

# April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

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## Introduction -- Appendix 2

Appendix 2 provides a discussion of and the general goals and actions for La Crosse's industry clusters and business sectors. The recommendations within Appendix 2 supplement the goals and actions within the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

As presented on Page 5 of the Strategic Plan, several goals and actions relating to the overall efforts towards the City's business sectors are shown. These include:

- Devote funding and technical assistance. Several of the State of Wisconsin's identified industry clusters are very important to the local economy such as food products and processing, printing, small engine manufacturing, tourism, and information technology. The City's responsibility should be to help coordinate the State's efforts with these local industry clusters and identify local needs for funding and technical assistance.
- Establish regular communication between the City and each local cluster group. This will include setting up regular meetings with each cluster and the Mayor, City Executives and Common Council.
- Research and track local economic information and trends. Provide relevant information via the City's web site and economic development newsletter concerning local economic development information and trends, City programs, vacant and available land and building space, and other information.



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## 1. State & Regional Efforts

According to the State of Wisconsin's Department of Commerce, "industry clusters are described as geographical concentrations of competitive firms in related industries doing business with each other and sharing a need for common talent, technology and infrastructure." The State's Report, *"Fostering Cluster Development in Wisconsin"* goes on to explain that in a cluster, large and small companies in similar industries achieve much more by collaborating than they would operating individually.

The recommendations within the report were reviewed and discussed by the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee in order to better understand what we could do locally to support and build upon the State's efforts. The Blue Ribbon Committee agrees within the State's recommendations, especially the idea of building networks and assisting the private sector when necessary, which are discussed throughout the report.

The importance of industry clusters has also been described locally by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) through their *"Industry Cluster and Regional Trade Report for La Crosse County."* The MRRPC Report also explains the importance of local industry clusters and sets strategies for assisting these clusters with procurement and other needs.

These two reports provide an excellent foundation for the recommendations within the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan and will be used to aid the City in establishing a service-oriented attitude, in improving the communication with the local business community, and in streamlining City processes. The state and regional reports provide the background information and set the overall framework for the City's involvement.

Sources:        *Fostering Cluster Development in Wisconsin*, State of Wisconsin Department of Commerce, October 27, 2003

*Industry Cluster and Regional Trade Report for La Crosse County*, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. September, 2001.

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## **2. City Business Sector Recommendations**

What follows is a discussion of each local industry cluster and sector. The discussion includes the identification of important issues and trends and also, in some cases, specific actions for the City to undertake in order to better serve the local industry clusters and sectors. The City can not know what's best for any local business sector or any individual business, so the goals and actions presented within this section should be considered a starting point for discussions between the City and business community. In several cases the goals and actions contained herein are very general--as work should be done with these business sectors to identify and refine the goals and actions applicable to each sector.

### Goals & Actions for Each Local Industry Sector/Cluster

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- **Manufacturing**

Goals:

- The City must better understand the local manufacturing base, the impacts of the global economy and opportunities for local growth and expansion.
- The City needs to develop a closer relationship with the local manufacturing base.

Actions:

- Market the International Business Park for the development and expansion of local manufacturing businesses.
- Plan for the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of out of use manufacturing facilities.
- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

- **Food Products & Processing**

Goals:

- The City must do a better job of communicating with the food products & processing sector.

Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

- **Information Technology & Related Companies**

Goals:

- Build upon the existing information technology base and promote and assist its development.

Actions:

- The City should collaborate with the various providers for the provision of technology within La Crosse, i.e. wireless service, fiber optics.
- Promote the area's quality of life and "cool" amenities to attract investment in technology and to recruit professionals.

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- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

- **Printing & Related Companies**

Goals:

- The City should work closely with the State's Cluster Coordinator, as described in the State's *"Fostering Cluster Development in Wisconsin"* Report.

Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.
- The City needs to contact the State's major industry printing council and local printing companies to discuss issues and strategies.

- **Education**

Goals:

- Recognize that high quality local schools are one of the most critical elements of our quality of life and also a key economic development tool.

Actions:

- The City should meet with the local school districts to discuss issues of mutual concern.
- The City should work to encourage and support graduate level applied technology.
- Utilize distance learning with UW-Madison, UW-La Crosse and UW-Milwaukee.
- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance.

- **Tourism & Hospitality**

Goals:

- Continue promoting the area as a tourist destination and work to partner and support the La Crosse Area Convention & Visitor's Bureau.

Actions:

- Work to support and partner with the local festivals, the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, the La Crosse Community Theatre, Pump House Regional Arts Center, local art galleries, and museums.
- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

- **Financial & Legal Professional Services**

Goals:

- Continue promoting Downtown La Crosse as a white collar jobs incubator.

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## Actions:

- Communicate and market the City's loan and tax credit programs.
- Create and maintain a data base of vacant office space and information about properties to help facilitate expansions and relocations.
- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

## ● **Health Care**

### Goals:

- Encourage and support the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium.

### Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

## ● **Transportation, Distribution & Warehousing**

### Goals:

- Encourage transportation mobility and support a multi-modal approach to regional transportation needs.

### Actions:

- Work on the reuse of the Fleming facilities.
- Maintain and enhance our local highway, road and pedestrian transportation systems.
- Continue promoting and enhancing our river transportation system, including municipal docks and fleeting sites.
- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

## ● **Construction, Architecture & Design**

### Goals:

- Work together over the next six months to develop goals for this business sector.

### Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

## ● **Utilities & Infrastructure**

### Goals:

- Work together over the next six months to develop goals for this business sector.

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Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

- **Religious, Social & Non-profit Institutions**

Goals:

- Work together over the next six months to develop goals for this sector.

Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.

- **Retail**

Goals:

- Work together over the next six months to develop goals for this sector.

Actions:

- Schedule a round table meeting with the Mayor, Common Council and City Executives to identify and analyze issues and strategies for City support and assistance for this business sector.
- Discuss and investigate forming a “buy local” campaign.
- Work to support and partner with cooperatives.