

# **AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE**

## **COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY - November 6-7, 2002**

### **Overview**

Three community meetings for the ARTS Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update were held November 6 and 7, 2002 in Columbia, Aiken, and Richmond counties. The meeting locations included the North Augusta Community Center, the Julian Smith Barbecue Pit, and the Savannah Rapids Pavilion. Forty-three community members participated in the meetings. The goals of the community meetings were to:

1. Educate the community about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update.
2. Gather input regarding goals and objectives, minimum safety design standards, programs and policies, and measures to evaluate the success of the plan in the future.
3. Review proposed projects and identify missing and/or priority projects.

The public was notified of the community meetings in several ways. Bookmarks with community meeting dates and the project web site ([www.co.richmond.ga.us/planz](http://www.co.richmond.ga.us/planz)) were handed out at the previous public meeting. The project web site contained community meeting dates and locations. Posters with community meeting dates and locations were distributed throughout the community. 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

Four stations were set up at the meetings to facilitate the exchange of information about planning, funding, and implementation for the ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

First, a sign-in station was set up for participants to sign in and gather handouts. Handouts included a newsletter highlighting the planning process and contact information, a project schedule, and an ARTS brochure. Comment cards were provided

to gather participant input regarding the information presented and the effectiveness of the meeting. Community participants returned 32 comments cards. Results from these are included in the overview below.

**Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning** A second station provided information related to the planning process for bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region and included goals and objectives, programs and policies, design standards, and projects identified by proposed network year.

**Goals and Objectives** Participants were asked to identify which objective under each goal they felt was most important. Community participants provided the following feedback (numbers in parentheses indicate votes by participants):

**Goal One: Provide for a bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to serve local, community, and regional needs.**

**Objectives:**

- Encourage local bicycle and pedestrian planning that complements and supports regional bicycle and pedestrian objectives. (9)
- Overcome physical barriers through governmental coordination and identification of critical linkages/connections. (7)
- Overcome policy level barriers by facilitating changes in local development ordinances and guidelines. (7)
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in activity and town centers, where appropriate. (4)
- Integrate and connect to transit facilities to create regional connections for both bicyclists and pedestrians. (2)
- Retrofit existing developed areas for ADA accessibility. (1)

**Goal Two: Promote the viability of walking and biking as safe and healthy transportation options throughout the region for all potential users.**

**Objectives:**

- Provide incentives to local employers and developers to promote bicycle and pedestrian use. (13)
- Provide for ongoing regional bicycle and pedestrian coordination through a task force and dedicated staff time. (6)

- Establish regionally consistent design standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities for all users. (6)
- Support regional education, safety, and marketing programs that increase awareness and use of facilities for all users. (2)

**Goal Three: Identify appropriate and adequate funding for the development and maintenance of regional and local bicycle and pedestrian systems.**

**Objectives:**

- Ensure flexibility in federal funding to include bicycle and pedestrian projects. (14)
- Establish requirements and standards for long-term maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. (6)
- Prioritize regional projects and strategies to develop a bicycle and pedestrian network based on need and regional significance. (3)
- Promote low cost, easy to implement projects at the local and state level (i.e. restriping, signage, bicycle racks). (3)

Programs and Policies Participants were asked to rank the types of programs and policies presented including funding, design/maintenance of facilities, and programs/activities, according to which they felt would be most effective in overcoming deterrents to a regional pedestrian and bicycle network. Results from the ranking are indicated in the table below.

Type of Program/Policy	Ranked First	Ranked Second	Ranked Third
Funding	17	4	1
Design/Maintenance of Facilities	3	16	13
Programs and Activities	2	2	18

Community participants also indicated the following additional types of bicycle and/or pedestrian programs they would like to see implemented in the region.

- Programs designed to connect the parks in Richmond and Columbia counties and North Augusta and Aiken with safe bicycle/pedestrian trails. (2)

- Incentives for city employees to commute to work by bike
- Useable network of bike paths/lanes
- Recreational programs
- I want a strong initiative in the schools starting at elementary level stressing safety rules and attractiveness of community to schools. Our kids are too sedentary. They don't know bicycle safety rules. Teach them while young and impressionable. Offer incentives like the current reading programs. In turn, the kids will encourage their parents to go out on bikes or walk, ergo, everyone will be healthier. Hopefully less vehicles on road - less healthcare costs - great for stress relief.
- Programs that teach family responsibility in biking/walking with children, teaching them to observe warning signs and street names. As they grow older, parents will know their children's bike/walk paths and hopefully will be able to trust them to know the rules of the road.
- Schools, churches, and recreational facilities need to teach sidewalk and bicycle safety.
- Public education of benefits of exercise to a healthy society and environment.
- Use national model programs and get local politicians' support. Quality of life issue will bring in industry if people want to live here. Use Denver and Portland, Oregon as models.
- Steering committee
- Walk/bike to school day
- Sunday afternoon family bike rides
- "Bike to Work" day
- A recreation center with a paved bike/walking trail in an area without a lot of traffic surrounding it.

**Design Standards and Cost Estimates** - Participants prioritized facility types they would most like to see implemented throughout the region in the following manner:

- Multiuse paths (12)
- Urban bike lane (6)

- Sidewalks (2)
- Share the Road signage (1)
- Restriping roads with bike lanes (1)
- Rural bike lane (1)

## **Projects**

Community participants indicated the following missing and/or priority projects.

### **Missing Projects**

- Paving levee
- East Boundary to Fosters to Lovers Lane
- Interstate connections
- Share the Road signage along Crane Ferry Rd. from Pleasant Home Road to Warren Road
- Urban bike lane in Belair Hill neighborhood
- 5th Street bridge for bicycles/pedestrians only
- Rails for Trails
- Share the Road signage along Joy/Boy Scout Road from Wheeler Road to Raes Creek
- Utilize lane for bike path from downtown to Lock and Dam Park. Build bridge over Sand Bar Ferry Road.
- Share the Road signage along Flowing Wells from Wrightsboro to Wheeler Road
- Add urban bike lane along Stevens Creek Road. Many bikers use this to get to Evans-to-Locks Road bike lane and the canal.
- I wish when Evans-to-Locks Road Phase II (C23) is completed, we could have a 2-foot wide area along the road from the intersection of Fury's Ferry/Evans-to-Locks to Columbia Industrial Boulevard until Fury's Ferry Road/County Road Phase II (C26) and Fury's Ferry Road/County Road Phase III (C27) is finished.

That way one can have a relatively safe ride – intersection – Bloestone Camp – Steven’s Creek – Evans Lock – Fury’s Ferry – Columbia Industrial Boulevard to Evans Lock.

- Extension to project along the Georgia Power easement from Alexander Drive to Eisenhower Park (R41), coming up from Eisenhower Park to Eisenhower Road and tying in Garrett School and the school and county park gym facility.
- Safe/secure bicycle parking at appropriate locations
- Bicycle lanes on Sand Bar Ferry Road
- Bike racks on all buses purchased
- Please recommend facility from Belair Road to Flowing Wells on Columbia Road.
- Need to connect Warren Road Bridge at Skinner Mill Road to Crane Creek and Raes Creek easement to Ingleside Drive and Berckmans Road (R37)
- The Warren Road widening and alignment to Beverly Heights Drive at Washington Road (with a red light) needs to continue on Parrish Road to Fury’s Ferry Road at River Watch Parkway. At River Watch Parkway, take a right to Prattwood Drive, right to Brookfield Parkway, left to Fieldstone Circle, left to Big Hunt Road, left to Mayo Road to Brookfield Park (adjacent to River Watch Parkway). You could tunnel under River Watch Parkway at Parrish Road and Elkdom Court to reach Mayo Road at Big Hunt Road. The county owns this section of land.
- Skinner Mill Road widening to Crane Creek and Raes Creek easement to Ingleside Drive and Berckmans Road to Wickow Road to Heath Drive, to Stanley Drive at Washington Road to Alexander Drive to Georgia Power easement before River Watch Parkway (R39)

## **Priority Projects**

### **Bicycle**

- Baston Rd. urban bike path – why no path when road was widened?
- Get lane included in planned expansion along Petersburg Road
- Columbia Industrial Blvd. is a safe, low traffic area, but it is dangerous to get there, especially coming from Fury’s Ferry in any direction at very least. Share the Road signs. 2018 is a long time to wait. I love riding out Fury’s Ferry across the river into South Carolina, but it is dangerous out Highway 28 now.

- Levee Road from Sand Bar Ferry Road to Lovers Lane (R3)
- Central Avenue from 15th Street to Highland Avenue (R13)
- Tobacco Road from Karleen Rd. to Doug Barnard Parkway (R1)
- Buena Vista Avenue from Martintown Road to Riverview Park Drive (A2)
- Lace Road/Ulm Road/Karleen Rd. from Tobacco Rd. to Willis Foreman Road (R22)
- Many bikers use Stevens Creek Road. Lots of subdivisions there. Should get bike lane there.
- William Few Parkway should be accelerated (in Columbia County).

### **Pedestrian**

- Sidewalk on Columbia Road (Belair Road to Washington Road)
- Wheelchair accessible sidewalks from subdivisions in 30901 area to schools, churches, shopping, transit
- Pedestrian projects would be number one priority and bicycling number two.

### **Multiuse**

- 13th Street bicycle/pedestrian bridge
- Off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- More dedicated bike paths that are not on roadways
- Alexander Drive along Georgia Power easement near Riverwatch Parkway (R40), move to 2008
- Connecting Georgia and South Carolina trail systems
- Multiuse paths throughout area
- Evans-to-Locks trail extension – don't wait till 2008
- Augusta Canal Phase I from Evans-to-Locks Road to Thirteenth Street (CR2) is a good beginning. Many neighborhoods off of Pleasant Home Road will benefit.

- Augusta Canal – Georgia Power easement – Fury’s Ferry Rd./Warren Rd.

### **Transit Related**

- Downtown access to transit from every subdivision and to nearby schools.

### **Geographic**

- Bike or multiuse path from Skinner Mill and Warren Road Bridge, using Crane Creek and Raes Creek easements to connect Wicklow and Ingleside to Heath/Stanley over to Alexander Drive, then down Riverwatch to Eisenhower Park.
- The projects listed below should be implemented by 2008 in order to connect the following activity centers: Warren Rd. Park, Warren Rd. Elementary School, Brookfield Park (planned), Eisenhower Park, Garrett and National Hills Elementary Schools, and the Augusta Canal (CR2). This would also lead into what is already under construction on Fury Ferry’s in Columbia County.
- Fury’s Ferry Rd./Warren Road from Riverwatch Parkway to Skinner Mill Road (R-37)
- Raes Creek/Crane Creek from Skinner Mill Rd. to Berckmans Rd. (R-39)
- Stanley Dr./Heath Dr./Wicklow Dr./ Berckmans Rd. from Washington Road to Raes Creek (R-38)
- Alexander Drive from Washington Rd. to Georgia Power easement near Riverwatch Parkway (R40)
- Georgia Power easement from Alexander Drive to Eisenhower Park (R-41)
- Rural/suburban areas in the future after bike racks and downtown access from transit
- Anything downtown
- Sidewalks/bike lanes that connect to parks and other major activity centers/neighborhoods
- Serious development of bicyclist commuter to facilitate transit from west Augusta to downtown – currently there is no safe way (and no decent way in rainy weather) to do this.



- Pedestrian and bikeways across the Savannah River at key locations to connect activity centers and provide links between the greenway, canal, etc.

## **General**

- Urban bike lanes, sidewalks, Share the Road signage
- All facility funding should be based on injury/death numbers, which are mostly downtown. Outlying areas (other than the canal path) should not be funded until we do what we can to prevent the 80 injuries/deaths/year that occur year after year downtown.

## **Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding**

### **Funding Options**

Community participants were provided with information regarding different funding options for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Nineteen participants indicated support for funding bicycle and pedestrian facilities as standalone projects, while two participants did not, and one participant indicated there was not enough information available to make a determination. The following are additional comments in support of funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects as standalone projects:

- To provide definitive public support
- People will only utilize bicycle and pedestrian paths if they are safe and connect to areas that people want to go. This will help with traffic problems in the future.
- Project will stay focused.
- Really should be both. Did like to see standalone projects, but bike/pedestrian planning should always be an intrinsic part of the design process for any road construction or improvement, just as planning for the disabled is now an intricate part of building design.
- Money allocated will go only to bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- They are becoming more important to DOTs and FHWA. They provide a realistic alternative mode separate from vehicular traffic.
- If these types of projects have to be lumped into road improvement projects, the implementation may be delayed. If these types of projects are funded as standalone and don't have to wait to coincide with the construction of a road project, hopefully the bike/pedestrian lanes will be implemented quicker.

- There are some roads already in existence that could use bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- They are an important part of quality of life projects that will have an impact on keeping/attracting business/industry/middle class people to the CSRA.
- Local control is paramount. Road project money is good, but it takes years just to implement road design standards and the highway money does the rest.
- Pursue road improvement projects. There should be standalone funding to cover those roads and areas not being considered for any improvements. However, for those roads being improved, funding should be included to provide bicycle and pedestrian projects along with road improvement. Therefore, both types of funding are necessary.
- Sidewalks are needed where road projects are not necessarily needed.
- Some facilities can be multiuse.
- The bicycling commute should not compete with pedestrian traffic.
- In older neighborhoods, or as new roads impact our area of west Augusta, I feel we should have the same improvements added such as sidewalks/bike lanes as road are improved or widened.

The following is one comment not in support of funding bicycle and pedestrian facilities as standalone projects.

- Cost of development and plans is prohibitive. It would be more cost-effective to link with other projects.

### **Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Implementation**

Implementation displays included the design and construction process and measures to evaluate the success of the bicycle and pedestrian system.

### **Regional Performance Measures**

Community participants reviewed all performance measures and indicated which performance measures would be most effective in evaluating the regional system (numbers in parentheses indicate the number of votes received):

- Percentage of projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that include funding for bicycle/pedestrian facilities. (15)

- Number of bicycle facilities that provide access across jurisdictional boundaries. (7)
- Percentage of population/employment within 1 mile of a bicycle facility; percentage within .25 mile of a sidewalk. (6)
- Number of bus stops accessible via bicycle facilities and/or sidewalks. (4)
- Amount of federal funding for education and marketing programs highlighting the safety and health benefits of bicycling and walking. (2)
- Percentage of jurisdictions that maintain a bicycle and/or pedestrian program. (1)
- Number of ARTS Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force meetings per year. (1)
- Percentage of federal funding used for bicycle projects/sidewalk projects. (1)

### **Additional Comments**

- No concern for bicycle safety due to high auto speed and traffic volume for Share the Road and on-road facilities.
- I see no concern for safety of bicycle riders.
- Who will maintain facilities and how?
- Encourage biking and walking for general health with attractive, safe facilities.
- Do not pave the canal path.
- Concern about lack of sidewalks in east Augusta. Where small children have to walk to school it is a dangerous area, and where seniors walk. The reason for my concern is that speeding cars coming through this area.
- Couldn't we please get a firmer surface from the parking lot at Savannah Rapids down around caretaker's house? I have fallen off my bike sliding down on the loose rocks and now I just walk down. Invite concrete trucks to donate extra concrete and build even 1- to 2-foot wide strips for bikes. Doesn't matter if you walk (only on downhill section). Flat is safe enough. Also a concrete ramp on this side of crosswalk (across canal) is badly needed for wheelchairs and bikes. Drop off is getting lower every year.
- It is important that our area be serious in implementing walkways, sidewalks, and bicycle trails in order to protect and maintain green space, which residents could enjoy using without cars. This would stimulate exercise not only for children to

and from parks and schools, but also adults to parks, as well as even possibly to work and shopping places.

- NHTSA has spent millions of dollars establishing 1,300 safe communities projects to study available data. As the coordinator of the local safe communities, I will encourage advocacy for downtown facilities (new and renovations) where approximately 80 percent of bike/pedestrian injuries occur. Injuries are by far the greatest cost factor in planning safer traffic patterns. Augusta loses \$50 to \$100 million/year in traffic injury-related costs. Three percent are pedestrians/bicyclists, which we can do something about with proactive planning.
- Since each county must apply for federal funding, I recommend that every county have one to three positions added to planning staff to do this full-time.
- If we start seeing actual trails, paths, and bike lanes, it will be a great improvement.
- Seems to me that the planning is not faithful to the federal mandate for transportation. It appears that the major thrust is to use the planning and funding for recreational riders and users.
- I think any time that work is to be done on roads, striped lanes should be included. Making this a standard in road design instead of an afterthought is important.
- No problem with the projects except that they never get built/funded. We need bike paths in the city/county that would be useful to the citizens for transportation as well as recreation.
- Thanks for all you do. I am really enjoying the bike trail along Evans-to-Locks. Sometimes I ride, sometimes I walk. I worry about debris and pine straw/leaves on trail when riding fast.
- Linking three west Augusta parks for exercise and to help aging neighborhoods is an important goal. This will help west Augusta compete with other developing areas. Also we can be better stewards of our drainage ditches and alert public works when trees fall or ditches need cleaning. West Augusta is alive and well. We are adding new shopping centers and more roads each year. We have public transportation connecting our section of town. It is important now or by 2008 the citizens see our leaders making improvements to our transportation system, our schools, our parks, and developing plans in the event we have abandoned motels, restaurants, etc.
- We need to stress community pride in every section of the CSRA. There is such wonderful potential for Aiken, North Augusta, Richmond County, and Columbia County to work together as a region promoting the entire area. Thank you for helping us begin this process through biking trails.

- Linking schools and businesses to existing greenspace is an important goal.
- By 2004 we will have 25.39 acres of park land in west Augusta. By 2015 all land will be developed in west Augusta.
- Linking of new Brookfield Park to Warren Road, to Eisenhower Park, then to the Augusta Canal would encourage family activities and exercise in west Augusta.
- Time and use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities will help measure the success of the plan.