

The Bedford Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

2010

Aim:

The aim of the Bedford Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to connect people: by making it safe and easy for people to have bicycle and pedestrian access to all parts of the Town of Bedford.

A secondary aim is to promote the use of bicycles as a viable alternative use to automobiles for travel within the three hamlets of the Town of Bedford. The health, environmental and energy-saving benefits of bicycle use need not be elaborated on and are well documented, and certainly these benefits will themselves have profound positive and far-reaching effects on our quality of life, to include social and economic benefits.

About the Plan:

The Plan is intended to be an active and living document, reflecting the views of the Bedford community, and should be constantly updated, reviewing existing bicycle and pedestrian conditions.

Bedford residents are invited to contact members of the Bicycle Committee at bedfordbikewalk@gmail.com with comments, questions, ideas or suggestions about any components of the Bicycle Plan that they feel passionate or knowledgeable about. The Bicycle Committee welcomes all feedback, discussion and questions from Bedford residents on bicycle and pedestrian issues, since this is the best way to develop a plan that reflects what the people in Bedford want.

The Plan is thus intended to be a resource document for Bedford Town Government, to be linked to the Comprehensive Plan. This first edition of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is performe brief, pointing the way for future planning and policy developments to enhance safe bicycling and walking in Bedford.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee,

The Bicycle Advisory Committee is a volunteer group created by the Town Supervisor to advise the Supervisor on all issues relating to bicycling, ensuring that bicycling is a fully integrated part of the transportation network in the Town of Bedford Comprehensive Plan. The Committee will be included in all current and future transportation planning. The members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee are listed in Annex I.

Background to the Plan

As is the case in most US communities, the automobile dominates transportation in Bedford. The Comprehensive Plan correctly points out that most of Bedford's residents drive: to shop, to commute, and for recreation. Early road planning in Bedford contained little or no provision for the integration of bicycles into the transportation network. The increase in the volume of traffic in Bedford has led to through traffic moving to Collector Roads and even local streets, using such roads as Hook, Guard Hill, Succabone and Croton Lake Roads to short cut from one Through Road to another Through Roads. The distances between the hamlets and sprawling nature of the Town of Bedford makes it difficult to adequately provide safe and convenient passage between the hamlets for bicycles and pedestrians.

Current provisions and situation

Current provisions for bicycles within the Town of Bedford are minimal.

- *There is one multi-use path, situated along the east side of the Bedford Road between the two entrances of the saw Mill River Parkway.*
- *There are no designated bicycle lanes on Bedford roads, but there are several roads where shared lanes exist, indicated by "Share the Road" signs, and there are several roads with paved shoulders on certain, but not all sections.*

The Bedford Transportation Plan

The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan has sought to rectify the situation with regard to bicycling.

The Transportation Plan includes strategies for improving and increasing bicycle usage through speed reduction, safety improvements, and various traffic calming treatments, particularly on Collector Roads to discourage short cuts.

Reduced lane widths, expanded shoulders, Share-the-road signs or designated bicycle lanes are also listed as strategies that could be applied to Through Roads (Arterial) and Collector Roads.

The Transportation Plan seeks to do all this, and at the same time protecting the unique qualities of the scenic roadways in Bedford. This is no small task, and to assist in this work, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan has been created to ensure that bicycles and pedestrians are fully integrated into all transportation planning.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan has developed the following goals and associated tasks to provide guidance to the Town Supervisor for further development of safe bicycling and walking within the Town of Bedford. The Plan groups the goals under the Five "E"s (**Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Evaluation**), which Federal guidelines recommend be incorporated into the Safe Routes to School program, and have been endorsed in the New York Department of Transportation strategy. These are also the criteria by which the League of American Bicyclists judge communities which have applied to the League to be considered for designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community

1. Engineering

Within the US, Federal, local and state policies over the course of the past century encouraged automobile-centered development, often to the detriment of safe and convenient cycling. Planning for the future we have the chance to rectify the situation in our local area of Bedford and work towards creating a livable and sustainable community.

Goal: provide safe and convenient access to all parts of Bedford

Associated tasks:

(a) Close coordination with the Bedford Transportation Department on:

- ensuring that current Bedford Comprehensive Plan strategies (reduced lane widths, expanded shoulders, share the road signs, designated bicycle lanes) for improving and increasing bicycle usage through speed reduction, safety improvements and various traffic calming treatments are implemented with the least possible delay;
- ensuring that the Transportation Plan strategies to the greatest extent possible accommodate bicyclist and pedestrian needs in all new road reconstruction and resurfacing;
- planning future bikeways (bike lanes along arterial and collector roads) as well as pedestrian routes to link the hamlets and within downtown areas;

(b) Identify hazards to safe cycling such as debris, broken shoulders, bad drainage gates, etc, and develop a system in coordination with the Bedford Transportation Department for the routine inspection, notification and maintenance of the current bike/pedestrian path, sidewalks and shoulders of roads;

(c) *Coordination with the Westchester County Department of Transportation on the implementation of established projects on routes 22 and 117 within the Town of Bedford, contained in the Mid-Hudson South Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan;*

(d) *Coordination with towns that neighbor Bedford and which have bicycle/pedestrian plans to ensure coordination on any projects which impact each other;*

(e) *Identifying possible sources of funding for future bicycle and pedestrian facilities and projects to include, inter alia;*

- *Highway funding and transportation enhancements*
- *School modernization (green standards for bicycle and pedestrians)*
- *Energy efficiency grant program*
- *Community development block grants*

2. Education

Goal: *provide educational tools to increase the safety of bicyclists*

Associated tasks:

(a) *Coordinate with the Bedford Schools/PTAs and Bedford Police Department on the Safe Routes to School program;*

(b) *Look into developing regular bicycle clinics to target children on bicycle safety;*

(c) *Work with schools and Police to include a bicycle section in the Driver's Education curriculum;*

(d) *Collect bicycling and walking data in order to track trends.*

(e) *Encourage PTAs in the Bedford and Katonah-Lewisboro districts to form bicycling/walking sub-committees that focus on safety and encouragement;*

3. Encouragement

Goal: *Get more people out on the bicycles*

Associated tasks:

(a) *Maintain an up to date site on the Bedford website on the development of the Bicycle Plan and bicycling issues and information;*

(b) *Explore running a regular bicycling column in the "Record Review";*

(c) *Develop a Bedford bike and pedestrian map, to show recommended routes for cyclists and walkers to take between the three hamlets;*

(d) *Organize regular "bicycle events" such as "bike/walk to work day", a community ride around the three hamlets, bicycle clinics on basic maintenance, maybe even one day a bicycle race, have an annual car-free day in Bedford, and so forth – anything that would encourage people to get out on their bikes or walk.*

(f) *Liaison: coordination with the Bedford Energy Advisory Panel, Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester/Putnam, with other Westchester communities that are active in Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan*

development, with the Westchester Bicycle Club, and attend annual Westchester and New York state Bicycle/Pedestrian Summits.

4. Enforcement

Goal: to increase safety of all road users with enforcement that emphasizes education and compliance

Associated tasks:

- (a) Coordinate closely with Bedford Police to ensure that all Bedford police officers are sensitive to bicycle and pedestrian issues and laws related to bicycle and pedestrian enforcement;
- (b) Establish regular Bedford Police interaction with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee;

5. Evaluation

Goal: to review and develop the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan

Associated tasks:

- (a) Monitor progress and effectiveness of all projects associated with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan;
- (b) Encourage and respond to input from Bedford residents on development of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan;
- (c) Provide an annual report to the Bedford Town Board on progress achieved and review and update the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.

Annex 1

The Bicycle Advisory Committee

Contact email address: bedfordbikewalk@gmail.com

George Bianco
Skip Beitzel
Terry Burke
Jim Duffy
Michael Dwyer
Don Pachner

*Annex 2***United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations**
Signed on March 11, 2010 and announced March 15, 2010**Purpose**

The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) is providing this Policy Statement to reflect the Department's support for the development of fully integrated active transportation networks. The establishment of well-connected walking and bicycling networks is an important component for livable communities, and their design should be a part of Federal-aid project developments. Walking and bicycling foster safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; promote physical activity and health; and reduce vehicle emissions and fuel use. Legislation and regulations exist that require inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian policies and projects into transportation plans and project development. Accordingly, transportation agencies should plan, fund, and implement improvements to their walking and bicycling networks, including linkages to transit. In addition, DOT encourages transportation agencies to go beyond the minimum requirements, and proactively provide convenient, safe, and context-sensitive facilities that foster increased use by bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and utilize universal design characteristics when appropriate. Transportation programs and facilities should accommodate people of all ages and abilities, including people too young to drive, people who cannot drive, and people who choose not to drive.

Policy Statement

The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems. Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life — transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.

Authority

This policy is based on various sections in the United States Code (U.S.C.) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in Title 23—Highways, Title 49—Transportation, and Title 42—The Public Health and Welfare. These sections, provided in the Appendix, describe how bicyclists and pedestrians of all abilities should be involved throughout the planning process, should not be adversely affected by other transportation projects, and should be able to track annual obligations and expenditures on nonmotorized transportation facilities.

Recommended Actions

The DOT encourages States, local governments, professional associations, community organizations, public transportation agencies, and other government agencies, to adopt similar policy statements on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation as an indication of their commitment to accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians as an integral element of the transportation system. In support of this commitment, transportation agencies and local communities should go beyond minimum design standards and requirements to create safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient bicycling and walking networks. Such actions should include:

- Considering walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes: The primary goal of a transportation system is to safely and efficiently move people and goods. Walking and bicycling are efficient transportation modes for most short trips and, where convenient intermodal systems exist, these nonmotorized trips can easily be linked with transit to significantly increase trip distance. Because of the benefits they provide, transportation agencies should give the same priority to walking and bicycling as is given to other transportation modes. Walking and bicycling should not be an afterthought in roadway design.
- Ensuring that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should meet accessibility requirements and provide safe, convenient, and interconnected transportation networks. For example, children should have safe and convenient options for walking or bicycling to school and parks. People who cannot or prefer not to drive should have safe and efficient transportation choices.
- Going beyond minimum design standards: Transportation agencies are encouraged, when possible, to avoid designing walking and bicycling facilities to the minimum standards. For example, shared-use paths that have been designed to minimum width requirements will need retrofits as more people use them. It is more effective to plan for increased usage than to retrofit an older facility. Planning projects for the long-term should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.
- Integrating bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges: DOT encourages bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on bridge projects including facilities on limited-access bridges with connections to streets or paths.
- Collecting data on walking and biking trips: The best way to improve transportation networks for any mode is to collect and analyze trip data to optimize investments. Walking and bicycling trip data for many communities are lacking. This data gap can be overcome by establishing routine collection of nonmotorized trip information. Communities that routinely collect walking and bicycling data are able to track trends and prioritize investments to ensure the success of new facilities. These data are also valuable in linking walking and bicycling with transit.
- Setting mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time: A byproduct of improved data collection is that communities can establish targets for increasing the percentage of trips made by walking and bicycling.
- Removing snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths: Current maintenance provisions require pedestrian facilities built with Federal funds to be maintained in the same manner as other roadway assets. State Agencies have generally established levels of service on various routes especially as related to snow and ice events.
- Improving nonmotorized facilities during maintenance projects: Many transportation agencies spend most of their transportation funding on maintenance rather than on constructing new facilities. Transportation agencies should find ways to make facility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists during resurfacing and other maintenance projects.

Conclusion

Increased commitment to and investment in bicycle facilities and walking networks can help meet goals for cleaner, healthier air; less congested roadways; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities. Walking and bicycling provide low-cost mobility options that place fewer demands on local roads and highways. DOT recognizes that safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities may look different depending on the context — appropriate facilities in a rural community may be different from a dense, urban area. However, regardless of regional, climate, and population density differences, it is important that pedestrian and bicycle facilities be integrated into transportation systems. While DOT leads the effort to provide safe and convenient accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, success will ultimately depend on transportation agencies across the country embracing and implementing this policy.

Ray LaHood, United States Secretary of Transportation