

Mayor and Common Council Members

**Re: 15-0365 ORDINANCE to amend Section 44-223(6) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding bicycle operations on sidewalks.**

The Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) considered the above matter at its meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2015 and recommends it be AMMENDED to change from 'the business district as defined by Wis. Stats. Section 340.01(6)' to 'the downtown La Crosse area defined in Sec. 44-198(b)(2),' which states, "On any sidewalk in the downtown La Crosse area bounded by 2nd Street, King Street, 6th Street and State Street." This amendment would bring bicycling in line with what is already in the Municipal Code for skateboards and roller skates.

The reasoning for this amendment is to reduce the area affected by this clause. The regulation would be redundant since most buildings downtown have entrances abutting the sidewalk. Additionally, the rest of the paragraph would largely cover any unsafe behavior that the amended clause is seeking to avoid, including going slowly and yielding to pedestrians.

Additionally, the Committee considered a recommendation from the Parks Department to include the Riverside Park Friendship Gardens, Grandad Bluff's Mezzanine Overlook, and Forest Hills Golf Course. It felt, though, that restricting bicycles, etc. in parks would be more appropriate in Sec. 34-68.

It is the BPAC's intention that bicyclists and pedestrians be able to get anywhere they need to go safely. Unfortunately, conflicts arise when increased pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile traffic converge in a narrow space, such as downtown. Bicyclists who do not feel safe among automobiles on the street move to the sidewalk, which in turn may make pedestrians feel unsafe. With bicyclists feeling unsafe on downtown streets and not allowed on sidewalks, some are under the impression that bicycling is not allowed anywhere.

This ordinance covers an important topic for the BPAC. The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* includes a benchmark to "Revise ordinances that confuse or deter bicyclists engaging in safe behaviors (e.g. clarify law that prohibits bicycling on downtown sidewalks, and encourage the use of downtown streets for bicyclists)." In addition to educational outreach from this Committee, reducing the complexity of this ordinance can help. The State Statute that defines a business district is confusing, while covering all of downtown may deter bicycling there all together.

If you feel that keeping bicycles off the sidewalk is important, then this Committee respectfully asks that you commit to solutions that make bicyclists feel safer using the streets.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gallager,

Chairperson