



Tim Kabat
Mayor
City of La Crosse

July 31, 2014

Ms. Tara Johnson
Chair, La Crosse County Board of Supervisors
400 4th Street North, Room 3260
La Crosse, WI 54601

Re: Requests for 2015 La Crosse County budget

Dear Tara:

The City of La Crosse respectfully requests that funding be provided in the 2015 La Crosse County operating budget for the La Crosse Public Library and for neighborhood revitalization efforts. Resources from La Crosse County will help to address some of the current inequities in how the services of the La Crosse Public Library are provided to La Crosse County residents, as well as help to implement neighborhood improvement recommendations contained within the *2012 City/County of La Crosse Joint Housing Task Force Report*.

La Crosse Public Library

As you are aware, La Crosse County residents who do not live within the City of La Crosse enjoy the services of the La Crosse Public Library. Recent data shows that these non-City residents comprise nearly 20% of the users accessing the La Crosse Public Library, including the north and south branches. Due to inequities in how the libraries are funded, these non-City residents enjoy full library services without having to pay for them. This is not fair to City taxpayers.

Both La Crosse County and the City operate library systems and there is a complicated formula that is used to credit taxpayers for their local library services; however La Crosse does not receive reimbursement from the County. I also know that longer-term solutions and collaboration between the City, County, School District, and other non-profits is possible in the near future to address the library operations and funding, as has been recommended by the City's Branch Library Task Force. But we are not there yet.

Therefore, I propose that La Crosse County allocate \$219,000 in the County's 2015 budget to offset a portion of this cost inequity. This amount is very conservative and does not reflect the full amount of usage by non-City residents, yet is reasonable so that the La Crosse Public Library can continue providing excellent services to our County residents who don't live in the City. Attached is an explanation showing how the City arrived at the \$219,000 cost request.

Neighborhood Revitalization

In order to assist our collaborative neighborhood revitalization efforts, the City of La Crosse requests \$500,000 in funds in the 2015 County budget for capital improvements. The purpose of these funds is to implement the recommendations contained within the *2012 City/County of La Crosse Joint Housing Task Force Report*. That report suggested that both the City and County invest capital improvement dollars into our neighborhoods to stimulate new housing and tax base (see Pages 39 to 41 of the report). The City is fully committed to a number of infrastructure projects in our most challenged neighborhoods. I believe it is time that La Crosse County funds a portion of these projects too.

The City plans to utilize the County's funds for various neighborhood infrastructure needs such as street/curb/gutter repairs, utilities, boulevard tree planting, lighting improvements, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and the like. The County's funding would be targeted in the Goosetown-Campus Neighborhood area immediately adjacent to the downtown and the La Crosse County campus. This area is one that is most impacted by declining infrastructure, housing quality, and crime. I would be happy to share the City's strategies for the Goosetown-Campus Neighborhood, including neighborhood policing efforts, and a possible future joint planning project with UW-La Crosse and Western Technical College.

The recent action by the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors to fund neighborhood park improvements as a part of the TID #15 economic development program showed a strong commitment by La Crosse County to help the City in our neighborhood revitalization program, as well as being a small step in helping to address some of the tax disparities that exist and show our constituents that we are in this together. County funding of the La Crosse Public Library and neighborhood infrastructure will continue this momentum to re-build our neighborhoods, add tax base, and enhance the quality of life and services that are enjoyed by all of La Crosse County's residents.

Thank you and please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns. I realize you may have a number of questions about this request and I would be happy to discuss this in more detail whenever convenient.

Sincerely,



Tim Kabat
Mayor

C: Steve O'Malley, La Crosse County Administrator

Attachment

In-county, non-city resident library reimbursement usage formula

- Based on the formula and provisions of Act 420 (passed in 2007), which provides reimbursement to La Crosse Public Library (LPL) for adjacent out-of-county usage.
- That formula is cost per circulation in a given year multiplied by the number of circulations multiplied by 70%. For 2015, LPL expects to receive over \$219,000 from adjacent counties based on a cost-per-circulation of \$4.4190. FYI – in 2013 this out-of-county circulation totaled 136,599 items.
- Under this same formula, La Crosse County Library Service also receives reimbursement at a rate of \$3.5780.
- The question became “what rate of reimbursement?”
- We averaged LPL’s rate with that of the county – which equals \$3.9985.
- For 2013, in-county, non-city residents (all the other municipalities and towns in the county) checked out 222,880 items.
- To arrive at a reimbursement amount – we multiplied the average rate of \$3.9985 by the 222,880 number of items checked out by 70%, which equals $222,880 \times \$3.995 \times 70\% = \$623,284$.
- It appears unreasonable to request a reimbursement of \$623,284, so we simply asked for the same \$219,000 amount as is reimbursed for the out-of-county users even though the in-county non-resident circulation is much higher (136,599 versus 222,880).