Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan for Berks County

Prepared For:
Reading Metropolitan Planning Organization

By:

Gannett Fleming

March, 2002
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gannett Fleming, Inc. wishes to thank the following persons who served as members of the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee for their insight, knowledge, and ongoing participation as we prepare this plan. We appreciate your constructive dialog, active review of materials, and attendance at the meetings.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE

Mark Alonge          North Central Highway Safety Network
Gary Angstadt        Richmond Township Supervisor
Dave Bachman         PennDOT Statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
Robert Behling       South Heidelberg Township Planning Commission member
Jacob Bowers         Reading MPO Liaison
Bob Gifford          Berks County Bicycle Club
Mike Golembiewski    Berks County Planning Commission staff
Jack Goodhart        AAA Reading/Berks
Ray Ignosh           Kutztown University
Douglass Kauffman    Reading School District
Kyle Kemp            Berks County Bicycle Club
Patti Marshall       PennDOT Ass’t Statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
Bill McQuilken       PennDOT District 5 Highway Safety Liaison
Jamie Passon         Berks County Planning Commission staff
Frank Pilat          City of Reading Police/Traffic Enforcement Unit
Chet Sczepkowski     PennDOT Berks County Maintenance Office
William Semmel       Berks County Parks & Recreation Department Director
Keith Swenson, AICP  Schuylkill River Greenway Assn.
Anthony Tomczak      PennDOT District 5 Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
Ralph Trainer        Abilities In Motion
Sara Weidner         Berks County Bicycle Club
Janet Weiss          BARTA

Gannett Fleming Staff:

Brian Funkhouser, AICP
Kirk Stoner
Pat Wright

Rails to Trails Conservancy:

Jamie Bridges
# Table of Contents

1. **INTRODUCTION** ...............................................................................................1

2. **VISION** ........................................................................................................2
   2.1 Vision Statement ..........................................................................................2

3. **GOALS** ........................................................................................................3

4. **EXISTING FACILITIES AND CONCERNS** ........................................5
   4.1 Existing Facilities .......................................................................................5
   4.2 Maintenance Issues ....................................................................................6
   4.3 Identification of Major Choke Points ..........................................................6

5. **PROPOSED PROJECTS** ............................................................................8

6. **IMPLEMENTATION** ....................................................................................11
   6.1 Adoption of this plan ..................................................................................11
   6.2 Continuation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force .................................11
   6.3 Revisions to the State Vehicle Code ..........................................................14
   6.4 Development of Statewide Greenways Plan .............................................15
   6.5 Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan ..........................................15
   6.6 Bicycle PA ...............................................................................................16

7. **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** ....................................................................17
   7.1 Transportation-related Funding ..................................................................17
   7.1.1 TEA-21 .................................................................................................17
   7.1.2 Federal-aid Highway Program ...............................................................17
   7.1.3 Federal Transit Program .........................................................................19
   7.1.4 Federal/State Matching Requirements ..................................................19
   7.2 Recreation-related Funding .........................................................................21
   7.2.1 Community Conservation Partnerships .................................................21
   7.2.2 Keystone Planning, Implementation and Technical Assistance (PITA) Program . .................................................................21
   7.2.3 Keystone Acquisition and Development Grant Programs (DCNR) ........21
   7.2.4 The Keystone Land Trust Program (DCNR) ..........................................22
   7.2.5 The Recreational Trails Program (DCNR) .............................................22
   7.2.6 Heritage Parks Program (DCNR)............................................................22
GLOSSARY

**BCPC:** The Berks County Planning Commission is the lead planning agency within Berks County and serves as the lead staff agency to the Reading MPO.

**DCNR:** The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources manages the state’s parks and forests, administers a grant and technical assistance program for community recreation and conservation, and provides topographic and geographic information.

**Greenway:** A corridor of open space, varying greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban and rural areas to wide corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural and scenic features. Greenways can be land or water based, running along stream corridors, shorelines or wetlands. They can incorporate public and/or private property. Some greenways are primarily recreational corridors, while others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage. A greenway network will protect natural, cultural and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance the natural beauty and the quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and can stimulate economic development opportunities.

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

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

**PennDOT:** The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Its direct responsibilities include the maintenance, restoration and expansion of the state-owned system of 40,500 miles of highways and 25,000 bridges.

**Rail Trail:** Rail trails are former railroad beds converted into trails for public use. Usually the right-of-way of the rail line falls into disuse and a local municipality buys the rights to the right-of-way. Then the city, town or county must secure funding to convert the rail bed to a trail. These new trails can be used for walking, biking, blading and running. They are usually about 10’ to 12’ wide and smoothly prepared with asphalt or other hard surfacing materials.

**Reading MPO:** The Reading MPO is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization of state, county and local agencies, along with officials from the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority (BARTA) and the Reading Regional Airport Authority. The MPO develops transportation plans and improvement programs, and provides oversight and analysis of the preparation of plans and studies affecting transportation planning in the county.

**Shared-Use Pathway:** A shared-use pathway is a facility that is typically used by casual bicyclists and pedestrians. These do not preclude the need for on-road facilities.

**STC – State Transportation Commission:** The Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission is a 15-member body that holds regular meetings throughout the state and holds public hearings to set transportation program priorities. The Commission recommends a 12-year transportation program to the Governor, the General Assembly and the Secretary of Transportation for their consideration every two years.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): A list of the transportation projects for which planning has been completed and that require funding for implementation. Projects are placed on the TIP by the MPO. The TIP serves as the first four-year period of the 12-Year Program.

Twelve Year Program: State legislation requires that the Commonwealth develops and maintains a 12 Year Transportation Program, and that the program be reviewed, revised, adjusted and extended every two years. Projects on the 12 Year Program can include major capacity adding projects but more typically are filled with projects related to the maintenance of the system’s existing highways and bridges. Other types of projects can include “non traditional” transportation projects such as those funded through the Transportation Enhancement program.
Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan

1 Introduction

The Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee began meeting on February 3, 2000. The Committee began the effort to bring knowledgeable and interested individuals from the county together to look at both on and off road bicycling/pedestrian opportunities throughout Berks County and how these opportunities can be facilitated, supported and promoted.

Adopting a Bicycle and Pedestrian plan establishes a solid policy and planning 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. Also, use of alternate transportation modes will help preserve the environment by decreasing air pollution. The quality of bike and pedestrian modes in a region or a community is also a fairly good indicator of quality of life and community livability.

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 county-wide 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 and, where necessary and possible, safely integrate bicycles into the normal flow of motor vehicle traffic; and
- Ensure unencumbered handicapped accessibility where necessary and feasible.

In this Report:
- Introduction
- Vision
- Goals
- Existing Facilities and Concerns
- Proposed Projects
- Implementation
- Funding Opportunities
- Conclusion
- Appendix
2 Vision

As with any planning effort, the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian 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.

2.1 Vision Statement

“The region values the importance of walking, bicycling and other non-motorized methods for transportation, tourism, recreation, air quality, health and wellness. It will actively plan, encourage and provide for the integration and development of walking and bicycling into our transportation system that connects communities and regional assets.”

A Vision Statement is a broad statement that outlines the plan’s values and states where we want to be over a period of time.
3 Goals

Committee members developed a comprehensive list of planning goals that, if realized, would make the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan a success:

Municipalities should actively plan for and encourage non-motorized modes of transportation
- Get municipalities to implement bicycle/pedestrian facilities
- Improve connectivity in urban sidewalks
- Provide more paved roadway shoulders throughout the county
- Provide incentives for people to use modes of transportation other than the automobile
- Increase communication among PennDOT, the county, municipalities, school districts, and advocacy groups pertaining to bicycle and pedestrian planning
- Develop functional classifications for bikeways and walkways to prioritize improvements
- Identify corridors to be targeted for walking and cycling improvements
- Identify and correct physical barriers to those with mobility limitations.

Establish an education/enforcement safety campaign
- Provide better separation between motorized and non-motorized transportation modes where possible
- Provide safe/secure facilities
- Educate bicyclists, motorists and municipalities on bike and pedestrian planning and safety issues
- Provide more “Share the Road” signs along popular cycle routes
- Provide guidance to municipalities on planning and implementing bike and pedestrian routes
- Establish feasible standards for rural municipal roads that would allow safe accommodation of motorized and non-motorized transportation
- Develop a map of mountain bike areas
- Provide municipal bicycle police patrol of trails
- Provide educational programs stressing safe bicycle and pedestrian practices
Develop funding mechanism and accountability in implementing the bicycle/pedestrian plan
- Educate municipalities on available grant and loan opportunities
- Identify additional funding sources for multi-municipal routes

Provide and maintain bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- PennDOT and municipalities should provide, where feasible, more paved roadway shoulders to improve system connectivity
- PennDOT, municipalities, adjacent landowners and users should provide better maintenance of shoulders by:
  - Grading shoulders to allow rain to wash debris off to the side
  - Cleaning shoulders regularly where necessary
- Complete the Schuylkill River trail and other major trails as listed in this Plan
- Provide linkages between trail systems
- Identify areas where bike parking is needed and provide it where possible
- Provide safe areas for bikes and pedestrians on bridges
- Provide bike racks on buses and trains and at bus stops and public facilities
- Create a formal, signed bicycle network in Reading and other densely-developed areas
- Create a system of bike lanes (routes) in Reading and other urbanized areas
- Ensure that facilities meet or exceed federal accessibility requirements

Identify Unique Urban and Suburban Pedestrian Issues
- Provide safer walking conditions for school children
- Improve connectivity in urban and suburban sidewalk systems
- Ensure that all pedestrian facilities meet federal accessibility standards
4 Existing Facilities and Concerns

The identification of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities is an essential component of any bicycle and pedestrian plan. An inventory of the facilities in Berks County was compiled by the Committee and digitally mapped by PennDOT District 5, with further updates by the Berks County Planning Commission staff. The mapping process served as one aid in identifying gaps or conflicts in the county’s bicycle/pedestrian network that need to be mitigated. The maps included with the Plan identify existing facilities and any barriers along those routes.

The existing facilities shown represent those identified by the Committee as the primary network of roadway and pedestrian facilities that connect popular origins and destinations. This network is generally suitable for bicycle and pedestrian travel, with the exception of areas that have been identified as a barrier. A barrier is a part of the roadway or network that contributes to an unsafe or impassible condition and could include turning conflicts or a lack of adequate space for that facility.

4.1 Existing Facilities

In identifying a bicycle/pedestrian network for the county, the Committee noted established hiker-only and multi-use trails and trail connections in Berks County:

- Tulpehocken Canal Trail project (up to the Blue Marsh Trail) is now in final engineering
- Thun/Schuylkill Trail from Reading to Montgomery County (selected sections only)
- Exeter Scenic River Trail
- Appalachian Trail
- Horseshoe Trail
- River Front Park Trail
- Dana Memorial Park Trail
- Reading Bikeway
- Blair Avenue and Schuylkill Avenue connector (connecting Reading Bikeway to Dana Memorial Park Trail)*
- French Creek Park Trail System (included by reference; trails not shown in detail)
- Union Canal Towpath Trail
• Blue Marsh Trail System
• Old Wyomissing Road from Old Mill Road and US 222/Lancaster Avenue in Shillington
• Old River Road connector (Routes 724 and 82) between the two sections of the Thun/Schuylkill Trail*
• Wyomissing Creek Park and Trail system
• Bartram/Schuylkill River Trail (Hamburg to Schuylkill County, selected sections only)
• Craig Link Trail and RACC railroad bridge (connects western terminus of the Thun Trail to River Front Park Trail in Reading)

*existing user conflicts with traffic and need for signage to guide users to next trail system

In conjunction with the existing trail network, and through the assistance of the Berks County Bicycle Club, a network of roadway segments that are adequate for bicycle commuting and distance riding has been identified. These segments are depicted on the maps as existing “On-Road” facilities.

4.2 Maintenance Issues

Maintenance issues are a major concern for bicycle and pedestrian transportation routes. Examples of maintenance issues include:

• Shoulder cutting to remove trees and growth for increased visibility
• Shoulder, road, and curb ramp sweeping for cinders, glass and other debris
• Replacing missing signs or installing new signs
• Keeping paved shoulder edges and sidewalks in good condition
• Maintaining clear sidewalk and intersection access, particularly during inclement winter weather

4.3 Identification of Major Choke Points

Choke points, as they are known, are areas where an existing or future bicycle or pedestrian facility is narrowed (or ‘choked’) to the point that a cyclist or pedestrian is unintentionally forced into vehicular traffic. Through the identification of a priority network for the county, the bicycle/pedestrian committee also identified major choke points found throughout the county:

• Reading RR overpasses on PA 61 at Reading Crest Ave. and north of West Huller Ln. will limit widening of roadway to include shoulders for bicyclists
• US 422 bypass and Perkiomen Avenue in Exeter Township: Merging of the two traffic patterns is precarious for bicyclists riding eastbound on Perkiomen Avenue, and curbing from the eastern entrance of the Promenade at Exeter shopping center is restrictive to cyclists heading west.

• US 422 at entrance to Pottstown Bypass: Merging of two traffic patterns is precarious for bicyclists riding eastbound on US 422 east of Douglassville.

• Birdsboro: Safe access between the Thun and Hay Creek Trails is not readily available.

• PA 12/Pricetown Road: Guide rail reduces two foot shoulder at multiple locations.

• Muhlenberg Township rail trail: Two business have encroached onto the right-of-way, preventing the trail from connecting to Kutztown Road.

• Hay Creek Trail: New Morgan Borough has fenced off the right-of-way through their municipality forcing users onto local roads to continue to the next section of the trail.

• Thun/Schuylkill Trail at US 422, US 222, and PA 10: Railroad bridge removed forcing trail users to cross at one of the busiest and most dangerous intersections in the county.

• Thun/Schuylkill Trail between PA 10 entrance and US 222: An adjacent property owner has filled in the ravine in the right-of-way with tons of fill, making it impassable.

• Thun/Schuylkill Trail - PA 724 in Monocacy: Railroad bridge taken down at the intersection of Monocacy and Shed Roads. Two adjacent properties have a poor line of sight distance here, coupled with fast moving traffic.

• PA 82 bridge over the Schuylkill River (Birdsboro Borough): Travel lanes very narrow with sunken drainage grates, poor road surface and much traffic. Sidewalks not accessible by ADA standards.
5 Proposed Projects

The mapping also identifies proposed facilities. These maps should not be viewed as the MPO’s “recommended route guide”, but rather as a planning tool to be used by state, MPO and municipal officials in planning and programming actions, as well as in determining operation and maintenance needs. Any proposed facility identified on the maps could potentially be a candidate for a future transportation improvement project, Betterment project, or Enhancement project, or recreation-funded improvement. Numbers shown in the following tables correspond with project locations on the maps and do not signify any means of project prioritization.

Prioritized Listing of Projects
By Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Priority</th>
<th>Roadway-Based Improvements</th>
<th>All state roads should include adequate paved shoulders of at least three feet in width that are properly marked/signed and regularly maintained.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PennDOT will accommodate bicycle/pedestrian shoulder paving recommendations in its maintenance and Betterment activities, where feasible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Provide a linkage from the Thun Trail to the Monocacy Hill Recreation Area – link would join a major regional walking and biking trail to a 420-acre wooded recreation area with previously established trails and facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Improve at-grade railroad crossings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>2. Complete the Schuylkill River Trail through Berks County from Montgomery to Schuylkill Counties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Complete trails, as funding permits, that connect to the Schuylkill River Trail as identified at the end of these Tables.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Extend existing Union Canal Trail west upstream along the south bank of Tulpehocken Creek to Paper Mill Road, allowing for connection to the Cacoosing Creek.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Provide a walking/bicycling connection along the Wyomissing Creek between the railroad tracks on the east, through the West Reading Borough recreation area, to Museum Road on the west, including a connection to the Thun Trail.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Create a formal countywide bicycle/pedestrian coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Provide universally accessible pedestrian linkages throughout the county’s boroughs and other densely-developed areas connecting residential, commercial, education, and recreational uses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support recommendations of municipal comprehensive plans that include policies for creating attractive streetscapes and enhancing the general welfare and safety of pedestrians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium Priority</th>
<th>Roadway-Based Improvements</th>
<th>6. Provide bicycle lanes along major vehicular routes in West Reading Borough.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a formal route from Blue Marsh Lake southwest to Mountaintop Road in South Heidelberg and into Lancaster County, connecting with PA 897.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Connect Amity Gardens to Weavertown Road along either Old Airport Road, Route 662 or through the development area. This connection would join the largest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
concentration of residential units in Amity Twp. to the elementary school, municipal building, and a municipal recreation area.

### Trails

8. Connect the county’s trail at Grings Mill to the Cacoosing Meadows Recreation Area in Spring Twp.

9. Develop a trail from Shiloh Hills Community Park in Spring Twp. using Sage Drive, Goose Lane, and other links to eventual connection with Lancaster County.

10. Establish a trail corridor along the Cacoosing Creek from Green Valley and Cacoosing Meadows northeast to Tulpehocken Creek.

### Education

The Berks County Planning Commission should provide technical guidance to municipalities and engineers on bicycle/pedestrian-friendly design issues during the subdivision/land development review process.

### Access

Establish/ensure intermodalism of Schuylkill Valley Metro.

11. Establish a perpetual easement through Carpenter Technology Property via River Road.

### Low Priority

#### Roadway-Based Improvements

12. Improve shoulder thoroughfare along River Rd. in Muhlenberg Twp. from the city line north to Riverview Road in the Eagle’s Landing development. The Township has already created a walking path along the bank of the river through part of this area.

#### Trails

13. Route 422 to Cider Mill Development – trail would join the major highway in Amity Township along or adjacent to a right-of-way path to a residential area.

14. Spring Township: Construct a non-roadway and roadway based trail through the Township, connecting Spring Towne Center, retail outlets at Penn Avenue and the Wilson School District Complex, as well as Spring Ridge Elementary School and the Cacoosing Meadows Recreation Area.

15. Complete a missing trail link between the Dana Memorial Park trail and the River Front Park trail.

#### Education

Municipalities should be encouraged to include a bicycle/pedestrian element in their comprehensive plans.

All school districts should be encouraged to include bicycle safety education (at the appropriate grade level) in their health, physical education and driver’s education curriculum.

#### Access

Add bicycle racks to BARTA buses

16. Create a safe link between Angelica Park and the Thun Trail at Brentwood Drive.

17. Railroad Station at 7th and Franklin Streets should be partly or wholly converted into a bicycle station with showers, lockers, bicycle storage, etc.

18. “Swinging Bridge” should be reconstructed over the Schuylkill River to connect the Dana memorial Park and Reading Bikeway Trails.

* Includes connector trails:
  - 3a. Hay Creek Trail on former Wilmington & Northern line;
  - 3b. “Blue Marsh Connector” from the end of the Union Canal trail to the Blue Marsh stilling basin;
  - 3c. Linkages between Thun Trail and Exeter Trail & Allegheny Aqueduct;
  - 3d. Connection of the Exeter Scenic River Trail to the Neversink Mountain Preserve trail system, and extending through Cumru Twp. to Reading with a connection to the Riverfront Park Trail
  - 3e. Neversink Mountain Preserve Trail System
3f. Hex Highway Trail connecting Hamburg, Shartlesville and Strausstown.

The above-listed connector trails are not prioritized in any particular order and should be completed as resources permit. In addition, the following trails are also recognized as locally significant and worthy of completion as funding opportunities arise. Note that they are not prioritized in any particular order, and the numbers are for map reference only.

19. Old Dutchman Trail on former Colebrookdale line (Boyertown to Bechtelsville)
20. Colebrookdale Trail on active portion of the Colebrookdale line should service ever be abandoned (Pottstown to Boyertown)
21. Muhlenberg Township trail on former Reading RR “Hill line” from Duke Street in Laureldale Borough to the northern Muhlenberg Twp. boundary
22. Ontelaunee/Maidencreek Township Rail Trail into Blandon from Muhlenberg Twp
23. Laurel Run Trail in Muhlenberg Twp.
24. Connect developer-provided trails and trail systems between residential developments (not shown on maps)
25. Bartram Trial in Hamburg Borough
26. Tulpehocken Creek Trail corridor west from Blue Marsh Lake
27. Antietam Creek corridor trail.
6 Implementation

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

6.1 Adoption of this plan

One of the most important aspects of adopting this plan is the public comment period. Through public comments, the Committee can assure that the plan addresses the needs and concerns of the county’s citizens and municipalities. To ensure 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.

The final version of the plan will be presented to the MPO for formal adoption. After MPO adoption, the plan will be distributed to all municipalities of Berks County, who will be asked to support the plan.

In the final step of the process, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan will be made a part of Long Range Transportation Plan, which is currently being updated. As a part of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the goals and action plans of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan must be considered whenever improvements to the transportation system are designed. Additionally, recommendations made in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be adopted by reference in the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. These recommendations will be considered when reviews are made against the County Comprehensive Plan.

6.2 Continuation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force

One of the Committee’s chief concerns is ensuring that this plan continues to guide transportation decisions in the future. In order to address this concern, the Committee has agreed to 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:
  - Reading MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program
• Local Municipalities
• BARTA
• Schuylkill Valley Metro
• PennDOT District 5
• Private organizations

• Ensure the plan remains relevant and useful
• Provide information to update the maps as facilities become either more or less accessible to bicycles and pedestrians
• Share ideas for new ways to promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation

**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 part of such a formal organization, the Committee should consider the following items:

• Membership
• 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 term, 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 bicycle and pedestrian modes. Berks County organizations that provide special assets should be sought for participation in the respective subcommittees—
e.g., Chamber of Commerce with Economic Development; law enforcement agencies with Safety; and so on.

**Planning & Programming** – This plan needs to be integrated into ongoing planning and programming activities with the Berks County Planning Commission, BARTA and PennDOT District 5. The Steering Committee should become familiar with the planning cycle for the MPO’s TIP, relevant grant programs, and PennDOT’s 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 issuing an annual report on the progress of plan implementation. That annual report would be distributed to key stakeholders, the general public and summarized in press releases. It should be prepared with input from the MPO, PennDOT, BARTA and others who affect positive changes to the network, and would report on accomplishments and also highlight planned improvements. Indirect impacts such as tourism growth and quality of life changes can also be noted, making the annual report 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 to 2-year accomplishment), medium term (3-5 years), and long term (over five 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 the 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 list highlights some other considerations related to successful implementation:

Recognition Programs – help reinforce progress and special achievements by communities, agencies, businesses, and individuals.

Involvement of Elected Officials – keep local and state elected officials informed and involved (e.g. event announcements, newsletter distribution, etc.).

6.3 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.

• 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 traveling.

• 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 bill deleted the problematic language that required bicycles to travel as far to the right “as practicable,” and replaced it with language that requires bicycles that are traveling at slower than the prevailing speed of traffic to keep to the right, while permitting bicycles to make movements consistent with their intended travel route.

The effect of these code revisions have been incorporated, where practical, into the Plan components. They should be further referenced and used where necessary, such as in educational programs, project planning, and accessibility compliance.

6.4 Development of Statewide Greenways Plan

Former governor Tom Ridge established the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission in April 1998. The purpose of the commission is to promote the development of an interconnected greenways network throughout Pennsylvania.

One of the main goals of the commission is to establish an operating framework or focal point for coordinating greenway development activities in the Keystone State. An established greenway program would serve local and regional governments and private sector organizations who implement greenway initiatives by bringing greenway related information and resources all under one roof.

The Commission is working towards developing a Statewide Greenways Action Plan which will culminate in the development of a final report by February 2001.

6.5 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 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: Bridgeville, Franklin, Allentown, Upper Merion Township and Harrisburg. The majority of invitees were civil engineers and designers who build and design projects but have limited access to the latest bicycle/pedestrian facilities design information.

As part of implementing its Master plan, PennDOT provided Gannett Fleming as a consultant to assist planning regions (including Berks County) 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 PennDOT’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator.

6.6 Bicycle PA

“Bicycle PA,” the movement to sign and designate multiple intrastate bicycle routes in Pennsylvania, continues. The Bicycle PA effort was initiated by the Pennsylvania Pedalcycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PPAC) and involves the development of six cross-state, “border to border” bicycle routes. The six Bicycle PA routes will use existing public roads and some rail trails to guide bicyclists through the state. Each of the six routes has an appointed “route development coordinator” who is in charge of soliciting input from knowledgeable individuals and designing a good route for bicyclists. The routes are designed for competent road bicyclists who may undertake a long distance cycle touring trip. Not all Bicycle PA routes will have perfect shoulders or be entirely free of truck traffic.

Bicycle PA includes two routes through Berks County, the Route “L” southern east-west route, and “Route Y,” the eastern, north-south route. Route “L” uses PA 23 through Caernarvon Township in the southern part of the county, while Route “Y” follows a north-south route through the rural eastern part of the County. Approximately $800 thousand dollars was approved 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. These routes are depicted on the Existing Facilities mapping.
7 Funding Opportunities

7.1 Transportation-related Funding

Bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from most major Federal-aid highway, transit, safety, and other programs. Bicycle and pedestrian projects must be principally for transportation, rather than recreation purposes and must be designed and located pursuant to the transportation plans required of states, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO’s) and Local Development Districts (LDD’s).

7.1.1 TEA-21

In June 1998, a new federal surface transportation act was signed into law. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21, was landmark legislation. It not only continued the visionary policies of its predecessor, ISTEA, but it provided more funding than ever before for non-motorized transportation modes, specifically, bicycle and pedestrian modes.

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.

TEA-21 expires September 30, 2003. It is anticipated that subsequent funding legislation will continue to support these efforts.

7.1.2 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 (TE’s) activities. The law provides a specific list of eligible activities that include the 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 their conversion and use for bicycle and pedestrian trails).

Transportation enhancement projects are eligible for a maximum of 80% federal funding. Pennsylvania’s program has been structured to have project sponsors fund the pre-construction phases of work; that is the design, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation work, with non-federal funding, and to then provide 100% federal funding for the construction phase. This generally results in an approximate 80/20 cost-sharing arrangement.

PennDOT provides staff to administer the program and to provide advice and technical assistance as necessary. Project sponsors are expected to secure the necessary engineering or architectural expertise to develop and implement the transportation enhancement projects.

Individual applicants submit their projects to the Reading MPO staff. The applications are reviewed, prioritized, and a recommendation is forwarded to the Reading MPO for its endorsement before going to PennDOT for final review and then to the State Transportation Commission for final adoption.

Another ten percent of each State’s STP funds is set-aside for safety-related programs. The Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing programs are two programs under the safety category that 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 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).
National Scenic Byways Program funds may be used for construction along a scenic byway of a facility for bicyclists and pedestrians.

### 7.1.3 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.

### 7.1.4 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 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.

Federal and state sponsors stress the importance of community support for projects receiving funding. Therefore, communities that provide more than the minimum 20% match may receive higher consideration of their projects.
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.

7.2 Recreation-related Funding

In addition to transportation-related funding programs, many opportunities exist to fund projects through recreation-based resources. Many of these are coordinated through Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

7.2.1 Community Conservation Partnerships Program

The Community Conservation Partnerships Program has been restructured to combine several funding sources that were previously administered as separate grant programs:

- the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (Keystone),
- Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Act (Growing Greener), and
- the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program, funded from both federal and state general fund appropriations.

The grant program components funded by these sources have been combined into one application cycle and a single application format and process. DCNR typically announces the availability of program funds each August in the Pennsylvania Bulletin before hosting application workshops in September. Applications are typically due at the end of October, with funds being awarded in March of the following year. These funds may be used for the planning phase (20%) of the 80/20 TEA-21 projects.

Technical assistance is available from the Bureau’s Central Office in Harrisburg.

The following DCNR funding programs are included in the Community Conservation Partnership Program and explained in more detail.
7.2.2 Keystone Planning, Implementation and Technical Assistance (PITA) Program

Within the PITA Program are three separate programs of interest to the greenways and trail community:

- Community Grants
- Rails-to-Trails Grants
- Rivers Conservation Grants.

Keystone Community Grants provide funds for comprehensive recreation, park and open space plans, greenway plans, site master plans for neighborhood or regional parks, county natural area inventories, and peer-to-peer technical assistance. Municipal governments (including counties), councils of government (COGs) and some authorities are the only eligible applicants.

Rails-to-Trails Grants may be requested either by appropriate non-profit organizations or municipalities. Money is provided for rail-trail feasibility studies and master plans and for special-purpose studies, such as studies of bridges and tunnels of special concern.

Rivers Conservation Grants are available to municipalities and appropriate non-profit organizations for conducting watershed and river corridor studies and plans, many of which include greenway and trail elements.

7.2.3 Keystone Acquisition and Development Grant Programs (DCNR)

The Keystone Acquisition and Development Grants Program includes three components:

- Community Grants
- Rails-to-Trails Grants
- Rivers Conservation Grants

Although these bear the same names as grant programs under the PITA grants, they are separate programs with distinct features.

Under the Community Program, municipalities, COGs and some authorities are the only eligible applicants. These grants provide funding for the purchase of land for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and the rehabilitation and development of park and recreation areas and facilities, including greenways and trails.

The Rails-to-Trails Program is open to municipalities and non-profit organizations. Grant funds may be used for acquisition of abandoned railroad rights-of-way and adjacent land, and to develop them for recreational trail use.
Under the Rivers Conservation Program, funding is available to both municipalities and appropriate organizations for acquisition and development projects recommended in an approved Rivers Conservation Plan (such as those created under the PITA Program). To be eligible for acquisition or development funding, the Rivers Conservation Plan must be listed in the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry.

7.2.4 The Keystone Land Trust Program (DCNR)

DCNR’s Land Trust Grant Program provides grants to non-profit land trusts’ conservancies and organizations. The funds require a 50-percent match and are used for acquisition and planning of open space and critical natural areas that face imminent loss. Lands must be open to public use and the acquisition must be coordinated with the communities or counties in which the property is located.

Although these funds are targeted to protecting critical habitat with threatened species, many of these lands also provide key open space, greenway, bikeway, trail and heritage corridor opportunities and connections in greenway systems. Many land trusts and conservancies are undertaking greenway initiatives and are willing partners in greenway projects.

7.2.5 The Recreational Trails Program (DCNR)

The Recreational Trails Program is administered by DCNR but uses Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds. The ISTEA legislation included the Symms National Recreational Trails Act, and these grants are sometimes referred to as “Symms Grants.”

Recreational Trails Program grants are available to federal and state agencies, municipal government, organizations, and even private individuals. Grant money may be used for a variety of purposes, including work on trails to mitigate or minimize the impact on the natural environment, provide urban trail linkages, and develop trail-side and trail-head facilities. These grants also require a 50-percent local match. DCNR has a detailed grant application manual that includes necessary application procedures, forms, worksheets, sample contracts and agreements, and as well as an environmental survey form. DCNR also provides technical assistance and training workshops for interested applicants.

7.2.6 Heritage Parks Program (DCNR)

DCNR administers the Heritage Parks Program in conjunction with a task force of other state agencies and non-profit organizations. Annual appropriations from the General Assembly are used to fund study, planning, implementation and management projects in officially designated State Heritage Parks in the Commonwealth. As of this
writing, Pennsylvania has eight designated State Heritage Parks. Three additional sites are being studied and are likely to be included in the system soon.

Heritage Parks are large multi-county corridor and geographic areas that contain heritage elements of national or state significance related to industrial themes, such as oil, steel, coal, railroads, and transportation. Through public-private partnerships and a bottom-up grassroots public participation process, regional management action plans are completed to protect and enhance the natural, cultural, recreational, historic and scenic resources of the area. These resources are interpreted, packaged and promoted to create economic development opportunities based on tourism for the area.

Most of the designated State Heritage Parks and those being planned include greenways, trails and river corridor projects in their regional strategies for preservation, enhancement, interpretation, education and promotion. Some of the state’s best greenway corridors are found in State Heritage Parks and have benefited from funding through the program. Each Heritage Park is run by a manager and staff, who are available to discuss greenways, trail, and heritage corridor initiatives in their regions. Information about the state’s system of Heritage Parks is available from the Department’s central office in Harrisburg or from the DCNR Web Page. The Schuylkill River Greenway Association manages the DCNR Heritage Program throughout the Schuylkill River corridor counties that include Berks County. Information about the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor may be obtained from the Greenway Association.
8 Conclusion

The Reading MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian 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 Reading MPO 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, the Reading MPO’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be reviewed and revised in step with each update afforded to the overall plan (which by federal law is mandated occurs every three to five years, depending on the MPO’s status for air quality attainment).

It is the desire of the Reading MPO 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 Berks County Planning Commission, the MPO, and PennDOT together can use to encourage and support these non-motorized modes of transportation.
APPENDIX A: Action Plans

A plan is only as strong as its related action or implementation component. As a matter of good public policy and economic common sense, “getting it done” needs to be paired with “doing it right.” The development of an action plan constitutes a proactive, strategic approach to moving from the planning and design stages to implementation and construction (if applicable). As important challenges and decisions are faced in the months and years ahead, the action plan should be the frame of reference to which the county’s elected officials and transportation planning officials can refer in implementing new policies and programming non-traditional transportation projects. The purpose of the action plans will be to provide the framework for many of the decisions that will need to be made along the way. The action plan also provides the basis for tracking progress over time.

As part of the plan’s data collection, the Berks County Planning Commission solicited project suggestions from each of the county’s member municipalities. The responses received are incorporated into the list below and are part of the public record. This list, in addition to project/policy suggestions from the Committee, was used as a starting point in identifying projects.

A potential list of projects follows under the following project categories: 1) Roadway-based improvements, 2) Safety, 3) Trails, 4) Education, and 5) Access.

A.1 Sample Action Plan Formats

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. Example: Modify the existing transportation infrastructure to encourage bicycling and walking in targeted rural, suburban and urban areas of the county.

- **Objectives** – Directives that identify specific things that need to be accomplished to achieve the goals. Example: Target bicycling and pedestrian improvements in areas where the most impact in increasing bicycling and walking and improving the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians can be accomplished.

- **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. Example: Give the PennDOT District 5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator the responsibility for working with local and regional agencies to coordinate bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
Sample action plans for three different types of bicycle/pedestrian projects are shown, including: trail development, shoulder improvements and pedestrian improvements.

**Sample Action Item #1**  
**Development of a Trail**

**Sample Objective #1**  
Complete one of the “missing links” of XYZ Trail from Point A to Point B.

**Sample Action Steps:**

1. The Reading MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, under the auspices of the BCPC will provide leadership for this objective by forming a subcommittee, or steering committee to guide the planning process.

2. The steering committee will reach out to the communities in the county in educating the public to the needs and benefits of on- and off-road trails, as well as in developing a vision for the project.

3. The steering committee will develop a scope of work for the project that will establish the framework for achieving the objective.

4. The steering committee will create a strategic plan for the development of this trail. The strategic plan should follow the same model used in the development of the region’s bicycle/pedestrian plan: developing a vision, or mission statement, setting goals and objectives, developing action steps, and then evaluating the plan’s progress.

5. The steering committee will seek public input through a public involvement process (town meetings, questionnaires, etc.) to gauge public interest in the initiative.

6. The steering committee will meet with elected officials of Berks County and its member municipalities as well as BCPC, DCNR, PennDOT and any other organizations interested in the project.

7. The steering committee will identify a list of prioritized projects that create an interconnected network of off-road infrastructure.

8. The steering committee will appoint a member or subcommittee responsible for engaging the media to increase exposure and awareness of the project. Media events could
include holding public meetings, communicating results of a survey or questionnaire, or beginning construction of a trail segment, etc.

9. The steering committee, with help from BCPC, will identify and secure funding for the top priority project(s). Some sources include local fundraisers, individual donors, corporate giving, and existing transportation and related improvement programs.

10. The steering committee/project team will conduct feasibility studies for the appropriate projects, including:

   a. An inventory and assessment of existing conditions, including:
      i. physical inventory
      ii. infrastructure
      iii. scenic resources
      iv. historical and cultural resources
      v. transportation characteristics
      vi. population and socio-economic characteristics

   b. potential demands, and

   c. potential benefits

   d. final feasibility determination

11. The committee will oversee the trail development process, either through an in-house source or a qualified engineering firm(s).

12. The steering committee/project team will identify who will take ownership of the trail (if any) identified for construction. Management and maintenance of the proposed trail should also be identified at this stage of the process.

Sample Action Item #2
Pedestrian Improvements

Objective #1
Provide for a better-integrated network of pedestrian facilities in the City of Reading.

Action Items:
1. The BCPC will arrange a meeting between members of its bicycle/pedestrian committee, planning and elected officials from the City of Reading, PennDOT County Maintenance Manager, and the school district in discussing the need for better connections for bicyclists and pedestrians through the City of Reading.

2. The meeting agenda should include a focus on the need for better pedestrian connections to the Thun Trail along U.S. 422, as well as sidewalks and crosswalks that are more accommodating to the disabled in meeting ADA requirements.

3. Targeted improvements should include a signing plan to direct bicyclists and pedestrians through the City of Reading and nearby trailheads, as well as clearly marked crosswalks and a well connected and maintained network of sidewalks. Bicycle racks will also be included among the improvements.

4. Portions of the City’s street network will be designated and improved as a bicycle pathway until such time that an alternative (trail) can be developed to connect the Thun Trail with popular destinations within the City.

Sample Action Item #3
Shoulder Improvements on PA Route ###

Objective #1
Improve bicycle/pedestrian connections by widening the shoulders along this state route.

Action Items:
1. PennDOT’s Betterment Program includes major improvements to state highways, typically including major resurfacings, and often involve minor widenings, shoulder improvements, safety and drainage improvements. The Reading MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, along with the County Planning Commission, will work with PennDOT’s County Maintenance Manager in including a shoulder paving/widening program for PA ###, PA ## and SRs #### and ##### as part of the County’s portion of the regional bicycle/pedestrian network.

2. BCPC will seek placement of the proposed projects on the region’s 2003 TIP if they cannot be addressed more quickly in the Department’s Betterment Program and/or routine maintenance activities.

3. The bicycle/pedestrian committee will establish a subcommittee to ensure that these suggested shoulder
improvement projects are properly advocated and find their way onto a state improvement program, i.e. Betterment, maintenance, or TIP.

4. The committee will seek and encourage the assistance of advocates from the bicycling community, the County Planning Commission, as well as municipal representatives from affected communities in its advocacy efforts.

5. The bicycle/pedestrian committee will work with its affiliates to develop a shoulder maintenance program. This program will monitor the conditions of the aforementioned shoulders and ensure that they remain amenable to cyclists and pedestrians. Should shoulder conditions degrade to an unsafe state for cyclists and pedestrians, PennDOT would be notified or other actions taken to improve their condition.

**Sample Action Item #4**

**System Continuity**

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

**Action Items:**

1. The Berks County Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, in conjunction with PennDOT District 5, 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) and PennDOT’s Twelve Year Program.

2. The Committee will work with the Pennsylvania Statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator in removing the “No Pedestrian” signs from county intersections.

3. The Committee will work with BCPC and PennDOT District 9 and municipalities 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 in urban or village growth areas.

4. The Berks County Planning Commission will encourage transportation grant applicants to consider pedestrian and/or bicycle mobility in the design of all transportation improvement projects.

5. The Berks County Planning Commission will ensure that transportation grant applicants demonstrate that their projects are consistent with the Berks County Transportation Plan, any existing corridor studies, and the applicable municipal comprehensive plan.

6. The Berks County Planning Commission will review all subdivision and land development plans for consistency with municipal and county park and recreation plans and with park and recreation chapters of municipal comprehensive plans to ensure consistency with proposed greenways.

7. The Berks County Planning Commission will review all proposed municipal comprehensive plan updates and corridor studies to ensure that they include policies for bicycle and pedestrian modes as part of the overall transportation system.
APPENDIX B: Berks County Bicycle Club Shoulder Paving Priorities

As part of their input into the Plan, the Berks County Bicycle Club - many of whom cycle as part of their daily commute - provided their list of shoulder paving priorities. This list is meant to supplement the map of future projects and further serves to link roadways with current conditions suitable for cycling.

1. Old Rt. 422 from bypass east of Douglassville east to Montgomery County line- to continue paved shoulders that extend from Exeter Township to 422 bypass (choke point east bound at entrance to bypass).

2. Rt. 724 from Rt. 10 east to Rt. 176 (or marked alternate bicycle route using Thun Trail from Rt. 724 to Rt. 10)- to connect to paved shoulders that run from 176 to 82 in Birdsboro.

3. Gibraltar Rd. from Rt. 724 north to RR overpass- to allow cyclists to get from Thun Trail in Gibraltar to Exeter Township River Trail.

4. Rt. 724 from Rt. 345 east to Red Corner Rd – connect curb to curb in Birdsboro to paved shoulders to Chester County line.

5. Rt. 724 from Rt. 10 west to Corbit Dr. – upgrade rough – paved shoulders to connect to C to C in Grill.

6. Gibraltar Rd. from RR overpass north to W. 47th St – to encourage people in developments along Gibraltar Rd. to walk/cycle to Exeter Township river trail & Thun Trail.

7. Alternate Bicycle Route needed on Rt. 422 in Exeter Township between Shelbourne Rd. & W. 47th. A proposed bike/ped bridge over Antietam Creek connecting Shelbourne Sq. Shopping Center to new development Eastwick at Exeter pivotal to this route. Existing secondary streets Hafer, Oak, W. 47th, Gilbraltar, Lorane, Shelbourne Rd. jug handle, Shelbourne Sq. entrance, unnamed passage through Eastwick at Exeter utilized for route east & west bound except for jug handle (west bound only). This contingent upon permission granted by all parties involved.

8. 11th St. from RR tracks at Lentz Milling and the U.S. Post Office north to Kutztown Rd. (extra space to cross tracks at right angle south bound)-to facilitate cycling along busy connection from NE Reading to Muhlenberg Township.

9. Rt. 345 from just north of Birdsboro south to Chester County, to connect recently-paved shoulders to Rt. 82.
10. Rt. 23 from Chester County line west to Morgantown – to connect two sections of 23 with paved shoulders.

11. Rt. 422 from Sinking Spring west to Wernersville – to extend paved shoulders west on major E/W route.

12. Rt. 82 from US 422 south to Birdsboro – connect shoulders of Rt. 422 to population area & shoulders of Rt. 724.

13. Rt. 10 from Flying Hills Rt. 176 interchange north to Angelica Park entrance – to complete paved shoulders on Rt. 10 in Berks Co. and to encourage cycling/walking to Thun Trail, Angelica Park, etc.

14. Old Rt. 222 from bypass north to Kutztown-connect paved shoulders of Rt. 222 to curb-to-curb in Kutztown.

15. Rt. 625 from Rt. 724 north to curb-to-curb or first full intersection.

16. Rt. 625 from Rt. 724 to Angelica Village – to connect populated area to Rt. 625 (section with paved shoulders) south to Lancaster County.

17. Rt. 73 from SR 2053 west to Oley – to continue w/paved shoulders installed from Boyertown to here in fall 1999.

18. Rt. 422 from Wernersville west to Robesonia – to extend paved shoulders west on major E/W route.

19. Rt. 61 from Zion Church Rd. north to Hamburg – to continue shoulder paving on major N/S route thru county.

20. Rt. 662 from Willow St. north to Pricetown Rd. (w/marked alternate bicycle route on Houck Rd.) – to connect to paved shoulders on 662 from Pricetown to Oley.

21. Rt. 562 from Oley Turnpike Rd. east to Boyertown – upgrade 1-1 ½ foot shoulders.

22. Shelbourne Rd. from Rt. 422 north to Rt. 562 – access for southern Exeter Township to Oley Valley route (paving over metal honeycomb bridge surface).

23. Rt. 183 from 3006 north to Bernville – to continue north with paved shoulders on 183 to population area.

24. Rt. 422 from Womelsdorf west to Lebanon County line - to extend paved shoulders west on major E/W route.
25. Rt. 73 from Oley west to Pricetown Rd. – continue with shoulders on 73.

26. Rt. 73 from Pricetown Rd. west to Rt. 222 - continue with shoulders on 73.

27. Rt. 73 from Rt. 222 west to Rt. 61 - continue with shoulders on 73.

28. Rt. 61 from Lincoln St. to Rt. 12 – curbing right next to travel lanes, no room for shoulders.

29. Rt. 61 from Hamburg north to Schuylkill County line – to continue north with shoulders.

30. Blandon/Fleetwood Rd. from Bowers Rd. east to Topton – to continue north with shoulders.

31. Pricetown Rd. from Antietam Rd. to Rt. 662 – to continue with paved shoulders.

32. Rt. 662 from Fleetwood to Rt. 222 – to connect population area to major N/S highway.

33. Rt. 662 from Rt. 73 to Rt. 562 – to continue with paved shoulders.

34. Rt. 662 from Rt. 422 to Rt. 562 – upgrade 1 ½ foot shoulders.
APPENDIX C: AASHTO Guide for Developing 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 that is 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 Berks County.

Some sample, typical bicycle lane cross sections from the AASHTO Guide are shown: