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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community has expressed a desire for an effective multimodal transportation system that connects local and regional destinations within the county. The Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan includes 38 goals, objectives and policies specifically pertaining to bikeability, walkability and livability. Successful implementation of these objectives and policies will result in a transportation system that includes:

- Enhanced mobility options.
- A safer environment for nonmotorized users.
- Implementation of smart growth measures.
- Increased economic benefits in relation to ecotourism.
- Improved quality of life for community members.
- A healthier environment that supports and encourages active living.
- Increased sensitivity to the natural environment.

The Sarasota Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides a framework to promote and encourage efficient and safe bicycle and pedestrian travel integrated in the existing Sarasota County transportation system, as guided by the Comprehensive Plan. Currently, Sarasota County has more than 230 miles of inventoried bicycle facilities and more than 1,300 miles of inventoried pedestrian facilities.

The plan development occurred in multiple stages. The initial draft plan focused solely on bicyclists, yet pedestrian needs also exist. The adoption of a plan that addresses both the bicycle and pedestrian network will supplement the county’s existing Master Trails Plan and Transit Development Plan, collectively recognizing the multimodal network and transportation needs within the county.

In the first phase of plan development, stakeholders were sought to provide feedback on the condition of the existing network. Additionally, stakeholders were provided the opportunity to comment on the future needs of the entire bicycle and pedestrian system within Sarasota County. The stakeholder input was followed by the preparation of a Community Assessment Report of this Phase I data summarizing the feedback of approximately 900 survey responses and emails. Analysis reflected in the Community Assessment Report identified significant priority needs and considerations for improvements and connections in the network. This was then presented to the general public and stakeholder groups through a series of meetings and online engagement methods. A subsequent Community Assessment Report of the Phase II data summarized 119 comments received from public meetings and online, as well as a wiki discussion. This provided additional data on key priorities and needs identified by the community.

The plan identifies opportunities for enhancements to the bicycle and pedestrian network, with the objective of providing for better integration of bicycle and pedestrian users into the existing transportation system, thereby improving the multimodal system throughout the county. The plan recognizes ongoing efforts and partnerships that increase the safety for bicyclists and pedestrians within Sarasota County. The plan provides facility design types and serves as a foundation for which county regulatory and policy changes may need to occur. The plan is an essential tool for the county to use when applying for grant funds from state, federal and nonprofit programs. The county, with assistance of the partners identified in this plan, will pursue funding opportunities to implement these improvements.

This plan will be used as a guide for ensuring that the county makes improvements consistent with citizens’ needs and desires.
INTRODUCTION

The integration of a bicycle and pedestrian system within the transportation network is an important priority of the Sarasota County Commission and is desired by the community. A safe, well-designed bicycle and pedestrian network will provide numerous benefits to the community by improving mobility options, quality of life and community health, while also minimizing environmental impacts from motorized transportation. The Sarasota County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will identify the need, rationale, opportunities and programs necessary to provide for a stronger bicycle and pedestrian system throughout Sarasota County.

1.1. BACKGROUND AND PLAN UPDATES

The initial draft of the plan originated from past efforts of the Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Advisory Committee (BPTAC). The BPTAC worked to develop the first bicycle plan for the county. The initial document created by the BPTAC served as the foundation for this plan, which includes both bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In coordination with additional agencies, including local residents and numerous stakeholder groups, the plan identifies the importance of – and the foundation for – the methods used to continuously improve the bicycle and pedestrian system and facilities within the community.

The plan will continuously evolve and be updated as projects and improvements occur, the county’s Comprehensive Plan changes and bicycle and pedestrian programs advance. Plan updates are expected to occur every three years; however, updates may occur more frequently, depending on funding and program changes.

1.2. BENEFITS OF BICYCLING AND WALKING

The plan provides a framework to promote and encourage efficient and safe bicycle and pedestrian travel within Sarasota County. This will be accomplished through the development of a well-designed transportation system with bicycle and pedestrian features providing access to major destinations, such as parks, beaches, schools, employment centers, health care facilities and shopping centers.

*Mobility Options*

Safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities increase opportunities for multimodal transportation throughout the county. These facilities will increase the mobility of children, elderly persons and those without access to a motor vehicle, to travel throughout Sarasota County.

*Safety*

Well-designed and interconnected bicycle and pedestrian facilities integrated into the transportation network will help to increase the likelihood of people using these modes. In addition to infrastructure improvements, education plays a crucial role in bicycle and pedestrian safety. As motorists come to expect bicycle and pedestrian users on roadways, they tend to reduce their speed, which helps to improve the safety for all.
**Smart Growth**

Smart land use decisions are key to having an efficient transportation network. Providing a transportation network that efficiently moves people throughout the county in a variety of modes, such as sidewalks, bicycle routes and multiuse trails, makes transportation more viable, affordable and enjoyable for county residents and visitors.

**Economic Benefits**

The potential economic benefits to residents and visitors from converting mobilized vehicular trips to nonmotorized trips are an important consideration. Sarasota County attractions and climate bring visitors who desire to explore the community. The availability of an easily navigable, nonmotorized transportation network will encourage residents and visitors to explore the vast number of destination points within the county.

**Quality of Life**

A transportation network that accommodates pedestrians and cyclists by fostering calm, safe streets and commuting helps to promote community livability. Factors of the built environment, social equity and recreational possibility enhance quality of life. These factors are an important part of attracting and keeping residents and businesses and are welcoming to visitors.

**Community Health**

In an effort to promote healthy weight and healthy lifestyles, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020 program goals are to improve health, fitness and quality of life through daily physical activity. The department’s “Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans” publication provides guidelines for physical activity, highlighting how physical activity is positively affected by the availability of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails and parks (http://www.healthypeople.gov). A safe, efficient transportation system that meets the needs of bicycle users and pedestrians will promote active living by fostering an environment that encourages walking and bicycling, which are activities that directly align with Healthy People 2020 program goals.

**Environment**

Efforts to encourage walking and biking throughout the county can positively impact the natural environment. Urban design, which creates a dependency for single vehicle use, results in traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and an expanding need for fossil fuels. Reducing personal-use motor vehicle miles traveled and encouraging multimodal transportation can have significant, positive impacts on air and water quality, as well as reducing wear and tear on the existing roadway network.
1.3. VISION, MISSION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan, the original bicycle plan and public input (Section 2.2.) helped to create the vision of what the county's bicycle and pedestrian network should look like in the future, provided a mission for how this can be done and why and defined the goal and objectives that will be the pieces necessary to achieve the mission.

**Vision**

Sarasota County will foster an environment that promotes and encourages recreation and healthy lifestyles through a safe and efficient multimodal transportation network.

**Mission**

To establish a safe, convenient and efficient bicycle and pedestrian system, integrated into the overall transportation system and providing access to and between destinations within the region.

**Goal and Objectives**

To provide and maintain a countywide network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connects to other modes of transportation to the greatest extent possible. The following objectives support this goal:

- Increase mobility choices in our communities.
- Connect multiple modes of transportation, allowing for alternative ways to access popular destinations.
- Enhance facilities to improve the multimodal network.
- Encourage respect for all users on roadways and paths.
- Promote equitable facilities that are safe and secure for all.
- Provide alternatives to automobile transportation.
2.1. DATA COLLECTION
Data collection from a number of resources was necessary to better examine information pertaining to the existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

This data included the following:

- Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, including layers identifying the location of parks, schools, trails, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and transit facilities.
- County maps.
- Community Assessment Report results for Phase I public input.
- Community Assessment Report results for Phase II public input.

2.1.1. SUPPORTING POLICIES
There are 38 goals, objectives and policies identified in the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan pertaining to bikeability, walkability and livability that may be implemented and supported through the plan, as it seeks to promote a well-established multimodal network. Specifically, these guide the county in respect to the environment, parks and recreation, transportation, housing and land use and are outlined in Appendix A.

2.2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Public outreach was largely completed in two stages. Phase I was conducted to inform the community that a bicycle and pedestrian plan was in development and to gain a perspective on:
• Bicycle and pedestrian user preferences.
• Community members’ desires for improvements to the network.
• Residents’ thoughts on the existing network.

Phase II of plan development spanned six months and was done after the draft plan was compiled in August 2012. The intent of Phase II was to:

• Share the results of the Community Assessment Report and survey results.
• Gather public input and feedback on the draft plan.
• Determine the appropriate changes to the plan prior to presenting it to the Sarasota County Commission for discussion.

2.2.1. PHASE I

Phase I focused heavily on gaining involvement, interest and input from the community, including all types of users of the bicycle and pedestrian network. In April 2011, Phase I outreach kicked off through the launch of a survey, which sought to gain information on user details, user needs and what might improve the experiences of users and increase the frequency of bicycle and pedestrian trips. The survey was available online from April to October 2011. Also, a Web page was created, providing more information on the draft plan for those interested. The link to this site was disseminated through media releases, social media outlets and various e-messages. From April until October 2011, posters, website information and links to the online survey were shared through Sarasota County communication channels; both full paper copies and mini-surveys were made available at county facilities and libraries; neighborhood groups throughout the county were contacted; local bicycle and recreational stores were individually visited and provided with materials to hand out; and an information table was set up at the first Cyclovia event held on Nov. 20, 2011, in the city of Venice.

To further ensure efforts were made for the survey to reach all stakeholders, public outreach was done through a collaborative approach in which county staff sought help from stakeholder groups to connect through their already established networks. A stakeholder meeting was held in July 2011 to build momentum for the plan with the diverse stakeholders and to brainstorm methods of collaboration and partnership with these groups in order to get input from their networks. A variety of stakeholders were invited, including different age groups, recreational groups, children’s groups, special needs groups, pet owners and staff members from other government agencies. As a result of this stakeholder meeting, articles were published in newsletters and blogs and the plan was mentioned at local meetings. County staff members also met with different advisory groups, including the Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Advisory Committee and the Development Services Advisory Committee and attended multiple meetings. The information gathered from these groups was critical in shaping the plan and ensuring that the needs and preferences of all users were considered.
neighborhood association meetings, as requested. During August 2011, all county utility bills included the plan website address and survey notice and provided contact information for citizen input.

Through the connections made by way of these various stakeholder networks, distributing posters with website information and making hard-copy surveys readily available throughout the community, there were approximately 850 survey responses and 50 emails received that provided input on the network.

2.2.2. PHASE II

Although input was continuously collected throughout the plan drafting phase, Phase II began at the end of August 2012, when the survey data analysis and assessment was completed and summarized to reflect the community input, inventory of current facilities and conditions and identification of any ongoing programs that support the bicycle and pedestrian network. During this phase, the intent of outreach was to present the content of the report and also to engage people who seemed interested in a conversation about the survey results. The input gained was essential to determine what is needed to be added or changed prior to taking the plan to the Sarasota County Commission.

Phase II outreach was done through online outreach methods, public meetings, stakeholder group meetings and media outlets. There were 12 public workshops held during the months of January and February 2013 in an “open house” style format where attendees had the opportunity to view maps displaying the existing bicycling conditions in the region and the areas of proposed improvements that were a result of Phase I input and to discuss the results directly with staff. Similar to Phase I, many newsletters, e-messages, media releases and social media messages were sent out to connect people to the draft plan for their review and feedback. This resulted in a number of phone calls and emails about the plan. Additionally, the county set up a wiki site for feedback on the draft plan and made this available for five months, from October to February. Through the wiki, 112 comments were received and 119 comments came from emails and at the public meetings. After completing this Phase II public input, a second Community Assessment Report with the results was prepared. Following edits suggested through the public and identified in this report, the plan was made ready for discussion and presentation to the Sarasota County Commission at the May 21, 2013, meeting. At this meeting, staff was directed to continue researching crash data and ensure the accuracy of the data in the plan. Prior to the follow-up County Commission meeting on October 8, 2013, public input continued to be provided and stakeholder meetings continued.

A complete outline of the communication outreach done for Phase I and II can be viewed in Appendix B: Stakeholder and Community Outreach Methods.
EXISTING CONDITIONS

To assess the existing conditions relating to bicycle and pedestrian travel within Sarasota County, 2007-2013 crash data were reviewed, as well as the results found in the Community Assessment Survey Report. This survey, distributed in 2011, was helpful in gaining a better understanding of county residents’ and visitors’ opinions about bicycle and pedestrian transportation within the county. The survey was available on the county website and placed in strategic locations throughout the county in order to reach the maximum number of people. The survey data provided results on user demographics, values and priorities, trip frequencies by purpose, barriers to pedestrian and bicycle travel and requested improvements to mobility modes.

3.1. INVENTORY OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Sarasota County has more than 230 miles of inventoried bicycle facilities and more than 1,300 miles of inventoried pedestrian facilities. The county’s bicycle network connectivity is concentrated west of Interstate 75 (I-75), with few links extending to the east and limited connectivity allowing north/south travel west of I-75. Figure 3-1 provides an inventory of Sarasota County’s existing bicycle network by facility type. Pedestrian facilities include nearly 75 miles of multiuse paths, with the remaining facilities consisting predominantly of sidewalks. Pedestrian network connectivity is highest in the county’s urbanized areas, including downtown Sarasota and Venice. The 2010 census data reflected the City of North Port as the highest populated city in the county, however, it contains the smallest amount of bicycle and pedestrian facilities available to residents. Figure 3-2 shows an overall inventory of Sarasota County’s pedestrian facilities.

Bicycle Facility Level of Service

Sarasota County updates the bicycle level of service (LOS) annually, grading each facility with a letter grade of A to F, with A being the best condition. To determine the bicycle LOS, the county uses a statistical method prepared by Sprinkle Consulting Inc and adopted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for determining existing and anticipated bicycling conditions. The bicycle LOS is a function of the traffic volume, speed limits, number of lanes, percent of heavy vehicles, width of roadway, pavement surface conditions and other factors. The bicycle LOS reflects users’ perception of the condition of roadway segments for commuting on bicycles.

Although the county has an adopted roadway level of service, there have not been any standards adopted defining what is an acceptable level of service for bicycle lanes. However, the bicycle LOS information is an additional tool that can be used as part of the county’s evaluation of future improvement needs.

3.2. IDENTIFY EXISTING USE

The survey used for the information in the Community Assessment Survey Report provided a look at the types of bicycle users and pedestrians in the community, their priorities for improvements and their needs. Overall, survey respondents predominantly classified themselves as residents of Sarasota County, with the majority of respondents (more than 50%) between the ages of 50 and 69. The largest single age group (27%) responding to the survey was between the ages of 50 and 59.
Figure 3-1: Existing Bicycle Facilities Inventory Map
Figure 3-2: Existing Pedestrian Network Facilities Inventory Map
Table 3-1: Priority Ranking for Locations of Future Connections

More men (53%) responded to the survey than women (46%). The vast majority (95%) of survey respondents reported owning a bicycle.

Reflected in Table 3-1 above, when asked to prioritize the most important location for future sidewalk/bicycle connections, “trails and greenways” received the highest overall priority scoring in the survey, followed by “parks,” and then “shopping.” “Libraries or community centers” and “restaurants” received similar scores as the fourth and fifth highest-priority connection locations. The lowest scoring locations were “places of worship,” “schools” and “places of employment,” with the latter two scoring similarly.

When asked to rank the most important considerations in determining areas to develop future sidewalk and bicycle connections, “pedestrian/bicyclist safety” was the top priority among survey respondents, followed by “filling gaps of missing sidewalks/paths” and “greenway trails.” The least important considerations were “places of employment,” “business or commercial areas” and “access to public transportation.” “residential neighborhoods,” “schools” and “parks” shared similar scores around the center of the ranking. This information is reflected in Table 3-2.

To get a better feel for the typical user, trip frequencies were analyzed for both pedestrians and bicyclists. The most commonly reported purposes for pedestrian trips were exercise, recreation and relaxation, with approximately 70% of respondents reporting making these types of pedestrian trips “frequently.” School, work and public transportation trips were the least commonly reported, with nearly 70% of respondents “never” taking walking trips for those purposes. The most commonly reported purpose for bicycle trips was recreation, with more than 60% of respondents reporting that they made bicycle trips more than two days per week. Errands were the next most common trip purpose, with 32% of respondents making bicycle trips for errands more than two days per week.

Based upon the survey results identified and the demographic of the group that responded, it is important to recognize the information provides useful information; however, it is not
Table 3-2: Priorities to Consider for Future Connections

fully representative of the county needs, as there is some selection bias. For example, although “schools” was rated as a low priority, there was not a representative sample of respondents that could be described as families with school-age children. The survey results largely represent those of the users who typically have more available time to use the bicycle and pedestrian facilities for recreation and exercise.

3.3. CRASH DATA

A review of Sarasota County’s most recent bicycle and pedestrian crash data included 1,756 crashes over the period from 2007 to 2013. The locations of these crashes were reviewed to determine where crashes in the county occurred most frequently. It should be noted that the crashes are occurring on the busier roads and intersections within the county, reflecting a correlation between the travel needs and locations for commuters whether traveling by foot, bicycle or automobile. An action item based upon this would be to prioritize areas of the transportation system that require further analysis to determine the appropriate safety improvements or countermeasures necessary to reduce the number of crashes.

As shown in Table 3-3 on Page 14, at the roadway level, Tamiami Trail had by far the most crashes with 312 (also including those crashes at intersections along Tamiami Trail), followed by Bee Ridge Road and Washington Boulevard with 117 and 100, respectively and Tuttle Avenue with 77. Specifically at the intersections, the intersection of Fruitville Road and Beneva Road, with 27 crashes, reflected the highest number of accidents for bicyclists and pedestrians; followed by Bee Ridge Road at the intersection of Tamiami Trail and Washington Boulevard and 17th Street, with 22 and 15 crashes, respectively; Bee Ridge Road and Beneva Road with 14 crashes; and Washington Boulevard and 10th Street with 13 crashes. Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4 show the locations of the mapped crashes 2007-2013, with concentrated areas of crashes highlighted in colors depending on their level of crashes. The crash data maps reflect the need to improve the transportation system for all users, providing for safe, convenient integration of all modes in these areas, as well as many others throughout the county.
Table 3-3: Bicycle/Pedestrian Crash Counts by Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CRASH COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamiami Trail</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee Ridge Road</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Boulevard</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuttle Avenue</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneva Road</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruitville Road</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockwood Ridge Road</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th Street</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahia Vista</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Boulevard</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERSECTION</th>
<th>CRASH COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruitville Road/Beneva Road</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee Ridge Road/Tamiami Trail</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Boulevard/17th Street</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee Ridge Road/Beneva Road</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Boulevard/10th Street</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruitville Road/Tuttle Avenue</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruitville Road/Lockwood Ridge Road</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamiami Trail/Martin Luther King Jr. Way</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

Bicycle and pedestrian connections to parks, greenways and trails were consistently a high priority to survey respondents. The comments received from the public reflect the top park and trail priority destinations to be The Legacy Trail, Rothenbach Park, Venetian Waterway Park Trail, Myakka River State Park, Arlington Park, Oscar Scherer State Park and Longwood Run Park. By making improvements to these places, including top area destinations such as The Legacy Trail and Siesta Key Beach, the ecotourism and visitation to these destination points will likely be further increased. The Legacy Trail alone during an eight-month period (October 2011-May 2012) experienced approximately 100,000 visitors and Siesta Key saw more than 1.7 million visitors during this time frame.

Respondents presented more than 100 locations for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, including roadways and intersections, parks and trails throughout the Phase I and Phase II public input stages. Overall, there were 10 top roadways mentioned specifically for needed improvements, including U.S. 41, Bee Ridge Road, Fruitville Road, Desoto Road, Honore Avenue and more listed in Table 3-4 on Page 17. In regards to parks, respondents identified a need for better connections to Longwood Run Park, Rothenbach Park, Myakka River State Park, Nathan Benderson Park and others. Respondents requested improvements and/or connections or amenities to The Legacy Trail, the Venetian Waterway Trail and Forbes Trail. The top three areas that were commonly requested for improvements by the public are U.S. 41, Bee Ridge Road and The Legacy Trail.
Figure 3-3: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Location Map, North Sarasota County
Figure 3-4: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Location Map, South Sarasota County
3.5. IDENTIFY DEFICIENCIES

The existing conditions analysis was conducted based on three main data sources: the Sarasota County Community Assessment Reports, county bicycle and pedestrian crash data from 2012 to 2013 and information/data about the county’s existing bicycle and pedestrian networks. Based on the Community Assessment Reports that summarized community input, the public indicated a desire for safe bicycle and pedestrian connections to trails and greenways, parks and shopping. Additionally, it was commonly noted that connections separated from roadways are preferred because of concerns about real or perceived danger caused by interaction with motorists. The analysis of the county’s crash data and existing bicycle and pedestrian network supported many of the safety concerns and gaps in network connectivity reported in the Community Assessment Reports. Several focus areas have been identified for potential improvements, as shown in Figure 3-5, 3-6 and 3-7 (in no order of precedence), based upon the existing conditions analysis, priorities identified during public input in Phases I and II and discussions with local jurisdictions while researching crash data and concerns. These are a few of the many areas where future improvements should be considered, based on the needs and the desires of the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Input Improvement Location</th>
<th>Frequency in Phase I</th>
<th>Frequency in Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US 41/Tamiami Trail</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee Ridge Road</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruitville Road</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Road</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honore Avenue</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIntosh Road</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneva Road</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockwood Ridge Road</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Parkway</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Road</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacaranda Boulevard</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Road</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>FREQUENCY</td>
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<td>Myakka Park</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benderson Park</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlington Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Scherer Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longwood Run Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Park</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Points Park</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Barritt Park</td>
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<td>Nokomis Park</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>FREQUENCY</td>
<td>FREQUENCY</td>
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<td>The Legacy Trail</td>
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<td>Venetian Waterway Trail</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forbes Trail</td>
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<tr>
<td>JURISDICTION</td>
<td>FREQUENCY</td>
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<td>City of North Port</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
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Table 3-4: Free Text Survey Improvement Frequencies

A. Downtown Sarasota – west of Tuttle Avenue, north of Mound Street, east of Sarasota Bay and south of Desoto Road. This area of Sarasota County has a high concentration of crash rates combined with gaps in bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity, particularly on Washington Boulevard (U.S. 301) and U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) intersection. Improvements in this area would be consistent with survey respondents’ interest in safe connections to parks, recreational opportunities and shopping.

B. Fruitville Road Corridor – between I-75 and downtown Sarasota. The high crash rates within this corridor indicate it would benefit from safety improvements. These safety improvements would be consistent with respondents’ interest in safe connections to shopping and recreational destinations in downtown Sarasota.
C. U.S. 41/Tamiami Trail Corridor, North County – between Clark Road and Washington Boulevard (U.S. 301). This corridor has both high crash rates and gaps in the bicycle network connectivity. Survey respondents also consistently identified it as a danger to bicyclists and pedestrians. Improvements (or suitable alternatives) to this corridor would potentially reduce crashes, provide a new north/south access to the city of Sarasota and destinations along Sarasota Bay, including Arlington Park.

D. Bee Ridge Road Corridor – between U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) and Rothenbach Park. This corridor has a high concentration of bicycle and pedestrian crashes, combined with existing gaps in both bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It also offers an opportunity to connect two parks consistently noted in the Community Assessment Reports: Urfer Park and Rothenbach Park. Improvements in this corridor would be consistent with survey respondents’ interest in providing safe connections to parks.

E. Beneva Road/Legacy Trail Corridor – This corridor between the northern terminus of the Legacy Trail to Fruitville Road, or even to Manatee County. Beneva Road has a relatively high bicycle/pedestrian crash rate and bicycle network connectivity gaps. The extension of The Legacy Trail to the north was a top request made during the survey and at public meetings. Improvements to the Beneva Road/Legacy Trail Corridor would provide a safer connection through The Legacy Trail to the north.

F. U.S. 41/Tamiami Trail Corridor, South County – in the vicinity of the Venetian Waterway Park Trail. This corridor has both high crash rates and gaps in bicycle connectivity and access to this park trail was consistently a priority of survey respondents. Improvements in this area could provide safer connections to this trail both from the east and the south.

G. Sumter Boulevard/Price Boulevard – This intersection has a high incidence of crashes and has incomplete bicycle and pedestrian facilities. City police staff expressed concern about this intersection. This intersection would benefit from safety and infrastructure improvements that connect to these major roadways and nearby shopping.

H. US 41/Tamiami Trail Corridor, North Port – This corridor has both high crash rates and gaps in bicycle connectivity and serves as a gateway to the City. Improvements in this area would provide safer connections those traveling this major roadway.

I. SR 776/Dearborn Street – This intersection reflected a high crash rate. It would benefit from bicycling and pedestrian improvements that connect residents and visitors to the recreational and shopping destinations in this community.
Figure 3-5: Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Needs Map, North Sarasota County
Figure 3-6: Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Needs Map, Central Sarasota County
Figure 3-7: Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Needs Map, South Sarasota County
Based upon the information identified in the Community Assessment Reports, a number of action items have been compiled that will help to improve the bicycle and pedestrian system for its users. These include new and improved programs, policy discussions and infrastructure improvements. There are a number of improvement design types and strategies that may be considered for enhancements to the existing network. To implement these action items and recommendations, additional resources are needed, including – but not limited to – a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian coordinator to implement bicycle and pedestrian efforts and actively seek grant funding necessary to do so.

4.1. ACTION ITEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Action items have been identified to promote engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation and planning (the “5 E’s”) concepts pertaining to bicycle and pedestrian modes. These action items, if implemented, will improve the existing system beyond infrastructure projects.

Engineering

- Include dedicated bicycle lanes in the design and construction of arterial and collector roadway improvements or resurfacing projects throughout the county.
- Continue sidewalk construction projects necessary to fill gaps or missing sections along major roadways as a component of the capital improvement program.
- Consider countermeasures at locations where there is a high number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes in order to improve safety (i.e., traffic calming).
- Ensure that all roadway improvement projects include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations to the fullest extent possible.
- Consider adoption of complete street policies for the county.
- Build links to and through county landholdings and other public lands, which would include incorporating off-road trails.
- Consider roundabouts or other traffic control devices to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians at intersections throughout the county.

Education

- Increase education regarding Florida bicycle and pedestrian laws, including the rules of the road, who has the right of way on roads and sidewalks and safety equipment.
- Expand public education campaigns, including radio and television public service announcements; messages inside transit vehicles and stops, as well as bus stations; and use of social media tools.
- Educate drivers on how to share the road with bicyclists and pedestrians, including through driver education courses for all drivers and educational training specifically designed for transit and school bus drivers.
- Partner with professional organizations to develop and host trainings (i.e., transportation and planning professionals internal and external to the county government).
• Continue Bicycle Safety Rodeos and trainings, both for children and for adults.
• Educate students in county elementary and middle schools using the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program (FTBSEP).
• Provide the Adult Cycling Road 1 Course offered through the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program (FTBSEP).
• Educate students at local colleges on Florida-specific bicycle and pedestrian laws.
• Develop, obtain and distribute bicycle safety materials, including materials published in Spanish.
• Ensure distribution of information at bicycle shops, parks, tax collector offices and community centers.
• Expand educational programs to offer helmet giveaways, bicycle lights and reflective gear.
• Create presentations on bicycle and safety issues and offer them to neighborhood and professional associations.
• Educate elected officials and other community leaders on laws, techniques and needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.

**Encouragement**
• Work with the Sarasota County School Board to expand the Safe Routes to School program.
• Support and participate in events that encourage bicycling and walking in their communities (i.e., National Night Out and Cyclovia events).
• Participate in targeted awareness campaigns, such as bike month or walk to school day/week.
• Encourage bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly communities.
• Increase and improve existing bicycle parking and storage at Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) park and ride lots and bus stops.
• Encourage businesses and employers to provide bicycle parking, storage, lockers, showers and other facilities that make bicycle and pedestrian commuting more feasible.

**Enforcement**
• Support and partner with the Sheriff’s Office to train law enforcement officers in pedestrian and bicycle laws, crash reporting and safety issues.
• Improve the reporting of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.
• Partner with the Sheriff’s Office to increase enforcement and strategies pertaining to the rules of the road.

**Evaluation and Planning**
• Evaluate and explore methods to improve connectivity of sidewalks, bicycle lanes and multiuse trails to major activity centers and destinations.
• Work with private-property owners to encourage public-private partnerships for improvements and connections that would complement or integrate into the existing transportation system.
• Ensure that the Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Advisory Committee has an opportunity to comment and provide recommendations on roadway design plans and proposed developments.

• Partner with local municipalities, adjacent counties, the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and FDOT to identify and prioritize facilities for installation of regional bicycle lanes, emphasizing connectivity between existing lanes, trails, major trip destinations and employment centers.

• Engage in intergovernmental collaboration to ensure road projects include bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

• Ensure bicycle and pedestrian facilities are adequately maintained and repaired to ensure safety.

• Plan for improved connectivity to existing and future transit stops.

• Ensure sidewalk design plans maximize pedestrian safety within road rights of way, while also providing a more calming experience for users.

• Explore policy discussion and regulatory changes that promote bikeable/walkable streets and communities.

• Explore policy discussion and regulatory changes pertinent to secure bicycle parking and facilities, the number of bicycle parking spaces required and other amenities.

• Consider establishment of a desired level of service standard for bicycle lanes.

• Develop performance measures to address changes in pedestrian and bicycling usage and bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

4.2. FACILITY DESIGN: GUIDANCE AND STRATEGIES

As Sarasota County seeks to improve its bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to more appropriately integrate them into the existing transportation system, it is important to explore the appropriate bicycle and pedestrian features and design solutions for the users and the location. There are design solutions and tools that currently exist or may be used in future development in Sarasota County. There are a number of considerations to determine the appropriate facility type, including road classification (arterial, collector, local); traffic volume and speed; access points; adjacent land use; available rights of way; and costs.

The following facility and design considerations may be used within the county, as appropriate:

• Bicycle Lanes
• Bicycle Shoulders
• Sharrows*
• Colored Pavement for Bicycle Lanes
• Separated Bicycle Lanes
• 5-foot Sidewalk
• 6-foot Sidewalk

• 10-foot Sidewalk
• Multiuse Overpass
• Multiuse Gravel Trail
• Multiuse Asphalt Trail
• Boardwalk
• Boardwalk Bridge
• Pedestrian Shelter
Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle Shoulders

Sharrows*

Colored Pavement for Bicycle Lanes

Separated Bicycle Lanes

5-Foot Sidewalk

6 Foot Sidewalk

10-Foot Sidewalk

*Shared lane marking.
Planning and Designing for Safety

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities must be designed for the comfort and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and special needs users to help reduce injuries and fatalities. These factors include the width and condition of sidewalks and the availability of curb cuts, pedestrian crossings, signalization, lighting and landscaping. The safer the facilities are, the more likely they will be used. Bicycle and pedestrian paths should be visible to surrounding areas to encourage usage and accessibility and also to ensure the users feel safe and the likelihood of crime is lessened. Other design considerations include limiting potential places to hide and appropriately managing vegetation.

According to the “Dangerous by Design” study prepared by Transportation for America (http://t4america.org), more than 76,000 Americans in the last 15 years were killed while crossing the street or walking in their community. The study also reported that in 2007-2008 in the Bradenton/Sarasota/Venice area, pedestrian activities accounted for 12.6% of the traffic fatalities involving pedestrians.

There may be streets in the county where bicycle lanes or other multimodal facilities could be provided by redesigning the existing travel lanes, adjusting the widths and reducing the travel speeds in a manner that makes the roadways safer to pedestrians and bicyclists. A planning and engineering analysis may be conducted to evaluate the opportunities for adjusting the travel lanes to better accommodate multiple modes of transportation.

Planning and Designing for the Elderly Population

The needs of the elderly population are a special consideration that needs to be acknowledged in the design and planning of facilities. This includes the timing and duration of crosswalk signals; appropriate, reflective signage with use of larger-size fonts; and pavement markings. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census data (www.census.gov/2010census), Sarasota has an above-average older population with 31.2% of the population age 65 or older. As the “Dangerous by Design” study describes, older Americans are two-thirds more likely to be killed while walking than those under 65 years of age. Therefore, especially in Sarasota, safety is an increasingly important concern for elderly drivers sharing the roadway with bicyclists and pedestrians. Safety issues include travel speeds in areas where multimodal transportation options are available, as well as consideration of curb radii, lane widths and the integration of roundabouts.

Creating a safe and inviting bicycle and pedestrian transportation system for users of all age groups requires attention to more than physical infrastructure: it also requires users and motorists to have a basic knowledge of travel safety and etiquette. The county is participating in a number of programs, described in the Safety and Education Initiatives section, to reach users. These programs are further described in Section 5.1.2.
5.1. AGENCIES, PARTNERSHIPS and PROGRAMS

This section recognizes the agencies and programs that – through partnership and implementation – will help to advance the quality of bicycling and walking in Sarasota County. The optimal programs and improvements would require continuous coordination efforts with public and private agencies and funding well beyond what is currently budgeted.

5.1.1. SUPPORTING AGENCIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Intergovernmental coordination, partnerships and connections with stakeholder agencies are integral to carrying out the goals of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. These agencies, their roles and their significance are identified below.

**Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Advisory Committee (BPTAC)**

In cooperation with the county, the BPTAC worked to develop this plan. More than 10 years ago, the first draft created by the BPTAC focused solely on bicycle needs. Since that time, the county and BPTAC updated the document to reflect the needs, current conditions and community vision for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Their continued partnership with the county will aid in updates and implementation of goals and objectives identified in the plan.

In addition to working with the BPTAC, the county collaborates and communicates with the following agencies in an effort to improve the multimodal environment in Sarasota County. Effective implementation of this plan will require active partnerships with these agencies.

**Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**

Florida State Statute 335.065 requires that FDOT establish adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, wherever and whenever feasible, with their construction or reconstruction projects. The FDOT Safety Office is responsible for several programs, including Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTSTs) and pedestrian/bicycle safety, producing printed materials for safety and education. The State Safety Office also administers various traffic safety behavioral grant programs under the State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program (Section 402) to address roadway safety, speed control, alcohol-related incidents, traffic records and motorcycle and bicycle/pedestrian safety. The FDOT funds other bicycle and pedestrian safety programs, such as the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program, specifically created to reduce bicycle and pedestrian crashes among children by using training and education.

**Friends of The Legacy Trail**

This nonprofit group of local citizens was formed in 2006 to support, promote, enhance and protect The Legacy Trail. Their goals include recruiting volunteers for the maintenance and operations of the 10.6-mile-long paved trail, educating the public on the trail and its amenities and providing a volunteer community bike patrol. The Legacy Trail is one of the key community assets that residents and visitors want to connect to via the multimodal network. The Friends of The Legacy Trail have been active in making improvements to the trail, including raising funds to install kiosks on the trail and for a water fountain at the Venice Train Depot.
Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)
Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) is a public transit service providing fixed-route and paratransit bus services within Sarasota County. SCAT provides an alternative mode of transportation within the county, working together with the bicyclists and pedestrians. A number of the buses are equipped for “pedal and ride” users. These buses include bike racks where riders may store their bikes while riding the bus to a destination, such as The Legacy Trail. Additionally, a number of SCAT bus stops have bicycle racks.

Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County
The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County encourages activities such as walking and biking in an effort to reduce and prevent obesity-related chronic diseases, while promoting active lifestyles. The department offers a number of programs for walkers and bicyclists. For example, the Pathways to Health program is aimed at increasing the number of steps people take daily by establishing walking paths in neighborhood and coordinating walking groups. The department launched the SRQKids4Health website, www.SRQKids4Health.org, which includes information on local health and wellness activities for county schools.

One important partnership formed by the department in 2002 is the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP). CHIP has been supporting collaborative efforts to create a healthier Sarasota County and region by convening grassroots teams and regional health leaders in planning and providing research and data tools to guide strategic efforts. One priority of CHIP is to encourage active, healthy lifestyles and this includes supporting efforts to create an environment providing for healthy choices and social connectedness. CHIP is important in the effort to increase the walkability and livability of the county.

Sarasota County School Board
The Sarasota County School Board is an important partner in identifying bicycling and pedestrian facility needs, since a large number of students commute to school on bike or foot.

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
The Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s mission is to develop a future plan, through cooperation with member governments and the general public, for a safe, efficient, financially feasible, environmentally sensitive, regional, integrated multi-modal transportation system that supports sustainable, livable communities and economic development.

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Bicycle, Pedestrian, Trails Advisory Committee
The Sarasota/Manatee MPO recently established its own Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Committee, which will be an integral partner of the county in the effort to improve the local bicycle and pedestrian environment. This plan will be a tool for the MPO’s committee to use in identifying gaps and funding improvements in the Sarasota County network.
**Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE)**

SCOPE is a volunteer-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Sarasota County. Each year, SCOPE publishes a Community Report Card for the county. A set of statistical indicators that measure a wide array of topics are used to help understand community progress. Many of these indicators further validate the importance of the Sarasota County Trails Master Plan, particularly within the Transportation and Mobility and Environment Indicators.

**Venice Area Beautification Inc. (VABI)**

This organization is focused on enriching the natural environment through parks and art and is also actively involved in safety and maintenance concerns in the Venice area. VABI provides the Trailblazers Bike Patrol, which helps to act as additional eyes and ears of law enforcement, making that area safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

**Bike/Walk Venice Committee**

Bike/Walk Venice is an advisory team composed of volunteers and city personnel whose mission is to promote, improve and advance cycling and walking in the Venice area. Established in 2011, the team serves as the governing body for the Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) program. Assisting with the BFC application in 2012, the City of Venice was awarded the silver designation. The team continues to work toward the next higher level designation which is gold.

John Nolen, the planner hired by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in 1926, provided a layout for a walkable community. To assist in helping sustain this plan, the Bike/Walk Venice team advises the city on improvements and enhancements to pedestrian sidewalks, trails and paths. Most notable has been the involvement of the planting of numerous shade trees throughout the city and the construction of walking paths and distance markers in parks.

**NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS**

Taking a multijurisdictional approach in future improvements will provide for benefits to Sarasota County. This includes collaboration with the cities of Sarasota, North Port and Venice and the town of Longboat Key. The Sarasota county Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan can be integrated with the plans of these local municipalities.

**City of North Port**

Pursuant to the Recreation Element of the City Comprehensive Plan, the City of North Port envisions an interconnected network of blueways, greenways, connecting paths and sidewalks that link parks and open spaces and creates a pedestrian – and bicyclist-friendly environment. The city aims to promote the linking of recreation trails and linear parks, including the implementation of the Myakkahatchee Creek Greenway Master Plan, which would allow for bicycle and pedestrian trails along the Creek from US 41 all the way to the northern boundary of the City and then bridging to the Carlton Preserve. In addition, coordinating linkages of publicly owned conservation lands within the city to those outside the city such as a future trail system from North Port to the Legacy Trail in Venice, or other trail systems. The city also envisions the collector and arterial roadway system as integrated with the connected network of on-street bike lanes and sidewalks to provide additional greenway systems throughout the city.
With the miles of canals that run through the city, there is an opportunity for the city to correct this disjointed pattern through the provision of connector trails. These connectors may require bridges over canals or the purchase of individual lots. The resulting connectivity provided by a web of roadways with adjacent bike paths and sidewalks, canal systems and conservation areas will serve to provide the adjacent residents with accessibility to city parks and ultimately larger trail systems.

**City of Sarasota**

Development of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be part of the City of Sarasota’s 2014-2016 Strategic Plan. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be a component of the City-wide Mobility Plan already underway with final adoption expected by 2015. To fund future bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, a revised road impact-fee process will be presented to the City Commission in 2014 for consideration of a fee program that results in furthering multi-modal initiatives in the city. Proposed changes to the City Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Program funding process related to transportation improvements will also be presented to the City Commission for consideration in 2014.

**City of Venice**

In 2012, the City of Venice was awarded the silver designation. This is representative of the strong commitment that has been to cycling by the City and local citizens, to include those involved in Bike/Walk Venice. This group is moving forward with increasing that designation and also preparing bicycle friendly community project ideas. Some of these ideas include improving or adding signage, working with the Venice Police Developing in the accident data and establishing local encouragement events, such as an annual "Ride with the Mayor" or "Bike Friday." The city has also hosted a number of Cyclovia events which had over 3,000 attendees, encouraging them to get out on bike and foot.

**Town of Longboat Key**

The Town of Longboat Key’s Comprehensive Plan also includes objectives aimed at developing a multimodal transportation system. Gulf of Mexico Drive, a 10-mile road spanning the length of Longboat Key attracts many recreational enthusiasts, including bicycling groups and pedestrians. Florida Department of Transportation is currently working to provide recommendations to the town on how Gulf of Mexico Drive can be improved for safety, walkability and possible changes in lighting. These recommendations come in the form of crosswalks, improved lighting, sidewalks where missing and changes to bus signage, which may help provide for the high pedestrian demands.

**5.1.2. SUPPORTING PROGRAMS**

There are a number of programs in place that aim to bridge gaps in sidewalks and trails, improve the multimodal environment by increasing safety and educate the users and motorists about bicycle and pedestrian rules and safety measures. The following sections identify these existing programs aimed at improving the overall multimodal environment.
**SIDEWALK PROGRAM**

In 2004, Sarasota County adopted the concept of building out regional sidewalk networks using a sidewalk prioritization system, which was updated in 2008. The focus on building out networks versus individual sidewalk connections allows for maximizing connectivity to schools, public transit, recreation, employment and shopping; constructing complete sidewalk networks; and only disturb neighborhoods one time. These networks are identified and prioritized on a set criterion. The prioritization criteria used includes 11 factors, such as improving connections to public transit, providing safe routes to schools and coordinating with other county improvement projects. Among other factors is the proximity to points of interest, including schools, employment, shopping, recreation and parks.

The Sidewalk Program Prioritization Location Map, located in Appendix C, displays the 21 sidewalk networks that have been prioritized. To date, 11 sidewalk projects have been completed, with the remaining 10 prioritized projects awaiting the funding for design and/or construction. New sidewalk requests continue to be submitted to the county. The county allocates funding to the highest-priority networks through funds in the Sidewalk Program Capital Improvement Project.

**Sidewalk Requests**

The county has an easy-to-follow process for handling requests from property owners who want sidewalks in their neighborhood. Sidewalk requests made to the county are first evaluated for the Gap Sidewalk Program eligibility and funding.

**Gap Sidewalk Program**

There are various missing sidewalk segments throughout the county, which typically are 500 feet or less and, if constructed, would connect surrounding sidewalk networks. The funding for these connections comes from the infrastructure surtax (1-cent sales tax), or grants from the state, recognized through Local Agency Program (LAP) funding agreements.

**SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

A major inhibitor to bicycle and pedestrian activity is both a perceived and real lack of personal safety. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities must be planned and built to minimize conflicts with other motorized and nonmotorized traffic. Education of proper bicycling and pedestrian practices and safety measures is another important tool to change perceptions.

**Community Outreach**

The county is involved in many educational initiatives designed to ensure pedestrians’, cyclists’ and motorists’ comprehension of safety practices and rules. The following are educational programs and initiatives ongoing in Sarasota County.

- The county provides free helmets to kids with grant funds made available through the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Since 2008, thousands of helmets have been provided to the community.
- The School Board and the county collaborate to provide Bicycle Safety Rodeos. These rodeos provide safety information and proper bicycle helmet wear instructions. The Sarasota County School Board provides a 14-foot-long trailer equipped for these rodeos and county staff members are trained and available to appropriately fit the cyclists.
The annual 9-1-1 Open House and Healthy Kids Day, held in conjunction with the Sarasota YMCA, offers safety materials and proper helmet wear instructions to the adults and children in attendance; when funds are available, free helmets also are provided.

The National Night Out event held annually in Sarasota County is aimed at preventing crime and fostering safer communities. One component of this event is bicycle safety, as promoted through the Bicycle Safety Rodeos and education on proper helmet wear. In 2009, approximately 350 helmets were distributed to the children following the training.

Parks and recreation events and other county capital improvement project ribbon cuttings and grand openings, provide great opportunities for education on bicycle and pedestrian safety. The Bicycle Safety Rodeos may seek to partner with these events in the future.

The county hires a trained consultant to facilitate and manage the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Training Program. This consultant travels to local schools and community events, providing courses about safe bicycle and pedestrian activities.

**Cyclovia**

This free community-wide event was first held in Venice in November 2011, then in March 2012 and May 2012. This event is a partnership with local governments, agencies and groups to promote and encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles. The first Cyclovia attracted more than 3,000 people. Future Cyclovia events will encourage people to explore the community on bicycle and foot and provide educational opportunities.

**Friends of The Legacy Trail Educational Outreach**

The Friends of The Legacy Trail group is vital to the education, awareness and promotion of The Legacy Trail. The group actively patrols The Legacy Trail, collects and analyzes attendance counts, hosts an annual “Tour de Parks” event and provides educational and promotional materials, including T-shirts, for those who signed pledges to be safe and follow the rules. At various times, members have set up a booth on the trail or the Venice Train Depot to promote the trail and talk to users about safety.

**Sarasota Community Traffic Safety Team**

Sarasota County serves as a member of the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST). This team includes government officials from incorporated and unincorporated Sarasota County, state officials, representatives of community businesses and organizations, engineers, police officers or law enforcement support personnel, fire/rescue professionals and citizens. The Sarasota CTST is committed to solving traffic safety problems through a comprehensive, multijurisdictional and multidisciplinary approach. This collaborative team works to solve local safety problems involving motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Annually, this group helps to coordinate a Traffic Safety Expo for the local community.
**Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

Studies have shown an increase in morning rush-hour traffic as parents drive their children to school. According to data presented in the Safe Routes to School Guide ([http://www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)) in 2009, 13% of children ages 5 to 14 years usually walked or biked to school, compared with 48% of students in 1969. In addition, 44% of children arrived at school by private automobile in 2009; in 1969, that number was only 12%. Providing a safe pedestrian and bicycle network can facilitate increased physical activity levels among children.

SRTS program is an important tool in improving facilities and educating students commuting on foot or bike to school. The program was initiated in May 2006 through funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration in an effort to increase physical activity among school-age children. The objective of this program is to assist communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school.

Pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 1011.68, funding allocations are provided to schools to support students who live two or more miles from school, unless they meet specific requirements. The students who do not live within the 2-mile radius must walk, bike or be driven to school.

**Safe Routes to School in Sarasota County**

SRTS is a comprehensive program that uses the 5E’s approach. The involvement of public agencies and neighborhood associations is crucial in using the Safe Routes 5E’s approach for the SRTS program. Since 2005, SRTS has funded $912,831 in projects within Sarasota County. These projects include both infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements.

- Traffic calming devices in the Brentwood Elementary School neighborhood
- Construction of 5-foot wide sidewalks along CR 780, Mill Terrace, Shade Avenue, Palm Terrace and Fiesta Drive for the Phillippi Shores Elementary School
- Construction of 5-foot wide sidewalks along Euclid Street from Courtland to Bahia Vista Street and Hatton from Euclid Street to Shade Avenue for Alta Vista Elementary School
- Installation of bicycle racks at Brookside Middle, Alta Vista Elementary and Brentwood Elementary Schools
- Reimbursement funds for PE teachers to attend specialized bicycle training provided by University of Florida – FTBSEP
- Walk & Roll Sarasota County – bicycle/pedestrian safety and creation of sustainable walking/biking school buses at Brentwood, Emma E. Booker, Englewood, Garden, Gocio, Phillippi and Tuttle Elementary Schools
- A fully equipped bicycle trailer, seven outfitted Walking School Bus wagons and educational materials, helmets and promotional items
Walking School Bus Program

The Walking School Bus is simply a group of children that walk to school with adult supervision. It is one component of SRTS that has recently been introduced here in Sarasota County. In May 2010, the first official Walking School Bus made its way to Tatum Ridge Elementary. This walk included three designated “bus stops” where residents in the area could bring their kids and parents who were outside of that area could drop off their kids so that they also could be a part of the event. Objectives of this program include increasing physical activity, creating safer routes to schools, reducing traffic congestion and helping students arrive alert and ready to learn. The Walking School Bus, as well as Bicycle Trains, a variation of it, are options that Sarasota County would like to see implemented. The National Center for Safe Routes to School, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have published a helpful manual on how to start and manage the program at (http://www.saferoutesinfo.org).

5.2. NEXT STEPS

Like most communities in Florida, Sarasota is facing a challenge of how to fund bicycle and pedestrian improvements to meet the needs of the users and to encourage increased usage. According to the Bicycling and Walking 2012 Benchmarking Report, the state of Florida spends 2.16% of its transportation dollars on bicycle and pedestrian projects and approximately 12% of all trips are made by bike or foot (http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/benchmarking). This disparity spurs the need to identify funding sources through other programs. The county may choose to dedicate funding towards bicycle and pedestrian improvements to support and increase educational, enforcement and safety programs. As a result of the adoption of the county plan, grant funding will be actively sought to increase safety, education, enforcement, facilities and enjoyment in the local bicycle and pedestrian environment.

The intent of this plan is to identify the current conditions and community needs, which will be used as a guide for ensuring that the county understands what is necessary to maintain and enhance the bicycle and pedestrian system. The county, in collaboration with the partners identified in this plan, will pursue federal, state, local and nonprofit funding to implement these improvements.
Progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the Sarasota County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be measured over time to evaluate its effectiveness. The plan evaluation mechanism outlined here consists of a variety of objective, quantifiable performance measures calculated on an evaluation cycle. A comparison of baseline data versus performance measure data will function as an indicator of the plan's effectiveness in accomplishing the goals outlined in this plan. The plan can then be modified to increase its effectiveness for the next evaluation in the cycle.

6.1. EVALUATION MEASURE
The performance measures below were selected because they can be used to measure progress in accomplishing the goals and objectives identified in this plan and because they use data that are readily available and relatively accurate.

- Total mileage of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multiuse paths and trail facilities.
- Total number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.
- Percentage of transit stops that are accessible to pedestrians, including persons with disabilities.
- Dollars invested in bicycle and pedestrian projects and maintenance.
- Number of public requests for bicycle and pedestrian information.
- Number of people reached through bicycle and pedestrian education efforts.
- Number of maintenance complaints for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Number of local and regional bicycling and walking events.
- Percentage of schools with a Safe Routes to School program.
- Number of bicycle and pedestrian connections to park and recreation facilities.

6.2. EVALUATION CYCLE
The Sarasota County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan’s effectiveness will be assessed and evaluated on a three-year cycle. Performance measures will be calculated initially and will be done again during the plan’s evaluation cycle. The results of each successive evaluation will be shared with local policymakers to improve the plan’s effectiveness over time to shape future outcomes.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
Appendix B: LIST OF COMMUNICATIONS OUTREACH
Appendix C: SIDEWALK PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION
Appendix D: RESOURCES
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

ENVIRONMENTAL CHAPTER

POLICY 1.2.2.
Protect beaches, dunes and coastal vegetation from vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic by providing vehicular parking, dune walkovers and by encouraging bicycle use through the provision of bicycle paths and storage racks.

POLICY 4.1.3.
Reduce pollution generated by motor vehicles by promoting cleaner burning, energy-efficient vehicles, including hybrid vehicles and alternate fuels such as biodiesel and fuel cell technology, as well as through public education and encouraging the following:

- The creation of mixed land use centers and residential form that utilizes clustering and Planned Unit Development (PUD) styles of design.
- Vegetative buffers between arterial roadways and residential neighborhoods (Policy 1.7.3., Transportation Chapter).
- The use of alternative modes of transport including public transit, bicycle and pedestrian paths/corridors and light rail (Policy 1.4.7., Goal 2. and Objective 2.1., Transportation Chapter).

PARKS & RECREATION CHAPTER

GOAL 1
Sarasota County shall provide, protect, maintain and enhance a high-quality, environmentally sensitive, accessible, economically efficient system of parks, programs, recreation facilities and open recreation space that serves all Sarasota residents and visitors.

POLICY 1.1.7.
Increase the ecologically benign recreation potential of Sarasota County’s natural waterways (bays, bayous, rivers, streams, creeks and lagoons).

- Establish locations, design standards and implement techniques for providing public access to appropriate waterways.
- Designate canoe/kayak access points on appropriate bays, bayous, rivers, streams, creeks and lagoons.

POLICY 1.1.13.
The county shall not vacate road segments on waterfronts along any creek, river, lake, bay or gulf access point and shall encourage right-of-way use of these areas for coastal beach and bay access.

POLICY 1.2.2.
Protect beaches, dunes and coastal vegetation from vehicular traffic and from excessive pedestrian traffic.

- Install effective barriers to prevent motor vehicle traffic except in designated parking areas.
- Protect native dune vegetation from pedestrian traffic by providing designated access points.
- Improve available parking at high-use beach sites while protecting beach resources.
• Provide secure bicycle racks at beach sites to encourage bicycle transportation.
• Encourage and promote alternative transportation in areas of beach accesses.
• Encourage efforts to redesign existing beach parking areas so that eventually all parking areas will be located landward of coastal construction control lines.
• Prepare and implement techniques to protect wildlife on the beaches.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3.**
Improve access to parks and recreation facilities for all Sarasota County residents.

**POLICY 1.6.3.**
Continue developing a system consisting of bikeways, footpaths, blueways and/or nature trails, including the consideration of local rails to trails program, linking parks and recreation areas, schools, libraries, beaches and barrier islands with residential areas. Develop guidelines or standards for internal bicycle and pedestrian facilities in these areas.

**PUBLIC BUILDINGS & RELATED FACILITIES CHAPTER**

**OBJECTIVE 2.2.**
Improve access to public library facilities for Sarasota County’s population by providing public transit service, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and access for physically disabled clientele.

**POLICY 2.2.2.**
Bicycle and pedestrian access to public libraries will be provided consistent with Objective 1.4. and Policies 1.4.1. through 1.4.5. of the Transportation Plan in The Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan. Parking at public libraries will be provided consistent with applicable Land Development Regulations.

**POLICY 3.3.3.**
All public schools shall provide bicycle and pedestrian access consistent with Objective 1.4. and Policies 1.4.9. of the Transportation Plan and Section 1006.23, Florida Statutes. Bicycle access to public schools should be incorporated in the countywide bicycle plan, as it is developed consistent with Policy 1.3.3. of the Parks and Recreation and Policy 1.4.1. of the Transportation Plan. Parking at public schools will be provided consistent to applicable Land Development Regulations.

**POLICY 3.3.4.**
Sarasota County will have the lead responsibility for providing sidewalks along the frontage of pre-existing development within the 2-mile distance to ensure continuous pedestrian access to public schools. Priority will be given to cases of hazardous walking conditions, as identified by the Sarasota County School Board, pursuant to Chapter 234.021, Florida Statutes. Specific provisions for constructing such facilities will be included in the Capital Budget adopted each fiscal year.

**POLICY 3.3.6.**
The county and the School Board will work to find opportunities to collaborate on transit and bus routes to better serve citizens and students.
TRANSPORTATION CHAPTER

GOAL 1
It shall be the goal of Sarasota County to develop and maintain a safe, convenient, efficient transportation system that recognizes present need; reflects the Future Land Use Plan and the plans of adjacent jurisdictions; provides for an affordable balance of alternative transportation modes; provides for safe, efficient intermodal transportation linkages; and respects the integrity of environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat.

POLICY 1.1.1.
Develop a financially feasible Countywide Road Construction and Maintenance Program to provide for the construction and maintenance of a thoroughfare system consistent with the adopted Future Thoroughfare Plan and Maps (Figure 6-9: year 2025 Future Thoroughfare Functional Classification; Figure 6-10 Future Thoroughfare Plan By Lanes; and Appendix F, Section 4). Additionally, the Countywide Road Construction and Maintenance Program should establish parking strategies that promote the Transportation Plan goals and objectives; coordinate roadway improvements with the future needs of seaports, airports and other related public transportation facilities; accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists; provide for timely construction of needed capacity, giving preference to the need for roadway projects based on current road conditions and level of service standards over the need for roadway projects to accommodate future needs; and include an annual component consisting of signalization, timing and other types of systems management improvements as a means to attain a more efficient level of service and site specific safety improvements; give the highest priority to roadway projects that alleviate current backlogged roadway conditions.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.
Sarasota County shall provide for a safe, convenient and energy efficient multimodal transportation system.

POLICY 1.3.7.
Maintain provisions in the Sarasota County Land Development Regulations and the Sarasota County Zoning Ordinance to ensure safe internal travel and parking of motorized and nonmotorized vehicles.

POLICY 1.3.13.
Develop a multimodal transportation plan by 2007 for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, transit and trucks that will provide the public additional transportation alternatives, but will not replace, reduce or weaken road concurrency measurements.

OBJECTIVE 1.4.
The Transportation Plan shall enable county residents the opportunity to live and travel utilizing an integrated, intermodal transportation system.

POLICY 1.4.1.
Maintain the Bicycle Plan for Sarasota County (December 1999, as amended) as a coordinated effort between Sarasota County and the Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization and continue to provide for safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian facilities that link new and existing development for both transportation and recreational purposes.
POLICY 1.4.2.
The Bicycle Plan for Sarasota County (December 1999, as amended) shall contain an inventory listing and locator maps of the existing and planned bicycle network.

POLICY 1.4.3.
The Bicycle Plan for Sarasota County (December 1999, as amended) shall contain an inventory of bicycle facilities at county-operated parks, public libraries and public schools, with recommendations for additional facilities and connections to pedestrian and transit facilities, as needed.

POLICY 1.4.4.
The Bicycle Plan for Sarasota County (December 1999, as amended) shall continue to monitor transportation improvements for bicycle consideration and also develop a prioritized list of candidate bicycle network projects for inclusion into the Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

POLICY 1.4.5.
All new construction and reconstruction of collector and arterial roadways shall, where feasible, provide 4-foot paved bicycle lanes or other bicycle paths consistent with the Florida Department of Transportation Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Manual. Where feasible, sidewalks shall be constructed with lateral separation between the outside edge of pavement and the inside edge of the sidewalk of at least 18 feet with open drainage systems and at least 7 feet on roads with closed drainage systems.

POLICY 1.4.6.
Maintain provisions in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage unified developments to provide for bicycle and pedestrian movement in their plans consistent with guidelines and standards contained in the Land Development Regulations.

POLICY 1.4.7.
Maintain provisions in the Land Development Regulations so that all new construction and reconstruction of collector and arterial roadways shall provide for safe pedestrian movement.

POLICY 1.4.8.
All new residential subdivisions with residential lots 1 acre or less in size shall provide for pedestrian access.

POLICY 1.4.9.
All schools, parks and recreation facilities and planned development shall provide pedestrian and bicycle access. Where feasible, sidewalks and bicycle facilities provided with road construction projects shall be connected to existing sidewalks and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the construction.

POLICY 1.4.10.
The Land Development Regulations shall be required to provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages between abutting residential and nonresidential uses, such as shops, office and employment facilities, civic uses, parks and schools, unless not possible.
POLICY 1.4.11.
The county will periodically review its Transportation Plan to ensure consistency with the State Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Regional Policy Plan and the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Long Range Transportation Plan in furtherance of coordinated intermodal management of the region’s surface and water transportation system.

POLICY 1.7.1.
Promote landscaping of multi-lane roadways, via the Street Tree and other applicable programs, considering traffic safety, right-of-way availability and the affordability of capital and maintenance costs. Where adequate right of way exists or can be acquired, landscaped medians shall be the preferred type of center component of roadway sections. During the design and construction phase of roadway projects, promote landscaping along sidewalks and roadways. Landscaping shall be maintained and plant types chosen that will preserve adequate sight distance and ensure visibility of vehicles and pedestrians.

POLICY 1.7.3.
Right of way acquisition for arterial roadways shall include, where feasible, sufficient land for either preservation or development of buffers. The following uses shall be permitted within buffers: noise walls, screens or berms; landscaping; facilities for pedestrian, equestrian or bicycle use; underground utilities; drainage systems components; safety appurtenances; and other environmental mitigation measures.

HOUSING CHAPTER
POLICY 1.6.1.
Ensure a compatible relationship between new housing and circulation patterns and encourage pedestrian and bicycle interconnectivity and transit-friendly communities to minimize traffic impacts and promote healthy lifestyles.

FUTURE LAND USE CHAPTER
The Future Land Use Chapter contains the following policies that include specific bicycle and pedestrian facility requirements for future development and land uses:

POLICY 2.2.5.
POLICY 3.1.4.
POLICY 3.1.10.
POLICY 4.1.1.
POLICY 4.1.3
## LIST OF COMMUNICATIONS OUTREACH

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<td>Lakewood Ranch Running Club</td>
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Manasota Track Club
Sarasota Storm Triathlon Club (formerly Sarasota Sharks/YMCA Triathlon Club)
ShamRockers (club)
Special Olympics of Sarasota
Friends of Sarasota County Parks (FOSCP)
MPO
MPO BPTAC
T-Rec Coalition of Sarasota County
SCOPE
Young Professionals Group
Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
Sheriff’s Office
Boys & Girls Club
Community Haven for Adults & Children with Disabilities, Inc. (CHAC)
Friends of Oscar Scherer Park
Friends of The Legacy Trail
Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations
Sarasota Audubon Society
Ringling College
Venice Area Beautification, Inc. (VABI)
Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County/CHIP
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates

Additional Outreach Methods

- Workshop with diverse stakeholders planning the outreach methods
- Survey, online and in print April - October 2011 (approximately 850 responses in Phase I)
- Printed messages on county utility bills (regarding the survey and plan, two different months)
- Cyclovia event table (two times)
- Sarasota County Web pages and Community Connections email
- Sarasota County Civics 101 classes
- Facebook and Twitter messages
- Link to county’s plan page on survey through other groups’ Web pages, emails, newsletters
- Online wiki discussion
- Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trails Advisory Committee
- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for Public Transportation

Twelve Open House Style Workshops (Phase II)

- Nokomis Community Center
- Laurel Community Center
- Venice Train Depot
- Morgan Family Center, North Port
- Englewood Sports Complex
- Longwood Run Park
- Sabal Palm Bank
- Robert L. Taylor Community Complex
- Bee Ridge Park
- Twin Lakes Park
- Siesta Key Chapel
- Selby Library
REGIONAL PROJECT AREAS

Status

- Completed
- Construction
- Design
- Pending Funds
- Major Roads

Sidewalk Program Prioritization Location Map
(Updated April 2013)
RESOURCES


Safe Routes to School. Retrieved 02 February 2012.
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/introduction/the_decline_of_walking_and_bicycling.cfm


http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012_benchmarking_report/

http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign2011/

http://www.pedbikeimages.org