

# Wheaton Park District Draft Bikeway Plan Update



May 2007



## ***Summary***

Whether it is for recreation or increasingly a means of alternative transportation, bike travel is an important factor to be considered in a community's plan. The Wheaton Park District, in cooperation with the City of Wheaton, seeks to create a Bikeway Plan that is safe and easy for residents and visitors to use.

Wheaton is fortunate to have an existing system of sidewalks and paths allowing for pedestrian and bike traffic throughout most of the City. Most City streets have sidewalks and new walks are systematically being added to certain areas where they do not exist. Wheaton is also fortunate to be at the center of the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP), which is a regional trail connecting Wheaton to a number of other communities in DuPage, Kane and Cook counties. The path contains three spurs that converge in Wheaton and are accessible to much of the community. Additionally there are pathways in many of the parks and forest preserves in Wheaton. The goal of this plan update is to create clearer links between these systems and enhance the overall safety of bike and pedestrian travel within Wheaton. The update also coincides with an effort by DuPage County to incorporate information from all the various municipalities in the County into their countywide plan.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey, 40% of all trips in the car are less than two miles and 27% are less than a mile. The short distances for many can easily be traveled by biking if the route is safe and convenient, which makes bikes a viable form of clean, healthy alternative transportation.

## ***Better Connection***

Wheaton has an excellent foundation for a comprehensive bikeway plan. Approximately 85 percent of city streets include sidewalks. There are approximately 30 miles of paths and signed bike routes within Wheaton. It is important that the connections between these segments are seamless and safe.

Designated bike routes and bike lanes could be used to make these connections. Parks can then be connected to one another and with the IPP. Citizens can be connected with destination spots (shopping, cultural, fitness, Metra etc.) in Wheaton. Students can be better connected with their schools, and some employees may be better connected to their place of work. A bikeway plan would allow communities that border Wheaton to easily connect their bikeway plans to Wheaton's.

## ***Clearer Direction***

Navigating Wheaton by bicycle or on foot can be tricky for a person who is unfamiliar with an area. Bike route signs can direct users to appropriate crossing for a busy street or lead the way to a park or any other destination. Bike route signs and bike lanes make drivers more aware of when to expect bike traffic. The bikeway map can be posted on websites, in the brochure or other key locations to encourage more people to bike and walk to various destinations.

### ***Health Benefits***

Better connection and clearer direction naturally lead to the promotion of health and safety. According to a 2006 report by US Department of Health and Human Services, 60 percent of the adult population in Illinois is considered overweight or obese. This leads to a myriad of other problems.

In addition to the health benefits from exercise, biking can improve health by reducing traffic congestion and air pollution. With a well-designed and easy to use bikeway route, people would be encouraged to consider the healthier option allowing their children to ride to school, or potentially commute to work.

### ***Safer Roads***

According to the Illinois Rules of the Road, bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other roadway users. Bicyclists are prohibited on limited-access highways, expressways and certain other marked roadways. Bicyclists are expected to observe all traffic laws, just as any other vehicle would, and can be ticketed for disobeying these laws. Therefore a bikeway plan is **not** intended to dramatically change the way a particular street should already function. Instead a bikeway plan is intended to enhance the safety for both the bikes and the vehicles that are already permitted to use the road by designating the existing spaces on the roads. Some improvements such as striped bike lanes can make a wide road “feel” narrower, resulting in reduced speeds. This sort of “traffic calming” has been quite effective in creating safer roads.

Butterfield, Naperville and Roosevelt Roads within Wheaton can be intimidating and potentially unsafe to cross. A bike route can direct people to cross at a safe location such as a stoplight. Striped bike lanes help designate a safe place to ride a bike, and bike route signs remind drivers to look out for bikes.

### ***Improvements Needed***

Three types of improvements are categorized in the bike plan: bike lanes, bike routes, and side paths. In most cases the Bikeway plan does not require significant or costly changes to the existing roadway. For the most part the Bikeway plan works with the existing road width, and most of the cost would simply be for striping and for signage.

The following recommendations for improvements have been made based on a visual analysis of the existing conditions. A more detailed analysis that considers variables such as traffic volume, parking restrictions, and speed limits will be required to finalize these recommendations. The League of Illinois Bicyclist (LIB) has created an online tool called Bike Level of Service (BLOS) that may assist in this task

Side paths would be the most significant change and the most costly to construct. Therefore they are recommended only in the most extreme cases, such as streets with a high volume of traffic or posted speed limits in excess of 40 MPH.

All Bikeway facilities should be designed and built to conform with the latest American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the

Development of Bicycle Facilities. All new signage should conform to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

***Proposed Bike Lanes*** (See Figure 1)

A bike lane is a lane striped, marked and signed lane reserved for bikes (with the exception of right turns at intersections). A bike lane requires a minimum of 5 feet and a maximum of 5½ feet, in each direction in addition to the lane width required for vehicle traffic. Bike lanes follow the same direction as vehicle traffic and are located on the right side of the road. No parking is allowed in a bike lane.

The Bikeway Plan includes the following bike lanes:

*Proposed:*

- 22<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Alchester
- Appleby
- Arrowhead
- Blanchard
- Bradford
- Briarcliffe Blvd.
- Brighton
- Childs
- Commerce
- Community
- Creekside
- Cromwell
- Durfee
- East Loop
- Farnham
- Gary
- Harrison
- Hill
- Hull
- Jewell
- Liberty
- Longfellow
- Lorraine
- Prairie
- President
- Scottdale
- West
- West Loop
- Wiesbrook

***Proposed Bike Routes*** (See Figure 2)

Some roads are not wide enough to accommodate or do not have enough traffic to warrant a designated bike lane and therefore are simply signed as a bike route. A bike route shares a lane of traffic in each direction with vehicle traffic. A shared lane arrow called a “sharrow” can be added for greater visibility and to help bicyclist with correct lane position. The sharrow is currently being considered by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD), but has not been added to MUTCD yet. Generally bike routes occur on low speed residential streets. It is preferred that no parking be allowed along bike routes because an opening car door can cause a hazardous situation for bikes.

The Bikeway Plan includes the following bike routes:

*Existing:*

- Cadillac
- College
- Franklin
- Parkway
- Stoddard
- Washington
- Webster
- West

*Proposed:*

- Arbor
- Aurora Way
- Bridle
- Burning Trail
- Chase
- Cole
- Dawes
- Dorset
- Elm
- Gables
- Hawthone
- Hazelton
- Herrick Dr.
- Illinois
- Jerome
- Lincoln
- Main
- Mayo
- Morse
- Pleasant Hill
- Scott
- Spring Green
- Stonebridge
- Thomas
- Thompson
- Wadsworth
- Washington
- Wexford
- Willow

***Side Paths*** (See Figure 3)

A side path is located off the road either in the road right-of-way or where no road exists such as in a park. Side paths should be a minimum of 8 feet wide to allow for traffic in both directions. A width of 10 feet is preferred where traffic is heavier, and/or where pedestrian use is also anticipated.

The path can be constructed with a variety of surface materials including: concrete, asphalt, and limestone screenings. Wood chips have been used in some environmentally sensitive areas such as Lincoln Marsh, but this surface is not optimal for bike traffic. Where side paths cross roads curb ramps, striped cross walks, and bike-crossing signs will need to be installed.

The Bikeway Plan includes the following side paths:

*Existing:*

- All existing paths with in the parks and forest preserves
- Loretto
- Orchard (Toohey Park)
- The Prairie Path

*Proposed:*

- Butterfield
- Leask
- Manchester
- Naperville
- Orchard

### ***Implementation***

The roads included in the Bikeway Plan fall under the jurisdiction of several other agencies including: The City of Wheaton, Milton Township, DuPage Division of Transportation, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (though the majority fall under the City of Wheaton). The Park District would need to work in cooperation with these other agencies in order for the Bikeway Plan to be completed. It is ideal to have all agencies involved adopt this plan.

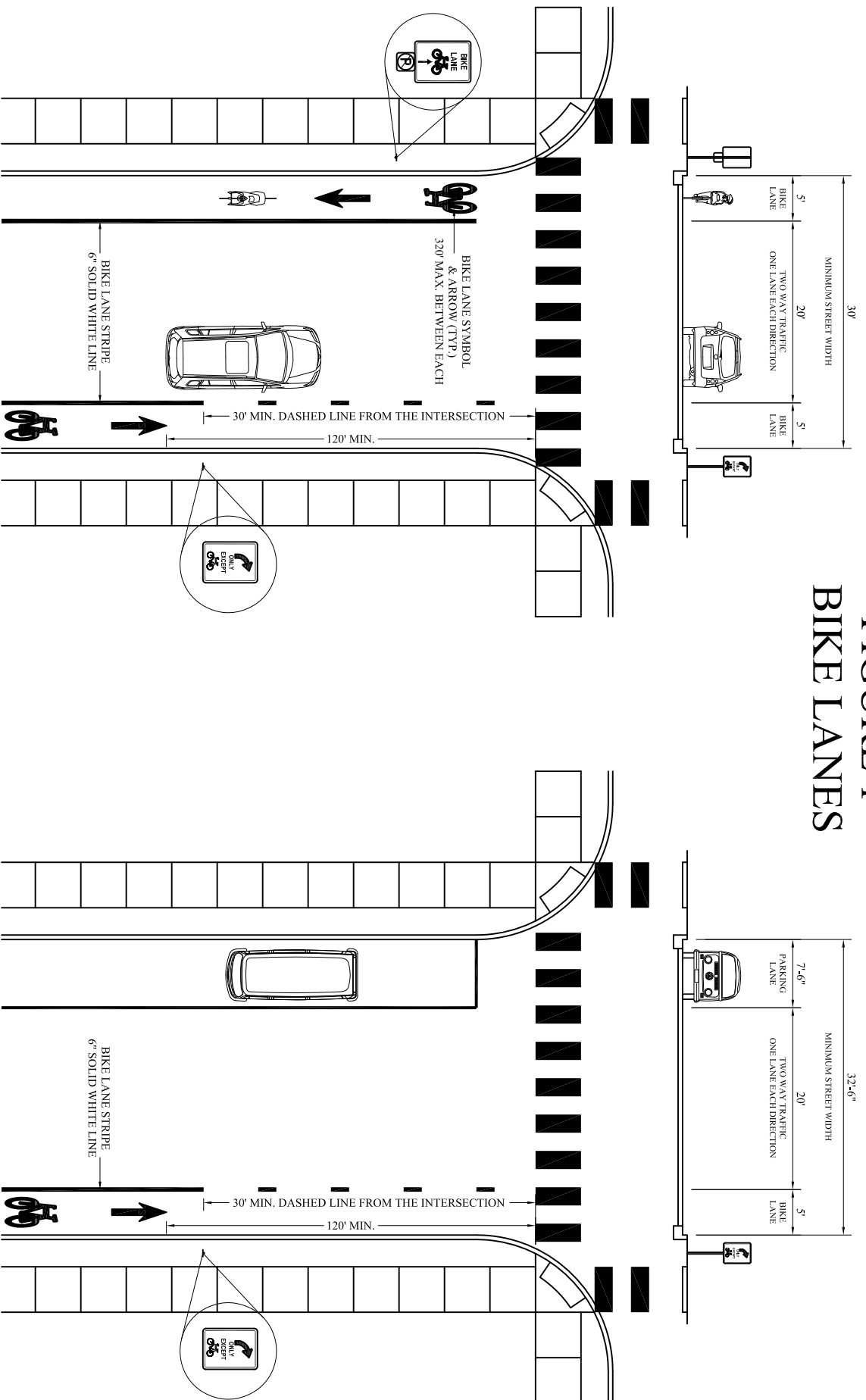
It is also recommended the plan be made available for public comment. It could also be presented to special interest groups in order to solicit feedback. DuPage County is updating its own bikeway plan and as part of that process neighboring communities will be asked to coordinate efforts so that bikeways connect throughout the entire county.

### ***Funding***

There are many aspects of this plan such as signage and striping that are relatively low cost and can hopefully be absorbed in existing operating budgets. Larger expenses such as street improvements and new side paths will need to be budgeted. We should seek to maximize the impact of local dollars by leveraging grants that can provide state and/ or federal funding.

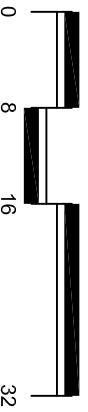
The Park District is currently working with School District 200 and the City of Wheaton to investigate a grant administered by IDOT called Safe Routes to School. Portions of the Bikeway plan could be incorporated into an application. Having an official Bikeway plan will make the application for similar grants easier to apply for as well.

# FIGURE 1 BIKE LANES

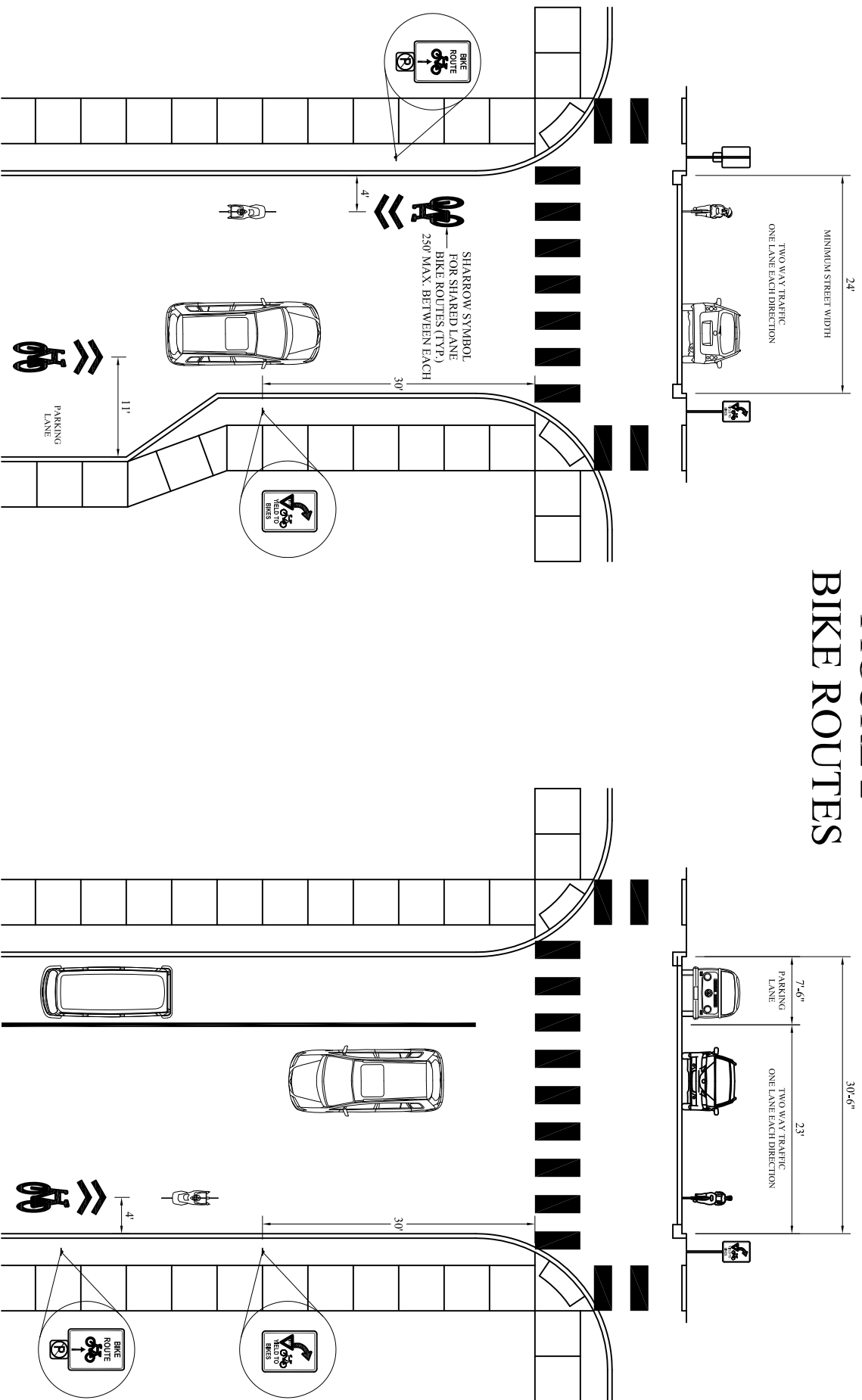


BIKE LANES TWO WAYS  
NO PARKING

BIKE LANE ONE WAY  
PARKING ONE SIDE

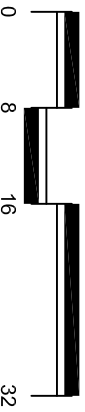


# FIGURE 2 BIKE ROUTES



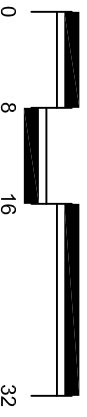
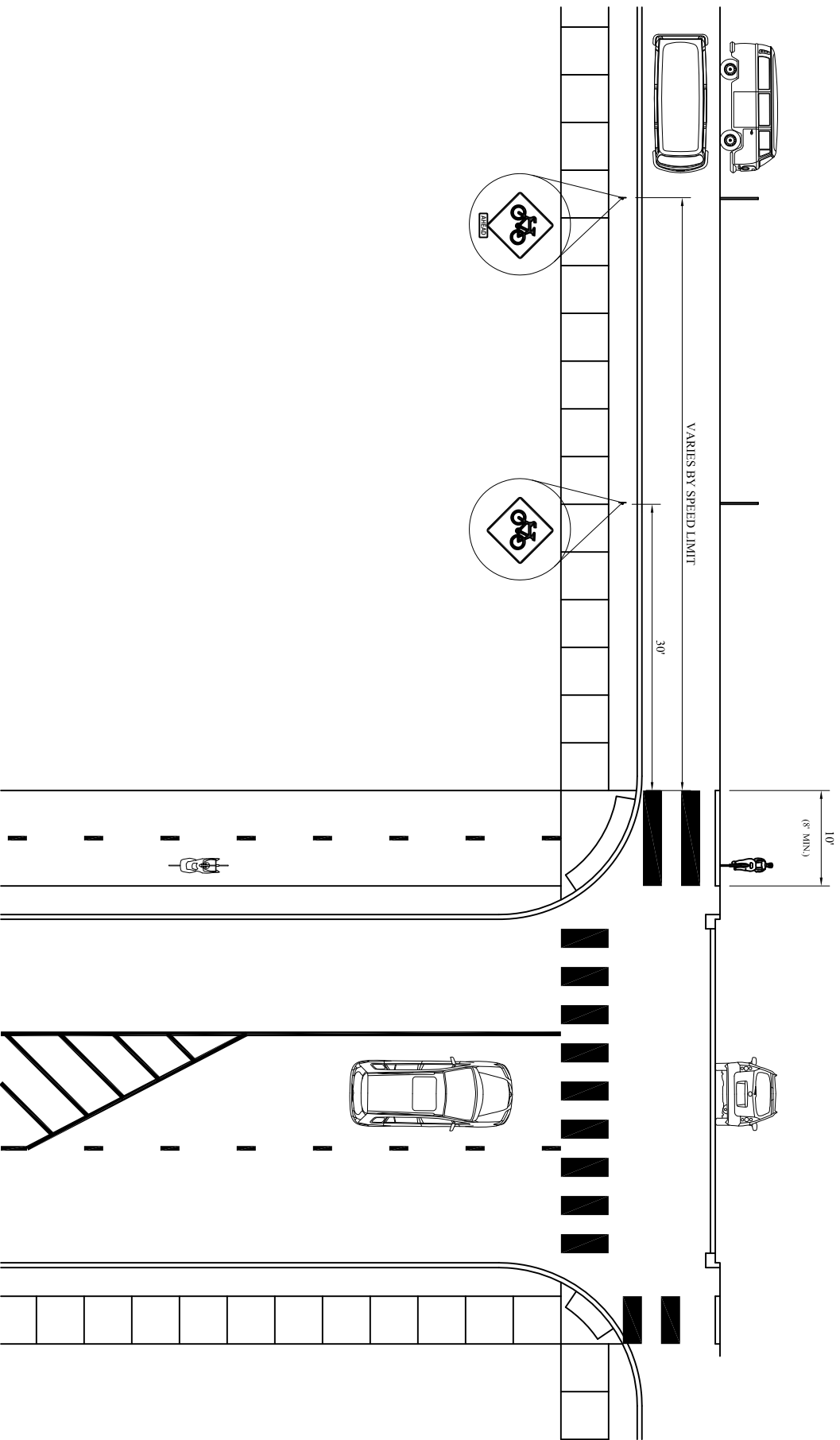
BIKE ROUTE TWO WAYS  
NO PARKING PREFERRED

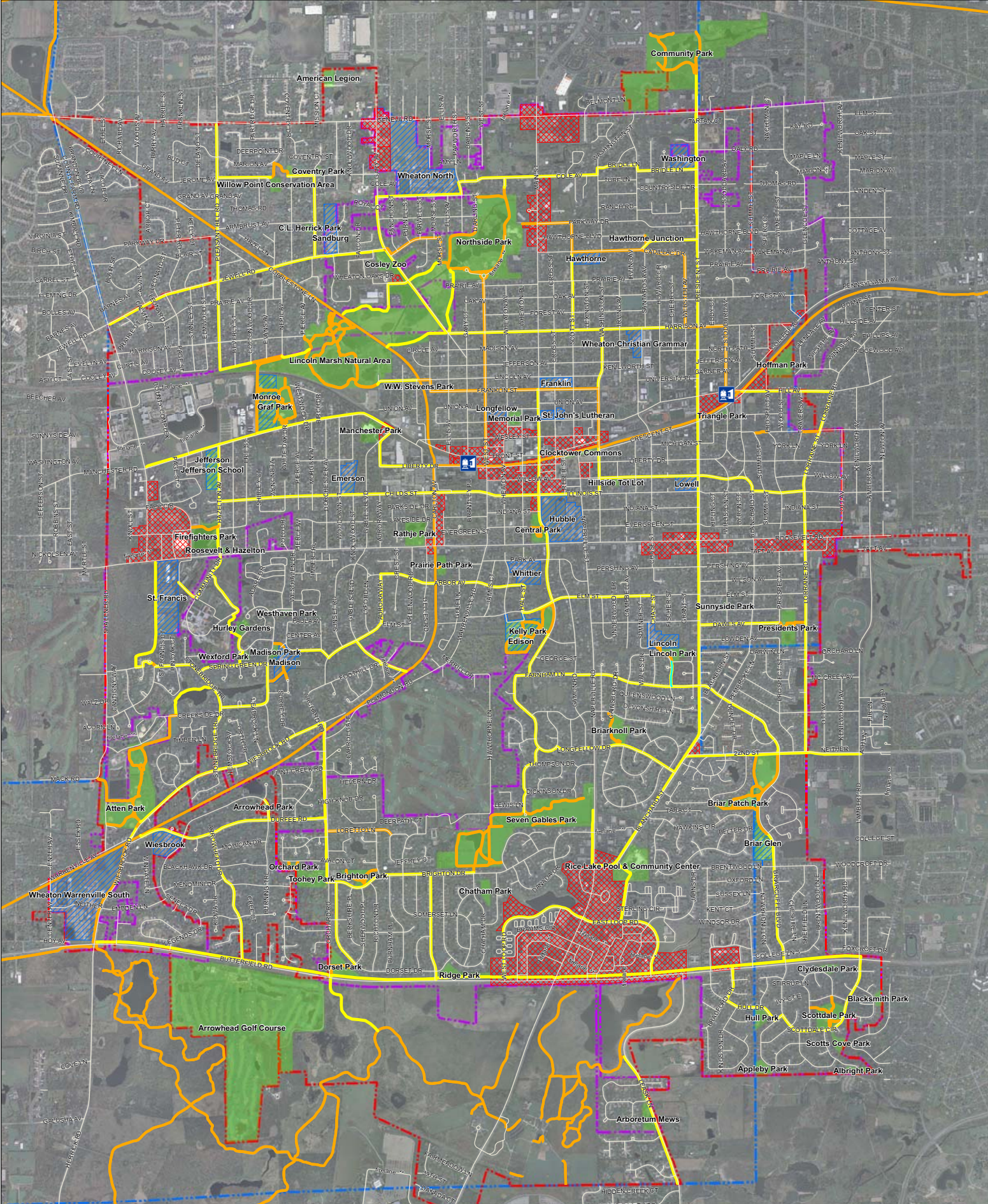
BIKE ROUTE ONE WAY  
PARKING ONE SIDE





# FIGURE 3 SIDE PATHS





## Wheaton Park District 2007 Draft Bikeway & Pedestrian Plan

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**Legend**

- Existing Bikeways & Trails
- Planned Bikeways & Trails
- Proposed Bikeways & Trails
- Schools
- Parks
- Main District Boundaries
- City Limits
- Grand 200 Boundaries

