



To: ARTS MPO

From: Alta Planning + Design; Steve Bzomowski, Vane Christiansen, Matt Hayes

Date: 1/23/23

Re: ARTS MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan System Update 2022-2023: Programming Best Practices – Equity, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation

Introduction

Active transportation infrastructure, such as sidewalks, greenways, and protected bicycle lanes can attract new users by increasing the comfort and safety of users; however, it is also important to develop programs that help to raise the profile and public understanding of facility investments, increase walking and bicycling mode share, enhance safety, and foster a local culture that values walking and bicycling. This can be achieved through equity, engineering, education, encouragement, and evaluation and planning programs that are designed to reach bicyclists and walkers of all ages and abilities. This document highlights best practices in programming, existing programs within the ARTS MPO region, and recommendations for program participation and expansion.

Research has shown that a comprehensive approach to bicycle- and walk-friendliness is more effective than a singular approach that would address infrastructure issues only. Recognizing this, the national [Bicycle Friendly Community program, administered by the League of American Bicyclists](#), and the [Walk Friendly Community program, administered by University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center](#), recommend similar multi-faceted approaches. The following five ‘E’s are from the League of American Bicyclists’ essential elements of a Bicycle Friendly America:

- Equity & Accessibility: A bicycle friendly America for everyone
- Engineering: Creating safe and convenient places to ride and park
- Education: Giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride
- Encouragement: Creating a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling
- Evaluation & Planning: Planning for bicycling as a safe and viable transportation option

Equity & Accessibility

The League of American Bicyclists defines “Equity” as just and fair inclusion into a society for all to participate and prosper. The principle of equity acknowledges historical inequities that have severely impacted underserved and underrepresented populations, and aims to improve these conditions. “Accessibility” refers to improving and increasing access and mobility for all people, regardless of age and physical ability. This principle acknowledges there are people in every community who live with mobility challenges, as well as cognitive and sensory disabilities, and taking this population into consideration improves access and increases accessibility for all.

Engineering

Engineering provides the design for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The physical accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians have a direct impact on the encouragement piece. For example, protected bicycle infrastructure is associated with improved safety for all road users and protected intersections are often built to enhance the visibility of bicyclists to motorists and to facilitate safer crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Education

Providing bicycle and pedestrian educational opportunities is critical for bicycle and pedestrian safety. Education should span all age groups and include motorists as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. The focus of an educational campaign can range from information about the rights and responsibilities of road users to tips for safe behavior; from awareness of the community-wide benefits of bicycling and walking to technical training(s) for municipal staff.

Encouragement

Encouragement programs are useful for promoting and increasing walking and bicycling. These programs should address all ages and user groups from school children, to working adults, to the elderly and also address recreation and transportation users. The goal of encouragement programs is to increase the amount of bicycling and walking that occurs in a community. Programs can range from work-place commuter incentives to a “walking school bus” at an elementary school; and from bicycle and walk friendly route maps to a bicycle co-op.

Evaluation & Planning

Evaluation & Planning includes topics around each of the five E’s. The Bicycle Friendly Community program and Walk Friendly Community program are excellent tools in themselves for evaluating and planning active transportation improvements.

Existing Resources in the ARTS MPO Region

Below is a summary of existing program resources for the ARTS MPO region:

State Level Programs

- [SCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#) – SCDOT integrates walking and bicycling infrastructure into transportation projects as guided by its [Complete Streets Policy](#) and recent guidance to improve safety in its [Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan](#).
- [GDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#) – GDOT’s Bicycle & Pedestrian Program incorporates a broad range of programs and initiatives throughout the state, offering technical assistance, engineering and planning guidance, public information, and educational materials and programs for bicyclists, walkers, and visitors in Georgia. Key resources include the [Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#), [Bicycle Safety Action Plan](#), [Drive Alert Arrive Alive](#), [Georgia Bike Sense guide](#), and the [See & Be Seen pedestrian campaign](#).
- [Palmetto Cycling Coalition](#) – The mission of the Palmetto Cycling Coalition is to make South Carolina bicycle and pedestrian friendly by improving safety through better access and education, promoting healthy lifestyles, and promoting livable and economically viable communities. The wide range of efforts by the Palmetto Cycling Association include [state legislation](#), the [SC Bike Walk Trails Summit](#), the [SC Livable Streets Academy](#), [Road Safety Audits](#), [Low Stress Bike Route/Network Mapping](#), and the dissemination of numerous other resources.
- [Georgia Bikes!](#) – Georgia Bikes! works to improve bicycling conditions and promote bicycling throughout the state of Georgia. Georgia Bikes! efforts include a wide range of advocacy efforts geared toward education, encouragement, evaluation and planning, and engineering best practices. Georgia Bikes! has produced/facilitated key [educational resources](#) in addition to a multitude of advocacy efforts.

Local Safe Routes to School efforts

- [GDOT Safe Routes to School Partners](#) – Georgia's SRTS Resource Center assists schools and communities with education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, planning and other non-construction related SRTS activities. Several schools in the ARTS MPO region have recently engaged in Safe Routes to School programs to varying degrees. These schools include:
 - Augusta-Richmond County, GA – A. Brian Merry Elementary School, Freedom Park Elementary School, Lake Forest Hills Elementary School, Meadowbrook Elementary
 - Columbia County, GA – North Columbia Elementary School, Parkway Elementary School, River Ridge Elementary School, Lewiston Elementary School, Greenbrier Elementary School, and Columbia Middle School
- Safe Routes to School in Aiken County, SC – North Aiken Elementary recently implemented sidewalk connections to adjacent neighborhoods to facilitate safer walking/biking connectivity to school, and has also participated in National Walk to School Day. South Carolina currently does not have state level resources for Safe Routes to School programming. National Safe Routes to School resources can be found through the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) as well as the [Safe Routes Partnership](#).

Additional Existing and Potential Partners/Resources

Local non-profit organizations, coalitions, and major institutions also play a key role in leading, developing, implementing, and sponsoring bicycling and walking programs. The ARTS MPO region already has a network of entities that could partner with local governments to generate community awareness and broad participation in bicycling and walking programs. For example, Augusta Urban Ministries, in partnership with the GDOT Safe Routes to School program and other local partners, led a [Bicycle Safety Rodeo](#) in May of 2022. Below is a list of existing organizations/resources and potential partners.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AARP • Aiken Bicycle Club • Aiken Medical Center • Aiken Running Club • Andy Jordan’s Bicycle Warehouse • Augusta BMX • Augusta NAACP • Augusta Road Cyclists • Augusta Sports Council • Augusta Urban Ministries • Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) • Fort Gordon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augusta U Center for Health Aging • Outspokin’ Bicycles • Piedmont August (University Health Care System) • Richmond County Neighborhood Association Alliance • Safe Kids Aiken • Safe Kids Greater Augusta • SORBA CSRA (Local Chapter of the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association) • Tri Augusta • Universities and colleges within the ARTS region • Wholespire Aiken County • YMCAs |
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Program Recommendations for the ARTS MPO Region

Building on the existing state programs and local resources in the ARTS MPO region, below are additional considerations to continue expanding active living programming. Most of these programs in some way can incorporate each of the five E's.

Form a Regional Active Transportation Advisory Committee

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** An Active Transportation Advisory Committee allows a forum for regional and local interests to coordinate and share successes and lessons learned. Information on actions of this committee and educational materials should be made available through a regional website to make the program visible and transparent to the public.
- **Audience:** ARTS MPO, member jurisdictions, local advocates and stakeholders, residents
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO, member jurisdictions, local advocates and stakeholders, residents
- **Recommendation:** An advisory committee has already been successfully used to develop an updated bicycle and pedestrian plan for the region and it is recommended that a permanent committee comprised of government staff and local advocacy groups be instituted to oversee active transportation programs and infrastructure implementation at a regional level. This group should meet quarterly or biannually.

Safe Routes to School (GA)

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** Safe Routes to School is an initiative that works to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children to walk and bicycle to and from schools. The goal is to get more children walking and bicycling to school, improve kids' safety, and increase health and physical activity (National Safe Routes to School Partnership).
- **Audience:** School staff, students, parents
- **Partners:** GDOT, Columbia County School District, Richmond County School System, Columbia County, Richmond County
- **Recommendation:**
 - Hire a Safe Routes to School Coordinator (one for Richmond County, one for Columbia County)
 - Implement Safe Routes to School infrastructure improvements outlined in this plan
 - Utilize GDOT Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance resources (and National Safe Routes to School resources as needed) to implement Safe Routes to School programming

Safe Routes to School (SC)

- **Partners:** SCDOT, Aiken County Public Schools
- **Recommendation:**
 - Hire a Safe Routes to School Coordinator for Aiken County
 - Implement Safe Routes to School infrastructure improvements outlined in this plan
 - Utilize National Safe Routes to School programming resources to initiate Safe Routes to School programming

BikeWalk Summit

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** The annual Bike/Walk Summits in both Georgia and South Carolina offer networking and learning opportunities on a broad range of equity, education, engineering, encouragement, and evaluation resources.
- **Audience:** Transportation planners, designers, engineers, program managers, advocates
- **Partners:** (GA) Georgia Bikes!, GDOT; (SC) Palmetto Cycling Association, SC Trails Association
- **Recommendation:** Send at least one staff member from each jurisdiction in the ARTS MPO to the GA or SC Bike/Walk Summit.

SC Livable Streets Academy

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** Since SCDOT adopted its state Complete Streets policy in early 2021, work remains to engage locally. While the new policy is powerful, work remains to engage citizens and cities with those regional planning bodies. The SC Livable Streets Academy was created to formalize the assistance the Palmetto Cycling Association gives communities and neighborhoods in obtaining funding for their safe mobility needs.
- **Audience:** Transportation managers, local jurisdictions, community organizations, elected officials
- **Partners:** Palmetto Cycling Association, SCDOT
- **Recommendation:** Each jurisdiction in South Carolina (City of Aiken, Aiken County, City of North Augusta) should identify a point person to reach out to the Palmetto Cycling Coalition to engage the SC Livable Streets Academy. Per the program instructions, priority will be given to community groups of citizens who are diverse, committed to attend towards a common goal, and who already have a relationship with at least one elected official.

Bike/Walk Month Events

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Education, Encouragement
- **Purpose:** Cities and towns across the country participate in National Bike Month annually, during May (and October is recognized as National Walk Month). Event examples include bike week, walk to school day and other events to encourage walking and biking.
- **Audience:** Communitywide
- **Partners:** Local bicycle shops and community groups, ARTS MPO jurisdictions
- **Recommendation:** ARTS member jurisdictions should host National Bike Month events and activities annually, with the support of local bicycling groups and shops. Currently, Andy Jordan's Bicycle Warehouse hosts the 'Kroc to Lock' event each May to celebrate Bike Month. The Bicycle Safety Rodeo led by Augusta Urban Ministries in May of 2022 is another example of a local Bike Month event in 2022. Some schools, such as North Aiken Elementary have celebrated Walk to School Day in October as well. Each jurisdiction should seek to formally support or participate in at least one bike month event each May and one walk month event each October.

Create a Regional Website

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Education, Encouragement
- **Purpose:** Provide information to residents and visitors; a one-stop source of information regarding biking, trails, walking/hiking within the region.
- **Audience:** Communitywide
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO and member jurisdictions
- **Recommendation:** With the completion of this bicycle and pedestrian planning process, the ARTS MPO and jurisdictions will have an up-to-date database of shared use paths, bike lanes, and sidewalks. This information could be featured on a regional interactive map. This resource could include many elements such as an interactive map, downloadable maps, popular destinations, calendar of events, and safety information.

Micromobility Share

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Encouragement
- **Purpose:** Micromobility share, specifically for bicycles and scooters, can serve as a key tool for improving efficiency in local transportation systems, especially in areas of frequent 0-3 mile trips.
- **Audience:** Residents and Visitors making 0-3 mile (or more) trips
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO, micromobility vendors, member jurisdictions
- **Recommendation:** Per the recommendations of the Micromobility Share analysis of this bicycle and pedestrian planning process (see the Micromobility Share Appendix), the ARTS MPO and member jurisdictions should continue exploring micromobility share implementation.

Media Events

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement
- **Purpose:** Increase awareness of significant new bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Publicity through local newspapers and other media outlets can draw people from throughout the region to showcase and bring awareness to network improvements.
- **Audience:** Communitywide
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO, local jurisdictions, GDOT, SCDOT, local news agencies
- **Recommendation:** When significant new facilities are completed, a media event should be scheduled to increase awareness of the new facility. A recent example includes the ribbon cutting held for the opening of the 5th St bike/ped bridge in Fall 2022. Multiple projects around the region that are currently in development, such as the City of Augusta's developing downtown bike network, Columbia County's Euchee Creek Greenway extension, and improvements to the 13th St bridge – these are examples of potential future opportunities to showcase new elements of the walking and biking network as they are completed and opened.

Create and Adopt a Vision Zero Action Plan

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** The Vision Zero philosophy rejects the notion that traffic fatalities are inevitable and proactively tries to keep people safe. Key tenets of Vision Zero are that design should seek to prevent crashes, and that we can always afford to take steps that save lives.
- **Audience:** ARTS MPO, member jurisdictions, GDOT, SCDOT, local residents and stakeholders
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO, member jurisdictions, GDOT, SCDOT, local residents and stakeholders
- **Recommendation:** The High Injury Network identified in this bicycle and pedestrian planning process (see Safety Analysis) should be utilized as a focal point for the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Program

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** Collecting bicycle and pedestrian count data utilizing permanent counters or the various technologies available will enable ARTS MPO communities to evaluate trends, such as increase/decrease in usage, peak travel periods, and high activity locations. Better data on bicycle and pedestrian travel can help to determine where investments are most needed. It also helps in quantifying the benefits of biking and walking.
- **Audience:** ARTS MPO, member jurisdictions
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO, member jurisdictions
- **Recommendation:** Determine the appropriate counter technology for the ARTS MPO member jurisdictions based on feasibility, context (shared use path vs bike lane), and available funding. [NCDOT's State-of-the-Art Approaches to Bicycle and Pedestrian Counters](#) provides great detail on different counting technology, and can be a helpful tool in selecting appropriate counters.

Bike Friendly and Walk Friendly Community Programs

- **Type:** Equity & Accessibility, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation & Planning
- **Purpose:** The Bicycle Friendly Community program, administered by the League of American Bicyclists, and the Walk Friendly Community program, administered by University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, recommend a multi-faceted approach based in fostering bike- and walk-friendly communities.
- **Audience:** Bicycle and pedestrian program managers and partners
- **Partners:** ARTS MPO member jurisdictions, League of American Bicyclists, University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center
- **Recommendation:** While each ARTS MPO jurisdiction may not be in position to receive recognition as a bike- or walk-friendly community at this time, it is a helpful exercise to complete the application every several years. The application is extensive, covering the five E's, and will help reveal where improvements are needed in the bicycle and pedestrian program. Further information on the Bike Friendly and Walk Friendly Community programs, tailored to two jurisdictions in the ARTS MPO, will be covered in another part of this planning process.