

RAMSEY COUNTY-WIDE

Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan

Executive Summary

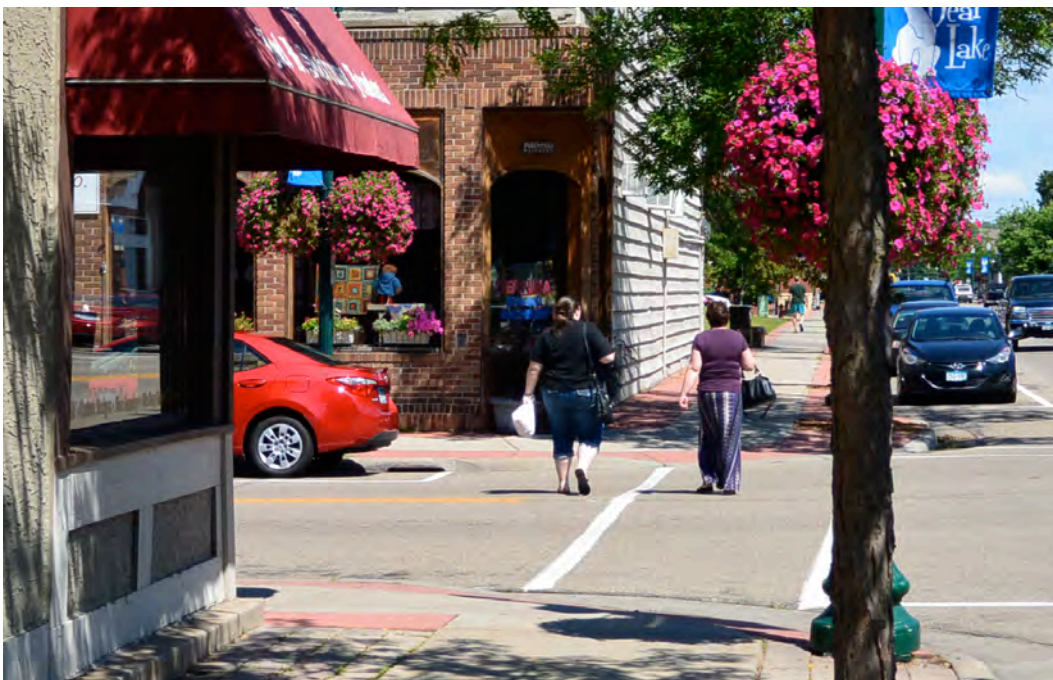
INTRODUCTION

For over 10 years, Active Living Ramsey Communities, with all of its community partners, has facilitated change to create environments that make it safe and easy for everyone of all ages and abilities to be physically active in their daily routine. Active Living Ramsey Communities encourages healthy lifestyles by bringing people and resources together to build active, bikeable and walkable communities. Their vision and collaborative efforts inform all aspects of this plan and support active transportation in Ramsey County.

This plan is a resource and a framework for development of a connected Ramsey County where communities and residents are engaged in the process of building a great place for walking and bicycling.

This is not a typical plan focused on specific projects for an individual jurisdiction, but rather a set of tools, analyses and actions to engage community members at all levels in supporting a place where people of all ages and abilities can safely, easily and comfortably walk and bicycle.

Active Living Ramsey Communities encourages healthy lifestyles by bringing people and resources together to build active, bikeable and walkable communities that make it safe and convenient for people to integrate physical activity in their daily routine.



VISION AND GOALS

VISION:

Pedestrians and bicyclists move freely on a safe and well integrated system that connects people and places in Ramsey County.

Walking and bicycling is a comfortable and integral part of daily life in Ramsey County for people of all ages and abilities.

GOAL 1

Improved Health through Active Mobility for All

GOAL 2

A Complete and Connected Multi-Modal Network

GOAL 3

A Safe Transportation System for Pedestrians and Bicyclists of All Ages and Abilities

GOAL 4

Equity and Social Justice in the Transportation System

GOAL 5

A Coordinated Approach to Filling Gaps in the Pedestrian and Bicycle System

GOAL 6

A Transportation System that Contributes to Sustainable and Prosperous Communities

A walkable and bikable community is one that people of all ages and abilities are able to enjoy.

All ages means that children as young as 8 can walk and bike independently from their parents. It means that the elderly can get around comfortably without a car. Facility needs vary by age and there is no “one size fits all” solution.

All abilities means that those using mobility devices or those with vision impairments are not faced with barriers. Crossings, intersections and facilities must be designed with users of all abilities in mind.

THE STATE OF WALKING & BICYCLING ENVIRONMENT

This section covers the current conditions related to walking and biking in Ramsey County through maps, data and discussion. It explores how population, land use, safety, and infrastructure work together to influence everyday choices related to transportation.

GAPS + BARRIERS ANALYSIS

The Gaps and Barriers Analysis identifies the areas in Ramsey County that are most deficient in walking and bicycling infrastructure and that would benefit the most from investment. Key findings include the following:

- While there is good sidewalk coverage in parts of Ramsey County, such as St. Paul, downtown White Bear Lake and areas of Falcon Heights, other parts of the county do not have good sidewalk coverage, particularly in lower density residential areas.
- For bicycling, county-wide network connections along local roadways may be considered candidates for speed management. By lowering vehicle speeds on local roads, streets may become lower stress and be considered suitable for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.

BUILDING A COMMON LANGUAGE

PRIMERS

Infrastructure Design

- Discusses the infrastructure needed to support a walkable and bikeable community for all ages and abilities. (see example below)

Funding

- An overview of different ways bike and pedestrian facilities are funded.

Legal Primer

- Describes the legal framework for non-motorized transportation at the local, state and federal levels.

Community Engagement

- Shares meaningful strategies for engaging with a diverse set of stakeholders in the transportation planning process.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Active Living Ramsey Communities worked to intentionally expand the number and diversity of voices providing guidance for the plan's development. Working alongside community partners, the project brought engagement to the places where people congregated- setting up booths at neighborhood and community events to make participation easy and fun, and organizing and facilitating meaningful and fun small-group activities. Robust online engagement, including a project website, online survey and an interactive map helped expand the project's reach.

An important consideration for engagement efforts was connecting with under-represented and health-disparity populations. The public comments and recommendations received during the community engagement were brought back into the plan development process to inform multiple aspects of the plan. Engagement with city and agency stakeholders helped to improve coordination and start the groundwork for buy-in and implementation.

Active Living Ramsey Communities enlisted its partners aligned with the overall mission, those with a key stake in or responsibility for implementation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and programs as well as community members who are impacted by safe, efficient and accessible walking and biking facilities. Two advisory committees were engaged throughout the planning process and are described below.

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM

The Project Advisory Team included community advocates, agency and community group representatives and County staff. This team advised the planning team on process and methods and served as liaisons to their representative groups, sharing information about the plan.

SYSTEM ADVISORY TEAM

The System Advisory Team included representatives from municipalities and implementation partners throughout the county, with representatives focused on community and economic development, parks and recreation and public works. This team provided pedestrian and bicycle facility inventories and plans as well as peer review on strategies and analysis.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS CONDUCTED IN 2015 INCLUDED:

- Pop-up workshops/events
 - Rondo Days
 - Lake Phalen WaterFest
 - City of New Brighton Town Hall Meeting
- Listening sessions
 - Olmstead Implementation Office with people with disabilities
 - Cycles for Change

- Active Living Ramsey Communities Coalition
- Active Living Ramsey Communities Biking and Walking Team
- Social and Educational Service Leaders and Practitioners
- Health and Safety Services Leaders and Practitioners
- Community and Economic Development Services Leaders and Practitioners
- Ramsey County Towards Zero Deaths Coalition
- Workshops
 - Alliance for Sustainability
 - Parks Commissions and Trail Committees
 - City of White Bear Lake
- Walking and Biking Audits with Saint Paul Public Housing
 - Residents
 - Resident Councils
 - The Citywide Council
- Community Open House
- Presentations and Meetings
 - Saint Anthony Village Citizens for Sustainability
 - Bike Walk Saint Anthony
 - St. Paul Women on Bikes
 - City of Vadnais Heights
 - Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County
 - Ramsey County Parks Commission
- Project website
- Public survey
 - 578 surveys received from participants
- Interactive online map
 - 466 comments received from 147 participants

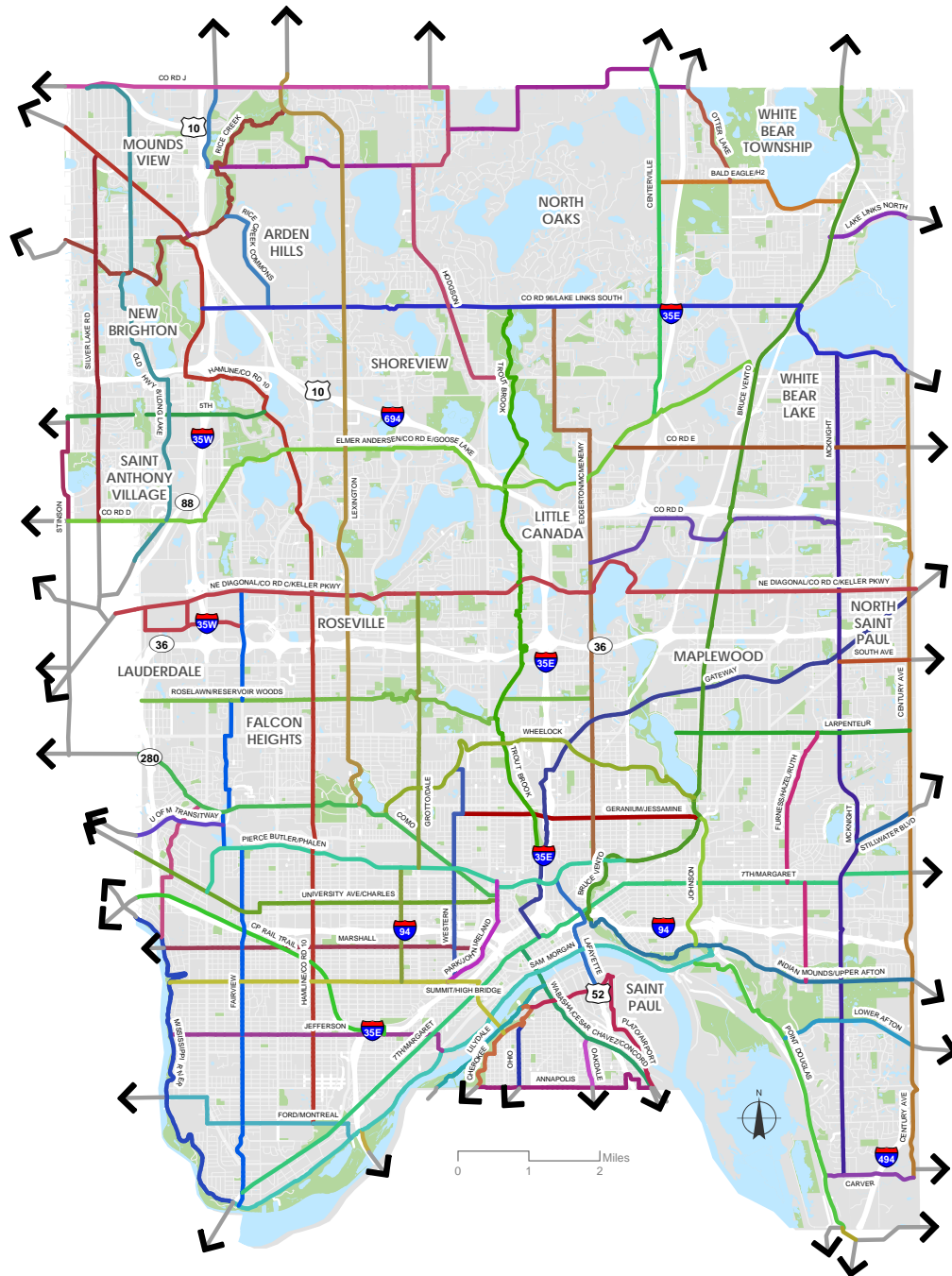
KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS INCLUDE:

1. People walking and biking want more **separation** from motor vehicle traffic.
2. People walk and bike for both **transportation and recreation**.
3. Participants want a **connected network across barriers**.
4. People who have not been involved in planning processes in past—including people of color and people with disabilities—want more opportunities for **meaningful engagement**.
5. **Maintenance**, especially in winter, is important to allow people to walk and bike safely.

CONNECTED RAMSEY COMMUNITIES NETWORK

The Connected Ramsey Communities network is a planning framework for the State, Metropolitan Council, County and local jurisdictions to refer to when planning, prioritizing and designing an active transportation network.

These are the countywide connections that bring people from important place to important place throughout Ramsey County, and when built out to a high quality, will act as a county-wide backbone between communities.



IMPLEMENTATION

SIX PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Connected Ramsey Communities Network

Through collaboration with Ramsey County stakeholders and implementing agencies, establish and build a connected network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The emphasis is on building high quality transportation and recreation facilities.



All Ages and Abilities Network

Identify specific opportunities to support local communities in developing design guidance that support all members of the community. This will include developing walkable and bikeable communities that offer easier access and connections to transit.



Performance Monitoring Report

Publish an annual report to help raise the profile of successes and challenges for walking and bicycling in Ramsey County. Focus on safety, connectivity, health equity, social and economic development and the quality of life improved by the county-wide active transportation system.



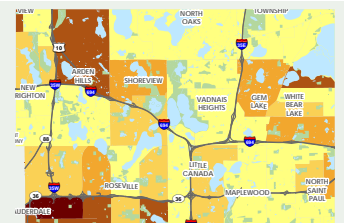
Annual Performance Evaluation Summit

Facilitate an annual forum for communities to evaluate their efforts, share best practices and collaborate on priorities for the coming year. Use this annual meeting as an opportunity to identify successes and discuss challenges.



GIS Clearinghouse

Develop a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) clearinghouse for spatial data related to walking and biking in Ramsey County. It can be used to map, visualize, analyze and interpret data to better understand relationships, patterns and trends related to walking and biking.



Coordinated Count Program

Collaborate in developing a count program that documents the numbers of people using bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks, trails or intersections. Understanding how people use existing facilities can help to prioritize future projects and help evaluate the success of investments.



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