

Chapter 3

Community Input



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3.1 Community Input

The community involvement process consisted of several key strategies designed to encourage participation and feedback from the greatest possible number of people. Public outreach included a web-based survey, a 4-day series of public meetings and a series of stakeholder meetings. Information about the development of the plan and survey were also available at the Bike Lexington event in 2006 and 2007.



2006 Bike Lexington participant completes a survey

Survey

A questionnaire was developed at the beginning of the planning process to elicit feedback from the community regarding their preferences for biking and walking in Fayette and Jessamine Counties. The survey questions were developed to determine such things as:

- Their level of comfort and/or skill riding a bike;
- How frequently they walked and/or biked;
- Where they walked and/or biked;
- Whether they walked and/or biked for commuting, recreation or other reasons;
- Whether there were barriers for biking and walking;

- What kinds of enhancements would encourage people to bike and walk; and
- Comments about biking and walking not addressed by the survey.

The online survey was open for citizens to complete for approximately two months. The survey was available at a number of community locations and was distributed at a series of public meetings. Over 600 residents of Fayette and Jessamine Counties completed the survey. All responses were entered into a database and analyzed. The following are key points that can be concluded from the survey results.

General:

- The age distribution of respondents was fairly even, along with the division between male and female respondents. Most respondents lived in Lexington and were not part of a pedestrian or bicycle club.

Both bikers and walkers:

- Cited the desire to walk/bike more on trails.
- Reported the need for sidewalks and bike lanes on major roads.

When responding to questions about walking, most respondents:

- Rated the conditions for walking as fair to poor.
- Walk for recreation or exercise purposes three or more times per week.
- Rarely walk between home, school or other destinations.
- Cited distance as a deterrent to walking for purposes other than recreation.
- Primarily walk on the sidewalk.
- Indicated that not enough trails is the leading reason they do not walk more followed by the need for sidewalks, safer intersection crossings and reduced trip distances.





Bike Lexington 2007

When responding to questions about biking, most respondents:

- Were bicyclists of an intermediate skill level.
- Rated conditions for bicycling as poor.
- Were concerned about traffic and aggressive drivers.
- Bicycle primarily for recreation purposes and rarely between home, work, school or to other destinations.
- Ride on neighborhood streets, but would like to bicycle more on off-street trails and major roads.
- Cited concerns about traffic as the main reason why they don't bicycle more.
- Indicated that dedicated bicycle lanes, trails and paved shoulders would encourage them to bicycle more.
- Felt there were missing links and connections between existing bicycle facilities.

A small number of write-in responses revealed that some people do not walk or bicycle due to laziness or lack of time. Building our community and infrastructure in such a way that walking and biking are easily incorporated into people's daily routines could help increase physical activity levels by making it easy and convenient to bike and walk.

Public Meetings

The planning process required significant community input to understand how citizens view the walking and biking environment. Public meetings were held:

May 31, 2006: Jessamine County Public Library, Nicholasville

June 1, 2006: Northside Public Library, Lexington

June 2, 2006: Luce Activity Center at Asbury College, Wilmore

June 3, 2006: Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Lexington



Asbury College hosted the Wilmore public meeting in May, 2006.

The goal of the meetings was to initiate a discussion with the public about the bicycle and pedestrian environments in both counties and to receive input and feedback about the planning process. The purpose was to talk specifically about attendees' experiences walking and biking in their communities. Active participation and feedback was encouraged at all meetings. Survey forms and maps of Jessamine and Fayette Counties were available for attendees to provide their thoughts.

A sample of comments heard at the public meetings are listed below. A full summary of the public meetings is included in Appendix C.

- "I want to be able to walk to something if I can see it."
- "I'd like to see a paved trail between Nicholasville and the Fayette/Jessamine County line that runs parallel to Nicholasville Road."
- "I'd like to see a bike lane on Main Street in Nicholasville from one end of the bypass to the other."



- “The gaps in the sidewalks should be filled in. Put sidewalks in more places where there aren’t any—have you tried walking on Nicholasville Road?”
- “My son is trapped in our neighborhood because there’s no connectivity.”
- “This effort (bike and pedestrian plan) needs to start with the disabled and aging people – what they need to get around.”
- “Major roads/crossings are unfriendly—New Circle Road is a barrier.”
- “There are lots of good places to walk; people just don’t take advantage of the opportunities out there.”
- “Enforcement is a big issue – especially in rural areas.”



Discussion after the Nicholasville meeting



North Lexington meeting



South Lexington meeting

The Final Draft of the Master Plan was distributed throughout the region and on the MPO website. Comments from the public were solicited for 30 days prior to the Final Draft adoption by the Transportation Policy Committee on August 22, 2007.

3.2 Stakeholder Input

Interviews with key stakeholders were conducted to better understand the needs and concerns of specific user groups and organizations. An initial list of potential stakeholders was developed; stakeholders not represented on plan oversight committees such as the MPO’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC), the plan’s Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) and the MPO’s Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), were individually interviewed. The list of stakeholder meetings included:

- Fayette County Schools (June 2, 2006)
- Bluegrass Council of the Blind (June 17, 2006)
- Disabled community (June 23, 2006)
- Senior Citizens (July 12, 2006)
- Bluegrass Cycling Club (February 17, 2007)

Each of these groups had different insight into what a bicycle and pedestrian plan should contain, promote and be, in order to accommodate their needs. They were able to identify both specific facility needs (such as missing connections or places where repair is needed) as well as policy needs to improve service. All of the input gathered at these meetings was considered during the planning process and incorporated into the plan as much as possible. For additional information on input from these specific stakeholder groups, refer to Appendix C.





Tour of downtown Lexington reveals many inadequacies such as curb ramps that are not ADA compliant

3.3 Technical Input and Policy Oversight

Technical input and guidance was provided throughout the planning process by the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) provided policy oversight and guidance. Each of these groups and their role in the development of the plan is discussed in more detail below.

Technical Oversight Committee (TOC)

This committee provided technical guidance in the areas of planning, traffic, engineering and maintenance, and included representation from LFUCG, the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Jessamine County, and the City of Nicholasville.

The TOC was instrumental in providing guidance on different elements of the plan, and the steps necessary for adoption and implementation.

Lexington Area MPO Transportation Policy Committee (TPC)

The TPC is the policy and decision-making body of the MPO and is comprised of representatives from Jessamine County, Wilmore, Nicholasville and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County governments. Presentations to the TPC were made at the beginning of the planning process, following the four initial public meetings, and to present the final draft of the plan.

Lexington Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC)

A sub-committee of the Lexington Area MPO, the BPAC advises the TPC about non-motorized transportation needs and projects. The committee was apprised of the progress on the plan at their monthly meetings to ensure that the group was informed and given the opportunity to provide input throughout the planning process.

To ensure good communication between all groups, the BPAC committee chair was a member of the TOC. Several other BPAC members also participated in other meetings.



Dave Elbon (left) 2006 BPAC chair and Scott Campbell (right) 2007 BPAC chair flank Dexter Porter at the November 2006 BPAC meeting at Asbury College

