

# MEMO

**TO:** Chad Pelishek, Village of Harrison  
Megan Sackett, City of Menasha  
Brenda Stumpf, Village of Sherwood

**FROM:** Lynda Fink, High Cliff Connection Trail Coordinator

**DATE:** 2/6/2025

**RE:** Summary of High Cliff Connection Feasibility Studies & Planned 2025 Activities



## Background

In 2023 KL Engineering was hired to complete feasibility studies (Studies) for potential route alignment for the High Cliff Connection. There were two studies completed – one for the potential trail alignment along local roads and one for alignment along STH 114 (*see attached High Cliff Connection Overview Map*). The Studies explored in more detail the concepts that were recommended in the High Cliff Connection Master Plan which was adopted by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission (ECWRPC) in 2022.

The Studies were funded by WisDOT grants (80%) and then the local 20% share was funded by the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region (CFFVR).

The Studies started with the analysis of potential alignments along the roadways, included public involvement feedback, and then ultimately the selection of preferred alignments for each of the sections. Analysis of potential alignments included the following elements/ impacts: environment, utilities, stormwater, public feedback, needed property acquisition, railroad, timing, and cost.

With preferred alternatives selected, the Consultant then further developed the concept alignments, created cost estimates, and then worked with the municipalities to develop potential timelines for the various segments.

*The full reports have been previously given to the boards, but this memo and attachments further summarize the Studies and provide additional information on proposed next steps for the project and the support from the CFFVR's David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund for the High Cliff Connection.*

## Study Recommendations: Local Roads

The "Local Roads" Trail Study concentrated on Old Highway Road, Pigeon Road, and Manitowoc Road (*see attached Feasibility Study Overviews*).

Ultimately, the study recommended that **Manitowoc Road Trail** was not included within the High Cliff Connection due to the multi-jurisdictional impacts and required future roadway planning that would directly impact any bike/ped improvements to the corridor.

The proposed **Old Highway Road Trail** was presented to Harrison's Village board prior to completion of the study with the concept of removing the bike lanes, shifting the roadway slightly to the north, and with the modifications, creating a new off-road trail on the south side of the road within the current road Right-of-Way.

The concept was approved and with that, the Village applied for a WisDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant for design and construction which was ultimately awarded for design beginning in 2025 and construction in 2027. Related, the Village will be reconstructing the roadway in 2026 and the roadway design will take into account the planned alignment changes to account for the future trail.

Two alternatives for the proposed **Pigeon Road Trail Extension** were evaluated—both on the west side (continuing the existing trail). The two alternatives differed with #1 being located within the existing right-of-way and requiring extensive storm sewer versus #2 being offset behind the existing drainage ditch and requiring property purchases. Ultimately, due to stormwater impacts, safety, and cost, Alternative #2 was selected. This trail is located within both Village of Harrison and Village of Sherwood.

### **Study Recommendations: STH 114**

The STH 114 Trail Study included a western segment and separate eastern segment (*see attached Feasibility Study Overviews*).

#### *Western Segment*

The western segment (from west to east) starts at Province Terrace Trail and reaches to the existing trail connecting to Lake Park Road. Both a north (#1) and a south (#2) alternative were reviewed with the north alternative ultimately being selected as the preferred alignment due to stormwater, cost, and trail safety. The western segment of the proposed trail is located within Menasha and Harrison.

Due to costs, anticipated real estate acquisition, and a number of logical sub-termini, the larger western segment was divided into three phases. From west to east these include Conservancy West, Conservancy East, and Woodlands West.

The Woodlands West subsegment is planned to start design first based on the connectivity into an existing trail system, no real estate needed, and the comparative simplicity of design. **The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region has committed to covering 100% of the design costs of this segment.**

#### *Eastern Segment*

This segment starts where the existing off-road Friendship Trail ends and terminates at Pigeon Road. Due to the terminus on either end of this segment, the study focused on alternatives on the south side of the road. Alternative #1 was within existing road right-of-way which Alternative #2 was behind the existing swale and required real estate. Due to safety concerns and cost-prohibitive storm sewer construction, Alternative #2 was selected as the preferred alternative. Unlike the Western Segment, there are not logical interim termini points, so the segment is being proposed as a single phase. The eastern segment is 100% located within the Village of Harrison.

The eastern segment will require significant strip property acquisition so the timing of this segment is anticipated later in the overall corridor. This segment will be connecting in with the proposed Pigeon Road Trail, which will also require significant strip property acquisition along with railroad coordination, so is also anticipated later in the corridor development.

### **Support:**

As you're aware, the CFFVR's David L. & Rita E. Nelson Family Fund originally pledged financial support of the High Cliff Connection Trail with a \$2,000,000 pledge and will continue going forward. This support has positive far-reaching implications that will assist the municipalities with project progress. Examples of this support include the following:

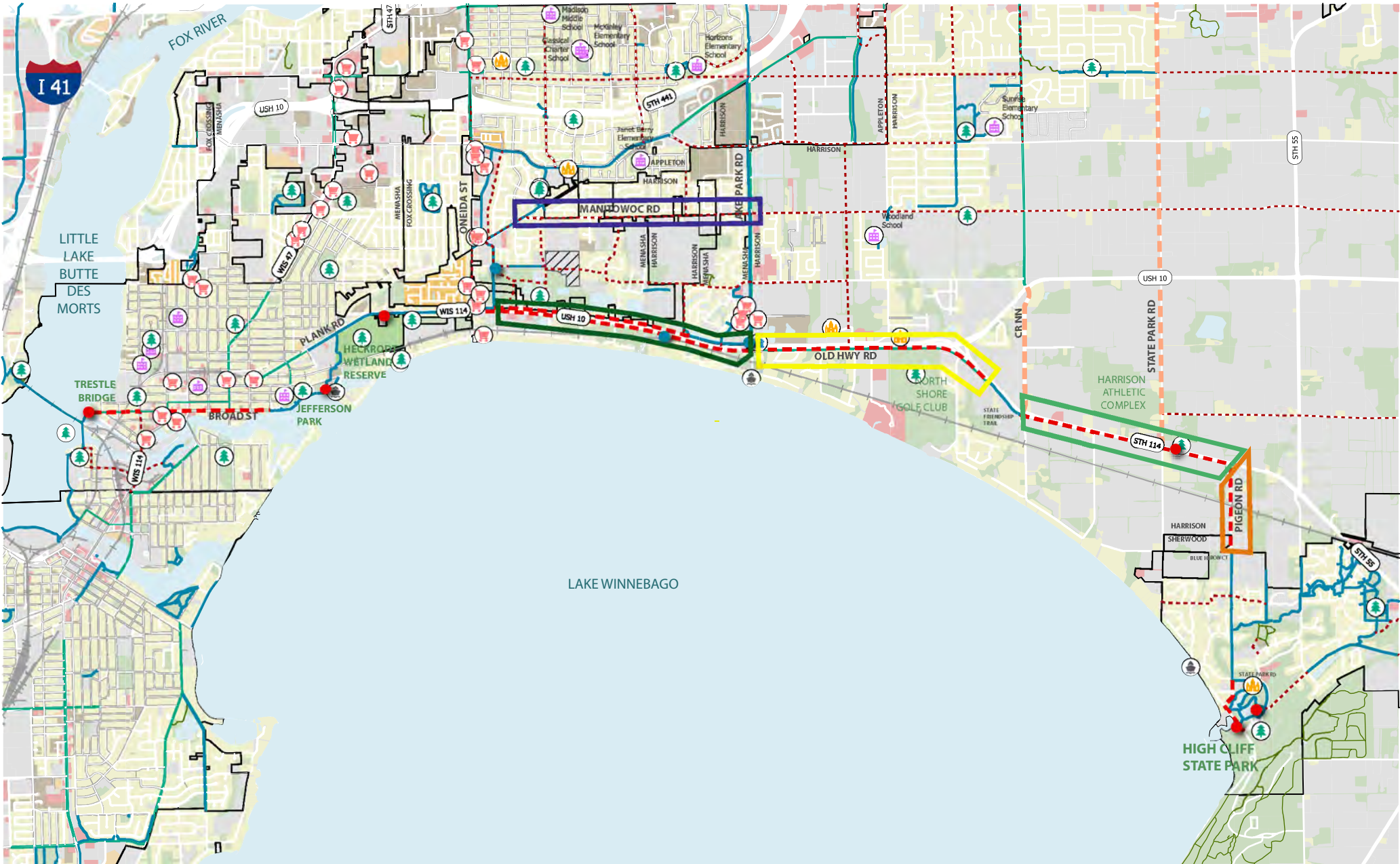
- 1) Funding the part-time trail coordinator position (Lynda Fink with Trail Strategies, LLC). Examples of work Lynda assists the municipalities with includes the following:
  - a. Serving as the required municipal grant administrator for WisDOT trail grants
  - b. Assisting with consultant contracting
  - c. Consultant deliverables review
  - d. Grant writing
  - e. Public outreach
- 2) Matching local sponsor grant matches at a 1:2 ratio (for every \$2 the municipality contributes, the CFFVR will match \$1) for new trail construction.
- 3) Financially support real estate activities and land interests.

### **Next Steps**

With approval of the recommendations presented by the municipal boards and councils, it is proposed that in 2025, the following occurs:

- Grant applications:
  - **City of Menasha** applies for a WisDOT TAP grant for the Woodlands West Segment construction cost. If Federal transportation redistribution funding is made available similar to last year, then Menasha may apply for this grant too.
  - **Village of Harrison** applies for a WisDNR Stewardship grant for the Old Highway Road Trail. This would be in addition to the WisDOT TAP grant that the Village already received for this trail segment. If Federal transportation redistribution funding is made available similar to last year, then Harrison may apply for this grant too.
  - **Village of Sherwood** applies for a WisDNR Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant for the rehabilitation of the existing Pigeon Road Trail.
- Trail Design:
  - Village of Harrison secures a design consultant and starts design on the Old Highway Road Trail.
  - City of Menasha serves as the local sponsor for the Woodlands West Segment and proceeds with securing a design consultant. As a reminder, the CFFVR has committed to funding the design cost of this section at 100% so we are in a good position to apply for grants.
- Explore trail real estate opportunities.

**Attachments:** *High Cliff Connection Overview Map*  
*Feasibility Study Overviews*



**HIGH CLIFF CONNECTION OVERVIEW**

<p><b>Trailheads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existing Trailhead</li> <li>● Planned Trailhead</li> </ul>	<p><b>Existing Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Existing Paved Trail</li> <li>— Existing On-Road Facilities</li> <li>— Existing Natural Surface Trail</li> <li>— Existing Sidewalk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proposed Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- - - High Cliff Connection Main Trail</li> <li>- - - High Cliff Connection Spur Trail</li> <li>... Local Bike/Ped</li> </ul>	<p><b>Points of Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church</li> <li>Civic</li> <li>Commercial</li> <li>Park</li> <li>School</li> <li>Lake Access</li> </ul>	<p><b>Land Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-Family</li> <li>Mobile Homes</li> <li>Group Homes</li> <li>Single Family</li> <li>Commercial</li> <li>Parks &amp; Open Space</li> </ul>	<p>0 0.5 1.0 miles</p> <p>Future Development</p> <p>Municipal Boundary</p>
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# High Cliff Connection-STH 114: West Segment

## Feasibility Study Overview

### Notes:

- The majority of the proposed trail is located behind the existing roadway ditch.
- There are some areas where property purchase vs. storm sewer vs. boardwalk are being evaluated.



Segment Name	Municipalities	Segment Length (miles)	Est. Design & Construction Cost	Real Estate (acres)*
<b>Woodlands West</b> (“Lake Park Trail” to Kernan Ave)	Harrison & Menasha	0.53	\$1,680,000 (2025-2029)	None
<b>Conservancy East</b> (Kernan Ave to Conservancy )	Harrison & Menasha	0.51	\$1,793,000 (2029-2031)	0.52
<b>Conservancy West</b> (Conservancy to Province Terrace Trail)	Menasha & Harrison	0.38	\$1,393,000 (2032-2034)	0.37
<b>Totals 114 West Segment</b>		<b>1.42</b>	<b>\$4,866,000</b>	<b>0.89</b>

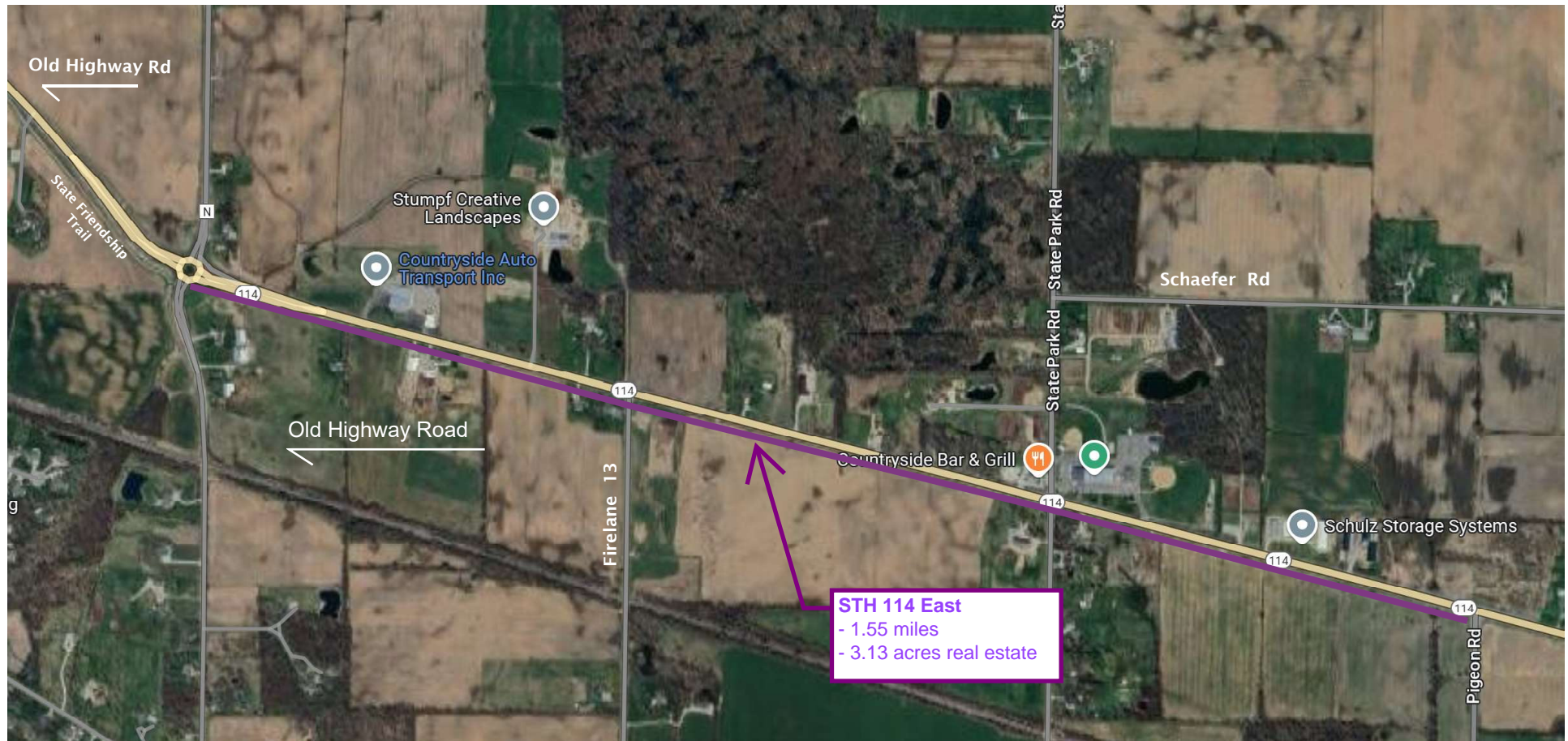


# High Cliff Connection-STH 114: East Segment

## Feasibility Study Overview

### Notes:

- The majority of the proposed trail is located behind the existing roadway ditch.
- Further research on utility easements are needed to verify offset from roadway,



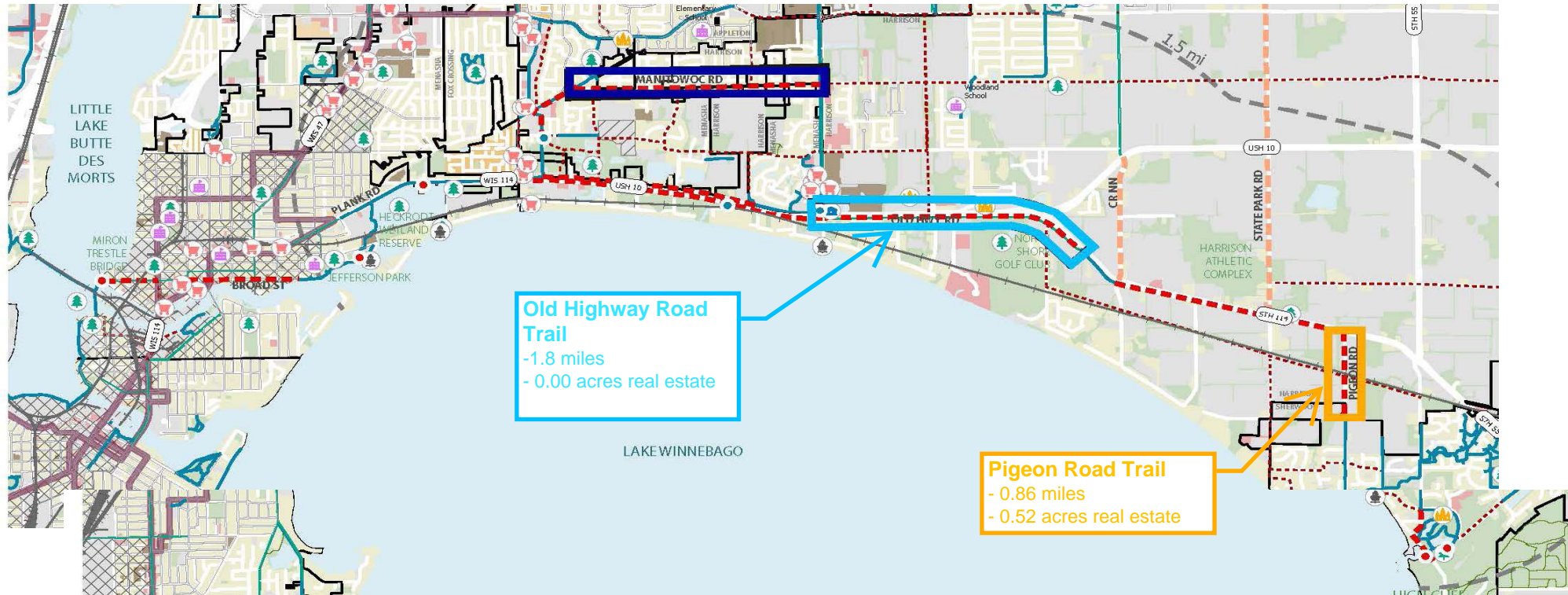
Segment Name	Municipalities	Segment Length (miles)	Est. Design & Construction Cost	Real Estate (acres)*
<b>STH 114 East</b> (State Friendship Trail/ CTH N to Pigeon Rd)	Harrison	1.55	\$1,790,000 (2033-2035)	3.13

# High Cliff Connection-Local Roads

## Feasibility Study Overview

### Notes:

- Old Highway Road Trail received a WisDOT grant in 2024 (design can start late 2025). Will also be applying for a WisDNR grant in 2025.
- Existing Pigeon Rd Trail will be reapplying for a WisDNR grant in 2025.



Segment Name	Municipalities	Segment Length (miles)	Est. Design & Construction Costs	Real Estate (acres)*
<b>Old Highway Road</b> (Lake Park Rd to STH 114)	Harrison	1.8	\$1,455,000 (2025-27)	None
<b>Pigeon Road</b> (STH 114 to Blue Heron Ct)	Sherwood & Harrison	0.86	\$1,750,000 (2028-30)	0.52
<b>Manitowoc Road</b> (Plank Rd to Lake Park Rd)	Menasha, Harrison, Appleton	1.64	Not to be included in High Cliff Connection project- future with road redevelopment	NA