



**Routes 7/15 Interchange  
Norwalk, Connecticut  
State Project No. 102-358**

**Environmental Assessment,  
Draft Section 4(F) Evaluation and  
Environmental Impact Evaluation**

**Appendix C  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Study**

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Prepared for:  
Connecticut Department of  
Transportation Federal Highway  
Administration

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## BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS

This Appendix provides a more detailed safety assessment of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, related plans, and pedestrian and bicycle activity within the Project Area of the 7/15 Norwalk Project. The focus area for the analysis is the potential project construction activity in the direct vicinity of Route 15 (Merritt Parkway) and Main Avenue interchange, defined within this document as the Project Site.

### REGULATORY AND POLICY SETTING RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT SITE

Current bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1) requirements were considered to establish the regulatory setting and ensure that the proposed project improvements are consistent with the goals, policies, and plans for bicycles and pedestrians in the Project Area. Plans reviewed include the City of Norwalk Citywide Plan of Conservation and Development (2019-2029) (2), the Norwalk Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan (3), the Main Avenue Transportation Study (4), and the Norwalk River Valley Trail Routing Study (5). Regulatory and design guidelines reviewed include NACTO Design Guides (6), CTDOT Highway Design Manual (7), and ADA requirements for these pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Relevant plans and their goals and objectives within the study area are briefly described below.

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANS

#### ***City of Norwalk Master Plan of Conservation and Development (2019)***

The following are a few of the goals and objectives of the *Norwalk Master Plan of Conservation and Development* related to bicycle and pedestrian conditions.

- Connect people and places. Provide safe and efficient transportation choices, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit opportunities, along with well-maintained streets, to connect people to each other, to city destinations, and the region;
- Support Complete Streets policies and multimodal level of service analysis<sup>1</sup> to improve streets for all users and varying abilities, and;
- Support investment in new bicycle and walking facilities equitably distributed throughout the City.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/PP\\_Policy/Documents/Complete-Streets](https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/PP_Policy/Documents/Complete-Streets)



### ***Norwalk Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan (2012)***

The *Norwalk Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan* provides specific recommendations for Main Avenue. These include:

- Improve sidewalk conditions just south of Glover Avenue;
- Improve crosswalk conditions at the intersection of Glover Avenue and Main Avenue;
- Improve crosswalk conditions at the intersection of Linden Street and Main Avenue; and
- Improve crosswalk conditions at the intersection of Perry Avenue and Main Avenue.

### ***Transportation Plan for Main Avenue – Route 719: New Canaan Ave (Route 123) to Norwalk/Wilton Town Line (March 2020)***

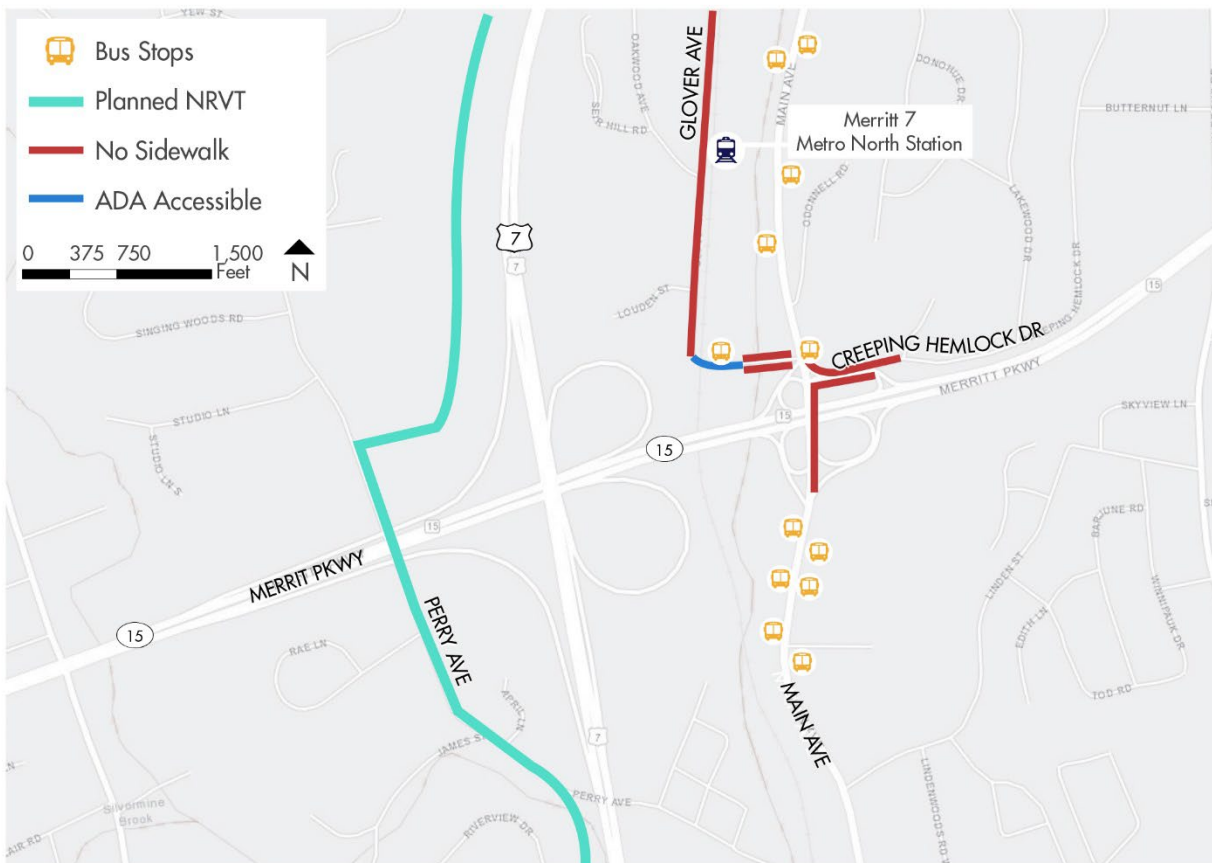
The Transportation Plan for Main Avenue was funded by Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) as a follow-up to the Route 7 Corridor Study with a specific focus on improved traffic operations, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along Main Avenue in Norwalk. Recommendations from the plan include:

- Improvements to sidewalks to meet ADA requirements;
- Enhanced cross-walks and consideration of exclusive pedestrian phases; and
- Enhanced streetscape along Main Avenue south of the Merritt Parkway.

### ***Norwalk River Valley Trail Routing Study (2012)***

The *Norwalk River Valley Trail Routing Study* was developed to research the implementation and construction of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT). The NRVT is a planned 30-mile-long multimodal pathway extending from Danbury to Ridgefield, Redding, and Norwalk. Currently, there are 8.2 completed miles to constructed with an additional 3.4 miles in progress. The pathway has not been completed within the 7/15 Norwalk Project Area. The trail is expected to pass to the west of the Route 7/15 Interchange, utilizing the current right-of-way for the United Illuminating power lines. An additional spur is currently under consideration to link the trail to the Merritt 7 train station and Main Avenue via Glover Avenue. Figure 1 presents the current routing options under consideration.





## DETAILED EXISTING CONDITIONS REVIEW – BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS

An existing conditions study of bicycle and pedestrian conditions was completed in 2018. Data for existing conditions related to bicycle and pedestrian amenities and use in the Project Area was obtained during a field visit, conducting pedestrian and bicycle counts, a review of Strava bicycle ridership and pedestrian data, and analyzing crash data from the CT Crash Data Repository. These methods are briefly described below.

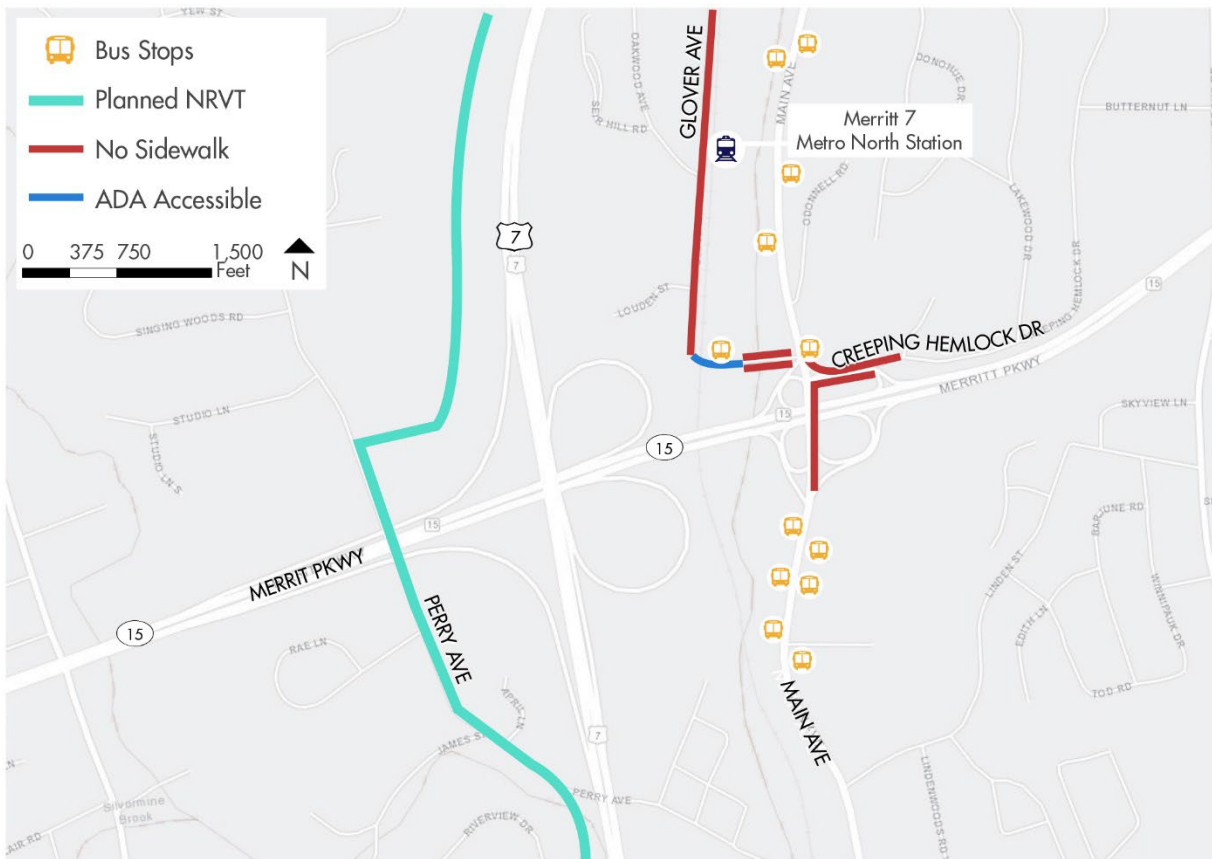
### *Field Review of Bicycle and Pedestrian Environment*

Main Avenue provides limited amenities for pedestrians and no bicycle-specific facilities. Sidewalks along Main Avenue are disjointed/non-continuous and do not meet the current design standards of CTDOT. Similarly, Glover Avenue has limited pedestrian facilities and no bicycle facilities. Creeping Hemlock Drive does not have pedestrian facilities near its intersection with Main Avenue.



Bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited from both the Merritt Parkway and Route 7. As such, no facilities or amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists exist within the Right of Way of these transportation corridors.

There are several bus stops along Main Avenue for service provided by the Norwalk Transit District. Additionally, the Merritt 7 Train Station is located on Glover Avenue. These transit facilities generate demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities as the bus stops do not have available parking, and the train station provides only limited parking. Transit system users who exit at the train station or bus stops, walk or bike to nearby offices, businesses, and residences.



### ***Review of Current Project Compliance with ADA Requirements***

Only one limited segment of roadway (approximately 300' in length) along Glover Avenue, between the Norwalk River and the Metro-North Railroad tracks, is fully compliant with ADA standards. Other roadway sections are not ADA compliant because one or more of the following facilities is not present:

- Tactile material to warn visually impaired pedestrians of the transition between the sidewalk and the street edge at the curb ramps;
- Sidewalks not on both sides of the roadway;
- Curb ramps to provide a sloped curb from the sidewalk to the street;
- Missing crosswalks at intersections: None of the intersections in the Project Area have crosswalks along all four legs;
- Audible information for visually impaired pedestrians where there is a pedestrian push button provided at signalized intersections, and;
- Overall poor conditions of sidewalks within the corridor with cracks, crumbling concrete, and heaving

In addition, street amenities, such as lamp posts and utility poles, block the center of the sidewalk in several locations and inhibit pedestrian pathways. See Figure 3 for a sample of sidewalk conditions within the Project Site.







Figure 3 Degraded sidewalk conditions (Main Avenue and Glover Avenue)

locations.

Figure 4 for count





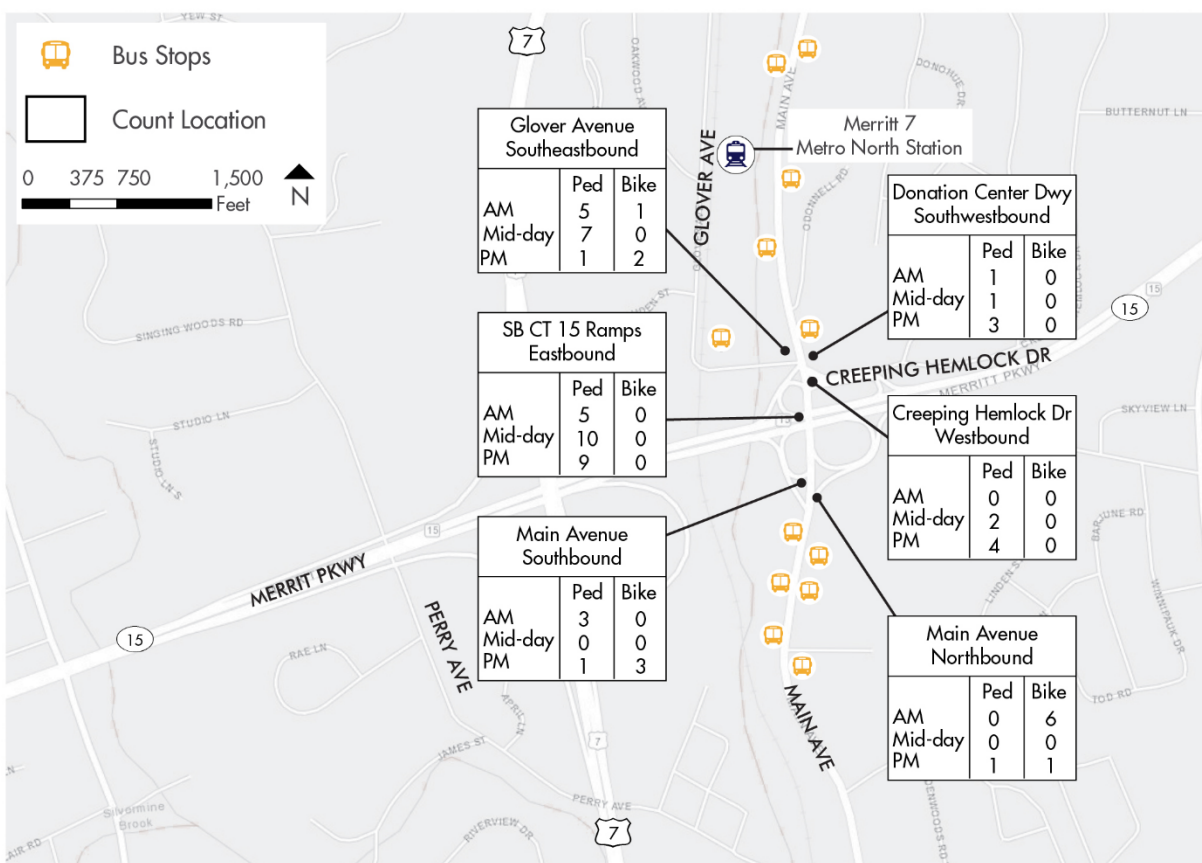


Figure 4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Counts (October 2018)

### Strava Data Review

Traffic count data was supplemented with data from the Strava website. Strava is a fitness activity application for GPS watches and cell phones. A user records their activity and location during walking, running, or bicycling and uploads their activity to the Strava website. This data is used to generate heat maps ([www.strava.com/heatmap](http://www.strava.com/heatmap)) of activities within an area. A review of Strava data shows an active use of local roadways for active transportation over the course of a year. Main Avenue is used by both pedestrians and bicyclists to connect through neighborhoods and residential streets (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Pedestrian use of Main Avenue is higher than bicycle use compared to other streets in the area. The higher pedestrian activity on Main Avenue to nearby streets demonstrates that even with the lack of supportive pedestrian infrastructure, the retail, commercial, and employment locations are attractive to residents and employees. From a bicyclist perspective, Main Avenue's lower use demonstrates the lack of bicycle infrastructure amenities, which creates a missing link in a more extensive, regional bicycle network. Bicyclists avoid Main Avenue in favor of lower traffic volume roadways east and west of Main Avenue



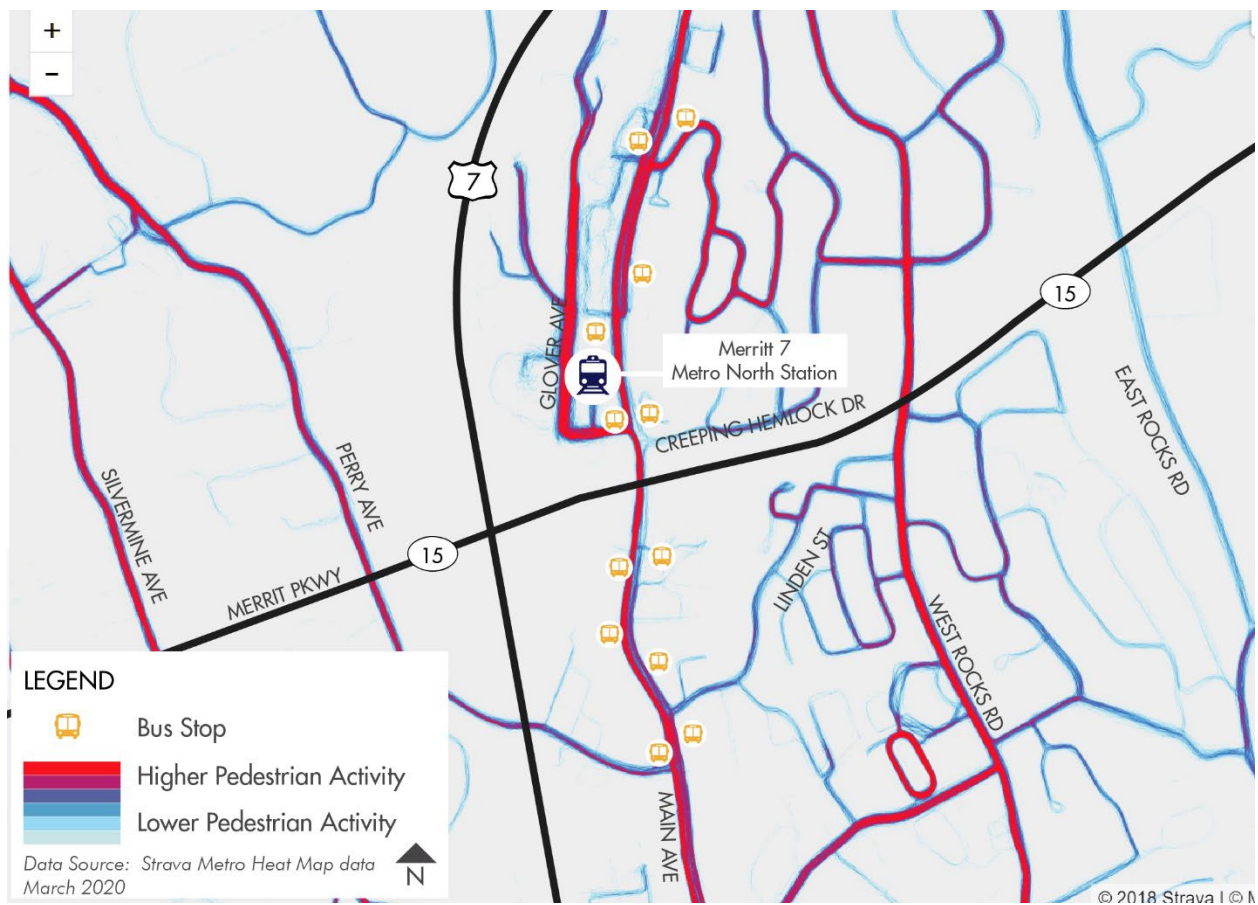


Figure 5 Pedestrian Activity (Strava Data)



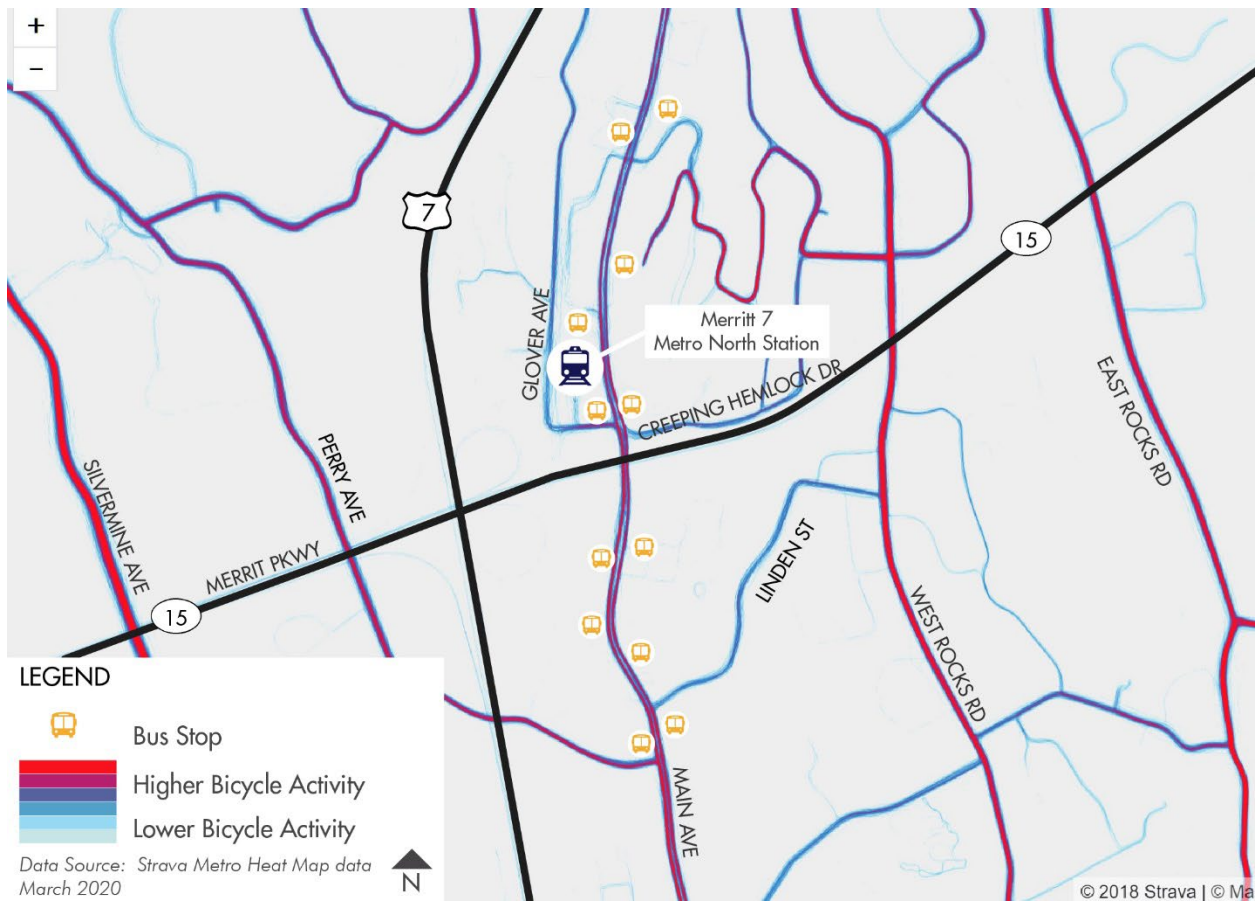


Figure 6 Bicycle Activity (Strava Data)



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