

(11) Economic Development.

(a) Overview.

1. Economic development incorporates who is working in the County, what industries they are employed in, the companies or agencies that are employing them, where those companies are located, and the money they are making and contributing to the La Crosse County economy. The chapter provides an overview of the statistical performance of those functions in the County.

2. While unemployment rates have inched up slowly over the past five years, the County is lower than state and national averages. There is an active work force participating in a wide range of industries. The employers in the County provide numerous opportunities for employees both in and outside the County.

(b) Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development.

1. Table 11.1 below provides an initial list of strengths and weaknesses that are currently facing La Crosse County. Past reports, business development plans, and site visits have contributed to this list. Future items will be added to the list as the planning process continues.

Table 11.1: Strengths and Weaknesses of the La Crosse Economy

Strengths	Weaknesses
Regional Center	Lack of Cooperation between Communities
Multiple Transportation Modes	Infrastructure Limitations
Low Unemployment Rate	Isolation from Larger Population Centers (Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Madison)
Great Natural Resource Amenities	Topography and geography of the area
Available Land and Building Space	Per capita income is below the State average
High Quality of Life	Property tax system encourages sprawl
Educated and Diverse Workforce	
Topography and geography of the area	
Higher Education Opportunities	
Health Care and Medical Facilities Options	
Strong, diverse manufacturing base	
Diversity	
Regional economic base separated from Larger Population Centers (Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Madison)	

Source: SAA, 2005

2. Future recommendations will be developed to build off strengths and to mitigate the weaknesses, to the extent possible.

(c) Labor Force.

1. Over 70 percent of the population over 16 years old is involved in the work force. Of those that are active in the labor force only 4 percent are currently without a job. The Towns of Medary and Shelby are experiencing exceptionally strong employment numbers, as almost 98 percent of their residents are employed. The Town of Campbell, is currently facing a 6.7 percent unemployment rate, which is highest in the County.

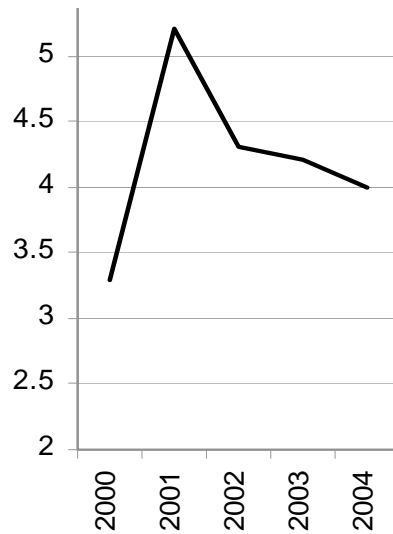
Table 11.2: La Crosse County, Employment Status as a Percentage, 2000

	Population 16 years and over	Civilian labor force	Employed	Unemployment Rate	Armed Forces	Not in labor force
Town of Burns	769	71.5	68.3	4.5	0	28.5
Town of Farmington	1,312	72.4	69	4.7	0.2	27.4
Village of Bangor	1,021	71.9	69.5	3.3	0.2	27.9
Village of Rockland	497	74.2	71.6	3.5	0	25.8
Sub-Area 1	3,599	72.3%	69.4%	4.1%	0.1%	27.6%
Town of Bangor	432	72.2	70.1	2.9	0	27.8
Town of Greenfield	1,125	79.4	76.8	3.2	0.2	20.4
Town of Washington	574	63.4	61.3	3.3	0	36.6
Sub-Area 2	2,131	73.6%	71.3%	3.2%	0.1%	26.3%
Town of Barre	746	82.6	79.6	3.6	0	17.4
Town of Hamilton	1,751	69.7	67.6	3	0	30.3
Village of West Salem	3,304	75.1	71.8	4.4	0.2	24.7
Sub-Area 3	5,801	74.4%	71.6%	3.8%	0.0%	25.5%
Town of Holland	2,237	81.3	78.9	3	0	18.7
Town of Onalaska	3,668	79.4	76.7	3.5	0	20.6
Village of Holmen	4,539	78.5	75.9	3.3	0	21.5
Sub-Area 4	10,444	79.4%	76.8%	3.3%	0.0%	20.6%
Town of Campbell	3,638	74.8	69.8	6.7	0	25.2
Town of Medary	1,123	77	75.2	2.3	0.2	22.8
Town of Shelby	3,546	68.1	66.3	2.6	0.1	31.8
Sub-Area 5	8,307	72.3%	69.1%	4.4%	0.1%	27.7%
City of La Crosse	43,058	65.2	62.2	4.6	0.1	34.8
City of Onalaska	11,491	75.5	73	3.3	0	24.5
Sub-Area 6	54,549	67.3%	64.4%	4.3%	0.0%	32.6%
County Total	84,831	70.2%	67.3%	4.1%	0%	29.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. Figure 11.1 demonstrates how the La Crosse County unemployment rate has fluctuated. The rate hit a high in 2001, but has steadily been decreasing over the past three years. The County rate is significantly lower than the national rate in 2004, which was 5.1 percent. The rate in 2004, was slightly lower than the State of Wisconsin's 4.1 percent unemployment rate.

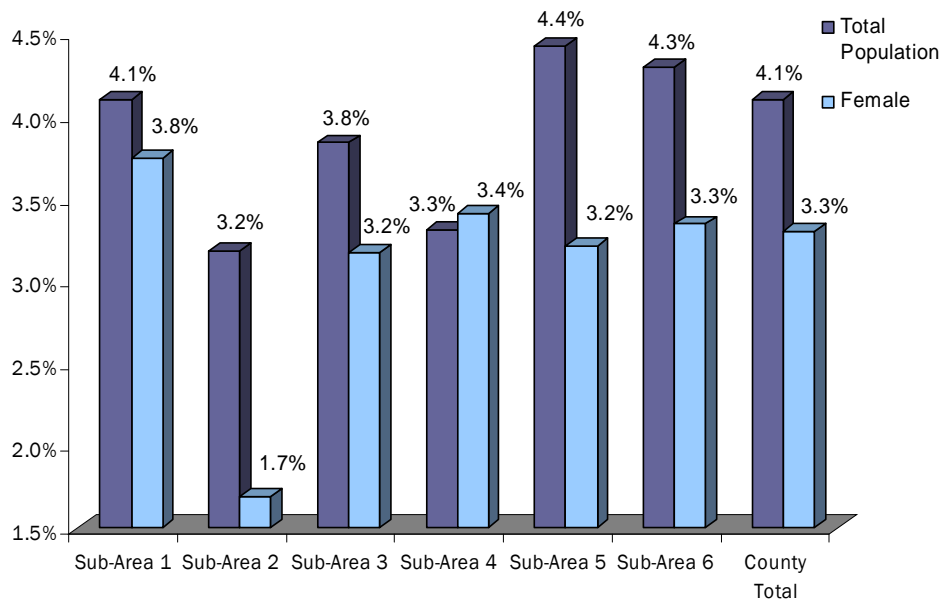
Figure 11.1: La Crosse County, Unemployment Rates, 2000-2004



Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

3. The figure below demonstrates that the unemployment rate for women is significantly lower than their male counterparts in almost all areas of the County. It should be noted that three quarters of men over the age of 16 are involved in the labor force, while less than two-thirds of women involved.

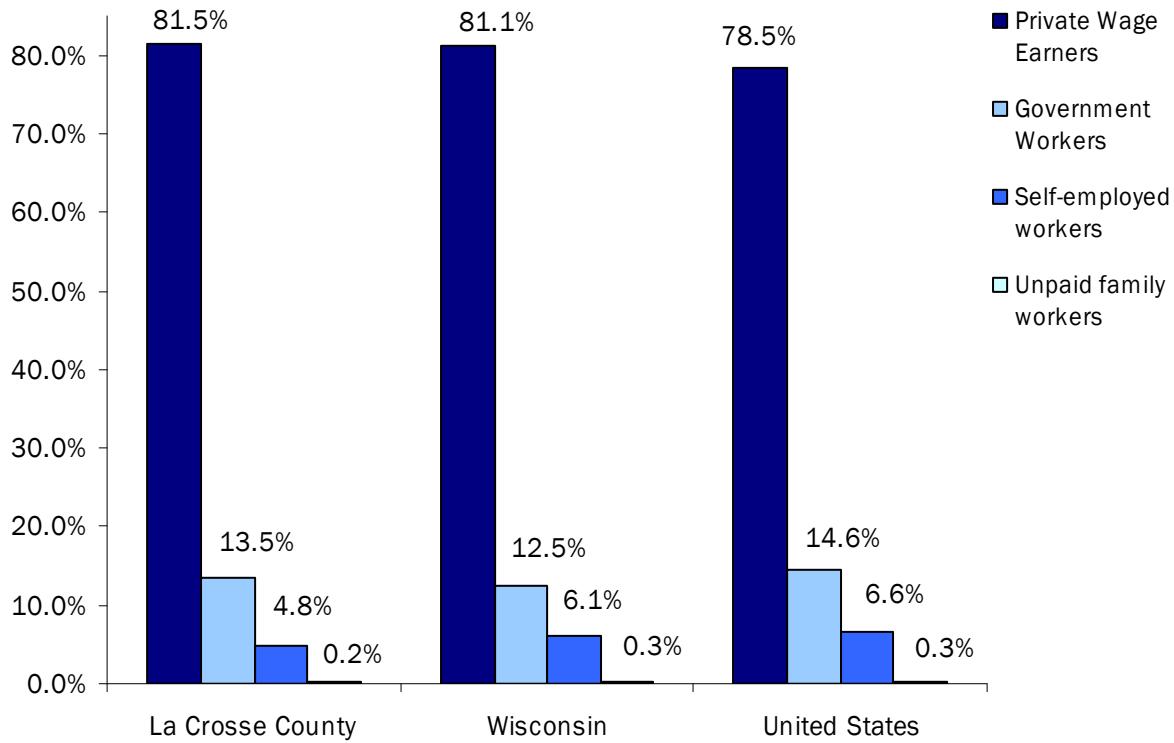
Figure 11.2: La Crosse County, Female and Total Population Unemployment Rates, 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

4. The majority of the labor force in the County derives their income from private companies. The figure below outlines the various sources of income. The largest income generator is the private sector employees, followed by government workers who account for nearly 14 percent of the labor force.

Figure 11.3: Industry of Employed Labor Force. County, State and Nation, 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

5. Table 11.3 outlines what type of occupation La Crosse County workers are participating in. Over thirty percent of employees are participating in management or professional occupations, which is the most common occupation type within the County. That rate is consistent throughout the County, except in the Town of Shelby where over 50 percent of residents are active in these occupations. Sales and office are the second most frequent occupation, with just under 30 percent of County residents participating in related occupations. In the Village of Rockland over 30 percent of residents are involved in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, which is almost double the County average in those occupations. Similarly, over 5 percent of the Town of Burns participates in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations, which is nearly five times the County average. The table demonstrates that La Crosse County has a diverse job offering for County residents.

Table 11.3: La Crosse County, Occupational Structure as a Percentage of Labor Force, 2000

	Employed civilian population 16 years and over	Management, professional, and related occupations	Service	Sales and office	Farming, fishing, and forestry	Construction, extraction, and maintenance	Production, transportation, and material moving
Town of Burns	525	26.9	9.9	21	5.3	8.4	28.6
Town of Farmington	905	25.4	13.8	20.7	1.4	13.6	25.1
Village of Bangor	710	23.9	12.5	28.9	0.4	14.5	19.7
Village of Rockland	356	18.5	12.6	35.1	0	3.7	30.1
Sub-Area 1	2,496	24.3%	12.5%	25.1%	1.8%	11.3%	25.0%
Town of Bangor	303	36.6	16.5	15.5	4	12.9	14.5
Town of Greenfield	864	34.5	14	24.1	0.5	9.7	17.2
Town of Washington	352	45.2	14.5	14.2	2.3	9.1	14.8
Sub-Area 2	1,519	37.4%	14.6%	20.1%	1.6%	10.2%	16.1%
Town of Barre	594	33.5	9.8	25.1	0.7	8.8	22.2
Town of Hamilton	1,184	38	13.6	24.1	1.4	8.7	14.2
Village of West Salem	2,373	29.5	15.6	23.3	0	9	22.6
Sub-Area 3	4,151	32.5%	14.2%	23.8%	0.5%	8.9%	20.1%
Town of Holland	1,765	31.4	13.2	27.8	0.2	10.1	17.3
Town of Onalaska	2,812	29.1	15.8	25.9	0.4	9.9	19
Village of Holmen	3,443	25.3	15	24.8	0.1	9.8	25
Sub-Area 4	8,020	28.0%	14.9%	25.8%	0.2%	9.9%	21.2%
Town of Campbell	2,540	30.6	15.4	23.4	0.4	8	22.2
Town of Medary	845	35.3	12.8	29.6	0	9.9	12.4
Town of Shelby	2,352	51.6	10.2	22.7	0.3	6	9.1
Sub-Area 5	5,737	39.9%	12.9%	24.0%	0.3%	7.5%	15.4%
City of La Crosse	26,761	27.9	20.4	29.1	0.2	6.6	15.9
City of Onalaska	8,389	36.8	12.9	29.6	0.1	6.4	14.1
Sub-Area 6	35,150	30.0%	18.6%	29.2%	0.2%	6.6%	15.4%
County Total	57,073	30.8%	16.8%	27.4%	0.3%	7.6%	17.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(d) Economic Base.

1. The La Crosse County economy is supported by many strong employers. Many of those employers are based in the La Crosse Metropolitan Area, but their employees come from all over the county and the region. The table below outlines the top employers in both the private and public sectors.

Table 11.4: Top Employers in La Crosse County

Private		
Gundersen Lutheran	5,000 FTE employees	Health Care
Trane	2,500 FTE employees	Manufacturer
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare/Mayo Health System	2,350 FTE employees	Health Care
Kwik Trip	900 FTE employees	Convenience Store
CenturyTel	830 FTE employees	Telephone Utility
The Company Store	567 FTE employees	Manufacturer
APAC Customer Service	500 FTE employees	Telephone & Telecommunications
Dairyland Power Cooperative	425 FTE employees	Electric Utility
Bethany-St. Joseph Corp.	420 FTE employees	Nursing Home
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad	400 FTE employees	Rail Transport

Government/Education		
County of La Crosse	1,100 FTE employees	Government
School District of La Crosse	1,060 FTE employees	Education
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse	1,000 FTE employees	Education
City of La Crosse	525 FTE employees	Government
School District of Holmen	449 FTE employees	Education
Western Wisconsin Technical College	418 FTE employees	Education

Source: La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce. 2005

2. Table 11.5 lists the top ten industry groups by employment for La Crosse County in March 2003. Two (2) industry types experienced employment increases between 2002 and 2003; most of the gains were in health care, and finance. Six (6) industry types were down in 2003; most of these job losses were in wholesaling, and merchandising. Data was unavailable for two (2) of the ten (10) industry types.

Table 11.5: Top Industry Groups: La Crosse County

Industry Group	March 2003		Number change 2002-2003
	Employers	Employees	
Educational Services	30	5,428	-64
Food Services and Drinking Places	205	4,977	-5
Hospitals	(x)	(x)	(x)
Ambulatory Health Care Services	103	4039	472
Machinery Manufacturing	(x)	(x)	(x)
Administrative and Support Services	97	2421	-78
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	54	2139	-312
Credit Intermediation and Related Activity	45	2013	216
General Merchandise Stores	12	1955	-152
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	16	1805	-78

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2003

3. Table 11.6, provided by the State Department of Workforce Development, outlines the annual wages earned by La Crosse County employees organized by industry. Most of the industries are providing County employees with a strong income base. As found throughout the State, leisure, hospitality and other service industries pay a lower average annual wage.

Table 11.6: Average Annual Wage by Industry Division in 2003

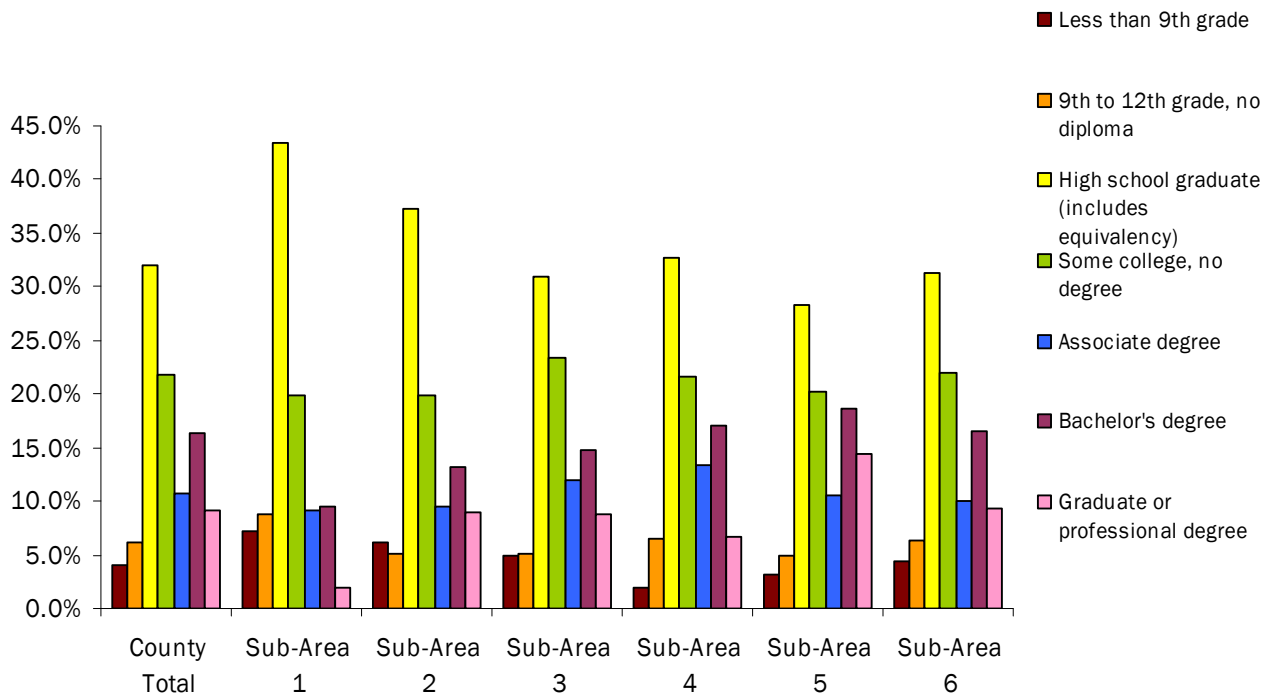
	Average Annual Wage
All Industries	\$29,982
Natural Resources	\$29,952
Construction	\$36,917
Manufacturing	\$37,342
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	\$26,404
Information	\$40,021
Financial Activities	\$35,861
Professional & Business Services	\$31,815
Education & Health	\$34,901
Leisure & Hospitality	\$9,588
Other Services	\$17,483
Public Administration	\$32,509

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2003

(e) Education Levels.

1. Figure 11.4 graphically displays the distribution of educational attainment by adults in each of the sub-areas as well as the county.

Figure 11.4: La Crosse County, Educational Attainment, 2000
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000



2. Table 11.7 outlines the highest education attained by adults over age 25 in the County. The Town of Burns and the Town of Farmington have a large presence of adults who have graduated high school, while the Town of Medary and the Town of Shelby have a larger presence of adults with bachelor's degrees or higher educational attainment.

3. The County Over 25.4 percent of La Crosse County adults over the age of 25 have a bachelor's or graduate/professional degree, which is slightly higher than the state of Wisconsin average of 22.5 percent.

Table 11.7: La Crosse County, Educational Attainment by Percentage of Population, 2000

	Population Over 25 Years	Less than 9th grade (%)	9th to 12th grade, no diploma (%)	High school graduate - includes equivalency (%)	Some college, no degree (%)	Associate degree (%)	Bachelor's degree (%)	Graduate or professional degree (%)
Town of Burns	640	7.3	11.1	46.6	14.4	9.4	9.4	1.9
Town of Farmington	1,161	5.5	8.2	47.3	18.1	10.2	8.3	2.5
Village of Bangor	912	8.7	6.6	39.9	24	7.1	12.1	1.6
Village of Rockland	419	8.6	12.2	35.3	24.6	10.5	7.4	1.4
Sub-Area 1	3,132	7.2%	8.8%	43.4%	19.9%	9.2%	9.5%	2.0%
Town of Bangor	361	4.2	5.3	45.2	16.9	10.8	11.1	6.6
Town of Greenfield	969	5.6	5.4	33.1	23.1	9	16	7.8
Town of Washington	511	8.6	4.5	39.7	15.7	9.4	9.6	12.5
Sub-Area 2	1,841	6.1%	5.1%	37.3%	19.8%	9.5%	13.3%	8.9%
Town of Barre	657	1.5	6.5	35.9	19	16	14.2	6.8
Town of Hamilton	1,551	3.6	5.2	29.6	23.7	10	12.6	15.3
Village of West Salem	2,932	6.4	4.9	30.6	24.2	12	16	5.9
Sub-Area 3	5,140	4.9%	5.2%	31.0%	23.4%	11.9%	14.8%	8.8%
Town of Holland	1,921	3.2	6.7	31.7	21.4	14.3	16.8	5.9
Town of Onalaska	3,208	1.9	5.9	29.4	21	14.1	18	9.7
Village of Holmen	3,782	1.4	7	36.2	22.4	12.1	16.4	4.4
Sub-Area 4	8,911	2.0%	6.5%	32.8%	21.7%	13.3%	17.1%	6.7%
Town of Campbell	1,135	5.1	7	35.9	21.8	11.2	14.1	4.9
Town of Medary	973	3.3	2.1	21.1	21.7	15.6	23.3	12.9
Town of Shelby	3,166	1.4	3.6	23	18	8.2	21.5	24.3
Sub-Area 5	5,274	3.2%	4.9%	28.2%	20.1%	10.5%	18.6%	14.5%
City of La Crosse	29,391	4.8	7.5	31.6	22.7	9.4	15.5	8.6
City of Onalaska	9,619	2.9	3.1	30.5	20.1	12.1	20.1	11.1
Sub-Area 6	39,010	4.3%	6.4%	31.3%	22.0%	10.1%	16.6%	9.3%
County Total	63,308	4.1%	6.2%	31.9%	21.7%	10.6%	16.3%	9.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

(f) Commuting Patterns.

1. The vast majority, over 80 percent, of workers in La Crosse County drive alone to work as is described in the table below. It takes the average worker 17.3 minutes to travel to work. The second most common way to travel to work was by carpool, almost 10 percent of workers traveled in this fashion. In the City of La Crosse another 9 percent walked to work; while nearly 4 percent of residents in both the Towns of Bangor and Greenfield walked to work. In the Town of Washington, nearly 20 percent of people worked at home.

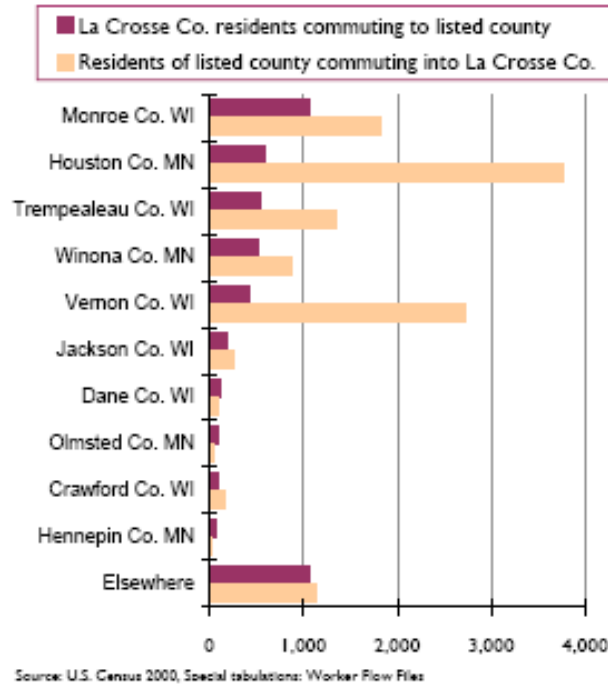
Table 11.8: La Crosse County, Mode of Transportation to Work, 2000

	Workers 16 years and over	Car, truck, or van – drove alone	Car, truck, or van – carpooled	Public transportation (including taxicab)	Walked	Other means	Worked at home	Mean travel time to work (minutes)
Town of Burns	520	78.5	8.1	0	3.3	0	10.2	22.5
Town of Farmington	891	80.1	10.3	0.8	1.8	0.4	6.5	34.2
Village of Bangor	704	82	10.8	0	4.7	0.4	2.1	19.6
Village of Rockland	348	83	14.9	0	0	0.6	1.4	27.9
Sub-Area 1	2,463	80.7%	10.6%	0.3%	2.7%	0.4%	5.3%	
Town of Bangor	297	70	13.1	1.3	3.7	1.7	10.1	28.6
Town of Greenfield	849	77.5	10.4	0.4	3.9	0.5	7.4	21.3
Town of Washington	344	64.2	12.2	0	4.1	0	19.5	23.4
Sub-Area 2	1,490	73.0%	11.3%	0.5%	3.9%	0.6%	10.7%	
Town of Barre	581	86.6	6.5	0.5	2.4	1.4	2.6	21.2
Town of Hamilton	1,171	86.3	7.4	0	0.3	0.4	5.6	20.3
Village of West Salem	2,373	85.4	8	0.2	3.5	0.9	2.1	21.2
Sub-Area 3	4,125	85.8%	7.6%	0.2%	2.4%	0.8%	3.1%	
Town of Holland	1,749	85.9	9.3	0.2	0.5	0	4.1	23
Town of Onalaska	2,769	87.9	4.4	0	0.8	0.4	6.5	19.4
Village of Holmen	3,403	85.8	11.8	0	0.7	0	1.7	19.4
Sub-Area 4	7,921	86.6%	8.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.1%	3.9%	
Town of Campbell	2,512	90.1	6.3	0.8	0.8	0.4	1.6	16.2
Town of Medary	845	89.1	4.5	0.4	0.9	0.2	4.9	18.3
Town of Shelby	2,332	84.2	8.5	0.5	1	1.6	4.2	17.2
Sub-Area 5	5,689	87.6%	6.9%	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	3.1%	
City of La Crosse	26,056	75.6	9	2.4	9.1	1.6	2.3	15
City of Onalaska	8,227	87.6	9.5	0.2	0.5	0.7	1.5	16.6
Sub-Area 6	34,283	78.5%	9.1%	1.9%	7.0%	1.4%	2.1%	
County Total	55,971	81%	8.8%	1.3%	4.9%	1.0%	2.9%	17.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

2. The figure below demonstrates how many residents travel from outside into La Crosse County for work and where La Crosse County residents travel to for work. La Crosse County employers draw from a large region both in and outside of Wisconsin. Most County residents who work outside of La Crosse County commute to Monroe County, Wisconsin or to Houston County, Minnesota.

Figure 11.5: Number of Residents Commuting into and out of La Crosse County, 2000



(g) Commercial and Industrial Building Trends. Table 11.9 outlines where the industrial and business parks are located in La Crosse County. The table also provides the size of the parks. This information is positive for the County as there are many different options for employers looking to expand in or relocate to La Crosse. Eleven of fifteen parks have vacancies available.

Table 11.9: Industrial and Business Parks in La Crosse County

Name	Location	Size (acres)
French Island Multi-Modal Facility	Campbell	N/A
Holland Business Park	Holland	35
Cedar Creek Business Center	Holmen	25
Holmen Business Park	Holmen	12
Northstar Business Park	Holmen	22
La Crosse Airport Industrial Park	La Crosse	94
Coulee Sites Industrial Park	La Crosse	135
Grand Crossing Industrial Park	La Crosse	125
La Crosse International Business Park	La Crosse	85
La Crosse Interstate Business Park	La Crosse	92
Onalaska East Gate Addition Business Park	Onalaska	38
Onalaska Elmwood Business Park	Onalaska	130
Onalaska Riders Club Road Addition Business Park	Onalaska	70
Onalaska Valley View Business Center	Onalaska	40
Lakeview Business Park	West Salem	150

Source: La Crosse Area Development Corporation, 2005

(h) **Environmentally Contaminated Sites.** There are a significant amount of contaminated sites within La Crosse County. The table below lists the number and types of contaminated sites found within La Crosse County. The numbers and the descriptions of the types of contamination have been provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The majority of sites are within the city of La Crosse or in surrounding communities. There are other contaminated sites located throughout the county. One of the most well recognized sites is the Onalaska Municipal Landfill which has been designated as a US EPA Superfund site. Often, the sites listed in this database will require significant attention and careful clean-up before they can be redeveloped and positively contribute to the County's economy.

Table 11.10: Contaminated Sites in La Crosse County

# of Sites	Type of Sites
311	Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST)
110	Environmental Repair (ERP)
420	LUST and ERP
447	Abandoned Container (AC) and Spill
2	Liability Exemption (VPLE)
1	Superfund Site (Onalaska Municipal Landfill)
1,290	Total Contaminated Sites

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2005

1. **Abandoned Container (AC).** An abandoned container, with potentially hazardous contents, has been inspected and recovered. No known discharge to the environment has occurred. If the container discharged a hazardous substance, a SPILL activity will be created at this location (See Spills module).

2. **Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST).** A LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances. However, given time, petroleum contamination naturally breaks down in the environment (biodegradation). Some LUST sites may emit potentially explosive vapors.

3. **Environmental Repair (ERP).** ERP sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Examples include industrial spills (or dumping) that need long term investigation, buried containers of hazardous substances, and closed landfills that have caused contamination. The ERP module includes petroleum contamination from above-ground (but not from underground) storage tanks.

4. **Spills.** A discharge of a hazardous substance that may adversely impact, or threaten to impact public health, welfare or the environment. Spills are usually cleaned up quickly.

5. **Liability Exemption (VPLE).** VPLEs are an elective process in which a property owner conducts an environmental investigation and cleanup of an entire property and then receives limits on future liability for that contamination under s. 292.15, Wisconsin Statutes. An individual, business or unit of government can receive the liability exemption after a completed cleanup is approved.

(i) Employment Projections.

1. The State of Wisconsin’s Department of Workforce Development’s “La Crosse County Workforce Profile” provides insight into the regional employment forecast for the County. This section illustrates employment forecasts for the La Crosse County area and for the entire State of Wisconsin.

2. Table 11.11 lists the top 10 occupations experiencing the fastest growth rates and the most job openings in Western Wisconsin. Many of the fastest growing occupations fall into either the “management, professional or related occupations” category or the “service” category, and there is a particular growth trend in computer software and support occupations as well as medical support occupations. The areas with the most openings are generally “service occupations,” with some exceptions.

Table 11.11: Western Region Occupation Projections: 2010

Top Ten Occupations		Education & Training Typically Required*	Average Wage**
Fastest Growth	Computer Support Specialists	Associate degree	\$16.65
	Network Systems/Data Communications Analysis	Bachelor's degree	\$23.49
	Medical Records/Health Info Techs	Associate degree	\$11.43
	Medical Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$10.61
	Personal and Home Care Aides	1-month or less training	\$8.25
	Computer/Information Systems Managers	Work experience & degree	\$29.77
	Social/Human Service Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$12.30
	Computer Systems Analysts	Bachelor's degree	\$24.14
	Home Health Aides	1-month or less training	\$9.03
	Dental Assistants	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$10.93
Most Openings	Combination Food Preparation/Service Workers Including Fast Food	1-month or less training	\$6.91
	Cashiers	1-month or less training	\$7.60
	Retail Salespersons	1-month or less training	\$9.04
	Waiters/Waitresses	1-month or less training	\$7.55
	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	\$20.23
	Truck Drivers/Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	1-12 mo. on-the-job	\$20.88
	Janitors/Cleaners, Maids/Housekeepers	1-month or less training	\$9.42
	Office Clerks/General	1-month or less training	\$10.27
	Bartenders	1-month or less training	\$7.41
	Nursing Aids/Orderlies/Attendants	1-month or less training	\$9.95

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, 2002

Western WDA includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

*The most common way to enter the occupation, not the only way

** Wages from Occupation Employment Statistics survey responses for region, 2001

(j) Sources:

1. U.S. Bureau of the Census
2. State of Wisconsin Departments of Administration, Natural Resources, and Workforce Development
3. La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce
4. La Crosse Area Development Corporation.

(12) Intergovernmental Cooperation.

(a) Overview.

1. This chapter was prepared within the context of many existing local, regional, and state plans, which were reviewed throughout this planning effort. The planning process considered the larger regional context and involved all local and neighboring governmental jurisdictions, planning organizations, agencies, stakeholders, and allowed for strong public participation.

2. Intergovernmental cooperation is a critical component of this planning effort and the future wellbeing of La Crosse County. Local services and planning strategies can be strengthened by cooperative relationships throughout the County. This chapter contains an overview of the County's intergovernmental relationships and identifies known existing or potential conflicts between this Comprehensive Plan and the plans of local cities, villages, towns, School Districts, the State of Wisconsin, and important federal agencies that maintain a presence in the County.

(b) La Crosse County.

1. La Crosse County encompasses 481 square miles and is located in western Wisconsin along the Mississippi River. The County's 2004 population was estimated at 109,616. La Crosse County is approximately 150 miles southeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, 175 miles from Waterloo, Iowa, and 145 miles from Madison, WI. The County is comprised of 18 local units of government: 12 towns, 4 villages, and 2 cities. Interstate 90 and the La Crosse River bisect the County from east to west. Trempealeau and Jackson County border La Crosse County to the north, Monroe County lies to the East, Vernon County lies to the south, and the Mississippi River and Minnesota lie to the west. This Comprehensive Plan is an update to the County's existing plan, the La Crosse County Development Plan 2020. In addition, the County has adopted numerous other plans, studies, and ordinances, including:

- a. La Crosse County, Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Plan, 1980
- b. La Crosse County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1998
- c. La Crosse County Land & Water Resource Management Plan, 1999
- d. Zoning Ordinance
- e. Land Division Ordinance.

2. La Crosse County is also party to general cooperative agreements for fire, police, rescue, road maintenance, solid waste, recycling, and other services with several towns, villages, and cities in the County.

(c) City of La Crosse.

The City of La Crosse is located on the west side of La Crosse County along the Mississippi River. La Crosse is the largest incorporated area in the County and serves as the County seat. The City's population in 2004 was estimated at 51,507, which is down slightly from the 2000 U.S. Census population of 51,818. The City has a 2003 adopted comprehensive plan, a park and recreation plan, a zoning ordinance, a land division ordinance, and many other plans and studies that guide community policies and actions.

(d) City of Onalaska. The City of Onalaska is located north of La Crosse and is the second largest municipality in the County with a 2004 estimated population of 15,782, an increase from the 2000 population of 14,839. The City of Onalaska adopted a comprehensive plan in 2004 and has a zoning and land division ordinance, as well as many other ordinances and plans that inform community decisions.

(e) Villages of Bangor, Holmen, Rockland, and West Salem. The Villages of Bangor (population 1,394), Rockland (population 639), and West Salem (population 4,809) are located along I-90 in the central part of the County. The Village of Holmen (population 6,984) is located along Highway 53 in the northern part of the County. All Villages, except Bangor, gained population between 2000 and 2004. Holmen was the most rapidly growing community (at a rate of approximately 13 percent) during this time period in part because of its location near Onalaska on Highway 53, which provides transportation access to both Onalaska and La Crosse. Holmen adopted a comprehensive plan in 2004. The La Crosse County Development Plan 2020 guides land use decisions in Bangor, Rockland, and West Salem.

(f) Towns.

1. The County's 12 Towns are Bangor, Barre, Burns, Campbell, Farmington, Greenfield, Hamilton, Holland, Medary, Onalaska, Shelby, and Washington. The estimated 2004 populations of these Towns ranged from 596 (Bangor) to 5,406 (Onalaska). All of the Towns, with the exception of Barre, gained population between 2000 and 2004.

2. All of the Towns are under County zoning, shoreland, and floodplain ordinances. Each Town has a development plan that was drafted as part of the La Crosse County Development Plan 2020 (1995). However, many towns have developed or are currently developing a comprehensive plan in conjunction with the La Crosse County comprehensive planning process that will update or replace these development plans per comprehensive planning requirements enacted in 1999.

(g) Surrounding Counties. La Crosse County is bordered by four counties on its north, east, and south sides, and by the Mississippi River and Minnesota on the west. Each of these counties has a much smaller population than La Crosse; Trempealeau County's 2000 population was 27,010; Jackson County's was 19,100; Monroe County's was 40,896; and Vernon County's was 28,056. These neighboring counties are primarily agricultural with outstanding natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. Existing or potential conflicts between La Crosse Counties and surrounding counties will be explored through this planning process.

(h) Regional Planning Jurisdiction.

1. La Crosse County is located within the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission's (MRRPC) jurisdiction. The MRRPC prepares and adopts regional or county-wide plans and represents Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, Jackson, and Monroe counties. The RPC was established to:

- a. Carry out comprehensive and intergovernmental planning;
- b. Have jurisdiction throughout the seven-county area, including incorporated and unincorporated areas;
- c. Meet area-wide requirements so local jurisdictions could receive federal grants; and
- d. Provide an organization to receive federal grants.

2. Services provided by the RPC include:
 - a. Comprehensive planning;
 - b. Open space, recreational and environmental planning;
 - c. Economic development;
 - d. Demographic information and projects;
 - e. Technical assistance to local governments;
 - f. Geographic information services; and
 - g. Aerial photography distribution.
3. MRRPC's planning documents and profiles that relate to La Crosse County include:
 - a. The MRRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2001;
 - b. The MRRPC Economic Development Program, 2000; and
 - c. The MRRPC Industry Cluster and Regional Trade Report, 2001.

(i) Important State and Federal Agency Jurisdictions. There are many state and federal agencies that affect planning in La Crosse County. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) District 5 plays a critical role in many aspects of the County's transportation system, from highway design and development to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and networks. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also has a prominent role in the County because of the many DNR-owned land and facilities that are located here. The University of Wisconsin Extension office is located in the City of La Crosse and serves as an educational resource for County residents. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a presence in the County because of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The U.S Army Corps of Engineers also maintains a presence in the County because of their ownership and management of locks and dams along the Mississippi River, which borders the western edge of the County. The County and its local units of government recognize the importance of working with these state and federal agencies, and are committed to continuing an ongoing dialogue with these agencies, both during and after the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

(j) School Districts.

a. La Crosse County is served by eight school districts, as described in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element and depicted on the Schools and School District Map.

b. There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts between the County and the school districts. However, this will be explored throughout the planning process and updated if necessary.

(k) Existing or Potential Conflicts and Process to Resolve Conflicts as follows:

a. Existing or potential conflicts related to land use decision-making have been reduced due to the multi-jurisdictional process used to develop county and local comprehensive plans. The intergovernmental effort required to develop local plans that concertedly and uniformly support a regional plan has been an ongoing effort. Ostensibly, these efforts have reduced the potential for land use conflicts in the future especially since all plans were developed over approximately the same amount of time and because the La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan unites existing plans into a cohesive document.

b. The process to resolve conflicts is tied to open communication and willingness of elected officials to maintain clear and responsive channels of communication in matters of conflict. The La Crosse County Zoning, Planning & Land Information Department is proactively working with local jurisdictions to develop boundary agreements to mitigate future disagreements within extraterritorial jurisdictions before intergovernmental conflict becomes an issue. Similar efforts are ongoing throughout La Crosse County to ensure effective cooperation between all local governments is maintained

(1) Sources. Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission; La Crosse County Website, October 2005; and La Crosse County Economic Development Plan 2020.