

A photograph of a town street. On the left is a brick building with a sidewalk and benches. A tree with a trash can is in the foreground. The street has a white SUV and a red pickup truck. The sky is blue with clouds.

Kalkaska Safety & Mobility Plan

Spring 2025



BREAKFAST + LUNCH
COFFEE + ESPRESSO

EXIT

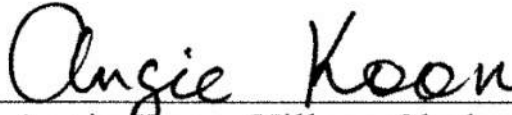
VILLAGE OF KALKASKA

MINUTES OF A REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 12, 2025 AT THE VILLAGE OFFICE, 200 HYDE STREET, KALKASKA, MICHIGAN 49646.

Consider Adoption of Kalkaska Safety and Mobility Plan – James Kilborn of Progressive Companies, the third-party consultant who assisted DDA with the plan, reviewed key improvements identified from public input sessions held. DDA Associate Director Gayenell Gentelia explained the plan reflects feasible options available and endorsable by MDOT; and any components implemented will be at the Village’s discretion.

Motion by Wiley, second by Bishop, to adopt the Kalkaska Safety and Mobility Plan. A roll call vote was then taken: Ayes – Trustees Bishop, Miller, Needham, Wiley and Yanz; Nays – None; Absent – President Sieting and Trustee Moses. Motion carried.

Recorded By:


Angie Koon, Village Clerk



 PROGRESSIVE
COMPANIES

Table of Contents

1	Introduction: Why Do We Need a Plan?	1
	

2	The Planning Process	4
	
	Pop-Up Events	4
	Community Open Houses	5
	Survey Responses	5
	Steering Committee	5
	Project Principles	6

3	What We Learned: Existing Conditions	7
	
	Roadway Characteristics	7
	Existing Network	14

4	Proposed Improvements	16
	
	Cedar Street	17
	Dresden Street Intersection	25
	Mile Road	28
	In-Town Non-Motorized Pathways	30
	Other Minor Improvements	31

5	Project Scoring and Implementation	32
	
	Project Scoring Criteria	32
	Potential Funding Sources	36

1

Introduction: Why Do We Need a Plan?

As County seat and the economic center of Kalkaska County, Cedar Street is not only the “Main Street” for the Village but for the entire County. Its historic downtown environment has struggled however, as boarded up windows and empty storefronts are a defining feature in this district. **What should be the bustling heart of the community is instead a largely empty environment of speeding cars and truck traffic passing through the district as quickly as possible.** Cedar Street’s design as a high-speed highway has divided the community and made walking, biking, and jogging unsafe for people of all ages. From school-age children trying to get to Chalker Park to senior citizens struggling to “shoot the gap” between traffic – Cedar Street poses hazards to Kalkaska resident’s health and quality of life while also making downtown an unpleasant environment. This Safety & Mobility Plan seeks to change that.

This Plan also recognizes improvement opportunities throughout the Village – all with the goal of making it easier to walk and bike safely throughout the community. While much of this Plan’s content is new, many of the key improvements have been discussed informally for months, years, and even decades in some instances. This Plan concentrates these projects “under one roof” and demonstrates how they align with not only the Village’s desire to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity but achieve MDOT’s long-range safety and quality of life goals. Improvements to Kalkaska’s non-motorized network also aligns with the Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity’s focus on creating vibrant small-town environments that bolster the State’s overall economy and desirability.



“Cedar Street’s design as a high-speed highway has divided the community and made walking, biking, and jogging unsafe for people of all ages.”



We Want Kalkaska to be a Safe and Walkable Community...

Many plans across a range of organizations and entities support providing more transportation choices in Kalkaska.

“Enhance Quality of life for all communities and users of the transportation network.” – Michigan Mobility 2045, Michigan Department of Transportation, 2025.

“Foster livable, healthy, and connected communities with convenient, multimodal access to jobs, services, social support, and activities regardless of age, income, race, or ability; provide strong intermodal connections; and engage in health-promoting projects and policies that support clean air.” – Michigan Mobility 2045, Michigan Department of Transportation, 2025.

“As rural communities work towards desirable place-based economic development, pedestrian and non-motorized infrastructure has become a top priority, particularly for those communities with high rates of traffic in or near their downtowns and commercial areas.” – Michigan’s Roadmap to Rural Prosperity, Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity, 2023.

“Work with MDOT to develop traffic calming measures in commercial areas on M-72 and US-131.” – Village of Kalkaska Master Plan, 2024.

“Provide amenities such as street lighting, landscaping, sidewalk, and walkway improvements and other amenities to foster a more pleasing environment.” – Village of Kalkaska Downtown Development Plan, 2024.

“Someone’s sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” – Warren Buffett

The Kalkaska Safety & Mobility Plan represents the Village’s future mobility vision and provides policy guidance to incrementally realize this vision over time. The Plan was developed in 2024 – 2025 and was guided by extensive community engagement through pop-up events, online and paper surveys, and community open houses. Regular feedback from the Steering Committee comprised of government agency representatives, local businessowners, and County and Village officials also shaped development of the Plan.

Members of the Steering Committee Included:

- Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority
- Downtown Businessowners
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- District Health Department #10
- Disability Network of Northern Michigan

Engagement Timeline



2 The Planning Process

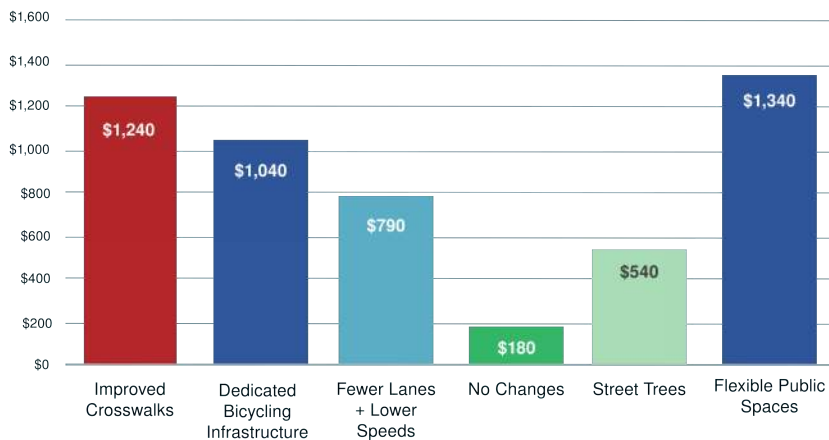
Through the year-long planning process, a multi-faceted engagement approach was used to gather feedback from key stakeholders, while community outreach events were conducted to raise awareness of the project and solicit feedback from the community at large.

Pop-Up Events

Pop-up engagement events were held to “go to the people” at Kalkaska events with lots of foot traffic to gather feedback from Kalkaska residents and ensure residents had an opportunity to participate. In total about 80 people participated via pop-up events.

Blazer Bash (August 22, 2024) – Held at Kalkaska Middle School, this event gathered feedback from over 30 people who shared their thoughts on downtown street improvements and identified areas for mobility improvements throughout the Village. Participants identified improving crosswalks and outdoor public spaces along Cedar Street as the most important changes for downtown improvements.

Pop-Up Activity: Participants were given \$50 in “Kalkaska Cash” and asked how they would improve Cedar Street, choosing from a number of street amenities.



Kalkaska Commission on Aging & Farmer’s Market (September 24, 2024) – Held at both the Kalkaska Commission on Aging as well as the Tuesday Farmer’s Market at Railroad Square. Like the previous pop-up event, participants identified improving crosswalks and outdoor public spaces along Cedar Street as the most important changes for downtown improvements.

Kalkaska Commission on Aging (September 27, 2024) – Held at a Friday pancake social at the Kalkaska Commission on Aging, participants at this pop-up event identified improved crosswalks and dedicated bicycle infrastructure as the most important changes for downtown improvements.



Community Events

Two separate community open houses were held during the project. The first to gather ideas and understand challenges, and the second to review proposed solutions and receive feedback on whether those solutions met the needs of the community. Roughly 60 people participated in community open houses.

Community Open House #1 (October 20, 2024) – Held at the Railroad Square Pavilion, this event gathered feedback on proposed street safety improvements to Cedar Street, Dresden Street intersection improvements, improvements to Mile Road (M-72), and the Village’s overall sidewalk and bicycle network. From this event, residents desired a protected non-motorized path along Cedar Street as well as improved crossing infrastructure along Mile Road (M-72).

Community Open House #2 (February 20, 2025) – Held at the Kalkaska Commission on Aging, this event built on previous feedback and presented the Plan’s proposed safety improvement projects. This event provided a great venue to discuss potential changes with residents and to identify the improvements residents cared about the most.



Survey Responses

Two online and paper surveys were made available throughout the planning process. The first survey received 196 responses and was focused on improvements to Cedar Street through Kalkaska while the second survey received 40 responses and was focused on village-wide improvements and presenting content shared at the second Community Open House. A summary of survey results is included in the appendix of this Plan.



Steering Committee

Throughout the planning process, a Steering Committee comprised of members of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Disability Network of Northern Michigan, and Kalkaska County District Health Department met and provided oversight over development of the Plan. The group also performed a walking audit of Cedar Street in July 2024, identifying locations for improvements. Early in the process, the Steering Committee identified Project Principles to direct the work.

Project principles are guides – they are statements that transform insights about the community’s desires and priorities into actionable direction for the project team. Shaped by the community’s feedback and guidance from the Steering Committee, all proposed improvements are made with the following principles in mind.



Project Principles

1

Safe and convenient connectivity throughout Kalkaska, including Kalkaska Schools, Kalkaska Memorial Health Center, Railroad Square and Downtown, Northland Plaza, the industrial park, and regional trails.

2

The characteristics of **Cedar Street should change from a busy vehicle thoroughfare to a pleasant and inviting pedestrian environment.**

3

Traveling along and across Cedar Street should be safe for people of all ages and abilities by foot, bicycle, wheelchair, car, or any other legal means.

3 What We Learned: Existing Conditions

Kalkaska’s location at the crossroads of US-131 (Cedar Street), M-72 (Mile Road), and M-66 means much of the Village’s traffic is from people “passing through.” Each of these roadways reflects this reality, as they were designed to channel traffic as quickly through the Village as possible. This creates tension with the desires of residents who want a safer, calmer community they feel safe walking and riding a bike in and business owners who want to offer patrons a pleasant environment where they are not afraid to get out of their car.

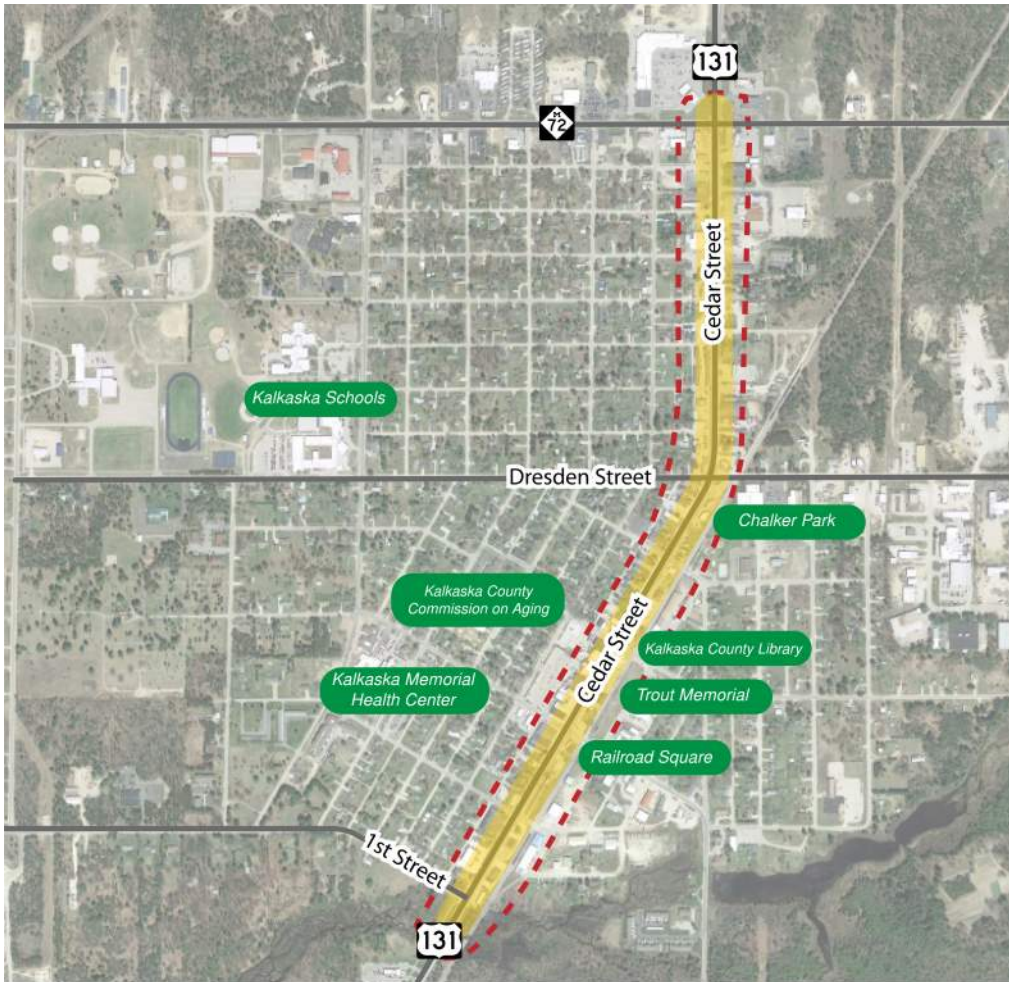
Speeds, Crashes, and Traffic Volumes

Throughout the planning process, a Steering Committee comprised of members of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Disability Network of Northern Michigan, and Kalkaska County District Health Department met and provided oversight over development of the Plan. The group also performed a walking audit of Cedar Street in July 2024, identifying locations for improvements.

Although posted speed limits are “the law,” they are not always followed. With this in mind, the vast majority of the Village’s streets feature a speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Cedar Street through downtown Kalkaska carries both US-131 and M-72 and has a speed limit of 45 miles per hour south of 3rd Street and a 35 miles per hour speed limit between 3rd Street and Lincoln Street before returning to 45 miles per hour north of Lincoln Street. US-131 north of M-72 (Mile Road) and south of First Street has a 55 miles per hour speed limit. M-72 (Mile Road) between US-131 (Cedar Street) and Birch Street has a 45 miles per hour speed limit and shifts to 55 miles per hour west of Birch Street.

Concerns regarding speed and the amount of traffic on Cedar Street were by far the most common sentiment heard during public engagement.





“Because much of the traffic on Cedar Street travels over 40 miles per hour, there is a severe risk for people walking and biking downtown.”

What People Said...

*“The volume of traffic and the disconnected nature of sidewalks or bike paths make alternate ways of getting through and across Cedar Street very **unpleasant.**”*

*“I will not use a bike or walk along Cedar Street. It is too busy and **cars do not pay attention to pedestrians.** The crosswalks do not work.”*

*“People drive **too fast!**”*

*“Not safe... **no bike trails.**”*

*“This is a major area where **vehicles speed.**”*

*“I hold my breath any time I see **kids walking** in this area. The public library and Chalker Park are **hard to get to** if you are walking from the residential area.”*

*“Better traffic control for those **crossing Cedar Street** by any means.”*

*“Cedar Street is **not a safe place** to walk or cross.”*

*“People drive **too fast** through there.”*

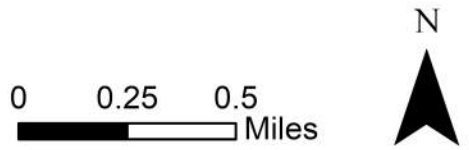
*“To try to cross Cedar St other than at a light is **risking your life**, especially if you are walking!”*

Speed Limits

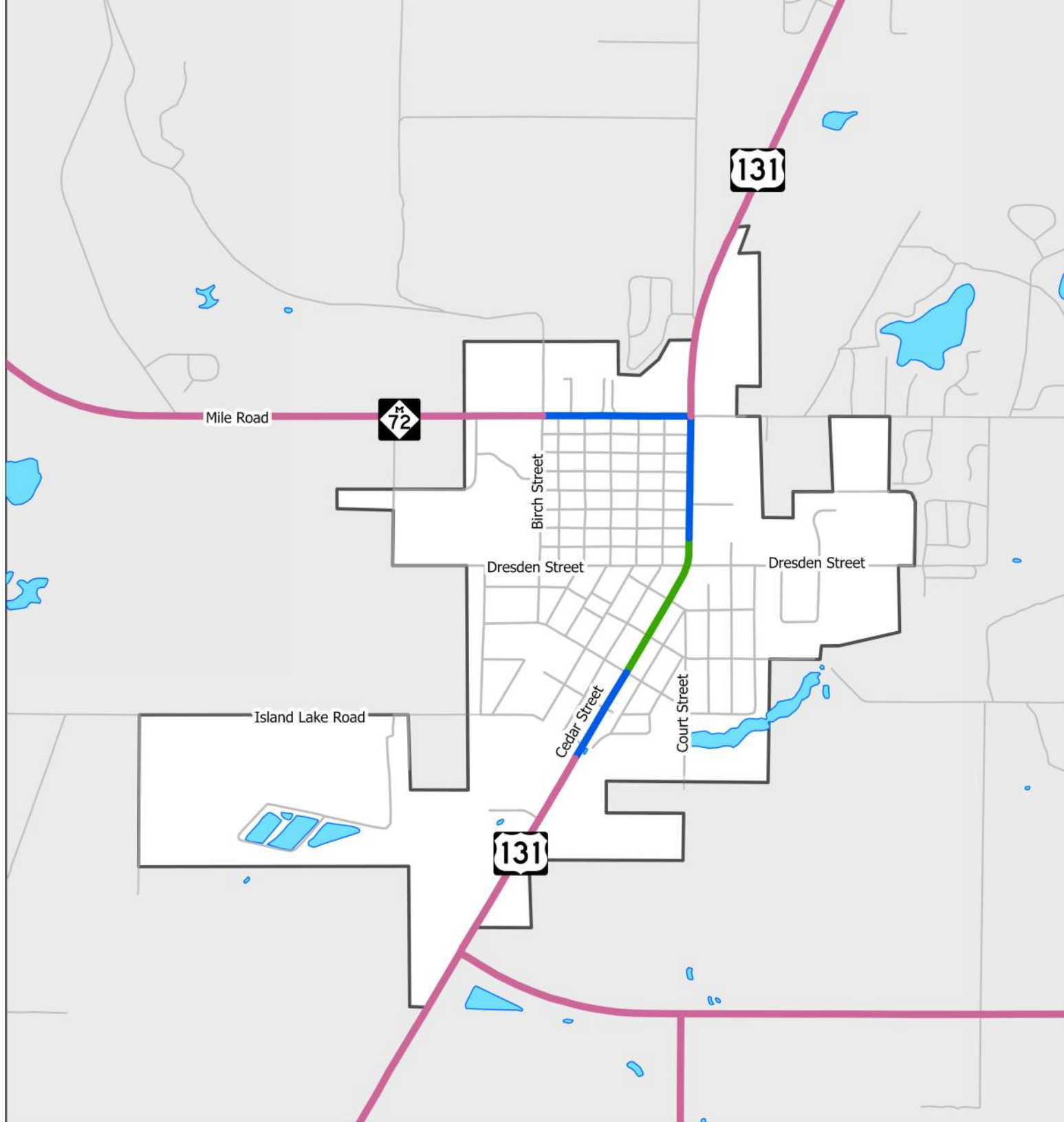
Village of Kalkaska, Kalkaska County, MI

LEGEND

- 35 Miles Per Hour
- 45 Miles Per Hour
- 55 Miles Per Hour
- 25 Miles Per Hour



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, 2025. Progressive Companies, 2025.

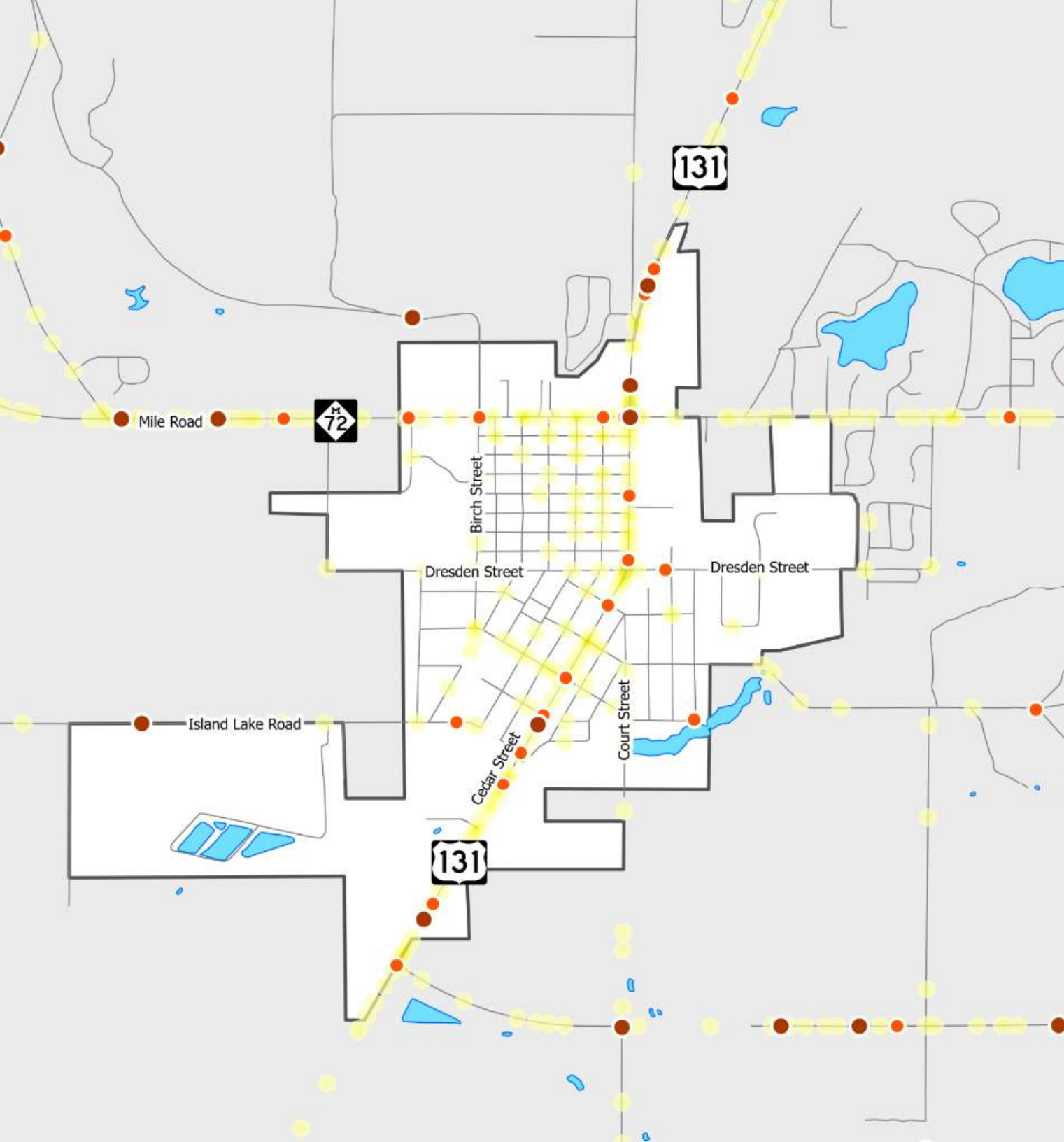


Traffic Crashes (2018 - 2022)

Village of Kalkaska, Kalkaska County, MI

LEGEND

- Serious Injury (A)
- Minor Injury (B)
- All Traffic Crashes



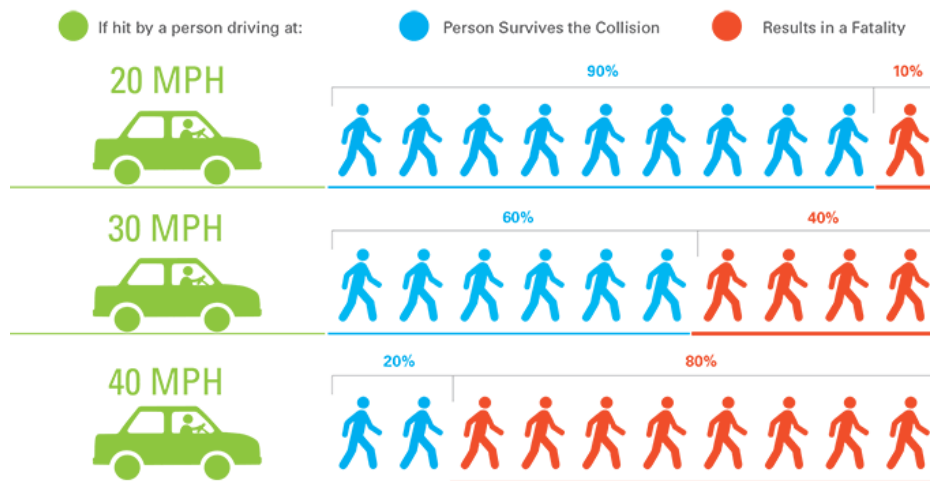
0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, 2025. Progressive Companies, 2025.

Vehicle speeds are a major determinant of street and pedestrian safety and lead to exponentially higher rates of serious and fatal vehicle crashes. **Of the Village’s 36 severe vehicle crashes between 2018-2022 (crashes with recorded injuries), 33 (92%) of them occurred on either Cedar Street or Mile Road (M-72).** Although none of these crashes involved pedestrians, the impact of high-speed crashes is particularly pronounced in relation to pedestrian safety. Pedestrians involved in a crash with a vehicle traveling 20 miles per hour have a 90% chance of survival. Pedestrians involved in a crash with a vehicle traveling at 30 miles per hour have only a 60% chance of survival. Only 20% of pedestrians survive crashes with vehicles traveling 40 miles per hour.

Because much of the traffic on Cedar Street travels over 40 miles per hour, there is a severe risk for people walking and biking downtown. What should be a pedestrian environment of local businesses and active storefronts is instead an environment people avoid for their own safety. A continuous flow of fast-moving vehicle traffic also makes the downtown district loud and unappealing.



Traffic volumes in Kalkaska are counted by the Michigan Department of Transportation periodically and provide average annual daily traffic counts (AADT). These counts represent two-way traffic expected to travel along a roadway on any given day. Unsurprisingly, traffic volumes in Kalkaska are highest along state and federal highways such as US-131 (Cedar Street) and M-72 (Mile Road). The Village’s heaviest-traveled segment is Cedar Street (US-131) between Dresden Street and Mile Road (M-72) with an estimated 16,500 vehicles per day. Other segments of Cedar Street (US-131) and Mile Road (M-72) have AADT volumes between 10,000 – 14,000 vehicles-per-day. Noted throughout community feedback, this creates a loud environment of fast-moving traffic, engine braking from large semi-trucks, and vehicles speeding to pass others through the Village.



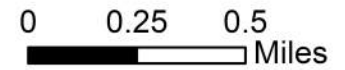
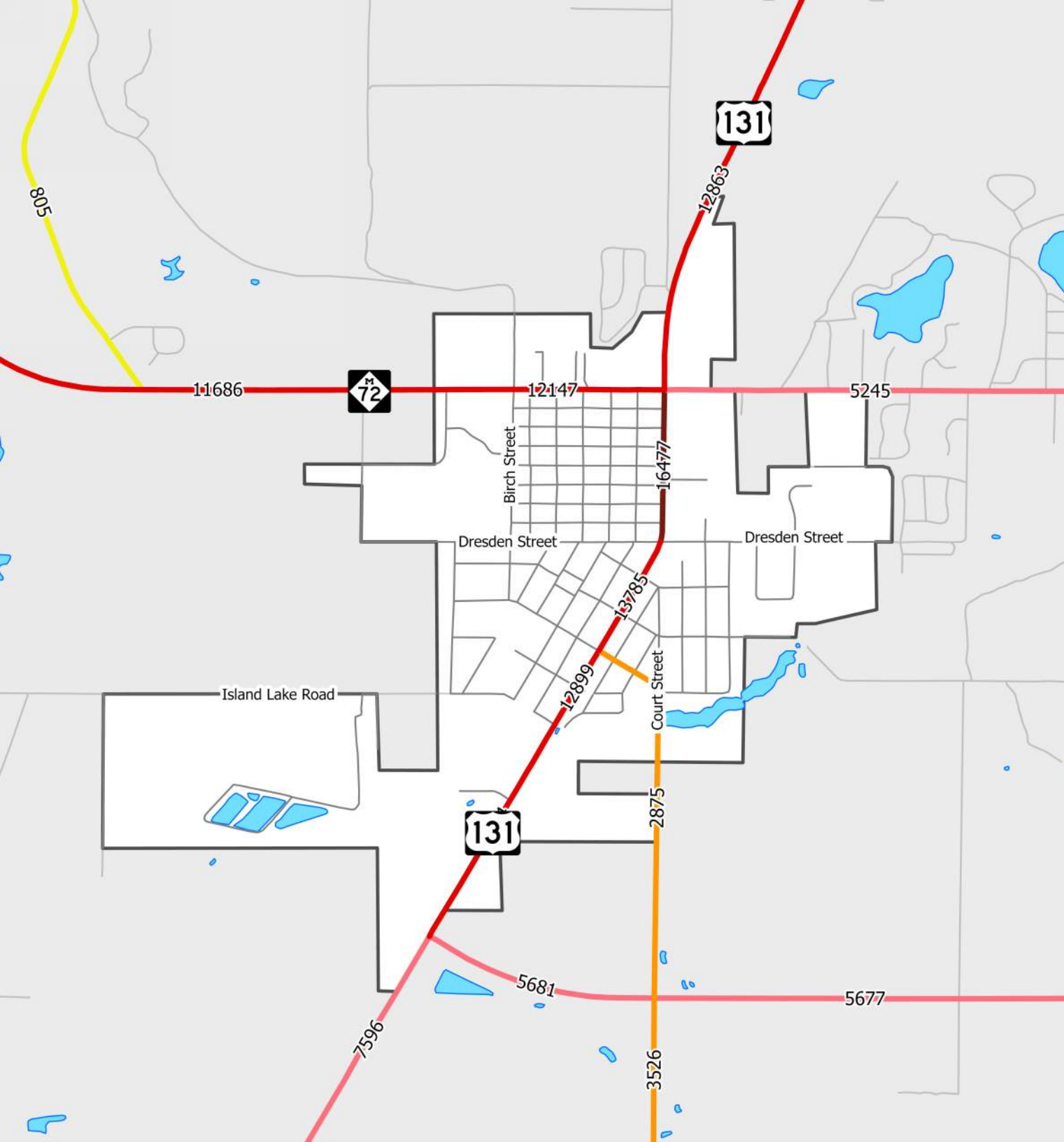
Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)

Village of Kalkaska, Kalkaska County, MI

LEGEND

- Under 999 Vehicles Per Day
- 1,000 - 4,999 Vehicles Per Day
- 5,000 - 9,999 Vehicles Per Day
- 10,000 - 14,999 Vehicles Per Day
- Over 15,000 Vehicles Per Day

Data Indicates 2023 Traffic Counts



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library, 2025. Progressive Companies, 2025.

With all of these factors in mind (traffic speeds, traffic crashes, traffic volumes) we asked residents to identify both the places they feel safe walking or riding a bike as well as places they feel unsafe walking or riding a bike in. Unsurprisingly, these locations match the data we've collected – locations featuring high traffic speeds, high crash rates, and high traffic volumes are the locations people feel the least safe in. We also asked residents to identify key destinations within the community, indicating locations they desire to travel to frequently.



This is a place I feel safe walking or cycling in



This is a place I DO NOT feel safe walking or cycling in



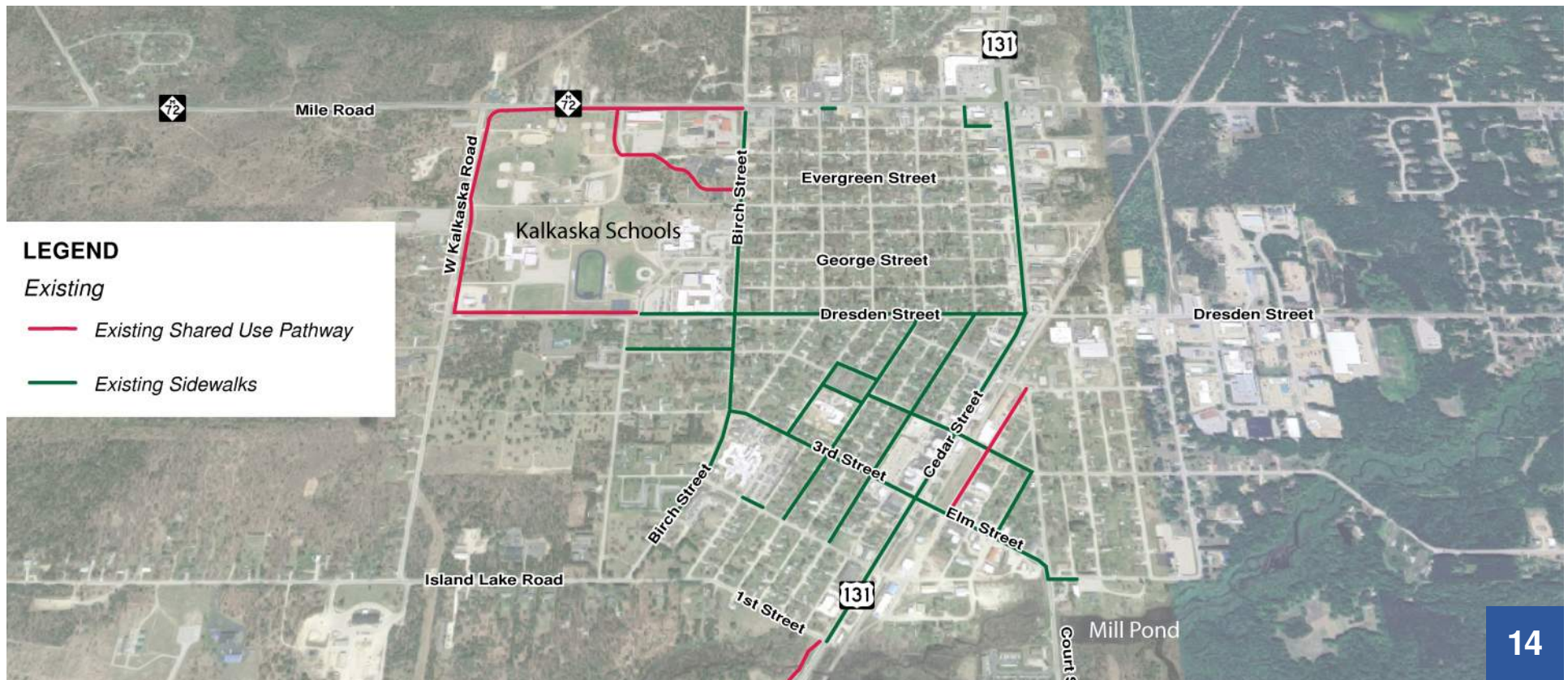
This place is a key destination



Existing Non-Motorized Facilities

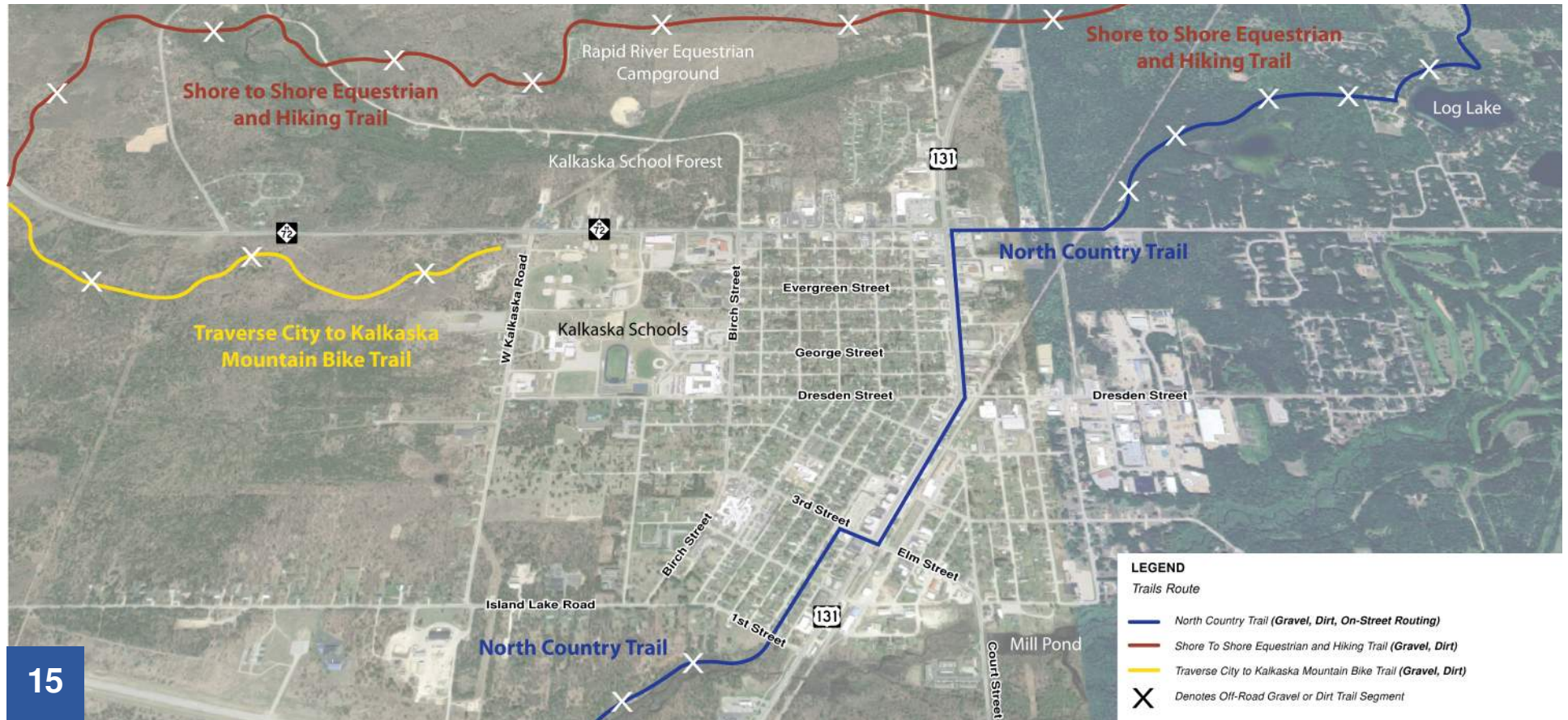
Kalkaska's current non-motorized network is comprised of sidewalks and off-street shared use pathways. The majority of the Village's sidewalks are located south of Dresden Street. Although both Cedar Street (US-131) and Birch Street feature sidewalks, the residential blocks north of Dresden Street as well as east of Court Street lack sidewalks. Other significant roadways lacking sidewalks include Island Lake Road, Court Street, Dresden Street east of Cedar Street (US-131), and Mile Road (M-72). Although the Village's sidewalk network is sparse in certain residential locations, low volumes of traffic on these streets make walking and cycling acceptable for most users.

The Village's inventory of off-street shared use pathways is mostly made up of the Kalkaska Area Recreation and Transportation (KART) Trails – a nearly two-mile loop surrounding the school campus, Kaliseum Recreation Complex, and County facilities. Another shared use pathway is located along US-131 south of First Street, connecting the Kalkaska Plaza and Family Fare shopping center to the rest of the Village. Through community feedback, residents desired better connections to downtown amenities such as Chalker Park, Railroad Square, and the library. While many residents noted the KART Trails as a key non-motorized asset, others desired better connections to key destinations throughout Kalkaska.



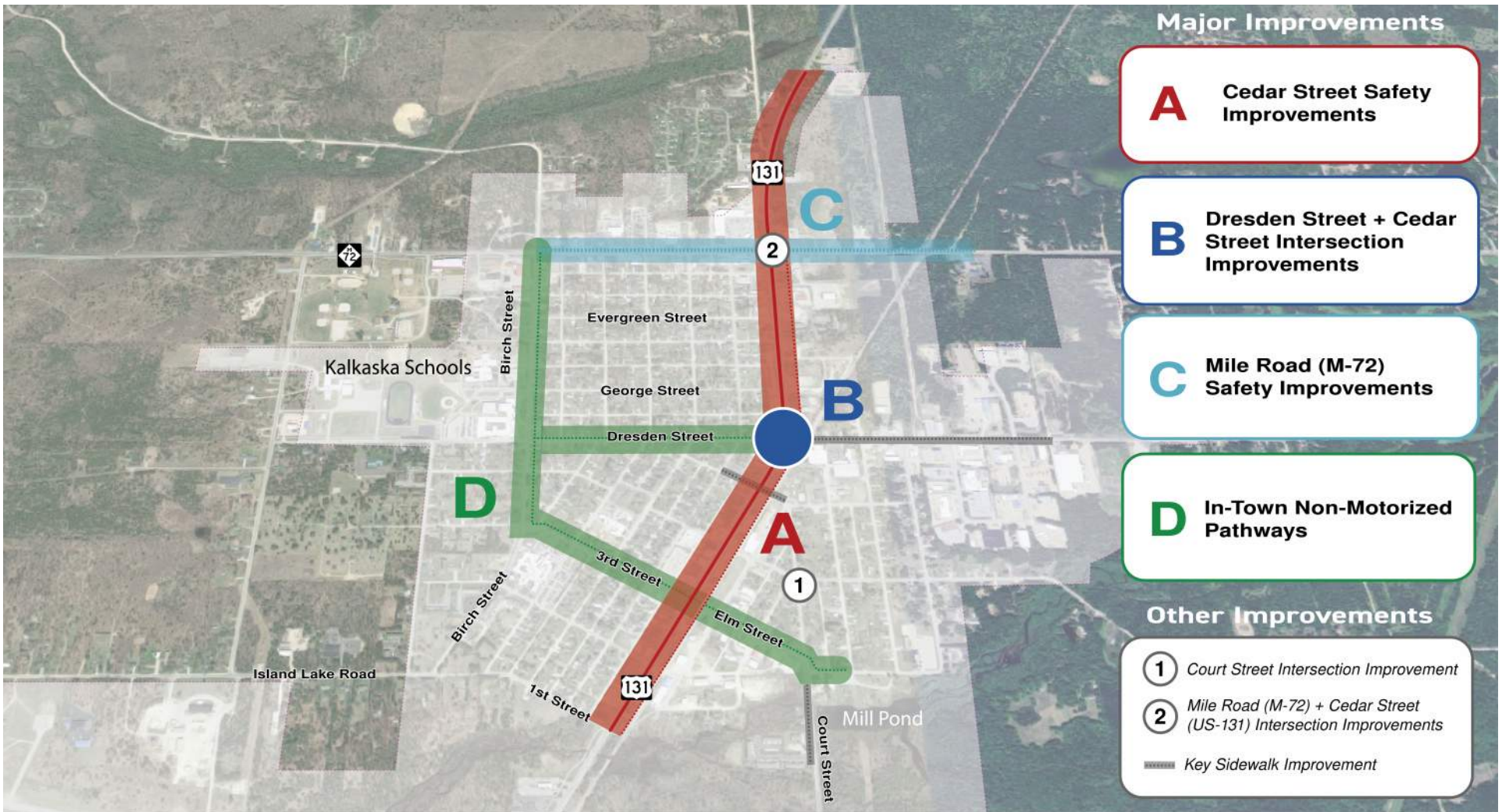
Unimproved Regional Trails

There are regional unpaved trails that pass through Kalkaska – these include both the North Country Trail (NCT) as well as the Shore-to-Shore Equestrian and Hiking Trail. The North Country Trail features two spurs that feed into Kalkaska. One alignment passes over the new Boardman River bridge on the south side of the Village and the other alignment passes west of the Village parallel to other snowmobile and other ORV trails. The in-town North Country Trail alignment passes along Cedar Street before connecting to Log Lake northwest of the Village. The Shore-to-Shore Trail passes north of the Village and connects Lake Michigan in Empire and Lake Huron in Oscoda.



4 Proposed Improvements

Throughout the planning process, four (4) major safety and mobility improvements were identified as priorities as well as other minor improvements. These include safety improvements to Cedar Street, the Dresden and Cedar Street intersection, Mile Road (M-72) safety improvements, and in-town sidewalk and bicycle network improvements as well as other minor sidewalk and intersection improvements.



A Cedar Street Safety Improvements

As Kalkaska's main street, Cedar Street is how most people interact with Kalkaska. Unfortunately its status as a federal highway coupled with its high speeds, wide lanes, and limited signalized intersections through the Village make it a serious barrier for people walking or riding a bike around town. Throughout the planning process, residents have continuously mentioned Cedar Street's high traffic speeds, noise, and limited crosswalks as major detractors to Kalkaska's overall quality of life. In addition to safety concerns, there are frustrations with downtown Kalkaska's environment, with people desiring more restaurants, stores, and other local businesses.



What is one word or phrase you would use to describe the current state of Cedar Street?



What is one word or phrase you would use to describe the current state of Cedar Street?



Changing Cedar Street's status as an unpleasant, high-speed highway into an environment safe for walking and cycling is a first step in encouraging downtown private investment. This aligns with the Plan's project principles and the following proposed infrastructure improvements were identified with these principles in mind.

Roadway Lane Reduction

Although Cedar Street carries an average of 12,000 – 16,000 vehicles per day, the current five-lane configuration through much of the Village is designed for higher traffic volumes. This makes the roadway a strong candidate for “right-sizing” or reducing the number of travel lanes, which will lower traffic speeds making it a safer and more appealing roadway for pedestrians and cyclists and reducing the number of vehicle crashes.

While reducing the number of lanes on Cedar Street is feasible throughout the Village, and supported by this plan, the preferred approach is to accomplish this in phases based on priority, with the section of Cedar Street in downtown Kalkaska as the highest priority, and then gradually moving North to Mile Road. Lane reductions can also be tested through a “pilot project,” or a trial that can gather information on how the lane reductions operate and how the public views the change before committing to long-term implementation.

Pilot projects offer an inexpensive trial to observe how traffic functions with a three-lane section prior to a permanent installation with pavement and curb work that would be expensive and time consuming to reverse if it was determined that the improvements were not working as intended.

Pros: Results in lower traffic speeds, pedestrian crosswalks are safer due to less crossing distance, additional space for non-motorized pathway and sidewalk space, reduce left turning vehicle conflicts in 4 lane sections.

Cons: May alter traffic flows, could slightly increase travel times for through vehicles.



Lane Reductions in Other Communities

Similar road improvements have been performed on MDOT and local roads in nearby communities including Traverse City and West Branch, MI. In 2024, MDOT reconstructed M-55 through West Branch, converting the existing 4 and 5 lane road into a 3-lane road. MDOT models showed that this lane reduction would not have a significant impact on travel times through town and would improve safety in the 4 lane sections of road. The project was completed in Fall of 2024 and has been well received by the community.

In 2014, Eighth Street in Traverse City was converted from a 4-lane roadway to a 3-lane roadway with bike lanes. This lane reduction resulted in slowing vehicle traffic and making the area more inviting for pedestrians and cyclists. 10 years later, Eighth Street has experienced an influx of development with new businesses choosing to be located on Eighth Street, and many pedestrians and bicyclists using the area.

M-55 in West Branch



Improved Pedestrian Crossings

While reducing the number of lanes on Cedar Street makes crossing easier, pedestrian crossings are necessary to allow people to cross the street safely (and legally). Improved crosswalk striping, pedestrian islands, or crossing signage in select locations will facilitate east-west walkability along the corridor. Key improvement locations include the mid-block crossing north of 3rd Street, 4th Street intersection, George Street intersection, and the Evergreen intersection.

Pros: Reduces the distance people need to walk to safely, and legally cross Cedar Street; slows vehicles by providing another barrier in the roadway, pedestrian islands create opportunities for landscaping and beautification.

Cons: Increases the number of legal conflict points between pedestrians and cars (people are likely crossing illegally today).





Non-Motorized Pathway

In the event of Cedar Street lane reductions, there will be excess space that can be repurposed for other uses. Throughout community engagement, residents desired a non-motorized pathway running parallel to the roadway. This pathway would create significant connections along the east side of the Village where there are fewer sidewalks and non-motorized facilities. This linear pathway would also carry the in-town alignment of the North Country Trail, passing by Chalker Park, the Kalkaska County Library, and Railroad Square. By emphasizing pedestrian and cycling safety on Cedar Street, this would form the community's non-motorized "backbone" that connects downtown to all other portions of Kalkaska's proposed non-motorized network.

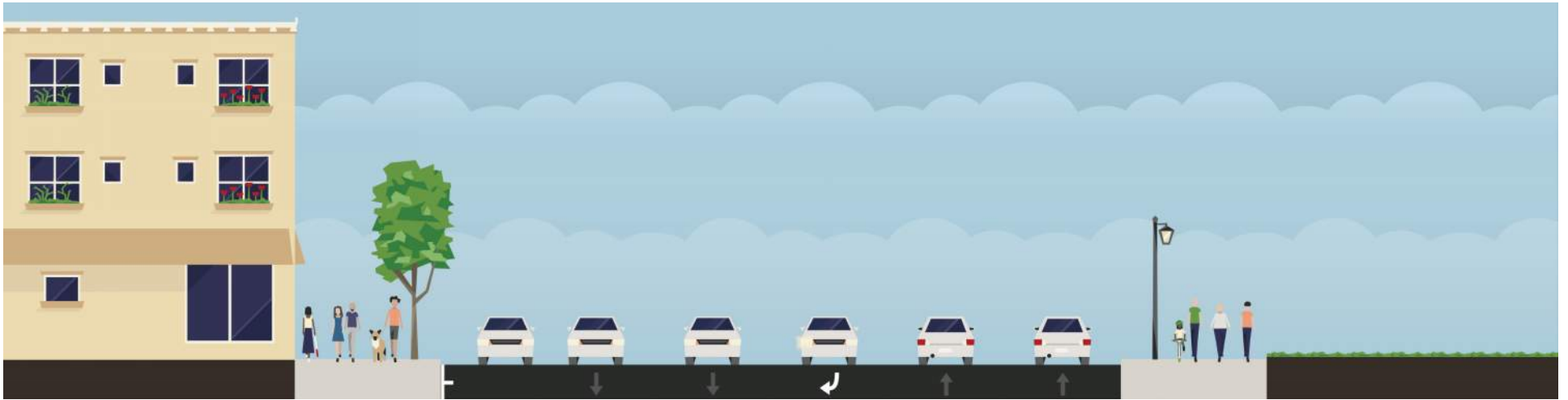
Pros: Clear, uninterrupted access for pedestrians and bicyclists, creation of a notable feature that distinguishes Kalkaska from other up-north towns.

Cons: Increased maintenance cost, especially during the winter months.

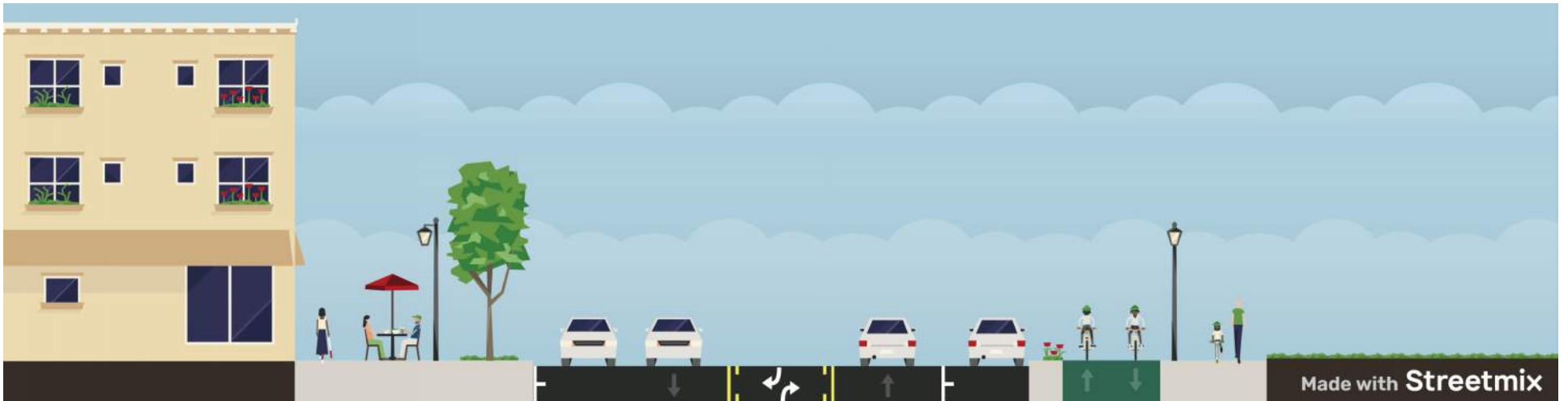




Current Cedar Street Cross-Section



Proposed Cedar Street Cross-Section





.....
Above: Rendering of Cedar Street lane reduction, north of 3rd Street



Above: Rendering of Cedar Street non-motorized pathway, north of 4th Street

B Dresden Street + Cedar Street Intersection Improvements

Of all the intersections in Kalkaska, the Dresden Street and Cedar Street intersection was identified as the one that felt most unsafe and challenging for pedestrians. The lack of crossing infrastructure, high vehicle speeds and travel volumes, and limited sightlines due to the Cedar Street curve results in an intersection people avoid due to its perception of danger.

Crash data supports this perception of danger, as 27 crashes occurred near or at this intersection between 2018-2022. Many of these crashes involved vehicles attempting to cross or turn onto Cedar Street with insufficient gaps in traffic, or turning vehicles striking stopped vehicles at the stop sign. Fortunately, the majority of these crashes resulted in no serious injuries, with only two minor injuries and two possible injury crashes occurring.

While this intersection has been regularly reviewed for traffic signal warrants, the intersection does not carry enough traffic to warrant a traffic signal. The lack of traffic can likely be attributed to drivers choosing not to use Dresden Street due to the perceived danger and poor level of service, particularly for left turning traffic onto Cedar Street.



What People Said...

*“Drivers are unsafe, **Dresden is unsafe**, street lines are poorly visible 9-10 months of the year.”*

*“This intersection is horrible and avoid it if at all possible, the angle of it on that curve is **very dangerous** and have seen several accidents there.”*

This intersection's poor level of service has also been identified as a hinderance to several commercial businesses in Kalkaska. Several companies located east of Cedar Street on Dresden Street have complained about having trouble accessing US-131 with trucks due to the poor visibility and heavy traffic on Cedar Street. Additionally, BC Pizza located at the corner of this intersection has been hit by a vehicle running off of the road several times in the last few years. There are select improvements that can be made to the intersection, these include:

Signalized Intersection (Traffic Signal)

Installing a traffic signal is perhaps the most conservative improvement with the fewest number of questions. It would involve a four-way traffic signal similar to what currently exists at Cedar Street and 3rd Street, with two vehicle phases (one for Cedar Street and one for Dresden Street) and countdown pedestrian signals. Building on over 40 years of public support for a traffic light in this location, this improvement still requires signal warrants to be met before implementation.

Pros: Predictable operations, improved access to / from Dresden Street, improved safety for pedestrian crossings, provides additional east-west pedestrian connection

Cons: Requires MDOT signal warrant standards to be met which is unlikely in the immediate future

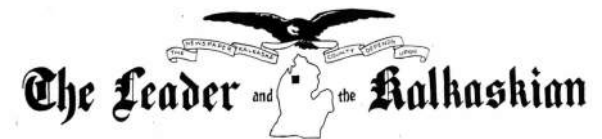


Did You Know?

This intersection has been subject to extensive studies over the past forty years. In 1986, over 1,400 people signed a petition requesting MDOT install a traffic light at the intersection. The same year, members of the State House of Representatives, local elected officials, and MDOT representatives met in Traverse City to discuss intersection improvements. Regardless of these efforts, no intersection improvements were made before 2003, when the prospect of a traffic light was again discussed. Over the past four decades, the intersection has continued operating without a traffic light due to not meeting signal warrant standards.

Stop?

MDOT officials say village must meet criteria for Dresden light



VOL. 108 NO. 12 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1986 KALKASKA, MICHIGAN 49646 25 CENTS

MDOT: 'Study postponed till summer'

Dresden/131 traffic light on hold

Powers arranges traffic light dialogue with state

Roundabout (Traffic Circle)

An alternative intersection solution is implementing a roundabout design similar to the one on US-131 in Fife Lake, or the intersection of M-115 and M-37 near Mesick, MI. This intersection treatment is polarizing; people seem to either love them or hate them as noted during community engagement. This intersection improvement would reduce traffic speeds while providing safer east-west connectivity and improve truck access to the Dresden Street industrial park. Unlike a traffic signal, traffic circles do not require signal warrants, although they occupy more space and are more expensive to construct, potentially requiring property acquisition to accommodate.

Pros: Does not require signal warrant for implementation, facilitates truck traffic to nearby industrial park

Cons: Expensive to implement, may require acquisition of nearby properties, generally controversial



Pedestrian Crossing Infrastructure

A simpler, lower-cost option to improve pedestrian safety at this intersection is to install pedestrian refuge islands and crosswalk striping. Although not altering the flow of traffic, these would at least provide a safer location for pedestrian crossings.

Pros: Lower-cost improvement, less impact on existing street configuration

Cons: Does not address east-west traffic flow concerns



C Mile Road (M-72) Safety Improvements

Mile Road (M-72) is an important east-west corridor that connects Kalkaska to Traverse City. As a state highway, it largely follows a three-lane configuration through the Village. The roadway lacks contiguous sidewalks on either side of the road, making walking both unpleasant and dangerous along the corridor.

While the roadway will continue operating as a three-lane highway, pedestrian and non-motorized improvements can make the corridor more conducive to those walking and cycling in the area.

What People Said...

*“There are a lot of homes and businesses on the north side of the corridor that are **not easy to walk or cycle to or from.**”*

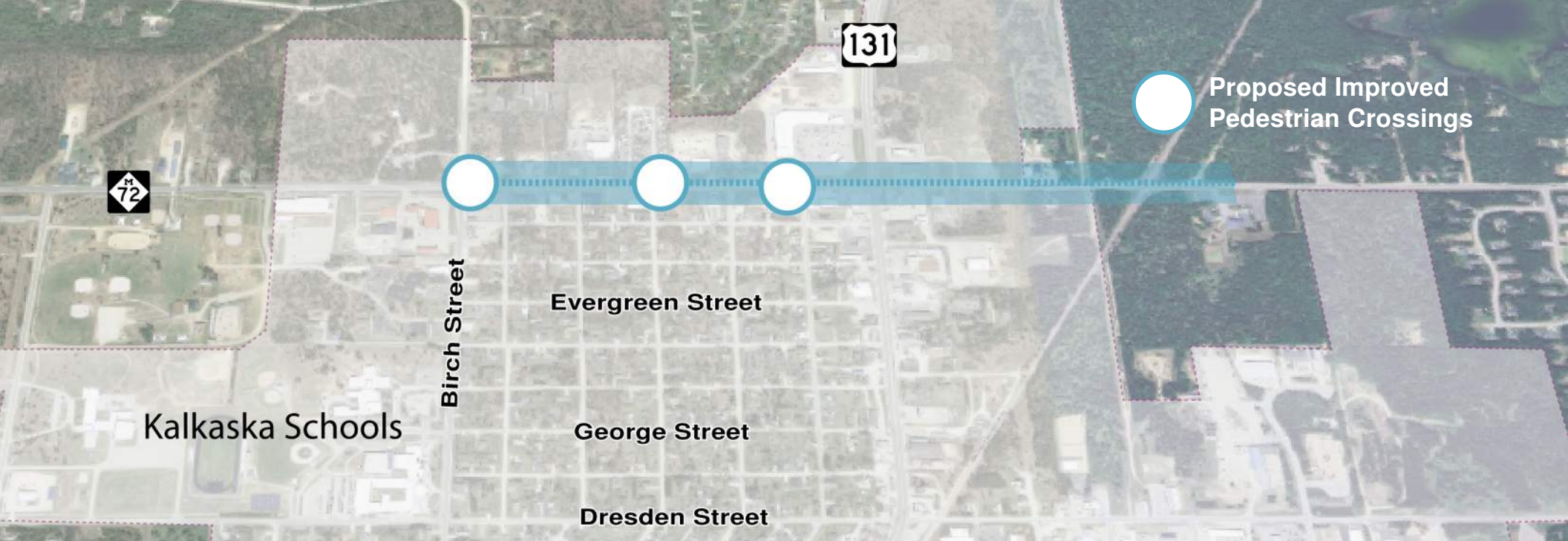
*“Crosswalks are definitely needed for **safe crossing.** Birch Street and across from Northland would be ideal.”*

*“A **pathway or continuous sidewalk** on the North side of the road should be the priority because of the estate community.”*

*“I saw a man **trying to cross to Northland Center** standing on the piles of snow. If he fell he would’ve fallen right into traffic!”*

*“A **bike path** would be great for walking, biking, skating.”*





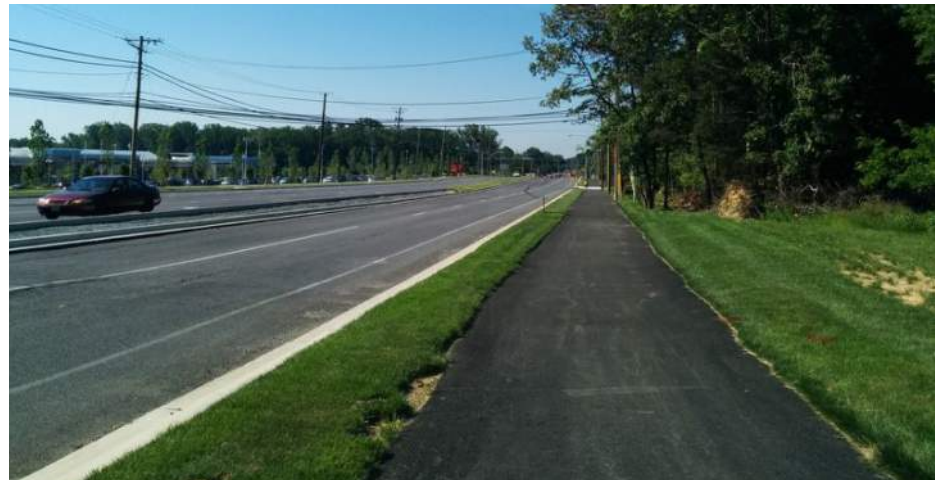
Improved Pedestrian Crossings

Installing pedestrian crossing infrastructure such as crosswalk striping, pedestrian islands, or pedestrian crossing signage will connect the rest of the Village to important destinations north of Mile Road (M-72) such as Northland Center, Kalkaska School Forest, Kalkaska Estates Mobile Home Park, and others. Key locations for improved pedestrian facilities include Birch Street, Coral Street, and Walnut Street across from Northland Center.



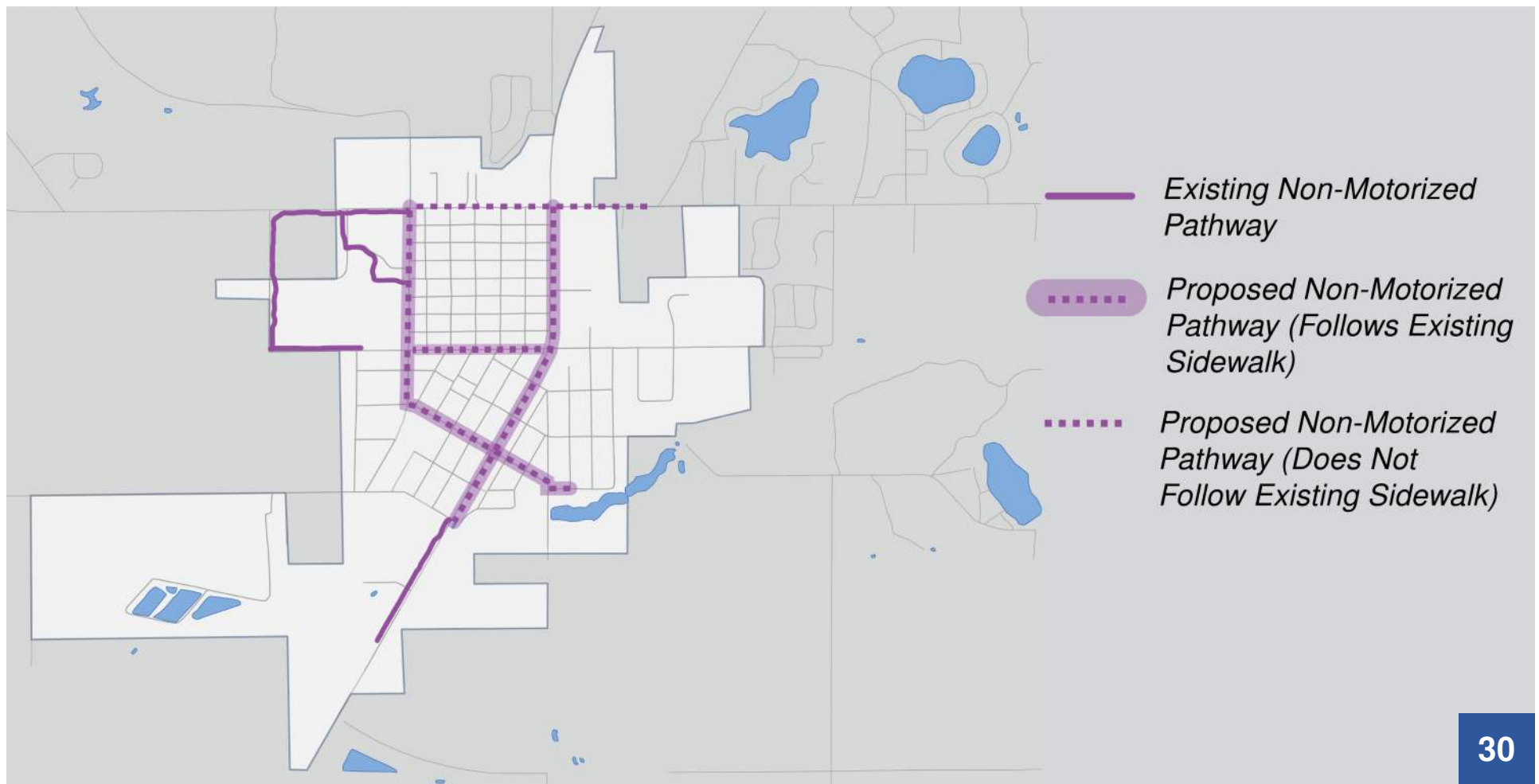
Non-Motorized Pathway

Although right-of-way is constrained along the corridor with utilities on both sides of the road, a non-motorized pathway could be constructed on at least one side of the roadway to facilitate east-west connectivity from the KART Trails towards Log Lake on the east side of the Village.



D In-Town Non-Motorized Pathways

With the addition of other non-motorized pathways, there is an opportunity to connect them to create an in-town non-motorized network – creating a circular off-street biking and walking trail throughout the Village, connecting residents to important destinations such as downtown, the KART Trail and schools, Log Lake, Mill Pond, and Northland Center. This non-motorized network would be comprised of 8-10 foot wide paths constructed alongside roads and can feature wayfinding signage to key destinations. This approach helps to provide access for Kalkaska residents and can also support Kalkaska’s image as an “up north” destination where access to the outdoors is prioritized.



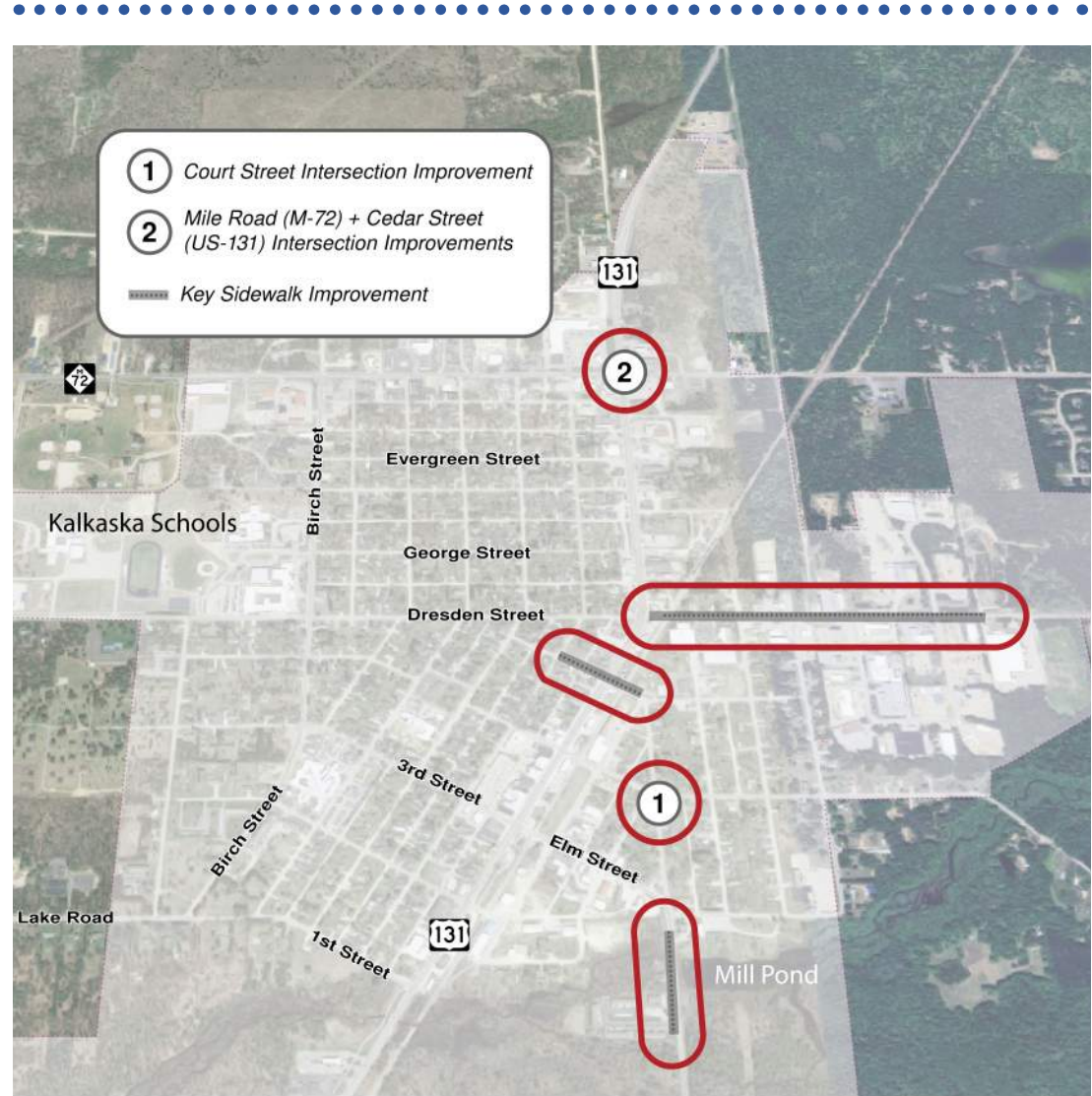
Other Minor Safety and Mobility Improvements

In addition to the major safety and mobility improvements described previously, other smaller-scale improvements can be pursued as resources become available. These include:

Sidewalk Extensions – Sidewalk connections in select locations will create safer pedestrian access. High-impact locations for sidewalk extensions are Dresden Street west of Cedar Street (towards the industrial park), sidewalks leading to the 5th Street and Cedar Street intersection, and sidewalk striping and sidewalks along Court Street connecting to the River’s Edge apartments.

Court Street & Oak Street Intersection Improvement – Although further study is warranted, the unique geometries of this intersection make a small-scale residential traffic circle feasible here.

Mile Road (M-72) & Cedar Street Improvements
Current signal timing permits were reviewed on Cedar Street at 3rd Street and Mile Road and they were found to be uncoordinated with different cycle lengths. A timing update to coordinate these signals could improve traffic flow through town, especially if a road diet trial is implemented. Additionally, signal timing could be updated to help create gaps in traffic on Cedar Street which would assist local traffic attempting to enter Cedar Street.



5 Project Scoring and Implementation

Balancing proposed projects with limited funding resources requires prioritization based on the Plan's project principles. With this in mind, projects have been "scored" According to the following criteria developed by the Steering Committee:

Project Scoring Criteria

Pedestrian Safety: Does the project improve safety outcomes for non-motorized transportation?

Connectivity: Does the project make it easier for people to get to/from key destinations in Kalkaska?

Downtown Place-Making: Does the project contribute toward making Cedar Street a more pleasant and inviting pedestrian environment?

Available Capital Funds: Are there funds available to support the necessary improvement?

Ongoing Maintenance Costs: Are the ongoing maintenance costs of the improvement reasonable and able to be supported by the Village, DDA, or others?

Each project or improvement identified in the plan was evaluated relative to these criteria and given a score from 1 – 5, with 5 meaning the improvement aligns extremely well with a criterion, and 1 meaning the project does not align with the criterion at all.

Project Scoring Matrix

		Proposed Improvement	Pedestrian Safety	Connectivity	Downtown Place-Making	Available Capital Funds	Ongoing Maintenance Costs	Total Project Priority Score
High Impact High Cost		<i>Cedar Street Safety Improvements</i>	5	4	5	2	2	18
		<i>Dresden Street Intersection Improvements</i>	5	2	2	3	4	16
		<i>Mile Road (M-72) Pedestrian Improvements</i>	4	4	1	3	4	16
Moderate Impact Moderate Cost		<i>In-Town Non-Motorized Pathways (3rd Street - Birch Street - Dresden Street)</i>	3	5	2	2	1	13
		<i>Cedar Street + Mile Road Intersection Improvements</i>	3	2	1	3	4	13
		<i>Dresden Street Sidewalk Extension</i>	4	4	1	2	2	13
Low Impact Moderate Cost		<i>5th Street Sidewalk Extension</i>	3	3	2	2	2	12
		<i>Court Street Sidewalk Extension</i>	3	3	1	2	2	11
		<i>Court Street + 5th Street Intersection Improvement</i>	2	1	1	2	2	8

Each project or improvement was scored from 1 – 5, with 5 meaning the improvement aligns extremely well with a criterion, and 1 meaning the project does not align with the criterion at all.

Implementation Strategies

Project scoring generally sorts the projects into three typologies. Implementation for each project type is provided in this section.

High Impact, High Cost Improvements to MDOT Roadways and Right-of-Way

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Cedar Street Safety Improvements

The proposed improvements to Cedar Street are the most costly and intensive in terms of the addition of new infrastructure and on-going maintenance. While MDOT will continue to maintain the roadway, the Village of Kalkaska and the DDA are responsible for maintenance of the area outside of the curbs. The addition of new bicycle pathways and expanded sidewalks adjacent to downtown businesses will increase ongoing maintenance expenses for the DDA. However, there is a significant positive benefit in that the DDA's revenue is directly tied to the value of property, and when downtown businesses receive investment as a result of the proposed improvements, the DDA will have additional funding to support costs of maintenance and repair.

The initial capital cost of improvements is most likely to be supported by MDOT, through potential partnership with the Village to share some costs or through grants and resources the Village can secure in partnership. While the process of securing resources to complete the proposed improvements can be lengthy, there are significant opportunities to test proposed improvements.

Temporary installations along Cedar Street to narrow the right of way, provide pedestrian islands, or reduce speed are relatively low-cost and low-risk. For example, closing one southbound lane and giving the on-street parking area back to local businesses to test the potential for outdoor seating and activities.

Dresden Street Intersection Improvements

While the addition of a traffic signal at Dresden Street is the preferred solution, an interim improvement for pedestrians could be implemented in the short term since the intersection does not meet traffic signal warrants. The addition of pedestrian crossing improvements is a relatively low-cost interim step that can happen as part of an overall plan for safety improvements on Cedar Street or as a separate project within the roadway's current configuration.

The addition of a pedestrian crossing along with a pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB), signage and markings that slow traffic and alert drivers of pedestrians crossing is a potential early implementation project to address a clear community need that is relatively low cost. A PHB would likely only be implemented if the road cross section was reduced to 3 lanes, or a center pedestrian refuge island was constructed.



Mile Road (M-72) Pedestrian Improvements

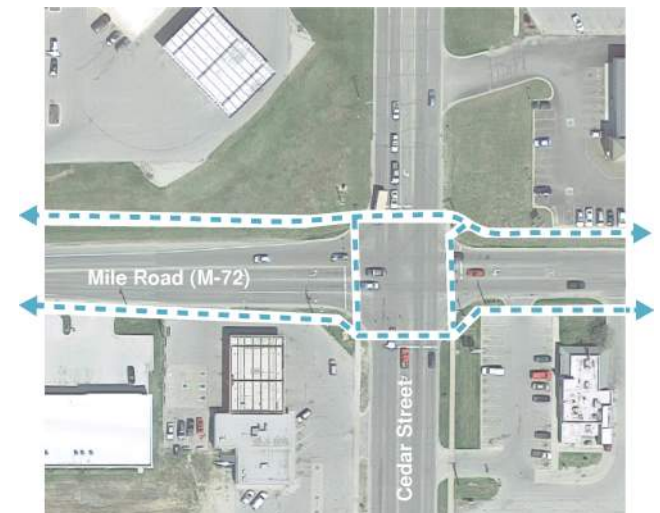
Like the Dresden Street Intersection, the necessary improvements along M-72 are relatively low cost in comparison to the Cedar Street improvements. The addition of pedestrian crossings, islands, and sidewalk or pathway along one side of the street is critical to connecting the community to the Northland Center and other destinations in the area.

Unlike Cedar Street, Mile Road is 3 lanes wide, making pedestrian crossing distance much more comfortable. However, sidewalks or pathways must be installed to connect pedestrian crossings to key destinations. If the improvements are phased over time, it would be reasonable to start by making a sidewalk/pathway connection between Cedar Street and Walnut Street first, and then gradually moving westward as funding allows.

Moderate Impact, Moderate Cost Improvements

Cedar Street and Mile Road (M-72) Intersection

The intersection of Cedar Street and Mile Road is among the busiest intersections in Kaskaska. Currently, signalized crosswalks exist across each leg of the intersection, however continuous sidewalks only exist south of the intersection. Several businesses exist north of the intersection mainly in Northland Center, but also the Ace Hardware and Arby's located on the northeast side of the intersection. Improving the sidewalk connectivity to Northland Center and the businesses northeast of the intersection would improve access for residents that live south of M-72, as well as encourage crossing M-72 at the signalized intersection rather than at an uncontrolled location.



In-Town Non-Motorized Pathways

This non-motorized pathway would connect the KART Trails near the school campus to the Mill Pond area on the east side of the Village. The trail would resemble the existing KART Trail (8-10ft paved surface) and would be located parallel to the streets. The trail could be installed as sidewalk extensions to connect existing sidewalks along Birch Street and 3rd Street.

Dresden Street Sidewalk Extension

This sidewalk extension should be timed, if possible, with crossing improvements at the Dresden Street Intersection. This will be complicated because the sidewalk will need to cross the railroad tracks just East of Cedar Street. Otherwise, there appears to be plenty of available right-of-way and no significant physical barriers for sidewalk construction.

Low Impact, Moderate Cost Improvements

Each of these projects is likely similar in its implementation strategy. As the Village is working through its Capital Improvement Plan or making improvements to adjacent roadways, drains, or other infrastructure the addition of sidewalk or infrastructure improvements can happen simultaneously to maximize cost effectiveness. For example, if improvements are required to the bridge on Court Street the addition of sidewalks or pedestrian pathways connecting the Rivers Edge Apartments to the rest of the pedestrian network in Kalkaska would be appropriate at that time.

Potential Funding Sources

Having a plan establishes the Village's desired safety and mobility improvements; implementation requires funding however. Constructing infrastructure improvements is like baking a cake – they often require a complex mix of ingredients (funding sources) at different quantities for it all to come together. This section lists relevant funding sources as of Spring 2025. Incorporation of each of the projects listed above into the Village's Capital Improvement Plan, even if they are not scheduled for funding over the plan's six-year time horizon is an important step to ensure eligibility for grant funds.

Federal Sources

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Grant Program – Administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), schools register with the state's Safe Routes to School database and are then eligible to apply for infrastructure funds to construct sidewalks, crosswalks, and non-motorized trails. Each school is eligible for \$300,000 in funding. Relevant projects to this funding source include the in-town connector pathways near the school campus and pedestrian crossing infrastructure at Mile Road (M-72) and Birch Street.

Transportation Alternatives (TAP) Program – Administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), this program uses federal transportation funds to develop non-motorized infrastructure improvements across the state. Funding emphasis is placed on projects that connect to existing trails and are regionally-significant and promote tourism and economic development. The grant process is competitive and has a minimum grant amount of \$200,000 with at least a 20% project cost match. Relevant projects to this funding source include all pedestrian-safety related projects – particularly the Mile Road (M-72) improvements, Cedar Street improvements, and in-town connector pathways.

Highway Safety Improvements (HSIP) Grant Program – Administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), this program uses federal transportation funds to assist local agencies pay for safety improvements on local or MDOT owned roadways. Improvements include traffic signal improvements, pavement marking and signing projects, roundabouts and other safety related projects. Funding is capped at \$750,000 per project with a 10% local agency match required. Grant applications need to show a crash history and time of return spreadsheet meeting the MDOT guidelines, and will then be evaluated against other applications to determine what projects will be funded.

Federal Sources (Continued)

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program– Administered by the Federal Department of Transportation, this grant program funds both planning and demonstration grants (which pays for community engagement, planning, and design work) and implementation grants (which pays for infrastructure improvements). Organizations with adopted Safety Action Plans are eligible to apply for these funds.

State Sources

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – Eligible for local units of government that have adopted a Parks and Recreation Plan, the MDNR Trust Fund is funded by oil and gas leases on the state’s public lands. Local units of government are eligible for up to \$400,000 in funding; Kalkaska County created a Parks and Recreation Plan in 2023 and would be eligible to apply for non-motorized trail funding. Relevant projects to this funding source include the in-town connector pathways, Cedar Street non-motorized pathway, and other non-motorized trail connections to the North Country Trail.

Private and Institutional Sources

Michigan Trails Fund – Originally the Iron Belle Trail Fund, this non-profit trails organization collects private donations and utilizes them towards trail projects throughout the state.

Michigan Health Endowment Fund – Under the Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles program, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund has funded trail development in communities across the state. Funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, these funds can be used for planning and design engineering for trails. Grant amounts are between \$50,000 to \$500,000 and are eligible to local units of government.

DALMAC Fund – This privately-sourced fund grants money towards the design and construction of bike trails throughout the state. Funding amounts are limited and are most likely to supplement project funding from other sources.

Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation – The Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation features endowments that support trail development and enhancing active recreation opportunities. Funding for both the TART Trails and Kalkaska Area may support trail development in Kalkaska.

Kalkaska Rotary Club - The Kalkaska Rotary Club has historically been a supporter of village-wide improvements and may be a funding partner for many improvements listed in this Plan.

Special Thanks

Village of Kalkaska

Village of Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority

Kalkaska County Board of Commissioners

Michigan Department of Transportation

District Health Department #10

Michigan State University Extension

Kalkaska County Commission on Aging

Kalkaska Memorial Health Center

Disability Network of Northern Michigan

Kalkaska Public Schools



