



# 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan



providing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations was further emphasized in March 2010 when U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood issued a new U.S. Department of Transportation policy statement stating:

*The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems. Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life — transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.*

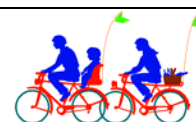
The recommendations put forth in this 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan achieve the intent of the Policy Statement.

## 1.2 Why Support Bicycling?

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Besides the benefits outlined in Secretary LaHood’s policy statement above, the bicycling industry is known to have positive economic benefits. A report commissioned by Madison, Wisconsin Rep. Spencer Black and produced by graduate students from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin – Madison states that recreational cycling in Wisconsin generates \$1.5 billion in economic activity each year. Over \$924 million is attributed to tourism and resident spending, with almost \$533 million devoted to food, lodging, and entertainment. Non-resident bicyclists spend more than \$535 million per year.

The authors of the report used the Benefits Mapping Analysis Program from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to calculate the potential economic value of replacing short automobile trips with bicycling. They estimated an annual savings of \$400 million in health benefits to Wisconsin residents. The report states that “by incorporating physical activity into the lives of sedentary Wisconsin residents, bicycling to work could save approximately \$319 million a





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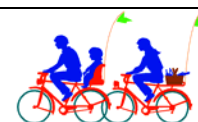
accommodate all classes of bicyclists. Two other documents—a model subdivision ordinance and a “complete streets” policy guide—will be drafted as implementation steps of the plan.

- 🚲 **Create several mapping products that will assist bicyclists and recreational enthusiasts identify where to visit and how best to get there.** The number one complaint of bicyclists in the area is that we have no good bicycling map. As implementation tasks, we plan to create a general bike route map with local and regional routes as well as a professional grade map that will aid visitors navigate the area.
- 🚲 **Regionalize the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.** During the planning process, staff has added several new members to broaden the membership base of this LAPC standing committee; however, not all communities are represented. The ultimate goal is to have representation by all of our member communities.
- 🚲 **Establish bicycling as a sustainable transportation alternative to driving.** When adopted by the local communities, the policies and recommendations outlined in this plan will provide the decision-making platform and infrastructure to achieve this goal.
- 🚲 **Encourage tourism and economic development.** With the possibility that La Crosse could become a national ride center for the International Mountain Bicycling Association and a major stop for the Midwest Regional Rail, the region can become a true destination for recreational enthusiasts. An improved bicycle network that allows for the safe and convenient movement of not only local but visiting bicyclists among destinations will encourage tourism and spur economic development.

## 1.4 Existing Plans

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After significant review, LAPC staff determined that the existing bicycle plans, the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Element* and the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for La Crescent*, should be re-evaluated. With the intent of reviewing the bicycle recommendations from the 1994 plan during



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the planning process of the regional bicycle plan, LAPC staff rolled the recommendations into the *2030 La Crosse and La Crescent Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (MTP) adopted in 2005.

The most recent regional bicycle plan was completed for the LAPC in 1994 as part of the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Element* of the *2020 La Crosse and La Crescent Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It identifies major east-west and north-south bicycling routes intended to connect planning area communities. It does not address local routing and facilities, however. Population growth, development, and changes in municipal boundaries and road function suggested a need to re-evaluate the regional routes recommended in the 1994 plan as well as look at routes and facilities at the community level.

Although the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for La Crescent* is relatively young (completed in late 2003 for the City of La Crescent and the LAPC), LAPC staff felt that two major roadway construction projects necessitated re-evaluating elements of this plan also. The two projects include 1) a significant reconstruction and realignment of the USH 14/61 / MN 16 / CSAH 6 intersection in La Crescent, which was completed in 2009; and 2) the design phase for the reconstruction of the I-90 / USH 14/61 interchange and I-90 Dresbach bridge, which is programmed for reconstruction in 2012.

One goal of this planning process is to provide an up-to-date, detailed bicycle planning document that can be used as a tool by communities and agencies to make informed decisions about bicycle accommodations within the planning area.

### 1.5 Geographic Scope

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The geographic scope and area of interest for this plan is the metropolitan planning area (MPA) for the LAPC. The LAPC is a bi-state planning agency with a planning area that encompasses about two-thirds of western La Crosse County in Wisconsin and small areas







