



## Chapter 5: Bicycle and Pedestrian Element

Bicycle and pedestrian travel provide both mobility and health benefits. Regions around the U.S. are discovering that the health and quality of life benefits of these “active” transportation modes warrant greater consideration and investment, regardless of their direct impact to highway congestion. Given that bicycle and pedestrian mobility are significantly affected by their consideration in highway projects, Metro Mobility 2040 looks not only at specific bicycle and pedestrian recommendations, but also the opportunities to benefit these travel modes through the choice of highway projects and the consideration of these modes in highway design. Chapter 5 discusses bicycle and pedestrian initiatives in the region and provides recommendations for future improvements.

### Current Initiatives

West Virginia and the Kanawha-Putnam region have become increasingly aware of bicycle and pedestrian needs and are developing improvements to make non-motorized transportation safer and more efficient. Some of the recent and ongoing initiatives are discussed below.



Joggers enjoy an afternoon run at Valley Park in Hurricane.



The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has been one of the main proponents for Complete Streets legislation in West Virginia

### Complete Streets

The **complete streets** concept promotes safer, more livable streets – designed with all users in mind: motorists, cyclists, walkers, wheelchairs, transit passengers, and shoppers. Several states, cities, and jurisdictions have passed legislation or adopted complete streets principles. In 2013, the West Virginia Legislature passed the Complete Streets Act, which, urges the WVDOT to consider many alternative modes of transportation when constructing future roads. In addition, the bill proposes to establish a “Complete Streets Advisory Board,” composed of members of WVDOT and citizens appointed by the Governor. Similar laws have been passed in 20 other states and 200 municipalities across the country. Virginia and Maryland, along with six regions of West Virginia, have adopted measures that include complete street-type policies. For example, Morgantown’s Complete Streets Resolution can be found at: <http://www.morgantownwv.gov/wp-content/uploads/complete-streets-resolution.pdf>.

### Kanawha Boulevard

A \$1.7 million congressional earmark, \$760,000 of which was secured by Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, was set aside for the conversion of the 105 year-old CSX rail trestle over the Kanawha River in Charleston into a multi-use facility for bicycling and walking. However, in 2012, after extensive study, the project was placed on hold (at least for the present), due to safety issues concerning the structural integrity of the bridge’s piers.



The City of Charleston has proposed twin 4-foot-wide bike lanes, stretching from Magic Island to Patrick Street on Charleston's West Side. Source: GAI Consultants Inc.

In the summer of 2013, City of Charleston officials announced that the grant would be reprioritized for a bicycle path project along Kanawha Boulevard from Magic Island to Patrick Street. The proposed path will run along the river side of the road and will be separated from eastbound traffic on Kanawha Boulevard by a concrete barrier. Construction could begin as early as spring 2014. According to the City, the project seeks to meet the following objectives:

- Encourage more walking and biking, especially among those who do not currently bike;
- Ensure safety for all users (vehicles, buses, pedestrians, bikes);
- Design for people of all ages and bicycling skill levels;
- Separate bicycles from pedestrians (for safety);
- Retain smooth traffic flow;
- Retain on-street parking where practical; and
- Improve access to the riverfront.

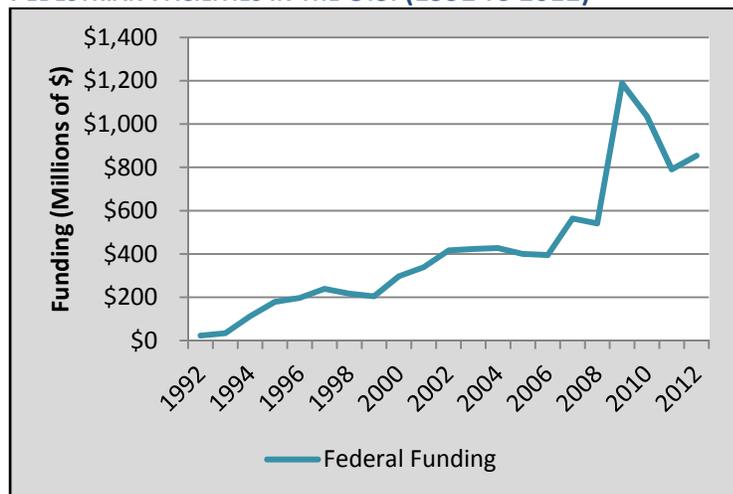
### Putnam Business Park

Walking trails and walking bridges are currently under consideration at the Putnam County Business Park in Frasiers Bottom. Local Boy Scouts recently helped install walking bridges in a wetlands area near the business park.

## Potential Funding Sources

Federal funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities has increased significantly over the last 20 years – a trend that could continue into the foreseeable future. 2009 was a banner year in which federal funding reached nearly \$1.2 billion, contributing to 3,010 national projects (Figure 29). However, the pronounced increase in 2009 and 2010 funding was, at least in part, attributable to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). ARRA helped fund five projects in the Kanawha-Putnam region, one of which (the Marlaing-St. Albans Project) facilitated the construction of bicycle lanes in St. Albans. Since the 2012 introduction of MAP-21, the total federal apportionments for bicycle and pedestrian programs in the United States have decreased from \$1.0 billion (average annual obligations, 2005-2011) to \$814 million (projected average annual obligations, 2013-2014).

**FIGURE 29: FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES IN THE U.S. (1992 TO 2012)**



Source: FHWA Fiscal Management Information System  
[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/funding/bipedfund.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/funding/bipedfund.cfm)

The federal funding program for bicycle and pedestrian projects has changed considerably since the 2012 passage of MAP-21. Specifically, MAP-21 introduced the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which has replaced or combined many pre-MAP-21 programs, notably

the Transportation Enhancement Fund (TE), the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and the Recreational Trail program. The TAP has six eligible categories for projects:

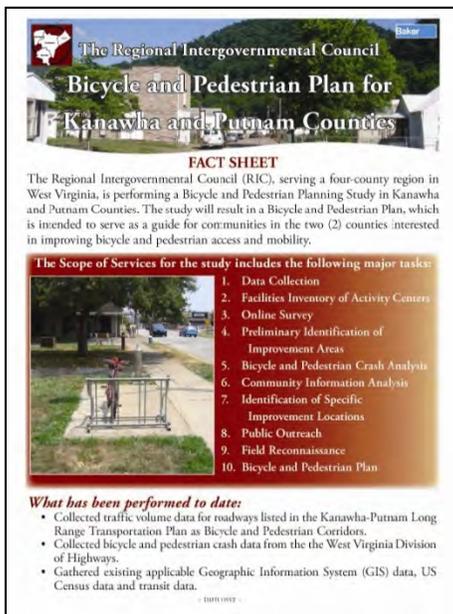
1. Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.
2. Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
5. Community improvement activities.
6. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation.

## Recommendations

While this document does not provide an exhaustive list of bicycle and pedestrian project-recommendations in the Kanawha-Putnam region, it references key studies and, where appropriate, recommends any additional improvements to help improve connectivity, accessibility, and safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the region. The prioritization process, designed to develop objective project scores, included features such as a project’s proximity to schools to give added weight to roadway projects that enhance key bike and/or pedestrian linkages. In some cases, specific recommendations for pedestrian facilities are included in the Chapter 8 (Safety), as is the case with the proposed King Street pedestrian improvements in Institute.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Studies

In 2008, the RIC completed a **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Kanawha and Putnam Counties**. The study reviewed activity centers, examined crash locations, conducted public outreach, and established recommendations pertaining to short-term improvements, education, and programming and policy. The study identified 37 locations that could benefit from the installation or enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Specific recommendations include “share the road” signs, lighting, streetscape amenities, curb ramps, intersection upgrades, sidewalks, and shared use paths. In addition, the **RIC 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan**, completed in 2009, subsequently incorporated many of the recommendations from the bicycle-



A fact sheet from the **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Kanawha and Putnam Counties**.

pedestrian plan. Together, these studies provide useful insight into the benefits and constraints (for example, right-of-way limitations) inherent in these strategies to improve the region's bicycle and pedestrian network.

The City of South Charleston recently completed a **2011 Master Plan for Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Corridors**, focusing on recreation, connectivity, and improvements along key corridors, such as Kanawha Turnpike and MacCorkle Avenue. The plan recommends locations for bike lanes, sharrows (with "share the road" signage), improved signage, sidewalk improvements, and connector trails. With respect to the latter, the study recommended a connector trail from the South Charleston Ice Rink to Little Creek Park and the golf course.

In 2012, the West Virginia Department of Transportation launched the **Statewide Bicycle Connectivity Plan**. The purpose of the study was to identify and finalize a system of designated, signed bicycle routes using the state's highway system. As of December 2012, the WVDOT had established a list of potential state designated bike routes, several of which intersect in the Charleston metropolitan area. In addition, the state's emphasis on bicycle planning has coincided with other local and regional bicycle and pedestrian studies.

### **Imagine Charleston**

**Imagine Charleston**, the city-wide comprehensive plan and downtown redevelopment plan for the City of Charleston, recommends various bicycle and pedestrian improvements for the City. The study focused on providing connections between key destinations, such as schools, parks, cultural institutions, and existing non-motorized facilities inside the city and linkages outside the city. Key recommendations include:

- Providing a more specific designation of Quarrier Street and Virginia Street as major bike routes to and from the downtown;
- Constructing a separate two-way bikeway along Kanawha Boulevard that links with a bikeway along MacCorkle Avenue to complete a bike loop around the river;
- Providing and/or improving sidewalks within  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  -mile of schools, parks, and bus stops; and
- Exploring the feasibility of utilizing the rail trestle as a non-motorized connection over the Kanawha River.



**Imagine Charleston** is the city-wide comprehensive plan and downtown redevelopment plan for the City of Charleston.



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