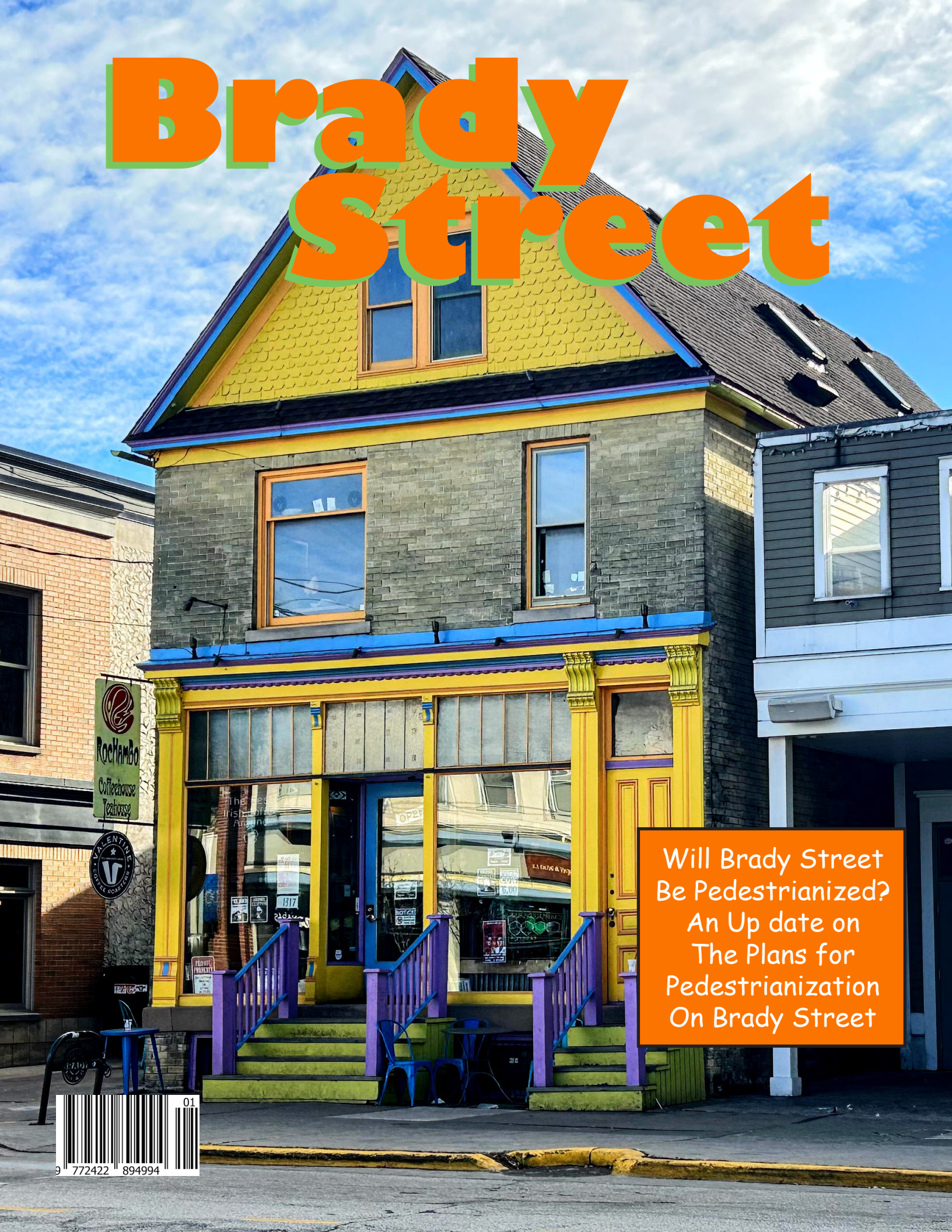


# Brady Street



Will Brady Street  
Be Pedestrianized?  
An Up date on  
The Plans for  
Pedestrianization  
On Brady Street





Mac Attack on Brady Street - Cael Byrne

# Will Brady Street Be Pedestrianized?

## An Update on the Plans for Pedestrianization on Brady Street

By Cael Byrne

**B**rady Street is a major thru-street that connects and provides access to several major destinations like UWM, MSOE, the Lakefront, the Beerline Trail and Oak Leaf Trail, the Riverwalk and more.

Brady Street is also home to several annual events including the Spring Art Walk, Pet Parade and Festivus. The most prominent annual event is the Brady Street Festival which arose from hippie counterculture in 1973.

According to Wisconsin Department of Transportation data, the average amount of vehicles on Brady Street daily has decreased to 8,900. Their earliest data shows the highest volume in 2004 at an average of 121,000 vehicles per day.

“Yeah, it’s pretty much a rush hour type point,” said Chairperson of the Brady Street Business Improvement District Leroy Buth. “It becomes a thoroughfare for people going to work or coming home from work.”

According to WisDOT data, there have been 32 crashes on Brady Street in the last year, not to mention the fatal crash that killed 32-year-old Arne J. Bast on Sept. 11th, 2022. The majority of crashes only resulted in property damage, but that does not diminish Brady Street policymakers’ concern.

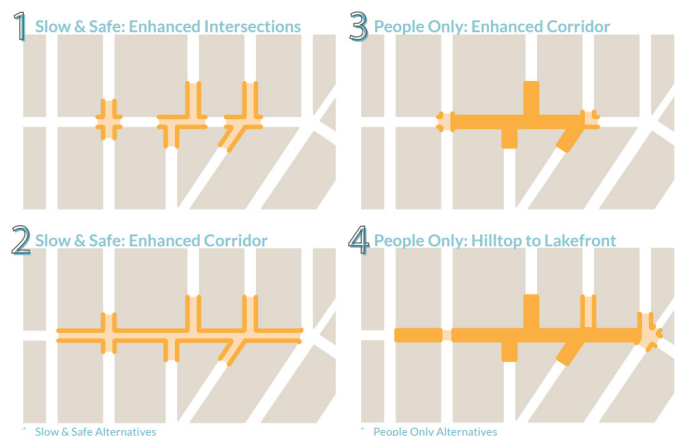
Taking these concerns into account, the Brady Street Business Improvement District did a study in the spring of 2022 to see what would happen if Brady Street was converted to a pedestrian-first environment.

This study was put together by the Brady Street BID,

Graef USA Inc., an engineering firm, and TKWA UrbanLab, an architectural firm. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning Robert Schnieder and his students also helped with the study by researching other pedestrianized streets.

“One thing that I always say about our students is that they haven’t formed really strong opinions about what’s possible and what’s not yet,” said Schnieder. “So they can be creative in their thoughts, and sometimes come up with things that the professionals would never even consider.”

The study includes four different designs from Humboldt Avenue to Farwell Avenue varying from a pedestrian-first space with access for personal vehicles to a completely pedestrianized space only allowing for pedestrians, cyclists and transit, loading, emergency and select business vehicles.



Slow & Safe Alternatives

People Only Alternatives

- Brady Street BID

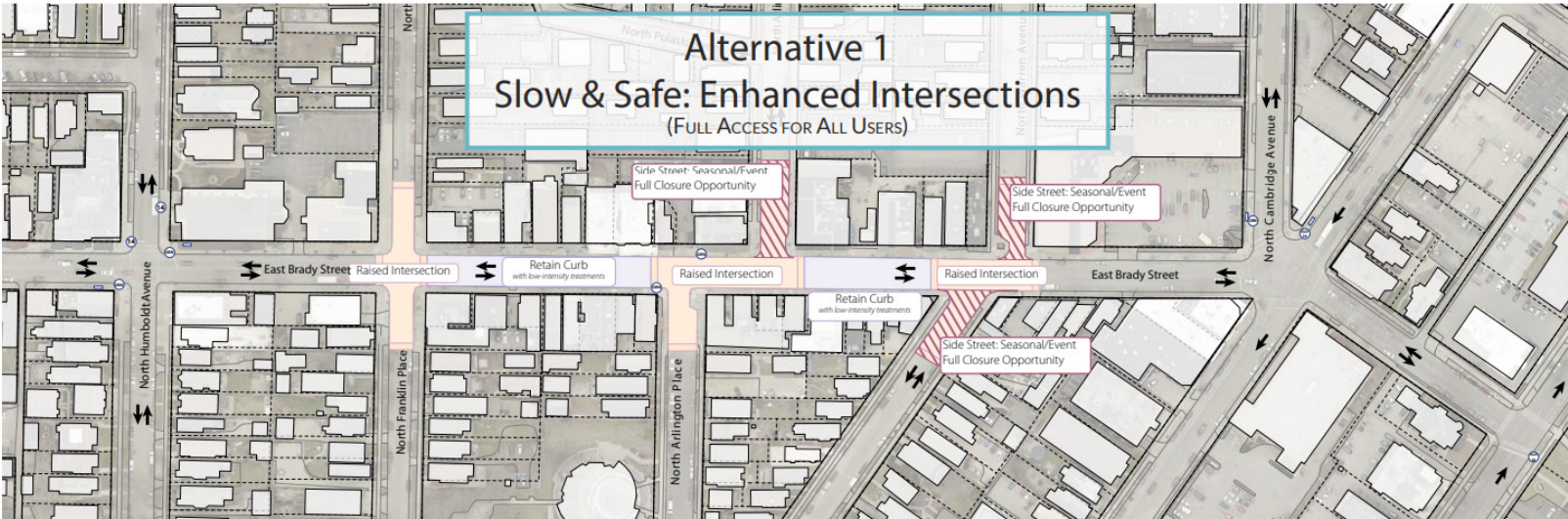
# Designs One and Two: Raised plazas with unrestricted access

The first and second designs are pedestrian-first environments which would prioritize pedestrians, but still allow personal vehicles to pass through at a much slower rate.

With no change to traffic; no redirection, educational signage, or wayfinding would be required for these designs. Bollards and painted arrows could be added to help motorists navigate the newly-pedestrian-first space.

The bus stop at Arlington Place may need to be shifted to accommodate curb extensions. All other existing bus stops as well as existing bike lanes would remain undisturbed. Altering bus stops to be in line with the traffic was also an option.

To improve the aesthetic, painted murals on the raised intersections were also considered which might require more maintenance. Otherwise, the maintenance required for these designs would be minimal.



- Brady Street BID

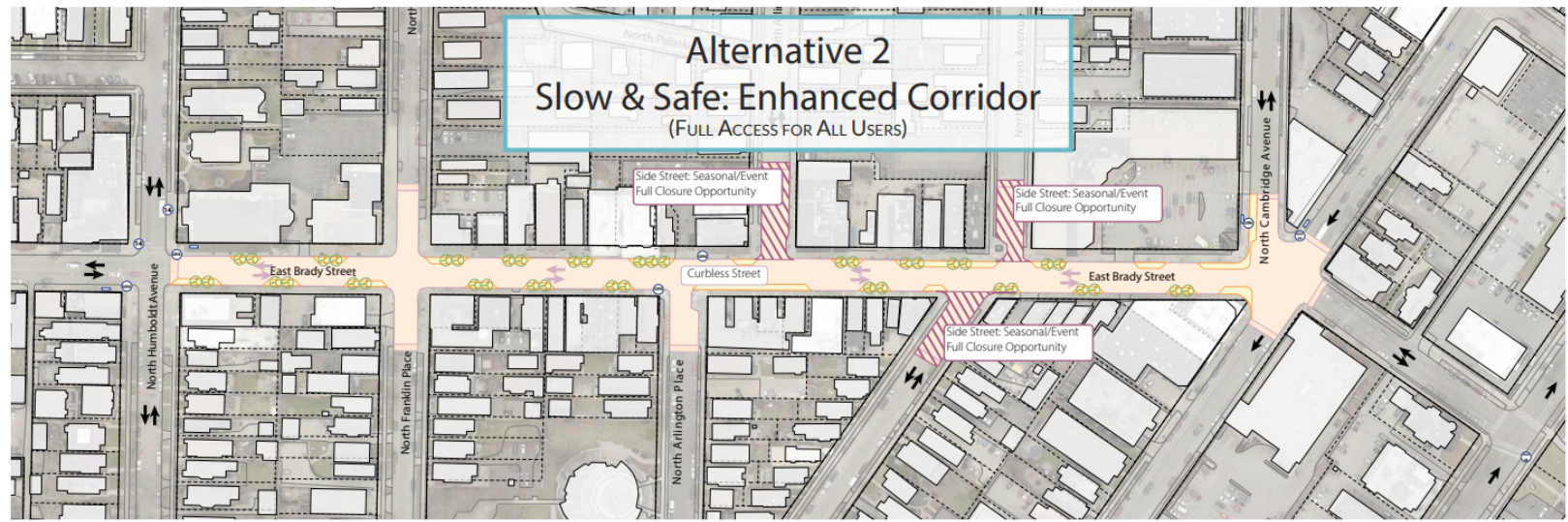
The first design would raise intersections at North Franklin Place, North Arlington Place, and North Warren Avenue to the level of pedestrians to create curbsless plaza spaces along Brady Street.

Raising Intersections and connected side streets would also add the opportunity to close these plazas for events. Additional sidewalks, seating, dining, and landscaping could also be added where new curb extensions would be.

Six existing on-street parking spaces would need to be removed at the raised intersections. However, the amount and proximity of speed tables may cause increased speed as drivers race to the next speed table. Signage and pavement markings could be added to reduce the potential for speeding when departing each raised intersection.



- Brady Street BID



- Brady Street BID

The second design would raise the entire stretch from Farwell Avenue to Humboldt Avenue to the level of pedestrians to transform Brady Street into a curbless plaza.

In the second design, the southern end of the Farwell Avenue intersection is narrowed significantly to facilitate one-way traffic. Ten to twenty existing on-street parking spots would be reallocated to pedestrian seating or landscaping areas which may reduce the prevalence of sideswipe crashes on Brady Street.

Raised curbless plazas would be implemented to reduce the speed of vehicles, and noise to enhance customer experience on Brady Street. Pedestrian Priority might also deter some drivers from using Brady Street, further reducing traffic.



- Brady Street BID



Nomad World Pub on Brady Street - Cael Byrne

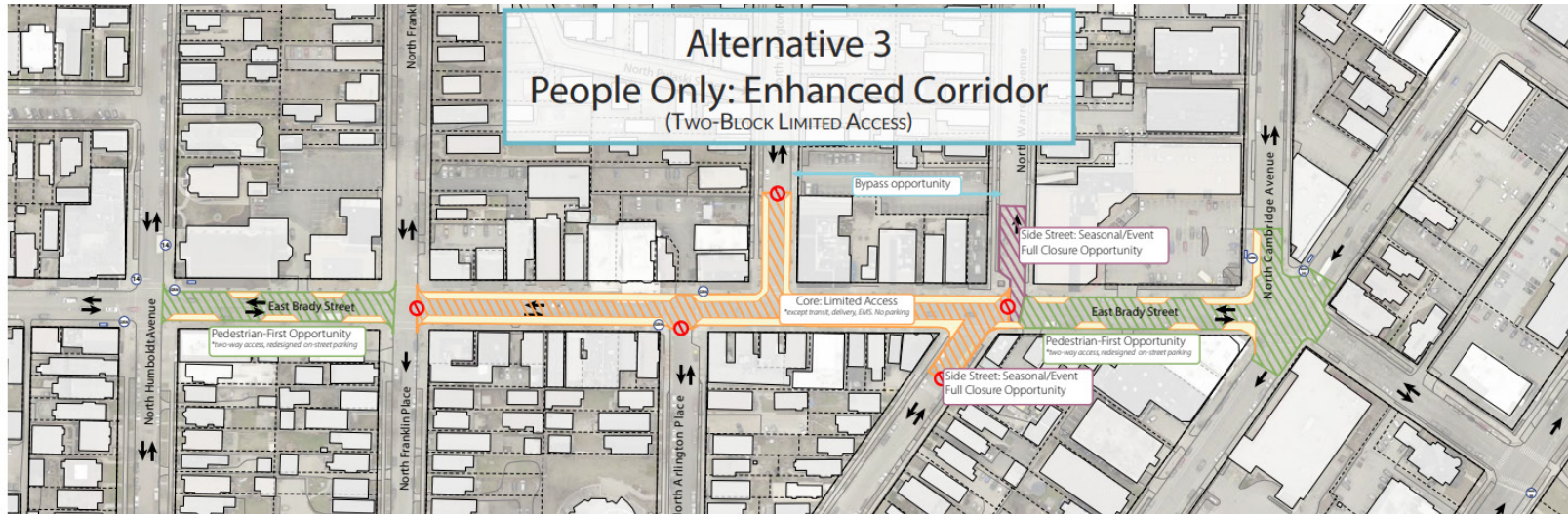
# Designs Three and Four: Completely Pedestrianized with restricted access

The third and fourth designs are completely pedestrianized spaces with no access for personal vehicles. These designs would still allow access for transit, loading, select businesses and emergency vehicles.

In both of these designs, Brady Street is raised and narrowed from 40 feet to 20 feet, adding 10 feet of sidewalk on each side. An extended sidewalk would provide opportunities for extra seating, dining and other aesthetic enhancements.

The bus stop at Arlington Place would be converted along with the narrowed street to an in-line bus stop, so the bus would not have to pull over. All other bus stops and existing bike lanes would remain undisturbed.

These designs would require minimal effort to maintain and enhance, because of the elimination of wear and tear caused by traffic.



- Brady Street BID

The third design is a fully-pedestrianized space from Warren Avenue to Franklin Place with pedestrian first opportunities on Farwell Avenue and Humboldt Avenue.

In this design, the two-block stretch from Franklin Place to Warren Avenue as well as a portion of Arlington Place and Warren Avenue are closed to all personal vehicles.

The east and west blocks of Brady Street would maintain access to personal vehicles with bump-out curb extensions to expand pedestrian space and facilitate on-street parking.

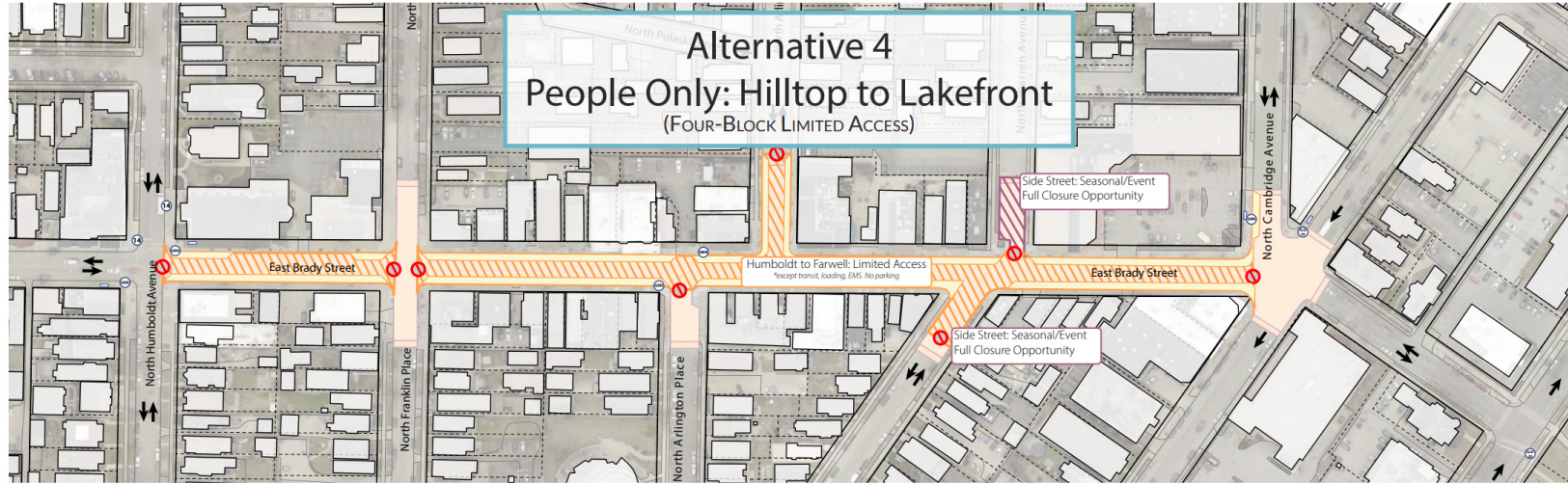
Motorists who are unfamiliar with the restrictions on Brady Street would most likely turn onto the side streets at Franklin Place and Warren Avenue. However, there is a concern of motorists cutting through the pedestrianized section of Brady Street.

To resolve this concern, the Brady Street BID would invest in motorist education through signage on Brady Street and marketing campaigns. There would also be physical barriers at Warren Avenue, Franklin Place and all side-street entrances.

Around 30 existing on-street parking spots would be reallocated to bump-out seating, dining and landscaping areas throughout Brady Street.



- Brady Street BID



- Brady Street BID

The fourth design is a fully-pedestrianized space from Humboldt Avenue to Farwell Avenue with partial closures on side streets at Warren Avenue and Arlington Place. All existing on-street parking would be reallocated to pedestrian space.

Intersecting side streets Humboldt Avenue, Franklin Place and Cambridge Avenue would remain open to thru traffic, allowing for people to park or be dropped off on side streets.

The intersection at Farwell Avenue would also be raised to notify motorists that they are entering a pedestrian-first environment. The intersections at Warren Avenue and Arlington Place would be converted to permanent plazas.

Motorists who are unfamiliar with the restrictions on Brady Street would most likely turn onto the side streets at Humboldt Avenue and Cambridge Avenue. However, there is a concern of motorists cutting through the pedestrianized section of Brady Street.

To resolve this concern, the Brady Street BID would invest in motorist education through signage on Brady Street and marketing campaigns. There would also be physical barriers at Humboldt Avenue, Cambridge Avenue and all side-street entrances.



- Brady Street BID



Dorsia on Brady Street - Cael Byrbe

# What Kinds of Barriers Would They Use?

In order to create a completely pedestrianized space with access for transit, loading, emergency and select businesses; barriers at each entrance would be a vital part of the design.

Authorized vehicles of all kinds must be able to access Brady Street on demand without the need for human interface, all while blocking access for motorists.

Physical permanent barriers would require little to no operation or maintenance, but would also have to be removed for authorized vehicles several times a day which would be problematic for transit and emergency vehicles.

Physical barriers could also be easily bypassed by motorcycles. However, a physical barrier designed to keep motorcycles out would also prevent cyclists from entering.

Retractable barriers would be an adequate solution if implemented correctly, allowing authorized vehicles to be granted access on demand. Retractable barriers could also be lowered to allow access for all vehicles at certain times.

Retractable bollards that rise up from the ground would fit well into a pedestrianized environment, but may malfunction due to collisions, frequent use, and weather conditions.

Retractable bollards could also fold downward which would require less mechanical maintenance. Although, they could break or malfunction if something gets stuck in the path of the bollard. Malfunctioning bollards would have to be left open until they are fixed which could put pedestrians in danger.



Retractable Bollard - Benoit Prieur



Foldable Bollard - TrafficGuard Inc.



Wurstbar on Brady Street - Cael Byrne



Glorioso's Italian Market on Brady - Cael Byrne

Drop-arm barriers are commonly used in parking garages and on railroads to stop motorists, plus pedestrians and bikes could easily maneuver past them. However, they may be confusing to motorists who are used to waiting for, or signing in to open drop-arm barriers. Radio Frequency Identification Devices are commonly used in credit cards and garage door systems for remote activation at a distance. RFID technology could be implemented in the same way to open the barriers on demand.

However, distributing RFID devices to all transit, emergency, loading and select business vehicles would be challenging, time consuming, and expensive.

This solution would also require managing the software for the RFID devices, a database of vehicles granted access and an application process so that business and loading vehicles can gain access.



RFID Logo - Christiaan Colen



Drop Arm Barrier - Wikimedia Commons



# The New Hotel Proposal

An 11-story, 130-room hotel will take the place of the Farwell Point retail building at 1709-1723 North Farwell Avenue. A brand for the hotel has yet to be announced, but a new hotel on Brady Street would help generate tourism for a pedestrian-first space.

The glassy, triangular design was proposed in January by President of Klein Development Michael Klein and Jenno Cataldo, owner of Dorsia and Saint Bibiana on Brady Street. When built, the hotel will also include a restaurant and an event space.

The Farwell Point property was sold to Klein's Investment group Farwell Propco LLC in August for \$1.53 million according to state real estate records.

The development team would also need to provide 59 off-site spaces and 11 short-term, on-site spaces. A parking lot at 1744-1750 North Farwell Avenue currently owned by Saint John's On The Lake is being considered.

Klein Development plans to buy the site, and provide space for 30 to 40 employees of Saint John's On The Lake. Architect Ethan Skeels is considering four options for the parking structure which would provide 90 to 219 parking spaces. A valet service will be used for people staying at the hotel.

The 11 on-site spaces would be added in a loading zone behind the hotel. The Department of Public Works has reviewed the proposal to ensure the loading area will provide enough space for loading and garbage



Brady Street Hotel Rendering - Kahler Slater trucks without blocking North Cambridge Avenue.

The hotel plans also include pedestrian beacons to be installed at the intersection of Farwell Avenue and Royall Place to make a safer path for pedestrians to and from the parking structure.

The development team also considered building an apartment complex, before deciding a hotel was the best use of the space. A 100-unit apartment building would have required a 12-story parking structure.



Farwell Point Shopping Center on Brady - Cael Byrne

## What do Local Businesses Think About Pedestrianization?

The impact of a completely pedestrianized street would draw more attention to Brady Street, which would lend itself to more opportunities for public art, cultural signifiers and other aesthetic enhancements to express local diversity.

However, many local businesses are opposed to the pedestrianization of Brady Street.

“I believe it would have a negative impact on our business,” said Melissa Honkamp, owner of Rochambo.

“We rely on easy accessibility nowadays. In the early days we were a destination as there were no other coffee shops. Now we are a convenience. If it becomes a hassle to get to us people will go somewhere else that is easier to get to,” said Honkamp.

Each design for pedestrianization would have to reallocate parking spaces to pedestrian space, which is a particular point of concern for local businesses.

“What will affect us is when it is busy on Brady Street, and there’s a lack of parking,” said Brian Kirk, manager of Lilliput Records. “We have customers that simply won’t come.”

Honkamp also said that lack of parking has definitely had an impact on her business at times. However, the plans for the hotel which include a parking structure are still moving forward. A parking structure would reduce on-street parking, which in-turn might reduce congestion and confusion on Brady Street.



Inside of Lilliput Records - Brett Krzykowski

## Final Thoughts:

---

UWM Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning Robert Schneider said that going immediately to option four would be a hard sell to the neighborhood.

“Would I say we need to close it down to all cars today, and that’s it? No, I wouldn’t,” said Schneider. “But, I absolutely think we need to experiment and see what works best.”

Taking these concerns into consideration, the Brady Street BID has decided not to move forward with pedestrianization.

“This was put together by the executive director in response to the city, and we thought, ‘Well, let’s roll with it and see if we can come up with anything that would be workable.’ And it really didn’t work out in our opinion,” said Chairperson of Brady Street BID Leroy Buth.

However, this study has provided a lot of useful research for making Brady Street safer for both pedestrians and motorists in a way that would not hinder business. This study could also be used as an example for other communities looking into pedestrianization.

“People that speed are going to speed,” said Buth. “But on the other hand, we have traffic enforcement that’s not being done to change behavior.”

Moving forward, the Brady Street BID is looking at installing stop signs and working with the Milwaukee Police Department to deploy traffic enforcement units on Brady Street.

