

MOBILITY

Background

After the 1980 Olympics, the Lake Placid/North Elba community adopted an economic strategy of developing and marketing events to increase area tourism. This strategy has been very successful. Over recent years the volume of visitors has increased, and the length of the "shoulder seasons" has decreased. More and more visitors attend events like the Lake Placid Ironman Triathlon; rugby, lacrosse and soccer weekends; hockey tournaments; skating events; and various other competitions. A byproduct of this success though is an increased strain on the transportation infrastructure, as larger numbers of people use a limited number of roadways and parking areas, usually in concentrated intervals. This makes it difficult for both locals and visitors to move about the region.

Frustrations with parking and circulation in the community are certainly not new. The 1997 Comprehensive Plan envisioned a circulation network which would invite residents and visitors of all ages and abilities to walk and bicycle to and from commercial districts, residential areas, recreational and cultural facilities, and special event venues. The Town and Village subsequently developed satellite parking with free trolley and shuttle services. While considerable progress has been made by the Town and Village in improving and expanding the pedestrian and bicycle network since then, it requires constant revision and improvement. This plan aims to continue that progress.



As indicated, bicycling and walking are increasingly popular activities in the community of North Elba/Lake Placid, whether for recreation, fitness, or transportation. Residents and visitors of all ages and abilities bike, walk, and/or run on our roadways alongside world-class athletes who gravitate to the area to train for competitive events like the Ironman Triathlon. With more vehicles and bicyclists on area roadways, the safety of all users has become an increasingly important mobility concern. In addition, while the community is generally very pedestrian-friendly, it remains difficult to walk from the outskirts of town into the central business district, and older adults and people with disabilities still face barriers when using the pedestrian network and public transportation.

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Vision for Mobility

Lake Placid/North Elba envisions a community with a transportation system that encourages healthy, active living, promotes all transportation options and independent mobility, and reduces environmental impacts. The community intends to achieve greater social interaction and community identity by providing safe and convenient travel options along and across roadways through a comprehensive, integrated transportation network for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, and motorists. Intended users include people of all ages and abilities, including children, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.



Goals, Objectives and Implementation Measures

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation/Complete Streets

Goal #1: To plan and establish a comprehensive, safe, and accessible network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that is incorporated into existing and proposed facilities, and links residential areas; commercial business districts; educational, cultural and recreational facilities; and community services.

Objective 1: To identify opportunities to improve and expand the existing network of pedestrian/bicycle facilities, in coordination with road repair/reconstruction/construction efforts on Village, Town, County and State roadways.

Implementation Measures

- Create a Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan for the Village and Town areas, to identify gaps and needed improvements in sidewalks, paved shoulders, trails, and other pedestrian/bicycle facilities.
- Develop a “Complete Streets” Policy that directs transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way, to enable safe access for all users regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation.
- Establish a pedestrian and bicycle advisory committee to coordinate with the Essex County Department of Public Works (DPW) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), to ensure that pedestrian/bicycle connectivity is a priority, and will be given equal consideration to other infrastructure investments.
 - Consider developing a GIS map of existing trail ways, walk ways, and bike ways.
 - Ensure that sidewalks in and out of the business district are maintained.

Objective 2: To create safe and convenient pedestrian connections between key destinations.

Implementation Measures

- Conduct an assessment and inventory of the existing pedestrian network, to evaluate existing conditions and identify and prioritize proposed improvements to pedestrian facilities.

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- Evaluate opportunities to link pedestrian facilities to the following trailheads that are within walking distance of the hamlet area.
 - Jackrabbit Trail
 - Henry's Woods
 - Lussi Trails (behind golf course)
 - Peninsula Trails
 - Evaluate opportunities to link the following areas: Cascade Acres to the existing sidewalk on Sentinel Road/NYS 73, where it terminates at the intersection with Newman Road.
 - Sentinel Road with Old Military Road by constructing a sidewalk on Newman Road.
- Investigate the feasibility of using "Access Management" designs to improve pedestrian safety on Saranac Avenue/NYS 86 between the intersection with Wes Valley Road and the entrance to Price Chopper and on West Valley Road.
 - Clearly define entrances and reduce the amount of pavement immediately adjacent to the roadway.
 - Design and construct commercial driveways that cross sidewalks so that the sidewalk continues across the driveway at the same elevation, and the driveway apron does not go through the sidewalk.
 - Seek ways to provide fewer driveways and narrower driveway crossings to improve pedestrian safety, especially in busy commercial areas.
- Approach the Department of Public Works about considering the following possibilities:
 - Whenever feasible, construct new sidewalks to be a minimum of 5 feet wide.
 - Install high-visibility ladder-style crosswalks at mid-block crossings and all intersections where sidewalks or paved shoulders are provided for pedestrians.
 - Install in-street crosswalk signs at un-signalized crossings, to make the crosswalk more visible and increase driver yielding.
 - Where appropriate, shorten crossing distances by using small corner radii on corners where truck traffic is not a concern, and by installing curb extensions where parking is allowed on local streets.
 - Restrict curb parking at specific crossing points to provide greater visibility for pedestrians and drivers.
 - Use traffic calming measures to slow motor vehicle traffic in areas with high pedestrian traffic, particularly residential, school, and shopping areas.
- Coordinate with local and state police to ensure that the following traffic laws pertaining to motorists and pedestrians are being obeyed and enforced.
 - Speeding Laws
 - Require drivers to STOP, not just YIELD, for pedestrians in a crosswalk.
 - Laws pertaining to pedestrian travel in roadways without sidewalks.

Objective 3: To create safe and convenient bicycle connections between key destinations.

Implementation Measures

- Conduct an assessment of the existing bicycle network to evaluate existing conditions and to identify and prioritize proposed improvements to bicycle facilities.
- Coordinate with local and state police to ensure that the following traffic laws pertaining to motorists and bicyclists are being obeyed and enforced.
 - Speeding Laws
 - Safe Passing Laws
 - Laws pertaining to the operation
- Coordinate with local businesses, community organizations, law enforcement, and volunteers to conduct education efforts on bicycle safety in the community.
 - Place special emphasis on Lake Placid Ironman Triathlon organizers and participants, in order to minimize conflicts during the spring and summer months.
- Encourage Village DPW, Town Highway Department, County DPW, and NYSDOT to provide appropriate on-road facilities for bicyclists that reflect Complete Streets design principles, including:
 - Regularly scheduled road maintenance, including sweeping of debris and pavement repairs.
 - Paved shoulders, 4-6 ft width is preferable.
 - Bicycle access to public transit (bike racks on buses/trolleys; bike parking at key stops).
 - Designated bicycle lanes (where appropriate and feasible).
 - Secure bicycle parking at key destinations.
 - Installing “shared roadway” and/or “share the road” signage along popular bicycling routes to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists.
 - Shared Lane pavement markings on roadways (also called “sharrows”) to indicate that bicycle traffic is common. Shared Lane markings are useful where bike lanes and/or paved shoulders are not an option due to street width or other factors, and can be helpful for linking bicycle routes together to form a comprehensive bicycle network. Where cars are allowed to park on the shoulder, Shared Lane markings can help reduce the chance of a bicyclist impacting the door of a parked car. They should only be used on roadways where the speed limit is less than or equal to 35mph.

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- Coordinate with the Scenic Railroad to provide “bike cars” that accommodate bicycles on one-way trips between villages. Also consider providing rail stops for passengers to disembark on more remote roads, and continue walking/cycling.
- Examine the possibility of creating a bicycle lane on Main Street.

Objective 4: To develop a pedestrian network that is accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

Implementation Measures

- Coordinate with NYSDOT to integrate Lake Placid/Town of Elba into the NYSDOT’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan for Region 1.
 - An ADA Transition Plan should include an inventory and assessment of the accessibility of pedestrian facilities (including sidewalks, curb ramps, paved shoulders, and their interface with parks, recreation facilities, parking lots, and other public spaces), and identify and prioritize improvements that remove barriers to accessibility.
- The DRAFT Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) should be used as guidance when planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining pedestrian facilities on local roads.

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Goal #2: To encourage and promote the use of the pedestrian/bicycle network.

Objective 1: To establish a community-wide Wayfinding Signage Plan to help residents and visitors navigate the community by foot and/or bicycle.

Implementation Measures

- Determine where signs should be located along existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes in accordance with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Determine sign standards to ensure consistency, including the following:
 - Uniform sign design
 - What information to include on the signs.
- Determine information to be placed on signs, including the following:
 - Identify destinations that signs will identify.
 - Identify approximate distance and walking/riding time to each destination.
- Manufacture and install signs.
- Consider converting information into a map of pedestrian and bicycle routes through the area; distribute as a pamphlet.

Objective 2: To provide a comprehensive system of bicycle parking facilities for residents and visitors.

Implementation Measures

- Conduct an inventory and assessment of existing bicycle parking facilities; identify and prioritize locations for new short-term bicycle parking racks.
- Identify potential locations and procedures for replacing car parking spaces with bicycle parking.
- Identify examples of bicycle rack cost-sharing programs, for potential partnership with local businesses and community organizations.

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Objective 3: To promote and market Lake Placid/North Elba as a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly community.

Implementation Measures

- Apply for recognition from the League of American Bicyclists as a “Bicycle Friendly Community.” The Bicycle Friendly Community Program provides incentives, hands-on technical assistance, and awards recognition to communities that actively support bicycling.

Goal #3: Improve the life of residents of Lake Placid and North Elba by supporting enhanced county-wide public transportation.

Objective 1: Enhance public transportation services for Lake Placid and North Elba residents.

Implementation Measures

- Convene a meeting of organizations that provide transportation assistance to identify existing service routes.
- Work with Essex and Franklin counties to ensure that bus service is operating as needed for local residents and businesses. Consider county budgets, route planning, and service advertisements.
- Develop coordinated marketing/education programs to increase awareness of existing transportation services.
- Consider developing a low cost personal transportation service, similar to the Gadabout service of Ithaca and Franklin Counties.
- Explore the feasibility of providing a limited shuttle to the Van Hoevenberg area for all-season recreation access.
- Consider partnering with the Adirondack Mountain Club to explore the implementation of a fee-based shuttle, similar to the one provided in the White Mountains of New Hampshire by the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Goal #4: Improve trolley operation to reduce congestion on Main Street, improve downtown parking, and improve around-town transportation for tourists and for those without personal vehicles.

Objective 1: Increase the efficiency of trolley operation.

Implementation Measures

- Reevaluate the trolley's route, determining stops that will best serve local residents and visitors.
- Ensure that the trolley serves remote parking areas to encourage visitor parking away from the immediate downtown area.
- Prominently mark trolley stops. At each stop post the schedule (indicating seasonal and special event changes), as well as a map of the route.
- Provide trolley schedules and maps to hotels/motels, village/town offices, and churches; for publication in tourist literature; and for posting on the internet.
- Conduct a "Ride the Trolley" campaign to announce the new, improved service.
- Consider the adoption of a phone app that tracks the trolley on its route.

Goal #5: Increase connectivity and transportation options to Lake Placid.

Objective 1: Coordinate activities between train stations, bus stations, and airports to Lake Placid and its various destinations.

Implementation Measures

- Inventory existing public transportation options between transportation hubs and Lake Placid.
- Conduct a gap analysis.
- Market public transportation connection options for those without a private vehicle.

Goal #6: Create a balance of parking that supports economic development but does not detract from the quaint village atmosphere.

Objective 1: Develop a Parking Plan for the Village of Lake Placid.

Implementation Measures

- Develop a comprehensive parking plan that evaluates Village rights-of way for additional parking and bicycle lanes.
- Consider a centralized location for a parking garage.