



Engineering & Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan

MEETING DATE: February 23, 2021

FROM: [Brigitte Berger-Raish](#) P.E. Director of Engineering and Public Works
[Dan Manis](#), P.E., Village Engineer

BUDGET IMPACT: See Budget Section

Recommended Motion

Adoption of Resolution No. 2021-R-13 approving the Village of Wilmette Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan.

Background

The formation of the Master Bike Plan Advisory Group was announced in June 2016 and tasked with developing recommendations on a community process and appropriate scope of work for a consultant to prepare a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian master plan. The 2018 budget included funding for the Plan, so the advisory group members finalized the components of a request for proposal (RFP). In April 2018, Civiltech Engineering together with their sub-consultant, Active Transportation Alliance (ATA), were selected as the project team.

Public Engagement Process

The Plan development included an extensive public engagement process. Feedback from the public engagement activities played a key role in determining the goals and benefits of the master plan. Outreach efforts to solicit feedback included the following activities:

- Attendance at Summerfest;
- Two open houses;
- Five focus groups with key stake-holder groups, such as schools, the park district, the library, and local advocacy groups;
- One-on-one office hours;
- Online comments through the project website; and
- On-line interactive map.

The Village used all its communication channels such as the Village newsletter, email distribution lists, e-news, signage and several mailers, to communicate with stakeholders regarding the project.

After review of existing community conditions, the project team held the first open house in September 2018 to provide residents an opportunity to share their thoughts on how to improve walking and biking conditions in Wilmette. Based on feedback received, draft recommendations were presented at a second open house meeting held in February of 2019. Additional feedback was received through on-line comments and community office hours, which led to further revisions of the draft recommendations and development of the draft Plan.

Transportation Commission Review and Approval of the Plan

The Transportation Commission held two meetings to discuss the Plan. At the February 18, 2020 meeting, Civiltech and ATA gave a presentation followed by public comment and Commissioner deliberation. The Commission asked for several revisions to the Plan which were made and presented at a subsequent meeting on August 11, 2020, when the Plan was ultimately endorsed.

Municipal Service Committee Review and Approval of the Plan

The Municipal Services Committee discussed and recommended adoption of the Plan on September 29, 2020. The Committee asked that staff strengthen and highlight the pedestrian components of the Plan, which are reflected in the final proposed version found [here](#).

Specific updates include:

- Pedestrian and bike icons added to the table of contents (page 3)
- New pages added to the Pedestrian Improvement section
 - Page 62: Pedestrian Destination and Barrier graphic
 - Page 63: Existing Pedestrian Conditions and Priority Sidewalk Recommendations map
 - Page 67: Pedestrian Toolkit graphic

Discussion

The embodiment of the Plan is captured in the vision statement:

“The Village of Wilmette commits to building a safe, inviting, and context-sensitive transportation network for all users. We visualize Wilmette as an accessible community for people of all ages and abilities where any transportation mode, including walking, biking, and driving, is expected on the transportation network, welcomed through secure, comfortable, and convenient design, and reflected in Village policies and programs.”

Adoption of the Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan is a significant milestone in becoming a more bike and pedestrian friendly community through a sustainable transportation network. The Plan is robust and comprehensive. In addition to providing bike and pedestrian network recommendations, it also includes chapters on initiatives, policy recommendations and implementation. Like the Village’s Comprehensive Plan, the Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan will be an important conceptual resource for staff and the Village Board to help guide decisions and priorities that impact the Village’s transportation system. Adoption of the Plan will also strengthen the Village’s position for grant opportunities.

Retrofitting bike accommodations in an urban, fully developed community like Wilmette is challenging. It required a thoughtful and thorough review of impacts to existing traffic conditions and neighborhood specific attributes like on-street parking availability. The Plan network recommendations reflect a balanced approach to building a safe and functional bike network while also being sensitive to the existing conditions.

Implementation

While the Plan was developed in partnership with the Wilmette community and many residents support the Plan, the Village has received some comments from residents opposed to certain aspects of the Plan. At the Transportation Commission and Municipal Services Committee meetings, residents were reassured that there will be opportunities to comment on the recommendations in the Plan as implementation of specific components is considered. Moreover, the Plan may change in the future based on additional public feedback, engineering considerations and changing conditions.

The Plan states that every year the Transportation Commission will review the Plan and approve staff's implementation recommendations prior to inclusion in the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Once the five-year plan is approved, the Commission will host subsequent meetings to develop the engineering details, so the public will have additional opportunities to share feedback.

Some areas of concern for residents include:

- Lake Avenue (east of Green Bay Road)—identified in the plan as needing further engineering study because there are multiple options to accommodate bikes. Some residents expressed concern about bike safety on Lake Avenue as well as possible impacts to on-street parking.
- Lawler Avenue bike boulevard and Edens crossing at Wilmette Avenue—originally identified in the plan as an “Edens Underpass”; this recommendation has been modified in the Plan to “Pedestrian Crossing” and requires further study based on perceived public safety concerns associated with an underpass.

Budget Impact

The 2021 budget includes \$50,000 for bike plan implementation. The first bike network to be reviewed by the Transportation Commission is Greenleaf Avenue from Poplar Drive to 4th Street. The Commission is tentatively slated to meet in April to review the draft plan with the Greenleaf neighborhood.

Future budget expenditures will be presented to the Village Board for review and approval during the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) review and budget process. In the ensuing months, staff will work with the Transportation Commission to develop a five-year implementation program. This five-year plan will guide Village staff when applying for grants. The costs to implement the Plan vary significantly from low cost signage to high cost infrastructure improvements. It is anticipated that the high cost projects will rely on grant funding.

Documents Attached

1. Resolution #2021-R-13

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-R-13

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE VILLAGE OF WILMETTE MASTER BIKE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Village of Wilmette, Cook County, Illinois (the “Village”) is a home rule municipal corporation as provided in Article VII, Section 6 of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois and, pursuant to said constitutional authority, may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Village desires to improve walking and biking both within the Village and regionally, as well as to improve access to destinations such as transit stations, business districts, schools, parks and recreational areas; and

WHEREAS, in order to help achieve the above stated goal, the Village has decided to update the current Bicycle Plan adopted in 1998, by creating a new more extensive plan to help guide the Village’s future decisions in implementing an active transportation network; and

WHEREAS, in order to help create a plan, the Village has not only engaged subject matter experts and consults, but also the Village has engaged in an extensive public engagement process, that included multiple open houses for the general public, multiple Transportation Commission meetings held on February 18, 2020 and August 11, 2020 and a Municipal Services Committee meeting held on September 29, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board finds that it is necessary, convenient and in the best interests of the residents of the Village of Wilmette to adopt the Village of Wilmette Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan (“Plan”); a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Wilmette as follows:

SECTION ONE: The above recitals are incorporated into this section one as if fully set forth.

SECTION TWO: The Plan attached as Exhibit A is hereby approved.

SECTION THREE: The Village Manager is authorized to make non-material changes and changes to the form of the Plan.

SECTION FOUR: The Village Manager is authorized to take any action necessary to carry out the purpose of this Resolution and this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

SECTION FIVE: This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

ADOPTED on February 23, 2021, pursuant to the following roll call vote:

AYES: None.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: None.

Village Clerk

Approved on **February 23, 2021.**

Village President

Attest:

Village Clerk

EXHIBIT A

VILLAGE OF WILMETTE MASTER BIKE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN