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City of Ashland, Wisconsin
601 Main Street West Ashland, WI 54806 www.coawi.org

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

May 16th, 2023 at 6:30PM at the City Hall Council Chamber and via Go To Meetings

The meeting can be joined in person or by using a computer, smartphone or tablet at <https://meet.goto.com/199542789>. The meeting can also be joined by phone at 1 866 899 4679 using Access Code: 199-542-789

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of minutes from the April 25th, 2022 Plan Commission meeting
4. Public Comment (non-agenda items)
5. Action Items:
 - a. Review and possible action on the proposed Biking and Pedestrian Plan.
6. Announcement/Reports/Comments/Questions
7. Adjournment

It is possible that a quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information or speak about a subject, over which they have decision-making responsibility. Any governmental body at the above stated meeting will take no action other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice. The City of Ashland does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability in employment or provision of services, programs or activities. NOTE: Upon reasonable notice, the City of Ashland will accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through auxiliary aids or services. For additional information or to request this service, contact the Planning & Zoning Dept. at (715) 682-7041.



City of Ashland – Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Plan Commission was held on **Tuesday, April 25th, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.** in the Ashland City Hall Council Chambers and via GoToMeeting.

Committee Members Present: Mayor MacKenzie, John Beirl, JoAnn Erickson, and Laurie Gregor

Committee Members Absent: David Eades, Jeff Beirl, and Ana Tochtermann

Staff Present: Steven Wiley and Mandelyn Lyons

Mayor MacKenzie opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by John Beirl, seconded by Laurie Gregor.
Passed unanimously.

2) Consent Agenda

a) Approval of minutes from the December 20, 2022 Plan Commission meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2022 Plan Commission meetings by John Beirl, seconded by Laurie Gregor. Passed unanimously.

3) Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

4) Action Items

- a) Public Hearing and vote on a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for expansion of a clinic use at 619 9th Ave W, parcel #201-04374-0000, zoned Single & Two Family Residential (R-2). Applicant: Savita Jones o/b/o the Ashland Birth Center

Mandelyn Lyons presented the proposed expansion plans and summarized the staff report. She noted the criteria of review for a CUP and noted the Class 2 public hearing notice that has been issued as well as the discretionary letters that were sent to thirteen neighboring properties that were within 200 ft.

Motion to go into the public hearing by JoAnn Erickson, seconded by John Beirl.

Erik Haukaas of 605 9th Ave W commented that he is not supportive of the expansion of the Birth Center due to numerous ambulance visits in which they do not turn off their engines nor their lights. He said that people are outside the facility screaming and yelling at all hours and triggering his motion sensor flood lights. He noted that these are concerns that he brought up at the initial CUP meeting that have not been resolved over the past decade. He finished by saying that there is not enough parking for the facility as well and that the neighborhood is not conducive of this use.

Ed Monroe of 614 10th Ave W commented that he is concerned about the possibility of the clinic adding lighting to the parking lot. He said he is already dealing with lighting problems in the area. He also asked to clarify where the fence and the parking will be.

Lauren Duffy-Pechacek of 601 9th Ave W, submitted their comment in advance and said, she is in support of the birth center and the work they do and that her and her family are comfortable with their plans.

Savita Jones, owner and primary care provider of the Ashland Birth Center, explained the proposal in more detail. She noted the concerns presented by others during the public hearing and stated that there have been few ambulance visits within the last ten years. She clarified that the center is not expanding their services but moving small classes that already occur into a different space, as the classes occur in the current waiting area. She also addressed the lighting concerns, and said that she is not planning on adding additional lighting.

Erik Haukaas of 605 9th Ave W made a second public comment regarding his previously stated concerns.

Mayor MacKenzie asked for more public comments and there were none.

Motion to close the public hearing by JoAnn Erickson, seconded by John Beirl.
Passed unanimously.

Mayor MacKenzie suggested that some concerns brought to the commissions attention during the public hearing could be handled internally. Savita Jones agreed and noted she could add signage to the building concerning noise levels during nighttime hours.

Mayor MacKenzie stated that the City could review their EMS engine idling practices as well.

John Bierl asked staff how many neighbors were contacted via the 200 ft range for discretionary letters. Mayor MacKenzie answered that 13 property owners were contacted. John continued by saying that only having two of thirteen property owners have concerns seems to point to operations being within normal levels. He did continue to say that the concerns from neighbors are valid and wondered if any internal discussion has been attempted to resolve the issues.

Erik Haukaas said that he has been informed that police should handle these complaints and communication between the property owners.

John Bierl clarified that this meeting is not to discontinue the clinic use and that the property owners should internally discuss concerns.

Mayor MacKenzie offered to have a meeting of concerned property owners and the Birth Center to find solutions for the current challenges.

JoAnn Erickson asked who property owners and neighbors contact with noise complaints or similar issues. She also asked who is in charge of holding people accountable for their CUP conditions.

Staff and Mayor MacKenzie answered that the police are the contacts for noise complaints. Steven Wiley responded that staff are in charge of monitoring conditions of a CUP.

JoAnn Erickson asked if the center would have more classes or larger classes if this CUP is approved. She also asked when classes are held.

Savita Jones explained that the class sizes likely would not change however they might offer one additional class once a month. She explained that these classes are usually one day a month and are four hours long. The classes are during normal business hours and they do not anticipate having night classes.

Laurie Gregor asked if the clinic would be expanding their services offered.

Savita Jones explained that they wouldn't be adding any new services but potentially add an extra session of a class that already exists.

Laurie Gregor asked how traffic flows on the property.

Savita Jones explained that the majority of people come in via the main entrance and turn around to exit the same way. There is no signage telling patients to not use the alley but most find it more intuitive to not use it.

Motion for approval of the Conditional Use Permit with conditions by John Beirl, seconded by Laurie Gregor. Passed unanimously.

b) Public Hearing and vote on a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to institute a multi-family dwelling use at 208 3rd Ave W, parcel #201-01650-0100, zoned City Center (CC). Applicant: S.H. Warren LLC.

Steven Wiley presented the proposed plans for the Opera House project and summarized the staff report. He noted that there is an easement that will have to be honored going forward and that the applicant and the holder of the easement are already in communication in regards to changes that should be made. He noted the criteria for review of a CUP and explained the Class 2 public hearing notice that had been issued as well as the discretionary letter that were sent to seven neighboring properties that were within 200 ft.

Motion to go into the public hearing by JoAnn Erickson, seconded by John Beirl.

Tom Trudeau, the lead contractor for the project, explained the project and the restoration of the building. He also explained the current site layout.

Scott Clark, submitted their comment in advance, and said that there is an easement on the

property and that the detached garage and driveway would be within the easement area. He mentioned that snow removal has been difficult in the past.

John Beirl asked if the specifics of the easement are pertinent for the CUP consideration.

Steven Wiley answered that the easement will impact the site layout but the consideration for this evening is the use of the property. He also said that there is communication between the property owners. They will be coming back for a site plan review.

Motion to close the public hearing by John Beirl, seconded by Laurie Gregor.

JoAnn Erickson asked if there will be enough room between the snow storage area and the trash area.

Tom Trudeau answered that there should be.

JoAnn commented that it is great to see that building be restored.

John Beirl noted that he has a conflict of interest and will be abstaining.

Motion for approval of the Conditional Use Permit with conditions by JoAnn Erickson, seconded by Laurie Gregor. Passed, John Beirl abstained.

5) Announcements/Reports/Comments/Questions

Steven Wiley announced that there will be more CUPs presented to the Commission in the upcoming months including one for the second story building adjacent to the existing emergency shelter. He also reiterated that the previously discussed multi-family housing project will be returning the Commission for site plan review and approval. He noted that ordinance text amendments will also be coming to the Commission in the coming months.

Steven continued his update letting the Commission know that the railroad right-of-way for Florence Campbell is also moving forward. However there have been delays due to unforeseen conditions on the site, including easements and access.

Mayor MacKenzie updated the Commission regarding the Housing Committee. He told the Commission that he, along with Steven Wiley, has been re-vamping the committee and that there is a spot for a Planning Commission member. He finished by letting commissioners know that if they are interested they should contact him.

6) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by JoAnn Erickson. Seconded by John Beirl. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm. Minutes done by Mandelyn Lyons.

Ashland Bike Plan Update, April 2023

Because of its small size and close proximity of neighborhoods to downtown business, the city of Ashland is uniquely poised to support bicycling and walking as efficient and effective alternatives to motorized transportation. Not only do bicycling and walking reduce local use of fossil fuels and promote resilience to climate change, but these modes of transportation also make Ashland a desirable place to live, visit, and recreate. In addition, [numerous studies](#) have shown that bicycle infrastructure has a positive economic benefit to local businesses.

In 2017, The Ashland Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was approved by the Ashland City Council. This plan sought to create a safe and efficient network of routes and associated infrastructure that supports bicycling and walking in our community. The plan states that “in order for Ashland to capitalize on the close proximity of attractions, the city must ensure that cyclists and pedestrians feel safe and comfortable while using the city’s infrastructure.” In addition to a route map, the plan provides a list of infrastructure priorities for the city to implement.

To align bicycle infrastructure planning with upcoming city road projects, while also reassessing bicycle infrastructure needs, representatives from the Parks and Recreation Committee and the Public Works Committee have initiated a process to update the original plan. In this document, we provide updated recommendations for bicycle infrastructure (primarily bicycle lanes and sharrows markings). In most cases these recommendations mirror the original Bike Plan; however, in some cases we suggest slight revisions that align with road construction projects.

Goals of Ashland Bike Plan Update:

- Increase bicycle ridership
- Enhance safety and visibility for bicyclists
- Provide better bicycle accessibility to downtown, schools, parks, and other city amenities
- Provide an update to the existing Bike Plan with consideration of upcoming road projects.
- Establish clear and preferred routes for cyclists, using a combination of bike lanes and sharrows
- Create bike routes that encircle downtown, with sufficient cross-cutting routes to connect with typical destinations
- Concentrating cyclists onto efficient transportation routes and away from otherwise dangerous routes/intersections
- Minimize overlap between motorists and cyclists
- Create a clear and simple route map
- Align bike plan priorities with scheduled road improvements (reconstruction and resurfacing)
- Enhance bicycle infrastructure for use by current residents and tourists
- Promote Ashland’s bike infrastructure as an amenity to attract new residents

Recommendation: Create bike routes that circumnavigate the central residential portion of downtown Ashland, using bike lanes on 2 arterial east-west streets and intermittent north-south sharrows that connect the interior of the “box”. Further consideration for Beaser Ave may be beneficial for improved bicycle access to the hospital campus.

Recommended Routes for Bicycle Lane Markings:

- 3rd Street W
 - Rationale: Bicycle lanes on 3rd St W will provide an efficient east-west transportation route for bikes that is not on Main Street. We want to minimize cyclist traffic on Main Street itself (due to parking congestion), but having a parallel route on 3rd would allow bicyclists to efficiently access their Main St destinations.
- 11th Street W
 - Rationale: facilitate efficient east-west biking along a corridor that connects to middle school, Northland College, and other “interior” sharrows routes
- Ellis Ave - from Lake Shore Dr. to 16th Street E
 - Rationale - already planned as part of the Ellis Ave rebuild
 - From a bicycling perspective this will provide an excellent and centralized north-south route with bike lanes for fast access to downtown and the lakeshore path.
 - QUESTION: can bike lanes be extended out to 22nd St. as part of this project? This would extend bike lanes to Tree Top Child Development Center and allow for a connection to Salem Church, Binsfield Rd. and the Farm Rd. mountain bike trails.
- Additional Question - Are these 3rd St E and 11th St E wide enough to support Bike Lanes as a continuation of the proposed bike lanes on 3rd St. W and 11th St W
 - Otherwise: use sharrows markings on these routes

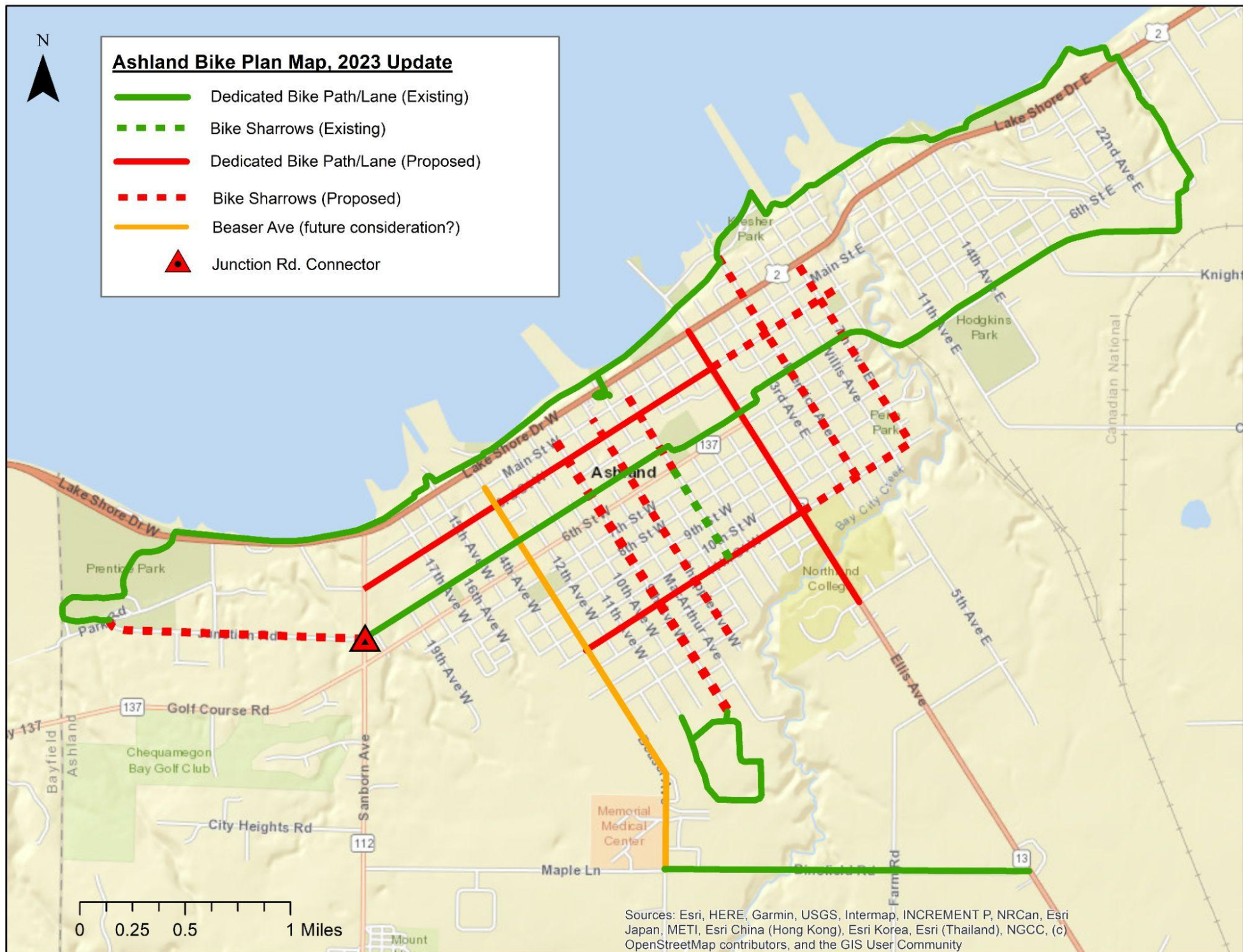
Recommended Routes for Sharrows Markings:

- Junction Rd
 - Rationale: Improve wayfinding for ARTS trail, indicate to motorists that this is a bike route
- Chapple Ave
 - Rationale: direct route to important section of downtown (Post Office, BlackCat/Bakery, Co-op, Farmer’s Market, HWY 2 underpass, etc)
 - Scheduled for reconstruction in 2025
- 7th Ave E (11th St to 6th St)
 - Rationale: Easternmost sharrows connector to downtown
 - Provides connection to Lakeshore path
- Prentice Ave (11th to Lakeshore)
 - Rational: Additional sharrows connector to downtown for the east side of Ellis.
 - Provides connection to Lakeshore path
 - Scheduled for Reconstruction in 2024

- 9th Ave W
 - Rationale: Additional sharrows connector to downtown for the west side of Ellis.
 - Continuation of the official “Safe Routes to School” (SRTS) route that exists south of 11th St W
- Vaughn Ave, north of 6th St
 - Rationale: continuation of existing sharrows route that exists south of 6th St.
- Vaughn Ave, south of 6th St (**COMPLETED**)
- **NOTE:** future placement of sharrows markings need to be in the travel lane. The Vaughn sharrows paint looks great, but it is a little too far into the parking lane.

Other important bicycle infrastructure considerations:

- Junction Rd “Connector”
 - Update intersection where ARTS trail meets Sanborn Ave, so that cyclists on ARTS trail do not have to navigate a complicated turn onto Junction Rd.
- ARTS trail crossing near Walmart?
- Beaser Ave - consider new creative solutions to enhance bicycle infrastructure?
 - Existing 8'-wide multi-use path is the only option on this route.
 - Future consideration of Beaser design or other routes to support better bicycle access to the Hospital Campus, High School, Northwoods Tech, and the proposed mountain bike trails south of Maple Ave.



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**DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT**

601 Main Street West
Ashland, WI 54806

STAFF REPORT

Plan Commission – May 16, 2023

Agenda Item # 5a: Review of updated City of Ashland Bicycle Plan

Applicant: Parks and Recreation, Public Works Departments

Staff Contact: Sara Hudson (Parks & Rec), John Butler (Public Works)

Action Request/Background

The Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments are requesting input on the updated City of Ashland Bicycle Plan which contains existing and proposed bicycle routes throughout the city. The two departments are in charge of implementing bicycle infrastructure in the city. Members of the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Committees have updated the plan over the past several months. David Ullman (Parks & Rec Committee) and Phil Sorensen (Public Works Committee) have spearheaded the update efforts. The Public Works Committee reviewed the updated plan at its April 13, 2023 meeting. The Parks & Rec Committee reviewed the plan at the April 17, 2023 Parks & Rec Committee meeting. Staff requests that the Plan Commission review the bicycle plan to determine consistency with the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan.

The original Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was approved by the City Council in 2017. The plan prioritized the creation of routes and infrastructure to support walking and bicycling in Ashland. The original plan provides a route map and list of infrastructure priorities for implementation. For the 2023 Plan update, there are updated recommendations for bicycle infrastructure. Most recommendations are consistent with the original plan but there are some revisions that align with planned street construction projects.

Analysis

The 2017 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was developed to encourage walking and biking in the city. The updated plan includes a series of goals, recommended routes for bicycle lanes and sharrows markings, and other bicycle infrastructure considerations. The plan contains an updated map showing existing and proposed bicycle routes. The updated bicycle plan will help in expanding and enhancing the city's bicycle routes.

The 2023 updated Bicycle Plan is consistent with the Complete Streets transportation goals of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan. The plan calls for streets to "address all modes of transportation" and explains that "vehicle and bike lanes can either be striped independently or shared" (Authentic Ashland, Part 2, pg. 26). The updated Bicycle Plan has no conflicts with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Ullman and Mr. Sorenson are seeking public input before any committees, the Plan Commission, and the City Council approve the finalized plan. Upon finalizing the plan and approval by the pertinent committees and Plan Commission staff will forward the plan to the City Council for review.

Review Recommendation

Staff requests input from the Plan Commission on the updated City of Ashland Bicycle Plan. The Commission can make a statement that the draft plan is not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.

Approvals are based on background information provided by the applicant and known conditions. Deviations from this information may be considered a change in the application and reconsideration and possible revision to the approvals may be made by the Plan Commission and Common Council.