



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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April 20, 2020

LAPC Policy Board
212 6th Street N
La Crosse, WI 54601

RE: Local Studies Program- City of La Crosse SRTS Plan

Dear La Crosse Area Planning Committee Policy Board Members,

Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and the stress it has placed upon parents, the La Crosse School District, and La Crosse residents, the City of La Crosse and the Safe Routes to School Plan Steering Committee would like to request an extension for our Safe Routes to School Plan from May 31, 2020 to December 31, 2020. This Plan was awarded Local Studies funding in April 2019 and an extension, if approved by WisDOT and FHWA, would require an amendment to the LAPC 2019 Work Program.

Our current agreement for the Local Studies funding requires us to submit a draft plan by May 31, 2020. We are currently in the final phases of completing our plan, which consists of a comprehensive public feedback effort that includes conducting an online survey through the La Crosse School District, its principals, and Parent Teacher Organizations and holding public meetings to gain input from parents on the Draft Safe Routes to School Plan.

Unfortunately, at this time, parents are faced with many other challenges, including maintaining their health and the health of their family, loss of job, lack of available daycare, educating their children at home, etc., and our electronic survey request for public comment may be lost in the shuffle of other needs. In addition to the online survey, we were planning to have multiple public meetings and in-person outreach at community centers and schools to reach historically underserved populations. Those in-person efforts are unlikely to occur as we are currently prohibited from holding such events.

The Safe Routes to School Plan will include recommendations for infrastructure strategies that may be controversial in La Crosse, such as

- Curb extensions, which reduce turning speeds and improve pedestrian visibility
- Reducing some four-lane streets to three lanes (two travel lanes and one center turn lane), which can reduce vehicle speeds and make room for safety treatments such as pedestrian islands or bike lanes
- Separated bicycle lanes on some high-volume streets

An extension would allow us to extend the online survey through the summer and into September and October, giving the public ample time to react and comment on the proposed recommendations. It would also allow us as

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restrictions are lifted to conduct in-person outreach at community centers and schools to reach historically underserved populations in the fall.

On Monday, April 13, 2020, the City of La Crosse Safe Routes to School Plan Steering Committee voted to request an extension from the La Crosse Area Planning Committee Policy Board. The Committee is concerned that the current conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will negatively impact the public input process and feels that an extension into the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year will result in better public input and a more informed Plan

We ask that the Policy Board approve this request for a funding extension and potential Work Program amendment

Sincerely,

Linda Lee, Chair
Safe Routes to School
Steering Committee

Tim Acklin, AICP
Senior Planner