Bicycling & Pedestrian Plan
La Crescent, MN

Winter, 2013

Executive Summary

Located in the southeast corner of Minnesota, La Crescent is nestled between the Mississippi River and picturesque bluffs overlooking the city. Rich in history and community pride, La Crescent, the "Apple Capital of Minnesota" is home to 5,114 residents. Another 4000 people live in an around La Crescent and identify our city as their community. Just across the river from La Crescent, 4.1 miles away, a very bikeable distance is La Crosse, Wisconsin. La Crosse is a major employment center for residents of La Crescent. We have the benefit of this much larger city, yet retain a small town atmosphere. Divided by only 4 miles from our destinations, these short distances are perfect for multiple forms of transportation.

It is the vision of La Crescent to be a vibrant community that encourages walking and bicycling for transportation and recreation. With this vision, La Crescent aspires to be recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community and a Walk Friendly Community.

This Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is prepared as an important step toward advancing the transportation network of La Crescent towards one that supports and encourages transportation for all users, ages and abilities. It is one that promotes the concept of Complete Networks which is a transportation system that makes necessary and adequate accommodations to ensure that all bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and transit riders are welcomed, protected, and respected.

The purpose of this plan is provide clear direction and commitment to refocus transportation priorities from moving vehicles to moving people, and for all projects to permit users of all transportation modes to move safely through the City. It is the intent to have a fully-developed and adopted plan for bicycle and pedestrian transportation networks to be ready as projects and grant opportunities arise.

The City recognizes that the health and well-being of its residents and economic success of the City depends on its transportation network. The City of La Crescent shall scope, plan, design, fund, construct, operate, and maintain all City streets to provide a comprehensive and integrated network of facilities that are safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities traveling by foot, bicycle, automobile, public transportation, and commercial vehicle. There shall be an adopted plan for each mode (walking, biking, transit and auto) that provides a network map that identifies transportation priorities. The City desires to improve and will strive to make safety, mobility, and accessibility a high priority for all corridor users to encourage more walking and bicycling as way to improve public health.

The City's transportation network was reviewed and analyzed to determine the current conditions with respect to bicycling and walking. The categories known as the "Five E's": Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation were used as the basis for analysis of current conditions and recommendations. Upon this thorough examination of La Crescent, a series of benchmarks were established that comprise the to-do list of this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The sections that follow summarize the key recommendations that will

guide La Crescent in diversifying, strengthening, and improving the City to encourage walking and bicycling for transportation and recreation.

Top Ten Recommendations:

The following recommendations in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan were popular among participants at public meetings, school leaders, City, County staff as well stakeholders interested in improving the bicycling and walking environment in and around La Crescent.

1. Identify critical pedestrian crossings and improve with pavement markings, signs, and traffic control devices.
2. Establish pedestrian and bicycle networks with increased access to employment centers, commerce, and educational institutions.
3. Make connections between on-street bike facilities and the parks and schools by establishing a signed neighborhood bikeway network.
4. Reduce travel speeds on County Road 6/25 and North Elm Street.
5. Implement a plan to correct blind entrances, such as alley ways, eliminate tripping hazards and sidewalk gaps.
6. Create pedestrian connections, off trail, between neighborhoods: Veterans park and by the high school.
7. Appoint a Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator who would be a member of the Park and Recreation Commission, report to the City Administrator, or be a member of the Planning Commission and establish a standing member on the Bicycle, Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) for the LAPC.
8. Complete a connected network of directional signs for bicycle routes, parks and community recreational facilities.
9. Create a safe walking and biking loop utilizing the Wagon Wheel Trail, Twilight district and 14/61.
10. Begin work on redesign of south 3rd street to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

These benchmarks are intended to be met through an expansion of the City's current practices with respect to the sidewalk repair program, the Safe Routes to School implementation plan, and improved coordination with private development, state, and regional agencies that will be implemented over several years. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan includes the following highlights:

Engineering:

- Increase the number of on-street bicycle facilities. More than 19 miles of on-street bicycle facilities are recommended.
- Complete a continuous Wagon Wheel Trail that forms a circuit down Shore Acres and back onto highway 14/61.
- Develop a network of neighborhood bikeways. These streets still allow automobile traffic, but include innovative treatments to reduce speeding, cut-through traffic, and encourage travel speeds that are comfortable for everyone.
- Increase the number of streets with sidewalks; this plan identifies where they are most necessary. In some areas, due to the steepness and topography sidewalks are not reasonable. Revisions to the design of the road to include wide shoulders can address the need to accommodate pedestrians while also ameliorating winter snow maintenance and drainage concerns.
- Utilize traffic calming strategies on specific roads with high pedestrian/bicycle, such as: North Elm, County Road 6 and 25 intersections, and South 7th street.
- Install wayfinding signage with distance that correlates with area regional signage plan to enhance uniformity and increase comprehension.

Education and Encouragement:

- Continue Safe Routes to School encouragement and educational programming. Explore interagency coordination to take advantage of not-for-profit and public agency educational resources.
- Conduct educational campaigns on bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Continue training programs for school staff, public officials, law enforcement officials as well as the public providing information on best practices and behaviors that are shown to keep all roadway users safe.
- Promote intermodal travel between public transport and bicycles, e.g. market and educate bike rack on buses option, explore utilizing public transport as an education tool for all elementary & middle school students.
- Continue information programs to promote bicycling for all purposes, and to communicate the many benefits of bicycling to residents and businesses (e.g. bicycle maps, public relations campaigns, neighborhood rides, a ride with the Mayor, City Council members, etc.).

Enforcement:

- Enforce traffic laws to improve the safety and comfort of all road users, with a particular focus on behaviors and attitudes that cause motor vehicle/bicycle crashes.
- Continue collaborative crossing guard program with the school district at high risk locations.
- Develop a policy within the police department to educate, address, and uphold laws with respect to pedestrians and pedestrian safety.
- Continue targeted enforcement programs at hazardous intersections, roads and locations with abundant pedestrian and cyclist activity, i.e. South 7th Street by the pool, Cedar and South 11th Street.
- Set up mobile speed feedback signs along La Crescent streets to reduce speeding and determine where enforcement measures would be most beneficial. Police resources are limited, so installing speed feedback signs help to collect data on where speeding may be a problem.

Evaluation (and Planning):

- Develop response tab on the City's webpage, or Smartphone applications, to collect resident feedback on maintenance needs, safety concerns and ongoing improvements.
- Ensure all City policies, plans, codes, and programs are updated and implemented to take advantage of every opportunity to create a more bicycle/pedestrian-friendly community.
- Establish a citywide, multi-disciplinary committee for non-motorized mobility to submit to the Mayor/Council (e.g. incorporate this committee into the Park and Recreation Committee with consistent agenda items and reports).
- Employ a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator to manage the implementation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations (e.g. this could be a collaborative position with other communities).
- Become a Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) through the League of American Bicyclists and a Walk Friendly Community (WFC) to recognize and promote our walkable and bikeable community as well as provide a framework for improvement.

Existing Conditions Report

This report provides an overview of the existing conditions of the City of La Crescent with respect to its bicycle and pedestrian network. This background provides the drive for development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The preparation of this plan was lead by the Steering Committee, which was comprised of the City Administrator, Planning Commissioners, Active Living La Crescent a Non-profit organization, Alta Planning + Design a National transportation consulting firm as well as various other stake holders interested in improving the bicycling and walking environment in and around La Crescent. Funding was provided by Active Living La Crescent, the City and a grant from the MnDOT made available through the La Crosse Metropolitan Planning Organization the La Crosse Area Planning Commission. All are acknowledged and thanked for their generous support of time and funding.

General Comments

There was consensus that La Crescent is well suited for bicycling and walking. The City is fairly flat, compact, making distances between destinations manageable. The City already has a good base for the network with many sidewalks, some bike lanes and facilities and existing green space ready for trail development. Consistent critical identified issues from surveys completed by The Minnesota Design Team, fall 2008, Active Living La Crescent, Spring 2009, and the Safe Routes to School Parent Survey, Winter 2010, all rank trail expansion, increased sidewalks, and bike facilities (lanes, trail, racks) as the most desirable and most critical identified priority issues for our community.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Network:

The older portion of the City is set up on a grid system and has a relatively good existing sidewalk network, which is an asset; with the exception of the newer developments especially on the bluffs and hillsides. One of the challenges the City faces is to fill in the gaps where sidewalks were not installed during development or where new development occurs. New developments are now required to install sidewalks when the property is developed. Another challenge the City faces is the steep terrain that would require large retaining walls and expensive engineering to establish a sidewalk.

The primary concern raised for pedestrians was difficult street crossings. One of the significant challenges to creating better pedestrian and bicycle networks is that there are only three exit/entrances into the City, (North 4th Street, South 3rd and South 14th) with one major inner arterial running the North /South length of the community, Elm Street and one outer, Highway 14/61. These thoroughfares are located by our schools and are heavily traveled by vehicles, especially during the peak hours of the morning and evening. They are intimidating or unsafe to many bicyclists and difficult to cross on foot or by bicycle.

Stakeholders agreed that the recent bicycle facilities, and bike lanes have improved conditions for bicyclist and a dramatic increase in use has resulted. The facilities, however, are not part of a complete network. Two additional concerns were raised in that too many bicyclists are riding on the sidewalks, riding the wrong direction, and making improper turns.

Specific Concerns/Problem Intersections:

In addition to the general concerns noted above, several specific locations were repeatedly noted:

- South 3rd and Oak Street
- South 3rd and 14/61 (traffic light timing & right hand turn)
- S. 14th and Spruce Drive
- S. 11th and Cedar
- S. 11th and Redwood
- S. 7th and Cedar
- Jonathan and Fireside

- N. 2nd and 14/61
- Shore Acres and 14/61

Plan Review:

Several plans have been developed by outside agencies that will have an impact on the bicycle and pedestrian network/planning process in the City of La Crescent. These plans are summarized.

La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2004)

In January 2004, the La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was prepared by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) as part of the long-range transportation plan and multi-modal transit plan for the La Crosse area. This plan was included for additional study and refinement and its intentions were to move specific projects out of the conceptual planning stage into implementation. The plan focused on three general projects, which are summarized as corridors A, B, and C.

- Corridor A: Elm Street, Seventh Street and Local connections.
- Corridor B: La Crescent to La Crosse.
- Corridor C: Root River Trail to Winona.

The plan identified objectives and principles intended to help La Crescent achieve these goals. In addition, the plan identified specific projects and components to budget into the City of La Crescents Capital Improvements Program and the LAPC Transportation Improvement Program; many that are still in existence today. The proposed bikeway map in the plan provided a network of bike lanes and paths, some parts of which have been incorporated into more recent plans.

Comprehensive Plan (1999)

The comprehensive Plan was compiled in May 1999 and is scheduled to be redone in 2013. The plan outlines the key elements in the transportation system in La Crescent:

- A transportation system that has an identifiable entrance to City.
- A transportation system that is efficient and integrate with road networks.
- A transportation system that provides for alternative forms of transportation and improved public transportation and a reduction of hazards.

Zoning/ Ordinance Plan (2010)

The Zoning Ordinance was revised in 2010 and included encouragement for change, including: urban density around the urban core; traditional neighborhoods on smaller lots and alleys on future annexed lands; provisions for mixed use; and a mandate for connecting neighborhoods, providing sidewalks and bonuses for park land.

2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan (2010)

The 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan (Regional Bike Plan) was developed by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) in May 2010. The purview of the LAPC is the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), which includes the City of La Crescent, La Crosse and portions of La Crosse County in Wisconsin and portions of Houston and Winona Counties in Minnesota. The Regional Bike Plan makes recommendations in support of the following goals:

1. Improve the mobility of bicyclists
2. Promote bicycling as a sustainable transportation alternative to driving automobiles
3. Increase the safety of all bicyclists in the region
4. Promote bicycle-friendly land use policies

5. Make the La Crosse/MPA a bicycling destination

These recommendations cover the five E's: education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation. Recommendations for accommodating bicyclists on streets were developed considering a number of factors, including existing roadway width and number of lanes, traffic volumes and speeds, and land use. On-street bikeway recommendations consisted of bike lanes, shared bicycle/parking lanes, striped travel lanes, and signed routes. Trails were also recommended as off-road facilities. These facilities made up recommended local and recreational bike routes.

In total, more than 20 recommendations for facilities within the City of La Crescent were included in the Regional Bike Plan. These recommendations include general recommendations to be implemented by all communities with the MPA as well as specific, community-based improvements, such as facility recommendations. Some of the facilities that were recommended for La Crescent are listed in table 1 below.

Segment	Recommended Treatment Facility
I 90 Dresbach Bridge	Separated bike path.
CSAH 6 between the planning area boundary and Elm St	Install bike lanes between Pine Creek Rd and Elm St. Remove parking from one side of 7th St between Elm St and CSAH 25.
3rd St S between Elm St and TH 14/61	Convert 3rd St between Elm St and Walnut St to a 3-lane roadway with bike lanes.
14th St S between Skunk Hollow Rd and TH 14/61	Install bike lanes. Parking is currently restricted between La Crescent High School and TH 14/61. Remove parking from one side of the road west of the high school to Skunk Hollow.
Wagon Wheel Trail between S 1st St and Shore Acres Rd and between Shore Acres Rd and TH 14/61	This trail will be built in phases beginning with Phase I in 2013. The trail, with a trailhead at the existing brush dump, will be constructed between S Chestnut St and Shore Acres Rd in Phase I. Phase II involves Shore Acres Rd to TH 14/61; and Phase III involves trail crossings of TH 14/61 into La Crescent (bridge) and at the West Channel Bridge (over- or underpass). Two full-service trailheads are recommended: one at the old brush dump on the Wagon Wheel Trail and one to the east of Chestnut St near the old Commodore.

The LAPC included illustrations for the design of bike lanes and shared lane markings in Appendix E of the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan, adopted on May 19, 2011. The recommended standards are based on American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and other standards. The illustrations were selected to be specific to the recommendations in the 2035 Regional Bicycle Plan and do not represent the complete guidance offered by AASHTO.

La Crescent Park and Recreation Plan (2013)

The Parks and Recreation Plan build on the successes of the 1994 plan to achieve an economically sustainable park and open space system. The plan identifies multiple trail developments and connections. A few of these proposals are:

- Continue development of trail system in Eagle Bluff Park, Vetsch Park and Vollenwielder Park.
- Improve Highway 14/61/16 for bicyclists and pedestrian crossing which separates the community from the Mississippi River and its adjacent lowland areas.
- Expand the La Crescent Area Historical Society's Historic Walking & Biking Trails.
- Create a trail connection from Vets Park to Eagles Bluff Park.

The Park and Recreation Plan also establish the objective of upgrading signs and maps for outdoor recreational facilities.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Volumes

Active Living La Crescent conducted a survey in the spring of 2009 of La Crescent residents to measure knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to active living and community design. The survey revealed that 39% of the respondents walked or biked for functional purposes and 3% walked or biked to work (they did not break out "walk" and "bike"). More than half of the respondents stated they would be more active if bike facilities were available.

Volunteers from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Active Living La Crescent conducted bicycle counts at major intersections during the afternoon traffic peak in mid September of 2009. The counts were conducted for a 2 hr to 4 hr time period on one weekday. They are not factored to be representative of every day of the year. The point of the exercise was to show that bicyclists are out there in rather significant numbers.

Despite the lack of bicycle accommodations through the La Crescent TH 14/61 / MN 16 intersection, an average of 47 bicyclists per hour—the third highest count in the planning area—negotiated this intersection.

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking is an important element of the bicycle network. In 2010, the City of La Crescent in partnership with Active Living La Crescent and funds from the Statewide Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) purchased and installed over 30 bike racks adding to the community's 16 existing bike racks. La Crescent has a total of 46 bike racks with capacity for 212 bicycles throughout the City, with a concentration at the schools, parks and central business district.

Bicycles and Transit

The Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) installed bike racks on its bus fleet in 1999 to expand transit choices for residents in La Crescent and La Crosse. According to MTU, the bus bike racks were popular soon after their implementation and continue to rise in popularity and use. Biking and busing helps curb traffic congestion and preserve air quality. Consider the Bikes on MTU option for taking a bus to a park or bike path can make your trip safer and more fun.

Existing Policies, Ordinances, and Programs

City of La Crescent Policies and Ordinances

The City of La Crescent in section 70.07 of Chapter 70 Traffic Regulations prohibits bicycles on sidewalks in the business district, but also prohibits bicycles use of the roadway "when a useable path for bicycles has been provided adjacent to such roadway." Because the ordinance is not enforceable on U.S. or state roads, the City is modifying its ordinance to reflect Minnesota requirements for differentiating among the classes of roads.

The City of La Crescent's Restated Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 12 itemizes multiple provisions for sidewalks and pedestrian safety. The City of La Crescent requires the following:

- 12.22 Central Business District (CBD) Subd. 4L.2. Provides that drive -through lanes have adequate stacking distance, to prevent interference with sidewalks.
- 12.22 Central Business District Subd. Q1 provides that a sidewalk in the CBD shall be at least 6 feet wide and unencumbered by seating. Additional ordnances prevent service vehicles from blocking sidewalks.
- 12.10 General provisions Subd.6.I: states that no vehicle can be parked closer than one foot from a public sidewalk which provides improved safety of pedestrians on the sidewalk.
- 12.36 Requires that right of way widths be wide enough for public services including drainage, trails, sidewalks, utilities, and snow storage.
- 12.35 The sub development ordinance requires sidewalks on both sides of the streets of new residential sub divisions.
- City Ordnance Code Chapter 93:05 Subd. (I), states that an accumulation of snow, and/or ice on a public sidewalk is declared to be a public nuisance affecting the health and public safety which gives the City a right to achieve a remedy.

Improving the way the City and other agencies accomplish tasks to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in everyday activities is of greatest importance. Formal adoption of this Bicycle Pedestrian Plan by the council is the first step to improving biking and walking in La Crescent. This Plan establishes priorities for future sidewalk infill projects. Funding from SRTS and other sources including general funds will be used. In 2009 the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and the City installed 4,200 lineal feet of sidewalk where none previously existed. It is the City's intention to continue filling in the gaps identified on the Bicycle Pedestrian Plan and to make the bicycle and pedestrian network larger and more intricate. As funding is scarce, it will be important to identify opportunities for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian funding early and diligently.

State Regulations of Bicycles

General Rules of the Road: Chapter 169 Traffic Regulations of the Minnesota State Statutes establish the law defining how bicycles may operate. Both Minnesota and Wisconsin define a bicycle as a vehicle and require operation on the street in business districts unless operation on sidewalks is allowed by local ordinance. (A business district is defined by Chapter 340 of the Wisconsin State Statutes as the area alongside a roadway where half or more of the frontage for at least 300 feet is occupied by buildings engaged in business activities.) Bicycles have the right to operate on any roadway except on the interstate and freeways. If bicycles are allowed to operate on sidewalks by local ordinance then bicyclists must obey the same rules and regulations established for pedestrians.

The Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation (DOT's) summarize the rules of the road and providing other safety information for bicyclists on their Web sites. Both restate the State regulations that bicyclists operating as a vehicle on a roadway must:

- Obey all traffic control devices;
- Ride in the same direction as traffic;
- Use lights and reflectors when riding at night; and
- Signal turning intentions unless doing so severely restricts the ability to maintain control of the bicycle.

Bicyclists operating on a sidewalk are considered pedestrians and must:

- Obey pedestrian signs and signals;
- Give right-of-way to pedestrians;
- Give an audible warning when passing pedestrians; and
- Travel at a reasonable rate of speed.

Although not a law, both states recommend bicyclists wear a helmet. They also encourage bicyclists ride predictably (i.e. do not weave between parked cars) so motorists can anticipate bicyclist behavior.

County and State Policies

MnDOT Complete Streets Rules

The Minnesota Department of Transportation Complete Streets goal is an integrated transportation system that:

- Includes all modes of transportation (transit, freight, automobile, bicycle and pedestrian)
- Serves users of all types, ages and abilities

Minnesota Complete Streets Law

The Complete Streets language was part of the transportation policy bill signed by Governor Pawlenty on May 15, 2010. "Complete streets" is the planning, scoping, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. Complete streets considers the needs of motorists, pedestrians, transit users and vehicles, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections, and crossings in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and recognizes that the needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) Complete Streets Policy

The LAPC shall work with the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation; the Counties of La Crosse, Houston, and Winona ; the communities within the metropolitan planning area; and the LAPC's other planning partners in Minnesota and Wisconsin to ensure that the needs and safety of all modes are considered in all roadway projects planned and programmed within the planning area.

LAPC included an overview of Traffic Regulations pertaining to bicycling, based on State Statutes. The regulations pertaining to bicycles in Chapter 169 Traffic Regulations of the Minnesota Statutes are identical in intent to the regulations pertaining to bicycles in the Wisconsin Statues (Chapter 346), with the exception that Minnesota requires motorists to pull into the bike lane when making a right turn. Wisconsin Statutes do not address motorists turning right in relation to a bike lane.

Programs

Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)

- Increased active travel behavior (biking and walking to school) of elementary students rose from 9% in 2009 to 19.6% in 2012.
- 2013 is the 4th consecutive semester that the High school leadership class chaperoned weekly walking school buses in four locations; in 2012, 970 trips were taken and over 749 miles were walked.
- The City's schools earned five Walk and Bike to School Week 'Golden Shoe and Silver Spoke' Awards, four years in a row, competing against 17 other schools in the region.
- Annually, all 3rd and 4th grade elementary students review Safe Cycling Skills and Rules of the Road with Bicycle Safety Bags.
- For additional information on La Crescent's SRTS program go to www.lacrescentsaferoutes.weebly.com

Brain Booster Program

- The Brain Booster Program was developed in partnership with the La Crosse County Safe Routes to School Coordinators and Active Living La Crescent. Its purpose is to increase students and teachers understanding of how physical activity affects learning and increase student's activity levels. The Brain Booster program provides evidence based information on how physical activity affects learning and provides resources for teachers to use with students.
- 100% of the Crucifixion Elementary School participated in 2012 in the Brain Booster program, incorporating physical activity breaks in the classroom, which resulted in over 17 hour's additional physical activity of students during the school day over a four week period.

Lifelong Fitness Coalition

- Mission: to provide youth and the community lifelong fitness opportunities to increase health. The goal is exposure and skill development for: bicycling, training for 5 K run/walks, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, hiking, rollerblading, fishing, disk golf etc.
- The First Annual Middle School 5k Fit for Life Fun Run 400 middle students completed the race and raised over $4000 to purchase 40 bicycles to be used in Physical Education Class, grades 5 through 10th.
- In 2011, 34 pairs of snowshoes were purchased and made available to the students and community through partnership with Community Education, Boys and Girls Club and ISD 300.

Bike Fest

- The La Crescent Bike Fest is held on an annual basis and involves children, parents and community members in the safety aspects of bicycling. The Fest offers an obstacle course teaching safe riding skills, bike helmet fittings, bike licensing, safety inspections, commuter information and Safe routes to school. The Fest is sponsored by the La Crescent Police Department, Active Living

La Crescent, ISD 300 Elementary School and Smiths Bicycling Shop.

- 3rd Annual Bike Fest, 2012, completed with over 160 adult and student participants, 32 helmets sold, 36 bikes licensed, and over 100 bikes were inspected and made safe.

The Bike Shoppe

- The Bike Shoppe is a non-profit program sponsored by Active Living and the City of La Crescent. The Bikes Shoppe's goal is to provide opportunities for the community to grow through bicycles through bike recycling, hands-on bike maintenance, cycling and service activities. The Bike Shoppe increases safe bicycles, everyday bicycle use, youth involvement and helmet usage.
- In the forth summer of Bike Shoppe operation, 2012, the business raised enough money to pay for 25 hours per week of staffing for summer 2013; as well, over 65 bicycles were sold, 114 repaired and over 80 volunteer service hours were accumulated of youth working in the Shoppe.
- An elective High School Bike Maintenance class is in its 4th semester of completion with over 20 students participating.

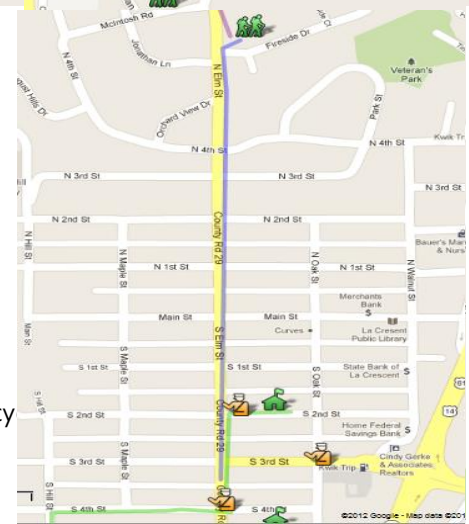
Walking School Bus

A Walking School Bus (WSB) is when one or more adults meet at certain designated locations and then walk a predetermined safe route to school. Students can either be dropped off at the meeting spot or picked up along the way. WSBs provide an opportunity for children to engage in physical activity and have fun while walking to school. Walking School Buses offer a supervised way for kids to walk to school and learn safe pedestrian skills.

We have three designated safe routes in La Crescent that we regularly use. They can also be found on the La Crescent Safe Routes to School Website at www.lacrescentsaferoutes.weebly.com

- **Route 1: Kistler Park (Green Route)**
  The Kistler Park Route is our most used and popular route. The students meet or get dropped off near the parking lot of Kistler Park (by the pool) and depart by 7:30am. They take the back roads down Hill St until they get to S 4th St. and can cross Elm St. using the crossing guards. The route allows students to avoid walking down Elm Street, the busiest street in the morning. The Kistler Walking Route encompasses students from both public and private schools.

- **Route 2: Old Hickory Park (Purple) and Route 3: Methodist Church (Green)**
  The Old Hickory Route is the longest of the routes to school. Students meet at the corner of Jonathan Lane and Honeygold Court. This route leads the WSB down to Methodist Church where they meet the next Walking School Bus and continue the rest of the way together. These routes tend to pick up additional students on the way. A majority of this combined route is on Elm St. Because Elm Street is extremely busy and



Bicy

heavily traveled in the mornings, it is especially important that students and adults cross the street together as a group, utilizing crosswalks and crossing guards when available.

Summary of Major Issues Impacting Biking and Walking in La Crescent

While the City is taking several actions to improve bicycling and walking in La Crescent, barriers remain that will limit the extent to which residents and visitors can comfortably walk and bicycle for recreation and transportation.

One of the most challenging circumstances that La Crescent faces is an overall lack of funding. This is due to several factors: a) limited governmental aid, b) geographic conditions, and c) limited economic base. Government aid is based on the number of homes built before 1940 and over 93% of the homes in La Crescent were built after that date. Caledonia, a neighboring community in our county, receives twice as much state funding even though they have half the population of La Crescent.

Secondly, while the Mississippi River Valley provides a dramatic setting, the rugged slopes and their intricate maze of deep valleys create unique challenges to creating hiking trails and bikeways. These geographic conditions also bring about a variety of federal and state environmental constraints and requirements. In addition, La Crescent, in comparison to other communities of this size, has a small business-related tax base. Most people living in La Crescent work in La Crosse. This results in a challenge when it comes to resources for parks, trials and recreational facilities.

Our third major challenge is presented by Highway 14/61 which cuts through the city. This busy roadway creates an access barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists. The residents located on the East side of the highway, most of who are economically challenged, are cut off from the City's business center and parks due to this highway.

The City's goal is to provide facilities for all roadway users of all modes of travel in a manner that is balanced, safe, and accommodating.

Implementation Plan

The La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is guided by the following general principles and objectives through the adoption of this plan by the City Council are hereby made policy: 1.) Fix broken infrastructure that needs repair, 2.) Improve unsafe and unaccommodating intersections that appear unfriendly towards pedestrians and bicyclists, 3.) Fill in identified gaps in the network, 4.) Implement new policies to improve the way the City and other agencies accomplish objectives to accommodate bicyclist and pedestrians in everyday activities, 5.) Grow the network to support movement throughout the City striving for a connected, integrated system that provides transportation options to a resident's many potential destinations. The City's intent is to provide safe travel for everyone.

The City recognizes that the health and well-being of its residents and economic success of the City depends on its transportation network. The City of La Crescent shall scope, plan, design, fund, construct, operate, and maintain all City streets to provide a comprehensive and integrated network of facilities that are safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities traveling by foot, bicycle, automobile, public transportation, and

commercial vehicle. There shall be an adopted plan for each mode (walking, biking, transit and auto) that provides a network map that identifies transportation priorities. The City desires to improve and will strive to make safety, mobility, and accessibility a high priority for all corridor users to encourage more walking and bicycling as way to improve public health.

Bicycle Planning Process Review

The planning process began in late 2010 and was led by the consulting firm of Alta Planning and Design. The consultants started by reviewing existing plans and listening to the expressed needs and desires of selected local representatives and the public via a public meeting held in February of 2011. Several meetings and site visits provided the information needed to produce this Plan that summarizes existing bicycle facilities and provides recommendations to improve biking in the City of La Crescent.

To complete this plan, Alta reviewed existing bicycle plans created by the DNR, MnDOT, Houston County Trails, MRT, MPO, City of La Crosse, City of La Crescent, and US Fish and Wildlife and reviewed the proposed trails arriving in La Crescent from the north, south, and east. The City requires internal connections to these trails and has its own needs to connect potentially annexed land to the west and recreational and commuter trails to the east. The proposed trails would be sufficient for both bike and pedestrian use so this effort will generally consider multi-use paths. On-road bicycle facilities are recommended, as well as trail extensions. Specific sidewalk and Central Business District planning is not included in this study.

This planning effort has resulted in a listing of bike facilities for La Crescent. Project costs and priorities should be determined by City Staff and local advocates as future Capital Improvement Plans are developed.

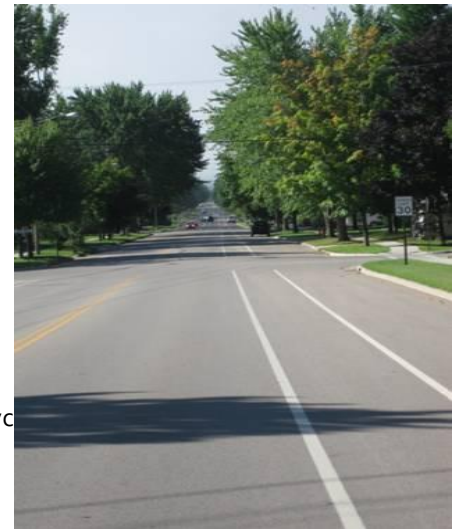
A public meeting was held to discuss bicycle facility planning for La Crescent in February 2011. This meeting was sponsored by the City of La Crescent, the MPO, and Active Living. The public meeting was held on February 24 at 5:30 PM in the Community Room and was billed as a "dream meeting." All ideas and suggestions from the public were captured and incorporated into this document.

This plan is intended to provide information that will be included in the City's capital and operations plans. The Planning Commission will recommend priorities and capital projects for future bicycle facilities to the City Council.

Transportation Benefits of a Bicycle-Friendly Community

The National Household Travel Survey found that roughly 40% of all trips taken by car are less than two miles. By taking these short trips on a bicycle, rather than in a car, citizens can substantially impact local traffic, air pollution, and congestion. Bicycle users can help alleviate overall congestion because each cyclist is one less car on the road.

Parking is an issue in the City in our Central Business District. The Minnesota Design Team and Active Living community surveys relayed a desire for increased retail options and destinations. The City has a goal of increasing commercial and retail options within our community. Riding your bike to our developed retail within our City is a high likelihood which would alleviate parking constraints and improve the quality of life. Additionally, many people do not have access to a vehicle or are not able to drive. According to the National Household Travel



Bicyc

Survey (NHTS), one in 12 U.S. households does not own an automobile and approximately 12 percent of persons 15 or older do not drive. An improved bicycle network provides greater and safer mobility for these residents.

Existing Conditions

The only existing on-road bicycle facility currently in La Crescent is the Elm Street bike lane that begins outside of La Crescent on Ridge Road and continues south along Elm Street to S 11th Street.

La Crescent is home to two trails of regional significance – the Mississippi River Trail passes through La Crescent and the Wagon Wheel Trail is under construction in the Mississippi River Valley just east of downtown La Crescent.

La Crescent lacks a bikeway network to connect these trails to local destinations and local residents to various destinations such as parks, schools, and shopping areas. Networks support a robust mix of culture and commerce. Networks attract business, light industry, jobs and economic opportunities.

Tools and Best Design Practices

Facility Definitions for the City of La Crescent Bikeway Network

Many on-street bicycle facilities can be developed inexpensively with paint and signs. The Proposed Bikeway Network for La Crescent has recommendations for five facility types: signed bike routes, shared lane markings, paved shoulders, bike lanes, and shared-use paths. Each facility type is described below.

Signed Neighborhood Bikeway

This facility is a local road that is identified as a bicycle route by signs. These routes are located on low-traffic roads where cyclists and motor vehicles can share the same space; routes may also be identified on busier roads that provide one of the other facilities identified below. All bicycle routes should include wayfinding signage that clearly identifies direction and distance to nearby attractions.

Shared Lane Marking

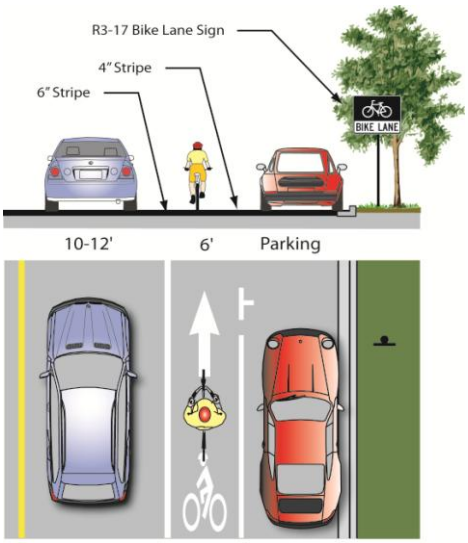
Shared lane markings are pavement markings that help position bicyclists within the travel lane. Shared lane markings are often used on streets where bike lanes are desirable but not possible due to width constraints, and where motor vehicle speeds are moderate (less than 35 mph). High-visibility pavement markings (MUTCD Section 9C.07) placed in the travel lane alert motorists of bicycle traffic, and to encourage cyclists to ride at an appropriate distance from the "door zone" of adjacent parked cars. Placed in a linear pattern along a corridor, shared lane markings also encourage cyclists to ride in a straight line so their movements are predictable to motorists. These pavement markings have been successfully used in many small and large communities throughout the US, including several communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Shared lane markings may be combined with bike route wayfinding and signage to direct people along routes to major destinations.

Paved Shoulders

In rural areas, the addition of paved shoulders is often the best way to accommodate bicyclists. The shoulder refers to the part of the highway that is adjacent to the right-most travel lane and is on the same level as the highway. Paved shoulders provide motorists the following benefits: room to maneuver, a break-down space clear of the travel lane, additional travel space for farm machinery, and an increased overall lifecycle for the pavement. Recommendations for the actual paved shoulder width may vary according to the width of the adjacent travel lane, traffic volumes, posted speed limit, and the presence of heavy truck traffic. Generally, however, to accommodate bicycles, a width of 5 feet from the face of a guardrail, curb, or barrier, and free of rumble strips or other obstructions should be provided. The slope of the roadway should continue across the shoulder to maintain adequate drainage. Paved shoulders may be combined with bike route wayfinding and signage to direct people along routes to major destinations.

Bike Lanes

Designated exclusively for bicycle travel, bike lanes are separated from vehicle travel lanes with striping and also include pavement stencils. In most cases, bike lanes should be provided in both travel directions. Optional bike lane signs may be used to clarify lane use to road users. Bike lanes are most appropriate in urban areas on arterial and collector streets, where higher traffic volumes and/or speeds warrant greater separation of bicyclists and motor vehicles. On some streets, bike lanes will fit within the current street width. On others, bike lanes will require the street to be widened to accommodate the lane.



The La Crescent recommendations include three types of bike lanes:

1. **Buffered Bike Lane:** a 5- to 6-foot bike lane with a 2-foot pavement buffer
2. **Bike Lane with Parking on One Side:** see typical cross section use for the North Second Street reconstruction
3. **Bike Lane with No Parking:** 5- or 6-foot-wide bike lane with no parking allowed on either side

Shared-Use Path

Shared-use paths (minimum width of 10 feet or 12 to 14 feet if heavy traffic is expected) can accommodate a variety of non-motorized traffic such as pedestrians, cyclists, in-line skaters, and runners. Shared-use paths are paved off-street facilities; sometimes they have their own right-of-way, as in the case of the Wagon Wheel Trail and sometimes they are within the right-of-way of street or highway. A shared-use path that shares right-of-way with a street or highway has special issues with crossing traffic and careful design is necessary to provide a safe facility. Even when the shared-use path has its own right-of-way, careful design at each street or railroad crossing is necessary to increase user safety.

Facility Location Recommendations

The table on the following page lists the on-street recommendations for La Crescent. The network map is included at the end of this Plan. The bikeway network is intended to provide a complete network for local

citizens as well as tourist to access La Crescent's parks, schools, trails, commercial areas and connect to surrounding communities. 'Networks' implies the priority for projects to permit users of all transportation modes to move safely through the City. The Networks offer choice of transportation alternatives and complement local assets.

Street	From	To	Facility Recommendation
S 3rd Street	Elm Street	Hwy 14/61	4 to 3 lane conversion, add bike lanes, pedestrian islands
Cty Road 25	Cty Road 6	Crescent Ave	Buffered bike lane
Cty Road 6	Cty Rd 25	Town Hall Road	Buffered bike lane
Jonathon St	Haralson Lane	Elm Street	No parking and bike lanes
S 14th Street	Lancer Blvd	East Driveway of Parking Lot on North Side of S 14th Street	No parking and bike lanes
Chestnut Street	Proposed Trailhead	Side path/shared-use trail leading to S 3rd St intersection	Parking as is, shared lane markings
S 14th Street	East Driveway of Parking Lot on North Side of S 14th Street	Oak Street	Parking as is, shared lane markings
Shore Acres Road	Outlet of Wagon Wheel Trail	Hwy 14/61	Parking as is, shared lane markings
Lancer Blvd	S 14th Street	S 11th Street	Parking as is, shared lane markings
S 11th Street	Lancer Blvd	Redwood Drive	Parking as is, shared lane markings
Main Street	Chestnut Street	Maple Street	Parking as is, shared lane markings
Jonathon Street	Honeygold	Haralson Lane	Parking on one side and bike lanes (See N 2nd Street Cross Section)
S 14th Street	Skunk Hollow Road	Lancer Blvd	Parking on one side and bike lanes (See N 2nd Street Cross Section)
S 7th Street	Cty Road 25	Oak Street	Parking on one side and bike lanes (See N 2nd Street Cross Section)
Skunk Hollow Road	Cty Road 25	S14th Street	Parking on one side and bike lanes (See N 2nd Street Cross Section)
Hwy 14/61	3rd Street Intersection	La Crosse Bridge	Shared Use Path on both sides of Hwy 14/61
Sycamore Street	Main Street	Hwy 14/61	Signed neighborhood bikeway
Maple Street	N 2nd Street	S 4th Street	Signed neighborhood bikeway
N 2nd Street	Walnut Street	Vetch Park	Signed neighborhood bikeway
Redwood	S 11th Street	S 7th Street	Signed neighborhood bikeway
S 4th Street	Elm Street	Hill Street	Signed neighborhood bikeway
Hill Street	S 4th Street	S 7th Street	Signed neighborhood bikeway
Oak Street	S 4th Street	N 2nd Street	Signed neighborhood bikeway
Oak Street	S 4th Street	S 14th Street	When reconstructed install buffered bike lanes

Details on a Few Select Facilities

South 3rd Street:
La Crescent should consider a "road diet," otherwise known as a "4 to 3 Lane Conversion" for S 3rd Street from the Hwy 14/61 intersection to S Elm Street. We recommend removing parking along this segment of S 3rd Street and installing the following lane widths: two 12-foot through lanes, one center 12-foot turn lane, and two 6-foot bike lanes. If parking is desired on one side of S 3rd Street, then we recommend 5-foot bike lanes in both directions. Other recommended improvements for this segment include:

- Pedestrian refuge islands at the intersection of Oak and S 3rd Street on the S 3rd Street legs
- Adding green paint to the bike lane located to the left of the eastbound right turn lane at S 3rd Street and Hwy 14/61
- Adding green paint to the west bound bike lane from the intersection of Hwy 14/61 to just west of the Walnut Street/S 3rd Street intersection.

Oak Street:
When Oak Street is reconstructed from S 4th Street to S 14th Street, buffered bike lanes and sidewalks should be included in the reconstruction.

County Road 6 and County Road 25:
Both of these roads are 45 feet wide or more. This plan recommends two 12-foot through lanes and two 6-foot bike lanes with 4-foot buffer areas on each bike lane. If parking is desired along these roads, it should be limited to one side only and consist of a painted 8-foot-wide parking lane leaving room for two 6-foot-wide bike lanes.

Intersection Improvements

Chestnut and Hwy 16:
This intersection is important for MRT users as they head south to Hwy 14/61 coming from Chestnut and possibly either La Crosse or the Wagon Wheel Trail. At a minimum, add signage to warn drivers of the possible presence of bicycles. Also consider a crosswalk and a pedestrian refuge island in the median.

S 3rd Street and Hwy 14/61:
Bicycle traffic from all directions uses this complex and busy intersection. Consider the following improvements:

- A bicycle detector on the traffic signal
- Colored bike lanes to emphasize the bike lanes at the intersection
- A "through" bike lane on the west bound lane to assist bikers through the free-flow right hand turn lane on Hwy 14/61

See the NACTO *Urban Bikeway Design Guide* for information on improving intersections for bicycles. http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/intersection-treatments/

N 2nd Street and Hwy 14/61:
This crossing connects the neighborhood located east of Hwy 61 along Sycamore Street to the downtown area. Consider a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) at this location to assist pedestrians across this busy street. RRFBs have been shown to enhance safety by reducing crashes between vehicles and pedestrians at unsignalized intersections and mid-block pedestrian crossings by increasing driver awareness of potential pedestrian conflicts. Refer to this link for more information:
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/resources/techsum/fhwasa09009/

Hillview Boulevard and Hwy 14/61:
This intersection is the first option for south-bound bicyclists to exit Hwy 14/61 and access La Crescent destinations. Wayfinding signs should be placed at this intersection.

Bicycle Parking
Where space allows, bicycle parking should be provided to promote bicycling into La Crescent. Bike racks should only be located where a minimum 5-foot clear walkway width can still be provided and when there is a business or office building within 50 feet of the sidewalk. Bike racks isolated from the adjacent land use by an open space or parking lot will not be used.

Trail Improvements

Wagon Wheel Trail Recommendations

When Phase 1 is complete to Shore Acres Road, install shared lane markings from the trail's outlet onto Shore Acres Road to Hwy 14/61. Discourage the use of South Shore Acres Road by bicyclists until improvements are made as part of a future phase of the Wagon Wheel Trail.

Improve the intersection of Shore Acres Road and Hwy 14/61 by adding ladder crosswalks and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon. Consider adding a pedestrian refuge island if space allows.

Add shared-use trails on both sides of Hwy 14/61 from Shore Acres Road to the 3rd Street intersection. Add a shared-use trail from Shore Acres Road connect to the existing shared use trail located on the north side of the highway at the West Channel Bridge.

Mississippi River Trail Route Recommendations for La Crescent

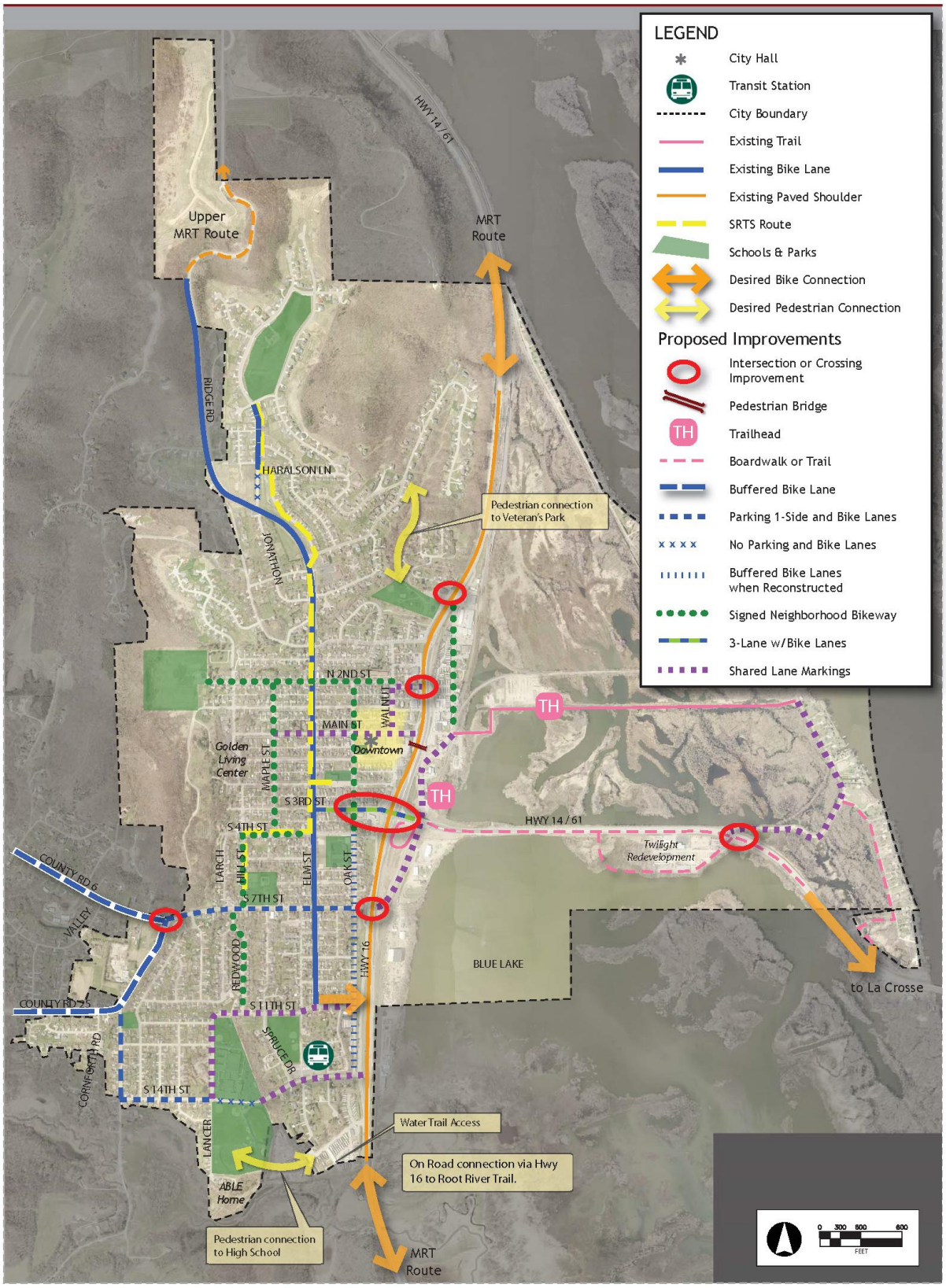
The fact that the MRT route passes though La Crescent presents an economic development opportunity for La Crescent. The key to converting the opportunity into reality is doing everything possible to make sure bicyclists on the trail know how to find La Crescent's downtown and commercial districts and feel welcome. The table below provides recommendations to assist MRT users in finding their way to and through La Crescent regardless of the direction from which they came. Whether they approach from Ridge Road, from the north, south or La Crosse, the recommendations below will allow them to either by pass La Crescent or easily find the downtown and take advantage of the services offered there.

Travel Direction	Going To	Recommended Route	Recommended Improvements
South Bound	Through/No Stops	Hwy 14/61/16	Install wayfinding signs along route
South Bound	To La Crescent	Hwy 14/61 to Chestnut St to Main St	Install wayfinding signs along route
South Bound	To La Crosse	Hwy 14/61 to Chestnut St to Main St, South on Oak to S 3rd Street, cross with signal to Hwy 14/61 causeway to La Crosse	Install wayfinding signs along route and consider a four to three lane conversion on S 3rd from Oak Street to Hwy 16. Install a bike lane on the left side of the right-hand turn lane for east-bound traffic. Consider installing a shared-use path on both sides of Hwy 14/61. Improve bicycle accommodations on steel bridge.
North Bound	Through/No Stops	Hwy 14/61/16	Install wayfinding signs along route.
North Bound	To La Crescent	Use signal at S 3rd Street to enter La Crescent	Install wayfinding signs along route.
North Bound	To La Crosse	Use signal at S 3rd St to turn east on to Hwy 14/61 to La Crosse	Install wayfinding signs along route. Consider installing a shared-use path on both sides of Hwy 14/61. Improve bicycle accommodations on steel bridge.
From La Crosse	To either North Bound or South Bound MRT	Hwy 14/61 use S 3rd St signal	Consider removing the north bound ramp/turn lane at the Hwy 16 and S 3rd Street intersection, install bike lanes and one right-hand turn lane and one through lane (west bound). If removal of free-flow right-turn lane is not possible, consider a colored bike lane to help bicyclists negotiate with right-turning cars. See NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide for more information.

La Crescent Strategic Bicycle Planning

Existing and Proposed Biking Facilities

January 2013



Pedestrian Planning Process Review

In 2012 the City of La Crescent received a Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) grant to provide a Complete Streets Planning Study ("CSPS") report to document the process for the CSPS for the City of La Crescent. The study will include the implications of Complete Streets. As part of the CSPS, the City contracted with Alta Planning + Design to develop a pedestrian plan for La Crescent. This plan will guide the City over the next 5 to 10 years in completing its sidewalk and pedestrian facility network.

The City of La Crescent is clearly committed to becoming more pedestrian-friendly, especially in the downtown commercial district and with connections to surrounding residential areas, parks, and schools. Development regulations in La Crescent require future projects to provide the necessary infrastructure to promote walking. Developing in a more walkable manner is also consistent with the vision for the area as spelled out in the Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan: *"Encourage and promote the availability and choice of human-powered transportation that will improve the health and safety of our citizens, the sustainability of our environment, and the economy of our region." (LAPC, 2010)* It is the City's goal to improve other forms of more sustainable transportation and to become a more transit-oriented and bike-friendly community.

The La Crescent Pedestrian Plan will provide guidance for enhancing conditions for pedestrians particularly in areas identified by the project's Advisory Committee and City staff.

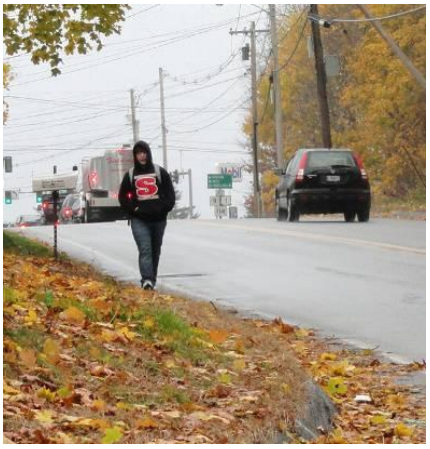
Public Benefits of Pedestrian Transportation

The physical exercise gained from walking and cycling is linked with increased health and well-being. According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity is second only to tobacco smoking as a health risk in developed countries and this is associated with many tens of billions of dollars of healthcare costs. Walking and cycling helps to improve people's health and fitness, enhance environmental conditions, decrease traffic congestion, and contributes to a greater sense of community.

Scores of studies from experts in the fields of public health, urban planning, urban ecology, real estate, transportation, sociology, and economics have supported and have acknowledged the substantial value of supporting walking as it relates to active living and alternative transportation. Communities across the United States and throughout the world are implementing strategies for serving the walking needs of their residents, and have been doing so for many years. They do this because of their obligations to promote health, safety, and welfare, and also because of the growing awareness of the many benefits of walking.

Increased Health and Physical Activity

A growing number of studies show that the design of our communities—including neighborhoods, towns, transportation systems, parks, trails, and other public recreational facilities—affects people's ability to reach the recommended daily 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity (60 minutes for youth). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "physical inactivity causes numerous physical and mental health problems, is responsible for an estimated 200,000 deaths per year, and contributes to the obesity epidemic." The increased rate of disease associated with inactivity reduces quality of life for individuals and increases medical costs for families, companies, and local governments.



While a healthy activity, walking in La Crescent is discouraged due to lack of sidewalks.

The CDC determined that creating and improving places to be active could result in a 25% increase in the number of people who exercise at least three times a week. This is significant considering that for people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity can bring measurable health benefits. The establishment of a safe and reliable network of sidewalks in La Crescent will have a positive impact on the health of local residents. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy puts it simply: "Individuals must choose to exercise, but communities can make that choice easier."

Economic Benefits

Walking is an affordable form of transportation. According to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC), of Chapel Hill, NC, the cost of operating a car for a year is approximately $5,170, while walking is virtually free. The PBIC explains, "When safe facilities are provided for pedestrians and bicyclists, more people are able to be productive, active members of society. Car ownership is expensive, and consumes a major portion of many Americans' income."

Walking becomes even more attractive from an economic standpoint when the rising price of oil (and decreasing availability) is factored into the equation. The unstable cost of fuel reinforces the idea that local communities should be built to accommodate people-powered transportation, such as walking and biking.

From a real estate standpoint, consider the positive impact of sidewalks and greenways, which are essential components of a complete pedestrian network. According to the recent CEOs for Cities report: *2009 Walk the*

Walk, "houses [in neighborhoods] with above-average levels of walkability command a premium of about $4,000 to $34,000 over houses with just average levels of walkability in the typical metropolitan areas studied."

Environmental Improvements

When people choose to get out of their cars and walk, bike, or take transit, they make a positive environmental impact and improve air quality. They reduce their vehicle miles traveled, reducing traffic, congestion, and the volume of pollutants in the air.

Other environmental impacts can be a reduction in overall neighborhood noise levels and improvements in local water quality as fewer automobile-related discharges wind up in the local wetlands, streams, rivers, and lakes. Furthermore, every car trip replaced with a pedestrian trip reduces U.S. dependency on fossil fuels, which is a national goal.

Trails and greenways are also part of the pedestrian network, conveying their own unique environmental benefits. Greenways protect and link fragmented habitat and provide opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. Aside from connecting places without the use of air-polluting automobiles, trails and greenways also reduce air pollution by protecting large areas of plants that create oxygen and filter air pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and airborne particles. Finally, greenways improve water quality by creating a natural buffer zone that protects wetlands, streams, rivers, and lakes, reducing soil erosion and filtering pollution caused by agricultural and roadway runoff.

Transportation Benefits

In 2001, the National Household Travel Survey found that roughly 40% of all trips taken by car are less than 2 miles. By taking these short trips on foot, rather than in a car, citizens can have a substantial impact on local traffic and congestion. Additionally, many people do not have access to a vehicle, are not able to drive, or choose not to drive. An improved pedestrian network provides greater and safer mobility for these residents.

According to the Brookings Institution, the number of older Americans is expected to double over the next 25 years. All but the most fortunate seniors will confront an array of medical and other constraints on their mobility even as they continue to seek an active community life. Senior citizens deserve access to independent mobility, and providing safe places for them to walk is an essential factor in meeting this important need.

Fewer children are walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation.

Children under the age of 16 also deserve access to safe mobility. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, fewer children walk or bike to school than did so a generation ago. In the past few decades, the percent of students between the ages of 5 and 15 who walked or biked to or from school has dropped from roughly 50% to about 15%, while one quarter of Minnesota's children are overweight or obese.

Tools and Best Design Practices

Pedestrian-Friendly Street Design Characteristics

Sidewalks and Crossings

Sidewalks are the most fundamental element of the walking network, as they provide an area for pedestrian travel that is separated from vehicle traffic. Sidewalks are typically constructed out of concrete and are separated from the roadway by a curb or gutter and sometimes a landscaped planting area. Sidewalks are a common application in both urban and suburban environments.

Installing entirely new sidewalks can be costly, particularly if drainage improvements such as stormwater sewers and installation of curb/gutter are part of the design. However, fixing short gaps in an existing sidewalk network are important to maximize system continuity, and can be a relatively low-cost fix to improve the network.

Attributes of well-designed sidewalks include the following:

Raised crosswalks are an effective means to calm traffic on lower-volume streets.

- **Accessibility**: A network of sidewalks should be accessible to all users, including those who are blind, or use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.
- **Adequate width**: Ideally, two people should be able to walk side-by-side and pass a third person comfortably. Different walking speeds should also be possible.
- **Safety**: Design features of the sidewalk should allow pedestrians to have a sense of security and predictability. Sidewalk users should not feel they are at risk due to the presence of adjacent traffic.
- **Continuity**: Walking routes should be obvious and should not require pedestrians to travel out of their way unnecessarily.
- **Landscaping**: Plantings and street trees should contribute to the overall psychological and visual comfort of sidewalk users, and be designed in a manner that contributes to the safety of people.
- **Drainage**: Sidewalks should be well graded to minimize standing water.
- **Social space**: There should be places for standing, visiting, and sitting. The sidewalk area should be a place where adults and children can safely participate in public life.
- **Quality of place**: Sidewalks should contribute to the character of neighborhoods and business districts.
- **Maintenance**: A proper budget needs to be sustained to keep sidewalks clean, cleared of snow, and in good condition.

In principle, every intersection is a legal crosswalk, regardless of markings or signs, unless crossing is expressly forbidden. Marked crosswalks are used to alert motor traffic to expect pedestrian crossings at higher volume walking routes, near schools, in retail districts, at signalized intersections, and other locations where pedestrian right-of-way needs emphasis. Crosswalk markings indicate to pedestrians the appropriate route for higher volume crossings of motor traffic. They facilitate crossing by the visually impaired, and remind turning drivers of potential conflicts with pedestrians.

High visibility continental/ladder crosswalk markings should be used at crossings with high pedestrian use or where vulnerable pedestrians are expected, including:

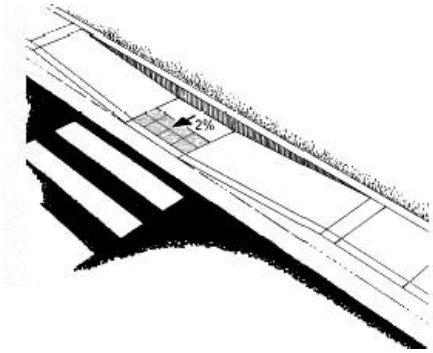
- School crossings
- Across arterial streets for pedestrian-only signals
- At mid-block crosswalks, where applicable
- At intersections where there is expected high pedestrian use and the crossing is not controlled by signals or stop signs

Continental/ladder crosswalk designs are highly visible to passing motorists.

ADA-Compliant Curb Ramps

Curb ramps are the design elements that allow all users to make the transition from the street to the sidewalk without encountering a vertical step. There are a number of factors to be considered in the design and placement of curb ramps at corners.

The 2010 ADA standards define two types of curb ramp systems: "perpendicular ramps" and "parallel ramps." The first provides a ramp into a crosswalk, while the second provides a ramp into a landing that is flush with the street surface, sometimes called a "dropped landing."



When sidewalks are too narrow to provide a typical perpendicular ramp, a dropped landing should be used (source: FHWA website).

Accommodating Pedestrians at Intersections with Traffic Signals

Pedestrians benefit from information provided by signal head indications, push buttons, countdown signals, and audible signals.

Traffic signal timing should assume a pedestrian walking speed, meaning that the length of a signal phase with parallel pedestrian movements should provide sufficient time for a pedestrian to safely cross the adjacent street. According to the *2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) standards, this amounts to 3.5 ft/second. At crossings where older pedestrians or pedestrians with disabilities are expected, lower crossing speeds could be considered for those more-vulnerable users.

No Right on Red

When motorists are accustomed to being able to turn right on red at all times, there is a tendency to roll through a red light when there is no cross traffic. This can lead to collisions with pedestrians who have the right-of-way but are less visible to the motorist wishing to turn right. Restricting "right on red" turning at key intersections can be an effective means to improve pedestrian safety.

Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)

At intersections where there are conflicts between turning vehicles and pedestrians, pedestrians are given a "walk" designation a few seconds before the associated green phase for the intersection, allowing them to enter the roadway and be more visible to traffic. This can be an especially effective technique where there is heavy right-turning movement.

Pedestrian Push Buttons

Pedestrians can be accommodated by an automatic pedestrian phase or by using a push button (demand-actuated signal). Pedestrian push buttons detect pedestrians desiring to cross at an actuated or semi-actuated traffic signal, at intersections with low pedestrian volumes, and at mid-block crossings.

Pedestrian push buttons need to be very visible from the adjacent sidewalk.

Audible Pedestrian Traffic Signals

Audible pedestrian traffic signals at signalized intersections provide crossing assistance to pedestrians with vision impairment. Audible signals should be activated by a pedestrian push-button.

Pedestrian Signal Indication ("Ped Head") and Countdowns

Pedestrian signal indicators use a symbol to indicate when to cross at a signalized crosswalk. All traffic signals should be equipped with pedestrian signal indications except where pedestrian crossing is prohibited by signage. Countdown pedestrian signals are particularly beneficial, as they indicate—based on the MUTCD walking speed standards—whether a pedestrian has time to cross the street before the signal phase ends.

Signs and Road Markings

Signage can serve both wayfinding and safety purposes including:

- Helping to familiarize users with the pedestrian network
- Helping users identify effective routes and walking times to destinations
- Helping to address misperceptions about time and distance
- Helping overcome a "barrier to entry" for infrequent pedestrians

Signs are typically placed at key locations leading to and along routes, including the intersection of multiple routes. Too many signs tend to clutter the right-of-way, and it is recommended that these signs be posted at a level most visible to pedestrians, rather than per vehicle signage standards.

Shared-use Paths

Shared-use paths serve bicyclists and pedestrians and provide additional width over a standard sidewalk. Facilities may be constructed adjacent to roads or through parks and wooded areas. Regardless of the type, paths constructed next to the road should have some type of vertical (e.g., curb or barrier) or horizontal (e.g., landscaped strip) buffer separating the path area from adjacent vehicle travel lanes.

Shared-use paths should be constructed according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* and be designed according to ADA standards.

Most shared-use paths are located on publicly-owned, publicly-managed, or publicly-accessed land (e.g., street rights-of-way or parks.) As such, existing on-site conditions, master plans, land use permits, easements, natural resource protection plans, significant tree locations, and other current and planned-for uses must be taken into account when determining path alignment, width, and location of any associated path amenities. In La Crescent, it is possible to develop shared-use paths within an easement on private property, based on negotiations with the land owner.

Traffic Calming Facilities

Curb Extensions

A curb extension (sometimes referred to as a "bump out" or "bulb out"), is a place where the sidewalk extends into the parking lane or wide shoulder of a roadway. Because curb extensions physically narrow the roadway, a pedestrian's crossing distance—and consequently the time spent in the street—is reduced. They can be placed either at mid-block crossings or at intersections and can help reduce roadway travel speeds because they create a visual pinch point for motorists. Curb extensions always need to be carefully considered so as not to impede bicycle movement along the edge of the travel lane or in the shoulder.

Refuge Islands

Median refuge islands help improve safety by providing a crossing refuge, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to gauge safe crossing of one direction of traffic at a time, and slowing motor vehicle traffic. This treatment is especially appropriate when helping to connect to a school, or where the roadway to be crossed is greater than 50 feet wide or more than four travel lanes. A median refuge island can also be used at shorter crossing distances to take advantage of available safe gaps in traffic. Like curb extensions described above, they also create visual pinch points for motorists, helping to reduce speeds.

Medians provide ideal opportunities for refuge islands at critical crosswalk locations.

Median refuge islands can be used at signalized or unsignalized crosswalks. The refuge island should be accessible, preferably with an at-grade passage through the island rather than ramps and landings.

A median refuge island should be at least five feet wide between travel lanes and at least 20 feet long. If a refuge island is landscaped, the landscaping should not compromise the visibility of pedestrians crossing in the crosswalk.

Lighting

Pedestrian-scale lighting improves visibility and can provide a vertical buffer between the sidewalk and the street, defining pedestrian areas. Pedestrian-scale lighting should be used in areas of high pedestrian activity and where feasible based on available right-of-way, utilities, and cost. Pedestrian-scale lighting is a significant capital improvement and should be provided only where it will have a maximum benefit, such as public safety. Lighting can also be considered on shared-use paths that are located away from the right-of-way or in areas that are not otherwise lit. In locations where vehicle-scaled lighting is desired, decorative streetlights in a variety of styles should be considered over cobra-head or other highway-style lights.

Pedestrian Amenities and Gateways

Benches

Providing benches at key rest areas encourages people of all ages to walk by providing a place to rest along the way or at bus stops. Benches can be simple (e.g., wood slates) or more ornate (e.g., stone, wrought iron, concrete). Benches and all other site furniture must always be selected and placed in accordance with ADA clearance requirements.

Benches provide a place for walkers to take a break.

Inventory Analysis and Recommendations

Downtown Neighborhoods (Generally from Hill Street to Hwy 16 and from N 3rd Street to S 4th Street)

This area of La Crescent has a fairly complete grid system of streets and an almost complete sidewalk network. There are a few areas where the topography of the area will not allow sidewalks to be built without extensive retaining walls and other infrastructure. This includes parts of the west side of N 2nd Street and N 3rd Street.

This plan recommends that the sidewalk network in this area be completed with the priority focus on filling in sidewalk gaps on N 1st Street to provide complete sidewalks to Vetsch Park and Golden Living Center from downtown. Another high-priority project is filling in the gaps on Maple Street from N 2nd Street to S 4th Street. This will provide an option of walking down the street with less traffic than Elm or Oak Street.

Lower priority projects in this area include filling in the sidewalk gaps on the east/west streets such as S 3rd Street, S 1st Street, and Main Street.

South Neighborhoods (Generally from S 4th Street to S 14th Street)

The sidewalk network in this area of La Crescent is less complete and due to short distances between the front of homes and the curb (especially in the neighborhood between S 7th Street and S 11th Street) adding sidewalks would be difficult at best. However this plan does recommend a sidewalk along Juniper Street between S 13th St and S 14th Street (on the east side). This will allow pedestrian access to Valley South Park and also provide sidewalks along a transit route.

Medium-term priorities for this area include S 11th Street from Elm to Oak Street, Oak Street from S 11th Street to S 14th Street, and 14th Street from Oak to Spruce Drive. These sidewalk extensions will serve an underserved area in the far south east corner of La Crescent and will serve a transit corridor.

Two important pedestrian connections are located in this area – a connection from Cornforth to Skunk Hollow and a connection from the mobile home park off of Kistler Drive and the high school campus. Both of these will be difficult under current conditions but should be considered if the opportunity arises in the future due to redevelopment.

County Road 6 from Birch Street to Town Hall Road should have sidewalks installed on one side when the street is improved in the future. A further engineering study is needed to determine if the north or the south side of the road would be the ideal location for sidewalk.

A shared use path (10 ft wide minimum) should be installed from the intersection of South 3rd Street and Hwy 16 to the east end of the Twilight Redevelopment site on both the north and the south side of Hwy 14/61.

Finally, when Oak Street is redeveloped, a complete street with bike lanes and sidewalks should be constructed from Main Street to South 14th Street.

North Neighborhoods (Generally from N 3rd Street to the north boundary of La Crescent)

The sidewalk network in this area of La Crescent is less complete than the central area of La Crescent. However, sidewalks do exist on the main streets in this neighborhood. This report does not recommend any new sidewalks in this area but it does recommend crossing improvements at Fireside Drive and Elm Street and at Eagles Bluff Road and McIntosh Road.

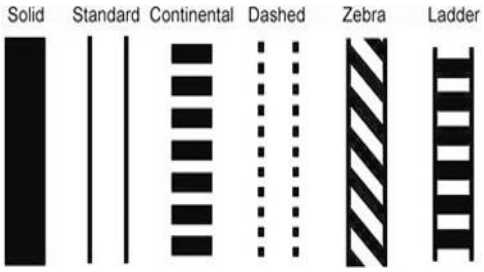
MUTCD-compliant W11-2 pedestrian crossing sign.

Crossing Improvements

In addition to the two crossing improvements mentioned above, this report recommends the following crossing improvements:

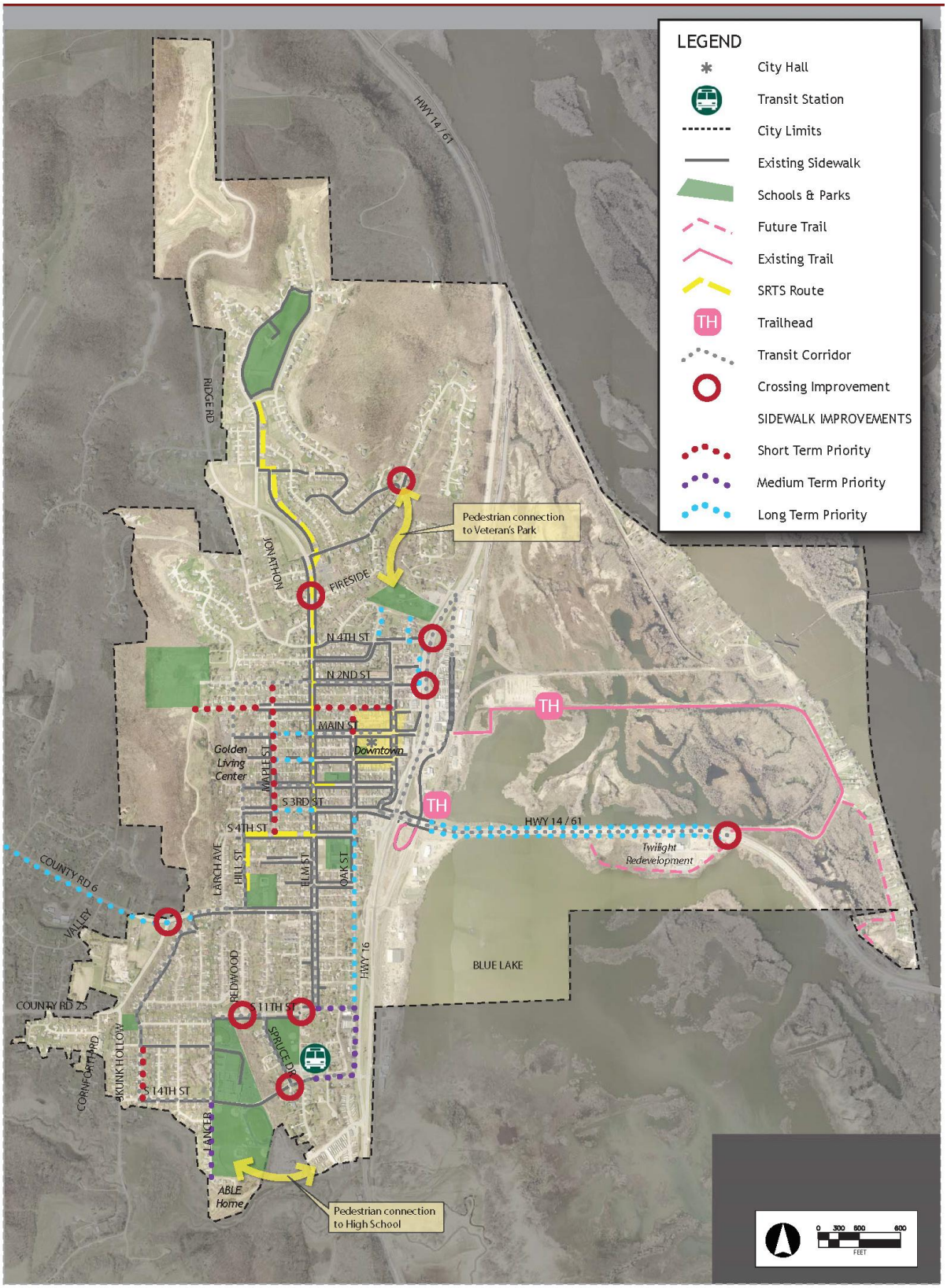
- Fireside Drive and Elm Street – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, install W11-2 signs
- Eagles Bluff Road and McIntosh Road – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, install W11-2 signs
- S 14th Street and Spruce Drive – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, install W11-2 signs
- S 11th Street and Redwood – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, install W11-2 signs
- S 11th Street and Cedar Drive – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon on the S 11th Street leg
- Hwy 14/61 and N 2nd Street – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon
- Hwy 14/61 and N 4th Street – Ladder crosswalk pavement markings, install W11-2 signs

Rectangular rapid flashing beacon.



When the intersection of S 11th Street and Cedar Street is reconstructed, the City should consider purchasing right-of-way on the southeast corner and work to align the intersection at a 90-degree angle. Sidewalks along the south side of S 11th Street are feasible if the alignment of the intersection is improved.

La Crescent Pedestrian Plan

Recommended Improvements

January 2013