

LAPC Local Studies Proposals, March, 2017

La Crosse County:

LiDAR, Total request: \$15,000

The La Crosse County requested grant from the La Crosse Area Planning Committee's Local Studies Program will be for an update to the county's LiDAR data. The local studies money is necessary to make this LiDAR project feasible, as our local budget match is limited. If our grant request is approved, we will make all of this data available to any LAPC partnering agency or municipality. We believe that the funding request is appropriate, as we will be receiving improved data on almost all of the culverts on county and state highways in La Crosse County. This data will allow our staff to efficiently map details of all of these culverts in the County. This map product will be valuable for any transportation engineering in the county. We will also receive significantly improved topographic, and hydrologic data which will be useful for any transportation engineering. If we are approved, this funding will leave a local match of \$47,750. This local match has already been budgeted and now awaits project implementation. We expect a spring 2017 flight and a delivery of the final product in late 2017.

City of La Crescent:

La Crescent Bicycle Pedestrian Plan Updates, Total request: \$26,500

PROPOSAL 1: Update La Crescent Bicycle Pedestrian Plan to include the 2016 Regional Bluffland Plan. \$13,000

The goal of the 2016 Blufflands Plan is 'protected blufflands and continuous recreational trails' on blufflands overlooking the Mississippi River Valley. A laudable goal and one embraced in La Crescent's 2016 comprehensive plan. To implement this 'goal' a specific plan, outlining a route and specific actions, must be generated. We propose to work with a consultant to first understand the implications of the bluffland plan for La Crescent and second to generate a specific action plan. La Crescent's commitment to Environmental Stewardship is one of the major focuses of the Comprehensive Plan and our current bluff trail system is the starting place for a network of trails on the western river bluffs. Winona County is interested in participating in La Crescent community and consultant meetings. This will further leverage the dollars and help the advancement of trails to the north. La Crescent Township will also have citizens engaged in the process. Specific professional assistance is required to identify and document, with maps and exhibits, the possible trails, bluffs and connections to existing trails. This work when adopted into the existing bike pedestrian plan will provide La Crescent direction to preserving and enhancing the western bluffs. This work which will likely span decades begins with the creation of a plan and the use of the plan to gain funding—small elements at a time—until we have attained to intended goal of The Blufflands plan. La Crescent has already acquired several dedicated bluff top lands and has worked to preserve view sheds and access to other lands, thus demonstrating that this will be a good investment for the LAPC and the region. The cost for the proposal is based on specific discussions with consultants.

PROPOSAL 2: Update La Crescent Bicycle Pedestrian Plan to conform to the Comprehensive Plan for specific routes. \$13,500.

This request will focus on the HWY 6, HWY 25, 7th Street Corridor and 3rd Street South Corridor between Elm and HWY 14/61. Professional assistance is required to study various alternatives to effectively engage with Houston County and MNDOT on bike infrastructure alternatives to update the current Bike and Pedestrian Plan for the City of La Crescent. The City will be extending sewer and water to serve homes along the newly annexed County HWY 6 and potential new residential development on HWY 6. Properties along HWY 6 may annex to the City of La Crescent pursuant to an orderly annexation agreement developed with the financial and planning support of the LAPC. This study will examine safe urban bike pedestrian connections to the Central City via HWY 25 and HWY 6 to their logical connection to Seventh Street. Existing city bike routes and sidewalks connect at 7th Street. Various on road, dedicated pathways built on the sewer excavations and road configurations will be studied.

The 'safety consideration' of 3rd Street South from Elm to HWY 14/61 requires professional support. This support would provide planning along a corridor that is important to urban bike commuters to La Crosse. The LAPC goals of the Vision 2050 Plan and current conversations about transportation alternatives encourages more people to bike and walk to work. La Crescent is only 4 to 5 miles from La Crosse's major employers and easily within biking-to-work distances. 'Encouragement to ride' requires the planning of safe routes. Assistance is required for these corridors. These studies are timely and infrastructure will soon be designed or redesigned for replacement. Without updated studies future design work cannot be undertaken. This project has regional benefit and it aligned with LAPC and transportation goals.

City of La Crosse

Boundary Agreement Facilitation with Town of Shelby, Total Request: \$15,000

This funding would complete the boundary agreement process between the City of La Crosse and Town of Shelby which was initiated in late 2015. Jason Valerius, of MSA Professional Services is facilitating the boundary agreement process.

The facilitation work includes drafting materials, including maps and text documents, and, at times, doing research on the feasibility of various policy options. At this stage in the process, assistance to prepare/edit executive summary or FAQ materials, and the preparation of materials to help explain and promote the draft agreement are required.

Final steps in the process could include:

- Working Group meeting to discuss boundary agreement terms (facilitation by MSA)
- City and Town attorneys insert draft terms into a formal agreement (format of their choosing)
- Working Group meeting to discuss and edit formal agreement (facilitation by MSA)
- Presentations to City and Town PC and elected leaders (by staff)

- Working Group meeting to discuss and edit formal agreement and materials for public meeting (facilitation by MSA)
- Public Information Meeting (presentation/facilitation by MSA)
- Working Group meeting to review public meeting and discuss agreement edits (facilitation by MSA)

Wisconsin/Minnesota Departments of Transportation

Phase 2 of the TCMC study (2nd Empire Builder frequency), Total Request: \$50,000

This request would help fund Phase 2 of the Twin Cities - Milwaukee - Chicago (TCMC) Intercity Passenger Rail Service Study (2nd Empire Builder frequency). This would include completion of the NEPA work and Service Development Plan to be ready for federal funding to implement the service.

Under the guidance of the Federal Railroad Administration, the Minnesota and Wisconsin departments of Transportation have initiated TCMC Study to improve passenger rail service on Amtrak's Empire Builder between St. Paul and Chicago and station communities in between. The service would operate at conventional speeds (79 m.p.h.).

This project is based on recommendations of Amtrak's 2015 feasibility report on the proposed service. The favorable ridership and revenue projections identified in the feasibility report supported a more detailed study of the proposed service.

This first phase will evaluate alternatives for track and other infrastructure improvements required for a second round trip, along with anticipated costs. Phase 2 of the project will complete environmental analysis and generate a service development plan.

Scope of Work:

- Environmental tasks to prepare a Purpose and Need Statement and a Service Alternatives Analysis that fulfills state and federal environmental requirements.
- An operations analysis to evaluate and determine how the additional frequency can be operated most efficiently with freight trains on the Saint Paul to Chicago corridor and integrate with the Hiawatha schedule between Milwaukee and Chicago.
- Evaluation of railroad infrastructure to determine improvement needs and development of conceptual engineering plans. This will ensure states become eligible for federal funding and allow the project to advance toward implementation.
- Development of capital cost estimates for approved infrastructure improvements based on the conceptual engineering plans.
- Stakeholder and public engagement.