

# City of La Crosse TAP Application for St. James-St. Cloud Cycle Track

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## Attachment A - Project Narrative

### St. Cloud/St. James Street Narrative

#### Project Description and Overview

The St. Cloud-St. James Street Cycle track will create a vital connection in the city of La Crosse between major employers, higher education institutions, and housing while creating a safer, accessible, and protected route for travelers to and from the north side of La Crosse. This corridor is one of two connection points on the north side to the extensive La Crosse River marsh trails, which provide an auto-free path to jobs, nature and recreation, education, and entertainment.

The current condition of St. James Street includes unprotected bike lanes on a road with annual average daily traffic of 6,500 vehicles between Winneshiek Road and George Street including abundant 18-wheeler traffic due to the industrial activity in this area.<sup>1</sup> Due to the lack of boulevards, semi-trucks can often be found parked in the bike lanes forcing bicyclists into the traffic lane. The proposed solution is to create a protected, buffered cycle track on the north side of the street with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) crossing to connect it to the marsh trails and the cycle track north of Gillette Street on River Valley Drive. These improvements also include sidewalk infill on the north side of the street, which will provide a new pedestrian connection to the marsh trails.

#### Project Planning and Preparation and Local Support

The bike lanes on St. Cloud and St. James Street have existed since the last *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* was adopted in 2012 and are a recommendation in the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan. The improvement project was first proposed at the La Crosse Community Transportation Academy hosted by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> The city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee recommended this project as an important improvement to pursue to enhance safety, ease, and accessibility for current and future cyclists.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://wisdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2e12a4f051de4ea9bc865ec6393731f8>

<sup>2</sup> <https://1kfriends.org/community-transportation-academy/>

## History of Sponsor Success, Deliverability and Commitment to Multimodal

This project has support from the City Council and Mayor and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. These stakeholders will work with staff and adjacent property owners to ensure the project is implemented within the desired timeframe. Through the cooperation of city departments, the city of La Crosse has designed and delivered many multimodal projects. Past projects that have been completed using State and Federal funding include Pammel Creek multi-use Trail, Southern Bluffs Trail, Highway 16 Side-path Trail, VIP Trail, Gund Trail, 3 Rivers Trail, North La Crosse River Trail, North Bank Trail, Gillette Street safety improvements. In 2022, the city was awarded TAP funds for the Wagon Wheel Trail, which is currently being planned and designed with construction anticipated in 2026.

## Project Utility and Connectivity

Safe and viable multimodal transportation on St. Cloud and St. James Street is important due to the vital connectivity this road provides to the popular and widely used marsh trails. These trails serve as shared use connection trails from the south side to the north side for commuting and recreation alike. The importance of creating a safe, continuous path past the Marsh Trails is vital for active transportation users.

The upgrades to St. Cloud and St. James Street would incorporate ease and accessibility into the existing active transportation network in the city. This cycle track will offer opportunity to reach important destinations within the city including Kane Street Community Garden, Myrick Park, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Kwik Trip Distribution Center and Factories, and Interstate Industrial Park. Aside from connecting to important employment, educational, and recreational destinations, this path will also continue up River Valley Drive which connects with the 24-mile Great River State Trail and the 22-mile La Crosse River State Trail. This will safely link commuters to nearby communities of Trempealeau, Onalaska, West Salem, Bangor, Rockland, and Sparta.

## Project Benefit

*Environmental*-One of the goals of the St. James Street improvements is to increase the number of those using the multi-modal system by increasing the safety of the route. Giving users the opportunity

to feel safe on a buffered cycle track gives opportunity to increase the likelihood of a modal shift by 21% to 171%.<sup>3</sup> This project also increases the access and connection to the natural environment through the connections to the Marsh Trails, Great River State Trail, and La Crosse River State Trail.

*Public Health*-The current conditions which include unprotected bike lanes on a high traffic road leaves cyclists susceptible to feeling unsafe. With an increase in safety, we not only see the benefits of an improvement in protection from crashes, but we could also see more people commuting and utilizing St. James Street to get to their desired destinations. With increased access to active transportation and nature the community will see both physical and mental health benefits.

*Economic Justice* -The cycle track project is in census tract two, which according to the United States DOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer is a disadvantaged census tract.<sup>4</sup> This census tract meets two of the five burden category thresholds: environmental burden and social vulnerability. Furthermore, the environmental burden category shows this tract is in the 67<sup>th</sup> percentile for high-volume road proximity. In addition to the census tract statistics, this path will be easily accessible to those living at the Garden Terrace affordable housing units and public housing Shuh Homes.

*Safety* -The marsh trails in La Crosse are not only a recreational resource, but also a commuting connection to many city residents. As one of the major access points to the marsh trails, St. James Street should be a safe and accessible road to transition from or get to the marsh trail network. According to the Wisconsin Community Crash Maps,<sup>5</sup> there have been over 50 crashes on this road in the last 10 years. With high traffic counts and a high crash rate, the current facility can be extremely intimidating and is not adequate for active transportation users. This improvement will address the need for safety improvements to a vital connection on the north side of La Crosse.

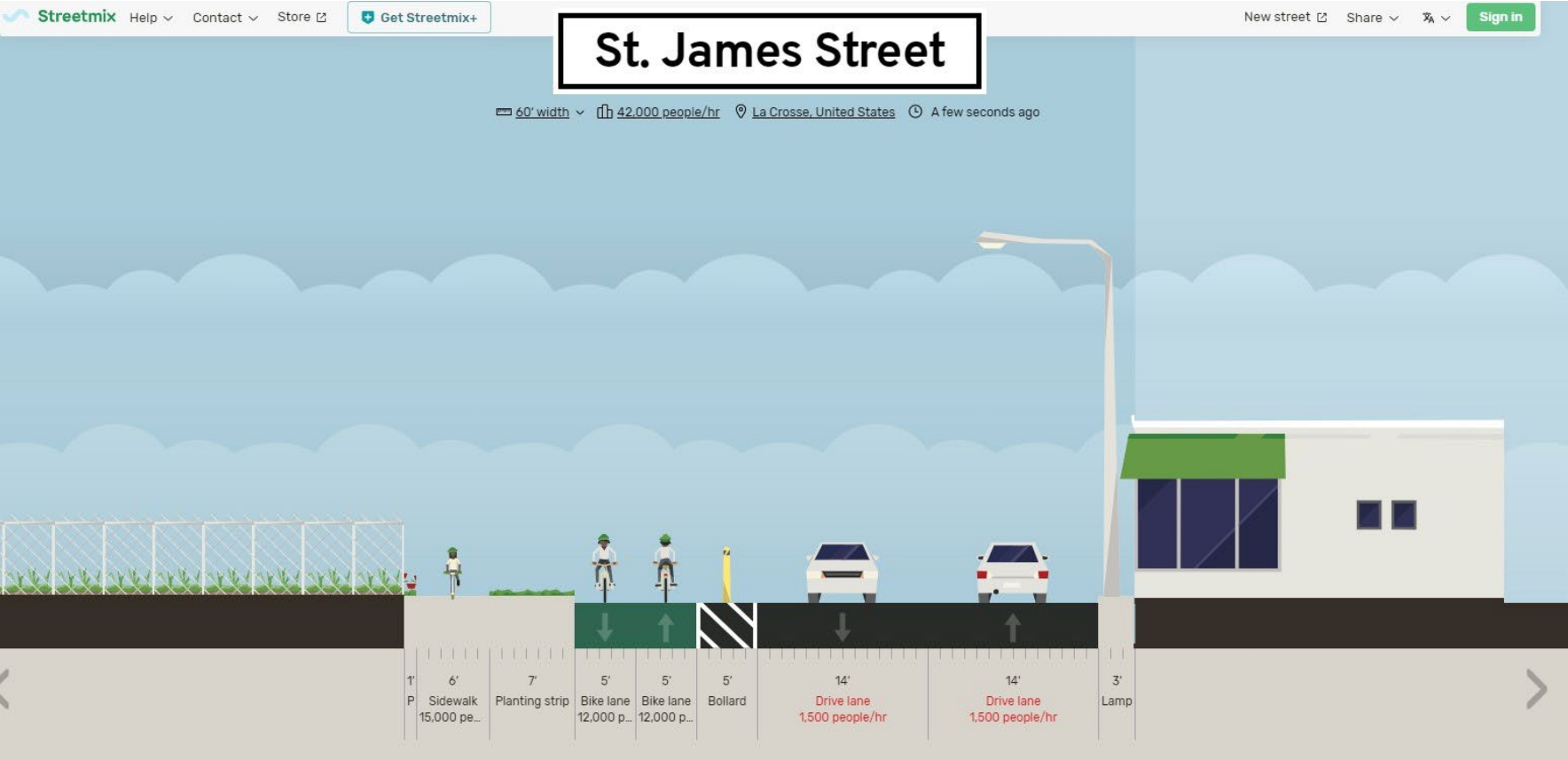
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<sup>3</sup> <https://nacto.org/2016/07/20/high-quality-bike-facilities-increase-ridership-make-biking-safer/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/0920984aa80a4362b8778d779b090723/page/ETC-Explorer---National-Results/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://transportal.cee.wisc.edu/partners/community-maps/crash/search/BasicSearch.do;jsessionid=0A565CA0FC4A40E62089A33591D2896D>

# Attachment B - Typical Cross Section





October 18, 2023

To whom it may concern,

1000 Friends of Wisconsin is writing in support for the **City of La Crosse Transportation Alternative Program grant proposal** to improve the City's bicycle network by installing a cycle track connecting Lang Drive, St. Cloud, St. James, River Valley Drive, and Gillette Street.

1000 Friends is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing healthy, thriving communities through sound land use and equitable transportation policy. We advocate for active transportation options that ensure everyone can reach everyday destinations, regardless of their age, race, ability, or socioeconomic status. Communities with robust bicycle and pedestrian networks are safer and healthier for everyone.

Earlier this year, 1000 Friends ran a program in La Crosse called the Community Transportation Academy. Nearly 30 residents of the La Crosse region spent 10 weeks learning the basics of local transportation planning, the impact of our transportation system on health and safety, the benefits of safe street design for bicyclists and pedestrians, and how to advocate for more accessible active transportation options. One Academy participant gave a presentation calling for improved bicycle infrastructure in the area in the TAP proposal. He included compelling photo and video evidence of the safety issues, such as truck traffic and parking in bike lanes.

1000 Friends is in full support of the proposal to improve bicycle routes in La Crosse. The proposed improvements would serve riders traveling to and from the Marsh Trails and provide routes to major employers such as Kwik Trip factories and the University of Wisconsin La Crosse. Additionally, safety would be increased in an area with heavy semi-truck traffic, truck parking in bike lanes, and vehicle volume around 6,500 daily.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah Nemeth". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Deborah Nemeth  
Executive Director

October 19th, 2023

Andrew Ericson  
La Crosse, WI

RE: St Cloud – St James Cycle Track

To Whom This May Concern,

This is a letter of support for the St Cloud – St James Cycletrack Transportation Alternative Program grant application.

As a resident of La Crosse's Northside and a bike commuter, I am acutely aware of the challenges of the St Cloud – St James Street corridor. This area is defined by the confluence of a high density of housing, industry, and a trail system. The various housing developments around this area, such as the Boot Factory, Schuh and Mullen Homes, 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Residences, and the rest of the Lower Northside and Depot neighborhood, are completely separated by a half-mile stretch of St James St. that is lined by industrial facilities. On the other end of this stretch is the beginning of the Grand Crossing Trail through the La Crosse River Marsh. In my eyes, the most important north-south passage for cyclists in the city. While the corridor has wide bike lanes, they are in disrepair and are frequently obstructed by parked 18-wheelers. This makes for a challenging and sometimes dangerous passage for cyclists, and certainly not an all-abilities route. But it is even worse for pedestrians, as there is no sidewalk for the entire stretch.

The proposed cycletrack provides a solution that balances the varied needs of this area. There is a need to connect the community to these vital paths with a safe all-abilities option. But it also provides for the need for parking for 18-wheelers. By dedicating one side to cyclists and pedestrians and the other to the industrial needs of the area, I believe that a balance will be struck. The approval of this grant and subsequent implementation of this project has my full support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Ericson

**Engineering Department**400 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601 • (608) 789-7505 • Fax: (608) 789-8184  
http://www.cityoflacrosse.org**CITY OF LA CROSSE ENGINEERING ESTIMATE**Estimate Date

10/4/2023

ContractTAP Application  
St. James / St. Cloud

Item	Unit	Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
<b>SECTION 1-</b>					
<b>REMOVALS</b>					
1	L.F.	Concrete Curb & Gutter	250	\$ 4.00	\$ 1,000.00
2	S.Y.	Bituminous Pavement (Any Thickness)	30	\$ 1.00	\$ 30.00
3	L.F.	Bituminous Sawing (Full Depth)	200	\$ 3.00	\$ 600.00
<b>INSTALLATION</b>					
4	L.F.	Standard Curb & Gutter (Including 6" Compacted Crushed Rock)	250	\$ 20.00	\$ 5,000.00
5	S.F.	6" Concrete Driveway	2,550	\$ 7.50	\$ 19,125.00
6	Each	Truncated Dome Warning Fields (2'x4')	6	\$ 350.00	\$ 2,100.00
7	S.F.	5" Concrete Sidewalk	11,220	\$ 8.00	\$ 89,760.00
8	S.Y.	5" Bituminous Pavement (Furnished & Placed)	30	\$ 10.00	\$ 300.00
9	SY	Chip Seal	30,600	\$ 2.00	\$ 61,200.00
10	S.Y.	7" Base Course (Including Placing, Shaping, & Compaction)	30	\$ 8.00	\$ 240.00
11	SF	Exposed Concrete Island 8"	250	\$ 25.00	\$ 6,250.00
12	Each	RRFB installation	1	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
13	L.S.	Erosion Control Installation & Maintenance	1	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
14	L.S.	Traffic Control	1	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
<b>SUBTOTAL - Section 1 (Items 1-14)</b>					<b>\$250,605.00</b>
<b>Section 2 -Restoration &amp; pavement marking</b>					
15	SF	Restoration	2,000	\$ 4.00	\$8,000.00
16	L.F.	pavement marking	30,000	\$ 7.00	\$210,000.00
<b>SUBTOTAL - Section 2 (Items 15-16)</b>					<b>\$218,000.00</b>
					<b>\$468,605.00</b>
<b>Remaining portion</b>					<b>\$468,605.00</b>
			<b>Contingency =</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>\$70,290.75</b>
					<b>\$538,895.75</b>
<b>TOTAL - Sections 1-3 (Items 1-23)</b>					<b>\$538,895.75</b>





Resolution committing to and accepting the Wisconsin Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant funding for the King Street Greenway, Avon Street Greenway, St. Cloud/St. James Cycle Track, and Willow Trail Resiliency.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the City of La Crosse Planning, Development and Assessment Department and the Parks and Recreation Department will be submitting four (4) projects for the 2024-2028 Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Cycle; and

WHEREAS the above projects have been identified by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning, Development and Assessment Department, and Parks and Recreation Department as priority projects to seek funding for; and

WHEREAS the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) requires a local resolution of support should they be awarded the proposed project(s), executed by a governing body that has the authority to make financial commitment on behalf of the project sponsor; and

WHEREAS WisDOT requires the City fund 100% of project costs upfront and WisDOT will reimburse up to 80% of the approved and eligible project costs once the project is complete and the City will be responsible for at least 20% of project costs; and

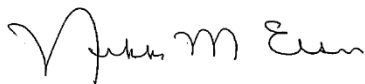
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse, that if the City of La Crosse is awarded funding by WisDOT for the 2024-2028 TAP award cycle, the City of La Crosse supports the project(s) and will commit to funding the proposed project(s) up-front through the Capital Budget understanding that upon completion, up to 80% of eligible costs will be reimbursed back to the City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon confirmation of the grant award the project(s) will be set to begin in 2025 or 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of Engineering and Public Works, Director of Planning, Development and Assessment, Director of Finance, and Director of Parks and Recreation are hereby authorized and directed to take all necessary steps to implement this resolution.

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*I, Nikki M. Elsen, certify that this resolution was duly and officially adopted by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse on November 9, 2023.*



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*Nikki M. Elsen, WCMC, City Clerk  
City of La Crosse, Wisconsin*