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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In January 2009, the Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS), Spartanburg County and the City of Spartanburg began developing a countywide comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan. The planning effort was funded by the Mary Black Foundation, SPATS, Spartanburg County, and the City of Spartanburg. This Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, hereafter called the Plan, represents a continuation of the bicycle and pedestrian planning, programming, and development efforts that have occurred over the past five years. SPATS, Spartanburg County and the City of Spartanburg have addressed some bicycle and pedestrian issues in the 2004 Enhancement Master Plan and the Active Living Assessment (2005). The Mary Black Foundation, Partners for Active Living and others have advanced numerous programs like Bike Town, leading to a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community designation for the City of Spartanburg. In 2006-2007, both the City and County of Spartanburg passed Complete Streets resolutions, but these policies have not been fully implemented. This Plan seeks to build upon what has already been accomplished and create action towards implementation, project, program, and policy development. The plan addresses the entire county, including incorporated areas and non-incorporated areas.



The City of Spartanburg earned a bronze-level 'Bicycle Friendly Community' designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

Nationally, such issues as rising gas prices, environmental concerns, and a growing interest in health and wellness are demonstrating the need for bicycle and pedestrian-friendly communities. On a local level, this Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan aims to take on such issues, translating them into affordable personal mobility, carbon-free transportation, and healthy, active lifestyles for Spartanburg County residents.

The development of this Plan included an open, participatory process, with over 1,000 residents of Spartanburg County providing input through public workshops, focus group meetings, municipality meetings, the project Steering Committee, and an online comment form.



Left and below: Spartanburg County residents participate in the planning process by completing comment forms and marking up maps designed for public input.



One of the goals of this process was to be action-oriented, beginning implementation during the development of this Plan. Therefore, the planning process served as a starting point for implementation that will occur in the future. Specific implementation goals of the Committee for this planning process and plan include:

- Successfully involve the public with recommendations and policies that are publicly-driven.
- Provide ready-to-go, action-oriented tasks and project packages.
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities during this process as part of planned roadway reconstruction and/or resurfacing projects.
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian design and development education to engineering, planning, and public works staff.
- Receive institutional support, staffing, and resources for plan implementation and maintenance.
- Bridge communication gaps between departments and within departments involving bicycle and pedestrian facility implementation.
- Shift the perspective of planners and engineers from serving cars to serving all forms of transportation.

VISION STATEMENT

Vision statements and project goals were collected through public workshops, project steering committee meetings, municipality interviews, input from County and City staff, and an online survey of local residents. These were combined, condensed, and crafted into the vision statement for this Plan. The statement (presented below) expresses the desired outcome of the plan, rather than the current conditions.

SPARTANBURG COUNTY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT

More people will **choose to walk or bicycle** to their destination instead of driving.

Bicycle and pedestrian **connectivity** (through sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, etc.) **will be improved** by removing gaps in the current system and connecting neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, schools, employment centers, bus stops, greenways and regional destinations throughout the Spartanburg area.

Bicycle and pedestrian routes will connect and be more comprehensive, thereby **reducing overall motor vehicle traffic congestion and improving air quality**.

Spartanburg area citizens will **connect with the outdoors and live healthier, more active lifestyles**.

A more walkable and bikable Spartanburg area will help **connect people and build community**.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will not simply be built, but built properly with **safety as a priority** in all cases, providing adequate and safe separation of space for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Further bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will **support users of all types including recreational, utilitarian, and commuter users**.

The Spartanburg area will achieve **greater economic vitality** through walkable and bikable spaces.

Bicycle and pedestrian policy will be integrated into City and County codes, and a bicycle and pedestrian culture will be integrated into Spartanburg area life.

Education programs will **increase safety and build courtesy between drivers and cyclists**.

MEASUREABLE GOALS

The purpose of this Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is to make this vision a reality. Measurable goals, derived from this vision, are listed below. While SPATS, Spartanburg County, and the City of Spartanburg must lead this effort, overall success will also require continued, active participation and encouragement from local residents and community organizations. The ultimate goal is for this Plan to be fully implemented within a 20-year time frame.

SPATS should conduct an annual meeting for the evaluation of progress on each of the following goals, including an official plan update in 2012. During each evaluation, SPATS staff and members of a citizens advisory board should identify steps to be taken before the next evaluation.

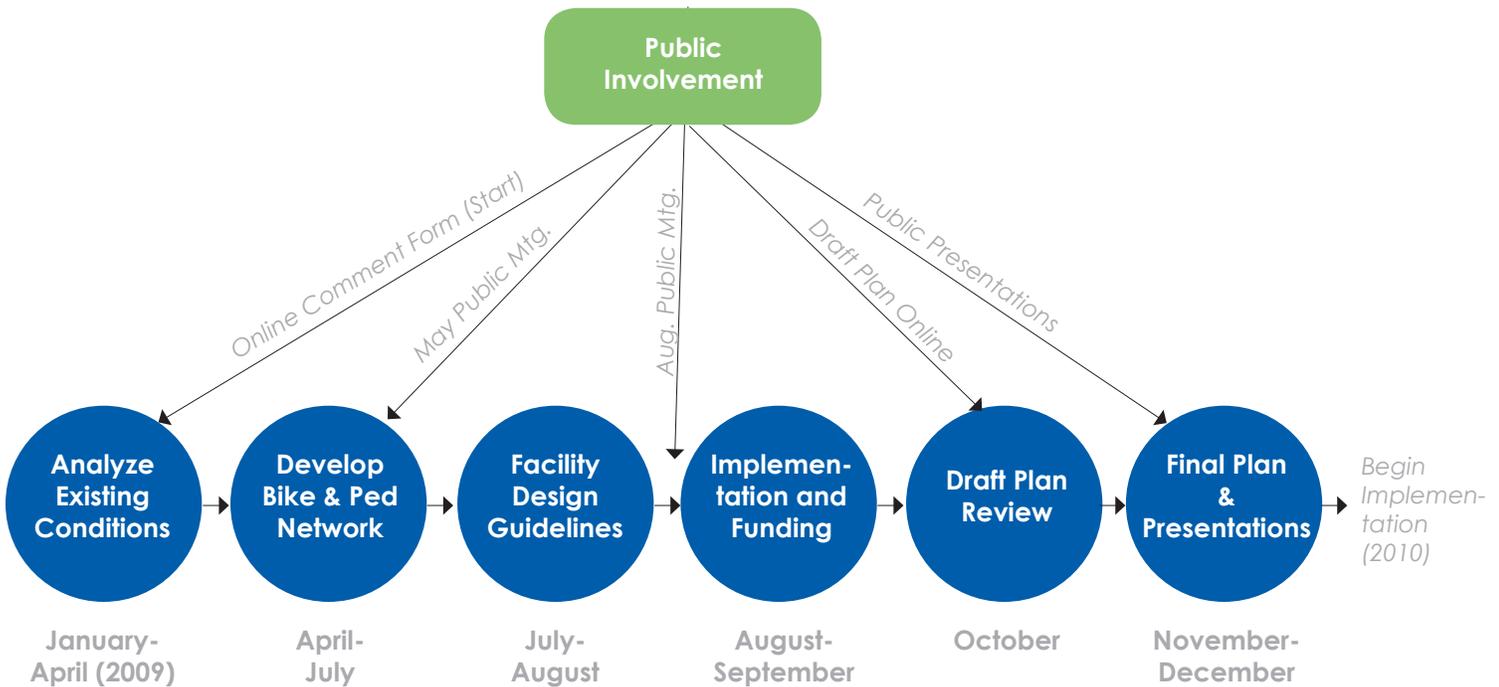
1. Triple both the 2000 Census bicycle and pedestrian commute rates by 2015.
2. Complete five of the top priority bicycle and pedestrian projects by 2011 and complete the next ten priority bicycle and pedestrian projects by 2015.
3. Increase 'Bicycle-Friendly Community' designation by the League of American Bicyclists from bronze by 2011.
4. Launch/participate in three new programs in three years (see Chapters 7 and 8 for details):
 - A) Bicycle Education and Encouragement Program
 - Create a countywide citizens Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission to meet on a regular basis and support implementation of this plan.
 - Produce online and hardcopy bicycle and walking maps and obtain a variety of educational materials for distribution that cover bicycle and pedestrian safety, etiquette, and rules and regulations.
 - B) Bicyclist and Motorist Enforcement Program
 - Establish an easy-to-use and well publicized bicycle and pedestrian enforcement hot line.
 - Training for law enforcement and law enforcement programs that focus on bicycling and pedestrian-related issues

C) Bicycle Facility Development Program

- Establish regular Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding for roadway retrofits and restriping.
- Integrate bicycle-related improvements with scheduled roadway maintenance and restriping projects.
- Initiate programs aimed at developing regional and countywide connections.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process began in January 2009 and concluded at the end of 2009. This figure illustrates the main steps taken throughout the planning process. Public participation (through workshops, steering committee meetings, and the online survey) played a key role in plan development.



THE VALUE OF BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

Given the extensive commitment of time and resources needed to fulfill the goals of this plan, it is also important to assess the immense value of bicycle and pedestrian transportation. As stated in comments from 1,059 Spartanburg County residents and from the goals of this Plan, bicycling and walking will help to improve people's health and fitness, enhance environmental conditions, decrease traffic congestion, and contribute to a greater sense of community.

Scores of studies from experts in the fields of public health, urban planning, urban ecology, real estate, transportation, sociology, and economics have supported such claims and affirm the substantial value of supporting bicycling as it relates to active living and alternative transportation. Communities across the United States and throughout the world are implementing strategies for serving the bicycle needs of their residents, and have been doing so for many years. They do this because of their obligations to promote health, safety, and welfare, and also because of the growing awareness of the many benefits of bicycling.

INCREASED HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A growing number of studies show that the design of our communities—including neighborhoods, towns, transportation systems, parks, trails and other public recreational facilities—affects people's abilities to reach the recommended daily 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity (60 minutes for youth). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "physical inactivity causes numerous physical and mental health problems, is responsible for an estimated 200,000 deaths per year, and contributes to the obesity epidemic." ¹ The increased rate of disease associated



Bicycle and pedestrian facilities like Spartanburg's Rail-Trail provides a great option for residents to be physically active.

with inactivity reduces quality of life for individuals and increases medical costs for families, companies, and local governments.

The CDC determined that creating and improving places to be active could result in a 25 percent increase in the number of people who exercise at least three times a week.² This is significant considering that for people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity can bring measurable health benefits. Establishing a safer, more reliable bicycle and pedestrian network in Spartanburg County will positively impact the health of local residents. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy puts it simply: “Individuals must choose to exercise, but communities can make that choice easier.”³

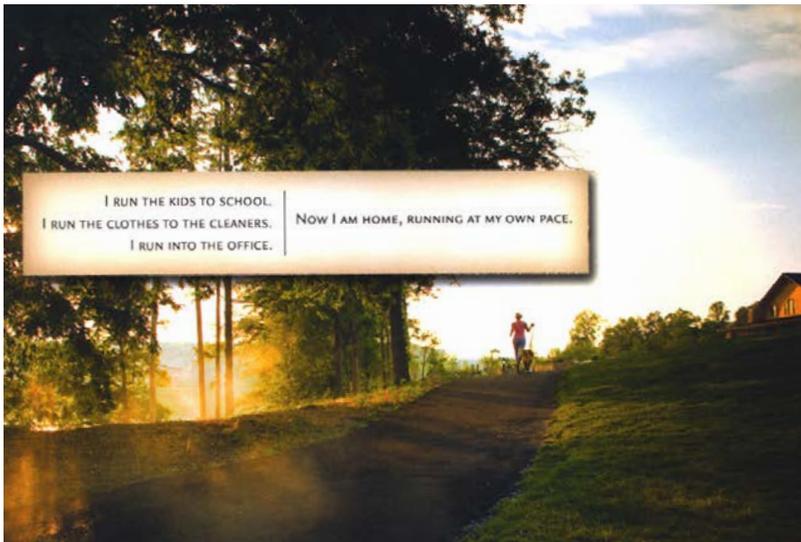
ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Bicycling and walking are affordable means of transportation. According to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC), of Chapel Hill, NC, the cost of operating a bicycle for a year is approximately \$120, compared to \$7,800 for operating a car over the same time period.⁴ Bicycling and walking become even more attractive from an economic standpoint when the price of oil rises, as it recently did in the summer of 2008. Furthermore, gasoline prices are generally forecast to continue to increase.⁵ The rising cost of fuel reinforces the idea that local communities should be built to accommodate people-powered transportation, such as walking and biking.



A residential development in North Carolina advertises the “Last Greenway Sites Available”

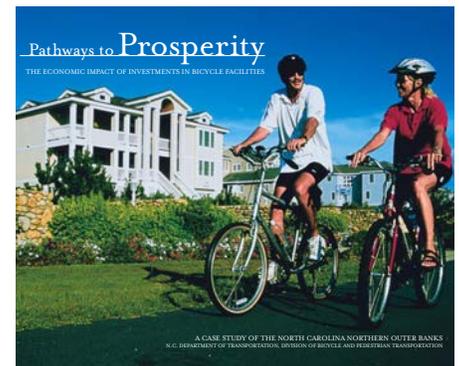
From a real estate standpoint, consider the positive impact of trails and greenways, which are essential components of a complete bicycle and pedestrian network. According to a 2002 survey of recent homebuyers by the National Association of Home Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders, trails ranked as the second most important community amenity out of a list of 18 choices.⁶ Additionally, the study found that ‘trail availability’ outranked 16 other options including security, ball fields, golf courses, parks, and access to shopping or business centers. Findings from the American Planning Association (How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development, 2002), the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways, 2005), and the Trust for Public Land (Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space, 1999) further substantiate the positive connection between trails and property values across the country.



The real estate industry understands the value of trails, biking, and walking; left and below are examples of two magazine advertisements from developers that focus their marketing on bicycling and walking amenities.



Finally, from a tourism perspective, cyclists and pedestrians can add real value to local economies. For example, in the Outer Banks, NC, bicycling is estimated to have an annual economic impact of \$60 million; 1,407 jobs are supported by the 40,800 visitors for whom bicycling was an important reason for choosing to vacation in the area. The annual return on bicycle facility development in the Outer Banks is approximately nine times higher than the initial investment.⁷ Similarly, Damascus, VA, the self-proclaimed 'Friendliest Trail Town', features 34-miles of trail where approximately \$2.5 million is spent annually related to recreation visits. Of this amount, non-local visitors spend about \$1.2 million directly into the economies of Washington and Grayson counties.⁸ While these examples feature beach and mountain destinations, Spartanburg County also has key advantages, such as the Palmetto Trail and a large population of hikers and bicyclists.



Download the full report, "Pathways to Prosperity", from: http://ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/safety_economicimpact.html

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

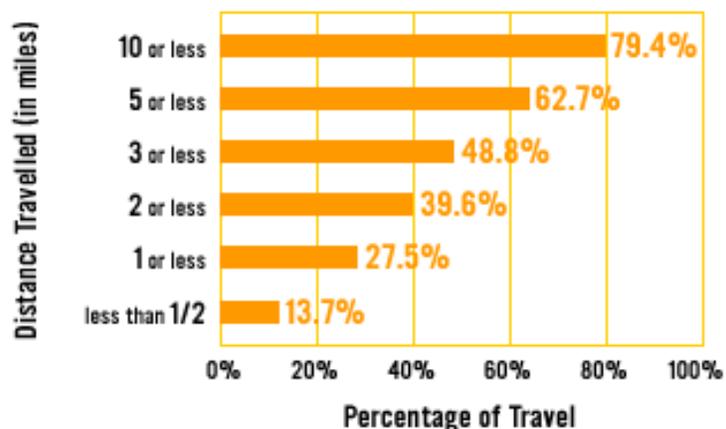
As demonstrated by the Southern Resource Center of the Federal Highway Administration, when people get out of their cars and onto their bicycles or on their feet, they reduce measurable volumes of pollutants.⁹ Other environmental impacts include a reduction in overall neighborhood noise levels and improvements in local water quality as fewer automobile-related discharges wind up in the local rivers, streams, and lakes.

Trails and greenways are also part of any bicycle and pedestrian network, conveying unique environmental benefits. Greenways protect and link fragmented habitat and provide opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. Aside from connecting places without the use of air-polluting automobiles, trails and greenways also reduce air pollution by protecting large areas of plants that create oxygen and filter air pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and airborne particles of heavy metal. Finally, greenways improve water quality by creating a natural buffer zone that protects streams, rivers and lakes, preventing soil erosion and filtering pollution caused by agricultural and paved-surface runoff.

TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

In 2001, the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) found that roughly 40% of all trips taken by car are less than 2 miles. By taking these short trips on a bicycle or by foot, rather than in a car, citizens can substantially impact local traffic and congestion. Additionally, many people do not have access to a vehicle or are not able to drive. According to the NHTS, one in 12 U.S. households does not own an automobile and approximately 12 percent of persons 15 or older do not drive.¹⁰ An improved bicycle network provides greater and safer mobility for these residents.

Daily Trip Distances



Right: 'Daily Trip Distances' chart from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Information Center website, www.pedbikeinfo.org

Traffic congestion is often a major problem in fast-growing areas such as the Upstate. Congestion reduces mobility, increases auto-operating costs, adds to air pollution, and causes stress. Bicycle and pedestrian users can help alleviate overall congestion because each cyclist and pedestrian is one less car on the road. Incidentally, cyclists and pedestrians take up significantly less space on the road. While some may argue over the degree to which overall congestion is alleviated by cyclists and pedestrians, one aspect of the argument is particularly difficult to challenge: for the individuals who choose to ride a bike or walk rather than drive, the negative impacts of congestion (stress, operating costs, and sometimes even mobility) are greatly reduced.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Many factors go into determining quality of life for the citizens of a community: the local education system, prevalence of quality employment opportunities, and affordability of housing are all items that are commonly cited. Increasingly though, citizens claim that access to alternative means of transportation and access to quality recreational opportunities such as parks, trails, greenways, and bicycle routes are important factors for them in determining their overall pleasure within their community. Communities with such amenities can attract new businesses, industries, and in turn, new residents. Furthermore, quality of life is positively impacted by bicycling and walking through the increased social connections that take place by residents being active, talking to one another, and spending more time outdoors and in their communities.

According to the Brookings Institution, the number of older Americans is expected to double over the next 25 years.¹¹ All but the most fortunate seniors will confront an array of constraints on their mobility, even as they continue to seek an active community life and the ability to age in place. Trails built as part of the bicycle and pedestrian transportation network generally do not allow for motor vehicles. However, they do accommodate motorized wheelchairs, which is an important asset for the growing number of senior citizens who deserve access to independent mobility.

Children under 16 are another important subset of our society who deserve access to safe mobility and a higher quality of life. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, fewer children walk or bike to school than did so a generation ago. In 1969, 48 percent of students walked or biked to school, but by 2001, less than 16 percent of students between 5 and 15 walked or biked to or from school.¹²



Above: By walking or biking for our trips that are less than two miles, we could eliminate 40% of local car trips.

According to the National Center for Safe Routes to School, “Walking or biking to school gives children time for physical activity and a sense of responsibility and independence, allows them to enjoy being outside, and provides them with time to socialize with their parents and friends and to get to know their neighborhoods.”¹³ In a 2004 CDC survey, 1,588 adults answered questions about barriers to walking to school for their youngest child aged 5 to 18 years.¹⁴ The main reasons cited by parents included distance to school, at 62%, and traffic-related danger, at 30%. Strategic additions to Spartanburg County’s bicycle and pedestrian system could shorten the distance from homes to schools, and overall bicycle improvements can improve the safety of our roadways.

PLAN COMPONENTS

This Plan document includes the following major components:

- This Introduction presents the background, visions and goals, planning process, and the benefits of a bikable and walkable County (Chapter 1).
- An assessment of Existing Conditions that overviews existing pedestrian and bicycle conditions, land use, trip attractors, and also summarizes existing related plans of Spartanburg County (Chapter 2).
- A Demand and Needs Analysis that examines mode-share, models bicycle and pedestrian activity, and presents key findings from the public input process (Chapter 3).
- A recommended Bicycle Network and maps that put forward a framework of connected, recommended facilities (bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, multi-use trails, wide outside lanes, and sharrows) (Chapter 4).
- A recommended Pedestrian Network that puts forward a framework of connected, recommended facilities (pedestrian corridors, intersection improvement projects, and multi-use trails) (Chapter 5).
- Recommended project pages, photos, and bike/pedestrian network maps for Spartanburg County municipalities (Chapter 6)
- Recommended policy updates and additions to ensure future development accommodates bicyclists and pedestrians (Chapter 7).

- Program Recommendations for education, encouragement, and enforcement (Chapter 8).
- Implementation recommendations that outline specific steps for achieving the plan's key elements including phasing and prioritization of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network (Chapter 9).
- Design Guidelines to guide Spartanburg County and its municipalities in current facility design and standards (Chapter 10).
- Appendices that provide a summary of public input, the prioritization matrix, recommended project cutsheets with cost estimates for the metro Spartanburg area, the bicycle network segment table, funding recommendations, and municipality meeting summaries.

Footnotes from, "The Value of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation":

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3. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. (2006) *Health and Wellness Benefits*.
4. Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. (2008). *Economic Benefits: Money Facts*. Retrieved 8/8/2008 from www.bicyclinginfo.org/why/benefits_economic.cfm
5. King, Neil. *The Wall Street Journal: Another Peek at the Plateau*. (2/27/08): In February 2008, the *Wall Street Journal* quoted industry experts, stating, "supply constraints could push the price of oil to \$150 a barrel by 2010".
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14. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The Importance of Regular Physical Activity for Children*. Accessed 9/16/05 at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/health_benefits.htm.