Executive Summary

Introduction

Whether it is a leisurely bike ride along the Constitution Trail or a short walk through Uptown, Normal residents and visitors greatly value the Town’s walking and bicycling opportunities. The foundation of a potentially tremendous bikeway/walkway network is currently in place or in development. Uptown Normal and several neighborhoods already have well-connected streets with few sidewalk gaps, while many low-volume streets also act as good bicycling routes. The Constitution Trail, a 24-mile long trail following a former railroad corridor, provides the backbone of Normal’s shared use path system (see Figure ES-1). With bicycling and walking combining to account for over six percent of McLean County’s commute trips – about twice the national average – residents are clearly making use of the existing network.1

With the foundation of a potentially fantastic system in place, the Town wants to take bicycling and walking to the next level. The Normal Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan presents the 20-year vision of a fully-developed bicycle and pedestrian system throughout the Town, serving residents, commuters, children and visitors alike. A complete bikeway and walkway network will enhance overall connections within the community and promote the overall health of area residents by making walking and bicycling safe, comfortable and attractive travel modes.

Plan Purpose and Community Involvement

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan provides an updated inventory and assessment of Normal’s walkway and bikeway network, and is an update of the bicycle-pedestrian component of the 1994 Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area Long Range Transportation Plan. This Plan lays out comprehensive strategies for system-wide improvements and specifies exactly what needs to be done to achieve the Town’s goal of becoming a better walking and bicycling community. These strategies will help Normal leverage the necessary funding and other resources needed to achieve this goal.

Town staff, stakeholder groups, and – most of all – Normal residents helped guide this Plan. Community workshops were held throughout the project’s duration, enabling residents and other interested individuals to express concerns and ideas for improvements. The planning

1 2007 U.S. Census American Community Survey.
process also included a Steering Committee, established to identify bicycle/pedestrian issues from the standpoint of various interest groups and organizations.

Existing Conditions

Sidewalks, the existing shared use path system, roadway shoulders, and shared roadways on low-volume streets comprise Normal’s current walkway and bikeway network. The quantity and quality of facilities varies by location.

Elements contributing to a positive walking and bicycling environment include:

- Relatively flat topography
- Uptown Normal land use characteristics
- Presence of walk- and bike-friendly streets in many areas
- Recent walkway/bikeway improvements
- Presence of grade-separated trail crossings

System weaknesses include:

- Limited street connectivity
- Lack of wayfinding tools
- Discontinuous shared use path system
- User conflicts on trails
- Maintenance issues
- Driver behavior
- Sidewalk obstructions
- Presence of pedestrian crossing treatments at several intersections
- Presence of available right-of-way for future bikeway improvements
- Use of warning signage at trail/roadway crossings
- Uncomfortable walking and bicycling environment around high-volume streets
- Uncomfortable sidewalk environment in some areas
- Demonstrated demand for more bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Difficult crossings
- Lack of formalized on-street bikeways

Recommendations

Maps ES-1 and ES-2 depict the recommended walkway and bikeway networks. This Plan lays out a comprehensive system connecting key walking and bicycling destinations and surrounding areas. The recommended system was developed based on input from Town staff, stakeholder groups and Normal residents. The network builds upon recommendations from previous and on-going planning efforts. The system includes a variety of facilities including sidewalks, intersection improvements, accessways, shared use paths, bike lanes, shared lane markings, Bicycle Boulevards, signed connections, and cycle tracks.

Equally important to the walkway and bikeway network are support programs. Additional strategies for improving walking and bicycling in Normal include crosswalk enforcement actions, development of a Complete Streets Policy, and updating the Bloomington-Normal Trail Map.
Map ES-2. Existing and Proposed Bikeways

Normal Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
Source: Town of Normal, Illinois
Author: HK
Date: July, 2009

- Existing Shared Use Path
- Proposed Bikeways
- Shared Use Path
- Cycle Track
- Bike Lane
- Shared Lane Markings
- Bike Boulevard
- Signed Connection
- Proposed Intersection Improvements
- Schools
- Parks
- Normal Town Boundary
- Streets
- Railroad
- Waterways

Scale: 0 0.25 0.5 Miles
The Bottom Line: Where to Start

This Plan lays out a long list of projects and programs to make Normal a premier bicycling and walking community. To get the momentum going, the Town should start today with a few key strategies (later chapters discuss these strategies in greater detail):

- **Develop an east-west on-street bikeway across southern Normal following Bryan Street, Dale Street, University Street, Virginia Avenue, Jersey Avenue, and other local streets.** Improvements would include Bicycle Boulevards, shared lane markings, and roadway re-striping to provide dedicated bike lanes (see Figure ES-2). The corridor passes within close proximity of numerous schools, parks, and Uptown Normal. The corridor also connects with other existing and planned bikeways, including the Constitution Trail.

- **Improve the School Street/Fell Avenue north-south bicycle route connecting Uptown Normal, ISU, elementary schools, and several neighborhoods in central Normal.** Although physical constraints preclude the addition of dedicated bike lanes, shared lane markings and supplemental signage could effectively serve bicyclists while enhancing motorists’ awareness of bicyclists on this corridor (Figure ES-3). In addition to connecting schools, neighborhoods and Uptown, an improved Fell Avenue/School Street corridor would link bicyclists with several other existing and planned bikeways, including eight proposed east-west corridors.

- **Develop an east-west bikeway following Clay Street, Lincoln Street, Chippewa Street, and other local streets.** Improvements would include signed connections, Bicycle Boulevard treatments, and a short shared use path segment to overcome limited street connectivity. This corridor would formalize a much needed east-west bikeway connecting ISU with residential neighborhoods in central and eastern Normal. The bikeway would also connect with several parks as well as existing or planned walkways and bikeways, including the Constitution Trail. Opportunities also exist to establish this route as part of the designated Route 66 Bikeway in Normal.
• Add shared lane markings and bike lanes to the College Avenue/Mulberry Street corridor between Parkside Road and Linden Street. This project would add shared lane markings to College Avenue in western Normal between Parkside Road and School Street. Sufficient curb-to-curb width exists on the College/Mulberry couplet in Uptown Normal to provide dedicated bike lanes through roadway re-striping. Improvements to this corridor would vastly improve east-west connectivity for Normal cyclists. The corridor passes within close proximity to several schools, ISU, and provides a direct link between western Normal and Uptown Normal. The corridor would also connect with several existing and proposed bikeways, including the Constitution Trail.

• Improve pedestrian crossings at Veterans Parkway. Non-motorized users currently face a variety of challenges in this area, including prohibited crossing movements on most or all intersection legs, high vehicle turning speeds at channelized right turns (Figure ES-4), absence of sidewalks and other bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure in the intersections’ vicinity, and motorists’ occasional disregard of traffic control devices (e.g., running red lights). Improved Veterans Parkway crossings would substantially enhance bicycle/pedestrian system connectivity, especially for east-west travelers. Upgraded crossings would also link several proposed east-west bikeways, including an on-street bikeway on Parkway Plaza Drive.

• Upgrade the Constitution Trail/Vernon Avenue crossing in eastern Normal. This project would close a major trail gap by improving a critical trail/roadway crossing on the Constitution Trail. Specific improvements include upgrading the existing trail/roadway crossing with an innovative bicyclist/pedestrian-activated signal, a high-visibility crosswalk, advanced stop lines for motorists, and supplemental warning signage. These improvements will streamline bicycle/pedestrian connections to and across Vernon Avenue, while enhancing Constitution Trail access to/from surrounding neighborhoods. This project could also tie in with the proposed widening of the narrow sidewalk along Vernon Avenue that currently serves trail users. (Figure ES-5).