

LAWRENCE PARK AND WESLEYVILLE MULTIMODAL TRAIL

FEASIBILITY STUDY AND ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS

MARCH 2024

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STUDY BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Lawrence Park Township (Lawrence Park) and Wesleyville Borough (Wesleyville) are municipalities located east of the City of Erie in Erie County, Pennsylvania (see **Figure 1**). Lawrence Park Township was incorporated as a first class township in 1926 and has a population of 3,700. Wesleyville Borough was incorporated in 1912 and has a population of 3,300. The two municipalities are both served by the Iroquois School District and all schools are in Lawrence Park Township.

The study area can generally be described as beginning at the intersection of East Lake Road (SR 5) and Water Street (SR 4027), which is also known as Lawrence Parkway, and following Water Street (SR 4027) south to Wesleyville and Buffalo Road (SR 20). The north end of the study area is in Lawrence Park Township and the south end is in the Borough of Wesleyville. The municipal boundary line is located between the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. The study area includes two pedestrian bridges over Fourmile Creek in Lawrence Park. The bridges are located between Water Street (SR 4027) and Bell Street and Water Street/Emerson Park and Napier/Curtis Park.



Figure 1 - Study Area location shown east of the City of Erie. Adapted from PennDOT General Highway Map-Erie County (2021).

Although many of the elements reviewed in the study have been discussed over the years, the current discussion regarding a feasibility study and alternatives analysis originated with the closure of the pedestrian bridge over Fourmile Creek at Bell Street.

The bridge has been closed for several years due to structural deficiencies and the closure of the bridge resulted in students in the Iroquois School District finding alternative, and sometimes unsafe, routes to cross Fourmile Creek while walking between Wesleyville and the Iroquois School campuses located in Lawrence Park. The continued use of the bridge after the closing, and the crossing of nearby railroad bridges to create a shortcut, increased concerns about student safety and led both municipalities to look

E05403, Work Order 5 – Lawrence Park & Wesleyville Multimodal Trail Study

for opportunities to replace the bridge, including coordinating with Erie County Planning to investigate funding and grant opportunities. The need for a replacement bridge and safer walking routes for pedestrians, especially students, was a major driver towards the implementation of this study.

In early 2023, a meeting was held at Governor Shapiro’s Northwest Office in Erie with local state representatives and PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation (BPT) officials to discuss a variety of study needs in the region, including a possible study and funding for not only the pedestrian bridge, but also enhanced pedestrian and multimodal facilities and connectivity along the Water Street (SR 4027) corridor between the two municipalities.

As a result of that meeting, the BPT formally initiated a feasibility study and alternatives analysis to explore the potential of improvements to the multimodal and transit connections to local schools, surrounding neighborhoods and other community assets. See **Figure 2** for the study area limits.



Figure 2 - Study Area adapted from Erie North USGS 7.5' Quad Map

HISTORY AND EXISTING PLANS

Recent studies and planning documents in Lawrence Park Township and Wesleyville Borough, as well as the City of Erie and Erie County, have discussed the need for improvements along the Water Street corridor and promoting alternative modes of transportation and better connections to community assets and neighborhoods.

Lawrence Park Township and Wesleyville Borough Comprehensive Plan (2004)

Lawrence Park and Wesleyville prepared a joint comprehensive plan update in 2004. In the comprehensive plan update, a description of Special Traffic Studies (page 7) noted a need for a *“traffic study update for the Buffalo Road/Station Road/East Lake Road/Iroquois [Avenue], and Water Street.”* The plan also mentioned potential land use improvements (page 9) that included a Fourmile Creek greenway, riparian area and buffer zone, and stormwater management to improve Fourmile Creek, which is a shared community asset. Possible improvements mentioned included two different path or bikeway options along Water Street from East Lake Road (SR 5) to points south in Wesleyville and Harborcreek, including possible connections to the East Side Access Highway trail and Penn State Behrend campus.

The 2004 joint comprehensive plan also mentioned an interest in finding new uses for the Wabtec (formerly General Electric) parking areas along Water Street. The parking areas were described as unused and/or under-used with potential environmental issues due to the area’s industrial uses in the past, although no specific environmental concerns were identified.

Erie Metropolitan Planning Organization 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan

The Erie Metropolitan Planning Organization (Erie MPO) updated **2050 Long Range Transportation Plan** (LRTP) (March 2022) noted that *“Active transportation considers multiple modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, ... Various mobility options benefit residents and visitors. Three Erie County municipalities— City of Corry, City of Erie and Union City Borough—created active transportation plans in 2021 to identify the needs of non-motorized travel. Getting around by bicycle continues to get easier with the growing number of bicycle routes, trails, and paths throughout the county.”*

The LRTP included several projects in the study area, or connecting to the study area, that, while highly ranked, were not programmed because of “difficult decisions” and funding challenges. Projects not programmed included the fifth and sixth ranked projects, specifically the Lawrence Park Main Street Streetscape (5th ranked) and the Sixth Street Bikeway from Pittsburgh Avenue to Franklin Avenue (6th ranked).

The Lawrence Park Main Street streetscape project included *“wider sidewalks, improved street lighting, improved ADA curb ramps, improved crosswalks, improved curbing, additional trees, improved parking, [and] improved drainage.”*

Located in the City of Erie, the Sixth Street Bikeway would *“connect to planned bike infrastructure in Millcreek Township to the west and to Lawrence Park Township in the east via East Lake Road. Proposed improvements vary by segment, but include: restriping existing roadway for bike lanes, widening to accommodate bike lanes, and new shared use paths.”*

Additionally, other betterment and local projects in Lawrence Park and Wesleyville were both unranked and unfunded in the 2050 LRTP. Elements from two projects mentioned in the LRTP are specifically included in this study, namely the Water Street Sidewalks project and Pedestrian Bridge over Fourmile Creek. These projects were described in the LRTP as follows:

Water Street Sidewalks (LRTP page 128): *Install a continuous sidewalk along the east side of Water Street from Main Street in Lawrence Park Township to US 20/Buffalo Road in Wesleyville Borough, connecting to [a] planned footbridge over Fourmile Creek.*

Pedestrian Bridge Over Fourmile Creek (LRTP page 139): *Re-establish pedestrian link over Fourmile Creek that was lost when the poor condition pedestrian bridge was closed. This is an important route for students in the Iroquois School District. In conjunction with Betterments Project 5, installing a continuous sidewalk along the east side of Water Street from Main Street to US 20/Buffalo Road.*

In addition to the 2050 LRTP ranked and unranked projects mentioned above, respondents to the LRTP Public Outreach comments and the “Wikimap” comment survey reinforced support for the need to improve access across Fourmile Creek by replacing the pedestrian bridge at Bell Street near Twinbrook, stating that this crossing is a “*significant travel route for pedestrians and students.*”

The need for improvements to the Wabtec parking area and pedestrian access was also noted with a respondent commenting on the need for “*Developing the Wabtec parking lots to look nicer. Additional, walking path/trail/sidewalk.*”

PLANNED MULTIMODAL USES

The City of Erie adopted the **Active Erie Transportation Plan** in 2021. The plan includes bikeways along five east-west corridors in Erie. Also included in the LRPT and mentioned above, one of the planned bike routes is along 6th Street (SR 5), which is known as East Lake Road east of East Avenue. East Lake Road (SR 5) intersects Water Street (SR4027) at the northern limit of this trail study area and is shown in **Figure 3** below.

The **Active Erie Transportation Plan** notes that “Destinations along the 6th Street Bikeway include Frontier Park, the Bayfront Bikeway, Strong Vincent Middle School, Gannon University, Downtown, Perry Square, and East Middle School. It will connect to planned bike infrastructure in Millcreek Township to the west and to Lawrence Park Township in the east via East Lake Road.”

East/West Bikeways

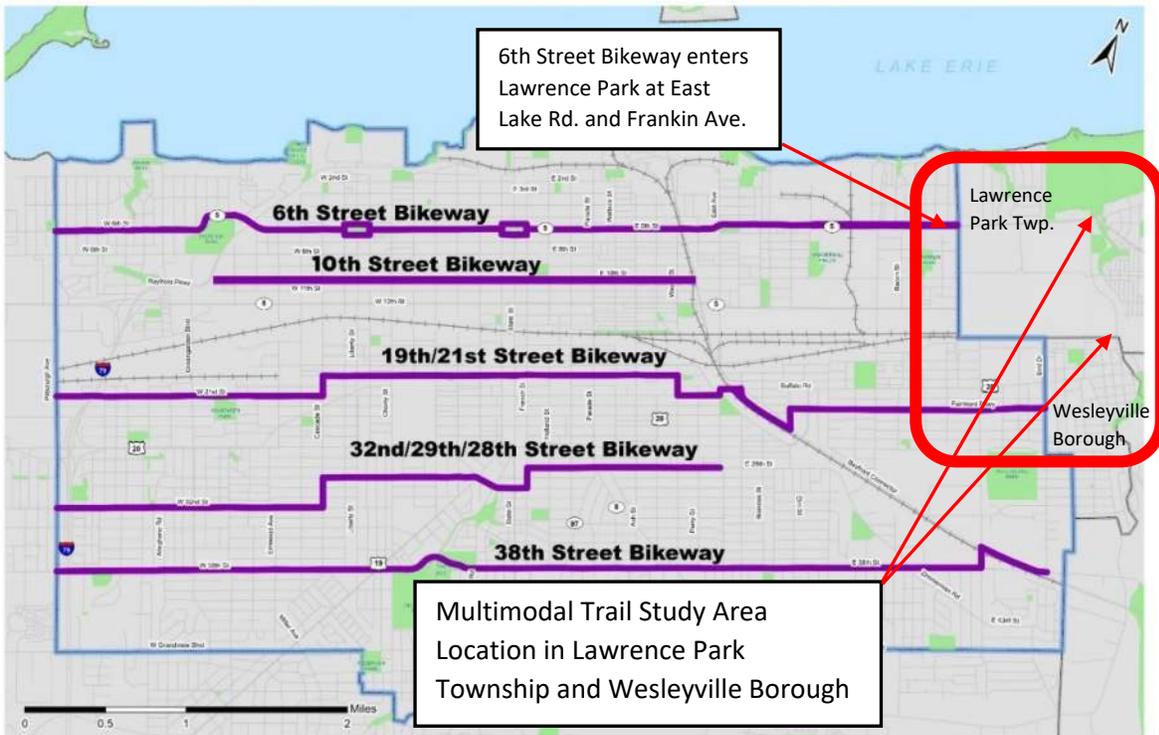


Figure 3 – Planned bikeways from "Active Erie Transportation Plan"

EXISTING TRANSIT FACILITIES IN THE STUDY AREA

Transit Connections

The Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA, or the ‘e’) operates four transit routes in the vicinity of the study area, which are shown on the EMTA Route Map in **Figure 4**. The routes include Route 11 (Harborcreek) and Route 21 (Lawrence Park), which both travel on East Lake Road before Route 21 travels south on Water to Main Street toward the Giant Eagle Plaza in Harborcreek. Route 16 (North East) and Route 25 (Wesleyville) both travel along Buffalo Road (US 20).

Although some ‘e’ stops are marked with posted bus signs or shelters, if a marked stop is not nearby along the bus route, riders may ‘wave-down’ a desired bus from any safe corner. There are stops for Route 21 near the northwest corner of the intersection of Water Street (SR 4027) and Main Street (SR 4032) and on the Main Street bridge over Fourmile Creek.

The closest bus stop signs (Routes 16 and 25) to the intersection of Buffalo Road (SR 20) and Water Street (SR 4027) several hundred feet from the intersection near Buffalo Road (SR 20) and Center Street to the west in Wesleyville and Parker Avenue to the east in Harborcreek.

Along East Lake Road (SR 5), the closest bus stop signs (Route 11 and 21) to the Water Street (SR 4027) intersection are located near Lake Cliff Drive, approximately 1,700-feet west.

The need for additional transit routes or stops, pull-off areas, and shelter locations was discussed with municipal officials and the EMTA. Dave Robinson from EMTA stated that EMTA will work with municipal partners to “shape transit to fit their needs” and would consider additional service, pull-off areas, and shelters at a new Bell Street pedestrian bridge location if there is a need.

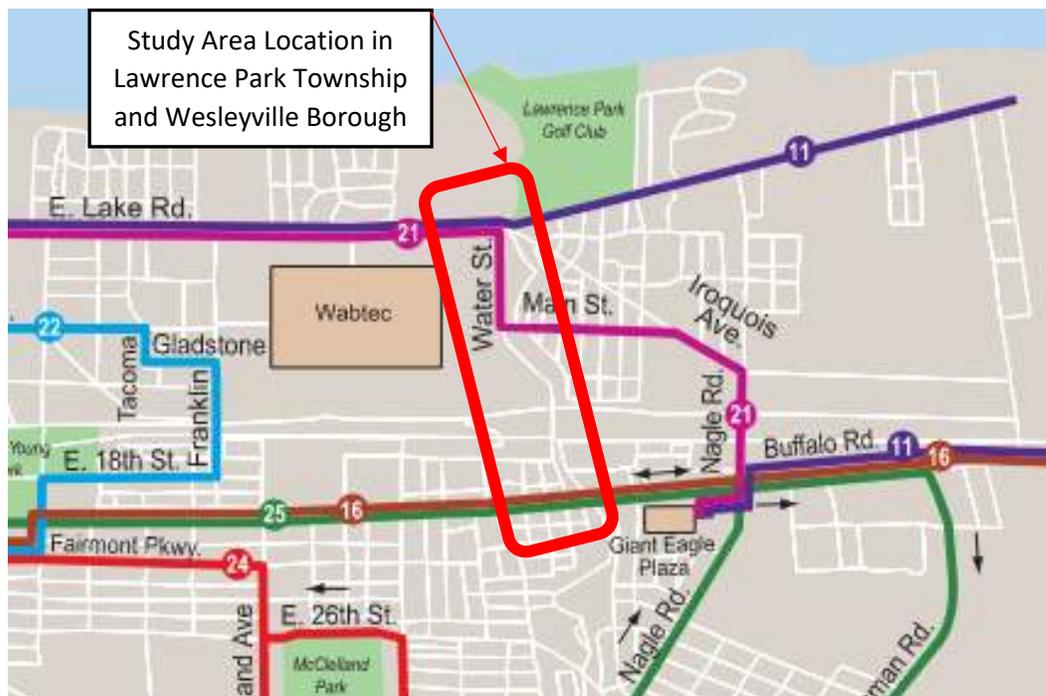


Figure 4 - EMTA Route Map in Study Area

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE STUDY AREA

A “desktop” review of environmental, cultural, community, and recreational resources within the study area was conducted by the study team. The resources identified were assessed for potential impacts and identification of agencies with jurisdiction over resources.

A copy of the full Environmental and Cultural Resources memorandum prepared for this study is contained in **Appendix D**.

Environmental Resources

Wetlands

No wetlands are present in the vicinity of the study area according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Mapper website. During subsequent studies and upon selection of a preferred alternative, a formal field view of the alignment is suggested for a review of potential wetlands present.

Floodplains

Fourmile Creek flows from south to north through the study area. FEMA Zone A, which is defined as the “1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard” zone, is located immediately adjacent to the Regulatory Floodway and includes mostly the wooded areas along the banks of Fourmile Creek. FEMA Zone AE, which is the Regulatory Floodway, is shown for Fourmile Creek proper. Generally, study alternatives will be west of Fourmile Creek and within Zone X, which FEMA defines as an “Area of Minimal Flood Hazard.” There is an area on Water Street (SR 4027) near the railroad bridges, between Pearl Avenue and the Bell Street pedestrian bridge, in which the flood hazard area encroaches on the roadway under the bridges.

If new pedestrian bridges are to be constructed, rehabilitated, or replaced, or other stream impacts are anticipated as part of a preferred alternative, appropriate permits would be obtained during a final design process.

Streams

Fourmile Creek is the only water resource identified in the study area. Fourmile Creek is designated by PA Code Chapter 93 as Water Uses Protected, Warm Water Fishes, and Migratory Fish.

Threatened and Endangered Species

A Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer and PNDI receipt for the study area indicate that the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) responded with a “Potential Impact” for the study area with three fish species being flagged as shown in **Table 1**:

Table 1: Threatened and Endangered Fish Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Current Status
<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>	Lake Sturgeon	Endangered
<i>Ammocrypta pellucida</i>	Eastern Sand Darter	Endangered
<i>Minytrema melanops</i>	Spotted Sucker	Threatened

PFBC has requested additional information about the study area before they decide on impacts or clearances for the study area. Additional coordination with PFBC will be necessary during future design and permitting.

Cultural Resources

Above Ground Historic Properties

A review of the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office’s (PA SHPO) PA-SHARE database has identified several previously identified resources within the study area as shown in **Table 2**.

The resources include three (3) National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listed and eligible resources in the immediate vicinity of the study area.

- NRHP listed Lawrence Park Historic District (1988RE00893)
- NRHP eligible General Electric Company (1995RE46650)
- NRHP eligible Crowley House (1995RE55497)

The NRHP listed Lawrence Park Historic District (1988RE00893) is located to the east of Fourmile Creek and is composed primarily of early twentieth century residential properties. The district was determined to be significant under Criteria A, for its planning and community development, and Criteria C, for its architectural distinction. In 2017, consultants prepared a National Register nomination form for the Lawrence Park Historic District. The nomination defined the western boundary of the district as the west bank of Fourmile Creek and recorded the Main Street bridge over Fourmile Creek as a contributing element.

The NRHP eligible General Electric Company (1995RE46650) complex is located on the property immediately west of Water Street and is bound by E. Lake Road, Franklin Avenue, and Norfolk Southern/CSX. The General Electric Company was determined eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A, pertaining to industry, and C, related to architecture.

The NRHP eligible Crowley House (1995RE55497) is located at 3506 East Lake Drive, at the northern end of the study area. The property is eligible under Criterion C for its Greek Revival style architecture.

Table 2: Previously Identified Historical Resources

Historic Resource/Resource Number	Description	NRHP Status
Lawrence Park Historic District (1988RE00893)	An early twentieth century residential neighborhood.	Listed: Criteria A, planning, and Criteria C, architecture.
General Electric Company (1995RE46650)	Industrial complex.	Eligible: Criteria A, industrial significance, and Criteria C, architecture.
Crowley House (1995RE55497)	Greek Revival residence located at 3506 East Lake Road.	Eligible: Criterion C architecture
L.R. 495 Bridge (1983RE02404)	A single-span, 40'-long structure built in 1940.	Not Eligible
L.R. 25065 Bridge (1983RE02880)	A single span, 35'-long, reinforced concrete deck arch bridge built in 1913	Not Individually Eligible (contributes to the Lawrence Park Historic District)
New York, Chicago, and St. Louis Railway "Nickel Plate Road" (2010RE01707)	Former railroad line.	Not Eligible
New York Central Railroad (Erie to Lawrence Park Township) (1995RE50234)	Former railroad line.	Not Eligible
Wesleyville District (1995RE50229)	Late nineteenth/twentieth century residential neighborhood.	Not Eligible
Bridge over Four Mile Creek (1995RE52146)	c. 1935-1950 steel girder pedestrian bridge.	Undetermined

A total of five (5) resources in the study area have been previously determined ineligible for inclusion in the NRHP. These include two bridges, two railroad lines, and a residential neighborhood in Wesleyville Borough.

The two vehicular bridges carry E. Lake Road and Main Street over Fourmile Creek. Both structures are not considered individually eligible for the NRHP; however, the Main Street bridge (1983RE02880) was determined to be a contributing element of the NRHP-listed Lawrence Park Historic District.

The railroads were formerly operated by the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railway and New York Central Railroad, but are now owned by Norfolk Southern/CSX.

One resource, the pedestrian Bridge over Fourmile Creek (1995RE52146), has not been evaluated for the NRHP, but appears to have a low potential to be individually eligible.

This study’s scope also included a review of the Erie County GIS parcel viewer, historic aerial images, and historic mapping to identify any properties 50 years or older in the study area. Based on a review of available records, there are several buildings or structures 50 years or older in the study area that have not been previously identified or documented as part of any cultural resource investigation. In general, the properties 50 years or older within the study area appear to have been extensively altered, lack architectural distinction, or lack historical significance.

Above ground historic properties that are eligible or listed on the NRHP are Section 4(f)/Section 2002 resources. Within the Lawrence Park Historic District, the only contributing elements to the historic district are Section 4(f)/Section 2002 resources.

Archaeological Resources

A review of the PA-SHARE website revealed that one (1) previously recorded archaeological site, the Wesleyville Site (36ER0018), lies within the study area. This site was recorded through an informant interview in 1992 and is mapped in the northeast quadrant of the Buffalo Road/Water Street intersection.

The Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS) form for that site indicates that it was “mostly” destroyed by modern development. According to the PASS form, 36ER0018 consisted of a Native American burial ground dating to the Late Woodland period. It was discovered during the late nineteenth century when trolley lines were placed along Buffalo Road. Additional burials were discovered immediately south of Buffalo Road when a house was built ca. 1900.

In 1937, during construction of a gas station immediately north of Buffalo Road, more burials were impacted. One of these burials reportedly contained a pottery vessel. Today, the landform where the site is mapped contains a Dollar Tree store. Because site 36ER0018 was recorded via informant interview, its boundaries were never systematically delineated through fieldwork. As a result, the mapped boundaries defined on the PA-SHARE should be considered approximate and this area should be considered to have high archaeological sensitivity.

One (1) archaeological survey has been conducted within the study area and one (1) archaeological survey was conducted adjacent to the study area.

A. The Phase I Cultural Resources Investigation for the Erie East Side Access Study (1995SR00110) was conducted by GAI, Inc. in 1995. A portion of the Alternative 5/5B survey area for that project is located within the Lawrence Park-Wesleyville Multimodal Trail and Pedestrian Bridge study area. Alternative 5B roughly followed the current alignment of the Lawrence Parkway from the northern terminus of the study at East Lake Road to the Norfolk Southern Railroad. South of the railroad, the survey area shifted to the western edge of Water Street to the southern terminus of the study at Buffalo Road.

No subsurface investigations were conducted for Alternative 5B along the Lawrence Parkway or Water Street. Alternative 5 for this study diverged from Lawrence Parkway on a new alignment about 175 feet (53 meters) to the south of Pearl Avenue. The new alignment veered towards the southeast from Lawrence Parkway and crossed Buffalo Road about 350 feet (107 meters) to the west of Water Street. Site 36ER0018 was mapped immediately west of the Alternative 5 right-of-way. During the GAI survey, the site location was found to be covered by gravel parking lots and houses, therefore no subsurface testing was conducted (Rose *et al.* 1995: 113).

B. In 2003, Mercyhurst Archaeological Institute conducted a Phase I Archaeological Survey for the Fourmile Creek Stream Erosion Control Enhancement Project. The survey area for this project was along a section of Fourmile Creek within Napier Park, about 200 feet (61 meters) to the north of the proposed Lawrence Park-Wesleyville Multimodal Trail and Pedestrian Bridge location. Eleven shovel test probes were excavated at a 32.8-foot (10 meter) interval along a single transect paralleling the east side of Fourmile Creek. In total, 220 historic period artifacts were recovered from the study area. The artifacts

were of relatively recent origin (i.e., post-1950) and were associated with the study area's use as a city park, therefore they were not considered to represent an archaeological site and no further work was recommended (Wilk and Quinn 2003: 6). As the study concept develops and an Area of Potential Effects (APE) is established, cultural resources investigations may be recommended depending on the proposed impacts.

Community Facilities

For purposes of this study, “community resources” included facilities used by the community such as churches, schools, medical facilities, fire/police/ambulance facilities, and municipal buildings. Numerous community facilities were identified within and adjacent to the project limits as depicted on Google Maps.

Community facilities within the study area include:

- Twinbrook Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center

Community facilities adjacent to the study area include:

- Bread of Heaven Tabernacle
- Wesleyville Baptist Church/Market Street School
- Wesleyville Police Department
- Wesleyville Volunteer Hose Department

Recreational Facilities

A “recreational facility” was defined as a park, playground or other recreational property used by a community.

Recreational facilities determined within or adjacent to the study are contained in **Table 3**. Through research as denoted above, it was determined that there are three (3) local recreational properties within the study area. Trails were identified within Emerson Park, but no other trails were noted in the study area or adjacent areas.

The recreational facilities identified adjacent to the study area were beyond the limits of property research approved for this study, and therefore additional research would need to be conducted in future studies to define property boundaries, recreational facility name, and ownership.

Section 4(f)/Section 2002

Section 4(f)/2002 properties include publicly owned parks, recreational areas, and other wildlife and historical site that may be impacted by a transportation project. These resources may only be impacted if no other feasible alternatives exist and the project plans minimize harm to the property.

Only one property is publicly owned and would likely be considered a Section 4(f)/2002 resource: Emerson Park/Napier Park/Playground. A portion of this park, on the east side of Fourmile Creek, is denoted as Curtis Park. Secondary source data shows conflicting park boundaries and park names.

There appears to be parkland on Westinghouse Air Brake Technology Corp.’s two properties, which may be the case if there is a lease agreement with the township for recreational use of those two parcels on either side of the publicly owned parcel. Further investigation may be warranted during future design to verify boundary of public ownership.

Section 6(f)

Section 6(f) properties are those acquired using Land and Water Conservation funds. There are no Land and Water Conservation Fund grant projects/properties denoted in the study area or in adjacent areas. Therefore, there are no Section 6(f) resources.

DCNR Grants

Several of the parks in or adjacent to the study area received DCNR funding from the Keystone Fund. Within the study area, Emerson Park/Napier Park received a grant for community recreation.

Conservation Easements

According to DCNR’s Conservation Explorer, there is a conservation easement located along Water Street denoted as the Lake Erie Region Conservancy Public Fish Access. It is also denoted as a nature preserve.

Table 3: Recreational Resources

Resource	Ownership	Section 4(f)/ Section 2002	Grants	Conservation Easements
Within Study Area				
Emerson Park/Napier Park/Playground	Lawrence Park Township.	Yes, but will need to further investigate boundary	DCNR Keystone Fund-Community Recreation	No
Curtis Park	Lawrence Park Township	Yes, but will need to further investigate boundary	No	No
Lake Erie Region Conservancy Fish Access	Lake Erie Region Conservancy	No	No	Yes
Mary B. Ripley Park	Needs additional investigation	Unable to determine at this time	No	No
Adjacent to Study Area				
CJ “Gus” Duskas Gazebo	Would need additional investigation	Unable to determine at this time	No	No
Emory Red Hinkler Park	Wesleyville Borough	Yes	Would need additional investigation	No
Lawrence Park Golf Club	Privately owned	No	Keystone Fund- River Conservation	No
Teker Park	Would need additional investigation	Unable to determine at this time	Keystone Fund-Community Recreation	No

For additional details, references, and information regarding environmental and cultural resources, please reference the full memorandum included in **Appendix D**.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES, CRASH HISTORY, AND CONSIDERATIONS

Water Street (SR 4027) is classified as a Principal Arterial Highway and according to the PennDOT Traffic Volume Map (2022) for Erie County has an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 4,700 (vehicles per day) north of Main Street (SR 4032) and 5,400 south of Main Street (SR 4032).

East Lake Road (SR 5) and Buffalo Road (SR 20) are classified as Principal Arterial Highways, both with AADTs of 12,000.

Main Street (SR 4032) is classified as a Minor Arterial and has an AADT of 2,900.

The study area is identified below on the 2022 PennDOT Traffic Volume Map in **Figure 5**. Traffic Volumes are listed on the map in AADT.

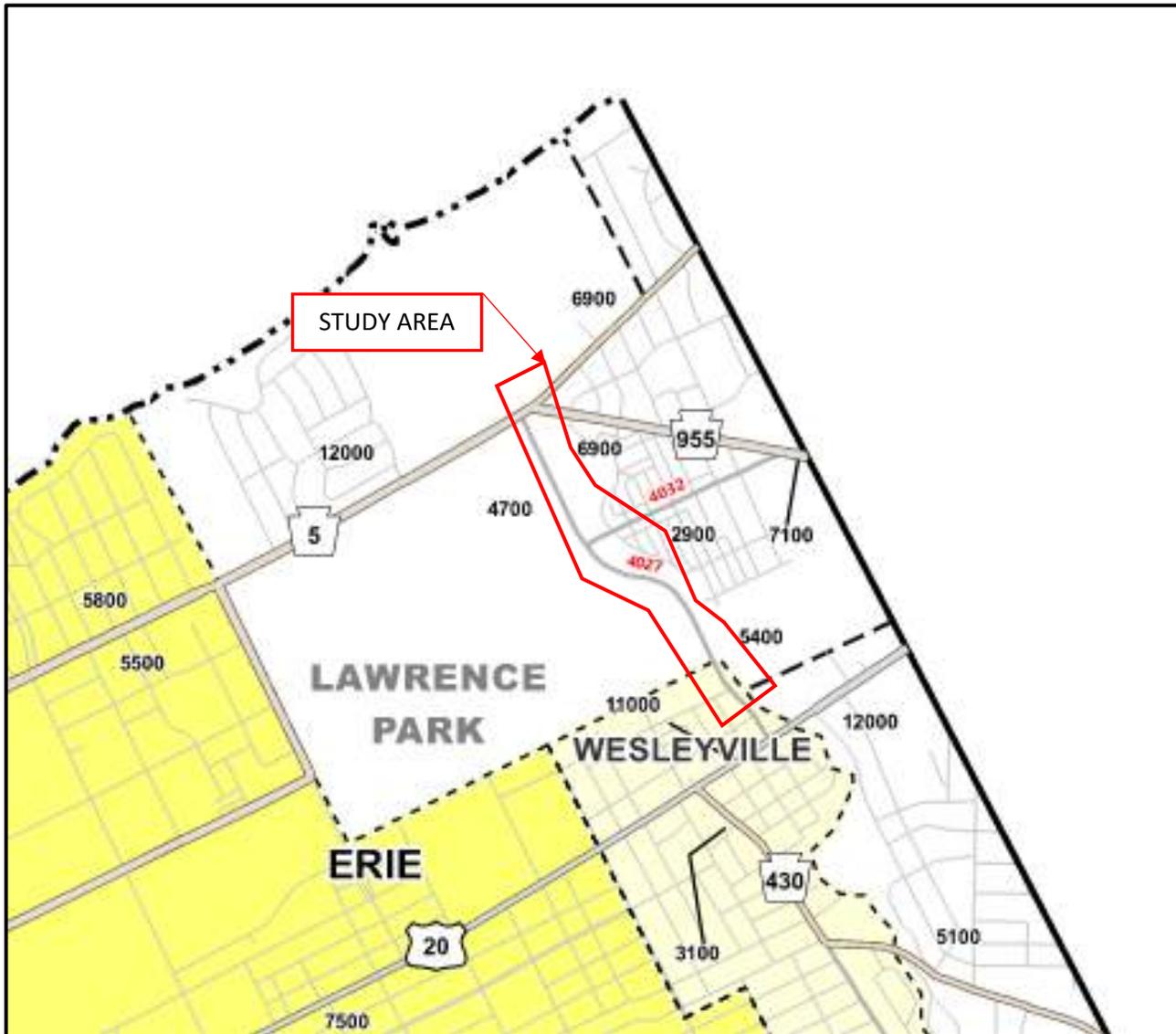


Figure 5- PennDOT Traffic Volume Map (2022) AADT

Figure 6 below shows the number and approximate location of crashes from the most recent 5-year crash history on the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT).

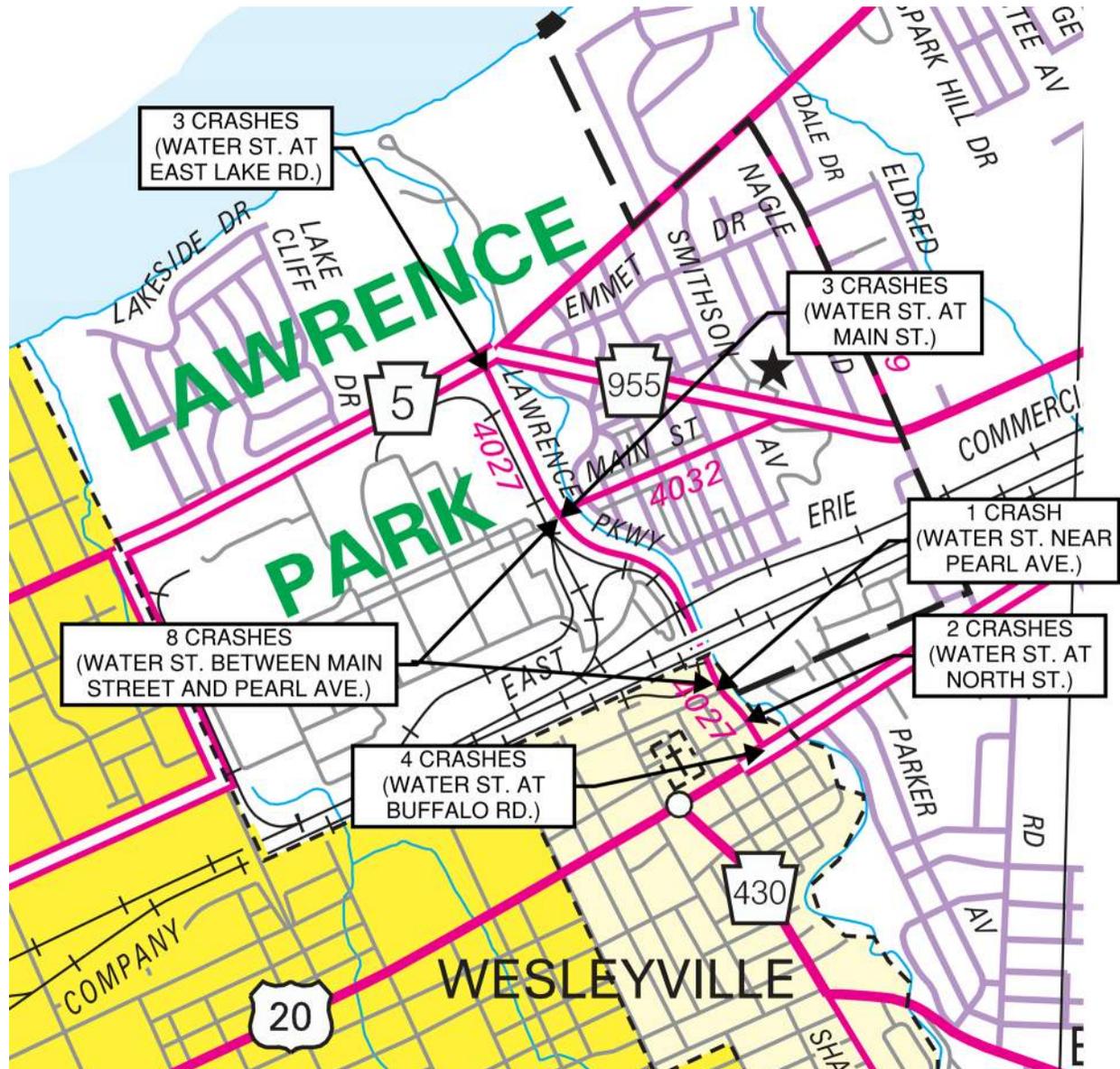


Figure 6 - Crash History Schematic adapted from PCIT data over most recent 5-year period.

Speed studies and safety audits should be conducted on Water Street (SR 4027) when considering alternative routes during preliminary engineering.

According to the PennDOT One Map (as of October 2023), there is one Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project on a segment of Buffalo Road (SR 20) encompassing Water Street (SR 4027). The project includes resurfacing of SR 20 in the City of Erie, Wesleyville, and Harborcreek.

TRAIL DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

Trail design criteria varies depending on the intended users, anticipated volumes, and direction of travel.

PennDOT Guidelines and Criteria

Publication 13, DM Part 2-Contextual Roadway Design (September 2023 Edition, Change No. 4) recommends the following criteria when developing a trail:

- Shared-use trail width of 10-feet, with a width of 12-feet recommended if heavy use is anticipated (Section 14.6.1 – General Design Practices)
- 8-feet is the minimum allowed for a two-way shared-use path, and only allowed if low-volume bicycle use with occasional pedestrian use (Section 14.6.1 – General Design Practices)
- Provide 2-ft. lateral/shoulder clearance on both sides
- Provide 3-ft. lateral/shoulder clearance for areas with sign installation
- Overhead clearance should be at least 8-feet and 10-feet is recommended
- Local Neighborhood Accessways width of 10-feet to 14-feet to accommodate emergency vehicles but allows for less than 8-feet if necessary to avoid mature trees (Section 14.6.3)

PennDOT Publication 13, DM-2 Highway Design (February 2023 Edition-Change No. 9) provides design guidelines for a pedestrian access route (PAR) in Chapter 6.5. Design guidelines include 5.0% maximum longitudinal slope (or match adjacent roadway slope); 2.0% maximum cross slope (or match street grade at crossings); and an unobstructed width of 48-inch minimum.

Federal Guidelines

The US Access Board Guide to the ADA Accessibility Standards Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) requires sidewalks or access paths to have either a 60-inch minimum width or a minimum 48-inch width with passing areas of 60-inch by 60-inch every 200-feet.

PROWAG guidance for longitudinal slopes states that where a pedestrian access route is contained within a highway right-of-way, the grade of the pedestrian access route shall not exceed 1:20 (5.0%). An exception applies where the grade established for the adjacent street exceeds 1:20 (5.0%), then the grade of the pedestrian access route shall not exceed the grade established for the adjacent street.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The Study Team used interviews, virtual meetings, and public meetings to gather stakeholder feedback on the existing study area and the proposed alternatives.

Community Context Audit

The initial stakeholder outreach efforts included a Community Context Audit (CCA). The Study Team identified local stakeholders within the community to interview to gather information and community context, related interests, and the needs, challenges, and concerns of the study area. The CCA was conducted with several individuals and groups with an interest in the study area.

The study team contacted the following stakeholders:

- PennDOT District 1
- Erie County Planning and Erie County MPO
- Borough of Wesleyville
- Lawrence Park Township
- Iroquois School District
- Businesses and Industries:
 - Wabtec
 - Twinbrook Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center*
 - National Fuel Gas (NFG)*
 - Norfolk Southern Railroad
 - CSX Railroad*
- Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA)*
- Wesleyville Police Department*
- Wesleyville Hose Company*
- Lawrence Park Police Department
- Lawrence Park Volunteer Fire Department*

While not all stakeholders contacts could be reached (as denoted by * above), several did respond to requests for interviews and provided feedback on the study background, connectivity challenges, safety concerns, existing infrastructure and maintenance, emergency services, recreation, and transit.

Common themes from the feedback include:

- Connectivity and Safety
 - There is a lack of proper infrastructure and connectivity.
 - The closure of the footbridge has disconnected the two communities.
 - A new pedestrian bridge would enable a safe route to school for the students in Wesleyville.
 - It is unsafe for kids to walk to/from school on Water Street.
- Infrastructure and Maintenance
 - Sidewalks and fence along west side of Water Street (SR 4027) are deteriorating.
 - Sidewalks are in poor condition.

- Railroad bridges are below standard height and visibly in poor condition.
- Emergency Services
 - If a project is developed, responders are concerned about access during construction.
- Recreation
 - Natural resources underutilized.
 - Access to Fourmile Creek is limited.

A summary document of all responses and a copy of the completed CCA forms (PennDOT Publication 217) from the interviews are included in **Appendix C**.

Virtual Stakeholder Meeting

On Thursday, January 25, 2024, a virtual meeting was held to discuss the study’s origins and needs; related regional plans developed by others; the current study alternatives; stakeholders’ suggestions and input; and the next steps in the study process. A total of 21 stakeholders joined the meeting (see **Table 4**) to learn more about the study and provide input and suggestions on the development of the study and alternatives.

Table 4 – Virtual Stakeholder Meeting Attendees

Organization	Name
Pennsylvania Senate, Senator Laughlin’s Office	Daniel Barker
Pennsylvania House	Rep. Bob Merski
PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation	Danielle Spila
PennDOT District 1	Brian McNulty, Lyndsie DeVito, Mark Nicholson, Thomas McClelland
Erie County Department of Planning & Community Development	Audrey Knight Jessica Horan
Erie County MPO	Emily Aloiz
Borough of Wesleyville	Mayor Paul Johnson Marcus Jacobs
Lawrence Park Township	Dale Williams, Tom Buchleitner, Lori Duska
East Erie Commercial Railroad	Scott Bemis
Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority	Dave Robinson
Iroquois School District	Michael Huster Thad Urban
Lake Erie Region Conservancy	Dave Skellie
Wabtec	Tim Haschalk
Urban Engineers, Inc. (Urban)	Andrew Holland
McCormick Taylor (MT)	Carrie Machuga, Elisa Kownacki, Celia Kottakis

Carrie Machuga (MT) and Andrew Holland (Urban) introduced the study and its goals, and provided background information on the study area, including environmental and cultural resources, existing infrastructure, and transit facilities. Three different trail alternatives were described and included a trail on the west side of Water Street (SR 4027), a trail on the east side of Water Street (SR 4027), and a “greenway” trail alternative along Fourmile Creek.

As each alternative was introduced, stakeholders provided feedback on the alternatives for discussion. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Dave Skellie of Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC) provided valuable insight on the current uses of the LERC property.
 - LERC has worked with PA Fish and Boat Commission to provide fishing access to Fourmile Creek.
 - LERC would consider trail implementation on their property and could potentially make a connection to Fourmile Creek to further expand access for recreation and fishing.
 - The potential use of LERC property for trailhead parking access was discussed.
- Wabtec property is an option for the “greenway” trail alternative.
 - Tim Hashchalk from Wabtec noted that while Wabtec would retain ownership of any property, consideration would be given to easements or other agreements for development of a trail.
- Bell Street Pedestrian Bridge
 - Bridge is currently closed due to structural deficiencies and unsafe conditions.
 - Construction of a new pedestrian bridge over Fourmile Creek at Bell Street is the top priority for both Wesleyville Borough and Lawrence Park Township.
 - Mayor Paul Johnson and Marcus Jacobs, Wesleyville Borough, proposed implementing the project in two phases. Phase 1 would include replacing the pedestrian bridge with a pedestrian connection to Buffalo Road, and Phase 2 would complete the trail walkway between the pedestrian bridge and East Lake Road.
 - Brian McNulty, PennDOT, agreed and said that it is feasible if each project has independent utility, which the two phases they identified would have.
 - Lori Duska, Lawrence Park Township, shared that previous consideration had been given to a new bridge location at Field Street. This was partly due to concerns from Twinbrook Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center regarding vandalism and disturbance of residents by students using the Bell Street bridge.
 - Generally, the discussion seemed to favor the current Bell Street location.
 - Trails alternatives on the east side of Water Street were preferred due to easier access to a future pedestrian bridge at Bell Street.
 - A west side trail would require users to make a mid-block crossing of Water Street.
 - Tom McClelland, PennDOT District 1, agreed that introducing midblock crossing can lead to complications, and the District would be supportive of a safer crossing location.
- Thad Urban, Iroquois School District, emphasized the importance of selecting the path of least resistance for students.

- He also spoke in favor of incorporating lighting or emergency call boxes along the trail and pedestrian bridges for safety and security purposes.
- Marcus Jacobs and Mayor Paul Johnson, Wesleyville Borough, agreed that a walkway or “greenway” trail along the creek would be great for access.
- Representative Bob Merski, Pennsylvania House, thanked the study team for the presentation and spoke in favor of the study in addition to inquiring about next steps. He asked to be kept informed about study progress and any funding requests that he could support in the legislature.

A Virtual Stakeholder Meeting Summary is included in **Appendix C**.

Public Officials Briefing and Public Forum

On March 5, 2024, a Public Officials Briefing and Public Forum were conducted by the study team of Urban Engineers and McCormick Taylor at the Iroquois Junior/Senior High School auditorium in Lawrence Park Township. The forum was conducted to present the findings of the Lawrence Park and Wesleyville Multimodal Trail Study and to gather public comments, ideas, and concerns regarding the study alternatives.

Twelve (12) officials attended the Public Officials Briefing and 34 people signed in at the Public Forum. (See Appendix for sign-in sheets from both meetings).

The following officials attended the Public Officials Briefing:

Governor’s NW Regional Office:
Mike Ferrito

PennDOT District 1:
Courtney Lyle

Erie County Planning:
Jessica Horan, Director

Lawrence Park Township:
Commissioner Tom Buchleitner
Commissioner Dale Williams
Joe Crotty, LP Vol. Fire Dept.

Wesleyville Borough:
Mayor E. Paul Johnson
Council Member Regina Julius
Council Member Sandy Morrow
Council Member Fred Petrini
Borough Manager Marcus Jacobs

Iroquois School District:
Superintendent Shane Murray

The Public Officials Briefing began at 3:30 p.m. with a presentation and opportunity for questions and discussion with team members prior to the Public Forum. The Public Forum began with a presentation at 5:00 p.m. with an opportunity for questions in an open forum.

The meeting format also provided an opportunity for the public to speak one-on-one with members of the Project Team after the presentation. Project Team members were available throughout the evening to address public questions/concerns and gather input.

The presentation included a description of the project origin, purpose, and need; description of existing conditions, environmental and cultural resources, and potential alternatives; summary of outreach and coordination; and outline of next steps for future study and/or design.

Public Officials Comments/Questions:

- There is a gas line on the Bell Street Bridge.
 - National Fuel Gas (NFG) was engaged in early discussions about replacing the bridge, but they opted out of any participation in funding to replace the bridge.
 - They are willing to move their gas line to a new bridge if/when it was constructed.
- Rehabilitation or repair is not an option for either Bell Street or Napier/Curtis Park pedestrian bridges. Replacement is the economical option for both.
- Wesleyville Borough suggested that if the Bell Street Bridge was replaced, a bus stop could be placed on Water Street at that location to provide additional connectivity.
 - This would require an additional EMTA bus route south on Water Street toward Buffalo Road.
- Wesleyville has started conversations with EMTA about improved bus shelters on Buffalo Road.
- This study seems like it is complicating the issue of just getting the bridge reopened.
 - The study team explained the need to do a formal study and include the connectivity of some kind of path or trail to the bridge to be better eligible for available funding sources.
- The existing lighting on Water Street is not bright enough, and it is often hard to see people walking along the road at night.
- The study will not identify a preferred alternative. It will include the feedback from the community that seems to prefer one of the alternatives on the east side of Water Street, along with the costs for all studied alternatives. A true Preferred Alternative will be selected in the more detailed Preliminary Engineering phase of design.
- Right-of-way and property acquisition costs were not included in the comparison matrix.
- One of the officials suggested reaching out to the Lawrence Park Historical Society to learn more about what the original designs for the area were intended to be.

Public Meeting Comments/Questions:

- The township [Lawrence Park] gave or sold the land on the east side of Water Street to GE/Wabtec for parking many years ago. Could they give or sell it back to be used for this project?
 - Wabtec has been involved in the discussions related to the study, and they were open to provide easements on their property for the construction of a trail. They would like to maintain ownership.

- There was a temporary pedestrian bridge installed over Fourmile Creek when the Main Street bridge was replaced by PennDOT. Could that temporary pedestrian bridge be used to replace Bell Street Bridge?
 - The contractor maintains ownership of items like that temporary pedestrian bridge, and PennDOT essentially ‘rents’ it from them during construction. A temporary bridge also may not be suited as a permanent replacement bridge.
- Multiple attendees raised concerns over erosion of trees and land along Fourmile Creek. When did responsibility for the land become Lawrence Park’s responsibility instead of GE/Wabtec’s?
 - There would need to be a follow up with the township on when the transfer of property and responsibility occurred.
- NFG has a gas line on Bell Street Bridge.
 - NFG was involved in early discussions about replacing the bridge. They decided not to aide in funding but are willing to move the utility line if/when the bridge was replaced.
- A resident suggested moving the trail east, into the neighborhood on the east side of the creek.
 - The study area was the Water Street corridor, and the team focused the trail/alternatives within the study limits.
- When did the study begin and who owns it?
 - The study began in 2023, with bridge inspections occurring in the fall of 2023. PennDOT’s Bureau of Public Transportation (BPT) is responsible for the study.
- Who approves the study and what are the next steps?
 - The trail study is the first step, then PennDOT BPT will receive a report and summary after the public meeting. Next steps would include project approval and funding from local sources.
- There is a rising issue with vandalism at Napier Park. Within the park, there is very little to no lighting at night.

The responses received after the meeting placed a high priority on the replacement of the Bell Street Pedestrian Bridge. Of the trail alternative alignments, respondents generally preferred the Greenway Trail alternative and incorporating the natural resources along Fourmile Creek.

A complete meeting summary, including displays, outreach, comments and responses, and attendees list, is included in **Appendix C**.

EXISTING CONDITIONS OF STUDY AREA

The following section describes the existing conditions of the study area, including existing features, facilities, and approximate dimensions for some existing facilities, beginning at the intersection of Water Street (SR 4027) and Buffalo Road (SR 20) and traveling north to the intersection of Water Street (SR 4027) and East Lake Road (SR 5).

Buffalo Road to Railroad Bridges

The sidewalk on the east side of the road extends from Buffalo Road to approximately 210-feet north along the Dollar Tree property and ends at the driveway entrance of the Dollar Tree (see **Figure 7** and **Photo 1**). The existing sidewalk width is approximately 5-feet. Several signposts and utility poles are located immediately adjacent to the sidewalk.



Photo 1 - Looking north along Water Street (SR 4027) near south end of study area.

From the end of the sidewalk to the railroad bridges, the east side of the road is generally a wide, gravel shoulder area outside the edge of pavement. Although no sidewalk exists, there is a well-worn walking path along the side of the road. The property in this area is owned by the Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC). LERC owns a 2.8 acres parcel in this area (see **Figure 8**) and has worked with municipalities and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat



Figure 7-Existing conditions from Buffalo Road (SR20) near Dollar Tree (not to scale).

Commission to provide access to Fourmile Creek, which parallels Water Street (SR 4027) to the east for the entire length of the study area (see **Photo 2**).

The sidewalk on the west side of the road varies in width from 4-feet to 6-feet between Buffalo Road and the railroad bridges. The sidewalk is interrupted by several driveway aprons between Buffalo Road (SR 20) and Pearl Avenue.

The existing right-of-way width from Buffalo Road (SR 20) to the existing railroad bridges is 60-feet. From the railroad bridges north to East Lake Road (SR 5), the right-of-way width is 50-feet.



Photo 2 - Looking north along Water Street (SR 4027) toward railroad bridge.

Railroad Bridges

There are three railroad bridges located near the municipal boundary between the Borough Wesleyville and Lawrence Park Township. From south to north, the three bridges carry rail lines owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad, CSX Transportation, and East Erie Commercial Railroad. There is no existing sidewalk on the east side of the road (see **Photo 3**).

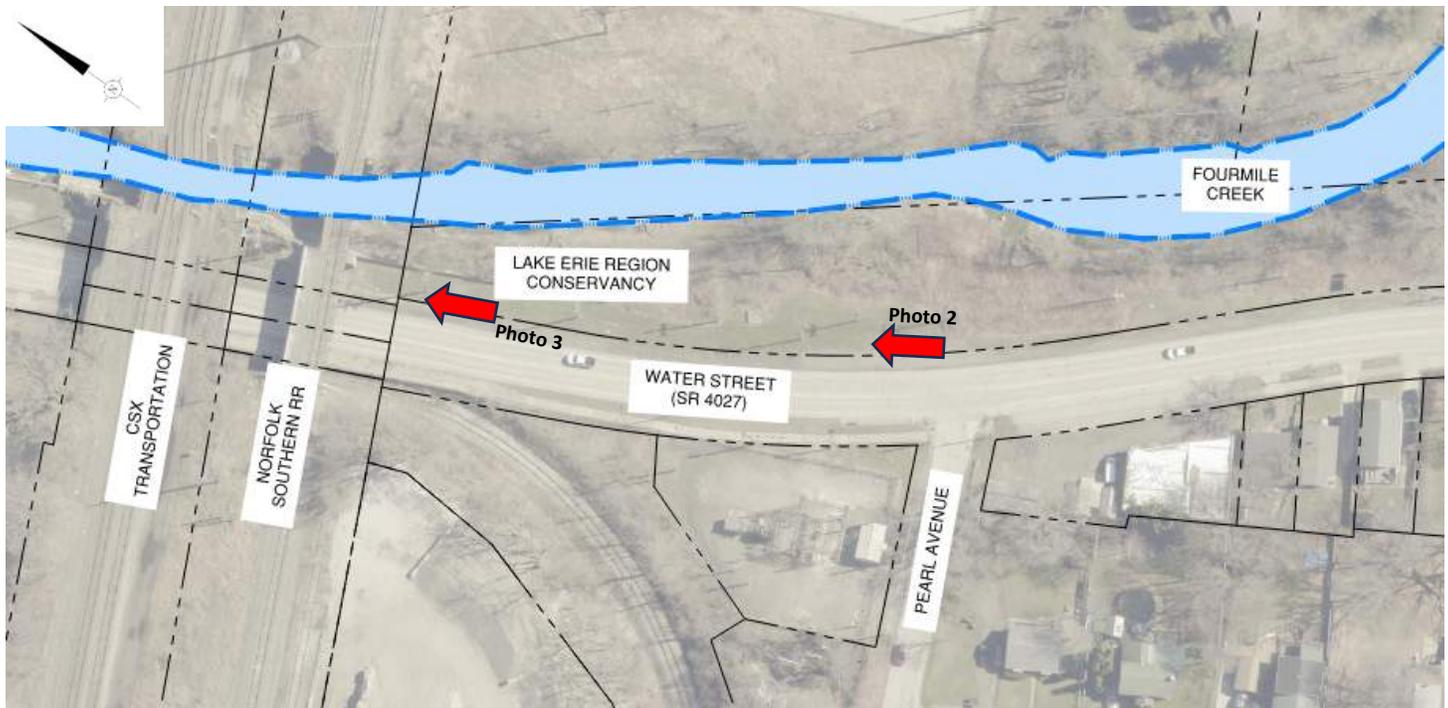


Figure 8-Existing conditions near Lake Erie Region Conservancy and railroad bridges (not to scale).



Photo 3 -Looking north along east side of Water Street (SR 4027) near Norfolk Southern Railroad bridge.



Photo 4 -Looking south along Water Street (SR 4027) at East Erie Commercial Railroad bridge.

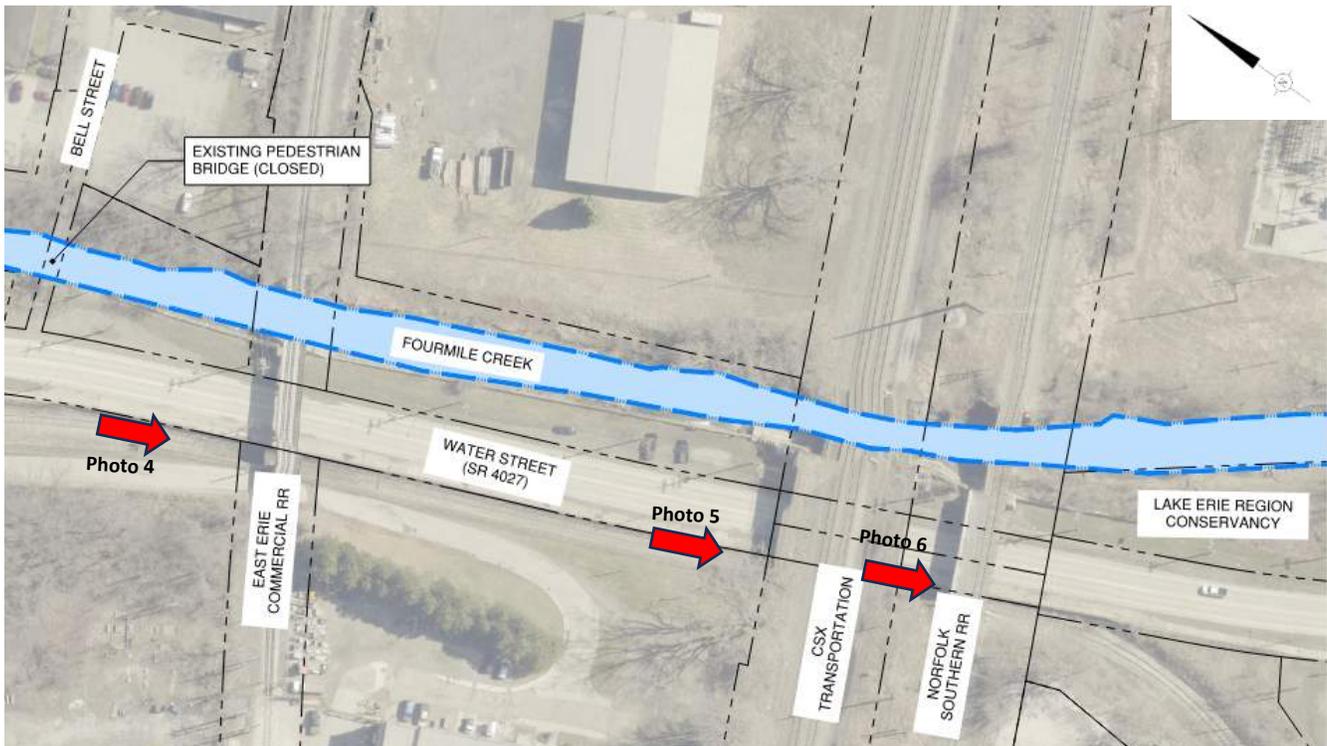


Figure 9-Existing conditions near railroad bridges (not to scale).

The sidewalk on the west side of the roadway continues north under the bridges and along the Wabtec property (see **Figure 9**). The sidewalk width widens from 6-feet south of the bridges to 10 to 11-feet wide. The 11-foot width continues for approximately 175-feet north of the bridges where it narrows to approximately 6-feet wide, which is typical width to Main Street. Sidewalk conditions vary with some sections showing signs of cracking and damage (see **Photos 4-6**).



Photo 5 -Looking south along Water Street (SR 4027) at CSX Railroad bridge.



Photo 6 -Looking south along Water Street (SR 4027) at Norfolk Southern railroad bridge Main Street.

At the intersection of Water Street (SR 4027) and Main Street (SR 4032) there are pedestrian signals, curb ramps, and crosswalks at all four corners (see **Figure 10**). Sidewalks connecting to the Wabtec entrance to the west and to Main Street (SR 4032) and downtown Lawrence Park to the east are

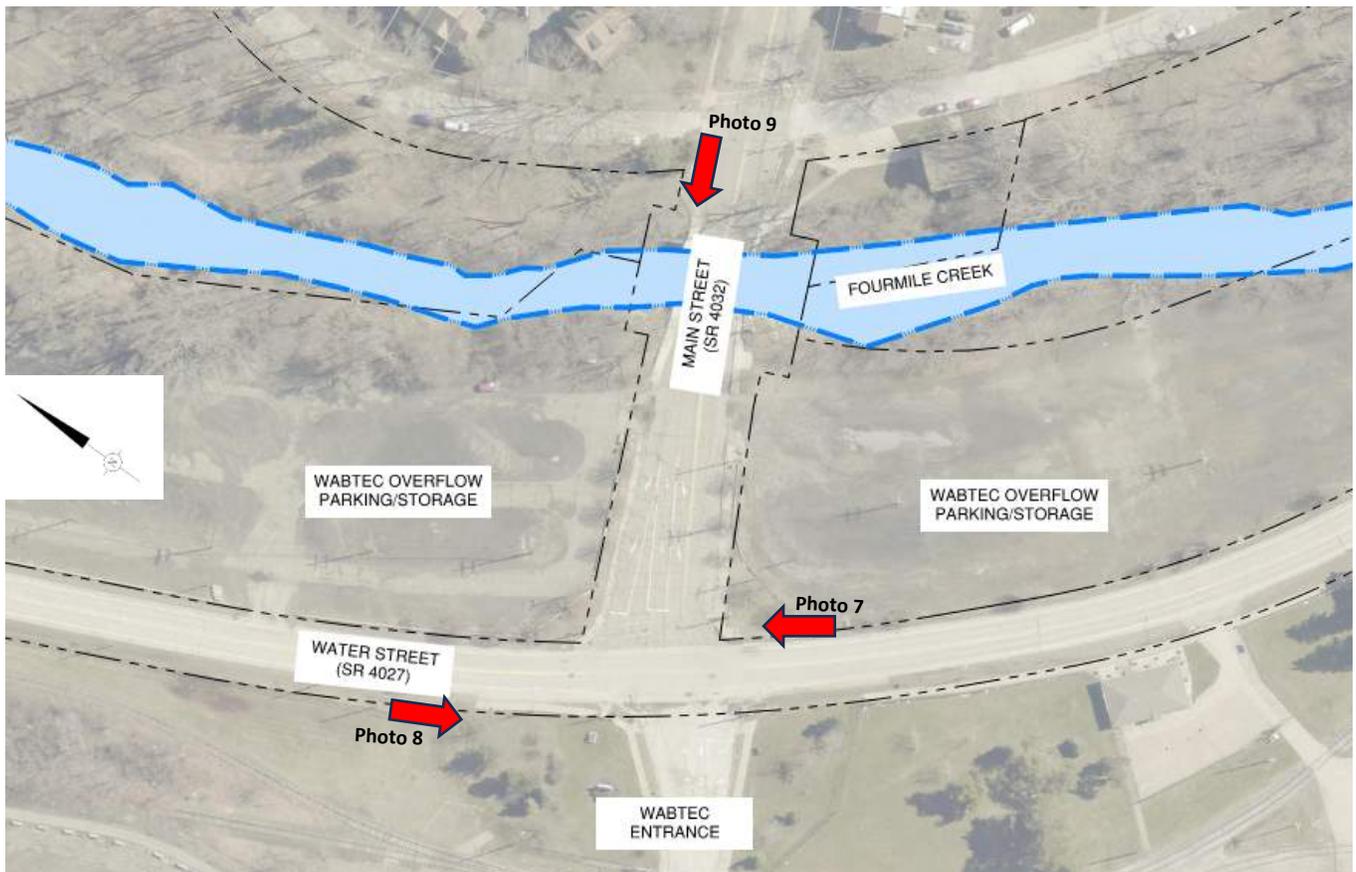


Figure 10-Existing conditions near Water Street and Main Street (not to scale).

available on the north and south sides of the intersection (see **Photos 7 and 8**). The bridge carrying Main Street (SR 4032) over Fourmile Creek was replaced in 2020 and includes sidewalks (see **Photo 9**).



Photo 7 - Looking south from west side of Water Street (SR 4027) near Wabtec Entrance.



Photo 8 - Looking north across Main Street (SR 4032) from east side of Water Street (SR 4027).

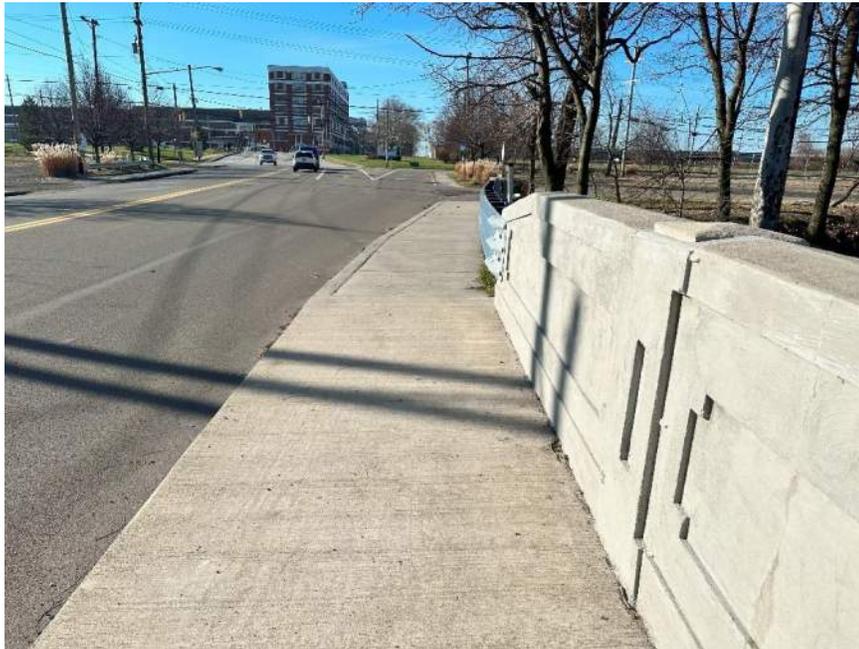


Photo 9 - Looking west from the north side of the Main Street (SR 4032) bridge.

North of Main Street

North of Main Street (SR 4032), Water Street (SR 4027) is adjacent to Wabtec property and Emerson Park (see **Figure 11**). The existing sidewalk on the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) is approximately 6-feet wide and continues north for approximately 110-feet before ending at the roadway shoulder (see **Photo 10**). There is no sidewalk on the east side of Water Street (SR 4027) north of the curb ramps at

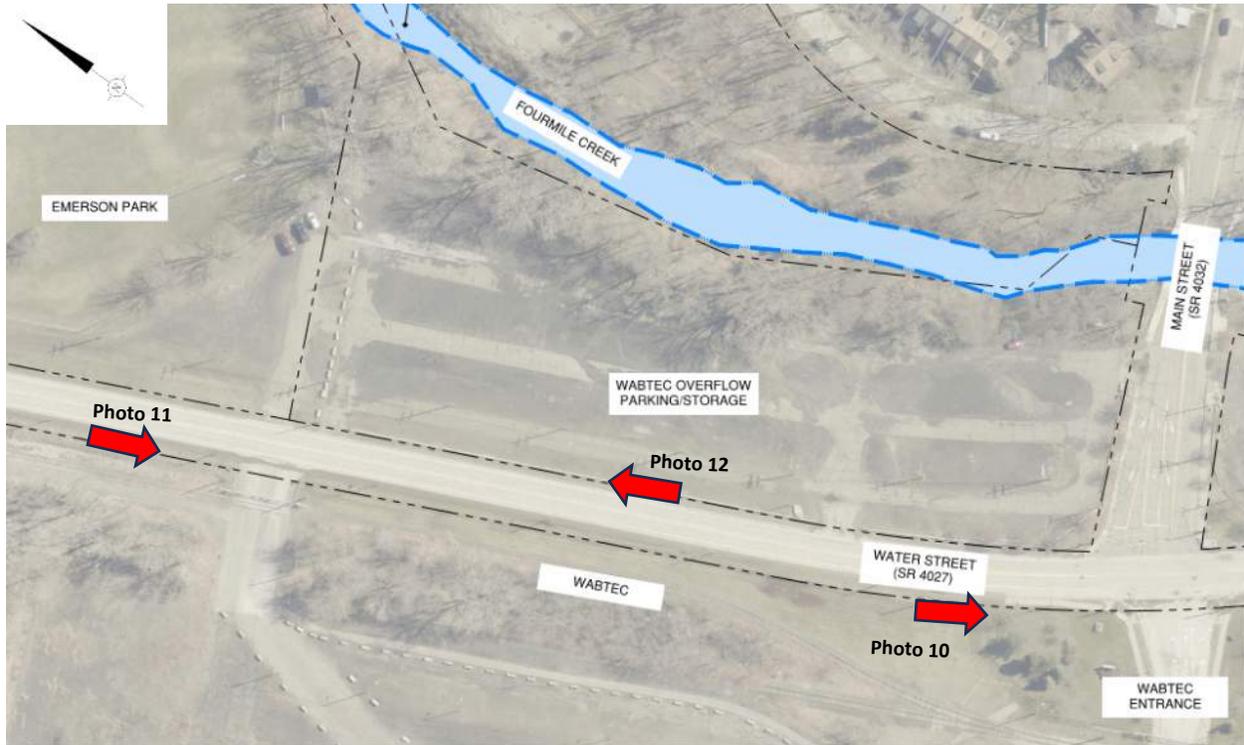


Figure 11-Existing conditions north of Main Street (SR 4032) (not to scale).



Photo 10 - Looking south at the end of sidewalk on the west side of Water Street (SR 4027), just north of the Wabtec entrance and Main Street (SR 4032).



Photo 11 -Typical shoulder area on west side of Water Street (SR 4027) with fence and Wabtec property on right side of photo.

Main Street (SR 4032).

There are no pedestrian facilities along the east or west sides of Water Street (SR 4027) for approximately 1,700 feet (0.32 miles) from Main Street (SR 4032) to East Lake Road (SR 5), (see **Photos 11 and 12**).

The west side of Water Street (SR 4027) has a 4 to 5-foot wide paved shoulder area and approximately 11-foot wide grass area from the edge of pavement to an existing chain link fence along the Wabtec property. Twelve utility/light poles run along the grass area approximately 3-feet from the edge of pavement. Existing drainage structures and some saturated areas are located along this section of the road (see **Photo 11**).

The east side of Water Street (SR 4027) north of Main Street (SR 4032) typically includes a 5-foot wide paved shoulder and 5-feet of dirt and gravel to the face of a guiderail. The guiderail runs adjacent to the street and a Wabtec parking lot from Main Street approximately 700 feet north. The guiderail could potentially be removed if future development along the shoulder is proposed. It is assumed that the guiderail was installed as an effective method of separating the parking area from the road and controlling ingress/egress points (see **Photo 12**).



Photo 12 - Looking north Typical east side of Water Street (SR 4027) north of Main Street (SR 4032).

North of the Wabtec parking lot is Emerson Park, which is owned by Lawrence Park Township. The park features athletic fields, including baseball/softball and soccer fields. A pedestrian bridge across Fourmile Creek to Napier/Curtis Park is located at the park. The bridge has been closed by Lawrence Park Township due to safety concerns identified during a bridge inspection conducted as part of this study.

Additional parking and storage areas owned by Wabtec are situated adjacent to Water Street (SR 4027) north of Emerson Park for a length of approximately 400 feet (see **Figure 12** and **Photo 13**). The final 200 feet on the east side of Water Street is generally a lawn area until the intersection with East Lake Road (SR 5).



Photo 13 - Looking north at Wabtec storage area.



Photo 14 - Water Street (SR 4027) at East Lake Road (SR 5) with crosswalk across East Lake Rd. Sidewalk continues west and east on north side and east on south side.

East Lake Road

There is a sidewalk on the north side of East Lake Road (SR 5) continuing east and west of the intersection with Water Street (SR 4027) (see **Figure 12**). On the south side of East Lake Road, the sidewalk only continues east of the intersection (see **Photo 14**). Pennsylvania Bicycle Route Z follows East Lake Road (SR 5) through the intersection, continuing east and west.

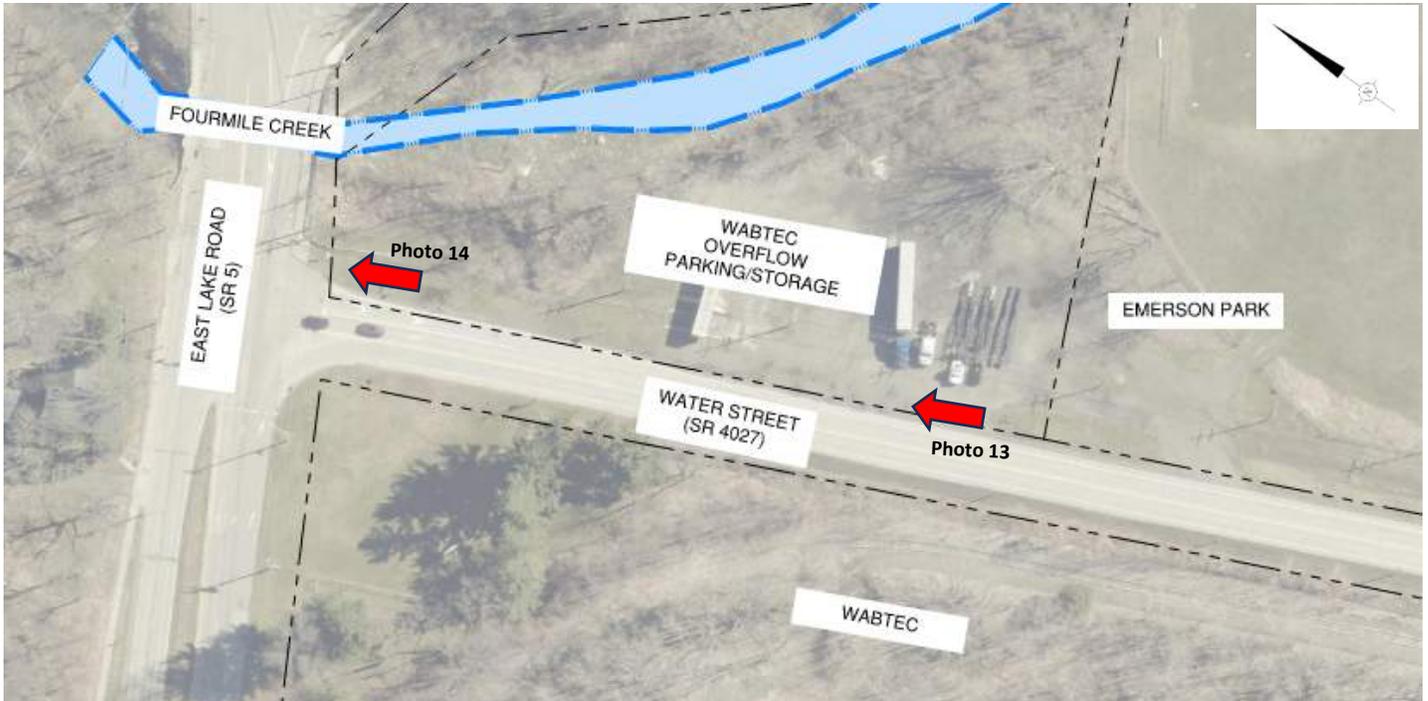


Figure 12-Existing conditions near East Lake Road (SR 5) (not to scale).

Existing Pedestrian Bridges

Bell Street Pedestrian Bridge

The Bell Street pedestrian bridge was originally used by employees of the General Electric (now Wabtec) plant to walk from residential areas of the Township to the plant (see **Figure 13**). The bridge was also widely used by students walking between Wesleyville and the Iroquois School District campus. The existing bridge is located on Lawrence Park Township property with right-of-way from Water Street (SR 4027) on the west connecting to existing Bell Street right-of-way on the east side of Fourmile Creek. The bridge right-of-way is 12-feet wide.

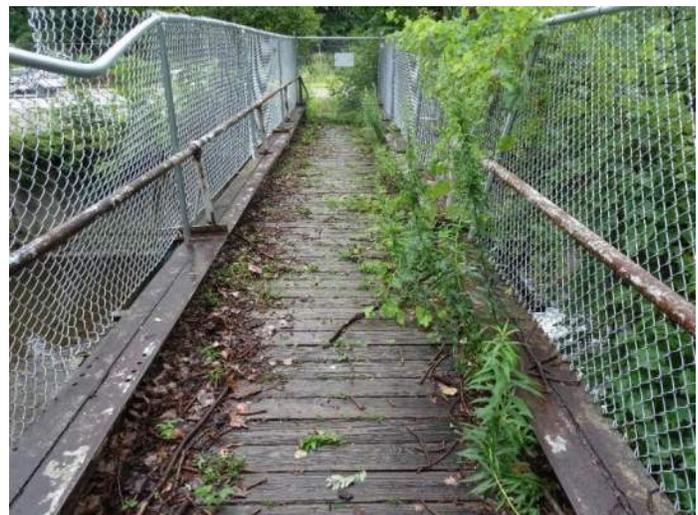


Photo 15 - Bell Street pedestrian bridge. Closed with fencing. Photo taken during inspection.

The bridge is currently closed due to structural deficiencies and safety concerns (see **Photo 15**). Additional information about the condition of the bridge is available in a separate bridge inspection report that was prepared as part of this study. A copy of the inspection report is included in **Appendix F**.



Figure 13-Existing conditions near Bell Street Pedestrian Bridge (not to scale).

Napier/Curtis Park Pedestrian Bridge

The Napier/Curtis Park pedestrian bridge crosses Fourmile Creek connecting Curtis Park (also referred to as Napier Park due to its proximity to Napier Avenue) on the east to Emerson Park on the west (see **Figure 14**). The bridge is currently closed due to structural deficiencies and safety concerns (see **Photo 16**).

Additional information about the condition of the bridge is available in a separate bridge inspection report that was prepared as part of this study. A copy of the inspection report is included in **Appendix F**.

Photo 16 - Napier/Curtis Park pedestrian bridge closed with fencing by Lawrence Park after bridge inspection.

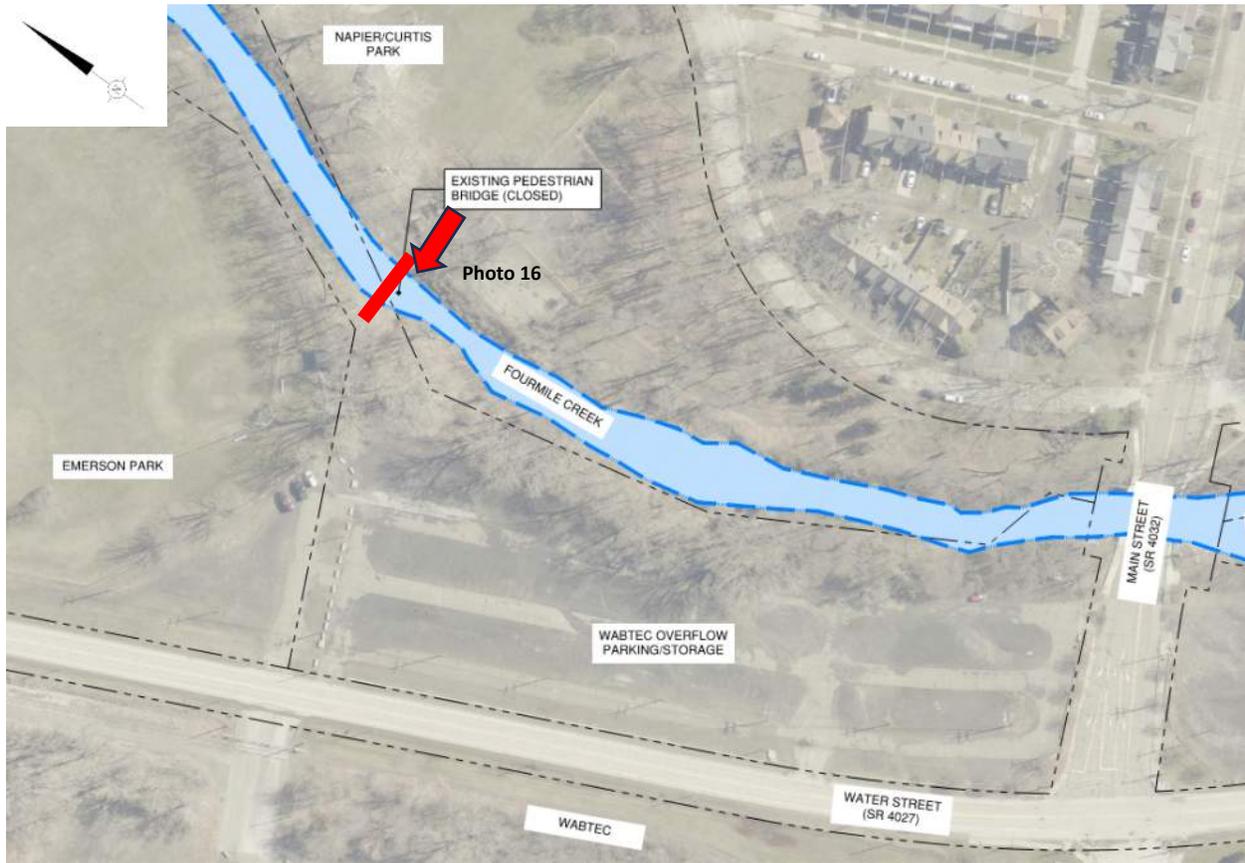


Figure 14-Existing conditions and location of Napier/Curtis Park Pedestrian Bridge and Emerson Park.

Existing Utilities

There are aboveground and belowground utilities within the study area, including electric, water, natural gas, and sanitary. A PA One Call preliminary design notification (Serial Number 20240750554) was placed to determine utilities within the study area and assess potential impacts.

First Energy poles and overhead electric lines are located along the east side of Water Street (SR 4027) from Buffalo Road (SR 20) to East Lake Road (SR 5). Poles are generally located outside the road right-of-way. Other utilities may attach to the First Energy poles, additional coordination may be required if pole locations are impacted during future study or design phases.

Street light poles are located along the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) from Pearl Street to East Lake Road (SR 5) along the Wabtec property.

Erie Water Works has an existing water line along Water Street (SR 4027) on the west side of the road from North Street to Pearl Street. A water line crosses Water Street (SR 4027) approximately 25' south of East Lake Road (SR 5).

National Fuel Gas (NFG) has an existing line that travels 271-feet along the west side of Water Street from North Street towards Pearl Street. Additional NFG lines are located along the east side of Water Street (SR 4027) from Buffalo Road (SR 20) toward the Bell Street Pedestrian Bridge. The line branches, with a line crossing Fourmile Creek attached to the closed pedestrian bridge at Bell Street. The other branch continues north for 495-feet and crosses Water Street (SR 4027) from east to west to the Wabtec property on the west side of Water Street (SR 4027).

Wesleyville owns a sanitary sewer that travels through Lawrence Park Township along the east side of Water Street (SR 4027) from Buffalo Road (SR 20) to East Lake Road (SR 5) where it connects to a sewer main. The sewer is generally located outside the right-of-way but does enter the right-of-way as it nears East Lake Road (SR 5).

Additional assessment of potential impacts will depend on a selected alternative alignment during future study or design phases.

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRAIL ROUTES

The study team developed three (3) alternatives for discussion and consideration by stakeholders and the public.

1. **West Side Trail** - a trail along the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) following the existing sidewalk or replacement trail/sidewalk, from Buffalo Road (SR 20) to Main Street (SR 4032), and construction of new trail/sidewalk north of Main Street (SR 4032) to East Lake Road (SR 5);
2. **East Side Trail** - a trail along the east side of Water Street (SR 4027), incorporating an offset and buffer strip between the road and trail; and
3. **Greenway Trail** - a trail along the top of the west bank of Fourmile Creek.

All trail alternatives considered the use of an 8-foot wide trail, which is the suggested minimum width necessary for a shared use facility accommodating both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Construction materials considered for the trail were bituminous pavement and concrete pavement.

The three (3) alternatives are presented in more detail below. Comments and suggestions from stakeholders and the public comments are included for each alternative, from the study outreach efforts.

Alternative sketch plans are included in **Appendix A**.

West Side Trail Alternative

Beginning on the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) at Buffalo Road (SR 20), a trail or sidewalk alternative would match the existing sidewalk width of approximately 6-feet from the vacant gas station north to North Street. The condition of the existing sidewalk varies and for the purposes of this study and cost estimates, new concrete sidewalks or bituminous pavement were considered.

Existing signposts, poles, and fire hydrants could be avoided or relocated to accommodate a wider 8-foot width without acquiring additional right-of-way, or the southbound right turn lane on Water Street (SR 4027) could be adjusted to allow for widening of the trail.

From North Street to Pearl Avenue, widening to an 8-foot trail or sidewalk could be accommodated within the existing right-of-way. Adjustments and relocations of signs and other obstructions would be required to accommodate the wider path.

Continuing north from Pearl Avenue, this trail alternative would follow the alignment of the existing sidewalk from Pearl Avenue to Main Street (SR 4032) and the Wabtec entrance driveway. This section of the alternative passes under three railroad bridges. As noted in the existing conditions section of this report, the existing right-of-way width from Buffalo Road (SR 20) to the existing railroad bridges is 60-feet and from the railroad bridges north to East Lake Road (SR 5), the right-of-way width is 50-feet.

The trail alternative could be constructed following the alignment of the existing sidewalk under the bridges and continuing north to Main Street (SR 4032). Although the right-of-way width can accommodate the trail, coordination with the railroads will be necessary during preliminary and final design and through construction, as the trail would pass beneath the railroads.

From approximately 150-feet north of the railroad bridges, the existing sidewalk alignment shifts west and straddles the existing right-of-way line. The proposed alternative would follow the existing alignment, with the west side of the trail abutting the Wabtec fence line. Generally, widening the trail to 8-feet can be accomplished, but the trail would require narrowing at select locations to avoid existing utility and light poles along the roadway shoulder. The trail could be reduced in width to avoid impacts and return to full 8-foot width, or alternatively, relocating poles could provide space for a continuous 8-foot wide trail.

For the alternative on the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) to connect to a Bell Street pedestrian bridge, a new mid-block crossing of the road would be required, as no existing street intersection, crosswalk, or signal exists. During a stakeholder meeting, the safety implications, and challenges of such a crossing were discussed. Generally, it was felt that pedestrians would be safer crossing the road at a signalized intersection rather than a mid-block crossing. The location of the existing, closed Bell Street pedestrian bridge is approximately 180-feet north of the railroad bridges and on the outside of a horizontal curve. Municipal government stakeholders from Lawrence Park and Wesleyville, as well as PennDOT District 1 staff, acknowledged that a mid-block crossing would not be preferred.

From Main Street (SR 4032) north to East Lake Road (SR 5) a new trail or sidewalk would be required, as there is no existing sidewalk in this area. The existing right-of-way line and Wabtec fence line are approximately the same for this stretch of the corridor. The existing shoulder area between the edge of pavement and Wabtec fence could accommodate an 8-foot wide trail; however, existing utility and light poles and storm drainage structures would need to be relocated or adjusted. One option would be to taper the trail width at the existing poles to avoid potential conflicts.

Like the connection to the Bell Street pedestrian bridge location, access from the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) to the Napier/Curtis Park pedestrian bridge location would require a mid-block crossing. The crossing would be located halfway between Main Street (SR 4032) and East Lake Road (SR 5), which are separated by approximately 1/3-mile.

The northern intersection of the trail alternative at East Lake Road (SR 5) may require a small impact to the Wabtec property to install curb ramps and pedestrian signals.

Potential Impacts and Challenges:

- Safety concerns with mid-block crossings for access from the west side of Water Street (SR 4027) to Bell Street and Napier/Curtis Park pedestrian bridge locations.
- Multiple utility poles adjacent to existing sidewalk.
- Railroad coordination for passing underneath bridges.
- Existing Wabtec fence limits widening to the west.
- Existing drainage structures and swale along shoulder area north of Main Street (SR 4032)

East Side Trail Alternative

The second trail alternative begins on the east side of Water Street at Buffalo Road where the existing sidewalk along the Water Street frontage of the Dollar Tree store would be used for a trail. At the end of the existing sidewalk, a new sidewalk or trail would begin. There are utility pole conflicts immediately north of the existing sidewalk ending. Pole impacts and relocation may be necessary. A shift of the trail

alignment or narrowing of the trail alternative to avoid impacts could be investigated during a future preliminary engineering phase.

The Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC) owns the property east of Water Street along Fourmile Creek, north of the Dollar Tree property and extending 860 feet to the Norfolk Southern railroad bridge. LERC owns approximately 2.8 acres adjacent to Fourmile Creek with access easements granted to PA Fish and Boat Commission for fishing access to the creek. The East Side Trail alternative is envisioned to maintain a 5-foot offset from the edge of pavement of Water Street through this section.

During the stakeholder discussion, Dave Skellie, President of the Board of LERC, welcomed the addition of sidewalk or a trail along LERC property on Water Street, noting it would be an improvement. He also suggested lighting and planting of additional native tree species in the area.

Additionally, Mr. Skellie noted that the LERC Board has discussed development of a walking path along the top of the bank of Fourmile Creek. If a walking path is constructed, a future connection to a trail alternative could be made.

Mr. Skellie requested that any curbs, trail, or paths constructed allow for a driveway to access their property, with a drive location to be determined during future design phases. If a parking lot was also developed in this area, it could function as a trailhead to access the East Side or Greenway Trail alternatives discussed in this study, as well as to access the LERC path or access to fishing at Fourmile Creek.

Continuing north from the LERC property, the road right-of-way width narrows from 60 feet to 50 feet and the East Side trail alternative would pass beneath three railroad bridges that pass above Water Street SR (4027). From south to north the bridges are Norfolk Southern Railroad, CSX Transportation, and East Erie Commercial Railroad. The piers for all three bridges generally sit adjacent to the edge of pavement on the east side of Water Street (SR 4027), so the trail alignment would move farther east and away from the edge of pavement, outside the road right-of-way. Between the CSX and East Erie Commercial Railroad bridges, there is a wide dirt/gravel area used for parking, so any trail alternative through this area would need to consider restricting or eliminating parking in the area to avoid conflicts with trail users.

North of the railroad bridges is access to the Bell Street pedestrian bridge where the existing Lawrence Park Township right-of-way from Bell Street extends across Fourmile Creek and meets the Water Street (SR 4027) right-of-way.

An alternative pedestrian bridge location was suggested at Field Street, located about 330 feet north of the existing, closed Bell Street pedestrian bridge. Lawrence Park Township officials shared that Twinbrook Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center, which is located on the east side of Fourmile Creek between Bell Street and Field Street, had requested the use of Field Street for a pedestrian bridge due to concerns with trespassing and vandalism in the parking lot near the former Bell Street pedestrian bridge. During the January 25, 2024 stakeholder meeting, officials from both municipalities, i.e. Lawrence Park and Wesleyville, favored maintaining the pedestrian bridge crossing at the Bell Street location.

As the alignment of the East Side Trail Alternative moves north, there is an existing guiderail approximately 2 to 3 feet from the edge of pavement of Water Street (SR 4027) that acts as a barrier between the road and Wabtec's property. It is not clear whether the guiderail is in place as a safety

barrier, or simply to restrict or limit ingress/egress points from the property, which appears to have been previously used for overflow parking or storage but does not appear to be used currently. It may be possible to remove or relocate the guiderail farther from the road to provide an acceptable offset width from the roadway and trail from the Bell Street pedestrian bridge location to the intersection with Main Street (SR 4032), which is approximately 1,500 feet north. Moving the guiderail, the alternative would maintain a 5-foot offset from the edge of pavement of Water Street to the trail.

The trail alternative would follow a similar approach north of Main Street for approximately 700 feet. This would again require removal or relocation of the guiderail to create sufficient space for a 5-foot offset from the edge of pavement of Water Street to the edge of an 8-foot wide trail.

After 700 feet, the area adjacent to the road is generally clear to a line of utility poles, approximately 40 feet from the edge of pavement. There is sufficient space for an 8-foot wide trail. There is also access to Emerson Park and the pedestrian bridge across Fourmile Creek to Napier/Curtis Park at this location.

The distance from the end of the guiderail adjacent to the Wabtec property to East Lake Road (SR 5) is approximately 1,060 feet. There are several signs and other minor obstructions that could possibly be avoided or relocated to allow for trail construction to existing sidewalks at East Lake Road (SR 5).

Potential Impacts and Challenges:

- Existing utility poles along shoulder area.
- Limited right-of-way under railroad bridges.
- Railroad coordination.
- Existing guiderail removal or relocation along Wabtec overflow parking and storage area to allow sufficient width for trail installation.

Greenway Trail Alternative

The Greenway Trail Alternative follows a similar alignment to the East Side Trail from Buffalo Road to the Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC) property. At the LERC property, there is space for the trail to separate more from Water Street (SR 4027) and follow closer to the top of bank of Fourmile Creek, or along the end of the trees atop the bank.

As the alternative approaches the railroad bridges, the alignment would follow the East Side Trail Alternative beneath the bridges and to the access point of the Bell Street pedestrian bridge. North of the Bell Street pedestrian bridge, the Greenway Trail begins to diverge from the East Side Trail alignment toward the tree line along Fourmile Creek.

As the alternative enters the Wabtec parking and storage area, a landscaped mound could be constructed to provide screening from Water Street (SR 4027) and create a more natural setting with the landscaping on the west side of the trail and the trees and Fourmile Creek along the east side of the trail.

The Greenway Trail Alternative intersects Main Street (SR 4032) approximately 150 feet east of the existing crosswalk at Water Street (SR 4027). To eliminate a mid-block trail crossing of Main Street (SR 4032) and provide a safer crossing with greater visibility, the trail would proceed along Main Street and connect to the existing crosswalk location at Water Street before continuing north along Fourmile Creek.

On the north side of Main Street (SR 4032) the Greenway Trail Alternative continues through the Wabtec overflow parking and storage areas along Fourmile Creek until intersecting with Emerson Park and accessing the Napier/Curtis Park pedestrian bridge.

The alignment through Emerson Park would follow the tree line along Fourmile Creek. Emerson Park has several athletic fields, baseball and/or softball, and soccer, and is generally fenced. A trail alternative may impact the fencing and/or fields, and it may be required to relocate the fence or adjust the field locations to accommodate such a trail alignment.

Alternatively, to avoid impacts to the park, the trail could connect to the East Side Trail alignment south of Emerson Park adjacent to Water Street (SR 4027). Additionally, a separate alignment along the west side of the existing fence at Emerson Park could also be considered to provide additional offset from the roadway and avoid impacts to the park.

North of Emerson Park, the Greenway Trail alignment would converge with the East Side alignment and follow the same route to the intersection of Water Street (SR 4027) and East Lake Road (SR 5).

Potential Impacts and Challenges:

- Property impacts at Wabtec.
 - Need for easements or acquisition of property for trail construction. Wabtec has preliminarily indicated that easements are preferred so that property can be retained.
 - Existing guiderail removal or relocation along Wabtec overflow parking and storage area to allow sufficient width for trail installation.
- Existing utility poles along shoulder area.
- Limited right-of-way under railroad bridges.
 - Railroad coordination.
- Potential impacts to Emerson Park ballfields, fencing, other facilities.
- Proximity to Fourmile Creek and flood hazard zones.

Bell Street Pedestrian Bridge

With the safety of pedestrians and school students being a paramount concern of both Lawrence Park and Wesleyville, as well as PennDOT and the public, reestablishing a viable bridge crossing of Fourmile Creek is a top priority for both municipalities. The existing bridge is closed and, based on the inspection report prepared under this study, it is not recommended to repair the existing structure based upon both its existing condition and economical aspects of associated repair costs. A replacement bridge structure is recommended.

An alternative location for a new pedestrian crossing of Fourmile Creek is Field Street. As noted above in the summary of the January 25, 2024 stakeholder meeting, previous consideration had been given to a new bridge location at Field Street, partly due to concerns from Twinbrook Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center regarding vandalism and disturbance of residents by students using the Bell Street bridge. The preference during the stakeholder meeting was to maintain the current Bell Street location. No additional feedback from Twinbrook has been received despite efforts to contact them during the Community Context Audit and stakeholder meeting.

There is an existing National Fuel Gas (NFG) gas line currently attached to the existing bridge. NFG has been involved with previous discussions with Lawrence Park Township regarding efforts to replace the existing bridge. While NFG was interested in attaching to a replacement bridge, they did not offer to participate financially in its replacement. NFG should be coordinated with in future design and development efforts to address any impacts to their gas line.

Napier/Curtis Park Pedestrian Bridge

While the bridge deck and superstructure are generally in fair condition, the condition of the Napier/Curtis Park Pedestrian Bridge is serious due to severe undermining of the east abutment. There are several priority repairs and maintenance items recommended in the bridge inspection report prepared under this study. However, based on the estimated age of the bridge, it is at the end of its original design service life and does warrant replacement. Lawrence Park Township closed the bridge in January 2024.

Additional Trail Components for Consideration

The inclusion of lighting along any of the trail alternatives should be considered. Stakeholders expressed concerns about safety along the trail and suggested the installation of lighting and emergency callboxes like those often seen on college campuses. Lighting could be low to ground with cut-offs to reduce light pollution while illuminating the trail. Further investigation and photometric design would be required during future engineering and design stages to determine light spacing, fixture types/styles, and power sources.

Dave Skellie from the Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC), Wesleyville Mayor Paul Johnson, and Wesleyville Borough Manager Marcus Jacobs discussed the addition of a trail accessing and along Fourmile Creek. While the study area included the Water Street (SR 4027) corridor, it did not include access to Fourmile Creek. If LERC and Wesleyville were to progress a trail to access Fourmile Creek from the LERC property along Water Street, future connections to one of this study's trail alternatives could be considered.

Mr. Skellie also noted that landscape mounds and plantings should include native species of plants, shrubs, and trees.

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES COST RANGES

The alternatives analysis considered three (3) alternatives: a West Side Trail, an East Side Trail, and a Greenway Trail. Alternative sketch plans and typical sections are included in **Appendix A**.

Within each of those alternatives, estimated costs were developed for both bituminous and concrete pavement trail options. A matrix of options and estimated costs is included in **Appendix B**.

- The range of costs for the West Side Trail Alternative is \$1.4 to \$2.3 million.
- The range of costs for the East Side Trail Alternative is \$1.7 to \$2.5 million.
- The range of costs for the Greenway Trail Alternative is \$1.5 to \$2.4 million.

Pedestrian bridge cost options were based upon new bridge construction at Bell Street or Field Street, and new bridge construction at Napier/Curtis Park.

- The estimated cost for a new pedestrian bridge at Bell Street is \$785,000.
 - Alternatively, the estimated cost for a new pedestrian bridge at Field Street is \$942,000.
- The estimated cost for a new pedestrian bridge at Napier/Curtis Park is \$630,000.
 - An alternative cost to repair and rehabilitate is \$549,500, although due to the age and condition of the existing structure, this option is not recommended.

Costs for required right-of-way and/or easements were not included in the cost estimates. Initial discussions with Wabtec indicated that they would likely consider and prefer easements for trail construction and maintenance allowing them to retain ownership of the property through which any of the trail alternatives would pass. Sketch plans showing trail alternatives, potential property impacts, and right-of-way needs are included in **Appendix E**.

APPENDIX A
ALTERNATIVE SKETCH PLANS

APPENDIX B
ALTERNATIVES MATRIX

APPENDIX C

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH:

COMMUNITY CONTEXT ASSESSMENTS,

VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES, AND

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

COMMUNITY CONTEXT ASSESSMENTS

VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

APPENDIX D
ENVIRONMENTAL
AND
CULTURAL RESOURCES MEMORANDUM

APPENDIX E
POTENTIAL PROPERTY IMPACTS
AND RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS

APPENDIX F
BRIDGE INSPECTION REPORTS:
BELL STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
AND
NAPIER/CURTIS PARK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

BELL STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

NAPIER/CURTIS PARK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE