

**Village Of Oak Park**  
**Transportation Commission Agenda Item**

**Item Title: A FIRST DISCUSSION ABOUT IMPLEMENTING SLOW STREETS ON RESIDENTIAL STREETS IN OAK PARK FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Review Date: June 9, 2020

Prepared By: Michael Koperniak, Staff Liaison to the Transportation Commission

**Abstract (briefly describe the item being reviewed):**

At its May 18, 2020 meeting, the Village Board of Trustees elected to receive recommendations from the Oak Park Business Recovery Task Force and direct Staff to proceed with specific actions. These recommendations are in response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health pandemic and its effect on the residents and businesses in Oak Park.

Included in these recommendations are actions that would affect parking and traffic in the Village. The Village Board discussed the recommendations and there was a majority consensus to refer parking and traffic related recommendations to the Transportation Commission.

On May 27, 2020, the Bike Walk Oak Park (BWOP) group submitted a Slow Streets Proposal to the Transportation Commission that encompasses the entire Neighborhood Greenways Network system.

**Staff Recommendation(s):**

1. Review the Village Board's meeting.
2. Review the BWOP proposal in order to determine if and how it can be integrated (in part or in its entirety) on residential streets with what the Village Board is asking for.
3. Discuss and possibly determine several pilot locations.
4. Discuss providing adequate public notice and receiving public testimony.
5. Discuss a timeline that includes at least one additional public meeting.

Supporting Documentation Is Attached

# MEMORANDUM

0620-1  
5.2  
1/3

Date: June 9, 2020

To: Transportation Commission

From: Mike Koperniak, Staff Liaison  
Transportation Commission MK

Re: Background information for a first discussion about implementing Slow Streets on residential streets in Oak Park for social distancing

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At its May 18, 2020 meeting, the Village Board of Trustees elected to receive recommendations from the Oak Park Business Recovery Task Force and direct Staff to proceed with specific actions. These recommendations are in response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health pandemic and its effect on the residents and businesses in Oak Park.

Included in these recommendations are actions that would affect parking and traffic in the Village. The Village Board discussed the recommendations and there was a majority consensus to refer residential street parking and traffic related recommendations to the Transportation Commission.

On May 27, 2020, the Bike Walk Oak Park (BWOP) group submitted a Slow Streets Proposal to the Transportation Commission. This proposal encompasses the entire Neighborhood Greenways Network system.

An online version of the July 2015 Neighborhood Greenways System Study & Bike share Feasibility Study can be found at:

<https://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/public-works/2015-07-20-greenways-bike-share-feasibility-study.pdf>

Several goals for tonight's discussion only meeting include:

- Review the Village Board's May 18th meeting minutes in order to ascertain what the Transportation Commission has been tasked with.

- Discuss how Village Staff can implement and enforce whatever actions the Village Board ultimately adopts given the current pandemic.
- Review the BWOP proposal in order to determine if and how it can be integrated (in part or in its entirety) on residential streets with what the Village Board is asking for.
- Discuss and possibly determine several pilot locations.
- Discuss how best to provide public notification regarding the Commission's discussions to residents on affected and adjacent streets and how best to receive public comment.
- Discuss a timeline that includes at least one additional public meeting to receive public testimony.

Exhibits for tonight's discussion only meeting include:

- 5.3 A relevant extract from the May 18, 2020 Village Board meeting minutes.
- 5.4 The BWOP Slow Streets proposal.
- 5.5 Received emailed public comment.

The impetus for tonight's meeting is agenda item M (Motion MOT 20-028) entitled A Motion to Receive Recommendations from the Oak Park Business Recovery Task Force and Direct Staff to Proceed with Specific Actions as included in the Village Board's May 18, 2020 meeting agenda. Exhibit 5.3 is an extract from the meeting minutes related to this agenda item.

The Village Board discussed the taskforce's recommendation regarding the Promenade Concept which entails closing off certain streets for bike and pedestrian only use to allow for socially distanced outdoor activities. The meeting minutes seem to suggest that there was discussion on if the Promenade Concept should be limited to business areas or should it extend to residential areas outside of business districts.

Tonight's meeting is to discuss how to develop and implement a Promenade Concept on residential streets in the Village, outside of the business districts.

In support of the Village Board's actions, the BWOP group has submitted a proposal (Exhibit 5.4) for implementing Slow Streets in Oak Park. This proposal calls for residential streets that are only open to local traffic to enable cycling, walking, and other forms of outdoor exercise (but not congregation) while appropriately social distancing.

Following are several websites related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Slow Streets concept. You can find these and more by using the search terms: covid slow streets.

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-slow-streets>

<https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2020/04/slow-streets-oakland-car-free-roads-pedestrians-covid-19/609961/>

<https://la.streetsblog.org/2020/05/01/l-a-announces-covid-slow-streets-pilot-then-postpones-it-program-needs-focus-on-health-equity/>

<https://www.alamedaca.gov/ALERTS-COVID-19/Slow-Streets-Alameda>

<https://www.sfmta.com/projects/slow-streets-program>

<https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/slow-streets-coronavirus/Content?oid=79539950>

<https://www.boston.gov/transportation/neighborhood-slow-streets>



# Village of Oak Park

123 Madison St  
Oak Park, Illinois 60454  
www.oak-park.il.us

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## Meeting Minutes

### President and Board of Trustees

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Monday, May 18, 2020

6:30 PM

Village Hall

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#### I. Call to Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the Meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

#### II. Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Abu-Taleb, Andrews, Boutet, Buchanan, Moroney, Taglia, and Walker-Peddakotla

**Absent:** 0

#### III. Agenda Approval

Village President Abu-Taleb noted that there was a request to move Item H from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla requested that Item D be moved from Consent to Regular as well. Village Trustee Boutet requested that Item M be discussed prior to Item L. Village President Abu-Taleb dismissed the request to change the order of the Agenda.

**It was moved by Village Trustee Andrews, seconded by Village Trustee Moroney, to approve the Agenda as amended. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

#### IV. Minutes

- A. [MOT 20-027](#) Motion to Approve Minutes from the May 4, 2020 Remote Regular Meeting of the Village Board and the May 11, 2020 Remote Special Meeting of the Village Board.

**It was moved by Village Trustee Moroney, seconded by Village Trustee Andrews, to approve the Minutes. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

#### V. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Chris White, SEIU Local Union 73 Field Organizer, on behalf of Stewards Rachel Nesbitt, Ivory Pearson and Kevin Cassidy. The three stewards asked the Board to invest in their Union staff.

#### VI. Village Manager Reports

- B. [ID 20-136](#) Status Report to the Village Board Regarding the Response to an Emergency Affecting the Public Health Pursuant to Resolution 20-120 Adopted on March 13, 2020 and Extended by Resolutions 20-124 and 20-128 which Continues the Emergency through June 1, 2020

to balance that out.

Village Trustee Buchanan expressed concern regarding potential cuts to Visit Oak Park. She noted that they could be very helpful in regards to business recovery. Village Trustee Boutet agreed.

There was further discussion.

M.

MOT 20-028

**A Motion to Receive Recommendations from the Oak Park Business Recovery Task Force and Direct Staff to Proceed with Specific Actions**

Dr. Mary Ann Bender, President of the OPRF Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Bender hopes the Board will consider the recommendations. She expressed concern that businesses will be unable to obtain proper PPE and hoped the Village could direct them to a source.

Garth Katner. Mr. Katner expressed concern that the Transportation Commission has not met since the Stay at Home Order began. They are essential for developing strategies that promote social distancing and safe transportation for shopping, dining and recreation.

Sylvia Schweri. Ms. Schweri also expressed concern regarding the absence of Transportation Commission meetings, making them unable to meet the transportation needs of Oak Parkers as those needs evolve over the course of the pandemic.

Jenna Holzberg, Franny Ritchie. Ms. Holzberg and Ms. Ritchie also urged Board to allow the Transportation Commission to meet and expressed concern that the Business Recovery Plan is being presented without the commission's expertise.

Rona Taylor. Ms. Taylor encouraged the Village to allow social distanced block parties.

Miranda Johnson. Ms. Johnson noted that more residents are walking, running and biking. She asked that the Board reestablish the Transportation Commission and approve partial street closures to allow space for pedestrians and bikers.

John Fishburn. Mr. Fishburn spoke in support of the Slow Streets Plan.

Judith Alexander. Ms. Alexander urged the Board to consider removing graffiti at no charge for residents and businesses.

Village Trustee Andrews stated that the Business Recovery Task Force has met three times. The task force is made up of a diverse group of business owners, staff members, himself and Village Trustee Boutet. Various entities within Oak Park have been present at these meetings to provide input in order for the task force to arrive at these recommendations. He proposed that the Board go through each item one by one to allow for discussion.

The first category, Parking, contains a recommendation to create a mix of parking specific to the needs of certain areas, such as 15-minute loading zones for businesses with curbside pickup, and to implement permit parking override for service-based companies needing to park on blocks with restricted permit parking.

Village President Abu-Taleb suggested implementing a sunset date for these recommendations. Village Manager Pavlicek commented that staff's recommendation is

to follow the Governor's orders. She noted that daytime parking restrictions are currently not being enforced. Staff is recommending implementation of a pilot program once they go back into effect. There was consensus.

The next category, Right of Way, includes a recommendation to close certain streets at designated times to allow for restaurants and retail to utilize outside space for dining, etc. Village Trustee Buchanan stated that staff advised this cannot happen until Phase 4. She asked for clarification as to why an ordinance is needed. Village Attorney Stephanides stated that anytime parking restrictions are modified in any form, an ordinance is required by State Law. Village Trustee Boutet clarified that the intent of this recommendation was for people who pick up curbside from restaurants be allowed to eat at a picnic table, etc, in the street to provide some semblance of going out to dinner. This can be done prior to Phase 4. She added that staff should work with businesses to be flexible and implement what works for them. Village Trustee Andrews agreed. Village President Abu-Taleb and Village Trustee Moroney expressed concern regarding patrons being hit by a car. Village President Abu-Taleb understands the good intentions, but he does not feel that patrons want to sit at a table in a parking spot or expose their family to that. He would support helping businesses set up shop on sidewalks. In addition, it is not the role of the Board to run businesses. The best thing they can do is support them and is not in favor of closing off any streets. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla agreed with the public comments regarding the Transportation Commission having input. Village Trustee Boutet stated that multiple businesses have discussed these recommendations, not just the task force. There are ways to be helpful now, as many businesses will not last without some type of action at this time. Village Trustee Andrews supports the recommendation, as well as getting the Transportation Commission involved, as long as they can make their recommendations in a timely manner. He expressed concern that they may not hear feedback for over a month. He would prefer that staff be given the latitude to work with businesses. There was consensus to defer this to staff's expertise.

Village Trustee Boutet explained the next recommendation, the Promenade Concept, which would entail closing off certain streets to allow for socially distanced outdoor activities. The Transportation Commission would be helpful in terms of creating a route. Village Trustee Moroney doesn't think this is necessary or germane to this topic. Village Trustee Andrews clarified that the original intent was to close off streets and create a route ending at a business district. Village Trustee Boutet commented that the Village has not done anything for the community in response to COVID-19. Village Trustee Moroney strongly disagreed. Village Trustee Boutet clarified that there is nothing in place for the business community or for any recreation for residents. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla supports the idea, as it creates outdoor space for those who currently don't have it. She also agrees with using the expertise of the Transportation Commission and the Green Ways Plan. Village Trustee Taglia doesn't support this. Aside from the safety issues, this would only be temporary, not to mention that there are parks available for outdoor social distancing. Village Trustee Buchanan supports the recommendation. Village Manager Pavlicek commented that the original proposal, which staff gave their input on, resembled a block party. Village Trustee Andrews acknowledged this, noting that the concept has since changed. There was a majority consensus to refer this to the Transportation Commission.

Village Trustee Andrews discussed the next category, Financial. One of the recommendations was to prorate, defer or waive business license fees, without taking away income from the Village, for those that were closed or cannot afford them. There was consensus. Village Trustee Moroney supported this and suggested this be turned

over to staff to determine which businesses qualify. There was consensus.

The next item in that category is a Loan Guarantee Program for those businesses that cannot get one on their own. Village Trustee Boutet feels it is risky for the Village to guarantee the success of a business. She was more supportive of the Village applying for the revolving loan fund grant through the Federal government to help businesses versus taking this out of the General Fund. Village Trustee Moroney agreed and is not comfortable putting taxpayers in that position. Village Trustee Andrews agreed there is a risk and that it is a complicated issue. If the Village is eligible for the grant, that should be investigated first. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla gave statistics regarding minority-owned businesses in terms of ability to secure a loan conventionally. She supports helping those businesses, despite the risk to the Village. Village Trustee Taglia acknowledged those concerns but didn't think the Board should be taking on that responsibility or saddling a future board with those obligations. Village Trustee Buchanan agreed. There was not consensus with the exception of Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla. There was direction for staff to apply for the grant. There was discussion regarding what to do for businesses using CDBG funding. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that the Village is waiting for information from the Federal Government and cannot move forward until then. .

Village Trustee Andrews stated that the next recommendation in that category is Social Media Advertising, where the Village would match investments made by Oak Park businesses up to a certain amount. Businesses could notify via social media that they are open, etc. Village Trustee Boutet recommends that Visit Oak Park do the marketing and discussed why the Village needs to continue funding them. Village Trustee Andrews disagreed. Visit Oak Park is in the business of tourism. There was discussion. Village Trustee Moroney was not supportive and noted that it would benefit some businesses over others. Village Trustee Buchanan would rather wait to discuss anything that is going to cost money until after the budget discussion. Village Trustees Walker-Peddakotla and Taglia felt that businesses can handle their own advertising. Village President Abu-Taleb commented that he is disappointed in the job that Visit Oak Park is doing. He agreed with Village Trustee Andrews regarding a tourism website marketing businesses. He does not think the Village should spend money on that at this time.

Regarding the next recommendation, Village Trustee Andrews stated that many businesses are having a hard time with procurement of PPE. In addition, the Village has not even completely fulfilled their own needs in regards to supplying PPE to first responders, etc. The task force had an extensive conversation about this, which resulted in the Village agreeing to supply businesses with PPE at cost if they find the opportunity to make large bulk purchases. However, businesses shouldn't rely on this as their only source. Fire Chief Ebsen commented that aside from demand outweighing supply, there are now government restrictions regarding the number of items that can be purchased. Bulk purchases are not possible at this time. Village Trustee Buchanan stated that perhaps the businesses assumed that government entities had knowledge of inside suppliers and they needed to hear that they do not. She is hoping that by the time retail, restaurants, etc. are open, PPE will be more available and that perhaps the Village could refer them to suppliers.

Village Trustee Andrews stated that the next category is Communications. The first recommendation is Funding a Chamber Employee, who can educate businesses about cash flow, marketing, etc. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla supports this. Village Trustee Moroney does not. Village Trustee Andrews commented that he does not support



this either, as much as he supports the Chamber. Village Trustee Taglia was not in favor of this as well. Village Trustee Boutet expressed concern that many of these recommendations are not being supported and asked what the Village is in favor of doing for small businesses. She was in favor of funding an employee for the Chamber. Village Trustee Buchanan and Village President Abu-Taleb were also unsupportive of this initiative. Village Trustee Moroney stated that most business owners just want to be able to open their businesses. In addition, the Village, as a municipality, is limited in what they can do.

The next recommendation is to Boost Consumer Confidence. Village Trustee Andrews believes the Village can have an impact by having staff produce a number of videos that can be broadcast on social media, YouTube, etc., informing the public which businesses are open and how they are keeping customers safe. There was consensus.

The final recommendation is for OPEDC or another entity to Host a Website to inform the public which businesses are open, similar to CarryOutOakPark.com. Village Trustee Andrews noted that traffic to that website has been lackluster and is concerned that if money and time is spent on a website it won't be utilized. Village Trustee Buchanan commented that if the OPEDC wants to do that, she is supportive but noted that most people would go directly to a businesses own website to check if they are open. Village Trustee Boutet agreed and wondered if it would make a difference. She was more in favor of advertising. Village Trustee Andrews suggested a Facebook group. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla spoke about the merits of the Village produced videos. This would provide more outreach and information to the public than a website. There was consensus that creating a website would not be the best use of resources.

**There was consensus to Receive the Recommendations.**

#### N. [ID 20-139](#)

##### **Update on the Farmers Market 2020 Season**

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that Village Trustees Walker-Peddakotla and Boutet had requested that this be on the Agenda.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla stated that at the last Farmers Market Commission meeting, the commissioners expressed concern regarding the lack of volunteers to work the market as well as how social distancing will be enforced. Village Trustee Andrews commented that the Farmers Market runs smoothly by staff every year without the Board's interference and believes this year should be no different. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla noted that this year, the commission was not included in the decision to open the market at the end of May. They are months behind in their work and it is difficult to do all these things that are usually done months in advance, as well as completely revamping the structure of the market, in a couple of weeks. Village Trustee Andrews noted that there has never been a situation where dozens of staff members are being paid but are not able to work on site. He supports the Village Manager's concept of having those staff members work at the Farmers Market instead of hiring additional part-time help solely for the purpose of that. He thinks they should trust staff to get the job done. Village Trustee Taglia commented that this is not a policy item.

Cameron Davis, staff liaison to the Farmers Market Commission, reported that the commission has met twice and have another meeting scheduled for May 27. Staff has collaborated in getting the Farmers Market running. Much progress has been made over the past two weeks and the commissioners have been very involved. Additional progress will be made within the next two weeks. Any problems that may arise will be addressed immediately. SEIU staff members and others are in place to fill the volunteer positions

Proposal to the Village of Oak Park Transportation Commission: Slow Streets for Social Distancing  
May 2020

At the urging of Bike Walk Oak Park (BWOP) and other community allies, the Board of Trustees has voted to re-open the Transportation Commission to enable them to implement Slow Streets in Oak Park, or streets that are only open to local traffic to enable cycling, walking, and other forms of outdoor exercise (but not congregation) while appropriately social distancing.

In implementing Slow Streets, Oak Park would be joining cities around the country and world; some of their methods for ensuring safety have been included below.

BWOP urges the Transportation Commission to consider designating all Village Greenways as Slow Streets until the Reopen Illinois Plan moves into Phase 5. This would create a network of streets that would allow people to travel across Oak Park on foot, bicycle or other non-mechanized transport safely, while social distancing.

BWOP also supports the recommendations made by the Small Business Recovery Task Force regarding amendments to street space in commercial districts. In particular, we support expanding sidewalks via parklets or expanded sidewalks (please see below for illustrative images).

The following pages contain:

- A greenways map (Proposal 1), to indicate which streets will be designated as Slow Streets in BWOP's preferred scheme;
- A second greenways map (Proposal 2) with a subset of greenways designated in purple, to indicate a more modest option should Proposal 1 be untenable;
- Images from other American cities that have implemented Slow Streets, to address questions about what a program might look like
- Design criteria developed by Hammersley Architecture for a Slow Street program in Chicago, which can also be used to guide Oak Park's Slow Streets program

Slow Streets will be delineated in the following ways:

- Temporary signage, similar to that used for block parties, will be set up across one lane of traffic with printed signs stating 'Local Traffic Only' (see attached images)
- Traffic at cross streets will be unchanged
- Local traffic (i.e. residents with driveways, deliveries/mail, etc.) will be permitted
- Congregating on Slow Streets (i.e. block parties or social gatherings) will be discouraged
- Slow Streets will provide paths to help residents meet every day needs and have been chosen because they link to commercial destinations

Please contact the Bike Walk Oak Park Advocacy Team with any questions. We are available for any follow-up or clarifications you would like. Thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,

Jenna Holzberg, [jennajholzbeg@gmail.com](mailto:jennajholzbeg@gmail.com)

Franny C Ritchie, [franny.ritchie@gmail.com](mailto:franny.ritchie@gmail.com)

# Proposal I

## Neighborhood Greenways Network Recommendations

0620-1  
5.4  
2/5

Prepared by Active Transportation Alliance  
Data Sources: Active Transportation Alliance,  
CMAP, Village of Oak Park



Neighborhood Greenways Network

Home Ave. Overpass

Green Line Station

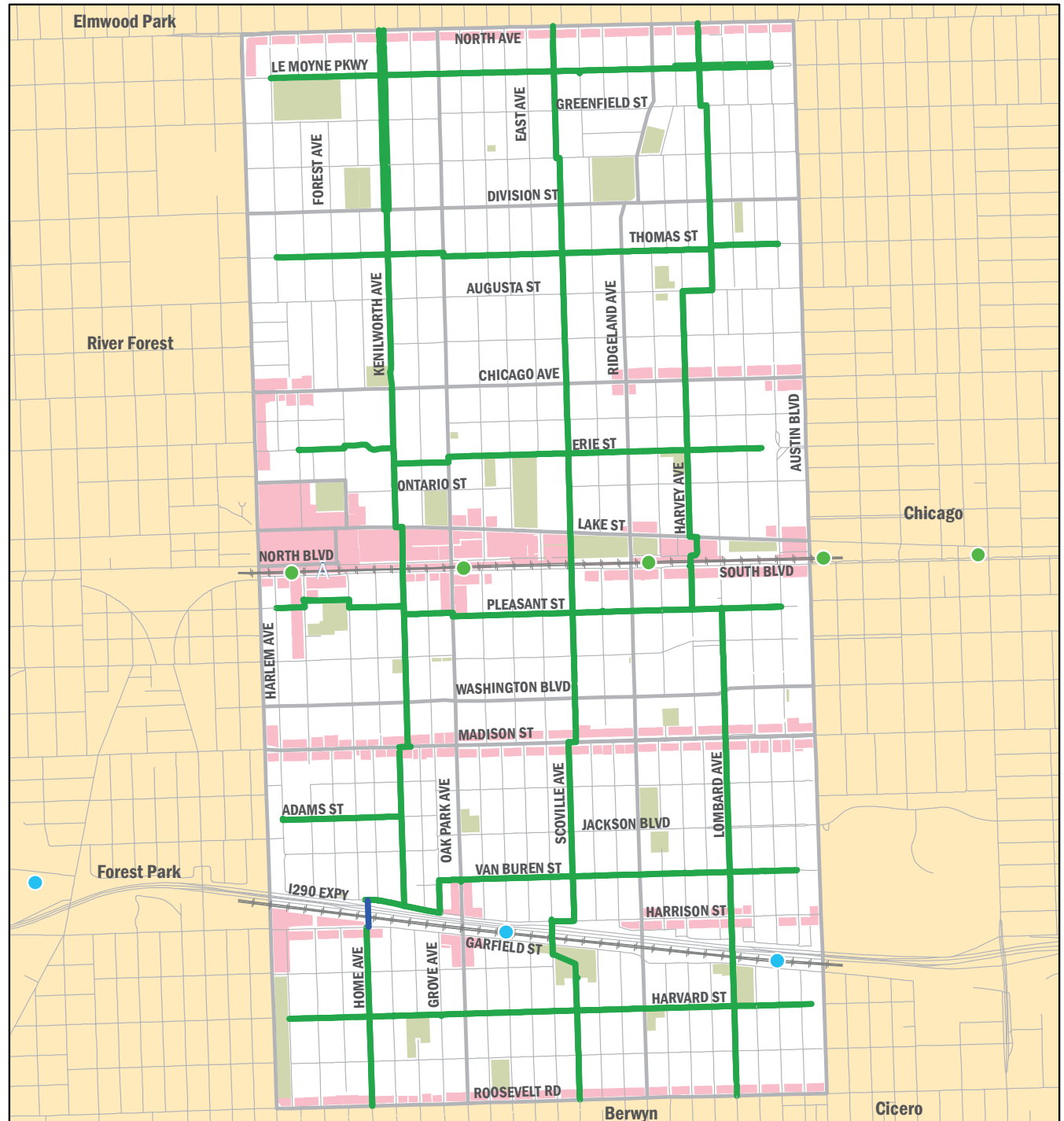
Blue Line Station

Business District

Park

Metra Station

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Miles



# Proposal II

## Neighborhood Greenways Network Recommendations

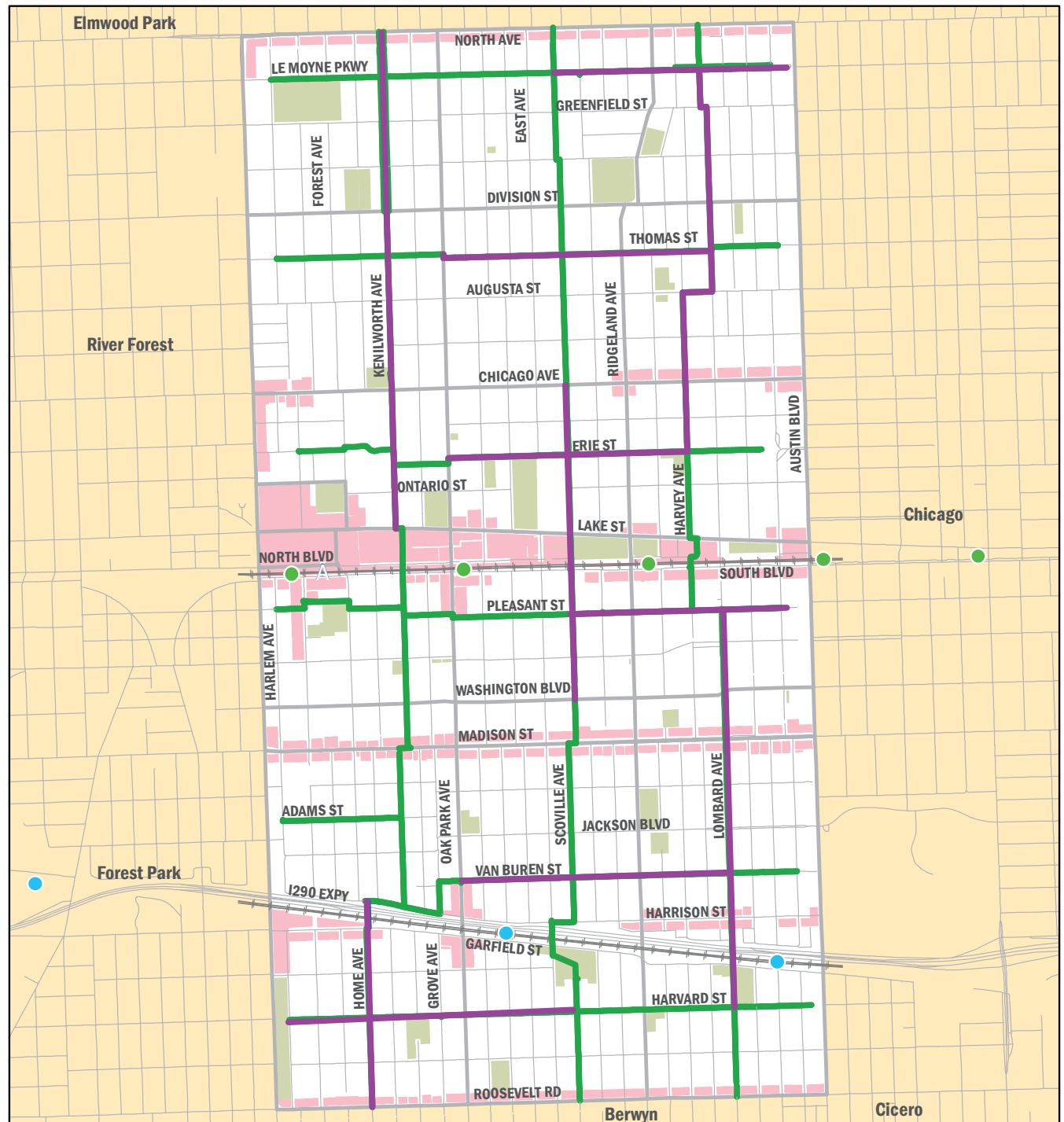
0620-1  
5.4  
3/5

Prepared by Active Transportation Alliance  
Data Sources: Active Transportation Alliance,  
CMAP, Village of Oak Park



- Neighborhood Greenways Network
- Proposed Slow Streets
- Green Line Station
- Blue Line Station
- Business District
- Park
- A Metra Station

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles





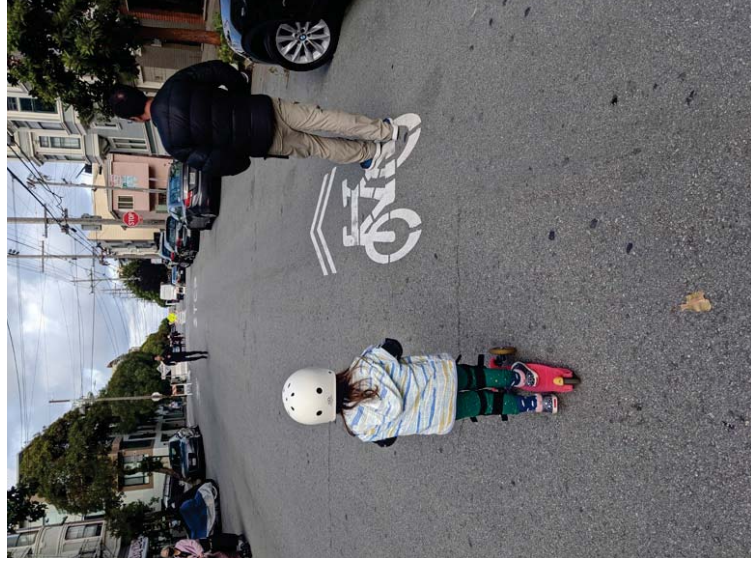
# Slow Streets in Action: Examples From Around the US



Nashville



Los Angeles



San Francisco



San Francisco



Oakland, CA



Greensboro, NC

0620-1  
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# Parklets and Expanded Sidewalks for Social Distancing



National Association for City Transportation Officials



London, UK parklet for social distancing



Sidewalk expansion/parklet, Dallas, TX



Sidewalk expansion, London, UK



Sidewalk expansion, Auckland, NZ



Leeds, UK sidewalk expansion

0620-1  
5.4  
5/5

**From:** [Jenna Holzberg](#)  
**To:** [Koperniak, Mike](#)  
**Cc:** [franny.ritchie@gmail.com](mailto:franny.ritchie@gmail.com); [Ron Burke](#)  
**Subject:** Re: notice of June 9th Trans Com meeting to discuss Slow Streets proposal  
**Date:** Thursday, June 4, 2020 4:36:04 PM

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Hi Mike,

Thank you for these updates! If you are concerned about receiving adequate public testimony, the meeting details can be posted online on various community Facebook pages, with explicit instructions on how to issue a public comment. I agree that this is a proposal that will affect the entire community so people should have a "heads-up" as to what is being discussed. I'll be happy to post and share!

Thanks!  
Jenna