

MEMORANDUM

October 10, 2023

To: Sarah Grainger

Organization: City of Viroqua

From: Shaun Murphy-Lopez, Kevin Luecke

Project: Viroqua Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Safe Routes to School Addendum

Re: Summary of Plans

Toole Design has conducted a comprehensive review of existing local plans and other documents related to bicycling and walking in Viroqua. This memo provides a summary of goals and policies as well as recommended network routing and projects to consider and/or incorporate into the Viroqua Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Safe Routes to School Addendum (the Plan).

City of Viroqua Comprehensive Plan

This 2007 Comprehensive Plan provides overall guidance for community development and redevelopment for a 20-year period. The Comprehensive Plan lays out bicycle- and pedestrian-related goals, objectives, and policies under the issues/opportunities, housing, and transportation subject areas:

Issues and Opportunities

- **Goal:** *Preserve our quality of life in changing times. We find quality in our slower lifestyle (quiet, low traffic, walkable city, slower pace, stars in the night sky, shade trees) . . .*
- **Objective:** *Provide community facilities that promote continuing education, community values and recreation.*
- **Objective:** *For the City and Town of Viroqua to become an “elder-ready” community where transportation, shopping, social services and wellness facilities are conveniently accessible as the baby-boom population moves through their elder years.*
- **Policy:** *Integrate health and wellness considerations in all local governmental decisions concerning public services and infrastructure development.*

Housing

- **Objective:** *Assure that residential developments have reasonably good access to outdoor activities that provide health and wellness benefits, such as sidewalks and trails.*

Transportation

- **Objective:** Seek to expand the bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel where feasible to diversify and supplement motorized travel. This includes adult and child use, as well as recreational and utilitarian use. Trails should be maintained for exercise and pleasure but land and parking facilities should be established for youthful school commuters and adults on local errands.
- **Objective:** Preserve corridors for future transportation and trail facilities including respect for multimodal transportation needs of smaller user groups and those choosing non-motorized means of transportation.
- **Objective:** Preserve and enhance neighborhood friendly streetscapes through the preservation of tree canopies, on-street parking and minimal safe illumination of roadways.
- **Policy:** Maintain a pedestrian environment in the Main Street shopping corridor in downtown Viroqua.
- **Policy:** Provide pedestrian facilities in major urban street corridors.
- **Policy:** Plan for the development of local and regional bicycle/pedestrian trails and paths along both local and intercommunity links and local designated bikeways including connections to local schools, parks, entertainment, and commercial uses.
- **Policy:** Maintain and restore boulevard trees in residential and commercial neighborhoods with aesthetic, energy conservation and traffic calming objectives
- **Policy:** Provide residential street and road design standards which are not excessive with respect to width of right-of-way or width of pavement so as to keep streets in scale with the neighborhood and to minimize the cost of residential development, housing, and street maintenance.

Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan includes a brief 4-page Bicycle Transportation Plan with an associated Bicycle Plan map, as shown in Figure 1. The Bicycle Transportation Plan includes an introduction, purpose, and scope, as well as a list of goals, objectives, and additional recommendations. There is also a section for walking facilities, which includes goals, objectives, policies, and programs.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Goals, objectives, and policies under the issues/opportunities, housing, and transportation subject areas should be considered as the foundational policy context for completing the Plan. Goals, objectives, and policies under the bicycling and walking portions of the plan should be reviewed for potential inclusion in the Plan. Bicycle routes in Figure 1 should be considered as possible routes for the future network.

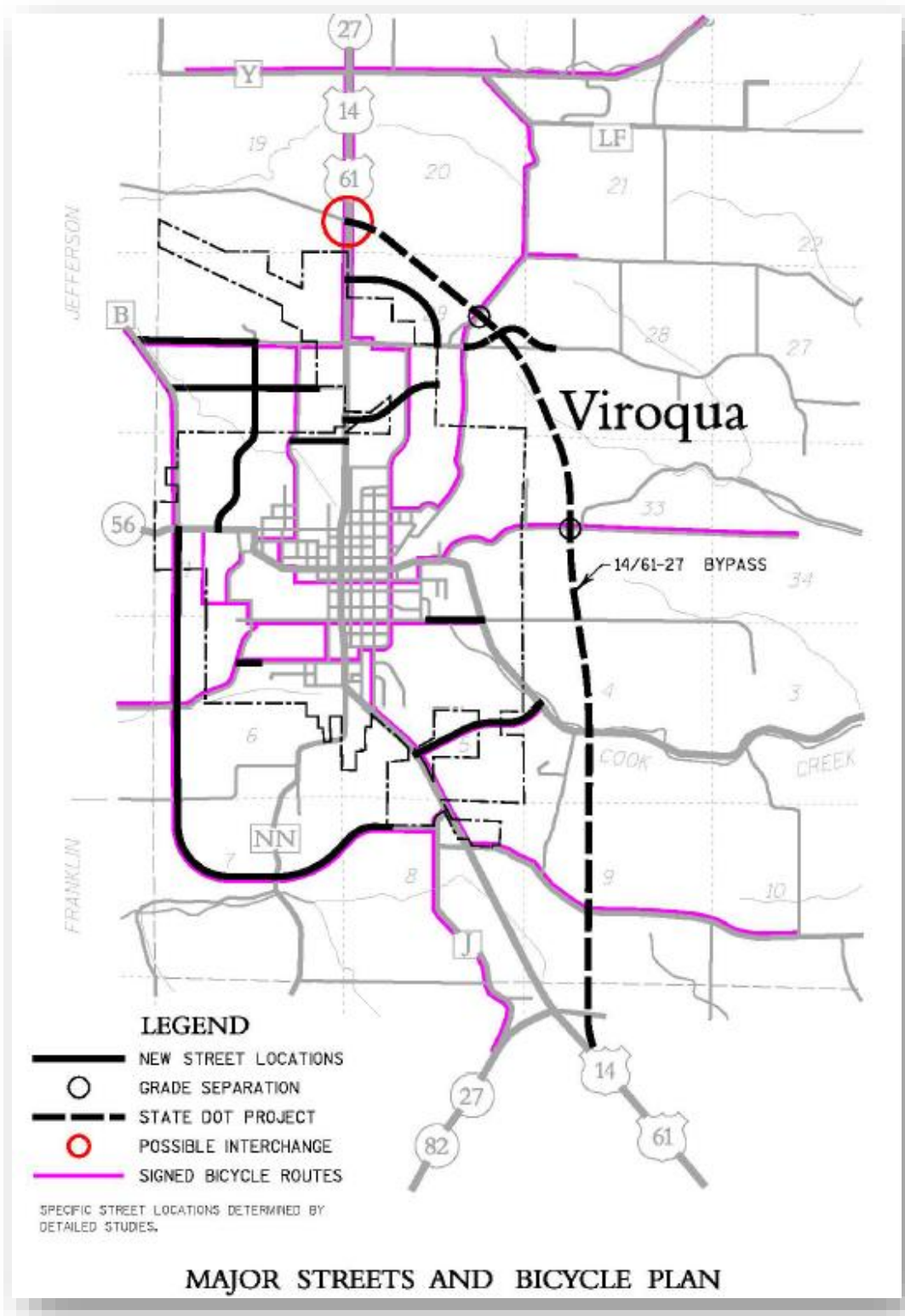


Figure 1. The bicycle plan from the 2007 Viroqua Comprehensive Plan shows signed bicycle routes in relation to new street locations. **NOTE:** The State DOT bypass project shown as a black dashed line is no longer planned.

Westby and Viroqua Safe Routes to School Plan

This 2011 plan's primary goal is to *"plan safe routes to schools, encourage students to bike or walk to school, educate community members on safety issues relating to walking and biking, and provide safe walking and biking routes throughout and between the communities."* The plan included an extensive parent survey with 531 responses between the two communities. The survey collected:

- Travel mode to and from school.
- Grades when parents will allow child to walk or bike alone to school.
- Issues affecting school travel decisions, as shown in Figure 2.

A thorough description of pick up and drop off procedures is included for Viroqua Elementary, Viroqua Middle, and Pleasant Ridge Waldorf Schools. Issues or needs identified in the planning process included:

School	Issues and/or needs identified in the planning process
Viroqua Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sidewalks directly serve the elementary facility or connect the facility to other school campus facilities • Crossing of State Highway 56 for students walking or biking to school from neighborhoods north of the school • Drop off/pickup congestion at facility
Viroqua Middle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing of State Highway 56 for students walking or biking to school from neighborhoods north and east of the school • Safe ped/bike crossing of U.S. Highway 14
Pleasant Ridge Waldorf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed on Jefferson Street • State Highway 56 crossing • Main Street (U.S. Highway 14) crossing • Bike racks • Continued maintenance of crosswalks

The plan also includes a thorough list of recommendations for addressing these issues and needs. Highlights include:

- Consider an additional crossing guard at the intersection of Broadway Street and Highway 14.
- Extend signal crossing time at Decker Street and Jefferson Street.
- Consider installing crossing beacons at the intersection of Highway 14 with South Street, Maple Street, and Broadway Street.
- Designate the sidewalk on the east side of Highway 14 from Decker Street to Airport Road has an optional bike route.
- Install crossing beacons at the intersections of Highway 56 with Abbey Lane, and W. Broadway Street with Hillyer Street.
- Develop a north-south shared use path on the west side of the Middle and Elementary schools.
- Develop school lesson plans for the Safe Route to School program.
- Provide information to the community on traffic laws.
- Consider installing a crossing beacon at the intersection of Highway 56 and East Avenue.
- Apply for implementation funding to accomplish the plan's recommendations, including a Regional Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

See Figure 3 for a map illustrating many infrastructure recommendations for the plan.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Plan should include an assessment of which recommendations have already been implemented, those that should continue to be pursued, and those that should be removed. Bicycle sharrow or bike lane routes in Figure 3 should be considered as possible routes for the future network.

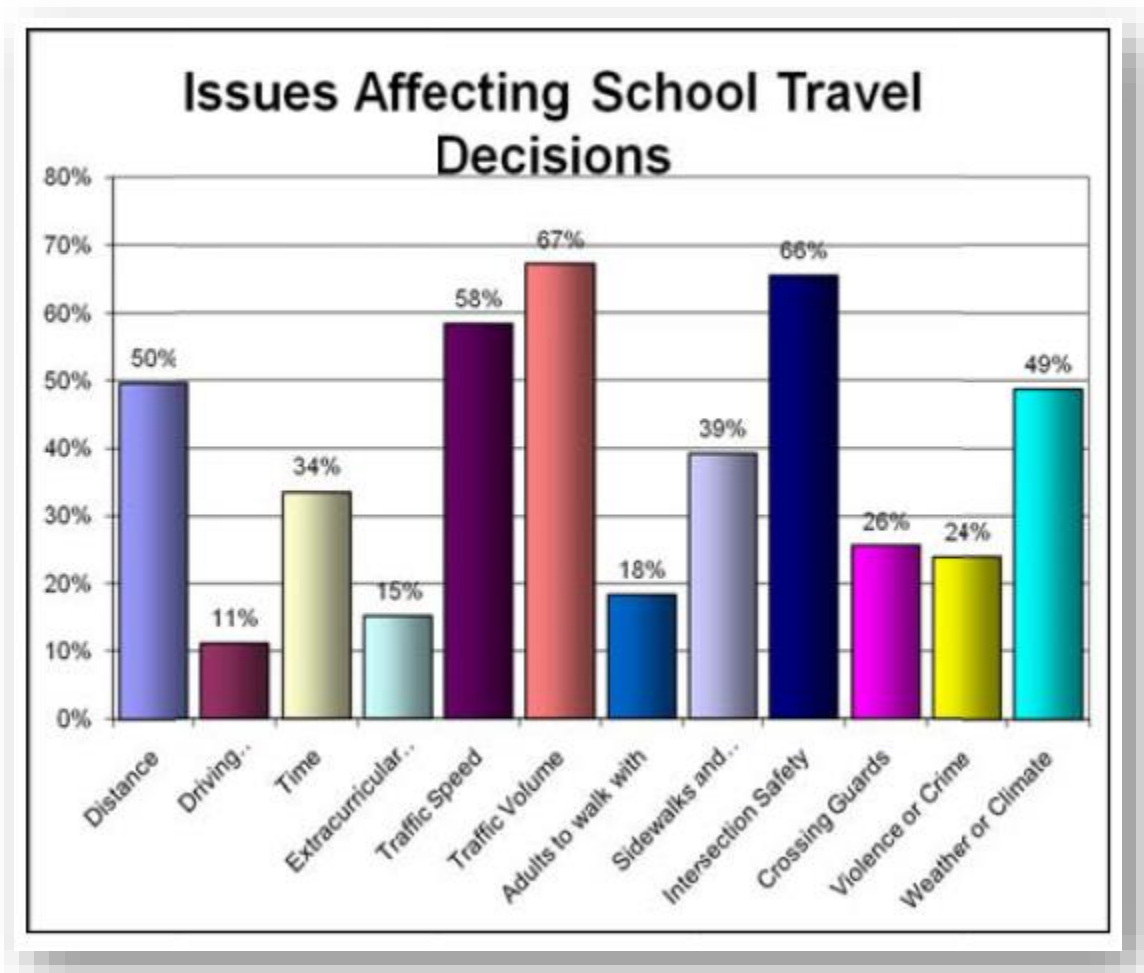


Figure 2. Responses from Viroqua parents to the question, "Which of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school?".

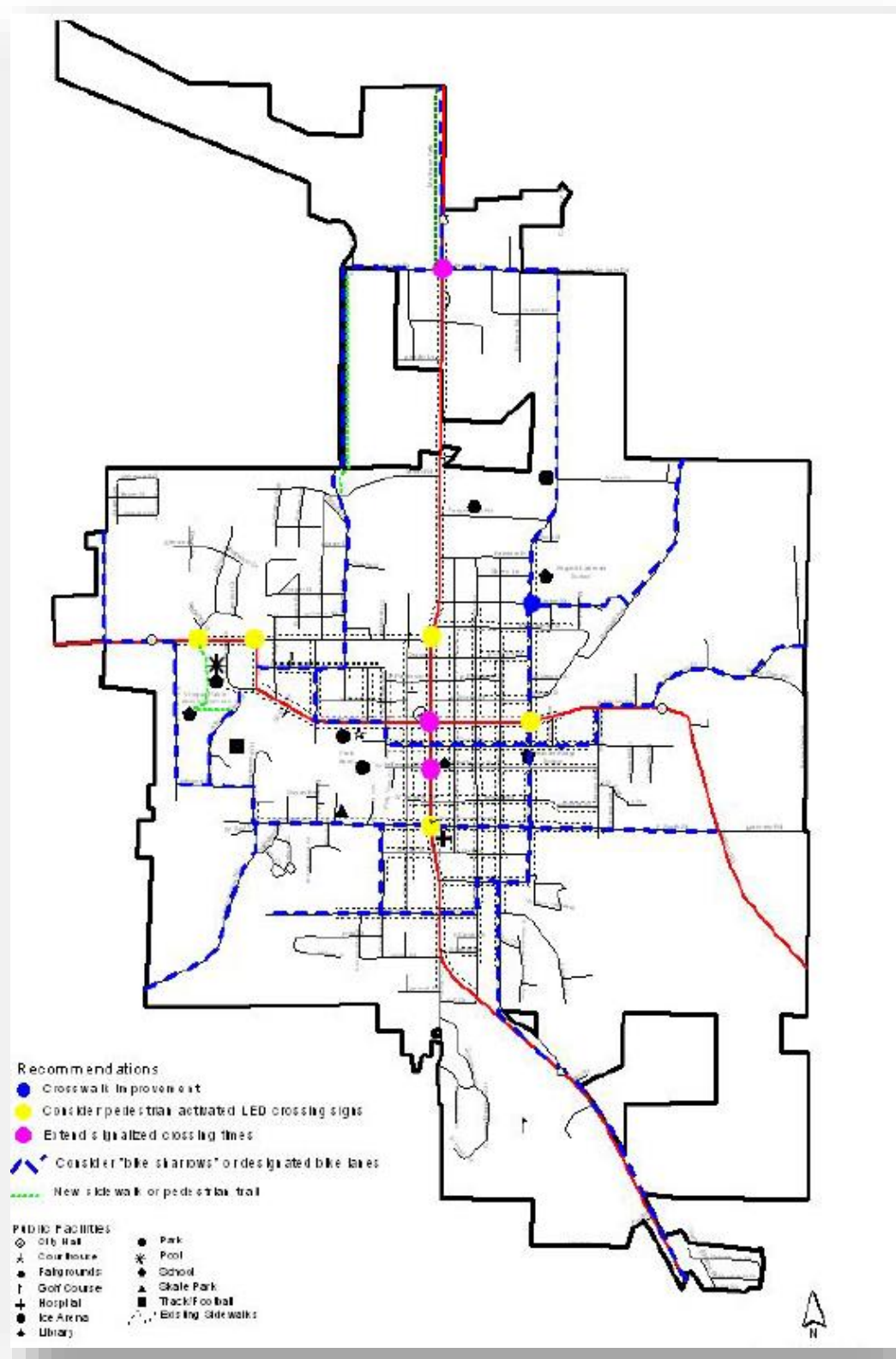


Figure 3. Infrastructure recommendations for Viroqua from the Westby and Viroqua Safe Routes to School plan.

Tax Incremental District No. 6 Project Plan

The 2015 Tax Incremental District (TID) No. 6 Project Plan includes a list of downtown pedestrian and bicycle improvements that can be funded with property tax revenues generated by the district between 2015 and 2037. While the City is not obligated to pursue these projects, they may pursue them throughout this time. Planned costs for pedestrian and bicycle facilities includes \$225,000 for bicycle trailhead improvements, \$100,000 for pedestrian facilities, and \$75,000 for multi-use trails. These may take place within ½ mile of the district, and may include pocket parks, sidewalks, multi-use trails, street crossing safety improvements, signs, bike racks, benches, tables, landscaping, a shelter, restrooms, renovation of the old bath house, and related amenities. See Figure 4 for a map illustrating these projects.

Additionally, sidewalks may be installed with additional planned costs for street reconstruction projects along Center Street, Jefferson Street, Rock Avenue, Rusk Avenue, and Washington Street. \$1.6 million is budgeted for street reconstruction projects. Finally, \$150,000 in general streetscape projects may be funded with district revenues, and may include gateway features, planters, landscaping, signs, lighting, and decorative sidewalk improvements.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Plan should consider possible pedestrian- and bicycle-related infrastructure improvements from the TID No. 6 Project Plan for inclusion, as well as TID funding as a potential funding source for qualifying projects. Pedestrian connections and bicycle routes in Figure 4 should be considered as possible routes for the future network.

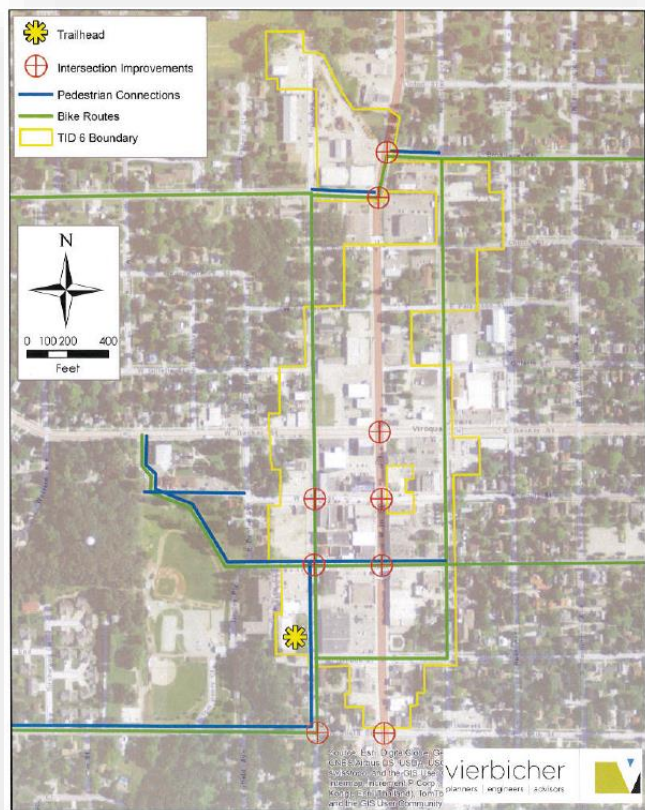


Figure 4. A map showing some of the pedestrian and bicycle improvements that may be financed with TID No. 6 revenues.

Rock Avenue Park Plan

The 2018 Rock Avenue Park Plan summarizes a public engagement process that took place regarding the site of the Viroqua Bath House (220 S Rock Avenue), Eagles Club (216 S Rock Avenue), and public parking lot to the north of the Eagles Club. This public engagement process was an outgrowth of the 2015 TID No. 6 Project Plan, which identified the Viroqua Bath House as a potential trailhead location. Due to the wide array of opinions within the community regarding the future of this Bath House, the process included extensive outreach including five focus groups, an open house, and a community survey completed by 291 individuals.

Out of 11 potential site amenities, a bicycle trailhead ranked as the ninth highest priority for survey respondents, as shown in Figure 5. 30 percent of survey respondents said that poor pedestrian and bicycle crossings were a barrier to access the area, as shown in Figure 6.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Rock Avenue Park Plan suggests that the public supports the addition of park amenities that appeal to a wide variety of users. Any potential trailhead amenities such as restrooms, drinking water, map kiosk, bike repair station, or e-bike charging stations should be considered as secondary uses to another primary use, such as a park or other community space. This plan also suggests that improvements to pedestrian and bicycle crossings should be evaluated near this site.

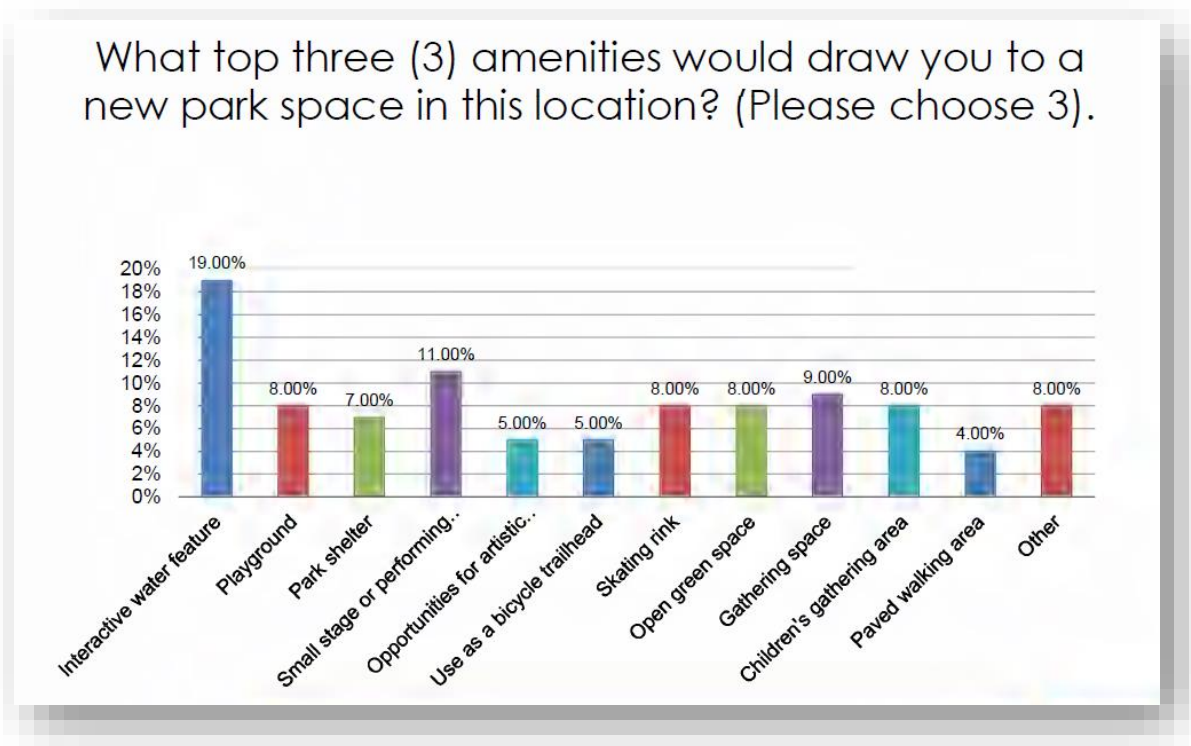


Figure 5. The most popular amenities with survey respondents included an interactive water feature, small stage, and gathering space.

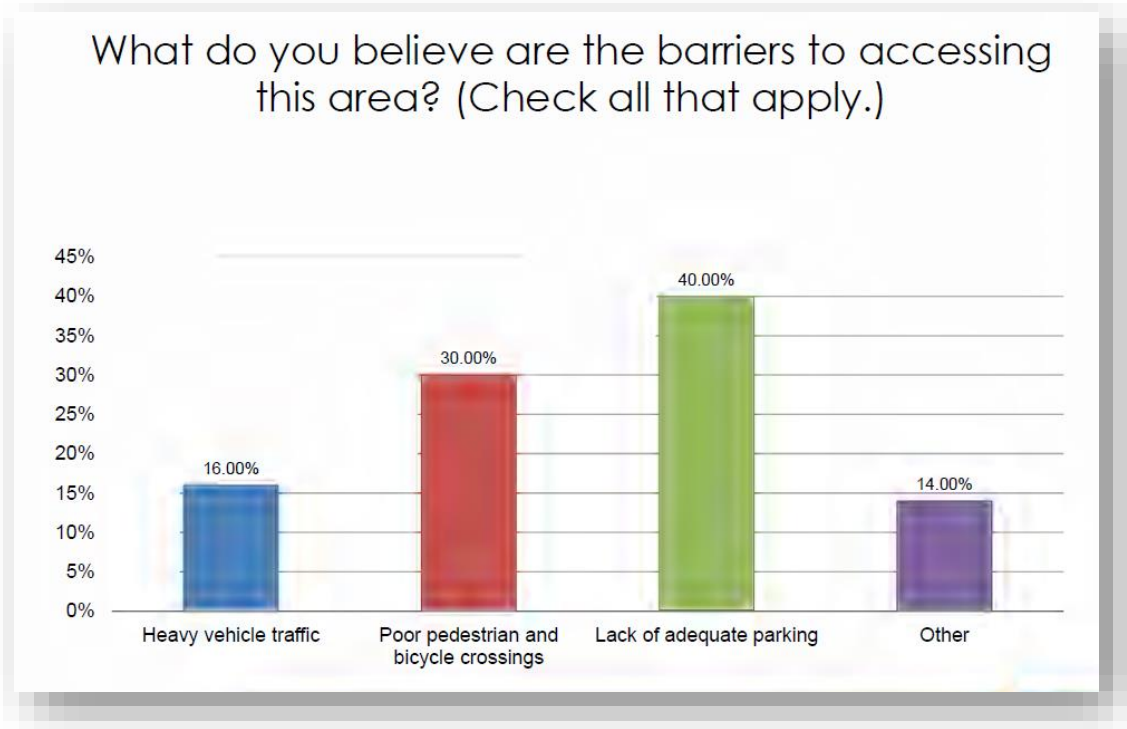


Figure 6. Poor pedestrian and bicycle crossings near the Viroqua Bath House were identified as a barrier for 30% of survey respondents.

Tax Incremental District No. 7 Project Plan

The 2019 Tax Incremental District (TID) No. 7 Project Plan is similar to the TID No. 6 Project Plan, in that includes a list of general pedestrian and bicycle improvements that can be funded with property tax revenues generated by the district between 2019 and 2034. While the City is not obligated to pursue these projects, they may pursue them throughout this time.

Planned costs for “pedestrian and bicycle facilities” are \$200,000. These may take place within ½ mile of the district and may include “pocket parks . . . multi-use trails, sidewalks, street crossing safety improvements, signage, bike racks, benches, tables, and related appurtenances.” Also included are trailhead park improvements, including the “demolition of existing improvements, site improvements, grading, parking lot, access drives, bike racks, signage, benches, tables, landscaping, shelter, restrooms, renovation of old bath house, park amenities, canoe launch facilities and related appurtenances.

Within the larger category of “infrastructure improvements,” street lighting, streetscaping, recreational trails, and “improvements to enhance pedestrian connections and safety” may be built. In addition, \$200,000 has been set aside for Highway 14 corridor improvements, which may include “street lighting, streetscaping, gateway features, plantings and landscaping, informational and directional signs, benches, bicycle racks, decorative lighting, and sidewalk improvements.” A multi-use trail map has been included in the plan, which is shown in Figure 7.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Plan should consider possible pedestrian- and bicycle-related infrastructure improvements from the TID No. 7 Project Plan for inclusion, as well as TID funding as a potential funding source for qualifying projects. Proposed multi-use trails in Figure 7 should be considered as possible routes for the future network.

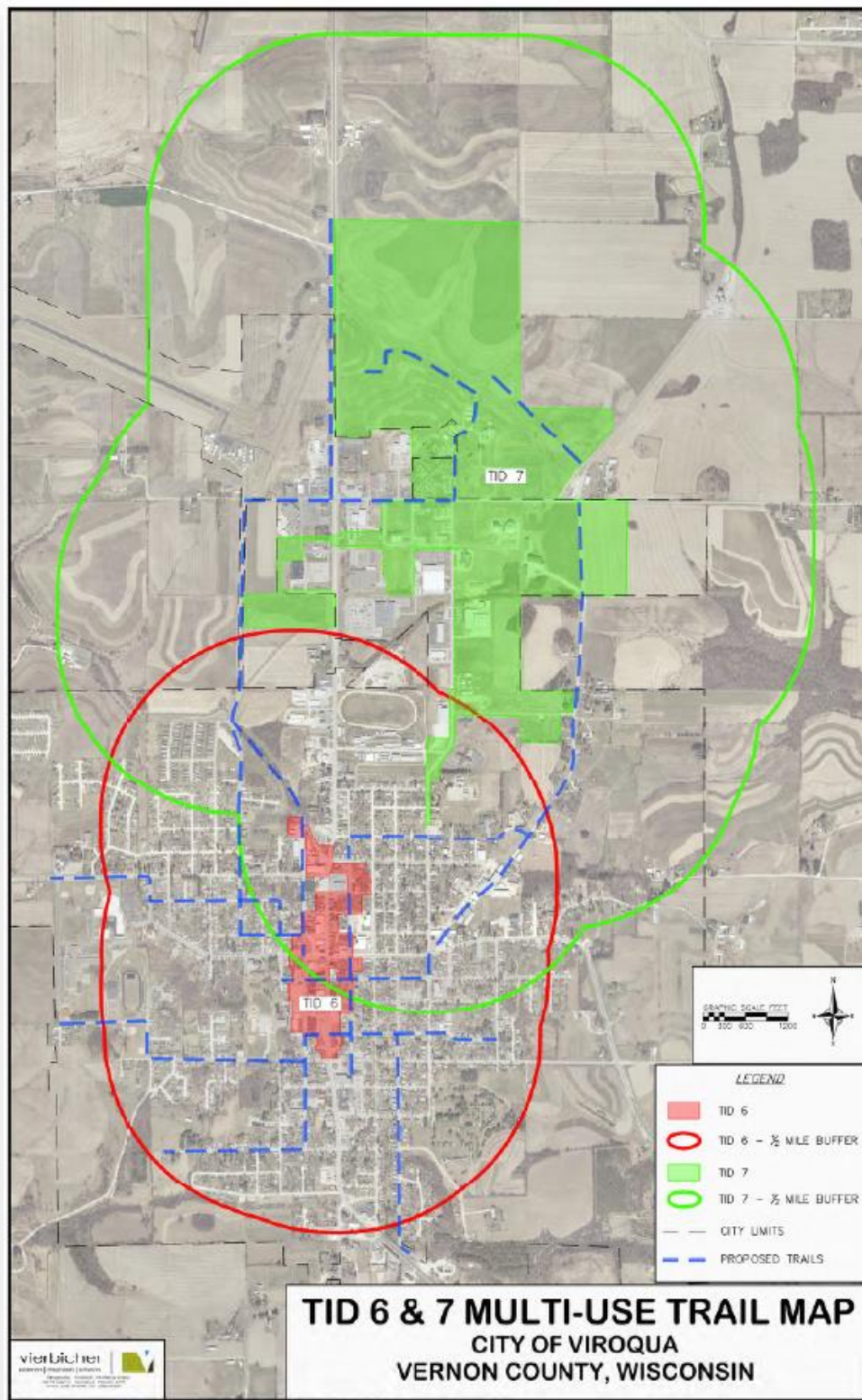


Figure 7. A map showing proposed trails from the TID No. 7 Project Plan.

Grant Application for Trail Extension Project and Trailhead

This 2019 grant application to the one-time State of Wisconsin Multimodal Local Supplement Grant Program includes a request for \$719,304 in funding for a trail along Airport Road and Chicago Avenue as well as trail head construction. The trail extension was planned to run along Airport Road between Main Street and Chicago Avenue, as well as on Chicago Avenue between Airport Road and Marquette Avenue, as shown in Figure 8. The trailhead construction was planned to be connect to the renovation of the Bath House into a visitor center, as shown in Figure 9. The State of Wisconsin received 1,596 applications and awarded 152 projects. Viroqua's application for this project was not funded.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The grant application's cost estimate for the trail extension may be used in the Implementation section of the Plan. The conceptual drawing for the trailhead may be considered for potential trailhead recommendations at the Bath House.



Figure 8. The trail alignment for the grant application runs along Airport Road and Chicago Avenue.



Figure 9. A conceptual rendering of the trailhead to the west of the Viroqua Bath House.

Vernon County Outdoor Recreation Plan

This 2021 plan provides guidance to Vernon County for the development of outdoor recreation opportunities. It includes a public survey with 369 participants. The top three outdoor recreation activities in Vernon County are hiking/walking, fishing, and biking (see Figure 10). The highest priority for future county/outdoor facility improvements was multipurpose trails (see Figure 11). Despite this, acquiring land for trail development was listed as a medium priority action, after boating/canoeing access, fishing improvements, and campsite acquisition (i.e., high priority actions).

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Vernon County Outdoor Recreation Plan survey is important context for the completion of the Plan and should be shared with decision makers and the public during engagement opportunities.

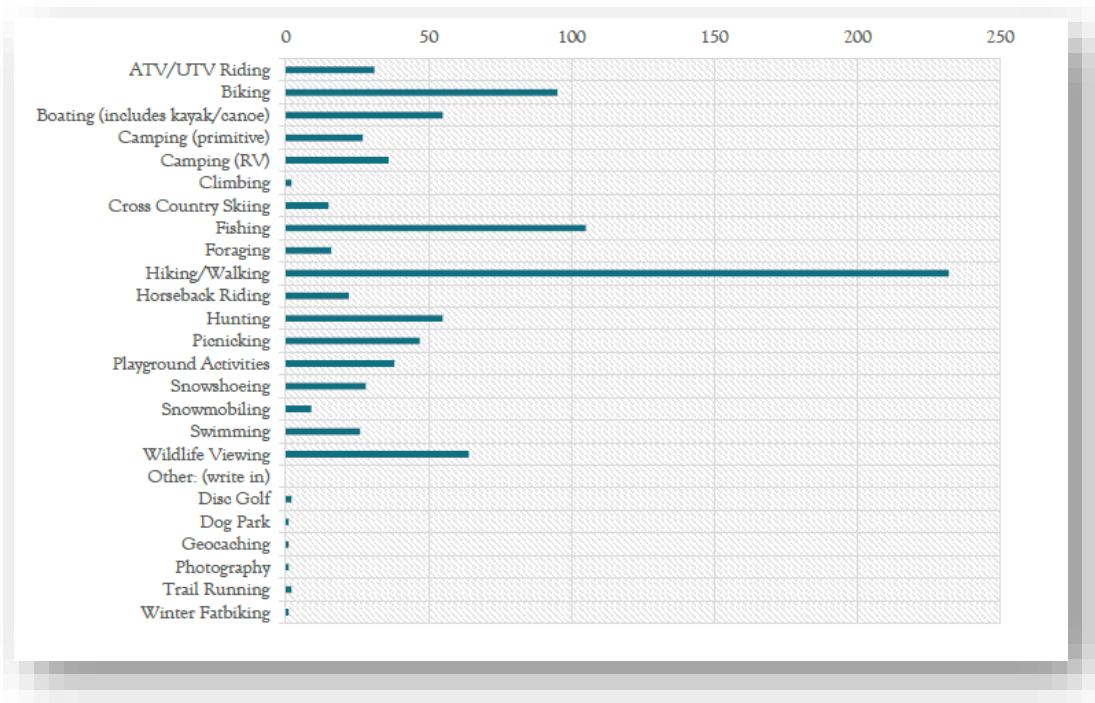


Figure 10. When asked what their top two outdoor recreation activities were in Vernon County, survey respondents said that hiking/walking was number one and biking was number three.

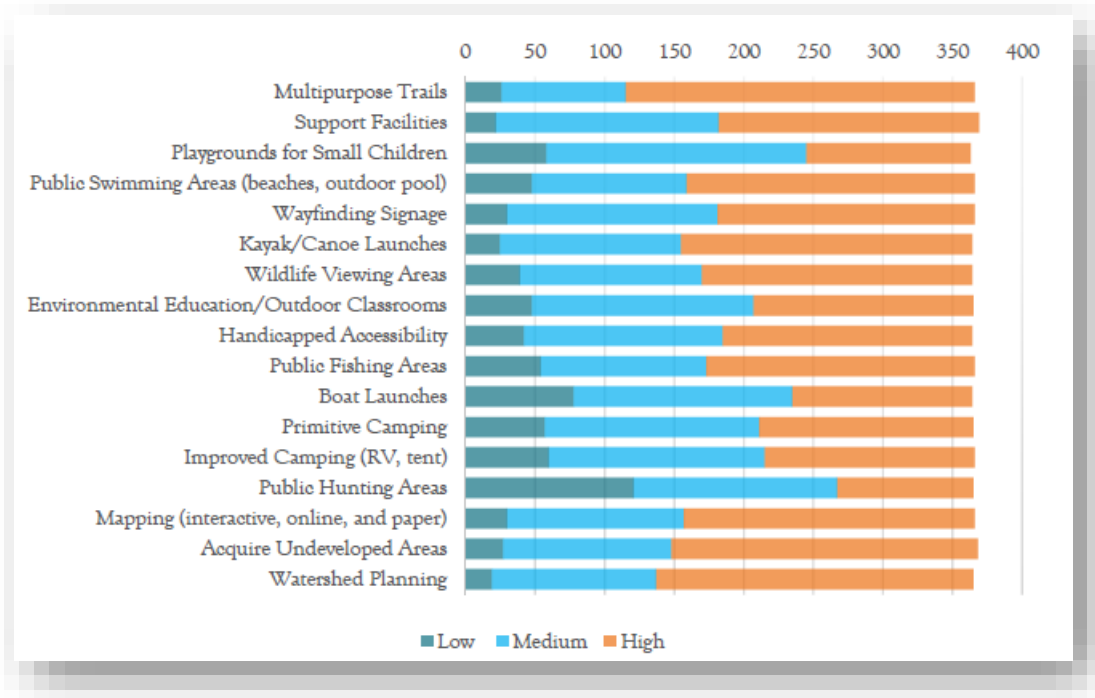


Figure 11. When asked what their priorities were for future county/outdoor facility improvements, survey respondents said multipurpose trails were their highest priority.

Main Street Highway Safety Improvement Program Presentation

This 2021 presentation to the public explains the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Main Street project that was constructed in 2023. The extent of the project was between Brendel Lane (near Wal-Mart) and South Washington Avenue, with a gap within the Downtown core between Decker Street and South Street. The project reduced the road from four lanes to three lanes. The purpose was to reduce crashes. The project also upgraded curb ramps to meet ADA standards and installed Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB's) improvements at five intersections:

Main Street Intersection	Median Type	Crossing Type
Fairgrounds Road	Raised	Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
E. Broadway Street	Corrugated	Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
W. Broadway Street	Corrugated	Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
Oak Street	Corrugated	Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
Maple Street	Corrugated	Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons

In addition, curb extensions were added to the northeast and southwest quadrants of the intersection of Main Street with Decker Street (Highway 56), as shown in Figure 12.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

These changes to traffic flow on Main Street and pedestrian crossings will encourage feedback during the public engagement process. This feedback should be encouraged and will provide opportunities for future project ideas in the Plan.

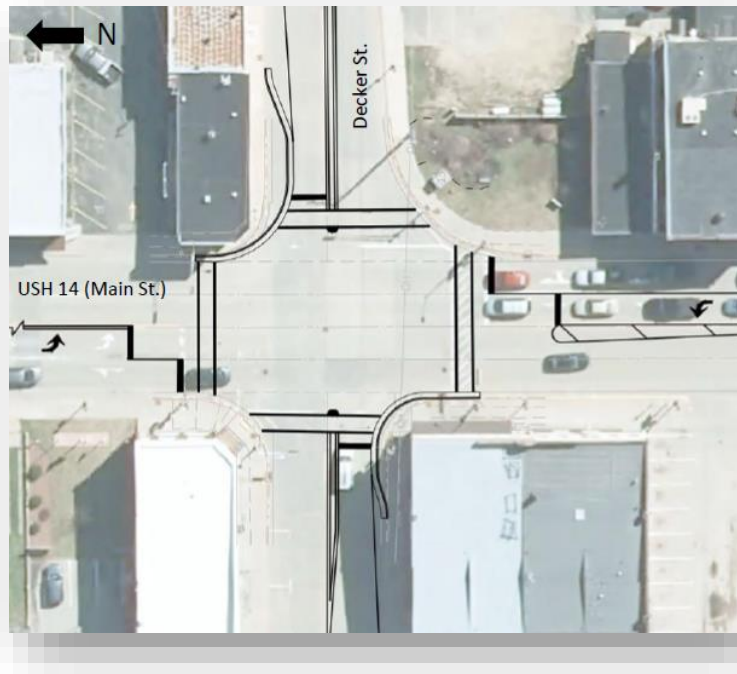


Figure 12. An aerial drawing illustrating planned bump outs at the intersection of Main Street with Decker Street.

Downtown Main Street Circulation & Safety Recommendations Report

This 2022 report summarizes the public engagement and design process to revamp Main Street between Decker Street and South Street. In 2020, the City of Viroqua received a \$525,000 grant from the federal Transportation Alternatives Program for Main Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Public engagement for this project took place in March 2021, with 69% of participants saying they do not feel safe crossing Main Street as a pedestrian. Evaluation of the Downtown area included destinations, redevelopment opportunities, parking, and circulation.

Four alternatives were presented to the public in September 2021, with most participants preferring an alternative that:

- Adds left turn lanes off Main Street onto Court Street and Terhune Street.
- Replaces the stoplight at the intersection of Main Street and Jefferson Street with an RRFB pedestrian crossing.
- Adds curb extensions to the intersections of Main Street with Court Street, Jefferson Street, and Terhune Street.
- Turns Jefferson Street and Terhune Street into one-way streets, within one block on either side of Main Street.

The report summarizes streetscape concepts such as a gateway arch, lighting, colored concrete crosswalks, bike racks, trees, benches, planters, and vertical placemaking features, as shown in Figure 13. The report includes additional changes for pedestrians and bicyclists, including:

- Marked crosswalks at the intersections of Decker Street (Highway 56) with Rock Avenue and Center Avenue.
- Directional signing for the bike trail on Rock Avenue.
- A visitor informational kiosk at the intersection of Rock Avenue and Jefferson Street.
- Bike racks at public parking lots.

The project will also make changes to parking in the Downtown area, including the addition of angled parking on Jefferson Street and Terhune Street, resurfacing public parking lots, and the addition of pavement markings for on-street parking on Rock Avenue. Report recommendations are summarized in Figure 14.

In 2023, an additional \$808,000 grant was received from the federal Transportation Alternatives Program, with construction scheduled for 2024.

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

With such significant changes coming to Downtown Viroqua within the next year, the Plan will need to consider how to educate the public about the City's plans during the engagement process. Any changes that are already funded should be included in the Plan, should they not be constructed by the time this Plan is finalized.

CONCEPT



Figure 13. Streetscape features planned for the Main Street project.

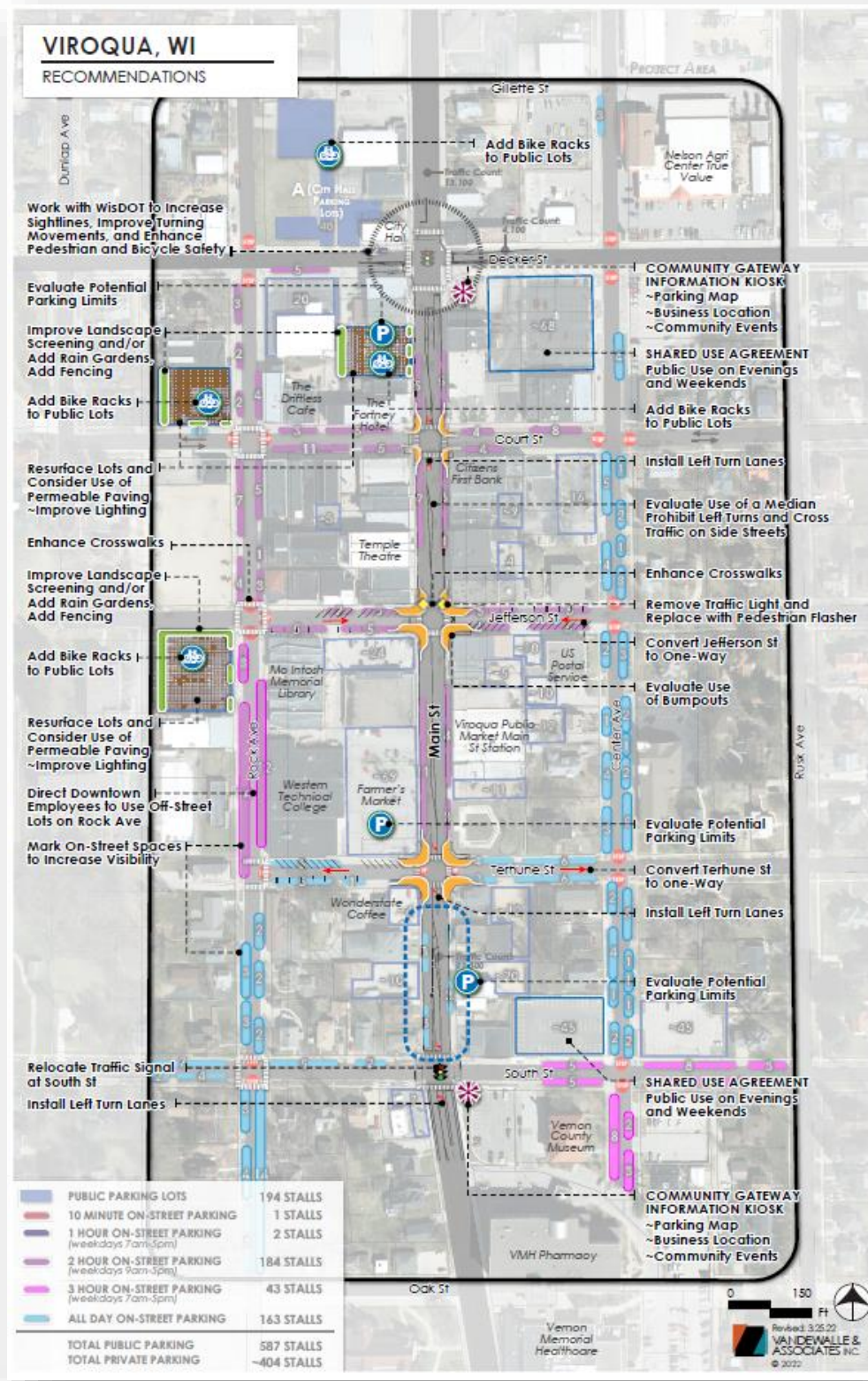


Figure 14. A map illustrating the Downtown Main Street Circulation & Safety Recommendations report.

Viroqua Municipal Code with Zoning

The most recent version of Viroqua's Municipal Code includes the following bicycle and pedestrian-related ordinances:

Title 10 – Vehicles & Traffic

- Those age 10 or older may not ride a bicycle on a sidewalk.
- Residents must obtain a license from the City to operate a bicycle.

Title 12 – Streets & Sidewalks

- Sidewalks are required to be four inches thick and made of concrete.
- The Director of Public Works may order repair of defective sidewalks and add the cost of the repair to the property tax roll, made payable in 10 annual installments.
- Snow or ice must be removed by the property owner within 24 hours of the end of a snowfall. The Superintendent of Public Works is responsible for removing snow or ice not removed by property owners, and should charge the following:

Sidewalk Length	First Time Shoveled During the Same Winter	Second Time Shoveled During the Same Winter	Third Time Shoveled During the Same Winter
Not Over 100'	\$100	\$150	\$175
Over 100'	\$200	\$250	\$275

How the Recommendations Should Be Considered/Used in the Viroqua Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Updates to ordinances in the municipal code may be recommended.