

Ellsworth Bicycle Pedestrian Plan

Revised 07/20/07

Excerpts Related to Safe Routes to School

Executive Summary

The City of Ellsworth is leading eastern Maine in an effort to provide people with good reasons and safe places to walk and bicycle. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan expresses this community's desire to complete the streets, connecting **schools**, parks, businesses and homes with safe and attractive places for children and adults to travel, exercise and recreate. The city recognizes the many economic, social, health and recreational benefits that will result.

Choice for Kids

Children are an important consideration for walking and biking plans. Promoting walking and biking culture among our students, parents and school administrators requires safe, efficient and **attractive routes to school**. A variety of improvements can enhance the safety or mobility of children in school zones.

- Sidewalks or separated walkways and paths
- Marked crosswalks
- Parking prohibitions near intersections and crosswalks that are near schools
- Drop-off areas located away from where children on foot cross streets or access the school
- Drop-off areas separated from bus drop-off zones
- Signs and markings, such as the school advance warning sign and speed limits or 15 to 25 mph when flashing

Ellsworth's schools should work with city planners to develop "**safe routes to school**" plans, identify and correct problem areas. Ellsworth's school administrators and parent-teacher organizations can seek assistance from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine to educate students about bicycle safety. Many towns in Maine have formed "walking buses" where an adult accompanies children to school, starting at one location and picking children up along the way

Coordination with Existing Plans:

Middle School Expansion

The City of Ellsworth, in coordination with the Maine Department of Education, is undertaking major renovations of the middle school. This initiative will increase the size of the building and the number of students that will be attending. Members of this committee recognize the importance of the track for adult exercise and sporting events.

The project will:

- Construct sidewalks on connecting streets
- Add additional parking
- Make changes to playgrounds and sports fields as needed.

Ellsworth Rail, Trail and Transit Center (STAR)

www.hpcme.org/landuse/ellsworth/STAR

Ellsworth was awarded a transportation enhancement grant in 2002 to construct a trail on or near this rail corridor to connect the high school with the central business district. The 2008-2009 MaineDOT work plan reserves up to \$1.4 million to construct this connection. This rail-with-trail project will provide a backbone for bicycles and pedestrians that, if extended, will connect the Boggy Brook Technical School and athletic fields, Ellsworth High School, Ellsworth Middle School, the YMCA and the central business district. Challenges to full implementation of this system remain.

- Users of the middle school, YMCA, library and central business district must **cross Route 1A to reach the trail**. Currently there are crosswalks at the High School and at Main Street, approximately one mile apart. A new traffic light will be located at the Oak Street and State Street intersection close to the half-way point between the existing crosswalks, but MaineDOT project planners have thus far refused to consider a crosswalk at this location. This MaineDOT decision will greatly reduce the future potential for children living east of Route 1A to safely walk or bike to Ellsworth's K-8 schools.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1: Safety: Provide **safe routes for bicycles and pedestrians**.

1B: Ensure safe routes between neighborhoods and schools in the urban core area.

Strategies

- Identify neighborhoods and primary travel corridors.

- Prioritize municipal expenditures to complete sidewalks, paths and shoulders to serve area schools.

Goal 2: Education and Awareness: Educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian facilities and issues, the health benefits of walking and biking and facilitate easy access to information.

2B: Provide educational programs about bicycle/pedestrian safety.

Strategies

- Encourage schools to promote bicycling and walking to school.
- Engage Bicycle Coalition of Maine to conduct regular bike events at area schools.
 - Bike rodeos
 - Bike safety classes
 - Bike to school week

Goal 3: Connectivity & Infrastructure: Modify the transportation infrastructure to provide bicycle/pedestrian access to and between significant destinations and neighborhoods and enhance connections with the network of other bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Objectives

3A: Create routes to key destinations.

Strategies

- Create bicycle/pedestrian routes to: DeMeyer Field complex, Ellsworth Falls, schools, shopping areas, recreation areas, Birdsacre, Woodlawn, Indian Point, and between neighborhoods.

3E: Create and enhance bicycle/pedestrian destinations.

Strategies

- Install modern bicycle racks at schools, businesses and other destinations.

Project Proposals

High Priority Investments (In alphabetical order by location)

Phase 1

Ellsworth Falls to High Street: “Shared Path” Rail with Trail designed/funded by MDOT

Forrest Avenue Area: Safe Routes Connecting K8 School to YMCA and Ellsworth Library

Main Street and State Street: Safe pedestrian crossing and Pedestrian exclusive time on light

Phase 2

Oak Street to Rail Trail: Pedestrian Crossing serving K8 School and safe route to trail

Shore Road: Safe pedestrian travel on route to school with traffic calming measures

Next Steps

- Apply for Safe Routes to Schools funding