A Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
For the Nyack River Villages and the Nyack School District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
August 2018
Introduction

Bicycling and walking provide great value to the quality of life and mobility in the greater Nyack area. Walking and bicycling reduce travel costs, congestion, and pollution and improve both transportation and social networks. Though not all people ride bicycles, the river villages and the lower Hudson Valley have for decades been a destination for recreational cyclists, a trend that will continue when the planned shared use path (SUP) opens on the new Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge.

This Greater Nyack Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Master Plan) is developed with an unwavering commitment to address the safety and mobility of all road users, with emphasis placed on children, seniors, and those with mobility impairments. Infrastructure that is safe and accessible for all users, particularly the most vulnerable, promotes mobility, public health, economic vitality, and social equity.

From January 2015 to December 2017, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) reported 52 crashes in the area involving bicyclists or pedestrians. Notably in 2018, as this plan was in preparation, two pedestrians were killed by motorists. Traffic crashes are preventable and this plan provides tools and solutions to minimize risks for all street users.

The creators and contributors to the Master Plan value the area’s unique character and believe that support for active transportation will make the river villages and adjacent hamlets increasingly desirable and safe places to live, work, and enjoy the region’s many recreational assets.

The Master Plan is funded by a grant from the New NY Bridge Project’s Community Benefits Program. The study is administered by the Village of Nyack for the entire school district, which includes Nyack, South Nyack, Upper Nyack, and the hamlets of Valley Cottage and Upper Grand View.

Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Master Plan is to synthesize bicycle and pedestrian needs and create a comprehensive package of recommendations that will encourage the community to bicycle and walk more for transportation, recreation, exercise, and overall quality of life. It provides a framework within which the area can strategically implement improvements that reflect the community’s priorities.

Safe streets are welcome streets

Access

Equity

Health

Future
Public Involvement

From the onset of the *Master Plan* until its completion, community members played a vital role in defining the vision, recommendations, and priorities of the *Master Plan*. Through in-person meetings, pop-up outreach events, and online engagement, members of the public shared their feedback on areas of concern and how best to improve walking and biking in the Nyack river villages and school district.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee met four times throughout the course of the study, comprised of public officials, residents, and representatives from community organizations, advocacy groups, businesses, and other stakeholders in the study area. The major roles of the committee included defining the *Master Plan’s* vision, assisting with public outreach efforts, identifying needs and key destinations, reviewing project materials, and updating the draft list of recommendations.

Virtual Outreach

To collect feedback early and often, the *Master Plan* team engaged stakeholders through virtual outreach methods, including an online mapping tool where users could share their concerns and opportunities on a map of the project area. The mapping tool received nearly 400 location-specific pin drops and comments. The project team also accepted and reviewed comments via email and through the project website. The school district also shared major milestones through Peachjar, the virtual outreach system used to reach parents.

Stakeholder Interviews

The project team interviewed key stakeholder groups in the initial stages of the *Master Plan* development. These interviews included representatives from public safety, public health, the school district, the disabled community, and the *Orangetown Bike Study*. Common themes heard included concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety for all road users, a need for more community education on traffic laws, and a desire for outreach to diverse communities.

Pop-ups and Public Workshop

The project team and Steering Committee worked to include members of the public at three public events. At the first event, a Lunch & Learn held at Nyack High School, the project team listened to students’ ideas and vision for their community. At the second pop-up event, held at the Earth Day Celebration & MusicFest, the project team sought feedback on a short-term painted protected bike lane and curb extension. Third, a public open house was held at Nyack High School to present the study process and draft recommendations and solicit feedback from community members. Input received at these events directly shaped the recommendations in this *Master Plan*. 
Network Needs Assessment

The network needs assessment was developed with input from the Steering Committee, stakeholders, and the public. As such, the first step was a comprehensive analysis of all the input that was received throughout the development of the Master Plan. Highlighted issues included problematic intersections, missing facilities such as crosswalks and pedestrian ramps, desired linkages between key destinations.

All the needs that were identified by the community were reviewed in detail and recorded as part of the needs assessment. To ensure the recommendations focused on the needs that applied to a broad community, the needs that had been identified most frequently were considered the top needs for consideration. Additional criteria included:

- **Crash locations**: A recent crash that involved pedestrians and / or bicyclists.
- **School zones**: Facility exists within a 0.25-mile radius of a school.
- **Transit-dependent populations**: Census block groups that were identified by the Rockland County Planning Department.
- **Existing plan or study**: A need already identified in another village, town, regional, or state-wide plan or study. An example would be the needs that have been identified as part of the Village of Nyack’s Pedestrian Safety Action Plan – Local Projects Grant Application for NYSDOT.

**Assessment Results**

The analysis identified the following corridors considered most in need of bicycle and pedestrian improvements:

- North Broadway
- Casper Hill Road
- Depew Avenue
- Franklin Street
- Gedney Street
- Main Street
- North Midland Avenue
- Piermont Avenue
- Route 303
- Route 59
- Route 9W
Recommendations

*Master Plan* recommendations are based on the vision and goals defined by the community as well as the technical analysis performed throughout the study. The foundation of these recommendations is safety. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety must be made the highest priority. In turn, these safety improvements create a safer environment for all users, including motorists. The transportation system must be accessible and equitable to accommodate all users.

Recommendations are organized into two categories: **Network and Facilities**, and **Policies and Programs**. Within each category, recommendations have also been organized into two tiers, with Tier I including highlighting projects suggested for earliest implementation. This list was determined by a number of factors, including which recommendations were the most compatible with the vision and goals as well as which recommendations offer the most effective and efficient strategies to enhance street safety.

More detailed information has been included for the Tier I recommendations that is intended to assist with their quick implementation. This includes a brief description, visual illustrations as appropriate, and information on quick build opportunities. The process for pursuing quick build opportunities has been highlighted in the graphic below and is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5: Implementation within this plan.

Visualizations provide proof of concept and further engineering analysis may be necessary prior to implementation. These concept plans are intended to support decision-making and policy and are not intended as final designs. In many cases, concepts are intended not only to improve street safety but to support place-making and enhance a range of community assets. The recommendations presented in this plan are consistent with recent local planning efforts and complementary to related efforts such as the *Orangetown Bike Study*.

Quick-Build Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT + NEED</th>
<th>DEMONSTRATION</th>
<th>PILOT</th>
<th>INTERIM DESIGN</th>
<th>LONG-TERM/CAPITAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine with public input</td>
<td>1 day-1 week ($$)</td>
<td>Several weeks-1 year ($$$)</td>
<td>1-5 years ($$$)</td>
<td>5-50 years ($$$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Network and Facilities

Tier I

- Shoulder Repainting Program
- Designate School Slow Zones
- Crosswalk Repainting Program
- ADA-Compliant Facility Assessment
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI)
- Signing Program
- South Broadway at Old Erie Path/Esposito Trail
- Gedney Street Multimodal Improvements
- North Broadway to Nyack Beach State Park
- Route 303 and New Lake Road and Christian Herald Road Intersection Improvements
- North Midland Avenue and Old Mountain Road Intersection Improvements
- Birchwood Avenue and Old Mountain One-Way Road Couplet and Shared Use Paths
- Main Street and Broadway Crossing Improvements
- Route 59 to Palisades Center
- Casper Hill Road / Kings Highway Pedestrian Connection

Tier II

- Hudson Avenue and Piermont Avenue Improvements
- Greater Nyack Area Gateway Signage
- Traffic Calming Strategies for North Midland Avenue
- Route 9W Traffic Calming Strategies
- Downtown Nyack Parking Utilization Study
- Transit stop improvements
- Multimodal Link Through Planned Open Space on North Broadway
- Paved side path on Esposito (Clinton to Cedar Hill)

Policies and Programs

Tier I

- Complete Streets Ordinance
- Road Safety Campaign for All Users
- Multi-Village / Town Active Transportation Task Force
- School Bicycle and Pedestrian Promotion Program
- Design and Maintenance Standards
- Sidewalk Maintenance Plan
- Neighborhood Walks Program

Tier II

- Maintenance Request & Reporting Mobile App
- Ban Right Turns on Red in Commercial Districts
- Active Transportation Community Center
- Community Service Officers (CSOs) Internship Position
- Local Law Enforcement Multimodal Training Programs
- Bike Share Program Partnership Opportunities
- Increase Bicycle Parking
- Annual Bicycle Events
- Default 25 MPH Speed Limit
- Safe Streets for Seniors Initiative
- School Bicycle Safety Class
Implementation

This Master Plan provides an essential step to improving safety and accessibility. Some projects outlined in this plan will require significant coordination, capital planning, multiple funding sources, and sustained community and political leadership.

**Don’t wait! The principle of the implementation plan is action.**

Many smaller projects can move quickly from paper to pavement, while larger efforts may be initially delivered with low-cost, interim or pilot street design projects that make use of removable materials lasting a few months to a few years. This ‘tactical’ approach to project delivery can be used to implement recommendations quickly, test a range of design options, and ultimately inform decision-making on which larger projects are worth the sustained effort to bring to completion in the mid- and long-term.

Engaged and involved community leaders and stakeholders are critical elements to develop a coherent and actionable consensus for achieving the shared outcomes of safer, more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. To make a strong case to potential funders of these projects, leaders must formulate a compelling narrative which expresses a roundly-supported, shared vision for a more livable, sustainable community.

The community-building work inherent in advancing this Master Plan and developing the early quick-build projects, such as organizing volunteers and engaging groups like artists and businesses, and seniors and schoolchildren, is the foundation for the broad support that will be necessary to shepherd the entire plan through implementation.

This undertaking is about more than just the Master Plan. It is about strengthening personal connections and encouraging a more united and more resilient populace that feels invested in the stewardship of their community, and regard it as a place which they enjoy living in. This requires the leadership, initiative, and cooperation of the key players who will take the first steps in pushing for these improvements.
Quick-Build Toolbox

This Master Plan highlights the value and importance of quick-build approaches to addressing our infrastructure needs sooner rather than later. To assist the communities in the school district with project development and implementation, either as pilot projects or permanent installations, a toolbox provides guidance on proven design considerations for commonly applicable street elements. The toolbox also points to design resources from professional organizations such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

- Curb extensions
- Mid-block pedestrian crossing
- Pedestrian plazas
- Conventional bicycle lanes
- Protected bicycle lanes
- Super sharrows
- Chicanes
- Speed humps/speed cushions
- Wayfinding signs

Image Credit: Street Plans
Funding

How Are Walking and Bicycling Improvements Funded Now?
The communities included in this Master Plan do not currently maintain a dedicated funding stream for walking and cycling projects. Rather, Nyack and the river villages have historically pursued the incremental implementation of walking and cycling improvements within larger roadway construction or repaving projects. Main Street in Nyack and Lake Road/Kings Highway in Valley Cottage are but two relatively recent examples of larger streetscape efforts inclusive of active travel amenities. Funding for these types of efforts are typically obtained from a variety of sources, including municipal bonding, annual local, county, and state repaving/striping budgets, NYSDOT grant programs, and federal TAP and Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) dollars, among other sources. As this Master Plan is written, Broadway TAP improvements in Nyack are entering final design review by NYSDOT.

What Will be Needed to Implement the Plan?
Many projects identified in this Master Plan will require changing or building new sidewalks, curbs, and other street elements. That said, key plan components (bike lanes, curb extensions, crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, public plazas, walking lanes and more) may be initially delivered using a range of low-cost surface materials and off-the-shelf barrier elements, including surface paint or epoxy gravel, traffic tape, vertical delineators, and planters.

While some quick-build projects may be of modest scale or visibility, they will cumulatively make a positive and systemic impact across the school district. Thus, as project development, prioritization, and funding are discussed at the municipal level, allocating funding to a series of smaller and interim quick-build projects can show greater benefits to safety and accessibility than concentrating limited resources into a limited number of large, high-cost projects requiring many years to fund, administer, and construct.

How Will We Pay For It?
The good news is that many funding sources exist to help with the implementation of this Master Plan. By adopting a coordinated plan, the river villages and the school district will be better positioned for success with funding and grant applications. Additionally, numerous projects included in this plan are small and relatively low-cost efforts that can be incorporated into ongoing municipal repaving and striping projects.

Regardless of individual project size, implementing this Master Plan requires an intentional focus so that ongoing efforts to repair and repave village streets are catalyzed as opportunities to deliver better streets.

Strategies to Fund and Build the Plan
Concentrating on a select list of funding strategies will help the river villages implement Master Plan recommendations.

- Dedicate 10% of bond funding to implement walking and bicycling projects
- Dedicate a larger share of local paving funds to walking and cycling projects
- A holistic approach to street reconstruction
- Bundle funds from a variety of sources
- Use federal funding judiciously
- Leverage this Master Plan for state funding
- Incorporate walking/cycling enhancements into tax increment financing (TIF) districts
- Leverage foundation, development, and/or other alternative funding sources
- Adopt the quick-build project delivery methodology
Put the People Power in Place

The river villages and the school district need more than just funding to implement the recommendations within this Master Plan. Each community also needs people who have the time and resources to coordinate the planning, assist with design, construction, and the maintenance of this network.

Successful communities harness the power of dedicated municipal staff alongside the grassroots efforts of community leaders and activists in a truly public-private partnership.

A central recommendation of this plan is the formation of a Multi-Village/Town Active Transportation Task Force to advance Master Plan recommendations and keep this conversation going. Now is the time to take action and work together as a community.

WE CAN DO THIS!

This Master Plan is ambitious but with funding at these levels, support at all levels of local government, and staff resources available to do the work, it can get done and will be well worth the effort.

The result will be a safe, modernized, and attractive street network that offers Nyack area residents and workers real choices in how they get around.
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