

Dear Councilwoman Herrick,

Following up on our meeting of March 12, as promised, we wanted to share with you some information about the feasibility of narrowing lane widths to 10 feet on streets having similar characteristics as Outer Drive.

To be sure, there are several instances of road design guidance that justify the reduction of lane widths to 10 feet in cases similar to Outer Drive. Because the width of travel lanes is not typically publicly available and decisions to narrow lanes are often not newsworthy, finding existing examples is more challenging.

That said, 1st Ave North in St. Petersburg, Florida has 10 foot travel lanes, along with adjacent parking and bike lanes.¹ It has a similar traffic volume to Outer Drive and a higher posted speed limit (40 mph). It provides a good example of how Outer Drive could accommodate both motorists and cyclists in an attractive, functional way (Image 1).

In addition, Washington DC has several arterials having 10 foot lanes that are also heavily used routes for bus and truck traffic.² Examples include 16th Street, Connecticut Ave, Wisconsin Ave, Pennsylvania Ave, Florida Ave, U Street, 14th Street. A picture of 14th Street is included below (Image 2).

Regarding design guidance at the local level, the cities of Fremont and San Ramon, both in California, are examples of jurisdictions that have established recommendations that provide for 10 foot lane widths.^{3,4} Figures 1 and 2 depict preferred designs that enable bicycle transport, and that are very applicable to the designs we are proposing for Outer Drive.

National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) are official transportation engineering guidelines that also support lane widths of 10 feet in urban areas.

These guidelines note that in addition to providing much needed space for pedestrian and cycling modes of transport, lane narrowing can lower travel speeds without impacting traffic operations, thus improving the safety for all users of these public rights of way. Wider travel lanes are correlated with higher vehicle speeds.

Thus, narrowing Outer Drive travel lanes is likely to reduce speeding, a concern that has been expressed by many Dearborn residents. Speeding traffic is not only unpleasant in walkable/bikeable environments, but affects the safety of cyclists and pedestrians as well. As Figure 3 shows, although an increase in speed of 5-10 mph may not feel like a lot to a motorist,

¹ https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/resources/resources_details.cfm?id=4348

² https://www.livablestreets.info/the_magic_bullet_of_road_design_narrower_lane_widths

³ <https://fremont.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37736>

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https://www.sanramon.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_10826046/File/Shared%20Documents/Transportation%20Documents/Appendix%20D_Bicycle%20Facilities%20Toolkit.pdf

it can significantly reduce the likelihood of survival for a pedestrian or cyclist involved in a car crash. While 90% of vulnerable users are likely to survive a collision with an automobile traveling at 20 mph, only 20% are likely to survive when travel speeds are at 40 mph.

We hope you find this information compelling. Design modifications to Outer Drive must be considered from not just the motorist perspective and safety, but from the perspective and safety of the cyclist too.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to receiving follow up information from Wayne County.

Respectfully,

Susan Hull Grasso, Healthy Dearborn
Tracy Besek, Bike Dearborn



Image 1

Example of 10' wide travel lanes on 1st Ave North near 49th St, St. Petersburg, Florida. Speed limit 40 mph, AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) 14500 (data source: [Florida DOT](#))



Image 2
Example of 10' wide travel lanes, with bike lanes on 14th St. NW near Taylor Ave, Washington D.C. (12,800 ADT, 2018)⁵

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<https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/2018-traffic-volume?geometry=-77.477%2C38.801%2C-76.549%2C38.988>

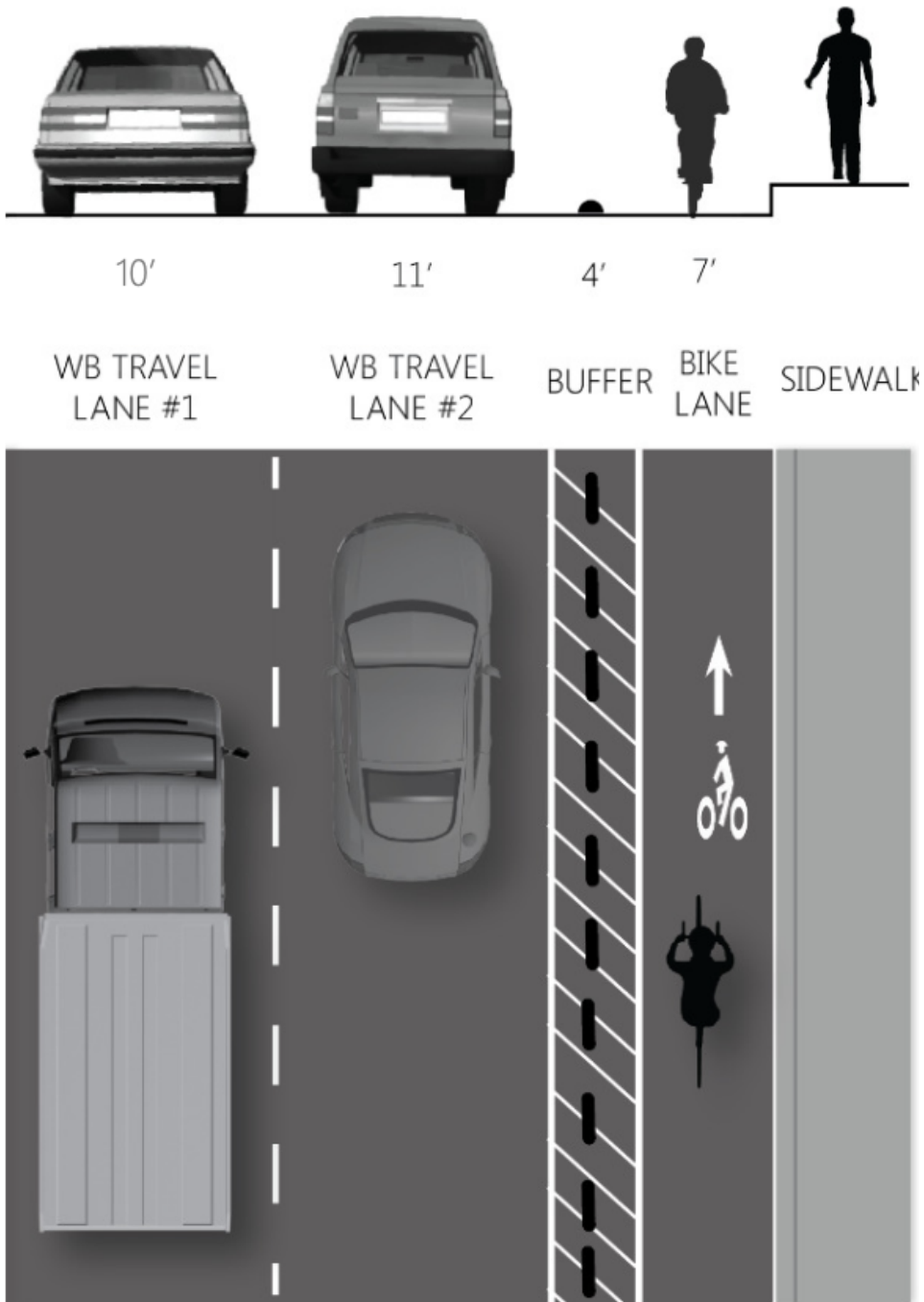


Figure 1 City of Fremont Preferred Separated Bikeways Dimensions

LANE NARROWING

Lane narrowing can improve comfort and safety for vulnerable road users. Narrowing lanes creates space that can be re-allocated to other modes, in the form of wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and buffers between cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles. Space can also be dedicated to plantings and amenity zones, and reduces crossing distances at intersections.

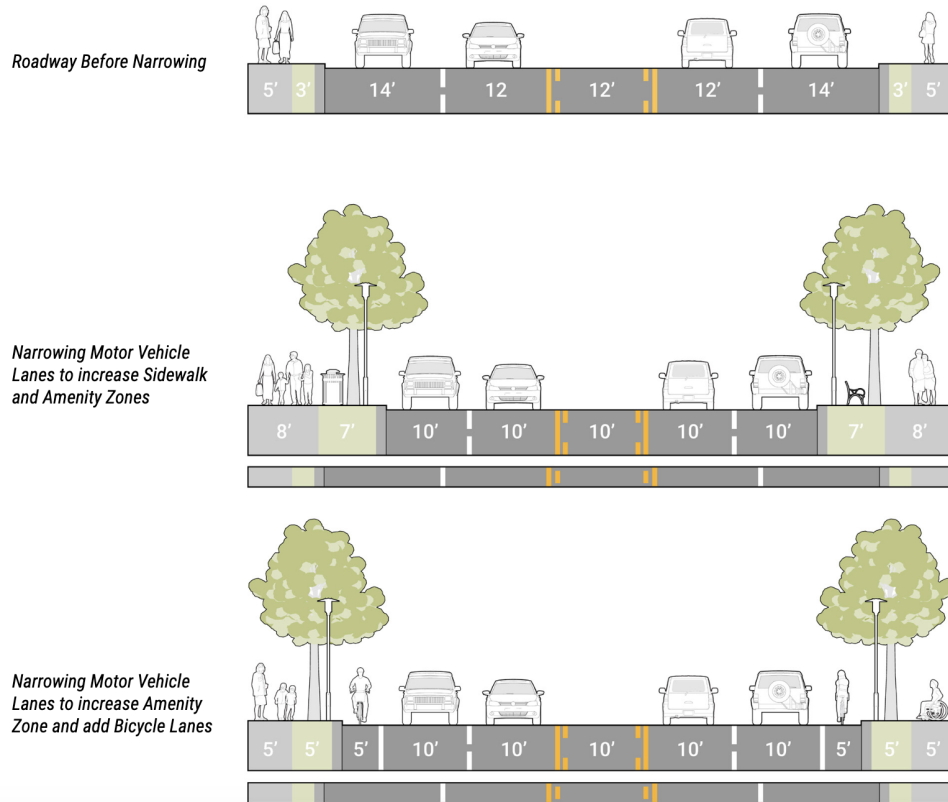


Figure 2
Design Guidelines from the San Ramon Bicycle Master Plan Bicycle Facilities Toolkit - Draft (2018)

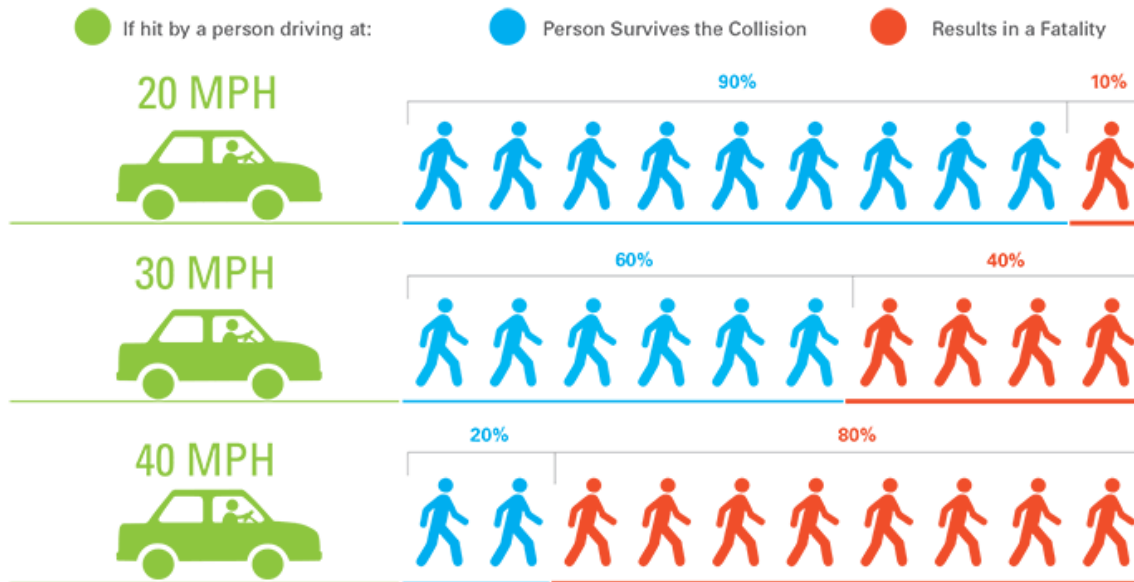


Figure 3 Impact of Travel Speed on Crash Survival Rate