

CHAPTER 1: POLICY CONTEXT FOR THE 2005 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN (Draft)

Overview

This plan draws on and has been shaped by a number of regional, state, and local policy statements, plans, and studies. Among them are the Vision of the Transportation Planning Board, the TCSP (Transportation and Community and System Preservation) reports, federal and state guidance on provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the Constrained Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, and the state and local bicycle and pedestrian plans.

The Vision of the Transportation Planning Board

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Washington region. It brings key decision-makers together to coordinate planning and funding for the region's transportation system.

The TPB's official vision statement for the region, the *Transportation Vision for the 21st Century*, adopted in 1998, is meant to guide regional transportation investments into the new century. The Vision is not a plan with a map or specific lists of projects. It lays out eight broad goals, with associated objectives and strategies that will help the region reach that goal.

The Vision is supportive of pedestrians and bicyclists. It calls for:

- Convenient, safe bicycle and pedestrian access
- Walkable regional activity centers and urban core
- Reduced reliance on the automobile
- Increased walk and bike mode share
- Including bicycle and pedestrian facilities in new transportation projects and improvements
- Implementation of a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan

Sections of the Vision relating to bicycle and pedestrian goals are highlighted in Table 1-1. The full text of the Vision is available at

<http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/vision/>

This plan is intended to fulfill the goals of the TPB Vision for Bicyclists and Pedestrians. The original policy recommendations from the 1995 bicycle plan have been revised to reflect the goals of the Vision and to incorporate pedestrian goals.

Table 1-1: Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions of the Transportation Vision

Goal 1. The Washington metropolitan region's transportation system will provide reasonable access at reasonable cost to everyone in the region.

Objective 4: Convenient **bicycle and pedestrian** access

Strategy 3: Make the region's transportation facilities safer, more accessible and less intimidating for **pedestrians, bicyclists**, and persons with special needs.

Goal 2. The Washington metropolitan region will develop, implement, and maintain an interconnected transportation system that enhances quality of life and promotes a strong and growing economy through the entire region, including a healthy regional core and dynamic region activity center with a mix of jobs, housing, and services in a walkable environment.

Objective 2: Economical strong regional activity centers with a mix of jobs, housing, services, and recreation **in a walkable environment.**

Objective 4: Improved internal mobility with reduced **reliance on the automobile** within the regional core and within regional activity centers.

Goal 5. The Washington metropolitan region will plan and develop a transportation system that enhances and protects the region's natural environmental quality, cultural and historic resources, and communities.

Objective 3: Increased transit, ridesharing, **bicycling and walking** mode shares.

Strategy 7: Implement a regional **bicycle/trail/pedestrian plan** and include **bicycle and pedestrian facilities** in new transportation projects and improvements.

Accompanying the Vision is a shorter action agenda with elements to be included in the year 2000 long range transportation plan for the region. Item four on the action agenda calls for a regional congestion management system to achieve significant reduction in single occupant vehicles (SOVs) entering the regional core and regional activity centers by:

- designing and developing circulation systems that maximize the use of transit (rail, monorail, bus, jitney, etc.) and **pedestrian and bicycle** facilities;

In addition to the specific references above, language throughout the Vision applies to bicyclists and pedestrians, such as: maintaining the existing transportation system,

reducing the per capita vehicle miles traveled, linking land use and transportation planning, and achieving enhanced funding for transportation priorities.

Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Greenways and Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Circulation Systems

MARGIN [Covers of TCSP reports]

The TPB vision set broad, general goals, without much detail on implementation strategies or any specific project recommendations. To support the new transportation vision, in 1999 the Federal Highway Administration awarded a grant to the TPB under the Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program. The grant was intended to support two key components of the TPB vision: improving circulation within the regional core and regional activity centers, and integrating greenspace into a regional greenways system. With the TCSP grant, the TPB produced a pair of reports: *Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Greenways*, and *Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Circulation Systems*. The Greenways report supports the greenways and trails component of the TPB vision, while the Circulation Systems report supports the goal of improving circulation, especially non-motorized circulation, within the urban core and the regional activity centers.

The Greenways report identified eight regional priority trail projects, and twelve local projects, as well as nine major existing greenways. Projects were selected as regional priorities based on five criteria:

- Potential inter-jurisdictional connection
- Fill a critical gap
- Provide ecological benefits
- Links to existing or planned greenway
- Provide community access to the regional greenway network

The Greenways report also provides detailed strategies for identifying, planning, implementing, and managing greenways projects.



Regional priority, local priority, and selected existing greenways from the Greenways report are listed below, and are shown on Figure 1-1, Metropolitan Washington Greenways.

Regional Priority Projects

1. Accotink Greenway
2. Anacostia Greenway
3. Fort Circle Greenway
4. Metropolitan Branch Trail
5. Monocacy River Greenway
6. Northwest Branch Greenway
7. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
8. Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Trail

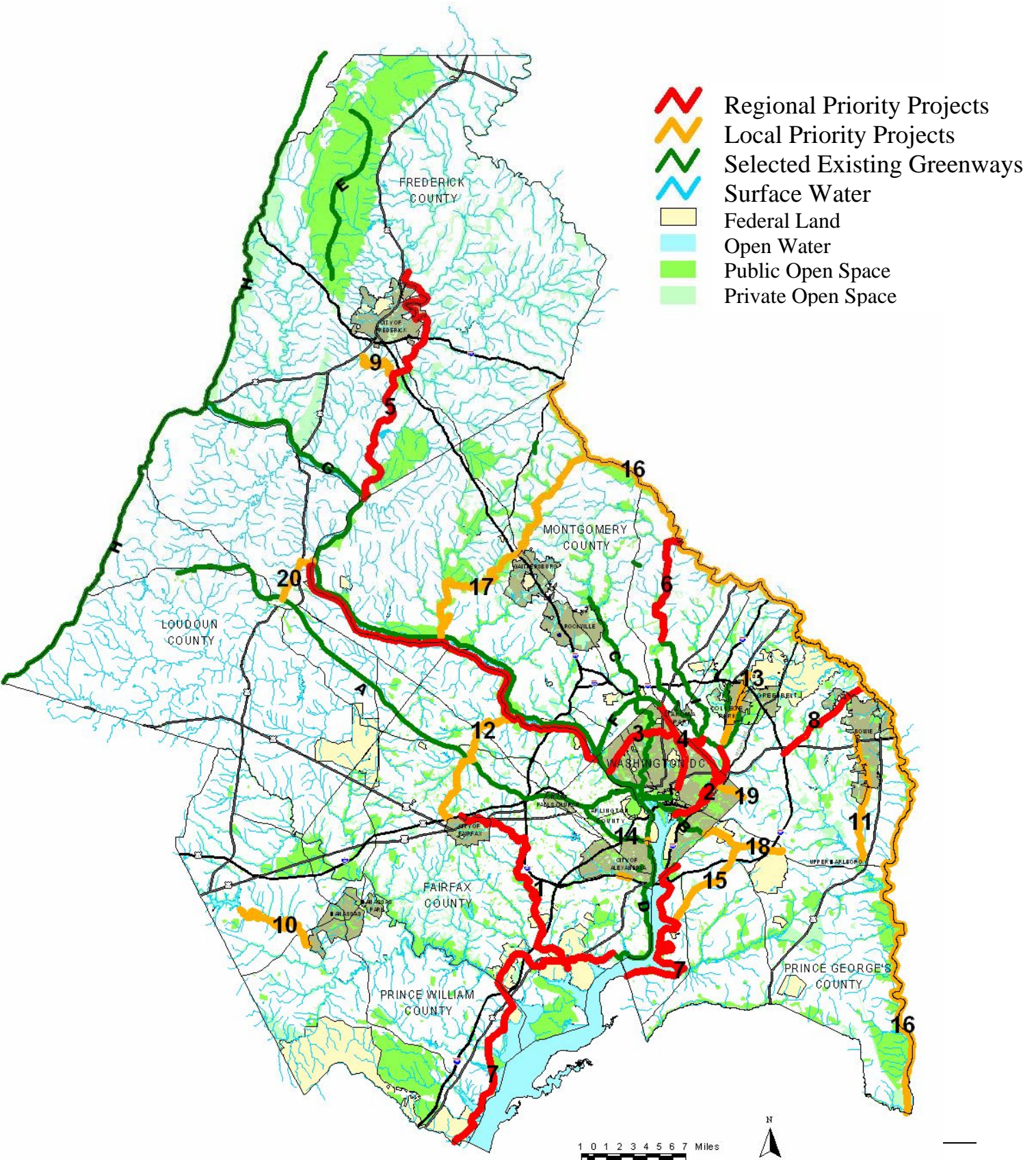
Local Priority Projects

9. Ballenger Creek Greenway
10. Broad Run/Rocky Branch Greenway
11. Collington Branch Greenway
12. Cross County Trail
13. DC Trolley Trail/Rhode Island Avenue Trail
14. Eisenhower Avenue Greenway
15. Henson Creek Greenway
16. Patuxent Regional Greenway
17. Seneca Greenway
18. Suitland Parkway Trail
19. Watts Branch Greenway
20. W&OD Connection to White's Ferry

Selected Existing Greenways

- A. W&OD Trail
- B. Suitland Parkway Trail
- C. Rock Creek Parkway
- D. Mount Vernon Trail
- E. Catocin-Gambrill Greenway
- F. Capitol Crescent Trail
- G. C&O Canal
- H. Appalachian Trail
- I. Northwest Branch Trail

Figure 1-1: Metropolitan Washington Greenways



The Circulation Systems Report focused on local circulation systems within the regional core and within regional activity centers. Places such as Tysons Corner have grown to urban densities while relying almost entirely on the automobile for internal mobility, leading to worsening congestion and poor internal mobility. There is tremendous interest in improving internal pedestrian, bicycle, and transit mobility in such centers.

The Circulation Systems report identified candidate and priority projects for improving internal circulation. Out of 51 candidate projects identified, 34 were pedestrian or bicycle projects. Projects were selected as regional priorities using the following criteria:

- location in a regional activity center
- readiness
- included in a local plan
- safety
- air quality
- economic development
- households served
- employees served
- cost

The following projects were selected as regional priorities:

1. Downtown DC Circulator
2. New York Avenue Metro Station Access
3. Union Station Bike Station
4. Montgomery County CBD Shuttle Package
5. Rockville Town Center
6. Suitland Metro Area Bus and Pedestrian Improvements
7. Old Town Fairfax Redevelopment
8. Rosslyn Circle Crossing
9. Tysons Corner Pedestrian Improvements

Of the nine regional priority circulation projects, seven are wholly or partially pedestrian or bicycle projects.

The Greenways and Circulation Systems reports continue to serve as a resource for planners in the Washington region. They also represent the most recent statement of regional bicycle and pedestrian priorities, and many of the projects chosen as priorities have either been implemented or have been advanced since the TCSP reports were issued. The TCSP selection criteria for regional priority have been incorporated into the information in the regional bicycle and pedestrian database.

Federal and State Policies

USDOT guidance issued in 2000 calls for bicycling and walking facilities to be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist. In 2003 the Virginia Department of Transportation released a new policy that commits VDOT to routinely accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists as part of all new construction and reconstruction projects, unless exceptional circumstances exist. The State of Maryland's Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Act provides that "Access to and use of transportation facilities by pedestrians and bicycle riders shall be considered ... in all phases of transportation planning, including highway design, construction, reconstruction, and repair."¹ The Maryland Department of Transportation is to "work to ensure" that transportation options for pedestrians and bicycle riders will be enhanced and not negatively impacted by a project or improvement.

These new federal and state guidelines and policies should lead to an increase in the number of pedestrian and bicycle facilities provided, with more facilities provided as part of larger transportation projects.

The Constrained Long Range Plan

The financially Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) is a comprehensive plan of transportation projects and strategies that the TPB realistically anticipates can be implemented over the next 25 years. The States submit projects for the CLRP, which is developed and approved by the TPB. The CLRP is the primary vehicle for realizing the TPB's Vision and the States' long-range plans. Federal law requires that the CLRP be updated every three years; the most recent version was adopted in 2004. To receive federal funding, a transportation project must be included in the CLRP. Because funds must be reasonably anticipated to be available for all the projects in the CLRP, the CLRP is not a wish list, but a fairly realistic plan.

The CLRP maps a few important bicycle projects, as well as discussing the actions of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety, walkable communities, and better professional development and training. Training in the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act with respect to pedestrian facilities has been a major emphasis.

The CLRP includes \$151 million in bicycle and pedestrian projects, as well as numerous larger projects that include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Bicycle and Pedestrian projects in the 2004 CLRP are listed in Chapter 5. However, since bicycle and pedestrian projects are usually small projects, they are often added to the plan later than the major highway and transit projects. Therefore, the CLRP under-estimates the amount of bicycle and pedestrian spending that will occur over the next 25 years. Much pedestrian and bicycle spending is also hidden in larger highway or transit projects. This is likely to be even more true in the future as State Departments of Transportation implement policies to routinely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in all new transportation projects.

¹ Maryland Department of Transportation, *Twenty Year Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Master Plan*, October, 2002. p. 32.

The Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides detailed information showing which projects in the CLRP will be completed over the next six-year period. The TIP is updated every year. Like the CLRP, the TIP is subject to federal review. Many projects in the TIP are staged, so a single CLRP project could end being split into multiple TIP projects.

The Fiscal Year 2005-2010 TIP includes \$133 million for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Of that, \$85 million is programmed for the first year, FY 2005. The first year of the TIP is usually the most accurate reflection of what will actually be spent. The \$85 million in bicycle and pedestrian projects programmed for FY 2005 is about 2% of total capital funds. As with the CLRP, funds spent on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as part of a larger highway or transit project are not broken out from the larger project.

Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans

Nearly every jurisdiction in the regional has completed a bicycle or pedestrian plan. Local plans are not subject to fiscal constraint or TPB approval, so they may include unfunded projects. Table 1-2 shows local and state plans and studies, by year of adoption.

**Table 1-2:
Regional and Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans and Studies, by Year of
Completion**

Jurisdiction/Agency	Plan/Study	Year Completed
District of Columbia	District of Columbia Bicycle Master Plan	2005
Montgomery County	Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan	2005
National Capital Planning Commission	Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements	2004
Virginia Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia Office	Northern Virginia Regional Bikeway and Trail Network Study	2003
Loudoun County	Loudoun County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan	2003

Maryland Department of Transportation	Twenty Year Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Master Plan	2002
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board	Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Greenways	2001
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board	Priorities 2000: Metropolitan Washington Circulation Systems	2001
Prince George's County	Transportation Priority List (Joint Signature Letter)	1999
Frederick County	Frederick County Bikeways and Trails Plan	1999
City of Gaithersburg	Bikeways and Pedestrian Plan	1999
City of Alexandria	Bicycle Transportation and Multi-Use Trail Plan	1998
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning	Countywide Park Trails Plan	1998
City of Rockville	Bicycle Master Plan	1998
Prince William County	Thoroughfares Plan (part of Comprehensive Plan)	1998
Arlington County	Pedestrian Transportation Plan	1997
Arlington County	Bicycle Transportation Plan	1994
Fairfax County	Master Plan of Trails	1994
Prince William County	Greenways and Trails Plan	1993
National Park Service	Paved Recreation Trails Plan	1990

Since 1995 nearly every major jurisdiction in the region has completed a bicycle or pedestrian plan, and the majority of them have done so since 1998. Projects drawn from these plans are incorporated in the updated regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.

Priority Unfunded Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee periodically selects a short list of priority unfunded bicycle and pedestrian projects. These projects are selected from the TCSP reports, the regional bicycle plan, and from State and local plans. The subcommittee has compiled and forwarded lists to TPB regularly since 1995, to be included in the solicitation document for the TIP/CLRP. In essence, the TPB urges the jurisdictions to consider funding these projects, which the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee has

judged to be regionally significant.

The selection criteria for inclusion in this short list were drawn from those used in the TCSP “Greenways” and “Circulation Systems” reports. The following criteria were used:

- **Bicycle Network Connectivity:** priority was given to projects that enhanced connectivity of facilities on the regional bicycle facilities network.
- **Pedestrian Safety:** priority was given to projects that promoted pedestrian safety, especially in areas with documented pedestrian safety problems and no pending road project that could address them.
- **Access to Transit:** priority was given to projects that enhanced access to Metrorail stations and other major transit stops or facilities.
- **Time Frame:** all projects should be able to be completed by 2011, the end of the TIP time frame.
- **Local Support:** the project is a priority for the jurisdiction or jurisdictions in which it is located.
- **Still seeking funding:** the project does not yet have full construction funding committed to it.
- **Reasonable Cost:** the total cost of the list should be a reasonable fraction of the total spending in the region on highways and bridges.

While considerable weight is given to the preference of the representative of the jurisdiction, subcommittee members were urged to think in terms of the regional selection criteria when nominating projects. The most recent list, adopted in 2005, included the following projects:

1. Metropolitan Branch Trail (District of Columbia)
2. Silver Spring Green Trail (Montgomery County)
3. Henson Creek Trail (Prince George’s County)
4. Holmes Run Stream Crossing (City of Alexandria)
5. Pentagon Area Bicycle Access Improvements Study (Arlington County)
6. Route 1 Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements (Fairfax County)
7. Centreville Road Underpass at Dulles Airport Access Road (Town of Herndon)
8. Loudoun County Parkway Multi-Use Path(Loudoun County)
9. Dumfries Road Multi-Use Path (Prince William County)

Funds requested for these projects totaled \$23,660,000.

Projects are dropped from the list when they receive funding, or if the subcommittee decides that priorities have changed. Most projects on past lists have been funded. Seven projects totaling \$11,508,000 were funded from the 2000 list, and five projects from the 2002 list were fully or partially funded.

Regional Bicycle Plans

The Washington region completed its first major bicycle study, the Washington Regional Bikeways Study of 1977. This study, created with under the supervision of the Regional Bikeways Technical Subcommittee of the Transportation Planning Board Technical Committee, provided an overview of bicycling characteristics and the potential market for bicycle commuting. Recommendations included the construction of 280 miles of protected bikeways and safe bicycle storage facilities, particularly at metro stations. It was estimated that bicycle mode share could be tripled if these facilities were built.

In 1988 the Bicycle Technical Subcommittee began work on a bicycle element for incorporation into the region's transportation plan. The plan identified the extent to which bicycle facilities and planning processes already existed in the region, highlighted areas of concern for the future, and drafted a set of policy principles to be applied by the the region's jurisdictions in updating their own transportation plans, as well as a list of recommended bicycle projects. The "Bicycle Element" was adopted by the Transportation Planning Board as part of the region's Constrained Long-Range Plan in November, 1991.

In July, 1995, the Transportation Planning Board adopted an update to the 1991 Bicycle Element, the Bicycle Plan for the National Capital Region, as an amendment to the Constrained Long-Range Plan. The revised plan emphasized bicycling for transportation. The revised recommended project lists and policy principles were produced by the Bicycle Technical Subcommittee.

Sources of the Regional Plan Projects

State, local, and agency bicycle and pedestrian plans are the source of the projects in this plan. All bicycle and pedestrian projects that are programmed in the TIP are also in the CLRP and in this plan. The plan, however, includes many projects that are not in the TIP or the CLRP. The TCSP priorities are not automatically included in this plan, but the TCSP selection criteria helped determine the data included for each project in the bicycle and pedestrian plan project list. Figure 1-2 illustrates the relationships between the various project lists.

Figure 1-2

