

City of Merrill

Bicycle and Pedestrian

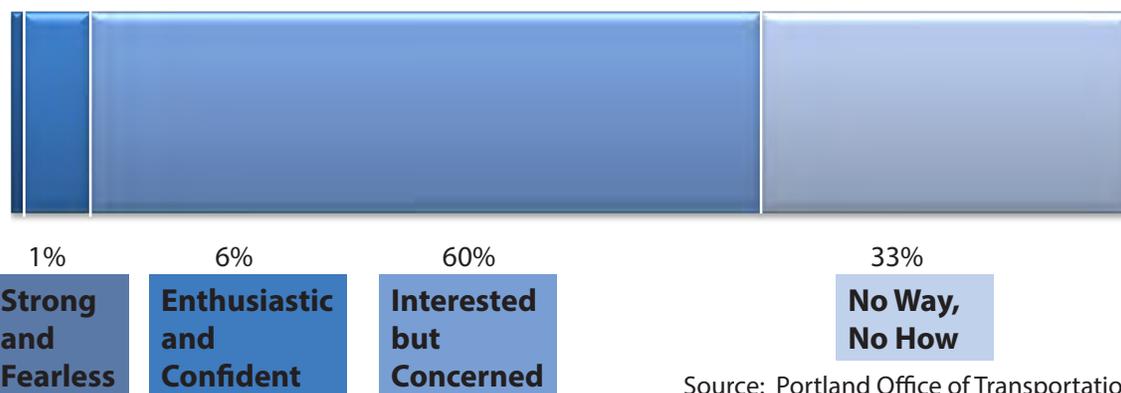
Plan Summary 2015

Prepared by North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

INTRODUCTION

The primary emphasis of this plan is to develop a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly transportation system in the City of Merrill. Biking and walking are essential to maintaining and promoting the quality of life for residents and visitors of Merrill.

FIGURE 1: TYPES OF CYCLISTS



Source: Portland Office of Transportation

TYPES OF CYCLISTS

The American population can be divided into four classes of bicyclists (see Figure 1):

- **1 percent describe themselves as “fearless.”**
These riders are confident in their abilities and will ride regardless of roadway condition, amount of traffic, or inclement weather.
- **6 percent call themselves “enthusiastic and confident.”**
Riders are comfortable sharing the road with motor vehicles, but they prefer to ride on separate facilities like bike lanes. May or may not ride in inclement weather.
- **60 percent are “interested but concerned” about their vulnerability.**
Very few of these people regularly ride a bicycle, but they like riding. They are concerned that their route is not safe to ride, so they don’t ride very often, and definitely do not ride when the weather is bad.
- **33 percent say “no way, no-how” to biking.**
They are not interested in bicycling at all, not even for recreation.

The challenge to increasing bicycling among the general population is making biking appeal to the large “interested but concerned” contingent.

By building a bicycle network that addresses the needs for the “interested but concerned” group, the more confident bike riders will also be served.

TYPES OF PEDESTRIANS

Everyone is a pedestrian at some point in their trip, whether it is from home to car, or walking to the bus stop.

There are essentially two groups of pedestrians:

- 1) general pedestrians who walk, and
- 2) pedestrians with limitations that make walking difficult or impossible.

The general pedestrian is anyone who can walk along and across streets without being limited by physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments.

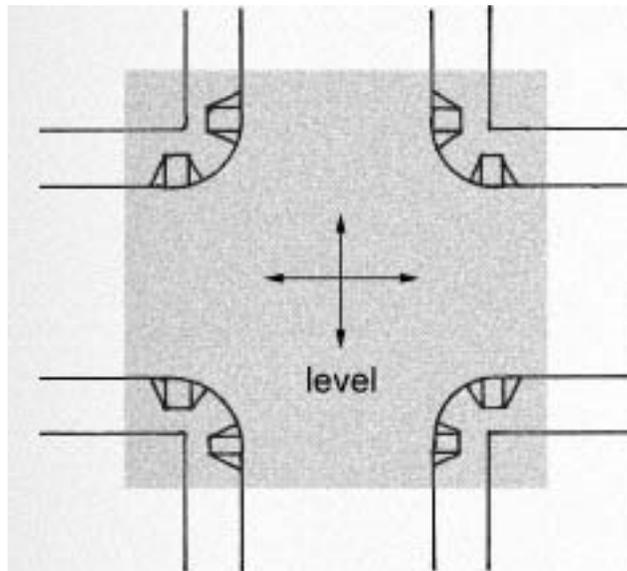
Other pedestrians, such as the elderly, children, people with physical or mental disabilities, and the blind may have limitations that make walking more challenging.

Facilities designed to assist pedestrians with limitations will be welcomed by everyone else.

FIGURE 2: CURB RAMP PLACEMENT AT INTERSECTION

The preferred design is to have a separate curb ramp aligned with each crossing direction to allow all pedestrians to cross at the same location. At most intersections, a pair of perpendicular curb ramps placed at 90 degree angles to one another is the optimal design for meeting these criteria.

The shaded area represents the portion of the intersection that should be level for pedestrian travel.

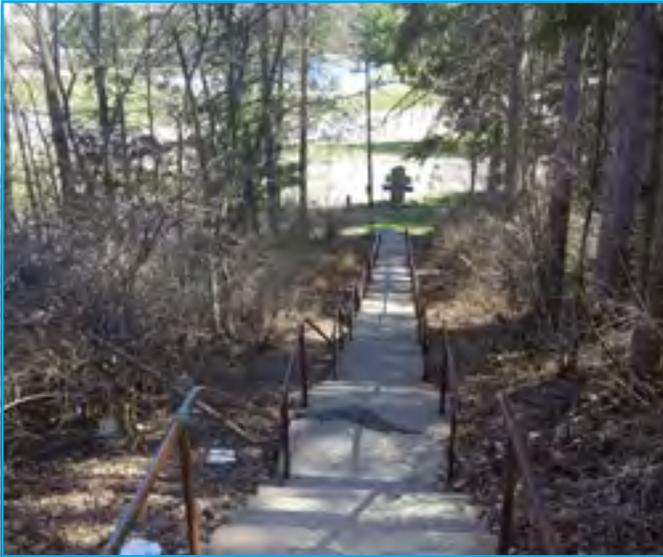


Source: FHWA, Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access.

The challenge to increasing walking among the general population is making walking conditions safer for people with impairments.

Repairing the existing infrastructure to accommodate pedestrians with various impairments will also inspire others to get out and walk.

Lions Park Stairs



Trails and Bridges in Stange Park



Taylor Street Bike Lanes



East 1st Street

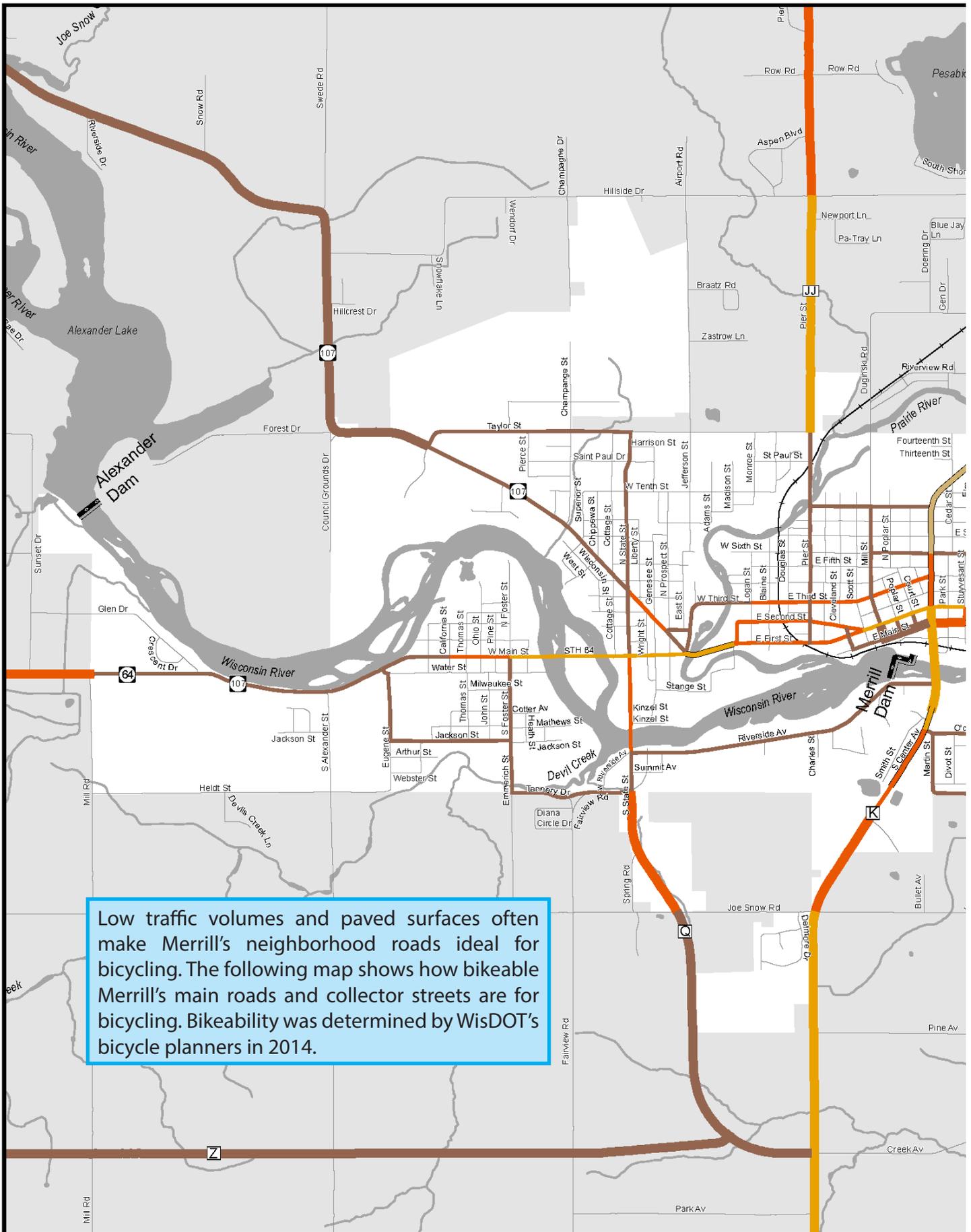


Stange Park Paths

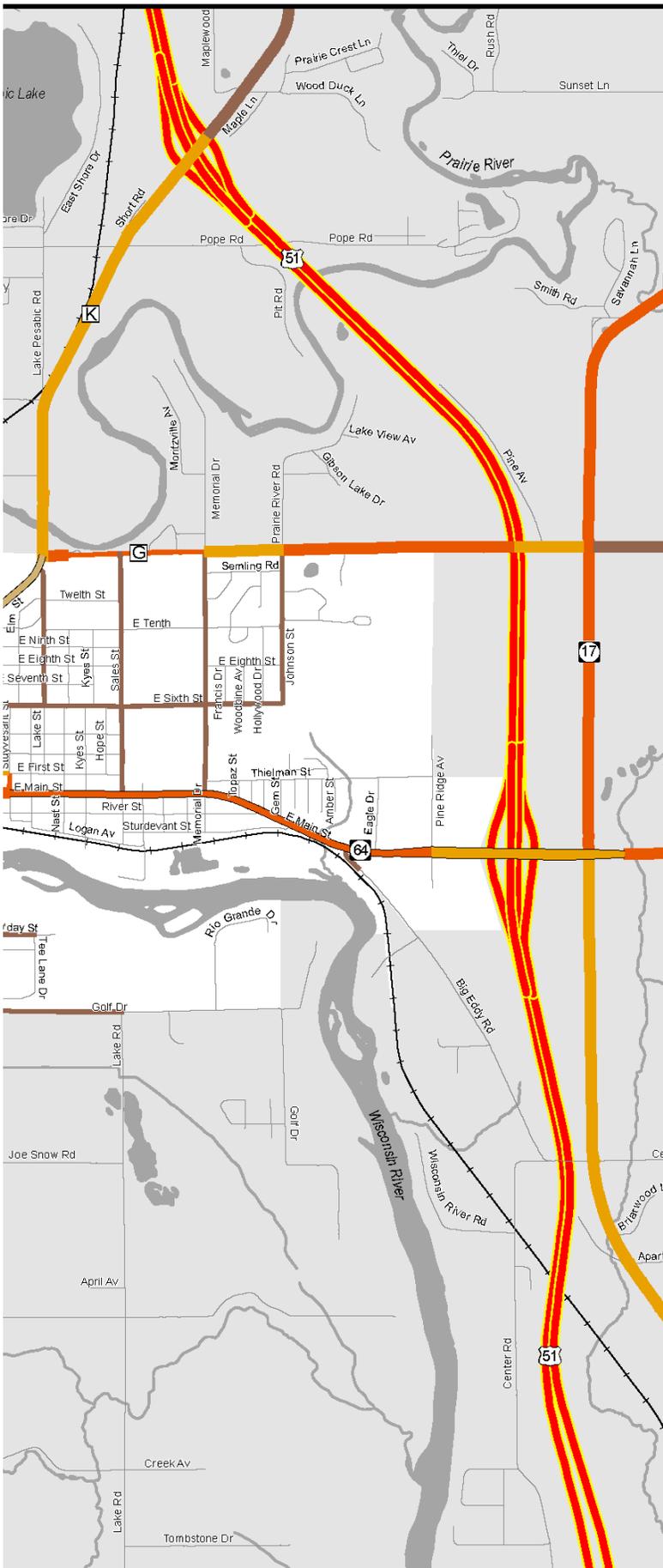


River Bend Trail - Bridge



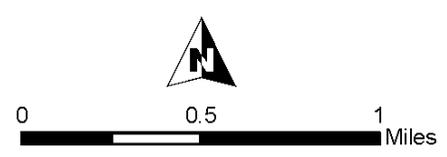


Map 1 Bikeability of Roads City of Merrill



Single Lane Width	Outer Paved Shoulders	Lanes	Bikeability
Wide	OR	4	Best
			Moderate
			Undesirable

- Bicycles Prohibited
- Local Roads
- Dams
- Railroad
- Water



Source: WisDOT, NCRWPC

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCRWPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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PLAN VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The following mission, goals, and objectives were created by the Advisory Group working with NCWRPC.

VISION:

For children and adults to safely bicycle and walk throughout Merrill for daily trips and recreational purposes.

MISSION:

Develop a transportation system that is safe and easily shared by motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, by bringing all streets up to a comfortable level of compatibility.

GOAL 1. MAKE ALL ROADS SAFE TO WALK OR BIKE

All roads in Merrill are available for people to walk and bicycle on. Some roads are dangerous or very uncomfortable to walk or bicycle on, and therefore need alternative routes or the road right-of-way needs some other accommodation to make it safe for all users.

Objective 1.1 – Identify very hazardous road segments for prioritization so that basic bicycling improvements can be scheduled to make those segments safer.

Objective 1.2 – Identify pinch points where walking could be dangerous due to predictable and observable hazards.

Objective 1.3 – Sign and possibly paint pavement markings for bike routes so drivers become aware to share the road with bicyclists.

Objective 1.4 – Create better outdoor recreation wayfinding and trailhead signage.

GOAL 2. PROVIDE BICYCLE PARKING

Everyone who owns a bicycle has a place to securely park it at home, but many destinations do not provide secure bicycle parking.

Objective 2.1 – Provide bicycle parking guidance through fact sheets to all employers.

Objective 2.2 – Provide bicycle parking in downtown commercial areas in the street furniture zone of the sidewalk and in select street parking spots (like at the ends of each block).

Objective 2.3 – Create a bicycle parking ordinance.

GOAL 3. PROVIDE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

This is an opportunity to make walking and bicycling to school safer for children in grades K-8, and to increase the number of families who encourage their children to walk and bike.

Objective 3.1 – Apply for Safe Routes To School assistance for each school.



GOAL 4. BUILD BIKE FACILITIES FOR “INTERESTED BUT CONCERNED” BICYCLISTS

All roads in Merrill are available for people to walk and bicycle on. Some roads are dangerous or very uncomfortable to ride on, so the challenge is making biking appeal to this huge contingent of “interested but concerned” bicyclists.

Objective 4.1 – When a road is 25 MPH, has a painted center line, and is not a truck route, then paint white edge lines (urban shoulder) to make lanes that are not wider than 10-feet. Narrow roads promote slower driving.

Objective 4.2 – On bike routes and paths that are not on the main roads in Merrill, design and install bicyclist oriented wayfinding signage that directs them to common civic, commercial district, and park destinations.

Objective 4.3 – Place 4-lane sections of Center Avenue and STH 64 on road diets to provide bike lanes. Side street traffic will also benefit due to fewer lanes to cross.

GOAL 5. DESIGN WALKING FACILITIES FOR IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

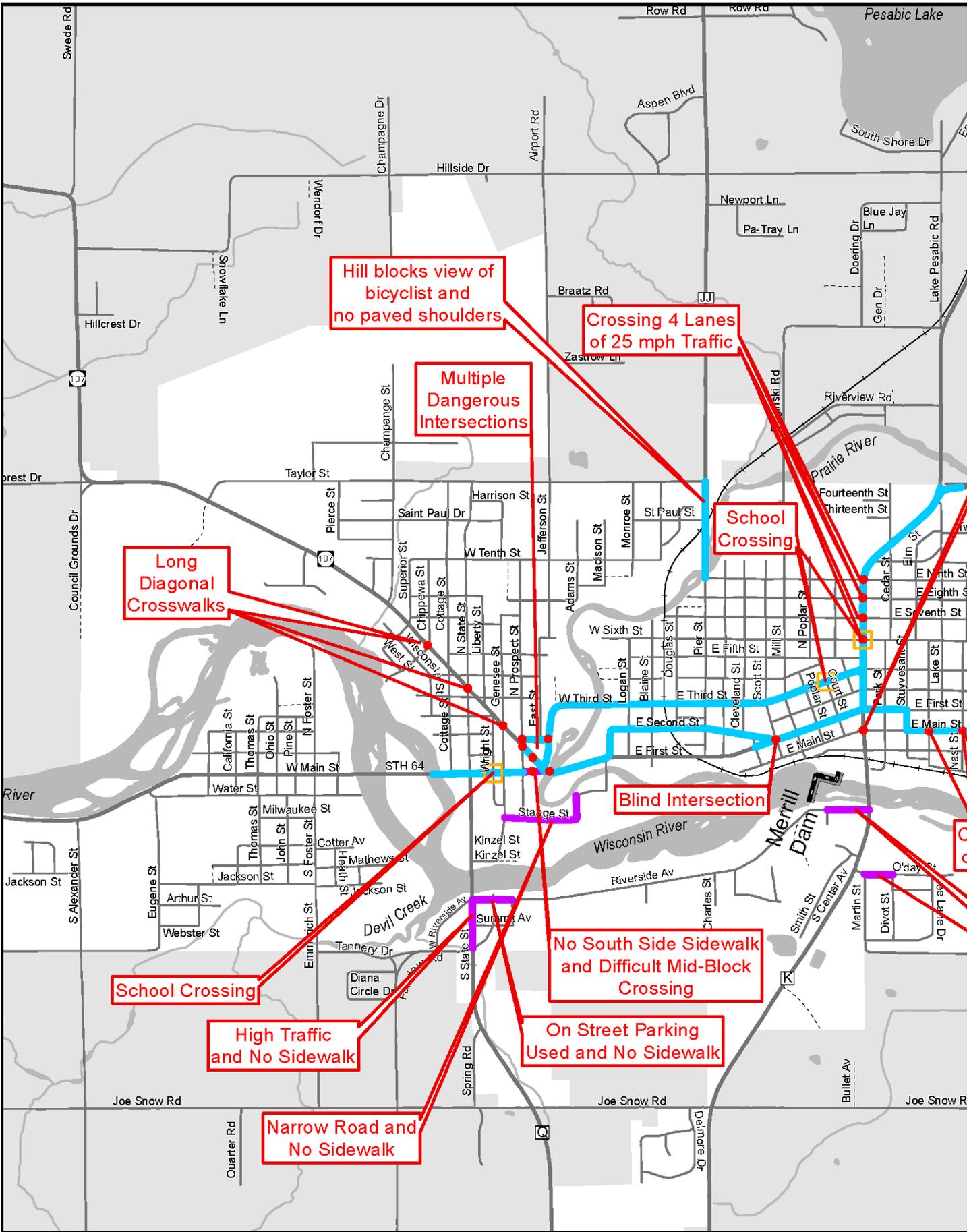
Making it easier for impaired individuals to walk around will also benefit everyone else.

Objective 5.1 – Make intersections predictable for visually impaired users to navigate by pointing curb ramps in the line of travel across a road.

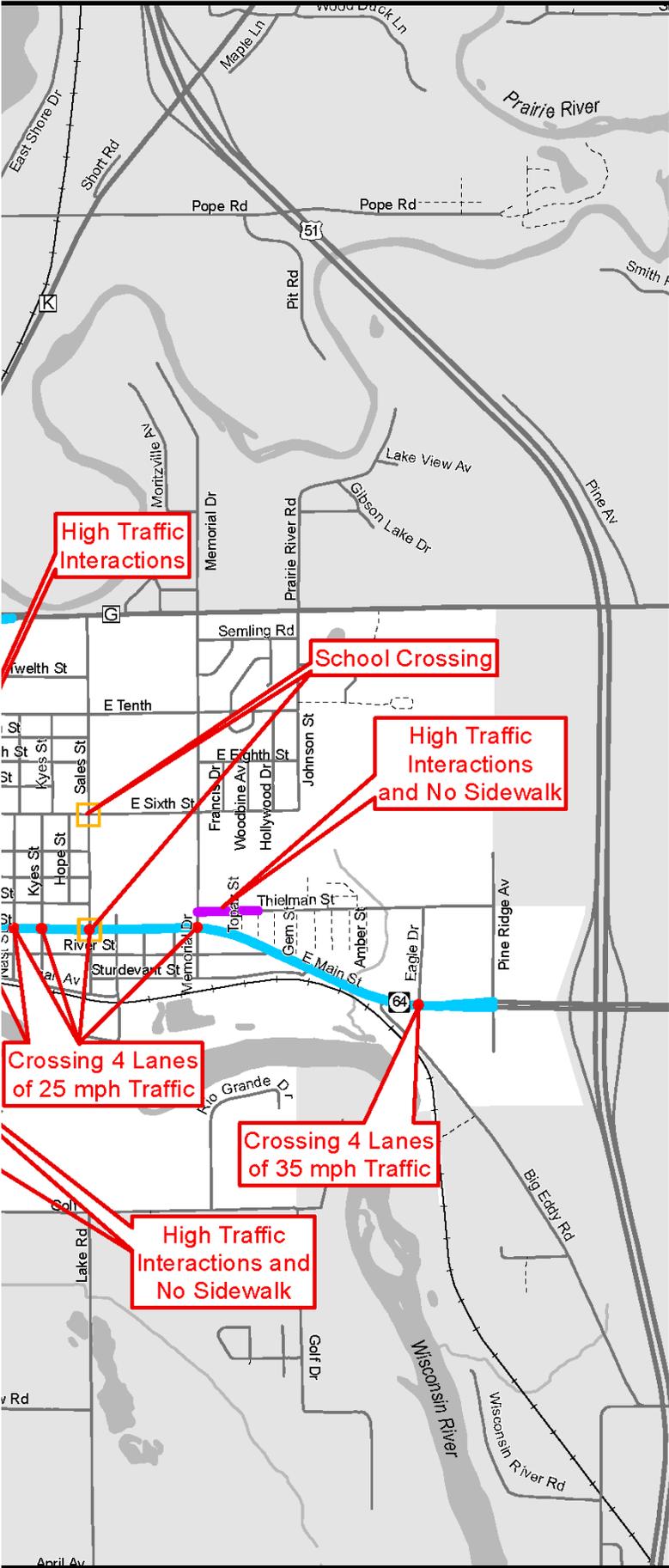
Objective 5.2 – Provide adequate crosswalk lighting for pedestrians using the crosswalk, and for vehicle drivers to see pedestrians in crosswalks in time to stop for pedestrians.

Objective 5.3 – Create sidewalks that are level and have properly sloping ramps at crosswalks. Replace stairs in the sidewalk line of travel with gradually sloping sidewalks, and keep sidewalks level at driveways so that only the driveway apron slopes to meet the road – or lower the whole sidewalk instead of slanting it toward the road.

Objective 5.4 – Where paths are needed, but asphalt or concrete are not desired, provide flat hard packed surfaces that are wide enough to allow wheelchairs to navigate a path during a rain event (at least 5-foot wide). A saturated grass path will be too soft to allow a wheelchair to pass.



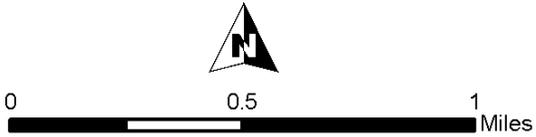
Map 8 Bike & Pedestrian Pinch Points City of Merrill



Legend

- Difficult Intersection to Cross
- Crossing Guard Intersection
- Difficult Road to Bike
- Difficult Road to Walk

Map 8, Bike and Pedestrian Pinch Points, shows what roads and intersections in Merrill were identified through this planning process as not friendly for bicycling or walking.



Source: WM DNR, NCWRPC
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Plan support and endorsement both by public officials and residents alike will greatly enhance the potential that recommendations will be implemented.

There are recommendations for many City departments, Merrill Schools, Merrill area groups, County Highway Dept., and WisDOT based upon jurisdiction.

Recommendations for Merrill are classified into the following groups: Policy based, Education and Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation.

A time frame is provided for each recommendation, so people can prioritize which recommendations to complete first.

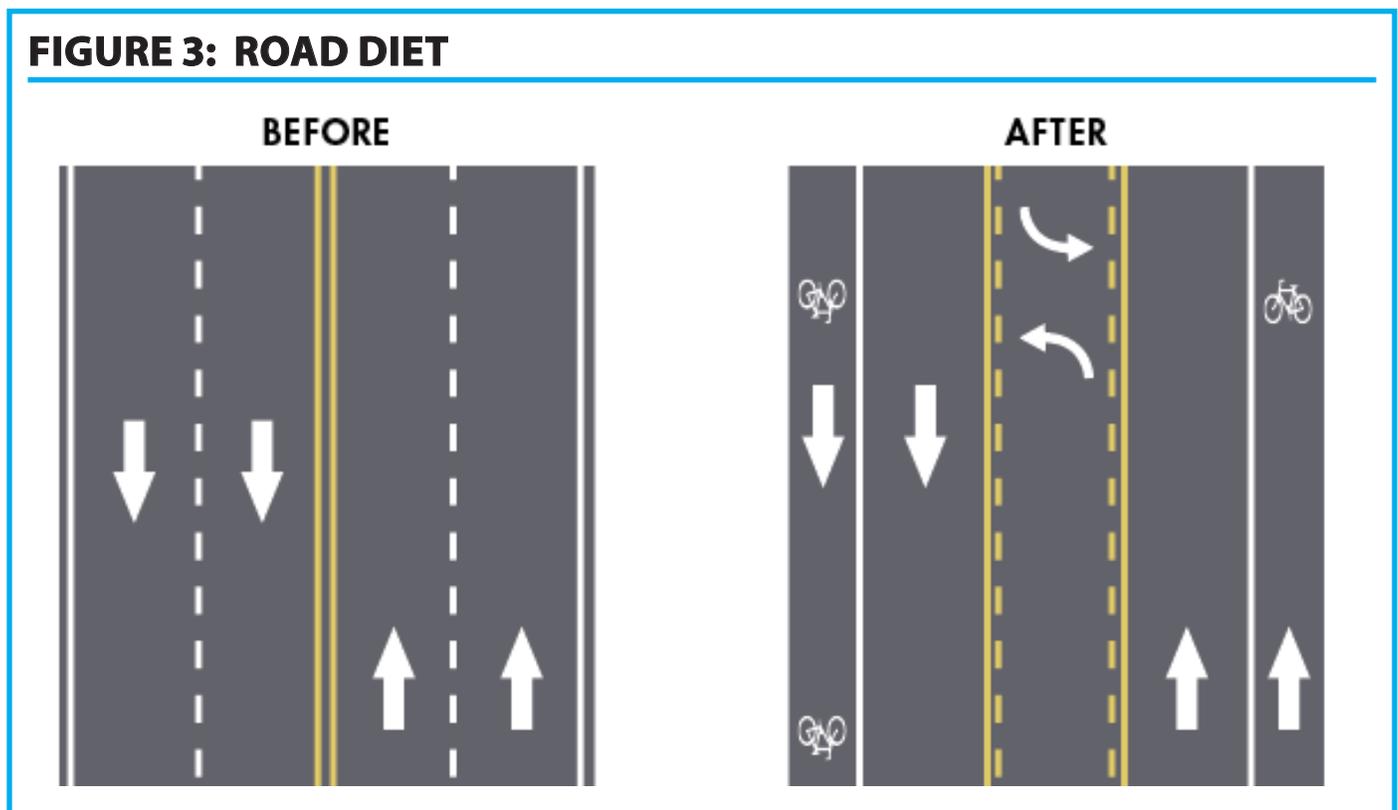
- Short* = less than five years
- Intermediate* = 5 to 10 years
- Long* = more than 10 years

<i>Policy Recommendations</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Page</i>
Advertise Infrastructure Changes	Short	26
Create Sidewalk Plan	Short	26
Change New Sidewalk Width in Code	Short	27
Allow Bikeway to Replace Sidewalk	Short	27
Remove Snow and Ice from Stange St Segment of River Bend Trail	Short	27
<i>Education and Encouragement Recommendations</i>		
Paint Bike Lanes and Sharrows as Part of Public Education	Short	28
Citywide Biking and Walking Encouragement Activities	Short	28
School Biking and Walking Encouragement Activities	Intermediate	28
Print Bike Routes on Tourism Map	Short	29
Bicycle Education Classes	Short	29
Education in Lieu of Punishment	Short	30
Bicycle Education Website	Short	30
<i>Enforcement Recommendations</i>		
Roadway Design - Vision Zero Deaths	Short to Long	30
Crosswalk Enforcement	Short	31
School Zone Speed Enforcement	Short	31
Sidewalk Snow and Ice Removal Enforcement	Short	31
<i>Engineering Recommendations</i>		
Sidewalk Maintenance	Intermediate	32
Pedestrian Signals	Short	32
Bicycle Parking	Short	33
Bike Racks on Buses	Intermediate	33
Safe Routes To School	Short	33
Route Wayfinding Signs	Short	34
Lions Park Dirt Path	Intermediate	34
Grass Paths for Wheelchairs	Short	35
Make Recreation Facilities ADA Accessible	Short	35

Sidewalk Ramps	Long	35
Third Street Bridge over Prairie River	Short to Intermediate	36
Remove Sidewalk Trip Hazards	Short	38
Crosswalk Improvements	Short	38
Center Avenue and Main Street	Intermediate	38
First Street and Scott Street	Short	39
Review Crosswalk Lighting Citywide	Long	40
Bike Routes	Intermediate	41
River Bend Trail	Short to Long	42
Segment 1 - Foster Street and Emmerich Street	Short	42
Segment 2 - Cottage Street	Short	42
Segment 3 - Prospect Street and 10th Street	Short	42
Segment 4 - Mill Street and Duginski Road	Short	42
Segment 5 - Pier Street and Merrill Memorial Forest	Intermediate	43
Segment 6 - Center Avenue/CTH K	Short	43
Segment 7 - Sales Street	Short	44
Segment 8 - Memorial Drive	Short	44
Segment 9 - Riverside Avenue to Jefferson Elementary	Intermediate	44
Segment 10 - Sixth Street/STH 64 Alternative	Short	45
Segment 11 - North Route, CTH G and Taylor Street	Intermediate	46
Segment 12 - Main Street/STH 64	Short	46
Segment 13 - Grand Ave/STH 107	Short to Long	48

Evaluation Recommendations

Program Counts	Short	49
Bike and Pedestrian Counts	Short	49



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Download the full plan at: <http://www.ncwrpc.org/lincoln/merrill-bicycle/>

This is a citywide plan developed by the Merrill Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Group (see back of plan cover) with oversight provided by the Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission, and technical assistance provided by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). Efforts were made to include additional local citizens, schools, and businesses to make all of Merrill bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Funding for this effort was provided in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Staff support was provided by the NCWRPC.