

Chapter 10. Implementation

The previous sections of the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO Sidewalk and Pedestrian Plan have discussed the existing conditions and proposed changes that need to take place to achieve the objectives. The section of the Plan discusses how to implement those recommendations, the responsible party and a way of charting the progress of the MPO and its partners in making the change from today's existing conditions to those "we" strive to achieve.

10.1 Building Support for Walking

At a glance, it would seem obvious that living in a place where walking is easy and safe is a goal shared by everyone. However, it is important to recognize that implementing the recommendations contained in this Plan will be achieved by relatively few agencies, and funded through a limited number of sources. It is critical to expand the circle of implementing partners to include non-traditional agencies and groups. Stronger communication should be encouraged between citizen advisory committees, such as the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Public Health Agencies, and Mayor's Council for Persons with Disabilities.

Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The MPO should consider the formation of a citizen advisory committee that is charged with advising the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO concerning pedestrian planning and coordination issues. The committee should have appointees by the City of Winston-Salem, local municipalities and representatives of the TCC/TAC. The importance of the group is that it would have a motivated membership with connections to business interests, college campuses, and other key non-traditional implementers of pedestrian projects and programs. Consideration should be given to a

combination of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Bicycle Advisory Committee is a group of citizens that meet monthly and is charged with advising the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation (WSDOT) concerning matters of bicycle planning and coordination issues. The BAC is staffed by the WSDOT and the City of Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks Department. The BAC is mainly focused on cycling issues. The BAC can effectively extend the “reach” of the government staff which serves as the primary support for this group. The BAC should be made very familiar with the objectives of this Plan and its recommendations, and serve as an advocacy group to help keep a long-term focus on achieving these recommendations.

Public Health Agencies

Increasing attention is being paid to the importance of walking as a means of confronting obesity, improving cardiovascular health, and maintaining a positive mental outlook. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has suggested that everyone can benefit from walking, or increasing the intensity or duration of their walking if they are already doing so. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that health agencies and public health advocacy groups have become more interested in promoting walking in their service area. The following agencies should receive a copy of the Plan:

- Student Health Centers at colleges and university campuses;
- Hospitals, one copy for each waiting area; and
- Public School nursing stations;
- Forsyth County Public Health Department, Forsyth County Health Community Coalition and the Board of Health.

Building Better Relationships between Government Agencies

There is no more critical set of linkages needed to implement pedestrian projects than those that exist between various operating departments and divisions in the City of Winston-Salem, the MPO and North Carolina Department of Transportation. An exhaustive review of how each of these agencies works and relate is not particularly relevant, and the relationships themselves change over time. However, it is critical that regular communication occurs between the City and State transportation staff to carry out their mutual missions of providing transportation services and facilities in the MPO.

Special Mobility Groups

Senior citizens, mobility impaired people, elementary and middle school children, and people that do not have reliable access to their own automobile are particularly reliant upon the pedestrian system to perform everyday tasks such as shopping, going to school, and working. This Plan has focused on selecting projects and programs that particularly affect these groups. Things such as maintenance, new construction, encouraging participation by mobility and visually impaired residents in the formation of solution to pedestrian problems, areas near schools, and special attention to transit access played a strong role in the recommendations of this Plan. Continued networking with senior centers, low income community organizations, transit companies, the public school system and other outlets is strongly encouraged.

General Public Participation

The general public should not be “left out” of the implementation of this Plan. They serve an important role as the eyes of the MPO staff, informing the staff of safety problems, maintenance issues, and identifying potential needs that should be prioritized alongside those described in this Plan. It is this communication that makes regular updates of the Plan so essential to its relevance and maintaining energy to

create positive changes in the walking environment. This Plan has recommended that complaints and accidents be recorded, reviewed, and acted upon in a systematic manner by multiple implementing and enforcement agencies. Increasing the level of feedback to communicate the goals and resources available to fund new trails, sidewalks, safety improvements and other pedestrian projects is more important than increasing the frequency of communication.

10.2 Program and Policy Implementation

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO Pedestrian Plan has identified several programs and policies that are recommended to further strengthen, educate, encourage and enforce pedestrian issues in the MPO. Listed below are those programs and policy areas, along with the personnel that will be needed to take action to implement and/or improve the programs and policies.

Pedestrian Steering Committee

This committee, comprised of Winston-Salem city staff, town managers, the Forsyth County Health Department and the Adaptables, has worked to produce an effective and useful Plan for the entire MPO. This committee should also work to get pedestrian-related issues, particularly safety issues, addressed early by the agencies in the best position to do something about them (law enforcement, transportation planning and engineering).

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School programs educate and encourage elementary, middle and high school students to walk to school and do so safely. This Plan has detailed the activities for Safe Routes to School but close coordination between the North Carolina

Department of Transportation, the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Schools will be required. Funding for this program will come through grants from NCDOT.

Changing Policies and Plans

This Plan identifies a large number of mostly small policy and planning changes to existing documents. It is assumed that the majority of these will be accommodated during the updates of those plans, but this should be carefully reviewed when those plans are being updated. The responsibility of making those changes rests with the individual agency or division re-writing a particular plan but coordinating those changes is the responsibility of the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation.

10.3 Tracking Progress

Every planning document and process envisions changes and progress being made as a result of all the efforts of its participants. While the process of creating the Plan has been successful already in increasing the awareness of pedestrian needs, it is even more important to its ultimate success to continue tracking and updating its contents to remain relevant. Two additional suggestions about updating components of this Plan and tracking its progress are therefore provided to help the MPO's staff and citizens keep the Plan dynamic and meaningful.

Plan Update Cycle

During the development of this Plan, concerns were expressed about how to incorporate comments from the public, new information, and revised funding and cost profiles. To accommodate these changes, the following update cycle is recommended:

- The overall Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years. This regular schedule, beginning in 2012, will allow the MPO to program ahead to allocate funds and resources for future updates.
- The project listing should be reviewed and updated every year to ensure that new comments and project changes are included. This will require maintaining a list of project changes by WSDOT and City Engineering staff and to create a simple summary report every January to verify the progress of the Plan.

Benchmarking

Even when the Plan or portions of the Plan are not being reviewed and updated, it is still important to maintain an annual accounting of the progress of the Plan's implementation. Just as important, the successes in the areas of pedestrian planning should be celebrated and communicated annually – policies adopted, projects completed, and miles of sidewalks under construction. This will require reporting to a central location or data acquisition by MPO staff to create a simple summary report every January to mark the progress of the Plan and that summary should be disseminated to the public.

Summary

Success in developing an MPO-wide pedestrian system will depend on the extent to which this Plan is followed. County and municipal departments along with recreation, transportation, utilities, land use planning and financing all play an integral role in ensuring the effective implementation of the Plan. It is important to secure the support of all the relevant agencies whose contributions are necessary to ensure that the recommendations are implemented. The Pedestrian Plan is intended to enhance the existing pedestrian facilities and the quality of life for all the citizens in the MPO by guiding the location and development of future pedestrian facilities.



Figure 36: The sidewalk ends