

Introduction

City of Clearwater Vision

“Sparkling Clearwater is a uniquely beautiful and vibrant waterfront community that is socially and economically diverse, that reinvests in itself, and is a wonderful place to live, learn, work and play.”

The development of a non-motorized system of transportation is a critical element to achieve this vision. Non-motorized transportation, specifically walking and bicycling, benefit City residents and visitors in areas of health and physical fitness, environment, transportation and economic development.

Healthy Communities

In a country where obesity is now a major crisis and at the national forefront, the City of Clearwater strives to be a healthy community. Regular exercise, including bicycling and walking, has enormous benefits. People who exercise have lower risks of heart disease and stroke, and an increased chance of remaining independent as they age. Obesity increases the risk of developing

numerous health conditions including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, post-menopausal breast cancer, endometrial cancer, gall bladder-disease, osteoarthritis, and obstructive sleep apnea.

Environment

Bicycling and walking help improve our environment by reducing motorized vehicle trips in the community. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, motorized vehicles contribute greatly to air pollution and they are the primary cause in most urban areas. On the other hand, walking and bicycling do not create any air pollution.

Transportation

A good walking and bicycling environment increases our travel alternatives. The transportation benefits of walking and bicycling include an increase in our overall mobility and a reduction in traffic congestion. The 2001 National Household Transportation Survey revealed that 62% of all trips are less than 5 miles in length. When considering this distance, it is feasible



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for more people to walk and bike instead of using motorized transportation.

Economic Benefits

There are both personal and community economic benefits to walking and bicycling. Personally, walking and bicycling is much less expensive than operating a motorized vehicle. The average annual cost of bicycling is about \$120 (according to the American League of Cyclists), while the corresponding average cost of operating a car is \$5,000 (according to AAA).

A connected bicycling and walking network will make Clearwater more attractive as a place to live and work. It adds vitality, brings tourism and contributes to Clearwater's identity. The Pinellas Trail alone generates a million users annually including many tourists.

Shifting Gears

Shifting Gears: A Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was developed to provide a blueprint and a comprehensive approach to walking and bicycling in the City of Clearwater.

This Master Plan is presented in six chapters:

1. Community Involvement Plan

This Master Plan is a product of our community. The Community Involvement Plan outlines the avenues utilized to foster community participation.

2. Goals and Objectives

This chapter presents the goals and objectives as created through the Community Involvement Plan. The goals are divided into Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Encouragement.

3. Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions chapter presents the snapshot of our community. This chapter includes presentations and evaluations of our existing education programs, policies and planning documents, roadway conditions and trails.



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4. **Bicycling and Walking Demand**

This chapter presents the methodology and the results of the walking and bicycling demand within the City.

5. **Project Prioritization**

Prioritization methodology results are presented for the infrastructure improvements component of the Implementation Plan.

6. **Implementation Plan**

The final chapter presents the elements needed to achieve the goals and objectives of this Master Plan.