

2013 CITY OF MARIETTA

MAYOR'S ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (M.A.T.A.C.)

Re-endorsement of **ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2011**

We, the 2013/2014 members of the Mayor's Alternate Transportation Committee, by resolution of majority vote, hereby re-endorse the Alternate Transportation Plan 2011, which was drafted and adopted by the standing M.A.T.A.C. committee of 2011.



Andy Coleman

Chairman

Mayor's Alternate Transportation Committee

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# **Alternate Transportation Plan 2010**

***A Plan For Alternate Transportation Enhancements  
For Marietta, Ohio And Surrounding Communities***

**This plan was prepared by volunteer members of the  
Mayor's Alternate Transportation Advisory Committee (M.A.T.A.C.)**

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## **Introduction**

In recognition of the need for alternate transportation opportunities in Marietta and surrounding communities and in support of community interest to create such opportunities, Michael Mullen, Mayor of Marietta, formed the Mayor's Alternate Transportation Advisory Committee (M.A.T.A.C.).

The M.A.T.A.C. mission is as follows:

1. Provide advice on long term comprehensive planning for multi-use paths within the city of Marietta and connections to outlying communities.
2. Evaluate the road routes currently in use by bicyclists, runners and other human powered transportation activities and recommend ways to improve access and safety related to the use of these routes.
3. Comprehensive planning will consider the location of parks, schools, and businesses as well as other areas of interest such as museums and recreational facilities. This will provide for optimum opportunities for commuting as well as recreation, with the potential of reducing pollution and traffic congestion while improving the quality of life and wellness opportunities in our community.
4. Evaluate local transportation projects to ensure that due consideration has been given for multi-use paths, bike lanes, bike railings, signage, etc.

## **Purpose and Intent of this Plan**

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for the implementation of interconnected bicycle and pedestrian networks for transportation in Marietta and surrounding communities. It is a fundamental principle and expectation of this Plan that all transportation projects will be planned, designed and constructed under the

assumption that they will be used by pedestrians and bicyclists except where specifically prohibited such as on limited access highways.

The intent of this plan is to consider the potential for greenways and trails, to evaluate the routes currently in use by bicyclists, runners and other human powered transportation activities, and to recommend ways to improve access and safety related to the use of these routes. The plan also considers the location of parks and major schools in the county as well as other areas of interest such as businesses and industries.

Fully connecting these areas of interest in the form of looped routes is presented as a long term goal. These routes are often already in use by serious bicyclists and runners in the community. Additional development of these routes will serve to improve the safety of a form of transportation widely in use in Washington County. As roadways along or near these routes are planned for improvement, surfacing, or other modifications, inclusion of alternate transportation opportunities should be included in the design and project development.

Planning for some routes may include "Share the Road" signage, or may require more aggressive measures to provide safe transportation routes. In some cases the routes we re chosen to improve the safety of connecting routes between two or more "safe" areas which are already widely used.

The proposal also prioritizes the plan based on our knowledge of the current use of the routes. In each case the priority is explained so that planning issues can be evaluated.

## **Benefits of Alternate Transportation Facilities**

Investing in pedestrian and bicycle facilities like sidewalks, shared use paths and on-road bicycle facilities not only assists the foot traveler and bicyclists to get from trip origin to destination but can also lead to other quality of life improvements. These

include:

**More Transportation Choices:** As conditions improve and more people are willing to walk or bike short distances to bus stops, public transit becomes a better mode choice for more people. Walking and biking can also substitute for short car trips, benefiting traffic flow and potentially reducing congestion.

**Economic Vitality:** A significant level of Washington County commerce takes place in historic downtowns and village centers. Sidewalks provide the pedestrian infrastructure that directly serves this commercial activity. Making these areas more walkable and bicycle friendly directly benefits the businesses and the local economy. The quality of the pedestrian and biking environment can also improve tourism.

**Tourism:** Trails and greenways are very popular among vacationing bicyclists and pedestrians. Visitors appreciate and often return to communities that provide places for bicycling and walking safely removed from busy roads and streets. Trails offer scenic recreation opportunities suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. Where popular trails exist, lodging providers can encourage extended stays among their guests, thereby increasing occupancy. For residents, investments in trails and greenways can increase property values and improve the overall livability of a community.

**Safe Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods are friendlier and safer if residents and visitors walk and bicycle. Their presence strengthens neighborhood bonds through frequent personal interactions and helps deter crime. More walking and biking can also reduce car trips within these neighborhoods thereby reducing the number of potential car/pedestrian and car/bicyclist conflicts.

**Cleaner Environment:** Changing the modal balance between cars and other modes - especially walking and biking - will benefit air quality by reducing vehicle emissions.

**Energy Efficiency:** Fewer motor vehicle trips means less fuel consumed and more energy conserved.

**Health:** Walking and bicycling can be keys to improving the physical fitness of many Americans. Regular walking and bicycling reduces the risks of major diseases, relieves stress and improves mental health.

**Social Equity:** Walking and bicycling expand personal mobility and choice for those who do not or can not drive - typically the young, the elderly, the disabled and those without cars. An improved pedestrian and bicycling system provides independent mobility and accessibility for more of our citizens.

### ***Greenways In Our Local Community***

As people have become educated concerning the benefits of healthy lifestyles, the demand for opportunities and facilities for healthy activities has increased. Due to increasing travel costs and decreasing leisure time, people now look closer to home for healthy recreational opportunities.

The linear park or greenway concept is a natural extension of our community park systems. Greenways allow people in a community, as well as visitors, to safely participate in activities such as walking, running, bicycling, inline skating, etc. without the repetition of a looped route inside a park. Greenways can also connect one area to another, allowing commuting as well as recreational opportunities. The success of this concept is well represented in our area by the North Bend Rail Trail (NBRT). The NBRT is a 70 mile long greenway and is part of the WV state park system, and an important section of the American Discovery Trail (ADT). The ADT is the only east coast to west coast trail in the United States. It provides a route for hikers and bicyclists to traverse the entire country and its development is further testimony of the demand for alternate transportation opportunities. The ADT crosses southern Ohio, and crosses the Ohio River at Belpre.

Greenways can also be used successfully in a transportation plan as alternative routes when there are hazards that cannot be addressed sufficiently to assure the safety of shared roadways.

In many locations greenways are not a feasible option. As more people utilize the greenways, they also look for other opportunities to practice their skills and enjoy these activities. This creates further need to include these transportation forms in roadway planning activities.

For alternate transportation planning purposes all streets, except for freeways, provide alternate transportation opportunities because people use them to get to their destinations. Laws governing activities such as pedestrians and bicyclists and their responsibilities on public roadways evidence this use. Bicycling advocates estimate that 85% of local streets are already suitable for bicycle travel. The remaining 15% are collector and arterial streets that need some special consideration to integrate bicycle and motor vehicle traffic.

Alternate transportation opportunities become an important aspect of the community, not only for current residents, but particularly for potential new residents. As businesses and industries consider our area, and as families move into Washington County, they consider the amenities the area has to offer. This includes recreation and alternate transportation as well as schools, parks, churches, etc.

Having sufficient alternate transportation opportunities enhances the area's economic development possibilities. Tourism is fast becoming one of the country's most important industries. Linear parks and other alternate transportation byways are becoming a popular destination for tourists and vacationers across the country. The development of the byways, and subsequent use by tourists, create the need for support businesses such as hotels, restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts, bike and skate rentals, and ice cream shops near the byway.



## **Types of Facilities**

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

#### **Types of Pedestrians**

Many parents and others are looking for opportunities that allow children to lead more active and independent lives, but the current transportation infrastructure has left a series of barriers and obstacles that can make independent mobility for children a challenge to achieve. Parents want their children to be safe-in and around their neighborhoods, schools and recreation areas. But most suburban neighborhoods built over the past 50 years are today overrun with fast motor vehicle traffic, and generally lack sidewalks. Now, new attention is being given to slowing motor vehicles down in neighborhoods through techniques called “traffic calming,” and programs such as “Walk a Child to School” (sponsored by the Partnership for a Walkable America) are encouraging parents and school officials to work together to make neighborhoods places that are safe for children to get around in on their own.

Age and functional disability can reduce a person’s mobility. Fortunately, good pedestrian facility design can help ensure that virtually everyone can continue to enjoy some level of mobility. As the Baby Boom generation approaches retirement age, communities across America will need to rethink how they provide transportation services and choices. Older Americans need more transportation options, not less. Driving should not be the only option. Transit and paratransit services and more walkable environments help to maintain personal mobility and access through the senior years.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law in 1990, seeks to assure that all Americans, including those with disabilities, will have full access to public facilities and services. Good accommodations for pedestrians, including disabled pedestrians-people using wheelchairs and other mobility aids, people with low vision

and the blind-is critical to meeting the requirements of ADA.

People in low-income households are nearly twice as likely to walk as people in other income groups. About a quarter of low-income households do not have a car (compared to four percent of other households) and individuals in these households must rely on walking and transit for many of their trips. For these travelers, safe and convenient walking routes, including routes to transit hubs and stops, are a critical element of the transportation system.

### **Types of Pedestrian Facilities**

Facilities which make a community more friendly to pedestrians may include:

- Traffic-calming treatments to help ensure that motor vehicles are operated at or below compatible speeds.
- Wide and continuous sidewalks that are fully accessible, that maintain a fairly level cant, and that are well maintained.
- Well-designed intersections to ensure easy, safe crossings by pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
- Well-designed and marked crosswalks, both at intersections and, where needed, at mid-block locations.
- Appropriate use of signs and signals for both pedestrians and motorists, with equitable treatment for pedestrians.
- Median islands on wider streets to provide a refuge area for crossing pedestrians.
- Street lighting designed to pedestrian scale (e.g., shorter light poles and/or lower light fixtures that are designed to be effective in illuminating the pedestrian travel way).
- Planting buffers, with landscaping and street trees that provide shelter and shade without obstructing sight distances.
- Street furnishings and public art intended to enhance the pedestrian experience, such as benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, and newspaper stands,

placed so as not to interfere with pedestrian travel.

- Trails which go where roads do not.

## **Bicycle Facilities**

### **Types of Bicyclists**

Planning for bicyclists involves providing bicycle facilities to meet the needs of bicyclists with various interests, ages and skill levels. A three-tier classification of bicycle skill levels has been developed that approaches bicyclists primarily from their ability to interact with traffic. This system is used by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in their latest Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, the de facto standard for bicycle facility planning and design in the United States. These classifications include Group A, Advanced Bicyclists; Group B, Basic Bicyclists; and Group C, Child Bicyclists.

***Group A, Advanced Bicyclists:*** Advanced Bicyclists are very experienced bicyclists comfortable riding in most all traffic conditions, requiring less separation from traffic. On lower speed, lower traffic roads they are comfortable mixing with motorized traffic. On higher volume, higher speed traffic roadways, they benefit from increased travel lane width (wide curb lanes), bicycle lanes on urban roadways or paved shoulders on rural roadways. They typically prefer riding on roads to shared use paths because they tend to be more direct. They travel at higher speeds and choose routes to minimize delays and for directness of travel.

***Group B, Basic Bicyclists:*** Basic Bicyclists are adult or teenage bicyclists that are less skilled than advanced bicyclists and less comfortable riding in traffic. They prefer roadways with lower traffic volumes and speeds and greater separation from traffic with designated on-road bicycle facilities or shared use paths.

**Group C, Child bicyclists:** Child bicyclists are the least skilled bicyclists and require bicycle facilities that provide the greatest separation from traffic. They are best accommodated on residential neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes and speeds or on shared use paths.

## **Types of Bicycle Facilities**

**Shared Use Paths:** “Shared use paths are facilities on exclusive right-of-way and with minimal cross flow by motor vehicles. Users are non-motorized and may include but are not limited to: bicyclists, in-line skaters, roller skaters, wheelchair users (both motorized and non-motorized) and pedestrians, including walkers, runners, people with baby strollers, people walking dogs, etc.” (AASHTO, 1999). These may be along, near or separate from roadways, on abandoned rail lines or adjacent to or within active rail lines. Other names used for these facilities may include bicycle path, bike path, Class I Bicycle Facility, transportation path, multi-use path, or bike trail. In this Plan, the term Shared Use Path will be used unless referring to the proper name of a facility, such as the River Trail.

**Bicycle Lane:** A bicycle lane or bike lane is a portion of the roadway designated for preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists. It includes roadway striping, pavement markings and signage to identify the presence of the facility. It should be a one-way facility except under special circumstances. Bike lanes are typically provided in an urban or village setting to provide more delineation between or channelization of vehicular and bicycle traffic. Parking should be banned in bicycle lanes.

**Paved Shoulder:** A paved shoulder is additional width contiguous to the travel lane. It is delineated by a white 6” wide stripe. Paved shoulders are typically provided on an uncurbed, rural roadway cross-section but may also be provided on an urban, curbed roadway cross-section.

**Wide Curb Lane or Wide Outside Lane:** A wide curb lane is a bicycle facility where

additional width above a standard 11'-12' travel lane is provided in the travel lane closest to the curb. It is typically an urban or suburban bicycle facility on a curbed roadway but can be a rural roadway without curbing. Bicyclists and motorists share the lane but the additional width allows motorists to pass the bicyclist without changing lanes or crossing over the center line. No special signage or striping is required. Lanes wider than 15' should not be provided as they may encourage use as two travel lanes by motorists.

**Shared Lane:** A shared lane provides no additional travel lane width for the bicyclist but can accommodate bicyclists by virtue of lower traffic volumes and speeds. Motorists and bicyclists share the travel lane. No special signage or striping is provided. Ideally, these facilities are 11' to 13' in width. Most streets and roads in Ohio are considered shared lane facilities.

**Bicycle Route:** A bicycle route is a preferred route for bicyclists that has been designated for use by signs. It may contain a combination of any or all of the above mentioned bicycle facility types.

The primary factors in selecting the type of facility that is appropriate for a roadway are:

1. Design bicyclist (Group A, B, C, or Combination)
2. Traffic volumes
3. Area type (urban, village, rural)
4. Roadway characteristics (curbed uncurbed, presence of parking)

## **Bridges**

Marietta is located at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers. Bridges are, therefore, a necessary part of transportation in and around Marietta whether one is traveling by car, bicycle, or on foot.

Bridges, almost by definition, are squeeze points: places where traffic must come together to cross an obstacle. For bicyclists, the problem with bridges is twofold: first, since bridges are often less common than are nearby roads, route options may be limited to high-volume roadways; second, since bridges are expensive to build, extra space is generally limited.

In many cases bicyclists are, therefore, funneled on to narrow high volume roads. And, while some bicyclists can handle the situation, many cannot. As a result, the presence of bridges or overpasses in key corridors can often reduce the amount of bicycling in a community.

There are two primary solutions to this problem. First, in some cases it may be possible to build a bicycle bridge, overpass, or underpass connecting low-volume roadways or segments of a trail network. This approach is particularly useful for providing new access, especially if it results in a significant short cut.

The other alternative is to modify roadway bridges to provide for bicyclists. In many cases, it is important to make such modifications whether or not there are nearby opportunities for trail bridges or other independent structures. Often, for example, a modified roadway bridge will better serve utilitarian needs like shopping and commuting to work or school. Such modifications may involve adding width to the traveled way, altering connecting ramps at the bridge ends, and making the deck more suitable for bicycle use.

In general, using both solutions in tandem—if feasible—may help better serve a wide

variety of bicyclists. Youngsters and less-experienced adult riders often feel more comfortable on a trail bridge, and skilled adults may find a well-placed structure cuts off a significant part of their journeys. On the other hand, some trips (e.g., commuting to work) are often best made on the through routes and riders of all skill levels may need to make such trips.

In some instances, it is possible to modify an existing bridge for the sole purpose of improving bicycle access. In cases where the modifications are minor, this can easily be done; some types of bridge deck modifications (e.g., adding expansion joint covers or re-striping the existing deck to create bike lanes or wide curb lanes) are relatively small-scale projects that can be easily accomplished in this fashion. And, yet, they can significantly improve conditions for bicyclists. However, if major construction is needed, the most likely approach is to include bicycle considerations when the bridge is replaced or extensively modified.

In general, decades go by between major projects at a particular bridge location. The recommended approach, therefore, is to determine the schedule for improvements and suggest appropriate bicycle accommodations for each project. The earlier in a project's history that bicycle elements are considered, the more likely they are to be implemented. With some bridge projects—for example, those under construction or in the middle of the bid process—only small modifications may be possible. However, if a bridge project is years away from completion, it is very feasible to include serious modifications to accommodate bicyclists.

Ultimately, it may be best to modify bridge design standards to include bicycle accommodations. In this way, such improvements will not be seen as exceptions but, rather, as the rule. New bridges should include wide shoulders as a matter of course. Following the recommendations of the Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (AASHTO; 1990) will result in shoulders at least 1.8 m (6 ft) wide, an adequate width for bicycle travel.

***Washington Street Bridge:***

This bridge carries State Route 7 across the Muskingum River at Washington Street. This is a high traffic two lane bridge with a narrow road bed. A complete re-decking of this bridge took place in 2009. Since widening the bridge deck was not possible, it was proposed by this committee that as a part of the re-decking project, the two narrow sidewalks on each side be combined into a single wider one on the down stream side of the bridge. This change was accomplished making the bridge safer for runners and walkers and accessible for wheel chair use. This wider sidewalk can also be utilized by cyclists with due care and when pedestrian traffic permits.

***Putnam Street Bridge:***

This bridge crosses the Muskingum River connecting historic downtown Marietta with the Harmar district on the west side. This is a high traffic four lane bridge with a wide road bed and raised wide sidewalks on each side. The sidewalks are separated from the roadway by a low concrete barrier. It has been proposed by this committee that a metal rail be added to the top of this concrete barrier. This would prevent pedestrians or the occasional cyclist from falling over this barrier and into the path of vehicular traffic.

***Proposed North Muskingum River Bridge:***

This proposed bridge will cross the Muskingum River and will serve to divert commercial traffic around the town center. Its exact location has yet to be determined. It is the hope of this committee that this bridge and related roadway improvements along Gilman Street will be planned and constructed with enough width to safely accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

***Historic Harmar Railroad Bridge:***

This former railroad bridge serves as a pedestrian link between two historic business districts with Harmar Village at its west end and historic downtown Marietta to the east. A wooden pedestrian walkway is maintained on the upstream side of the bridge.



This historic bridge is badly in need of structural repairs. There is little doubt that this will be an expensive proposition. There is equally little doubt that a rehabilitated Harmar Bridge would be an outstanding asset to the residents and businesses of Marietta. With appropriate structural repairs the rail bed could be decked and transformed into a shared use path which would directly connect with the existing River Trail which passes under the east end of the bridge. With amenities such as historic lighting, benches, and a full implementation of the proposed "Bridge of Flowers" project, the bridge could easily become a tourist attraction in and of itself.

***Williamstown Bridge:***

This bridge crosses the Ohio River connecting Marietta, Ohio with Williamstown, West Virginia. This is a high traffic two lane bridge with a wide road bed and a reasonably wide raised sidewalk on one side. Pedestrian access is provided on the Marietta side by an accessible sidewalk at Greene Street and by a stair tower at Ohio Street.

## User Groups

One of the goals of the Mayor's Alternate Transportation Advisory Committee (M.A.T.A.C.) is to promote the inclusion of safer alternate transportation in short and long term roadway planning. To achieve this goal, M.A.T.A.C. has involved local user groups to determine the primary needs for Washington County.

There are many people in our community who utilize the streets and roads for bicycling, walking, running, in-line skating and other activities. Most of these uses are recreational in nature and intent, but there are also many people who use these means as transportation, either by choice or by necessity.

There are many organized and informal bicycling activities in Washington County. From students commuting to schools and adults of all ages commuting to work, to organized bike clubs and individual riders.

***Marietta Rowing & Cycling Club*** is an active local organization whose members utilize local routes for bicycling activities and events. Members of this organization provided valuable information and review of this plan.

***Blennerhassett Bicycle Club (BBC)*** is an organization of local bicycling enthusiasts. They plan and promote rides throughout the cycling season as well as sponsoring one or two major rides or events. Members of this organization provided valuable information and review of this plan especially for the western part of Washington County.

***River Valley Mountain Bike Association (RVMB)*** is an organization of mountain biking enthusiasts. Marietta's off-road trails are constructed and maintained by the RVMB. The RVMB also builds and maintains trail in the Marietta Unit of Wayne National Forest in Ohio and Mountwood Park and North Bend State Park in West Virginia. The RVMB hosts group rides and local events such as The Wayne Ultra (June 28th) and Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day

**All Seasons Outdoor Club (ASOC)** is a large organization of outdoor enthusiasts involved in promoting a variety of activities including bicycling and bicycle touring, cross country skiing, inline skating, hiking, backpacking, canoeing and kayaking in a safe and responsible manner.

**River City Runners (RCR)** has been actively using roadways in our area since 1981 for exercise, practice and events. With about 275 members, RCR represents a large organized group of citizens who require safe opportunities to participate in their chosen activity.

Other identified groups using alternate transportation include school athletic programs, the Marietta YMCA, the Ely Chapman Education Foundation, the medical community, senior citizens groups and company wellness programs.

In addition to these specific user groups, many charitable organizations such as the American Lung Association, the American Cancer Society, and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation organize, promote and present bicycling, walking and running events as fund raising activities. These events generally utilize existing roadways and/or greenways.

Even with the availability of these organized opportunities, the majority of users are individuals who simply enjoy using alternate transportation for recreational purposes or prefer it for utilitarian travel. These include people who walk for pleasure or exercise, runners, bicyclists, in-line skaters, and cross country skiers. Many of these activities are currently routine uses of our roadways. This proposal acknowledges these uses and attempts to designate and improve existing routes to create safer opportunities.

## **Network Destinations**

The short and long term plans presented in this proposal will also enhance and

connect many areas of interest which currently exist or are under development. This "network" of proposed routes will encourage awareness of multiple use access and a safer environment for recreation and transportation activities.

In Marietta, the "River Trail", an existing shared use path, may be thought of as a backbone or arterial route for pedestrians and group B and C cyclists. This, along with connecting low traffic streets and sidewalks, form a network which connects many important destinations of interest to local residents as well as tourists.

### **Destinations Along the Existing River Trail**

#### **Fourth and Ohio Streets to Indian Acres Park**

Destinations marked with an asterisk (\*) connect to the Trail via low traffic streets.

Oho River Front Park	Downtown Historical District
Historical Ohio River Levee	Washington County Library*
Historical Lafayette Hotel	Marietta Post Office
Marietta Harbor	Armory Building
Harmar Historic District	Indian Acres Skate Park
Historic Harmar Bridge	W.P. Snyder Historic River Boat
East Muskingum Park	Sacra Via Arboretum
Campus Martius Museum*	Historic Lockmaster's House
Ohio River Museum	Downtown Retail Shops
Washington County Fairgrounds	Don Drumm Stadium*
Indian Acres Park & Boat Ramp	Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club*
Bridge to Williamstown, WV	
Marietta College*	

### **Destinations Along the Proposed South Extension to The River Trail (River Trail Phase 3) Fourth and Ohio Streets to Gunlock Park**

Destinations marked with an asterisk (\*) connect to the Trail via low traffic streets.

Marietta College Baseball Fields*	Marietta Country Club
Phillips School*	Gunlock Park
Major Retail Outlets (including Walmart & Lowes)	Harvest of Hope Community Garden
	Restaurants
Lodging (over 500 hotel rooms)	Route 7 toward Reno
Pioneer Family Golf Center	High Density Residential

### **Destinations Along the Proposed North Extension to The River Trail Indian Acres Park to Devols Dam**

Destinations marked with an asterisk (\*) connect to the Trail via low traffic streets.

Marietta Aquatic Center	Devola Soccer Fields
Marietta High School*	Devols Dam Historic Locks
Ewing School*	Lodging (47 hotel rooms)
Wasco Workshop*	Broughton Nature & Wildlife Education Area*
Devola Swimming Pool	

## **Long Term Plan**

The long term plan to enhance our roadways for alternate transportation includes several routes which are routinely used for these activities. The plan provides the routes required by users and connects many important areas of interest in the county. Some sections of the network are located on roadways which do not experience heavy traffic. Others are connecting sections where there is no alternative other than a high traffic route.

The proposed plan connects the following communities of Washington County:

Barlow	Bartlett	Belpre	Beavertown
Beverly	Churchtown	Coal Run	Cutler
Bloomfield	Dart	Decaturville	Devola
Fleming	Layman	Little Hocking	Lowell
Lower Salem	Macksburg	Marietta	Matamoras
Newport	Oak Grove	Porterfield	Reno
Veto	Vincent	Waterford	Watertown
Warner	Whipple		

This proposal is intended to give area highway planners a guideline for inclusion of alternate transportation in long term roadway plans. While we realize the primary purpose of roadways is for motorized transportation, these routes are proposed for consideration to be improved as projects are implemented and funding is available. In addition, long term improvements should include the placement of "Share the Road" signs on the low traffic routes designated in blue on the route map.

Several widely used routes in Washington County with existing paved berms need to be improved for alternate transportation with "Share the Road" signs and sweeping of berms scheduled as needed for safe travel.

The short term plan, discussed below, will present the areas we believe are the top priorities to provide safe opportunities for alternate transportation on routes with the heaviest current use in Washington County.

## **Short Term Plan**

Due to the current high usage, we present the following sections of the proposed route for short term planning. Modifications to these areas may include, but are not limited to: improved berms, widened roadways with designated lanes for alternate transportation, and/or appropriate signage.

These areas are among those designated in orange on the route map, which classifies the section as high traffic/high hazard.

- Grove Avenue, Marietta
- Gilman Avenue from Putnam Avenue to Oak Grove
- State Route 339 from State Route 7 to Beverly
- State Route 60 from Colegate Drive to Marion Street (This area could be bypassed by the River Trail extension north)
- State Route 7 North from Acme Street to County House Lane (This area will be bypassed by the River Trail Phase III extension south)

## Priorities

Although existing and future planning schedules may determine the scheduling of improvements for alternate transportation, we present the following priorities as guidelines and goals.

- **High Population/ High Traffic Areas:** These sections are a high priority due to high usage by all modes of transportation. Many sections of Routes 7 and 60, with little or no alternate travel options are included in this category. Generally, these will be designated as "orange" routes.
- **High Population/ Low Traffic Areas:** These sections remain priorities for improvement planning based on the high potential for use by many people in the communities. Routes through downtown areas and residential sections generally fall in this designation. Most of these are shown as "blue" routes.
- **Low Population/ High Traffic Areas:** These sections are slightly lower priorities based on less use by the largest numbers of users. Some are very well used, such as Route 60 north of Devola, but need minor improvements; others may be used less frequently, such as Route 7 from Reno to New Matamoras, and need significant improvements.
- **Low Population/ Low Traffic Areas:** While important pieces of the "network", improvements to these sections are generally the lowest priority. While each should be considered with appropriate roadway projects, the areas discussed above should be considered higher priorities. These are generally rural routes designated as "blue" routes. It should also be noted that because of the lower traffic, these routes are often the choice for alternate transportation users, which makes them an important part of the overall plan. Often these routes become a higher priority when surface improvements are needed.



With the principals described above in mind and with input from user groups, three levels of importance have been assigned to proposed alternate transportation facilities improvements. The tables on pages 27 and 28 depict specific improvements needed on specific routes throughout Marietta and surrounding communities of Washington County.

## **Regional Trail Considerations**

Trails, like rivers, do not respect political boundaries. For a regional trails plan to be effective it needs to provide a comprehensive review and analysis of the region-wide trail system. The intent of this document is to provide a comprehensive planning tool for making informed decisions for Washington County and the surrounding region. This plan is intended to serve as a catalyst for funding and legislative action. By identifying specific trail improvements that transcend municipal and county boundaries, the plan gives our region a distinct advantage when seeking grant funding for trail improvements.

### **Specific Long Distance Trails in The Area**

North Bend Rail Trail (NBRT):

The North Bend Rail Trail is a multi-use recreational trail operated by West Virginia State Parks. Formerly an abandoned spur of the CSX system, the trail is part of the 5,500 mile coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail. Stretching 72 miles from I-77 near Parkersburg in Wood County to Wolf Summit in Harrison County, this scenic trail passes through 13 tunnels and crosses 36 bridges.

American Discovery Trail (ADT)

The American Discovery Trail is 6,800+ miles of continuous, multi-use trail. It stretches from Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware, to Pt. Reyes National Seashore, California. It reaches across America, linking community to community in the first coast to coast, non-motorized trail

## North County Trail (NCT)

The North County Trail is comprised of 4600 miles of trail stretched across seven states from New York to North Dakota. It is the longest hiking path in the United States.

### **Specific Connection Efforts Underway**

#### Marietta to Belpre

State Route 7 is the main arterial highway connection between Marietta and Belpre. It runs along the Ohio River and is flanked along much of the way with parallel low traffic paved county and township roads. A serviceable bicycle connection can be made by utilizing a combination of the parallel low traffic secondary roads and the paved shoulder along State Route 7. The task of mapping this route has been accomplished. Short sections of off road connections are now being explored.

#### Belpre to Parkersburg

This connection is in place in the form of a wide sidewalk on the existing bridge which spans the Ohio River between downtown Belpre, Ohio and downtown Parkersburg, West Virginia. This pedestrian/bicycle connection is especially important. It not only provides a link two urban population centers but also will provide a connection between the extension of the North Bend Rail Trail in West Virginia and the extension of the HockHocking Adena Bikeway in Ohio. Efforts to expand each of the trails toward each other are now well underway.

#### Belpre to Athens

Efforts to connect the HockHocking Adena Bikeway from Athens to Belpre are ongoing. While some sections are still in the planning stages, others are well in to acquisition activities. Much of the alignment will be along abandoned railroad right of way. This connection will be largely off road and unpaved. Activities in Athens County are being spearheaded by the Athens Conservancy while those in Washington County are being handled by MATAC.

## Summary

This plan is presented as a guide and as a long term proposal to improve alternate transportation opportunities in the Washington County area. It is intended as a working document. The Mayor's Alternate Transportation Advisory Committee (M.A.T.A.C.) intends to continue to work with local government and the Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission (WWW) on related issues and needs. M.A.T.A.C. is prepared to act as a resource to assist with the collection of information required to address alternate transportation in the area.

M.A.T.A.C. will continue to solicit input from the community, user groups and tourism resources. By providing this type of data and acting as an information resource M.A.T.A.C. expects to see a natural progression toward a safer community for residents, tourists, and visitors. As our community continues to grow and prosper, opportunities for transportation and recreation improvements will arise. It is crucial that a comprehensive alternate transportation plan be in place so that these opportunities do not pass us by.

As businesses and industries evaluate our area to build, expand or invest, they also evaluate the community and the quality of life offered to their employees. Many have actively developed wellness programs to encourage healthy lifestyles and activities.

In many areas with developed trail systems and a variety of recreational activities, economic development is enhanced and escalated.

This plan presents a long term view of the area, with supporting short term goals and priorities. The intent is for regional and community planners to evaluate these proposed improvements when planning and designing roadway projects.

Equally important, the intent of the proposal is to strengthen the line of communication between highway planners and those members of the community interested in working to plan and provide alternate transportation opportunities in the region.

### **Alternate Transportation Route Types**

The full long term proposal is attached in the form of maps of Washington County and Marietta. The proposed alternate transportation routes are added according to the following color-coded designations:

**Red..... High traffic/ high hazards**

**Blue..... Low traffic / low hazards**

**Green..... Existing Shared Use Path**

**Magenta..... Proposed Shared Use Path**

**Purple..... Proposed Shared Use Path (Alternate Alignment)**