

Summary of Comments for the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan

May 13, 2010

The following comments were received by LAPC staff during the 30-day comment period:

- **Received by e-mail from Sue Howe, Project Manager, Active Living La Crescent:**

Dear Ms. Jackie Eastwood,

The Active Living La Crescent organization is writing to encourage you to support the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for the new I-90 bridge project across the Mississippi at Dresbach, Minnesota in the Regional Bike Plan. We believe the bridge project provides a rare opportunity to positively impact the local economy and the health and well being of citizens for decades to come.

While some believe that these types of changes will slow the I-90 bridge project and jeopardize other parts of the plan, it is important to realize the 100 year influence this project will have. It is also crucial to recognize that the current regional bike plan does not provide solid language and planning for the I90 Dresbach bridge project and the Wisconsin State Highway 53/35/I90 interchange. The federal government has recognized the need to focus planning efforts on requiring consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in all roadway projects. Active Living La Crescent respectfully recommends and encourages BPAC to include stronger language and action plans supporting bicycle facilities on the I90 corridor in its long range plan.

Active Living La Crescent would like to offer our assistance in helping you to be leaders in the region; as your goals so nobly present: improve the mobility of bicyclists and ensure bicycle accommodations are designed into all roadway projects. Let's not be the impediment to the connection but the champion by clearly supporting an East/West bicycling corridor between the two states and beyond.

Recent Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood issued a statement declaring that our transportation system must think about all users and give representation to bicycling and pedestrian modes. While not mandated, the

Regional Bike Plan should put planning for bicycling and pedestrians on equal footing with highway and transit on the I90 corridor. This change in the plan is information that should be included in the planning and execution of upcoming projects on both sides of the river. Planning which favors motorized transportation at the expense of non-motorized transportation is out of date and shortsighted. We want the new bridge to be an expressway to future sustainable economically sound and safe transportation needs.

Active Living La Crescent offers the services of its board and members to the BPAC and both DOT's and interested parties and users of these types of facilities. Active Living La Crescent is a group of committed individuals working to make physical activity a routine part of local citizens daily lives. We look forward to working with you in the future on issues surrounding bicycling in our region.

▪ **Received by e-mail from Anne Morse, Sustainability Coordinator, Winona County Environmental Services:**

Dear Ms. Eastwood,

Congratulations for you and your office for your work in completing the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan. Having attending the Open House you hosted last Tuesday, it's clear that much thought and effort went into the development of the plan by individuals in your communities. As the person recently tasked with facilitating the development of a Winona County Trail Plan, I appreciate what is clearly excellent planning.

I write today on behalf of the Winona County's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), with a comment, and a request, related to your 2035 Regional Bicycle Plan.

Our comment is to thank you for your support and advocacy to ensure safe passage for bicycles and pedestrians through the junction at Dresbach that has been described as The Gateway Crossing. Your vigilance in support of a bike/ped crossing there, which is undergoing planning revisions as we speak, is greatly appreciated. If we are ever to successfully design our roads and communities for Active Living, it must begin right here, and right now, with the design of this intersection.

Our request relates to the language in your Plan, in Table 4-7, regarding the bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the I-90 /Dresbach Bridge rebuild. Specifically, the plan identifies a long-term goal of "considering" bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on I-90. It is our desire that the plan be clearer, and more direct, about the goal of bike/ped access on the Interstate Bridge. Specifically, if the word "considered" were removed from this

sentence, along with “long-term”, the sentence would far better represent our interests. The sentence would then read as follows: “A goal is to have bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on I-90 between the Minnesota MRT and the USH 53/STH 35 interchange (exit 3).”

The fact is that the I-90 Bridge we build will serve our residents for generations to come, and the future we are trying to build is one where people use their bicycles for their commutes. An I-90 bike/ped crossing is key to such a future.

ACTION: The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) voted on Monday, May 10 to change the existing language in the plan regarding accommodations on the I-90 bridge from “A goal for the long-term is to have bicycle and pedestrian accommodations considered on I-90 between the Minnesota MRT and the USH 53/STH 35 interchange (exit 3)” to “Because facilities in this corridor have a 50- to 100-year design life, design the capacity for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into all projects within the I-90 corridor between the Minnesota MRT and USH 53/STH 35 (exit 3), including the Dresbach Bridge project and its interchange.”

▪ **Received by e-mail from Steve Nagel, citizen:**

Dear Ms. Eastwood,

I am writing about a specific feature of the 2035 Regional Bicycle Plan. I write as a long-time member of an advisory committee to Winona County and the City of Winona on biking and walking accessibility, although I am not writing on behalf of the committee. I understand that you have supported and advocated to ensure safe passage for bicycles and pedestrians through the junction at Dresbach, described as The Gateway Crossing. Thank you for your support of a bike/ped crossing.

The I-90 Bridge will last for perhaps a century, and so much forethought must go into the planning, I know, including

- The potential for increased travel and commuting using non motorized vehicles.
- The potential for increased tourist activity in our region, given improved trail features.
- The need for family friendly routes, give these travel and tourist increases.
- The recognition of the importance of this crossing in national biking routes.
- The developing consensus on the public need for safe and healthful recreational activities for our region.

For all these reasons, planning on the Gateway Crossing should include safe passage for bikers and hikers. At a minimum the plan cannot preclude development of this crossing in the future due to technical or physical obstructions that will make this construction impossible or impossibly expensive.

Thank you for providing the leadership needed to plan for these clear future directions, as established in national planning documents and as they are growing in the public mind.

- **Received by e-mail from Kevin Leucke, Lead Planner, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin:**
 - The plan does a very good job summarizing the existing conditions in the region as well as the public participation process that went into the plan’s development.
 - Please change the font of the “sad fact” boxes to something more legible; I understand the desire to add some character to the plan, but these pull-out boxes are often hard to read. **ACTION:** Deleted.
 - Please include WisDOT’s policy position that bikes and pedestrians are to be accommodated as a matter of course on all transportation projects and only excluded in exceptional circumstances. **ACTION:** None. This is addressed in section 4.2.4 page 4-8 and in Appendix D pages D-1 to D-2.
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 1:** Recommend that all new arterials and collectors should have bicycle lanes, regardless of projected traffic volume rather than those with an ADT greater than 10,000 (4-10). **ACTION:** None. The ADT limit was obtained from *Innovative Bicycle Treatments* from the Institute of Transportation Engineers.
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 1:** Recommend that all gutters should be bicycle compliant regardless of street’s designation as a bike route or the presence of other bike facility (4-11). **ACTION:** Recommendation changed to say: “Gutters shall be constructed so that the seam has minimum impact on a bicyclist’s line of travel.”
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 1:** Recommend that all drainage grates must be bicycle compliant regardless of street’s designation as a bike route or the presence of other bike facility (4-11). **ACTION:** Recommendation changed to say: “Bicycle-friendly drainage grates shall be installed whenever new curb and gutter is installed.”
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 1:** In general, the cutoff of 10,000 ADT for inclusion of bike lanes on urban streets is too high (4-11); for comparison we have been using a cutoff of 2,000 ADT for inclusion of bike lanes in the forthcoming City of Milwaukee bike plan. **ACTION:** None. The ADT limit was obtained from *Innovative Bicycle Treatments* from the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

- **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 1:** In general, the Share the Road signage cutoff of 45mph is too high (4-12); I would recommend sign usage “where appropriate” and on streets with posted speed limits of 35 mph or greater. **ACTION:** None. The cut-off is not 45 mph for all roads. The recommendation states: “Share the Road signage should be installed along arterials with more than 10,000 AADT and other roads with posted speeds of 45 mph or more on roads designated as bike routes or recommended for bicycle facilities.”
- **Chapter 4, Table 4-1:** The proposed 8-foot bike lanes will encourage vehicle parking or use as travel lanes. These lanes should define as buffered bicycle lanes (may be experimental) which will more clearly define them as bike lanes to motor vehicle drivers. **ACTION:** None. The scenario is unlikely to occur. The extra width is desired for adult tricycles and bicycles pulling trailers. We will, however, explore the concept of buffered bicycle lanes.
- **Chapter 4, Table 4-1:** For the 44’ ROW: Change the recommended 5’ bike lanes and 10’ parking lane to 6’ bike lanes and 8’ parking lane. **ACTION:** None. With the prevalence of large trucks (i.e. Dodge Rams, Hummers) parking on the streets, retaining a 10-ft wide parking lane and a 5-ft bike lane will provide a greater buffer for the bicyclist than striping at 8 ft and having the vehicle encroach into the bike lane.
- **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 4:** Include encourage municipalities to add bike parking requirements to their zoning codes anywhere they have motor vehicle parking requirements. **ACTION:** None. Addressed under Goal 2, Objective 3 on page 4-16 (model bicycle parking ordinance).
- **Chapter 4, Goal 2, Objective 3:** Include snow removal on off-street bikeways concurrent with snow clearing on streets if they are intended to serve as transportation facilities (as the plan intends). **ACTION:** None. This is already a policy of the municipalities.
- **Maps:** Is it possible to reduce number of symbols or create multiple maps showing the same things that a single map now shows? Map 4-4 has 25 symbols and is very difficult to decipher. **ACTION:** None. Separating the symbols into different maps would eliminate the context of the bicycling system. The maps are meant to be used with the detailed tables. Creating one map per symbol could be done, but the time and cost to do so would not add to the usefulness of the recommendations.
- **Chapter 6:** The recommendation of 10 miles of bike lane by 2015 and 30 by 2035 seems extremely low for a region with over 1,000 miles of urban roadway. The phase in time for these lanes also seems very slow (only 1 mile per year from 2015 to 2035). I recognize that this is the MPO plan and that specific communities, especially La Crosse, will define many of their own bike lanes in their own plan, but I expected

- considerably higher recommendations. **ACTION:** None. The recommendations include a variety of bicycle accommodations to fit within the existing urban constraints. We are recommending a total of 27 miles of dedicated bicycle facilities by 2015 and 80 miles by 2035.
- **Chapter 6:** Table 6-1 is confusing: are the targets new miles or total miles? A little clarifying text will fix this. **ACTION:** Added the word “new” to the introductory paragraph for Table 6-1.
 - **Appendix E:** E-3: Diagram improperly shows sharrow along side travel lane. Please see the attached diagram for a better layout of how sharrows should be deployed. **ACTION:** None. The diagram borrowed from the City of Seattle represents sharrows with parking and curbside sharrows—both of which are recommended as treatments in the planning area. The MUTCD allows for the use of the sharrow symbol at 4 ft from the curb for curbside sharrows and at 11 ft from the curb when used with parking.
 - **Appendix E:** E-5: Recommend skip-striping both sides of the bike lane to increase visibility and awareness for motorists that they are crossing a bike lane. **ACTION:** None. We recommended the treatment illustrated in the *Bikeway Facility Design Manual*, Mn/DOT 2007. The recommendation does not preclude the use of skip striping on both sides if the treatment where preferred.
 - The plan is generally very good, although it could be more aggressive in some of its recommendations to ensure that bicycles are being fully accommodated as a transportation mode on all streets. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about my comments and recommendations.
- **Received by e-mail from Vicki Christopherson, citizen:**

The idea of having a special lane for bikes would be very beneficial. I would like to see the bike lanes a different color. Something green mixed into the concrete so the lane can be distinguished from the road. The green would match bike signs. Just an idea to help drivers and bikers. **ACTION:** None taken in the plan. We have discussed this at the committee level and will consider implementing such a treatment when appropriate.
 - **Received by e-mail from Chris Pinkowski, citizen:**

What an amazing piece of work you have all done! I have one concern: On at least one of the bike routes through residential areas (for example, 22nd St), there are a number of uncontrolled intersections—cross streets without stop signs—that seem to pose a hazard to safe travel by bike or car. I know that I tend to avoid biking 22nd St for this reason. Would it be possible to reduce the number of such intersections while at the same time not encouraging the use of these streets by automobiles as cross-town shortcuts?

Thanks for all your work on behalf of cyclists. I bike to work 9 months out of the year. The rest of my family rarely uses an automobile for in-town trips during the warmer months. **ACTION:** None taken in the plan. The BPAC will work with the municipalities to integrate traffic calming measures along bike routes.

▪ **Received direct comment from Jim Nisson, Fish & Wildlife Service, and Marc Schultz, Town of Onalaska:**

Accommodations for bicyclists consistent with the Brice Prairie Master Plan should be recommended on CTH Z, CTH ZZ, CTH ZB, and CTH ZN. **ACTION:** We changed the recommendations to include bike lanes on those segments of the aforementioned county roads to provide local connections and circulation among residents, the Great River State Trail, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Center, and a proposed overlook.

▪ **Received by e-mail from Ryan Gaug of Mn/DOT:**

- The 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan is an attractive, clean, and well formatted bicycle plan covering the La Crosse Area Planning Committee’s urbanized area. The plan makes good use of visualization techniques and goes to great lengths to make clear to bicyclist of all types the existing conditions. Additionally, the inclusion of performance measures for the first time in this plan is laudable.
- In reviewing the plan and cross referencing the comments of four reviewers, one theme was recurring: the plan often makes mention of a characteristic of Wisconsin (e.g., existing law, funding levels, etc.) but no corresponding mention of Minnesota. Specific examples are found on the following pages: 3-22, 3-33, 4-5, 4-8, 4-17, 6-2 and in several section of Chapter 5. While we recognize that the large majority of LAPC’s planning area is in Wisconsin, we’d like to see some reference to Minnesota if possible. **ACTION:** With regards to funding levels, the following sentence was added to the text, “Please note that in most cases applicable to state appropriations, information related to Minnesota appropriations was unavailable.” Page 3-22: Done. Law was not enacted when chapter was published. Page 3-33: None. The discussion is for the whole of the planning area. We had no reported bicycle/motor vehicle crashes in the Minnesota portion of the planning area. Page 4-5: Done. Law was not enacted when chapter was done. Page 4-8: Text was added to include, “Many states and municipalities have adopted Complete Streets policies to ensure all modes are considered in street design. To date, Complete Streets bills have been introduced into the Minnesota legislature, but they have not yet been voted into law.” Page 4-17: None. There is no exclusive reference to Wisconsin. Page 6-2: None. We were unable to find a similar law for Minnesota.

- **Section 1.1 Introduction:** Consider including greater discussion of livability, recreation, and transportation choices as they relate to the goals of this plan. **ACTION:** None.
- **Section 1.3 Goals for the Planning Process, Goal to Create Mapping Products:** 1) Consider using today’s technology delivery methods (e.g., Cyclopath, Google Bike, Facebook, etc.). 2) State the goal more clearly in the narrative if this is to be completed as part of the implementation of the plan. **ACTION:** 1) None. We will take under advisement. 2) Done.
- **Section 1.3 Goal to establish bicycling as a sustainable transportation option:** 1) Consider restating the goal as follows: Establish bicycling as sustainable transportation. 2) Review and cite federal policies that reinforce biking as a mode. **ACTION:** 1) None. The goals and objectives were developed through the public process (see page 4-8 and Appendix C). 2) None. This is already addressed in the Introduction (quote by Ray LaHood).
- **Section 1.3 Goal to regionalize the BPAC:** State more clearly in the narrative if the goal is to have all communities in the LAPC represented on the BPAC. **ACTION:** Done.
- **Section 1.4 Existing plans:** In the list of projects that necessitated re-evaluation, consider adding 3) Development of the Wagon Wheel Trail. **ACTION:** None. As we reviewed the La Crescent plan, we felt the planning for the Wagon Wheel Trail was good and is going forward with construction in 2011, so we don’t feel it’s necessary to comment on the Wagon Wheel planning.
- **Chapter 2 Public Process:** Consider inclusion of greater detail relating to the timeline of the public process and key dates and/or a schedule of events rather than just in Appendix C. This would benefit Chapter 2 in a number of ways, including its expansion to more than just two pages. **ACTION:** None. We think the detailed discussion is best left to an appendix for those who may be interested in such information.
- **Chapter 3 Existing Conditions:** 1) The “sad facts” call outs have good information that could perhaps be presented differently or with different terminology. 2) Consider referencing the new AASHTO bicycle facility guide under 3.2.1 bike lanes. This will aid in keeping the plan from becoming outdated. 3) Note that the new AASHTO bicycle facility guide no longer refers to Class A, B, and C riders. 4) Consider the inclusion of a map or maps highlighting the areas problematic for bicycle travel (page 3-24) under section 3.3.1 Manmade Barriers to Bicycle Travel. **ACTION:** 1) Deleted. 2) None. AASHTO is referenced throughout the document, including the guide. 3) Thank you for letting us know, but we have not had access to the new guide. The class A, B, and C terms are familiar here and will remain in the

- current document. We will update the terminology in the next update. 4) Good idea, but time precludes adding it to the document at this time. We plan to include such information on our bike route map.
- **Chapter 4 Recommendations:** The introductory paragraph states that the overall intent of this plan is to increase “the number of trips by bicycle while decreasing the number of trips by personal vehicle in the planning area.” Is this consistent with your Long Range Plan? **ANSWER:** Yes. Our overall planning goal is to reduce congestion on our roadways and increasing the number of bicyclists is one of our transportation demand management actions.
 - **Chapter 4, 4.2 Current Practice:** The Minnesota Legislature recently passed an unchanging red light law (H.F. 2616) allowing bicyclists to proceed through a red light at actuated signals – this should be noted in this section. **ACTION:** Done.
 - **Chapter 4, 4.2.4 Engineering:** Referencing the new AASHTO bicycle facility guide (though still in draft form). This will aid in keeping the plan from becoming outdated. **ACTION:** None. The main section is on current practice. Referencing the new guide is best left for section 4.3 recommended actions. The guide is referenced on page 4-10 of this section.
 - **Chapter 4, 4.3.1 Goals to Accommodate Bicycle Travel:** The strategies beneath each goal should be numbered in some way to make them more easily referenced. In at least one instance the narrative references a strategy by number, but there is no associated number listed. **ACTION:** The words “Strategy 3” was removed.
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 1:** States that bicycle accommodations should be designed into all roadway projects. Consider rephrasing to state that bicycle accommodations are “considered” in all roadway projects. **ACTION:** None. Discussion at the BPAC level revealed disagreement with using the word “consider.” The strategy comments are based on an old version of chapter 4. Much of the text under this goal was modified as a result of working with our TAC and BPAC.
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 3:** Consider New Strategy: Work with League of American Bicyclists to establish Bicycle Friendly Businesses and Bicycle Friendly Communities designation. **ACTION:** None. This comment does not relate to this goal and objective. Comment based on old version of chapter? La Crosse is already designated a Bicycle Friendly Community and Onalaska is applying for such designation.
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 4:** Consider New Strategy: Provide a mix of parking facilities including racks, lockers, covered facilities, etc. Subsequently develop a map highlighting the locations of these facilities. **ACTION:** None. Actions under Goal 2 Objective 3 and Goal 5 Objective 1 meet the spirit of this comment. Existing parking

- facilities are already mapped and illustrated in maps 3-19 and 4-8. Those facilities will also be part of the information provided on the bike route map we are currently working on.
- **Chapter 4, Goal 1, Objective 5:** 1) Consider New Strategy: Develop a wayfinding/sign plan to enhance multimodal connections. 2) Consider New Strategy: Develop an ADA Transition Plan. 3) Consider developing a map and/or weblink to show proposed shuttle service routes. **ACTION:** 1) None. See pages 4-91 through 4-95 and page 6-3. 2) None. The cities already have sidewalk plans in place. 3) None. We need to determine the routes first.
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 2:** As noted above, consider rewording this goal as follows: “Promote Bicycling as Sustainable Transportation.” **ACTION:** None. We developed these goals through the public process (see page 4-8 and Appendix C).
 - **Chapter 4, Goal 3, Objective 3:** Consider New Strategy: Develop an educational course aimed at a law enforcement audience. **ACTION:** None. We will take under advisement.
 - **Chapter 5 Financial Plan:** Consider a high-level discussion of possible strategies to accomplish the long-range projects. **ACTION:** None. These projects are illustrative and will be reconsidered annually as the plan is re-evaluated (see last implementation step on page 6-4).
 - **Chapter 6 Implementation and Evaluation:** Consider including a broad description of implementation steps for the mid- and long-range projects. **ACTION:** None. The projects and process will be evaluated annually as stated in the last implementation step on page 6-4.

Please note that all of the goals and objectives were developed through the public process (see page 4-8 and Appendix C).