

# Wichita Bicycle Wayfinding System Plan Technical Report #2

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## Community Assessment, Project Objective, and Destinations

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Wichita and neighboring communities have taken great strides in recent years to lay the foundation for a world-class bicycle transportation and recreation system. The region's commitment to bicycling can be seen in the 70 miles of shared use paths, the small but growing network of on-street bikeways, and a recently completed Bicycle Master Plan to guide future investments in bicycle facilities. As the network of trails, bike lanes, and other bicycle facilities continues to grow, residents and visitors will have greater access to local and regional destinations.

System-wide wayfinding is a vital component of any bicycle network:

- improving access to popular destinations,
- creating a consistent brand and identity for the network, and
- increasing bicycling as a viable mode of transportation.

The Wichita Bicycle Wayfinding System Plan (Wayfinding Plan) is intended to serve as a guide for the City of Wichita with recommendations for how the City should use bicycle wayfinding to improve conditions for bicycling in Wichita and implement the Wichita Bicycle Master Plan. In order to inform the development of the Wayfinding Plan, this memorandum documents:

- related recommendations from the Wichita Bicycle Master Plan;
- existing and planned bicycling facilities;
- community needs;
- project vision; and
- popular destinations and landmarks.

## WICHITA BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

Below is a brief overview of the Wichita Bicycle Master Plan and recommendations related to bicycle wayfinding; and brief highlights of the progress to-date.

### *Plan Overview*

Adopted by the City Council in February of 2013, the Wichita Bicycle Master Plan (Bicycle Plan) serves as the City's guiding document for investments in bicycle facilities and programming. The plan envisions "an



interconnected network of on- and off-street bicycle facilities that accommodates bicycle riders of all skills levels; and links all areas of the City of Wichita – including employment centers, schools, parks, and other activity centers.” The Bicycle Plan goals are listed below.

Goal 1: Increase the amount of bicycling in Wichita

Goal 2: Improve the safety of bicyclists in Wichita

Goal 3: Foster and promote a culture where bicycling is a viable and acceptable form of transportation

In addition to the 770 miles of recommended bicycle facilities, the Bicycle Plan Strategy 2 recommends the development for a bicycle wayfinding system as an integral strategy to increase bicycling. As noted in the plan, wayfinding signs, markers and supporting materials help to “visually connect the bicycle network, allowing bicyclists to reach their destination with minimal or no use of a map.” Action steps associated with this strategy include:

- adopting a wayfinding protocol,
- creating a wayfinding plan,
- prioritizing wayfinding improvements,
- applying for funding, and
- installing the wayfinding system.

### ***Implementation Progress***

The City’s Wichita Bicycle Master Plan 2014 Annual Implementation Progress Report indicates that the City has not met its annual target of an average of 20 miles of signed bicycle routes installed each year. However, the City did achieve success with regard to the wayfinding strategy by working with community partners to develop a wayfinding project along the K-96 Path and draft a memorandum of understanding for a wayfinding signage donation.

## WAMPO REGIONAL PATHWAY SYSTEM PLAN

Below is a brief overview of the WAMPO Regional Pathway System Plan.

### *Plan Overview*

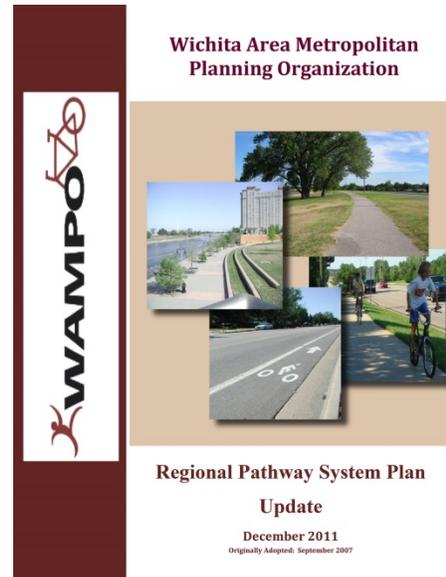
Developed by the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in 2007 and updated in 2011, the WAMPO Regional Pathway System Plan (RPSP) identifies primary east/west and north/south corridors that connect most of the communities in the WAMPO region. These regional corridors create a framework for biking facilities and help lay the foundation for identifying missing links. The regional corridors can be looked at as a backbone system that connects existing and future bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

The principal function of WAMPO is to serve as a regional forum for transportation decision-making.

The plan addresses the following in order to meet the needs of the WAMPO region for creating connectivity, optimizing safety, and encouraging bicycling and walking to local and regional destinations:

- Multimodal transportation needs at a regional scale
- Integration of bicycles and cars
- Cohesive transportation networks accommodating all modes of transportation
- Specific public infrastructure and private land use improvements to encourage pedestrian travel
- Site-specific projects and local planning to accomplish regional goals
- Needs for building new facilities
- Relevancy to WAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035
- Performance measures determining effectiveness of WAMPO MTP 2035
- Timeline of plan and implementation

Key observations of existing conditions in the region and recommendations for enhanced bicycling and walking are described. They include regional development patterns, network connectivity, and steps to move towards implementation.



## WICHITA BICYCLE NETWORK

Wichita's growing bicycle transportation system is a reflection of the community's interest in bicycling for both recreation and transportation. The City of Wichita and its neighboring communities have responded to this increased desire for active recreation and alternative transportation, constructing shared use paths like the Arkansas River Path and the Canal Hike and Bike Trail, and on-street bikeways like the bicycle lanes on 1st and 2nd Streets. While these existing bikeways encourage and support bicycling activity, the lack of a uniform and comprehensive wayfinding system presents challenges to both residents and visitors who wish to access destinations and services throughout the region.

### *Shared Use Paths*

Shared use paths represent the largest single bicycle facility type in the Greater Wichita area. Located along rivers and streams, in abandoned rail line rights-of-way, adjacent to interstate corridors, and within major parks and open spaces, 72 miles of shared use paths in Greater Wichita are enjoyed by bicyclists of all ages and abilities, from families with small children and seniors with limited physical mobility to daily commuters and avid recreational cyclists. Major paths in the region include:



- Arkansas River Path
- K-96 Bicycle Path
- McAdams Bicycle Path
- Canal Hike and Bike Trail
- Gypsum Creek Bicycle Path
- I-35/Gypsum Creek Connection
- Prairie Sunset Trail

More than 45 of the 72 miles of shared use paths are located within the City of Wichita. Their accessibility, comfort, and minimal interaction points with motor vehicle traffic make shared use paths appealing to both recreational bicyclists and commuter/utilitarian bicyclists alike. Because the majority of shared use paths are linear

in nature, rather than a circle or loop path located within a park, these facilities have great potential to connect residents and visitors to many of the region’s great cultural, civic, commercial, and recreational amenities.

### ***Sidepaths***

Sidepaths are an integral component of the bicycle transportation and recreation network in Wichita. These bicycle facilities are similar in character to shared use paths, offering a paved travel surface for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized users, but are located adjacent to roadways rather than in a separate corridor. Because of their position within a roadway’s right-of-way, there are some



unique opportunities and challenges inherent to these facilities. For example, sidepaths can serve as an ideal connector between shared use paths and popular destinations, providing a comfortable and accessible facility for most bicyclists. However, their proximity adjacent to the roadway creates additional conflict points with motor vehicle traffic, particularly along roadways with numerous side streets and driveways.

There are approximately 51 miles of sidepaths in Greater Wichita. The 18 miles of sidepaths within the City of Wichita function as extensions to the shared use path system, connecting separate shared use paths to one another and to nearby destinations. In neighboring communities like Maize, Derby, and Andover, sidepaths are the most prevalent bicycle facilities and function as the major spines of these local bicycle networks.

### ***On-Street Bikeways***

The system of on-street bikeways in Greater Wichita is still in its infancy. Within the City of Wichita, there are 7.5 miles of bicycle lane miles. The most prominent bicycle lanes are located on 1st Street and 2nd Street, Westdale Drive, and Mount Vernon. Outside of the City, paved shoulders provide bicycle facility on roads like South Meridian and South Broadway near Haysville, and 21st Street west



of Wichita. In addition to these designated bicycle facilities, many people bicycle on roadways without separate bicycle facilities.

## Community Needs Related to Bicycle Wayfinding

Based on previous bicycling projects, and research and observations by the project team, the following Wichita community needs have been identified related to bicycle wayfinding:

- more connections for people bicycling;
- increased awareness of recommended locations for bicycling;
- providing information about bicycling travel time; and
- assistance with navigation.

Based on observations and discussions for this project, it is recommended that the bicycle wayfinding system should be oriented towards those who ride for recreation as well as transportation.

### *Connections*

Wichita residents and stakeholders have indicated a need for increased connections for people bicycling. The Wichita Bicycle Master Plan survey showed that the most frequent reason why participants find bicycling difficult in Wichita and neighboring areas is that “bicycle lanes are too few, and are not interconnected.”

### *Awareness*

Wichita stakeholders have also indicated an opportunity and need for increased awareness of recommended locations for cycling in the City. As part of the 2007 Wichita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan survey, nearly 20 percent of respondents indicated that they did not use trails or pathways in Wichita because they did not know where they are located. This was followed closely by the response that the facilities were too far away and not conveniently located. The bicycle wayfinding system can increase



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awareness of existing facilities and is also a great opportunity to raise awareness of cycling, including for those who prefer to drive.

### *Travel Time*

National best practices show that the Wichita community has a need for information about the bicycling travel time to destinations. Studies from other US cities have shown that the time to reach a destination on a bicycle is a significant perceived barrier. A wayfinding system can help address this barrier by including estimated bicycling travel time in minutes to destinations.

### *Navigation*

People bicycling on the existing Wichita bicycle facilities have expressed a need for wayfinding to help identify the routing of some existing paths. Intersections, route interruptions, non-intuitive routes, and locating off-route destinations, are all navigational challenges that Wichita cyclists encounter. A bicycle wayfinding system can help address these challenges through the use of confirmation signage that indicates which route people are bicycling, destination signage, and guidance where bicycle facilities intersect.

### Community Identity

Several themes are strongly ingrained into the identity of Wichita. An internet survey of Wichita logos and visual references repeated the following core elements: agriculture and wheat, airplanes, and sunshine. The Keeper of the Plains and Wichita City flag are also popular visual identifiers.



## BICYCLING DESTINATIONS

As the City's bicycle network continues to grow, more and more trips will be taken for transportation and recreation purposes.

Wayfinding information will assist all bicyclists traveling to, from, and between destinations and services.

Following the first principle, "connect places," this section describes an approach for selecting and prioritizing the potential destinations to which cyclists may want to travel. Bicycle signs only allow for three slots of information or destinations per sign. Thus, a consistent approach to selecting destinations to be included on wayfinding elements is necessary given the multitude of potential destinations possible. Signs should follow the same approach throughout the region so that the system is clear and predictable. Destinations and their names should be referred to consistently until they are reached.

This list of destinations will be further refined and prioritized during the wayfinding system plan process in order to best accommodate the specific needs of the Wichita community.



### *Level 1 – Municipalities*

Level 1 destinations include cities found within the Greater Wichita area. Highlighting cities provides large scale geographic orientation in support of regional cycling. Level 1 destinations provide "pull through" destinations for cyclists who are travelling significant distances. Bicycle facilities that extend beyond the boundaries of the Greater Wichita region may include prominent destination cities outside of the metro region. If a town does not include an activity center and services, it may be excluded from signs.

Recommended Level 1 destinations include:

- Andale
- Bel Aire
- Derby
- Eastborough
- Garden Plain
- Goddard
- Haysville
- Kechi
- Maize
- Park City

- Valley Center
- Wichita (for cities outside of Wichita)

At the primary level, it may also make sense to refer to areas of Wichita in terms of large geographic regions or readily understood locations such as northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast.

### ***Level 2 – Districts + Neighborhoods***

Level 2 destinations provide a finer grain of navigational information than level 1 destinations by directing users to comprehensible districts and neighborhoods. These may be city centers, post-secondary educational institutions, historic, commercial, cultural, and/or neighborhoods with a distinct name and character. Emphasis should be placed on districts providing a mix of services. Neighborhoods not offering services or attractions, need not be included.

- Downtown Wichita
- Old Town
- Delano Shopping Core District
- Commerce Street Arts District
- Douglas Design District
- McAdams Neighborhood Core District
- Friends University
- Newman University
- Wichita State University
- Wichita Area Technical College
- 21st Street International Marketplace District
- Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport
- McConnell Air Force Base
- *Riverside Neighborhood*
- *College Hill Neighborhood*
- *Midtown Neighborhood*

### ***Level 3 – Landmarks + Regional Destinations***

Level 3 destinations are specific landmarks or attractions which attract a regional audience. Landmarks include transit stations, major tourist venues, major medical centers, major shopping centers, regional parks, and civic buildings.

- Sedgwick County Zoo
- Sedgwick County Fairgrounds
- Great Plains Transportation Center
- The Keeper of the Plains
- Botanica Wichita
- Old Cowtown Museum
- Union Station
- Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum
- Wichita Art Museum
- Wichita Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Wichita Transit Center
- Exploration Place
- Intrust Bank Arena
- Century II Convention Center

- Kansas Fire Fighters Museum
- Mid-American All Indian Center
- Wichita City Hall
- Kansas African American Museum
- Frank Lloyd Wright Allen House Museum and Study Center
- Carnegie Library Building
- Decorative Arts Collection Museum
- Epic Center
- Lawrence Dumont Stadium
- Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall
- Wichita Boathouse & Kansas Sports Hall of Fame
- Wichita Farm & Art Market
- Wichita Ice Center
- Wichita Water Walk
- Hartman Arena
- Kansas Coliseum
- Eck Stadium & Tyler Field
- Lake Afton Public Observatory
- Valley Center Historical Museum
- Ulrich Museum of Art
- Wichita Center for the Arts
- Clearwater Historical Society Museum
- Souder Historical Farm Museum
- Kansas Aviation & Museum Library
- Holmes Museum of Anthropology
- The Original Pizza Hut Building
- Museum of World Treasures
- Great Plains Nature Center
- Veterans Memorial Park
- Tanganyika Wildlife Park
- Cheney State Park
- Sedgwick County Park
- Chisholm Creek Park
- Alfred McDonald Park
- Dr. Glen Dey Park
- Planeview Park
- Chapin Park
- Pawnee Prairie Park
- Brooks Tract Park
- Central Riverside Park
- Watson Park
- South Lakes Park
- North Riverside Park
- O.J. Watson Park
- Arkansas River Trail
- Redbud Path
- Downtown Bikeway
- K-96 Path
- Gypsum Creek Path
- Canal Path
- Towne East Mall
- Towne West Mall
- Bradley Fair
- Westlink Shopping Center
- Indian Hills
- New Market Square
- Clifton Square
- Via Christi St. Francis Medical Center
- Wesley Medical District
- Via Christi St. Joseph Medical Center

### ***Level 4 - Local Destinations***

Level 4 destinations are local destinations such as local parks, recreation centers, libraries, high schools, and shopping centers. They typically occur on signs in low density areas where few other destinations are present or along bikeways not connecting higher priority level 1-3 destinations.

- Kellogg pedestrian bridge at Pattie Street
- Kellogg pedestrian bridge at Chautauqua
- I-135 pedestrian bridge at Park St/East Rivera St.
- I-135 pedestrian bridge at Wassall St.
- Boston Recreation Center
- Colvin Recreation Center
- Edgemoor Recreation Center
- Evergreen Recreation Center
- Linwood Recreation Center
- Lynette Woodard Recreation Center
- McAdams Recreation Center
- Orchard Recreation Center
- Atwater Neighborhood Resource Center
- Colvin Neighborhood Resource Center
- Evergreen Neighborhood Resource Center
- Aley Swimming Pool
- Boston Swimming Pool
- College Hill Swimming Pool
- Evergreen Swimming Pool
- Harvest Swimming Pool
- Linwood Swimming Pool
- McAdams Swimming Pool
- Minisa Swimming Pool
- Orchard Swimming Pool
- Wichita Central Library
- Alford Library
- Angelou Northeast Library
- Comotara Library
- Evergreen Library
- Linwood Park Library
- Rockwell Library
- Westlink Library
- East High School
- West High School
- Southeast High School
- Heights High School
- Northwest High School
- Metro Boulevard High School
- Metro-Meridian High School
- South High School
- Independent High School
- Northeast High School
- Maize High School
- Kapaun Mt Carmel High Catholic High School
- Wichita Collegiate School
- Bishop Carroll Catholic High School
- Local parks