
CHAPTER VI

IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING STRATEGIES



FUNDAMENTALS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION



LAND ACQUISITION



FUNDING STRATEGIES



COORDINATION WITH OTHER BIKE/PEDESTRIAN INITIATIVES

IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING STRATEGIES

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan commissioned by the City of Charlottesville will be meaningful when the plan is funded, constructed and used by citizens. It is the intent of this section of this document to describe some of the ways in which this plan can be implemented and funded.

Soon after the adoption of the Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, an implementation strategy should be put into place. The master planning process has created community interest and this momentum must be focused into action.

A. FUNDAMENTALS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

1. Coordination and Management

In 1978, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Services studied a sampling of trail projects across the country to identify the key elements that led to a successful trail project. The results were not conclusive though a couple of key ingredients were present in all of the successful projects. The first and foremost consistent thread in the successful trail projects was the active presence of an individual and/or small group of citizens, who were totally committed to developing the bicycle and pedestrian trail and trail amenities. This person or agency must be identified early on in the process to organize, communicate and answer questions, and search for funding sources. This person and/or organization basically does what it is required to keep the Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian project moving forward, and communicating this progress to the community.

2. Community Support

The second key ingredient in all of the successful programs was active community support for the project, and will be so in Charlottesville. For this to occur, the project should be presented to a large cross-section of interest groups that will benefit from the bicycle and pedestrian facility. Education, safety, health, inexpensive family recreation, reduction of pollution, environmental preservation, better transportation, economic development and more are all items that spark the interest and eventual support from individuals, organizations, businesses and elected officials.

3. Political Support

It is imperative that the elected officials of the community fully support the project. There will be times that the bicycle and pedestrian project will compete for funding with other valid municipal projects. One of the best methods to gain political support is to maintain a high level of community desire for the project.

4. Realistic Budget

Have a realistic budget, with the commitment to construct the project in a quality fashion. Funding is always difficult and the visions for the project may be loftier than the present funding dollars can support. A preliminary

budget should be drafted for each project so that costs, priorities and funding sources can be clearly identified and acted upon. Do not construct one-mile of trail or bike lane poorly in order to build twice as much. It is much more difficult to go back and raise the other 50% to make it right. More importantly, what is constructed today will become a testimonial project that can be used to raise more funds for tomorrow. Supporters must be able to see progress happening, but also must be happy with what they see.

5. Realistic Schedule

When an opening date is promised to a community, the date must be kept. It is so essential, in fact that ground breaking occur when promised, but more importantly, that the grand opening occur when promised. This is important for establishing credibility with the public and elected officials and makes asking the community, businesses, developers, etc. for donations and dollars to expand the project in the future.

Phasing of the Master Plan is critical to success. The City of Charlottesville cannot implement everything at once, so the segments that make the most sense should be prioritized and completed first. This must be made a part of the public relations program to the community, so that the "big picture" can be seen. This will keep the city staff from stamping out a lot of political fires, and will make answering lots of questions easier, to be able to say, "yes, we are going to build trail in your area, and it will happen in the year, ---".

As the Master Plan is being implemented opportunities to acquire property for trails may occur and the City should act upon the opportunity aggressively, even if the trail cannot be funded at that time. This Master Plan provides a general phasing plan for both on and off-street facilities, however, the phasing plan should remain flexible to take advantage of funding and or land acquisition opportunities.

6. The Demonstration Project

One of the first priorities upon completion of the Master Plan will be to get something built. After all of the words, presentations and meetings, the Demonstration Project focuses all of the ideas from the Master Plan into something that all can see, touch, and use. We recommend installing a "Demonstration Project" first. This initial project should be one that will implement the goals and demonstrate that the City of Charlottesville will implement the plan. A Demonstration Project should be located in a high profile location, will enjoy a high volume of user traffic, can demonstrate all the highest principles of design and construction techniques, and be of the highest quality materials, and craftsmanship.

7. Building and Maintaining Momentum

Developing and maintaining momentum will enhance and expedite implementation off the Master Plan. Momentum began during the master planning process but too long a time gap between planning and implementation can eventually cause the loss of interest and support. It is easier to keep momentum/support alive and sustained than attempting to resuscitate it once it's lost.

News of the first project, such as a Demonstration Project should be released to the public with a marketing- like approach. Success should be celebrated and shared with the public. Those who have contributed to make the project a reality must be properly acknowledged. Additionally, programs that educate and influence people to use the new amenity will help to build future support.



Programs to Encourage Bicycling in Charlottesville can include:

a. Master Plan Celebration Organize a day of celebration and education by inviting bicycle, pedestrian, recreation and greenspace enthusiasts to set up information booths for the public. High points of the Master Plan can be presented as well as fun events such as a concert, race (walk, run, bike) free drawings for goods such as tennis shoes and bikes, and free gifts such as water bottles and bike helmets.

b. Bike to Work Days Promotes bike riding to work through new or existing programs such as:

- Downtown Mall Days
- Give Air a Brake Day
- Fridays After Five
- Yellow Bike program

c. Incentives for Business Develop a program for businesses to offer their employees to promote bike riding to work. A brochure with safety tips, how to select the proper route, and where to store bikes should be included. Businesses should provide their employees with bike lockers and racks, and a place to change clothing and freshen up after the ride.

d. Free Bicycle Clinics The City of Charlottesville or other civic organization should have a bicycle clinic demonstration presentation that can be taken to schools, businesses and events such as the Bike to Work Days.



e. Bike to School Programs This program helps school children and parents determine if biking to school is a safe alternative. The program facilitator discusses potential routes with the family and distributes safety information, and possibly t-shirts, bicycle flag and flexible pole (attaches to bikes back seat, making it easier for motorists to see the bike and rider), helmets, water bottles, and more.

f. Free Parking in Outer Lots The City of Charlottesville could offer free automobile parking outside of the Charlottesville business district, if the user arrives with a bike and then rides it to their final destination. Free parking will provide an incentive for bicycle commuters who live far from the City that would otherwise not commute on a bicycle and reduce automobile use and parking congestion in the downtown area.

B. LAND ACQUISITION

Acquiring property for bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be the most difficult challenge in implementing the Master Plan. A successful acquisition program should be implemented in such a way that a minimum corridor width for the specific type of trail is established. Therefore, the trail itself and sufficient shoulders on either side of the trail must be acquired. Safety and ecological considerations may dictate that additional widths need to be obtained in order to construct a trail.

Under any circumstances, the City of Charlottesville should actively seek to acquire all properties within the 100-year flood plain for conservation, creating ecological buffers and development of the appropriate type(s) of recreation amenity.

As the City of Charlottesville continues to grow in population, demands on land will increase with property values. Securing the desired lands will increasingly become more difficult and expensive. All potential avenues should be explored when acquiring properties. Several methods to consider include:

1. Land Dedication Land dedication as part of a development agreement between a private enterprise and a municipality is an effective method for obtaining land for roads with bicycle facilities, open space and recreation. The developer dedicates land in return for open-space and/or park credits that are required by the municipality. Often, the land donated is flood plain that otherwise cannot be developed for commercial purposes. In many circumstances, bicycle facilities such as trails and trail amenities are required to be paid for by the developer as part of the development agreement

2. Lease or License This type of transaction involves the landowner conveying all rights, control, and liability from the landowner to the City. Ideally a lease will be enacted for a minimum of 99 years. Upon its termination, the lease may be renewed or the land may be purchased or donated. The owner is compensated for the terms negotiated in the lease.

3. Revocable Permits, Access or Use Agreements These types of transactions are similar to a lease; however, the landowner may revoke access if the terms of the agreement are not being met. Termination may also occur due to land use changes or the sale of the land.

4. Land Trades Land trades are negotiated when a private landowner owns a property that the City of Charlottesville desires and the landowner wants a property that the City owns. When beneficial to both, the land trade can be an easy, low cost method for acquiring land.

5. Easements Easements for recreation access and use can be

negotiated with property owners who do not wish to sell their land. The easement may be negotiated as part of a development agreement between the property owner and City or can be part of future applications for zoning or development of the property. Incentives for a property owner to provide an easement agreement for recreational use include: possible tax benefits, future development considerations, future zoning considerations, relief from liability, and potential for increased property values.

6. Land Trusts Land trusts are generally associated with not-for-profit organizations. Land trusts may acquire property through gift or purchase, sometimes for conveyance to a public entity, by establishing conservation easements that place the legal restrictions on future development and use of the land. Landowners seeking tax benefits or who want to preserve land for personal reasons typically prefer to donate their property to a land trust.

7. Open Space and Conservation Districts Open Space and Conservation Districts are generally special tax districts approved by voters for the purpose of generating tax revenues for land purchase.

8. Purchase of Land At times, direct purchase of a property is the easiest and perhaps the only method of acquiring land. A fee-simple purchase is the acquisition of property for its fair market value. A bargain sale is when the owner sells the property for less than full market value in exchange for income tax credits. The purchase of a land title can include the entire parcel or only part of the property.

9. Railbanking In areas where railroad lines exist and that are, or are soon to be abandoned, railbanking can provide the best method of acquisition. Railbanking is a process where rail corridors, bridges and trestles can be secured for trail use. The railroad may desire compensation for the abandoned rail line, and it can be restored to rail use in the future if the line is deemed to be useful as a rail line again. Once the landowner has accepted the acquisition offer from the City, transfer documents (titles, easements, etc.) need to be created in compliance with the federal Railbanking Act and local courts.

10. Utility Corridors Utility corridors (sewer, electrical, natural gas, etc.) provide opportunities for trail location. Some utility corridors have access and maintenance roads, which are compatible with trail uses. Other utility corridors may have been created by an easement. These easements should be looked into on a case-by-case basis to determine if recreational use is part of the easement agreement or if this use needs to be arranged for with the property owner.

C. FUNDING STRATEGIES

It can be assumed that the costs to fulfill the proposed amenities of the Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan will be substantial. Therefore, the obvious concern for funding becomes a prominent issue. Potential funding sources are easy to identify, but obtaining money from them can be difficult. Financial assistance can come in many shapes and sizes; from volunteer donated labor to million dollar grants, and from a local small business to large corporations and foundations. No contribution is too little or too much.

Funding sources can be grouped as either public (federal, state or local) or private (business, foundations, civic organizations and individuals). Both resources should be approached for funding since neither sector will have the resources to fund the project alone. Public/private sector cooperation at all monetary level is the trademark of a successful funding strategy. The following discussion describes public and private sector funding opportunities:

1. Public Sector Funding

Various agencies of government have different goals and objectives concerning trail corridor development. At times these goals are compatible but are described differently. Consider a proposed multi-use recreational trail as one example. To one agency the trail provides recreation for its citizens. To a Public Works Department or utility company the trail could be regarded as a maintenance access road. Still another agencies may be interested in obtaining land for flood control purposes or preservation. Inter-governmental cooperation between agencies can often yield amenities desirable to all for less money than if each were to proceed on there own.

Currently, the State of Virginia and the Federal Government have various funding programs that are applicable to on and off-street bicycle and pedestrian projects. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has published several excellent documents on the planning, design and funding for Bicycle Facilities. One such document titled "Virginia Bicycle Facility Resource Guide" provides a variety of funding mechanisms that are available to the City of Charlottesville.

The mechanisms listed and described in the guide and are applicable to Charlottesville are summarized below:

a. Highway Construction Fund

Funds for highway construction or improvement projects that include bicycle facilities. The proposed project must be in the Virginia Transportation Development Plan in order for VDOT to consider using highway construction funds for the construction of bicycle facilities. This is the most common source of VDOT money for bicycle facilities.

b. TEA-21 Transportation Enhancement Program

The Transportation Enhancement Program is funded through the 1997 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, more commonly known as TEA-21. This federal program is managed and administered by VDOT at the state level. In order to be eligible for funding, a project must meet the following criteria:

- A relationship to the surface transportation system
- Qualifies under one of the Enhancement Program Categories (paved shoulders, bicycle paths, bike lanes, bicycle racks and lockers, development of education materials, safety campaigns and programs, safety training, and activities related to safety enforcement are all eligible projects)
- Formally endorsed by a local jurisdiction or public agency as evidenced by a resolution and commitment of 20% minimum local match
- Must be endorsed by the MPO if within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area
- A duly advertised public hearing must have been held on the project

c. Provide people with better access to jobs, services, and trade centers

- Encourage private-sector development patterns that achieve these goals

d. TEA-21 Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Similar to the TEA-21 Transportation Enhancement Program, TEA-21 legislation also provides money for enhancements to transit systems including the accommodation of bicycles, bicycle access, and multi-modal connections. Projects typically funded include installation of bicycle storage facilities and the installation of equipment for transporting bicycles on mass transit vehicles.

e. State Aid Transit Grants

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation also administers state aid grant programs. Approximately \$100 million in state grant money is available each year for transit systems including bicycle accommodation. Although no minimum match is required, a local match of 20% is more likely to receive funding than a project with a match of 5%.

f. Virginia Recreational Trails Fund

The Virginia department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) administers the Virginia Recreational Trails Fund. Grant money through this program is available for the purpose of providing and maintaining recreational trails and trail-related facilities. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Development of urban trail linkages near homes and workplaces

- Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails
- Easement acquisition and development for trail/trail corridors in a state or local trail plan
- Construction of new trails that meet identified needs on state, county, municipal, or private lands
- Construction of new trails on federal lands if certain conditions are met

g. 402 Highway Safety Program Annual Grants

Overall, the diversity of eligible programs ranges from drunk driving prevention to motorcycle safety and child safety/safety belt use. Bicycle and pedestrian safety is also an eligible program. Each application must identify a specific issue (i.e. bicycle safety) and present a plan to address that issue. Proposals may address efforts to start a new program or they may look at expanding an existing program.

h. 402 Highway Safety Program Mini Grants

Similar to the annual grant program except that monies are available throughout the entire year while funds last. This enables localities and others to react to safety issues that may suddenly arise in their communities.

B. Private Sector Funding

Private sector funding sources include monies contributed by small businesses, corporations, and grant foundations, civic organizations and citizens. Because Charlottesville is a popular place to live and work, many successful businesses and individuals reside here. The first part of the fund-raising campaign is to identify all of the potential local sources that will be approached for money. Next, an organized presentation about the project and why it is important to them and the community should be created. When asking others for donations always assume that they are going to rank your project based on the local commitment already demonstrated. The most important commitment is local funds from both public and private sector sources. The question is - Why should we be expected to give money when the community has not demonstrated its support for the project?

The presentation should be short, to the point and visually appealing to the audience.

The following entities are potential donors to bicycle and pedestrian facilities:

a. Corporate Grant Foundations

Corporate foundations may be locally based or national. Typically a list of corporate grant foundations can be found on the Internet or in the library. The

list provides type(s) of projects that the foundation generally donates money too, typical amounts of grants, and information on how to apply. Grant amounts can range from the hundreds, if well into the millions of dollars. Corporate grant foundations will generally like to see evidence that there is large local public and political support for the project that money is being requested for. This support most often comes in the form of funds raised from the community and/or appropriated by local government. Most corporate grant foundations do not fund maintenance activities but will be very interested in how the project will be maintained once it is built.

b. Civic Organizations

Local civic organizations that will benefit from a bicycle and pedestrian project should be mobilized behind the project. These organizations may include bicycle clubs, naturalists, scout troops, bird clubs.

c. Citizens

There are many ways in which local citizens can become involved with the bicycle and pedestrian project. Working through civic organizations as previously discussed is one way to contribute. Other strategies include creation of a “trail club” to individuals and families who can become members for a small donation. The club member may receive a small gift such as a tee shirt or water bottle and a newsletter that provides valuable information regarding upcoming events and the implementation status for the project.

Individuals should also be encouraged to provide volunteer work along the trail corridor. Appropriate activities include construction and maintenance of signs, picnic tables, benches, nature trails, etc. A detailed accounting of the work completed and hours worked should be kept in order to estimate the monetary value of the volunteer work. Many grant programs (public and private) allow the value of volunteer efforts to help satisfy a dollar match that is required in the grant.

