

# Memorandum

## Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO)

**TO:** David L. Corliss, Lawrence City Manager

**FROM:** Bart Rudolph, L-DC MPO Transportation Planner

**CC:** Scott McCullough, Planning and Development Services Director  
Todd Girdler, L-DC MPO Senior Transportation Planner

**DATE:** September 30, 2009

**RE:** City Commission Goals Update – Community Building: Seeking educational and publicity opportunities to encourage recreational activities including walking and bicycling downtown.

This report updates the City Commission on educational and publicity opportunities to encourage recreational activities including walking and bicycling downtown, a stated goal of the 2009 City Commission goal setting work session.

The Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO), Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), and the Planning and Development Services department are currently involved in a number of projects aimed to bolster the City's efforts to increase bicycle and pedestrian activity. Outlined below are current efforts and other ideas to move forward on this issue.

### **Current Efforts**

- The City is constructing the Burroughs Creek Rail to Trail project adding a significant biking/walking/jogging trail to the City's trail network.
- The L-DC MPO is working with the BAC to create a Bicycle Map that will highlight the most bicycle-friendly streets in Lawrence and allow cyclists to choose the most appropriate route based on their skill level. The map will also include bicycle safety information and highlight bicycle parking areas available downtown. The map is scheduled to be printed and available for distribution by December 31, 2009.
- MPO, PDS and Public Works staff have begun working on the development of a Sidewalk Master Plan. The plan will identify "gaps" where sidewalks need to be installed and include a decision matrix to help prioritize where investments should be made. An updated inventory of existing sidewalks will also accompany this plan and is expected to be complete in early 2010.
- The L-DC MPO is acquiring data to better document the number of bicyclists and pedestrians in Lawrence. Manual bicycle and pedestrian counts were

gathered by volunteers in September and the final report is expected in October 2009.

- The BAC is working to amend its bylaws and expand its membership to include representation from the three smaller cities (Lecompton, Baldwin City, and Eudora) in Douglas County. The BAC will then begin work on creating a county-wide Bikeway System Map and plan for future bicycle facilities that connect all four cities in Douglas County.
- City staff will be attending a presentation and “walkabout” with Mark Fenton on October 6, 2009. Mark Fenton is a nationally recognized authority on public health issues and the need for community, environmental and public-policy initiatives to encourage more walking and bicycling. He serves as the health representative to the four-person executive committee of the Partnership for a Walkable America and is the former editor-at-large of Walking Magazine; Fenton now hosts the new PBS series “America’s Walking.”
- Staff will be meeting with faculty, staff, and students from Kansas University on October 7, 2009 who are interested in developing a campaign to promote biking and walking to and on campus and will discuss the possibility of creating a community-wide campaign.
- The L-DC MPO will be hosting a Complete Streets presentation by Dom Nozzi on October 19, 2009. Dom Nozzi is an authorized speaker from the National Complete Streets Coalition and will discuss the importance and process of incorporating Complete Streets into regional plans policies and manuals. Instituting a Complete Streets policy ensures that transportation agencies routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.
- The PDS department will be hosting a webinar entitled *Performance Measurement in Transportation Planning* on January 20, 2009. The webinar will discuss how communities measure livability and find a balance between speed-based measures and measures that support non-motorized transportation.

### **Suggestions to further promote bicycling and walking**

- Establish a goal to become a Bicycle Friendly Community at the silver, gold or platinum level. Lawrence has been a bronze level community since 2000.
- Continue to expand the bicycle and pedestrian network to increase connectivity.
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy. Every street should accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists and transit users of all abilities and ages.
- Increase the amount of secure bicycle parking downtown and throughout the community. Provide monitored bicycle parking at special events to raise awareness of alternative forms of transportation and encourage bicycling where vehicular parking may be limited.
- Provide bicycling education opportunities for adults. Utilize the knowledge and expertise of local League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Cycling Instructors to teach courses that expand cycling education like *Smart Cycling* or *Traffic Skills* 101. <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/courses.php>

- Implement a Safe Routes to School program at all public elementary schools. The Police, Public Works and PDS departments should partner with each school to assess the conditions for walking and biking to each school. A plan should be developed listing all of the potential problems or impedances to walking and bicycling and measures should be identified to address those issues.  
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>
- Expand the reach of the bicycle safety campaigns during Bicycle Safety Month in May. Partner with bicycle clubs to promote community bike rides or sponsor a bicycle ambassador commuter program.
- Partner with Kansas University to encourage more cycling. Provide safety and bicycling information material to all incoming freshmen.
- Better identify bicycle routes with pavement markings and way-finding signage.
- Ensure that police officers are aware of the Share the Road message and have general knowledge regarding traffic law as it applies to bicyclists. Host an *Enforcement for Bicycle Safety* seminar.
- Encourage police officers to use targeted enforcement to encourage motorists and cyclists to share the road. This could be in the form of a brochure or tip card explaining each user's rights and responsibilities.
- Consider alternative methods of addressing sidewalk maintenance to insure convenient and safe infrastructure for pedestrians.