

Sustainable Transportation and Calvin College: Action Steps

Calvin Campus Roadway and Bicycle Facility Improvements

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Background

Knollcrest Circle is the main circulation road on Calvin's campus. While it is a pleasant drive, walk, or bikeway, sharing the road- and understanding several of the intersections can be confusing and unnecessarily dangerous. We have proposed several solutions for these problems, as well as some improvements for bike storage which would provide an aesthetic, organized, and sophisticated increase in our current storage on campus.

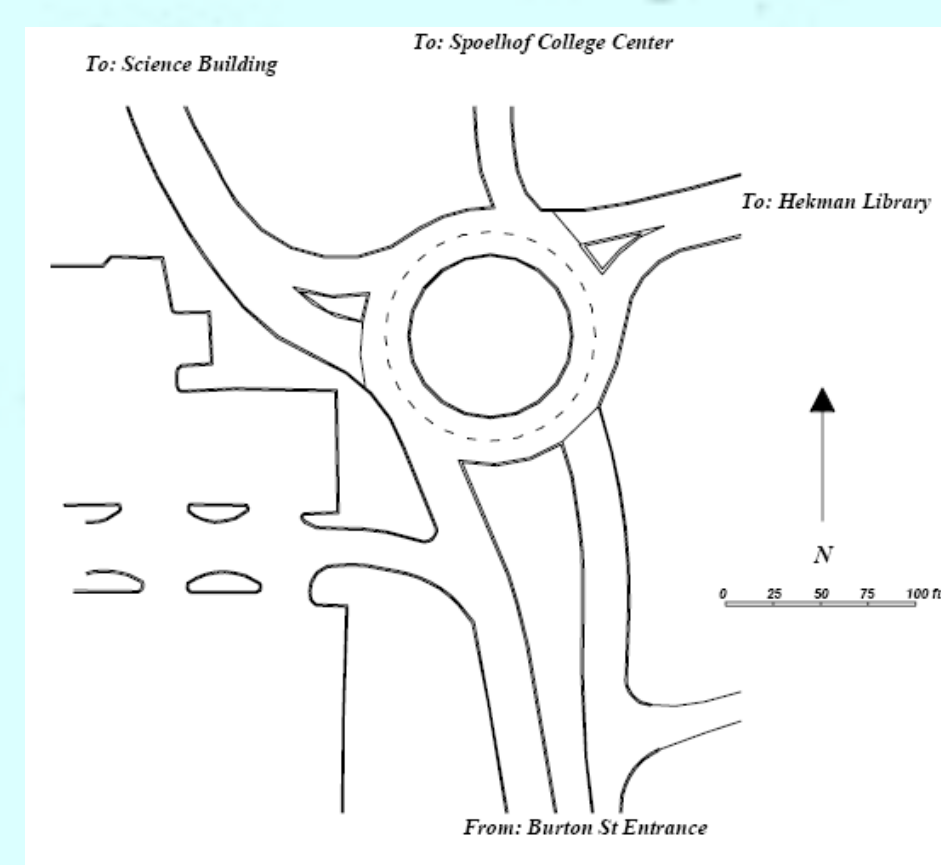
Roundabout

The Burton St. intersection has grown too large. There are many points of conflict and unusual movements. It is confusing and dangerous for drivers and cyclists, and unfriendly to pedestrians.

Roundabouts serve as traffic-calming devices, reduce points of contact for possible collisions, ease flow of traffic and add aesthetic quality to an intersection. Safety and efficiency would both be greatly improved, reducing fuel consumption, air pollution, and traffic delays.

Proposal

A roundabout would be a great solution to the current issues that occur frequently at this intersection. Currently, Calvin is in possession of a plan for a roundabout with two lanes connecting to the intersection at the existing points. This design also closes the parking lot entrance/exit to reduce points of conflict.



Proposed roundabout

Sharrow

Calvin's roads are wider than the required width to accommodate large vehicles and on street parking in spots. The disadvantage to having wide roads is that drivers naturally tend to drive faster and less carefully. With increased bike ridership on Calvin's campus, the roads are filled with more cyclists. This has caused dangerous situations between riders and automobiles.

Separate bike lanes would be an ideal solution; however, Calvin's roads are considered too narrow to accommodate this. A sharrow is a simple and affordable way to ease some of these problems.

Proposal

A simple solution to improve road safety is painting "sharrow" markings and installing "share the road" signs. These serve simply to remind drivers that they share the roads with bikers, mopeds, and scooters, and help to promote bike use by contributing to safety on campus.

The cost is minimal and the project simple.



Sharrow marking



Share The Road sign

Bike Facilities

Bike ridership has increased on Calvin's campus in recent years. Biking is a sustainable mode of transportation and should be encouraged at Calvin. The current racking system is cluttered and overcrowded with bikes daily. would benefit from some aesthetic improvements. To further encourage biking and to provide adequate storage on campus we would also like to propose some covered shelters. Michigan weather is unpredictable, and these racks would be well used by students and faculty.

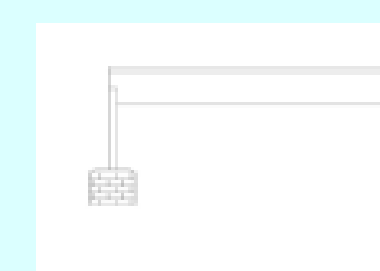
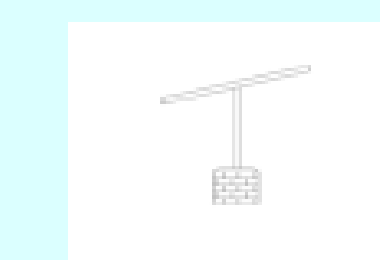
Proposal for new bike rack design:

This design would be a nice aesthetic addition to any Calvin building. The racks are easy to use, and remain fairly clutter-free compared to the current design. A similar design has been successfully used in several Grand Rapids locations with the addition of a logo. This would provide space for the Calvin name, building name, or whatever use is most beneficial for campus.



Proposal for bike shelter locations:

The FAC parking lot would be the ideal place for a bike shelter. Existing bike racks located between the Student Commons and the Heckman Library are always full. Each shelter would require only one parking space, reducing available parking spots by one, but increasing sheltered bike storage by up to 10. This design is an example of a simple, economic structure with similar aesthetics to those on campus



Action Steps

Advocate

Students can actively write to and meet with the Calvin administration and can make sure that their opinions are heard, by searching out those in power to make a change.

Keep Biking

Students and faculty need to continue biking; continued crowding of bikes racks may lead to fast implementation of advancements.

Write to Chimes

Chimes has recently published articles on biking at Calvin, continued exposure will be helpful. New information about the values of roundabouts and a sharrow system could reach many through Chimes.

Talk to ESC

Both the student and staff coalitions advocate for biking and bike facilities, they may be interested in furthering some sustainable transportation ideas on campus.

Educate

Sharrows and roundabouts are underutilized structural elements. Their ability to allow cars to maintain mild speeds while changing direction saves energy. The designs are visually appealing, and make transportation more enjoyable. The issue here is not whether they are valuable, but rather a general education of the public. Chimes and ESC are valuable forums for education.

Fundraise & Promote

Calvin is interested in these projects, but budgeting is always an issue. Student organizations and clubs like ESC and the Calvin Bike Club could get involved to help raise funds to get these projects rolling. Sustainable transportation needs to be promoted not only to students and faculty, but to board members and donors.

References:
Phil Beezhold
www.dero.com

"Roads to the Future" project preliminary feasibility study



CALVIN
MINDS IN THE MAKING