

CITY OF RENVILLE
ACTIVE
LIVING PLAN



MMDC
MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

CITY OF
Renville
Growing Through Collaboration

Chapter One: Introduction to the Renville Active Living Transportation Plan

The Renville Active Living Transportation Plan represents the commitment to promote outdoor recreation and physical activity in the City of Renville, Minnesota. The overall goal of the plan is to “Create a healthy environment for Renville by ensuring that residents and visitors can safely walk and bicycle throughout the community.”



The development of the plan was paid for with the financial assistance of the Kandiyohi & Renville County State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) and the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC). The city contracted with MMDC to develop the plan and created the Renville Active Living Committee, a group of local residents and stakeholders.

The Renville Active Living Transportation Plan consists of the following five chapters:

Chapter One provides an introduction to the plan, with sections on the benefits of active living transportation plans, a description of the planning process, and an overview of the plan’s key stakeholders.

Chapter Two profiles the community, including demographics, maps, a description of the community’s land use, and information on the city’s existing infrastructure.

Chapter Three provides an assessment of the community conducting a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. This chapter will serve as the foundation for identifying areas that need to be addressed in the 6E’s (refer to Section C of this Chapter). In addition, an assessment of the city’s existing plans and policies as they relate to active living is provided.

Chapter Four will lay out a plan to make improvements for active living in the community through goals, objectives and action steps.

Chapter Five establishes the Renville Active Living Implementation Plan. Highlights include the identification of the community’s priority projects and discusses the potential timing and funding sources for each project.

A. What is ‘Active Living?’

‘Active living’ is simply incorporating physical activity into our daily lives. It is widely known the lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for many preventable diseases. The City of Renville’s goal is **to create an Active Living Community where residents and visitors can readily and safely participate in everyday physical activity**. From a transportation perspective, such activities can be as simple as a short walk to school, a park, or to a local store; or it may mean traveling by bicycle to and from work or school from a longer distance. The goal of this plan is to create a transportation plan that will identify the infrastructure, policies, and programs necessary to ensure efficient and effective transportation options for residents of Renville.

B. The Benefits of the Active Living Transportation Plans

Health Benefits

The foremost benefit and reason to undertake this plan is to have a positive impact on the health of the residents of Renville. Physical activity has been shown widely as one of the most important things you can do to for your health. Making it more natural for persons to walk and bike is an effective way to increase resident’s physical activity levels. Physical activity can help persons to:

- ✓ Control their weight
- ✓ Reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease
- ✓ Reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- ✓ Reduce the risk of some cancers
- ✓ Strengthen bones and muscles
- ✓ Improve mental health and mood

**From the Minnesota
Department of Health:**

- In 1995 the state obesity rate was 15.3%.
- It was 27.6% in 2014.
- Over 50% of deaths are from obesity-related chronic diseases.

- ✓ Improve the ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, especially for older adults
- ✓ Increase the chances of living longer

A joint Kandiyohi and Renville Counties' 2014 Community Health Improvement Plan provided the following key facts:

- ✓ "In the most recent measures, roughly 63% of Kandiyohi and Renville County's population is overweight or obese, fairly equal to the Minnesota rate".
- ✓ "Regular physical activity has been shown to reduce morbidity and mortality from many chronic diseases and increase quality of life. Kandiyohi and Renville County residents suffer from chronic illnesses that can be prevented or improved through regular physical activity. About 16% of Kandiyohi and Renville County adults report levels of activity report no regular exercise".
- ✓ "According to the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey, 16% of Kandiyohi and Renville County teenagers in 9th and 11th grades, watch TV shows or movies, play video games or use phone or phone apps 3 to 5 hours a day. In the same age group, nearly 9% report doing those activities 6 or more hours each day. The amount of time spent watching television is associated with obesity in both children and adults". (Surgeon General Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation).

Economic Development Benefits

The City of Renville should be able to derive economic development benefits from undertaking the improvements that are laid out in this Active Living Transportation Plan. By providing a network of trails, sidewalks, bicycle road sharing routes, and other bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, will improve the livability of the community. A pedestrian and bicycle friendly community is a livability measure that helps attract and retain residents and the needed workforce for the community's businesses. Studies have shown that neighborhoods that have above average levels of walkability have higher property values of similar neighborhoods that lack walkability. All other things being equal, persons prefer to live where they have the option to easily walk to downtown shops, community parks and other destinations.

Fairness/Equity Benefits

Many of the community's population do not have a motor vehicle license, or the ability to drive. Under-driving-age children alone are a large percentage of the city's population. There is also a percentage of the city's population that rely on the need for non-motorized transportation that are elderly, disabled, or have low incomes. Persons that either need or choose to walk or bike to destinations need to be accommodated by the transportation infrastructure as has been provided to those using motorized vehicles.

Sense of Community

By encouraging more walking and biking in the community, it increases the amount of people interacting with each other, thus creating a friendlier more attractive place to live and be engaged in community events.

Other Benefits

Besides health and economic development benefits there are a couple of other benefits for a community having a bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment. Although traffic congestion is not a major concern in the City of Renville, having a friendly active living transportation community will lower roadway congestion, driver frustration, and increase parking availability. Removing some motor vehicle trips is also good for lowering pollution.

C. Project Scope & Document Contents

Analysis and recommendations for this Plan will be guided by utilizing the “Six E’s” planning process. A well-rounded healthy living transportation plan will discuss how Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation and Equity will all be addressed in improving the current conditions for Renville.

THE 6 Es

Engineering: Creating safe and convenient places to ride a bicycle and walk.

Education: Giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride and walk safely, while educating all users about the rules of the road.

Encouragement: Creating local enthusiasm and a stronger culture that welcomes and promotes walking and biking.

Enforcement: Implementing enforcement measures that will help ensure safe roads for all users, and sidewalks and paths for all ages.

Evaluation and Planning: Planning for bicycling and walking as a safe and viable transportation option.

Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation and Equity will all be addressed in improving the current conditions for Renville.

D. Key Stakeholders

Renville City Council:

The City of Renville has a six-member city council. The mayor is elected to a four-year term just like the councilors. There are 3 members elected at each biennial city election for a four-year term. The City Council holds their regular meetings on the second and fourth Monday of each calendar month at City Hall (normally at 6:00 p.m.). For more information on the City

of Renville, visit the community's official website at:



<https://ci.renville.mn.us/>

Meetings are held at 221 North Main Street

Phone: (320) 329-8366

City of Renville Public Works – The City of Renville Public Works Department has a large role in the success of the Renville Active Living Transportation Plan. Public works will be in charge of repairing any existing sidewalk, establishing new sidewalks, ADA upgrades, and maintenance of current pedestrian infrastructure. It will be important for the public works department to be familiar with this plan and what needs to be completed on an annual basis.

Renville County Public Works – The Renville County Public Works Department will be a valuable partner for the Renville Active Living Transportation Plan. Ultimately the County Board will need to support any of the proposed infrastructure changes along the county roads. For more information on the Renville County Public Works Department, visit the following website:



Renville County Public Works Website:

www.renvillecountymn.com/departments/public_work

Renville County Sheriff's Office – The Renville County Sheriff's Office provides a full range of law enforcement services for all unincorporated areas of Renville County. Additionally, they provide contracted law enforcement services for the cities of Bird Island, Morton, Sacred Heart and Franklin. They operate with a strong community-oriented policing philosophy and strive to form and maintain alliances with other emergency services agencies as well as with the citizens of Renville County. For more information, visit the following website:



www.renvillecountymn.com/sheriff/index.php

City of Renville Police Department – The City of Renville police department will be heavily involved with components of the Active Living Transportation Plan. They will enforce city ordinances that help or obstruct active living activities, enforce safe roadway practices, and continue to keep the city safe for pedestrians at all times of the day.



The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) – The local Regional Development Commission, serving Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, and Renville Counties, is involved with taking the lead in the development of SRTS plans. MMDC staff also works with MnDOT on transportation planning activities and helps local governmental units with technical and grant writing assistance. For more information on MMDC or the Renville Active Living Plan, visit the following website. www.mmrhc.org

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) – Any road infrastructure improvements on MnDOT owned roads will have to be reviewed and approved by MnDOT staff. The Renville active living plan will address issues on Highway 212 and County Road 6, which will have to be supported by MnDOT district 8, located in Willmar. MnDOT planners and engineers can help by identifying which infrastructure improvements are feasible along MnDOT owned roads. For more information on MnDOT and their role in ALT plans, please visit the following website:



www.dot.state.mn.us

Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) – The Minnesota Department of Health houses the Statewide Health Improvement Program. One of the many objectives of SHIP is to help create active communities by increasing opportunities for walking and biking. They are also involved in promoting education on a number of other health-related topics, such as healthy eating, drugs and alcohol prevention, and reducing TV and other screen time. Kandiyohi-Renville is the local SHIP program. For more information, visit the following websites:

Statewide SHIP website: www.health.state.mn.us/ship



Local SHIP Website:

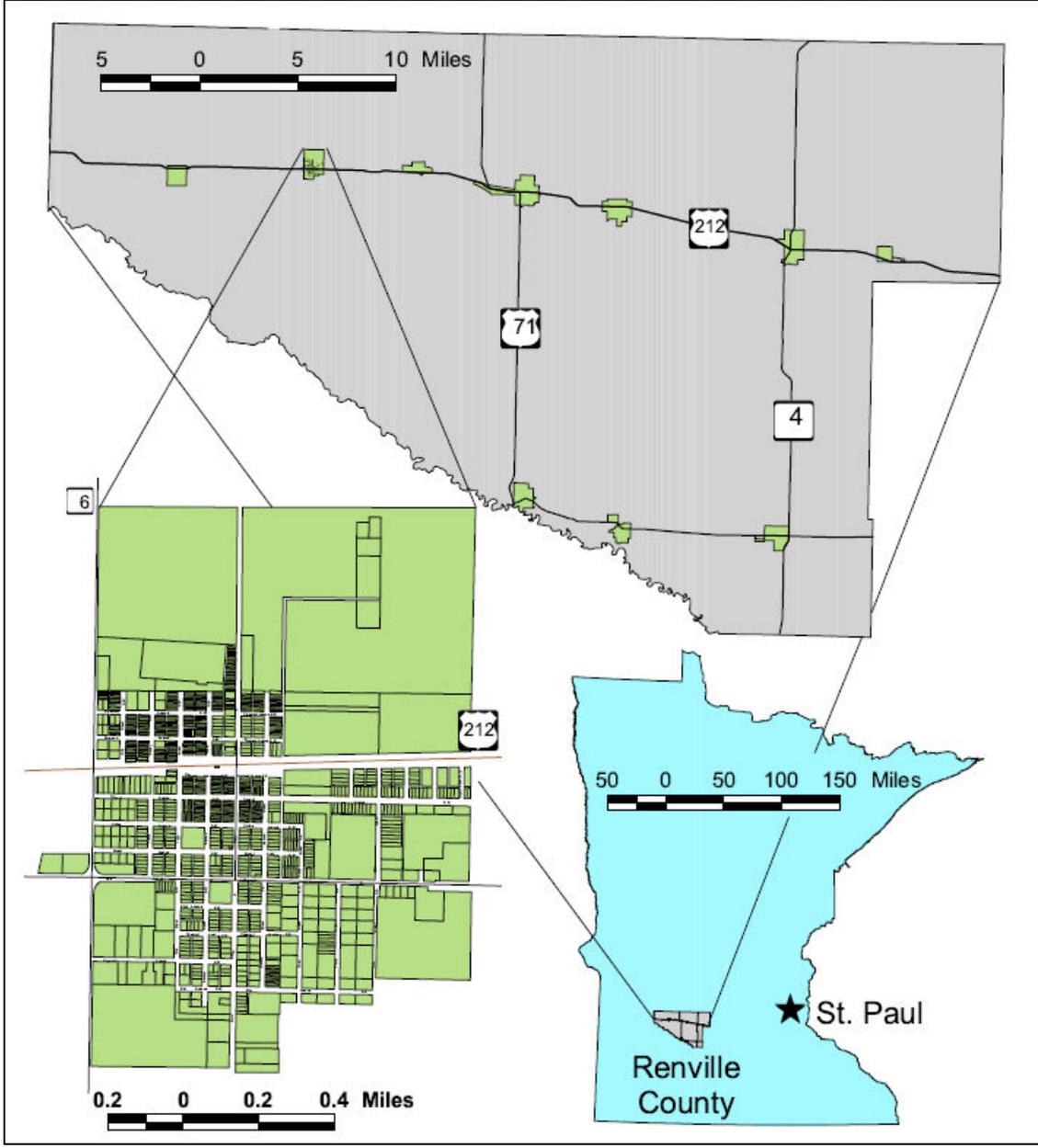
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/ship/communities/Kandiyohi-Renville.html

Chapter Two: City of Renville's Community Profile

Chapter Two profiles the City of Renville as well as the surrounding Renville County. Renville's history is also briefly mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, to add context. The profile contains demographic and land use information, including population and household statistics along with workforce distribution and age composition

Map 1A: Renville County

The City of Renville is the largest community located in the western third of Renville County, about 120 miles west of St. Paul. The community is located along U.S. Highway 212, and is surrounded by Emmet Township. The Minnesota River, one of Minnesota's largest waterways, can be found approximately 10 miles to the south of the Renville city limits.



A. Renville History

The City and County of Renville were named for Joseph Renville, a man of French and Dakota descent who had extensive knowledge of the wilderness and served as an interpreter, translator, and guide for many expeditions. He also served as a Canadian Officer in the War of 1812, founded the Columbia Fur Company, and was an important figure in dealings between European Settlers and the Dakota People.



The City of Renville was platted in 1878, when the railroad reached the area. It was incorporated in 1906. The community has grown from a population of 250, in 1900, to about 1,200 residents today.

The area surrounding the Minnesota River Valley, including the land surrounding the City of Renville and its neighbors, is a fertile agricultural area known for its high productivity. As a result, Renville's economy, past and present, is based largely upon agribusiness. Renville serves as an agricultural service and distribution center for the surrounding area, and the city boasts the world's largest beet sugar processing plant.

B. Renville's Community Profile

Population

An important aspect of developing an Active Living plan is to determine current population trends within the community. This information is important as it can be used to help predict a city's population growth or decline. Any change in a city's population will impact future planning.

Table 1A, found on the following page, reports the population statistics for both the City and the County of Renville, since 1930.

**Table 1A:
City of Renville and Renville County
Population since 1930 (U.S. Census)**

Year	City of Renville	Change		Renville County	Change	
		#	%		#	%
1930	1,064	N/A	N/A	23,645	N/A	N/A
1940	1,256	192	20%	24,625	980	4%
1950	1,323	57	11%	23,954	-671	-3%
1960	1,373	50	4	23,249	-705	-3%
1970	1,252	-121	-6%	21,139	-2,110	-9%
1980	1,493	241	5%	20,401	-738	-4%
1990	1,315	-178	-3%	17,673	-2,728	-13%
2000	1,323	8	-10%	17,154	-159	-1%
2010	1,287	-36	-13%	15,730	-1,424	-8%
2020	1,271	-16	-3.6%	14,487	-1,243	-8%
Average	1,296	21.8	1.7%	20,204	-944	-5%

Table 1A shows that Renville has experienced an overall population increase since 1930. However, the City's population peaked at 1,493 in 1980 and has declined by 382 residents over the last 60 years. Table 1A also shows that Renville's population in the year 2020 (1,271) was nearly the same as it was in the year 1940 (1,256). Renville County's population has steadily decreased since 1940, while not experiencing a single ten-year period of positive population growth. It is important to note, when looking at the average change in population over the 90-year period, Renville has not seen an increase or decrease in population. While Renville County has decreased at the rate of 944 residents every ten years. Renville has retained its population which could be due to a number of factors including strong employment opportunities, solid housing market, sense of community, etc.

Age

Age composition is another important aspect to consider in the Active Living planning process. It is essential that every age bracket be considered and included in planning. For example, young people will need to be able to get to and from school safely. One way to encourage an active lifestyle for this group would be to incorporate safe and accommodating routes to the school. Similar considerations can also be applied to older demographics who may like to walk or bike to work, to worship, or to the local business district. Renville's age statistics for 2020 appear in Table 1B. Note that a total number of people in each age category is provided along with that group's proportion of the total City of Renville population (1,271 total residents). The proportion information is also provided for Renville County and all of Minnesota..

Table 1B
Population by Age Group for
Renville, Renville County and Minnesota (2020 American Community Survey))

Renville		Age Category	Percentage of Renville County Population	Percentage of Minnesota Population
Number	Percent			
363	28.6%	Under 18 Years	23%	24%
81	6.9%	18 to 24 Years	7%	10%
196	15.9%	25 to 44 Years	21%	26%
376	30%	45 to 64 Years	30%	27%
230	18.6%	65 and Older	19%	13%
1,271	100%	Totals	100%	100%

Compared to the State of Minnesota, the City of Renville's age percentages differ in several ways. First, only 6.9 percent of Renville's population falls into the 18 to 24 age category, compared to 10 percent statewide. Although the difference may not be large, it reinforces the idea that young rural Minnesota adults often leave their hometown, at least for some amount of time, after high school. A larger age difference between the population of Renville and the State is found in the 65 and older category. According to Table 1B, Renville has significantly more seniors, proportionally, than the state as a whole. The senior category comprises 18.6 percent of the City of Renville's population, versus just 13 percent of Minnesota's total populace. Table 1B also indicates that the majority of Renville's population is of either school or working age. It will be necessary to ensure planning accounts for this.

Housing

**Table 1C:
Renville's 2020 Housing Statistics**

Renville Housing Units	Number	Percent
Occupied Housing Units	473	100.0%
Owner-Occupied Units	357	75.4%
Population in Owner-Occupied Units	958	
Average Owner Household Size	2.68	
Renter-Occupied Units	116	24.5%
Population in Renter-Occupied Units	311	
Average Renter Household Size	2.68	

The 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) showed that the City of Renville had 296 families, with an average family size of 3.3 persons. A "family" is defined as a group of members who maintain kinship with each other while living in the same dwelling or different dwellings. 146 families included related children under 18 years of age. There were just 28 female heads of household with no husband present, 17 of whom had children under the age of 18. ACS estimates show that 13.0% of City residents lived below the poverty line in 2020. The 2020 ACS showed that 294 minority persons (i.e. People of Color) lived within the community in 2020. The highest reported minority race (103) identified as being Hispanic or Latino.

In 2020, the City of Renville contained 473 occupied housing units. 357 (75.4%) were owner-occupied housing units and 116 (24.5%) renter occupied units. The 2020 ACS showed that, of these occupied housing units, 12 units had no vehicle available. Another 180 occupied housing units had just one vehicle available.

In addition to the occupied housing units, the Renville community contained 56 vacant housing units in 2020. These accounted for roughly 10% of the City's total housing units.

Employment Characteristics

Employment is a key factor when planning for an active community. Residents that work and live in the same town should be encouraged to walk or bike to and from work whenever possible. This section will highlight the number of individuals in Renville’s workforce, how these workers travel to work, and which major industries employ them.

**Table 1D:
Renville’s 2020 Employment Status**

Renville 2020 ACS	Number	Percent
Population 16 Years and Over	953	100.0%
In Labor Force	572	60.0%
Employed	536	56.2%
Unemployed	36	3.8%

Table 1D shows the employment status statistics for the City of Renville in 2020. 572 of Renville’s 16 years and older population (60%) were actively engaged in the workforce (working or seeking work at that time). Of that group, 536 people were employed (56.2%) and 36 were unemployed (3.8%).

**Table 1E:
Commuting to Work**

Ways of Travel	Number	Percent
Car, truck, or van (Drive alone)	452	84.6%
Car, truck, or van (Carpool)	45	8.4%
Public Transportation	3	0.6%
Walked	18	3.4%
Other means	0	0.0%
Worked from home	18	3.0%

Table 1E shows how the employed population travels to and from work in 2020. Driving alone and carpooling were, by far, the frequently-chosen modes of workforce travel, comprising 93% of work-related trips. Only 3.4% of work-related travel was by foot.

To support active living, it is important for commuters who work and live within Renville to have safe and easy walking or bicycling routes between their homes and their places of employment. Improvements to the City’s active living infrastructure and culture can increase the percentage of people walking and/or biking to work.

Key Destinations

Determining key destinations is an important step within the Active Living planning process. Many residents will choose to walk or bike to these areas if suitable pedestrian routes are provided.

There are three public park/recreation areas within the City of Renville. Memorial Park, which encompasses one entire city block and contains a park shelter, playground equipment, and a veteran's memorial. Water Tower Park contains a park shelter, ice rink, and playground equipment. North Park contains a park shelter, playground equipment, and a sand volleyball court. The Renville County West School offers additional active living facilities that currently include the City's pool, a playground, ball fields, and tennis/pickleball courts.

Main Street serves as Renville's primary commercial area. It is another key destination for walkers and bikers. It is important that pedestrians from all of the City's neighborhoods be provided sufficient access to the Main Street area, which is home to Renville's City Hall, the public library, restaurants, a grocery store, and various other businesses. The City's central Main Street area/commercial district does provide pedestrian infrastructure. However, many residents lack direct pedestrian-friendly access to the central area's sidewalk system. Walkers and bikers must share the streets with motor vehicle traffic when traveling to or from the City's central area.



The following is the full list of key destinations in Renville:

Business and Civic

- [212 Driving School](#)
- [212 Hub](#)
- A to Z Insurance
- A+ Insurance
- Adam Zaske Rentals
- [AEI](#)
- Bishop Rook
- Casey's General Store
- [CIRCLE](#)
- [Community Electric](#)
- Cenex
- Community Soft Water
- [Country Rose Floral](#)
- Dave's Place
- [Dawson Co-op Credit Union](#)
- [Dirks-Blem Funeral Services](#)
- [Discher & Associates Life Center](#)
- [Dollar General](#)
- [F&M Bank](#)
- [Farmer's Co-op Oil](#)
- [Farmward Cooperative](#)
- [First Security Bank](#)
- [Fitzner Real Estate](#)
- [Hinderk's Chiropractic](#)
- [K&M Manufacturing](#)
- Main Street Bar & Grill
- Marcus Well Drilling
- [Maynard's Grocery Store](#)
- Memory Stylez
- [Napa Automotive](#)
- [Novotny Electrical Services LLC](#)
- [Renville Clinic](#)
- [Pioneerland Library](#)
- [RCW Public School](#)
- Renville C Store
- [Renville Health Service](#)
- Renville Pool
- [Renville Post Office](#)
- [Renville Sales Pavilion](#)
- [Steve's Heating and AC](#)
- United Mills
- [Viessman Trucking](#)

Parks

- Memorial Park
- Central Park
- North Park

Churches

- First Lutheran Church
- Holy Redeemer Church
- St. John's Lutheran Church
- United Methodist Church
- Emden Christian Reformed Church

Apartments

- East Court Apartments
- Meadows on Main Apartments
- Hinderks Apartments
- Renville Holdings Apartments
- Bryant Avenue Apartments
- Second Street Apartments



Chapter Three: SWOT Assessment and Inventory of Policies and Practices

A. SWOT Analysis

SWOT, which stands for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats, is an analytical tool used to help identify both internal and external influences on the decision-making process. During a meeting with the Renville Active Living Task Force the following SWOT analysis was generated. This can be used to guide Renville's Active Living Plan by helping City decision-makers identify areas for improvement and opportunities for implementation.

STRENGTHS

- Active groups relating to active living (e.g., Lions, Park Moms, Exercise Groups)
- Flashing beacon crossing infrastructure (U.S. Highway 212 and 3rd Street East)
- New growth with businesses
- Buy-in with City leaders
- Positive and engaged school system
- Low traffic (aside from U.S. Highway 212) and wide residential streets
- Sense of good community/support
- Newer and recently renovated community center/library
- Strong park system
- Strong church system
- Strong fire department/first responders
- Community pool
- Residents that support and participate in active living
- Local law enforcement (vs. law enforcement provided by the County only)

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of lighting around town
- Uneven and cracked segments in the community's sidewalk system
- High traffic and risks associated with crossing U.S. Highway 212
- Blighted properties within the community
- Unconnected segments of public sidewalks
- Aging pedestrian infrastructure around school and pool
- Unmaintained/uncleared sidewalks during the winter season
- Car-focused rural mindset (common in Greater Minnesota communities)
- Lack of transitional housing
- Lack of childcare
- Aging tennis courts and other active living infrastructure
- Older walking and biking infrastructure do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards

OPPORTUNITIES

- Bike events
- New fitness facilities
- Sugar Beet Days town festival
- 5k Beet Days run
- Renville County West District's summer recreation programming
- Improving tennis courts/pickleball/playground equipment
- Possible trail from the community to the Stoney Creek Golf Course

THREATS

- Safety around U.S. Highway 212 and Renville County Road 6
- Aging sidewalk infrastructure
- Social media and indoor activities in competition with more active living
- Lack of pedestrian infrastructure around and to active living destinations (e.g., parks, tennis courts, pool)
- Non-ADA compliant pedestrian infrastructure
- Unleashed and unattended/roaming dogs

B. Review of Local Policies

The Inventory of Policies and Practices section of this chapter provides an analysis of local policies, private employee wellness practices, and best practices for active living. The focus of this section is on policies or programs that affect, either positively or negatively, the average person's ability to engage in physical activity within the community.

Characteristics of a Walkable and Bikeable Community

To create a healthy walking and bicycling culture, there are various characteristics of a walkable and bikeable community Renville should strive to achieve or improve. When changes to City plans and ordinances are considered, both in new and more established City locations, these characteristics should also be taken into consideration. Walkable and bikeable characteristics include:

- **Coherence:** There should be an organized, clear, and understandable sidewalk, trail, street, and land-use system, consistent with the scale and function of the surrounding environment. Sidewalks and trails should link the community's key destinations.

- **Safety:** Pedestrian and bicyclist safety must always be considered when designing new or updating existing roadways and when planning for major construction.
- **Continuity:** A pattern of design and usage that unifies the pedestrian system should be incorporated in the City's planning.
- **Equilibrium:** A balance among transportation modes should be ensured to accommodate and encourage pedestrian and bicycle usage.
- **Comfort:** Well-maintained surfaces, negotiable crosswalks, unobstructed passage at corners, and well-timed crossing signals are needed to ensure pedestrian comfort and safety.
- **Accessibility:** ADA compliance is necessary to ensure opportunity for all to benefit from the pedestrian/bicycle environment to the fullest possible extent.
- **Sociability:** The City should encourage a tone of hospitality and friendliness to promote social interaction within the community. A variety of uses and activities should be considered along sidewalks and trails.
- **Efficiency:** Simplicity in design and function will support cost-effectiveness and minimize route improvement delays.
- **Attractiveness:** The environment for walkers and bikers should be clean, comfortable, and efficient. Surroundings should be well-maintained. To the extent possible, shade trees should be placed along sidewalks, trails and other locations of interest. Amenities, such as benches and bicycle racks, and trash receptacles should be strategically placed throughout the community, along pedestrian routes.

It is important to consider local policies and discuss the implications of these policies as they pertain to active living within Renville. Key elements/principles of land use and design, which should be encouraged within the City's plans and ordinances, include:

- Incorporating appealing, compact neighborhoods with shared open spaces,
- Encouraging mixed-use development,
- Ensuring functional site designs with a sufficient level of detail,
- Including a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and infrastructure,
- Integrating shorter blocks and linked subdivisions,
- Providing universal access and safety for all.

MMDC staff have reviewed the following City planning documents and ordinances, which impact active living in the Renville community:

- The City of Renville's Comprehensive Plan
- The City of Renville's Subdivision Ordinance
- The City of Renville's Zoning Ordinance
- Relevant Sections of the City of Renville's Code of Ordinances

Renville Comprehensive Plan Recommendations:

Overall, the City of Renville's Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2002, has many sections that support the concept of "active living transportation". The Goals and Policy section of the Comprehensive Plan includes a number of policy recommendations that support pedestrian and bicycle travel. Below are a few recommendations that, if implemented, would make Renville's comprehensive plan even more proactive and supportive of active living principles.

Recommendations:

- The Active Living Transportation Plan should be adopted as a Section of the Comprehensive Plan after its completion.
- Under Goal 6 - Housing, Objective A, consider the following additions:
 - Active transportation design features will be incorporated into new housing and neighborhood developments.
 - Street connectivity will be improved, using grid-like street patterns, with more intersections, and smaller block size.
 - Connections throughout and between neighborhoods and scaled for pedestrians, will be developed to make the City a more livable and vibrant community for people of all ages and incomes.
- Under Goal 7-Transportation, Objective B, consider the following additions:
 - Planning will be balanced and include each of the six E's: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation, and Equity.

- Infrastructure changes and improvements will be rooted in the concept of creating “complete streets”, incorporating design that supports all common modes of travel, including walking, bicycling, public transit, and motor vehicles.
- The share of transportation modes used will, to the extent possible, achieve greater balance between walking, bicycling, public transit, and motor vehicles. The level of walking and bicycling activity will be measured in terms of physical activity, public health, and transportation benefits.
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will be prioritized and given the same level of consideration as motor vehicle infrastructure when directing community funds.
- The safety of pedestrians and bicyclists will be improved, with specific actions taken to reduce the likelihood of collisions, injuries, and fatalities.

Subdivision Ordinance Recommendations:

Ensuring that local site plan review adequately addresses the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists is important. To provide a better pedestrian and bicycling environment in the City of Renville, the following Subdivision Ordinance recommendations are provided.

- Existing Subdivision Ordinance purpose language gives mention to facilitating adequate provisions for transportation. However, additional language centered specifically on pedestrian activity/active transportation would be beneficial. New subdivision developers should ensure pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through the inclusion of facilities (i.e., sidewalks, routes, and trails) that are integrated into roadway design or provided as stand-alone amenities.
- In the Subdivision Design Standards section, language states that new subdivisions shall be required to have an internal circulation plan for traffic. “Traffic” will be defined broadly to include bicyclists and pedestrians. New subdivision developers shall, as part of the traffic impact analysis, conduct an analysis of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- To minimize short-distance motor vehicle trips, subdivision plans must demonstrate connectivity between developments for bicyclists and pedestrians. If the City approves multiple cul-de-sacs in a new development, “cut through” easements, allowing for connecting paths between cul-de-sacs, shall be required. Traditional neighborhood design and development, incorporating street grids, will be encouraged as the best option.

- The City should also allow and even encourage the use of conservation or cluster development for new subdivisions, as this will encourage access and open space while incorporating compact land use patterns that support increased walking and bicycling.
- The City of Renville should consider a Dedication Requirement policy in the Subdivision Ordinance, reserving a significant percentage of land for parks and recreational use. Typically, Minnesota communities reserve between three and 12 percent for this purpose. The Dedication Requirement policy should include specific mention of trails as an allowable use. Consideration should be given for language that gives the City discretion to decide whether a proposed dedicated requirement area meets the needs of the community or if a fee option, that is to say an option for developers to financially contribute to other more beneficial parks and recreation space, is more appropriate. This would allow for more City flexibility and ensure that the dedicated spaces contribute to the community's Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents to the fullest-extent.

Zoning Ordinance Recommendations:

Following are recommendations for adjustment to the City of Renville Zoning Ordinance. These changes would positively influence pedestrian and bicycle facilities improvement within the City:

- Under Article II - General Regulations, include a section on design standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This section:
 - Should address which development applications must include provisions for bicycle and/or pedestrian access,
 - a. Provide a reference to the bicycle and pedestrian circulation plan, to related components of the Comprehensive Plan, and to this Active Living Transportation Plan.
 - b. Should explain how the zoning administrative officer, commission, or council will decide if bicycle and pedestrian access-focused requirements have been met.
 - c. Should describe conditions under which the zoning commission or council may waive bicycle and pedestrian facility, easement, dedication requirements, and related standards. For instance, indicating that requirements may be waived if the development occurs along existing public bicycle lanes or multi-use paths.
 - d. An explanation of the process by which facilities will become public right-of-way, owned by the city.

- Under the design standards section in Article XII Site Plan, consider adding language directing City officials to address bicycle and pedestrian amenities and related topics. This should include provision of access; linkage/connectivity; safety; bicycle lane and sidewalk width, and geometry; related amenities; bicycle parking; relation of facilities to parking lots/on-street parking; easements for bicycle lane, sidewalk, or path right-of-way; and ADA compliance.

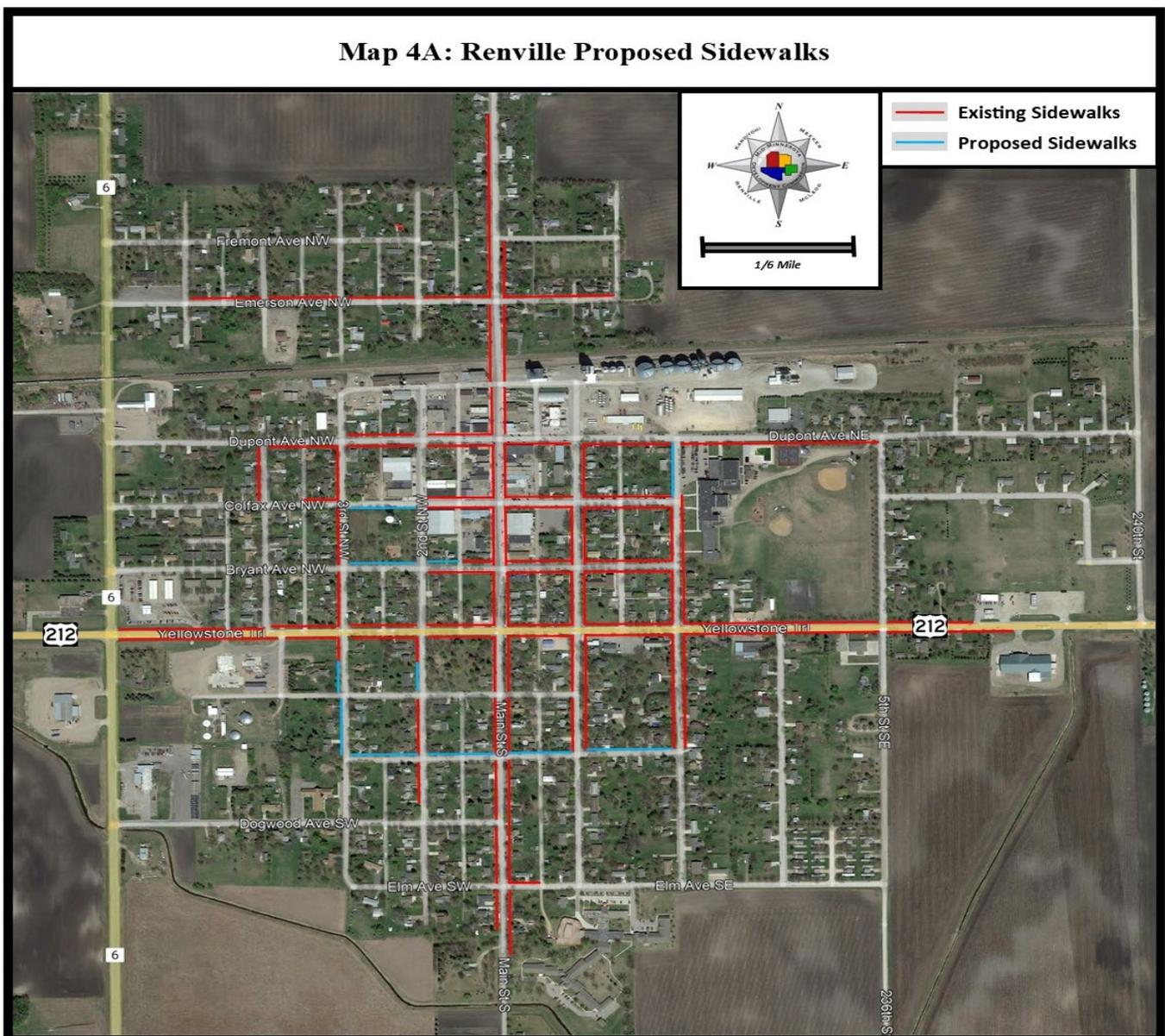
General Provisions of Ordinance Code Recommendations:

- Ordinance 3.04.00 (Sidewalks, Curbs, and Gutters) should allow for assessment and maintenance of existing sidewalk, curb, and gutter infrastructure. The city can use a similar process pertaining to the assessment of street standards. The city should annually assess all sidewalks and make repairs to damaged sections.
- Ordinance 3.01.04 (Curb and Gutter) under design standards should have a section addressing curb cuts. This section should require that all sidewalks have curb cuts to comply with current ADA standards.
- Ordinance 3.09.09 (Tree Distance from Curb and Sidewalk) should contain clear language that states that no tree should be planted within the boulevard. Trees within this space, cause damage to the curbs/sidewalks and interfere with street lights.
- Ordinance 7.05.00 (Use of bicycles, roller or in-line skates, and skateboards in the central business district) is in direct conflict with active living concepts. The current ordinance prohibits the use of bicycles, skates, and skateboards within the central business district. From an active living standpoint, access to the City's businesses should be encouraged to those using these active transportation modes.
- Ordinance 8.09.00 (Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks) has the complete language required to have safe sidewalks in winter months. However, enforcement of this ordinance has been an issue. The city should review current ordinances and form a plan on how to properly execute the removal of snow and ice from all City-owned sidewalks and trails.

- Chapter 3 (Streets, parks, public property and improvements) should have a section addressing street lighting within city limits. Currently there are segments of street that are not properly lit. The city should take inventory of street lights and form a plan to have proper lighting on all city owned streets.
- Currently, there are a limited number of sidewalks within the City's residential zones. It is recommended that several short sidewalk segments be constructed on streets abutting residential property. Additionally, given there are so few sidewalks in these residential areas, the City should consider fairness when determining if the owners of properties abutting public sidewalks should be held financially responsible for their repair, and to what degree. This conversation should take place prior to the construction of new or the repair of existing sidewalks. The sidewalks proposed in this Active Living Transportation plan are important pedestrian corridors for all residents in the community. As such, it may be considered reasonable and fair if all, or at least most, sidewalk-associated costs be covered by the City. Determining responsibility for keeping sidewalks clear of snow, ice on public sidewalks would be another appropriate action. If the City does move to take on this responsibility, it would be wise to inform residents that street snow removal will be prioritized ahead of sidewalk snow removal, to ensure clear expectations. It is recommended that individual property owners remain responsible for keeping sidewalks clear of rubbish.
- Language addressing trail maintenance should be added to the ordinance code before trail segments are constructed.
- The City of Renville should consider adopting a "Complete Streets" policy. Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to facilitate safe use and support mobility for all users, including drivers, walkers, bicyclists, or public transportation riders of all ages and abilities. The Complete Streets concept incorporates multiple approaches to planning, design, and operating on roadways and within rights-of-way, with a focus on safety and efficiency.

Chapter Four: Existing Conditions and Engineering Needs Future Sidewalk Locations, Sidewalk Repair Inspections, and ADA Inventory

Renville's sidewalk infrastructure is well-developed and connected within the central section of the city. However, in the City's outer neighborhoods, sidewalks are scarce, forcing walkers and bikers to compete with motorists for roadway space. While sidewalks are not needed on every Renville street, the incorporation of additional north/south and east/west sidewalks would filter pedestrians to the City's central



sidewalk network. Please see the map on page 25 for an illustration of proposed sidewalk locations.

Locations for recommended sidewalk additions include:

- Along Chesnut Avenue SE, from 3rd Street SE to 3rd Street SW placed on the north side of the street.
- Along 3rd Street SW/NW, from Chesnut Avenue SE to the existing sidewalk corridor placed on the west side of the street.
- Along Colfax Avenue NW, from 3rd Street NW to 2nd Street NW. This corridor would run along the north side of Water Tower Park.
- Along Bryant Avenue NW, from 3rd Street NW to the mid-block of 2nd Street NW and Main Street North placed on the north side of the street,
- Along 3rd Street NE, from Dupont Avenue NE to Colfax Avenue NE placed on the west side of the street.

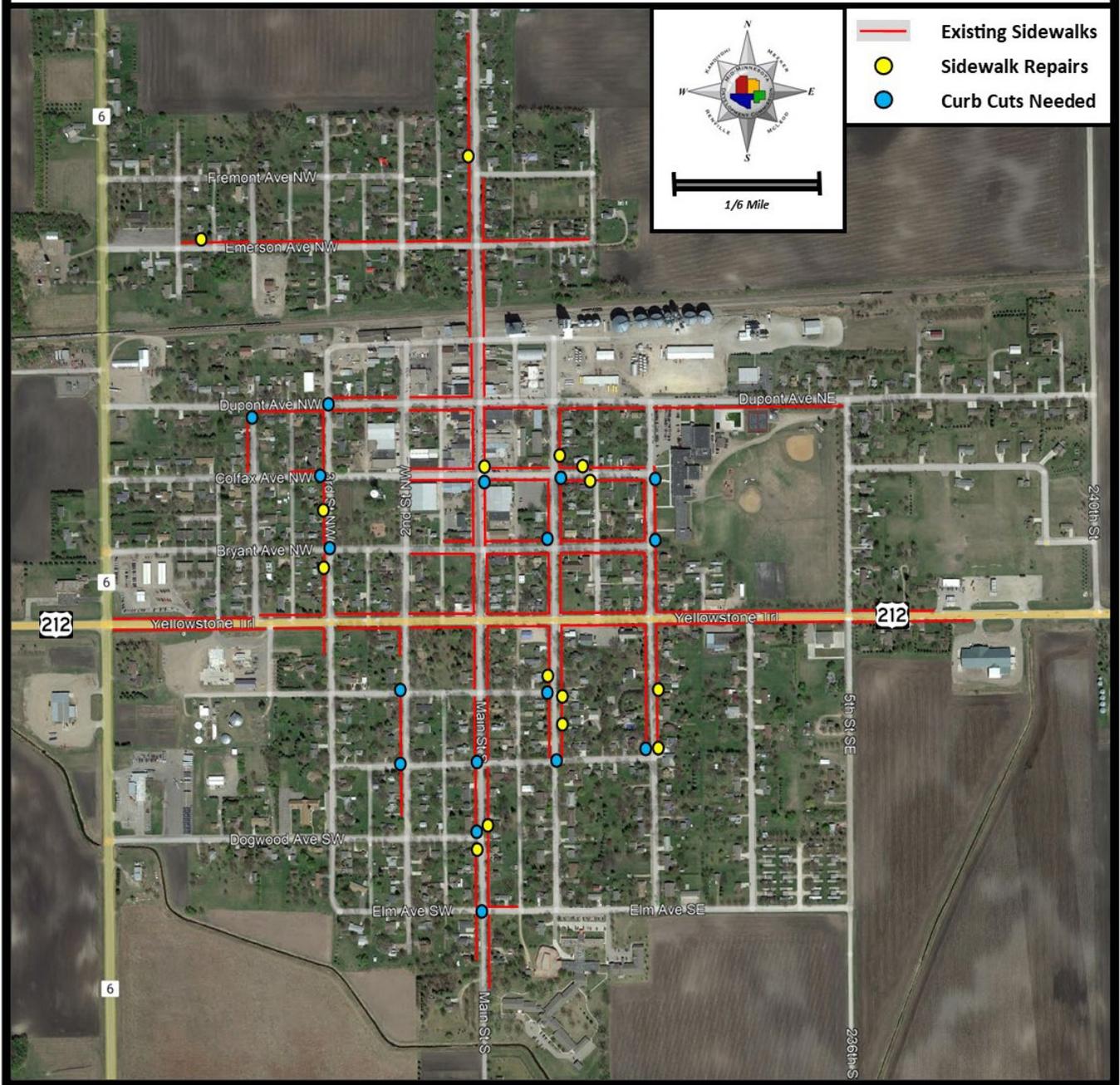
It is recommended that the City review the current condition of all community sidewalks to identify where repairs are needed. It is important to identify large cracks, lips, and buckled sidewalks that could cause injury. Additionally, the inspecting party should identify any overhanging tree limbs and/or shrubbery blocking portions of the sidewalk and in need of trimming or removal. Once these issues are identified, repairs and trimming should be scheduled. A review should also be conducted to identify if and where any Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance measures are needed. Once a list of needs is identified, a long-term ADA plan should be created to resolve compliance issues. Sidewalk investments should be included in the City's annual budget until all identified issues are resolved. The ADA requires Renville to "give priority to walkways serving state and local government offices and facilities, bus stops and transportation services, private businesses offering goods and services to the public, and employees, followed by walkways serving residential areas." The City should establish a method by which members of the public can easily request ADA compliance measures for specific intersections or walkways frequented by people with disabilities.



When sidewalks are reconstructed within the community, efforts should be made to bring them to current width standards. Within residential areas, sidewalks should be at least five feet (60 inches) wide and include buffer zones. In areas where sidewalks fail to meet that standard, the ADA requires a minimum of four feet (48 inches) of width. To address ADA needs in areas where a significant length of sidewalk is under five feet in width, passing spaces (designed for wheelchairs) should be placed every 200 feet. These passing spaces should, at a minimum, be 5 feet x 5 feet (60 inches x 60 inches) in size. Sidewalk standards have additional design/engineering considerations that should be met. While not the focus of this plan, sidewalk grades, cross-slopes, and other design standards must be adhered to. Additionally, ADA requirements include the need for curb cuts and detectable warning truncated domes. Current sidewalk design manuals are readily available for the City's engineering firm to reference and follow when planning improvements.

Within business districts sidewalks should be considerably wider than in residential areas. Currently, sidewalks in Renville's central business district (CBD) are adequate, as they extend from buildings to the curb and are sufficiently wide. To afford accessibility, care should be taken to ensure sidewalk furniture and other obstructions allow for no less than a four-foot (48 inch) width of contiguous clear space. Map 4B below shows the areas where sidewalks need to be repaired and where curb cuts need to be added to support ADA compliance.

Map 4B: Renville Sidewalk Repair and Necessary Curb Cuts



Trail Development

Trail development and use has become increasingly popular as communities embrace the multiple benefits that come with a quality trail network. Ideally, trail segments should be 10 feet (120 inches) wide, paved, and prohibited to motor vehicles. This section highlights some of the benefits of incorporating trails into community plans.

Recreational Opportunities and Healthy Lifestyles: Trails provide excellent opportunities for recreation and promote healthy living. Increased physical activity has long been associated with numerous health benefits, including the prevention of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and depression. Furthermore, trails provide a means for exercise, and reduce the instance of obesity and its negative health impacts. Data released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows Minnesota's adult obesity rate in 2020 was 30.7%, up from 30.1% in 2019.

Transportation Options: In many communities, trails are used by residents as a means of transportation. Although walking and biking to or from work or school are not viable options for everyone, providing access to trails is a simple way to support walking and biking to daily destinations. The existence of a 'safe network of trails' is usually a key factor for commuters who decide to walk or bike, rather than drive. In addition, the presence of an adequate trail network can provide an economical transportation option for low-income families.

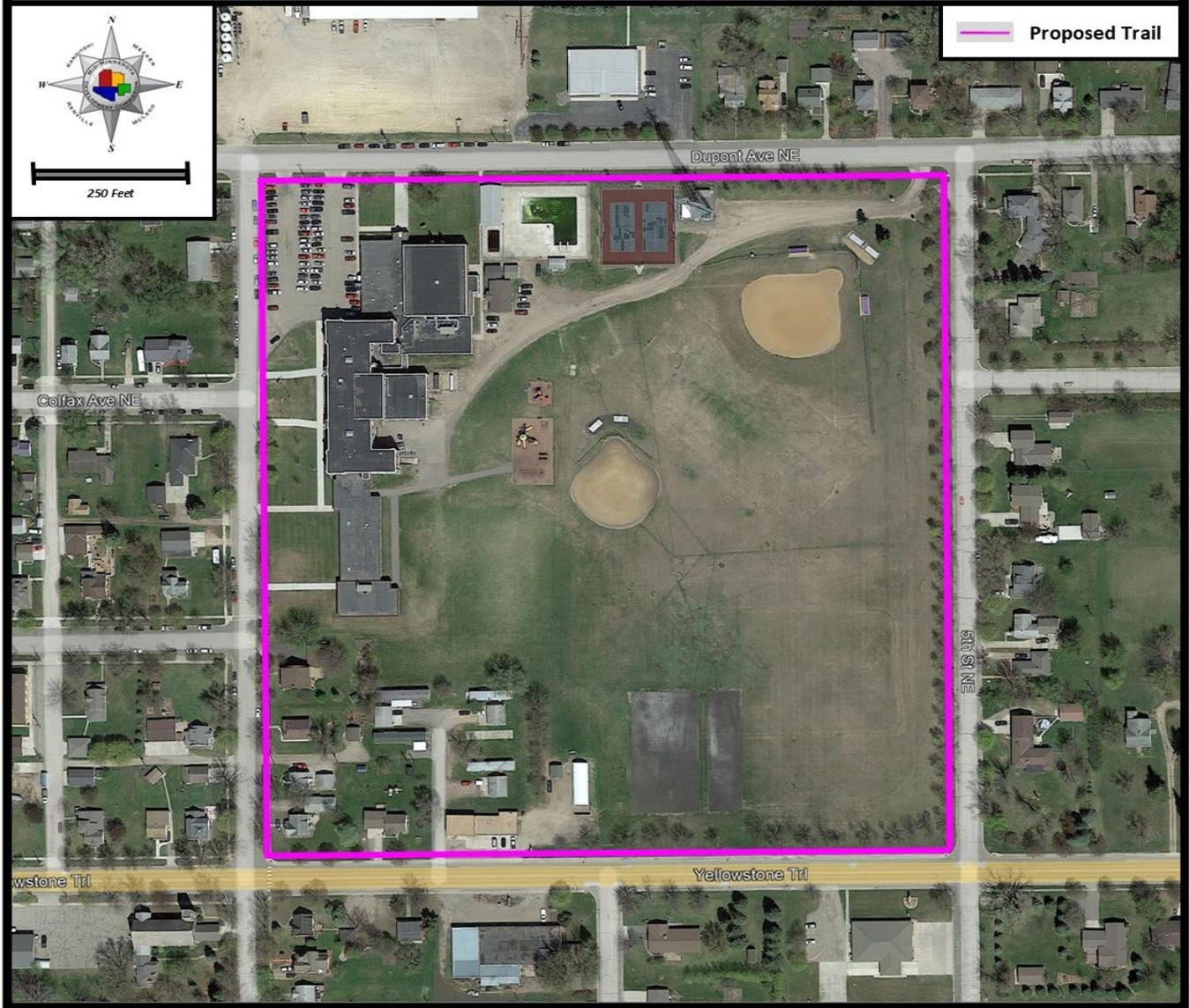
Tourism and Economic Benefits: A well-established trail network increases opportunity for residents and visitors to spend locally. During Minnesota's warm weather months, nearly 1.5 million cyclists, inline skaters, and walkers use the state's nationally-recognized city, county, and regional trails (Parks & Trails Council of MN: www.parksandtrails.org). According to American Trails (www.americantrails.org), 90% of trail users will be local. They will spend approximately \$17 per day per user in local shops and restaurants, on items like fuel, water, snacks, etc. In some cases, trails can also be used to attract a variety of tourists. In addition to those who appreciate quality walking and biking areas, trails can be used to attract bird watchers, amateur botanists, photographers, or other visitors.

A well-designed Renville trail system would allow residents to more efficiently walk and bike for commuting, exercise, and leisure. The map on the following page includes depicts a recommended trail location/route. Based off of community feedback and task force recommendations, the two most desired potential trail locations are:

- Around the city block containing the Renville County West School District complex
 - West side of 5th Street NE from Highway 212 to Dupont Avenue NE
 - South side on Dupont Avenue NE from 5th Street NE to 3rd Street NE
 - East side of 3rd Street NE from Dupont Avenue NE to Highway 212
 - North side of Highway 212 from 3rd Street NE to 5th Street NE
- From the City of Renville to the Stoney Creek Golf Course
 - East side of County Road 6 from Highway 212 to 820th Avenue
 - South side of 820th Avenue from County Road 6 to the entrance of Stoney Creek Golf Course



Map 4C: Renville Proposed Trail



Proposed Trail on 5th St NE

(Trail example)



Long Range Overview of Pedestrian and Bicycle Flow and Highway 212

There are many benefits that come with U.S. Highway 212 running through the City of Renville. U.S. Highway 212 provides easy access for Renville's industries and stores, for those that provide professional services, and also for residents. U.S. Highway 212 must also be considered beyond the local level for its importance as a key county, regional, and state transportation corridor. U.S. Highway 212 is designated both as a "principal artery" and as an "interregional corridor".



These designations signal that the State of Minnesota desires improved and maintained traffic flow along the corridor, with limited stops and slowdowns. All indications are that traffic, from both general motorists and from commercial vehicles, will continue to increase in the coming years. An increase of residents in places along the U.S. Highway 212 corridor, along with expanded industry and business development, will likely add to traffic volumes.

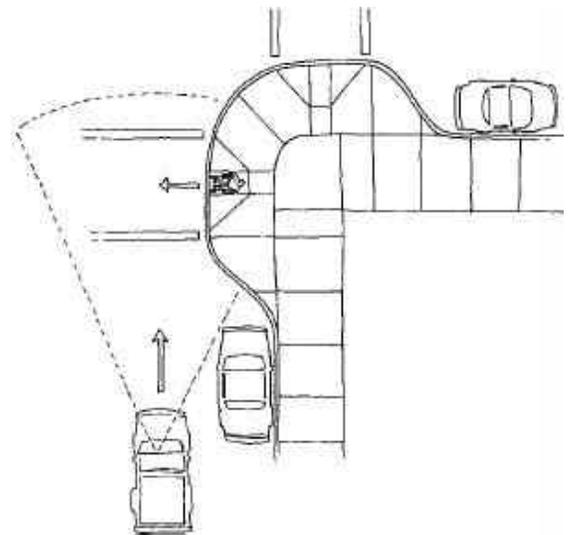
U.S. Highway 212 should be considered when developing a long-term vision for pedestrian and bicycle travel within the City of Renville. The highway presents challenges to the natural flow of pedestrian and bicycle users in the community. In particular, the highly traveled two-lane highway presents crossing difficulties. Safety concerns must be addressed. While the following project recommendations will be helpful, though other long-term solutions may also be needed as crossing concerns rise with increased motorized and especially commercial traffic. Renville's outlook includes residential growth, which will also increase the number of pedestrians and bicyclists in need of a safe highway crossing. Given the importance of U.S. Highway 212 to the State of Minnesota's network of key highways, they will likely be little interest in slowing or stopping traffic in many U.S. Highway 212 locations. As safe highway crossings become more difficult, the City may need to consider the incorporation of a grade-separated pedestrian crossing (i.e. pedestrian overpass or underpass) within the community.

It should also be noted that responsibility for snow removal along U.S. Highway 212 sidewalk infrastructure is currently divided between the City and property owners. The City should consider removing snow along the entirety of the corridor to ensure safe passage during winter months. U.S. Highway 212 is a main pedestrian corridor and maintaining safe and adequate walking paths in the winter is an important way to support active living.

Sidewalk Extension

The intersection of Main Street and U.S. Highway 212 is an example of a location where sidewalk curb extensions could be considered as an additional safety feature. Many communities incorporate curb extensions (also called bump-outs or bulb-outs) as a pedestrian safety measure at key intersections. A curb extension is an extension of the sidewalk into the roadway that reduces the roadway's crossing distance for pedestrians, minimizing their exposure to vehicular traffic. The primary benefits of curb extensions are:

- Increased pedestrian visibility at intersections through improved sightlines.
- Decreased pedestrian exposure to vehicles as a result of the shortened crossing distance.
- Encouragement of slower turning speeds for vehicles, due to a tighter curb radius.
- Prevention of vehicles from illegally passing other vehicles that are turning.
- Reduction of illegal parking at corners.



The incorporation of curb-extensions is one of many strategies that can be considered to enhance pedestrian safety. In some cases, median refuges, raised crossings, or a combination of strategies may be more appropriate.



Temporary curb-extensions are often used by communities to determine if this is the most appropriate safety improvement. These are placed before constructing a permanent curb-extension at an intersection to ensure the change will have the desired effect. In some locations, curb-extensions may hinder large trucks from turning. Temporary curb extensions can be used to see if this will be a problem before spending significant funds and more permanently altering infrastructure. Due to costs associated with the demolition and reconstruction of curbs, re-grading of the roadway, curb ramp construction, realignment of utility lines, poles and hydrants, repaving, and relocation of any catch-basins, permanent curb extensions can be quite expensive. However, while costly, curb extensions have many safety benefits which could be realized at the intersection of Highway 212 and Main Street.

Bike Infrastructure and Bike “Sharrows”

The City of Renville currently has minimal bicycle infrastructure and the bike infrastructure that does exist needs upgrades. Opportunities for improvement include the addition of bike racks. Bike racks would allow riders to secure their bikes while keeping the sidewalks and streets organized and clear of more randomly parked bikes. Bike racks should be strategically placed in key destinations to encourage the use of bicycles for short trips. Currently There is a bike rack located outside the main doors of the Community Center (Main Street) that houses City Hall and the Library. Good locations for future bike racks include parks, restaurants, and the local grocery store.



Bike repair stations are also convenient additions for local and visiting bicyclists. Bike repair stations typically provide a manual air pump for tires, tools to adjust brakes and derailleurs and other bicycle maintenance items. Good Renville locations for a bike repair station include parks and along any future bike trails.

The City may also consider the incorporation of shared lane markings also known as “sharrows” on designated bike routes. The term sharrows is derived from the words shared and arrows. They are pavement markings used to mark a designated bike route. Placed in the travel lane, they encourage bicyclists to ride in a safe position outside of the door zone



(where the driver’s side door of parked cars open). Besides providing bicyclists with proper positioning, sharrows also give additional legitimacy to bicycles. This empowers bicyclists to more effectively share the road with motorists and can also aid with directional and wayfinding guidance. When passing bikes, motorists must give the bicyclist at least three feet clearance (between bicyclist and the side of the passing vehicle). Renville’s residential streets have great width, so interference between vehicles and bicycles should not be a major issue. Bike sharrows are typically very inexpensive and require only street paint and signage. Roadways to consider for the incorporation of bike sharrows include Main Street, 3rd Street West and 3rd Street East.



Signage and Street Paint

Pedestrian signage is a key component to a well-organized, safe transportation network. Some of the City’s existing signage is in need of replacement due to rust and fading. New signage will be crucial along all proposed sidewalks and trails, for both safety and wayfinding. Street paint and markings will also allow for better understanding and promote communication between motor

vehicles and pedestrians. On city streets, drivers will be more aware of pedestrian crossings and infrastructure when proper street markings are present. If the City chooses to implement bike sharrows, painted bike lanes will help drivers and bikers navigate without conflict. To ensure continued visibility, the City should budget for fresh street paint every two years.

Railroad Pedestrian Improvements

Twin Cities and Western Railroads maintains a railway through the City of Renville, just north of Railroad Avenue North. For pedestrians, using only the existing infrastructure to cross the tracks poses a safety concern. Railway crossing improvements should be considered when adding or improving sidewalk segments.

There are a number of ways pedestrian safety can be improved at railroad crossings through the selective use of

passive and/or active devices. Passive devices include fencing, channelization, swing gates, pedestrian barriers, pavement markings and texturing, and making walkways level with the top of the rail at the crossing point. Active devices include flashers, audible warning devices, automated pedestrian gates, pedestrian signals, variable message signs, and blank-out signs.



Crossings being considered for safety improvements should be reviewed by a diagnostic team. An engineering study should be conducted to select the appropriate warning devices for each crossing. All pedestrian railroad crossings should be designed to minimize the time required for pedestrians to cross, with emphasis on avoiding entrapment of pedestrians on or between sets of tracks. In addition, rail safety laws that prohibit dangerous actions around rail crossings should be enforced. It will be important to work with the Twin Cities and Western Railroad's administration when considering any pedestrian improvements along the railway

Street/Sidewalk Lighting

At night, well-lit areas enhance pedestrian safety, by improving visibility and decreasing concealment in public settings. The City of Renville is only minimally lit and would benefit from more lighting infrastructure. The City should conduct a study to prioritize lighting improvements, through the incorporation of additional streetlamps or other means. The Active Living Plan Task Force has identified areas for lighting improvements, including the area surrounding the school and along some residential streets.

CHAPTER 5:

Strategies and Implementation

This chapter lays out suggested strategies for implementation for Renville Active Living Transportation Plan implementation. Special attention has been given to the “Five E’s” – Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation - along with a sixth “E” which stands for “Equity” or “Everyone”. The implementation plan has been developed after consideration of information gathered and discussed in the previous chapters of this document.

Active Living Transportation Plan Goals

- Provide essential infrastructure that encourages physical activity and makes active transportation an easy, accessible, and enjoyable option.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and improve the overall health and safety of Renville residents.
- Promote and implement policies and practices that create more active communities by increasing opportunities for nonmotorized transportation and improving access to recreational activities.

Objectives and Strategies

The objectives below describe *what* could be done to address active living transportation within the community and attain the goals listed above. Associated strategies outline *how* the objectives could best be accomplished. This section outlines an approach to implement those strategies.

Objective 1: Generate community-wide support for active living and collaborate with key partners to drive changes in the community.

Strategy 1.1 – An Active Living Transportation Committee takes the lead role in promoting and educating citizens about this Active Living Plan, working to increasing local “buy-in”. This committee may have the same membership as the committee utilized for the Active Living Plan’s development. It is possible that this roster could be used as a starting point, with other willing community members added, as appropriate.

Description – The Active Living Transportation Committee, with assistance from City staff, are most knowledgeable of the benefits and proposed goals of this Active Living Plan. They will reach out to the community’s elected officials, businesses, organizations, and residents to garner support to move this Active Living Plan

forward. Promotional work will be key in increasing the number of walking and bicycling community members. Helping these community members incorporate walking and bicycling into their daily routine, as part of a healthy lifestyle, is essential. Work could include providing the local newspaper with prepared articles and creating an Active Living page on the City's website are two examples of ways to accomplish this objective. Any new infrastructure that is added or improved to support walking and biking should be shared and celebrated. Creating and distributing brochures that include maps showing bicycle and walking routes, possibly with mileage/distance information, is another strategy for increasing physical activity. Renville already has multiple events with activities that involve running and bicycling. These should remain and be enthusiastically promoted and supported. Other events, such as "Bicycle to Work Day" should be considered as an additional community-promoted event.

The Committee may also consider promoting "workplace wellness programs" to community employers.. Even small businesses can implement workplace wellness programs with only minimal expense. Information on simple workplace wellness program ideas could be researched, compiled, and distributed to existing and incoming employers. The local Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) program, accessed via Renville County Public Health, may be able to assist with this activity.

Strategy 1.2 – Partner/collaborate with other interested partners and community organizations to who can assist with Active Living Plan strategy implementation.

Description – There are some organizations who have already shown their support for active living and others that would likely join the effort after learning more. The Active Living Transportation Committee should continue to collaborate with local *SHIP and other Public Health-focused workers*, who can be valuable partners. The *CentraCare* health network will also consider local/community requests for activities that improve health, wellness, and safety. Their wellness programming empowers people to build healthy habits. *The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and Renville County's Highway Department* have jurisdiction of several roads within the community. As such, any plans for adding or improving walking and bicycling infrastructure along these roads will require their collaboration. **Local law enforcement** should be included with Active Living Transportation efforts, to provide enforcement assistance, when/where needed (e.g., for problem areas and/or to ensure additional safety during walking and/or bicycling events). *Service clubs and organizations* can be recruited to help promote and manage various events or activities that support healthy living initiatives. As new trails are constructed in the community, these same organizations may be willing to adopt a section of a trail to assist the City with routine maintenance activities.

Where no organizations already exist, the Active Living Transportation Committee can support the formation of new groups to tackle various aspects of this Active Living Plan. For example, local bicycle enthusiasts may be interested in organizing a bicycle club. Local employers could be encouraged to work together to offer small incentives to workers who walk or bike to work.

As with every Active Living Plan objective, it is important to continuously plan, implement, and evaluate new initiatives that increase physical activity and healthy, active living.

Objective 2: Provide the necessary safety education of citizens to help ensure that walking and bicycling in the community can be an enjoyable, safe activity.

Strategy 2.1 – Increase residents’ skills and safety knowledge related to biking and walking in the Renville community.

Description – Residents of all ages should be educated on safety and understand the rules of the road. The Active Living Transportation Committee and City should provide information on state and local laws along with other safety information on the City’s website, on an Active Living webpage. Safety and education-focused articles can be written and provided to the local newspaper for publication.

The Active Living Transportation Committee could reach out to the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, which works to train bicyclists, of all ages, on bicycle safety. There may be an opportunity to organize classes in Renville during summer months. The Active Living Transportation Committee could assist with logistics (e.g., meeting location), advertising, and class recruitment. “Bike rodeos” can also be held. Bike rodeos are a fun activity that can be incorporated to teach children and, by extension, their parents, basic safety techniques. These events also provide opportunities to make sure young riders have properly-fitted helmets. Civic organizations can be encouraged to provide helmets to youngsters or support in some other way. These groups should always be recognized and celebrated for their contributions.

As off-road trails are added to Renville’s infrastructure, it will be important to inform residents of proper trail etiquette. Bicyclists, runners, and other pedestrians should also be reminded to wear highly-visible, reflective gear and clothing, especially at dusk and at night, and all bicyclists should be educated on the importance of properly-fitted helmets.

Strategy 2.2 – Educate local motor vehicle users on laws and proper etiquette when interacting with both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Description – Work with local law enforcement and the Renville County TZD (Toward Zero Deaths) Safe Roads Coalition to educate drivers on laws that pertain to pedestrian and bicycle interaction. This information can be compiled and distributed to all local drivers. Education on distracted driving is also important, as distraction is a key factor in many accidents. Drivers should be reminded that bikes are allowed to use any street in the community, but also let them know about the City’s efforts to create and promote any local “share the road” routes. The RCW School District’s driver education course is another opportunity to educate new drivers on laws related to pedestrian and bicycle interaction.

Objective 3: Improve and enforce city ordinances and planning documents to support a culture of active living throughout Renville.

Strategy 3.1 – Encourage and pass recommended changes to various plans and ordinances to improve the current and future pedestrian and bicycle environment.

Description – In Chapter 3, this Active Living plan includes suggested changes to City ordinances and planning documents. If implemented, these changes will improve the pedestrian and bicyclist environment throughout the community. The City should carefully consider these suggestions and provide the necessary document updates, when possible. In some cases, the City may wish to adjust suggested language prior to adoption. This is okay, as it is important that any approved changes be effective for Renville over the long-term.

Strategy 3.2 – Educate residents on key ordinances need to be followed, especially those related to sidewalk accessibility, and enforce these ordinances.

Description – The City has plans and ordinances in place that can be useful when implementing this Active Living Transportation Plan. However, these will only be helpful if they are used and enforced. The City should be diligent and consistently adhere to approved plans and policies to create and maintain a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment.

Sidewalks and future trails should be well-kept and maintained. Education and enforcement will be necessary to keep sidewalks and trails from being blocked by parked vehicles, debris, or other items. Low-hanging trees, bushes, and shrubbery must be trimmed, so as not to impede sidewalk use. Property owners should be reminded that some users may have poor eyesight and or mobility issues, and that items left in the sidewalk can impose a safety hazard. In winter, City rules

surrounding snow and ice removal must be enforced. Residents should be encouraged to report sidewalks that are unsafe or in need of repair so they can be restored.

To encourage resident support for sidewalk expansion, the City should revisit resident obligations for sidewalk repairs and maintenance within residential areas. The City should also work closely with any new developers to ensure new subdivisions address pedestrian and bicyclist needs. When major rehabilitation or reconstruction occurs, the City should ensure plans are in place and implemented to support the healthy living transportation environment.

Objective 4: Make physical infrastructure improvements to address the needs identified in this Active Living Plan and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety while encouraging more physical activity.

(Note: Please see Chapter 4 for a more detailed explanation of key infrastructure needs highlighted in this plan.)

Strategy 4.1 – Provide infrastructure that supports improved pedestrian and bicycle access to identified key destinations (e.g., City offices, downtown businesses, parks).

Description – Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is typically added over the long-term. Construction of additional sidewalks, off-road trails, and other identified improvements will likely need to be implemented in stages. More expensive infrastructure projects will need to be prioritized. Work should be coordinated with other construction projects (e.g., street improvements) whenever possible to maximize efficiency and cost-effectiveness. When projects involve MnDOT, Department of Natural Resources, and/or County rights-of-way, these units must be consulted.

The City should include funds in the annual budget to ensure continued progress with these projects. Competitive grant dollars, such as those provided by the Transportation Alternatives Program, may be available to help supplement City funds and mitigate costs.

Strategy 4.2 – Improve crosswalk infrastructure in several community locations.

Description – As outlined in Chapter 4 there are several locations where the need for crosswalk improvements has been identified. It is imperative that all crosswalk improvements include proper curb cuts and high-visibility paint.

Strategy 4.3 – Improve pedestrian safety in crossing Highway 212.

Description – Making improvements to improve safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing U.S. Highway 212 should be considered this Active Living Plan’s highest infrastructure priority. This would include the incorporation of a sidewalk extension to improve visibility and minimize pedestrian and bicyclist time within the busy highway. Additional safety improvements are also proposed for the nearby railway crossing along Main Street.

Strategy 4.4 – Inventory current city sidewalks to determine present condition and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and develop a plan.

Description – Within Chapter 4, there is a discussion about ADA requirements. Curb cuts at intersections and other sidewalk requirements are explained within the law. City staff should evaluate the community’s sidewalk network to determine any need for ADA-related modifications. After this evaluation has taken place, an implementation plan should be developed that identifies projects, shows continuous improvement, and projects full ADA compliance within a reasonable timeframe.

Strategy 4.5 – Determine locations to install bicycle racks and pedestrian benches and complete these installations.

Description – Bicycle racks are an important feature to include throughout the community when encouraging bicycle use. Benches placed at key locations will aid those who require a place to rest when walking to and from community destinations. This may be a particularly important feature for Renville’s older citizens. City organizations and businesses should be encouraged to sponsor the purchase and/or fabricate and donate these racks and benches. SHIP has also helped to fund bicycle racks and may be able to provide further financial assistance in the future.

Strategy 4.6 – To provide a safe network for community-wide bicycle travel, identify key bicycle routes and provide necessary signage. Consider using “sharrows” on streets that need additional bicycle traffic awareness.

Description – Off-road trails are recommended in only a couple of Renville’s locations. City streets will continue to be the primary means of bicycle transportation. Chapter 4 highlights the need to designate a network of streets that bicyclists can use as primary routes of travel. These routes will require proper signage to guide bicyclists and caution motorists of the additional bicycle traffic.

The City may decide to go a level beyond simple bike route designation by designating some streets as “sharrow” routes. These routes would have stenciled sharrow markings on the roads to make motorists more aware of the fact they are

sharing the road with bicyclists. Bike route signs and paint are relatively affordable improvements that can be made in the near term. These activities can have an immediate, positive impact on bicycle safety and are relatively easy ways to make Active Living Transportation Plan progress.

Strategy 4.7 – Establish a plan to address street lighting in necessary locations around the City of Renville.

Description – The City should conduct a study to determine sites for new lighting infrastructure. Collaborating with the City’s power provider will help establish existing streetlights and dictate where new lights should be installed. It should also be noted in the plan that trees within the boulevard should be trimmed to allow adequate lighting and provide pertinent recommendations for doing so.

Implementation

The purpose of this section is to discuss how the City can best approach goal implementation, policy development, and strategies associated with this Active Living Transportation Plan. The City’s Active Living Transportation Committee will be called upon to champion Active Living Plan implementation. In addition to the Active Living Transportation Committee, the City’s staff and Council will play a large role. Renville’s Active Living Plan also includes a variety of other partners (current and potential) who should be engaged for successful plan implementation.

It will be important for the City and the Active Living Transportation Committee to maintain a close partnership with SHIP, the Renville County Highway Department, and local law enforcement. Mid-Minnesota Development Commission will also be available to connect the City and Active Living Transportation Committee with resources and provide guidance, as needed.

Active Living Plan implementation should include the following five strategies:

1. **Preparation & Collaboration:** Success requires that continuous effort be put forth to maintain existing and develop new and effective partnerships that support active living. Alone, the Active Living Committee cannot hope to achieve the goals of the Active Living Plan. Collaboration, with both public and private players, is necessary for goal achievement. An assessment of existing conditions, and resources is also necessary.
2. **Promotion and Programming:** Renville supports a variety of programs and events that encourage activity among residents. This should continue. New programs that provide incentives for healthy living and environments should be

fostered were possible. Promotion and communication are essential to the success of any active living initiative. Promotion activities can also encourage wide resident support for physical/infrastructure improvements. The City and Active Living Transportation Committee should promote their vision and advocate for actions that can be taken to advance active living goals. Working with local media to highlight activities and share success should be considered a high priority. The Committee/City should begin with some easier projects, considered “low hanging fruit”, to generate momentum and a positive buzz amongst residents. All successes should be publicly-celebrated, as this will help to garner support for larger projects.

3. **Policy:** Chapter 3 discussed opportunities for the City to improve current policies and implement healthy living strategies. In addition to implementing these recommended changes, other components of this healthy living initiative will help to create an environment where healthy living is institutionalized and comes naturally.
4. **Education and Awareness:** This activity is closely-tied with promotion. The public should be fully-informed of the City’s healthy living initiatives and understand the benefits of active living. Motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians must be aware of how to safely interact with one another at street level. These education and awareness efforts need to be inclusive of all residents (e.g., youth, seniors, English-language learners, the business community).
5. **Physical Projects:** One of the primary outcomes of this Active Living Plan is to make physical/infrastructure changes that improve the built environment for active living. Strategies 1 – 4, if well-implemented, will help to create political and public will for the infrastructure investments and maintenance described in this plan. The City should begin making physical active living-focused improvements as soon as possible, beginning with less expensive investments (e.g., paint high-visibility crosswalks, and begin adding signs for bicycle routes).

When implementing the above strategies, it is important to maintain the flexibility to capitalize on opportunities as they arise. Goal elasticity may be required. If a group or entity wishes to champion a desired Active Living Plan-focused project or activity, it is important to give them sufficient latitude to proceed. When no champion emerges on certain projects, the Active Living Committee may need to take that leading role. Without a project champion, there is little likelihood of progress.

Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrixes, shown below, are intended to guide the efforts of the City and the Active Living Committee (ALC). The matrixes are split between physical

infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure strategies (Preparation & Collaboration, Promotion & Programs, Education & awareness, and policy). Under each strategy the matrix provides a level of priority, suggests responsible parties, and designates a short-, mid-, or long-term timeline. Short-term strategies are intended to be started within one year with a goal of completion within three years. Mid-term projects should be completed within three to six years. Long-term projects are typically completed within ten years. Some strategies are intended to be on-going and will continue throughout the life of the City’s active living efforts.

It is advised that the Active Living Transportation Committee and City identify “low hanging fruit”-type projects and start on these within the six months of the adoption of this Active Living Transportation Plan. This will demonstrate to the community that the intent is not to let this plan sit on a shelf but instead to be used as a working document. Tackling these smaller projects will also provide some of the momentum required for larger projects. The projects described below are given timeframes of short-term, mid-term and long-term. Short-term are projects within the first two years of the plan’s adoption.

Implementation Matrix for [Non-Infrastructure Strategies](#):

Implementation Matrix					
Strategy	Priority	Responsible Party**		Timeline	
		Lead	Support	*ST or LT	Notes
Hold regular meetings of the Active Living Transportation Committee and develop sub-committees as needed.	High	ALTC	City staff, SHIP, MMDC, and other identified contributors, as needed	ST	Ongoing
Develop a close partnership with SHIP, county, school, businesses, & service organizations and work together to increase opportunities for physical activity.	High	ALTC	All parties highlighted within the Strategy	MT	Ongoing
Sidewalk condition/ADA review and planning.	High	City Staff	ALTC, MMDC	ST	Ongoing
Develop marketing and education materials and employ use of City website for distribution.	High	ALTC	City staff, SHIP, off-shelf materials from State and others	ST	Ongoing

Provide opportunities for bicycle safety education in the community.	Moderate	ALTC	SHIP, City staff, City organizations	ST	Ongoing
Work with local businesses to implement employee wellness programs that include an active living component.	Low	ALTC	SHIP	MT	Ongoing
Organize an annual “alternative mode of transportation to work” (bike, walk, skip, gallop, etc.) day.	Moderate	ALTC	City Staff, SHIP	LT	
Apply to become a Bicycle Friendly Community.	Moderate	ALTC	City Staff, SHIP, County Tourism Bureau, MMDC	MT	

*Abbreviations used: ST = Short-term, MT = Mid-term, LT = Long-term

** Under the “responsible party”, the City’s Active Living Transportation Committee shall be abbreviated as the ALTC.

Implementation Matrix for [Infrastructure Strategies](#):

Implementation Matrix						
Strategy	Priority	Responsible Party		Timeline		
		Lead	Support	*ST or LT	Notes	
Sidewalk extension to improve safety while crossing U.S. Highway 212, at or near Main Street.	High	City	MnDOT, City, ALTC	MT	Need multiple funding sources	
Railway safety improvements across Twin Cities and Western Railroad line, along Main Street.	High	City	MnDOT, SHIP, ALTC	LT	Railway study needed	
Multipurpose trail along 5 th St NE, Dupont Avenue NE, 3 rd St NE, Elm Avenue, and Highway 212	Moderate to low	City	City, ALTC, Property Owners	MT	Grant funding needed	

Bicycle routes with proper signage and possible "Sharrows" on some routes.	Moderate to Low	City	ALTC, SHIP	ST, MT, & LT	High priority ST and Lower priority LT
Construct sidewalk along Chesnut Ave SE, 3 rd St SW/NW, Colfax Ave NW, Bryant Ave NW, 3 rd St NE.	Medium	City	ALTC, Property Owners	LT	High priority ST and Lower priority LT
ADA planning and sidewalk repairs.	Medium	City	ALTC, City	LT	
Install biking infrastructure (e.g., bike racks and bike repair station).	Low	City	City, SHIP, ALTC	MT	
Pedestrian signage improvements.	Low	County and City	City, ALTC	ST to MT	
Street paint improvements and upkeep.	Low	County	City, ALTC	LT	Street paint should be installed every 2 years.
Conduct a study to determine street lighting improvement locations.	Medium	City	Power provider, MMDC	LT	City could partner with a consultant
Multipurpose trail from Renville to Stoney Creek Golf Course.	Low	City and County	City, SHIP, MnDOT	LT	Grant funding needed

* Abbreviations used: ST = Short-term, MT = Mid-term, LT = Long-term

** Under the "responsible party", the City's Active Living Committee shall be abbreviated as the ALTC.

Note: The City's contracted engineering firm, currently Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc, is included as part of "City"

Funding

While a variety of worthwhile projects are discussed within this Active Living Plan, each comes with a cost. Non-infrastructure activities may be inexpensive but are likely to cost volunteer and/or staff time. Infrastructure costs range from relatively inexpensive (e.g., paint or signage) to quite costly. The community of Renville will need to find funds that can be dedicated toward projects over time. Identifying or creating local funding sources that can be used as matching funds for available grants will help to stretch the City's local investment. **The City will also need to determine how to fund needed sidewalk expansion as well as ongoing maintenance (e.g. Who will pay and/or be responsible?).**

When determining whether to fund projects, the City will need to consider all costs – beyond construction and land use. Health impacts, sprawl, the sense of community, and the City's ability to attract businesses, residents, and visitors must also be considered, as should any ongoing maintenance costs.

The availability of outside funding tends to ebb and flow. The City and its residents need to remain vigilant, so the community can capitalize on opportunities when they do become available. The following list provides examples of commonly-accessed funding sources. This list is not all-inclusive:

Minnesota Department of Transportation – Transportation Alternatives Program
www.dot.state.mn.us/ta/

MnDOT's District 8 Transportation Alternatives Program has annually awarded approximately \$700,000. Eligible Transportation Alternatives Program projects include construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for non-motorized transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming measures, lights and other safety-related infrastructure, ADA compliance, and conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for trail use. State rules prohibit the use of these funds for engineering activities and the purchase of rights-of-way.

As the funds originate with the federal government, there are federal requirements attached. Transportation Alternatives Program applications for cities with less than 5,000 residents must be sponsored by their county. Counties may also apply for this funding and it may be in the City's best interest to collaborate with Renville County to achieve common goals. As these federal projects require more capacity for grant administration, this can be a good arrangement for involved cities. Typically, counties will ask the involved cities to contribute the required matching funds, though this may vary. The minimum local match is no less than 20 percent of total project costs, and larger local matches will strengthen any grant application.

Transportation Alternatives Program projects are awarded four years prior to project commencement. However, in order to accelerate a project, communities typically have an option to pay all of the associated costs up-front, with the understanding that the grant award would reimburse the City later.

The Transportation Alternatives Program application process begins in the fall of each year with a letter-of-intent process. Final applications are normally due in early-January. Mid-Minnesota Development Commission is part of this process and should be contacted by any City interested in accessing this funding stream.

Greater Minnesota Legacy Grants

www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/parks-trails-fund

Greater Minnesota Legacy Grants are funded as a result of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment, which was passed by voters in 2008. This amendment increased the state's sales tax by .375 percent and dedicated 14% of new revenues to a Parks & Trails Fund. A portion of this Parks & Trails Legacy Fund supports regional parks and trails throughout Greater Minnesota. Greater Minnesota Legacy Grants are available to assist with the acquisition, development, improvement, or restoration of regionally significant parks and trails outside of the seven-county metropolitan area. As such, any local unit of government, outside the seven-county metropolitan area, is eligible to apply.

Eligible projects include land acquisition for development of trails or outdoor recreation facilities; development, redevelopment or rehabilitation of existing trails or outdoor recreation facilities; and protection or restoration of natural resources within parks and trails. Projects must be within a designated regional park or trail in Greater Minnesota. There is no minimum or maximum amount for funding requests and applicants are not required to provide a match. However, projects that include non-state cash contributions will receive additional consideration. Past grants have ranged from \$20,000 to \$1.5 million.

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Commission receives, reviews, and evaluates all applications. Projects are selected based upon criteria in the Parks & Trails Legacy Plan, the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan and Funding Program, the availability of a non-state cash match, and the project's overall quality, readiness, and design.

Regional Trail Grant Program

www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails-regional.html

The Regional Trail Grant Program serves to accelerate the acquisition and development of long-distance, regionally significant trails outside of the seven-county metropolitan area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington). Any local unit of government, outside of the seven-county metropolitan area, is eligible. Trail organizations and/or user groups may also apply, but only in coordination with a local unit of government.

Eligible funding uses include land acquisition from willing sellers; trail construction and/or restoration; permanent trailside improvements (e.g., drainage, parking, bathrooms); ADA compliance-related improvements; contracted maintenance; and bridge construction and restoration. Projects within state park boundaries or in state trail corridors are not eligible for funding.

Grants may range from \$5,000 to \$250,000, though grants between \$100,000 and \$170,000 are common. Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis and the grantee must fund at least 25% of the total project cost. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviews all applications and makes final funding decisions. Priority is given to projects that develop trails of significant length, projects involving trails that are expected to see high usage, and projects that provide a unique and interesting connections to the outdoors.

Regional Trail Grant Program grants are primarily-funded by the Minnesota State Lottery. Each year, the State Lottery returns 6.5% of gross sales to the state as a payment “in lieu of” sales tax. From these proceeds, state law dictates that 2.2% is to be spent on local trail grants. These dollars are divided between the Local Trails Connection Program and the Regional Trail Program. In some years, state bond sales and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund have also been used to fund local trail grant programs.

PeopleForBikes Community Grants

www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants

The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program provides funding for important and influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S. These projects include bike paths, rail-to-trail projects, mountain bike trails, bike parks, BMX facilities, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives. Grants typically range from \$4,500 to \$8,000 and require a 50% local match.

Advocacy Advance Grants

www.advocacyadvance.org/grants

Advocacy Advance Grants help state and local organizations take advantage of unexpected opportunities to win, increase, or preserve funding for biking and walking. These REI-supported grants are fund short-term campaigns that will increase or preserve investments in active transportation, in communities where program decisions on how to spend federal, state, and local funding are being made. Average grants range from \$1,000 to \$10,000, with no local match required.

Active Transportation Program Grant

www.dot.state.mn.us/active-transportation-program/

Active Transportation (AT) Program grants are available to communities who wish to make walking, biking, and rolling better. The grant aims to increase the number of people walking and biking via both non-infrastructure and infrastructure projects. This grant requires no match and can be a great option for funding more expensive projects.

Other Funding and Educational Resources

Renville County's Statewide Healthy Improvement Partnership (SHIP) program may be a source of funding to help Renville implement low-cost infrastructure projects, such as bicycle racks, paint and signage for bicycle routes. At times, *Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Minnesota* has funds available to support active living-focused projects. The *Minnesota Bicycle Alliance* (www.bikemn.org) is a great source for educational assistance and materials. They also are the organization to contact if Renville is interested in pursuing a "Bicycle Friendly Community" designation. The *America Walks* organization (<https://americawalks.org>) offers both education and funding opportunities. The *Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center* (www.pedbikeinfo.org) can also be a helpful information resource. The *Minnesota Safe Routes to School (SRTS)* program provides educational resources. While it may be difficult to include local walking and bicycling-focused infrastructure projects, the *State bonding* bill should be considered. Local State Representatives may be able to help determine if state bonding is possible and provide sponsorship.

Local Support

When presented with the opportunity, community service organizations, businesses, user groups, and individuals are often willing to donate time and/or money toward worthwhile community projects.

Plan Maintenance

For the goals and strategies of this Plan to be successfully implemented, the City's Active Living Transportation Committee will need to remain actively-engaged after this Active Living Plan's adopted. The Active Living Plan should be considered a living document. This means it should be periodically updated as conditions and needs change. The City Council should also be provided with a regular update from the Active Living Transportation Committee. Key partnerships will need to be formed and maintained to advance projects. While nurturing current collaborations, the Committee should always seek to forge new partnerships as opportunities present. Goals will be more easily achieved with wide and diverse participation. Dedication to flexibility and to strong collaboration between the City, County, walking/bicycling groups, law enforcement, the Renville County West school district, community education, parents, students, civic organizations, businesses, active and involved residents, and others will likely be the best way to achieve Plan's success.

