



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

GOAL 1: CONNECTIVITY

Create a regional, interconnected active transportation network that allows for efficient transportation to the places you want to go.

- Safety, convenience and weather are the most common reasons for not utilizing active transportation for trips.
- Important destinations to be connected to include parks and recreation, public facilities, events or entertainment, educational and employment centers, retail, bus stops, and other communities.
- Distance people are willing to travel depends on type of trip, commuting or recreation. People will travel farther on a walk or bike ride for recreation rather than for commuting
- Consistent facilities that are separated or protected, such as a trails or bike lanes, are most preferable to walk and bike on. However, different types of facilities are needed for different levels of comfort and ages. New development should incorporate good active transportation design in consideration of these factors.
- Routes are best founds using apps, which means it can be on hand and trips do not need to be planned out ahead of time.
- Connections between communities was emphasized, and there is a need to promote facilities regionally (signage, website, maps) and how they connect.
 - Some lacking connections include Elkhart to Mishawaka, Elkhart to downtown, Elkhart to Bristol, Goshen to Warsaw, and Syracuse to Goshen.

GOAL 2: ACCESSIBILITY

Integrate active transportation with other forms of transportation (i.e. public transit) and provide equitable transportation options to all people of all abilities and backgrounds to places of employment, grocery stores, parks, school and other key destinations.

- Convenience for riders is a very important factor in taking public transit due to time constraints, headways, and lack of confidence in the system.
- Awareness (signage), education, and incentives (park and ride locations) could encourage people to ride public transit by “choice.” Another incentive mentioned was turning bus stops or centralized nodes into places of information such as weather, WiFi hotspots, news – or places of utility providing power, storm water systems, free libraries, warming stations etc.
- There is a lack of public transit access in smaller communities in the region.



- Sidewalk accessibility is a large issue, often times because there is a lack of financial resources for governments to maintain. Winter weather also impacts accessibility because many property owners do not keep their sidewalks clear.
- Areas mentioned lacking facilities include SW South Bend and near SBN Airport
- When looking at fixing sidewalks, we need to look at the whole block rather than from the perspective of one property owner.
- We should be ensuring that low income neighborhoods are being provided access to bike and pedestrian facilities that are in good condition. Cost share programs to replace sidewalk are often not affordable for these residents.

GOAL 3: CULTURE

To foster in the region a change from a car-centric culture to an active transportation culture among residents, business owners and political leaders to create a greater awareness and support for active forms of transportation.

- Attitudes toward bicyclists and pedestrians lean towards impatience and entitlement from motorists, but a positive shift can be seen in recent years.
- Community Bike Groups can be used to promote cyclists etiquette to help shift public perception and promote a friendlier relationship between riders and motorists. “Citizen Cyclists-promote thoughtful bikers!”
- Ways to make more people use active transportation include the promotion of safety and education, festivals and events (Downtown Days, Urban Adventures, weekly bike rides), increasing visibility of users (paths along major roads, parking spaces for bicycle parking, covered parking, etc), connecting existing routes and trails, or signage providing distance and time (QR codes).
- Culture is a mentality that largely derives from where you live. Marketing behavior change and informing users is a way to shift that mentality.
- Communication to businesses and chambers of commerce about the benefits of trails and active transportation facilities near their businesses, as well as existing programs in place are important. Businesses can support active transportation by being including in events, forming partnerships and providing reward or discount systems for bicyclists. Could be beneficial to put together a resource for businesses in the region that promote active transportation.
- Cities and towns can support active transportation by advocating for users, financial support (including equitable distribution of funds to promote all modes of transportation), increasing signage, hosting events, releasing public service announcements, installing more infrastructure, or promoting bike share programs.
- There are a variety of programs, such as South Bend Community School Corporation’s Walking/School Bus Program or Syracuse Active 4 Me program, that could be implemented in other communities.



- Getting to 1% of trips by bike creates a mental shift in perspective, due to visibility. An example of this comes from the Amish community in Nappanee.

GOAL 4: HEALTH

Provide opportunities for residents to access active transportation to support a health and active lifestyle.

- Benefits of active transportation affect not only the obvious physical health, but also mental and social sides of health, contributing to a stronger sense of community.
- Safety is an important concern when it comes to considering the use of active transportation facilities for health. Safety concerns include lighting, infrastructure gaps or in poor repair, and intersection crossings.
- Amenities could also be a factor in encouraging people to use active transportation for health. Commonly mentioned amenities include water fountains, restrooms, end of trip facilities (showers, racks), separated paths, entertainment venues, food/beverage destinations, outdoor workout facilities, splash pads, and educational opportunities.
- Barriers that could limit or discourage people from using active transportation include the sense of feeling unsafe, infrastructure gaps, and a lack of financial support to own equipment (such as a bicycle), and no wayfinding or signage.
- Mental barriers can be the hardest to overcome. These barriers include psychological distance vs. geographical distance, choosing to walk or bike instead of driving, or the idea that anyone can ride a bike. In terms of health, active transportation should be viewed as an opportunity rather than just defining it as recreation.
- Health should be made fun – through events, programming, and organized groups – and should include all ages and abilities, particularly those who wouldn't normally use active transportation as a way to exercise.
- Regional promotion/advertising of our regions trails and that anyone can use them is important.

GOAL 5: SAFETY

Improve conditions and awareness of all users of the transportation network, especially the most vulnerable users.

- Perceived level of safety will often depend on the different type of riders or users. Most prefer a physically separated facility.
- The built environment also plays a major role in users' perceived safety. Those older in age that commute feel more safe in an urban environment because of the high visibility to motorist and lower vehicular speeds, while others preferred county roads because of low volumes of traffic.
- Safety issues can arise if a facility is not utilized on a regular basis
- Areas mentioned that are not as comfortable to bike or walk at include intersections, bike lanes adjacent to on street parking, smaller width paths, major arterial roads and left-turn lanes.



- While, generally, the perception of safety is greater during the day, if facilities are designed properly, users perception of safety can increase (ie lighting, usage)
- Effective ways to spread the message of safety include increased trail etiquette signage, adoption of city ordinances that incorporates safety measures, engagement of local law enforcement to increase violation citations or verbal warnings, or incorporating education into driver’s education classes and PE curriculum
- Ways to make active transportation safer include education for cyclists and motorists (all ages), signage along trails warning of upcoming intersections, decreasing vehicular speeds on streets with facilities, lighting, increasing urban and rural communities with trails, law enforcement, hosting promotional events with safety giveaways, SRTS curriculum, and incentivizing cycling and walking to increase usage.

GOAL 6: QUALITY OF LIFE

Create economically and socially vibrant communities, through us of active transportation networks, that attract residents to live, work, and play in our region.

- Examples of trails or other facilities that make a neighborhood more vibrant include The Winona Lake Trail (encourages people to come out and meet each other), Heritage Trail in Winona Lake(connects neighborhoods and commercial, businesses, parks), East Race and Mishawaka Riverwalk, the Mill Race, Indy Cultural Trail (has a bike share program, lighting, visibly marked, and has led to property/residential development), Monon (provides destinations along route), Nickelplate (40 miles), B-Line in Bloomington, Pumpkinvine, IN-MI River Valley Trail (has potential to one day), Fort Wayne (combines trails and hose festivals and community events), Pittsburgh (manual on trail towns), Minneapolis or Portland, and the High Line in New York.
- Some of our network currently lacks some characteristics found in the above examples including connectivity, lighting, maintenance, private investment, tool repair stations, bike rentals, signage and branding of trails, comfortability, wayfinding, function and destinations (giving people a reason to ride/walk), density and an overall better biking culture.
- Mixed use development can impact the active transportation network by providing more options and support services (convenience), creating a higher population density which could increase usage and visibility of users, and allowing shorter distance between destinations which allow the expansion of transportation options.