# Planning Context SECTION 1

July 2016

## Purpose

The purpose of the Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) is to enhance the quality of life in the City of Bloomington through strategic investments over time in multi-modal transportation features that meet the needs of individuals and families living, working, and recreating in Bloomington.

In 2008 Bloomington adopted the original ATP, adopted under the name "Alternative Transportation Plan". Since that time the City, in collaboration with other agencies (Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Three Rivers Park District, and others), has initiated a number of planning and implementation projects to further pedestrian and bicycle transportation in and around Bloomington. Highlights of these efforts include the 86th Street Multi-Modal Traffic Study, plans for the Nokomis-Minnesota River Regional Trail, the Hyland Trail Project, and the 2012 adoption of a Complete Streets Policy. This ATP Update incorporates the work accomplished since 2008 and provides direction for future implementation and maintenance efforts.

## Plan Need

A comprehensive and cohesive alternative transportation system is needed to ensure the long-term health, safety, and wellness of the community. Rationale for the need for the original plan and the plan update include:

- Responding to an increasingly vocal concern by citizens and community interests to enhance facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Improving community health and fitness by encouraging active living and fostering safety, accessibility, social capital, and emotional well-being
- Increasing transportation options to reduce reliance on personal automobile-based modes of transportation – e.g., more access to bus and LRT service
- Responding to increasing concerns about the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in the built environment
- Responding to regional and national trends in walking, biking, and transit usage as well as infrastructure investment, funding, and planning practices (see Figure 1.1 for a summary of trends)

***Figure 1.1:*** *Regional Trends in Alternative Transportation (Adapted from the Hennepin County 2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan)*

**Major Federal Funding**

In recent years, Twin Cities communities have been recipients of major federal grants to support the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Most notably, the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP), known locally as Bike Walk Twin Cities, has funded 54 miles of bikeways and 2,800 bike parking spaces, and helped to initiate a bike sharing program.

**Bike Sharing**

In 2010, Minneapolis became the first U.S. city to launch a large-scale bike share system, known as Nice Ride Minnesota. Funded through NTPP and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, the system has grown to serve a range of Minneapolis and St. Paul neighborhoods and downtown areas, with more than 1,500 bikes and 170 stations as of 2014. The presence of bike sharing has served to increase the visibility of on-street bicycling and provide new opportunities for people to bike.

**Transit-Bicycle Compatibility**

With the addition of two light rail lines, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit, the county's transit options have expanded significantly since 1997- and the county's bicycle advisory committee and other entities have advocated in turn for the integration of bikes and transit systems. Today, Metro Transit buses and light rail trains are equipped to carry bicycles, and bike parking is routinely included at transit stations and park and rides. With new transit investments in the pipeline, transit ridership and bike-transit connections are expected to continue increasing in coming years.

**More People are Biking**

Bicycling has been increasing rapidly in Hennepin County for more than a decade both in sheer numbers and rider diversity. The population of people riding bicycles increasingly reflects the diversity of the population as a whole, with growing number of women, seniors, and nonwhite groups bicycling.

**Driving Habits are Changing**

Despite prior decades of steady increases in per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the U.S., since 2000, this trend appears to be reversing both at the national and state level. National per capita VMT has declined 7.2 percent from its peak in 2004 (based on 2013 VMT). Similarly in Minnesota, per capita VMT has declined 5.3 percent since 2004, and 4 percent on all roads in the County from its peak in 2001.

National data reveal that people 34 and younger are increasingly choosing modes other than driving, with declining per capita VMT and increasing numbers of bicycling, walking, and transit trips seen in the 16 to 34 year old age group between 2001 and 2009.

**People are Using the Regional Trail System Differently**

Use of the Three Rivers Park District regional trail system has increased steadily over the past decade and became important for transportation as well as recreational trips. Commuter use of regional trails in Hennepin County has tripled.

**The County's Approach to Bicycling is Changing**

Hennepin County has focused on improving bicycling conditions, and as a result of past efforts and planning, bikeways have become a routine part of project development. The county has made a formal commitment to bicycling and active transportation with the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy in 2009.

## Regional Context and Urban Form

The challenging bicycle and pedestrian infrastructural condition in Bloomington has much in common with other first-ring suburbs in Hennepin County. The historic development patterns in the Minneapolis area and its suburbs pose inherent constraints to addressing alternative or active approaches to transportation. Communities often labeled "developing suburbs," such as Bloomington, Minnetonka, Maple Grove, Eden Prairie, Plymouth and Brooklyn Park, were built out between 1960 and 1990, most often with a decidedly auto-oriented development pattern which often did not include sidewalks, much less greenways and trails.

Figure 1.2 highlights some of the challenging barriers to a bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as documented by Hennepin County.

In addition to the items listed in the table, a few other barriers are worth highlighting, including:

- Surface street characteristics – the on-street bike facilities lack continuity in connectiveness or route guidance
- Actual street use/speeds – bicyclists using a particular road encounter multiple lanes of traffic, with vehicles often traveling at higher than the posted speed limit
- Limited regional connections – to destinations outside the city, many of which are quite extensive and offer a missed opportunity for local residents
- Lack of end of trip facilities – such as well-placed bicycle parking racks or lockers, showers/changing space for commuters, etc.
- Lack of right-of-way to retrofit the streetscape to include sidewalks, on-road bikeways, trails, trees, etc.

As these realities suggest, transitioning Bloomington's infrastructure to be more multi-modal and pedestrian-focused poses some significant challenges that will take time and resources to address. Nonetheless, the thoughtful and incremental implementation of this and complementary plans (i.e., park system plan, etc.) will ensure that alternative transportation options for residents and visitors will continue to grow over time.

***Figure 1.2:*** *Regional Challenges to Establishing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure (Adapted from the Hennepin County 2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan)*

**Sidewalk Gaps**

Gaps in pedestrian infrastructure, large and small, are quite typical along municipal boundaries. Current county policy states that the cost of pedestrian facilities is currently delegated to the city for any municipality with a population greater than 5,000 inhabitants. Since investment priorities do not commonly occur at city boundaries, closing gaps at the edges of communities will generally remain an issue due to lack of incentive to construct new sidewalks.

**Freeway Interchanges**

Freeways and other larger arterials pose significant barriers to pedestrian travel. Large commercial tracts generate traffic; retail, hotel, service station and restaurant employees need to walk to work. Travelers, too, walk to and from restaurants and hotels that are common in these areas and all of these pedestrians must cope with traffic entering and exiting freeways.

Sidewalks are often common only along the bridge structures that actually span the freeway and remain disconnected by a series of on and off ramps that usually do not have pedestrian infrastructure.

**Left and Right Turn Lanes**

Use of dedicated left and right turn lanes (slip lanes) at intersections is common in Hennepin County, which tends to give priority to cars turning across crosswalks. While these features facilitate vehicle flow, they can deter pedestrians if poorly designed.

**Turning Radii and Right Turn Lanes**

Right turn lanes with a wide turning radius were observed to allow vehicles to pass through an intersection without significantly reducing their speed. Other than occasionally marked crosswalks, there were no additional cues, signals or design maneuvers found to slow down the driver. This design was observed more often in recently constructed intersections than in older infrastructure. When painted, right turn lane crossings almost without exception are marked at the middle of the turning radius. Here, pedestrians risk crossing while the vehicle is traveling at relatively the same speed and where they are not in the driver's direct line of sight. The right turn thus functions as a separate intersection where the pedestrian is no longer protected by the traffic and pedestrian signals required in the main intersection.

**Unsignalized Crossings**

Illegal road crossings outside of crosswalks occur frequently, most commonly on roads that have dense commercial land use or a significant distance between bisecting streets. Other common infrastructure patterns that encourage informal crossings are areas that do not provide pedestrian facilities on two sides of the street or do not provide a direct route to a common destination.

**Park and Ride Facilities**

In Hennepin County, park and ride locations were often found in areas that were very accessible by vehicle but less convenient for walking or bicycles. In Bloomington, this is less of an issue and the proposed system attempts to more effectively address this issue.

# Demographics and Population Characteristics

In 2013, the official population estimates for Bloomington released by the Metropolitan Council were:

» Population: 85,935

» Households: 37,156

Figure 1.3 provides an overview of the 2010 population based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau.

As Figure 1.3 illustrates, like many communities, Bloomington's population is aging, with the upper two age groups seeing particular growth. Along with this changing demographic will be a higher percentage of "empty nesters" or households without school age children living in the community.

The city is also becoming more ethnically diverse. Although only around 11% of the population in 2000 was non-white, that percentage has grown significantly, to over 20%. The population of people who identify as Latino or Hispanic more than doubled in 10 years, as did the Black population. The fastest growing demographic by age in Bloomington is residents of 45 years and older, while the 20 to 44 age-group is declining.

In the past ten years, school enrollment decreased by 4.5%. However, recent school demographic projections show enrollment increasing by 4.7 to 7.4 percent in the next ten years with the majority of this increase reflecting elementary grades and occuring in 2019-2020 . By 2019 more than half of Bloomington Public School students will be minority students.

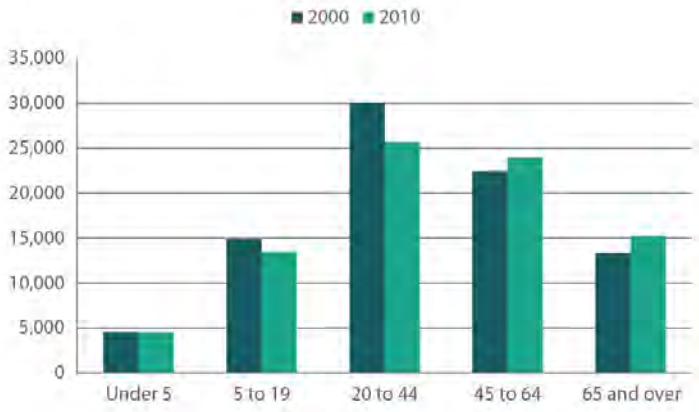
## Influence of Demographic Change on Recreational and Social Trends

The aging of the population in Bloomington along with evolving recreational and societal trends will markedly affect the demand for public services and facilities. An aging population, for example, will likely result in a reduced demand for athletic complexes. Conversely, interest in passive recreation such as walking along a trail, sitting at a pleasant overlook, taking in the arts, gardening, adult and senior programs, and attending social gatherings in their many public and private forms will rise. In fact, the use of trails is the most popular form of recreation for all age groups.

Along with the changing demographic, all age groups have a growing list of recreational and social choices available to them. This translates into an ever increasing expectation of a high quality experience when an individual of almost any age participates in an activity or social event. Today youth in particular have much more diverse interests than in past generations, often making it much more difficult to engage them in active, outdoor recreational activities.

***Figure 1.3:*** *City of Bloomington Demographic Profile (Source: U.S. Census)*

| City of Bloomington | 2000 | | 2010 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Population | 85,172 | - | 82,893 | - |
| Female | 44,040 | 51.7% | 42,778 | 51.6% |
| Male | 41,132 | 48.3% | 40,115 | 48.4% |
| One Race | 83,704 | 98.3% | 80,304 | 96.9% |
| White | 75,055 | 88.1% | 66,087 | 79.7% |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 4,368 | 5.1% | 4,904 | 5.9% |
| Black | 2,917 | 3.4% | 5,957 | 7.2% |
| American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut | 296 | 0.3% | 329 | 0.4% |
| Other Races | 1,068 | 1.3% | 3,027 | 3.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 2,290 | 2.7% | 5,623 | 6.8% |
| 0-4 Years Old | 4,532 | 5.3% | 4,505 | 5.4% |
| 5-19 Years Old | 14,852 | 17.4% | 13,466 | 16.2% |
| 20-44 Years Old | 29,994 | 35.2% | 25,710 | 31.0% |
| 45-64 Years Old | 22,436 | 26.3% | 23,984 | 28.9% |
| 65+ Years Old | 13,358 | 15.7% | 15,218 | 18.4% |
| Median Age | 40.1 | - | 42.7 | - |




*Since 2000, Bloomington has grown older, showing a 17 percent increase in the population 65 years of age and older, a 10 percent increase in the population 45-64 years of age, and declines or minimal growth in other age groups. Over the next 20 years, the 65 and over population will continue to grow.*

The changing demographic character of the city coupled with the changing recreational and social trends underscore the need for a well-balanced and flexible system that can respond to evolving, broad-based community needs. The plan update places considerable emphasis on addressing this issue by ensuring that the active and passive recreational and social interests of residents are reasonably accommodated, with a particular focus on the issue of quality.

# Past Planning and Studies

## 2008 Alternative Transportation Plan and Progress to Date

Prior to the 2008 ATP, the City's alternative transportation system was an eclectic collection of trails, sidewalks, and bike routes throughout the city that had evolved over time. Public input from the prior planning process characterized the system as fragmented, inconsistent, and in need of upgrading. The 2008 plan (shown in Figure 1.4) laid the foundation for subsequent improvements to the system.

The existing alternative transportation system (shown in Figure 1.45) reflects new facilities, maintenance, and upgrades completed since 2008. Key improvements to date include:

- Completed construction of Hyland Trail Corridor, except connection to Edina (Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail)
- Initiated planning and design for Minnesota River Trail Corridor (Construction to be funded by State)
- Completed construction of trail along Bloomington Ferry Road
- Completed on-street bike facilities along West 111th Street, Nesbitt Avenue, West 94th Street and Poplar Bridge Road.
- Completed on-street bike facilities along West 90th Street, northern portion of Xerxes Avenue and East 86th Street.
- Completed on-street bike facilities along West 102nd Street (Except Normandale Boulevard to France Avenue.)
- Completed trail construction along 90th Street (Nicollet Avenue to Portland Avenue)
- Completed on-street bike facilities along Auto Club Road, West 110th Street.
- Completed portions of bike facilities along West 106th Street.
- Initiated planning and design trails along Old Cedar Avenue between Old Shakopee Road and the bridge. (2015-2016 construction)
- Completed planning and design of Nokomis-Minnesota River Regional Trail (Three Rivers Park District to construct in 2016)
- Several pedestrian crossing safety improvements throughout the city
- Completed construction of trail segments in West Bush Lake Park and Normandale Park.

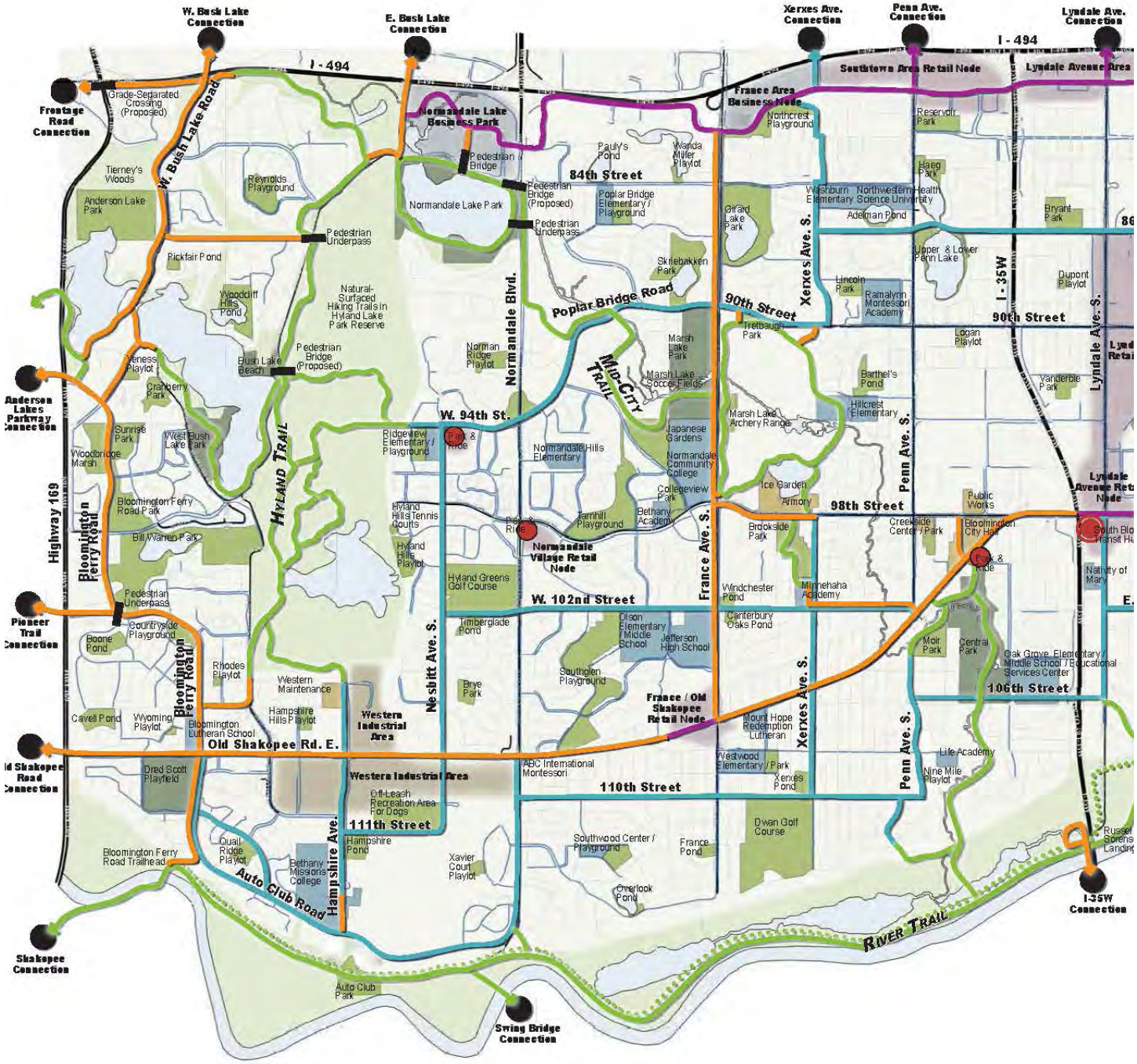
This update of the ATP builds on the community input, vision, and values of the original plan, but also reflects progress made in completing prior planning objectives and integrates new input from community engagement, City staff, and other stakeholders.

## Rapid Health Impact Assessment (2008)

To aid public involvement in the planning process, the City of Bloomington routinely tests new approaches. As part of the 2008 ATP planning process, the City tested a new Rapid Health Impact Assessment (RHIA) tool developed by the Design for Health team. Design for Health is a collaboration between the University of Minnesota and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. The Health Impact Assessment tool is designed as an interactive workshop that brings together stakeholders to identify and assess health impacts of a project, plan or policy.

The Rapid Health Assessment tool was applied in a planning effort for the Xcel Energy Corridor Trail and was also used as a part of the 86th Street Multimodal Corridor Traffic Study. The aim of the assessments were to explore the potential health benefits, obstacles, and enhancements associated with these trail/multimodal projects. Input from these assessments were used to help determine support for including the corridors as part of the alternative transportation system. Based on these experiences, the City has found the assessment to be an effective tool if used in the planning stage of a project to proactively consider and develop strategies to mitigate possible health implications.

***Figure 1.4:*** *2008 Alternative Transportation System*




*Prior to the 2008 ATP, the City's alternative transportation system was an eclectic collection of trails, sidewalks, and bike routes throughout the city that had evolved over time. The 2008 plan laid the foundation for subsequent investment by defining priority projects and improvements to define a core system of sidewalks and trails. The map below reflects improvements made since the 2008 plan. The alternative transportation system plan presented in Section 3 builds on the core facilities shown here and addresses gaps and deficiencies in the existing system.*

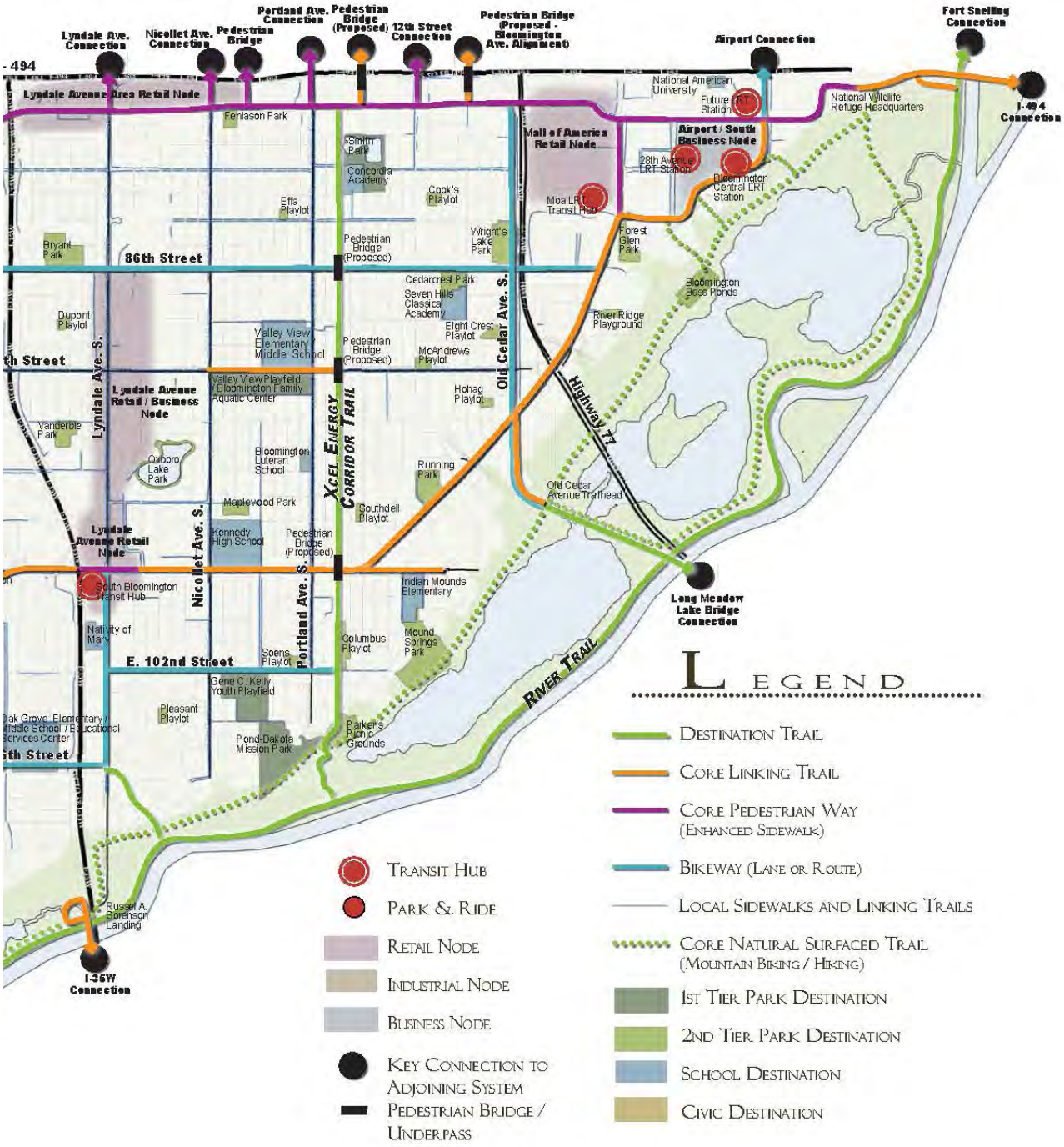
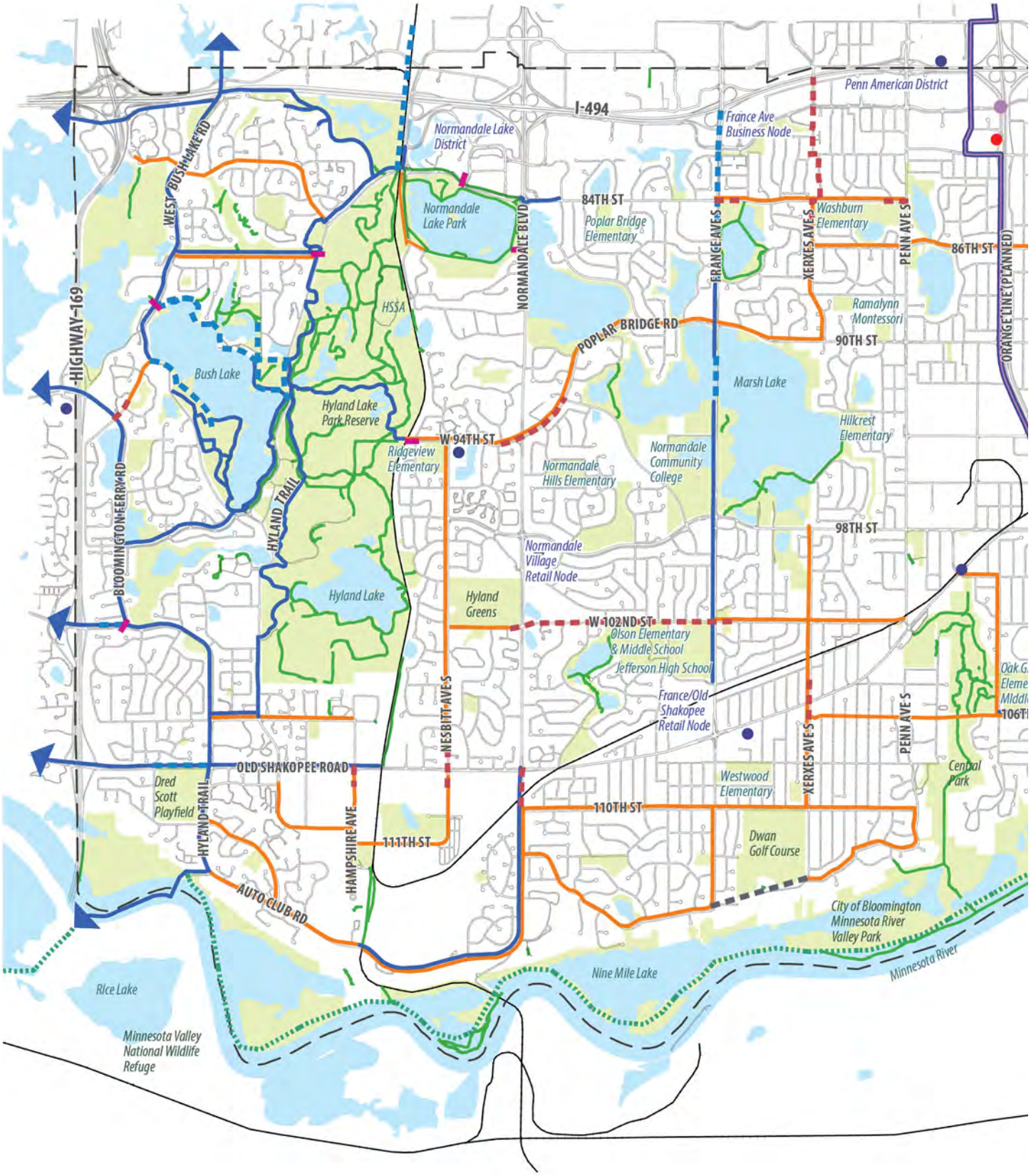

Lyndale Ave. Connection
Nicollet Ave. Connection
Pedestrian Bridge
Portland Ave. Connection
Pedestrian Bridge (Proposed)
12th Street Connection
Pedestrian Bridge (Proposed - Bloomington Ave. Alignment)
Airport Connection
Fort Snelling Connection
I-494 Connection
I-494
Lyndale Avenue Area Retail Node
Fenlason Park
Smith Park
Concordia Academy
Cook's Playlot
Effa Playlot
Bryant Park
86th Street
Pedestrian Bridge (Proposed)
Wright's Lake Park
Mall of America Retail Node
Moa LRT Transit Hub
National American University
Future LRT Station
Airport / South Business Node
28th Avenue LRT Station
Bloomington Central LRT Station
National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters
Forest Glen Park
Bloomington Base Ponds
River Ridge Playground
Cedarcrest Park
Seven Hills Classical Academy
Eight Crest Playlot
McAndrews Playlot
Dupont Playlot
Valley View Elementary / Middle School
Pedestrian Bridge (Proposed)
Old Cedar Ave. S.
Lyndale Ave. S.
Lyndale Avenue Retail / Business Node
Valley View Playfield / Bloomington Family Aquatic Center
Hohag Playlot
Highway 77
Vanderbie Park
Cuboro Lake Park
Bloomington Luteran School
Xcel Energy Corridor Trail
Running Park
Old Cedar Avenue Trailhead
Maplewood Park
Southdell Playlot
Lyndale Avenue Retail Node
Nicollet Ave. S.
Kennedy High School
Pedestrian Bridge (Proposed)
Portland Ave. S.
South Bloomington Transit Hub
Indian Mounds Elementary
Long Meadow Lake Bridge Connection
Nativity of Mary
Columbus Playlot
Mound Springs Park
E. 102nd Street
Soens Playlot
River Trail
Gene C. Kelly Youth Playfield
Pleasant Playlot
Oak Grove Elementary / Middle School / Educational Services Center
Pond-Dakota Mission Park
Parker's Picnic Grounds
Russel A. Sorenson Landing
I-35W Connection
Legend
Destination Trail
Core Linking Trail
Core Pedestrian Way (Enhanced Sidewalk)
Bikeway (Lane or Route)
Local Sidewalks and Linking Trails
Core Natural Surfaced Trail (Mountain Biking / Hiking)
1st Tier Park Destination
2nd Tier Park Destination
School Destination
Civic Destination
Transit Hub
Park & Ride
Retail Node
Industrial Node
Business Node
Key Connection to Adjoining System
Pedestrian Bridge / Underpass

***Figure 1.5:*** *Existing System and Gaps*



I-494
Lyndale Ave Area Retail Node
Mall of America Retail Node
South Loop District
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters
Smith Park
HIGHWAY 77
BLUE LINE
RED LINE (PLANNED)
ORANGE LINE (PLANNED)
LYNDALE AVE S
NICOLLET AVE S
PORTLAND AVE S
OLD CEDAR AVE S
Lyndale Ave Retail/Business Node
Valley View Elementary & Middle School
Minnesota DNR (Fort Snelling Park)
Long Meadow Lake
Kennedy High School
OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD
Lyndale Ave Retail Node
Indian Mounds Elementary
I-35W
E 102ND ST
Oak Grove Elementary & Middle School
106TH ST
City of Bloomington Minnesota River Valley Park
Black Dog Lake
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Existing Off-Street Trails
Existing On-Street Facility
Existing Park Trails
Existing Gaps, Off-Street Trails
Existing Gaps, On-Street
Existing Gaps, Undetermined
Planned Minnesota Valley State Trail
Transit Centers
Park & Ride Lots
Transitways and Stations
Bloomington Municipal Boundary
Railroad
Open Water
Parks
Grade-separated Crossing (proposed and existing)
0
0.5
1
Miles

## Public Participation in Shaping the Plan

The staff advisory committee, focus group meetings, an on-line questionnaire, open houses, stakeholder interviews, presentations to local boards and commissions, website information and newspaper articles provided a variety of opportunities for the community to provide input into the planning process. These insights were valuable in many ways, especially in consideration of various routing options for trails and bikeways. The following summarizes the key points of these interactions.

Although the list is not an exhaustive reiteration of the issues brought up during the public process, it does capture the key themes and issues that the plan attempts to address. See Appendix A for overall summary of community input.

**Community Engagement:**

*300+ On-line Questionnaires Received*

*3 Community Open Houses (60+ attendees)*

*3 Focus Group Meetings (17 participants)*

*Farmers Market*

*South Loop Charrette*

*Sun Current*

*Bloomington Briefings*

*Website*

***Figure 1.6:*** *Summary of Input from Public Participation - by category*

**Barriers to Walking and Biking**

- Lack of sidewalks/trails
- Lack of on-street bike lanes and facilities (i.e. bike racks, tire pumps)
- Lack or poor condition of crosswalks
- Poor sidewalk/trail maintenance (including plowing)
- High traffic volumes on major roads
- Highway crossings, particularly across/over I-494
- Missing connections between existing trails/sidewalks
- Missing connections between parks/recreation areas
- Lack of crossings/facilities across highways and Minnesota River

**Improvements to Walking Conditions (see Figure 1.98)**

When asked to rate the importance of various improvements:

- 61% of questionnaire respondents rated "Street crossing safety improvements" as very important
- 49% of respondents rated "Maintenance" as very important
- 44% of respondents rated "Additional sidewalks" as very important

**Common Desired Locations - Walking**

- France Avenue - Safer trail; wider sidewalks; safer crossings (108th, Heritage Hills, 98th, 494)
- Normandale Boulevard - Improve/widen sidewalk; improve road conditions; bike lanes; crosswalks
- Old Shakopee Road - Wider sidewalks; crosswalks; repaving; traffic calming
- Bush Lake Road - Sidewalk or trail; crossings
- Penn Avenue - Wider/separated sidewalks
- Crosswalks needed at various locations
- Connections between existing trails and parks
- Pedestrian bridges and/or wider sidewalks over I-494
- Old Cedar Avenue Bridge
- Sidewalks/crosswalks around Jefferson H.S. and Olson ES/MS

***Figure 1.7:*** *Online Questionnaire Summary at Open House #1* *Full summary graphic is shown as part of APPENDIX A.*

## What we've heard so far: Online Questionnaire Summary

*Almost 300 people have participated in an online questionnaire to gather initial input on Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) updates needed! The questionnaire, along with input from community open houses and focus groups, will inform final ATP plan updates. The following is a summary of questionnaire responses received to date.*

**There's still time to fill out the online questionnaire!**

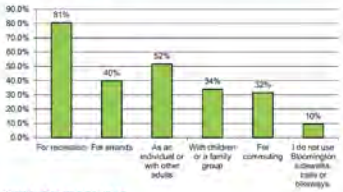
**To view the online questionnaire, go to:**

http://bloomingtonmn.gov/cityhall/dept/commdev/planning/longrang/alttranplan/alttrans.htm

**Or scan with your smartphone:**

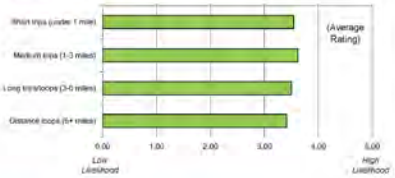
### SIDEWALK, TRAIL, AND BIKEWAY USE

***How do you use Bloomington sidewalk, trails, and bikeways? Check all that apply.***




### TRIP DISTANCES

***Check the box describing the preferred length of walking or biking trip that you are likely to take***




### BARRIERS TO WALKING AND BIKING

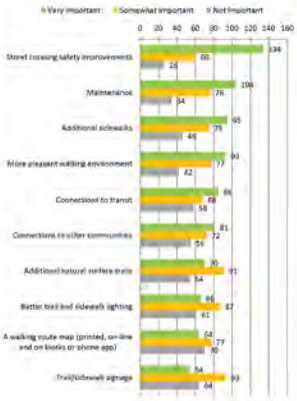
*Respondents listed a number of barriers to walking and biking in Bloomington. Common issues raised include:*

- *Lack of sidewalks/trails*
- *Lack of on-street bike lanes*
- *Lack or poor condition of crosswalks*
- *Poor sidewalk/trail maintenance*
- *High traffic volumes on major roads*
- *Highway crossings, particularly across/over I-494*
- *Missing connections between existing trails/sidewalks*
- *Missing connections between parks/recreation areas*

### IMPROVEMENTS - WALKING

***In your opinion, how important are the following to improving walking conditions in Bloomington? (see chart below)***

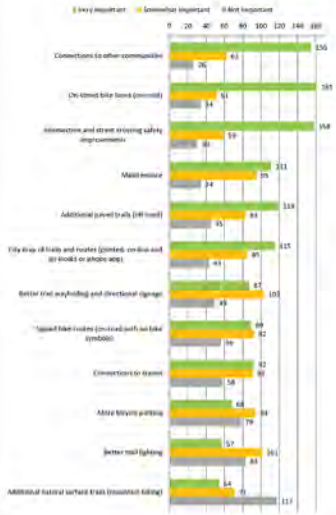
- *61% of respondents rated "Street crossing safety improvements" as very important*
- *49% of respondents rated "Maintenance" as very important*
- *44% of respondents rated "Additional sidewalks" as very important*




### IMPROVEMENTS - BIKING

***In your opinion, how important are the following to improving bike conditions in Bloomington? (see chart below)***

- *66% of respondents rated "On-street bike lanes (on-road)" as very important*
- *65% of respondents rated "Connections to other communities" as very important*
- *63% of respondents rate "Intersection and street crossing safety improvements" as very important*




### PRIORITY LOCATIONS - WALKING

***Please list your top three priority locations and type of improvements needed to improve walking conditions in Bloomington.***

*Common responses include:*

- *France Avenue - Safer trail; wider sidewalks; safer crossings (108th, heritage hills, 98th, 494)*
- *Normandale Boulevard - Improve sidewalk/road conditions; bike lanes*
- *Old Shakopee Road - Wider sidewalks; crosswalks; repaving; traffic calming*
- *Bush Lake Road - Sidewalk or trail; crossings*
- *Penn Avenue - Wider/separated sidewalks*
- *Crosswalks needs at various locations*
- *Connections between existing trails and parks*
- *Ped bridges and/or wider sidewalks over I-494*
- *Old Cedar Avenue bridge*
- *Normandale - Improve/widen sidewalk; crosswalks*
- *Sidewalks/crosswalks around Jefferson H.S. and Olson ES/MS*

### PRIORITY LOCATIONS - BIKING

***Please list your top three priority locations and type of improvements needed to improve biking conditions in Bloomington.***

*Common responses include:*

- *Old Shakopee Road - Bike lanes*
- *France Avenue - Bike Lanes; improve road conditions; trail; sidewalk*
- *Crossing I-494 - Bike lanes; bike/ped bridge (12th Avenue, France Avenue, Portland, Bush Lake)*
- *Penn Avenue - Bike Lane; sidewalks*
- *Bush Lake Road - Bike Lanes*
- *Hyland Park - Connections through park and to Bush Lake*
- *American Boulevard - various comments*
- *Mall of America - improved bike/walk access*
- *Old Shakopee Road - Improve conditions; bike lane; widen trail*
- *Old Cedar Avenue - Bridge; bike lanes*

*For more details on the questionnaire, see the full printout of responses received to date.*

**QUESTIONAIRE SUMMARY** **BLOOMINGTON ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE**

***Figure 1.8:*** *Summary of Input from Public Participation (Continued)*

**Improvements to Biking Conditions (see Figure 1.9)**

As part of the on-line survey, when asked to rate the importance of various improvements:

- 65% of questionnaire respondents rated "On-street bike lanes (on-road)" as very important
- 63% of respondents rated "Connections to other communities" as very important
- 64% of respondents rate "Intersection and street crossing safety improvements" as very important

**Common Desired Locations - Biking**

- France Avenue - Safer trail; wider sidewalks; safer crossings (108th, Heritage Hills, 98th, 494)
- Normandale Boulevard - Improve sidewalk/road conditions; bike lanes; improve/widen sidewalks; crosswalks
- Old Shakopee Road - Wider sidewalks; crosswalks; repaving; traffic calming
- Bush Lake Road - Sidewalk or trail; crossings
- Penn Avenue - Wider/separated sidewalks
- Crosswalks needed at various locations
- Connections between existing trails and parks (Hyland Park, Bush Lake Beach)
- I-494 - Need ped bridges and/or wider sidewalks over
- I-35W - Lack of safe crossings (esp. south of 86th/98th street)
- Lack of safe crossings for highways (494, 35W, 62, 77)
- Minnesota River - lack of crossings (77, 35W, west side of city, Cedar)
- Need biking connections south into Burnsville
- Need connections from 86th Street route
- American Blvd and area around MOA- traffic, lack of trail/bike lanes
- 98th Street - lack of bike lanes
- Old Cedar Avenue Bridge
- Sidewalks/crosswalks around Jefferson H.S. and Olson ES/MS

**General Comments**

Many of the comments included here were documented as part of the 2008 ATP planning process and echoed in recent public input. These ideas are reiterated here and continue to inform recommendations in the updated plan.

- True system of trails and sidewalks is lacking in the city; bike and ped facilities are not always connected to another route or destination
- Transportation infrastructure focuses on moving vehicles, not pedestrians or bicyclists, around the city
- Trail and sidewalk systems need to complement each other and provide sufficient wayfinding, connect to destinations, relate to neighborhoods, and provide access to schools, parks, and libraries; Direct route to destination is often missing
- Lack of support facilities is an issue – such as bike racks/lockers at destinations, bike shelters at the select destinations
- Weather-proof system – year round use desired, but have to deal with maintenance and design issues (plowing, grades, drainage, width of facility)
- Accommodation of and separation between different user groups
- Needs of elderly and disabled population need to be considered; consider universal design to improve readability for signage
- Signal timing is a concern with respect to having enough time for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely get across intersections; signals are triggered by cars, but not bikes or pedestrians - need to design for all users
- Provide signage in multiple languages to reflect diversity of city
- Safety is a big concern – safe routes to school, intersections, separation between vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists; traffic calming measures are important
- Public perception of safety is also issue – education, right type of facilities, adequate lighting, and police enforcement of laws are all necessary to change perception
- Cultural change is a possibility – but need to create that environment through good planning, education, promotion, enforcement, and commitment of resources
- Faith community, Chamber of Commerce, health care community, staging events are all possible avenues for education and promotion
- Cost is a key consideration – What can the City of Bloomington reasonably afford to do?

***Figure 1.9:* Questionnaire Responses:** *In your opinion, how important are the following to improving walking conditions in Bloomington?*

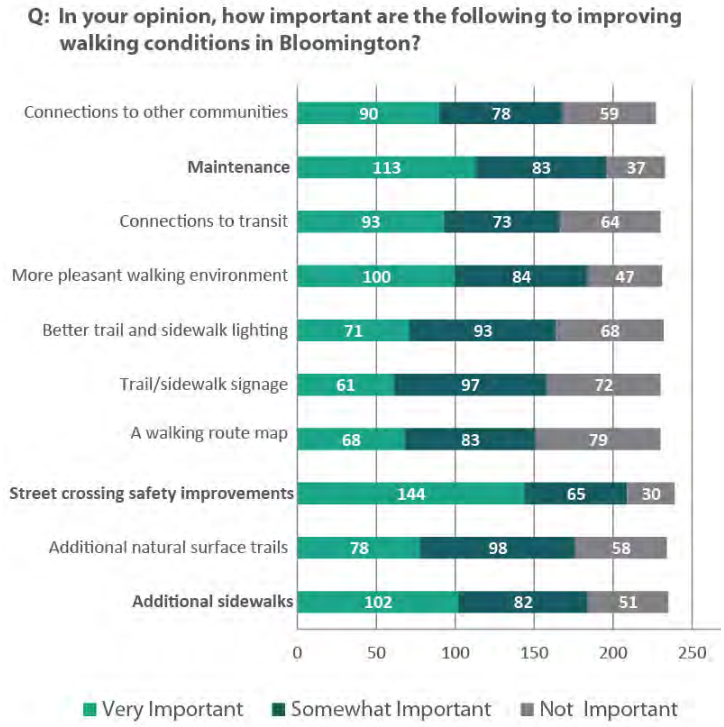
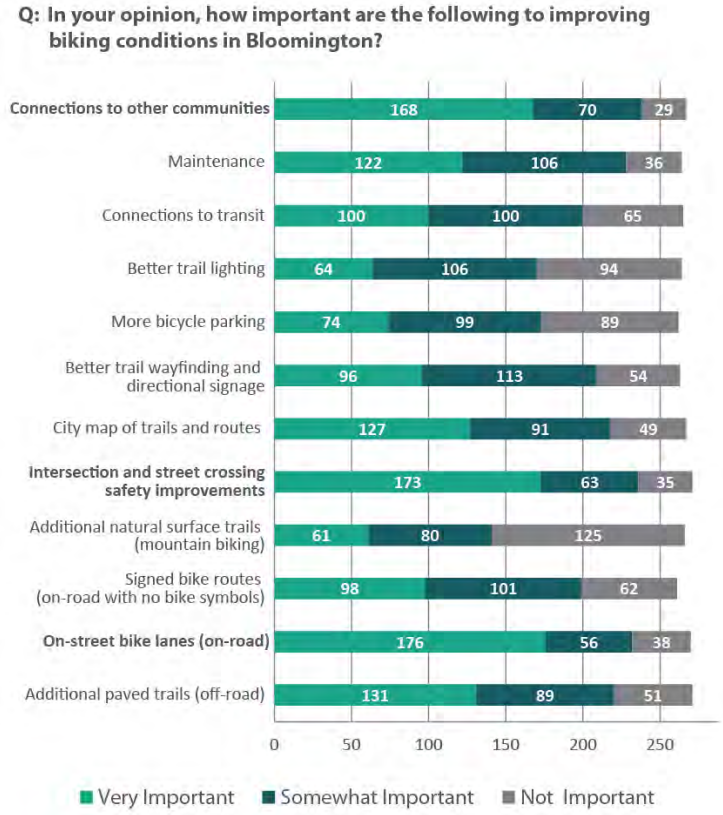
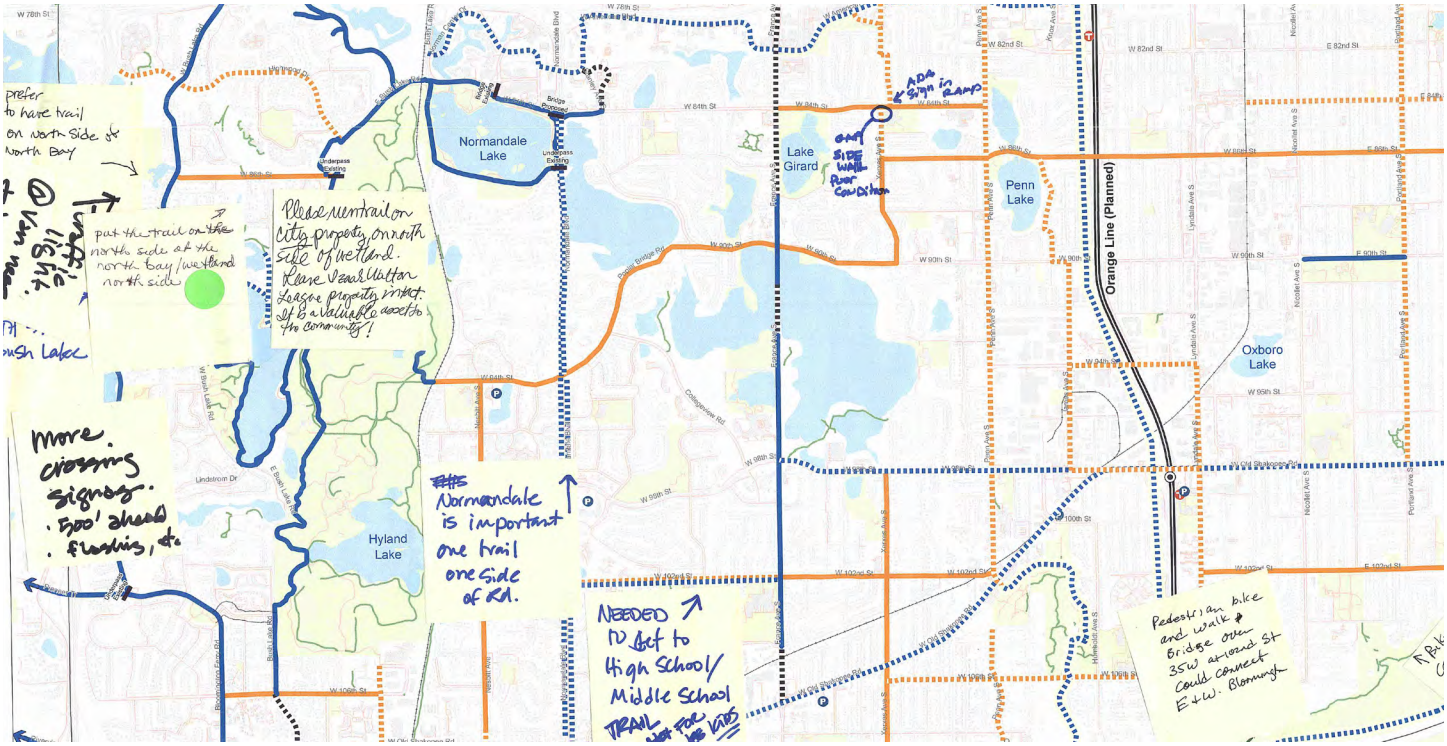



***Figure 1.10:* Questionnaire Responses:** *In your opinion, how important are the following to improving biking conditions in Bloomington?*




*Annotated map from community open house*

## Findings from Complementary Regional Studies

The ATP system needs to be a reflection of current macro-trends and regional context. Broad topics such as climate change, health and active living and changing demographics all have a profound influence on bicycling and walking at a local level.

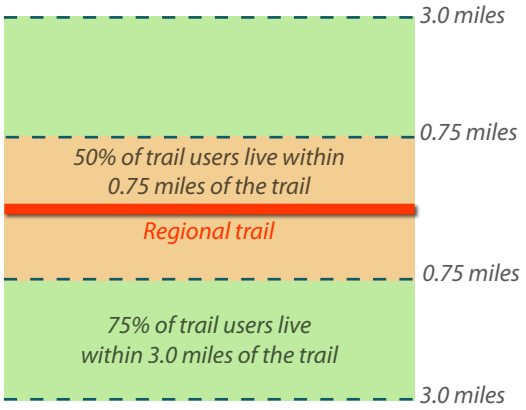
In addition to findings from the public process, a variety of state and regional trends have influenced planning outcomes, as the following considers. Findings by the Metropolitan Council, MN DNR, and other agencies suggests that future growth in participation in many areas of outdoor recreation is not as assured as was the case a decade or two ago. In numerous activities, research indicates that participation rates are expected to actually decline as Minnesotans shift their activity patterns based on evolving interests, age, and access to newer forms of recreation. Other key findings pertinent to this plan include:

- Barriers to getting outdoors include time, family obligations, work responsibilities, lack of money, weather, insects (uncontrollable environment), lack of outdoor skills and equipment, lack of information and knowledge, and concerns about personal safety
- More ethnically diverse population with more widely varying expectations
- Obesity/health issues on the rise, with lifestyle choices a key factor
- Greater diversity in recreation opportunities available to all age groups
- Funding issues – less Local Governmental Aid (LGA) and other public dollars for acquisition and capital improvements; suggests greater need for non-traditional approaches
- Technology is competing for people's discretionary time and creating more sedentary time
- Energy costs are rising and limiting people's willingness to travel very far for recreation
- Climate change is impacting our natural resources and weather
- Growing disconnection with nature, which impacts personal development, societal well-being, stewardship of natural areas; also contributes to nature-deficit disorder in youth

In communities throughout the Twin Cities' Metro Region, trails and bikeways continue to be one of the most popular recreation and transportation facilities. These facilities offer low cost transportation options, are good for the environment because they reduce automobile use, and they promote an active population. They also provide essential connectivity for those who cannot or choose not to drive including low income households, children, and the elderly. Trail based activities such as walking, hiking, biking, jogging, and dog walking are among the primary activities in regional parks (2008 Metropolitan Council Regional Parks and Trails Survey).

Trail research by the Metropolitan Council suggests that the majority of trail users live within three miles of the trail they are using, as Figure 1.110 illustrates. Providing residents with regional or community trails within 0.75 miles of their house provides the most benefit to residents.

***Figure 1.11:*** *Travel Distances For Regional Trails*



## Conclusions

The input received from residents during the public process, along with recreation, public health, and transportation trends, influenced this plan's recommendations for the ATP system and implementation. Despite varying opinions on specific needs, issues, and priorities, it is important to underscore that all residents that participated in the planning process consider a more robust alternative transportation system to be a valuable quality of life improvement.

In response to these inputs, the system emphasizes the following key points:

» Quality is as or more important than quantity for encouraging use of alternative transportation features and facilities; providing high quality, safe, and well-maintained facilities will attract greater public use and in turn, increase public value and satisfaction

» Future improvements should look to fill in missing connections in the system- between routes and to key destinations

» The system must be balanced, diverse, and flexible enough to adjust to ever-changing needs of the community

Section 2: Visions and Values explores more deeply the vision, values, and principles that undergird the ATP. Section 3: ATP System describes the future alternative transportation system, key routes and destinations, facility types, and best practices for the design of alternative transportation features. Section 4: Implementation, speaks to the importance of pragmatism and balanced, incremental implementation and evaluation and maintenance.

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