



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

*EDITED: Due to concerns with our original demands, we have reworked our original list. We are now calling on Mayor Kabat to listen to his constituents about changes we would like to see, and come back with a plan by July 4th. We are encouraging La Crosse residents to reach out to his office directly: his office number is (608) 789-7500.

Following the past few rallies and marches for George Floyd, and in recognition that racist police violence happens in our community, too, we will be gathering in front of City Hall to demand Mayor Tim Kabat work with the community to answer these questions:

1. How will you use your office to work with the community and create the change and justice you say you support?

My vision is a La Crosse that is an inclusive and welcoming community for everyone, with real opportunities for safe, decent and affordable housing, strong businesses and good paying jobs and transparency in City Hall, including the La Crosse Police Department.

We actively seek out and work with our community members to gather information about existing conditions and problems. We work together to develop the goals and action steps, and the programs and policies to realize this vision.

Specific ways we work with the community to create change and justice include the traditional methods of public meetings, one-on-one conversations, presentations and education about challenges, surveys, outreach through the City's web site, social media, and information sharing and listening sessions.

A critical next step is to develop forums and opportunities for people – especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color who do not feel safe or welcomed – in sharing their experiences and ways we can improve. We must identify what changes are needed.

To address this need for better outreach and engagement, I have contacted a number of groups and individuals here in La Crosse to discuss more effective ways to work with our Black, Indigenous and People of Color. We are working to schedule a virtual town hall (or halls) to discuss transparency, systemic racism and policing here in La Crosse – more on that to follow in #2.

As we have for the past seven plus years, the City of La Crosse will continue our multi-pronged, comprehensive program to improve our community through our neighborhood revitalization program.

This program includes community policing, pedestrian lighting and safety, refurbished parks and recreation areas, high quality libraries, enhanced transit service and investments in our streets and public spaces. We support community-wide efforts to end homelessness, combat drug and substance abuse, and improve the mental health and well-being of our citizens. Our neighborhood program also includes building and facilitating more affordable housing, supporting and growing local businesses and jobs, especially women and minority-owned.

We will enhance how we measure and track our performance in all these key metrics and in how we share that performance with our community.

2. How will you ensure transparency in the planning process and how will community members be invited to take part?

We will work with the City's Planning & Development Department, Neighborhood Revitalization Commission and Human Rights Commission (HRC) to develop inclusive, welcoming processes and ways to engage all citizens.

*****Please note: we are currently working with the HRC and La Crosse's Black Leaders Acquiring Collective Knowledge (BLACK) leadership to host a virtual town hall(s) with City and community leaders, members of the La Crosse Police Department, and others involved in the criminal justice system. Please stay tuned, as we are working on the details of the meeting date(s), format and agenda.***

3. What is your plan to address systemic racism in our community?

Addressing systemic racism in our community must include all of City government, our housing programs and policies, and supporting and growing local businesses and jobs – especially for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. As Mayor, I will also: invite local governments, the La Crosse School District, businesses, institutions and non-profits to evaluate policies in fair housing, jobs, education, lending and community investments, seek community input into changing and updating these policies and programs, and establish clear goals and action steps to understand how effective these programs and policies are at making La Crosse a welcoming and inclusive place for everyone.

We will build upon the work of the City's HRC, who held multiple listening sessions during the past few years to put together a strategic plan for improving our community and addressing racism. To build upon these efforts, we must re-engage citizens, listen to their stories and try to understand. We must identify specific benchmarks, measure our impact and develop the updated policies, programs and standards to get us where we want to go.

4. How will you continue to protect La Crosse resident's right to protest?

As has been demonstrated through these past several days, the City strongly supports our citizen's free speech, their right to assemble and the right to petition their government. The City will continue doing everything we can to respect, support and promote these fundamental American rights.

We will continue these practices and procedures with safety in mind, by working and communicating with event organizers and our community partners.

We have witnessed four (4) recent peaceful marches and protests because of the efforts of the organizers, participants, LCPD and City staff.

5. How will you increase transparency surrounding the trainings LCPD go through?

*****On June 4th, the LCPD launched their transparency in policing web page, with information about their training programs, standards and procedures, arrest information including use of force, budget and personnel, among other information.***



*****Going forward, I am working on legislation for the La Crosse Common Council to create a citizen advisory board, who will review and assess our training programs, offer input, and help assess and understand the training program's effectiveness and make recommendations for change and improvement.***

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Kabat". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mayor Tim Kabat