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Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Planning: Training for Practitioners

OTREC-TT-12-02

January 2013

Additional information about this project, including associated project deliverables, can be found at <http://otrec.us/project/465>

A National University Transportation Center sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration

ABOUT THIS PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT

The purpose of an OTREC Technology Transfer (T2) project is to leverage existing research or knowledge for the direct benefit of transportation practitioners and users. In most cases, the result of a T2 project is a handbook, workshop or other standalone deliverable. The purpose of this project summary report is to document the project's methodology and outcomes. The deliverables may be included directly or by reference, but will always be readily available on the project's webpage at <http://otrec.us>.

We expect that this report will be primarily of value to researchers who may be considering a project to replicate or adapt, or who want to apply the lessons learned through the way this report was conducted rather than use its results. We encourage you to contact the principal investigator or OTREC staff for further information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was funded by the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC). I would like to thank Allison Duncan and Collin Roughton for their enthusiasm and dedication to researching and drafting much of the material in the handbook and presentation. Also thanks to Drusilla van Hengel, PhD, for her thoughtful review and input during the process and for conducting the initial workshop. Finally, thanks to the staff at Alta Planning + Design who provided material and review along the way.

DISCLAIMER

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PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLANNING: TRAINING FOR PRACTITIONERS

PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT

OTREC Project No. 2012-465
Principal Investigator: Lynn Weigand
University Affiliation: Portland State University
Project Website: <http://otrec.us/project/465>

INTRODUCTION

This Project Summary Report describes the execution of OTREC Project #2012-465 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Planning: Training for Practitioners). The primary project products are a handbook on bicycle and pedestrian master planning and the presentations and lecture notes from a one-day workshop. The workshop was held on June 7, 2012, at Portland State University (PSU). The handbook, presentations and notes are available at <http://otrec.us/project/465>.

The project team included the following:

- Lynn Weigand, PhD, director, Initiative for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation (IBPI)
- Druscilla van Hengel, PhD, Northwest planning manager, Alta Planning + Design
- Collin Roughton, Master of Urban and Regional Planning student, PSU, and intern, Alta Planning + Design
- Allison Duncan, PhD student and graduate research assistant, PSU

LITERATURE REVIEW

We reviewed academic and practice literature to understand the current thinking on bicycle and pedestrian master planning. We were interested in literature that addressed the topics listed below, but found that little has been written in this area:

- Why plan for pedestrians and bicyclists?
- History and evolution of pedestrian and bicycle master planning.
- Similarities to and differences between transportation and land use plans.
- Planning process for pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- Integrated versus separate plans - the pros and cons.
- Data needs and use in the planning process.
- Elements of a good plan.

The few studies and reports we did find primarily addressed the following subjects:

- Why develop non-motorized plans?
- What should a plan contain?

- Planning process for non-motorized transportation.

The majority of resources reviewed are very general and not very useful in actually providing a roadmap in how to develop both a bicyclist and pedestrian master plan.

INTERVIEWS

We interviewed people at several cities across the country to learn more about their experiences with bike and/or pedestrian master planning. The goal was to obtain ideas and “lessons learned” that we could integrate into the handbook and workshop curriculum as “vignettes” or examples. We identified communities to target from suggestions from non-motorized transportation planners at Alta Planning + Design, communities featured at recent bicycle and pedestrian planning conferences, and those highlighted in the popular literature. We also chose the cities based on geographic distribution as well as population size. The list below includes all of the cities that were suggested for interviews. Some cities had stories we could include in the handbook, while others either did not meet our requirements or did not fit in with the structure and content of the handbook and workshop.

Albuquerque, NM	Denver, CO	Ohio State University*
Anchorage, AK	Des Moines, IA	Portland, OR*
Boca Raton, FL	Easley, SC*	Raleigh, NC
Bozeman, MT*	Eugene, OR	San Diego, CA*
Bremerton, WA	Greenville, NC	San Francisco, CA
Carlsbad, CA	Holcomb, KS	San Mateo, CA*
Charleston, SC*	Holly Springs, NC	Santa Barbara, CA
Chattanooga, TN	Louisville, KY	Scarborough, ME
Chicago, IL*	Minneapolis, MN*	South Park (Charlotte), NC
Colorado Springs, CO	Nampa, ID*	Tacoma, WA*
Columbus, OH	Newberg, OR	Ventura County, CA

** Indicates a city in which the team was able to speak with either the city planner/engineer in charge of bicycle and/or pedestrian master planning or someone who had been very involved in the process.*

SECONDARY RESEARCH

The project team conducted a review of professional and academic literature related to planning for pedestrians and bicyclists. We also reviewed feedback from Alta Planning + Design clients regarding the most useful aspects of recently completed bicycle and pedestrian plans, and used Alta Planning + Design's project database to collect information about completed plans.

CONSULTANT INTERVIEWS

We conducted 16 one-on-one interviews with bicycle and pedestrian consultants at Alta Planning + Design. Interview questions (see list on page 6) were developed in collaboration with senior-level staff at Alta, with the following goals in mind:

- Ensure that proposed topic areas covered the most important elements of bicycle and pedestrian master planning.
- Fill identified knowledge gaps in the “how-to” literature (including the history and evolution of bicycle and pedestrian master planning), thereby building support for the plan.
- Uncover examples of exceptional bicycle and pedestrian master plans.
- Elicit pitfalls and lessons learned during previous planning efforts.
- Identify other experts to contact for interviews.

Each planner or designer was asked to answer 12 questions about their experience planning for walking and bicycling in a variety of community types throughout the U.S. Interview time ranged between 20 minutes and 1.5 hours.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND FINAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The project team developed a draft outline based on the literature review and interview findings. This outline was reviewed by senior planners at Alta Planning + Design and refined to reflect their feedback. The initial effort to flesh out the outline and develop draft content of the handbook was completed by Roughton in December 2011. Draft content was reviewed by IBPI staff and specialists on specific topic areas at Alta. After three rounds of revisions, a draft version of the handbook was used during the June 7, 2012, professional development course taught by Van Hengel. Final proofing and edits by IBPI and Alta staff took place in June and July, before the completion of the final version in late summer 2012.

DISSEMINATION OF PRODUCTS

The handbook is posted on the websites of OTREC and IBPI. A notice was sent to the entire IBPI listserv. Potential audiences or dissemination organizations include the following list. We plan to contact them in the coming weeks to promote the handbook’s availability.

- State departments of transportation
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- America Walks
- League of American Bicyclists
- Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
- Bikes Belong
- National Association of City Transportation Officials
- Transportation Research Board
- American Planning Association

APPENDIX: CONSULTANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do practitioners need to know in order to create a bike/ped master plan? Does the following list cover the important elements? Anything missing?
 - Why plan for pedestrians and bicyclists?
 - History and evolution of pedestrian and bicycle master planning
 - Benefits to creating a stand-alone pedestrian and/or bicycle plan
 - Planning process for pedestrian and bicycle master plans
 - Integrated versus separate plans: the pros and cons
 - Data needs and use in the planning process
 - Building public support for the plan and adoption
 - Elements of a good plan
 - Case studies, drawn from a diverse set of communities across the US that represent a broad range of sizes, types, and geographic characteristics
 - Optional appendices, such as design guidelines
2. What motivates your clients to produce bike/pedestrian master plans? How have communities you've worked with benefitted from completing bike/pedestrian master plans?
3. In your experience, are there particular justifications for bike/pedestrian master plans that resonate with the public? Elected officials? Engineers? Business interests?
4. Why is it advantageous to create and adopt a stand-alone pedestrian and/or bicycle master plan? (i.e. Isn't this already a section in the Transportation System Plan or Comprehensive Plan? How do you explain this to key partners and/or the public?)
5. How has the practice of bike/ped master planning changed over time? Is the process different now than it was in the past? If so, how? (For example, how was the 1996 Portland Bike Plan different from the 2009 Bike Plan)
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing combined bike/pedestrian master plans? What about separate plans?
7. What is the most important data required for the production of bike/pedestrian plans?
8. How do you build support for the plan? Who do you need on board for adoption and implementation?
9. Can you think of a plan or plans you worked on that exemplify current best practices in bicycle and/or pedestrian master planning?
10. What about pitfalls to avoid or stories from processes you've been a part of that were less successful? (1 or 2 examples)
11. Outside of Alta, who else should I talk to about bicycle and pedestrian master planning (particularly national experts)?
12. Other insights? What didn't I ask that I should have?

