

LAPS

Lander Area Pathway System

Lander Greenway Committee Proposal – [DRAFT]
Development Plan 2008

Introduction

The citizens of Lander have long expressed support for the utility and community value of the existing greenways and bikeways of Lander. The Lander Greenway Committee has responded to the community's aspirations and has made a number of proposals to enhance and expand the current pathway system. These proposals and this draft document reflect a citizen and city partnership in the development and planning of the Lander Area Pathway System (LAPS).

Linking Parks, Schools, Neighborhoods and the Community

A community's transportation plan, economic development plan and parks and recreation plan are not complete without linear linkages between facilities and connections to neighborhoods, schools, and other public use facilities. Areas along the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie River are ideal for pedestrian walkways and bike trails connecting several of the city's parks, neighborhoods, schools, and other community destinations. The river already serves as the north-south spine of the existing greenway trails system. Lateral east-west connections to the river greenway trail can be developed along easements in open areas and could be expanded within the wide surfaced areas of many of the local streets. The use of existing public ways, as well as rights-of-way along utility and drainage easements, construction of walkways or pedestrian paths through cul-de-sacs, and the establishment of wider shoulder lanes along arterial streets and rural roadways could offer safer and more convenient connections between the city parks, public areas, schools and community facilities.

The Lander Greenway Project

The Lander Greenway Committee was established in 1991 as a sub-committee of the Lander Parks and Recreation Commission and serves in an advisory capacity to the Lander City Council. The Greenway Committee is comprised of several current and past members of the Lander Parks and Recreation Commission, the Lander Parks and Recreation Director, the Lander Economic Development Coordinator, Popo Agie Conservation District Representative and other interested citizens from the community.

The current system is highlighted by the Greenway along the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie River, continuing along surface streets to Lander City Park and on through McManus Park. This linear park and pathway is highly valued and heavily utilized by community members and visitors alike. Further development and expansion of the existing Greenway has been identified as a community priority since its inception.

Lander's unique geography, workforce, demographics, and transportation dynamics allow for expansion to the current system. The pathway system expansion will facilitate diversification of transportation modes, enhancement of recreational and leisure opportunities and significantly contribute to the sense of cohesiveness and character of Lander. An interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian pathways will serve not only as a form of recreation and exercise but will also provide an added benefit as an alternative mode of transportation. Lander outdoor-oriented citizens of all ages will be the beneficiaries of the increased opportunities of non-motorized travel throughout the city. In addition, improvements made to the current pathway system will significantly contribute to the overall quality of lifestyle within the community.

Extended Goals and Action Statements

Mission Statement

“To enhance the quality of life for the citizens and visitors of Lander and to encourage them to enjoy the beauty of the great outdoors by providing safe and enjoyable pathways for all non-motorized modes of transportation.”

The Lander Area Pathway System should be expanded to encompass the entire City of Lander, providing safe access to schools, outlying businesses, and open space resources in addition to improving the walk-ability and connectivity of the community.

LAPS Project – Safe Routes to Schools Proposal

Safe Routes to Schools (overview) – the U.S. Department of Transportation has formed a National Safe Routes to School Task Force. The purpose of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is to empower communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity once again. The program makes funding available for a wide variety of programs and community projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing educational programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school.

The Greenway Committee and the city should continue to work with Fremont County School District #1 to coordinate pathway and bikeway system development throughout the planning and construction of the new elementary schools and new middle school.

1. Develop 'safe routes to school' paths for the new middle school on the north side, linking the middle school to Lander Valley High School via existing surface streets. Explore possibilities of utilizing utility easements from Jefferson Street to Tweed Lane and along Industrial Park Road to the Popo Agie River and Hwy 789.
2. Develop 'safe routes to school' paths along Smith Street and Baldwin Creek Road to West Elementary School, connecting with the proposed "green-space walkway" through the Lander Business Park via existing surface streets to the new Pathfinder School (presently Starrett Junior High School) and the Lander Community Pool.

3. Develop 'safe routes to school' paths along Canyon Street and Popo Agie Street to Fifth Street connecting to South Elementary School; plan for 'safe routes to school' paths connecting South Elementary School with the Lander Community Pool.
4. Continue to explore possibilities of extending the Lander Pathway System (LAPS) to connect Lander Valley High School and Baldwin Creek Road with Squaw Creek Road and Sinks Canyon Highway (WY 131).

LAPS Project – Greenways and Pathways Proposal

1. Continue efforts to acquire easements to extend the existing Lander Greenway southwest from City Park to provide access to Goodrich Drive and connection with the existing biking/jogging path on Sinks Canyon Highway (WY 131).
2. Continue efforts to extend the Greenway north of Main Street along the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie River. The proposed path would connect with the present "Judith A. Barney Memorial River Walk" Greenway section, crossing Main Street and then continuing along North First Street to access city property along the river (the parcel recently deeded to the city by Fremont County Commissioners). The Greenway would continue north, generally parallel to the river channel, to Poor Farm Road, crossing the river via a pedestrian bridge, and continuing up the slope to WY 789.
3. Collaborate with WYDOT to initiate a cost assessment and strategic plan exploring the feasibility of the construction of a pedestrian / bicycle crossing (possibly a bridge overpass or tunnel underpass) of WY Highway 789. This project will connect a number of state facilities and neighborhoods east of WY 789 to downtown Lander, helping to mitigate dangerous circumstances associated with crossing WY 789 and the intersection with US Highway 287. A crossing could also serve as an attractive entrance 'gateway' to Lander. An aesthetic gateway such as this would enhance the character of and delineate the entrance to the city. (Explore the possible formation of a "Gateway to Lander" Committee to spearhead the project).
4. Collaborate with WYDOT in an effort to explore options and opportunities of creating a bike/pedestrian crossing or underpass at the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie and US 287 (possible pathway under the bridge at Main and First Street).
5. Develop plans for a future Greenway from the State Training School along Colter Street, following along the city limit boundary to Leedy Drive. Greenway would continue along Leedy Drive (or along Mt. Hope Cemetery boundary) to Highway 287, allowing access to the proposed Greenway along the golf course.
6. Develop a new trailhead to be included in the Greenway system beginning just above Phyllis Lynn Drive. This new path would skirt the perimeter of a small portion of the golf course along a section of 'rough' extending west-southwest to Wind River Ave allowing access to the Community Center; from there, a number of surface street options then connect to City Park and the existing Greenway System.

7. Explore possibilities of collaborating with the Fremont County Recreation Board and the Lander Planning Commission to further develop and extend the existing McManus Park section of the Greenway; continuing the greenway along Hillcrest Drive and Mortimer Lane to connect with the existing bike lane and walking path on Sinks Canyon Highway (WY 131). Development along this corridor would greatly enhance the current and proposed Greenways and Pathways system.

LAPS Project – Additional Goals & Complete Streets Initiatives

1. Mark and stripe bike lanes along proposed pathways along with wider curb lanes on local, arterial and collector streets. Many of Lander’s wide residential streets present an ideal opportunity for reconfiguration and re-striping.
2. Encourage Lander City Council to support and adopt “Healthy Communities” and “Complete Streets” initiatives and guidelines to implement pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements for all new developments and new construction, especially around the new elementary and middle schools. Codify the guidelines for the improvements when streets are re-surfaced in existing neighborhoods and in areas near parks and churches. Improvements could include installation of new crossing signals and signage, bike lanes, wider sidewalks and raised crosswalks.
3. Routine maintenance such as repainting, snow removal and sweeping for debris must be incorporated so bike lanes and walking paths are safe and useable throughout the year; primary responsibility of Lander Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with Fremont County School District No.1.
4. The system of off-street bike and walking trails should be designed and constructed in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
5. Perform a ‘walk-ability – bike-ability’ study to identify significant impediments for safe and convenient use of the pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure system; study to include an assessment of existing city sidewalks, pathways and bike lanes.
6. Explore ways to develop creative incentives for landowners who grant easements and/or donate land.
7. Maintain a strong planning relationship with the City Planning Commission and Fremont County Recreation Board. Continued collaboration with the Popo Agie Conservation District throughout the planning and implementation process is desirable. Identify and evaluate opportunities for expanded Greenways that may be developed if the City, County, and Popo Agie Conservation District implement the Lander Flood Mitigation Project.

Challenges

There are several possible impediments the success of the LAPS project and its many initiatives. The most significant will be the highway crossings, land transfers, and the acquisition of right-of-way easements. The City of Lander, Fremont County School District 1 and the Wyoming Department of Transportation must partner together to best serve the interests and needs of all entities as they strive to accomplish their respective statutory mandates to provide for the general health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Lander and Wyoming. Enhancing the Pathway System of Lander will require a continuous concerted effort on behalf of both the public and private sectors.

Implementation

Plan implementation is the most important step in the development process; it requires the combined efforts, support and commitment of the City's leadership, including the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, and City Staff.

2-Year Update/Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An evaluation and appraisal report should be prepared every two years. The Greenway Committee would prepare the report with input from various city departments, such as the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and City Council. The report involves evaluating the existing plan and assessing how successful it has been in implementing the community's vision and goals. The purpose of the report is to identify the success and shortcomings of the plan, look at what has changed over the past two years, and make recommendations on how the plan could be modified to reflect those changes. The report should review baseline conditions and evaluate implementation potential including the success and shortcomings of the goals, policies, and recommendations. The result of the evaluation report will be a revised master plan, including identification of new or revised information that may result in an updated vision, policies, goals, and recommendations.

Lander Greenway Committee

Lander Area Pathways System – Development Plan 2008 v.4

Revision History:

September 2007 – First Draft

December 2007 – Second Draft: Safe Routes to Schools (overview) added; Appendix A and Appendix B added; minor revisions and corrections.

January 2008 – Third Draft: Removed references to “project phases”; removed specific references to potential easement acquisitions; minor revisions and corrections.

January 2008 – Fourth Draft: Replaced Appendix C – “Additional Funding Sources” with Appendix C – “Additional Resources and Information”.

APPENDIX A – Safe Routes to Schools Program

The purpose of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is to empower communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity once again. The Program makes funding available for a wide variety of programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school.

The Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Program was created by Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act (SAFETEA-LU). The SRTS Program is funded at \$612 million over five Federal fiscal years (FY 2005-2009) and is to be administered by State Departments of Transportation (DOTs).

The Program provides funds to the States to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely. The purposes of the program are:

1. to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
2. to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
3. to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity (approximately 2 miles) of primary and middle schools (Grades K-8).

Each State administers its own program and develops its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding. The program establishes two distinct types of funding opportunities: infrastructure projects (engineering improvements) and non-infrastructure related activities (such as education, enforcement and encouragement programs). More detail on eligible projects, as well as program set-up is provided in the SRTS Program Guidance document.

For more information:

Federal Highway Administration – Safe Routes to School
<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>

National Center for Safe Routes to School
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>

APPENDIX B – Bikes Belong Grants Program

The Bikes Belong Grants Program strives to put more people on bicycles more often by funding important and influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S. These projects include bike paths, lanes, and routes, as well as bike parks, mountain bike trails, BMX facilities, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives.

Since 1999, Bikes Belong has awarded 150 grants to municipalities and grassroots groups in 42 states and the District of Columbia, investing more than \$1.2 million in community bicycling projects and leveraging more than \$450 million in federal, state, and private funding.

Bikes Belong works to make bicycling better in America by:

- Working with the federal government to maximize federal funding for bicycling
- Awarding grants to help create more and better places to ride
- Sponsoring programs to help cities and towns become more bicycle-friendly
- Promoting bicycling to get more people riding
- Cultivating cooperation throughout the bicycle industry

Facility Project Objectives

"To connect existing facilities or create new opportunities; leverage federal, state, and private funds; influence policy; and generate economic activity."

Eligible facility projects include:

- Bike paths, trails, routes, and lanes
- Mountain bike facilities
- Bike parks
- BMX facilities
- Innovative and unique high-profile projects

Generally, Bikes Belong will consider funding construction costs and matching funds for facilities projects. Bikes Belong will also consider funding advocacy work for bike facilities on a case-by-case basis. Projects with a limited impact, such as the installation of a small number of bike racks, are unlikely to be funded through the program.

For more information:

Bikes Belong

<http://www.bikesbelong.org/>

Bikes Belong – Safe Routes to School National Partnership

<http://www.bikesbelong.org/saferoutestoschool>

APPENDIX C – Additional Resources and Information

America Walks, Boston MA (617) 367-1170

<http://www.americawalks.org>

A coalition of local and regional pedestrian advocacy groups nationwide.

Bikes Belong Coalition, Boulder, CO (303) 449-4893

<http://www.bikesbelong.org>

A coalition of bicycle industry supporters for more livable communities.

Complete Streets, Washington, DC (202) 207-3355

<http://www.completestreets.org>

National campaign to have all roads accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists as well as cars and trucks.

League of American Bicyclists, Washington, DC (202) 822-1333

<http://www.bikeleague.org>

Advocacy group promoting bicycling for fun, fitness and transportation.

National Center for Bicycling and Walking, Bethesda, MD (301) 656-4220

<http://www.bikewalk.org>

Organizes the “Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike” Conference every two years.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, Chapel Hill, NC (877) 925-5245

<http://www.pedbikeinfo.org>

Technical support, including walk-ability and bike-ability studies and facility design.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Washington, DC (202) 331-9696

<http://www.railstrails.org>

Great help for trails advocates, including research supporting the benefits of trails.

Safe Routes to Schools Program, Wyoming Contact, Cheyenne, WY (307) 777-3938

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>

Information and framework for launching a SRTS program, organizing an event, and developing SRTS education in the schools.

Surface Transportation Policy Project, Washington, DC (202) 466-2636

<http://www.transact.org>

Publishes Mean Streets – booklet loaded with pedestrian data and information.

Walkable Communities, Inc., Orlando, FL (866) 347-2734

<http://www.walkable.org>

The website of Dan Burden, one of the nation’s leading experts on walkable community design.