



CONNECT CLEVELAND WALKABILITY ACTION PLAN

The Cleveland Urban Area MPO received funding assistance from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) to attend the *Step It Up!: Action Institute to Increase Walking and Walkability* held in Decatur, GA on April 3-6, 2017. The Cleveland MPO *Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group* was one of eleven participating teams from around the continental U.S. and Hawaii which were chosen from among thirty-five applicants. Apart from pre-course and post-course assignments, teams worked during the Action Institute with their members and faculty from early morning until late in the evening, and collaborated with other teams to produce draft Walkability Action Plans for their communities based upon local needs and information and resources provided during the Action Institute. These plans are to consist of Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) strategies to be pursued over coming months. The *Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group* includes Avery Johnson, Vice-Mayor of Cleveland and MPO Board Member; Amy Davenport, Health Educator with the Bradley County Health Department; Beverly Johnson, Northwest Cleveland Neighborhood Association Secretary and walkability advocate; Dustin Tommey, Executive Director of Impact Cleveland and neighborhood advocate; David Sheely, Professional Engineer and Cleveland Transportation Projects Manager; and Greg Thomas, Cleveland Planning Director and MPO Coordinator. The completed Walkability Action Plans are to be submitted by April 28, 2017 to NACDD with on-going participation in a Community of Practice (CoP) among teams for collaboration during plan implementation.





The Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan is dependent upon the decisions of the people and organizations within the greater Cleveland community to understand and embrace walking and walkability as priorities, and upon their communication with elected officials and administrative staff to determine and implement specific pedestrian improvements that will make the community walkable. To these ends, the following list of value statements underlies the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan:

EDUCATION: Share knowledge within our community about walking and walkability including the health benefits of walking, strategies for improving walkability within different neighborhoods, pedestrian mobility issues related to social justice (disability, low-income, etc.), consumer preferences for walkable neighborhoods and other economic benefits of improved walkability, environmental benefits of reduced automobile travel, etc.

SERVICE: Serve neighborhoods, political districts, and corridors with appropriate pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, improved crossings, greenways, walking paths, improved roadway shoulders, traffic calming, etc.) that make walking safe, easy, and enjoyable.

CONNECTIVITY: Connect Cleveland neighborhoods to the Greenway system, the Downtown, and to Schools with pedestrian improvements. Connect outlying areas with pedestrian improvements linked to schools and other neighborhood centers. Where possible, coordinate pedestrian improvements to support connectivity with transit and bicycle modes.

EQUITY: Provide an equitable distribution of pedestrian improvements among neighborhoods, political districts, and corridors while attending to the transportation needs of low-income, minority, and disabled populations, as well as those who are more dependent on walking, biking, and transit.





The purpose of the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan is to encourage Cleveland area residents to walk more and to get to more of the places they go by walking. Physical exercise improves health and lowers health-related costs and improves productivity. Walking is a form of exercise that requires no special skills or equipment --- excepting wheelchairs or other mobility aids for some-- and is possible for people of all ages, abilities, and economic circumstances to incorporate into their daily routines. Walkability emphasizes the ability to incorporate walking as a form of transportation into our daily routines for short trips for work, school, shopping, social activities, etc. Walkability is a sought-after characteristic that promotes higher property values and higher levels of economic activity. Walkability is improved with community design to provide a mixture of land uses connected with sidewalks and other facilities in an area where population is concentrated. Walking is known to increase where the built environment is walkable.

Why are people not walking and what can be done about it? Heavy automobile-dependency, long commute times, and sedentary lifestyles are recognized to contribute significantly to poor health, often in combination with other conditions. Published data as well as primary research on walking habits, attitudes toward walking, and impediments to walking experienced by Cleveland MPO area residents would be helpful in shaping policy responses including those coming from the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan. It would be helpful to have this information on walking as the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan is begun, and after a significant period of implementation, e.g. 10 years.

As a target, the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan encourages participants to think primarily in terms of trips that could potentially be made within about 20 minutes under suitable conditions. That implies some proximity of people, land uses, and activities as well as connection with pedestrian facilities. It is also recognized





that other non-motorized modes are important in supporting a community designed for walkability, namely cycling and transit. The mixture and density of land uses that supports walking also supports cycling and transit. A commuter may cycle part way and put her bike on a bus before placing the bike in a bike rack near her destination and walking the rest of the way. Transit users, and school bus riders, are often dependent upon sidewalks to get safely to and from the bus. Some facilities serve both pedestrians and cyclists, such as street crossing improvements, traffic calming, multi-use paths, e.g. the Greenway, etc. Some amenities like bike racks and transit shelters and shade trees are integrated with the sidewalk, while other amenities like facilities for showering and changing, restrooms, etc. can serve cyclists and pedestrians. Interlinking pedestrian facilities with these other systems can extend the reach of the 20-minute travel area for pedestrians, and the 20-minute travel area for a cyclist is obviously greater. Taken together walking, cycling and transit increase physical activity which is the primary reason for supporting walking and walkability. Those who are implementing the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan should be alert to opportunities to integrate benefits for the cycling and transit modes; plans for bicycle improvements and transit improvement should likewise be aware of and responsive to those for pedestrian improvements that will be embodied in the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan.

Much of the Cleveland area has urbanized in recent decades with automobile-oriented suburban development located on or near major corridors radiating outward from downtown Cleveland with a wide interspersing of green area further from the center of town; in effect, it is a typical urban sprawl condition. Compared to national averages, it is believed that relatively little of the population would be living in a walkable location in terms of sidewalks and other facilities connecting them with jobs, recreation, school, shopping, etc. within a relatively short distance. Where pedestrian facilities do exist within the area to otherwise make it walkable, a sizeable proportion of these facilities are believed to be in disrepair or in need of upgrades consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There is a need to assess current walkability conditions and possible walkability





improvements in Cleveland and the Cleveland MPO area. Because of the development pattern extending along major streets, identifying high-impact potential arterial and collector street pedestrian improvements should be part of the overall strategy.

The Greenway is a special case facility within the overall considerations of walkability. It functions both as a transportation resource connecting people with schools, parks, shopping, etc., and as a linear park. It provides mobility for both pedestrians and cyclists. A separate Greenway Board is active in the planning and management of the Greenway and Greenway events and amenities. Presently, the Greenway extends mostly along South Mouse Creek from just south of Willow Street to just north of Mohawk Drive. Further extension to the north is desired but it is challenging while extension further south to Inman Street and the confluence of Woolen Mill Branch is being actively pursued. Some parts are completed or underway along Fillauer Branch in the northeastern part of the City. Some planning has been done for a Greenway along Candies Creek that would be in the northern and western parts of the City. Redevelopment activity in the downtown and brownfield areas southeast of downtown is anticipated to include an extension of the Greenway along Woolen Mill Branch. Greenway paths along South Mouse Creek, Fillauer Branch, and Woolen Mill Branch could provide bicycle and pedestrian connection to much of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Coordination with the Greenway Board, neighborhoods, and entities involved in downtown redevelopment is needed to maximize the benefits of connecting the Greenway with other pedestrian facilities. A considerable problem at present is pedestrian barriers between neighborhoods and the Greenway and the Downtown.

Downtown redevelopment is a special focus of the Cleveland City Council and the City Manager. The City Manager is formulating and beginning to implement a multi-faceted downtown redevelopment program that focuses on the downtown core near Inman Street, the major east-west corridor through downtown Cleveland





where the intent is to implement a road diet with a “complete streets” approach making the Inman Street corridor more friendly for pedestrians and inviting to business. The plan also addresses the need for additional housing in the downtown and in adjacent neighborhoods. It seeks to connect surrounding neighborhoods with the downtown, including those that have been somewhat separated by physical (e.g. a railroad), economic, and social barriers. It would use a density of intersections, improvements to sidewalks and other infrastructure including bicycle facilities, the convergence of transit routes at the downtown transit center, a proposed “Cleveland Chattanooga Commute Hub” park-and-ride lot a commuter bus connection, and the Greenway Extension along Fillauer Branch to provide a multi-modal transportation framework for downtown. Cleveland’s downtown is ringed by diverse neighborhoods, including a 5000-student university, that could access jobs, shopping, and services along commercial corridors and in a downtown brownfield redevelopment area (the former Whirlpool plant site and other properties) offering a major opportunity for redevelopment. The Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan needs to coordinate with the downtown redevelopment effort.

Schools will figure prominently into the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan. Several schools are located within Cleveland and others are in the City’s urbanized area. Most of the City’s elementary schools are surrounded by neighborhoods with at least some sidewalks that could permit some students to walk to school. In most cases the walkable area around these schools could be expanded with additional pedestrian improvements. A new City elementary school is to be constructed in a suburban corridor on Georgetown Road SR60, also the location of the City’s middle school, where there is presently no pedestrian access; however, a planned road improvement will bring sidewalks and bike lanes in front of both schools which could possibly be accessed from a future Candies Creek Greenway. The City’s high school is well-connected by the Greenway and sidewalk. Bradley County Schools should be assessed for possibilities of connecting students with the addition of limited pedestrian improvements (Knox County, TN undertook such an effort). Bradley County’s Ocoee Middle School is in a highly





congested area inside Cleveland that should be studied to determine whether benefits could be had from additional pedestrian improvements. Apart from walking to school, another major area of concern is pedestrian improvements and shelter at school bus stops that would make them safer, more accessible, and more comfortable. Both of types of improvements, school walkability and bus stop improvements, hold the possibility of savings from better school bus utilization.

The Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan is presented in the NACDD tabular format below. The plan sets forth two goals, one focused on education and information gathering and the other focused on determining specific walkability improvements and implementing them. The plan contains several action steps for each goal, the whole of which involves several participants from citizen advocates to government officials. The action steps within the plan, to be taken over about a two-year period, lead to a set of specific walkability improvements and policy changes and budget resources to achieve those improvements over ten years. The intention is that the information and experience gained in each of the action steps would be documented as part of the on-going Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan effort as would progress toward specific walkability improvements.

Goal #1: Make Walking and Walkability Priorities in Our Community. By March 31,2018, the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group and Cleveland MPO will educate and engage schools, Cleveland Urban Area Transit, private / non-profit sectors, public officials, and residents on the importance of walkability and active transportation. Surveys will be conducted to assist with the identification of barriers and in efforts of improving Active Transportation.

Estimated reach:. The target estimated reach is the Cleveland MPO population of approximately 90,000.





<p>Action Steps (to include timeline):</p> <p><i>Action Steps are specific activities, benchmarks, or achievements that assist in accomplishing the goal; the timeline is an estimated completion date for that stated action step</i></p>	<p>Responsible Party:</p> <p><i>Agency, Group, or individual responsible for achieving the action step</i></p>	<p>Additional Comments:</p> <p><i>Added comments or resources useful for achieving the action step</i></p>
<p>Action Step 1.1: By May 1, 2017, continue implementation of “Healthy Tennessee” education program.</p>	<p>Health Department staff</p>	<p>Teach the benefits of active lifestyle and active transportation, emphasizing walking, to strategic public audiences</p>
<p>Action Step 1.2: By May 31, 2017, provide a short written briefing on the Walkability Action Plan process to elected officials, the Health Department, and the MPO.</p>	<p>Public Health and MPO staff members from Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group</p>	<p>The intention here is to brief elected officials and administrative officials on the process that is underway, not to discuss specific pedestrian improvement proposals that may be developed during the planning process. Officials should be alerted to the intent to carry out neighborhood/district level walkability audits.</p>
<p>Action Step 1.3: By June 1, 2017, begin working with Bike-Walk Cleveland to implement the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan.</p>	<p>Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group, Bike-Walk Cleveland members</p>	<p>Bike-Walk Cleveland, a citizen-led planning and advocacy group, is currently forming with an organizational meeting on April 24, 2017. Meet with them by July 1, 2017 to present Walkability Action</p>





		<p>Institute (WAI) information on health and economic benefits of improved walkability, to get input on the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan, and to begin planning neighborhood/district level walkability audits. Bike-Walk Cleveland leaders for walkability Audits should be identified for each neighborhood/district</p>
<p>Action Step 1.4: By July 1, 2017, engage with school officials concerning walkability improvements that would allow nearby children to walk to school, as well as pedestrian improvements needed to support school bus stops.</p>	<p>MPO staff</p>	<p>Review and analyze data related to school bus stop walkability and walkable areas around schools to determine priority school-related walkability improvements.</p>
<p>Action Step 1.5: By July 1, 2017, engage with Cleveland Urban Area Transit concerning pedestrian facility improvements, and related bus stop improvements, needed to support current and future operations of the fixed route transit system</p>	<p>MPO staff</p>	<p>Review and analyze data related to walkability and walkable areas along transit routes, including locations that may be generating high ridership and locations of proposed transit stops</p>





		and shelters as the CUATS fixed route system transitions toward a fixed stop operation.
<p>Action Step 1.6: By July 1, 2017, begin walkability health and economic benefit education presentations to private and non-profit sectors.</p>	Health Department staff, Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group	Presentations to key groups in the private and non-profit sectors (Realtors, Homebuilders, Chamber of Commerce, Mainstreet Cleveland Civic and religious Organizations, and Environmental Justice communities) focusing on the community health and economic benefits of improving walkability and the Walkability Action Plan. Provide data-driven compelling evidence for public health and economic benefits that follow from making the community more walkable. Use data from Health Department and related agencies, Realtors and others.
<p>Action Step 1.7: By August 1, 2017, make Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan presentations to key public sector entities.</p>	Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group from WAI and Bike-Walk Cleveland	Presentations should be made to the Bradley County Health Council, City and County Schools, Cleveland MPO, and City and County Planning Commissions. Presentations should include community health and economic benefits of improving walkability, the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan, and the proposed neighborhood/district level





		walkability audits. It is important that members of these bodies be challenged to participate in the neighborhood/district level walkability audits.
<p>Action Step 1.8: By October 1, 2017, do a survey of walking, walking attitudes, and walking impediments among community residents.</p>	Health Department staff and MPO	Develop and Implement a Survey of Cleveland MPO area residents to assess the extent to which they have integrated walking into their daily lives and the barriers to walking that they experience and their attitudes toward walking; conduct the survey at the beginning and repeat after a period of Walkability Action Plan implementation, e.g. 10 years. Other published data and comparative data should be integrated into this analysis. This task may require outside assistance and resources for design and implementation. Results will be used in the final Walking Action Plan that is presented to the Cleveland City Council and Bradley County Commission
<p>Action Step 1.9: By November 1, 2017, conduct walkability audits throughout the community.</p>	Bike-Walk Cleveland with support from Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group and MPO staff	Conduct walkability audits in neighborhoods and City Council/County Commission districts, including neighborhood representatives, elected officials,





		<p>school officials, transit officials, planning commissioners, transportation officials. Prior to the walkability audits, audit Walkability Action Groups will need training and there will need to be a walkability audit form for their use in the field. Data will then need to be compiled and analyzed</p>
<p>Action Step 1.10: By March 1, 2018, make formal Walkability Action Plan presentations to the City Council and County Commission.</p>	<p>Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group from WAI and Bike-Walk Cleveland</p>	<p>Presentations to the City Council and County Commission should include the community health and economic benefits of improving walkability and the most up-to-date Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Plan with the highest ranking walkability projects from each neighborhood, district, or corridor (see Action Steps 2.3 through 2.5 below). Key stakeholder representatives should be present and recognized during the presentations (Bike Walk Cleveland, Schools, Transit, Neighborhood representatives, etc.) Results from the community survey will be presented.</p>



Goal #2: Make walking easy, safe, and enjoyable. By August 1, 2018, the Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group’s and the MPO staff’s goal is to develop for adoption the policy changes, capital project plans, budgets, and other implementation resources to improve pedestrian facilities to connect neighborhoods to the Greenway system, to Downtown Cleveland, and to schools, while serving transit and cycling modes, linking people to activities, and distributing transportation benefits across the community with equity toward those impacted by disability, minority status, low income, or limited access to automobiles. Identified improvements to be achieved over 10 years.

Estimated reach: The Cleveland MPO area contains approximately 90,000 people.

<p>Action Steps (to include timeline):</p> <p><i>Action Steps are specific activities, benchmarks, or achievements that assist in accomplishing the goal; the timeline is an estimated completion date for that stated action step</i></p>	<p>Responsible Party:</p> <p><i>Agency or individual responsible for achieving the action step</i></p>	<p>Additional Comments:</p> <p><i>Added comments or resources useful for achieving the action step</i></p>
<p>Action Step 2.1: By August 1, 2017, locate and map existing walkable and potentially walkable areas in the community.</p>	<p>MPO staff, City and County planning and GIS staff</p>	<p>These maps and data will be used to inform the walkability audit process. Within the MPO area, determine areas near arterial and collector roadways with significant clustering of population and pedestrian attractors (schools, parks, office and commercial</p>



		<p>areas, etc.) that are walkable due to existing sidewalks, connecting low volume streets, etc. Likewise, determine such areas that are <u>potentially</u> walkable with the addition of short sections of sidewalk, trails or walking paths, improvements to roadway shoulders, use of connecting low volume streets, etc. Develop a map and calculate square miles within these walkable and potentially walkable areas. The maps can be updated once the sidewalk inventory process is complete</p>
<p>Action Step 2.2: By November 1, 2017, complete an inventory of existing sidewalks.</p>	<p>MPO and Engineering staff and interns</p>	<p>The inventory should document the location and condition of existing sidewalks together with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues as indicated in the published PROWAG standards.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.3: By December 1, 2017, develop a list of potential walkability improvements for each neighborhood/district and along major corridors.</p>	<p>Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group from WAI and Bike-Walk Cleveland</p>	<p>Using the information developed in the walkability audits and other data, develop a prioritized list of pedestrian improvements for each neighborhood/district and along major corridors at a community level. The project description</p>





		<p>should be general but include project termini and what is being connected. The focus should be primarily upon arterial and collector streets, using other local streets where necessary, and including local streets with low traffic volumes (with or without additional traffic calming, shoulder widening, etc.) as part of the pedestrian circulation network.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.4: By January 1, 2018, evaluate the list of potential walkability improvements using a matrix of benefits and/or impacts</p>	<p>Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group from WAI and Bike-Walk Cleveland</p>	<p>Evaluate the prioritized list of projects for safety, environmental justice impacts, economic development impacts, connectivity to downtown Cleveland, connectivity to the Greenway, support for walking to school or school bus transportation, support of access to transit, and support of access to other pedestrian destinations, and coordination with bicycle improvements. The goals are to connect neighborhoods to the downtown (especially those within a 20</p>



		<p>minute walk) to support downtown revitalization and redevelopment, to connect neighborhoods to the Greenway system (existing and future), to connect people with schools, transit, and other activities, and to provide greater transportation equity for areas with historically higher concentrations of minority and low income populations. Projects within each neighborhood, district, or corridor should be ranked according to their level of benefit or impact.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.5: By February 1, 2018, develop a planning level cost estimate for the highest ranking walkability project in each neighborhood, district, or corridor to inform the budget making process</p>	<p>MPO staff and City Engineering staff</p>	<p>Determine a planning level cost for the highest ranking walkability improvement projects in each neighborhood, district, or corridor. This determination should expand as necessary upon the general project description to include intersection improvements, crossings, traffic calming, landscaping, etc such as may be proposed within the project.</p>





		<p>Project descriptions should be formatted to work within the TDOT cost estimating tool. The purpose is to inform the budget request to elected officials.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.6: By April 1, 2018, establish a walkability support program to design and implement amenities and services that support quality pedestrian experience (and where coordination is possible, quality cycling and transit experiences) for each of the selected walkability projects.</p>	<p>Connect Cleveland Walkability Action Group, Bike-Walk Cleveland, and others</p>	<p>The package of walkability projects will need to be supplemented by additional programs and policies and their associated costs that are beyond the scope of the TDOT estimating tool; such programs to encourage supporting facilities (bike racks, showering and changing facilities, adjacent businesses catering to active transportation users, a visually interesting streetscape, etc.) outside of the public right-of-way.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.7: By April 1, 2018, complete a Draft ADA Transition Plan to inform the budget making process.</p>	<p>MPO staff and City Engineering staff</p>	<p>Develop the Draft ADA Transition Plan by April 1, 2018 and from that the first-year ADA Transition Plan Improvements budget request. The information in the sidewalk inventory will be critical to the Draft ADA Transition Plan, which must document the sidewalk improvements needed for ADA</p>



		<p>compliance and establish a budget and timeframe by which the local government intends to make the improvements. For purposes of plan development, a 10 year timeframe could be used for implementation.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.8: By April 15, 2018, develop funding alternatives for a 10-year program of ADA Transition Plan Improvements and Priority Walkability Improvements.</p>	<p>MPO and City Engineering staff</p>	<p>Funding alternatives should consider actions such as setting aside a percentage of USTBG funds through the MPO for pedestrian improvements, dedicating a portion of general fund revenues to a pool for pedestrian improvements, establishment of a fee for pedestrian improvements.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.9: By July 1, 2018, complete for adoption an ADA Transition Plan for improvements that must be made to existing sidewalks.</p>	<p>MPO and Engineering staff</p>	<p>The information in the sidewalk inventory will be critical to the ADA Transition Plan, which must document the sidewalk improvements needed for ADA compliance and establish a budget and timeframe by which the local government intends to make the improvements. For purposes of plan development, a 10 year timeframe could be used for implementation.</p>





<p>Action Step 2.10: By July 1, 2018, complete for adoption a Walkability Action Plan Improvements Program that includes a schedule and budget of priority walkability improvements to be made over the next 10 years</p>	<p>MPO and Engineering staff</p>	<p>This will rely on synthesis of information gained through preceding planning steps and develop more complete project descriptions, schedules, and budgets.</p>
<p>Action Step 2.11: By August 1, 2018, Adopt established standards for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities</p>	<p>Administrative and elected officials</p>	<p>Changes will require approval of planning commissions and legislative bodies</p>
<p>Action Step 2.12: By August 1, 2018, Adopt changes to land development regulations to facilitate greater density and mixture of uses as well as the provision of sidewalks and bicycle facilities.</p>	<p>Administrative and elected officials</p>	<p>Changes will require approval of planning commissions and legislative bodies</p>
<p>Action Step 2.13: By August 1, 2018, Adopt changes funding mechanism for pedestrian improvements to implement ADA and priority walkability improvements.</p>	<p>Administrative and elected officials</p>	<p>Changes will require approval of planning commissions and legislative bodies</p>