

Introduction

There is a new interstate in your town, and its travelers, for the most part, are on bicycles or foot! This recreation/tourism corridor can become a lightning rod for new opportunities in your town.

More and more people are using the trail systems every year. They are hungry, need supplies, may want to spend the night, are enjoying the beautiful scenery and want to explore interesting towns along the trail. What they need is a "Trail Town."

To create a Trail Town, you need a dedicated core group of citizens that can envision a "healthy" downtown, both physically and economically, and organize fellow residents and merchants to join in. The Trail Town Program is patterned on "Main Street" principles, so communities who have participated in the program will recognize the format. Communities who wish to learn more can visit the National Trust Main Street Center website at www.mainstreet.org.

The success of the Trail Towns also relies on communities becoming bicycle and pedestrian oriented. There is technical assistance available through your local Department of Transportation engineering district and your regional Metropolitan Planning Organization or Rural Planning Organization. A number of resources and websites are included throughout the manual, but an especially helpful one comes from the League of American Bicyclists (www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org) in the Technical Assistance section.

Building a Trail Town, like all things, happens step by step. The first step was building the trail to your community and now it's up to the community to entice the trail visitors off the trail into the heart of your downtown. You need to help them have a satisfying experience, allow them numerous opportunities to spend leisure time and tourist dollars in your community, and tell their friends about the great time they had on the trail and in your town.

Tips on How to Use the Blue Book Self-Assessment

1. Convene interested residents, merchants, local elected officials, and someone from the local trail organization. Invite the Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator from your regional DOT engineering district.
2. Set a date (and rain date) to do a walking tour of your town. Meet at the trail access area, divide into teams of 2 or 3 people (2 is preferable), distribute the blue books, and determine a time and place to regroup. Encourage the use of digital cameras to capture the good, bad, and the ugly. In fact, assigning participant photographers is recommended.
3. Each team may wish to stop for a "coffee break," mid-tour, to collect thoughts, record observations, begin to draw conclusions.
4. Allowing for 2 to 3 hours, depending on the size of your downtown area, reassemble the self-assessment team to discuss general observations. What great assets does the town have that you would want to promote or enhance? What needs does your town have?

5. Pick one or two items and develop an action plan to address them. Make sure someone is identified to take responsibility to move the plans forward. Another person should be commissioned to hold all the self-assessment booklets, consolidate all the answers and comments into a single report that can provide the basis for a long-term plan for the community. (Note: Check marks in the “yes” column indicate the Trail Town friendly answers. The more “yes” marks, the better positioned your community is to capitalize on the trail market.)

If you have trouble figuring out how to move forward, you can contact the Trail Town Program at www.trailtowns.org or (724) 216-9160 for advice in developing community leadership and local capacity.

6. Record your progress and keep your local newspapers informed. Invite your local elected officials and legislators to help dedicate the new amenities that your town constructs or installs.

7. Revisit the summary report from time to time and add new projects to your busy lives. The visitors, and your residents, will be most appreciative of your efforts.

Consider the following scenario as you complete the self-assessment and work to consider the questions from the visitors’ perspective.

It’s a beautiful fall weekend and you decide to pack up the family and the bikes and head to your trail for a few days of biking. You have the trail maps and have decided to stay with friends who live near the trail and have been encouraging you to come to explore it. You know your teenagers will want to stop frequently – for food—and you’re glad that the map shows towns about every ten miles along the trail. The weather is glorious and everyone is having a great time, until the first flat tire and the realization that the pump was left in the car!

Luckily the unfortunate incident happened right as they approached YOUR TOWN. Everyone dismounts and heads toward town. What did they find?

Traffic & Access Issues Assessment

YES ~ NO

General Access Between Trail and Town

T1	What is the distance between the business district and the trail?	<input type="text"/>		
		in blocks or miles		
T2	Is it easy for visitors to find and access downtown from the trail?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T3	Is there an easy grade between trail and town? (Hint: Ride bike - do you need to use your smallest chain ring?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signage

T4	Is there adequate signage for motorists to find the trailhead from town?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T5	Are there sign ordinances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T6	Are sign ordinances being enforced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T7	Is there adequate signage from the trail leading to the town?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T8	Is there sufficient signage for finding businesses and services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Safety

T9	Not counting the trail, are there bike lanes or share the road signs in town?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T10	Are bike lanes and road shoulders free of potholes, kept clean and free of debris?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T11	Are the sidewalks in good shape?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T12	Are sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T13	Do curb cuts have a gentle slope?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T14	Are all sidewalks continuous (vs. stopping abruptly), in the central business district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

T15	Are crosswalks well marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T16	Do motorists generally respect pedestrians in crosswalks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T17	Are there pedestrian walk/don't walk signals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety - continued		YES	~	NO
T18	Do signals allow enough time for a child or older adult to cross the street?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T19	Are pedestrians highly visible to motorists at crossings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T20	As a pedestrian, do you feel safe when walking through town?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking (Vehicles and Bicycles)				
T21	Is there sufficient on-street parking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T22	Are off-street parking lots placed behind stores?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T23	Are curb cuts in front of businesses limited (in size and number), resulting in a continuous sidewalk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T24	Are there bike racks near businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T25	Are bike racks placed in easy-to-find places?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T26	Are bike racks well-placed to prevent interference with sidewalk use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T27	Are there secure off-sidewalk, bike parking areas close to the business district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T28	Are bike racks simple enough for the rookie rider to use correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T29	Are there creative bike racks, eg. combo bike rack/bench or dual use of decorative metal fencing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T30	Are there hitching areas for horses, if applicable to your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q# **Notes**

Business Checklist

Overall Impressions		YES	~	NO
B1	Is there a "gateway" point to enter/leave town (like a piece of art/mural/sign)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B2	Do business hours match customers' needs (i.e. open on weekends)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B3	Are downtown businesses clustered in a compact area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B4	Are customers greeted warmly when they walk through the door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B5	Are the merchandise and store clean and well kept?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B6	Are there window displays that show off the community's heritage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B7	Are window displays appealing and inviting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodating to Visitors				
B8	Are there public-accessible restrooms in the businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B9	Do businesses offer information on the town/region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B10	Is there a tourism information or visitor center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B11	Can employees answer questions about the town or region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B12	Do employees answer questions in a friendly manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B13	Do shops carry souvenirs, especially related to the town	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Signs				

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| B14 | Are businesses' signage clearly visible and well-designed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B15 | Do the signs clearly state what is being sold? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B16 | Do businesses clearly indicate that they're opened? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B17 | Are business hours posted on front door or window? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Does your town have the following types of businesses and service? YES ~ NO

Food:

OPEN

- | | | SAT. | SUN. | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| B18 | Outdoor vending machines | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B19 | Grocery, or portable food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B20 | Coffee shop | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B21 | Ice cream cone/soft-serve service | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B22 | Candy/Chocolate Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B23 | Family-style restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B24 | Fast food or chain restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B25 | Informal café with wait service | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B26 | Bar or tavern | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B27 | Restaurant with liquor service | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B28 | Restaurants that offer outdoor seating | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B29 | Do restaurants serve local food? | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Bike Related:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|------|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| B30 | Bike rental | SAT. | SUN. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|-------------|------|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

B31	Bike equipment and repair	SAT. <input type="checkbox"/>	SUN. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	---------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Lodging:

B32	Hotel or inn			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B33	Bed and Breakfast			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B34	Motel			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B35	Hostel			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Lodging-continued: YES ~ NO

B36	Secure bicycle storage at lodging properties			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B37	Nearby camping? If YES, _____ miles from the trail			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Services & Amenities:

B38	Convenience/quick stop			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	------------------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B39	Drug store			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B40	24 hour ATM			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B41	Bookstore			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-----------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B42	Laundromat			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B43	Emergency medical service			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	---------------------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B44	Family medical services			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B45	Shuttling service to nearby town (max 25 miles)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	---	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B46	Shuttling service to distant locations (max 250 miles)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B47	Taxi service			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

B48	Access to public email service (i.e. at library)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--	--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Design Checklist

		YES	~	NO
Visual Appearance- Town & Storefronts				
D1	Does the downtown feel distinct or special?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D2	Does the town appear economically healthy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D3	Does your town feel safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D4	As a whole, are you enjoying your walk of downtown?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D5	Are walls and storefronts kept free of graffiti?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buildings & Parking				
D6	In general, are vacant storefronts reasonably maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D7	Does the community enforce building codes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D8	Is there a solid strip of businesses? (eg: not broken up by parking lots.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D9	Are businesses situated at sidewalks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D10	Are historic buildings restored and recognized?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D11	Are the structures in town in a good condition overall?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storefronts				
D12	Are store windows clean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D13	Are store windows lit at night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D14	Are storefronts maintained? (eg: no broken glass, crumbling brick, peeling paint, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D15	Do stores have attractive window displays?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D16	Are there audible amenities—chimes, church bells, music, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D17	Are there banners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storefronts-continued		YES	~	NO
D18	Are storefronts decorated with flowers or hanging baskets?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D19	Are there drinking fountains or sources for potable water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D20	Does the town use decorative lampposts for night lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean & Green				
D21	Are there enough benches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D22	Are there picnic areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D23	Are the benches well-placed? (Are they in the shade, near high pedestrian traffic areas, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D24	Are parks/green spaces easily accessible and welcoming to visitors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D25	Do parks have adequate bike racks and benches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D26	Are street trees used effectively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D27	Are native plants used in green spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

-
- D28 Are the sidewalks swept and kept neat and free of debris?
-
- D29 Are there rain gardens or permeable surfaces in parking lots?
-
- D30 Are there recycling receptacles in town?
-
- D31 Are there sufficient trash cans in town?

Access Areas

Signage and Information:

-
- D32 Is there an attractive, well placed access area sign?
-
- D33 Is there exit directional signage?
-
- D34 Is there an informational kiosk or bulletin board?

Signage and Information-continued:

YES ~ NO

-
- D35 Is there directional signage indicating destinations to east/west or north/south?
-
- D36 Is there a rule/regulation/courtesy sign?
-
- D37 Is there interpretive information?
-
- D38 Is there information on contributing or volunteering?
-
- D39 Is there information on nearby town amenities or services?
-
- D40 Is there a map of the town with businesses/services on bulletin board or kiosk?

Signage and Information - continued

-
- D41 Is there a take-away map of the town with businesses/services listed?
-
- D42 If the trail crosses any roadways, are the crossings safe?
-
- D43 Are there signs to emergency facilities?
-

Parking Lots:

- D44 How many parking spaces are in your trailhead parking lot?
- D45 Do parking spaces have extra length for hitch-mounted bike racks?
- D46 Does your parking lot have extra turning radius for shuttle vans?
- D47 Does your parking area accommodate horse-carrying vehicles?
- D48 Is there safe interface between trail users and parkers?
- D49 Does parking lot fencing have convenient openings for trail access?

Amenities:

- D50 Are there flush toilet facilities?
- D51 Is there a portable toilet?
- D52 Is there a public water fountain?

Amenities -continued

YES ~ NO

- D53 Are there trash receptacles?
- D54 Is there landscaping to provide shade?
- D55 Are there picnic table(s)?
- D56 Are there pavilions or shelters?
- D57 Are there bike racks?
- D58 Are there benches?
- D59 Is there security lighting?
- D60 Is there a pay telephone?
- D61 Is there cellular reception at the trailhead?

Q#	Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

or foot!
r town.

ies, may
towns

healthy"
to join
have
re can

n
ortation
ig
ut an

: trail to
o the

:ll their

local trail
ing

ea, divide
ie and
gly. In

e self-
at you

is

ments
: Check
, the

ram at
local

d
ills.

The

he

*o your
ds who
enagers
very ten
: first*

one

