

# Executive Summary

Existing Conditions and Analysis. O'Fallon is characterized in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan as a fast-growing suburban activity center. Almost 25% of its population is made up of children and young adults. In other cities, many individuals in these age cohorts typically use bicycles for recreation and transportation purposes, and field reconnaissance suggests that bicycle usage here is significant as well.

With the exception of a short length of Lincoln Avenue, there are presently no designated bicycle facilities on the road system. This shortage is not as significant within the eighty-five square block central portion of the city, which was built on a street grid concept and provides ample opportunity for efficient bicycle movement. Bicycle movement, however, becomes more challenging on newer streets that are laid out in the typical subdivision pattern that has characterized recent development in the city. This pattern represents about 80-85% of the city's present land area and would particularly benefit from selected improvements to facilitate bicycle movement.

Greater traffic demands will be placed on O'Fallon's street system in the future as the city continues to grow. This is primarily due to the fact that transportation systems tend to be dominated by one transportation mode instead of several that could include walking, bicycles, transit and local shuttle systems. Multi-modal systems enable the movement of larger numbers of people on paved surfaces that are not significantly different from their single-mode counterparts. This is reflected in the actual experience of other cities engaged in managing the dynamic of development, population growth, and road building activity.

Presently, there are several existing trails in O'Fallon: The Hesse Park Trail, an asphalt trail at Rock Springs Park, and another asphalt facility in St. Ellen Mine Park. These trails are essentially shorter recreational facilities that have limited value for alternative transportation.

An extensive sidewalk system is present in O'Fallon, beginning with an essentially complete system in the city's historic core. Subdivisions often have partial sidewalks, usually on one side of each street. Typical widths in the older sections of the city are 5 feet, while subdivisions often have 4 foot widths. Many areas of the city have sidewalk gaps. Sidewalks are being increasingly used for a variety of exercise-motivated activity including leisurely walking, power-walking, and jogging, and to socialize with neighbors. Younger children, who have always used sidewalks for bicycle-riding, continue to do so especially as streets have become busier.

O'Fallon has many public facilities and institutions which are an important part of the city's community fabric. Examples include parks, government centers, post offices, schools, libraries, and other facilities. The bicycle is presently used by a significant number of children as a transportation device to most of the elementary schools. It is also used on the street system by children and adults for other utilitarian trip purposes. Although the automobile obviously is, and will continue to be, the most predominant transportation mode for accessing these destinations, it is possible for the bicycle to provide a significant means of alternative access to them for some vehicle trips.

Several natural features help to define the physical makeup of O'Fallon. The topography of the city is generally flat to rolling. The city has gentle to moderate slopes of up to 10%, and this lends itself well to cycling and walking, both as a recreation and an alternative transportation activity. Streams are the second defining natural feature in the city. O'Fallon is tri-sected by three stream

corridors running generally from the southwest to the northeast. These include Ogles Creek, Engle Creek, and Rock Spring Branch. On the far eastern edge of the urban area is a fourth creek corridor, Silver Creek. The comprehensive plan calls attention to the potential for increased difficulty and expense related to intense development close to these corridors, and that these factors impose significant limitations on development.

As development in O'Fallon continues and open lands are converted to residential and commercial uses, it is critical for the edges of these streams and their corridors to be preserved as natural greenways to protect their multiple roles in natural storm drainage, air pollution control (the extensive tree canopy provides important air filtration), and as ecological corridors. While the protective imperatives of these corridors preclude residential and commercial development, they are quite compatible with a variety of passive and semi-active open space uses, and are ideal sites for a linear trail system with semi-active park nodes. The park nodes arranged along the greenways would provide new close-to-home park opportunities for future residential developments, and could pay significant dividends in terms of the per capita cost of park development.

The wider Metro East area has a growing number of major bicycle facilities. Within St. Clair County, the principal facility is the Metro Bike Link. Another facility is the Metro East Levee Trail. Madison County has eight major bicycle paths. There are no major bicycle paths in Monroe County. The Missouri side of the region also has a significant number of major bicycle facilities.

Hard data on existing bicycle usage in O'Fallon is limited, due to the absence of a local survey that would measure such usage. However, indirect sources for the assessment of existing demand do exist, which enable the development of a reasonable estimate of bicycle activity and other related activities likely to be undertaken in and around the city. For example, the Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) measured *rates of regular participation* by households in St. Clair and Madison Counties in a wide range of activities, including those that are very likely to be undertaken on a trail or a greenway. The results indicated that 65% of households walk or jog regularly; 47% regularly visit nature areas; 27% regularly engage in bicycling and/or BMX activities; 20% hike regularly; and 16% regularly run. From this and other data, it is estimated that a substantial number of O'Fallon households engage in activities likely to be undertaken on a trail/greenway. Because of the present lack of substantial trail mileage in O'Fallon, the majority of residents are going elsewhere to engage in them.

A substantial number of elementary and secondary school children already use bicycles on streets and sidewalks for transportation and/or recreational activity, and significantly higher number would use bicycles if improvements were made to facilitate riding. There is no quantifiable local data on adult bicycle usage in the area; however, data from regional and national sources enables an estimate of existing usage and possible additional bicycle usage with on-street system improvements. It is probable that new or improved on-street bikeway facilities are likely to be used by a greater proportion of O'Fallon's existing population, and that usage levels will further increase as the city's population continues to grow.

In terms of projected trail needs for O'Fallon, the application of national trail standards to the city's Year 2000 population of 21,910 indicate that there was a need for almost 22 miles of multipurpose trails at that time. Using the city's 2010 population projection of 31,000, approximately 31 miles of multipurpose trails will be needed in order to provide an adequate level of service. Presently, the city has about 2.5 miles of trails in existing parks. Therefore, 28.5 additional miles of multipurpose trails will be needed over the next six years. (It should be pointed out that this need is for paved

trails only. The study provides a separate estimate of potential all terrain bicycle – ATB -- trail needs.)

In order to establish a functional, efficient, and usable on-street bikeway system, most of the city's streets should have some level of bikeway treatment. This would result in the creation of an overlay of key bicycle streets, bicycle routes, and bike lanes accessible to all residents and connecting to most activity centers. Such an approach would not necessarily be cost-prohibitive. This system would be intended for residents who use a bicycle for commuting or for short-distance utilitarian trips (to the store, library, etc.); and for recreational or workout riders who like the convenience of getting on their bike at the house and using the street system for a ride. It would also help to make selected streets safer for the many school children who already use them, and for increased anticipated usage.

In many locations on-street improvements could be as basic as the placement of signage, while in others it would require the establishment of bicycle routes and perhaps bicycle lanes. At other locations cut-throughs at key cul-de-sacs might be appropriate in order to provide for route continuity or a significantly more direct route.

### Bicycle Facilities Plan.

#### A. Goals and Objectives

1. Develop Bikeways as an Important Element in the City's Transportation and Recreation System
  - a. Establish a Bicycle Facilities Committee (BFC) comprised of representatives from the Departments of Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and Planning, to oversee *design, development, engineering and ongoing operation* of the bikeway system.
  - b. The BFC should meet regularly and on an ongoing basis to develop and manage the physical components of the bikeway system.
  - c. Develop appropriate budget levels and an implementation timetable.
  - d. Selectively modify *existing* city streets when financially feasible, to include bicycle accommodations that are appropriate to traffic levels and to the type of traffic.
  - e. Ensure that *new* local, collector, and arterial roads are designed to include bicycle facilities that are adequate for projected traffic levels as well as the anticipated type of traffic (automobiles, trucks, and buses).
  - f. Utilize, to the extent feasible, inactive rail corridors as well as utility and drainage corridors, to develop a trail/greenway system that interconnects neighborhoods with institutional, commercial, and retail areas.
  - g. Strive to ensure that the network of linear trails and on-street bikeways is sufficient to enable bicycle movement between most residential, institutional, and commercial/retail land uses as directly as possible.
  - h. Adhere to appropriate federal and state design guidelines and standards for bicycle facilities.
2. Establish Programs to Effectively and Safely Use the Bikeway System

- a. Establish a Bicycle Task Force (BTF) made up of representatives from the Police Department, local schools, businesses and the community at large, *to oversee development of programs* to promote effective usage of the Bikeway System. The Mayors Office or a designee should make appointments.
- b. The BTF should meet regularly to oversee the implementation of all programmatic aspects of the Bicycle Facilities Plan.
- c. Support the Police Department in the enforcement of all applicable state laws regarding bicycle operation and road-sharing, and in the development and enforcement of additional local ordinances as appropriate.
- d. Educate cyclists on safe bicycle operation.
- e. Educate both bicyclists and motorists on how roads can be safely shared.
- f. Encourage bicycle usage for transportation, recreation, and fitness purposes.

## B. Bicycle Facility Components

### 1. Trails

It is proposed that several additional trails be developed and interconnected – through a system of bicycle routes and bicycle lanes – with the three existing facilities in Hesse, Rock Springs, and St. Ellen Mine Parks. These trails will become the backbone of O’Fallon’s new interconnected bikeway system, and would ensure the preservation of alternative transportation, recreation, and environmental habitat corridors as residential development continues. The new trails would be developed within designated greenways as well as the proposed Gateway Connector corridor and would include: North Extension of Hesse Park Trail; Ogles Creek Trail; Engle Creek Trail; Rock Springs Branch Trail; Silver Creek Trail; and a trail on the proposed Gateway Connector Alignment.

### 2. On-Street Bikeways

The On-Street Bikeway System consists primarily of accommodations intended to facilitate travel connections for bicyclists, including movement between city parks, downtown commercial establishments, and other activity centers. The primary intended users of this system are experienced and casual adult cyclists, and teenage riders who could most appropriately use an on-street bikeway system. The arterials and collectors within this system are not intended for child riders who, under the supervision of their parents, might most appropriately use other elements of the system including trails, sidewalks (in accordance with AASHTO bikeway guidance<sup>1</sup>), and low volume residential streets.

An extensive on-street system of bikeways should be developed to provide alternative transportation facilities for all areas of the city, as well as interconnections to activity generators and to the trail system described above. Segments and treatment types are

described in Chapter 2.

In addition to these bikeway improvements, the city should promote and encourage bicycle accommodations on connecting state and county-maintained roads. It should also promote cooperation with Collinsville, Lebanon, Mascoutah, and Scott Air Force Base to establish connections to bordering bikeways in those communities. Bikeway connections to St. Clair County Transit and Metrobus lines are also very important in terms of further encouraging bicycle usage and supporting transit-oriented development (TOD).

### C. Implementation Strategy

This section provides a preliminary opinion of cost to develop the bicycle facility system identified in the previous section. This is essentially a rough-order-of-magnitude (ROM) estimate that has been developed based on experience with other bikeway projects in the St. Louis Metropolitan region. The level of estimation is considered to be typical for a planning study. At this planning stage, it cannot reflect the more precise estimates that would be developed during the design/engineering phase of work. Moreover, it cannot account for future conditions in the construction market, which would determine actual price outcomes during the bid phase of work.

<u>Plan Element</u>	<u>Length (Mi.)</u>	<u>ROM Estimate</u>
North Extension of Hesse Park Trail	2.8	\$770,000
Ogles Creek Greenway and Trail	6.5	\$1,787,500
Engle Creek Greenway and Trail	6.5	\$1,787,500
Rock Springs Greenway and Trail	4.5	\$1,237,500
Silver Creek Greenway and Trail	9.5	\$2,612,500
Trail on Gateway Connector Alignment	7.5	\$2,062,500
On-Street Bikeway System	<u>73.5</u>	<u>\$6,289,680</u>
Total Bikeway Mileage & ROM Cost Est.	110.8	\$14,484,680

The estimated costs to construct O'Fallon's proposed bikeway system are substantial, yet achievable with an appropriate funding and phasing strategy. A variety of potential funding sources to implement this plan are available, and include: TEA-21 Enhancements (successor program to be enacted); Surface Transportation Program Funds; Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Program; Local Funds; and developer contributions.

Several action steps are recommended in order to implement O'Fallon's Bicycle Facilities Plan. Among them are the following:

- Local adoption by the O'Fallon Parks Board and the City Council. Adoption of the plan as a policy will ensure implementation of the system.
- Application of the City's Parkland Dedication Code, as the city continues to build-out.

Encouragement, Education and Enforcement. Bicycling has been one of the most popular forms of recreation in the United States for some time. Well over 35 million American adults

ride regularly, and this number has been steadily increasing since 1983.<sup>2</sup> Many of these riders use public streets for recreational, and some utilitarian/commuting activity. A variety of programs related to the encouragement, education and enforcement of proper bicycling behavior has evolved to facilitate usage of bicycles by adults and children. These are summarized below:

1. Encouragement Activities. This category includes establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee to guide the process; a brochure, including a map of the bicycle system and park system; special events; and encouraging the installation of bike lockers or racks, and to install showers to promote commuting.

2. Education Activities. This category addresses the need to learn the how-to's of bicycling in order to provide cyclists with skills to use trails and streets

3. Enforcement Activities include establishing basic rules and regulations for trails under O'Fallon's jurisdiction; stocking supplies of bicycle safety material, maps, and rules of the road at kiosks or other stations within parks; and other techniques described in the Plan chapter.

Monitoring and Evaluation. The implementation of the O'Fallon Bicycle Facilities Plan should be monitored by representatives of the Department of Parks & Recreation and the Department of Public Works, working closely with other departments as necessary, and with the Bicycle Task Force.

The utilization of local and external resources as well as the timetable for completion of development should be central elements of this monitoring process. Monitoring of facilities usage should also occur, preferably on an annual basis. Regular progress reports to the Parks Board and to the City Council should be made, including recommendations as to whether program resources, scoping, or its timetable need to be modified.