

CHAPTER VII
INTERMODAL CONSIDERATIONS
PEDESTRIAN & NON-MOTORIZED

There are several related areas of interest in the provision of transportation facilities to meet the needs of pedestrian and non-motorized modes of travel. These include adequate pedestrian crossings on the roadway network, provision of safe, efficient travel for utilitarian and recreational bicyclists, preservation of future trail corridors for recreational uses, and implementation of a comprehensive non-motorized system for the entire study area.

Passage of "Complete Streets" legislation by the Michigan legislature in added additional planning and development requirements to transportation projects to adequately consider all users of the roadway system, especially for projects implemented by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

PEDESTRIAN

Pedestrian movement is generally accommodated by the presence of sidewalks (or non-motorized paths) combined with the use of pedestrian crossing signals at major intersections in the BCATS area. Some recently completed roadway projects in the urban area have included sidewalks or multi-use paths to enhance pedestrian activity. It is recommended that future projects include adequate provisions for pedestrian movement and that special categories of funding, such as Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants (administered by MDOT), be sought whenever possible to broaden the funding possibilities for non-motorized facilities in conjunction with roadway projects or as uniquely identified transportation improvements. The City of Battle Creek has implemented a limited number of pedestrian "countdown signals" which provide pedestrians with the number of seconds left on the walk signal. This helps the pedestrian decide whether or not to attempt to cross the road during that signal phase. The City of Battle Creek also periodically tests other new pedestrian oriented technology, such as "flashing eyes" pedestrian signals and in-pavement or overhead pedestrian crossing warning lights for motorists. The City of Battle Creek has also installed pedestrian signals with audible indicators at three downtown intersections to aid those with vision disabilities. The locations are Michigan Ave at McCamly St, Michigan Ave at Capital Ave, and Washington Ave at Champion St.

For some time now, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements include the installation of not only sidewalk ramps at crosswalks, but also of a detectable warning surface within the sidewalk ramp as well. These surfaces, with a pattern of raised domes on them, can be detected by persons with vision disabilities. The raised surface is required at areas of possible hazards, which include not only crosswalks, but also at edges of train platforms. The road agencies are required to install the ramps with detectable warning surfaces on all streets which are reconstructed, resurfaced or have other specific lesser treatments.

NON-MOTORIZED (linear parks, bikeways, bicycle lanes)

Bicycling is permitted on all highways, roads, and streets in Michigan except limited access freeways. However, just because it is permitted does not necessarily mean that it is safe or advisable to do so along many of the busy thoroughfares and narrow rural roads that make up the transportation network. While the responsible road

agencies (state and local) have delineated bicycle lanes and provided non-motorized paths (as may be represented in this document), it is the responsibility of the user of the facilities to exercise the good sense of a reasonable person in conjunction with the use of any provided facility. Personal safety is the responsibility of the user.

(Disclaimer: Since BCATS does not maintain the roads or paths referred to in this Plan, it makes no express or implied guarantee as to the condition or safety of existing or planned facilities. The condition of facilities will change over time and should be assessed for suitability depending upon one's skills and abilities. BCATS shall not be answerable or held accountable in any manner for loss, damage, or injury that may result from the use of the identified non-motorized facilities in this Plan.)

In addition to traditional shared auto/bike corridors, there has been an interest in developing non-motorized travel corridors along abandoned rail rights-of-way under the auspices of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (formerly the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Program). Nationally, there have been over 550 rails-to-trails conversions representing over 6,800 miles in 45 states. In Michigan, currently 1,200 miles of such trails connect a variety of destinations.

Nationally, the designated North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) will be traversing Calhoun County in its route from North Dakota to New York. The NST links areas of historic, natural, cultural, and scenic importance along its route. When completed, the NST will be the longest continuous trail in the nation, covering over 4,000 miles. The NST effort is expected to be jointly signed along with some of Battle Creek's Linear Park and Calhoun County's trailway as it makes its way through the county.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Southwest Region Office has developed a reference map for trails which exist in each of the counties in its region. The map was prepared by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and is available through the MDOT Transportation Service Center offices. The map provides a more regional perspective of the non-motorized trails that currently exist.

In the BCATS area, the City of Battle Creek developed a Linear Park system many years ago with 16 miles of non-motorized trails, primarily located in the area surrounding downtown Battle Creek. In 2002, the system was expanded by an additional mile with a connection to Irving Park on Battle Creek's northwest side by utilizing a federal Transportation Enhancement grant. Pennfield Charter Township's master plan includes a recommendation for development of a trailway to extend a non-motorized facility from the City of Battle Creek's Linear Park northward along the Battle Creek River and/or Wanondoger Creek. There is also a recommendation to develop a bike route along Pennfield, McAllister and Brigden Roads in Pennfield Township, in coordination with the Calhoun County Road Department (CCRD).

The CCRD has identified a corridor across the whole county for a trailway, mostly in the eastern section of the BCATS area and extending east into the remainder of the county. Some components of this trailway have already been constructed, including a portion around the Ott Biological Preserve in 2014. Calhoun County has a "2015-2019 Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Master Plan" detailing planned development of its trails county-wide. Emmett Charter Township has proposed bike lanes along several roadways in its jurisdiction. Some of these lanes have been included as part of recent roadway projects. MDOT and the City of Springfield completed a vital connection to the City of Battle Creek's Linear Park along M-37 (Helmer Rd) on the west side of the metropolitan area in 2008. MDOT added a sidewalk along M-37 (Helmer Rd) from the end of the Springfield path, south to connect with the City of Battle Creek's sidewalk and paths along Helmer Rd south of Columbia Ave.

The City of Battle Creek has developed an extensive *Non-Motorized Transportation Network Master Plan*, which was adopted by the Battle Creek City Commission in March, 2006 and which is revised on a periodic basis. This plan is a 20-year vision for the City's non-motorized system. The City utilized the assistance of consulting firm Wade Trim to complete the plan and incorporated an extensive amount of public involvement in the development of the plan. Several short-term actions were identified in the plan that are designed to implement a connected non-motorized system for not only Battle Creek, but Calhoun County and the region. These efforts included:

- incorporating the *Non-Motorized Transportation Network Master Plan* into the City of Battle Creek's Comprehensive Master Plan
- installing bike racks on Battle Creek Transit line-haul buses
- development of a citywide bike rack program targeting not just City of Battle Creek parks, schools and the library but also major employers, the downtown, hospitals, the industrial park, the retail mall, and Binder Park zoo
- expanding opportunities for water travel on the area's rivers (an effort is currently underway to explore opportunities for white water rafting along sections of the rivers in downtown Battle Creek)
- public education/media campaign to encourage safe and proper use of the non-motorized system
- establish a maintenance program and financial support for the expanding non-motorized system
- development of a coordinated signage and way-finding program for the non-motorized system

In reviewing the status of non-motorized facilities within the BCATS area, the local agencies have had an aggressive program to expand the areawide non-motorized system. Battle Creek Transit has completed installation of bike racks on its entire fleet of large buses, as called for in the listing above. BCATS plans to support the plans of the local agencies within the programming of its own long range transportation plan. There continues to be no need to recreate the excellent process used by the City of Battle Creek for determining non-motorized needs. The city's process addressed a significant amount of the "needs" in regard to this system and did an excellent job of looking beyond the borders of the City of Battle Creek. Similarly, Calhoun County has developed its Plan utilizing a comprehensive process and public involvement.

On the following page is an inventory of websites related to non-motorized transportation plans & facilities in the Battle Creek metropolitan area, including some previously referenced in this chapter.

NON-MOTORIZED PLANS & RESOURCES

City of Battle Creek *Non-Motorized Transportation Network Master Plan*, March 2006

<http://www.bcparks.org/DocumentCenter/View/385>

City of Battle Creek *Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2014-2018*, March 2014

<http://www.bcparks.org/DocumentCenter/View/384>

<http://www.bcparks.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/730>, list of "Original Projects" in Capital Improvement Plan for 2014-18 Master Plan

<http://www.bcparks.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/729>, list of 2016 "Amendments" to Capital Improvement Plan for 2014-18 Master Plan

City of Battle Creek, Current Non-Motorized Network map, updated 9/16/16

http://www.bcatsmpo.org/downloads/bc_nonmotorized_network_map_20160916.pdf

City of Battle Creek, Linear Park map, "New" 2016

<http://www.bcparks.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/565>

City of Battle Creek, Linear Park map, from old brochure

<http://www.bcparks.org/DocumentCenter/View/246>

Woodland Park and Nature Preserve, <http://woodlandparkbc.com/>

Battle Creek Whitewater, Inc. (local non-profit organization promoting restoration of Kalamazoo River in downtown Battle Creek, to potential "blueway" trail with connections to other non-motorized facilities). <http://www.battlecreekwhitewater.org/>

Calhoun County *Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2015-2019*

<https://www.calhouncountymi.gov/DownloadTracking.aspx?DocumentId=1868>

Map of Calhoun County parks, <https://www.calhouncountymi.gov/DownloadTracking.aspx?DocumentId=1876>

Calhoun County Trail Master Plan, 2015, by Professional Engineering Associates (PEA) Inc.

<http://peainc.com/portfolios/calhoun-county-trail-master-plan/>

Calhoun County Trailway (Calhoun County Trailway Alliance, <http://www.calhouncountytrailway.org/>)

– 51 miles of trail across Calhoun County connecting Homer, Albion, Marshall and Battle Creek; Portions of the trail are in beautiful Ott Preserve; Will link with the Falling Waters Trail in Jackson and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail in Kalamazoo County, along with the North Country Trail, the Iron Belle Trail, and the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail.

North Country Scenic Trail (<https://northcountrytrail.org/>)

– Connects with the the Calhoun County Trailway; – When completed will be the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States; The NCNST is over 4,600 miles long.

Great Lake-to-Lake Trail (www.michigantrails.org/trails/past-work/great-lake-to-lake/)

– The Calhoun County Trailway will be the county hub for the trail; Will connect Port Huron to South Haven; Its master plan was completed in 2011; When completed it will be 240 miles, connecting numerous tourist destinations.

Iron Belle Trail (http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10365_16839_71459---,00.html)

– The Calhoun County Trailway will serve as a portion of this trail; Will consist of hiking and biking routes from Belle Isle in Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula; Will be the longest designated state trail in the nation.

Pennfield Township Parks & Recreation Plan 2016-2021, January 2015. <http://smpcregion3.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Plan-Final-1-6-15.pdf>

Connecting Communities: A Regional Vision for Non-Motorized Transportation in Southwest Michigan aka *Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* (for Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren Counties). Developed by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission with funding from the MDOT. September 2011.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/SW_MI_Final_Plan_9_21_2011_369277_7.pdf