



1612 k street nw suite 800 washington, dc 20006
phone 202-822-1333 fax 202-822-1334
www.bikeleague.org

Mr. Tom Faella
Executive Director
La Crosse Area Planning Committee
La Crosse County Administrative Center
Room 2300
400 North Fourth Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin

07/28/2011

Dear Mr. Faella:

Re: Support for bicycle accommodation on Dresbach Bridge replacement

I am writing to express the League's support for bicycle facilities on the Dresbach Bridge replacement along the I-90 corridor. Bridges are critical for cyclists. Without safe accommodations on the bridges that connect our communities and complete our transportation networks, countless clean, healthy, low-cost bicycling trips will never take place. On the other hand, the potential for cycling in the area is enormous. On the east side of the bridge, La Crosse, WI, has a 2.2 percent bicycle commuter rate – four times the national average. These are people who rely on their bicycle every day to get to work. The west side of the bridge will link to the Mississippi River Trail, one of the most used and significant multi-state trails in the country.

History shows that the popularity of bicycling facilities on bridges is notoriously underestimated. Officials in Pennsylvania predicted about 500 cyclists a week on a bridge over the Schuylkill River. Today 15,000 cyclists use the bridge each week. In South Carolina, DOT officials said that no one would use the bicycling and walking path on the Ravenel Bridge. In fact, the bridge is so popular that the DOT now happily takes credit for the idea and the proven physical activity benefits of the facility.

A generation ago, excluding bicycles and pedestrian facilities would have not have raised an eyebrow. Things have changed. Today including bicycling facilities on all bridges places you firmly in the mainstream. We have a list of two dozen interstate bridges that have bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, including two I-90 bridges, posted on our website (bikeleague.org/reports).

Minnesota is the fourth best state for bicycling, according to our 2011 Bicycle Friendly State rankings. Wisconsin ranks third. Both states have been leaders in promoting bicycling. It would be enormously regrettable to miss this once-in-a-hundred-years opportunity to provide bicycle access to this important route across the Mississippi River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andy Clarke, President