THE CITY OF WATERTOWN

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING AGENDA

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026 AT 6:00 PM

MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 106 JONES STREET, WATERTOWN, WI 53094

Virtual Meeting Info: https://us06web.zoom.us/join Meeting ID: 965 279 3780 Passcode: 53094 One tap mobile +16469313860 https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9652793780?pwd=0gIWdtrdiJJHznZXyVgAb9U8pNOstl.1

All public participants' phones will be muted during the meeting except during the public comment period.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **BUSINESS**
   A. Presentation of One Way - Two Way Streets
3. **ADJOURNMENT**

Persons requiring other reasonable accommodations for any of the above meetings, may contact the office of the City Clerk at cityclerk@watertownwi.gov phone 920-262-4000

A quorum of any City of Watertown Council, Committee, Board, Commission, or other body, may be present at this meeting for observing and gathering of information only

THE CITY OF WATERTOWN

MEMO

Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Committee of the Whole Members

From: Nathan R. Williams, Civil Engineer I

Date: January 15, 2026

Subject: Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 20, 2026

Review and take possible action: Downtown One-Way to Two-Way Streets Conversion Study

Background

The Engineering Division retained raSmith as consultant for the Downtown One-way to Two-way Streets Conversion Study. This study evaluated the feasibility of converting one-way streets within the downtown area to two-way operation. It evaluated all existing one-way streets within this area but focused on the Third Street and Fourth Street corridors, as these are heavily traveled streets containing traffic lights and requiring traffic software modeling and coordination with the 2028 Main Street reconstruction project design. Preliminary results were available in August 2024, after which the conversion of Third Street and Fourth Street to two-way traffic in 2028 was taken to the Public Works Commission, the Public Safety and Welfare Committee and the Common Council for approval in October 2024, Ord. #24-25. After this approval the Wisconsin Department of Transportation included this two-way operation in their 2028 Main Street reconstruction design. The study could not be finalized at that time due to a lack of reliable traffic data in the downtown area as a result of the Main Street Bridge Reconstruction. Once the bridge was completed, updated traffic data was gathered in May 2025, and the study was refined and finalized. The traffic data confirmed the assumptions made in the preliminary report.

In addition to traffic operations, raSmith completed a parking analysis as part of the study to evaluate the impacts of proposed roadway changes on public parking supply within the downtown area. The parking analysis generally showed that adequate parking exists to support the limited parking removal associated with certain alternatives, including the parking impacts identified under Option #2 described below.

Within the final version of the study, three options were presented regarding the block of Main Street between Third Street and Fourth Street pertaining to designated turn lanes on Main Street, and potentially affecting on-street parking.

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As part of the study, raSmith modeled traffic operations under all three options using industry-standard traffic analysis methodologies. The analysis showed that traffic operations under each option meet applicable performance benchmarks for downtown arterial and collector streets. While all three options operate acceptably from a traffic standpoint, the modeling indicates that overall traffic flow and intersection performance improve under Option #2 and further improve under Option #3 due to the addition of dedicated turn lanes and reduced turning conflicts.

- Option #1: maintain existing turn lane configuration of a single left turn lane for eastbound traffic between Third Street and Fourth Street from E. Main Street to N. Fourth Street.
- Option #2: maintain the existing eastbound turn lane from Main Street to Fourth Street and add one new left turn lane for westbound traffic between Third Street and Fourth Street. This option results in the anticipated loss of two parking spaces on the south side of Main Street between Second Street and Third Street.
- Option #3: maintain the existing eastbound turn lane from Main Street to Fourth Street and add three new left turn lanes – including the one proposed in Option #2, an additional left turn lane for westbound traffic between Fourth Street and Fifth Street, and an additional left turn lane for eastbound traffic between Second Street and Third Street. This option results in the anticipated loss of nine parking spaces on the south side of Main Street, including six spaces between Second Street and Third Street and three spaces between Fourth Street and Fifth Street.

A representative from raSmith will be in attendance at the January 20, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting to present the study findings, including the traffic and parking analysis, and to answer questions from Council members.

Budget Goal

2. Proactively maintains and improves our parks and infrastructure to ensure safety, quality, and equity
4. Fosters community growth by assessing opportunities, stakeholder input, environmental needs, and modern code and policy priorities
5. Maintains a safe and healthy community**,** with an eye toward future needs and trends

Financial Impact

The conversion of Third Street and Fourth Street to two-way traffic is expected to cost approximately $175,000 to $225,000. This cost estimate includes re-striping, signage, sealcoating, temporary traffic control measures, and pedestrian crossing improvements. This conversion is anticipated to be completed in 2028. There will be additional costs should other one-way streets be converted to two-way within the study area. The timeline and cost for these additional conversions will be determined through further evaluation.

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Recommendation

The Engineering Division recommends continuing with the One-way to Two-way conversion of Third Street and Fourth Street as recommended by raSmith's study, and as preliminarily approved by the Public Works Commission, the Public Safety and Welfare Committee, and the Common Council in October 2024. All other one-way streets mentioned in the study will be further evaluated and brought to these Committees and the Common Council for conversion at a later date. Some of these streets may require widening or on-street parking removal to accommodate two-way traffic.

In addition, the Engineering Division recommends selecting Option #2, which adds a dedicated westbound left turn lane to the block of Main Street between Third Street and Fourth Street. This turn lane would result in the loss of two parking spaces on the south side of Main Street between Second Street and Third Street. If the committee selects this option, the Engineering Division will draft an ordinance to remove the affected on-street parking and present it for consideration at the next Public Safety and Welfare Committee meeting.

Attachments:

- Slideshow summary of the study

Downtown Watertown One-way to Two-way Streets Conversion Study

Committee of the Whole Meeting

January 20, 2026

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Presentation Outline

- Study scope and process
- One-way vs. Two-way
- Existing one-way system
- Operational analysis (3rd/4th Street)
- Design Concepts (roadway, multi-modal)
- Parking Study
- Recommendations Summary/Cost Estimates

Study Scope and Goals

- Study area - downtown one-way streets
- **Convert** (revert) to two-way streets
- Feasibility – Safety, Operations, Design
- **3rd Street/4th Street** analysis
- Local residential street evaluation
- Multi-modal / All users

Study Process

Traffic Study – 2 Steps
(bridge out)

Feasibility Assessment (2024)

- Crash Analysis
- Volume Estimates
- Preliminary Operational Analysis
- Economic Assessment
- Concept Designs
- Stakeholder Outreach

Refinements and Recommendations (2025/2026)

- Field data collection
- Refined operational analysis
- Final recommendations
- Cost estimates

Now

Design 2026/2027

- Formal design plans
- Updated cost estimates
- Construction staging plans

Construction 2028

- Implementation
- Coordination with Main Street Project

Study Progress

- Preliminary Study – August 2024
- Committees Review & Council Approval – August 2024
- Staff update meeting – September 2024
- Public Involvement Meeting – November 2024
- Updated traffic counts and parking counts – May 2025
- Staff update meeting – July 2025
- Refine recommendations and formal/final report – November 2025
- Committee of the Whole Presentation – January 2026

One-way vs Two-Way: Why consider a change? Tradeoffs

- One-way
  - + Higher vehicular capacity
  - - Faster travel speeds
  - + Shorter travel times
  - - Potential for wrong-way movements
  - + Simplified pedestrian crossings (single travel direction)
- Two-way
  - **+ Reduced/safer travel speeds in urban areas**
  - - Longer travel times
  - + Simplified circulation for motorists
  - + More direct access to destinations & businesses
  - + Improved business visibility
  - + Fewer signs
  - + Improved conditions for non-vehicle users (slower speeds)

Other Communities

Janesville, Manitowoc, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha

- Slower travel speeds
- Better for business
- More inviting conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Few complaints or incidents
- Quick adjustment period – **advanced outreach** is key

Public Involvement Meeting

- Held November 14, 2024
- Preliminary operational analysis and concept design plans
- Feedback generally positive
  - Supported lower speeds and more direct routing
  - Pedestrian enhancements would be an improvement
- Concerns included
  - Loss of parking
  - Truck maneuverability (issues today)
  - Impacts to specific blocks (residential streets)

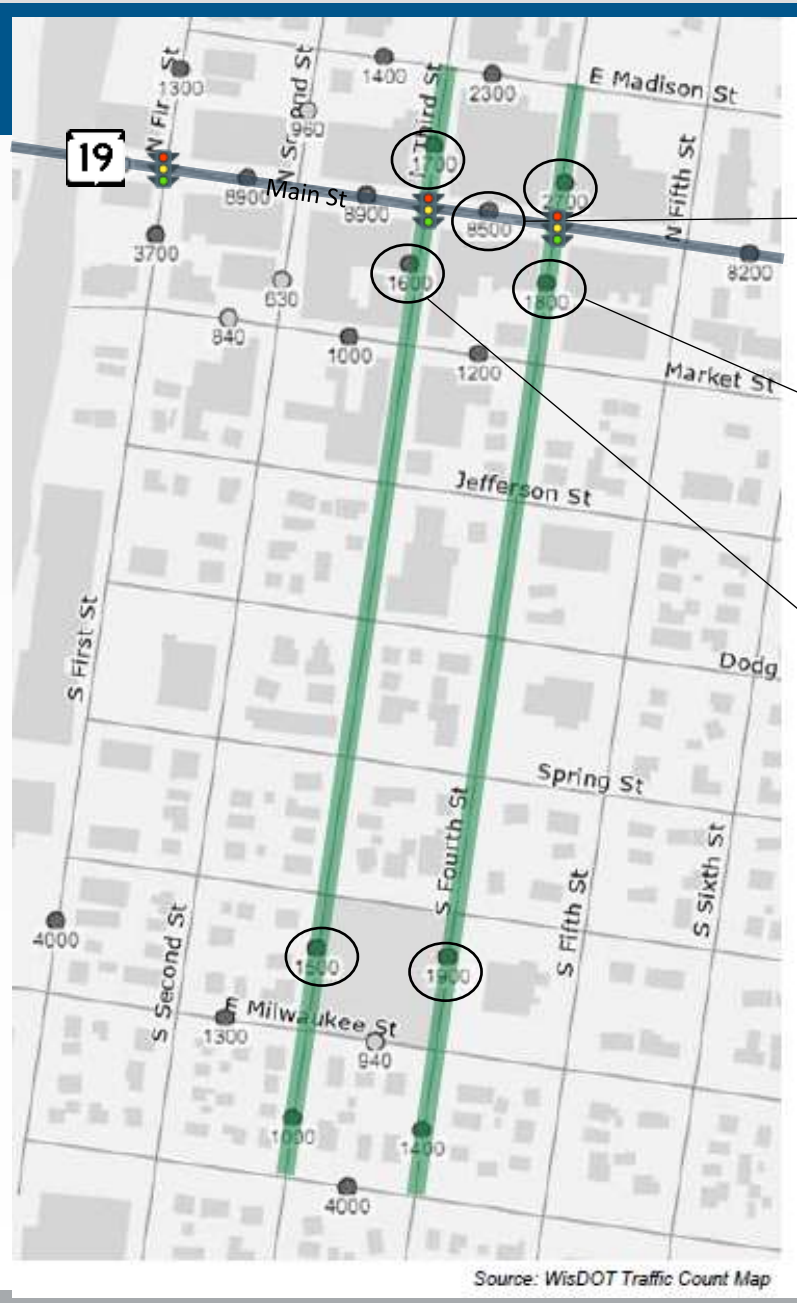
Existing System

- Multiple one-way pairs
- **Discontinuity**
- User **confusion**, wrong-way movements
- Originally implemented in 1970's to address increased volumes and congestion

Daily Traffic

Current daily traffic

3rd Street & 4th Street are **significantly underutilized** for multi-lane roadways



Source: WisDOT Traffic Count Map

Main Street:
8,500 vehicles per day (vpd)

4th Street:
1,800 to 2,700 vpd

3rd Street:
1,500 to 1,700 vpd

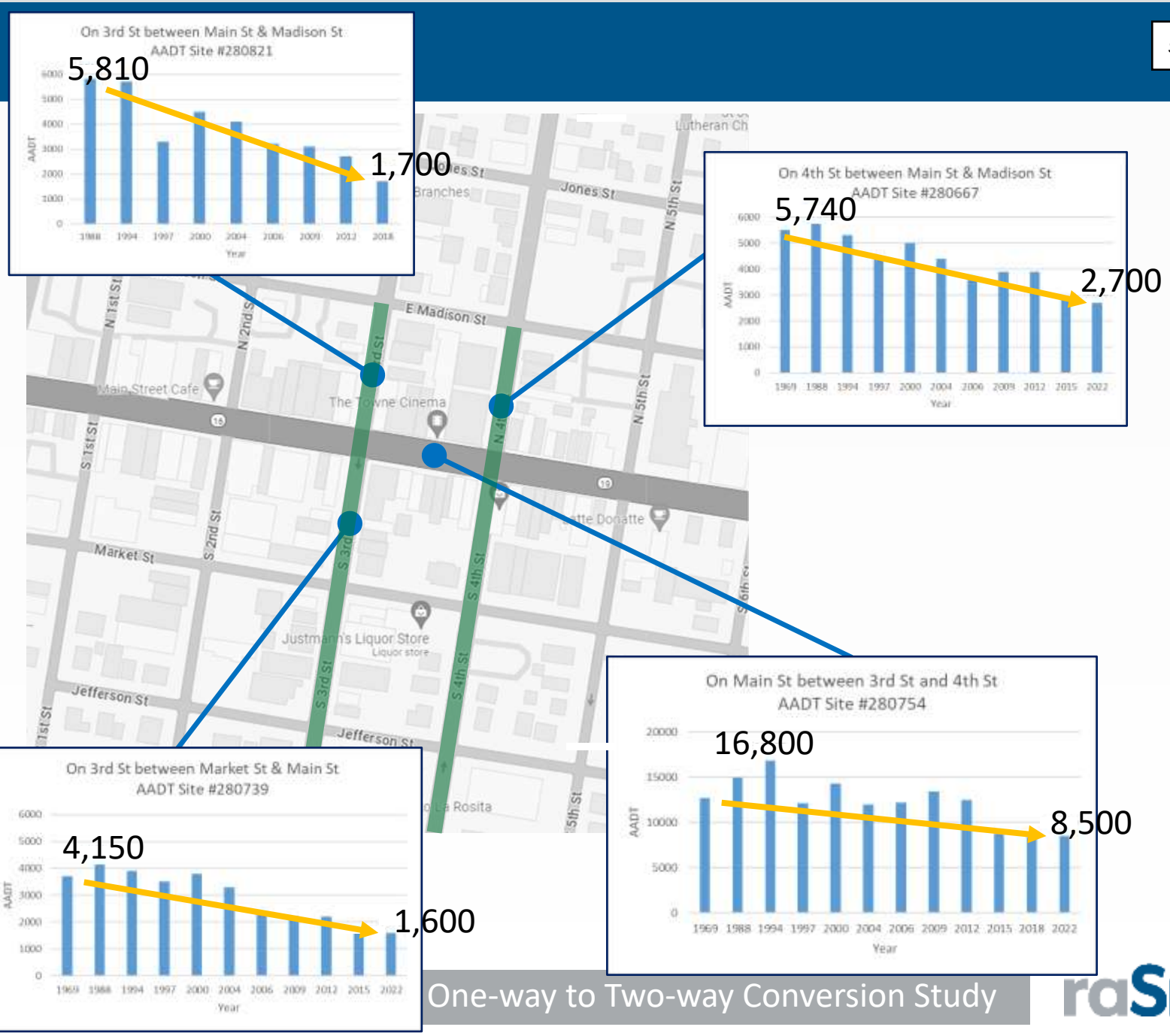
Comparison volumes:

- Church St (near PnS): 12,400 vpd
- 1st St: 4,000 vpd
- Cady St (at river): 5,800 vpd
- Market St: 800-1,200 vpd
- Typical residential street: 400-800 vpd
- Two-lane urban capacity: 6,500-10,000+ vpd

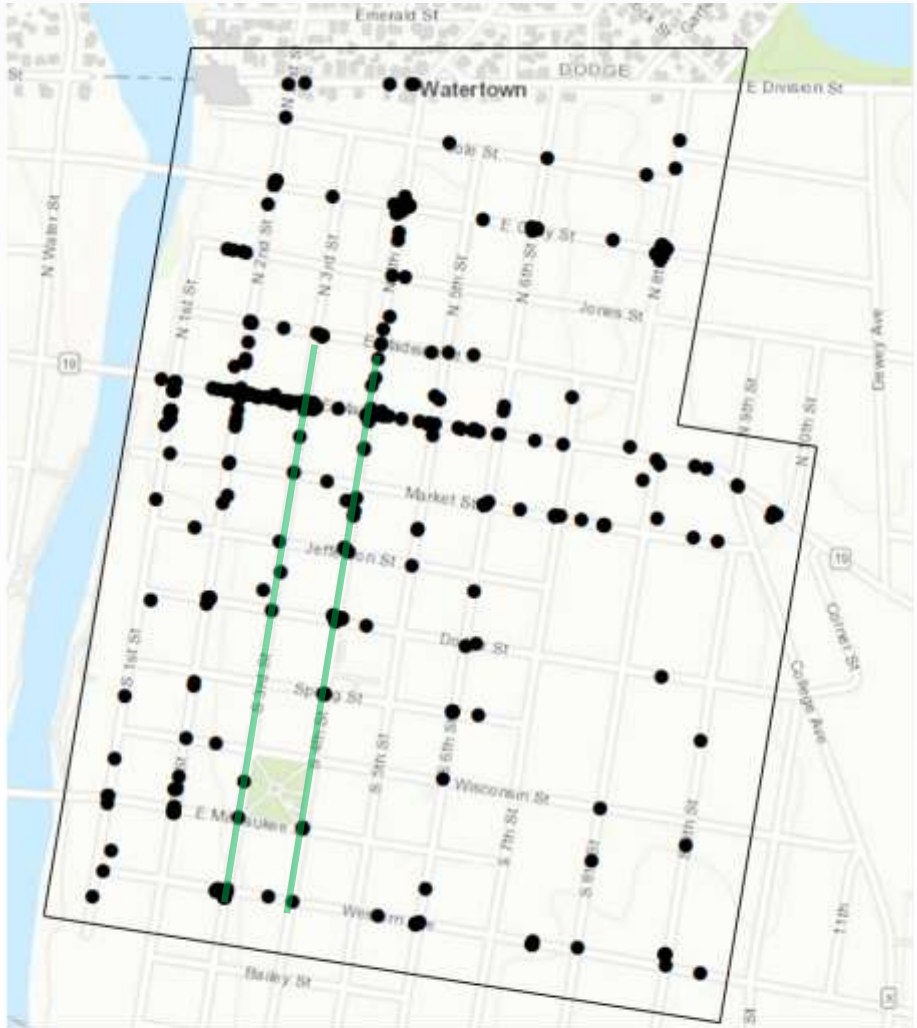
Daily Traffic

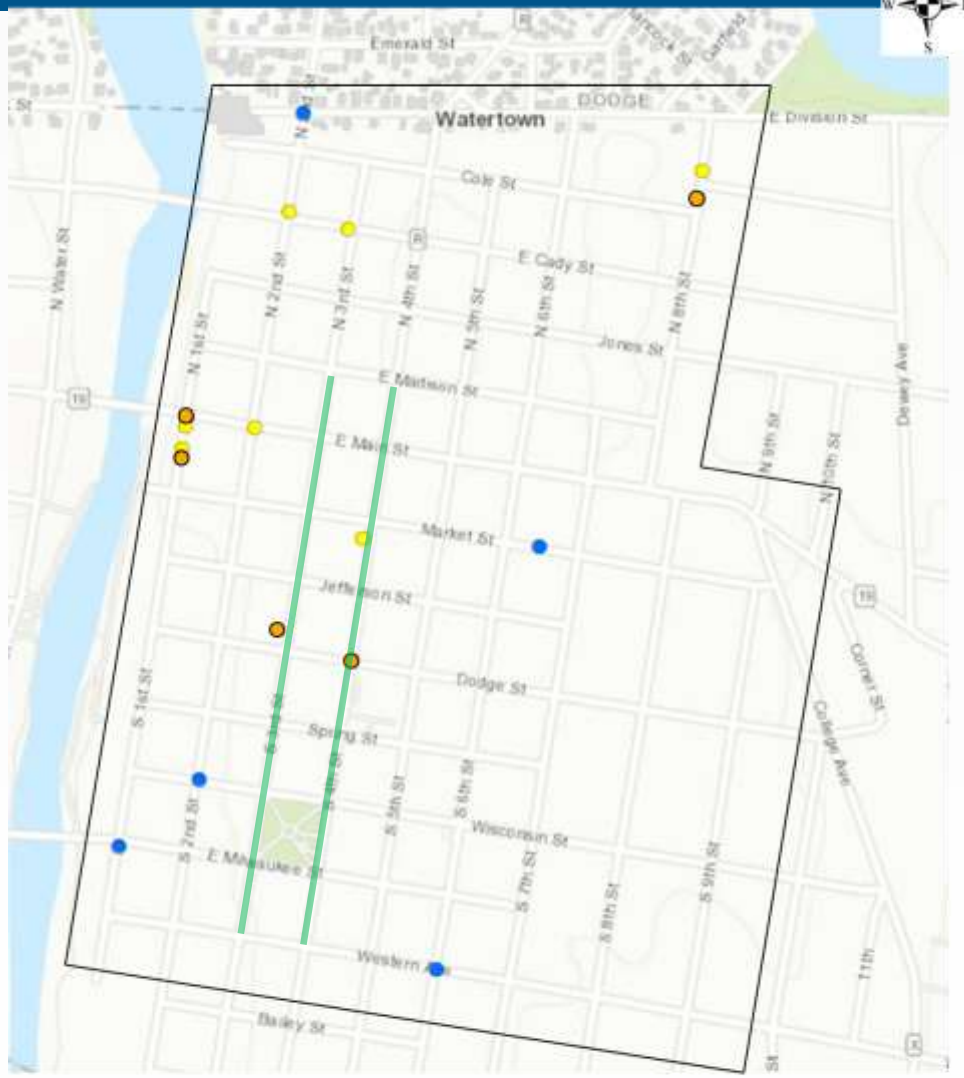
Historic daily traffic

- **Downward** trend since early 1990's
- Volumes today about **one-half** of peak



Crash History





Crash Type								Severity					
									Injury				
Rear End	Angle	Side Swipe	Fixed Object	Head On	Parked Vehicle	Other	Ped/Bike	Property Damage Only	K	A	B	C	Total
36	140	22	38	6	70	4	15	275	1	4	29	22	331

Crash Type Key:
- Head On (FTF)
- Pedestrian Crash
- Bicycle Crash

Operational Analysis: Two-way System Summary (3rd/4th St)

- Acceptable peak-hour operations (two-way) and surplus capacity
- Daily traffic well within capacity range for two-way streets
- 3rd Street/4th Street can operate as two-way streets

Operational Analysis: Two-way (3rd/4th St with Main St)

2025 Analysis

Weekday Peak Hour Level of Service – Highway Capacity Manual

AM (PM)

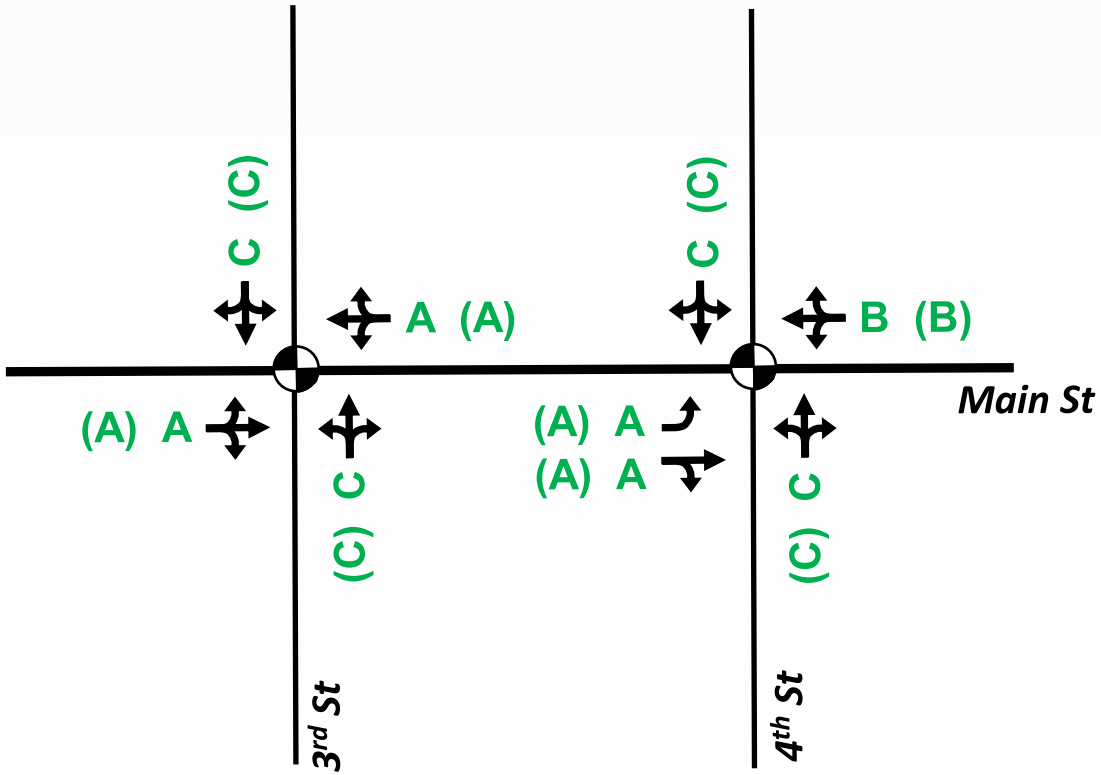


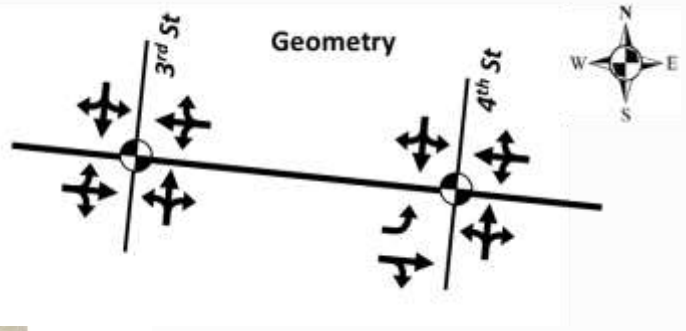
Exhibit 19-8: LOS Criteria: Motorized Vehicle Mode

Control Delay (s/veh)	LOS by Volume-to-Capacity Ratio[a] ≤1.0	>1.0
≤10	A	F
>10–20	B	F
>20–35	C	F
>35–55	D	F
>55–80	E	F
>80	F	F

Note: [a] For approach-based and intersectionwide assessments, LOS is defined solely by control delay

Operational Analysis: Simulation & Left-turn Evaluation

Left-turn Evaluation: Option #1 (no new turn lanes)

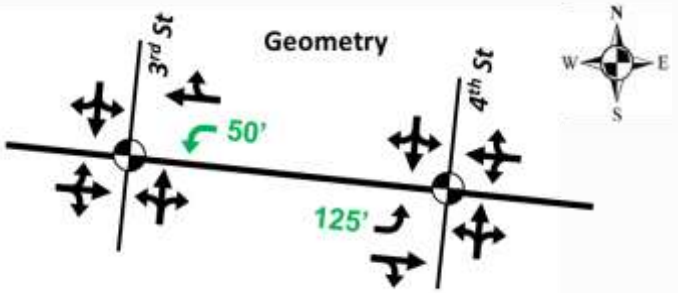


Synchro 'typical' queues

SimTraffic simulation queues

Parking loss

Left-turn Evaluation: Option #2 (one new turn lane)

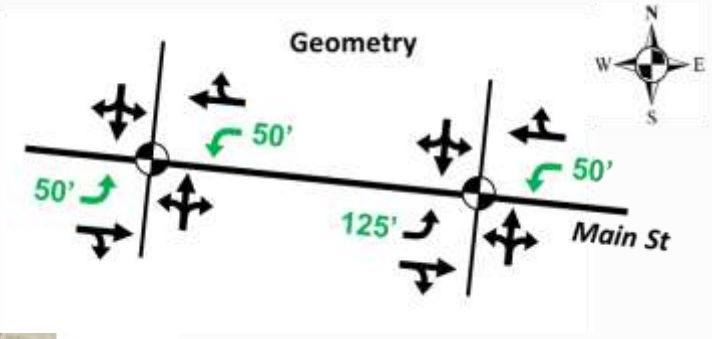


Synchro 'typical' queues

SimTraffic simulation queues

Parking loss

Left-turn Evaluation: Option #3 (three new turn lanes)



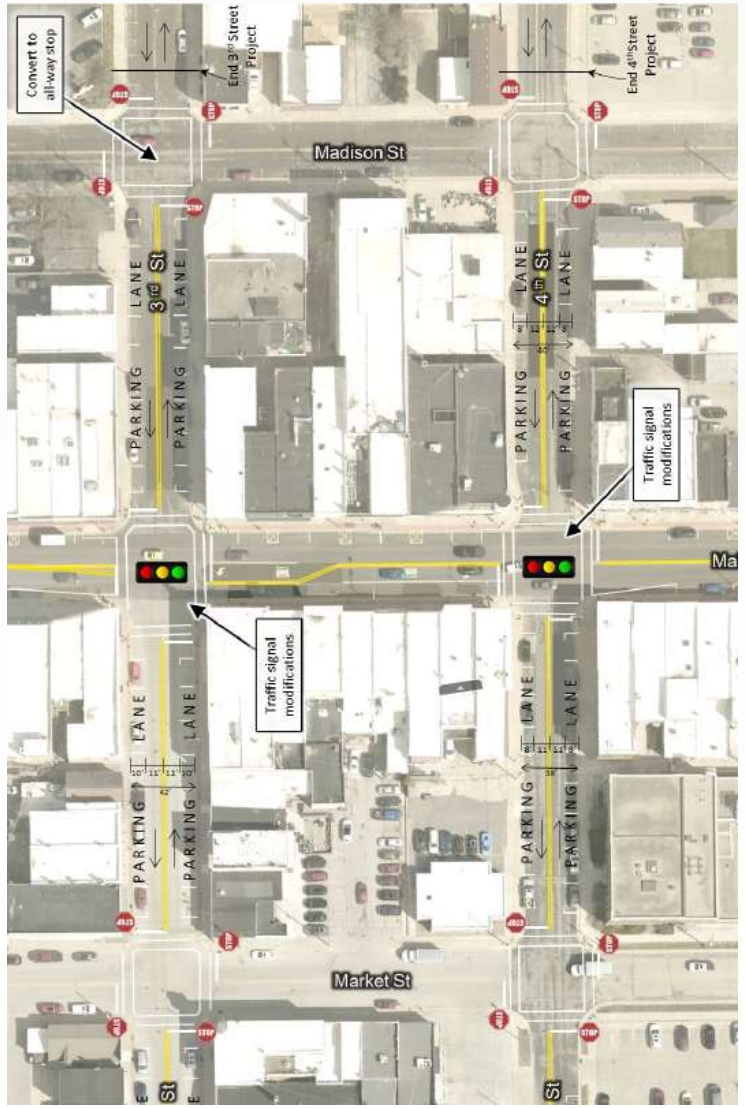
Synchro 'typical' queues

SimTraffic simulation queues

Parking loss

Design Concept Two-way System (3rd/4th Streets)

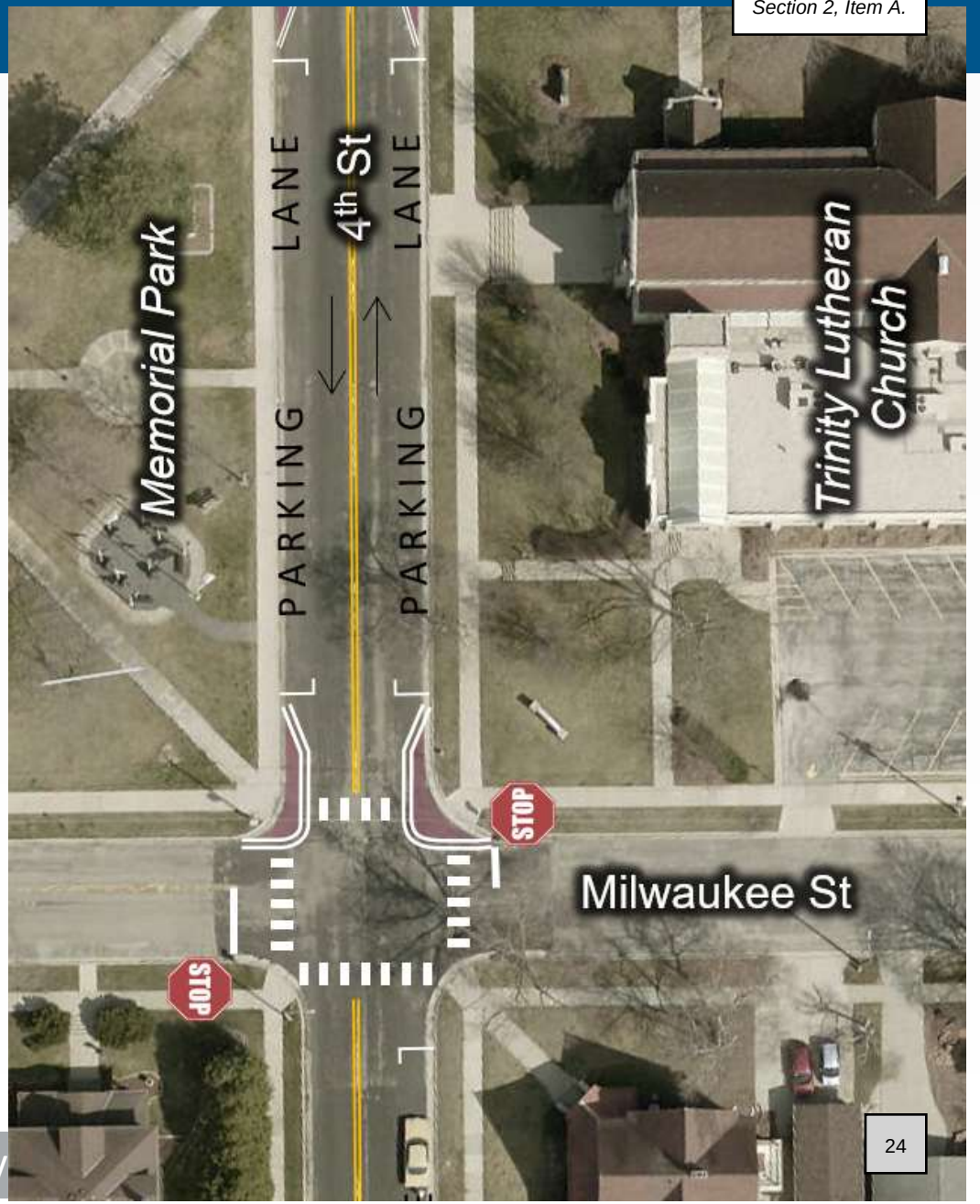
- **“Paint and Sign”** project
- New double-yellow centerline
- New signs and signing changes
- Existing parking lanes maintained
- New pavement seal coat (4th St)
- New signalized approaches



Pedestrian Accommodations

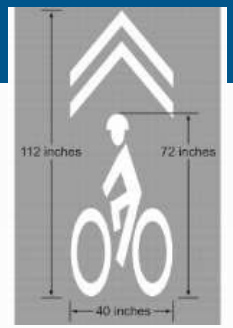
Crosswalk Enhancements (for consideration)

- Paint/Post curb extensions
- High visibility crosswalks



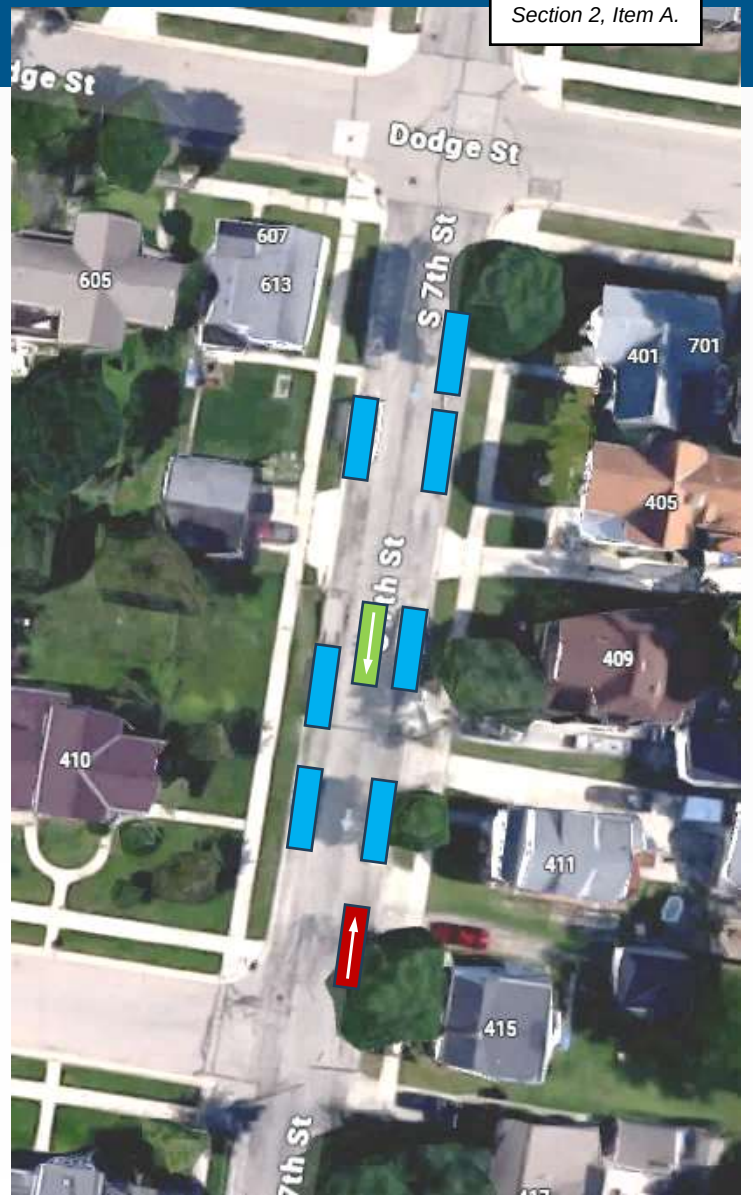
Bicycle Accommodations

- Insufficient width on 3rd/4th St for dedicated bicycle lanes (need roadway widening or remove parking)
- Use of ‘sharrows’/shared bike operation instead of dedicated lanes
- Other roadways
  - Dedicated bike lanes (1st St)
  - Bike boulevards (2nd, 5th, etc.)
- Ensure conformity to City’s future Bike and Pedestrian master plan



Local Residential Street Evaluation

- Functionality Review based on roadway width FOC to FOC (face-of-curb to face-of-curb)
- Minimum width for residential streets with parking on both sides is **26’** to **28’**
- Drivers may need to/choose to yield to traffic – comfort
  - **Less than 30’:** Most drivers will not drive side-by-side
  - **Widths 30’ to 32’:** Most driveway will drive side-by-side
  - **Widths of 32’+** provides min9’ travel lanes
- Generally infrequent conflicts (residential use, low volume and parking occupancy, short trips, low speeds)



Local Residential Streets

- Variable FOC to FOC widths along local streets
  - 5th Street – **30’ to 36’**
  - 6th Street – **27’ to 37.5’** (one 27’ block)
  - 7th Street – **30’ to 32’**
  - 8th Street – **27’** (restricted parking one-side)
  - 9th Street – **34' to 36’** (recent widening)
- Need block-by-block evaluation and review of compliance with city ordinances/standards

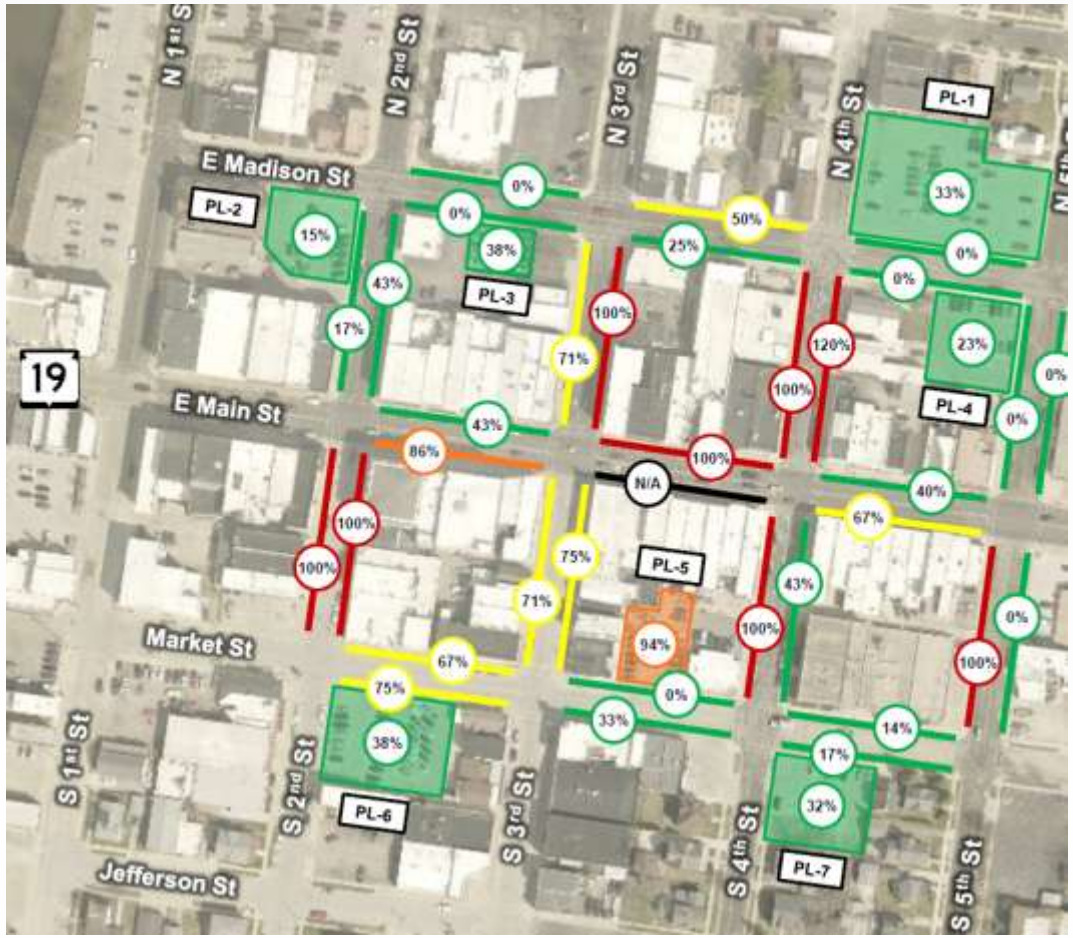
Parking Study

- Study area: 2nd St to 5th St, Market St to Madison Street
- 187 on-street spaces, 187 public lot spaces
- Data collection May 29 (Thur) and May 31 (Sat) 11am, noon, 1pm & 4pm, 5pm, 6pm 7pm
- Peak hour parking occupancies:
  - **Thursday midday (11:00am) – 52%**
  - Thursday evening (7:00pm) – 51%
  - Saturday midday (11:00am) – 44%
  - Saturday evening (7:00pm) – 46%

Parking Occupancy

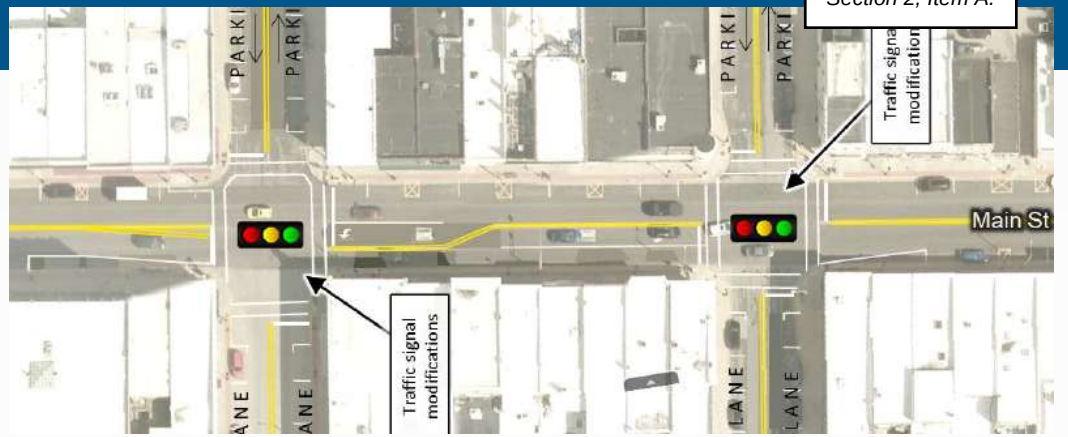
Thursday Midday Peak Hour (11:00AM to Noon)

Saturday Evening Peak Hour (7:00PM to 8:00PM)



= <50% Occupancy Rate
= 50% - <80% Occupancy Rate
= 80% - <100% Occupancy Rate
= 100%+ Occupancy Rate
XX% = Peak Parking Occupancy Rate

Recommendations Overview



- Convert 3rd Street/4th Street into two-way streets
  (one through travel lane in each direction)
- 3rd Street/4th Street Intersections with Main Street
  - Option #2 (one new left-turn lane – WB 3rd/Main)
  - Maintain signal control with similar timings/phasing
  - Equipment to be replaced as part of the Main St project
- 3rd Street/Madison Street – convert to all-way stop control
  (sight distance limitations)
- New seal coat (4th Street) for better pavement marking application
- Consider pedestrian enhancements and bicycle accommodations
  (conform to standards in the City's future Bike/Ped master plan)
- Consider local street conversion to two-way operations
  (sufficient width, review for impacts and compliance with ordinance/standards)

Cost Estimate

- $175,000 to $225,000 for conversion of 3rd Street/4th Street

- Assumptions:
  - Removal/installation of pavement markings
  - Installation of signs (removal by city staff)
  - Asphalt Pavement seal coat (4th Street and other locations)
  - High visibility crosswalks and paint/post curb bump outs
  - Temporary traffic control signs and staging (single lane closures each direction)
  - Main Street roadway/signal work excluded (part of state project)

Questions?

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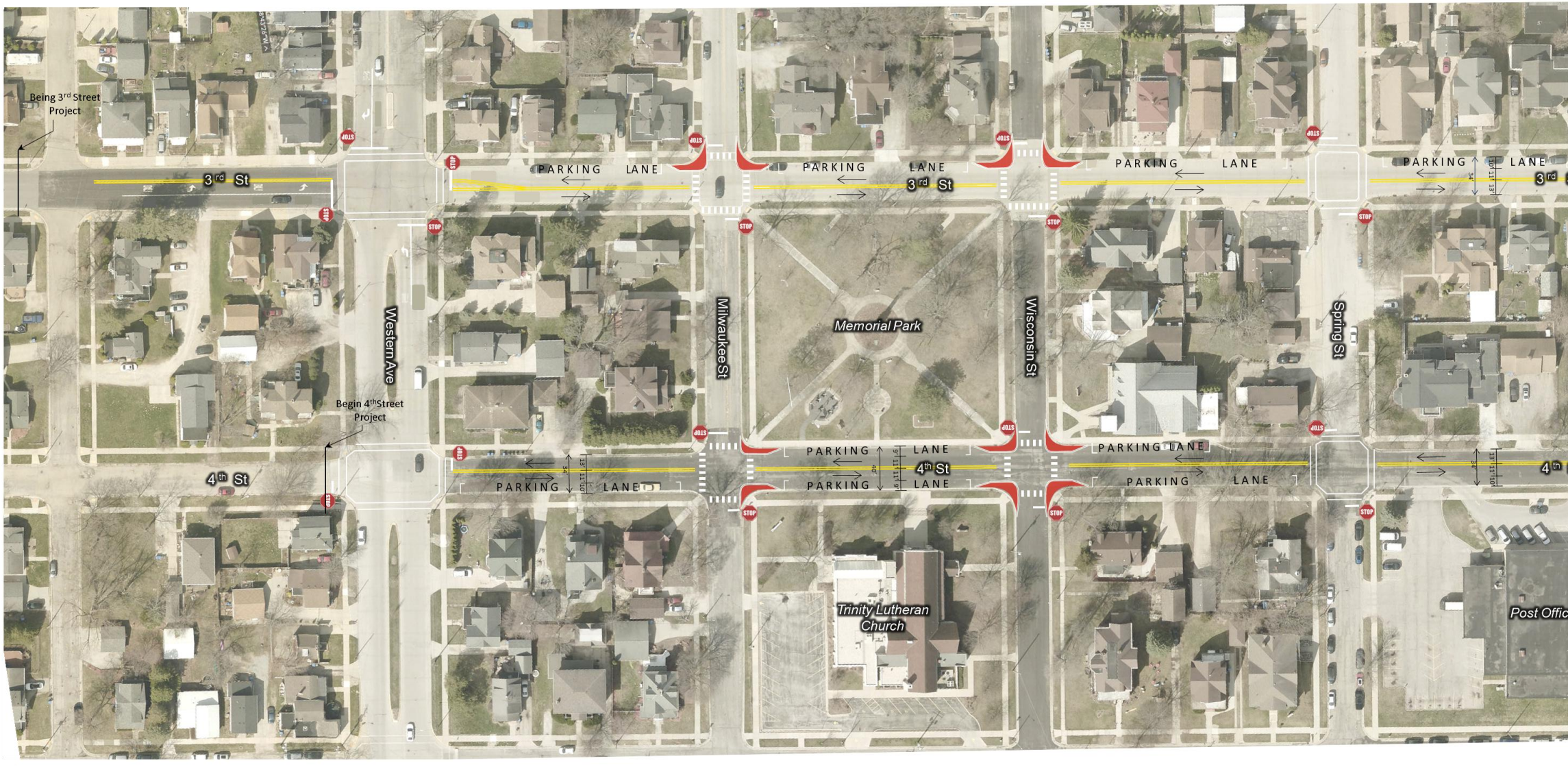
ATTACHMENT #1: One-way to Two-way Conversion Concept Drawing
3rd Street and 4th Street

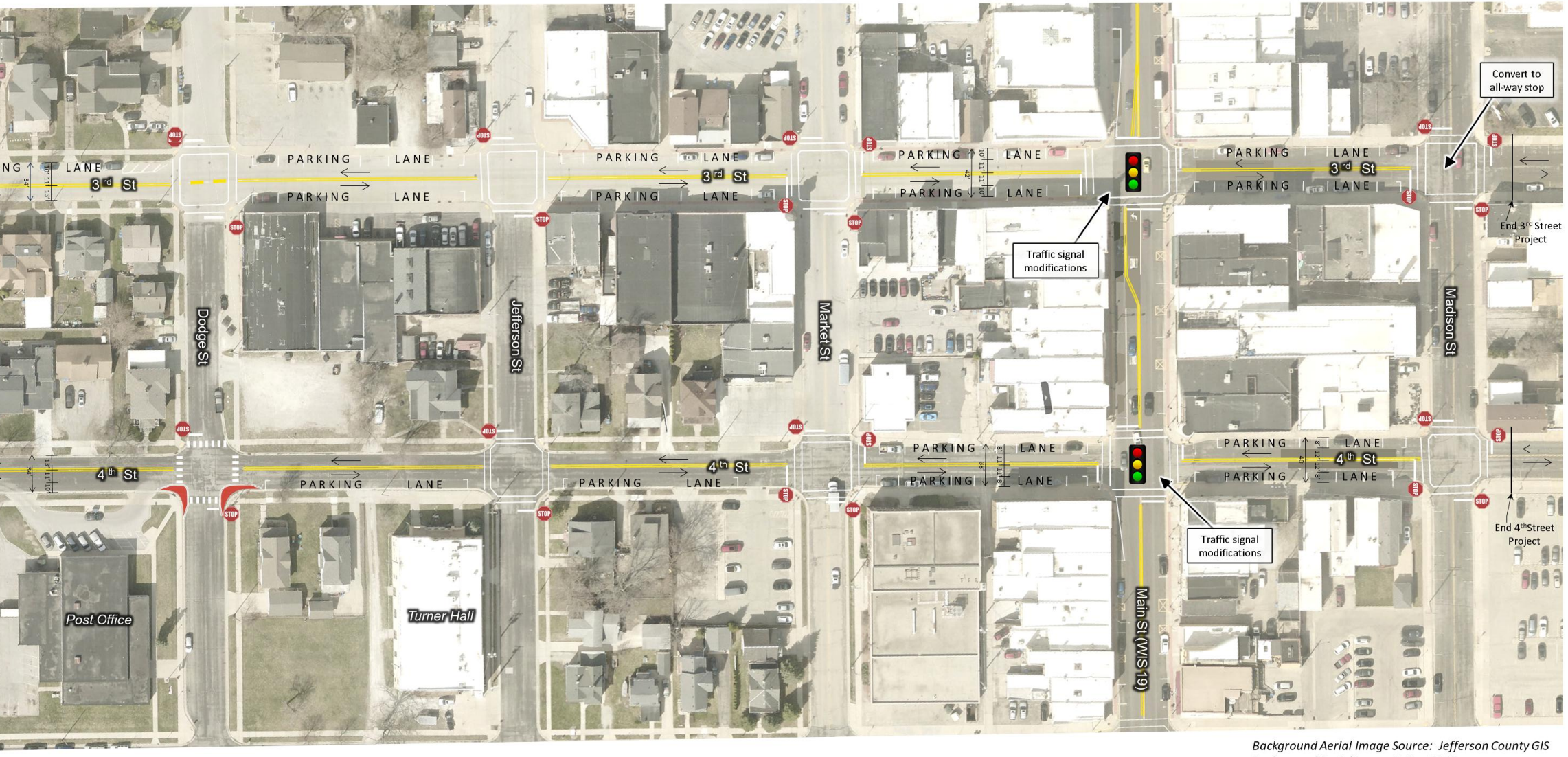


Notes:

- Design drawing is conceptual and is not for construction.
- Street signing (other than traffic control) is not shown on this concept drawing.
- This concept drawing does not reflect recent improvements near the 3rd St/Western Ave intersection or planned improvements along WIS 19 (WisDOT plans along Main St have not been finalized).

wing

→ = Travel Direction
= Double-Yellow Centerline
= Paint/Post Curb Extension (bump out)
STOP = Stop Sign
= Traffic Signal



Background Aerial Image Source: Jefferson County GIS
Background Aerial Image Date: 2023