

# 1. Introduction

Communities across the nation are recognizing that facilities for bicycling and walking are an important part of their infrastructure. These facilities, including shared-use paths, sidewalks and on-street bicycle lanes, offer transportation choices that are available to all ages and socioeconomic groups. Bicycle and pedestrian networks increase travel and recreational opportunities for residents. At the same time, a robust bicycle and pedestrian network can boost the local economy. Urban bicycle greenways have a positive impact on home values. Studies have shown that people walking or cycling to local businesses spend more than those who drive. Bicycle tourism can also draw increased traffic to local businesses.

Bicycling and walking are important modes of transportation. Bicycling in particular is a convenient and efficient form of transportation, and for some people, bicycling is their main mode of transportation. Like the automobile, but unlike public transit, a bicycle provides its user with autonomy and flexibility regarding travel schedules and destinations. Bicycling is also a form of transportation that is accessible to many people who cannot drive: the young, some elderly and those who do not own a motor vehicle. A complete transportation system serves motorists, cyclists and pedestrians in a safe and efficient manner.



## 1.1 Purpose

Prior to incorporation as a village, Pleasant Prairie developed in a way that was not conducive to bicycling or walking: development was dispersed throughout the area and was linked by narrow, sometimes busy streets with no sidewalks or paved shoulders. Since incorporation the Village has grown rapidly. Residents and staff have worked to ensure that this growth and development better serves all forms of transportation while also being environmentally sensitive. This *Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Plan* will complement that development by designating a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect all parts of the Village as well as surrounding communities. This plan will guide the development of shared-use paths, demarcate on-street facilities, provide design guidelines and policies for facilities and highlight funding opportunities for the Village to pursue.

The Plan will build on past bicycle and pedestrian planning, including that in the Village's *2006 Park and Open Space Plan* and the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's (SEWRPC) *Regional Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2035, A Regional Land Use Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2035, and Amendment to the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2020*. The Plan should be updated every five years to reflect the needs of the community and progress that has been made in implementing new facilities.



## 1.2 Scope

*The Village of Pleasant Prairie Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Plan* focuses on bicycling for transportation. For bicycle transportation, trip origins, destinations and trip purpose are of utmost importance (e.g. commuting to work or school, shopping, attending a social event, etc.), and the bicycle is simply the means to the end. Conversely, recreational bicycling trips are made expressly for the enjoyment of bicycling, and the destination, if there is one at all, is of minor importance. Most trips, and most facilities, serve both functions, but the bicycle facility network must be complete in order to serve the needs of transportation bicyclists while also serving recreational bicyclists and pedestrians.

Bicycle projects must be primarily for transportation purposes to be eligible for funding under most Federal aid programs, although the Recreational Trails Program is an exception. Federal guidelines generally consider any bicycle path other than a closed loop as being principally for transportation and eligible for federal funding.



The *Plan* is a comprehensive approach to bicycle transportation planning that encompasses the “four E’s:”

- Engineering: facility creation and improvement
- Education: increasing cyclist and motorist awareness of the rules of the road
- Encouragement: programs to increase cycling
- Enforcement: applying the rules of the road to all users: motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians

When combined with facility improvements, education and encouragement can dramatically increase the levels of bicycling and walking. Educating bicyclists and motorists on how to share the road safely is important. Education of elected officials, planners, engineers and others involved in land use development will help ensure that bicyclists’ needs are included when planning new neighborhoods and roadways. Educating law enforcement officers about the illegal behaviors that are the most common factors in crashes can allow them to better target these behaviors.

The plan identifies existing facilities and recommends new programs, policies and facility projects including off-street paths, on-street facilities, signed routes and support facilities, such as bicycle parking. Implementation of the plan will encourage the use of this practical, non-polluting, affordable mode of transportation. The bicycle and pedestrian facility recommendations are necessary for safety, mobility and access to destinations such as schools, employment centers, commercial areas, public and institutional land uses and recreational areas. Recommendations are prioritized to augment the existing bicycle and pedestrian transportation network in the Village and its connections to other municipalities.

### 1.3 Summary of Public Input

An effective planning effort requires the participation of the public. Public input during the planning process was solicited via a survey administered online by the Village of Pleasant Prairie and through a public information meeting. Both the survey and the meeting provided the public with opportunities to voice their concerns over bicycle and pedestrian issues as well as offer opinions on the direction of the planning effort and what they would like to see as the end product.

#### Public Informational Meeting

An informational meeting for the public was held on Thursday, May 28, 2009, from 5:00pm – 7:00pm at the IcePlex in Pleasant Prairie. Notice of the meeting was provided through the Village newsletter that was sent to each Pleasant Prairie household, as well as on the Pleasant Prairie official webpage. A total of 34 people attended the meeting including members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Plan Steering Committee and the general public. After a brief introduction to the planning process and a description of a map of proposed bicycle and pedestrian trails drawn from the *2006 Park and Open Space Plan*, the meeting was opened up for public comment. Comments were wide-ranging, but specific themes emerged repeatedly:

- **Connections:** The plan should identify a network of on- and off-street routes that connect throughout Pleasant Prairie as well as into the City of Kenosha, the State of Illinois and other recreational areas.
- **Signage:** Provide a signage system that clearly indicates where users are within the trail system, how to get to popular destinations and times and distances to locations.
- **Secure parking:** Provide secure bicycle parking facilities at employment centers, retail destinations, parks and other locations.
- **Maintenance:** Ensure that the bicycle and pedestrian system, both on- and off-street, is well maintained so as to be safe and efficient for all users.
- **Funding:** The plan should identify funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian trails and maintenance.
- **Trail amenities:** Provide off-street bicycle and pedestrian path and trail amenities including trash and recycling receptacles, drinking fountains, restrooms, picnic tables, signage and lighting.
- **Multimodal options:** The plan should identify and tap into opportunities to expand multimodal travel options, particularly rail and bus.



Attendees at the public meeting as well as written comments that were received at the meeting are listed in Appendix A.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Plan Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee was established at the beginning of the planning process to oversee development of the plan and to provide input from different areas of the community. The Steering Committee included representatives of the Parks Commission, the Kenosha Unified School District, the Recreation Commission, the Village Public Works, Engineering, Police, and Community Development Departments, and local recreation facilities. The Steering Committee met monthly during the planning process to review progress and provide input on the plan.



Pleasant Prairie hosts numerous triathlons throughout the year drawing thousands of athletes to the Village.

### **Survey of Public Opinion**

A public survey was administered online to Village residents and others interested in bicycling and walking in the Village. Notice of the survey was placed on the Village website as well as in the Village newsletter that was mailed to each household in the Village. A total of 82 people participated in the survey, with the majority of those people residing within the Village. Results of the survey helped guide the planning process and the full survey results are presented in Appendix B.