CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

PARTA SR 59

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

MAY 2022

SPONSOR

PREPARED FOR

PREPARED BY

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Connecting Communities study evaluates existing conditions and recommends pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements along State Route 59 from Horning Road to State Route 261. Most of this approximately 0.9 mile corridor is in Franklin Township with a portion in the City of Kent.

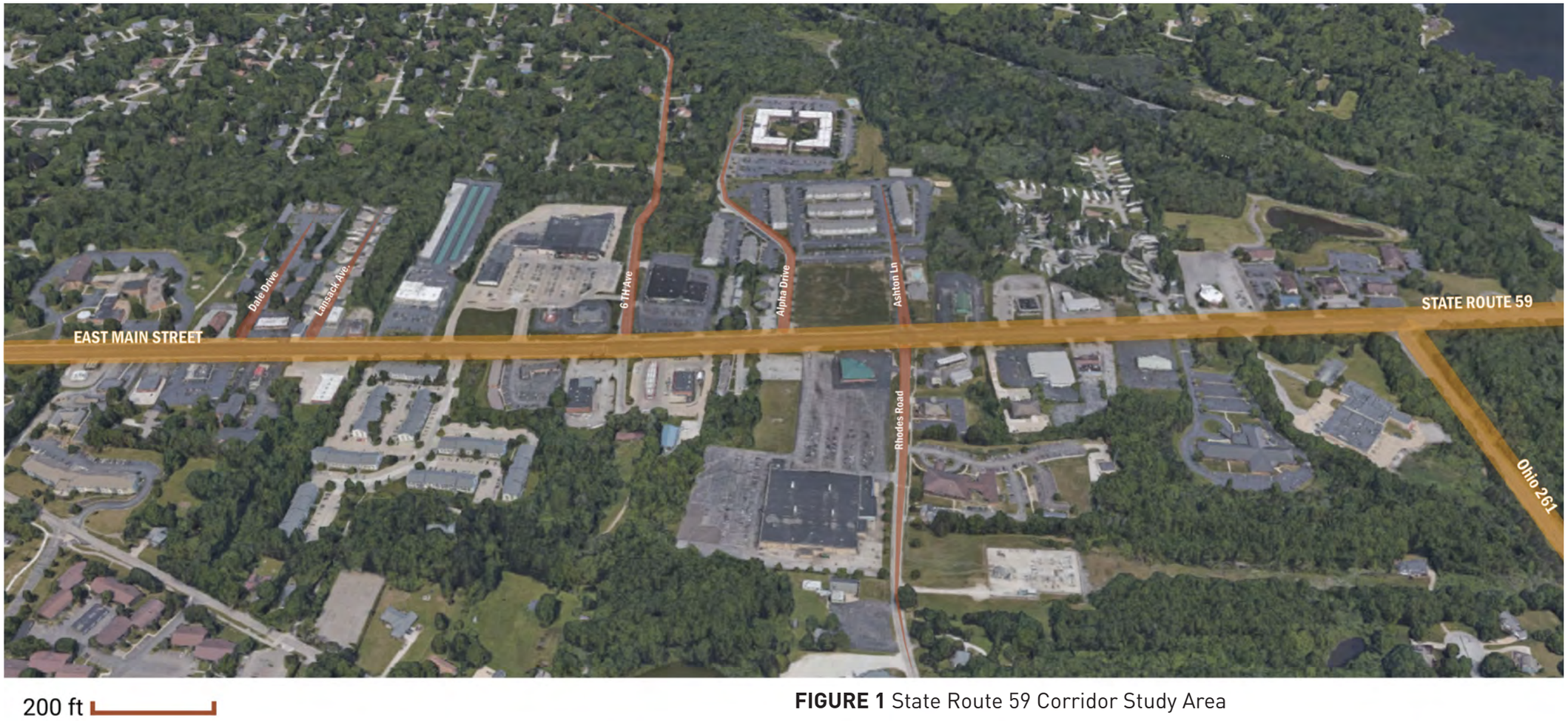


FIGURE 1 State Route 59 Corridor Study Area

Current development along the corridor is generally oriented towards cars and trucks. Businesses are setback from the roadway behind large parking lots. Housing areas and institutional uses along the corridor are also designed primarily for car access. The area has a high population of students and other community members who rely on non-vehicular transportation (bicycle, pedestrian, and transit). SR 59 is the primary transit corridor connecting Kent and Ravenna and a wide range of individuals rely on transit for access to businesses and institutions located in this segment. Corridor improvements are needed to provide safe, comfortable access for residents of all abilities and income levels. Currently, the facilities needed to serve these users are lacking or deficient.

These deficiencies are evident in the 2010 Sidewalk/Crosswalk Gap Analysis, 2016-2018 Top 50 High Crash Sections, and existing data on pedestrian-related crashes. The corridor needs wide, safe, continuous sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The corridor also needs enhanced transit waiting environments and better connections between transit stops and destinations. High speed traffic on SR 59, along with a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage make conditions difficult for the community members who live, work, and travel in this area.

Goals of the Planning Process

- Identify appropriate locations for alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian walkways, multi-purpose trails, transit improvements.
- Blend roadway and street scape improvements between E. Main Street in Kent and SR 59. There should not be a distinct boundary between the two jurisdictions and subsequent project lines.
- Provide infrastructure that supports alternative methods of transportation to employment, education and recreational centers, which in turn will support economic development activities.
- Ensure an equity focus in the community planning process by including residents of all abilities and income.
- Improve community collaboration (internally and externally).
- Identify community action items and implementation strategies.

Recommendations

- Reduce lane widths to reduce speeds to posted limits.
- Extend and widen sidewalks for safe shared use by bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Create additional mid-block crossings with painted crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, pedestrian islands, and new crossing signals.
- Improve transit amenities, including ADA accessible bus stops, shelters, and connections to nearby designations.
- Upgrade pedestrian crossings at traffic lights with painted crosswalks and pedestrian signals.

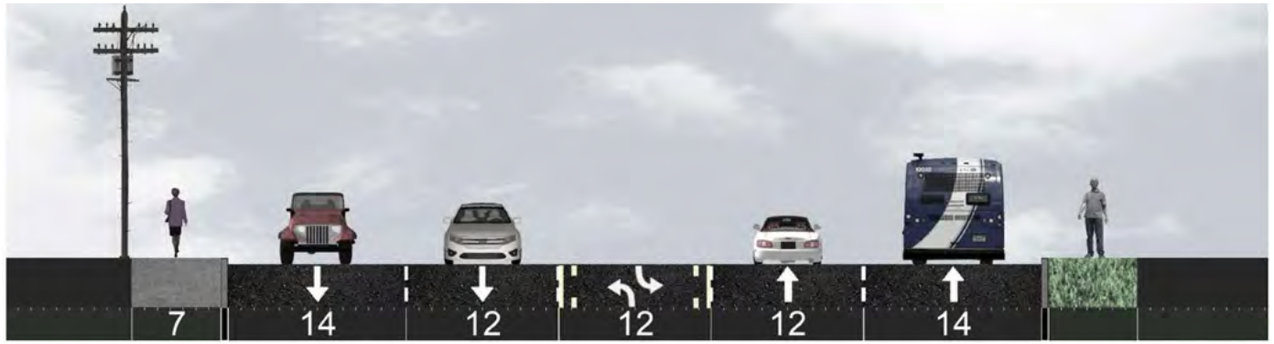


FIGURE 2 Existing corridor right-of-way and lane widths. In some areas, pedestrians are forced to walk on grass or dirt with no sidewalks

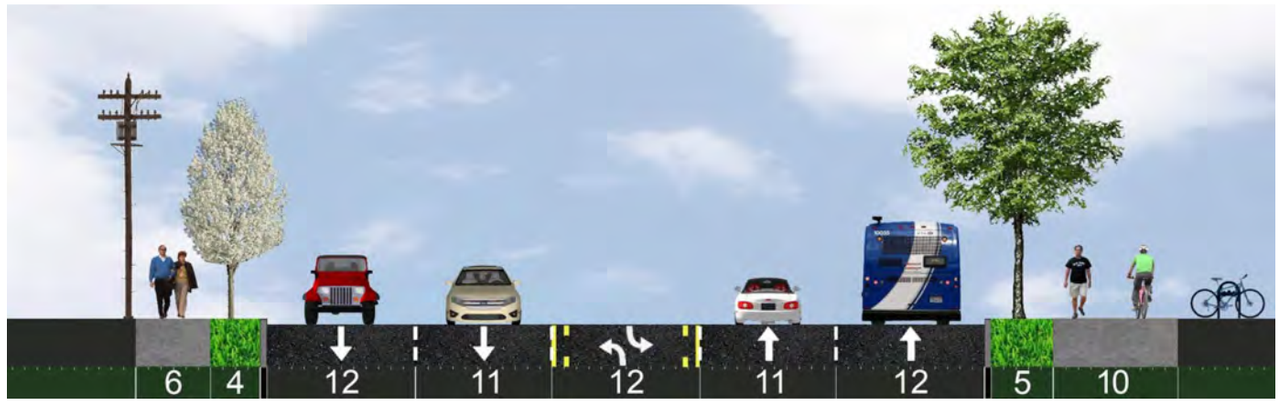
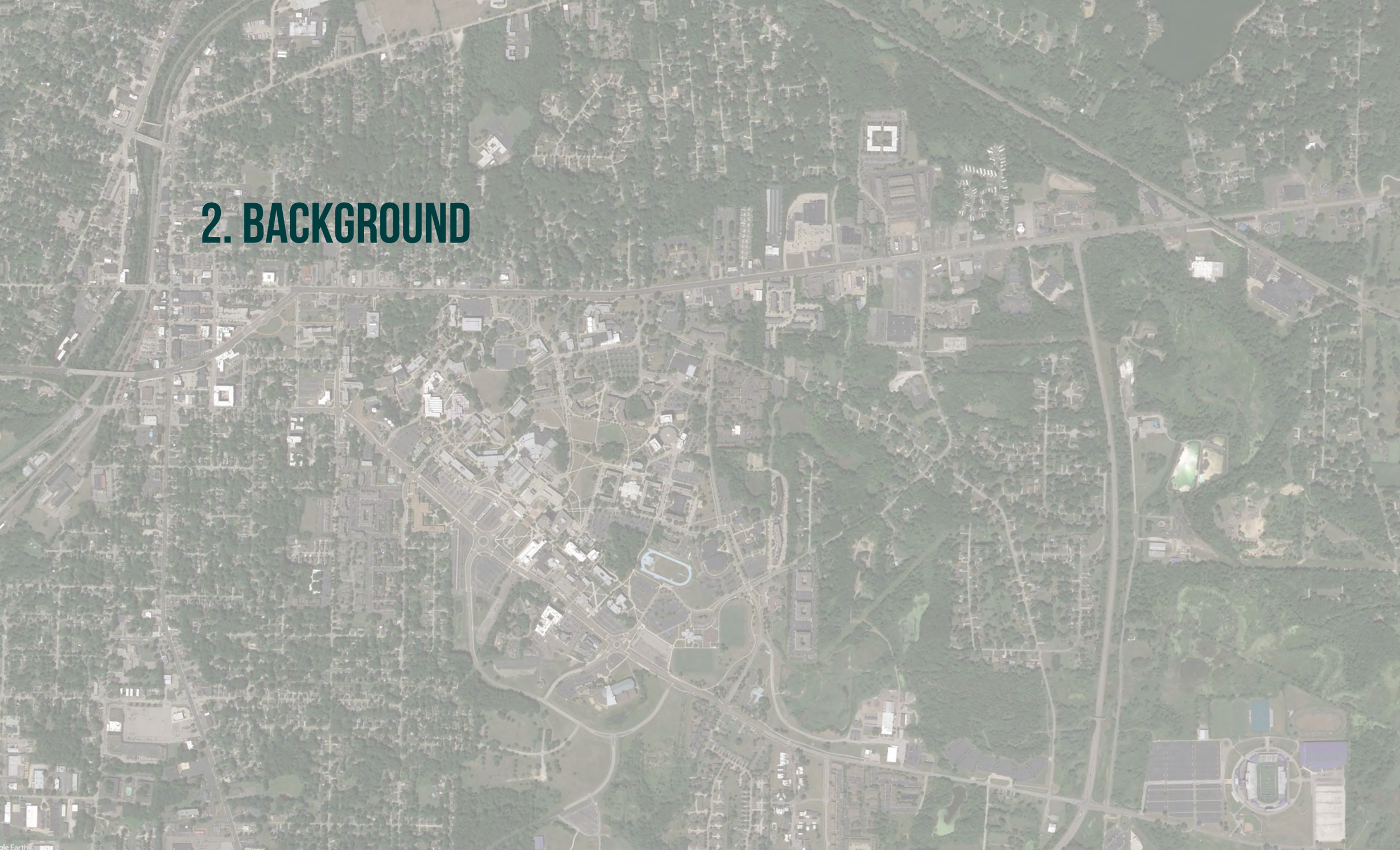


FIGURE 3 Proposed corridor right-of-way and lane widths



2. BACKGROUND

This PARTA SR 59 Alternative Transportation Improvements Study is part of AMATS Connecting Communities initiative, aimed at increasing alternative transportation options to connect people and places; promoting Complete Street principles to create vibrant and safe places for all users; and leveraging transportation projects to develop places which support alternative transportation and complete streets through land use and design.

Purpose and Need

State Route 59 between Horning Road and State Route 261 is a five lane, vehicle-centric stretch of roadway with an average daily traffic count of around 19,184 vehicles based on AMATS 2016 Average Daily Traffic Study. 1,000-5,000 of these are big trucks according to AMATS Transportation Outlook 2040.

This 0.9 mile stretch of roadway has two lanes in each direction for travel and a median left turn lane with limited facilities for transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The lack of sidewalks creates a difficult and dangerous environment for pedestrians. Cyclists must ride with traffic with little visibility to the automobiles driving past.

The speed limit in this segment of SR 59 is 35 miles per hour, which is down from 45 miles per hour at the east end of the study area. Boarding and alighting the bus is difficult as passengers are dropped off in areas of low accessibility due to a lack of landing pads and curb cuts at the bus stops. PARTA provides two fixed routes that run every 30-45 minutes Monday through Saturday. These routes cover several residential areas and retail centers located within a quarter mile or five-minute walk. There are 17 stops in the project area where PARTA saw 30,447 boardings in 2019. Only nine of the 17 stops are accessible from a sidewalk. The rest are accessed from the tree lawn. Without sidewalks, landing pads, or curb cuts, stops are barely accessible to ambulatory passengers and inaccessible to those with mobility devices. Visibility at the stops is low due to the lack of lighting in the area.

Pedestrians in this area experience similar difficulties. Of the three signaled intersections in the study area, two have crossing signals, one has a painted crosswalk, and one has no crossing facilities at all. AMATS' Traffic Crashes and Safety Performance Measures for 2016-2018 notes that the section of State Route 59 between Horning Road and the Kent city limits is #18 on the list of high crash roadway sections. This section saw 48 crashes, two that were pedestrian-related. This could be attributed to the large apartment complex located across from a grocery store with no adjacent intersection from which to cross. Recently, AMATS found ten bike or pedestrian crashes in this area between 2015 - 2021. ODOT CAM tool found one bike and pedestrian crash between 2018-2020.

AMATS 2010 Sidewalk/Crosswalk Gap Analysis also noted more than half of the area is not covered by sidewalks. Bicycle amenities are also lacking. There are no marked bike lanes or paths. Cyclists must ride with traffic with no signage indicating a shared lane. According to AMATS Transportation Outlook 2040, bike crashes were down from two in 2013-2015 to zero in 2016-2018. This could be due to indirect improvements for cyclists in the greater Kent area such as paths that bypass the study area, but nothing that improved the study area directly. Cyclists can also be transit riders, since the buses have bike racks, but this is not an attractive first mile/last mile solution in this area due to the lack of amenities.

The alternative transportation needs for the section of SR 59 between Horning Road and SR 261 are great. Transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists need infrastructure investments that make them safer and more visible to motorists. The corridor needs more accessible points to connect with transit and better crossing facilities to help people navigate their way safely across five lanes of traffic. In this area of retail, dining, and residential uses, it is imperative to make access for all better, safer, and more attractive to those who do not have access to a car whether by choice or circumstance. Corridor improvements for SR 59 will connect to planned improvements for East Main Street and SR 261, creating an expanded bike network.

FIGURE 4 No sidewalk for pedestrians

FIGURE 5 Curb cut with no crosswalk

Alignment with Connecting Communities Principles

Alternative Transportation

SR 59 currently prioritizes vehicular traffic, often to the detriment of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. This plan aims to improve safety, enhance mobility, and encourage bus ridership by reducing lane widths, shifting space within the right-of-way for wider sidewalks and pedestrian buffers, creating pedestrian islands at mid-block crossings, and enhancing bus stops/transit waiting areas.

Wider, continuous sidewalks throughout the corridor and more prominent crosswalks will allow for a safer and more comfortable experience for pedestrians and bicyclists, so these modes of transportation become a more viable alternative to driving, particularly for short trips.

Land use patterns along SR 59 are primarily oriented for vehicular access. Development in the corridor is mostly single-use--commercial, residential or institutional--and the area has a spread out, suburban density. However, there are a significant number of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders who live, work, and shop in this area and infrastructure investments are needed to improve safety and access for these populations.

Bicycle facilities play an important role in the transportation system. A wider sidewalk/ multipurpose path along SR 59 could connect with the proposed side path on the adjacent East Main Street project, eventually connect with a planned bike path along SR 261, and further connect with the Freedom Trail to Tallmadge, creating a larger bike network that could be used for commuting and recreation.

Buses are a critical part of the transportation system, providing access to shopping, restaurants, housing, employment, medical facilities, religious institutions, and other destinations along SR 59. PARTA provides frequent bus service along this segment, but sidewalks connecting to the stops are not continuous, unsafe in areas, and uncomfortably close to fast moving traffic. The sidewalk and shared use path recommended in this study

would provide continuous connectivity to the many bus stops. Currently, the entire 0.9-mile segment only has two marked crosswalks (at the 6th Avenue and Rhodes Road signals). This is deficient given the density and locations of development. Transit users often must walk several hundred feet to the nearest crosswalk to safely cross SR 59 or cross unsafely where there is no marked crossing.

To provide high quality transit service, bus stops should ideally be located within ¼-mile (or 5-minute walk) of the user's destination. Strategically placed mid-block crosswalks near the residential developments and other high use stops would significantly shorten the walk for many users. Possible locations include the Ryan Place apartments, Holly Court apartments, and the Whispering Pines mobile home park.

To provide a safe, comfortable experience, mid-block crossings must be highly visible to drivers through adequate signing, lighting, and pavement markings, which can include changes in pavement color and texture. Equally important to the safety of mid-block crosswalks is slowing vehicular speeds which can be accomplished by narrowing the lanes. Bus pull-offs should also be considered at higher volume stops.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are designed and operated to ensure safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities. SR 59 is particularly challenging for people with disabilities. PARTA's bus fleet is fully accessible but connections between the bus stops and many destinations in the corridor are not accessible. Some bus stops are located in grassy areas without sidewalks, which can be difficult to traverse in a wheelchair. Deep building setbacks often mean that the front door of a business or other destination is far from the location where people get off the bus, often separated by a parking lot without a sidewalk or other pedestrian amenities. As a result, people with disabilities often choose door-to-door service, which is less frequent and more expensive than the fixed route service.

Enhancements to existing bus stops, including the installation of bus shelters wherever possible, will make SR 59 more 'complete.' Collaborating with business owners and other private sector partners along the corridor can help to improve connections between the right-of-way and intended destinations.

Land Use and Design

Development along the corridor is mostly built-out, except for a few small empty lots (out lots at the Acme Plaza and Gabe's, the former Kentwood Restaurant site, and a small parcel behind Raising Cane's). Given current land use patterns and the existing zoning code (C-1/Local Commercial and R-4/Multi-Family in Franklin Township and C-R/Commercial High Density Multifamily Residential in Kent), the corridor is likely to remain automobile-oriented for the foreseeable future. However, improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure along SR 59 may encourage private property owners to invest in better connections to their facilities. This is especially important for elderly and disabled populations who use this route frequently. There are several medical facilities in the corridor and a residential complex for people 55 and older (Four Seasons at Kent). Corridor and intersection improvements should be designed to support the needs of these populations and other people with mobility limitations.

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Lack of Bike Infrastructure

There are no bike lanes, sharrows, or other bicycle infrastructure in the segment of SR 59 between Horning Road and SR 261. With five lanes of high speed traffic, the corridor offers no facilities to protect bicyclists. PARTA buses are equipped with bike racks to allow cyclists to ride and use their bikes for first mile/last mile connections. Bike infrastructure would improve safety and encourage bicycling as an alternative to driving. Bike infrastructure would also provide greater access to restaurants and retail in the corridor for students who live nearby and others in the area.

Sidewalk gaps

Sidewalks are not continuous throughout the corridor. Gaps were noted at the following locations:

- On the south side of SR 59 at Rhodes Road, walking east, the sidewalk in front of Sunoco does not reach the curb. Pedestrians must walk through the grass.
- There is no sidewalk on the north or south side of SR 59 between Rhodes Road and SR 261. This section of the corridor has five bus stops, three of which lack sidewalk access or even a landing pad.
- Goat paths are visible in areas where sidewalks are lacking, which is an indication that pedestrians are currently walking in these areas and would benefit from continuous sidewalks.
- There is a goat path that leads to a wide shoulder on SR 59 while heading toward SR 261. Although the shoulder is wide, this is an uncomfortable area for pedestrians since car and truck traffic is moving fast as drivers try to make the light. There is no protection from traffic for pedestrians. A sidewalk with a buffer would make pedestrians safer and more visible.

Limited Bus Stop Amenities

Bus stops are not easily accessible, especially those that lack sidewalks, a landing pad, or a curb cut. A person in a wheelchair would struggle to access transit in this area at any time of the year, but especially in the snow.

Missing Crosswalks

Crosswalks and pedestrian signals are needed to improve pedestrian visibility and safety at the intersection of SR 59 and SR 261. Unfortunately, there are no sidewalks on SR 59 to the east of SR 261, so a new crosswalk would bring pedestrians to grassy, snowy, or muddy areas, rather than a sidewalk.

The intersection of SR 59 and 6th Avenue has crosswalks on three sides of the intersection. The east side of the intersection lacks a crosswalk.

The intersection of SR 59 and Rhodes Road lacks crosswalks and pedestrian signals. A crosswalk exists at the east side of the intersection only. There is an existing sidewalk on the north side of SR 59, in front of Campus Point apartments. A crosswalk is lacking across Ashton Lane.

Safety and Crash Analysis

Safety issues are a primary concern in the SR 59 corridor. AMATS has documented 12 pedestrian and bicycle crashes in the study area between 2015 and 2021, as shown in Figure 5.

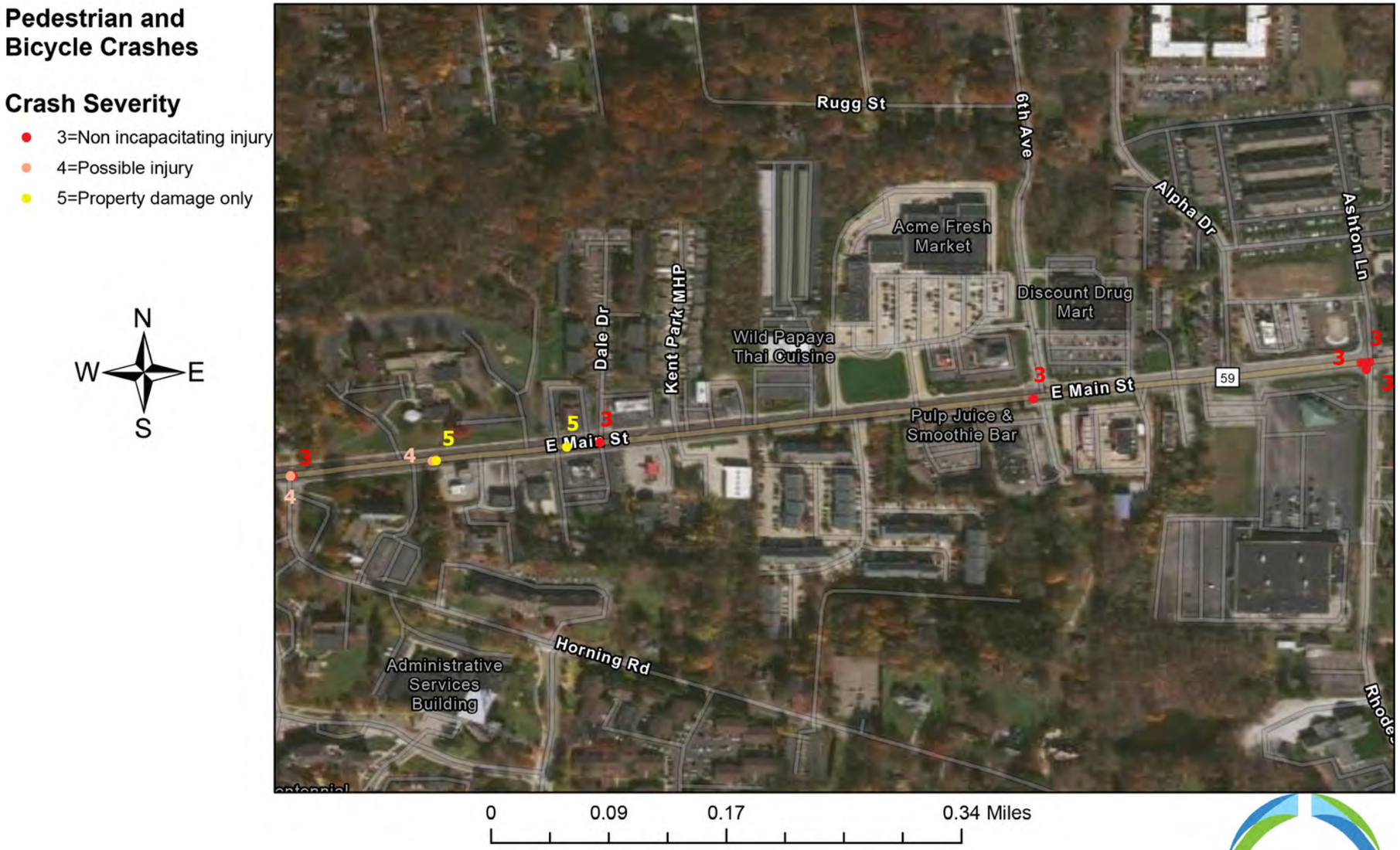


FIGURE 5 Map of Pedestrian and Bike Crashes (Horning Rd to Ashton Lane)

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study

ODOT District 4 provided crash data for the SR 59 corridor from 2018 to 2020. The data was sourced from the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS). A total of 114 crashes occurred within the study area.

Figure 6 compares the crash data to statewide averages for similar four-lane arterials in Ohio using ODOT's Crash Analysis Module (CAM) Tool. The figure shows that the SR 59 corridor exceeds statewide averages for pedestrian, sideswipe-passing, left turn, angle, rear-end, and injury crashes.

The crash statistics are summarized in Table 1.

No fatalities occurred on SR 59 between 2018 and 2020. One crash resulted in a serious injury in 2019 when a westbound vehicle turning left into the BP gas station collided with an eastbound vehicle. Thirty-one crashes resulted in minor injuries. A majority of the crashes, approximately 72 percent, were property damage only crashes.

Rear-end and angle crashes were the most common crash types accounting for 68 percent of the total crashes, followed by left turn and sideswiping-passing crashes (25 percent combined). Approximately 76 percent occurred between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. during weekdays and 72 percent occurred on dry pavement.

One pedestrian was struck in 2020 by a southbound vehicle turning right out of the United Methodist Church of Kent (across from the BP gas station driveway) resulting in a possible injury to the pedestrian. The crash occurred during daylight hours on dry pavement. One bicyclist was rear ended in 2020 by an eastbound vehicle near Rockne's but the cyclist was not injured. The crash occurred at night in the rain.

Given the frequency and severity of crashes a more in-depth safety evaluation will be conducted in the next phase of this project. The in-depth safety analysis will use more recent crash data and will either follow the ODOT guidance for a formal safety study or the ODOT guidance for a systemic safety application depending on whether the injury rate exceeds 30 percent with updated data.

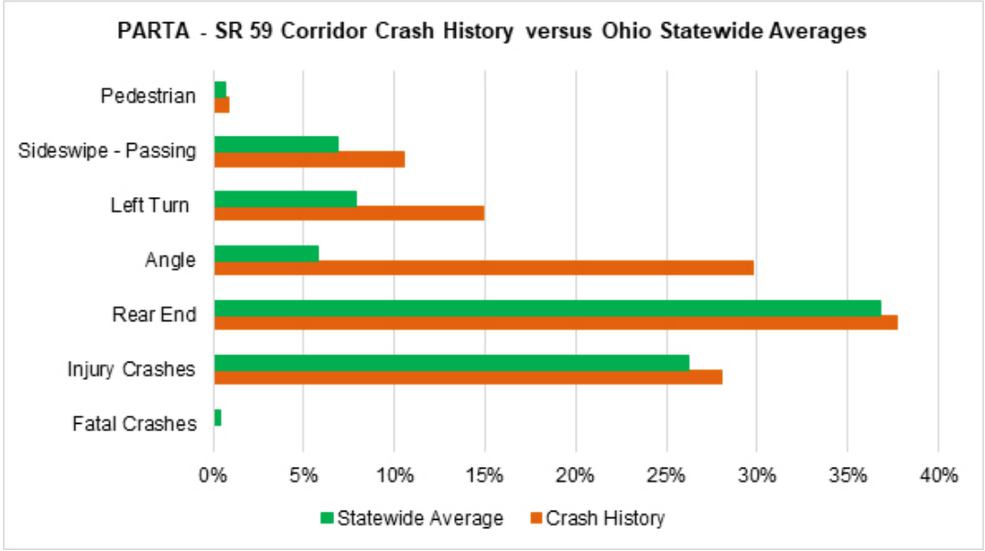


FIGURE 6 PARTA – SR 59 Study Area Crash History

Table 1 - PARTA - SR 9 Crash Summary

Crash Severity	Total	Percentage
Fatal Crashes	0	0%
Serious Injury Crashes	1	1%
Minor Injury Crashes	19	17%
Injury Possible Crashes	12	11%
PDO Crashes	82	72%

Crash Type	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Rear-End	0	10	33	38%
Angle	0	10	24	30%
Left Turn	1	6	10	15%
Sideswipe-Passing	0	2	10	11%
Fixed Object	0	2	0	2%
Animal	0	0	2	2%
Backing	0	0	1	1%
Right Turn	0	0	1	1%
Bicycles	0	0	1	1%
Pedestrian	0	1	0	1%

Contributing Factor	Total	Percentage
Other Improper Action	1	1%
Following too Close/ACDA	43	38%
Failure to Yield	34	30%
None	4	4%
Improper Lane Change	8	7%
Other	6	5%
Ran Red Light	9	8%
Improper Turn	3	3%
Improper Backing	1	1%
Left of Center	1	1%
Unsafe Speed	0	0%
Drove off Road	1	1%
Improper Passing	2	2%
Ran Stop Sign	1	1%

Time of Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
12 a.m. to 6 a.m.	0	0	3	3%
6 a.m. to 9 a.m.	0	1	4	4%
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.	0	11	22	29%
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.	1	11	37	43%
7 p.m. to 12 a.m.	0	8	16	21%
Crashes by Day	**Serious Injury**	**Minor/Injury Possible**	**PDO**	**Percentage**
Sunday	0	1	6	6%
Monday	0	2	12	12%
Tuesday	1	8	9	16%
Wednesday	0	4	10	12%
Thursday	0	3	15	16%
Friday	0	9	14	20%
Saturday	0	4	16	18%
Month	**Serious Injury**	**Minor/Injury Possible**	**PDO**	
January	0	3	10	
February	0	3	9	
March	0	4	5	
April	0	2	4	
May	0	2	2	
June	0	1	4	
July	0	1	6	
August	0	5	3	
September	1	2	5	
October	0	3	11	
November	0	3	10	
December	0	2	13	
Crashes by Year	**Serious Injury**	**Minor/Injury Possible**	**PDO**	
2018	0	12	26	
2019	1	10	30	
2020	0	9	26	
Road Condition	**Serious Injury**	**Minor/Injury Possible**	**PDO**	**Percentage**
Dry	1	24	57	72%
Wet	0	7	15	19%
Ice/Snow	0	0	10	9%
Unknown	0	0	0	0%

SR 59 was widened from two lanes to five lanes in 1975. The record plans show the existing right-of-way varies considerably with generally more right-of-way on the north side, particularly from Dale Drive to Ashton Lane. In many places through the corridor, the existing right-of-way is at the back of sidewalk (where sidewalk exists), or seven to 8 feet behind the curb where there is no sidewalk.

The right-of-way is narrow in a few areas, particularly in front of the Whispering Pines mobile home park where the right-of-way is three feet behind the north curb line. The existing plans show a 64-foot pavement width from curb-to-curb, which translates to three 12-foot lanes on the inside and two 14-foot lanes on the outside. Generous lanes widths, particularly on multi-lane roads, result in higher vehicular speeds making roads less safe and inviting for bicycles and pedestrians. While the legal posted speed is 35-mph, the record plans show that SR 59 east of Horning Road was designed for 45-mph, which is likely much closer to the prevailing speed on this section.

AMATS Discovery Process

AMATS completed the initial data collection and analysis in April 2021. The discovery document identified areas of concern or improvement and provided important data about the study area.

Auto-oriented Corridor

The SR 59 corridor has five lanes and average daily traffic of almost 20,000 automobiles. It includes residential and retail/dining areas, with pedestrians of all ages. Two bus routes serve the corridor with a total of 17 stops in the study area.

The intersection of Horning Road and SR 59 has crosswalks, curb cuts, and pedestrian signals, making it safer and easier to navigate on foot than other intersections in the study area. It sets the standard to be replicated for other intersections in the corridor.

Overall, the corridor lacks crosswalks and pedestrian signals. It has missing sidewalks, a lack of bus amenities, and no bike infrastructure. Since this segment of SR 59 has only four traffic lights, traffic speeds often exceed posted limits. The corridor has heavy truck traffic which adds to pedestrian discomfort. The corridor is particularly difficult for people in wheelchairs and pushing strollers.

Several nearby housing developments offer student housing. Many students walk between their apartments and the nearby Kent State campus. Improvements are being planned for East Main Street just west of the SR 59 study area, and for the 261 corridor at the west end of the study area. Improvements for SR 59 will be designed to tie into these other projects.

FIGURE 7 Bus stop with no amenities

Connecting Communities Bus & Brainstorm

On August 31, 2021 the planning team and stakeholder group explored the SR 59 corridor by bus and on foot, documenting existing conditions and discussing potential improvements. The Bus & Brainstorm was attended by:

Curtis Baker (AMATS), Heather Davis Reidl (AMATS), Mark Dennis (Arcadis), Jim Bowling (City of Kent), Clayton Popik (PARTA), Claudia Amrhein (PARTA), Denise Baba (PARTA), Larry Jenkins (Portage County Engineer), Terry Schwarz (CUDC), Ann Ward (E. Main Street Citizen Advisory Committee), Randy Smith (E. Main Street Citizen Advisory Committee)

The group boarded the 35 bus at the Kent Central Gateway and headed to the easternmost stop in the study area, on the south side of SR 59 near SR 261. From there, the group walked west, crossing to the north side of SR 59 at 6th Avenue and walking to Horning Road. At Horning, the group crossed to the south side of SR 59 and walked to the Police Station for a work session.

Observations

The group witnessed a passenger board with a walker at Rhodes. The Rhodes bus shelter is accessible from the sidewalk, but not from the roadway where passengers get on and off the bus. This particular passenger with a walker was able to navigate through the grass, but not all mobility devices would be able to function in these conditions.

FIGURES 8 & 9 No sidewalks available for pedestrians in many regularly-used areas.

FIGURE 10 Rhodes Road bus shelter is inaccessible from the street.

Another passenger got off the bus at SR261 and crossed mid-block toward a medical facility. The Whispering Pines mobile home park is a residential area with transit accessibility issues. Residents of Whispering Pines also have first mile/last mile issues, which underscores the need for alternative transportation improvements.

In the segment of the corridor near the Sheetz gas station, sidewalks are not continuous. There is an existing crosswalk at SR59 and 6th Avenue. Traffic moves at high speeds as people move east of this intersection. Jim Bowling made note of higher pedestrian accidents in crosswalks. A crosswalk can create a false sense of security for pedestrians. A painted crosswalk and crossing signal are often not enough.

At SR 59 and 6th Avenue, the pedestrian signal was blocked by a new utility pole. Also, the bus shelter near the Pizza Hut is accessible to buses in the roadway, but there is no access across an area of grass between the bus stop and the restaurant.

FIGURE 11 Bus shelter near Pizza Hut is accessible from the road/bus but there is no pedestrian access from the bus stop to the business entrance. A person in a wheelchair would be forced to navigate around the lawn by using the driveway, which would put them at risk.

Holly Park, Dale Drive, and the Four Seasons residential complexes need access to mid-block crossings on SR 59. Redundant access points to these residential properties are good places for mid-block medians where the extra entrance could be made into a right in/right out turn, as occurs at the west entrance to the Acme Plaza.

Preliminary Recommendations from Work Session

Based on observations in the corridor, the group discussed reducing the outside through lanes by two feet and the inside through lanes by one foot. This provides a total of six feet of usable space in the right-of-way that can be dedicated to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements. The group also discussed reducing the center turn lane width from twelve feet to ten feet. A reduction in lane widths would help to slow traffic and provide right-of-way for a side path.

The existing five-foot tree lawn would be needed for a multi-use path on the south side of SR 59. There is a current plan for SR 261 that incorporates a bike path along the right-of-way through that corridor, which would effectively connect SR 59 to the Freedom Trail to Tallmadge at some point in the future.

The expansion of Crystal Clinic underscores the need for a sidewalk to be extended along the north side of SR 59 to at least the end of the study area, with a crosswalk for access to both sides of SR 59. Signal upgrades would be needed at the three intersections throughout the study area to make the necessary pedestrian signal installations. A bus shelter in front of Acme Plaza needs to have better access to the businesses, perhaps by a dedicated sidewalk or path across the parking lot.

FIGURE 12 Bus Shelter in front of Acme Plaza with no clear, accessible path to the businesses in the plaza.

The existing eastbound bus stop across from the Whispering Pines mobile home park lacks sidewalks and a transit loading area. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for a person in a wheelchair to board the bus at this stop. Transit, sidewalk, and crosswalk improvements are needed to address this situation.

The center turn lane could be used as a median or pedestrian refuge at mid-block crossings. The mid-block crossings would be located where people are currently crossing. Aligning mid-block crossings with bus stop locations would enable transit riders to more safely reach destinations on the other side of the street. Bus shelters are preferred at bus stops, wherever there is room in the right-of-way.

Pedestrian islands should be placed at the mid-block crossings. Access management is important, to ensure that drivers can access their destinations and trucks and emergency vehicles also maintain access. During the design process, Arcadis will work with PARTA to finalize locations of bus stops along the corridor to correspond with locations of mid-block crossings and transit needs. These could be incremental steps for implementing changes while waiting for the overall project to be put together. Better placement of bus stops would reduce the amount of east/west movement of riders along SR 59 so the lack of sidewalks in some areas would be less of an issue for the moment.

Shelters make riders feel safe and protected from the elements. Shelters should be installed at bus stops wherever possible, using transit counts and demographics to decide shelter placement. Shelters can be added at once or gradually as road improvements are made, if the sites are prepared and there is enough right-of-way established for the shelter.

FIGURE 13 Proposed mid-block crossing with pedestrian island

4. CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

Overall Recommendations

Based on a review of data and on-site observations, the project team recommends:

Narrowing the Existing Pavement

Narrowing the existing pavement will slow vehicular speeds and provide more space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Narrowing the through lanes from 12' inside/14' outside to 11' inside/12' outside would allow the curbs to be shifted in three feet on each side, freeing up space for sidewalks or shared use paths. This would match the proposed lane widths on the E. Main Street Project providing a seamless transition to the west.

The mirrors on PARTA buses are more likely to hang over the curb on narrower outside lanes, but street signs, utilities, and other features can be set sufficiently behind the curb to avoid potential conflicts.

Creating Continuous Sidewalks

SR 59 currently has seven foot sidewalks adjacent to the curb on both sides, but the southern sidewalk terminates at 6th Avenue and the northern sidewalk stops at Ashton Lane. The sidewalks do not provide continuous connection for pedestrians, and the lack of offset from the busy, high-speed roadway does not offer an inviting pedestrian experience. The E. Main Street project will include a six foot sidewalk on the north side and ten foot shared use path on the south side, both separated from the street with comfortable tree lawns. If the curbs are shifted in three feet, this concept could be continued through the study area without reconstructing SR 59.

Adding a Multi-Use Path

In-street bicycle lanes could also be considered, but they would reduce available space for pedestrian improvements. Also, bike lanes on higher speed, multi-lane streets can encourage higher vehicle speeds, because the lanes feel wider to drivers when no bicycles are present.

The primary utility poles carry three-phase power as well as phone and cable and are located on the north side at the back of sidewalk throughout the study limits. There are secondary poles on the south side for a portion of the segment, but these poles are much shorter and fewer in number, are generally farther from the existing curb, and carry fewer utilities. South side poles will likely need to be shifted back between the BP station and Pulp Juice Bar, but pole relocations outside of this segment could be minimized.

Access Management

Access management is a preferred countermeasure to potentially mitigate the most common crash types in the study area: rear-end, angle, left-turn, and sideswipe-passing.

The in-depth safety analysis mentioned in Section 3 will evaluate whether rear end crashes are caused by drivers on SR 59 stopping quickly to avoid an angle, sideswipe, or left turn crash with vehicles entering SR 59 from an unsignalized side street or driveway. The analysis will also evaluate whether the angle, left-turn, and sideswipe-passing crashes are caused by drivers on SR 59 colliding with vehicles exiting the unsignalized side streets or driveways or colliding with weaving vehicles changing lanes to turn at unsignalized side streets or driveways.

Access management techniques include combining driveways, converting driveways to right-in/right-out operation, and providing a physical barrier to restrict left turns into and out of the unsignalized cross streets and commercial driveways. Managing access along SR 59 may contribute to a reduction in collisions by decreasing the number of vehicles turning left onto or off of SR 59 and by decreasing the frequency of weaving maneuvers as vehicles change lanes to turn at unsignalized side streets or driveways. It may also benefit active transportation users by allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to pause in the center median when crossing SR 59. Most of this segment of SR 59 is in unincorporated Franklin Township and is therefore maintained by ODOT. When reviewing access requests to the state highway

system, ODOT utilizes their own State Highway Access Management Manual. The principles of this manual can also be applied to the portion of SR 59 within the City of Kent. SR 59 is classified as a Category 2 access facility requiring a higher level of protection due to existing congestion, traffic volumes, and crashes. While the property along the corridor is mostly developed, a few parcels are available for development and redevelopment of parcels is also occurring.

Cross access easements can be encouraged to provide multiple businesses access to lower volume side streets, signalized side streets, or common access drives. ODOT has recently applied access management successfully for the new Raising Cane's and Arby's developments, which were both given access to side streets to avoid new driveways on SR 59 (POR-59-3.43) and the new ModWash development which was given access to the existing Gabe's drive through a cross access easement (POR-59-3.37).

FIGURE 14 POR-59-3.37 Access Management Improvements

FIGURE 15 POR-59-3.43 Access Management Improvements

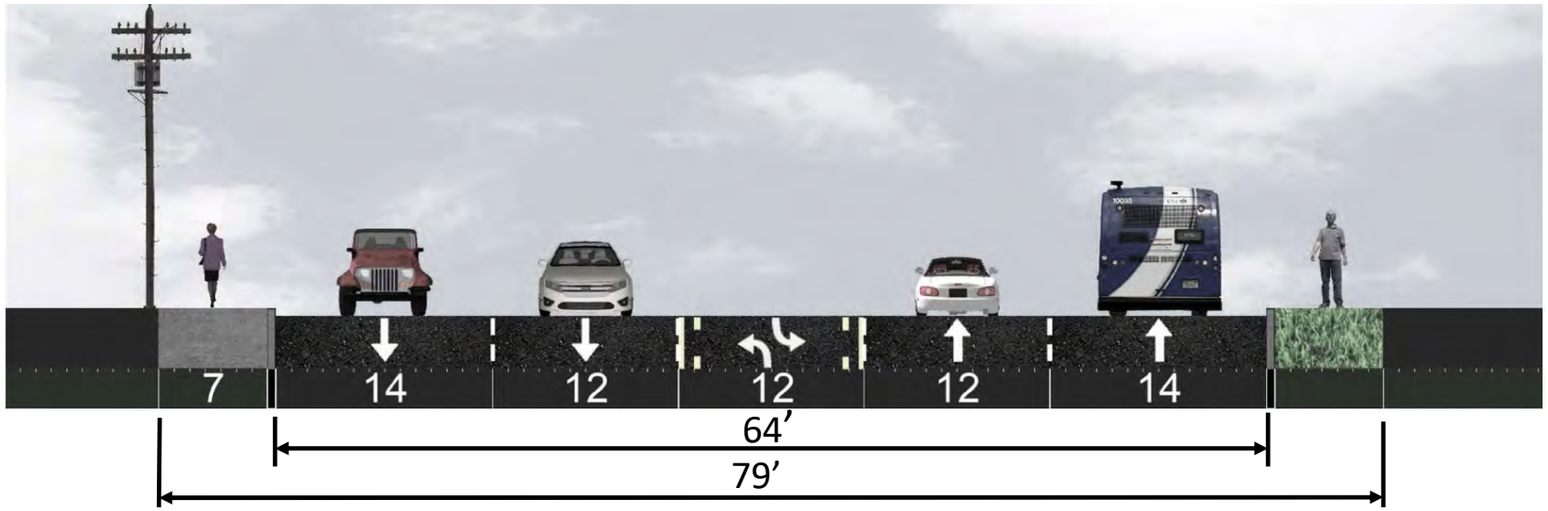


FIGURE 16 Existing corridor right-of-way and lane widths.

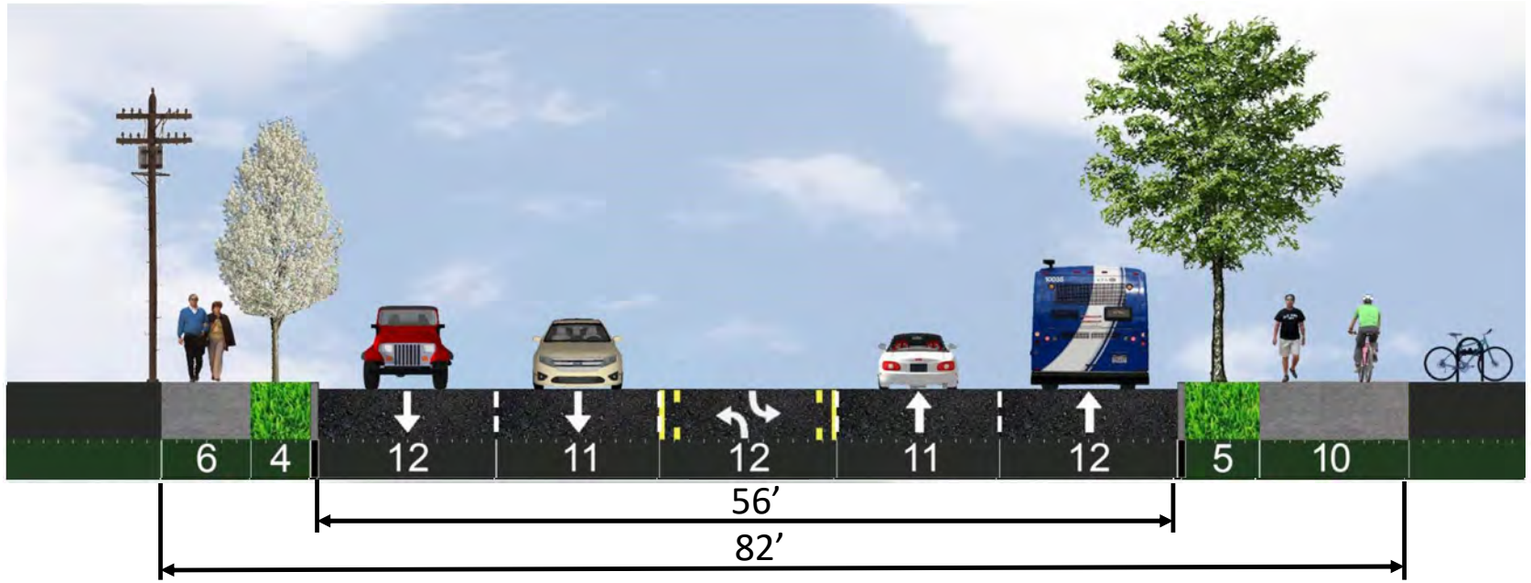


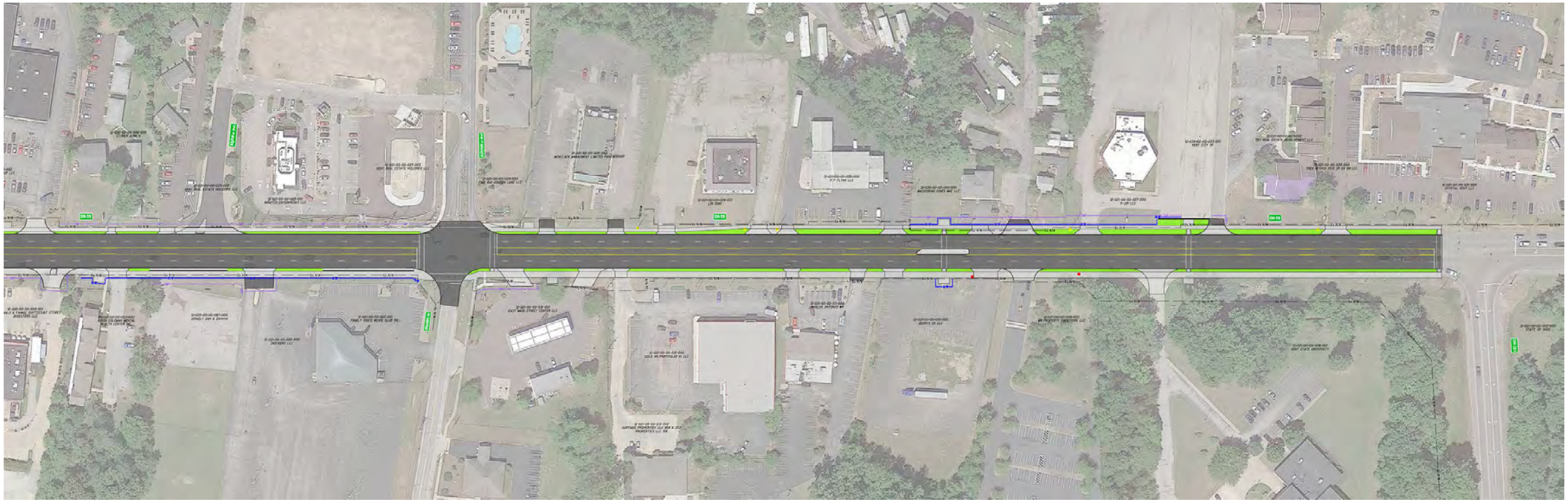
FIGURE 17 Proposed corridor right-of-way and lane widths, with continuous sidewalks and multi-use path.

Alternatives

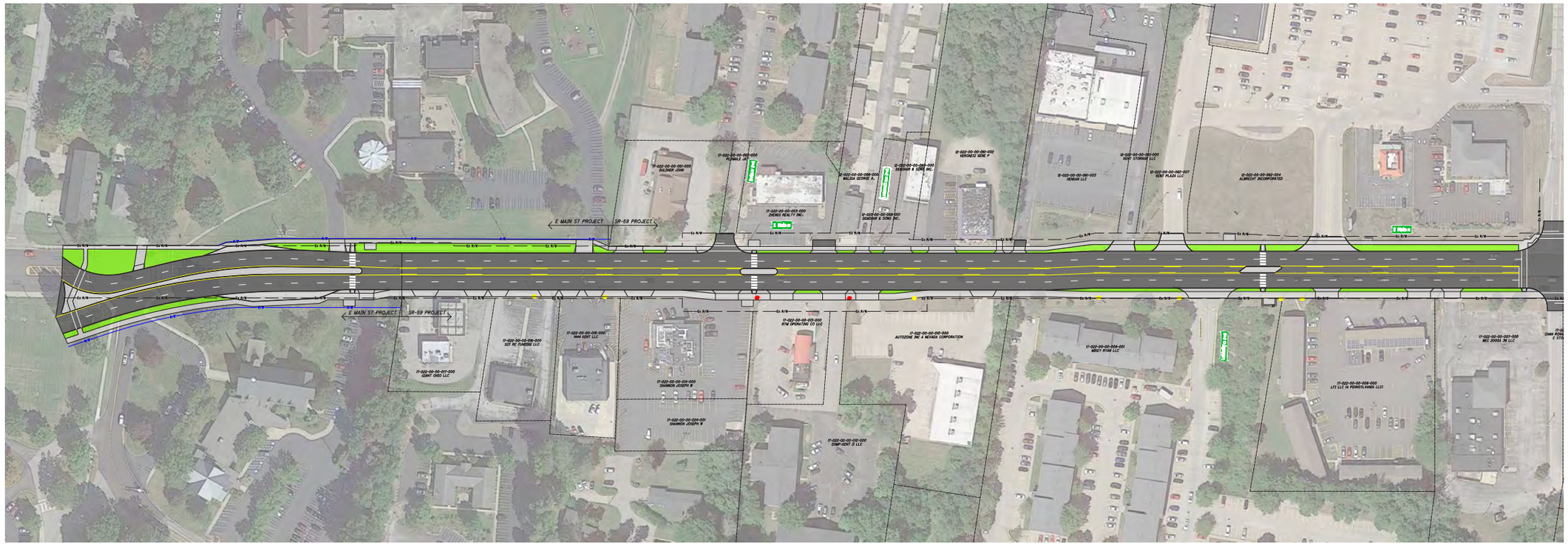
Arcadis developed an initial layout for the corridor based on the corridor-wide recommendations described above. After discussion with the stakeholder group, Arcadis developed a second alternative that limits the extent of property takes required for implementation.

Alternative One (Overall Corridor)

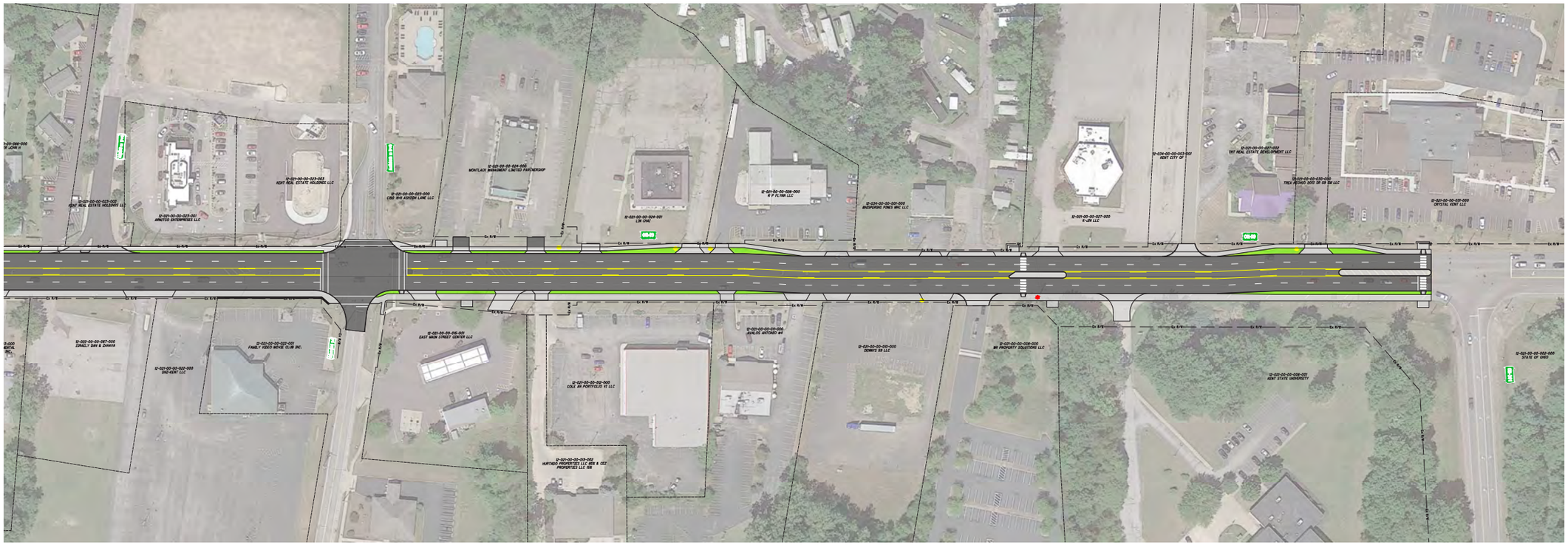
Alternative One (Overall Corridor) - Continued



Alternative Two (Overall Corridor)



Alternative Two (Overall Corridor) - Continued



The differences between the alternatives can be seen at four locations in the corridor, shown on the following pages.

1. SR 59 & Loblolly Court

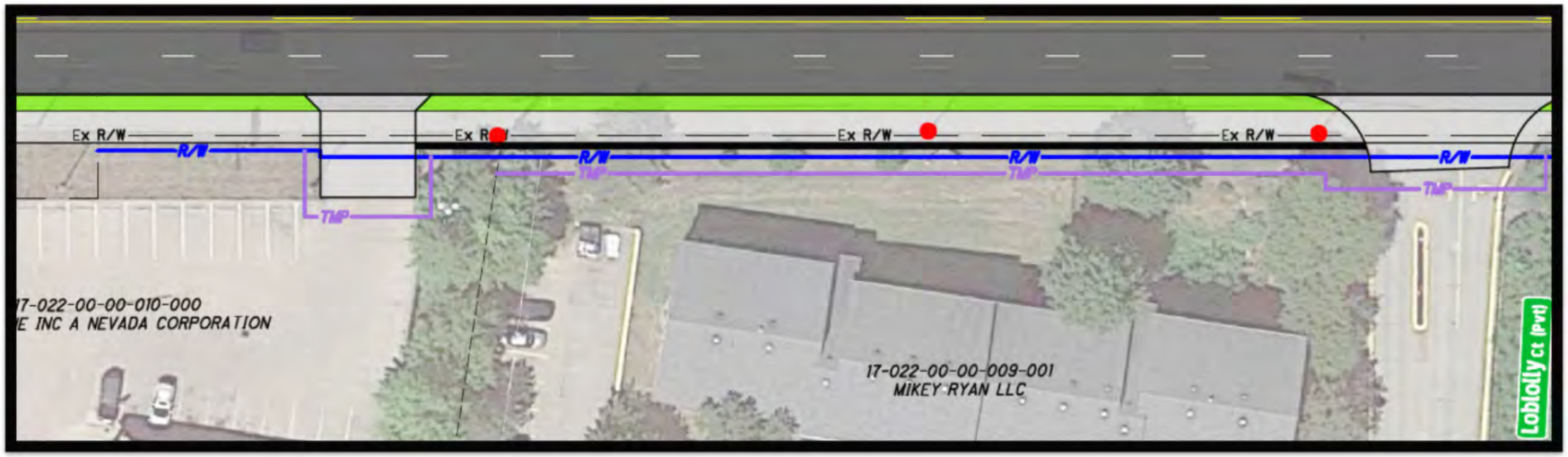
The Holly Park Apartments on the south side of SR 59 is sited below the level of the road.

Alternative One will require a retaining wall (indicated by a heavy black line on the drawing on the following page).

Alternative Two will leave the facility as is, without the need for a retaining wall.

FIGURE 14 Holly Park Apartments

Alternative One



Alternative Two

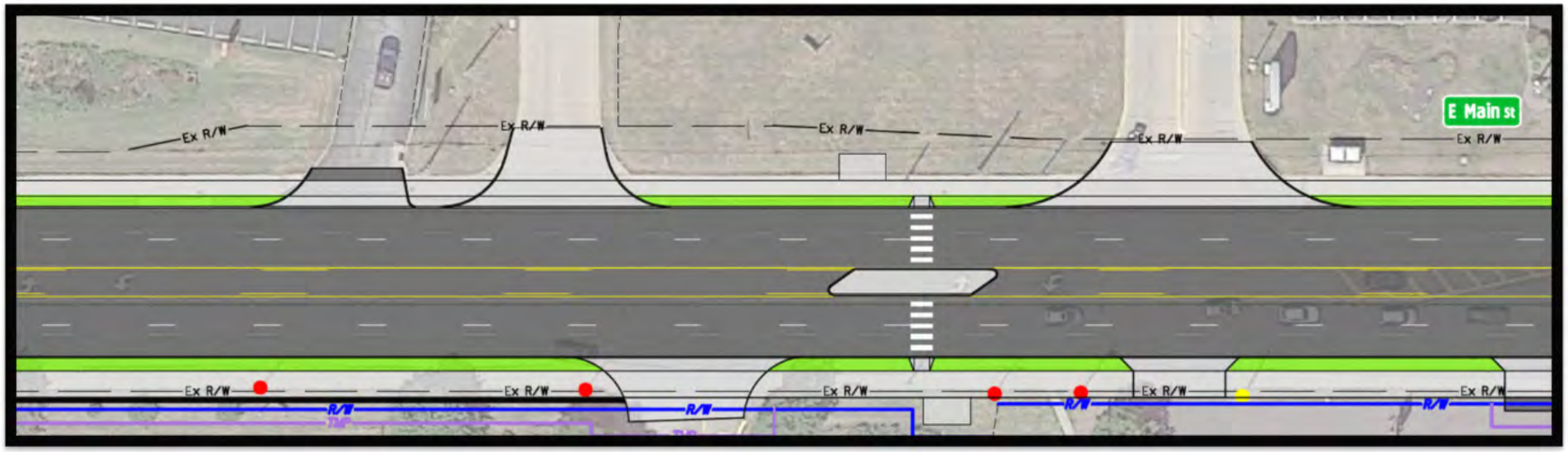
2. SR 59 at Acme Plaza (between Loblolly Court and 6th Avenue)

Alternative One requires the relocation of existing utility poles to allow for a sidewalk and a landscape buffer on the north side of SR 59.

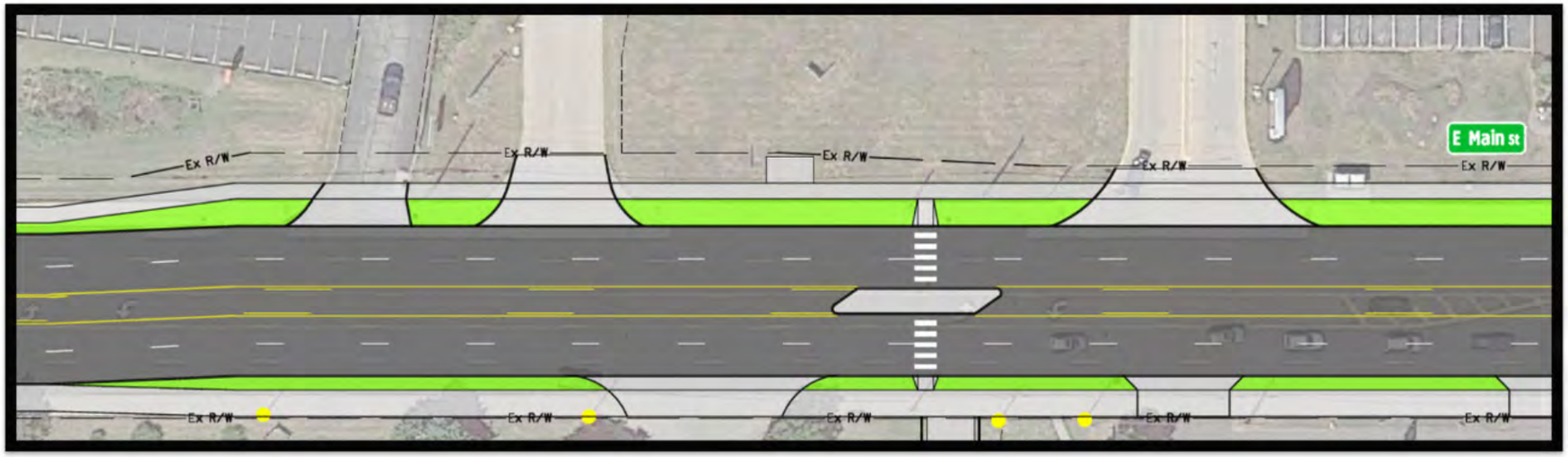
Alternative Two places the sidewalk behind the existing utility poles. The existing right-of-way extends well into the grass area so this can be accomplished without property takes.

FIGURE 15 Acme Plaza

Alternative One



Alternative Two



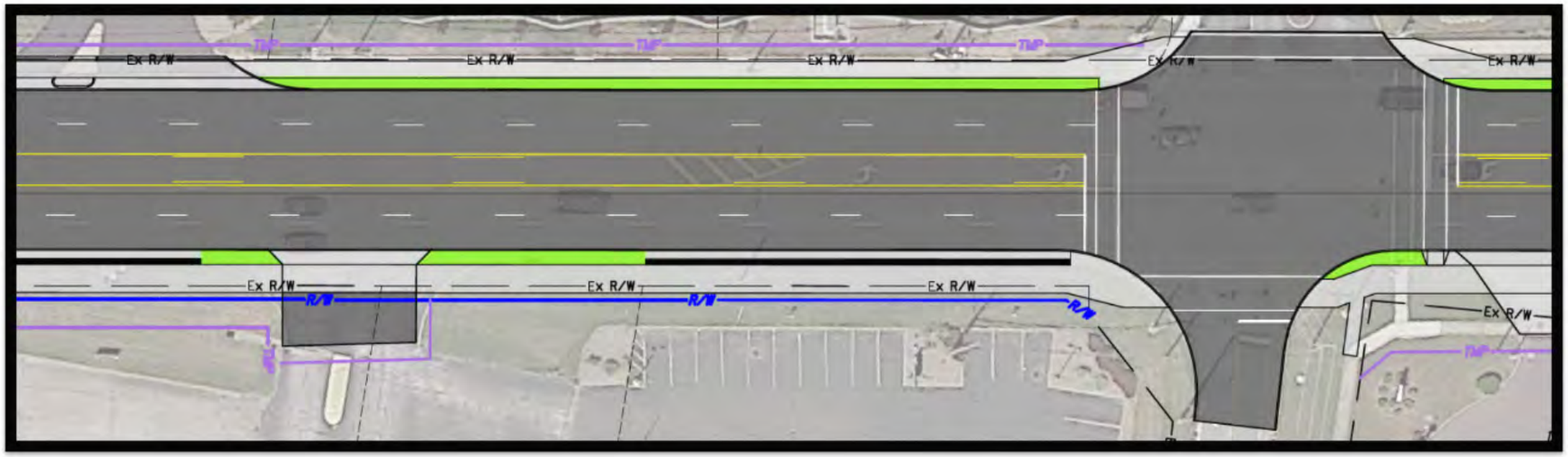
3. SR 59 at Dollar General (Rhodes Road/Ashton Lane)

Alternative One requires a retaining wall at the edge of the property on the south side of SR 59.

Alternative Two also requires a wall, but it is a short wall (approximately one-foot tall) at the outside edge of the right-of-way that will be less expensive to construct.

FIGURE 16 Dollar General / Rhodes Road

Alternative One



Alternative Two

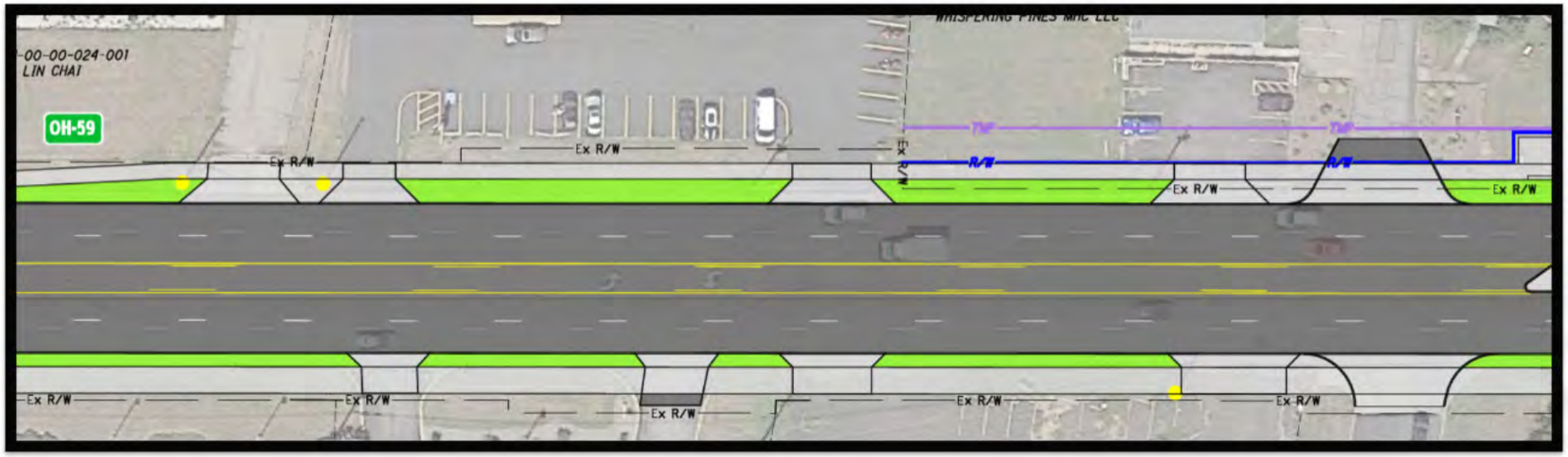
4. SR 59 at Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park

Alternative One includes a new sidewalk and a landscape buffer on both sides of the street. This will require property acquisition on both sides to expand the right-of-way.

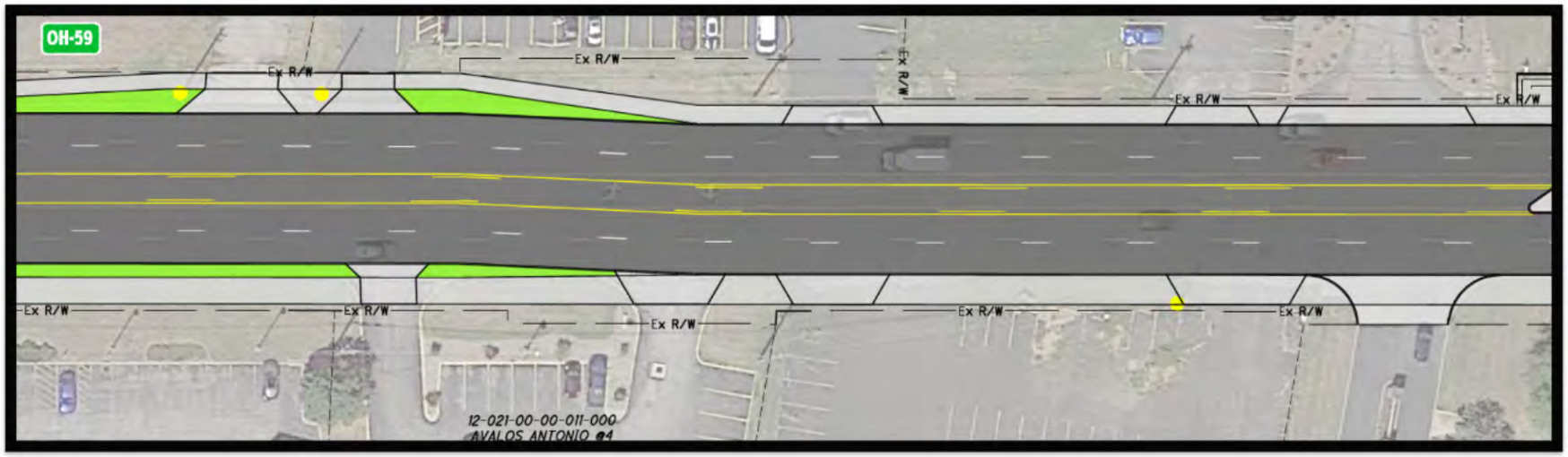
Alternative Two eliminates the landscape buffer on both sides and also eliminates the need for property takes.

FIGURE 17 Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park

Alternative One



Alternative Two



Alternative Two is recommended since it will be faster and less expensive to implement. Cost details are discussed in the Funding & Implementation section.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Stakeholders group will present the preferred alternative to the community via a handout to bus passengers in May 2022, as well as online through PARTA's website.

Feedback will be able to be provided in an online or hard copy comment form, hosted on PARTA's website. The public engagement process will be conducted in coordination with PARTA, the City of Kent, and Franklin Township in order to obtain feedback from the adjacent property/business owners and the general public. Results are described below with survey results and comment forms will be included in the appendices.

6. FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION

Comparison of Estimated Project Costs

Alternative One is estimated to cost ±$5.1M

Alternative Two estimated cost is ±$4.2M.

The cost savings in Alternative Two is due to:

- No funding needed to purchase right-of-way. Pulling in eight feet (typically four feet on each side). In the west section, all eight feet of narrowing is on the south side, holding north curb line.
- By holding the curb line on the west side, no drainage changes are needed so cost is reduced.
- Time savings, since purchasing right-of-way will take approximately one year. Saving one year in the construction equates to inflation savings.
- Retaining wall in front of Autozone due to elevation differential is not needed in Alternative Two.
- In the east section, four-foot narrowing on each side. The shared use path is maintained up against curb in front of car wash, Gabe's, and Dollar General (no tree lawn)
- At Rhodes Road, it will be very difficult to stay within the right-of-way. There may need to be a small wall here.
- It might be possible to widen the tree lawn at Whispering Pines if they are willing to donate right-of-way.

The cost estimates include traffic signal modifications ($125,000 per signal to replace) and traffic control ($130,000 for five overhead signs, etc). The cost estimates also include upgrading the signal at SR 261.

All right-of-way for church properties is taken with E Main Street. Islands are extended with the E. Main Street project/

If the two-way LTL near Whispering Pines is eliminated, it would be difficult to put in the island. Can finish this study without making a decision on this.

Phasing

The project can be constructed in one phase or two. The impacts on costs are as follows:

Construct in One Phase
- Alternative 1: $5.1 Million (Construction in 2025)
- Alternative 2: $4.2 Million (Construction in 2024)

Construct in Two Phases
- Alternative 2 Phase 1: $2.1 Million (Construction in 2025)
- Alternative 2 Phase 2: $3.1 Million (Construction in 2032)

If constructed in a single phase, the overall project cost and construction time are reduced. However, if constructed in two phases, funding may be more attainable for each phase as the phased dollar amounts are each lower than the overall amount for a single phase.

In addition, Phase 1 would be constructed on the eastern portion of SR 59 with poor condition pavement. By the time Phase 2 is constructed, the western portion of SR 59 pavement will be further deteriorated, likely resulting in further justification for pavement and roadway improvements to be performed with the other multi-modal improvements.

Potential Funding Sources

ODOT, PARTA, the City of Kent, and Franklin Township are committed to partnering in this community improvement. As such, much preliminary collaboration has occurred in order to consider all possible funding opportunities. Funding opportunities being considered include:

- Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Funding - The team is hopeful in pursuing the majority of the funding from the TASA Program ($700k max per phase).
- ODOT Safety Funds - The team is investigating the possibility of obtaining safety funds, as many of the proposed features along this corridor contribute to a reduction in pedestrian crashes.
- ODOT Paving Funds - A portion of the funding for pavement improvements may be able to be funded by ODOT's paving funds.
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Funding - PARTA is currently investigating current FTA Grant Programs, such as Access and Mobility Partnership Grants.
- Local Funding - Participants including PARTA, Kent and Franklin Township anticipate contributing to the local portion; and also anticipate that a portion of this could be supported by JEDD funds and ODOT.
- Property Owner Donations - Previously, some local property owners have indicated a willingness to potentially donate a small portion of land if these types of improvements are made. For example, Whispering Pines may be willing to donate right-of-way, allowing the tree lawn to be widened in this area.

APPENDICES

1. Crash Data
2. CAM Tool
3. Community Survey

APPENDIX 1 CRASH DATA

PARTA - SR 9 Crash Summary

Crash Severity	Total	Percentage
Fatal Crashes	0	0%
Serious Injury Crashes	1	1%
Minor Injury Crashes	19	17%
Injury Possible Crashes	12	11%
PDO Crashes	82	72%

Time of Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
12 a.m. to 6 a.m.	0	0	3	3%
6 a.m. to 9 a.m.	0	1	4	4%
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.	0	11	22	29%
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.	1	11	37	43%
7 p.m. to 12 a.m.	0	8	16	21%

Crash Type	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Rear-End	0	10	33	38%
Angle	0	10	24	30%
Left Turn	1	6	10	15%
Sideswipe-Passing	0	2	10	11%
Fixed Object	0	2	0	2%
Animal	0	0	2	2%
Backing	0	0	1	1%
Right Turn	0	0	1	1%
Bicycles	0	0	1	1%
Pedestrian	0	1	0	1%

Crashes by Day	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Sunday	0	1	6	6%
Monday	0	2	12	12%
Tuesday	1	8	9	16%
Wednesday	0	4	10	12%
Thursday	0	3	15	16%
Friday	0	9	14	20%
Saturday	0	4	16	18%

Contributing Factor	Total	Percentage
Other Improper Action	1	1%
Following too Close/ACDA	43	38%
Failure to Yield	34	30%
None	4	4%
Improper Lane Change	8	7%
Other	6	5%
Ran Red Light	9	8%
Improper Turn	3	3%
Improper Backing	1	1%
Left of Center	1	1%
Unsafe Speed	0	0%
Drove off Road	1	1%
Improper Passing	2	2%
Ran Stop Sign	1	1%

Month	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO
January	0	3	10
February	0	3	9
March	0	4	5
April	0	2	4
May	0	2	2
June	0	1	4
July	0	1	6
August	0	5	3
September	1	2	5
October	0	3	11
November	0	3	10
December	0	2	13

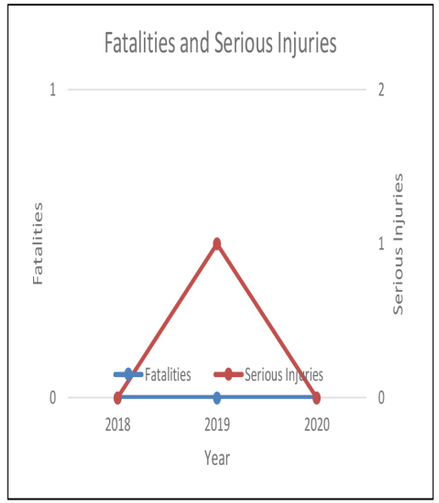
Road Condition	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO	Percentage
Dry	1	24	57	72%
Wet	0	7	15	19%
Ice/Snow	0	0	10	9%
Unknown	0	0	0	0%

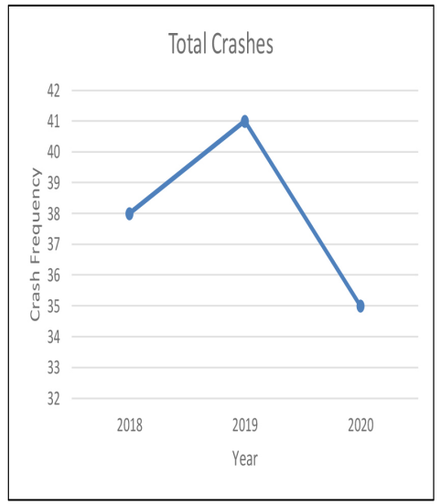
Crashes by Year	Serious Injury	Minor/Injury Possible	PDO
2018	0	12	26
2019	1	10	30
2020	0	9	26

POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020

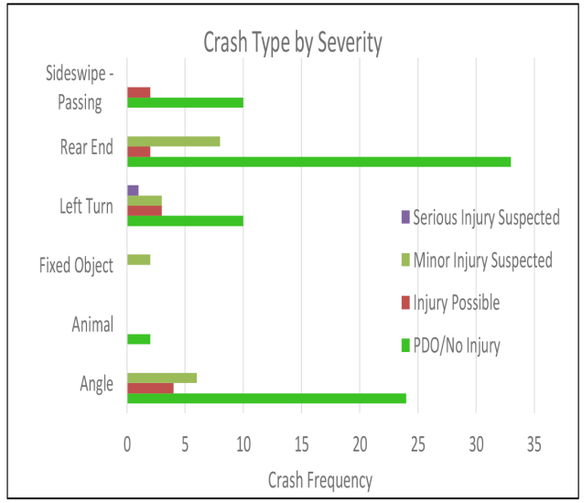
Crash Summary Sheet

Year	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
2018	38	0	0
2019	41	0	1
2020	35	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1





Total Crashes Crash Type	Injury Level PDO/No Injury	Injury Possible	Minor Injury Su	Serious Injury S	Grand Total
Rear End	33	2	8	0	43
Angle	24	4	6	0	34
Left Turn	10	3	3	1	17
Sideswipe - Passing	10	2	0	0	12
Fixed Object	0	0	2	0	2
Animal	2	0	0	0	2
Backing	1	0	0	0	1
Right Turn	1	0	0	0	1
Pedalcycles	1	0	0	0	1
Pedestrian	0	1	0	0	1
Grand Total	82	12	19	1	114



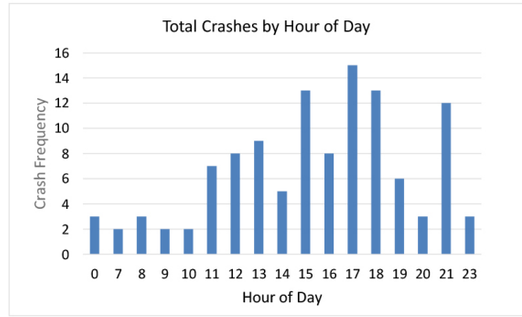
POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020

Crash Summary Sheet

Road Condition	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Dry	82	0	1
Ice	2	0	0
Snow	8	0	0
Wet	22	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Hour of Day	Total Crashes
0	3
7	2
8	3
9	2
10	2
11	7
12	8
13	9
14	5
15	13
16	8
17	15
18	13
19	6
20	3
21	12
23	3
Grand Total	114

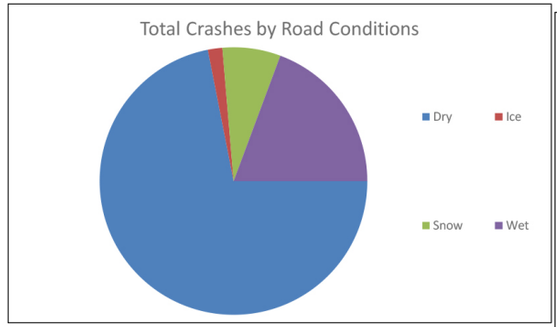
Month	Total Crashes
January	13
February	12
March	9
April	6
May	4
June	5
July	7
August	8
September	8
October	14
November	13
December	15
Grand Total	114

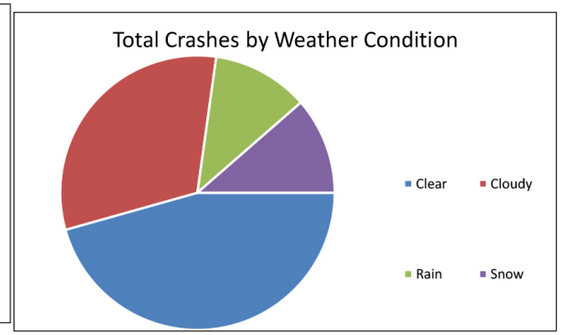


Weather	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Clear	52	0	1
Cloudy	36	0	0
Rain	13	0	0
Snow	13	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

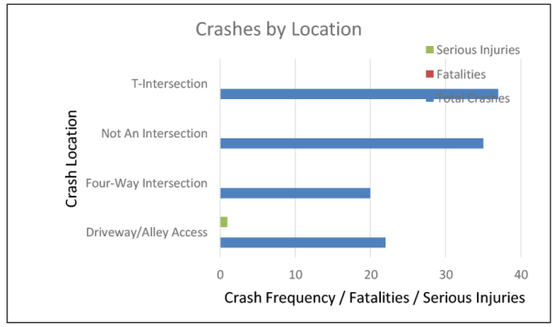
Day in Week	Total Crashes
Sunday	7
Monday	14
Tuesday	18
Wednesday	14
Thursday	18
Friday	23
Saturday	20
Grand Total	114

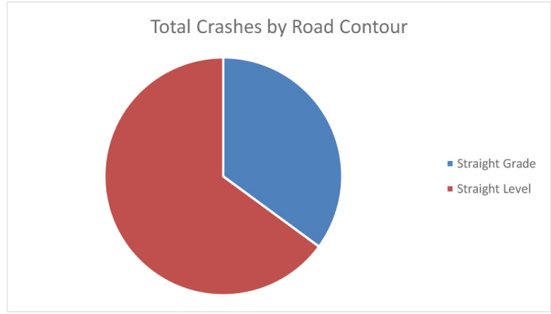
Crash Location	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Driveway/Alley Access	22	0	1
Four-Way Intersection	20	0	0
Not An Intersection	35	0	0
T-Intersection	37	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1





Roadway Contour	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Straight Grade	40	0	0
Straight Level	74	0	1
Grand Total	114	0	1





POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020
Unit 1 Crash Summary

Type of Unit	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Sport Utility Vehicle	27	0	0
Semi-Tractor	1	0	0
Pick up	4	0	0
Passenger Car	73	0	1
Passenger Van (minivan)	6	0	0
Motorcycle 2 Wheeled	1	0	0
Bicycle	1	0	0
Cargo Van	1	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Special Function	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
None	113	0	1
Other / Unknown	1	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Pre-Crash Action	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Backing	1	0	0
Changing Lanes	9	0	0
Entering Traffic Lane	12	0	0
Making Left Turn	27	0	1
Making Right Turn	2	0	0
Overtaking/Passing	3	0	0
Straight Ahead	60	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020
Unit 1 Crash Summary

Gender	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Female	58	0	1
Male	54	0	0
Unknown	2	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Driver Age	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
<15	5	0	0
15-19	13	0	0
20-24	43	0	0
25-29	13	0	0
30-34	6	0	0
35-39	2	0	0
40-44	4	0	0
45-49	2	0	0
50-54	4	0	0
55-59	3	0	0
60-64	2	0	0
65-69	4	0	0
70-74	5	0	0
75-79	4	0	1
80-84	2	0	0
85-90	2	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020
Unit 1 Crash Summary

Traffic Control	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Stop Sign	4	0	0
No Control	66	0	1
Signal	44	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Object Struck	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Light/Luminaries Support	1	0	0
Utility Pole	2	0	0
Grand Total	3	0	0

Contributing Circumstances	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Failure to Yield	34	0	1
Improper Backing	1	0	0
Improper Turn	3	0	0
Left of Center	1	0	0
Operating Defective Equipment	2	0	0
Other Improper Action	1	0	0
Ran Red Light	9	0	0
Ran Stop Sign	1	0	0
Swerving to Avoid	1	0	0
Lying in Roadway	1	0	0
Drove off Road	1	0	0
None	4	0	0
Not Discernible	2	0	0
Following too Close / ACDA	43	0	0
Improper Passing	2	0	0
Improper Lane Change	8	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

POR SR-59 Section SLM 2.88-3.80 CAMTool 2018-2020
Unit 1 Crash Summary

Alcohol Involved	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
No	111	0	1
Yes	3	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Distracted By	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Other / Unknown	5	0	0
Not Distracted	91	0	1
Manually operating an electronic communic	1	0	0
Other distraction inside the vehicle	7	0	0
Other distraction outside the vehicle	6	0	0
Talking on hand held communication devic	1	0	0
Other activity with an electronic device	2	0	0
Passenger	1	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Non-Motorist Location	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
Grand Total	0	0	0

Estimated Speed	Total Crashes	Fatalities	Serious Injuries
<15	59	0	1
15-19	12	0	0
20-24	10	0	0
25-29	9	0	0
30-34	6	0	0
35-39	15	0	0
40-44	2	0	0
65-70	1	0	0
Grand Total	114	0	1

Name: _____

Email address: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address of impacted property (or nearest cross streets), if applicable: _____

_____

Business/Organization Name: _____

Business/Organization Address: _____

What is your interest in the proposed project? *(Select all that apply.)*

☐ Area Resident ☐ Area business owner or employee ☐ Commuter ☐ KSU Student
☐ KSU Employee ☐ Other: _____

How often do you travel in the project area?

☐ Daily ☐ A few times a week ☐ Weekly ☐ A few times a month ☐ Monthly
☐ Other: _____

How do you travel through the project area?

☐ Car/Motorcycle ☐ Bus ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk ☐ Other: _____

If you travel by bus, which stop(s) do you typically use?

_____

PROJECT COMMENTS:

_____
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COMMENTS DUE BY
May 31st, 2022

Comments may be submitted:

- Online at https://www.partaonline.org/connecting-communities
- Verbally or in writing to:
  PARTA
  2000 Summit Road
  Kent, OH 44240
- By email at **CustService@partaonline.org**
- By telephone at 330-678-7745

PARTA PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
THE CITY OF Kent, Ohio
amats

PARTA PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
THE CITY OF Kent, Ohio
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PARTA S.R. 59 - Alternative Transportation Improvements

PARTA, Franklin Township, the City of Kent, the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), and ODOT are teaming together through the AMATS 'Connecting Communities' Program to provide transit, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements along S.R. 59, between Horning Rd. and S.R. 261. This project will connect seamlessly at the west end with the City of Kent's East Main Street project which is currently in design.

This S.R. 59 project is currently in the planning phase and hopes to improve access to multi-modal transportation by the following methods:

- **Improved Bus Access**: Improve transit amenities, including ADA accessible bus stops, shelters, and improved connections to nearby destinations.
- **Improved Pedestrian Access:** Create additional mid-block crossings with painted crosswalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, pedestrian islands, and new signalized crosswalks at traffic lights.
- **Improved Sidewalks:** Extend and widen sidewalks for safe shared use by bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Improve Safety:** Like the proposed East Main Street project, the use of new concrete islands along with reduced lane widths will promote a reduction of vehicular speeds to posted speed limits. This improves both vehicular and pedestrian safety.

PARTA PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Franklin Township

THE CITY OF Kent, Ohio

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