

Dear LAPC,

Please find below a brief status report on the I-90 Dresbach Bridge. This summary was adopted by the working group on August 2, 2011. Our collective advocacy in support of the LAPC resolution, requiring bicycle pedestrian accommodation on the bridge, and in particular the meeting with the FHWA-Minnesota has been productive.

As long as we have the support of the LAPC and the elected officials that lead our communities we will continue our work.

Sincerely and thank you for your leadership.

On behalf of the group, we are Larry, Sue and Don.

I-90 Dresbach Bridge Status Report

Bicycle Pedestrian Accommodation Workgroup

"Working to support our Communities and the 2035 Transportation Plan of the LAPC"

'Ride for a 100 years, not wait for a 100 years'

UPDATE

The State of Minnesota Department of Transportation Region 6 has indicated that at the direction of the Federal Highway Administration-Minnesota (FHWA) they have withdrawn from publication the Environmental Analysis (EA) and intend to reexamine bicycle pedestrian accommodation on the I-90 Dresbach Bridge. The FHWA has encouraged the MnDOT to include public engagement, engineering studies and an analysis of alternatives in this reexamination so that the EA, when published, can more completely assess the need and the opportunities for this accommodation. It is intended that this review be more than 'window dressing' of the current, but unpublished, Environmental Analysis (EA) and rather be a real and open minded assessment.

The Bicycle Pedestrian Accommodation Workgroup views this as a positive outcome, acknowledges the work done to date by the MnDOT, thanks the FHWA for their positive engagement and appreciates the willingness of MnDOT to more closely examine bike and pedestrian accommodation on the Dresbach Bridge and in the corridor between Minnesota and Wisconsin. As agency and community representatives the workgroup looks forward to engagement with MnDOT (Minnesota Department of Transportation).

There will be an EA published in the next 2 months or so. There will be Public Comment and a Public Hearing on that EA. The workgroup will continue to prepare for the Public Hearing by further understanding and analyzing the issues that the FHWA indicated would be required to be affirmatively argued in a case for inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on the Dresbach Bridge. Namely that there is a *'need'* for the accommodation and that there is a *'route with independent utility and logical termini'*. We will continue outreach to advocacy organizations and keep our elected officials informed of local discussions and outcomes. This will allow us to be a better partner as this reexamination occurs and a better advocate in the event that MnDOT does not engage in an 'open minded' 'hard look' or fails to include this accommodation in their engineering and the revised EA.

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REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Ray LaHood, U.S. Secretary of Transportation indicated in a *Policy and Regulation Statement* of March 11, 2011, "Every transportation agency, including USDOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and biking into their transportation systems." Under USDOT policy transportation agencies and local communities should strive to create "safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible and convenient bicycling and walking networks." "Planning projects for the long-term should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities that do not preclude the provision of future improvements." There are no Federal laws or regulations that prohibit shared use paths along or near Interstate highways, bridges or other freeways.

The MnDOT describes MPO's, as Federal Partners in transportation planning... "Entities designated by law with the lead responsibility for the development of a metropolitan area's transportation plans and to coordinate the transportation planning process." Under Federal Law an MPO's plans must provide for consideration of all modes of transportation, including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, so as to provide an intermodal transportation system for the State and the United States. The 2035 Transportation Plan of the LAPC identifies from Minnesota to Wisconsin HWY 53 as a bike corridor. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee, LAPC, serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

In July 2010 the USDOT announced a Nationwide Interstate Bike Highway System. In this area it is called the MRT (Mississippi River Trail) and runs the length of the Mississippi River and is generally on both east and west sides of the river. There would be 4 bike trail systems and 10 States connected by this bridge.

The FHWA has recognized, since 1999, "Bicycling and walking ought to be accommodated, as an element of good planning, design, and operation, in all new transportation projects unless there are substantial safety or cost reasons for not doing so."