Chapter 4
Encouragement

Education
- **Encouragement**
Enforcement
Engineering & Facilities
Evaluation & Planning

Photo above: Children show off their ribbons at the Tour de Virginia Beach.

Encouragement
Chapter 4

SCORECARD
IS YOUR COMMUNITY
BICYCLE-FRIENDLY?

Does your community have an up-to-date bicycle map? NO

Does the community celebrate bicycling during national Bike Month with community rides, Bike to Work Day, or media outreach? YES!

Does the community host any major cycling events or rides? NO

Is there an active bicycle advocacy group in the community? YES!

Bicycling and walking are healthy, fun activities and affordable modes of transportation. Still, many people are not receptive to recreating and commuting on our bikeways and trails system. Marketing and promoting the health and economic benefits of active transportation and recreation are fun, affordable ways to make the most of our existing infrastructure.

This section outlines four (4) recommendations that are gleaned directly from comments from public input. They include promoting Virginia Beach as a destination for bike and pedestrian tourism, holding bicycling and walking events, working with local businesses to encourage employees to walk or bike to work, and working with businesses to encourage patrons to walk or bike to their establishment.

Goals & Implementation Tasks

Goal 4.1: Virginia Beach will be seen as a destination for bike and pedestrian tourism.

A TOP-PRIORITY GOAL

Virginia Beach has a vibrant tourist industry at its Oceanfront with many opportunities to bike, walk, and play along the Boardwalk and beyond. The Maritime Trail connects the Boardwalk to First Landing State Park, which connects to the Cape Henry Trail. The 8 mile South Beach Trail allows cyclists to ride from the Boardwalk to the Virginia Aquarium, to Birdneck Road, finally looping back around to the Oceanfront.

Additionally, several of the Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) outlined in the Comprehensive Plan recommend facilities for bicycling and walking. The Town Center SGA is a lively, pedestrian-friendly area that has potential to link up with other sections of Virginia Beach. Making links like that could encourage visitors and locals alike to explore other parts of the city by bike and by foot.

North Carolina recently invested $6 million in bike infrastructure in the northern Outer Banks. According to the North Carolina Department of Transportation, bike tourism in the Outer Banks now generates about $60 million dollars a year and supports 1,400 jobs. Visitors could extend their trip to Virginia Beach for bike events and tours, thus generating more revenue and providing a variety of activities for the community to get involved. Conclusions of the Economic Impact Study include:

> *"Bicycling activity in the northern Outer Banks provides substantial economic benefits to the area — an estimated $60 million annually.*
>
> *"The bicycle facilities in the area are an important factor for many tourists in deciding to visit the region.*
>
> *"Three-fourths of study respondents indicated that more bicycle facilities should be built, and nine out of 10 surveyed believe state and federal tax dollars should be used to do it."*
>
> *"The annual economic impact of cyclists is almost nine times as much as the one-time expenditure of public funds used to construct special bicycle facilities in the region."*
> *- http://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/researchreports/*

Task 4.1.1: Create a bike tourism packet to be distributed by the hospitality industry.

The roads in the Resort Area are often extremely congested during the summer months. Information on bicycling and walking can help visitors choose safe and efficient routes that are fun and rival driving in terms of comfort and convenience. Additionally, bicycling and walking events should be advertised. The packet should include local bike and pedestrian laws, a bikeways and trails map, and information on events and how to get there by bike or foot.

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

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public comments

["The City should make it easy for people to ride around the Oceanfront as an alternative to driving."]

["Put bike maps at the bike shops."]

["People should not have to drive to Town Center if they live less than 2 miles away."]

["As a tourist destination, seems the focus is on the Boardwalk and nowhere else."]

["I know there are a few bike trails in Virginia Beach, but I have no idea where they are or how I can find and use them."]

["Many parks with wonderful trails do not have a simple map posted on the board near their parking lot."]

Bike riders take a moment pose during the annual Bayside History Tour. Photo courtesy of Bruce Drees

A senior commuter. Photo courtesy of www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

Task 4.1.2: Create new bikeway/trail maps and make available online and in print.
Visitors and residents alike do not always know where bikeways and trails lead, how to get where they want to go, or how to get around and back. Revise the maps simultaneously with the Bikeways and Trail plan update. Distribute the maps at visitor centers, hotels, schools, recreation centers, bike shops, realtor offices, and libraries.
Online mapping services are including tools for mapping bike routes, just as they already do for motor vehicle routes. Make sure that each is using current information.

Task 4.1.3: Install maps at trailheads and at nodes along bikeway and trail network.
Use the "Virginia Beach Waterway Access Sites" maps as a guide so that signage is consistent. Since the bikeways and trails maps are updated about every 6 years, make sure the maps content is relevant. Consider signage that allows you to remove and replace the map as needed.

Goal 4.2: Virginia Beach will hold cost-effective events and programs to encourage bicycling and walking.
Virginia Beach currently partners with other organizations like the Tidewater Bicycle Association to host fun events like Bike to Work Day and Earth Day that showcase our city through biking and walking. Continue these annual events and expand on them with a bike rack design competition, themed routes and tours.

Task 4.2.1: Work with Local Groups to Make Bike to Work Day More Significant
Bike to Work Day is an annual event held in communities across the United States on the Third Friday in May. It promotes bicycling as a mode of transportation. The Tidewater Bicycle Association (TBA) has partnered with the City of Virginia Beach to organize bike-related events for this day and the entire month of May, Bike Month. Parks and Recreation should work with the BTAC to make Bike to Work Day and Bike Month more significant.

Task 4.2.2: Hold a bike rack design competition.
Fun, attractive bike racks double as public art while providing cyclists a place to securely park their bikes. A design competition can bring good publicity that encourages creativity. Winning designs could be built and used at a variety of special sites, although they might not be suitable for most neighborhood parks.

- Work with partners for sponsorships.
- Establish design constraints to ensure proper functionality.

Task 4.2.3: Create themed routes and tours.
Virginia Beach has a rich natural and cultural heritage that includes two state parks, a national wildlife sanctuary, a variety of public art, and impressive historical landmarks. The Bayside History Tour is a popular bicycle event that takes place every May. Encourage the community to enjoy all that Virginia Beach has to offer by organizing points of interest

and linking them into themed routes and tours. Place signs that draw attention to points of interest. Include routes and trails in the City bikeways and trails map/brochure.

Task 4.2.4: Hold high-profile events for positive publicity.
Races, bike/walk festivals, and bikeway and trail cleanups can draw positive attention to biking and walking. Work to weave these events into existing regular events, such as the Neptune Festival and the Shamrock Run. Include free valet parking for bikes at such events and others.

Goal 4.3: People will increasingly bike and walk to go to work, shop, dine and other activities.

Task 4.3.1: Work with local businesses to encourage their employees to bike or walk to work.
When employees can bike or walk to work, the employer benefits from improved employee health and morale along with an innovative and environmentally-friendly image. Encouraging those who are interested in commuting by active transportation may help alleviate traffic congestion during rush hour. Bike Iowa's "Employer's Bike to Work Guide" is a good resource for businesses.

Task 4.3.2: Connect potential commuters to incentive programs.
The Bicycle Commuter Act is described in Section 211 of the "Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008". It reimburses employees who bike to work at least three days per week for up to $20 of any bike-related expenses. Employers may reimburse employees tax-free for "reasonable" expenses related to their bike commute. Nuride.com provides incentives such as free passes to the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Museum to people who walk, bike, carpool, take transit, or telecommute. The League of American Bicyclists has Bicycle Commuter Tax Reimbursement Cards that can be downloaded free of charge from their website.

Task 4.3.3: Encourage employers and businesses to have secure bike parking, showers, and changing rooms.
Employees and patrons alike need secure bike parking to be able to use their bikes. Employees also might need showers and changing rooms. According to a study conducted at the University of Texas at Austin, people are more likely to commute by bike if they have secure parking and showers at their work. The City can publicize information about good bike parking to help business owners.

Through the public input process, we received many comments that indicate that the Virginia Beach community would like to get around, go out to eat, and run errands by biking or walking. Businesses could install bike parking and, when possible, locate their business close to bikeways or trails to encourage their patrons to arrive by bike or foot.

Create an interactive map that identifies businesses with secure bike parking.

public comments

["Many people cannot afford cars or their own personal transportation, but they should be able to get to their jobs without it taking over an hour by bus. They should be able to walk or bike…and do so safely."]

["Many recreational cyclists want to commute too."]

["I would even consider walking to work, but there is no walkway or shoulder."]

Valet bike parking. Photo courtesy of www.pedbikeimages.org / Amber Dallman

Bike racks as public art outside an Oceanfront restaurant.

A family uses one type of cargo bike. Photo courtesy of www.pedbikeimages.org / Kevin Whited

Parks and Recreation and the BTAC should encourage businesses adjacent to bikeways and trails to offer incentives to their customers who come by bike or foot.

Task 4.3.4: Provide preferred bike parking at special events.
Secured valet parking for bikes makes it easier to bike to events.

Task 4.3.5: Use "cargo" bikes in City parks.
These heavy-duty bikes can be configured for a variety of tasks, such as carrying tools and equipment; carrying supplies, including modest amounts of mulch or soil; and collecting trash and debris. Cargo bikes would be used within parks only – not to go from park to park – and would demonstrate for the public that the City is committed to cost-effective and "green" ways to complete its work.

Policies & 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 new City-wide policies are needed or recommended to implement the Goals and Tasks of this chapter.

Priorities

This chapter contains one Top-Priority Goal:

- Goal 4.1: Virginia Beach will be seen as a destination for bike and pedestrian tourism.

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