



CITY OF OTHELLO PLANNING COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting
500 E. Main St.
January 17, 2023
6:00 PM**

For those who would like to attend remotely, see virtual instructions at the end of the agenda

1. Call to Order - Roll Call
2. Public Input
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. November 21, 2022 p.3
 - b. December 19, 2022 p.8
4. Active Transportation Plan – Review Draft p.12
5. Economic Development/Local Improvement Districts/Tax Increment Financing – Informational p.71
6. December Building & Planning Department Report p.73
7. Upcoming Meeting Topics
 - a. **February 21:** Active Transportation Plan public hearing, recommend to Council. Discuss Fence code and Landscaping code.
8. Old Business
 - a. Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) – Council continued the public hearing to Jan. 23
 - b. Subdivision Update – OMC Title 16 – This should be the next big project for the Commission
 - c. Zoning Update – Home Occupations – OMC 17.59 – We will come back to this as time allows
 - d. Housing/ADUs

Next Regular Meeting is Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Remote Meeting Instructions:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81894213261?pwd=MjMwZ01Ubmdaai8xdlFua0dvd3dMUT09>

Meeting ID: 818 9421 3261

Passcode: 357731

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City of Othello
Planning Commission
November 21, 2022
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Dorow called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Chris Dorow, Brian Gentry, Alma Carmona, and Daniela Voorhies

Absent: Kevin Gilbert

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning, Building and Planning Secretary Zuleica Morfin

Attendees: Sandi Duffey (Adams County Emergency Management). Bob Carlson attended remotely.

This was a hybrid meeting with Zoom available for remote attendees.

MINUTES APPROVAL

October 17, 2022 minutes were discussed. Chair Dorow noted that the second page, last bullet had a typo: "They liked to idea" should be "They liked *that* idea". Approved with that correction.

M/S Carmona/ Gentry

SAND HILL ESTATES #5 PRELIMINARY PLAT DEFERRAL/DEVIATION/WAIVER REQUESTS

Palos Verdes LLC has applied for the next phase of the Sand Hill Estates development north of Olympia Street. This phase includes some requests for deviations and deferrals of street and utility standards. OMC 16.40 sets up the process to deviate from standards and defer improvements. Community Development Director Anne Henning explained the four requests:

1. Sewer main offset from centerline, and sewer manholes offset from the center of the street. This request is necessary because it conflicts with the requirement that monuments be set at the centerline of intersections. Staff's determination is that monuments on centerlines are more important than manholes on centerlines.
2. Gravel temporary turnaround at the end of Mt. Si (Mt. Lago) St. The gravel turnaround will be removed and the street continued in a future phase. This is a standard way to address a street continuation. Staff recommends an easement for the turnaround and a covenant for permanent improvements if the street is not continued within 5 years.
3. 60' ROW for Cascade St, 13th Ave, & Mt. Si (Mt. Lago) St. based on Othello recently reducing the requirement for the constructed width of the street, leaving an extra 3' of undeveloped ROW on each side of the street. There is no need for the extra 6' of ROW. When the code is updated, this requirement will be corrected.
4. No sidewalk on east (canal) side of 14th Ave. The developer did not specifically ask for this waiver, but the submitted plans do not show sidewalk on the far side of 14th. This request has been made and granted in earlier phases of the development, based on no sidewalk being needed since there are no lots or other destinations on the east side of the street, only the canal abutting the street.

Engineering and Planning staff are in agreement that the requests are acceptable and recommend approval. Similar requests were approved for previous phases of the development.

Action: Motion to recommend to the Hearing Examiner to approve the deferrals, deviations, and waivers as recommended by staff. M/S Carmona/ Voorhies. Approved 4-0

MULTI-FAMILY TAX EXEMPTION (MFTE) PROGRAM - REVIEW DRAFT ORDINANCE

The City received a grant from the Department of Commerce to work toward implementing the adopted Housing Action Plan. We are using the grant to explore implementing the state's Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program. The Commission reviewed the draft MFTE ordinance prepared by the consultant. The Commissioners asked whether other taxing districts would be affected if Othello decided to adopt this program. Ms. Henning explained that the tax exemption would apply to all property taxes, such as school, hospital, library, EMS, etc. It would not apply to assessment, such as mosquito or weed assessment. Chair Dorow asked if we are required to do a stakeholder meeting or if that would be part of the public hearing process. Ms. Henning said she and the Mayor are working on a letter to the taxing districts, explaining the proposal and inviting them to participate in the process. She said they would emphasize the desperate need for housing, and explain that the districts wouldn't be losing money, they would be foregoing future taxes. It's not a tax cut, it's not getting taxes on new development. Without the MFTE program, the development may not happen at all. Chair Dorow noted that this program is an investment in the future.

Commissioner Alma Carmona asked about the timeframe to complete a project. Could someone start and keep the tax exemption for 20 years and then do a project? Or develop very slowly and not be taxed the whole time? Ms. Henning explained that there would be a contract between the City and the developer. The ordinance allows 3 years to complete the project, with a 2-year extension possible under certain conditions. Then each year of the project, the owner has to submit documentation that they continue to meet the requirements. If they no longer qualify, then full taxes start to be due.

There were some specific points in the draft ordinance where the consultant asked for input:

1. 3.40.070 Application Review sets the process for who formally determines whether applications should be approved. Since an application either meets the criteria or it doesn't, the draft ordinance has staff doing the approval, rather than requiring Council approval for a decision with no discretion involved. The Commission agreed it would be a waste of everyone's time to require a Council approval process when the criteria are so clear.
2. 3.40.050(h) provides an optional clause to discontinue the program after a certain number of units and/or a set time frame. Commissioners agreed they liked having a number of units rather than a sunset date but were uncertain about the number to set it at. After discussion, they settled on 800 units, to try to meet about half of the current need without foregoing more tax revenue than necessary. They noted that the ordinance could be changed at any time to increase or decrease this number, depending on how the program goes.
3. 3.40.100(5) provides an optional clause to cancel the tax exemption if the property owner fails to submit the required annual certification. The Commission was in favor of this provision.

Sandi Duffey, Adams County Emergency Management Director, asked where the new housing would be located. She noted that the city is packed pretty tightly. Chair Dorow pointed out the maps with the target areas outline in red. He noted that there is land suitably zoned for multi-family but that has just been sitting vacant, such as around Walmart, on 1st Avenue near Mi Carniceria, and between Terra Gold and Sage Hill Veterinary Clinic. Maybe with an incentive such as the MFTE program these areas would be developed with new units. Ms. Duffey questioned whether it was appropriate to encourage multi-family housing across the street from the industrial areas with their anhydrous ammonia. Chair Dorow said that the area that is considered "at-risk" is most of the city, so the same evacuation plan that would happen

right across the street from industrial would also happen at his house. Ms. Duffey stated she wasn't in Othello when all the industry was being built and increased in size. She said there is a company that has trimethylamine, which is really bad, worse than anhydrous ammonia. It comes on the rail line by tankers. She has concerns. Some plants have had chemical releases. Accidents happen. She mentioned that this was the first year Adams County Emergency Management participated in the Fair, trying to get information out so the community could plan for themselves and be prepared. If you don't know what you don't know, how can you know how to be prepared? Chair Dorow said that Ms. Duffey is bringing up a discussion the Commission has on a regular basis: Providing a buffer between industrial facilities, the type of facilities and what should be required, and how close should they be allowed. It brought up the question of how close is that housing development to our industry? The Commission takes this very seriously. The thing that becomes problematic with some of the chemicals is prevailing winds and speed. When the Commission reviewed these concerns is when they learned that the whole city is within about the same level of concern. Unfortunately, we can't undo some of the things that are there but we can prepare and use mitigation. It would be nice to be able to have a city park as a buffer, but we can't do that when we have emergency concerns for housing. Othello is also somewhat landlocked and limited in where it can grow. Ms. Duffey said she understands: It took her over a year to find a place to live in town. Now she drives past the industrial area every day and thinks about this issue all the time. Chair Dorow mentioned that mitigation strategies are problematic. Ms. Duffey said the half-mile radius takes in most of the city, but it depends on the wind status and speed, the temperature, and the specific chemicals. Anhydrous ammonia likes to be cold so it has a tendency to want to go up into the atmosphere which is helpful to some degree so it doesn't spread out over the ground. Ms. Duffey mentioned that now that she lives in town, she is better able to attend meetings such as this. Adams County has a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) based on industries that have hazardous chemicals. They meet every other month. Participation from the local entities and businesses that carry the hazardous materials is fairly good. There is one business that she has concerns with which hasn't participated yet, and records show over 7 million pounds of chemicals in the last year, which was trucked up Highway 17 to an industry in Moses Lake. That means a lot of the chemical was stored in Othello each month. She doesn't know if it was a fluke that so much was used in one year. The other part the LEPC is working on is a strategic group that plans what to present at meetings. The first topic is how do they want to approach the Tier 2 reporters that should be participating and start that conversation because they do need to be there. Also how to get the industry partners to talk to them about their emergency plans. The emergency will be over before the responders can get there. It has been difficult to get them to share their plans. She doesn't need trade secrets about how they make their products, she just needs to know: If they have an emergency, what are they going to do?

Chair Dorow said that the City looks at buffering and how the land is used. One of the biggest challenges we are facing is being landlocked with a 1500-unit deficit. That becomes a problem too. He said the Commission's radar went up when they saw the maps. Ms. Duffey asked if the city has ever considered going across Highway 17 further east? Chair Dorow said there is a lot of land in between and up to Hwy 17 that hasn't been utilized. It all comes down to availability of land, demand and need, and then process. He continually looks at this himself. At a time of emergency, do we have the right process to protect people but also maximize opportunity for situations? He thinks all of us would like to move toward Hwy 17. When you have Walmart on one side, it would be nice to have something on the other side. But we have to wait for that opportunity to arise. With programs like MFTE, we can be a little more strategic with where we place some of this stuff so we can help move people into that direction. Ms. Duffey agreed that Othello needs more housing, and more shopping. She spends time in Grant County and Soap Lake and tends to do her shopping there, which she doesn't like to have to do. She feels it is important to contribute

to the community where you live. Chair Dorow mentioned Ms. Duffey may be very interested in another item later on the agenda.

Chair Dorow asked if everyone was comfortable with the map. He said he didn't understand why the target areas are named A, B, and C. Are they prioritized? Ms. Henning explained there are multiple areas because of the requirements on how areas are designated. Each area is required to have some commercial along with the residential and must meet the minimum density. Areas that are left out are R-1 and R-2 zones, which creates some gaps that can't be MFTE areas. Chair Dorow asked if area C isn't already an apartment complex? Ms. Henning said designating it would allow expansion that could qualify, or rehabilitation of units that have been vacant for more than a year.

Commissioner Daniela Voorhies asked whether the program would encourage new apartments which would cause traffic congestion, specifically the vacant properties near CBHA. Ms. Henning explained that traffic information is required for new developments. We can only require mitigation for the part of the problem caused by the new development; we can't make them fix problems that are already there. Commissioner Voorhies asked whether the mitigation would be before or after development. Ms. Henning explained that the Growth Management Act has a concurrency requirement that says mitigation must occur within 6 years of the development.

Ms. Henning asked the Commissioners if they would be ready to hold a public hearing on the updated ordinance at the next meeting. They agreed the hearing should be at the next meeting.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN - REVIEW 1ST DRAFT

The City's consultants, SCJ Alliance, are continuing to work on Othello's Active Transportation Plan (bicycle/pedestrian/non-motorized transportation) through a planning grant from QuadCo. After last month's review of the draft goals, policies, and framework, SCJ has submitted a first draft of the overall plan for review. The draft plan incorporates the Planning Commission's direction on changes to the goals and policies. After the Commission's review this month, SCJ will revise the draft and provide an updated version in December that can be circulated for public review. This version will be provided to the Commission at the December meeting for any changes before the public hearing version in January.

Chair Dorow brought up the idea of a Burke-Gilman-type trail. If this trail is planned around the edges of town, it would eventually be through town as Othello grows. Commissioners were interested in planning ahead to make this happen. Possible corridors include 14th Avenue, 1st Avenue, Lee Road, Hwy. 26, north of Wahitis Elementary, and connecting the existing green trails shown on the map. The canals provide land uninterrupted by cross streets but it may be difficult to work with USBR and the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District to be allowed to create official trails. Ms. Henning said she would pass on these thoughts to the consultants to see what they could come up with.

COLUMBIA STREET

Chair Dorow mentioned there is a lot of vacant land between Columbia Street and Hwy 26 that would be good for a grocery store, restaurant, and other development that local residents would like to see. He wondered if there were ways to get developers interested and maybe finish out the street from 1st to 7th Avenue. He thought there should be a committee of interested parties, separate from the Planning Commission and maybe including the Chamber, groups like Rotary, and people from the business community. The Commission was in favor. Commissioner Gentry mentioned that a hotel would generate lodging taxes. Chair Dorow said he would talk to the Mayor about how to proceed. Ms. Henning said she

could bring information on Economic Development, Local Improvement Districts, and Tax Increment Financing.

STREET SAFETY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION - TRAFFIC CIRCLE REPORT - INFORMATIONAL

After a long process of trying to find ways to slow traffic, reduce traffic cutting through neighborhoods, and prevent accidents, the Planning Commission made some recommendations to the City Council in the summer of 2021. City Engineering staff installed traffic "circles" in fall 2021 in one neighborhood as a test of the concept. Included in tonight's packet is the City Engineer's report to the Council, showing traffic volume and speed, both before the installation and then one year after installation. The 2023 draft budget includes money for traffic calming, with the exact measures to be determined later.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Commissioner Carmona asked the other Commissioners if they thought it would be a good idea to increase the number of Commissioners to 7. All agreed, both to have more points of view and to avoid having decisions made by just a few people if a couple of Commissioners had to miss a meeting. It is also a way to involve more people in city government. Commissioner Carmona will discuss the idea with the Mayor as the next step.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm. M/S Carmona/ Gentry next regular meeting is Monday, December 19, 2022.

Chris Dorow, Chair

Date: _____

Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary

Date: _____



City of Othello
Planning Commission
December 19, 2022
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Dorow called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Chris Dorow, Brian Gentry, Alma Carmona, and Daniela Voorhies

Absent: Kevin Gilbert

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning (remote), Building and Planning Secretary Zuleica Morfin

Attendees: Bob Carlson, Sheriff Dale Wagner, County Commissioner Jay Weise, Connie Agenbroad (Hospital District)

This was a hybrid meeting with Zoom available for remote attendees.

PUBLIC INPUT

Sheriff Dale Wagner and County Commissioner Jay Weise stated they are working on a plat and deferral request for the Evidence Building. Under the terms of the funding, they have until June. They hope to have a contract with a builder by then. They may be able to get an extension of the funding. Chair Dorow asked if there is anything the Commission can do to help in the process. Community Development Director Anne Henning said that depending on when the application is submitted and complete, it may be helpful to have the Commission schedule a special meeting to hear the deferral request, since the Commission's usual schedule of meeting only once a month could delay the project.

MINUTES APPROVAL

November 21, 2022 minutes approved, M/S Carmona/ Gentry; however, Chair Chris Dorow said he felt the section on p.4 of the packet wasn't accurate (discussion on residential near industrial). His memory was the Commission discussed mitigation, ventilation, that certain businesses wouldn't be appropriate there (like child care) but that housing would be acceptable. He asked staff to listen to this section again and bring the revised November minutes back next time for Commission approval. Motion passed to withdraw the minutes approval and have staff revise this section based on the recording. M/S Carmona/Gentry

MULTI-FAMILY TAX EXEMPTIONS (MFTE) PROGRAM- PUBLIC HEARING & RECOMMENDATION

Through a grant from the Department of Commerce for work toward implementing the adopted Housing Action Plan, the City hired a consultant to exploring creating a Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program. This program would provide a 12- or 20-year tax exemption for new multi-family development of at least 4 units if a portion were set aside for households below the median income. This program is intended to provide an incentive for building multi-family housing, which there has been very little of for a long time. Adding apartments to Othello's housing stock would provide additional housing options for local residents. The exemption applies only to the multi-family units themselves, not to the underlying land or any associated commercial or community buildings.

Chair Chris Dorow asked if the 20-year option could be removed. Ms. Henning thought it probably could be. She said it seemed less likely to actually happen than the 12-year program, due to the ownership limitations, but recommended leaving it in so we have it as an option if someone wants to go that way.

Chair Dorow asked about the notification process for the hearing. Besides the standard legal notice in the newspaper and notification on the City's website, letters were mailed on December 9 to the taxing districts that would be affected: Adams County, Hospital District (including EMS), Library District, School District, Adams County Parks & Recreation District #1, Port of Othello, and Adams County Fire District #5. Ms. Henning noted that the Fire District wouldn't be affected the same way as the other districts because they don't collect taxes directly, but they were notified for thoroughness. Another notification was done on December 19 when Mayor Logan emailed a reminder to representatives of the Hospital District, School District, Fire District, Port, Library District, and County Commissioners.

Chair Dorow opened the public hearing for testimony at 6:30 pm. He called for testimony in opposition to the proposal. There was none. He called for testimony in support. There was none. He called for testimony neutral to the proposal. The following testified:

Adams County Commissioner Jay Weise said the packet answered some of his questions but not all. He asked if properties had to keep meeting standards in order to stay tax exempt. Ms. Henning pointed out section 3.40.090, Annual Certification. Properties must submit a report every year, showing that they still qualify. She also pointed out 3.40.100(a)(5), which states that the exemption will be cancelled if the owner fails to submit the annual certification. County Commissioner Weise then asked if the City has been in contact with the County Assessor, so that she can be prepared to deal with this program. Ms. Henning stated that she thought the consultant had mentioned coordinating with the Assessor, but she was not able to find a record of that in her emails. County Commissioner Weise stated that he had provided information to the Assessor. County Commissioner Weise also asked what happened at the end of the program, when full taxes start to be due. Will the owner be surprised? Ms. Henning pointed out section 3.40.060(b)(4), which requires as part of the initial application a statement from the owner acknowledging the tax liability when the project ceases to be eligible.

Chair Dorow asked the attendees for input on the scope of the proposed ordinance, specifically 3.40.050(h), which ends the program after 800 units. He asked whether 800 is the correct number, given the housing emergency but also the impact of foregone tax revenue. County Commissioner Weise said the ordinance impacts the city more than the other taxing districts, and everyone is feeling the housing shortage. Connie Agenbroad the hospital would feel the impact mostly through staffing. She was not opposed to the ordinance but maybe the number of units should be less than 800. She asked how many total people would live in 800 units. Ms. Henning said the Census collects a persons-per-household number, which she thought was 3.27. She mentioned that persons-per-household for multi-family would likely be less, because probably the units would be smaller than the current supply of mostly single family houses.

Bob Carlson stated that this looks like another example of cost shifting, which leads to needing to find other ways to make up the lost revenue, like the Transportation Benefit District and the law enforcement tax. He mentioned that the state has increased the charity care hospitals are required to provide. He would like to see the limit on units set closer to 250 than to 800. He did feel the MFTE program would be better than more Housing Authority units that will never pay property taxes.

Chair Dorow mentioned that many people can't find housing in Othello: teachers, new medical professionals, new executives at McCain or Simplot.

Bob Carlson asked about the designation criteria listed on p.6 of the MFTE Overview (p.24 of 90 in the packet). He mentioned that the area south of Hwy 26 lacks sidewalks, so he questioned whether it is appropriate to designate it for MFTE. Chair Dorow asked whether since the developer would be required to provide improvements along with the development, if that was sufficient? Ms. Henning said the consultant had explained to her that it's up to the city how it wants to draw the boundaries of the area and to determine if facilities are adequate. The Commission asked for this to be pointed out to the Council.

Chair Dorow asked the attendees again what an appropriate number of units to allow in the program would be. He said he was thinking 300 to 500, leaning toward 300. County Commissioner Weise said he would need more time to consider it, but he prefers the program to be smaller rather than larger.

Commissioner Brian Gentry says he sees the housing emergency daily. But he wondered if the MFTE program will attract any builders; the discussion might be moot. He thought a small number of units would be better. It can be revisited in the future.

Connie Agenbroad from the Hospital District wondered how many people in town were currently living in their parents' or grandparents' houses because they couldn't find somewhere to move to. She mentioned that traveling nurses can't find housing.

Chair Dorow asked if there were any further public comments. Hearing none, he closed the public testimony portion of the hearing at 7:14.

Commissioners discussed the number of units to recommend in the ordinance. All agreed that 250 to 300 seemed right. Commissioners discussed whether to reduce the target areas due to facilities. Commissioner Daniela Voorhies felt it should be left as is, since if the developer will build the infrastructure, the MFTE program could encourage new development. Chair Dorow mentioned this should be pointed out to Council.

Motion approved to recommend the draft MFTE ordinance to Council, with reducing the number of units allowed in 3.40.050(h) to 300, and pointing out the state designation criteria related to infrastructure for target areas. M/S Carmona/Voorhies

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN- REVIEW WORK IN PROGRESS

The City's consultants are continuing to work on Othello's Active Transportation Plan (bicycle/pedestrian/non-motorized transportation) through a planning grant from QuadCo. After last month's review of the first draft, the consultant submitted a second draft of the overall plan for review. This draft still has some comments and corrections that need to be made, and additional graphics that need to be created. The Commission was asked to review for whether they are satisfied with the direction the plan is taking, and if they see any substantive changes that are needed.

County Commissioner Jay Weise mentioned he took a quick look at the draft plan, and he felt most of the questions could be cleared up by having a conversation with the Adams County Public Works Director. He said he was meeting with the Director the next day and would bring it up. He also mentioned that the County Commissioners have been talking about the Building Communities Fund. The process is in need of

rejuvenation. He noted that the sheriff's office property has a private drive not a public street, so the map should not show sidewalks needed there.

Chair Dorow mentioned that connectivity and safety are the main focus for the plan. He pointed out that a recreational trail today might be transportation in the future, with the Seattle Burke-Gilman trail as an example.

Commissioner Carmona said the plan is great so far but needs more details, especially in the funding section. She felt it was too general.

Commissioners agreed they wanted to see a more final draft with the questions answered before they were comfortable with the draft being released for public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm. Next regular meeting is Tuesday, January 17, 2023.

Chris Dorow, Chair

Date: _____

Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary

Date: _____

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: December 19, 2022

SUBJECT: Active Transportation Plan – January 2023 Draft – Request for Direction

Our consultants, SCJ Alliance, have finalized their draft of the Active Transportation Plan (bicycle/pedestrian/non-motorized transportation). This work is supported by a planning grant from QuadCo. The Planning Commission requested a complete draft to review before it is released for public comment.

Staff Comments

1. This draft is intended to be complete, with just minor edits needed for any issues the Commission still sees in it. All aspects of the plan, including formatting, graphics, typos, and content should be reviewed at this time.
2. Once the Commission has determined that the plan is acceptable for public review, staff will post it on the website and request public comments.
3. After the public comment period, the Commission should hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to City Council.

Attachments

- January 2023 Draft of the Active Transportation Plan

Action: The Planning Commission should discuss the draft Plan and provide direction to staff and the consultants.



City of Othello

Active Transportation Plan

January 2023 DRAFT



SCJ ALLIANCE

Project Information

Project: City of Othello Active Transportation Plan
Prepared for: City of Othello, Washington
500 E Main Street
Othello, WA 99344
Plan Adopted: February 2023 (Anticipated)

Contact Information

City of Othello, Washington
Anne Henning, AICP, Community Development Director
500 E Main Street
Othello, WA
509-488-3302
ahenning@othellowa.gov

Prepared by: SCJ Alliance
108 N Washington, Suite 300
Spokane, WA 99201
509-835-3770
scjalliance.com

Contact: Aren Murcar, AICP
SCJ Alliance



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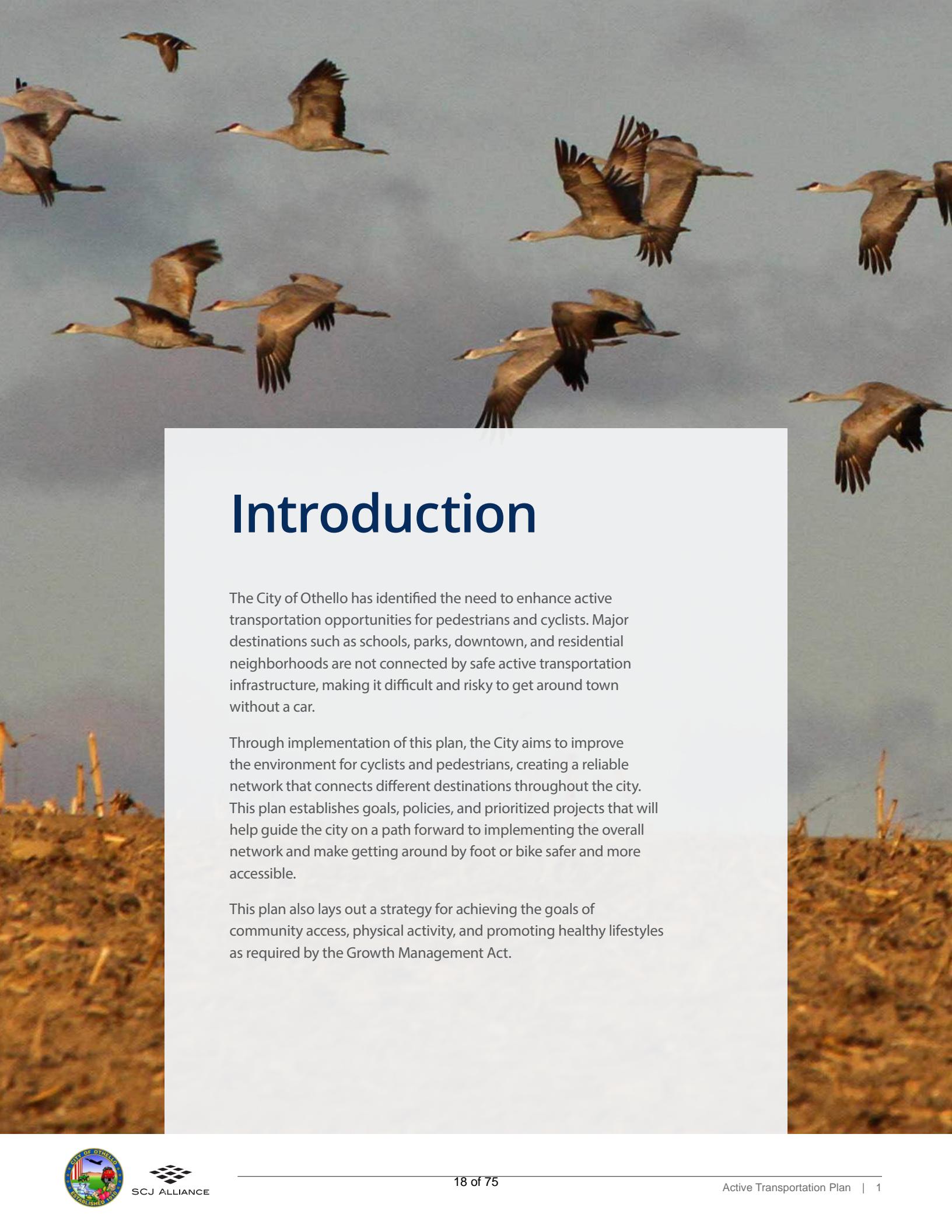
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Introduction

The City of Othello has identified the need to enhance active transportation opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists. Major destinations such as schools, parks, downtown, and residential neighborhoods are not connected by safe active transportation infrastructure, making it difficult and risky to get around town without a car.

Through implementation of this plan, the City aims to improve the environment for cyclists and pedestrians, creating a reliable network that connects different destinations throughout the city. This plan establishes goals, policies, and prioritized projects that will help guide the city on a path forward to implementing the overall network and make getting around by foot or bike safer and more accessible.

This plan also lays out a strategy for achieving the goals of community access, physical activity, and promoting healthy lifestyles as required by the Growth Management Act.



What is Active Transportation?

Active transportation is any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling. While this plan mainly focuses on addressing the needs of people walking and cycling, active transportation improvements can benefit multiple other forms of transportation as well, such as skateboarding, scooters, and other micro-mobility methods, as well as wheelchairs and other mobility-assistance methods.



Demographics

To understand the growing need for active transportation, the following demographic analysis provides a snapshot of the current trends in Othello that impact the need for alternative transportation modes.

Population Growth

The 2020 Census reported a population of 8,549 in Othello. In Othello's 2015 Comprehensive Plan, it was projected that medium growth by 2020 would be a population of 8,262 and high growth would be 8,885. The fact that their population reached 8,549 in 2020 shows that Othello is experiencing medium to high population growth.

While the official population projection in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan was established as 17,825 people by the year 2035, more recent trends show that Othello is more on track with the OFM projections mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan than its separate official projection. For this reason, it is now assumed that Othello will have a population of between 9,896 and 11,007 by 2035, aligning with the OFM projections as stated in Table I-1 of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The City will likely update these numbers in the next periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan, but it is safe to assume that the City will continue to experience medium to high population growth in the foreseeable future.

As the population grows, there will be more and more opportunities to build and promote an active lifestyle in Othello. Citizens are already asking for alternative transportation options for commuting and/or recreation, and this demand is expected to increase as the population grows.

Othello Population Growth and Projections

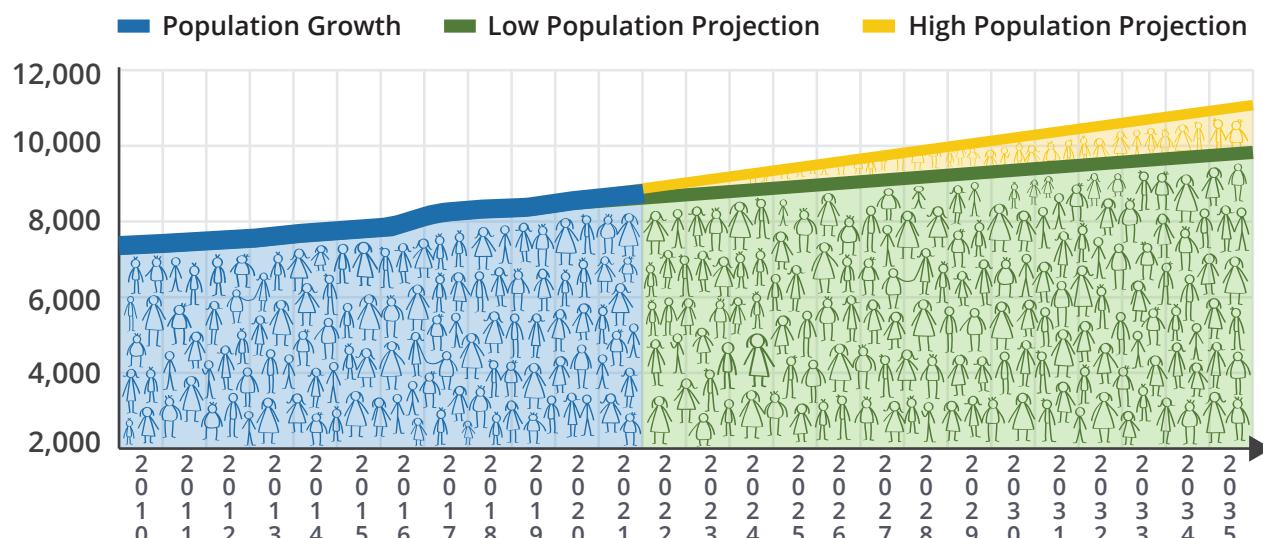


Figure 1: Population Growth and Projections



Age

In Figure 2, it is notable how many young people, specifically under the age of 14, there are in Othello. Kids ages 0-14 make up 35.4% of the total population. People under 30 make up 59.5% of the total population. Active transportation use tends to decline at higher ages, while peaking in young to middle-aged people¹, so the high number of people in these youth and young adult age groups must be taken into consideration while planning for transportation needs in Othello.

Language

Othello is home to many people who speak a language other than English. Of the population age 5 years and older, 34.9% of the population speaks only English, and 65.1% speaks a language other than English, whether that is in addition to English or not. The main language spoken apart from English is Spanish, with 59.8% of the population over the age of 5 speaking Spanish. This high percentage of people who speak Spanish in Othello should be taken into account when establishing informational signage, materials, and wayfinding for active transportation users. Active transportation options will be more accessible and more widely used if community members have information available in the language they are most comfortable with.

Alternatively, information and signage could utilize symbology to help communicate to a wide range of languages, not just the two most common in Othello.

Percent of Population

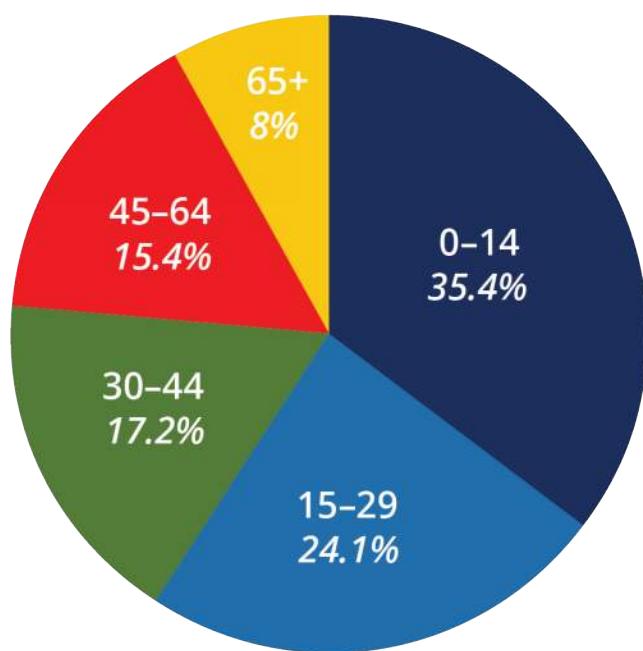


Figure 2: Population by Age in Othello

Disability

A major consideration in active transportation planning is ensuring that everybody in the community will be able to access what they need. On the following page, figure 3 notes that 6.2% of Othello's population experiences ambulatory difficulties, which means that they have trouble walking or climbing upstairs. 2.5% of the population have vision difficulties, and 2.6% have hearing difficulties.

By making infrastructure accessible to those who need extra support with their hearing, vision, or mobility, the city can ensure that its active transportation network is accessible by all. While ADA compliance is required in new infrastructure construction, the city should also consider strategic improvements and upgrades to existing sidewalks, crossings, and pathways to ensure that people with disabilities can access the active transportation network.

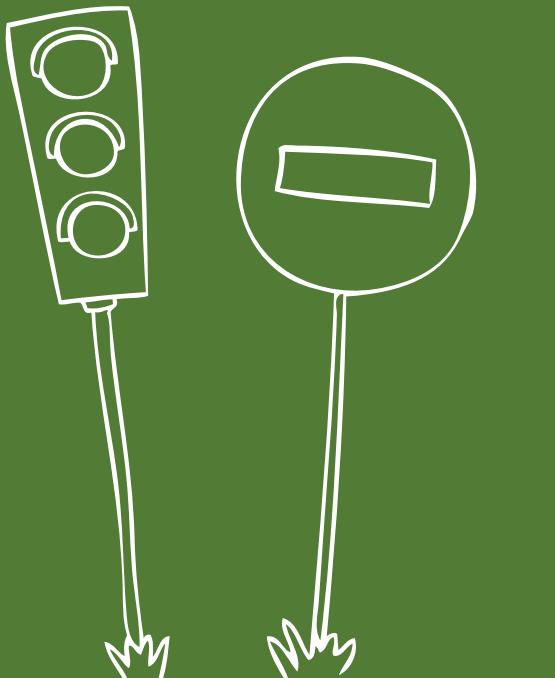
¹Dill, J., & Voros, K. (2007). Factors Affecting Bicycling Demand. *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board*, 2031(1), 9-17.



Vehicle Ownership & Transportation to Work

The 2020 American Community Survey estimates that there are 2,967 workers over the age of 16 in Othello. Of these workers, 1.4% have no vehicle available, 12.1% have 1 vehicle available, 50.3% have 2 vehicles available, and 36.3% have 3 or more vehicles available. Figure 4 on the right shows the breakdown of how people in Othello commute to work.

While vehicle ownership is common among the majority of the working population in Othello, there are still at least 40-50 people without a car who need to figure out an alternative way of getting to work. This further emphasizes the need for active transportation improvements in Othello, indicating that not everyone has the option to drive themselves to work.



Othello Population with Certain Disabilities

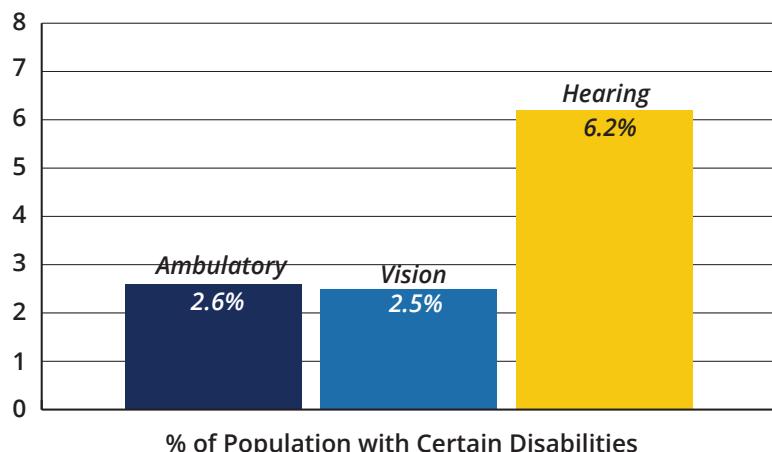


Figure 3: Percentage of People in Othello who experience certain disabilities

Means of Transportation to Work in Othello

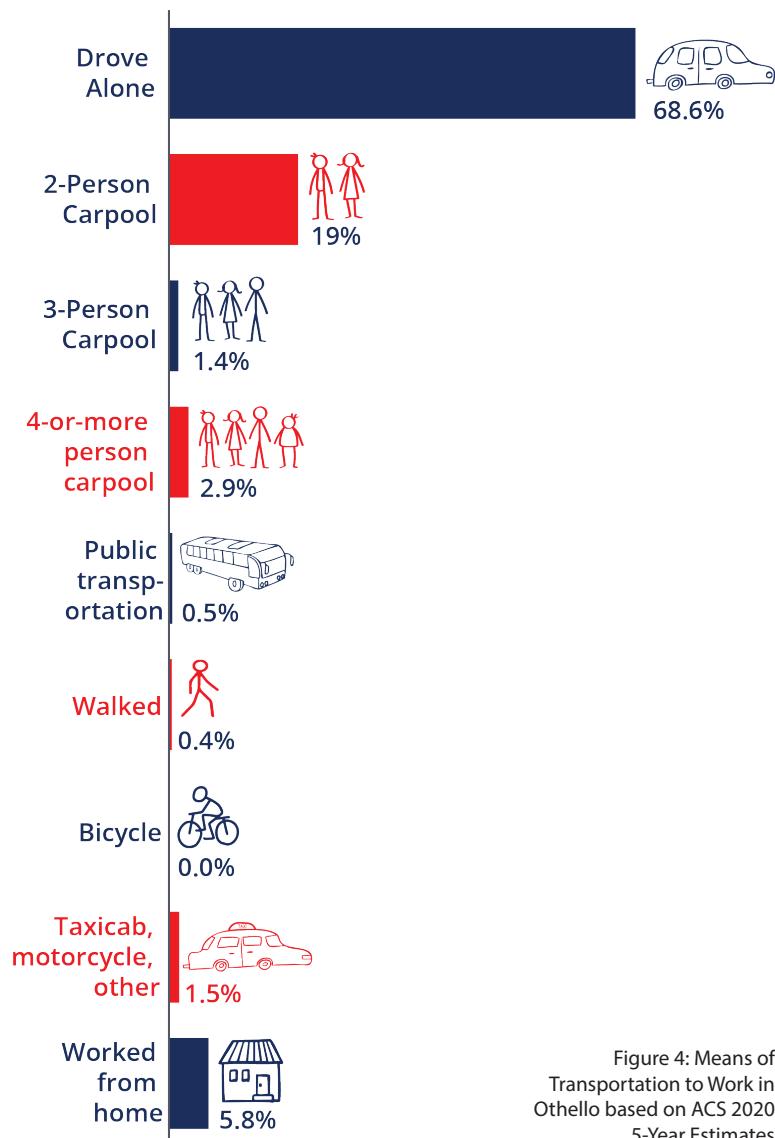


Figure 4: Means of Transportation to Work in Othello based on ACS 2020 5-Year Estimates



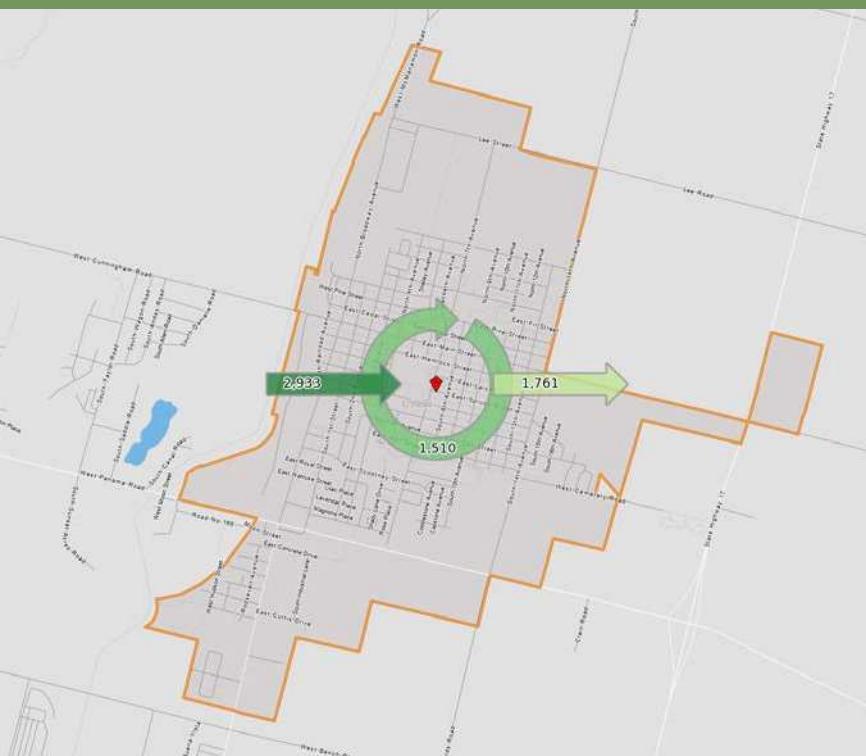


Figure 5: Inflow/Outflow Analysis of People who Live/Work in Othello.
Source: onthemap.ces.census.gov

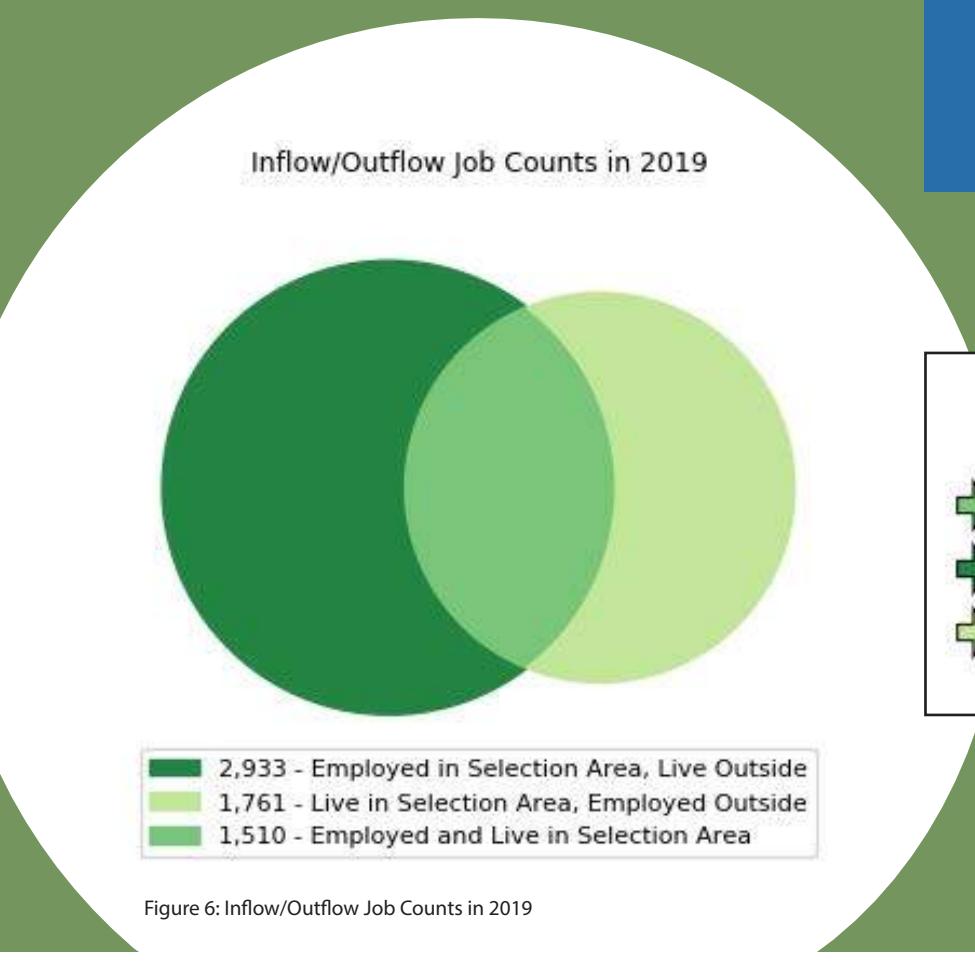


Figure 6: Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2019

Commuting Trends

Commuting trends are especially important to understand in an Active Transportation Plan. Based on 2019 data, Figure 6 shows inflow and outflow job counts. Based on this data, there are 1,510 people who live in Othello who also stay to work in Othello. There are 1,761 people who live in Othello but leave city limits for work, and there are 2,933 people who live elsewhere but work in Othello.

This is important for understanding how many people are commuting within Othello and outside city limits. 1,510 people stay within city limits, and since the city is not large in size, it is reasonable to assume that a portion of this population would be willing to walk or bike to work. In planning for active transportation improvements, it will be beneficial to consider how the city can grow the number of people who both live and work in Othello and also grow the portion of those people that walk or bike to work.

Note: Overlay arrows do not indicate directionality of worker flow between home and employment locations.

- ➡ Employed and Live in Selection Area
- ➡ Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
- ➡ Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside



Context Map

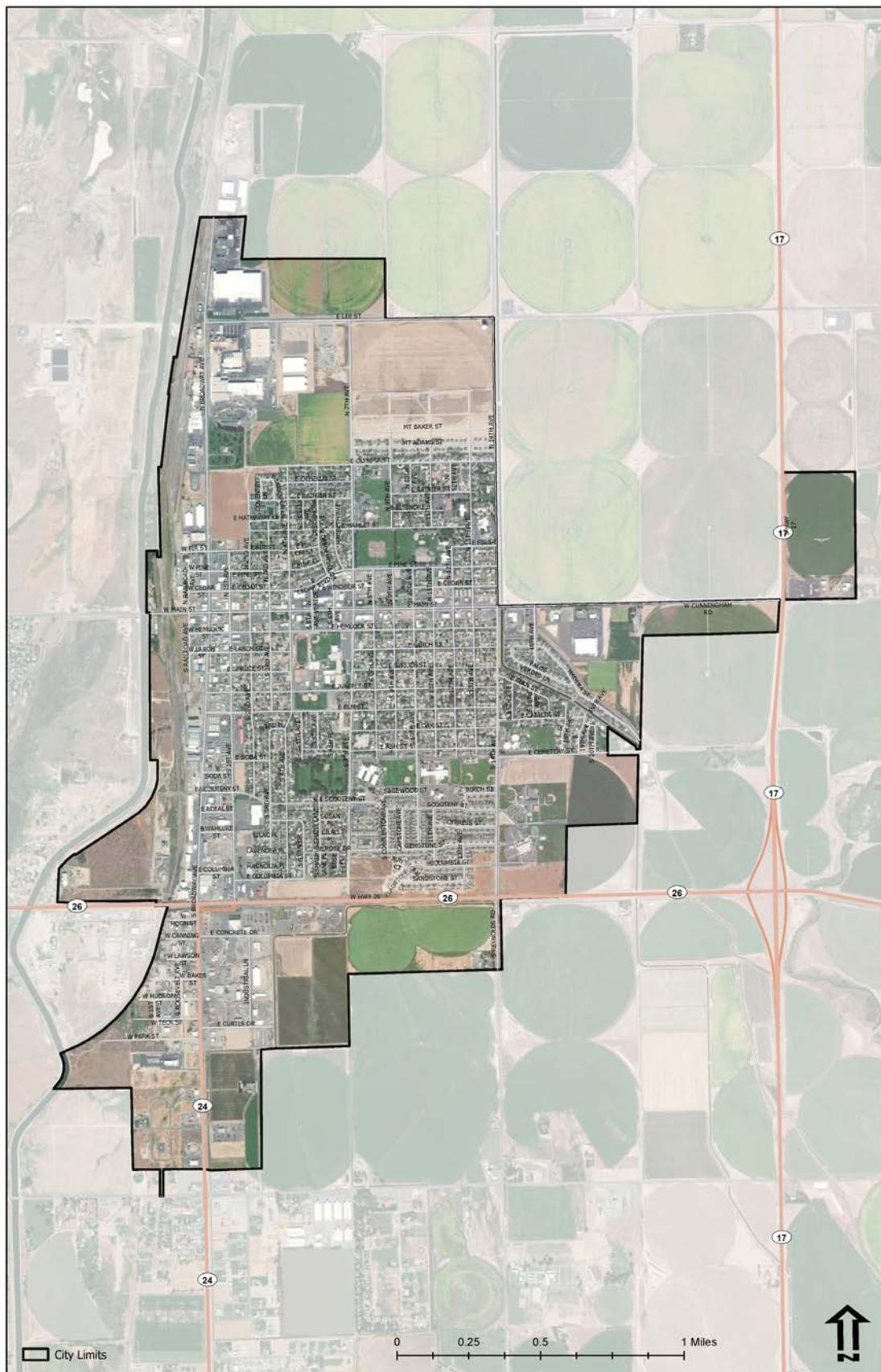


Figure 7: Context Map



Policy Review

The Department of Commerce states that “development of a community’s pedestrian and bicycle component occurs in the context of federal, state, and regional policies.” This section outlines those relevant policies and describes how Othello’s proposed active transportation network aligns with local, regional, state, and national transportation policies.

Othello Comprehensive Plan

Othello’s Comprehensive Plan provides context for how and where the city is looking to grow. As noted in the demographics section of this report, Othello is predicting a medium to high growth rate and needs to plan accordingly.

Some of the active transportation-related goals and objectives to note within Othello’s transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan are:

- ◆ Objective 4.2.3 – Pursue implementation of the Parks & Recreation trail plan within the growth area.
- ◆ Goal 4.3 – Incorporate ADA standards into all capital improvement projects and private development improvements that will become part of the City’s transportation infrastructure.
- ◆ Objective 4.4.2 – Implement the Parks & Recreation trail plan as part of any capital improvement project if the trail plan and street plan overlap.
- ◆ Objective 4.4.3 – Develop a greenway plan for Highway 26 and Highway 17.
- ◆ Goal 4.5 – Develop, prioritize, and implement an ongoing list of transportation Capital Improvement Projects.

These goals and objectives support the development of a safe and accessible network of walking and biking paths, sidewalks, crossings, and bike lanes. This plan aims to remain consistent with the comprehensive plan, and further build on its goals for active transportation.

Othello Complete Streets Policy

Othello adopted a Complete Streets Policy as Chapter 11.80 of the Municipal Code in 2020. This policy defines and outlines what complete streets in Othello will look like and the standards they are required to meet, emphasizing that the people of Othello should have options when it comes to transportation.

The policy ultimately aims to provide infrastructure for “pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, emergency responders, freight, and users of all ages and abilities in new construction, retrofit, and reconstruction projects of public streets.” Additionally, the Complete Streets Policy “focuses not just on changing individual streets but on changing the decision-making process so that all users are considered during the planning, designing, building, and operation of roadways.”

Othello’s Complete Streets Policy sets a strong foundation for the work proposed in this plan. The recommendations set forth later in this plan will have the support of the city code behind them, providing an extra dimension of feasibility to the proposed recommendations.



Othello neighborhood traffic calming measures.
Source: Columbia Basin Herald



Othello Housing Action Plan

Othello's Housing Action Plan (HAP) was adopted in June 2021 with the purpose of providing clear direction on increasing production of market-rate and affordable housing, and the need for greater housing diversity, affordability, and access to opportunity for residents of all income levels. With a review of goals surrounding housing, transportation always needs to be addressed, as different housing options lead to a change in demand for specific types of transportation. Often, with increased density, active transportation options become more desirable.

Regarding parking and transportation standards, the HAP lays out strategic recommendations. It states, "The provision of parking and rights-of-way can affect the amount of land available for development and the costs of new projects. Adjusting these standards can help make developments more efficient, reducing costs and improving project feasibility". The plan suggests reviewing off-street parking requirements, encouraging or requiring alley-access, rear, or shared parking, and to reduce neighborhood street width requirements.

The overall HAP objectives are:

1. Make it easier to build affordable ownership and rental housing
2. Increase housing variety and choice
3. Ensure opportunities for families with children
4. Promote housing for agricultural workers

Expansion of the active transportation network in Othello can support these objectives, so that both housing options and active transportation opportunities improve, making Othello an even better place to live and work.

City of Othello HOUSING ACTION PLAN



Othello Parks and Recreation Plan

Othello's Parks and Recreation Plan was adopted in February 2022. Included in the plan is a map that outlines Othello's Parks & Trails Plan. That plan highlights some active transportation components including existing trails, proposed trails, and greenway trails. This helps identify some of the routes that have previously been prioritized. Through the Active Transportation Plan, Othello aims to further develop this network of paths and trails, aligning with the analysis and outreach conducted as part of the Parks and Recreation Plan.

In the Parks & Rec Plan's future needs analysis, it is noted that "More walking trails was highly desired by the community in the survey; however, the City doesn't currently have much of a place to put them. It is hoped these trails could be incorporated into the proposed eco park/nature park. Therefore, the trail expenditure is scheduled out beyond the 6-year timeframe of this plan."

The Parks and Recreation Plan, therefore, emphasizes the importance of expanding the existing sidewalk and pathway network to more fully connect throughout the city, which supports the purpose of the Active Transportation Plan.



Adams County Comprehensive Plan

Othello is located within Adams County. Adams County's Comprehensive Plan speaks to the 1,125.5 miles of graveled and 650 miles of paved county roads. Beyond the roads, the plan shares that public transportation does not exist in rural Adams County, besides some transit opportunities for the elderly or people with disabilities.

There are two policies that stand out regarding active transportation in the plan. They are:

Recreational Uses, Policy 7:

"Promote eco-tourism opportunities such as non-motorized interpretive trails that capitalize Adams County's history as well as natural and cultural resources, especially railroad history."

Transportation, Policy 14:

"Provide alternative transportation choices for the traveling public by identifying suitable bicycle routes within the county where incompatibility issues with long haul truck traffic aren't involved."

While Adams County is focused on moving people primarily on roads in personal vehicles, these policies do point toward a desire to have more transportation options for both residents and visitors.



QUADCO Regional Transportation Plan

The QUADCO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) includes Adams, Grant, Kittitas, and Lincoln Counties. This plan was adopted in December 2016 and plans for a 20-year period, from 2017 to 2037. The plan highlights six goals, under the themes of economic vitality, preservation, safety, mobility, environment, and stewardship. Within each of these categories, the plan highlights a goal that has to do with active transportation. This shows how moving toward better active transportation options is incorporated through the plan. The top goals identified in this plan are to:

- ◆ Protect the safety of our community
- ◆ Preserve and extend the life and utility of prior transportation system investments
- ◆ Enhance our region's economic vitality by promoting and developing transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods.
- ◆ Enhance the mobility of people and goods throughout the region by providing an interconnected transportation system and opportunities for choosing different transportation modes.
- ◆ Protect our region's environment and high quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.
- ◆ Improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of our region's transportation system and growing communities with cost effective investments that have public support.

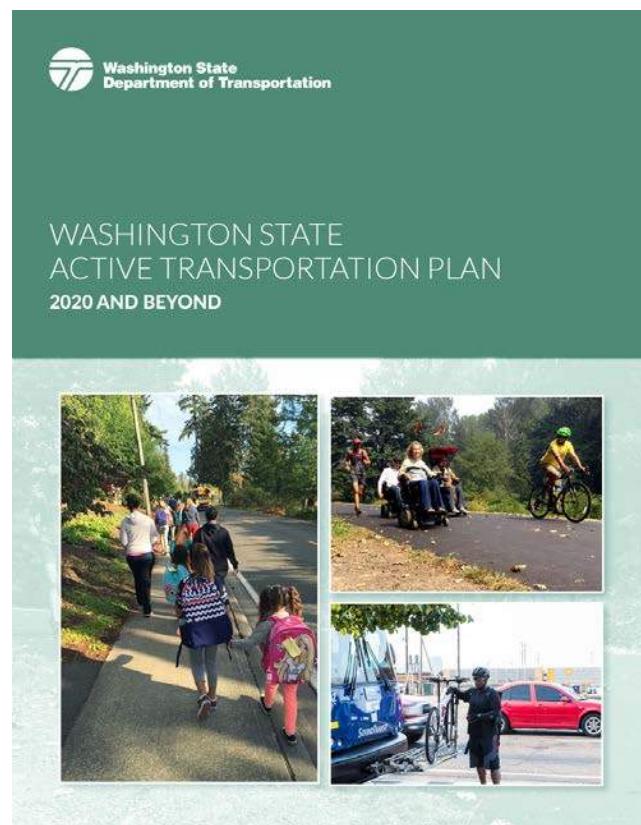


WSDOT Active Transportation Plan

In 2021, the Washington State Department of Transportation published the Washington State Active Transportation Plan: 2020 and Beyond. The plan discusses the importance of reliable active transportation options and the challenges in active transportation if certain facilities or amenities are not complete or are blocked from use. Since this plan covers the entire state, it focuses on both urban centers and the smaller, rural towns like Othello. The main goal for active transportation in the future is stated as, "The integrated transportation system of the future provides safe, welcoming, and connected networks that invite and enable everyone to walk and roll where they need to go".

There are important benefits of bicycling and walking and these benefits help work toward a stronger Washington for everybody. These benefits include improvements in human health, the environment, the economy, local and regional mobility, accessibility, and congestion relief. This plan is evidence that Washington is planning for a future that involves active transportation as a regular way to travel.

Figure 3-35 in the plan shows how Othello connects to the Great American Rail-Trail, which is a project being undertaken by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Washington's portion of this trail is



currently known as the Palouse to Cascades Trail, which will eventually connect across both the state and eventually the country. However, there is a large segment of the trail missing near Othello (see Figure 8 below). It would be helpful to consider how Othello might eventually connect to and capitalize on access to this trail. This future connection may play a significant role in the economic development and recreational environment in Othello.

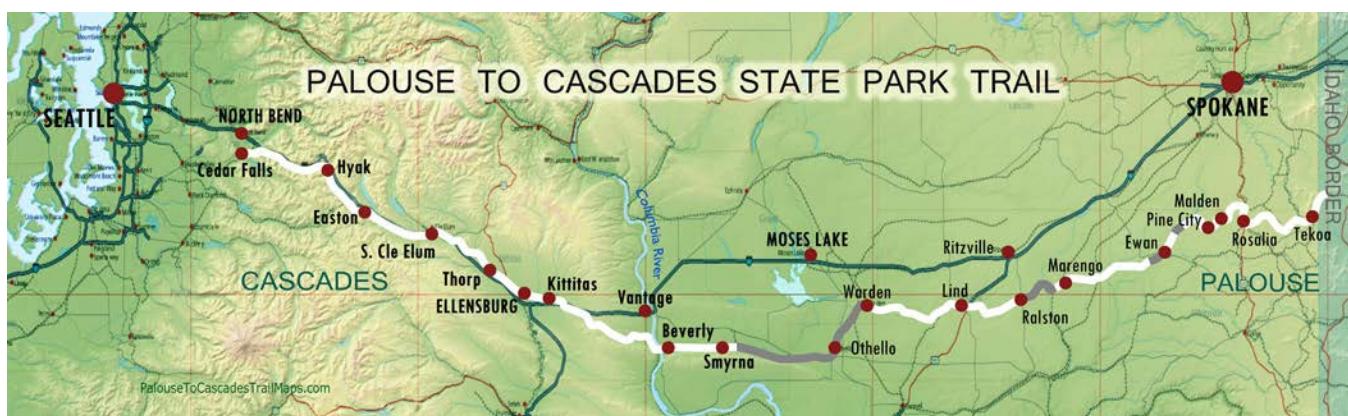


Figure 8: Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail Map



Existing Conditions

Sidewalks

Sidewalks provide dedicated space intended for use by pedestrians that is safe, comfortable, and accessible to all. Sidewalks are physically separated from the roadway by a curb or unpaved buffer space and are ADA compliant. Othello aims to have sidewalks on almost every street so that anywhere in town is safely accessible by foot.

Sidewalk Gap Analysis

There are approximately 37 miles of completed sidewalks within Othello city limits. It is also estimated that there are at least 46 miles of additional sidewalk length needed to ensure a complete and connected pedestrian network throughout the City. This accounts for sidewalks being needed on both sides of the street for all of the city blocks displayed in Figure 7.

Most of the gaps in Othello's sidewalk network are in the older, centrally located neighborhoods as well as the industrial areas on the outskirts of town. Newer neighborhoods and major arterials tend to have fewer sidewalk gaps.

These gaps make it difficult for pedestrians to safely access many areas throughout Othello. Lack of sidewalks and abrupt discontinuations can lead to confusion for pedestrians, forcing them into the street



There are many instances in Othello where sidewalks abruptly end, providing no alternative to pedestrians.

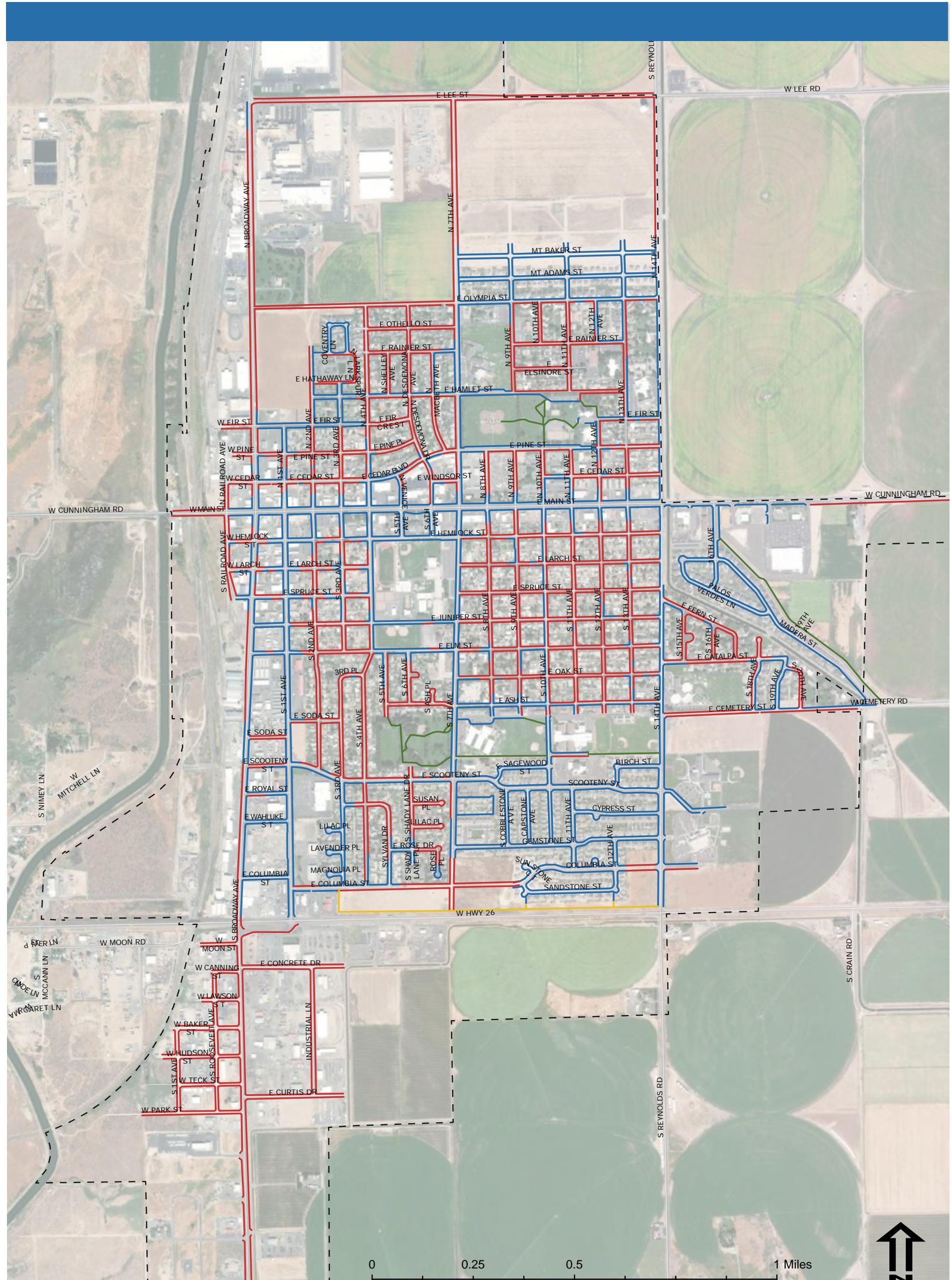




where they have to contend with vehicles. In addition, since there are currently no bike lanes in Othello, people frequently use the existing sidewalks to ride their bikes as a way to stay separated from passing vehicles. Until bike infrastructure is provided in Othello, bike riding on the sidewalks is expected to continue occurring. Therefore, sidewalk gaps also lead to challenges for those riding bikes in town.

These sidewalk gaps ultimately incentivize more driving as people decide they would rather drive than walk or bike on unsafe streets.





- Existing Sidewalks -- 192,599 feet (36.5 miles)
- Missing Sidewalks -- 239,105 feet (45.3 miles)
- Existing Paved Paths -- 10,399 feet (2.0 miles)
- Missing Paved Paths -- 4,444 feet (0.8 miles)
- City Limits



Figure 9: Sidewalk Gap Map



SCJ ALLIANCE

Bike Infrastructure

Othello currently has very little infrastructure for bicycles. There are about 2 miles of existing off-street pathways, as indicated in Figure 9. These include the city park paths, the path on the south side of Lutacaga Elementary and McFarland Middle Schools, and the path on the east edge of town.

Apart from these unconnected paths, cyclists must share the roadway with vehicles. There are currently no bike lanes in the City of Othello. As with sidewalk gaps, this citywide gap in bicycle infrastructure makes cycling seem like a risky activity, and there are not many people that bike in Othello because of this. Some school children bike to school, but as seen in the demographics review, zero percent of people commute by bicycle in Othello.

By adding some new bicycle infrastructure, such as more paths and bike lanes, that safely connect throughout the city, Othello will likely see an increase in the number of people that choose to get around by bike.

Paved Paths

Othello has been working to develop its paved pathway system. These paths are safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians to get around without the need to contend with vehicles. Othello's city parks already have paved paths, and there is a paved path south of Lutacaga Elementary and McFarland Middle Schools, as well as one on the east edge of town, pictured in the images on the next page.

Figure 9 shows a "Missing Paved Path" type, which outlines where paved paths are either planned to be developed or have been identified as a community need in the past. The missing path along SR 26 is partially planned as a linear park just south of the existing Sandstone Street. The remainder of the missing path along SR 26 is not currently planned, but is an ideal route to provide separation from the highway and a connection to the new linear park.



Cyclists currently have almost no dedicated place to get around in Othello, forcing them to choose between riding in the road, or on the sidewalk.



As Othello works to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, these pathways will be vital arteries for the active transportation network. It will be important to create a continuous network of pathways throughout the city to ensure cyclists and pedestrians have a safe, low stress environment in which to get around and recreate.

The paved path on the east side of town is quite popular, even getting use in the winter months.



Amenities

Bike Parking

In addition to providing ways of getting around safely by bike, it is equally important to have a secure way of parking and locking up bikes throughout the city. New development and upgrades to major destinations such as parks, schools, and business districts, should be required to provide a minimum number of secure bike parking spots, or bike racks, in convenient locations to ensure cyclists have an accessible location to park and lock up their bikes.

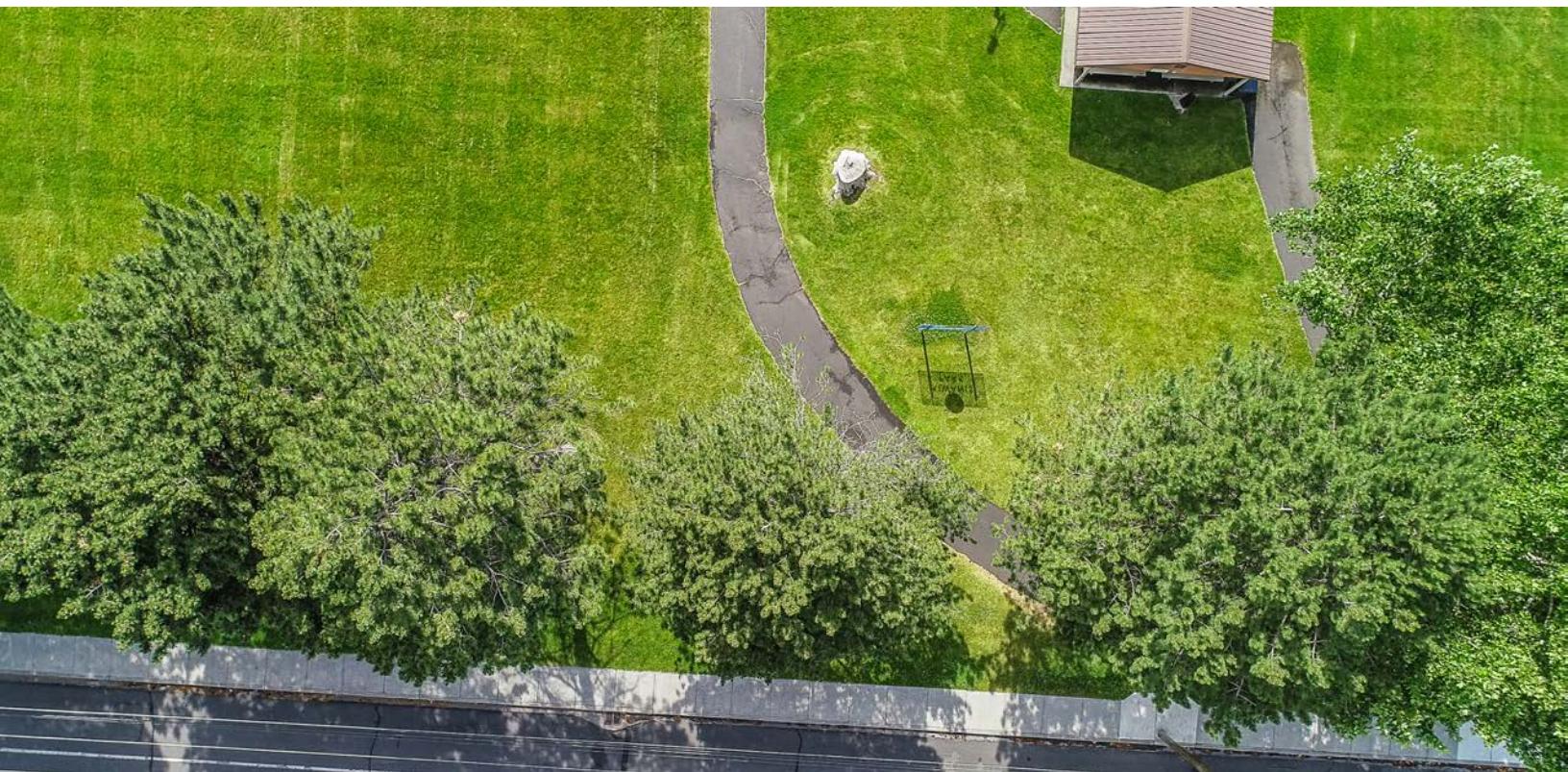
Other Amenities

In addition to bike racks, the city should also consider addition of amenities such as bike repair stations, rest areas with benches, drinking fountains, and shade, as well as wayfinding information posted throughout the community to help guide cyclists to their destination. These extra amenities will ensure a positive, secure, and accessible experience when getting around Othello by bicycle.

Informal Paths & Trails

Othello also has a number of informal pathways, such as the dirt paths along the canal next to North 14th Avenue. This is not a formal pathway or trail but is still regularly used by pedestrians. This is evidenced by the Strava Heatmap in Figure 10, which shows where walkers and runners tend to be the most active. This heatmap helps identify informal paths because it shows pedestrian and cyclist behavior by people who use the Strava App, which provides a sampling of where people gravitate toward when exercising or recreating. Strava data is limited to those who record their activity with Strava, so does not tend to capture more recreational walking or cycling, nor does it likely capture paths that children take to bike or walk to school.

Still, these heatmap paths demonstrate that people are using informal paths, such as those along the canals. It also shows which streets are more popular for pedestrian and cyclist activity.



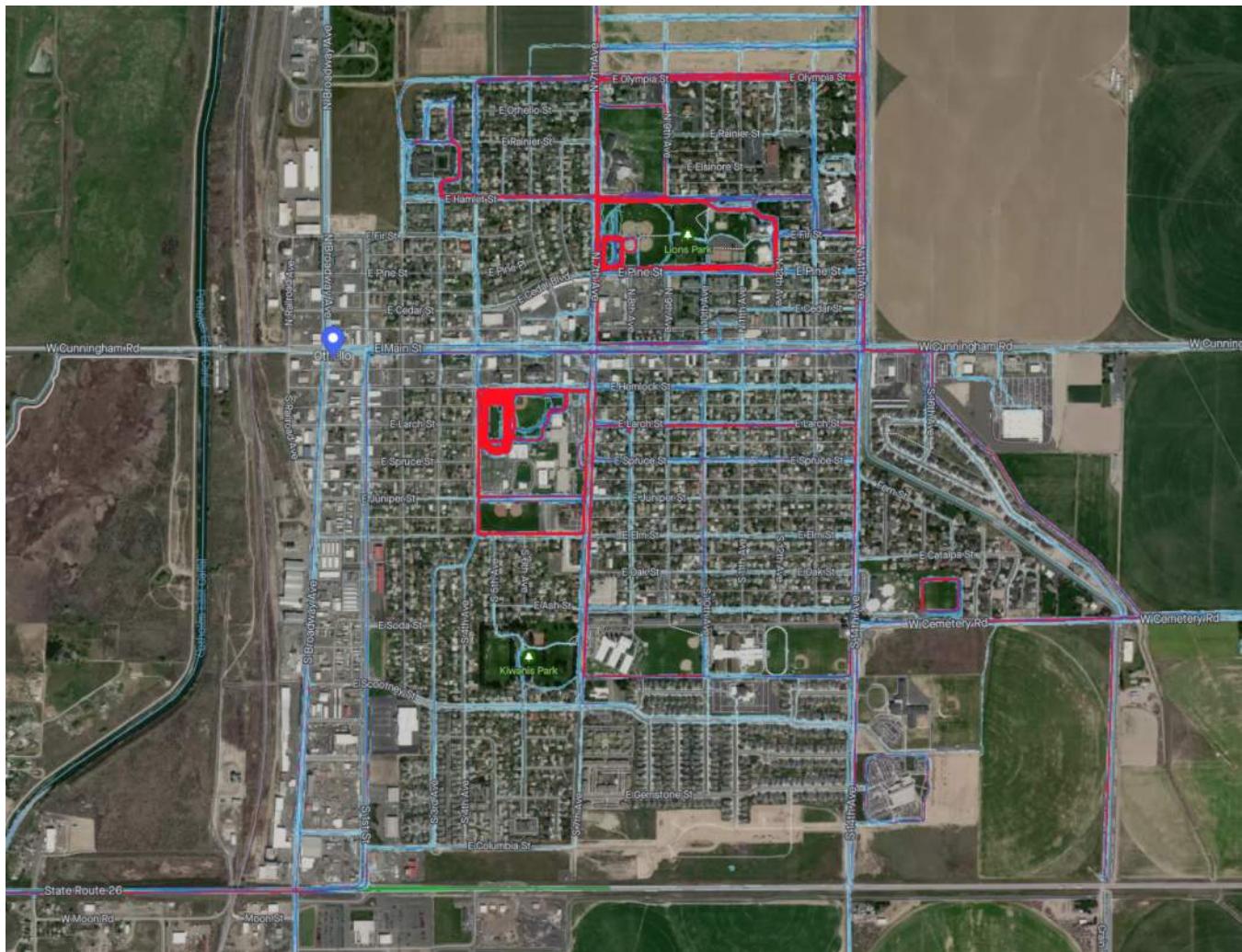


Figure 10: Strava Heatmap for Bicycle and Pedestrian Activity in Othello. The red lines indicate the most active routes used by Strava users, and light blue lines indicate less frequently used routes by Strava users. Dark blue lines fall in the middle. The green line along SR 26 is not part of the heatmap data.

Source: strava.com/heatmap





Opportunities

Wide Rights-of-Way

Othello's streets are very wide, and many of the streets have excess capacity based on current traffic volumes. In other words, there is plenty of publicly-owned space, making it feasible to reallocate more space for sidewalks, bike lanes, and buffers between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Because of this, Othello should consider:

- ◆ Adding bike lanes on streets with sufficient right-of-way
- ◆ Adding parking-protected bike lanes on arterials
- ◆ Making minor changes such as signage, traffic-calming, and sharrows to low-traffic, slow-speed residential routes to make them bike and pedestrian friendly

Street Connectivity

The city's existing street network is largely in a grid pattern, so streets are well-connected with plenty of opportunities for route alternatives and greater accessibility to main routes.

Because of this, Othello should consider:

- ◆ Adding paved pathways to further connect the system of off-street active transportation network
- ◆ Connecting bike and pedestrian infrastructure with major destinations
- ◆ Completing the sidewalk network
- ◆ Improving crossings at strategic locations to ensure safe connections across busy intersections

Flat Terrain

Othello is mostly flat, which makes cycling and walking more attractive options than other, hillier, cities.



Othello Walk Path

The Othello Walk Path creates a 4.8-mile loop around the east-central side of the city. This path was established in the 2000s and funded through Adams County Paths & Trails. More recently, it was included in the Othello Parks and Recreation Plan and the Othello Comprehensive Plan, indicating that it is still relevant.

The existing path consists of a mix of paved pathways and sidewalks. However, the City has an opportunity with this plan to focus on enhancing this loop by providing more paved pathways, improving crossings along the route, and installing wayfinding signage to make the loop trail more accessible and well-known.



Figure 11: Map of the Othello Walk/Bike Path from the Parks and Recreation Plan

Challenges

Auto-Oriented Roadways

Othello, like many small towns, has developed in a pattern that is largely dependent on cars. Streets are wide, but sidewalks are narrow and most buildings are oriented toward parking lots or driveways rather than the sidewalk. This focus on cars can discourage alternative modes of transportation.

Lack of Existing Transportation Options

There is a lack of facilities for people walking and biking in Othello. While there are sidewalks throughout the city, there are also many gaps in the sidewalk network and long stretches without safe pedestrian crossings.

Maintenance and Funding

Funding the development of appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities is always a challenge, as is the funding and logistics of maintenance for these facilities.



Planning Process

Spatial Analysis

A spatial analysis effort was undertaken in order to determine which routes within the city are most vital to the active transportation network. City staff and the planning consultant group looked at a map of major destinations throughout the city, how these destinations are connected by the existing street and pathway networks, and then determined which routes might be most appropriate for various bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure types to subsequently request feedback on from the public and elected officials.

Public Outreach

Public outreach was an important step to ensure that the residents of Othello had a chance

to provide feedback on the vision for active transportation in Othello. The City gathered feedback through multiple methods of outreach, including a community survey, an in-person outreach event, and through multiple check-ins at planning commission meetings.

The survey was conducted during summer 2022 to gauge how people in Othello felt about active transportation needs in the community. A total of 218 respondents took the Othello Active Transportation Survey. Additionally, an in-person outreach event was held outside of Walmart on a Friday afternoon in July to ask people what they want to see from the active transportation plan (pictured to the right). Approximately 50 members of the public participated in the in-person outreach event.





Public Outreach Priorities

The following list summarizes the themes that emerged from this public outreach process. These priorities helped establish this plan's vision, goals, and project prioritization.

- 1** Improve existing sidewalks and develop a sidewalk maintenance program to ensure sidewalks and pathways are well-maintained.
- 2** Close gaps in the sidewalk network by adding sidewalks where there currently are none, especially around schools.
- 3** Develop more opportunities to walk and bike on pathways around town.
- 4** Ensure safe crossings on busy streets and near parks and schools.
- 5** Increase traffic calming efforts to slow down car traffic and improve driver behavior.



Vision

The vision for active transportation in Othello combines objectives from the demographics analysis, spatial analysis, existing policy framework, existing conditions, opportunities and challenges, and public feedback. This vision establishes the active transportation conditions that the City will strive for. The subsequent sections of this plan outline how the vision can be achieved by proposing a network, an action plan, and strategies for implementation.



Vision Statement

Othello aims to become a more walkable and bikeable city.

Othello's active transportation network will be safe, interconnected, and accessible, ensuring all who want to use it are able to. The City of Othello will have an established network of sidewalks, paved pathways, and bike lanes to ensure that there are equitable opportunities for people to get around town without needing a car. This network will connect major destinations throughout the city and enhance local and regional mobility. Active transportation routes will be separated from vehicle traffic to the greatest extent possible and they will connect safely across major intersections. Cyclists and pedestrians will be valued and prioritized by the City and its transportation budget, encouraging residents to walk and bike more often, ultimately increasing the level of active transportation use in Othello.



Goals and Policies

GOAL 1: Provide a complete, connected network of sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes.

- POLICY 1.1 -- Ensure the bicycle and pedestrian facilities connect seamlessly to schools, parks, transit, employment centers, and higher-density neighborhoods.
- POLICY 1.2 -- Prioritize filling in gaps in existing networks, such as sidewalks, to provide continuous facilities and fulfill the Complete Streets Policy outlined in Othello City Code Chapter 11.80.

GOAL 2: Improve safety for people walking and bicycling on city streets.

- POLICY 2.1 -- Improve crossings where active transportation routes intersect with major arterials and where they connect to schools and parks.
- POLICY 2.2 -- Encourage traffic calming measures along all streets within the active transportation network.

GOAL 3: Provide equitable opportunities to access the active transportation network throughout the community.

- POLICY 3.1 -- Encourage amenities along bicycle and pedestrian routes that increase the comfort with using those facilities, such as street trees, lighting, bike racks, benches, and wayfinding/guidance signage.

- POLICY 3.2 -- Regularly monitor the active transportation network to ensure that travel lanes, signs, pavement markings, crossings, and ADA amenities are well maintained and cleared.
- POLICY 3.3 Ensure information and signage is available in multiple languages and/or designed to be easily understood by all, such as with consistent symbology.

GOAL 4: Prioritize, fund, and maintain active transportation projects as the city grows.

- POLICY 4.1 -- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements where possible during scheduled street maintenance/construction.
- POLICY 4.2 -- Require development projects to provide their fair share of bicycle and pedestrian improvements if they are located along a designated active transportation route. (Othello City Code 16.33.130)
- POLICY 4.3 -- Identify and apply for funding to design, construct, and maintain active transportation facilities.
- POLICY 4.4 -- Include priority bicycle and pedestrian facilities in local improvement plans such as the CIP and TIP.
- POLICY 4.5 -- Where funding and/or time is short, utilize tactical urbanism approaches to initiate pilot projects. This includes installing temporary bicycle lanes, parklets, street furniture, & traffic calming to inspire long-term change and gauge community support.



GOAL 5: Increase awareness of the active transportation network.

- POLICY 5.1 -- Keep an updated map of bicycle and pedestrian routes available on the city's web page.
- POLICY 5.2 -- Develop a unified signage system for identifying routes and access points within the active transportation network that is consistent with established standards.
- POLICY 5.3 – Once a sufficient network has been developed, organize educational and awareness programs such as a 'Bike to Work Month' to promote and increase the use and safety of active transportation.



Pedestrian Action Plan

It is Othello's goal to ultimately provide safe pedestrian access on nearly every publicly-owned street in the city. This will ensure that getting around town on foot is doable and safe for those of all ages and abilities.

Othello also recognizes that some streets need safe pedestrian access more than others. For example, ensuring there are safe, continuous sidewalks on local arterials is more important than ensuring there are safe, continuous sidewalks on residential streets simply because there is more traffic and faster speeds on the arterials. Because of this, Othello has identified two different priorities for pedestrian routes in town, Priority 1 Routes and Priority 2 Routes, as explained below and as shown in Figure 12.

Priority 1 Routes

Priority 1 Routes are the highest priority pedestrian routes. These follow arterial and collector streets across the city and provide a high degree of connection. These are also busier streets, making it more important that there are safe and continuous sidewalks and crosswalks.

Priority 1 Routes should:

- ♦ include a buffer from the vehicle travel lanes wherever possible
- ♦ take priority over Priority 2 Routes when filling in sidewalk gaps
- ♦ have safe crosswalks and/or crossing signals wherever two Priority 1 Routes intersect

Priority 2 Routes

Priority 2 Routes are all other city streets because pedestrians should have safe access to all parts of Othello. While it will be important to ensure these routes have sidewalks or safe spaces for pedestrians, they are the routes that provide a lower degree of connection, often connecting to residential areas or city outskirts.

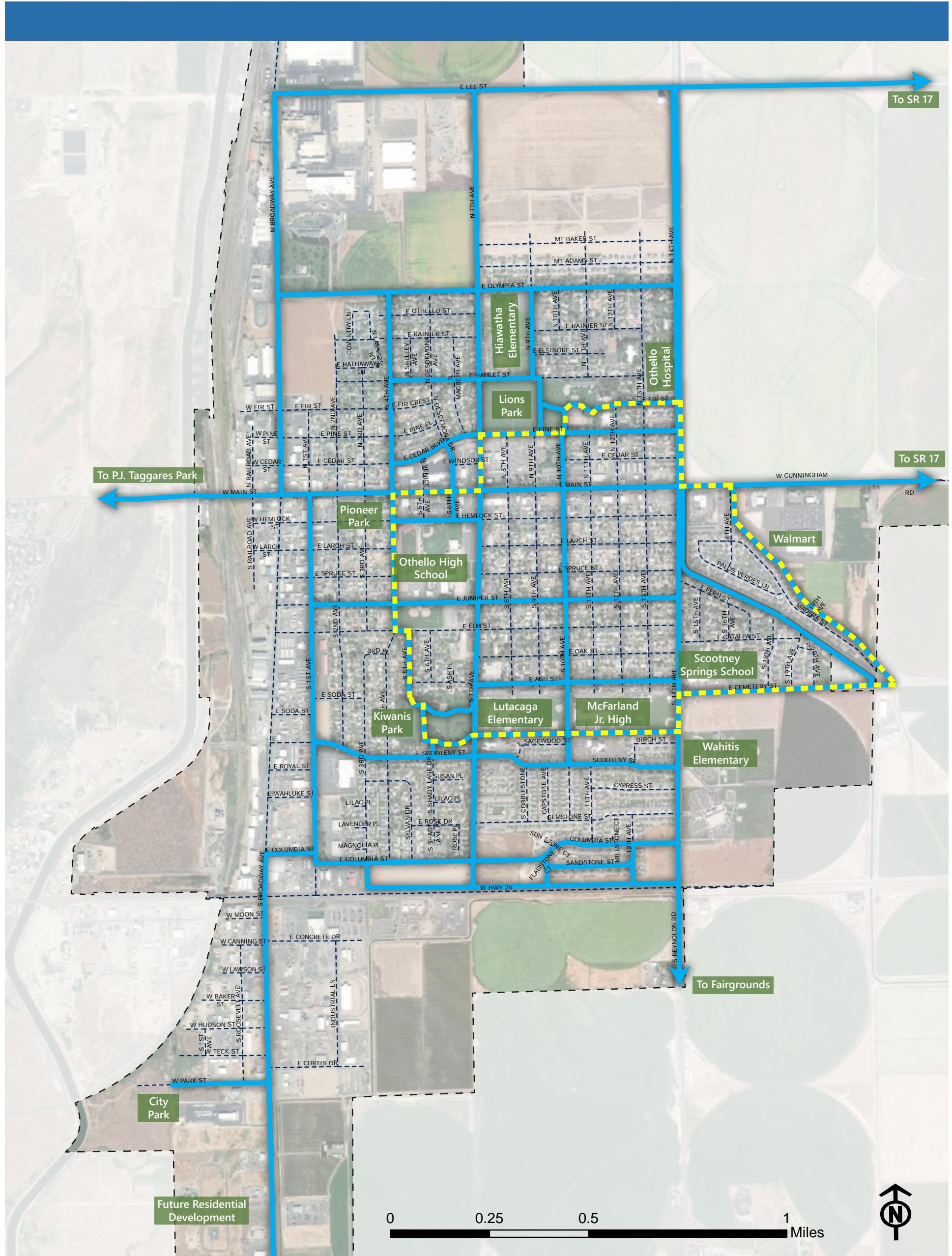
Filling in sidewalk gaps on Priority 2 Routes should be considered whenever other street work is done, or where specific gaps will make a big difference in pedestrian connectivity.

Safe crosswalks and/or crossing signals should be considered where Priority 2 Routes intersect with Priority 1 Routes as some of these intersections may provide beneficial connection points for pedestrians.

Othello Walk Path

Building on the existing Othello Walk Path, this plan aims to enhance this established route to create a safe, accessible, and enjoyable route for walking around Othello. The entire length of the Othello Walk Path is designated as a Priority 1 Route, however this enhanced path will ensure that all sidewalks are buffered from vehicle traffic, street crossings are very safe and visible, and that the route is comfortable, with many areas of shade trees, rest areas with benches and water fountains, and wayfinding signage. This will be the premiere walking route in Othello and maintain an already well-known and established loop.





Othello, WA Pedestrian Network

- Othello Walk Path
- Priority 1 Pedestrian Routes
- - - Priority 2 Pedestrian Routes
- City Limits

Figure 12: Othello Pedestrian Network



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Pedestrian Conceptual Design

The following conceptual designs illustrate a general cross section for the identified facility type. These concept designs focus on the pedestrian realm, and do not represent actual plans and are not to scale.

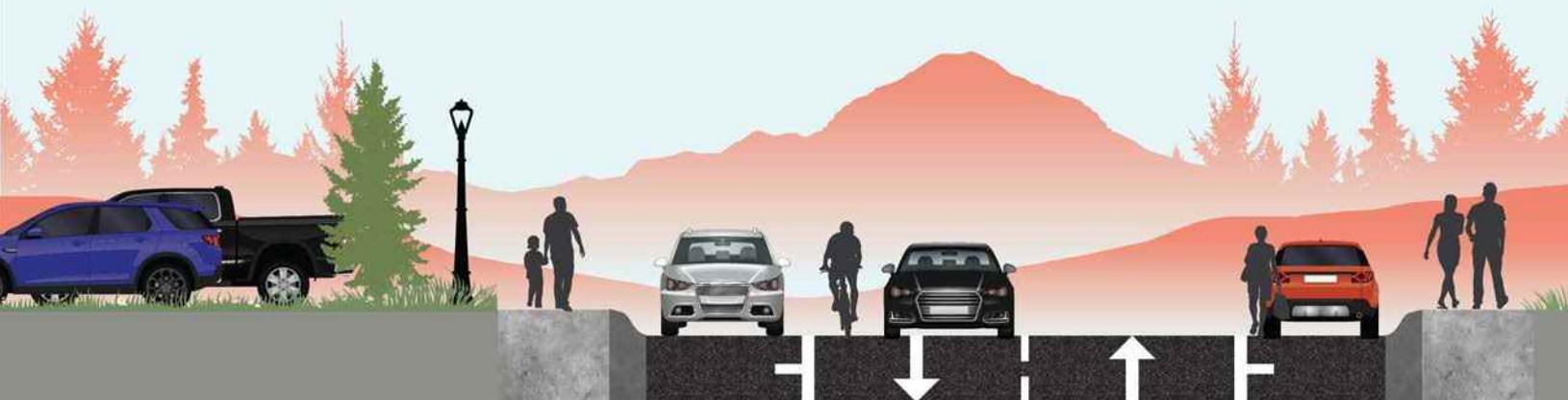


Figure 13: Residential Street Pedestrian Concept

Residential Street Concept

The Residential Street Concept shows what pedestrian facilities should look like on most residential streets in Othello. This concept illustrates a simple residential street with enough curb-to-curb width for street parking on both sides of the street as well as two vehicle travel lanes – one in each direction. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street, conforming to widths provided by Othello's City Code. Residential streets do not need a lot of changes to become safe streets for pedestrians since there are fewer cars driving by, and often slower speeds.

By providing space for pedestrians on both sides of the street, even in residential areas, Othello will ensure that anyone can get around safely on foot, including children, seniors, and those with disabilities.



Collector/Arterial Street Concept

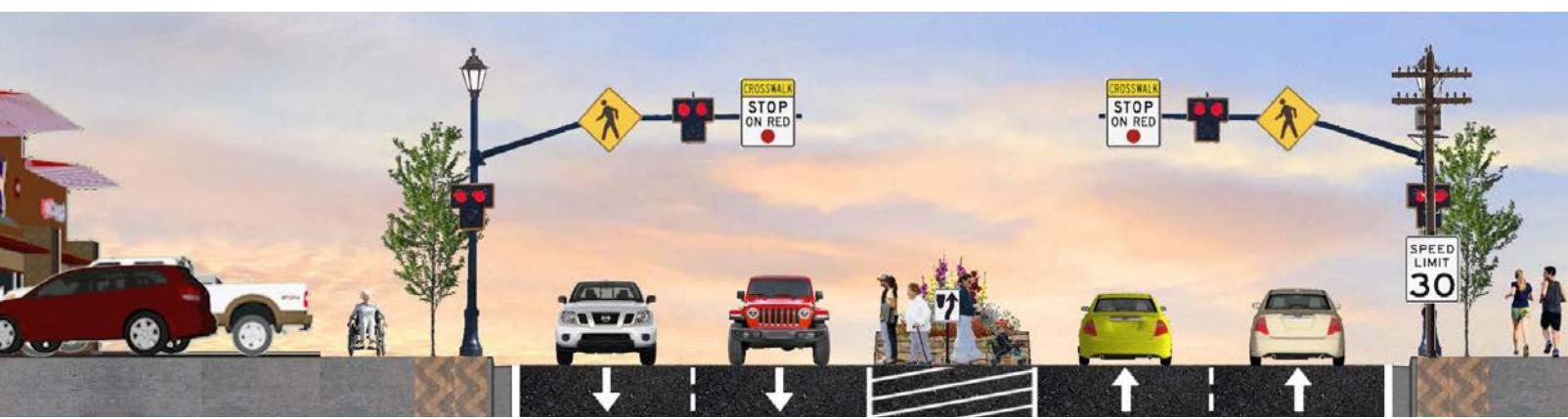


Figure 14: Collector and Arterial Street Pedestrian Concept

Unlike residential streets, collectors and arterials typically have higher volumes of traffic and higher speed limits. This creates conditions that feel less safe for pedestrians, making it even more important that safe and continuous sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street. It also becomes important to ensure that there is a significant buffer between the vehicle travel lanes and the sidewalks. This buffer can either be a wide shoulder, a street parking lane, or landscape/street furniture buffer, such as pictured in Figure 14.

Figure 14 shows a conceptual cross section of

an arterial street with two travel lanes in each direction and a center turn lane, with no parking lane on the side. Because the vehicle travel lane is so close to the curb, an extra buffer is provided, and can be used for street trees, benches, signage, lighting, utility poles, etc.

This figure is not representative of any particular location in Othello, but simply aims to illustrate that anything that provides a physical buffer between the vehicle travel lane and the sidewalk will greatly increase pedestrian comfort and safety.



An example of a mid-block RRFB crossing with a pedestrian refuge island in Airway Heights, WA



The concept also shows a pedestrian refuge island in the center lane. Pedestrian refuge islands are highly recommended for mid-block crossings or wherever the center turn lane is not needed for a particular section of roadway, such as at a mid-block crossing or where left turns are prohibited. These refuge islands help pedestrians to cross busy streets safely where they need to navigate crossing multiple lanes of traffic in each direction.

The concept also depicts a HAWK crossing signal, like the ones at the intersections of Main Street at 4th Ave and 5th Ave. Othello may decide that there are other locations where HAWK signals are appropriate, but ultimately the City should evaluate the unique context of each crossing location (see the section on "Choosing a Crossing Type" below).

Overall, collectors and arterials should provide buffered, accessible sidewalks on both sides of the street and regular safe crossing opportunities should be provided.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are separated into short term and long term recommendations. Short term recommendations are those that are expected to be more feasible within a 5-6 year timeframe (aligning with the TIP), and the long term recommendations are those that may only be possible in a 10+ year timeframe.

Short Term

- ◆ Fill in the sidewalk gaps along Priority 1 Routes.
- ◆ Improve pedestrian street crossings where Priority 1 Routes intersect each other.
- ◆ Improve the sidewalk, paved paths, and crossings along the Othello Walk Path route.

Long Term

- ◆ Add buffers (or furnishing zones) between the street and the sidewalk along Priority 1 Routes. Buffers may vary in size, and the Small Town and Rural Design Guide recommends

furnishing zones of 4-6 feet for proper comfort and aesthetics².

- ◆ Fill in the sidewalk gaps along Priority 2 Routes
- ◆ Connect the pedestrian network to regional networks that connect to nearby communities and the Palouse to Cascades Trail.

Strategies

The following strategies can help inform how best to adapt to different situations and contexts for developing pedestrian facilities throughout Othello. These are not prescriptive and aim to provide guidance on dealing with different situations.

Using the existing Right-of-Way

Lanes as narrow as 10 feet do not result in an increase in crashes or reduce vehicle capacity on roads with speeds of 45 mph or less. Narrower lane widths of 10 feet or less can contribute to lower vehicle operating speeds, which can increase safety for all roadway users. Othello has many streets with travel lanes much wider than 10 feet. Some of this extra space could be repurposed for pedestrian infrastructure.

Choosing a Crossing Type

Intersections pose unique challenges to a pedestrian network. Without proper treatment, an otherwise safe network can suffer from intersection crossings that do not properly accommodate pedestrians.

Different types of crossings will be appropriate in different places, but generally the longer the distance to cross and the higher traffic volume on the road, the greater degree of crossing infrastructure needed. Othello aims to provide enhanced crossings wherever two Priority 1 Routes intersect, and will regularly analyze the need for enhanced crossings wherever Priority 2 Routes intersect with Priority 1 Routes.

² Alta Planning + Design - Rural Design Guide. Retrieved from <https://ruraldesignguide.com/>



Othello may consider an array of crossing types, and ultimate decisions about which crossing types to choose will be determined based on the need of the particular intersection based on city and engineering analysis. These crossing types are outlined below.

Crossing Types

1. Crosswalk Markings (Street Paint & Signs)

Painted crosswalks provide designated places for pedestrians to cross safely. They indicate pedestrian right-of-way through painted pavement and signage and are appropriate for low-volume intersections and residential streets.

2. Raised Crosswalks

These are painted crosswalks that double as speed bumps since they require vehicular traffic to slow down as they drive over the raised crosswalk. This also brings greater awareness to pedestrians attempting to cross at these locations and may be appropriate on low-speed streets with high pedestrian volumes.

3. Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB)

The RRFB is an enhanced/active crossing type that allows pedestrians to press a button that activates flashing beacons to let cars know to stop. These are particularly effective as mid-block crossings or at multi-lane crossings with speeds of less than 40 mph and may be appropriate at many locations along arterials.

4. High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK)

HAWKs provide a high level of protection for pedestrians. These signals require vehicular traffic to stop long enough for a pedestrian to cross the street. These crossings are ideal for streets with high traffic volumes and multiple lanes in each direction. Othello has found HAWKs to be successful within town, and may choose to increase the number of HAWKs as arterial crossings.

5. Grade-separated

Grade-separated crossings separate cars from cyclists and pedestrians. Examples are bridges and tunnels. These are appropriate for locations where it is unreasonable or impossible to slow down vehicle traffic, or where vehicle volumes are very high. They are also options for overcoming barriers such as railroads or rivers/canals, and can be ideal options for paths that aim to provide continuous travel without the need to make stops.

6. Traffic Control Signal

Pedestrian crossings at traffic signals are already usually provided. However, bicycle and pedestrian safety should be enhanced by adding bulb outs, crosswalks painted in vibrant colors, and signal timing that prohibits cars from turning while pedestrians and cyclists cross.



Adding Accessory Features

Ideally, pedestrian facilities in Othello will consist of more than just the sidewalk itself. The experience of walking should be comfortable and enjoyable, and there are a few things that can help improve that experience on Othello's streets.

Street Furniture

Street furniture is a broad term that describes the various amenities that people walking on sidewalks can use and/or benefit from. This includes things like benches, drinking fountains, garbage cans, lighting, and signage. By adding street furniture, the City will help increase interest and comfort when walking through town.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage helps pedestrians orient themselves within the City, and can make walking around much more comfortable while also keeping

pedestrians on track and not distracted with trying to figure out where to go. Othello should ensure that wayfinding signage is available in both English and Spanish.

Landscaping

Having greenery lining the street makes walking much more enjoyable. Simply adding landscaping in the sidewalk buffer, or street trees along the roadway can make walking feel a lot safer, and can even encourage people to get out and walk more. Street trees also provide shade, which can be extra helpful for pedestrians out walking during the hot Othello summers.

The Role of Trees

Increased Pedestrian Safety

Trees play a role in calming traffic. In 2006, a study was done in Texas of ten urban arterial and highway sites. They compared accident records before and after planting trees. What the study found was a 46% decrease in crash rates after the trees were in place. The trees also helped to slow vehicles by up to 8 miles per hour.³

Additionally, trees give the appearance of narrowing street width. Accidents increased by almost 500% within an 8-year period when streets were widened and trees were not present.⁴

Reducing Heat

It is easily observed that shade cools the temperature for people compared with not having any shade. Trees have started to be recognized as a remedy to the public health concerns that have arisen from increased heat. One way to help keep members of a community from facing dehydration and heat exhaustion, and further caring for and protecting their health, is to provide more spaces where they can cool off. This is especially needed if the hope is for them to use active transportation options.

³<https://www.deeproot.com/blog/blog-entries/trees-are-a-tool-for-safer-streets-2/>

⁴<https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/research/transportation/>



Shaded surfaces may be 20-45 degrees cooler than unshaded materials⁵. By providing shade along the areas where people are walking and biking, they become more likely to use these forms of transportation.

Shade Protects Pavement

Shade is not only beneficial to humans, but has a positive impact on built infrastructure as well. A study done in Modesto, California showed that streets that were covered with at least 20% shade had 11% improved pavement conditions compared with streets that did not have shade. This translates to a savings of 60% over 30 years.⁶ Valuable infrastructure like sidewalks and streets can be protected and need less maintenance if they have the proper shading.

Increased Walkability

Trees promote feelings of relaxation, and they promote safety. Research done in the US has shown that tree lined streets encourage people to walk more than those without. A study done in Australia concluded that people who perceived their neighborhood as being highly green had a 1.37 to 1.6 times higher odds of better physical and mental health⁷, based on recreational walking being a significant predictor of mental health.

Overall, if the goal is to have increased walking and biking, trees play a valuable role in working toward that objective.



⁵<https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/using-trees-and-vegetation-reduce-heat-islands#:~:text=Trees%20and%20vegetation%20lower%20surface,peak%20temperatures%20of%20unshaded%20materials>

⁶<https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/research/transportation/>

⁷<https://jech.bmjjournals.org/content/62/5/e9>



Bicycle Action Plan

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are stripes painted along existing roadways that designate space on the street for bicycle use. In Othello, bike lanes will be prioritized on streets that have higher traffic volumes or faster speeds to help cyclists maintain distance from fast-moving cars.

Bike lanes can come in many different forms, and the decision to add bike lanes to streets in Othello will require looking at the specific context of the project and determining what is feasible. For example, it may be possible on streets with higher speeds and traffic volumes, to include a buffered bike lane, as pictured in Figure 15, which is a bike lane with a painted buffer between it and the vehicle travel lane, helping provide space for safety between bikes and cars. The Small Town and Rural Design Guide⁸ states that buffers should be a minimum of 18 inches wide.

Alternatively, bike lanes can be fully separated from the vehicle travel lane by including a physical barrier between the bike lane and vehicle travel lane, as pictured in Figure 16. This can take multiple shapes, including a parking lane, where the parked cars provide a physical buffer, or some other sort

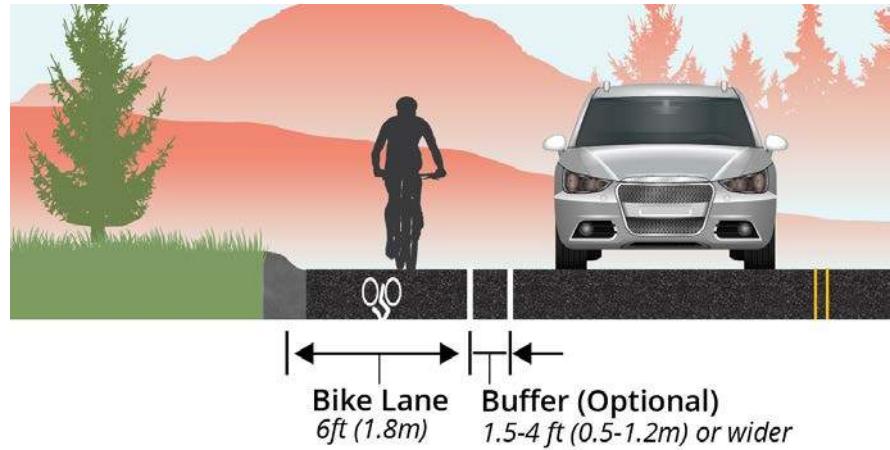


Figure 15: Bike lanes establish an area for exclusive bicycle use outside the path of motor vehicles.

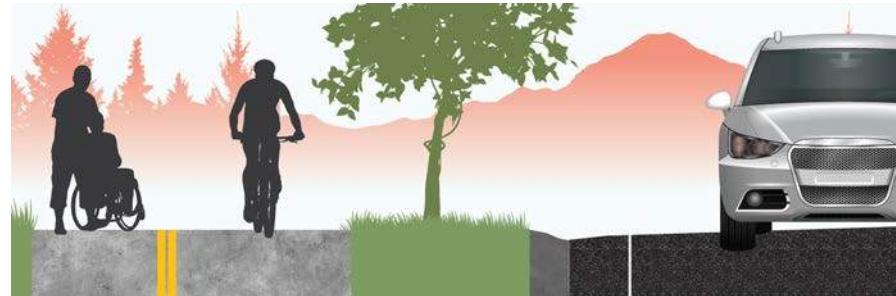


Figure 16: The use of physical separation with vertical elements, unpaved separation, or detectable edges may be more effective than painted buffers.

of physical separation such as bollards, planter boxes, or concrete (jersey) barriers. Separated bike lanes are best for high-speed, high-volume streets.

These various types of bike lanes should be considered, and the safety of the cyclists should be top priority when adding bike lanes to existing streets. The safer the bike lane, the more likely it is to be used.

⁸ Alta Planning + Design - Rural Design Guide. Retrieved from <https://ruraldesignguide.com/>



Bike Friendly Streets

Bike friendly streets are designated bike routes along low-traffic, slow-speed streets. These are often residential streets that connect across town. Some bike riders, such as kids riding to school, may already use these routes because of their calm and safe nature.

By designating these streets as “bicycle-friendly streets”, this plan would help ensure cyclists are continued to be prioritized through investments in safe crossings where these routes cross busier collectors and arterials, sharrows painted on streets to make drivers aware that the road is shared with bicycles (as shown in the example image above), and other traffic calming measures where appropriate.

Shared Use Paths

Shared use paths are pathways or trails that allow both bike and pedestrian use. They are safer for cyclists than bike lanes and bike-friendly streets because they are physically separated from vehicle traffic. These will be prioritized in recreational areas, such as in city parks or along canals, as well as wherever bike infrastructure aligns with roads with speed limits over 35 mph, such as along SR 26.

Future Shared Use Paths

Future shared use paths will have the same characteristics as shared use paths, except these routes will likely take longer to implement. These are long-term projects, but indicate the desire for additional shared use paths in and around Othello, helping create a more cohesive and continuous network of bike paths.

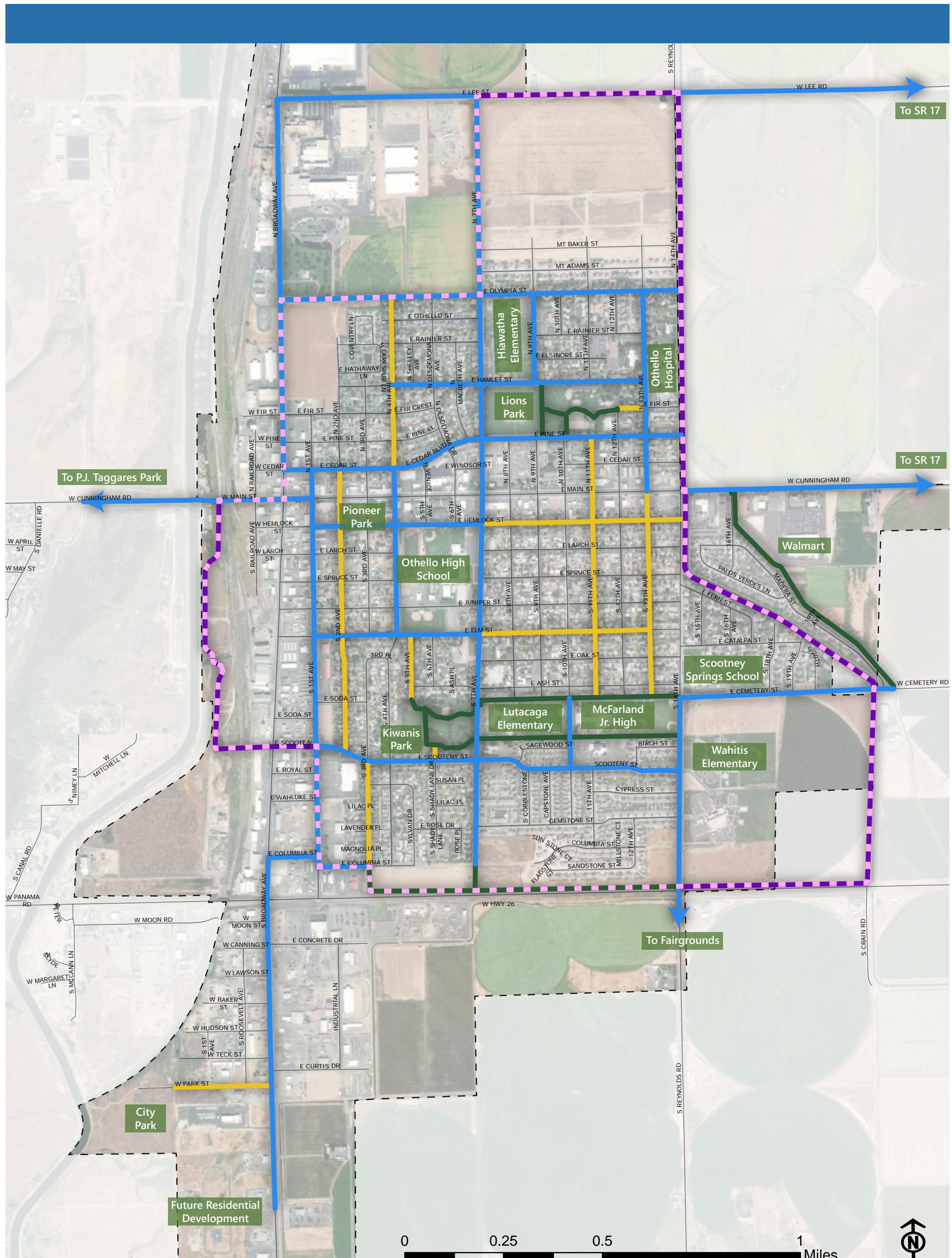
Future Othello Bike Loop

The Future Othello Bike Loop will be a 7.1-mile bike loop around the perimeter of Othello, and will consist of a mix of shared use paths and protected bike lanes.

This concept is a long-term project, but is vital to planning for the future of bike infrastructure in Othello. The goal of the Othello Bike Loop is to provide a long, continuous, recreational bike path that allows cyclists to ride further distances without regularly needing to navigate intersection crossings or vehicle traffic.

Shared use paths on the Othello Bike Loop will require sufficient buffers between the path and any adjacent or nearby vehicle traffic. Likewise, bike lanes on the Othello Bike Loop will necessitate significant separation from adjacent vehicle traffic to ensure that cyclists feel comfortable and safe while riding on Othello’s premier bike route.





Othello, WA Bicycle Network

— Roads
- - - City Limits

Proposed Bicycle Routes

- Bike Lane
- Bike-Friendly Street
- Shared Use Path
- Future Shared Use Path
- Future Othello Bike Loop

Figure 17: Bicycle Network Map



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Bike Infrastructure Conceptual Designs

The following conceptual designs illustrate a general cross section for the identified facility type. These concept designs focus on the bicycle realm, and do not represent actual plans or designs and are not to scale.

Bike Friendly Street Conceptual Design

Bike Friendly Streets are typically low-speed, low-volume residential streets. Bike Friendly means that cyclists can ride anywhere in the street and feel relatively safe and comfortable. These are streets that most would feel comfortable letting their kids ride their bikes to school on.

Bike Friendly Streets can be configured multiple different ways – but the goal is essentially the same: to calm traffic and prioritize cyclists and pedestrians. Cars should feel like guests on these streets, and Othello can develop methods of accomplishing this, such as:

- ◆ Painting bike sharrows on the roadways to help notify drivers to be aware of cyclists
- ◆ Adding signs that indicate the street is a designated bike route – further signaling to drivers that bikes are the priority.
- ◆ Developing traffic calming measures that encourage drivers to slow down.
- ◆ Improving sidewalks, crossings, and other pedestrian facilities that are complementary to cycling infrastructure.

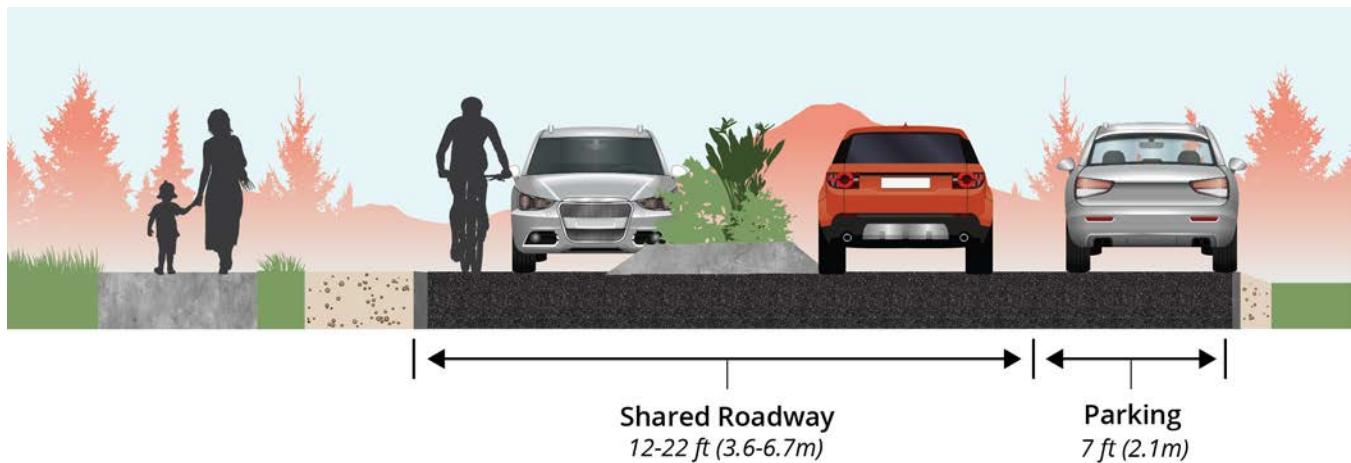


Figure 18: Example diagram with common elements of a bike friendly street.

Bike Lane Conceptual Design

As stated earlier, bike lanes come in many different styles and contexts. The two concepts presented here represent the varying degrees of buffers that bike lanes can have from the moving vehicle lanes. Generally, on roads with more lanes of traffic, more traffic volume, and/or faster speeds, the greater the buffer between the vehicle and the bike lane, the better.

Paint Buffer

Painted buffers do little to actually protect cyclists, since there is nothing except paint on the roadway between vehicles and cyclists. Painted buffers do, however, provide cyclists with extra room to maneuver without feeling like they are competing for space with vehicles. Many cyclists may still feel unsafe on these facility types, but a painted buffer may be the most feasible or logical option for certain places in Othello, as determined at the time of project design. By using existing lane space for a painted bike lane, vehicle traffic lanes become slightly narrower, which can have the added benefit of slowing down traffic on these routes.

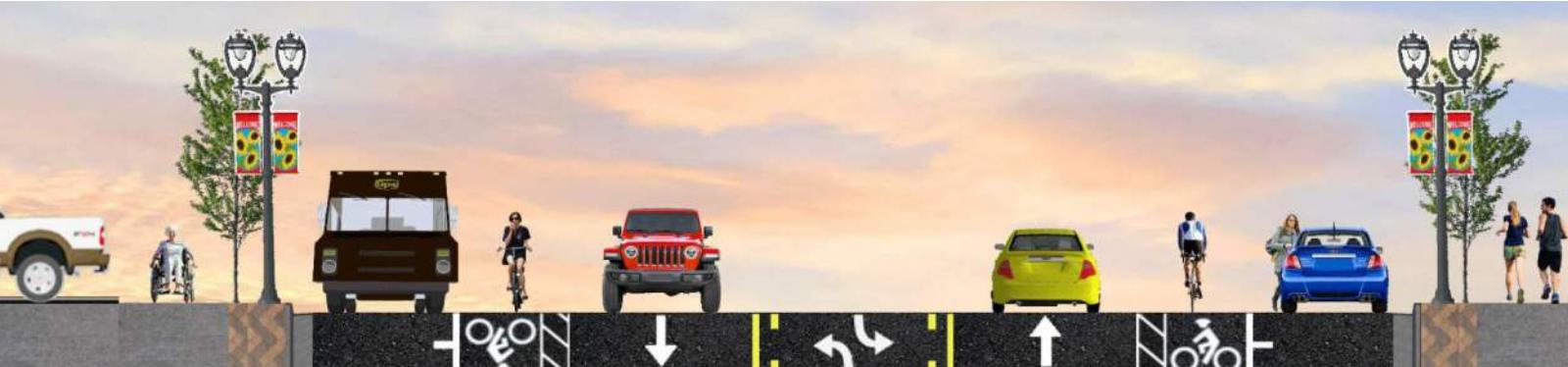


Figure 19: Bike lane with painted buffer

Physical Buffer

A physical buffer is a material object that separates the bike lane from the vehicle travel lane. This can also take many forms, but a common and more feasible option is the parking lane buffer, as depicted in Figure 20. In this situation, the parking lane is painted next to the vehicle travel lane, and the bike lane is designated between the sidewalk and the parking lane. This is one of the more feasible options because it does not require anything more than paint on the roadway, and instead utilizes the need for street parking as a way to keep bikes away from moving traffic. This is preferable over a painted buffer, but uses the same amount of resources: paint.

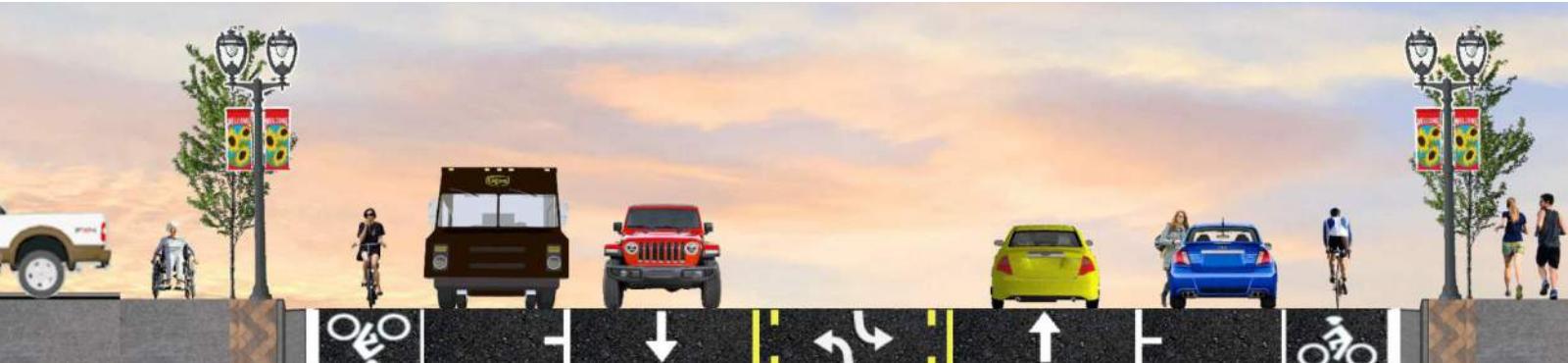
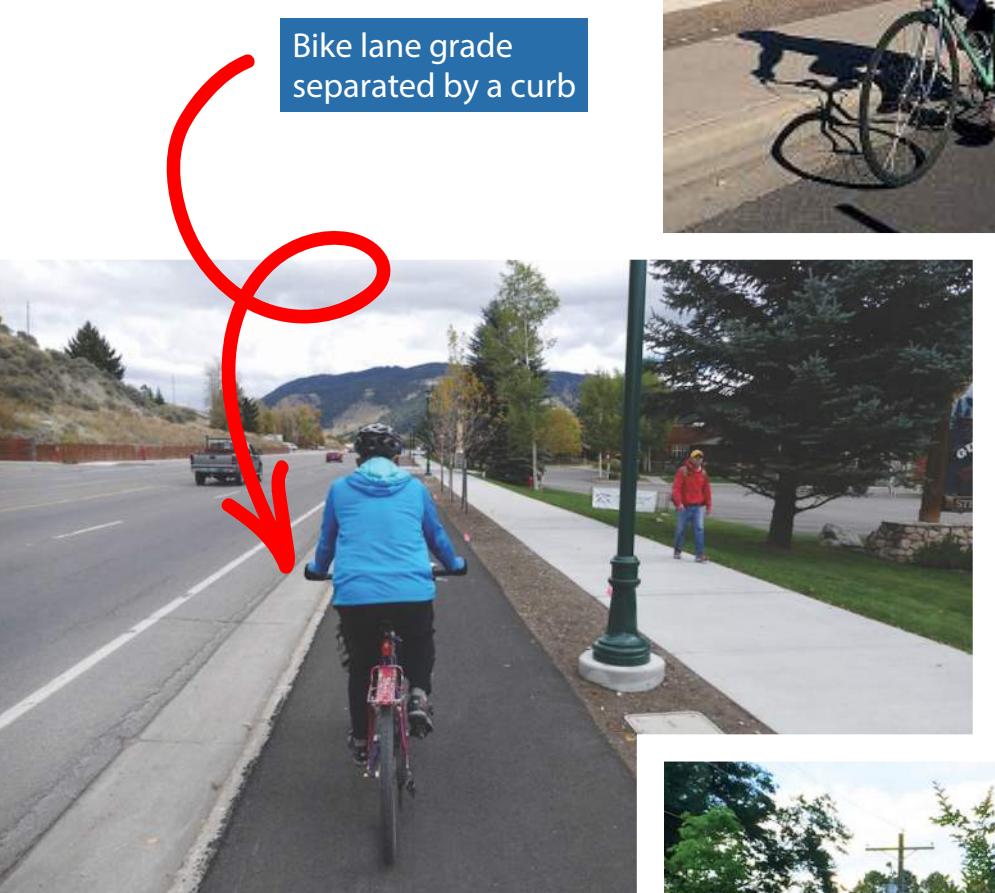


Figure 20: Bike lane with physical buffer (parking lane)

Other physical barriers could include:

- ◆ Grade separation (bike lane separated by a curb)
- ◆ Bollard buffer
- ◆ Landscape buffer



Bike lane with a landscape buffer

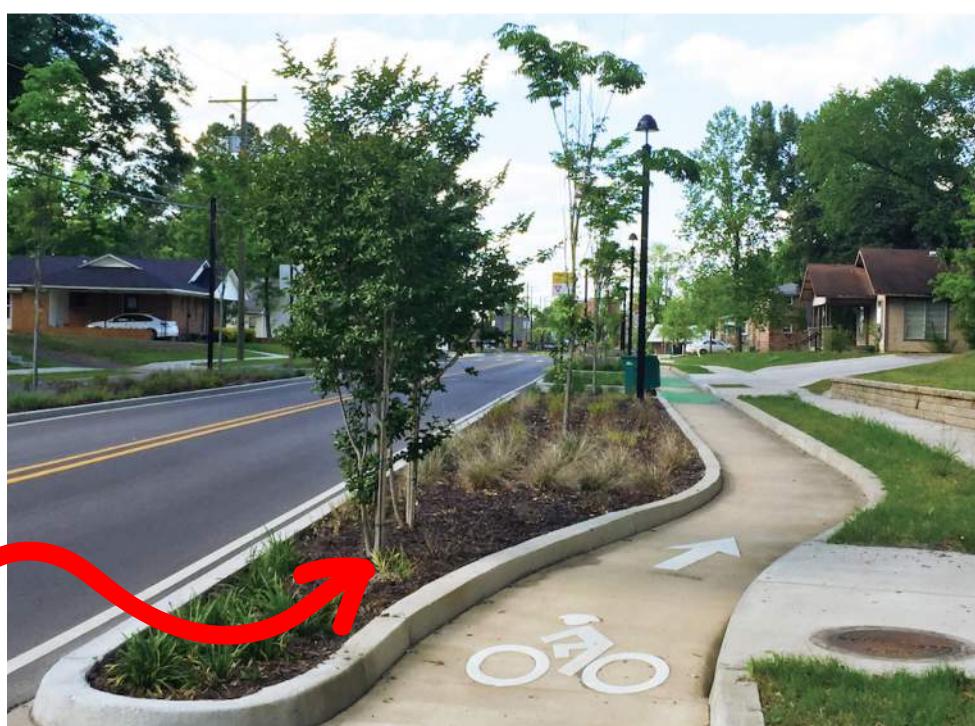




Figure 21: Paved Path (Shared Use Path) Concept

Paved Path Conceptual Design

Paved paths, sometimes known as “shared use paths” or “shared use trails”, are the ideal bicycle facility. These paths, such as the part of the Othello Walk Path on the east side of town, allow both pedestrians and cyclists to travel on them without any interference from cars (except where they cross streets).

These are the safest types of bike infrastructure and are safe for all ages and abilities. However, paved paths require more space than any other type of bike infrastructure since they are separated from existing roadways, and must be significantly wider than the average sidewalk to ensure there is enough space for both cyclists and pedestrians. Best practices from WSDOT recommend that shared use paths have a minimum width of 10 to 12 feet.

Othello aims to expand its network of paved paths where there is room and where it is logical and feasible to do so.

Recommendations

Short Term

- ◆ Add bike lanes to city streets (as designated in the Othello Bicycle Network Map in Figure 17. when completing regular road maintenance work.
- ◆ Improve crossings where bike lanes and paved paths cross arterials and collector streets (see strategies section below)
- ◆ Outline a bike-friendly streets program (see strategies outlined below)
- ◆ Develop traffic calming measures on designated bike routes
- ◆ Implement a Bike Rack Program
 - Include bike rack locations on bike map

Long Term

- ◆ Develop a network of protected bike lanes
- ◆ Develop a wayfinding system
- ◆ Expand the paved pathway network
- ◆ Expand the bike network to new development



Strategies

The following strategies can help inform how best to adapt to different situations and contexts for developing bicycle facilities throughout Othello. These are not prescriptive, and aim to provide guidance on dealing with different situations.

Reorganizing Street Space

Street space can often be reconfigured to accommodate the same capacity of vehicle traffic while also adding safer active transportation facilities. The strategies below offer some examples of reconfiguring streets to accommodate new or safer facilities.

1. In some cases, curbside on-street parking can be shifted away from the curb face to create parking-protected separated bike lanes. This type of project requires changes to pavement markings and attention to intersection design treatments.
2. On streets with parking on both sides, adding bike lanes or shared use trails may not require the removal of all on-street

parking if the parking is not being used efficiently. Deciding where to remove parking may depend on which side of the street has fewer or no businesses.

3. Converting diagonal parking to parallel parking can generate road width for the creation of bikeways and improve bicyclist safety. Front-in, diagonal parking creates conflicts with bicycle travel.

Choosing Alternative Facility Types

When the proposed non-motorized facility type is determined not to be feasible, other facility types which maximize user safety and comfort should be considered. For example, if the preferred facility type is a shared use trail and the current project is a street resurfacing, it may not be feasible for that project to install the shared use trail. The only practical option may be the installation of a bike lane.

In circumstances where the preferred facility type is not feasible, and the provision of a lower quality facility will not provide sufficient safety, a parallel route should be evaluated as an alternative that provides a similar connection.

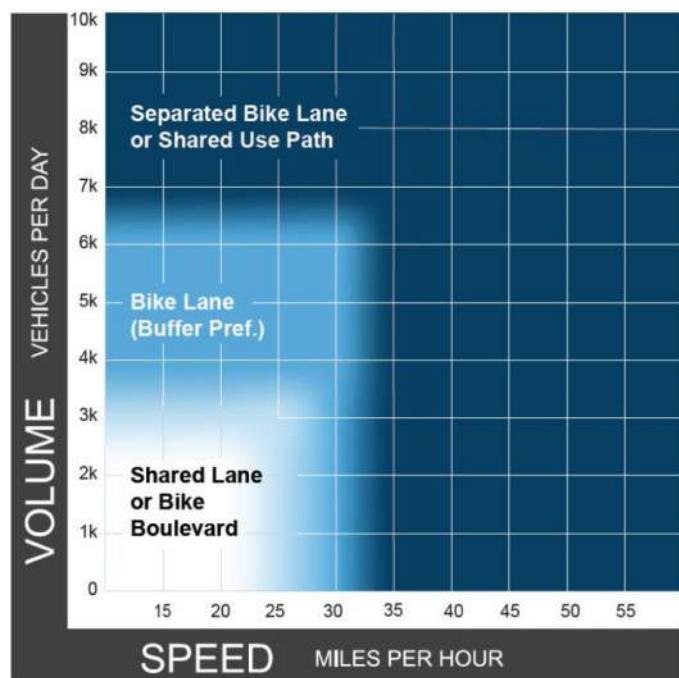


Figure 22: Preferred Bikeway Type Guide
Source: FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide





Installing Pop-Up or Temporary Facilities

Pop-up and temporary facilities can be good demonstration practices that provide immediate and inexpensive solutions. A pop-up bike lane, for example, can show the community what it would be like to invest in a permanent bike lane or path on that segment. Doing this can be a good strategy to gauge the community's reaction to new bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and gain buy-in on projects where some may be skeptical.

These types of projects can be implemented almost immediately because they use inexpensive materials such as traffic cones, pavement tape, planter boxes, and flex delineators.

"[Projects reallocating road space] can be implemented as temporary, or pilot projects to test measures to determine if they meet the needs of all users. This can be an effective strategy to engage community members and build long-term support for more permanent solutions. "

-FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide





Adding Accessory Features

Ideally, bicycle facilities in Othello will consist of more than just the bike lane or paved path itself. The experience of biking should be comfortable and enjoyable, and there are a few things that can help improve that experience on Othello's streets:

Bike Racks

Bike racks are vital to the individual decision of whether to make a trip by bike or not. When people have a safe, convenient place to lock up their bikes, they will be much more likely to choose to travel by bike. Bike racks should be clearly identifiable, and this could even be coordinated with public art efforts. Bike racks should be identified on bicycle wayfinding maps, and the City should consider a bike rack program that works with local businesses to install bike racks outside their business.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage helps cyclists orient themselves within the City, and can make biking around much more comfortable. These signs can be coordinated with pedestrian wayfinding.

Safety Programs

Bicycle safety programs may include education and training on how to use the roadway, local and state bicycle laws, advice for being safe on the road, the importance of wearing a helmet, and how to be a respectful driver. Other programs could include local campaigns to get people to bike more often, such as a "Bike to Work Week" or a Helmet Distribution event. It is important to get the community involved and make them feel like a part of the changes in town, and show people how these efforts to improve cycling in Othello will be beneficial to them and their families.

A bike friendly street program would help Othello gain momentum in creating a network of bike friendly streets, with support and assistance from the community. A bike friendly streets program could involve

- ◆ Choosing the first bike friendly routes on the Bicycle Network Map to become bike friendly streets.
- ◆ Identifying funding for small interventions on these routes such as bike sharrows and signage.
- ◆ Continue to monitor and improve traffic calming measures along these streets.
- ◆ Hosting events such as a [Summer Parkways](#) that gets community members out biking around these streets.



Speed Management and Traffic Calming

Othello should refer to the Small Town and Rural Design Guide⁹ for best guidance on traffic calming measures. The guide outlines strategies such as speed humps and speed tables, mini roundabouts, pinch points, lateral shifts, median islands, speed feedback signs, and speed reduction markings.

The guide also discusses the benefits of traffic calming, highlighting the graphic below that shows how much safer streets with slow speeds are for pedestrians (and cyclists).



Figure 23: Impact speed and a pedestrian's risk of severe injury or death

Source: ruraldesignguide.com

Accommodating for Bikes in Street Crossings

Cyclists must also be considered in crossing improvements. Crosswalks, RRFBs, and HAWK signals that align with sidewalks may be difficult for cyclists to access. Therefore, Othello should consider placement of crossing infrastructure on arterials and collectors to be accessible by both pedestrians and cyclists on routes where the two align.

The Small Town and Rural Design Guide provides the following guidance for accommodating bike lanes at intersections:

Design strategies for bike lanes at intersections emphasize reducing speeds, minimizing exposure, raising awareness, and communicating right-of-way priority.

- Under most conditions, bicyclists have priority over turning traffic. Markings and signs should support this priority and remind motorists of the obligation to yield.
- Adjacent to a through-right lane, use a modified R10-15 Turning Vehicles Yield to Bikes sign to clarify user priority.
- Where a right-turn lane is established to the right of a bike lane, R4-4 Begin Right Turn Lane Yield to Bikes sign reminds motorists to yield to bicyclists before entering the lane.
- Where special emphasis is desired, green pavement color may be used within bike lanes and at merging or weaving areas where motor vehicles may cross bike lanes. For more information on the use of color, refer to FHWA Interim Approval 14 2011.

⁹ Alta Planning + Design - Rural Design Guide. Retrieved from <https://ruraldesignguide.com/>



Intersection Crossing Markings



Added Right Turn-Only Lane



Figure 24: A variety of design treatments exist depending on the roadway configuration, available curb-to-curb width, traffic volumes and desire to provided a dedicated turn lane. All designs should strive to reduce speeds of turning vehicles, remind users of bicycle priority, and clarify user positioning approaching and through the intersection. Common signs at intersections include R4-4 Begin Right Turn Lane Yield to Bikes and a modified R10-15 Turning Vehicles Yield to Bikes sign.

Source: ruraldesignguide.com





Combined Bike Lane/ Turn Lane in Eugene, OR. Source: nacto.org

Additionally, the Urban Bikeway Design Guide by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)¹⁰ provides guidance on combining bike lanes and turn lanes, which may be necessary on streets where there is a right turn lane but not enough space to maintain a standard-width bicycle lane at the intersection:

A combined bike lane/turn lane places a suggested bike lane within the inside portion of a dedicated motor vehicle turn lane. Shared lane markings or conventional bicycle stencils with a dashed line can delineate the space for bicyclists and motorists within the shared lane or indicate the intended path for through bicyclists. This treatment includes signage advising motorists and bicyclists of proper positioning within the lane.

¹⁰ National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). Urban Bikeway Design Guide. Retrieved from <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/>

Funding Opportunities

There are various funding strategies and grant opportunities to pursue to complete projects in this plan. The City of Othello should monitor these opportunities regularly to ensure grant deadlines are met and program funding is identified well in advance of the proposed project development. The funding strategies listed here are just some of the options available, so looking for funding opportunities outside of this list will be beneficial to the development of the non-motorized network.

Taxes

Property Taxes

County governments collect property tax levy for the County Road Fund. The County Road Fund is limited to no more than \$2.25 per \$1,000 of assessed value to be used for "proper county road purposes." These purposes include establishing, laying out, constructing, altering, repairing, improving, and maintaining county roads, bridges, and wharves for vehicle ferriage.

Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes (MVFT)

The 49.4 cents/gallon gas tax revenues collected by the state are shared among cities, counties, and WSDOT. Under RCW 47.30 cities may use a portion of their motor vehicle fuel tax funds to establish and maintain paths and trails for pedestrians, equestrians, or bicyclists as a part of streets, roads, and highways.

Sales and Use Tax for Public Facilities in Rural Counties

Monies collected in rural counties for the purpose of financing public facilities that serve economic development purposes in the rural county. Adams County may collect and distribute these funds to

utilize in projects, including city transportation improvements. Funded projects must be listed in the county or city economic development plan, comprehensive plan, or capital facilities plan.

Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD)

Cities and counties may establish TBDs to fund capital improvements and operations of transportation systems. TBDs fund projects through voter-approved tax levies, bonds, sales taxes, motor vehicle fees, tolls, LIDs, and other fees. Othello has established a TBD as outlined in the Othello Municipal Code Chapter 3.30. The TBD consists of the entire city limits. TBD funds may be used to make transportation improvements that are consistent with state, regional, and local transportation plans.

Private Development Fees/Impact Fees

Impact fees are authorized in Washington State as a financing tool to help develop infrastructure improvements. Impact fees may be used for active transportation infrastructure.



Recreation Trails Program

This is a FHWA program that develops and maintains recreational trails and trail-related facilities. Funds for this program are from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use (snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off highway motorcycles, and off-highway light trucks).

Federal Public Lands Access Program

This program funds transportation improvements that provide access to, on, or adjacent to federal lands. This program is an updated version of the Forest Highway Program. Transportation improvements may include public roads, bridges, trails, or transit systems.

WSDOT Funding

Surface Transportation Block Grant and Transportation Alternatives Programs

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds can be used for the widest range of transportation projects including street or sidewalk construction projects, design, and right-of-way acquisition projects, etc.

- ♦ Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds can only be used for bike and pedestrian facilities and programs, trails, some historic preservation projects, and safe routes to schools.
- ♦ Funding priorities and project selection process are established by the funding agency (Adams County). STP and TAP funds have different requirements as to which facilities are eligible based on functional classification and project type, with greater flexibility for TAP funds than STP. Putting any federal money onto a project – even a very small amount relative to the rest of the project funding – effectively federalizes the entire project and all monies must be used in ways that meet federal reporting and accounting

requirements and the project must comply with all federal standards for design, testing, and record keeping. A project designed with federal funds must go to construction within 10 years or else the earlier expenditure of funds must be repaid. Any federally-funded project other than a planning project must be managed by an agency certified by Highways and Local Programs for this purpose.

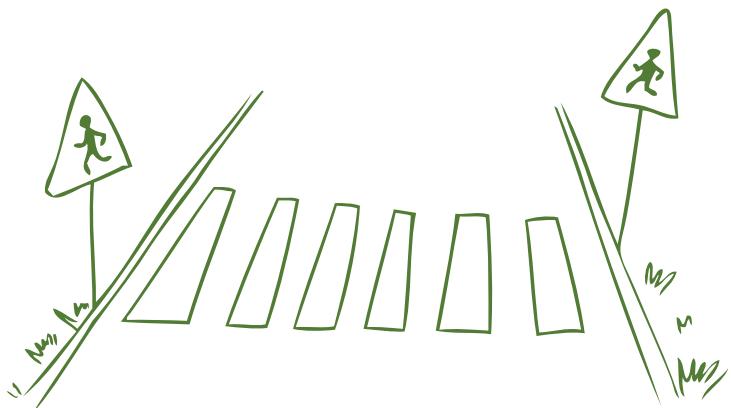
Federally-funded projects have a minimum 20% local match requirement.

- ♦ For more information: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/localprograms/programming/stp.htm>

Pedestrian and Bicycle Program

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Program objective is to improve the transportation system to enhance safety and mobility for people who choose to walk or bike. Since 2005, the program has awarded \$72 million for 159 projects from over \$337 million in requests.

- ♦ WSDOT issues a call for projects in the “even year” before the new biennium for selection by the legislature. For example, the application period closed in June 2020 for projects to be considered for funding in the 2021-2023 biennium. The most recent call for projects was in 2022. All public agencies in Washington are eligible to apply.
- ♦ For more information: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/funding-programs/pedestrian-bicycle-program>





Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

- ◆ The WSDOT Safe Routes to School program provides technical assistance and funding to public agencies to improve conditions for and encourage children to walk and bike to school. Eligible projects include infrastructure improvements within two miles of a school and education/encouragement projects.
- ◆ No match requirement but priority is given to projects with cash or in-kind match.
- ◆ The grant cycle is every two years. The most recent application was due June 2022.
- ◆ For more information: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/funding-programs/safe-routes-school-program>

Regional Mobility Grants

WSDOT provides a grant program for projects that promote multimodal transportation and improve high occupancy travel in order to reduce travel delay for people and goods. Projects can be capital construction, equipment acquisition, and operating. Most projects are transit-related in this program.

Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Funding

Complete Streets Funding

- ◆ The Complete Streets Award is a funding opportunity for local governments that have an adopted complete streets ordinance, such as Othello. Board approved nominators may nominate an agency for showing practice of planning and building streets to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, access to transit, cyclists, and motorists of all ages and abilities.
- ◆ This program awards grants every two years, starting in 2017. Agencies with an adopted complete streets ordinance should confirm their eligibility.
- ◆ For more information: <http://www.tib.wa.gov/grants/grants.cfm>



Washington State Department of Commerce Funding

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

- General Purpose Grants can be used for the planning or construction of public infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, and community facilities that serve lower income populations, affordable housing, and economic development projects. Application materials are available in March and due in June of each year.
- CDBG funds can be used as local match for other federal or state grant programs used to fund CDBG-eligible activities.
- For more information: <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/current-opportunities/community-development-block-grants/>

Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)

Land and Water Conservation Fund

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funding to preserve and develop outdoor recreation resources, including parks, trails, and wildlife lands.
- Applications are due annually in the spring.
- For more information: <https://rco.wa.gov/grant/land-and-water-conservation-fund/>

Volunteers and Donations

- While the local community may have limited funding resources to tap for capital improvement projects, a number of the projects developed in this plan would be appropriate for smaller-scale contributions from businesses and civic boosters, as well as provide opportunities for community

involvement either for-hire or as volunteers on the design and/or installation.

- Local artists can be used in the design and fabrication of signage and wayfinding features.
- Local contractors or vendors may be appropriate for some of the smaller projects, trail furnishings, art and signage installation, landscaping and painting.
- There are a number of opportunities to partner with private property owners to enhance the streetscape or view corridors where there is no clear demarcation between the public right of way and private property.

Table 1: Funding Opportunities by Facility Type

Facility Type	Recommended Funding
Shared Use Trails	<p>Funding opportunities for shared use trails come from complete streets opportunities, WSDOT funding, and increased opportunities for regional mobility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Surface Transportation Block Grant ProgramRegional MobilityComplete Streets Funding
Bike Lanes	<p>Bike lanes are funded mainly through larger program scopes and are a subset of why funding could be awarded to a project. WSDOT and Commerce have opportunities that integrate diverse modes of travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Surface Transportation Block Grant ProgramPedestrian and Bicycle ProgramCommunity Development Block Grants
Sidewalks	<p>Sidewalks can be funded through a variety of programs. The more connections that are made, such as schools, parks, low income residential districts, the more funding is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pedestrian and Bicycle ProgramCommunity Development Block Grants
Routes to Schools	<p>Connections to schools, neighborhoods, essential services, and parks have a variety of funding options through WSDOT, Commerce, and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Safe Routes to SchoolCommunity Development Block Grants



Conclusion

Othello is looking toward the future and planning for population growth and economic changes. This growth and change will come with increased pressures on the transportation system. Othello hopes to become a safer, more accessible city to help accommodate and capitalize on this growth. A very big part of this will be creating safer streets for all community members, and a big part of that is ensuring safety and accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians.

By moving forward toward these proposed facilities, networks, and strategies, Othello will be able to achieve the vision stated in this plan.





TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: January 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Economic Development, Debt, Local Improvement Districts, Latecomer Agreements, Tax Increment Financing – Informational

At the November meeting, the Commission expressed an interest in stimulating economic development by completing missing street and utility improvements. Staff has compiled some options that are available. MRSC (Municipal Research & Services Center of WA) explanations are quoted and summarized below, with the links given for anyone who wants to explore a topic in more depth.

Staff Comments

1. **Economic Development** is a broad category including job creation, job retention, job training programs, public and private capital investments, and business and community capacity-building to allow the business or community to continue to grow. All activities must be for a proper public purpose and not in violation of Washington's constitutional restrictions on the giving of money or the lending of credit. It is more of an overall strategy rather than addressing a specific infrastructure gap.

<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/economic-development/economic-development-basics/economic-development-in-washington-state-an-introduction>

2. **Debt** <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/finance/debt/types-of-municipal-debt>

- a. **General obligation bonds** are repaid through taxes.
 - i. **Limited/councilmanic bonds** may be issued by a vote of the legislative body. Because voters haven't been asked to approve the tax increase, existing general fund revenues must be used for the interest payments.
 - ii. **Unlimited bonds/voted debt** must be approved by 60% of voters, with voter turnout of at least 40% of those who voted in the most recent general election. It can include debt service in the repayment because voters are being asked to raise their property taxes.
 - b. **Revenue bonds** may be used to finance projects for an enterprise that is self-supporting. Generally used to finance water and wastewater projects, airports, and stormwater systems. Repaid through user fees.
 - c. Improvement District bonds. A **Local Improvement District (LID)** is used when a capital project primarily or wholly benefits only a subset of the community. Commonly used for projects like street improvements, street lights, sidewalks, water and sewer systems, and underground power lines. City or owners can initiate. Can be blocked if owners who would be paying at least 60% of the cost object. Bonds are sold to pay for the project, then the benefiting property owners pay off the bond over time. LIDs can be a catalyst for economic growth, allowing developers long-term financing at potentially lower interest rates; however, because the construction must be overseen by the city and requires prevailing wage and public works contract requirements, costs are higher than if it were a private construction project. LIDs are very well-suited to filling in gaps in existing infrastructure but "LID financed projects test agency public relations skills like no other projects". The assessment per parcel may not exceed the benefit to the parcel

(the difference between the fair market value of the property before and after the project).

<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/public-works/finance/local-improvement-districts>

3. **Latecomer Agreements or Reimbursement Agreements** allow a property owner who installed street or utility improvements to recover a portion of the costs from property owners who develop later and benefit from the improvements. <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/public-works/finance/local-improvement-districts>
4. **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** is a tool to fund public infrastructure in target areas to encourage private development and investment. TIF allows a city to set an “increment area” around the site needing improvements. The property tax increase caused by the increase in assessed value after the improvements is used toward paying off the cost of the improvements. Similar to MFTE, this would affect all taxing districts (except the state school levy and regular property taxes levied by a port to the extent necessary to repay general obligation bonds). A project analysis is required, including estimates of the increased assessment and revenues generated. <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/economic-development/financing-economic-development/tax-increment-financing>

Attachments

- None. See links for more information.

Action: The Planning Commission should review the provided material and provide direction to staff if they want to further pursue any of these methods.

City of Othello
Building and Planning Department
December 2022

Building Permits			
	Applied	Issued	Final
Residential	1 ¹	3 ⁴	5 ⁷
Commercial	1 ²	3 ⁵	3 ⁸
Industrial	0	0	0
Total	2	6	8

¹ Swimming pool
² HVAC at Tee-Pee Septic
⁴ 1 single family, 1 remodel, 1 swimming pool
⁵ Storage shed at Dug-X, HVAC at Tee-Pee Septic, Sign at Public Works building
⁷ 2 patio covers, 1 fence, 1 furnace replacement, 1 single-family foundation permit
⁸ Fence at 1995 S. Broadway, storage shed at Dug-X, Sign at Public Works building

Inspections

- The Inspector completed 34 inspections in December, including 4 rental inspections.

Land Use Permits		
Project	Actions in December	Status as of December 31
Charan Short Plat	No action (Prelim plat approved in June, owner put on hold in Sept.)	Next steps will be sidewalk and final plat.
M. Gomez Boundary Line Adjustment (Matching lines with businesses at 724-728-740 E. Main St)	No change (BLA approved in April.)	Waiting for copy of recorded BLA
Ochoa Short Plat	No change (Deferrals heard at Aug. 2021 Planning Commission meeting.)	Waiting for proposed covenant language from applicant's attorney, as specified in PC recommendation.
Sand Hill Estates #4 Final Plat	Comment period ended. Department & agency comments provided to applicant. Updated drawings submitted & reviewed. Drafted easement, resolution, & covenant for temporary cul-de-sac. Prepared items to present to Council in January.	Final plat, easement, & resolution scheduled for 1/9 Council meeting
Sand Hill Estates #5 preliminary plat	Public hearing held. Reviewed Hearing Examiner decision and issued Notice of Decision. Realized the northernmost part of the plat extends outside the	Waiting for applicant to review draft revisions to decision document.

Land Use Permits		
Project	Actions in December	Status as of December 31
	<p>Residential zone. Prepared request for reconsideration.</p> <p>Researched zoning history for this area.</p> <p>Applicant decided to withdraw the northernmost lots that extend outside the Residential zoning.</p> <p>Per Hearing Examiner direction, drafted a revised decision document & sent to applicant for concurrence.</p> <p>Created Comp Plan Amendment/ Rezone form so proponent can apply for changes to his remaining property.</p>	
Story Rentals Short Plat (Ace Hardware)	Revised final plat drawing submitted 12/30.	Staff will review new submittal in early January. (Done Jan. 3)
Wahitis Short Plat	<p>(History: May 2019 Plat approved. Dec. 2019 Scootney street/utility improvement plans approved by City. 5/26/20 USBR notified School District that it will be about a year before they have time to review it.</p> <p>Dec. 2021 OSD received paperwork releasing the USBR easement, but it had some errors that will need to be corrected by USBR.)</p>	<p>No change: Street improvements must be completed or bonded before accepting mylars for recording.</p> <p>USBR issues must be resolved before street improvements can proceed.</p>

Rental Licensing & Inspection Program

- One new rental application was submitted in December.
- There were 4 inspections in December (2 single family homes, 1 ADU, 1 unit of a triplex). One passed.
- 68 locations with a total of 118 units have been fully approved so far.
- There are currently 86 active applications for a total of 188 units in various stages of inspection and correction.

Development Projects

- Building Inspector Tim Unruh continues to manage the contractors and scheduling for the City Hall/Court remodel, painting, carpeting, temporary office relocation, etc.

Housing

- Brought draft Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) ordinance to Council in case there were any questions.

- The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft MFTE ordinance and took testimony from stakeholders. The Commission made one change to the ordinance and forwarded a recommendation to City Council.
- Staff sent MFTE informational letter to the taxing districts and invited them to participate in the public process.

Parks & Recreation

- Received notice that the applications for RCO “Planning for Recreation Access” grants are complete, and review is expected to take until late January. Othello applications were for cultural resource reports, planning and designing Taggares Park improvements, and planning and designing a spray park (to be further along at the next grant cycle for construction funds). Statewide, 99 projects requesting a total \$12.5M were submitted to RCO. Funding available is \$3M.

Transportation

- Reviewed second draft of the Active Transportation Plan with the Planning Commission. They want to see a more finalized version before it is released for public comment.
- Several more rounds of review of maps and drafts of the Active Transportation Plan with consultant.

Website

- Created webpage for [MFTE program](#).
- Updated [Long Range Planning](#) page.

Other

- Reviewing updates to Zoning Map being prepared by Engineering.
- Working with Permit Trax to be able to take permits online through the website (Citizen Connect).