

MEMORANDUM

October 18, 2023

To: Sarah Grainger and Members of the Viroqua Public Works Committee

Organization: City of Viroqua

From: Shaun Murphy-Lopez and Jaz Warren

Project: City of Viroqua Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Addendum to the Safe Routes to School Plan

Re: Public Engagement Plan

Overview

Resident and stakeholder perceptions are positively influenced by ample public involvement opportunities and transparent decision-making processes. This Public Engagement Plan (PEP) serves as a guiding document for sharing information with and gathering feedback from stakeholders and the public on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Safe Routes to School Plan Addendum project. The PEP helps establish clear roles and responsibilities for staff, the consultant, and the public throughout the project.

The PEP gives detail on the following components:

1. Advisory Committee
2. Project website
3. Online survey
4. Open house/public meeting
5. Tabling event/pop-up workshop
6. School-focused outreach

Advisory Committee

A project Advisory Committee (AC) will serve as a venue for the community to provide feedback on the plan as it develops. We will facilitate up to four AC meetings over the course of the project. We currently envision the timeline and purpose of these meetings to be:

Approximate meeting date	Meeting purpose
Late October/Early November	Share the planning process and schedule with the AC; Learn about goals, issues, and opportunities from AC
Late November/Early December	Solicit feedback from the AC on the recommended approach for public engagement
February	Review community feedback and ask the AC for input on how to prioritize projects
April	Review and comment on the draft plan

To ensure that the committee has a diversity of members, we recommend considering the following representatives for the AC committee, with a diversity of race and gender.

1. [Vernon Trails rep](#)
2. Public Works Committee (i.e., City Council) member
3. High school student
4. A person who uses an assistive device
5. Parks & Recreation Director
6. Spanish speaking resident
7. Vernon County Health Department rep or UW Extension [Food Wise employee](#)
8. Vernon County Aging and Disability rep
9. Local business owner or [Chamber Main Street employee/board member](#)
10. Mayor Running or his appointee
11. Police Department rep (e.g., someone who handles traffic enforcement)
12. School staff representative (e.g., crossing guard, P.E. teacher, administrative staff)
13. [Viroqua Tourism Commission member](#)
14. [City Plan Commission member](#)
15. Resident who primarily walks for transportation
16. Resident who primarily bikes for transportation
17. Resident who primarily drives for transportation
18. A senior who regularly walks or bikes
19. Parent who walks or bikes their child to school
20. Historic Preservation Commission member
21. Viroqua Westby Trail Committee member
22. Member of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association

Project Website

A project website using wix.com is recommended having the following components, following this example from the Town of Holland Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (see Figure 1):

- Home
 - Public engagement
 - About the project
- About
 - Why this plan?
 - What will it cover?
- Engage
 - Open house (including boards)
 - Online community input map and survey
 - School-focused outreach
- Contact
- Email list for project updates

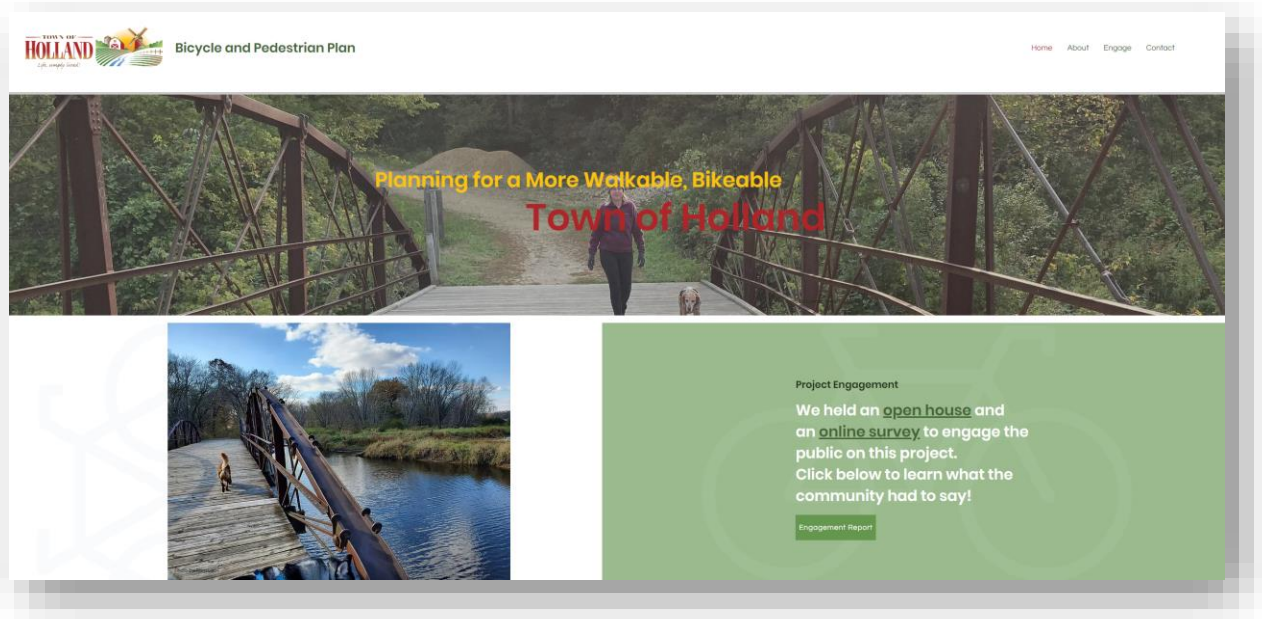


Figure 1: Screenshot from the Town of Holland project website

Online Survey

The project team will create and distribute an online survey using a similar format to this example from Niles, Ohio: https://tooledesign.github.io/webmap_template/

This format allows participants to first answer multiple choice questions, and then gives them the ability to draw and comment on route and spot improvements. The survey will be open to the public for at least one month. Hard copies of the survey can also be placed at the library to increase the online survey’s reach.

Table 1: Online Survey Action Items

Target Dates for Online Engagement	How Promoted/ Advertised	Toole Design Responsibilities	City Staff Responsibilities
Live by mid-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email to AC and City Council members asking for help in promoting online questionnaires/engagement Social media posts prior to target date in first column Flyers posted at city hall, library, parks, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content for City project website, flyer, and social media content prior to target date in first column Online questionnaire creation and summary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share project webpage with selected stakeholders Update City of Viroqua website and social media

Open House/Public Meeting

The project team will organize materials and logistics for one (1) formalized in-person open house/public meeting. Participants will be invited into a casual environment in which they will guide themselves through various stations of informative and engaging material. The proposed open house meeting could be located at Viroqua City Hall.

Examples of the types of materials used during the public open house include questionnaires, interactive maps/boards, and an open-ended opportunity to place ideas on a “wish list.” These materials will mimic an online questionnaire and paper survey. Project team members will be present for the open house to field questions, engage in conversation, and direct participants. Table 2 outlines the action items.

Goals of the open house are as follows:

- Explain the purpose of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to the public
- Give the public opportunities to discuss ideas and questions with the project team
- Introduce the public to the planning process
- Share the goals of bicycling and walking for Viroqua
- Glean information about the state of bicycling and walking: interests, concerns, gaps, and safety issues
- Present findings from the preliminary existing conditions analyses
- Seek input to craft a vision for bicycling and walking in Viroqua
- Explain the process used to develop a proposed network of facilities

Table 2: Public Open House Action Items

Target Date for Open House	How Promoted/ Advertised	Toole Design Responsibilities	City Staff Responsibilities
Mid-January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email to AC members asking for help in promoting • City of Viroqua Facebook page • Email to those interested in the project and other City contacts • Flyers posted at city hall, library, parks, etc. • Bulletin on the Announcements board of the city website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Exhibits • Handouts • Social media content • Email content • Flyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location reservations • Social media posts on City pages • Email to contact list • Print and post flyers

Tabling Event/Pop-Up Workshop

The project team will organize materials and logistics for one (1) tabling event/pop-up workshop (a workshop held where people already gather on a regular basis). The proposed location for the pop-up is a combination of the Viroqua Farmers Market, McIntosh Memorial Library, Nelson’s Agri-Center Ace Hardware, and Viroqua Food Co-op, giving people who attend these destinations the opportunity to participate in the planning process. While this tabling even is envisioned to be staffed and take place on one day, it may be extended through subsequent weeks to gather additional feedback without the project team present. Table 3 outlines the recommended activities and timeline.

Goals of the pop-up workshop/tabling event are as follows:

School-Focused Outreach

The project team will facilitate outreach with members of the Viroqua school community, such as students, parents, and staff. Because this plan has a significant Safe Routes to School element, we are proposing to ask school stakeholders how best to gain input.

We recommend choosing one of the following options:

Option A (two group gatherings)

- Inviting a group of parents, students, and/or staff to **meet and share observations, ideas, and questions**. The project team would facilitate the meeting with question prompts and maps of Viroqua (see Figure 3) but allow the conversation to flow freely.
- Inviting a group of parents, students, and/or staff to **walk together, generating ideas for improvements** needed at key locations around and near a school (see Figure 4). The project team would provide a route, safety vests, and facilitate the conversation.

Option B (one online survey)

- Creating an **online survey tailored to kids**, as shown in Figure 5. In the Town of Holland, an online survey was sent to parents by school administrators. This survey received 184 responses, which was nearly double the number of responses received for the regular online survey. The result of the kid-focused online survey was that the Town prioritized building a shared use path along County Highway MH, which was an important thoroughfare for students between home and school.

Table 4: School-Focused Outreach Action Items

Target Date for Focus Groups	School-Focused Outreach Activity Ideas	School-Focused Outreach Location Ideas	Materials Needed
Early to mid-December	Meeting or walking tour with members of the school community	Viroqua Elementary/Middle School Pleasant Ridge Waldorf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinks and snacks • Safety vests • Maps
December – January	Online survey	Viroqua Elementary/Middle/High Schools, Laurel High School, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf, Youth Initiative	n/a



Figure 3. A school-focused meeting could use maps and question prompts to learn about problem areas near schools.



Figure 4. A walking tour could generate locations that need change.

Town of Holland Student Survey

The Town of Holland is surveying students about walking and bicycling to make it safer for kids and teens to complete.

1. What school do you go to?

- Evergreen Elementary
- Holmen High
- Holmen Middle
- Prairie View Elementary
- Viking Elementary
- Alternative/Other - Write in

2. How old are you?

- 6-8
- 9-11
- 12-15
- 16-18

3. Where are 2 places you wish you could walk or ride a bicycle but aren't allowed to go?

Option 1

Option 2

4. Why is walking and bicycling important to you?

Figure 5. A screenshot of the Town of Holland student survey.