Introduction

Fairfield County, in 2009, adopted the Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan. At that time, there were many pedestrian and bicycle oriented projects and plans that were being pursued throughout the county that prompted the development and adoption of the 2009 plan. The 2009 plan was a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission (FCRPC) with help from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). This planning process also involved many of the local communities and stakeholders within Fairfield County and created a Recommended Comprehensive Bikeway Network for the county.

The 2009 plan is broad and covers a range of issues related to transportation and open space. The recommendations of the plan provide guidance to the county and local governments when making planning related decisions. However, as noted in the 2009 plan, many of the details need to be worked out by the implementing agencies. For this reason, the FCRPC created an Active Transportation Sub-Committee (“the Committee”). The Committee focused on prioritizing the recommendations and implementing the active transportation component of the plan. The Committee is comprised of representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- Fairfield County Engineer’s Office
- Fairfield Utilities Department
- Fairfield Soil & Water Conservation District
- City of Lancaster
- Lancaster Public Transit System
- City of Pickerington
- Village of Bremen
- Village of Carroll
- Village of Lithopolis
- Violet Township
- ODOT District 5
- Fairfield Heritage Trail Association
- Fairfield County Farm Bureau
- The Rails to Trails Association
- Fairfield County Visitors and Convention Bureau
- Fairfield County Historical Parks District
- Fairfield Department of Health
- Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children’s First Council
- Pickerington Safe Route to Schools

Active Transportation Sub-Committee Goals

The Committee meets on a monthly basis and has established the following goals and tasks:

- Create criteria for installing Bike Route and Share the Road signs.
- Review the 2009 Fairfield Active Transportation Plan.
  - Make recommendations to the RPC for revisions to the recommended routes.
  - Continue to review the recommended routes and recommend further revisions due to future changes in future highway use.
As Presented to the RPC on October 1, 2013

- Prioritize routes and needed infrastructure for each of the proposed routes.
- Recommend sign changes for routes which have been upgraded or deteriorated.
- Assist local agencies in identifying any sources of funding for signs or improving highways for bike use.

Share The Road and Bike Route Signs

The 2009 plan discusses the use of Share the Road and Bike Route signs, which can be a relatively easy and affordable mechanism for identifying active transportation options in an area. For this reason, the Committee was quickly approached by Fairfield Heritage Trail Association (FHTA), a bicycle advocacy group, about installing Share the Road signs on various roads throughout the county. As a result, the Committee identified the need to establish criteria for these signs. Creating model sign criteria became a top priority for this Committee to ensure that the roads meet certain standards before these types of signs are installed.

The Committee completed a set of model criteria, and a copy can be found in Appendix A. The Fairfield County Engineer’s office has since incorporated a modified version of these criteria into the county’s Highway Signing Policy. The purpose of these criteria is to create a relatively consistent approach to installing Share the Road and Bike Route signs throughout the county. These criteria are available for other Fairfield County communities to adopt or modify as necessary.

After adopting these model criteria, the Committee began reviewing the roads where FHTA suggested signs be installed. One route, which included a series of roads from Canal Winchester/Pickerington to Lancaster, quickly rose to the top. This route also connects to the Village of Carroll. The Committee recommended that Share the Road signs be posted along this route. The Committee’s recommendation was ultimately confirmed by the RPC and forwarded to FHTA. FHTA has worked with the County Engineer’s office to install signs along several of the roads within this route. These signs have been posed on the following roads:

- Hill Road from the Canal Winchester Corp Limit to the US 33 Overpass
- Basil Western Road from Hill Road to Carroll Northern Road
- Carroll Northern Road from Basil Western Road to the Village of Carroll
- Carroll Eastern Road from the Village of Carroll to State Route 158
FHTA continues to work with the maintaining authorities of the other roads in this route in order to complete the signage for this route. The Active Transportation Committee will also continue to work with FHTA and other organizations to review additional roads for these signs when requested.

**Review of 2009 Fairfield County Active Transportation Plan**

The 2009 Fairfield County Active Transportation Plan created travel corridors to provide recommended bikeway connections between destinations throughout the county. In some cases, the 2009 Plan has provided a range of alternatives allowing local communities to pick the best option.

One of the Committee’s goals is to review the 2009 plan so it can recommend revisions to the RPC. The Committee spent several months reviewing the 2009 plan and identified the followings needs:

- Maintain the 2009 plan document
- Create a supplemental document to further enhance the 2009 Recommended Bikeway Network, which:
  - Confirm or Modify the recommendations in each Corridor
    - In some cases, a recommended route in 2009 may no longer be recommended based upon the Committee’s findings. The reasons for eliminating a route are listed as a footnote on the applicable page.
  - Includes additional routes identified by the Committee during the review process
  - Creates a Short Term Route and Long Term Route in each corridor to help prioritize implementation
  - Recommends specific design treatments when supported by other plans

**Rolling Forward**

The following paragraphs and attached maps create an amendment to the 2009 Active Transportation Plan. This document includes the original corridors that were in the 2009 Plan, but some of the corridor names have been revised to better reflect the area being traveled. Each corridor includes at least one Short Term Route and one Long Term Route to better prioritize the Committee’s recommendations.

For the purposes of this document, a Short Term Route typically includes roads that either (1) bicyclists currently utilize on a frequent basis or (2) may be the most feasible roads to utilize at this time. It should be noted that these Short Term Routes may not be considered bikeways at this time and may require relatively inexpensive improvements to meet the criteria for such a facility. In some cases, due to the terrain and other limiting factors, the Short Term Route may
also be limited to the experienced cyclist. Caution should be utilized in riding these roads, especially until such time improvements are made to create a bikeway facility and/or such time Share the Road or Bike Route signs are installed.

The Long Term Future Routes are broader visions for an overall bikeway network through Fairfield County, and in some cases involve off-road improvements such as multi-use paths or greenway recommendations. The Committee recognizes that these routes will involve additional planning and extensive improvements in order to create these bikeways. The Committee also emphasizes the importance of identifying these routes so that improvements can be properly integrated into development plans and infrastructure.

It should also be noted that a goal of this plan is to connect to the Ohio Erie Trail System. As the bikeways recommended in this plan are developed, this overall goal should become reality.

**Bikeway Corridors**

**Corridor 1: Amanda to Perry County**

Recommended routes:

1a. **Hamburg Amanda South – Sugar Grove North---- Short Term Route**

A series of county, state and township roads: Village of Amanda to Hamburg, south on SR 159, Amanda Clearport, Clearcreek, Revenge, Beck, McGrery, Blue Valley, Old Logan, Sharp to the Village of Sugar Grove. Some concerns with the SR 159 jog have been raised, but overall the Committee believes these roads are in better condition than those in the route that extends to the north out of Amanda.¹

This route continues from the Village of Sugar Grove to the north on Sugar Grove Road to Savage Hill, Carpenter, Chicken Coop (Borah Hill), Baumen Hill, West Point, Bremen, Bremen Corporation, SR 664, SR 312.² The Committee and applicable township trustees extensively reviewed the portion of this route extending north from the Village of Sugar Grove in 2012. The Committee believes that this route provides better connections to the county’s villages and is commonly used by bicyclists. One of the main goals of the 2009 Plan is to connect villages.

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¹ The 2009 Plan included a recommendation to go north out of the Village of Amanda on SR 159 to, Hamburg, Meister, Crooks, Eaton Hollow, Revenge, Beck, Blue Valley, Old Logan, Sharp and Sugar Grove. The Committee had concerns with the conditions of various roads within the northern portion of this route. Therefore, it is no longer a recommended route.

² The 2009 Plan recommended a route that extends to the south from the Village of Sugar Grove on Sugar Grove Road to Perry County. However, the Committee did not prefer this route due to its terrain. It also extends outside of the county and does not reach Bremen.
1b. Clear Creek ---- Long Term Future Route

Clear Creek is a greenway corridor that travels from the abandoned railroad corridor south of Amanda to the Hocking River. This alternative continues as the Hocking River greenway corridor from Clear Creek to Rutter Hill Road and then onto SR 312. The Clear Creek greenway corridor is proposed in the Fairfield Heritage Trail plan. This route is recommended as a Long Term Future Route due to the extensive improvements that are needed to create this greenway network.

Corridor 2: Hocking River and US 33

Recommended routes:

2a. Canal Winchester-Pickerington-Carroll-Lancaster Connection – Short Term Route

A series of county and township roads: Hill, Basil Western, Carroll Northern, Carroll Eastern, Stringtown to the City of Lancaster. This route was added since the 2009 Plan, because it was identified by the FHTA as a potential route for Share the Road signs. As previously discussed, a portion of this route already has Share the Road signs posted. FHTA continues to work with the applicable townships in effort to get these signs posted on the township roads along this route.

2b. Winchester Road – Short Term Route

This alternative is a township and county road proposed in MORPC’s 2006 Regional Bikeway Plan. It includes an existing bike route between Lithopolis-Winchester and Waterloo. Winchester between Jefferson and Pickerington is part of a Columbus Outdoor Pursuits route. This route also connects the City of Canal Winchester to the Village of Carroll.

2c. Lancaster to Hocking County – Short Term Route

Old Logan from Memorial Drive to Hocking County is a county road. It is also used by Columbus Outdoor Pursuits as a bike route.

2d. Indiana Ohio Central Railroad – Long Term Future Route

A series of county and township roads between the City of Canal Winchester and the Indiana Ohio Central Railroad: Hill, Waterloo Eastern, Benadum to the Indiana Ohio

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3 The 2009 Plan also reviewed a route along Wilson from Mt. Zion to Fair in the City of Lancaster. This route was not recommended at that time due to its curves and sight distance concerns. This route was reconsidered by the Committee in 2013 as part of a recommended route in Corridor 8a. Corridor #8 notes this route should be limited to the experienced cyclist.
Central Railroad to the City of Lancaster. This alternative is proposed in the Fairfield Heritage Trail Plan and MORPC’s 2006 Regional Bikeway Plan. This alternative includes two existing bike routes; (1) Waterloo Eastern from Waterloo to Amanda Northern and (2) Benadum between Amanda Northern and Pickerington. The Indiana Ohio Central Railroad portion of this alternative is called the Lateral Trail in the Fairfield Heritage Plan and travels along US 33. Due to the current active status of the railroad, cyclist should NOT utilize this route at this time. For this reason, this is recommended as a Long Term Future Route, and it should NOT be considered a bikeway at this time. If this rail line is abandoned, efforts should be taken to preserve the line for a rail trail. Preservation will reduce encroachment and prevent the line from reverting back to the property owners.

The interurban also ran through this area and should also be considered when examining this corridor in the future.

2e. **Lithopolis Road – Long Term Future Route**

This alternative is proposed in MORPC’s 2006 Regional Bikeway Plan and travels from Franklin County to the Indiana Ohio Central Railroad. This alternative is located in hilly terrain and is therefore recommended as a Long Term Future Route. This is the only route that provides direct service between the Village of Lithopolis and the City of Lancaster.

2f. **Hocking River – Long Term Future Route**

i. **Lancaster – North**

This route is a greenway corridor that travels from the west side of Amanda Northern to Camp Ground Road in the City of Lancaster.

ii. **Lancaster – South**

This is a greenway corridor that extends south from the City of Lancaster along the Hocking River to Hocking County. This route is proposed in the Fairfield Heritage Trail Plan.

Both of these greenway corridors are recommended as Long Term Future Routes due to the extensive improvements that would be needed to create this greenway.
Corridor 3: Millersport to Lancaster

Recommended Routes:

3a. Millersport, Old Millersport, City of Lancaster – Short Term Route

This route is already frequently used by bicyclists and is therefore recommended as a Short Term Route in this plan. The Agricultural Security Area (ASA) remains to be a vital part of this corridor. As the 2009 Plan documents, consideration must be provided when determining the types of treatments to be utilized within this route.

3b. Baltimore Connection – Long Term Future Route

A series of state, county and township roads: Millersport, Canal to Village of Baltimore. This route then creates a loop extending south from the Village of Baltimore on Main, Leonard and Basil in order to provide a connection to the Smeck Farm. Otherwise, this route could continue south on SR 158 to the City of Lancaster.

The Agricultural Security Area (ASA) is a vital part of this corridor. Consideration must be provided when determining the types of treatments to be utilized within this route.

Corridor 4: Pickerington to Millersport

Recommended Routes:

4a. Stemen, Cherry, SR 204 – Short Term Route

This is a series of township and state roads that provides connections between the City of Pickerington and the Village of Millersport. This route is already frequently used by bicyclists, and it is therefore recommended as a Short Term Route. A connection to the south on Cherry has also been added. This will connect to Canal Road, which is a part of Corridor 3b, and would provide service to Baltimore.

4b. Refugee Road, SR 204 – Long Term Future Route

An alternative that consists of county and state roads extending between the Village of Pickerington and the Village of Millersport. The Committee believes that this route is an extremely important route that is well documented within various planning documents.

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4 The 2009 Plan included several other alternative and recommended routes. After reviewing this corridor, the Committee believes that the 3a and 3b listed in this document are the best routes to serve as connections between the Village of Millersport and the City of Lancaster. Therefore, the other alternatives listed for Corridor 3 in the 2009 Plan are not recommended at this time.

5 The 2009 Plan included a route that followed SR 256, Doty, Bickel Church, Millersport to the Village of Millersport. The Committee believes that the Stemen, Cherry, SR 204 route is currently more frequently utilized by cyclists and it does not cut through the existing ASA. Therefore, the SR 256, Doty, Bickel Church, Millersport route is not a recommended route in this plan.
For this reason, a shared use path should be built along this route from the Franklin County line to Toll Gate Road. This is consistent with the recommendations set forth in the Pickerington Schools Safe Routes to School Plan and the City of Pickerington Refugee Road Corridor Plan.

4c. **Leib’s Island Road – Long Term Future Route**

This spur provides service to Leib’s Island. There are physical limitations to expanding this road for wide shoulders or bike lanes. Therefore, it is recommended as a Long Term Future Route.

**Corridor 5: Pickerington to Tarlton**

Recommended Routes:

5a. **Lithopolis - Amanda Connection --- Short Term Route**

A series of county and township roads that provide connections to the Villages of Amanda and Lithopolis. These roads include: Diley, Hill, Waterloo to the Village of Lithopolis. This route continues out of the Village of Lithopolis on Lithopolis, Cedar Hill, Marcy and Amanda Northern to the Village of Amanda. This route continues south out of the Village of Amanda on Amanda Southern, Bowers, Gerhart and 16th to the Village of Tarlton.

5b. **Clear Creek – Long Term Future Route**

This alternative is a greenway that travels from Amanda Northern Road to US 22. This greenway could connect into the Clear Creek greenway recommended in Corridor 1, which ultimately provides service to Perry County.

In order to provide the full connection between the City of Pickerington to the Village of Tarlton, a connection could be made from the greenway to Amanda Northern Road to continue travel north along Route 5a to the City of Pickerington. A connection could be made on the south side at Amanda Southern Road to continue travel along Route 5a to the Village of Tarlton.

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6 The 2009 Plan included several other alternative and recommended routes. After reviewing this corridor, the Committee believes that the 5a and 5b listed in this document are the best routes to serve as connections between the City of Pickerington and the Village of Tarlton. Therefore, the other alternatives listed for Corridor 5 in the 2009 Plan are not recommended at this time.
Corridor 6: Pickerington to Rushville

Recommended Routes:

6a. SR 256 Connection – Short Term Route

This route includes a series of state, county and township roads and extends between the City of Pickerington to the Village of Baltimore along an existing bike lane on SR 256. The route continues out of the Village of Baltimore on SR 256 to the east to the Village of Thurston. From Thurston, this route continues to the south on Old Millersport, Leitnecker and Pleasantville into the Village of Pleasantville. The route then continues to the east from the Village of Pleasantville on Richland (Eld)er to Coonpath to the Villages of West Rushville and Rushville.

6b. Norfolk Southern Railroad – Long Term Future Route

This alternative is proposed in the Fairfield Heritage Trail plan. Due the current active status of the railroad, cyclist should NOT utilize this route at this time. For this reason, this is recommended as a Long Term Future Route, and it should NOT be considered a bikeway at this time.

If this rail line is abandoned, efforts should be taken to preserve the line for a rail trail. Preservation will reduce encroachment and prevent the line from reverting back to the property owners.

6c. Walnut Creek – Long Term Future Route

This greenway alternative travels from Franklin County to Millersport Road. The segment between Franklin County and Carroll Northern Road was proposed in MORPC’s 2006 Regional Bikeway Plan. Connections could be made to the roads in Route 6a to provide full connection to the Village of Rushville. Connections could also be made to the routes in Corridor 3 to provide service to the Village of Millersport.

Corridor 7: Rushville to Bremen

Recommended Routes:

7a. Perry – Hocking County Connection – Short Term Route

This route includes a series of state, county and township roads to provide service between the Villages of Rushville and Bremen with continued service to Perry County to

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7 This route combines 6a and 6b from the 2009 Plan (utilizing SR 256 from 6b in 2009 Plan instead of Blacklick and Basil Roads from 6a in 2009 Plan) for the connection between the City of Pickerington and the Village of Baltimore.

8 In the 2009 Plan, this route was in its own corridor labeled as Corridor 10 – Walnut Creek. The Committee does not believe that a stand-alone Walnut Creek Corridor embraces the goal of the 2009 Plan to provide links to various villages and/or other destinations. For this reason, this route has been included in this corridor.
the north and Hocking County to the south. This route starts in Perry County and includes the following roads: Oakthorpe, Pleasantville and Gun Barrell to the Village of Rushville. The route then continues to the south from the Village of Rushville on the following roads: Rushville, W. Rushville, Marietta, Zion and Bremen to the Village of Bremen. The route continues to the south from the Village of Bremen on the following roads: SR 664, SR 312 to Perry County. The route also continues south on Rutter Hill to provide service to Hocking County.

7b. **SR 664 – Long Term Future Route**

This alternative serves the Amish community. It travels from Perry County through the villages of Rushville and Bremen to Hocking County. This 12 mile state route is hilly and curvy and has been identified in ODOT’s Amish Buggy Safety Report. One side of SR 664 has been widened to accommodate an Amish buggy. However, this lane will only allow buggies to travel in one direction and does not allow buggies traveling in opposing directions to pass each other. This is designated as a Long Term Future Route due to the additional infrastructure improvements needed to widen the road.

7c. **Rush Creek – Long Term Future Route**

This segment is a greenway that travels from SR 37 to Hocking County. South of Bremen there is a Rushcreek Conservancy Levy between SR 37 and Sugar Grove. Nothing can be placed on the west side but the east side has a maintenance berm, 6-8 feet down from the top of the levy that extends to Sugar Grove and could possibly be used for a bicycle facility. The Rushcreek Conservancy District has acquired a maintenance easement from the property owners for the berm. Currently no infrastructure exists on this route. However, the Active Transportation Committee recommends designating this as a Future Long Term Route.

**Corridor 8: Pickaway County to Bremen**

Recommended Routes:

8a. **Slate Run to Lancaster Connection – Short Term Route**

This route includes a series of county and township roads: Marcy, Rock Mill, Wilson to Fair Avenue. The Committee also recommends that a spur be included on Rock Mill to

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9 U.S. 22, Wheeling was also recommended in the 2009 plan. The Committee has not included this route in this document, because there are sufficient routes already identified in this corridor. U.S. 22, Wheeling also does not provide direct service to Bremen, which is the intended destination for this corridor.

10 The 2009 recommended Lithopolis instead of Wilson. The Committee spent a substantial amount of time over a course of three meetings to determine which road would be better suited for cyclists. The Committee agrees that neither road is ideal for cyclists, but due to a lack of a better alternative, Wilson would be included as the Short Term Route for this corridor. Lithopolis Road has been added as a Long Term Future Route for this corridor.
the north to allow cyclists to visit the Rock Mill Covered Bridge located on the southeast corner of Lithopolis Road and Rock Mill Road.

8b. **Duffy, Lake, Bremen – Short Term Route**

This route has potential to connect into the City of Lancaster bike path and is also currently used by some cyclists. Therefore, it is recommended as a Short Term Route. It should be noted that Duffy is hilly and may be limited to the experienced cyclist.

8c. **SR 37 - Short Term Route**

This corridor provides connections from Lancaster to Perry County. Despite heavy traffic, this route has wide shoulders and long sight distances.

8d. **Raccoon Run, Lake, Bremen – Long Term Future Route**

Since a portion of this route includes a greenway, the Committee recommends designating this a Future Long Term Use Route. There is also an abandoned railroad along this route that should be considered when planning for a long term route through this corridor.

8e. **Lithopolis Road – Long Term Future Route**

This alternative is proposed in MORPC’s 2006 Regional Bikeway Plan and travels from Franklin County to the Indiana Ohio Central Railroad. This alternative is located in hilly terrain and is therefore recommended as a Long Term Future Route. This is the only route that provides direct service between the Village of Lithopolis and the City of Lancaster. It is also a Long Term Future Route identified in Corridor 2.

**Corridor 9: Stoutsville to Lancaster**

Recommended Routes:

9a. **Village of Amanda Connection – Short Term Route**

This route connects the Village of Stoutsville to the Village of Amanda and includes the following roads: Amanda Southern, Bowers, Gerhert, 16th, Wyandotte and Fosnough School.

9b. **US 22 and Abandoned Railroad – Long Term Future Route**

This route, proposed in the Fairfield Heritage Trail Plan, travels from Pickaway County to Lancaster. It has limited access from south of Amanda Northern Road to Delmont Road. Over a mile of this rail trail is under development in the Village of Amanda. The existing right-of-way may be utilized as a Short Term Route, however, due to the planned
long term improvements in this corridor, this route is designated as a Future Long Term Route in this plan.
Appendix A

As approved by the Fairfield County RPC Active Transportation Sub-Committee:

Criteria for Utilizing “BIKE ROUTE” Signing on a Fairfield County Road:

Note: Care should be taken to sign only the appropriate roads. These signs indicate preferred routes for bicyclists; hence these signs should only be installed when the below criteria are met.

1. The route must be listed in the Fairfield County Active Transportation & Open Space Plan.

2. The route should be known as a common route for bicycles and should be considered the best available route for bicycle traffic (to and from destination), due to factors such as pavement width, Average Daily Traffic (ADT), sight distance, percentage of truck traffic, etc.

3. The route should be shown to be continuous to a reasonable destination and maintained throughout by all entities involved.

4. The route should be paved with an improved surface (as opposed to a gravel road) and have a pavement width of at least 20 feet.

5. The route should have an ADT < 2,000. If the route has an ADT of ≥ 2,000 there should be a minimum of 4 foot paved shoulders.

6. The route should not have unsafe utility castings.

7. Drop-offs, sight distance, grade and surface smoothness should be checked to determine the feasibility of a route before any signing is installed.

Criteria for Utilizing “SHARE THE ROAD” Bike Signing on a Fairfield County Road.

Note: The Share the Road signs are for warning motorists of potential bicyclists in the area. Care should be taken to sign only the appropriate portions of a road. Over signing may lead to drivers disregarding these signs, which would defeat the purpose of installing them. The Engineer reserves the right to alter signed routes or remove signs should circumstances change in the future.

1. The route should be listed in the Fairfield County Active Transportation & Open Space Plan.

2. The route should be known to be a common route for bicycles.
3. The route should not have unsafe utility castings.

4. Drop-offs, grade and surface smoothness should be checked to determine the feasibility of a route before any signing is installed.

5. Sight distance, based on the latest No Passing Zone Study, should be considered when determining the need for the warning signs. For example, roads with less than 33% of total lane miles being no passing zones (exclusive of intersection no passing areas not related to sight distance) typically have adequate sight distance and should not have “Share the Road” warning signs installed.

Signing a route using “BIKE ROUTE” or “SHARE THE ROAD” signs:

1. At the terminal points of the route.

2. At intersections with a county road or a state route. If no such intersection exists, engineering judgment may be used for additional signing.

3. Share the Road signs may not be placed within 250 feet of an intersection, unless placement is necessary to preclude the sign interfering with the location of a warning or regulatory sign of greater safety stature.
NOTE: Corridor 2D should NOT be utilized at this time due to the active status of the railroad. This is a recommended Long Term Route for possible future use if and when the rail line is abandoned.
NOTE: Corridor 6B should NOT be utilized at this time due to the active status of the railroad. This is a recommended Long Term Route for possible future use if and when the rail line is abandoned.