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## **Bike, sidewalk draft plan unveiled**

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A draft of New Castle Bike, Pedestrian Plan outlines alternative transportation in the city, including using sidewalks and bike paths to connect parks and other key destinations.

An engineer unveiled the plan Wednesday evening at the New Castle-Henry County Public Library.

It gives a detailed analysis of suggested improvements needed for connecting public parks, schools and other places regularly visited by residents, said Jason Griffin, project manager for the Butler Fairman & Seufert engineering firm.

"We made this plan based on what we heard from the public," Griffin said. "Many people want the city to implement safe bike lanes and sidewalks for easy access to their favorite store. Most said there were not enough sidewalks in front of their houses."

The plan illustrated suggested improvements the city can make to well-traveled streets and roads such as Ind. 3, Trojan Lane or Bundy Avenue. Ind. 3 is considered a frightening barrier to get across, Griffin said.

"We would need to talk to INDOT (Indiana Transportation Department of Transportation) to possibly suggest to give up one of the lanes heading north into the city," Griffin said. "Then we could use that lane and turn it into a shared use path (trail)."

Other shared use paths are suggested for areas near Osborne Park, Henry County YMCA and possibly heading from the city south to Spiceland. Shared use paths are expensive to construct, Griffin said.

The city could start painting stripes on streets to designate shared car and bike path roadways or parking areas. That could be started at once and is relatively inexpensive.

"This can be done on several roads especially around New Castle High School where some streets are a good 18 feet wide," Griffin said. "By designating parking, you actually narrow the road and decrease the speed seen in the area."

Griffin said the plan is not the final draft. Public comments will be considered before a final presentation to the New Castle City Council on Monday, May 19.

The project is sponsored by the city, Hope Initiative and Healthy Communities of Henry County.