

**MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
**THURSDAY, October 1, 2015**  
**6:00 PM**  
**CITY COMMISSION ROOM**  
**151 MARTIN STREET, BIRMINGHAM**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Introductions
- C. Review of the Agenda
- D. Approval of Minutes, Meeting of September 3, 2015
- E. Neighborhood Connector Route, Phase I
- F. Meeting Open to the Public for items not on the Agenda
- G. Miscellaneous Communications
- H. Adjournment

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2015  
City Commission Room  
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, September 3, 2015. Vice-Chairperson Andy Lawson convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairperson Johanna Slanga (arrived at 6:08 p.m. at which time she took over the gavel); Board Members Vionna Adams, Stuart Bordman, Lara Edwards, Andy Lawson, Michael Surnow, Amanda Warner; Student Representative Daniel Evans

**Absent:** Student Representative Rebecca Mendel

**Administration:** Lauren Chapman, Asst. City Planner  
Mark Clemence, Deputy Chief of Police  
Commander Scott Grewe, Police Dept.  
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer  
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer  
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

**Also Present:** Mike Labadie from Fleis & Vandenbrink ("F&V"),  
Transportation Engineering Consultants

**B. INTRODUCTIONS (none)**

**C. REVIEW AGENDA (no change)**

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MEETING OF AUGUST 6, 2015**

**Moved and seconded to approve the Minutes of August 6, 2015 as presented.**

**Motion carried, 6-0.**

**E. COLE ST. PARKING**

Mr. Clemence advised the Police Dept. received a petition signed by twenty (20) individuals, eighteen (18) of whom listed a Cole St. address, requesting that one side of Cole St. east of Commerce St. become prohibited parking. The petition was signed by all of the businesses that front on Cole St.

According to Police Dept. records, all on-street parking on the south side of Cole St. was prohibited since 1962 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. except Sundays. In 2011, new sidewalks were installed. When the sidewalks were installed, the former no parking sign posts were removed by the contractor. Parking on both sides of Cole St. has been permitted since the fall of 2010. The area being considered is very small, just between Commerce St. and the end of Cole St.

Since January of 2012 to date there has been one (1) side swipe accident on Cole St. east of Commerce St. The Police Dept. has ordered a speed/volume count for Cole St. between S. Eton and where Cole St. dead ends. There has never been an official traffic order for the removal of the signs. Therefore, if the board feels the no parking signs should be put back up in that small section it doesn't even have to go to the City Commission.

Mr. Terry Adams from Bob Adams Towing, 2499 Cole St., said this is starting to become a very upscale area for commercial businesses. One of the biggest issues today is the increase in traffic on Cole St. He passed around pictures depicting the parking between Commerce and the end of the block. He indicated the spaces are full every day, all day long. When a 53 ft. truck trailer makes deliveries to Boar's Head twice a week, as many as 20 cars can become lined up trying to get through. Pedestrians must cross Cole St. between parked cars and their safety is important to the business owners. Another issue for his company is that in the wintertime when the snow builds up and cars are unable to get up to the curb there are evenings that their tractor trailers cannot get back to their facility. It was noted eight (8) parking places will be given up if parking is restricted to one side of Cole St.

Mr. Adams said they would be more than happy to adhere to the suggested no parking 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. hours as stated on the signs that were removed. They can give that a try and if there are still issues they will have to come back.

Rather than go back to the signs that existed in 2010, the Board thought it was best to recommend what they petitioners were asking for (no parking 24 hours a day).

**Motion by Ms. Warner**

**Seconded by Mr. Lawson to recommend to the City Commission to ban parking on the south side of Cole St. between Commerce and the east end, per the petition.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

**VOICE VOTE**

Yeas: Warner, Lawson, Adams, Bordman, Edwards, Slanga, Surnow

Nays: None

Absent: None

**F. S. ETON - HAZEL TO HAYNES, NO PARKING AREAS**

Mr. O'Meara recalled that at the July meeting, the Multi-Modal Transportation Board ("MMTB") passed a recommendation that included several suggested changes. One topic was to lengthen the yellow curbed no parking zones for parts of three intersections (Hazel St., Bowers St., and Haynes St.). Staff had made a recommendation to clear the first 40 ft. of curb at four particular corners along the corridor, basically losing one (1) car space at each corner. Consultant Mike Labadie suggested they may want to apply American Assoc. of State Highway and Transportation Officials ("AASHTO") standards to this. The board recommended that this be researched, and that the AASHTO standards apply as appropriate.

After further review, it was determined that the AASHTO standards would result in clearing the majority of the existing parking spaces, leaving only two (2) legal spaces on each block. This issue was reviewed with the MMTB at their August meeting. The board was then presented with making the original modification, which would help but not completely resolve the problem, or to move in the very conservative direction based on AASHTO, which would introduce other unintended problems (loss of several parking places, and potentially increased speeds on S. Eton Rd. due to the resulting wide open pavement areas).

Last month, it was acknowledged that the AASHTO standards are not being followed on most intersections in the City where parking is allowed. To further explore this issue, the MMTB asked staff to research the crash history for this area to see how serious of an issue the sight distance is and to make sure they are not ignoring a problem that exists.

Staff had all crashes that occurred over the past few years reviewed. Interestingly, none of the four locations of concern (where parking demand is greatest near Griffin Claw) have recorded any incidents over the most recent three years. Most other intersections have not had any incidents either. It would

appear that clearing the subject corners to meet AASHTO standards may be excessive. It is recommended that the MMTB move back to the original staff proposal to:

1. Expand the yellow curbed zones to 40 ft. long at the four (4) subject locations.
2. Mark these particular corners with No Parking Here to Corner signs for better clarity during winter weather conditions.

It appears that the modification relative to the AASHTO standards came up late in the discussion, and was not officially acknowledged in the written motion. Given the above findings, staff recommends that the board not make any changes to the motion, but rather concur that this can now move to the City Commission for final review and approval.

Mr. Labadie advised if there are problems, the board is obligated to follow AASHTO standards. However, since there have been no problems they are allowed to exercise their own judgment.

Board members thought by keeping the motion the way it is, which is the 40 ft., it is a conservative balance between parking and visibility. It does improve the current situation. If over time the Police Dept. sees that the number of crashes have increased, then the board can re-examine the site distance issue. Mr. Labadie agreed that it makes good sense to revisit this matter in a year to see if there have been accidents.

Chairperson Slanga noted if the parking is a problem then the board needs to be extreme in their response to the City Commission and tell them to fix the parking problem because it is frustrating to see people trying to find parking spots.

Mr. Clemence agreed the Police Dept. will add this item to their calendar to be taken up again in a year. He noted that when he presented the Bowers Residential Parking Permit to the Commission he told them on the board's behalf that they feel there is a parking problem that needs to be addressed.

The chairperson summed up the discussion. The board is staying with their original recommendation and they will revisit this matter in a year when more businesses have come into that area.

**G. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**  
(no public was present)

**H. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. O'Meara updated the group on when W. Maple Rd. will transition to three lanes. In early October they will start to measure all the traffic in the current four lane situation. Then in the middle of October they plan to switch to three lanes.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the chairperson adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

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Jana Ecker, Planning Director

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Paul O'Meara, City Engineer



## MEMORANDUM

Engineering Dept.

**DATE:** September 25, 2015

**TO:** Multi-Modal Transportation Board

**FROM:** Paul T. O'Meara, City Engineer

**SUBJECT:** Neighborhood Connector Route – Phase I

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Attached is a sheet from the City's Multi-Modal Master Plan, summarizing all the various neighborhood connector bike routes that the plan suggests could be implemented. Highlighted in yellow are the street segments that now have, or will soon have, shared lane markings to encourage motorists to be alert for bikes. These segments are:

1. Oak St. – Chesterfield Ave. to Lakepark Dr.
2. Lincoln Ave. – Southfield Rd. to Woodward Ave.
3. Derby Rd. – Adams Rd. to Eton Rd.
4. Eton Rd. – Derby Rd. to Lincoln Ave.

Looking at the map, these streets are starting to form a loop that may be able to be better connected with a small amount of effort. At this time, it is recommended that the City finalize its Bike Route signing protocol, and establish its first bike routes as suggested in the Master Plan.

### PROPOSED BIKE ROUTE

Referring to the internet, [www.mapmyride.com](http://www.mapmyride.com) provides a web site for members to post suggested bike routes in map form. Several routes are provided for Birmingham, as well as other neighboring cities such as Bloomfield Hills, Troy, and Royal Oak. From personal experience, I know that the signed routes on the east side of the City that extend north into Troy and Bloomfield Twp. tend to be very popular with bicyclists. A "Kensington/Cranbrook" loop that is posted was overlaid on the master plan map to show the similarities between the two. Signing a suggested bike route that connects and uses routes that are already popular will help make them more of a community asset. With relatively minor effort, the City may wish to make its first bike route priority the one shown on the third map, labeled "Proposed Birmingham Bike Route." Points of interest relative to links and necessary improvements are listed below, starting at the northwest corner of the loop, and proceeding clockwise:

1. At Chesterfield Ave. and Redding Rd., bikes could connect with another popular bike route to the west, Cranbrook Rd., which extends north and south through Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Twp.
2. As bicyclists head east, there are three options that can be considered:
  - a. Redding Rd. to Lakepark (per the Master Plan)
  - b. Redding Rd. to Lakeside (per mapmyride.com)

- c. Chesterfield Ave. to Oak St. (to take advantage of the newly constructed bike lanes)

Input from the committee would be helpful here.

3. For those wishing to head east and avoid downtown, the Master Plan recommends using Oak St. to cross Woodward Ave. There is currently not a good location for bikes or pedestrians to cross at this intersection, which until more recently, had no sidewalks in the area. We have discussed with MDOT the feasibility of installing a traffic signal upgrade in this area that would allow for a proper crossing for bikes and pedestrians. Due to the limitations of the existing equipment, we were told that a whole new signal would have to be installed, at Birmingham's expense, which would be about \$100,000. Fortunately, the signal is due to be retired within the next five years. Once it is scheduled for replacement (at MDOT expense), the City will be diligent about getting this area improved for multi-modal use. In the meantime, it is best to not direct the public to this intersection. Instead, directing traffic south into downtown, and ultimately using the Oakland Ave. crossing is recommended.
4. At the Derby Rd. intersections of Adams Rd. and Eton Rd., connections for popular bike routes north into Bloomfield Twp. and Troy would be included.
5. The bike route would connect to the section of N. Eton Rd. that now has bike lanes.
6. The website referred to above did not have a longer, regional bike route that extends into Royal Oak. Most routes in Royal Oak tend to focus on their downtown area, or areas north of downtown. If committee members are aware of a good suggested route in this area, the Birmingham bike route could be extended further south on Eton Rd., to 14 Mile Rd.
7. The Master Plan recommends using a wide green pavement area to encourage bikes to cross Woodward Ave. at Lincoln Ave. This idea is still very new, and needs to be explored further. Because the markings would be within the MDOT right-of-way, we will also have to review this idea with them prior to implementation.
8. Since Lincoln Ave. has a similar pavement all the way westerly to Seaholm High School, likely an important destination for bicyclists, it is recommended that the bike route extend to Cranbrook Rd.
9. The Master Plan recommends an off road bike path on the south side of Maple Rd., between Larchlea Dr. and Chesterfield Ave. This simple improvement has been shown conceptually in the attached aerial photograph, as prepared by F&V. Since bike lanes are not planned for W. Maple Rd., installing this short segment of bike path would help bicyclists feel safe as they cross Maple Rd. in this area. This work can be added to our Maple Rd. resurfacing project for 2016 if approved by the City Commission.

## BIKE ROUTE AND WAYFINDING SIGNS

The attached picture of various Bike Route and wayfinding signs are the officially recommended signs for this purpose located within the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. It is recommended that the D11-1 signs be used as the standard designation sign to be placed as needed throughout the various routes.

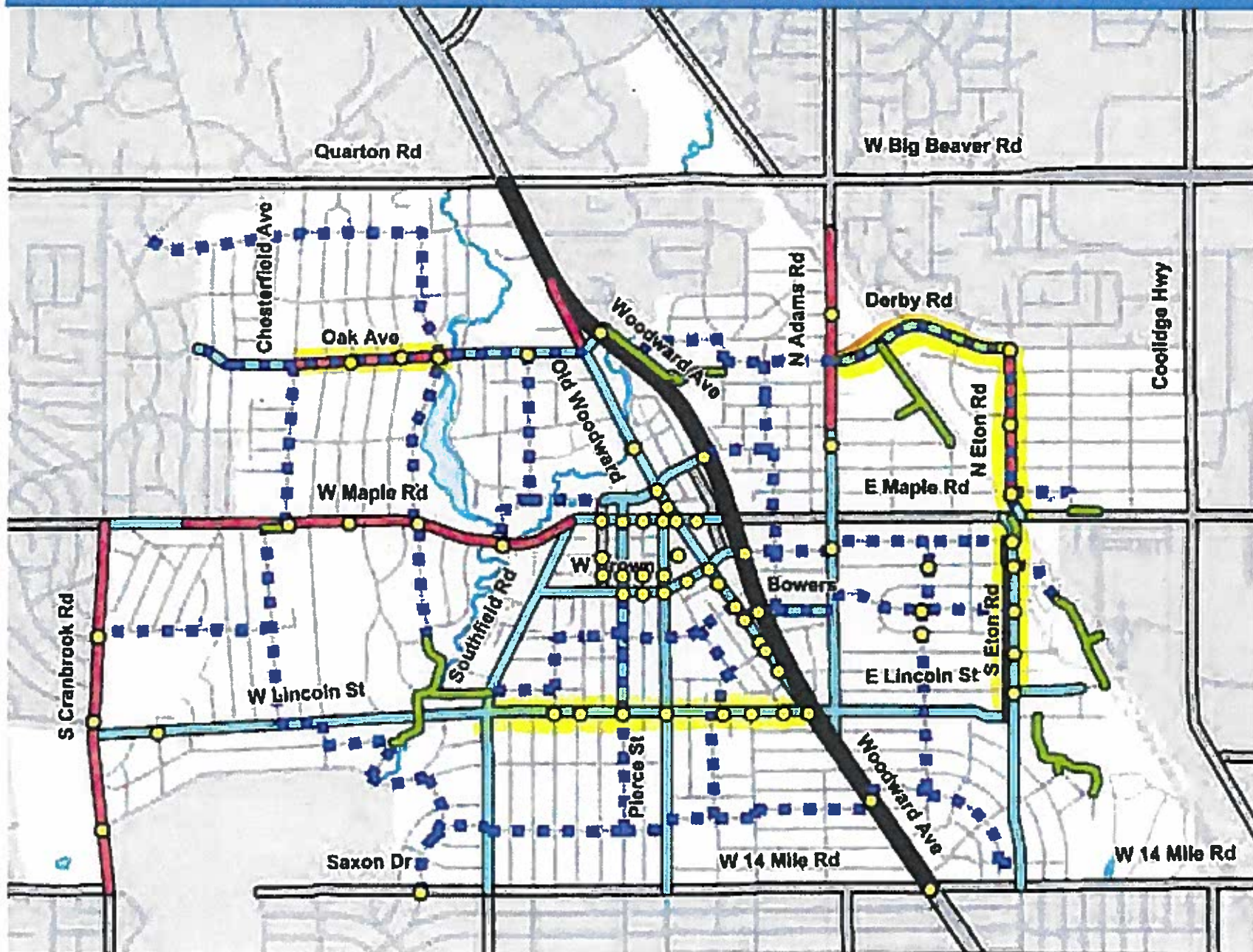
Attached is a picture of a recently installed Bike Route and wayfinding sign in Royal Oak. The wayfinding signs use the same lettering and background color to match the Bike Route sign. Some of the sample signs in the attached page from the manual show directional signs with mileages to proposed destinations shown. Royal Oak used this feature in their signs as well.



For this bike route, there is not necessarily a clear defined destination that the public is being directed to, rather it is a region. For example, at the Derby Rd. & Eton Rd. intersection, a sign pointing the public north to Troy could be installed. In this case, Wayfinding signs can be used to help the public, but a specified distance can be deleted, as in sample sign D1-1.

At this time, staff is requesting comment and direction from the Board relative to the suggested location of the Phase I Neighborhood Connector Route, and the suggested signing policy. Based on input from the Board, staff can finalize the Phase I plan and return it to the Board at a future meeting for final approval.

FIGURE 3.1E OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL NETWORK



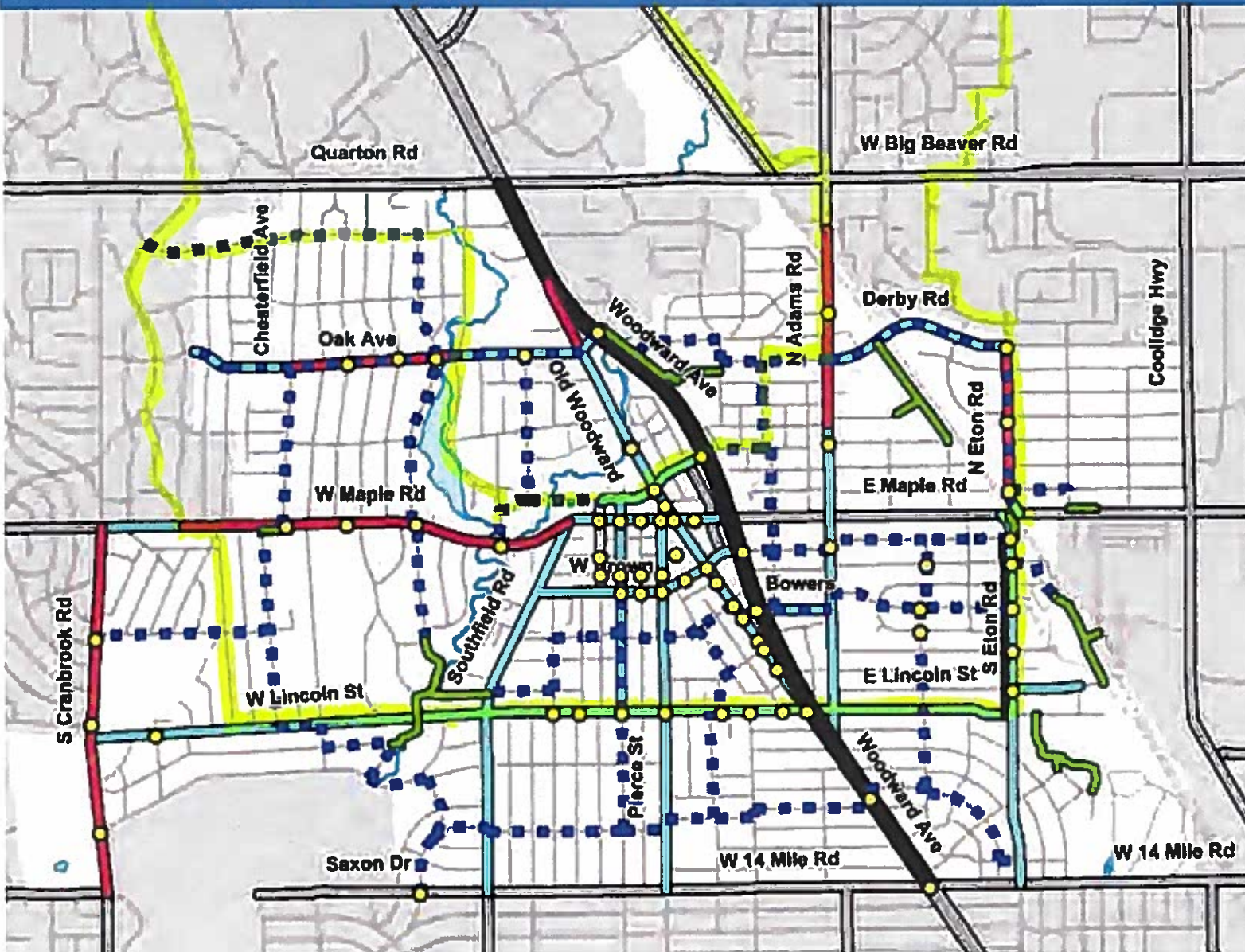
**Legend**

- Proposed Crossing Improvement
- Proposed Off-road Trail
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector Route

**EXISTING SHARED  
LANE MARKINGS**



FIGURE 3.1E OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL NETWORK



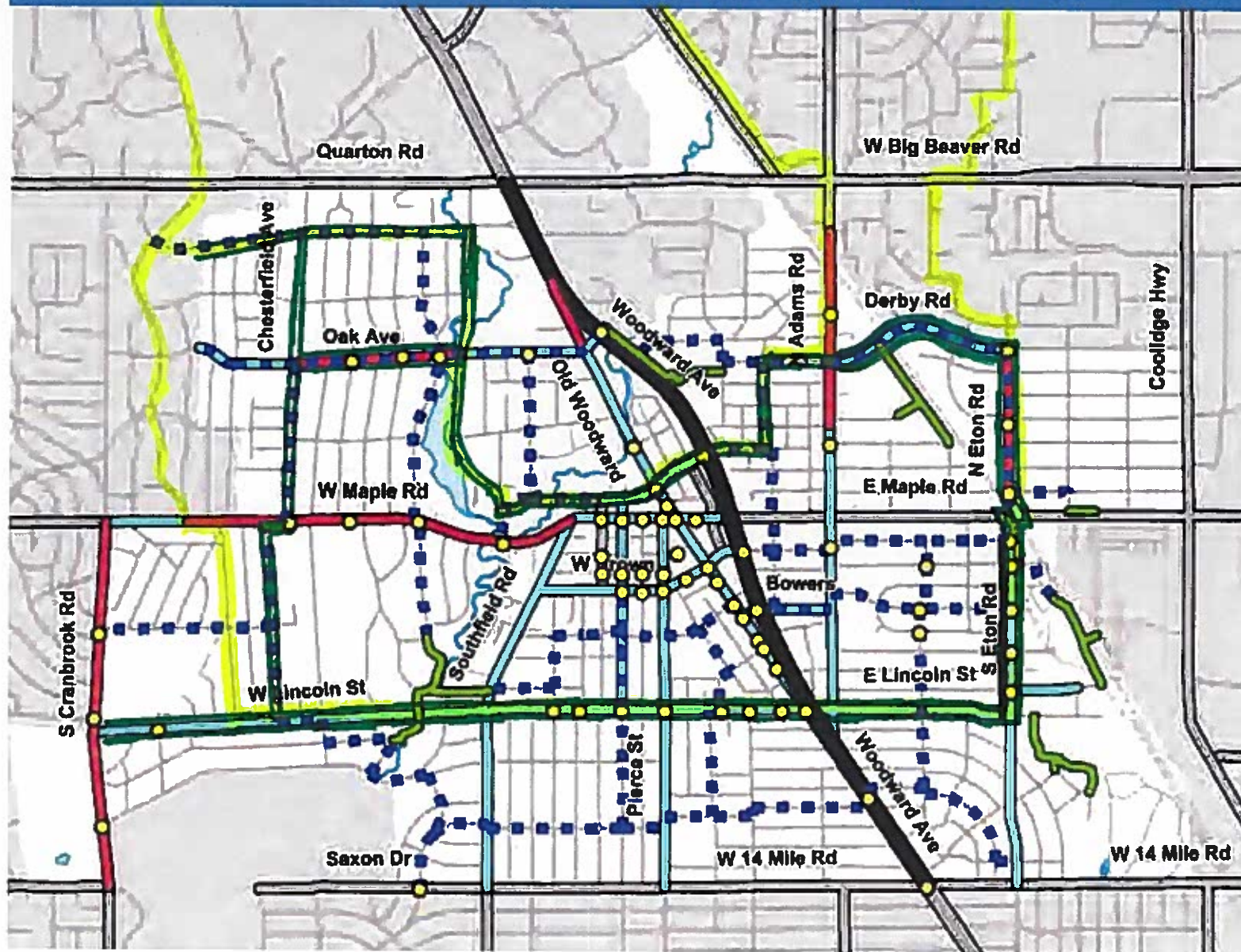
**Legend**

- Proposed Crossing Improvement
- Proposed Off-road Trail
- - - Proposed Neighborhood Connector Route
- Proposed Bike Lane

**KENSINGTON/CRANBROOK  
BIKE ROUTE FROM  
[www.mapmyride.com](http://www.mapmyride.com)**



FIGURE 3.1E OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL NETWORK



**Legend**

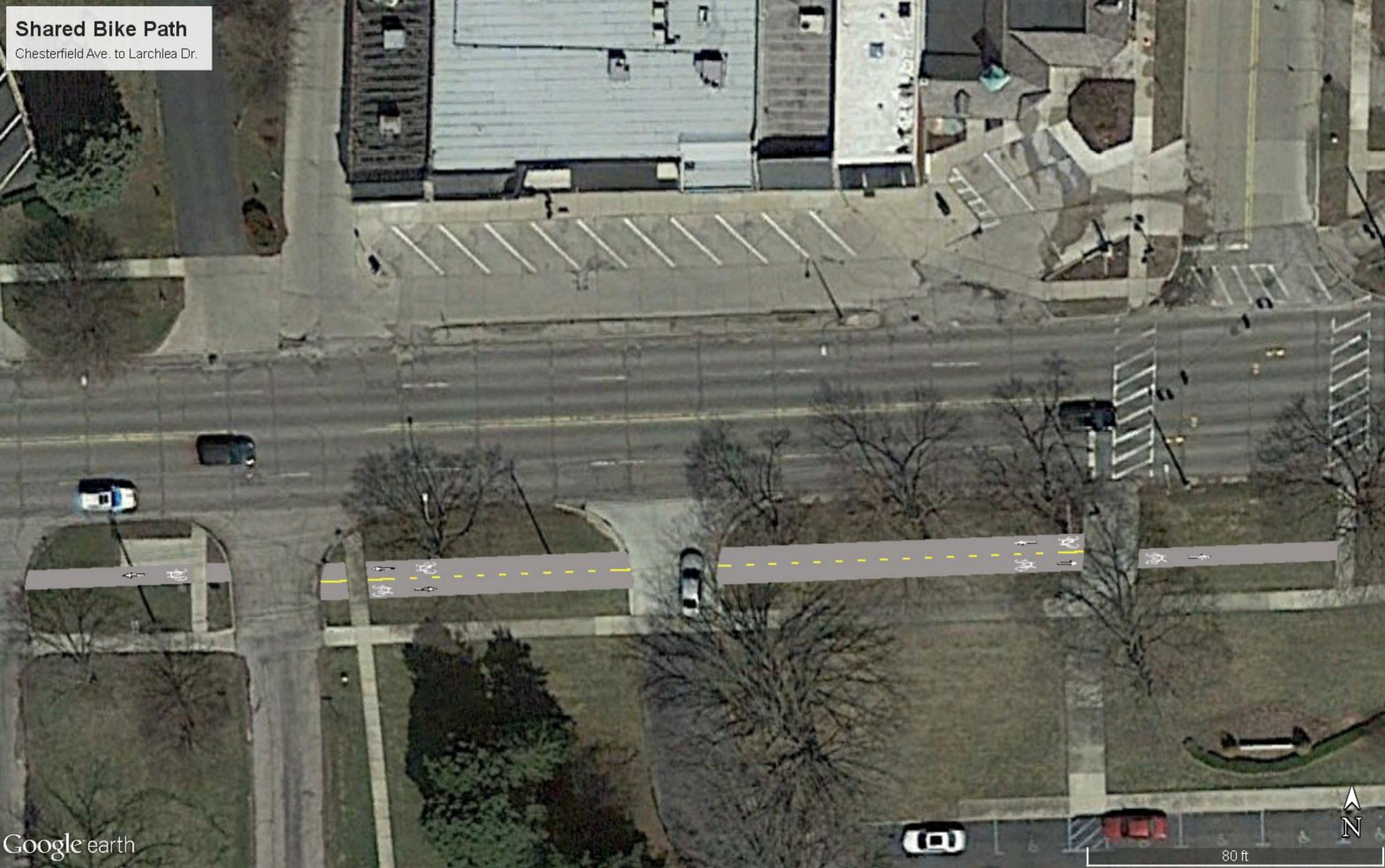
- Proposed Crossing Improvement
- Proposed Off-road Trail
- - - Proposed Neighborhood Connector Route
- Proposed Bike Lane
- Proposed Buffered Bike Lane

**PROPOSED  
BIRMINGHAM  
BIKE ROUTE**



**Shared Bike Path**

Chesterfield Ave. to Larchlea Dr.





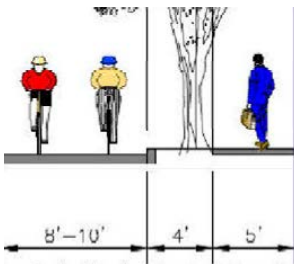


## Required Elements of a Cycle Track

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A cycle track is an exclusive route for bike use only and, like a bike lane, is a type of preferential lane as defined by the MUTCD.



The minimum paved width of a two-way path should be 10'. This width may be reduced to 8' for short distances to avoid inordinate cost, related to widening structures or other physical constraints.



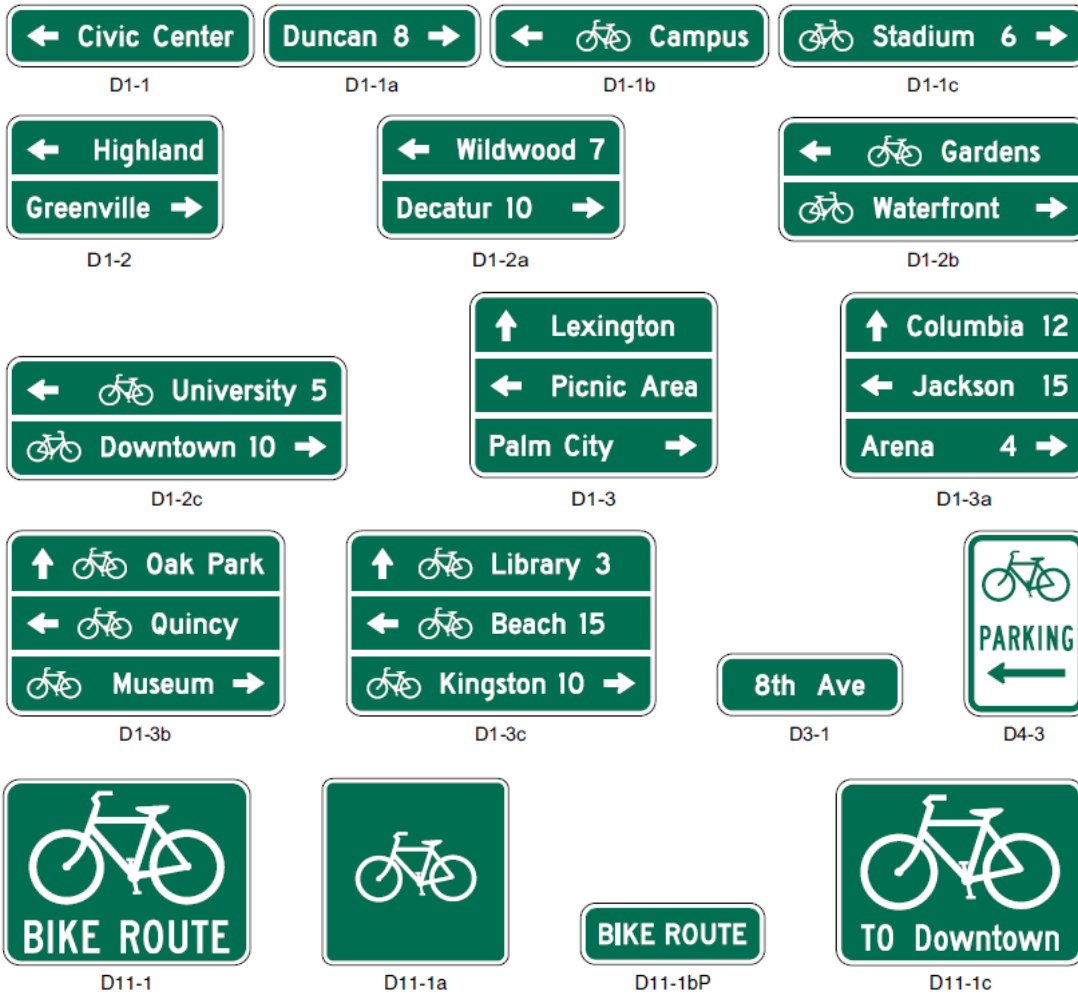
Bicycle lane word, symbol, and/or arrow markings (MUTCD Figure 9C-3) shall be placed at the beginning of a cycle track and at periodic intervals along the facility based on engineering judgment.

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## Typical Applications

- On streets with extra right-of-way on one side.
  - To connect with another bicycle facility, such as a second cycle track on one side of the street.
-

Standard MMUTCD Bike Guide Signs



Alternative-Bike Guide Sign









## MAGAZINE

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# County to Celebrate 'PARK(ing) Day' By Transforming Silver Spring, Bethesda Parking Spaces into Pop-Up Park

**The parklet will feature plants, seating and cornhole**

**BY AARON KRAUT**

**6**

*Published: 2015.09.15 09:59*

**Updated at 11:15 a.m.** - There will be one less parking space Friday in downtown Silver Spring and one more opportunity to play cornhole.

As part of an international event to highlight open space in cities, Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County's Planning Department and Department of Transportation will transform a curbside parking space at Fenton Street and Wayne Avenue into a pop-up park.

The "parklet" will include plants, seating and cornhole—the bean bag toss game often played at football tailgate parties.

The three departments are creating the parklet to celebrate “PARK(ing) Day,” an annual event invented in 2005 by a San Francisco art and design studio.

In 2011, the event included 975 parklets in more than 160 cities on six continents. Rebar, the design studio that came up with the idea, says it’s meant to “invite people to rethink the way streets are used and to promote discussion around the need for broad-based changes to urban infrastructure.”



A parklet in San Francisco  
VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

“Every time we dedicate a chunk of land for parking, that is space not available for a park or an open space,” Montgomery County Planning Board Chairman Casey Anderson said in a press release. “Through this event, we want to raise awareness and ask people to think about more efficient ways to arrange parking to accommodate other amenities.”

The parklet will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and then will be converted back into a parking space.

In Bethesda, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center is partnering with the Bethesda Urban Partnership to create two parklets Friday.

One, near the corner of Norfolk and Cordell avenues, will have an outdoor cafe theme. The other, near the corner of Woodmont and Bethesda avenues, will have a lounge and reading room theme, according to Regional Services Center Director Ken Hartman.

11 Comments Bethesda Magazine

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Join the discussion...



**JAC** • 3 days ago

I'd rather they erect a "sidewalklet" and leave the parking spots for what they're intended for. Parking is tough enough as is without finding a great spot only to find out it's been converted into a park. Sidewalk provides more room for cornhole anyway. Can't imagine there's enough room to toss bean bags in a parking space size area.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Stephen Davies** • 3 days ago

so, people are going to be throwing beanbags near the street? Does anyone else think this might pose a problem? Oh, wait, it's just from 9-4.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**amp16** • 3 days ago

the funding for these things is usually volunteer hours and donations from companies. My office participated last year in DC and we got all our materials and plants and promotions through donations. No "funds" were involved

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**josfitz** • 3 days ago

Love the idea of this but could someone please resurface Arlington Road and put street lighting on both sides. Even though these are obviously funded from different budgets it would be nice to have the basics covered before funding what I would call non-essentials no matter how nice those serendipitous projects might be.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Ken Hartman** → josfitz • 3 days ago

Resurfacing of Arlington is planned this fiscal year - before June 30, 2016. More street lights on Arlington is a bigger project, and challenging where the sidewalk is narrow. Developers continue to add streetlights. We just had more installed on St. Elmo by Bainbridge and more streetlights will be installed along Norfolk by 7770 Norfolk. Also, the County has funds coming in 2018-2020 for more comprehensively filling in the gaps.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Gull** → josfitz • 3 days ago

Don't know about the street lighting, but you'll get a new hot mix asphalt road surface out there next spring.

<http://www.montgomerycountymd....>

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

[↑](#) | [↓](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#) ›**josfitz** → Gull • 3 days ago

Thanks to both Ken and Gull. I just took a friend out to Reston and wondered around a wide area in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties while waiting to pick him back up for the return trip to ChCh. I am embarrassed to report how all of the layout, the trees, the signalization, the underground power and the street lighting, in short the whole streetscape looked everywhere I traveled over a space of two and one half hours. It made things here in Bethesda/Chevy Chase seem old and out of date indeed. I know that we can do better. I don't understand why we have to wait for developers to act, for properties to be redeveloped for there to be a unified street scene including all of the street furniture. Can't the County front these funds from some sort of imprest fund and then replenish it from developer's contributions later? Some sort of funding mechanism or conservancy needs to be established to accomplish the same. As I said, it's embarrassing.

[↑](#) | [↓](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#) ›**staituned** → josfitz • 2 days ago

I think you meant "wandered". Anyway your appreciation of Reston was due to the fact that it was a "planned" community like Columbia, MD. These new towns were developed by James T. Rouse and all the amenities you speak of were carefully orchestrated. Our beloved Bethesda/Chevy Chase evolved as an urban area, and the installation, or rehabilitation of street furniture and other features is a slow process of evolution and constant coordination. Good things come to those who wait.

[↑](#) | [↓](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#) ›**josfitz** → staituned • 2 days ago

Thank you for the correction. Yes, I admit Reston was planned. What I referred to was the vast areas outside of it from Leesburg to Reston where I "wandered". It was those areas that astounded. As lifelong resident (since the age of four) I do think that something is wrong with the process that Montgomery County utilizes. I see better results in Howard and Frederick Counties as well. Not all areas within these jurisdictions are within planned communities. Agreed that Bethesda/Chevy Chase evolved in a different time but the glacial pace of placing street lights on both sides of the street, undergrounding power lines and resurfacing roads, etc. is just too slow.

[↑](#) | [↓](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#) ›**staituned** → josfitz • 2 days ago

Don't hold your breath for the undergrounding part. If you look at any

area in this region, other than planned communities, with new infrastructure, you will find very few if any retrofitted utilities. Why, due to the cost factor, and who pays? PEPCO, property owners, and local government agencies cannot reach agreements on this issue, or other pertinent concerns. It's not a high priority issue for any of them.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**josfitz** ➔ staituned • 2 days ago

My point exactly. Meanwhile other areas manage to do it. Can you even imagine Rockville Pike or Wisconsin Avenue without the ugly utility poles on both sides? After being told how wonderful that we are over and again it becomes discouraging to see other areas shoulder the costs and decide to move the lines underground. Montgomery County would be so beautiful (our climax forest deciduous trees are second to none) if it would decide for once and for all to put the lines underground. The improvement to the quality of life would be astounding and so good for our environment.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

ALSO ON BETHESDA MAGAZINE

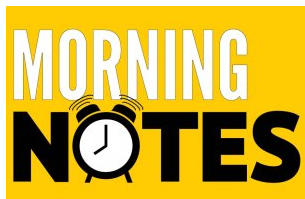
WHAT'S THIS?

Total Wine & More Dedicates New

Public Response Shows Strong

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News, announcements and



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Recommendations outline potential taxing strategies to raise money for Montgomery County bus rapid transit



**County Council Environment Committee Approves Limited Pesticide Bill**

The amended bill eliminates the general ban on using pesticides on private lawns, but the





Jana Ecker &lt;jecker@bhamgov.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Easy Nine mile -FERNDALE. 4 to 3 conversion**

1 message

**Joe Valentine** <jvalentine@bhamgov.org>

Thu, Sep 24, 2015 at 12:04 PM

To: George Dilgard <gdilgard@hotmail.com>, Gordon Rinschler <gordon4bham@aol.com>, Mark Nickita <markforbirmingham@yahoo.com>, Racky Hoff <rackyhoff@hotmail.com>, Scott Moore <sdm984@sbcglobal.net>, Stuart Sherman <stuart.sherman@sbcglobal.net>, Tim Currier <tcurrier@bhlaw.us.com>, Tom McDaniel <mcdaniel\_tom@hotmail.com>

Cc: Jana Ecker <Jecker@bhamgov.org>, Paul O'Meara <Pomeara@bhamgov.org>, Mark Clemence <Mclemence@bhamgov.org>

fyi - An apparent 4 to 3 lane conversion success story...

Paul/Jana/Mark - Please share with the MMTB.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Markforbham** <markforbham@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu, Sep 24, 2015 at 11:45 AM

Subject: Easy Nine mile -FERNDALE. 4 to 3 conversion

To: Paul O'Meara <pomeara@bhamgov.org>, Joe Valentine <jvalentine@bhamgov.org>, Jana Ecker <jecker@bhamgov.org>

Joe

Per our discussion - Ferndale just reworked the lanes on east nine mile from their downtown to I-75. It's worth a visit to see how it works and looks.

Mark











**Mark Nickita**

*City Commissioner*  
City of Birmingham, MI

***"never worry about action- only about inaction"***  
- Winston Churchill

***@MarkNickita on Twitter***

***Mark Nickita on FB***

---

**Joseph A. Valentine**

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From The Atlantic

CITYLAB

## CITYFIXER

## How San Francisco Got More Drivers to Yield to Pedestrians

The data-driven solution was part marketing, part enforcement, and part community outreach.

SARAH GOODYEAR | [@buttermilk1](#) | Sep 17, 2015 | [9 Comments](#)



[Davide D'Amico / Flickr](#)

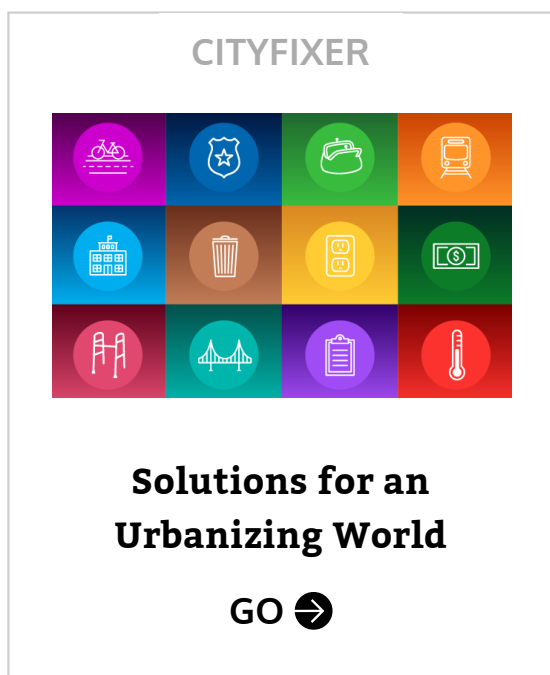
Along with an increasing number of cities around the country, San Francisco has a “Vision Zero” [plan to make its streets safer for pedestrians](#). The initiative’s near-term goal is to reduce deaths and serious injuries by 50 percent by 2021, and in this tech-dominated town, a big part of the strategy for doing that involves data—improving the quality of information on pedestrian

injuries and fatalities, analyzing those numbers, and “using data to inform better public policy.”

A [new study](#) out this month from the city’s Department of Public Health and Municipal Transportation Agency gives you some idea of how data-driven policy analysis and implementation might work in practice. Officials looked at whether or not various interventions succeeded in getting drivers to yield to pedestrians at intersections. That’s important for safety, as the report notes, since “64 percent of all collisions between people walking and driving are ‘driver at fault.’ ”

The 43-week study looked at the effect that various tactics had on driver behavior at four of the most dangerous intersections in the city. Various measures were deployed in phases and in different combinations over the study period.

There was a publicity campaign with bus ads and billboards in the streets leading up to the intersections reading: “It Stops Here: Pedestrians have Right of Way.” In some crosswalks there was increased enforcement of the law that requires drivers to yield to pedestrians as well. And there was grassroots outreach, such as pamphlet distribution and meetings coordinated with community groups. For comparison, researchers looked at four control intersections without any interventions.



They found a 3- to 4-percent increase in drivers yielding to people on foot at intersections where the intervention tactics had been deployed. In contrast, the number of drivers yielding at the control sites actually fell.

While 3-to-4 percent may not sound like a big increase in compliance, the potential effect of widespread interventions looks meaningful when you scale it up. Researchers estimate that across the city, at intersections where a high rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities occur, a 3-

to-4 percent improvement would translate to 419 more drivers yielding per hour at peak commute times.

“This could result in hundreds of avoided collisions, some of which might have caused injuries or deaths,” Ed Reiskin of the Municipal Transportation Agency [told SFGate](#). In 2014, by the city’s count, 96 people on foot were killed or severely injured in traffic crashes. That number [exceeded the official goal of 82](#).

Injuries caused by crashes may affect more people than the tally of past years would indicate. Another [recent study](#) from the city’s Vision Zero team suggests that the number of traffic injuries is [dramatically underestimated](#) by the San Francisco Police Department, which has been the source of official figures. The study used hospital records to identify 515 patients admitted for severe traffic injuries over a 12-month period beginning in April 2014. SFPD records only reflected 200 injuries during that time—an underestimation of nearly 60 percent. Possible explanations for the low count include the fact that police officers are not trained medical personnel and that some injuries occur outside of city police jurisdiction (for instance, on state highways).

More data and better data are clearly still necessary. Just as important, once it’s gathered, the city has to commit to acting on the results.

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## About the Author



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