

Chapter 10 Bicycle and Pedestrian

SAFETEA-LU legislation requires that non-motorized users be considered in the LRTP. The legislation allows for bicycle and pedestrian safety to be incorporated into the LRTP and does not require States or MPOs to develop a separate Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, however, states and MPOs may choose to do so. Walking and bicycling are viable modes of transportation and are an important part of the regional transportation system. Development of an integrated multimodal transportation system requires the needs of all system users to be addressed. Therefore, HOCTS developed and maintains a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which addresses the specific needs of non-motorized users.

This chapter addresses SAFETEA-LU requirements with regard to planning for the accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians. The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides the foundation for bicycle and pedestrian planning in the two-County area, and guides long-range project and program planning and implementation. Both the LRTP and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan seek to create safe, convenient, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to develop education programs that increase bicycle and pedestrian safety and use, and to provide bicycle and pedestrian systems that are interconnected with other transportation systems.

REGIONAL NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Multi-Use Trails

The New York State Canalway Trail System is comprised of a network of multi-use trails across upstate New York. Major segments of these trails are adjacent to the waterways of the New York State Canal System or follow remnants of the historic original canals of the early 1800s that preceded today's working Canal System.

The Canalway Trail System is comprised of four major segments: the 100-mile Erie Canal Heritage Trail in Western New York; the 36-mile Old Erie Canal State Park Trail in Central New York; the 60-mile Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway in the eastern Capital Region, and the 8-mile Glens Falls Feeder Canal Heritage Trail. In addition, there are smaller segments of Canalway Trail in other areas.

These trail segments and other areas of the Canalway Trail System connect with trails leading throughout New York State, providing one of the most extensive trail networks in the country.¹

To date, nearly 80% of the Canalway Trail has been constructed. Completion of the trail would make it the longest Class I trail in the United States. There are currently four segments of the Canalway Trail in Herkimer and Oneida Counties. When complete, the trail will traverse east-west across the state, forming the backbone of regional multi-use trail networks.

There are five additional multi-use trails (Class I facilities) in Herkimer and Oneida Counties. These local trails have been developed through the efforts of HOCTS, NYSDOT and the municipalities in which they exist. Currently, these trails are not interconnected and therefore

¹ New York State Canal Corporation, <http://www.nyscanals.gov>, 2009.

serve local residents but do not yet form the regional network envisioned in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Trail user counts conducted by HOCTS, NYSDOT and others indicate that demand for additional trails exists. Further documentation of this interest in multi-use trails is provided in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

On-street bicycle facilities – bicycle lanes and signed bicycle routes – provide an additional level of protection for the bicyclist by designating space on the roadway. These facilities play a key role in the regional non-motorized network, and are supported by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Bicycle Lanes

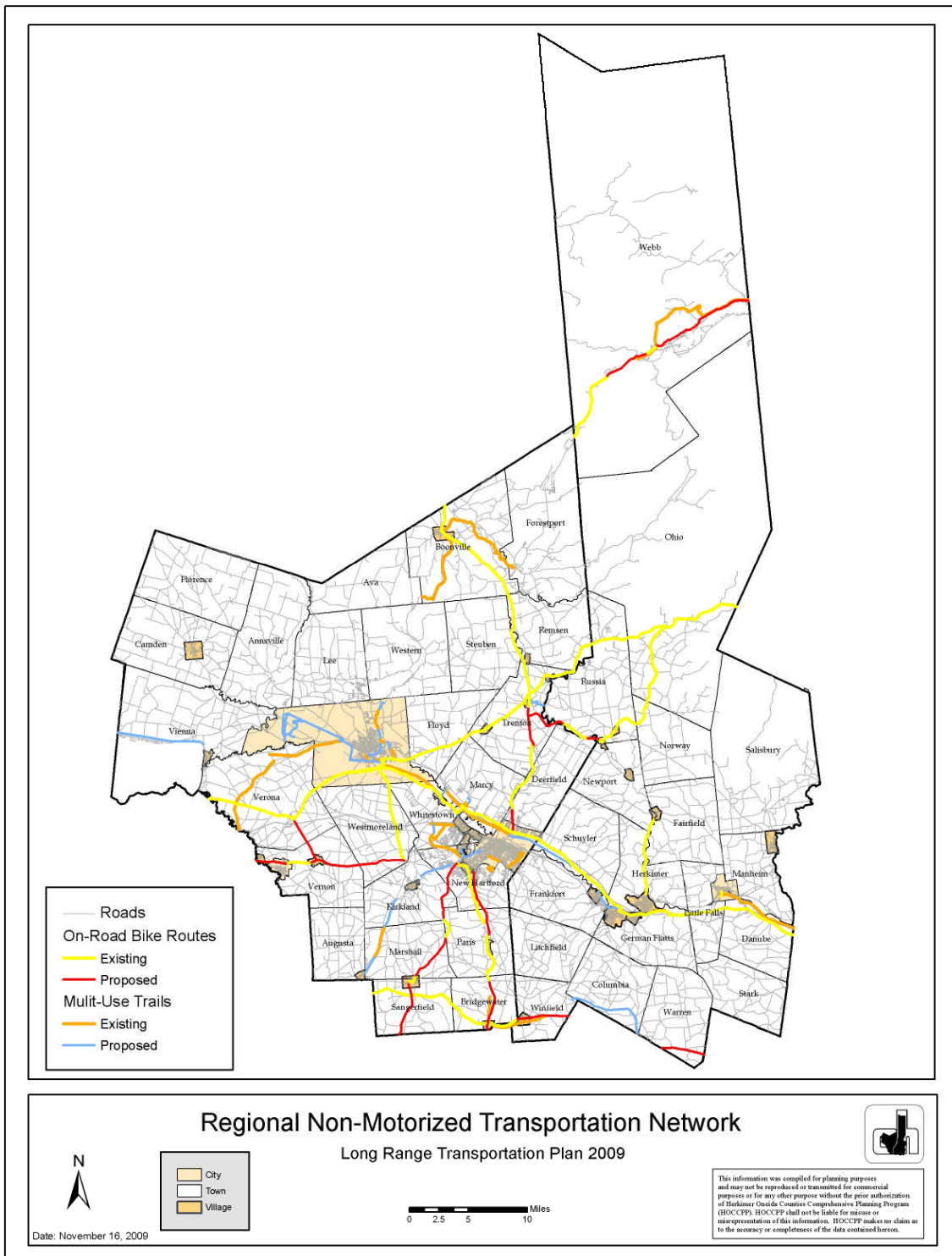
Where ample right-of-way exists, the addition of striped bicycle lanes has been proven effective at reducing motor vehicle speed, promoting the use of non-motorized travel, and reducing conflicts with motor vehicles. However, bicycle lanes (Class II facilities) are not commonly provided in Herkimer and Oneida Counties. The only bicycle lanes in the two-County area are on Champlin Avenue near Utica College. Herkimer Road in Utica (NYS Bike Route 5) also has a Class II facility, but is currently not striped as such.

Designated Bicycle Routes

NYSDOT has developed an extensive statewide network of signed bicycle routes. The bicycle routes have special signage and, in most locations, a painted stripe separating the shoulder from the motor vehicle travel lanes. Bicycle Route 5 is the east-west bicycle route that generally parallels the route of the Erie Canal, bisecting New York State between Niagara Falls and Albany. Bicycle Route 5 travels through central Oneida County and Southern Herkimer County and provides access to regional attractions and the Canalway Trail. Bicycle Route 5 is supported by regionally designated bicycle routes. Bicycle Routes 8, 12, 28, 233 and 365 also traverse Herkimer and Oneida Counties following the same route designations as the corresponding state highway. Typically these routes have shoulder widths of 4 to 6 feet or more, often follow state highways with posted speed limits of 55 miles per hour and are designed for experienced adult riders and bicycle tourists. Safety is important factor when considering motor vehicle speed.

Map 10-1 shows existing and proposed on-road bicycle routes and multi-use trails throughout Herkimer and Oneida Counties. If completed, the proposed multi-use trails would form an extensive regional network serving the region's transportation and recreation needs.

Map 10-1. Bicycle Routes and Multi-Use Trails



BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Safety continues to be the most important consideration when planning bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs. Safety is also one of the most common reasons given by people of all ages for not considering taking walking or bicycling trips. Figures 10-1 and 10-2 provide an overview of bicyclist- and pedestrian-related crash statistics in the United States. Additional fact sheets, crash statistics and analysis are available at www.nhtsa.gov.

Figure 10-1. Bicyclist Injuries and Deaths in the United States, 1997 - 2007

Bicyclist Deaths (1997)	814
Bicyclist Deaths (2007)	698
Reduction in bicyclist deaths (1997-2007)	14%
Bicyclist Injuries in 1997	58,000
Bicyclist Injuries in 2007	43,000
Reduction in bicyclist injuries (1997-2007)	26%
Estimated total cost of bicyclist injury and death per year	\$5.4B

Sources: NHTSA, National Safety Council, Bicycle and Pedestrian Information Center

Figure 10-2. Pedestrian Injuries and Deaths in the United States, 1997 - 2007

Pedestrian Deaths (1997)	5,321
Pedestrian Deaths (2007)	4,654
Reduction in pedestrian deaths (1997-2007)	13%
Pedestrian Injuries (1997)	77,000
Pedestrian Injuries (2007)	70,000
Reduction in pedestrian injuries (1997-2007)	9%
Estimated total cost of pedestrian injury and death per year	\$5.2B

Sources: NHTSA, Safe Kids Worldwide, Bicycle and Pedestrian Information Center

An analysis of Herkimer and Oneida Counties bicycle and pedestrian accident data from the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles for the years 2004 – 2007 indicates that pedestrians and/or bicyclists are involved in 1.8% and 2.8% of crashes in Herkimer and Oneida Counties, respectively. Two hundred thirty six (236) of the 8,288 total reported crashes in Oneida County between October 1, 2004 and September 30, 2007 involved pedestrians or bicyclists. Thirty two (32) of the 1,770 total reported crashes in Herkimer County between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2007 involved pedestrians or bicyclists. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, pedestrians and bicyclists are at far greater risk of injury or death when involved in highway incidents.² The majority of pedestrian injuries or deaths occur while the pedestrian is crossing a street without a crosswalk or pedestrian signal. The majority of bicycle injuries or deaths occurred while the bicyclist was riding along with vehicular traffic.

² The NYS DOT crash data does not account for non-reportable crashes. It is therefore assumed that pedestrian and bicycle crashes are underrepresented in this data set since a disproportional amount of these crashes involve only minor property damage.

Identification of bicycle and pedestrian accident locations within the two-county region would help to determine if there are specific locations where repeated accidents have occurred. NYSDOT collects detailed bicycle and pedestrian accident data for “high frequency motor vehicle accident locations” (locations where ten or more vehicle accidents have occurred). Additional efforts could also include maintaining a database that provides specific location information about accidents that do not fall into the high frequency category.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL COORDINATION

NYSDOT Region 2 has taken a proactive role in promoting bicycle and pedestrian coordination. HOCTS also has staff assigned to work with NYSDOT, interest groups and local officials on bicycle and pedestrian issues. NYSDOT Region 2 and HOCTS have also formed partnerships with other agencies and local governments to address planning issues and provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities not located on state highways.

Projects such as the reconstruction of Route 49, the construction of Route 840, reconfiguration of the intersection of Routes 5, 12 and 12B and the reconstruction of State Street in Herkimer are among many that have included bicycle and pedestrian improvements in their design as a result of this coordination.

Municipal Comprehensive Plans

As a Home Rule State, municipalities in New York are responsible for adopting regulations guiding local land use. HOCTS will continue to encourage municipalities to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into their planning documents, local ordinances and project review processes.

Incorporating bicycle and pedestrian needs at the municipal level will help ensure that safety, proximity and access is addressed. Currently, Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program (HOCCPP) and HOCTS coordinate site plan and master plan reviews with regard to bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. This effort should continue to be encouraged and expanded upon.

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

- Public support for on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities has increased.
- Few municipal comprehensive plans currently incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians are overrepresented in fatal and injury crash data.
- Existing bicycle facilities lack connectivity.

Recommendations

- Encourage municipalities to incorporate recommendations in the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and to develop complementary local plans
- Seek to make Herkimer and Oneida Counties bicycle tourism destinations
- Encourage programs that will educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Encourage programs that will educate the public about health benefits of cycling and walking
- Ensure that safety, accessibility and suitability for non-motorized users is routinely incorporated in capital projects
- Develop the regional network of interconnected multi-use trails and on-street facilities
- Develop the regional network of signed bicycle routes
- Encourage local organizations to promote, develop and maintain multi-use trails