

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an assessment of the recommendations from the 2030 metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) completed in 2005 and its supporting modal plans, new recommendations categorized by the five E's (enforcement, encouragement, education, emergency services, and engineering), and next steps for LAPC staff to complete and/or facilitate over the next five years (2011-2015). This chapter incorporates recommendations from the *2008-2015 Transit Development Plan for the La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility* (TDP) adopted in 2007 and the *2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan* ("regional bicycle plan" for short) adopted in 2010 when feasible. Some recommendations are incorporated by reference.

### GOALS FOR THE MTP

The recommendations provided in this chapter strive to achieve the goals of the eight planning factors (chapter 2), the goals from the 2005 MTP update (below) as reaffirmed through our committee structure and public contacts, and the goals of the TDP and bike plan.

- Provide safe and continuous pedestrian and bicycle connections within and between communities so as to promote non-motorized work, school, and shopping trips, as well as recreational trips.
- Promote and maintain a safe and effective transit system that can operate as a viable transportation alternative in both an urban and regional context.
- Provide a safe, convenient, efficient, and economical multimodal transportation system that meets the needs of citizens, businesses, and visitors, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.
- Ensure the safe, efficient, and economical movement of goods within and through the region.
- Promote safe, efficient, and economical land use development that seeks to protect the region's cultural and natural resources.
- Provide a safe and efficient roadway system that promotes economic prosperity, improves local and regional connections, utilizes innovative operations, and preserves and enhances existing facilities.
- Enhance knowledge of and promote public involvement in local and regional transportation issues and processes.
- Enhance and protect the region's natural resources.

### THE 5 E'S

#### ENFORCEMENT

Laws and public policies are enacted to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people and to reflect the values of a community. Enforcement is the process by which to “compel observance of or obedience to” a law or policy. From a transportation standpoint, regulating how communities and transportation infrastructure are built can affect travel behavior. The ultimate goal is to build infrastructure to a standard that encourages a desired behavior (i.e. reduced speeding and red-light running) and thus reduces the need for formal enforcement.

#### Achievements and Ongoing Activities

Although the LAPC is an advisory agency and not an enforcement agency, staff has worked toward improving enforcement of the rules and regulations for the operation on and maintenance of our transportation infrastructure. Through inventories and assessments, the TDP and bicycle plan identify such major issues as ice- and snow-filled sidewalks and ramps, disregard of the rules of the road by motorists and bicyclists, and illegal parking. The plans then offer recommendations to address those issues. Ongoing activities to assist enforcement include:

- LAPC staff attending Highway Safety Commission (HSC) meetings.
- LAPC staff serving as the disseminator of bicyclist infrastructure concerns (as posted to the Coulee Bikes Web site) to the appropriate agency.
- LAPC staff and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) members educating the public at local events (i.e. Earth Day, Bike to Work Week, conferences).
- Retaining a liaison from the La Crosse Police Department on the BPAC.

#### Recommendations

- Continue with ongoing activities.
- Expand list of enforcement personnel on LAPC committee contact lists.
- Encourage communities and Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to incorporate traffic calming measures into their road projects.
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy (La Crosse County and MPO member communities).

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- Encourage planning, engineering, and public works departments to adopt design standards that reduce the need for traffic enforcement.
- Other enforcement recommendations as presented in the TDP and the regional bicycle plan.

### ENCOURAGEMENT

“Encouragement” involves recommending actions that promote, advance, or foster a desired behavior such as increasing the number of people walking and biking or decreasing the number of single-occupancy vehicles. Development practices that provide multimodal facilities give residents and visitors travel choices and thus encourage travelers to use modes they have not in the past been able to use.

Many of the recommendations are policy-based and can be used as tools for enforcement, also.

### Achievements and Ongoing Activities

Through the Transit Coordinating Council (TCC), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), and La Crosse County planning staff, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) has encouraged travel by bicycling, walking, transit, and carpooling.

- The bike plan recommends strategies that, if implemented, will increase the number of trips taken by bicycle.
- The TDP recommends strategies to improve the pedestrian environment to and at transit stops as well as strategies that improve the reliability of transit and access to transit through modifications to MTU route alignments. MTU will implement the recommended route changes (with some modifications) with the opening of the new transit center.
- The new transit center with its mixed-income and mixed-use design is an example of transit-oriented development in the region.
- LAPC staff worked with County staff to implement a transit pass program at La Crosse County. This program has been in effect since January 2009.
- La Crosse County planning staff established an informal County employee carpooling program while La Crosse County Aging Unit staff incorporated Wisconsin’s carpooling program into its Find-A-Ride program.

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- The SRTS coordinator has helped La Crosse and Onalaska receive federal grants to purchase bicycle racks, stanchions, and signage to encourage walking and biking to school.

### Recommendations

- Continue working with stakeholders to implement the TDP and bike plan.
- Complete a pedestrian safety action plan.
- Enact a Complete Streets policy at the County and municipal levels.
- Create a regional bike route map.
- Municipalities and counties in the planning area should:
  - Amend zoning/development regulations to REQUIRE bicycle parking at new commercial, public, and multifamily residential developments. Minimum design guidelines for parking facilities and types should also be addressed in the ordinance.
  - Amend development regulations to require bicycle paths and trails as a discretionary condition of development.
  - Amend development regulations to require sidewalk provisions as recommended by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
  - Modify zoning requirements to establish maximum parking spaces and shared-parking.
  - Modify zoning regulations to require adequate off-street loading docks or spaces at new and renovated businesses.
- The incorporated communities should develop transit-oriented development (TOD) plans.
- The incorporated municipalities should modify zoning regulations to include incentive zoning.
- Other encouragement recommendations as presented in the TDP and the regional bicycle plan.

### EDUCATION

Roadway users need to be educated about the rules of the road for all users so that motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike know how to interact with other users. Education coupled with enforcement will increase the safety of all users.

#### Achievements and Ongoing Activities

- LAPC staff and BPAC members provide educational materials on walking and biking at display booths at local events.
- LAPC staff presents at local advocacy group meetings.
- LAPC staff assists the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Coordinator and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator.

#### Recommendations

- Continue educating the public through the activities listed above.
- Make educational materials available to the public on the Web, at public kiosks, at local establishments, and at the MPO office.
- Other education recommendations as presented in the TDP and the regional bicycle plan.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

FHWA characterizes causes of roadway congestion as recurring (peak commuter traffic) and non-recurring (i.e. incidents, weather, and work zones). Non-recurring events are responsible for 50 percent of all roadway congestion, with incidents (crashes and disabled vehicles) alone accounting for half. Secondary incidents (i.e. vehicles overheating or running out of fuel; subsequent crashes) account for approximately 20 percent of all incidents.

Because the main priorities of emergency responders at an incident are to rescue and remove people from the incident, protect responders (in 1997, nearly 40 percent of all law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty died in traffic) and the scene, minimize environmental damage, and investigate the incident, they often create a safety/work buffer around the incident. One lane out of three blocked will reduce roadway capacity by 50 percent and two lanes out of three blocked will reduce roadway capacity by 80 percent. (The average time for clearing incidents blocking

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one lane is 12 minutes.) Even minor lane-blocking incidents can have significant impacts on traffic if they are not removed quickly—especially if they occur during peak travel times. The “cascading” traffic congestion results in not only increasing the risk of secondary incidents but also impeding the ability to respond to unrelated medical emergencies, fires, and police calls.

### **Achievements and Ongoing Activities**

The LAPC has not yet engaged in formal emergency services planning. Staff does, however, communicate with County emergency management staff and participates on the HSC.

### **Recommendations**

- The LAPC should work with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), state departments of transportation (DOTs), and local jurisdictions to develop a regional traffic incident management (TIM) program.

## **ENGINEERING**

Engineering involves the design and operation of roads to a standard that provides an efficient and safe travel environment for all users (exclusive of user behavior).

### **Achievements and Ongoing Activities**

- A consultant completed the South La Crosse Transportation Study, which recommends access management strategies to address crash and congestion issues on USH 14/61 between Green Bay St and CTH M.
- A consultant is currently conducting the Coulee Connections Transportation Study, which will recommend a preferred alternative to address roadway congestion and safety issues in the La Crosse area.
- La Crosse County and LAPC staff conducted a study to determine the need for an intermodal rail freight facility. This study concluded such a facility was not feasible.
- LAPC staff completed a transit development plan that recommends improvements to route alignments.

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- LAPC staff completed a regional bicycle plan that recommends bicycle infrastructure to improve the safety and accessibility of bicyclists.
- La Crosse County Health and Human Services staff and the Healthy Living Collaboration (HLC) created a Community Action Plan (CAP) that includes goals, objectives, and performance measures to implement the regional bicycle plan.
- LAPC staff is collaborating with La Crosse County, the BPAC, the HLC, and local municipalities to implement the regional bicycle plan.
- The SRTS coordinator has helped La Crosse and Onalaska receive federal grants to improve walking and biking conditions near several schools and has in 2010 applied for infrastructure grants for La Crosse, Campbell, Holmen, and West Salem.

### Recommendations

- Continue to assist La Crosse County staff implement SRTS initiatives and CAP recommendations.
- Encourage WisDOT to select and construct a preferred alternative from the South La Crosse Transportation Study.
- Enact a Complete Streets policy at the county and municipal levels.
- Encourage municipal engineering and public works departments to adopt the ITE guide, *Context-Sensitive Solutions for Major Urban Thoroughfares in Walkable Communities*.
- Incorporate Complete Streets into the Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP-U) project prioritization criteria.
- Implement engineering recommendations in the regional bicycle plan.
- Identify the infrastructure needs of freight operators in the region.

### NEXT STEPS

#### STATUS OF 2005 MTP UPDATE TASKS

Several tasks were identified as “next steps” in the 2005 MTP update:

- **Transportation planning database.** The work to establish the database is complete; however, this is an ongoing task as new data are obtained and files are created.

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- **In-house traffic forecasting model.** We have obtained the model in-house and have received training. Maintenance of the data is the ongoing task and includes updates after Census data become available.
- **Pavement condition study and cost estimate methodology for street and highway needs.** The original hope with this task was to obtain access to Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) at the planning area geography to estimate costs. The DOT did not grant planning area-level access to LAPC staff, so this task is forwarded to the “new tasks” itemized below.
- **Transit Development Plan.** This plan was completed by LAPC staff in 2006 and adopted by the LAPC and the La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) in 2007.
- **Feasibility study for a Regional Transit Authority (RTA).** This task was found to be unnecessary because enabling legislation for several areas in Wisconsin was being created at the state level. The Policy Board opted for a “wait and see” action to see what happens at the state level.
- **Resurrecting the Transportation Management Association (TMA).** TMA activities are performed by existing LAPC technical committees and the need for another committee was deemed unnecessary.
- **Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI).** LAPC staff attempted creating a BCI for the planning area; however, much of the data needed were (and are) unavailable. LAPC staff does not have the capacity or the resources to obtain and maintain the needed data.
- **Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS).** LAPC staff assessed pedestrian LOS for transit accessibility, but, the methodology was transit-specific. The data needed to do a PLOS assessment are not readily available and, again, LAPC staff does not have the capacity or the resources to obtain and maintain the needed data.
- **Identifying local freight issues.** This task was limited to doing a survey of freight industries to assess the need for an intermodal rail freight facility and so is forwarded as a “new task.”
- **Transportation corridor study.** The Coulee Connections Transportation Study is in progress and will recommend improvements to address existing and future congestion south of Gillette St.
- **Information Resource Center.** LAPC staff has established the LAPC staff office as a resource center, but this is an ongoing task as materials need to be added, replaced, and updated regularly.

### NEW TASKS

- **Complete Streets Policy.** Work with the La Crosse County Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and the Healthy Living Collaboration (HLC) to create a Complete Streets Policy for La Crosse County and county municipalities.
- **Population and employment projections.** LAPC staff will complete projections for the travel model to be used for the 2015 MTP update.
- **Land use inventory.** LAPC staff will update the land use inventory for the planning area for use in the travel model for the 2015 MTP update.
- **Forecasting methodology for the Financial Plan.** LAPC staff will update the methodology for the forecasting of needs and future revenues in the Financial Plan to make better use of DOT pavement condition and funding data. Staff will improve the methodology used to estimate costs for maintenance and replacement of high-cost, non-linear infrastructure such as bridges, ramps and intersections.
- **Planning for major shifts in transportation planning characteristics.** The planning process for the 2015 MTP update will include a visioning process that considers:
  - Decreasing federal and state funding for increasing costs and need;
  - No longer anticipating “building our way out of congestion”;
  - Changes in mode choice, trip frequencies, and destinations due to an aging population;
  - Strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and,
  - Planning for sustainable and livable communities.
- **Modernize Coulee Visions.** This “workbook” was designed to educate community leaders about the relationship between transportation planning and land use, and to serve as an example of how plans can be developed. Our task will be to modernize the discussion to include Complete Streets and other sustainability concepts developed since the workbook was completed. The new “workbook” will then be made available on the LAPC web site.
- **Pedestrian Action Safety Plan.** As the title suggests, the 1994 Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of the MTP included a specific pedestrian element. The update of the plan with the *2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan* considers pedestrians in the light of basic and child bicyclists who tend to ride on sidewalks. A pedestrian element was intentionally excluded because of the scope of the bicycle plan and because of the intent to complete a pedestrian action plan during the 2015 MTP plan process.

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