Frequently Asked Questions
Village of Oak Park Bike Plan

What is the Bike Plan Update?

Oak Park's Bike Plan was first adopted in 2008 and later updated in 2014. In January 2024, the Village issued a Request for Qualifications for Professional services to update the bike plan. The objective of this project was to update the plan to reflect the current built condition of the Village, coordinate with safety planning studies such as Vision Zero, review the feasibility of bike sharing options considering changes in the industry since 2014 and City and County initiatives, and review planned routes through the Village to identify opportunities for additional infrastructure for dedicated or protected bike lanes due to increased demand for cycling accommodations.

What is an All Ages and Ability Plan?

The All Ages and Abilities Criteria is a national and international best practice for the design of safe, comfortable and equitable bike facilities. To achieve growth in bicycle usage, bikeway design needs to meet the needs of a broader set of potential cyclists. Many existing facility designs exclude most people who might otherwise ride and traditionally favor very confident riders.

What is NACTO? Why is the Village following its recommendations?

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is a coalition of departments of transportation in North American cities. Founded in 1996, the group has participated in research initiatives dealing with surface transportation in urban areas and developed design guides which are widely used throughout North America for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Must the Village follow NACTO recommendations?

The Village is under no obligation to follow NACTO recommendations. The Village hired a consultant to develop a bike plan update. The task assigned them was to create and 'All Ages and Abilities' network and they applied best state of practice methodology to develop the document that was presented. The Village can opt to implement all, some or none of the plan as presented.

What is ADT? How does that relate to the selected treatment a roadway receives?

Average Daily Traffic is one measurement of how busy a street is. The more cars that use a roadway the more interactions occur between a cyclist and a car, generally the higher the ADT the more protective a treatment is selected.

- The lowest treatment in the bike plan update is the neighborhood greenway, which encompasses signage and striping to alert drivers that cyclists are expected users of the roadway and may take the full lane. Intermittent traffic calming treatments such as speed cushions and radar speed feedback signs are also present in a greenway.

- The next step of protection is a striped bike lane, also sometimes called a constrained bike lane, which channelizes bicycle traffic and car traffic into dedicated areas of the roadway and allows them to progress at independent speeds.
- Moving a further step more protective, is the buffered bike lane which marks out a one-foot wide strip of roadway that is a buffer between the area designated for bicycles and that designated for cars. This allows a larger margin of error for both parties.
- Finally, there is a protected bike lane which physically separates the traffic streams, usually with an approximately six-inch high concrete divider.

What happens at the 2,000 ADT threshold? 3,000 ADT?

Per the NACTO guidelines, on a low speed (25 mph) street with under about 2,000 ADT bicycle and car traffic can share the road, the bicycle can take the full lane, which prevents passing encounters. In this case, vehicle traffic is low enough that it would be expected that not many cars would stack up behind the slower moving cyclist. As the number of vehicles goes up, the number of cars behind a cyclist in the lane will rise, which makes a shared lane untenable. The installation of a striped bike lane allows vehicle traffic to proceed independent of cyclist speed since each has a dedicated portion of the roadway. In general, NACTO calls for this switch at between 1,500 and 2,000 ADT, though other factors must also be taken into consideration. ADT is a 24-hour measurement. If traffic in an area is heavily skewed toward peak times, such as commuting or school start times, this tipping point situation can be achieved with total daily traffic not reaching 2,000 ADT.

At 3,000 ADT, NACTO suggests considering buffered bike lanes because passing events are so numerous on roadways with higher ADT that the additional level of protection reduces the likelihood of a crash.

The January presentation showed a different infographic with bike lanes starting over 3,000 ADT, while the March version shows bike lanes starting at 2,000 ADT. Why the discrepancy?

NACTO released an update to its urban bikeway design guidelines on Jan. 7, 2025. The old graphic was from the 2011 version. The 2011 version made no distinction between buffered and constrained bike lanes, but prior to the full reissue NACTO released supplemental guidance separating the two, which was used to design the Oak Park system. In short, the change came from the use of an old infographic that was later updated upon the official release of the NACTO document.

Why bike lanes on Harvard Street?

Harvard Street has been proposed to become a bicycle facility since the original bike plan from 2008, where it was shown as a Bicycle Boulevard from Home Avenue to

Lombard Avenue. The next version of the plan was approved in 2015 and extended the proposed length to be from Maple Avenue to Humphrey Avenue.

The reason Harvard was selected as the east-west route through the Village south of I-290 is because it is one of two streets that span the entire Village, it is centrally located and has traffic lights at Oak Park Avenue and Ridgeland Avenue, as well as an all-way stop at East Avenue and Lombard. This makes crossing the major north-south routes safer and more predictable. Harvard also directly touches three parks and two public schools and several other points of interest. To the west, Forest Park has also proposed Harvard as a route on its bike plan.

Does stripping parking and installing a bike lane make the road less safe for both cyclists and pedestrians because studies say cars will go faster?

There is a long-studied correlation between lane-width and driver speed. The existing roadway on Harvard Street is 30 feet wide with no center lane line and intermittent parking. This means that sometimes the road is visually 30 feet wide (15 feet wide if a vehicle stays on one half). The proposed bike lane will have a solid white line five feet off of each curb line, which will narrow the road to two 10-foot wide travel lanes. The end result of the removal of parking is a consistent width that is visually narrower than existing conditions, which should reduce speeds.

Are other Bike Lanes proposed in the short-term plan besides Harvard Street? What about LeMoyne Parkway?

The short-term plan calls for striped bike lanes on Augusta Street from Cuyler Avenue to Harlem Avenue, and protected bike lanes on Chicago Avenue from Ridgeland Avenue to Kenilworth Avenue.

Bike lanes were also considered for LeMoyne Parkway from Woodbine Avenue to Harvey Avenue. The Transportation Commission voted to move forward with a Greenway Treatment on LeMoyne due to its lower traffic volumes. The highest ADTs for LeMoyne are under 1,500 and clustered around Lindberg Park at Marion Street and LeMoyne. ADTs east of Woodbine are between 900 and 1,100 cars per day. This data makes LeMoyne a candidate for Greenway Treatments and traffic calming, which is what the commission voted to move forward with.

What public engagement occurred as part of the development process?

This project started in mid-May 2024 and began seeking public input starting in July 2024. The Village posted information about engagement opportunities via e-news, Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) no fewer the 20 times leading up to the Open House that was held at the Oak Park Public Library on Oct. 24, 2024. Public input was accepted in-person at the Open House and online at www.engageoakpark.com/bike-plan where the public could review drafts of the plan, fill

out a survey and provide comments by placing them on a map. Additionally, public updates were presented to the Transportation Commission in July and October 2024. Taking all the feedback into account and in preparation for presenting to the Transportation Commission again in January 2025, a direct mailer was sent to all properties with frontage on Harvard Street, LeMoyne Parkway and Augusta Street in addition to the Village's broader outreach via its social media channels.

Why did some people get letters and not others?

The properties with frontages where parking would be removed received direct mailings. The meetings were open to the public, but it would not be feasible to invite, for instance, a block on either side of a 1.5-mile improvement to a meeting.

What if I lose parking adjacent to my property because of a bike lane but I need a temporary dumpster or develop a disability that limits my mobility?

Dumpster permits are usually a week or two in duration, and it would be reasonable to issue a permit to block a bike lane with proper signage for this duration. The bike lane would temporarily change to a shared use condition for the area occupied by the dumpster. This permit would go through the Village's standard review and would be looked at individually.

Every application for a reserved parking spot for a person with disabilities is reviewed by the Village on a case-by-case basis. Different from a publicly accessible ADA compliant space which has a legally required design, the reserved spaces are usually sited to address the specific hardship of the applicant. The preference would be to place the spot on the frontage of the home without the bike lane, but barring that it would be possible to place it as necessary and design the bike lane to become a shared condition at that location.

There isn't any issue now or really anyone biking on the street, so why do we need bike lanes?

The latest traffic counts taken on Harvard Street in 2023 show that cyclists represent between 3-5% of the road users on a street with no facilities. In the past 5 years the Village has records of two crashes involving bicycles along this stretch along with many near misses recounted during public comment. This evidence, both hard data and anecdotal, backs up what the design standards are prescribing. Harvard has too much traffic on it to safely be a shared environment. The travel modes need to be separated, which is why the plan calls for a bike lane.

Are students allowed to bike to Lincoln and Irving Elementary Schools?

Currently both schools allow students to bicycle to school.

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What is being proposed on Harvard Street as part of this plan?

The immediate recommendation is for a striped bike lane on Harvard Street from Maple Avenue to Humphrey Avenue. This is a five-foot wide painted bike lane along each curb line consisting of a continuous four-inch stripe defining the boundary between the bike lane and the road with intermittent painted bicycle symbols and green markings at the intersection.

What does the short-term plan cost? What does the long-term plan cost?

The short-term plan, a constrained striped bike lane from Maple Avenue to Humphrey Avenue on Harvard Street, is expected to cost around $150,000 to $160,000. A bike lane is actually less expensive than a greenway due to the signage and traffic calming that goes along with a greenway. The long-term plan of incorporating raised bike lanes is currently estimated at $1.5 million. This cost assumes the road is being fully reconstructed and only encompasses the difference in cost between standard pavement and raised bike lane.

There are short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations? When would they happen?

The short-term recommendations are intended to be designed and installed in the next five years. The Harvard Street bike lane will most likely be installed in 2026 or 2027 if it is approved. The medium- and long-term recommendations will be evaluated as part of the next bike plan update or as part of a larger project in the area only. They are intended to show where the roads are wide enough to install protected bike lanes and where a raised condition would have to be constructed. The medium and long-term recommendations also highlight choke points in the system that will have to be resolved to connect existing bike facilities. There is no commitment to the installation of any medium- or long-term conditions by adopting this plan.

Can you leave parking on one side?

Harvard Street is 30 feet wide from face of curb to face of curb. A one-way bike lane is five feet and a minimum standard drive lane is 10 feet, so two-way vehicular traffic takes up 20 feet and two-way bicycle traffic takes up 10 feet, which is the entire roadway.

Will I lose access to my driveway?

No access will be lost to either driveways or alleys.

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Was Harvard Street's infrastructure formally evaluated for negative safety or livability impacts prior to recommending the striped bike lane?

Removing parked cars clears visibility, making it more likely someone exiting a driveway or alley sees a cyclist, not less. It also clears the sight triangle at the intersections, enhancing visibility of pedestrians from motor vehicles.

Why was the Fillmore Street–Lexington Street Greenway, which preserves parking and provides safe east–west connectivity, removed or deprioritized without public process or technical justification?

The Fillmore-Lexington Greenway was removed because the crossings at Oak Park Avenue and Ridgeland Avenue were unsignalized while signals exist on Harvard Street. The presence of these signals is why the bicycle routing was placed on Harvard in the previous two versions of the Bike Plan. The current version sought alternatives that would reduce parking impacts but discarded them in favor of increased safety at the crossings of these two high volume streets.

If bike safety is the primary justification for removing all on-street parking, how will the proposed design provide actual protection at the locations where most incidents typically occur—namely intersections, alleys and driveways?

A bike lane increases visibility over a shared condition. It also increases predictability in the behavior of both cars and cyclists (i.e. where to watch for both when exiting an alley or approaching an intersection). The bike lane has not been designed yet but will include intersection treatments to enhance safety and mark conflict points.

Were pedestrian sightlines, backing movements or dooring conflicts modeled?

Pedestrian sightlines are improved in the proposed conditions along with vehicular sightlines for backing out of driveways. Dooring risk is completely removed by the removal of parked cars.

What are the next steps for the Bike Plan Update?

After the Public Meetings are concluded, the public comments will be shared with the Village Board and the Draft Bike Plan Update is scheduled for a vote at the July 22, 2025 meeting of the Village Board. If the Plan is adopted the short-term recommendations will be programmed into the 2026-2031 Village Capital Improvement Plan during the fall budget cycle. The improvements will then be designed, bid and constructed systematically over the next five years. Village staff will also utilize the adopted Bike Plan to apply for any applicable grants to help fund implementation of the plan.