



La Crosse Area Planning Committee

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Serving the La Crosse/La Crescent Urbanized Area

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Minutes of Committee on Transit and Active Transportation Meeting, November 14, 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the CTAT held on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 3:00 pm in room 1107 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 212 6th St N, La Crosse, WI.

Members Present: Francis Schelfhout, Susan Lundsten, Sandy Sechrest, Cathy Van Maren, Krista Heinz (ph), Jim Longhurst, Adam Lorentz, Charlie Handy, Jackie Eastwood. **Excused:** Kurt Wayne, Ginny Loehr, Becky Lakowske. Jack Zabrowski, Leroy Brown. **Staff and Others Present:** Peter Fletcher, Jackie Eastwood.

Peter Fletcher called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. Introductions were done.

1) Approval of minutes of the March 14, 2019 CTAT Meeting:

Adam Lorentz motioned to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2019 meeting; Susan Lundsten seconded. All were in favor.

2) Status of Mississippi River Parkway Commission discussions regarding realignment of Mississippi River Trail through La Crosse:

Francis Schelfhout provided an update stating that the goal for the MRT is to have it signed consistently across the 10 MRT states. Because the Parkway Commission needs resolutions from every city, village, town, and county that the MRT runs through, they are going to work county-by-county instead of trying to sign the entire alignment at once. Having an easement through the Rivercrest mobile home park in place for the Regional Route 1 bike route, which is recommended to be the new alignment for the MRT, isn't quite so urgent. The City Council approved authorization to pursue and easement, but the engineering department has been very busy and has not been able to determine the extent of the easement needed.

3) La Crosse County SMRT Bus:

Charlie Handy stated that La Crosse County took over administration of the SMRT service from the city of Prairie du Chien after the route system was expanded into Tomah (Green Route) in late 2018. This route has again expanded to accommodate bidirectional and mid-day service. Service to Organic Valley in La Farge has ended, however, due to low ridership. Gundersen has committed to funding free rides for their employees. Three new buses have been acquired this year and two new electric buses will be acquired next year.

4) Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Service final phase:

Peter Fletcher summarized the activities for the TCMC service stating that the study is down to two alternatives—1) extending one of the seven Hiawatha trips out to the Twin Cities and 2) adding an eighth Hiawatha trip. The preferred alternative will be decided this spring (2020), with an environmental document completed by fall. Implementation of the second train service should occur in 2023. MnDOT and WisDOT will be updating their websites to reflect current information.

5) Update on La Crosse SRTS Plan:

Jackie Eastwood stated that Toole Design had been selected as the consultant to update the city of La Crosse's Safe Routes to School Plan. This project was funded through LAPC local studies funds and she was ensuring that the scope of work remained eligible for the funding. Because of delays, the city asked for an extension, which was granted by WisDOT until May 31, 2020. A draft plan must be completed by then.

6) Results of STP-Urban project ranking:

Peter Fletcher stated that five projects totaling about \$4 million were submitted for STP-U funding. Only \$2.3 million was available. After the TAC ranked and discussed the projects, the TAC recommended that one of two MTU buses, four of six shared-ride vans, and the CTH SN project at 73% of the construction request be funded. The

recommendation was approved by the Policy Board at its meeting on September 18 and subsequently sent to WisDOT.

7) Other updates and information items:

Krista Heinz from Couleecap announced that their Work 'n Wheels program has increased its eligibility income limits from 150% of the poverty line to 200%. The program assists eligible applicants get a no- or low-interest loan to purchase a new or repair an existing vehicle. Couleecap serves as the lender.

Jim Longhurst inquired about the Multimodal Local Supplement (MLS) program, wondering who in the area may have applied. Charlie Handy stated that the County has applied and Adam Lorentz stated that planning, engineering, and MTU at the city of La Crosse have applied.

Jim Longhurst reported that HealthTides has lost its funding and that 1000 Friends of Wisconsin will be taking over its project, Wisconsin Active Together, while HealthTides look for funding. The YMCA will be hosting an event on February 6 to bring local advocates of active transportation together as part of the statewide Wisconsin Active Together project.

Charlie Handy stated that the La Crosse BPAC approved a letter of support for a bike share program in the city and asked if the CTAT would consider doing the same. Adam Lorentz said that MTU has committed to one-half of one station for two years. Cathy Van Maren said that she is in favor of bike share, but that the city needs to have a concurrent program of building bike infrastructure.

Francis Schelfhout reported on the design of the STH 16/La Crosse St project scheduled for construction in 2022. He stated that the design includes 5-ft integral curb for bike lanes, a two-way left-turn lane, median pedestrian refuges, and two crossing with rectangular rapid flashing beacons.

Adam Lorentz stated that MTU will have 10 new buses by 2021. La Crescent will acquire a new bus in 2021 and some new shelters. MTU applied for the MLS for upgrades to their maintenance shop.

8) Future agenda items:

- Letter of support for bike share program in La Crosse

9) Adjourn; Next meeting TBA:

Sandy Sechrest motioned to adjourn at 4:05 pm; Charlie Handy seconded. All were in favor.