

BCBS Design for Health

Date: 10/25/07

Partner Community: Edina

Plan: Compressive Bicycle Plan

Reviewed by: Design for Health Team

(Dr. Ann Forsyth, Dr. Kevin Krizek, Dr. Carissa Schively Slotterback, Aly Pennucci, and Amanda Johnson)

The Design for Health team is the technical assistance provider for this BCBS-funded project. Reviewing partner community plans is one of the contractual obligations outlined in the agreements. We offer a series of insights and recommendations that can be considered. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us [info@designforhealth.net](mailto:info@designforhealth.net).

### Overall Thoughts

The comprehensive bike plan is a very well written plan. The lay-out is particularly well-done since it provides a nice balance between text and illustrations, which makes it easy to read.

In general, it manages nicely to take a complex issue and break it down into its essential components. Also, it provides a layered system of short and long-term strategies related to planning, design, engineering, programming, and operations. It resonates as a good planning document that provides a wealth of strategies to accomplish the stated objectives. That said, there are opportunities to more directly bridge the work with human health in an innovative fashion.

### Plan strengths

- The concept of Complete Streets is well covered throughout the document. There are opportunities to more fully explore what it means to implement a complete streets policy.
- It advocates a regional framework by focuses on the connections to the surrounding suburbs and to Minneapolis. Moreover, it considers not just residents but those leaving and coming to Edina for work or for shopping.
- It demonstrates a good understanding of the differing needs of bicyclists in relation to individual characteristics (age, ability) and whether or not the intent is for recreation or for more utilitarian purposes.
- All of the primary and secondary routes take into account existing and future land uses. This gives the plan a forward-thinking approach, particularly since it is tied to development.
- There is a great deal of emphasis placed on end-of-trip facilities, which is more than most bicycle plans have. Moreover, it not only highlights the benefits of such facilities, it also recommends where they should be placed.
- As mentioned above, the plan is visually strong due to such design strategies as powerful illustrations, clear language, and balancing white space with text.
- Unlike many separate plans, it connects the work to the other regional, state, and federal policy positions – many of which support nonmotorized planning.

- It uses a hierarchy of destinations to build its network. For example, the primary routes consider community, schools, parks, shopping (Southdale, 50<sup>th</sup> and France, and 70<sup>th</sup> and Cahill) and public facilities as well as the Cedar Lake Trail.
- The recommendations section is particularly strong. The route selection principles, the recommended routes, the recommended treatments, the attention to regional routes and transit are incredibly detailed and thoughtful. For example, the recommended treatments offer a wealth of information related to signs, blue lanes, bike lanes, underpasses, bicycle loop detractors and then links how these design strategies can be used in Edina. Moreover, the end-of-trip and end-of-trip facilities along with the signs, signals and wayfinding are enhanced by images and a list of terms in the Appendix.
- The implementation section provides a list of tasks on a timetable, which are organized by who needs to be included in the decision-making process of each.
- The Appendix offers a series of tools that range from bicycle parking information and design strategies for bike lanes to estimated costs and traffic counts.

### Plan Opportunities

- While the comprehensive plan is mentioned here to highlight the city's commitment to bike planning, it would be most helpful to have explicit language about how this plan will be used in conjunction with the updated comprehensive plan.
- The plan includes a health section, which is good to see. It could be expanded to more fully explore health themes beyond physical activity and even physical activity is dealt with in a very general way. Currently, there is a paragraph that briefly mentions mental-health, social capital, air quality, and safety; however, this section provides an opportunity for elaboration. For more information, please see the Design for Health Planning Information Sheets and Key Question Series (<http://www.designforhealth.net/techassistance/techassistance.html>). While the plan covers safety and accessibility; it would be helpful to embed these topics directly into the health section to more fully tie to the document together.
- In terms of sub-populations, there is not a great deal of emphasis on low-income populations. While there is a bit more information on senior citizens, it could more fully explore how to plan for these groups.
- It would be useful to make more explicit how this document fits into the overarching transportation plan for Edina.
- An overall budget associated with the plan and a direct connection with the city's capital improvements work would help with implementation.
- It recommends hiring a bicycle planner for implementation, programming, fundraising, and managing the entire project. It is a big job and the plan recommends a minimum of 10 hours a week, which seems low. Moreover, it might be helpful to have bicycle planning fall within the transportation arm so as to provide a more overarching strategy for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles.

We wish you the best of luck as your community moves forward with this comprehensive bicycle plan. If you are looking for addition information, please visit [www.designforhealth.net](http://www.designforhealth.net). There you will find plan and plan implementation examples, measurements tools (HIAs), key finding on health research and planning; and a number of ways to systematically examine polices, plan for specialized populations, look for additional funding opportunities, and view progress reports from other partner communities.