

APPENDIX 11: Bike, Pedestrian and Pathway Improvements

As mentioned in the Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan (Macro), although bicycling usually goes overlooked, it is an important alternative mode of transport. Not only is the role of bicycle and pedestrian traffic an integral part of a multi-modal transportation system, but as those who walk or bike do not contribute to car traffic, encouraging these alternative modes of transportation can reduce vehicular loads on local roads.

To create a safer, more continuous network of bicycle access for the LCV region, there should be a focus on filling in gaps, continuing to identify deficiencies in the system, and analyzing hazards that may result in accidents. This would help attain the goal of providing the interconnection of neighborhoods, schools, employment, shopping, parks and recreation, future neighborhoods and other traffic-generating locales.

Goals to consider in reaching these objectives may include the following:

- Emphasizing biking/walking as legitimate travel modes;
- Coordinating agency planning towards an inter-connected system;
- Creating education programs to increase safety and awareness.

The formation of a comprehensive and unified bicycle, pedestrian and pathway master plan will help give the MPO, the planning agencies, and the highway districts a strong tool when negotiating with developers to help ensure good design and construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This plan would also lend itself to giving developers a better idea of expectations and to recognize the advantages that alternative modes of transportation have to offer. The unified master plan could be complemented by instituting the following programs:

Technical Advisory Committee: A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) could be formed to provide information and assistance to the MPO in the promotion of multi-modal transportation, and to provide technical assistance and information to local agencies and interested citizens. The TAC would be comprised of members representing schools, public works, local governments, developers, cyclists, business leaders, among others. The TAC would address bike, pedestrian and pathway planning issues and recommend policies to the MPO Board regarding bike and pedestrian projects, enhancement projects and implementation of a master plan.

Project Planning Program: A project planning program could be formed to coordinate the development and construction of sidewalks, bike paths and pathways within all jurisdictions. The MPO would coordinate all aspects of transportation project development, including road improvement projects, ensuring that each project incorporates sidewalks and bike paths when appropriate, using design standards consistent with its surrounding area. Just as with other transportation planning in the LCVMPPO area, coordination among the region's cities and counties is necessary to the successful improvement of the bicycling and pedestrian networks.

The LCVMPPO and its agencies should adopt standards that require the consideration of bicycle/pedestrian facilities in the development of major roadway projects and land development. The MPO could mandate a bicycle, pedestrian, and pathway process in which there is coordination between the local municipalities in the planning, review and construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the metropolitan area. The MPO

would work closely with the planning agencies in reviewing site plans to ensure that bicycle/pedestrian facilities are adequately addressed in residential and commercial developments.

Developing a complete inventory of all bike and pedestrian facilities is an important first step in identifying additional needs, system enhancements and infrastructure improvements in the current system. Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian plans and data can be pulled together during the coming years to form comprehensive, effective mechanisms for organizing and implementing key policies, programs, and facility projects.

Bicycle Safety and Awareness Education Program: An education program focused on enhancing bicycle safety and awareness may help promote the use of this form of transportation. The MPO could help coordinate bicycle safety presentations upon request to schools, churches, civic groups, recreationists, etc. to not only help automobilists and bicyclists to be aware of each other, but also to show the advantages that bicycling has to offer. If bicycling is a desired form of transportation for the metropolitan area, then a proactive approach must be taken.

Strategies and policies would include coordination with schools (including Lewis Clark State College), planning agencies, business leaders, cyclists and others. Actions might include bicycle helmet promotions, the publication and distribution of a bike route map, a brochure on cycling tips and advantages, and events such as community bicycle races or rodeos.

Safe Routes to School Program: It is the mission of the Idaho Safe Routes to School Program to improve the health of kids and the community by making walking and biking to school safer, easier, and more enjoyable. The Federal-aid Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) was created through SAFETEA-LU to provide funds for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, and to administer State Safe Routes to School programs that benefit elementary and middle school children in grades K-8. The purpose is to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school by making it safer and more appealing. The program also includes the planning, development and implementation of projects to improve safety, and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

Some tools that may be employed as a proactive approach include:

- Employing operational and physical improvements to the facilities surrounding schools that aim to reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and that establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
- Educating children about the range of transportation choices, helping them learn important bicycling and walking safety skills, and incorporating driver safety campaigns in schools.
- Teaming with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed near schools (such as enforcement of speed limits, yielding to pedestrians in crossings), and instituting community efforts such as crossing guard programs.
- Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.

- Through the collection of data, both before and after the initiation of programs, trends and results can be documented to evaluate what is working and those areas that need revision.

Safe Routes to Schools projects proposed for funding must be programmed in the metropolitan planning organization's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These projects may include activities around the planning, design, and construction of projects that improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, such as sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, secure bike parking, and traffic diversion improvements near schools. Public awareness campaigns and outreach to community leaders are other eligible programs, as well as are traffic education and enforcement near schools, sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, and training of volunteers and managers of safe routes to school programs.

The determination of appropriate projects to be included in the TIP could be addressed by:

- Collaboration amongst planners, elected officials, business leaders, and the school board throughout the planning process.
- Safety should be a criterion in identifying and selecting projects, with funds allocated specifically for this endeavor.
- Developing a process that includes joint planning between land, transportation, and transit planners to investigate multimodal linkages with safety as a key objective.
- Gather and incorporate local and state safety statistics/data into information systems to assist in evaluation of safety programs.
- Educate land-use and transportation planners on the accessing and applying safety data.
- Develop unified standards for the planning agencies in the LCVMPPO area that require the appropriate links (sidewalks, pathways) between schools and other land uses that will provide a safe means to travel rather than via the automobile.
- Develop unified standards for the planning agencies in the LCVMPPO area that require an inventory of land uses in the vicinity of schools (and an inventory of walk/bike facilities in the vicinity of proposed land development) to assess the compatibility between land uses so as to determine which walking and biking links are appropriate to implement. Pedestrian friendly uses should be considered around schools when comprehensive plans and land use zones are being formulated to enable concurrency of infrastructure when land is developed.

These programs, the collaborative groups, and the TAC would be aided by the following tools:

- The development of a GIS-based database that would integrate existing infrastructure with planned projects, as well as hazards and deficiencies that need correction. This program would provide the ability to immediately assess existing conditions for planning purposes, such as availability of right-of-way, sidewalk/pathway widths, and location of related uses (such as schools or parks), to name a few. In addition, with the ability to

- **Bicycle, Pedestrian and Pathway Development Review.** The MPO should ensure that all municipalities establish consistent development review policies that require new development proposals and agencies overseeing roadway projects to conduct a pedestrian and bicycle accessibility analysis of the site as part of a plan submittal and review process. The analysis should include a snapshot of the immediate area (perhaps a quarter-mile to a half-mile radius) around the project site, and identification of the existing infrastructure and any potential obstacles or deficiencies that may reduce access. This policy would also help the MPO and local governments to be consistent in examining the linkages between developments and other land uses, and to identify potential site plan modifications that might encourage walking and biking between uses and rather than using the automobile. This recommendation may require amendments to the respective city and county comprehensive plans and land development codes.

The identification of additional funding sources for the planning agencies. The MPO would identify local, state and federal funding sources to pay for priority improvements. This funding could be supported by instituting developer incentives, such as more flexibility in design standards or reduced developer fees for connected and walkable pedestrian-scaled development, to encourage the construction of facilities.