

Eau Claire Bike/Ped Times

Volume 1, No. 2

March, 2005

Local News

Eau Claire City Council Election

What Do the Candidates Think Regarding Alternative Transportation?

The survey responses are here! The Survey responses are here! We sent an alternative transportation survey to each candidate for City Council. Here's a sample of what we got back:

Dave Adler! Do you believe that transportation choices, such as bicycling and walking, are important to our community?

Dave's Response: "I believe bicycling and walking are critical components to our community. Given our increased reliance upon the automobile, it is incumbent upon us as a community to encourage non-motorized modes of transportation..."

Bob VonHaden! Would you support the formation of a Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee to advise the City on issues affecting non-motorized transportation?

Bob's Response: "I would support (its) formation... People who have a strong interest in bicycling and walking are the ones we need input from to write the best policies."

Dave Duax! What role do you feel government should play in providing a seamless network of paths, trails and on-street bicycling and walking facilities?

Dave's Response: The Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee should study and recommend practical implementation steps.

These are just an example of the thoughts your candidates have regarding Alt-Trans in Eau Claire. For the complete candidate response summary, scroll to the end of the newsletter. This summary is also available as a MS Word document for the asking.

Comprehensive Plan Addresses Non-Motorized Transport

We encourage you to attend the public hearing of the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan Update this Saturday. A brief presentation of the Plan will be provided and people will be given the opportunity to speak or submit written comments. This is an opportunity to advocate for biking and walking, as necessary alternative forms of transportation. As you know, a supportive city infrastructure is important to enable an active, healthy community. The Plan currently includes biking and walking in the Transportation Section, but a show of support is needed to ensure its inclusion in the final draft.

Saturday, April 2nd

9am – Noon

New RCU building downtown near the Post Office

The Comprehensive Plan also proposes creating a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. This Advisory Committee would exist to advocate for the equal opportunity to use non-automotive forms of

travel (biking, walking, and handicapped/disabled chairs and scooters) and to ensure the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into a well designed, integrated transportation network for all citizens.

The Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan has been designed to guide and govern growth and development in Eau Claire for the next twenty years. A 30-member citizen advisory committee developed the Plan over the last two years. Special subcommittees also provided input on Transportation and a few other sections. To learn more about the Plan, go to <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us> and click on "Comprehensive Plan".

We hope you can attend. Please feel free to invite others and share this information. If you have questions, please contact Brad Henderson at 831-9912 or Francie Peardon at 839-5091.

State News

BIKE FED ACTION ALERT: REINSTATE FUNDING FOR BICYCLE PATHS AND LANES

The Wisconsin Bicycle Federation is fighting to get a vital source of funding for bicycle paths, trails, and lanes reinstated into the state budget. The funding source is called Surface Transportation Program Discretionary Funding or STP-D. We want to make sure that STP-D funds, which have been reinstated in the DOT preliminary budget and the Governor's version of the budget at the \$2,720,000 level in year TWO of the 2005-2007 state budget, stays intact in the Joint Finance Committee. This committee eliminated the funding in the last budget cycle. In addition, we would like to see the funding added to year ONE of the 2005-2007 budget. The committee needs to hear how important the funding is from YOU!

Contact the Joint Finance Committee before April 11th and encourage them to keep STP-D in year two of the final budget they send to the Legislature and also to add it to year one. Letters and emails are best...but you can call and leave a message with the committee members' staff too if that is easier. A sample letter appears at the bottom of this message.

Send your message to:

1. Your Representative or Senator that is on the Joint Finance Committee.

2. Senator Scott Fitzgerald, Senate Chair (R) Joint Finance Committee
Room 317 East, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-5660
sen.fitzgerald@legis.state.wi.us

3. Representative Dean Kaufert, Assembly Chair (R) Joint Finance Committee
Room 308 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702
(608) 266-5719
rep.kaufert@legis.state.wi.us

National News

5th National Bike Summit Establishes Bicycling in the Public Interest

The 5th National Bike Summit was a resounding success, reports the League of American Bicyclists. More than 325 registrants from 47 states attended the 2005 Summit. Together, they visited in excess of 310 House offices and more than 90 of the 100 Senate offices during Capitol Hill day, March 17.

Keynote speakers during the National Bike Summit® included The Honorable Norman J. Mineta, Secretary of Transportation ([speech.pdf](#)); Ms Elizabeth Mabry, Executive Director of the South Carolina Department of Transportation ([speech.pdf](#)); Andy Clarke, Executive Director of the League of American Bicyclists; Tim Blumenthal, Executive Director of the Bikes Belong Coalition, and Michael Aherne, Head of Traffic Management for the City of Dublin, Ireland.

Senator John Kerry (D-MA) received a National Bicycle Leadership Award at the Congressional Reception, March 17th. The award recognized his role in raising awareness of bicycling and his personal commitment to enjoying the benefits of bicycling even during his grueling Presidential campaign. He thanked the audience for rewarding his “fanaticism”. Awards were also presented to Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), the Palmetto Cycling Coalition in South Carolina, and Pat Cunnane, president of Fuji Bicycles.

Andy Clarke used this final agenda item to tie the summit into the League’s 125th anniversary. “Bicyclists led the Good Roads Movement in the late 19th century,” he said. “Now we are leading the charge for Complete Streets in the 21st century. We’ve got plenty of pavement, but it isn’t always conducive to bicycling. We still need to complete the streets”

Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta picked up on the historical theme during his keynote address. “Bicycling is among our oldest modes of transportation,” he reminded the audience. Mineta reiterated his commitment to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs as “an integral part of our nation’s transportation system for the 21st century.”

During the two days of educational workshops and training that are wrapped around the Capitol Hill day, experts presented and discussed the finer details of policies such as Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School. For those unable to participate in congressional meetings, this year featured a special one-day Safe Routes to School training course presented by the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#).

The bicycle movement’s congressional champions warned against complacency. Representatives Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) urged Summit participants to stay involved, to keep contacting their members of Congress, to participate in the political process, and to bring their friends and colleagues to the next Summit. “There should not be a single empty seat in the hall in 2006”, challenged Blumenauer in the opening plenary, as he looked out at the more than 300 people in a 600-seat amphitheater!

Andy Clarke agreed. “I am not content with bicycling being just another reasonably effective special interest group making incremental gains”, he said. “Getting more people safely on bikes is clearly in the public interest and we must not be shy about making that case.”

Colorado State House Approves 'Bicycle Bill'

By George Lurie

Herald Denver Bureau Chief

DENVER - Lawmakers in the state House on Friday passed HB 1218 - the so-called "Bicycle Bill" - by a vote of 41 to 21. The bill was introduced by state Rep. Greg Brophy, R-Wray, and now moves on to the Senate. If passed, the law would allow bicyclists to ride two abreast in certain situations, signal a right turn with a horizontal motion of their right arm, and to ride through pedestrian crosswalks. State Rep. Matt Knoedler, R-Lakewood, who supports the legislation, said: "This is a common-sense bill and establishes common-sense liability issues." But state Rep. Mark Larson, R-Cortez, who voted against the bill, believes the legislation would put bicyclists at risk. "This is going to expose many bicycle riders to unnecessary danger," said Larson. "The intentions behind this bill are good, and we tried to amend it in committee. But if passed this bill begins to encroach on motor-vehicle laws and will have the unintended consequence of giving false confidence to cyclists."

Alternative Transportation Survey Summary - 2005

The following questions were sent to all candidates for Eau Claire City Council. As of March 31, responses were received from 6 of the 11 candidates. Remember to vote on April 5.

General Questions

1. *Do you believe that transportation choices, such as bicycling and walking, are important to our community?*

Council Candidate	Response
D. Adler	I believe bicycling and walking are critical components to our community. Given our increased reliance upon the automobile, it is incumbent upon us as a community to encourage non-motorized modes of transportation, where feasible, to alleviate traffic, make our city more safe and promote the overall health of our residents.
D. Duax	Yes
D. Neville	Yes
D. Fischer	Yes
B. VonHaden	Yes, bicycling and walking are important transportation choices for our community.
A. Klenz	I believe that alternative modes of transportation or very important to our community.

2. *Should the state and local government promote transportation choices, such as bicycling and walking?*

D. Adler	I do not believe we can mandate behavior, but I do believe we should, as a city and state, promote such choices. Our population is becoming increasingly lethargic and obesity levels are at an all time high to epidemic proportions. Unfortunately, more and more of our youth are falling into this category. The financial costs of obesity to our society are enormous and the consequences are deadly. Unfortunately, we cannot promote alternative modes of getting around if we do not provide the means. It is important to recognize this as we go forward in our street projects and neighborhood designs to try and facilitate options so people have options.
D. Duax	Yes
D. Neville	Yes
D. Fischer	Yes
B. VonHaden	Yes, the state and local governments should promote bicycling and walking as transportation choices
A. Klenz	Yes they should

3. *Are you interested in promoting construction projects that are of particular interest to bicyclists and pedestrians in the City of Eau Claire?*

D. Adler	Absolutely
D. Duax	Yes, I have co-chaired the Citizens Advisory Committee for the last 18 months. I hope that affordable projects can be found.
D. Neville	--
D. Fischer	Yes
B. VonHaden	Yes, and each project would be reviewed on its merit as it impacts the citizens of Eau Claire and our community five-year capital budget; however, be mindful that some projects, depending on costs, would be completed as funds are available.
A. Klenz	As I mentioned at the March 10th debate, I have a visual impairment and use my bicycle to get around. I have found that most parts of Eau Claire are not bicycle friendly. I would support a project that would do that.

4. What projects were you glad to see completed or are you aware of that the community is working on being implemented in the near future?

D. Adler	Two projects that come to mind are the Boyd Park Bridge and the Phoenix Park addition of the trailhead facility and Barstow Street underpass. Both additions will enhance and promote pedestrian and bike trail connections and will give residents safer and healthier alternatives to accessing our evolving and revitalized downtown. Additionally, we, as a city, implemented a safe routes to school program in the East Hill Neighborhood that has promoted safer routes for children to get to school through the use of designated routes, strategically placed stop signs and “bump out” designs of many of the curbs to calm traffic. I also believe the installation of planned roundabouts will also be a benefit to the city.
D. Duax	The S-bridge over the Eau Claire River near Banbury place, and the completion of the Galloway Street past and planned bike paths. Also I hope that the connection to the Old Abe trail can be completed.
D. Neville	“The Walk Bridge” over EC River. Trail through Phoenix Park.
D. Fischer	Bike and Nature trails
B. VonHaden	Projects that are currently being worked on include the Boyd Park Foot Bridge, various safe routes to and from our schools, and the completion of the downtown bike trail.
A. Klenz	I think the Phoenix Park project offers some nice venues for walkers and bicycle riders. I am also glad to hear that they are planning to add a bike lane on Water St.

[Providing Safe Routes to School](#)

Forty years ago, over 60% of school children walked or rode a bike to school. Today, that figure is less than 10%. In many communities, parents driving children to school make up as much as 30% of morning traffic. The decline in bicycling and walking is mirrored by dramatic increases in childhood obesity. Today, over 13% of American children are obese, more than double the number two decades ago. Childhood asthma rates are also on the rise, as unhealthy air becomes more common in our urban areas.

5. Would you support a city-wide Safe Routes to School program to identify and promote safe and healthy opportunities for children to walk or bike to school?

D. Adler	I already have and will continue to do so. As mentioned previously, as a member of city council, I supported and helped implement the safe routes to school program in the East Hill. We need to continue promotion of this program. It is a challenge as schools are consolidating and children are having to go further distances to get to school. However, as a city, we need to do what we can to promote this program.
D. Duax	Yes
D. Neville	Yes
D. Fischer	Yes
B. VonHaden	I believe all children who are not bused to their respective schools should have safe routes identified which promote walking or biking. Costs to implement this program would need public input.
A. Klenz	Yes I would

[Create a bicycle-friendly transportation system](#)

Every transportation project and program has an impact on bicyclists and pedestrians. That impact can and should be positive, but many times the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are not considered. The next time you travel to the store, think about whether traffic congestion or the lack of safe would discourage you from walking or bicycling.

6. Should the City take steps to educate motorists and bicyclists about shared use of the roadway?

D. Adler	In a perfect world, I do wish the city would take more of a proactive role in such an education program. Budgetary constraints, unfortunately, sometimes prevent the city
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	from doing everything it would like. It ultimately comes down to priorities and, for better or for worse, it may take greater public pressure on local government for its governing body to take notice. Having said that, I think this issue would be a great opportunity for a show on Community Television and the city could certainly run public service announcements on Channel 12 at very little cost to the taxpayers. It would be a great opportunity for city council members to get involved on a personal level.
D. Duax	Yes
D. Neville	DOT and Highway Safety provides these services.
D. Fischer	No, however we should encourage schools and other programs to promote awareness.
B. VonHaden	The initial documents should be drafted by the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee; the city would make the documents available to the citizens of Eau Claire.
A. Klenz	I think the City should.

7. Would you support the formation of a Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee to advise the City on issues affecting non-motorized transportation?

D. Adler	It is an interesting idea and one I would be open to. I would be interested in learning more, such as the committee's mission, role, and binding authority on council, etc.
D. Duax	Yes, The Comprehensive Plan for the City draft calls for this. I supported it on the citizens advisory committee.
D. Neville	Yes
D. Fischer	Yes
B. VonHaden	I would support the formation of a Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee to assist the city council on how best to resolve the issues affecting non-motorized transportation. People who have a strong interest in bicycling and walking are the ones we need input from to write the best policies.
A. Klenz	Yes I would

8. Do you agree that a seamless network of paths, trails and on-street bicycling and walking facilities should connect homes, shops, schools, shops, families and friends?

D. Adler	To the extent it is feasible, I think a seamless network would be an absolute asset to the city. I do not know that we could create such a network throughout the entire city, given some topographical limitations. However, we should do what we can to promote such a network, because it not only is good our residents, but puts Eau Claire on the map as a "destination" for visitors.
D. Duax	Yes, to the extent such is both practical and affordable
D. Neville	Yes
D. Fischer	Yes
B. VonHaden	I agree that we need to continue our policy of connecting the various bike trails and providing on street bicycling and walking facilities wherever logical. This may take time due to our city budget constraints.
A. Klenz	Yes I do

9. If yes, what role do you feel government should play in making that network a reality?

D. Adler	I think that as we plan for the future, we should look for, and encourage, opportunities to create such networks. This can happen in several ways, such as when as road re-constructions occur, new subdivisions are built and new commercial districts are planned.
D. Duax	The Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee should study and recommend practical implementation steps.
D. Neville	They should be a leader, but the funding will limit in some cases. With an advisory committee, council can help city staff be mindful and plan for further pedestrian usage.
D. Fischer	Sidewalks, Streets wide enough to accommodate both cars and bikes and bike trail.

B. VonHaden	The city council should provide assistance to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee in planning the future steps to make the network a reality. An overall program should be prepared and a timeline set up for completion.
A. Klenz	I think the City government can do a great deal with this issue. The biggest obstacle will be dealing with the economic issues related to creating that network. However, I think it is worth making the effort to do so.