

COMMENTS ON THE NOACA DRAFT REGIONAL BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The issues of climate change, high energy and health care costs, sedentary lifestyles with its resulting health problems are forcing governmental bodies at every level, from nations to neighborhoods, to revise its planning methods to provide systems that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. How the Northeast Ohio region addresses these issues through its major plans is critical to setting the region on a visionary, but practical, course of action.

One of the major systems being transformed is the transportation system that is primarily designed around the single-occupancy vehicle. Enhancing transportation systems with alternative modal options has been proved to be effective and transportation planning is now premised on providing a multi-modal system that is cost-effective, healthy and convenient.

Within this context, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) offers the following comments on the Draft Plan.

1. With the issues of climate, energy and health at the forefront, a complete paradigm shift has occurred within the realm of bicycle planning. At first these facilities were built for recreational and entertainment purposes, now they are viewed as viable alternative mode of transportations.

However, the major objective of the Plan is to continue what was begun in 1997; encouraging communities to plan more bike facilities and promoting bicycle ridership and safety programs. The NOACA Plan does not discuss the impact these issues will have on the transportation planning in the upcoming years. If it did it would be apparent that just building the planned or proposed facilities would not provide a bicycle system that could be considered a viable alternative mode of transportation.

2. NOACA should financially assist each county in developing a master bike plan. These plans would enable each county to identify the areas with the appropriate land uses, major activity centers, transportation routes and connections that would be conducive for bicycling. These plans when merged would be the beginning of a viable bicycle system that could then be incorporated into the region's overall transportation system. Specifically, NOACA should work to coordinate inter-county routes.

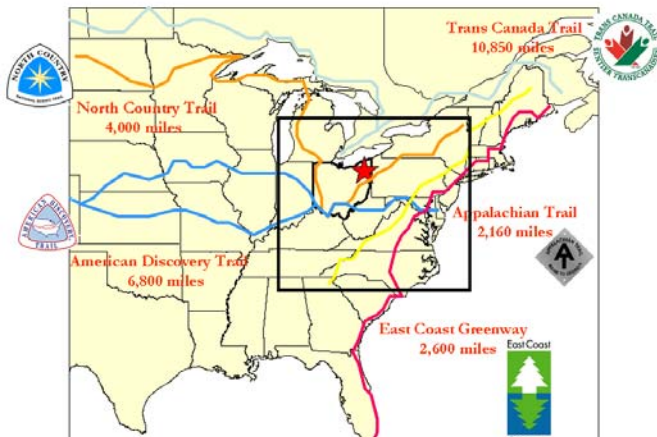
Once these plans are completed, NOACA should identify and allocate funding for the construction of bicycle routes and facilities.

3. A transportation network is comprised of a series of interrelated or interdependent elements: highways, railroads, bus routes, streets, trails, etc. As illustrated in the maps below, Northeast Ohio is a major confluence for a number of significant regional, state and federal trail systems. The Plan does not show or articulate how the Northeast Ohio is connected to these systems or how it can improve or make new connections to these systems.

REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM



NATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM



4. General comments on the content and graphics:

- A. Many of the maps are indecipherable and therefore unusable as reference documents;
- B. A majority of data used in the Plan is already outdated. For example the crash data is from 2004;
- C. Many of the projects listed as proposed have already been completed;
- D. Inconsistencies in the data provided. City of Cleveland has noted that its Master Bikeway Plan constitutes 150 miles while the Plan shows that Cuyahoga County's planned and proposed facilities amount to only 53 miles;
- E. Typographical errors, etc. For example: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission representative to the Bicycle Advisory Committee is Christopher Alvarado, not Alvarez.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Cuyahoga County Planning Commission December 12, 2007