

# Establishing and Signing a Regional Route Connecting La Crosse and Onalaska

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The Bud Hendrickson Nature Trail (BHNT or “Nature Trail”) was completed and dedicated in 2015. It took nearly 20 years from first concept to construction to provide this vital link between the City of Onalaska and the City of La Crosse. It clears one of the greatest barriers—the BNSF rail yard—for bicyclists and pedestrians traveling between the two communities and beyond. It also provides direct connections to the Great River State Trail, which connects to the La Crosse River State Trail.

Users of the State trails destined for La Crosse and Onalaska have voiced a need for wayfinding signage to direct them to the downtowns of these communities. The LAPC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has identified the Nature Trail as an important connection between communities and other on- and off-street bicycle facilities, and has selected it as the main alignment of a pilot project to establish and sign a regional bicycle route between Onalaska and La Crosse.

## NATURE TRAIL ALIGNMENT AND CONNECTIONS

Beginning at its northern terminus at Oak St and Enterprise Ave, the Nature Trail crosses the BNSF rail yard via a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over 870 feet long (Figure 1) that touches down near Hamilton Rd and Salem Rd in Northside La Crosse. The Trail continues south for an additional 5,200 feet between the rail yard on its east and residential properties on its west to its southern terminus at Gillette St, just across from Logan High School. In total, the Trail is nearly 1.2 miles long.

The Trail’s northern terminus (Figure 2) connects with Oak St, which becomes Oak Ave in Onalaska and takes users north by bike lane to the Great River State Trail and toward downtown Onalaska, and with Enterprise Ave, which takes users east by bike lane to its intersection with the Great River State Trail and on to the La Crosse River State Trail.

The Trail’s southern terminus at Gillette St is approximately 120 feet east of the Gillette St/Onalaska Ave/Ranger Dr intersection and poses some signage and maneuvering challenges for users to connect to the bike lanes on Ranger Dr. The better alternative is to exit the Nature Trail at Credit Union Ct and then use Onalaska Ave as the connection to Ranger Dr.



**Figure 1:** Picture of the Nature Trail bridge taken from its terminus at Oak St/Enterprise Ave and looking west toward its terminus near Hamilton Rd and Salem Rd.



**Figure 2:** Picture of the Nature Trail’s terminus at Oak St/Enterprise Ave, looking east up Enterprise Ave.

## PROPOSED REGIONAL ROUTE ALIGNMENT

The proposed regional route would connect the Great River State Trail trailhead and future Welcome Center just west of Main St in Onalaska to Riverside Park in La Crosse. The route from north to south would utilize the following facilities:

- Main St/STH 157
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave S (bike lanes)
- Oak Forest Dr
- Oak Ave S (bike lanes)
- Oak St (bike lanes)
- Bud Hendrickson Nature Trail
- Credit Union Ct
- Onalaska Ave
- Ranger Dr (bike Lanes)
- Clinton St
- Avon St
- Monitor St
- North La Crosse River Trail
- Riverside North Trail

Directional signage such as that illustrated in Figure 3 would be installed at critical locations and at regular intervals along the route. The proposed locations for signage (Table 1) as well as the proposed alignment are illustrated in Figure 4.

**TABLE 1: Proposed Locations for Bike Routing Signage along a Regional Trail Connecting Onalaska and La Crosse**

Location	Community	Location	Community
On Front St connection at 3 Rivers Trail	La Crosse	On Onalaska Ave at Gillette St	La Crosse
On 3 Rivers Trail at Riverside North Trail	La Crosse	On Onalaska Ave at Credit Union Ct	La Crosse
On 3 Rivers Trail at Front St connection	La Crosse	On Credit Union Ct at Onalaska Ave	La Crosse
On Riverside North Trail at 3 Rivers Trail	La Crosse	On Credit Union Ct at BHNT	La Crosse
On Riverside North Trail at north loop	La Crosse	On BHNT at Credit Union Ct	La Crosse
On Riverside North Trail at north loop	La Crosse	On BHNT at Oak St	La Crosse
On Riverside North Trail at Copeland Ave	La Crosse	On Oak St at BHNT	La Crosse
On North La Crosse River Trail at Copeland Ave	La Crosse	On Enterprise Ave at Oak St	La Crosse
On North La Crosse River Trail at Festival	La Crosse	On Oak St at Enterprise Ave	La Crosse
On North La Crosse River Trail at turn on Trail	La Crosse	On GRST at Enterprise Ave	Onalaska
On North La Crosse River Trail at Monitor St	La Crosse	On GRST at CTH SS	Onalaska
On Monitor St at Avon St	La Crosse	On Oak Ave at Oak Forest Dr	Onalaska
On Avon St at Monitor St	La Crosse	On Oak Forest Dr at Hilltopper Dr	Onalaska
On Monitor St at North La Crosse River Trail	La Crosse	On Oak Forest Dr at Oak Ave	Onalaska
On Avon St at Hagar St	La Crosse	On 3rd Ave S at Oak Forest Dr	Onalaska
On Avon St at Hagar St	La Crosse	On Oak Forest Dr at 3rd Ave S	Onalaska
On Avon St at Clinton St	La Crosse	On 3rd Ave S at Main St	Onalaska
On Clinton St at Avon St	La Crosse	On Main St at 3rd Ave S	Onalaska
On Clinton St at George St	La Crosse	Trailhead at 2nd Ave S	Onalaska
On Ranger Dr at George St	La Crosse	On Main St at 2nd Ave S	Onalaska
On Ranger Dr at Gillette St	La Crosse		

## COST OF PROPOSAL

At \$110 per sign, including post and installation, and 41 signs the total cost of the project would be \$4,510. The City of La Crosse would be responsible for its 30 signs (\$3,300) and the City of Onalaska would be responsible for its 11 signs (\$1,210).

## FUNDING

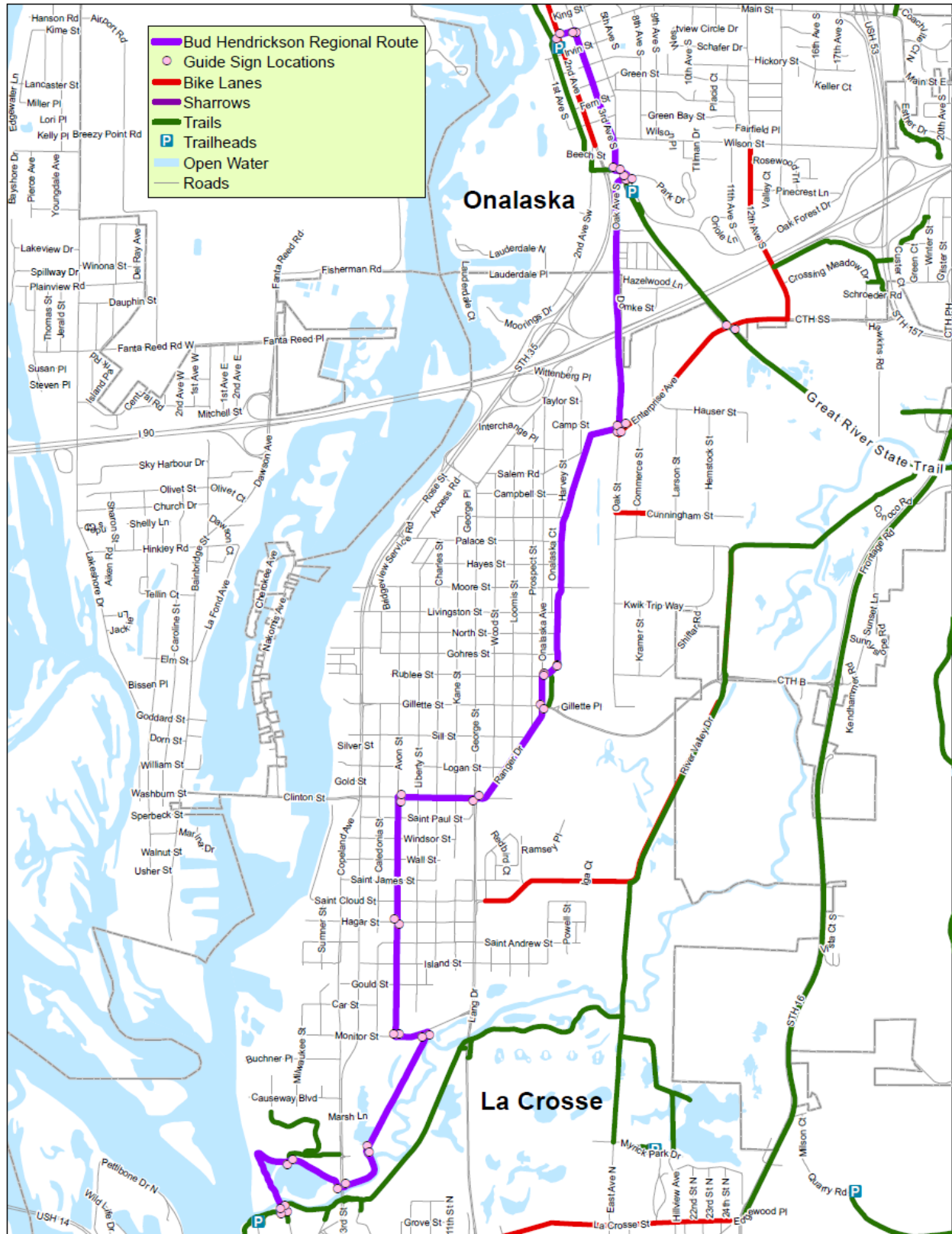
Because of the low cost to do this project, the City of La Crosse and the City of Onalaska could fund their respective portions of the project through their capital improvement programs.

## NEXT STEPS

- 1) Obtain a resolution of support from the City of La Crosse Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.
- 2) Obtain a resolution of support from the Onalaska bicycle advocacy group, OnaBike.
- 3) Work with the City's of La Crosse and Onalaska to implement the project.
- 4) Use volunteer help to determine exact signage information and placement.



**Figure 3:** Example bicycle guide sign, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.



**Figure 4:** Proposed routing for the Bud Hendrickson Nature Trail regional route between La Crosse and Onalaska.