

## Chapter

## 2

## Mobility for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

*Walking and bicycling to school used to be a viable means of mobility for school age children. What role should these modes of travel play in Woodford's future mobility program?*

When it comes to setting priorities, the automobile has been top dog in the mobility business for the last 100 years. While most of us couldn't maintain our current lifestyles without the automobile, we should remember there are a sizable number of us who are either too young to drive, do not have the funds to own and maintain an auto, or are too old to drive. What mobility options are available for those who either can't use the automobile or who really want to get somewhere other than by auto?

This is a question that few comprehensive plans tackle with any great success. The dollars available for mobility improvements are so limited, particularly for communities like Woodford<sup>1</sup>, that options other than the auto are simply not part of the picture. What can be done then to enhance these modes if improvement funds are limited and the priority for these types of facilities is low? In terms of comprehensive planning, a major part of the solution is to **think strategically about these challenges**.

Strategic planning for pedestrians and bicyclists involves two tasks. First, it means developing a plan with limited but achievable objectives. Second, it means that capacity building may override facility building for some initial part of the planning cycle. Too often, communities lack commitment to a long-term program of capacity

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<sup>1</sup> The statement "communities like Woodford County" references the fact that Woodford is not yet classified as part of an "urbanized area" under FHWA/Census guidelines. Urbanized areas are afforded higher priority in receiving state and federal project implementation funds.

building – which involves creating and building constituencies that support further development of these travel modes. These constituencies include school boards, PTA’s, bicycle clubs, and senior citizen advocacy groups.

The focus of this Chapter is providing information to begin the process of “thinking strategically” about mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### *Historical Context*

In days gone by in many communities, sidewalks were an expected feature. We used them to walk to work, to church or synagogue and to school. We even used them for recreation and socialization. This changed as our society spread out, geographically, and as a result we began to depend more and more on the automobile for all the trips and functions that walking and bicycling had previously provided. This change meant that sidewalks (and bike paths) were no longer considered an important element of civic infrastructure. Thus began a long history of debates between planning commissions, city and county commissions and developers as to the necessity of building sidewalks.

This historic context is provided here not to be nostalgic about the past but to underscore that at one time sidewalks (which were commonly used by both pedestrians and bicyclists) were an unquestioned part of the civic infrastructure of neighborhoods and town centers. We have generally lost this perspective but many communities today, including Woodford, are regaining it through traditional neighborhood development practices. The recent *Preserving Town and Country* process that produced the New Urban Code is an example of how community perspectives are being changed to the benefit of pedestrians and bicyclists.

This change is important for another reason. It has suggested a hierarchy (described below) of responsibilities that government, neighborhoods and developers can share to improve opportunities and the quality of mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Local governments are responsible for civic infrastructure (meaning sidewalks and bike paths) that connects neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, shopping districts and recreation areas. This responsibility is usually accomplished with facilities along arterial and collector roads and within non-roadway corridors such as greenways and parks.

Developers are responsible for civic infrastructure that connects the internal elements of neighborhoods, shopping districts, workplaces, etc, and which also connects that neighborhood or workplace to the larger civic system that government is responsible for.

Neighborhoods and Associations (Main Street Association, Neighborhood Associations, School Board, etc.) are responsible for retrofitting areas with missing or deteriorated elements of civic infrastructure (that are not a part of the government's responsibilities).

With these respective responsibilities as a starting point, the next section of this Chapter begins an evaluation of existing and planned facilities. This evaluation will become the basis for strategic thinking about the role that government can and should play through the comprehensive plan to improve mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### *Existing and Planned Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities*

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities addressed in this section include those sponsored and maintained by local and/or state governments. At present, the only existing facility of this type is the recently completed 8-foot wide multi-use path that was constructed as part of the US 33 – US 62 Connector facility. This path connects subdivisions in southern Versailles with the growing employment center at the intersection of US 62 and the new Connector Road as well as Woodford County's Falling Water Park.

Planned facilities are identified on Figure 2.1. All of these planned improvements were identified as a result of the 2020 Transportation Plan and the Community and Transportation System Plan for Southern Versailles. Each of these proposals is briefly described below.

**Multi-Use Path – County Park to Downtown (Priority Rank – 1):** “Currently the only way for cyclists and pedestrians to access Falling Water Park from Downtown Versailles and surrounding neighborhoods is by using auto roadways, and some segments of incomplete sidewalk along US 62 (Tyrone Pike). This new path would provide pedestrians and cyclists a safe, scenic route that is removed from auto traffic. By giving users a designated path, conflicts between the users and autos will be removed. Additionally, by providing this connection and encouraging pedestrian and cycle travel, more vehicle trips can be removed from congested streets and intersections.”<sup>2</sup>

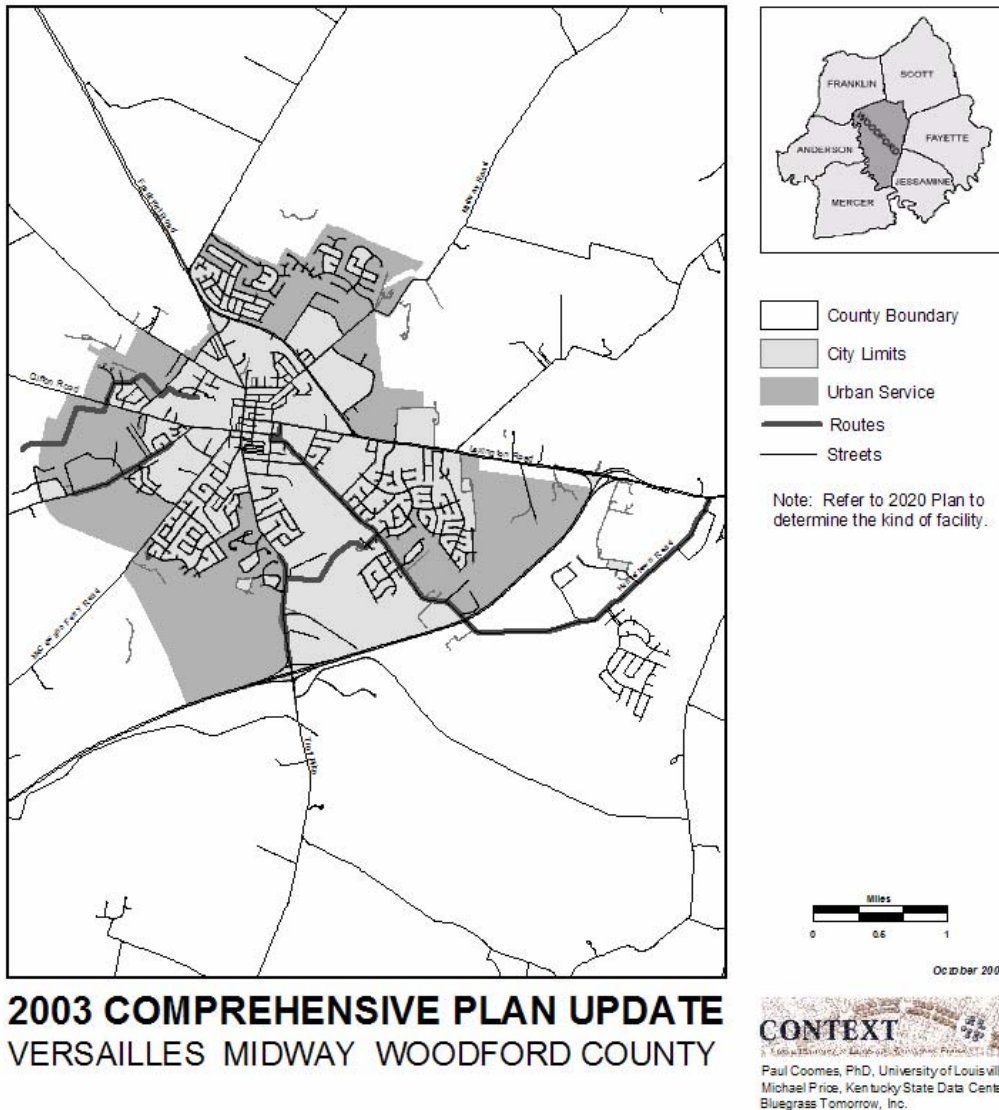
The cost of this 8,500 linear foot project is projected to be \$150,000 and ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) funding has been secured. Construction should be initiated and completed in 2003.

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<sup>2</sup> Text excerpted from Community and Transportation System Plan for Southern Versailles, Wilbur-Smith & Associates, January 2002.

**Figure 2.1**

**Existing & Planned Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities**  
 MOBILITY AND THE WOODFORD BLUEGRASS



**2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**  
 VERSAILLES MIDWAY WOODFORD COUNTY

(This graphic will be updated as part of Final Draft of Mobility Background Study – some elements of system are missing)

**Pedestrian Link – Main Street from Gormley Drive to US 62/KY 33 Connector Intersection (Priority Rank – 7):** This proposal would provide pedestrian access from to the new Multi-Use Path along the north side of the US 62/US 33 Connector Road. The new four-foot sidewalk would be approximately 1,125 feet in length and cost \$98,000 to design and construct. This sidewalk segment would connect an existing sidewalk along S. Main Street that continues to Downtown Versailles, and the proposed sidewalk project that would link schools in the area.

**Multi-Use Recreational Path – Huntertown Road (Priority Rank – 16):** This project would result in a continuous multi-use path along Huntertown Road from US 60 (east of the Bluegrass Parkway) to Woodford Middle School – a distance of almost five miles. Huntertown Road north of the Bluegrass Parkway is the focus of several new residential subdivisions and this path would become the core pedestrian/bicycle route for eastern Versailles. The estimated project cost is \$784,000.

**Pedestrian Link – Connecting Oxford Drive to US 62/KY 33 Connector’s Multi-Use Path (Priority Rank – 19):** The addition of a four foot wide pedestrian path connection between Oxford Road and the US 62/KY 33 Connector’s multi-use path will make a convenient linkage between two pedestrian networks – one internal to subdivisions in the area and one connecting with Falling Water Park and Downtown. The cost of this 200-foot connector is estimated at \$5,700.

**Pedestrian Link – Connecting Main Street to Huntertown Road via School Properties (Priority Rank – 20):** The addition of an eight-foot wide multi-use path between S. Main Street and Huntertown Road will make an important linkage between neighborhoods and schools. The proposed corridor is located entirely with school properties – Southside School and Huntertown School – and is projected to cost \$145,000.

**Sidewalk Additions – Tyrone Pike (Priority Ranking – 12):** This planned four foot sidewalk improvement (4,750 linear feet) would be constructed between Elizabeth Street and Falling Water Park. Currently, there are no pedestrian facilities in this heavily traveled (auto) corridor and the proposal would provide a safe means of traveling from adjoining neighborhoods to the Simmons Elementary School, Downtown and Falling Water Park. The estimated cost is \$89,000.

The cumulative effect of these existing and planned improvements, as shown on Figure 2.1, clearly demonstrates a community supported bicycle and pedestrian plan for southern Versailles – and the role that local government can play in creating a viable system. The next step toward implementation of this plan will involve capacity building and identifying the funds to undertake design and construction.

*Regulatory Provisions for Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements*

The second level of responsibility for implementing this type of improvement falls to the developers of Woodford's neighborhoods, workplaces and commerce centers. This type of responsibility is typically spelled out in either the zoning or subdivision regulations. These requirements are inventoried as part of this Background Study in order to later identify any type of regulatory actions necessary to clarify the responsibilities of developer's.

Woodford's subdivision regulations have recently been updated to incorporate several of the recommendations/provisions of The New Urban Code. The Code was an outcome of the *Preserving Town and Country* process, defining methods for building mixed-use neighborhoods, workplaces and regional commerce centers. The revised subdivision regulations require sidewalks to be constructed along both sides of all types of neighborhood streets (Major, Main, Neighborhood). This standard clearly defines the responsibility of developers and builders.

An area of responsibility that is not as clearly delineated are any potential connections between proposed neighborhoods, workplaces and commerce centers and the bicycle and pedestrian system that has emerged as a result of recent transportation planning efforts.

*Capacity Building*

There have not emerged any organized community based groups whose focus is on the promotion of bicycle and pedestrian planning, routes and improvements. Often, such groups are instrumental in advocating the need for greater opportunities for these modes of travel as well as lobbying for funding at all levels of government. In some larger communities, such as Louisville, there are Bicycle Clubs who perform a great job of capacity building.

The lack of such community advocacy groups in Woodford represents an opportunity. One possible method for initiating such a group to form in Woodford County would be to provide some initial seed money for a group to devise a pamphlet of bicycle routes. Such a group may also be included as advisors as projects listed above are brought to design and construction.

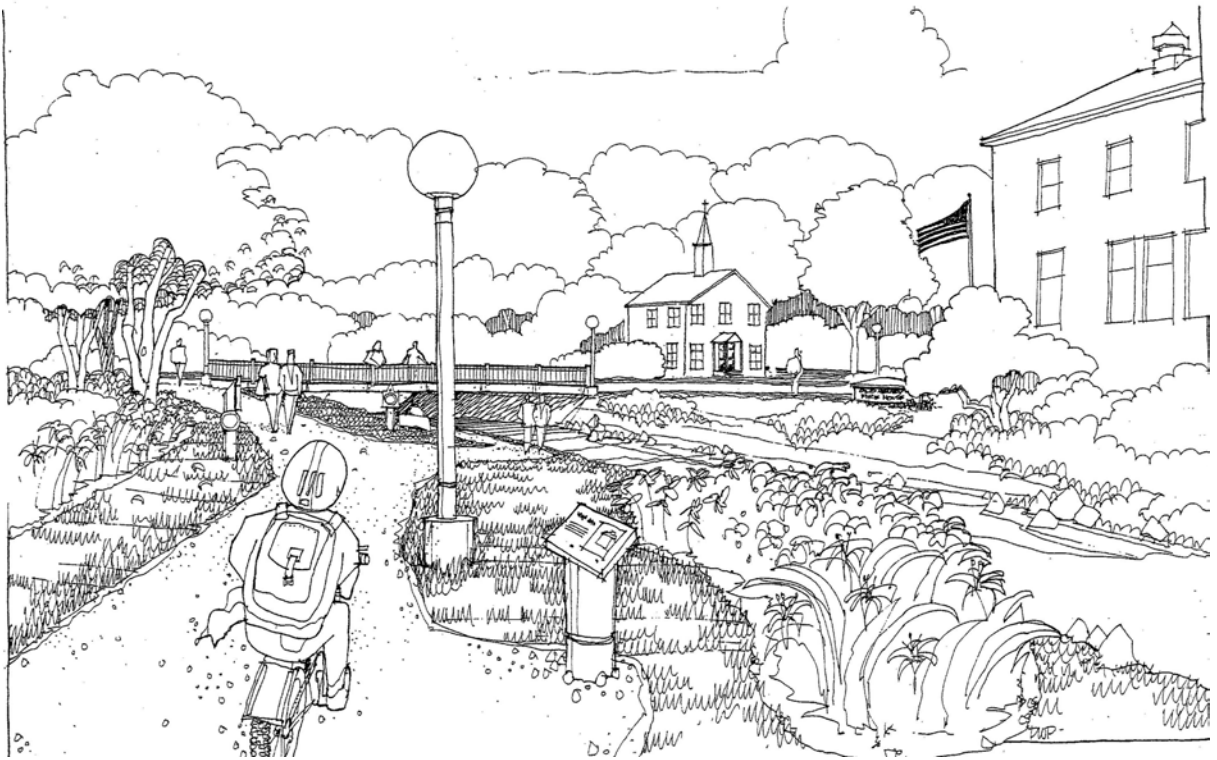
*Linkages - Heritage Based Tourism, Intra-County Travel*

A component of Bicycle and Pedestrian planning that is often overlooked is the benefits to be derived from improvements that help to promote economic development, heritage based tourism/preservation, and connections between communities. The Plan that has emerged focuses primarily upon the Urban Service Area of Versailles, and providing connections between neighborhoods, schools and downtown.

## MOBILITY IN THE WOODFORD BLUEGRASS

There are several other aspects of the Woodford County that could be further explored in terms of Bicycle and Pedestrian access. For example, the US 62 corridor between Versailles and Midway may represent an opportunity for a multi-use path to promote: an additional connection between the two primary Woodford cities; the scenic and agricultural heritage of the County; and possibly, agri-heritage tourism opportunities.

Another example of making multi-purpose connections is the potential to extend a multi-use path along US 60 west to the Pisgah Historic District. Not only could this path serve to promote heritage tourism in County, it would connect existing neighborhoods, churches and other uses to shopping opportunities at the proposed Versailles Center.



An illustration of a multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path linking civic and residential uses in a new urban neighborhood.

