#1

City of La Crescent

Planning Commission
Meeting Notice

October 3rd, 2023 - 5:30 P.M.
LA CRESCENT COMMUNITY BUILDING
336 SOUTH FIRST STREET

Agenda

1. Call To Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Approval of September 5th, 2023 Meeting Minutes
5. Presentation and discussion for the Active Transportation Corridor Plan for Hwy 16 to Miller's Corner
6. Presentation and discussion for the Walnut Street Corridor Plan
7. Planning commission related updates from planning commission appointed city council member
8. Adjourn

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION, CITY OF LA CRESCENT, MINNESOTA
SEPTEMBER 5TH, 2023

The Planning Commission met at 5:30 p.m., on September 5th, 2023 in the City's Community Building located at 336 S. 1st Street.

Item 1. Call to Order

Chair Greg Husmann called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 3. Roll Call

Upon a roll call taken and tallied by the Community Development Director, the following members were present: Chair Greg Husmann, Vice Chair Mike Welch, Dave Coleman, Dave Hanifl, Jerry Steffes, and Ryan Stotts. Commissioner Christopher Langen was absent. Ex-Officio City Council Representative Cherryl Jostad was present. Bill Waller, City Administrator, City Attorney Skip Wieser, Community Development Director Larry Kirch and Josh Tarrence, Building Inspector were also present. City Engineer, Tim Hruska of WHKS was present by Zoom.

Others in attendance included (spelling and names unreadable/uncertain): Adam Literski, Ben Sherman, Michel Dolleribe, Darrin, Walch, Brian Sullivan, Matt Valek, Gary Eddy, Sherry Benish, Allie Benish, Gene Semin, Paul Ulland, Angie Klankowski, Teresa O'Donnell Ebner.

Item 4. Approval of June 6th 2023 Meeting Minutes

Mike Welch made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 6th meeting. Dave Hanifl seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the Community Development Director, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Mike Welch	Yes
Dave Hanifl	Yes
Ryan Stotts	Yes
Greg Husmann	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Jerry Steffes	Yes
Dave Coleman	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

#3

Item 5. Public Hearing Final Plat Wagon Wheel Electric Substation

Chair Husmann opened the public hearing at 5:50. Attorney Wieser addressed the procedure for allowing the applicant to speak first, then to open a Public Hearing. Brian Sullivan representing Xcel Energy addressed the Planning Commission about the Final Plat and gave an overview of the site history and projected future electrical needs for the community. Ross Lexvold, Adam Literski, and Dustin Wilson representing Xcel Energy addressed the Planning Commission about the applications for Final Plat. Chair Husmann opened the Public Hearing and asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard. After several requests for public comment, no one wished to speak and Chair Husmann closed the public hearing. Commissioner Steffes asked several questions about drainage and grading, the height of the retaining wall, whether the rail road had anything to do with the review of the project, and whether the Fire Department was ok with the opaque fence. All questions were answered by Xcel Energy, the City Engineer or the Community Development Director. Commissioner Hanifl asked who was paying for the engineering for this project? Brian Sullivan stated that Xcel Energy was paying for the engineering for this project and not the city.

Mike Welch made a motion to approve the Final Plat for the Wagon Wheel Electrical Substation. Ryan Stotts seconded the motion. The followings findings conditions and were included in the motion.

Findings:
1). The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner permitted by the zoning ordinance.
2). The request is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the ordinance.

Conditions:
1). The applicant/developer abide by all representations made by the applicant, their agents during this process that are not specifically negated by the City Planning Commission or City Council or to the extent they are not consistent with their underlying application
2). They comply with all local, state and federal regulations.
3). That no site work be completed until after approval and recording of the final plat.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the Community Development Director, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Mike Welch	Yes
Ryan Stotts	Yes
Dave Hanifl	Yes
Greg Husmann	Yes
Dave Coleman	Yes
Jerry Steffes	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

Item 6. Public Hearing Final Plat Horse Track Meadows North

Chair Husmann opened the public hearing for the final plat of Horse Track Meadows North. Audience member Dave Baumgardter inquired about this plat and wanted to know if this were a done deal and why all this development was happening and why. Staff and members of the Commission stated that this plat is for the east side of the road and is for five building with a total of 10 dwelling units and an Outlot for stormwater detention. Chair Husmann stated that the land is already in the city and if there are specific comments on the plat, they should speak up. Gene Semin asked if the water and sewer utilities were already in place for the lots. Chair Husmann responded that, yes, all utilities are in place. There being no additional speakers on this plat, the Chair, closed the Public Hearing. Jerry Steffes attempted to enlighten Dave Baumgartner as to the history of the overall development. Larry Kirch clarified that there is a total of 10 lots/10 units and 5 buildings (twin homes) plus accommodations for stormwater. Council member Jostad offered her comments on the possibility of setting these lots designated for over 55 housing and noted her information contained in the packet. Council member Jostad also suggested that there be a restriction on short term rentals for these lots. The Chair noted that he was open to discussion on these topics but noted that these were council decisions and that the Planning Commission should focus on the final plat. There was no other discussion on the over 55 or vacation rental. Mike Welch asked about the process of selling the land and the City Attorney discussed the process for the sale of this land through an RFP and is at the discretion of the city council. This discussion would happen at the city council in October and that the staff preference was to sell the lots to one developer rather than individual buyers. The question before the commission is whether the final plat substantially conforms to the preliminary plat and any conditions of approval previously set by the council. The City Attorney also suggested that it may not be the appropriate time to place age restrictions on the land as part of the platting process but ultimately this is a decision of the city council. With no other questions by the Planning Commission, the Chair asked for a motion on the final plat that would include findings of fact and conditions of approval. After an inquiry by Council Member Jostad, the City Attorney reviewed previous conditions on the preliminary plat set by the council. The City Engineer confirmed that the conditions were met.

Ryan Stotts made a motion to approve the Final Plat for Horse Track Meadows North. Dave Coleman seconded the motion. The followings findings conditions and were included in the motion.

Findings:

1). The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner permitted by the zoning ordinance.
2). The request is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the ordinance.

Conditions:

1). The applicant/developer abide by all representations made by the applicant, their agents during this process that are not specifically negated by the City Planning Commission or City Council or to the extent they are not consistent with their underlying application
2). They comply with all local, state and federal regulations.
3). That no site work be completed until after approval and recording of the final plat.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the Community Development Director, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

#5

Ryan Stotts	Yes
Dave Coleman	Yes
Dave Hanifl	Yes
Mike Welch	Yes
Greg Husmann	Yes
Jerry Steffes	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

Item 7. Planning commission related updates from planning commission appointed council member.

Council Member Jostad provided an update on city council actions that would be relevant to the planning commission including: the council adopting the Bee Keeping Ordinance; review of the Short Term Rental ordinance several times with possible future action; the Walnut Street Corridor Planning Project; (Larry Kirch also provided an update of the project including recent public involvement in early August and noted that the Economic Development Commission is scheduled to review a draft of the document at their September 11, 2023 Meeting and that the Planning Commission would be reviewing the document, hopefully in early October); council discussion on a possible Crescent Hills Drive annexation; discussion of a Cannabis ordinance; possible property exchange with VSC Corporation and City Hall of a property west of the Fire Station; the Dog Park and referral of the location back to the Park and Rec Commission for consideration of a different location; and that the City Council would start meeting at 5:00 p.m. to accommodate the township, now that the Council meetings are being held at the Community Center.

Item 8. Adjourn.

The Chair noted that the next meeting would be on October 10th, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:21 PM.

#6

La Crescent MINNESOTA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Larry Kirch, Community Development Director LJK

DATE: October 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Presentation and Discussion of the DRAFT MnDOT Active Transportation Corridor Plan – Wagon Wheel Bridge to Miller's Corner (Active Transportation Action Plan)

The city applied for and was awarded an Active Transportation Program corridor planning study through the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). The project was led by MnDOT and their selected consultant. The project started with a kick-off meeting on October 6, 2022 with MnDOT, the consultant team and a local project team that included city staff, county staff and bicycle and pedestrian advocates. On November 3, 2022, a day-long series of meetings and events was held including both biking and walking the corridor as well as an evening community meeting. The draft plan was completed in May of this year and the local project team met in September to make final changes to the draft plan. The city is still awaiting comments from MnDOT District 6.

The Commission will be asked at a future meeting to make a recommendation to the city council on the draft plan. Below is a synopsis of the city's application to highlight the purpose of the corridor planning effort.

The lack of a Root River Trail Connection between La Crescent (Wagon Wheel Trail (WWT) terminus) and the cities of Hokah and Houston has been seemingly unsolvable for nearly 30 years. Houston County and the three cities are in the process of entering into a formal agreement to complete the trail. The Wagon Wheel Trail bike/ped bridge is being completed over U.S. Highway 14/61 this summer into downtown La Crescent. Connecting the Wagon Wheel Trail, the MRT/USBR 45 and the Root River Trail has been a long-term goal of the cities and county. The La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update (2017) identifies the connection from downtown La Crescent to Miller's Corner as a critical link but lacks an implementable corridor plan (p. 59). The cities and region are in need to define a safe corridor between Walnut Street (WWT bridge terminus) and Miller's Corner (Mn 16/26).

Active Transporation

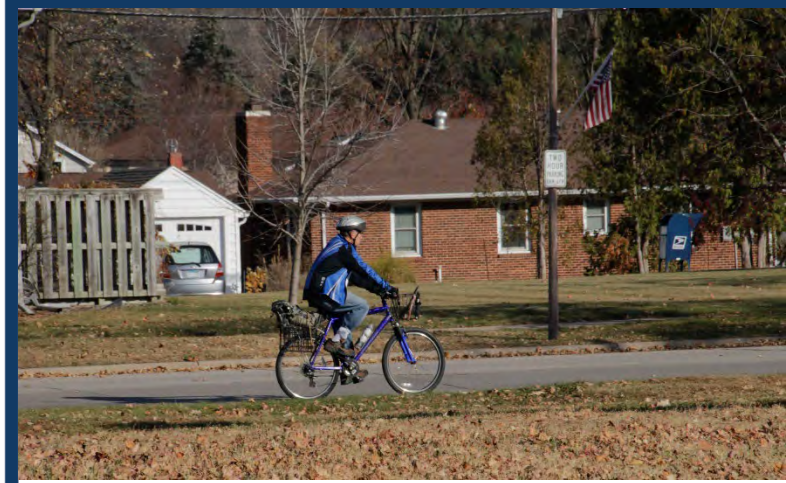
ACTION PLAN

City of La Crescent, Minnesota

La Crescent MINNESOTA

Growing from River to Ridge

May 2023



Acknowledgement

Corridor Planning Team

- Bill Waller, City of La Crescent, City Administrator
- Larry Kirch, City of La Crescent, Community Development Director
- Cody Bellock, City of La Crescent, Police Officer
- Jason Ludwigson, City of La Crescent, Sustainability Coordinator
- Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner, La Crescent City Council
- Willow Arden, Bike Advisory Committee
- Maseray Bangura, Bike Advisory Committee
- Linda Larson, La Crescent Community Bike Shoppe
- Steve Gund, Community Member
- Donald Smith, Former La Crescent Planning Commission Chair
- Bob Spencer, Community Member
- Bob Schuldt, City of Hokah, Chief of Police, Houston County Commissioner
- Bri Ceaser, Houston County Public Health
- Brian Pogodzinksi, Houston County, Engineer
- Jeff Copp, La Crescent-Hokah Public Schools
- Carl Ekern, La Crescent-Hokah Public Schools
- Beth Theede, La Crescent-Hokah Public Schools
- Peter Fletcher, La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Director
- Tracy Schnell, MnDOT, District Planner
- Kurt Wayne, MnDOT, District Planning Director
- Bob Storlie, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Area Supervisor
- Tim Hruska, WHKS, La Crescent Engineer
- Dorian Grilley, Bike Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN)
- Jacob Rueter, MnDOT Active Transportation Program
- Cole Norgaarden, MnDOT Active Transportation Program

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Action Plan was funded through the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Active Transportation Program.

Learn more:

https://www.dot.state.mn.us/active-transportation-program/

Planning Assistance Team:

Terra Soma, LLC – Samantha Lorenz

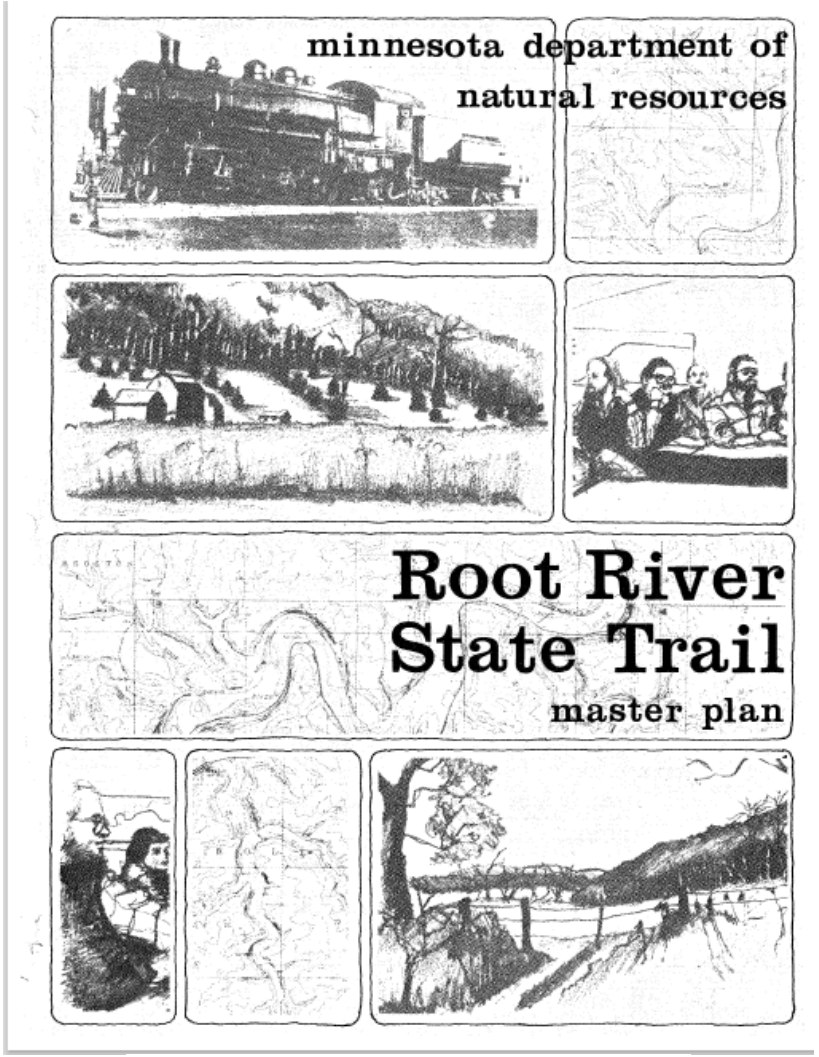
HDR, Inc. – Jamie Kennedy, Mindy Moore

Contents

Plan Purpose and Need

The need for a Root River Trail (RRT) connection between La Crescent (Wagon Wheel Trail (WWT) terminus) and the Cities of Hokah and Houston has been a major challenge to address over the past 30 years. The cities and region need to define a safe corridor between Walnut Street (WWT bridge terminus) and Miller's Corner (MN 16/26). The WWT bicycle and pedestrian bridge was completed over U.S. Highway 14/61 in the summer of 2022 into downtown La Crescent.

Connecting the region from the WWT to La Crosse, WI and to the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) / U.S. Bike Route 45 and the Root River Trail has been a long-term goal of the city and county to address transportation inequities of underserved populations. The La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update (2017) identifies the connection from downtown La Crescent to Miller's Corner as a critical link but lacks an implementable corridor plan (p. 59). Houston County, Hokah, Houston and La Crescent have entered into a formal agreement to cooperate to complete the RRT trail corridor. The first RRT plan was approved 40 years ago in 1983.



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Trails & Waterways Unit
Trails Planning Section
November 1983

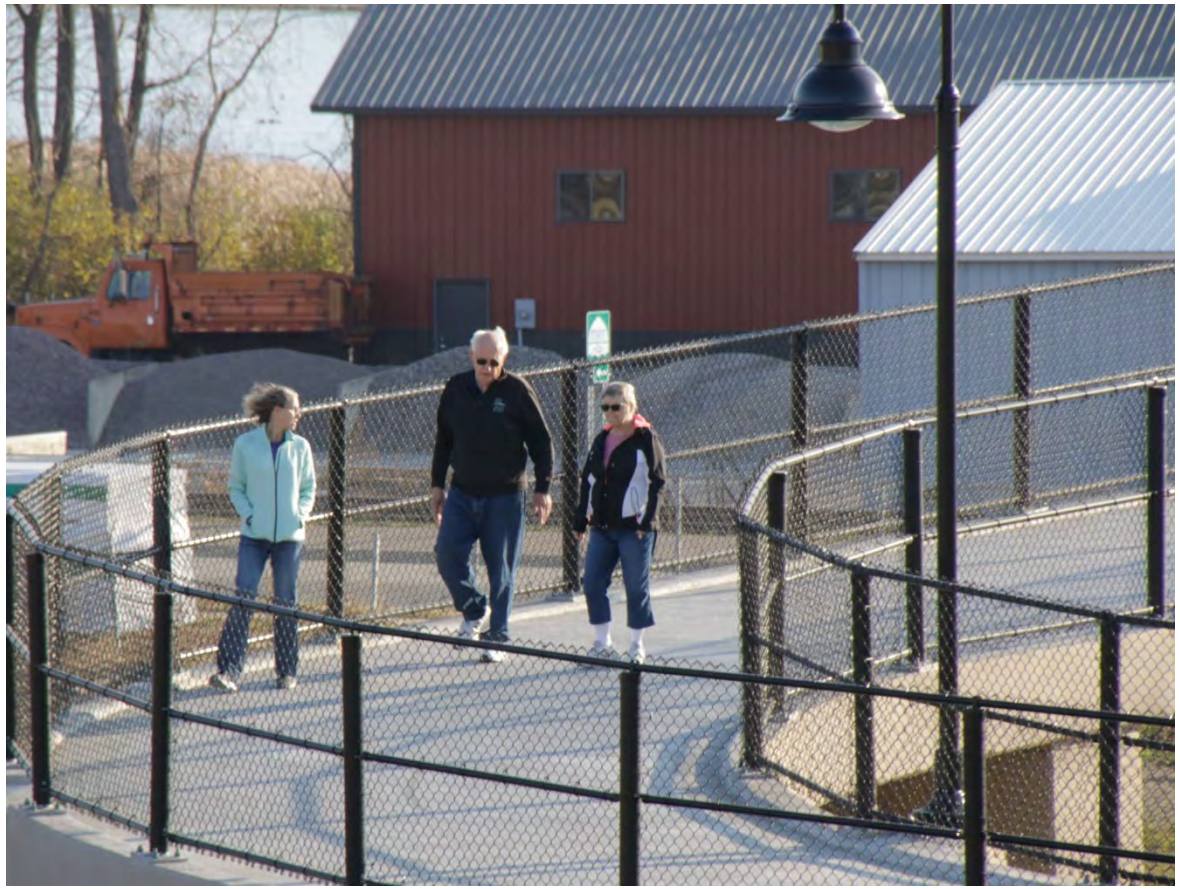
Executive Summary

The Active Transportation Action Plan is the result of a eight-month collaboration from October 2022 to May 2023. A diverse Local Planning Team came together to set direction, co-create strategy and lead a walking audit, bicycle audit and trail planning workshop. An online interactive map and survey was used to collect broader input.

The study corridor is along Highway 16, which is under the jurisdiction of MnDOT. Part of the corridor is in the City of La Crescent and part is within unincorporated Houston County. Therefore, implementation of this plan will rely upon a strong partnership between the City, County and MnDOT. The route is also adjacent to an active railroad line and the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge.

The Action Plan serves as a living guide. It establishes clear, evidence-based and action-oriented priorities to guide future investments in developing a trail connection from the Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge in La Crescent to Miller's Corner (intersection of Highways 16 and 26), with a longer-range goal to connect to the Root River Trail. **The preferred vision is to construct a multi-use sidepath to the east of Highway 16, with separation from both the highway and the parallel railroad. Due to the complexity of the project, an interim measure to paint buffered bike lanes along the highway's paved shoulders would provide a short-term incremental improvement.**

The Plan builds on existing plans, conversations with residents, lessons learned from other cities and careful observation to establish recommendations that can help La Crescent, Houston County and MnDOT move toward achieving this trail connection.



Introduction

SECTION 1

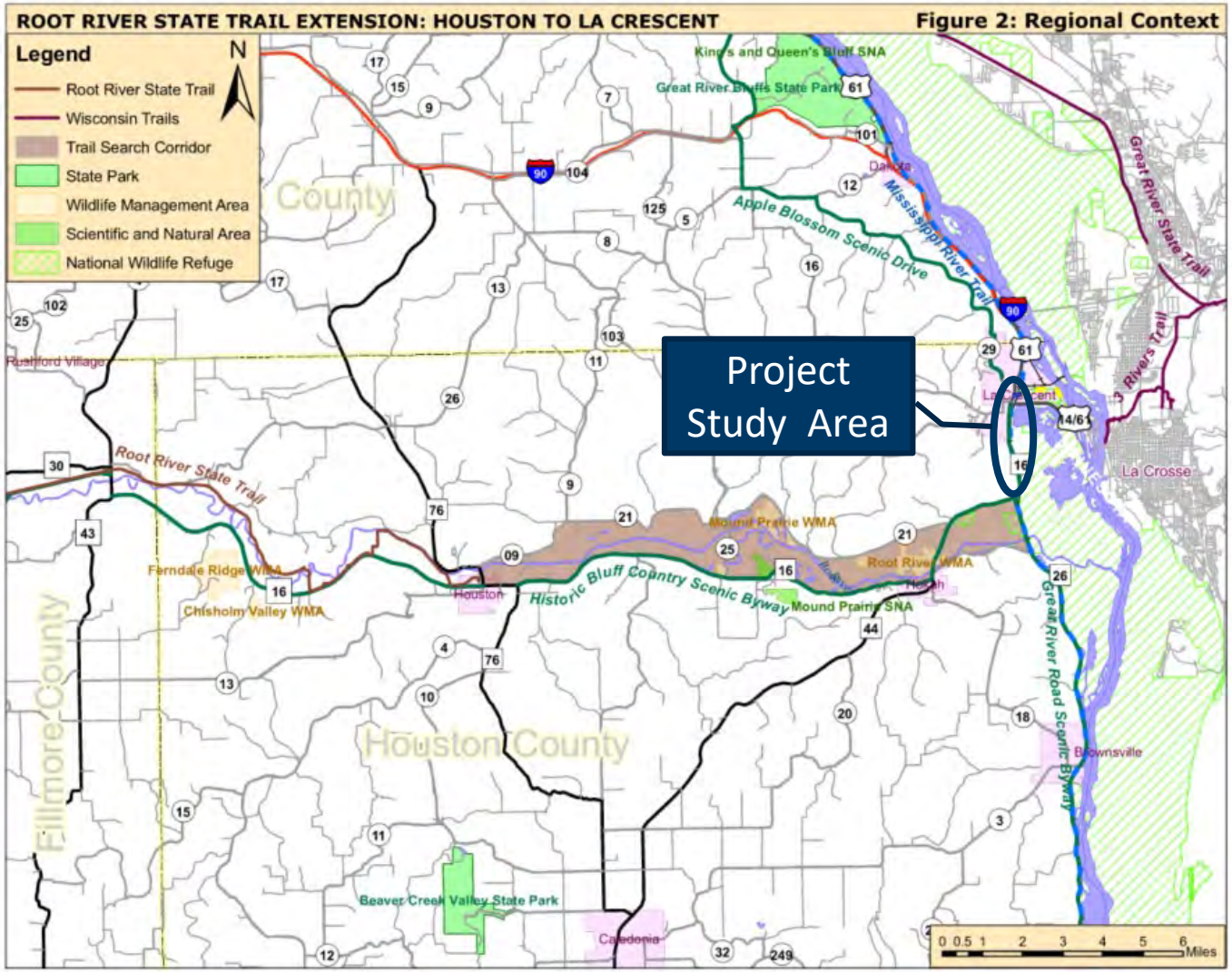
Why an Active Transportation Action Plan

The City of La Crescent is working to be the hub where local, regional and state trails, including a national bike route—Mississippi River Trail—meet. A key goal is to connect to the Root River Trail, which currently terminates in the City of Houston. A vision for this connection has been recognized in numerous plans. La Crescent has made significant progress to achieve its vision for a biking and walking friendly community. The Wagon Wheel Trail connects to La Crosse, WI. The pedestrian and bicycle bridge (opened Fall 2022) provides trail users direct access to downtown La Crescent with a grade separated crossing of U.S. 14/61-MN Highway 16.

The next step: a multi-modal connection from the Wagon Wheel Trail and bridge terminus south to the intersection of Minnesota Highways 16 and 26, locally referred to as "Miller's Corner." Due to physical and jurisdictional constraints along the corridor, the vision of the trail in this segment has been murky. There are bluffs characteristic of the driftless region, constrained sections of highway right-of-way, an active Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railroad line, privately-owned properties and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Upper Mississippi Fish and Wildlife Refuge.

However, the physical constraints of bluffs and wetlands are also what makes this a scenic and desirable route. This segment of Highway 16 is designated as the Great River Road National Scenic Byway/All American Highway, Historic Bluff Country National Scenic Byway and the Mississippi River Trail/U.S. Bicycle Route 45.

This Action Plan includes alignment options and offers incremental steps to continue to build momentum, awareness and support. This project will be a centerpiece for how bicycle and pedestrian facilities can advance city, regional and statewide active transportation network goals connecting residents and visitors alike to nature and neighboring towns.



Source: Root River Trail Extension Master Plan, 2011

How Active Transportation Benefits La Crescent & Minnesotans

Multi-use paths/trails and other active transportation facilities are valuable assets for communities. From large cities to small towns, communities see active transportation as a prime opportunity to benefit equitable mobility, environmental resiliency, economic vitality and community well-being. Multi-use paths offer separated routes that are inviting for people of all ages and abilities. They are often built along river valleys, active and abandoned railroad lines, rural highways, main streets and through parks and natural spaces. Additional facilities help connect to places we live and work for everyday transportation needs.

La Crescent is working to create family-friendly connections to the national and regional trails that showcase the beauty of the bluffs, valleys and wetlands.

The envisioned corridor will expand the comfort and reach of the MRTI–one of two official U.S. Bicycle Routes in Minnesota—for families by providing a separated multi-use path along Highway 16 and/or through the adjacent wetlands.

Long-term, the corridor will expand the 42-mile Root River State Trail—one of the longest paved trails in Minnesota—creating a continuous multi-use path from Houston (east end of Root River Trail) through Hokah to La Crescent. When completed, and paired with the Harmony-Preston State Trail, the route will be approximately 120 miles.

The benefits of active transportation infrastructure are many and include:

HEALTH	ACTIVE LIVING & MODE SHFIT	ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY	ECONOMIC VITALITY	COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PRIDE
Provide recreational opportunities helping to increase physical activity and connections to nature, improving well-being.	Create a seamless, regional multi-modal transportation system, connecting people to the places they want to go in a low-stress environment. Trails give people a safe and enjoyable transportation choice, encouraging people to walk/bike more often.	Benefit the natural habitat through native plantings and bioretention to better manage stormwater and protect and preserve wetlands and animals. They can provide routes that support emergency evacuation.	Strengthen the local economy through trail-based tourism, connecting people to downtowns and providing a significant economic driver for many small communities.	Make the community stronger by being a source of community identity and pride.

Why Trails & Active Transportation

“Minnesota’s multimodal transportation system maximizes the health of people, the environment, and our economy.”

-Minnesota GO Vision Statement

Health

Trails, paths and safe streets encourage physical activity as part of daily life.

Walking and biking is as effective as structured workouts for improving health.
Only **52% of Minnesotans meet daily physical activity recommendations**.

Bike commuting at least **2 miles, 3 times per week** is linked to:

- **46%** lower odds of **heart disease or diabetes**
- **31%** lower odds of **obesity**
- **28%** lower odds of **high blood pressure**

All of which lowers medical costs.

"Minnesota Walks," Minnesota Department of Transportation, n.d.

“Active Transportation: Benefitting health, safety and equity,” American Public Health Association, n.d.

“Health Benefits of Bicycle Commuting,” Minnesota Department of Transportation and University of Minnesota, n.d.

Why Trails & Active Transportation

Economy

Active transportation stimulates local economies: job creation, tourism, and business development.

Economic impact of cycling in MN is **$780 Million annually**.

Over **5,500 jobs** tied to **biking industry**.

"Assessing the economic impact and health effects of bicycling MN", University of Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Transportation, n.d.

Environment

Less driving means cleaner air.

Minnesota must **reduce transportation** related **greenhouse gas emissions** by **80%** and **vehicle miles traveled** by **20%** by **2050**.

Active transportation networks help people shift from driving, reducing carbon emissions.

"Statewide Pedestrian System Plan", Minnesota Department of Transportation, n.d.

Equity

Active transportation supports equitable mobility.

Owning one car costs roughly **$10,730 per year** (AAA). Vehicle ownership should not be a requirement for getting around safely and efficiently.

10% of U.S. households **don't have access to a car**; **56% of no-car households are in rural communities**.

"Complete Streets." Advancing Transportation Equity - Complete Streets - MnDOT.

Bellis, Rayla. "More than One Million Households without a Car in Rural America Need Better Transit." Smart Growth America.

Safe System Approach

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) follows the Safe System Approach to traffic safety, advocated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which aims to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users, including people walking and bicycling.

Safe Systems Approach focuses roadway safety efforts on ways to effectively:

1. Design for the people in the system;
2. Manage vehicle speeds by design;
3. Employ proactive tools to manage risks across an entire roadway network, especially for the most vulnerable users; and
4. Foster integrated, collaborative and coordinated action.

Street Design Influences Behavior

The design of streets and highways directly influences behavior. Most motorists drive to match the “design speed” of the road, using cues such as lane width, street texture, the distance between buildings, street trees, other edge features and sight-line distances rather than solely relying on the posted speed limit. In turn, streets should be designed to promote safety by taking a proactive design approach to ensure lower “target” speeds—the speed drivers *should* be going.

The design of intersections and crossings become very important, especially on higher speed roads. Roadway crossings must be designed to promote visibility and ensure safety of the most vulnerable users by slowing motorized traffic and encouraging trail users and motorists to see one another. This way, the physical design of the crossings reinforces the legal protections granted to people walking and biking.

> MnDOT can prevent traumatic life-altering, costly crashes by focusing on creating low-speed environments in population centers and around other destinations where people are likely to walk [and bike]." - Statewide Pedestrian Systems Plan

Safe System: When to Mix, When to Separate?

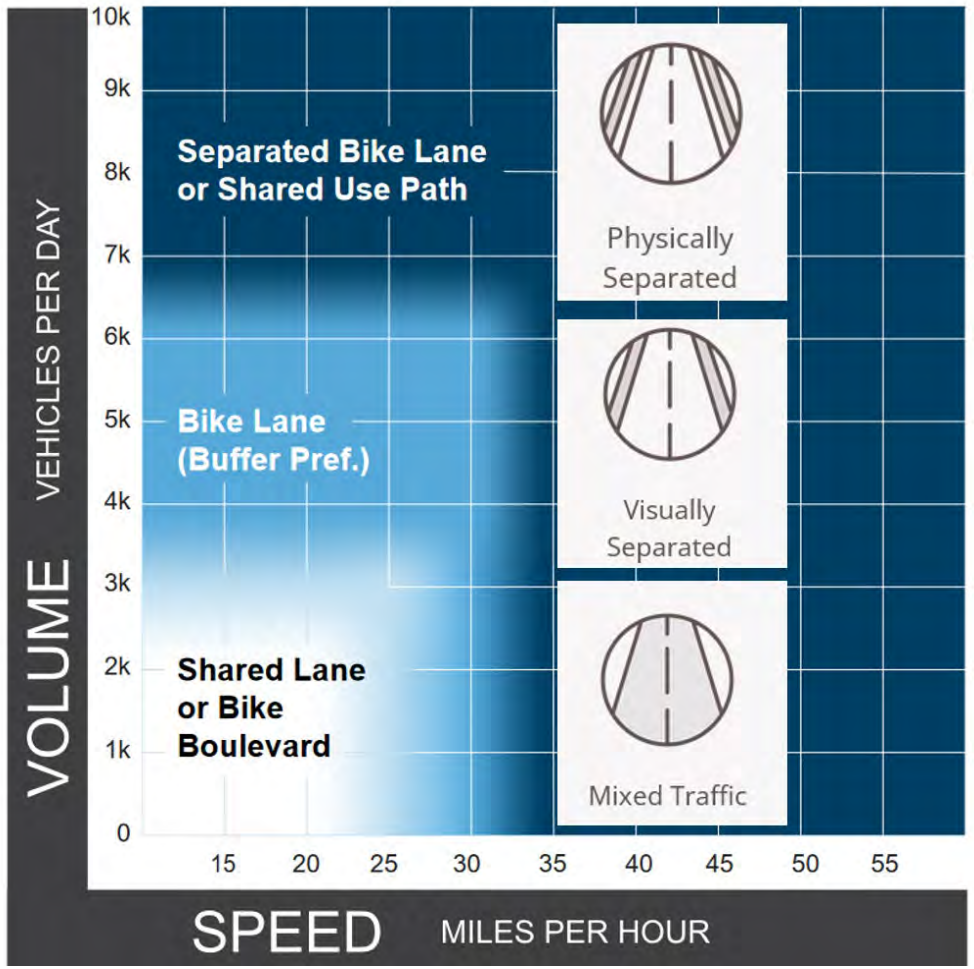


Chart adapted from *Federal Highway Administration Bicycle Selection Guide*.
Note: Chart assumes operating speeds are similar to posted speeds. If they differ, operating speed should be used rather than posted speed.

The greater the vehicle speed, the greater the physical separation needs to be between vehicle traffic and people walking, biking and rolling.

A shared street environment, where users are mixed, can be created for people walking, biking, rolling and driving when target speeds are at or below 20 mph.

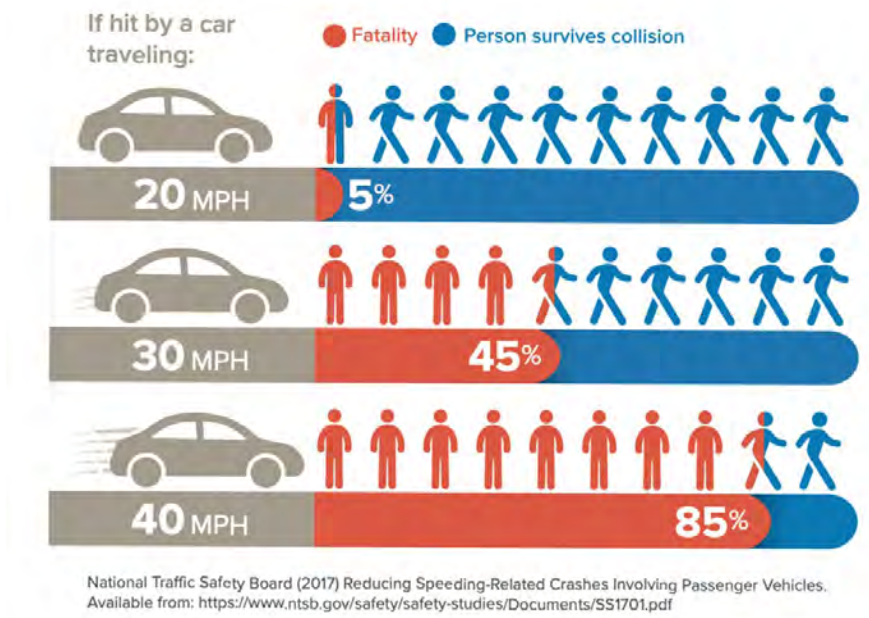
Separate and protect people from traffic when vehicle speeds are above 20 mph.

Making Safety a Top Priority Over Speed

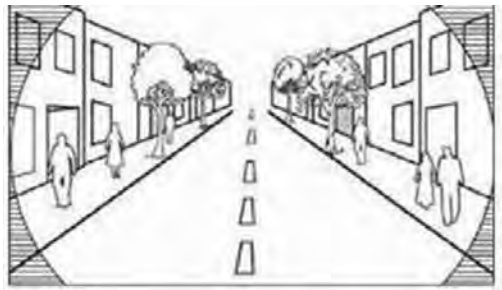
Why Speed Matters

The impact of motor vehicle travel speed on crashes that involve people walking and biking is well-documented. For example, a person walking has a 95 percent chance of surviving the crash if struck by a person driving at 20 mph. The chances of survival decrease by almost 50 percent when the person driving is traveling only 10 mph faster. Traffic crashes that kill and injure people are a serious transportation and public health concern. Many communities are joining the Vision Zero initiative, which works toward eliminating all traffic fatalities and serious injuries to ensure safe, healthy and equitable movement for all.

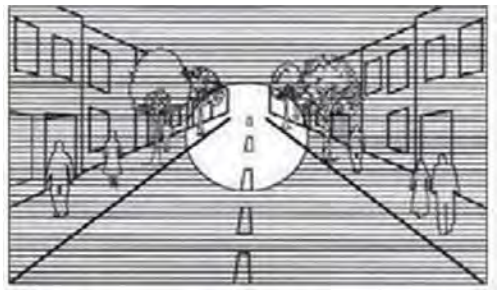
Lower speed streets also better support businesses by increasing visibility. At lower speeds, drivers can see more of their surroundings and have more time to react, yield and stop for people crossing, parking and to avoid potentially fatal crashes.



National Traffic Safety Board (2017) Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles. Available from: https://www.ntsb.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SS1701.pdf



Field of vision at 15 MPH



Field of vision at 30 to 40 MPH

Active Transportation Principles

To provide transportation choice and ensure active trips, routes must be:

Safe: Does the route minimize risk of injury and danger (both traffic and personal security)?

Comfort: Does the route appeal to a broad range of age and ability levels and are there user amenities (e.g., places to sit, protection from the weather)?

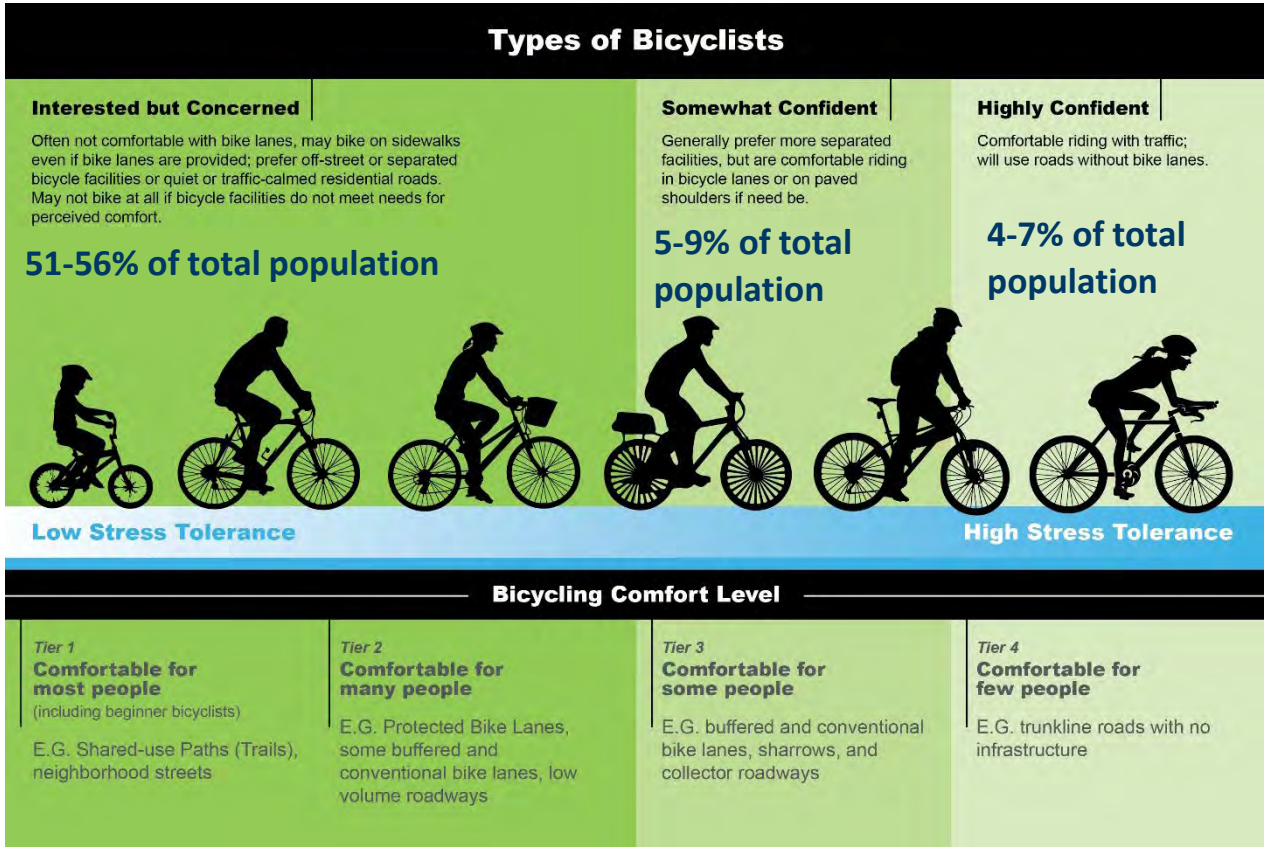
Coherent: How easy is it to understand where to go, how to navigate a crossing or an intersection? How connected is the network?

Direct: Does the route provide direct and convenient access to destinations?

Attractive: Is the route green, well-maintained, and celebrate local identity?

These Active Transportation Principles are founded in a Safe System approach. As we consider how to make our built environment more conducive to walking and biking, we apply the Active Transportation Principles. The significance of each principle may vary from route to route and from person to person. For example, people walking or biking to the grocery store often prioritize directness. Whereas people out for a recreational bike ride value attractiveness and comfort more than a direct route. Regardless of trip type, safety is paramount for all users, especially when ensuring children have safe routes to school and parks.

All Ages and Abilities



Who Will Active Transportation Facilities Serve?

La Crescent envisions a multi-use path along MN Highway 16 to better support people of all ages and abilities in safely and comfortably connecting to where they want to go while enjoying the natural environment.

Highway 16 creates a gap in local, regional and state active transportation networks due to high vehicular speeds and paved shoulders. Today, the road only caters to the **"highly confident" bicyclist** who will ride regardless of roadway conditions and bicycle facility. Highly confident riders represent the smallest category of people willing to bike.

Interested but Concerned

To create a complete corridor and maximize the potential for more people to bike, it is important to design active transportation facilities with the "interested but concerned" bicyclist in mind.

MnDOT and national research continue to confirm just over half of the population are interested in bicycling more often but are concerned about having to share the road with motor vehicles. This group of "interested but concerned" people is who MnDOT typically considers when selecting a bicycle facility type (as noted in MnDOT Bicycle Facility Design Manual). Designing for this type of bicyclist will ensure a route and facility type that is lower stress and higher comfort to a wider audience, attracting more people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike and roll.

Plan Process

SECTION 2

How the Plan Was Developed

La Crescent Corridor Planning Team met with the MnDOT Planning Assistance Team over the course of the planning process to:

INSIGHT
Process of discovery

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2022

Planning Team meetings (October 6 and November 3) to:

- Assess current policies, plans and existing built environment conditions
- Co-develop engagement strategy
- Develop and refine vision and goals

Lead outreach for community mapping, walk and bike workshop

Curbside Coaching

IDEATE
Turning key insights into actions

NOVEMBER 2022 – JANUARY 2023

Community Engagement (November 3):

- Walking audit in town
- Bike audit along Hwy 16 from Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge to Miller's Corner
- Community mapping workshop with over 34 people to identify preferred route

Conduct broader public engagement and outreach with online survey– 316 responses, providing additional feedback

Curbside Coaching

ITERATE
Putting the plan together

FEBURARY-MAY 2023

Two Planning Team meetings (March 2 and April 26) to collaboratively:

- Assess and vet alignment options to confirm preferred alternative
- Review concepts and priorities
- Review and finalize Action Plan

Take action, move Plan forward with final Planning Team Meeting on September 7, 2023

Curbside Coaching

How the Plan Was Developed

Photos (clockwise from top left): Community members mapped opportunities, challenges and discussed potential solutions; walking audit participants discuss in-town connections and potential improvements; Corridor Planning Team members gathered for a bike audit of the Highway 16 corridor.

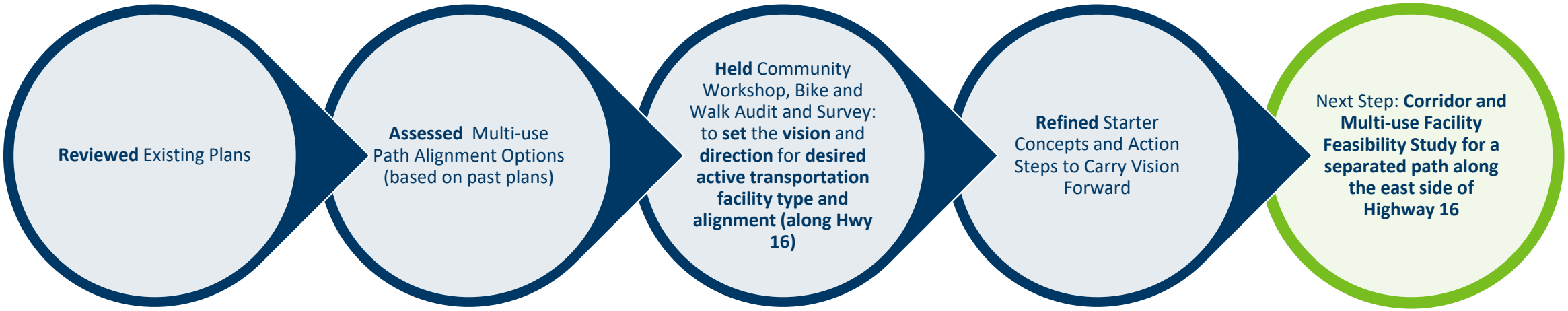
The Corridor Planning Team met with the MnDOT Planning Assistance Team four times over the course of the planning process. Together, they established vision and goals, identified stakeholders, evaluated route options based on existing plans, built and natural environment existing conditions and community input, discussed facility types and concepts and set a path forward.

The Corridor Planning Team hosted community members at a mapping workshop. They also conducted a walking audit in town and a bike audit along Highway 16 between the Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge and Miller's Corner.

An **online survey drew a strong response with input from 316 community members**, providing valuable feedback for the team to consider as they developed this Action Plan.

How the Plan Was Developed

To develop this Plan, the Corridor Planning Team:



Vision and Goals

The Corridor Planning Team completed a series of exercises during the first two committee meetings to identify a vision and goals for the Active Transportation Action Plan.

OUR VISION

La Crescent is a family-friendly hub of national and regional trails that showcase the beauty of the bluffs, valleys and wetlands.

OUR GOALS

NATURE: Connect and educate residents and visitors with the natural beauty of the driftless region along the trail corridor.

INCLUSIVE: Appeal to people of all ages and abilities by creating a safe, comfortable and welcoming trail and street network.

TOURISM: Create a trail that connects destinations, attracts visitors and sparks economic development.

HEALTH: Improve community physical and mental well-being by providing accessible outdoor activity.

Assessment of Existing Conditions

SECTION 3

Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

First Priority is Safety

People have been historically left out of the design of Highway 16 through La Crescent. La Crescent is working to ensure people have a safe, comfortable route to enjoy the Mississippi River Trail and driftless region. Safety for all users is a top priority for MnDOT through its *Complete Streets Policy* and system plans. The *Statewide Bicycle System Plan* (SBSP) identifies four goals:

1) **Safety and comfort:** build and maintain safe and comfortable bicycling facilities for people of all ages and abilities

2) **Local bicycle network connections:** support regional and local bicycling needs

3) **State bicycle routes:** develop a connected network of state bicycle routes with partners

4) **Ridership:** increase ridership of people who already bicycle and people who don't

EXISTING PLANS

MnDOT District 6 Bicycle Plan (2019)

A section of Highway 16 in La Crescent is identified in MnDOT District 6 Bicycle Plan as a Tier 1 priority route.

MnDOT Bicycle Facility Guide

"MnDOT is committed to supporting safe and comfortable bicycling travel for people of all ages and abilities."
Through the SBSP development, MnDOT learned that most people prefer bicycling on low-stress facilities separated from motor vehicle traffic. The Bicycle Facility Guide provides guidance to create **projects and a complete transportation system that are: usable, balanced, flexible and maintainable.**

Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

EXISTING PLANS, CONTINUED

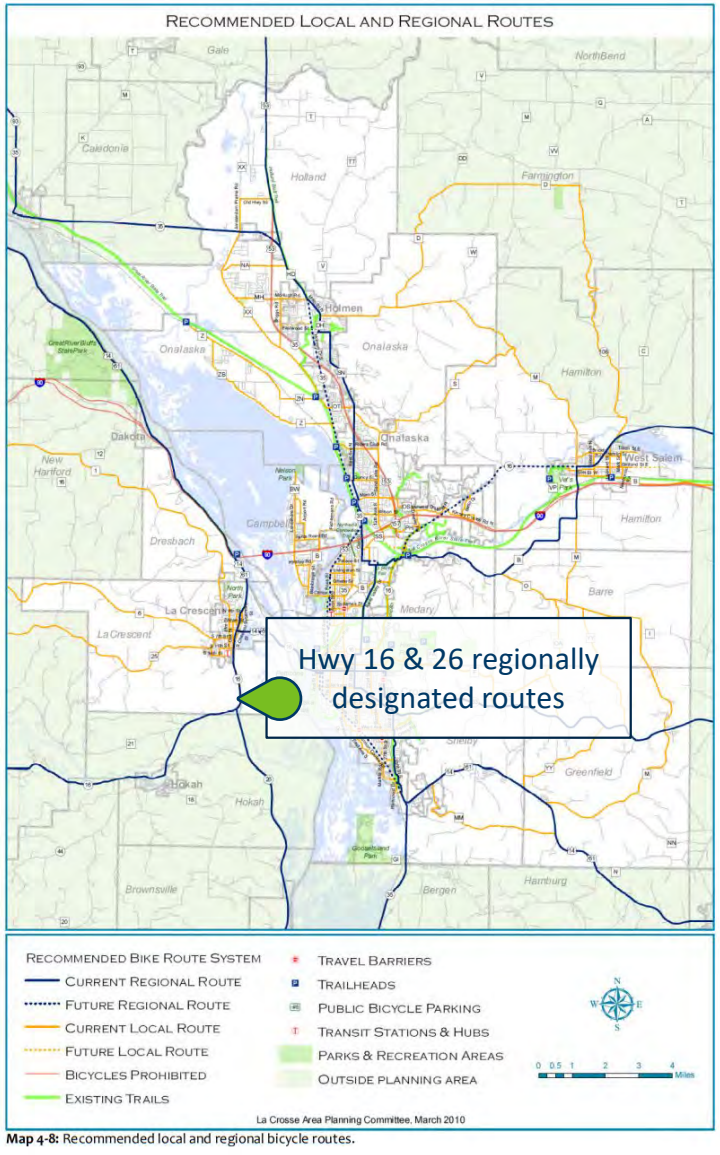
MN DNR "Bluffland State Trail" Preliminary Trail Alignment (1997)

Preliminary engineering designs with trail alignment on the east side of Hwy 16 between the highway and railroad.

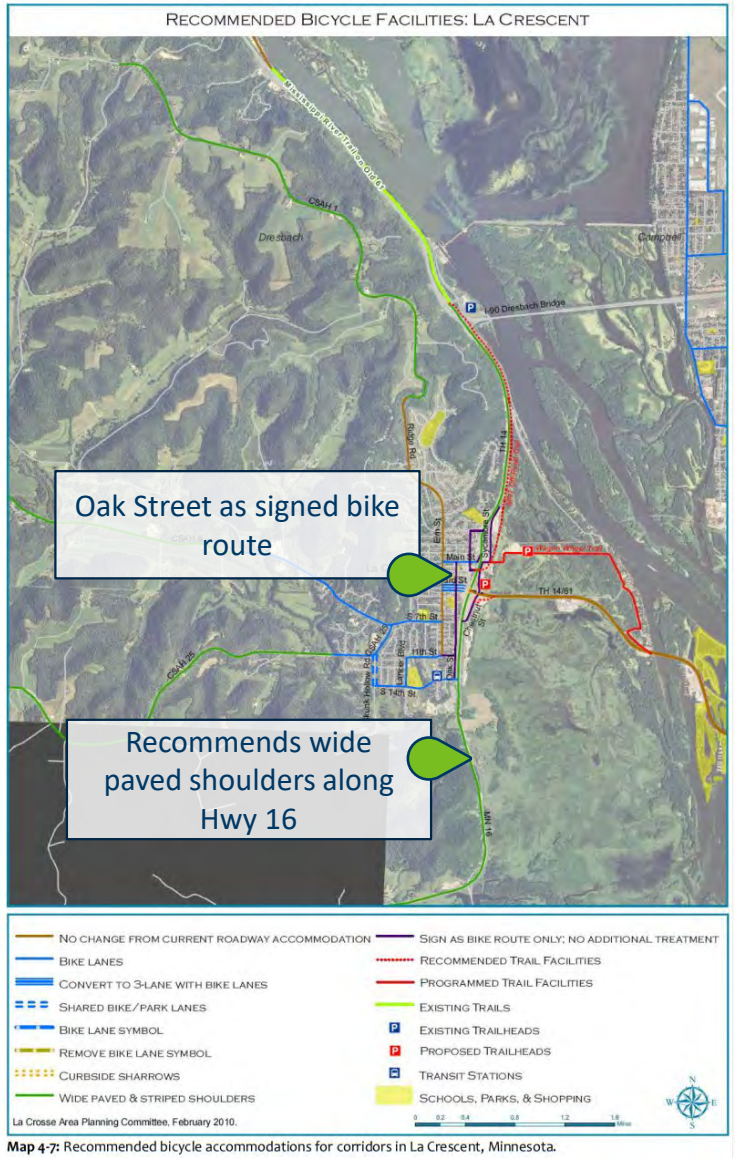
Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan

La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2010

As a regional plan, it shows a vision for regional routes to provide connectivity across communities with local routes completing in-town connections to **"identify significant bicycling corridors and recommend bicycle treatments that accommodate all classes of bicyclists"** and **"encourage tourism and economic development."**



Map 4-8: Recommended local and regional bicycle routes.



Map 4-7: Recommended bicycle accommodations for corridors in La Crescent, Minnesota.

Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

EXISTING PLANS, CONTINUED

Root River State Trail Extension Houston to La Crescent Master Plan

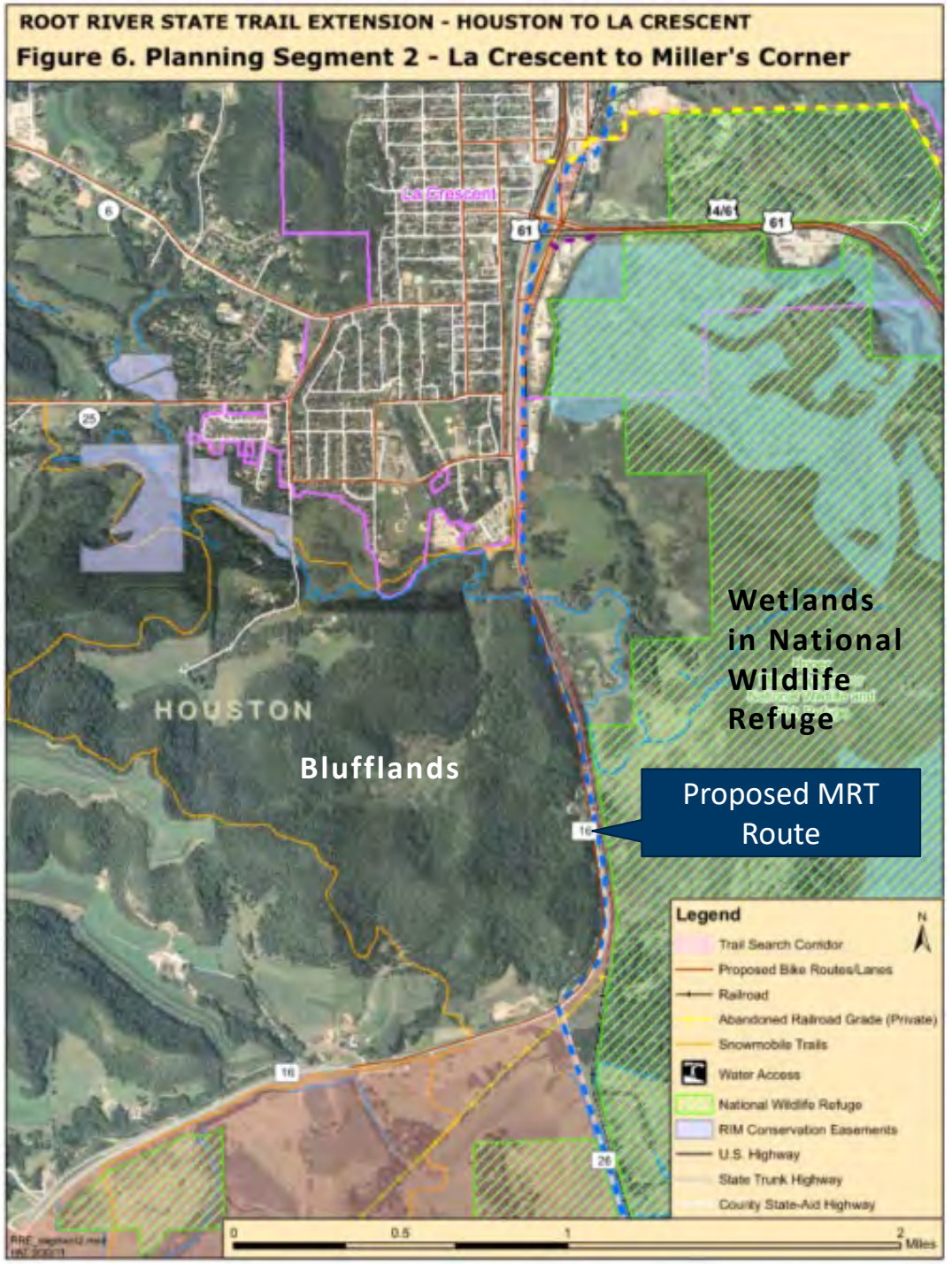
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, December 2011

"From the west end of the Wagon Wheel Trail, the trail corridor would turn south on the **east side of MN 16**. **Given physical constraints, the most viable route for the trail is to continue between the railroad and MN 16** through La Crescent and south to Miller's Corner, where Highways 16 and 26 diverge."

This location fulfills the criteria for the location of a trail as identified in this plan:

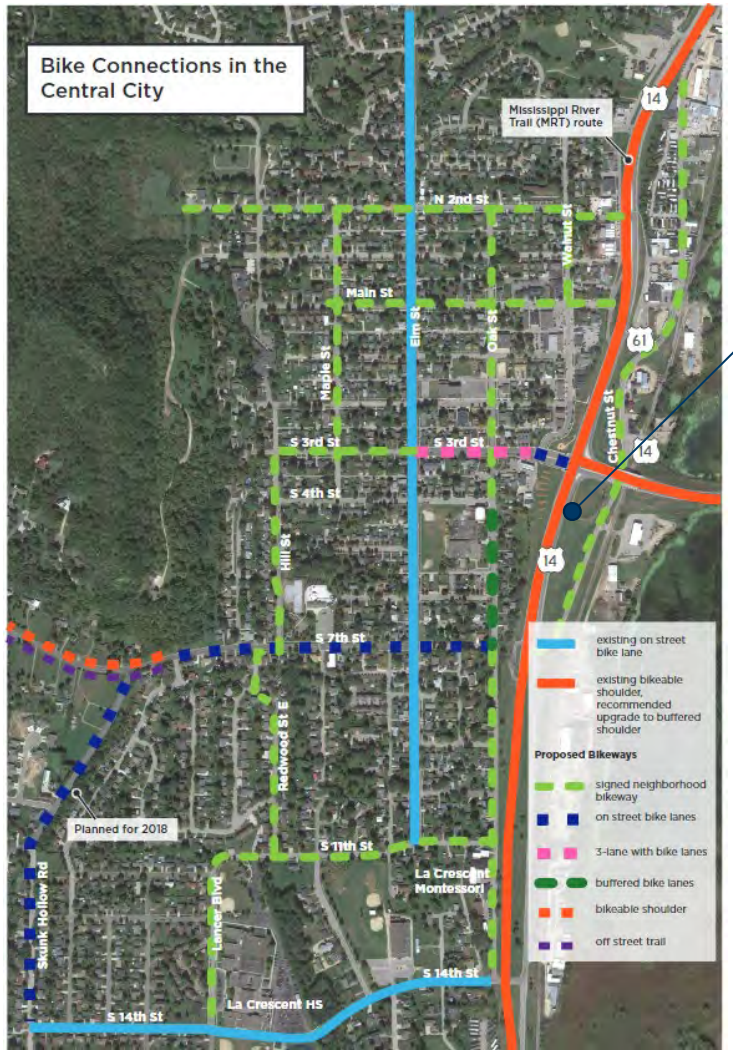
- Provide a scenic route that showcases the Blufflands landscape.
- Minimize trail user exposure to vehicular traffic.
- Minimize impact on wetlands and floodplain. Avoid negative impacts on rare and endangered species and avoid fragmentation or disturbance of significant native plant communities.
- Provide snowmobile and horseback riding access where they can be safely accommodated.

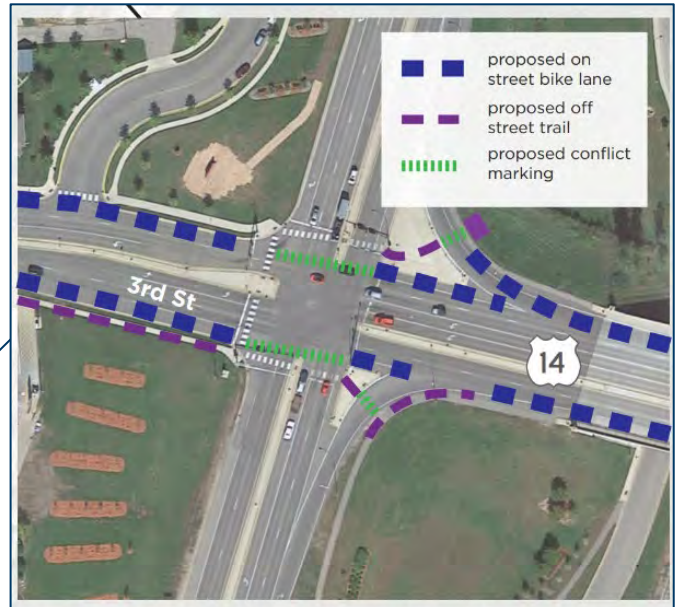
In 1997, MnDNR prepared a preliminary alignment of the "Bluffland State Trail" between Miller's Corner and La Crescent. The preliminary design positioned the trail between Highway 16 and the railroad.



Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

EXISTING PLANS, CONTINUED





The Hwy 14/61 and 3rd Street intersection is challenging for people walking and bicycling. Above are recommendations to improve the intersection for walking and bicycling.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update identifies the connection from downtown La Crescent to Miller's Corner as a critical link but lacks an implementable corridor plan (p. 59).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

City of La Crescent, 2017

This plan's vision is to create, "A vibrant community that encourages walking and bicycling for transportation and recreation."

The proposed network includes **neighborhood bikeways (bike boulevards) through traffic calming, access management and crossing treatments** and **buffered bike lanes along Oak Street**. The plan recommends **installing buffers along the paved shoulders** to make the **Mississippi River Trail route (MN 16) more comfortable**, while improving wayfinding signage and the intersection of Highway 14/61 and S 3rd Street.

Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

EXISTING PLANS, CONTINUED

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan

City of La Crescent & Minnesota Department of Transportation, 2020

Relevant to this Active Transportation Action Plan, the SRTS Plan noted several issues along the Oak Street corridor, which could also serve as a connection between the Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge and the proposed trail along Highway 16 south of town.

South 3rd Street and Oak Street – This crossing is a challenge for walking to school. Despite the Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB), marked crosswalk and adult crossing guard, students and families are still uncomfortable with crossing four lanes of traffic. **Two curb extension crossings are planned to be installed.**

Oak Street South of 3rd Street – Motorists sometimes use Oak Street as a north/south alternative to Highway 16. To make sure this route remains pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, traffic calming and diversion was recommended through tools like chicanes and curb extensions.

Oak Street Mid-Block Crossing – Near the Montessori and STEM school, a crosswalk is needed to alert drivers and provide a preferred location for students to cross from the school on the west to the sidewalk on the east side of Oak Street. Other recommendations include curb extensions, crosswalk signage and pavement markings.

South 14th Street and S Oak Street – South 14th Street has a painted bike lane, and this intersection is a logical connection between the Middle and High Schools along S 14th Street and the Montessori and STEM schools on S Oak Street. This intersection is adjacent to Highway 16 with large turn radii, which creates higher speed right turns. A crosswalk has been added across S Oak Street. Recommendations include curb extensions.

Kistler Court – The plan also recommends a path to connect the mobile home park to South 14th Street.

Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

EXISTING PLANS, CONTINUED

Pedestrian and Bicycle Scoping Recommendation Report

Minnesota Department of Transportation, 2020

The state will be doing a mill and overlay along a portion of the highway in 2026; this report provides the following recommendations within the Trail Action Plan study area:

A – Provide a continuous, separated 6-feet-wide sidewalk along Chestnut and Sycamore Street. Consider a 10-feet-wide shared use path to include bicycle facilities. If shared use path cannot be provided, consider an advisory shoulder between Chestnut and Main Street.

B – Provide a 10-feet-wide shared use path connection from the mobile home park at Kistler Drive to the local neighborhood sidewalk and bicycle network on Oak Street.

C – Provide an RRFB at 7th Street to provide a crossing for people walking and bicycling to reach South Chestnut Street and for people using the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) route.

F – Provide a minimum 10-foot-wide shared use path separated from the roadway on the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection. Provide smaller turning radius and narrower lane width for the channelized right turn lanes. Provide crosswalk markings and stop bar across turn lanes; consider a raised crosswalk or RRFB. Provide a leading pedestrian interval on the signals. Consider a protected intersection.

H – Consider bike lanes and neighborhood bike boulevards, especially along South Oak Street as it provides a parallel route to Highway 16.

Building on Existing Plans and Efforts

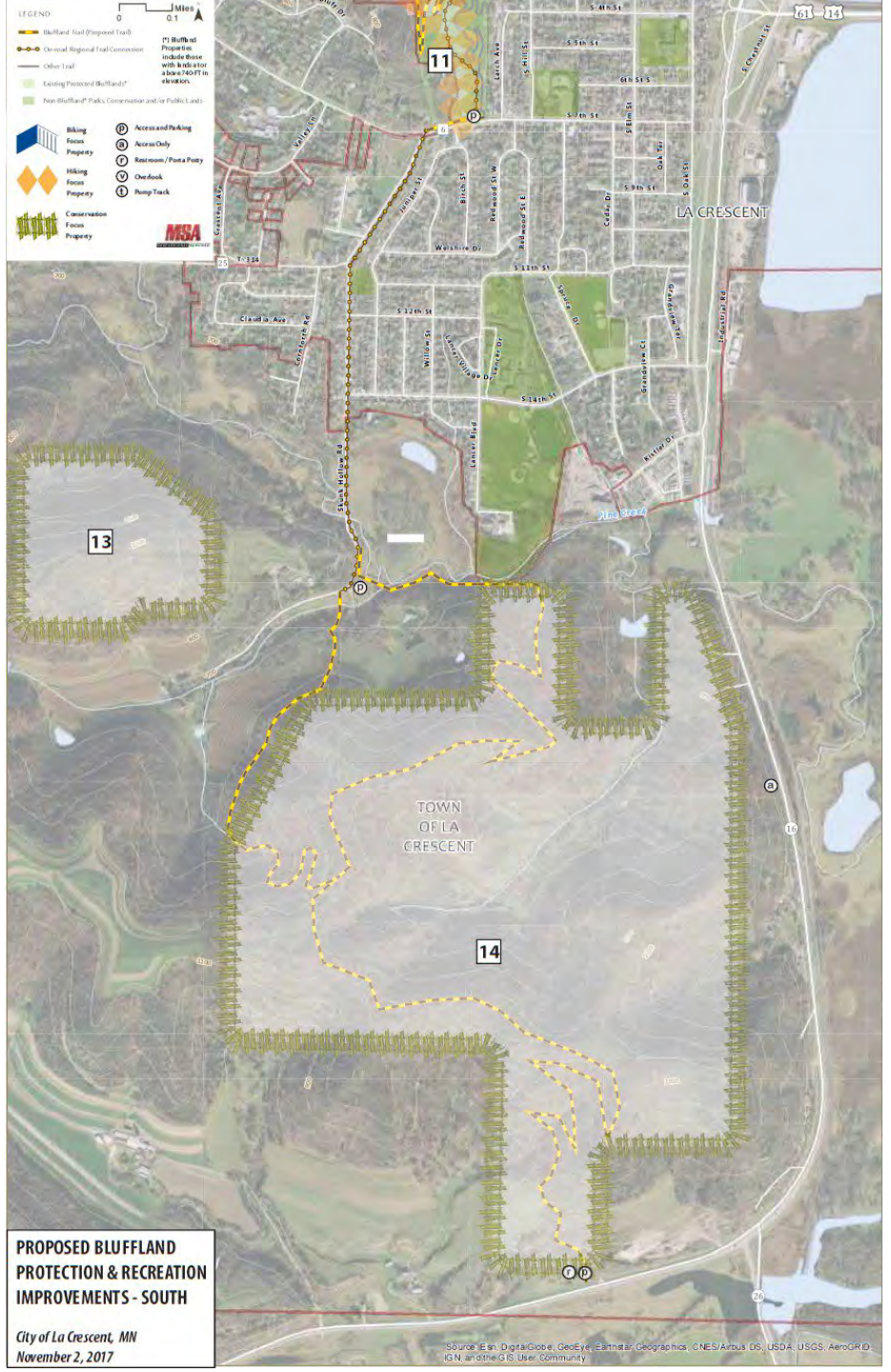
EXISTING PLANS, CONTINUED

The Blufflands Plan

City of La Crescent, November 2017

This plan sets a vision to “establish an exceptional network of protected blufflands and recreational trails in and around the City of La Crescent. Our cooperative efforts will enhance the health of residents, visitors, natural eco-systems and our local economy.”

This plan included a proposed trail connection through the blufflands at the south end of town and connecting to Highway 16. There are multiple private property owners including allotment lands owned by indigenous families who are ancestors of the HoChungra (Winnebago). The current use of the land is woodlands, farmland and open space with an elevation change of 430 feet. The proposed trail would be either paved or crushed stone maintained for summer use for people walking/running, wildlife viewing and bicycling.



Existing Conditions Summary

A key focus of the November community walk- and bike-audit was to better assess and identify potential opportunities to address both in-town routes and a safe route along Highway 16 to close the gap between the Wagon Wheel Trail, residents of the mobile home park, and the future Root River Trail connection. These connections would enable more people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of active transportation, and support local livability and economic vitality.

Existing Conditions

COMPLEX INTERSECTION; LACK OF GATEWAY

Hwy 16 and US 14/61 is a complex intersection with overly wide turning radii, long crossing distances due to multiple lanes and no bicycle facilities, which create an auto-dependent environment. This is a key intersection into La Crescent. It lacks a gateway or sense of welcome.

PAINTED CURB EXTENSIONS

As part of Safe Routes to School, La Crescent has tested painted curb extensions to improve sight lines and shorten crossing distance for children walking to school.

3rd STREET IS OVERBUILT FOR VEHICLES

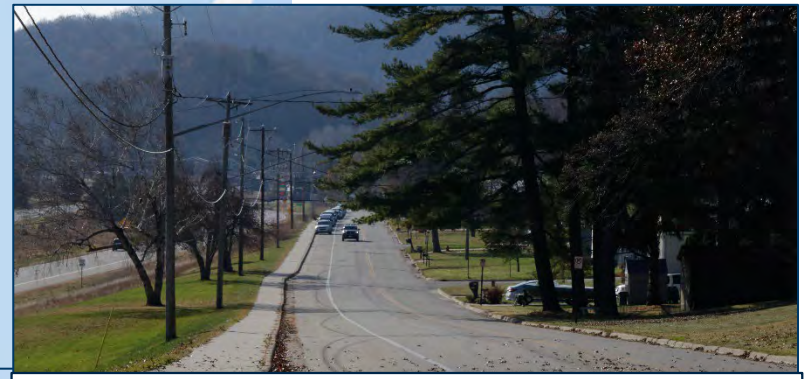
S 3rd Street is a four-lane County Road (CR6), with a 2021 AADT of 7049. Multiple lanes and higher vehicle speeds make the crossing for people on foot, especially school-age kids, more complex requiring added crossing treatments like Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB).

MAP 2[37]

Existing Conditions

IMPORTANT CONNECTION

S 1st Street is an important route into downtown La Crescent for residents and a key connection to the Wagon Wheel Trail bridge. It is an overly wide neighborhood street and lacks marked bike lanes.



ROUTE TO SCHOOLS & ALTERNATE MRT ROUTE

S Oak Street is a key route to schools connecting the elementary school, STEM and Montessori school. It is also the signed alternate route to the Highway 16 Mississippi River Trail (MRT).

COMPLEX INTERSECTION

S 14th Street and S Oak Street are designated as local bike routes, but there is no crossing support for people biking to cross Hwy 16.

NEED FOR CONNECTION

There is no path to the mobile home park located south of 14th Street along Hwy 16. Today people walk along the highway shoulder.

Existing Conditions

MINIMAL SEPERATION
Rumble strips provide some visual separation between people biking and people driving.

CHALLENGING INTERSECTION
Highway 16 and Miller's Corner (Hwy 26) is a challenging intersection for people on bikes to navigate, especially when turning south on Mn 26, because they need to mix with vehicular traffic going 55+ mph and there is a curve at this junction.

HIGH VEHICULAR SPEEDS
Posted speed limits heading out of La Crescent are 55 mph. A paved shoulder makes walking and bicycling less safe and comfortable, especially for families, due to high vehicle speeds and traffic (including truck) volumes.

Significant grade changes between bluffs, highway and wetlands.

National Fish & Wildlife Refuge - wetlands

Federal wetland mitigation area.

Potential connection to Root River Trail on old rail line.

Existing Conditions

HIGH VEHICULAR SPEEDS
Multiple travel lanes, wide shoulders and long sight distances encourage motorists to travel faster than the posted speed limit.

SCENIC VIEWS
Railroad divides people from the National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. East side of highway provides the most scenic views.

Opportunity for trail to help improve Pine Creek habitat through native plantings and infiltration.

Portion of existing highway is on easement through railroad property.

40

Path Options: Challenges and Opportunities

With agreement on the vision and goals, the Corridor Planning Team carefully identified and evaluated alignment options along the highway, noting challenges such as landowners that might be impacted, the number of highway and railroad crossings and the need for bridges. Through discussion amongst the planning team and public outreach, the wetland option was identified as the most desired and scenic. However, the challenges proved that option to be impractical. The second-best option was the east side of the highway due to the scenic view, the lack of impact on private property owners, and absence of driveway crossings. The east side option was therefore the preferred concept.

	West side of highway	East side of highway	Both sides of highway	Through wetlands	Through blufflands (See the Blufflands Plan)
Landowners impacted	• Private owners • Tribal properties • MnDOT	• MnDOT • CP RR	• Private owners • Tribal properties • MnDOT • CP RR	• Private owners • MnDOT • CP RR • USFWS	• Private owners • Tribal properties • MnDOT • County
Easements or acquisitions	Either	Easement, possible acquisition	Easement, possible acquisition	Easement	Either
Number of Hwy 16 crossings	1 (at Miller's Corner)	2 (Miller's Corner and S 14th Street)	2 (Miller's Corner and S 14th Street)	2 (Miller's Corner and S 14th Street)	1 (Miller's Corner)
Number of RR crossings	0	0 – (portion in RR right-of-way)	0 – (portion in RR right-of-way)	2	0
Number of Bridges	Existing bridges to be evaluated and modified	1-2 (Potentially one long elevated trail over narrowest part of corridor)	Existing bridges to be modified	3-5	0

Path Options: Challenges and Opportunities

	West side of highway	East side of highway	Both sides of highway	Through wetland	Through blufflands
Opportunities	• No crossing needed in town • Creates connection for mobile home neighborhood	• Connects directly to Wagon Wheel Trail • Provides elevated view of wetlands • May be least impactful to private property owners	• Narrower travel lanes required, may slow traffic • May reduce need for roadway modification	• Most comfortable and scenic • Unique trail experience could be tourism attractor • Connects people to nature • Most preferred at mapping workshop	• Fewest/no dangerous roadway/railroad crossings • Scenic • Connects trail users closer to nature
Challenges	• Inside of curve at Miller's Corner could be most hazardous • Private property owners may oppose potential acquisitions	• Narrowest space to fit trail • Elevation difference between highway and railroad requires retaining walls • Could be challenging due to railroad agreements • Riders coming from the east would be able to "bypass" the downtown area. Signage may help encourage riders to connect to downtown.	• Not easily navigable by users (may get wrong-way riders) • May not be comfortable to all users • One-way travel emphasizes bike traffic, rather than multi-use trail • Occupies shoulder space typically reserved for vehicular emergency stops	• Most interagency coordination • Private property owner • Requires 2 new railroad crossings • Wetland impacts require mitigation (and avoiding already-mitigated wetland at SE Miller's Corner • More trains expected in future • Extensive boardwalk may be difficult to access in an emergency	• Hills may discourage less enthusiastic riders • Indirect route • Private property owners may have opposition to potential acquisitions • ADA considerations are necessary but may cause the trail footprint to be bigger and increase chances for drainage and erosion issues

Path Options: Design Along Highway Corridor

(Between S 14th Street and Miller's Corner)

	West side of highway	East side of highway	Both sides of highway	Through wetland	Through blufflands
Facility Type and Design Options	• Separated trail setback from road – constructed along backslope of ditch, or relocate ditch • Separated sidepath trail on shoulder – use curb, concrete barriers, guardrail for vertical element (would require narrowed and shifting of travel lanes)	• Combination of types depending on constraints • Elevated over highway and railroad • Separated trail setback from road as much as feasible • Separated trail on shoulder – use curb, concrete barriers, guardrail for vertical element (would require narrowed and shifting of travel lanes)	• One-way routes on each side of highway • Both sides would have a separated or buffered bike lane along the shoulder - use curb, concrete barriers, guardrail for vertical element (would require narrowed travel lanes)	• Boardwalk – could use composite (recycled materials) decking or concrete decking • Combination of trail along highway and boardwalk	• Paved or packed limestone trail surface • Switchbacks to manage the change in elevation
Precedent Imagery	 	  	 	 	 

Envisioning a Multimodal Corridor

SECTION 4

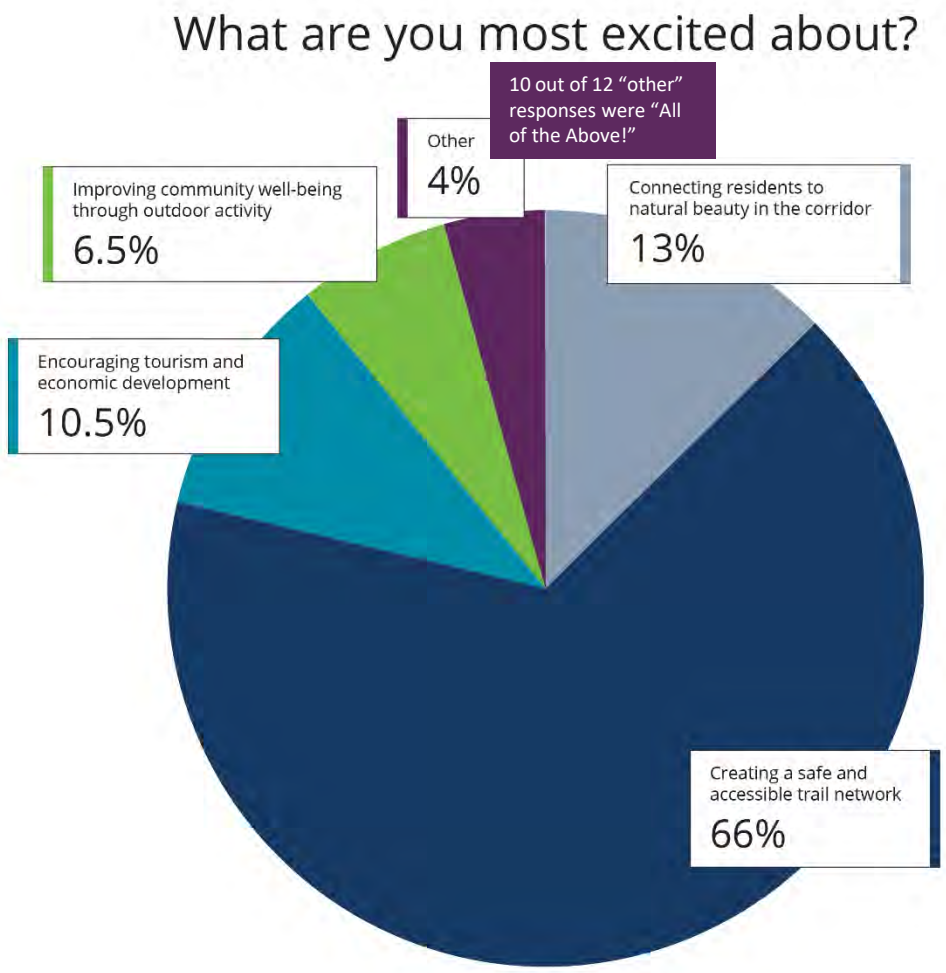
What We Learned From the Community

COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online survey was open from December 7, 2022 to January 23, 2023 to gain additional insight from residents and visitors on how people walk and bike.

- **68% say they would use a path to Miller's Corner and continue along the highway to Hokah!**
- 53% of respondents walk at least weekly
- 48% of respondents bike at least monthly
- 76% reported that Root River Trail trips are with another person (for recreational and social purposes)

316 responses
67% were La Crescent residents
52% Female, 43% Male
65% age 35-64, 9% under 35



What We Learned From the Community

The community-wide survey asked participates to rank the importance of the active transportation principles to inform path alignment.

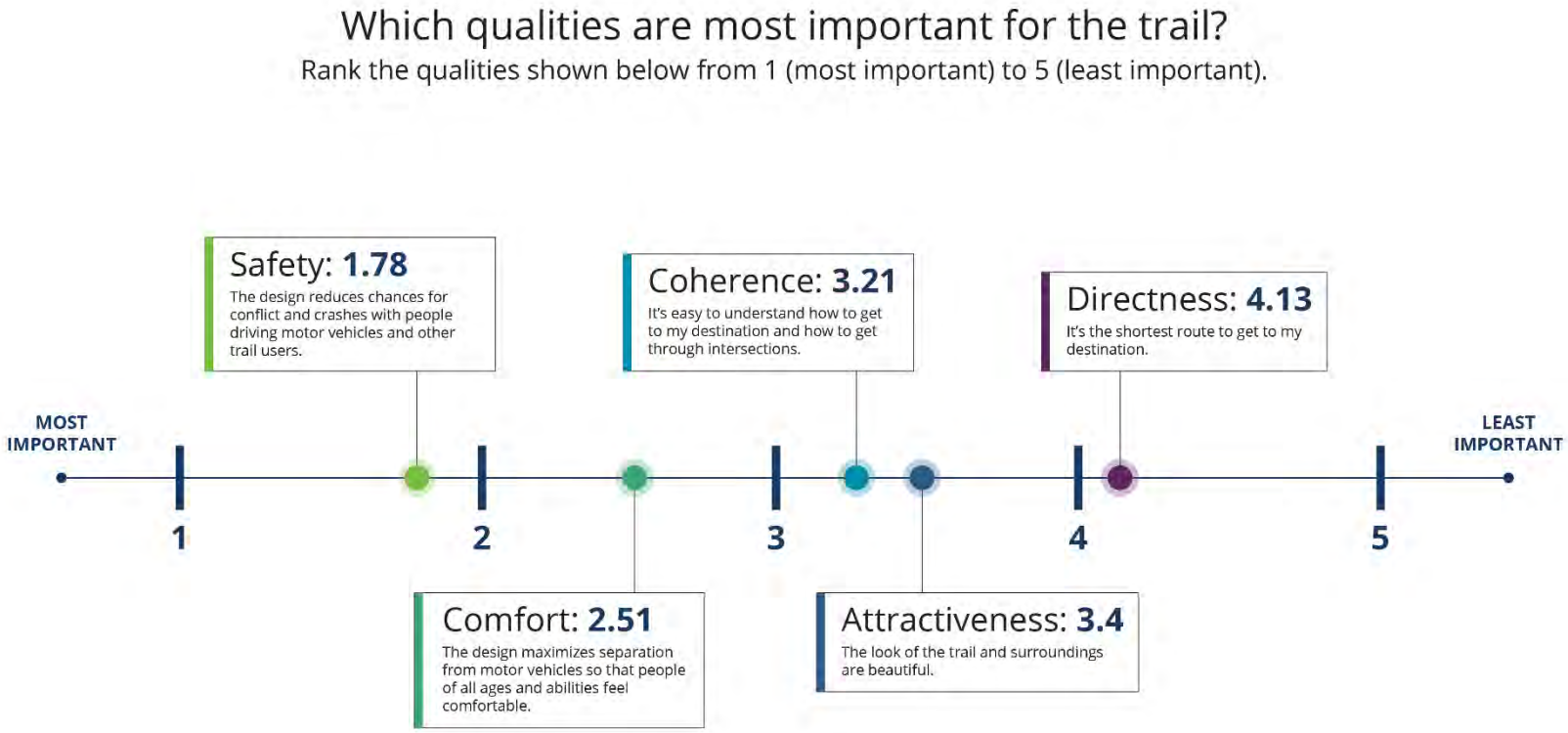
Safety was the most important. Considering the challenges of high traffic speed and the traffic volume along Highway 16, ensuring a safe space for people walking and biking is critical.

Comfort was ranked as the second most important to ensure a route will maximize separation and broaden usage of the trail to people of all ages and abilities.

Coherence fell in the middle. Considering the location of the corridor along the highway, the only decision-making points will be getting in and out of town and at Miller's Corner.

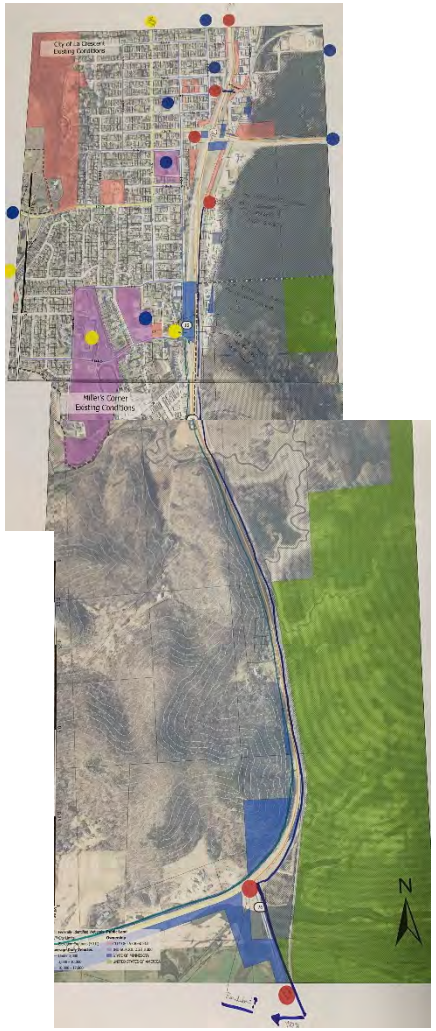
Attractiveness was close behind coherence. The beauty of the corridor is largely impacted by the setting in the driftless region.

Finally, directness ranked last. The linear nature of the corridor and the primary purpose of the trail for recreational use is likely why this characteristic was less important to respondents.



What We Learned From the Community

COMMUNITY MAPPING WORKSHOP



PROCESS

- Attendees worked in groups to identify origins and destinations such as schools and parks.
- Next, they identified preferred routes and challenges such as major street crossings, steep topography and the active rail line.
- Using walking and biking infrastructure tools, they identified how challenges might be overcome.

KEY FINDINGS

- Strong support for creating a path connection to Miller's Corner and beyond.
- The idea of a path through the wetlands was most preferred because of the opportunities for a scenic and quiet route, but attendees recognized the challenges of approval for construction in the sensitive environment along with crossing the railroad multiple times, including a new rail crossing.
- **The next best option for the path was along the highway to provide a scenic route while connecting most people to key destinations within town.**

Why Focus on Highway 16 Corridor

As a result of the community workshop and existing conditions assessment, the Corridor Planning Team identified MN Highway 16, a state trunk highway, as being instrumental to supporting a future multi-use path alignment.

Taking a Complete Street and multi-modal approach to the future design of MN Highway 16 will:

- Provide transportation equity, connecting residents of two mobile home neighborhood located along Highway 16, and south of Downtown La Crescent, to schools and town
- Allow active transportation users to enjoy the beauty and unique characteristics that make Highway 16 a National Scenic Byway
- Ensure people of all ages and abilities can safely and comfortably enjoy a U.S., state and regionally designated bicycle route –Mississippi River Trail
- Close the gap in the Root River Trail extension, helping spur bicycle tourism

The need to address in-town routes and the Highway 16 corridor to better support active transportation users has been identified in numerous plans including:

- MN DNR Preliminary Trail Alignment for the "Bluffland State Trail" along Highway 16 (1997)
- Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan (2010)
- Root River State Trail Extension - Houston to La Crescent Master Plan (2011)
- City of La Crescent Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Update (2017)
- MnDOT District 6 Bicycle Plan (2019)
- La Crescent Safe Routes to School Master Plan (2020)
- MnDOT Pedestrian & Bicycle Scoping Recommendation Report (2020)

Why Focus on Highway 16 Corridor

> *MnDOT is committed to improving the safety and comfort of local bicycle facilities by investing in infrastructure along or across state trunk highways – even if not part of a designated state bicycle route or a district bicycle plan.*

- Statewide Bicycle Systems Plan

Who Will the Multi-use Path Serve?

La Crescent envisions a path that safely and comfortably connects people of all ages and abilities to where they want to go while enjoying the natural environment.

To maximize the potential for more people to bicycle, walk, roll and create a complete corridor that will bring residents, commuters, through bicyclists and recreational riders to La Crescent, it is important to design active transportation facilities to support safe and comfortable (separated, lower stress) travel for people of all ages and abilities along Highway 16.

MnDOT has a suite of policies, plans and guidance to support this shift in transportation funding, planning and design, including:

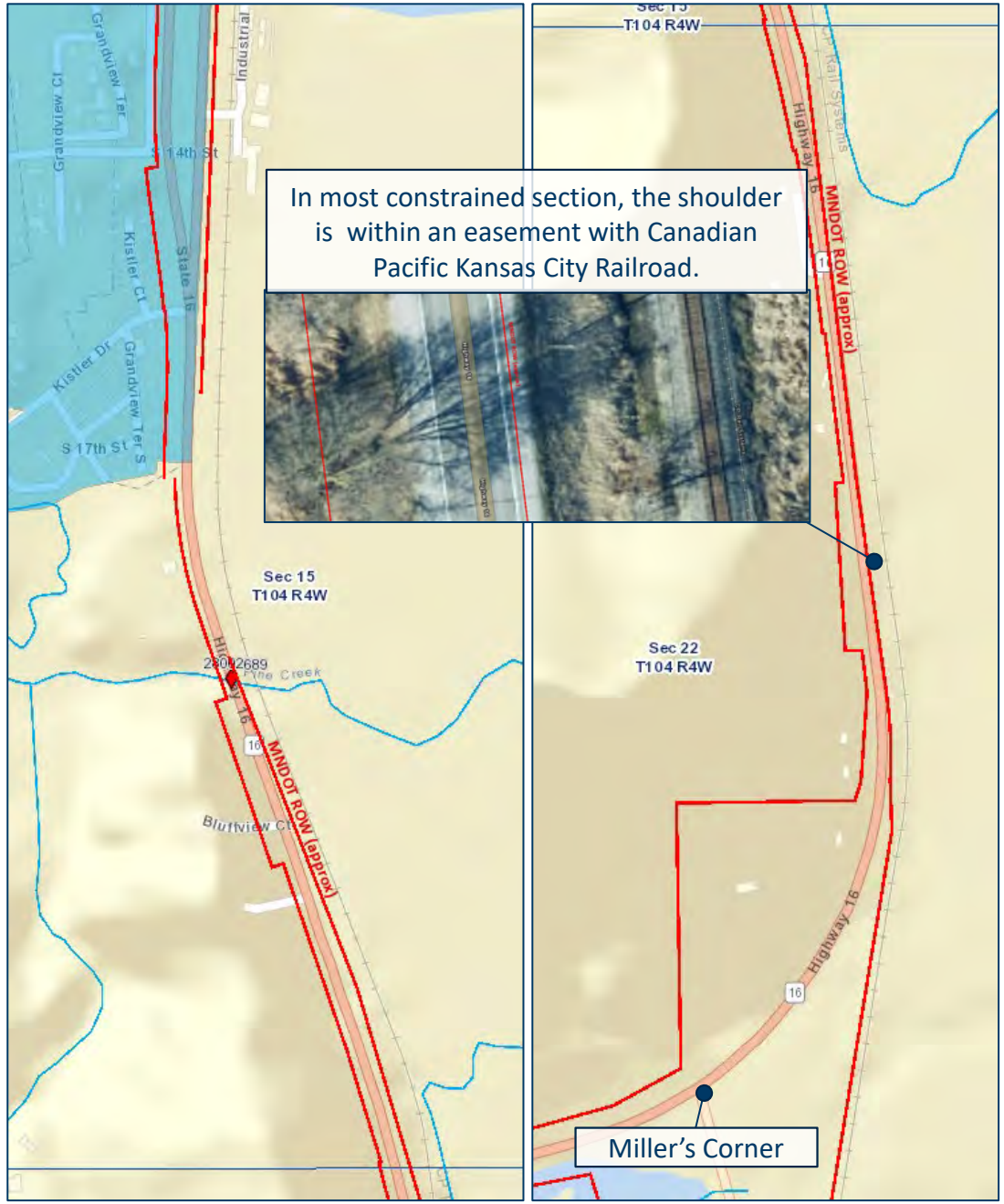
- Complete Streets Policy and Handbook
- MN GO Vision for Transportation
- Statewide and District Bicycle Systems Plans
- Bicycle Facility Design Manual

The following pages/slides outline starter concepts towards a multi-modal corridor.

Highway 16 Today

FOCUS AREA | CORRIDOR AT A GLANCE

HWY 16 between US 14/61/3rd Street/County Rd 6 & HWY 26/Miller's Corner	
Corridor Length	**~2.5 miles**
Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) (2021)	**10,090 vehicles per day** between Miller's Corner and S 14th Street; **13,069 vehicles per day** between S 14th Street and south side of US 14 intersection; **16,839 vehicles per day** north of US 14 intersection
Right-of-Way Width	Varies from **~55 feet to 100+ feet**
Posted Speed	**55 miles per hour (mph)** between Miller's Corner and Pine Creek bridge; **40 mph** within city limits between Pine Creek bridge and US 14 intersection
Active Transportation User Facility Type	**Paved shoulders**
Route Designation	**National Scenic Byway, State Scenic Byway, Mississippi River Trail/U.S. Bicycle Route 45**



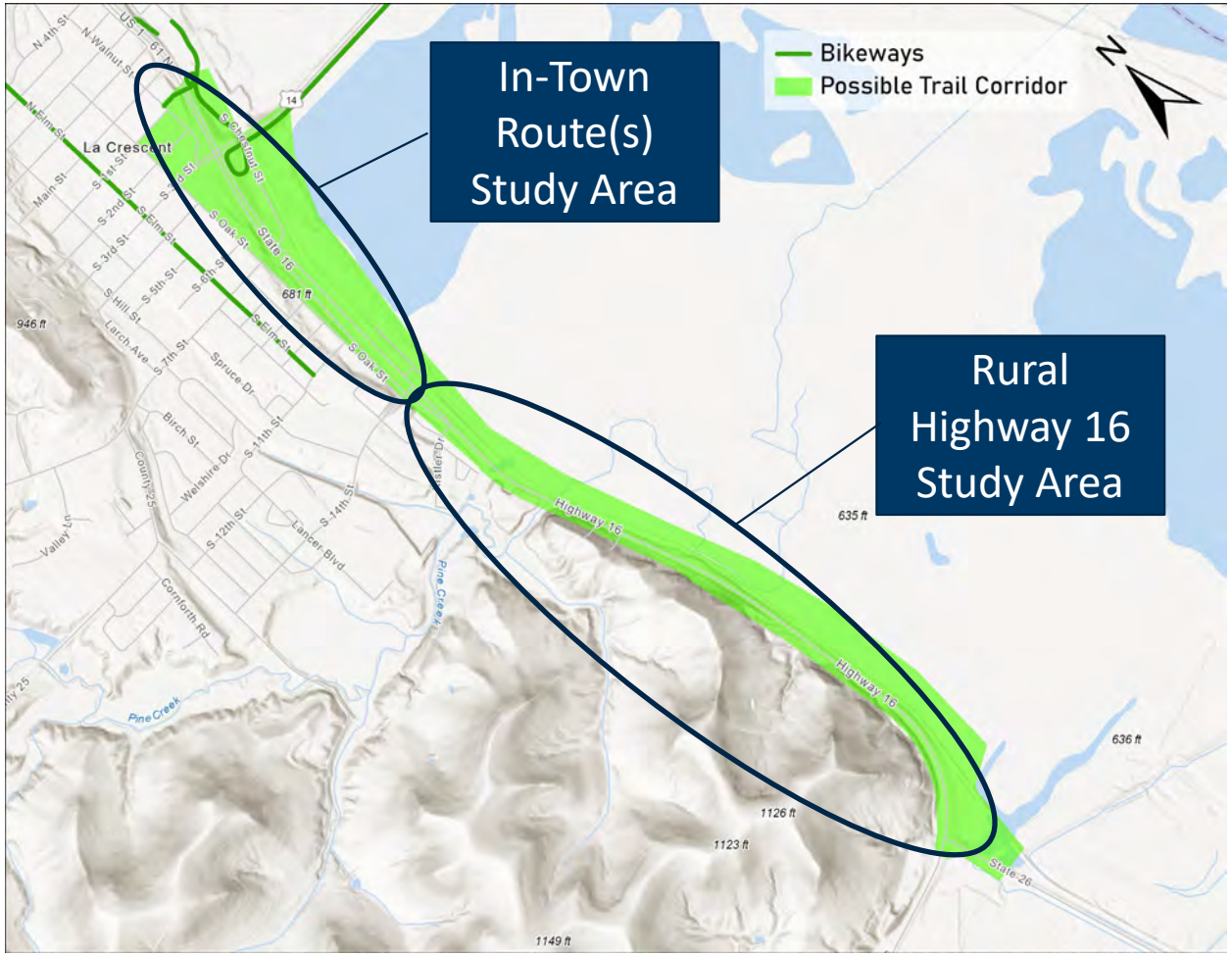
Source: Right of Way Mapping and Monitoring (arcgis.com)

From Vision to Starter Concept

To envision the multi-use path concept, the Corridor Planning Team separated the corridor into two main segments based upon their existing characteristics:

1. **In-town Route(s)** – This segment would connect between the Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge and South 14th Street, a distance of approximately 0.7 miles. Highway 16 through this section is a four-lane divided highway. There are multiple route options for this connection including through town along South Oak Street as an on-street bikeway, and a combination of trail and on-street bikeways on the east side of the highway. If the four-lane cross section were to be re-envisioned as a two-lane cross section, a trail or other biking and walking facilities could be added along the entire corridor.

2. **Rural Highway 16 Segment** – This segment connects from South 14th Street to Miller's Corner, a distance of approximately 1.75 miles. The rural 2-lane highway cross section begins near Kistler Drive (just south of South 14th Street) and continues south. To evaluate the trail options, the Corridor Planning Team considered routes through the wetlands, along the east and west sides of the highway, and even an alternative through the blufflands. Due to the complexities of this segment, the Corridor Planning Team's efforts were focused on vetting these trail alignment options, concluding that further conversation and feasibility with MnDOT and the railroad are needed.



Trail Alignment Preferences and Considerations

As described in the vision, the multi-use path should be family-friendly and showcase the natural beauty of the corridor.

A popular option to achieve this vision south of S 14th Street is to construct a boardwalk through the wetlands immediately east of the highway and railroad. The challenges with this option may result in it being unattainable due to:

1) Crossing the active rail line twice. Per the Rails to Trails Conservancy, "New at-grade trail-rail crossings… should only be proposed where there is no other reasonable alternative." Railroads often do not allow new crossings.
2) Securing approval for the boardwalk though the Fish and Wildlife Refuge owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), including an amendment to their Park Master Plan. Also, some of the wetland near Miller's Corner is a wetland mitigation bank which cannot be altered and must be protected.
3) Acquiring private land north of the USFWS Refuge to complete the connection into town.
4) Need for an improved highway crossing at S 14th Street.

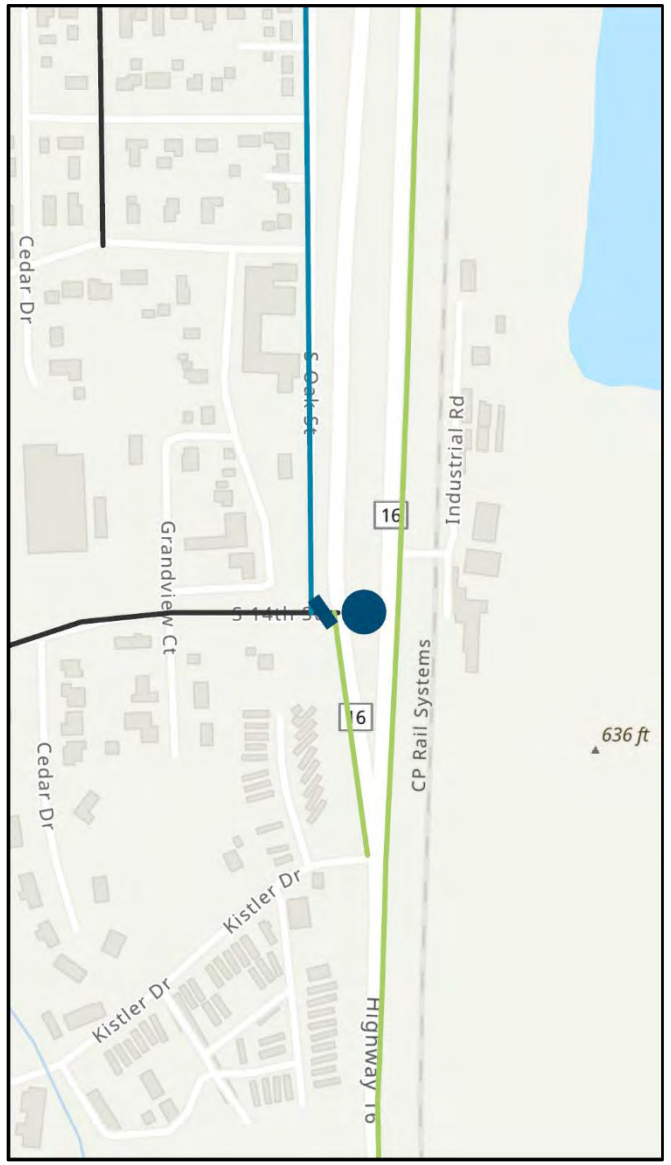
A second alignment option is to construct the trail along the east side of Highway 16, between the highway and railroad, while maximizing separation from both the road and the railroad to the extent possible. Considering that this route is also the Mississippi River Trail, a state and national bike route, biking and walking infrastructure improvements would be supported by those designations. This alignment also faces challenges, with suggested solutions, as noted below:

1) Lack of sufficient highway right-of-way along an approximately 0.3-mile and an approximately 0.5-mile segment in which the highway shoulder is constructed on an easement from the railroad.
   - Possible solution – Trail would be physically separated where possible. In constrained segments, the trail could be along the side of the highway, preferably with a vertical barrier between the motorized traffic and the trail.
2) Changes in topography
   - Possible solution - Retaining walls and barrier rails may be necessary in some segments or shifting the trail closer to the existing roadway with a vertical separation.
3) Need for an improved highway crossing at S 14th Street
   - Possible solution - Preferably, some intersections could be reconfigured to roundabouts to facilitate both vehicular traffic and safer trail crossings. Alternative, a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon could be added at the intersection with South 14th Street.

In coordination with MnDOT, this alignment provides an option with fewer hurdles than going through the wetlands, yet it would still be family-friendly and scenic. In addition, the trail along the highway could increase safety for all users and enhance the attractiveness of the state's highway and city's gateway corridor into town.

For all options, the intersection of Highways 16 and 26 could be converted to a roundabout or a pedestrian hybrid beacon with a pedestrian refuge to facilitate crossing the highway(s).

Trail Options: In-Town Routes



The Corridor Planning Team recommended alignment options on both sides of the highway. The west side in-town bikeway could begin at the west side of the Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge, through downtown and along Oak Street to South 14th Street. A combination of bike lanes, traffic calming and intersection improvements would help establish this route.

On the east side of the highway, a path could continue between South 14th Street and South Chestnut Street and then a bikeway could be marked on South Chestnut Street. Or a path can go all the way to Highway 14/61 intersection where it connect to the Wagon Wheel Trail and downtown.

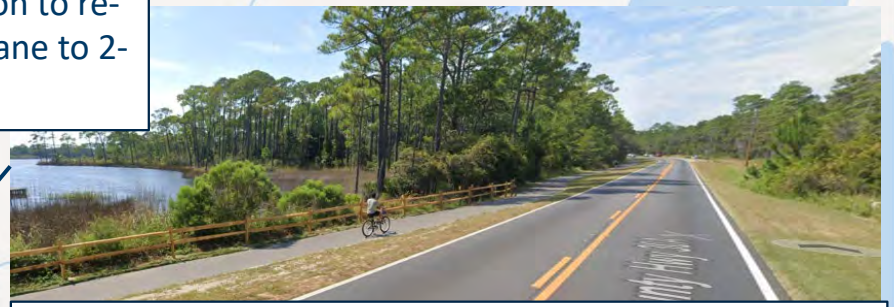
The intersections of South 14th Street and Highway 16 and Highway 14/61 and South 3rd Street are important gateway intersections, and today lack crossing support for the most vulnerable roadway users – people walking, biking and rolling. Roundabouts are a proven safety countermeasure and create a strong gateway or sense of arrival and traffic calming effect. Roundabouts with dedicated multi-modal facilities should be considered at these intersections. An alternative treatment at the South 14th intersection, which is not currently signalized, would be a pedestrian hybrid beacon with a center pedestrian refuge.

In the longer-term vision, if the highway was re-envisioned to be a two-lane cross section with a center boulevard, opportunities for additional sidewalks, trails, separated bike lanes and crossings to better connect the town to the wetlands, lake and river to the east of the highway could be explored.

Hwy 16/MRT Vision Concept

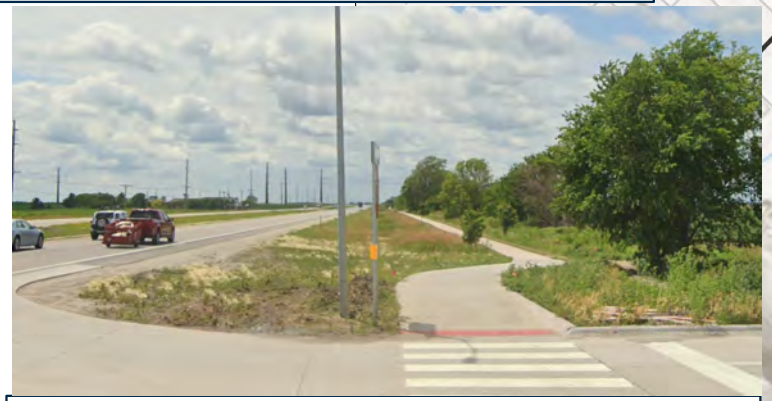
Longer-term consideration - Modern Roundabout: Gateway to La Crescent and Minnesota.

Longer-term consideration to re-envision Hwy 16 from 4-lane to 2-lane.

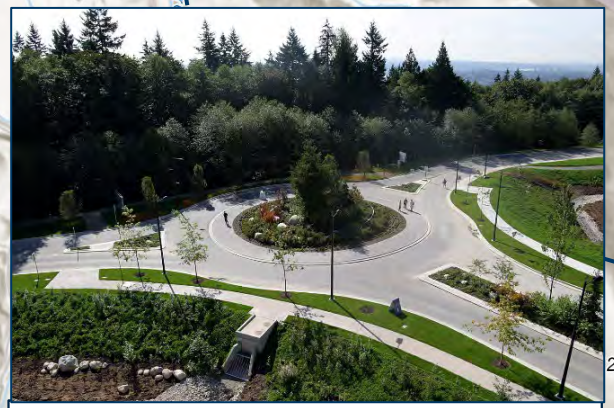


Side-path trail separated from highway and railroad where feasible.

Barrier-separated trail in constrained segments.



Side-path connection between S 14th Street and Kistler Drive on west side of Highway 16 to connect to mobile home area.



Roundabout at Highway 16/26 and S 14th Street.

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Rural Section

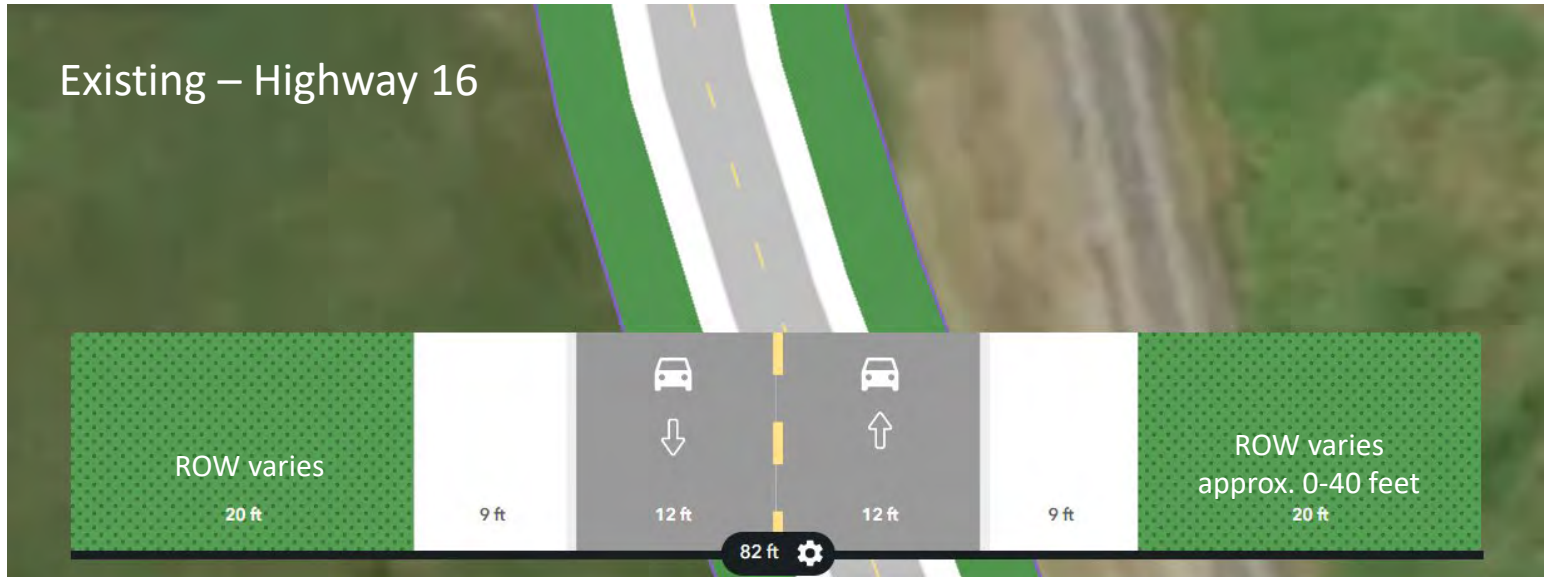
(Between S 14th Street and Miller's Corner)

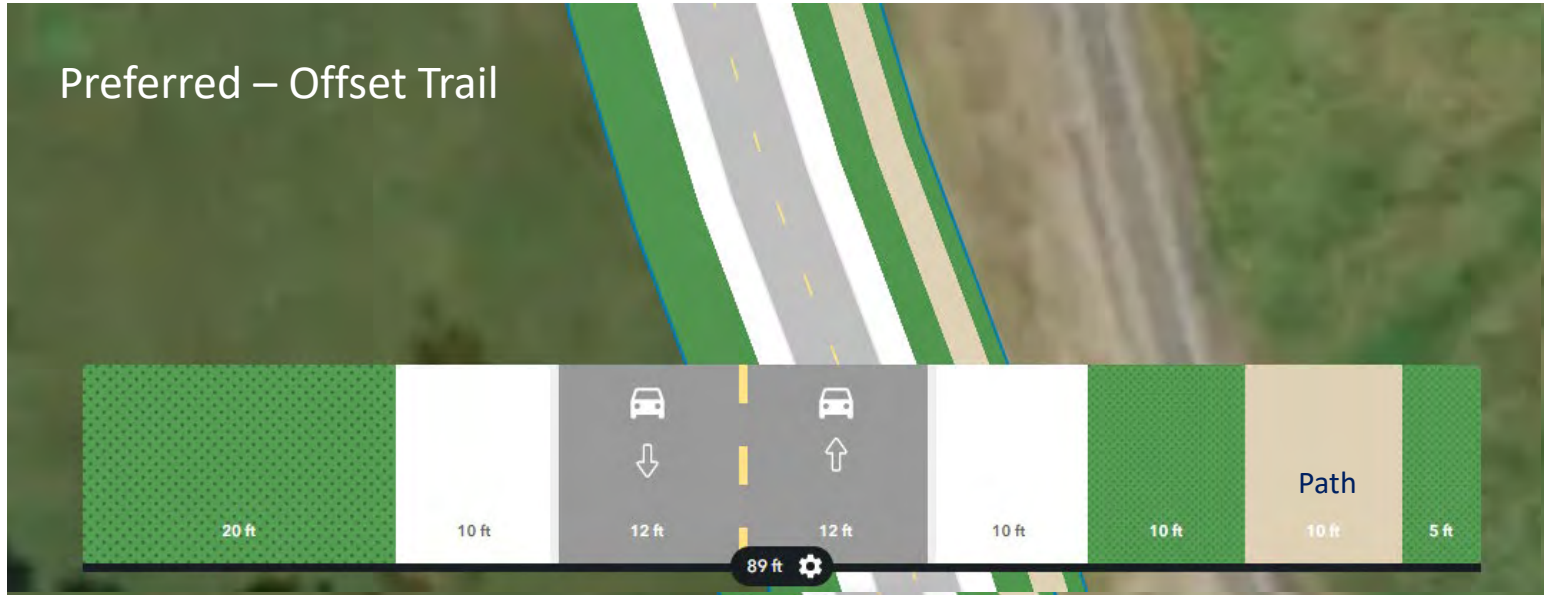
Existing Highway Cross Section

- Existing travel lanes are 12-feet-wide
- Right-of-way width varies
- Paved shoulder width varies
- Some sections of highway shoulder are located on an easement on railroad right-of-way

Preferred Cross Section - Offset Path

- Paved trail separated from the highway by open space
- Between S 14th Street and Kistler Drive, this section would be located on both sides of the highway to allow for a path to the mobile home neighborhood





Path Within Existing Pavement Width

Constrained Section 1

- Narrow west shoulder, shift and narrow lanes to 11 feet wide
- Shoulder on east becomes 5-foot offset for trail
- Option for vertical barrier to be in buffer, with gaps for emergency stopping for vehicles

Constrained Section 2

- Narrow west shoulder, shift and narrow lanes to 11 feet wide
- Remove section of pavement to create grass strip between roadway and trail

Interim Option: Buffered Shoulder or Bike Lanes

The Corridor Planning Team evaluated the facility option of buffered or separated bike lanes on both sides of the highway. While the Team felt that this concept fell short of fulfilling the vision of a "family-friendly" trail, they acknowledged that this treatment option may provide an incremental improvement since today people bike along the shoulder and could help to build momentum for a trail facility in the future.

Since buffered bike lanes could be implemented by paint and signage alone, this would be the lowest cost facility and could be installed in the near-term without construction or lane shifting.

Interim Option: Buffered Bike Lanes or Buffered Bikeable Shoulder

- Mark as bike lanes with pavement markings (pedestrians and other active transportation users still can use)
- Paint buffers (ideally at least 3-ft) to provide visual separation between active transportation users and motorists

Optional Enhancements

- Narrow lanes to allocate more space to paved shoulders (as shown)
- Colorize bikeable shoulder with paint (e.g green or coral) to provide more visual separation
- Provide physical separation with a vertical element in the buffer, such as flexible posts, with gaps for emergency stopping for vehicles
- If providing a vertical element, may need a 4-feet-wide buffer space to allow for shy distance and narrow bike lane to 6 feet wide

"The decision to modify the bikeway design should consider allowable flexibility and trade-offs. If the preferred facility type is not feasible, the next best facility should be considered. Only after balancing roadway cross-sectional elements within the right-of-way based on context and after exhausting a variety of design configurations should designers consider implementing the next best bicycle facility type." FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide

Action Plan

SECTION 5

Key Action Items for the Multimodal Connection

The Corridor Planning Team and public engagement process identified the following projects as priorities to fulfill the vision.

Priority	Design Considerations/Strategies	Next Steps	Partners

1. THE BIG PICTURE
Connect La Crescent to the Root River Trail to expand recreational opportunities and attract tourism.
	• Focus on creating a safe multimodal connection from La Crescent to Miller's Corner, then through Hokah and on to Houston.
	• Plan a route that shows off the unique natural beauty of the driftless area.
	• Due to the complexity of fulfilling the vision, consider interim approaches for incremental improvement to biking and walking.
		• **Incremental Infrastructure Step:** Paint a 2- to 4-foot-wide buffer along the paved shoulders of MN Hwy 16. Add bike lane pavement markings and signage.
		  • Conduct bicycle and pedestrian counts both before and after the buffers are painted to document any change in use.
		  • Survey bicyclists and pedestrians to get feedback on the incremental improvements.
		• **Conduct a Feasibility Study:** Work with MnDOT District 6 to determine right-of-way needs, alternatives to acquiring right-of-way in constrained sections and cost opinions.
		  • Use the trail alignment from MnDNR's 1997 preliminary design as starting point.
		  • Use the preferred and constrained sample sections in this Action Plan for guidance.
		  • Meet with representation from the railroad to discuss right-of-way impacts.
		• **Seek Funding:** After completion of the feasibility study, apply for grant funding to construct the preferred vision of a trail along the east side of the highway.
		  • Use the bicycle and pedestrian counts and user feedback to support the application.
		• **Continue Root River Trail Extension:** Actively participate in Citizen Exploratory Committee meetings to plan larger connection through Hokah to Houston and promote ongoing collaboration.
			• City of La Crescent
			• Houston County
			• MnDOT
			• MnDNR
			• Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railroad
			• Citizen Exploratory Committee

2. MILLER'S CORNER
Improve traffic safety at Miller's Corner (Hwys 16 and 26), while also providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
	• Evaluate potential to install a roundabout with marked and signed crosswalks.	• **Incremental Infrastructure Step:** Use green paint to mark dashed bike lanes through the intersection. Add bike warning signs to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists in the area.
		• **Conduct a Study:** Apply a roundabout-first approach to:
		  • Evaluate safety risk factors of intersection for all modes and improvement provided by a roundabout as a countermeasure
		  • Identify right-of-way needs for a roundabout
		  • Provide cost opinion for roundabout
			• City of La Crescent
			• Houston County
			• MnDOT
			• MnDNR

Key Action Items for Active Transportation Connections

Priority	Design Considerations/Strategies	Next Steps	Partners

4. HIGHWAY CROSSINGS Ensure that people walking and biking along the Mississippi River Trail can cross Highway 16 safely.	• Provide dedicated time and space for people walking and biking to cross the highway.
	• Shorten the distance of bicycle and pedestrian crossings to reduce the time people are exposed to motorized traffic while walking or biking.
		• **Improve the intersection of S 3rd Street and Highways 16/14/61** for people using the regional trail network.
		• **Construct a bicycle and pedestrian crossing at S 14th Street** to create a connection between the future trail on the east side of the highway with the bike boulevard along S Oak Street that terminates at S 14th Street.
		• For both crossing locations, **evaluate the potential for a roundabout** that can slow traffic and serve as a gateway announcing a change in the character of the highway. A single-lane roundabout is preferred.
		  ◦ For the S 3rd Crossing location, consider a protected intersection as an alternative to the roundabout. This would be consistent with the 2017 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update and MnDOT's 2020 Pedestrian and Bicycle Scoping Recommendation Report.
		  ◦ For the S 14th Street crossing location, consider a pedestrian hybrid beacon as an alternative to the roundabout.
			• City of La Crescent
			• MnDOT

5. IN-TOWN ROUTES Improve key routes through town for biking and walking.	• Develop bike- and walk-friendly routes on both the east and west sides of Highway 16 between the Wagon Wheel Trail and south end of town. • Connect to parks, schools and downtown.	• On the west side of Highway 16, **use Oak Street as a bike boulevard**. Follow the recommendations of the SRTS Plan and MnDOT's 2020 Pedestrian and Bicycle Scoping Recommendation Report. • On the east side of Highway 16, **construct a sidepath trail** consistent with the preferred vision. • **Fill sidewalk gaps** to ice arena. • **Consider four to three lane conversion of S 3rd Street**.	• City of La Crescent
6. CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS* Enable residents of the mobile home neighborhood to bike or walk to the rest of the city.	• Construct a sidewalk or trail along the west side of Highway 16 between Kistler Drive and S 14th Street.	• **Construct a paved connection** separated from the highway. Follow the recommendations of the SRTS Plan and MnDOT's 2020 Pedestrian and Bicycle Scoping Recommendation Report.	• City of La Crescent • MnDOT

*The mobile home neighborhood connection is important to ensure transportation equity and a safe route to school. In addition, ensuring safe crossing of MN Hwy 16 near Kistler Drive and S 14th Street will become even more critical with a trail on the east side of the highway.

Future Re-Envisioning of the Highway

Priority	Design Considerations/Strategies	Next Steps	Partners
7. RE-ENVISION THE HIGHWAY Re-envision Highway 16 as a leisurely driving route that appreciates the scenic byway, provides a welcoming entrance to the community, and enables bicycle and pedestrian mobility and crossings.	• Convert Highway 16 to two-lanes in town and narrowed lanes throughout the study area to reduce prevailing speed, improve safety and character, and comfortably accommodate biking and walking (even through constrained sections). • Consider unique entry features to announce arrival into La Crescent. • Add pedestrian and bicycle crossings – consider roundabouts and pedestrian hybrid beacons.	• **Conduct a traffic study** to determine suitability to reduce four lanes to two lanes in-town. • **Develop graphic concepts** for each section of the highway to convey the vision	• City of La Crescent • MnDOT

Active Transportation Toolbox

SECTION 6

Active Transportation Planning & Design

A next step is to refine starter ideas and concepts presented in this Plan for the preferred location (alignment) of a multi-use path on the east side of MN Highway 16. Given right-of-way, topographic, railroad and wetland challenges, the facility type might need to vary.

This requires balancing community priorities based on relevant project constraints, data analysis and engineering judgement. There are many important factors, including the need for separation between modes, when determining location and where facility type may vary, all of which will drive trade-offs, conversations and decisions.

This Toolbox presents design techniques that can be used to create a multi-use path and experience that fulfills the active transportation principles of safety, comfort, coherence, directness and attractiveness. It provides a starting point to illustrate core concepts and further guide conversations, analysis and decision-making to advance the concept of ***an attractive, safe and comfortable roadway with bicycle and pedestrian facilities that serves the transportation needs of all users.***

Photo: MnDOT Bicycle Facility Design Manual

DESIGN GUIDANCE

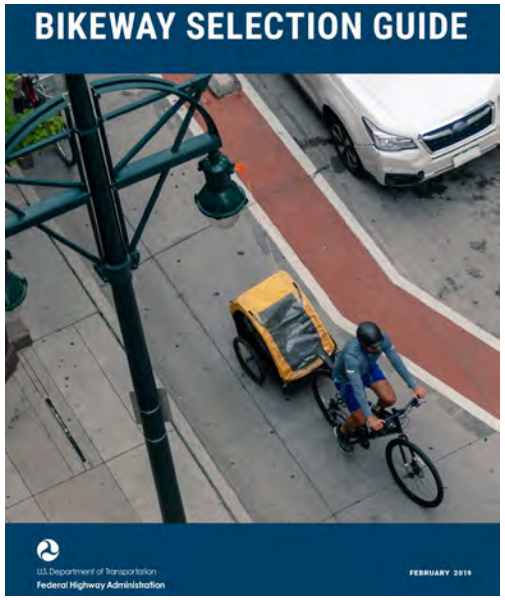
Trail and Bicycle Facility Design

[Bicycle Facility Design Manual]

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), 2020

[Small Town and Rural Design Guide]

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 2016



[Bikeway Selection Guide]

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 2019

The recommendations presented in this Plan emerge from evidence-based best practices in active transportation design.

There are many excellent resources available for trails and bikeways. The *MnDOT Bicycle Facility Design Manual* serves as a key resource for how to design Minnesota's transportation system to support the safety, comfort and convenience for all people bicycling. The *Small Town and Rural Design Guide* provides design details for trails as well as on-street bikeways for rural settings. The *Bikeway Selection Guide* builds on FHWA's support for design flexibility to assist transportation agencies in the development of connected, safe and comfortable bicycle networks that meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

In addition to these, FHWA has a suite of other design guidance and references on proven safety countermeasures. It is time to put these into practice.

ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Multi-Use Trails / Shared Use Paths

FULLY SEPARATED PATHS / MULTI-USE TRAILS

Paved trails (also known as shared use paths) are completely separated from motorized traffic and are shared by people walking, biking and rolling traveling in both directions. They are generally 10 to 14 feet wide. In constrained circumstances, 8 feet wide is allowed.

Source: AASHTO (2012), Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 4th Edition

People rolling and strolling along a multi-use trail or side-path.
Photo: Small Town & Rural Design Guide

Intersections and driveway crossings require additional care, and ideally the trail remains at the same grade while crossing (doesn't dip down). Where trail users need to stop, providing a lean bar is a helpful amenity.
Photo: Dan Burden

Side-path trails: bidirectional shared use paths that run parallel to the roadway. Trees create a powerful vertical buffer and help manage stormwater.
Photo: Dan Burden

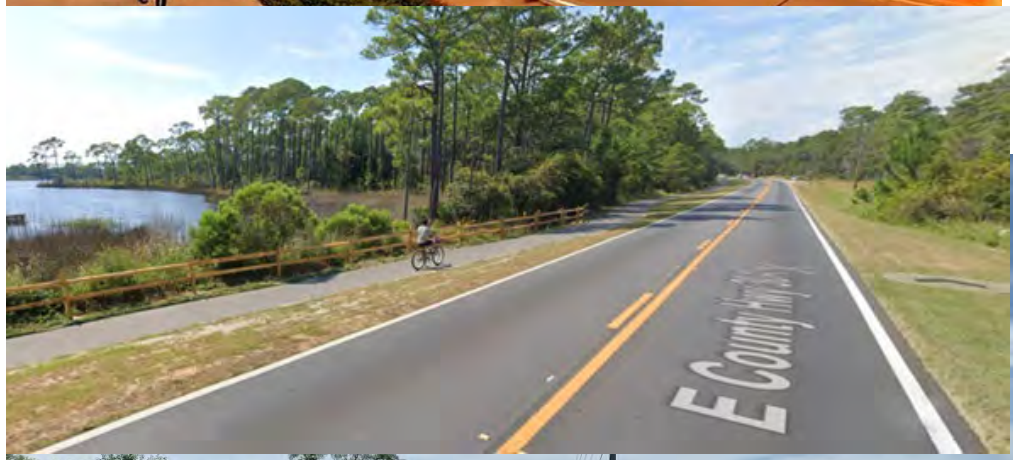
ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Rural Paved Trails

Physically Separated

FOR ALL TYPES OF BIKE RIDERS AND WALKERS

The most comfortable and preferred trail design for all users is one that is completely separated from vehicular traffic. In a rural setting, a sidepath trail might be separated from the highway by a narrow grass strip or a wider drainage swale. In a constrained corridor, a sidepath trail might be separated by a concrete curb or other type of vertical barrier.



ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS | LEARNING FROM

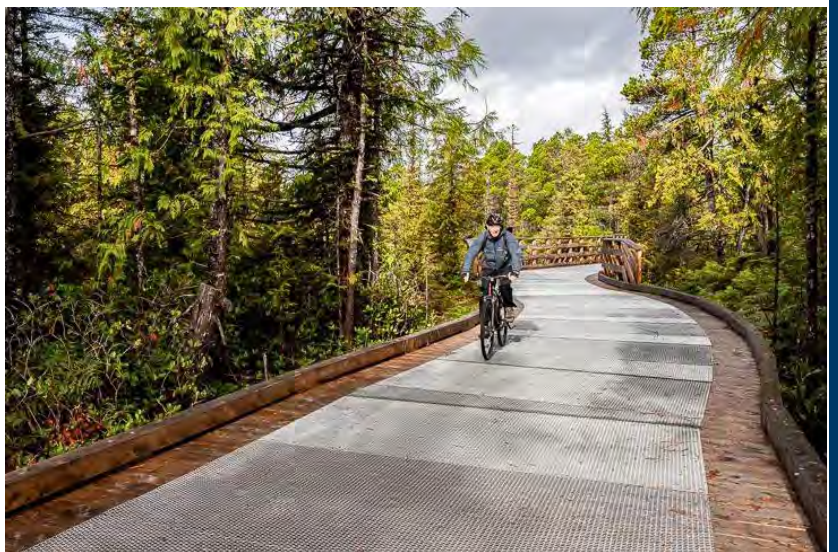
Pacific Rim Hwy, Tofino, BC

MULTI-USE TRAIL CONNECTING COMMUNITIES & LOCAL CULTURE

Completed in 2022, the **15.5-mile multi-use trail** called **ʔapsčiik ƛašii** (pronounced: ups-cheek ta-shee; meaning *going in the right direction on the trail*) connects the towns of Tofino and Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Not only does the trail connect communities by providing a safe path that **is family-friendly**, but it is also **beautiful, celebrating local culture**. It weaves through the temperate rain forest, along boardwalks over bogs, aside rural-style bioswales and improved creek crossings help restore important fish habitat. While the facility treatments vary to meet the constraints of the road and surrounding environment, it offers a very **coherent path for all to travel**.

Photos (from left to right)**:**

- Low-cost, artful buffer created to separate people driving and people walking, biking, and rolling in constrained sections.
- Where topography constraints exist, like at creek crossings, the trail was designed to also help restore fish habitat, a co-benefit.
- Boardwalk sections protect sensitive bogs while creating a quiet, off-road section. They are covered with a metal mesh that provides good traction—whether on foot or bike.



ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Rail-with-Trail

Side by Side Uses

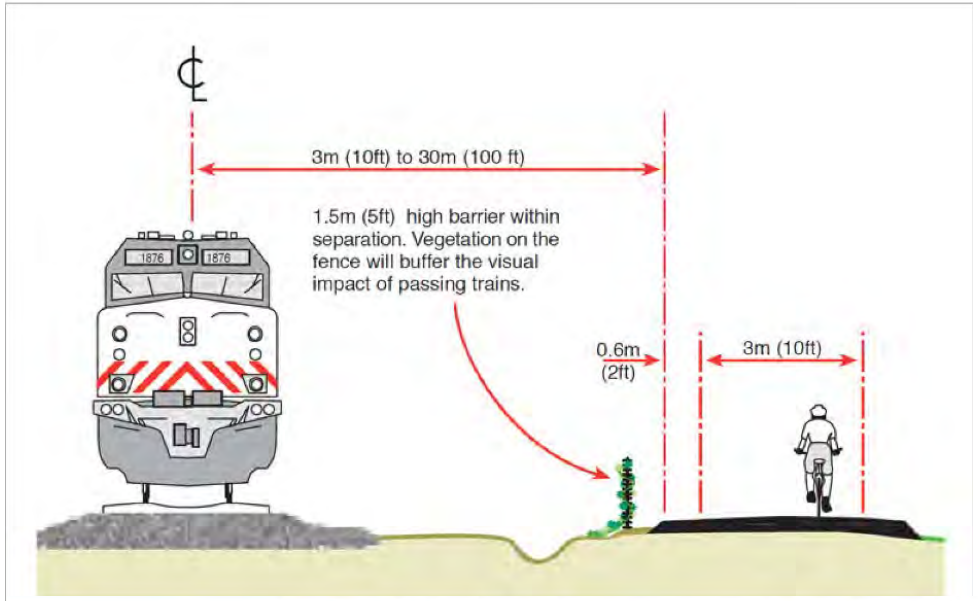
The Rails to Trails Conservancy has inventoried over 1,000 examples of rails with trails. Many of these were built with exceptions to the rules and polices that the railroads have in place, due to mitigations that the entities managing the trails were able to incorporate with the trail development (e.g., barriers between the trail and railroad).

The distance between the edge of the trail and the centerline of the closest active railroad track is referred to as the "setback." If no vertical barrier, such as a 6-feet-high fence, is included, the preferred minimum setback is 25 feet. The range of setbacks on existing rails-with-trails varies considerably, from 7 to 200 feet, with an average of approximately 32 feet. A comparison of rail-with-trail setbacks with both train speed and frequency reveals little correlation, with some trails reporting a narrow setback existing along high speed and frequently traveled rail lines.

Factors to consider in the setback include:

- Train speed, frequency and type
- Rail maintenance and operational needs
- Track curvature
- Topography and other environmental or physical constraints
- Trespassing patterns
- Type of separation, such as fences or vegetation
- Any applicable state standards

Source: Rails to Trails Conservancy



A trail bridge was built parallel to the rail bridge on the White River Greenway in Indiana. (Photo courtesy of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy).

Rails-with-Trail, Various Communities

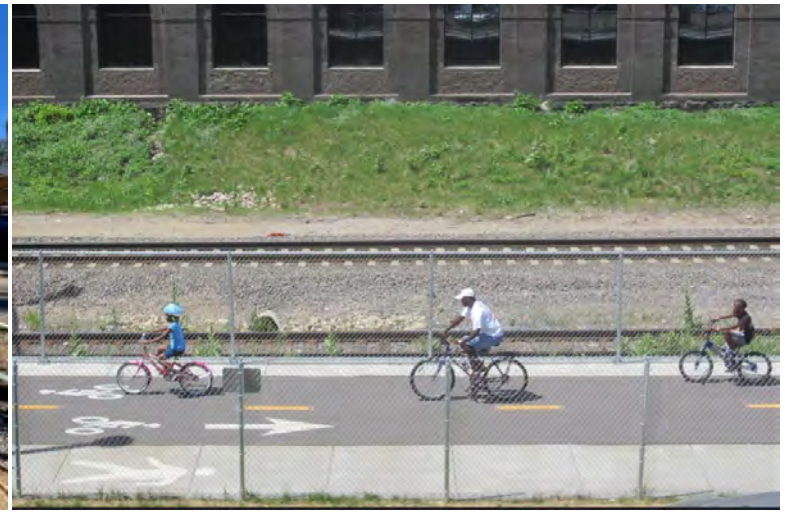
RAIL WITH TRAIL SUCCESSES

Trails have been developed successfully along active rail lines with various setbacks. Trail managers report few problems with trail operations or incidents due to the proximity to the rail line.

- La Crosse River State Trail (1987) – La Crosse, Wisconsin – This 21-mile-long trail is separated from the active rail line by approximately 100 feet of marshland or prairie. There are approximately 16 freight and Amtrack trains per day, with speeds up to 80 mph.
- Cedar Lake Trail (1980s) – Minneapolis, Minnesota – This 3.5-mile-long trail operates in a 25-feet-wide easement in the BNSF Railway. There are 10 to 12 trains per day traveling between 25 and 50 mph.
- Inland Rail Trail – San Diego County, California – There is a seven-foot setback between the trail and rail line. There are 70 trains per day traveling up to 60 miles per hour.
- Frisco Trail (2006) – Fayetteville, Arkansas – The trail is as close as two feet away from the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad line thorough downtown.
- Camp Chase Trail (2016)– Columbus Ohio – Parts of the trail are 10 feet from the Camp Chase Railway line at its narrowest point.
- Montour Trail – Allegheny County, Pennsylvania – Setback of 14 feet along the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway line, which hosts one train per day traveling at 10-20 miles per hour. Source: Rails to Trails Conservancy

Photos (from left to right):

- The Inland Rail Trail is separated from the active rail line by an attractive fence. (Source: Keep San Diego Moving)
- North Cedar Lake Regional Trail is separated by a chain link fence. (Source: Minneapolis Public Works Department)
- The Camp Chase Trail runs alongside the active rail line with no vertical barrier. (Source: Trail Link and orangedoug)



ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Buffered and Separated Bike Lanes

FOR MANY USERS

The standard 5-feet-wide bike lane has evolved to better meet the needs of all types of bicyclists. Increasing separation and protection of people biking improves comfort and safety for riders. It also improves coherence since the preferred place for people riding is clearly marked on the pavement and with signage.

Bike lanes are typically located on both sides of the road so that people biking are traveling the same direction as traffic.

In rural settings where sidewalks are not typically present, people may want to also use bike lanes for walking or running. Wider bike lanes can better accommodate multiple uses and allow for faster users to pass slower users.

Buffered Bike Lanes: provide a painted buffer between the bike lane and the travel lane to increase the separation between the two modes. The buffer width is typically 2 to 3 feet wide, while the bike lane is typically 5 to 7 feet wide. In rural settings, rumble strips within the painted buffer can help to alert motorists if they start to veer toward the bike lane. Since buffered bike lanes do not provide a vertical barrier, they may be uncomfortable for some people when traveling along high-speed traffic.

Physically Separated Bike Lanes: provide a vertical barrier between the bike lane and the motorized travel lane. This may be in the form of flexible bollards, a raised curb, guard rails, concrete barriers, landscaped planters and more! A non-flexible vertical barrier would provide the most comfort for users. A wider buffer of 3 to 4 feet accounts for a "shy distance" for the bicyclist from the vertical element. (Separated bike lanes are also known as protected bike lanes or cycle tracks.)

ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

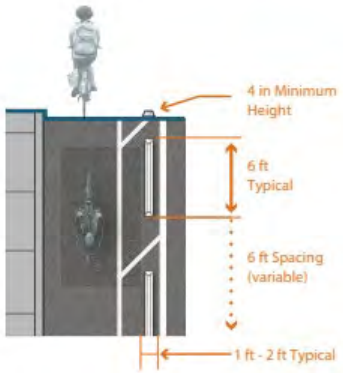
Separated Bike Lanes

Vertical elements can vary in the degree of "protection" provided. They may take the form of flexible bollards, parking stops, raised medians, or concrete barriers. Guard rails may also serve as separation.

Source: Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide, FHWA, 2015

FORMS OF SEPARATION

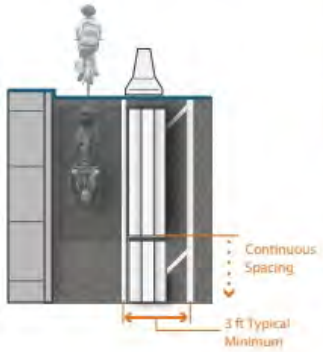
Parking Stops



Baseline Road separated bike lane in Boulder, CO. (Source: City of Boulder)

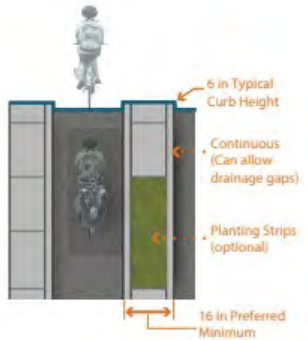
FORMS OF SEPARATION

Concrete Barrier



Seattle, WA. (Source: Seattle DOT)

Raised Median



Austin, TX (Source: City of Austin)

ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Rural Bike Lanes

Visually Separated

FOR CONFIDENT RIDERS

A paved shoulder may be marked as a bike lane in rural areas. A slight upgrade would be to highlight the shoulder with a different color of paving material. Confident bike riders may be comfortable riding under these conditions and if traffic volumes are very low, some more cautious riders may join them. However, this type of treatment is unlikely to be comfortable to all ages and abilities.

Source: Small Town and Rural Design Guide

ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Right-Sizing Streets

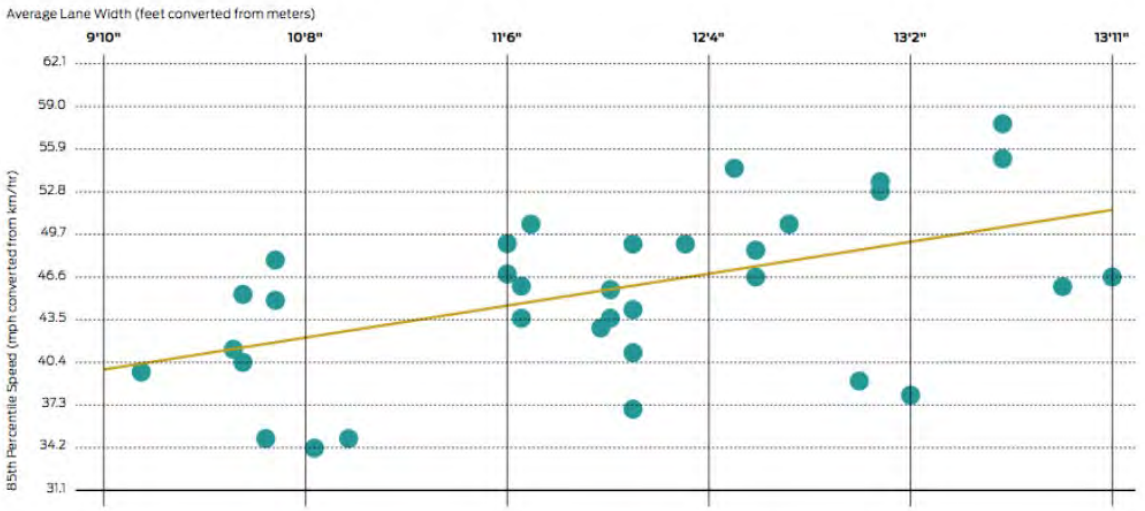
To make streets safer for people walking, biking and driving, many communities are reallocating the number of vehicle lanes or lane widths in order to direct additional space towards trails, wider sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, on-street parking and more.

Narrower Lanes: Narrowing lanes can reduce the operating speed of traffic while also providing the width needed for bikeways. Ten-feet-wide lanes have a positive impact on a street's safety without impacting traffic operations (NACTO.org). A default street width of 10 feet, with allowances to widen to 11 feet in certain circumstances (e.g., transit or truck routes), can improve traffic safety community-wide. On multiple-lane transit or truck routes, the outside lane may be 11-feet-wide, while the inside lanes remain at 10-feet-wide.

AASHTO's *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*—commonly referred to as the "Green Book"—provides flexibility to use 10-feet-wide travel lanes in a variety of situations depending on operating speeds, volumes, traffic mix, horizontal curvature, use of on-street parking and street context. Ten-feet-wide lanes do not result in an increase in crashes or reduce vehicle capacity on roads with speeds of 45 mph or less. Narrower lane widths can contribute to lower vehicle operating speeds, which can increase safety for all roadway users (FHWA Bicycle Selection Guide).

Reduced Number of Lanes: Right-sizing streets from 5- or 4-lane roads to 3- or 2-lanes works best on streets that have daily traffic volumes of less than 20,000 vehicles. As streets reach the higher traffic volumes additional intersection treatments such as the modern roundabout might be needed to more effectively manage the vehicular traffic.

Wider travel lanes are correlated with higher vehicle speeds.



"As the width of the lane increased, the speed on the roadway increased... When lane widths are 1 m (3.3 ft) greater, speeds are predicted to be 15 km/h (9.4 mph) faster."

Chart source: Fitzpatrick, Kay, Paul Carlson, Marcus Brewer, and Mark Wooldridge. 2000. "Design Factors That Affect Driver Speed on Suburban Streets." *Transportation Research Record* 1751: 18–25.

Main Street in Hamburg, NY is a major state truck route carrying 12,000 vehicles per day. The town of Hamburg and NYDOT removed two travel lanes and narrowed the remaining two lanes to 10-feet-wide, allowing wider sidewalks, park assist lanes and additional street trees.

Parking / curb zone | "park assist" lane | 10-ft travel lane

Roundabouts

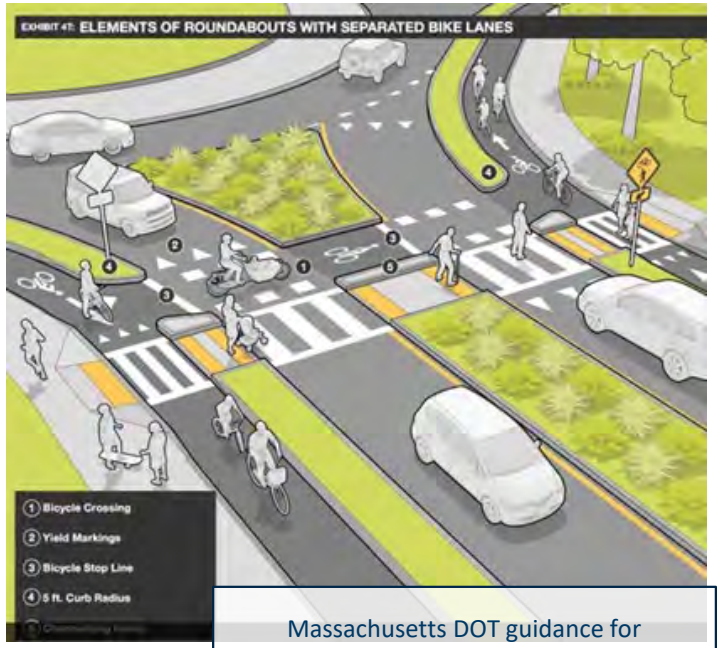
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Intersections present the most conflict points between motorists and people biking and walking. Modern roundabouts are a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) "Proven Safety Counter-Measure," creating a safer intersection for all users:

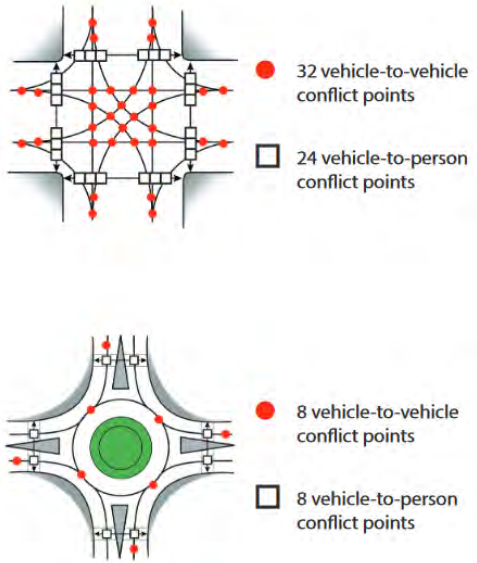
- 90% reduction in fatal crashes
- 75% reduction in injury crashes
- 30-40% reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 10% reduction in bicycle crashes
- 30-50% increase in traffic capacity

Roundabouts slow traffic to the design speed, often 15-23 mph, while accommodating **up to 25,000 vehicles per day**. The slower design speed increases drivers' ability to judge and react to other people driving, walking and biking. Roundabouts can be designed with dedicated space for people biking or walking with pavement markings, signage, and separation.

Roundabouts at the intersections of highways entering town can also serve as a gateway with landscaping or signage that signifies that travelers are now entering town and should slow down from their faster highway speeds. Consider roundabouts at the intersections of Highways 16 and 26 (Miller's Corner), Highway 16 and South 14th Street, and Highways 16 and 14/U.S. Highway 61/S 3rd Street.



Massachusetts DOT guidance for roundabouts with separated bike lanes.



The roundabout design reduces the number of potential conflict points.
Source: Massachusetts DOT

Protected Intersections

DEDICATED SPACE FOR EACH MODE

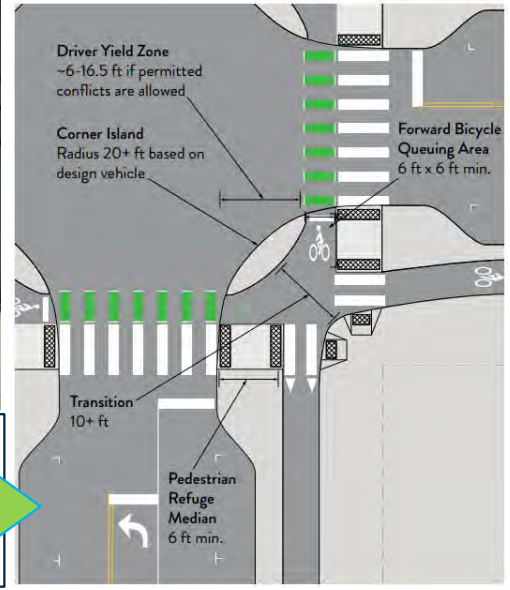
Protected intersections provide dedicated space for each mode of travel: walking, biking and driving. They can be implemented at stop-controlled or signalized intersections and are most often used with separated bike lanes, but may be used with conventional bike lanes, paved shoulders, or even shared lanes. A variation on the standard protected intersection can also be designed for two-way bicycle traffic on one side of the road.

Benefits include:

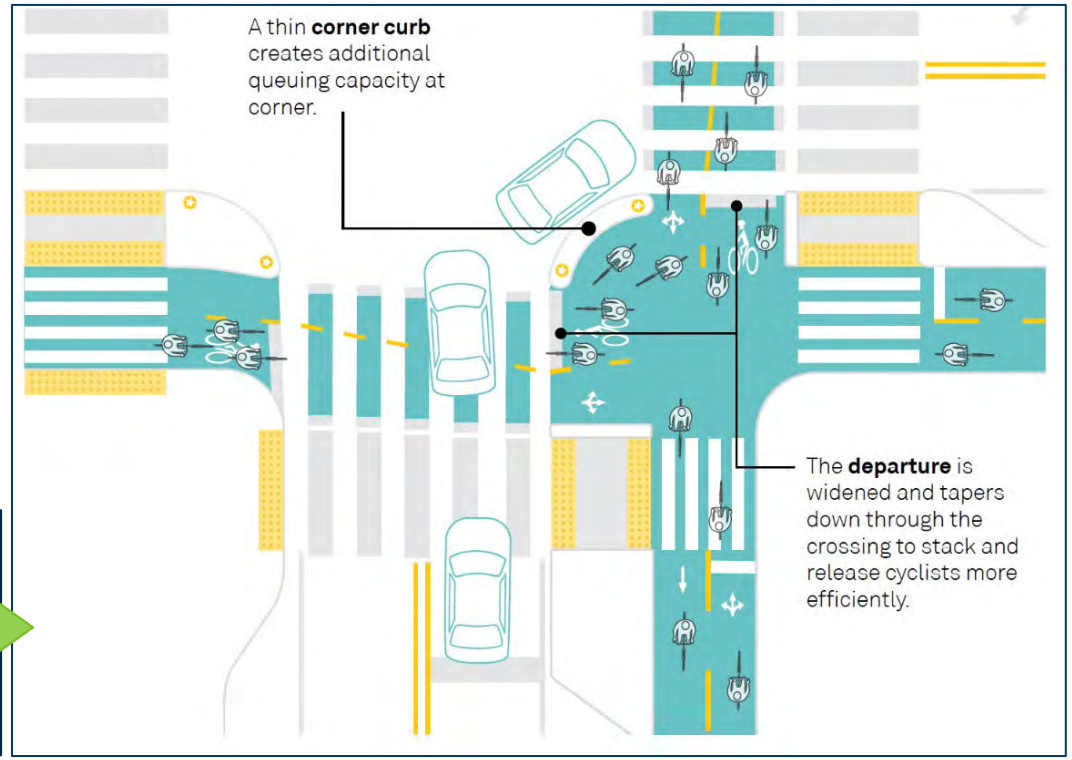
- Provide clear right-of-way assignment between modes
- Maintain physical separation between bicyclists and motor vehicles through an intersection
- Place queued bicyclists in front of and in clear view of drivers
- Improve visibility of bicyclists for motorists' while turning
- Clearly define pedestrian and bicycle operating spaces
- Reduce pedestrian and bicycle crossing distance
- Reduce motor vehicle turning speed

A protected intersection could be considered at the intersection of Highways 16 and U.S. Highway 61/S 3rd Street.

Source: MnDOT Bicycle Facility Design Manual, 5-37 and 5-38.



Key features include a corner island, forward bicycle queueing area, driver yield zone and pedestrian refuge median.
Source: MnDOT Bicycle Facility Design Manual



Alternative design for two-way bicycle traffic on one side of the road.

Source: NACTO, "Don't Give Up at the Intersection" Variations | National Association of City Transportation Officials (nacto.org)

ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons

MAKE MULTIPLE LANE, HIGH SPEED STREET CROSSINGS SAFER

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB) (also known as HAWK - High-Intensity Activated Crosswalks) are a proven safety countermeasure suitable for crossing higher speed (35 mph or more) and higher volume (9,000 vehicles per day or more) roadways.

The signal remains dark until activated, then turns yellow to slow traffic before tuning red to allow pedestrians to cross while motorists wait behind a stop bar. The crossing must also include a marked crosswalk and pedestrian countdown signals.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons are proven to reduce:

- Pedestrian crashes by 55%
- Total crashes by 29%
- Serious injury and fatal crashes by 15%

Source: https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/pedestrian-hybrid-beacons

Trail Amenities

Amenities along the trail can help achieve the active transportation principles. For example, lighting can improve user safety by improving visibility. Wayfinding signage can improve coherence and directness. Restrooms, water, and seating areas can improve comfort. Artwork, scenic overlooks can improve aesthetics. Together, amenities can support a unique trail experience while also establishing character and sense of identity for the trail.

- Restrooms and water
- Wayfinding signage
- Bike fix-it stations
- Doggy waste stations
- Lighting and safety improvements
- Resting points, seating or picnic areas
- Scenic overlooks
- Offshoot trails into natural areas, such as a boardwalk into the wetlands
- Mountain bike trail offshoots or similar dirt trails
- Nature and signage describing the environment
- Historic features and signage describing history
- Play areas for children
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Artwork/murals/sculpture

Enhanced entry features along the trail can be a character-defining amenity.

Photo credit: Walkable Livable Communities Institute and TDC Design

ILLUSTRATING CORE CONCEPTS

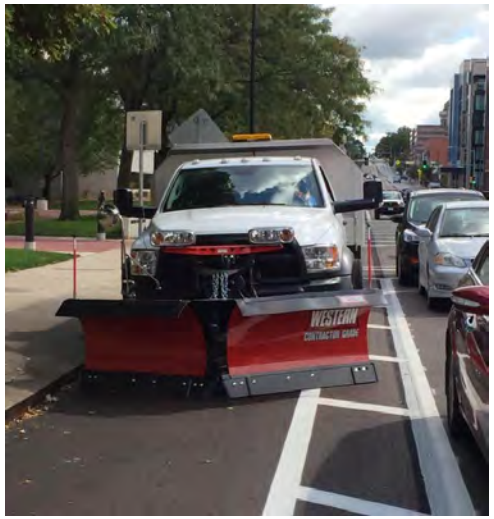
Winter Maintenance

PEOPLE WALK & BIKE YEAR ROUND

People biking and walking are susceptible to the negative impacts of delayed maintenance. People walking, biking or using a mobility aid are often discouraged from venturing outdoors when snow and ice can impede their ability to safely access their destination. Year-round maintenance of walking and biking surfaces, pavement markings, and signage are necessary to ensure equitable mobility for all.

Key principles to guide winter maintenance policy and practice:

- Priority Network: Identify which routes are the highest priority for snow clearing (e.g., route to school).
- Frequency of Clearing: Specify the amount of accumulated snow that is acceptable before clearing will commence. Common accumulation is 1 inch.
- Clear Width: What minimum width of cleared path along a bikeway or multi-use trail is allowable? For example, cities specify a minimum of 4 feet for narrowest operable space along a separated bike lane.
- Responsibility: Identify the responsible party and put into place necessary agreements.



All Clear: Historic snow volumes didn't stop Cambridge, MA from prioritizing snow removal of separated bikeways. A small bobcat style plow was used.

A small portion of a trail could be plowed for biking and walking while another portion could be left unplowed for skiing and snowshoeing. Alternatively, some communities do not plow rural trails (but do plow in-town), to allow for snowmobile, skiing, or snowshoeing usage. Snowmobiles with metal traction devices can damage paved surfaces and should not be used on trails.

Source	Funds	Purpose
US DOT	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	Low-cost infrastructure; education; monitoring and evaluation
US DOT	Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)	Infrastructure funds as well as planning for eligible surface transportation capital projects
US DOT	Rural Surface Transportation Grant	Improve and expand transportation infrastructure in rural areas
FHWA	National Byways Program	Funds improvements along byways, such as facilities, safety improvements and interpretive information implementation
FHWA	Carbon Reduction Program	Projects designed to reduce transportation emissions
MnDOT Active Transportation Program	Infrastructure Grants, Planning Assistance, Quick Build/Demonstration Projects	Support active transportation capacity building and facilities
MnDOT Safe Routes to School	Infrastructure Funds	Construct sidewalks; improve crossings
MnDOT (Federal Funding)	Transportation Alternatives (TAP)	New pedestrian and bike facilities
MnDOT	Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)	Funding for constructing or reconstructing local roads
MN DNR	Regional Trail Grant	Motorized, non-motorized and joint trail usage
MN DNR	Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	Matching grant for the cost of acquisition, development, and/or redevelopment of local parks and recreation area
MN DNR	Local Trail Connections Program	Supports acquisition and development of trail linkages
MN DNR (Federal funding)	Federal Recreational Trail Program	New trails, trail maintenance and trailhead construction
Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission	Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program	“Regionally Designated” parks and trails can be funded
Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)	Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)	Activities that protect, conserve, preserve and enhances Minnesota's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources

State and Federal Funding for Active Transportation

In addition to local Capital Improvement Program funds, local jurisdictions may seek state and federal funding to assist with development of the active transportation network. Most programs involve applying through one or more of these agencies:

- United States Department of Transportation (US DOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR)
- Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC)
- Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

Grants are also available through organizations that support economic development and tourism, public health, and conservation. Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota has a guide: https://www.parksandtrails.org/grants with additional recourses. Private donations are popular for projects that support community recreation and well-being.

Moving Forward

SECTION 7

Next Steps

1) **Keep building momentum, awareness and participation.** Share the vision for a trail alignment along the Highway 16 corridor and starter concepts with residents, partners and other stakeholders.
    - Host an Open House
    - Present to the City of La Crescent Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Bike-Ped Committee, Safe Routes to School Committee, Green Step Committee, Natural Resources Committee
    - Share with the Root River Trail Extension - Citizen Exploratory Committee
    - Share with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and MN DNR representatives
    - La Crescent City Council and Houston County Commission adoption
    - Host conversations with businesses and landowners
    - Inform local legislators/representatives
    - Create a marketing and advocacy campaign

2) **Continue to coordinate, develop and maintain governmental partnerships.**
    - Work closely with MnDOT District 6 to advance the corridor vision through a design and engineering study
    - Further conversations with MN DNR on State Trail designation
    - Work with USFWS to understand flood mitigation measures and opportunities to strengthen the message on how trails provide environmental and emergency evacuation co-benefits
    - Continue to position the multi-modal/multi-use facility as a priority in regional planning with La Crosse Area Planning Committee (Metropolitan Planning Organization)
    - Establish a joint-governmental group for further coordination and negotiation with Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) Railroad

3) **Leverage upcoming projects.** Continue to take incremental steps in improving the active transportation network and steps toward a fully separated trail with MnDOT District 6 mill and overlay project of a section of Highway 16, scheduled for 2026.

A Call to Action

COMMUNITY CHARGE

It has been a long-held and studied vision to create a multi-use trail connection from La Crescent to the Root River Trail. Multiple plans and processes, including this one, keep affirming the need to re-envision the Highway 16 corridor to ensure it offers all people, regardless of mode, the ability to enjoy the natural beauty of the region, while also maximizing the health of people, the environment and local economies. La Crescent isn't new to trail building. The recent Wagon Wheel Bridge is a testament to the fortitude and collaboration it takes to successfully build trails and facilities dedicated to active transportation users. Continue to act together and take trail building in segments. Celebrate wins. Focus on incremental ways to further build momentum.

The MnDOT Active Transportation Program supports community-led Active Transportation planning in communities, cities, and counties across Minnesota. This planning process includes an analysis of existing conditions, public outreach and identification of potential infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions that contribute to the State's goal of **helping more people walk and bicycle safely to destinations where they live, work and play.** Plans help lay the foundation for future engineering, design and construction work that will bring projects to fruition. A unified community vision and a commitment to advocacy are key to moving those projects forward. The following Plan is a living document that can be used to guide continued conversation and close collaboration with MnDOT and District 6 leaders, among other partners, to take the next steps in advancing active transportation for the City of La Crescent and surrounding region. La Crescent and MnDOT have a unique opportunity to model how rural highways can balance recreation, transportation and economic development needs by creating a multimodal corridor that maximizes public benefit.

#82

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Larry Kirch, Community Development Director

DATE: October 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Presentation and Discussion of the DRAFT Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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The city received funding from the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) from their Local Studies Program to create a corridor plan for Walnut Street. The LAPC is the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the La Crescent/La Crosse Bi-state transportation planning area. The purpose of the planning effort was to re-imagine the Walnut Street corridor into a walkable/bikeable complete street that meets the needs of downtown businesses, community residents, and visitors. The city identified in its 2017 Downtown Plan, a vision of the downtown as a trailhead to a regional system of interconnected walking, biking, hiking trails in the community including the blufflands, streets and waterways.

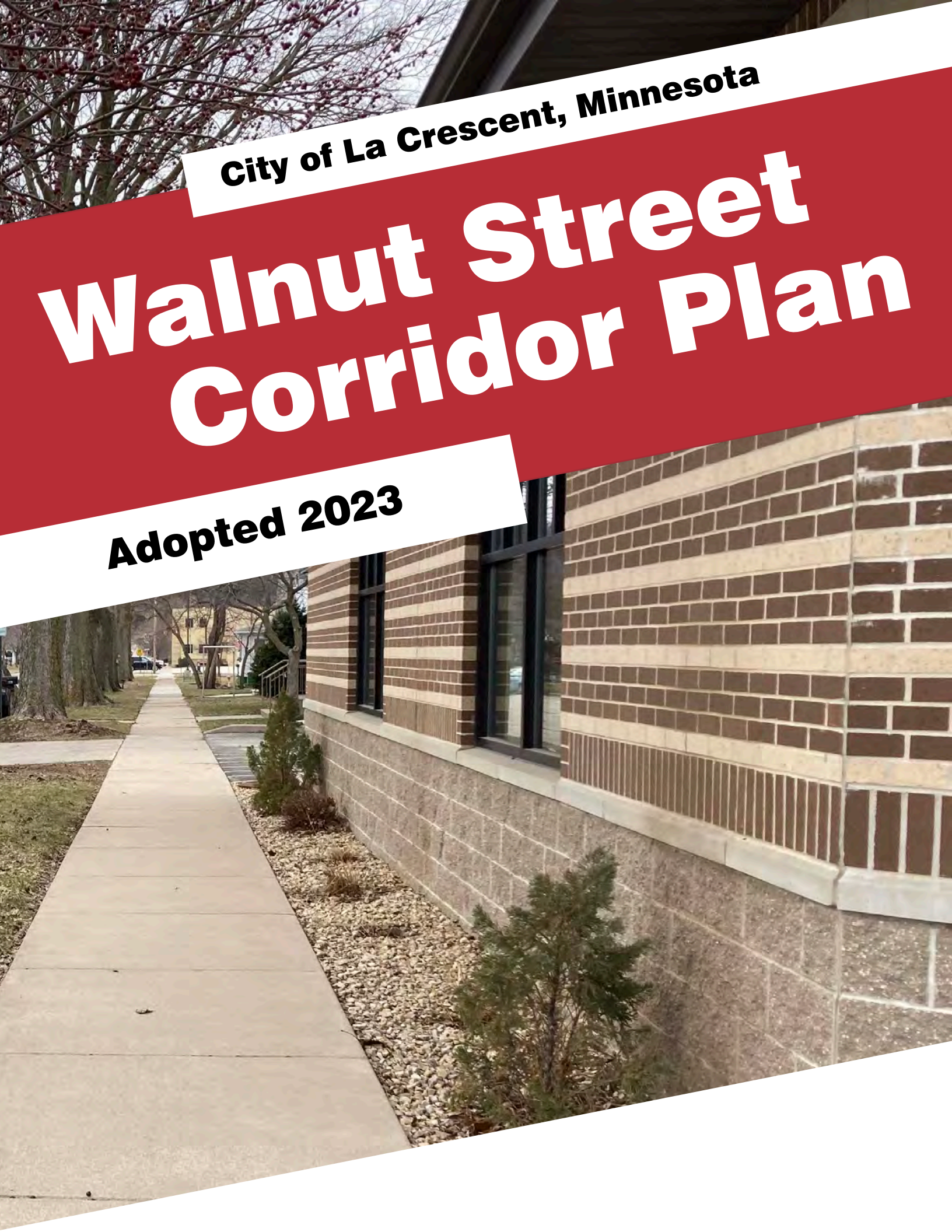
The plan will assist the city in the final engineering design for the reconstruction of Walnut Street from South 3rd Street to North 4th Street and to Veterans Park. The planning process has involved extensive input from the downtown businesses, residential property owners along the corridor including the hotel, tavern and the event center. The goal of the project was to gain community consensus on a plan for the corridor. The project includes water, sewer, stormwater management, pavement replacement, and streetscaping and wayfinding elements.

The Commission will be asked at a future meeting to make a recommendation to the city council on the draft plan. The city must complete the planning project by the end of 2023 and seek reimbursement from the LAPC for the consultant costs.

City of La Crescent, Minnesota

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

Adopted 2023



Acknowledgments

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Tim Hruska, *City Engineer*
Jason Ludwigson, *Sustainability Coordinator & SRTS Coordinator*
Tyler Benish, *Public Works Director*
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Emily Herold, *Assistant Planner*
Anne Holzem, *Traffic Engineer*
Steve Tremlett, AICP, CNU-A, *Senior Planner*
Jason Valerius, AICP, *Principal in Charge*
Brad Vowels-Katter, *Urban Designer*

Table of Contents

La Crescent MINNESOTA

MSA planning + design studio

Introduction

Plan Purpose – Transform Walnut Street

A vibrant community requires a variety of unique districts or spaces where people interact and find desired services and activities. In creating the city's Comprehensive Plan, La Crescent residents identified the Walnut Street corridor and Wagon Wheel Trail as areas needing public investment.

This plan outlines the city's long-range approach for improvements, redevelopment, beautification, and the overall revitalization of Walnut Street. The recommendations within this plan are intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. Establish a pedestrian and bicycle network that connects downtown La Crescent and its surrounding neighborhoods to Veteran's Park.

2. Enhance the overall aesthetics and cohesion of the corridor – including private building design, private site design, and public streetscaping – in order to attract residents and potential businesses.

3. Generate strategies to encourage visitors and residents to explore downtown La Crescent and the Walnut Street corridor.

4. Better utilize city right-of-way throughout the corridor, especially in the residential area north of downtown La Crescent.

The detailed conceptual images and action steps contained in this plan improve the city's ability to facilitate public and private investment in the corridor. As specific projects come forward, whether public or private, they will be subject to additional community discussion and scrutiny. That process may lead to new perspectives and different outcomes than envisioned in this plan.

This plan builds upon existing city plans, especially La Crescent's Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and Safe Routes to School Plan. Recommendations and actions in this plan will help provide concrete steps to implement the vision within these documents.

This planning project presents a once-in-40-year opportunity to improve the Walnut Street corridor. Transforming Walnut Street into a Complete Street for all residents and visitors will be the first step towards transforming all of downtown La Crescent's streets.

Project Study Area

This plan document focuses on the entire Walnut Street corridor, stretching from the S 3rd Street intersection to the N 4th Street intersection. The project also aims to determine the best ways to connect Walnut Street to Veteran's Park, encouraging safer and more seamless pedestrian and cyclist movement between downtown La Crescent and the park, Event Center, and bluffland trails beyond.

While this project is mainly focused on the Walnut Street corridor itself, special consideration has been given to its integration into La Crescent as a whole. The project team explored the street renovation's impact on surrounding traffic, parking, community assets, and commercial and residential areas. The map (at right) shows the parcels that were directly impacted by this planning process, but on-site observations and feedback were collected from around the community.

Existing Plan Document Review

Comprehensive Plan (2016)

In 2016, the City of La Crescent adopted its Comprehensive Plan with a vision of advocating for "balanced growth, with high regard for health, safety, and environmental stewardship". Guiding principles and implementation recommendations were developed to help the city achieve this vision within various community aspects like housing, economic development, downtown enhancement, and transportation.

Of the seven Essential Themes outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, two are particularly relevant to the Walnut Street Corridor Plan:

1. A proactive city role in new housing and downtown redevelopment – with few options for outward growth, the city can lead the way with "catalytic" infill projects by acquiring parcels and facilitating redevelopment.
2. Health and safety as a priority – attention to health and safety in all projects and decisions, including continued investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

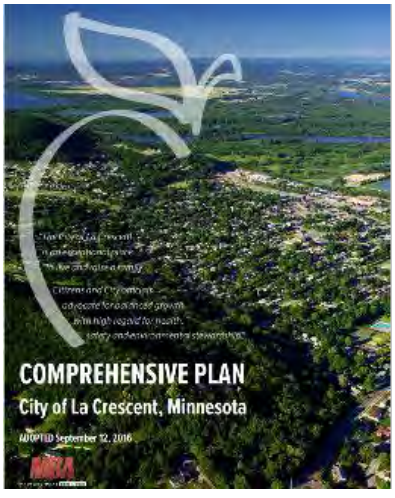
The Downtown Enhancement, Transportation and Mobility, and Land Use sections of the Comprehensive Plan each contain goals that will inform the recommendations generated by the Walnut Street Corridor Plan process. The general objectives of these goals include:

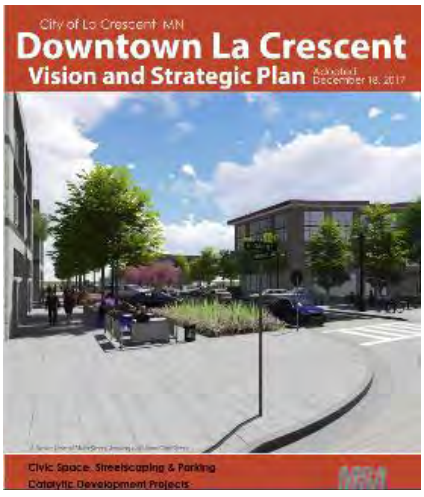
1. Creating and articulating a downtown district through dense "urban" development, intentional streetscaping, and incorporation of residential and commercial uses;
2. Maintaining convenient parking facilities;
3. Enabling efficient and safe vehicular circulation throughout the community; and
4. Following Complete Streets principles and further addressing community health through provisions like street trees and stormwater management.

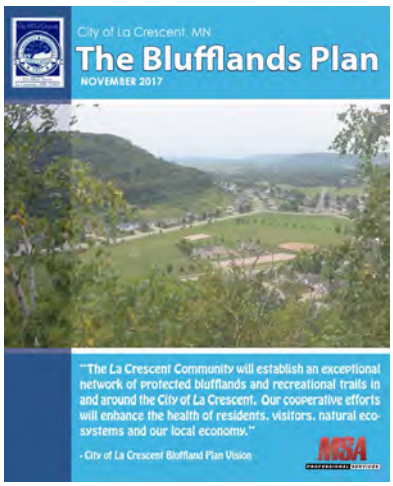
Downtown Vision & Strategic Plan (2017)

Adopted in late 2017 as an extension of the Comprehensive Plan, this plan directly addresses density, housing and commercial development, traffic patterns, and the pedestrian realm in downtown La Crescent. The project area extended from La Crescent-Hokah Elementary to Veteran's Park, completely encapsulating the Walnut Street corridor.

Among the plan's highest priorities is establishing a distinct downtown district and enhancing pedestrian/vehicular circulation throughout the space. One of these accompanying initiatives – the Wagon Wheel Trail trailhead and bridge over Hwy 14/61 – was completed in August 2022. While the Downtown Vision and Strategic Plan does not discuss connecting downtown La Crescent to Veteran's Park and the new hotel/Event Center, nor emphasizing the South Walnut Street–South 3rd Street intersection as a downtown corridor gateway, its recommendations offer specific design improvements and public facility ideas that can be incorporated into the Walnut Street Corridor Plan's overarching vision.







Veteran's Park Master Plan (2017)

This set of site plans outlines proposed improvements to Veteran's Park, including pickleball courts, pedestrian pathways, a building for restrooms and gatherings, and enhanced stormwater management. The Master Plan also overhauls the site's existing hotel and parking lot in favor of a proposed convention center and hotel complex, relocating parking facilities further into the park and adding an entry driveway from Park Street. The La Crescent Area Event Center and Best Western Hotel complex was completed in 2019. An eventual parking lot expansion and connection to Park Street was proposed but was not included in the implementation.

Bluffland Plan (2016)

Following the completion of a regional blufflands plan (commissioned by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee for bluffland conservation and recreation throughout the La Crosse-La Crescent region), the City of La Crescent adopted its own Blufflands Plan to protect these lands from future development. This plan works to educate and rally property owners to protect the community's blufflands through conservation easements, land purchase, and other means. The plan also identifies recreation improvements that will lead to a more cohesive system of trails and recreational amenities in the city's bluffland areas.

Park and Recreation Plan (2022)

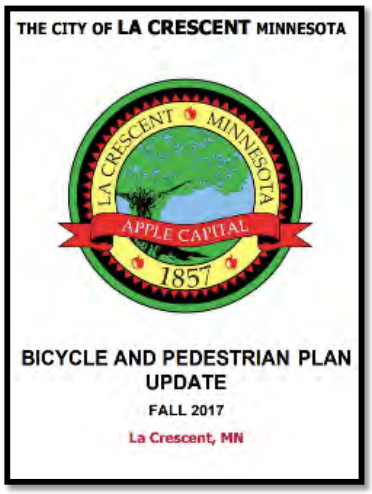
This plan amends the 2012 Park and Recreation Plan and offers master plans for Eagles Bluff, Vetsch/Vollenweider/Stoney Point, Horsetrack Meadows, and Wieser Park. The plan starts with broad goals and strategies aimed at enhancing residents' quality of life and natural resiliency through green space. Through quantitative analysis and community feedback, each park in La Crescent is then prescribed specific recommendations with accompanying prioritizations and cost estimates. Similar to the Veteran's Park Master Plan, this plan recommends a trail connection from Veteran's Park to Park Street, better connecting the park to surrounding residential areas.

Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2013)

Adopted in 2013 and updated in 2017, this plan seeks to improve pedestrian and cyclist-oriented elements throughout the community. The primary principles of the plan include fixing infrastructure that needs repair, improving intersections for bicyclists and pedestrians, improving integration of bike and pedestrian-friendly policies in everyday activities, and developing a connected system for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the city. The plan recommends improvements that provide continuous, safe facilities for people traveling by a variety of transportation modes.

Coulee Vision 2050 (2013)

In 2013, the City of La Crescent participated in the preparation of the Coulee Vision 2050, a long-term, regional transportation and land use plan facilitated by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. This plan envisions limits on new road construction, enhanced public transit systems, and more compact development patterns throughout the region.



Planning Process

This plan was developed over approximately seven months, beginning in March 2023 through October 2023. The process included the following activities:

Staff Coordination Meetings

The project team met with city staff at every stage of the project to outline the planning process, share information, brainstorm community engagement events, and review and discuss draft materials.

EDC Meetings

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) served as the city's project planning committee and acted as a sounding board for the project. The project team met with the EDC four times over the course of the planning process to walk the corridor, present draft materials, and finalize logistics of engagement events and other major project milestones.

Public Engagement

Throughout the duration of the planning process, the project team collected public input through a variety of methods including pop-up events, focus group interviews, and public meetings. The processes and results of these events are summarized in the Public Engagement chapter.

Project Timeline

1 Investigate (March – June)

- Public kickoff meeting.
- Existing plan document review.
- Corridor evaluation.
- First round of focus group meetings & public input meeting.

2 Envision (June – July)

- Public engagement summarization.
- Goals and strategies development.
- Design alternatives/concepts development.
- Draft Corridor Plan document.

3 Revise (July – September)

- Second round of focus group meetings & public input meeting.
- Revise design alternatives/ concepts.
- Review/edit Corridor Plan document.

4 Adopt (September - October)

- Finalize Corridor Plan document.
- Final Committee review/ recommendation.
- City Council action.

Initial Corridor Evaluation

Early in the planning process, the project team evaluated the existing state of the Walnut Street corridor through a variety of methods, including surveying, on-site observation, and conversations with city staff. The following are the themes that emerged from this analysis:

Pedestrian/Cycling Infrastructure

- Inconsistent sidewalk conditions and ADA compliance.
- Inconsistent sidewalk coverage throughout the corridor.
- Unmarked or unsafe crosswalks.
- No dedicated "family friendly" bike lane/route.

Car Infrastructure

- Unnecessarily wide/underutilized streets and rights-of-way.
- Adaquate number/placement of parking facilities, lack of awareness of parking locations.

Urban Design

- Lack of consistent street furniture style and opportunities for city branding.
- Lack of directional/wayfinding signage.

Public Engagement

Introduction

Community engagement was a crucial part of the planning process, creating a direct line of communication between the project team and the residents of La Crescent. Various methods of engagement were utilized throughout the project's duration to generate preliminary corridor-specific priorities and obtain input on resulting concepts. Community engagement events included the following:

Farmer's Market Pop-Up #1

Veteran's Park | June 13, 2023

MSA and city staff set up a booth at the La Crescent Farmer's Market to gather general input from community members and promote upcoming public events. Activities at the booth included a visioning exercise, in which participates could vote on their image preferences with stickers, and a board to jot down answers to basic prompts. Alongside the activities, the project team had numerous one-on-one conversations with residents about their priorities and concerns for the Walnut Street corridor.

First Round of Focus Group Meetings

La Crescent City Hall & Community Building

June 14, 2023

Two separate focus group meetings were held to gather input from specific demographics from the Walnut Street corridor: residents and business owners. At each meeting, attendees were divided into small groups to have guided discussions with members of the project team.

At the resident focus group, the following themes emerged:

- Concern about the unsafe intersection in front of Kwik Trip (N 4th St, Veterans Pkwy, and U.S. 61).
- Opportunity for beautification throughout downtown La Crescent – additional planters, cohesive streetlights, improved signage, increased tree canopy, etc.
- Concern about pedestrian safety along corridor – improve sidewalk coverage and maintenance, safe crossings, traffic calming measures, preventing jaywalking, widen sidewalks.
- Concern about loss of trees and driveway access, and having to shovel sidewalks in winter.

At the business owner focus group, the following themes emerged:

- Downtown La Crescent is hidden from highway traffic/potential customers – improve appearance of highway frontage and add wayfinding to guide traffic into downtown.
- Accommodating bike traffic – prevent cyclists from riding on sidewalks, add more bike racks, encourage cycling tourism from other cities.
- Make downtown La Crescent a destination – add new shops and interest points, provide central gathering spaces, community events, tourism kiosks, seating, move Farmer's Market downtown, enhance sense of unity and branding along corridor.
- Improve parking situation – better promote existing public parking lots, provide designated spots for "transient" traffic (e.g. daily delivery trucks and take-out customers), longer-term employee parking, repurpose underutilized diagonal parking spots.

Public Input Meeting #1

Community Building | June 14, 2023

Attendees of the public input meeting received a brief introductory presentation about the project's objectives and timeline, then were given plenty of time to roam around the room and leave comments on the numerous project area maps. The project area was divided into nine aerial maps – each blown up to 24"x36" – allowing community members to identify and annotate specific changes that they would want to see along the Walnut Street corridor. Through this activity, as well as multiple one-on-one and small group conversations, the project team gathered useful insight to inform the next stages of the project.

Farmer's Market Pop-Up #2

Veteran's Park | August 8, 2023

City staff engaged the public at the La Crescent Farmer's Market and invited visitors to comment on preliminary design concepts and place stickers on a street furniture-specific visual preference board.

Second Round of Focus Group Meetings

La Crescent City Hall & Community Building
August 9, 2023

Similar to the first round of focus group meetings, residents and business owners attended separate meetings to provide feedback on preliminary design concepts for each major section of the Walnut Street corridor. Attendees were sorted into small groups and walked through each section with a member of the project team. The following themes emerged:

- Attendees from both meetings generally agreed that Park Street and Walnut Place offered the best access points to Veteran's Park. Attendees almost unanimously disliked the idea of pedestrians accessing Veteran's Park from N Chestnut Street (near Kwik Trip and MN 14 intersection).
- Business owners disliked the parallel parking proposed in each design concept, requesting to prioritize existing angled parking instead of adding a dedicated bicycle facility.
- Residents re-emphasized the importance of safer crosswalks and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the residential segment of the Walnut Street Corridor.

Public Input Meeting #2

Community Building | August 9, 2023

The materials displayed and annotated at the second Farmer's Market pop-up event and focus group meetings were brought to this public input meeting, allowing community members to see previous comments and add their own thoughts to the boards. Attendees received a brief project update, then were sorted into small groups to discuss the materials.

Streetscaping

Streetscape Overview

Some of the major objectives of the Walnut Street Corridor Plan are to better balance pedestrian and bicycle facilities, enable safer vehicular circulation, and maintain parking access. Doing so will provide more equitable access for visitors and residents to enjoy downtown businesses and events and further boost economic activity.

Recent implementation of the new Wagon Wheel bridge and realignment of the Mississippi River Trail present an opportunity to recreate Walnut Street as a more balanced Complete Street corridor. The new Wagon Wheel Bridge provides a safe and reliable crossing for trail users traveling between downtown La Crescent and La Crosse, WI. The bridge is an important element of the Wagon Wheel Trail that will allow access to the Mississippi River trail system and other local trails in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Presently, however, the trail ends at S First Street with no continuation of bicycle facilities onto Walnut Street.

The increase in bicycle traffic and visitors to La Crescent is expected to steadily increase as more regional bicycle facilities are added to the area over the next decade. It is in the best interest of the city to anticipate this growth and capture these economic benefits to continue to develop and thrive.

The streetscapes envisioned in this plan will help make La Crescent a more connected community. This goal is accomplished by re-imagining Walnut Street with a more activated Complete Street profile that improves functionality and safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists alike.

Streetscape *is a term used to describe the natural and built environment of the street, including the roadway and the sidewalk terrace. It is typically defined as the design quality and visual character of the street. The concept recognizes that a street is a public place where people engage in various activities and experiences. Streetscapes and their visual impact largely influences public places where people interact. Making targeted streetscape improvements will ultimately help define a community's aesthetic quality, economic activity, public health, and environmental sustainability.*

Public Realm

The "public realm" consists of any structures, materials, and design elements that are located within the public right-of-way and any publicly-owned adjacent lands. The components of the public realm include softscape elements such as trees and landscape material and hardscape elements such as lighting, wayfinding signage, street furniture, crosswalks and active transportation facilities (i.e. parking, bike lanes, bus stops, etc.).

Unique structures and elements can also be placed in high activity areas to encourage interaction with the space and create a sense of place – often called "placemaking." Examples of these placemaking elements includes outdoor art/sculpture, gateway features and interpretive signage often decorated with municipal or district logos.

Intentional placemaking elements along the Walnut Street corridor would increase economic activity by creating a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors, aiding in pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and reinforcing a memorable brand for La Crescent. However, these components should be considered with their holistic maintenance or operational cost trade-offs.

Street Trees & Landscaping

Incorporating softscape elements such as trees and landscaping into streetscapes helps create resilient communities. These features make the sidewalk more inviting for pedestrians and support a more active street profile with vertical and overhead plant mass. Integrating vegetative material into the street environment can also help mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce the city's carbon footprint.

There are a variety of ways that these softscape elements provide multi-purpose benefits along the Walnut Street corridor:

- Installing shade trees will provide shade and some shelter from wind.
- Street trees also capture stormwater runoff, filter pollutants and reduce the heat island effect.
- Native plants provides visual interest and supports biodiversity of local wildlife and insects.
- Landscaping – especially trees and other vertical elements – can assist with traffic calming by appearing to narrow the roadway.
- Similar to rain gardens, properly designed sidewalk terraces can capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff.
- Raised-bed or moveable planters can be used to add vegetation where space is limited.
- These streetscape features can be used to attract attention to public spaces, provide passive seating opportunities, and buffer pedestrian spaces from automobile traffic.
- Hanging baskets can complement the assortment of landscape features with more strategic color and character.

Street Furnishings

Street furniture activates the public realm by providing functional objects that complement the aesthetic character of the community. The environment created with these features often increases foot traffic because the space is more comfortable and welcoming for pedestrians. Examples of street furniture include benches, planters, seat walls, tree grates, light poles, trash receptacles, water fountains, bike racks and bus shelters.

Complete Streets *are roads and adjacent areas designed with a balanced approach that better supports all modes of transportation. This is accomplished by adding more room for pedestrian and bicycle traffic while optimizing over-designed automobile infrastructure. With a Complete Street profile, visitors and residents of different ages and abilities can more safely access community events, shopping areas, and public amenities with the transportation mode that fits their lifestyle. If implemented properly, this redeveloped corridor can serve the dual purpose of creating a vibrant place (placemaking) and providing a more functional transportation network.*

Currently, a variety of furniture brands and styles are scattered sporadically throughout the Walnut Street corridor. The city's Brand Guidelines (2019) and the recently completed work at the Walnut Street and S 3rd Street intersection provided inspiration for the styles that were considered most appropriate for the corridor moving forward. Public engagement provided more targeted input that can be used to select the final furniture style list for the corridor that can be adapted to fit the commercial and residential areas.

As the Walnut Street design development process proceeds with more detailed design development, the city should work with local property owners and stakeholders to determine the appropriate style and frequency of furnishings to be used in the corridor. The final selection should be complementary to other styles already used in recent street projects to support broader cohesion across the city's street furniture selection.

The Complete Street ideal does not support a "one size fits all" approach to streetscape design. Unique areas throughout the city or even along the Walnut Street corridor can have their own identity. For example, one district could use a more traditional, classic style while another area uses a more modern style. There is an opportunity to delineate districts by tailoring the street furnishings with their unique environmental characteristics and recognizing their commercial, residential, or park uses.

Lighting

Effective lighting improves the aesthetic character and sense of comfort in a space, but should also support a safe environment for all users throughout the day and night. Lights can also be used to highlight key public spaces or accentuate placemaking elements and interesting buildings. A variety of scales of lighting can be applied to the corridor – larger and brighter lights for streets and parking-centric areas, and pedestrian-scaled options for areas with high foot traffic or gathering spaces. Any lighting options should prioritize public safety while also limiting light pollution as both a cost-saving and environmental benefit.

Signage

One way to visually unite the public realm is through a coordinated signage program. A hierarchy of signage helps to convey locational or event information for residents and visitors along the corridor. Signage throughout the corridor can include wayfinding

Wayfinding *Is the process of determining and following a route or path between two points. Maps and signage are examples of active wayfinding. Finding your way using landmarks or other spatial features is an example of passive wayfinding. Streetscape design and corridor planning should support both types of wayfinding to enhance the corridor placemaking effort.*

signage, traffic signage, and more specialized interpretive or gateway signage.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage provides environmental cues to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Street signs and directional signage are the most commonly used wayfinding signs. However, within the Walnut Street character districts (or other key locations across La Crescent), there may be opportunities to include unique branding coupled with seasonal markers or banners to further enhance the placemaking effort. Other types of wayfinding signage can be used to inform visitors and residents of various locations, areas of interest and tourist destinations including commercial activity areas, parks and recreation sites, and/or seasonal events. Overall the signage should be designed depending upon the speed and eye height of the user based on their transportation mode: walking, biking, or driving.

Public Parking

La Crescent has an abundance of public parking opportunities located throughout the corridor study area. While on-street parking does help to provide visual and physical separation between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists, it may have negative impacts on overall traffic flow. The Walnut Street reconstruction project is an opportunity to evaluate the holistic parking needs of downtown La Crescent and implement Complete Street principles to support more active and accessible modes of transportation.

On-Street Parking

Existing on-street parking along Walnut Street between N 1st Street and S 2nd Street consists of a total 57 parking spaces configured as parallel parking and angled parking. In this area, there are 25 unmarked parallel parking spaces. The angled parking portion is limited to a two-block area of Walnut Street representing a total of 32 parking spaces.

An additional 139 parallel parking spots are in the more residential portion of the study area north of N 1st Street to Veteran's Park. In the section of Walnut Street north to N 4th Street, there are 49 parking spots. N 4th Street from Walnut Place to Park Street can accommodate 28 parallel parking spots. Another 43 parking spots are located along Park Street up to Veteran's Park, which are primarily used as overflow space for park events. Walnut Place, a short dead-end street off of N 4th Street, has room for 19 parking spaces.

Municipal Parking Lots

Currently, six public parking lots serve the immediate corridor area – three within downtown La Crescent and three in the Veteran's Park commercial district.

Downtown public parking lots have a total capacity of 110 cars. A parking lot with capacity for approximately 36 cars is located behind City Hall with midblock access via S 1st Street. Another parking lot with capacity for 28 cars is located at the southeast corner of S Oak Street and S 1st Street. The city also maintains a long-term lease for a parking lot behind buildings at 31-33 S Walnut Street (Southeast of Walnut Street/ Main Street intersection) with capacity for 46 cars. All three parking lots are within a 1/8 mile walk of La Crescent's downtown core at the Main Street and Walnut Street intersection.

At the Veteran's Park commercial district, three parking lots serve the Event Center and park with 187 total parking spaces. The westernmost parking lot serving the ballfield and the Eagle's Bluff Park access trailhead has 44 parking spaces. The central parking lot serving the Event Center and playground area has 108 parking spaces. The easternmost parking lot directly north of the stormwater basin has 35 parking spaces.

Character Districts

The Walnut Street corridor is unique in that it has three different character types in its half-mile span, each with their own distinct look, feel, and land uses. These types are sorted into distinct districts, which are color-coded on the map on the following page. These districts are as follows:

Downtown District

The southernmost district located from S 3rd Street north to N 1st Street. This district includes a mixture of commercial uses including retail, professional services, and restaurants/cafes along with some mixed-density residential included throughout.


Residential District

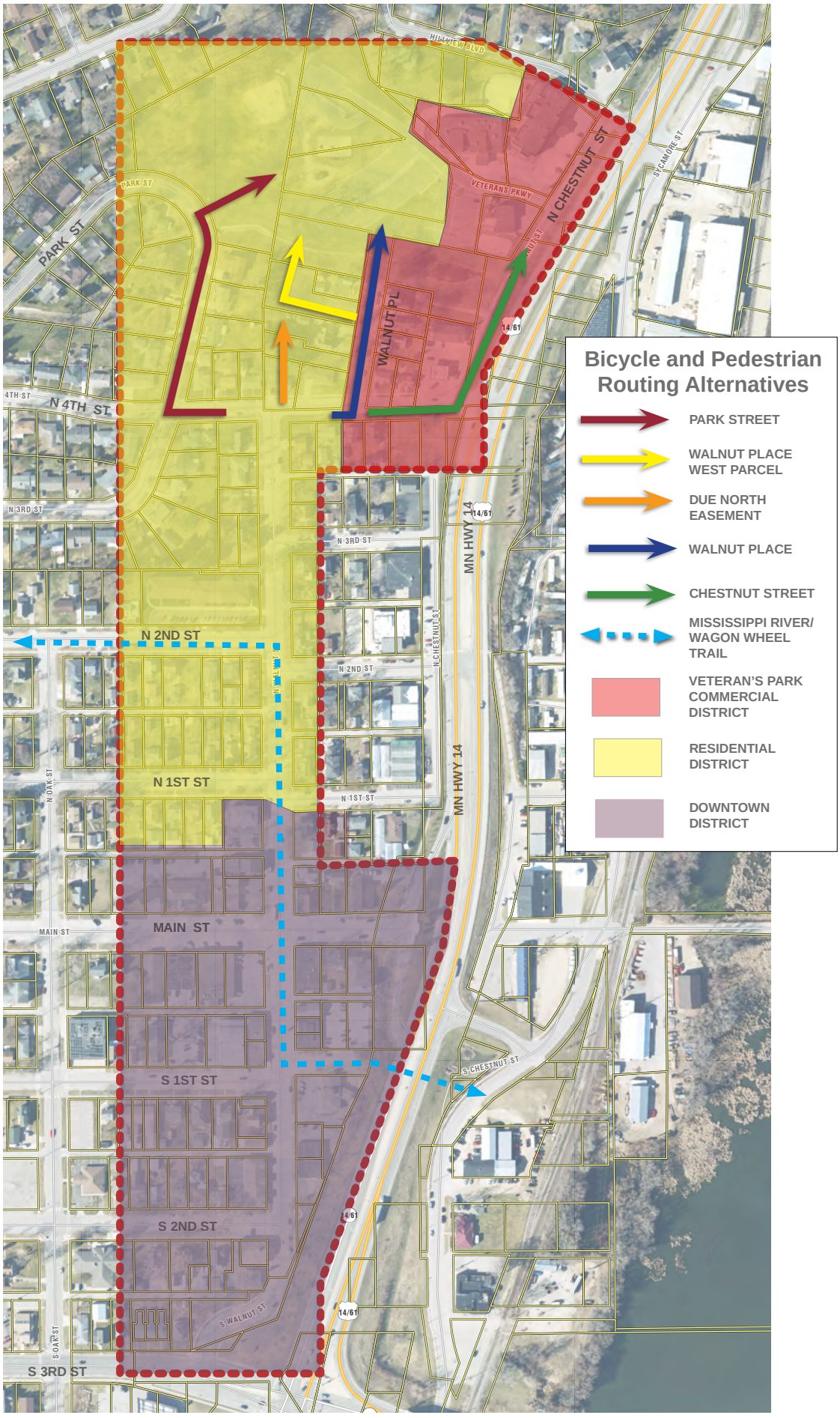
The middle portion of the project area including from N 1st Street north to N 4th Street and branching off to Park Street to the west and Walnut Place to the east. The area is predominantly single-family residential housing with some medium- and higher-density residential buildings located along Walnut Street. This district includes the western portions of Veteran's Park.



Veteran's Park/Highway Commercial District

The northernmost area of the corridor from N 4th Street north to Hillview Boulevard and including N Chestnut Street (14/61 Frontage Rd). This district mainly consists of convenience, food and beverage, and lodging-related businesses. However, the eastern, more developed portions of Veteran's Park are included in this area due to the number of seasonal events held there each year.




Bicycle and Pedestrian Routing Alternatives
PARK STREET
WALNUT PLACE WEST PARCEL
DUE NORTH EASEMENT
WALNUT PLACE
CHESTNUT STREET
MISSISSIPPI RIVER/ WAGON WHEEL TRAIL
VETERAN'S PARK COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
PARK ST
N 4TH ST
N 3RD ST
N 2ND ST
N 1ST ST
MAIN ST
S 1ST ST
S 2ND ST
S 3RD ST
WALNUT PL
N CHESTNUT ST
MN HWY 14
VETERANS PKWY
S CHESTNUT ST
S WALNUT ST
N OAK ST
S OAK ST
14/61

Design Alternatives

Design Alternatives

To support a more nuanced discussion of the design and planning of the whole corridor, Walnut Street was divided up into nine segments between S 3rd Street and Veteran's Park. Each segment has different roadway and sidewalk/terrace requirements when considering the variety of adjacent uses, right-of-way width, and parking needs along the corridor. Each segment is described in further detail on the following pages along with the preferred design profile and examples of streetscape features that can be modified to fit the Walnut Street corridor.

Connecting the Downtown La Crescent portion of Walnut Street to Veteran's Park presents a unique challenge in the corridor planning process. The public engagement process revealed several alternative routes that were considered as potential connections into the park. The proposed routes shown in the diagram on page 14 only indicate proposed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. No additional automobile connections are proposed.

Park Street Route: The most feasible route and designated for future path/trail route improvements per the 2022 Park & Recreation Plan. The mixed use path would turn west from N 4th Street onto the south side of N 4th Street and then cross at the controlled intersection currently located at Park Street. After crossing N 4th Street, the wider sidewalk route would follow the east side of Park Street up to Veteran's Park so that overflow parallel parking can be maintained on both sides of the street.

Walnut Place Route: An existing right-of-way easement connects Walnut Place into Veteran's Park. However, steep terrain limits access into the park which poses a significant engineering and cost challenge. Developing the mixed-use path across N 4th Street and on the west side of Walnut Place can further support park access. One proposed solution was a pedestrian and bicycle bridge into the park from Walnut Place; however, this option would still be expensive and difficult to implement.

Alternate Walnut Place Route: Another potential Walnut Place route would involve the city-owned parcel that forms an L shape from mid-block Walnut Place turning north into Veteran's Park. The route could then cross the drainage ditch either with a bridge or run west to Park Street and double back east into the park. While the terrain is not as severe as that running due north of Walnut Place, this routing still poses significant engineering challenges if a wider path is to be carved into the hillside. Another limitation to consider is that this alternate route would lessen the development potential of that park-adjacent parcel.

North Chestnut Street: The mixed-use path could be directed over to N Chestnut Street and then north into Veteran's Park. The narrow roadway corridor could transition into a one-way street where one travel lane could be converted into a bike and pedestrian route buffered from automobile traffic. Accessing N 4th Street as a pedestrian/cyclist requires crossing and navigating the HWY 14/61 and N 4th Street intersection and, with more traffic conflicts, can pose significant safety risks. Additionally, this route was also deemed as "uncomfortable" and "unaccommodating" for pedestrians/cyclists due to noisy, unprotected conditions.

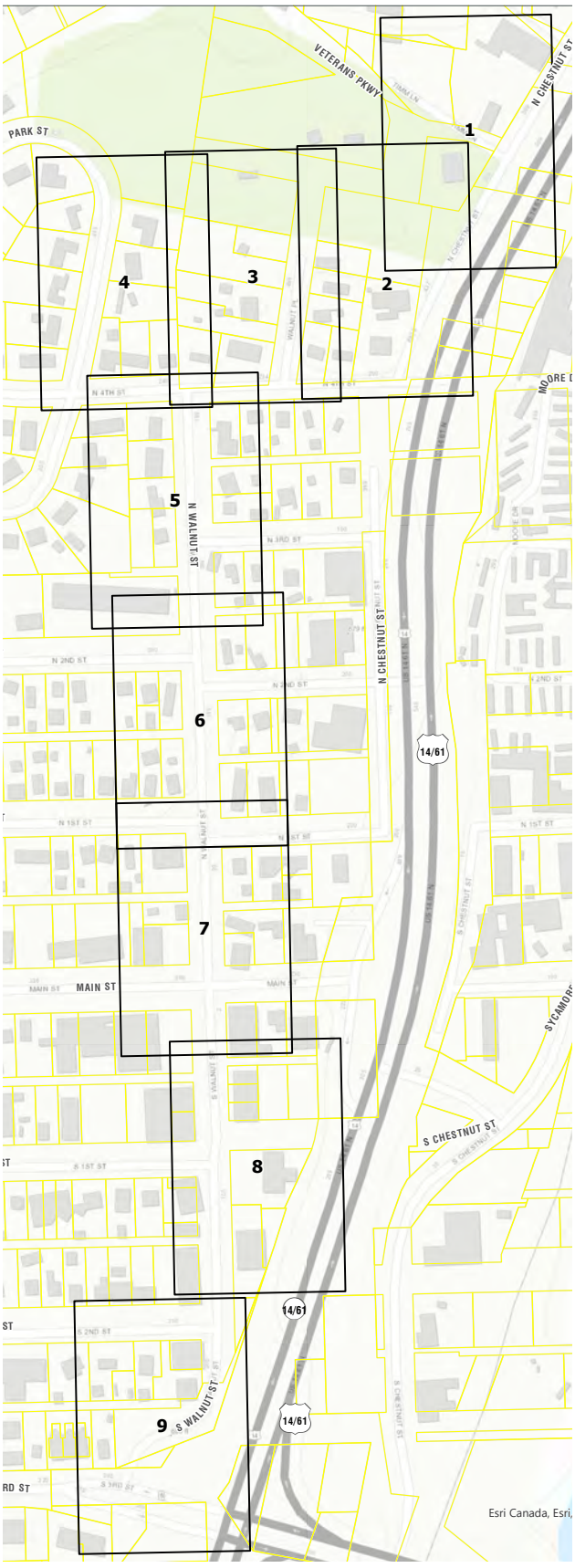
One related alternative explored routing vehicles, bikes and pedestrians along sections of park property currently partially occupied by a shared driveway. If N Chestnut Street were eventually connected to Walnut Place, the N 4th Street and Hwy 14/61 intersection would be improved by removing the close intersections.

Due North Easement: Continuing Walnut Street due north was also considered as a route alternative. This option was not preferred because it would suffer from similar topographical constraints while also involving the negotiation of property easements.

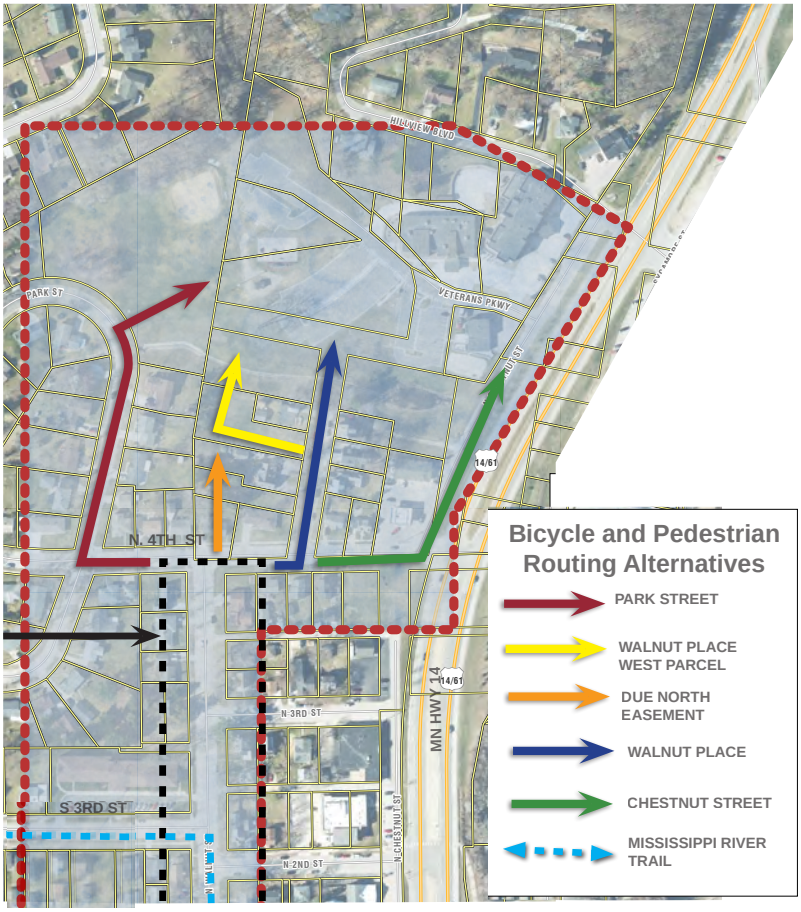
In the preferred alternative, the proposed mixed use path would eventually split at N Walnut Street as non-vehicular traffic is directed toward Veteran's Park. One path would stay on the south side of N 4th Street as it progresses west to Park Street. The other path section would cross N 4th Street and proceed east to Walnut Place and eventually north into the park.

Corridor Segment Key Map

The following map index was used to break down the overall corridor into smaller segments to be designed with unique characteristics of each section impacting the overall design. The designs that follow are organized with these corridor segments.



Alternate Bicycle & Pedestrian Routing



Segment 1 & 2: Chestnut Street (North to Veteran's Park)

Observations/Issues:

- Not preferred as one-way traffic for bicycle and pedestrian traffic – not an inviting atmosphere and current intersection alignment/spacing creates several traffic conflict points that should be avoided.
- Right-of-way width is too narrow with steep slopes and adjacent roadway conflicts.
- N 4th Street/N Chestnut Street/MN Hwy 14 (Kwik Trip) intersection is viewed as unsafe for mixing pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.
- Potential rerouting of N Chestnut Street to Walnut Place via property acquisition to close off one leg of the N 4th Street/N Chestnut Street/MN Hwy 14/61 intersection.

Chestnut St (North to Veteran's Park)

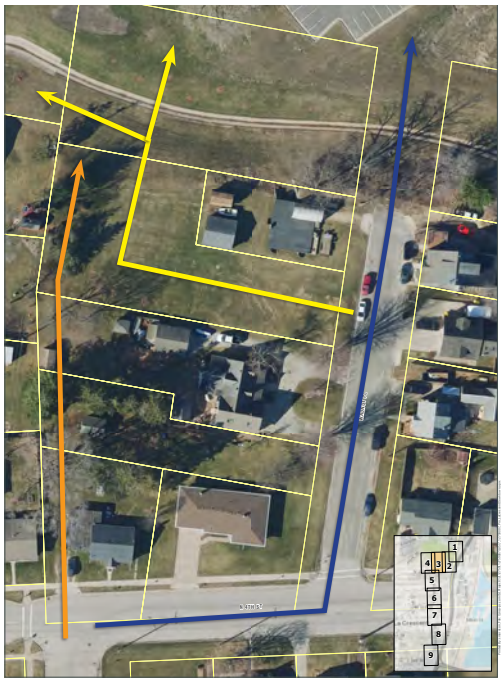
EXISTING STREET PROFILE

ONE-WAY NORTH + BIKE PATH STREET PROFILE

Segment 3: N 4th Street (West to Park Street or East to Walnut Place)

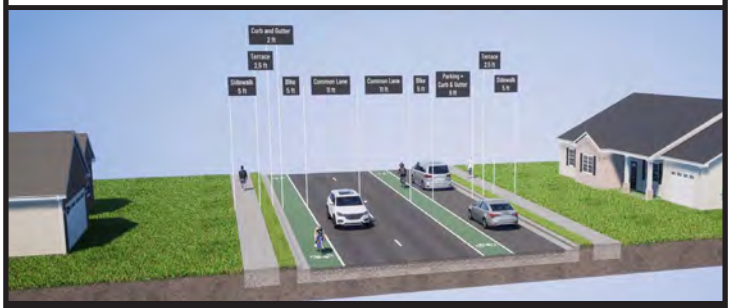
Observations/Issues:

- Narrowest right-of-way location at 58 feet wide.
- Can only apply dedicated bicycle facilities by sacrificing parallel parking on one side.
- Parking opportunities limited for homes located on north side of N 4th Street.
- Higher volumes of 'cut-through' traffic and unevenly spaced controlled/uncontrolled intersections create potential for increased traffic conflicts with more pedestrians and cyclists.
- Potential to continue dedicated bicycle facilities or mixed use path routing farther west along N 4th Street to connect with other existing bicycle lanes on Elm Street (Apple Blossom Drive).



N 4th St (West to Park or East to Chestnut)

EXISTING STREET PROFILE



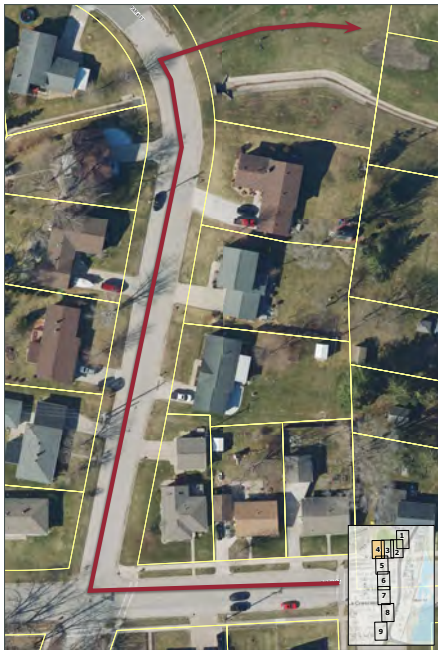
BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

Segment 4: Park Street (From N 4th Street to Veteran's Park)

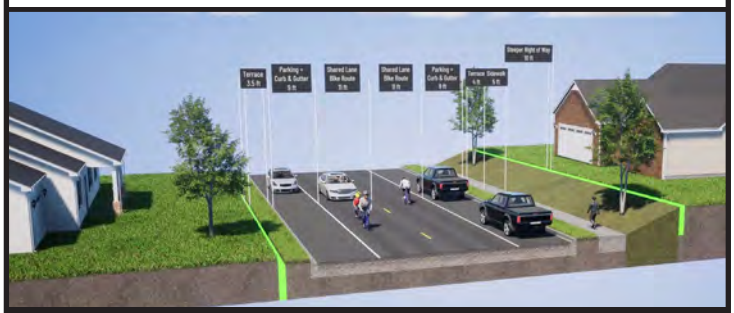
Observations/Issues:

- Controlled intersection at N 4th Street and Park Street provide crosswalk opportunity for shared-use path north into Veteran's Park.
- Narrow 62-foot right-of-way width along with steeper topography adjacent to Veteran's Park may prevent parking and sidewalks to be placed on both sides.
- Public meetings favored keeping shared use path on east side and allowing buffered yard space for closer homes and steeper topography while keeping parking on both sides.
- Public input also included the idea of expanding parking into southern portion of Veteran's Park without 'cut-through' access to the Event Center.



Park St (Southwest of Veteran's Park)

EXISTING STREET PROFILE



MORE PARKING, LESS SIDEWALK STREET PROFILE

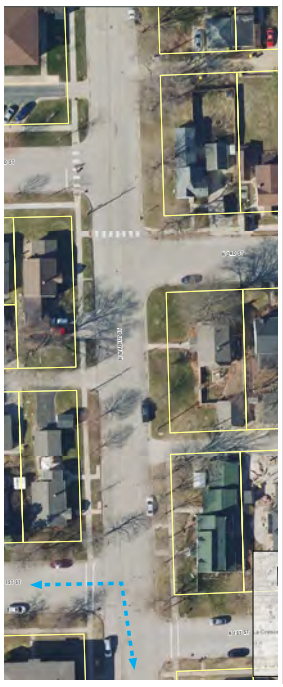
MORE SIDEWALK, LESS PARKING STREET PROFILE

Segment 5 & 6: N Walnut Street (200+ Blocks, Residential)

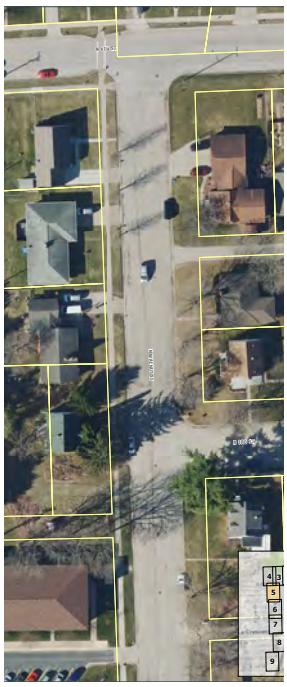
Observations/Issues:

- Serves as transition from downtown to residential character district to the north.
- Wide right-of-way that does not feel appropriate for residential streets.
- Residents in this segment expressed concern about unsafe and staggered intersections, fast vehicular speed, and lack of crosswalks.

N 1st to N 2nd



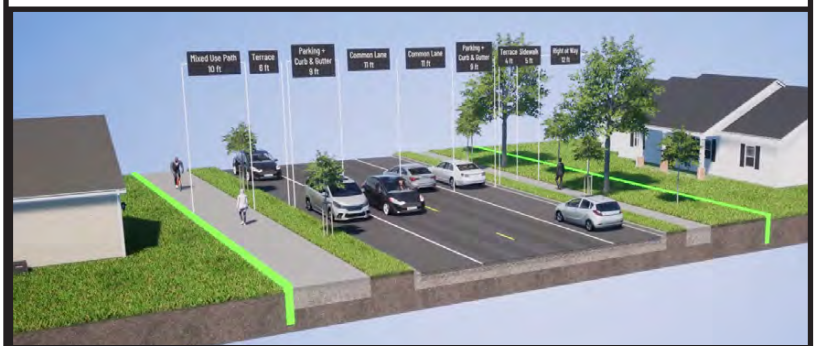
N 2nd/N 3rd to N 4th



N Walnut St (200 + Block Typical Section)

EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE

BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

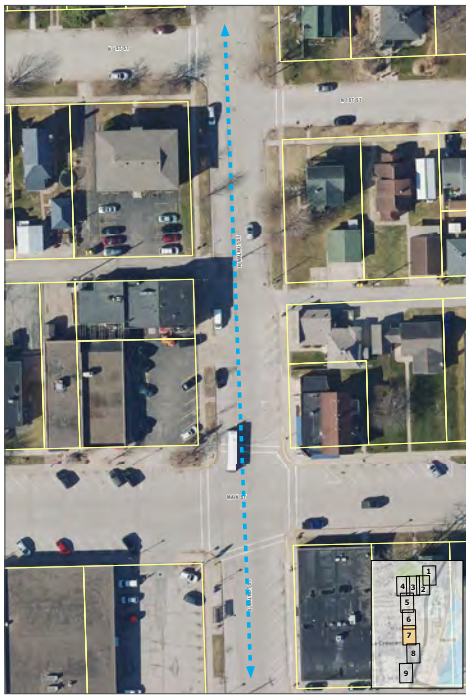


MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

Segment 7: N Walnut Street (100 Block, Downtown)

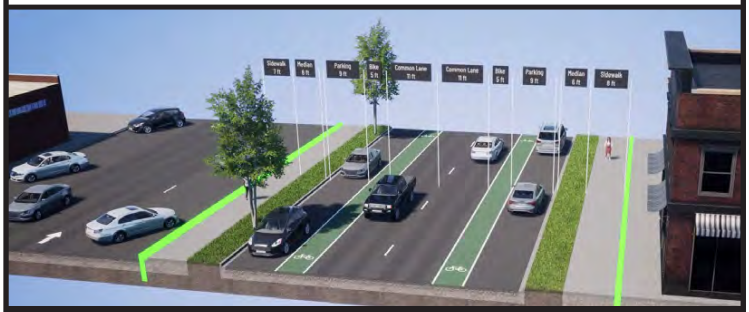
Observations/Issues:

- Transition from downtown to residential character district allows more area for shared-use bicycle and pedestrian path.
- Wider terraces and curb extensions provide space for green infrastructure like rain gardens or pollinator gardens that can also add character to the street.
- On-street parking areas can be converted to parklets. These extensions of the sidewalk terrace area allow outdoor seating, dining, or landscape amenities to be temporarily added to high traffic areas and then removed for winter traffic.



N Walnut St (100 Block Typical Section)

EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

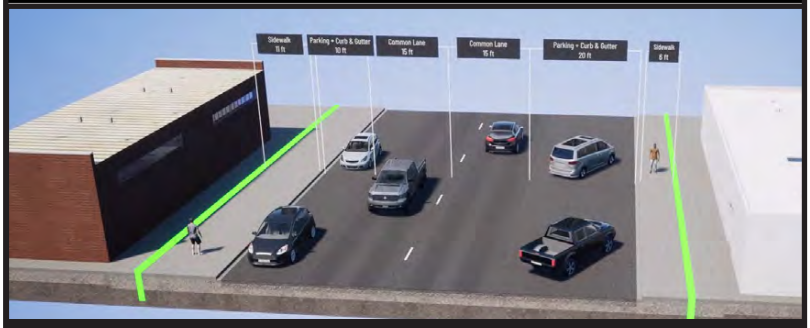
MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

Segment 8: S Walnut Street (100 Block, Downtown)

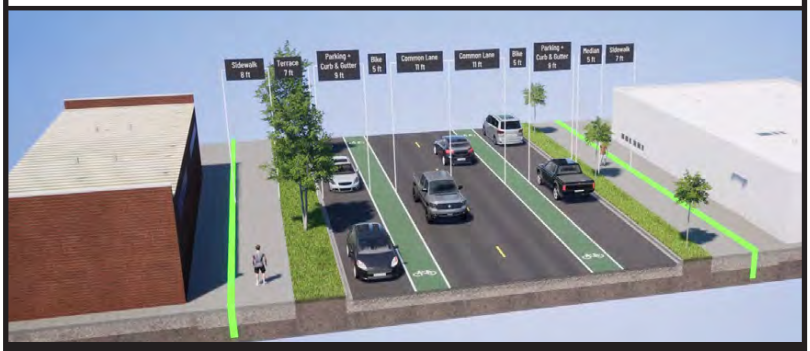
Observations/Issues:

- The right-of-of way width of 78 feet does currently allows parallel and angled parking.
- Wider sidewalks on west side with limited trees and furniture of various styles
- Sidewalk slope and conditions do not support universal accessibility.
- Adding dedicated bicycle facility will require at least 10-foot wide area; cannot accommodate angled parking with comfortable sidewalk space.

S Walnut St (100 Block Typical Section)



EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

Segment 9: S Walnut Street (200-300 Block, 3rd Street Intersection)

Observations/Issues:

- Recently completed landscaping and city signage project provides examples of furniture styles and material palettes to be modified and used for northern portions of Walnut Street corridor.
- Lighting and materials used for Wagon Wheel Bridge can be used to supplement existing furniture and streetscape amenity choices.

Overall Preferred Concept

Introduction

he following section provides a summary of the preferred concept design and the major streetscape features included in the final corridor plan. However, multiple alternative streetscape sections were used to evaluate the possibilities in detail for this planning project. Those alternatives are provided alongside the preferred option as a reference for future engineering design input.

Key Streetscape Features

- Increased sidewalk width downtown for improved pedestrian space along Walnut St for more seating, furniture, and other streetscape amenities.
- Narrower 11-foot travel lanes to reduce traffic speeds and increase awareness of potential pedestrian/bicycle/automobile traffic conflicts
- Curb extensions (sidewalk 'bumpouts') at most intersections and prominent crossings to decrease lane width and discourage faster cut-through traffic.
- Expanded sidewalk terrace areas to be used by local businesses for outdoor seating, landscape features, or bike parking.
- Crosswalk materials and markings with bolder contrast to better delineate the crossing area
- 10-foot-wide mixed use walking/bicycle path to Veterans Park starting at N 1st St to promote more bicycle and pedestrian connectivity along Walnut St

Mixed-Use Path/Bicycle Path

- The preference to keep angled parking downtown does not allow for dedicated bike facilities to be placed south of N 1st St. Pull-in/back-out angled parking and bicycle facilities do not work well together and limited right-of-way width does not allow for proper buffering.
- Wider sidewalks downtown will allow bike riders to walk their bikes to the mixed-use path that starts at N 1st St and stays on Walnut St.'s west side
- The 10-foot mixed use path continues up to N 4th St and turns east toward Park St where it narrows to approximately 8 feet to accommodate right-of-way limitations.

Veteran's Park
(Corridor Segments 1 – 4)

- The most preferred option for access to Veteran's Park included placing a wider 8-foot sidewalk on the east side of Park St from N 4th St north to Veteran's Park where a trees have been pre-planted to line an eventual path into the park from Park St toward the Event Center.
- Due to steeper slopes and narrower 60-foot right-of-way mean keeping parallel parking on both sides is and sidewalks on both sides would not be possible without requiring engineered solutions to handle severe grade changes adjacent to existing driveways
- Mixed-use path can maintain 10-foot width to south of N 4th St with crossings at Park St stop sign and/or due north of Walnut with a more prominent rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) to better announce crosswalk locations

Residential Walnut Street
(Corridor Segment 5 & 6)

- Narrower lanes and sidewalk bumpouts at intersections and crosswalks provides more opportunities for seating, landscaping, and other streetscape amenities.
- A mixed-use pedestrian/bicycle path starts at N 1st St on the west side of Walnut St and continues onto Veteran's Park
- Adding a 6-foot sidewalk on the east side of Walnut St delivers better connectivity and accessibility while providing more space for streetscaping features.

Downtown Walnut Street
(Corridor Segments 7 - 9)

- Reallocating the space from narrower travel lanes lets nearly at least 6-feet of sidewalk to be added for streetscape amenities like outdoor seating/dining, landscaping, and lighting
- Angled and parallel parking spots along the street can be repurposed for temporary 'parklets' during warmer months to further expand useable sidewalk/café space

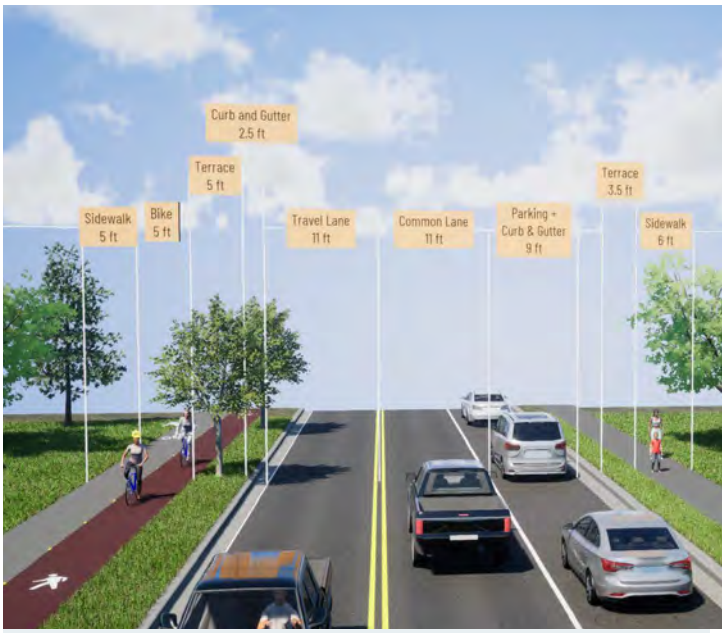
Overall Preferred Concept

N 1st Street to Veteran's Park

S 1st Street to N 1st Street

Overall Preferred Sections

Park St to Veteran's Park



N 4th St to Park St

N Walnut St Residential

Overall Preferred Sections

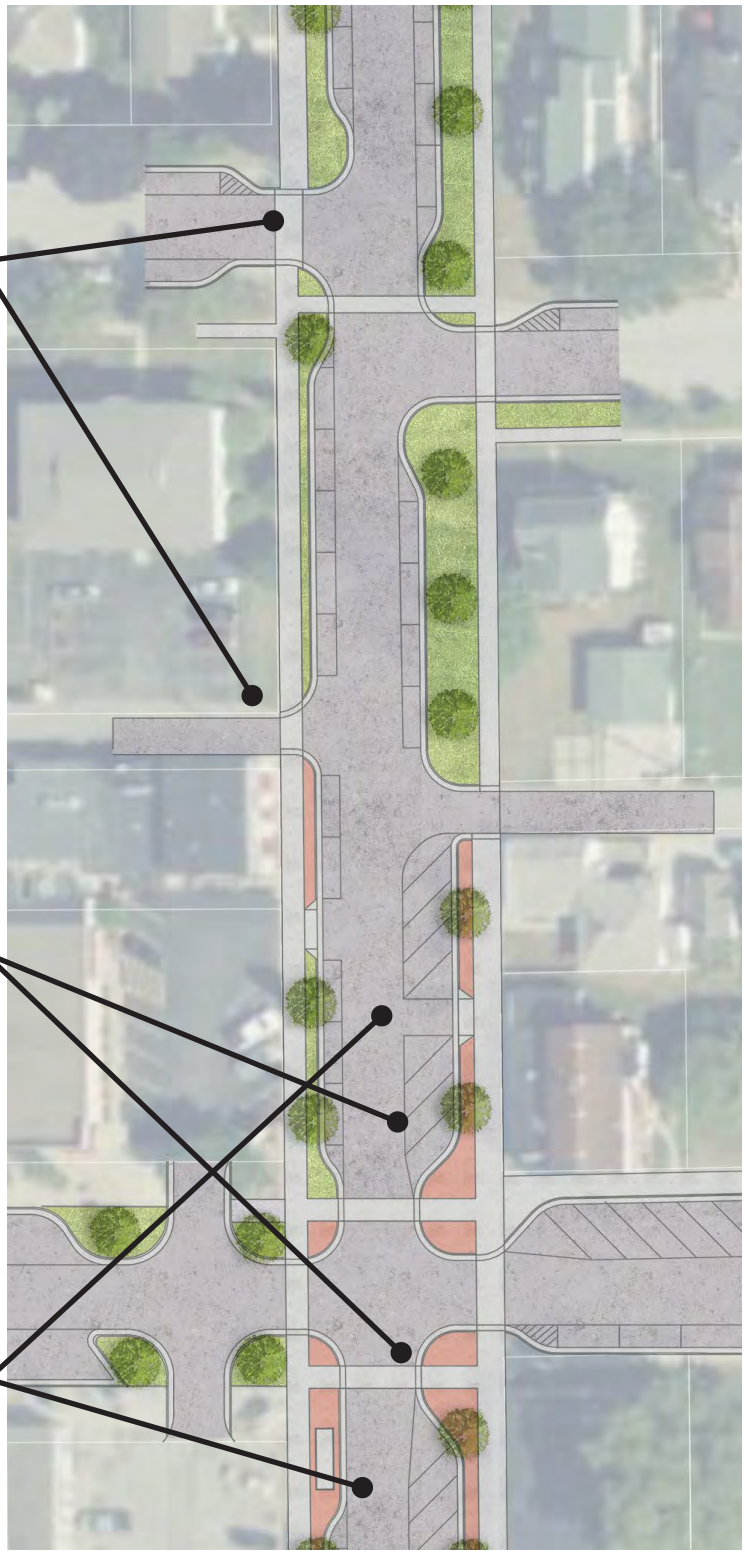
N Walnut St Downtown

S Walnut St Downtown

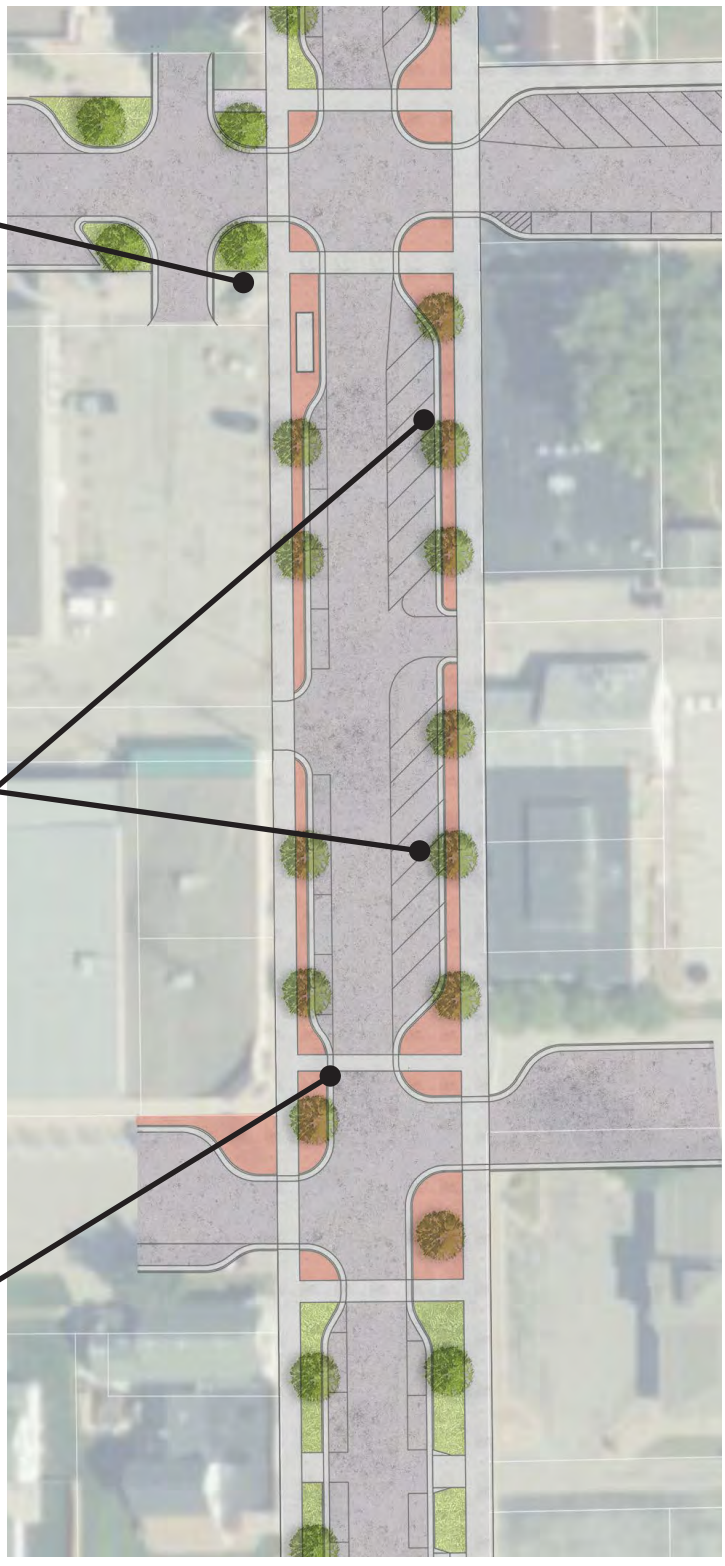
Segment 4: Park Street (From N 4th Street to Veteran's Park)

Segment 5 & 6: N Walnut Street (200+ Blocks, Residential)

Segment 7: N Walnut Street, N 1st Street to Main Street (100 Block, Downtown)



Segment 8: N Walnut Street, Main Street to S 1st Street (100 Block, Downtown)



Implementation

Preliminary Cost Estimates

Most of this plan focuses on reimagining the curb/roadway alignment and sidewalk environment of the Walnut Street corridor as it connects the Wagon Wheel Bridge to Veteran's Park and beyond. Implementing this plan will primarily rely on creating engineering drawings and specifications for the preferred concept. The preliminary cost estimate for the project can range from $800,000 to $1.5 million. This range includes the following: mobilization, bonding, insurance, erosion control, removals, unclassified excavation, curb and gutter, asphalt and aggregate road base, crosswalk/parking/bike enhancements, paving markings, regulatory signs, restoration, bio-swale and landscaping assumptions, 10% contingency and 16% design engineering costs. Notable exclusions include lighting, landscaping, utility work, street furniture, and plaza enhancements.

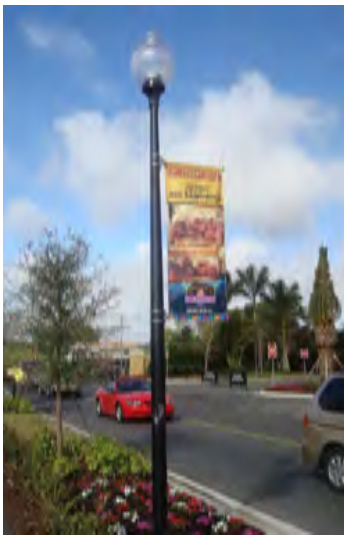
Standard Roadway & Sidewalk/Terrace Construction	$859,000.00
Subsurface Water/Sanitary Sewer Installation	$970,000.00
Mobilization, Removals, and Subsurface Preparation Work	$898,000.00
Estimated Construction Subtotal	$2,727,000.00
Inflation Factor (3% per year)	$164,000.00
Estimated Construction Cost (2025)	$2,891,000.00
Contigency Estimate (15%)	$434,000.00
Design Engineering (10%)	$290,000.00
Construction Engineering (10%)	$290,000.00
Total Estimated Roadway Construction Project Cost	$3,905,000.00

Placemaking (PM) Actions

Along with the engineering and reconstruction of Walnut Street, the city may also wish to consider additional actions supported during the planning process that can bolster the proposed changes along Walnut Street.

PM-1. Support the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian entry plaza on the western side of the Wagon Wheel Trail bridge. This area provides a potential gateway/rest area and wayfinding opportunity as visitor enter La Crescent. A protected bicycle parking facility can be located here along with a map kiosk and/or a bike repair station.

PM-2. Create a parklet program to allow businesses to utilize parking spaces immediatedly adjacent to their businesses as extended terrace patios. Keeping abundant parking downtown allows for the opportunity to create usable space for sitting, eating, and other social activities.



PM-3. Use existing logo and branding guidelines to create banners that can be installed on existing light poles. These installations can be a quick a way to brand the corridor as it transitions through redevelopment. The long-term plan will be to incorporate similar banners onto light poles and signage in the expanded terrace and bumpout areas. Double banners could be considered to promote the corridor on one side and seasonal (or park events) on the other.

PM-4. Plan for and install additional trees within the street terrace. There are gaps in the tree canopy along the Walnut Street corridor leading up to Veteran's Park. The wider right-of-way along some sections of the study area would allow new trees to be planted and get established prior to more mature trees being removed. Planting trees where minimal construction disturbance will happen can help minimize the impact of temporarily losing large areas of tree canopy.

PM-5. Install temporary curb extension (sidewalk bump-outs) at intersections identified for those redevelopment improvements. All non-alley intersecting streets were proposed to have narrower streets with expanded curbs in the preferred corridor design. Placing removable/seasonal bollards or painting approximate curb locations can give users a better understanding of how the improvements will

impact the travel lane alignment. These temporary bumpouts can use community art installations to promote community-project ownership.

PM-6. Improve awareness and access to already owned /leased public parking lots to alleviate the need for on-street parking along Walnut Street. The city has 3 public parking lots within its downtown. However, these lots are often only accessible from side streets or dead-end streets, encouraging reliance on more visible and accessible on-street parking. Wayfinding signage and maps can help guide visitors to these parking lots.

Administrative (A) Actions

Along with the planned streetscape improvements that will be pursued over the next decade, the city may also choose from a variety of administrative or policy actions that can support infrastructure improvement effort.

- ***A-1. Review action plan on an annual basis as part of the city's budgeting and strategic planning processes.*** To provide lasting value and influence, this plan should be used and referenced regularly, especially during budgeting processes, to support implementation of this plan's actions. This review should discuss items completed over the prior year, re-evaluate the actions based on funding and existing opportunities, and adjust action timeline based on the evaluation.

  Timeline: Ongoing, Annually

- ***A-2. Initiate business retention efforts to support the corridor's existing businesses, including the following initiatives.***

  1. Meet with business owners annually, or send a business survey to assess needs and economic stability of the corridor businesses. This could be done in conjunction with efforts in the downtown.

  2. Promote and supply businesses with available grants or support services to continue to be a sustainable business operation in the corridor.

  3. Work with existing businesses to improve façades. This could include design services to help the owner realize updates and costs to initiate the façade enhancement. Additional considerations could be a façade grant program.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- ***R-5. Begin acquiring parcels along the corridor for additional city-led development opportunities, as available.*** Watch for opportunities to acquire parcels in areas proposed for redevelopment. Acquiring available parcels, especially those lacking buildings or have a history of vacancies, can help to prepare for future development needs where the city would like to maintain an active role.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- ***A-3. Consider creating and managing a city building improvement matching grant program to encourage exterior building improvements.*** This program can focus on updating, restoring and maintenance of exterior facades. This could be a matching grant that uses the design guidelines in this plan for reviewing improvements with public financial assistance.

  Program Creation Timeline: Short Term (2024-2026)
  Administration Timeline: Ongoing

Preferred Furniture Palette

LIGHTING





BIKE STORAGE




SEATING




SIGNAGE



GREENERY




Appendix A

Segment Maps

MSA

0 10 20 Feet

Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

MSA

0 10 20 Feet

Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

MSA

0 10 20 Feet

Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

MSA

0 10 20 Feet

Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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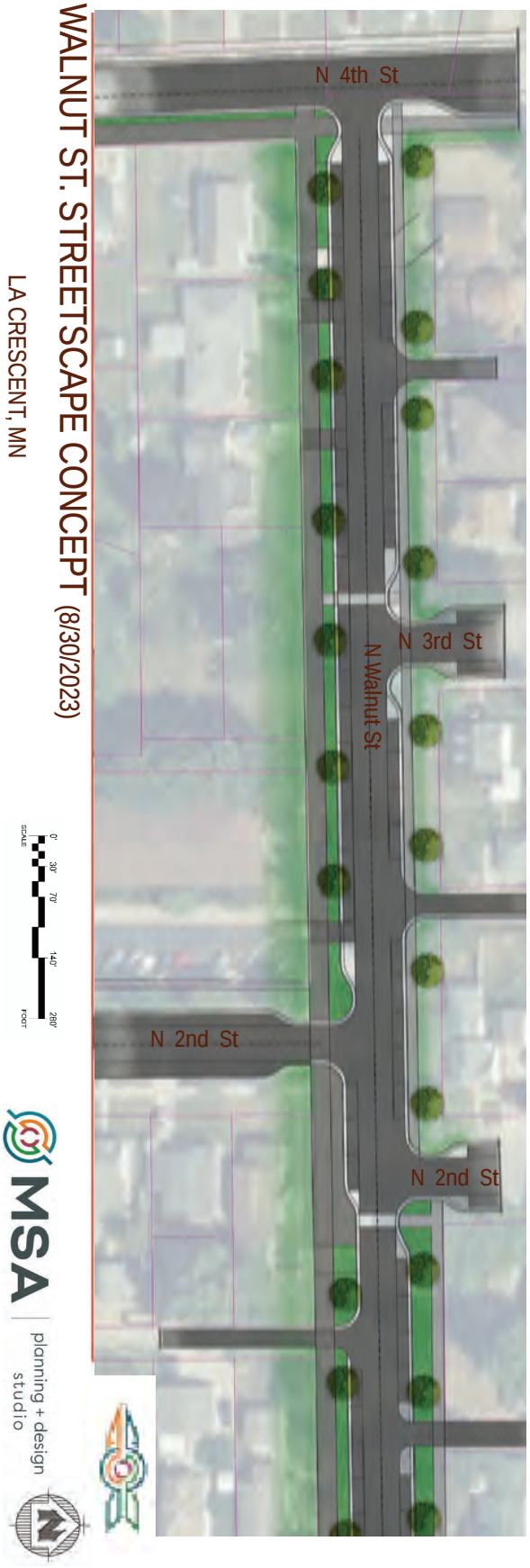
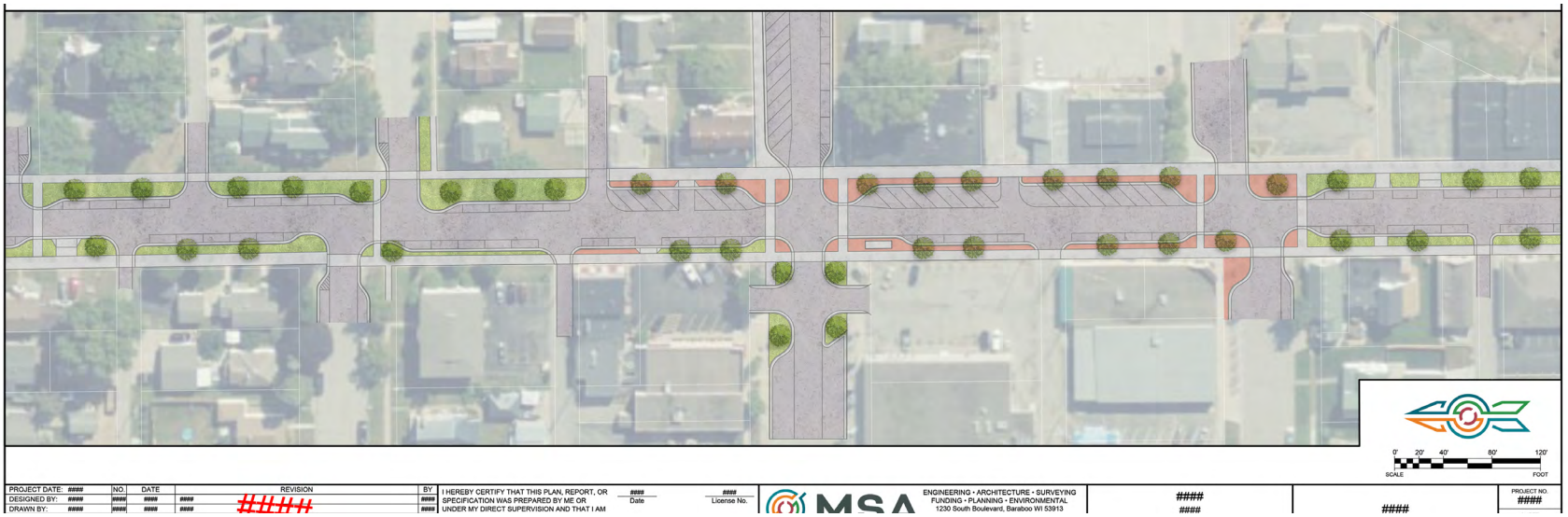
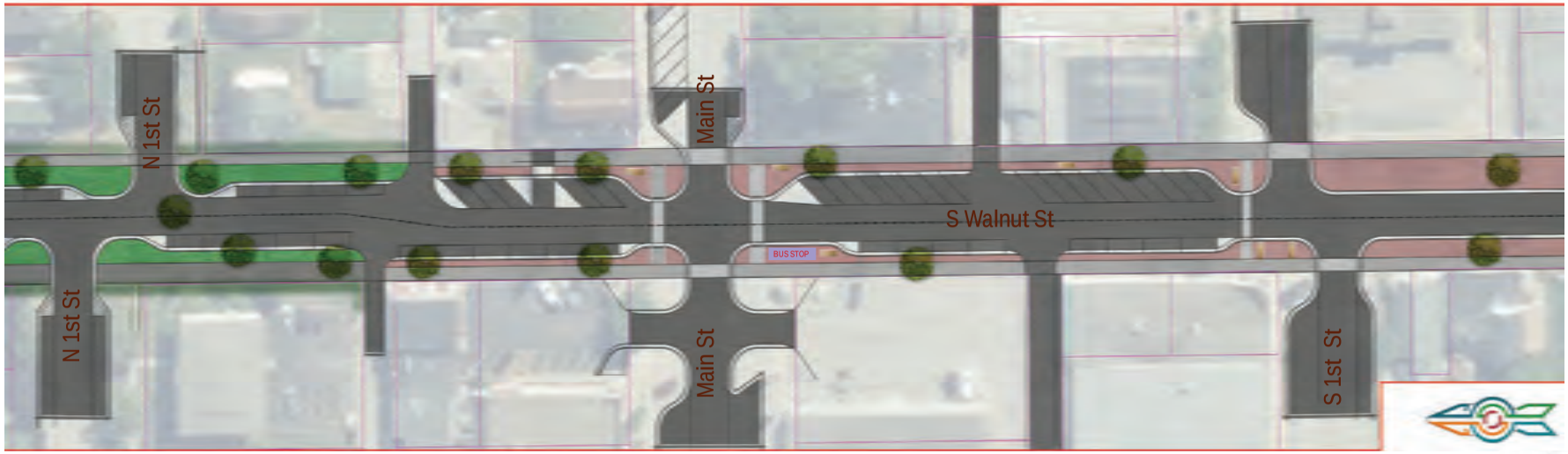
Appendix B


WALNUT ST. STREETSCAPE CONCEPT (8/30/2023)
LA CRESCENT, MN
N 4th St
N 3rd St
N Walnut St
N 2nd St
N 2nd St
SCALE
0'
30'
70'
140'
280'
FOOT
MSA
planning + design studio





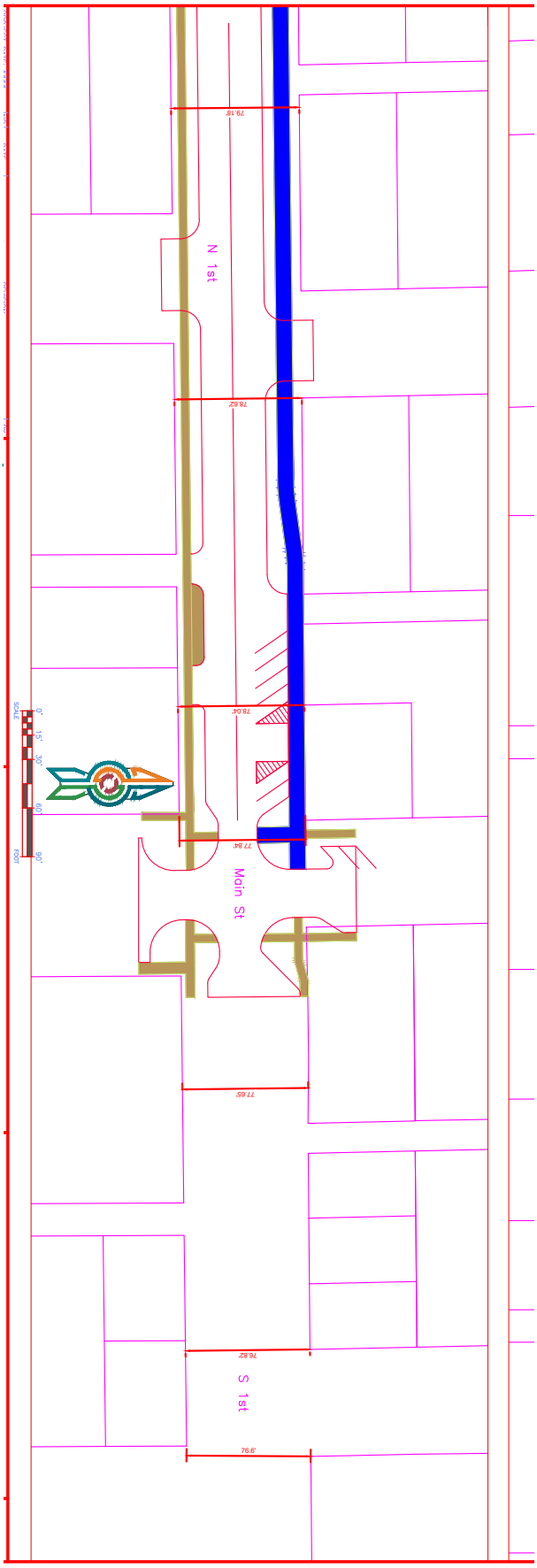
WALNUT ST. STREETSCAPE CONCEPT (8/30/2023)

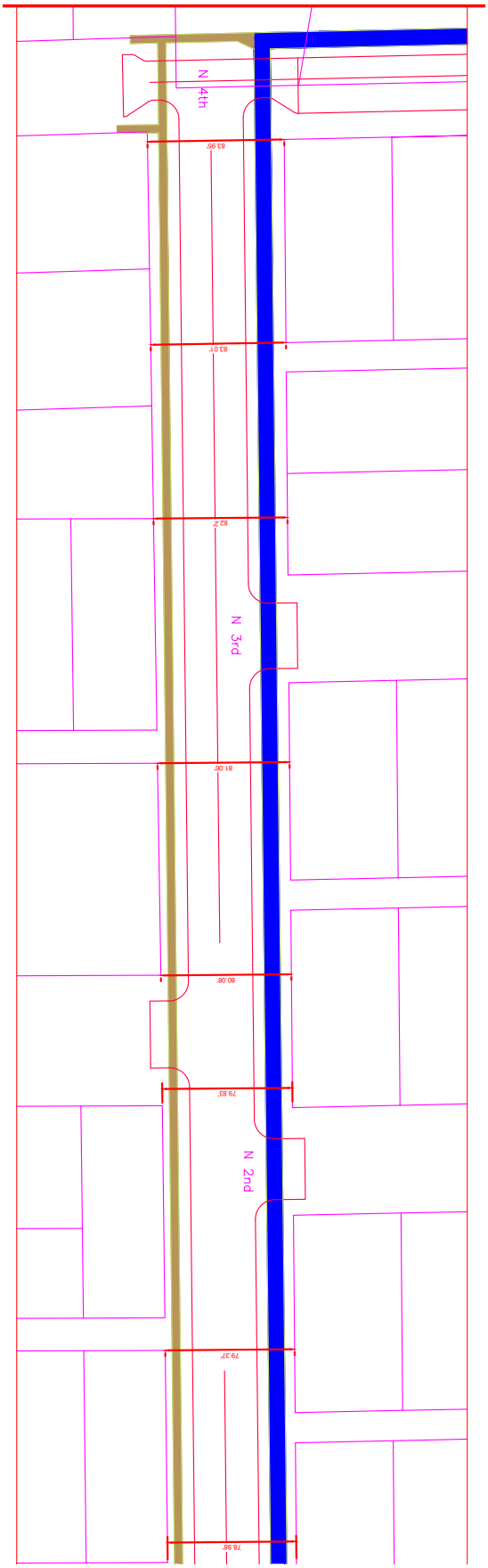
LA CRESCENT, MN

0' 30' 70' 140' 280'
SCALE
FOOT

MSA planning + design studio

Right-of-Way Dimensions





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Appendix C

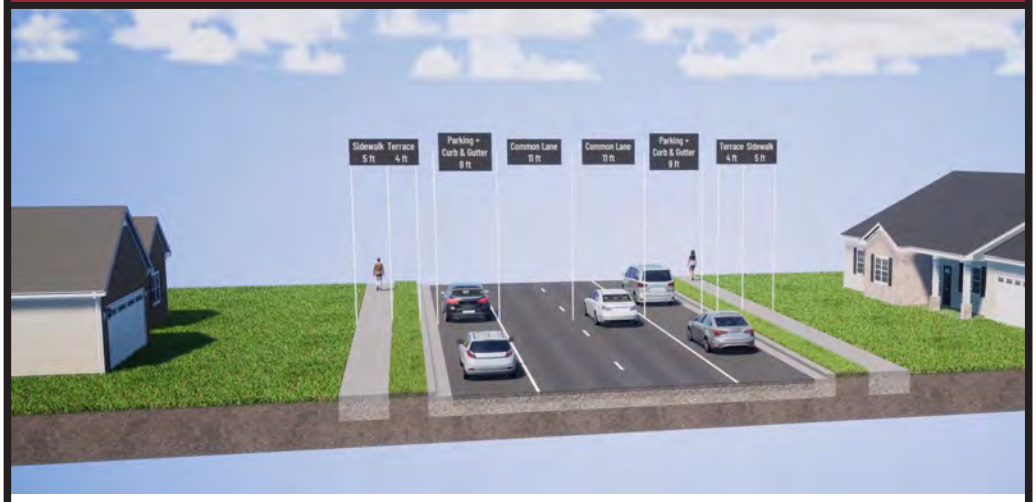
Streetscape Section Alternatives

Chestnut St (North to Veteran's Park)

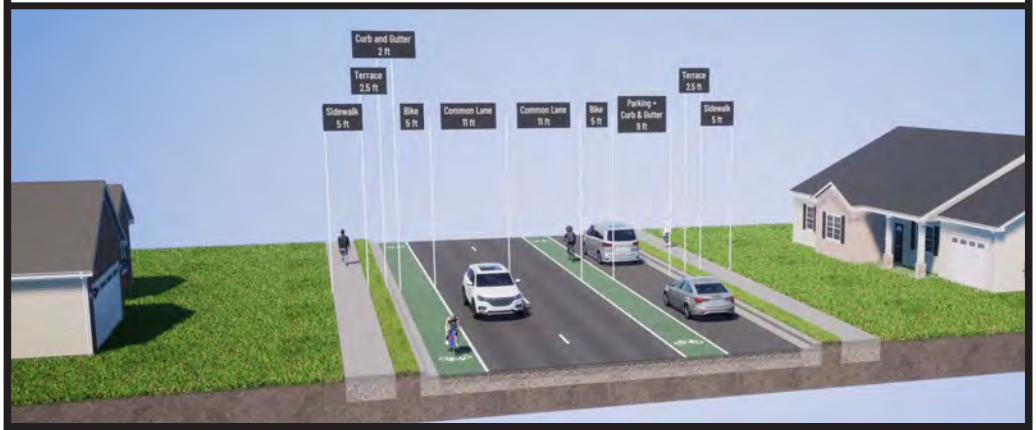
EXISTING STREET PROFILE

ONE-WAY NORTH + BIKE PATH STREET PROFILE

N 4th St (West to Park or East to Chestnut)



EXISTING STREET PROFILE

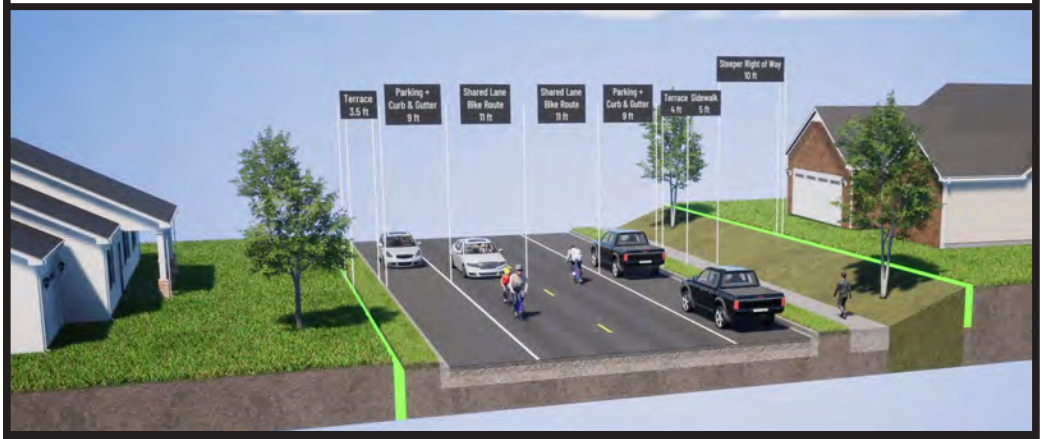


BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

Park St (Southwest of Veteran's Park)

EXISTING STREET PROFILE



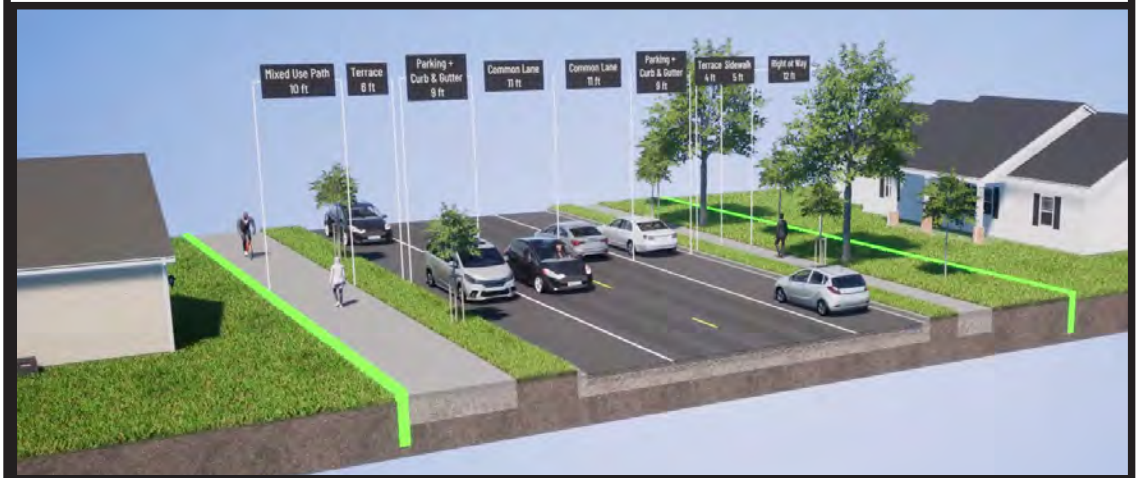
MORE PARKING, LESS SIDEWALK STREET PROFILE

MORE SIDEWALK, LESS PARKING STREET PROFILE

N Walnut St (200 + Block Typical Section)

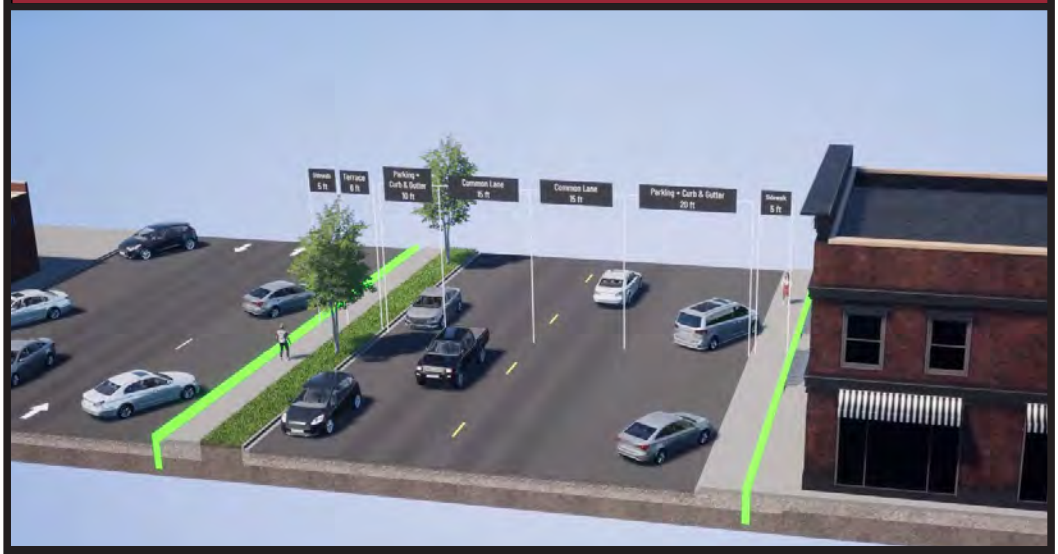
EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE

BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

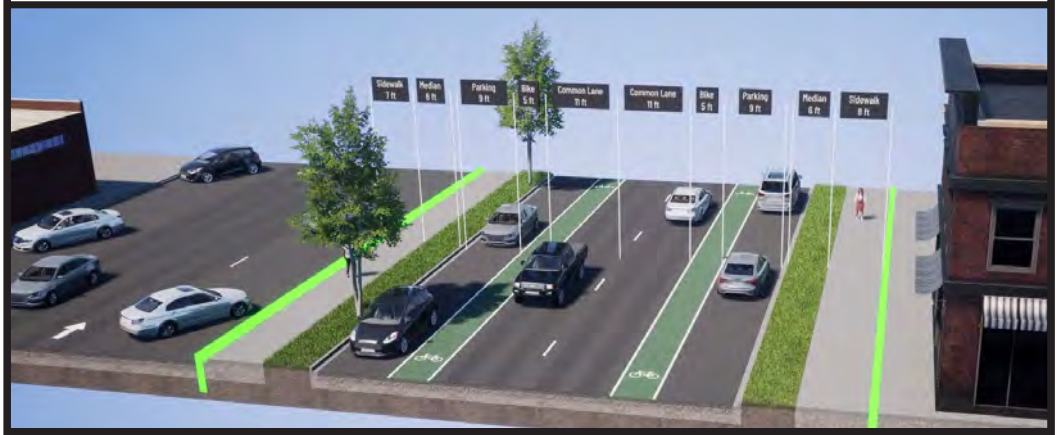


MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

N Walnut St (100 Block Typical Section)



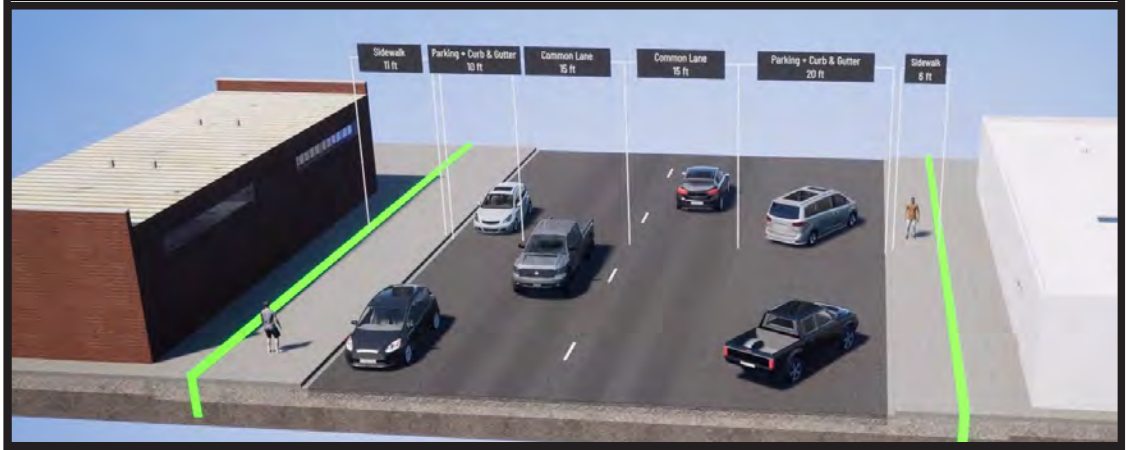
EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

S Walnut St (100 Block Typical Section)



EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE

BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE