CHAPTER 2
PED & BIKE ISSUES

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ISSUES

Unlike many countries worldwide, the United States is heavily dependent upon automobile transport to a vast majority of destinations. Inevitably, pedestrian and bicycle usage has dropped significantly as primary methods of travel. For example, since 1960, the number of pedestrian and bicycle trips by children has decreased by 40%. In another example, a 1999 study found nearly 90% of Americans using the automobile as their primary mode, with walking at 6%, and bicycle use a meager 1%. In stark contrast, in the Netherlands (as a European example) only 45% of the population utilizes the car, while 18% walk, and a significant portion – 28% – bicycle as their primary mode of travel.

There are a number of reasons behind these statistics in the U.S. - primarily poor development patterns and disconnected communities where walking or biking a mile to a destination can be a dangerous proposition. The side effects have been nothing short of staggering with an epidemic of obesity sweeping the nation stemming from a sedentary lifestyle.

This chapter aims to put in perspective the major issues behind trails, from their rejuvenation due to federal funding set-asides, to their positive impacts on a community's quality of life. Much education is still needed to relay the message that trails offer strong positive impacts to localities on a number of issues, both directly and indirectly.

I. Federal, State, & Local Initiatives

In 2005, when the original *Ped & Pedal Plan* was written, Northwest Indiana (specifically Lake and Porter Counties) was one of five ozone non-attainment areas within the State of Indiana and actual ly the worst of the five with a designation of "severe." Of the five levels of non-attainment classifica tion, ranging from "marginal" to "extreme," "severe" ranks as the second worst. The classification is assigned based upon the degree to which an area exceeds the ozone standard. At the time of writ ing, Northwest Indiana has been designated an ozone attainment area. With this change, Northwest Indiana is now considered to be in "maintenance" status. Having become an attainment area, the region must now work to maintain that status. Essentially this means that Northwest Indiana must continue to remain vigilant in its efforts to continually improve the region's air quality.

Because ground level ozone is regarded as the number one concern in large urban areas across the country, a major segment of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 is devoted to addressing the problem. States having ozone non-attainment areas within their boundaries are mandated by the CAAA to develop and implement programs by specific dates, under the direction of the EPA that will reduce ozone-causing pollutants from all sources.

The permissible programs for reducing the ozone emissions in non-attainment areas are included in the CAAA. These programs are known as transportation control measures (TCMs). Some of the TCMs in the CAAA identify alternative modes of transportation to the single occupant vehicle as a means of reducing the ozone emissions. These transportation alternatives include carpooling, ridesharing, public transportation, bicycling, and walking. These measures can and will continue to be used to maintain attainment.

a. The Legacy of ISTEA

In 1991, Congress passed the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which recognized the increasingly important role of bicycling and walking in creating a balanced, intermodal transportation system. ISTEA established funding programs such as Transportation Enhancements (TE), the Recreational Trail Program (RTP), and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) to provide a significant amount of their funding to the development of non-motorized transportation projects. Because of these developments, non-motorized transportation projects were competitive against highway projects for the first time.

In 1998, ISTEA was reauthorized by Congress as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21, which further increased funding levels to said programs, including the addition of more non-motorized funding avenues. One of these included the Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) program.

The successor to TEA-21 came in 2005 in the form of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation. The bill contained two major components that were targeted specifically at pedestrians

and bicyclists. It introduced the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program in order to provide a safer and more appealing environment for schoolchildren to get to school. Secondly, the bill appropriated $370 million for the development and maintenance of recreational trails for a variety of users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

The "TEA" legislations have been responsible for over 12,000 miles of off-road trails being constructed in the United States. In Northwest Indiana alone, nearly 80 miles of off-road trail have been constructed, with another 60 miles either funded or planned. The legislation has provided the funding, planning, and program authorizations necessary to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities. A detailed description of the TEA programs mentioned above will be discussed in **Chapter 3**.

b. State & Local Roles

Through the "TEA" legislations, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) set aside 10% of its federal apportionment to projects for the Transportation Enhancement (TE) program. In 2009, INDOT distributed about $20 million statewide for projects eligible under the TE program. Since ISTEA, INDOT has awarded entities in the NIRPC region over $29 million, for an average of $1.6 million per year. In addition, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources manages the Recreation Trail Program (RTP). In 2010, the DNR distributed $1.4 million in RTP funds statewide.

At the NIRPC level, the Ped, Pedal, and Paddle Committee (3PC) has been charged with reviewing and ranking all bicycle and pedestrian projects eligible for TE funding. The TE Committee further reviews DNR-funded proposals for regional significance, although the DNR does not require such MPO review.

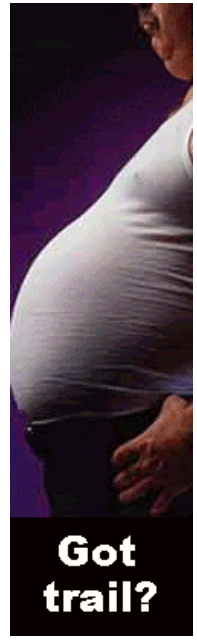
In a far more direct fashion, the 3PC also solicits and ranks projects for NIRPC's Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, which doles out approximately $19 million per year of allocated Surface Transportation Program (STP) monies. Of this money, no less than 3% is guaranteed to non-motorized projects, with more funding eligible based on roadway-related

submissions. NIRPC internally selects those projects, and funds them at their own discretion without any further approvals from INDOT.

II. Need for Active Living

America is rapidly becoming a nation under siege to unhealthy eating habits, poor lifestyle choices, and shortsighted land use planning. If any greater argument can be fostered for the inclusion of better walking and bicycling facilities in a community, it would stand to reason that increasing overall health and wellness would take a pri mary focus.

a. An Obesity Epidemic



America continues to grow…fatter. Physical activity rates in the United States are dangerously low, and continue to deteriorate since 2005. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as of 2008, Colorado stood as the only state that had a prevalence of obesity of less than 20%. Thirty-two states had prevalence equal to or greater than 25%, with six of those having rates equal to or greater than 30%. As of 2007, all three of the counties in the NIRPC region have over 25% of their adult population considered obese, with one having a rate of over 30%. Porter County's adult obesity rate, according to the CDC, is 28.1% (the lowest of the three), and LaPorte County's rate is 29.2%. Lake County's adult obesity rate is 32.1%, the highest both in the region and the state. A map outlining the increase in our obese population is shown in ***Figure 2-1.***

The damage is not only restricted to our waistlines, but also bleeds into our pocketbooks. The CDC estimated that in 2000, direct and indirect health costs related to obesity amounted to $117 billion. In Indiana alone, it was estimated that adult obesity-attributable expenditures cost over $1.6 billion.

The reasons for our deplorable health status are many. Of prime note is simply eating way too many calories while not getting enough physical activity. It is estimated that more than 60% of Americans do not get enough physical activity to provide

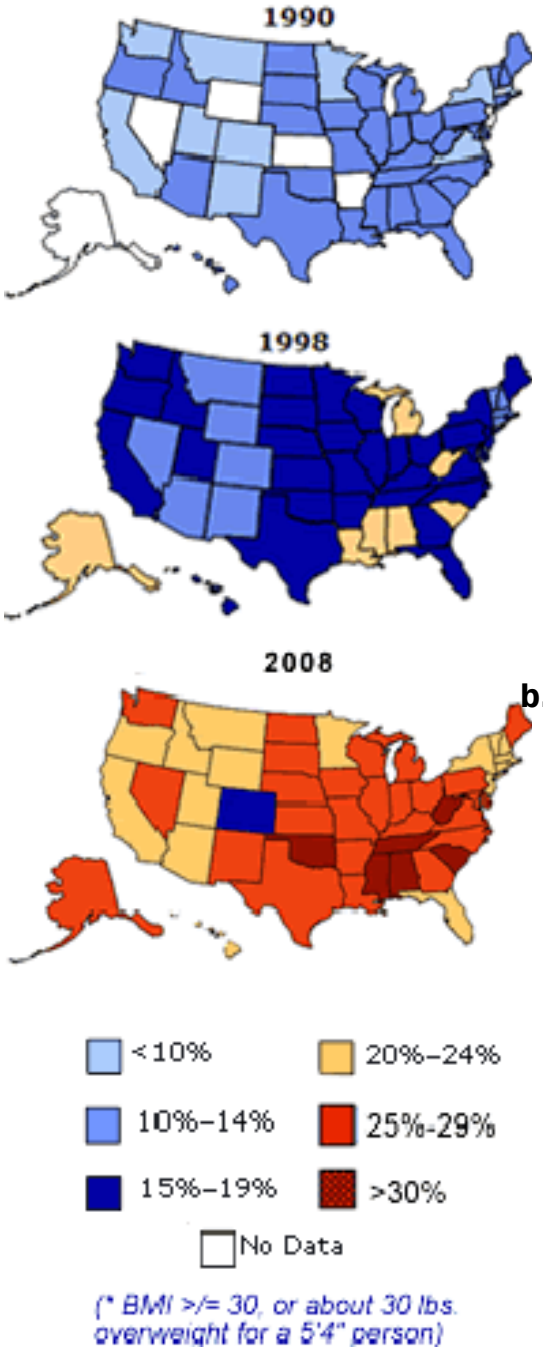


Figure 2-1: Percentage of Obese Populations per State

even basic health benefits. The CDC defines this as 30 minutes of moderate activity five days a week, or 20 minutes of vigorous activity for 3 days a week. As for nutrition, the CDC found that we are weaning our younger generation on horrible eating habits – with 60% of young people eating too much fat, and less than 20% consuming the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Beyond just bad eating, we are also enjoying a very sedentary lifestyle buoyed by modern technology. The internet, DVDs, video games, and the lure of hundreds of channels to mindlessly surf through on the television has turned our focus from outside the home to inside it. Very little inspiration remains to get outside and take a walk or ride a bike, but then again, where is there to go?

b. Poor Quality Development

Many creative names have been attributed to poor land use development patterns in the United States over the last 50 years. These include “leapfrog” and “greenfield” development, but the most commonly used term has been to simply call it “sprawl.” In short, sprawl tidily sums up the rampant pace of new construction further and further outside established city centers. This in turn has produced a number of dilemmas over the years, which include population flight from cities and older “ring” suburbs, and the increased pressures on once pastoral communities now grappling with serving their new residents and businesses with essential municipal services.

Northwest Indiana has hardly been immune to sprawl. U.S. Census Bureau figures show that the NIRPC region of Lake,

Porter, and LaPorte Counties experienced a 3.4% growth in population between 2000 and 2008, with a 9.2% growth in new housing units. Using the estimate in NIRPC's *Connections 2030 Plan* that 33% of new housing units were constructed in the unincorporated areas of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, it quickly becomes apparent the region has issues with poor land use development patterns away from established municipal infrastructures and essential services.

What these patterns have also established is a culture severely dependent upon the automobile as the sole transportation mode. With new development pushed farther away from common destinations (shopping, schools, etc.), it has made pedestrian and bicycle travel not only infeasible, but hazardous as well. In addition, an increasing number of new subdivisions are being planned without sidewalks along the collector or arterial roads that feed into them. Furthermore, municipalities are not being proactive in setting aside greenways and open space for permanent off-road, communitywide connections. The end result has left a vast majority of our population disconnected, and thus stuck in their homes with very little inspiration or desire to leave.

III. The Benefits of a Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Culture

Into this muddled chasm of poor development, bad health habits, and sedentary life styles has emerged a new philosophy on the benefits of non-motorized travel. Com munities around the country are re-discovering the many positive attributes that are brought about by catering to a culture of connectivity.

a. Making the Connections & Completing Our Streets

In a poorly designed community of scattershot subdivisions and land uses, what emerges as the most negative aspect is the lack of being able to connect to another part either by foot or bike. It is estimated that a person can comfortably walk one mile in fifteen minutes and by bike in five. However, the way many communities have developed, traversing these distances in any other form than by automobile is risking one's life at times.

With connected sidewalks, greenways, and trails incorporated into the growing development scheme (or retrofitted for that matter), communitywide links are assured, as well as a positive quality of life. There are numerous destinations that would benefit including schools, parks, civic facilities (libraries), retail centers, and other areas of employment. A growing number of communities are beginning to recognize that their constituents demand better quality of life choices, and facilities that improve their health and wellness.

To help accomplish this goal, NIRPC adopted *Complete Streets Guidelines* in May of 2010. Complete Streets is a concept that encourages the development of a transportation network that considers *all* modes of transportation, not just driving, bicycling, and/or walking. Often, this means the placement of elements that create a safer environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. These elements vary, and can include things such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes. It also encourages greater intermodal connectivity. Complete Streets will help encourage greater energy and fiscal efficiency, provide alternative regional connections, and, most importantly, improve the safety of the walking and bicycling public. The full text of the Complete Streets Guidelines can be found in ***Appendix D.***

To this end, and as mentioned earlier in this report, the primary reason people use trails in for improving their health – far ahead of recreational purposes. A safe, maintained and planned non-motorized network represents a tremendous attraction for new residents, and for that matter, businesses alike who desire to locate where a healthy workforce resides. A 1991 Harris Poll found that 46% of the 1,250 adults surveyed said they would bike to work if designated trails were built.

Trail activities such as walking, jogging or running, in-line skating, cross-country skiing, and bicycling are well documented as ways to improve health and fitness when done on a regular basis. Physical activity need not be unduly strenuous for an individual to reap significant health benefits. This benefit accrues to the individual and, in the form of reduced health-care costs, to society as well.

For example, the Trek Bicycle Store in Schererville encourages its employees to ride their bikes to work as often as possible. As an incentive, the employees that ride are given $5 extra for each day. On-site shower and changing areas, important elements of bicycle-friendly workplaces, are provided. The business's owner has said that this system has ultimately saved the company money because it encourages employees to lead a healthier, more active lifestyle. As a result, fewer sick days and medical expenses need to be paid for, offsetting the cost of the financial incentive.

Land use decisions by local governing boards can have a positive impact on the development of the region's non-motorized transportation network. At one time, it was commonplace for schools, especially elementary schools, to be placed within the neighborhoods they were meant to serve. This gave students, faculty, staff, parents, and other residents easy pedestrian and bicycle access from their homes. The general trend, however, has been moving away from this.

According to the Bikes Belong Coalition, the average size of schools has been increasing. Additionally, a policy bias exists toward building new schools rather than renovating or expanding existing ones. Many places have guidelines and regulations that favor new construction, while some states even limit the amount that can be spent on a renovation project relative to the cost of building new. Finally, minimum acreage standards are often imposed on new school construction projects as well. These types of policies often result in existing schools being left behind and new schools being constructed on the edge of town, away from the very populations they are meant to serve. This is especially a problem for elementary school students, who cannot get themselves to school without non-motorized means. When elementary schools are located far from the served population, often on dangerously busy roads, there are often no sidewalks or paths to facilitate safe and easy access. This problem is only growing. In 1969, 50% of elementary school students lived within two miles of their school, a number which declined to only 33% by 2001.

Several groups and states are beginning to realize, however, that schools must be easily accessible in order to fulfill their role as a center for both students and the community as a whole. Since 2003, South Carolina, Rhode Island, and Maine have all eliminated their minimum acreage standards for schools. While this is progress, many states still have this and other policies that do not allow the smart placement of schools within the communities that they serve.

Local school boards should be encouraged by NIRPC and its members to revisit and reconsider their school siting procedures and policies in order to favor sites with good access both on foot and by bicycle. Additionally, such policies would encourage site design with these elements included as well. The Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in Tennessee has made a similar recommendation. As an example, the Nashville MPO suggests "that new elementary schools be located on neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes and speeds, and within walking distance of a large proportion of students' homes." Additionally, NIRPC will assist and encourage efforts to change or eliminate any other policies at a variety of levels that restrict the safe and smart placement of schools.

The Bicycle Friendly America Program, which is run by the League of American Bicyclists, seeks to encourage the creation of bicycle friendly states, communities, and businesses. To do this, they offer designations of platinum, gold, silver, and bronze in each of these areas. As of 2010, there is a diverse membership of four bicycle friendly states (Indiana ranks number 24 on the program's list without designation), 124 bicycle friendly communities, and 82 bicycle friendly businesses nationwide. These are located in many different areas of the country, with many different climates.

As part of the program, Bicycle Friendly America staff provides support and assistance in helping places achieve their bicycle-friendly goals. This is done through direct assistance as well as other activities such as workshops and application reviews. Another part of their mission has been to make it easier for states, communities, and businesses to measure themselves through the development of an evaluation scorecard. The scorecard helps interested parties determine how bicycle friendly they are and whether or not they are ready to apply for bicycle friendly status.

The Bicycle Friendly Community scorecard is divided into five categories: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. All bicycle friendly communities excel in at least one or two of the categories, with the top communities managing to excel in all of them. The Bicycle Friendly Business scorecard does not contain an enforcement section, but does allow for a notes section. These cards can help set the stage for what work needs to be done by defining weaknesses and helping with prioritization of work to be done.

The Bicycle Friendly America Program is free. The program's staff is able to provide assistance from the self-evaluation phase through the application process and beyond. Once a community or business is named as a bicycle friendly community, it can continue its work to improve and attempt to reach a higher level of recognition. The counties, communities, and businesses in the NIRPC region will be encouraged to implement bicycle-friendly improvements with an eye toward a "Bicycle Friendly" designation under the Bicycle Friendly America Program. NIRPC will assist in these activities and work with staff from the program as necessary to assist in designation. For further information on the program, a link to the Bicycle Friendly America Programs can be found in ***Appendix E***.

b. Just "Common Cents"

A growing library of empirical data has clearly shown the positive effects of trail development on a local economy. From a homeownership perspective alone, trail location has been associated with higher property values and attraction from homebuyers.

- A 2003 study by the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis determined that homes near the many greenways in Indianapolis sold for 10% higher than the average for all homes within the larger districts.

- A survey conducted by the National Association of Home Builders found that recent homebuyers ranked trails as the second most important community amenity out of a list of 18 choices. Only freeway access ranked higher.
- The Silver Comet Trail, which stretches across three counties in Georgia, is an example of how popular trails are when it comes to residential development. A community of 322 homes was developed adjacent to the trail in Dallas, Georgia. As part of the plan, the developer built a community trail that connects to the Silver Comet Trail.

In addition to positive home ownership attributes, trails and greenways bring job growth in construction maintenance as well as tourism-related opportunities like bike rentals, restaurants, and lodging. In addition, they also attract new businesses to an area, and thus serve as a vital economic development tool.

- The National Trails Training Partnership has found that, generally speaking, a trail through a community can bring at least $1 million into a community annually. This is dependent, of course, on how strongly the community embraces the trail.
- The town of Lanesboro, Minnesota, located on the Root River Trail, has seen something of an economic boom with the trail. The town has 12 B&Bs with waiting lists, restaurants, an art gallery, and a community theater. A locally-owned bike shop in the town sold 60 tandem bicycles in a year, beating the largest multi-store bicycle retailer in the Twin Cities that same year.
- The City of Pueblo, Colorado attributes the investment in trails and parks along the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek as one of the most important components in the economic revitalization of this industrial city.
- In the State of Wisconsin, it is estimated that bicycle tourism generates $278 million annually.

These figures bode well for Northwest Indiana since many of the existing and planned trail systems traverse through established downtown districts. Many of these same trail networks also link up to large retail centers, allowing another mode of transportation for utilitarian and employment trips.

c. Protecting Our Environment

As trail development provides many positive attributes, there also exists solid reasoning for their incorporation in aiding our environment. For one, trail corridors provide linear greenbelts that preserve and protect plant species and open spaces that facilitate wildlife habitats and their migrations. Furthermore, the preservation of trail corridors improves water quality and mitigates flood damage. They do this by providing natural buffer zones to protect stream, rivers, and lakes from pollution run-off caused by fertilizer and pesticide use on yards and farms. Thy also can serve as flood plains that absorb excess water and mitigate damage caused by floods. Such conservation efforts make good sense, because they save communities money in the long run.

IV. Overcoming Opposition

Even with such superlatives associated with pedestrian and bicycle facility develop ment, there still remains a number of people and organizations which strongly op pose their creation – especially trails. Their reasoning comes in many flavors which have been debunked in virtually every case, and include the following issues below.

a. Crime

Despite numerous studies that have concluded trails do not generate crime, concerns persist and fear of the unknown continues to provide fertile ground for trail opponents. Trail opponents with only a handful of newspaper headlines rather than empirical research perpetuate stories of trails attracting drug dealers, murderers, thieves, and rapists. The truth is, local residents and police departments both have agreed that with limited automobile access to trails, criminal activity had not increased, and could in fact decrease due to the extra patrols and activity by law-abiding citizens.

- A study of Omaha, Nebraska's trails from 2000 showed that, of the 149 property owners surveyed, only 4% reported having property stolen by a trail user, and only 4.7% reported having their property vandalized by trails users. The report goes on to note that most of these incidents were of a relatively minor

nature. Only one respondent of the 149 wanted to see the trail along their property closed.

- In 1998, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy reported findings from their survey of 373 trail systems in the U.S. which found that only 3% of respondents reported any type of major crime (rape, murder) associated with trails in 1995 and 1996. In addition, only one-fourth of the respondents reported minor crimes occurring (littering, graffiti, petty theft).

b. Privacy

Of all concerns raised by those who will be directly affected by the placement of a trail facility, privacy issues hold the most weight. In this case, trail design concepts become critically important towards facilitating approval from neighboring properties. Natural screening such as large shrubs, planted berms, or manmade fences can effectively serve to preserve a homeowner's sense of privacy. However, and as previously mentioned, trails positively impact the value of neighboring properties and enhance the overall quality of life.

c. Liability

The specter of a tort claim against a local entity regarding pedestrian and bicycle travel is a legitimate fear. Our society has developed a hair-trigger response to any perceived violation of rights, especially when they feel that their own government isn't doing enough to protect them. Major non-motorized liability can be divided into three separate modes:

1. **Trails:** Along with the fear of increased crime rates and privacy, fear of becoming threatened with a lawsuit is a common concern among landowners adjacent to a proposed rail corridor. Likewise, potential trail owners and managers are sometimes leery of undertaking a trail project because of the liability exposure. However, the laws that protect adjacent landowners as well as trail managers, coupled with strategies for designing and managing a trail, should provide ample protection for managers and adjacent landowners alike from a successful lawsuit. The three legal precepts that define, and in many cases limit, liability are Duty of care, Recreation Use Statutes, and liability insurance as a final line of defense.

2. **Shared Routes:** For many bikers, sharing an existing roadway with automobile traffic is the only way to travel. However, this poses an increased risk of liability due to passing motorists either hitting or throwing debris at them, which unfortunately is all too commonplace. However, in Indiana, as in other states, bicyclists have as much of a right to ride on the road as automobiles do. To this end, they are allowed by state statute to travel as deep as two abreast, and can take over the left hand turn lane if proceeding in that direction. Of prime concern to local municipalities and counties are their signed routes, and how well they are maintained. It goes to reason that signing a dangerously fast and pothole-festooned route would provide for an ample amount of evidence for a tort claim. Providing a reasonable amount of maintenance is all that is needed to stem any further actions.

3. **Sidewalks:** Many municipalities are faced with a lawsuit now and then from those who have tripped or fallen due to sidewalks in disrepair. Since budgets are simply too tight to undertake an all-out reconstruction of all poor sidewalks, a logical alternative is creating a five-year maintenance plan to demonstrate, at the very least, a community's efforts to improve the walking environment. Also, communities should be very cognizant of laws pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires wheelchair ramps at all corners and driveway entrances. In short, liability at this level is murky at best since many communities claim that the landowners are responsible for the maintenance and care of their sidewalk. This remains an issue of considerable debate.

Simply stated, properly planned operations and design can provide all the effective measures necessary to appease adjacent landowners who, for the most part, are acting out on what they don't know. It is up to the municipal or county officials to provide the education and patience necessary to win over a majority of people. It shouldn't be expected that everyone will go along with a trail project, but enough support should be generated to quell their opposition.

V. Education

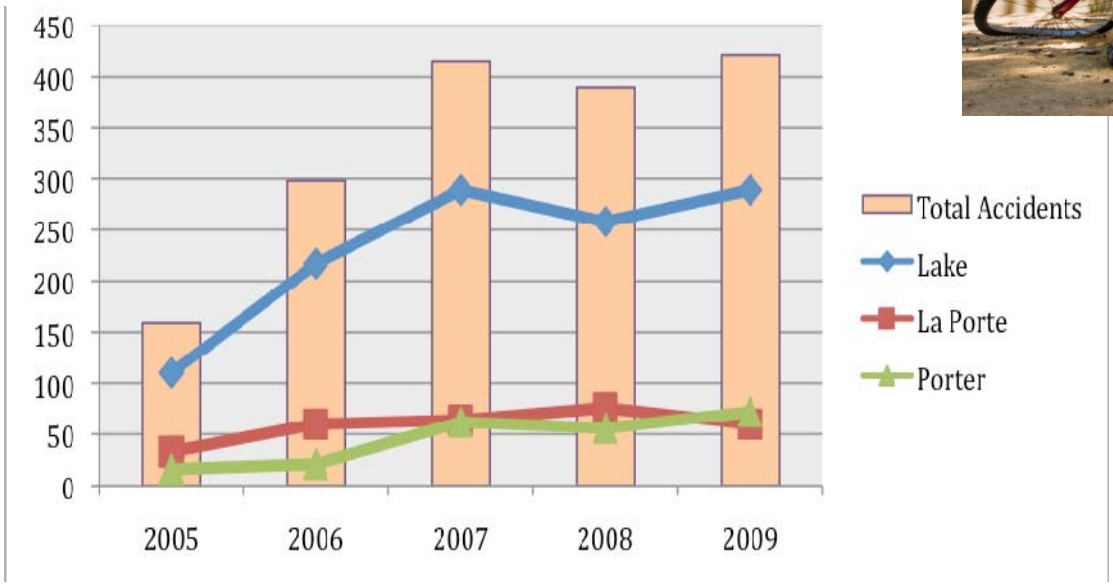
Education is important because many bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists are unaware of what the rules of the road affords each user. Enforcement and education historically overlap one another and will dominate policy recommendation. Too often the simple and proactive initiative of encouragement of riding a bicycle or walking to a nearby destination is lost.

Much of the need for education revolves around safety. Both pedestrians and bicyclists must practice proper safety at all times. The need for improved safety is demonstrated in the number of accidents involving non-motorized transportation. Nationally, 12.9% of traffic fatalities are bicyclists and pedestrians. Between 2005 and 2009, the number of accidents in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties rose 165% from 159 accidents in 2005 to 421 in 2009. The ***Table 2-1*** and ***Figure 2-2*** below give a more detailed view of the numbers for each of the three counties as well as the region as a whole.

Table 2-1:

Accidents in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties Involving Non-Motorized Transportation: 2005-2009	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Lake	110	217	289	258	289
La Porte	33	60	64	76	60
Porter	16	21	62	56	72
Totals	**159**	**298**	**415**	**390**	**421**

Figure 2-2: Accidents in Lake, Porter & LaPorte Counties Involving Non-motorized Transportation: 2005-2009



a. Bicycles

Educating the adult bicycle rider is more difficult than educating a child. Adults often ride illegally, against traffic for example, because of the prevailing attitude that the bicycle is a recreational object. It is difficult to educate an adult because they are not always receptive to safety training. The only sure way of reaching adults is for a police officer to issue a citation. Motorists often do not understand the bicyclist on the road. This group must also be educated as to the rights and concerns of the bicycling community.

However, educating the child rider remains a very difficult task. Traditionally the bicycle is seen as a toy to the child. This attitude encourages unsafe bicycle rid-

ing. Instead, bicycles are the form of transportation children depend on. Children hear too little about the importance of bicycle safety or lose the safety lesson while learning technique. Often, safety instructors rely on memorizing the "Rules of the Road," which many children fail to remember in actual practice.

b. Pedestrians

It should not be discounted that the cheapest and healthiest form of transportation for a vast majority of people is their very own feet. As already mentioned in this chapter, however, pedestrian travel is becoming increasingly difficult due to spread-out development patterns and crumbling or incomplete sidewalk infrastructure. In addition, many intersections where automobiles and pedestrians interact are devoid of vital safety measures, such as adequately timed signals and crosswalks, to guide people safely across streets.

Education, however, does not completely escape the pedestrians themselves. Many individuals would be well advised by following common sense practices to help avoid dangerous situations. For example, crossing the street at the appropriate location, and not jaywalking, would greatly aid in safety of movement. Another would include walking or jogging on a roadway against traffic if a sidewalk is not present. Since everyone is a pedestrian at some point of every trip, it would stand to reason that providing for safe travel should be a priority for every community.

c. Safe Routes to School

In light of growing concern over bicycle and pedestrian safety, a movement that has gained significant momentum over the last five years is the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Originally conceived in Denmark in the 1970s, the SRTS program seeks to reduce the number of child pedestrian accidents through a series of initiatives launched with the support of multiple constituencies. The SRTS vision engages the following ideals:

1. Locating schools in close proximity to the children who attend them;
2. Providing good facilities for walking and biking to school;

3. Reducing the threats to health and safety posed by motor vehicles, pollution, and crime;
4. Fostering a cultural shift that accords high value and broad responsibility for the realization of this goal.

These are goals that can be attained through pro-active planning at the front-end involving *all* forms of land development. Statistics in 2001 showed that nearly 9 out of 10 children between 5 and 10 years old were driven to school by parent or bus, which in turn increases traffic and creates a negative environment around schools. Through the SRTS program, our desire to recapture that cherished and independent expression of our childhoods – walking or biking to school – can once again be attained.

Indiana's SRTS program is administered by INDOT. The funding for this program comes from the federal government via the SAFETEA-LU legislation, which was passed in 2005. The state funds non-infrastructure projects of up to $75,000 and infrastructure projects of up to $250,000. The funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis, but no local match is required. However, any projects that are located within an urban area of 50,000 people or more are required to have the endorsement of their local MPO. Since 2006, the state has provided $1,249,453 for SRTS projects in Northwest Indiana.