



WILMAPCO

UNION STREET

April 2022

Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study

DRAFT Report

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Acknowledgments

The study team included a project management committee and a project advisory committee. The project management committee was responsible for project decision making. The advisory committee were crucial in helping to steering the project and advise throughout the process but were not responsible for decision-making.

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Jim Ursomarso & Francesco Vattilana -
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Dino Thompson - Dino's Ice Cream
Frank Pagliaro - Frank's Wines

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Rep. Sherry Dorsey Walker
Rep. Gerald Brady
Rep. Charles M. "Bud" Freel
Rep. John Mitchell
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_INTERFACE STUDIO

Project Partners



UNION STREET

Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study

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Project Overview

Background

Located on the west side of Wilmington, Union Street serves as an important transportation corridor, serving the local residential and business community while facilitating accessibility and connectivity to the surrounding region. Union Street is a one-way, southbound street that is paired with Lincoln Street (one-way, northbound) and serves as a main thoroughfare for many surrounding neighborhoods as well as a commercial corridor that serves the area at large as a “main street.” More information about the existing conditions of the project area is in Appendix A: Existing Conditions. Union Street is a place where the entrepreneurial spirit of Wilmington can be seen, and the culture of the community can be felt. The diversity of multicultural businesses and community members that have made this street their home, their place of business, their place to connect with neighbors is obvious and should be celebrated and enhanced to help this main street to flourish.

The *Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study* builds on previous efforts to identify a preferred configuration that is optimal to support future land use and transportation needs as a “Main Street Corridor” in the City of Wilmington and better support the multimodal mobility and connectivity needs of the local business community and residents. This study is the result of a community driven design process that was supported and influenced by dedicated community members, business owners, community advocates, elected officials, and state and local government representatives.

This study sets the stage for future design phases to transform Union Street into a streetscape that will better function as a Main Street corridor and improve multimodal mobility and connectivity by rebalancing the street to better support multiple modes of transportation, reduce speeding, increase safety, and transform Union Street into an attractive, inviting, people-oriented Great Street. This study included completion of a PEL Questionnaire to help progress the recommendations of this study into the NEPA process. The PEL Questionnaire is located in Appendix B: PEL Questionnaire.

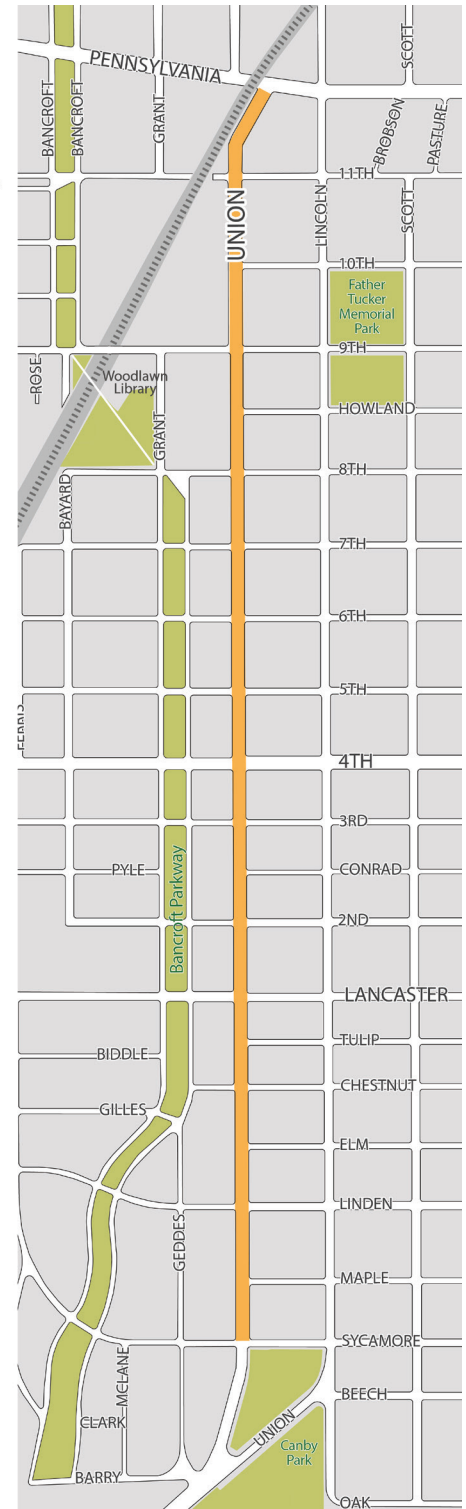
Project Limits

The Union Street study area extends along the public rights-of-way for Union Street stretching between Pennsylvania Avenue and Sycamore Street, approximately one mile. The study also focuses on multimodal connections to intersecting streets.

STUDY AREA

- UNION ST STUDY AREA
- RAIL
- OPEN SPACE

0 0.1 0.2 MILES



Project Purpose and Need

Purpose: The purpose of the project is to transform Union Street into a Main Street corridor that supports the multimodal mobility and connectivity needs of the local business community and of the residents of the Flats, Little Italy, Union Park Gardens, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Need: Transportation and streetscape improvements are needed along Union Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Sycamore Street to (a) better function as a Main Street corridor, as a place for residents and neighbors to shop, dine, work, recreate, socialize, and play, while balancing moving cars and (b) improve multimodal mobility and connectivity.

Better Function as a Main Street Corridor: The Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan (2019) designated Union Street as a “Main Street corridor”: “Main Street corridors are where Wilmington residents’ shop, dine, and work. These streets are core to the City’s economic well-being and local business community. Wilmington’s main streets balance their role of moving cars with their function as places for neighbors to recreate, socialize, and play. In addition to people driving, main streets must be welcoming for people walking and biking and need to ensure access for buses and delivery vehicles.”

Union Street needs to function as a place for residents and neighbors to shop, dine, work, recreate, socialize, and play, while balancing moving cars. There is not adequate public space for people to gather, recreate, socialize, or play. Union Street is not well shared, creating an uninviting and uncomfortable environment for people in the warmer seasons. Lighting on Union Street is not consistently installed along the corridor or at intersections, which creates an uncomfortable pedestrian environment during nighttime and low-light conditions.

Multimodal Mobility and Connectivity: The existing roadway configuration creates conflicts between different types of users along the corridor. This has resulted in mobility and connectivity challenges that impede people and goods moving through the corridor, which has impacted residents, business owners, and commuters along Union Street.

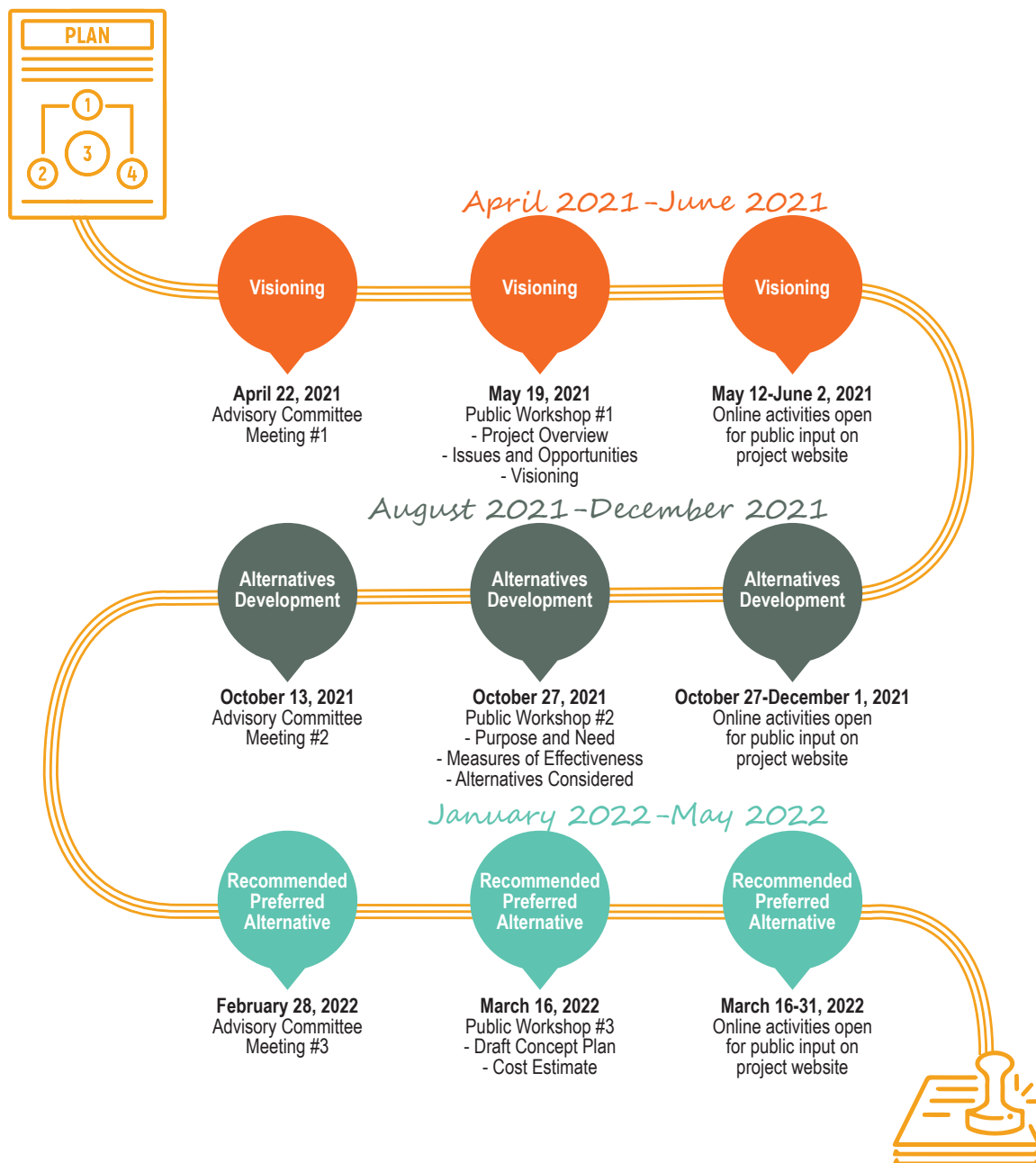
The full purpose and need statement is in Appendix C: Purpose and Need Statement.



The Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study was a 1-year effort, started in April 2021. During this period, the project team coordinated with an advisory committee to help direct the project and advise the project team throughout the planning process. The advisory committee were crucial in helping to steering the project and advise throughout the process but were not responsible for decision-making.

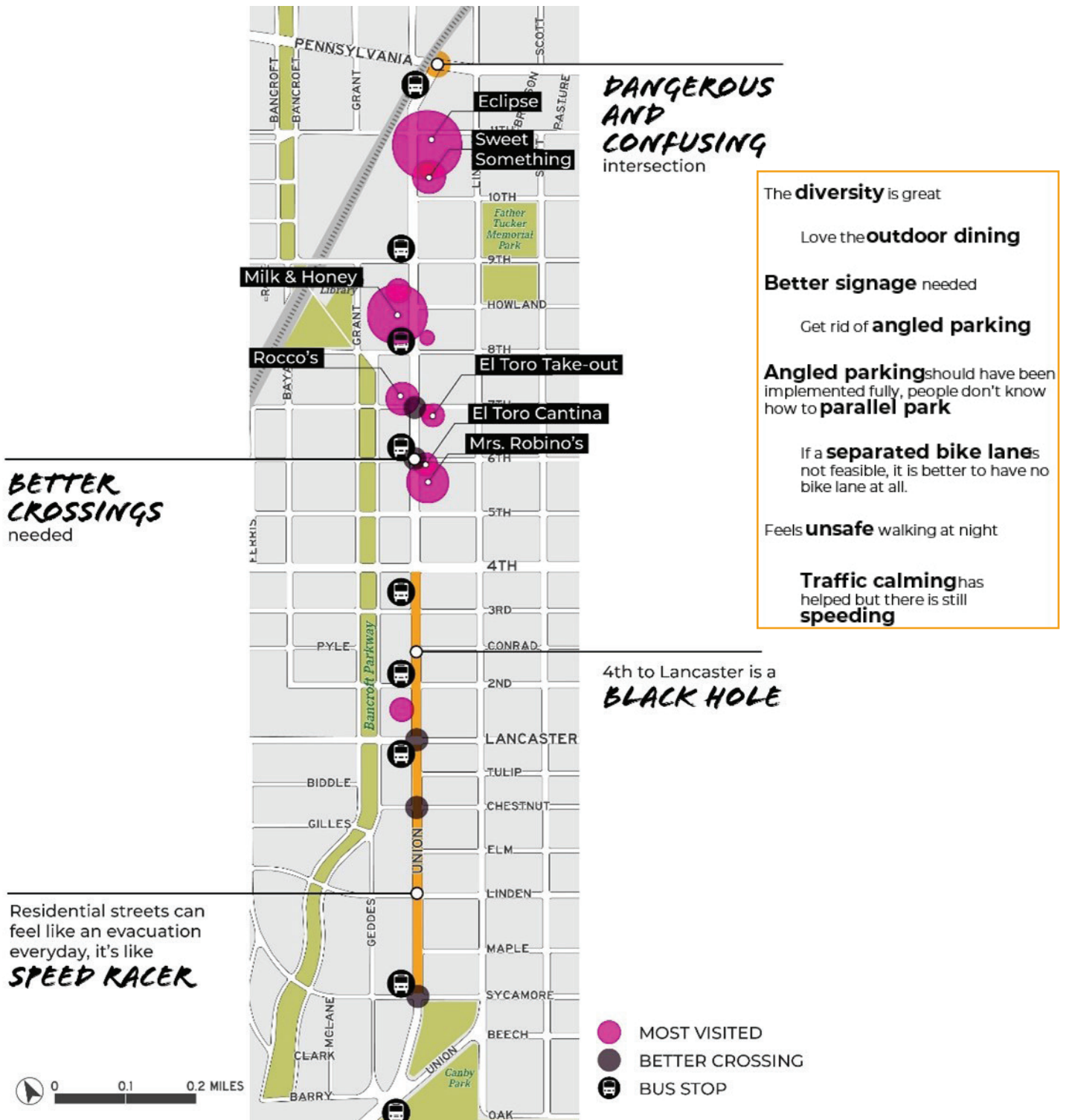
There were three virtual public workshops held for this project to get more community members and business owners involved in the planning process. A project website (<http://www.wilmapco.org/unionstreet/>) was created at the start of the project and updated throughout the project. The website housed online engagement activities following public meetings to expand outreach to reach more people.

More information about project outreach is in Appendix D: Outreach Summary.



What We Heard

Tell us what you think about Union Street currently?



Tell us what Union Street should be like in the future.

61

responses

What do you see as the most important priorities for the redesign of Union Street? [select three]



Other:

Improve parking: no angled parking, build parking garage
Traffic safety: enforcement, signage, manage deliveries

25

responses

What street components are most important and least important for Union Street? [select three]



Wish list for change:

- Prioritize pedestrians: art, shade trees, crosswalks, wide sidewalks, lighting
- Slower traffic for the whole corridor
- Space for outdoor dining
- Consistent aesthetics along commercial corridor including businesses around Lancaster Avenue
- Convenient and comfortable transit
- Safe, protected bike lane(s)
- Managed parking: general discontentment with back-in angled parking though sentiment is mixed, other ideas include metered or garage parking
- Managed delivery with loading zones/times

Existing Streetscape

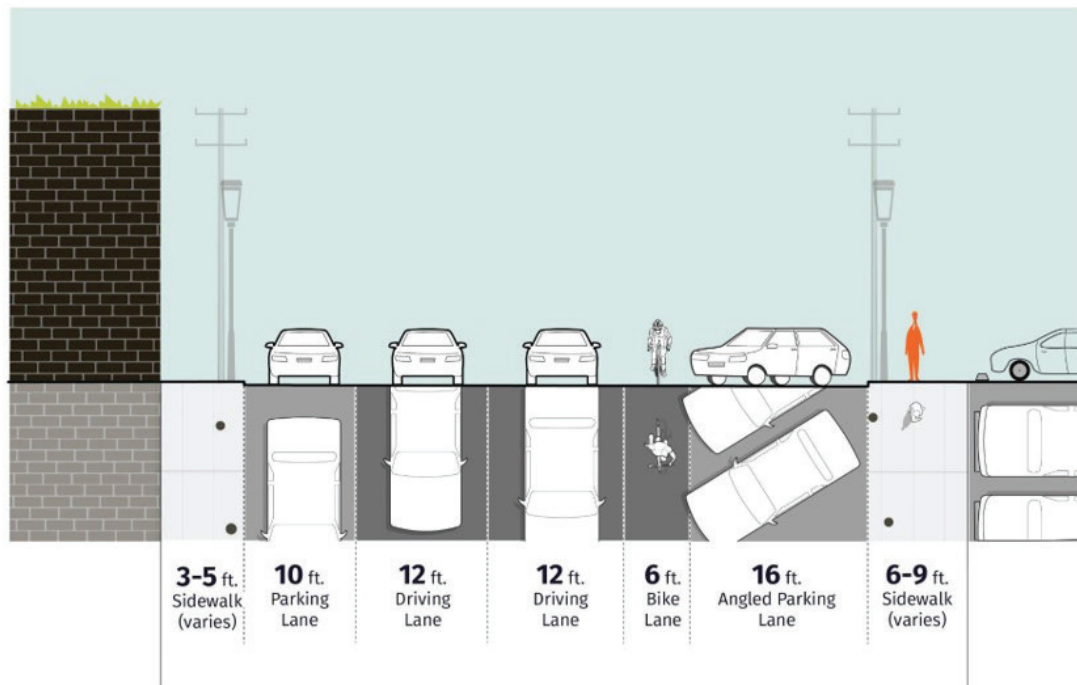
Union Street is a one-way southbound urban mixed-use street with two twelve-foot travel lanes, a one-way southbound six-foot bicycle lane, and on-street parking lanes on both sides of the street. The on-street parking is a mix of parallel and back-in angle parking along the corridor. Union Street functions as a one-way paired street with Lincoln Street, a northbound one-way street to the east. These streets serve as neighborhood thoroughfares.

Union Street is classified as a principal arterial with an annual average daily traffic (AADT) count of 20,000 and designated as an emergency evacuation route. Union Street has a level 3 bicycle level of traffic stress (LTS 3). According to DelDOT's LTS system, a classification of LTS 3 is considered tolerable by "enthusiastic and confident bicyclists."

The public right-of-way along this section of Union Street is approximately 80' wide in total, with approximately 55' of paved surface within the roadway from curb to curb. There are sidewalks along each side of the street varying in width from 3 to 9 feet. Union Street is served by DART Bus Route 6, with bus stops located at Pennsylvania Avenue, 9th Street, 8th Street, 6th Street, 4th Street, 2nd Street, Lancaster Avenue, and Sycamore Street. There is a higher transit ridership focused within the central area of the corridor which correlates to the area comprised of mostly commercial and mixed-use development. The northern area of the corridor has a mixture of residential, mixed use, and regional commercial land uses, whereas residential land uses comprise most of the southern area.

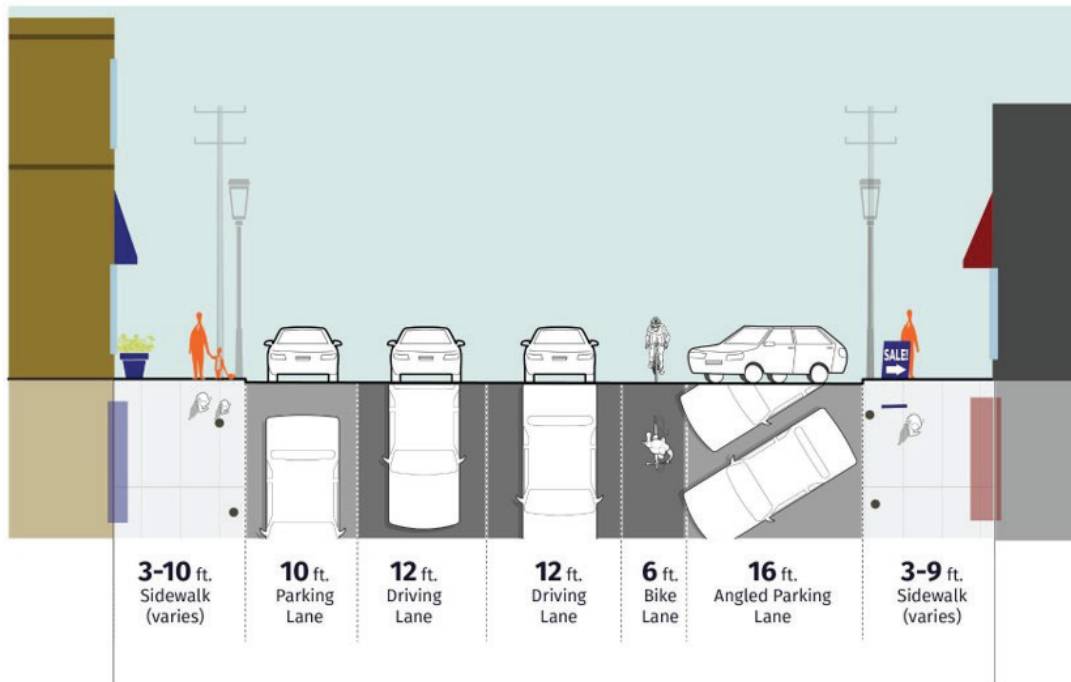
Typical Existing Street Scape Cross-Sections

Union Street - Auto-Oriented Commercial (Pennsylvania Avenue - 11th Street) Existing



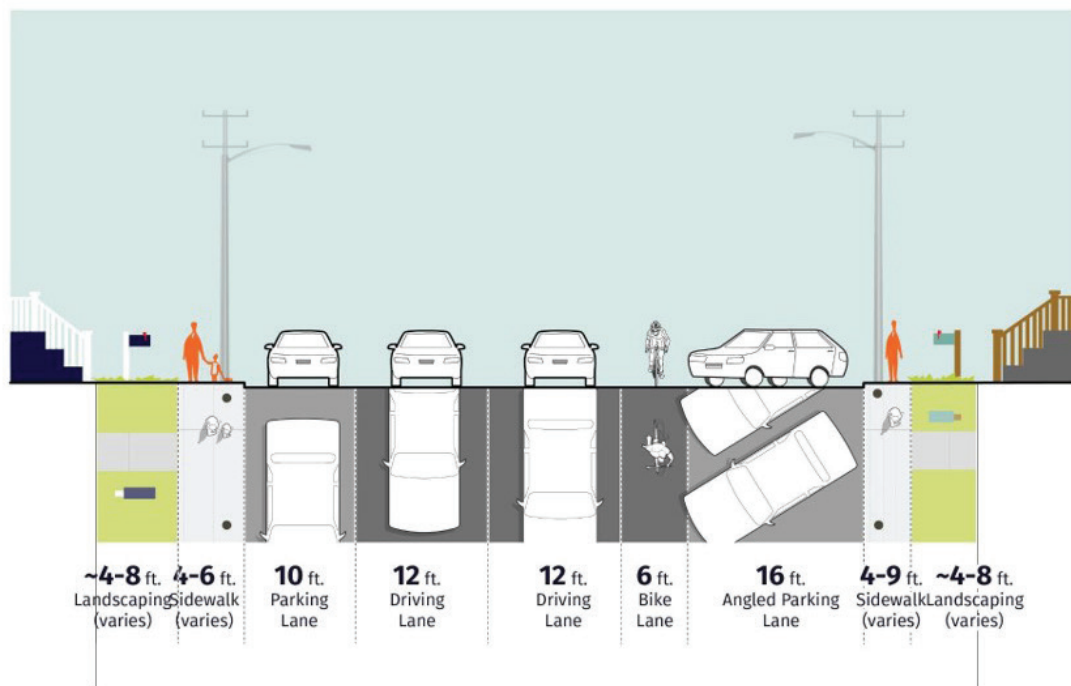
Union Street - Pedestrian-Oriented Mixed Use (11th Street - 7th Street)

Existing



Union Street - Landscaped Residential (Lancaster Avenue - Sycamore Street)

Existing



Union Street Photos



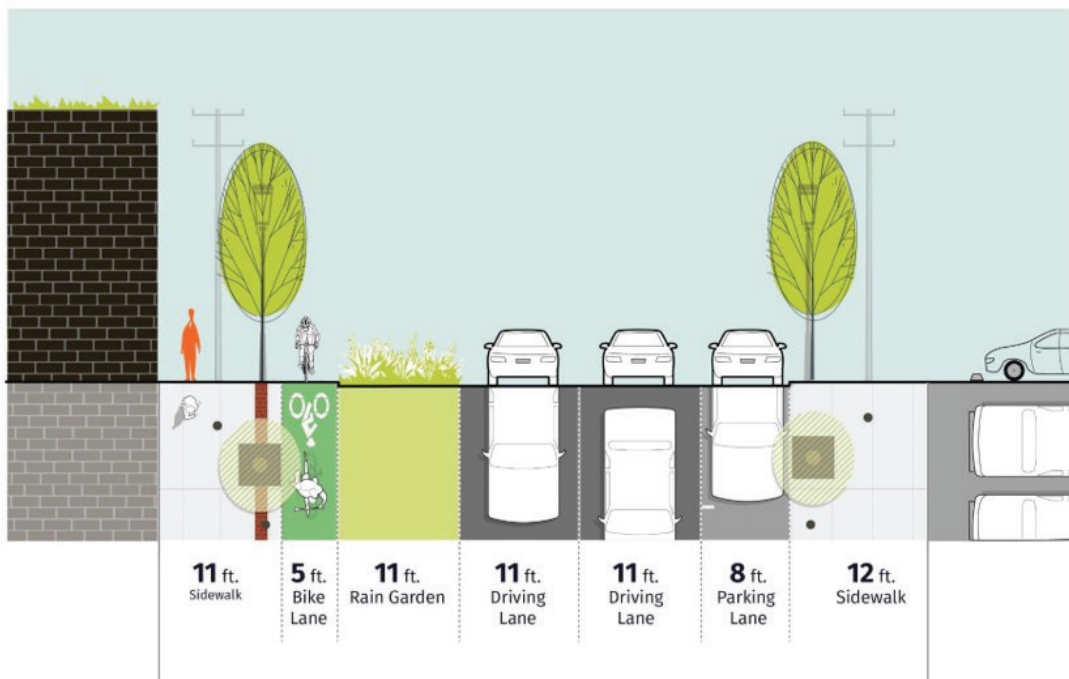
Alternatives Considered

There were numerous alternatives considered as part of this study. The alternatives development and evaluation process consisted of an iterative three-tiered screening process to rank how well the various alternatives met the identified purpose and need of the project. The evaluation process systematically identified the alternatives' ability to meet the project purpose and need and consider the potential for impacts and benefits of the various alternatives. Please see Appendix E: Range of Alternatives and Alternatives Screening Process for more information on the alternatives considered.

Preferred Recommended Alternative

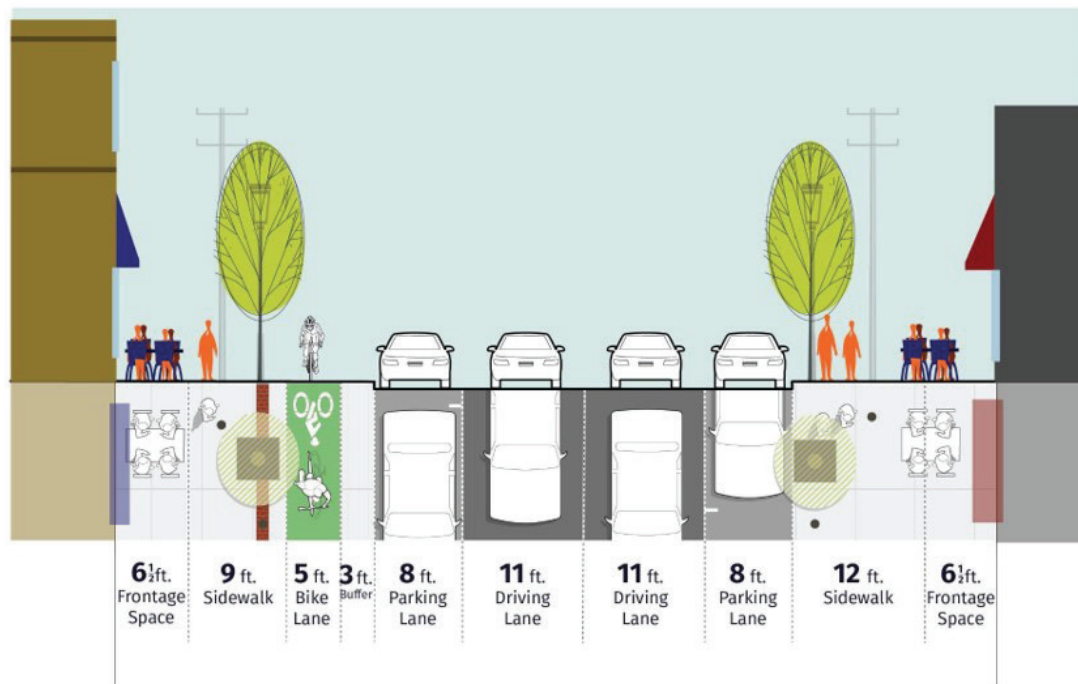
Ultimately, the preferred recommended alternative resulting from this study was Alternative B: Parallel Parking with Southbound Separated Bike Lane with Alternative A: Parallel Parking with Separated Southbound Bike Lane (Utilities Underground) as a potential secondary option if undergrounding utilities is determined to be a critical community priority during the future project development phase. The preferred recommended alternative includes expanded sidewalks along each side of the corridor for pedestrian travel as well as provide space within the streetscape for businesses to advertise and to set up outdoor dining and seating. The alternative also includes a southbound protect bike lane, floating bus islands, enhanced bus stops, new pedestrian crossings, bio-filtration areas to better manage storm water runoff, street trees to add more shade to the corridor, space for bike parking, new street lighting, and approximately 280 on-street parallel parking spaces. Refer to Appendix F: Recommended Preferred Alternative to review the concept plan and typical sections of this recommended preferred alternative. Alternative A is estimated to cost between \$15 - \$18 million. Refer to Appendix G: Cost Estimate to review the estimated construction cost to build the recommended preferred alternative.

Union Street - Auto-Oriented Commercial (Pennsylvania Avenue - 11th Street) Proposed Recommended Alternative



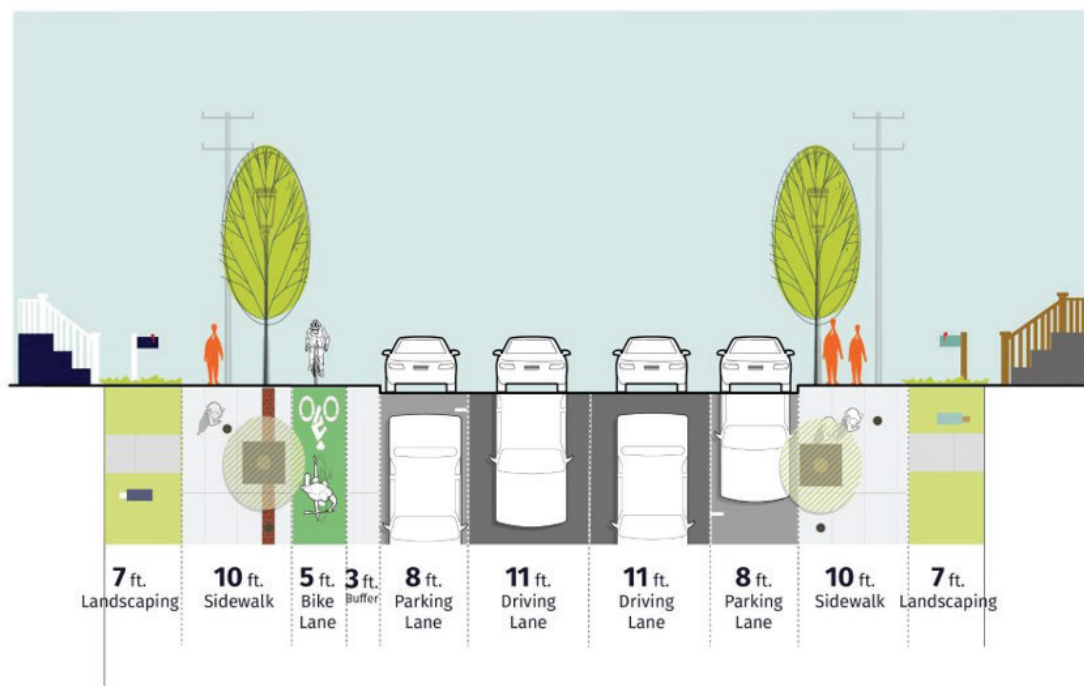
Union Street - Pedestrian-Oriented Mixed Use (11th Street - 7th Street)

Proposed Recommended Alternative



Union Street - Landscaped Residential (Lancaster Avenue - Sycamore Street)

Proposed Recommended Alternative



Next Steps

1. **Project Endorsed by Council and Added to the RTP** - After this study report has been endorsed by the WILMAPCO TAC, it will then be endorsed by the WILMAPCO Council and then added to the WILMAPCO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).
2. **Project to be Added to the CTP** - This project will need to be added to the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) six-year Capital Transportation Program (CTP) to identify this project as an anticipated capital investment.
3. **Identify Funding Source** - Once the project is included in the CTP, a funding source for the environmental review, final design and construction of the project will need to be identified.
4. **Environmental Review** - This project will need to go through an environmental review process to determine if this project qualifies as a categorical exclusion or if it will need to go through a more detailed environmental review.
5. **Final Design and Construction** - After steps 1 - 4 have been completed, this project will move into final design and construction. During that phase the following action items are recommended.

Actions that should be taken during final design and construction:

- **Utilities** – The existing overhead utilities along the project corridor should be further investigated to explore opportunities to underground utilities during future design development phase. As part of this utility investigation, research should be completed to understand the existing utility capacity along the corridor, particularly to ensure that the corridor is able to support any future electric vehicle charging infrastructure needs, particularly in the residential areas of the project where residents depend on on-street parking.
- **Access Management** – The existing commercial driveways along the corridor should be further examined for access consolidation and width reduction to decrease the number and widths of driveways along Union Street. Consolidating and reducing the widths of driveways will decrease pedestrian exposure to turning vehicles along the corridor as well as better organize turning vehicle movements at driveways. There should also be an investigation of properties that are using existing sidewalks for parking to examine right-of-way encroachment and to better define parking areas and sidewalks. Any access modifications proposed in the recommended alternative proposed in this PEL study should be thoroughly vetted during future design development phase and discussed with affected property owners.
- **Stormwater Management** – The stormwater capacity and treatment system along the project corridor should be further investigated to explore opportunities to reduce nuisance flooding and improve stormwater runoff treatment.
- **Traffic Study** – Traffic study for new traffic signals and to further study the intersection modifications proposed within this study.
- **Stakeholder Coordination** – The project management committee and advisory committee should continue in their respective roles to help guide future design development phases and ensure that the stakeholders and community members continue to guide and inform this project. The contact information for members of the project management committee and advisory committee will be available to the future project development team via a request to WILMAPCO.
- **Public Involvement** – Additional public involvement will be required as the project progresses.