
Watertown Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION

3/10/2026



THE CITY OF
WATERTOWN

Opportunity runs through it.



Planning | Landscape Architecture | Urban Design



Project Intro

» Plan Purpose

- 1 To create a plan that addresses the future of a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian network, building off the existing network.
- 2 To gather and incorporate community feedback and desires to address safety and a future vision for active transportation in Watertown.
- 3 To identify best practices and guide the City in future facility and network investments.
- 4 To guide policy and programming improvements, such as wayfinding, bike parking, and educational and encouragement activities.
- 5 To build awareness of and enthusiasm for expanding multimodal transportation opportunities in and around Watertown.

» Plan Objectives



Address Facilities and Infrastructure



Encourage and Educate



Address a Variety of Users



Make Connections



Prioritize and Implement

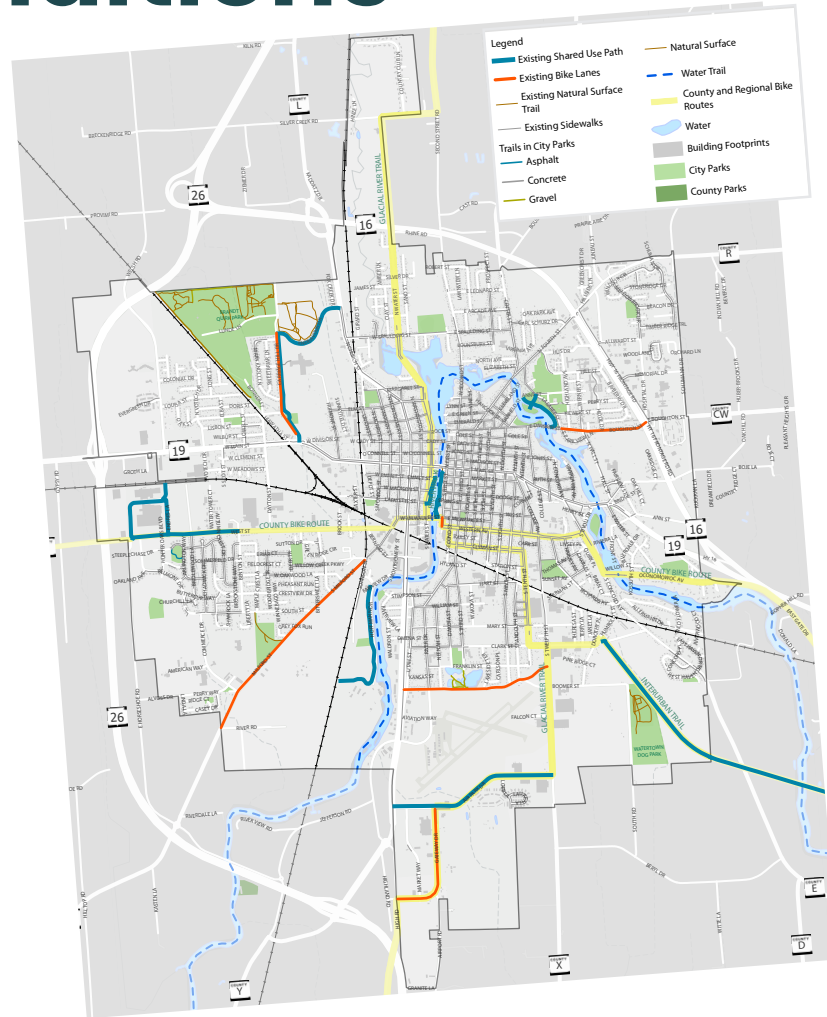
PLANNING TIMELINE


-  Winter 2025
Project Kick-off
-  Spring 2025
Information Gathering
-  Summer 2025
Public Involvement
 - Open Houses
 - Pop-up Events
 - Advisory Group Meetings
-  Fall 2025
Develop Recommendations
-  Winter 2025 - 2026
Finalize the Plan
-  Implement the Plan

Existing Conditions

REVIEW + ANALYSIS

- » Demographics - Focus on Travel Behavior
- » Relevant Plan Review
- » Existing Facility Inventory and Review for Future Facilities
- » Regional Connections
- » Traffic Safety and Roadway Information
- » Hydrology, Topography, Land Use
- » City Ordinance Review



8.5% of households in Watertown have no vehicles 

11%



Carpool to work



Work from home

0.5%

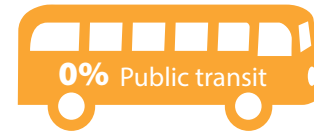


Bike to work



Walk to work

4%

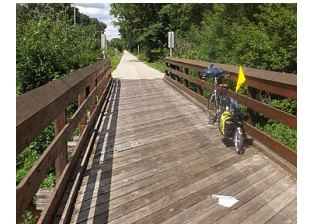


0% Public transit



Drive to work alone

Transportation to Work in Watertown and Household Vehicle Ownership (2023 ACS Data)



Community Engagement

- » Outreach and Communications
- » Pop-up Events
- » Community Open house
- » Bike & Ped Task Force + Community Advisory Committee
- » Stakeholder Engagement
- » Community Survey
- » Social Pinpoint

WHAT WE HEARD



! BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

- » Lack of interconnected facilities that link to all areas of Watertown, as well as within the region.
- » Physical barriers, such as rail lines, highways, and the Rock River impact where facilities are easy or convenient to build.
- » Need for upgrades at specific intersections and mid-block crossings for safety.
- » Need for consistent, well-defined facilities for bicyclists to travel across the City.
- » One-way streets in downtown are difficult for bicyclists to navigate and impede connectivity.

★ KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- » Create a network of well-connected bikeways and sidewalks that make choosing to bike or walk to work, school, or other common destinations a viable option.
- » Celebrate the Rock River with improved connections to parks, the Riverwalk, and water access locations for biking and walking.
- » Create a network that is safe and comfortable with considerations for young people, families, seniors, and people who are visiting or new to Watertown.
- » Promote Watertown as a biking destination by highlighting existing regional trail and route connections that run through Watertown.
- » Develop and support programs for education and awareness around road etiquette for all roadway users.

Network Plan

FUTURE CONNECTIVITY

Neighborhood Bikeways



Neighborhood bikeways are proposed areas with shared lane markings (also known as sharrows) to indicate an on-street bicycle facility that overlays with an existing vehicle travel lane.

Sidewalks



Proposed sidewalks are shown on the Network Plan in primarily residential areas where none exist today. Sidewalks are concrete walkways intended for use by pedestrians.

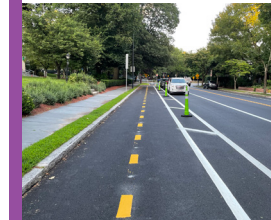


Shared Use Paths



Shared use paths are paved trail segments, located off-street and physically separated from vehicle traffic by a boulevard and raised curb. They are generally located in parallel to a roadway but can also be located independently.

Two-Way Protected Bike Lanes



There are three segments within downtown Watertown where **two-way protected bike lanes** are proposed. This facility provides a single area for bicyclists to travel within the road (in both directions) with a physical barrier that separates vehicle traffic from bicycle traffic.

Bike Lanes



Bike lanes are designated areas within the roadway for bicycle travel. Generally, bicycle lanes are located on both sides of the roadway and are designated with a solid white stripe marking with bike lane markings at intersections.

Facility Design Guidance

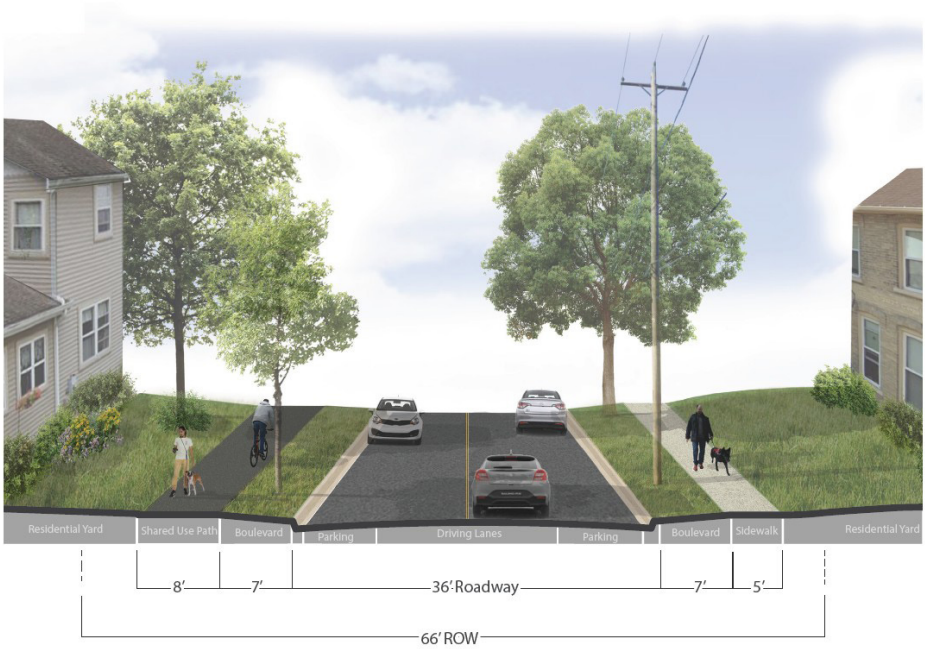


Figure 4.2 Cross section and plan view study of a shared use path along Fourth St.



Figure 4.3 Cross section and plan view study of two-way protected bike lane on Market St.

Intersection Treatment Recommendations

INTERSECTION TREATMENTS



High Visibility Crosswalk Markings: Pavement marking patterns at crosswalks that are visible to both the driver and pedestrian from farther away. Recommended pattern: continental.



Curb Extensions: Sometimes called bump-outs, curb extensions narrow the roadway at intersections and mid-block crossings to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians and make pedestrians more visible to drivers. Curb extensions also provide an opportunity to integrate landscaping, stormwater management, or site furnishings into the streetscape.



Bike Crosswalks: Pavement marking patterns at crosswalks that are specific for bicycle travel and usually painted green.



Trail Crossing Sign: Diagonal yellow sign alerting motorists that a trail crossing is nearby.



Raised / Tabletop / Speed Table Crosswalks: Crosswalk design that maintains the sidewalk or path elevation for the pedestrian, providing more visibility to motorists.



Share the Road Sign: Signage reminding motorists to share the road with bicyclists. This type of signage pairs with on-street bikeways.



Pedestrian Ramps: Concrete ramps designed for ADA accessibility to connect sidewalks and paved paths to roadway intersections. Detectable warning surfaces with truncated domes are recommended to be included in pedestrian ramp design.



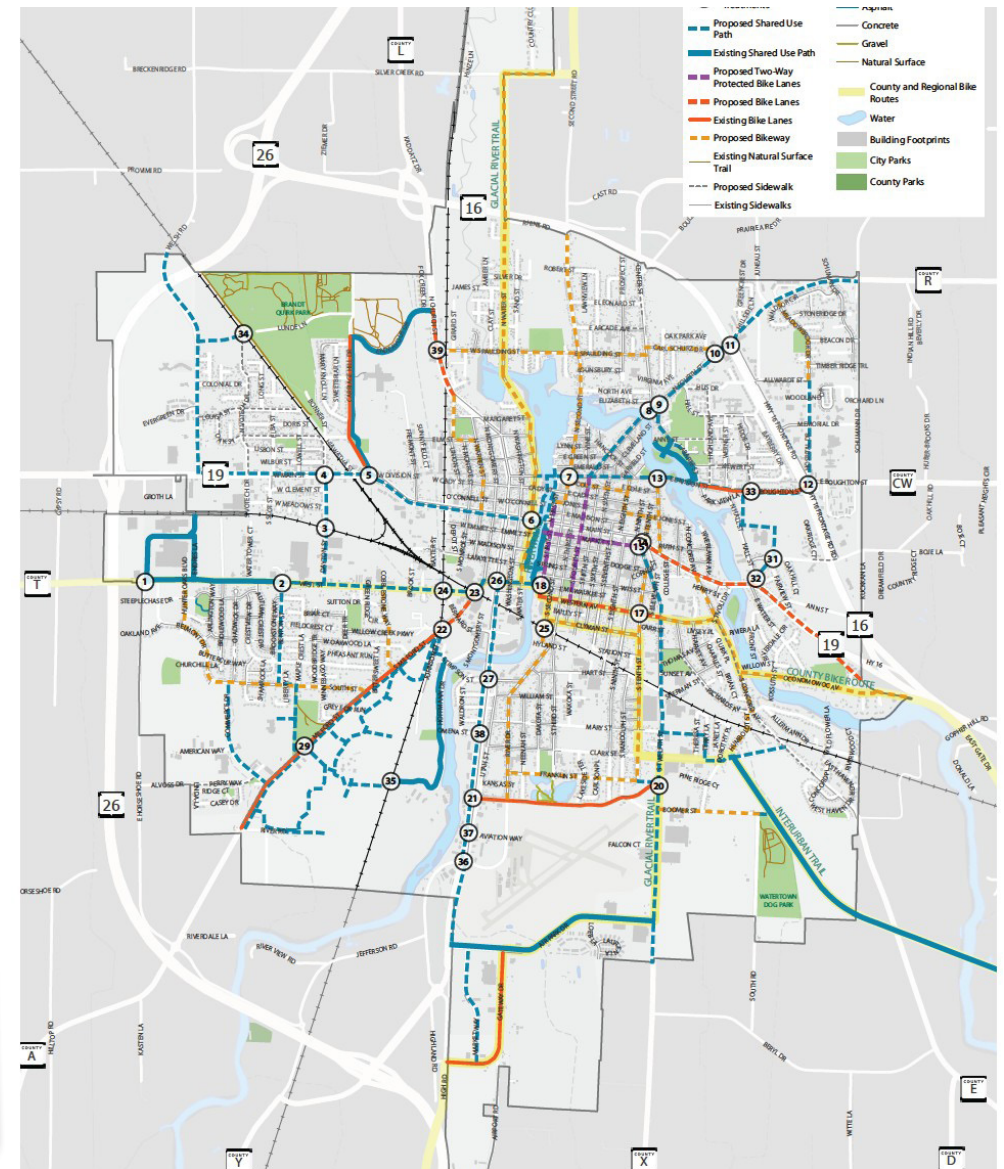
Grade Separated Crossing: A bridge or a tunnel dedicated for pedestrian or bicycle crossing of a busy roadway. These treatments require significant space allocation and are expensive to build; however they provide the most separation for pedestrians and bicyclists at crossings.



Rapid Flashing Beacon (also known as RRFB – Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon): Active warning beacon that uses rapid, irregular flashes of light to alert motorists to yield to pedestrians and bicyclists at crossings and intersections.

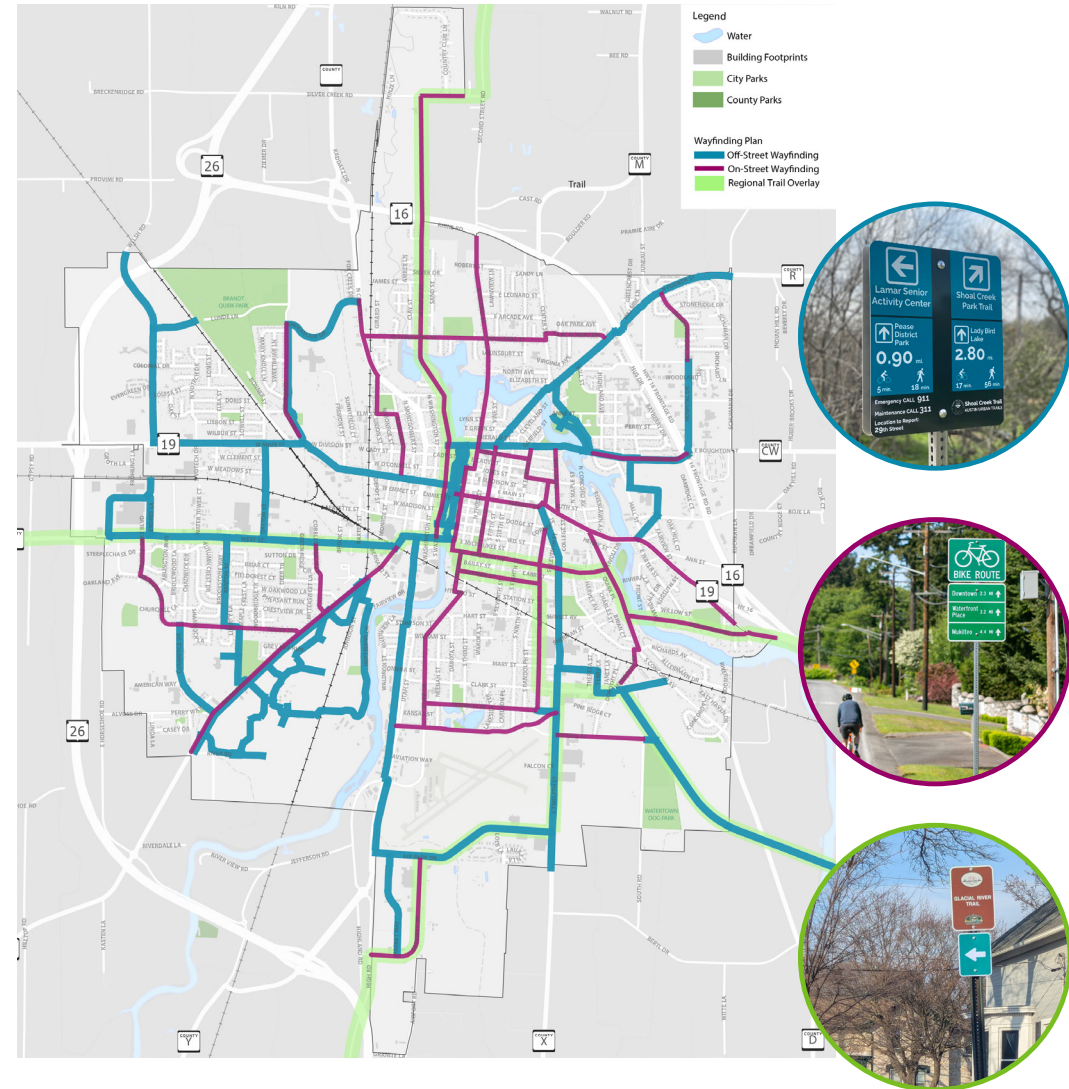


Pedestrian Refuge Island: Protected island, usually made with a raised concrete curb, centered on a crosswalk to shorten the distance that pedestrians are exposed to traffic.



System Recommendations

- » Trail Access Points and Amenities
- » Bike Parking
- » Wayfinding
- » Railroad Crossings
- » Bridge Crossings and Constrained Areas
- » Landscaping and Stormwater Management



Policy Recommendations

- » Subdivision Code Suggested Revisions
- » Definitions to include Electric Bicycles, Classes, Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Devices, Electric Scooters and Non-Classified Bicycles and Scooters
 - Recommendations for speed limits on sidewalks (15mph) and shared use paths (20mph)
 - Limit all bicycle, e-bike and e-scooter use on sidewalks
 - Consider helmet requirements
 - Case study examples from other WI communities



SECTION 13. 346.806 SPECIAL RULES APPLICABLE TO ELECTRIC BICYCLES.

- An electric bicycle shall be considered a vehicle to the same extent as a bicycle.
- A person operating an electric bicycle is not subject to the provisions relating to financial responsibility, operator's licenses, registration, or certificates of title.
- No person under the age of 16 years may operate a class 3 electric bicycle.
- A person under the age of 16 years may ride as a passenger on a class 3 electric bicycle that is designed to accommodate passengers.

OTHER WISCONSIN STATE STATUTES

- Within the e-bike market, in addition to the three classes of e-bike noted above, there are also unclassified/classless e-bikes available for sale. Other e-bikes that don't fall under any class in the system (for example, those without pedals, those with a throttle that can assist up to 28 mph, and those with motors over 750W). As they fall outside of the three classifications, these bikes are still in use but not considered e-bikes by the state of Wisconsin.
 - With all e-bikes, but especially with unclassified bikes, fires can start when e-bike and e-scooter batteries are stored, charged, or disposed of incorrectly
- Wisconsin allows local municipalities to enact stricter rules concerning e-bike usage.
- Electric bicycles used without the motor engaged are allowed on all bicycle trails unless specifically prohibited.
 - NO e-bike capable of more than 30 MPH is permitted on any state trails that do not specifically allow motorcycles (these would technically not be considered e-bikes by state law).
- Signage is used in many places rather than, or in addition to, policy to identify specific locations where some types of e-bikes are not allowed (ex. sign stating that no e-bikes with a throttle are allowed on a trail)
- E-bike policy can be difficult to enforce due to the difficulty of identifying the type of e-bikes without close inspection.

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Implementation

FROM PLAN TO REALITY

» Implementation Recommendations

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Task Force
- Evaluation, Monitoring and Tracking
- Agency and County Coordination
- Encouragement and Education

» Prioritized Phasing Plan

» Operations and Maintenance

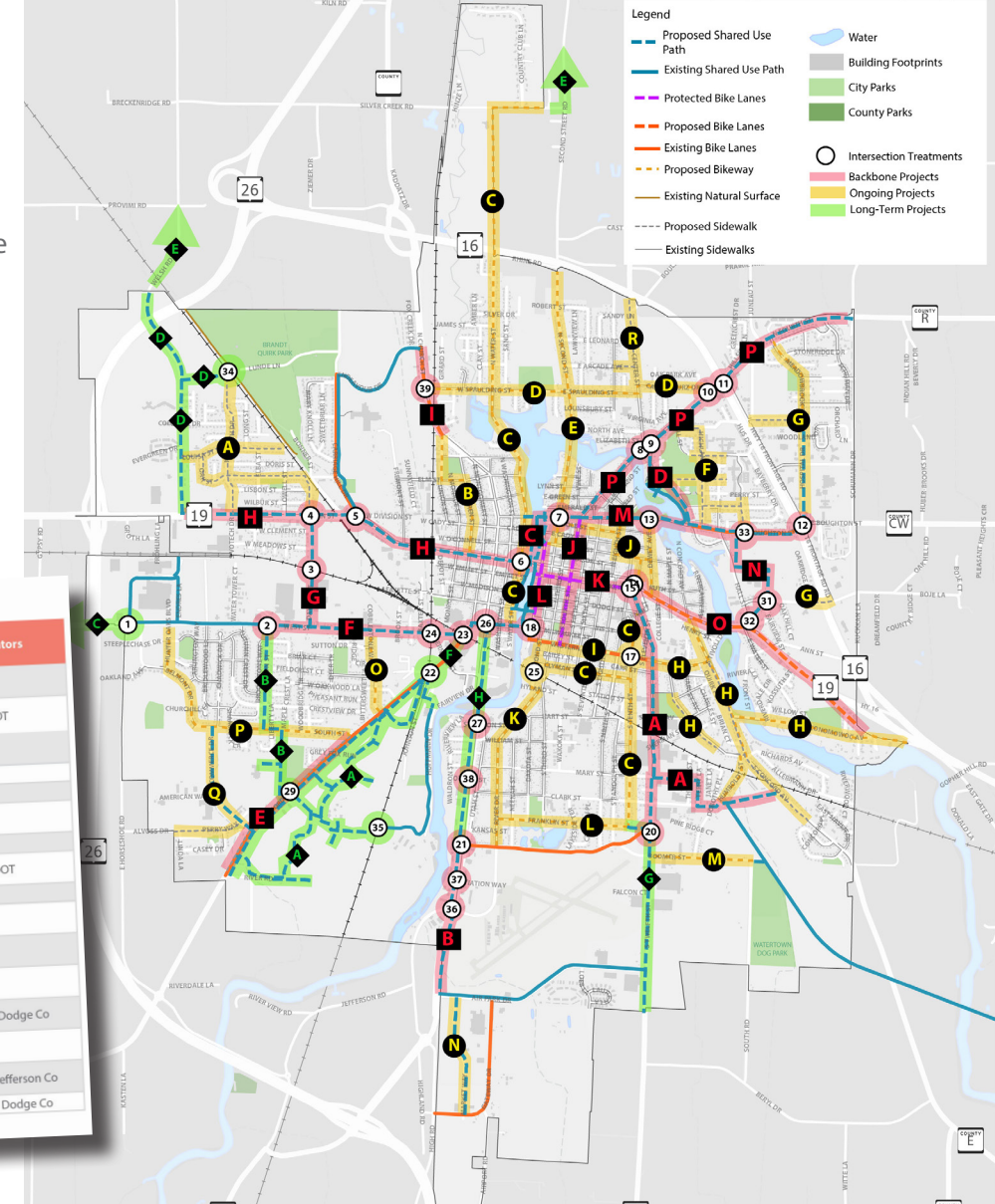
» Funding Sources

Backbone Projects are generally larger projects that have been identified as vital to create a well-connected network.

Ongoing Projects are generally smaller, lower-cost projects or projects that can be more easily folded into the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Long-Term Projects will generally require more planning and collaboration with regional agencies to implement or are intended to be initiated and completed as part of future.

BACKBONE PROJECTS								
Tag	Location	Extents	Planned Facility	Project Type	Length	Unit Cost*	Estimated Cost	Collaborators
A	12th St / Interurban Trail	Interurban Trail to Market St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	9961	\$80	\$796,880	
B	S Church St	Air Park Dr to Boomer St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	1840	\$80	\$147,200	WisDOT
C	Riverwalk Extension	Rock River (east and west sides) Main St to Division St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	2418	\$80	\$193,440	
D	Labaree St	Fourth St to Division St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	4555	\$35	\$159,425	
E	Millford St	Western City Limits to South St	Sidewalk	New Facility	6354	\$80	\$508,320	
F	West St / Milwaukee St	Benton Ln to Millford, Milwaukee St to 1st St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	2815	\$80	\$225,200	
G	Dayton St	West St to Main St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	9266	\$80	\$741,280	WisDOT
H	W Main St	Welsh St to S 1st St	Sidewalk to SUP Conversion	New Facility	2325	\$20	\$46,500	
I	N Church St	Endeavour Dr to Union St	Bike Lanes	New Facility	3244	\$60	\$194,640	
J	Fourth St	Western Ave to Division St	Two-Way Protected Bike Lanes	New Facility	2617	\$60	\$157,020	
K	Market St	Riverwalk Trailhead to Sharp Corner Park	Two-Way Protected Bike Lanes	New Facility	2172	\$60	\$130,320	
L	First St	Western Ave to Jones St	Two-Way Protected Bike Lanes	New Facility	5834	\$80	\$466,720	WisDOT, Dodge Co
M	Division St / Boughton St	Fourth St to SH 16	Shared Use Path	New Facility	3563	\$80	\$285,040	WisDOT, Jefferson Co
N	Riverside Middle School	Main St to Boughton St	Shared Use Path	New Facility	7020	\$20	\$140,400	WisDOT, Jefferson Co
O	E Main St / Summit Ave	Sharp Corner Park to Oconomowoc Ave	Bike Lanes	New Facility	9565	\$80	\$765,200	WisDOT, Dodge Co
P	Fourth St	Division St to Schuman Dr	Shared Use Path	Conversion			\$5,287,585	



THANK YOU!

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Pete Thompson, Citizen Member

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Robert Stocks

CONSULTANT TEAM



Approved by the City of Watertown on _____.