

CAIRO PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DRAFT NOVEMBER 2021



Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the Illinois Public Health Institute in collaboration with partners in the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity

INTRODUCTION

About the Plan

The Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission and Active Transportation Alliance (Active Trans) worked with the City of Cairo in the fall of 2021 to develop a Pedestrian Improvement Plan. The project's intent was to provide the city with a sidewalk network plan that prioritize's the construction of new or re-constructed sidewalks and improved intersections to encourage walking in the area.

About Cairo

The City of Cairo is in the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers in Southern Illinois' Alexander County. With a total of 1,733 (based on ACS 2019 data) residents, the population has been declining for many years. Cairo has also experienced high levels of poverty (34%), high vacancy (52.4%), disability (27.8%), and 89.4% drive alone to work. Yet, the city has access to rail, interstate, and two busy waterways.

The Alexander-Cairo Port has been established and received funding. It is expected to generate an estimated \$300 million in private investment, hundreds of construction-related jobs, and other permanent positions in the transportation field once the port is operating.

Why walkability matters

There is a very high cost, at an estimated \$9,666, to new car ownership. For those that do not have or cannot afford an automobile, there is reduced access to employment and education opportunities. For older adults and people with disabilities there is a lack of mobility. A safe and accessible sidewalk network allows residents to access local resources by reducing the distance needed to travel. Increased activity can also lead to a reduction in chronic diseases.



20% of trips
Are less than 1 mile, which is an easy walking distance for most people



\$1 saves \$3
An American Heart Association study found that every dollar spent on walking or biking paths saves \$3 in medical costs



76%
Of workers 16 years or older drive alone in the U.S. based on ACS estimates



\$9,966
AAA estimated cost of new car ownership

GOALS & PROCESS

The goal of this project was to collect information that would help community leaders prioritize sidewalk improvements that make Cairo streets safer for all residents. Although the City of Cairo does not have immediate funding available to make upgrades, the sidewalk plan can be an instrument to help them identify funding opportunities through federal grants and partnerships with local agencies.

Data Collection

Information on challenges to walking in Cairo was collected through field surveys and resident conversations. The Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission staff conducted an intersection audit and hosted a walkability event.

Due to the numerous gaps in the sidewalk network, rather than conduct a full sidewalk audit, residents were invited to participate in a walkability event. At this event they learned to identify the elements that make sidewalks and intersections safe. They walked a short distance in groups and rated their comfort level. They also had small group discussions where residents identified areas in their community that they need access to and why they may not be inclined to walk to them.

Southern Five staff audited intersections to identify missing elements, such as crosswalks and curb ramps, that would make them unsafe for pedestrians. See the findings for more details.

Walkability Assessment

Based on where local resources are located a study area was identified where specific infrastructure recommendations were identified to improve walkability in the Cairo. See the recommendations for Washington Corridor and City-wide.

Implementation

Potential funding sources were identified that could be used by the city or Southern Five on behalf of the city to implement the plans recommendations for improving walkability. See the implementation section and funding sources for more details.



FINDINGS

Walking along sidewalks is challenging

- Sidewalks are in poor condition, broken or busted with lots of weeds and overgrowth.
- Parts of Main Street lack a buffer between the sidewalks and the road.
- Poor sidewalk conditions put people using wheelchairs in the road, lack of curb ramps makes it difficult to impossible to get into the road.



Crossings are inaccessible and not well-marked

- Lack of accessible crossings
- Very few curb ramps connect to crosswalks
- Very few sidewalks connect to crosswalks
- Crosswalks are not visible when driving in vehicle and are barely visible when walking.
- Some ramps are not wide enough for walkers or wheelchairs
- Washington is difficult to cross without a median or traffic control



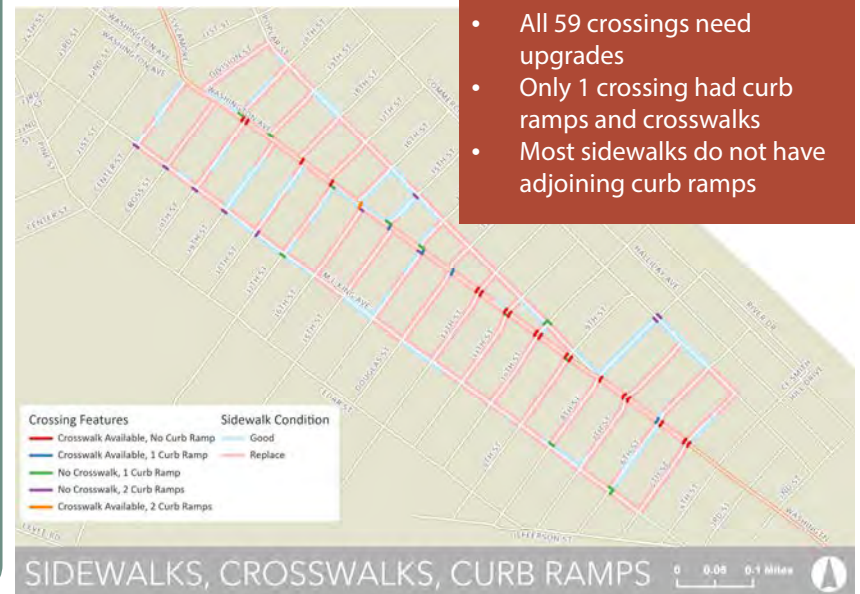
The field survey included an audit of:

- 11.25 miles of sidewalks
- 7.5 miles were in poor condition



There is a disconnect between sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps:

- All 59 crossings need upgrades
- Only 1 crossing had curb ramps and crosswalks
- Most sidewalks do not have adjoining curb ramps

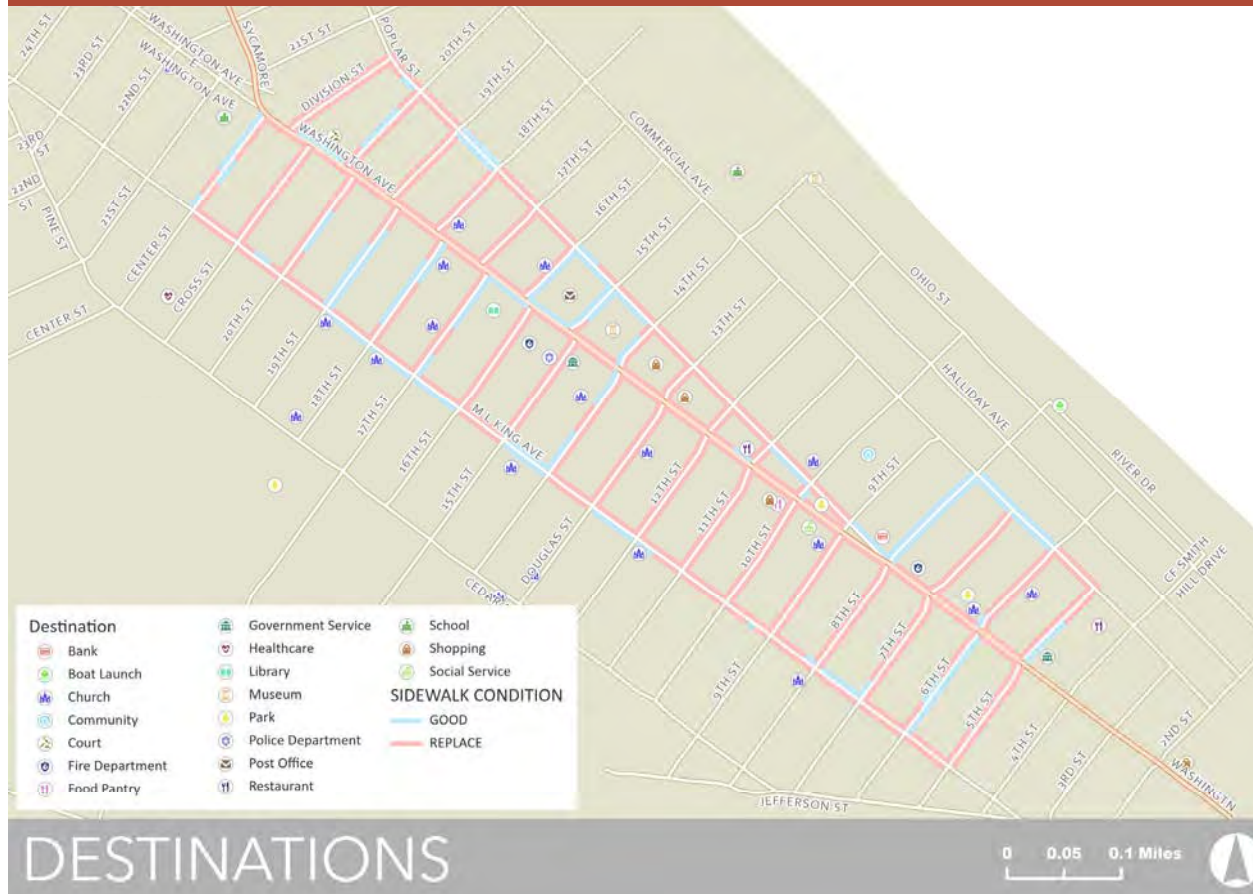


Walking around Cairo is uncomfortable due to a lack of amenities and destinations

- Lack of lighting makes people feel uncomfortable at night
- Unmaintained grass and landscaping block sidewalk access and might attract pests and vermin
- Difficult to navigate community with physical or visual disability, with a stroller, on a bike
- Destinations like Dollar General are difficult to access on foot.
- Barricades at City Hall prevent people from walking through the parking lot, since there are no sidewalks, people walk in the street.
- St. Mary's Park could be improved for walkers with a walking path

There are 37 destinations in the study area:

- Only a few have direct access to a sidewalk.
- None have good sidewalk connections more than a block away.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Washington Corridor



1

Study ways to right-size Washington by installing a center left turn lane and/or medians. Consider adding bike lanes and or parking lanes. See cross section examples.



2

Add pedestrian crossing signs to all Washington crossings to increase driver awareness of pedestrians. Consider installing flashing beacons (RRFBs) at popular crossing locations.



3

Install zebra striped crosswalks, curb ramps, and detectable warning pads at all Washington crossings to increase visibility of pedestrian crossings and make all of them accessible.



4

Reconstruct all sidewalks and create landscaped or paved buffers along Washington to provide a accessible and inviting experience.



5

Install pedestrian scaled lighting on Washington to increase pedestrian visibility at night.



6

Install standard crosswalks, curb ramps, and detectable warning pads on all cross streets.



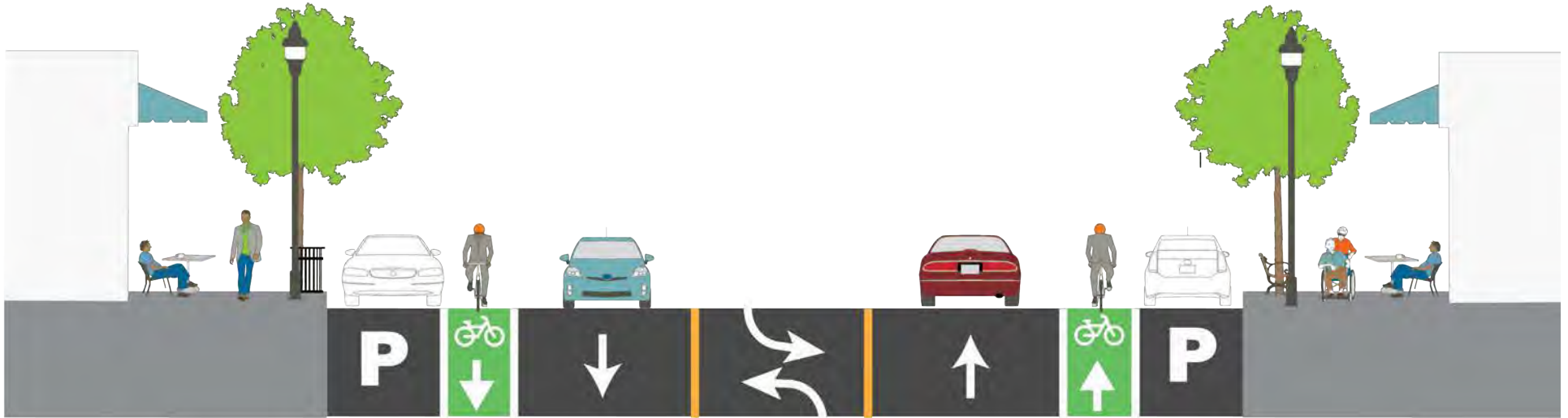
Summary of Recommendations:

- 1. 0.75 mile corridor study/right-sizing project
- 2. 8 crossing signs, 8 warning signs, 1-2 RRFBs
- 3. 16 zebra striped crosswalks, 64 curb ramps
- 4. 1.2 miles of reconstructed sidewalks
- 5. 0.75 miles of street lights
- 6. 16 standard crosswalks, 64 curb ramps

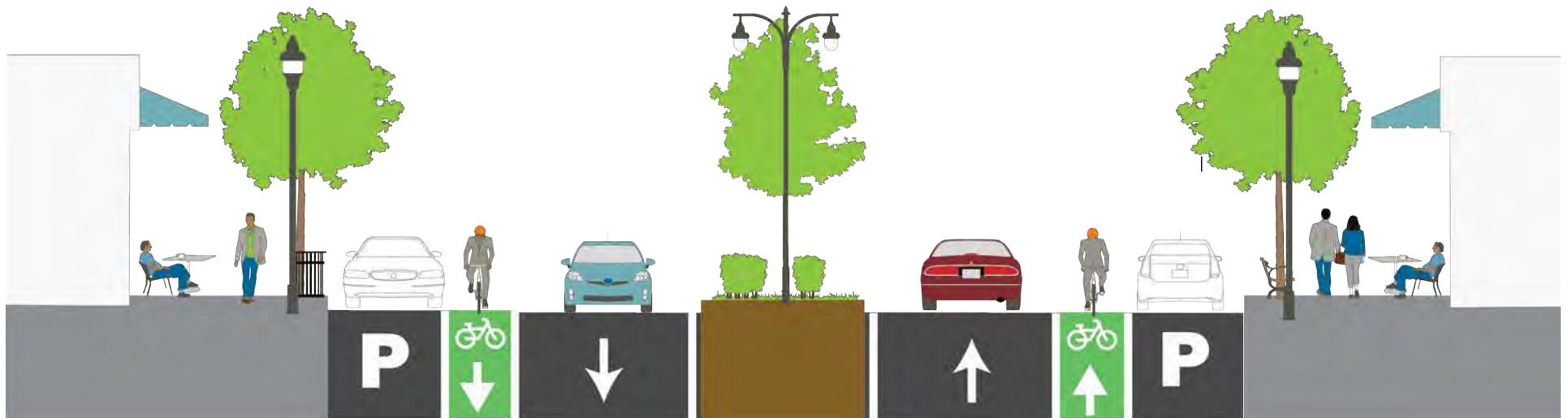
Right-Sizing Washington Avenue

Washington Avenue is a good candidate for a road right-sizing project. Roads with less than 20,000 vehicles per day are often see improved traffic flow and increased safety for all users when travel lanes are replaced by a center left turn lane, medians, parking, and/or bike lanes. Washington is well within the acceptable threshold with fewer than 8,000 vehicles per day. The road has already been right-sized to the north of the study area. Reducing the number of lanes could provide a consistent cross section and more predictability for drivers. Below are a couple of options to consider in a future study.

Concept A: Center Left Turn Lane, Bike Lanes, Parking Lane



Concept B: Center Left Turn Lane, Vehicle Lanes



RECOMMENDATIONS

City-wide



1

Replace all sidewalks with a grass buffer and fill in gaps.



2

Install standard crosswalks, curb ramps, and detectable warning pads.



3

Encourage property owners to maintain landscaping adjacent to sidewalks by trimming trees, mowing, and maintaining sightlines around corners.



4

Educate drivers on the Must Stop for pedestrians law.



5

Create a walking path at St. Mary's Park.



6

Develop a Community Advisory Group to lead and inform implementation of this plan.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Washington Corridor	
Meet with IDOT to discuss options for right-sizing and ADA improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if Washington is included in future plans. • Discuss previous right-sizing project and feasibility south of 21st Street
Seek funding for next steps, including Feasibility Study, engineering, and construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDOT Planning Grant (if feasibility study) • APA Pro Bono Technical Assistance (if feasibility study) • ITEP (if Phase I engineering through construction) • Conduct in conjunction with Port improvements (may be able to pay for engineering and/or construction)
City-wide	
Replace sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may be improved with Port improvements • Apply for SRTS grant for sidewalks within 2-miles of a school
Install crossing upgrades (crosswalks and curb ramps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may be improved with Port improvements • Seek ITEP funding
Encourage property owners to maintain landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund through BRIC • Work with Community Advisory Group • Seek additional funding for support, such as America Walks Community Grant or AARP Communit Challenge Grant
Educate drivers on Must Stop for Pedestrians Law	
Create a walking path at St. Mary's Park	
Develop a Community Advisory Group	

FUNDING SOURCES

Grant Type	Grant Name	Program Administrator	Description	Funding Cycle	Call for Proposals (typically)	Local Match
Private	Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund	Rails to Trails	For building and improving multi-use trails	Annual	Fall/Winter	None
Private	AARP Community Challenge Grant	AARP	Fund projects that help communities become great places to live for residents of all ages.	Annual	February	None
Private	America Walks Community Change Grant	America Walks	\$1,500 community stipends for walking projects related to creating healthy, active, and engaged places to live, work, and play.	Annual	Summer/Fall	None
Private	APA-IL Pro Bono Planning Service Program	APA IL	To assist in the initiation, organizing, and fine tuning of early stage planning projects	Annual	February	None
Private	Action for Healthy Schools Grant	Action for Health Schools	Funding for schools and parent-led groups to improve or introduce new nutrition and physical activity programs	Annual	February	None
Federal	Transportation Enhancements (ITEP)	IDOT	Funding for community based projects that expand travel choices	Every 2 years	Fall (odd years)	20% to 50%, 0% or 10% for underserved communities
Federal	Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	IDOT	Funds that enable and encourage children to walk and bike to school	TBD - 2019 awards announced in March	Fall (even years)	20%
Federal	Highway Safety Grant Program (Section 402)	IDOT	Seed funding for ongoing projects. Injury Prevention Program funds program that improve driver behavior and reduce deaths from motor vehicles.	Annual	Winter	None

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Grant Type	Grant Name	Program Administrator	Description	Funding Cycle	Call for Proposals (typically)	Local Match
Federal	Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	IDOT	Fund highway infrastructure safety projects aimed at reducing fatalities/serious injuries	Annual	Spring	10%
Federal	Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	IDNR	Funds for recreational trails and bike paths	Annual	January	20% to 50%
Federal	Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program	IDNR	Funds for bike trail enhancement and development	Annual	January	20%
Federal	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Counties	Funds community development programs that expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons	Annual	Varies	None
Federal	National Parks Service	NPS	Technical assistance work for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects	Annual	Spring	None
State	Illinois Catalog of State Financial Assistance	State	Directory of available grants in Illinois	NA	NA	NA