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From:

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To: [Zabrowski, Jack](#)

Cc: [cvanmaren Randi Pueschner Smith's Bike Shop Kirsten Finn](#)

Subject: Protected Bicycle Lanes on Market Street

Sensitivity: Normal

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August 9, 2021

Dear City of La Crosse,

I was very disappointed to learn about the proposed painted bicycle lanes on Market Street. We can do much, much better than this. Transportation is the biggest contributor to climate change and we need to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle friendly options instead of cars (and parking!) Accepting this mediocre option, is antithetical to the city's goals to be more bicycle friendly and in turn, carbon neutral. Let's not water down a critical plan to make Market Street more bicycle friendly.

If we want to increase bicycle mobility in La Crosse, we need to make people of all ages and abilities feel safe and comfortable. This is the number one reason people turn to bicycle commuting. Painted bicycle lanes do not provide this experience, and in fact often hinder that sense, and the safety of bicyclists, as they can cause confusion between motorists and bicyclists, and do not slow down vehicle traffic.

While they might initially cost more money than painted bike lanes and street markings, protected bike lanes clearly delineate space on the road for bikes and prevent cars from infringing on that space. Installing physical barriers such as plastic bollards on street parking or even planters offer the greatest degree of protection for people riding bikes in on street bike lanes – and research shows that in areas with protected bicycle lanes more people feel safe.

Once on the fringe, protected bicycle lanes are now mainstream in cities that aim to be more bicycle friendly. Of course, there are the flagship examples of Madison with 55 miles of protected bicycle lanes,, but we are also seeing that this is becoming more normative in less recognized cities such as Steven's Point and Fitchburg. Let's not be behind the curve, when it comes to safe, progressive bicycle lanes. In Boston, a historically unfriendly bicycle community, protected bicycle lanes increased rideshare 80 percent.

[A 2019 study](#) spanning thirteen years in twelve cities found that protected bike lanes dramatically reduced fatalities for all road users on the streets that added them. The study found the main reason for this was the traffic calming effect protected bike lanes have on all road users. With protected bike lane street designs, traffic speeds are lowered, so when collisions do occur, they are far less likely to be fatal, and this protects everyone.

As the instructor of a bicycle history and politics class each fall at UW-L I would like to be able to provide an example of a progressive transportation option in this city, as we explore case studies from around the United States – and the world. In this class students ride the streets of La Crosse, and they embody the range of transportation options, many of which are not favorable to the bicycle. Let's show them a progressive example of what we can do.

Sincerely yours,

Margot Higgins, PhD

Lecturer, UW-L

Board member of the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation