

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Local-Regional Bikeways Plan provides a broad vision, policy, goals and objectives for improving bicycling in the Miami Valley, Ohio region over the next 30 years.

This project was produced by the consulting team of Alta Planning + Design and Burgess & Niple. The project was funded by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) with financial support from the Miami Conservancy District, Five Rivers MetroParks, and the Miami County Park District. Many other organizations and individuals provided input.

The MVRPC region includes Greene, Miami, Montgomery, and the far northern portion of Warren counties and is situated along several major river corridors, including the Great Miami, Stillwater, and Little Miami rivers. Dayton, the area’s largest city, boasted a strong economy largely based on industry and manufacturing in the late 1800s, and was home to over two dozen bicycle shops (including the Wright Brothers Cycle Company). Today, the Miami Valley region includes many assets enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, including Cox Arboretum, the University of Dayton, MoMBA Mountain Bike Park, and the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

The Miami Valley benefits from an extensive trail system that has developed over the past several decades. The Miami Conservancy District (MCD), established after the Great Flood of 1913, has built an extensive network of shared use paths along the region’s waterways. The Miami Valley’s trail network is also a result of other efforts, including the conversion of abandoned railroads to recreation corridors (e.g., the Little Miami Scenic Trail and portions of the Creekside Recreation Trail). MVRPC’s Long-Range Transportation Plan includes a long list of bikeway projects, and numerous bicycle advisory committees are helping local communities develop connections to the regional bikeway network.



Figure 1. The Miami Valley has a great legacy of bikeways, and significant potential for the future.

Over the past 50 years, development has largely followed the region’s major transportation corridors including Interstates 70, 75, 675, and U.S. 35. Today, 81 jurisdictions (counties, townships, cities and villages) comprise the Miami Valley region, home to approximately 822,000 people within 1,300 square miles. The region is home to many employers including Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the largest single-site employer in the state of Ohio. Nearly 70 percent of Miami Valley residents reside in Montgomery County, with most living in Dayton (about 166,000 residents). Over the next 30 years, the region’s overall population is expected to decline slightly, although employment is expected to grow during the same timeframe.

This Plan builds on the tremendous previous work toward developing a safe and attractive bikeway system. Having a unified Plan for all jurisdictions in MVRPC’s planning area is important for the following reasons:

- **Maximize Funding Sources for Implementation:** With the identification and prioritization of specific facility and programmatic improvements found in the Comprehensive Local-Regional Bikeways Plan, MVRPC and other local jurisdictions can apply for appropriate funding to support bicycling in the region.

- **Improve Safety and Encourage Cycling:** This Plan provides tools to enhance safety for bicyclists in the Miami Valley through design guidelines, education, encouragement, and enforcement recommendations. This Plan provides recommendations for route improvements intended to make cycling safer for bicyclists of all ability levels. Examples of encouragement programs are also provided to motivate Miami Valley residents to ride for work, school, exercise and recreation.
- **Expand the Network and Support Facilities:** The Miami Valley already has several very popular bikeways such the Great Miami River Recreation Trail, Creekside Recreation Trail, and Little Miami Scenic Trail. While many of these existing facilities provide excellent routes for recreational bicyclists along scenic routes, developing a more comprehensive on-street network is necessary to provide full bicycle connectivity for regional communities. Implementing a complete bikeway network linking a variety of destinations is critical to attracting greater numbers of bicyclists. In addition to expanding and connecting key routes, providing support facilities such as clear directional signage and secure bicycle parking will enhance the functionality of the network and encourage more people to bicycle.
- **Enhance the Quality of Life in the Miami Valley:** The development of bicycle facilities provides for people-friendly streets, trails, and activity centers available to everyone, and supports sustainable community development. Bicycling can reduce traffic congestion, vehicle exhaust emissions, noise, and energy consumption. It is a healthy and active form of travel. Good bicycling opportunities can mean good economic sense for businesses in the Miami Valley. Safe and efficient cycling opportunities will help attract tourists to the region, and attract employees to the many sports and recreation-oriented businesses.

The planning process for the MVRPC Comprehensive Local-Regional Bikeways Plan included public outreach meetings, a project website, media releases and a project steering committee. The Plan's emphasis is to create a regional framework to link the existing regional shared use path system with a network of on- and off-street bikeways bringing local communities together. Through a combination of geographic information system (GIS) based data analysis tools and listening to local communities, a regional bikeway network has been developed. A prioritization process was used to identify priority projects which are presented in detailed project description sheets. Design guidelines, potential costs and maintenance information is also provided. In addition, the planning process included outreach to assist with the region's Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) program, and an SR2S toolkit is provided as both a separate document and as an element of this Plan.

This Plan presents a vision for the future of bicycling in the Miami Valley region. To ensure that that vision is implemented, the Plan must become a living document that is incorporated into the day-to-day activities of planning, design, funding, construction and maintaining infrastructure in local communities. With the leadership of MVRPC, the region's partner agencies, citizens and organizations, bicycling will be an important part of the future for the Miami Valley.

The Plan is a very detailed and extensive plan, prepared to the latest national standards, but it is only a plan. Without the decision of individual communities to implement these projects, our region will not change. The intention was always to create a corridor plan, connecting communities and neighborhoods to the spines of our current trail network and expanding commuting opportunities for cyclists. If a proposed route specified herein is not ideal, or if a parallel alternative could be used to better advantage, then route modifications **should** be made to create the best connection along that corridor.

There is nothing in this Plan that is mandatory. MVRPC hopes it will be a useful guide and book of good suggestions. MVRPC's funding process has not been tied to these suggestions, although several were considered important enough to the region to be added to our Long Range Transportation Plan. The power to make this Plan a reality lies with local leaders and activists, local engineers and planners, who will decide what is important to their community.