

V. Summary of Existing Conditions, Sustainability Indicators and Progress Reporting

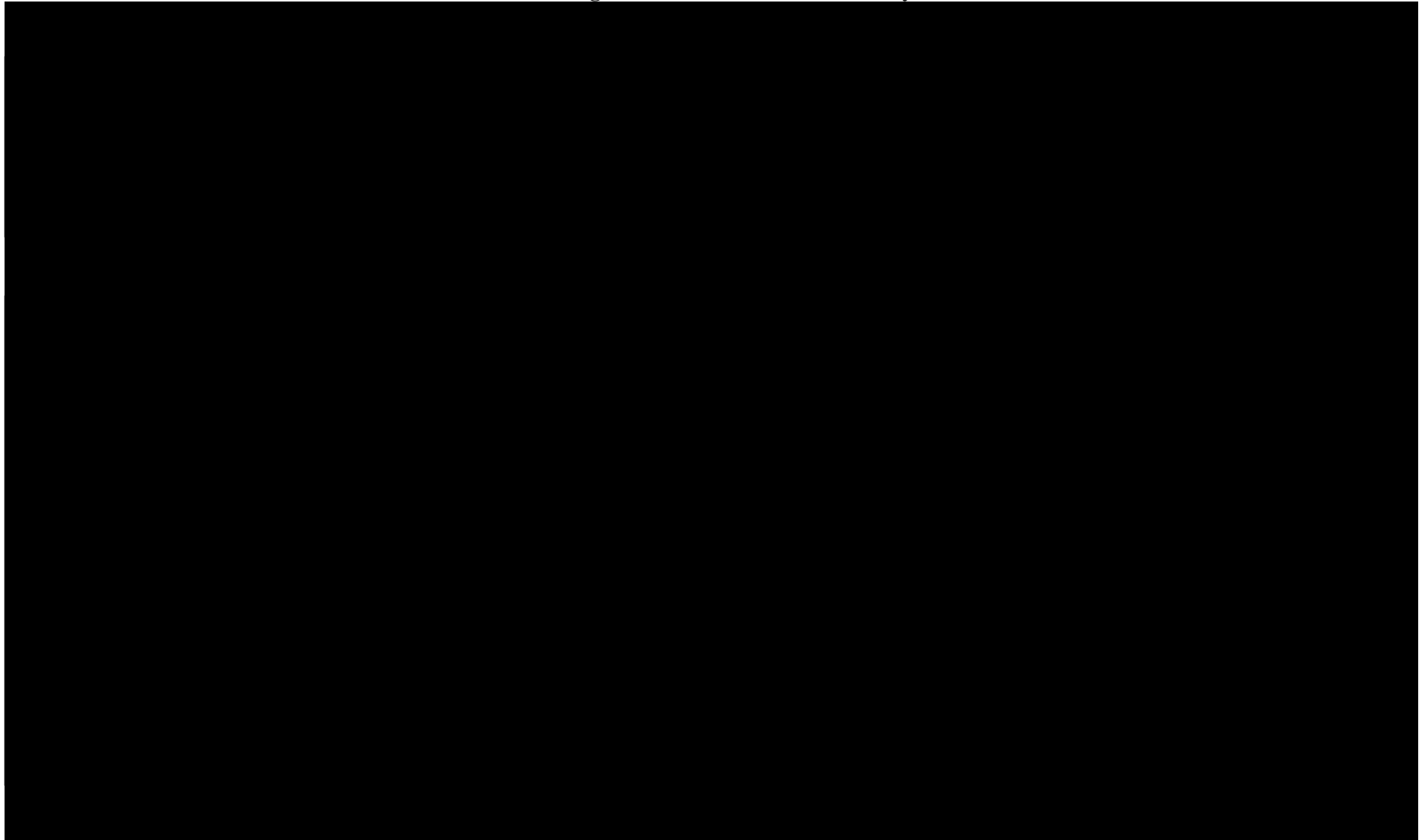
This plan establishes goals, objectives, and actions for assisting both the City and County of La Crosse to operate in a more sustainable fashion. As with any strategic plan for change, it is important to periodically measure progress in reaching these goals. Measurement of progress is important for many reasons including identifying and celebrating successes, providing examples for others, and recognizing shortcomings and areas for greater focus.

Existing Conditions & Sustainability Indicators

The Natural Step model stresses the importance of the four system conditions; and progress will be measured in each of the four areas outlined below. Indicators were selected to provide a representative sampling and to be indicative of our overall level of sustainability. Many indicators relate to more than one system condition. Indeed, the more conditions an indicator reflects, the more useful it is as a measure of our overall progress toward greater sustainability. In addition, several community-wide sustainability indicators are included in order to assist the La Crosse community in ~~measuring the success of our combined efforts.~~ assessing ongoing sustainability progress within the community.

The baseline data within the following table is derived from the best information currently available. This plan element and the associated data collection methods will be allowed to be improved and refined over the life of the plan as long as they do not skew the results. The table also identifies the departments responsible for data collection for the specific indicators. Each year, the departments will submit reports for the previous calendar year on or before March 1st. Initially the La Crosse County Sustainability Coordinator will compile this data and complete the table on or before March 31st. As other municipalities or entities become involved, the data can be expanded and as more organizations develop sustainability measures and practices, ~~as dedicated sustainability personnel become standard to more organizations,~~ assignments and responsibilities will be modified accordingly.

La Crosse Existing Conditions and Sustainability Indicators



Data will be collected annually and an updated table provided by the end of the first quarter, March 31st, for the previous year.

Reporting Process

The process of moving toward more sustainable practices is an ever-changing course. For this reason it is important that the City and County of La Crosse continue to have a permanent committee that is charged with overseeing these efforts and keeping our ~~hard~~ work in sustainability moving forward. This committee should include Common Council representatives, County Board Supervisors, and an expanded group of citizen representatives with experience and interest in sustainability. Any other appropriate committees are permitted and can include any appropriate people.

The committee will act chiefly in an advisory and advocacy role and will help ensure accountability to the ~~planned~~ adopted objectives. The committee will schedule periodic reports from department heads throughout the year to assess the progress being made on specific action plans. (See *Appendix B.5*, Ordinance which outlines the role and membership of the committee).

On an annual basis, this committee will receive a progress report detailing all successes and shortcomings in the sustainability efforts. The report will illustrate progress on action items and analyze identified sustainability indicators. This report will be submitted to the City Council and County Board. As with any such reports, it is fully accessible to the public. This report will be widely distributed both within the City and County organizations and to the surrounding community through the local media, sustainability web site, and community organizations such as the Coulee Partners for Sustainability. It is our intent to share our successes and challenges and to inspire others to follow our example. ~~Sharing information and networking with the larger community are absolutely critical for the success of our efforts. The La Crosse area can only achieve sustainability through collaboration, cooperation and coordinated, collective action.~~

VI. Joint Goals & Action Items

The La Crosse effort is ~~some~~ what unique as it is a collaborative effort project between of the City and County government. As both organizations are utilizing *The Natural Step* framework as a guide, many of the goals and actions contained in both organization's plans are shared. Rather than repeat these shared goals and actions, this section of the plan outlines those actions and projects that should be undertaken **jointly** by ~~both the~~ City and County government together. Each organization has developed an individual plan with goals, objectives, and actions which is located later in this document.

System Condition #1: The City and County of La Crosse will reduce their dependence upon fossil fuels and extracted underground metals and minerals.

Actions:

1. ~~Create~~ Explore the creation of a joint purchase arrangement of compact fluorescent light bulbs and light emitting diodes (LEDs) program as similar to Gundersen-Lutheran's "Change a Light, Change the World" campaign.
2. Explore joint sponsorship of wind turbine, solar energy project, etc.
3. ~~Establish~~ Explore the establishment of a joint project, with private sector input, to create a methane recovery system at the La Crosse County landfill and City wastewater treatment plant.
4. ~~Develop~~ Explore regional transportation/transit opportunities.
5. Research ~~County wide ordinances banning incandescent light bulbs, plastic bags, plastic bottles, etc.~~ pros and cons of projects, programs and legislation in other counties and municipalities.

System Condition #2: The City and County of La Crosse will reduce their dependence on chemicals and other manufactured substances that can accumulate in nature.

Actions:

1. Continue the City/County purchasing collaboration involving other entities when appropriate.
2. Explore the potential for sharing of facilities, equipment, etc.

System Condition #3: The City and County of La Crosse will reduce dependence on activities that harm life-sustaining eco-systems.

Actions:

1. Conduct a county-wide comprehensive assessment of solid waste and recycling programs.
2. Explore regional stormwater options to address mandates by Federal Emergency Mandates Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
3. The County should participate and sponsor the City's Bluffland Protection Program.

System Condition #4: The City and County of La Crosse will meet the hierarchy of present and future human needs fairly and efficiently.

Actions:

1. Conduct community outreach and education about sustainability and The Natural Step model including sending an information packet to every household in the community.
2. Enhance and expand the www.sustainablelacrosse.org web site.
3. Host a public meeting to “roll out” the *La Crosse Strategic Plan for Sustainability* to the larger community.
4. Explore the creation of a “green” industry cluster economic development strategy.
5. Complete joint applications for various grants and other sources of funding.
6. Invite and involve other communities within the County and institutions in sustainability efforts and programs.

***City of La Crosse Goals and Action Plan**

Create footnote

***Any use of the terms “the city” or “organization” or “we” or “our” refers to the governmental unit of the city of La Crosse, WI.**

The City of La Crosse sustainability action plan is organized by *The Natural Step* framework's four system conditions for sustainability. Under each system condition are specific goals and actions ~~that will~~ designed to help move the City towards its sustainable vision. The action items are also broken out by City department, and categorized into an estimated time frame for completion.

In keeping with the recommendations of *The Natural Step for Communities*, we will prioritize actions by answering the following questions (page 192):

Does the action go in the direction of all four system conditions?

Does the action create a flexible platform for future actions or does it create a blind alley?

Will the action give a good return upon investment?

By asking these questions, we can avoid unintended consequences and invest capital wisely. In pursuing the actions herein, to the fullest extent possible, staff and other sources will provide decision makers with cost and benefit assessments.

System Condition 1: The City of La Crosse will Reduce its our dependence upon fossil fuels and extracted underground metals and minerals.

Goal 1A: By 2025, the City will reduce overall energy consumption as measured per square foot within City facilities from 2007 levels by at least a minimum of 25%.

Actions. The City will:

1. Establish baseline consumption amounts of electric and natural gas usage within all City of La Crosse facilities.
2. Re-examine resources such as the Michaels Engineering audit of all City facilities and the Honeywell program to determine what energy efficient projects have been implemented and what is left to do. Also consider the examination of ~~examine~~ any new technologies or issues that have emerged or will emerge since the Michael Engineering audit was drafted in 1998.
3. Develop an energy conservation policy for all City facilities and implement it through promotion, education, employee training, and action. Actions to include:
 - a. Develop and install signage asking staff to turn out the lights and turn off computers when not in use, to take the stairs rather than the elevator, etc.
 - b. Install occupancy and sound activated sensors in all City facilities to turn off lights when rooms and offices are unoccupied where appropriate.
 - c. Investigate the use of smart power strips and similar technologies to help reduce phantom power.
 - d. Continue to maintain and upgrade its HVAC systems. ~~These systems will need to be replaced far before 2025 and their estimated cost is greater than \$1.5 million.~~
 - e. Complete audit of all electric and gas meters and accounts serving City facilities and buildings.
4. Continue replacing incandescent bulbs and other traditional lighting with high efficiency lighting including compact fluorescents and light emitting diodes (LED's) where applicable.
 - a. Examine long-term cost differential between traditional lighting and new technologies in order to better understand the “pay back” period.
 - b. Complete lighting audit of all City owned facilities.
5. Hire an Engineering firm (such as Michael's) to recommission controls of city facilities' energy usage.

Goal 1B: By 2025, at least 25% of the City's energy needs in city facilities will be generated from renewable resources.

Actions. The City will:

1. Purchase and use renewably produced electricity through utility providers.
2. Explore the use of solar energy and other renewables for its energy needs (e.g., solar ~~hot~~ water heaters for park facilities, Solatubes for lighting).
3. ~~Establish an energy conservation, efficiency and educational program for residents and home owners including energy audits, solar assessments, etc.~~

Goal 1C: The City will ~~obtain~~ consider LEED Silver equivalent ratings in all ~~new City facilities including new buildings and major renovation projects~~ and new city buildings.

(www.usgbc.org/leed/)

Actions. The City will:

1. ~~Complete~~ Consider LEED analyses in planning new projects and major renovations which will identify opportunities for green building methods and technologies.
2. Utilize recycled construction materials to the extent practicable in all city of La Crosse projects involving materials extracted from underground.
3. Utilize recycled shingle materials from the County's shingle recycling program.
4. ~~Adopt~~ Develop for Council consideration a construction and demolition ordinance which requires all buildings to recycle materials and reduce the amount of demolition materials that are landfilled.
5. Learn more about building materials from a fire protection and life safety standpoint to provide better application of building and fire codes to balance the benefits to the environment as well as maintaining acceptable levels of life safety.

Goal 1D: By 2025, the City will consume at least 25% less fossil fuel for its transportation fleet.

Actions. The City will:

1. Establish a baseline amount of fuel consumption including diesel and gasoline.
2. Develop a City eco-driving/smart-driving policy which could includes mandatory:
 - a. Car pooling to meetings, inspections, and other services.
 - b. Use of teleconferencing and telecommuting whenever possible.
 - c. Reducing idling times of vehicles.
3. Maximize ~~Improve~~ mileage through vehicle maintenance program ~~and driver education~~.

Goal 1E: By 2025, at least 25% of the fuel consumed for the City's fleet will come from renewable sources and alternative fuels.

Actions. The City will:

1. Require that 25% of fleet vehicle purchases are "green" including hybrids, NEV's, CNG's and Flex vehicles (police cars, parking enforcement, Assessors, etc.) and look at opportunities for alternatives (e.g. segways, bikes, and horses) when appropriate and to the extent possible.
2. Consider the purchase of Purchase bio-diesel whenever its cost per mile is the same or less than ultra low sulfur diesel.
 - Regularly analyze trends in bio-diesel production, technology advancements, and cost; especially to encourage the purchase and use of cellulosic bio-diesel.
3. Investigate the use of natural gas as an alternative fuel for fleet vehicles and equipment.
4. Research and test alternative fuels for fire safety design.
5. Research hydrogen fuel and solar technology as an alternative ~~fuel~~ energy source.

Goal 1F: City will consider policies to ~~employees will~~ reduce the amount of fossil fuel used by employees in order to get to and from work.

Actions. The City will:

1. Encourage ~~Increase the number of~~ employees ~~living within~~ to live within the City limits.

2. Develop an employee car pool program and/or incentives for ride sharing.
3. Consider providing ~~Promote bicycling to work by providing improved more~~ bike paths, facilities, bike lanes, showers, racks and preferred parking to promote bicycling to work.
4. Expand the MTU Works program to include all employees.
5. ~~Sponsor~~ Consider sponsorship of a community car as part of the community car sharing program.
6. Explore a partnership with the existing bike sharing program.

Goal 1G: The City will enhance our community’s transportation system.

Actions. The City will:

1. Improve the public transportation system (Municipal Transit Utility) through more convenient and available service (e.g., 15 minutes or less headways, more education and promotion).
2. ~~Help~~ Consider helping to establish a community car sharing program.
3. ~~Adopt~~ Develop for Council consideration a complete streets ordinance to make streets more pedestrian and bicycle friendly in new developments and redevelopment projects by providing more sidewalks, bike paths, and on-street bike lanes.
4. Explore with University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Western Technical College, Viterbo University, and the La Crosse Convention & Visitor’s Bureau the creation of a community bike program.
5. Investigate opportunities for closing certain streets to motorized vehicles (e.g. designate walk and bike thoroughfare along Badger Street between UWL and WTC, close Pettibone Park to motor vehicles on Sundays, etc.).
6. Limit the amount of land being utilized as surface parking lots by promoting the use of existing parking ramps and facilities.
7. Continue to support the development of the Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative through the La Crosse metro area.
8. ~~Require~~ Consider requiring the use of the La Crosse Municipal Airport for any City sponsored air travel such as attendance at meetings and conferences.
9. Improve timing and operation of traffic control lights.

System Condition 2: The City will Reduce its ~~our~~ dependence on chemicals and other manufactured substances that can accumulate in nature.

Goal 2A: By 2025, the City will replace 50% of purchased products with increase the purchase of environmentally preferred products and services from their current levels by at least 50%. We will use up the product we’ve got.

Actions. The City will:

1. Determine ~~Establish~~ a baseline ~~amount~~ of products including pesticides and chemicals, etc. that are currently purchased and used.
2. Identify environmentally-preferred alternative products and equipment, and educate City staff, Common Council members, and the public on their use, performance, availability, etc. (including post-consumer content paper products, chlorine-free paper, low Volatile Organic Compound materials, etc.).
3. ~~Adopt~~ Consider for adoption an environmentally-preferred purchasing policy including standards for worker safety, handling of chemicals, etc.; ~~examine cost differential between traditional versus new technologies and products.~~

4. Develop a policy for its facilities to go chemical-free and by landscaping with native plants, reduced watering, and reduced mowing, etc.
5. ~~By 2010,~~ Complete one ~~pilot~~ project to purchase and install native perennial plants to demonstrate the reduction of the need for fertilizers, pesticides, watering, mowing, etc.
6. ~~Adopt~~ Develop Park and Recreation policies to reduce the need for fertilizers, pesticides, etc. for the maintenance of our golf courses and parks. ~~including tenants such as the Forest Hills Golf Course.~~
7. ~~By 2010~~ Complete a ~~pilot~~ project to install or convert a chlorine free and/or solar-heated swimming pool.
8. ~~Adopt~~ Develop Streets Department policies to ~~reduce~~ minimize the use of salt and sand for winter snow and ice control.
9. ~~Educate~~ Remind the staff, the Common Council, ~~Police,~~ and the public ~~in~~ of safe winter driving techniques annually ~~on snow covered streets.~~
10. ~~Adopt~~ Develop a full cost and life cycle accounting policy for all purchasing decisions.

Goal 2B: The City will ~~reduce its demand for~~ make more efficient use of high impact products such as laptop and personal computers, wireless devices, personal digital assistants, etc.

~~Actions:~~ The City will:

1. Investigate extending the replacement cycle on all electronic equipment. ~~as well as~~
2. Encourage ~~ing~~ staff to reduce the number of different devices that are utilized.

System Condition 3: ~~The City will Reduce our dependence on activities that harm life-sustaining eco-systems.~~

Goal 3A: By 2025, the City will reduce the total amount of waste it generates by at least 25% and of the waste that is generated, the amount that is recycled ~~also increases~~ will increase by at least 25%.

~~Actions.~~ The City will:

1. Establish a baseline of waste generated.
2. Assess City facilities' recycling of cardboard, glass, cans, paper, and electronics/e-waste.
3. Implement ~~an aggressive a program to reduce, reuse, recycle program~~ for all facilities.
4. Conduct a community-wide comprehensive assessment of its solid waste and recycling system including contract with Xcel Energy for waste-to-energy facility (ideal assessment would be county-wide led by La Crosse County). ~~Issues to be addressed:~~
 - ~~Keeping local waste local~~
 - ~~Adopt La Crosse County Solid Waste Plan~~
 - ~~Single stream recycling~~
 - ~~Volume based charges for trash (pay as you throw)~~
 - ~~Education on reducing, reusing, recycling, and home composting~~
 - ~~Improving recycling and solid waste collection of apartments, multi-family homes and commercial buildings.~~
 - ~~Licensing of waste haulers/green hauler qualifications~~
 - ~~Electronic waste recycling~~
5. Study the feasibility and impact of recycling plastics.

Goal 3B: ~~Starting in 2009~~, The City will reduce its paper consumption by at least 10% each year for five years. (subject to review)

Actions. ~~The City will:~~

1. Establish a baseline amount of paper usage and cost for each department for 2008.
 - From this baseline paper cost, require at least a 10% reduction each year for five years for each department for paper expense.
 - Of the paper that is consumed, ~~require 100% post-consumer recycled content.~~ chlorine-free and a maximum of post-consumer content is preferred when feasible.
2. Maximize use of Information Systems & Technology Department through more electronic communication and information management.
3. Automate to electronic payroll, billing, timekeeping, accounts receivable, and purchasing.
4. Maximize use of wireless devices to reduce cable use and minimize ~~eliminate~~ the need for duplicate paper records (particularly during meetings, inspections, etc.).
5. Set printers to double-sided printing by default. Photo copy in duplex and multi-shot whenever practical.
6. Develop paperless job application process and materials, open enrollment materials, and related Human Resources documents.

Goal 3C: The City will strive to preserve and enhance its natural resources, including: wildlife habitat, forests, water, wetlands, and blufflands.

Actions. ~~The City will:~~

1. Implement the City's smart growth plan, neighborhood plans, Downtown redevelopment plans, ~~focused on~~ efficiently using land resources and protecting natural areas.
2. Modify its development ordinances to protect natural habitats (e.g., limiting slope/bluff developments and filling in wetlands and floodplains, etc.).
3. Continue the City's Bluffland Protection program (continue working with Mississippi Valley Conservancy).
4. Continue and enhance the boulevard restoration program.
5. Establish water conservation policies and adopt a well field protection ordinance.
6. Establish a comprehensive stormwater management program for both water quality and water quantity issues (i.e. volume). ~~Complete a pilot~~ Consider projects at City Hall ~~to use~~ such as rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, pervious pavement, etc.
7. Plant more trees city-wide especially boulevards that lack street trees.
8. ~~Establish~~ Assist in the establishment of an environmental education program to promote conservation and enhancement of our natural resources (e.g., through EcoPark).

System Condition 4: ~~The City will Meet the hierarchy of present and future human needs fairly and efficiently.~~

Goal 4A: City facilities will be healthy environments in which to work for all employees (air quality, ergonomics, mental health, etc.).

Actions. The City will:

1. Establish an employee sustainability policy and make sustainability part of new employee orientation.
2. ~~Survey~~ Consider surveying employees about various work environment issues well-being and work-life balance. including the implementation of sustainability practices both good and bad (e.g. e-mail overwhelm)
3. ~~Provide assistance on email overwhelm and management.~~
4. Continue to offer health risk assessments.
5. Offer a variety of work options like telecommuting, flex-time, etc.
6. Continue the ergonomic work stations program.
7. ~~Start a City~~ Consider an off-duty staff study circle.
8. Develop a cross-departmental “green team” to help plan, implement, and promote sustainability initiatives including brainstorming project ideas, assessing progress, and communicating to staff.
9. Develop a recognition program for City departments regarding reducing resources and increasing recycling amounts; set up challenges/friendly competitions amongst departments.
10. Post the four system conditions on every floor of every City building.

Goal 4B: More Support the availability of local food. will be available for City residents.

Actions. The City will:

1. Work with existing organizations to identify, promote, and educate the community about ~~the benefits of~~ Community Supported Agriculture farms, co-ops, and farmer’s markets.
2. Work to increase food grown within the City.
 - Increase the number of community gardens including establishing a garden at City Hall.
 - Study and ~~apply~~ provide examples of and information on urban agriculture to ~~increase the number of~~ residents and property owners. ~~who grow their own food.~~

Goal 4C: The City will continue to offer a range of housing that is of high quality and affordable.

Actions. The City will work to:

1. Explore the creation of ~~Create~~ a community development corporation to focus on housing and redevelopment projects.
2. Increase the number of affordable housing units (through Home Buyer, Housing Replacement and Housing Rehab Programs).
3. Maintain, increase, and encourage socio-economic integration in housing.
4. Improve the quality of multi-family housing (through multi-family design standards, rental inspection, and single-family home registration).
5. Explore ways to encourage owner occupied rental properties.

Goal 4D: The City will work to ensure that neighborhoods are safe, integrated, and have a sense of community.

Actions. The City will:

1. Work to re-establish more single family housing units within our neighborhoods. ~~and stop allowing the practice of demolishing homes for surface parking lots.~~
2. Reduce surface parking.

3. Address pockets of poverty by a review of housing, workforce development, and education programs, etc.
4. Work to refurbish all neighborhood parks city-wide.
5. Be an advocate and lender for redevelopment of blighted areas – by providing grants and incentives.

Goal 4E: The city will foster community-wide knowledge and acceptance of The Natural Step framework.

Actions. ~~The City will:~~

- ~~1. Develop an education plan in order to communicate with the larger community on TNS framework and sustainability issues. informational program to keep the public informed of the sustainability practices we are implementing.~~
2. ~~Coordinate~~ Partner with existing groups including the Coulee Partners for Sustainability, the Clean Energy Coalition, the League of Women Voters, UW-L, Viterbo, WTC, and the La Crosse School District on sustainability education and resources.
3. Upgrade the City's web site and e-newsletters; use other electronic media (e.g., www.sustainablelacrosse.org) as key education tools.
4. ~~Send an educational packet on TNS and sustainability to every household in the City. Packet could contain information and resources in the form of web links and/or DVD's. Make available an informational packet.~~
6. Periodically ~~h~~Host a public open house to present and review the City's strategic plan for sustainability.

Goal 4F: The city will work to implementation of the Sustainable Strategic Plan for Sustainability.

Actions. ~~The City will:~~

1. ~~Consider the creation of~~ Create the position of sustainability coordinator or identify staff responsible to oversee Plan implementation, various sustainability projects, education, and community ~~outreach.~~ resources.
2. Draft an annual report to measure progress on Plan implementation including the common set of sustainability indicators.

Goal 4G: The city will encourage develop a green economic development strategy. including the green economy sector.

Actions. ~~The City will:~~

1. ~~Create~~ Continue and enhance economic development programs and assistance to ~~encourage the development and growth of businesses and industry related to~~ take advantage of opportunities in the green economic development including the energy conservation, renewable energy, sustainable products, and recycling sectors.
2. ~~Adopt~~ Develop procedures, policies, and marketing to encourage and promote the La Crosse Center as a sustainable conference destination.

Goal 4H: By 2025, at least 25% of the City's residents' energy needs in city facilities will be generated from renewable resources.

4. Establish an energy conservation, efficiency and educational program for residents and home owners including energy audits, solar assessments, etc.