



Community Engagement



This section includes a summary of community engagement conducted to collect public opinions and comments related to walking and bicycling in Robbinsdale.

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2.1 - Introduction

Engagement with Robbinsdale residents and city staff served as the foundation for the recommendations in this Plan. The community engagement process was planned and facilitated to achieve the following objectives:

- Offer multiple opportunities for participation;
- Offer a combination of in-person and online engagement activities;
- Seek the participation of under-represented and health-disparity communities;
- Take engagement activities to places where residents were already gathering; and
- Provide useful guidance for development of the Plan, including guidance on policy priorities, Plan vision, network development, and facility designs.

The comments, questions and ideas generated through that engagement inform the recommendations presented and developed in this project.

This section provides an summary of engagement activities and results. A full report detailing all community engagement activities and results received is included in this Plan’s Appendix.



At the Robbinsdale Eggstravaganza.

With whom did we meet?

These are the in-person meetings that were held as part of this work:

Event	Date
City of Robbinsdale Project Steering Committee	2/3/2014
Robbinsdale Chamber Eggstravaganza at Robbinsdale City Hall	4/12/2014
Birdtown Half Marathon at Lakeview Terrace Park	5/17/2014

Participation: by the numbers

Robbinsdale residents were invited to provide their comments about walking and bicycling in the city both in person and online:

- **Over 100** residents provided comments in person at one of the community events;
- **90** people provided feedback using the online survey; and
- **40** people logged into the online map and provided over **80** comments.

2.2 - Engagement Activities

A variety of in-person and online activities were available to gather resident guidance and comments. A brief description is provided in this section.

2.2.1 - In-Person Engagement

Staff Steering Committee

The project team met periodically with City Manager Marcia Glick and Community Development Coordinator Rick Pearson throughout the project. In addition to project progress updates, the meetings offered the opportunity to enhance the understanding existing walking and biking assets and constraints in Robbinsdale, and develop the recommendations included in the plan.

At the February 3, 2014 meeting, the project team facilitated a set of formal activities and discussion with city staff. A summary of this meeting and the ideas and suggestions received is included as an Appendix to this report.

Community Events

Representatives of the consultant team were present with engagement materials at the Robbinsdale Chamber of Commerce Eggstravaganza on April 12, 2014, and the Birdtown Half Marathon on May 17, 2014. A summary of these community events, including comments received, is included as an Appendix to this report.

2.2.2 - Online Engagement

Project Website

A public website was created for the project (www.robbinsdalepedbikeplan.org) which included updates on project process and information, housed online engagement activities, and communicated project updates. The website was launched in late March/early April 2014 and included direct links to the online survey and online interactive map, discussed below.



At the Birdtown Half Marathon.



A public website (www.robbinsdalepedbikeplan.org) was set up to provide information and engagement opportunities for the public.

Online Survey

A survey was made available on the project website. The survey was provided so that all interested Robbinsdale residents could offer comments and ideas for the Plan without needing to attend in-person workshops. Survey questions closely mirrored the in-person engagement activities. The survey offered the ability for a respondent to answer solely walking questions or biking questions, or both.

Questions included those asking about:

- Walking and biking preferences, practices, and destinations;
- Perceived and real barriers to walking and biking; and
- Opinions about ways in which it can be made easier and more convenient to walk and bike in Robbinsdale.

Basic demographic characteristic questions were also asked of participants to help determine the extent to which the survey reached a cross-section of Robbinsdale residents.

Online Interactive Map

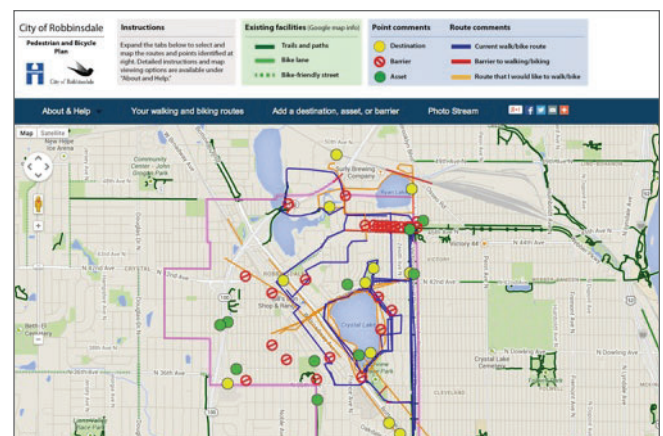
An online WikiMapping tool was made available to receive public comment at the project website. The tool was intended to gather ideas and suggestions in map format regarding current walking and biking routes and destinations, barriers, and gaps in the network.

Respondents were invited to use the tool to identify:

- Destinations;
- Barriers to walking and biking;
- Assets to walking and biking;
- Routes that participants currently take; and
- Routes that participants wish they could take.

The tool allowed respondents to place dots and lines on a map, and write comments associated with each feature added. All locations and description information provided by participants were digitized and transcribed into a geographic information systems (GIS) database and are summarized in Section 3 of this report. GIS data with all comments will be provided to the City of Robbinsdale.

This section provides an summary of engagement activities and results. A full report detailing all community engagement activities and results received is included in this Plan’s Appendix.



The online mapping tool allowed participants to identify specific walking and biking routes, assets, and barriers using a familiar Google Maps interface.

2.3 - Summary of Overall Results and Themes

This is a summary of aggregate results for the mapping of destinations, assets, barriers, and routes in Robbinsdale across in-person and online engagement. Additionally, overall results and themes from the public engagement effort are discussed.

2.3.1 - Results from Mapping

Map comments pertaining to walking and biking assets, barriers, destinations, and routes in Robbinsdale were received at both in-person engagement sessions, as well as through the online WikiMap. The mapping exercise was available at the February 3 Staff Steering Committee Meeting, April 12 Eggstravaganza, and the May 17 Birdtown Half Marathon.

Process and instructions for this activity were kept constant, yielding results that can be aggregated with online results. Aggregating all of the results (online and in-person) on a single map yields a “heat” map of destinations, assets, barriers, and routes. **2.3.2** (on the next page) is useful as an approximation of general patterns for residents’ understanding and interaction with the city’s pedestrian and bicycle network.

Additionally, the map can help highlight where key route connections may be needed. These results inform recommendations for improvements needed at certain locations and for enhancing overall network connectivity.

All data points, and specific text comments associated with each point and line are included in the GIS shapefiles for mapping activity data.

Assets to walking and biking

Assets identified across all mapping exercises included the following, among others:

- Victory Memorial Trail;
- Pedestrian/bike tunnel under Bottineau Boulevard south of U.S. Highway 100;
- Path around baseball field at Robbinsdale Middle School;
- Flashing stop signs in Downtown Robbinsdale; and
- Pedestrian/bike bridge over U.S. Highway 100 at 39th Avenue N.

Destinations

Destinations identified included the following, among others:

- Downtown Robbinsdale;
- Lakeview Terrace Park;
- Sanborn Park; and
- North Memorial Medical Center.

Barriers to walking and biking

Barriers identified included the following, among others:

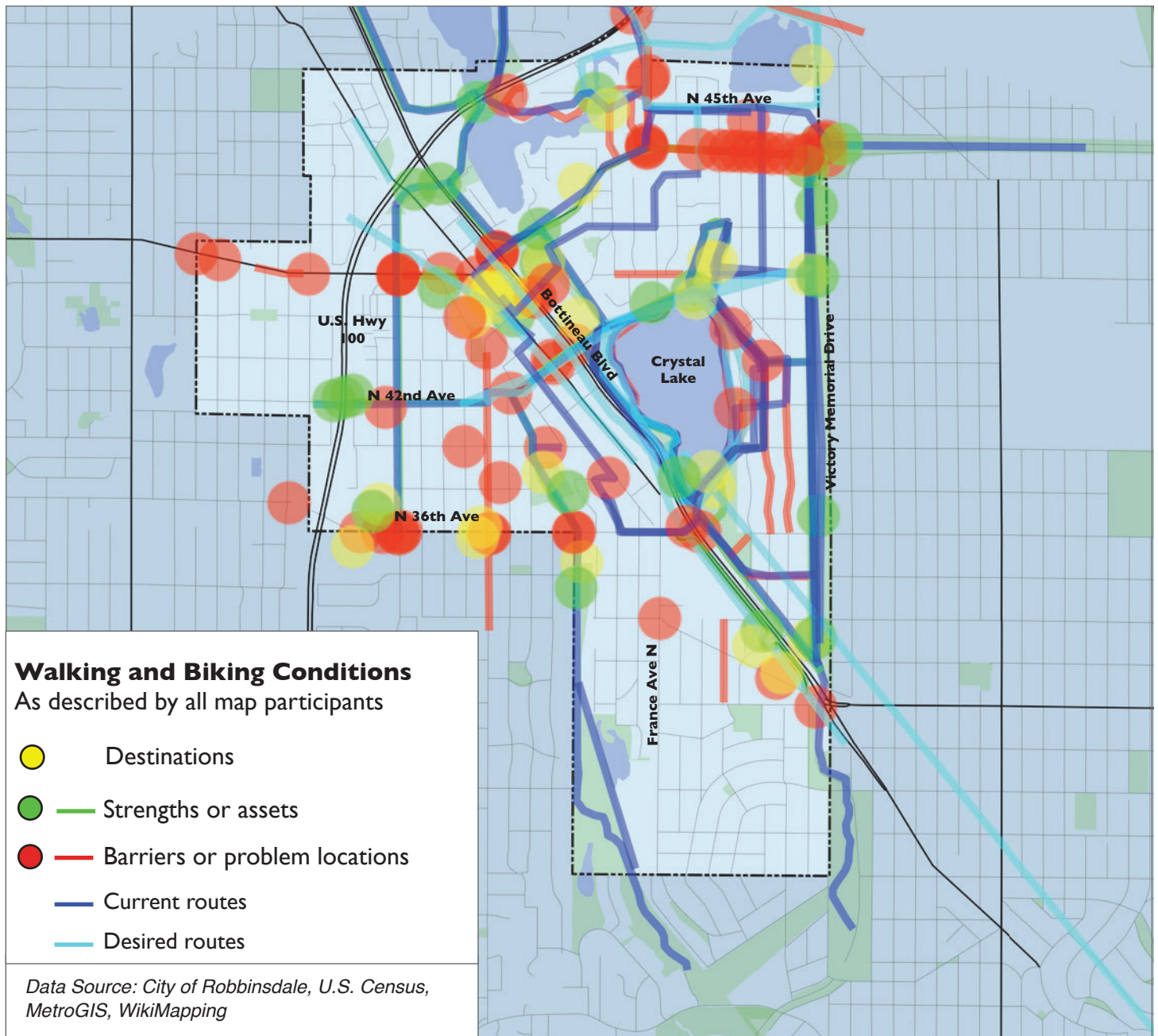
- Intersections along 42nd Avenue N/Lake Drive/45th Ave N/County Road 9;
- Bottineau Boulevard/County Road 81;
- Lack of continuous connection around Crystal Lake; and
- 36th Avenue North.

Current and desired walking and biking routes

Routes (current and desired) identified included the following, among others:

- Victory Memorial Trail;
- Around Crystal Lake; and
- 39th Avenue N → 40th Avenue N → Shoreline Drive → 42nd Avenue North.

2.3.2 - Aggregate of All Mapping Results - Walking and Biking Destinations, Barriers, and Routes



2.3.3 - Overall Themes

Several themes emerged from engagement with Robbinsdale residents, including:

Significant foundation for walking and biking in place today

Robbinsdale has an excellent foundation for walking and biking, and many current walking and biking assets that are enjoyed by residents and visitors. With a core downtown area, relatively compact size, grid street network, and good sidewalk coverage, Robbinsdale is inherently walkable and bikeable. In general, destinations are close by and can be reached easily on foot and by bike. Trails such as the Victory Memorial Trail can be accessed easily, and connections can be made to adjacent communities and recreation areas. The ability to walk and bike in Robbinsdale contributes to the small town feel and sense of community residents feel.

Greater separation from motor vehicles is desired

Participants expressed a general desire to be separated from motor vehicles when walking and biking. Many also expressed the desire for additional bike lane striping on certain roadways, giving bicyclists a defined space on the road. The desire for off-road trail connections was also expressed in many cases.

There are several key opportunities for improving conditions for walking and biking

Despite a positive opinion about the walking and biking conditions in Robbinsdale, engagement participants identified several issues that represent opportunities for improvement.

Address gaps in the network

Frequently, participants mentioned routes that were missing sidewalks or bike facilities, roads that are uncomfortable to bike or walk on, or connections to key destinations that are missing. The need for bike facilities along major roads was cited.

Improved bike connections to adjacent communities and destinations was also mentioned.

Intersection crossings

Many participants cited intersection crossings as being significant points of conflict with vehicles. These intersections have high motor vehicle volumes, multiple travel lanes, turning vehicles, and wide crossing distances. In many cases, intersection crossings were identified by participants as barriers to walking and biking.

Education and enforcement of traffic laws

Participants frequently mentioned the need for improved awareness of people walking and biking by drivers of motor vehicles. Participants also suggested improved education and enforcement of traffic laws so that all users safely interact with each other.

Bicycling parking

Increased bicycle parking at destinations was requested by many participants.

Consistent, on-going maintenance

Winter maintenance, particularly ice and snow removal, was mentioned by participants as a priority area for improvement.

Public safety as a barrier to walking and biking

Participants cited the need for improved safety measures along pedestrian and bicycle facilities, particularly at night. Improved lighting was mentioned as a potential area of improvement.