

CEDAR RAPIDS DOWNTOWN STREETS

In the summer of 2012, the Cedar Rapids DPW retained Speck & Associates to redesign all of the streets in its 25-block downtown core. Understanding that funding was limited, the resulting proposal focused exclusively on the areas between curbs, avoiding any reconstruction beyond repaving, restriping, and the modification of traffic signals.

The typical street in downtown Cedar Rapids consisted of four travel lanes yet routinely carried no more than 6,000 car trips per day. Since a two-lane street can typically carry more than 10,000 daily trips, most of these streets could be narrowed to two lanes, freeing up a tremendous amount of excess pavement for alternative uses. These uses included turning parallel parking lanes into angle parking lanes and introducing a robust cycling network. Additionally, almost half of the downtown streets were one-way, notoriously harmful to retail activity. The plan restored two-way travel to all one-way streets.

Rather than budgeting specific funding for the work, the City decided to simply restripe individual streets as they came up for repaving. As a result, the project took about 6 years to complete, with no large street closures needed. Additionally, transforming a four-lane street system into a two-lane street system allowed the City to replace many of its signalized intersections with mostly four-way stop signs, saving approximately \$150,000 per intersection.

CLIENT
Cedar Rapids Department
of Public Works

TIMELINE
2012

CATEGORY
Streets & Networks

BUDGET
Completed without
dedicated funding

SCALE
200 acres

STATUS
Completed

AWARDS
Merit Award for Planning,
ASLA Central States,
2023; Congress for the
New Urbanism, Charter
Award 2023; Merit Award,
Iowa Chapter, American
Planning Association 2022

REFERENCE
Jeff Pomeranz,
City Manager, j.pomeranz@
cedar-rapids.org

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

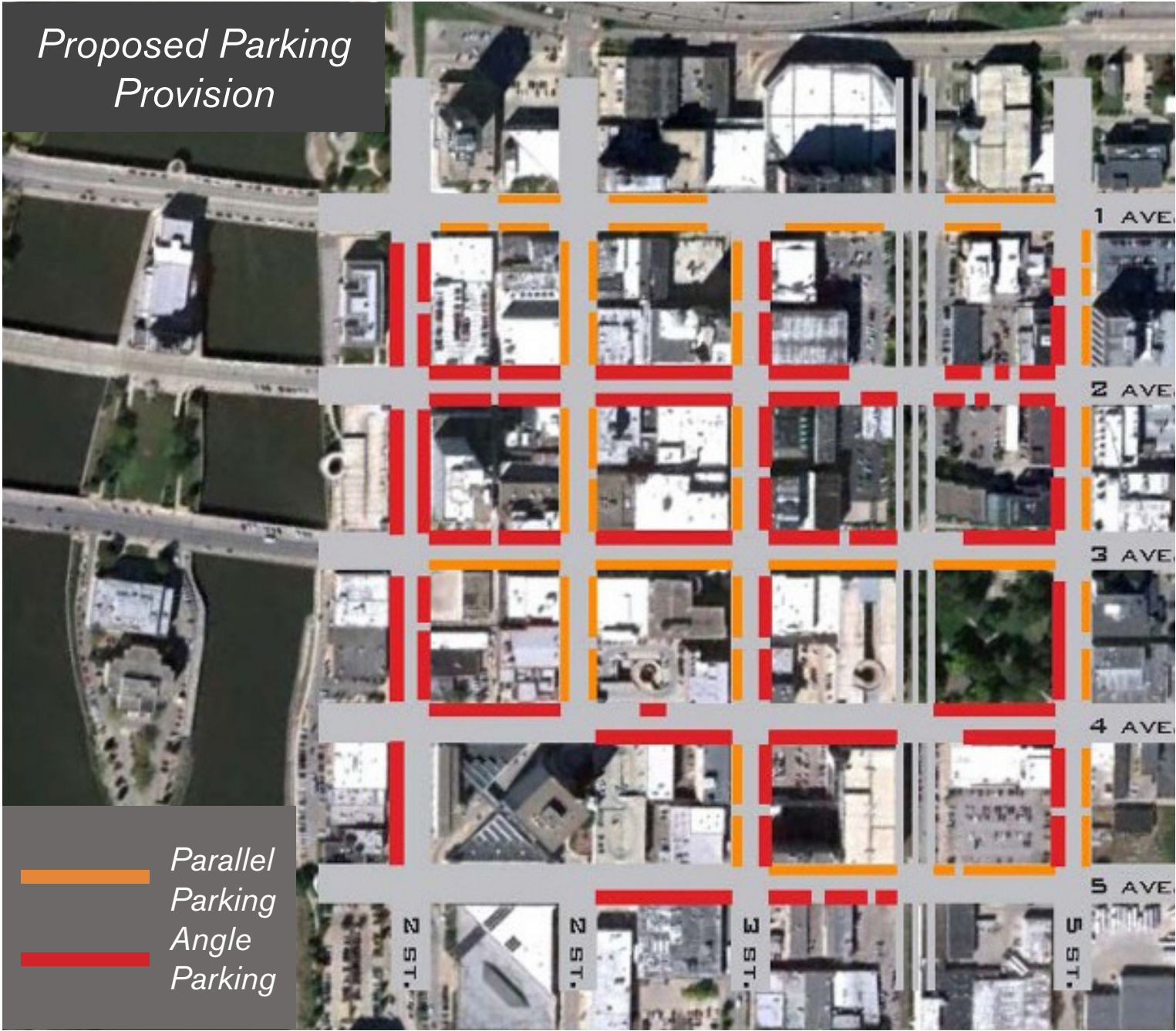
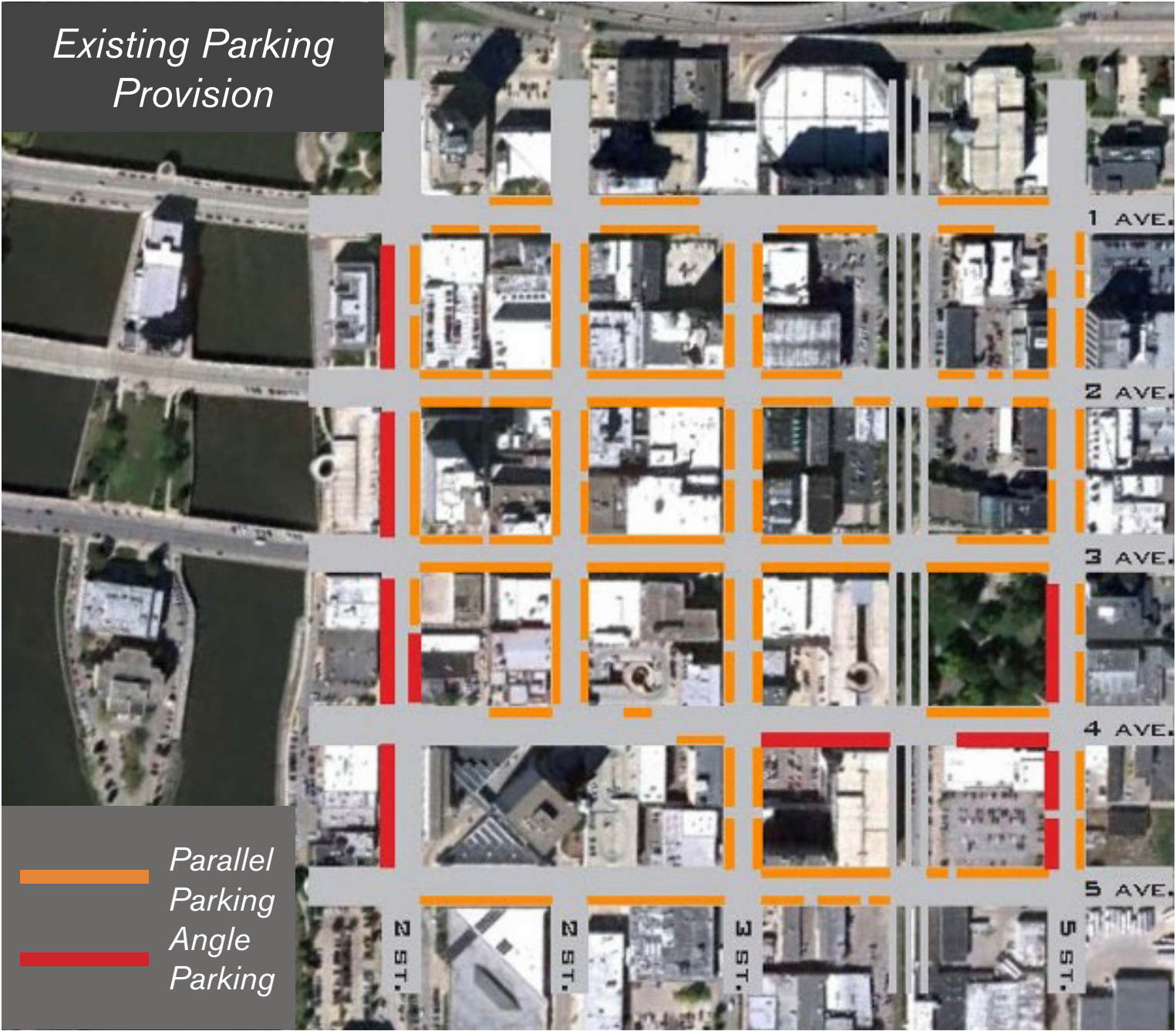
“One-way conversions are a critical piece to making [the downtown] feel like a place where you would want to live and walk around and feel safe.”

— Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director

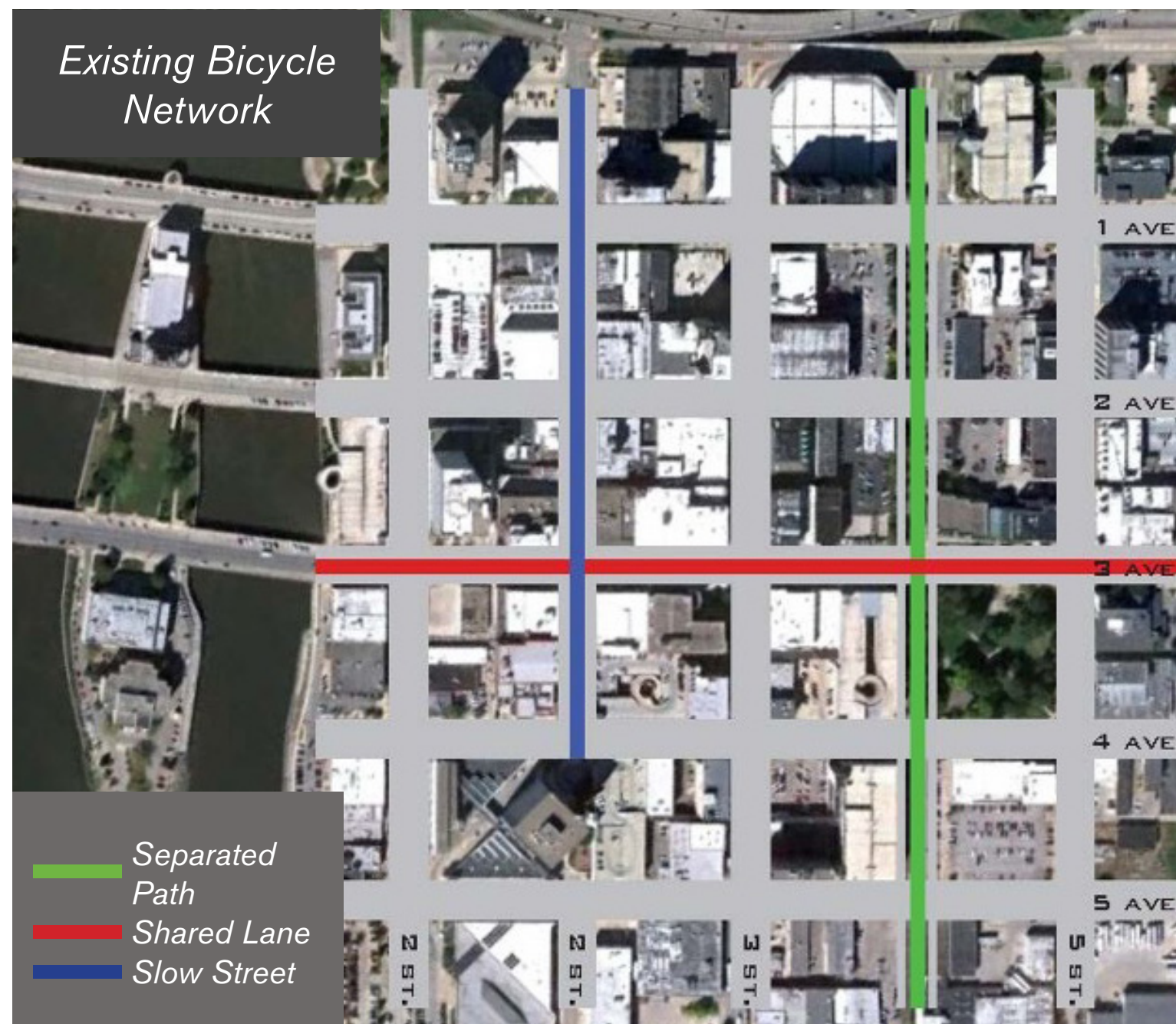




A typical street in downtown Cedar Rapids before and after conversion from four-lane one-way to two-lane two-way with buffered cycletrack.



Existing Bicycle Network



Proposed Bicycle Network

