

North Bassett Street Parking Protected Bike Lane Pilot



DEPARTMENT OF

November 18, 2020



Pilot Evaluation

TRANSPORTATION

Bassett Street Corridor Study and Parking Protected Bike Lane Pilot Background

The Bassett Street Corridor Study recommended the parking protected bike lane design be implemented as a pilot project. Bike lanes separated by a parking lane are new to Madison. A pilot project on North Bassett Street allowed the city to monitor the performance before implementing further recommendations. In November 2019, construction was completed between Dayton Street and West Washington Avenue, with a parking protected bike lane on those two blocks.

If the pilot project on North Bassett Street does not meet expectations, the alternative with a bike lane to the left of parking can easily be implemented simply by changing the striping and signing on Bassett Street.

Reasons for this pilot implementation include the following:

- Better bicycle accommodations are needed between University and John Nolen Drive, as evidenced by previous bike infrastructure investments on Bassett Street.
- The relatively low volumes on Bassett Street make it a good candidate to test protected bike lanes. This test could provide needed information on how to maintain these facilities during the winter months, as well as how driveways and protected bike lanes interact.
- Because the proposed protected bike lane is at street grade and uses the same face of curb to face of curb dimension, it is easily converted back to a conventional buffered bike lane if the pilot project proves unsuccessful.

N Bassett Street Plan, Specifications and Estimate Approval

Common Council approval stated that the project includes a test of a bike lane configuration as recommended by the Transportation Commission under file #54640. To determine the results of the test, City Engineering, Traffic Engineering and Streets Division will monitor any safety issues resulting from the new configuration such as: crashes, visibility issues at intersections, driveways, or elsewhere, and reported conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians, and motor vehicles, will also monitor any excessive maintenance issues such as: the ability to remove snow and sweep the street in an efficient and cost effective manner and excessive replacement of delineators, and will also monitor reported complaints resulting from the new configuration. After 1 year of implementation, the results of these monitored items will be reported.

The Common Council approved a motion related to the N Bassett St Pilot that included that Transportation Commission will decide whether to continue or cancel the pilot 1 year after completion date.

Project Feedback

Feedback was solicited through a variety of methods. Engineering sent letters to residents on the impacted blocks both at completion of the project in 2019 and again to residents after August 15, 2020. Traffic Engineering issued a press release with information on sending feedback which did receive media

coverage. Traffic Engineering also sent an email to the Bike Madison list and included information on the website. Comments were also received via the City Report a Problem. A meeting was held with the Mifflin Neighborhood Association in October 2020 to review the parking protected bike lanes and receive feedback.

The City received just over 60 emails and Report a Problem submissions providing feedback or reporting issues with the parking protected bike lanes.

- Under 10% negative
- 10% neutral
- Initial comments unsure of success of winter maintenance but positive comments received after snow events
- Intersection concerns
- One residence had concerns over people parking illegally and blocking driveway
- Concerns over garbage/recycling cart placement
- Requests for more protected bike lanes in other locations

Evaluation Considerations

During the approval of the final N Bassett St design, the following items were listed as evaluation metrics for the parking protected bike lane.

- Safety
- Increased Bicycle Use
- Improved Bicycle Connections/Access
- User Confusion
- Facility Maintenance

1. Safety

A goal for Bassett Street is to improve safety for all users and the parking protected bike lanes were seen as the preferable way to accomplish that goal for people riding bicycles.

Reported Crashes

Since construction was completed, there have been two motor vehicle crashes. Neither crash involved the parking protected bike lane or people walking or biking. The crashes since construction completion were:

- 7/1/2020 – On Bassett just north of Mifflin - Sideswipe same direction – 2 Units (both vehicles) – No injuries/fatalities

- 8/4/2020 – On Bassett at Mifflin – Vehicle in SB right lane attempted left turn onto Mifflin, struck by vehicle in SB left lane – 2 Units (both vehicles) – No injuries/fatalities

Not all crashes are reported and there can also be near misses. However, the only conflicts reported via emails or Report a Problem were around the placement of garbage and recycling carts.

The majority of the emails were from people who bike who and comments generally were that they felt safer using N Bassett St now. Several commenters said that they felt more likely to bike this section of street with children with the parking protected bike lanes. A number of comments also were regarding preferring the parking protected bike lanes during winter. Comments included:

- It was very pleasant and felt quite safe. We felt comfortable enough to have a 10 and 12 year old use them.
- Please more of these! As a year round cyclist, it so much safer for me and my daughter to ride to daycare with these in place.
- As a car-driver and bike-commuter, I really appreciate the protected bike lanes.
- One benefit that I hadn't realized until recently is that the separation of lanes also prevents the build-up of snow/ice that tends to happen in bike lanes that are adjacent to moving traffic lanes from plows. This often forces bikers to take car lanes even on roads where bike lanes exist, which creates uncomfortable situations with drivers who don't understand why bikers need to do this.
- I've been bicycle-commuting in Madison for 15 years. I love the concept of the parking-protected bike lane. I've encountered it in other cities as a pedestrian and auto driver, and have liked it from that perspective as well. From a bike-commuter perspective, it provides a significantly higher level of perceived safety, and actual safety as well, from auto traffic. I love the test segment on Bassett Street. I hope the city considers implementing this model on other streets.
- As an emergency physician and bike commuter, I wanted to thank you and the city for the parking-protected bike lane. I hope that Bassett can serve as model for improving the safety of bicyclists.

Although the majority of the comments were positive there were a few comments where people did not support the parking protected bike lane or expressed concerns. These comments included:

- Can't see oncoming traffic when turning right from the 500 block of W. Mifflin onto N. Bassett.
- Any way we can protect bicyclists is worth a try, but at what expense. We need to be careful to not allocate funds for this project that will risk the safety of others that need it all 12 months of the year.
- Stupid idea! Why don't we just ban all cars from the roads? Will interfere with snow removal and trash collection. Also most city streets are not wide enough!
- I think my biggest concern with the idea of protected bike lanes is that the visual separation between vehicular and bike traffic may make drivers *less* aware that they may be turning across a bike lane.

Feedback from people who walk in this area was minimal. The new Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) at N Bassett St and Mifflin St was mentioned as a favorable improvement. However, people walking and especially those with disabilities were underrepresented in feedback and more feedback will be needed moving forward. During the Wilson Street Corridor Study staff met with the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired and Access to Independence to review the designs and discuss concerns. Construction of the next segment of parking protected bike lane would need to involve these stakeholders further to ensure the best possible design especially of the floating bus stop.

2. Increased Bicycle Usage

It is hard to compare 2018 bicycle counts to 2020 due to the pandemic. There has been increased interest in bicycling during this time but travel to the University and to certain types of employment has changed during the pandemic which would influence travel on this corridor that connects the University to downtown. However, there was an increase in total number of people biking through the corridor in 2020.

Oct 10, 2018

Bikes													
7am-9am Summary													
From South			From West			From North			From East				
Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left		
Counts	0	8	1	0	3	0	9	5	2	15	0	Bike Total	
Bike Total	9		3			14			17			43	
11am-1pm Summary													
From South			From West			From North			From East				
Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left		
Counts	0	8	2	1	3	0	1	14	4	2	3	0	Bike Total
Bike Total	10		4			19			5			38	
4pm-6pm Summary													
From South			From West			From North			From East				
Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left		
Counts	0	5	0	1	8	1	3	27	12	3	28	3	Bike Total
Bike Total	5		10			42			34			91	

October 6, 2020

Bikes													
7am-9am Summary													
	From South			From West			From North			From East			
	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	
Counts	0	4	0	0	12	2	1	4	0	0	6	0	Bike Total
Bike Total	4			14			5			6			29
11am-1pm Summary													
	From South			From West			From North			From East			
	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	
Counts	0	4	2	2	22	3	2	17	3	1	4	0	Bike Total
Bike Total	6			27			22			5			60
4pm-6pm Summary													
	From South			From West			From North			From East			
	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	Right	Thru	Left	
Counts	1	9	0	7	72	18	4	9	5	2	8	0	Bike Total
Bike Total	10			97			18			10			135

3. Improved Bicycle Network Connections/Access

This segment of N Bassett St from W Dayton St to W Washington Ave is now considered a low stress route. However, it still lacks a full connection. This would be changed with the full construction of the Bassett St Corridor Plan and Wilson St Corridor Plan. The parking protected bike lane would also connect in the future to the W Main Street Bike Boulevard which intersects with the Southwest Path and the Brittingham Path.



4. User Confusion

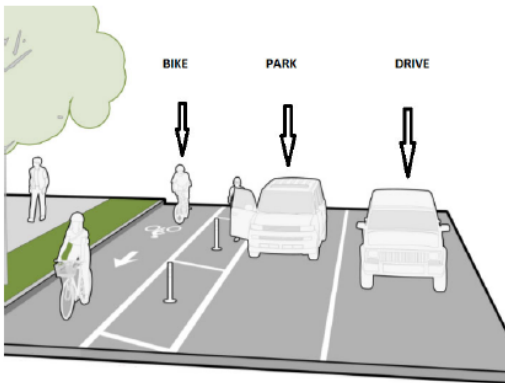
A number of actions were taken to help educate residents of the area and people who travel through the N Bassett Street corridor.

- Letters to residents on the impacted blocks – 2019 and 2020
- Press release and media coverage
- Bike Madison website and email

The following information was a part of these efforts:

N. Bassett St. Parking Protected Bike Lanes

The following includes information for all users of the street, along with additional information for residents regarding placement of refuse and recycling carts.



If you are parking:

- The bike lane is now next to the curb, and the parking lane is between the bike lane and travel lane. Only park in the designated parking lane.
- The bike lane is separated from the parking lane with bollards and paint. If for any reason the bollards are not in place, still park in the designated parking lane.
- Use care when loading and unloading from your car so you do not step in front of a bicyclist.
- Ensure that your parked vehicle is not blocking a driveway.

If you are driving:

- Look for bicyclists before turning across the bike lane or pulling out of a driveway. Bicyclists have the right-of-way at Dayton St., Mifflin St. and at all driveways. You can turn across the bike lane, but must yield to people riding bicycles, and, as always, yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks.
- Do not drive in the protected bike lane.
- Do not block the bike lane when waiting to turn on to Bassett St. or while pulling out of a driveway.

If you are biking:

- Yield to pedestrians and wheelchair users who are crossing the protected bike lane.
- Watch for turning vehicles when approaching intersections and driveways.
- Keep right, pass left. Stay to the right and allow faster bicyclists to pass safely to the left.
- To make a left turn onto Mifflin St., either exit the protected bike lane when it is safe and turn from the left turn lane, OR make a two-stage turn by pulling through to the far side of the intersection, checking that traffic is clear and then going straight through the intersection.
- Garbage day is on Thursday for N. Bassett St. Be on the lookout for garbage and recycling trucks as the truck's automated arm will reach across the bike lane to pick up and return the cans. Bicyclists will need to wait until it is clear during this time.

If you are a pedestrian:

- Always cross the street at a crosswalk. Use caution when crossing the protected bike lane at other locations, such as when entering and exiting parked vehicles.
- The protected bike lane is for bicycles only. Use the sidewalk when traveling along the street.
- Do not stand or wait in the protected bike lane. Wait on the sidewalk.

Garbage and Recycling Carts

The most common issue reported was around the placement of Garbage and Recycling Carts. Residents were asked to place them in the buffer area to ensure that City staff could safely pick up and return the carts. Letters were sent to residents at the completion of the project alerting them to the new procedure and then flyers were placed on carts that were improperly placed to remind the residents. Due to most houses having a number of residents this helped ensure that all of the residents of each house were aware of this change. In 2020, the same procedure was adopted after new residents moved in August 15, 2020.

Along this corridor, these houses tend to be multi-unit with a number of residents so it does take some staff effort to educate residents each year. However, the residents do adapt to the new process although a reminder was needed in 2019 after winter break. Some of the issues are not specific to the parking protected bike lane but can be found in other similar neighborhoods where garbage and recycling is not placed correctly.



November 7, 2019



December 5, 2019



January 6, 2020



January 30, 2020



September 3, 2020



September 10, 2020

Parking Issues

An issue noted by the neighborhood was people parking in front of driveways. This was an issue between Dayton St and Mifflin St particularly at one residence.

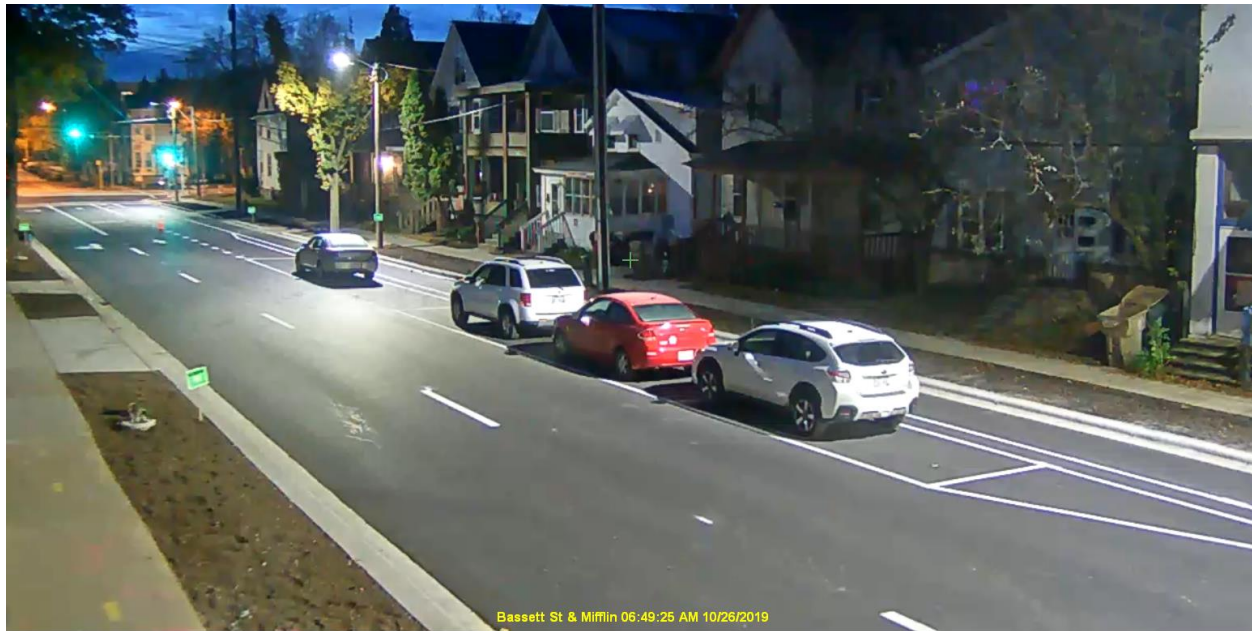
Because this street design was a pilot, the street was initially opened with a minimum amount of markings in case it should need to be changed. However, due to the issue with illegal parking a few additional markings were added in mid-October 2020.

If the pilot is approved for a permanent parking protected bike lane additional review of the markings will be needed to determine if additional signing and marking is warranted to improve parking compliance.



Cross hatches added in front of driveway.

It is also worth noting that before the N Bassett St construction was fully completed and the parking protected bike lane completed, the street was opened for Halloween and Freakfest. The paint markings were done at this point but the signs and bollards were not completed. As the photo shows people did park in the correct locations.



People Biking Outside of the Bike Lane

One other issue that was reported is that some people were biking outside of the bike lane. It was not clear if this was due to confusion or if they had left the bike lane because they wanted to turn into a driveway or onto Mifflin St or W Washington Ave. To help clarify that the space between the parking and the curb was a bike lane, bike lane symbols were added in mid-October. Additional markings such as turn boxes and green markings would also improve understanding and utilization.

5. Facility Maintenance

Winter Maintenance

Winter maintenance was one of the items that people had concerns about when the project first opened. However, during the winter only one comment was received that was unhappy with the facility. The majority of feedback was very positive about the route. The parking protected bike lane was noted for being useable when the traditional bike lane with parking was not.

In 2020, snow events were light and so were managed without too much additional efforts. In years with large snowfall events or colder weather where snow accumulated more it would likely be necessary to occasionally or even regularly haul snow from the area depending on the snow accumulation. Staff also noted that due to the limited area for snow storage there could be negative impacts to people who park along this stretch of N Bassett Street as well as users of the bike lane.



N Bassett Parking Protected Bike Lane –
November 11, 2019



S Bassett Combined Parking Bike Lane –
November 11, 2019

Other Street Considerations

The parking protected bike lane also requires some adjustments to leaf pick up and large item pick up. These activities necessitate blocking the bike lane at times although this is also the case with bike lanes that are not protected. The parking along this section does not allow parking on Thursday mornings as part of the Clean Streets Clean Lake program which helps make it easier to do maintenance and garbage, recycling, and large item pick up.

Bollards

This design will require some replacement of bollards. However, over one year 5 out of 20 bollards were damaged. The new bollards that were used to replace the original ones are also a different design that is intended to be both more visible and more durable.



New
Design

6. Recommendation

After one year, the evaluation team recommends continuation of the parking protected bike lane on N Bassett St between Dayton St and W Washington Ave. Furthermore, it is recommended that the parking protected bike lane be continued east as detailed in the Bassett Street Corridor Study.

Reasons for this recommendation include the following:

- Although there were some items that confused users, these can be addressed through monitoring of signage and marking for continued improvement. These should also become less of an issue when additional parking protected bike lanes are implemented and people become more familiar with this type of infrastructure.
- There was not an increase in number or severity of crashes for people walking, biking or driving.
- Maintenance should continue to be monitored as one year is not enough data to fully understand long term costs. This will be needed that the cost to maintain a parking protected bike lane can be included in discussions and budgeting for future parking protected bike lanes.
- The parking protected bike lane provides an all ages and abilities bicycle route that will eventually provide a much needed connection between University Ave and John Nolen Drive.
- In the winter, the parking protected bike lane was much easier to keep clear and useable by people biking. This will need to continue to be monitored along with the winter maintenance to ensure that continues to be possible even in high snowfall years.