CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

bikewalk**okc** is organized into the following chapters:

1. **Introduction, Goals, Public Participation, Planning Context –** Discusses the motivation for the plan and the outreach to the residents of Oklahoma City for guidance in the planning effort.

2. **Bicycle and Trail Plan** – Includes descriptions of the transformative bicycle and trail projects identified through the planning process. These projects include a combination of transportation and recreation projects that seek to enhance residents' quality of life.

3. **Pedestrian Plan** – Includes pedestrian planning analysis and identifies immediate needs for pedestrian infrastructure.

4. **Implementation** – Describes the responsible parties, the funding sources, and project prioritization lists for successful implementation.

plan**okc**, the comprehensive plan for the City of Oklahoma City, calls for the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian master plan that addresses the needs of users of all skill levels. Furthermore, 14 of the 21 initiatives of connect**okc**, the transportation element of plan**okc**, are related to active transportation. Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation (e.g. walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, etc.). plan**okc** prioritizes active transportation as a form of transportation that needs considerable attention, and this plan, bikewalk**okc**, does just that.

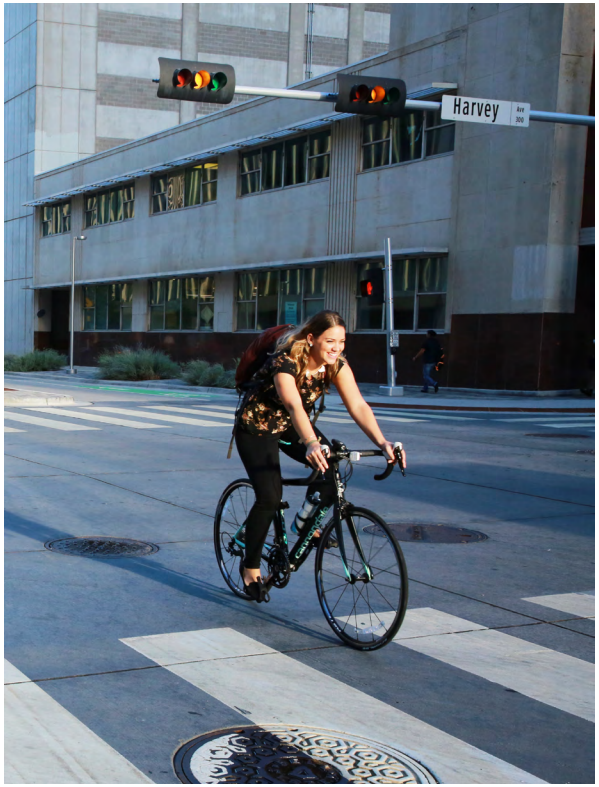
bikewalk**okc** serves as the bicycle and pedestrian master plan for Oklahoma City, and as the foundation for future active transportation development and planning efforts within Oklahoma City. The City adopted three previous plans, the 1997 Trails Master Plan, the 2008 Oklahoma City Bicycle Transportation Plan, and the 2012 MAPS 3 Sidewalk Plan, which were used in the formation of bikewalk**okc**. bikewalk**okc** now serves to replace these previous plans as the City's first comprehensive plan addressing both bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Nationally, bicycling and walking as means of transportation have been gaining momentum over the past 10 years, We have a great start in Oklahoma City with a significant number of trails, bike facilities, and sidewalks already constructed, but there is still a long way to go in developing a comprehensive, connected, and safe active transportation network. bikewalk**okc** aims to transform the transportation landscape for bicycling and walking in Oklahoma City.

The city has been built in a way that reflects people's primary dependence on the automobile for transportation, but growing interest in using active modes of transportation within Oklahoma City is reflected in the bikewalk**okc** survey (discussed later in this chapter).

To meet the public demand for world-class active transportation infrastructure, this plan proposes bicycle and pedestrian projects and policy changes, with the broader goal of improving residents' quality of life and transforming how we get around in Oklahoma City.

Above: Cyclists participate in the Full Moon Bike Ride starting at the Myriad Gardens (Photo by Nate Billings, The Oklahoman, Copyright 2013)



Our Plan

bikewalk**okc** is an implementation component of plan**okc**, which created goals with associated initiatives and policies to guide future planning and development within Oklahoma City. These goals, initiatives, and policies guided the direction of the planning team and steering committee in developing the plan. Through the public outreach, steering committee meetings, and internal staff time, a new set of bikewalk**okc** goals were generated to address specific needs in Oklahoma City.

Our Goals

1. WALKING AND CYCLING IS SAFE IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Safety for residents who walk and bicycle in our community is the highest priority goal of this plan. We reach this goal by ensuring that infrastructure exists, and that said infrastructure is sufficient to provide actual safety during interactions with automobiles, as well as perceived safety to keep residents from being discouraged from choosing an active form of transportation.

2. GREATER NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ARE WALKING AND CYCLING FOR TRANSPORTATION

While residents of downtown Oklahoma City and some of the surrounding neighborhoods presently walk and bicycle at rates comparable with large cities, it is the goal of this plan to increase these levels, not only in the most urban areas of the city, but in all areas. This requires investment in new infrastructure, as well as policy changes, educational efforts, and more.

3. NEIGHBORHOODS ARE CONNECTED TO JOBS, TRANSIT, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS, SCHOOLS, AND PARKS

Gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network can negate the portions of the network that do exist. The approach of this plan is to leverage existing facilities by filling in gaps and growing the networks so that residents can safely get to the places they need and want to get to. As gaps are filled, new areas will become accessible to a greater cross-section of Oklahoma City residents.

4. BARRIERS TO WALKING AND CYCLING ARE REMOVED

One of the most often stated reasons for not walking or cycling in Oklahoma City is the difficulty associated with crossing major barriers. Whether these are interstates, major arterials, or bodies of water, this plan focuses on ensuring that there are safe and convenient places for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

Our Initiatives

1. Increase the availability of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

The crux of this plan is a capital improvements strategy that identifies where the greatest need for pedestrian and bicycle improvements are. These improvements are prioritized to ensure the most efficient use of funding as it becomes available into the future.

2. Provide education for residents related to safe walking, cycling, and driving.

What cannot be achieved by simply building infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists can be addressed through marketing campaigns that seek to educate residents to safe driving, cycling, and walking skills. This should include training for City staff and police officers, so that the City is united in its efforts to promote safety on our streets.

3. Ensure that all new infrastructure is ADA accessible, and identify locations that require retrofitting.

Standards for pedestrian infrastructure have changed since a great deal of the sidewalks and crossings in Oklahoma City were constructed. This plan emphasizes the importance of accessible design by ensuring those infrastructural elements needed for ADA compliance (ramps, push buttons, etc.) are accounted for, and gaps are identified for improvement.

4. Empower residents to be a part of active transportation decision-making.

The residents of Oklahoma City know where they need and want to walk and bicycle already; it's the City's responsibility to identify those needs and wants and ensure that what we do addresses these desires in a meaningful and transparent manner. Including stakeholders from the community during the planning process as well as the project implementation process will ensure that residents take ownership over new infrastructure, which will in turn ensure better maintenance and better justify future projects.

bikewalk**okc Goals**

bikewalk**okc Initiatives**	1	2	3	4
1. Increase the availability of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.	■	■	■	■
2. Provide education for residents related to safe walking, cycling, and driving.	■	■		
3. Ensure that all new infrastructure meets current standards, and identify locations that require retrofitting.	■			■
4. Empower residents to be a part of active transportation decision-making.		■	■	
5. Increase bicycle and pedestrian connections from neighborhoods to the places people want and need to go.	■	■	■	■
6. Add safe crossings over interstates, major arterials, and water bodies.	■	■	■	■
7. Provide the needed investment to tip high-opportunity areas toward walkability.		■	■	
8. Identify ordinances, statutes, and other regulations that need to be updated to better facilitate a robust active transportation culture.	■			■

5. Increase bicycle and pedestrian connections from neighborhoods to the places people want to go.

Results from the bikewalk**okc** survey, input from the steering committee, and the general public all inform the planning process, ensuring that popular destinations are included. Increasing access to jobs, public transit, commercial districts, schools, and parks will result in a greater return on the City's investments in these areas.

6. Add safe crossings over interstates, major arterials, and water bodies.

Connectivity across barriers is critical to the success of an active transportation network in Oklahoma City. Presently, there are too many locations that cause potential pedestrians and cyclists to choose to drive because they do not seem to be traversable. Additionally, for those who do not own automobiles, we must ensure that the city is usable.

7. Provide the needed investment to tip high-opportunity areas toward walkability.

There are areas of the city with great opportunity to become fully walkable with relatively minimal investment in the pedestrian infrastructure. Areas with high amounts of jobs, transit ridership, schools, parks, and multi-family residential are great opportunities for improvement.

8. Identify ordinances, statutes, and other regulations that need to be updated to better facilitate a robust active transportation culture.

In order to facilitate safe walking and cycling in Oklahoma City there are regulations that need to be updated. These include definitions, ordinance amendments, and more to ensure that equal protection is given to pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers on our roads.

Benefits of an Active Community

Increasing bicycle and pedestrian friendliness can substanstially benefit a community's health, safety, economic performance, and environmental health.

HEALTH

Easy access to active transportation options has many health benefits for individuals and communities. Active transportation increases individuals' physical activity levels, reducing the risks for obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, degraded bone health, cancer, and depression.[1] Creating a citywide active transportation system will allow residents to more easily incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. Additionally, providing transportation options other than automobile travel can have profound impacts on the health of the population and the environment. For example, motor vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) is directly correlated to the proliferation of air pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter.[2] This leads to increased rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.[3]

Other concerns associated with a transportation system dominated by automobile travel include: greater risk for debilitating or fatal vehicle collisions, lower amounts of physical activity, and a greater percentage of household income used for transportation costs.[5] This illustrates the need for a transportation system that provides options that can meet the individual needs of a wide spectrum of transportation users.

SAFETY

Improving the safety and comfort of active transportation is a key component of bikewalk**okc**. Historically, Oklahoma City, along with most cities across the U.S., has constructed roadways specifically to accomodate an increasing number of automobiles. With the resurgence of active transportation, cities are reconsidering the way roadways are configured in order to accommodate all modes of transportation. By installing appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, greater separation is created and conflict points with automobile traffic are reduced. These facilities also improve the predictability of bicyclist and pedestrian behavior, which leads to better communication and coordination between modes. Communities with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, policies, programs, and enforcement are able to improve safety for all modes of transportation.

In Oklahoma City, it was reported that 1,657 pedestrians were hit by motor vehicles between 2003 and 2015. 120 of these people were killed. Ninety-four percent of these fatalities occurred on roads with speed limits above 30 miles per hour. Pedestrians are twice as likely to be fatally injured on streets without sidewalks. And while pedestrian trips make up less than 2% of total trips made in the city, nearly 15% of traffic fatalities are pedestrians.

There were 790 reported automobile/cyclists collisions between 2003 and 2015, 10 of which resulted in a fatality. Nearly two-thirds of the collisions occurred on streets with speed limits above 30 miles per hour. The statistics for cyclist collisions are less dramatic than those of pedestrians in Oklahoma City. What is more relevant is the number of collisions per trip made by bicycle, and providing cyclists with safer, protected facilities can help to bring that figure down over time.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE / DEVELOPMENT

Oklahoma City has untapped potential in utilizing active transportation for economic development. According to the FHWA white paper, "Evaluating the Economic Benefits of Non-Motorized Transportation," there are multiple potential economic benefits of bicycle and pedestrian investments. These benefits include the following:

- Commute cost savings for bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Direct benefits to pedestrian, bicycle, and tourism-related businesses;
- Indirect economic benefits due to changing consumer behavior (i.e. lower transportation expenses lead to more disposable income); and
- Individual and societal cost savings associated with health and environmental benefits.

While the indirect and societal benefits are difficult to express in dollar amounts, direct benefits include a job creation rate of approximately 11-14 jobs per $1 million in spending as compared to only approximately seven jobs per $1 million in roadway infrastructure spending. This is due to the high labor to materials ratio that bicycle and pedestrian projects typically require. Table 1.1 provides the results of a study conducted in Baltimore, Maryland from 2010 on job creation per $1 million spent.

Additional findings from the FHWA white paper on the economic impacts of non-motorized transportation include the following:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians who have more disposable income due to reduced travel expenses are more willing to spend a greater portion of their income on local goods and services.
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure may make a commercial corridor more accessible to foot traffic, increasing consumers' browsing opportunities and encouraging more access to local goods and services.
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, along with other forms of traffic calming make commercial streets more attractive to visitors and increase visitors' perceptions of safety.

The limited amount of active transportation infrastructure and low mode share within Oklahoma City, show the economic benefits are not yet realized. The bicycle and pedestrian network improvements in this plan are economic development opportunities.

ENVIRONMENT

Reliance on the automobile for transportation brings negative impacts on the environment, while increasing active transportation commuting can lead to a reduction in regional motor vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thus reducing vehicle emissions and improving air quality. Additionally, while providing ample surface parking is essential to the success of a business or public facility, vast amounts of impervious surface are required. Presently, about 97 of Oklahoma City's 621 square miles is impervious, the largest portion of that being surface parking lots. This leads to contaminated run-off that negatively impacts the quality of our soil and water bodies.

According to the Oregon Environmental Council, "once about 10% (or less depending on the watershed's physical and biological characteristics) of a watershed has been converted to impervious surfaces, significant ecological damage has already been done." In Oklahoma City 16 of our 40 sub-watersheds already have greater than 10% of their area covered by impervious surfaces, while 8 more are close to that level. Additionally, in Oklahoma City today roughly 70% of our water bodies are considered "impaired" by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This illustrates the importance of minimizing additional impervious surface construction, and active transportation systems can help in this effort.

Another negative impact of motor vehicle traffic that can be mitigated by a modal shift toward active transportation is the degradation of air quality associated with automobile emissions. According to the website Stateoftheair.org, Oklahoma City is ranked 24th in the country for worst air quality by ozone amounts, with a score of F for the number of "orange ozone days". Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air by automobiles, but is the result of chemical reactions between nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) with sunlight. Motor vehicle emissions and gasoline vapors are major sources of NOx and VOC, and the resultant ground-level ozone can exacerbate or trigger respiratory conditions such as asthma, especially the elderly and young children.

Table 1.1 Economic Impacts of Active Transportation Infrastructure Per $1 million Spent

Project Type	Direct Jobs	Indirect Jobs	Induced Jobs	Total Jobs	Multiplier
Pedestrian projects	6	2.2	3.1	11.3	1.9
Bike lanes (on-street)	7.9	2.5	4	14.4	1.8
Bike boulevard	6.1	2.4	3.2	11.7	1.9
Road repairs and upgrades	3.8	1.5	2	7.4	1.9
Road resurfacing	3.4	1.5	1.9	6.8	2

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, along with other forms of traffic calming make commercial streets more attractive to visitors and increase visitors' perceptions of safety.

Public Participation

Public participation is an important component for the success of any plan. Four approaches of public participation used include:

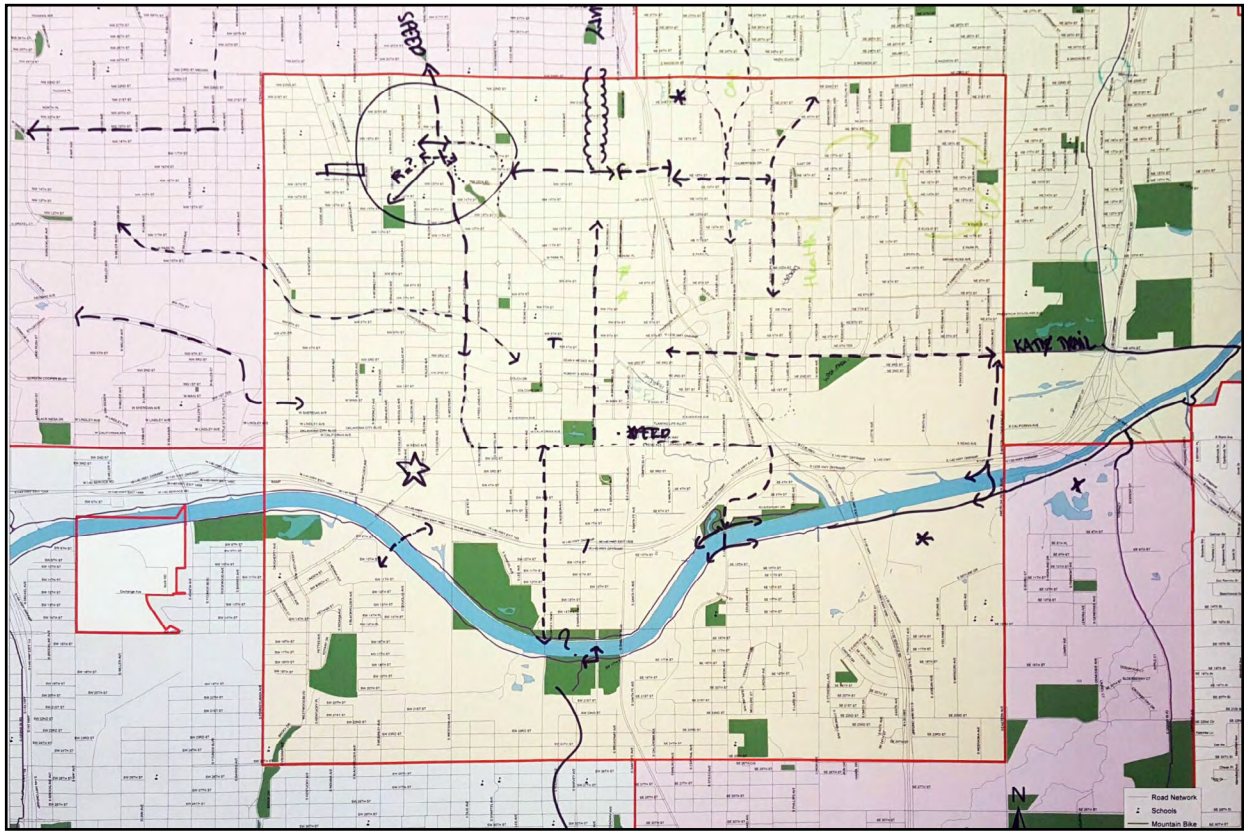
- A steering committee comprised of local stakeholders including: advocates, business owners, residents, and others (see Acknowledgments).
- The bikewalk**okc** citizen survey administered via the Internet, in person, and sent to all public water customers.
- Public outreach events in all quadrants of the city.
- A web page providing information about the plan and the planning process.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The bikewalk**okc** planning process included a Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Steering Committee to assist in guiding the process. The Steering Committee was responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on plan materials. The Committee also helped advertise the plan process and distribute information to the larger community. The Steering Committee met six times over the course of the planning process:

- **May 19, 2015** – Review of Purpose, Goals, Ideas
- **July 28, 2015** – Review of Plans, Policies, Legislature and Map Activity
- **September 29, 2015** – Review of the Peer Cities and Potential Themes
- **October 13, 2015** - Walking and Bicycling Tour
- **November 17, 2015** – Review of Analysis Preliminary Bicycle Network
- **February 24, 2016** – Review of Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

During the July 28, 2015 steering committee meeting, members were asked to identify locations around the city for investigation. This included urban and rural bicycle alignments, potential multi-use trail alignments, as well as intersection improvements and key crossings of major barriers. These barriers include natural elements like rivers and streams, as well as man-made infrastructure like I-240, Northwest Expressway, and I-235. This exercise allowed steering committee members to utilize their expertise to guide the plan analysis, to ensure that key problems would not be overlooked. This process helped delineate the different types of facilities proposed on street, such as the different needs of long-distance recreational cyclists when compared to urban transportation-focused cyclists. Map 1.1 shows some of the results from the maping exercise.



Steering Committee Mapping Exercise - July 28, 2015

Above: Steering Committee members participate in an exercise to guide planners in how to prioritize improvements.

PUBLIC RESIDENT SURVEY

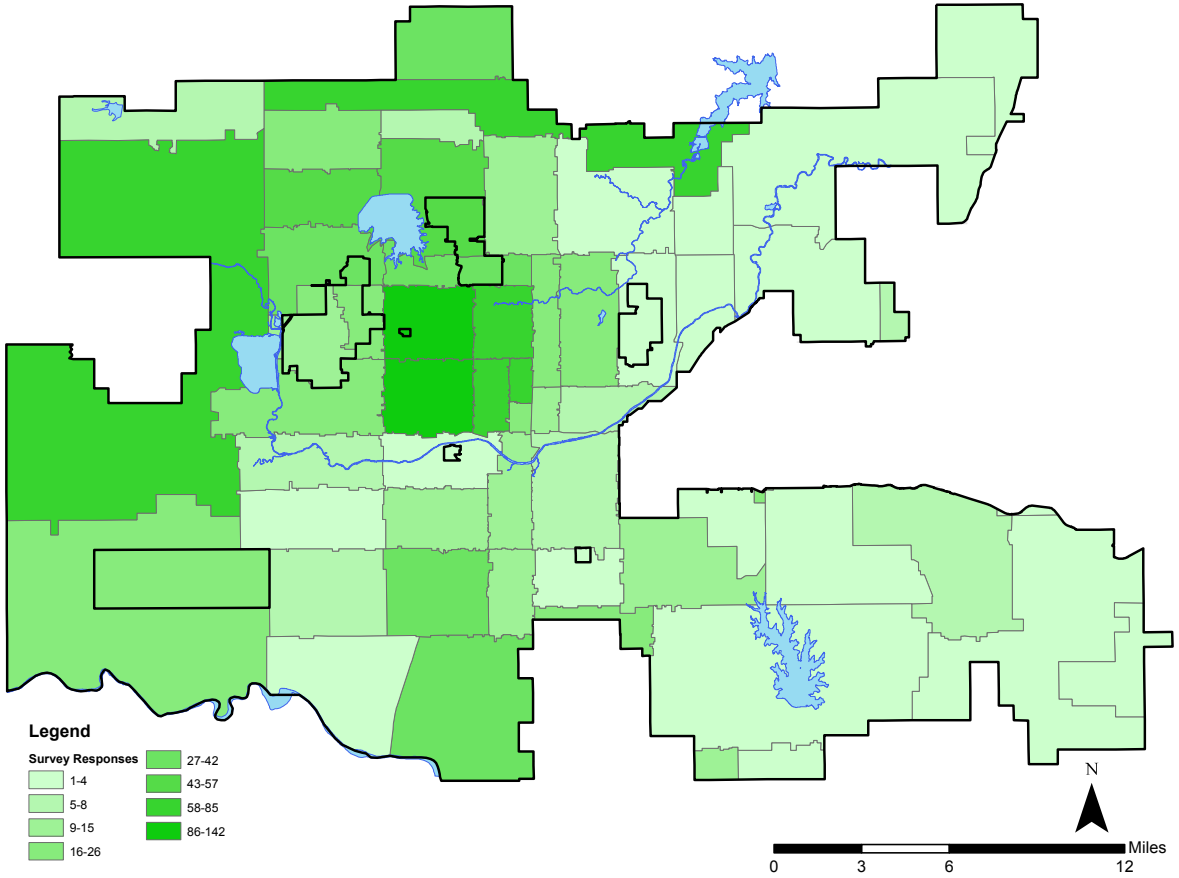
To gather input from the broader Oklahoma City area, the planning team assembled a survey that consisted of 27 bicycling and walking questions. Appendix I.1 includes the entire bikewalk**okc** survey. 1,738 people responded to the survey, which was advertised in the Oklahoma City October 2015 water bill. Additionally, hundreds of survey postcards were placed at six public outreach events, Open Streets, and eight bike and running shops. Map 1.2 illustrates the reach of survey respondents, showing representation from all areas of the city.

Key take-aways from the survey include the following:

- People bicycle and walk mainly for exercise and recreation but cycling and walking as a means of transportation is becoming more important.
- Improve connectivity between existing networks (trails, sidewalks, bike lanes).
- Improve connectivity between resources (water bodies, commercial districts, schools, etc.).
- Improve access points to the trails network.
- Improve the sidewalk network (locations all over the city were mentioned).

The survey was valuable in providing perspective on current walking and cycling conditions. Of the survey respondents, between 90 and 95 percent stated the current conditions for walking and cycling is fair to poor, while 75 percent of respondents said that improving bicycling conditions is very important. Almost 80 percent believe improving walking conditions is very important.

> I'd love to see bikable, walkable cooridors incorporating Film Row, the Farmers Market District, Midtown, the Plaza District, the Western Avenue District... If I could access all these places safely on a bike or on foot, I would rarely drive other than to go to work.
>
> -bikewalkokc Survey Respondent



Map 1.1 Survey Results by ZIP Code

KEY RESULTS FROM THE RESIDENT SURVEY:

What factors discourage bicycling and walking in Oklahoma City?

1. Lack of connected trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes
2. Automobile traffic
3. Unsafe street crossings
4. Aggressive motorist behavior
5. Deficient or unmaintained existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities

What destinations would you most like to reach by bicycling or walking?

1. Parks and Existing Trails
2. Commercial Districts
3. Places of Work
4. Libraries
5. Public Transit
6. Schools and Universities

PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENTS

Public outreach events took place in each quadrant of the city. These outreach events gave residents the opportunity to discuss bicycling and walking problems and/or possibilities in their neighborhood. The outreach locations included:

- Leadership Square - August 25, 2015. 211 N Robinson Ave. Oklahoma City, OK 73102
- Ralph Ellison Library - August 25, 2015. 2000 NE 23rd St. Oklahoma City, OK 73111
- EMBARK Transit Center – September 9 and October 23, 2015. 420 NW 5th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73102
- Almonte Library – September 10, 2015. 2914 SW 59th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73119
- OSU OKC Farmers Market – September 12, 2015. 900 N Portland Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73107
- Meinders Hall – October 15, 2015. 2501 N Blackwelder Ave. Oklahoma City, OK 73106

Above: Public Outreach at the OSU OKC Farmers Market.

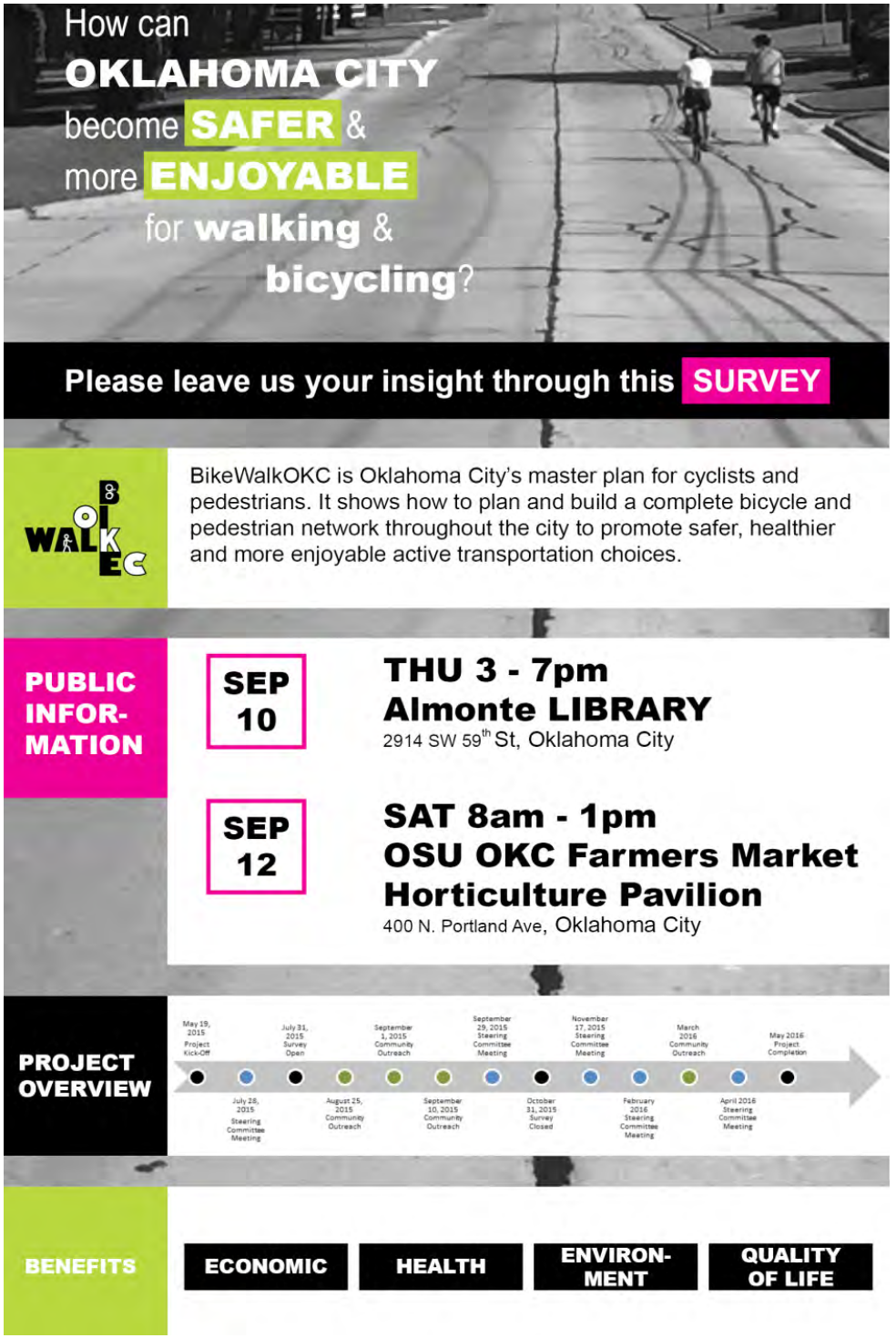
Right: Hundreds of postcards were distributed around the city in English and Spanish.

ONLINE PRESENCE

In addition to outreach meetings, the City of Oklahoma City maintained a web page to host information on outreach events, the benefits of walking and cycling, and links to related resources. Additionally, the draft plan was hosted on the web page for review and comment prior to adoption. After adoption, it will be necessary to maintain an online presence to disseminate the plan and achieve a widespread acceptance of the recommendations and goals of bikewalk**okc**.

As a part of the online presence, an interactive map will document the implementation of plan projects, showing upcoming and completed projects. This provides the City with the unique opportunity to promote plan implementation as it happens, and will allow for easy reporting of implementation to assist with public outreach, future planning, grant opportunities, and awards associated with the development of walkability and bikability.

Social media will also play a role in the implementation of bikewalk**okc**. The City's Public Information Office will keep residents up to date on implementation progress through updates on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms. This gives residents the opportunity to provide much-needed feedback on their satisfaction with new projects. Continuing the public outreach element of bikewalk**okc** is imperative for the long-term success of the plan. A transparent and public process will ensure that major alterations to certain streets as recommended in this plan will have minimal negative impacts on nearby residents.



Right: bikewalkokc.com provided information on the planning effort and opportunity to leave feedback through the available survey.

Past Plans

Existing plans, policies, and laws related to bicycling and walking help in understanding past efforts and accomplishments, and in knowing what work is yet to be completed. This section describes planning efforts, policies, laws, and programs that impact walking and cycling in Oklahoma City.

GUIDING PLANS

Three plans in particular give the guidance for transportation planning in Oklahoma City. These are plan**okc**, Encompass 2040, and the ODOT Long-Range Transportation Plan. These plans address transportation for the area in a nested fashion, where plan**okc** applies within the city limits of Oklahoma City, Encompass 2040 addresses transportation for the greater metropolitan area, and the ODOT Long-Range Transportation Plan aims to guide transportation initiatives for the entire state of Oklahoma. These three plans identify needs at different levels of granularity, but all of them emphasize the importance of planning, designing, and implementing transportation projects that move the needle toward a more balanced transportation system, with special consideration for the burgeoning field of active transportation.

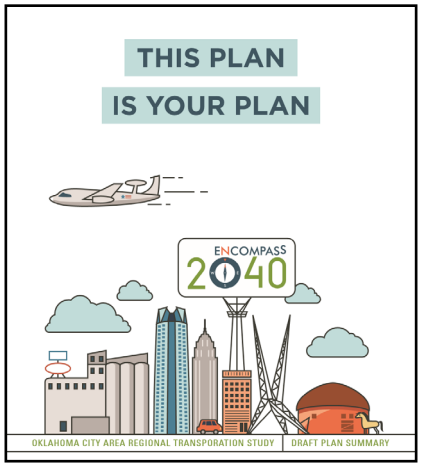
SUPERSEDED PLANS

Upon adoption, bikewalk**okc** will become the new guide for sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements, as well as on-street bicycle and off-street trails improvements. Four plans that came before have been folded into bikewalk**okc** in terms of projects identified in previous plans, standards for design, and funding approaches. The 1997 Trails Master Plan, the 2008 Bicycle Transportation Plan, the 2012 MAPS 3 Sidewalk Plan, and the 2015 Downtown Development Framework have all provided the planning and details needed to implement transformative improvements around Oklahoma City. bikewalk**okc** seeks to capitalize on these efforts to continue the momentum generated since their adoption. These four plans will be superseded by bikewalk**okc**.

planokc
planning for a healthy future

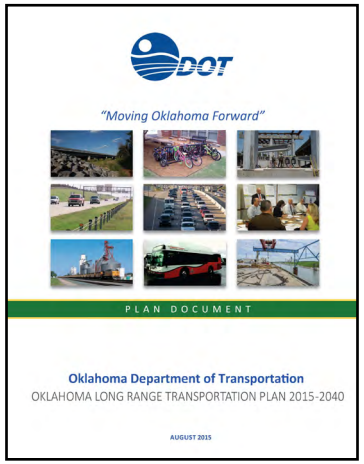
planokc (2015)

The City of Oklahoma City adopted plan**okc** in July 2015. plan**okc** is the City's comprehensive plan and serves as a policy document which guides future growth, development, and capital improvements. Citizen input for the preferred growth scenario within **plan**okc guided the plan toward more compact and dense growth with improved transportation options. Several of the plan's initiatives and policies revolve around improving walking and bicycle conditions. There are 23 plan**okc** policies related to active transportation. These policies range from regulatory development standards to sidewalk design standards.



Encompass 2040

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is housed within the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), which assembles a long range transportation plan (LRTP) every five years as required by the USDOT. The 2040 LRTP includes focus and provisions for alternative modes of transportation. Encompass 2040 was adopted in winter 2017.

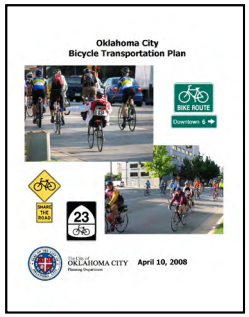


ODOT Long Range Transportation Plan

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is working under the 2015-2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. This plan provides information on transportation inventory, needs, and opportunities, as well as recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian planning.

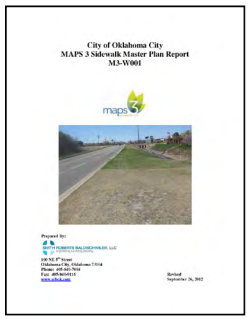
Trails Master Plan (1997)

The Oklahoma City Trails Master Plan was adopted in 1997 and called for 208 miles of off-road multi-purpose trails. The plan called for a combination of public and private funding to complete the trails network. Of the 208 miles planned, 60 miles have been completed and an additional 20 miles are under construction. bikewalk**okc** keeps many of trail alignments identified in the Oklahoma City Trails Master Plan, and will serve as the new trails master plan into the future.



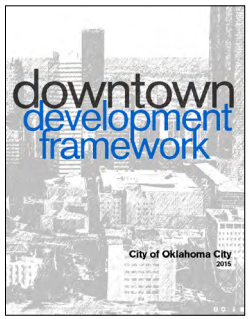
Bicycle Transportation Plan (2008)

The City of Oklahoma City adopted the Oklahoma City Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2008. The focus of the plan is on bicycling for transportation as opposed to being solely for recreation. All planned facilities were "signed routes". Bike lanes are mentioned as a possibility, but there is no plan for the implementation of bike lanes, protected intersection design, or bicycle parking facilities. bikewalk**okc** uses this plan as the baseline for building the bicycle network.



MAPS 3 Sidewalk Master Plan (2012)

The purpose of the MAPS 3 Sidewalk Master Plan is to create "a series of strategically placed sidewalks on arterial streets and near public use facilities within the City of Oklahoma City." Currently, 28.6 miles of sidewalk construction have been completed or are under contract. It is anticipated that a total of 60 miles of MAPS 3 sidewalks will be completed by the end of the project. MAPS 3 sidewalks are accounted for in the pedestrian networks created within bikewalk**okc**.



Downtown Development Framework (2015)

The Downtown Development Framework was adopted in 2015 and includes guidelines and recommendations for development in downtown Oklahoma City. Recommendations for walking and cycling infrastructure were included as a part of this plan. Modifications to these recommendations are reflected in bikewalk**okc**, and the new designated facilities in downtown supersede those in the Downtown Development Framework.

EXISTING LAWS AND POLICIES

In the past 10 years, there has been growing support for active transportation at each level of government. This section provides a review of the federal, state, and local policies and laws that impact active transportation.

USDOT Policy Statement

In 2010 US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Ray LaHood issued a policy statement of support for integrating bicycle and pedestrian planning into transportation projects. The policy strongly encourages transportation planning agencies to incorporate walking and bicycling into transportation projects because of the numerous benefits of active transportation.

Federal Walking and Bicycling Statutes

US Code (USC) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) have requirements for accommodating non-motorized transportation into the metropolitan planning process. The FHWA summarized applicable codes related to the metropolitan planning process, which can be located in Appendix I.2.

Local Law and State Law

Oklahoma City walking and bicycle laws are meant to protect these modes of transportation as well as protect drivers of automobiles. The local laws are largely reflective of state law.

Chapter 4 of this plan has a list of policies that introduce new potential laws. While many of the current local laws are appropriate, there are revisions suggested within Chapter 4. For a full list of existing laws please see Appendix I.2.

Supporting Programs

In order to increase additional bicycle and pedestrian activity, programs and initiatives supportive of cycling are a necessity. This section describes several ongoing efforts being made by public entities related to walking and cycling.

WATCH FOR ME OKC

Watch for Me OKC is a program to help teach pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and police officers how to reduce the risk of serious injuries and death from collisions on our roadways. The program includes components related to safety, education, encouragement, enforcement, and demonstration. Watch For Me OKC is a multifaceted approach to reach and impact all groups of people in Oklahoma City.

The program includes marketing through radio, bus advertising, a website, flyers, brochures, sidewalk decals, and videos. Additionally, City staff has worked at multiple health fairs and various other events to educate individuals on how to be safe as a cyclist or pedestrian, and how drivers should respect other modes. The following is a list of past events where Watch for Me OKC information has been distributed:

- West River Trail Grand Opening
- Leadership Square bikewalk**okc** outreach
- Ralph Ellison Library bikewalk**okc** outreach
- Almonte Library bikewalk**okc** outreach
- EMBARK Transit Center bikewalk**okc** outreach
- EMBARK Transit Center Health Fair
- Oakridge Elementary Health Fair
- Boy Scout Troop 180 Event
- OSU OKC Farmers Market
- Bridges to Access Health Fair
- TenaCity ProAm
- The YMCA Summer Camp series

The Planning Department is working with the Oklahoma City Police Department (OKCPD) on Watch for Me OKC. Brochures have been provided to OKCPD to dessiminate to cyclists and drivers. This is a program and partnership with OKCPD that is intended to continue indefinitely.

The campaign has also had success partnering with the private sector. In partnership with Chesapeake Energy's safety office, the Watch for Me OKC campaign participated in 3 events to provide educational information, co-branded merchandise, and campus planning assistance to employees. Additionally, the Watch for Me OKC campaign partnered with The Boeing Company's commuter program, participating in outreach events, delivering presentations to employees, and fielding input to improve bicycling and walking accessibility in the southwestern quadrant of Oklahoma City.

A main component of Watch for Me OKC is the construction of demonstration corridors with protected bike lanes, non-protected bike lanes, and sharrows. Intersection improvements include bike boxes and signage. The demonstration corridors will be on NW 4th St., N. Shartel Ave., and N. Walker Ave. The purpose of the demonstration corridors is to implement state-of-the-practice bicycle facilities in Oklahoma City and show how to retrofit roadways with excess capacity into livable streets. These facilities will serve to educate motorists and cyclists as to how interactions between them can be improved. This is education through implementation.

Top: Outreach at an elementary school
Middle: Summer program partnership with YMCA
Bottom: Co-branding with Chesapeake Energy

SPOKIES BIKE SHARE

Spokies is the Oklahoma City bike share program. It began in 2012 and is operated as a public transportation service by the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA), also known as EMBARK. There are eight stations located within Downtown, Midtown, and Bricktown. The new fleet consists of the latest bike share technology offered, and includes GPS tracking and rugged bicycles.

To utilize a Spokies bicycle, pass holders pay a $3.50 per half hour of use. Monthly passes cost $9.95 plus the applicable usage fee. Annual passes are $70 plus the applicable usage fee.

Spokies currently averages about 600 rides per month and almost 1,000 rides per month in the summer. The current fleet averages about one trip per day per bike. Most current Spokies customers are tourists to Oklahoma City – about 40 percent of the rides originate at the Bricktown Ballpark Station. The system currently has few monthly or annual pass holders so most riders are walk-up customers. In order to grow the system, Spokies has plans for more station locations focusing on activity districts. By expanding the number of stations and bikes, the service will become more convenient to the average commuter.

OPEN STREETS OKC

Open Streets OKC is a local health and wellness project that is supported and sponsored by Oklahoma City-County Health Department, City of Oklahoma City, Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Neighborhood Alliance, and more. The purpose of Open Streets is to get members of the community to reclaim a portion of a busy street for a few hours for non-motorized activity. Everyone attending is invited to walk, bike, skate, or board while they meet local business owners and celebrate the unique charm of a historic Oklahoma City neighborhood. There have been several Open Streets events within Oklahoma City, with tens of thousands of participants at each event.

Top: A new Spokies station in Bricktown.
Bottom: Open Streets OKC in the Uptown 23rd district has seen as many as 40,000 residents in attendance.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Destinations

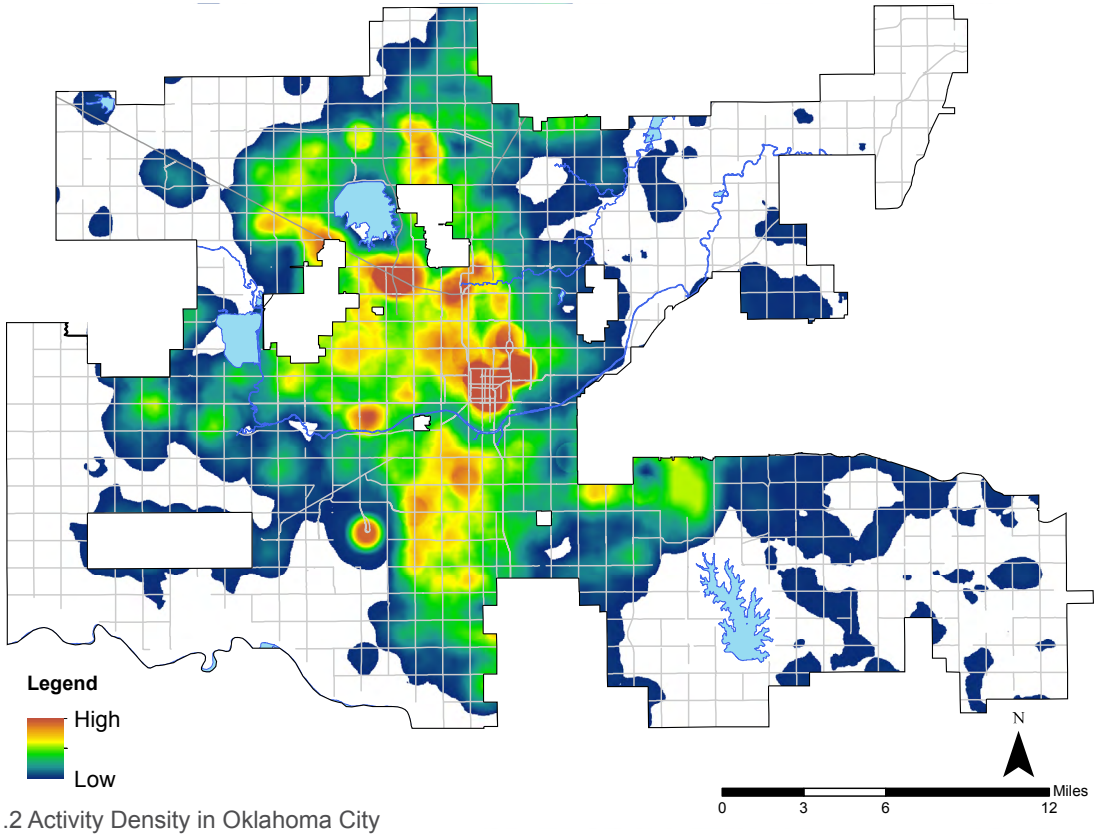
Analyzing where people live, work, and play is an important component of understanding the existing conditions of current infrastructure and identifying potential future bicycle or walking trips (and needed facilities). City staff utilized employment data, residential population data, and visitation data to determine areas of high "activity density." Map 1.1 provides a visual of high and low activity density. Areas highlighted in yellow and red indicate areas with high amounts of population, employment, and/or visitation. These include downtown, multiple locations along Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, and the Meridian and I-40 corridors. Areas of lower activity are shown in blue or green. The white areas within the city limits of the a map are locations that scored "0" in terms of activity; these areas were excluded in order to not skew the data.

DESTINATIONS

Knowing where people want to go is essential for any prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian projects. Destinations can range from outdoor recreational areas to major commercial districts. With regard to recreational opportunities, Oklahoma City has more than 150 parks, varying in scale from parks that are intended to serve specific neighborhoods, to large natural outdoor recreational areas. Some key outdoor locations include:

- Lake Hefner
- Lake Overholser
- Lake Stanley Draper
- Martin Nature Park
- Myriad Botanical Gardens
- Will Rogers Park
- The multi-use trail network

Additionally, The City of Edmond is currently working on completing a multi-use trail around Lake Arcadia, providing an opportunity to connect recreational resources between cities to better connect our regional bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.



Map 1.2 Activity Density in Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City also has a number of activity districts such as Bricktown, Stockyard City, Capitol Hill, Paseo District, Plaza District, Uptown 23rd District, Midtown, and the Adventure District. These districts are local and regional destinations, and are drivers of commercial activity as well as tourism. Most users of these districts access them by private automobile; however, with reasonable improvements, more people would be able to access these areas without their vehicles, reducing parking demands.

Oklahoma City is a destination for shopping, which can be classified into two categories: local and regional. Local destinations include convenience stores, small- to medium-sized grocery stores, as well as stores aimed at providing residents with basic goods and services. Connecting bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to the local shopping destinations improves the accessibility of these areas to people that do not rely on personal automobiles for transportation. Improved connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian networks encourages alternative transportation for short non-work trips, potentially generating improvements in public health, local economics, and the environment.

Regional destinations include large supermarkets, shopping malls, and specialty stores. These types of destinations should be well connected to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to provide transportation options for employees and patrons.

Peer City Comparisons

Peer comparisons are important for goal setting and determining areas of needed improvement. In order to compare Oklahoma City to peer cities, planners gathered data from multiple cities of similar size and culture. Additionally, cities known for great bicycle and pedestrian networks were selected for comparison. Table 1.2 includes the peer comparison.

Oklahoma City has a lower percent transit mode share than its peers. For bicycling and walking, Oklahoma City's mode share is higher than that of Ft. Worth's and comparable to that of Memphis; however, Oklahoma City's modal split is among the least diversified of the peers and has much room for improvement. Additionally, all cities reviewed have obtained at least the bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community Award, except Ft. Worth and Oklahoma City. Oklahoma City will achieve the Bronze award for the Bicycle-Friendly Community distinction from the League of American Bicyclists upon the adoption of this plan.

Seattle and Madison are shown as best practice cities. Seattle is a high-performing walking and cycling city and is interesting to use for goal setting. Madison is home to University of Wisconsin and the dynamics of large university highly influence the commuting pattern of the city. However, it is important to note that the climate of Madison and Seattle is not as ideal, yet through commitment and investment, the modal split of Madison and Seattle is significantly more diverse than Oklahoma City's modal split. Also, despite having roughly the same population as Oklahoma City, Seattle has a significantly lower rate of transportation related fatalities, indicating that designing roads for safety and multi-modality leads to results that make communities safer.

These comparisons allow us to understand where we stand as a community in the broader regional and national context of cities, and helps us set goals for the future.

Source: indyculturaltrail.org

Table 1.2: Peer City Performance Comparison

City	Oklahoma City	Tulsa	Ft. Worth	Austin	Memphis	Madison	Seattle	Indianapolis
Population (2015)	610,672	398,082	796,614	887,061	657,167	243,122	653,017	841,449
Land Area (sq mi)	606	196.75	339.82	298	315.06	76.79	83.94	361.43
Bike-friendly Award	Honorable Mention	Bronze	Honorable Mention	Silver	Bronze	Gold	Gold	Bronze
Walk-friendly Award	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bronze	N/A	N/A	Platinum	N/A
Bike Lanes	12	9	38	192	96	Not Listed	129	142
Multi-use (mi)	60	113	76	201	26	Not Listed	48	90
Bike Routes (mi)	161.6	83	44	983	70	Not Listed	150	381
% Bicycle Commute Mode-share	0.20%	0.30%	0.10%	1.4%	0.20%	5.30%	3.50%	0.50%
% Walking	1.60%	1.80%	1.10%	2.5%	1.80%	9.60%	9.00%	2.00%
% Transit	0.80%	1.10%	1.10%	4.30%	2.30%	8.80%	19.20%	2.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, League of American Bicyclists, City of Oklahoma City

References

[1] Booth, G. L. (2012). Unwalkable neighborhoods, poverty, and the risk of diabetes among recent immigrants to canada compared with long-term residents. *Diabetes Care*, 36(2), 302-308. Retreived from http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/36/2/302.long

[2] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (1970-2013). National emission inventory (NEI) air polluntant emissions trends data [data set]. Retrived from

http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/trends/index.html#tables

[3] World Health Organization. (2011). *Air quality and health* [fact sheet]. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/

[4] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. (2008). *Changing your habits: steps to better health* (08-6444). Retrieved from NIH Publication website: http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/PDFs/Changing_Your_Habits.pdf

Further Reading

Olson, J. S. (2012). The third mode: towards a green society. United States: The 3rd Mode.

Birk, M., & Kurmaskie, J. (2012). Joyride: pedaling toward a healthier planet. Seattle: Mountaineers Books.

Speck, J. (2013). Walkable city: how downtown can save American, one step at a time. New York: North Point Press.