



Ada County Highway District

Pedestrian-Bicycle Transition Plan

Adopted December 14, 2005

The
Transpo
Group



ACHD Pedestrian-Bicycle Transition Plan

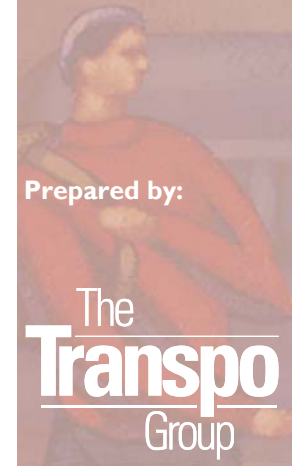


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INTRODUCTION

The Pedestrian-Bicycle Transition Plan (PBTP) is intended to provide a comprehensive plan to enhance the Ada County urban area pedestrian and bicycle system. This effort was initiated by the Ada County Highway District (ACHD), with a primary emphasis on addressing federal pedestrian planning guidelines and the regulatory requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)¹. ACHD has jurisdiction and responsibility for all public roads and streets within Ada County, Idaho, except state highways and interstate freeways. By state statute, pedestrian (typically sidewalks) and bicycle system components of most public streets also fall under ACHD's jurisdiction.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted on July 26, 1990, provides comprehensive civil

rights protections to persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, state and local government services, access to public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. There are five titles or parts to the ADA, Title II is of most concern to ACHD. ACHD's PBTP is intended to address the most recent ADA policies and rules.

Title II of the ADA prohibits state and local governments from discriminating against persons with disabilities by requiring them to make all programs, services, and activities accessible to persons with disabilities. Title II requires that a public entity must evaluate its services, programs, policies, and practices to determine whether they are in compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of the ADA. The ADA requires that a *Transition Plan* be prepared, to describe any structural or physical changes required to make programs accessible. The *Transition Plan* is

intended to outline the methods by which physical or structural changes will be made to effect the non-discrimination policies described in Title II.

Commensurate with the ADA requirements for inventory and self-evaluation², ACHD targeted a significant portion of the overall planning effort to complete a walking inventory of the entire, street-side pedestrian system within the Ada County urban areas. More than 2,800 miles of existing and missing sidewalks and 19,300 street corners (with 15,500 curb ramps) were inventoried and assessed as part of ACHD's *Self-Evaluation*. Documenting the location, type and condition of sidewalks and curb ramps is an important step in the pedestrian planning effort. A full inventory of



Well-connected sidewalks offer full mobility and access



Missing sections discourage pedestrian travel and/or force pedestrians into street

| Executive Summary

missing sidewalks helps identify the critical “gaps” to fill. ACHD has successfully completed a thorough inventory of the pedestrian system as the basis of the PBTP planning effort. Prior to the PBTP effort, no such inventory existed.

In the course of defining the work plan ACHD also elected to inventory the bicycle system (street width and lane demarcations) to help identify candidate corridors for bicycle lane and route enhancements. The Ada County Ridge-to-Rivers Pathway Plan is the most current regional bicycle plan for the Ada County urban area, some of which consists of connecting links that are not under ACHD’s jurisdiction. This plan

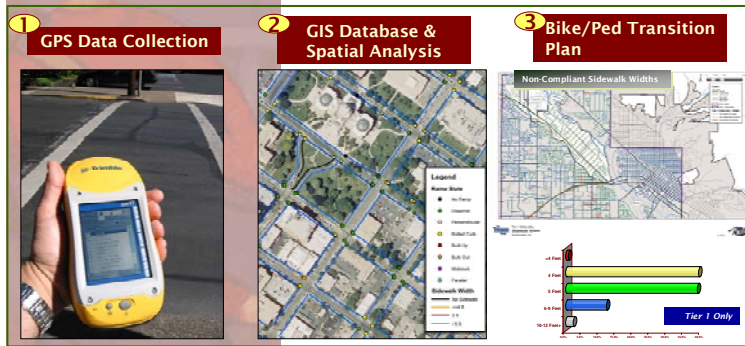
has acknowledged gaps in the bicycle system network within the urban area.

While a greater portion of the overall study effort targeted the pedestrian system, ACHD was able to effectively apply its resources and efficiently expand its bicycle and transit-related planning base. The PBTP provides ACHD with the added background inventory, assessment and general recommendations for bicycle corridor enhancements to fill in critical bicycle system gaps. Through recommended implementation, ACHD can effectively expand the PBTP findings through a more detailed bicycle master plan effort to fully complete the ACHD portion of the Ada County Ridge-to-Rivers Pathway Plan at a later date. Through continued coordination and implementation of the PBTP, ACHD and Valley Regional Transit can also plan and implement pedestrian enhancements at critical bus transit junctions and stops.

ACHD’s PBTP contains a summary evaluation of the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and provides comprehensive recommendations for future facilities. Key components of the PBTP include:

- A Community Involvement program to effectively engage major stakeholders and local jurisdictions in the PBTP effort.
- An inventory and condition assessment of all existing sidewalks and curb ramps in the urban area of Ada County.
- A methodology for prioritizing pedestrian projects.
- A bikeway route map.
- A Local Design Guide for pedestrian facilities, including recommended changes to existing ACHD design standards.
- Recommended measures to implement the PBTP, including the identification of high priority project examples.

A 3-Step Plan Process with GPS and GIS



CHAPTER 1 - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Community Involvement effort was specifically defined to address the regulatory requirements of the ADA. A targeted approach was defined to effectively engage two audiences:

Local Jurisdictions – the various cities within Ada County, together with Ada County, Valley Regional Transit and Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). These are entities that ACHD coordinates with in the development of transportation projects, review and administration of development plans and who may share in responsibility for implementation of some of the Plan’s recommendations.

Stakeholders – public and private individuals and organizations that have stated interest in pedestrian and bicycle travel within Ada

County, including neighborhood associations and mobility- and vision-impaired groups and agencies.

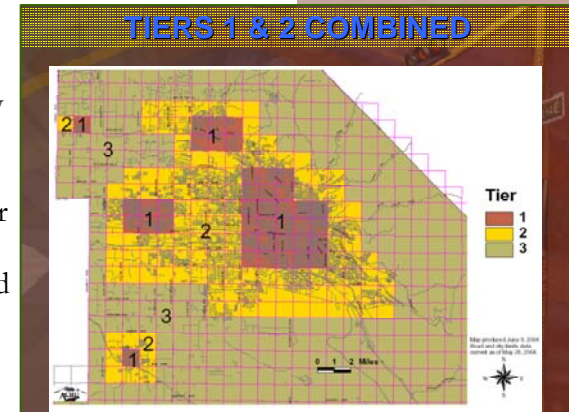
Four separate work sessions were held with the local jurisdictions and stakeholders to get important feedback in the planning process. Outreach included project mailings and telephone interviews, workshop notices, and specific interviews with mobility-impaired organizations. The plan recommendations are based on input from the community, cities, Ada County, and key stakeholders, in addition to the consulting team’s expertise and application of best practices in pedestrian and bicycle planning.

CHAPTER 2 - INVENTORY AND SELF-EVALUATION

The largest single component of the plan was a sidewalk and curb ramp inventory and condition assessment. Throughout the

Summer of 2004, data collection using hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) units was conducted to fully inventory the pedestrian facilities in the urban areas of Ada County. The result of the inventory is a map and database of existing and missing sidewalks and curb ramps. The inventory database was formatted specifically for GIS analysis and was added to ACHD’s GIS-based mapping themes for interim analysis and evaluation.

The condition assessment incorporates a thorough record of physical conditions, including cross slope, the presence of obstructions such as utility poles and mailboxes, general condition of the sidewalks such as cracks and vertical displacements, the design and



The GPS data collection covered much of the Ada County urban area

presence of curb ramps, and missing sidewalk segments and curb ramps. This data makes it easier for ACHD to determine which existing sidewalks need to be upgraded or replaced, and where missing segments should be installed.

By successfully deploying the GPS-based data collection effort ACHD was able to fully inventory the critical pedestrian facilities within the Ada County urban areas. The inventory effort was completed within the pre-planning estimates for staffing and schedule, and was successfully formatted and assimilated in ACHD's GIS database. The *Self-Evaluation* and scoring provides one of the

essential measures from which ACHD analyzes, identifies and prioritizes pedestrian improvements (see Chapter 3).

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY FOR PRIORITIZING PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

Ada County Highway District has made a substantial commitment to pedestrian facilities. In the last five years, over \$10 million dollars has been dedicated solely to installing new sidewalks, repairing existing sidewalks, and making sure that sidewalks are accessible to those with disabilities. Additionally, roadway widening or upgrade projects in the urban areas also include repairing, upgrading or installing new sidewalks.

The Pedestrian Priority Index (PPI) was developed to provide ACHD with an objective methodology for selecting and prioritizing pedestrian system improvements. This methodology provides an initial basis for project identification as input into ACHD's Five-Year Work Program (FYWP).

Future pedestrian improvements in Ada County should be prioritized so ACHD can effectively implement the PBTP recommendations. The prioritization method must consider the *relative cost of needed pedestrian improvements* to maximize the public's investment within Ada County *areas that require higher levels of pedestrian accessibility*. ACHD's Pedestrian Priority Index (PPI) was based on separate index measures for:

Attributes

The summary and evaluation of existing sidewalks and curb ramps identified for each pedestrian attribute is given a condition rating, ranging from very poor to good or excellent (see *Chapter 2 – Inventory and Self-Evaluation*). The current pedestrian system attributes in the poorest condition (or missing) were scored highest in the *Attribute Index* as the segments in greatest need for improvement.



Over 1,700 miles of existing sidewalks were inventoried



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Accessibility

The closer that needed pedestrian improvements projects are located to various important trip generators and transportation facilities, the higher their priority. A series of critical accessibility indices are grouped into a composite *Accessibility Index* to help prioritize improvements.

Benefit-Cost

Relatively lower cost improvement projects that provide the greatest increase in accessibility for the largest number of users should have higher priority (e.g. the greatest number of attribute deficiencies = “need”). The *Cost-Benefit Index* provides an added measure to address pedestrian system improvement costs and establish consistent priorities.

The PPI also helps ensure that sidewalks and curb ramps get built first where pedestrians’ needs are the greatest.

PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT NEEDS FOR FULL ADA COMPLIANCE

The cost to build new and improved sidewalks and curb ramps compliant with the ADA is estimated at about \$292.5 million.

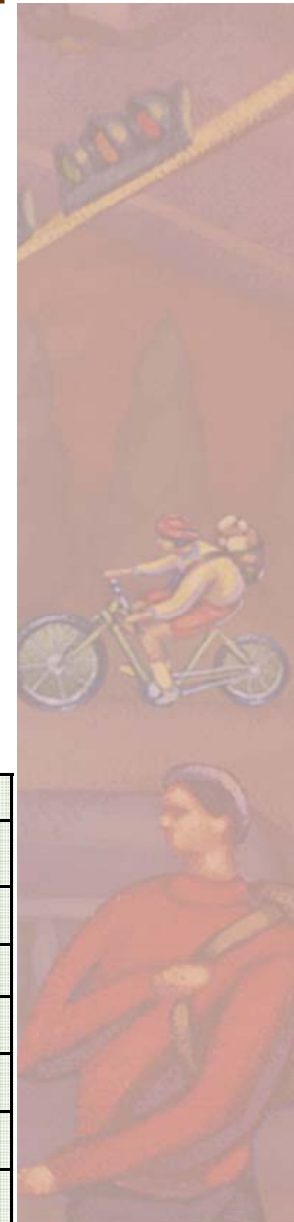
Table 1 summarizes these pedestrian improvement cost estimates by priority and improvement type. Table 1 also summarizes the total costs of sidewalk improvements identified in ACHD’s Capital Improvements

Plan (CIP), estimated at a total of \$70 million.

High priority pedestrian improvement projects in the Ada County urban areas are estimated to cost about \$37.4 million, all of which are either new sidewalks or new curb ramps. New sidewalk improvement costs also comprise a large portion of the *Moderate* priorities. Sidewalk repair improvements total almost \$110 million and are roughly spread

Table 1: Pedestrian System Improvement Costs (2004 dollars, in millions)

Pedestrian Improvement Priorities (millions)					
	High	Moderate	Low	Low-est	TOTAL
New Sidewalks	\$ 35.9	\$ 128.1			\$ 164.0
Sidewalk Repairs		\$ 35.1	\$ 51.5	\$ 22.0	\$ 108.6
Other	\$ 1.5	\$ 6.7	\$ 7.8	\$ 3.9	\$ 19.9
PBTP Subtotal	\$ 37.4	\$ 169.9	\$ 59.3	\$ 25.9	\$ 292.5
ACHD CIP (2003-2023) - Sidewalk Improvements					\$ 70.0
TOTAL					\$ 362.5



across the *Moderate to Lowest* priorities.

CHAPTER 4 - RECOMMENDED BICYCLE FACILITIES

The PBTP includes a Bikeway Map which identifies streets where new, on-street bicycle lanes should be installed. These recommendations help fully connect the bicycle system already identified in the Ada County Ridge-to-Rivers Pathway Plan.

ACHD should consider a range of techniques to add on-street bicycle lanes along critical street segments:

- A few streets already have sufficient width and just need bicycle lane pavement markings.

- Other streets have adequate width but require either removal of on-street parking or the striping of narrower travel lanes to accommodate on-street bicycle lanes. The street re-striping can occur during normal street maintenance activities.
- Many existing streets are scheduled for widening in ACHD's CIP, and several new streets are planned in Ada County. On-street bicycle lanes can be incorporated into the larger street projects.

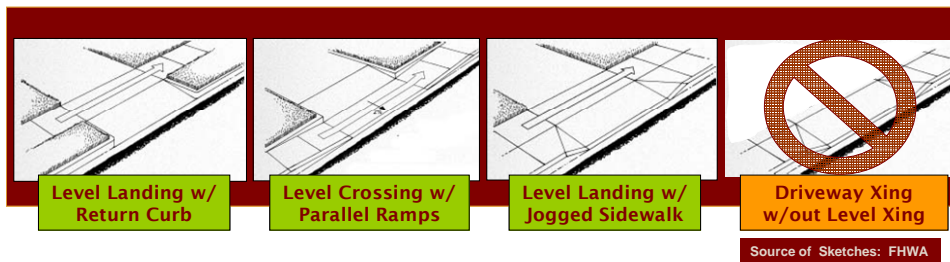
The recommended on-street bicycle facilities are coordinated with the off-street facilities (multi-use paths) that have already been identified as part of the Ada County Ridge-to-Rivers Pathway Plan, which will

result in a comprehensive bicycle route network throughout Ada County. Further, ACHD should coordinate with other agencies to develop a Bicycle Master Plan.

CHAPTER 5 - LOCAL DESIGN GUIDE FOR ACHD PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The Federal Highway Administration has completed an important guideline for the design of ADA-compliant pedestrian facilities. Based on *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access*³, ACHD's **Local Design Guide** is being developed to address critical pedestrian design issues in Ada County. The *Local Design Guide* highlights significant local design features relative to the ADA requirements based on the premise – accessible design is the foundation for all pedestrian design. The ACHD *Local Design Guide* identifies the sidewalk, curb ramp and driveway crossing standards that should be amended to best

Sidewalk Driveway Crossing Design Options for ADA Compliance



comply with the ADA. Other policies and standards should be re-evaluated so ACHD can better provide a balance of transportation facilities to best meet the multi-modal needs and expectations of Ada County residents.

design, refinement to design standards, and better site-plan review processes. Follow-up planning efforts to focus on critical walk-to-school routes and a comprehensive neighborhood traffic management program are all important measures that help implement the findings and recommendations of the PBTP.

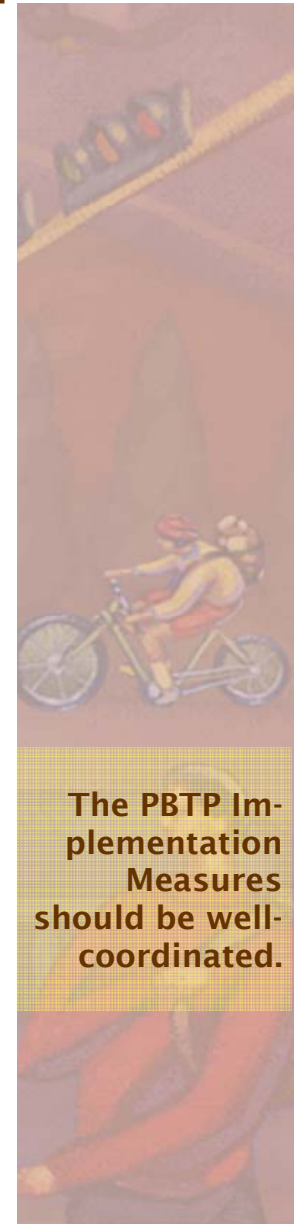
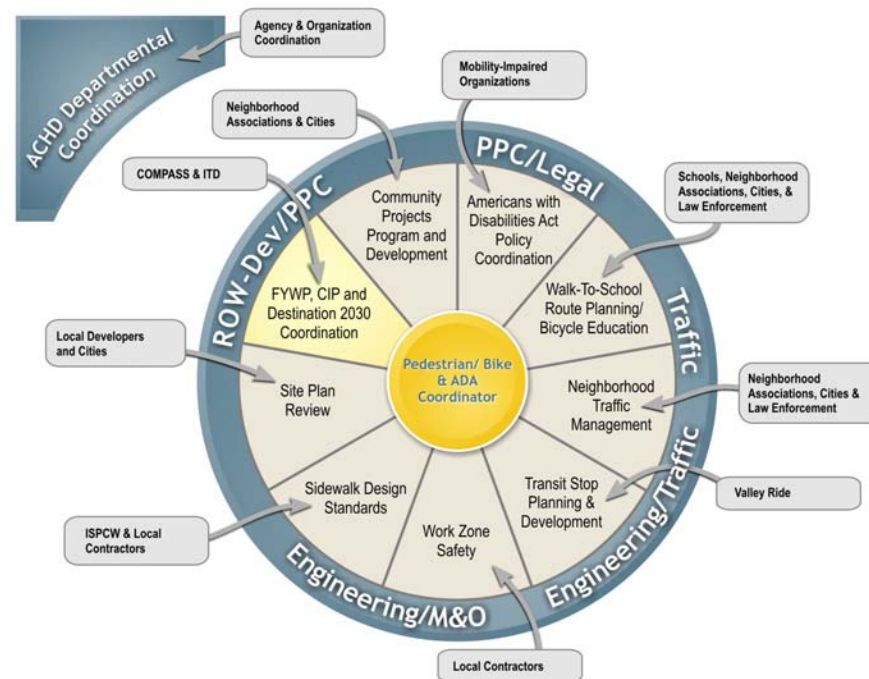
How will Pedestrian Improvement Projects Be Defined?

Defining short-term projects will involve more detailed planning than simply selecting the high priority projects to construct based on the PPI. Other issues that will affect project priority-setting include:

CHAPTER 6 - RECOMMENDED MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE PBTP

ACHD serves a critical role in the planning, development and construction of needed pedestrian improvements. That role will likely be expanded to meet the needs identified in the PBTP. A number of planning issues are identified in the PBTP that will require ACHD's attention and in some cases further evaluation.

The PBTP recommends on-going refinement to project priorities, short- and long-range planning coordination, bus stop planning and



The PBTP Implementation Measures should be well-coordinated.



- Jurisdictional equity
- Defining “packaged” pedestrian improvements that span or mix *high* and *moderate* priorities, resulting in comprehensive corridor enhancements for construction programming and cost efficiencies
- Complimenting long-range street projects with intersecting sidewalk and curb ramp improvements to complete neighborhood accessibility

Recent public opinion research⁴ indicates that Ada County residents are seeking greater public investment in pedestrian facilities. Neighborhoods and interest groups are also focusing on street and pedestrian traffic safety issues. As continued growth occurs in Ada County cities, so too will traffic congestion. The public’s interest in neighborhood traffic management issues will likely expand, and residents will be calling on ACHD

for even greater assistance to help improve pedestrian and neighborhood traffic conditions. It is also very likely that more detailed federal policies and ADA rules are forthcoming in the near future. These policies may require ACHD to expand its efforts to develop and refine internal policies and standards to guide pedestrian plans and projects.

How should ACHD Proceed?

In accordance with current ADA requirements, ACHD is to have designated an ADA Coordinator to facilitate the ADA rules and coordinate with local stakeholders. To best administer the PBTP findings, ACHD should consider a new staffing position that couples as the ADA and PBTP Coordinator functions, serving to guide and facilitate the implementation measures as outlined. In this manner ACHD will help meet the public’s growing expectations for pedestrian and bicycle system enhancements and investments in the future.



END NOTES:

¹ *The ACHD Pedestrian-Bicycle Transition Plan does not address ADA compliance for immediate access to and within ACHD's buildings.*

² *Code of Federal Regulations, Title 28, Judicial Administration, Office of the Federal Register, July 1, 2003.*

³ *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access; Part II – Best Practices Design Guide, U.S. Department of Transportation, 2002.*

⁴ *Public Opinion on Priorities for ACHD Capital Spending, Strategic Intelligence, Inc., May 2004.*

⁵ *ACHD Capital Improvements Plan, 2003-2023, August 2004.*

