

CHIPPEWA-EAU CLAIRE

MPOQUARTERLY

December 2025

Edition #20



Articles

*High-speed rail,
coolest streets,
and free transit*

Chippewa Valley Bike Routes

Near completion

L RTP Update

*Final Draft
available*



Newsletter #20

Wow, has it been five years?!?! We started this newsletter in January of 2021, and we are now at number 20. We wanted to give a quick, but heartfelt thank you to everyone for all the positive comments over the years. If you would like to see anything new in our newsletters, please let us know. We would be more than happy to include other things in the newsletter as well.

Long Range Transportation Plan Update

The MPO staff continues to work on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update.

At this time, staff has prepared the final draft which will be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on January 14th and Policy Council on February 4th. The draft can be found on the MPO LRTP [webpage](#). The completed community crash reports can also be found on the webpage. The planning process is currently in the public input stage. If you have any comments, please contact our office.

Staff is also working on a LRTP poster which will be distributed to all the communities in the MPA. We will distribute the posters in late winter.

Project Updates

Long Range Transportation Plan Update - Ongoing.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Story Maps - Ongoing.

Eau Claire County Vehicle Registration Fund project Story Map - Ongoing.

City of Chippewa Falls Wayfinding Plan - Ongoing.

Passenger Rail from Eau Claire to the Twin Cities - Ongoing.

Chippewa Valley Bike Routes - Communities continue to install signage. MPO staff are creating a QR code sticker for back of signs and public outreach items. The stickers will be installed in Spring 2026. The public map can be found [here](#).

Intersection and Traffic Control Analysis - Ongoing. Please contact us if you would like us to do any intersection or speed studies for your community.

Chippewa Valley Bike Map Update - Ongoing.

Cover Photo: Chippewa River State Trail with Chippewa Valley Bike Route signage

High Speed Train Travel in the U.S.

As the work to get passenger rail to the Chippewa Valley continues, the discussion of passenger rail and/or high speed trains only continues to grow in the U.S. This [CNN article](#) highlights what three high speed train routes in the U.S. could look like. They are New York-Chicago, San Francisco-Los Angeles, and Atlanta-Orlando.

For each route, the article highlights unique attributes about the routes, a route map, route length and time of travel, how travel times compares to air travel and cars, and similar routes in other parts of the world (China, France, and Spain).

The World's Coolest Streets

As communities in the MPA continue to redevelop their downtowns and other commercial districts, it is important to remember that there are a lot of best practices and examples of vibrant and "cool" streets around the world. This [article](#) highlights 31 of them. Many of the examples are in much larger metropolitan areas than as ours, however, many of the attributes and principles that make these streets special can be used here in the Chippewa Valley. In fact, many of the streets are in neighborhoods and commercial areas that are more to scale to our downtowns and commercial areas.

In the photos, you will see numerous examples of unique signage and architecture, people relaxing and shopping, outside seating for restaurants, cars not having the highest priority, and more. What is most common in these examples are people having the option and feeling comfortable to be outside (walking, shopping, eating, etc.) along the street.

When you have traveled, what are the coolest streets you have seen, and what things on those streets could we easily incorporate on our streets? Could we implement those here? In addition, are there things that would take a little more time and effort, but are still doable and would make some of our streets more vibrant?

The Chippewa-Eau Claire MPA includes:

The cities of Altoona, Chippewa Falls, and Eau Claire, the Village of Lake Hallie, and all or parts of the towns of Anson, Brunswick, Eagle Point, Hallie, Lafayette, Pleasant Valley, Seymour, Tilden, Union, Washington, and Wheaton.
www.wcwrpc.org 715.836.2918

Free Transit in Iowa City

A recent *New York Times* [article](#) discusses Iowa City's decision to make all bus rides free. The article talks about how the new policy has significantly increased ridership and reduced delays. The 2023 two-year pilot program was so successful that the City decided to extend it an additional year. The program is partially funded by a one percent increase in utility tax and by doubling most public parking rates from \$1 to \$2.

In addition to talking about the change to free transit, the article highlights additional actions that enhanced the visibility of transit as an option and promoting the change to free transit. This included:

- hosted launch parties
- artists decorated bus shelters
- jazz bands played on sidewalks
- booths were set up to write thank you cards to bus drivers

The article also talks about the importance of an enhanced P.R. campaign that was needed to promote transit as a viable option and the new program.

Chippewa Valley Bike Routes

The 20 route Chippewa Valley Bike Route system is near completion for sign installation. Chippewa County and the Village of Lake Hallie completed all of their signage this fall. Eau Claire County and the City of Altoona completed all of their signage earlier in 2025. Both the City of Chippewa Falls and City of Eau Claire have limited signage to install and hope to finish all installation in 2026.

MPO staff will complete the QR code sticker this winter. The sticker will be placed on the back of each sign and updating the bike route map. In the spring, MPO staff will work with local volunteers to install the QR code sticker on the back of the signs and will also promote the route system with a public outreach campaign.

The route map can be found [here](#).

Contact Information

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MPA Geography - 101

How good is your knowledge of geography in the MPA?

We have a new photo in each newsletter.
Good luck!!



MPA Geography 101 Answer: Click on this [link](#) to find the location.