Potential Short Term Solutions to Improve Traffic Safety on Park Street and Other Similar Arterial Streets

Transportation Commission Meeting

April 15, 2026

We look into every crash.

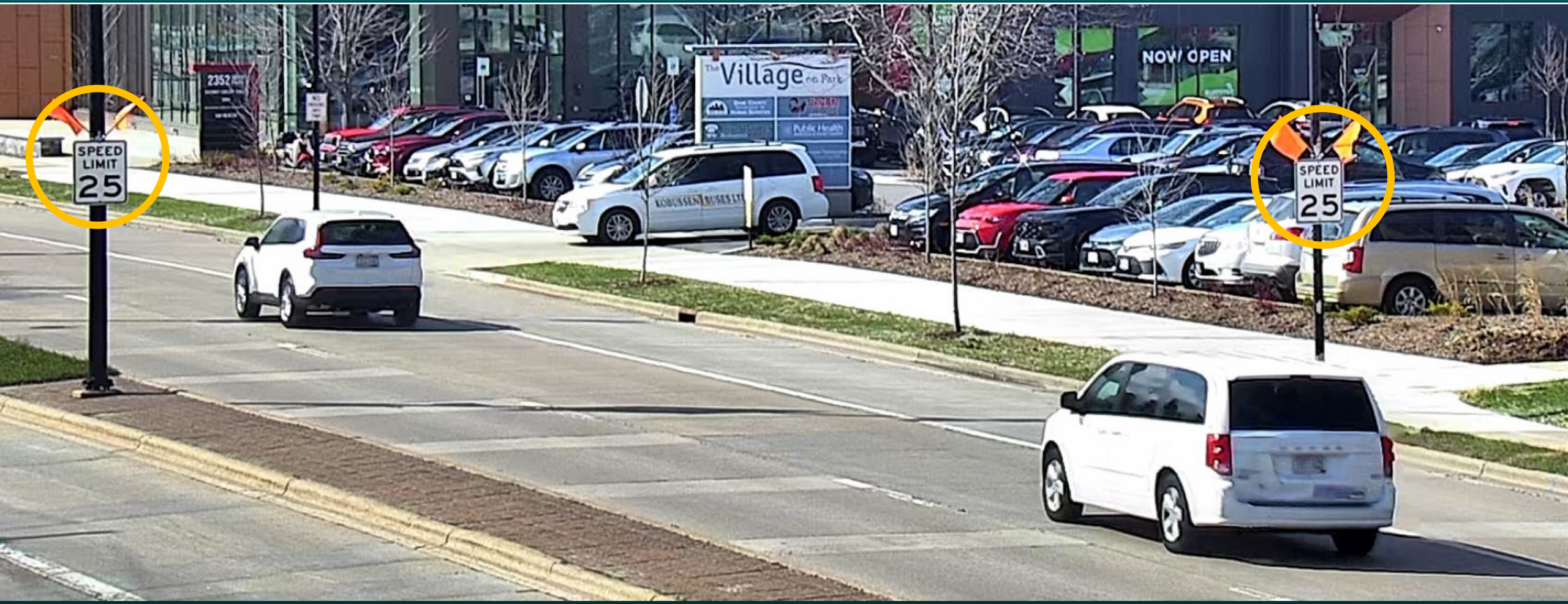
Traffic Engineering Rapid Response

- Verify traffic control immediately
- Rapid Response Team field visit
- Review past crash history
- Collaborate with Police
- Review police reports when available
- Understand factors involved in the crash
- Identify any possible short-term measures to be implemented quickly
- Identify longer-term safety improvements

Safety measures implemented and planned on Park

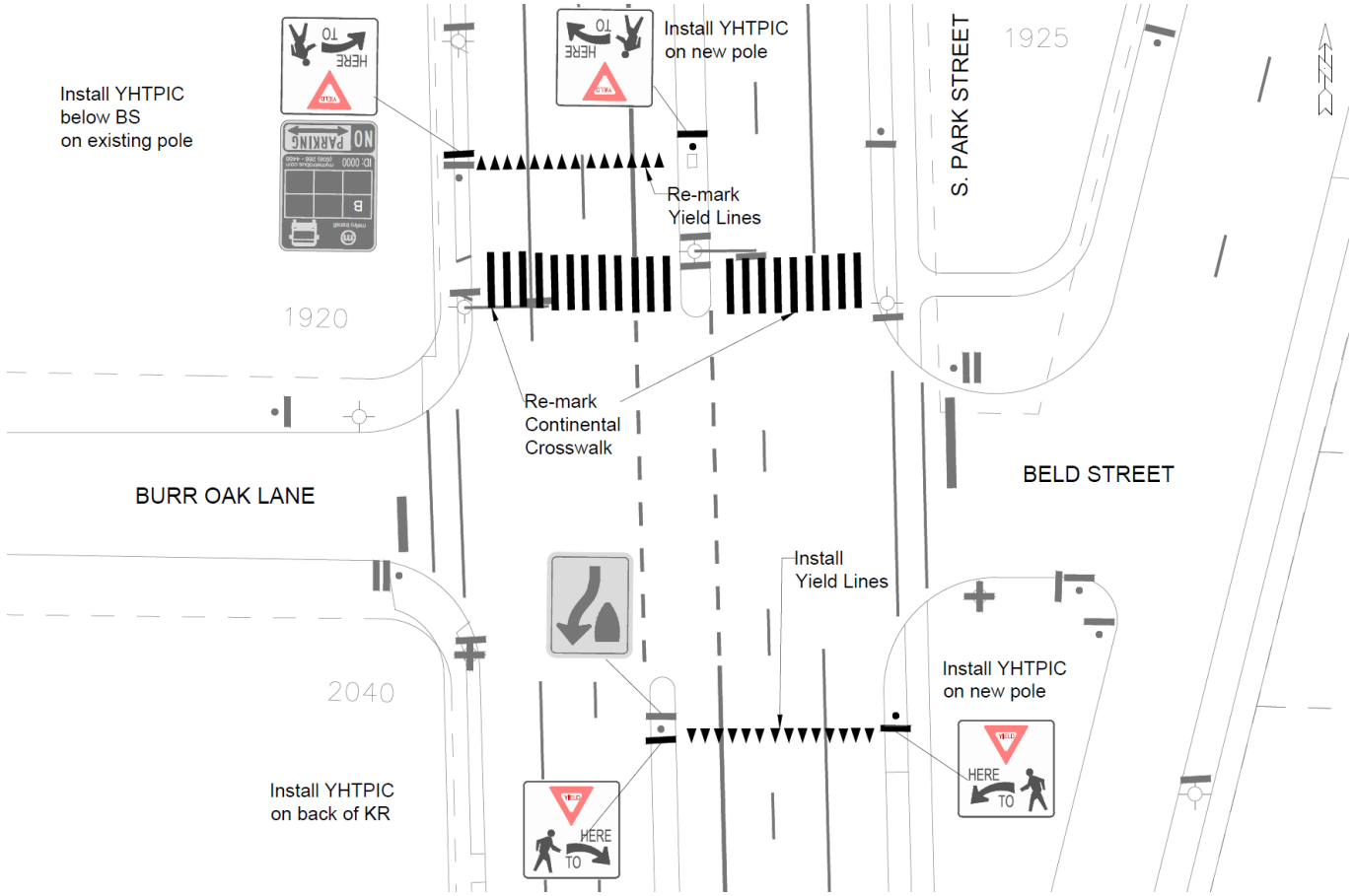
- Median refuge
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons
- High visibility crosswalk
- Pedestrian crossing signage
- Lowering speed limit to 25 mph
- Flagging speed limit signs (added immediately after learning about speeding as a main factor during the February 5, 2026 crash)
- Refreshing crosswalk markings (planned for 2026)
- Bus lane lettering (planned for 2026)
- Yield to pedestrian signage (planned for 2026)
- Overhead driver feedback signs (proposed for 2026 as part of Safe Streets Madison)
- Traffic signals (proposed as part of BRT)

Flagging All Speed Limit Signs (Done)



Refreshing Crosswalk Markings (planned)

- Street markings on Park Street including crosswalks will be refreshed in 2026



Bus lane lettering painting

- Add additional Bus lane markings with 2026 marking project
- To discourage drivers from using the bus lane to by pass stopped vehicles in the general traffic lane

Additional Yield to Pedestrians Signage

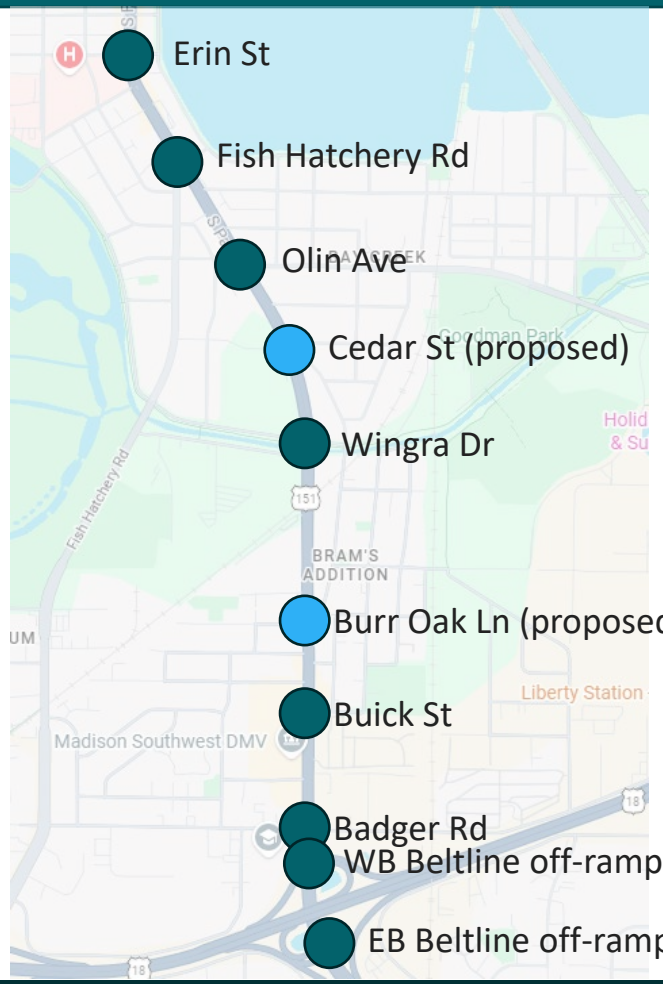
- To supplement the exisiting yield line and the pedestrian crossing signage
- Will be installed on Park Street this summer

Overhead Electronic Driver Feedback Signs

- To remind drivers to operate at a safe speed
- Will propose as Safe Streets Madison project on Park Street for TC approval

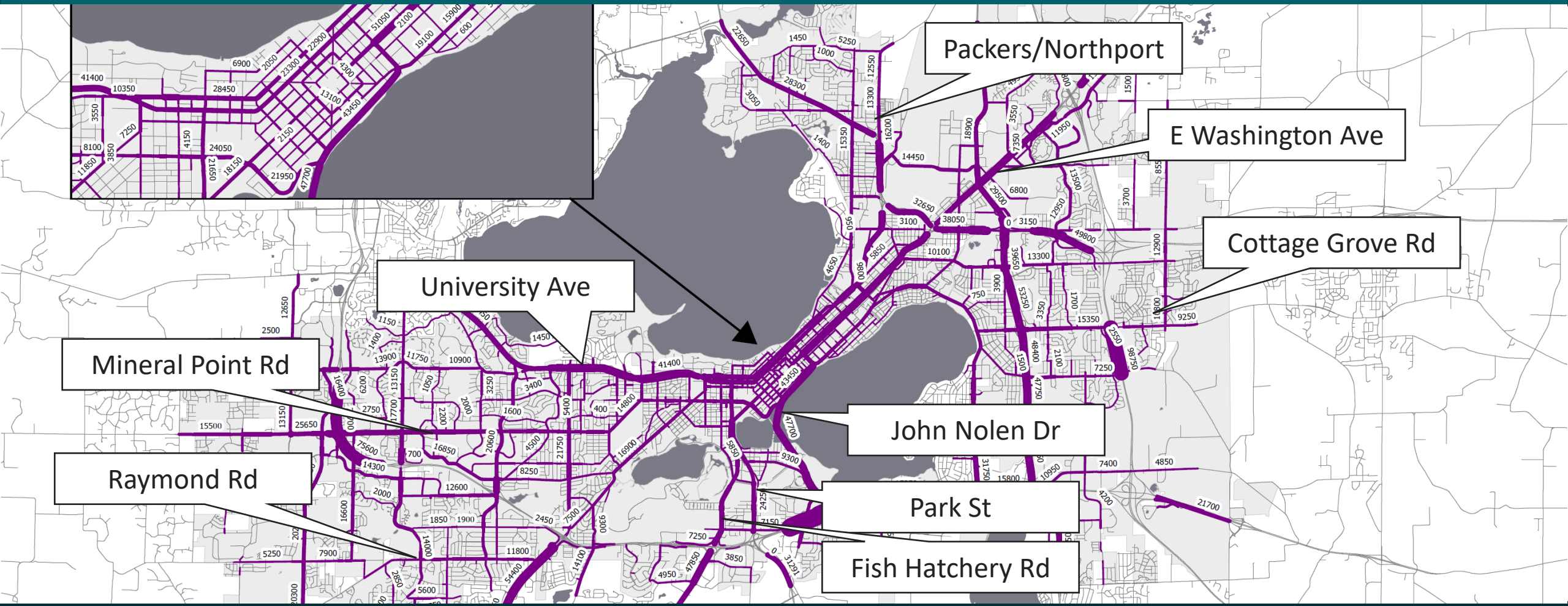
Added signals

- Submitted signal warrant application to WisDOT January 2026
- WisDOT response 2/26/26: “No volume-based traffic signal warrants (typically used in warrant evaluation on the STH system) are met at any intersection.”
- The city is currently negotiating with WisDOT on a Jurisdictional Transfer on Park Street that would give city control and not require WisDOT approval



The tragic crash on Park Street is emblematic of a larger problem

Park Street is one of multiple high traffic multi-lane major arterials in Madison

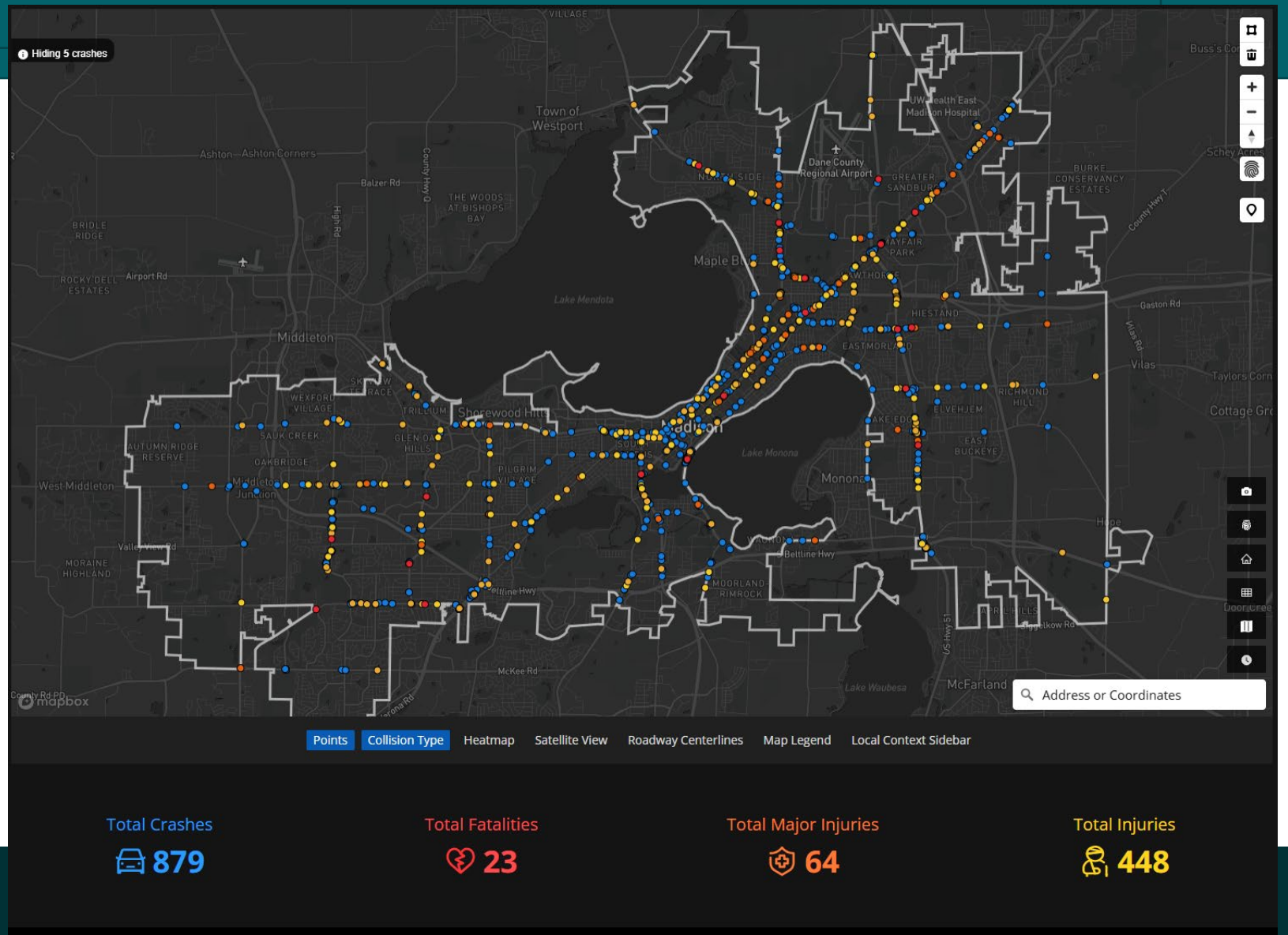


Major Factor: Speeding

2021 through 2025 arterial crashes with “Speed” listed as a contributing factor in the police report

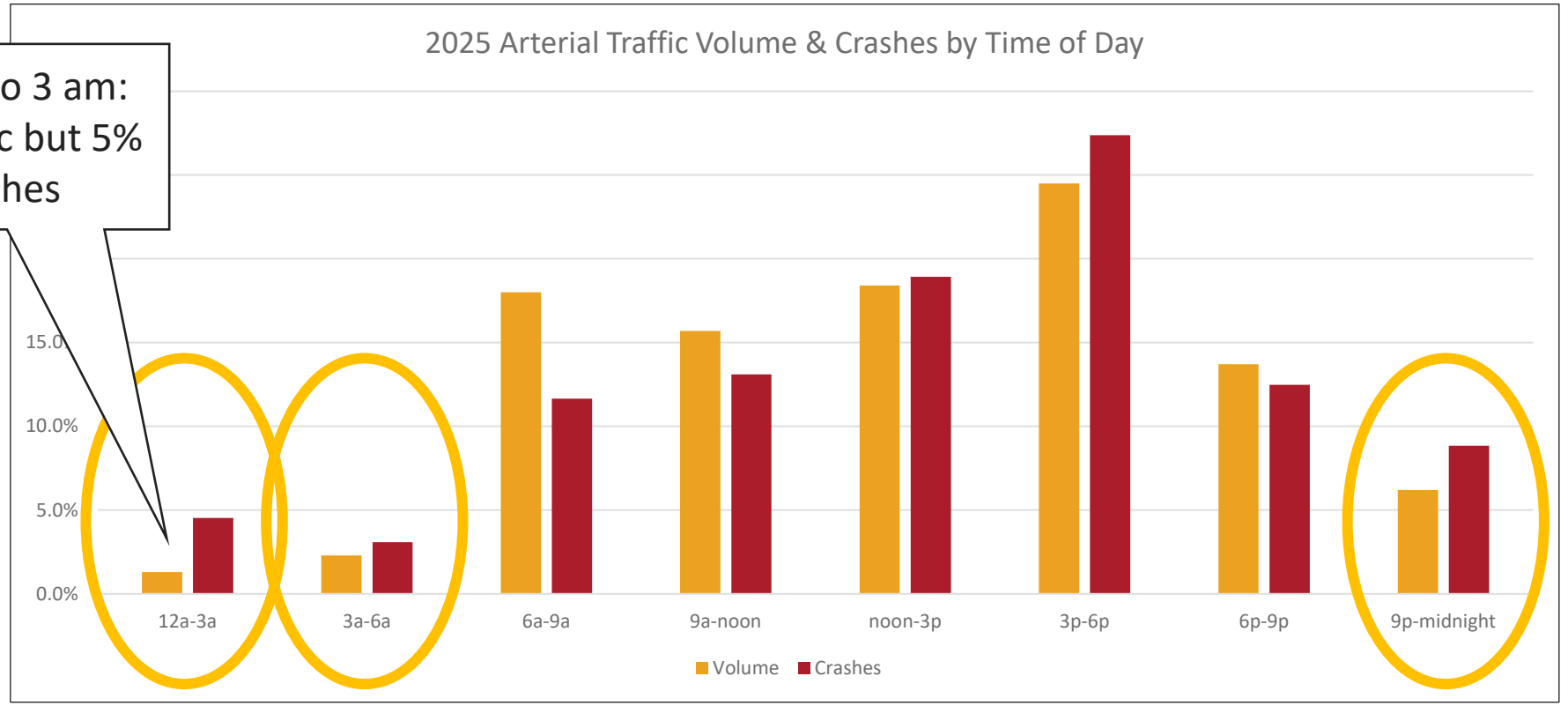
“Speed” crashes account for:

- 10% of total crashes
- 12% of total injuries
- 25% of major injuries
- 51% of fatalities



Additional issue: late night crashes

Midnight to 3 am:
1% of traffic but 5% of crashes



The best tool we have is street rebuilding

We have a toolbox for neighborhood streets but the toolbox for arterials is small.

FHWA **Traffic Calming ePrimer**

Traffic Calming Measure	Segment or Intersection	Functional Classification		
		Thoroughfare or Major	**Collector or Residential Collector**	**Local or Local Residential**
Horizontal Deflection				
Lateral Shift	Segment	3	5	5
Chicane	Segment	1	5	5
Realigned Intersection	Intersection	1	5	5
Traffic Circle	Intersection	1	3	5
Small Modern & Mini-Roundabout	Intersection	3	3	5
Roundabout	Intersection	5	3	1
Vertical Deflection				
Speed Hump	Segment	1	5	5
Speed Cushion	Segment	1	5	5
Speed Table	Segment	3	5	5
Offset Speed Table	Segment	3	5	5
Raised Crosswalk	Both	3	5	5
Raised Intersection	Intersection	3	5	5
Street Width Reduction				
Corner Extension	Intersection	5	5	5
Choker	Segment	5	5	5
Median Island	Both	5	5	5
On-Street Parking	Segment	5	5	5
Road Diet	Both	5	5	3
Routing Restriction				
Diagonal Diverter	Intersection	1	3	3
Full Closure	Both	1	3	3
Half Closure	Intersection	1	5	5
Median Barrier	Intersection	3	5	5
Forced Turn Island	Intersection	3	5	5

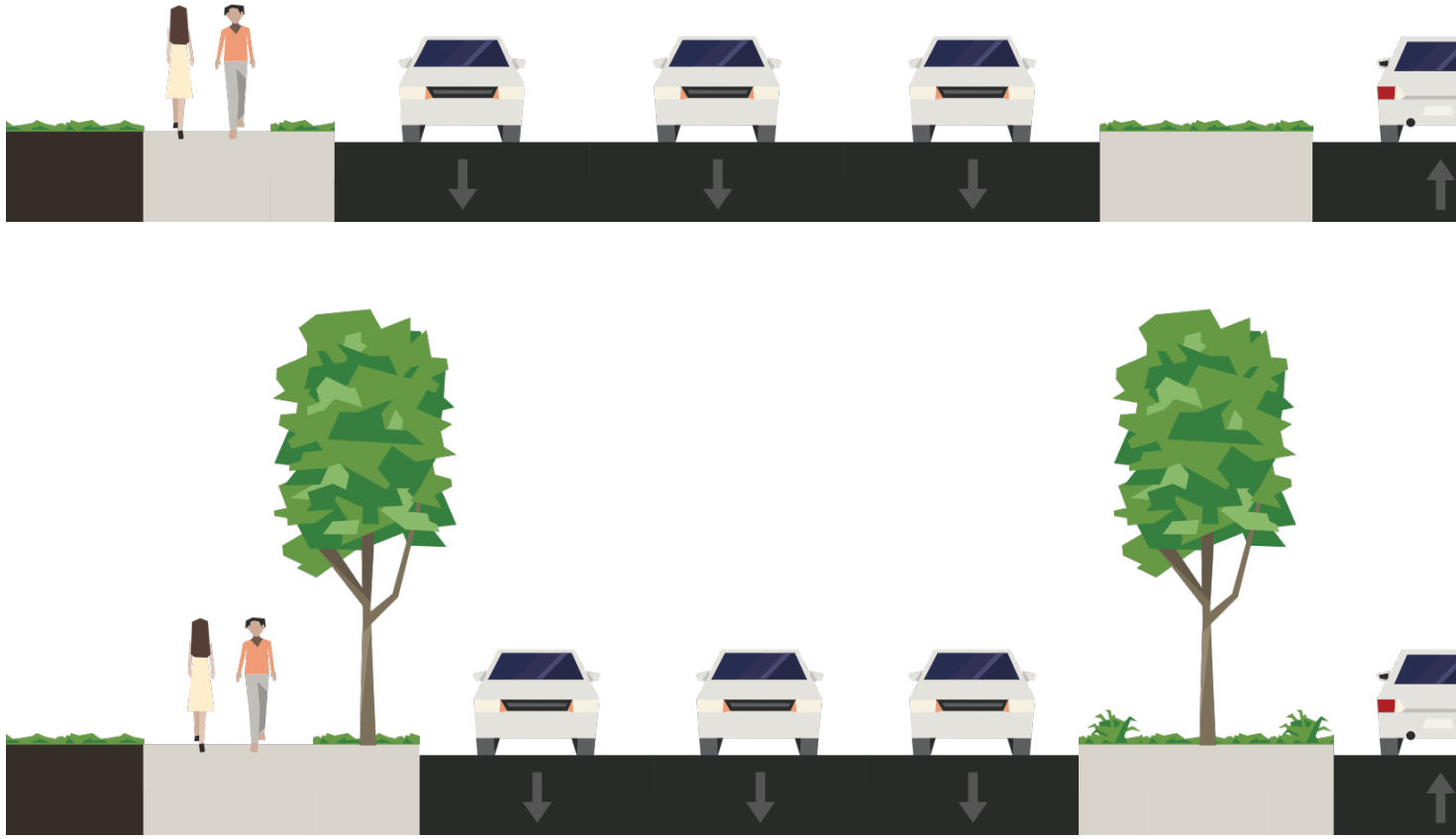
5 – traffic calming measure may be **appropriate**

3 – caution; traffic calming measure **could be inappropriate**

1 – traffic calming measure is **likely inappropriate**

Much of what we know is effective can only be done when we rebuild a street

- Narrower lanes
- Street Trees
- Medians
- Redesigned intersections
- Roundabouts
- Requires:
  - Moving curbs
  - Rebuilding drainage



What can we do without a rebuild?

Advance Warning Signs for Pedestrian Crossing

- Not appropriate on urban arterials
  - No recommended in urban settings since adjacent intersections in close proximity can lead to confusion
  - May make drivers more alert on arterials with a long spacing between pedestrian crossings
- Not appropriate on Park St

	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness	X		
cost	X		
applicable	No		

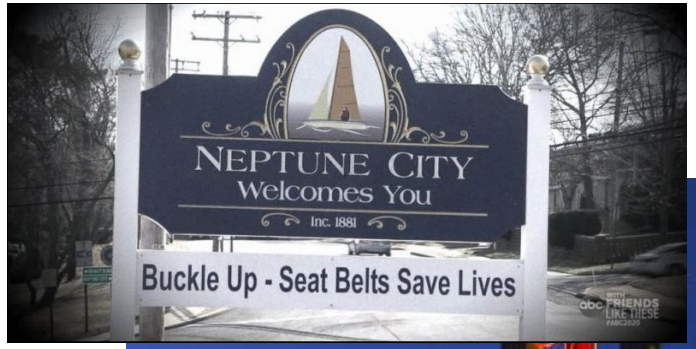
Oversized Signage (not Recommended)

- Not appropriate on urban arterials
  - Larger signs make the roadway feel more like a highway, could encourage drivers to go faster
- Not appropriate on Park St.

	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness	X		
cost	X		
applicable	No		

Gateway signs

- May be effective on arterials
  - Make it clear to drivers that they are leaving a highway and entering a busy urban environment
- Can be implemented without roadway reconstruction
- Could work on Park St.



	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness	?	?	?
cost	X		
applicable	Edge of town / highway offramps		

Positive messaging for safe speeds

- May be effective on arterials
  - Positive reinforcement improves behavior
- May have regulatory issues
  - Investigate compliance with new MUTCD
  - May be possible through a request to experiment
- Could work on Park St.

Photo credit: abc News

	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness	?	?	?
cost		X	
applicable	Everywhere if allowed		

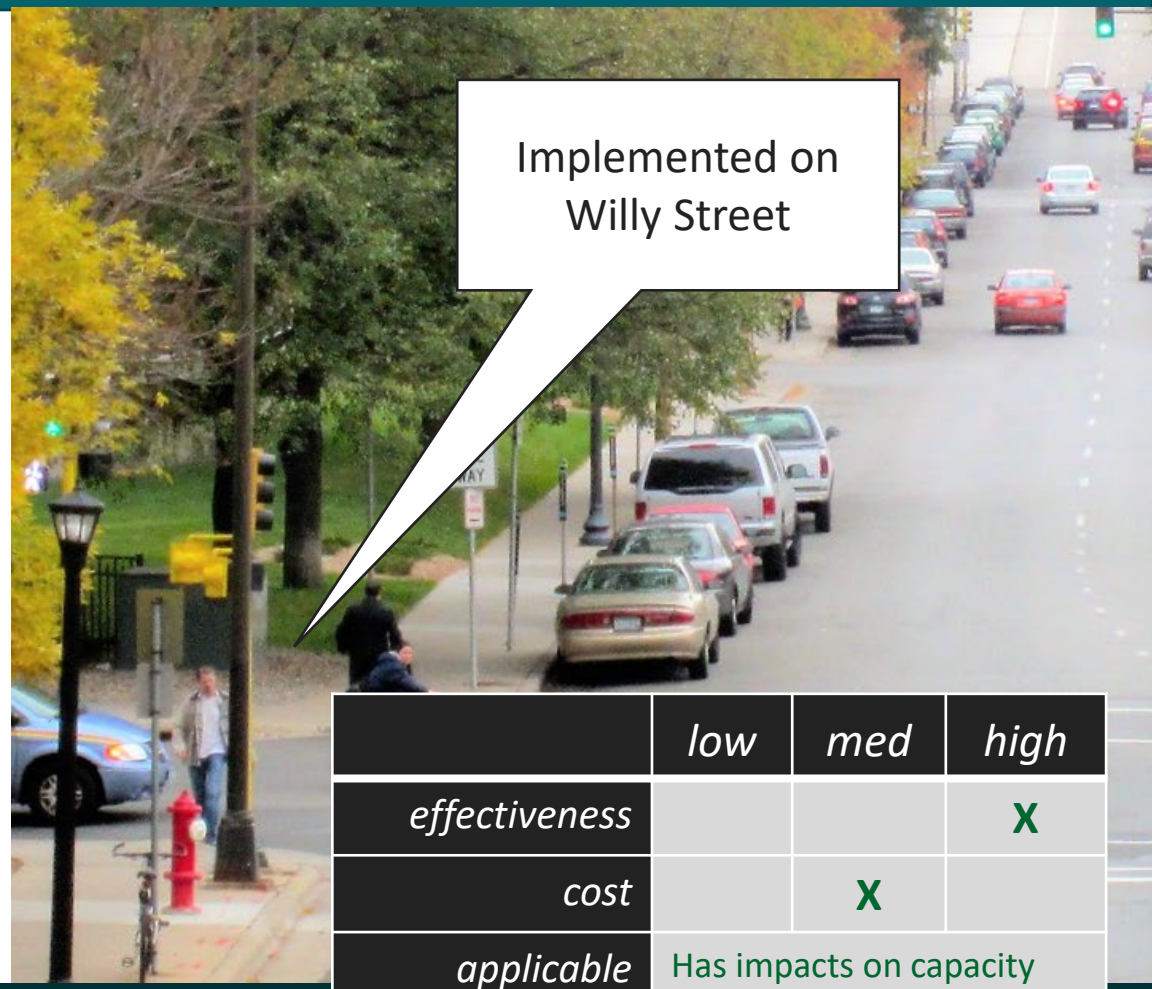
Pedestrian bumpouts

- Effective on some arterials
  - Encourage slower speeds
  - Shorten pedestrian crossings
- Can be implemented with temporary materials or with concrete
- Will not work on Park St.
  - Can be done only with 24/7 parking

	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness			X
cost		X	
applicable	Streets with 24/7 parking		

Reducing traffic lanes with 24/7 parking

- Effective on some arterials
  - Encourages slower speeds
  - Allows bumpouts
- Would have major impacts on Park St.
  - WisDOT unlikely to approve lane reduction
  - Traffic volume on Park is 22,000 vehicles per day; capacity of a 2 lane street with turn lanes is about 18,000 vehicles per day.
  - Parking may have low utilization



	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness			X
cost		X	
applicable	Has impacts on capacity		

Speed tables and raised intersections

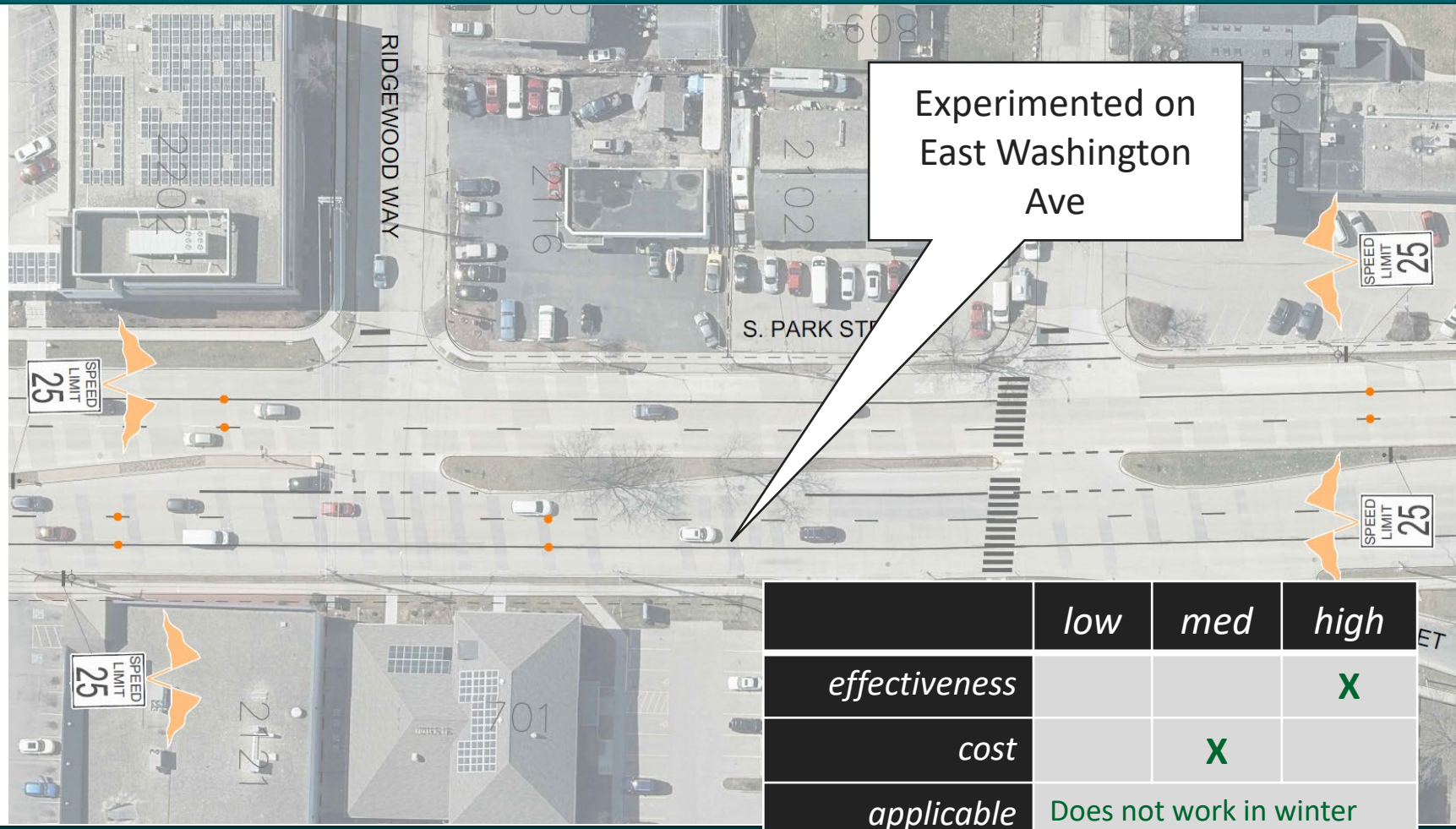
- Effective on some arterials
  - Encourages slower speeds
- Requires reconstruction of section of street
- May have issues on Park St.
  - Potential issues with emergency vehicles

Implemented on Monroe Street: Harrison, Knickerbocker, Glenway

	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness			**X**
cost			**XS**
applicable	Impacts emergency vehicles		

Tubular pylons between lanes

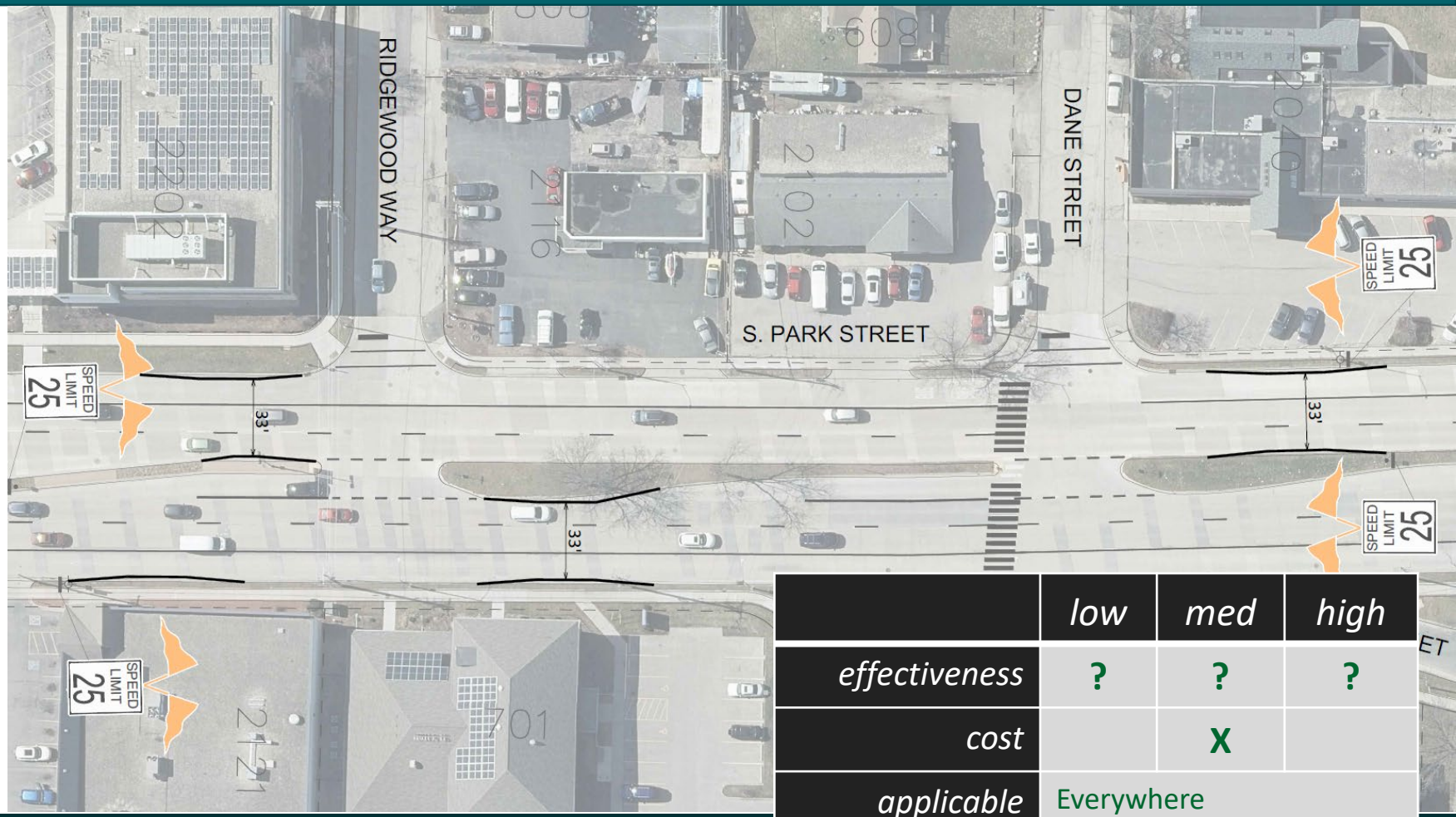
- Effective on some arterials
  - Can only be done during the summer because of plows
- Requires frequent replacement
- Could work on Park St.



	low	*med*	*high*
effectiveness			X
cost		X	
applicable	Does not work in winter		

Lane narrowing with curbs

- Likely effective on some arterials
  - Compatible with plows
- Can be implemented with temporary materials or with concrete
- Could work on Park St.
  - Requires buses to shift slightly leftwards
  - May require shifting and remarking lane lines near the temporary curbs



	low	med	high
effectiveness	?	?	?
cost		X	
applicable	Everywhere		

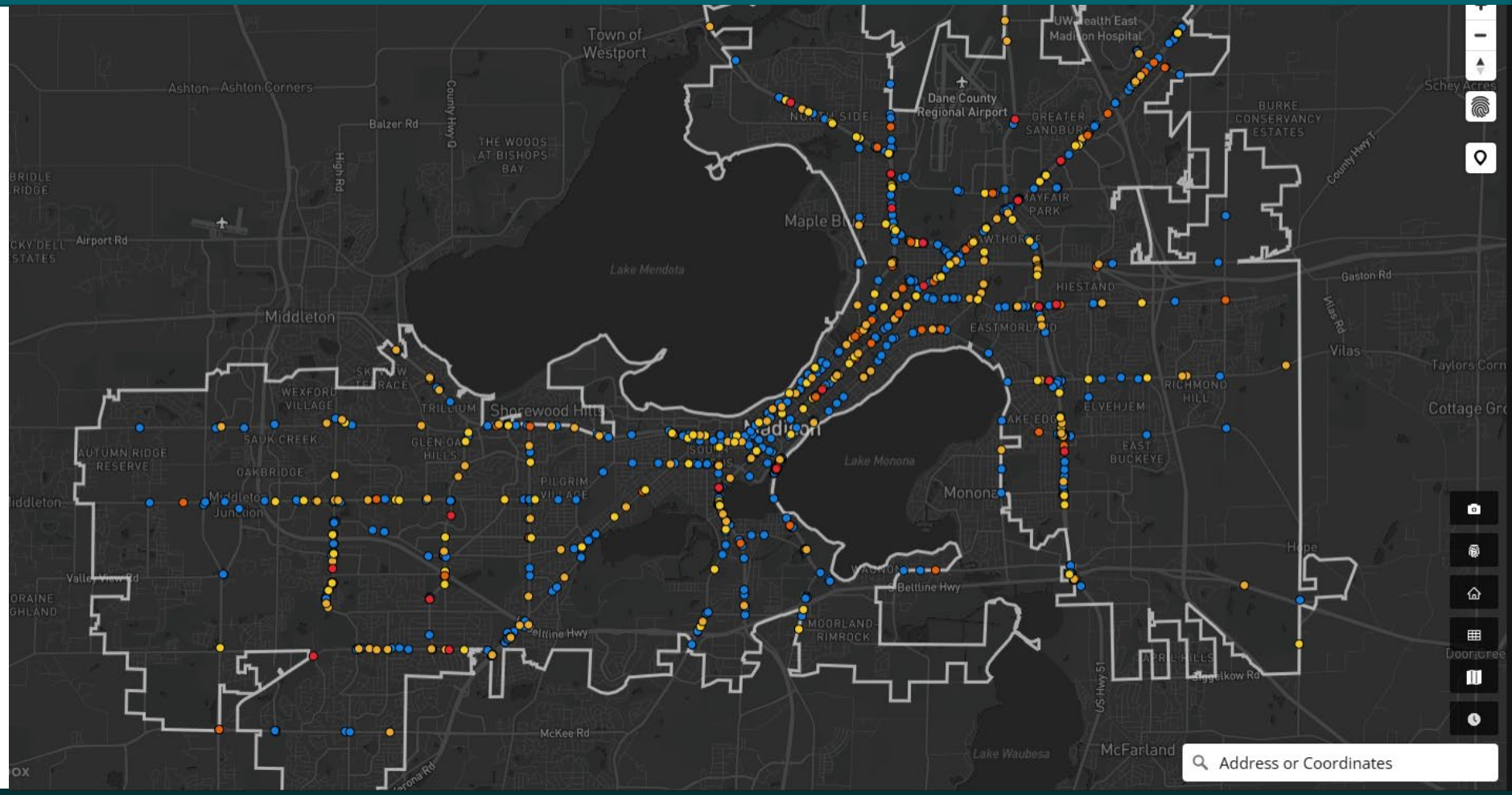
We will test options.

Proposal: Experimental Projects

- Tubular markers
- Gateway signage
- Lane narrowing with temporary curbs
- Positive messaging for safe speeds

Proposal: Experimental Projects

- Use crash data to choose experimental project locations



Next step: Systematic Speed Analysis Using Streetlight Data

Streetlight has anonymized ”big data” for trips, with origins, destinations, paths, and times.

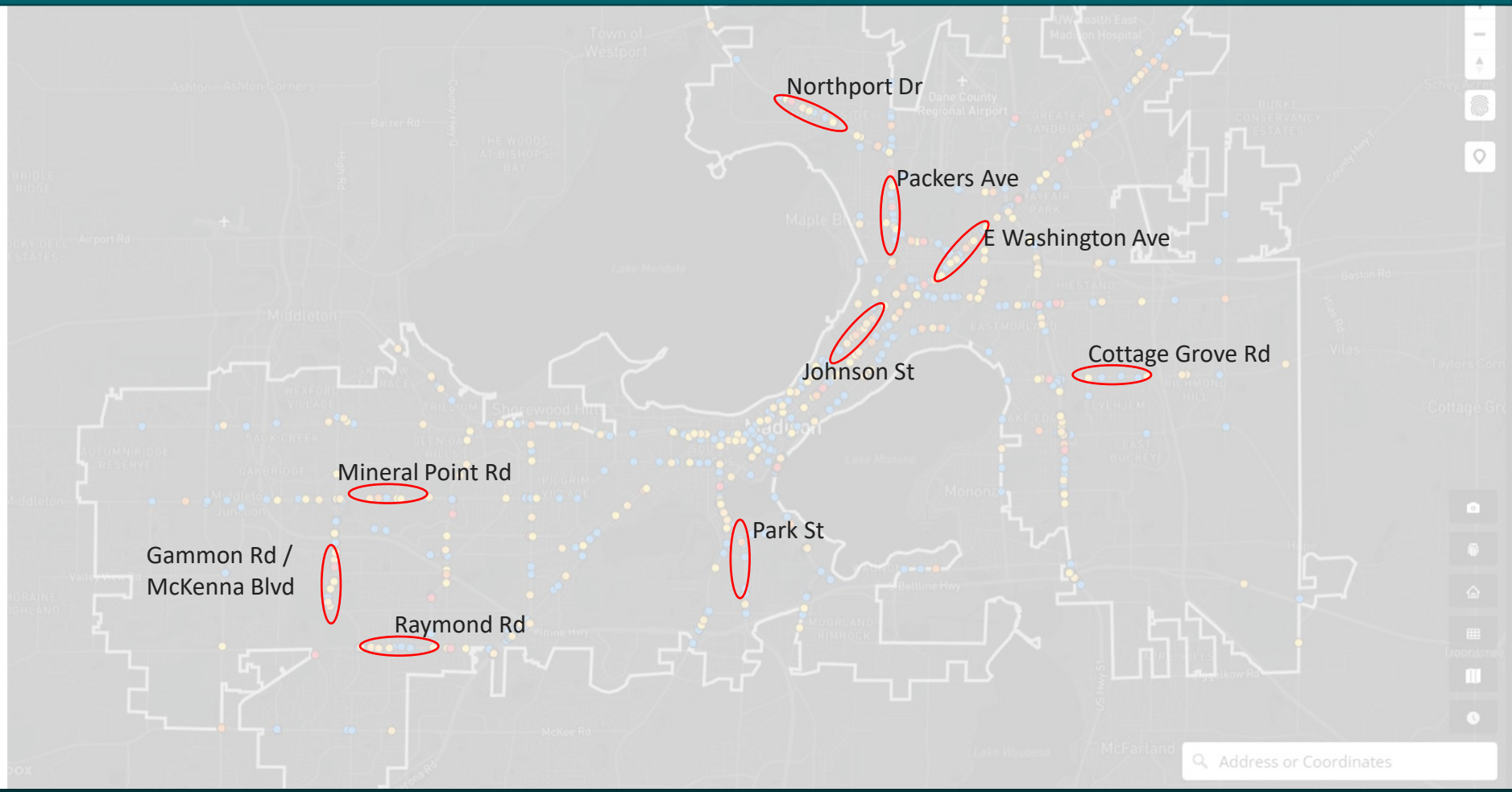
We believe we can use this data citywide to identify areas where there is a high rate of extreme speeding.

This is more comprehensive than traditional speed checks.

Work is pending renewal of contract.

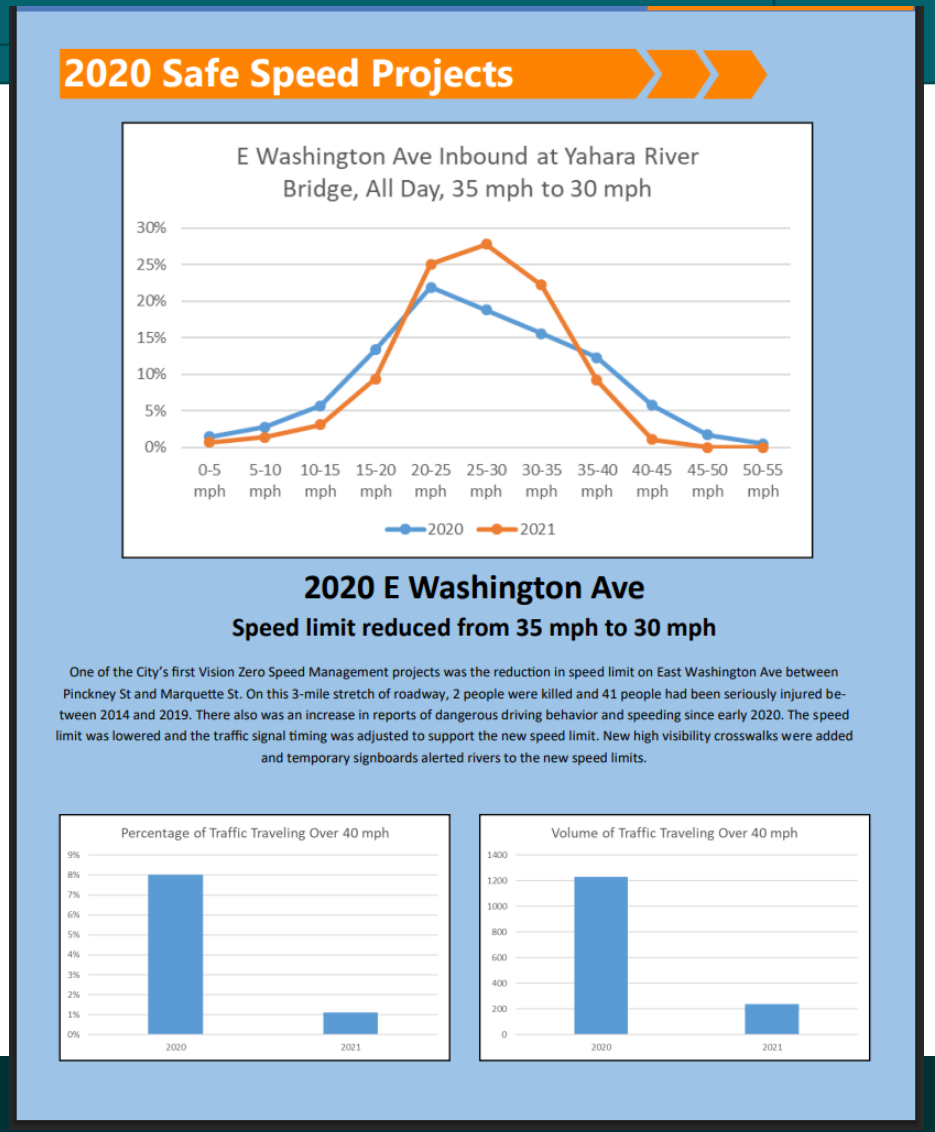
Proposal: Experimental Projects

- Select locations with traffic cameras
- Consult with MPD
- Do 3-4 locations in 2026



Data Collection and Evaluation

- Experiments are intended as a way to determine which measures work
- Collecting before and after speed/volume data
- Similar to the Speed Limit Reduction Speed Reports

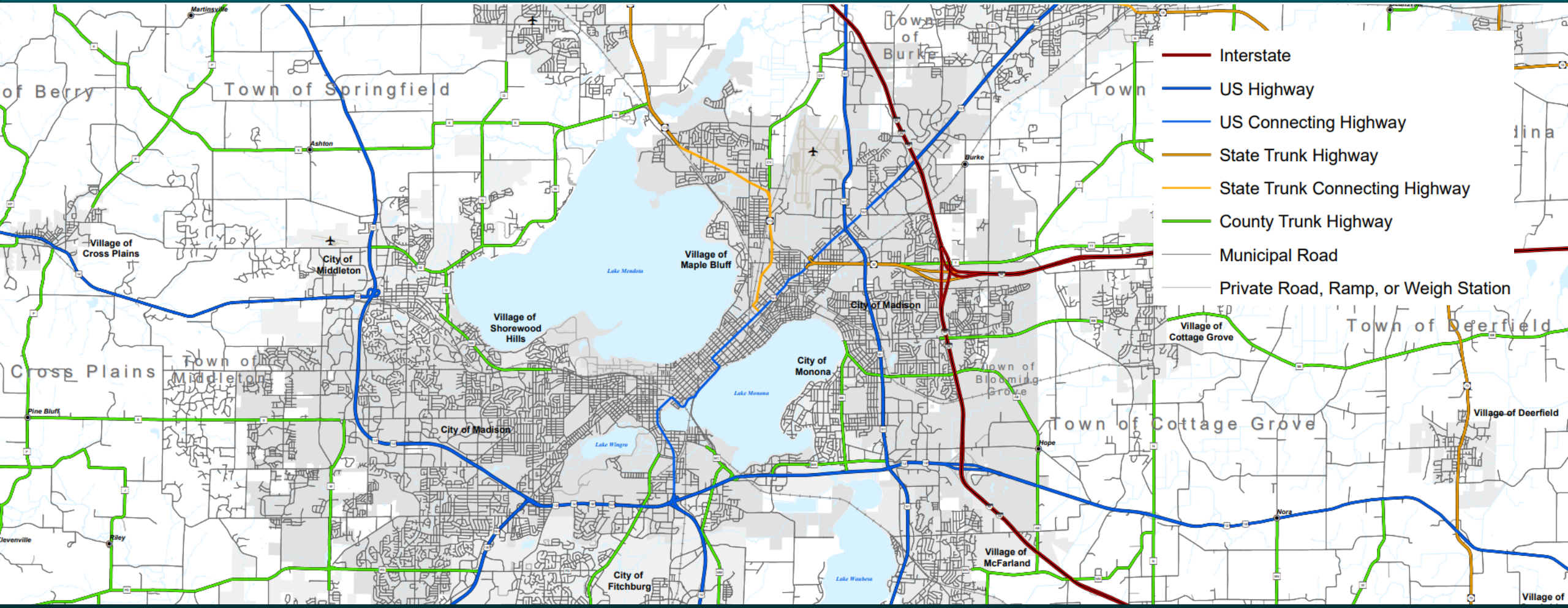


The longer term solution is rebuilding streets

Eventual Solution on Park Street

- BRT project includes:
  - Narrower lanes
  - Upgraded crosswalks
  - New signals

Many of the most problematic streets are not under our control.



WisDOT Safety Standards on Urban Arterial Streets

- WisDOT standards such as FDM (Facilities Development Manual) and TEOpS (Traffic Engineering Operations Manual) play a critical role on how these roads are designed and operated
- Design speed on urban arterial streets needs to be further lowered
- Better accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users
- Geometric standards need to be modernized, such as lane width and turning radii
- Safety for all road users needs to be prioritized over vehicle LOS (level of service)

We also need culture change.

Vision for the Future

- Vision Zero: All road users deserve safe mobility
- Safe System Approach: Shared responsibility
- Partnership among all levels of government