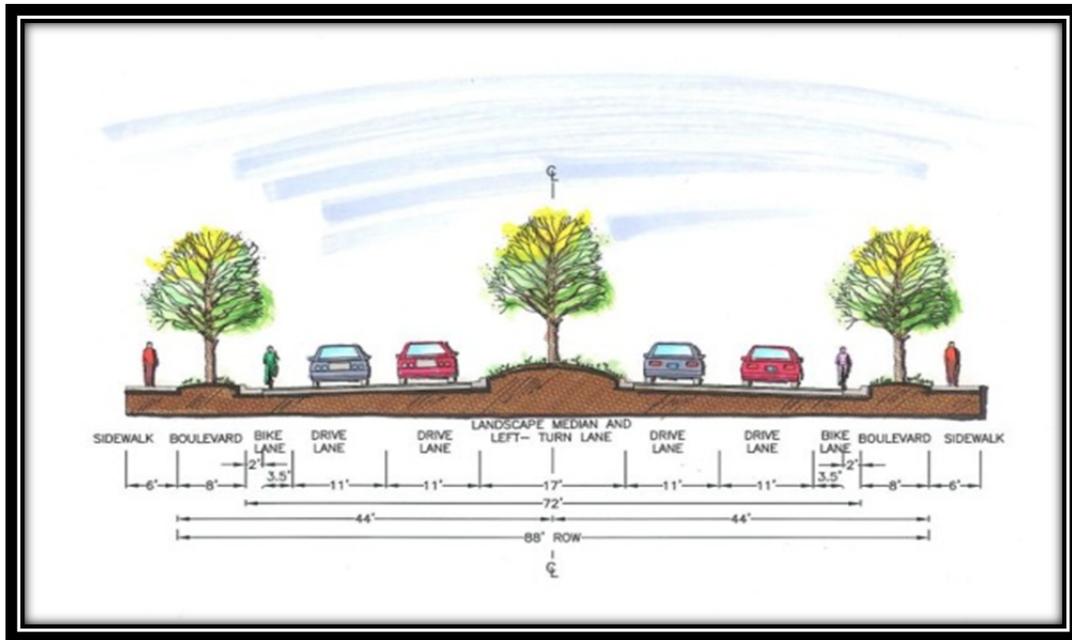


# Chapter 5. Complete Streets and Walkable Communities.



## 5.1 Description of Complete Streets.

Cities throughout the world, and specifically the United States, are coming to embrace a new transportation and community planning design concept called “Complete Streets.” Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a Complete Street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations, trails and other points of interest.

Incomplete streets – those designed with only cars in mind – limit transportation choices by making walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation inconvenient, unattractive, and too often, dangerous. Changing policy so that our transportation system routinely includes the needs of people on foot, public transportation, and bicycles means that walking, riding bikes, and riding buses and trains will be safer and easier. People of all ages and abilities will have more options when traveling to work, to school, to the grocery store and to visit family.

Although alternative forms of transportation such as bus and train networks may never be feasible or part of Charlevoix’s transportation network, the City

can take specific steps to provide safe and accommodating transportation networks for bike and walking paths to access the downtown area, City parks and beaches, schools, the Little Traverse Wheelway, the Lake to Lake Trail and other points of interest.



Complete Streets have a number of recognized benefits including: (Source: National Complete Streets Coalition)

- **Complete Streets improve safety.** A Federal Highways Administration safety review found that streets designed with sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers improve pedestrian safety. Some features, such as medians, improve safety for all users: they enable pedestrians to cross busy roads in two stages, reduce left-turning motorist crashes to zero, and improve bicycle safety.
- **Complete Streets encourage walking and bicycling for health.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently named adoption of Complete Streets policies as a recommended strategy to prevent obesity. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among individuals without safe place to walk, just 27% were active enough.
- **Complete Streets can lower transportation costs for families.** Americans spent an average of 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, with the poorest fifth of families spending more than double that figure. In fact, most families spend far more on transportation than on food. When residents have the opportunity to walk, bike, or take transit, they have more control over their expenses by replacing car trips with these inexpensive options.
- **Complete Streets foster strong communities.** Complete Streets play an important role in livable communities, where all people – regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation – feel safe and welcome on the roadways. A safe walking and bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation and creating friendly, walkable communities. A recent study found that people who live in walkable communities are more likely to be socially engaged and trusting than residents of less walk-

able neighborhoods. Additionally, they reported being in better health and happier more often.

## **5.2 Changes in State Legislation.**

The State of Michigan also recently acknowledged the importance and value of Complete Streets. In 2010, the State of Michigan passed Complete Streets Legislation that amends both the Michigan Transportation Fund Law (Act 51) and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33).

Under this new legislation, the Michigan Department of Transportation will be required to consider all users of roads in all phases of road project planning and during construction. The new legislation also encourages local units of government to consider Complete Streets principles when updating their master plans.

The Complete Streets Advisory Council was also established to provide education and advice to the State Transportation Commission, county road commissions, municipalities, interest groups, and the public on the development, implementation, and coordination of Complete Streets policies.

## **5.3 Safe Routes to School. (SR2S)**

State and national efforts are also being made to promote and establish “Safe

Routes to School” which is another transportation planning initiative with an obvious purpose. Safe Routes to School (SR2S) is an international movement—and now a federal program—to make it safe, convenient and fun for children to bicycle and walk to school. When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need for good health. Safe Routes to School initiatives also help ease traffic jams and air pollution, unite neighborhoods and contribute to students’ readiness to learn in school. SR2S efforts must involve coordination between the schools, the general public, and local and state government.

There are state and federal grants available to help accomplish SR2S goals. Listed below are examples of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects and programs that are eligible for federal Safe Routes to School funding:

- Sidewalks
- Traffic calming and speed reduction
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
- On-street and off-street bicycle facilities
- Off-street pedestrian facilities
- Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools
- Activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school
- Public awareness campaign, community outreach

- Traffic enforcement operations in the vicinity of schools
- Traffic education
- Student training sessions (bicycle and pedestrian safety)
- Funding for training volunteers and managers of Safe Routes to School programs



The need for pursuing SR2S in transportation planning for Charlevoix came to the forefront in 2010 when two Charlevoix Middle School students were struck by a car at the intersection of Bridge Street and Garfield Avenue. This accident spurred an effort to be more proactive in preventing future accidents and finding solutions to transportation problems faced by students who walk or bike to school. As a result, the CMS Principal engaged students to perform a study that included finding out how many students walk or bike to school, the routes they travel, how many cars go by at specific intersections, and evaluate drivers level of concentration or activities they are doing while driving

by. A committee is also being formed of community leaders and citizens to study these transportation issues faced by students and find solutions. Specific goals and objectives on Safe Routes to School initiatives in Charlevoix can be found in Chapter 7.

#### **5.4 Limitation and Challenges facing Charlevoix.**

A number of challenges and limitations face all communities when seeking to incorporate Complete Streets and pursue walkable communities. Charlevoix is no different and must identify these challenges, then actively seek solutions by working with the public and coordinating with state government and local organizations.

One of the major challenges facing Charlevoix is budgeting and securing funding to incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure. Careful capital planning, grant funding, and public support are necessary to help deal with the funding limitations that will be faced in the future. The City also recognizes the inherent problem of having a major US highway, US 31, bisecting the City and the bridge over the Pine River Channel, both of which can limit achieving complete streets goals. The highway and bridge create obvious problems when crossing from the east and west, and from accessing the north and south sides of the City. In addition to the highway, the lakes and channels limit

the City to only one available crossing for vehicular and pedestrian traffic to the north and south. Topographic conditions, such as hills and valleys, can create safety problems for both vehicular and bike traffic. Weather conditions can affect road and bike surfaces and limit the times of year when Complete Streets can be used. Busy summer traffic conditions can prevent new crossings from being established and affect pedestrian safety of bikers and people walking. Physical structures, such as the buildings being too close to the road downtown, can prevent bike lanes from being included. Telephone poles and trees can affect the placement and width of sidewalks or bike lanes. Limited number of streets in our small community and one way streets can complicate overall transportation routes.

Despite all of these challenges, the benefits of walkable communities and Complete Streets far outweigh the costs. The City of Charlevoix recognizes these obstacles and outlines specific goals and objectives in Chapter 6.

## **5.5 Creating a Bike Friendly Charlevoix.**

The major benefits of creating a bike friendly Charlevoix include the following:

- Improved public health from exercising and reducing fumes from vehicles.
- Reduction in traffic flows and congestion, which improves traffic safety.
- Cost savings as a result of not spending money on fuel and maintenance.
- Environmental benefits by not using fossil fuels, and reducing emissions.
- Helping to reduce the U.S. reliance on foreign oil.
- Economic benefits.



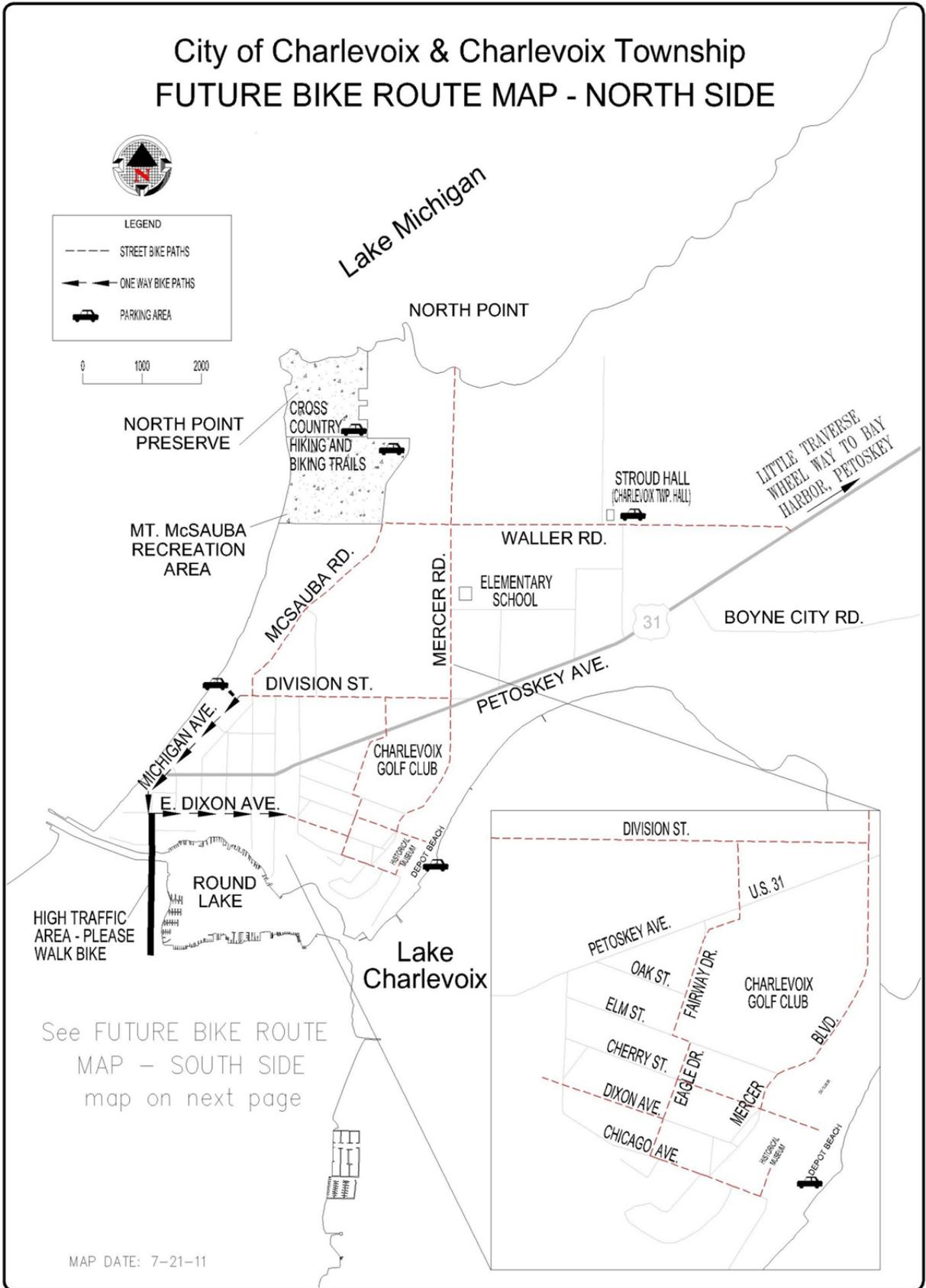
Through careful study and planning, the City of Charlevoix has created the following maps as a starting point and guide for future bike transportation networks. The bike routes were determined by carefully considering the limitations described in Section 5.4, and connecting relevant points of interests, parks, schools, and other bike routes.

# City of Charlevoix & Charlevoix Township FUTURE BIKE ROUTE MAP - NORTH SIDE



**LEGEND**

- STREET BIKE PATHS
- ← ONE WAY BIKE PATHS
- 🚗 PARKING AREA



See FUTURE BIKE ROUTE  
MAP – SOUTH SIDE  
map on next page

MAP DATE: 7-21-11

# City of Charlevoix & Charlevoix Township FUTURE BIKE ROUTE MAP - SOUTH SIDE

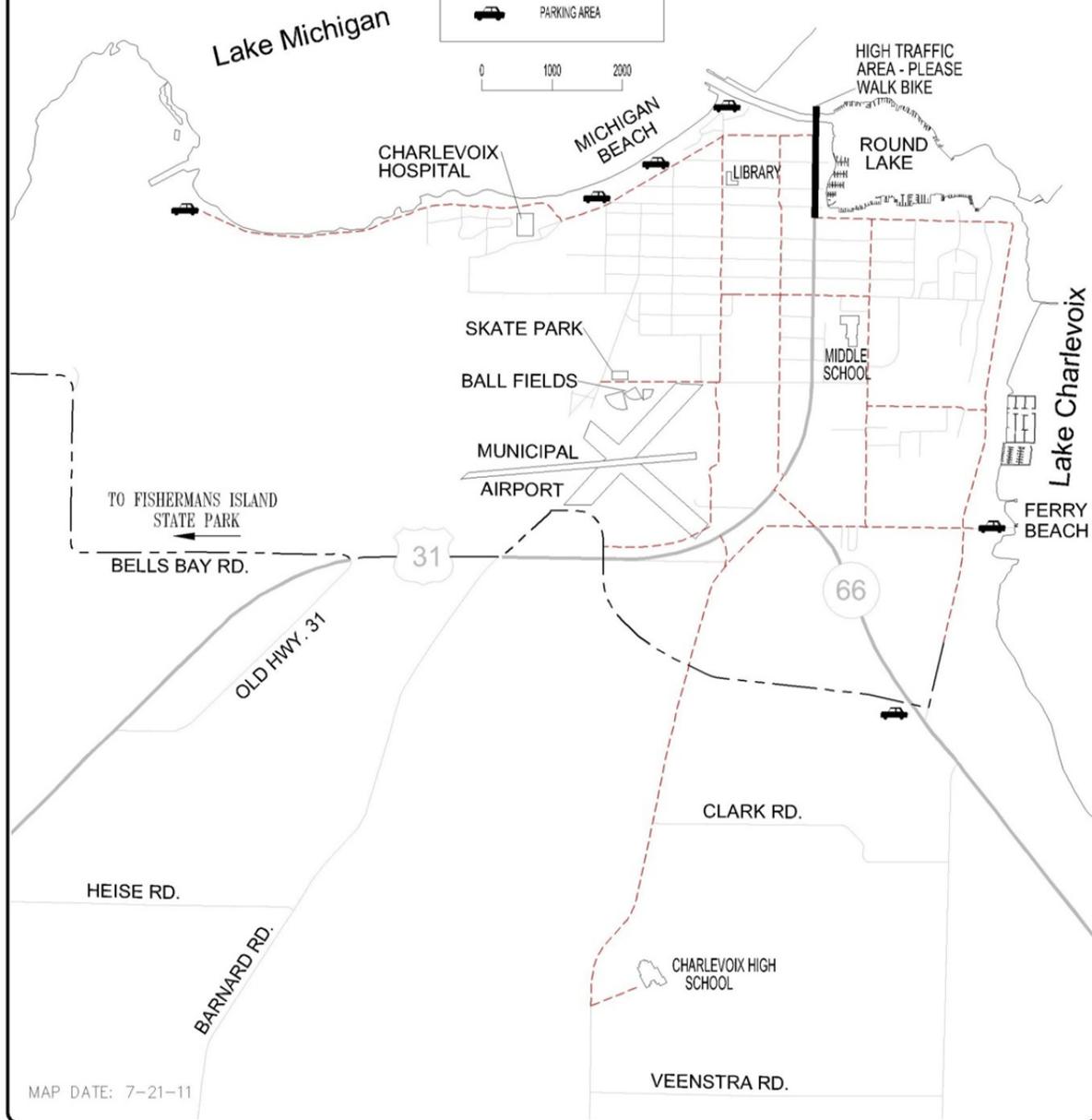


See FUTURE BIKE ROUTE  
MAP – NORTH SIDE  
map on previous page

**LEGEND**

- BIKE PATHS ON SHOULDER
- LAKE TO LAKE TRAIL
- 🚗 PARKING AREA

0 1000 2000



MAP DATE: 7-21-11