

COMMENT REGARDING 2024-2028 CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST FOR SIGNAGE FOR REGIONAL ROUTE 1

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC), Metropolitan Planning Organization for the La Crosse and La Crescent Urbanized Area, and its Committee on Transit and Active Transportation (CTAT) have been working and collaborating on developing a system of regional bicycle routes that include signage for wayfinding. The route system is being designed to connect communities and their downtowns along safe and scenic routes.

The LAPC and CTAT worked with the City of La Crosse to sign the first phase of the Regional Route 1 between Riverside Park and Oak St and with the City of Onalaska to sign the route from the La Crosse terminus to The Great River Landing, which serves as a trailhead to the Great River State Trail. The signed bike route as it currently exists connects Riverside Park to the Great River State Trail. The extension south would connect to CTH G1 and the entrance to Goose Island Park.

The southern extension is important for several reasons: 1) it completes the Route through the City of La Crosse; 2) it provides a safe traveling alternative to South Ave and Mormon Coulee Rd; 3) it assists bicyclists navigate the less direct streets through neighborhoods; 4) it demonstrates that La Crosse deserves its silver ranking as a bicycle-friendly city; 5) the Mississippi River Plan Commission is planning to move the MRT through south La Crosse from along the bluffs to the Regional Route 1; and 6) signing this route is consistent with meeting the goals and objectives of several City of La Crosse Plans:

- Climate Action Plan (approved December 2022)
 - Decrease commuter and communitywide VMT by 5% by 2030.
 - Improve the comfort and safety of walking and biking within La Crosse.
 - According to the La Crosse Climate Action Survey, over 65% of respondents indicated they would walk or bike more frequently if they felt safer.
- South Avenue Multimodal Assessment
 - Recommends implementing the bike route between the VIP Trail and East Ave (Map 11, page 39).
 - Considers this a bicycle priority project.
- Confluence
 - “Bike Route Signage. The City shall work with appropriate jurisdictions to sign the designated bike route network. Strong consideration should also be given to providing directional signs to key destinations along designated bike routes.” (Pages 193-194 of pdf; pages 5-48 and 5-49 of chapter).
- Forward La Crosse Transportation Draft (pages 7-8 of pdf)
 - Opportunities for Growing Walking and Biking
 - Participants identified several improvements that would encourage them to walk or bike more often:
 - Growing the network of walking and biking routes
 - Increasing separation from motor-vehicle traffic
 - Addressing gaps in the network
 - Providing maps and wayfinding signage to find destinations more easily

As the transportation planner for the La Crosse Area Planning Committee and representative of the CTAT, I'd like to emphasize the importance of this route to citizens and visitors alike and its role as the first regional route in the area. It serves as an impetus to the development of a conceptual bicycle route system that will make La Crosse a regional bicycling hub with connections to La Crescent, Onalaska, West Salem, Holmen, and beyond. I believe that the return on the very small investment for signage will be realized through greater economic activity (see the La Crosse, *Bike Economic Impact Study*), improved safety to non-motorists, and decreased congestion as drivers are given safe alternatives.

Respectfully,

Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner, LAPC