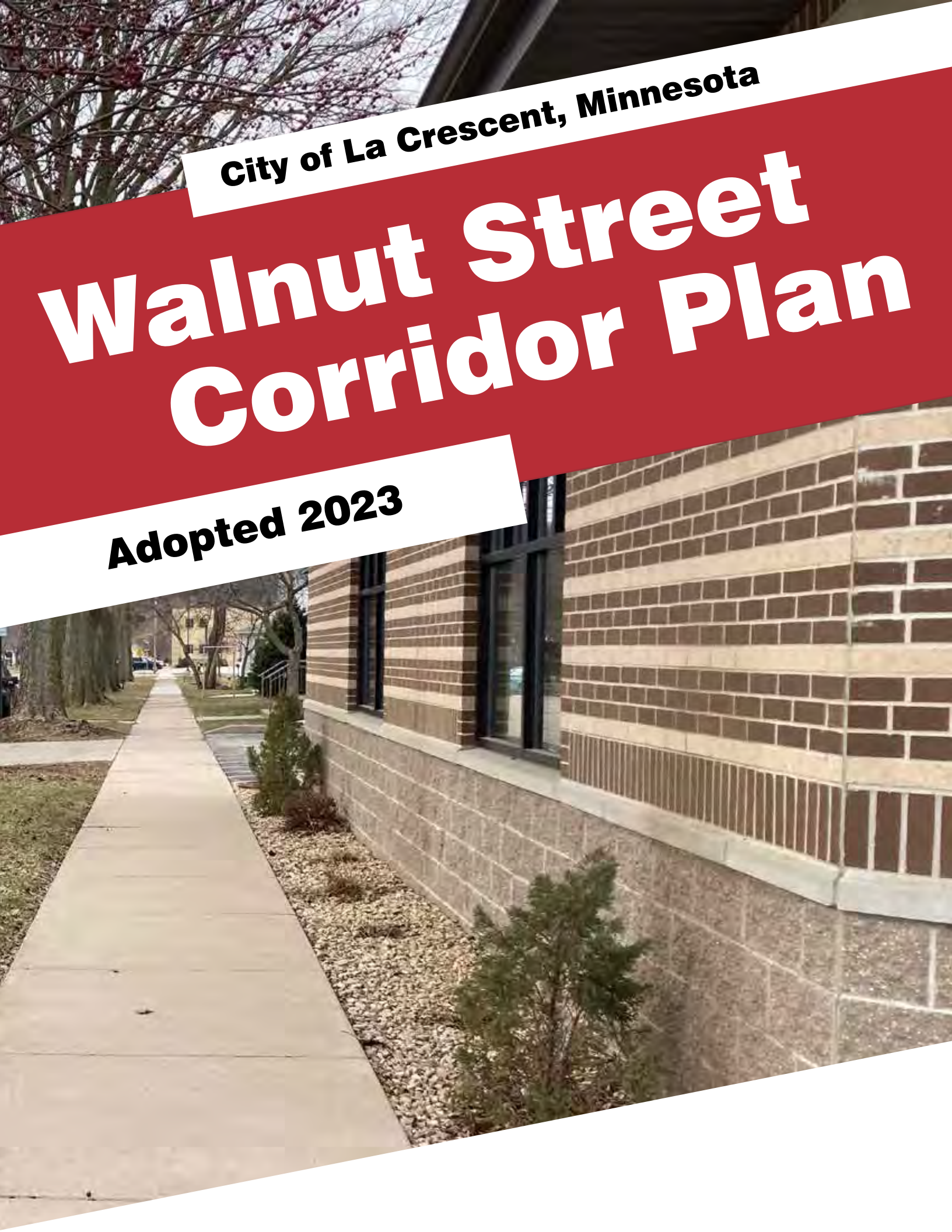


City of La Crescent, Minnesota

Walnut Street Corridor Plan

Adopted 2023





Acknowledgments

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Project Summary

Public Meeting Memorandum

At the Planning Commission Meeting on October 3rd, 2023, staff presented the draft of the Walnut Street Corridor Plan. No action was taken by the Planning Commission at this meeting as the item was on the agenda as a presentation and discussion item only.

The city funded the corridor plan with funds from the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) under their Local Studies Program. The LAPC is the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The purpose of the planning project was to develop a plan for Walnut Street from South 3rd Street to North 4th Street and to Veterans Park. The planning process involved obtaining both community-wide input and input from residents and businesses along the corridor including the new hotel, tavern and the event center north of N. 4th Street. The goal of the project is to gain community consensus on a plan for the corridor.

City of La Crescent Walnut Street Corridor Planning Proposal Summary September 19, 2022

The city would like to re-imagine the Walnut Street corridor into a walkable/bikeable complete street that meets the needs of downtown businesses, community residents, and visitors. The city identified in its 2017 Downtown Plan, a vision of the downtown as a trailhead to a regional system of interconnected walking, biking, hiking trails in the community including the blufflands, streets and waterways. With the 2022 completion of the Wagon Wheel bicycle and pedestrian bridge over U.S. 14/61, one important linkage has been completed. The next critical linkage is from the bridge landing at Walnut St. and 1st St. north to Veteran's Park (one of the access points to the City's bluffland trails) and the new La Crescent Area Event Center and Best Western Hotel. Walnut Street has sidewalks on only one side of the street and has no accommodations for safe biking. There are neither walking nor biking accommodations that connect safely to the park or the event center. This planning project would engage residents and property owners in the planning of a complete street connection, including options to provide for safe driving, transit, truck route, parking, walking and biking in this corridor while balancing the needs of all stakeholders.

Recommendations

Economic Development Commission

The City of La Crescent's Economic Development Commission (EDC) served as the project steering committee for the planning process. The EDC has reviewed the draft final plan on October 2nd and again on October 16th, 2023. The EDC recommended approval of the Walnut Street Corridor Plan on October 16th, 2023 with the following additions:

1. All lighting must be Dark Sky compliant;
2. More modern light fixtures are preferred and should be like those depicted on Page 23 as the city has chosen those already for the Wagon Wheel Bike-Ped bridge area;
3. Light fixtures should accommodate cameras, banner arms, possible hanging baskets, wifi capability, etc.;
4. Add more angle parking on the east side of Walnut Street north of the new coffee shop up to N. 1st Street;
5. Continue to carry the 10' multi-use path on the west side of Walnut Street into the downtown, if possible, in the final engineering design;
6. On the east side of Walnut Street, do not put the sidewalk directly behind the curb so to allow for both snow storage and boulevard trees;
7. As part of the implementation of the plan, the city needs to address the two-hour parking zones;
8. The city should reconstruct the alleys on the east and west side of Walnut Street between Main Street and S. 1st Street (between Quillin's and the hardware store) and between the laundromat and pizza parlor);
9. The burial of overhead wires is not addressed in the plan and all the overhead wires should be buried during construction;

The Planning Commission will make its own separate recommendation to the City Council on the draft plan. City staff will give a short presentation on the recommended plan as recommended by the Economic Development Commission, followed by a Public Hearing. The Commission may choose to recommend approval, denial or continue to their next meeting. The City Council will also hold a public hearing on the plan. The plan does need to be adopted by the end of 2023 to satisfy the LAPC's Local Studies Program requirements.

*Larry Kirch, Community Development Director
City of La Crescent Economic Development Commission
October 30, 2023*

Introduction

Plan Purpose **Transform Walnut Street**

A vibrant community requires a variety of unique districts or spaces where people interact and find desired services and activities. In creating the city's Comprehensive Plan, La Crescent residents identified the Walnut Street corridor and Wagon Wheel Trail as areas needing public investment.

This plan outlines the city's long-range approach for improvements, redevelopment, beautification, and the overall revitalization of Walnut Street. The recommendations within this plan are intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. Establish a pedestrian and bicycle network that connects downtown La Crescent and its surrounding neighborhoods to Veteran's Park.
2. Enhance the overall aesthetics and cohesion of the corridor – including private building design, private site design, and public streetscaping – in order to attract residents and potential businesses.
3. Generate strategies to encourage visitors and residents to explore downtown La Crescent and the Walnut Street corridor.

4. Better utilize city right-of-way throughout the corridor, especially in the residential area north of downtown La Crescent.

The detailed conceptual images and action steps contained in this plan improve the city's ability to facilitate public and private investment in the corridor. As specific projects come forward, whether public or private, they will be subject to additional community discussion and scrutiny. That process may lead to new perspectives and different outcomes than envisioned in this plan.

This plan builds upon existing city plans, especially La Crescent's Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and Safe Routes to School Plan. Recommendations and actions in this plan will help provide concrete steps to implement the vision within these documents.

This planning project presents a once-in-40-year opportunity to improve the Walnut Street corridor. Transforming Walnut Street into a Complete Street for all residents and visitors will be the first step towards transforming all of downtown La Crescent's streets.



Project Study Area

This plan document focuses on the entire Walnut Street corridor, stretching from the S 3rd Street intersection to the N 4th Street intersection. The project also aims to determine the best ways to connect Walnut Street to Veteran’s Park, encouraging safer and more seamless pedestrian and cyclist movement between downtown La Crescent and the park, Event Center, and bluffland trails beyond.

While this project is mainly focused on the Walnut Street corridor itself, special consideration has been given to its integration into La Crescent as a whole. The project team explored the street renovation’s impact on surrounding traffic, parking, community assets, and commercial and residential areas. The map (at right) shows the parcels that were directly impacted by this planning process, but on-site observations and feedback were collected from around the community.



Existing Plan Document Review

Comprehensive Plan (2016)

In 2016, the City of La Crescent adopted its Comprehensive Plan with a vision of advocating for “balanced growth, with high regard for health, safety, and environmental stewardship”. Guiding principles and implementation recommendations were developed to help the city achieve this vision within various community aspects like housing, economic development, downtown enhancement, and transportation.

Of the seven Essential Themes outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, two are particularly relevant to the Walnut Street Corridor Plan:

1. A proactive city role in new housing and downtown redevelopment – with few options for outward growth, the city can lead the way with “catalytic” infill projects by acquiring parcels and facilitating redevelopment.
2. Health and safety as a priority – attention to health and safety in all projects and decisions, including continued investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The Downtown Enhancement, Transportation and Mobility, and Land Use sections of the Comprehensive Plan each contain goals that will inform the recommendations generated by the Walnut Street Corridor Plan process. The general objectives of these goals include:

1. Creating and articulating a downtown district through dense “urban” development, intentional streetscaping, and incorporation of residential

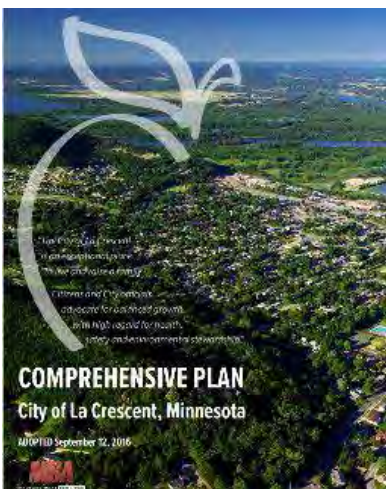
and commercial uses;

2. Maintaining convenient parking facilities;
3. Enabling efficient and safe vehicular circulation throughout the community; and
4. Following Complete Streets principles and further addressing community health through provisions like street trees and stormwater management.

Downtown Vision & Strategic Plan (2017)

Adopted in late 2017 as an extension of the Comprehensive Plan, this plan directly addresses density, housing and commercial development, traffic patterns, and the pedestrian realm in downtown La Crescent. The project area extended from La Crescent-Hokah Elementary to Veteran’s Park, completely encapsulating the Walnut Street corridor.

Among the plan’s highest priorities is establishing a distinct downtown district and enhancing pedestrian/vehicular circulation throughout the space. One of these accompanying initiatives – the Wagon Wheel Trail trailhead and bridge over Hwy 14/61 – was completed in August 2022. While the Downtown Vision and Strategic Plan does not discuss connecting downtown La Crescent to Veteran’s Park and the new hotel/Event Center, nor emphasizing the South Walnut Street–South 3rd Street intersection as a downtown corridor gateway, its recommendations offer specific design improvements and public facility ideas that can be incorporated into the Walnut Street Corridor Plan’s overarching vision.



Veteran's Park Master Plan (2017)

This set of site plans outlines proposed improvements to Veteran's Park, including pickleball courts, pedestrian pathways, a building for restrooms and gatherings, and enhanced stormwater management. The Master Plan also overhauls the site's existing hotel and parking lot in favor of a proposed convention center and hotel complex, relocating parking facilities further into the park and adding an entry driveway from Park Street. The La Crescent Area Event Center and Best Western Hotel complex was completed in 2019. An eventual parking lot expansion and connection to Park Street was proposed but was not included in the implementation.

Bluffland Plan (2016)

Following the completion of a regional blufflands plan (commissioned by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee for bluffland conservation and recreation throughout the La Crosse-La Crescent region), the City of La Crescent adopted its own Blufflands Plan to protect these lands from future development. This plan works to educate and rally property owners to protect the community's blufflands through conservation easements, land purchase, and other means. The plan also identifies recreation improvements that will lead to a more cohesive system of trails and recreational amenities in the city's bluffland areas.

Park and Recreation Plan (2022)

This plan amends the 2012 Park and Recreation Plan and offers master plans for Eagles Bluff, Vetsch/Vollenweider/Stoney Point, Horsetrack Meadows,

and Wieser Park. The plan starts with broad goals and strategies aimed at enhancing residents' quality of life and natural resiliency through green space. Through quantitative analysis and community feedback, each park in La Crescent is then prescribed specific recommendations with accompanying prioritizations and cost estimates. Similar to the Veteran's Park Master Plan, this plan recommends a trail connection from Veteran's Park to Park Street, better connecting the park to surrounding residential areas.

Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2013)

Adopted in 2013 and updated in 2017, this plan seeks to improve pedestrian and cyclist-oriented elements throughout the community. The primary principles of the plan include fixing infrastructure that needs repair, improving intersections for bicyclists and pedestrians, improving integration of bike and pedestrian-friendly policies in everyday activities, and developing a connected system for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the city. The plan recommends improvements that provide continuous, safe facilities for people traveling by a variety of transportation modes.

Coulee Vision 2050 (2013)

In 2013, the City of La Crescent participated in the preparation of the Coulee Vision 2050, a long-term, regional transportation and land use plan facilitated by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. This plan envisions limits on new road construction, enhanced public transit systems, and more compact development patterns throughout the region.



Planning Process

This plan was developed over approximately seven months, beginning in March 2023 through October 2023. The process included the following activities:

Staff Coordination Meetings

The project team met with city staff at every stage of the project to outline the planning process, share information, brainstorm community engagement events, and review and discuss draft materials.

EDC Meetings

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) served as the city's project planning committee and acted as a sounding board for the project. The project team met with the EDC four times over the course of the planning process to walk the corridor, present draft materials, and finalize logistics of engagement events and other major project milestones.

Public Engagement

Throughout the duration of the planning process, the project team collected public input through a variety of methods including pop-up events, focus group interviews, and public meetings. The processes and results of these events are summarized in the Public Engagement chapter.

Project Timeline

1

Investigate (March – June)

- Public kickoff meeting.
- Existing plan document review.
- Corridor evaluation.
- First round of focus group meetings & public input meeting.

2

Envision (June – July)

- Public engagement summarization.
- Goals and strategies development.
- Design alternatives/concepts development.
- Draft Corridor Plan document.

3

Revise (July – September)

- Second round of focus group meetings & public input meeting.
- Revise design alternatives/concepts.
- Review/edit Corridor Plan document.

4

Adopt (September - October)

- Finalize Corridor Plan document.
- Final Committee review/recommendation.
- City Council action.

Initial Corridor Evaluation

Early in the planning process, the project team evaluated the existing state of the Walnut Street corridor through a variety of methods, including surveying, on-site observation, and conversations with city staff. The following are the themes that emerged from this analysis:

Pedestrian/Cycling Infrastructure

- Inconsistent sidewalk conditions and ADA compliance.
- Inconsistent sidewalk coverage throughout the corridor.
- Unmarked or unsafe crosswalks.
- No dedicated “family friendly” bike lane/route.

Car Infrastructure

- Unnecessarily wide/underutilized streets and rights-of-way.
- Adequate number/placement of parking facilities, lack of awareness of parking locations.

Urban Design

- Lack of consistent street furniture style and opportunities for city branding.
- Lack of directional/wayfinding signage.



Public Engagement

Introduction

Community engagement was a crucial part of the planning process, creating a direct line of communication between the project team and the residents of La Crescent. Various methods of engagement were utilized throughout the project's duration to generate preliminary corridor-specific priorities and obtain input on resulting concepts. Community engagement events included the following:

Farmer's Market Pop-Up #1

Veteran's Park | June 13, 2023

MSA and city staff set up a booth at the La Crescent Farmer's Market to gather general input from community members and promote upcoming public events. Activities at the booth included a visioning exercise, in which participants could vote on their image preferences with stickers, and a board to jot down answers to basic prompts. Alongside the activities, the project team had numerous one-on-one conversations with residents about their priorities and concerns for the Walnut Street corridor.

First Round of Focus Group Meetings

La Crescent City Hall & Community Building

June 14, 2023

Two separate focus group meetings were held to gather input from specific demographics from the Walnut Street corridor: residents and business owners. At each meeting, attendees were divided into small groups to have guided discussions with members of the project team.

At the resident focus group, the following themes emerged:

- Concern about the unsafe intersection in front of Kwik Trip (N 4th St, Veterans Pkwy, and U.S. 61).
- Opportunity for beautification throughout downtown La Crescent – additional planters, cohesive streetlights, improved signage, increased tree canopy, etc.
- Concern about pedestrian safety along corridor – improve sidewalk coverage and maintenance, safe crossings, traffic calming measures, preventing jaywalking, widen sidewalks.
- Concern about loss of trees and driveway access, and having to shovel sidewalks in winter.

At the business owner focus group, the following themes emerged:

- Downtown La Crescent is hidden from highway traffic/potential customers – improve appearance of highway frontage and add wayfinding to guide traffic into downtown.
- Accommodating bike traffic – prevent cyclists from riding on sidewalks, add more bike racks, encourage cycling tourism from other cities.
- Make downtown La Crescent a destination – add new shops and interest points, provide central gathering spaces, community events, tourism kiosks, seating, move Farmer's Market downtown, enhance sense of unity and branding along corridor.
- Improve parking situation – better promote existing public parking lots, provide designated spots for "transient" traffic (e.g. daily delivery trucks and take-out customers), longer-term employee parking, repurpose underutilized diagonal parking spots.





Public Input Meeting #1

Community Building | June 14, 2023

Attendees of the public input meeting received a brief introductory presentation about the project’s objectives and timeline, then were given plenty of time to roam around the room and leave comments on the numerous project area maps. The project area was divided into nine aerial maps – each blown up to 24”x36” – allowing community members to identify and annotate specific changes that they would want to see along the Walnut Street corridor. Through this activity, as well as multiple one-on-one and small group conversations, the project team gathered useful insight to inform the next stages of the project.

Farmer’s Market Pop-Up #2

Veteran’s Park | August 8, 2023

City staff engaged the public at the La Crescent Farmer’s Market and invited visitors to comment on preliminary design concepts and place stickers on a street furniture-specific visual preference board.

Second Round of Focus Group Meetings

*La Crescent City Hall & Community Building
August 9, 2023*

Similar to the first round of focus group meetings, residents and business owners attended separate meetings to provide feedback on preliminary design concepts for each major section of the Walnut Street corridor. Attendees were sorted into small groups and walked through each section with a member of the project team. The following themes emerged:



- Attendees from both meetings generally agreed that Park Street and Walnut Place offered the best access points to Veteran’s Park. Attendees almost unanimously disliked the idea of pedestrians accessing Veteran’s Park from N Chestnut Street (near Kwik Trip and MN 14 intersection).
- Business owners disliked the parallel parking proposed in each design concept, requesting to prioritize existing angled parking instead of adding a dedicated bicycle facility.
- Residents re-emphasized the importance of safer crosswalks and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the residential segment of the Walnut Street Corridor.

Public Input Meeting #2

Community Building | August 9, 2023

The materials displayed and annotated at the second Farmer’s Market pop-up event and focus group meetings were brought to this public input meeting, allowing community members to see previous comments and add their own thoughts to the boards. Attendees received a brief project update, then were sorted into small groups to discuss the materials.

Streetscaping

Streetscape Overview

Some of the major objectives of the Walnut Street Corridor Plan are to better balance pedestrian and bicycle facilities, enable safer vehicular circulation, and maintain parking access. Doing so will provide more equitable access for visitors and residents to enjoy downtown businesses and events and further boost economic activity.

Recent implementation of the new Wagon Wheel bridge and realignment of the Mississippi River Trail present an opportunity to recreate Walnut Street as a more balanced Complete Street corridor. The new Wagon Wheel Bridge provides a safe and reliable crossing for trail users traveling between downtown La Crescent and La Crosse, WI. The bridge is an important element of the Wagon Wheel Trail that will allow access to the Mississippi River trail system

and other local trails in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Presently, however, the trail ends at S First Street with no continuation of bicycle facilities onto Walnut Street.

The increase in bicycle traffic and visitors to La Crescent is expected to steadily increase as more regional bicycle facilities are added to the area over the next decade. It is in the best interest of the city to anticipate this growth and capture these economic benefits to continue to develop and thrive.

The streetscapes envisioned in this plan will help make La Crescent a more connected community. This goal is accomplished by re-imagining Walnut Street with a more activated Complete Street profile that improves functionality and safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists alike.



Streetscape is a term used to describe the natural and built environment of the street, including the roadway and the sidewalk terrace. It is typically defined as the design quality and visual character of the street. The concept recognizes that a street is a public place where people engage in various activities and experiences. Streetscapes and their visual impact largely influences public places where people interact. Making targeted streetscape improvements will ultimately help define a community's aesthetic quality, economic activity, public health, and environmental sustainability.

Public Realm

The “public realm” consists of any structures, materials, and design elements that are located within the public right-of-way and any publicly-owned adjacent lands. The components of the public realm include softscape elements such as trees and landscape material and hardscape elements such as lighting, wayfinding signage, street furniture, crosswalks and active transportation facilities (i.e. parking, bike lanes, bus stops, etc.).

Unique structures and elements can also be placed in high activity areas to encourage interaction with the space and create a sense of place – often called “placemaking.” Examples of these placemaking elements includes outdoor art/sculpture, gateway features and interpretive signage often decorated with municipal or district logos.

Intentional placemaking elements along the Walnut Street corridor would increase economic activity by creating a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors, aiding in pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and reinforcing a memorable brand for La Crescent. However, these components should be considered with their holistic maintenance or operational cost trade-offs.

Street Trees & Landscaping

Incorporating softscape elements such as trees and landscaping into streetscapes helps create resilient communities. These features make the sidewalk more inviting for pedestrians and support a more active street profile with vertical and overhead plant mass. Integrating vegetative material into the street environment can also help mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce the city’s carbon footprint.

There are a variety of ways that these softscape elements provide multi-purpose benefits along the Walnut Street corridor:

- Installing shade trees will provide shade and some shelter from wind.
- Street trees also capture stormwater runoff, filter pollutants and reduce the heat island effect.
- Native plants provides visual interest and supports biodiversity of local wildlife and insects.
- Landscaping – especially trees and other vertical elements – can assist with traffic calming by appearing to narrow the roadway.
- Similar to rain gardens, properly designed sidewalk terraces can capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff.
- Raised-bed or moveable planters can be used to add vegetation where space is limited.
- These streetscape features can be used to attract attention to public spaces, provide passive seating opportunities, and buffer pedestrian spaces from automobile traffic.
- Hanging baskets can complement the assortment of landscape features with more strategic color and character.

Street Furnishings

Street furniture activates the public realm by providing functional objects that complement the aesthetic character of the community. The environment created with these features often increases foot traffic because the space is more comfortable and welcoming for pedestrians. Examples of street furniture include benches, planters, seat walls, tree grates, light poles, trash receptacles, water fountains, bike racks and bus shelters.

Complete Streets are roads and adjacent areas designed with a balanced approach that better supports all modes of transportation. This is accomplished by adding more room for pedestrian and bicycle traffic while optimizing over-designed automobile infrastructure. With a Complete Street profile, visitors and residents of different ages and abilities can more safely access community events, shopping areas, and public amenities with the transportation mode that fits their lifestyle. If implemented properly, this redeveloped corridor can serve the dual purpose of creating a vibrant place (placemaking) and providing a more functional transportation network.

Currently, a variety of furniture brands and styles are scattered sporadically throughout the Walnut Street corridor. The city’s Brand Guidelines (2019) and the recently completed work at the Walnut Street and S 3rd Street intersection provided inspiration for the styles that were considered most appropriate for the corridor moving forward. Public engagement provided more targeted input that can be used to select the final furniture style list for the corridor that can be adapted to fit the commercial and residential areas.

As the Walnut Street design development process proceeds with more detailed design development, the city should work with local property owners and stakeholders to determine the appropriate style and frequency of furnishings to be used in the corridor. The final selection should be complementary to other styles already used in recent street projects to support broader cohesion across the city’s street furniture selection.

The Complete Street ideal does not support a “one size fits all” approach to streetscape design. Unique areas throughout the city or even along the Walnut Street corridor can have their own identity. For example, one district could use a more traditional, classic style

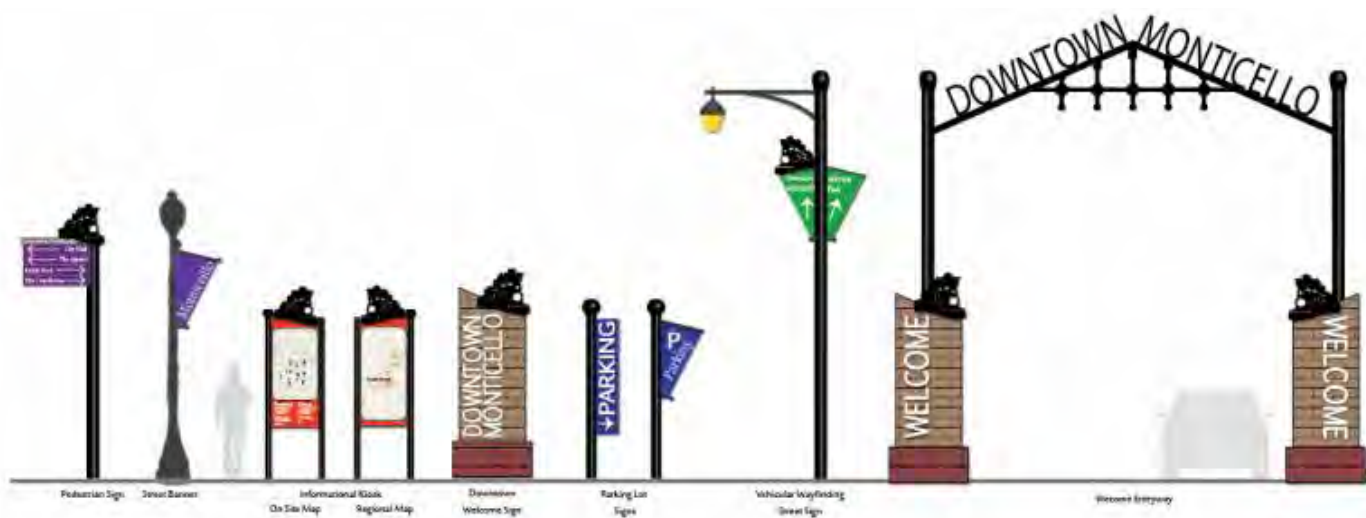
while another area uses a more modern style. There is an opportunity to delineate districts by tailoring the street furnishings with their unique environmental characteristics and recognizing their commercial, residential, or park uses.

Lighting

Effective lighting improves the aesthetic character and sense of comfort in a space, but should also support a safe environment for all users throughout the day and night. Lights can also be used to highlight key public spaces or accentuate placemaking elements and interesting buildings. A variety of scales of lighting can be applied to the corridor – larger and brighter lights for streets and parking-centric areas, and pedestrian-scaled options for areas with high foot traffic or gathering spaces. Any lighting options should prioritize public safety while also limiting light pollution as both a cost-saving and environmental benefit.

Signage

One way to visually unite the public realm is through a coordinated signage program. A hierarchy of signage helps to convey locational or event information for residents and visitors along the corridor. Signage throughout the corridor can include wayfinding signage, traffic signage, and more specialized interpretive or gateway signage.



Wayfinding *Is the process of determining and following a route or path between two points. Maps and signage are examples of active wayfinding. Finding your way using landmarks or other spatial features is an example of passive wayfinding. Streetscape design and corridor planning should support both types of wayfinding to enhance the corridor placemaking effort.*

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage provides environmental cues to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Street signs and directional signage are the most commonly used wayfinding signs. However, within the Walnut Street character districts (or other key locations across La Crescent), there may be opportunities to include unique branding coupled with seasonal markers or banners to further enhance the placemaking effort. Other types of wayfinding signage can be used to inform visitors and residents of various locations, areas of interest and tourist destinations including commercial activity areas, parks and recreation sites, and/or seasonal events. Overall the signage should be designed depending upon the speed and eye height of the user based on their transportation mode: walking, biking, or driving.

Public Parking

La Crescent has an abundance of public parking opportunities located throughout the corridor study area. While on-street parking does help to provide visual and physical separation between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists, it may have negative impacts on overall traffic flow. The Walnut Street reconstruction project is an opportunity to evaluate the holistic parking needs of downtown La Crescent and implement Complete Street principles to support more active and accessible modes of transportation.

On-Street Parking

Existing on-street parking along Walnut Street between N 1st Street and S 2nd Street consists of a total 57 parking spaces configured as parallel parking and angled parking. In this area, there are 25 unmarked parallel parking spaces. The angled parking portion is limited to a two-block area of Walnut Street representing a total of 32 parking spaces.

An additional 139 parallel parking spots are in the more residential portion of the study area north of N 1st Street to Veteran's Park. In the section of Walnut Street north to N 4th Street, there are 49 parking spots. N 4th Street from Walnut Place to Park Street can accommodate 28 parallel parking spots. Another 43 parking spots are located along Park Street up to Veteran's Park, which are primarily used as overflow space for park events. Walnut Place, a short dead-end street off of N 4th Street, has room for 19 parking spaces.

Municipal Parking Lots

Currently, six public parking lots serve the immediate corridor area – three within downtown La Crescent and three in the Veteran's Park commercial district.

Downtown public parking lots have a total capacity of 110 cars. A parking lot with capacity for approximately 36 cars is located behind City Hall with midblock access via S 1st Street. Another parking lot with capacity for 28 cars is located at the southeast corner of S Oak Street and S 1st Street. The city also maintains a long-term lease for a parking lot behind buildings at 31-33 S Walnut Street (Southeast of Walnut Street/Main Street intersection) with capacity for 46 cars. All three parking lots are within a 1/8 mile walk of La Crescent's downtown core at the Main Street and Walnut Street intersection.

At the Veteran's Park commercial district, three parking lots serve the Event Center and park with 187 total parking spaces. The westernmost parking lot serving the ballfield and the Eagle's Bluff Park access trailhead has 44 parking spaces. The central parking lot serving the Event Center and playground area has 108 parking spaces. The easternmost parking lot directly north of the stormwater basin has 35 parking spaces.

Character Districts

The Walnut Street corridor is unique in that it has three different character types in its half-mile span, each with their own distinct look, feel, and land uses. These types are sorted into distinct districts, which are color-coded on the map on the following page. These districts are as follows:

Downtown District

The southernmost district located from S 3rd Street north to N 1st Street. This district includes a mixture of commercial uses including retail, professional services, and restaurants/cafes along with some mixed-density residential included throughout.



Residential District

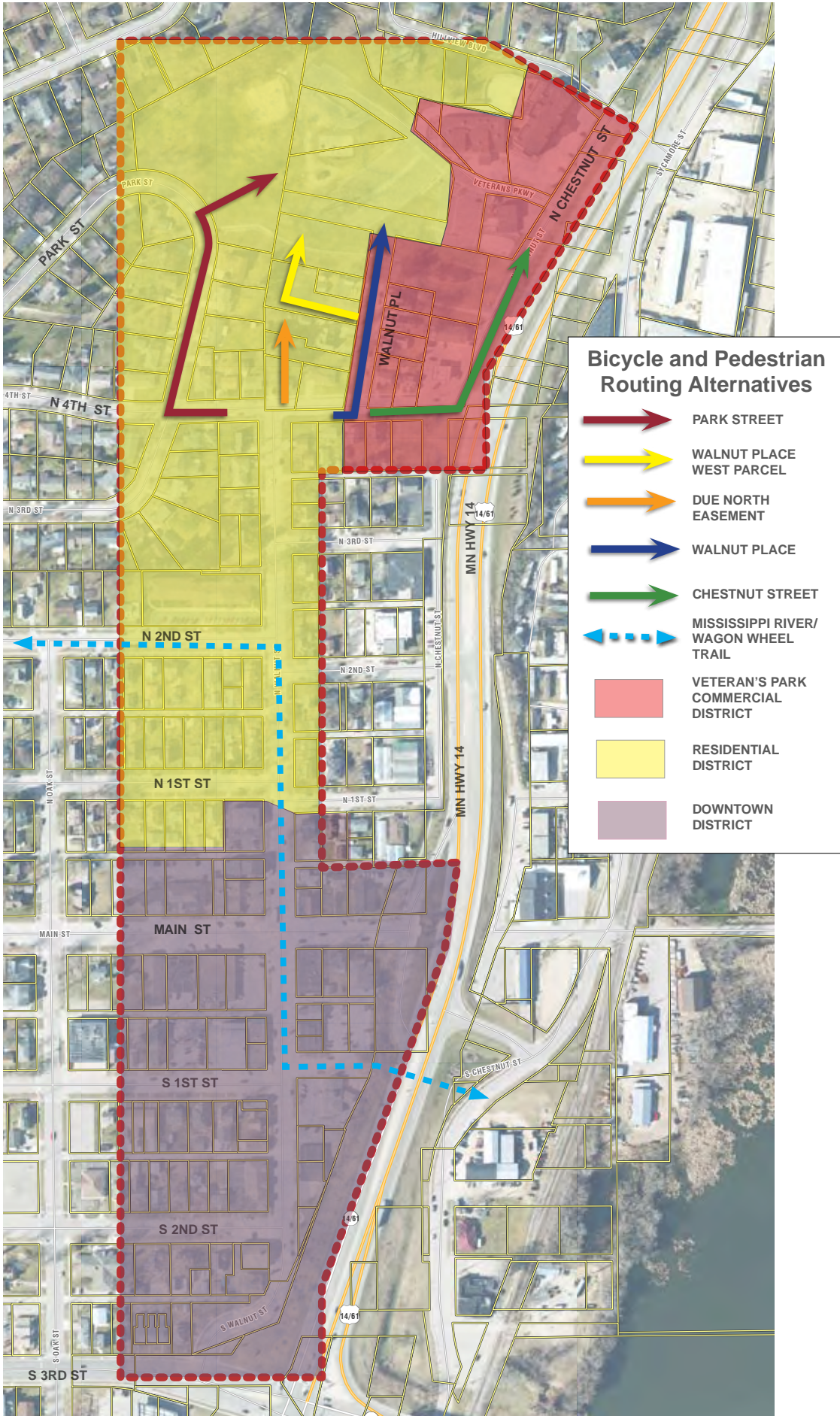
The middle portion of the project area including from N 1st Street north to N 4th Street and branching off to Park Street to the west and Walnut Place to the east. The area is predominantly single-family residential housing with some medium- and higher-density residential buildings located along Walnut Street. This district includes the western portions of Veteran's Park.



Veteran's Park/Highway Commercial District

The northernmost area of the corridor from N 4th Street north to Hillview Boulevard and including N Chestnut Street (14/61 Frontage Rd). This district mainly consists of convenience, food and beverage, and lodging-related businesses. However, the eastern, more developed portions of Veteran's Park are included in this area due to the number of seasonal events held there each year.





Design Alternatives

Design Alternatives

To support a more nuanced discussion of the design and planning of the whole corridor, Walnut Street was divided up into nine segments between S 3rd Street and Veteran's Park. Each segment has different roadway and sidewalk/terrace requirements when considering the variety of adjacent uses, right-of-way width, and parking needs along the corridor. Each segment is described in further detail on the following pages along with the preferred design profile and examples of streetscape features that can be modified to fit the Walnut Street corridor.

Park Street Route: The most feasible route and designated for future path/trail route improvements per the 2022 Park & Recreation Plan. The mixed use path would turn west from N 4th Street onto the south side of N 4th Street and then cross at the controlled intersection currently located at Park Street. After crossing N 4th Street, the wider sidewalk route would follow the east side of Park Street up to Veteran's Park so that overflow parallel parking can be maintained on both sides of the street.

Walnut Place Route: An existing right-of-way easement connects Walnut Place into Veteran's Park. However, steep terrain limits access into the park which poses a significant engineering and cost challenge. Developing the mixed-use path across N 4th Street and on the west side of Walnut Place can further support park access. One proposed solution was a pedestrian and bicycle bridge into the park from Walnut Place; however, this option would still be expensive and difficult to implement.

Alternate Walnut Place Route: Another potential Walnut Place route would involve the city-owned parcel that forms an L shape from mid-block Walnut Place turning north into Veteran's Park. The route could then cross the drainage ditch either with a bridge or run west to Park Street and double back east into the park. While the terrain is not as severe as that running due north of Walnut Place, this routing still poses significant engineering challenges if a

wider path is to be carved into the hillside. Another limitation to consider is that this alternate route would lessen the development potential of that park-adjacent parcel.

North Chestnut Street: The mixed-use path could be directed over to N Chestnut Street and then north into Veteran's Park. The narrow roadway corridor could transition into a one-way street where one travel lane could be converted into a bike and pedestrian route buffered from automobile traffic. Accessing N 4th Street as a pedestrian/cyclist requires crossing and navigating the HWY 14/61 and N 4th Street intersection and, with more traffic conflicts, can pose significant safety risks. Additionally, this route was also deemed as "uncomfortable" and "unaccommodating" for pedestrians/cyclists due to noisy, unprotected conditions.

One related alternative explored routing vehicles, bikes and pedestrians along sections of park property currently partially occupied by a shared driveway. If N Chestnut Street were eventually connected to Walnut Place, the N 4th Street and Hwy 14/61 intersection would be improved by removing the close intersections.

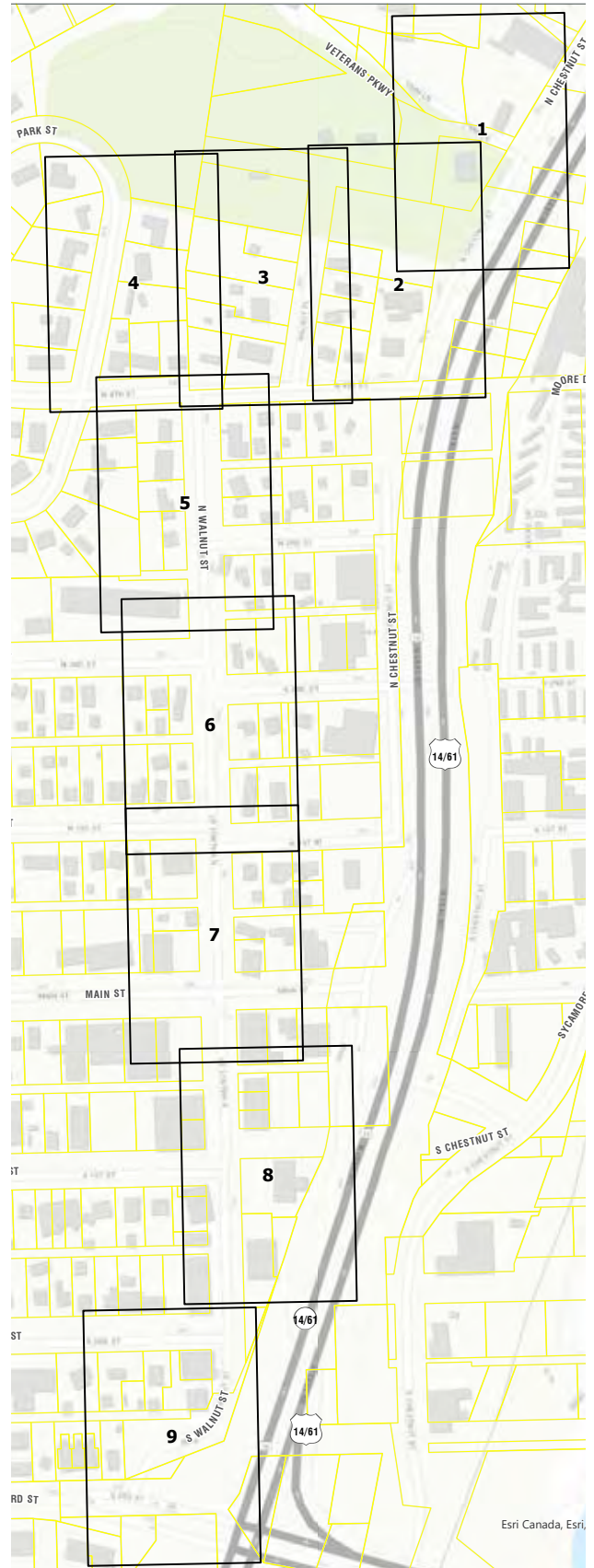
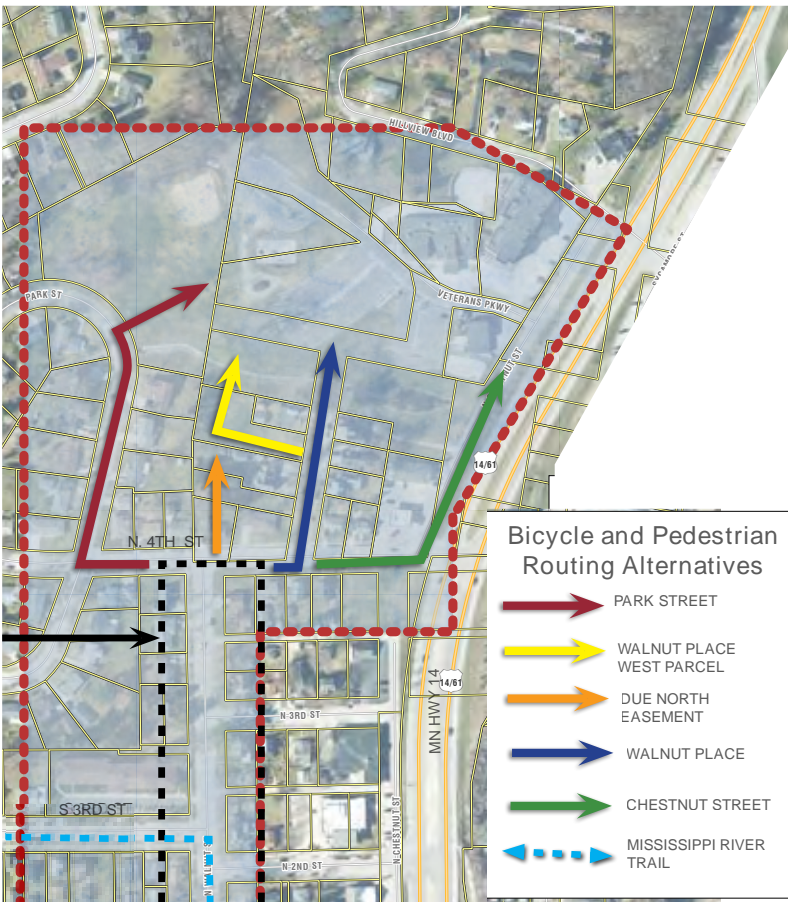
Due North Easement: Continuing Walnut Street due north was also considered as a route alternative. This option was not preferred because it would suffer from similar topographical constraints while also involving the negotiation of property easements.

In the preferred alternative, the proposed mixed use path would eventually split at N Walnut Street as non-vehicular traffic is directed toward Veteran's Park. One path would stay on the south side of N 4th Street as it progresses west to Park Street. The other path section would cross N 4th Street and proceed east to Walnut Place and eventually north into the park.

Corridor Segment Key Map

The following map index was used to break down the overall corridor into smaller segments to be designed with unique characteristics of each section impacting the overall design. The designs that follow are organized with these corridor segments.

Alternate Bicycle & Pedestrian Routing

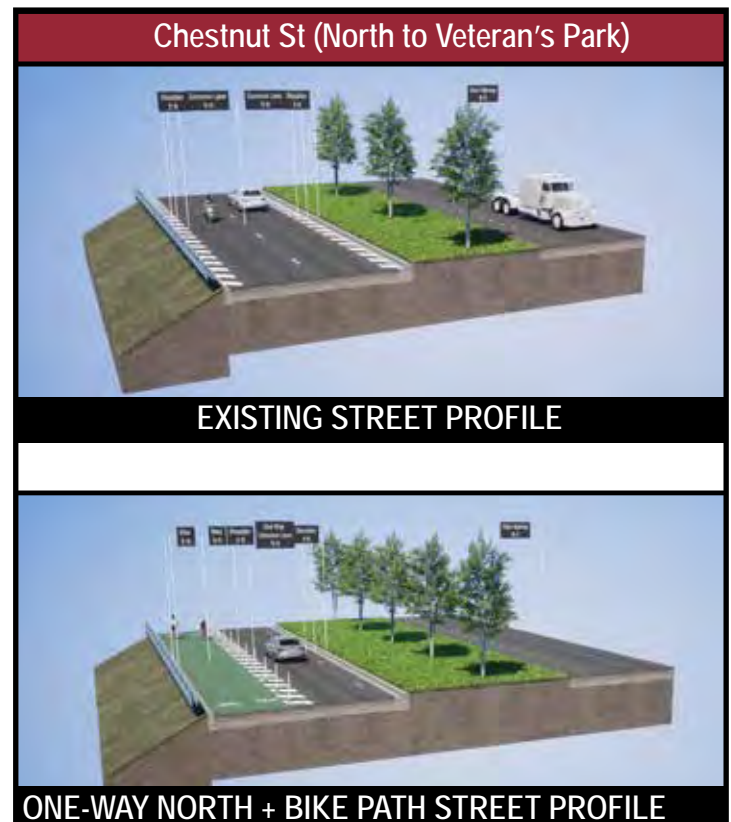
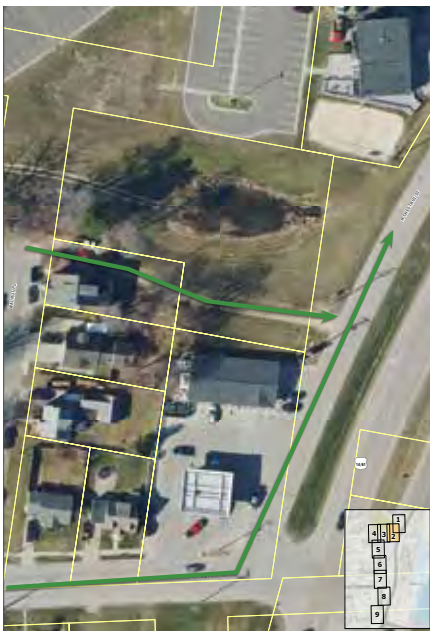




Segment 1 & 2: Chestnut Street (North to Veteran's Park)

Observations/Issues:

- Not preferred as one-way traffic for bicycle and pedestrian traffic – not an inviting atmosphere and current intersection alignment/spacing creates several traffic conflict points that should be avoided.
- Right-of-way width is too narrow with steep slopes and adjacent roadway conflicts.
- N 4th Street/N Chestnut Street/MN Hwy 14 (Kwik Trip) intersection is viewed as unsafe for mixing pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.
- Potential rerouting of N Chestnut Street to Walnut Place via property acquisition to close off one leg of the N 4th Street/N Chestnut Street/MN Hwy 14/61 intersection.

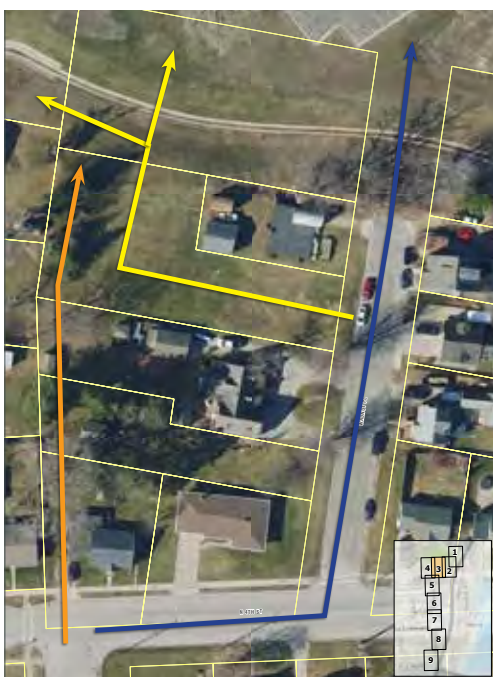




Segment 3: N 4th Street (West to Park Street or East to Walnut Place)

Observations/Issues:

- Narrowest right-of-way location at 58 feet wide.
- Can only apply dedicated bicycle facilities by sacrificing parallel parking on one side.
- Parking opportunities limited for homes located on north side of N 4th Street.
- Higher volumes of 'cut-through' traffic and unevenly spaced controlled/uncontrolled intersections create potential for increased traffic conflicts with more pedestrians and cyclists.
- Potential to continue dedicated bicycle facilities or mixed use path routing farther west along N 4th Street to connect with other existing bicycle lanes on Elm Street (Apple Blossom Drive).



N 4th St (West to Park or East to Chestnut)

EXISTING STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE



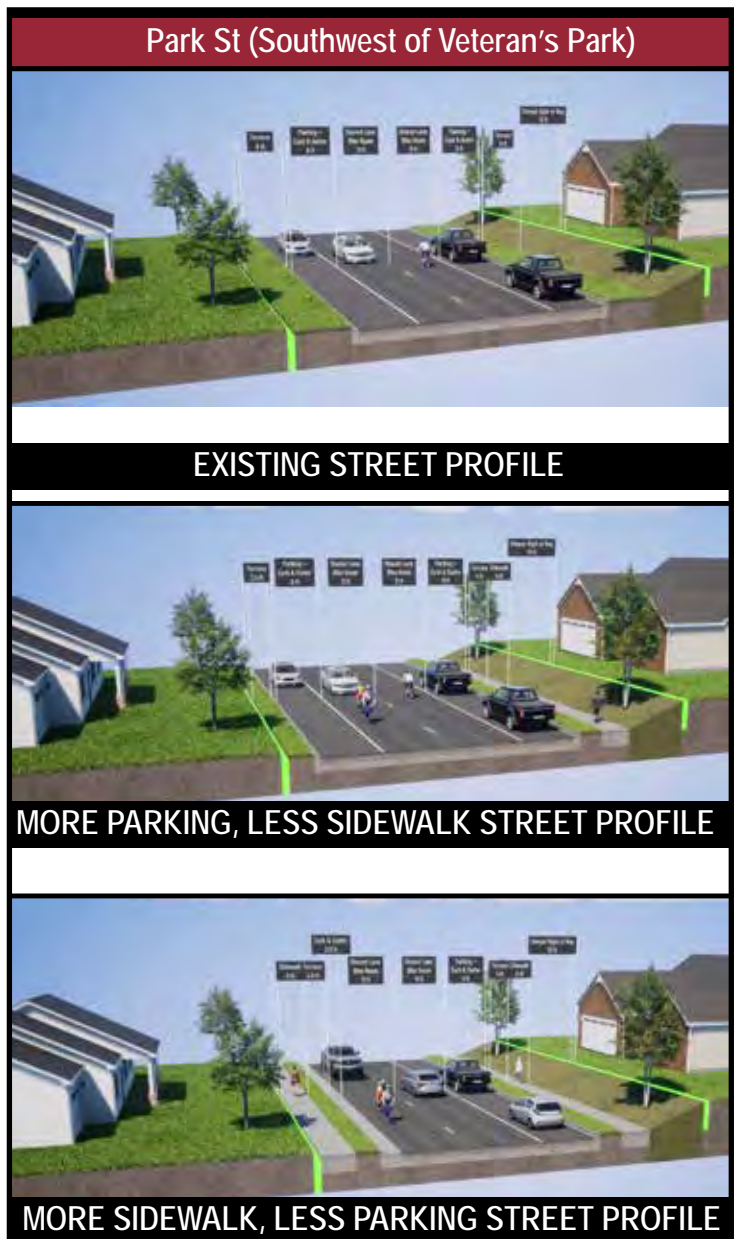
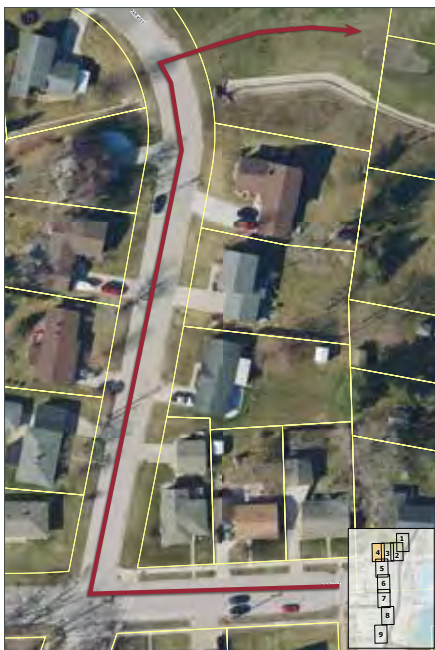
MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE



Segment 4: Park Street (From N 4th Street to Veteran's Park)

Observations/Issues:

- Controlled intersection at N 4th Street and Park Street provide crosswalk opportunity for shared-use path north into Veteran's Park.
- Narrow 62-foot right-of-way width along with steeper topography adjacent to Veteran's Park may prevent parking and sidewalks to be placed on both sides.
- Public meetings favored keeping shared use path on east side and allowing buffered yard space for closer homes and steeper topography while keeping parking on both sides.
- Public input also included the idea of expanding parking into southern portion of Veteran's Park without 'cut-through' access to the Event Center.





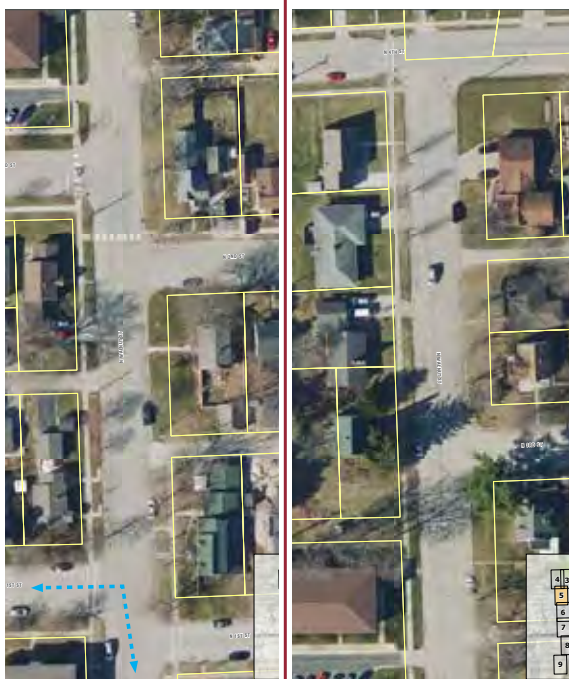
Segment 5 & 6: N Walnut Street (200+ Blocks, Residential)

Observations/Issues:

- Serves as transition from downtown to residential character district to the north.
- Wide right-of-way that does not feel appropriate for residential streets.
- Residents in this segment expressed concern about unsafe and staggered intersections, fast vehicular speed, and lack of crosswalks.

N 1st to N 2nd

N 2nd/N 3rd to N 4th





Segment 7: N Walnut Street (100 Block, Downtown)

Observations/Issues:

- Transition from downtown to residential character district allows more area for shared-use bicycle and pedestrian path.
- Wider terraces and curb extensions provide space for green infrastructure like rain gardens or pollinator gardens that can also add character to the street.
- On-street parking areas can be converted to parklets. These extensions of the sidewalk terrace area allow outdoor seating, dining, or landscape amenities to be temporarily added to high traffic areas and then removed for winter traffic.





Segment 8: S Walnut Street (100 Block, Downtown)

Observations/Issues:

- The right-of-way width of 78 feet does currently allow parallel and angled parking.
- Wider sidewalks on west side with limited trees and furniture of various styles
- Sidewalk slope and conditions do not support universal accessibility.
- Adding dedicated bicycle facility will require at least 10-foot wide area; cannot accommodate angled parking with comfortable sidewalk space.





Segment 9: S Walnut Street (200-300 Block, 3rd Street Intersection)

Observations/Issues:

- Recently completed landscaping and city signage project provides examples of furniture styles and material palettes to be modified and used for northern portions of Walnut Street corridor.
- Lighting and materials used for Wagon Wheel Bridge can be used to supplement existing furniture and streetscape amenity choices.



Recommended Concept Summary

Committee Recommendations

The Walnut Street Corridor Plan should be modified with the following additions prior to developing the project's engineering phase:

1. All lighting must be Dark Sky compliant;
2. More modern light fixtures are preferred and should be like those depicted on Page 23 as the city has chosen those already for the Wagon Wheel Bike-Ped bridge area;
3. Light fixtures should accommodate cameras, banner arms, possible hanging baskets, wifi capability, etc.;
4. Add more angle parking on the east side of Walnut Street north of the new coffee shop up to N. 1st Street;
5. Continue to carry the 10' multi-use path on the west side of Walnut Street into the downtown, if possible, in the final engineering design;
6. On the east side of Walnut Street, do not put the sidewalk directly behind the curb so to allow for both snow storage and boulevard trees;
7. As part of the implementation of the plan, the city needs to address the two-hour parking zones;
8. The city should reconstruct the alleys on the east and west side of Walnut Street between Main Street and S. 1st Street (between Quillin's and the hardware store) and between the laundromat and pizza parlor);
9. The burial of overhead wires is not addressed in the plan and all the overhead wires should be buried during construction;

Recommended Plan Notes

The concepts in the following pages reflect input by those who attended public meetings and focus group sessions. The planning process revealed two stakeholder priorities:

1. a dedicated bike facility along Walnut Street from the bike bridge at South 1st St to Veteran's Park (either bike lanes in the street or a two-way path located outside the curb of the street, or a combination of those methods)
2. no reduction in the number of parking stalls in the downtown segment of Walnut St.

Unfortunately, these two priorities are not compatible. The Walnut Street right-of-way is too narrow in the downtown area (76 feet at the narrowest) to safely accommodate a dedicated bike facility AND the same amount of parking. A dedicated bike facility IS possible with a modest reduction in Walnut St. parking, either by removing parallel parking from the west side or converting the angled parking to parallel on the east side. The effect of this change, besides enabling a safe bike route, would be a shift in the location of parking for some users at peak demand. Some customers would need to utilize existing parking stalls along Main Street, increasing the typical walk from the car to the building entrance from about 20 seconds to about 60 seconds.

Recommended Concept

Introduction

The following section provides a summary of the preferred concept design and the major streetscape features included in the final corridor plan. However, multiple alternative streetscape sections were used to evaluate the possibilities in detail for this planning project. Those alternatives are provided alongside the preferred option as a reference for future engineering design input.

Key Streetscape Features

- Increased sidewalk width downtown for improved pedestrian space along Walnut St for more seating, furniture, and other streetscape amenities.
- Narrower 11-foot travel lanes to reduce traffic speeds and increase awareness of potential pedestrian/bicycle/automobile traffic conflicts
- Curb extensions (sidewalk 'bumpouts') at most intersections and prominent crossings to decrease lane width and discourage faster cut-through traffic.
- Expanded sidewalk terrace areas to be used by local businesses for outdoor seating, landscape features, or bike parking.
- Crosswalk materials and markings with bolder contrast to better delineate the crossing area
- 10-foot-wide mixed use walking/bicycle path to Veterans Park starting at N 1st St to promote more bicycle and pedestrian connectivity along Walnut St

Mixed-Use Path/Bicycle Path

- The preference to keep angled parking downtown does not allow for dedicated bike facilities to be placed south of N 1st St. Pull-in/back-out angled parking and bicycle facilities do not work well together and limited right-of-way width does not allow for proper buffering.
- Wider sidewalks downtown will allow bike riders to walk their bikes to the mixed-use path that starts at N 1st St and stays on Walnut St's west side
- The 10-foot mixed use path continues up to N 4th St and turns east toward Park St where it narrows to approximately 8 feet to accommodate right-of-way limitations.

Veteran's Park (Corridor Segments 1 - 4)

- The most preferred option for access to Veteran's Park included placing a wider 8-foot sidewalk on the east side of Park St from N 4th St north to Veteran's Park where a trees have been pre-planted to line an eventual path into the park from Park St toward the Event Center.
- Due to steeper slopes and narrower 60-foot right-of-way mean keeping parallel parking on both sides is and sidewalks on both sides would not be possible without requiring engineered solutions to handle severe grade changes adjacent to existing driveways
- Mixed-use path can maintain 10-foot width to south of N 4th St with crossings at Park St stop sign and/or due north of Walnut with a more prominent rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) to better announce crosswalk locations

Residential Walnut Street (Corridor Segment 5 & 6)

- Narrower lanes and sidewalk bumpouts at intersections and crosswalks provides more opportunities for seating, landscaping, and other streetscape amenities.
- A mixed-use pedestrian/bicycle path starts at N 1st St on the west side of Walnut St and continues onto Veteran's Park
- Adding a 6-foot sidewalk on the east side of Walnut St delivers better connectivity and accessibility while providing more space for streetscaping features.

Downtown Walnut Street (Corridor Segments 7 - 9)

- Reallocating the space from narrower travel lanes lets nearly at least 6-feet of sidewalk to be added for streetscape amenities like outdoor seating/dining, landscaping, and lighting
- Angled and parallel parking spots along the street can be repurposed for temporary 'parklets' during warmer months to further expand useable sidewalk/café space

Recommended Concept

N 1st Street to Veteran's Park



S 1st Street to N 1st Street



Recommended Typical Sections



Park St to Veteran's Park



N 4th St to Park St



N Walnut St Residential

Recommended Typical Sections



N Walnut St Downtown



S Walnut St Downtown

Segment 4: Park Street (From N 4th Street to Veteran's Park)



Divided Multi-use Path



Raised Crosswalk to calm traffic



Multi-use Path Instructional Signage



Segment 5 & 6: N Walnut Street (200+ Blocks, Residential)

N 1st to N 2nd

N 2nd/N 3rd to N 4th



Multi-use Path Character Examples



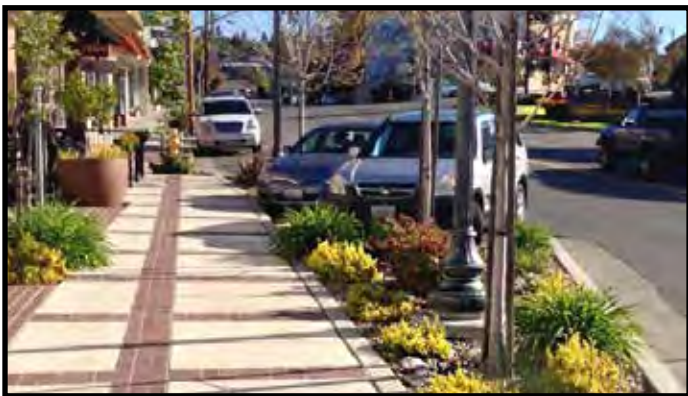
Temporary/Seasonal Curb Extensions



Segment 7: N Walnut Street, N 1st Street to Main Street (100 Block, Downtown)



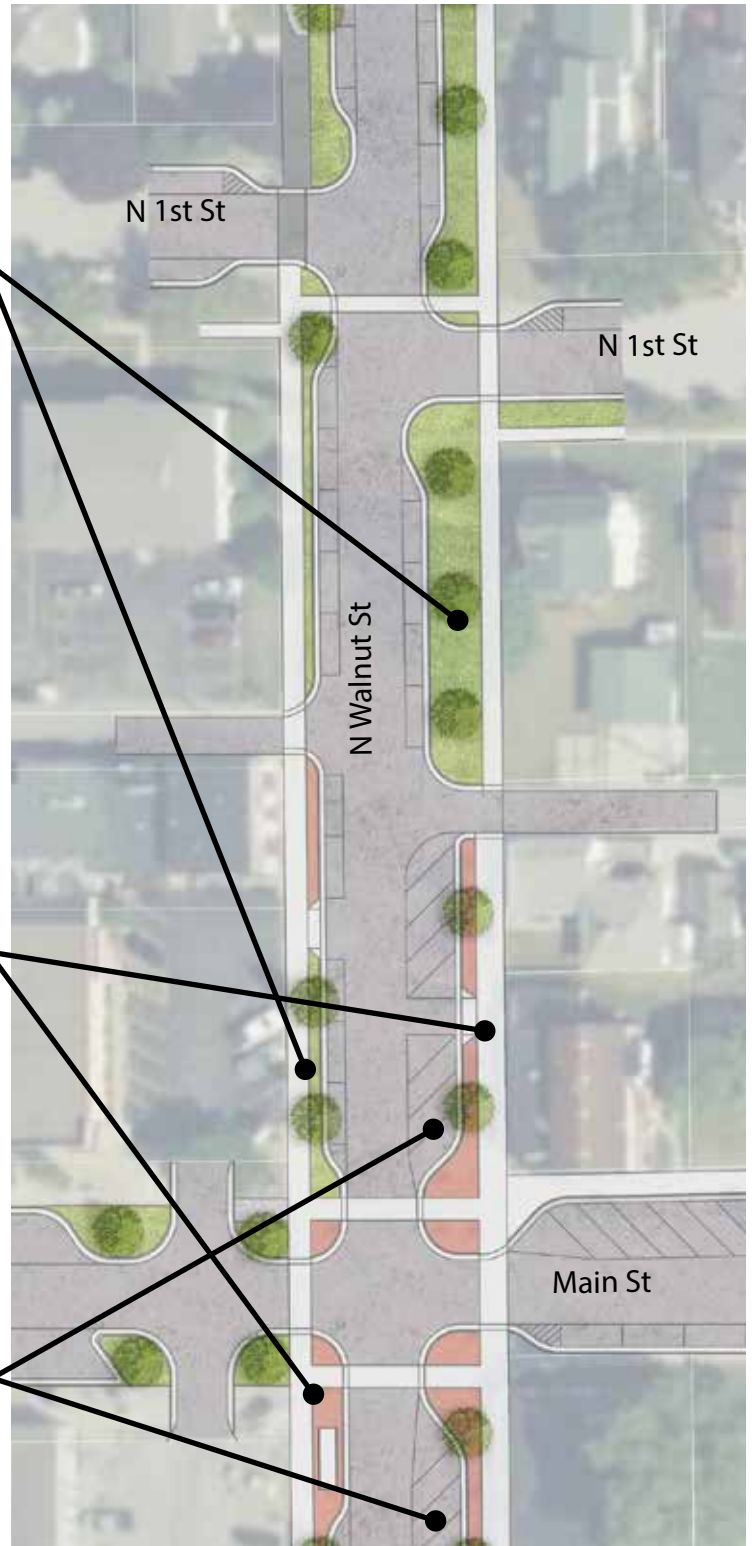
Green Infrastructure for Stormwater



Sidewalk Environment



Seasonal Parklet Cafes for Outdoor Dining



Segment 8: N Walnut Street, Main Street to S 1st Street (100 Block, Downtown)



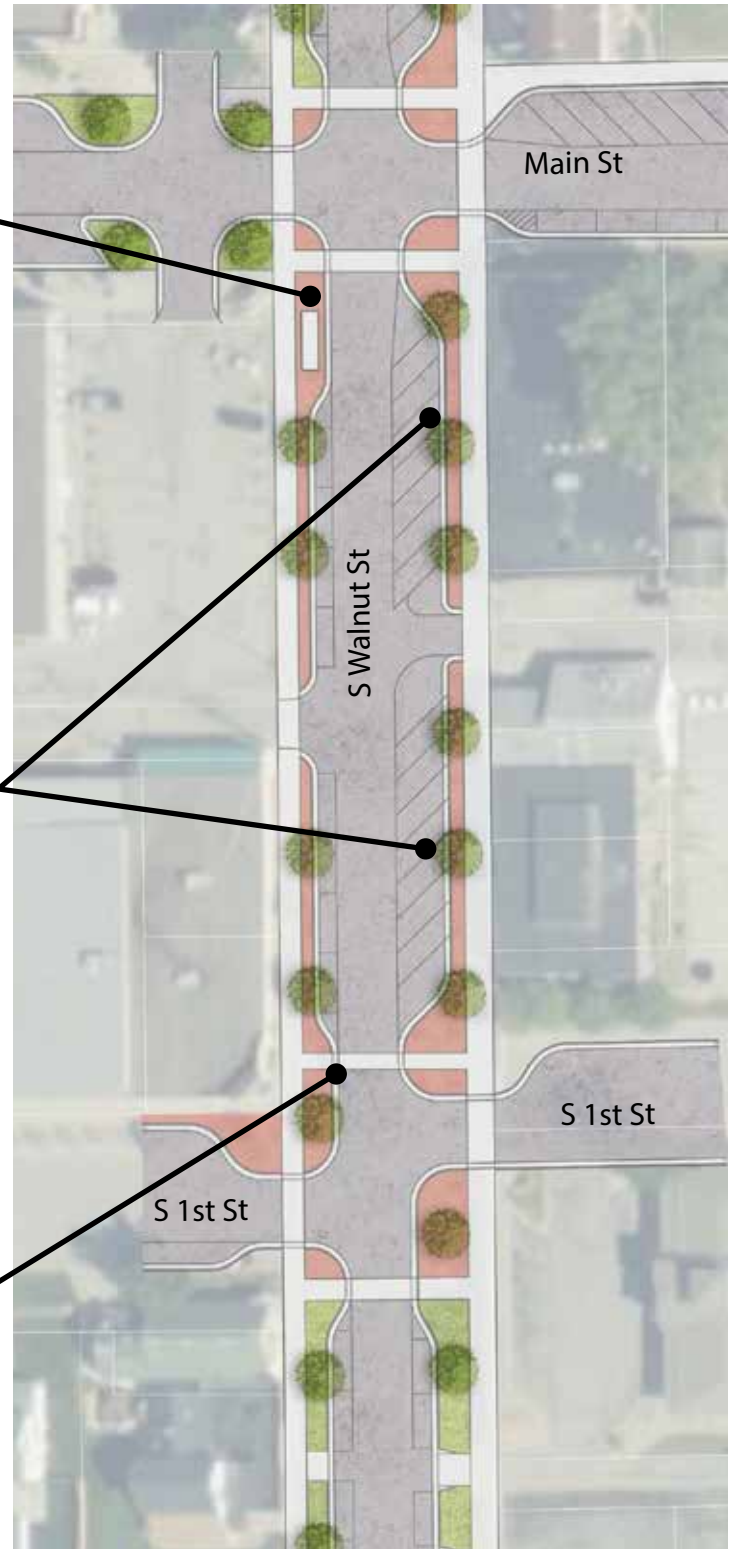
Bus Stop Curb Extension



Sidewalk Character



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs)



Implementation

Preliminary Cost Estimates

Most of this plan focuses on reimagining the curb/roadway alignment and sidewalk environment of the Walnut Street corridor as it connects the Wagon Wheel Bridge to Veteran’s Park and beyond. Implementing this plan will primarily rely on creating engineering drawings and specifications for the preferred concept. The preliminary cost estimate for the project can range from \$800,000 to \$1.5 million. This range includes the following: mobilization, bonding, insurance, erosion control, removals, unclassified excavation, curb and gutter, asphalt and aggregate road base, crosswalk/parking/bike enhancements, paving markings, regulatory signs, restoration, bio-swale and landscaping assumptions, 10% contingency and 16% design engineering costs. Notable exclusions include lighting, landscaping, utility work, street furniture, and plaza enhancements.

Standard Roadway & Sidewalk/Terrace Construction	\$859,000.00
Subsurface Water/Sanitary Sewer Installation	\$970,000.00
Mobilization, Removals, and Subsurface Preparation Work	\$898,000.00
Estimated Construction Subtotal	\$2,727,000.00
Inflation Factor (3% per year)	\$164,000.00
Estimated Construction Cost (2025)	\$2,891,000.00
Contingency Estimate (15%)	\$434,000.00
Design Engineering (10%)	\$290,000.00
Construction Engineering (10%)	\$290,000.00
Total Estimated Roadway Construction Project Cost	\$3,905,000.00

Placemaking (PM) Actions

Along with the engineering and reconstruction of Walnut Street, the city may also wish to consider additional actions supported during the planning process that can bolster the proposed changes along Walnut Street.

PM-1. Support the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian entry plaza on the western side of the Wagon Wheel Trail bridge. This area provides a potential gateway/rest area and wayfinding opportunity as visitor enter La Crescent. A protected bicycle parking facility can be located here along with a map kiosk and/or a bike repair station.



PM-2. Create a parklet program to allow businesses to utilize parking spaces immediately adjacent to their businesses as extended terrace patios. Keeping abundant parking downtown allows for the opportunity to create usable space for sitting, eating, and other social activities.



PM-3. Use existing logo and branding guidelines to create banners that can be installed on existing light poles. These installations can be a quick a way to brand the corridor as it transitions through redevelopment. The long-term plan will be to incorporate similar banners onto light poles and signage in the expanded terrace and bumpout areas. Double banners could be considered to promote the corridor on one side and seasonal (or park events) on the other.

PM-4. Plan for and install additional trees within the street terrace. There are gaps in the tree canopy along the Walnut Street corridor leading up to Veteran's Park. The wider right-of-way along some sections of the study area would allow new trees to be planted and get established prior to more mature trees being removed. Planting trees where minimal construction disturbance will happen can help minimize the impact of temporarily losing large areas of tree canopy.

PM-5. Install temporary curb extension (sidewalk bump-outs) at intersections identified for those redevelopment improvements. All non-alley intersecting streets were proposed to have narrower streets with expanded curbs in the preferred corridor design. Placing removable/seasonal bollards or painting approximate curb locations can give users a better understanding of how the improvements will

impact the travel lane alignment. These temporary bumpouts can use community art installations to promote community-project ownership.

PM-6. Improve awareness and access to already owned /leased public parking lots to alleviate the need for on-street parking along Walnut Street.

The city has 3 public parking lots within its downtown. However, these lots are often only accessible from side streets or dead-end streets, encouraging reliance on more visible and accessible on-street parking. Wayfinding signage and maps can help guide visitors to these parking lots.

Administrative (A) Actions

Along with the planned streetscape improvements that will be pursued over the next decade, the city may also choose from a variety of administrative or policy actions that can support infrastructure improvement effort.

- ***A-1. Review action plan on an annual basis as part of the city’s budgeting and strategic planning processes.*** To provide lasting value and influence, this plan should be used and referenced regularly, especially during budgeting processes, to support implementation of this plan’s actions. This review should discuss items completed over the prior year, re-evaluate the actions based on funding and existing opportunities, and adjust action timeline based on the evaluation.

Timeline: Ongoing, Annually

- ***A-2. Initiate business retention efforts to support the corridor’s existing businesses, including the following initiatives.***

1. Meet with business owners annually, or send a business survey to assess needs and economic stability of the corridor businesses. This could be done in conjunction with efforts in the downtown.
2. Promote and supply businesses with available grants or support services to continue to be a sustainable business operation in the corridor.
3. Work with existing businesses to improve façades. This could include design services to help the owner realize updates and costs to initiate the façade enhancement. Additional considerations could be a façade grant program.

Timeline: Ongoing

- ***R-5. Begin acquiring parcels along the corridor for additional city-led development opportunities, as available.*** Watch for opportunities to acquire parcels in areas proposed for redevelopment. Acquiring available parcels, especially those lacking buildings or have a history of vacancies, can help to prepare for future development needs where the city would like to maintain an active role.

Timeline: Ongoing

- ***A-3. Consider creating and managing a city building improvement matching grant program to encourage exterior building improvements.*** This program can focus on updating, restoring and maintenance of exterior facades. This could be a matching grant that uses the design guidelines in this plan for reviewing improvements with public financial assistance.

Program Creation Timeline: Short Term (2024-2026)

Administration Timeline: Ongoing

Preferred Furniture Palette

LIGHTING



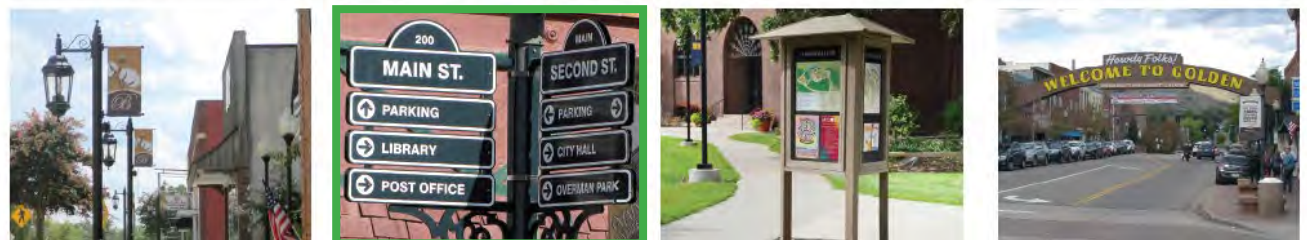
BIKE STORAGE



SEATING

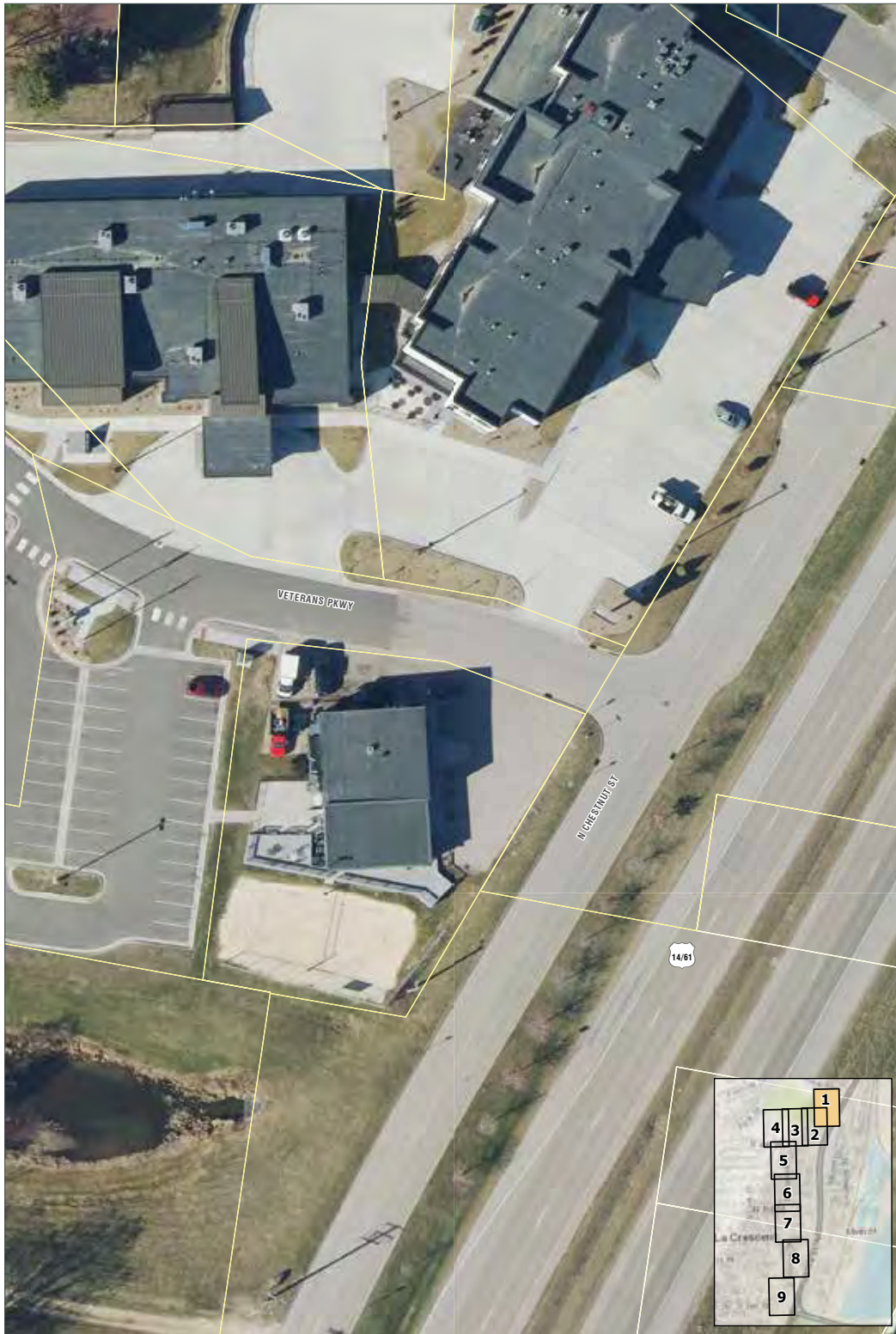


SIGNAGE



GREENERY





 MSA

 0 10 20 Feet

Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan



Project Location Map
Walnut Street Corridor Plan

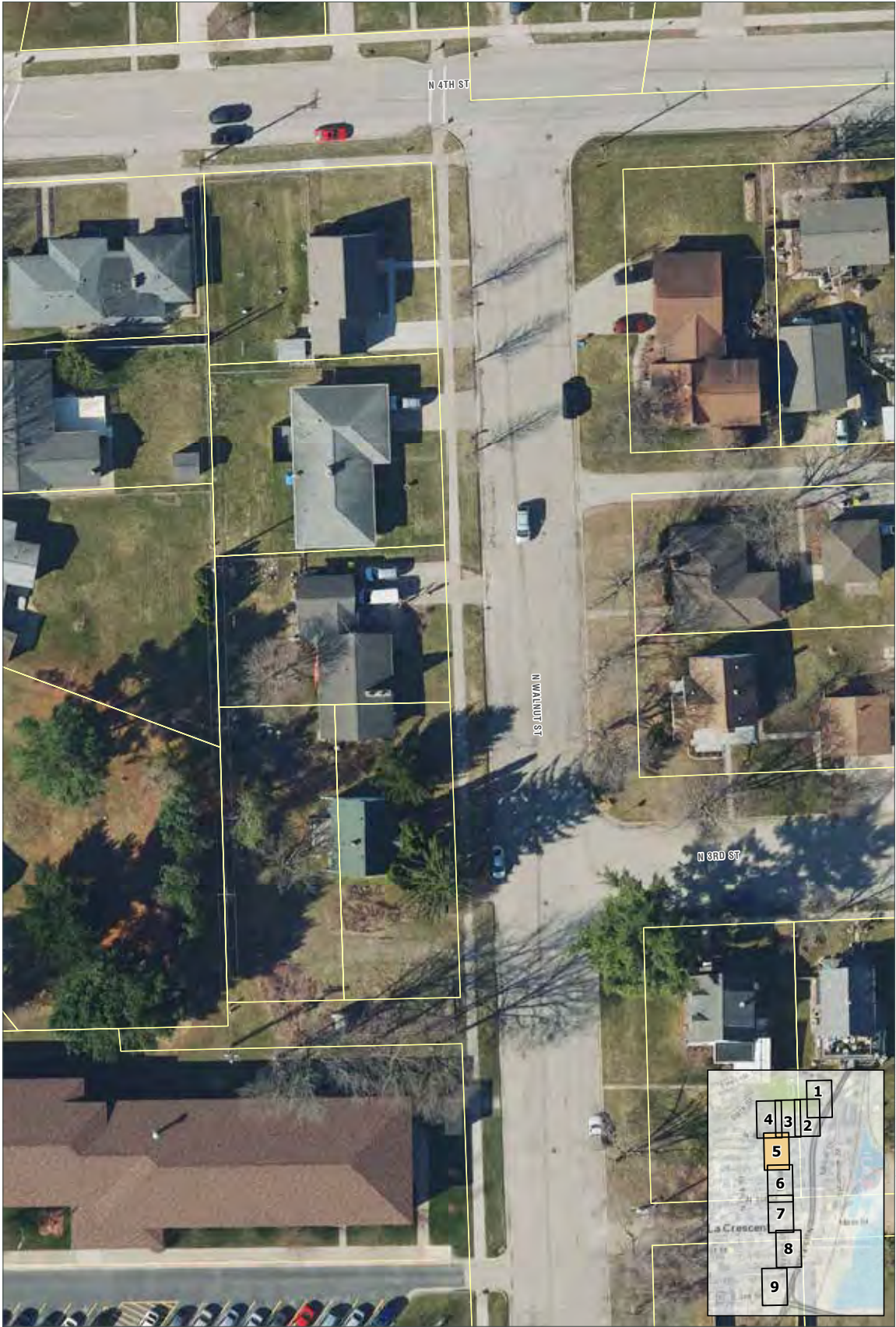


Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan



Project Location Map
Walnut Street Corridor Plan



Project Location Map

Walnut Street Corridor Plan



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Project Location Map
 Walnut Street Corridor Plan



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Project Location Map Walnut Street Corridor Plan



Aerial imagery provided by Google Earth. Map data by Mapbox. Project: 11/25/2014 12:58:07 PM. File: LC_member_bem_mn.apx
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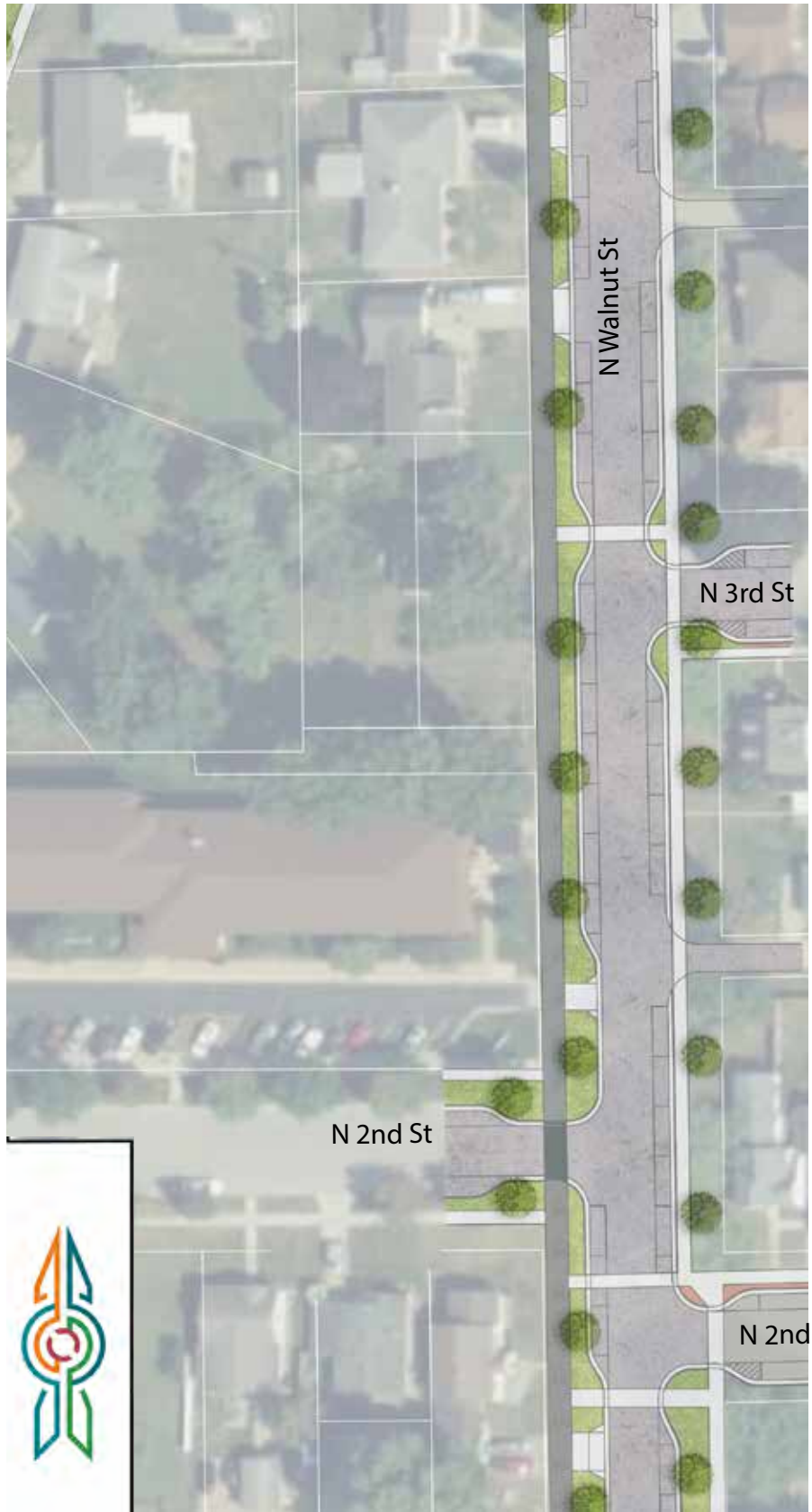
Project Location Map
Walnut Street Corridor Plan

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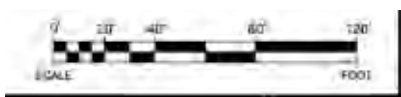
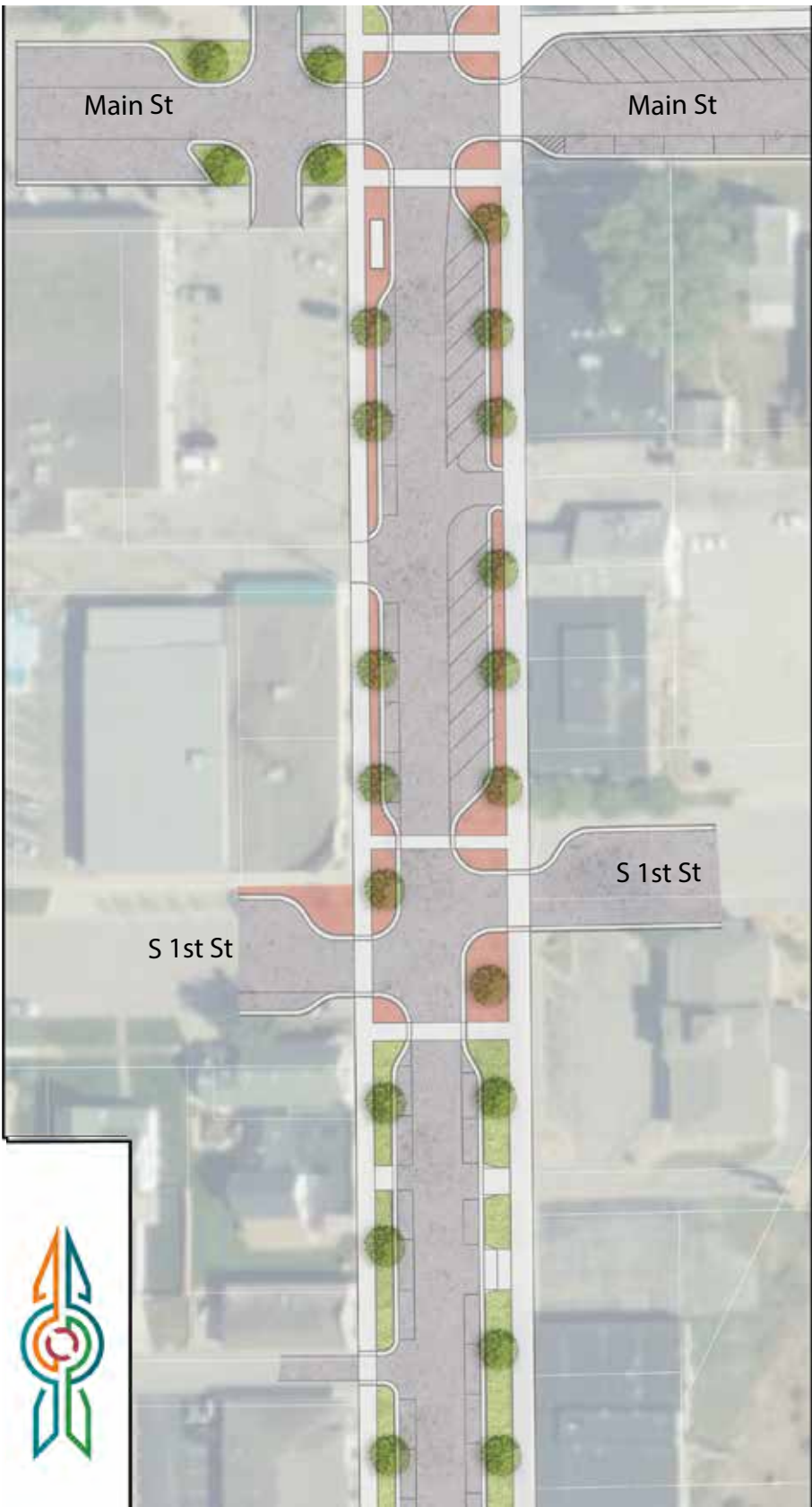
Appendix B

Street Design & Parking

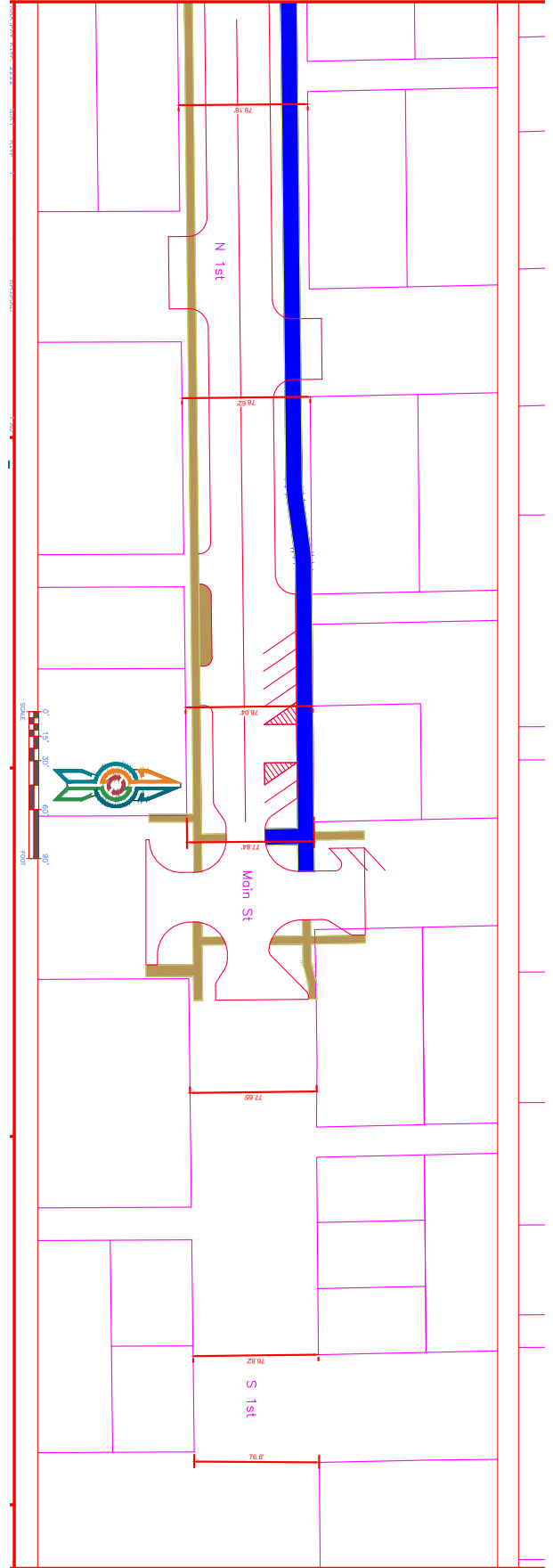
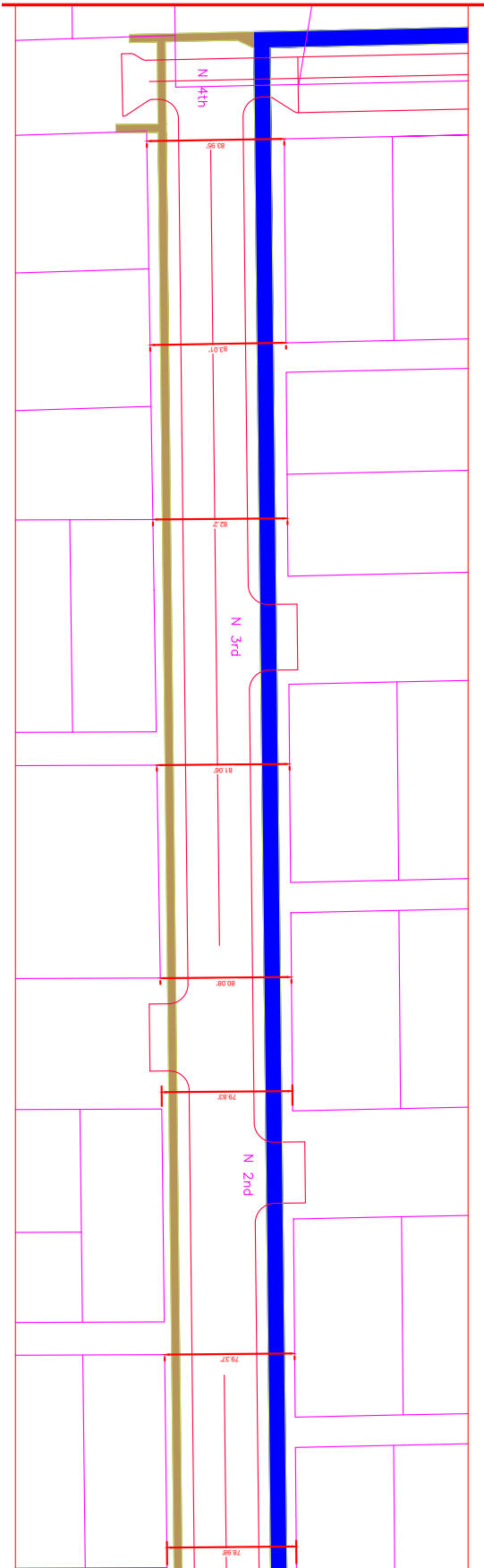








Approximate Right-of-Way Dimensions



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Chestnut St (North to Veteran's Park)



EXISTING STREET PROFILE



ONE-WAY NORTH + BIKE PATH STREET PROFILE

N 4th St (West to Park or East to Chestnut)



EXISTING STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

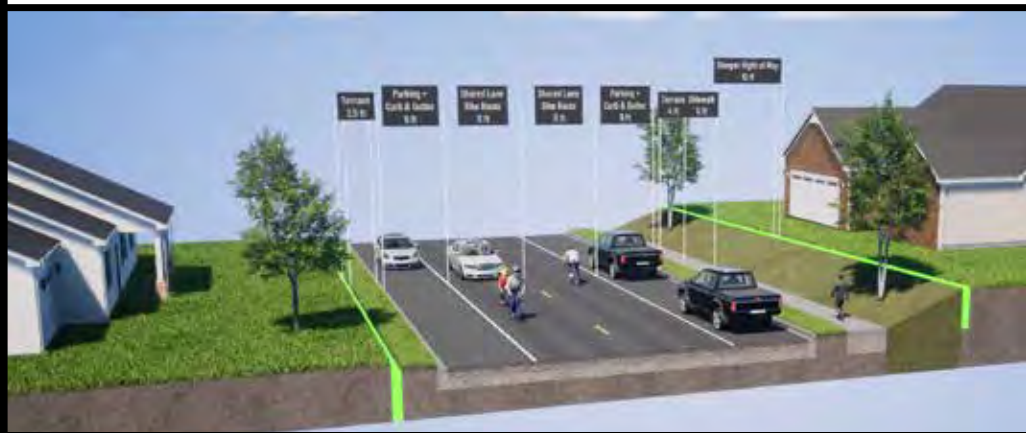


MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

Park St (Southwest of Veteran's Park)



EXISTING STREET PROFILE



MORE PARKING, LESS SIDEWALK STREET PROFILE



MORE SIDEWALK, LESS PARKING STREET PROFILE

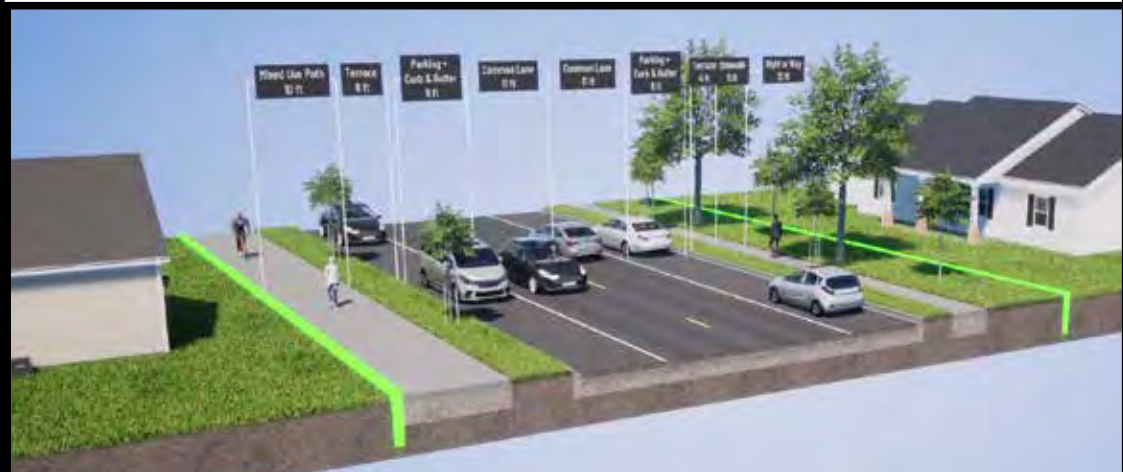
N Walnut St (200 + Block Typical Section)



EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

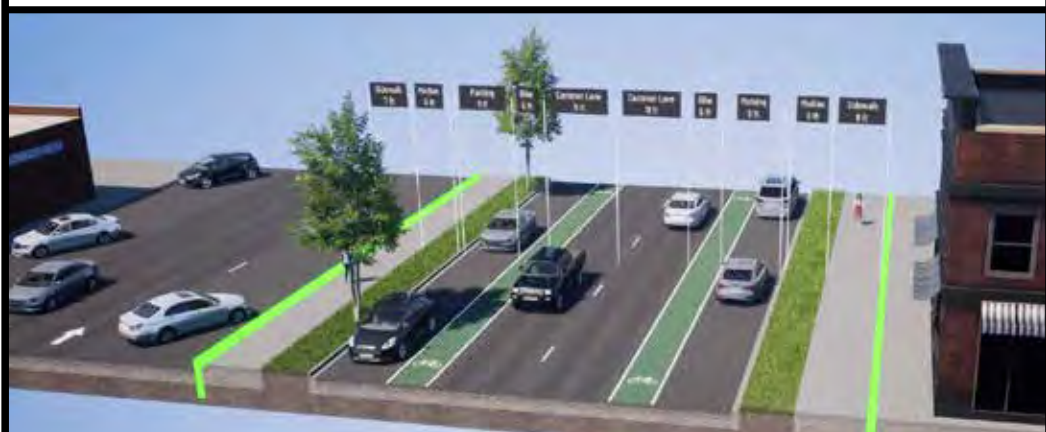


MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

N Walnut St (100 Block Typical Section)



EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE

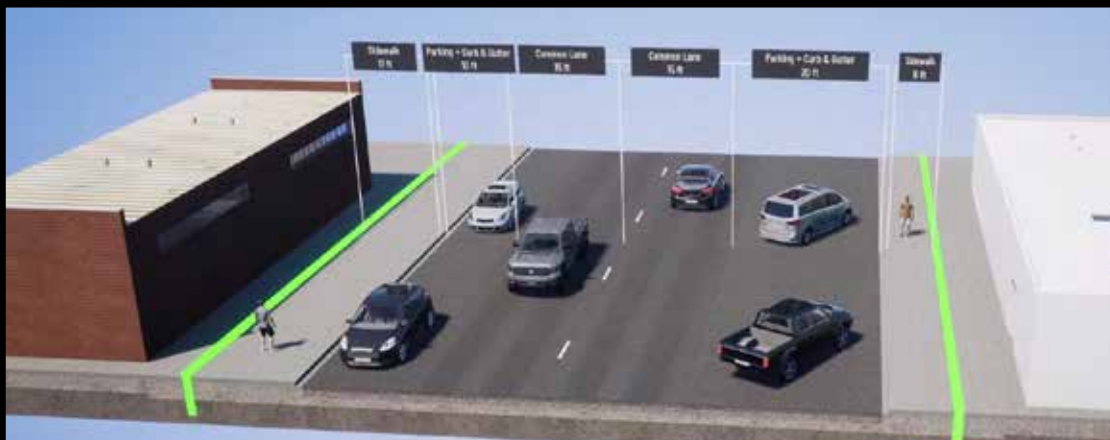


BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE



MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE

S Walnut St (100 Block Typical Section)



EXISTING WALNUT STREET PROFILE



BIKE LANE ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE



MIXED USE PATH ALTERNATIVE STREET PROFILE