

Eau Claire Bike/Ped Times

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Local News

Water Street to Receive Bike Lanes?

This summer, Water Street from 6th to 9th is going to be replaced. Word from the Eau Claire Public Works Department is that they will be considering bike lanes in the space between the travel lane and the parked vehicles. This would be a great chance to see how residents respond to a designated bike lane on Eau Claire streets. Contact the Public Works Department for more information.

Chippewa River Trail extended

The Chippewa River Trail (or is it the Old Abe?) now extends northeast along Hastings Way all the way to Pederson Road. This is just past the Hwy 53 over pass across the road from the tank farms. If you just can't wait till spring I believe the trail is maintained during winter... Eventually this section will be linked through Chippewa Falls and to the north side of Lake Wissota.

Clairemont Ave Bridge to be Removed

The westbound bridge by the Ship Shape Car wash will be removed and replaced with a three lane structure this year. Many of you know this means there will be no sidewalk or trail available to non-motorized traffic from March 1 until July 4. Much work went into having DOT recognize the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians not only after but during the project! As a result of your letters and phone calls, a shuttle bus service will be provided during the three months mentioned above. There will be a posting at each side of the bridge with the following information on it.

The shuttle service contact is Dorothy Jereczek
Office Number: 715.832.9833
Cell Number: 715.456.3552

The Shuttle Transport Vehicle shall be a van capable of transporting 8 (eight) passengers and 6 (six) bicycles.

The Shuttle Transport Vehicle shall be equipped with a hazard identification beacon (flashing yellow light).

The Shuttle Transport Vehicle shall pickup and drop-off passengers at the intersections of Menomonie St. & Carson Park Drive; Short Street & Chippewa River Trail; Craig Road & Clairemont Avenue.

The Shuttle Transport Vehicle shall pickup passengers within 30 minutes of being called. The hours of operation for the Shuttle Transport Vehicle shall be a continuous operation from 6:00 AM to 9:00 AM and from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM on weekdays.

Winter Snow removal

We're not quite out of the woods yet as far as snow removal is concerned. If you know of an area that is not cleared of snow in a timely manner. You can contact:

For property owned by the Eau Claire Area School District, Ron Nunke at 839-6075

For property in the City of Eau Claire 839-4963

For property maintained by Eau Claire County (which includes most bridge decks and approaches) contact 839-2952

Birch Street and Hasting Way Do-Over

Have you ever wondered what the intersection would be like if the overpass were gone and the two streets were controlled at grade? The intersection design will be discussed at an Open House next Thursday, February 24th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Banbury Place. It would be good to discuss it then - if you are able to attend - and also review it with Wis/DOT and the consultant that is working on the project.

State News

Racine, Wis. Named "Bike Town" by Bicycling Magazine

Racine Wisconsin is one of 5 Bike Towns identified last year as a "Bike Town" by Bicycling Magazine. As Bicycling put it, "We wondered if we could turn some Bobs into Steves--and how many Steves might fall in love with cycling. To find out we gave 50 people in the city the use of a new bike for three months. We chose the participants based on an essay contest, which more than 200 people entered. Our expectations were modest. We know that in America, Bobs far outnumber Steves. And we'd resolved not to preach or actively try to turn these people into cyclists. We gave them the bikes, plus helmets, locks and a smidgen of advice, and let them ride off to discover- or abandon--cycling on their own. Check out the March issue for more information...

Wisconsin trails could lose funds for workers in 2007

Trail operations would go to groups outside DNR

**By Anna Krejci
News-Chronicle**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources budget proposal calls for cutting eight full-time equivalent employee positions who work for the state's trail system, and the idea has one pro-trail group concerned.

During a Natural Resources Board meeting in Madison today, the board will study the department's 2005-07 budget proposal. The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin advocates keeping the full-time equivalent employees for the trail system. Marjorie Ward, the organization's executive director, said she worries the cutback signifies the weakening of the state's commitment to the trail system - a commitment that Ward said has been one of the strongest in the country. The DNR has 13 FTE positions for the state's trail system. In the next two-year

budget period, that number would be reduced to five. There would be one regional trail coordinator for each of five DNR regions in 2007. The \$488,800 in salaries and benefits for the eight FTE positions would be used in another way by the DNR's Park and Recreation Department.

The regional coordinator would work with counties or other partners that would be responsible for the trail operations. The state has 34 trails. Of those, 14 are directly operated by the state and the remaining are operated by county governments or other partners. Brown County should be less affected by the potential FTE cut-backs because it operates its own trails, said Joe Polasek, director of the department's Bureau of Management and Budget. In such cases, the county keeps 70 percent of the trail's revenue and the state keeps 30 percent. The potential cuts would affect trails in Eau Claire and Dane counties, among other areas, he said. Ward is concerned that if local communities are required to take more responsibility for the recreational corridors, trail rules will be poorly enforced, especially those concerning motorized vehicles.

The shift in responsibility also would be another financial burden on local communities that already have budget problems, she said. The state has been a leader in trail systems because not every state has the right to purchase abandoned railways and turn them into trails like Wisconsin, she said. The group is also asking that more Service Transportation Program Discretionary funds from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation be allocated to trail systems. Also in the 2005-07 budget, the DNR is requesting \$137,000 for the new Badger State Trail connecting Madison to Freeport, Ill. The DNR is balancing obligatory budget cuts with funding demands. It's proposed operating budget is \$514.2 million in 2005-06 and \$515.3 million for 2006-07. <http://www.gogreenbay.com/page.html?article=128920>

National News

FEDERAL RESCISSION PUTS COMMUNITY FUNDS AT RISK – Act Now to Protect Bike and Trail Projects

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a notice January 25 that requires all states to return their portion of \$1.26 billion in previously allotted transportation funds. The rescission directive gives states until February 24 to determine how to meet their FHWA quota.

Recognizing that the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program—the largest federal investment in rail-trails, walking and bicycling in American communities—is vulnerable to sweeping, disproportionate cuts, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is taking action to shield the program from a potentially devastating blow. Your help is needed.

To find out how you can get involved and for more information on your states fair share go to <http://www.railtrails.org/whatwedo/policy/rescission.asp>

TEA-21 Reauthorization Reintroduced in the House

Representative Don Young, Chairman of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, reintroduced a \$283.9 billion six-year transportation reauthorization bill, in line with the President's FY06 budget. The policy features of the bill from the last Congress remain largely

intact but there are some differences in funding including a “reopener” clause that would allow the amount to be revised upward should additional funds become available.

In addition to the continued protection of bicycling’s core programs, the proposal retains a national Safe Routes to School program that will provide \$875 million over five years to states for projects to allow children to walk and bicycle to school, as well as other crucial bicycling measures that we worked for during the previous Congress.

For detailed information on the bill, see the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee website at: www.house.gov/transportation