

Elsen, Nikki

From: City of La Crosse Notices - No Reply
Sent: Sunday, April 19, 2026 7:38 PM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Sleznikow, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: Support protect bike lanes (on Green Bay Street)
Attachments: parallel_bike_route_panel_color_400-singer.jpg

Submitted on: 4/19/2026

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Is this related to a legislative agenda item: Yes

Agenda item number: 26-0438

Subject: Support protect bike lanes (on Green Bay Street)

Dear Mayor, Board of Public Works, and Council Members,

At the Tuesday, April 14 Bike Ped Advisory Committee meeting, I learned that plans for adding bike infrastructure to Green Bay Street (26-0438) would be coming up before the BPW on Monday. I had planned to attend and speak, but there's no public hearing noted on the agenda and I now have a schedule conflict, so I am emailing my remarks.

In July 2019, the council passed a resolution to reduce community-wide carbon emissions to do our part in limiting the existential threat posed by human-caused global heating. That commitment included stepped carbon reduction goals to be reached between 2019 and 2050 which led to the city's December 2022 Climate Action Plan (CAP) (<https://www.lacrosseclimateactionplan.org/the-plan>). It also included the condition that, "all purchasing decisions that come before the Common Council for approval, which impact our goals of carbon neutrality and renewable energy, shall include a cost benefit analysis and a measurement of the contribution the purchase will have towards reaching our stated goals."

Transportation infrastructure can help or hinder us reaching CAP goals. But, I have not heard of any climate-cost benefit analysis on this or any other bike project. I'm pretty sure some decision-makers are not familiar with the climate action resolution or the CAP and its specific goals and action steps that call for encouraging and facilitating more transportation cycling. It's also frustrating to hear from some staff that certain infrastructure is not possible, when our own personal experiences and countless studies and projects (<https://youtu.be/C16SDtppKBg?si=CzRJQJPCAU3p5nyF>) show otherwise.

It also seems our other myriad city plans, many developed with expensive consultants and extensive research and public input, are often not followed when it comes to bicycle infrastructure. We saw this most recently in the WisDOT downtown protected bike lane (PBL) issue. Even with all the public input, our city's plans, and a wealth of research and studies showing benefits for safety, equity and access, health, and climate action, that project was denied by the council. Our plans are worthless if they aren't followed. Community members who came out in force to support that project were told they didn't

matter. Why do we have to fight over and over for projects that are already included and promised in our city plans? Does this affect public participation in future projects? Why bother if no one listens?

Now you will decide about whether to add PBLs to Green Bay Street Our CAP, our Bike-Ped Master Plan, our Complete Streets ordinance, and other plans say we should have a PBL here. It's a direct route touching on many important destinations, including schools, health care facilities, shops, and other services.

These lanes are not for adults who already bike. I've used Green Bay and other city streets for bike transportation for more than 60 years and will continue to do so. They are needed to encourage the large number of residents--children, families, students, new bike commuters, and seniors--who want to bike because they understand the financial, health, developmental, and community benefits of transportation cycling but don't currently feel safe using most of our city streets. Direct routes promote transportation cycling. Protected bike lanes are the only bike infrastructure that actually improves safety for all road users (<https://theprogressplaybook.com/2023/11/20/13-year-study-finds-protected-bike-lanes-make-roads-safer-for-everyone/>) and increases the numbers of cyclists (<https://news.unm.edu/news/study-shows-protected-bike-lanes-increase-bicycle-commuting>).

As we saw with Losey Boulevard, another direct route city street that should have PBLs, when our plans and ordinances are ignored and sections are reconstructed without bike infrastructure, that absence of infrastructure becomes the reason to not add infrastructure to the next segment. This is backward. Rather, we should add infrastructure called for in our plans whenever the opportunity comes up to indicate our commitment to fulfilling our plans and to prepare for the next segments.

Imagine if we had no women working in city offices because of past discriminatory practices and attitudes and our council passed plans and pledges to fix that and add more women employees. Would it be acceptable for boards and committees and the council to bypass those commitments and continue hiring and promoting only men? In this case, we have prioritized cars, including parked cars, at the expense of our public health and safety, our children's development, our economic development, and our environment and climate. Understanding the problems resulting from this imbalance, we, YOU, have pledged and planned to change. Now, those changes must be prioritized.

I urge you to look at the latest climate change forecasts (<https://e360.yale.edu/digest/warming-gaining-pace>) and become familiar with the CAP, especially the transportation and mobility section. How can you make sure we are completing our action steps? If you have any doubts that these changes can be done or that they do have an impact, please look at examples from Minneapolis (<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/2025/november/2025-bike-friendly-city/>), Paris (<https://climatehealth.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs4416/files/2025-11/cycling%20infrastructure.pdf>), and other cities where mayors and elected officials have led the way. We can do that here. We must do that here.

Cathy Van Maren