

(9) Transportation.

(a) Overview. The La Crosse County transportation system is the collection of many modes and technologies, all with the goal of moving people and goods throughout the County, western Wisconsin, and the nation. The interchange of goods, services, and ideas provided through a functioning transportation system is the basis for the County's economy. The County's transportation policies and programs strive:

1. to achieve a safe and efficient transportation system,
2. to provide personal mobility for all segments of the population,
3. to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts on the County's natural, economic, and social environments, and
4. to shape future growth and enable infill development.

(b) Current Commuting Patterns.

1. Like the rest of the country, the La Crosse County area has experienced a significant increase in the percent of workers working outside the home who drive alone to work. The 2035 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan analyzed census data to understand commuting patterns and mode choice.

2. Despite a fixed-route transit system in the City of La Crosse, an extensive network of bike routes, and pedestrian paths, the percentage of workers using private vehicles increased between 1990 and 2000. Because the eastern portion of La Crosse County is extensively rural in nature, the percent of workers 16 and older who worked outside of the home who drive alone to work in 2000 was somewhat higher at 90.2 percent than the percent of workers who drove alone (83.8 percent) in the urbanized area.

3. The County's development patterns, natural and manmade barriers, and Wisconsin winters can make traveling by non-motorized means challenging. Two-worker family households; high growth in Holmen, Onalaska, and West Salem; and three-quarters of all commuters living outside of La Crosse commuting into La Crosse make vehicle ownership a basic necessity for most. Over half of the area's households own two or more vehicles.

(c) Existing Transportation Facilities.

1. To that end, this section of the Existing Conditions Report reviews and summarizes the current provision of transportation services in La Crosse County, reviews state and regional transportation plans and programs, and reviews all available transportation modes available in La Crosse County. This section is divided between the movement of people and goods, with the movement of people organized by trip type. Within the movement of people, first reviewed is longer distance, intercity travel opportunities – the interstate system and state routes, airport, intercity transit, and passenger rail service. This section then examines intra-city transportation opportunities, County and local streets, local transit services, bicycling facilities, and pedestrian facilities.

2. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) has completed the 2035 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, which is the new long-range transportation plan for the La Crosse and La Crescent area. The plan was adopted by the LAPC on September 1, 2010. Chapter 4 of the plan contains a highly detailed analysis and description of all transportation modes available in La Crosse County. Any reader of this section of the Existing Conditions Report seeking further details should consult Chapter 4 of the Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan.

(d) Movement of Goods. A 1996 study showed that Wisconsin's freight movements were accommodated through three modes: trucks on highway (84.6 percent), rail (4.4 percent), water (10.9 percent), and air (0.1 percent). All four cargo modes are available in La Crosse County. The convergence of highway, rail, and water cargo facilities in La Crosse County provides the opportunity for a fully intermodal terminal for freight distribution. The County's closest intermodal terminals are in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago.

1. Highways. The officially designated trucks routes within La Crosse County are the interstate system and three US Highway routes and four state highways: I-90, USH 53, USH 14/61, STH 157, STH 35, STH 33, and STH 16. Interstate 90 from the Monroe County line into Minnesota is an east-west truck route, while STH 16 crosses the majority of the County in an east-west fashion. North-south routes are STH 35 from Vernon County, USH 14/61 through the City of La Crosse into La Crescent, USH 53 to connect with I-90, STH 16 parallels the eastern boundary of the City of La Crosse, and USH 53 north to Trempealeau County. There are truck stops located adjacent to I-90 near the Monroe County line (20 truck parking stalls) and near the Mississippi River (19 truck parking stalls). See the Truck Routes Map for a depiction of officially designated truck routes and truck stops.

2. Water.

a. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, one barge is equivalent to 15 jumbo hoppers on rail or nearly 60 trucks on the highways. Water freight movement is highly efficient, but its flexibility is very limited. A combination of efficient water freight movement and flexible trucking allow for cost-effective freight movement.

b. Direct water access for waterborne freight is available through both public and private terminals in the City of La Crosse and the Town of Campbell. The Port of La Crosse serves incoming and outgoing barge traffic on the Mississippi River. The port offers connections to the Upper Midwest and the world, including Russia, South America, Mexico, China, and other regions. Products commonly received include rock salt, coal, pig iron, liquid caustic soda, cement, asphalt, iron ore, aggregate, and cottonseed. Manufactured machinery (heating and cooling units from Trane and Chart) and farm products are typical commodities shipped out of the region by barge.

**TABLE 4-15: COMMODITY TONNAGES HANDLED IN THE PORT OF LA CROSSE, 2008-2012**

Commodity	Tons by Year					% Change	
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2008-2012	2011-2012
<b>Loadings</b>	<b>282,000</b>	<b>237,000</b>	<b>363,000</b>	<b>415,500</b>	<b>349,500</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>-15.9</b>
Farm products	268,500	216,000	361,500	415,500	349,500	30.2	-15.8
Waste or scrap	13,500	21,000	1,500	0	0	-100.0	None
<b>Unloadings</b>	<b>345,000</b>	<b>240,000</b>	<b>369,000</b>	<b>423,000</b>	<b>408,000</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>-3.5</b>
Chemicals	118,500	115,500	102,000	88,500	73,500	-38.0	-16.9
Clay, concrete, glass, stone	109,500	64,500	159,000	244,500	222,000	102.7	-9.2
Coal	25,500	7,500	9,000	0	0	100.0	None
Food or kindred	15,000	6,000	19,500	16,500	33,000	120.0	100.0
Primary metal products	76,500	42,000	79,500	73,500	79,500	3.9	8.2
Waste or scrap	0	4,500	0	0	0	None	None
<b>Total</b>	<b>627,000</b>	<b>477,000</b>	<b>732,000</b>	<b>838,500</b>	<b>757,500</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>-9.7</b>

Source: Brennan Marine report of Port activity. Commodities are aggregated to high level standard transportation commodity codes (STCC).

c. The City /County Harbor Commissions prepared the Port of La Crosse Harbor and Waterfront Plan (2011). The County Harbor Commission feels that the Harbor Plan should be updated, particularly to include consideration of homeland security issues. One recommendation of the plan was to reduce the redundancy of the City and County Harbor Commissions.

d. The Port of La Crosse has rail access and highway access.

3. Rail Freight.

a. The County has rail cargo service through three Class I railroad companies, all of which provide direct access to Chicago and connections to eastern points. The Canadian Pacific Railway connects La Crosse to Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul. This company provides service, or potentially could provide service, to Rockland, Bangor, West Salem, and the north side of La Crosse. The Union Pacific Railroad operates with trackage rights on the Canadian Pacific between Tomah and Winona. The Burlington Northern & Santa Fe operates in the far western part of the County in a north-south orientation and provides service to industries on the south side of La Crosse and Onalaska.

b. The Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities study in 1996 forecasted that rail cargo lines that serve La Crosse County will continue to serve as higher density lines. By in large this forecast has come true and exceeded all forecasts due to the significant increase in trains on both the CP and the BNSF rail lines with most of the increase due to the shipping of crude oil and frack sand.

4. Air Cargo.

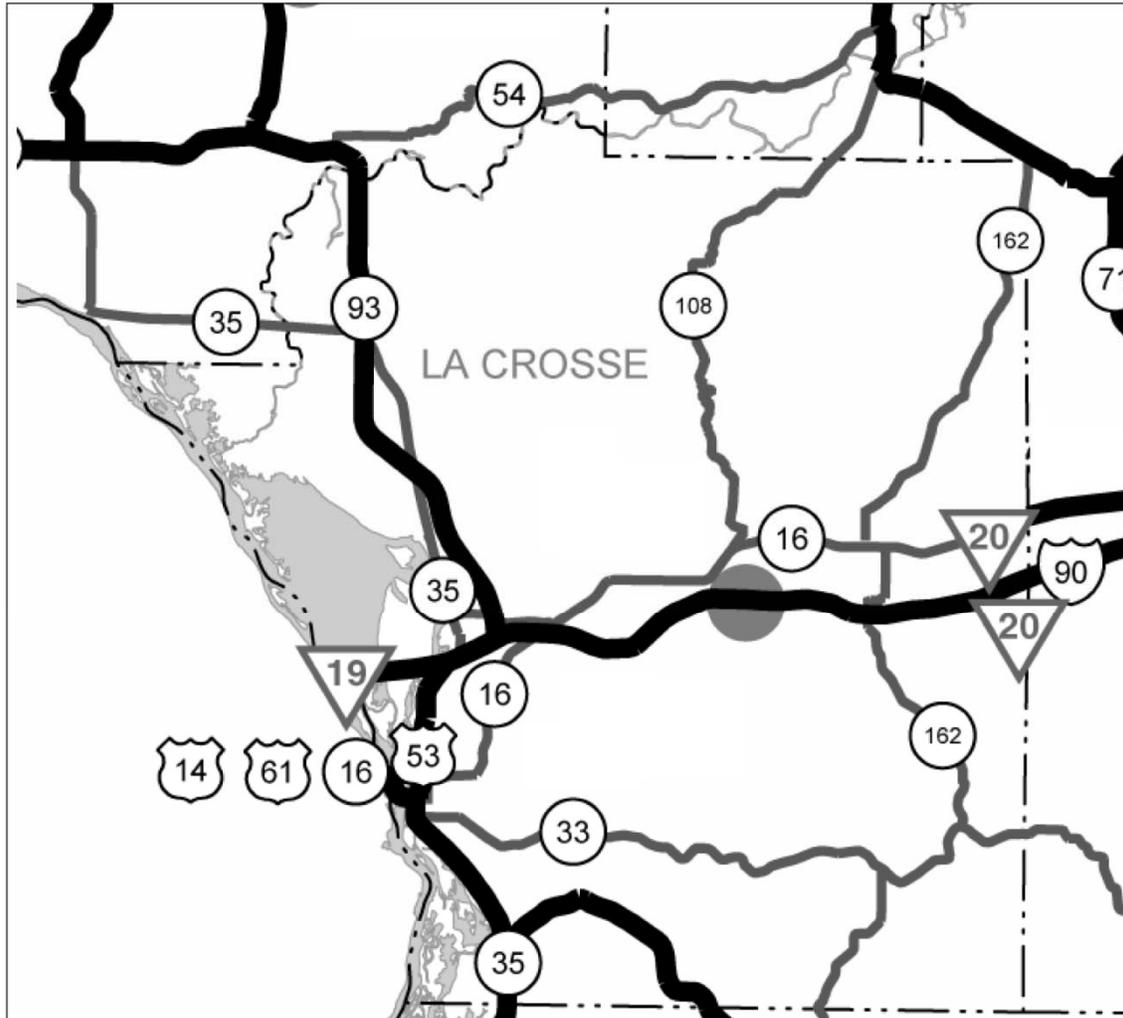
a. The La Crosse Regional Airport serves as a commercial service airport. The airport is not one of the state’s six primary air cargo airports, but it does function as a feeder air service. Rather than maintain and operate a fleet of small aircraft, the integrated express carriers contract for on-demand service with a variety of aircraft operators.

b. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 forecasts for all-cargo aircraft operations at La Crosse Municipal Airport to cease

**Table 4-26  
Individual Airport Forecasts of Dedicated Air Cargo Operations**

Airport	Actual	Forecast		
	2010	2015	2020	2030
Appleton	1,452	1,452	1,556	1,712
Eau Claire	4	4	4	4
Green Bay	1,043	1,043	1,043	1,043
La Crosse	0	0	0	0

# Truck Routes



-  OFFICIAL DESIGNATED HIGHWAYS
-  OTHER STATE TRUNK HIGHWAYS
-  STATE REST AREA (number of truck parking stalls)
-  PRIVATE TRUCK PARKING AREA  
ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAY  
24 HOUR DIESEL FUEL  
AT LEAST 12 TRUCK PARKING STALLS  
WITHIN 1 MILE OF EXIT

	<p>Map 9.1</p> <p><b>La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan</b></p> <p>January 2006</p>	 <p>Source: WISDOT, 2003 Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap</p>
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## Road Network By Type



### Legend

- Railroad
- Water
- US Interstate
- National Highway
- State Highway
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles



Map 9.2

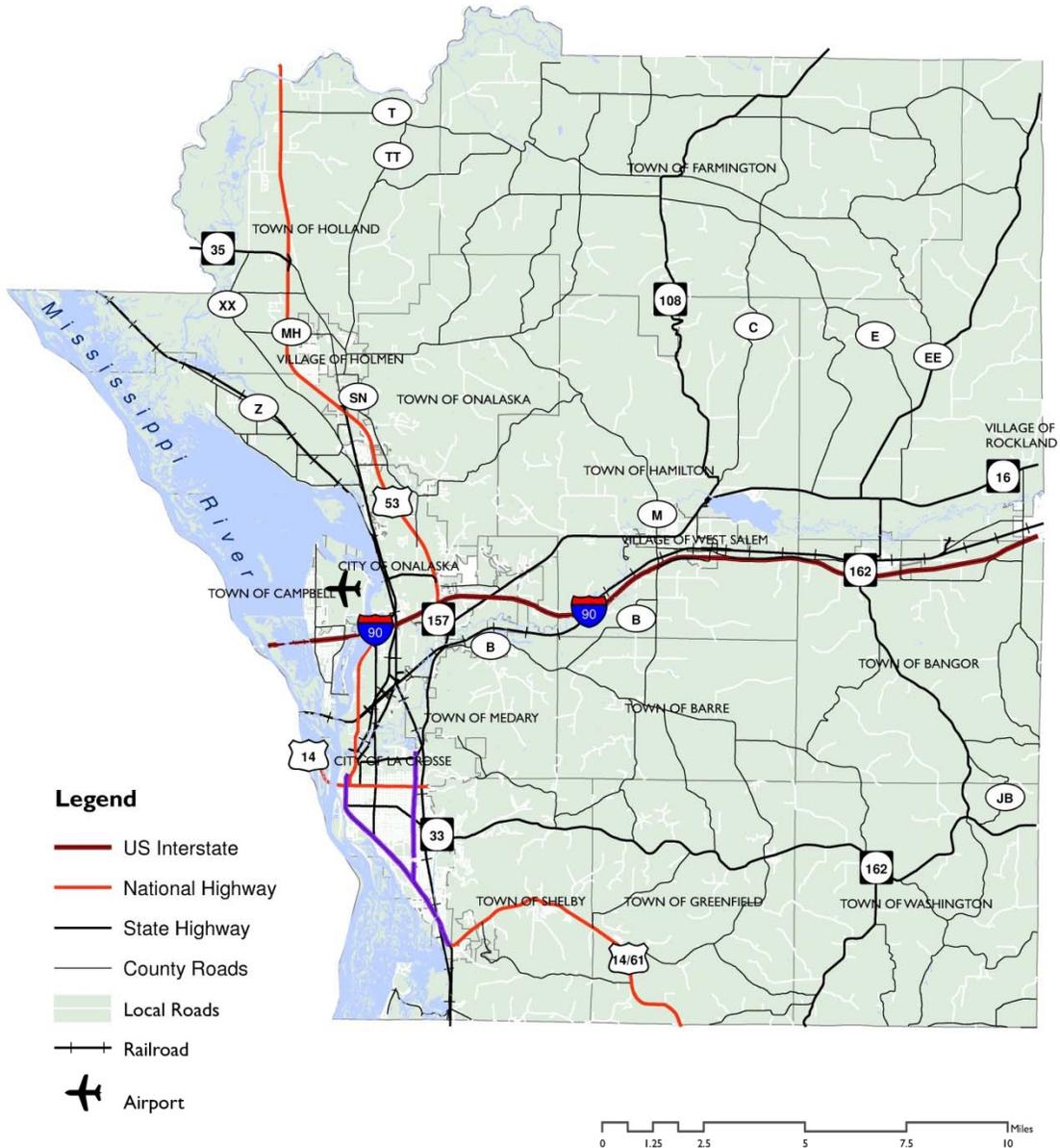
La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

# Road Network By Jurisdiction



Map 9.3

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Plng. Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(e) Movement of People – Intercity.

1. Highways.

a. Interstate 90 serves long distance, intercity trips to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota and areas west, and areas to the east including Madison and Chicago, Illinois. USH 14, USH 53, STH 35, and STH 16 provide north-south travel parallel to the Mississippi River.

b. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation projects extreme or severe traffic congestion on state routes in the cities of La Crosse and Onalaska. State traffic models predict little to no congestion on Interstate 90 within the County. According to the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan STH 16 between STH 157 and La Crosse St, some segments of USH 53, STH 35, 4<sup>th</sup> St., and La Crosse St. all have a congestion level that is above the State DOT guideline. The Plan also forecasts unacceptable levels of service on the following routes: segments of USH 53, USH 14/61, STH35, and STH 16 and all of Copeland Ave and Rose St; George St north of Clinton St; La Crosse St; and parts of Main St in Onalaska, 4th St, Cass St and Mormon Coulee Rd.

c. See the Road Network by Type and Road Network by Jurisdiction Maps for a depiction of the highway and roadway system in La Crosse County. The roadways designated as state routes and the interstate are used for intercity travel.

2. Air Transportation.

a. The La Crosse Municipal Airport is one of nine Wisconsin airports that have commercial air passenger service on a year-round basis. The airport is located on French Island and it serves passenger air travel through connections to regional hubs.

b. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 forecasts an increasing number of enplanements. The plan forecasts 201,000 thousand enplanements in 2010 and 231,000 enplanements in 2020.

c. At the airport, the multimodal connection opportunities are to rent a vehicle from three national car rental companies (Avis, Hertz and National), or to use local city bus Route 7 French Island. The City bus, however, only operates Monday through Friday.

3. Passenger Rail

a. Intercity passenger rail is available through Amtrak service. The Amtrak Empire Builder serves La Crosse, with regional connection to Chicago, Milwaukee, Columbus, Portage, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, Winona, Red Wing, and St. Paul. The Empire Builder also connects to the West Coast (Seattle, WA and Portland, OR). Through a connection in Chicago, the national Amtrak network is available.

b. The passenger rail station is located at St. Andrew and Caledonia Streets (601 St. Andrew Street in the City of La Crosse). The closest multimodal connection opportunities are public bus Route 6 Northside or Route 5 Valley View. The intercity bus company formally housed in the train station relocated to the Grand River Station at 3rd Street and Jay Street in Downtown La Crosse in 2008.

c. Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative has been studying ways in which intercity passenger rail system could be expanded and developed into a more robust component of the Midwest's overall transportation system. While Wisconsin has taken a subordinate role in the further study of high-speed rail service through Wisconsin, Minnesota continues the study with a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to 1) focus the purpose and need developed by MWRRI for the Twin Cities-to-Milwaukee corridor; 2) evaluate train types, levels of service, and ridership; and, 3) analyze impacts to determine a preferred service and design alternative for the route alternative identified in the Final Alternatives Selection Report. The regional rail system would provide more round trips at peak times between Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, La Crosse, and St. Paul. Modern trains operating at higher speeds could produce travel times competitive with driving or flying.

4. Intercity Bus

a. Intercity passenger bus service in the La Crosse area is provided by Jefferson Lines, a connecting carrier to Greyhound Bus Lines. Jefferson Lines runs daily scheduled bus service between Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

b. The intercity bus terminal is located at the public transit station, Grand River Station, 301 Jay St, La Crosse . At this location, Riders of Jefferson Lines have access to the entire city through the MTU bus service.

(f) Movement of People – Intracity. There are a variety of modes that provide transportation within La Crosse County.

1. Local Roadway Network. The street network shapes access and circulation through the County. Public streets in the area are classified by their primary function, as described below:

- Principal Arterials – Serve longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through urban areas. They carry high traffic volumes and provide links to major activity centers.
- Minor Arterials – Provide intra-community continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials. The minor arterial system interconnects with the urban arterial system and provides system connections to the rural collectors.
- Collectors – Provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These facilities collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid which forms the basic unit of traffic circulation.
- Local Streets – Local streets primarily provide direct access to adjacent land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility and through traffic movement on this system is usually discouraged.

2. S.M.R.T. – Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit Bus for Southwest Wisconsin.

Area businesses, local units of government, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation are contributing to provide inexpensive public bus transportation for Southwest Wisconsin citizens. The focus of this regional bus transit service is for commuters, elderly and disabled residents, the general public, and potential tourism-related travel. Each time you board the bus you pay only \$3.00 (cash) one way no matter how far you ride. The drivers will not be making change, so please have correct payment ready.

**Table 9.1: Length of Highways by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction (1)	Length In Miles	Percent of Total
Interstate Highways	40	3.5
U.S. Highways	27	2.4
State Highways	109	9.6
County Highways	288	25.4
Town Roads	367	32.3
City Streets	256	22.5
Village Streets	49	4.3
TOTAL	1,136	100.0

Mileage of county highways that also serve as local streets in cities and villages are assigned as state and county mileage, not mileage on city and village streets. Source - La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan 2027

a. Average Daily Traffic

i. One method to understand the usage patterns on a community's street network is through counting the daily traffic of each roadway segment present on an average day. These counts are one characteristic that can be used to describe the function of a road and to observe change in usage over time.

ii. The 2040 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee estimated level of service for roadways, which establishes a guideline for "acceptable" congestion levels by facility type. There are small segments on the state highways that will experience some congestion, but the most problematic may be the congestion on all three crossings over the La Crosse River – USH 53, STH 35, and STH 16. Congestion on these routes will further divide the City of La Crosse. The portions of the following areas are identified in the plan as locations for future congestion under current conditions:

- Copeland Avenue & Rose Street (US Highway 53)
- 3rd Street & 4th Street (US Highway 53)
- South Avenue / Mormon Coulee Road (US Highway 14/61)
- George Street / Lang Drive / West Ave (State Highway 35)
- State Highway 16
- La Crosse Street
- Main Street in Onalaska

b. Crashes. the La Crosse Area Planning Committee mapped the locations that have high crash occurrences. As one might expect, high volume intersections experience more crashes. One of the main concerns of high traffic volumes and their effects on congestion is the increased risk of motor vehicle crashes. The intersection at STH 16 and Gillette St, for example, experienced 99 crashes during the 2008-2012 time period.

c. Pavement Conditions. The effectiveness of local roadways is dependent on adequate maintenance of their surface condition. The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system was developed by the Wisconsin Transportation Information Center to assist local communities in evaluating the condition of the roadway system and to help set priorities for maintenance, reconditioning, and reconstruction. The PASER system is a database of visual inspections, keyed to standardized ratings.

d. Bridges. Given the County's location at a confluence of the Mississippi River and several of its tributaries, bridges are relatively more important to La Crosse County than other Wisconsin counties. Recent projects on Mississippi River bridges and projected congestion on the La Crosse River bridges underscore their importance. The three worst bridges in the City of La Crosse--the I-90 eastbound and westbound bridges at Exit 3 and the STH 16 bridge over the CP rail line and La Crosse River--(which are evaluated as "somewhat better than minimum adequacy to tolerate being left in place as-is") are programmed to be reconstructed by 2017 and 2020, respectively.

e. Rustic Roads. While the County's transportation system supports all economic activity, some roadways in La Crosse County have been designated to promote tourism and related economic activity. These Rustic Roads are scenic, lightly traveled country roads that have outstanding natural features along its borders such as rugged terrain, native vegetation, native wildlife, or include open areas with agricultural vistas that singly or in combination uniquely set this road apart from other roads. La Crosse County has three designated Rustic Roads.

- Rustic Road 26: County MM, beginning at the intersection of USH 14/61 to its intersection with USH 14 and USH 61 (5.3 miles). La Crosse County MM combines beautiful scenery and history. It offers the traveler views of the Mississippi River Valley and the Mormon Coulee Creek Valley. Brinkman's Ridge provides a wide panorama of the Mississippi River, including the Goose Island wildlife refuge. This route also passes by the Oehler Mill site, first built in 1854, and a 111-year old root cellar.

- Rustic Road 31: R31 travels on several streets in the Village of West Salem to County Highway C, north to WIS 16, then loops around Swarthout Lakeside Park, back to WIS 16 (2.6 miles). Rustic Road travelers can view such historic spots as the Gullickson Octagon House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Hamlin Garland Homestead, where the late Pulitzer prize-winning author, who was born near West Salem, did much of his writing. Other points of interest include the former home of Thomas Leonard, founder of West Salem, and Swarthout Lakeside Park, a recreation area near Lake Neshonoc.
- Rustic Road 64: Northwest of Holmen, R64 makes a loop off US 53/STH 93, following Amsterdam Prairie Road and Old 93 (2.7 miles). Located near the Van Loon Wildlife Area, this route offers a rather unique combination of historic transportation architecture and scenic views. From Amsterdam Prairie Road, it is possible to enter historic McGilvray Road, also known as 7-Bridges Road, by foot. McGilvray Road is on the National Register of Historic Places because of its rare bowstring arch bridge construction.

2. Public Transportation and Transit. The La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU), operated by the City of La Crosse, provides the only fixed-route mass transit service in the County. Six bus routes serve virtually the entire City while three others serve La Crescent, French Island, and part of Onalaska.

- Route 1 South Ave provides connections to Gundersen Health System, Viterbo, Mayo Clinic Health System, and the Shelby Mall
- Route 2 33rd St connects with Route 1 on the south side of La Crosse and connects residents of the east side neighborhoods to downtown
- Route 4 Losey Blvd serves the Shelby Mall, Central High School, the Village Shopping Center, and UWL.
- Route 5 Valley View is the main connection for UWL students and other riders to the Valley View Mall.
- Route 6 Northside serves many schools and senior centers on the north side of town as well as Bridgeview Plaza Shopping Center.
- Route 7 French Island provides service to the La Crosse Regional Airport and the industrial park, and connects residents with the main system in La Crosse. Once this route enters La Crosse, it becomes the Route 8 Industrial Park. This deviated-service route only operates during the week.
- Route 8 Industrial Park connects residents of French Island and La Crosse to the north La Crosse industrial park and Crossing Meadows. This route only operates during the week.
- Route 9 Onalaska connects Bridgeview Plaza, Center 90, and Valley View Mall along Main St through Onalaska. This route only operates during the week.
- Route 10 La Crescent provides deviated service to virtually all of La Crescent and connects La Crescent to La Crosse, but only during the week.

Routes 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 begin service at 5:12 am and end service at 10:40 pm. Other than Route 5 Valley View, the routes provide 30-minute service until 6:40 pm and then shift to 60-minute service. During the academic year, the Route 5 Valley View maintains 30-minute service for the entire day. Route 8 serves the north industrial park with 60-minute service during the day on weekdays only. This route is combined with the contracted service for French Island, resulting in one large route that utilizes one bus and one driver.

MTU also operates a Safe Ride service between downtown La Crosse and the UW-La Crosse and Viterbo campuses during the academic year. The Safe Ride is a state-funded service designed to reduce drinking and driving by college students. It operates every 15 minutes from 10:00 pm to 3:00 am on Thursdays and Fridays, and from 9:00 pm to 3:00

am on Saturdays. Multimodal opportunities include the ability for MTU buses to carry bikes through its “Bikes on Busses” service wherein bicyclists may place their vehicles on the front of the bus.

The Onalaska/Holmen/West Salem Public Transit is a demand response door-to-door transportation system. The shared ride taxi service provides transportation to all citizens and meets Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. The program is administered by the City of Onalaska, which contracts with a private transit company to provide the service. Service hours are 6:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., seven days a week. In addition to fares, funding for the service comes from a combination of federal, state, and local dollars.

There are two park-and-ride lots in WisDOT’s District 5, which includes La Crosse County. One lot is located at the Valley View Mall in a remote and ill-defined location within Mall parking that is not served by MTU. The other lot is in West Salem on CTH C near access to I-90. See the 2035 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan for a detailed description of MTU’s service, as well as private transit providers.

a. Paratransit.

i. Paratransit, in its broadest sense, includes all modes of “public” or “mass” passenger transportation systems other than privately driven automobiles or regularly scheduled bus/train service. To meet the special needs of persons with disabilities and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, MTU operates lift-equipped buses on its regular fixed-route system.

ii. MTU also provides complementary Paratransit Service. Disabled persons who, by reason of their disability cannot get to a bus stop from their home, from the bus stop to their destination, or who require more assistance in using transit service than that provided by a driver operating a lift-equipped MTU bus, may qualify for ADA Paratransit Service. This service operates on a "demand response" basis with advance reservations made the day before transportation is needed. MTU contracts with a private provider to operate this service, which is available during the same hours and days as buses are scheduled.

iii. La Crosse County Department of Aging contracts with a private operator to provide “mini-bus” service to all residents of La Crosse County age 60 or over, or 18 and over who are self-defined disabled, or otherwise unable to use conventional mass transit if it is available. In the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska this service is provided on a daily basis but in other parts of the County it is available certain days of the week on a demand response door-to-door, with a hierarchy of trip purposes determining the priority for space and time.

b. Taxis. There are three taxi cab companies operating in La Crosse County that will provide chauffeured taxi service from or to anywhere in the County, or to or from other destinations, with a La Crosse County starting or ending point, at market rates.

3. Biking

a. The La Crosse area has an extensive system of both on-road bicycle and off-road multipurpose facilities, especially in the more urbanized areas. See the 2035 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan for more information regarding off-road and on-road bicycling facilities.

b. On-road bicycle routes include both intracity and intercity routes, with intercity routes achieving state and national significance. On-road intracity routes tend to align with minor arterial streets in order to take advantage of signalization and connectivity. Greater directness could be achieved by following major arterials; however, those alignments are more heavily trafficked and pose a greater danger to bicyclists.

c. Off-road multipurpose facilities have both local and state significance and take advantage of abandoned railroad alignments and scenic marsh views. Most of the off-road facilities with local significance circulate within the City of La Crosse.

4. Walking.

a. Pedestrian facilities are not mapped by most local governments in La Crosse County. However, the 2035 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan makes the following generalizations about the pedestrian network:

i. For the most part, the roadways in suburban and urban-fringe areas of the planning area are constructed with curb and gutter; yet, these roads generally lack sidewalks, and have a narrow, 3-ft gutter pan and/or a wide curb lane within which a pedestrian might travel (not recommended). The lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk in the roadway, increasing the likelihood of pedestrian/motor vehicle crashes.

ii. The cities and villages (incorporated areas) have relatively complete systems within and near their cores (central business districts); however they are often in disrepair.

iii. The cities and villages have gaps in the sidewalk system or lack sidewalks entirely in their fringe areas. This is due mainly to the incorporated areas annexing unincorporated areas that were not under development requirements to provide sidewalks.

b. Issues of pedestrian safety and childhood obesity prompted the implementation of numerous Safe Routes to School Programs. The first studies began with a survey of parents whose children attend Irving Pertzsch Elementary School. Results of the survey revealed that, while only 22 percent of the students whose parents responded lived farther than one-half mile from the school, 58 percent of the children were driven to school every day. Parents cited safety and dropping their children off on their way to work as two major reasons for driving their children to school. La Crosse County now has a Safe Routes to School coordinator who assists throughout the County in encouraging walking and bicycling as a safe, healthy and viable option. See the 2040 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan for more detailed information on pedestrian crashes, particularly for children in the vicinity of schools.

## Existing and Proposed Bike Trails



### Legend

- Bicycle Routes
- - - Off-Road Multipurpose Trails
- - - Proposed Trails



Map 9.4

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: La Crosse County Planning Dept.  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap.

(g) Planned and Scheduled Improvements. Below is a brief description of major, multi-year projects. For full details on funding and phasing, the reader should contact the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

1. I-90 Corridor Roadside Facilities Study.

a. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has initiated a study to evaluate roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor from La Crosse to Tomah. The purpose of the study is to develop a long-range plan for modern roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor that serve the traveling public, enhance freeway operations and safety, and are compatible with local land use planning.

b. The study will evaluate options for improving facilities at their present location and/or developing facilities at new locations. Four existing roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor will be evaluated:

- La Crosse travel information center, located on French Island, mile marker 1 eastbound.
- West Salem safety and weight enforcement facility (truck weigh station), located at mile marker 10 eastbound.
- Rest area #15, located at mile marker 20 eastbound, east of Bangor.
- Rest area #16, located at mile marker 21 westbound, west of Sparta.

2. South La Crosse Transportation Study.

a. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, City of La Crosse, and Town of Shelby, is working to identify a long-term vision for the future of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road.

b. The area under evaluation includes South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road from the junction with Green Bay Street (by Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center) to the intersection of USH 14/61/STH 35. Two additional highway segments also will be examined:

- STH 35 from the USH 14/61/STH 35 intersection to the La Crosse County line (near Goose Island).
- USH 14/61 from the USH 14/61/STH 35 intersection to the junction with County M (near Ten Mile Hill).

c. Timing for potential four-lane construction on the rural segments will be examined using updated traffic counts and forecasts.

3. 12th Ave Extended/USH 53 Extended. According to the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan, the following recommendation has been adapted by the LAPC to extend this roadway:

“USH 53 Extended from CTH SS to Gillette St and 12th Avenue Extended from CTH SS to STH 16. These two projects are the recommended “minimal build” of the New North/South Roadway. The New Roadway will be considered with reduced lane capacity if warranted by the reinforcement and reconstruction of the existing north/south grid network, such as the continuation of Oak Ave and 12th Ave and the distribution of other improvements on existing roadways.”

4. Sources: La Crosse County Development Plan 2020; 2030 La Crosse and La Crescent Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan; Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020 for WisDOT District 5; Port of La Crosse Harbor and Waterfront Plan (2011); and Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020.

(10) Utilities and Community Facilities.

(a) Overview. Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation on which La Crosse County is built and maintained and also provide the basis for how the County functions. Utilities include sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water systems, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste disposal systems, including recycling. Community facilities include schools, libraries, parks, police, fire, health care, churches, and other similar facilities. Utilities and community facilities contribute significantly to the quality of life in La Crosse County and it is important to assess the existing services and understand how and if they need to be changed or improved.

(b) Water Supply.

1. Approximately 75 percent of La Crosse County's residents are served through the nine municipal water supply systems and 36 active wells that exist in La Crosse County. These facilities are depicted on the Utilities Map and are listed in Table 10.1. The County's water supply comes entirely from groundwater – either through municipal wells or private wells. The water supply in the County, as well as most of Wisconsin, is truly an invaluable treasure because of its cool, clean, and clear characteristics. The vast majority of Southwestern Wisconsin's groundwater comes from a sandstone and dolomite aquifer that was deposited 425-600 million years ago. The area's mid-continent climate ensures an abundant supply of groundwater by providing over 30 inches a year of precipitation. This groundwater recharge capability allows the area's population a plentiful supply of safe water.

**Table 10.1: La Crosse County Municipal Water Supply, 2005**

Name	City	Storage Capacity
BANGOR WATERWORKS	BANGOR	176,000
HOLMEN WATERWORKS	HOLMEN	600,000
LA CROSSE WATERWORKS	LA CROSSE	5,000,000
MINDORO SANITARY DISTRICT 1	MINDORO	50,000
ONALASKA WATERWORKS	ONALASKA	
ROCKLAND WATERWORKS	ROCKLAND	50,000
SHELBY TN OF SD 2 ARBOR HL	LA CROSSE	65,000
SHELBY TN OF SD 2 SKYLINE	LA CROSSE	45,000
SHELBY TN OF WEDGEWOOD VLY	LA CROSSE	152,000
ST JOSEPH SAN DIST 1	LA CROSSE	161,500
WEST SALEM WATERWORKS	WEST SALEM	750,000

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2005

2. While the County's precipitation and soil geology allow for rapid groundwater recharge, they also allow for groundwater contamination from surface activities. There are many contaminated groundwater sites within the County and with continued growth in population and economic activity, the demand on groundwater supplies will continue to increase. To assist in preventing further groundwater contamination, a groundwater modeling study of La Crosse County was completed in 2003. This study assessed the effects of recent and potential future groundwater withdrawals and provides a suitable tool to evaluate the effects of proposed water management programs. The plan identifies the extent of contamination on existing sites and the direction in which these contaminated sites are flowing.

3. It is important to designate groundwater protection zones, often called groundwater recharge areas or wellhead protection areas, to protect this invaluable resource. Wellhead protection plans and ordinances are already in place in the City of Onalaska, and the Villages of Holmen, Rockland, and West Salem. Any new municipal wells that are drilled in La Crosse County are also required to have wellhead protection plans and ordinances.

(c) Sanitary Sewer Service/Wastewater Treatment Facilities.

1. There is probably no other man-made facility that plays such an influential role in determining the location and density of development than sewer service supported by a centralized wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater treatment plants are cost beneficial because of an economy of scale factor involving a large population contributing to and maintaining one single facility as opposed to each user maintaining their own treatment facility or holding tank. The economic benefits of wastewater treatment systems carry over into land subdivision developments too, making undeveloped land within a community or on its periphery attractive for development because of the increased number of smaller size lots that can be served in an environmentally sound manner. The higher costs associated with a centralized wastewater treatment collection system requires a high number and a certain density of users; therefore these systems are most often found in urbanizing areas.

2. Four sewer service areas are located throughout the county: La Crosse, Holmen, St. Joseph, and Mindoro.

3. The City of La Crosse owns and operates the La Crosse municipal wastewater treatment system that serves a combined population of approximately 80,000 residents in La Crosse County, with a total of 11 municipal wastewater treatment facilities. The City of Onalaska, Town of Shelby, and Town of Campbell through local ordinances and intermunicipal agreements with the City of La Crosse discharge to this treatment system. The facility is located on Isle La Plume in the City of La Crosse and was originally constructed in 1936, but has been modified and upgraded many times, with the last major upgrade occurring in 1998. The La Crosse Sewer Service Area Water Quality Management Plan 1999-2020 states that the facility has excess capacity that can handle twice the loading and the population that was served in 1999. Each of the Villages in the County has their own wastewater treatment facility. These facilities are depicted on the Utilities Map.

4. A general rule of thumb that is often used when estimating present or future wastewater treatment demand is 100 gallons per capita per day. A community with no major industrial or institutional users, such as the Mindoro Sanitary District treatment plant, operate with a flow that is much lower, while the City of La Crosse treatment plant, which has major industrial and institutional users, handles flow amounts that exceed the 100 gallons per capita per day by three to four times. Wastewater treatment plants are also intentionally built with excess capacity to handle future residential and business growth.

5. Section 208 of the Clean Water Act plays an important role in the La Crosse sewer service area, and this section of law led to the development of the La Crosse Sewer Service Area Plan in 1985; the plan was updated in 1999. Approvals for wastewater treatment facilities, permits for all point source discharges and sewer extensions, and any projects funded with Wisconsin Fund dollars must conform to the plan.

6. The plan also delineates a 20-year sewer service area boundary, which is the maximum land area that is expected to be served by sanitary sewer service. Environmentally sensitive areas that should be protected from development or mitigated against development impacts are also identified in this plan. These environmentally sensitive areas include (1) steep slopes (greater than 20 percent), (2) wetlands, and (3) floodplains.

7. A very important element of the Sewer Service Area Plan from a local government perspective is a policy that a single regional treatment plant is the lowest-cost approach to wastewater treatment in the area. The costs of one or more smaller, satellite plants in the developing areas of towns were analyzed and found to be much higher than the cost of a single regional facility. This policy is based on a recommendation from the Facility plan for Wastewater Treatment System - La Crosse (1979) and is consistent with the Department of Natural Resources nonproliferation policy. Special conditions are also identified in the Plan describing the circumstances that need to be present to be granted an exception to this nonproliferation policy. The Sewer Service Area boundary includes areas within the towns of Medary, Onalaska, Campbell, Hamilton, and Shelby and the entire cities of La Crosse and Onalaska. The Sewer Service Area Plan also outlines the procedure for review of sewer extension requests and for amendments to the Plan.

(d) On-Site Wastewater Treatment Technology.

1. The disposal of wastewater in the areas of La Crosse County that are not served by sanitary sewer is handled through the use of individual on-site wastewater treatment systems, often referred to as septic systems. On-site wastewater treatment systems are used by fewer than 20 percent of residents in the County. These systems include on-site ground absorption septic systems, holding tanks, and private package system plants that serve larger commercial industrial uses or higher density residential developments such as condominiums and mobile home courts.

2. The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, Industry Services regulates the siting, design, installation and inspection of most private on-site sewage systems. The State's Plumbing Code allows both conventional and advanced pre-treatment systems for residential development, which presents local communities with land use challenges. Recent changes allow properties that have soil depths or soil types that were once unsuitable for conventional septic systems to now be developed and serviced by advanced pre-treatment sewage systems. This could result in widespread areas of scattered non-farm related residential development in the County unless sound land use planning principles and policies are followed. Scattered non-farm residential development is both costly and inefficient to serve and it significantly degrades the County's unique rural character. Further, such scattered non-farm development often leads to increased conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural uses.

3. If not properly located or maintained, on-site sewage disposal systems can significantly pollute groundwater. During this 20 year planning horizon, the County anticipates private on-site sewage treatment will continue. However, some areas of the County that are within or adjacent to the sewer service area may connect to sewer service.

(e) Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities.

1. Solid waste in La Crosse County is disposed of at the La Crosse County Landfill, which is located east of I-90 and south of Highway 16 as shown on the Utilities Map. Glass, aluminum, and tin are collected for recycling at this facility. In addition to landfilling solid waste, the County is under contract with Xcel Energy (formerly Northern States Power Company) until 2008 to provide sufficient quantities of solid waste to economically run Xcel's refuse to energy facility located on French Island in the City of La Crosse. In 1988 La Crosse County and Xcel Energy entered into a contract calling for the burning of solid waste to produce energy and extending the life and use of the County's regional landfill. The contract calls for a minimum delivery of 73,000 tons of acceptable solid waste a year. All unacceptable solid waste and the ash left over from the burning is disposed of at the County landfill. The need to provide this minimum quantity of solid waste and the closing of many smaller landfills in Western Wisconsin resulted in La Crosse County negotiating solid waste disposal contracts with other surrounding communities and counties. At the time of this writing, solid waste is received for burning at the Xcel facility and landfilled in La Crosse County from as far as 100 miles away and comes from communities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin.

2. The County recently entered into a contract to mine an estimated 2 million cubic yards of waste that was buried in the landfill in the 1970s and 1980s and rebury it in a new section designed to better prevent groundwater contamination. The old landfill has been leaking contaminants into the groundwater for years and the plume of contaminants threatened the wells of residents to the south.

3. This is the biggest project of its kind in Wisconsin, and should be completed by 2008. The project could extend the life of the landfill by up to 40 years, which is well beyond the planning horizon of this Comprehensive Plan. The expansion is much needed, as it is estimated that 200 to 300 tons per day of waste enter the landfill. The continued population growth in La Crosse County coupled with the rugged driftless area topography makes the siting of a new sanitary landfill in the County difficult. Therefore, extending the life of the existing landfill is extremely important.

(f) Stormwater Management.

1. Stormwater management has gained attention in recent years as an environmental concern because of its impacts on flooding, property damage, and surface water quality issues. Similar to water supply and wastewater treatment, stormwater management is an important part of municipal infrastructure. In La Crosse County, individual municipalities are responsible for collecting, storing, and conveying rainfall and snowmelt runoff in a manner that is safe for the public and does not harm the environment.

2. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires an erosion control plan and permit for all projects that disturb one or more acres of land. The landowner is required to ensure that a site specific erosion control plan and stormwater management plan are developed and implemented at the construction site. Also, the La Crosse County Subdivision and Platting Ordinance requires subdividers' to provide a soil erosion plan subject to Chapter 21 of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances and a stormwater management plan that meets the appropriate post-construction water quality requirements of NR151 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the water quantity requirements set forth in the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances.

(g) Telecommunication Facilities.

1. CenturyTel provides the County with local telephone service; long distance service is available through several providers. Charter Communications provides cable television service and both CenturyTel and Charter Communications offer high-speed Internet access.

2. The La Crosse area has a strong base of broadband technology. High speed Internet access and fiber optic connections are available throughout the La Crosse Metro area. The region is connected to the Midwestern fiber optic network via CenturyTel. Fiber optics allow for the high-quality transmission of large volumes of information at an affordable rate. However, this technology is not available throughout the entire County and residents in rural areas and outside of the La Crosse Metro area have limited capabilities for high-speed Internet services.

(h) Power Plants, Electricity, and Transmission Lines.

1. La Crosse County is served by two electric power utilities, Xcel Energy and Riverland Energy Cooperative. The nearest power plants are located on French Island in La Crosse and in Genoa. Xcel Energy and We Energies provide natural gas to County residents.

2. The French Island facility is a combination generating plant and resource recovery facility. The plant burns wood waste and processed municipal solid waste, called refuse-derived fuel (RDF) - a burnable fuel produced on-site at a resource recovery facility built specifically for that purpose. The conversion of the French Island facility in the 1980s from burning coal and oil, to burning wood waste and RDF helped extend the life of the plant and maintain reasonable electric rates for customers, while resolving a solid waste disposal problem for La Crosse County. The facility has the capacity to burn 104,000 tons of waste per year.

3. One of the drawbacks to burning garbage is the impact on air emissions. The refuse to energy facility must meet federal emission guidelines and meeting these standards is of critical importance due to the facility location in the City of La Crosse. In November 2002, French Island completed \$10.9 million in improvements to reduce emissions, and has operated at 85-90 percent below previous emission levels since the improvements were made.

4. Transmission lines connect the French Island power plant to the surrounding region. In October 2005 it was announced that a 345-kilovolt power line was proposed to run from eastern Minnesota to northern La Crosse County by 2011, and eventually extend into central Wisconsin. Utilities report that existing transmission lines are inadequate and that a new high-voltage line is needed. At the time of this writing, the largest high-voltage lines in the Coulee Region carry 161-kilovolts and utilities report that these lines aren't adequate to move power through the area or handle new generation sources.

5. Overall, according to Wisconsin's Citizen Utility Board, the electrical system in western Wisconsin is congested and not as robust as in other parts of the state. As the area considers energy needs over this planning horizon, it will be important to coordinate their transmission planning with Minnesota and also to consider opportunities for utilizing alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar.

# Public Utilities



Map 10.1

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(i) Libraries.

1. The La Crosse Public library serves residents throughout the County. A main branch is located in the City of La Crosse and five other branches are located throughout the County. Each branch is housed in a building provided, furnished, and maintained by the municipality in which it is located. The County is responsible for books and other media contained in each library, the processing of the materials, and the personnel to provide the services.

a. The Administrative Center for the County Library is housed in the Holmen Library. 1,500 square feet provides office space and all new books and other media are received and processed in this location before they are sent out to the branches ready for public use.

b. The John Bosshard Memorial Library in Bangor was built in 1991 to replace a smaller location in the Village Hall. The present building has 2,400 square feet of space.

c. The Campbell Branch Library is located in the Campbell Town Hall, which is on French Island. In 1975 the Library was moved into the Town Hall and has been enlarged to its present size of 810 square feet.

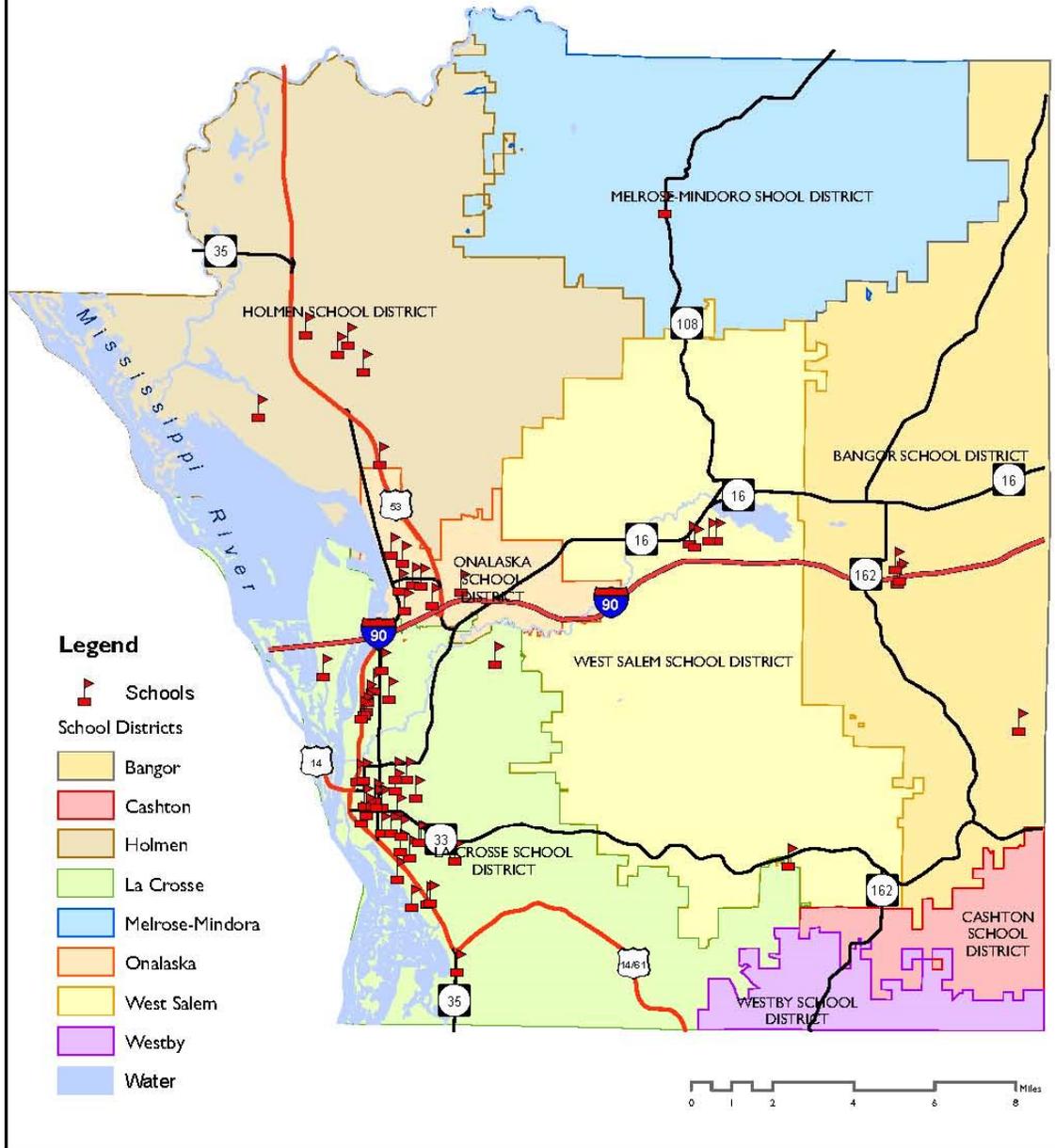
d. The Holmen Area Library is housed in a former grocery store in downtown Holmen. This 4,500 square foot building was renovated in 1988 to accommodate the Library, which was moved from its former location in the Village Hall.

e. The Onalaska Public Library was constructed in 1990 and has 12,000 square feet.

f. The Village of West Salem has the newest facility in the County System, the Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library. Dedicated in December 2000, it has 7,500 square feet of space.

2. In addition to the extensive resource collection within the library system, each branch has one or more public computers with Internet access.

# Schools Districts and Schools





Map 10.2

**La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

January 2006



Source: ESRI Data & Maps CD  
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

(j) Schools.

1. La Crosse County is served by eight school districts: Bangor, Cashton, Holmen, La Crosse, Melrose-Mindoro, Onalaska, West Salem, and Westby. These districts and school locations are shown on the School Districts and Schools Map.

2. The educational future of La Crosse County is ensured through ten public high schools (including charter/alternative schools and the Western Wisconsin Technical College), nine public middle schools (including charter/alternative schools) and twenty-seven elementary schools. In addition, the County has 16 private schools that provide additional educational choices for residents.

3. The County also has several post-secondary education schools, including the following:

a. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse was founded in 1909 and is now one of the 13 four-year campuses in the University of Wisconsin System with enrollment around 9,000 students. UW-L has joined the City's other two institutions of higher education and the region's medical facilities to form a consortium to bring cutting-edge health care to the region, along with a state-of-the-art health research and education facility for professionals and students.

b. Western Technical College is a public two-year college with a focus on technical education. The college has an annual enrollment of approximately 9,400 credit students and 12,900 non-credit students. The average age of WTC's credit and non-credit student is 33.

c. Established in 1890, Viterbo University is a co-educational Catholic University founded in the Franciscan tradition. Viterbo offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and has an enrollment of approximately 2,100 students.

(k) Parks and Recreation Facilities.

La Crosse County has an excellent network of park and recreation facilities. In addition, thousands of acres of quality recreational lands for hunting, fishing, camping, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling exist in the surrounding area. The County's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan provides a detailed description of the park system. Also, the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources section of this Report provides a summary of the County's recreation opportunities.

(l) Police, Fire, and Rescue.

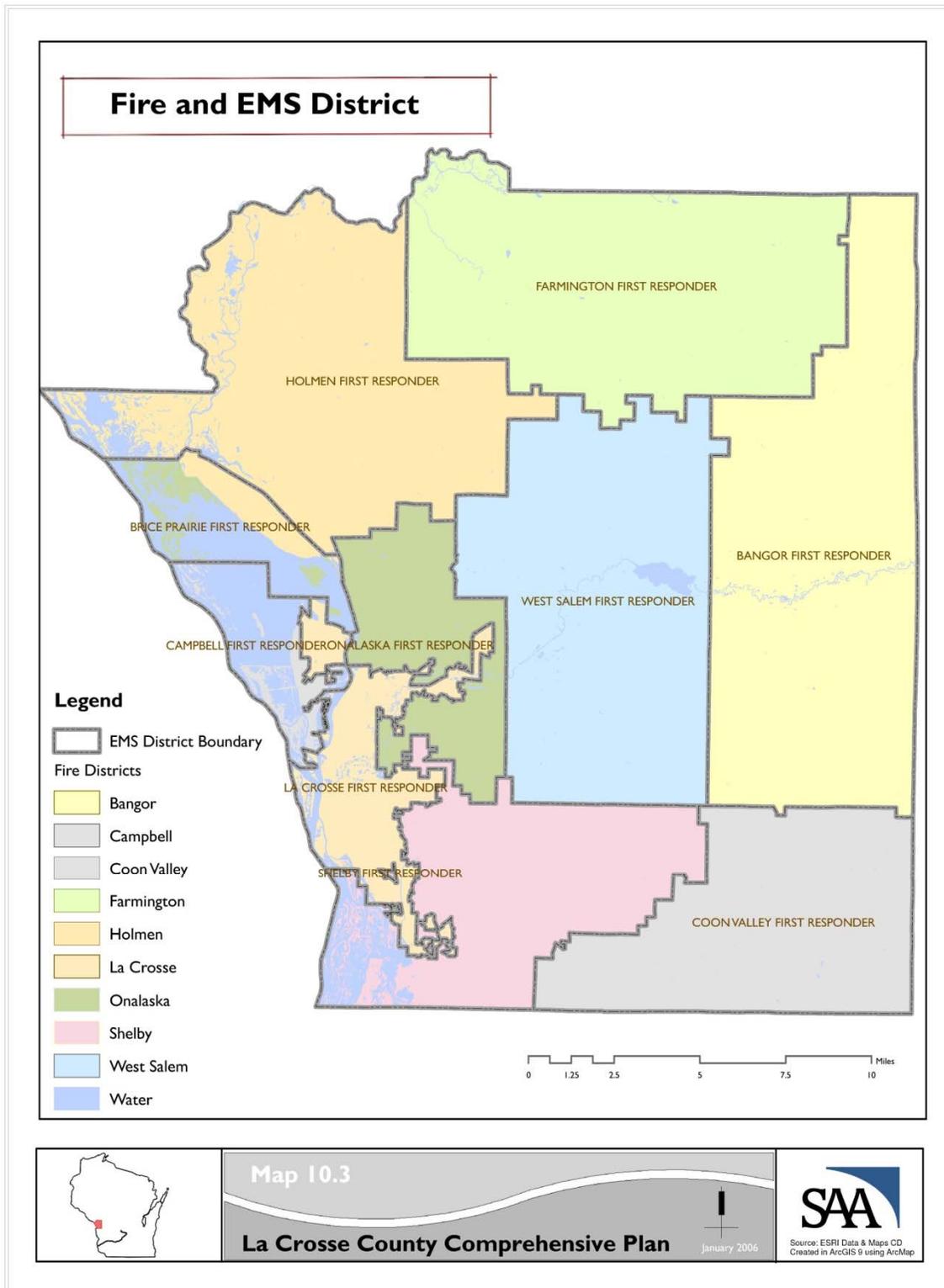
1. The La Crosse County Sheriff's Department is located in the City of La Crosse and serves the entire County. At the time of this writing, the Department has 109 employees.

2. There are nine Fire Districts in La Crosse County: Bangor, Campbell, Coon Valley, Farmington, Holmen, La Crosse, Onalaska, Shelby, and West Salem. In addition, there are ten EMS Districts: Bangor, Brice Prairie, Campbell, Coon Valley, Farmington, Holmen, La Crosse, Onalaska, Shelby, and West Salem. These districts are depicted on the Fire and EMS District Map.

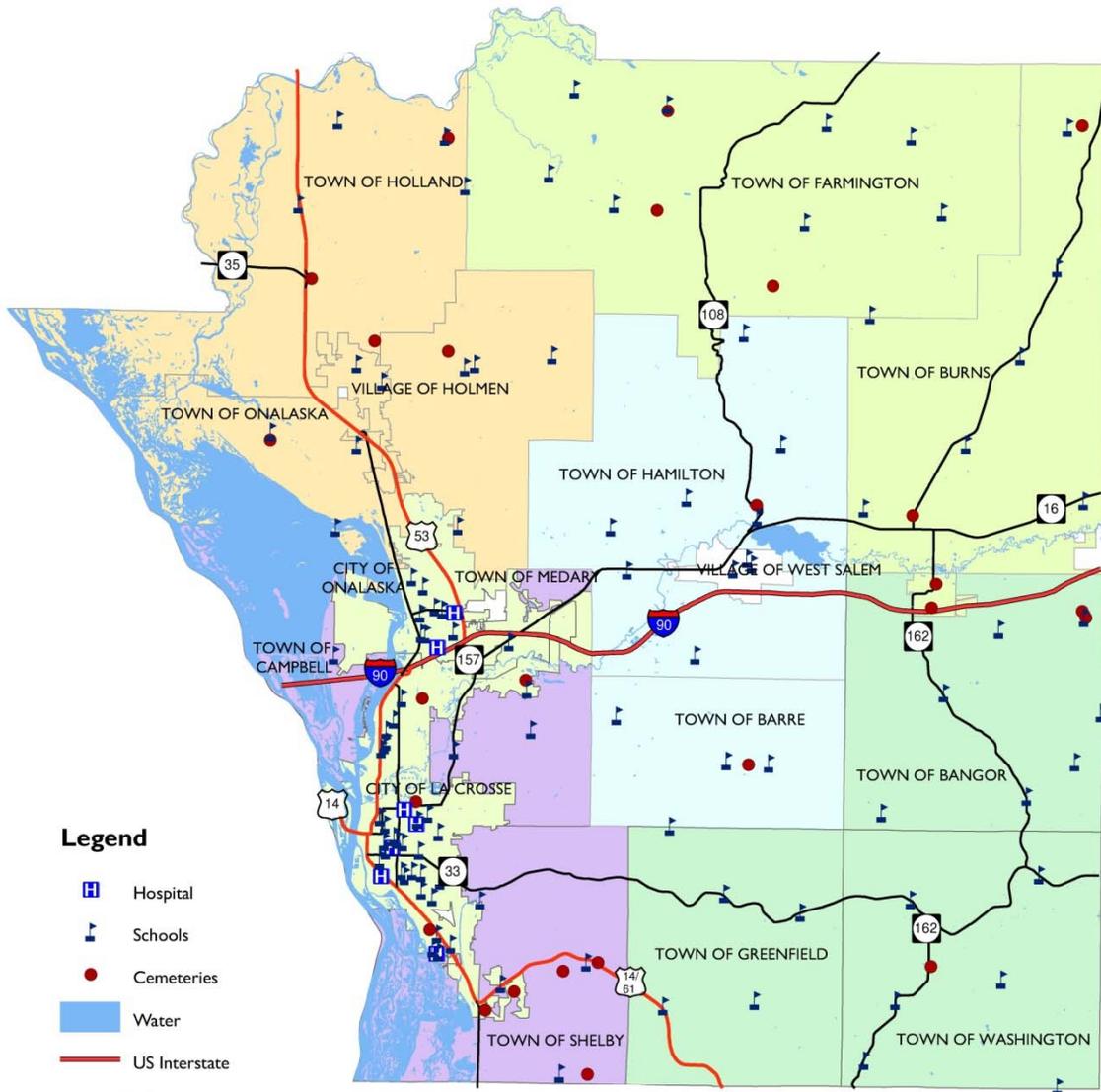
3. The La Crosse County 911 Emergency Dispatch Center is located in the La Crosse County Law Enforcement Center in La Crosse. Over 30 employees provide 24-hour emergency telephone service to everyone in La Crosse County. Using a state-of-the-art enhanced 911 system (E-911), the 911 telecommunicator is able to send emergency and non-emergency assistance quickly and accurately.

4. In addition to providing emergency telephone answering service, the La Crosse County 911 Emergency Dispatch Center telecommunicators are the radio and multiple computer system operators. This

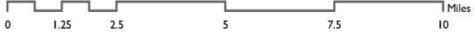
fully integrated system allows the department to provide full emergency and non-emergency service to each of the eight Law Enforcement Departments, the eight Fire Departments, the nine First Responder organizations, Emergency Government, and Search and Rescue throughout the entire County.



# Community Facilities



- Legend**
- Hospital
  - Schools
  - Cemeteries
  - Water
  - US Interstate
  - US Highway
  - State Highway



Map 10.4

La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan

January 2006



(m) Health Care Facilities. La Crosse County is fortunate to have two regional health care centers, Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare.

1. Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center is the area's recognized leader in heart, trauma and cancer care, births, business services, research and health education, with over one million clinic, hospital, and emergency room visits each year.

2. Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, partnered with world-renowned Mayo Clinic, offers excellent specialty services including cardiology, neurology, nephrology, oncology, orthopedics and many others, as well as comprehensive, compassionate primary care throughout an 11-county region in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Franciscan Skemp is a leader in women's health, having established the area's first Women's Health Center in 1983.

(n) Child Care Facilities.

1. Family Resources, the accredited Child Care Resource and Referral service for La Crosse County, helps over 1,000 families locate and select child care each year. According to County statistics, La Crosse County has one of the highest numbers of regulated child care slots per 1,000 children in Wisconsin. Businesses within the County can purchase a personalized parent counseling and child care referral service from Family Resources for their employees as an additional option in their benefits package.

2. La Crosse County has 33 regulated full day group child care centers and 254 regulated full day family child care homes. 212 child care facilities offer infant care and 47 offer care during second and third shift.

(o) Religious Institutions and Cemeteries. Religious institutions of a variety of denominations are located throughout La Crosse County. The County also has numerous public and private cemeteries, including seven in the West Salem area, six in the Mindoro area, six in the Bangor area, seven in the Holmen area, two in the Onalaska area, and three in the La Crosse area. The locations of these cemeteries are generally available in County plat books, as well as from the County's Historical Society. The Internet also provides information on County cemeteries and genealogical records.

(p) Timetable for the Expansion of Utilities and Community Facilities. An important part of this planning process is to determine what upgrades or expansions to the County's utilities and community facilities are needed, and when. This analysis will be completed throughout this planning process and upgrades and expansions will be identified as needed.

(q) Sources:

1. La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan 2027
2. La Crosse County Land Conservation Department
3. La Crosse County Land and Water Resource Management Plan
4. Numerical Simulation of Ground-Water Flow in La Crosse County, Wisconsin, and into Nearby Pools of the Mississippi River, USGS 2003
5. La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2010
6. La Crosse County Website – Various Departments
7. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.