

BPAC Ranking of Downtown Corridor Alternatives (King St to La Crosse St)

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) ranks the Wisconsin DOT alternatives for the Downtown Corridor between King Street and La Crosse Street as follows, from highest to lowest preference:

1. **Alternative 1 (most preferred)**
2. **Alternative 3 (hybrid proposal)**
3. **Alternative 2 (least preferred)**

Statement:

The BPAC believes all proposed options will provide meaningful improvements to pedestrian safety, which is downtown's most important constituency. The inclusion of curb bump-outs, leading pedestrian intervals, and targeted spot improvements has the potential to transform several currently high-stress and dangerous intersections into places that better prioritize people walking. These improvements are a clear step in the right direction in creating a safer and more comfortable downtown environment.

The BPAC does have concerns regarding the proposed traffic circle at the La Crosse Street intersection, given pre-existing challenges with pedestrian crossings at previously installed roundabouts in the city. While the committee doesn't recommend against the roundabout, the committee urges WisDOT and the City to prioritize the experience of non-motorized users by following best practices for enhanced crossings, signalization, and geometry that benefits people walking and biking.

BPAC continues to recommend Alternative 1 as the committee's preferred option because it provides continuous, predictable, and comfortable facilities for non-motorized travel through the entire corridor and to key downtown destinations. Continuity is critical to creating a network that works for all ages and abilities. The committee also acknowledges that this alternative is aligned with the City's adopted plans, including the 2015 Transportation Vision, 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Safe Routes to School Plan, Imagine 2040 Downtown Plan, Climate Action Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and others.

Because corridor reconstructions of this scale occur only once every several decades, BPAC views this project as a rare opportunity to implement connected facilities now rather than defer links indefinitely. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations can be included more efficiently during reconstruction than through later local retrofits.

The BPAC recognizes the importance of on-street parking and the concerns expressed by downtown businesses and the public.

The BPAC also acknowledges Alternative 3, presented to the Common Council and BPAC in January, as an attempt to strike a compromise. While this option does not provide continuous accommodation through the full corridor, it improves connectivity relative to Alternative 2 and extends bicycle facilities farther south to connect with existing infrastructure. With a connection to Vine Street, this option would allow users to access downtown and bypass portions of the corridor where facilities are absent. It also requires thoughtful engineering through the La Crosse Street intersection, which BPAC views as preferable to leaving that movement unresolved.

If Alternative 3 is selected by the Common Council, BPAC strongly encourages WisDOT and the City to plan now for how the remaining stretch between Vine Street and King Street could be retrofitted in the future. While the ultimate design may differ from sidewalk-level facilities, it should provide meaningful protection and comfort for people biking.