CHAPTER 7

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL

Improvements in bike and pedestrian travel are important for advancing toward a viable multi-modal transportation system. This plan’s recommendations for bike and pedestrian modes are consistent with recommendations in the Kenton County Bicycle Plan (1998) and the Kenton County Pedestrian Plan (2001).

ROLE OF NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL

As in other urban areas across the country, there is a need to increase bicycle and pedestrian travel in Kenton County. Bicycling and walking are essential to a multi-modal transportation system as alternatives to driving, especially for short trips, and as connectors that support and facilitate transit use. Non-motorized travel helps to reduce congestion and vehicle emissions, in addition to its benefits to the users.

Kenton County’s potential for expanding non-motorized travel is indicated by the estimate that 25% of all trips, regardless of mode, are less than one mile in length (Kenton County Pedestrian Plan, page 1-3). These short trips would more frequently involve bicycling and walking if there were more facilities that provided for safe travel by these modes. Bike and pedestrian facilities are especially effective when they provide for travel connectivity in residential and commercial areas.

Bike and pedestrian facilities are divided into the following three categories.

- **On-road bicycle facilities** (needed on bridges and viaducts as well as on roadways):
  - Bike lanes - a part of the roadway designated for exclusive bicycle use through striping or signage, most appropriate in urban areas, minimum width of four feet, preferably located on both sides of a roadway
  - Paved shoulders - most appropriate in rural areas, provide from four to six feet for bike use
  - Shared lanes
  - Wide outside lanes

- **Separate off-road facilities:**
  - Bike paths - separated from the roadway, width from ten to thirteen feet plus two-foot shoulders on either side, typically paved but may use other materials
Multi-purpose trails - especially useful as connectors to schools, shopping areas, bus stops, etc.

- **Sidewalks:** to provide for safe pedestrian travel, especially in residential neighborhoods and along transit routes

Implementation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements depends on funding from federal, state, and local sources. At the federal level, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are eligible for funding from most transportation programs, but the Transportation Enhancement Program is especially important. This is the only designated funding source for projects that support non-motorized travel, as well as for other types of enhancement projects. At the state level, KYTC normally includes the cost of bike paths and sidewalks within the cost of capacity expansion projects on State Roadways in urban areas. At the local level, government funding and citizen initiative play a major role in expanding bike and pedestrian facilities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

This plan’s recommendations for improving bike and pedestrian facilities are consistent with recommendations in the *Kenton County Bicycle Plan* (1998) and the *Kenton County Pedestrian Plan* (2001). Both of these documents were developed by the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission and are incorporated into Kenton County’s Comprehensive Plan (2001).

The *Kenton County Bicycle Plan* proposes routes for six categories of bikeway. Among these categories, the Primary, Secondary, and Local Bikeways are most important as elements of the transportation system. These three categories have a total of 159 miles of recommended bikeway, of which 99 miles are on State Roads (62% of recommended mileage). The other three categories of bikeways are primarily for recreational use. The categories are summarized below. Routes recommended for Primary Bikeways are presented in Figure 7-1.

- **Primary Bikeways**, which are the major pieces in the proposed bicycle network, form an inter-connecting system of major north-south and east-west routes. The proposed routes are located mostly north of KY-536, including KY-8, Dixie Highway east of Turkeyfoot Road, Turkeyfoot Road, KY-17, KY-16, DeCoursey Pike, and KY-536. The *Kenton County Bicycle Plan* recommends 106 miles of Primary Bikeways, of which 69 miles (65%) are on State Roads.

- **Secondary Bikeways**, which provide alternative routes to the Primary Bikeways, tend to be best suited for advanced cyclists (these routes tend to have more traffic, narrower width, or steeper terrain than the Primary Bikeway routes). The *Kenton County Bicycle Plan* recommends 41 miles of Secondary Bikeway, of which 29 miles (71%) are on State Roads.
Figure 7-1. Recommended Bikeways
- **Local Bikeways** provide links to the Primary and Secondary Bikeways; these are generally located on lightly traveled roads. The *Kenton County Bicycle Plan* recommends 12 miles of Secondary Bikeway, of which only one mile is located on State Roads.

- The bikeway categories that are primarily for recreational use are as follows: **Touring Bikeways**, which are mostly on lightly used roads in the rural area south of KY-536 (recommended for 45 miles, of which 39 miles, or 89%, are on State Roads); **Bike Paths**, which are paved or unpaved bike paths that are not anticipated to become part of the roadway system (recommended for four miles); and **Mountain Bike Areas**, which are in off-road areas suitable for trail development.

The implementation of these recommended routes depends primarily on the KYTC and local governments. The state includes bike lanes (marked by striped pavement), as well as sidewalks, as part of the capacity expansion on “urban segments” of State Roads with a speed limit of 45 miles per hour. On urban segments where the speed limit is 55 miles per hour, bikes can be used on the paved shoulder.

In Kenton County, the effect of state policy will result in the addition of marked bike lanes and separate sidewalks to the following:
- all of Turkeyfoot Road,
- all of KY-16 south of I-275,
- KY-536 west of KY-16, and
- KY-17 south of KY-536.
Bikes may be used on the shoulders of KY-17 north of KY-536 and KY-536 east of KY-16.

The bike lanes and sidewalks that will be constructed over the next thirty years on state roadway represent the beginning of bicycle and sidewalk networks that can be gradually expanded. For bicycling, in addition to construction projects, other means of encouragement include improvements to signage and the creation of shared lanes.

The *Kenton County Pedestrian Plan* supports the expansion of pedestrian facilities by providing a guide for designing pedestrian ways. The plan provides design standards that it recommends for incorporation into subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances. The plan also presents a process for assessing pedestrian access to selected destinations (involves identifying walkable areas and potential pedestrian connections) and recommends the process for new development plan applications and for local jurisdictions evaluating sidewalk improvement projects.