

## Section 7. Program Recommendations

### 7.1. Introduction

Pedestrian facilities alone do not make a town pedestrian-friendly; a variety of programs can also be implemented to create and support a pedestrian-friendly culture. A pedestrian-friendly culture has several different characteristics, including the behavior of the people in the town, the attitude of motorists in the town towards pedestrians, and the role of police and other law officials to enforce pedestrian safety. For this reason, programs are often created to fit within the three E's of pedestrian planning: education, encouragement, and enforcement. Education programs teach others about safe pedestrian behaviors, the benefits of walking, and are necessary to assist people in feeling more comfortable with their "new" mode of travel. Education programs can also be used to teach motorists how to interact safely with pedestrians. Encouragement programs, like education programs, can also teach about the benefits of walking, and serve to promote walking and pedestrian-friendly behavior through activities and incentives. Finally, enforcement programs provide the "teeth" of creating a safe and legal pedestrian environment. When law enforcement officers and other officials protect pedestrians and encourage walking, this sends a clear message that the presence of pedestrians is a legitimate and permanent condition in the town's transportation network.

The Town of Cary already has several programs that encourage a pedestrian-friendly town, including their sidewalk request program (see Section 4). As part of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the Town participates in several yearly activities which are sponsored by RTP SmartCommute and the Triangle Transit Authority (TTA), including:

- ◆ The SmartCommute Challenge, which is intended to encourage alternative forms of work commuting.
- ◆ International Walk-to-School Day, which encourages students and their parents to walk to school.
- ◆ International Car-Free Day, in which participants pledge not to use their cars all day.

In addition, in May 2005 the Town renewed its Bronze designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community with the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). The LAB originally awarded the Town the Bronze designation in May 2003. Although this is a designation intended

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primarily for bicycling, a bicycle-friendly community frequently has characteristics which make it pedestrian-friendly. The Town also has a strong greenway program which includes a Greenway Advisory Committee to its Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Committee. The Greenway Advisory Committee also has a webpage with information about Cary's greenways and committee members, located through the Town of Cary webpage at [www.townofcary.org](http://www.townofcary.org).

Some of Cary's previous planning documents have also recommended several programs; they are listed below. These recommendations are incorporated into the Pedestrian Plan.

- ◆ Implementation of a program of systematic sidewalk gap closure with construction projects initiated by the Town (*Cary Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Jan 2001*)
- ◆ Pursuit of a set of five short-term priority sidewalk construction projects in specific locales (*Cary Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Jan 2001*)
- ◆ Establishment of a Pedestrian/Bicycle Advisory Committee (*Cary Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Jan 2001*)
- ◆ Initiation of a "Pathways to Progress" program that would focus on connectivity. This program would identify and prioritize needs for linkages between adjacent neighborhoods, activity centers, shopping centers, greenways, and schools (*Cary Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Jan 2001*)
- ◆ For the downtown area (from Town Center Plan): Comprehensive system of signage and wayfinding to complement all modes of travel in downtown. (*Town Center Plan, Aug 2001*)

The combined effect of pedestrian-oriented programs with projects to improve pedestrian facilities can be a strong, lasting force in making a town more pedestrian-friendly. The following discussion identifies several programs that the Town should consider implementing to promote pedestrian-friendliness. These programs would augment the impact of any pedestrian facility construction to create a more pedestrian-friendly culture in the Town.

#### 7.2. Program Recommendations

The following programs have been organized according to the three E's of pedestrian planning: Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement; however, some of the programs categorized as one type of program will have some overlaps with other types

of programs. Unlike sidewalk and intersection construction projects, programs often require the partnering of various town departments with other town departments, and potentially with other outside agencies or community groups, in order to be successful. In addition, programs are often recurrent in nature, such as a yearly event. For these types of programs to be successful, they will need a sustained and coordinated effort between the lead agency or organization and its partners. Taking this into account, the programs recommended in the Cary Pedestrian Plan have been developed using input from Town staff, Stakeholders, and the potential partnering agency representatives. Although programs can seem more complex and demanding than construction projects, with successful implementation they will have long-lasting effects on pedestrian-friendliness in the Town.

### 7.2.1. Education

#### Safe Routes to School Program

According to the Federal Highway Administration's website for Safe Routes to School, in 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, however, over half of all children arrive at school in private automobiles and only 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling<sup>1</sup>. Designed to address these dramatic statistics, the Safe Routes to School Program is intended to create and promote safe walking and cycling to school in order to improve safety near schools, promote active lifestyles, and reduce pollution and congestion caused by school traffic.

**Did you know?** In 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, however, only 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling<sup>1</sup>.

The first Safe Routes to School program was begun in Europe in the late 1970's, but the first program in the United States began in the Bronx, NY, in 1997. Now, less than 10 years later, the Safe Routes to School Program has become both a federally-funded and grassroots national movement. Safe Routes to School programs are usually kicked-off with a celebration of International Walk to School Day. On this day, schools will often create various incentives for students and their parents to walk or bike to school, including a Walking School Bus and Walk-to-School assembly and luncheon. The 2006 International Walk to School Day was on October 4, 2006, and over 2,200 schools participated. Throughout the year, schools with Safe Routes to School programs continue to conduct encouragement programs for walking or bicycling to school, and also incorporate education into the school curriculum for students about safe walking and bicycling skills and the benefits of an active lifestyle.

<sup>1</sup> FHWA Safety: Safe Routes to School Program. <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>

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In North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, has established the North Carolina Safe Routes to School program, which is a state-wide program to promote safe walking and bicycling to elementary and middle schools in North Carolina. The North Carolina Safe Routes to School program provides opportunities for schools to apply for funding for both programs and capital improvement projects to encourage walking and cycling to school. In order to receive funding, representatives from eligible schools must first apply for a Safe Routes to School training session to be conducted at their school. This free training session brings together school administrators, faculty, staff, and representatives from related agencies such as health departments, law enforcement, engineering, and town planning, to educate them about Safe Routes to School, its purpose, and techniques that can be used to create a successful program. Once the training session has been conducted, the school will be prepared to start an effective Safe Routes to School program, and is eligible to apply for grants for both programs and capital improvements.

In 2005, the Town of Cary's Briarcliff Elementary participated in a very successful Safe Routes to School pilot program. It is recommended that Town Staff should coordinate with Wake County Public School System officials to continue this work to establish an on-going Safe Routes to School program in the Town's schools. Many of the Town's schools have facilities, such as greenways and street crossings, which are designed to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access. It is important that the Town work with the Wake County Public School system to take advantage of these facilities and to encourage walking and biking to school. In addition, when new schools are planned and constructed, Wake County Public School System representatives should work with Town Staff to plan for and design safe walking and cycling routes to new schools. A Safe Routes to School program is a recurring activity, and it will require support from Town Staff, school administration, and parents and faculty; however, the benefits of a Safe Routes to School program will continue with children into adulthood.

**Recommendation:** *In continuation of the successful Safe Routes to School pilot program held at Briarcliff Elementary, Cary Town Staff should coordinate with school administration, at either a system-wide or individual school level, to encourage and support the establishment of an on-going Safe Routes to School program at all schools within the Town. In addition, when new schools are planned and constructed, Wake County Public School System representatives should work with Town Staff to plan for and design safe walking and cycling routes to new schools.*

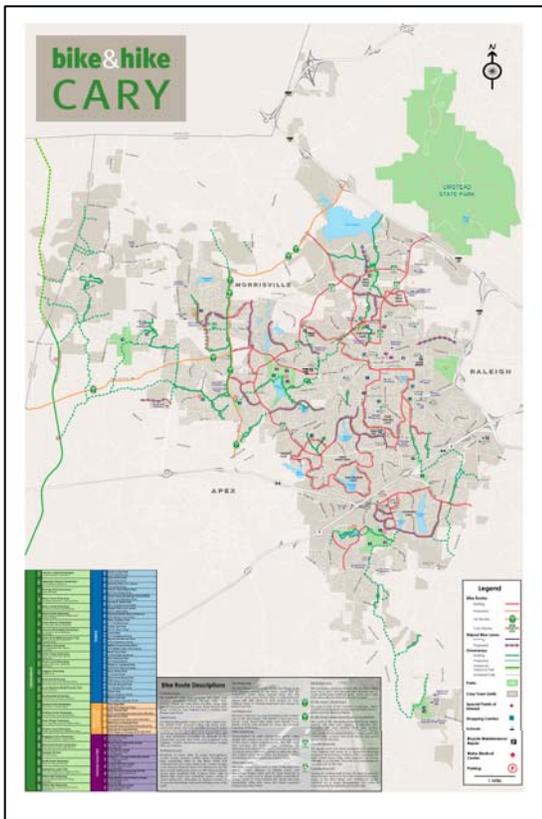


**Figure 7-1.** Weatherstone Elementary is one of the schools in Cary that would be eligible for Safe Routes to School funds.

Promotional/educational materials

A simple way to spread information about walking and safe pedestrian behavior is to create promotional and educational materials for distribution at various venues throughout Town, and to Town staff, major employers, and future residents. Already, the Town has Bike + Hike Map that includes safe cycling instructions; In the same manner, the Town can prepare similar materials with pedestrian-related instructions. The purpose of these materials would be to educate Cary's citizens about safe walking behaviors, safe driving behaviors around pedestrians, the proper use of pedestrian facilities like pedestrian signals, and the benefits of walking on health and the environment. The educational materials can be distributed to outdoor groups and outdoor supply vendors, as well as distributed at town events, kiosks, or Parks and Recreation Department activities. In addition, materials could be created for distribution to developers which would educate them about pedestrian-friendly design and construction.

***Recommendation: Town Staff should design and distribute educational and promotional materials to Town Staff, major employers, and future residents, as well as for display at Town Hall and other public locations (for example: parks, bus stops, recreational facilities).***



**Figure 7-2.** Cary's Bike + Hike Map serves both as a map and as an educational tool for bicycle safety. The Town should also consider preparing similar materials for pedestrian safety.

Council and Administration/Town Hall Employees Education day

One of the major characteristics of a pedestrian-friendly town is to have public officials and leaders who support and encourage pedestrian-friendliness. Usually this requires that town officials and staff are educated about the economic, health, and general quality of life benefits of a pedestrian-friendly town. In order to facilitate this, it is recommended that Town Staff establish a Pedestrian-friendliness Education Day, perhaps in conjunction with a Bicycle-friendliness Education Day. During this day, Town Council members and staff representatives will attend presentations on pedestrian- and bicycle-friendliness to learn about the projects, programs, and policies that can encourage a more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly town. Several organizations, such as Walkable Communities, Inc. and the Complete the Streets program ([www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org)), provide resources such as speakers, handouts, guides, and publications which can be used for the Education Day. The purpose of this day would be to both educate about pedestrian-friendliness and to help create a greater acceptance of pedestrian-related projects and initiatives in the future. Should this education effort prove successful, the Town could consider using it as a model for employers and businesses to educate their employees and staff.

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**Recommendation:** *Town staff should create a Pedestrian-friendliness Education Day, in which Town staff, Town Council members, and other officials are educated about the benefits of a pedestrian-friendly town and some of the projects, programs, and policies that can be used to create a better walking environment supportive of adult pedestrians, economic goals, and students.*

#### 7.2.2. Encouragement

##### Walk-to-Work Week and Employer Outreach

As part of the Triangle Region, Cary is served by several organizations intended to promote alternative modes of transportation, such as walking. Some of these organizations include the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the Triangle Transit Authority (TTA), and RTP SmartCommute. All of these organizations hold throughout the year various promotional events, such as the SmartCommute Challenge and Bike-to-Work Week. The SmartCommute Challenge, in particular, occurs each year between the months of August and July, and is designed to promote taking alternative modes of travel for the work commute by challenging individuals to pledge to test out one alternative mode of travel to work at least once between the start and finish of the Challenge. Participants in the program receive special incentives such as wristbands and discounts at participating stores, as well as recognition for their efforts. The SmartCommute Challenge often coincides with International Walk-to-Work Week and International Car-Free Day.

It is recommended that the Town of Cary take a more active role in these events by coordinating a Town-supported Walk-to-Work Week in conjunction with the SmartCommute Challenge and International Car-Free Day. The Town's Walk-to-Work Week could join promotional efforts with the SmartCommute Challenge to advertise in local papers and the Town's internal BUD newsletter. During the week, the Town could set-up a booth in a central location to provide food and drink to participants and to distribute flyers and educational material as previously described in the Education Programs discussion. Although this may have already been done in the past during various alternative commuting events, this should become a consistent activity. The Town could also consider providing incentives to employers who encourage their employees to walk to work – incentives could be either monetary or publicity.



**Figure 7-3.** The SmartCommute Challenge is one of the Triangle-wide activities to encourage alternative forms of transportation, including walking.

***Recommendation:*** *Town staff should coordinate with the various alternative commuting organizations in the Triangle area to create a joint-effort event. This joint effort may be a Walk-to-Work week, which encourages employees and employers to walk to work or use other alternative modes of travel.*



**Figure 7-4.** The Northwoods Trail is one of Cary's many greenways. It serves not only as a recreational facility but also as access to Northwoods Elementary.

#### Greenway Activities

Another way to encourage walking is to encourage more recreational activity. Already the Town has a Greenways Advisory Committee, which reports to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Commission; the Town could use this committee and its presence to promote greenways and encourage their use. Some of the activities that the Greenways Advisory Committee could support include:

- Creating repeating Education Walks which would occur on the Town's greenway system and help to familiarize residents with the greenways;
- Establishing an Adopt-a-Trail Program whereby participants maintain and monitor greenway trails and report needs back to Town staff; and
- Creating a more interactive greenway promotional webpage and enhancing the content with educational materials, a greenway map, and fun facts.

By promoting greenways, the Town will be encouraging residents to get out and walk, and thereby use the pedestrian facilities available to them in order to live a more healthy and active lifestyle.

***Recommendation:*** *Town staff should use its Greenways Advisory Committee as a platform to promote greenways through activities such as an Education Walk on the Town's Greenway system, an Adopt-a-Trail program, and designing a promotional greenway webpage.*

#### *7.2.3. Enforcement*

##### School zone monitors/crossing guards

As part of Cary's school zone policy and new Safe Routes to School Program, schools in the Town should establish school zone monitors and crossing guards to assist students as they walk or bike to school. Crossing guards are trained individuals hired for school drop-off and pick-up hours to control traffic flow and direct children when and where to safely cross the street. They are usually placed at intersections or mid-block crossings near a school which are used by a high number of students. School crossing guards should be formally trained in traffic control, first aid, and CPR, but do not have to be a police officer. Also, crossing guards should wear reflective vests and similar uniforms to be distinguishable as an official and to create consistency throughout the Town. School

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zone monitors are usually police or other law enforcement officials who are stationed at the school during drop-off and pick-up to monitor the school zone and make sure all policies, such as reduced speeds and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks, are enforced. Unlike crossing guards, school zone monitors are the “teeth” of the enforcement in school zones because they are empowered to write tickets and arrest others.

Although some of the schools in Cary, such as Cary Elementary, already have a school crossing guard, crossing guards and monitors should be placed at ALL of the Town’s schools, in both urban and rural settings. The presence of school crossing guards and school zone monitors can have several benefits, including increasing children safety when walking or bicycling to and from school, raising parents’ level of comfort about allowing their children to walk or bike to and from school, and also improving traffic flow during school drop-offs and pick-ups. The presence of a crossing guard or school zone monitor also indicates to others that the Town has a commitment to making it safer for children to walk and bike to all schools.

**Recommendation: Establish school crossing guards and school zone monitors at all schools during drop-off and pick-up periods.**

#### Police Pedestrian Stings

A police pedestrian sting is used to improve safety at locations by enforcing the laws that create safe pedestrian and motorist behavior. Sting operations can be targeted at both pedestrians and motorists. Similar to police stings in locations with high incidents of speeding, a pedestrian sting occurs when a police officer waits in an inconspicuous location near to where there have been frequent pedestrian-vehicle incidents and then takes the appropriate action when an incident occurs. A more aggressive form of a pedestrian sting can occur when a plain-clothed police officer attempts to cross the street at a crosswalk while another uniformed officer waits nearby to apprehend motorists that fail to yield the right-of-way. Pedestrian stings can be used especially at crosswalks in which vehicles frequently fail to yield to pedestrians. They can also be used at mid-block locations where pedestrians frequently jaywalk; however, monitoring for jaywalking should be done with caution because jaywalking frequently occurs not out of disrespect for the law, but because there is a need for a mid-block crossing. Rather than ticketing first-time offenders, officers could provide educational material about pedestrian safety and the existing laws protecting pedestrians.



**Figure 7-5.** Cary Elementary is one of the schools in the Town that already has a crossing guard. It is recommended that all schools have crossing guards and school zone monitors to make it safer for students to walk to school.

Police pedestrian stings should be used with caution and only at locations which are particularly troublesome. Frequently, they are used to enforce laws at locations where no other engineering or preventative measure can be taken to improve safety. Police pedestrian stings also require coordination between town staff and police to identify those trouble locations.

**Recommendation:** *Create a program of police pedestrian stings conducted at locations with high rate of pedestrian-vehicle incidents in order to enforce the laws that create safe pedestrian and motorist behavior.*

#### Coordination between Engineering, Planning, and Police

During the Plan's preparation process, one of the major issues identified was the need for more communication between police and other law enforcement officials and Town staff, particularly engineering and planning, to share information about locations which are frequently problematic for pedestrians. Currently, Cary police officers receive complaints about pedestrian issues and respond to crashes and other pedestrian-vehicle incidents, while the Planning and Engineering Departments plan for and design new pedestrian facilities or projects that will improve pedestrian conditions at existing facilities. In order to improve communication, a monthly meeting should be established in which police share with town staff their records of trouble locations and incidents, as well as their perceptions of the pedestrian needs in the Town, while Town staff share with police their plans for new projects and improvements. In addition to Engineering and Planning staff, other Town staff that could be invited to the meeting include representatives for street and crossing maintenance, traffic engineers, and school representatives. A school representative should provide information on trouble locations near schools, which would be particularly important if Cary should create a Safe Routes to School program and hire additional crossing guards. This monthly meeting to exchange information would help to quickly target trouble locations with both engineering and enforcement solutions, and improve the effectiveness of new projects or improvements on pedestrian safety.

**Recommendation:** *Better coordination between the Police Department and other Town staff, especially those in the Engineering and Planning Departments, to identify locations which are particularly hazardous for pedestrian safety and cooperatively craft both engineering and enforcement solutions.*

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#### 7.3. Prioritization

The following tables provide prioritization for the recommendations with Section 7 and discuss potential coordination efforts that may be necessary. Prioritization is based on ease and cost of implementation, as well as coordination with other on-going projects. Many programs require coordination with organizations beyond Town staff.

Program Recommendation	Reason for Prioritization	Coordination Required
◆ Safe Routes to School Program	Near future availability of NCDOT Safe Routes to School grants. Improve safety.	Coordination with Wake County School System, North Carolina Department of Transportation, volunteers, and Town staff.
◆ School zone monitors/crossing guards	Immediate safety need.	Requires coordination with Wake County School System, Police Department, and North Carolina Department of Transportation.
◆ Promotional/Educational Materials	Coordinate with current CAMPO development of educational and promotional materials.	Needs funding to produce materials. Requires coordination with CAMPO.
◆ Coordination between Engineering, Planning, and Police	Rapid development and new project construction requires immediate coordination to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.	Requires inter-staff coordination and leadership with a commitment to communication.
◆ Walk-to-Work Week and Employer Outreach	To encourage walking to work and a healthier lifestyle.	Needs staff time to coordinate and committed employers.
◆ Greenway Activities	To promote greenway use and raise awareness about pedestrian issues.	Needs volunteer effort to develop and maintain webpage and informational material. Also needs server support.

<p>◆ Police Pedestrian Stings</p>	<p>To improve pedestrian safety.</p>	<p>Requires coordination with Police and other law enforcement.</p>
<p>◆ Council &amp; Town Hall Employees Education Day</p>	<p>To encourage Town-wide participation in pedestrian-related events and promote walking as a form of commuting.</p>	<p>Requires staff coordination with Town departments and funding for events.</p>