Executive Summary

Shawano County is in an excellent position to capitalize on existing bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly attributes in the area, like the Mountain Bay Trail and the Wowash Trail and a walkable and bikeable downtown in Shawano as well as walkable and bikeable villages and hamlets scattered around the county. This plan will help to increase the number of residents and visitors who walk and bike not just for recreation but also for transportation.

The Shawano County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan builds on efforts by the community to improve transportation options and the quality of life in the Shawano County area. The Master Plan guides the development of a network of bicycle routes linking activity centers within the County as well as to the larger regional network. The improved network will not only make bicycling a more viable mode of transportation, but will contribute to economic development opportunities and enhanced quality of life for the community. Pedestrian policies are discussed to assist the County in making it easier and more pleasant to walk for transportation and recreation.

Why Bicycling and Walking?

Bicycling and walking are low-cost means of transportation that are non-polluting, energy-efficient, versatile, healthy and fun. Both modes can help build physical activity into our daily lives while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution and saving money. The many advantages to walking and bicycling include:

- Bicycling and walking are good for the economy. Bicycling makes up $13 billion of the U.S. economy, funding 1.1 million jobs.
- Walkable and bikeable neighborhoods are more livable and attractive, increasing home values property tax revenue.
- Walking and bicycling can save families money. By replacing short car trips, bicycling and walking can help lessen personal transportation costs.
- Walking and bicycling are good for public health. Bicycling for exercise can reduce the cost of spending on health care by as much as $34 per person every year.
- More people walking and bicycling increase safety for others. In a community where twice as many people walk, a person walking has a 66 percent reduced risk of being injured by a motorist.

Vision

Shawano County will enhance transportation choices by developing a network of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide connections to destinations throughout the County.

References

Existing Conditions

The Shawano County area is home to two trails of statewide significance and miles of town and county roads that carry very little traffic through beautiful northern Wisconsin landscapes. This Plan seeks to leverage opportunities and to overcome barriers to accommodating and encouraging bicycle and pedestrian trips.

Opportunities include:
- A pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly downtowns in the cities, villages and unincorporated hamlets of Shawano County;
- Existing walk- and bicycle-friendly streets in some parts of the County;
- The Mountain Bay Trail and the WIOWASH Trail, providing miles of off-road riding and walking experience;
- Space in many locations to provide low-cost bicycle improvements; and
- A very energetic volunteer group in Shawano County area residents, community stakeholder groups and public agency staff helped guide the development of this Plan. Public input was obtained in several ways, including two public input workshops (July 2012 and November 2012), and through several project meetings with Shawano Pathways (SPKES) from March of 2012 to February of 2013.

Implementation

The Shawano County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is a 20-year plan for completing the system of bikeways, shared-use paths and spot improvements in Shawano County. The completed network will result in a Shawano County where biking and walking for transportation and recreation are every day, safe activities that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The recommended network builds upon previous and on-going local and regional planning efforts and reflects the input offered by county staff, the project Steering Committee – Shawano Pathways, bicycle and stakeholder groups, and Shawano County residents. Implementation of the plan will take place over many years. The implementation strategy presents a targeted methodology for how Shawano County can institutionalize bicycle and pedestrian improvements into local and regional planning processes and projects.

The following strategies and action items are provided to guide Shawano County toward the vision identified in the plan:
- Establish a Permanent Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Implement the Park to Park walking loops by publishing a brochure and signing where necessary.
- Strategically pursue infrastructure projects by obtaining capital improvement and grant funding as well as incorporating projects into upcoming public works projects, especially the short-term bicycle improvements.
- Regularly revisit project priorities in the plan as projects are completed, conditions change and new projects are needed.
- Implement education, encouragement and enforcement activities to encourage more walking and bicycling in Shawano County.

Constraints include:
- Major highways, the Wolf River and railroads impede local street connectivity;
- Lack of wayfinding tools along existing walkway and bikeway networks;
- Intersection of the Mountain Bay or WIOWASH Trail with busy roads; and
- Uncomfortable walking and bicycling environments along high-volume roadways.

Public Involvement

Shawano County area residents, community stakeholder groups and public agency staff helped guide the development of this Plan. Public input about the opportunities and challenges to better

Developing the Network of Bikeways and Shared-Use Paths

The recommended bikeways connect key destinations in and around Shawano County. The recommended improvements are designed to overcome barriers bicycling, including providing several north to south routes and east to west routes around the County.

Improvements vary from low-cost measures yielding immediate results – like adding wayfinding signs to low volume roads – to longer-term strategies for transforming Shawano County into a more bicycle- and pedestrian friendly community, like larger-scale trail construction or adding paved shoulders to busier highways. The highest priority projects outlined in this Plan provide improved options for transportation and recreation and could be implemented in the near future.

The infrastructure recommendations fall into four categories:
- Priority bikeway improvements that focus on low-cost treatments on key corridors that provide an interconnected network that links communities, schools, parks, commercial areas, paths and other attractions, such as Shawano Lake, and the Mountain Bay Trail.
- Key shared-use path improvements designed to fill gaps in the path network, such as the Mountain Bay Trail, just west of Shawano and connecting the trail to nearby communities.
- A proposal for the Shawano Lake Loop Route, visioning a long-term loop closely following the Shawano Lake shoreline. This route consists of both on road segments and shared use paths.
- Spot improvements at trail crossings, designed to increase safety and clarify proper use where trails cross major roadways.

Short-term Project List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail Crossing</td>
<td>East Green Bay Street / Mountain Bay Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike Lane Installation</td>
<td>Lake Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Infill</td>
<td>Mountain Bay Trail Gap Closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Crossing</td>
<td>Hwy 29 / Wiouwash Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Lake Routes</td>
<td>Signed Bicycle Loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit Route</td>
<td>Joe Bikeler - NW (33.3 Miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit Route</td>
<td>Joe Bikeler - SW (16.8 Miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed Connection CTY TK A (1.8 Miles)</td>
<td>Hillside Drive/CTH TK A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed Connection CTY TK A (0.5 Miles)</td>
<td>North Cecil Street (0.6 Miles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>