

FUNDAMENTALS

Current Conditions

During interviews with stakeholders, a major recurring theme was that downtown Toledo needed to be more pedestrian-friendly, easier to navigate on foot and by car. There are adequate sidewalk widths but no interesting streetscape theme to make the walk attractive and interesting. Recent streetscape improvements on Adams have been a success in bringing more life and vitality to the corridor.

The Citiwalk system is a network of skywalk, subterranean tunnels and internal connections to allow pedestrian circulation in inclement weather. It is not well maintained and not well used. The Riverwalk and Promenade extend from COSI to Owens Corning and offer recreational walking and biking opportunities. There is a pedestrian/bikeway trail (Buckeye Basin Trail) on Greenbelt, but nothing to connect it to the facilities along the Maumee River.

There are information signs directing motorists to major activity centers such as COSI, Erie Street Market and Fifth Third Field, but the system is not complete or integrated. There also are no signs oriented to pedestrians. The *2002 Downtown Toledo Master Plan* calls for a variety of small transportation-related investments to encourage revitalization efforts, such as one-way streets and streetscape improvements.

Problem Statement

- For any form of transit to succeed, downtown must be more walkable
- Need more information so that pedestrians and drivers can navigate downtown better
- Need support facilities for bicycles if they are to be considered a true alternative mode
- Gaps in trail system between Riverwalk and Erie Street Market, and between Promenade and Buckeye Basin Trail on Greenbelt

Elements Considered

1. Streetscape Improvements
2. Auto-oriented Wayfinding
3. Pedestrian Wayfinding
4. Greenway Improvements
5. Bicycle Improvements
6. Parking Development Policy
7. Taxi Regulations

Initial Findings

As analysis progressed, it became apparent that a package of relatively low-cost basic improvements would address many of the issues raised by stakeholders. This package of improvements became known as “Fundamentals.” They endorse and further develop recommendations made in the *2002 Downtown Toledo Master Plan*. They enhance non-motorized transportation, both walking and biking, by filling in major gaps in the trail system. They also provide a framework for both pedestrian and auto-oriented wayfinding, all of which support revitalization efforts.

Description of Elements

- Streetscape Improvements.** Within the existing sidewalk width, new landscaping and street furniture treatments would soften and enhance the Huron (from Market to Cherry) and Madison (from Summit to Michigan) corridors. Estimated cost of these improvements is \$1.3 - \$2.6 million, depending on extent of streetscaping. Estimate does not include any street work or right-of-way.
- Auto-oriented Wayfinding.** The first priority would be the placement of static directional signs. A total of 50 is estimated to cost \$90,000. The next step would be to design a dynamic system that provides informational signs about parking conditions at three key gateways into the downtown. It is estimated that there would be 10 parking facilities linked into this system. Cost of design and implementation of this element is estimated to be \$636,000. An additional 6 gateway locations could be added at a cost of approximately \$396,000.
- Pedestrian Wayfinding.** Complementing the auto-oriented wayfinding system would be pedestrian kiosks and directional signs located at strategic locations throughout downtown. A system that includes 12 kiosks and 15 wayfinding signs is estimated to cost \$275,000 - \$300,000, exclusive of the cost to develop the sign standards and the system map that would be used.
- Greenway Improvements.** There are two major gaps in the greenway system. One is a connection between the Buckeye Basin Trail on Greenbelt and the Promenade along the Maumee River, as well as across the river to the paths on the east side. Some improvement should be made in the Cherry corridor to make bicycling more attractive. Biking and walking should be accommodated on the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Bridge.

There is also a missing piece from the existing Riverwalk to the facilities parallel to Swan Creek near the Erie Street Market. Both walking and biking should be accommodated in any improvements made in this area.

Initial planning estimates, exclusive of any right-of-way costs, suggest a budget of \$1 - \$2 million for these improvements that could take the form of a path or improved sidewalks and a bikeway (either a bike lane or a wide outside lane).

Extension of the elevated Citiwalk system was considered, but is not recommended. The focus should be on developing ground-level pedestrian connections that are linked to transit.

- Bicycle Improvements.** In addition to greenway improvements that facilitate bicycle travel, there is the need to provide bicycle parking facilities as well as information on bicycle opportunities in the downtown area. Kiosks could be provided at strategic locations such as along both sides of the river, at the Transportation Center near the Buckeye Basin Trail and at Erie Street Market. A budget of \$50,000 - \$100,000 could provide for substantial improvements.
- Parking Development Policy.** A park-once system should be promoted. Therefore, the placement of any new major parking facilities should consider the connection to transit. Any additional parking in the immediate core area should be limited to replacement parking and should not have vehicular access/egress points on major pedestrian streets such as Madison or Huron. There should be no new public commercial parking east of Summit in order to protect the pedestrian-orientation of the riverfront area.
- Taxi Regulations.** Taxis are not a reliable transportation mode in the downtown area. Additional regulation may be required to make this an attractive alternative. Sample regulations used by other cities, as well as a list of "passenger's rights" and "driver's rights", have been provided for guidance.