

Plainfield Sidewalk and Trail Masterplan 2011

Executive Summary

The Town of Plainfield considers improving the access of its citizens and visitors to sidewalks and trails to be a top priority. If this goal is taken to the ideal extreme, every resident or visitor to Plainfield would have a readily available access to the Town's sidewalk and trail system and would be able to use that system to reach all other destinations within the community without having to get in a car. That is a lofty and impractical goal, but it is very useful because it does guide and provide direction to Town leaders.

Plainfield already has the most developed and well-regarded trail system in Hendricks County, and one of the best to be found in Central Indiana. The trail system is frequently noted as one of the primary reasons people live in Plainfield, and the local support for more and improved facilities is strong. But while the trails are the highlight of the Town's alternative transportation system, local officials are very aware that existing sidewalks need attention, especially in the Town's older core. Some neighborhoods and streets lack sidewalks and should have them. Faced with the challenge of determining how to make more improvements, the Town has to consider several key issues:

- Local funding for sidewalk and trail improvements is limited.
- Eligibility for Federal funding for transportation improvements (including roads, trails and sidewalks) has been linked to each community having a formal plan that identifies how it will bring its current system into compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).
- There has not been a formal process or plan in place to identify what improvements are needed.
- Aside from previous plans and aerial photographs, the Town did not have a formal inventory of its existing sidewalk and trail infrastructure, and had not completed a condition assessment.
- The Town needs to identify and balance its priorities, including increasing access to the system, improving safety, removing obstacles to ADA-compliant access, and responding to public input.
- Local leaders want the trail and sidewalk system to continue to be part of its unique offerings.
- The Town's leaders want to have a process and plan that demonstrates their commitment to long-term improvements to the system, and can be a living guide to capital investment decisions.

The Town commissioned the preparation of this Sidewalk and Trail Masterplan to address these complex yet related needs. This effort was developed in three primary steps:

First, a comprehensive inventory was compiled of the Town's existing network of sidewalks, trails and ramps. Using aerial photography augmented with fieldwork, sidewalks and trails were formally added to the Town's GIS mapping. The condition of existing infrastructure was examined, especially ramps. The existing system was examined for the type of service it provides to the alternative transportation user, and all facilities were assigned a level in the existing system as Primary, Secondary, or Tertiary. Trails are the classic example of the Primary system, serving bicycles and pedestrians, and offering a pavement separated from streets. The Secondary System consists of ADA-accessible sidewalks which serve the important role of providing access from residential areas to the Primary System, and also along busier streets. The Tertiary System consists of sidewalks that provide direct access to residential properties and businesses. ***This inventory step provided a current snapshot of the Existing system.***

The second step was to compile a comprehensive picture of ***what improvements are needed and wanted.*** This included an assessment of the existing facilities to determine what projects are needed to achieve ADA-compliance. The condition of existing infrastructure was reviewed. Identifying what improvements are wanted was a much more involved activity. The Masterplanning Consultant began the process by

conducting a map review and providing ideas for new sidewalks and trails. These initial ideas were then reviewed, and modified, by Town staff. The ideas were then presented to the public for comment in several forums including a long term display at the Recreation Center, on-line on the Town's website, and at two public open houses, one each at the Recreation Center and at the Public Library. Many additional modifications were made to the proposed plan based on this feedback. ***This step identified the desired future trail and sidewalk system.***

The final step, which is this Masterplan, is the documentation of this process and the identification of how the Town can get from the existing condition to the system that is desired. In this final step the projects are listed and are evaluated on how they satisfy various goals for access, safety and ADA-compliance. Projects are prioritized and a conceptual overall budget is presented so that the Town can consider its long-term funding objectives.

The Masterplan provides compelling evidence of the Town's tremendous achievements in its development of sidewalks and trails. It also presents a bold challenge to the community:

The Masterplan identifies over 17 miles of new Primary trail facilities which would complement the nearly 20 miles of existing primary trails. The Masterplan also identifies another 6 miles of sidewalks that should be upgraded to Primary trails. These are intended to link the Town's neighborhoods to its current trails, and to improve connectivity and access, especially in the Town's inner core.

The Masterplan includes over 18 miles of new sidewalks, and about 5 miles of needed sidewalk replacements. These are needed to provide ADA-compliant accessibility, and to provide connectivity of the Town's residents with key destinations, especially schools, parks and major retail centers.

All totaled the Masterplanning process identified 46 miles of sidewalk and trail projects and an estimated \$30 million investment. Some of the projects determined to be most needed include:

Primary Trails (all new because the existing primary trails are in good condition):

- Stafford Road, trail on south side from Center Street to Southfield Drive
- Al and Jan Barker Sports Complex to Moon Road and Moon Road: US 40 to Sugar Grove Entrance
- Simmons Street from Stafford to Buchanan

Secondary and Tertiary Sidewalks (a mix of New and Replacement Sidewalks):

- Center Street – two short segments associated with tree problems
- Stafford Road – north side from Center to Harding
- Harding Street – west side from Stafford to Buchanan
- Elm Drive – west side from Tarpon Ave to Oliver Ave
- SR 267 – east and west sides from Krewson Ave to Elm Street
- North and South Mill Street from Buchanan to North Street
- North and South Vine Street from Buchanan to Depot

While this Masterplan provides a detailed list of improvement projects and the process by which they were identified, we acknowledge the "living" nature of such a plan. It is intended to give the Town a guide and direction, but not to prevent the Town from being proactive when new opportunities to improve its sidewalk and trail systems are discovered. The Town has already achieved a lot. Through the steps involved in this Masterplanning process, it has set a foundation from which it will continue to be a leader in the development of alternative transportation systems.