

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Greenway Access

Pedestrian and bicycle access is an important aspect of the County's overall transportation system. Walkways and bikeways provide for safe and convenient travel and improve the efficiency of the roadway system by reducing potential conflicts between motor vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists.

Pedestrian and bicycle access improvements can also complement and enhance the mass transportation system by improving access to bus stops and places of economic activity. The provision of an effective pedestrian/bicycle system can also enhance the sense of community within developed or developing areas of the County by providing pedestrian/bicycle facilities that interconnect communities and facilitate and encourage interaction within the area.

Appropriate facilities such as walkways, pathways and bike facilities create a safe and effective pedestrian/bicycle environment. These facilities alone, however, do not provide for adequate safe and efficient access, and as a result, additional facilities or improvements may be necessary such as street lights, signs, and other road intersection improvements.

The Department of Community Development in cooperation with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission has developed the Jefferson Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plan. This Plan will replace the existing Pedestrian Obstacle Study, and the Bicycle Plan for the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

The purpose of this plan is to provide information and guidance on development of facilities and other accommodations to enhance safe bicycle and pedestrian travel within the Thomas Jefferson Planning District. This plan will also satisfy the Virginia Department of Transportation requirement that a roadway be identified as a bike lane or sidewalk in a locally adopted bicycle or pedestrian plan before improvements can be made. Descriptions are given as to how localities can create and maintain safe and efficient walking and biking systems, linking people to the services they need. An overall network is proposed that connects the many communities of the region, and smaller networks proposed for within those communities. The plan also identifies methods for increasing awareness among the public, especially automobile drivers, about the needs of walkers and cyclists. Implementation and funding issues are discussed, as well. This plan offers recommendations for both physical improvements and programs aimed at improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and safety.

The Jefferson Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plan begins with a description of existing conditions, demand and need, and possible facility types for both bicycles and pedestrians. The Plan allows for links to surrounding localities. Public input was invaluable to the development of this plan. Local biking clubs and organizations were invited to the meetings. The Jefferson Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plan incorporates the recommendations of the County's Greenway Plan (Appendix_)

Goals and Objectives of the Regional Plan are:

GOAL 1: Provide a comprehensive and coordinated regional bicycling and walking system.

Objective: Provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access to public facilities, employment and commercial centers, schools, residential areas, and recreation and tourism attractions.

Objective: Integrate bicycles and pedestrians into planning for transportation and land development.

Objective: Ensure consistency among local plans, designs, and facilities in the region.

Objective: Provide adequate support facilities for the travel networks.

Objective: Encourage developers to include bicycle and pedestrian access in projects.

Objective: Integrate bicycle and walking networks with transit systems.

Objective: Preserve and restore walking and bicycle access when roadways expand.

GOAL 2: Provide safe bicycle and walking networks, convenient for all users.

Objective: Provide a system that serves expert, intermediate, and novice users of all ages.

Objective: Provide a system that serves recreational and utilitarian user needs.

Objective: Create a network easily used by residents, guests, and tourists.

Objective: Develop a system that meets or exceeds VDOT standards.

Objective: Minimize potential conflicts between bicycles, motor vehicles, and pedestrians.

Objective: Provide signage, markings, and physical improvements to ensure safe and easy usage.

Objective: Provide and maintain riding surfaces free of obstructions, trash, gravel, and other hazards.

Objective: Develop improved methods of bicycle accident data gathering, analysis, and retrieval.

GOAL 3: Educate the public of bicycling and walking advantages, facilities, safety and regulations.

Objective: Develop a comprehensive public information and education program to raise the community's awareness and enjoyment of walking and bicycle riding facilities.

Objective: Inform public of health and environmental benefits to further entice users.

Objective: Incorporate maps of facilities into standard transportation and tourist maps.

Objective: Inform bicyclists and pedestrians of their responsibility in relation to traffic.

Objective: Educate bicyclists and drivers on the rules of the road and bicycle safety.

GOAL 4: Establish a system to coordinate steady implementation of the plan.

Objective: Establish priorities for facility development consistent with funding priorities while maintaining flexibility to develop any segment of the system as opportunities permit.

Objective: Develop facilities which are cost efficient to construct and maintain.

Objective: Maintain awareness of and pursue all potential funding sources.

Objective: Hire staff at each locality or regionally to be in charge of grant writing, plan coordination, and other activities that will provide the necessary support to implement the plan.

Recommendations

- Utilize the existing Neighborhood and Master Plans for identifying potential walkway, bicycle, greenway, and streetlight projects.
- Implement the recommendations of the Jefferson Area Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway Plan.
- Evaluate existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance requirements and enabling legislation to ensure pedestrian facilities are being provided as called for in this Plan.
- Evaluate the need (and method) for the County to supplement VDOT's walkway maintenance, grassy strips, and tree lawn areas.
- Establish an on-going walkway, bicycle, and greenway construction fund in the Capital Improvements Program. Utilize all possible funding sources for the construction of walkways and bicycle facilities.
- Utilize Development Standards for Roads and Land Use Standards for Development as guidelines for pedestrian facility development.
- Implement the recommendations of the existing Bicycle Plan for the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Regularly review and update Plan.
- Include bicycle and sidewalk facilities within new major developments depending on their location. Provide amenities such as bike racks and shower facilities.
- Consider VDOT and railroad companies' excess right-of-way for multi-use trails.