

5.0 PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEM

5.1 Introduction

The Pedestrian and Bicycle System consists of all sidewalks, trails, paths, and other amenities associated with non-motorized travel. The Pedestrian and Bicycle System serves a wide variety of purposes including recreational, commuting, and shopping. Three policy goals of the Transportation Plan address the Pedestrian and Bicycle System:

Goal 1 – Mobility

The transportation system should offer convenient travel opportunities that will allow people to travel according to their own needs.

Goal 3 – Non-Motorized Travel

The transportation system should enhance the quality of life of the Blaine community by providing a system of interconnected and safe bicycle paths, routes, trails, and pedestrian facilities.

Goal 6 – Environmental and Natural Resource Protection

The transportation system should recognize the environmental resources of the region and minimize negative encroachments and disruptions on such areas.

5.2 Facility Types

There are four primary pedestrian and bicycle facility types: sidewalks, off-street paths or trails, on-street bike lanes, and shared roadway facilities.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are generally located directly adjacent to and parallel with a roadway and are within the public right-of-way. Sidewalks are usually three to six feet in width and have a concrete surface. Sidewalks are primarily intended to serve pedestrian traffic but are also used by bicyclists when other bike facilities are not available.

Off-Street Paths

Off-Street Paths or Trails are often, but not always, located directly adjacent to a roadway. They are also located independently of the roadway system, often along natural physical features such as lakes or rivers, within parks and other recreational facilities, and other locations such as abandoned and converted railway corridors. Off-Street Paths are usually between 8 to 12 feet in width and may be constructed with a variety of materials. The most common surface type is bituminous pavement, however, non-paved surfaces are also used including crushed gravel or wood chips. Off-Street Paths are intended for pedestrians and bicyclists and are usually shared facilities, although some locations do provide for separate pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Bike Lanes

Bicycle Lanes are defined as a portion of roadway or shoulder designated for exclusive or preferential use by bicyclists. Bike Lanes are delineated through striping or other pavement marking so that they are distinguishable from the remaining portions of the roadway. Bike Lanes are generally five feet in width.

Shared Facilities

Shared facilities are defined as roadways which pedestrians and bicyclists can legally use for transportation and generally include all public roadways except the Interstate system and other freeway-type facilities. Some roadways may be *designated bikeways* and usually include basic signage but do not have striping or pavement marking similar to that used for Bike Lanes.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian System also consists of associated features including pedestrian crosswalks, pedestrian/bike bridges, bicycle route signage, and bicycle racks and storage lockers.

5.3 Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle System

There are approximately 60 miles of sidewalks within Blaine and another 33 miles of designated trails or paths. The 33 miles of trail includes primarily off-street paths but also includes on-street bike lanes.

5.4 Issues and Opportunities

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are becoming increasingly important for both transportation and recreational uses. The provision of adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities enhances community livability, promotes non-motorized travel, and improves safety for all citizens.

Historically, many suburban areas were developed without the inclusion of sidewalks in residential areas, including a significant portion of the City of Blaine. More recently developed residential areas are more likely to include sidewalks as in the TPC and Club West developments. As areas of the city continue to develop or be redeveloped, whether to include sidewalks, trails, or paths will become an important consideration.

The Pedestrian and Bicycle System should provide connectivity between important activity concentrations, especially as related to non-motorized travel. Linking these activity concentrations, or “nodes,” should be a primary objective of the Pedestrian and Bicycle System. These nodes include schools, parks, recreational facilities, and concentrations of commercial properties. Additionally, the Pedestrian and Bicycle System should provide connectivity to other regional trail systems.

5.4.1 Inter-City Connectivity

Within the City of Blaine there are a number of important nodes that should be connected by some type of sidewalk or trail. In addition to the numerous schools and parks throughout the city, other important nodes that should have adequate pedestrian and bicycle linkages include:

- The National Sports Center
- Town Square (City Hall)
- Northtown Shopping Center
- The Village Shopping Center
- Junction of TH 65 and TH 242

To provide adequate mobility and connectivity for non-motorized travel within Blaine, there are several corridors that should be explored in more detail to determine their potential for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Corridors that have been identified include:

- 109th Avenue Corridor
- Radisson Road Corridor
- Naples Street Alignment
- TH 65 Eastern Frontage Road System
- Jefferson Street Corridor
- Northeast Area Collector

109th Avenue Corridor

The National Sports Center and Town Square are located adjacent to 109th Avenue and should be easily accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. 109th Avenue connects to existing or planned facilities on University and Lexington Avenues. The 109th Avenue Corridor does not currently have appropriate facilities for non-motorized travel.

Radisson Road Corridor

Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities have been included in the Radisson Road improvements that have been or will be completed from I-35W to CSAH 14. Any future improvements to Radisson Road north of CSAH 14 should include similar trail facilities.

Naples Street Alignment

As discussed in Section 4, if Naples Street is extended to the north, or if a corridor is preserved for such an extension, this would be an ideal location for trail. If Naples Street is not extended a trail may still be appropriate to provide some access to open space and the Northeast Area.

TH 65 Eastern Frontage Road System

The Eastern Frontage Road System for TH 65 consisting of 93rd Lane, Baltimore Street, and Aberdeen Street may be an important corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists. Because of the high volume of high speed traffic on TH 65, it is unsafe and not appropriate for non-motorized travel. This corridor would provide an alternative north-south route providing direct access to the National Sports Center and would connect to the existing trails on 85th Avenue to the planned trails along CSAH 14.

Jefferson Street Corridor

If Jefferson Street is ultimately extended as discussed in Section 4, this corridor should be considered for implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This corridor serves Blaine High School, Roosevelt Middle School, Jefferson Elementary, and Madison Elementary, and would provide an alternative north-south route to University Avenue.

Northeast Area Collector

As the Northeast Area develops, the primary collector that connects to Radisson Road and Lexington Avenue should include appropriate pedestrian and bicycle facilities. This corridor could extend across Blaine from University Avenue to Sunset Avenue and may provide an alternative east-west route to 109th Avenue.

5.4.2 Regional Connectivity

The Pedestrian and Bicycle System in Blaine should provide linkages to other important regional trail facilities and recreational areas including the following:

- Bunker Hills Regional Park
- Mississippi River Trail
- Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve/Rice Creek Regional Trail

Bunker Hills Regional Park

A section of Bunker Hills Regional Park is located in the northwest corner of Blaine. Anoka County plans to implement an additional trail in Bunker Hills Regional Park that would provide a connection between the park system trails and Jefferson Street in Blaine along a portion of 127th Avenue. This trail should also be connected to a major east-west trail along CSAH 14 or another alternative route. The long-range plan for Anoka County includes the development of regional along CSAH 14.

Mississippi River Trail

The Mississippi River Trail generally follows East River Road and provides linkages to Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, Anoka County Riverfront Regional Park, and other regional trails and parks. Currently, the Mississippi River Regional Trail can be accessed from Blaine via designated bikeways from Northtown Mall along University Avenue to Osborne Road in Fridley. An alternative, but undesignated route is along 85th Avenue in Coon Rapids.

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve/Rice Creek Regional Trail

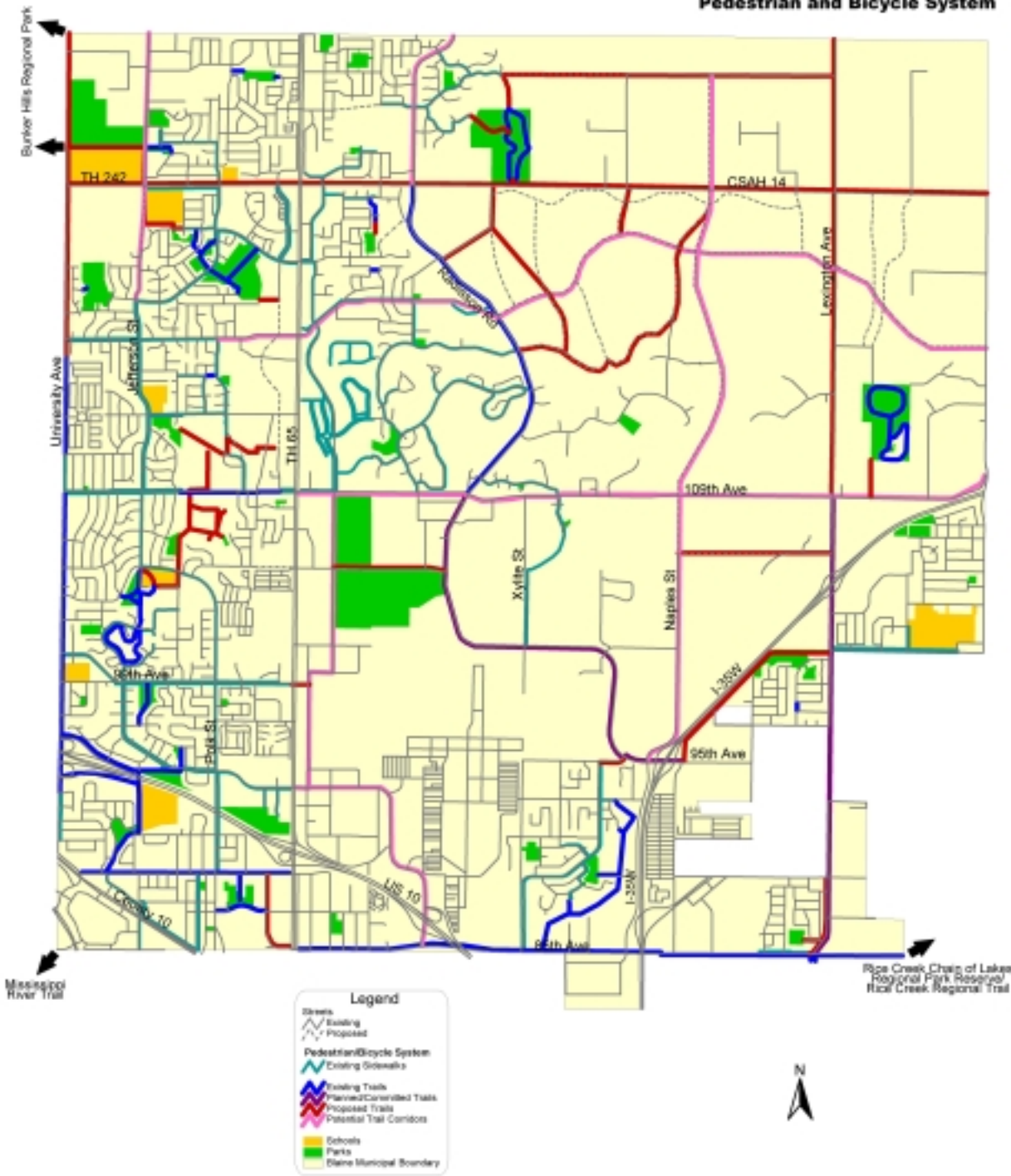
The Rice Creek Regional Trail connects the path on 85th Avenue in the southeast corner of the City to park system trails within the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve. Expansion of the trail system within the park is currently proposed.

Anoka County will include a designated trail system as part of the planned and committed improvements to the Lexington Avenue Corridor. The proposed Lexington Avenue Trail would connect the southern edge of the Rice Creek Trail with locations to the north including Coon Lake County Park in Columbus Township and Martin Island Linwood Regional Park in Linwood Township.

5.5 Recommendations

The following are recommendations for enhancements and improvements to the Pedestrian and Bicycle System to meet the stated goals of the Transportation Plan. Figure 5.1 shows the Pedestrian and Bicycle System for Blaine.

**Figure 5.1
Pedestrian and Bicycle System**



Sidewalks

All new residential and commercial developments should be reviewed to determine if the inclusion of sidewalks would be beneficial to the city and its residents.

Inter-City Connectivity

The Pedestrian and Bicycle System should connect important activity nodes within the city including:

- Parks
- Schools
- National Sports Center
- Town Center
- Northtown Shopping Center
- The Village Shopping Center
- TH 65/TH 242 Junction

Corridors within the City that should be considered for pedestrian and bicycle facilities include:

- 109th Avenue Corridor
- Radisson Road Corridor
- Naples Street Alignment
- TH 65 Eastern Frontage Road System
- Jefferson Street Corridor
- Northeast Area Collector

All collector roadways should ideally include provisions for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Collectors that are already in-place that do not have adequate facilities should be reviewed to determine if retrofitting is feasible and desirable. All new collectors should include facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Regional Connectivity

The Pedestrian and Bicycle System should connect with regional trails and recreational facilities including:

- Bunker Hills Regional Park
- Mississippi River Trail
- Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve/Rice Creek Regional Trail

System Amenities

The Pedestrian and Bicycle System should be planned and implemented to include all appropriate amenities to enhance safety and convenience and to promote non-motorized travel.

These amenities should include:

- Bicycle and Trail Route Signs
- Kiosks and Maps
- Pedestrian Crosswalks and Crosswalk Treatments
- Bicycle Racks and Storage Lockers