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## Detailed Results of Public Workshops

### *ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan: A Guide for Community Involvement and Consensus*

The Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) and Aiken County recognize that the success of any community improvement plan is dependent upon a meaningful community involvement effort. ARTS/Aiken County is committed to conducting a pro-active stakeholder and public involvement program for the development of the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan focused on soliciting local government and community interaction throughout the study process. The value of implementing a strong stakeholder and public involvement effort is to ensure that the needs of the community are identified and to develop public awareness of and support for the study.

The ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan team is committed to providing broad based and continuous opportunities for stakeholder and public involvement throughout the plan development process. The process is designed to be responsive to citizen participants and is committed to utilizing the knowledge and understanding of citizens to address important issues. The outreach plan offers multiple opportunities for engagement – at varying levels of involvement. All public input and the responses to the input will be included as an appendix to the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

#### **Public Participation Committee Structure**

The public participation framework includes four primary groups that will guide the development of the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The four groups are: (1) Project Steering Committee; (2) Stakeholder Interviews (3) Targeted Focus Groups; and (4) Community

Organizations and General Public. The roles and membership for each of these groups is outlined below.

#### **(1) Project Steering Committee**

The Project Steering Committee will be comprised of government agencies responsible for developing and implementing the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan plus representatives from interested bicycle and pedestrian community organizations. The committee will review and comment on materials to be presented to the public, help advertise the plan process, and distribute information to the larger community. The committee will meet during the study to establish study goals, identify needs and opportunities, review preliminary improvement alternatives, and select preferred improvement alternatives. A subcommittee for Aiken County will be formed to address Aiken County specific plan elements. The Project Steering Committee will meet up to five times (3 ARTS regional committee meetings and 2 Aiken County subcommittee meetings) during the course of the study. One joint meeting of the Project Steering Committee and the general community will be held at the close of the study process. To conserve costs, the ARTS and Aiken County steering committee meetings will be scheduled to occur on the same day with public outreach events or field investigations, when possible. ARTS staff will be responsible for meeting logistics, meeting notification, and assistance with meeting summaries for the regional committee meetings. The consultant staff will attend, facilitate, and provide meeting materials and presentations. The Project Steering Committee will participate in a walking and bicycling tour to gain first hand knowledge of the study area and to identify potential system improvements. The ARTS/Aiken County staff will select an area to be examined and provide tour arrangements and notification.



Consultant staff will facilitate the tour activities and discussion. Anticipated meeting times are illustrated on the study schedule in Appendix A.

A preliminary membership list for the Project Steering Committee is included in Appendix B.

### **(2) Stakeholder Interviews**

Together with the Steering Committee, the Alta/Greenways Team will identify appropriate interviews with key local agencies and stakeholder groups. Interviews will be conducted regarding local needs, goals, desires, attitudes and concerns for the ARTS/Aiken County area's bicycle/pedestrian network and related facilities and programs. The interviews will be conducted in-person or via telephone. Some stakeholder interviews will be conducted with agencies/organizations represented on the Steering Committee. Up to five stakeholder interviews will be conducted for the regional plan including one in Aiken County. ARTS staff will contact the stakeholders and arrange for the interviews. Two additional interviews will be conducted for the Aiken County plan.

### **(3) Targeted Focus Groups**

To assist ARTS/Aiken County and the Study Team in identifying specific needs throughout the study area, the consultant team will conduct up to four targeted focus group meetings during the needs assessment phase of the study. Three focus groups will be conducted for the regional plan (2 in Georgia and 1 in South Carolina) and one focus group will be specifically targeted towards Aiken County. ARTS Staff will identify potential participants, make logistical arrangements and send notifications for the focus group meetings. The consultant staff will provide focus group meeting materials, facilitate the meetings, and document the meetings. Based on guidance from the Project Steering Committee and the study team regarding the need for additional focused input, the focus group targets may include:

- Transit Users
- Special Needs Citizens such as the elderly and sight and hearing-impaired
- Employment, Education, and Housing Providers

- Recreation and Equestrian Users
- Safe Routes to Schools

Focus Group participants will be recommended by ARTS/Aiken County staff, consultant team staff, and the Project Steering Committee. Focus group membership will be approved by ARTS/Aiken County Staff.

### **(4) Community Organizations and General Public**

The Community Organizations and General Public group will be comprised of representatives from civic organizations with a general interest in the betterment of the ARTS community. Initial groups identified for inclusion are predominantly neighborhood associations and economic development organizations. Other organizations will be added as they are identified during the study process. Individual citizens will be added to the list as they express interest in the study. Additionally, all public involvement activities will be advertised using free media outreach engaged through the release of meaningful press releases and paid display advertisements as needed. Database membership will be maintained by ARTS/Aiken County staff utilizing input from the consultant team.

### **Public Workshops**

The Community Organizations and General Public database will serve as a basis for organizing public workshops during the study period. Two rounds (each round consisting of two locations) of public workshops will be held. Each round will consist of two meetings conducted in two locations in the ARTS area. Two regionally focused meetings will be held in Georgia and one regionally focused meeting plus one Aiken County specific meeting will be held in South Carolina. The first round of public workshops will take place during the needs assessment phase and the second round of public workshops will occur when draft recommendations are available. The public will also be invited to attend the final Project Steering Committee Meeting which will serve as an additional opportunity for the public to participate in the plan development process.

Notification will be issued to the Community Organizations and General Public Database maintained by ARTS Staff. The meetings will



be advertised using both meaningful press releases to generate community interest and display advertisements as needed. Display advertisements will be paid for by ARTS if they are deemed necessary to effectively notify the public of involvement opportunities. One very important method of generating community interest will be reliance on e-mail distribution lists maintained by members of the Project Steering Committee, Targeted Focus Group Participants, and Community Organizations and General Public groups. Prior to each public meeting, a flyer will be developed by the consultant team and distributed electronically by the ARTS/Aiken County staff to the membership of the study committee organizations. Each member will be requested to share the information with their members or associates. A Facebook Group could also be established for distribution of notification materials.

### **Public Event Booths**

The consultant team will host up to two education and information booths at public events during the plan development process (1 event in Georgia and 1 event in Aiken County). The booths will offer educational materials about bicycling and walking in the ARTS/Aiken County area, give citizens an opportunity to speak with the study team members about local issues, and a survey of citizens to gather information about needs and visions for bicycling and walking in the ARTS/Aiken County area. ARTS staff will assist with logistical arrangements for the booth events and staffing of the booth in Georgia.

### **Public Participation & Involvement Plan Tools**

The tools outlined in this section are designed to aid in public and media education regarding the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. They are also designed to encourage involvement in the planning process through participation and by providing feedback. The following tools will be utilized during the course of the study.

#### **Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan (SPIP)**

The Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan (SPIP) will be updated and amended throughout the study process. The SPIP outlines the public involvement approach to be taken during the plan development and includes lists

of all plan development committee members. Collection of public input will occur throughout the duration of the study. The purpose of the SPIP is to define how all stakeholders, public, and study team staff will be involved throughout the planning effort and how the community will be provided opportunities to participate in and comment on the plan development.

### **Study Website**

The consultant team will provide materials to be placed on the ARTS/Aiken County websites during the course of the study. The website materials will include a downloadable study factsheet, an on-line survey, and information about opportunities to participate in the study process. The study website will provide a portal for the Steering Committee, through password protected access, to view documents under review, exchange comments, view scheduled events, and post links. The website will also provide the general public with the opportunity to gain knowledge and share comments. ARTS/Aiken County staff will be responsible for updating and maintaining the websites. Consultant staff will provide regularly updated materials for inclusion on the websites.

The consultant team recommends establishing a website devoted to bicycling and walking in the study area, providing a one-stop location for maps, documents, news stories, event calendars, and links to related websites. This website can serve as the basis for a permanent on-line forum available to citizens after the completion of the plan.

### **On-line Survey**

The consultant will provide information for development of an on-line survey allowing citizens to provide input regarding the area's needs surrounding bicycling and walking in the region. The consultant will also provide survey materials to be included in local electric bills or other region-wide mailings. The team will make the survey available for posting on websites, at public workshops, in press releases, and other public avenues. ARTS/Aiken County staff will assist by including survey materials on the study websites. ARTS staff will assist in data entry for hard copy surveys. The consultant team will provide survey data compilation assistance for Aiken County specific survey results.

## Fact Sheet

A study fact sheet will be developed to provide background information regarding the study. An overview of the study process and study schedule will be included. Contact information for the study team will be included to ensure that stakeholders and the public are able to obtain information about the progress, findings, and recommendations resulting from the study process. The fact sheet will be distributed at all meetings and will be available as community members request information about the study.

## Press Releases

Press releases will be prepared by the consultant team and distributed by the ARTS/Aiken County staff for release during the study period just prior to each round of public involvement. The press releases will cover the study process, status, and key findings. The press release will be issued by ARTS/Aiken County staff to local newspapers, television, and radio media.

## Database Development and Maintenance

Three databases will be developed and maintained by ARTS staff with input from the consultant team during the course of the study. The study team will develop Project Steering Committee, Targeted Focus Groups, and Community Organizations and General Public databases. Throughout the study, the databases will be used to contact people for meeting announcements, to distribute deliverables for review, and to request input into the planning process.

## Media Education and Advertisement

Print, radio, and television media will be used to promote the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Paid advertising as well as press releases and feature articles or coverage may be pursued.

The Augusta Chronicle and Aiken Standard (daily publication) and the Augusta Focus, Metro Spirit, and North Augusta Star (Thursdays only) will be used to promote the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Public meetings related to the study process will be advertised using both display advertisements

and meaningful press releases to generate community interest. Should the ARTS/Aiken County staff feel additional coverage is necessary, display advertisements will be run one time prior to each public meeting. The consultant team will prepare display advertisements to be released by ARTS/Aiken County. The display advertisement will be funded using ARTS Special Study funds and/or Aiken County funds.

Press releases will be sent to the newspapers, television stations, and radio stations at least one week prior to the desired publication date. The study team will prepare the press releases and the ARTS/Aiken County staff will send the press releases to the media as the media is more comfortable receiving information directly from the government entity as opposed to requiring time for verification of the source of the information.

The following media will receive announcements of upcoming meetings:

Adam Folk	adam.folk@augustachronicle.com
Allen Cooke	Acooke@aug.edu
Comcast - Bill Botham	bill_botham@cable.comcast.com
Deborah Moody	rnorris@augustafocus.com
Lynn Hola Augusta	Lynnhola@bellsouth.net
Spirit - Joe White	joe.white@metrospirit.com
Michael @ WAGT	michaelb@wagt.com
Aiken Standard	MGibbons@aikenstandard.com
Michelle Bostic	mbostic@wagt.com
The North Augusta Star	editor@northaugustastar.com
WAFJ	info@wafj.com
WAGT Channel 26	producers@nbc26news.com
WAGT News	producers@wagt.com
WAKB WGAC WAEG	Augustaproduction@radio-one.com
WCHZ WGAC WGOR	MaryLiz@WGAC.com



WFAM News	wfam@wilkinsradio.com
WGAC Radio	news@wgac.com
WJBF Channel 6	mrosen@wjbf.com and Yarnell@wjbf.com
WKZK	wkzk1600@bellsouth.net
WRDW Channel 12	mark.cowan@rdw.com
WSLT	chuckw@wslt.com
WSLT WKXC Steve WKXC	SteveS@kicks99.com

**Comment Forms**

Comment forms will be distributed at each public meeting and will be available for distribution as interested parties inquire about the study. ARTS/Aiken County staff will compile the comments and submit them to the study team for use in guiding the development of the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

**Advisory, Stakeholder, and Public Meetings**

Each of the three groups identified to assist in guiding the development of the study will meet periodically during the study development. Anticipated meeting times are illustrated on the study schedule in Appendix A.

**Evaluation of Public Involvement Efforts**

Evaluation of the effectiveness of public involvement efforts is a key aspect of developing a public involvement plan. Spurred by federal interest, regional planning organizations and other agencies have started evaluating all public involvement efforts in order to determine which public involvement tools are effective for specific situations and under what circumstances they are not effective. Evaluation measures are also important in documenting the level of public involvement achieved. Table 1 outlines the major tasks and key performance measures.

**Table D-1: Public Involvement Plan Performance Measures**

Technique	Performance Measures
Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan	Successful implementation of strategies and techniques
	Participant feedback
	Comprehensiveness of the identification of stakeholders
Project Steering Committee	Number of members that attend meetings
	Usefulness of feedback received
Targeted Focus Groups	Number of participants that attend meetings
	Number of completed surveys received
	Usefulness of feedback received
Public Workshops	Number of attendees
	Number of comments received
	Types of comments received
	Participant Feedback on meeting process
Media Partnerships	Amount of media coverage
	Accurate information was delivered to citizens
	Accessibility of public to the variety of media outlets
On-line survey	Number of surveys completed
	Usefulness of input received
Fact Sheets	Number of fact sheets distributed
	Reader feedback
	Number of avenues used to reach the public
Meeting Notification & Flyers	Number of notifications/flyers distributed
	Timeliness of distribution
	Number of avenues used to reach the public

Based on plan performance, existing communication and outreach techniques will be modified and new techniques will be added to ensure plan success. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach efforts, a debriefing will be held with the study team after each meeting and input will be solicited from appropriate ARTS/Aiken County staff regarding the outreach effort outcomes. A brief summary of each activity will also be developed. An overview of the success of the public involvement program will be presented in the final public involvement report, in addition to supporting documentation.

Evaluation surveys will be provided at each of the public outreach activities to gather input regarding the quality of each activity (an example of the evaluation form is included in Appendix C). These surveys will ask participants to evaluate the Stakeholder and Public Involvement process and will ask for feedback on how to better reach the community. This is an internal tool used to measure the effectiveness of the public involvement activities and will be separate from the comment sheets which will ask for public input on the plan development.

### Study Schedule

PROJECT SCHEDULE												
ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update												
ALTA/GREENWAYS TEAM												
Task	2011					2012						
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Project Management	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Task 1 – Project Initiation	•											
Task 2 – Existing Conditions Inventory and Mapping												
Task 3 – Steering Committee Meetings	▲		▲		▲		▲		▲			
Task 4 – Public Involvement				▲				▲				
Task 5 – User Needs Assessment												
Task 6 – Recommended Bikeway, Walkway, and Trail Network												
Task 7 – Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation												
Task 8 – Plan Implementation												
Task 9 – Draft and Final Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update												▲
• Staff Coordination Meeting (in-person or teleconference)												
▲ Steering Committee/Public Workshop												



### Project Steering Committee

Matt Aitken, Augusta-Richmond County Commissioner
Stacie Adkins, Recreation and Events Manager, Columbia County Recreation Department
Aiken Running Club Representative
Brett Ardrey or German Chavarria, Outspoken Bicycles
Officer Rick Brown, Aiken Public Safety
Glen Bollinger, Columbia County Traffic Engineering
Joe Bowles, Augusta-Richmond County Commission
Brad Barnes, Aiken County Recreation.
Bob Brooks, City of NA, Park and Recreation
David Caver, Deputy Superintendent-Aiken County
Beverly Clyburn, Aiken City Council Member
Corporal C.M. Coats, South Carolina Highway Patrol, Emergency Traffic Management (ESF-16)
Steve Cassell, Richmond County Traffic Engineering
Martin D. (Gator) Cochran, Randonneurs USA (RUSA)
John Cock, Alta Planning
Kedrick Collins, GDOT
Deke Copenhaver, Mayor
Tom Dodds, SCDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Engineer
Paul DeCamp, Augusta Richmond County Planning Commission
Randy DuTeau, Event Manager, Augusta Sports Council
Steve Exley, Road Construction Manager, Columbia County Road Construction Department
Rebecca Gallos, Aiken Mom's Club Representative, or Melissa Devine
Kathy B. Hamrick, Augusta State University
Ron Houk, Planning Manager, Richmond County Recreation, Parks, and Facilities
Gerald Jefferson, Transportation Planner, Aiken County
Drew Jordan, Andy Jordan's Bicycle Warehouse
Susanna King, Aiken Sidewalk Appreciation Society
David Kjellquist, Member Aiken Bicycle Club
Sandra Korbelik, Planner, City of Aiken
Christian Lentz, Special Projects Manager, CSRA Regional Commission
Juriah Lewis, APT
Tom Lex, Aiken Bicycle Club
Mrs. Toni Marshall
Honorable LaWana McKenzie
John T. Manley, South Carolina Department of Public Safety
Amanda McDougal, Healthy Augusta
Helen Minchew, Richmond County Board of Education
Nayna Mistry, Columbia County Planning and Engineering Division Manger, Development Services
Marya Moultrie, Transportation Planner, ARCPC
Jenette Murray, Aiken Vocational Rehab



### Project Steering Committee

Charles Nagle, Columbia County Superintendent of Schools
David Nance, President, Augusta Striders
Glenn Parker, Director, Aiken City Parks, Recreation and Tourism
Richard L. Pearce, City Manager, City of Aiken
Byron Rushing, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, GDOT
Matt Schelachter, Director, Columbia County Board of Commissioners, Construction & Maintenance
Jimmy Smith, GDOT
Stephen Strohming, Director Aiken County P & D
Dennis Stroud, Augusta Public Services, Maintenance
Jennifer Tinsley, LSCOG
Wheel Movement Representative

### Public Outreach Evaluation Form

Let Us Know What You Think!

We don't want to miss an opportunity to hear your opinion! Please take a few minutes to let us know any last thoughts, and how our public involvement efforts are working for you.

#### Public Involvement Process

How would you rate this event overall?

Very Good      Good      Average      Poor      Very Poor

Are the presentations and display boards informative and easy to understand? If not, please explain.

Has project staff been helpful in answering your questions? If not, please explain.

What did you like most about the event?

In what areas do you feel the event could have been improved?

What do you think this project is trying to accomplish? Do you agree?

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

(1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree)

\_\_\_ I learned new information.

\_\_\_ I was given an opportunity to provide input.

How did you find out about today/tonight's meeting?

Please provide any additional comments on any aspect of the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your contact information if you would like to be added to the study mailing list.

Name:			
Address:	Street:		
	City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:		Email:	



## ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

### Focus Group: Aiken County

Conducted at City of Aiken Municipal Building

October 3, 2011

#### **Focus Group Participants:**

- **Liz Lewis;** [liz4jesus@gmail.com](mailto:liz4jesus@gmail.com); (803) 642-9940 (Visually impaired, local chapter of National Federation of the Blind)
- **Renee Staggs;** [rstaggs@aikenydc.org](mailto:rstaggs@aikenydc.org); (803) 642-8832 (Tri Development Learning Center (involved in Eat Smart Move More) and many patrons of the center have disabilities that prevent them from driving)
- **John McMurtrie;** [jmcmurtrie@scvrd.state.sc.us](mailto:jmcmurtrie@scvrd.state.sc.us); (803) 641-7730 (Aiken Vocational Rehabilitation Center, and many patrons do not drive and rely on alternate transportation – where they live is where they have to work)
- **Glenn Parker;** [gparker@cityofaiken.sc.gov](mailto:gparker@cityofaiken.sc.gov); (803) 642-7632 (City of Aiken Parks, Recreation & Tourism, which includes senior commission)
- **LaWana McKenzie;** [lmckenz7@gmail.com](mailto:lmckenz7@gmail.com); (803) 593-5532 (Aiken County Council)
- **Will Williams;** [wwilliams@edpsc.org](mailto:wwilliams@edpsc.org); (803) 641-3300 (Director of Economic Development Partnership for Aiken County – supports existing industry and also tries to bring in new business (also personally a cyclist and triathlete))
- **Scott Sterling;** [ssterling@northaugusta.net](mailto:ssterling@northaugusta.net); (803) 441-4225 (City of North Augusta Planning Department)

#### **Staff Attending:**

- **Gerald Jefferson,** Aiken County
- **Stephen Strohming,** Aiken County
- **Sandra Korbelik,** City of Aiken
- **Mary Huffstetler,** MPH and Associates, Inc.
- **Jean Crowther,** Alta Planning + Design

#### **Let's talk about what we have in the region that is already good.**

- The changes in downtown Aiken have really improved wheelchair access
- The new signalized systems with a pedestrian countdown for crossing
- Increased amount of two foot shoulders along roads in the area is beneficial
- City of Aiken adopted a strategic plan that includes biking and walking language which has a long-term effect on mindset of local leadership
- Senior commission that has newly formed is helpful
- Greater awareness of health impacts for residents in the area

#### **Who would be the best partners for programs and initiatives?**

- Aiken ESMM was chartered 2 months ago – Aiken County is one of the fattest counties in one of the fattest states
- SCDHEC helped to initiate the effort
- Aiken Bicycle Club is very active in these types of efforts.

#### **Where are the ideal places to bike and walk, right now?**

- Hitchcock Woods – though it needs a bike trail surrounding it
- North Augusta Greenway
- Citizens' Park and Odell Weeks Park



- Harrison Caver Park has facilities that are well-used, though not necessarily ideal

### **What are the barriers to people biking and walking?**

- The Rudy Mason Parkway (SR 118) is not maintained which prevents people from wanting to use it.
- Also, if something were to happen along the Rudy Mason Parkway there is no way for others to see/respond.
- Banks Mill is a physical barrier to get to Citizens' Park which would connect to the grocery store (from Hopeland)
- Inconsistencies to where there is a sidewalk and where there isn't – sidewalk gaps
- Bike trails end also
- Being connected to what is already available would be an improvement

### **What are the key destinations that should be connected?**

- McKenzie would like a trail to follow Horse Creek from Aiken to Augusta
- Most populated area is Graniteville (whole Valley area) but not very well connected
- As a cyclist, SR 421 is where I feel most comfortable.
- Millbrook, Kennedy, South Aiken Schools (and other schools), North Aiken has a Safe Routes to School grant.
- Aiken Tech has no walkable neighborhoods around it – sidewalks extended to USC Aiken (but on wrong side of street)
- Certain schools are not allowed to walk or ride bikes to school – talk to bus transportation office
- Aiken Elementary on Pine Log Road serves a huge neighborhood and no safe access

- School siting is an issue
- Create a staging area to schools and industrial parks where people can get to that point, and then walk or bike from there
- Citizens Park is a transit stop for Best Friend Express – access to the fixed route bus stops is difficult
- Where each bus route starts, there are no sidewalks
- Stop at Odell Weeks Activity Center is not safe
- Need bus shelters – all that is present now is a sign on a telephone pole
- Best Friends Express has bicycle racks on all buses, APT does also
- North Augusta now requires bicycle parking in all new development – this has been in effect since 2008 for all commercial development
- Bicycle racks need to be installed at public buildings

### **What programs would be most helpful?**

- There is no way to identify bicyclists or pedestrians that are breaking the law (but a drivers license plate number is available for cars).
- Safety is a major concern
- Need to promote the economic development aspect of biking and walking
- There is a real concern in Aiken that the municipalities will go into neighborhoods and take pieces of their property and build a trail – protecting private property is an issue.
- Provide examples of neighborhoods that improved through new biking/walking infrastructure and the benefits that they gained from that.
- Use the North Augusta Greenway as an example – the biggest complaint now is that it isn't being built fast enough and that it is crowded.



- Educational workshop with elected officials discussing the benefits of biking and walking
- Start with the low-hanging fruit so that you do not set yourself up for failure
- Share the road signs.... Needs to be more clear exactly what share the road means.
- Whiskey Road South... open ditches, no sidewalks – have some money to add that, but public works department does not want to include buffer
- Belvedere Clearwater Road (back to I-520 is in LRTP)
- Clearwater needs better pedestrian crossing

### **What is the low-hanging fruit? What projects are those?**

- Within the cities
- Safe crossing across Whiskey Road
- Wayfinding signage
- Educating citizens about the places where it is safe to walk (with safe parking)
- Expand North Augusta Greenway paths out into the county... beyond the North Augusta city boundaries... need intergovernmental coordination to connect those dots
- Whiskey Road is dangerous for bicycling
- Target groups – people using alternative transportation and leisure bicyclists
- Graniteville Recreation Center – children crossing US 1 (near Greenville-Aiken Road) – possibly need a mid-block crossing there
- Cherokee Drive and US 1 – trying to get to retail businesses (motels, fast food restaurants, etc)
- UPS call center on Clifford – sidewalk from Whiskey to the corporate center
- Aiken Tech – shopping center is planned across the street (long-term, in future), but how would students access that center – how would they cross the street
- USC Aiken is going to build multi-million-dollar elevated bridge across University Parkway from Convocation Center to the campus
- Gregg Park across Trolley Line Road

### **Where are the challenging intersections or corridors?**

- Dixie Clay Road is very challenging, but beautiful/scenic. Trucks use the corridor and are driving too fast. (Major concern of McKenzie) Road is part of state bike route
- Five Notch Road
- SR 118 Bypass
- Pine Log Road
- Intersection of Hampton Ave NW and York Street in City of Aiken – 90% of pedestrians do not cross at either of the crosswalks.
- Shiloh Heights Area – come to town along SR 19



### **What are the preferred facility types?**

- Educational and philosophical difference in addressing bicyclists on the road
- Cyclists want to have the same right of way as vehicles but a separated area which creates a design issue
- The cycling clubs want to ride in the road
- Aiken wants to look at routes – however the facility falls out during design
- Need to not forget the “necessity” bicyclists and walkers

### **What are the maintenance needs?**

- Whiskey Road sidewalk is narrow
- Cobblestones downtown are not very wheelchair friendly
- Mailboxes hang over sidewalks on Pine Log Road

### **Final Thoughts – Important Focus Points of the Plan**

- Philosophically we want to move in this direction but how do we get to implementation on the private side – need to incorporate into regulations
- Safety is the selling point
- Newspaper is the best way to get the word out
- Capitalize on the areas that are already easy and nice to bike
- Courtesy among drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians have equal value; maybe hold a summit between each of these groups in the communities that would focus on increasing awareness/respect for each other
- Bike paths
- All planning for new facilities should address walking and biking
- Encourage people to use alternative transportation

- Combined City and County funding source for the long-term plan
- Connection between cities of North Augusta and Aiken
- Connectivity to the great “pockets” available in the region
- Route between Aiken up to Edgefield – Northwest connectivity (create a triangle)
- Implement it! Don't put it on a shelf!
- North Augusta Greenway to Augusta Canal – connecting those is a positive regional resource.
- Be mindful of the fact that in the more economically, depressed neighborhoods, the only way for some people to get from Point A to point B is to walk or bike. Therefore, using bikes for recreational purposes may not be a higher priority with most people in those neighborhoods.



*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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:
  - o Media campaign to educate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians (if required for drivers license) (2 responses)
  - o Senior citizens walking programs
  - o Safety campaign encouraging pedestrians to wear bright clothing
  - o Local police enforcement programs targeting motorists
  - o Media campaign encouraging active lifestyle
  - o Safe Route to Schools (2 responses)
  - o Safe Routes to Transit
  - o Walking School Bus program

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