



**Case
Study
No. 6**

*Analysis of
Successful
Grassroots
Movements
Relating to
Pedestrians
and Bicycles
and A Guide
On How to
Initiate A
Successful
Program*



U.S. Department
of Transportation

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And Walking Study**



Foreword

This case study was prepared under contract for the Federal Highway Administration
by Anne Lusk.

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**ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS
RELATING TO PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES AND A
GUIDE ON HOW TO INITIATE A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS RELATING TO PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES AND A GUIDE ON HOW TO INITIATE A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

A grassroots movement is about just that, movement by the grassroots. It's not about social clubs, coffee gatherings or just forming a coalition. The goal of a grassroots movement is to see change, and to get something done.

A grassroots movement related to pedestrians and bicycles should serve the needs of all walkers and bicyclists and even other users. The movement wants to try to improve existing conditions and see if it can create new facilities.

A successful grassroots pedestrian and bicycle movement actually gets facilities built for the bicyclists and walkers and dramatically improves existing conditions.

Perhaps the easiest of the tasks related to pedestrians and bicyclists is putting up signs saying "Bike Route" or painting lines on the pavement. Widening outside curb lanes or roadways can sometimes be easily included as part of highway repaving. The hardest job usually is creation of an off road separate bicycle and pedestrian facility on land that is acquired from private property owners. The building of this separate community facility can often be the climax in a grassroots movement's success story.

To start a grassroots movement all that is needed is the idea from one person. That one person talks to another person and the movement has begun.

Since the mission of a pedestrian and bicycle grassroots movement is to see change, something must get accomplished or the group will eventually disband.

To create a separate bicycle path, a grassroots movement must explain the concepts of these facilities to the community. Marketing is an integral component of a successful grassroots movement's job. This analysis and guide are written to not only initiate a grassroots movement but also to help make the movement successful.

This analysis and guide can be used by a grassroots group to just get started and to create a pedestrian or bicycle facility.

The analysis section explains and defends the steps a grassroots group must go through in order to be successful. Special emphasis is placed on landowner relations, for often a facility is created in cooperation with the landowners. The analysis identifies and explains the following points:

- * Measures of Success
- * Leaders
- * Organizations
- * Users
- * Facility Development
- * Mapping
- * Land
- * Marketing
- * Fund Raising
- * State Departments of Transportation
- * Foreign Experiences
- * Aesthetics

The user guide is a 15-step process a grassroots group can follow to work towards developing a facility. The steps are sufficiently detailed so the grassroots organization could follow the directions and, it is hoped, achieve success with a completed project. The following are the 15 steps described briefly:

1. Come up with the idea.
2. Write general newspaper articles.
3. Form a group.
4. Map destinations and public land.
5. Work with the property owners.
6. Contact agencies and organizations.
7. Prepare a map after the landowners agree.
8. Publish the map and write specific articles.
9. Hold large public meetings.
10. Begin major fund raising.
11. Acquire the land.
12. Prepare plans and specifications.
13. Begin construction.
14. Thank donors.
15. Maintain and enhance the project.

The analysis and guide were written using related materials and the suggestions of organizations or individuals from around the world. Their input was solicited through four sets of requests for information:

1. General requests to small grassroots groups.
2. Formal requests to larger grassroots organizations.
3. Requests to State Departments of Transportation regarding state policy.
4. Requests to individuals in foreign countries interested in these facilities.

The grassroots groups are comprised of individuals or organizations related to bicycling, walking, trails or greenway facilities. The State Departments of Transportation contacted were those which have historically spent a share of their Federal-aid funds on bicycle/pedestrian facilities. The foreign requests were sent to individuals who had written American Greenways concerning the article on Greenways in National Geographic Magazine.

Nine requests for information were sent in each of the four categories. Five returns were received in response to the foreign and general requests for information. Six returns were received in response to the requests for information sent to the State Departments and larger organizations.

The information was extracted from the requests for information and organized in the analysis starting with the definition of measures of success and ending with aesthetics. The results were also incorporated into the 15 steps for the user guide.

Conclusions which can be drawn from the study include:

- * It takes the efforts of the grassroots movements, the State Departments of Transportation and other State and local agencies to create facilities. The grassroots movement can offer leaders a pulse of the people, an aesthetic element, and an esprit de corps.
- * Property owners should be involved early on.
- * Marketing is a key component of success.
- * The feelings of success can be reflected in community pride, increased prosperity and the ambition to try another project.
- * America should perfect this pedestrian and bicycle system and share the conclusions with other countries, as well as learn from their experiences.

ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS RELATING TO PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS

INTRODUCTION

To initiate a grassroots movement, some people must get together and talk. To call the grassroots movement a success, the group must collect themselves and get something accomplished.

There are many types of grassroots movements. Some, such as Rails-to-Trails in Washington, are massive and reach nationwide while others, such as Springfield Trails and Greenways in Vermont, are small and parochial.

These grassroots groups have common elements that account for their success. These common elements have been discussed in the analysis section of this report and in the user guide.

It should be noted that some grassroots organizations may have goals other than facility development. This report is an analysis of successful grassroots movements. Success can be interpreted to mean satisfying the needs of the variety of bicyclists and pedestrians and other users. Since the users often want facilities, this report will analyze the facility oriented grassroots organizations.

Measures of Success

If a facility gets built, that's a grassroots movement's best measure of success. But leading up to that moment and even after completion, there are other benchmarks. To get something on the ground can take anywhere from 1 to 3 years or longer. To keep spirits high and enthusiasm from flagging, other, more short term goals must be identified as measures of success. The common measures of success include those:

- 1) Before the pedestrian or bicycle facility is built.
- 2) Routes once completed.
- 3) After the system has been in existence.

1) Common measures of success before the pedestrian or bicycle facility is built.

A Leader

A grassroots movement has to proceed like everything else, one day at a time. Usually the center of attention

in this day to day activity is the leader. A visionary leader can be the pied piper of a facility and start the project off on the right foot.

Community Support

The leader will only succeed with broad community support. This community support is demonstrated first by the number of committee volunteers, members or individuals with follow-through; numbers of productive meetings with good attendance; continued enthusiasm and the high percentage of original volunteers who stayed with the project until the end.

Success is also measured by how broad the community participation is and how much support the community gives to the effort. This support can be demonstrated in the form of approving votes, dollars, land and even favorable Letters to the Editor.

The business people, local corporations and civic organizations can provide funds, staff, copying, money and even office space or conference meeting rooms. The news media will be a sign of success if they feature positive stories and run a variety of them often. Just having a newspaper reporter show up at a meeting can be an accomplishment.

Sometimes there is dissension in a bikeway or walkway group and agreement is something for which to be thankful. Agreement between agencies, corporations, the facility users or those giving out the permits is sometimes cause for celebration.

Informed Public

An educated public is a sign of progress. They can be educated through newspaper articles, brochures, TV programs, handouts, radio spots, or even the community grapevine. Sometimes the measure of this education can be in an affirmative vote for the project. A town meeting where citizens don't need to discuss the issue but want instead to get on with the vote can be a sure sign of an educated public. They know the issues and facts and are eager to vote. They say, "Mr. Chairman, call the question."

Participating Land Owners

Helpful, participating land owners are a major key of success. Without their insight, knowledge and perhaps land contributions, the facility could be in the wrong location and never used or never even created.

Money

A good idea will not be implemented if there are no funds. Even small grants are a windfall because they can perhaps match larger grants or spark other donations.

Engineering Input

Achievement can be in the form of an excited and qualified engineer hired to design the project. It is sometimes the ideas generated by the engineer that make the project a community winner. The excitement from the engineer or planner sometimes comes as a reflection from the excitement in the volunteer members of the project committee. Excitement breeds excitement.

When using State or Federal Department of Transportation Funds, a helpful Department of Transportation staff willing to work towards completion of the bikeway or walkway can be considered a plus. Their job historically has been to build highways and bridges, and when they work cooperatively on this type of project, it's a measure of success for both the community individually and transportation in general.

Permits

Permits will need to be secured. Getting the permits as well as finding helpful permitting agency officials could be the achievement of the moment. Some permits are so detailed that completion can come about only with the patient assistance of the agency staff person. Final receipt of the permit could warrant a party.

Enthusiasm

Success is contagious and one success can beget another success. Belief in the project is evident to all involved and this enthusiasm will help get the bikeway or walkway completed.

2. Common measures of success once the route is completed.

Location

Beyond the major success of getting the project built, there are other measures. Is the path in the right location? And perhaps, does it preserve a nice piece of the environment along a river or at the edge of a tree line?

Safety

Safety is a feature which can be measured in no or few accidents or conflicts, but also in the consideration of signs, rules of the road and cleanliness. Liability insurance should exist to cover any accidents.

Support Facilities

Support facilities of a completed path can add to the enjoyment and measure of success. Benches, bike racks, picnic areas, water fountains, parking and bathrooms can each be an enhancement of the project. Facility use and support of local businesses is also important.

Usage

Finally, numbers of users can be the easiest measure of success to tally. Are there lots of users of all income levels, ages and athletic abilities? And even if they are only using the facility for purely transportation purposes, are they also smiling?

3) Common measures of success after the system has been in existence.

Maintenance

Path facilities may be significantly less trouble to take care of than swimming pools or hockey rinks, but even so, there is some maintenance. A measure of success is having someone or some municipality take care of the project and, additionally, do a good job. Maintenance responsibility is essential, for there have been instances where a lack of maintenance reduced the attractiveness and use of particular facilities. Paths need a watchdog maintenance crew to make sure the facility continues to be maintained and enhanced for maximum usage. Citizens can be encouraged to report maintenance problems, or to do minor repairs themselves.

Potential for Expansion

The route should have been planned so extensions can be easily added. Arriving at a brick wall or on the edge of a cliff means the project will not continue its success in the future because it can't physically be extended.

Economic Indicators

Communities have prospered after the creation of a facility. Property values have gone up, tourism has increased, corporations have relocated to the community with a trails system and businesses have sprouted up near the route. Success of the project can be found in each of these economic indicators.

Health Effects

Though health of a general population is difficult to measure, there are long term health benefits from physical exercise. With the creation of a safe trail system, all ages of citizens can partake and receive this bonus of health.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Leaders

A name and a face always help to sell an idea. Michael Eisner sells Disney. Elizabeth Dole sells the Red Cross. Magic Johnson sells AIDS prevention. The personal conviction is evident and others can relate to the sincerity. In raising money, the understanding has been that people don't give money to faceless organizations, but rather that "people give money to people." People help people build trail projects.

The leader of a facility can be any age, gender, background or even athletic ability. Some leaders spring on the scene with the idea and let the newly formed organization serve as an incubator for replacement leaders. The guiding light could be a Governor or Mayor or a first timer in the public's eye. Even if a huge nonprofit organization is spearheading the crusade for the project, careful investigation will reveal a leader within the machine who works overtime to make sure the project is built. The power of one person is truly extraordinary.

Leaders historically serve to get the project started. Unless they are an elected or hired official, the leader usually starts with no expenses, no salary and no office but lots of motivation. The leader is someone who can speak for the effort, inspire others and help turn out people for meetings. Sometimes the leader writes the newspaper articles, keeps the maps and collects the small change to pay for postage and copying. Sometimes all the

leader does is bring in friends or converts who will then in turn write the articles, keep the maps and collect petty cash.

A good leader includes everyone and feels "the more the merrier." For a trails community project to succeed, it can't have the appearance of executive sessions held behind closed doors.

The best leaders are local leaders who have a personal stake in the community. If a leader is brought in from the outside and paid handsomely, the project may backfire later as the citizens suggest the facility isn't theirs, but rather a plan prepared by the hired designer. Local ownership of a project is displayed by the local leader.

The work hours range anywhere from a few hours a week to 30 to 40 hours. Oftentimes the hard working volunteer becomes the first paid staff person. The community usually gets a deal because this volunteer continues with the same zeal and works more hours than the salary warrants. In the end, the real reward for the grassroots leader is a completed facility and a contented community.

Organizations

For a bikeway or walkway to succeed it will take more than a leader. A supporting crew of people is essential to carry out the many tasks and lend psychological support.

The groups usually start very informally, usually pulled together by a leader. Often the first meetings are held in someone's home. No minutes are taken. No dues are allotted. But the coffee and conviviality are plentiful.

Sometimes the group is called together by appointment of the mayor, and other times, the town "movers and shakers" come together to tackle their next community project.

The best meetings are those that are aggressively advertised and open to anyone. Just knowing that they could attend if they wished makes citizens feel as if the meeting's outcome is a product of theirs rather than a project forced on the community by an elite club.

The typical ages of those present usually are in the middle range with a few younger and older citizens in attendance as well. Advice is sought from business leaders, the Chambers of Commerce, the Department of

Transportation, trail and greenway groups, city or county parks people and citizens from neighboring towns who have built successful projects.

The meetings initially are held once a month; then sometimes as often as three times a month if a grant application deadline looms. After a project is completed, meetings are less frequent but can pick up again if an extension is proposed. Since a facility is a living functioning product, the group should continue to exist to oversee its caretaking. If the group disbands, a replacement supervisory body such as a community parks and recreation department should take on the responsibility of the facility. Questions beyond routine maintenance will need to be addressed, such as, "Are roller bladers with ski poles allowed on the bikeway in the summer as a training technique for winter cross country skiing?" Issues such as this didn't arise when the project was first planned because roller blades hadn't been invented yet.

As time goes on, the group may formalize with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, bylaws, minutes, dues and elected officers. A meeting space may be provided in a government building and seed money or copying donated by the agency. The City Council may formally recognize the group, lending it credibility. More volunteers may be sought through questionnaires sent to schools, newspaper articles or word of mouth.

In time, other fledgling groups will call up this now organized group and ask group members for advice on how to get a project built. By nature of the work and the people, the "experienced group" may be able to give away secrets to help the new grassroots group succeed.

Users

The users of a trail facility could quite simply be considered bicyclists and walkers and it would be left at that. But not all bicyclists are the same. And an independent walkway or bicycle path, once created, attracts baby carriages, equestrians, roller bladers, roller skiers, and, if in winter country and not plowed, cross country skiers, snowmobilers and other winter enthusiasts.

Some bicyclists prefer to ride on the roadway on either a marked bike lane or a widened curb lane. Others prefer a separate path. In addition, as local conditions vary, an individual may change from one facility to another.

It is very difficult to gauge which type of bikeway a community might need. The skilled bicyclists who prefer to ride on the road may be the most visible and organized into bike clubs. They are the most vocal because of their organization. The amateur bicyclists aren't organized and sometimes don't know to ask for independent bikeways. They are silent yet oftentimes they are the majority. If an independent bikeway is created, old bikes that have languished in garages for years are dusted off, pumped up and ridden with glee. Kids who had before been chauffeured in cars, bike ride around town with gay abandon.

With regard to walkers, they can walk on separate walkways, sidewalks, or share the independent path with bicyclists and trail users. The needs of all pathway users must be taken into account.

Facility Development

All facilities should be accessible for persons with disabilities and smooth for baby carriages, tricycles, bicycles, and those with unsure footing. On pavement, people can walk along, have a conversation and enjoy eye contact because they don't have to watch their feet all the time to avoid tree roots or rocks.

Bicycle facilities built with Federal-aid Transportation Funds must be used for transportation purposes. The lines dividing transportation and recreation are becoming grey since someone going to work might be really having a good time and someone out recreating might have a destination to reach. It is generally agreed though that a loop path that goes around a pond and arrives back at the same location with no other entry or exit points is recreational and not eligible for these funds. Recreational trails may be eligible for Federal monies under the Symms' National Recreational Trails Fund Act.

Mapping

Mapping has often been done for bike routes. The maps identify both on and off street facilities. Color coding is used to identify which sections of the route are on the road and which are independent paths.

Trails can be shared with even more users than the roller bladers or cross country skiers. If the pathway managing body approves, snowmobiles can share the independent path in the winter. Horses, off highway

motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles may ride on unpaved portions of the pathways. Joggers may also share the trail with other users.

Land

Property owners' rights should be protected in the process of developing bikeways and walkways. The way to ensure that the legal rights of the property owners are protected is to make those property owners, early on, part of the planning process.

Some trails can be located on existing public land but, since these projects are linkages and are also best created near population centers, the necessity may arise to properly acquire private land.

The time to bring in the property owners is after public land and destinations have been identified. The property owners whose land lies near the public land or whose land sits between the destinations should be called and personally invited to the meetings.

A map with the line indicating the route should not be prepared until well after the property owners have provided agreement for their land to be included (either by donations, selling or deeds of easement).

In the meetings, the property owners must be assured of two-way communications. The landowners also need to know they can call committee members and the leader anytime with questions or concerns, and be assured they will receive answers soon.

Concerns of property owners must be addressed early on. The issues of property values, liability protection, the types of people who will use the trail, fencing and maintenance must be discussed and resolved.

All of the affected property owners must be solicited for ideas and suggestions. To reach only a few means the best ideas might not be offered and concerns not completely addressed. A 100 percent effort must go into working with 100 percent of the property owners, for only with their assistance will the path be a success.

When it comes time to draw on a map where the bikeway or walkway might go, the property owners should be the drawers. In pencil they should indicate the pathway location on their land.

After the property owner gives permission to use the land (either by selling the land, donating it or deed of easement), he or she should continue to be involved in the creation of the bikeway or walkway. The property owners should be notified of public votes, important meetings, design ideas and even the time for the arrival of a bulldozer. Keeping them involved means they will continue to give good ideas which will result in a better project.

Land considerations that involve location mean dealing with the desirabilities of sun and shade, the coziness of spaces closed in by trees or structures, the freedom of open expanses in fields or wide rights-of-way, straight lines and curves, hills and valleys, and proximity to buildings or privacy away from congestion. Linkages of destination to destination must be sought so parks, schools, housing, open land, recreation facilities, and bodies of water can be connected.

Just as private landowners must be sought for advice, the managers of public land must be consulted. Since they know the land well, they may offer sound valuable insight concerning routing.

In some cases, the facility may have to be rerouted and that's why it's best to inform the whole community about the concept. If a different route needs to be found, the new landowners have been informed of the project concept in the general interest newspaper articles.

Marketing

Bikeways, walkways or trail projects have not been built in some communities because of a negative reaction. According to the National Park Service, Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, a Rail-Trail in Oregon was killed because the adjacent landowners mobilized quickly and contacted their Congressman. He was able to stop the U.S. Forest Service from taking the lead on a project which ran partially through a U.S. Forest. Perhaps the reasons were well founded but perhaps the project would have gone through if there had been more marketing and the ensuing public involvement.

Opinions differ on when a negative reaction may occur. This reaction, which can kill a project, may come at all stages: early on, during the middle, near construction or, according to one source, instantaneously. The longer a facility is planned without public

involvement, the more likely and louder will be the negative reaction when the plan is finally made public. A negative reaction can start with one person and snowball unless early criticism is addressed. If opposition mobilizes early, the bikeway or walkway has a slim chance of being approved. Even a vocal minority can overwhelm proponents and shame them into retracting their support.

If negative press does appear, the best reaction is to respond promptly but on the offensive. The opponents will define the issues if those issues aren't addressed by the proponents. This is another good reason to get the facts out early ahead of a negative reaction.

Negative press may be inevitable and preparing for it an integral part of the planning process. Just a few negative people can stop a project by getting to elected officials. To counter the negative, a huge push must be made at the outset to identify the positive. If the project is a good idea which will benefit the community and raise property values, then every effort should be made in the beginning to let the public know the benefits. Members of the public should be educated and ensured that they can ask and have answered any questions. If there aren't good answers to their concerns, then they may be right and the project shouldn't be built.

Marketing for these projects should be in the broadest definition of the word and include everything from education to printed flyers, publicity, questionnaires, brochures, letters to the editors, Public Service Announcements and T shirts. In order to market effectively, the person needs to study the subject if he or she has never done a project before. By writing any number of organizations, agencies or individuals, they will be able to amass enough information to grasp the issues and discuss with the public the possible sequence of events.

Meetings should not be public information meetings where the audience members are told "the facts", but rather workshops with lots of two-way dialogue. The audience members, which could include landowners, elected officials, potential financial donors, or developers, happen to often have wonderful ideas which wouldn't be considered if they hadn't had the opportunity to suggest them. Those leading the effort don't always have all the answers.

The audience tends to be community wide because such projects can serve everyone. For this reason, marketing cannot be narrowly focused and accomplished by talking only to a targeted constituency. Meetings should be held in

kitchens, local coffee shops, or recreation centers as well as town halls.

A name for the project helps in the publicity but at the outset only the general concept should be described. The specific route with a map is made public only after the property owners agree. If the name is general, such as Orange County Greenway System, the name can be used in the beginning months. If the name is specific, such as Jones Creek Bikeway, and the creek is short and bordered by two private properties, that name should wait.

Some project proponents may prefer the creation of a plan early on. This plan is marketed to the public. Sometimes members of the public view this plan as a fait accompli with no room for their input. An early plan has a greater chance of success if it doesn't contain a finished map and if it is only a sequence of suggested events. Oftentimes a grassroots group working with a city council cannot proceed unless they produce a plan for the council to approve. In this case, the plan may contain steps such as: 1. Write newspaper articles; 2. Form a coalition and invite everyone; and 3. Talk to the involved property owners. This sort of plan should not backfire. More complete early plans which show the route, assume community funding and take a cavalier approach to public input are too presumptuous, and once forced on the public, die amid hostility. The community members who helped put that plan together then spend five years back-pedaling before they dare test the waters of public sentiment again.

With these projects, marketing is relatively easy. All the issues must be studied early and discussed with the public. Members of the public, and especially the affected landowners, should be made part of the process by informing them and asking for their input at all stages. Votes should be held and the dialogue should continue even after the project is completed.

Fund Raising

Path facilities could be created simply with government grant programs and no citizen contributions. Airplanes could fly over cities and drop 10 feet wide rolls of asphalt which would unravel when they hit the ground. Project completed. No fuss. No meddling citizen input. But the citizens, after realizing where the bikeway came from, would say, "It's not ours. We're not maintaining it."

Fund raising is the ideal opportunity to make a bikeway or walkway a product of the local citizenry. Nothing unites a community like one of these projects because every citizen in some way gets to participate in the process and benefit from the completed project.

Fund raising means far more than just dollars put into an account to pay the bills. Funding can include providing daffodils, garbage pick up, in kind services, land donated, volunteer labor, benches, a backhoe and an operator, food, culverts, rooms, and ideas.

The major sources of funding can be from the State Department of Transportation or the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Corporations give out grants and foundations have certain types of projects which qualify under their aegis. Communities can appropriate tax dollars or bond for a trail project. But large federal, state, corporate, foundation or even community dollars still don't make a project the people's own. For that, grassroots fund raising at the local level is necessary.

Fund raising is fun. It's games, parties, raffles, T shirts, balloons, kids, breakfasts, races, bingo and fireworks. The fund raising events may generate less in dollars than the grants, but fund raising generates visibility which in turn generates dollars. When a community displays earnestness in its attempts to raise money for its project, that effort is usually rewarded, and sometimes from a secret benefactor who has been watching from the wings all the while.

Drives which involve selling pieces of the path, raffle purchases or even silent auctions should allow opportunities for the less wealthy to be participants. It's easier having contributions which don't go lower than \$100 but not everyone can afford \$100. Everyone won't get to enjoy the good feeling of being a contributor unless given a lower denomination. Two, five or ten dollar contributions should be accepted. Even someone who just takes a bike to a recreation equipment swap sale can feel they contributed to the bikeway, knowing a percentage of the sale of their bike built a part of the path.

The media should be cultivated to help in fund raising efforts. Their newspaper articles bring the crowds to the events and the dollars into the project. Pictures tell the best story about a bikeway or walkway and therefore either the presence of a press photographer should be requested or black and white glossy photographs should accompany a submitted article.

Success breeds success and one of the most profitable means to acquire funds is to start with a demonstration project. A small section of path in the right location is sure to be used and, once in place, may garner many dollars for an extension.

The whole community can be united behind a fund raising campaign for a facility. The fund raising effort is more labor intensive than grant writing, but more profitable in the visibility.

State Departments of Transportation

In order to analyze a successful grassroots movement for bicycle facilities and pedestrian walkways, it's necessary to study sources of expertise and funding. With the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, one new source of expertise will be the State bicycle/pedestrian coordinators and one source of funding will be the State Departments of Transportation.

Education is sometimes cited as a responsibility of the bicycle coordinator. A successful grassroots movement should be mindful to provide all members of the biking community with safe bicycle facilities. To truly be a successful grassroots movement, bicyclists of all abilities and ages should be accommodated and taught safety lessons for all bicycling alternatives.

The new money available through ISTEA is significant. Coupled with the enhancement activity money and the Symms Act money, there are plenty of opportunities to create both on road bicycle facilities and walkways and off road bicycle facilities and walkways. In order to receive funding, communities and grassroots organizations need to make the requests. In most funding instances those requests then must compete with highways and bridges. The requests for information sent to several states revealed that communities are not requesting the funds either at the local metropolitan planning level or at any of the higher levels. When projects are built, like the many Rails-To-Trails projects in Iowa, the high numbers of users demonstrate the demand. Perhaps the citizens in other states without bicycle facilities just don't know to come asking for the funds. In a phone conversation with Larry King, the Deputy Secretary for Planning at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, he explained that in the 15 hearings held throughout the state, rarely was there a request for a bikeway or walkway. He was amazed at how few requests were made.

Another factor in making the requests is who is actually asking for the funds. In the requests for information sent to nine State Departments of Transportation across the country, North Dakota was one of the states to respond. They were asked, "How do the communities ask you for the bikeway/walkway funds?" They explained that annually they receive lists of projects from their 13 Urban and Urbanized Areas. Most of their requested projects are highway/street rehabilitation type projects. "The 100 or so projects requested annually actually represent about a five year improvement program for the cities. One or two of those 100 projects may be a standalone pedestrian or bicycle facility project." Children, seniors and less athletic bikers need to be making requests as well so that more than one or two projects out of 100 result in separate bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

States have different ranking systems for funding bicycle facilities and walkways. In Vermont, \$5.5 million was appropriated for the projects and competition is among the bicycle and walkway projects and not nonmotorized against motorized. Oregon ranks bicycle projects against bicycle projects, but in Maine bicycle facilities compete against highways. Vermont's ranking is handled collectively once a year. Other states accept applications individually all year long, or once or twice a year.

Projects using ISTEA funds must serve a transportation function. The exception is the Symms National Recreational Trails funding which creates and maintains recreation trails. The transportation function is identified as part of the planning requirements performed by the States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Nancy Burns with the Iowa Department of Transportation was asked, as part of the requests for information, "How do you have the communities identify that their project is transportation related and not recreation related?" She said that they are seeing the line between transportation and recreation is beginning to blur. According to her, it is mattering less why people are bicycling and walking, because it matters more that they are out there. Vermont developed a minimum threshold points system, to measure demand and the numbers of users, to try to answer this transportation and recreation question.

If a bikeway or walkway is a local project, the application can be made individually, but if it crosses several jurisdictions it should be submitted as a regional application. The State DOTs work closely with bicycle clubs or bicycle advisory committees and they could help facilitate cross region projects. The clubs or

organizations can also encourage more communities to submit applications. The Vermont Trails and Greenways Council holds conferences and workshops and tells everyone about the DOT funding opportunities.

Bikeway and walkway projects tend to generate good press. The State DOTs have received good publicity for their bicycle programs, but on occasion some publicity which was less good. Iowa stated that the positive publicity outweighed the negative.

The State Departments of Transportation can be helpful in seeing bicycle and pedestrian facilities built. But the responsibility also lies with the grassroots movement. One of the questions asked of State Departments of Transportation was, "Is there anything the communities or local bike/walk clubs could do to help you in getting more bikeways and walkways built?" Nancy Burns from Iowa responded, "The only thing locals may be able to do to increase the number of projects approved and built might be to increase the level of support and willingness to do some serious work to make their project a reality." The grassroots movement should be assisting their State Departments of Transportation by working hard, being willing to help and making their needs known.

Foreign Experiences

To get a perspective on America's successful grassroots movement related to pedestrians and bicycles, inquiries were sent to nine foreign countries for comparisons. Among the five responses, Israel has an organized trail movement and a few bicycle clubs. Barcelona talked about great weather but regretted not having more bicyclists or walkers. Czechoslovakia has many bicyclists and walkers, as does Poland. The more urban Hong Kong had few bicyclists, but the rural roads appealed to recreating bicyclists. Walkers were common in the Hong Kong parks.

In answer to the question, "Does your country have a transportation policy in regards to biking and walking," most said no but that they had hopes for a policy in the future. Israel described public desire but no associated policy. Poland has a policy but no money and Hong Kong doesn't even have a policy.

When asked, "Does your transportation agency spend money for biking and walking, and listen to local requests for biking and walking?" Hong Kong responded, "Hardly."

This response puts America clearly ahead. Barcelona did boast about one bikeway project and one rail-trail project up north. Czechoslovakia wrote that before the revolution the local transportation agency spent no or very little money on bicycle facilities, but they were hopeful that would now change. Poland said they don't spend money because they don't have any. Only the urgent projects are tended to, leaving these facilities at the end.

The countries were asked to rank how they viewed these projects and all responded that they were good for exercise. Some felt they served as nonpolluting and nongas consumptive transportation. Last, there was one vote for "convenience", one vote for "it's popular because it's the thing to do" and an added "they increase nature conservation and awareness".

No country that answered talked extensively about separate paths. Instead, everyone had to ride on the road. Poland's bicycle riders can use natural paths along rail lines, rivers and parks. Hong Kong has a few separate bike paths on new roads.

The pedestrian and bicycle grassroots movement is not as visible in these countries, for there are very few organized clubs. Poland has organized clubs for long and short distance tourist trips. Hong Kong has walking clubs and Israel, Czechoslovakia and Barcelona mentioned the existence of a few bicycle clubs.

All of the countries were hopeful they would see safe bicycling and walking alternatives in the future. One positive sign in Hong Kong is citizens' informal requests, and the negative indicators of fatalities on the roads. Local communities in Poland have managed to force a few projects to respect the bicyclist's and pedestrian's rights. The city council joined major forces against the Public Road Administration.

Each country stated that they will need more facilities in the future because demand is growing. Barcelona sees a rise in mountain biking. Poland stated that if they had more facilities in big cities, more people could use them for recreation and convenient transportation.

When asked how they were going to create more facilities, Poland was the most aggressive. They said they want to: 1. Adopt "natural" trails and paths; 2. Rebuild bikeways that were seized by car owners as parking lots; and 3. Build new bikeways on new streets. The town of

Bratislava in Czechoslovakia has a master plan and bicycling and walking will be incorporated. Hong Kong wants to equip all new roads with facilities, and try to modify existing roads.

Keys to success recommended by the countries included Hong Kong's idea of organizing, petitioning and campaigning for publicity to raise the level of awareness. Poland echoed America's attitude that a very wide grassroots movement is indispensable. Land reserves should be included in planning, according to Barcelona. Israel recommended publicity campaigns promoting bicycling and hiking. The most lofty suggestion came from Czechoslovakia. They wanted to concentrate on education from early childhood on, and promote and help to spread new ecological and holistic paradigms.

There was space for additional comments and this prompted some of the most thoughtful suggestions. Hong Kong felt it was an excellent idea to give up motor transport for short trips, though this was a difficult goal in built-up areas. Poland said they must first view a bicycle as a healthy, fast and convenient means of transportation and recreation. They want their local authorities to change their vision of transportation systems in cities. Czechoslovakia felt it would be beneficial and helpful to establish closer international links and cooperation among bicyclists and walkers all around the world. Finally, Barcelona looks forward to keeping in touch and they want any information concerning bicycling and greenways in America. Israel wants a copy of this case study.

Since America seems to be ahead in some aspects of pedestrian and bicycle planning, and certainly in the grassroots movement, this country should be more self-conscious. America should try to perfect the bicycling and walking systems not only for this country, but to share their solutions with other nations.

Aesthetics

A grassroots movement cannot be considered a success if a project is built and isn't used. Land, money, labor and enthusiasm will have been wasted and future projects may never be completed based on the past failure.

People are attracted to a bicycle or walkway facility because it takes them where they want to go, it's a shorter trip than driving by car, it's nonconsumptive transportation and it's good exercise. But even with all

of these reasons, if the ride is miserably unpleasant, such as riding near a garbage dump or alongside an oil slicked abandoned car lot, people will prefer their cars with air conditioning and a stereo. How can a bicycle or walkway project compete with the car? Build an attractive, sweet smelling, pleasant sounding facility.

These facilities can be made more attractive with grass, trees, shrubs, daffodils, wildflowers, donated perennials, and pools of sun and shade. Some individuals view pavement as an intrusion on a natural setting, but if the surroundings are natural, the pavement disappears with dappled light and a few fallen leaves. Benches, signs, picnic tables, and even attractive garbage cans can enhance the setting. Bridges and tunnels, though an addition in cost, can become the scenic curios most often photographed.

In the path shoulders, the grass area can be shaped and rooms carved in the adjacent woods. Vistas can be opened up and historic buildings showcased.

A sense of place can be enhanced with natural vegetation. Palm trees don't belong in Vermont and sugar maples don't belong in Florida. In the correct location they thrive and flatter the setting.

For safety, a facility needs sight distances and easy curves. But a meandering path slows down traffic and adds some interest to what could be considered an airplane runway. The unforeseen element doesn't need to be a bicyclist coming around a sharp bend at top speed, but instead a gentle bend could eventually reveal the surprise of a shady sitting area or a waterfall.

Trees can come from the President's "America the Beautiful" program or even as part of the request for State DOT funds. If the trees aren't requested as part of a DOT plan by the grassroots members or by the pathway organizers, they won't automatically be incorporated.

Natural vegetation or introduced flowers can add alluring smells to the facility. Seasonal perfume such as lilac bushes in spring or chrysanthemums in the fall enhance the sense of seasons.

Sounds can come from wildlife. Birds can be attracted to berry bushes and certain trees. Even squirrels and chipmunks make pleasant noises rummaging through fall leaves or nibbling off greenery in the spring. Moving water makes a soothing sound and can even drown out the rumble of nearby car traffic.

Sounds can come from cultivated life too. The sound of children's laughter, teenagers engaged in happy jostling, bike bells, a parent talking to a baby or a senior talking to a dog are convivial sounds which comfort.

With the Americans with Disabilities Act, facilities are to be made accessible to the disabled. The usual assumption is they are to be made accessible to those who are unable to walk. People who are blind should be able to enjoy a bicycle or pedestrian facility. Their enjoyment can be enhanced by these smells, sounds and even the sensation of a breeze, the touch of wood benches or the cool feel of bridge railings.

Critics of the facility who may never ride or walk the route find their daily life enhanced by the view of others enjoying the pastoral setting. Fears of critics that a facility will contain litter, vandals, and overgrown weeds are dismissed with a look at the attractive route and the happy faces of users.

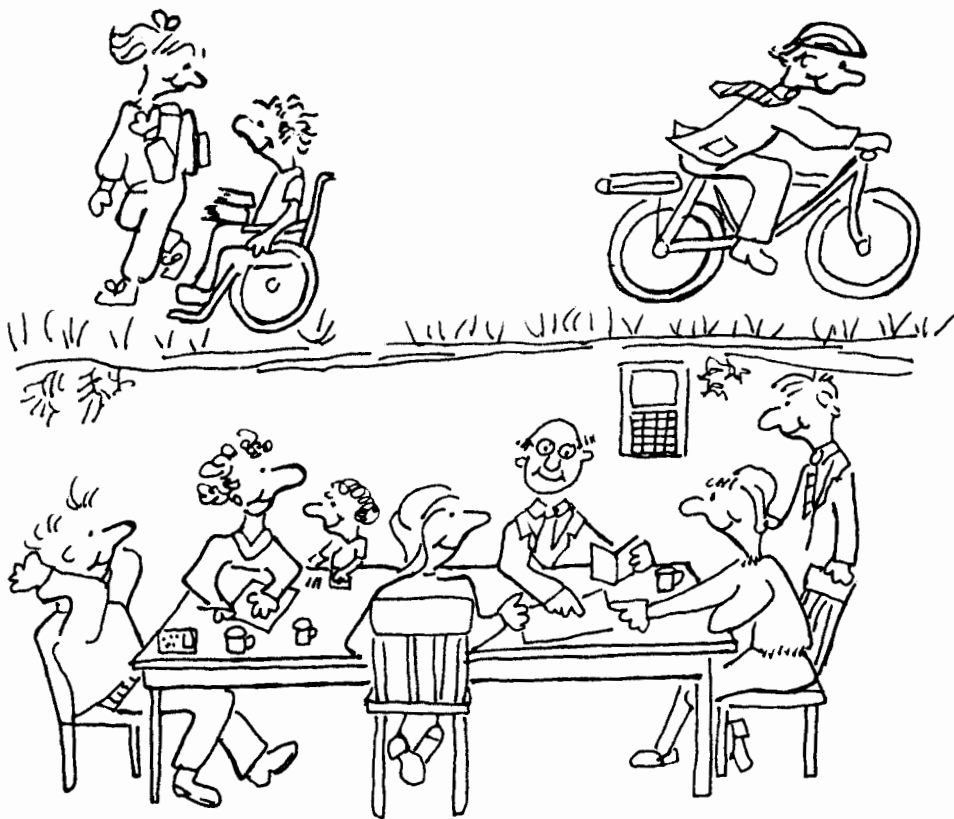
Finally, volunteers will come out of the woodwork and stay with the project forever when they know their contribution is creating something attractive. Members of the Garden Club or Audubon Society may permanently adopt sections to oversee. The visible signs of caring and personal touches will make the pathway appear to truly be a product of the community. The project, frequented and pretty, will be considered a success.

Conclusion

A successful grassroots movement related to pedestrians and bicyclists can help produce the facilities. But the grassroots movement can also lend the human connection to what could otherwise be utilitarian facilities. The enthusiasm, personal consideration, aesthetic touch, cultivation of leaders, organization of community support, cleverness in marketing, joy in fund raising, and finally, residual glow of success, are the additional results of a grassroots movement's efforts.

A GUIDE ON HOW TO INITIATE A
SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT
RELATING TO PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES

Anne Lusk



NATIONAL BICYCLING AND WALKING STUDY

FHWA CASE STUDY

A GUIDE ON HOW TO INITIATE A SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Anne Lusk

To start a grassroots movement related to pedestrians and bicycles, you need one person with the idea. That one person talks to at least one other person and the movement is started. Simple as that.

To call your movement a success, you must satisfy the needs of the pedestrians, bicyclists and other facility users, and that usually means getting something that is used on the ground. This Step-by-Step Guide is designed to help you turn your "Start" into a "Success".

At a glance, here are the 15 steps from conception to completion of your grassroots movement and the related biking and walking system. This process should take you all the way to completion of a separate bike and walk path, on land acquired from a private property owner, because that is usually the hardest-to-achieve facility. On occasion a step may not occur in this prescribed order, but by and large, this is the usual progression. The following pages will detail and explain each of these steps:

1. One person or a few people come up with the idea of a grassroots group to develop a facility related to pedestrians and bicycles.
2. General interest newspaper articles are written about the concepts of bikeways and walkways. No specific route is suggested.
3. A group or a coalition is formed and public meetings are held to discuss the concept. At this time the range of users of the bikeway or walkway may be identified and a name for the group or project may be considered.
4. Destinations and public land are identified on a map, but again, no specific route is drawn.
5. The potentially involved landowners (those located between the identified destinations) are talked to, ideally in person after a phone call. Their initial ideas are sought and the landowners become part of the planning process.
6. The local and state agencies (highway, parks and recreation, permitting, funding...) and organizations or clubs (scouts, schools, Rotarians...) are sought for guidance and assistance.

7. A map with the route or routes is prepared (after the property owners agree in concept to the inclusion of their land).

8. Specific articles are written about the grassroots group and their proposed pedestrian and bicycle routes. Maps are published in the newspapers and in newly printed brochures.

9. Large public hearings are held with maps and plans. Votes are taken to indicate community approval. Minor plans and specs or a concept plan may have been prepared at this point and initial funding sought.

10. Major fund raising begins and/or federal money is sought to pay for at least a portion of a route.

11. The land is acquired sometimes initially through a nonbinding contractual agreement with the property owners. (The landowners should be assured that funds and permits can be obtained before they sign over their land. Also, for Department of Transportation funding, the land is formally acquired last.)

12. Major plans and specifications are prepared and the permits obtained.

13. Construction begins.

14. All land and financial donors are publically acknowledged. It is wise to also be doing this as the project progresses.

15. The path is enhanced and maintained. The grassroots movement starts investigating possible connections.

1. One person or a few people come up with the idea of a grassroots group related to pedestrians and bicyclists.



It can happen anywhere. The inspiration for a grassroots bikeway or a walkway group can come when you're driving on the road and have to swerve to avoid two young bicyclists. The concept might be sparked by a newspaper article which identified funding for transportation bikeways and walkways. You may have just visited a town with a popular bikeway and decided you needed your own homegrown version. Or you and a friend may have been sharing a cup of coffee and, after discussing the loss of community life, decided you needed something to invigorate the town. You have just started a local grassroots movement.

From here, the group may be led by you or it may be turned over to another volunteer or a paid staff person. Someone has to follow through on the idea or it will remain, forever, just an idea. The next steps are not difficult. If you really want to have a successful grassroots movement you need to tackle head-on the job of creating the facilities. By the way, even at this early date, it is easy to enlist help.

2. General interest newspaper articles are written about the concept of a bikeway or walkway. No specific route is selected.

There is a good chance that at this point you know a little more about planning for bikeways and walkways than do others, but there is always a lot more to learn. Once you learn about facility planning and design, you'll know a great deal but the public still will need educating. Eventually, you might have to knock on someone's door for money or land. They won't know who you are and what you're talking about. You'll be making a "cold call". You might get a "cold response". You'll have to spend a lot of the meeting time trying to explain a bikeway or walkway. The next person you visit may also not know anything about these facilities and you'll have to start all over again. Make life easier. After you educate yourself, educate others.

Write to or call the following organizations or agencies for information about bikeways and walkways:

Your State Department of Transportation
or Highways

Your State Department of Forests, Parks and
Recreation

American Greenways
1800 North Kent Street
Suite 1120
Arlington, VA 22209
703-525-6300

American Trails
1400 16th Street, NW Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036
802-253-7758 (phone contact is in Vermont)

Bicycle Federation of America
1818 R Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20009
202-332-6986

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
1400 16th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-797-5400

After you begin to receive the material, study it and then write or have someone else write general interest newspaper articles for the smaller local papers. Oftentimes until your bikeway is actual news, it will be difficult to get an article in the larger statewide newspapers. Try them too anyway. For a Sunday edition they sometimes run stories of this nature.



Try in your articles to mention ways people can communicate ideas back to you. Give your address or phone number so the newspaper articles become a two-way conversation instead of a one-way lecture. Articles can spark Letters to the Editor which further puts the topic before the public.

At the same time that you are getting articles published, start establishing contacts with the media. These contacts may prove beneficial later when you actually start your project.

Your own name recognition becomes important this early. The more your name is repeated, the more familiar the public becomes with you. Suggestions come in because people say, "I know Jane Smith. I'll call her." You may have never met the person in your life but the barriers were broken by name familiarity.

Photographs can be included in the articles if they show public land. Include children biking or walking on the eventual path corridor.

Surveys or questionnaires should be postponed until after the newspaper articles have run. People are more apt to have an educated opinion or helpful suggestions after the general concept has been explained in the paper.

Other publicity tactics such as events, displays, brochures, radio or TV Public Service Announcements, and speaking engagements should be postponed until you have decided upon a route with the landowners. At this point you probably don't have any money anyway, and this next phase of publicity isn't always free.

Keep in mind that this first step is only identifying the concept of the project. You are writing generic articles about the economic advantages for the property owners, the potential as a means for transportation, or the benefits realized by another community that has a bikeway or walkway facility.

Every bikeway expert can cite at least one case where "all the best laid plans" backfired. The public wasn't informed, opposition rallied, confusion reigned and the project was killed. A few informed souls regretted the demise of the project because they knew the benefits were many. You must educate the public, all the public, at the outset.

3. A group or coalition is formed and public meetings are held to discuss the concept. At this time the range of users of the facility may be decided and a name for the group or project may be considered.

THE GROUP



The idea from the initial one person will be unheard and unseen unless the idea can be shared with others. This means you need to come together as a group.

The groups formed to see a project become a reality range from the neophytes who may not know how city government operates to formalized committees that are appointed by the mayor. The vast majority of groups start out on an ad hoc basis, but, with time and accrued

credentials, achieve the endorsement of the City Council or Mayor's office.

The people who will show up for your first grassroots meetings are there because they have an interest in bikeways and walkways. They may include school teachers, real estate agents, environmental leaders, Chamber of Commerce members, community "movers and shakers," heretofore quiet mothers or fathers, recreation or park professionals, bird watchers and city planners. The age range may be broad though typically those present are in their 30s to 50s. Make sure everyone in your community knows the meetings are open to the public and everyone, even those who may be in opposition, is encouraged to attend.

At the outset, the meetings might not be formally advertised because you aren't that organized. As time goes on you should publicize the meetings. Remember though, not everyone reads those little formal meeting announcements in the newspapers. Make sure you do high visibility advertising for the meetings so that no one can say you met with a select few behind closed doors.

The first meetings are usually held in someone's home. Eventually your meetings may take place in city or corporate office buildings in borrowed conference rooms. The number of meetings is frequent at the outset, sometimes every two weeks. As people take on individual responsibilities and lots of work gets accomplished between meetings, the frequency of meetings can drop to one a month. Once a project is completed, your meetings may be held as infrequently as every two or three months.

In the majority of successful grassroots movements, the group stays informal, does not apply for nonprofit status until much later, and is comprised primarily of volunteers. The leader often is a volunteer or, if employed, is paid for a 10 to 20 hour work week but works 40 to 50 hours per week. Decisions are made either by the leader, the group or both. Oftentimes, no officers are elected because people prefer to make up their own work agenda and the hierarchy isn't needed. Dues may be charged but only to pay for initial postage and copying and not to operate the organization.

Advice is sought from the city, trails and greenway groups, users and nationwide organizations. Some states have key contact people with lots of answers but at other times calls are placed to another state to their key bicycle facility or walkway expert. Ideas and encouragement

are usually passed freely from one state to another and from individual to individual.

Initially, the interests of your group should be close to home. The aim should be to succeed locally and with the goal of a completed project somewhere in the community. On occasion your local vision may be translated into a regional vision encompassing several districts or counties, but you can be most effective first with completion of the local segment.

The most successful grassroots groups function by consensus rather than majority rule. Votes can splinter a group. Consensus builds the coalition. If you can't reach a consensus, move on to another issue and come back to the dividing issue later. Make final decisions only when you have a deadline. If, for example, you can't agree on a logo, take up that issue later. Part of the success of a grassroots movement is keeping all of the members contented. Let all sides call decisions a victory.

Rather than struggle with the size, composition and structure of this first ad hoc group, just let the group happen. Call a huge group of people together and then keep holding public meetings. Those who can't attend, often due to time constraints, will take pride knowing they were participants at the outset. The people who do continue to attend will go the distance and see the project to completion. This filtered down core group will be comprised of the idea people, the hard workers, a few quiet backup people and the leaders.

The leaders who often rise to the top didn't know they had the potential to be leaders. Sometimes they were just the ones who kept coming to the meetings, doing the homework and giving the most informative reports. By daily approval of their work and suggestions for how they could be better, they are trained by the community to become the effective new leaders.

FACILITY USERS

The location, surface, width and sight distance are all factors decided after considering the users of your facility. You should consider both on and off road facilities. Keep in mind that demand is not always indicated by those who attend the meetings. For example, slower bicyclists may



want to have facilities but they just don't know how to ask anyone for a bike path because they've never experienced one. Tell them of the opportunities.

Your group should identify the users of the system. Admittedly, this is difficult because you won't know "they will come" until you give them "what they want." So you may have to guess.

THE NAME

At some point your grassroots group will have to adopt a name. This name is used for identity in the newspaper articles, letters written to the City Council members or in preliminary inquiries about grant money for the bike path or walkway. The name can apply to the bikeway or to the grassroots group. The group's name can be clever and may last only as long as the group.

Since at this early date the specific location of the project is not decided, and the facility may have spurs, a general name applicable anywhere in the community would be best. A name should not be selected if it refers to a specific piece of land and that land is owned privately. The land owner should first be consulted to see if the project could feasibly be located there and thus receive that name. In both the name for the group or the name for a location, a good name is worth a lot.

4. Destinations and public land are identified on a map but again no specific route is drawn.



Major destination areas can be identified on a map with a mark or pin. These areas can include schools, national, state or local parks, major neighborhoods, recreation areas, trail or business districts, and waterfronts. Areas not to be identified at this time are private land destinations such as waterfalls or railroad beds that have reverted to the abutting private property owners. These areas may be considered at a later date but only with the permission of the landowner first.

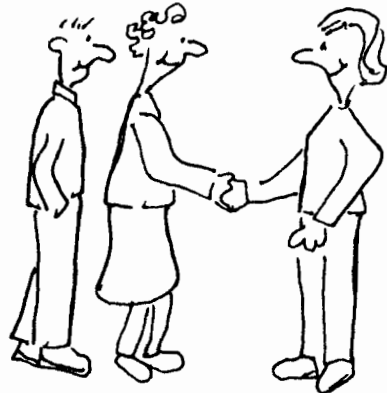
Public linear corridors can also be included on the map. These include unmaintained town roads and legal trails. Highway rights-of-way were sometimes extremely wide when acquired and a potential facility could perhaps be created a safe distance away from the road. Rivers as

potential corridors can be identified, but only if there is public access. Projects may be located on national, state, or local public land and a route across these properties can be considered, but again, only after preliminary discussions with the supervising agency. Utility corridors offer additional opportunities.

At this point a simple highway or town map on a piece of cardboard or foam board will suffice with push pins and highlighter markers. The map doesn't need to be huge and cumbersome. You'll want it small enough so you can easily take it with you when you visit property owners, permitting agencies, local boards or potential funding sources. As the plan develops, a more elaborate display with photos of picturesque locations, renderings of the bikeway, cross sections, path furniture and the detailed route with destinations can be professionally produced.

5. The potentially involved landowners (those located between the identified destinations) are talked to, ideally in person after a phone call. Their initial ideas are sought and the landowners become part of the planning process.

If the project is to be built solely on public land or is located on the side of the road, this step is less crucial, but even then, the nearby landowners should be informed and involved. If the bikeway can't be created without the participation of landowners because of its location, then this step is essential for success and it must happen this early.



At this stage, your grassroots group will have developed a simple map which identifies the destination points. Resist the temptation to draw a line on a private property owner's land. If the temptation is strong, put yourself in the private property owner's shoes. Would you like someone drawing a line on your land?

Call or write the involved property owner and ask if you can come by for a visit. You may want to take along someone in the grassroots group who knows the landowner and who knows the project's issues.

By this time the newspapers should have run a series of articles about the generalities of these facilities. When you have your visit, the landowner is apt to be a bit more informed about the subject because you have worked

hard to get some general interest articles published.

Take with you the map that shows the destinations and ask the property owners for their ideas in getting from one location to another. They know their own neighborhood better than anyone else and are most qualified to point out good river crossings or bad traffic areas. Take a few of the studies about bicycle facilities to leave with them and tell them that the next time you meet, you'll give them an update on progress and some more material. Give them the date of your next meeting and ask them if they would consider attending. If they can't go, tell them you'll get back to them with information about the meeting.

This is the first in what should be many meetings with the property owners. The property owners have some wonderful ideas. Even negative ideas are useful because you can hustle to find a solution to a problem that they identified and you didn't even consider.

In the end, if the landowners wish to sell, deed or donate their land, they should be the ones to draw in pencil on their own land where a bikeway or walkway might go. If they don't wish to sell, deed or donate their land, that's their prerogative. It's their land. You'll have to consider other options such as relocating the route.

6. The local and state agencies (highway, parks and recreation, permitting, funding...) and organizations or clubs (scouts, schools, Rotarians...) are sought for guidance and assistance.



Your grassroots group will seek out others for guidance, funding, permits and approval. Because bikeways and walkways are such a human related product, when you seek advice about permits you'll find you are also given guidance and helpful suggestions. Everyone wants to see a good idea succeed, so look upon everyone as a friend and coach.

The local and state agencies can include your highway or transportation department, parks and recreation departments, agencies of natural resources, permitting offices and regional planning commissions. You will go to them for guidance, funding and permits. Since obtaining permits can be a long and involved process, it is wise to inquire early about necessary permits. Line up these permits so you know the sequential order, since sometimes one permit cannot be

obtained until another is obtained first. Either you or a professional engineer, landscape architect or planner may be applying for the permit but it's wise to familiarize yourself with what lays ahead. Don't be intimidated by the permit process. It's just a process, albeit a complicated one, but those giving out the permits are there to help.

Funding is available from different agencies. Transportation bicycle facilities and walkways can be funded through your State Department of Transportation. Recreation trails can be funded, perhaps from the Symms National Recreational Trails Act. Information about these funds might be available through your State Department of Transportation, Parks and Recreation Department or your State Trails Organization. Land and Water Conservation Funds are available through your Parks and Recreation Department. Nationwide, the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program with the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. can give you advice, including information about other sources of funding and a regional contact person.

Approval and direction can come from your local Scout troops, schools, Rotarians, Real Estate Associations, Church groups, League of Women Voters, and many others. Seek their guidance early on, for collectively, they can be of great assistance.

If you like, at this time you could do a survey or questionnaire. Perhaps the school children could take it home to their parents. You could write a list of questions in the local paper and ask readers to respond. Presentations could be made to real estate organizations about the concept. They, too, know the land in the community, and the owners. Perhaps they will have suggestions for a route.

During this phase your grassroots group is looking for assistance and guidance. You need to seek as many ideas as possible. In order to do that you have to travel to the agencies or local clubs, since they may not know enough about the project yet to seek you out.

7. A map with the route or routes is prepared (after the property owners agree in concept to the inclusion of their land).

A good route is first the route for which you acquired land, but second, if you have the luxury of additional features beyond location, a route with sun and shade, hills and flats, views, rivers and bridges, straight lines and mild curves, open mowed fields and dense trees with

wildflowers, solitude away from buildings and company near buildings.



Once the route is decided, this is the time when you may wish to prepare a map that is more professional than the first. The first map was a town or highway map which identified destinations and public land. This new map can have the photographs, renderings of people on the path, quotes from potential users, the name and logo of the bikeway, and clever graphics. This map can be a work of art and showcase your bikeway or walkway.

A word about the property owners is necessary again at this point. You may decide to obtain a nonbinding contractual agreement from the landowners at this time, or wait until Step # 11. For certain, before you include private land in your formal map, you need to have the property owner's permission. They may choose to sign a contractual agreement at this point, or wait and work with you to see if funding, permits and voter approval can be obtained. The choice is theirs but remember, there is the possibility in the end that they will not give you the land.

8. Specific articles are written about the grassroots group and its proposed pedestrian and bicycle routes. Maps are published in the newspapers and in the newly printed brochures.

Up until this time, generic articles have been written about the grassroots movement and the pedestrian or bicycle project. No route has been proposed and even the users haven't been defined. Now is the time to tell the public specifics.



Publish a map which identifies the route or routes in the local paper. Describe the users. Acknowledge the landowners participating in the process. Name individuals who have served on the committees. Outline the necessary steps to create the project and, always, continue to ask for suggestions.

If you want lots of suggestions, the best tactic is to not just say, "Send me your ideas". Instead, ask a specific question, list three options; then ask the public to choose. They will respond.

Besides the newspaper, other just as effective means exist for publicity. Get the word out through radio or television. Print brochures. Have kids do posters. Distribute materials to the bike shops, sporting goods stores, and local restaurants. Take flyers door to door in the neighborhoods. Have a booth set up at a fair or event. Produce and distribute a newsletter and include the map.

All this publicity is setting your grassroots group up for a successful fund raising campaign. Since you have been doing publicity from the very early stages, members of the public will understand what you are talking about when you ask them for money. And you'll raise the money quickly.

A mention must be made about negative publicity because it might happen in any well meaning project. You have had ample time to get out the facts. If a newspaper reporter offers factual negative information that you didn't mention, it's hard for you to refute since you have had enough time to print all the facts. This is just a reminder early on to urge you to disclose everything at the outset.

Personal opinions can be countered with substantiated facts from you. Since there are now numerous studies which contain documented statistics, it's better than countering an opinion with an opinion.

These projects are generally so good that you should not be put on the defensive for these non-polluting transportation alternatives and preservers of the environment. Answer charges in your next promotional piece and remain on the offensive.

If a negative article does appear, respond positively and immediately. If ever people are in doubt about an issue, they will vote no. Your silence may be sufficiently confusing that they will vote no when funds for the bikeway or walkway are requested.

Some of the best people to counter a negative suggestion are the elected officials or respected locals. Get their opinions on an issue and include them in your article.

Always stress the positive and be positive yourself. Bikeways and walkways thrive on optimism, and with economic, environmental and community benefits with which to explain the project, it's not hard to remain cheerful.

9. Large public hearings are held with maps and plans. Votes are taken to indicate community approval. Minor plans and specs or a concept plan may have been prepared at this point and initial funding sought.

So far, your grassroots organization has contacted people primarily on a one-to-one basis, in a small group, or through the newspaper. You have tried to make sure that the talking is not a one way but two way discussion.

Now is the time to set up larger meetings. These should be arranged in comfortable settings. Avoid rooms with harsh fluorescent lighting and bad memories. These are typically the rooms with a head table where dictates are handed down by higher authorities. Choose friendlier rooms with seating ideally in a circle or half circle. Serve food. Make the meeting room specific to the project with posters, maps and brochures. Advertise the meetings well so everyone in the community feels welcomed.

Hold several large meetings or many smaller meetings in peoples' homes. Consider the Senior Citizen Center, the Masonic Temple, the Church, or the Art Center because people show up for meetings where the surroundings are familiar. You'll get different audiences for each location.

The name "Public Information Meeting" has a bad reputation. These meetings are an obligation for due public process but because they are marginally publicized, under attended and often conducted in a lecture format, people now are shying away from them. Instead, advertise your meeting as a workshop and run it as a workshop. Challenge the audience with questions, tasks and options.

Consider also having a city or town wide vote related to the facility. This public indication of approval will help later in grant applications.

The concept may have had to be more fleshed out at this phase, so minor plans and specs or a concept plan may have been developed. These plans can detail specific costs, identify bridges, diagram parking, or show plantings and benches.

Also at this point, initial funding may have been acquired. To pay for the mapping, concept plan or brochures, minor funding may have been sought and received in the form of donations. The project is now ready to go after major funding.

10. Major fund raising begins.

Moving right along, we begin fund raising. This is the fun part...the parties, the committees, the checks arriving, the enclosed notes of approval. Don't be daunted by this step because you'll find people are happy you gave them a good cause to which they can donate their money.



How and if your grassroots organization receives the funds directly will depend on whether or not your group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. This status means your donors' contributions are tax deductible. If you have not formalized your organization and sought nonprofit status, the funds can go to another affiliated nonprofit or directly to the municipality. You should still assist in the fund raising and grant application writing because it is your group's enthusiasm which will be most contagious.

Funding can be broken down into two broad categories: 1. Federal monies, and 2. Local funds which match or augment the Federal funds.

Federal-aid funds come from your State Department of Transportation. Exciting new sources of money for bikeways and walkways have been added to the Federal-aid funds. Your State Department of Transportation bicycle/pedestrian coordinator will be able to tell you about the opportunities. Also, contact your metropolitan regional planning organization (if you have one). You may also wish to call some bicycle clubs, pedestrian or trail organizations in other states that have used a high percentage of their transportation funds for these projects. They may be able to tell you how you might get more state funding for your facility.

Other monies available for these facilities may be more recreation than transportation oriented. These include, among others, Land and Water Conservation Funds and the Symms National Recreation Trails Fund. Again, both of these funds are available from your State, with the former coming from your Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and the latter the State agency designated by

your Governor. Other less well known grants exist and the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program can send you the list.

Virtually all Federal or State funds must be matched. Some are in a low ratio such as 20% local to 80% Federal or State to 50% to 50% for others. Since competition for money can be stiff, your chances of being selected can increase if you show that your grassroots group or community is donating an amount greater than its obligated percentage. For the match, you need to raise some local money.

Your community can obligate tax money or bond over a period of time. Even the votes to approve these two options show good faith, and raise money on their own. They may generate less than a money-grant or bond, but commitment is displayed in the vote, and the publicity pays off in other donations.

Beyond the usual T shirts, selling pieces of the path, donating labor or mass mailing campaigns, one bikeway committee had its members pump gas at the local self serve to raise money. The extra 5 cents for each gallon pumped didn't set fund raising records, but between washing windows, passing out brochures and getting their story in the paper, they raised incredible community support for their bikeway.

The lists of clever fund raisers are long but the key is to be cautious so you don't take on more than you can handle. But more importantly, be daring and try something new. Sometimes, even when a fund raising event doesn't raise all the money you had hoped, there is a wealthy benefactor who has been watching your industriousness and a check is quietly sent in the mail to your grassroots group.

11. The land is acquired, sometimes initially through a nonbinding contractual agreement with the property owners. (The landowners should be assured that funds and permits can be obtained before they sign over their land. Also, for Department of Transportation funding, the land is formally acquired last.)

The money you are in the process of obtaining or may have already obtained will have a bearing on how and when you acquire your land. Land can be acquired by buying it, or perhaps through a donation from the landowner. In some instances land is leased and other times its use is obtained through a deed of easement. A deed of easement means the land is still owned by the owner and only the

right-of-way on the surface is deeded to the community. Some railroad rights are land banked and the corridor which once held trains now holds bicyclists and walkers. Of course sometimes the land is public already and the permission for use is issued by the local, State or Federal government.

To apply Federal-aid funds to your bikeway or walkway, the land must be publicly owned. In other words, you can't just ask permission from a farmer to run a bicycle path along the edge of the field and then build the path based on a handshake. The land must have a deed of easement, sales agreement, or have been donated all within the stricture of Transportation guidelines.

Unless you already own the land, the Transportation Fund guidelines require you to obtain the land after you secure all the necessary permits. At this time, your grassroots group could obtain a nonbinding contractual agreement before you start preparing plans and specs and obtaining permits.

For Land and Water Conservation Funds, the land can be acquired earlier, but again, it too must be land that you have properly acquired and where the right-of-way is publicly owned. Symms Act money also must be used on land that is in public ownership.

It must be repeated, if you are considering using private land, the private landowner is king and should be given all consideration and due respect. The owner is, it is hoped by now, also a friend and he or she will offer suggestions to you.

12. Major plans and specifications are prepared and the permits obtained.



Now is the time when your grassroots group may want to bring in an experienced landscape architect, planner or engineer. If you are planning a dirt walkway through the woods, with little impact on the land and no necessary permits, you can probably do the paperwork yourself. If, however, you are planning to build a bicycle facility following AASHTO Guidelines, using Federal-aid funding, you'll need a licensed engineer. The professional can either be inhouse if your grassroots group has professional members, or hired from an outside firm. On occasion, as a

volunteer you can do some of the legwork for the permits with the engineer having final oversight.

Considerations in the design plans and specifications include first the surface. Will the project have dirt, sta-mat (1/3 clay 1/3 sand and 1/3 fine crushed stone), or asphalt? The adequate minimum width is 8 feet, but trails have become so popular, the AASHTO Guidelines recommend 10 feet for two-directional bike traffic. It might even be desirable to create a path 12 feet wide under certain circumstances. Construction manuals such as Bikeways by the National Recreation and Park Association recommend a gravel subbase for an asphalt surface. On some Rails-to-Trails the ballast for the railroad tracks can serve as the subbase. Drainage must be factored in with culverts, ditches and pathway pitch.

Some projects will need bridges or tunnels. Opportunities for bridges include wooden or prefabricated bridges. Historic road bridges can be repaired and used on location or moved to another site with assistance from your State Department of Transportation. Tunnels might be preexisting railroad tunnels, corrugated metal tunnels or cast concrete rectangular tunnels. A tunnel of sorts can be crafted by going under a highway bridge. For example, a highway bridge may cross over a river and the path can be built down below on the banks of the water.

Road crossings, safety and access for the disabled should be considered. Striping and signing of facilities should also be considered. Additional factors worthy of inclusion are elements of historic preservation, habitat for wildlife and the need for amenities such as bathrooms or drinking fountains. These added elements may be incorporated in the end after the facility is built, or now during the planning phase.

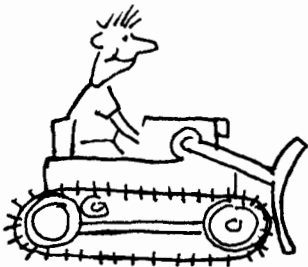
The permits that must be obtained to build the project may be related to stream alterations, wetlands, floodplains, historic preservation, curb cuts or a variety of other state and local requirements. As mentioned earlier, obtaining the permits is not necessarily difficult. It just may take some time to file for the permits and then receive the written permission.

13. Construction begins.

Now is the time for the bells, whistles and fireworks. You are breaking ground. Make sure you have a photo of the moment in the local paper. Bring a shovel,

some glasses and an energy beverage for a ground breaking toast.

Some pathways may be created by volunteer crews who do the bushwhacking and clean up. Volunteers can include parents, youth and even prisoners as part of a community work program. The project gets completed by local willpower and labor, with oversight by the organizing committee.



At the other extreme, you may have very little to do at this stage. For bicycle Federal-aid funds, the plans and specs are so detailed and the bids so complete that all you have to do is stand and watch the bulldozers and backhoes. Eventually, when all the major work is done, you can move in and landscape beyond the shoulders if this landscaping work was not part of the original Federal-aid contract.

On occasion, decisions are made in the field regarding whether a certain tree be cut down or remain standing. If you are concerned about aesthetics you might want to develop a friendly working relationship with the work crew members. They may possibly bow to your judgment since they know you care.

14. All land and financial donors are publicly acknowledged. It is wise to also be doing this as the project progresses.

This step is so often overlooked and it shouldn't be. Your grassroots project wouldn't succeed if it weren't for the generosity of your donors of money, land or labor. Make a fuss over them. Send them a personal thank you. Unless they want to remain anonymous, put their names in the paper and also on a donor plaque. Hold a party to thank your donors. Call them up to personally say thanks. Send them occasional updates. Invite them to the ground breaking.



When you are public about your appreciation, it makes the town, city or state appreciate the generosity as well. This display of thanks generates community pride which generates prosperity which generates overall well-being. The Town of Stowe, Vermont, built the Stowe Recreation Path

on 32 pieces of land donated by deed of easement and with funds raised principally through local fund raising efforts. The donors names were listed weekly in the local paper, a painted thermometer on Main Street marked the progress and a permanent sign on the path lists all the contributors. Vermont Life Magazine wrote in an article: "Walk the village and ask any resident or merchant for an example of civic pride, and invariably the reply is the Stowe Recreation Path, a 5.3-mile pathway that manages to give hikers, skiers, bikers and joggers pristine views of Mt. Mansfield and the West Branch River, and serves as a sidewalk of sorts for the Mountain Road." Your donors, by their gift, have contributed far more than just land or labor or money. They gave their own community its pride.

15. The path is enhanced and maintained.



The funding you received to build your project may have provided for the bare necessities but no amenities. People enjoy a bikeway that is functional and pretty. The job may fall on your grassroots group to enhance your facility.

First to consider are plantings native to the area. Even in urban settings the preference for vegetation leans towards the meandering natural look rather than the right angles of a manicured city plot. A variety of trees provide different types of trunks, heights, shade and dappled light, and needles or leaves. Flowers can include daylilies, cultivated beds, wildflowers, daffodils and any flower that volunteers to beautify the path. The Garden Club, Scouts, Board of Realtors or Church groups may decide to plant beds of flowers along the bikeway, which they may continue to maintain and improve. Appeal to the sense of smell with wildflowers, sight with views, touch with the cool of shade or the heat of sun, and sound with water, birds, bike bells and laughter.

Even signs, benches and garbage cans can flatter the facility. Garbage cans can be rimmed with wood slats and painted dark green or black. Signs can be painted in the colors of nature and include the logo.

If your project is in an urban neighborhood, you may have lots of concrete which needs the softness of trees or flower boxes. If a walkway is in an urban park setting, the land beyond the mowed shoulders may be predominantly

manicured with pruned trees and, if the city parks budget allows, more mowed grass. In a rural setting, the land beyond the path can remain natural with fallen logs and rotting wood to attract animals and birds.

Monotony on a bikeway needs to be broken, for too much of the same thing can be a bore. On occasion, widen the shoulders, carve out picnic areas or open up the path to a view from an overlook with benches. Create rooms with the trees and vary the canopy so sunlight, shade and dappled light hit the bikeway intermittently. Feature that wildflower forest understory with a beckoning doorway into the woods.

Historic sites or buildings can be highlighted with trees framing the area and expanses of grass leading up to the site. A spring can be contained in a marble water fountain, or serve thirsty travelers from the overflow of a rudimentary stone holding tank.

Beyond aesthetics, maps of your facility and rules of etiquette can improve the corridor. The map can tell not only where the routes are located, but where adjacent restaurants, motels or shops can be found. If the rules of the facility are spelled out in the brochures, everyone's enjoyment is increased with the addition of courtesy and cooperation. Perhaps a Friends of the Trail Organization may help with the brochure, or even perhaps help with bikeway care and planting. Your grassroots group could start the friends organization if one doesn't exist already.

General maintenance includes mowing the shoulders and picnic, parking or overlook areas, picking up garbage and cutting down weeds that fall over into the mowed areas. This responsibility is often taken over by the department maintaining the ballfields and cemeteries because they have the equipment. On occasion trees may need pruning, removal or planting. If the climate produces snow, the parking areas will have to be plowed. Most winter communities leave the snow intact in the winter for cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and other winter sports.

The pavement may need to be resealed or painted with lines or STOP at the road crossings. Patrons love to know how far they have traveled so it's helpful to paint 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile and on up on the edge of the pavement.

Liability insurance is also a factor well before the project is completed. The best coverage is by the community, municipality or state. They already have insurance for their roads, playgrounds and sidewalks. They

can include the bikeway or walkway at no additional cost except perhaps for the insurance necessary for one or two additional employees needed to maintain the path.

Finally, the maintenance of a bikeway or walkway facility is low in comparison to the maintenance costs for a swimming pool or a tennis court. Since bicyclists, pedestrians and others use the facility 12 months out of the year, there are usually more users than in a swimming pool or on a tennis court. When you calculate the low cost of maintenance with the high usage, the cost of maintaining a bikeway or walkway project should not be a deterrent to creating the facility.

Conclusion

Now you know how your grassroots group can start a project related to pedestrians and bicyclists (with the idea from one person) and you know how to successfully build one (everyone helps). How much you enjoy your facility will be up to your citizens, but experience has shown that after the project is completed, the residents say, "The bikeway is the best thing to happen to the community."



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