

Making Our Area Safe and Appealing for Non-Motorized Traffic

A Summary of the Feasibility Study Project – July, 2012

The Mercersburg Area Council for Wellness (MACWell) is concluding a Feasibility Study demonstrating how to make our area safe and appealing for resident and visiting bicyclists and pedestrians.

Project Goal: MACWell's project goal is to enhance the walking and biking connectivity between the Borough of Mercersburg and the Montgomery and Peters communities, including neighborhoods, schools, parks, business districts and other residential, historical and recreational opportunities. These connections will improve our communities' quality of living and health by incorporating principles of sustainable communities that will make our area more attractive to residents and visitors.

Background and Vision: In January 2009 community leaders representing local governments, schools, banks, businesses, and churches met with MACWell to create a vision — a vision centering on:

- walkways and trails that will stitch the community together, and provide a truly “livable community” where most things are within walking and bicycling distance using safe and attractive paths and trails
- opportunities for fitness, health, recreation and the enhancement of everyday living and travel
- the promotion of people interacting, and the vibrancy of places of daily business (post office, schools, library, stores, restaurants, banks, businesses) which are easily reachable and connected, rather than sprawled apart
- the attraction to the Montgomery-Peters-Mercersburg area to local business, repeat business, and new business by encouraging an environmentally favorable, calm, inviting, and vibrant atmosphere

The Feasibility Study: The Study addresses the questions of how to reconnect our area to make it safe and inviting for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The study's designs build upon the extraordinary natural and historical features and community structures already present. It has included a robust public participation program of interviews, meetings, workshops and presentations.

Identification of Resources and Options: The Study identifies existing resources – walkable areas, back roads, paths, alleyways, township roads, current state bike roads, and railroad corridors, and maps out where we can reconnect, with the goal that walking and biking routes need to be continuously interesting, safe and accessible. It considers options to improve “walkability” and “bikeability” within the towns to schools, neighborhoods, business districts, and such, and will develop ideas for larger-scale recreational routes which will tie into the amenities in Mercersburg and the villages. The Feasibility Study shows how to stitch back together the area's “zones of serenity,” now often separated by fast traffic and a lack of safe, continuous routes for walking and bicycling. The before and after photos included in this summary show what is possible when developing a safe, attractive side path as part of the proposed network.

Costs, Implementation and Management Recommendations: The Feasibility Study identifies where we are now, and creates a plan that can be phased in – with short term and long term tasks identified. It provides direction toward funding sources and economic development dollars, and recommendations on the management of the project. It provides support as well by showing how to work with businesses, landowners, and the community in general. The Feasibility Study provides an implementation plan and cost estimates for the proposed improvements.

Public Involvement: A well-attended Kickoff Meeting was held on July 20, 2011 with the Study Committee and the public. Public Workshops were held October 4, 2011 to explain the consulting team's findings, and to hear requests, ideas and suggestions from the public.

Report and Presentation: Finally, The Study is being presented to MACWell and the larger community through a final report and public presentation. Following the review of any comments, the final written report will be prepared and released.



Existing Conditions – McFarland Road East of Mercersburg



Proposed Side Path – Same Location on McFarland Road