



Chapter 7

Evaluation

Education
Encouragement
Enforcement
Engineering
● **Evaluation**

Photo above: Parks and Recreation staff meets with Dominion Power to evaluate trail lighting options at Beach Garden Park.

Evaluation

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SCORECARD

IS YOUR COMMUNITY BICYCLE-FRIENDLY?

Is there a specific plan or program to reduce cyclists/motor vehicle crashes? **NO**

Does your community have a current comprehensive bicycle plan? **YES!**

Is there a Bicycle advisory Committee that meets regularly? **YES!**

This section outlines strategies to evaluate our current bikeways and trails system and plan to make it more effective. This E focuses on the processes and planning that support the other four E's. A comprehensive evaluation process includes:

- establishing performance measures to assess progress
- working towards Bicycle-Friendly Community status
- strengthening the BTAC
- partnering with other agencies, and
- continuing to update the Bikeways and Trails Plan periodically

Goals describe desirable end results or conditions towards which we will strive, and **Tasks** describe the actions that will help us achieve those goals.

Goals and Implementation Tasks

Goal 7.1: Virginia Beach will apply for Bicycle-Friendly Community status by 2015 and achieve it by 2017.

According to the League of American Bicyclists, Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) are places that actively support biking, provide safe accommodation for cyclists, and encourage the community to bike for recreation and transportation. Becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community can translate into a healthier, more connected, active community with increased tourism, property values, and business growth. BFC status is seen as a valuable metric for quality of life and has been used by businesses as they consider relocating.

Currently, four cities in Virginia have been awarded Bicycle Friendly Community status: Arlington, Alexandria, Charlottesville, and Roanoke. Harrisonburg received Honorable Mention. Virginia Beach will need to make significant progress accomplishing the goals in this Plan in order to be in a position to apply for BFC status by 2015.

Task 7.1.1: Begin the application process and receive technical assistance.

Goal 7.2: Virginia Beach will maintain and evaluate tracking data about conditions for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorized road users.

Task 7.2.1: Count Cyclists and Pedestrians

Counting cyclists and pedestrians helps evaluate the use and demand of bikeways and trails. Like traffic counts, bike and pedestrian counts can illustrate when the facility is being used and how many people are using it. Unlike traffic counts, bike and pedestrian counts present the opportunity to see who is using the facility. Demographic data collected by bike/ped counts could be used to develop programs that target specific groups that may be underrepresented, or to focus efforts on groups that are already using the facilities. Fortunately, there is already a standard for bike and pedestrian counts that is widely used and accepted throughout the United States. The National Documentation Project (NDP) is cosponsored by Alta Planning and Design and the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Pedestrian and Bicycle Council. Virginia Beach would benefit from participating in this national project, because it provides a consistent source of data that can be used by planners, engineers, and government agencies. Volunteers from the BTAC, Tidewater Bicycle Association, and other groups could conduct the counts. The data is then sent to the NDP headquarters where they analyze it for free.

Task 7.2.2: Analyze Pedestrian and Bicyclist Crash Data:

The Virginia Beach Police Department keeps track of pedestrian and bicyclist crash data that includes location, fatality, and whether the person

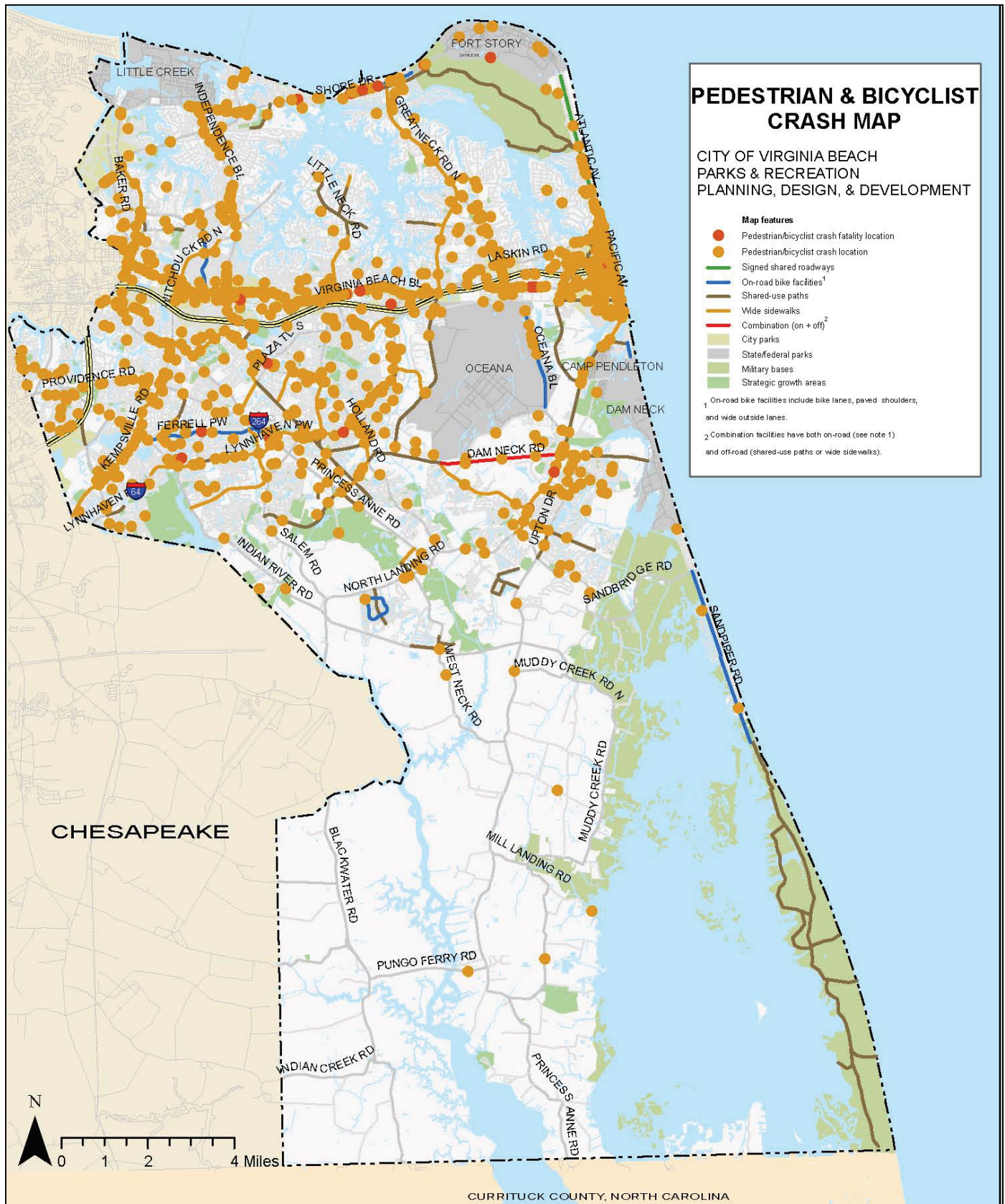
A TOP-PRIORITY GOAL

public comments

["There's tons of potential. Glad to see someone cares. Good luck!"]

["I moved to this City in 1989. I LOVE this City. You have almost arrived as one of the best cities in which to live and move around. PLEASE take these suggestions and make the necessary changes to allow the residents to be safe while pursuing happy and healthy lifestyles."]

["We live in such a beautiful place--wouldn't [it] be great (and greener) if we could transform our commutes into an activity where we would get more exercise, spend less money and be kinder to the environment[?] Create biker/walker friendly roadways that effectively navigate our area and the changes will happen. Thanks for taking the time to gather this feedback."]



involved was a pedestrian or cyclist. The Pedestrian and Bicyclists Crash Map on the facing page shows the location of all reported pedestrian and bicyclist crashes from 2000-2010. Crashes seem to be most frequent at the Oceanfront and along major arterial roads such as Virginia Beach Boulevard, Shore Drive, and Independence Boulevard.

- Continue to collect crash data and identify troublesome roads and intersections in the city.
- Develop a system that compares the implementation of Bikeways and Trails Plan recommendations with crashes.
- Work with Police and PW-Traffic Engineering on annual reports that provide the information needed to enhance the City's efforts in education, enforcement, and engineering & facilities.

Task 7.2.3: Use BLOS to evaluate Virginia Beach roads for active transportation.

Many communities, including Alexandria, Greensboro, and Baltimore use the Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) as a performance measure of their street network. BLOS is based on FHWA research into user preferences and correlates several variables with a comfort level for most cyclists. Feeding these variables into an equation results in a number from 1 to 6 which is then associated with an A to F rating: a value of 1 becomes BLOS A (most preferable), and a value of 6 becomes BLOS F (least preferable). This system closely parallels the Level of Service (LOS) system used for motor vehicles, and a similar system has been developed for pedestrians.

- BLOS A: usually occurs where there are bike lanes or wide paved shoulders, moderate traffic volumes, and low to moderate speeds.
- BLOS B: usually occurs where there are wide shoulders, moderate traffic volumes, and moderate to low speeds.
- BLOS C: usually occurs where there are wide outside lanes, low to moderate traffic volumes, and low to moderate speeds.
- BLOS D: usually occurs where there are lane widths of at least 12 feet, no shoulders or limited shoulder width, moderate to high traffic volumes, and low to moderate speeds.
- BLOS E: usually occurs where lane widths are 12 feet or less, no shoulders, moderate to high traffic volumes, and moderate to high speeds.
- BLOS F: usually occurs where there are no shoulders, lane widths of 12 feet or less, usually high traffic volumes, and moderate to high speeds.

The variables are:

- Through lanes in each direction
- Width of outside lane
- Width of a paved shoulder, bike lane, OR marked parking area
- Daily traffic volume
- Posted speed limit
- Percentage of heavy vehicles



A BTAC board member and Parks and Recreation staff walk along the Norfolk Southern transportation corridor.



Photo courtesy of Steven Vance.

- FHWA's pavement condition rating
- Presence of on-street parking
- On-street parking time limit
- Goes through residential area

Similar systems have been developed to evaluate Pedestrian Levels of Service (PLOS).

BTAC duties and responsibilities

"a. Work with local civic groups and other interested citizens to develop secondary network priorities, linkages, and potential new corridors;

"b. Work with City staff to review road construction projects to ensure that all roads and bridges, where part of the primary or secondary networks, are constructed, improved or maintained in a manner consistent with the Bikeways and Trails Plan;

"c. Work with City staff to review the City's Development Ordinances and recommend revisions in consultation with City staff to encourage bicycle and trail accommodations;

"d. Identify potential funding sources for proposed projects through various private, local, state and federal programs;

"e. Provide a forum for direct citizen input in the planning of future bikeways and trails facilities; and

"f. Focus efforts on achieving completion of the priority projects as identified in the Plan."

(Adopted October 12, 2004)

"Objective performance measures, analogous to those used for motorized travel, are useful for helping planners, engineers and decision makers evaluate existing road and path facilities, identify appropriate improvements and prioritize projects.

"Most bicycle suitability measures quantify a cyclist's perceived safety on a particular roadway, as a function of factors including traffic volume, traffic speed, pavement condition, and lane width. This perception of a safe bicycling environment is a major determinant in an individual's mode choice of bicycling. Suitability scores are translated into a "Level of Service" (LOS) from A to F, consistent with the terminology of other transportation performance measures. Other travel modes use measures based on vehicular flow and capacity, but their LOS gradations are also ultimately based on human perception – for example, motorist tolerance of traffic delays and conditions."

- The Road Network Is The Bicycle Network: Bicycle Suitability Measures For Roadways And Sidepaths, by Ed Barsotti and Gin Kilgore

Goal 7.3: The Bikeways and Trails Advisory Committee (BTAC) will have its appropriate influence on projects in the City.

Council created BTAC in 2004 and gave to it this mission:

"... to serve in an advisory capacity to City Council with respect to the implementation and coordination of the Bikeways and Trails Plan and to coordinate the timely construction of bikeways and trails in accordance with the priorities established by the Bikeways and Trails Plan, to promote a balanced approach between and among various trail users' interests in the City, and to provide a forum for continued citizen and governmental input in the planning and programming of future bikeways and trails."

BTAC is an incredible resource for the City. Its members are the liaison between the community, City staff, and local politicians.

Ben Gomberg, the Bicycle Program Coordinator for the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), recommends "Ten Strategies for Effective Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees". They are: Recruitment, Member Selection, Orientation, Training, Work Plan, Organize Meetings, Committee Structure, Committee Credibility, Annual Retreat, and Recognition. Below is a summary of Mr. Gomberg's recommendations that best suit Virginia Beach's own BTAC with an additional recommendation, specific to this Plan, to submit an annual report to City Council.

Recruitment: Prepare a job description that explains member responsibilities, time commitments, and attendance requirements. Interview applicants as you would prospective employees. Look for people with a history of community involvement who work well with groups.

Orientation: Design a solid orientation for new committee members that includes duties, history of the committee, how the committee works with the City and the public, and the committee's structure and bylaws. Provide the new member with a copy of the Bikeways and Trails Plan, minutes of recent meetings, a list of committee members, and a list of appropriate staff and politicians.

Training: Make sure your committee members understand bikeways and trails planning essentials. Invite local experts to speak at meetings. Encourage all committee members to complete Traffic Skills 101 or a similar educational course.

Organize Meetings: Encourage consideration of agenda items by phrasing them as questions to be considered before the meeting. Prioritize each agenda item.

Annual Retreat: Plan an annual retreat to review past activities, prepare a work plan, and address problems in an environment different than the regular meeting space. Encourage the BTAC to determine its priorities once a year and review them every six months.

Submit an Annual Report to City Council: Prepare a report each year that informs Council members of the BTAC's achievements, priorities, goals, and objectives.

Goal 7.4: For implementing this Plan, partnerships between City departments and other agencies will be commonplace, collegial and collaborative.

A comprehensive bikeways and trails system depends on cooperation between City departments and outside agencies. For the summer of 2010, Public Works/Building Maintenance Plumbing Shop used bicycles to get around the busy boardwalk to monitor and service the foot washers, water fountains, and showers. One problem in the past was having maintenance trucks on the Boardwalk with a high volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The bikes came from the Police Department's collection of stolen bikes. The bicycles allow Public Works to be more sensitive to people on the Boardwalk while increasing efficiency and showcasing Virginia Beach's strong biking culture at the Oceanfront. Other City departments are encouraged to follow Public Works' lead to maximize our resources and work together to find solutions that are fun and effective.



A citizen talks with Parks and Recreation staff about the Bikeways and Trails Plan during a public meeting at the Kempsville Recreation Center.

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A woman and two children bike along Lynnhaven Pkwy. Photo courtesy of Bruce Drees

Task 7.4.1: Identify departmental liaisons that influence particular aspects of the bikeways and trails plan.

Task 7.4.2: Identify representatives from each agency and stakeholder group to assist with plan implementation and revisions as needed.

Goal 7.5: This Plan will be kept current and up-to-date.

The Bikeways and Trails Plan is currently updated about every six years. Continue to solicit public feedback and tailor the Plan accordingly.

Task 7.5.1: Update this Plan concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is updated on a 5-year cycle.

Task 7.5.2: Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan, Master Transportation Plan, and Bikeways and Trails Plan correspond.

Task 7.5.3: Develop a process to document the progress in implementing this Plan.

This could and should include annual reports to Council and the community.

Policies and Priorities

This section summarizes the Policies & Priorities that flow from the Goals and Tasks described in this chapter. The Top Priorities are listed together in the Executive Summary.

Policies

No specific new City-wide policies are needed or recommended to implement the Goals and Tasks of this chapter.

Priorities

Principle among the Top Priority goals is Goal 7.1: "Virginia Beach will apply for Bicycle-Friendly Community status by 2015 and achieve it by 2017."

This goal is principle not because it is the most important goal but because it is the most over-arching and comprehensive: pursuing Bicycle-Friendly Community status helps to frame the prioritizing of the other goals. Doing this also highlights a set of metrics that Council, BTAC, staff and citizens can use to assess progress and to continue making decisions about how to implement this Plan.

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