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Sent: Sunday, November 9, 2025 10:48 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: ZZ City Clerk External; mayor@cityoflacrosse.org
Subject: Support Alternative 1 - we NEED better bike infrastructure

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Dear Council Members,

I am emailing to strongly urge you to prefer Alternative 1, the option that provides parking-protected bike lanes (PBLs) on Third and Fourth Streets, as part of the coming WisDOT reconstruction project. This is an amazing opportunity to take a strong step toward actualizing an important part of our city's climate action plan and looking forward to a more sustainable future.

But first, please understand that bicycles are transportation vehicles. They are the most efficient vehicles ever invented. Most people's daily trips are less than five miles. That means, a lot of trips could be made by bike—safer, cleaner, quieter, cheaper, and healthier. Please take a moment to reset; too many decisions are being made from our “car brains” (also called *motonormativity*), “a shared bias whereby people judge motorised mobility differently to other comparable topics.” (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378025000172>)

Our climate action plan calls for improved bicycling infrastructure, more people cycling for transportation, and reduced vehicle miles traveled. Of all the sectors, transportation is the worst, with emissions from cars and light duty trucks making up more than half of the total. (<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>). We have not moved forward with the urgency required since our climate action plan was completed and certainly not since the 2019 resolution pledging to reduce carbon emissions in steps. We are already behind on those commitments. Supporting PBLs as part of this state highway project is imperative.

Besides being a most important climate action, we know from years of research that PBLs are the best way to encourage more people of all ages and abilities to bicycle - not painted lanes, not sharrows, and certainly not nothing. In fact, PBLs make roads safer for all users. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2214140518301488>)

I know some members of the committee for citizens with disabilities have expressed opposition to this alternative, but I think their fears may be based on their projections and not on facts. In fact, PBLs would reduce the distance pedestrians and wheelchair users would need to travel across motorized vehicle lanes, would provide a virtual pedestrian island part of the way across the streets (the parking buffer), and, if the city would designate the first and last parking space along each block as parking for those with disabilities, it would ensure that needed parking access would be available and might even be increased.

I know that some business owners oppose Alternative 1. But many studies have shown that protected bike lanes are actually good for business. (<https://www.kittelton.com/ideas/myth-busters-are-bike-lanes-bad-for-business/> and <https://www.businessinsider.com/bike-lanes-good-for-business-studies-better-streets-2024-3>). In fact, this 2024 news video reports on business owners who rose up **for** bike lanes when a politician proposed removing them. (<https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2024/10/24/annex-businesses-tell-ford-to-back-off-bloor-bike-lanes>)

For people who have not experienced this level of modern, safe, efficient multi-modal design, I recommend watching this very short video about the newly completed PBL on Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis (<https://youtu.be/mM2xkz-syEw?si=ooGwbMCsizltoMN3>).

But to me, again, the most important (and I mean MOST. IMPORTANT.) reason to prefer Alternative 1 is that we MUST take climate action NOW. We are supposed to be doing every single step in our climate action plan as quickly as possible, but we are not. Our planet is "on the brink," as described in a major new report (https://us01.z.antigena.com//FIHCzbym_ppJRg2Jv0H6g64Oky_MZsL2eVDIx8FmQbX99VaMMS-vkspKt85gAf3Mv4MZFPxqXcUdnz~WU0UzDgorLtpboYa2_PddD5SgT_X5FM7oImToG9kayKLXZm-ue_EMyt_mOI1T4ptuwCLZAm2a~p61ZxeAOUTsuaVaeRHg-NazXp68v1VVdM80P~GK8ns0tWNT1m) "We are hurtling toward climate chaos. The planet's vital signs are flashing red. The consequences of human-driven alterations of the climate are no longer future threats but are here now. This unfolding emergency stems from failed foresight, political inaction, unsustainable economic systems, and misinformation. ,,, The window to prevent the worst outcomes is rapidly closing." To ignore this crisis and the time and money spent to create our robust plan would be, to me, a travesty..

Bicyclists pay taxes, we cause much less wear and tear on roadways, we cause many fewer traffic deaths and injuries, and we emit zero pollution and greenhouse gases. Yet, we are usually relegated to cracked, debris-strewn gutter lanes or poorly designed, useless painted lanes. We are told to take longer, indirect routes on side or back streets that are far from our destinations. Our complete streets ordinance is routinely ignored.

This is a chance to ensure that those choosing to bike to work, to appointments, to social engagements, for shopping, and just to get from A to B are treated more fairly and given due space to travel safely on the public street that we all pay for.

For climate, for safety, for fairness, for future, you must support Alternative 1.

Thank you for listening.

Cathy Van Maren