

**ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION
AND GREENWAYS SYSTEM PLAN
(An Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan
Adopted by Resolution 01-24
on October 31, 2001)**

Location of Plan

Duplications of this plan are attached to the resolution and included with the background material for resolution in the Council Office files. Copies of this plan (with foldout maps) have been placed in the Council Library.

Alternative Transportation & Greenways System Plan

City of Bloomington, Indiana

PUBLIC REVIEW
October 12, 2001

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Preface

Preface

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Preface

Executive Summary

The City of Bloomington is undertaking an important step toward mitigating traffic congestion and improving the health, fitness, and quality of life of its residents. The Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan represents a commitment by the City to design, construct, and maintain a network of safe, convenient, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities for commuting and recreational use throughout the City.

One key benefit of an alternative transportation and greenways system is to minimize the use of cars, especially for short, frequent trips. The City of Bloomington's streets have many more vehicles on them than they were designed for or originally intended to carry. This has resulted in increasing road maintenance costs, building new and wider roads, traffic congestion, driver frustration, longer commute times, and increased use of nonrenewable energy resources.

In addition to mitigating traffic, a network of bicycle and pedestrian routes will result in many other benefits the City is striving to accomplish. These include:

- Further enhancing the community image,
- Further enhancing local quality of life,
- Promoting healthier lifestyles,
- Reducing commuting costs,
- Expanding tourism opportunities and experiences,
- Building the City's assessed value,
- Increasing and stabilizing property values,
- Enhancing the local economy,
- Aiding business recruitment efforts,
- Providing opportunity for people unable to drive or people without cars,
- Improving the natural environment, and
- Preserving natural areas.

The Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan is composed of three sections. These include:

1. Strategic Plan,
2. Plan Development, and
3. Design Guidelines.

The Strategic Plan section introduces the overall network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as identifies key projects for the first five years. The Plan Development section outlines the benefits of alternative transportation and greenways development as well as the vision, goals, and objectives for the Plan. The Design Guidelines section sets standards to ensure uniformity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the City.

Implementing the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan will require a cooperative effort among public agencies, private and nonprofit organizations within the City of Bloomington and Monroe County. To facilitate such coordination, the Alternative Transportation and Greenways Plan recommends the creation of a new staff position within the City structure. This person will be responsible for coordinating projects and obtaining funding for design, construction, and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the City.

The Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan should not be viewed as a static, set in stone series of ideas or projects. For the Plan to be effective it must be reviewed, evaluated, and when necessary updated to reflect changing trends and attitudes of the community. In doing so, the City of Bloomington can collectively reduce resistance to alternative transportation and develop a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that take advantage of opportunities and avoid potential pitfalls.

Preface

Plan Directive

The directives of the plan established at the inception of the process are as follows:

- Establish a community vision for alternative transportation and greenways,
- Identify key destinations and potential linkages within Bloomington,
- Develop a conceptual design for alternative transportation and greenways routes,
- Identify goals and objectives to guide future decision making, and
- Coordinate this plan with Bloomington's Growth Policies Plan, Parks Master Plan, and Thoroughfare Plan.

Note: The directives for the plan were supported and embraced by the public, steering committee, and staff throughout the process.

Why Develop this Plan?

The pursuit and implementation of an alternative transportation and greenway system plan has resulted from noticeable increases in traffic congestion in the City of Bloomington.

Streets and parking areas in Bloomington are increasingly more crowded than in the past. In fact, in recent years the City has noticed a disproportional increase in vehicular traffic in comparison to population growth. According to the City of Bloomington/Monroe County Year 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, the population and traffic congestion in Bloomington are increasing at a disproportional rate: 1.2% and 5% respectively, leading to increased traffic problems.

The City of Bloomington is a progressive community that recognizes bicycling, walking, and public transit as a necessity for future vitality, stability, and especially quality of life. However, construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities has lagged behind this recognition.

Preface

Overview of the Planning Process

In the fall of 2000, the planning effort was initiated to develop an Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan for the City of Bloomington. Since this plan addresses alternative choices for commuting and mobility in their community, it was essential that citizens have a voice in shaping the plan. In fact, the City leadership emphasized that this effort be a grass-roots planning effort.

Because public input was so vital in the preparation of the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan for Bloomington, a steering committee of sixteen people from diverse backgrounds was formed. This group was asked to serve as a sounding board on behalf of the community throughout the planning process. In addition, to steering committee meetings, two public workshops and extensive key interest group interviews were held to gather information and ideas from the community.

How to use this Document

The Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan is intended to be adopted and used in daily and long-term decision making by elected and appointed officials and City staff. These individuals, as well as the general public, should become familiar with the goals and objectives of the plan and implement them to the greatest extent possible.

The concepts, goals, and objectives discussed in this Plan should complement the Growth Policies Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Parks Master Plan.

This Plan reflects the current and anticipated alternative transportation needs of Bloomington. However, this is a living document and must evolve with the evolution of the City. To be effective, this plan should be reviewed, evaluated, and updated every ten years to reflect changing trends, outlooks, and thinking of the community. The Strategic Plan and Design Guidelines sections of this Plan should be reviewed and updated annually. In this way, the plan remains a relevant guide to future alternative transportation and greenways planning in Bloomington.

Preface

Acknowledgments

The following people are recognized for their participation and assistance in the development of the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan.

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Strategic Plan

Alternative Transportation & Greenways System Plan

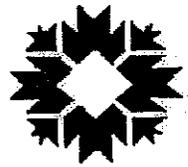
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Preface

Introduction

The intent of the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan is to create a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities for residents of all ages and mobility to walk or bike to their destinations rather than taking their car. Choosing to walk or bike will ultimately reduce traffic congestion in the City and improve the health, fitness, and quality of life of Bloomington's residents. However, motivating individuals to walk or bike will require developing safe, convenient, and attractive facilities.

The information contained in this Strategic Plan moves the City of Bloomington that much closer to developing a network of safe, convenient, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This Strategic Plan establishes the conceptual plan for the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System, identifies specific bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the City, and sets priorities for implementation.

Although this Plan contains key projects for the next five years, it should be reviewed on an annual basis to address changes in funding, user needs, and priorities.

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Strategic Plan

Conceptual Plan

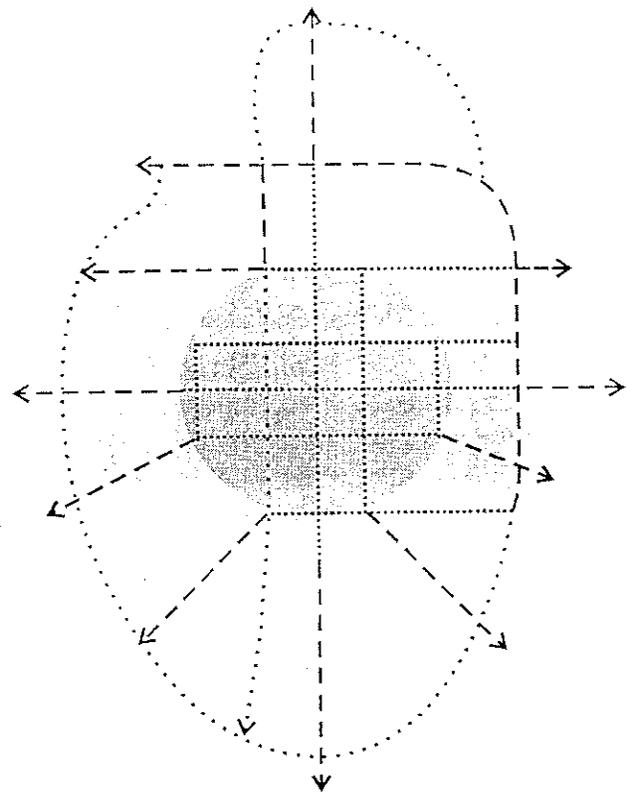
The conceptual plan is based on the three distinct character areas in the City of Bloomington. These include:

1. Central City - downtown, historic neighborhoods, and adjacent, densely urbanized areas,
2. Urbanizing Ring - subdivisions, commercial nodes, and industrial areas outside of the Central City, and
3. Fringe - undeveloped areas, farmland, natural, and transitional areas.

There are several different types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that have been successfully implemented throughout the nation. The primary types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities discussed in this Plan include:

1. Signed Bike Route - A street that is safe for use by both vehicles and bicycles without a designated bike facility. These routes are identified with appropriate signage,
2. Bike Lanes - A portion of the road that has been designated and designed for the exclusive use of bicycles with distinct signage and pavement markings,
3. Sidepath - A hard-surface path physically separated from the road with a grass or tree plot within the road right-of-way for use of two-way bicyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorized users,
4. Sidewalk - A hard-surface path within the street right-of-way that is designated for the exclusive use of pedestrian traffic, and
5. Multi-use Trail - A hard-surface, off-road path for use by bike, foot, and other non-motorized traffic typically not within the road right-of-way.

This conceptual plan and graphic illustration is intended to be the foundation for the Strategic Plan.



- On-Street Facilities/Sidewalks
- Sidepaths
- Multi-use Trail
- ████████ Central City
- Urbanizing Ring
- Fringe

Strategic Plan

The conceptual plan acknowledges that a successful city-wide alternative transportation and greenways system does not rely on any one type of facility, but is a system of different types of facilities with seamless transitions. This Plan conceptually transcends all areas in the City with the most appropriate and feasible types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Central City

On-street facilities such as bike lanes, signed bike routes, connector paths and sidewalks are most appropriate in the built up areas of the Central City. In general, on-street bike lanes and signed bike routes should be accommodated on existing streets with minimal disturbances to the function of the street and neighboring land uses. In extreme cases it may be necessary to restrict on-street parking to one side or all together to successfully accommodate bike lanes.

Urbanizing Ring

The area outside of the central City, the urbanizing ring, has opportunities for sidepaths, sidewalks, and multi-use trails where space exists. Sidepaths should be considered on busy streets with large right-of-ways so there is sufficient space to separate vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.

Fringe

The fringe or less developed/low density areas are better suited for multi-use and unimproved trails. Multi-use trails will most likely follow utility easements, waterways, or other public non-vehicular right-of-way.

Four alternative types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, although not shown on the conceptual plan, will be considered for future use, where appropriate.

These include:

1. Unimproved Trail - A less intrusive path utilizing pervious materials such as crushed limestone, bark mulch, or exposed soil surface. Unimproved trails may restrict all types of users but may be the best solution for areas considered environmentally sensitive,
2. Bicycle Boulevards - A roadway converted to a bicycle-only or bicycle-dominated thoroughway,
3. Alley Conversions - An improved alley easement utilized for bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and
4. Connector Path - A hard-surface linkage or shortcut between key destinations that is not accessible by automobiles.

Strategic Plan

Existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

The City of Bloomington has made a good effort to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into new and existing infrastructure improvements. The beginnings of a strong network of east-west and north-south linkages is evident.

Designated bike lanes on College, Walnut, Washington and Lincoln are well used however missing segments, lack of signage, and conflicts at intersections hinder the overall success of the existing network. Existing signed bike routes identify preferred routes for bicyclists and successfully link some neighborhoods and key destinations in the City.

A limited number of sidepaths have been successfully built within the right-of-way of Clarizz Boulevard, Landmark Avenue, and a short stretch of Bloomfield Road. Unfortunately these sidepaths dead end at busy streets without providing safe connections for bicyclists.

Several well-used multi-use trails have been built throughout the City. The most recent and very popular Clear Creek Trail will eventually connect Tapp Road to the Victor Oolitic Trail at Church Lane. Both the Victor Oolitic Trail and Clear Creek Trail currently dead end at roads which experience high volumes and speeds of vehicular traffic throughout the day. A short stretch of multi-use trail on the north-east side of the City successfully runs within Indiana Railroad's right-of-way connecting two signed bike routes.

Although the county has no official, marked routes for bicycling, the state routes and paved county roads continue to be well-used by local and regional bicyclists.

Secure and convenient bicycle parking is limited throughout the City. Since 1995, the City has required bike parking for new developments but not for existing establishments, as a result bicyclists are forced to lock their bikes to nearby street signs, trees, and light standards.

Strategic Plan

Sidewalk Inventory

Several neighborhoods are currently without sidewalks, have missing segments, or the sidewalks are unsafe and in need of repair.

The City of Bloomington recently conducted a thorough sidewalk inventory. The location and condition of each stretch of sidewalk has been recorded in the City's GIS system and a prioritizing methodology has been established to determine key areas of the City in need of sidewalk repair, replacement, and new construction.

As the City considers additions to the existing sidewalk system the following methodology will be used to ensure the wisest possible investment of City funds. Elements of this methodology include:

- Identifying dangerous roads and intersections,
- Determining the number and frequency of trips generated from key destinations,
- Collecting and analyzing census data to determine areas that have high densities,
- Identifying location of transit routes and transit stops, and
- Allocating the City's resources evenly throughout the residential, commercial, and institutional land uses.

The City of Bloomington has a 50/50 program to share the cost of installation and repair of sidewalks with property owners. While this program has been successful, sidewalk construction is very expensive for both the City and landowner. This Plan recognizes sidewalks as an essential component of the alternative transportation and greenways system.

City of Bloomington

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-  Existing Bike Lane
-  Existing Signed Bike-Route
-  Existing Skatepath
-  Existing Trail
-  Parks
-  City Limits



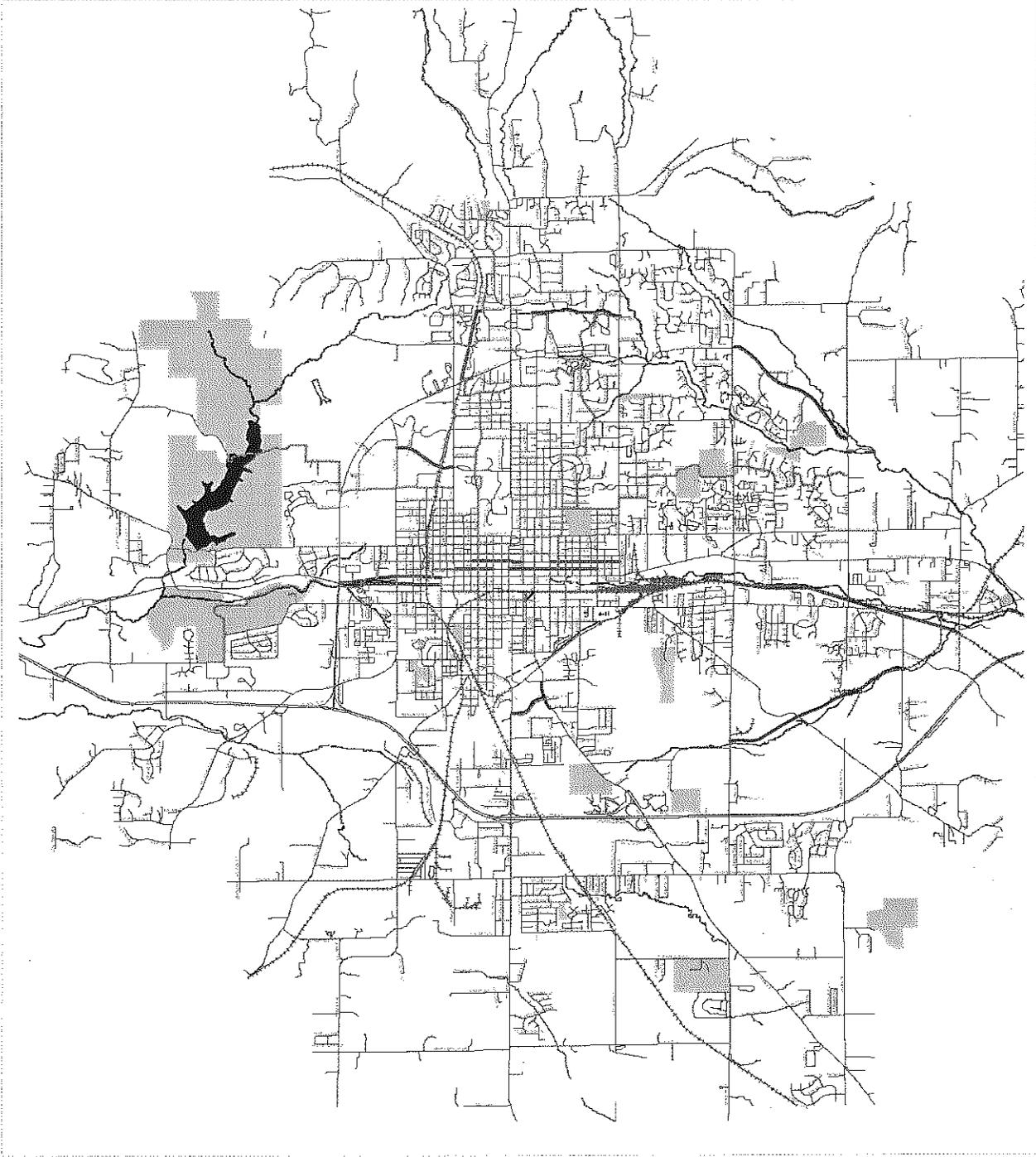
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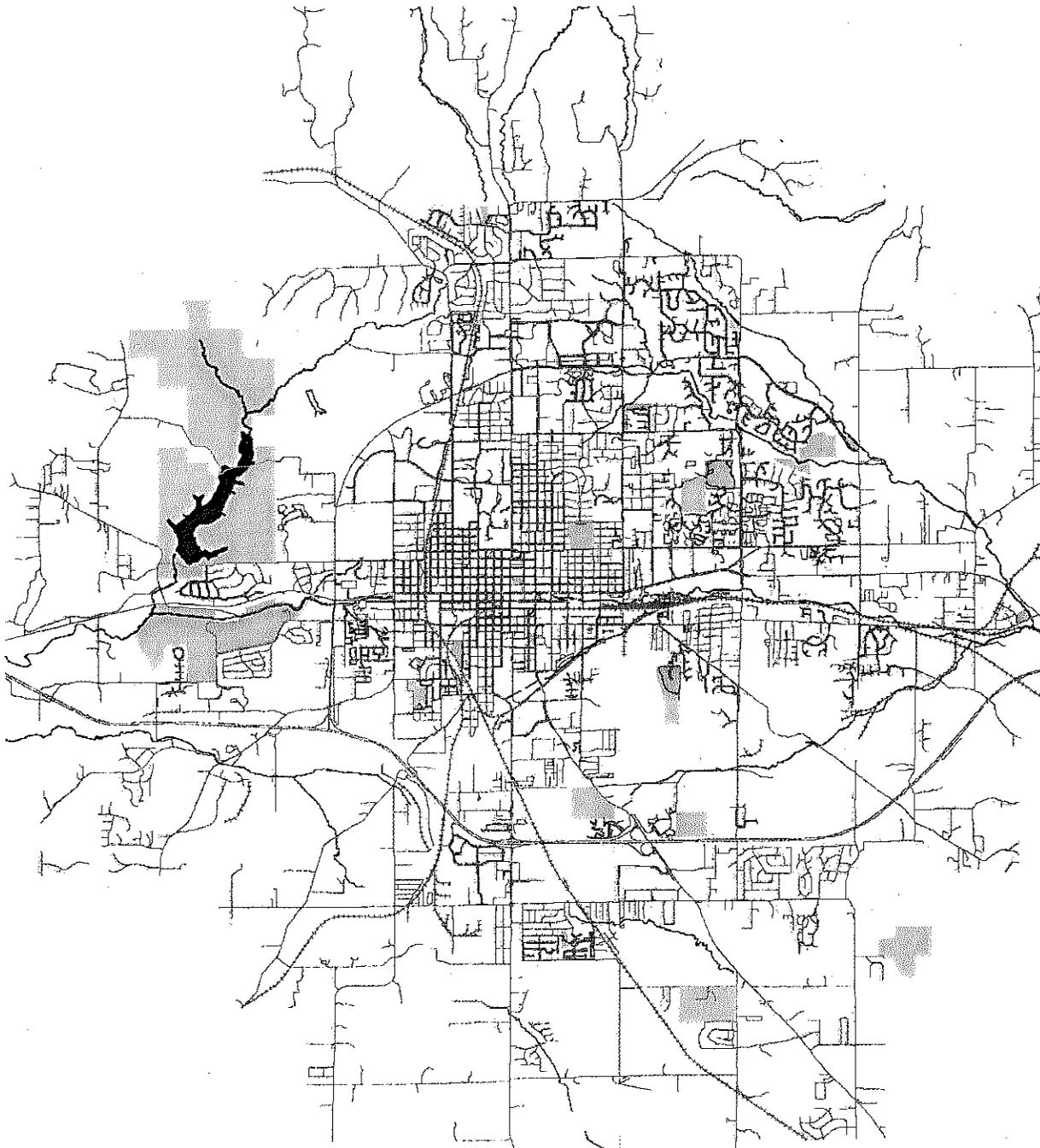
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Existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Map



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Alternative Transportation & Greenways System Plan



Existing Sidewalks
Parks
City Limits



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Strategic Plan

Proposed Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

The Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan has evolved from public input, analysis of existing and potential facilities, and precedent research.

The Plan identifies key destinations in the City of Bloomington including student housing, Indiana University campus, schools, parks, and major employment and commercial centers. The Plan builds on the existing network of north-south and east-west routes as well as adds a loop around the City.

When possible, the proposed bicycle and pedestrian routes are identified within the City's road rights-of-way and utility easements. The Plan attempts to avoid the busier, more congested streets and intersections. However, this is not always possible, and careful consideration should be made to establish designated well-marked and continuous bike lanes and sidewalks to safely facilitate bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Prioritizing and determining the type of facility (bike lane, signed route, sidepath, multi-use path, or sidewalk) for each route will depend on space availability, funding, user needs, and coordination with private and public projects. This Strategic Plan will assist staff and decision-makers with these issues.

Priorities for implementing the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan shall focus on connecting key destinations and mitigating traffic congestion. As much as possible, such bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be built on existing City-owned land to minimize conflicts with adjacent land owners.

The proposed routes identified on the following maps are somewhat flexible in nature. The City should take advantage of opportunities to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities through infrastructure improvements, private and public projects, and land acquisition as long as they follow the basic principles outlined in the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan.

Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Schedule

The following lists of committed and proposed projects have been identified by City staff and the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan Steering Committee.

The following criteria was used to develop the Strategic Plan schedule.

- Goals of the Plan - How does the proposed route meet the goals of the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan?
- Purpose of Route - Will the proposed route be used for commuting, recreation, or a combination of the two?
- Potential Facility Use - Who will use the proposed bicycle and pedestrian facility? How many people? How often?
- Bridging Gaps - Does the proposed route link two or more existing routes or key destinations otherwise unconnected?
- Property Ownership - Does the City own the property? If not, is it for sale? Is an easement possible?
- Cost - What are the costs associated with developing the proposed route including land acquisition, design, construction, and maintenance?
- Timeline - Will the completion of the proposed route take one year, two years, or longer?
- Local & Regional Recognition - Will developing the proposed facility result in local or regional recognition of alternative transportation and recreational opportunities in Bloomington?

The charts and maps on the following pages identify committed and proposed bicycle and pedestrian projects for the next five years. The success of this Plan will be measured annually by the construction and maintenance of the projects identified.

Strategic Plan

2001 Committed Projects

PROJECT	TYPE OF FACILITY	ESTIMATED COST
Individual Projects:		
Washington Street and Lincoln Street (fill missing bike lane segments and repair/ replace sidewalks where determined from Hillside Drive to 12th Street)	Bike Lanes & Pedestrian Improve- ment, where neces- sary	\$70,000
Morton Street (from 11th Street to 6th Street)	Bike Lanes	\$2,500
11th Street (from Rogers Street to Walnut Street)	Bike Lanes	\$2,500
Pete Ellis Drive (from 10th Street to Longview Avenue)	Sidepath	\$90,000
Kingston Drive (from 3rd Street to Longview Avenue), Longview Avenue (from Kingston Drive to Pete Ellis Drive), and Clarizz Boule- vard (from end of existing sidepath to 3rd Street)	Bike Lanes and Curb Cuts on Clarizz at intersections	\$20,000
Smith Road (from 10th Street to 3rd Street)	Bike Lanes	\$35,000
Jackson Creek (from Olcott Park to Sherwood Oaks Park)	Multi-Use Trail, Greenways Enhance- ments	\$120,000
Pedestrian Movement Improvements:		
Southdowns Drive (from Woodlawn Avenue to Jordan Avenue)	Sidepath/Sidewalk off-road, or Bicycle/ Pedestrian Boulevard on-road	\$150,000
Feasibility Study:		
10th Street and 3rd Street	Bike Lanes	\$10,000
	TOTAL EST. COST	\$500,000

Strategic Plan

OTHER 2001 CITY PROJECTS

TYPE OF FACILITY

Maxwell Lane
(from Sheridan Drive to Rose Avenue)

Sidewalk

Hillsdale Drive/Eastgate Lane
(from 7th Street to 45/46 Bypass)

Sidewalk

East 10th Street
(from Grandview Drive to Bell Trace Retirement Community)

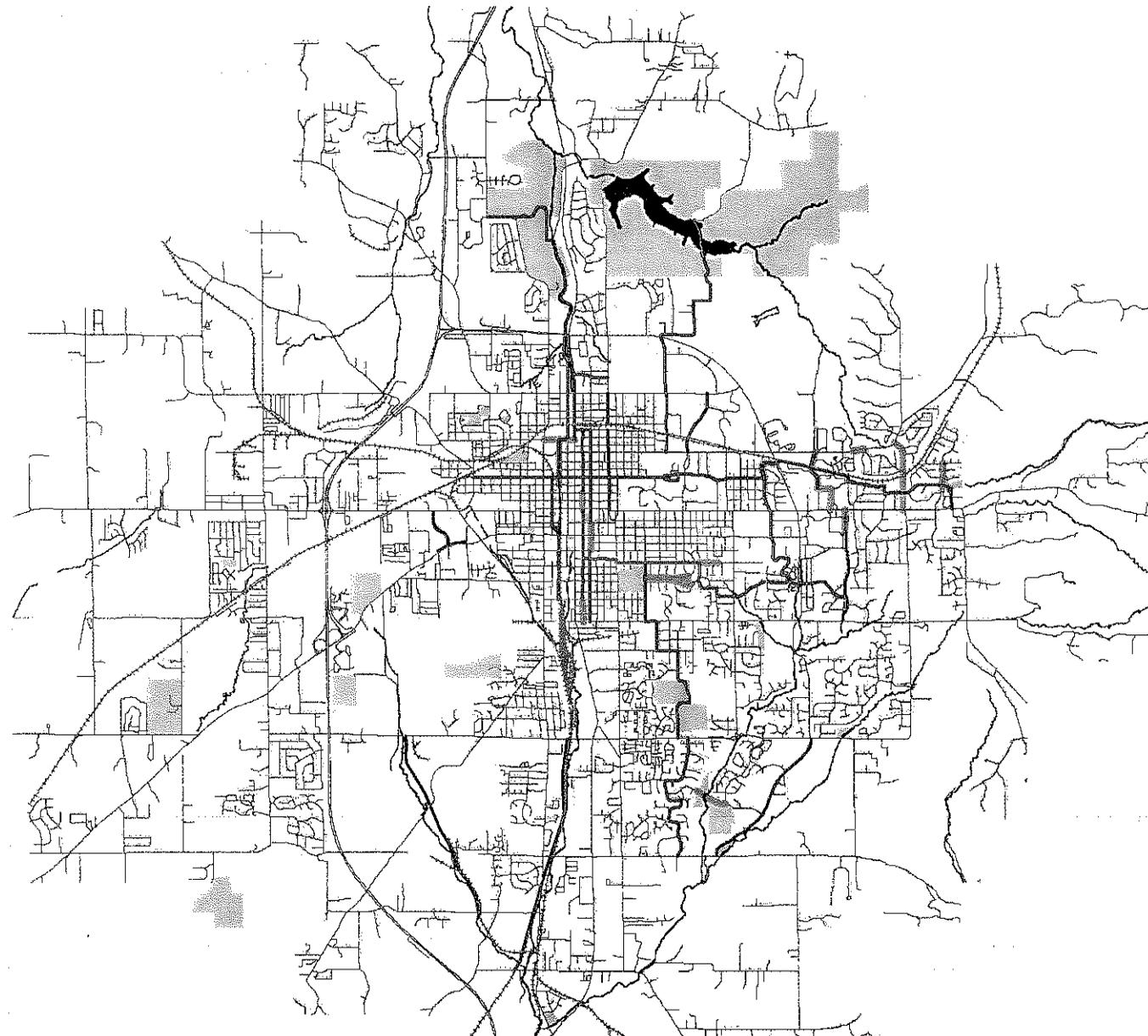
Sidewalk

Park Ridge Road
(from Morningside Drive to Sheffield Drive)

Sidewalk

City of Bloomington

Alternative Transportation & Greenways System Plan



-  Existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
-  2001 Committed Projects
-  Parks
-  City Limits

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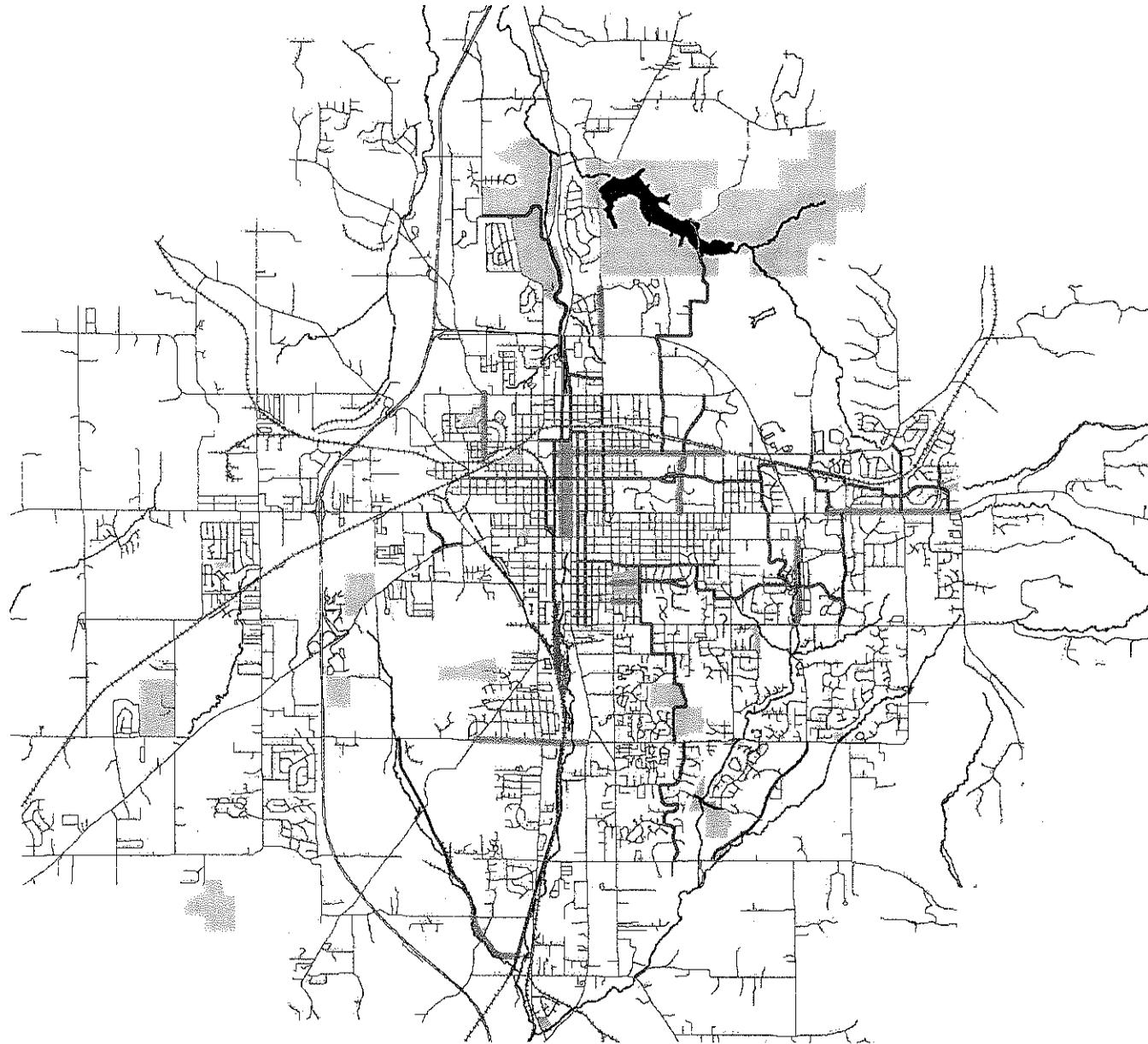
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*2001 Committed
Projects Map*

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-  Existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
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0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles 

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*2002 Proposed
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