

## Transportation Enhancement Program



### Background

The years 1994 and 1995 were pivotal for innovative transportation planning in the Spartanburg urban area. As part of ISTEA (the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991), federal transportation enhancement funding became available to local communities. This allowed local officials to focus on enhancing the transportation experience – by adding beautification, historic preservation, and alternative transportation paths to the traditional, highway driven transportation system.

**From 1995 to 2007, citizen leadership and interagency partnerships have resulted in \$4,410,500 allocated to 22 different organizations for enhancement projects. (See Allocations By Organization in Appendix C)**

In the 1990's, enhancement projects generally concentrated on beautification and historic preservation. In early 2000, a shift in focus occurred, as more organizations with wider interests began to apply for funding. More specifically, 26 beautification projects and 9 beautification corridors have been improved, and 18 miles of trails and bike paths have been installed including:

- Town of Cowpens Downtown Pedestrian Improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramp improvements)
- Duncan Park Trail Extension
- Mary Black Foundation Rail-Trail, a section of the statewide Palmetto Trail
- Wadsworth Trail (Willis Road Pedestrian Path)
- Town of Pacolet Nature Trail
- Town of Reidville Main Street Sidewalks and Bike Lanes
- SC 295 Shared-Use Path



*Downtown Cowpens*



*Pacolet Nature Trail Dedication*



In addition, the program has participated in the restoration of the Historic Spartanburg Train Depot and the Historic Cowpens Train Depot, and continues to support the preservation of these historic, transportation-oriented buildings.

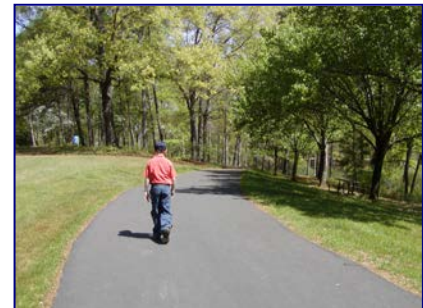


*Historic Cowpens Train Depot*

See Project History 1995-2007 in **Appendix C**. Detailed project information for 2004-2007 is also in **Appendix C**.

The presence of SPATS, as the central coordinator for the enhancement program, has led to successful partnerships in funding and in the implementation of a wide variety of projects. In 2001, this commitment to the program was evident when the SPATS MPO created an Intermodal Transportation Planner position, the first of its kind in South Carolina. This position was charged with coordinating non-traditional modes of transportation within the SPATS planning process and the administration of the Transportation Enhancement Program. The program includes:

- Coordinating partnerships with applicants and local government
- Managing the application process
- Providing guidance to applicants in preparing applications for submission to SCDOT
- Providing staff assistance to the Enhancement Committee (scheduling and preparing agendas, minutes, and information packets)
- Working closely with SCDOT to expedite the enhancement planning process
- Coordinating staff review of applications
- Communicating with other Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Council of Governments, SCDOT and Federal Highway Administration to share challenges and successes



*Duncan Park Path*

### **Enhancement Committee**

In Spartanburg, the SPATS Transportation Enhancement Committee was formed in 1995 to examine and then recommend new enhancement projects for funding. Initially, the SPATS Enhancement Committee included representatives of organizations interested in roadside beautification. The committee has evolved over time to include groups involved in alternate transportation, historic preservation, land preservation, business, education, running, and cycling.

In November 2002, the SPATS Enhancement Committee expanded its interests with the addition of two members of the Spartanburg County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory, and one member each from Partners for Active Living and Palmetto Conservation Foundation (the Palmetto Trail organization).

The variety of interests represented on the Enhancement Committee is of significant benefit to the overall process, which continues to expand its mission and its focus.

*The mission of the SPATS Enhancement Committee is:  
To provide the citizens of Spartanburg County with non-traditional transportation activities that will preserve and beautify the county transportation network, adding to the general quality of life.*

The Committee's charge is to choose project applications which:

- Are large in scale,
- Provide a maximum POSITIVE impact on the community
- Are driven by the community
- Add another function to the transportation network, and
- Connect destinations.

The members of the Committee review potential projects based upon the projected value of the transportation enhancement to the community, the merging of traditional and innovative transportation functions, and the overall beautification effect on the SPATS transportation system.

(For general federal guidelines, see SPATS Transportation Enhancement Program section in the Overview and Introduction)

*US 221 Treescape Before*



*US 221 Treescape After*

*Town of Cowpens Streetscape Before*



*Town of Cowpens Streetscape After*



2008 SPATS Enhancement Committee Current membership is as follows:

2 members from the community (**Bill Lonon, Monty Mullen-Vice Chair**)

1 member from a college or university (**Rick Puncke - USC Upstate**)

2 members from the SPATS Policy Committee  
(**Honorable Sallie Peake - Mayor of Wellford**)  
(**Honorable Mike Hamrick - Mayor of Cowpens**)

2 members from Spot of PRIDE Program  
(**One vote from Pride Task Force co-chairs – Susan Sease or Stewart Winslow, One vote from Spot of Pride Program – Wanda Miller**)

1 member from the local land trust (SPACE) (**OPEN**)

1 member from the Historic Society (**Jennifer Furrow**)

1 member from the Men's Garden Club (**Ed Wilde**)

1 member from the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce (**Lee Blair**)

1 member from the Running Club (**Rita Zollinger**)

1 member from the Freewheelers (**Marly Divver**)

1 member from Partners for Active Living (**Laura Ringo**)

1 member from Palmetto Conservation Foundation (**George Fields**)

1 member from County Administration (**Chris Story**)

2 members from the County Planning Department  
(**Jim D'Amato, Lisa Bollinger**)

2 members from the County Parks and Recreation Department  
(**Jeff Caton-Chair, Stan Tillotson**)

2 members from the City of Spartanburg  
(**Stephanie Monroe, Tim Carter**)



*Enhancement Committee at Work*

## Enhancement Planning Process

The Enhancement Application Process is now based on a quarterly timeline:

- **First Quarter - identification and refinement of projects eligible for enhancement funding:** The SPATS office sends past and potential applicants a request for applications and schedules a Pre-Application Meeting for potential applicants to present their Statement of Intent for an enhancement project. During this pre-application meeting, Enhancement Committee members assist the applicant with creative design elements and ideas to coordinate matching funds and in-kind work, and suggest any partnerships that might expedite project success. Applicants adjust their proposed project applications before SPATS submission.
- **Second Quarter - Committee review of projects:** After the SPATS office coordinates the scheduling of applicant presentations, the Enhancement Committee hears applicant presentations, provides feedback, then makes a recommendation for approval of the project to the SPATS Policy Committee.
- **Third Quarter - SPATS Policy Committee Approval and SCDOT Review and Approval**
- **Fourth Quarter – Status reports and review:** The overall Enhancement Master Plan is reviewed, Committee identifies potential projects, and status of ongoing projects is reported.



(See Timeline in **Appendix C**. For more details, see the Enhancement Process Flowchart also in **Appendix C**.)

The SPATS Enhancement Committee currently evaluates project applications based on the merits of the plan towards:

- Transportation Benefit – Does the project add another transportation function to the transportation corridor (i.e., walking or biking)?
- Beautification Benefit – Does the project provide a memorable aesthetic impact?
- Maintenance Plan – Does the applicant have a secure commitment to maintaining the improvements after the project is complete? (Maintenance is not an eligible activity under the Federal Enhancement Funding.)
- Scope of Project – Does the project provide a large-scale improvement along a major corridor or include more than one eligible activity?
- Public Input – Does the project have the support of the community and is it consistent with local plans?



SC 295 Shared-Use Path



- Financial Commitment – Is there a secure funding commitment from the applicant and partners and does the applicant combine resources?

(See Evaluation Sheets in **Appendix C**)

Enhancement projects recommended for approval by the SPATS Enhancement Committee are presented to the SPATS Policy Committee for final local approval and implementation.

### **2004 Enhancement Master Plan for Alternate Mobility and Beautification**

In 2004, the SPATS MPO commissioned the SPATS ENHANCEMENT MASTER PLAN. This plan received the South Carolina American Planning Association (SCAPA) Outstanding Planning Project Award in the Multi-Jurisdictional Category.



*Wadsworth Trail (Willis Road)*

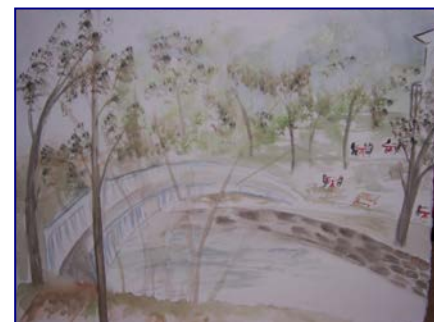
As part of the planning process for this study, SPATS MPO staff hosted several community visioning workshops to receive direction for the creation of a 10-year plan to guide use of federal enhancement funding. An important element of the process was to coordinate the efforts of agencies in the Spartanburg area involved in alternative mobility and in beautification.

The 10-Year vision included community priorities for conceptual future enhancements (greenways, trails and beautification) and creatively linked destinations (colleges, schools, parks, shopping, services, and other community facilities and amenities). The Plan also provided a necessary framework for the implementation of newly funded facilities. (See **Appendix C** for Alternate Mobility and Beautification Master Plans)

### **Alternate Mobility Master Plan**

A wide variety of organizations are working with the SPATS Enhancement Committee to implement the greenway portion of the Plan:

- The Palmetto Conservation Foundation (organization concerned with the Palmetto Trail)
- Spartanburg Sanitary Sewer and Water System (SSSD)
- Startex Jackson Water District (SJWD)
- Partners for Active Living
- Spartanburg County Parks and Recreation
- Tyger River Foundation
- Upstate Forever



*Artist Rendering of Future Middle Tyger River Bridge at Library*

- Middle Tyger Connected
  - Foothills Natural Resource Conservation Service
- (See Bike/Ped Section under Palmetto Trail and Tyger River Greenway)

### Beautification Master Plan

The Spartanburg community is blessed with a wealth of very dedicated and focused interest groups that share the objective of beautifying our community, including such groups as Spot of Pride Incorporated, Spartanburg Men’s Garden Club, Noble Tree Foundation of Milliken, Inc., Pride Task Force, Graffiti Group, Group of 100, Leadership Cowpens, Leadership District Three, and many others. These groups nurture the partnerships needed for a successful beautification program.



The Enhancement Committee believes that “beautification” includes more than just the planting of vegetation. Instead, successful beautification efforts include the creative incorporation of landscaping, signage, lighting, fountains, benches and other amenities that can make a site a “place of pride.” Indeed, the beautification vision, as identified in *The 2004 SPATS Enhancement Master Plan* was “to enhance beautification of major roads and highways of the area, with coordination from a central entity.”

### How We Have Implemented This Vision:

The partnership between SPATS and the Spot of Pride program continues to be a model for transportation enhancement excellence. By developing a low-maintenance, cost-effective method for beautification enhancement, the number of organizations attracted to sponsor maintenance at a specific “spot” has continued to grow.



Since 2004, the enhancement application process has become much more competitive. First, Pacolet, Inman, and Chesnee have been brought into the SPATS urban boundary, and have become an important and new part of the process. Second, due to municipalities’ understanding of how enhancement funding can help them implement their goals from the 2005 Walkable Workshops, local cities and towns have become much more active in applying for enhancement funding to support this innovative initiative.

## 2005 Walkable Workshop Series

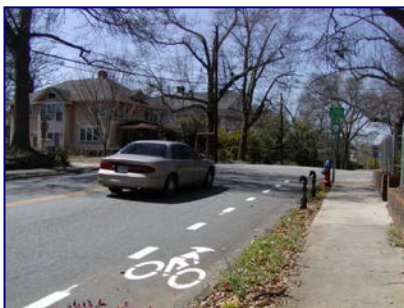
The Walkable Workshop Series was a SPATS-managed program that received a 2006 Transportation Planning Excellence Honorable Mention from both the Federal Highway Administration and the American Planning Association. The program brought citizens, officials and advocates together to create eight walkability/bikability plans for eight different communities across Spartanburg County:

- the downtowns of Chesnee, Cowpens, Pacolet, Inman;
- the Lan-Yair/US 29 area of Spartanburg,
- the Duncan/Lyman/Wellford area,
- the Boiling Springs area, and
- the Cleveland Park/Asheville Highway area.



Funded by the City of Spartanburg, the Spartanburg County Transportation Committee (CTC), the Mary Black Foundation, Partners for Active Living, the Palmetto Conservation Foundation and Upstate Forever, this series has proved invaluable in making local communities safer for pedestrians and cyclists. (See Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Section for more information)

The implementation of these programs and projects has transformed Spartanburg which has benefited greatly from localized education and identification of needed improvements. We are a healthier, more active community featuring:



*Hampton Avenue Bike Lane*

- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Traffic calming
- Street connectivity
- Trails, bike paths, and parks.





## COMPLETE STREETS

With a much more competitive program and a balance of beautification and active living applications, enhancement project applicants work to give options to the traveling public. “Complete Streets” are now the norm, not the exception, for accepted transportation design. Enhancement applicants work with SPATS planners to create transportation corridors with beautification projects (or Spots of Pride), and to build Places of Pride that includes street trees, bike lanes, sidewalks, and bus stop improvements that serve community needs.



Cummings St. “Complete Street”

### 2008 Projects:

- Glendale Pedestrian Bridge
- Chesnee Elder-Ready Community Enhancements
- Town of Cowpens Streetscape Phase 2
- Town of Reidville Streetscape Phase 2
- Town of Pacolet Gateway Enhancements

### Future Enhancement projects include:

- Tyger River Greenway
- Middle Tyger Connected
- Inman Heritage Path and Senior Center Connections
- Glendale Greenway
- Future phases of downtown paths, gateways and streetscapes, and
- Implementation of the SPATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, including sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and trail paths.



Glendale Bridge Future Pedestrian Enhancements

### Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan

In 2009, citizens, community leaders, active living advocates, and government officials will work with a chosen consultant to develop the Spartanburg County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This collaborative effort will establish a unified 10-year **vision for a network** of useable facilities that will serve a variety of users to provide connected corridors for safe, convenient opportunities for walking and biking in Spartanburg County.



Inman Student Cyclist



The Plan will provide the guidance and direction that is currently needed in order for all stakeholders to pursue common, coordinated improvements in bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure.



Evins St. "Complete Street"

Funded in part by a grant from the Mary Black Foundation with matches from SPATS, Spartanburg County and the City of Spartanburg, the Plan will be integrated at its completion in the fall of 2009 as an addendum to the SPATS Long-Range Transportation Plan.

## DEDICATION

### HANS BALMER (1946 - 2007)

The local Spot of Pride Beautification Program creates ideal transportation enhancement projects which have a positive impact on the Spartanburg transportation network. Mr. Hans Balmer, founder of the program, took unattractive roadsides and enhanced them with aesthetic improvements that make residents proud and impress visitors.

The landscaped sites are the result of much coordination, recruiting, and communication with funding sponsors by Mr. Balmer and his assistant, Mrs.



Pine St. Spot of Pride

Patricia Horne. SPATS has received calls from all four corners of the US inquiring about the program. The program is successful because Mr. Balmer was creative in securing local funding commitments to match federal enhancement dollars.



N. Church St. Spot of Pride

Although we lost this wonderful community champion last year, his legacy has continued. He was a community leader who was willing to become involved in planning a project for the greater good. From planting flowers to funding maintenance, he made a person feel their role was the most important of the whole concept. His work is now a model others want to follow. We were fortunate to have him be a part of our program and will pass his passion on to others.

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

