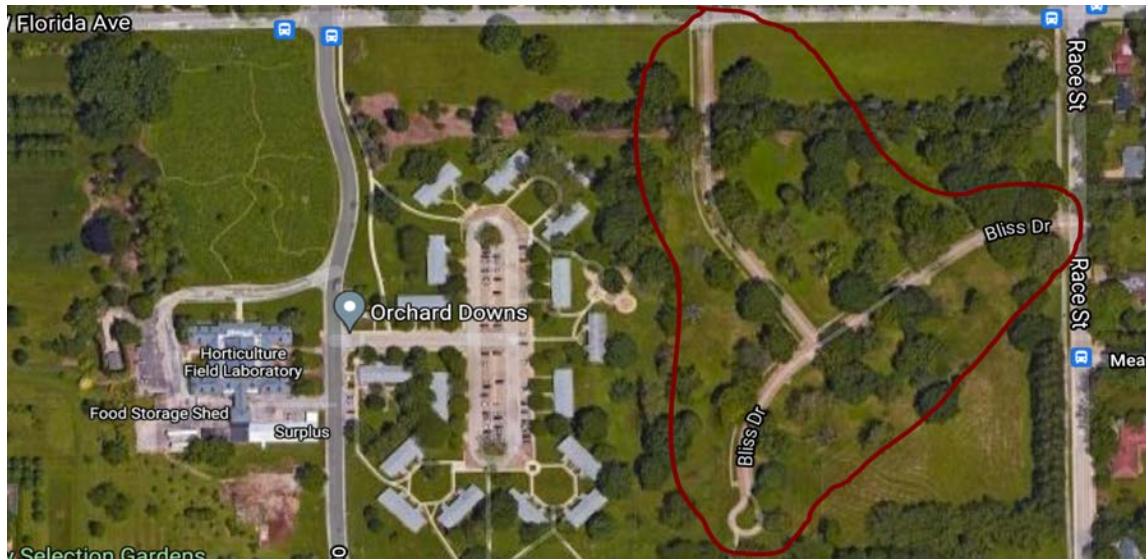


CLL Traffic Garden Project Proposal

A proposition for use of Bliss Dr. and Carle Ave. as a community traffic garden



OVERVIEW

A traffic garden is a designated area — usually on a paved street, a network of streets, or a paved lot — with traffic features but without any motorized vehicles. At a traffic garden (also known as a traffic park or playground), young people and adult learners can develop skills related to general bike riding abilities, as well as navigating streets, intersections, and crossings. This C-U Safe Routes to School project seeks to transform Bliss Drive into a robust traffic garden so that individuals in the community can learn the skills needed to safely and lawfully ride their bicycles.

This project is important for a multitude of reasons. Through this development, learners will be able to practice navigating roadways in an environment where they are able to make mistakes without being at risk for major injury. Biking promotes healthy habits in children and adults, and, at its core, these learners will also be developing a useful transportation skill, which they can and will use for the rest of their lives. According to David Balick of BikeArlington, their community traffic garden has allowed children to “build confidence in their skills as well as bonds with other children, and overall become more empowered to move in a way they enjoy”.

Beyond the benefits granted to the individual biker, having a traffic garden also has the massive potential to improve the Champaign-Urbana community. Learners who form these skills early on will promote the development of safe roadway systems overall — for bikers, car-drivers, and pedestrians. Every year in the United States hundreds of cyclists die from preventable accidents, and hundreds of thousands are injured. Teaching road safety, proper signaling, and awareness leads to a safer community for everyone.

GOALS AND MILESTONES

I. Increase Biking Safety

❖ *Most common errors children make while biking:*

1. Darting into traffic
2. Weaving on the road
3. Biking the wrong way

❖ *Causes of these errors:*

1. *Smaller peripheral vision:* Children have a smaller range of peripheral view. Which means they frequently cannot see the threats to them.
2. *Trust in adults:* Children do not see adults as a threat to their safety. They trust car drivers when they are in the car, why shouldn't they while sharing the road?
3. *Focused on themselves:* It takes a lot of mental energy from a child to focus on their own riding. Children need to practice using many skills at once.
4. *Having fun:* Biking is and should be fun! Children often ride around with friends or home from school, however, this can lead to distraction and accidents.

II. Skills and Areas

❖ *Starting and Stopping* - We will have painted indications on the road that will be green, yellow, and red. These will help the rider develop a sense of the distance between themselves and the stop sign and when they need to start slowing down. We will also include all stop and crosswalk markings and indications.

❖ *Straight Line Riding* - The paths marked on the sidewalks are solely intended to help children learn to ride in a straight line. They are for single use so that children may practice this skill before entering the rest of the course with fellow riders.



<https://bikeportland.org/2016/08/01/creating-new-staff-park-in-the-perfect-place-to-leave-the-edge-of-the-road-19771/>

❖ *Turning* - Turning will be incorporated throughout the garden at the various intersections and elements. They will practice sharp turns at the central t-intersection and can practice wider turns when switching from stations and circling the round-about.

- ❖ **Signaling and Awareness** - Users will be strongly encouraged to practice hand signals and at intersections with their parents and fellow riders. They will also learn how to properly use the bike lane or ride safely on roads that do not have a bike lane.



<https://www.pinterest.com/TrafficGardens/diy-traffic-garden/>

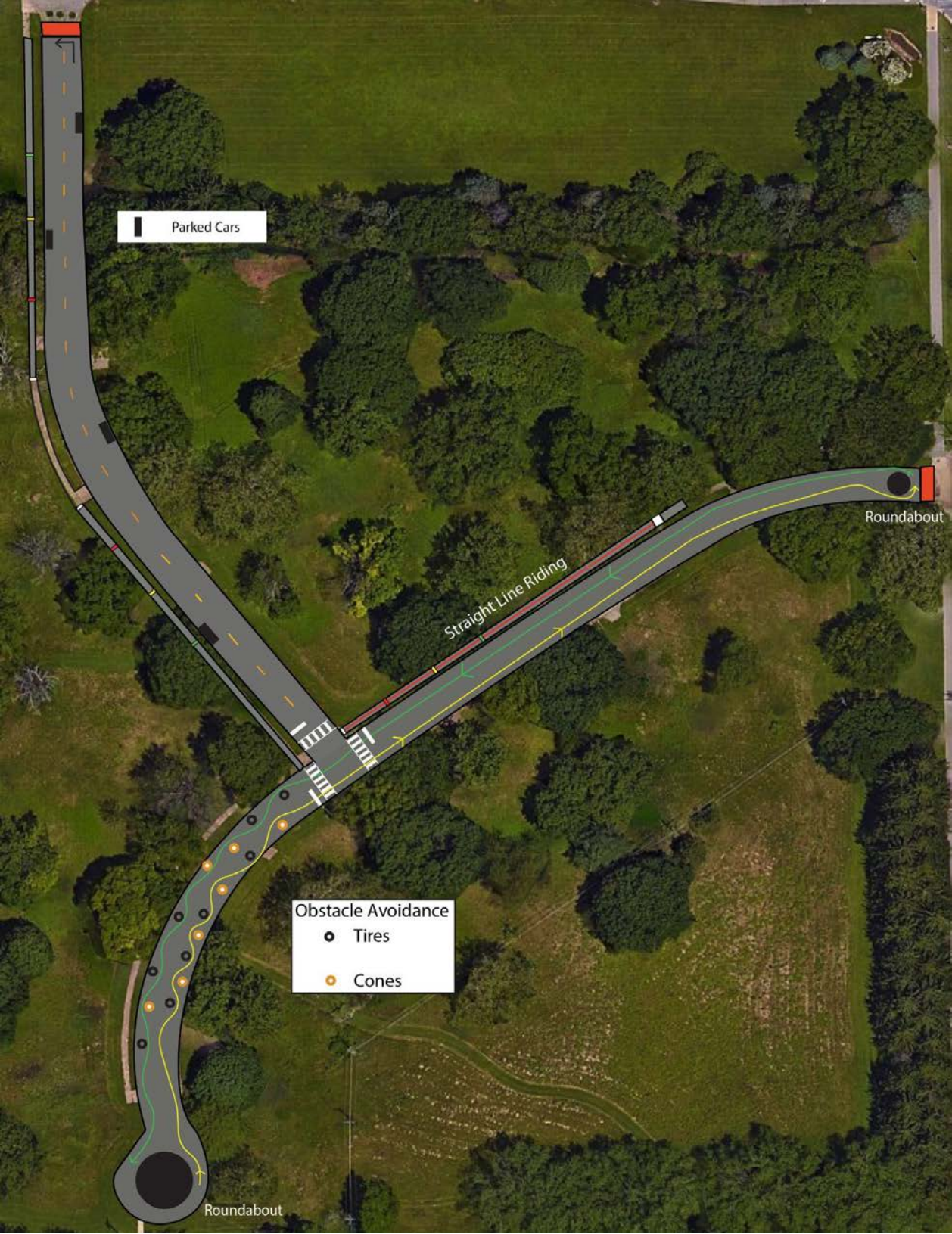
- ❖ **Obstacle Avoidance** - The elements painted on the ground will train kids to keep an eye on the road in front of them. This will teach them to learn to maneuver quickly and safely to avoid collisions.

- ❖ **General Road Safety** - Children (5-14 years) and adolescents (15-19 years) have the highest rates of nonfatal bicycle-related injuries, accounting for more than one-third of all bicycle-related injuries seen in U.S. emergency departments.

III. Phases

- ❖ **Phase 1** The “Phase 1” plan will consist primarily of painted elements. This is the most basic level of our plan and requires the least amount of setup and funding. This plan is vital to our project as it adds functionality and liveliness to the space that will invite families to use our garden.
- ❖ **Phase 2** Consists of the addition of simple road signs and 3D obstacles. This phase will be easy to complete; we will anchor road signs of all types including stop, yield, and all intersections included in our garden. There will be dimensional elements for children to have a better example of roadway obstacles.
- ❖ **Phase 3** This phase will include interactive additions such as a hand-crank railroad-crossing bar, spinning “stop” and “go” signs to simulate stoplights, parent-run variability, different terrains, and a “book box” with instructions on how to properly use the traffic garden.

PROPOSED LAYOUT



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

I. Funds

- Funding for the Phase 1 plan could be acquired through volunteer work or fundraising.
- There are a plethora of grants available for our project; to name a few:
 - A.** The Illinois Department of Transportation offers a Non-Infrastructure grant through the Safe Routes to School Program. The application period opens in Fall 2021.
 - B.** The Park and Recreational Facilities Construction Program offers grant amounts from \$25,000 to \$2,500,000. This grant is offered to land acquisition projects that will be used for general park purposes.
 - C.** The Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program offers a grant of up to \$200,000. This grant applies to bicycle path support facilities and paths.

II. Maintenance

- *Paint touch-ups: 2-5 years* We estimate that paint retouches will fall on the longer end of the spectrum as the garden will be limited to bike tires and minor foot traffic.

III. Liability

Initial questions were raised about the regulation and maintenance of the facility which, in turn, raises the question of who is responsible for potential injuries or liability concerns. Because the facility will be treated as a public park, there is a limited liability to the University. From precedents with other public parks, the locality assumes responsibility only in the case of provable negligence in the form of poor maintenance. Because the obstacles in phase 1 will only be painted on, the possibility of injury is first extremely limited, and secondly would not be due to lack of maintenance — thereby nearly eliminating the possibility of legal action. If this project moves forward, liability under Phase 2 and 3 can be revisited by reaching out to the organizers and administrators of other public traffic gardens to determine their maintenance schedules for signs and other potential sources of injury.

IV. Parking

Many families will likely bike or walk to the park. However, those that are not within close proximity will need a place to park. We believe that it is reasonable to request 4-10 parking spots of Lot D be designated for our traffic garden to allow for convenient and stress-free parking in the near vicinity.



CONCLUSION

Proceeding with this project offers the opportunity to make an incredible difference to the Urbana-Champaign community. Learners of any age will be able to develop the skills necessary for becoming competent road users of all kinds — bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians. With a traffic garden, they will be able to cultivate the basic skills of bike riding and road safety in a low-stakes environment, decreasing the possibility of injury or even death further down the road. There are hundreds of successful traffic gardens and parks around the country, all with the intent of improving the overall health, safety, and awareness of bike riders in their area.

Currently, this area of Bliss Drive and Carle Avenue is going completely unused. Through this C-U Safe Routes to School project, it can instead become a functional, beautiful addition to the community. We seek to foster healthy habits in adults and children, promote sustainable transportation options, and prevent at least some of the many collisions that occur on our roads due to unsafe or unaware travelers.