



North Park Avenue Sidewalks and Maxwell Road Crosswalk Design Concept

September 2020

Proposed Project: sidewalk and bike lane on the east side of North Park Avenue between Maxwell Road and Howard Avenue; and pedestrian-activated flashing beacon and concrete pedestrian refuge island at crosswalk on Maxwell Road at North Park Avenue.

Acknowledgements

This is a community-driven project under the leadership of:

Howard Elementary and Colin-Kelly Middle Schools

Funding Provided by:

The Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

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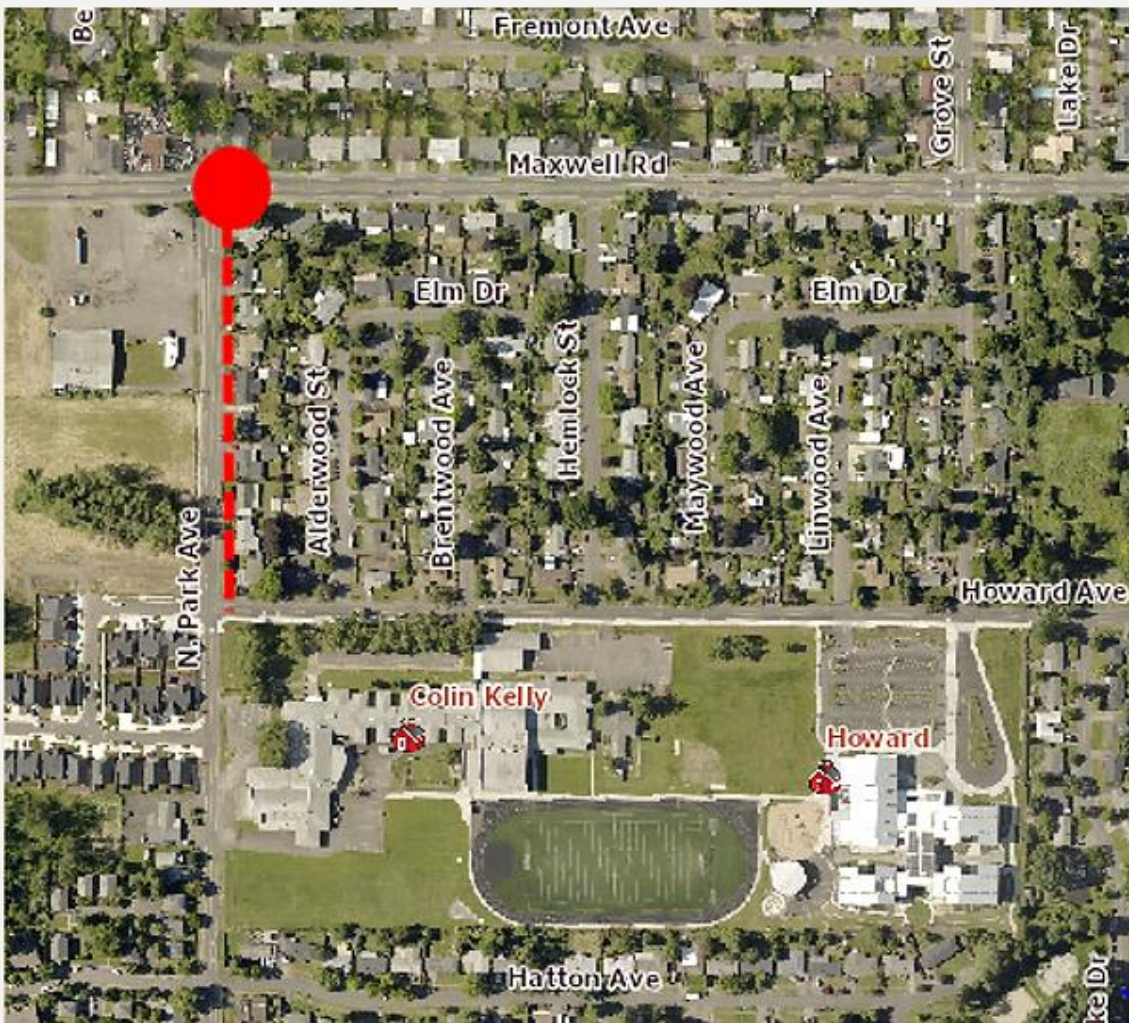
Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the project purpose and process.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve safety, especially for people walking on North Park Avenue and crossing Maxwell Road. This project would provide sidewalks and a bike lane on the east side of North Park Avenue, between Maxwell Road and Howard Avenue, and a pedestrian-activated flashing beacon and pedestrian island at the crosswalk on Maxwell Road at North Park Avenue. The pedestrian island would replace/remove the center turn lane for westbound traffic on Maxwell Road turning south onto North Park Avenue.

Figure 1. Project Area



Currently, there is only sidewalk on the west side of North Park Avenue. Sidewalks are needed on the east side of the street to access Howard Elementary and Collin-Kelly Middle Schools located at the southeast corner of North Park Avenue and Howard Avenue. The crosswalk on Maxwell Road has signage and pavement markings, but vehicles failing to yield to pedestrians is a safety concern. The school reported a student being hit by a car in the crosswalk; fortunately, the child was not injured.

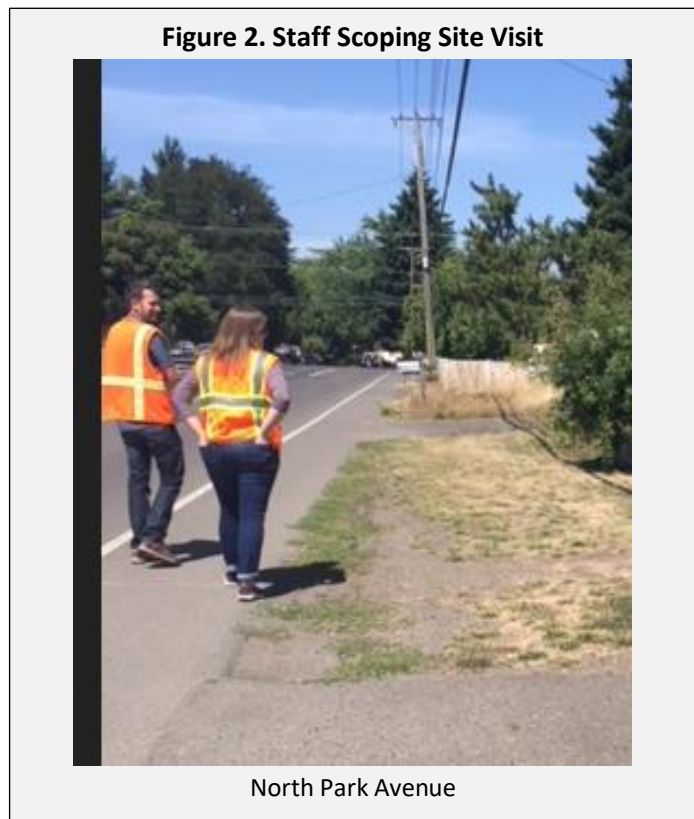
The schools have been advocating for these improvements for years. Over 100 students signed a petition for improving safety on North Park Avenue and Maxwell Road (see Appendix B). Funding for this project was made possible by the Central Lane Planning Organization (MPO). As a member of the MPO, Lane County applied for this funding which was awarded by the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC).

Process

The MPO funding requires compliance with applicable federal requirements. The funding is administered through the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Lane County and ODOT staff had a project kick-off meeting in March 2019 and met on-site in December 2019. The requirements associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and storm water management increased the project cost estimates.

In January 2020, Lane County obtained a Metro Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) amendment to reprogram funding from a cancelled project to provide additional funding for this project. The current project funding programmed through the MPO is \$805,461.37. The project funding is phased for design in 2019-2020 and construction in 2021.

The project is currently in the design phase. Lane Manual 15.580 establishes a public involvement process and requires Design Concept approval by the Lane County Board of Commissioners. This report demonstrates consistency with these procedural requirements.



Chapter 2 – Existing Conditions

This chapter describes constraints and opportunities of Gilham Road

Jurisdiction

Currently, Lane County has jurisdiction of North Park Avenue, north of Howard Avenue, and Maxwell Road, east of the Maxwell Connector (see Figure 3). There is a patchwork of annexed properties, such as the school and several properties on the west side of North Park Avenue which have recently been developed with apartments. On the east side of North Park Avenue, most of the properties have not been annexed and are developed with houses.



Like all County roads within urban growth boundaries, a desired outcome of this project is jurisdictional transfer to the City of Eugene. Jurisdictional transfer is when ownership of a roadway is transferred from one roadway authority to another. When an agency has jurisdiction of a street or highway, that agency is responsible for the upkeep of that facility, including reconstruction, maintenance, and preservation.

Roadway Conditions

North Park Avenue (Maxwell Road to Howard Avenue) has a bike lane, curb, gutter, and sidewalk on the west side of the street only. The east side of the street has a narrow asphalt shoulder. Lane County classifies North Park Avenue as an Urban Local. The posted speed is 25 miles per hour (mph). The average daily traffic volume measured in 2019 was 2,550 vehicle trips.

Figure 4. North Park Avenue Conditions



South of Howard Avenue, the Eugene school district has constructed sidewalks on the east side of North Park Avenue, abutting the elementary and middle schools. The sidewalks are setback from the street with a planter strip. The school district also installed speed cushions on North Park Avenue abutting the school property to reduce vehicle speeds.

Maxwell Road Crossing (at North Park Avenue) is a through intersection for east-west travel on Maxwell Road with stop signs regulating north-south travel on North Park Avenue. Lane County classifies Maxwell Road as an urban minor arterial. The posted speed on Maxwell Road is 35 mph. The average daily traffic volume is 5,000 vehicle trips.

There are center turn lanes which increase the crossing distance for pedestrians, thereby increasing their exposure to motor vehicle traffic. There is only a painted crosswalk on the east leg of the intersection; aside from stop bars, there are no markings at the other three legs of the intersection.

Figure 5. Maxwell Road Conditions



Safety

In the past five years, there have been three vehicle crashes within the project area. Two were rear-end crashes at the intersection that resulted in property damage and minor injuries. About mid-block on North Park Avenue there was a turning-movement crash that resulted in minor injuries.

There were no bicycle or pedestrian crashes reported to the DMV. However, the school district reported a student being hit by a truck in the crosswalk, without injury. There are also stories of near-misses with vehicles driving on the shoulder where people are walking and of vehicles not yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

The school district and Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation participated in a Safe Streets Audit led by AARP Oregon as part of the Network of Age-Friendly Communities effort which was published in 2019 (see Appendix C).

“Sidewalks have recently been built around the middle school and Howard Elementary, but connecting roads to the schools do not have sidewalks or bike lanes. The shoulders serve as the only space for walking and biking but are narrow and often covered with leaves and obstructed by trash and recycling carts. However people walking and biking need to use the road space as well as people in cars and are deterred from doing so by the inadequate infrastructure. New development has brought more traffic to the area. Compounding the issues, parents who live only a couple of blocks away from school often drive their children to school because they don’t feel safe walking them or letting them walk to school.”

-- Safe Streets Audit, River Road Neighborhood, 2019

Environmental

Prior to the construction of any improvements, a more detailed review of environmental impacts will occur, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or other applicable regulations.

Chapter 3 – Public Involvement

The community provided input on the project which is summarized in this chapter.

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the project was developed to help the project team develop and organize public involvement activities, to be effective and meaningful in accomplishing project goals, and in compliance with applicable regulations, including Lane Manual 15.580 *Citizen Input with Regard to Individual Road Improvement Projects*. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some public outreach activities had to be modified to be virtual (on-line or by phone) rather than in person. Nevertheless, there has been significant public input on this project (see Appendix B for an inventory of public comments received to-date) with the majority commenting in favor of the project.

Public Involvement Goals

- Develop early communication & rapport with public
 - Increase public confidence in Lane County by improving transparency and accountability
 - Inform all stakeholders (including environmental justice populations) about the project and gain their views, concerns, and values – with an inclusive, fair, and responsive process
- Obtain local knowledge and take account of public inputs in decision making
 - Demonstrate that our approach in addressing the need is reasonable, sensible, and responsible
 - Solicit information, provide timely information
 - Be clear about what ideas can or cannot be explored

River Road Neighborhood Association

Staff introduced the project at the neighborhood meeting in winter 2019. Neighbors were excited about the project and appreciative of Lane County pursuing federal funding to avoid assessing abutting properties. Notice of the September 2020 public hearing was published in the neighborhood newsletter.

Public Open House

Draft designs were completed in February 2020 and planned to be presented to the community during an open house held at North Eugene High School on April 1, 2020. Due to restrictions on gathering sizes set in place by Governor Brown in response to coronavirus, the open house was unable to take place. In lieu of the in-person open house, an online open house was set up and hosted on the City of Eugene's online public engagement platform, Engage Eugene. The project page presents the information that would have been shared during the in-person open house, including answers to frequently asked questions and current high-level design plans. Additionally, it provides a feedback mechanism for visitors to share their thoughts and concerns regarding the project with county staff. The online open house was promoted through postcards mailed to residents along the project area, the City of Eugene's *InMotion* e-newsletter, the City of Eugene's Transportation Planning

social media accounts, and through efforts undertaken by Eugene School District 4J's Safe Routes to School Program Manager. Information to the school was also translated in Spanish. Contact information for the Lane County Transportation Planning Supervisor was also provided for direct communication.

All comments received support safety. In fact, many of them ask for additional safety measures to be considered, including speed bumps, a crosswalk across North Park Avenue at Pennington Court, and safety planning considerations for neighboring street segments (Grove Street between Silver Lane and Maxwell Road, North Park Avenue between Howard Avenue and Hatton Avenue). Concerns communicated relate to parking and private property impacts of the project, and the impact of a newly constructed apartment building on traffic and parking

Public Hearings

Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC)

In 2018, the MPC held a public hearing on Lane County's request for MPO funding for the project.

The **Lane County Transportation Advisory Committee (TrAC)** held a public hearing on September 23, 2020. Five people spoke in favor of the project, including two school district employees, two neighbors in the River Road area, and one abutting property owner. The abutting property owner confirmed that she was not concerned about the project resulting in the removal of parking areas, stating that most people park in driveways rather than on the gravel shoulder. One of the neighbors urged Lane County to reduce the posted speed on Maxwell Road. The TrAC voted to recommend approval of the design concept, as presented in Appendix A. In response to public testimony, the TrAC also directed staff to apply to ODOT for a speed study on Maxwell Road.

Project Webpage: www.lanecounty.org/NParkMaxwell

Throughout the process, the County updated a webpage dedicated to the project to enable interested parties to review key documents and be informed about upcoming opportunities to provide feedback.

Mailings

Interested parties received project updates via email. Postcards and letters were mailed to abutting property owners at project milestones, including: August 2018 pre-survey letter; February 2019 project introduction letter; July 2019 project design letter; and August 2020 notice of public hearing postcard.

Environmental Justice and Title VI Civil Rights

Environmental Justice (EJ) and Title VI focus on understanding and addressing the unique needs of different socioeconomic groups, which are vital components to effective transportation decision-making. Key areas of consideration for compliance include: identifying populations so that their needs can be acknowledged and addressed; and evaluating and improving the public involvement process to eliminate participation barriers and engaging minority and low-income populations in transportation decision-making. Census data indicates potential minority and disabled populations.

Special considerations for the potential vulnerable populations include minimizing the need for transportation to exchange information (such as direct mail, providing materials electronically, and holding meetings in the vicinity) and translating materials to accommodate limited English proficiency. The outreach for this project included the development and maintenance of a project webpage to provide clear and timely project information. Project information was mailed directly to abutting properties. All postcards contained taglines in Spanish and Chinese regarding translation services being available at no charge, consistent with Lane County's Limited English Proficiency Plan (2018). Any requests for translation services or other needs to accommodate Title VI populations will be provided.

Summary of Public Comments

Public comments received to-date are included in Appendix B. There has been no public comment objecting to the proposed project. Two people expressed concern about removing the center turn lane on Maxwell Road. Staff is recommending this in order to construct a pedestrian refuge island, as described in Chapter 4.

Some property owners have expressed concern about impacts to their property. Staff will work with property owners affected by the project to coordinate and mitigate impacts to fences, landscaping, and irrigation. The design drawings provided in Appendix 1 shows the project fitting within the existing right-of-way, although temporary construction easements may be necessary.

Chapter 4 – Design Implementation

This chapter describes the Design Concept and next steps to implement the project.

Design Concept

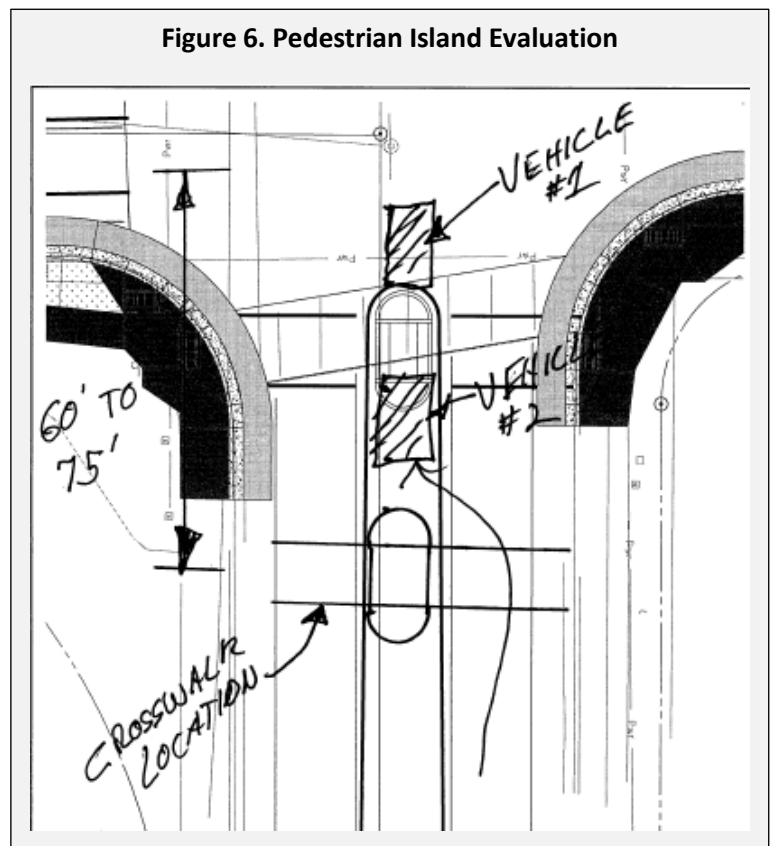
The design concept drawings are included as Appendix A. This design is for sidewalks and a bike lane on the east side of North Park Avenue between Maxwell Road and Howard Avenue and for a pedestrian-activated flashing beacon and concrete pedestrian island refuge at the crosswalk on Maxwell Road at North Park Avenue. The pedestrian island will replace/remove the center turn lane for westbound traffic on Maxwell Road turning south onto North Park Avenue. The design fulfills the project's goal of improving safety for people walking on North Park Avenue and crossing Maxwell Road.

Pedestrian Island

Two people stated concerns with removal of the turn lane on Maxwell Road that will be replaced by the pedestrian refuge island. In response, staff considered alternative designs, such as moving the crossing island away from the intersection. The traffic engineer recommended against this alternative because the crosswalk would not be visible to drivers and it would create an out-of-the-direct route for pedestrians; conditions that would create pedestrian safety conflicts.

The traffic engineering models are provided in Appendix D. The modeling compares the impacts of eliminating the westbound left lane. The results are as follows:

- The westbound approach delay increased from 1.4 to 1.7 seconds/vehicle.
- The northbound approach delay is expected to go up from 12.6 to 15.6 seconds/vehicle.
- The left turn lane might see a slight increase in queue up from 0.7 to 1.1 vehicle length.



Staff finds the safety benefits for pedestrians outweighs the three-second delay that a vehicle may encounter as the result of replacing the turn lane with a pedestrian island. The pedestrian island was recommended by the traffic engineer to improve pedestrian safety. Crossing islands are a proven safety treatment designed to provide refuge for people crossing a wider road. The island reduces the crossing distance by creating a place of refuge to allow a multi-stage crossing if needed.

Pedestrian Refuge Island



Benefits:

32%

reduction in pedestrian crashes


- Reduces pedestrian delay
- Reduces/eliminates multiple threat risk
- Reduces crossing distance
- May influence driver behavior by visually narrowing roadway
- Can be used with unmarked crosswalk

Source: www.nedhikotrnaaes.com / TooleDesign

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)

An RRFB is a pedestrian-activated flashing light that alerts drivers to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. The school district has commented about several near-misses with vehicles not yielding to students in the crosswalk. An RRFB produces driver yielding rates as high as 98%.

Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB)



Benefit:

47%

reduction in pedestrian crashes

- Motorist yielding rates as high as 98%

Funding

The majority of funding for this project is sourced from grants awarded to Lane County from the MPO. The MPO receives a set amount of federal funding each year from the United States Department of Transportation, which it then distributes to local transportation projects through a competitive selection process. Grants supporting this project include the Surface Transportation Block Grant and the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Grant. The current project funding programmed through the MPO is \$805,461.27. The project funding is phased for design in 2020 and construction in 2021.

In the City of Eugene, property owners are normally financially responsible for the construction and maintenance of improvements like sidewalks. Due to the grant funding awarded to this project, property owners with land that borders the sidewalks will not be financially responsible for sidewalk construction costs. They will, however, be responsible for maintenance.

Just Compensation (Right-of-Way Acquisition)

No additional right-of-way acquisition is anticipated. The proposed design fits within the existing right-of-way. Temporary construction easements may be necessary, especially to construct ADA ramps at the intersections. Property owners will be offered Just Compensation for the portion of their property needed to complete the project. The Just Compensation amount is determined by an appraisal and forms the basis of monetary offers presented to property owners. Just Compensation includes the estimated value of all the land and improvements within the needed area. Staff will work with property owners affected by the project, such as temporary construction easement acquisition and coordination on mitigating impacts to fences and landscaping.

Jurisdictional Transfer

If jurisdiction over North Park Avenue should transfer from Lane County to the City of Eugene, it would create the opportunity for property owners with property that is connected to North Park Avenue to opt into the City. It is important to note that, should the transfer occur, “annexing” into the City would be purely voluntary and not at all mandated.

Next Steps

Following approval of the Design Concept by the Lane County Board of Commissioners, staff will continue to develop the design into construction drawings. The right-of-way / temporary construction easement needs for the project are conceptual at this time and will be more precisely determined as the design drawings are refined. Staff will work with property owners affected by the project, such as right-of-way/easement acquisition and coordination on mitigating impacts to fences and landscaping.

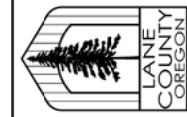


NORTH PARK AVENUE
STA: 11+50 TO 14+00



LEGEND

- PAVEMENT
- DRIVEWAY
- SIDEWALK
- LANDSCAPE STRIP
- CENTERLINE
- ADA RAMP AREA
- RIGHT-OF-WAY
- PROPERTY LINE
- EX. POWER POLE WITH EX. STREET LIGHT



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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ENGINEERING DIVISION
 DANIEL M. HURLEY, P.E. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
 PEGGY A. KEPPLER, PE, PLS. COUNTY ENGINEER

APPROD	REVISION	DATE

HOWARD ELEMENTARY-COLIN MS
TRAFFIC MITIGATION AND CONGESTION
NORTH PARK AVE
STA 11+50 TO 14+00

DATE: 10/22/19
 PROJECT NO.: 360289960
 ROAD NO.: 132900

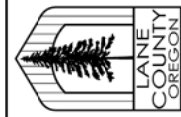


NORTH PARK AVENUE STA: 14+00 TO 16+50



LEGEND

- PAVEMENT
- DRIVEWAY
- SIDEWALK
- LANDSCAPE STRIP
- CENTERLINE
- ADA RAMP AREA
- RIGHT-OF-WAY
- PROPERTY LINE
- ☀ EX. POWER POLE WITH PROPOSED STREET LIGHT



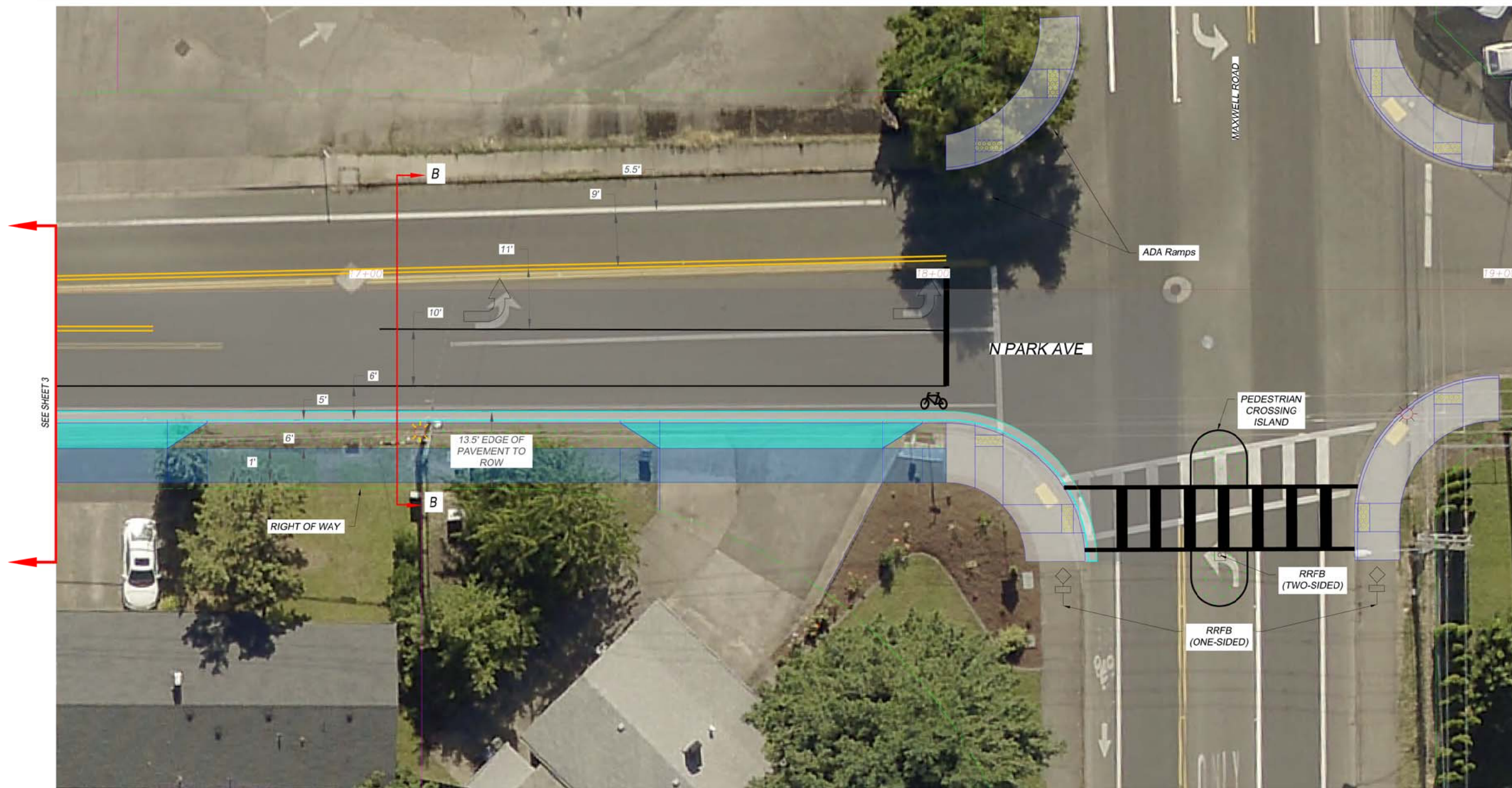
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ENGINEERING DIVISION

DANIEL M. HURLEY, P.E. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
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DATE	REVISION	APPROD

HOWARD ELEMENTARY-COLIN MS
TRAFFIC MITIGATION AND CONGESTION
NORTH PARK AVE
STA 14+00 TO 16+50

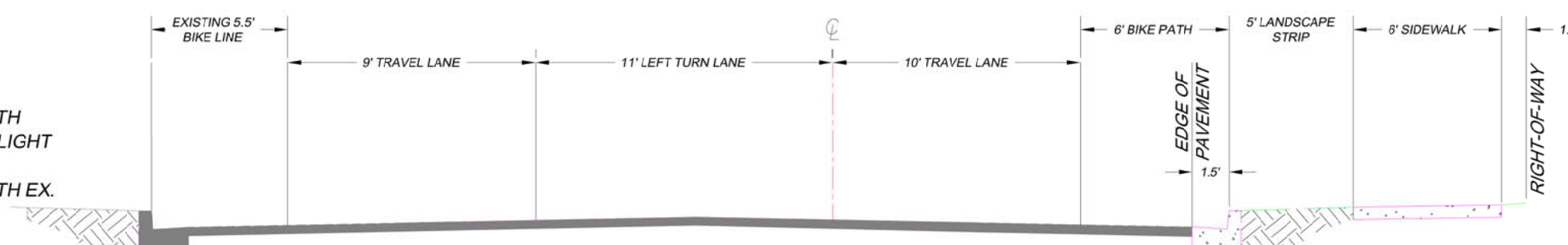
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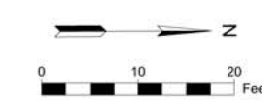
NORTH PARK AVENUE
STA: 16+00 TO 19+00

LEGEND

- PAVEMENT
- DRIVEWAY
- SIDEWALK
- LANDSCAPE STRIP
- CENTERLINE
- ADA RAMP AREA
- RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EX. POWER POLE WITH PROPOSED STREET LIGHT
- PROPERTY LINE
- EX. POWER POLE WITH EX. STREET LIGHT



TYPICAL SECTION B-B



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APPROD	REVISION	DATE

HOWARD ELEMENTARY-COLIN MS
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NORTH PARK AVE
STA 16+00 TO 19+00

DATE: 10/22/19
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