



DECEMBER 2023



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

City of Pittsburg, KS

Created for:
City of Pittsburg, Kansas

Created by:
The Center of Community Supports at Greenbush

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REPORT SUMMARY

The Center of Community Supports at Greenbush was commissioned by the Crawford County Health Department, on behalf of the City of Pittsburg, Kansas, to provide a concise update to the 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan currently in use. The Pittsburg, Kansas Active Transportation Plan aims to provide useful data to assist stakeholders in making walking, bicycling, and other modes of active transportation safe, easy, convenient, and enjoyable for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

This Plan utilizes “best practices” from the State of Kansas, the previous Transportation Plan from PedNet, state and community data, and contains the following components:

- Data Collection
- Vision and Goals
- Progress and Gaps
- Community Snapshot
- Community Engagement and City Initiatives
- Relevant Traffic Statistics
- Recommendations

KEY FINDINGS

- Completed projects since the 2014 plan include: North Broadway Sidewalk, Memorial Drive Project, 4th Street Overpass Trail, South Rouse Trail, Silverback Sidewalk, East-West Connector Trail, and Railroad Crossing Improvements.
- Pittsburg, Kansas has a high level of community involvement around active transportation as evidenced by multiple committees and community programs to address active transportation.

- A plan for maintaining asphalt and city sidewalks, as well as a plan for addressing lack of connectivity, is recommended.
- Updated priorities from the City's Active Transportation Advisory Board are included for consideration.

Although it should not be used as an exclusive nor exhaustive source of information about active transportation in Pittsburg, this plan can serve as a point of historical knowledge, the current state of the City, and guide future recommendations.

DATA COLLECTION

This document was created using primary and secondary data sources from the United States Census, Kansas Health Rankings, Crawford County Health Department, City of Pittsburg Public Works, Kansas Department of Transportation, Pittsburg State University, City of Pittsburg Steering Committees and Advisory Boards, and others. Data is shared throughout the document and used to inform recommendations and findings.

VISION & GOALS

The City of Pittsburg considers the vision and goals adopted by the State of Kansas in its planning. That vision and those goals are as follows:

State of Kansas: Active Transportation Vision

Kansas will be a place where people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds have safe and convenient options to walk, bike, roll, and use other active modes for transportation and recreation.

State of Kansas: Active Transportation Goals

Safety: Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists, and other active transportation users.

Equity: Invest in underserved communities and prioritize the needs of populations that rely on active transportation and transit to reach jobs and essential services.

Mobility: Increase the regular use of walking, cycling, wheeling, and other active transportation modes.

Community Health and Vibrancy: Promote active transportation activity and infrastructure to improve people's lives, positively impact the environment, improve quality of life, and spur economic development.

Culture Shift and Education: Normalize active transportation as a vital part of the overall transportation system.

System Longevity: Maintain and preserve active transportation system investments and funding sources.

PROGRESS & GAPS

Work to Date

In 2014, the City of Pittsburg worked with a consulting agency to develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to assist in the development of the City's biking and walking infrastructure. An advisory committee composed of 15 citizens and headed by Live Well Crawford County provided feedback and guidance for the development of the plan. In addition to the advisory committee, two public meetings were held and a website was created to collect public input. The plan was officially adopted by the City in 2015.

Several priority projects were identified:

- A sidewalk connecting the YMCA to 20th Street via Memorial Drive and Walnut Street
- Connecting Pittsburg High School to the existing sidewalk on 4th Street
- A trail loop around Lincoln Park
- A 2.8-mile trail alongside Cow Creek connecting Wilderness Park and Lincoln Park

- A trail connecting the existing Watco Trail to Lincoln Park
- A trail connecting Schlanger Park to the Farmers Market
- A 1-mile trail from Pittsburg High School on an abandoned rail bed past Free King Highway

In the time since the plan was developed, several projects have been completed.



North Broadway East Side Sidewalk Extension

The sidewalk along North Broadway Street was completed in 2022 from 25th to 29th Street and offers pedestrian access to a number of businesses. This area previously had limited to no pedestrian access, forcing foot traffic to walk in the grass or in the roadway.

Memorial Sidewalk

The Memorial Drive trail project was completed in 2019 and created a sidewalk along the north side of Memorial Drive from Walnut Street to the opposite end of the baseball complex where none previously existed. It also provides a connection to the YMCA.





4th Street Overpass Trail

The 4th Street Overpass project was completed in 2022, which widened the narrow existing bridge and added a trail for pedestrian access. The old bridge had a raised and narrow sidewalk accessible only by a large step up from the sidewalk, and had a short concrete barrier along the edge. The new 10-foot-wide trail connects seamlessly to existing sidewalks and trails to the east and west of the overpass, and has a chain link fence along the exterior.

South Rouse Trail

The South Rouse Trail was completed in 2019 and provides access to active transportation in an area with a sizable population that previously had no access to sidewalks and a narrow roadway on the edge of town. The trail was completed as part of the South Rouse improvement project, which widened the road to three lanes and installed storm sewers. It connects the housing additions south of the hospital to the existing sidewalks and trails along Centennial and Rouse streets.



Silverback Way Sidewalk

The half-mile sidewalk connecting Centennial Street to the Silverback housing addition was completed in 2019 to provide residents in the new addition access to active transportation facilities. The new path connects to existing sidewalks running along Centennial Street.

East-West Connector Trail (not pictured)

The East-West Connector Trail was completed in 2016 and created a 10-foot-wide path connecting the Farmers Market at 11th and Broadway to the 4th Street entrance of Schlanger Park, running east along 12th Street to Michigan Street, south along Michigan Street to 7th Street, and east on 7th Street across the railroad tracks to Short Street, where it runs south and connects to Schlanger park. At the south entrance to the park on 4th Street, it connects to the 4th Street Overpass trail.

Railroad Crossing Improvements

A number of existing railroad crossings have been improved to include pedestrian access, making for unimpeded pedestrian traffic flow. Two examples include the railroad crossing on Centennial to the east of Rouse, and the railroad crossing on 7th immediately to the east of Michigan Street which includes the East-West Connector Trail.



Other Projects

Other smaller projects include the South Rouse Harvey Dean Sidewalk running from Radell to Washington streets, completed in 2018; several Safe Routes to School sidewalk projects near George Nettels, Westside, and Pittsburg Community Middle School; the North Broadway West Side sidewalk by Home Depot; the North Side Medical District sidewalk connecting Joplin and Michigan streets, completed in 2022; several sidewalks included as part of new housing additions; sidewalks along Georgia Street completed as part of stormwater improvements; and numerous ADA sidewalk ramps added around Pittsburg.

GAPS & BARRIERS

While several projects have been completed, there are areas where work remains to be done.

Asphalt Maintenance

There are several trails around Pittsburg that are paved with asphalt that will require maintenance much sooner than similar projects paved with concrete. The trail along Centennial Street and the Watco trail are the two most prominent examples. The Centennial Street trail in particular, which is one of Pittsburg's older existing trails, has several areas in considerable disrepair that makes trail use difficult, particularly for those with mobility challenges. Sustainability regarding the maintenance and repair of these facilities will be important if they are to continue being used by residents.

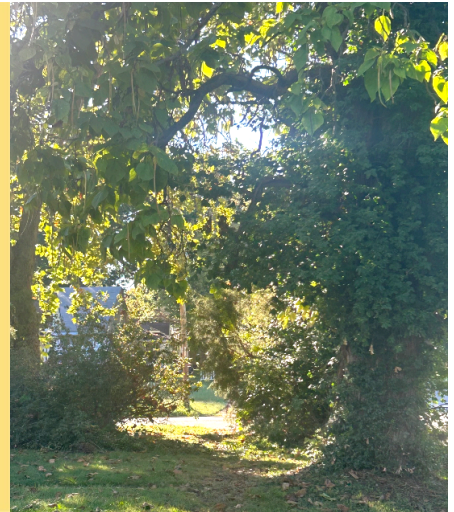


Lack of Connectivity

Sidewalks are scattered throughout Pittsburg that abruptly end in the middle of a block or do not provide ADA ramp access to the roadway, making travel more difficult for pedestrians with mobility challenges. Without processes in place to ensure these areas of disconnectivity are improved, they will continue to present challenges and deter more people from utilizing active transportation facilities.

Ill-Maintained Sidewalks in Residential Neighborhoods

Some sidewalks are overgrown and in disrepair, and in places are entirely buried under grass and dirt. They can also be blocked by trees or foliage, impeding access to pedestrians and forcing them to walk in the roadway. This poses a safety risk to anyone utilizing these sidewalks. Without a maintenance plan in place or mechanism to ensure such areas are improved, residents will be discouraged from utilizing sidewalks to a greater degree.



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

According to data from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates in 2021, the City of Pittsburg mean family income was \$68,569, compared to Crawford County at \$72,649 and the State of Kansas at \$104,742. The rate of the City's population receiving food stamps is 13.6%, with Crawford County at 11.5% and the State at 7.1%. Families living in poverty make up 20.5% of Pittsburg households, nearly three times higher than the State average of 7.6%.

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute's Health Factor Rankings & Roadmaps shows that out of the 104 counties in the State of Kansas that have rankings data, Crawford County moved from 78th in 2022 to 94th in 2023 in Health Behaviors, which measures tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, and diet and exercise. For Physical Environment, which measures air and water quality and housing and transit, Crawford County remained last at 104th in both 2022 and 2023. Crawford County continues to decline in Clinical Care, which assesses uninsured rates and access to quality care; in 2022, Crawford County was ranked 85th and then declined to 90th in 2023.

According to the Kansas Health Surveillance Survey from 2022, Crawford County has 37.4% of adults with a BMI equal to or greater than 30, which is 1.6 percentage points greater than the State of Kansas. Crawford County also reports 20.9% of the population uses tobacco and 20.6% engage in excessive drinking (binge drinking or heavy drinking). The percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month is 10.6%, while those reporting 14 or more days of poor physical health is at 15.1%.

In 2020, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment reported Crawford County had 387.4 suicides per 100K population, while the State of Kansas had 335.7. KDHE also reported 363 deaths per 100K people in Crawford County were determined to be tobacco-related compared to the State of Kansas's 294.8 deaths per 100K population. The number of people in Crawford County with heart disease per 100K people, 213.7, was also significantly higher than the state's 165.4 per 100K.

The extensive data pointing to negative health and social outcomes in Crawford County suggests a need for improved access to a built environment that supports healthy behavior, as well as an alternative transportation system that encourages people to walk and bike instead of using a car. Improved access to trails, sidewalks, and outdoor areas that promote physical activity and help improve mental health outcomes would help considerably in mitigating some of Pittsburg and Crawford County's worst outcomes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CITY INITIATIVES

The City of Pittsburg actively engages community members through multiple strategies to provide input and ideas on what's most important to them. The following three initiatives are ongoing and have, at their core, the input of Pittsburg residents. Those initiatives are Imagine Pittsburg 2030, Spruce Up Pittsburg, and the resident-led Pittsburg Active Transportation Advisory Board. Additional initiatives are the Pittsburg Sidewalk Audit, the Sidewalk Repair Program, and Pittsburg State University's Gorilla Rising Project.

Imagine Pittsburg 2030

The Imagine Pittsburg 2030 plan, last officially updated in 2017 by the Steering Committee of fifteen local representatives, utilized multiple studies and community input to identify priority areas for Pittsburg. The plan included six areas of focus which were housing, economic development, public wellness, infrastructure, education, and marketing.

Activities related to active transportation were prioritized under this plan under three of the six areas of focus, and they were:

- Economic Development
 - Promote a more walkable city center
 - Improve walkability from hotels in north Pittsburg to the northern retail district
- Public Wellness
 - Create a built environment that encourages alternatives to automobiles
 - Leverage parks and trails to improve walkability
 - Promote outdoor recreation

- Infrastructure
 - Invest in sidewalk and trail programs
- Public Wellness and Infrastructure
 - Employ bicycle and pedestrian master plan

The Imagine Pittsburg 2030 community visioning effort launched a new phase called Imagine Pittsburg 3.0, which re-engaged residents through town hall input meetings in April 2023 and through a survey administered online with 483 responses. Among the survey results, in addition to redeveloping vacant and underutilized properties, the priority receiving the fourth-most votes was improving and expanding trails and sidewalks for bikeability and walkability (115 responses, or 23.8% of respondents).

Spruce Up Pittsburg

Spruce Up Pittsburg is a new initiative in 2023. It was created by the City to “improve neighborhoods through education and advocacy.” The spring of 2023 was spent hosting community meetings in order to gather input from the community as it pertains to neighborhood revitalization. Quadrant-specific clean-ups were also organized.

Spruce Up Pittsburg led to the creation of a new 12-member Neighborhood Advisory Council with representatives from each of the City’s four quadrants, for which the City Commission will elect members in December 2023. The focus of the Council will be neighborhood issues such as safety, cleanliness, walkability, and code enforcement. Additionally, city funds were allocated in the 2024 budget for tree removal at intersections to improve visibility, dangerous building demolition, and new street signs throughout the City.

Pittsburg Active Transportation Advisory Board

Created by the Pittsburg’s City Commission (ordinance Number G-1201) in July 2014, the Pittsburg Active Transportation Advisory Board is comprised of five local members and a city liaison who have as their primary purpose to “develop transportation alternatives that offer options to residents and visitors, providing economic, health, and environmental benefits.”

In August 2023, four advisory board members, four city staff, and one interested community member met with staff from the Center of Community Supports at Greenbush to complete a strategic planning process. This process produced four priorities (outlined below) with a summary of action steps for each priority.

- Review and recommend safety improvements for school sites.
 - Review existing GIS data, police data, “See, Click, Fix It” data, and student demographic information.
 - Work with the City’s internal Traffic Advisory Board to coordinate activities.
 - Report findings to City Commission for potential action.
- Review and recommend connections to Northeast Health Care District.
 - Review and prioritize connection concerns.
 - Report findings to City Commission for potential action.
- Increase walkability by determining existing infrastructure and recommending improvements.
 - Work with City Staff and other interested parties to complete a walkability study.
 - Prioritize concerns and present recommendations to the City Commission for potential action.
- Review and recommend actions regarding the Complete Streets framework.
 - Work with Legal Counsel to understand City responsibilities and regulations.
 - Complete the study session with Planning and Zoning to determine the next steps, if any.

Pittsburg State University's Gorilla Rising Project

Master Plan



In addition to the City's efforts to address active transportation concerns, Pittsburg State University (PSU) also utilizes active transportation in its planning. A collaborative effort of PSU, the City of Pittsburg, and local business leaders, a new initiative called Gorilla Rising is being launched in downtown Pittsburg. This project involves moving the Kelce College of Business, currently on the main campus, to downtown near 5th Street and Broadway, and restoring the Besse Hotel which is also downtown. Construction is anticipated in the spring of 2024 with classes occurring in the new building in 2026.

Although PSU is already present downtown in the existing Block 22 development, it will increase the number of students moving between the main campus and the downtown area. To address this need, PSU and the City of Pittsburg plan to create a focused "Locust Street Greenway" development corridor—a 1.3-mile bicycling/pedestrian pathway connecting the main campus with downtown. This greenway will include benches, landscaping, and access to Locust Street businesses.

Pittsburg Sidewalk Audit

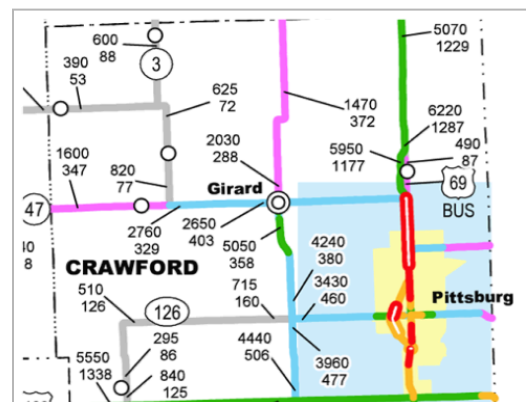
The City of Pittsburg, utilizing its ESRI mapping platform, is in the process of conducting an audit of all the sidewalks and paths in city limits. The City currently uses the ESRI platform to inventory city assets including traffic signage and water and wastewater facilities, but an inventory has never been conducted of sidewalks and paths. The audit will consist of Active Transportation Advisory Board members using tablets, along with aerial drone footage, to collect field data focusing on the placement of sidewalks, which will be used to create a map of existing sidewalks and features like ADA ramps. Once the map is created, an analysis will be conducted to determine gaps in connectivity and identify possible priorities for improvements, which can be used to leverage external funding. This project is ongoing and was not completed before the publication of this report, but will be included in future updates.

Sidewalk Repair Program

In 2017, Pittsburg residents voted to implement a sales tax to fund additional street repairs and to create a sidewalk improvement program. In 2020, Pittsburg residents voted to renew the sales tax for 10 years, doubling the allocation to \$100,000 each year for sidewalk repair. This program provides a 50-50 match for property owners who wish to build new sidewalks or repair existing ones.

RELEVANT TRAFFIC STATISTICS

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) provides annual average daily traffic counts for roads that are in the state system (state and US highways), which for Pittsburg and the surrounding area includes Kansas Highway 126 (4th Street) and US Highways 69 (Broadway), 160, and 400. The map shows the annual average daily traffic counts for 2022.



Road Key	
	Over 10,000
	7,500 to 10,000
	5,000 to 7,500
	2,500 to 5,000
	1,000 to 2,500
	Less than 1,000

The highest traffic areas are on Broadway, particularly outside of the downtown area, and the US 69 bypass, both of which have counts higher than 10,000 per day. Downtown, while having slightly lower counts (7,500 to 10,000), still is among the highest trafficked areas in the county.

Traffic count and accident data were not available from the City of Pittsburg at the time of publication of this report. Relevant data will be included in future updates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Active Transportation Advisory Board identified “priority projects” which are in alignment with the findings of this study.

The following priority sidewalk projects include:

- Rouse to Meadowlark School along 20th Street
- North Joplin Street
- 4th Street from Rouse to Water Street
- South Rouse from Washington Street to 4th Street
- South Broadway sidewalks, including a connection to the Meadowbrook Mall
- Connections and improvements on the North Broadway business corridor

Once Pittsburg’s Sidewalk Audit has been completed, a plan to improve overall connectivity and maintenance of existing sidewalks and trails is also recommended.

This project was funded through a Chronic Disease Risk Reduction (CDRR) grant from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.