

La Crescent Community Ice Arena - R-22 Ice System Replacement | Solar Installation**AT A GLANCE****2026 Request Amount:** \$2,268**Priority Ranking:** 1

Project Summary: \$2.268 million in state funds as part of a \$5.311 million dollar project (including inflation) to design, construct and replace the R-22 ice system, install rooftop solar, install a Low E ceiling, replace the rink floor, replace the glycol system, install life safety improvements and replace the dasher board system at the La Crescent Community Ice Arena.

Project Description

The city partnered with the La Crescent Youth Hockey Association (Lancer Youth Hockey - LYHA), in 1997 to construct the La Crescent Community Ice Arena. The city commissioned an Ice System Evaluation Study in 2022 which was completed in early 2023. The study evaluated the current system, its limitations, its use of R-22 refrigerant and options for replacement as well as other aspects of the building's systems. The 28-year-old ice system is beyond its useful life and a new system will eliminate the potential to leak banned R-22 refrigerant, eliminate ongoing emergency repairs, reduce energy costs, and produce carbon free electricity. Replacing the ice system and installing a Low-E ceiling will increase the energy efficiency of the building by over 40 percent. The rooftop solar project is also expected to have a payback of less than 15 years. Replacing the concrete floor and the failing glycol system under the floor is best done when the ice system is being replaced. Replacing the outdated dasher boards is a safety improvement and is also best done when replacing the floor. The facility is utilized 8 1/2 months per year, and the upgrades will extend the ice availability to 11 months. The facility is a tremendous regional asset and serves both residents and youth hockey teams as well as hosting regional events and training camps.

Regional/Community Usage of the Rink:

- La Crescent High School Hockey Team – Games and Practices
- Winona State University (WSU) Men's Club Team – Games and Practices
- University Wisconsin La Crosse (UWL) Women's Club Team – Games and Practices
- UWL Men's Club Team – Practices until their primary rink has ice
- Figure Skating Club – Practices in the fall and spring when their primary rink doesn't have ice
- Adult Co-Ed League – Play games weekly. Only 18+ League in a 60 Mile Radius
- Five7 Club Teams and Camps by local resident and a retired NHL player
 - o Former Head High School Hockey Coach - now Semi-Pro Hockey Coach
 - o Camps and Club Teams attract players from all over Southeast MN (Rochester, Austin, Hastings, Winona) and Western Wisconsin (La Crosse, Onalaska, West Salem, Viroqua, Sparta).
 - o Clubs and Camps can run almost year around if ice was available.
- Sled Hockey Team
 - o Working to bring the team to La Crescent as their home rink.
 - o Sled Hockey Team has players from Houston and Caledonia, MN

The city and Lancer Youth Hockey have been good stewards of the Community Ice Arena have been diligent with maintenance including replacing the compressors four times since 1997, replacing fan motors, replacing the inefficient dehumidification system in 2016, replacing the fire suppression piping, re-calked the joints in the precast building panels, converted the lights to LED, purchased an electric ice resurfacing machine to improve indoor air quality, replaced the roof in 2021 and completed an exterior paint sealing project in 2024.

The new roof in 2021 allows for the city to advance its Minnesota Green Step Community efforts to install solar on city buildings. The city has completed several solar projects on city properties and recently completed an RFP process for several additional solar installations, one of which is the Community Ice Arena. The ice arena rooftop solar project is sized to serve just the community ice arena.

The replacement of the ice system, floor, and boards along with adding the Low E ceiling and rooftop solar is beyond what the city and community can do on its own. The city is ready to move forward but the city is in need of significant financial assistance to implement the proposed projects. This project was submitted in 2024 for consideration by the state.

Project Costs in 2026 dollars and include design, construction, contingency, engineering, legal, financial, administrative.

Replace Transmission Mains: \$151,165
Replace Ice Rink Floor: \$1,637,626
Dasher Board System Replacement: \$386,312
Refrigeration Room and Life Safety Systems: \$64,833
Low E Ceiling: \$142,767
Ice System: \$2,191,899
Rooftop Solar: \$465,000
Inflation: \$272,000
Total: \$5,311,602

Proposed Project Cost Breakdown:
State 2026 Capital Budget: \$2,268,000
Lancer Youth Hockey Funding: \$250,000
City Tax Abatement Bonds: \$2,793,000

Project Rationale

The project will extend the life of the La Crescent Community Ice Arena for another 25-30 years and protect current investments while expanding its use to 11 months. Replacement of the aging ice system is more ecologically friendly as it now uses R-22 refrigerant and is eight years beyond its useful life. Upgrading the ice system will use less energy and with the addition of the Low E ceiling and solar project, will assist the city in its goal to reduce energy use.

The city recently was awarded Step 5 in the Minnesota Green Step Cities Program for its efforts to achieve community sustainability and quality of life goals. For example, the city used the B-3 Benchmarking system to measure the improved efficiency of replacing the very inefficient dehumidification system which tracked an immediate and significant reduction in energy costs. The conversion to LED lights saves the city over \$8,000 per year in energy costs at the arena. A new ice system will be 20-25% more energy efficient than the current system and a Low-E ceiling is expected 2025 to add another 20 percent in energy efficiency. The rooftop solar project has a positive

proforma with payback within 15 years. Energy costs can be reduced from \$50,000 dollars per year to \$5,000 dollars per year and the cost savings can be used for debt serving for the project.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the use of the facility and resulted in a loss of revenue and delayed several smaller ice arena projects. The city is now able to move ahead with these projects. Program growth has been steadily increasing as a result of the hard work of LYHA and the professional approach to managing the facility and programs.

Registration Numbers:

- 20/21 Season – 73
- 21/22 Season – 93
- 22/23 Season – 102
- 23/24 Season – 119
- 24/25 Season – 135

Registration Cost and Cost to Play:

- One of the lowest costs to play in the State of MN.
- Attempting to keep costs as low as possible to continue to grow the program and reverse the assumption that hockey is expensive.
- First year skaters are no charge
- Equipment is provided at no charge as long as LYHA has equipment that fits.

Project Timeline

The project will take approximately 16-18 months to complete from notification that funding is secured. Longer lead times are commonplace and therefore construction could take longer. The goal is to minimize disruption to facility use.

Timeline if funded:

- Capital Budget Award: May 31, 2026
- Grant Agreement signed August 31, 2026
- Design Complete: December 31, 2026
- Bidding: March 1, 2027
- Award Contract: May 1, 2027
- Preconstruction Meeting: May 15, 2027
- Construction: May 16 - December 31, 2027

Other Considerations

The facility has been in place for 28 years and the project has wide community support along with support from the Mayor and City Council, School District, and Lancer Youth Hockey. For 28 years, the Community Ice Arena has been a valuable asset for the community, especially the youth in the area. Eriah Hayes, a La Crescent native, grew up in Lancer Youth Hockey and went on to play hockey for Minnesota State University-Mankato and then in the NHL with the San Jose Sharks. Mr. Hayes was the high school hockey coach with the La Crescent-Hokah Lancers for the last five years and helped grow the program. Community facilities such as the community ice arena provide the youth of the community and area with the opportunity to participate in healthy extracurricular activities. The facility is an economic asset to the community and region where families from throughout the Midwest come to La Crescent and spend a week at training camps or for tournaments.

Keeping the La Crescent Community Ice Arena in top shape assures that Minnesota residents will use a Minnesota facility rather than a competing nearby facility in Onalaska, WI.

Impact on State Operating Subsidies

N/A No state operating dollars are associated with this request. The city does not use any state dollars to operate the facility.

Who will own the facility?

City of La Crescent

Who will operate the facility?

City of La Crescent. The city will administer the project. The Community Ice Arena is managed and operated in partnership with Lancer Youth Hockey. The facility is financially supported through fees, fundraising and charitable gambling revenue.

Who will use or occupy the facility?

Community residents of La Crescent, Lancer Youth Hockey, Minnesota residents travelling for to La Crescent for games and training camps, school hockey teams, Winona State University, UW-La Crosse men and women's club teams, figure skaters, adult hockey clubs.

Public Purpose

The La Crescent Community Ice Arena is publicly owned by the city and the city has a long-term lease of the land from the La Crescent-Hokah School District. The ice arena is truly a community facility as it is open to the public for open skating as well as for the school hockey programs, training camps, high school graduation, fundraising events and birthday parties. The site is adjacent to Abnet Field, a softball and baseball facility and the ice arena is used as a storm shelter facility in severe weather.

Description of Previous Appropriations

None

Project Contact Person

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(\$ in thousands)

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PROJECT FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Source	Prior Years	FY 2026	FY 2028	FY 2030
State Funds Appropriated and Requested				
General Obligation Bonds	\$0	\$2,268	\$0	\$0
State Funds Pending				
Non-State Funds Already Committed				
Non-Governmental Funds	\$0	\$250	\$0	\$0
Non-State Funds Pending				
City Funds	\$0	\$2,793	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$0	\$5,311	\$0	\$0

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

Cost Category	Prior Years	FY 2026	FY 2028	FY 2030
Property Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Predesign Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Project Management	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$0	\$5,039	\$0	\$0
Relocation Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
One Percent for Art	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Occupancy Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Inflationary Adjustment	\$0	\$272	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$0	\$5,311	\$0	\$0

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements will apply to projects after adoption of the bonding bill.	
Has the project owner requesting state funds reviewed and agree to meet the applicable capital requirements listed in the "Statutory Requirements" below and in the "Capital Budget Requirements" section of the MMB Capital Budget Instruction documents?	Yes
Is this project exempt from legislative review under M.S. 16B.335 subd. 1a?	No
Predesign Review (M.S. 16B.335 subd. 3):	

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements will apply to projects after adoption of the bonding bill.	
Does this request include funding for predesign?	No
Has the predesign been submitted to the Department of Administration?	No
Has the predesign been approved by the Department of Administration?	No
Will the project design meet the Sustainable Building Guidelines under M.S. 16B.325?	Yes
Will the project designs meet applicable requirements and guidelines for energy conservation and alternative energy sources (M.S. 16B.335 subd. 4 and 16B.32)?	Yes
Will the project comply with the targeted group purchasing requirement (M.S. 16C.16 subd. 13)?	Yes
Will the project meet public ownership requirements (M.S. 16A.695)?	Yes
Will a use agreement be required (M.S. 16A.695 subd. 2)?	Yes
Will program funding be reviewed and ensured (M.S. 16A.695 subd. 5)?	Yes
Will the matching funds requirements be met (M.S. 16A.86 subd. 4)?	Yes
Will the project be fully encumbered prior to the Cancellation Deadline (M.S. 16A.642): December 31, 2030?	Yes
M.S. 16A.502 and M.S. 16B.31 (2): Full Funding Required	Yes
M.S. 473.4485: Guideway Project	
Is this a Guideway Project?	N/A
Is the required information included in this request?	N/A
Has the governing body of the political subdivision passed a resolution of support, which indicates this project's priority number if the applicant is submitting multiple requests?	Yes