

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Wichita Pedestrian Master Plan (Plan) is a guide for how the City of Wichita can improve conditions for walking over the next 10 years. Wichita residents have indicated a desire to improve conditions for walking, and especially to make needed safety improvements. Wichita residents currently walk for 1.3 percent of trips to work, yet pedestrians account for 16.8 percent of traffic fatalities in the city.<sup>1</sup> In addition to a desire for safety improvements, Wichita residents shared the following perspectives about the Wichita pedestrian environment:

- » Twenty six percent of residents in the region felt that the lack of safe and accessible sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities was currently a problem and a further 26 percent felt it is an emerging problem.<sup>2</sup>
- » Improving safety on roadways ranks second out of 16 priority options for roadway improvements for residents in the region.<sup>2</sup>
- » Nearly 93 percent of survey participants agree or strongly agree that Wichita should help seniors, those who are disabled, and low-income residents meet their transportation needs.<sup>3</sup>
- » Forty five percent of citizens rated walking conditions in Wichita as “good” or “excellent.” When compared to other cities of its size, Wichita is considerably below the national benchmark.<sup>4</sup>
- » Sidewalk maintenance was rated a 40 out of 100, much below the nationwide benchmark.<sup>4</sup>
- » The most popular recreational activities in Wichita include: walking for pleasure (#1), dog walking (#4), and nature walks (#9).<sup>5</sup>
- » Residents want to be able to walk to Wichita parks and want help finding their way to trails.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alliance for Biking and Walking. “Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report.” 2014.

<sup>2</sup> WAMPO Household Travel Survey. 2010 - 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Wichita-Sedgwick County Community Investments Plan Community Survey. 2013

<sup>4</sup> National Citizen Survey. 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Wichita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Survey. 2007.

This Plan presents an opportunity for the City of Wichita to build on what residents already find to be valuable community assets, while continuing to improve the pedestrian environment for all users of the transportation system. Walking is the most basic form of transportation. Improving the pedestrian environment – the “walkability” of a place – can result in significant improvements in the public health, safety, and the economic well-being of a community.

## PUBLIC INPUT AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

This Plan reflects public input received throughout the planning process. This included numerous opportunities and different formats for stakeholders to provide input, including: Steering Committee meetings; two (2) public open house events; multiple listening sessions; an online survey; and an online interactive map. Ultimately, the planning process was guided by a Steering Committee of Wichita citizens and stakeholders who were assisted by a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of City staff.

One overarching theme from the public input was a desire to improve conditions for walking in Wichita and make it safer for all pedestrians. Stakeholders emphasized the need to improve the pedestrian network for seniors and children. Making and enhancing connections between and within neighborhoods was also strongly desired. The Vision, Goals, Strategies, and Actions were developed to reflect the public input.

## THE WICHITA PEDESTRIAN PLAN VISION AND GOALS

### *The Wichita Pedestrian Vision*

*By 2024, the City of Wichita will be a pedestrian friendly community and a place where walking is an easy choice in all people's daily lives. Wichita residents and visitors will have access to high quality and safe walking environments that connect all neighborhoods, destinations, and other modes of transportation, while contributing to a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant Wichita.*

### **Goals**

#### **Goal 1: Provide a safe and welcoming pedestrian network**

Improving safety for all roadway users is essential to creating a pedestrian-friendly community.

*Performance Measure Target: Reduce the pedestrian fatality rate by one third over the next 10 years.*

Baseline:

- » The Bicycling and Walking in the United States 2014 Benchmarking Report reports the 2009-2011 Pedestrian Fatality Rate for Wichita at 16.8. Pedestrian Fatalities per 10,000 daily pedestrian commuters is calculated by dividing the average number of annual pedestrian fatalities from crashes with motor vehicles (obtained from KDOT data) by the estimated average annual number of commuters walking to work (obtained from U.S. Census American Community Survey three year estimate) - divided by 10,000.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Alliance for Biking and Walking. “Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report.” 2014.



### ***Goal 2: Improve community accessibility and connections for pedestrians***

Reducing barriers to transportation by building network connections will make the walking environment in the City of Wichita more accessible to everyone.

*Performance Measure Target: Increase the amount of walking in Wichita by 50% over the next 10 years.*

Baselines:

- » The U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates reports that walking is the primary means of transportation to work for 1.3 percent of Wichita resident workers age 16 and over.
- » The 2013 WAMPO bicycle and pedestrian counts conducted for two hour periods on a weekend and a weekday reported 724 pedestrians counted at count locations in Wichita.

### ***Goal 3: Promote a citywide culture of walking***

Providing a citywide environment where walking is available as a comfortable everyday option provides the population of Wichita with more transportation and recreation options.

*Performance Measure Target: Increase the percentage of survey respondents rating ease of walking in Wichita as “excellent or good” to at least 60 percent.*

Baseline:

- » As part of the 2012 National Citizen Survey, 45 percent of Wichita survey respondents rated the ease of walking in Wichita as “excellent” or “good.”



The following ten strategies are recommended for implementation over the next 10 years to achieve the goals and realize the vision of this Plan.

***Strategy 1 - Implement the Design Guidance Included in Chapter 7 of this Plan***

Following a set of comprehensive design guidelines can provide consistent, useful direction to practitioners help reduce crashes, improve access, create a better walking environment, and set consistent expectations for pedestrians. This strategy recommends that the City incorporate this Plan's design guidance into City guidelines, projects and review processes.

***Strategy 2 - Create a Marked Crosswalk Policy***

It is recommended that the City develop a policy to help formalize a consistent approach for marked crosswalks. This will help improve safety and set consistent expectations for all street users. It is also recommended that the City review and update existing marked crosswalks.

***Strategy 3 - Focus Pedestrian Improvement Resources on Improving Safety at Intersections***

Crashes involving pedestrians and motor vehicles typically occur at intersections. Focusing resources on improving the design of intersections is the single best way to reduce the number of crashes and injuries involving pedestrians. It is recommended that the City identify high priority intersections for improvements and include pedestrian safety as a factor in capital projects selection processes.

***Strategy 4 - Provide Sidewalks along Arterial Streets***

It is recommended that the City continue to install sidewalks along arterial streets, and that the City utilize a prioritization process to ensure that new sidewalks are in locations that will have the greatest benefit to the community.

***Strategy 5 - Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure near Senior Centers, Housing and Destinations***

Seniors are encouraged to walk to maintain and promote health, independence, and social interaction. At the same time, the percentage of pedestrian fatalities that involve seniors is

disproportionately high compared to their representation in the general population.<sup>7</sup> It is recommended that the City work with other community partners to respond to requests for improvements along senior walking routes.

### ***Strategy 6 – Improve Safety by Improving Pedestrian Infrastructure near Schools***

It is recommended that the City work with other community partners to identify school walking routes and identify improvements. It is also recommended that the City continue its support of school districts to upgrade school curbside management plans that make it safer to walk to school.

### ***Strategy 7 – Make Maintenance of Pedestrian Infrastructure a Priority***

The City already has a significant network of sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure. Maintaining the existing pedestrian infrastructure is necessary to improve pedestrian safety, encourage more walking, and save money by increasing facility life. It is recommended that the City review and update the process for identifying and prioritizing pedestrian maintenance needs and improve the way that people can report concerns regarding pedestrian facility maintenance.

### ***Strategy 8 - Plant and Maintain Street Trees***

It is recommended that the City continue providing trees along roadways by incorporating street trees in capital projects, and seek funding/partnerships to maintain existing and new street trees.

### ***Strategy 9 – Support Efforts to Encourage Walking to School and Safety Education***

Walking provides freedom and independence to younger populations. It is recommended that the City continue to support partner organizations to encourage and support participation in national “Walk to School Day.”

### ***Strategy 10 – Monitor and Update the Implementation Plan***

It is recommended that the City create an annual work plan and develop an annual progress report. It is also recommended that the City provide training and adequate staffing to implement this Plan.



<sup>7</sup> US Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. “Traffic Safety Facts.” 2012.

Apart from the “Top 10” strategies recommended for implementation over the the next 10 years, there are a number of longer-term strategies that should also be considered including those listed below:

- » Strategy 11– Make Area-Specific Pedestrian Improvements
- » Strategy 12 – Improve Pedestrian Access to Buildings
- » Strategy 13 - Improve Pedestrian Connections to Transit
- » Strategy 14– Encourage Walking for Fun, Health, and Transportation
- » Strategy 15 – Provide Pedestrian Wayfinding
- » Strategy 16 – Support Safety Education Programs that Focus on Changing Pedestrian, Bicycle and Motorist Behavior
- » Strategy 17– Develop Enforcement Strategies that Focus on Changing Pedestrian and Motorist Behaviors that Cause Crashes
- » Strategy 18 – Maintain Pedestrian Access During Construction

## MAKING PROGRESS

---

An essential part of this plan is establishing a process for evaluating progress and adjusting annual work plans to react to identified priorities. Maintaining an annual work plan and progress report can be important to help achieve year to year progress. It can also be important to have a clear understanding of the costs of pedestrian infrastructure, and to identify potential infrastructure and program funding sources.

### *Annual Work Plan and Implementation Progress Report*

Establishing a process for setting short-term targets, ensuring accountability, and celebrating successes can be one of the best ways to make progress implementing this Plan over the next 10 years.



An annual implementation work plan can be used to focus attention on areas identified as lacking, be a mechanism to look for opportunities to take advantage of public and private projects, and a chance to reconsider how resources are being allocated. It should identify annual performance targets for implementation of this plan. A draft 2014-2015 Annual Implementation Work Plan is provided as Appendix G.

To monitor the progress of implementation, a progress report should be prepared on an annual basis. This document should illustrate progress relative to the goals and performance measures expressed in this plan, and provide an opportunity to celebrate major accomplishments. The progress report should be geared toward the public as the primary audience, but can also be used by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board and the City Council as they review progress and recommend future actions.



Figure I: Pedestrian Plan Implementation

**Infrastructure Costs & Potential Funding Sources**

The cost of pedestrian infrastructure varies by location depending on many factors. However, a general sense of the scale of these costs is important for planning and project development. Chapter 5 provides additional information on planning level cost estimates for pedestrian infrastructure. The cost estimate information should only be used for planning level estimates and not for determining actual bid prices for a specific infrastructure project. Cost estimates can be refined as a potential project moves from planning to design and construction. The figure below illustrates how the cost estimates are refined as a project moves through the design process.

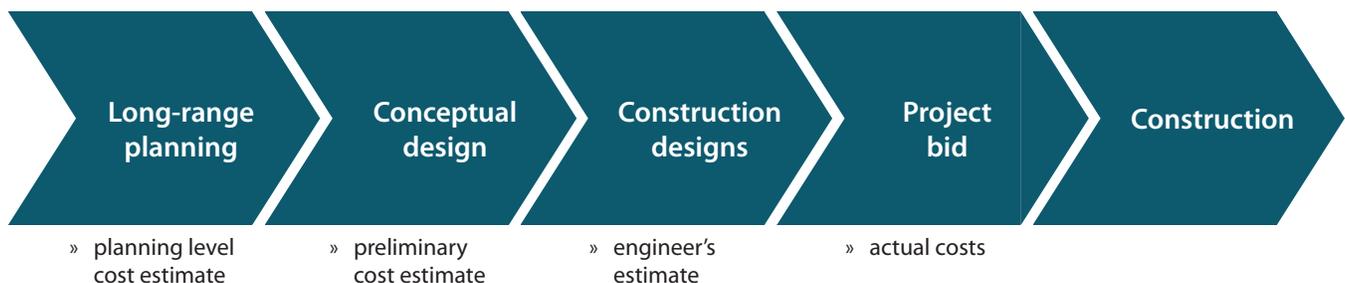


Figure II: Cost Estimates for Planning and Design Phases

Pedestrian projects and programs can be developed either as stand-alone projects or as part of other projects through routine accommodation (e.g. including a crosswalk as part of a repaving project), which generally costs less compared to undertaking a project separately.

Table I: Pedestrian Projects Funding Sources Summary Matrix

Project Type	Local			Federal							Other	
	RA	BGT	CIP	STP	HSIP	402	NHPP	CMAQ	RTP	TAP	P/P	C/R
Pedestrian Plan		X		X							X	
Paved Shoulders	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Shared Use Path/Trail	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Spot Improvement Program	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X
Maps		X		X		X		X		X		
Sidewalks, new or retrofit	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Crosswalk, new or retrofit	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Trail/Highway Intersection	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Signal Improvements	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Curb Cuts/Ramps	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Traffic Calming	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X
Coordinator Position		X						X				
Safety/Education Position		X		X		X				X		
Police Patrol		X				X				X		
Safety Brochure/Book		X		X		X		X	X		X	
Training		X		X		X		X	X		X	
Technical Assistance		X		X				X		X	X	

RA = Routine Accommodation

BGT = Budget

CIP = Capital Improvement Program

STP = Surface Transportation Program

HSIP = Highway Safety Improvement Program

402 = State and Community Highway Safety Program, Section 402

NHPP = National Highway Performance Program

CMAQ = Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

RTP = Regional Trails Program

P/P = Public Private Partnerships

C/R = Private Construction

There are a variety of funding sources that can be used to fund pedestrian projects. The following matrix summarizes funding opportunities and the types of projects or programs they can support:

### Project Prioritization

Local plans and existing guidelines related to walking were reviewed. Comparison communities were also contacted for perspective on how pedestrian issues are addressed. This information helped to provide context for pedestrian related policies and conditions in Wichita.

Establishing implementation priorities is important because resources and timing generally don't allow for every project and improvement to be undertaken at once. It can be challenging for a community to decide which projects to implement first and which to defer. A structured process to prioritize projects with respect to the Pedestrian Plan's goals can help in this decision making process. The following criteria are suggested for prioritization (see Chapter 3):

- » Does it improve pedestrian safety at priority intersections?

- » Does it serve students?
- » Does it serve the senior population?
- » Does it fill in a gap in the existing system?
- » Is it on a Safety Corridor?
- » Is it on a transit route?
- » Does it connect to retail / service destinations?
- » Does it connect to a public park or public amenity?
- » Does it address a public concern?

## DESIGN TREATMENTS

---

Design treatments are intended to guide the design and construction of pedestrian facilities. The Plan proposes best practice for 30 pedestrian design treatments (Chapter 7). Each treatment includes a definition, the benefits of applying the treatment, design considerations, the crash reduction factor, a photo example, a graphic showing design best practices, and additional resources. The project team reviewed existing City and State design guidance and incorporated the latest national research into the recommendations.

The pedestrian design treatments suggested address roadway crossings, intersection geometry, and traffic calming. For example, roadway crossing treatments include detailed information on marked crosswalks, crossing islands, and mid-block crossings. Similarly the intersection geometry section in Chapter 7 is focused on best practices to make intersections safer for all modes, and incorporates detailed information on elements such as curb ramps and extensions and right turn slip lanes.

