
Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan

for the

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
for Blair County (Altoona MSA)**

Prepared For:
Blair County Planning Commission

By:

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GLOSSARY

Blair County Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee: A technical subcommittee of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Blair County Planning Commission (BCPC): A division of Blair County government whose employees serve as the staff to the MPO.

Intermodal: Connection and ease of transfer between modes of travel. For example: Bicycle lockers at a train station are an intermodal amenity.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Blair County (Altoona MSA): The regional body, comprised of elected and appointed officials, undertakes a comprehensive, coordinated and continuing transportation planning process for the county.

Multimodal: A transportation trip which uses more than one mode of travel. For example: Bicycling to a bus stop and completing the trip on the bus.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): A list of the transportation projects for which planning has been completed and which require funding for implementation. Projects are placed on the TIP by the MPO.

MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan

1 Overview

Blair County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee began meeting on January 24, 2000. The Committee began the effort to bring together knowledgeable and interested individuals to look at both on and off road bicycling/pedestrian opportunities throughout the county and how these opportunities can be facilitated, supported and promoted.

Having a bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan developed for Blair County and adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Blair County Planning Commission (BCPC) establishes a solid policy direction for the county and its member municipalities. Bicycling and walking are legitimate transportation modes that can improve the performance of our transportation system if included in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the overall transportation system.

The plan must not only be technically strong from a planning and design standpoint, but the planning process must be developed and carried out in ways that:

- Develop and sustain interest and appreciation for bicycle and pedestrian modes.
- Result in a set of priorities and projects that reflect a regional consensus.
- Mainstream bicyclist and pedestrian concerns as part of the transportation planning and programming process at the state, county, and local levels.
- Build relationships among organizations and agencies that have not constructively interacted on these issues in the past.
- Minimize bicycle and pedestrian conflicts with motor vehicle traffic.
- Integrate bicycles into the normal flow of motor vehicle traffic, where feasible.

Included in this Plan:

- Overview
 - Introduction
 - Goals
 - Opportunities/Assets
 - Action Plans
 - Conclusion
 - Implementation
-

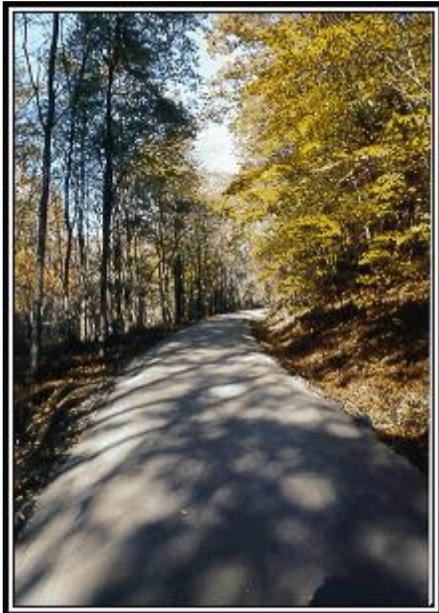
2 Introduction

As with any planning effort, the Blair County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan begins with a vision statement, followed by a list of goals that support the intent of the planning vision. These planning goals are in turn followed by a list of action steps that must be taken by a variety of agencies and organizations to meet the plan's goals.

Vision Statement

A vision statement is a broad statement that outlines the plan's values and states where the county wants to be over a period of time.

“The region values the importance of walking and bicycling for transportation, recreation, tourism, health and wellness, and will actively plan, encourage and provide for the safe integration of walking and bicycling into a transportation system that will connect communities and regional assets.”



A Pennsylvania Rail Trail

3 Goals

Task Force members developed a list of planning goals that, if realized, would make the MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan a success. Goals were revised to include those listed below:

GOAL 1: Providing Connections and Linkages

- Routes through and in Altoona 1976 plan
- Improve bike/ped access to downtown areas e.g., Pleasant Valley
- Connect to tourism historical sites, regional assets and communities
- Maximize residents access to bike/ped facilities
- Support millennium trail
- Balance between rural and urban opportunities
- Take advantage of other opportunities – flood plains, rail lines, conservation
- Build upon Mennonite community, enhance their system
- Establish designated, connected bike network

GOAL 2: Providing Education

- Educate drivers and cyclists to share roadways
- Coordinate/enhance existing educational activities
- Educate parents
- Coordinate effort with Altoona Parking Authority
- Educate drivers about pedestrian laws
- Team up with bike shops/stores to give cycling guide to bike buyers, course schedule
- Promote cycling/walking for health/wellness
- Promote network to public

GOAL 3: Improving Safety

- Protecting pedestrians
- Education of children for cycling/walking
- Develop prototype safe bicycle route in city
- Mark crosswalks in Altoona, increase visibility
- Designate a safe, obstacle free, connected pedestrian network
- Identify safe routes for cycling for different types of cyclists

GOAL 4: Providing Facilities

- Provide secure bicycle racks, lockers at key destinations
- Bike racks on buses – promote more use
- Eliminate pedestrian impediments to use transit
- Provide for proper planning of pedestrian facilities
- Upgrade land use ordinances to provide for pedestrians, sidewalk maintenance
- Change attitudes about cycling
- Improve maintenance activities on shoulders
- Build trails along with highway projects
- Add shoulders to roadways for a variety of needs
- Provide signing for a network
- Provide (restrooms, etc.) where needed, parking areas, lighting
- Provide facilities for rollerblades, skateboards

4 Transportation Route Mapping

The identification of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and recommended network is an essential component of any bicycle and pedestrian plan. An inventory of the facilities and networks within Blair County was compiled by the Committee and digitally mapped by PennDOT District 9. The maps identify existing routes and any barriers along those routes as well as proposed facilities. Any barrier or proposed facility identified on a map could be a potential candidate for a future transportation improvement project. Types of barriers could include:

- Shoulder barrier -- the shoulder of the road is nonexistent or it is not paved and therefore is unsuitable for travel.
- Paving barrier -- a road is not suitable for travel due to the poor condition of the pavement, such as, potholes, cracked pavement, ruts.
- Bridge barrier -- the roadway narrows for the bridge crossing leaving little or no shoulder for safe bicycle travel.
- Turning conflict barrier -- there are too many turning movements due to a large number of access drives along the road. High traffic volumes also contribute to turning conflict barriers by not providing gaps in the traffic needed to make a turning movement.
- Intersection barrier -- an intersection is not properly configured to safely accommodate bicycle travel.
- Widening barrier -- the road is not wide enough to accommodate bicycle travel. These areas should be widened and provide paved shoulders.

The plan map is not to be used as a commercially-produced “bicycle route guide”, but rather as a decision-making tool by the county bicycle/pedestrian committee and its affiliates, the county planning commission and PennDOT District 9.

5 Existing Opportunities/Assets

5.1 Funding Opportunities

Bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from almost all major Federal-aid highway, transit, safety, and other programs. Bicycle projects must be principally for transportation, rather than recreation purposes and must be designed and located pursuant to the transportation plans required of States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

"In less than a decade, bicycling and walking have gone from being described... as "the forgotten modes" to becoming a serious part of our national transportation system."
– **Kenneth Wykle,**
FHWA Federal Highway Administrator

5.1.1 TEA-21

In June 1998, a new federal surface transportation funding act was signed into law. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21, was landmark legislation. It not only continued the policies of its predecessor, ISTEA, but it provided more funding than ever before for non-motorized transportation modes, specifically, bicycle and pedestrian modes. Under the new law, Pennsylvania will receive nearly \$1.3 billion annually in transportation funding, a significant increase over ISTEA levels.

TEA-21 has extended the legislation of its predecessor by continuing the multimodal emphasis of transportation planning and programming on non-motorized modes of travel, particularly for bicyclists and pedestrians. In fact, there is a greater realization and even a greater receptiveness among transportation professionals to improve the bicycle and pedestrian modes and in so doing improve the overall transportation system.

Transportation Enhancements Program

The Transportation Enhancements Program continues under TEA-21, providing more funds for a greater variety of projects. Pennsylvania is expected to receive \$120 million over the six-year life of TEA-21 for Transportation Enhancements. A few of the previously funded projects include:

- Provision of facilities for bicycles and pedestrians,
- Provision of safety and education activities for bicycles and pedestrians, and
- Preservation of abandoned railroad corridors for bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Funding requests often outweigh available dollars for the Transportation Enhancements Program. The MPO submitted 10 Transportation Enhancement applications in 1998, totaling nearly \$8.57 million dollars. In 1999, eight applications were received, representing \$4.53 million in requests. In 2001, seven applications totaled \$ 5.35 million. Individual applicants submit their projects to the MPO. The applications are reviewed and prioritized with recommendations forwarded to the PennDOT for final review and then to the State Transportation Commission for final adoption.



5.1.2 Federal-aid Highway Program

National Highway System (NHS) funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System, including Interstate highways.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects, such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements related to safe bicycle use and walking. TEA-21 adds the modification of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as an activity that is specifically eligible for the use of these funds.

Ten percent of each State's annual STP funds are set-aside for **Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs)**. The law provides a specific list of activities that are eligible TEAs and this includes: provision of facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, provision of safety and educational activities for bicyclists and pedestrians, and the preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for bicycle and pedestrian trails).

Another ten percent of each State's STP funds is set-aside for the **Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing programs**, which address bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. Each State is required to implement a Hazard Elimination Program to identify and correct locations that may constitute a danger to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Funds may be used for activities including a survey of hazardous locations and for projects on any publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail, or any safety-related traffic calming measure. Improvements to railway-highway crossings shall take into account bicycle safety.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use.

Recreational Trails program funds may be used for all kinds of trail projects. Of the funds apportioned to a State, 30 percent must be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses (any combination).

Provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists are eligible under the various categories of the **Federal Lands Highway Program** in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways. Priority for funding projects is determined by the appropriate Federal Land Agency or Tribal government.

National Scenic Byways Program funds may be used for construction along a scenic byway of a facility for bicyclists and pedestrians. The road to the Horseshoe Curve is currently listed as a "National Scenic Byway."

Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants are available to support projects, including bicycle-related services, designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from employment.

High Priority Projects and Designated Transportation Enhancement Activities identified by TEA-21 include numerous bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and traffic calming projects in communities throughout the country.

5.1.3 Federal Transit Program

Title 49 U.S.C. (as amended by TEA-21) allows the Urbanized Area Formula Grants, Capital Investment Grants and Loans, and Formula Program for Other than Urbanized Area transit funds to be used for improving bicycle and pedestrian access to transit facilities and vehicles. Eligible activities include investments in pedestrian and bicycle access to a mass transportation facility that establishes or enhances coordination between mass transportation and other transportation.

TEA-21 also created a **Transit Enhancement Activity** program with a one percent set-aside of Urbanized Area Formula Grant funds designated for, among other things, pedestrian access and walkways, and bicycle access, including bicycle storage facilities and installing equipment for transporting bicycles on mass transportation vehicles.

5.1.4 Highway Safety Programs

Pedestrian and bicyclist safety remain priority areas for State and Community Highway Safety Grants funded by the Section 402 formula

grant program. A State is eligible for these grants by submitting a Performance plan (establishing goals and performance measures for improving highway safety) and a Highway Safety Plan (describing activities to achieve those goals).

Research, development, demonstrations and training to improve highway safety (including bicycle and pedestrian safety) are carried out under the Highway Safety Research and Development (Section 403) program.

Federal/State Matching Requirements

In general, the Federal share of the costs of transportation projects is 80 percent with a 20 percent State or local match. However, there are a number of exceptions to this rule.

- Federal Lands Highway projects and Section 402 Highway Safety funds are 100 percent Federally funded.
- Bicycle-related Transit Enhancement Activities are 95 percent Federally funded.
- Hazard elimination projects are 90 percent Federally funded. Bicycle-related transit projects (other than Transit Enhancement Activities) may be up to 90 percent Federally funded.
- Individual Transportation Enhancement Activity projects under the STP can have a match higher or lower than 80 percent. However, the overall Federal share of each State's Transportation Enhancement Program must be 80 percent.
- States with higher percentages of Federal Lands have higher Federal shares calculated in proportion to their percentage of Federal lands.

The State and/or local funds used to match Federal-aid highway projects may include in-kind contributions (such as donations). Funds from other Federal programs may also be used to match Transportation Enhancement, Scenic Byways, and Recreational Trails program funds. A Federal agency project sponsor may provide matching funds to Recreational Trails funds provided the Federal share does not exceed 95 percent.

5.3 Other Opportunities

5.3.1 Revisions to the State Vehicle Code

In December 1998, Title 75 of the State Vehicle Code was amended to allow for more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly policies. Highlights of the bill include:

- The legalization of installing bicycle racks on buses.
- Motorized wheelchairs are no longer considered motor vehicles.
- Both motorized as well as hand powered wheelchairs are now permitted on sidewalks but are not considered pedestrians.
- The mandatory use of available bike paths and lanes has been eliminated. Prior to this amendment to the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, a bicycle was required to use a bicycle path or lane if one was available and usable adjacent to the road on which the bicycle was travelling.
- The subsection authorizing use of shoulders for bicycle travel was amended to require that all turns be made in accordance with Section 3331, which specifies the required lane position and method for making turns.

These changes went into effect in February 1999.

In addition, an earlier law deleted the problematic language that required bicycles to travel as far to the right “as practicable,” and replaced it with a statute that requires bicycles that are travelling at slower than the prevailing speed of traffic to keep to the right, while permitting bicyclists to make movements consistent with their intended travel route.

5.3.2 Bicycle PA

“Bicycle PA,” the movement to sign and designate multiple intrastate bicycle routes in Pennsylvania, continues. The Bicycle PA effort includes one route through Blair County, “G,” the central north-south route. PennDOT secured \$1 million dollars through the Transportation Enhancement Program to fund the signing portion of this project. Acceptance of this application means that the six initial routes in the state will be furnished with “Bicycle PA” signs sometime during the year 2000. More information about the signing effort can be found on PennDOT’s web page at www.dot.state.pa.us.



5.3.3 Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

The Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan for Pennsylvania was created in 1996 as an update to the 1976 Bicycling in Pennsylvania Plan. The Master Plan sets policy for integrating bicycles and pedestrians into the current multimodal transportation system by creating a series of goals and objectives that can be used as a guide to improve existing roads to create a better bicycling and walking environment for the future. As part of the Master Plan, the state adopted the goals of the National Bicycling and Walking Study published by the U.S Department of Transportation to double the percentage of trips by foot and bicycle, from a national average of 7.9 percent to 15.8 percent of all trips and to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities suffered by bicyclists and pedestrians by 10 percent. As part of the implementation of its Master Plan, PennDOT sponsored Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety and Accommodation training sessions in five locations around the state. Also, PennDOT provided technical assistance through a consultant to assist Pennsylvania's planning regions (including the MPO) in the creation of bicycle and pedestrian plans.

Copies of the Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan for Pennsylvania and the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety and Accommodation training manual are available by contacting Dave Bachman, PennDOT Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator, at (717) 783-8444.

5.3.4 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities

In 1999, AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) published the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities to provide information on the development of facilities to enhance and encourage safe bicycle travel. By presenting sound guidelines that will be valuable in attaining good design sensitive to the needs of both bicyclists and other highway users, the Guide aims to accommodate bicycle traffic in most riding environments. AASHTO guidelines should be used in the design and improvement of all bicycle facilities in Blair County.

6 Action Plans

The Committee also developed a prioritized list of strategies that should be implemented to reach the plan's goals. From this list, the committee saw six projects that should serve as the top priority projects for this plan:

1. Completion of Blair County links of the Mainline Greenway
2. Develop bicycle/pedestrian access to area attractions, schools and parks
3. Link Mainline Greenway to the Bellwood area with a rail trail
4. Explore other greenway possibilities through the City of Altoona (Mill Run, Brush Run, etc.)
5. Stronger pedestrian component in municipal comprehensive plans.
6. System continuity

Remaining priority project suggestions included:

- Completion of a north/south signed route through the City of Altoona from McKee to Tyrone
- Sign the three Southern Alleghenies tour loops in Blair County
- Promote better pedestrian facilities/enforcement of pedestrian safety (laws, ordinances, etc.)
- Secure bicycle racks/lockers at key facilities
- Develop an educational program
- Institute bicycle racks on buses

Action plans were developed for the top five action items. The action plans outline implementation steps and related issues.

6.1 Action Plan Format

Each action plan consists of several elements as follows:

- **Goal** – Policy-oriented general statements of what needs to happen in order to produce the vision.
- **Objectives** – Directives that identify specific things that need to be accomplished to achieve the goals.
- **Action Items** – Probable steps that the bicycle/pedestrian committee and others must take to implement the plan objectives. Action items are subsequently monitored by performance measures.

Action Item #1

Complete proposed Pennsylvania Millennium Legacy Trail

Objective #1

Complete the development of the Pennsylvania Millennium Legacy Trail and greenway from the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site to Lower Trail while identifying potential connections for links and spurs.

Action Items:

1. The MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee will meet to establish a basic scope for the planned project completion and will consider inviting a resource person or persons from PennDOT, MPO or both. The following items should be covered in this discussion (key directions and decisions should be made part of the record as a product of this meeting):
 - Project objectives (what the group would like to see achieved through these trail projects).
 - Potential community issues and concerns.
 - Potential partners (e.g. Allegheny Ridge Corp., DCNR, municipalities, etc.).
 - Public involvement ideas and strategies.
 - Basic Project Schedule (desired) and desired milestones.
 - Other potential problems and issues—including physical and natural features for the proposed trail areas.
2. The Committee will identify possible funding sources for the project(s), including private sources, DCNR, DCED and the Transportation Enhancement Program. Attempt to establish a substantial local match or commitment of local match to leverage dollars from state/federal programs. This can be an agenda item in task 1.
3. Establish efforts to secure funding based on information established in preceding tasks. Keep area legislators informed of efforts.

The following tasks are predicated on having the project financial plan and funding in place. One alternative, however, would be to structure the project in a way that seeks to not only design and build the trail(s) but to promote investment as well. Such an innovative approach would seek for the contractor to propose funding options or direct investment commitments. This assumes that there would be some basis for return on investment—such as development rights on certain available parcels of land in connection with the trail.

4. The Blair County Planning Commission will have a trail designed that will tie into local facilities i.e, parks, parking and public transit. All issues of interest or concern to project's stakeholders should be addressed. Key

maintenance issues should also be addressed. Among them is the need to design the trail in ways that are maintenance friendly from a cost standpoint.

5. The Blair County Planning Commission will involve potential stakeholders in the design phase, including the Blair County Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, DCNR, the redevelopment authority, and any corporate sponsors involved in the project. A project scoping and field view involving stakeholders and appropriate resource agencies will be required. The design phase should culminate with a presentation of draft plans to the public for comment and incorporation of that comment into a set of final plans.
7. The Bicycle Pedestrian Committee will monitor progress of this initiative by overseeing the development and completion of the trail connections.

Action Item #2

Develop bicycle/pedestrian access to area attractions, schools and parks

Objective #1

The MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Committee will develop an inventory of area attractions, schools and parks and will compare the location of these destinations with existing bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Objective #2

Create pedestrian access across from the Logan Valley Mall, Park Hills Plaza, BiLo Plaza to the Convention Center, Ramada and Hampton Inn sites, including Summit Fitness and the Park Hills Golf Club. Other existing problem areas include:

- Logan Valley Mall to the Convention Center
- Juniata Street
 - Sidewalks and shoulders
 - Pedestrian crossings
- Pedestrian crossings on Pleasant Valley Blvd. : McDonalds, Value City (for bus stop) and Cayuga Avenue
- Pedestrian access from the Convention Center to Blair County Ballpark
- Seventh and Eighth Street bridges, pedestrian and wheelchair access
- Sidewalks from New Chestnut Avenue widening to 25th Avenue
- Better traffic control and pedestrian facilities at:
 - 25th Avenue and Juniata Gap Road
 - Wopsonock and Juniata Gap Road
 - Ivyside Drive and 25th Avenue

Action Items:

1. The Blair County Planning Commission will document the problems and include proposed projects in its Long Range Transportation Plan.

2. The Blair County MPO will recommend inclusion of the project scope with the existing Plank Road interchange improvements.
3. The Blair County Planning Commission, as the administrative agency for the County Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, will seek consensus and participation from such major community stakeholders involved in the proposed project(s), including: PennDOT, Logan and Allegheny Townships, the City, Amtran, Center for Independent Living, major businesses, and others. The stakeholder group is established to unify a team of key leaders and to create momentum for the committee to follow through on plan implementation.
4. The Committee and County Planning Commission will seek funding opportunities in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the project(s).
5. The Committee will monitor the progress of this objective.

Action Item # 3

Link Pennsylvania Millennium Legacy Trail to the Bellwood area with a rail trail

Objective #1

Create a major north/south connection from Tyrone to Hollidaysburg and on to Williamsburg to an east/west trail.

Action Items:

1. The committee, in coordination with the county planning commission, PennDOT, and the MPO, will pursue appropriate funding mechanisms (public/private) to link the Mainline Greenway to the Bellwood area.
2. Once funding is secured, project planning, design, and development should generally follow the sequence of events described in the preceding action items for the completion of the Mainline Greenway links in Action Item #1.

Action Item # 4

Explore other greenway possibilities through the City of Altoona

Objective # 1

Establish a system of greenways through the City, that connect to greenbelts such as along streams (Mill Run, Brush Run, etc.) and recreational trails.

Action Items:

1. The MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Committee will work with City of Altoona planners in identifying future or planned greenways through the city.
2. The Committee will encourage City planners to administer a series of community forums to better gauge community attitudes regarding greenways, their availability and anticipated use. Emphasis should be placed on community awareness, financing options, needs, and degree of connectivity. Committee members could volunteer time to help administer the public involvement efforts and summarize results for use by City planners. The Committee should coordinate regularly with the statewide greenways initiative.
3. The Committee will identify high priority desirable connectors to retrofit in already developed areas for which no easement currently exists, so that the City can make efforts to acquire the right-of-way as opportunities present themselves. Streets may be used in the interim as trail connectors.

**Action Item #5
Stronger pedestrian component in Altoona's
comprehensive plan****Objective #1**

Draft policy language for incorporation into current draft City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan.

Action Items:

1. Members of the county bicycle pedestrian committee will work with the City Department of Planning and Community Development in identifying pedestrian improvement needs within the City for identification in the City's comprehensive plan.

Objective #2

Development of a model ordinance for the City to be used as a possible pilot for use by other Blair County municipalities.

1. The Committee, under the auspices of the MPO and in concert with the City Planning Commission, will draft a model ordinance for presentation to the Altoona City Council for its consideration.
2. The Committee will analyze the City's ordinances to determine how consistently they direct City agencies and commissions to provide for accessible, convenient, safe and enjoyable pedestrian travel, and shall evaluate how well they are being implemented. Based on this analysis,

the Committee shall make recommendations to improve City ordinances and their implementation that will enhance pedestrian travel in the City.

Objective #3

Mainstream bicycle and pedestrian planning within existing City functions.

1. The City will continue to take steps to link bicycle/pedestrian planning with related municipal activities such as subdivision review, zoning, street maintenance/sweeping and comprehensive planning.

Action Item #6 System Continuity

Using this plan's Bicycle Transportation Routes and Pedestrian maps, the Committee will recommend implementation of a network of bicycle routes and corresponding roadway improvements, providing for county-wide access for bicyclists of all skill levels, and all types of recreational and utilitarian travel.

Action Items:

1. The Blair County Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee and PennDOT District 9, will continue to monitor and maintain its county-wide bicycle/pedestrian network, prioritizing projects on a regular basis, preferably in conjunction with the update of the county's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
2. The Committee will work with the Pennsylvania Statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator in removing the "No Pedestrian" signs from intersections.
3. The Committee will work with BCPC, the County of Blair and its member municipalities and PennDOT District 9 in providing improvements to links of the county's bicycle and pedestrian network such as:
 - Installation of bicycle-friendly drainage grates
 - Installation of traffic calming measures
 - Provision of adequate paved shoulders and outside lane widths
 - Placement of "Share the Road" signs
 - Placement of "Yield to Pedestrian in Crosswalk" signs
 - Provision of traffic light sensors that can be triggered by bicycles
 - Provision of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian-crossing traffic lights in major road improvement projects
 - Audible signal devices for the visually impaired.

7 Conclusion

The Blair County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan represents a significant first step in “mainstreaming” bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation into the transportation planning process.

The “action steps” of the Plan should be dynamic and ongoing in nature, and subject to periodic review and revision by the Blair County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Committee. This Plan should be considered as both an amendment to and element of the county’s Long Range Transportation Plan. The Long Range Transportation Plan serves as the “umbrella” or planning framework for all other related transportation plans in the county. As such, Blair County’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan should be reviewed and revised in step with each update afforded to the overall plan.

It is the desire of the Blair County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee that this plan will provide the planning basis necessary to achieve the plan’s goals. It should be viewed as a policy tool that municipalities, the Blair County Planning Commission, the MPO, and PennDOT together can use to encourage and support these non-motorized modes of transportation.

The Blair County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee will continue its role as an advisory group to the MPO, and will meet on an ongoing basis to constantly identify problems and possible solutions both in the short-term and long-term.

The Committee will also provide minor updates of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan in conjunction with updates of Blair County’s Long Range Transportation Plan. This will provide current information as PennDOT updates its Twelve Year Program on a biennial basis. The Committee will monitor and evaluate the performance of its planning program in ongoing meetings.

And finally, the Committee will continue to monitor the effectiveness of its Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan and ensure that it is being used as a source of bicycle and pedestrian project recommendations for Program updates and TIP development in Blair County.

8 Implementation

The primary value of any plan is the extent to which that plan is implemented. Sometimes, even the most visionary plans fail in implementation. The purpose of this section is to identify a framework for the Blair County Planning Commission through the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee to ensure a strong implementation. Numerous implementation considerations are discussed that provide a guide for proceeding forward.

Institutional/Organizational – The Committee should consider forming as a permanent group if that is not its current intent. The rationale for permanent status is for the Committee to oversee the implementation of this Plan, including future public involvement and outreach as well. As part of such a formal organization, the Committee should consider the following items:

- Meeting frequency
- Standing agendas (including status of plan implementation)
- Structure (officers and subcommittees)
- Relationship to other MPO committees and the MPO Board
- Development of annual goals (based on this plan) and an annual report of progress achieved

Subcommittee Structure – over time the Committee may want to form a subcommittee structure for the purpose of "assigning" specific tasks and objectives that are contained in the Plan as well as those that are added over time as new challenges and opportunities are identified. Should this be considered in the short run, the Committee should still organize its implementation efforts around the following categories (which can later be the basis for subcommittee organization as well):

- Planning & Programming
- Public Information & Outreach
- Economic Development & Tourism
- Safety

These four categories are broad enough to effectively address the wide range of issues and opportunities for bike/ped. Blair County organizations that provide special assets should be sought for participation in the respective subcommittees—e.g., Chamber with Economic Development; law enforcement agencies with safety, etc.

Planning & Programming – this plan needs to be integrated into ongoing planning and programming activities with the Blair County Planning Commission, MPO and PennDOT District 9. The Committee should become familiar with the planning cycle for the MPO TIP, related grant programs like Transportation Enhancements, and PennDOT annual maintenance work program development. The specific task is to provide input as these programs are being cyclically developed so that those projects included in the plan can be considered. Ideally, a planning and programming subcommittee (see above) would be comprised of a combination of system users and the key funding agencies.

Progress and Performance Review – an indispensable facet of plan implementation is to periodically evaluate progress being achieved throughout the county. The major and most direct focus for doing so is the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network that has been established. Improvements to that network should be summarized at some periodic interval—usually annually—and integrated into the ongoing public outreach and information strategies to reinforce the value of these facilities and the investments being made. Consideration should be given by the Public Information & Outreach subcommittee—assuming one is formed—to an annual report card of progress. That report card could be distributed to key stakeholders, the general public and summarized in press releases. It should be prepared with input from PennDOT and other MPO affiliates who affect positive changes to the network to report on accomplishments and to highlight future planned improvements. Indirect impacts such as tourism growth and quality of life changes can also be noted—making the report card a good resource as well for tourism promotion.

Action Plan Timetable – the organizations participating in plan implementation should also assign desired time frames for completion of the actions recommended in this plan. Sometimes this can be a daunting or abstract challenge as the implementation phase begins, but it does not have to be. It is recommended that the Steering Committee proceed as follows;

- Categorize each recommended actions as short term (1 year accomplishment); medium term (2-3 years) and long term (over three years). It is important to emphasize that this categorization would be based on accomplishment of the action not the start of the action.
- Establish priorities—high, medium, and low (if necessary)—for each action in each of the three categories noted above.
- Establish agreed upon lead and support organizations for each task. The lead organization agrees to a role of shepherding that action through to completion, recognizing that other assistance and resources may be required. The support roles provide assistance to the lead organization.
- Establish any interim major milestone dates for each recommended action to track progress.

- Use an action plan matrix to review status of appropriate items at each steering committee meeting and update regularly to ensure currency.

Other Implementation & Progress Monitoring Strategies

Implementation is part “Science” (management of the process) and part “Art” (the intangibles of plan implementation). The following highlights some other considerations related to successful implementation:

- **Recognition Programs** – to reinforce progress and special achievements by communities, agencies, businesses, and individuals.
- **Involvement of Elected Officials** – keeping local and state elected officials informed and involved (e.g. event announcements, newsletter distribution, etc.).

8.1 Adoption of this plan

One of the most important aspects of adopting this plan is the public comment period. Through public comments, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee can assure that the plan addresses the needs and concerns of the county’s citizens and municipalities. To assure that the public’s voice is heard a full effort will be made to distribute the draft plan to the public and solicit their comments and ideas.

This plan was adopted by the MPO on August 3, 2000. The MPO will include the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan in its update to the *Long Range Transportation Plan* in December 2002.

The BCPC intends to include the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan as the transportation element in its *Areawide Comprehensive Plan for Blair County (Altoona MSA)*. This will help ensure that the goals and action plans of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are considered whenever improvements to the transportation system are designed.

8.2.2 Continuation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force

One of the Committee’s chief concerns is assuring that this plan continues to guide transportation decisions in the future. In order to address this concern, the Committee should continue to meet on a regular basis. These meetings would be held to accomplish the following:

- Be advocates for the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in transportation improvements instituted by any of the following:
 - MPO

- Local Municipalities
 - PennDOT District 9
- Ensure the plan remains relevant and helpful
- Provide information to update the maps, as roads become either more or less accessible to bicycles and pedestrians
- Share ideas for new ways to promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation

The Blair County Planning Commission holds high regard for bicycle and pedestrian trail development. The agency has made efforts to increase involvement with stakeholders supporting the creation of trails and greenways. Some local and regional strategic steps taken to develop an effective and safe trail system is to:

- Capitalize on past accomplishments and on-going efforts of regional trail facilities
- Strive to connect significant existing facilities
- Support on-going efforts to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities into future development activities at the state, county, township and borough levels.
- Use the availability of funds from national, state and local sources to implement improvements.