



# Bicycle Transportation

## Policy Statement 1.0

### Description

This policy statement provides a detailed description of the bicycle transportation system in Plano along with the major issues affecting bicycle travel. City initiatives to address these issues and policies to guide decision makers for implementing the Bicycle Transportation Plan are included as well.

The bicycle is considered an alternative means of transportation that could be used to improve air quality of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. This policy statement addresses the following objective and strategies found in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ▶ **Objective A.4** Provide for safe and accessible recreational and destination-oriented bicycle use.

- ▶ **Strategy A.7** Develop and maintain a system of major and secondary bicycle routes and recreational trails for destination and recreational use that lead to cultural and employment areas, mass transit facilities and residential neighborhoods.
- ▶ **Strategy A.8** Provide safe, east-west connections for bicycle travel over barriers such as U. S. 75 and the Dallas North Tollway.

### Background

The City of Plano has a Bicycle Transportation Plan which identifies bicycle routes and trails. Some of these facilities are in existence today while others are in the planning stages. There are four types of bicycle facilities found on the Bicycle Transportation Plan:

## ***Regional Veloweb***

This is a system proposed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) that is intended to link bicycle routes from multiple cities throughout the Metroplex region. The Bluebonnet and Preston Ridge Trails are designated as a part of the Regional Veloweb system along with proposed routes adjacent to Rowlett Creek, and the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) railroad right-of-ways that follow the Union Pacific and Cottonbelt Railroad alignments. These trails would also be a part of local regional bicycle system known as the Six City Trail Plan sponsored by the cities of Allen, Frisco, Garland, McKinney, Plano and Richardson. An example of an existing Veloweb trail close to Plano would be the White Rock Trail, beginning in Richardson and eventually working its way through Dallas to the White Rock Lake area.

## ***Major Bicycle Routes***

Major bicycle routes are identified on the Bicycle Transportation Plan as under proposal at this time. These routes are located on and off the street system and are intended more for destination trips. Plans for major routes include construction of a paved bicycle path that would be wider and straighter than the paved trails in existence today along the Bluebonnet and Preston Ridge Trail corridors. These proposed trails may replace or be constructed along the existing trails. The on-street routes would follow major and secondary thoroughfares.

## ***Secondary Bicycle Routes***

Secondary bicycle routes are located on collector and local streets. A few of the trails are marked with signage and future plans call for the entire system to be identified with route signs. Secondary bicycle routes have at-grade crossings with the major thoroughfares.

## ***Recreational Trails***

Recreational trails are off-street bicycle trails. Some of them are located within the parks found throughout Plano. The Bluebonnet, Chisholm and Preston Ridge Trails are three existing recreational trails that cross major portions of the city. Future plans call for additions to these trails as well as proposed trails along the Rowlett Creek and White Rock corridors. Recreational trails also serve pedestrians and rollerbladers.

## **Analysis**

The major issues regarding bicycle transportation in Plano are implementation of the Bicycle Transportation Plan, the crossings of major thoroughfares and barriers that interfere with east-west bicycle travel. The Bluebonnet Trail, Chisholm Trail and Preston Ridge Trail are built. Collector and local streets serve as secondary bicycle routes and some have identification signs to mark the system. The regional veloweb and the major routes are still in the planning stages and have yet to be implemented.

The secondary routes and most of the recreational trails have at grade crossings with the major thoroughfares. These roadways are extremely busy, especially during the weekday peak travel times and are difficult to cross. Bicyclists must wait for a long time for a break in the traffic to cross the major thoroughfares.

The same roadway system that provides access to Plano from the rest of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex also poses as a barrier for east-west connections for bicycle transportation. U. S. 75 is an eight-lane expressway through Plano. Trying to cross under the highway at intersections such as 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Spring Creek Parkway is dangerous. Even though these intersections do have traffic signals and pedestrian heads, there is always a

vehicular movement pattern that would conflict with people trying to cross the intersection as pedestrians or with their bicycles. There is no sidewalk or separate lane for bicycles to use to travel under U. S. 75 at these locations.

The bridge over U. S. 75 at Park Boulevard does have sidewalks. However, the walkways are very narrow and cannot accommodate a bicyclist and a pedestrian at the same time. The Dallas North Tollway and Preston Road are also difficult barriers for bicyclist and pedestrians trying to access the western areas of the city and recreational facilities such as Arbor Hills Nature Preserve. Preston Road carries some of the highest traffic volumes in the city. The intersections with other major thoroughfares are quite wide and the walk signal cycle is not long enough to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to get across the entire intersection. The constant flow of traffic at intersections with the Dallas North Tollway pose similar barrier problems of access as encountered at U. S. 75.

East-west connections are not the only barrier issues. In order for the Veloweb to work and for Plano's trails to interconnect with those in neighboring cities, north-south barriers must be considered as well. Major roadways and expressways, such as State Highway 121 and the President George Bush Turnpike, also pose barriers for bicyclists trying to connect with trails in Plano and adjacent cities to the north and south. The State of Texas is considering plans to provide enough space at the Rowlett Creek and White Rock Creek crossings for bicycle and pedestrian trails. No plans are under consideration for crossing President George Bush Turnpike. The six cities trail plan calls for bicyclist to utilize existing underpasses along the turnpike at Ohio Drive and Alma Road.

## City Initiatives

The Plano Parks and Recreation Department intends to conduct a study to explore alternatives to address the following issues:

- ▶ A bicycle crossing for U. S. 75
- ▶ At grade trail crossings with major thoroughfares
- ▶ Intersections of bicycle routes on collector streets with major thoroughfares

The City of Plano has also received grants for the implementation of the Bicycle Transportation Plan. However, matching funds are required to complete the funding process and will be considered in a future bond election.

## Policy Statements

The following is a list of policy statements that should be used for implementation of the Bicycle Transportation Plan as described above:

1. *Develop and maintain a system of major bicycle on-street routes on Los Rios Boulevard and Ohio Drive as designated on the Bicycle Transportation Plan map. Ensure safety for bicycles and motor vehicles traveling these roadways together through exploring possibilities of how to accommodate both modes of transportation within existing parameters.*
2. *Develop and maintain a system of off-street major bicycle routes using the existing Bluebonnet and Preston Ridge Trails. These routes should have appropriate signs, signalization or grade-separations to ensure safe crossings at major thoroughfares.*

3. *Develop and maintain a system of clearly identified secondary bicycle routes primarily on collector streets to accommodate local bicycle access. Secondary bicycle routes should interconnect with major bicycle routes and provide access to neighborhood schools in areas where off-street facilities are not available.*
4. *Develop and maintain a system of off-street recreational trails interconnected with the Regional Veloweb, major and secondary bicycle routes. Where possible, recreational trails should connect neighborhoods with educational, recreational, commercial and cultural facilities and interconnect with other bicycle transportation systems in surrounding cities.*
5. *Provide bicycle route and trail access to multi-modal mass transit facilities wherever possible and encourage the installation of adequate, safe and secure bicycle storage at these locations.*
6. *Encourage employers to implement trip reduction programs and provide bicycle storage facilities and changing rooms for employees who wish to travel to work by bicycle.*
7. *Continue to study and develop specific routes across major thoroughfare corridors.*
8. *Develop and update educational materials that inform motorists and bicyclists about the city's Bicycle Transportation System and its proper use on a regular basis.*