

8. *Education & Marketing*

The education and marketing is critical for the establishment of a successful non-motorized environment in the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area. This section outlines recommendations and strategies on how the area can develop a program for public outreach and education for the non-motorized system.

Topics:

- 8.1 – Existing Promotional and Marketing Activities
- 8.2 – Opportunities and Assets
- 8.3 – Public Outreach and Educational Strategies
- 8.4 – Methods of Evaluation
- 8.5 – Outreach and Education Recommendations

Imagine walking into a new sandwich shop. In front of you is a menu 6 feet high and 8 feet wide filled with an overwhelming array of sandwich choices. Many of the sandwiches listed have ingredients you've never tried before. So you decide to go with what you know: a ham and cheese sandwich on white bread. The next day you walk into the shop and order the same thing. And again the day after that. Even though some of the other sandwiches might be cheaper, or better for you, you are hesitant to break out of your routine.

Many people experience their transportation choices in the same way. They think "I could walk to the grocery store or bike downtown, but will it be safe? Will I get dirty? Will I look silly?" So many people stick to what they know and lose out on the great benefits non-motorized transportation can offer. So how do we get people to break out of their routine and encourage them to try non-motorized transportation? A public education and marketing program can provide the encouragement many people need to move them from considering using non-motorized transportation to actually using it.

The following recommendations outline the strategies the community can use to develop a public education and marketing program for the non-motorized system. It is important that the recommendations outlined in this section are done in tandem with the infrastructure changes so that what is being sold by the outreach program is truly a good product. If people are told that a particular bike route is safe and then have a fearful experience when they try it out, the result will be counterproductive.

8.1 Existing Promotional and Marketing Activities

The following is a list of activities that are already being done to promote non-motorized transportation in the area.

Safe Routes to School (<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org>)

Fancher Elementary is enrolled in the Safe Route to School Program and has participated in the International Walk to School Day in the past.

League of Michigan Bicyclists (www.lmb.org)

The League of Michigan Bicyclists provides advocacy, events, and resources for cycling in Michigan. Their website contains information on bike rides, Smart Commute events throughout the state, and ways to get involved in advocacy efforts around cycling. LMB has regional representatives for each part of the state. Barbara Schmid is the current representative for the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area.

Michigan Mountain Biking Association (www.mmba.org)

The MMBA provides advocacy, events, programs and resources for mountain biking in Michigan. Their website contains information on trail guides, news, upcoming events, and ways to get involved in advocacy efforts around mountain biking. MMBA has regional representatives for each part of the state.

Michigan Trails & Greenways Alliance www.michigantrails.org/

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance fosters and facilitates the creation of an interconnected statewide system of trails and greenways for environmental/cultural preservation purposes, and includes an extensive database of Michigan's trails.



8.2 Opportunities and Assets

When developing a public outreach and education program for the non-motorized plan, it is important to survey the opportunities and assets for promoting and encouraging non-motorized transportation.

Partnerships

There are many opportunities for the community to partner with other groups to promote non-motorized transportation and collaborate on programming educational opportunities and events.

Police Department: The mission of the Mt. Pleasant Police Department is to establish partnerships with the community to identify and resolve problems, to implement new ideas and concepts, and to maintain a safe environment for all. There may be opportunities to partner with the department to help educate the community about non-motorized transportation through events and programs.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS): It is a national program funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration devoted to identifying the best routes for children to walk to school based on safe facilities and street crossings. The local community should be a key partner in any SRTS Programs. SRTS teams typically include a local law enforcement official or officer and a representative from the local road authority. These officials provide the technical expertise to help the team implement some of the programs and physical improvements.

Many of the proposed improvements in this plan may be helpful and could be considered as part of a SRTS program as they would provide access to schools. For more information on SRTS please visit their website at, www.saferoutesinfo.org.



Local Hospitals: Collaborating with medical centers may be a powerful partner in programs and events that promote healthy, active lifestyles, reduce traffic-related crashes, and reduce the incidences and severity of injuries through traffic safety campaigns and classes, such as youth and adult cycling education.

The Merchant Community: Merchant developments and downtown business districts are generally developed with the pedestrian and bicycling environment in mind. Merchants may be enthusiastic participants in programs and events that encourage residents to bike and walk to their businesses.

Corporations: Effective company wellness programs send cost savings in health insurance and lost productivity straight to a company's bottom line. There may be opportunities to engage companies from an employee wellness perspective as partners in bicycling and walking programs and events. Corporations can also apply for Bicycle Friendly Business awards as well, from the League of American Bicyclists.

Community Groups: Local groups such as Neighborhood Associations, civic groups, environmental groups and volunteer associations, may be interested in promoting a higher quality of life for the Greater Mt. Pleasant area residents. These groups may represent a good avenue for promoting non-motorized transportation and creating a movement around walking and biking as a way of life.

ICTC Shuttle: The shuttle is already an alternative form of transportation that supports and generates pedestrian activity. This group may provide advertising and marketing opportunities as well as incorporating bike racks on the bus.

Student Groups: Groups such as fraternities and sororities might represent good places to promote non-motorized transportation. It might be useful to coordinate with the new cycling course PED 169A at Central Michigan University that teaches and promotes bike safety.

Mt. Pleasant Bike Cooperative: The Mt. Pleasant Bike Cooperative is a grassroots organization that aims to unite and educate the local community on cycling. It aims to accomplish this by ultimately finding a location with the necessary tools to fix bikes. They provide a free service to the local cycling community that is economical, environmentally friendly and empowering to everyone involved. They would be a helpful resources that is local to the area and already supports a bicycle use.

Local Bike Shops: Local bike shops are usually the most knowledgeable about the local bicycling environment and culture. Not only will they provide a resource, but they may be enthusiastic participants in programs and events that encourage more bicycling in the area.

Communications

Media Sources: There are a number of local media sources that may be friendly to promoting non-motorized transportation. The Morning Sun is the area's local daily paper and the Central Michigan Life is CMU's daily paper. Also, inquire with Local T.V. and Radio Stations.

Social networks: Downtown Mt. Pleasant has a robust social networking presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Events

Major Community Events: The Greater Mt. Pleasant Area hosts many events that could be opportunities for promoting biking and walking and providing traffic safety education.

Live Well Weekend/R.A.T. Race Info: The Live Well Weekend is sponsored by Central Michigan Community Health and promotes health and wellness in central Michigan. It features the R.A.T. Race which is the largest annual race in Mt. Pleasant and is for individuals of all ages and abilities.

Le Tour De Mount Pleasant: This annual event occurs during the Mt. Pleasant Summer Festival and includes exhibitors that promote health and wellness, bicycle safety, great food, artwork, contests, competitive bicycle races, a family fun ride and opportunities to meet professional cyclists, book signings and more. There may be opportunities to coordinate and provide bicycle and walking safety information during this event.



Resources

For Public Services, Planning, Police and Parks and Recreation Staff involved in the planning, design and implementation of non-motorized transportation, there are a number of on-line resources and standards texts that are exceptionally helpful.

FHWA Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/univcourse/instrtoc.htm

The following is the outline of the online course.

Lesson 1: The Need for Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Lesson 2: Bicycling and Walking in the United States Today

Planning Section

Lesson 3: Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Overview

Lesson 4: Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Types

Lesson 5: Adapting Suburban Communities for Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel

Lesson 6: Neo-Traditional Neighborhood Design

Lesson 7: Using Land-Use Regulations to Encourage Non-Motorized Travel

Lesson 8: Tort Liability and Risk Management

Lesson 9: Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections to Transit

Lesson 10: Off-Road Trails

Lesson 11: Traffic Calming

Lesson 12: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in Work Zones

Pedestrian Facility Design

Lesson 13: Walkways, Sidewalks and Public Spaces

Lesson 14: Pedestrian Signing and Pavement Markings

Lesson 15: Pedestrian Accommodations at Intersections

Lesson 16: Mid-Block Crossings

Lesson 17: Pedestrians with Disabilities

Bicycle Facility Design

Lesson 18: Shared Roadways

Lesson 19: Bike Lanes

Lesson 20: Restriping Existing Roads with Bike Lanes

Lesson 21: Bicycle Facility Maintenance

Lesson 22: Bicycle Parking and Storage

Lesson 23: European Approaches to Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design

Lesson 24: Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)

<http://www.apbp.org>

This organization is the only organization that focuses specifically on bicycle and pedestrian issues. Some of the benefits of membership include a newsletter with the latest resources and studies, members only list serve (best source for peer review) and in-depth training seminars.

League of Michigan Bicyclists

www.lmb.org

This organization promotes bicycling and the safety of bicyclists in Michigan. Their website includes news, events, resources and educational information regarding bicycling in Michigan.

Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Biannual Conference

www.bikewalk.org

Organized by the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, this conference is a large gathering of bicycle and pedestrian advocates and professionals from around the US and Canada. It is an excellent way to learn a great deal in a short period of time. There are presentations and workshops on the latest issues and technologies and networking with others involved in non-motorized facilities.

ITE Transportation Planning Handbook, Chapter 16 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Chapter 16 is a good introduction to the bicycle and pedestrian planning and design issues.

AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities

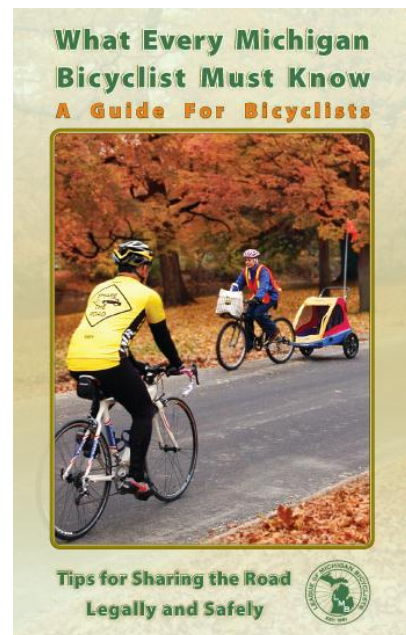
Incorporated by reference into AASHTO's A policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Most public and private funding sources require projects to be in compliance with this guide.

AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities

Incorporated by reference into AASHTO's A policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Most public and private funding sources require projects to be in compliance with this guide.

What Every Michigan Bicyclist Must Know – A Guide for Bicyclists

Created through a partnership between the League of Michigan Bicyclists, the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, MDOT and the Michigan Department of Community Health, this brief pocket size booklet is an excellent resource for anyone riding a bicycle in Michigan. This document can be found on the League of Michigan Bicyclists website at www.lmb.org.



8.3 Public Outreach and Educational Strategies

A non-motorized transportation system isn't of much use if people do not use the system. Too often there is a reliance on a "build it and they will come" approach. This ignores the fact that the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area and many other communities have been designed around automobile use for the last 50 years. Thus, many residents will not naturally feel comfortable using a non-motorized system and will benefit from some encouragement.

The great thing about public outreach and education is that it can start immediately, before the community lays one more mile of sidewalk or completes another trail connection. Fortunately, the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area has enough infrastructure and the programs, partners, and community pride to begin adding to the numbers of residents willing to try biking and walking right now. Efforts now will prime the area for success as it begins the hard, tedious work of improving its infrastructure for non-motorized transportation.

Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign

A Regional Fitness and Safety Campaign should be developed in the county to help support active and healthy lifestyles and promote non-motorized transportation in the region.

Establish a Bicycling and Walking Task Force to help shape and direct the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign

If the outreach and education program is going to be successful, its development, direction and oversight needs to include key stakeholders, including interested residents. Forming a Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign Task Force that engages stakeholders helps provide buy-in from important groups as they are involved in the process of creating this program. They'll also be important channels for promoting efforts and programs to their constituencies, enabling the program to tap a much larger pool of potential volunteers, resources, energy and enthusiasm.

The primary responsibility of the Task Force will be to establish the needs of the community for non-motorized transportation education, information, promotion and events, and to provide the expertise, partnerships, resources and coordination to fulfill them.



This plan recommends that the Task Force have members from the City of Mt. Pleasant, Union Township, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Central Michigan University, Isabella County and other key stakeholder groups in the community. Suggested stakeholders for this Advisory Board include the following:

- Staff member from the different municipalities that represent parks and recreation
- Staff members from the different municipalities that represents transportation, public relations
- A representative of the Chamber of Commerce
- A representative from the Police Department
- A representative from the County Road Commission
- A representative from the business community
- A representative from the Hospital
- A representative from Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance
- A representative from the Isabella County Transit Commission
- A representative from Central Michigan University student body
- Up to three residents interested in bicycling and walking
- Representative of the Public Schools, potentially working on Safe Routes to School issues

The Task Force will also help to establish relationships among groups that are effected by non-motorized and sustainable transportation issues, highlight programs and services that should not be duplicated and generally contribute to a program that is more likely to meet the needs of the community.

This Task Force should meet on a monthly basis to provide input on the direction of the program and help find ways to partner with the program once it is created.

Define a brand

The first step for creating a public outreach and education program is both literally and figuratively creating the program's image. What does someone "see" when they think about this program? If a person can't figure out what the program is or what it does, it's going to be very hard for the program to share its message with the intended audiences. A branded program gives the region a tool for promoting, communicating and creating buy-in for its facilities and initiatives.

Most public outreach and education programs form an identify through creating a name for the program, determining the mission for the program, creating program goals, identifying what it is the program does, and finally what it looks like (logo, website, ect.). This image doesn't have to be anything fancy, but it does have to distinguish the program as something unique and worth paying attention to. Once a brand is developed it can be marketed. The brand should be incorporated into events, bike maps, signage, tourist information and websites. Together these elements help to build a brand that can be marketed to help support and promote the messages that are developed by the regional fitness & safety campaign.

Targeting the Message

Though a partnership between the different stakeholders, create a regional campaign that presents a simple focused message to all roadway users. Have a key safety message and a key health message that stresses only a few focused points to the public.

The safety message should be “Understand and Respect All Roadway Users.” The message should be a two-way conversation between non-motorized users and motorists. The message should not be condescending or accusing but be rather be structured to foster a better understanding of the perspective of other users. Another key aspect is that bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists should be seen as people, not modes. The message should highlight that all of the users of the roadway should be treated as your neighbors, friends, family and guests. The following are three points to focus on:

- Bikes are Vehicles – Bicyclists on the roadways need to operate the same as motor vehicles and motorists should accord bicyclists the same the same rights they would for other motorists.
- Using Crosswalks – Pedestrians should use crosswalks when available and motorists should be acutely aware of the potential for pedestrians at crosswalks and yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- See and be Seen – Bicyclists and pedestrians should be encouraged to wear bright and reflective clothing and use lights at night and motorists should be encouraged to keep an eye out for pedestrians especially at dusk and at night.

The key health message could be “Active Transportation Improves Quality of Life.” The message should stress the individual benefits gained from walking and bicycling. It should avoid being condescending, overloading people with statistics and setting unrealistic expectations. Rather it should be encouraging people to simply integrate walking and/or bicycling into everyday activities such as a trip to school, the store or to see a friend. The following are three points to focus on:

- Improved Fitness Level – How improving your physical fitness does not necessarily require joining a gym.
- Mental Well Being – How physical activity has a positive impact on a person’s mood.
- Air Quality – How driving less improves the air that you breathe.



Programs that Promote the Message of the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign

Establish a web presence for the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign

The branded program should have a website. The page should offer a calendar of biking and walking-related events in the area, information available through the program, an explanation of the Task Force and meeting minutes, and updates regarding grant awards and efforts to improve the built environment. The page should be complimented by links to follow the non-motorized transportation plan on Facebook and Twitter.

It's important that the social networking feeds, Facebook and Twitter, post not just the communities progress towards bicycling and walking improvements but ANY information about walking or biking in the County or neighboring communities, including mountain biking events and races. The Facebook page should be open to all notes, commentary and encouragement regarding the current cycling and walking experience, good and bad. Build upon existing walking and cycling groups to create a movement around sustainable transportation. Both Facebook and Twitter can build community but only if communication is two-way and open.

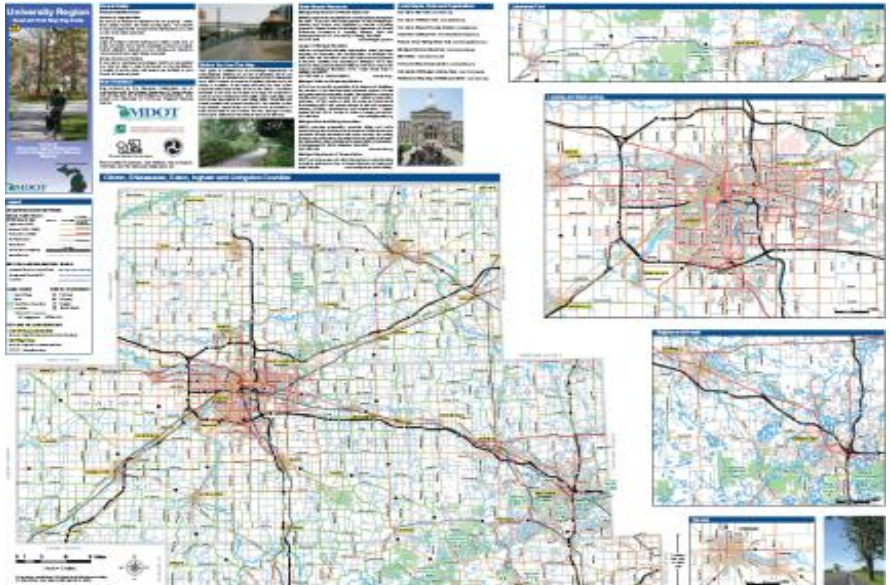
A great strategy would be to make two or more of the Task Force members administrators for these pages, allowing posts to reflect a variety of opinions and perspectives about walking and biking. The goal is to start and grow a conversation around the shared vision of a walking and biking-friendly community. The payoff is community buy-in, a rich source of viewpoints, a ready company of potential volunteers, and a qualified audience for programming and events.

Produce Walking and Bicycle Maps

A map does more than simply provide wayfinding information. It defines an area as accommodating and welcoming to bicyclists and pedestrians and encourages exploration. A map produced by a region's tourism partners can also be an effective marketing tool for local merchants and businesses by offering advertising and sponsorship space, which can offset the cost of production and printing.

A bike map of the county and the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area should be produced. The map should provide recommended bicycle routes, with emphasis on connectivity using existing infrastructure for all residents to destinations (including trails, other routes and surrounding communities). It is recommended to include loops, such as 15 mile, 30 mile and 60 miles be identified to encourage local cycling trips starting and returning to the same major destination. Other information such as identifying gravel roads and rolling terrain may be valuable on a county map.

Fig 7.3A Example Bicycle Map



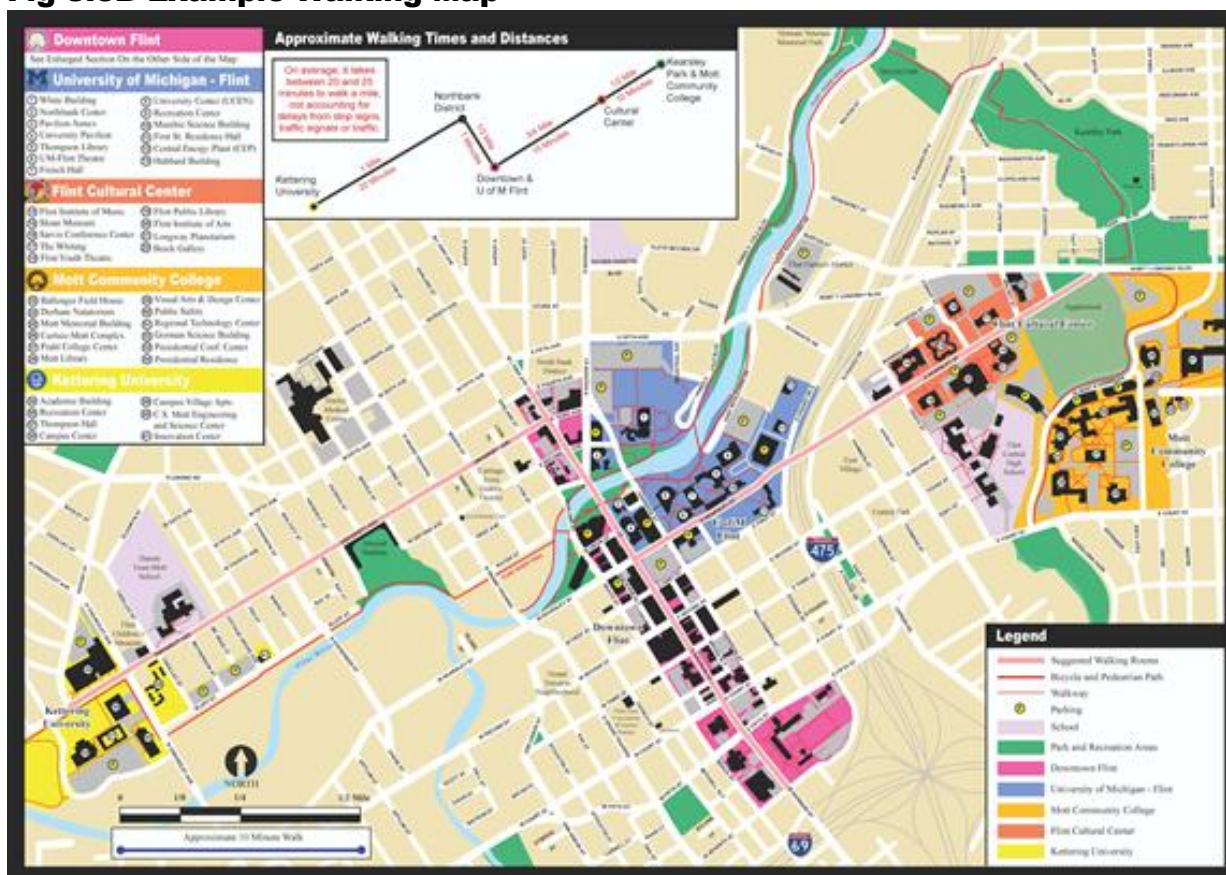
The best bicycling maps include the entire street network as a base, and rank on-street routes by color corresponding with the necessary traffic tolerance a cyclist would need to feel comfortable using them. A great map also includes basic traffic cycling safety and trails etiquette information, including equipment choice, helmet information, locking information, and how drivers should pass cyclists on the street.

A walking map should be developed for the downtown area and it should highlight the different amenities and resources in the area. The noted destinations may include both publicly owned structures such as museums and libraries as well as private enterprises that are open to the public. The map may also include suggested walking routes, local walking events and safety information.

The maps should be stand-alone documents distributed to every household to generate excitement and awareness about walking and bicycling in the community. The goal should be to distribute the map for free. Map production and print costs can be offset by selling advertising. The map can be paired with other publications already targeting residents' mailbox for efficiency and coverage as well. The map should also be located at welcome centers, local gas stations and businesses and at the proposed Active Transportation Hub locations for further distribution.

Michigan is home to several large, active bicycle organizations that can become outstanding distribution centers for the maps as well. National organizations, such as Adventure Cycling and the International Mountain Bicycling Association, may be willing and natural outlets for the maps as well.

Fig 8.3B Example Walking Map



Implement Active Transportation Hubs

Developing Infrastructure that Supports Bicycle Touring

Developing infrastructure that supports bicycle touring is important to encourage and extend bicycling trips in the region. Amenities that support cycling, such as bike parking, ready access to repairs and supplies, bathrooms, water fountains and food providers, make bicycling an easier and less stressful choice, which encourages more bicycle travel and more visits by bicycle travelers.

Part of this initiative should be to spread bicyclists' common needs beyond the bike shop. Bicycle repair stations could be located in areas with high bicycle traffic such as near campus, in major parks and in the downtown. Local merchants, especially in rural areas where there are no bike shops, should also be encouraged to stock a range of inner tube and tire choices, bicycle lube, and tire patch kits and pumps. As an incentive the business could be identified on the county's bike map. For example, the tire company Continental has converted used cigarette vending machines all over Germany instead to vend the company's line of inner tubes and patch kits, and now offers purpose-built vending machine to bike shops. Vending machines provide 24/7/365 service. Either existing bike shops or other businesses throughout the county could be invited to install the machines at their locations.

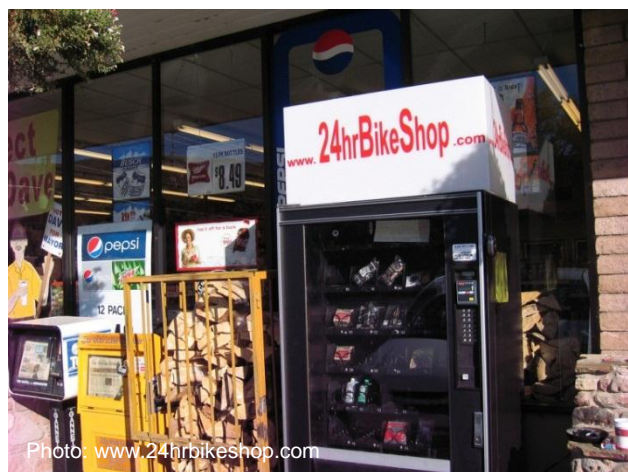
There may be opportunities to partner with Mid Michigan Community College to build bicycle parking racks. Mid Michigan offers a certificate program in Welding Technology. This may open opportunities to supply the region with bicycle parking racks for much less cost. Racks could be stamped with the school's website or some other message to return value to the school.



A free bike maintenance station in Cambridge, Massachusetts includes tire gauges, air pump and basic hand tools such as screwdrivers, wrenches and tire levers. Each station cost the city about \$1,000.



A "bike box" from www.24hrBikeShop.com is stocked with supplies such as tubes, patch kits, CO2 cartridges, energy supplements, etc. They offer retailers a readymade kit.



A vending machine for bike supplies in Moab, Utah.

Active Transportation Hub

Active Transportation Hubs serve as orientation and resource centers for non-motorized trips. The goal of the active transportation hubs is to provide new ways for people to experience the non-motorized opportunities in the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area. If done well and in a systematic way, the area can build up its reputation as a close to home recreation destination. This will benefit the residents of the communities not only from an economic standpoint, but also by helping to make walking and bicycling a natural choice for many of their daily trips.

Active Transportation Hubs include the following amenities:

- Downtown Information Kiosk
 - county bike map
 - list of downtown attractions
 - bulletin board that lists resources and events
 - general tourist information
- Compressed Air or heavy duty fixed hand pump
- Vending Machine that dispenses basic bicycle supplies such as tubes and repair kits.
- Bike Parking
- Bench
- Trash Receptacle
- Lighting

Fig. 8.3C. Active Transportation Hub Example



Active Transportation Hubs should be located in the downtown area, Central Michigan University Campus, Tribal Lands, Parks and Trailheads.

Commuter Challenge Program

A Commuter Challenge Programs is a competition between local business and employees to see who can get the most employees to try a green commute (walking ,biking, busing, carpooling, ect.). The program leverages this activity to expand awareness of bicycling and other non-motorized connections to the work place and to generate excitement among the corporate community around the health and well-being benefits of cycling or walking to work. This event generally occurs in May with National Bike to Work Month. Please visit League of American Bicyclist website at, www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth to learn more about promoting National Bike to Work Month.



Key tasks are event promotion and providing a registration and tracking process, which can be as simple as a basic web-based form. Companies, organizations, and other job centers appoint a Commuter Challenge Team Leader who signs up co-workers to try biking or walking to work at least once during Bike to Work Month. The Team Leader also becomes the liaison to the program's organizers and a distribution point for safety information and encouragement items such as maps and fitness gear. During Bike to Work month, employees track the days they tried walking or biking to work, and report them to the program organizer. When the week is over, the program organizers tally the counts and award prizes and acknowledgement to winners in each category as well as an overall winner.

University Orientation

Students represent a key target audience for the non-motorized outreach program. Beginning freshman year students should be educated and encourage to take advantage of the non-motorized transportation options in the community. The Regional Fitness & Safety council should develop an information package for students that include; maps, educational and safety information, bicycle maintenance, local bike shop information and how to register their bikes on campus. Orientation would be the ideal time to distribute these materials to students.

Programs for K-12 Schools

The Regional Fitness & Safety Taskforce should partner with local schools to provide consistent programming. The following paragraphs give examples of the types of programs that the Regional Fitness & Safety Taskforce should encourage the local schools to undertake.

Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. A bicycle train is a group of children riding their bikes to school with one or more adults supervising. Both programs work similar to a regular bus with a timetable and regularly rotated schedule of trained supervisors or volunteers.

Now that a "No Bus Zone" has been established in the City of Mt. Pleasant, a walking school bus or bicycle train would provide an alternative mode to safely get children to school.

For more information on how to organize a walking school bus and/or bicycle train please visit, www.walkingschoolbus.org.

Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum

The Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to teach and encourage pedestrian safety for students grades Kindergarten through 5th

Grade. It is organized into five lessons, walking near traffic, crossing streets, crossing intersections, parking lot safety, and school bus safety. Each lesson builds upon the previous set of skills learned.

Lesson Plans, Assessment Guides, Student Response Forms and a Teacher's Guide are all available on the NHTSA website. For more information on how to develop a Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum please visit the Nation Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at, www.nhtsa.gov/ChildPedestrianSafetyCurriculum.

Cycling Skills Clinic

A Cycling Skills Clinic is a program that provides bicycle safety information and includes on-bike training. Also known as "bicycle rodeos," these programs are designed to be a fun educational activity for children of varying levels of bicycle riding experience. They are generally, held for children at schools or at other community events.

The Cycling Skills Clinic was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to provide a step-by-step approach to planning and initiating a bicycle safety skills event, including instructors and resources for setting up a course and conducting it to meet the needs of all the children participating.

It is recommended that the Regional Fitness & Safety Task Force develop a program for a Cycling Skills Clinic that can be held at the different schools throughout the county.

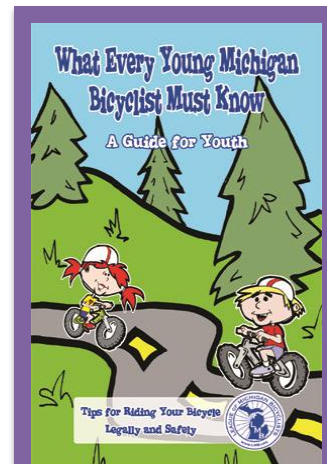
For more information on how to hold a Cycling Skills Clinic please visit the Nation Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at, www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/CyclingSkillsClinic.

Third Grade Bicycle Academy

Begin normalizing the broad-based delivery of safe cycling education to children and their parents in a fun, engaging way by making the completion of a safe cycling course at the end of the third grade as a prerequisite for the privilege of cycling to school.

This program could be tied into the Cycling Skills Clinic. The elementary school district could adopt a school travel policy that limits cycling to school to fourth grade and above, and establish a week-long, end-of-the-year "bicycle academy" integrated into the third grade physical education. During the event, children learn cycling skill basics, basic bicycle safety check, helmet fit, and appropriate traffic cycling skills such as how to safely cross roads, driveway dangers and negotiating sidewalks. Children completing the academy would receive a free helmet and certificate permitting them to bicycle to school in fourth grade.

This program would require that children have a bicycle to use during the program. Not all children wishing to participate will have their own bike to use. A small fleet may quickly be established for the program by repurposing unclaimed bicycles recovered by the police department. The Mt. Pleasant Bike Cooperative may be a good resource to help supply and repurpose bikes as well.



Another resource for educating children is the League of Michigan Bicyclists "What Every Young Michigan Bicyclist Must Know, A Guide for Youth." The guide was created to help young bicyclists understand how to ride their bicycles legally and safely in Michigan. The guide can be downloaded from the League of Michigan Bicyclists website at www.lmb.org.

Reaching Motorists

It can be difficult to reach Motorists with your message, especially if motorist do not live in the area or are just passing through town. The following examples are provided as ways to promote educational and safety information to motorists.

Gas Pump Campaign

Motorists are always on the move so it can be difficult to find ways to get your message to them. However, filling up at the gas station may present an opportunity to get their undivided attention. It is recommended that the Task Force coordinate with the local Gas Stations to provide educational and safety information at gas pumps.

Advertise on Buses

Work with the Isabella County Transportation Commission to provide educational and safety adds inside and outside of the bus. Recently, the City of Ann Arbor passed a new law regarding right-of-way of pedestrians approaching a crosswalk. In cooperation with the transit system they were able to put adds on the back of the bus to inform motorists of the new law.



Targeted Promotion

The most cost effective and best way to communicate to an audience is to target the message specifically to them. An effective public outreach and education campaign recognizes that different audiences have different needs. Residents, for example, are going to need different information and have different needs for non-motorized transportation than commuters. The same goes for students versus youth versus seniors. While there are a myriad of audiences for any public outreach and education campaign, it would be completely overwhelming to try to reach all of them. So an education and outreach campaign should start by identifying the key groups to focus the program on to begin with. Once the key audiences are identified, there are many techniques to try and figure out what messages might work for those audiences. These techniques include focus groups made up of the audience, surveys of the audience and interviews with key stakeholders.

The following are example of five different target groups and the specific message for that group that the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign may want to focus on.

- Children – Physical Fitness
- Residents – Healthy Lifestyles
- Seniors – Physical Activity
- University Students – Save Money
- Business Community – Keeping the Work Force Healthy

Public Service Adds

A public service announcement can be a cost-effective and powerful way to send your message. Although public service announcements were no longer mandated by law to air them for free, many new ones are still being produced and aired today.

The Task Force should contact the local television and radio stations and speak with the public affairs director to find out what guidelines and format are required for a submission. Some TV and radio stations may also offer these details on their website.

New Events

While paper ads, Facebook pages and other communication techniques are important to a public outreach and education campaign, there is nothing like an event to get people engaged and excited about using sustainable transportation. In effect, the communications component of a public outreach and education campaign is a way to prime the individual to take action, and the action taking can actually happen at the event.

Events that generally work best for promoting the use of sustainable transportation are events that are time sensitive, low risk, high fun and offer some incentive. In addition, these events are often targeted at a certain audience, such as employees or students, etc. Many people don't necessarily have time to come to an event, so it's best to create an event that will come to the people, or create an event with a strong online component. The following examples describe events that the Regional Fitness & Safety Task Force may want to consider.

Bike & Dine:

A Bike & Dine is simply a progressive dinner by bicycle event. The Task Force identifies 3 to 5 Restaurants in the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area to visit by bicycle and asks each restaurant to offer one course of a meal to all participants. Following a pre-selected route, with police escort if desired, participants ride to each establishment, enjoy the restaurant's offerings and continue on to the next. Bike & Dines typically are limited to less than 35 participants and involve a fee to cover the restaurant costs. If well publicized, a small event like this can generate interest and excitement community wide with modest resources. Also a bicycle tour of the establishments can garner media attention to the local business and raise the profile of cycling as a way to encourage and enjoy local patronage.

Large Scale Ride:

Generate regional excitement and notoriety for the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area as a healthy community that encourages cycling and walking by hosting a large scale ride event. Establish a closed-course route within the community, preferably a route that includes a major thoroughfare for a unique and family-friendly celebration of active living and recreation.

Many of the residents and visitors to the Greater Mt. Pleasant Area have only experienced travel around the community from inside a car, whose speed and seclusion blunt and condense observations and interaction with the true character of its streets and neighborhoods. On a bike, residents and visitors will have a richer experience that often times seems wonderfully unfamiliar as participants literally see, hear and feel more of their community along the routes many of them have only ever driven. For many, it will begin to change their perspective of the quality of their community and the potential for active living.

A large scale ride will engage the entire Task Force, a crew of Ambassadors, and a team of volunteers. The Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign should also invite a partner expert in large scale ride production and management to join the force, such as the organizers of Tour De Troit or

the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance. Involving these organizations also invites their partnership in event promotion to their constituencies.

The event should charge a registration fee. Most of the costs will be for personnel, including police control of any intersections with open streets, and they are substantial. Still, the City can expect to raise funding that can be used as matching dollars for federal walking and biking grants, as education and outreach funding, or to fund the bicycling and walking coordinator position. These program options for the funding should be a key message of the events' promotion.

Promote mixed-surface riding in the Region

Mixed surface riding taps the growing appeal of back road bicycle touring and cyclists' natural inclination toward exploration and personal challenge. In addition to off-road mountain bikes and cyclocross bikes, which blend road racing and off-road racing features, bicycle manufacturers are also beginning to sell bicycles specifically for mixed-surface touring to satisfy a growing market.

The region should promote the mixed-surface bicycle touring experience in the area. Isabella County's generally flat landscape encourages experienced cyclists to set personal bests in distance and speed, and invites all levels of cyclists to ride. The region's rural characteristics of unique small towns, acres of pasture land with farm houses and rolling landscape are natural draws for cyclists. With a little marketing and some significant efforts, such as a signature ride, the area could become a great location for mixed-surface riding.



8.4 Methods of Evaluation

Complete application for Bike Friendly Community Award with community and partner input

The League of American Bicyclists promotes communities throughout the country with its Bike Friendly Community Award. The process of applying for the award is a great way to determine what is being done in the community as well as where improvements might need to be made. The community can be engaged in the process of applying for the award through public meetings. In addition, if a city or village receives a Bike Friendly Community Award, this becomes a great promotional tool not only for the program but for the community as a whole. Currently, Ann Arbor (Silver Award), Traverse City (Bronze Award), Grand Rapids (Bronze Award), Houghton (Bronze Award), Lansing (Bronze Award), Marquette (Bronze Award), and Portage (Bronze Award) are the other cities in Michigan with Bike Friendly Community designations.

Complete application for the Promoting Active Communities Award with community and partner input

The Promoting Active Communities Award is a Michigan-Based award for communities that show a strong commitment to supporting physical activity. Just like the Bike Friendly Community Award, this award is a great way to engage the community in non-motorized transportation issues as well as a good promotional tool, should a community receive a designation.

Central Michigan University should complete application for the Bicycle Friendly University Award

The Bicycle Friendly University program recognizes institution of higher education for promoting and providing a more bicycle friendly campus for students, staff and visitors. The Bicycle Friendly University program provides the road map and technical assistance to create great campuses for cycling. Currently, Michigan State University received a Bronze Medal in 2011.

Encourage local businesses to complete application for the Bicycle Friendly Business Award

The Bicycle Friendly Business award, put on by the League of American Bicyclists, recognizes employers' efforts to encourage a more bicycle friendly atmosphere for employees and customers. The program honors innovative bike friendly efforts and provides technical assistance and information to help companies and organizations become even better for bicyclists.

Recommended data collection and performance evaluation criteria

A bicycle and Pedestrian Count should be conducted as part of the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project to document the uses and demand of non-motorized facilities in the cities and villages. The National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project is a nationwide effort to provide a consistent model of data collection and ongoing data for use by planners, governments, and bicycle and pedestrian professionals. The counts should be done on a yearly bases, with consistent locations used each year. Please visit, www.bikepeddocumentation.org for more information on conducting a bicycle and pedestrian count and on ways the local communities can participate in national count.

In addition to counting the number of users, the miles of built facilities should also be documented on a yearly bases to track the development of the non-motorized network. The miles of bike lanes, pathways, sidewalks, neighborhood connectors/bike routes, number of mid-block crossing improvements and number of bike parking spaces should be tracked. It is important to keep up-to-date documentation of these facilities because these measurements are used to apply for awards, such as the Bike Friendly Community Award.

8.5 Outreach and Education Recommendations

This section breaks out a Year One and a Year Two for outreach and encouragement to help the Regional Fitness & Safety Task Force set a direction and build momentum towards a sustainable, rich and varied outreach and education program.

Year One: Establish the Program

In the first year expect to do the following:

- The city administration should determine the home of the city's biking and walking outreach and education program. The Parks and Recreation Department may be a natural location should additional resources be provided
- Establish a Bicycling and Walking Task Force to help shape, produce and guide the outreach and education efforts.
- Establish a brand for the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign
- Create a Facebook and Twitter presence for the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign
- Establish partnerships with experienced bicycling and walking organizations such as Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance and League of Michigan Bicyclists
- Apply for grants to fund a part-time coordinator for the Regional Fitness & Safety Campaign and related tools and materials like website development, printed materials, and events promotion
- Begin tying active transportation messages and information into existing events
- Measure the miles of existing non-motorized facilities in the city
- Participate in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project

Year Two: Build a culture of biking and walking

Year one recommendations provide a structure and process for establishing outreach and education objectives, helps the community identify partners and supporters in the community, and begins a dialogue with the community about biking and walking. Year two recommendations leverage these efforts to begin initiatives in Education, Enforcement, and Encouragement that can grow biking and walking modeshare and consideration for other transportation system users going forward.

In year two, expect to do the following:

- Produce a community bicycle map and walking map
- Host Commuter Challenge
- Produce a larger bicycling event
- Survey residents' attitudes towards biking and walking efforts
- Measure the miles of non-motorized facilities in the city
- Participate in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project

- Apply for the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community, Bike Friendly University Award, and Bicycle Friendly Business Award and the state's Promoting Active Communities award

Year Three and Beyond: Strengthen the Walking and Biking Community

In year three, expect to do the following:

- Update and distribute community bicycle map and walking map yearly
- Host Commuter Challenge on a yearly basis
- Survey residents' attitudes towards biking and walking efforts yearly
- Install Active Transportation Hubs and update information on a seasonal basis
- Measure the miles of non-motorized facilities in the city yearly
- Participate in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project yearly
- Apply for the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community, Bike Friendly University Award, and Bicycle Friendly Business Award and the state's Promoting Active Communities award yearly