

Part III – Application of the Planning Process

As walking becomes a more popular form of exercise, for tourism or as a means of transportation, the development of community walking maps becomes more important and necessary to allow people to fulfill their health, recreation and travel goals more effectively. The third part of this guide will apply the proposed planning process recommended in Part 1 to an actual mapping need in a Wisconsin community.

The **Application of the Planning Process** was executed by David Phillips (representing Wisconsin Walks), and Angie Tornes (representing the Rivers and Trails Program of the National Park Service). The Rivers & Trails Program provided coordination and technical assistance, which was invaluable in guiding the Sheboygan Walking Trails Project used to test this guide. Their editorial assistance in developing the guide is also greatly appreciated. The “we” referred to in this section will refer to David and Angie.

In order to test the efficacy and desirability of this mapping guide, a community was chosen as a test site. Because of the enthusiastic initial support from government agencies, health organizations and businesses, the city of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, was selected as a test location. Sheboygan County had recently received a \$25 million federal grant to provide infrastructure designed to influence an increase in non-motorized modes of transportation. It was felt that the mapping project could piggyback on the federal grant and that funds could become available through the grant or some other public or private agency for producing a physical map.

The city of Sheboygan has a rich commercial history dating back to early 19th century, with trade between Native Americans and French, and then American traders. Later, Lake Michigan, the Sheboygan River and the adjacent harbor provided an excellent location for lumber and flourmills, meatpacking and commercial fishing. The city thrived with successive waves of immigrants and diverse manufacturing enterprises. Entrepreneurs contributed land and treasure to build a park system that is the envy of most cities. Indeed, Sheboygan now has the highest park acreage per capita of any city in Wisconsin.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, global economic forces brought about an erosion of Sheboygan’s manufacturing base and the city began to decline. In the late 1980s, the City of Sheboygan and citizens from throughout the region entered into a public/private partnership that culminated in a plan to revive the area by building on the unique natural and historical resources of the city and region. The success of this endeavor is being realized as Sheboygan has become a popular tourist and vacation destination for golfing, bicycling, sailing, fishing, and miles of some of the finest natural sand beaches in the United States.

In summary, the following factors led us to choose Sheboygan as the place to test the Guide for Developing a Walking Map:

- Abundant park and recreational assets
- Rich historical resources
- Receptivity of the citizens
- Support of governmental agencies and
- Absence of a walking map for the city.

Step One: Determine the Purpose of the Map and the Intended Users

If we had tested the planning process on our own community based on our particular interests, we could have determined the purpose of the map based on our special interests. Since we were testing the guide in someone else's community, we decided to meet with local officials to discuss the project and identify the purpose and potential users of the map.

The initial planning meeting was held in February 2006, and included representatives from the following agencies:

- Sheboygan Department of Public Works
- Sheboygan County Department of Planning
- Sheboygan County Human Resources Department
- Non-motorized Transportation Project Coordinator
- Sheboygan Department of Planning and Development

At this meeting we discussed the purpose of the walking map, a preferred model and potential stakeholders. It was determined that the purpose of the map was to:

- Encourage walking as an alternative form of transportation,
- Increase physical activity to promote a healthy lifestyle and,
- Promote the natural, historic and cultural resources of the area for the purposes of tourism and recreation.

We displayed various examples of walking maps used for similar purposes in other cities. The map that seemed to be the best fit for Sheboygan was the [Walk Downtown Victoria](#) map discussed earlier in Section II.

Step Two: Identify Stakeholder Group

Additional Stakeholders included in the planning process were representatives from:

- City of Sheboygan Division of Tourism
- Sheboygan County Historical Society
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program
- Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission
- Sheboygan City Council

Additional input on historical, cultural and environmental resources was received. At this point, the stakeholder group directed the map-making process.

Step Three: Determine the Scale of the Map

The Stakeholder group continued to regard a map similar to the *Walk Downtown Victoria* map to be best suited for the purposes of a Sheboygan walking map. The map would be based on existing city street maps.

Step Four: Determine the information to be included on the Map

In order to get a better grasp of the information that should be included on the map, we toured the city with the director of the Department of Public Works. This was an important step in the planning process since we were not familiar with the rich resources that the city offered. Most visitors to the city are familiar with the city center, lakeshore and riverfront areas, but we soon discovered that there are parks, natural areas and interesting historical sites that would make the map much more appealing to visitors and residents alike.

Using city street maps provided by the Department of Public Works, we sketched out five interconnecting loops that connect most of the public schools and hospitals, most of the scenic natural areas and parks within the city limits, numerous historical and cultural sites and a number of key commercial areas that are important to tourists. We field checked each trail, noting potentially unsafe conditions, and we adjusted routes to create more interesting walking experiences. We also established beginning and ending points that provide essential services such as food, information and parking.

In October 2006, we submitted the proposed trails to the stakeholder group. Some adjustments were made based on additional historical information and safety concerns. The group also decided to hold an open house for public comment in January 2007, for additional information and possible support from the community at large. The public notice advertising the open house appears on the following page.

DISCOVER SHEBOYGAN BY FOOT: WALKING TRAILS OF SHEBOYGAN

A **public open house** will be held at Mead Public Library (Rocca Room), 710 N. 8th Street, on **Wednesday, January 24, 2006**, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., to invite comments on a proposed network of pedestrian walking trails in the City of Sheboygan.

The Sheboygan Department of Public Works/Engineering, the Sheboygan Department of Planning and Development, and Sheboygan County Planning and Resources Department have collaborated with Wisconsin Walks and the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Program to identify interesting interconnected trail loops within the city. Others involved in the project include the City of Sheboygan's Historian, Sheboygan County Health and Human Services Department, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The existing facilities link schools, historic neighborhoods, downtown, parks, rivers and the lakefront in five loops of varying length. The purpose of the project is to encourage residents, visitors, and workers in the city to walk as a form of recreation, an alternative form of transportation for short trips, an easy and interesting way to increase their physical activity, and as a way to explore Sheboygan's rich natural, cultural, historic, and economic assets.

The trails will be mapped, described on a brochure entitled "Discover Sheboygan by Foot: Walking Trails of Sheboygan", and distributed to the public. Two larger loops circle the northern and southern portion of the city, one circles the downtown section, one circles the North Historic District and lakefront, and another circles historic neighborhoods south of the river and the lakefront. Public Open House to invite comment on a proposed network of pedestrian walking trails in the City of Sheboygan.

Although much of the work has been provided by agency staff, funds are being sought to cover graphic and printing expenses.

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Following the open house some additional suggestions were included in route descriptions and draft maps. The final draft of the names and descriptions of trail segments follows:

ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS

NORTH LOOP TRAIL - 12 miles

The North Loop is the longest of the Sheboygan walking trails but also the most ecologically diverse. The walker will circumnavigate most of the north side of the city, experiencing everything from a dense urban center to large historic parks and a near wilderness environment. Free maps of the trail system through Maywood Park's natural environment are available at the park's visitor center. Most of the schools and hospitals on the North Side of Sheboygan are connected by the trail and more than five miles of it offer picturesque views of the Sheboygan River, Pigeon River, or the dramatic vista of the Lake Michigan shoreline. In between we see old and new neighborhoods, churches and cemeteries and manufacturing areas that testify to the rich cultural and economic heritage of Sheboygan. In Deland Park, pass by the remains of the lumber schooner, Lottie Cooper, that sank with her goods intended for furniture making in 1894; she was brought to the surface in 1994.

NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT TRAIL – 4 miles

Beginning at the parking lot at the intersection of Riverfront Drive and Virginia, the North Historic District Walking Trail follows the first third of the North Loop, taking advantage of the riverfront boardwalk shops and restaurants of the riverfront and the dramatic views offered by Lake Michigan. After leaving the lakeshore the trail meanders through mid-twentieth century neighborhoods. As we continue our walk south toward the starting point, we walk back in time to a gilded age when the owners of businesses such as coal shipping, furniture making, ship building, leather tanning, shoe making, and glove making built their opulent homes which still grace the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. The trail passes by the John Michael Kohler Art Museum, a stop that should not be missed. On the last several blocks of the walk we pass through the oldest section of city where, with a population of 36 souls, the Village of Sheboygan was chartered in 1846; the City was established in 1853.

SHEBOYGAN DOWNTOWN TRAIL – 3 miles

A walk on the Sheboygan Downtown Trail could be accomplished in little more than an hour, but lingering in front of the many alluring sights and attractions will inevitably extend it. Here we see fine examples of architecture from three centuries, many of which have been converted into fine restaurants, bars and shops. On Eighth Street the trail passes by the Stefanie H. Weill Center for the Performing Arts, the most exquisitely restored Atmospheric Theater in the

Midwest. In summer, local farmers market their produce and crafts in gracious Fountain Park, one of the two original town squares. A historic Little Red School House, constructed around 1915, can be seen on Huron Street, one block north of our trail on Michigan, between 11th and 12th streets.

SOUTH LOOP TRAIL -- 7.5 miles

The South Loop Trail begins and ends at the mouth of the Sheboygan River. Leaving the eco-trail south of the convention center, we pass a neighborhood tied to Sheboygan's furniture making industry and walk for a mile on a white sand beach ("Sand Dune Walkway"). We then rise up at High Avenue to the bluff for more sweeping views of Lake Michigan and continue on the trail clockwise through residential neighborhoods whose architecture marks the slow expansion of Sheboygan over the past 150 years. As we return to the riverfront we see elegant nineteenth century buildings refurbished to their former glory. At 8th and High there is a cliff on which a significant Indian battle occurred and where, in the late 1890s, Buffalo Bill hosted several of his "Wild West" nighttime shows. Buffalo Bill's shows were unique in his use of portable electricity generators; many people had never seen electricity before.

SOUTH LAKESIDE TRAIL – 3.75 miles

This trail is a shorter version of the South Loop. After leaving the lakeside, the walker returns to the riverfront and walks over former wetlands ("swamp") in the vicinity of Indiana and 9th. The walker continues through the middle of the old South Side neighborhoods, one of which was a commercial district known as "Heritage Square". This section on 12th Street from Georgia to Broadway was built in 1920 and included a neighborhood shopping area and theater. The numerous churches seen on this walk are a testament to the ethnic and cultural diversity that Sheboygan has supported from the mid-nineteenth century on.

Please refer to the digital version of each route in Appendix III.

Step Five: Determine the Size and Format of the Map and Level of Portability

The Stakeholder group reviewed the size, format and portability of the *Walk Downtown Victoria* map. This map (17" X 21") had all the qualities that the group was looking for, was easily carried and stored and detailed six separate walking loops. Additional input based on the public meeting and subsequent comments reinforced the suitability of this map. It was decided that it would remain a model for the Sheboygan City Map.

Step Six: Production of the Map

Using free internet mapping tools, we developed electronic versions of the five walking paths identified in this project. These maps can be downloaded here as well as through the [City of Sheboygan Web site](#).

- Downtown walk using mapmywalk.com
<http://www.mapmywalk.com/walk/united-states/wi/sheboygan/597663590>
- North Historic District using mapmywalk.com
<http://www.mapmywalk.com/walk/united-states/wi/sheboygan/662388882>
- North Loop using mapmywalk.com
<http://www.mapmywalk.com/run/united-states/wi/sheboygan/100786509>
- South Lakeside Walk using mapmywalk.com
<http://www.mapmywalk.com/walk/united-states/wi/sheboygan/490171006>
- South Loop using mapmywalk.com
<http://www.mapmywalk.com/walk/united-states/wi/sheboygan/505094951>
- North Loop in Topographic style
<http://www.mapmywalk.com/walk/united-states/wi/sheboygan/325209626>

The links provide tools that enable the user to enhance details in the maps and individualize them. The stakeholder group hoped to acquire funds to produce a printed map with advanced graphics similar to the *Walk Downtown Victoria* map referenced earlier in this posting.

Step Seven: Identify Potential Sponsors or Funding Sources

The stakeholder group met regularly to identify sponsors and funding sources, including:

- Federal non-motorized transportation grant
- Local health care facilities
- City of Sheboygan Division of Tourism
- Sheboygan Chamber of Commerce
- Local foundations

Step Eight: Distribution Locales

The stakeholder group identified the following locations for distributing the map:

- Local health care facilities that treat cardiac and obesity issues
- Chamber of Commerce
- State and local tourism offices
- Local lodging facilities specializing in tourism
- Public schools

In addition, we received offers to host the maps on the Web sites of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Walks and the City of Sheboygan.

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