

**ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Public Workshop – City of Aiken Municipal Building
October 3, 2011**

Meeting Agenda

Welcome/Introductions (Gerald Jefferson)

- Welcome
- Introduce/recognize elected officials (Mayor Fred Cavanaugh welcomed the meeting participants and spoke several minutes regarding his support for creating a friendly community for biking and walking. He thanked everyone for their interest and support and encouraged them to remain involved in the planning and implementation process.)
- Introduce local staff
- Introduce consultant team
- Describe agenda

Presentation (John Cock, Jean Crowther, Mary Huffstetler)

- National Bike-friendly, Walk-friendly Trends
- The 6 E's: intro and local accomplishments
- Existing Conditions – recognize recent local tragedies
- Goals and Objectives Discussion
- Public Outreach efforts and opportunities

Break-out Groups: 4 stations (John Cock, Jean Crowther, Martin Guttenplan, and Mary Huffstetler)

- Bicycling Infrastructure – identification of areas of need and opportunity, gaps in network
- Bicycling Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation - issues, opportunities, priorities
- Walking Infrastructure – identification of areas of need and opportunity, gaps in network
- Walking Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation - issues, opportunities, priorities

Break-out Groups Report Back (John Cock)

General Questions and Closing Comments (John Cock)

- Plan schedule
- Next steps
- Ways to get involved

Meeting Summary:

About two dozen citizens attended the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Public Workshop on October 3rd at the City of Aiken Municipal Building. By a show of hands, the audience showed itself to be primarily City of Aiken residents. Three attendees indicated they were residents of Aiken County. Most attendees expressed interest in both bicycling and walking infrastructure and about six persons identified themselves as members of the Aiken Bicycle Club.

Workshop participants marked locations for infrastructure improvements on the maps provided. In addition, the following comments represent the preferences and priorities of local residents who attended the meeting regarding bicycling and walking in the Aiken County community.

Bicycle Infrastructure

- Avoid impacting emergency vehicles
- Bicycle parking is needed
- Shoulders should be provided on all rural roads
- Rudy Mason Parkway multi-use path is not well maintained
- In the past, a survey of senior residents showed that bike paths are preferred for the benefit of motorist comfort
- Recreational trails are preferred because they are more scenic (“pretty”) than walk/bikeways along roads
- Abandoned rails should be used to create rail-trails – there is a 4-mile stretch of rail available outside of the City of Aiken
- Motorist speed limits should be lowered
- The new road at the Cracker Barrel should be bicycle and pedestrian friendly
- Infrastructure convenient for running errands and accessing shopping areas is important.
- Actuated signals in Aiken will trigger with bicyclists if the cyclist positions in the center of the lane; better signal actuation should be provided
- Shoulders on rural roads would provide adequate facilities for bicycling club members
- Protected bikeways close to town would provide adequate facilities for families and others
- Connect equestrian trails and expand access

Walking Infrastructure

- More ramps are needed throughout the city for wheelchairs and mobility carts
- Handrails along sidewalks and steps would assist senior citizens
- Signage is needed to warn that the sidewalk ends on the 13th street bridge

Bicycle Programs

- Targeted enforcement is needed to ensure both motorists and bicyclists understand the rights and responsibilities of the road
- Educate law enforcement officers in regards to the law and reporting bicycle and pedestrian collisions (partner with Bikelaw.com)
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce – the Chamber is supportive of bicycling and walking and could sponsor a bike ride, an encouragement program, or help to secure private sector sponsors of bikeways and trails
- Bicyclists should wear reflective clothing, use lights, and ride on the right side of the road
- Safety education for adult bicyclists is needed.
- Neighborhood outreach would be beneficial to explain the benefits of walking and biking for residential communities
- Retirees wanting to live active lifestyles could be reached through the hospital
- Partner with public safety officers to teach safe bicycling practices (through on-bike outreach, a pamphlet, brochure, or other means)
- Ensure proper maintenance of roadside landscaping to allow for sufficient motorist sight lines
- Ensure that signs are visible
- Include bicycle safety as a part of school curriculum, or as a school assembly
- Promote Safe Routes to School
- Partner with employers to provide bike safety materials to their employees (regarding commuting to work safely and how to identify bike-friendly routes)
- Create an online tool for planning bicycling and walking routes

Walking Programs

- Walking infrastructure (sidewalks) is needed outside of downtown
- Public transportation needs to be improved to make walking a more viable option
- Downtown Merchants Association and merchants in other parts of town could be tapped as partners
- Speed of traffic in downtown should be lowered or better controlled
- Signals outside of downtown are not timed to allow pedestrians to cross safely
- Signs could be placed in crosswalks reminding drivers to slow down and respect pedestrians
- Homeowners' Associations – creating direct access through walking (Riverbluff to East Gate)
- Suzanne King hosts a webpage for a walking group in Aiken
- The “Mom’s” groups in Aiken could be a partner for walking programs
- Real time speeds (speed trailers) could help to slow speeds
- Pedestrians should be given blinking lights
- Emphasize economic development and target merchants and the Chamber of Commerce as partners

- Sidewalks should be required (More handrails and ramps at sidewalks throughout the city. In other words, more ADA compliant.)
- Retirees are a large, growing segment of the population; Tie retiree community to walking programs and heart health
- Partner with the senior citizens/aging council (Lynda Bassham at the City of Aiken)
- Tie walking programs to health and wellness – currently you have to drive to Odell Weeks to walk/exercise
- Change the focus from nutrition/diet to exercise/active living
- Connect the YMCA to the University and to residential neighborhoods
- Ensure roadside landscaping is maintained to ensure driver visibility
- Pedestrians and bicyclists should wear visible, bright clothing

Comment Forms:

- The silent majority is a barrier to walking – i.e. the “good ole boys.” They tell you that bicycling and walking access has never been an issue before... until the “out-of-towners” moved in.
- Sidewalks are needed south of the Mitchell Shopping Center
- The Odell Weeks Recreation Center would be a partner/lead agency for walking programs
- Retirees that move to the area need to maintain good health and walking is a free and easy way to do that
- Selecting from a list of potential ideas presented by the study team, participants expressed support for the implementation of the following programs:
 - Media campaign to educate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians (if required for drivers license) (2 responses)
 - Senior citizens walking programs
 - Safety campaign encouraging pedestrians to wear bright clothing
 - Local police enforcement programs targeting motorists
 - Media campaign encouraging active lifestyle
 - Safe Route to Schools (2 responses)
 - Safe Routes to Transit
 - Walking School Bus program