



B.

Planning Approach & Plan Development



Benefits of Alternative Transportation

The *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015* is designed to address and resolve community issues that affect the current and future environmental and economic health of the Noblesville metropolitan area.



Greenways have been implemented by communities throughout the United States in order to provide recreation and alternative transportation, control flooding, improve water quality, protect wetlands, conserve habitat for wildlife and buffer adjacent land uses. Greenways typically incorporate varying types and intensities of human use, including pathways for recreation and travel and passive and active park facilities, including open playing fields. Greenways increase the value of adjacent private properties as an amenity to residential and commercial developments. These and other benefits of the Noblesville Alternative Transportation network are described in the following pages. (Adapted from the Kansas City MetroGreen Plan)

Transportation Benefits

In past years, American communities have grown in a sprawling, suburban form as a result of dependence upon the automobile as the sole means of transportation. As automobile use has increased, traditional forms of transportation (such as passenger train service) have become less available and communities have been slow to offer alternatives such as bicycle and pedestrian networks, bus systems and local rail service. In order to provide relief from automobile congestion on the streets and highways in metro areas, future transportation planning and development must be concentrated on providing residents with choices in modes of travel. These choices should be appealing and should offer the same benefits currently provided by the automobile: efficiency, safety, comfort, reliability and flexibility.

Noblesville's greenways corridors will be designed to serve as extensions of road networks, offering realistic and viable connections between origins and destinations such as work, schools, libraries, parks, shopping areas, historical and cultural sites and tourist attractions. Greenway-based bikeways and walkways are most effective for certain travel distances. National surveys by the Federal Highway Administration have shown that Americans are willing to walk as far as two miles to a destination and bike as far as five miles. Destinations can be linked to multiple origins throughout the Noblesville area with a combination of off-road trails and on-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



Economic Benefits

Noblesville's greenways corridors offer numerous economic benefits, including higher real estate property values, increased tourism and recreation-related revenues, and cost savings for public services. Greenways have been shown to raise the value of adjacent properties by as much as five to 20 percent. For example, in a residential development in Raleigh, North Carolina, new lots situated on a greenway were priced \$5,000 higher than comparable lots off the greenway. Many homebuyers and corporations are looking for real estate that provides direct access to public and private greenway systems.

Greenways are viewed as amenities by residential, commercial and office park developers who realize higher rental values and profits from when they locate next to greenways. Additionally, greenways can save local tax dollars by utilizing resource-based strategies for hazard mitigation and managing community storm water, thus placing into productive use landscapes that would not normally be considered for conventional development.

“Green infrastructure is our nation’s natural life support system—an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas; greenways, parks and other conservation lands; working farms, ranches and forest; and wilderness and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources, and contribute to the health and quality of life for America’s communities and people. Green infrastructure is smart conservation that address the ecological, social, economic impacts of sprawl and the accelerated consumption and fragmentation of land.”

— **Definitions of green infrastructure are found in a report titled Green Infrastructure: Smart Conservation for the 21st Century, by Mark Benedict and Ed McMahon of the Conservation Fund.**

Greenways enhance the role tourism plays in the economy. Tourism is ranked as the number one economic force in the world. In several states, regional areas and localities throughout the nation, greenways have been specifically created to capture the tourism potential of a regional landscape or cultural destination. The state of Missouri, for example, spent \$6 million to create the 200-mile KATY Trail, which, in its first full-year of operation, generated travel and tourism expenditures of more than \$6 million.

Health and Recreation Benefits

Studies show that as little as 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity exercise (such as bicycling, walking, in-line skating or cross-country skiing) can significantly improve mental and physical health and prevent certain diseases. Greenways contribute to public health by encouraging more people to walk or bike to short-distance destinations. Providing opportunities for participation in these outdoor activities, close to where people live and work is an important component of promoting healthy lifestyles.

The President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors released a report several years ago that profiled the modern pursuit of leisure and defined the quality of life for many Americans. Limited access to outdoor resources was cited as a growing problem throughout the nation. The commission recommended that a national system of greenways could provide all Americans with access to linear open space resources.

The *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015* will complement the community’s existing parks and open-space system, and serve as a primary recreation and fitness resource.

Cultural Benefits

Indianapolis’ newest trail system, The Indianapolis Cultural Trail, is a world class urban bike and pedestrian path that will connect all six Indianapolis cultural districts and bring users to the front door of nearly every arts, cultural, heritage, sport and entertainment venue in the downtown. Through the public/private partnership the 7.5-mile trail will serve as the downtown hub for the central Indiana greenway system, not only providing an inspiring and safe way to travel and exercise throughout Indianapolis, but also exposing users to downtown dynamic arts amenities and the city’s rich heritage.

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail will boost tourism, quality of place and quality of life in central Indiana. It will increase downtown residential

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development and inspire new businesses. It is forecasted to position Indianapolis as a dynamic city, which is essential for attracting and retaining talented professionals, which is the key to succeeding in a global economy.

With the growing epidemic of obesity in Indiana, the Cultural Trail, as well as other trails throughout the state, will provide a safe and free form of exercise that supports both state and city initiatives, INShape and FitCity.

The *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015* system will connect with The Indianapolis Cultural Trail in the future years allowing the physical connections and the cultural benefits to be realized by its users and visitors to both cities.

Greenway systems like *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015* enhance the culture of their regions and protect historic resources in metropolitan areas.

Successful greenway projects across the United States have served as new “main streets,” where neighbors meet, children play and community groups gather to celebrate. For cities and towns large and small, greenways have become cultural assets and focal points for community activities. Some communities sponsor “greenway days” to celebrate the outdoors and local traditions. Various walking and running events are held on greenways to support charity events or extend traditional sporting events. Many civic groups adopt segments of greenways for cleanup, litter removal and environmental awareness programs. Some greenways, like San Antonio’s Riverwalk, are the focal point not only for community activities, but also for economic development.

Locally or nationally significant historic sites and districts represent the richness and diversity of area historic and cultural resources. The interpretation of historic and archeological sites along greenways can serve to increase the awareness and appreciation of the area’s rich history. Greenways can also serve as vehicles to provide controlled public access to important cultural sites in a manner that promotes preservation and enhances interpretive opportunities.

Security and Safety Benefits

Most Americans are concerned about crime. Safe neighborhoods are of prime concern and priority to metro area residents. Some of the most successful deterrents to criminal activity involve increasing neighborhood awareness by citizens and participation in community watch programs. Greenways have proven to be an effective tool to encourage local residents to participate in neighborhood programs. Some greenways have been developed as part of efforts to deter criminal activity in a neighborhood. Crime statistics and reports from law enforcement officials have shown that parks and greenways are typically land uses with the lowest incidence of reported criminal activity.

As a recreation resource, alternative transportation corridor or area where fitness activities take place, most greenways provide a safer and much more user-friendly resource than other linear corridors, such as local roads. Greenways typically attract local residents who use the facilities frequently, creating an environment that is virtually self-policing. Additionally, greenways — whether publicly or privately owned — are

“Increased access to open space has been linked to better physical fitness leading to decreased public health care costs, reduced social service and police/ justice costs; as well as reduced self-destructive and anti-social behavior.”

— U.S. National Park Service,
“The Economic Benefits of
Protecting Rivers, Trails and
Greenway Corridors”



dedicated for multiple uses and are normally designed to meet federal, state and local standards for public safety and use.

In 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling. Over half of all school children arrive at school in private autos.

This decline in walking and bicycling has had an adverse effect on traffic congestion and air quality, as well as affecting the health of children. Studies show that children that lead sedentary lifestyles are at risk for obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Parents often cite safety concerns such as traffic dangers as a reason for their children not walking or bicycling to school.

Water Quality and Water Quantity Benefits

Greenways preserve wooded open spaces along creeks and streams that absorb flood waters and filter pollutants from storm water. In some cases buildings and other land uses have encroached into flood-prone areas. By designating floodplains as greenways, encroachments can be managed, and sometimes replaced with linear open space, an amenity to residents and businesses occupying adjacent property.

As a flood-control measure, Noblesville's greenways corridors serve as primary storage zones during periods of heavy rainfall. The protected floodplain can also be used during non-flood periods for recreation and alternative transportation. In conjunction with existing storm water management policies and programs in the region, greenway lands can be set aside as development occurs. Greenway corridors also serve to improve the surface water quality of local rivers and creeks. The floodplain forests and wetlands contained within greenway corridors filter pollutants from storm water. These pollutants are not removed if storm water is collected in pipes and discharged directly into local streams and rivers. Improving surface water quality in streams benefits both local residents and numerous forms of wildlife that depend on streams for their habitat.

As a water supply protection measure, Noblesville's greenways corridors can buffer streams and lakes with vegetation to absorb pollution from runoff. As a flood control measure, Noblesville's greenways corridors will serve as primary storage zones during periods of heavy rainfall. The protected floodplain can also be used during non-flood periods for recreation and alternative transportation.



Air Quality Benefits

Greenways as alternative transportation corridors serve to reduce traffic congestion, thus helping to improve air quality. Since the majority of automobile trips are less than two miles in length, offering alternative transportation choices through greenways would encourage residents to bicycle or walk these short distances more often, thereby reducing traffic congestion and automobile emissions.

Plant and Animal Habitat Benefits

Noblesville's greenways corridors can serve as viable habitat for many species of plants and wildlife. Greenway corridors provide essential food sources and, most importantly, access to water that is required by all wildlife. Greenways in the Noblesville area could become primary migratory routes for terrestrial wildlife, serving to help maintain the integrity of many plant and animal gene pools. Some wildlife biologists have extolled greenways as future "gene-ways" because these migration routes are essential to maintaining healthy wildlife populations.

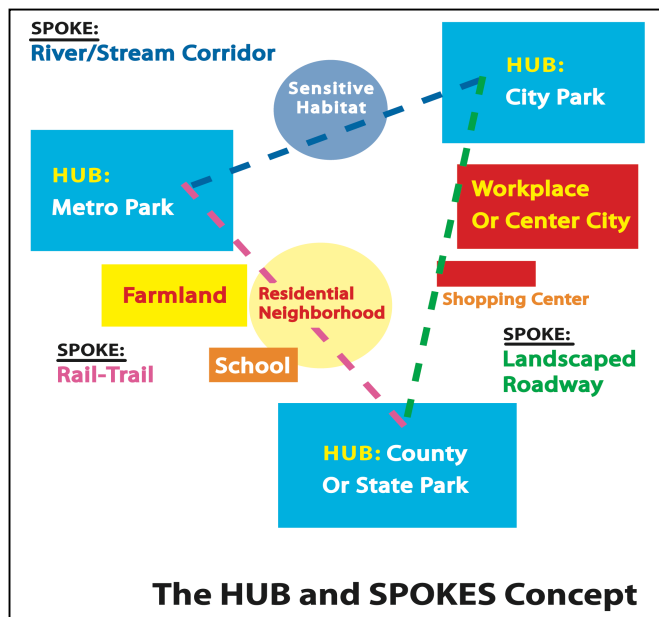
Greenways can also serve as "gene-ways" for plant species that migrate with changes in climate and habitat. These "greenways" often follow river and stream corridors that have long served as transportation routes for

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animals and humans. Noblesville greenways promote local programs to protect valuable existing forested and wetland areas and to reclaim and restore streams to support higher quality habitat.

Connecting People through “Hubs and Spokes”

Connections are the most tangible product of pathways and greenways plans. The physical framework of the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015* is based on a popular concept known as “Hubs and Spokes.” Under this concept, residential, commercial and business landscapes (hubs) are linked to parks, preserves and open spaces via greenway and physical corridors (spokes). For residents this means improved access to the outdoors for recreation, auto-alternative transportation, and participation in activities that can improve health, fitness and quality of life.



The strategy for implementation will be in applying the following elements:

- Start with the Trails Master Plan (general routes and destinations) and the findings of the master planning study
- Work with all stakeholders (citizens, government officials, businesses, etc.)
- Recognize that “users” (walkers, runners, cyclists, families, etc.) have differing needs
- Route around, not through, private property except where that access is offered voluntarily
- Choose first to construct those trails that are simplest to accomplish in terms of land, funding, etc. Easy, early successes provide project momentum and fastest benefits to citizens.

Hubs: Destination Points in the Community

One of the primary reasons for developing a pathway and greenway system is to provide access to a destination. While the pathway system evolves it will connect neighborhoods on its way to other destinations. Many possible destinations in the Noblesville community have been identified.

- Recreational—Golf, Cinemas, Parks, Swimming Pool
- Services—Banks, Medical
- Commercial—Restaurants, Shopping, Video Stores, Arcades
- Civic—Schools, Churches, Parks, Library, City Buildings
- Residential—Houses, Apartments, Retirement Communities, Hotels/Motels

Identified Benefits

- | | |
|------|---|
| S | 1. Increased safety for those currently biking, running, walking, pushing strollers (etc.) along our sidewalk-less and shoulder-less roads. |
| Q, S | 2. Transportation routes for wheelchairs where none existed before. |
| S, T | 3. Safe routes for children to parks, schools and other places they frequent. |
| Q, S | 4. Parents can send kids on trails with confidence (no traffic permits). |

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- Q, T 5. Parents can encourage children's self-reliance (in getting themselves where they want to go).
- C 6. Increased sense of community—of something that is "ours" to share.
- C 7. Increased sense of community among frequent users as community members get to know each other.
- S 8. Increased sense of community promotes increased safety—watching out for one another.
- E, H, T 9. Every person that chooses to walk (or wheel) to a destination avoids one car trip—decreased traffic; decreased pollutants.
- H, Q 10. Studies show that people will use trails once they exist—increased activity brings health benefits community-wide.
- S 11. Crime goes down when trails go through—increased activity and surveillance deter negative activity.
- Q, T 12. Employees who live in Noblesville can more readily choose to walk or bike to work—even if only occasionally.
- Q, T 13. Employees, whether they live in Noblesville or not, can choose to walk to lunch locations.
- S, \$ 14. Hotel guests in our city can safely walk to nearby restaurants and shops.
- S, \$ 15. Many hotel guests look for safe and convenient running routes while in town on business—more likely to use that hotel next time.
- T, \$ 16. Business guests in our hotels may find that they can walk each day to the facility they are in town to visit.
- \$ 17. We will draw trail users from nearby communities that do not have such systems – they will spend money while they are here in our restaurants and shops.
- Q, \$ 18. Nationwide, there is evidence that nearby trails raise property values—for trail adjacent properties; but also for the community at large, which becomes a more desirable place.
- E, Q 19. Areas set aside for trails through greenways preserve that greenspace permanently creating a more livable community.
- E 20. Greenspaces preserve animal habitats, plant habitats and wetlands, all contributing to a healthy ecosystem.

Identified Benefits Key

- C = Community
E = Environmental
H = Health
Q = Quality of Life
R = Recreation
S = Safety
T = Transportation
\$ = Business & Tourism

Identified Uses

Foot

- Walking
Running

Wheeled

- Wheelchairs
Baby strollers
Bicycling
Skating
Scooters
Skateboards

Complete Streets

Complete streets serve everyone – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers – and they take into account the needs of people with disabilities, older people, and children. The complete streets movement seeks to change the way transportation agencies and communities approach every street project and ensure safety, convenience, and accessibility for all.

The complete streets movement initially arose within the bicycle advocacy community as a response to the absence of space for bicyclists and pedestrians along too many roads. But a sidewalk without curb ramps is useless to someone who uses a wheelchair (and is difficult to use for parents with strollers and travelers with suitcases). An awkwardly placed bus stop that does not provide a safe and convenient way to cross the street

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can endanger transit riders. A true complete streets policy does not simply call for the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities but rather inspires a careful consideration of the needs of all travelers.

At the heart of the complete streets movement are important political, policy, and procedural changes. The following explores what communities across the country have learned when implementing their complete streets visions.



Policy Components

The National Complete Streets Coalition has identified 10 elements that should appear in a comprehensive complete streets policy document. A good complete streets policy:

- Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
- Specifies that “all users” include pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as automobile drivers and transit-vehicle operators.
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
- Is adoptable by all relevant agencies to cover all roads.
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right-of-way.
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design standards while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Directs that complete streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
- Includes specific next steps for implementing the policy.

Handling Costs

Paying for transportation projects is always a challenge, regardless of jurisdiction or project design. Most often, successful implementation of complete streets policies is achieved by integrating multimodal facilities into general project design. This folds the costs for these facilities into the costs for the overall project.

Principles of Complete Streets

Two principles are critical to achieving the primary goal of complete streets: reducing street width and managing vehicle speeds. These two principles work together to improve the roadway for all users.

Reducing street width

Wide roads make it more difficult to provide for the needs of the walkers, bicyclists, and transit users traveling along the road, crossing the street, or navigating complex intersections. They consume much of the right-of-way, leaving less space for these modes, and make crossing the street more difficult. Reducing the width or number of travel lanes ("road diets") has safety and operational benefits for drivers, too, and should be one of the first options considered when balancing the needs of all travelers.

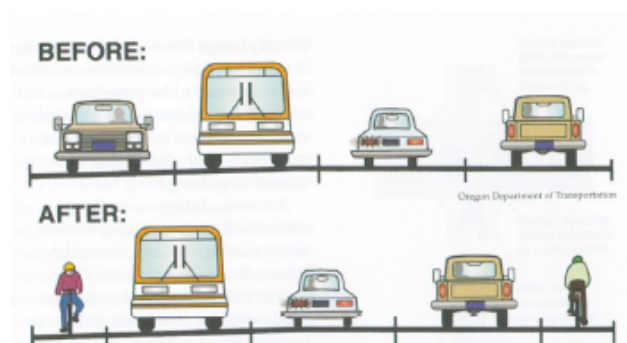
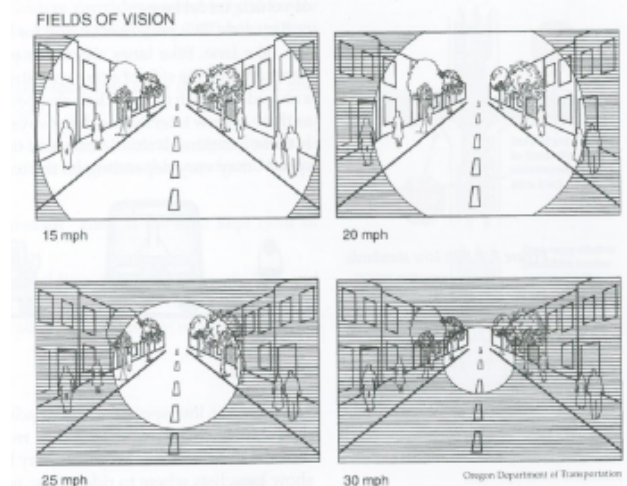


Figure 7.6. This road diet shows four lanes reduced to two lanes, a center turn lane, and two bike lanes.

Vehicle speed management

Speed management is an overarching concern for complete streets design. Lower traffic speeds make roads safer in two ways: Drivers are more able to avoid a crash, and in the case of a crash the resulting injuries are less serious. Slower vehicle speeds make the street safer and more pleasant for non-motorized users.

Another advantage of lower speeds is that most design manuals require higher design standards for high-speed roadways, which are incompatible with pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit use. A lower design speed allows designs that are more favorable to non-motorized users. This creates a virtuous cycle because the design features that are allowed at lower speeds actually encourage lower operating speeds. Virtually all of the elements of good complete streets design help slow traffic; narrow travel lanes, medians and pedestrian islands, on-street parking, sidewalks, and street trees.





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Green Streets

This term commonly refers to streets designed to minimize environmental impacts through reducing impervious surfaces. Most of the time, the goals for green streets and complete streets are mutually compatible, and features such as planting strips can promote the needs of both. Other features, such as bioswales and pervious surfaces, can work well on a complete street if pedestrian and bicyclist access and safety are carefully considered. However, eliminating bikeways or walkways to reduce the overall width of impervious surfaces is contrary to complete streets goals. Reducing the width of the motor vehicle way is a better approach.

Lessons Learned

- 1) Complete streets policies are valuable tools in changing transportation priorities, establishing a new ideal for street function, and communicating with the public.
- 2) Complete streets policies are most often one part of a broader move to change transportation and land-use planning.
- 3) The policy development process should include a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that all needs are addressed.
- 4) Linking achievement of complete streets to funding eligibility helps institutionalize complete streets practices.
- 5) Successful policies affect the practices of all the entities responsible for road building in the jurisdiction.
- 6) Policies work best when they exist across all governmental levels.
- 7) Successful implementation reaches beyond the initial policy document to include changes to zoning codes, plans, standards, manuals, and procedures.
- 8) Advocates inside the agency can make or break policy implementation, especially during early stages.
- 9) Successful implementation at the local level is often marked by empowering planners and engineers to approach each project creatively, continually collecting data, and evaluating progress to confirm success.
- 10) Early consideration of the needs of all road users helps avoid potential implementation problems, saves money, and encourages a paradigm shift in thinking about street design.
- 11) Using every opportunity to improve multimodal accommodation speeds creation of a complete network and saves money.
- 12) The first projects are often the hardest.

(Reference: *Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices*, Barbara McCann and Suzanne Rynne, Editors; American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report # 559)



Additional Studies Having Influence to this Study

There were several previous studies that were referenced as a resource throughout the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015* planning process.

Noblesville Recreation Impact Fee Study – Update

Noblesville Parks and Recreation Facilities Infrastructure Improvement Plan 2014 (RIF) was referred in this study as it relates to standards and requirements for the Community Level of Service of recreation infrastructure. The RIF established that Multi-use / Nature Pathways show a current surplus of 11.82 miles, while there will be a deficiency in 2023 of 12.29 miles. These deficiencies are based on the established community level of service of 1 mile for every 775 persons.

Noblesville Parks and Recreation Five-Year Master Plan Update 2014-2019

The Park Department's Five Year Master Plan was also used as a resource in this planning study. The identified goals of the Five Year Master Plan were considered as a foundation to this pathways study, such as the goal to “*Expand Trails System (connecting neighborhoods with key destinations)*”.

Planning Approach for the Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015

Lehman & Lehman, Inc. (Mishawaka, IN) served as the Consultant for the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015*. The approach of the Consultant was as follows:

1. Form a Planning Team – This was made up of various members of City Departments, including the Park Department, Streets Department & City of Noblesville Planning Department, as well as Hamilton County Park Agencies (HAMPA).
2. Prepare a base map of the study area – Utilizing the existing CAD information provided by the City, a base map indicating streets, key landmarks, etc. was created.
3. Delineate an initial routing layout looking at destination points, priorities, “coat-tail” projects, etc. – This work was prepared by the Consultant and then shared with the Stakeholders.
4. Meeting with the Planning Group – the Consultant provided an orientation overview, defined goals and values to incorporate into the plan, addressed known priorities, outlined the next steps and assignments, reviewed the initial routing layout plan and received additional feedback. Also, any new stakeholders that would have input for the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015* were identified.
5. Expand on the initial routing layout plan – Identify priorities, trail and greenway types, land ownerships, incorporate the City's Comprehensive Growth Plan, locate and identify proposed new subdivisions, etc.
6. Provide a written Progress Report – Document the Plan progress which included goals, values, visions, routing concepts, design of typical trail sections, priorities, etc.
7. Prepare in-progress presentations of the Conceptual *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan — 2015*. Share the conceptual design and the benefits of the plan with various service clubs, public groups, etc. to share the Greenways Vision for Noblesville and to solicit feedback and response.



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8. Meet with the various city departments (streets, utilities, etc.) to discuss impact of the proposed *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015*.
9. Master Plan Inclusion – Review and process the inclusion of the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015* with the City's Comprehensive and Thoroughfare Plans and Subdivision Standards.
10. Finalize the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015* – Document the planning process, outline the overall master plan and its phases or priorities, related construction cost estimates, identify various funding sources, etc. Provide suggested policies and operations/management structures in the greenways implementation and operations. Also, address possible organization structures of the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015*.
11. Present the Master Plan to the Park Board and other agencies (i.e. Plan Commission, Common Council, etc.)

Identified Trail Segment Criteria

Project Goals

By the end of this project the project team will:

1. Provide a recommended routes map that has taken into consideration:
 - a. Anticipated uses and development vision
 - b. Destinations
 - c. Access and easements
2. Present a concluding policy statement that includes:
 - a. A vision for the final trail system
 - b. A list of anticipated uses, destinations, and benefits
3. Recommendations for the next steps



Planning Worksessions

There were various meetings with the City during the course of this study. The meetings included a review of the goals and values of the study as well as an open discussion regarding the routes of the system, documented current inadequacies and problems, surveyed goals for the trails system and designed a master plan to meet the goals.

Several assignments to complete for each meeting were given. Some of the assignments included on-site assessment activities. Activities included the following actions:

1. Identify key destination points in the community that should be connected with a greenway route.
2. Study areas of the community that carried concerns of safety, security, poor visibility, high maintenance, neighborhood acceptance, etc.



3. Develop thoughts regarding how best to communicate the applications of the Greenway System to the community.

Other planning ideas and concerns that this Master Plan addressed included the following:

1. The plan should address the connections of the existing sidewalks ... connecting the open segments.
2. Parks, schools, and churches may all serve as parking and trail heads for the greenway system.
3. Bikes should be used on streets or expanded pathways and not on existing sidewalks.
4. The minimum width of the sidewalk/pathway should be 8-10 feet when following existing streets.
5. The plan should develop design standards for the various trail/pathway/greenway types.
6. Trails in remote areas may want to provide a width to accommodate emergency vehicle access.
7. As the Master Plan evolves involve existing homeowners associations for input.

In identifying the routings of the greenway master plan and their priority for implementation the City identified several values to be considered as criteria (the list may be refined and added to in the master planning process):

1. Maximum length of the trail segment
2. Minimum expense in trail development
3. The practicality of the trail segment (whom it will serve)
4. Connections of the trail segments to community destinations
5. Safety factors of the trail segment (i.e. visibility of the trails)
6. Minimum stops or hesitations of the trail segment
7. The availability of water and other trail amenities
8. The circuit routes of the trail segment
9. The diversity of the trail segment
10. Ownership of the land (i.e. is there need to acquire, easements, etc.)

"To make a greenway is to make a community."

—Charles Little, Author,
Greenways for America

Position Statement

Cities nationwide are realizing the benefits of establishing trail systems. They are taking action and seeing the positive results. The Indy Greenways and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail are local examples.

Trail systems serve many purposes, including recreation, which may take the form of exercise, or simply the enjoyment of an evening stroll. Trail systems, if properly designed, also provide a network of paths that connect desirable destinations. They enable a mode of transportation to the places people want to go. Imagine a city in which one is not forced by dangerous conditions





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to drive to a destination only three blocks away. Imagine a city in which children, seniors, and non-drivers can walk safely to a park, a grocery store or a video store.

Such a network should include multi-use trails, footpaths, bike lanes and exiting and/or improved sidewalks. It is equally important that it include well-identified “connectors” that enable users to depart for a destination with the confidence that the trail system is contiguous. Finally, the network should ultimately include walkable connections between residential areas that are otherwise isolated from one another.

Priority Strategies

The implementation of a greenway system as large and complex as the *Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan – 2015* cannot be accomplished immediately. The system will take years to build, giving full consideration to the way each segment is designed, surveying the miles and securing adequate funding. As this Action Plan was formulated, segments of the overall system will need to be prioritized into four distinct phases.

Prioritization of Segments suggested to be of prime importance for implementation was identified based on a set of criteria suggested to seek out the best applied loop segments of the overall system. This information is based on the following criteria:

- Connections of links to destination points
- Number of persons served by link
- Costs and funding sources for link
- Link’s potential for multi-users
- Link’s relation with other projects (“coat tails”)
- Partnerships: public and/or private
- Link’s proximity to identified loop or existing link
- Community / Neighborhood need requests
- Property availability
- Follows the overall alternative transportation plan
- How link applies to standards and pending impact fee strategies

Funding Resources

The following is a partial list of possible funding opportunities and resources for the City of Noblesville to further explore. It includes Local, State, and Federal Funding, Grant Programs, Foundations, and Corporate Sponsorship.

Local Funding Sources and Resources

1. Mayor and City Council—May supply direct funding and local matching for funds for state and federal grants. May adopt regulatory measures for setbacks, open space requirements, and trail easements. May provide political support.
2. City Departments—Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Traffic/Streets, Utilities, Planning, and Engineering Departments. May coordinate the planning, land acquisition, implementation, and maintenance efforts among individual departments, which will lessen the financial burden of trail development on one department. Includes alternative transportation efforts in each department.



3. Private Developers—With the inclusion of the trail/pathway standards housing developers will be required to meet such standards as part of their development's Recreation Impact Fee.
4. Tourism Agency—May provide funds or services for promotion and publishing information regarding trails, routes, destinations, etc.
5. School Districts—Funding for land for use as outdoor classrooms/labs and greenways.
6. Special Interest Groups—May collaborate funding with organizations with compatible interests.
7. Recreation Impact Fees—Alternative funding mechanism for infrastructure improvements in fast growing areas

State Funding Sources and Resources

(Taken from *Hoosiers on the Move, The Indiana State Trails, Greenways and Bikeways Plan*, July 2006)

Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) administers multiple programs on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that relate directly to trail/greenway development. Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (**SAFETEA-LU**) is the current highway bill in which these programs are funded. All projects funded through this federal money must be programmed in the State's **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** and those in urbanized areas must also be in their respective Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) TIP.

Transportation Enhancement (TE): Is a provision of the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) that requires states to set aside 10 percent of their share of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for projects that enhance the existing transportation system. States have the flexibility to design a program to best suit their needs within the limits of the law. This program was continued and somewhat expanded under TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century) and under the current transportation bill. This program is an 80/20% matching fund. There are 12 eligible categories within TE that relate to surface transportation and 4 of those relate specifically to bicycle/pedestrian activities. Those categories are:

1. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
2. Pedestrian and bicycle safety and education
3. Preservation of abandoned railroad corridors
4. Historic transportation building, structures, and facilities (places historic bridges on bike/ped systems).

Indiana's TE program funds transportation projects that expand beyond the traditional accommodations for cars, trucks, buses and transit. This fund is Indiana's largest funding source for trails/greenways projects. TE funding is a cost reimbursement program and not a grant. The sponsor must pay at least 20 percent of a project's cost to show commitment by the local group or community. Applicants may receive reimbursement for eligible costs as work is completed. TE strengthens the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal transportation system.

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ): an 80/20 federal funding program is only available in urbanized areas (areas exceeding population of 50,000) designated by the US EPA as NOT meeting current air quality standards for various pollutants. Six areas in Indiana currently qualify. Key considerations for projects funded with this source are improving air quality and being able to document that positive impact. The MPOs evaluate all sorts of projects that help air quality. As a result transit projects, ride-sharing projects,



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certain signal upgrade projects, ozone alert projects, etc., provide competition for limited funds. Candidate projects are annually submitted to and evaluated by INDOT in a statewide application process.

Safe Routes to School (SR2S): A new federal funding source that was created specifically to encourage and improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to and from school. There are limitations on the use of these funds. They target only elementary and middle schools (K-8), not high schools. Improvements need to be located within two miles of the intended schools. Schools can be public or private.

There is no match requirement for these funds. There should be a demonstrable positive effect on the numbers of children biking or walking to school. Most of the available funds (70% - 90%) would be directed toward construction projects, while a smaller amount (10% - 30%) is required to be directed toward education, encouragement and enforcement efforts (non-construction projects). These projects can have secondary beneficiaries, such as area residents, employees or adults walking and biking in the vicinity of the school, but the primary targets are schoolchildren. Secondary impacts on school children are insufficient to justify a project.

Transit Enhancement Funds: This is a general category of funds administered by the Federal Transit Administration; it is not a specific program. Transit funds in general improve or promote better access to public transportation (e.g. bus or rail). Near transit stops or along corridors used frequently by transit vehicles there may be opportunities to improve transit use that would, at the same time, make it easier or safer to walk or bike. For example, sidewalk improvements near transit stops will improve access for transit users but also enable people who are not catching the bus to walk more safely. Transit funds can be used to purchase bike racks for buses or to install bicycle racks and bike lockers at transit centers. The objective is to make it more convenient to use transit and that remains the primary purpose of transit funds. Pedestrians and bicyclists would be secondary beneficiaries.

National Scenic Byway (NBS): this discretionary grant program makes federal funding available for 8 project types that directly benefit designated byways. Among eligible uses are projects that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and access along the byways and to important byway-related resources in the corridor. The 80/20 federal funds in this program are required to contribute directly to the byway and the experience of byway travelers and not simply in an incidental way. Indiana has two nationally designated byways and one state-designated byway. These funds are not available outside the byway corridors. Once a year NSB applications are submitted to the state DOT, thoroughly reviewed and forwarded to FHWA for consideration under a national merit-based program. Walkways, curb ramps, crosswalk treatments, bicycle racks, trail facilities, and rest stops that are readily available and intended for by-way travelers are examples of improvements benefiting cyclists and pedestrians.

Indiana Recreational Trails Program (RTP): This 80/20 matching program is intended to develop and maintain non-motorized and motorized recreational trails. Originally called the National Recreation Trails Trust Fund Program, this money comes from federal motor fuel excise taxes paid by users of motorized off-highway vehicles. In Indiana, this fund is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. By legislation, at least thirty percent of the funds are to be used for non-motorized trails, and at least thirty percent of the funds are to be used for motorized trails. The remaining forty percent is discretionary for diversified trail uses and education.

To date, RTP has provided more than \$4.9 million for trail projects including Indiana's first publicly owned motorized vehicle riding area, Redbird State Riding Area. Since its inception in 1995, RTP has put over 100 miles of trail on the ground, helping to create safer, more livable communities through the development of walking, hiking, equestrian, mountain bicycling, bicycling, off-road motorized, and water trails.





Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): This is a 50/50 matching program administered by the IDNR through the National Park Service, Department of Interior. The program is for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas. Trails are one priority of this program in Indiana.

Indiana Heritage Trust (IHT): This state land acquisition program was established to preserve land and among the priorities is greenways acquisition. Matching requirements vary with the program. Funds come from the sale of the environmental license plate and sometimes from legislative appropriations.

Federal Funding Sources and Resources

1. Department of the Interior
 - a. National Park Service—Funds are currently available for land acquisition and trail development through the “Land & Water Conservation Fund” and “Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.”
 - b. U.S. Fish and Wildlife—Funds are currently available for wildlife habitat conservation along greenways.
 - c. Bureau of Land Management—Funds are available for forest restoration, wildlife habitat studies, riparian habitat restoration and other programs benefiting public land.
2. Department of Transportation—Funds for bicycle and pedestrian trails are currently available through the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21) including “Recreational Trails Program,” “Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways” and “Scenic Byways Program”.
3. Environmental Protection Agency—Funding is currently available for planning, public information, and wetland projects related to greenways.
4. Department of Defense—U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have funds available for recreation and conservation projects in conjunction with flood control improvements.
5. Department of Housing and Urban Development—Community Development Block Grants are funds available to projects that benefit low and moderate-income people.
6. Department of Commerce
 - a. Economic Development Administration—Supports projects that promote long-term economic development and private sector job creation especially in areas in severe economic distress.
 - b. Small Business Administration—Funds are currently available for tree planting programs.
7. Federal Emergency Management Agency—Funds available through local flood insurance programs.
8. Department of Energy—Funds are currently available to assist communities cleanup contaminated sites.
9. National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities—Funds are currently available for including art along trails and greenways.

Grant Programs

1. **American Greenways Kodak Awards Program**—Grants of \$500 to \$2,500 are currently available through The Conservation Fund to local greenways projects including planning, design, or development. Contact American Greenways Program at The Conservation Fund, 1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120, Arlington, VA, 22209



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2. **Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI)**—Seed grants of \$200 to \$2,000 are available to state and local conservation groups for river protection projects. Contact National Rivers Coalition, American Rivers, Inc., 801 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington DC, 20013.
3. **The Global Relief Heritage Forest Program**, American Forestry Association—Grants are available (unspecified amount) for tree planting on public lands. Contact American Forestry Association, P.O. Box 2000, Washington DC, 20013
4. **The Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts**—Grants are also available (unspecified amount) to promote excellence in urban design, historic preservation, planning, architecture, and landscape architecture. Contact National Endowment for the Arts, Room 625, Nancy Hawks Center, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington DC, 20506

Foundations

National, regional and local foundations may be able to fund trail development. The National Foundation Center (www.fdncenter.org) maintains a database of foundations.

Corporate Sponsorship

Corporate donations have been used to build boardwalks, interpretive signage, trail furniture, and provide funds for annual awards programs.

Organizations and Resources

The following is a partial listing of alternative transportation and greenways organizations that may provide valuable policy, planning, design, and technical information to the City of Noblesville.

Alternative Transportation

1. **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)**. A national organization representing highway transportation departments, published “Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities” in 1999. Contact AASHTO, 444 North Capital St., NW, Washington, DC 20001 or www.aashto.org
2. **National Bicycle Greenway**. A national organization dedicated to creating and maintaining a coast-to-coast network of multi-use transportation and recreational bicycle trails. Public education information available. Contact www.bikeroute.com
3. **Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals**. A national organization dedicated to promoting better conditions for bicycling and walking. Contact www.apbp.org
4. **National Center for Bicycling & Walking**. A national organization promoting the increased safe use of bicycles and walking in transportation planning. Contact National Center for Bicycling & Walking, 1506 21st St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036 or www.bikewalk.org
5. **League of American Bicyclists**. A national organization devoted to increased bicycle use for commuting and recreation. Contact League of American Bicyclists, 1612 K St., NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20006 or www.bikeleague.org
6. **Surface Transportation Policy Project**. A national organization lobbying for alternative transportation and instrumental in passage of ISTEA. Contact Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1100 17th St., NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20036 or www.transact.org



7. **Transportation Access Project.** A national organization dedicated to integrating alternative transportation into communities. Contact Transportation Access Project, 503 W. 4th Ave., Olympia, WA 98501.
8. **Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center.** A national organization dedicated to providing sound policy, design, and research information regarding alternative transportation. Contact www.bicyclinginfo.org

Greenways

1. **The American Greenways Program.** A national organization dedicated to establishing a network of public and private open space corridors. Information and technical assistance is available on all aspects of greenways planning and development. Contact The Conservation Fund, 1800 N. Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209 or www.conservationfund.org
2. **American Farmland Trust.** A national organization charged with protecting agricultural land. Technical information is available regarding land preservation strategies. Contact American Farmland Trust, 1920 N. St., NW, Suite 400, Washington DC 20036 or www.farmland.org
3. **American Hiking Society.** A national organization dedicated to protecting the interests of hikers and preserving footpaths and the natural environment. Information about volunteer recruitment, trail building and maintenance is available. Contact The American Hiking Society, 1422 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 or www.americanhiking.org
4. **American Rivers.** A national organization leading the charge of preserving the nation's outstanding rivers and their landscape. Contact American Rivers, 1025 Vermont Avenue, Suite #720, Washington, DC 20005 or www.amrivers.org
5. **Land Trust Alliance.** A national organization of land trusts. Expertise in establishing land trusts is available. Contact Land Trust Alliance, 1319 F St., NW, Suite 501, Washington DC 20004 or www.lta.org
6. **National Wildlife Federation.** A national organization dedicated to the protection of wildlife, wild places, and the environment. Sponsors a program called The Community Wildlife Habitat Program/Wild City Initiative. www.nwf.org
7. **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.** A national organization dedicated to assist local governments and nonprofits convert abandoned railroad right-of-ways into public recreational trails. Contact Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1100 17th St., NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20036 or www.railstotrails.org
8. **Scenic America.** A national organization devoted to preserving America's scenic beauty. Information and technical assistance is available to assist identifying, designating, and protecting scenic roads in urban and rural settings. Contact Scenic America, 801 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20003 or www.scenic.org
9. **Trust for Public Land.** A national organization formed to help public agencies acquire land of significant recreation, cultural, and ecological value. Contact Trust for Public Land, 116 New Montgomery St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 or www.tpl.org
10. **Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse.** A national organization dedicated to promoting greenway development. Technical assistance and information is available. Contact Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, 1100 17th St., NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20036, or www.trailsandgreenways.org



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