

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

Mercer Island is currently updating its 1996 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan. The following Vision and Guiding Principles will form the foundation of this work.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Mercer Island will build upon existing facilities to create and maintain a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that makes walking and bicycling attractive alternatives for meeting the mobility needs of persons of varying ages and abilities.

- *Pedestrian and bicycle facilities will provide safe and convenient connections among neighborhoods and key destinations, including public transportation, shopping areas, schools, religious, recreational and other community facilities.*
- *A variety of pedestrian and bicycle facility types will be provided, tailored to their primary functions and users, and compatible with their environmental setting and community values.*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle facilities will provide recreational opportunities and integrate exercise into commute, shopping, school and other trips, contributing to a healthy lifestyle.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to achieve this Vision over time, the Pedestrian and bicycle facilities plan will be guided by the following principles:

- **Connectivity.** The plan shall provide a network of continuous links connecting employment, retail centers, schools, and other primary destinations with the Island's neighborhoods.
- **Sustainability.** The plan will increase the opportunity for sustainable transportation choices by Island residents by facilitating pedestrian and bicycle movement as an alternative to the automobile.
- **Routine Accommodation:** Street improvements will be designed by identifying the full range of mobility needs to be met by the facility, and then balancing or adjusting these needs with space, financial and other considerations to achieve the best result.
- **Arterial corridors are shared-use assets.** Automobile, bicycle and pedestrian use must be integrated. These needs should be considered in planning street projects.
- **Incremental solutions are preferred.** Consideration should be given to the minimal facility or improvement that can balance our competing priorities.
- **Appropriate facilities balance our community values, expected uses, and site.** Preserving Mercer Island's woodsy, rural character and neighborhood scale is important. So is affordability. Let's not overbuild. Instead, let's choose facility

designs that accommodate the basic needs for the types of users and amount of use expected.

- The Mercer Ways are a unique and valuable community asset. Trade-offs here are especially complex.
- Maintenance, parking and speed control policies affect use of these facilities. These issues must be addressed to assure full value is obtained from investments.

DISCUSSION

Ultimately, the city's pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be a connected network of facilities that link key destinations with the Island's neighborhoods. This network would be integrated with transit services and the I-90 trail to link to off-Island destinations. The most significant destinations include:

- North Mercer Park and Ride/I-90 Trail
- Town Center
- North Mercer Campus (Mercer Island High School)
- South Mercer Island Shopping Center

In linking these key destinations the network would also serve the Island's schools, parks, transit stops and other community facilities. Working with Mercer Island School District to provide safe routes to schools will be a priority.

The network would consist of a hierarchy of facility types consistent with both the character of their location and the nature and level of travel demand generated by destinations they serve. Facilities which are intended to carry higher volumes of activity that run along major automobile traffic corridors or through more intensively developed areas would be designed to accommodate such activity safely along with the automobile traffic. In residential neighborhoods served by low-volume local streets, pedestrian and bicycle activity would share space with automobiles, consistent with the residential character of the area and safety considerations. Facilities will be designed in a manner which is consistent with the character and values of the communities and pose the least amount of disruption necessary to achieve the function desired.

This network of facilities will be built gradually over time, using existing routes and facilities as much as possible and by taking advantage of any transportation project to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle needs. Wherever appropriate and possible the pedestrian bicycle network would incorporate trails through city parks; in such cases the design of the facilities will be consistent with the character of the park.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES PLAN UPDATE

Public Workshop #1 Issues and Questions

Public Workshop #1 will be structured as an information sharing and gathering event. Staff and consultants will provide a brief presentation regarding the value of updating the 1996 Plan, the planning process, citizen input opportunities, and briefly summarizing the technical work undertaken so far. This will be followed by a period where staff and consultants will facilitate stations equipped with maps, hand-outs and flip charts for taking notes regarding desired facilities, routes, design issues etc. Staff and consultants will solicit and record the following information:

- We will ask participants to tell us what pedestrian or bicycle corridors work well for them, why those facilities meet their needs, and what improvements could make them work even better.
- We will ask participants to identify concerns or problems with pedestrian and bicycle mobility and recreation. Where appropriate, we will ask them to specifically locate the concern on a map.
- We will display maps showing our preliminary findings regarding important walking and bicycling destinations, and ask workshop participants to identify and prioritize destinations important to them.
- We will display maps showing existing routes, and photos or sketches of various types of facilities (improved roadside shoulder, bicycle lane, separated path, etc.). We will ask participants to identify and prioritize existing or new routes that are important to them, and indicate what type of facility they would prefer.

The final twenty minutes or so will be reserved for facilitators to report back to the larger group. Comment cards will be available throughout for those preferring to provide written comments.