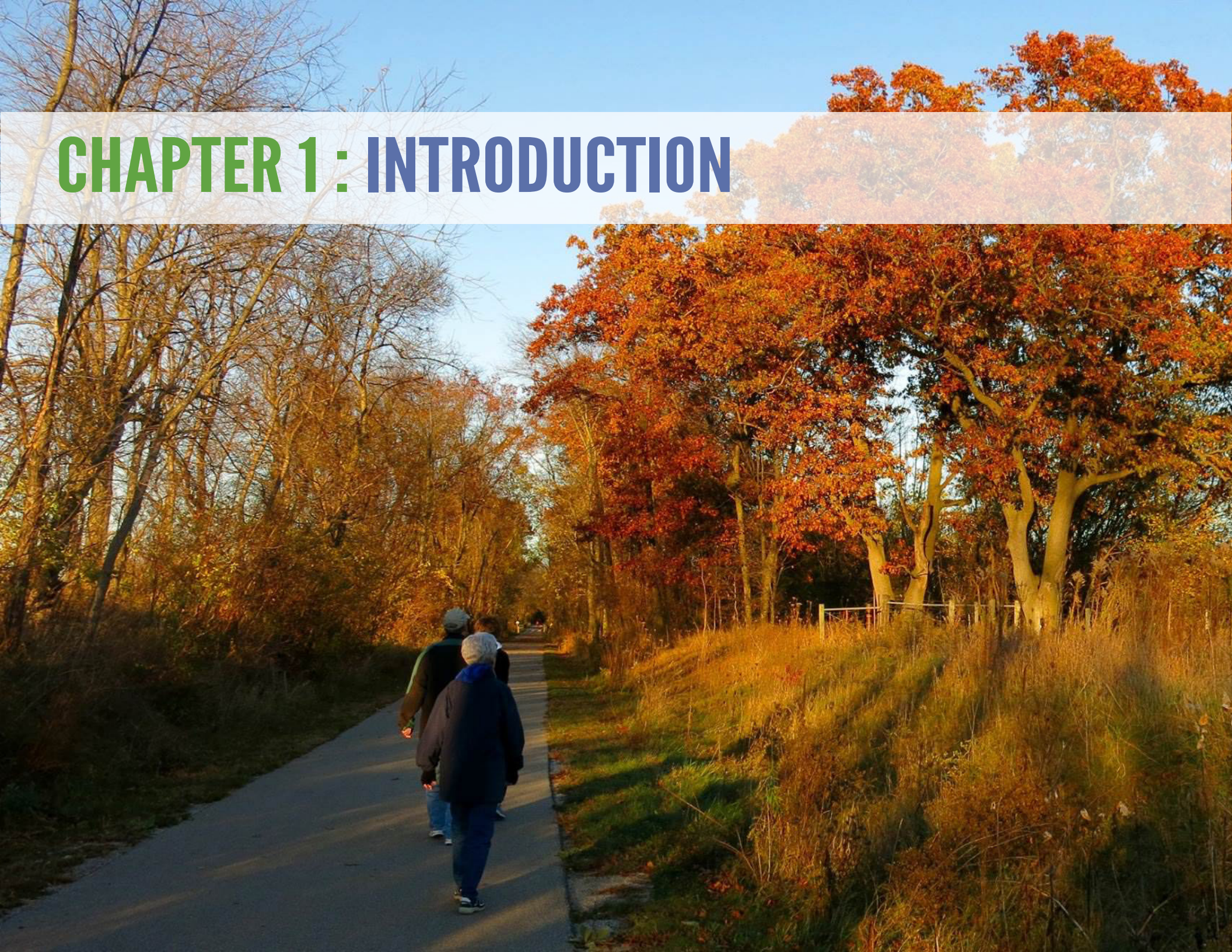


CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



Nationally, communities are recognizing the need to balance the demand for growth with sustainable, integrated multimodal transportation strategies. This approach creates a system in which each mode of transportation supports the other, working to move people and goods more effectively, safely, and efficiently. Many communities have begun to look beyond transportation infrastructure alone, and are reexamining the relationship between development pattern and the transportation system.

During the development of the Michiana on the Move: 2040 Transportation Plan, approved November 2014, there was a strong interest in developing a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. In order to better discuss and plan for bicycle and pedestrian needs, the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) decided to conduct a complementary long-range plan focusing on active transportation.

The Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), created in 1964, serves as a forum for regional discussion and cooperation in Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties in north central Indiana. MACOG is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for its member counties. As such, MACOG is responsible for facilitating long-range transportation planning for the region.

Active transportation has become a key factor for measuring a community's quality of life. Communities have become more competitive in attracting new talent and investments in private and public infrastructure by improving the availability of safe and efficient active transportation networks. Achieving this is not an easy task. It requires a significant cultural shift within the region and will require that the cities, towns, and counties with the MPO region reconsider traditional transportation models to include multiple modes. This plan represents a step toward a future where walking and bicycling are legitimate and viable components of a robust and sustainable multimodal transportation system.

Purpose

Our transportation network is more than just roads for vehicles. It also incorporates sidewalks, bike lanes, trails and other facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The Active Transportation Plan is needed to provide a comprehensive strategy for the region, ensuring these other users of the transportation network are able to move around in a safe, connected, and accessible environment.

This plan is intended to identify needs, resources, and strategies to encourage and enhance bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel within the Michiana region. The intent of the plan is not to secure funding for every project. Instead, the recommendations contained herein should be used as a guide for local jurisdictions in taking advantage of these opportunities.

Active transportation is more than a fun way to get exercise and get around town. The benefits for communities and residents that invest in active transportation networks are numerous. This plan will help realize the benefits of communities that invest in active transportation including an enhanced quality of place, healthier residents and environment, and a culture that advocates for accessible transportation system for all types of users.

The Active Transportation Plan will serve as the bicycle and pedestrian component of the Michiana on the Move: 2040 Transportation Plan. The 2040 Transportation Plan serves

What is Active Transportation?

Active transportation is human-powered transportation that engages people in healthy physical activity while they travel from place to place. People walking, bicycling, pushing strollers, using wheelchairs and other mobility devices, skateboarding, and rollerblading are all forms of active transportation. Additionally, active transportation is necessary to support public transit to allow for more accessibility within and among communities.

as a blueprint for how the Michiana region will address its transportation needs and how federal, state and local funds will be invested into highways, public transit, freight, bikeways and pedestrian walkways. Additionally, this plan works to integrate with other various planning efforts conducted by MACOG.

Lastly, this plan provides guidance to support local communities in the region that are enhancing their bicycle and pedestrian networks. By using the analysis and recommendations identified in this plan, local communities will be able to build upon their own efforts to encourage more walking and bicycling in their communities.

