



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

400 LA CROSSE STREET | LA CROSSE, WI 54601 | P: (608) 789-7512 | F: (608) 789-7318



2015 Green Tier Legacy Community Annual Report

Submitted May 27, 2016

Sustainability Mission Statement

As governing bodies of the City and County of La Crosse, we recognize a shared, collaborative responsibility to lead our organizations in accordance with the principles of sustainability. Using The Natural Step framework as our guide, we will work toward effective, affordable, sustainable government operations that meet the needs of the present while minimizing our negative impact on future generations. We will strive to lead by example and, whenever possible, support citizens, businesses and organizations in our community that are interested in adopting sustainable practices. – [La Crosse Strategic Plan for Sustainability \(2009\)](#)

Build and Buy Green

- **Green Product Purchasing:** All Requests for Proposals over \$20,000 must discuss how the vendors plan to incorporate sustainability into the project.
- **Paper Products:** The City has converted to green soap and toilet paper along with energy efficient hand dryers in all City restrooms.

Transportation

- **Silver Bike Friendly Community:** The League of American Bicyclists awarded a silver designation to the City of La Crosse in 2015, based on our efforts to enhance bicycle advocacy, usage, and safety.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:** The City of La Crosse completed this plan in 2012 to make La Crosse more safe, accessible, and sustainable.
- **Bus Ridership Increase:** Bus ridership on the [Municipal Transit Utility](#) increased 4.6% from '13 to '14.

Land Use

- **Tree Planting:** the City has increased their tree planting program by 20% annually since 2009.
- **Gundersen & Mayo Neighborhood Incentives:** Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic are both offering incentives to employees to live in the Washburn and Powell-Poage-Hamilton neighborhoods, thus reducing the number of employees commuting to work and the need for surface parking.
- **Green Streetscaping Downtown:** The City has incorporated more trees, lighting, and rain gardens on sidewalks downtown to not only make the city more attractive, but also to make it more walkable and

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efficient. The trees will keep temperatures more moderate and the rain gardens will help to divert runoff.

- **WisCorps Programs:** The La Crosse-based Wisconsin Conservation Corps works on projects like trail maintenance, tree planting, and invasive species removal. In addition, WisCorps, the Mayor's Office, the Parks, Rec, and Forestry Dept., and the La Crosse School District have created a program to help La Crosse youth learn skills while also improving public lands.

Energy

- **Vehicle Idling Policy:** The City established a policy in 2013 that prevents people from allowing their empty cars to idle.
- **Municipal Electricity Usage:** The City's electricity usage has decreased by over 20% between 2011 and 2014.
- **Hybrid Buses:** The Municipal Transit Utility now operates four hybrid buses, which use 40 percent less fuel than their diesel-powered buses.

Water

- **Stormwater Utility:** In 2014-15, the City's stormwater utility has collected \$4.48M to reduce runoff pollutants through maintaining current and constructing new stormwater facilities. The Stormwater Utility charges user fees including tax-exempt properties based upon the amount of runoff produced by their property, encouraging the reduction of runoff.

Waste

- **Single-Stream Recycling:** La Crosse has seen recycling rates double since single-stream recycling was implemented in 2014 for plastics (#1-7), glass, aluminum, tin, cardboard, and newspaper. Curbside single-stream has diverted 1640 tons of recyclable material from the La Crosse County Landfill this past year.
- **WI DNR Recycling Excellence Award for Overall Program:** Out of the 1,000+ recycling programs in Wisconsin, La Crosse was awarded for their recycling efforts in 2015. These improvements would not have been possible without the introduction of new, larger recycling bins in the year prior.

Recognitions

- **Bird City Wisconsin:** La Crosse has been a [Bird City](#) since 2011 and reached High Flyer status in 2014.
- **Tree City USA:** For over 25 years, La Crosse has been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA.
- **Silver Bike Friendly Community:** La Crosse has been recognized as a Bike Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists since 2007 and has been at the Silver level since 2011.
- **Bronze Walk Friendly Community:** La Crosse was first named a [Bronze Walk Friendly Community](#) in 2013.

Field	Value	<u>Wisconsin Legacy Communities</u> <u>Strategy Options</u>	
	<p>The purpose of the strategy options matrix is to provide a broad list of best management practices that encompass several elements of sustainability including transportation, energy, land use, water, and waste. This list is not inclusive.</p> <p>Prospective signatories should use the strategy options to gauge environmental performance and then use this baseline to strive for superior results.</p> <p>Superior environmental performance may be achieved when municipalities use the strategy options to develop a sustainability plan that reduces their overall negative impact on the environment.</p>		
	<p><u>TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT:</u></p> <p>Transportation demand management strategies aim to reduce GHG emissions and VMT by influencing change in individual behavior. These strategies encourage walking, bicycling, and transit as modes of transportation within a community and seek to curb the number and length of trips by vehicle.</p>		
	<p><u>Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs/Projects</u></p>		
2	Require bike parking for all new non-residential and multifamily uses.	2	2
1	Set standards for placement and number (as function of intensity of use) for bike parking spaces.	1	1
3	Commuter bike routes identified and cleared.	3	3
5 to 10	League of American Bicyclists certification. (Bronze 5, Silver 7, Platinum 10)	7	7
3	Funded and operating SRTS program (or functional equivalent) covering at least 10 percent of students, targeting schools with higher rates of free and/or reduced lunch.	3	3
1	Conduct annual survey of students' mode of transport to school.	0	0
	<u>Employer-Based Programs</u>		
5	Require large employers seeking rezoning to set a price signal (cash- out or charge).	0	2
5	Require large employers seeking rezoning to provide subsidized transit.	0	2
5	Require large employers seeking rezoning to provide a TDM plan that would reduce trips by 20 percent over business as usual.	0	3
	<u>Traffic Volume</u>		
3	Track VMT or traffic counts and report on efforts at reduction (including those on this list).	0	0
3	Eliminate parking minimums from non-residential districts.	0	0
5	Set parking maximums at X per square feet for office and retail uses.	0	0
5	Scheduled transit service at basic level (hour peak service within half- mile of 50 percent of addresses) and need (underserved areas with low socio-economic status).	5	5

City of La Crosse Baseline 2015	City of La Crosse Goal 2016-17
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5	Scheduled transit service at enhanced level (half-hour peak service within 75 percent of addresses) and need (underserved areas with low SES).	10	10
5			
10			
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT			
Transportation system management strategies aim to reduce GHG emissions and VMT by improving the overall performance of a transportation system. These strategies improve existing infrastructure, introduce new technology, and plan for the future of the system.			
<u>Preservation and Improvement</u>			
3	Develop and fully fund comprehensive maintenance program for existing roads.	0	0
1 to 5	Charge impact fees for new roads.	0	0
5	Calculate lane-miles per capita for arterials and collectors, and show reductions	0	0
5	Prepare a plan identifying disconnections in bike and pedestrian networks, prioritizing fixes and identifying potential funding sources for the most important projects in those areas where there are limited transportation options and low car-ownership levels.	3	0
5	Any proposal to add lanes to a two-lane roadway shall be evaluated for a center turn lane, the preferred options over an expansion to four lanes.	0	0
3	Identify four-lane roadways with fewer than 20,000 vehicles per day (AADT) and evaluate them for "road diets" with bike lanes or on-street parking	3	3
<u>Electric Vehicles</u>			
1	Allow NEVs on appropriate roadways.	1	1
2	Provide public charging stations	0	0
<u>Vehicle Idling</u>			
2	Ban idling (more than 5 minutes) with local government vehicles.	0	0
5	Ban idling (more than 5 minutes) community-wide.	0	0
ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT			
Zoning and development strategies work toward improving the overall environmental, economic, and social health of a community by promoting mixed-use and infill development, walkable neighborhoods, and an overall sustainable lifestyle.			
<u>Infill Development</u>			
5	Identify priority areas for infill development, including those eligible for brownfields funding particularly in areas needing revitalization, including those in lower socio-economic status neighborhoods.	1	2
1	Create land bank to acquire and assemble priority infill sites	0	0
1	Develop an inventory of known contaminated properties for reuse planning, with possible GIS application and prioritize reuse projects in lower socio-economic status areas.	0	1
<u>Walkability Score</u>			

10	Measure a walkability score at 10 random residential addresses per Census tract, compute average, and improve upon overall score	0	3
	<u>Zoning</u>		
N/A	Adopt traditional neighborhood design ordinance (If population is less than 12,500) that includes multi-family residences.	N/A	N/A
5	Zoning for office and retail districts permits floor-area ratio > 1, on average.	0	0
8	Zoning for office and retail districts requires floor-area ratio > 1, on average.	0	0
5	Zoning code includes mixed use districts	5	5
8	Mixed-use language from Smart Code.	3	3
	<u>NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</u>		
	Natural resource management strategies seek to conserve, preserve, protect and promote a community's greenspace, wildlife, wetlands and waterways for this and future generations by promoting pervious surfaces and adequate setbacks.		
	<u>Canopy</u>		
3	Adopt tree preservation ordinance per GTLC standards.	0	0
4	Set a tree canopy goal and develop a management plan to achieve it ensuring trees are incorporated in all neighborhoods.	0	0
2	Require trees to be planted in all new developments	1	2
2	Certification as Tree City USA	2	2
	<u>Vegetation Management</u>		
2	Public properties and rights of way mown or cleared only for safe sightlines and/or to remove invasive species.	0	0
2	Create community policy and BMP guidelines on minimizing chemical use during vegetation management of public and private properties	0	0
	<u>Water Protection</u>		
10	Establish 75-foot natural vegetation zone by surface water.	3	3
5	Inventory wetlands and ensure no net annual loss.	2	2
	<u>COMMUNITY ENERGY USE</u>		
	Community energy use strategies encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable fuels to reduce total energy consumption throughout the community		
	<u>Community Energy Use Policies</u>		
6	Use PACE financing	0	4
1	Watt meters available to the public for free and education provided on their utility.	1	1
10	Adopt Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance (time-of-sale certification and upgrades).	0	0
	<u>Measuring Community Energy Use</u>		
4	Work with local utilities to calculate total electricity and natural gas consumption annually, beginning with the fifth year before entering the program.	3	3
1	State of Wisconsin Energy Independent (EI) Community designation.	1	1
	<u>MUNICIPAL ENERGY USE</u>		

Municipal energy use strategies encourage municipal employees to conserve energy, preserve the environment, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions from municipal facilities, services, and vehicle fleets.

Government Energy Use Policies

5	Include transportation energy/emissions as criterion in RFPs for purchases of goods over \$10,000.	0	0
3	Develop list of lighting, HVAC and shell improvements to raise Energy Star Portfolio Manager or LEED EBO&M score	1	1
3	Reduce motor fuels use for non-transit activities --	1	1
6	Provide transit passes at 50 percent or more off the regular price and/or provide parking cash-out options for local government employees.	3	4
5	Streetlights operate at 75 lumens/Watt or higher	0	0
3	Stoplights are LED or functional equivalent	0	0
5	Municipal electricity purchases are at least 5 percentage points higher in renewable content than the statewide renewable portfolio standard requires. Calculation may include self-generated power and purchased offsets.	0	0
<u>Measuring Government Energy Use</u>			
5	Complete EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager spreadsheet for government energy use. Or score existing buildings with LEED EBO&M.	1	3
2	Calculate annual government fleet use of motor fuels, in gallons of petroleum and biofuels, beginning with the fifth year before entering the program.	2	2
10	All new and renovated municipal buildings must meet LEED Silver or greater.	2	2

WATER USE CONSERVATION

Water Conservation strategy options set baselines and goals for water and energy performance in municipalities. They measure progress and promote water conservation by the government, business, and the community at-large.

Water Conservation

6	Track water and sewer use annually, beginning with fifth year before entering program, and develop plan for reductions.	2	3
4	Develop a water loss control plan with targets below the 15% required by the state and include a system-wide water audit implementation and time table	1	1
2	Join EPA's WaterSense Program for water utilities or the Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program and promote them to local business.	0	1
6	Use block rates and flat rates to encourage water conservation among residential, commercial, and industrial users.	2	2
1	Financial assistance for sewer lateral replacements.	0	0
2 to 6	Upgrade water utility equipment (e.g., variable frequency drive motors) to achieve energy efficiency.	2	3
3	Infiltration and inflow reduction by 10%	1	1
5	Wastewater biogas captured and used in operations.	0	0

5	Plan for replacing all toilets using > 1.6 gpf and annual progress sufficient to reach 90 percent replacement in 10 years, providing education to all, and financial assistance to households with low socio-economic status.	0	0
<u>Local Government Use</u>			
2	Install waterless urinals in men's restrooms at municipal facilities (city hall, parks, etc.)	0	0
3	All outdoor watering by local government, excluding parks and golf courses, from rain collection.	0	0
4	Develop a water efficiency and conservation plan for municipal buildings	1	1
<u>STORMWATER MANAGEMENT</u>			
Stormwater Management strategy options encourage the use of best management practices to achieve a reduction in the amount of harmful pollutants introduced to our streams, rivers, and lakes.			
3	Develop a regular street sweeping program to reduce total suspended solids	3	3
3	Stormwater utility fees offer credits for best management practices such as rain barrels, rain gardens, and pervious paving	3	3
2	Inventory all paved surfaces (e.g., by GIS mapping), and develop a plan for reduction	1	1
2	Work with commercial or light industrial businesses to develop stormwater pollution plans	0	0
<u>WATER AND DEVELOPMENT</u>			
Water and Development strategy options link water conservation and the preservation of land, wetlands, and wildlife habitat while promoting compact development, restoration and rehabilitation efforts, and long-term planning.			
<u>Land Development</u>			
5	Identify key green infrastructure areas during plan development and/or implement a plan to acquire and protect key green infrastructure areas particularly in underserved areas.	0	1
<u>Waters, Wetlands, and Wildlife</u>			
1 to 6	Replace concrete channels with re-meandered and naturalized creeks, wetlands, or swales	3	3
3	Develop a system for identifying culverts that obstruct fish migration and install fish friendly culverts where needed	2	3
4	Provide incentives for protection of green infrastructure, sensitive areas, important wildlife habitat, or for the restoration or rehabilitation of wetlands or other degraded habitats such as credit towards open space or set-aside requirements	0	0
<u>WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION</u>			
Waste Management and Reduction strategy options encourage municipalities and their citizens to divert organics and recyclables from landfills and properly dispose of hazardous materials in an effort to reduce waste in a community.			
3	Community waste stream monitored at least annually . Waste reduction plan prepared and updated annually	3	3

4	Waste and materials management plan based on "zero-waste" principles, with specific goals, prepared and updated annually	1	2
3	Construction/deconstruction waste recycling ordinance	1	1
3	Mandatory residential curbside recycling pickup that covers paper, metal cans, glass and plastic bottles	3	3
5	Develop a municipal collection program that encourages the diversion of food discards, yard materials, and other organics from landfills to composting or anaerobic digestion with energy recovery	0	0
3	Develop and promote programs that dispose of household hazardous, medical, and electronic waste	3	3
4	Use anaerobic digesters to process organic waste and produce energy	0	1
3	Implement municipal ordinances requiring manufacturer takeback for fluorescent bulbs, thermostats and other mercury-containing devices	0	0
2	Ordinances in place to reduce the usage of phone books as well as single-use shopping bags, styrofoam food containers and other disposable packaging	0	0
2	Pay-as-you-throw system implemented by municipality or required of private waste haulers	0	2
1	Use public education and outreach to promote recycling, backyard composting, product re-use and waste reduction.	1	1
308		101	127
		33%	41%