

From: Matthew Christen <ynotbicycle@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2025 2:54 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Protected bike lanes on 3rd & 4th St.

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Subject: Support for Protected Bike Lanes on 3rd & 4th Streets

Dear La Crosse Common Council Members,

I'm writing to share my support for Alternative 1, the option that includes protected bike lanes on 3rd and 4th Streets.

This project is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make our downtown safer, more connected, and ready for the future. Adding protected bike lanes will make it easier for people to move through downtown — whether they drive, walk, or bike — without taking any options away.

Downtown already has more than 3,000 parking spaces in surplus, so we can afford to make space for people. Cities that have made this kind of investment have seen it support local business and create more vibrant, welcoming streets. The economics speak well for adding bike lanes. It has been demonstrated that adding bike infrastructure such as this increases business revenue from 3-49%. Nationally, it has been shown that bicyclists spend more money at retail businesses, including restaurants, than car drivers. They stop more frequently. With the current generation of young people, they are buying 20% fewer cars and deciding to live where use of a car is not a requirement. It is in our best interest to draw these young, bright minds to our city to feed the ranks of our businesses with the best and the brightest by providing alternatives to car travel only. Our own city engineers have identified that the cost of a parking spot along the street is close to \$17,000 per space. We have spent more than that in the parking towers to accommodate citizens driving gas powered vehicles into the city. It is prudent that these vehicles pay for this privilege and not expect all of the citizens of the city to pay for it through tax subsidies. It is in our best economic interest to make accommodations for bicyclists commuting into and around our city. Our current trend in fossil fueled transportation is not sustainable. Bicycle infrastructure is the least expensive transportation infrastructure modifications that ultimately provide healthy alternative transportation modes.

Keep in mind, that owning and operating a vehicle in the US is equal in value to the mortgage payment for a \$200,000 home at 5% interest over 30 years.(\$12,000-14,000 annually) According to the NHSA, this is a cost of \$0.72 PER MILE. In La Crosse county, 15% of our population is at or below the poverty

line. That amounts to over 17,000 people. Transportation cuts into their household budget at 40%, putting great stress on the ability to cover rent, food, health care, and clothing. Over half of the bicycling commuters in the USA make \$25,000 or less. These people need to be considered in these decisions, as they are usually considered the silent users. With the cost of a vehicle now averaging over \$51,000, the use of bicycles will continue to grow as a source of transportation.

Please recognize that bike lanes are not for the occasional recreational rider, as much as transportation users. They also will encourage the use of the Drift Bike Share program, which in turn mitigates parking needs, bottlenecking, increases participation in downtown businesses, and promotes a healthier community.

Please choose the option that reflects the future we want for La Crosse — a city built around connection, choice, and people.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important decision.

Sincerely,
Matthew Christen
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