

AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE

COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY - JULY 9, 2002

Overview and Findings

The first community meetings for the ARTS Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update were held July 9, 2002 in two locations: The Aiken Community Center and the Augusta Richmond Municipal Building. Sixty staff and community members participated at the community meetings. The goals of the community meetings were to:

1. Educate the community about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update.
2. Gather input on issues and perceived problems in the bicycle and pedestrian system.
3. Identify origins and destinations.
4. Identify preliminary criteria for project evaluation.

The public was notified of the community meetings in several ways. Posters and bookmarks with community meeting dates and locations were distributed throughout the community and press releases detailing the purpose of the meetings were distributed to the following news organs:

- The Augusta Chronicle
- The Augusta Focus
- The Metropolitan Spirit
- The North Augusta Star
- The Aiken Standard

Five stations were set up at the meetings to facilitate the exchange of information. First, a sign-in station was set up for participants to sign in and gather handouts. Handouts included bookmarks, a newsletter highlighting the planning process and contact information, a project schedule, and a meeting evaluation.

A second station was set up to provide participants information regarding the 1994 Bicycle Walkways Plan and to explain the planning process for the update. At third station participants identified where they live and/or work on maps of Aiken County, Columbia County, and Richmond County. (See Appendix A)

Stickers representing a variety of origins and destinations including home, office, entertainment, restaurants, recreational facilities, and shopping, were provided at the fourth station. Participants identified on maps of Aiken County, Columbia County and Richmond County where they currently bicycle or walk or where they would like to bicycle or walk (See Appendix B). The following table demonstrates the number of times a destination was chosen for bicycle and/or pedestrian accessibility.

Destination	Number Chosen
Recreation	35
School	32
Restaurants	19
Entertainment	14
Church	11
Residential	10
Hospital	9
Library	7
Work	5
Transit	2
Commercial	2

A questionnaire was provided at the fifth station to gather input from participants regarding issues and opportunities and preferred route criteria. See Appendix C for results from the survey. General comments from the survey, grouped by topic, include:

Project Recommendations:

- Connect Skinner Mill Road to River Watch Parkway.
- Connect Alexander Drive to Eisenhower Park so we can get to the Augusta Canal.
- Connect canal with North Augusta Greenway.
- We need bike and walkways that go to destinations.

- More sidewalks, user friendly intersections.
- Providing sidewalks is very important, especially from residential communities to shopping areas.
- Connect the lock in south Augusta to the lock in Evans.
- I would like to ride from Warren Road to downtown, North Augusta, and the river in Columbia County.
- Convert rails to trails.
- Extend the North Augusta Greenway to Edgefield County (24 miles).
- Complete the bike trail that has been started on the new Pine Log Road. Complete project so it runs all the way around the bypass.

Bicycling and Walking Benefits

- Some dedicated walk/path ways in this area. It will add a lot to the community. Thank You.
- Adventure for people to ride bike to functions on the Riverwalk.
- Columbia County canal areas near the Savannah Rapids are beautiful and popular areas.
- Schools need to get back to weighing students at beginning and end of school year. Let them see the list for correct weight.
- We need to help form traffic intersections so that parents will ride or walk with children in their early years. Parents will then trust their children to know how to use crosswalks and bike trails and we will have helped them develop healthy, safe habits.
- Augusta is a beautiful city with good weather and it is not reaching its potential because of selfishness and not caring for our environment and health.
- Many neighborhoods are almost isolated from the next neighborhood. More places to connect and get together informally are needed.
- I would like to see a paved bikeway from city of Aiken, parallel to each of the main highways and going out 4 or 5 miles from the city. The first candidate should be Wagner Road, which goes past the Advance Fiberglass Company. There is plenty of room on each side of the road to build this.

Safety Issues

- Concerned about safety
- We must develop a plan now to educate different users, to take pride in what we are developing. We need to educate people about litter, community pride, safety, etc.
- It is difficult to find safe places to run and bike. I was very disappointed when the path at the reservoir (behind Daniel Village) was closed. Now the only good, long dirt trail is the canal path. Please close it to traffic to leave a portion of the width as pack dirt in the event that you consider paving it. Find a way to connect the canal path to the Greenway. Running on hard surfaces is much harder on runners' legs and knees than soft surfaces such as dirt and cinders. Please keep this in mind as you plan trails.
- There needs to be an expectation that cyclists and pedestrians belong, that they are not a nuisance.

Accessibility

- Current development practices, low-density suburban style development, are designed solely with car access in mind. This situation is exacerbated by many projects being small in scale with few, if any, amenities included. Not only is this the current practice, it is the development practice that has predominated for several decades. Retrofitting existing development with these facilities will be a challenge.
- Islands on Crawford, off Pine Log, block pathway.
- If facilities are available they will be used.
- I like to walk and use sidewalks when present. The Odell Weeks area of Aiken is the most pedestrian unfriendly area of the city.
- I think the circular loop with cross trails makes a great configuration. It gives a long route with access to the business area.
- Augusta just needs to look at other cities for what works (i.e. Seattle has bike racks on buses).
- I would bike 10 miles to entertainment venues assuming the access is pleasant and is not harrowing.

Recreation

- More trail miles are needed.
- Pave canal and leave path for runners.
- Create further rails to trails to attract visitors who bike.
- Open Augusta National for bicycle recreational paths.
- Near the San Francisco area, bicycle lanes are included with many scenic highways. I would like for Georgia and South Carolina to do the same.

Maintenance

- Someone needs to have a plan to maintain and keep the paths clean and neat.
- For the last few months, we have had someone putting tacks on the towpath of the Augusta Canal. It is speculated that possibly the walkers do not appreciate the speed of some bikers on the towpath. We have had to place signs restricting four-wheelers on the towpath.
- Our park ranger has had to repaint his building a few times due to graffiti in the area.

Meeting Evaluation Results

Community participants returned 21 meeting evaluation cards. Comments received are summarized below.

How would you rate this meeting overall?

Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
2	11	5	1	0

What did you like most about the meeting?

- Good handouts
- Ability to provide input
- Willingness to help and being able to map out this community

- Relaxed atmosphere – helpful staff
- The ability to interact
- Clarity of presentation and openness for public presentation
- The survey – meeting other people
- Opportunity for my input. I figured that I would be sitting in a meeting and listening to a talk.
- Informal moderators easily accessible and eager to interact
- Well organized and comfortable atmosphere
- Questionnaire
- I hope you are able to gather a lot of good information
- Freedom to choose
- Able to suggest things as needed and not just with the stickers

In which areas do you feel the meeting could have been improved?

- Would like to have heard overview on where planning currently stands.
- None – more people
- I think a longer time period would help
- Prior public education regarding issue
- It was a little difficult in determining how to fill out the "Use" map
- Since a starting time was named (6:30), a brief overview made to all participants may have been helpful
- Have a speaker
- Better maps
- It was well done for collecting information

- An up-front briefing – overview
- Hard to orient yourself to the map
- Definitely needed a short program. Maps needed more street names.
- Needed to be more informative
- Very little communication

Do you have an understanding of the ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan process? (circle the answer that applies)

Yes	No Opinion	No
15	1	4

Regarding what you have learned, how would you rate the following statements?

I learned new information.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	12	3	0	1

I was given an opportunity to provide input.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9	6	1	0	1

How did you find out about tonight's meeting? (numbers in parenthesis indicate more than one response)

- Newspaper (12)
- Newsletter (1)
- Bookmark (1)
- Magnet

- Utility bill flyer
- Neighbor(4)
- Friend (7)
- Family
- Other (2)*

*Includes neighborhood associations

What mode of travel did you use to attend this meeting? (numbers in parenthesis indicate more than one response)

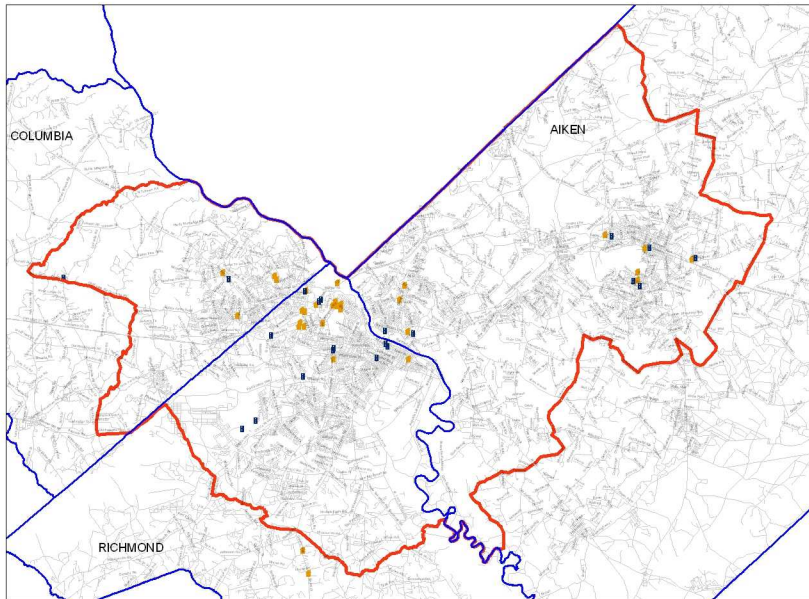
- Walking (0)
- Biking (1)
- Driving (15)
- Riding transit (0)
- Other (0)

Additional comments.

- Good accessible location (Aiken Conference Center). Are local citizens (groups) with disabilities being actively sought out?
- My questions were answered knowledgably and presenters were well informed. Central presentation needed more publicity about the plan and its future expected actions, particularly with regard to funding.
- We need to move this up in priority and start work on the project as soon as possible. This can be good for business.
- Great to see this activity.
- Citizens seemed to want orientation on existing plan as point of departure for their own comments and suggestions.

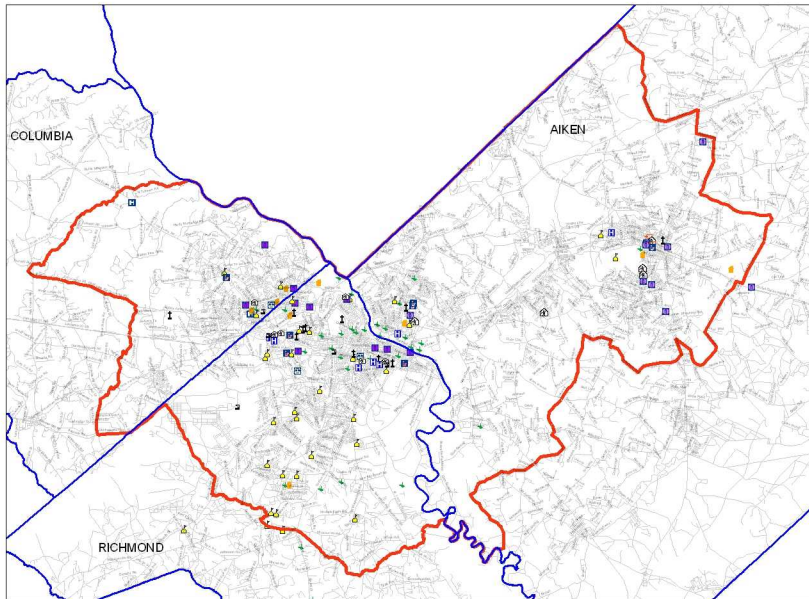
Appendix A

Live/Work Locales



0 12,500 Feet

Appendix B
Destinations



Legend

-  City Limits
-  County
-  Community Destinations
-  Church
-  Entertainment
-  Hospital
-  Library
-  Recreation
-  Residential
-  Restaurant
-  School
-  Transportation
-  Work



0 4,000 8,000 Feet

