



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

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To: Transportation Commission

From: Ben Zellers and Linda Horvath, West Area Plan Co-Managers

Re: West Area Plan Review and Recommendation

Date: July 31, 2024

Since meeting with the TC on December 13, the [West Area Plan team](#) presented the draft plan and collected feedback through in-person and virtual public meetings, at neighborhood group meetings, and through community displays, and online. We have also continued to meet with other city agencies, including Transportation and Engineering, for their direction. The [full draft of the West Area Plan](#) was introduced at Common Council on July 16, 2024, and has been referred to TC for review and comment.

Highlights of Draft Plan Changes since December

The transportation chapter of the West Area Plan starts on page 19. Highlights to Transportation-related action changes since December include:

- **Middleton Street:** Many residents voiced opposition and concern about the action connecting the two segments of Middleton Street. Concerns included increased traffic, environmental impacts, and pedestrian safety. In response, staff changed the recommendation from “connect the two segments of Middleton Street along the east border of Stricker’s Pond, in coordination with the City of Middleton” to “preserve the opportunity to connect Middleton Street in the future.”
- **Sauk Creek Greenway North-South Path:** General public feedback early in the process indicated interest in adding more north-south bike connections in the West Area. The Sauk Greenway N-S path was pulled into the West Area Plan from previously adopted plans that covered the area. However, staff removed the north-south connection from the plan draft introduced at Council due to resident concerns about the ecology and trees in the greenway, among other concerns. Instead, the planned All Ages and Abilities bicycle route improvements have been shifted to Westfield Road and High Point Road. Transportation Commission had directed staff to undertake an analysis of N-S bike routes at its December meeting to better understand the various routes. Staff is including that analysis as an attachment to this memo to fulfill the Commission’s direction - see attached *Analysis: West Area Plan North-South Shared-Use Path & Bicycle Routes*.
- **Sauk Creek Greenway East-West Path:** Based on public feedback for the east-west path, this is how the recommendation changed between the last two public feedback phases: Changed from “During the Sauk Creek Greenway Corridor Plan, use detailed engineering data to design

an All Ages and Abilities shared use path from Brule Circle to Walnut Grove Park through the greenway using environmentally sensitive best practices and minimizing impacts to trees” to “During the Sauk Creek Greenway Corridor Plan, use detailed engineering data to consider the impacts and benefits of adding an All Ages and Abilities shared-use path to make an east-west connection across the greenway to Walnut Grove Park” and “Any All Ages and Abilities path should be designed using environmentally sensitive best practices and minimizing impacts to trees and other vegetation, wildlife habitat, and adjacent properties.”

- **Pedestrian Network:** Also due to a large amount of public feedback, staff increased the number of intersections highlighted for ped/bike improvements on the Pedestrian Network.
- **Street North of Rennebohm Park:** Staff had pulled in a planned street recommendation from the University-Hill Farms Neighborhood Plan, showing an east-west street connection north of Rennebohm Park, connecting Segoe Road to Eau Claire Avenue. This was modified to curve to the north to intersect Sheboygan Avenue before reaching Segoe. The change was made because of a small parcel along Segoe that would likely have needed to be completely used for the street connection.

Request for Transportation Commission

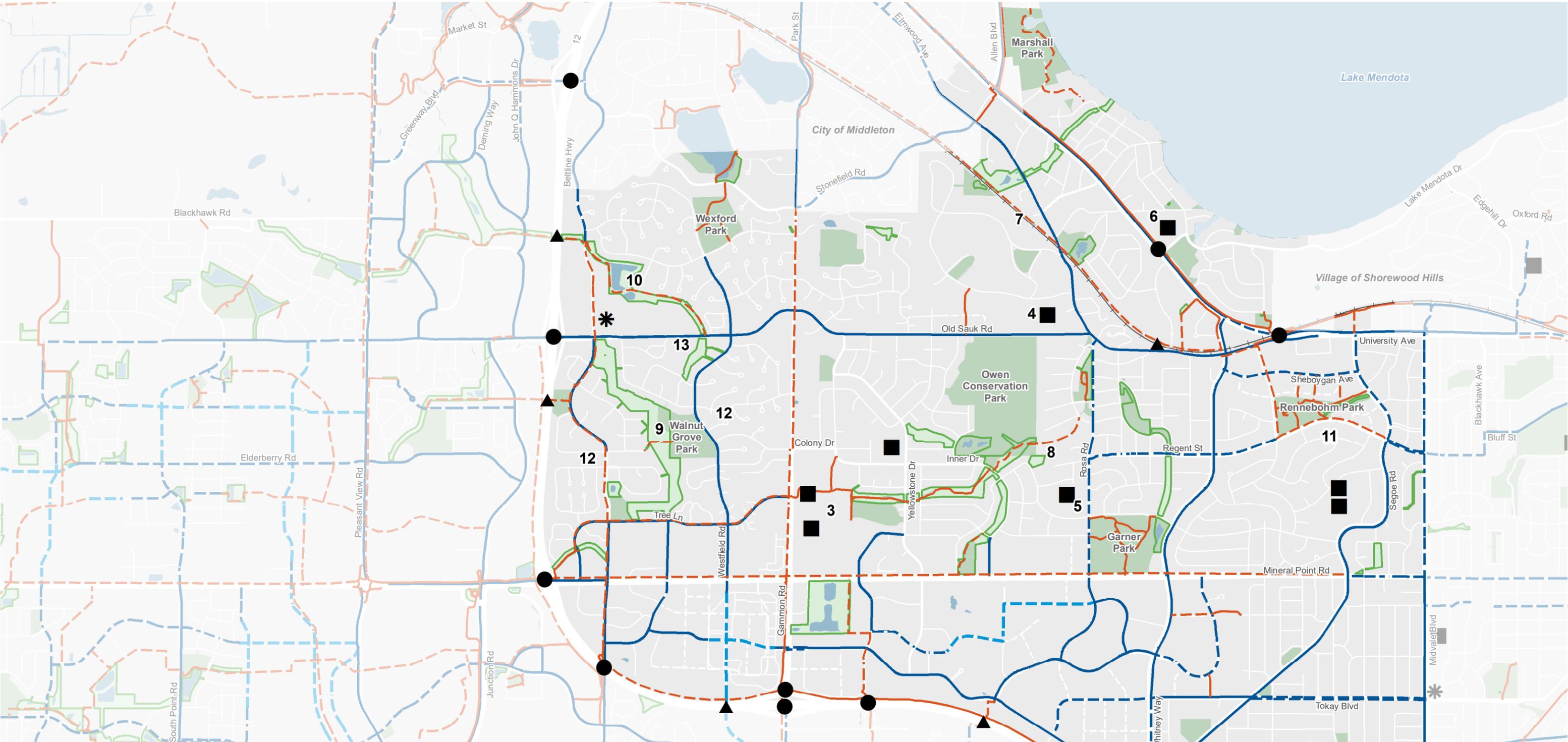
Staff is recommending one transportation-related change to the current draft be made: shifting the connection across the Beltline from Tokay (solid blue line) to the east (dashed blue line). The Wisconsin DOT has conducted additional analysis as part of its [Beltline Study](#), and the eastern connection is more feasible.



The Transportation Commission may recommend changes to the Final Draft Plan to the Plan Commission (lead). The Plan Commission will review recommended changes from TC and the other four committees/commissions the Plan was referred to and make a final recommendation to the Common Council. After plan adoption, staff will incorporate Plan changes approved by the Common Council. If the TC wishes to recommend any changes to the Plan Commission (including the one recommended by staff) **please include the changes in your motion.**

Attachments

- Shared-Use Path and Bicycle Network map (excerpt from page 24 of the full West Area Plan)
- Analysis: West Area Plan North-South Shared-Use Path & Bicycle Routes



West Area Plan Shared-Use Path & Bicycle Network

- Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Overpass or Underpass
- ▲ Planned Bicycle/Pedestrian Overpass or Underpass
- MMSD School
- * Library
- Existing Shared-Use Path/Two-Way Bike Facility
- - - Planned Shared-Use Path/Two-Way Bike Facility
- Existing On-Street Route/Protected Bike Facility
- - - Planned On-Street Route/Protected Bike Facility
- - - Planned On-Street Route/Protected Bike Facility (planned roads)
- City of Madison Park
- Greenway

Note: See text the Transportation actions for numbered map notes.

Analysis: West Area Plan North-South Shared-Use Path & Bicycle Routes

Background

Citywide Policy

Citywide plans and guides adopted by the City Council, such as the [Complete Green Streets \(CGS\) Guide](#) (adopted January 2023), [Comprehensive Plan](#) (adopted August 2018, update adopted December 2023), and [Transportation Master Plan](#) (adopted February 2017) provide general policy guidance for development of smaller area plans and projects. General strategies and policies pertaining to the shared use path, pedestrian, and bicycle network include:

- Expand and improve the city’s pedestrian and bicycle networks to enable safe and convenient active transportation (Comprehensive Plan, page 41).
- Establishing a “Modal Hierarchy” that prioritizes pedestrians, transit, and bicyclists above car traffic (CGS, page 7).
- Continue to expand bicycle networks throughout the metropolitan area, with priority given to eliminating system gaps and developing additional facilities in areas where anticipated use is high (Transportation Master Plan, page 72).
- Continue to construct off-street paths, with priority placed on those that eliminate existing gaps in the network (Transportation Master Plan, page 72).

Sauk Creek Greenway

While a bicycle path for the Sauk Creek Greenway has been discussed/mapped in various plans since 1991, City staff heard from many nearby residents opposed to a shared-use path via the [West Area Plan](#) and [Sauk Creek Corridor Plan](#) processes. With the substantial amount of feedback in opposition to a shared-use path in the Sauk Creek Greenway from homeowners nearby/adjacent to the corridor staff removed the north-south path from the draft introduced at Common Council on July 16, 2024. Planning Division staff had presented the issue to the Plan Commission at its December 7th meeting at to the Transportation Commission at its December 13th meeting for feedback and direction. The Plan Commission directed staff to continue to show the shared-use path in the greenway. The Transportation Commission “*moved to Support leaving the shared use path connection in the Sauk Creek Greenway in the Plan, but recommend enormous caution and study with exploration of other alternatives; and TC feels that an east-west connection is enormously important,*” according to the [December 13, 2023 minutes](#). This report provides further details and analysis of north-south alternatives to a Sauk Creek Greenway path to fulfill the TC’s direction for study of alternatives.

All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network

The CGS Guide identifies an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Bike Network on page 24, consisting of “*streets and paths that provide a complete bike network of low-stress bikeways—comfortable for people ages 8 to 80—between neighborhoods, key destinations within Madison, and to adjacent municipalities,*” stating that a “*continuous network is essential for bicyclists of all ages and abilities to travel throughout the city and is critical in increasing the number of people who choose to bike.*” The Guide identifies the Sauk Creek Greenway as part of the AAA network and states that “*the All Ages and Abilities Bike Network will be updated regularly including during Bicycle Plan updates and sub-area plan updates.*” Guidance is provided on the following page for designing All Ages and Abilities Bikeways. An accompanying chart is excerpted below – it provides policy direction for consideration of bike lanes or sidepaths based on speed and traffic volume of a street. The AAA network shown in the CGS Guide may be adjusted through the adoption of subsequent plans, like the West Area Plan, by the City Council. The West Area Plan, if adopted as introduced at Council, would modify the AAA network by moving a planned shared-use path from the Greenway to High Point Road.

Existing Conditions

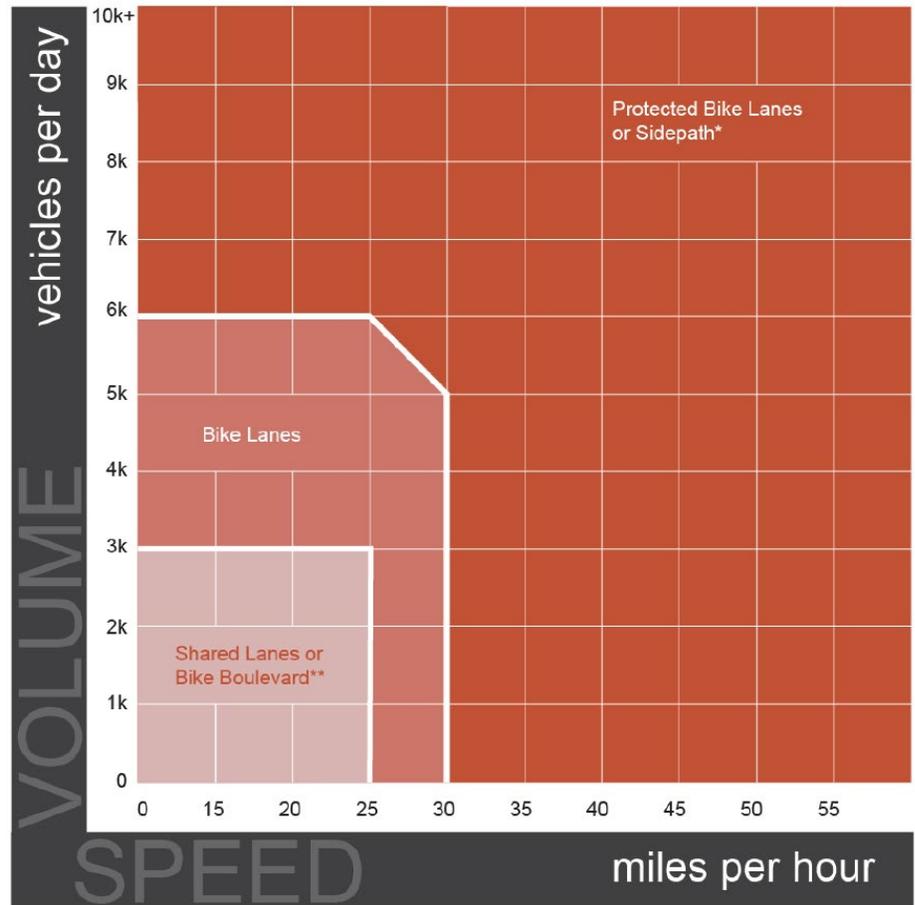
High Point Road

High Point Road has a variety of cross-sections between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road:

- Old Sauk Road to High Point Court: variable
- High Point Court to Brule Street: two lanes of car traffic; striped bicycle lanes; parking on both sides
- Brule Street to Tree Lane: median; two lanes of car traffic; parking on both sides; no bicycle lanes (see diagram below)
- Tree Lane to Mineral Point Road: two lanes of car traffic; striped bicycle lanes; parking on one side

With the intermittent bicycle lanes, speed of traffic, and relatively high traffic count, a number of people have reported feeling unsafe bicycling on High Point Road throughout the West Area Plan process and in other recent engagement. This likely serves to

depress bicycle use in the area – if people feel unsafe, they tend to avoid a route or don't bike at all. Additionally, the High Point-Mineral Point intersection is unsafe as currently configured, which has led to several crashes. It appears on the City's [High Injury Network \(HIN\) map](#). The remainder of High Point is not on the HIN map. The median between Brule and Tree Lane was installed in the mid-1990s in an attempt to tame speeding due to an overly wide street and low utilization of on-street parking. Unfortunately, no provision for bicycle facilities were made through that section – if bike facilities are to be added through this section either parking on both sides of the street or the median would need to be removed. Overall, High Point Road provides excellent north-south connectivity from downtown Middleton on the north



*To determine whether to provide a shared-use path or separated bike lane, consider pedestrian and bicycle volumes or, in the absence of volume, consider land use.

**The preferred traffic volume for bike boulevards and shared lanes is 2,000 vehicles per day or less. Above this volume, additional considerations should be made to reduce speeds and/or limit the possibility for potential future increases in vehicle volumes.



to Mid Town Road on the south (and eventually McKee Road), making it the longest stretch of uninterrupted road between Pleasant View Road/CTH M and Verona Road/Midvale Boulevard. However, the car traffic, speed, and variable bicycle facilities make it an uncomfortable route for many bicyclists, especially families with children. Destinations along the way include the Princeton Club, Marcus Point Cinema, Walgreens, Alicia Ashman Library, and an SSM clinic. West Towne Mall is not as accessible from High Point as it is from Westfield. East-west connections to and from High Point are limited by the Beltline to the west and the Sauk Creek Greenway to the east. The February 23, 2024 West Area Plan Public Review Draft shows planned Beltline underpasses at Sauk Creek Park and west of Tramore Trail, which would open up further destinations to the west but also require Wisconsin Department of Transportation partnership to implement.

High Point-Westfield Existing Conditions Comparison ¹		
Element	High Point	Westfield
Traffic Count ²	5,500-6,200	2,750-3,200
Posted Speed Limit	30 mph	30 mph
Percent of drivers over 30 mph ³	61% near Tree Ln 49% near Sauk Creek Dr	41% near Tree Ln 16% near Farmington Way
Bicycle Facilities	Varies ⁴	On-Street, unbuffered
Right-Of-Way Width (ft)	80-82	80
Pavement Width (ft)	44-54 ⁵	44

1: Between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road.
 2: Average Weekday Traffic in vehicles per day; numbers pulled 3/26/2024.
 3: 2019 Speed Data
 4: None for portion; on-street and unbuffered for portion.
 5: Includes median for the portion of High Point with a median.

Westfield Road

Westfield Road is about a half-mile to the east of High Point Road. Other than missing a sidewalk along the Sunset Memory Gardens frontage just north of Mineral Point Road, it has a consistent cross-section between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road that includes sidewalks on both sides, parking on both sides, unbuffered bicycle lanes on both sides, and one lane of traffic in each direction. Traffic calming speed humps and enhanced crosswalks were installed in 2022 between Farmington Way and Southwick Circle. Westfield between Greenhaven Circle and Millstone Road is on the City's HIN.

Westfield currently ends at Mineral Point Road. While the adopted Odana Area Plan and draft West Area Plan both call for Westfield to be extended south through West Towne Mall and under the Beltline to Watts Road, that is unlikely to occur in the next 20 or so years because it would require demolition and redevelopment of West Towne Mall, in addition to Wisconsin DOT buy-in for a Beltline underpass and acquisition of property from Wal-Mart. Westfield also has less connectivity to the north, dead ending at Fox Point Circle, and fewer destinations along the way than High Point Road.



North-South Shared-Use Path/Bike Facility Alternatives

Enhancing north-south connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists (via a shared-use path) or bicyclists (via enhanced on-street bicycle facilities) between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road in the West Area is reviewed below, with a summary chart comparing the three alternatives.

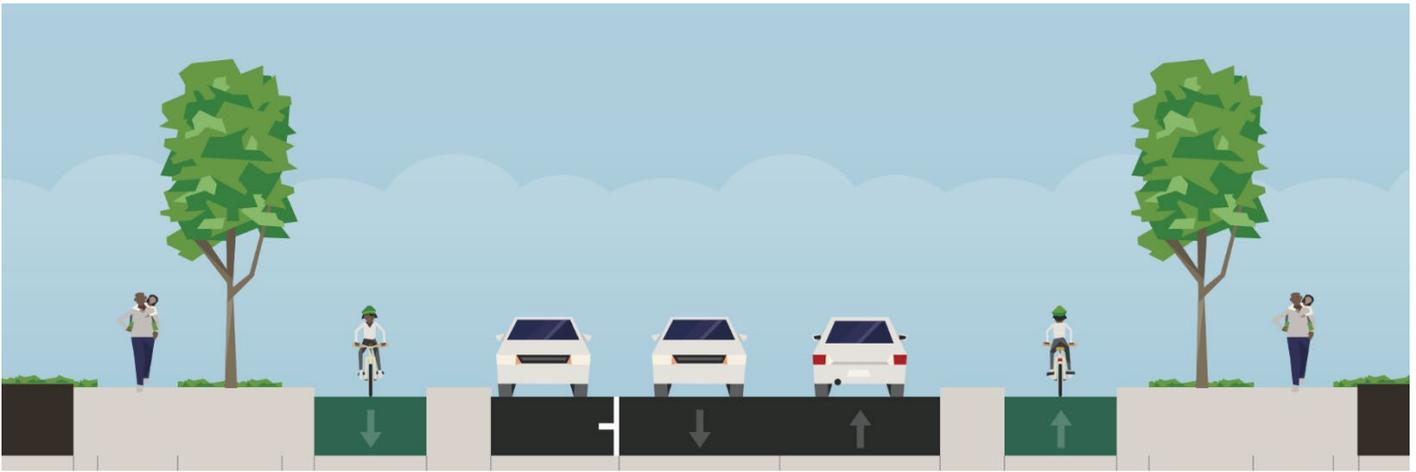
High Point Road: Two-Way Bicycle Facility

An option to convert High Point Road to an AAA bike route is to retrofit the street to construct a two-way facility along one side of the street, separated from traffic by a median (see diagram below). Such a retrofit would require removing parking from one side of the street and removing the existing median and pedestrian refuge islands. On-street parking is sparsely used, so elimination of parking from one side of the street should not significantly impact the neighborhood. The existing sidewalk and terrace would remain. The high upfront cost of median removal would result in lower long-term maintenance costs because it is easier and faster for the City to clear one two-way bicycle facility than two one-way bicycle facilities. A median separating path users from adjacent traffic would greatly increase bicyclist comfort above the current configuration, but path users would still need to cross 24 driveway aprons and five cross-streets between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road. Having so many driveway crossings along the approximately mile-long section of High Point is not ideal, as each is a conflict point with side path users, and would need to have appropriate green marking, signage, and raised driveway crossings to alert drivers to the two-way facility.



High Point Road: Protected On-Street Bicycle Facility

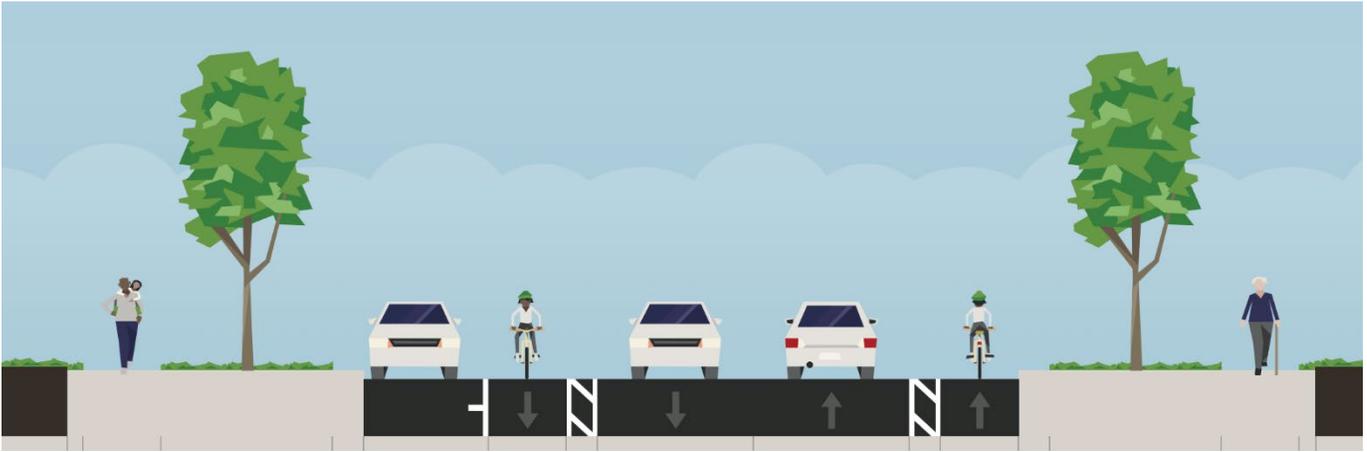
A second option to convert High Point Road to an AAA bike route is to remove parking on both sides and retrofit the street to construct one-way protected lanes in each direction (see diagram at right). This approach would not require removal of the median between Tree Lane and Brule Street but would necessitate removal of parking on both sides of High Point. The lower up-front cost of the retrofit would lead to longer-term maintenance costs, as specialized equipment and plowing each direction would be needed to clear two narrow bike lanes. Like the above option, a



median separating path users from adjacent traffic would greatly increase bicyclist comfort above the current configuration. A bollard protected lane would be the least expensive to construct but would also have the highest maintenance cost as bollards frequently need to be replaced and are harder to plow in the winter. They also provide less protection for people biking. A median is more costly to construct but is easier to maintain in the long-term. Bicyclists would still need to cross 24 driveway aprons and five cross-streets between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road but would be traveling in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic. This configuration would likely benefit from the addition of corner islands to provide more protection at intersections.

[Westfield Road](#)

With its lower traffic count, making Westfield Road an AAA bike route would not require as significant a change as High Point Road. The main changes would be to lower the speed limit and add a buffer to the existing bicycle lanes, which could be achieved by removing parking from one side of the street (see diagram below). Some additional traffic calming measures, beyond what was installed a few years ago, would further enhance Westfield as an AAA bicycle route in conjunction with buffering the bike lanes. The West Area Plan draft introduced at Council includes both High Point Road and Westfield Road as AAA bike routes, as there is a half-mile between the two streets.



[Sauk Creek Greenway](#)

A shared-use path in Sauk Creek Greenway would serve as an AAA bicycle route. If implemented as shown to the Transportation Commission in December 2023, the AAA route would connect from the path along the north side of Mineral Point Road via a shared-use path along Randolph Drive, through the greenway, to the High Point-Old Sauk intersection. From there it would continue north as a side path to the planned shared-use path underpass of the Beltline just west of Tramore Trail. D’onofrio Drive, south of Mineral Point Road, has on-street bicycle lanes, but does not serve as an AAA connection at this time. Destinations are similar to the High Point Road alternatives, but there is less connectivity to the south, as path users would need to head southwest on D’onofrio Drive to cross the Beltline on

High Point Road but with the completion of the next phase of the West Towne Path there will be a new connection at Zor Shrine Place. However, east-west connectivity across the greenway could be greatly enhanced by a path – there are six public access spurs from streets along the west side of the greenway and two spurs plus Walnut Grove Park on the east side of the greenway.

North-South Path/Bicycle Route Comparison

The chart below compares north-south shared-use path and bicycle routes in the West Area west of Gammon Road between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road.

North-South Shared Use Path/Bike Route Alternatives Comparison				
Element ¹	High Point – Two-Way Protected Bicycle Facility	High Point – Protected On-Street	Westfield – Buffered On-Street	Sauk Creek Greenway Shared-Use Path ²
Safety/Protection	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●
On-Street Parking Impact	●●	●●	●●	●
Driveway Crossings (West/East)	25/24	25/24	19/17	4/8
Street Crossings (West/East)	5/5	5/5	3/9	2/1
Connectivity/Access to Destinations	●●●	●●●	●●	●●
Meets All Ages and Abilities?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
General Cost - Construction	\$\$\$ ³	\$ ⁴	\$	\$\$/\$\$\$ ⁵
General Cost – Ongoing Maintenance	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$	\$\$

1: One dot or \$ = low impact or low cost; three = high impact or cost.
2: Route as shown at Transportation Commission in December 2024 and on the February 23, 2024 West Area Plan Public Review Draft, including connection from the greenway to Mineral Point Road via a path alongside Randolph Drive.
3: Requires removal of median between Tree Lane and Brule Street and removal of crossing refuges at Copper Circle and Sauk Creek Drive. If done as a stand-alone project.
4: If the median from Tree Lane to Brule Street is maintained, which would require no on-street parking for that section. \$\$ if done as a stand-alone project and a concrete median is used instead of bollards.
5: \$\$ if shared-use path overlaps maintenance access, \$\$\$ if it does not.