

# LUCAS COUNTY ATP

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



DRAFT MAY 2022



## WHAT IS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

“Active Transportation” is an umbrella term for all the ways people can get around without using a motorized vehicle - walking or cycling, using mobility assistance devices (such as wheelchairs and scooters), skating or skateboarding, and more. In short, active transportation is human-powered travel. Many Ohioans access transit, work, school, retail stores or any number of destinations in urban, suburban, and rural settings by active transportation. Active transportation can provide many community benefits beyond personal mobility, such as improved public health, economic development, greater quality of life, and enhanced environmental quality.

Active transportation planning involves community engagement specific to the needs of people who walk and cycle as well as outlines the vision, goals, and strategies needed to support safe, convenient, and accessible active transportation options. It is important and beneficial to meet the needs of people walking and cycling by planning for and directing investments in infrastructure and programs that support active transportation options.



## **BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

### **Physical Health**

Increased opportunity for recreation and destination-oriented trips using active modes of travel are key to increasing daily physical activity and reducing the risk for developing preventable, chronic diseases.

### **Mental Health**

Physical activity reduces depression, can improve the quality of sleep, and has been shown to improve cognitive function for older adults.<sup>1</sup> Active transportation can also improve social conditions in communities, which contributes to positive mental well-being among residents.

### **Economic Development**

There is broad consensus across the country, and in Ohio, that investing in active transportation produces a positive return on investment for host communities. This is especially true when it comes to trails, which serve as major regional attractions for recreational riders.

### **Quality of Life**

Comfortable and accessible options for cycling and walking provide a host of quality-of-life benefits. They increase the number of travel options for everyone and can lead to greater independence for older residents, young people, and others who cannot or choose not to drive. Providing a high-quality active transportation network is especially important for the mobility of community members who do not have full access to a vehicle.

### **Environmental Quality**

Shifting to cycling and walking trips and concentrating development in dense walkable and bikeable communities can reduce transportation-based emissions and sprawling land use that impacts the natural environment.<sup>2</sup>

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2008 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services; 2008. <http://health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/paguide.pdf>

2. Federal Highway Administration, National Bicycling and Walking Study, "Case Study No. 15 The Environmental Benefits Of Bicycling And Walking," 1993 [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/docs/case15.pdf](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/case15.pdf)

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## PLAN TIMELINE

The Lucas County Active Transportation Plan was created under the leadership of a Steering Committee, as well as a broad coalition of people over the years, which ensured that it represented the variety of interests and stakeholders in Lucas County. The planning process began in 2017 when a team from Lucas County attended the Action Institute. Co-hosted by the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Action Institute was a two-day training and networking opportunity for Ohio cities, counties, or regions interested in making their communities safer and more accessible for walking, cycling, and transit. Since then, a Steering Committee led by Live Well Greater Toledo and the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department has helped develop the plan through regular meetings, community outreach, and working with an outside consultant.

2017

- The Health Department and Live Well Greater Toledo assembled a multi-disciplinary team and participated in the Ohio Action Institute.

2018

- The Lucas County team established a Steering Committee and developed active transportation initiatives.
- In the spring of 2018, a workshop hosted by Toole Design Group focused on "Best Practices in Active Transportation".
- An Active Transportation Steering Committee was established to develop active transportation initiatives.

2019

- During the summer of 2019 a second workshop hosted by Toole Design Group focused on the process of developing a county-wide Active Transportation Plan, vision, and goals.
- The Steering Committee continued to meet regularly, advance initiatives within their organizations, as well as share progress.

2020

- Toole Design performed an assessment of the active transportation planning work to date to identify next steps.
- The assessment identified a need for broader public engagement and a need for outside support to finish the plan.

2021

- The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department leveraged Building Resilient Communities (BRIC) funding to contract with Toole Design to complete the draft plan.
- The draft plan was completed in December 2021.

2022

- Plan is presented to decision makers for adoption.
- Steering Committee begins implementation.

# VISION AND GOALS

The vision and plan goals presented here were developed collaboratively by the Steering Committee and guided the development of the plan recommendations. They are also central to evaluating plan implementation.

**Vision:** In 2040 Lucas County will be an accessible community where people of all ages and abilities, including children, can conveniently, comfortably, affordably, and safely walk, cycle, or use public transit as part of their everyday travel behaviors. There are four goal categories:

## Health & Safety



Encourage the development of a safe and context-appropriate bikeway and pedestrian system for all users in Lucas County including special populations.

- Reduce the amount of vehicular traffic by providing opportunities to utilize alternative modes of transportation.
- Improve the overall well-being of Lucas County residents and minimize health care costs by promoting an active lifestyle that will serve to improve the resident's physical and mental health.
- Reduce the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.

## Livability



Create a framework for a comprehensive, community-driven, transportation network for all users, of all ages.

- Increase opportunities for physical activity with well-designed sidewalks, on-street bicycle facilities, and multiuse trails.

## Equity



Create a more accessible community for all through development of interconnected pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

- Increase connectivity of active transportation facilities to improve access to job opportunities, medical care, and local commercial services.

## Sustainability



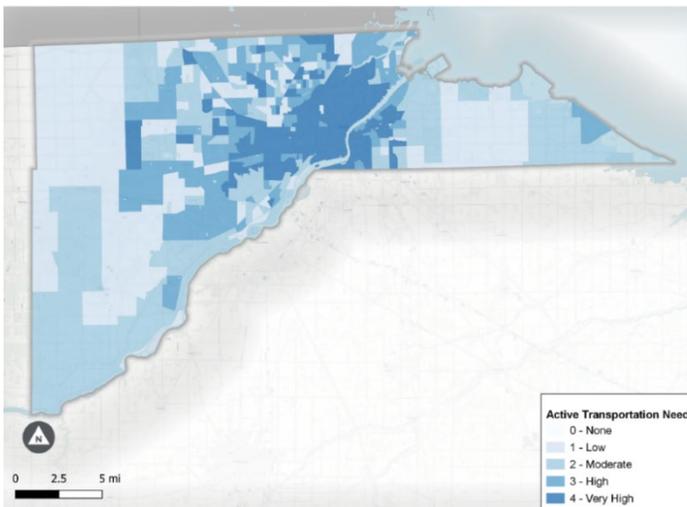
Reduce per capita energy consumption and promote alternative fuel resources to increase affordability and resilience of regional energy supplies.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

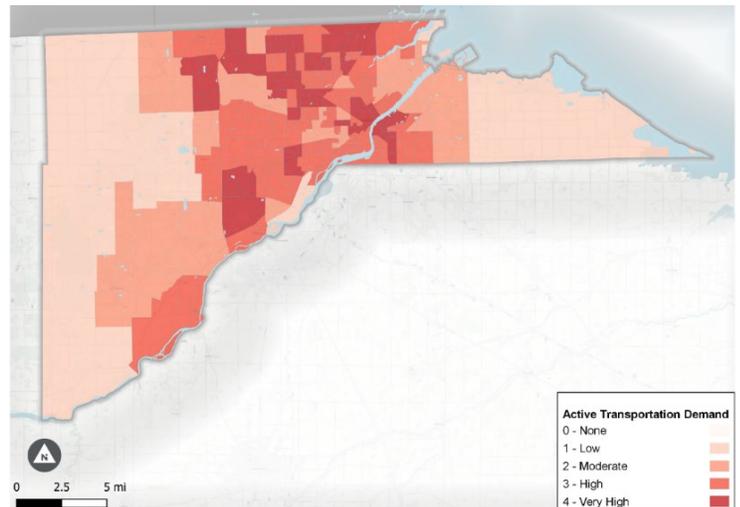
The project team completed an existing conditions analysis to understand the current transportation system and where improvements could be made for people walking and cycling.

- » The trail network is one of Lucas County's key active transportation strengths, as trails are comfortable facilities for a wide range of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- » There are multiple existing active transportation education and encouragement programs within Lucas County such as two Safe Routes to School programs, Bike Month every May, the City of Toledo's bikeshare program, etc.
- » Lucas County ranks in the bottom 25% of counties in Ohio for overall health outcomes.
- » For severe injury and fatal pedestrian crashes, Lucas County ranks higher than other counties with large cities.
- » Lucas County is the only county to rank in the top five for both pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

In addition, the project team reviewed volume and speed data as well as ODOT's Demand and Needs Analyses, which identified areas with strong potential for cycling and walking. The city of Toledo is both high demand and high need for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. See the Existing Conditions section for a summary of all analyses.



**Figure 2: Composite Need Map. Darker areas have concentrations of populations with multiple demographic need indicators.**



**Figure 1: Composite Demand Map. Darker areas have greater demand for walking and cycling opportunities.**

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement was different than normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project team collected community input online through a public survey, interactive mapping tool, and in-person tabling events at the TARTA transit center and county libraries. Early engagement identified key barriers to walking and cycling, which defined areas of focus for the planning process.

**Table: Frequency of walking and biking for transportation**

	How often do you WALK for transportation?	How often do you BIKE for transportation?
<b>Most days</b>	39%	21%
<b>Once a week</b>	12%	18%
<b>Once a month</b>	8%	10%
<b>Less than once a month</b>	42%	51%

# PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

The existing conditions analysis, public input, and steering committee meetings led to the final active transportation network. The proposed Active Transportation Plan routes include:

<p>47 miles</p> <p>Shared Use Paths</p> 	<p>5 miles</p> <p>Buffered or Separated Bicycle Lanes</p>	<p>21 miles</p> <p>Bicycle Lanes</p> 	<p>11 miles</p> <p>Bicycle Boulevards</p>	<p>20 miles</p> <p>Wide Shoulders</p> 
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The plan also proposes establishing supportive programs such as educational campaigns, community support, policies, and data programs.

## Safe System Approach

- » The Safe System Approach is a holistic method to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users. The Need and Demand maps in Chapter 2 can inform where to make pedestrian infrastructure investments.

## Pedestrian Toolkit

- » A few pedestrian safety treatments found in the toolkit include raised crosswalks, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and pedestrian refuge islands.

## Program Recommendations

- » A variety of programs and policies can help establish a culture of walking and cycling at all levels. Recommendations consist of education opportunities, policy implementations, community support, and data analysis and collection.