

RAMSEY COUNTY-WIDE

Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan

Purpose, Vision & Goals

Introduction

For over 10 years, Active Living Ramsey Communities, with all of its community partners, has facilitated change to create environments that make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to be physically active in their daily routine. Active Living Ramsey Communities encourages healthy lifestyles by bringing people and resources together to build active, bikeable and walkable communities. Their vision and collaborative efforts inform all aspects of this plan and support active transportation in Ramsey County.

This plan is a resource and a framework for development of a connected Ramsey County where communities and residents are engaged in the process of building a great place for walking and bicycling.

This is not a typical plan focused on specific projects for an individual jurisdiction, but rather a set of tools, analyses and actions to engage community members at all levels in supporting a place where people of all ages and abilities can safely and comfortably walk and bicycle.

Active Living Ramsey Communities Background

State, county, municipality, school, business, health care and nonprofit representatives, community groups and local residents came together to create Active Living Ramsey Communities in December of 2004. Community engagement formed the core of the organization's mission. The organization promotes and creates environments that make it safe and easy for everyone to integrate physical activity into their daily routine.

The graphic below illustrates many highlights of Active Living Ramsey Communities accomplishments over the past ten years.



ACTIVE LIVING RAMSEY COMMUNITIES HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Engaging the community to improve health by collaborating with nearly 19 Ramsey County municipalities, leaders, practitioners and residents to create and promote environments to make it safe and easy for everyone to be physically active in their daily routine.
- Developing the Go Ramsey mapping portal for residents and visitors to find all the green spaces and fun places to be active in Ramsey County. <http://goramsey.co.ramsey.mn.us/Pages/default.aspx>
- Building pathways to health through the Be Active! Be Green! Recycling Bench Initiative. <https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/alrc/Pages/benches.aspx>
- Incorporating health and active living into County and municipal comprehensive plans. https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/Documents/working_with.pdf
- Developing comprehensive, county-wide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data layers and maps of all the pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connectivity gaps. <https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/alrc/Pages/gapmaps.aspx>
- Creating a Ramsey County parks and trails wayfinding master plan. <https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/alrc/Documents/Ramsey%20County%20Wayfinding%20Masterplan.pdf>
- Facilitating the Active Living Ramsey Communities Biking and Walking Team which works to create a safe, efficient and accessible recreation and transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.
- Implementing an Active Living policy initiative in Ramsey County departments which resulted in bike parking, Sheriff's Cross-fit training program, library bike lock check out, the Active Minds! Active Lives! library summer reading program, and the Ramsey County Employees Committed to Health Steering Committee (REACH).
- Developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian System Gap Analysis to create a safe, efficient and accessible biking and walking system.
- Conducting a community survey on physical activities, safety issues, city-suburb differences, walking and bicycling.
 - Initial Findings, Fall 2005
https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/Documents/2005_residential_survey_initial.pdf
 - Full Report, Spring 2006
https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/Documents/2005_residential_survey_complete.pdf
- Winning awards from the Association of Minnesota Counties, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association and League of American Bicyclists.

Active Living Ramsey Communities Identified Four Overlapping Strategies:

TRANSFORM SYSTEMS

Creating change in organizations and advancing broad efforts.

IDENTIFY POLICY

Identifying evidence based policies and best practices.

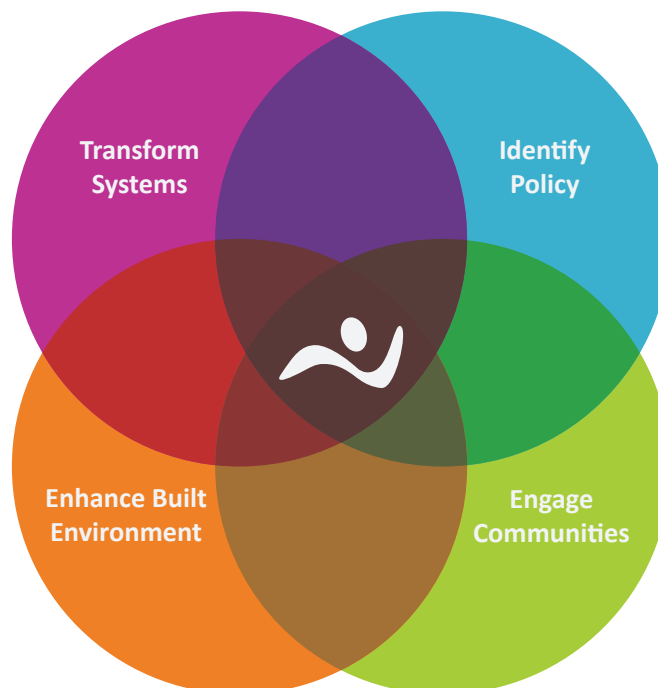
ENHANCE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Encouraging smart decisions about transportation infrastructure, land use, zoning and community design.

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES

Involving leaders, practitioners and residents in improving health by creating and promoting environments, so it is safe and easy for everyone to be physically active in their daily routine.

Projects in the areas of overlap across these strategies have the highest potential for impact and help to advance the mission in multiple ways. For example, developing this plan to support cities in implementing walking and bicycling infrastructure and programs lies directly in the overlap area of all four strategies. This effort influences each strategy directly and clearly.



Planning Process

The purpose of this plan is to develop a county-wide resource that integrates with Ramsey County municipal plans to provide a seamless transition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities across the communities.

Active Living Ramsey Communities recognizes that disparities exist in how its residents access and use transportation and recreation resources. Recommendations in this plan support the elimination of these disparities by focusing additional attention toward improving conditions for walking and biking in communities experiencing disparities.

The tools and resources provided in this plan were developed through a collaborative process. The collaborative activities included public outreach and engagement, involvement of two advisory committees, coordination with local groups and agencies and technical analysis. The analyses and discussions take a county-wide view and envision a web of communities fully connected with safe and comfortable facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the county.

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY TEAMS

Active Living Ramsey Communities enlisted its partners aligned with the overall mission, those with a key stake in or responsibility for implementation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and programs as well as community members who are impacted by safe, efficient and accessible walking and biking facilities. Two advisory committees were engaged throughout the planning process and are described below.

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM

The Project Advisory Team included community advocates, agency and community group representatives and County staff. This team advised the planning team on process and methods and served as liaisons to their representative groups, sharing information about the plan.

SYSTEM ADVISORY TEAM

The System Advisory Team included representatives from municipalities and implementation partners throughout the county, with representatives focused on community and economic development, parks and recreation and public works. This team provided pedestrian and bicycle facility inventories and plans as well as peer review on strategies and analysis.

Purpose Of Creating Vibrant, Livable, Walkable & Bikeable Communities

A walkable and bikeable community is one where people walk and ride bicycles, because it is a convenient, fun, safe and healthy choice. It is a community in which people of all ages and abilities walk and bicycle in their daily routine for many types of trips. This plan provides a framework for Ramsey County communities to come together to create vibrant, livable, walkable and bikeable neighborhoods.

There is tremendous opportunity to increase physical activity in our daily routine through recreation and active transportation like walking, biking and using transit. A connected network for walking and bicycling can help support health and prosperity for all people in Ramsey County.

Improve The Overall Quality Of Life For All

by creating a community where it is easy to walk and bike, engage in physical activity, access resources, enjoy nature and interact with others.



Studies show that walkable neighborhoods “foster greater social cohesion and a sense of community,” than auto-oriented neighborhoods.¹



40%
of Minnesotans do not drive.²

Increase Mobility For All People

by considering the transportation needs of people of all ages, abilities and preferences.

Increase Social Interaction & Physical Movement In Public Spaces

which can support improved health for Ramsey County community members.



Currently, only

44%

of Ramsey County residents report engaging in any physical activity.³



According to a recent survey,

86%
of Millennials want to live in a city that offers opportunities to live and work without relying on a car.⁴

Foster Economic Prosperity & Growth

by attracting a diverse and educated workforce and creating jobs and economic development that all community members will benefit from.

Increase Opportunities For Active Transportation

by creating safe, convenient and enjoyable places for walking and biking. This includes increasing connections to public transportation.



In Ramsey County,

9%

of adults bike or walk to work.⁵

While only 9% of all trips are made by walking and biking nationally,

13%

of all vehicle crash deaths are cyclists and pedestrians.⁶



Increase Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

through the design and implementation of safe and convenient active transportation corridors and crossing locations. This includes educating all road users on how to act safely and responsibly.

Improve Community & Individual Health

by creating a place with increased opportunities to engage in healthy activities that reduce the burden of chronic disease and increase positive health outcomes for everyone in Ramsey County.

Residents in a **HIGHLY WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD** complete about



70

MORE MINUTES PER WEEK

of moderate & vigorous physical activity than residents in low-walkability neighborhoods.⁷

Every **10** MILE BIKE TRIP saves **1/2** GALLON OF GAS

Reducing 10 miles of driving every week would eliminate about 500 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions a year.⁸

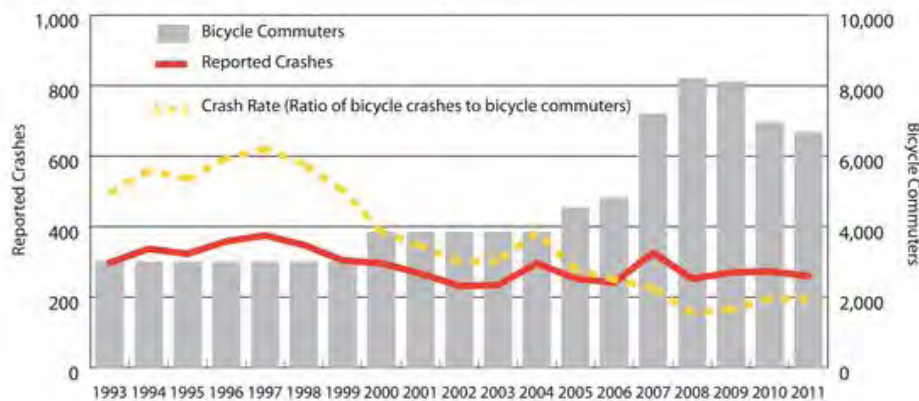
Improve The Health Of The Natural Environment

and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation system by encouraging the use of energy-efficient, non-polluting and healthy forms of transportation.

The Vision For Ramsey County

Communities within Ramsey County are not alone in the effort to become walkable and bikeable places. Other communities have achieved success in transforming from auto-oriented places into places where walking and biking are safe and normal daily activities. Cities like neighboring Minneapolis and Portland, Oregon have seen a large increase in the cycling mode share, while experiencing a decrease in crash rates.

Bicycle Ridership Increase and Crash Rate Decrease in Minneapolis, MN



CREATING WALKABLE & BIKEABLE PLACES

Ramsey County can look to other communities as a precedent for creating walkable and bikeable places. As seen in the US and worldwide, there are several important components that all successful walkable and bikeable cities share:

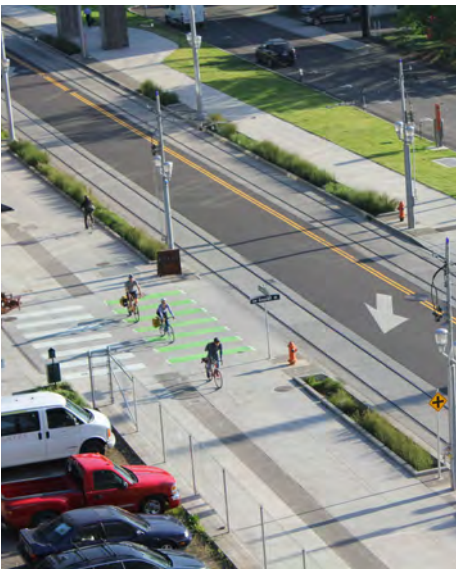
- Dedicated infrastructure for biking and walking, including on-street bike lanes, physically separated bike lanes, sidewalks, trails and wayfinding systems.
- A connected system that creates access to key destinations and public transportation.
- Fun events that create opportunities to get out and ride or walk, make social connections and get familiarized with existing infrastructure.

Minneapolis, MN



- As part of the 2005 federal transportation funding bill, Minneapolis and the surrounding area received \$24 million to participate in the Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program to fund local bicycle and pedestrian investments.
- While cycling rates have increased, the number of bicycle involved crashes has stayed the roughly the same since 1993, resulting in a decreased crash rate.
- Extensive investment in bicycle networks, in particular, the off street path system.
- 4.1% of commuters bike to work, six times the national average of 0.6%.
- In some neighborhoods, over 12% of commuters bike to work.

Portland, OR



- Bicycle ridership rates have tripled since 2001.
- While cycling rates have increased, the number of bicycle involved crashes has stayed the same since 1995, resulting in a decreased crash rate.
- Extensive investment in bicycle networks, including bike boulevards and on-street bike lanes.
- The country's first bike/pedestrian/transit only bridge - no cars, Tilikum Crossing, which opened in September 2015.
- 6% of commuters bike to work, about 10 times the national average.
- In some neighborhoods, over 20% of commuters bike to work.

Boulder, CO



- Installed more than 300 miles of dedicated bikeways.
- Consistent, long-term community efforts and urban planning.
- Designated Gold-Level Walk Friendly Community.
- Pedestrian-only Pearl Street Mall attracts residents and tourism.
- 10% of commuters walk to work.
- Comprehensive transit system with 90% of bus stops accessible by wheelchair.
- 78 bicycle and pedestrian underpasses to create a more connected network.

Houten, The Netherlands



- Suburban town of about 49,000 people.
- 26% of all commuter trips are taken by bike.
- Lowest bike fatality rate in the world, 5 times less than in the U.S.
- Almost every major street features safe and protected bicycle facilities.
- Bike facilities include separated bike lanes, bike signals and bike highways.

Vision And Goals

VISION:

PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS MOVE FREELY ON A SAFE AND WELL INTEGRATED SYSTEM THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE AND PLACES IN RAMSEY COUNTY.

WALKING AND BICYCLING IS A COMFORTABLE AND INTEGRAL PART OF DAILY LIFE IN RAMSEY COUNTY FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

Turning the vision into action can be simplified into a process of establishing clear goals, identifying key objectives and tracking performance measures to keep on the right track and make progress.

GOALS	The goals provide guidance for achieving the vision.
OBJECTIVES	Objectives achieve and measure progress toward realizing each goal.
PERFORMANCE MEASURES	Potential measurable targets describe progress and performance towards plan implementation.

BUILDING ON 10 YEARS OF ACTIVE LIVING RAMSEY COMMUNITIES

Built on 10 years of history, engagement and collaboration, the goals and objectives on the next page offer communities in Ramsey County a starting point for framing their local efforts to implement plans, improve walking and biking conditions and collectively develop a world class, county-wide walking and biking system.

GOAL: HEALTHY AND ACTIVE MOBILITY FOR ALL

Increased walking and bicycling has the potential to increase physical activity levels and improve health and quality of life for people in Ramsey County.

Objectives:

- Increase walking and bicycling for short trips as part of people's daily routine.
- Increase the number of trips made by walking and bicycling for recreation and transportation in the county.
- Improve connectivity, quality and reliability of pedestrian and bicycling facilities.
- Develop locally-oriented design guidelines for the transportation system that support safety and mobility for the most vulnerable users.
- Improve opportunities for people to commute to work and school by walking and bicycling.

GOAL: A COMPLETE AND CONNECTED MULTI-MODAL NETWORK

In order for a pedestrian and bicycle system to be heavily used, it must be connected and get people conveniently to their destinations: work, shopping, school, parks and transit stations.

Objectives:

- Build and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit.
- Support development of links between communities to create a complete network.
- Coordinate with transit and leverage transit lines and stops.
- Improve system efficiency through connected networks for all modes.
- Employ best practices and context sensitivity to design bicycling and walking facilities for as many people as possible.

GOAL: A SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Bicyclists and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable users of the transportation system. Improving facilities and design standards can enhance safety and increase predictability, not only for pedestrians and people riding bicycles, but also for transit users and drivers of cars and trucks.

Objectives:

- Reduce the number and severity of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians.

GOAL: EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Objectives:

- Comply with civil rights laws for all transportation projects.
- Support inclusive public participation for transportation system and project planning.
- Incorporate an equity framework in transportation policy and project implementation in the County.
- Engage vulnerable communities in discussions about walking and bicycling and their transportation needs.

GOAL: A COORDINATED APPROACH TO FILLING GAPS IN THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEM

Objectives:

- Create a shared understanding and common language about pedestrian and bicycle project selection, design, construction, operation and maintenance.
- Engage community leaders, practitioners and residents to contribute, review, buy into and help implement the pedestrian and bicycle system plan, especially those who live in underrepresented and underserved communities.
- Improve coordination between communities in support of bicycling and walking.
- Improve coordination and communication among responsible governmental units, as well as with the public.
- Create aspirational vision for walking and cycling among the general public.

GOAL: A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT CONTRIBUTES TO SUSTAINABLE AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

Objectives:

- Create educational resources on bicycle and pedestrian benefits, laws, definitions and best practices.
- Support transportation that responds to disparities and helps to close the opportunity gap.

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