



**Economic
Development and
Growing the
Economy**

**UW
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Profiles of Best Practices

Engaging Community Development—Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridor Plan

Community, County

Oneida County

Area of Project Impact

Oneida County and neighboring Vilas and Forest Counties

Population Affected

36,776

Situation

Lack of physical activity was identified as a priority health problem in the *Healthy People, Healthy Oneida County* needs assessment and community health plan. Tourists and seasonal residents are also seeking safe recreational routes for access to bicycling and walking when they travel to the northwoods.

Economic Development Strategies

As part of the *Healthy People, Healthy Oneida County* community plan, the Oneida County Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridor plan was created to encourage physical activity by increasing walking and biking trails and routes in Oneida County. This project serves to make walking and bicycling a viable, attractive alternative transportation choice. It also provides fitness and recreational opportunities to people living in and visiting the county.

Implementation

An Oneida County Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridor plan was developed in 2002 in order to guide the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Oneida County as both a recreational opportunity and transportation alternative which functions as part of the county's overall transportation plan. The plan provides for the development of a comprehensive, safe and attractive bicycle and pedestrian network within the county. The plan also serves to encourage healthy recreational choices; the potential benefits of which include health and fitness, social, recreational, environmental and quality of life improvements.

Building trails also stimulates economic development by attracting new financial resources in the form of state, federal and private grants. In addition, the presence of a coordinated system of trails helps to make Oneida County a tourist destination, especially in off-seasons, bringing in new tourism dollars. Increased tourism due to bicycling and walking trails may develop more adventure and eco-tourism businesses. Existing lodging, eating establishments and other tourist attractions would also benefit from increased tourism. In sum, this project potentially offers a myriad of community and economic benefits.

Partners and Leadership

At this time the Oneida County Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridor plan has engaged organizations, government agencies, business interests and citizens in a planning process with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; worked side-by-side with the Rhinelander Pathways Project (a similar planning group for the City of Rhinelander); produced a proposed pedestrian and bicycle trail map for Oneida County; solicited input from local government officials; worked with community partners to plan a bike safety rodeo in Rhinelander; and conducted public hearings on the proposed trails in Oneida County.

Outcomes

A public awareness campaign about the benefits of trails has been launched through media, advocacy, public presentations, and public hearings. At the same time, efforts to plan for a coordinated system of trails have established new public and private collaborations and strengthened relationships between local, county and state government services. To date, four towns have passed resolutions supporting the plan and it is anticipated that after the county board passes a resolution in support of the bike plan in December, 2002, development of the primary corridor trail will begin.

Contact

Mary Hilliker
Oneida County Health Department
Courthouse, P.O. Box 400
Rhinelander, WI 54501-0400
715-365-2710

DonnaRae Jacobson
UW-Extension Oneida County
P.O. Box 1208 – Airport
Rhinelander, WI 54501
715-365-2750

Richard Rollman
Forestry and Outdoor Recreation
Courthouse
P.O. Box 400
Rhinelander, WI 54501