



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
L A C R O S S E

TO: Executive Committee

CC: La Crosse Common Council Members & La Crosse Department Heads

FROM: Mayor Tim Kabat *Tim Kabat*

DATE: August 8, 2020

RE: Proposed reorganization for 2021 operating budget

Each annual operating budget provides the opportunity to streamline and advance City programs and services. Budget deliberations offer opportunities to discuss efficiencies in the staffing and resources needed to provide these programs and services. Improvements may include merging departments, sharing and reallocating staff, and eliminating positions due to retirements, vacancies or ineffectiveness.

This year is no different and presents the added experience of how City operations have been managed during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are operating in a modified organizational structure because of the unified incident command. This arrangement has allowed for more creative problem-solving and the sharing of staff and resources. We have learned a lot about our organization during this on-going emergency.

It is with this knowledge in mind that I propose the following changes to the City's organizational structure. I have given these changes much thought and feel that full implementation of my proposal will move our organization forward and help deliver programs and services more effectively.

Here is my plan, which is effective January 1, 2021 unless otherwise noted:

Create a new department by combining the Parks, Recreation, Forestry & Facilities Department and the La Crosse Center with Streets, Refuse & Recycling, Utilities and Engineering. This new department is to be called Operations. The merged department offers significant opportunities to cross-train and share staff during times of high needs such as spring flooding, the fall paving and street repair push, large snow events, major events and conventions, and leaf pick-up, to name a few.

Elevate the current Director of Parks, Recreation, Forestry & Facilities to the new Director of Operations. Mr. Odegaard has clearly demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic his abilities to lead these departments and bring them together during very challenging circumstances.

Ask the Operations Director to work with the various departments, Finance and Human Resources to review and streamline the operating budgets, organizational structure, staffing needs, job descriptions, responsibilities and compensation levels for the various management positions within this new combined department as needed. This will realistically take much of 2021 to fully implement.

Eliminate the Director of City Engineering & Public Works position sometime in 2021.

Eliminate the Director of the La Crosse Center position sometime in 2021.

My understanding is the current Director of City Engineering & Public Works and the La Crosse Center Director are eligible to and may be planning to retire in 2021. The Common Council should allow for the appropriate time to facilitate these changes.

Address the following support positions to improve customer service, productivity and effectiveness.

Eliminate the vacant Safety Coordinator/Risk Manager and vacant Code Enforcement Technician positions within the Fire Department and Division of Community Risk Management. Hiring has been frozen in 2020 as part of the Economic Recession Plan. Duties to be absorbed within the department, to be determined by the Fire Chief. Funding support from Utilities for safety coordination to continue as is.

Eliminate the Courtesy and Customer Service Representative in the Mayor's office. Customer service duties will be absorbed by staff from various departments located on the first floor of City Hall in the new customer service lobby.

Eliminate the Sidewalk/ADA Technician position. Sidewalk construction and ADA compliance duties to be absorbed by staff within the Operations Department. The snow shoveling enforcement program to be transferred to the Division of Community Risk Management, as they are well versed in education and enforcement.

Eliminate the Environmental & Sustainability Planner position. The City must shift focus from planning to operational improvements related to clean energy, climate action and resiliency. A new position in the Operations Department to be created to address these needs. To provide budget relief in 2021, funding for this new position is recommended to begin on April 1st.

The floodplain advisory committee staffing duties will be transferred to Utilities-Storm Water. On-going daily floodplain regulatory review will be managed by staff within the Division of Community Risk Management, as they have a number of certified floodplain managers.

The Economic Development Planner position within the Planning & Development Department will be reorganized into a redevelopment administrator to staff the Redevelopment Authority and economic development programs. This position will be funded by tax increment financing. This position will review other needs to address redevelopment projects and development agreement administration.

Eliminate the vacant Assessment Technician position. Hiring has been frozen in 2020 as part of the Economic Recession Plan. Duties to be absorbed within the Assessor's Department and provided through contracted services to address large-scale commercial development and other needs.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Thank you.