

NCDOT Multimodal Planning Guidelines

Content Standards for Project Acceleration Plans

Version 2/2/2022

A project acceleration plan is an abbreviated plan that focuses on priority project identification and project implementation for municipalities with a population of 9,999 or less that might otherwise have difficulty resourcing or funding a multimodal network plan or who are looking for a quicker approach to arrive at priority projects. Project acceleration plans are meant to identify multimodal improvements and foster a more walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly environment and an overall higher quality of life for the community residents and visitors within a more abbreviated timeframe. This could also be a good fit for a municipality that has recently completed extensive planning and public and stakeholder engagement and transportation needs evaluation as part of another study (i.e. a comprehensive plan or a CTP).

A project acceleration plan could be the first step in the project development process in North Carolina, which starts with long range planning (including Comprehensive Transportation Plans, Metropolitan Transportation Plans and municipal or county multimodal network plans), development of further detail through a feasibility study when required, and continues through project prioritization for funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) before the project can advance into design, environmental documentation and construction.

The following document outlines the expected content for the development of municipal bicycle and pedestrian project acceleration plans. This document is intended for consultants preparing a plan with funds received through the NCDOT Multimodal Planning Grant Initiative.

Content

Title Page

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents & Index of Maps, Tables, Figures and/or Charts

Overview

Introduction

Vision and Goals

History/Project Background

Benefits/ Why This Plan is Important - Describe benefits specific to the community including mobility, safety, health, economic, environmental, etc.

Current Conditions

- Provide an overview of the community (physical characteristics, transportation network, etc.), community concerns/needs/priorities, key origins and/or destination points, special user groups, usage, and analysis of local bicycle and/or pedestrian crash data.
- Assess current conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians within the local transportation system, including existing on and off-street bicycle/pedestrian networks and facilities, as well as the overall transportation network. Identify any issues with current connectivity, problematic street crossings/intersections, maintenance issues, safety hazards and deficiencies such as gaps/hazards/natural or man-made barriers/substandard design/etc.
- Provide a desktop review of significant cultural and environmentally sensitive resources and other potential barriers to implementation such as known streams and wetlands, floodplain areas and railroad right of way.
- Provide a map of existing bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities, and any other relevant maps.
- Research relevant local, regional, and state plans for any recommended projects in the locality.
- Provide a summary of relevant public input from the steering committee, public comment/outreach efforts and focus groups.
- Review the existing plan's evaluation of the interaction with the local transit system (where applicable) and update where necessary.

Recommended Multimodal Network Plan

- Identify and display the main corridors/special focus areas of desired bicycle and/or pedestrian travel derived from previous analysis and input from the public and steering committee.
- Develop a methodology for prioritizing projects (recommended alignment with current criteria formulas of NCDOT's STI Strategic Prioritization, where appropriate).
- Identify potential projects (linear and crossing/intersection projects). This shall also include a subset of five to ten priority project cut sheets that focus on projects that ideally have a greater opportunity for implementation in the short- to mid-term timeframe (through NCDOT's STI Strategic Prioritization or other funding/programming source).
- For the five to 10 priority projects, identify the following
 - The existing roadway conditions (cross-section, lane widths, etc.), and preferred treatment(s)
 - Method of facility development (new construction, upgrades/retrofits, regularly scheduled road maintenance, etc.)
 - Known environmental and cultural constraints: based on a desktop review of protected and environmentally sensitive resources, agricultural lands, cultural and historic resources, floodplains, known wetlands and streams overlapping with the project, railroad rights-of-way and interstate crossings, as well as other known barriers
 - Proposed cross-section, project development constraints, and cost estimates shall be described. Visual renderings shall also be provided.
- Provide map(s) of recommended network/projects.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

- With assistance from local staff, form and assemble a Steering Committee for the study.
- Three to four (3-4) meetings of the Steering Committee to be held during the study process to help develop the vision, goals, and objectives, review key community activity centers and destinations, review draft project selection methodology, and provide feedback regarding the planned public engagement approaches.
- Prepare a Public Engagement Plan including the Equity Engagement Plan elements to reach the traditionally underserved community groups through engaging with local community leaders, small focus groups and other initiatives. The plan must be approved by IMD staff.
 - An optional public input survey may be included
 - Hold at least one public engagement meetings in virtual or in-person format to review existing conditions findings and draft recommendations.
- Summarize public and stakeholder engagement results as part of final report.

Implementation Plan

- Specifically outline implementation action steps for project implementation (the steps that the local community should undertake to have the project proceed from plan to construction). This may include lead agencies and key partners, anticipated timeframe, proposed funding source, anticipated local resources needed, etc.
- Identify the prime funding sources/opportunities (STI Prioritization and other) for the priority projects.
- Review programmed maintenance and improvement projects and assess opportunities for integrating bicycle and pedestrian elements.
- Cut sheets for the top five to 10 priority projects with visuals, key data points, to include the following data points:
 - Project location and facility type description
 - Key activity centers and features
 - Barriers and opportunities
 - Cost estimates

Final Deliverables

- Final cut sheets for 5-10 priority projects
- Provide as an appendix direction to the most current and relevant online resources concerning programs, policies, design guidelines and the benefits of walking and biking infrastructure.
- ArcGIS files (to NCDOT's standard geodatabase template for bicycle and pedestrian facilities).
- Additionally, the ArcGIS data of the proposed project files will also be formatted separately to correspond with NCDOT Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP) mapping practices and provided to NCDOT.