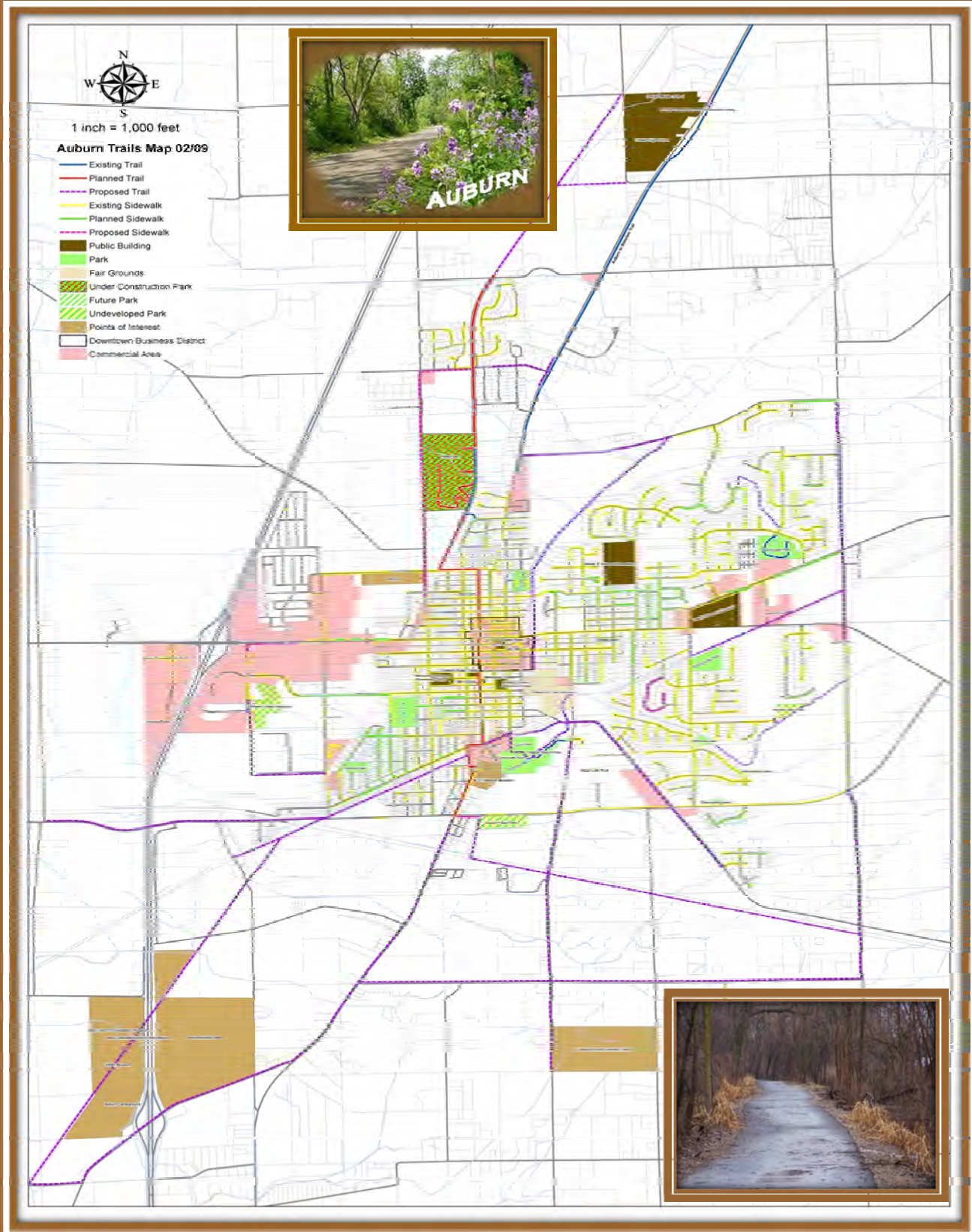




2009 – Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan





Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan

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Section 1: Introduction

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this plan is to address the City of Auburn's current pedestrian walkways and recreational trailways needs and concerns; to provide a pedestrian and bikeway connectivity and accessibility from the residential neighborhoods to recreational parks, schools, commercial areas, museums, and other points of interest; and to provide a safe access to those locations.

It is the intent that this plan be incorporated into the City of Auburn 1987 Comprehensive Master Plan and the 2005 Future Land Use Map as amended; and the City of Auburn 2006-2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This plan will serve as a guide to direct the future growth and improvements of the City of Auburn pedestrian walkways and residential trailways.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Auburn over the past twenty years has promoted the construction of sidewalks within most all new subdivision developments, both residential and commercial. This has resulted in a generally well connected community for pedestrian access; however, there exists gaps in many key destination points. In addition, until more recent times the city had not addressed an overall plan for the creation of new recreational trails, with the exception of the Auburn to Waterloo pedestrian and bikeway. This trail runs from the northern edge of Auburn to the southern boundary of the Town of Waterloo.

In 2006, the city embarked on the development of a city-wide pedestrian walkway and residential trailways plan. This effort was tied into the regional effort spearheaded by the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council and the Region 3A Development Council. The 2007 draft version of this city-wide plan was incorporated into this regional effort as part of the creation of the Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenway, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Upstate Indiana Trails Plan.

The 2009 Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways plan is the result of the work that the city has participated in, both on a local level and on a regional level, and is now a part of the City of Auburn 1987 Comprehensive Master Plan and the 2005 Future Land Use Map as amended.



Section 1: Introduction

PLAN COMPONENTS:

The components of this Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan are as follows:

SECTION 2–Existing Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Review: This section provides an overview of the existing walkways and trailways in use within the City.

SECTION 3–Citizen Participation: This section describes the process of obtaining citizen input into the Pedestrian Walk Ways and Recreational Trailways Plan.

SECTION 4–Pedestrian Walkways/Recreational Trailways Issues: This section identifies the key issues in developing the Plan.

SECTION 5–Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan: This section describes the recommended walkways and trailways plan and includes a master land use plan map of the locations of the walkways and trailways.

SECTION 6–Implementation Plan: This section prioritizes the recommended trailways and walkways and sets up a five-year action plan for the development of the Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan.



Section 2: Review of the existing pedestrian walkways and trailways:

INVENTORY OF THE MAJOR EXISTING PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS AND TRAILWAYS:

- The first step in the review of the city's existing pedestrian walkways and trailways was to inventory their locations throughout the city's jurisdiction. This was accomplished using the city's GIS data base and prior and recent aerial photography (April 2008) to highlight the existing sidewalks. Field check observations were made to confirm questionable locations. The areas where gaps existed were identified and labeled on draft aerial maps. Field checks were also conducted to assess and identify the sidewalks that are in the worst disrepair.
- The next step was to add to our GIS data base the locations of known recreational trails. Many of these trails required field checks to insure accuracy in locations.
- The final step was to add to the GIS data base the new sidewalks constructed within the housing subdivisions and commercial or business developments that have occurred after the April 2008 aerial photography update to the GIS data base.

LOCAL CITY OFFICIALS REVIEWS:

- Once the inventory of the existing pedestrian walkways and trailways was created within the GIS data base, draft aerial photography maps were prepared and given to the various city departments including the Engineering Department, Street Department, Building, Planning and Development Department, and the Mayor's Office.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS & TRAILWAYS MAP:

- Through this process corrections and additions were applied to the inventory map to create the draft Pedestrian Walkways and Trailways Map. This map was then used as the basis for determining the proposed locations for new sidewalks and trailways development. From that process the proposed Pedestrian Walkways and Trailways Plan (map) was created and used in the public workshops and plan commission meetings.



Section 3: Citizen Participation:

The Citizen Participation process for the development of the Pedestrian Walkways and Trailways Plan (map) was primarily accomplished through public meetings with the City of Auburn Plan Commission and through three public information workshops and meetings.

A. PLAN COMMISSION MEETINGS:

March 13, 2007 meeting:

In support of an Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Transportation Enhancement (TE), Trails grant application the Plan Commission staff discussed the drafting of a new pedestrian walkways and trail plan. The Planning and Engineering Departments have been putting together a map showing where the proposed walkways and trails will be located.

The Plan Commission staff announced that there will be two public workshops, the first to be held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 27, 2007 at approximately 7:00 PM after the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting and the Parks & Recreation Board meeting. The second meeting will be held again, in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, April 10, 2007 at approximately 7:00 PM after the next Plan Commission meeting. More meetings will be held further in the future.

The Plan Commission staff stated that they will be asking the Plan Commission and Park & Recreation Board to add amended sections to the 2005 Future Land Use Map of the 1987 Comprehensive Master Plan and the 2006-2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan including the proposed trailway and walkway map to aid in the application for the grant.

The Plan Commission staff informed the Plan Commission that the old railroad bed running through Rieke Park is slated to be part of a trailway between Bluffton, Indiana and Pokagon State Park. The Commissioners agreed this was a good idea and they looked forward to hearing more.

December 9, 2008 meeting:

The Plan Commission staff informed the Plan Commission that the department is working with the DeKalb County Central Schools system for a grant for the Safe Routes to School Program for McKinney



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Harrison & JR Watson Elementary Schools. The Plan Commission was informed that in March 2009 the staff would bring the proposed pedestrian walkways and recreational trailway plan to the Commission as an amendment to the Comprehensive Master Plan. The plan would show where future sidewalks and trails should be installed. The Plan Commission staff stated that the intention was to have the Park Board adopt something similar as an amendment to the Parks Master Plan.

February 10, 2009 meeting:

At the February 10, 2009 Plan Commission meeting staff Administrator, Bill Spohn presented the Draft of the Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan. The sidewalk and trail routes were discussed in their various locations throughout the city and points where sidewalks and trails need to be constructed were pointed out. Mr. Spohn explained that this project is also being worked in conjunction with the Safe Routes to School Program.

A review of the history for this project was presented to the commissioners. Mr. Spohn explained that the intent was to be requesting Plan Commission to approval of this plan as an amendment to the city's Comprehensive Master Plan and the Future Land Use Map. It was also pointed out the staff would be requesting the Auburn Park Board to approve the plan as an amendment to its Parks Master Plan. The staff further explained that this project would become part of the Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenway, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Upstate Indiana Trails Plan.

March 10, 2009 meeting:

At the March 10, 2009 Plan Commission meeting staff Administrator, Bill Spohn presented a PowerPoint presentation on the background of the pedestrian walkways and trailways initiative for the city of Auburn, along with a summary of the Pedestrian Walkway & Trailways Master Plan study which included issues the plan addressed and the Implementation Plan and Action Plan portions of the study. Mr. Spohn again explained that the intent was to request the Plan Commission to recommend this plan to the City Council as an amendment to the city's Comprehensive Master Plan and the Future Land Use Map. It was also pointed out that the staff would be requesting the Auburn Park Board to approve the plan as an amendment to its Parks Master Plan. The staff further explained that this project would become part of the



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Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenway, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Upstate Indiana Trails Plan.

A detailed explanation and discussion of the Pedestrian Walkway & Trailways Map took place highlighting the existing, planned, and proposed walkways and trailways.

Following the discussion, the Auburn Plan Commission approved the 2009 Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Master Plan and forwarded a favorable recommendation to the Auburn Common Council to amend the City of Auburn's 1987 Comprehensive Master Plan and existing Master Land Use Map by adding the 2009 Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Master Plan and Map. The motion was carried unanimously by the Commission.

B. PUBLIC INFORMATION WORKSHOPS:

March 27, 2007 Public Information Workshop

The first public information workshop was held by the staff of the Plan Commission on March 27, 2007 at the City of Auburn City Council Chambers. Approximately 18 persons were in attendance. The meeting began with a Power Point presentation on the purpose of the workshop, the prior planning efforts of the city, and a discussion of the proposed pedestrian walkways and trailways.

The Council Chambers was divided into three areas and after the formal presentation, the attendees were divided up into three groups with staff monitors for each group to review and discuss the proposed pedestrian walkways and trailways proposed plan. Comments both favorable and non-favorable to the proposed walkway and trailways locations were given and recorded and new walkways and trailways location recommendations were solicited. The results were written down or marked on the maps provided.

Much of the discussions from this first workshop revolved around protecting the residential neighborhoods with landscaping screening or fencing, connectivity to existing parks, safe crossings for school children in residential areas, and connecting to the existing Auburn to Waterloo trailway. Participant's suggestions were marked on the maps provided. The changes or additions suggested were then added to the draft base maps for use at the second public workshop

April 10, 2007 Public Information Workshop:



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The second public information workshop was held by the staff of the Plan Commission on April 10, 2007 at the City of Auburn City Council Chambers. Approximately 25 persons were in attendance. The format of this meeting was similar to the first meeting starting with the Power Point presentation followed by dividing into three groups with staff monitors for each group to review and discuss the proposed pedestrian walkways and trailways proposed plan.

This meeting tended to focus more on the specific Rieke Park trail and concerns on neighborhood protection of having the trail run along the rear yards of home owners. Many of those concerns were resolved once portions of the Rieke Park trail were constructed and the impact to the property owners lessened.

Other areas of discussion focused on questions regarding safety and police protection, use of Park Department to maintain and keep trails free of trash, and the need to focus on sidewalks.

The creation of a trailway/sidewalk off of Grandstaff Drive and North Street to Rieke Park and the addition of new sidewalks along Ensley Avenue were suggested by one of the groups. Other groups inquired about; creating a vegetation buffer along the creek areas so that wildlife could co-exist with the trail users, extending a trailway from Ensley Avenue area on the northeast side of the City out toward the City of Butler, designing signage that would be legible for cyclists, and creating a trailway west from Auburn Drive to the City of Garrett.

March 2, 2009 Public Information Meeting:

On March 2, 2009 the third and final public information meeting was held. This Power Point presentation was focused on the draft 2009 Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Master Plan as amended from the two prior public workshops and with input from the local officials and Plan Commission reviews.

The presentation was in three parts;

1. The background of steps taken in preparing the Plan.
2. The presentation of the proposed Walkways and trailways Plan and Map.
3. The question and answer session.

The input from those in attendance was both positive and supportive of the plan. No major changes to the plan were suggested by the 9 persons in attendance. As a result of the



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meeting the staff was to make any needed changes to the plan and present the proposed 2009 Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Master Plan to the Plan Commission was approval at its March meeting.



Section 4: Issues to be Addressed:

Based on input received from the public workshops and the meetings with the local officials, the following basic issues were formulated.

1. To provide connectivity within the City's existing sidewalk system.
2. To provide on a community-wide basis, better pedestrian access to the City's points of interests (i.e. downtown business district, recreational parks, schools, museums, commercial areas, and residential neighborhoods).
3. To improve student pedestrian and bicycling access to the local school districts with emphasis on the elementary schools.
4. To provide safe and accessible pedestrian movement throughout the City's jurisdiction, securing access to and from any one part of the community to another.
5. To provide sidewalk connections to those areas planned for future development, particularly the new residential and commercial areas.
6. To repair or replace deteriorating sidewalks and fill in areas where no sidewalks were constructed providing for gapless pedestrian routes throughout the community.
7. To improve existing recreational trails and connect to a community wide recreational trail system.
8. To plan for and create new recreational trails within the City.
9. To tie the City of Auburn's Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan into the City's 1987 Master Plan and 2005 Future Land Use Map and the City of Auburn's 2006-2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
10. To incorporate the City of Auburn's Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan into the regional Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenway, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Upstate Indiana Trails Plan.



Section 5: The Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways Plan (Map)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS AND RECREATIONAL TRAILWAYS PLAN:

- ❖ This Pedestrian Walkways and Recreation Trailways Plan is designed to address the *Section 4: Issues* identified through the public participation and Plan Commission meetings.
- ❖ Using the proposed Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trailways map, the recommendations of the Plan Commissioners and its Staff, and the general public from the March and April 2007 meetings and the February 2009 meeting, this Pedestrian Walkways and Recreation Trailways Plan was created. This plan is presented in a map format and is as shown in Appendix A of the document.
- ❖ The use of this plan is to provide the basis to guide the future development of walkways and trailways through the jurisdiction of the City of Auburn Plan Commission and to be made a formal amendment to the 2005 Future Land Use Plan of the 1987 Master Plan.
- ❖ It is further recommended that this Pedestrian Walkways and Recreation Trailways Plan be made part of the City of Auburn 2006-2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Section 6: Implementation Plan:

A. Prioritization Plan:

This plan has divided the pedestrian walkways and recreational trailways into three categories: existing, planned, and proposed. Those identified as planned have the highest priority and are considered to be short term projects. Those identified as proposed are for future long term projects. As this plan begins to be implemented, a more clearly define strategy needs to be development for the proposed walkways and trailways and timeframes developed for implementation.

B. Action Plan:

1. Create a **five-year priority construction plan** (Five-year Plan) by Spring of 2010 to implement the planned new walkways and trailways.
2. Provide construction cost estimates for the top five planned walkways and trailways projects to include, where needed, any phasing of these projects.
3. Begin construction of at least one walkway or trailway project by Summer 2010.
4. Review progress of the five-year priority plan in each of the next four years starting at the end of 2010 and adjust the five-year priority plan as required.