



Lower Cascades Pilot Road Conversion Frequently Asked Questions

1. What part of the road is being temporarily converted to a trail?

A .6-mile section of Old State Road 37 North is being converted to a trail in this pilot project. On the south end, the trail will be identified by barricades placed just north of the IMI quarry entrance. The north end of the trail will be identified by barricades placed just south of the entrance to the southernmost playground parking lot.

2. How long will the road be closed to motorists?

Plans call for Old State Road 37 North to be closed to motorists for this pilot road conversion project from Friday, March 13 through Wednesday, September 30, 2020. During this time, the City of Bloomington will collect feedback from park and trail users, both current and former, to determine whether or not to make the conversion from road to trail permanent.

3. Why convert a road to a trail?

One of seven public amenity improvements being funded by City Bicentennial Bonds issued in 2018, the pilot trail project is intended to expand and integrate with Bloomington's network of walking and bicycle trails; provide a safe, accessible destination for recreation and exercise; and offer bicycle commuters additional options for safer routes. All of these goals were identified as priorities through both the Parks and Recreation Department's Master Plan 2016-20, and the City of Bloomington's most recent Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2018. Proposed by the mayor and approved by the Bloomington Common Council in 2018, the Bicentennial Bonds will fund additional trail projects around Griffy Lake and from Wapehani Mountain Bike Park to Switchyard Park, and a protected bike lane along Seventh Street.

The Parks Department's community-wide master plan survey revealed that nearly 80% of survey respondents use trails. City-managed, multi-use trails were rated as three of

the Parks and Recreation Department's top four facilities, in terms of importance to Bloomington. In addition, 94% of survey respondents said that having walking and biking trails was either important or very important to them.

4. Why convert this road?

Bloomington's major north-south thoroughfare traversed the Lower Cascades when the city's first park was founded there in 1924. The road became a section of the 'Dixie Highway'/State Road 37 when that Miami-to-Indianapolis route came through Bloomington in 1926, although the road's famous curves soon prompted rerouting S.R. 37 to the east.

Today, motorists have multiple alternatives to the narrow, winding road through Cascades Park, including North Kinser Pike, North Walnut Street, and North Dunn Street. For pedestrians and cyclists, however, the route through the Lower Cascades provides valuable access to the Cascades Park Trail, Ferguson Dog Park, Griffy Lake, and Cascades Golf Course on Bloomington's north side. Building an additional bicycle/pedestrian trail through the Lower Cascades Park valley would entail environmental and financial impacts.

Lower Cascades Park includes one of the city's largest and most accessible playgrounds, plus sturdy reminders of days gone by in the form of two limestone picnic shelters, built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. These amenities, coupled with the forested hills of the valley, and Cascades Creek that runs the length of the park, bring people from across Bloomington to use both the paved Cascades Park Trail and the natural surface trail to the waterfall at the park's south end.

The road's conversion reintegrates the park's divided space and reinforces its identity as a destination. Additionally, removing motorized vehicles from the road establishes a safer environment for cyclists, hikers, runners, playground users, and other park visitors.

5. How can I share my feedback with the City?

The City of Bloomington is interested in learning how residents and visitors feel about their experiences using the converted road as a trail. To leave feedback about the pilot road conversion project, visit <https://bloomington.in.gov/parks/lower-cascades-road> and click on "Share your thoughts on the converted road," or call (812) 349-3700.

6. Where can I park my vehicle if I want to go to the Sycamore Shelter, the Waterfall Shelter, the playground, or if I want to take the trail to the waterfall?

Motorized vehicles will continue to have access to the parking lot at the Sycamore

Shelter, located at the corner of Clubhouse Drive and Old State Road 37 North, and to the parking lots on either end of the Cascades Park playground. The Waterfall Shelter will be accessible only on foot during the pilot road conversion period.

Vehicle parking for trail users is also available at the 17th Street parking lot at Miller-Showers Park, at the Lower Cascades Park ballfields on Old State Road 37 North, at the Ferguson Dog Park on Stone Mill Road, at Cascades Golf Course on Clubhouse Drive, at the Lion's Den Shelter at Upper Cascades Park, and at the Skate Park at Upper Cascades Park on Kinser Pike (Lower Cascades Park is accessible via the natural surface trail from the east side of the Skate Park).

7. Bloomington Parks and Recreation did an online survey in 2019 to ask people what they thought about turning Old State Road 37 North into a one-way road. Will the City continue to collect input once the pilot is underway?

The city received 212 responses to its online survey from March 7 through March 31, 2019. Results of the online survey are posted on the Lower Cascades Park website at <https://bloomington.in.gov/parks/lower-cascades-road>. The pilot road conversion offers the opportunity to collect more feedback-this time, empirical data about users' experience of the road as a trail. All visitors to Lower Cascades Park are invited to share their experiences via the online feedback form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7VDP2BF> or by phone at (812) 349-3700.

8. Will the converted road be safe for people on bikes and on foot, especially at night?

The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing safe, accessible places for people to engage in activities that contribute to health and well-being. Like all other Bloomington Parks and Recreation parks and trails, Lower Cascades Park is open from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m. The absence of motorized vehicles promotes safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

9. Why don't vehicles/bicycles/pedestrians share the road? Why don't you build a walking/biking trail next to the road?

The City of Bloomington has long sought a connection from downtown Bloomington to Lower Cascades Park, but has been deterred by the cost to build a new bicycle/pedestrian trail to modern safety and construction standards. By conducting this six-month pilot road conversion project, the City will be able to study the advantages the road conversion offers in terms of accessibility, safety, and connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians, and the experience of the park as a destination.

10. How will the road conversion affect bus routes to and from Bloomington North High School, Marlin Elementary, Arlington Elementary, and others?

Monroe County Community School Corporation buses primarily use Old S.R. 37 North of Clubhouse Drive. The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department has communicated information about the road conversion to the MCCSC Transportation Department, and bus drivers were notified February 18, 2020.

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