

FAMILY FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS ACTION PLAN

Highland Park



IMPROVING OPTIONS FOR BIKING,
WALKING, AND TRANSIT ACCESS
DEVELOPED FEBRUARY 2016



ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

FAMILY FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS ACTION PLAN

Highland Park

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Acknowledgements

THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

This plan represents the combined vision and goals of the City of Highland Park, the Highland Park City Council, its Bike Walk Advisory Group, and residents of the Highlands neighborhood. Thank you to these committee members, residents and staff for donating their time to this project.

OUR FUNDERS

This report made possible with support from REI and People for Bikes.

ABOUT THE CONSULTANTS

The mission of Active Transportation Alliance is to make bicycling, walking, and public transit so safe, convenient, and fun that we will achieve a significant shift from environmentally harmful, sedentary travel to clean, active travel. We advocate for transportation that encourages and promotes safety, physical activity, health, recreation, social interaction, equity, environmental stewardship, and resource conservation.

We are both Chicagoland's voice for better biking, walking, and transit and a premier consultancy. Our staff includes planning, policy, and education experts who developed many of the best practice programs and policies included in this plan. By partnering with us on this project, you not only get the best plan possible, you also support our mission to improve active transportation throughout the Chicagoland region.

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Front cover photo courtesy of Greg Borzo.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Family Friendly Bikeways Campaign helps communities build a network of streets that are comfortable for cyclists of all ages and abilities. The City of Highland Park and its Bike Walk Advisory Group partnered with Active Transportation Alliance to advance the campaign by developing a plan to improve cycling on routes through the Highlands neighborhood. This plan summarizes the process used and recommendations that will help create Family Friendly Bikeways in the community.



BIKE BLENDER IN ACTION AT HIGHLAND PARK'S BIKE FAIR.



HELMET FITTING AT HIGHLAND PARK'S BIKE FAIR.



GETTING READY TO RIDE AT HIGHLAND PARK'S BIKE FAIR.



BIKE SAFETY INSTRUCTION AT HIGHLAND PARK'S BIKE FAIR.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The City of Highland Park is dedicated to becoming a bike-friendly community. Many residents bike for recreation and transportation, trails are found throughout the community, and the City has supported cyclists by adopting a *Bike-Walk HP 2030* active transportation plan and Complete Streets policy, developing a *Bike-to-Metra Guide*, supporting a community Bike Fair, and installing on-street bike markings and bike route signage. As a means of implementing the Bike-Walk plan, the City received funding to add additional signage and pavement markings for increase biking safety. In turn, the League of American Bicyclists recently awarded Highland Park an Honorable Mention as a Bike Friendly Community.

1.2 FAMILY FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS

To further encourage bicycling, Highland Park partnered with Active Transportation Alliance (Active Trans) to create Family Friendly Bikeways. Family Friendly Bikeways use low-stress facilities to encourage more bicycle trips for people of all ages. These facilities include bike trails, on-street protected bike lanes, and “bike boulevards,” which are residential streets that prioritize cycling and minimize cut-through motor vehicle traffic.

Bike-Walk HP 2030 includes Family-Friendly Bikeways recommendations such as dedicated bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, off-road trails, and improved sidewalks and intersections throughout the City for cyclists and pedestrians.

The City of Highland Park and its Bike Walk Advisory Group chose the Highlands neighborhood for the Family Friendly Bikeways program. The neighborhood has many elements in place conducive to encouraging cycling for people of all ages. It is primarily residential, has access to trails, includes a junior high school, two elementary schools, several parks, and is near restaurants, ice cream shops and other destinations that attract cyclists .

The City and the Bike Walk Advisory Group identified several objectives for Family Friendly Bikeways in the Highlands. These include:

Develop recommendations for routes through the Highlands, including Greenwood Avenue, Summit Avenue, and University Avenue.

Identify strategies for improving access to the Robert McClory Path, Fort Sheridan and businesses along Sheridan Road and across Old Elm Road.

Meet with residents to discuss barriers and opportunities to developing Family Friendly Bikeways.

FIGURE 1.1: TYPES OF FAMILY FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS

Family Friendly Bikeways, or low-stress bikeways, have the power to encourage more people to use bikes as transportation in their community. Different types of treatments are appropriate for streets, based on available space and vehicle traffic volumes. The various types of Family Friendly Bikeways are summarized below.



MCCLORY PATH, HIGHLAND PARK, IL

PROVIDE A DEDICATED SPACE FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS AND FUNCTION LIKE A NON-MOTORIZED HIGHWAY.



BIKE BOULEVARD, PORTLAND, OR

ARE LOW TRAFFIC RESIDENTIAL STREETS THAT PRIORITIZE BIKE TRAVEL THROUGH TRAFFIC CALMING AND OTHER TREATMENTS



PROTECTED BIKE LANE, HONOLULU, HI

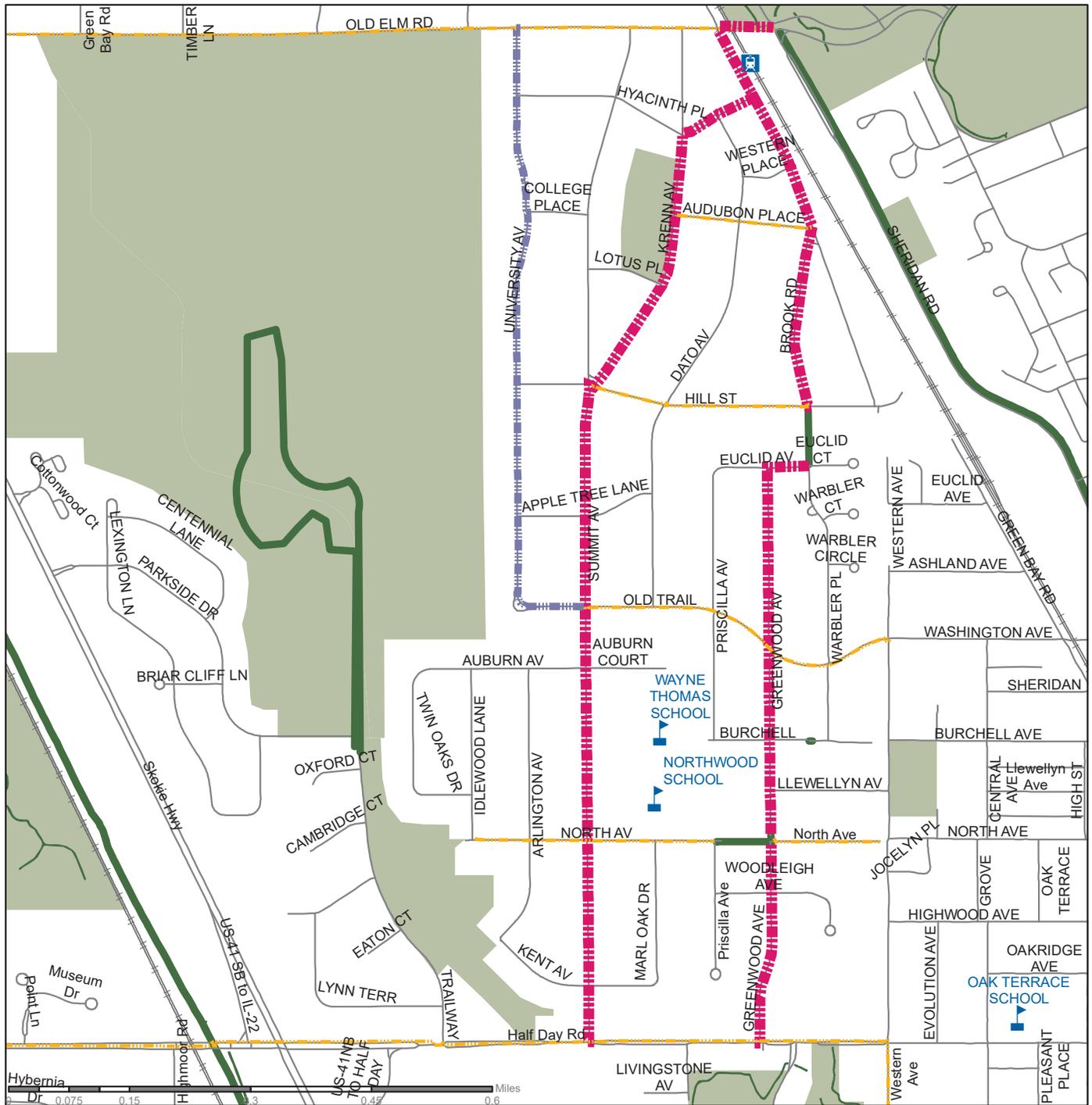
PROVIDE PHYSICAL SEPARATION FROM TRAFFIC ON HIGH TRAFFIC STREETS.



SHARED USE PATH, BARTLETT, IL

ARE SHARED AMONGST CYCLIST AND PEDESTRIANS AND RUN PARALLEL TO MAJOR ROADS.

FIGURE 1.2: PROJECT STUDY AREA



- - - - - Other Proposed Bike Route
- - - - - Proposed Traffic Calming
- - - - - Proposed Family Friendly Bikeway
- Existing Trail

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

The recommendations in this plan were developed through the review of existing conditions and discussions with the community. The following steps were taken:

Review of Plans and Datasets

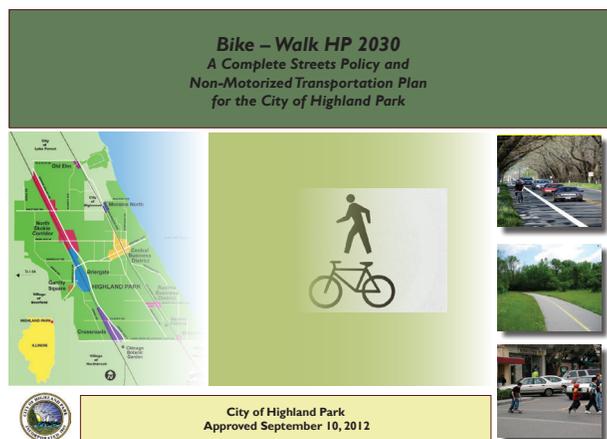
The project team reviewed the Bike-Walk HP 2030 plan and discussed recent plans with the City of Highland Park and the Bike Walk Advisory Group to understand recommended improvements for the area, many of which are reinforced in this plan. The project team also looked at datasets, such as average annual traffic on streets, roadway jurisdiction, and crashes.

Neighborhood Visit

City of Highland Park staff, the Bike Walk Advisory Group and Active Transportation Alliance toured the neighborhood to see first-hand the challenges to the bicycle environment. Plans for bikeways and ways to improve connectivity for cyclists were two major themes that emerged during the visit.

Community Meeting

Community members attended a community meeting on June 24, 2015 at the Highland Park Building Department to discuss goals and strategies to create Family Friendly Bikeways in the Highlands neighborhood. Participants responded to live polling questions and identified barriers to safe biking on a map. A map summarizing their feedback is included on the following page.



BIKE WALK HP 2030 IDENTIFIES ROUTES AND TREATMENTS FOR IMPROVED ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IN THE COMMUNITY.

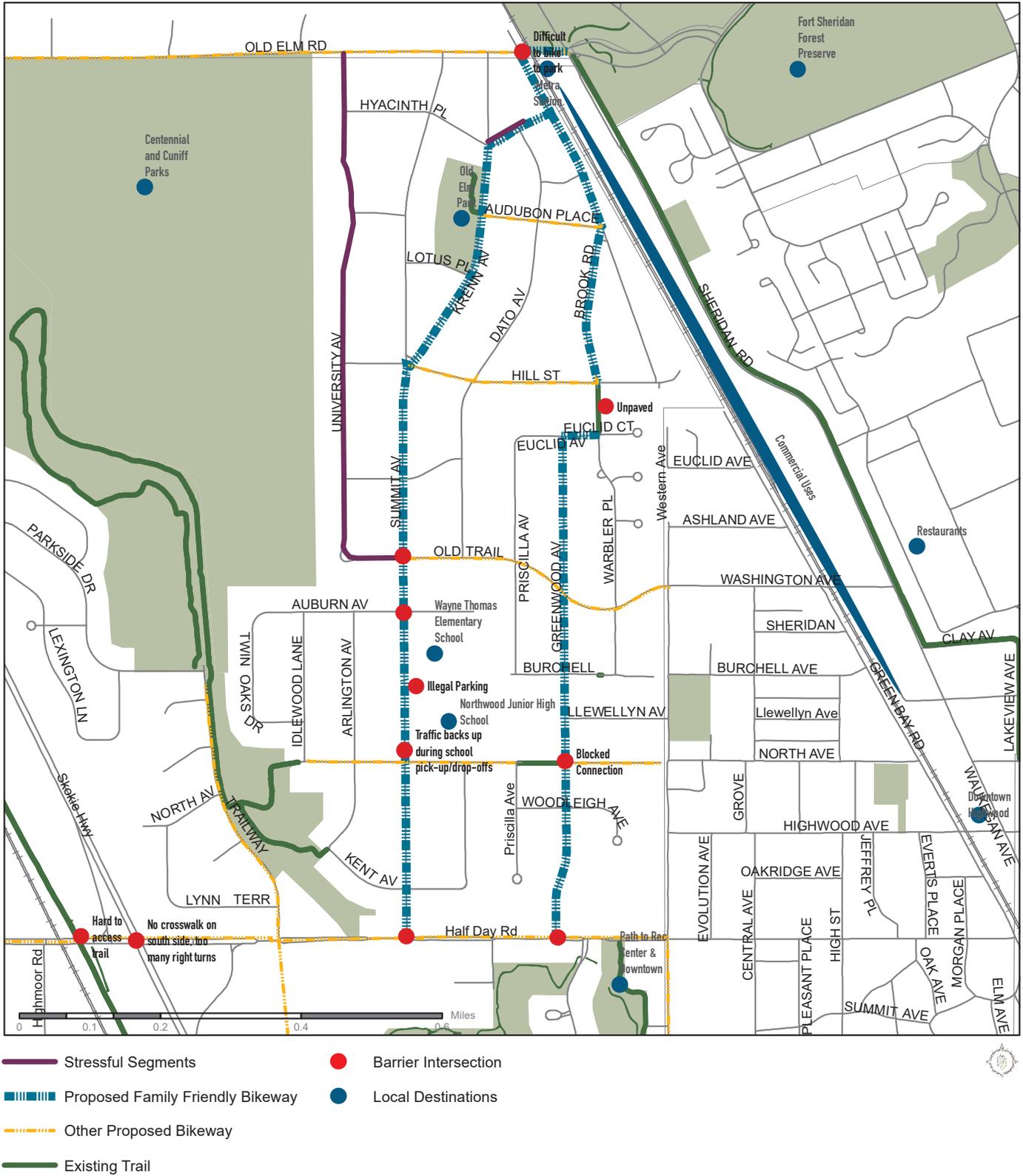


THE CITY, ADVISORY GROUP, AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE EXPLORED THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO SEE THE CHALLENGES THAT CYCLISTS FACE, SUCH AS THIS NARROW TRAIL ACCESS POINT.



MEETING ATTENDEES RESPONDED TO A SERIES OF LIVE POLLING QUESTIONS ABOUT PREFERENCES AND CHALLENGES TO CYCLING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MARKED UP A MAP.

FIGURE 1.3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS



2. ACTION PLAN

Based on the assessment of existing conditions and opportunities and challenges identified by the community, the several strategies, both infrastructure-related and non-infrastructure-related, are recommended for the neighborhood to implement.

2.1 STRATEGIES

Each of the recommended strategies are listed below. For more information on any of the strategies, please refer to the corresponding strategy on pages 13 to 20.

Strategy 1: Create family friendly bikeways on Greenwood Avenue/Brook Road/Western Avenue and Krenn Road/Hyacinth Place.

Strategy 2: Make connections between family friendly bikeways on Audobon Place, Hill Street, Old Trail, and North Avenue.

Strategy 3: Create bicycle and pedestrian connections at culs de sac.

Strategy 4: Develop new local trail connections

Strategy 5: Connect the Highlands to regional trails, including the Skokie Valley Bike Path, the Robert McClory Bike Path, and Fort Sheridan.

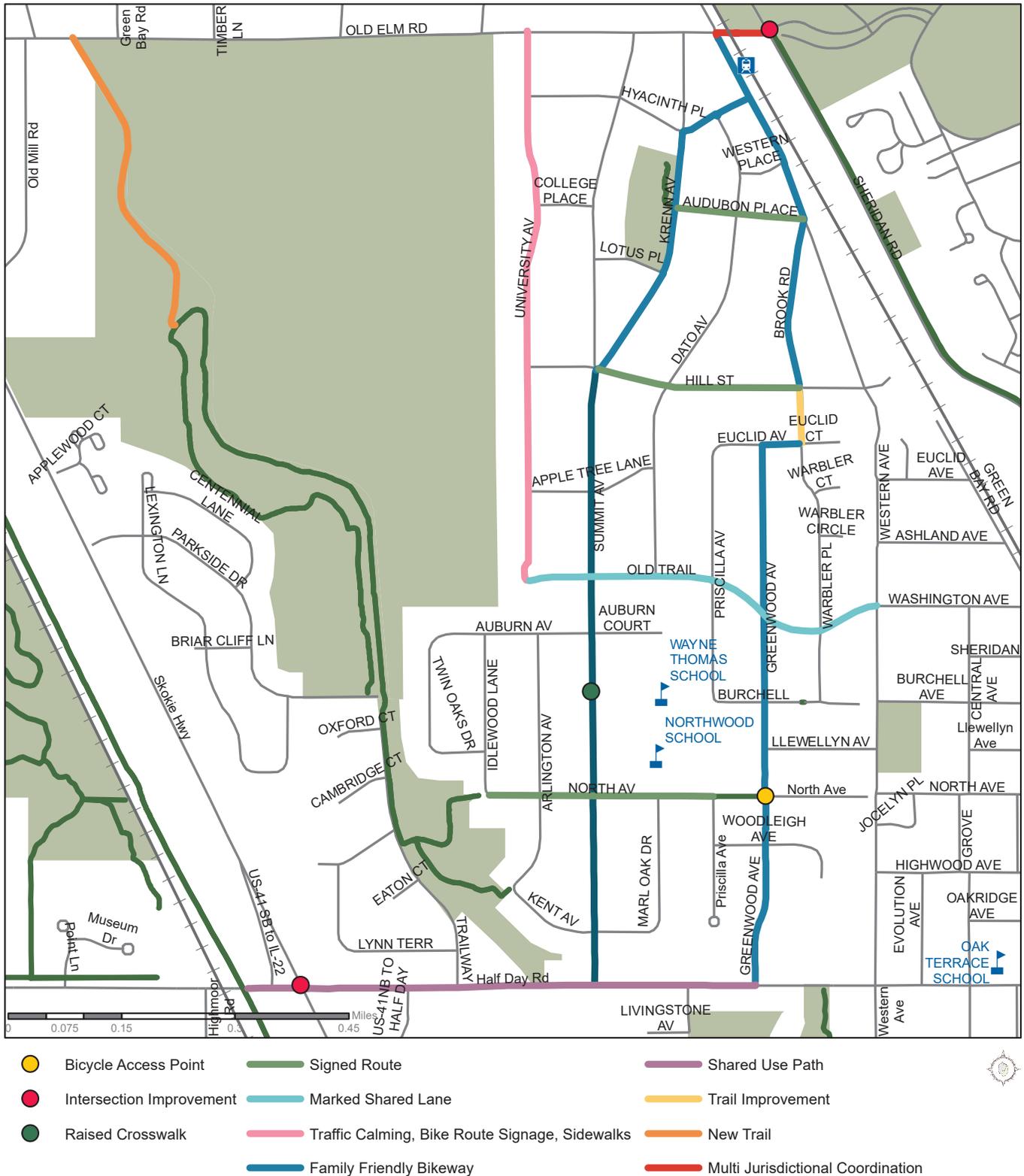
Strategy 6: Relieve traffic congestion by increasing biking and walking rates at schools.

Strategy 7: Calm traffic on key cycling corridors.

Strategy 8: Launch a “Share the Road” public safety campaign for people of all ages and all users of the road.

Strategy 9: Host a series of annual special events aimed at increasing the number of families and individuals who bike in the Highlands.

FIGURE 2.1: RECOMMENDATIONS



Strategy 1: Create a Family Friendly Bikeway on Greenwood Avenue/Brook Road/Western Avenue and Krenn Road/Hyacinth Place.

ISSUES



Issue 1a: Greenwood Avenue, Brook Road, Western Avenue, Krenn Road, and Hyacinth Place are calm, comfortable cycling routes, but many cyclists are unaware of them.



Issue 1b: There is an unpaved trail that provides connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians between Greenwood Avenue at Euclid Avenue and Brook Road at Hill Street. It is narrow, frequently muddy, and difficult for most cyclists and other users to navigate due to the surface type.

ACTIONS



Image Courtesy of <http://koonceportland.blogspot.com/>

Action 1a: Install Family Friendly Bikeway pavement markings and/or install family friendly bikeway signage on Greenwood Avenue, Brook Road, Western Avenue, Krenn Road, and Hyacinth Place to indicate that the street is cyclist friendly.



Action 1b: Explore the feasibility of paving the trail segment to create a more bike friendly surface.

Strategy 2: Make connections between family friendly bikeways on Audobon Place, Hill Street, Old Trail, and North Avenue.

ISSUES



Issue 2: Limited knowledge of local low-stress bicycle routes and limited connectivity throughout the neighborhood.

ACTIONS



Action 2a: Install marked shared lanes on Old Trail between Summit Avenue and Western Avenue.



Action 2b: Install bicycle route signage on Audobon Place, Hill Street, and North Avenue connecting Summit and Krenn Avenues to Greenwood Avenue and Brook Road.

Strategy 3: Create bicycle and pedestrian connections at culs de sac.

ISSUES



Issue 3: The cul de sac on Greenwood Avenue at North Avenue does not provide a dedicated space for pedestrians and cyclists to connect.

ACTIONS



Action 3: Pave a 5-foot path to allow for bicycle and pedestrian access.

Strategy 4: Develop new local trail connections.



Issue 4: There is limited pedestrian and bicycle connectivity from Old Elm Road to Centennial Park.



Action 4: Work with the Park District of Highland Park and the Old Elm Club to complete the planned Skokie River Trail connection.

Strategy 5: Connect the Highlands to regional trails, including the Skokie Valley Bike Path, the Robert McClory Bike Path, and Fort Sheridan.

ISSUES



Issue 5.1: Accessing the Skokie Valley Bike Path on Half Day Road from the Highlands is difficult due to the crossing at Route 41. Route 41 has high traffic volumes and a narrow sidewalk on the south side of the street. Just west of Route 41 is a trail access point for the Skokie Valley Bike Path, also on the south side of Half Day Road. Many cyclists ride on the sidewalk here to access the trail more easily. Cyclists riding on the sidewalk here are not as visible to drivers making left and right turns onto and off of Route 41, and there are also conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

ACTIONS



Action 5.1a: Work with IDOT to make crossing improvements at the intersection of Half Day Road and Route 41. These may include: installing a protected area for cyclists to wait at the refuge island, bumping out the curbs into the shoulder to create a wider area for cyclists to wait, or adjusting the signal to include a leading pedestrian interval for bicycle and pedestrian crossings.

Action 4.1b: Explore the feasibility of creating a shared use path on Half Day Road from Summit Avenue to the Skokie Valley Bike Path.

Image courtesy of Charlotte DOT

Image courtesy of Charlotte DOT

Strategy 5, Continued: Connect the Highlands to regional trails, including the Skokie Valley Bike Path, the Robert McClory Bike Path, and Fort Sheridan.

ISSUES



Issue 5.2: Accessing local restaurants, Fort Sheridan Park, and McClory Bike Path from the Highlands on Old Elm Road is difficult for less confident cyclists due to its lack of sidewalks, narrow roadway, and railroad tracks. Changes to this segment of land will require collaboration between multiple agencies.

ACTIONS



Action 5.2a: Convene a working group consisting of the City of Highland Park, the Villages of Lake Forest and Highwood, Metra, Union Pacific, and the Lake County Forest Preserve to address bicycle improvements on Old Elm Road.

Action 4.2b: Identify improvements, which could include: paving a sidewalk on the north side of Old Elm Road between Western Avenue and Sheridan Road, installing pedestrian crossing gates on either side of the railroad tracks, building a sidewalk on the south side of Old Elm Road between Western Avenue and the Union Pacific tracks and marking high visibility crosswalks at the intersection of Old Elm Road and Sheridan Road.

Strategy 7: Calm traffic on key cycling corridors.

ISSUES



Issue 7: Drivers and cyclists travel at high speeds on University Avenue due to its rolling hills.



ACTIONS

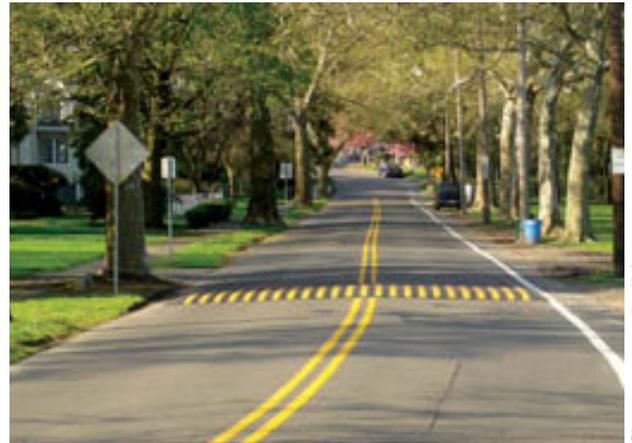


Photo courtesy of trafficlogix.com

Action 7a: Lower the speed limit to 15 mph and post appropriate signage. Identify traffic calming strategies for University Avenue, such as speed humps.



Photo courtesy of Greg Raisman.

Action 7b: Work with neighbors to create a temporary street mural to educate motorists and cyclists about slowing down.



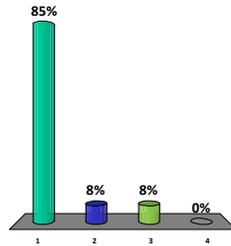
Action 7c: Install sidewalks.

Strategy 8: Launch a “Share the Road” public safety campaign for people of all ages and all users of the road.

ISSUES

Should the City increase the number of cyclists in the community through education, events, and enforcement of traffic laws?

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree



Issue 8: In order for the new network to truly be low-stress, drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians need to understand their rights and responsibilities when travelling through the Highlands and beyond and put them into practice.

ACTIONS



Photo courtesy of sfbikes.org

Action 8a: Educate drivers on ways to share the road with cyclists and pedestrians. Messages should include how to use new infrastructure, the role of bicycle priority streets, the three-foot passing rule, and stopping for pedestrians and cyclists in crosswalks.



Photo courtesy of Trails for Illinois

Action 8b: Teach cyclists etiquette when riding on streets, trails, and sidewalks. This campaign should focus on how to use new infrastructure, sharing the road with drivers, and yielding the right-of-way to pedestrians on sidewalks.

Strategy 9: Host a series of annual special events aimed at increasing the number of families and individuals who bike in the Highlands.

ISSUES



Issue 9: Not all families view cycling as a safe, convenient, and fun mode of transportation around the neighborhood.

ACTIONS



Action 9a: Continue to celebrate Bike to Work Week.



Action 9b: Celebrate Bike to School Day.



Action 9c: Hold family friendly bike rides to showcase the Highlands' trails, streets, and nearby destinations.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan included on the following pages outlines next steps for each recommendation, lists potential partners, and suggests phasing for each of the strategies in this Action Plan. These steps are recommendations and may be modified over time to reflect the changing goals and priorities of the community. Bike Walk improvements are considered for budget discussion annually as part of Public Works Capital Improvement Program. The improvements are scheduled for construction in appropriate year upon approval of the funds by City Council.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#	Action	Location	Partners	Phase
2a	Install marked shared lanes on Old Trail.	Between Summit Avenue and Western Avenue	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Near-Term
3	Pave a 5-foot path to allow for bicycle and pedestrian access	Greenwood Avenue at North Avenue	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Near-Term
5.2a	Convene a working group to address bicycle improvements on Old Elm Road	Old Elm Road from Western Avenue to Sheridan Road	City of Highland Park Village of Lake Forest Village of Highwood Metra Union Pacific Lake County Forest Preserve District	Near-Term
6a	Develop School Travel Plans	Wayne Thomas Elementary School Northwoods Junior High School	City of Highland Park Northshore School District Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Near-Term
7a	Lower the speed limit to 15 mph and post appropriate signage. Identify traffic calming strategies for University Avenue, such as speed humps.	University Avenue from Old Trail Road to Old Elm Road	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Near-Term
7b	Work with neighbors to create a temporary street mural to educate motorists and cyclists about slowing down	University Avenue from Old Trail Road to Old Elm Road	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Near-Term
8a	Educate drivers on ways to share the road with cyclists and pedestrians	Village-wide	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee	Near-Term

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

#	Action	Location	Partners	Phase
8b	Teach cyclists etiquette when riding on streets, trails, and sidewalks	Village-wide	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee	Near-Term
9a	Continue to celebrate Bike to Work Week	Village-wide	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee	Near-Term
9b	Celebrate Bike to School Day	Village-wide	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee	Near-Term
9c	Hold family friendly bike rides to showcase the Highlands' trails, streets, and nearby destinations	Village-wide	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee	Near-Term
1a	Install Family Friendly Bikeway pavement markings and/or install family friendly bikeway signage	Greenwood Avenue, Brook Road, Western Avenue, Krenn Road, and Hyacinth Place	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Mid-Term
1b	Explore the feasibility of paving the trail segment or installing crushed limestone on it	Brook Road at Hill Street to Euclid Avenue	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Mid-Term
2b	Install bicycle route signage on Audobon Place, Hill Street, and North Avenue connecting Summit and Krenn Avenues to Greenwood Avenue and Brook Road.	Between Summit and Krenn Avenues and Greenwood Avenue and Brook Road	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Park District of Highland Park Residents	Mid-Term (along with installation of family friendly bikeways)
4	Complete planned Skokie River Trail connection	Skokie River Trail from Trail Way to Old Elm Road	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Group Park District of Highland Park Old Elm Club	Mid-Term
5.2b	Identify improvements, for Old Elm Road between Western Avenue and Sheridan Road	Old Elm Road from Western Avenue to Sheridan Road	City of Highland Park Village of Lake Forest Village of Highwood Metra Union Pacific Lake County Forest Preserve District	Mid-Term
6b	Install raised crosswalk.	Summit Avenue at Wayne Thomas Elementary School	City of Highland Park Northshore School District Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Mid-Term

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

#	Action	Location	Partners	Phase
7b	Identify traffic calming strategies for University Avenue	University Avenue from Old Trail Road to Old Elm Road	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Mid-Term
5.1a	Work with IDOT to make crossing improvements at the intersection of Half Day Road and Route 41	Half Day Road and Route 41	City of Highland Park IDOT Bike Walk Advisory Group	Long-Term
5.1b	Explore the feasibility of creating a shared use path on Half Day Road from Summit Avenue to the Skokie Valley Bike Path	Half Day Road from Summit Avenue to Skokie Valley Bike Path.	City of Highland Park IDOT Bike Walk Advisory Group	Long-Term
7b	Action 6c: Install sidewalks.	University Avenue from Old Trail Road to Old Elm Road	City of Highland Park Bike Walk Advisory Committee Residents	Long-Term

