

River Valley

Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan 2016



Developing Bicycle & Pedestrian Initiatives
in our Communities



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Publication and Publicity

DISCLAIMER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Columbus Riverwalk

Vision

The vision of the River Valley Regional Commission is to enhance the region's quality of life for cyclists and pedestrians by promoting health and tourism while providing convenient, safe, and passive recreation as a practical means of transportation.

The River Valley Regional Commission's (RVRC) Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan represents the efforts of the RVRC staff, the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Advisory Committee, local agencies, advocacy groups, and countless dedicated citizens in the River Valley region.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides direction to the residents and local governments in the River Valley Regional Commission region in promoting non-motorized methods of transportation including, bicycling and walking. The plan will provide guidelines to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on the needs and desires of the River Valley region. The goals of the plan are listed below.

- 🚲 Promote non-motorized transportation as a means of mobility in the urban and rural areas of the region.
- 🚲 Encourage walking and cycling as economic development opportunities and support rails-to-trails projects regionally.
- 🚲 Promote bicycle transportation and programs as being

environmentally and health friendly as well as means to develop tourism.

- 🚲 Establish a primary network for bicycling and walking, which will include building new facilities throughout the region to provide connectivity between cities and counties.
- 🚲 Promote education opportunities for cyclists, motorists, and law enforcement about safe cycling, bicycle laws, trail etiquette and sharing the road.
- 🚲 Develop and promote Safe Routes to School Programs for communities in the region, and encourage walking and cycling to school.
- 🚲 Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities in community land use planning.
- 🚲 Continue to develop and maintain the regional bicycle-pedestrian website www.activevalley.org
- 🚲 Develop maps of bicycle routes and multi-use paths showcasing local tourist attractions within the region.
- 🚲 Educate communities on the Complete Streets program. Adopt programs and assist with developing and implementing policy.
- 🚲 Plan and execute the celebration of Bicycle Week and its cycling events within the region.
- 🚲 Maintain Bicycle Friendly designations within our region and encourage communities to work towards Bicycle Friendly Designation.

The Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan focuses on the goal of establishing a network of routes throughout the River Valley region and promotes these facilities to increase economic development through bicycle tourism.

The following steps were used in order to identify, plan, and evaluate the River Valley Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

1. Develop a public involvement plan and Planning Advisory Committees.

Established the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) in both the City of Columbus and the City of Americus; composed of stakeholders from various organizations (public and private), cities, and counties. In addition to establishing the PAC, public involvement was also sought by hosting public meetings) to gain input from citizens and advocacy groups in the region.

2. Identify goals, objectives, and performance measures.

Public events and meetings with the Planning Advisory Committee were conducted to establish the goals, objectives, and performance measures for the plan. The goals and objectives were then refined by the PAC by identifying routes, developing marketing strategies and programs, advocating the health and economic benefits of walking and cycling, and seeking for funding to implement goals.

3. Assessment of needs and existing conditions.

The RVRC conducted an analysis to assess current needs and trends within the River Valley region. Based on the assessment, both PACs along with RVRC Bicycle-Pedestrian staff identified needed facilities and routes to be proposed in the plan.

4. Implementation Strategy for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Completing the needs assessment and conducting an analysis of existing conditions within the region, the RVRC

and its PACs developed implementation strategies to be outlines in the regional plan.

The regional plan will have a widespread impact on a variety of issues, including economic development, health and social issues, which will be discussed at greater detail further in the plan. The resulting plan provides an overview of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategies. Recommendations are also outlined to identify ways of integrating and establishing the non-motorized transportation modes of bicycling and walking throughout the region. Furthermore, additional analysis has identified the increasing desire of residents to establish a bicycle and pedestrian networks within their communities throughout the River Valley Region.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the plan's established goals, objectives, and performance measures, the RVRC Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Staff in conjunction with local governments and PAC members identified and proposed potential facilities for the region. With the growing interest of cycling and walking both as forms of leisure and transportation, the planning partners of this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan understand the importance of identifying and implementing the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. However, implementation can not occur without the availability of funds. Due to the current competitiveness for funds, there will not be enough money to fund all projects. Therefore, it is important for the planning partners and local governments to prioritize local projects and work closely with the Georgia Department of Transportation to incorporate on-street projects along with road improvements throughout the region.

Section I: Introduction

As bicycling and walking are increasing in popularity among youth and adults across America, both are becoming viable modes of non-motorized transportation.

Many urban areas experience roadway congestion, lack of parking, and stop-go movement in everyday traffic situations. These combined traffic situations create an excellent opportunity for bicycling and walking. Leisure time is becoming increasingly scarce due to a number of factors such as the increase in the duration of a normal work day.

There are benefits of bicycling and walking for today's society. These include:

- 🚲 Reducing traffic congestion;
- 🚲 Reducing air and noise pollution;
- 🚲 Reducing wear and tear on roads;
- 🚲 Reduce crashes and property damage;
- 🚲 Reducing the need for additional roads, travel lanes and parking; and
- 🚲 And improving health (reducing adult and childhood obesity) and the quality of life.

Bicycling or walking to work and for personal trips provides an enjoyable, efficient, and environmentally friendly method of incorporating exercise into one's hectic schedule. With this in mind, the Georgia Department of Transportation along with Regional Commissions (RCs) throughout the state, is looking to utilize these transportation modes to relieve some traffic strain in urban areas, and provide a way of improving the quality of life and boosting economic development through bicycle tourism in rural areas.

The River Valley Region

The River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) is the region's planning organization for a sixteen county area that includes the counties of:

Chattahoochee, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, and Webster.



The RVRC echoes the objective of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) in emphasizing bicycle and pedestrian transportation throughout the state. In order to make these strides in the River Valley region, the concept of cycling and walking as a non-motorized mode of transportation must be embraced by the local governments, advocacy groups, and partner agencies (public and private) in the region.

Public Involvement

Public involvement in Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning is essential, and works best when the community is involved from the beginning. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities can rarely be implemented to meet all of a community's needs. Therefore, choices that prioritize investment and citizen involvement are essential to determine the needs and desires of the community.

To successfully achieve this goal, a Public Involvement Process was developed. The Public Involvement Plan defines the coordination and collaboration efforts between the RVRC, public and private organizations, general public, local governments, and advocacy groups. The initial public

involvement in the development of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan began when the RVRC convened an oversight committee that included the creation of a Planning Advisory Committee. The committee consisted of elected local government officials, chambers of commerce, and stakeholder groups. This partnership approach ensured that representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups with different areas of expertise could provide input and guidance on the development of the plan. The Planning Advisory Committee provided valuable direction and guidance to the overall plan effort.

A series of public meetings were also held in both Columbus and Americus. The primary concerns were the lack of facilities, shoulder width, pavement conditions, and accommodation for cyclists on roadways and sidewalks throughout the region. Also discussed was the need to provide alternative facilities, if none are available. Another consistent concern was the lack of marketing and information about the region's existing bicycle and pedestrian routes, facilities, and events.

After concluding the public meetings, the RVRC evaluated and discussed with both PACs different alternatives in addressing the concerns of the region. Bicyclists are considered to be the primary users of the regional system. However, in developing the goals and objectives for the regional system, pedestrians were considered to be important within local municipalities. In addition to goals and objectives, several recommendations were discussed which included the creation of new routes for the extension and connectivity of existing routes, and the concentration of pedestrian travel within urban areas. Shorter trips and greater development densities make walking a feasible mode of transportation in urban areas. Developing and participating in The

Safe Routes to School Programs was also a concern. Through Safe Routes to School Programs, stakeholders and elected officials hope to increase the number of children walking and cycling to school, as well as address childhood obesity and physical activity. Other alternatives will be addressed throughout the plan.



Americus Bicycle-Pedestrian PAC



Columbus Bicycle-Pedestrian PAC



Bicycle-Pedestrian PAC work session

Section II: Bicycle and Pedestrian Goals and Objectives

The River Valley Regional Commission's Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning staff and the PAC members defined the goals and objectives for the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Goals are generalized expressions which provide direction for bicycle and pedestrian planning and help achieve the vision of the plan. Objectives are specific obtainable targets, which are used to measure the goals of the plan. These specific goals and objectives were developed to guide the present and future implementation of the plan.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Provide a regional system which is safe, convenient and accessible for cyclists and pedestrians.

Objective 1: Identify and develop connectivity between destination points within the region and local jurisdictions – (i.e., urban areas-employment and educational centers, services; rural areas-natural, cultural, and recreational centers).

Objective 2: Develop bicycle and pedestrian systems that meet the highest safety standards, including ADA standards, and accessibility to other modes.

Objective 3: Establish and maintain partnerships with community organizations, local governments, school districts, law enforcement agencies, recreation organizations, and other interested parties on educating the region about bicycle and pedestrian transportation and safety.

Objective 4: Develop a regional bicycle and pedestrian information guide (Web based, guide book, brochure) to include all regional facilities and points of interests).

Objective 5: Provide user friendly signage on roadways to increase awareness of bicycle and pedestrian activity including Share the Road, 3ft passing, and Route Directional arrows.

Goal 2: Identify adequate funding resources to assist in the continuous development and implementation for the regional system.

Objective 1: Identify eligible federal, state, local, and private funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian planning, project development, education and infrastructure improvements.

Objective 2: Coordinate the development of joint bicycle and pedestrian projects using public or private resources.

Objective 3: Provide technical assistance to local governments implementing inventive ways of financing options for bicycle and pedestrian facilities (i.e., local sales tax, capital improvement programs, and user fees.)

- Goal 3: Encourage tourism and economic development opportunities that enhance bicycle and pedestrian mobility, using the bicycle as means of tourism and economic development.**
- Objective 1: Promote communities and the region as a bicycle and pedestrian friendly destination by promoting facilities, accessibility and regional assets (points of interests).
- Objective 2: Work with advocacy groups and locals to encourage and establish bicycle events, walking tours, races, festivals, and fundraisers for the cities/region.
- Objective 3: Promote local trails, pathways, walkways, and local attractions as bicycle tourism destinations.
- Goal 4: Plan, execute and evaluate yearly bicycle and pedestrian activities/events as means of a promoting a healthy lifestyle, with alternative commuting options, and to promote the region as being bicycle friendly while providing safety education to all participants.**
- Objective 1: Develop programs that encourage family-oriented activities and active lifestyles (i.e. Midtown Columbus Minimum Grid walks/ rides/ runs).
- Objective 2: Educate communities about the impact of bicycling and encourage community participation within local and regional events such as coordinated bicycle rides, marathons, bicycle tours and safety workshops (rodeos).
- Objective 3: Educate cyclists and motorists about safe cycling, including the importance of sharing the road and exercising the 3 Feet passing law (HB 101).
- Goal 5: Promote programs to encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel as a viable form of transportation, as a healthy form of exercise, and as an environmentally sensitive way to travel.**
- Objective 1: Establish and execute regional participation in the annual Bike Week activities, which include the National Ride of Silence, National Bike to Work Day, and the Ride with the Mayor event.
- Objective 2: Encourage participation from local schools to promote bicycle and pedestrian activities, and the health benefits associated with them amongst students, faculty, staff and parents.
- Objective 3: Incorporate demonstrations and literature of the health benefits of cycling and walking at public health fairs, as well as the execution of bicycle rodeos and first time commuters' classes.
- Goal 6: Develop and implement Safe Routes to School Programs for communities within the region and increase the number of students walking and cycling to school.**

Objective 1: Partner schools with the Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center through implementing education and encouragement programs.

Objective 2: Work with schools to develop travel plans and/or walk audits in order to identify infrastructure needs to increase the number of parents walking and cycling to school.

Objective 3: Promote the participation of Georgia and International Walk to School Day within elementary and middle schools in the region.

Objective 4: Assist local governments and school districts in identifying and applying for funds in order to construct and improve walking and cycling facilities within a 2 mile radius from local schools.

Goal 7: Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities in community land use planning.

Objective 1: Incorporate designated bike lanes, sidewalks, and trails into county and city future land-use planning.

Objective 2: Incorporate provisions for sidewalks and protected bicycle and pedestrian facilities into zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Objective 3: Develop bicycle and pedestrian plans for interested communities within the region.

Goal 8: Create and designate regional bicycle routes and facilities in the region.

Objective 1: Create designated bicycle routes to include bicycle lanes and signage.

Objective 2: Develop routes connecting regional cultural and historic sites, as well as communities and attractions in the region.

Objective 3: Identify potential areas for locating bicycle paths and routes along abandoned railroad corridors (rails-to-trails projects) and identify existing facilities in order to promote their location and usability.

Objective 4: Develop maps of bicycle routes and multi-use paths showing local tourists attractions, restaurants, lodging facilities and parking availability for each bicycle and pedestrian facility mapped.

Goal 9: Apply for Bicycle Friendly Designation by the League of American Cyclists for communities and businesses within our region that meet the designation criteria.

Objective 1: Work with cities and counties in order to meet the criteria established by the League of American Cyclists in order to obtain Bicycle Friendly Community Designation.

- Objective 2: Work with employers/businesses within the region to strive and promote bicycling/walking to work and applying for Bicycle Friendly Business designation.
- Goal 10: Introduce Complete Streets to governments within the region and encourage the adoption and implementation of a Complete Streets policy; and to continue to assist Complete Streets communities in implementing their policy.**
- Objective 1: Partner with Georgia Bikes! To host Complete Streets workshop in communities throughout the region.
- Objective 2: Assist communities in the adoption of a Complete Streets resolution (minimum requirement) and/or Complete Streets policy using the sample policy as provided by Georgia Bikes!.
- Objective 3: Continue to provide technical assistance to Complete Streets communities as they implement the policy.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are used to evaluate the goals and objectives of this plan. The outcome is designed to provide information to the transportation planning process relevant to decision making. To ensure that River Valley Regional Commission is meeting its goals, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program tracks three performance measures:

- 1. Projects that meet criteria for accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists (i.e., paved shoulders, bike lanes, sidewalks, or wide curb lanes).**
- 2. Funding sources which have been established for developing, improving, and maintaining bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**
- 3. Coordination and collaboration of programs, events and services to educate bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians of "Share-The-Road" and 3ft Passing Law, in addition to health and environmental benefits.**

With the implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian plan, the River Valley Regional Commission plans to continue collecting data required to successfully meet the performance measures used to identify the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan's goals and objectives.

During the bicycle and pedestrian planning process, it was recommended that the RVRC staff develop the best practices for bicycle and pedestrian facility design as a technical resource for local governments based on the NACTO urban street design guide. The development for design along with typical cost estimates for recommended facilities will be identified in the project recommendations.

In order to identify the design for a facility, it is important to understand the users of the proposed facilities. The varying types of users have different requirements. A successful bicycle and pedestrian network of facilities must be provided for all types of users if it is to be successful as a viable transportation network. RVRC staff will use the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide as well as the AASHTO Guide for Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities and the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities as a reference and model when working with local government in planning for and building bicycle-pedestrian facilities.

Section III – Users and type of Facilities

Defining Rider Types:

In 1994, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) conducted a study that identified bicycle user types (**A, B, C**) to assist highway designers in determining the impact of different facility types and roadway conditions on bicyclists. Types include:

1. **Advanced bicyclists:** experienced riders who can operate under most traffic conditions. They comprise the majority of the current users of collector and arterial streets and are best served by the following:
 - a. Direct access to destinations via existing streets and highway;
 - b. The opportunity to operate at maximum speed with minimum delays; and
 - c. Sufficient operating space on the roadway or shoulder to reduce the need for either the bicyclist or the motor vehicle operator to change position when passing.
2. **Basic bicyclists:** casual or new adult and teenage riders who are less confident of their ability to operate in traffic without special provisions for bicycles. Basic bicyclist prefer:
 - a. Comfortable access to destinations, preferably by a direct route (i.e., low traffic volumes streets and designated bicycle facilities); and
 - b. Well defined separation of bicycles and motor vehicles on arterial and collector streets, or separate paths.
3. **Child riders:** initially monitored by parents, but eventually released and are independent to access the system. Young riders and their parents prefer:
 - a. Access to key destinations surrounding residential areas, including schools, recreation facilities, shopping, or other residential areas;
 - b. Resident streets with low motor vehicle speed limits and volumes; and
 - c. Well-defined separation of bicycles and motor vehicles on arterial and collector streets, or separate bicycle paths.

Facility Types

The evaluation of bicycle facility types is dependent on many factors, including the ability of the users, specific corridor conditions, and facility cost. The descriptions below provide an overview of each specific facility type and general design for the River Valley region.

a. **Signed Shared Roadway.**

According to the AASHTO Guide which describes signed shared roadways as "those that have been identified by signing as preferred bike routes" and goes on to describe the reasons why routes might be so designated:

- 🚲 Continuity between bicycle lanes, trails or other bicycle facilities;

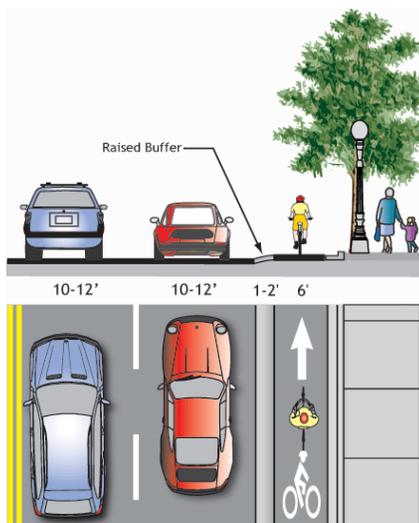


- 🚲 marking a common route for bicyclists through a high demand corridor;
- 🚲 directing cyclists to low volume roads or those with a paved shoulder; and
- 🚲 directing cyclists to particular destinations (e.g. park, school or commercial district).



In addition, designation indicates that there are particular advantages to using the route rather than an alternative. Signed shared roadways generally do not succeed in diverting cyclists away from routes that are more direct, faster, and more convenient even though they may be on quieter streets.

- b. **Bicycle Lane.** Bicycle lanes are established with appropriate pavement markings and signing along streets where there is significant bicycle demand and where there are distinct needs that can be served by them. The purpose of bike lanes is to improve the conditions for bicyclists on the streets. Bicycle lanes are intended to delineate the right of way assigned to bicyclists and motorist and to provide for more predictable movements by each.



Bicycle lanes also help to increase the total capacities of highways carrying mixed bicycle and motor vehicle traffic. Another reason for constructing bicycle lanes is to better accommodate bicyclists where insufficient space exists for comfortable bicycling on existing streets. Regular maintenance of bicycle lanes should be a top priority, since bicyclists are unable to use a lane with potholes, debris or broken glass.

If bicycle travel is to improve, special efforts should be made to assure that a quality network is provided with these lanes. However, the needs of both the motorist and the bicyclist must be considered in the decision to provide bike lanes.

- c. **Shared Use Path.** Shared-use paths should be used to serve corridors not served by streets and highways permitting such facilities to be constructed away from the influence of parallel streets. Shared-use paths offer opportunities, such as recreation, that are not provided by the road system. There may be many situations in which these facilities can be provided as part of planned developments. For example, in 1994 the Columbus Riverwalk



was completed, providing opportunities for a shared use path for bicyclists and walkers along the Chattahoochee River. In 2011, the Columbus Fall Line Trace (Rails-to-trails project) was completed also providing shared use paths for bicyclists and pedestrians. These two developments together provide over 30 miles of designated shared use paths for the residents of the City of Columbus.



- d. **Paved Shoulder:** Smooth paved roadway shoulders provide a suitable area for bicycling, with few conflicts with faster moving motor vehicles. In the River Valley region, paved roadway shoulders are an effective way to provide better bicycling facilities. In developing paved shoulders for the rural communities, GDOT uses AASHTO's guidelines for the design of bicycle facilities. GDOT uses a 5' bike lane in urban sections and a 6.5' paved shoulder for rural sections. However, GDOT does require that rumble strips be installed on rural sections with posted speed limit of 50 mph or higher. The design standard includes a 16' long by 4' wide milled rumble strip that begins one foot from the edge of the travel lane. Providing paved shoulders and following the standards for rural sections by GDOT adds safety to cyclists by providing a means for emergency pull-off and riding on steep inclines or sharp curves in the region. Paved shoulders can be beneficial for improved safety and mobility for both cyclists and motorists.



- e. **Wide Outside Lanes:** In urban areas, paved shoulders are not normally provided on major roads. A wider outside lane allows a motorist to safely pass a cyclist while remaining in the same lane. This can be a significant benefit and an improvement for cyclists, especially more experienced riders. A wider outside

lane also helps trucks, buses, and vehicles turning onto the major road from a driveway or wide street.

Dimensions: 14-ft. (4.2m) is the recommended width for an outside lane, and must be useable. The measurement should be from the edge line or joint of the gutter pan to the lane line.

15-ft. (4.5m) is the preferred width when extra space is required for maneuvering or to keep clear of on-street parking or other obstacles. Continuous stretches of lane 15 feet or wider may encourage the undesirable operation of two motor vehicles in one lane. Where this much width is available, consideration should be given to striping bike lanes or shoulders.



Defining Pedestrian Facility Types

The American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has not defined types of pedestrians. For the purpose of this plan, pedestrians will be designated into three types: Adult Pedestrian, Children Pedestrians, and Pedestrians with Disabilities.

1. **Child Pedestrians:** Children Pedestrians use the facilities for playing. They often have trouble judging traffic speed, gaps in traffic, or whether a car is coming, going or standing still.
2. **Adult Pedestrians:** Adult Pedestrians use pedestrian facilities for commuting, recreation, and exercise.
3. **Pedestrians with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination to pedestrians with disabilities. Pedestrians who are blind, deaf, or who rely on wheelchairs need visible warnings about crossing vehicular traffic. For example, people who are deaf need visible warnings about crossing vehicular traffic and people who are visually impaired need tactile indications that they are approaching an intersection or hazard.

Defining Pedestrian Facility Types

When designing pedestrian facilities, understanding the need of pedestrians is an important factor that affects pedestrian travel. In the River Valley region pedestrian travel is not a vital mode of transportation due to

the widespread of rural land in the region. However, in some areas of the region, pedestrian travel is common among children and young adults walking for leisure, attending educational institutions, and going to concentrated businesses areas in local municipalities. Most pedestrian facilities are located in the concentrated business areas of local municipalities. The pedestrian facilities in the local municipalities include

sidewalks with some areas with crosswalks and paved shoulders mostly on state routes.

Each municipality maintains at least 0.5 miles in sidewalk. Currently, the River Valley region has a total of approximately 220 miles of sidewalk. With greater density in population, Columbus-Muscogee County provides approximately 160 miles of sidewalk for pedestrians. Providing this amount of sidewalk allows pedestrians to access business centers, educational institutions, recreational activity centers, transportation centers, and shopping centers (in most cases) throughout the city. In preparing this plan, the RVRC staff and the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) recognize that there is some need of pedestrian facilities throughout the unpopulated regions. The 2000 Statewide Transportation Plan created by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), recognizes "pedestrian facilities" as

being more than just sidewalks. Illustrated in the figures to the right are the different types of pedestrian facilities identified by GDOT with the emphasis of which facilities are relevant to the River Valley region.



Crosswalks



Sidewalks



Walkway, Pathway



Paved Shoulder



Curb ramps

Bicycle Safety

Most bicycle crashes do not involve collisions with motor vehicles. However, motor vehicles do cause bicycle crashes by forcing the cyclists to run into the curb, to swerve to avoid being cut off by a car, or swerving to avoid stationary objects. Injury crashes caused by loss of control can be greatly reduced by:

- 🚲 Improving riding skills;
- 🚲 Ensuring that all equipment is functional (brakes, tire pressure and condition, etc.);
- 🚲 Ensuring that bicycle lanes are clear of obstructions, debris and rough surfaces.
- 🚲 Educating motorists and cyclists on the importance of Sharing the Road and enforcing the "3ft when passing law" (HB 101).

Many bicycle/motor vehicle crashes are not reported. In the River Valley region there were 27 bicycle accidents reported to the Georgia Department of Transportation in 2010. 23 of the 85 accidents were reported to have taken place in Muscogee County.

An apparent solution to increase bicycle safety would be to bicyclist education. However, motorist education and engineering solutions should also be considered when developing programs for educating all persons sharing the roads.

A. Engineering Solutions to Common Problems.

Although most bicycle/motor vehicle crashes are caused by improper behavior, many improvements can be made to roads to reduce the potential for crashes. Well-designed facilities encourage proper behavior, decreasing the likelihood of crashes. With the growing trend of cycling and walking, GDOT is beginning to provide facilities that encourage all users to obey the rules of the road.

A.1. Wrong-Way Riding

Riding against traffic can be discouraged by:

- 🚲 Including a directional arrow on bike lane markings;
- 🚲 Placing bike lanes on both sides of a two-way street or placing bike lanes on both legs of a one-way couplet;
- 🚲 Replacing existing two-way bike lanes with one-way bike lanes on each side of the road;
- 🚲 Providing equal width shoulders on each side of the road;
- 🚲 Providing more crossing opportunities on wide streets; and
- 🚲 Avoiding two-way multi-use paths that begin or end at mid-block.

A.2. Cyclists Disregard Stop Signs

It is natural for bicyclists to want to ride without breaking their momentum. Good planning places bicycle lanes on streets where there are not excessive stops by:

- 🚲 Providing bike lanes on arterials, which have the right-of-way at most intersections;
- 🚲 Avoid directing cyclists to local streets with many stops, which encourages bicyclists to disregard stop signs that slow them down;
- 🚲 Avoid placing unnecessary four-way stop signs on local streets.

A.3. Cyclist Enter the Roadway from Driveway

Entering the roadway from a driveway is most common among young riders. Young riders often have not fully developed their perception skills, increasing the chance for crashes with motor vehicles. Some simple steps that can help improve motorists' awareness of children are:

- 🚲 Improving sight distance by removing excessive vegetation and other obstructions;
- 🚲 Designing residential streets to discourage excessive motor vehicle speeds.

A.4. Motorist enter the Road from Driveway or Alley

This is a constant source of conflicts for cyclists riding on busy streets with many accesses. Engineering solutions include:

- 🚲 Reducing the number of accesses by elimination or consolidation; and
- 🚲 Improving sight distance by removing excess vegetation and other obstructions.

A.5. Motorist Disregard Sign or Signal

Motorists often commit this infraction because they didn't see a bicyclist. The best engineering solutions to improve the visibility of cyclists include:

- 🚲 Designing bike lanes or paved shoulders that place bicyclists in the flow of traffic; and
- 🚲 Improving sight distance by removing excess vegetation and other obstructions.

B. Education Recommendations

Education of both motorists and bicyclists can curtail unintentional infractions as well as promote other safe riding and driving practices. For bicyclists and motorist to safely coexist with each other, they need to understand the vehicle codes and regulations as well as develop good

principles of sharing the road. Education provides this knowledge to both users. Comprehensive bicycle safety education programs are designed for users to understand the common errors committed while riding bicycles.

At present, the River Valley Region is working on a continuous comprehensive bicycle safety education program which includes bicycling forums throughout the region, as well as on-street bicycle events which teach participants riding techniques, etiquette and safety (see list of events in appendix x). Through the coordinated efforts of a group of expert personnel, and persons or agencies including Bicycle Columbus, Sumter Cycling, Planning and Engineering departments, and Police Departments a bicycle program will be designed and implemented. In order to establish a foundation to advocate bicycle safety, local advocacy groups such as Bicycle Columbus and Sumter Cycling, local governments, Chambers of Commerce, SAFE KIDS, and Boards of Education will be contacted to assist in establishing the foundation needed to educate citizens in their community.

C. Law Enforcement Recommendations

Law enforcement is a necessary component of bicycle safety. Stricter enforcement can limit both intentional and unintentional infractions. As with any law, lack of enforcement leads to a general disregard of the law. Local police officers should be willing to enforce the motor vehicle code with bicyclists and motorists. There are practical problems in citing bicyclists, since they often lack positive identification, such as a driver's license. This is an issue that will be addressed in future educational programs implemented by RVRC staff and involved advocacy groups.

A way to resolve these practical problems is to have frequent contact

between local bicycle advisory committees, parks and recreational departments, and law enforcement to collaborate and highlight the need for enforcement in identified problem areas. Community education and support of enforcement efforts builds respect between bicyclists and motorists.

House Bill 101 – Better Bicycle Bill, enforces new rules for motorists such as the 3ft when passing and for cyclists to signalize their every turn and/or move. This bill is an initial tool for law enforcement, motorists and cyclists to follow the new rules.

D. Equipment Recommendations

There are several bicycle features which contribute to a rider’s ability to control his/her their movements:

- 🚲 **Size:** a bicycle must be properly fitted. If it is too small or too big, the rider will have trouble reacting properly when stopping, turning or accelerating. The wrong size bicycle is also uncomfortable, leading to fatigue.
- 🚲 **Brakes:** by law, brakes must be sufficiently powerful to enable a rider to bring a bicycle to a skid on dry pavement. Brake levers must be readily accessible.
- 🚲 **Tires:** must be in good condition and inflated to their recommended pressure.
- 🚲 **Fenders:** prevent lights and reflectors from getting dirty in wet weather.
- 🚲 **Luggage racks and panniers:** bicyclists should never attempt to carry loads in their arms while riding.
- 🚲 **Lights:** by law, when riding after dark, the bicycle or the rider must be equipped with a white

light visible at least 500 feet to the front and a red light or reflector visible at least 600 feet to the rear.

E. Riding Skills

Poor riding skills are one factor associated with bicycle crashes. However, there are many different factors to bicycle crashes, some involving motor vehicles. In riding a bicycle, one must have a good sense of balance. By looking ahead and to the sides, avoiding distractions, and by ensuring that one’s bike is in good working order, falls and collisions with fixed objects can be largely avoided. Many crashes with motor vehicles could be avoided if riders learned to better control their bicycles, pay more attention to their surroundings, and maneuver the bicycle to avoid collisions.

F. Helmets

Wearing a helmet does not reduce the chances of a crash, but can reduce the severity of injuries and even the possibility of a fatality. A properly worn bicycle helmet can reduce the severity of head injuries by up to 80%. The Columbus SAFE KIDS is a part of the National organization which promotes awareness campaigns aimed to increasing safety among children. The Columbus branch of SAFE KIDS Program is instrumental in providing education to children about the importance of bicycle safety and helmet use in the River Valley region. Proper fit is an important aspect of responsible helmet use. The Safe Routes to School Plan will also address safety issues for children who are walking and cycling to and from school.

Chart 1

Chart 1: River Valley Region 2000-2010 Bicycle Crash Data											
County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CHATTAHOOCHEE	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
CLAY	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
CRISP	4	3	6	5	8	2	6	6	4	1	1
DOOLY	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1
HARRIS	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
MACON	4	1	2	4	2		2		3	0	0
MARION	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
MUSCOGEE	37	50	32	32	29	30	44	33	18	36	23
QUITMAN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RANDOLPH	1	0	2	3	3	1	0	0	1	0	0
SCHLEY	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
STEWART	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUMTER	6	4	2	2	0	1	1	1	5	4	1
TALBOT	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
TAYLOR	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEBSTER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	56	64	50	47	45	37	55	42	36	42	27

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian crashes are the result of a collision with a motor vehicle. This is mostly due to the individual visual capability and perception. When a person trips and falls while walking, the resulting injury is rarely reported as a pedestrian crash. Most pedestrian crashes are the result of an attempt to cross a roadway. Fewer pedestrian crashes occur as pedestrians walk along a roadway.

Analysis of pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes can help establish engineering, education, and enforcement solutions. One important factor in all pedestrian crashes is speed.

Reducing traffic speeds not only reduces the severity of pedestrian crashes, but may also reduce their occurrence. Slower driving speeds decrease braking distances and reaction time. For instance, in each school zone located in the River Valley region all zones are designated by a flashing caution light indicating a speed of 25mph during posted morning and afternoon school hours.

All engineering, education and enforcement programs should include the reduction of speed as an important step in pedestrian safety. This does not necessarily mean reducing existing speed limits as much as ensuring that the current limits are observed and respected.

Long-term trends

A future trend may be a rise in the number and severity of pedestrian crashes with cars being built with more safety features, i.e. the isolation of sound. This could lead to pedestrians being invisible to or ignored by motorists. Pedestrian fatalities have been on the rise in the last few years. The statewide data collected by the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety and the Georgia Department of Transportation reveals the nature of crashes between pedestrians and motor vehicles in the River Valley region (see chart 2 pg. 20). As identified, there were 328 pedestrian crashes reported during 2004-2006 in the River Valley region.

A. Engineering Recommendations

Even though most pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes are caused by improper behavior, many improvements can be made to the roads to reduce the potential for crashes. If facilities are well-designed and pedestrians and motorists use them correctly, the likelihood of crashes will decrease.

The most important step transportation agencies can take is to design pedestrian facilities that enable motorists to clearly see pedestrians along the roadway and those preparing to cross the roadway. Pedestrians must be given opportunities to cross roadways with minimal conflicts with motor vehicles. Engineering solutions for the region are as listed:

- 🚲 The addition of sidewalks in urban areas and wider shoulders in rural areas.
- 🚲 Sidewalks separated from traffic with planter strips increasing pedestrian safety.
- 🚲 Include road improvement techniques including curbs.
- 🚲 Placement of signs reminding motorists of their duty to yield to pedestrians when they turn left or right.

Chart 2

River Valley Region 2004-2006 Pedestrian Crash Data			
County	2004	2005	2006
Chattahoochee	1	0	2
Clay	0	0	0
Crisp	9	10	11
Dooly	2	0	2
Harris	2	1	6
Macon	2	2	2
Marion	1	0	0
Muscogee	73	87	74
Quitman	0	0	0
Randolph	2	2	1
Schley	0	1	0
Stewart	7	2	0
Sumter	2	8	6
Talbot	3	1	2
Taylor	2	1	1
Webster	0	0	0

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation and Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle

A.1. Motorist Speeding

Although motorist speeding is usually considered an enforcement issue, there are many roadway design features that influence the speed at which motorists drive. Motorists will usually travel at speeds that seem appropriate for the roadway. Traffic calming measures can be used on local streets and minor collectors. On arterials and major collectors, there are features that can be incorporated that discourage excessive speeds i.e. trees along the road, narrower lanes, landscaping, bike lanes, etc (see figures 1-3).



Figure 1: Traffic Calming Street



Figure 2: Speed hump



Figure 3: Raised islands at intersection

B. Education Solutions

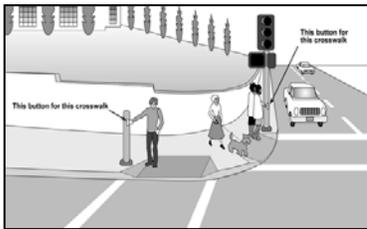


Figure 4: Pedestrian friendly crosswalk

Many pedestrian crashes are due to lack of knowledge of the rules pertaining to the right-of-way. More information should be made available to motorists resulting in their knowledge that pedestrians have the right-of-way at both marked and unmarked crosswalks. The consequences of excessive travel speeds must be made known to the motorists. Many do not understand traveling above the speed limit in residential areas can result in a fatal pedestrian crash.

Pedestrians must know how to safely cross streets. It should never be assumed that a signal guarantees safety. One should always look before crossing. The meaning of "WALK/DON'T WALK" electronic crossing signals is not clearly understood by all.

While there are many situations in which the pedestrian is technically at fault, more emphasis needs to be placed on the driver's responsibility because he or she is the one moving in a high-speed, heavy vehicle.

B. Enforcement Recommendations

Along with education, increased enforcement can have the greatest effect on pedestrian safety. The lack of consequences to motorists who run lights and stop signs or fail to yield at crosswalks is mostly due to the insufficient numbers of law enforcement officers dedicated to traffic enforcement.

Increased education efforts aimed at law enforcement officers can help them understand the severity of pedestrian infractions. Attitudes towards the relative severity of pedestrian crashes need to change among prosecutors and judges. Motorists often face little punishment following crashes that result in pedestrian injuries or deaths. The pedestrian is often assumed to be partially at fault for simply "being in the road." In order for motorists to change their behavior, the consequences of failing to yield to pedestrians in designated crosswalks needs to be more severe and better publicized.

BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Land Use

Many land use practices result in long distances between origin and destination points, requiring an automobile for most trips. Zoning for high densities of employment, housing and mixed-use development places origin and destination points closer together, creating a more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment. This can be done more easily in new developments, but can also be retrofitted into established areas with neighborhood commercial zoning.

Connecting Streets

Disconnected streets and cul-de-sacs create long travel distances, even though the actual distance from origin to destination may be fairly short, making walking and bicycling impractical. A gridded street system provides continuity for pedestrians and bicyclists along the shortest routes. If gridded street patterns do not exist, disconnected streets can be improved with connecting paths.

Street Crossings

Wide multi-lane roadways are difficult to cross on foot. Crossing opportunities can be provided with techniques such as raised medians, refuge islands, curb extensions and pedestrian signals, where appropriate.

Intersections

Intersections built for the movement of motor vehicles can be very difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross. A network of streets with sidewalks and bike lanes does not fully accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists if intersections present obstacles. Improvements for pedestrians include refuge islands, shorter crossing distances, reduced curb radii, crossings at right angles and slower traffic speeds. At busy interchanges, grade-separation for bicyclists and pedestrians may be needed.

Access Management

Every driveway creates conflicts for pedestrians and bicyclists. One component of access management deals with the number of driveways connecting to the road. Reducing the number of driveways and limiting access from one or more directions improves pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort.

Suburbs

Suburbs create an environment that is somewhat conducive to walking or bicycling. Most suburbs are within an urban growth boundary. In suburban areas planning for bicycle and pedestrian travel should be considered. Many enhancements other than providing bikeways and walkways are needed to make a suburban environment more conducive to bicycling and walking:

-  Providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access to employment, recreation, and educational centers;
-  Redesigning parking lots to allow better pedestrian access and circulation;
-  Providing safe crossings of multi-lane roads;
-  Encouraging land-use patterns that place origin and destination points within reasonable walking and bicycling distance;
-  Connecting cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets with streets or paths.

Section IV: Existing Condition Analysis

The River Valley region's current bicycle and pedestrian system is comprised of 15 routes totaling approximately 284.7 miles in length. Of these 15 routes, 5 are on state routes, and comprise approximately 235 miles of the region's 284.7 miles of bike paths. The remaining 10 routes are existing bicycle and pedestrian trails and pathways throughout the region totaling approximately 55.7 miles. **Table 1** shows the total mileage of each route and trail.

The facilities in the region include sidewalks, crosswalks, paved shoulders, and bike lanes already incorporated the current transportation system. These facilities also include 14 miles of the Columbus River Walk (multi-use shared path) and 7 miles of the Columbus Fall Line Trace (multi-use shared path). Cyclists are able to access all state route facilities. This however, does not include interstate highways throughout the region. Existing and planned bicycle facilities are described in the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan summary shown in **Table 3**.

Figure 1 shows the entire River Valley region Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities. This map is intended to show the existing routes and trails within the River Valley region.

The majority of the River Valley region is rural with the exception of the City of Columbus. Cycling and walking as a means of non-motorized transportation is limited because travel distances tend to be lengthy. In addition to length, rural communities in the region do not have adequate roadways and pedestrian facilities to provide for bicycle and pedestrian activity in their community.

Columbus, however, is able to accommodate non-motorized transportation for bicyclists and pedestrians. Serving as the regional

center for the River Valley region, Columbus has a higher population density and can therefore provide many opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian activity. Continuous improvements of existing streets in both Midtown and Uptown that incorporate sidewalks into residential developments, and the continued growth of educational institutions is leading to a greater interest in cycling and walking as an alternative transportation method. However, just as in the rural communities, most commuters depend on motorized transportation as a means of getting to and from their destination.

As rural communities strive for growth, many once quiet streets could someday carry large volumes of high-speed traffic, with no pedestrian or bicycle facilities thus discouraging many people from using these modes. Currently, it is not evident that traffic will increase in the rural communities; however, various cities within our region provide the potential for more traffic volume with U.S. and state highways running through their communities.

With the possibility of growth and development within the region, road improvement projects by GDOT and commercial/ residential development can provide opportunities to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Providing good bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region will encourage many more people to use an alternative mode of transportation whether it is primarily for commuting or recreational use. Furthermore, good bicycle and pedestrian facilities enhance opportunities for economic growth, tourism, improving the quality of life, and reducing the wear and tear on roadways throughout the region. Retrofitting these streets by providing good facilities and meeting ADA compliance will make the accessibility to bicyclists and pedestrians more encouraging

Table 1
Route Mileage
Total for River Valley Region

Route –Trail Number and Name	Total Mileage
5-Chattahoochee Trace	148.1
40-TransGeorgia GA HWY96	72.7
45- Little White House	18.8
15-Central Route US. 41/GA 7	38
Columbus Riverwalk	14
Discovery Bicycle Trail @ Callaway Gardens	10
Pine Moutain	
Harris County Palmetto Creek Pedestrian and Biking Trail	4.6
Pine Mountain Trail Hiking	23
Shellman Walking Trail	1
Shiloh Walking Trail	1
Waverly Hall Walking Trail	1
Woodland Pedestrian and Bike Trail	1
Phenomenon Trail, Clay County	6
Columbus Fall Line Trace (Rail-to-trails)	7
Walking/Hiking trail GA Vet. Memorial Park - Crisp County	1
Columbus Fall Line Trace	11
Sum Totals in miles	350.7

Table 2
Existing and Future Facility Miles

Existing Facilities		Future Facilities		Total
Off-Road	On-Road	Off-Road	On-Road	
55.7 miles	166 miles	6.37 miles*	75 miles*	273.07 miles

* Proposed Future Off-Road Facilities
Fort Gaines Phenomenon Trail, Fort Gaines, GA – 6 miles

* Proposed Future On-Road Facilities
Columbus RiverLink
State Hwy. 315 – Ellerslie, GA to Talbot, GA
State Hwy. 116 – Hamilton, GA to Woodland, GA
State Hwy. 39 – U.S. Hwy 27 to Omaha, GA
U.S. Hwy. 82 – Cuthbert, GA to Shellman, GA
State Hwy 280 – from Andersonville to Americus to Plains, GA & Webster Co.

Table 3
Existing Facilities
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Name of Project	Date of Plan/Completion	Status	Length in Miles	Brief Summary of Plan
Columbus, GA Riverwalk	1994	Majority Complete	14	Multi-use path developed by Columbus Consolidated Government; extends from Lake Oliver Marina to Fort Benning with the exception of connecting some central portions. This is currently in the planning stages.
Columbus, GA Fall Line Trace	2011	Majority complete	11	A rails-to-trails project developed by the Columbus Consolidated Government. Consists of three phases. Phase I 14 th St. Bridge to Columbus State University (CSU), Phase II from CSU to Cooper Creek Park, Phase III from Copper Creek Park to Psalmound Road. \$12.5 million total investment.
Discovery Bicycle Trail – Pine Mountain, GA	1989	Complete	10	Located on the grounds of Callaway Gardens used for biking/walking.
Harris County, GA Palmetto Creek Pedestrian and Biking Trail	2006	In design phase	4.6	Multi-use trail that will run from a park behind the Hamilton City Hall to the Harris County Agriplex in Pine Mountain Valley
Pine Mountain, GA Trail	1975	Complete	23	Nature walking trail that begins 6 miles north of Hamilton and ends at Dowdel Knob in Warm Springs
Phenomenon Trail, Clay County, GA	2014	Complete	6	Multi-use trail beginning at Bagby State Park and ending at the city limits of the city of Fort Gaines, GA.
Shellman, GA Walking Trail	1999	Complete	1	Walking trail located in central Shellman that includes picnic areas and lighting. The City plans to enhance this trail with lighting and benches.
Shiloh, GA Walking Trail	2002	Completed	1	Walking trail located in central Shiloh that the City plans to enhance with paving, lighting, and benches.
Waverly Hall, GA Village Green Walking Trail	1996	Complete	1	Walking trail located in central Waverly Hall that is paved and includes lighting, benches, and trash receptacles.
Woodland, GA Pedestrian and Bike Trail	2004	Complete	1	Pedestrian and bike trail in the City of Woodland extending from the park behind City Hall to the Woodland Recreation Center that included ADA accessible improvements for the recreation center. This trail allows an alternative to citizens as a means to access the recreation area without the use of automobiles.
Crisp County, GA Hospital Trail		Complete		Walking and jogging track

Williams Field Athletic Complex, Cordele, GA		Complete		Walking and Jogging Track
Harmon Park – Cordele, GA		Complete		Walking and jogging track
Turner Park, Cordele, GA		Complete		Walking and jogging track
Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park – Lake Blackshear, Crisp County, GA		Complete	1.5	Yucca trace walking/jogging trail and lake shore natural trails.
Jewel Bowen Park – Unadilla, GA		Complete		Walking/jogging trail
Whitewater Creek Park – Montezuma, GA		Complete		Walking/nature trail
Buck Creek Bypass Park – Oglethorpe, GA		Complete		Walking/Jogging trail
W. L. Walton “Boone” Park – Americus, GA		Complete		Walking Trail
Liberty Street Park – Reynolds, GA		Complete		Walking and Jogging track

These existing plans and facilities will be used as a foundation for developing proposed improvements relating to these existing plans (i.e. enhancing or extending bicycle and pedestrian trails.) These facilities will also be used in supporting the interconnectivity of proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the region.

Section V – Proposed Facilities

Minimum Grid | Maximum Impact Project Winner of the Knight Cities Challenge 2015 -Midtown Columbus, GA

The Minimum Grid project reimagines how we connect people and the distinctive places that we love, the places that define our community.

Working with the team from Gehl has been eye-opening and affirming. A great outcome of the project has been the opportunity to partner locally, to grow local connections and friendships, and to see community assets and opportunities with fresh perspective, together.

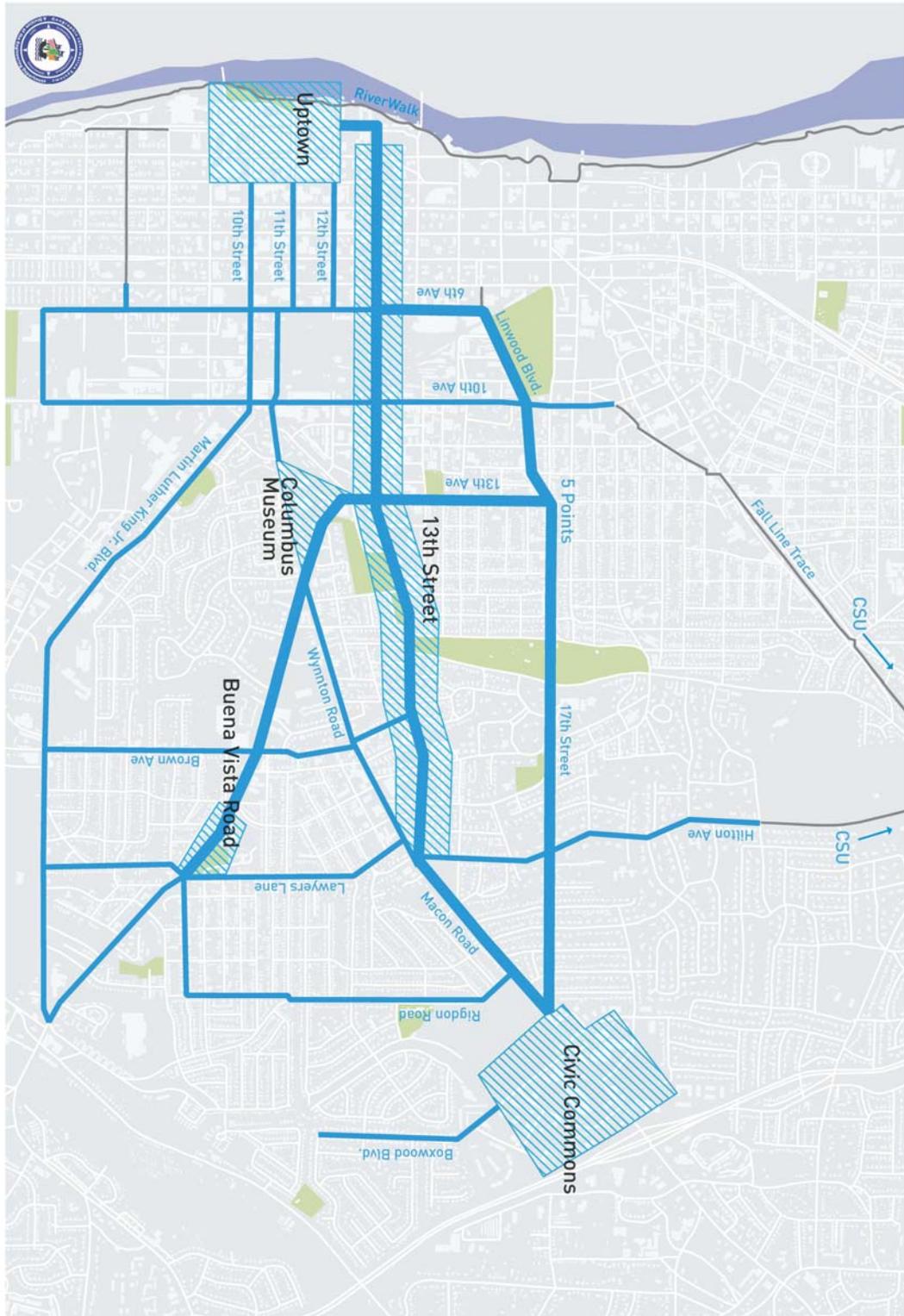
The Minimum Grid project has been guided by the board and staff of MidTown, Inc. and a local leadership team that includes Richard Bishop, President of Uptown Columbus, Inc.; Betsy Covington, CEO of the Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley; City Manager Isaiah Hugley; and Julio Portillo, Regional Community and Bicycle-Pedestrian Planner for the River Valley Regional Commission. The Minimum Grid proposal itself was bolstered by support from State Representative Calvin Smyre, Mayor Teresa Tomlinson and GDOT District 3 Representative Sam Wellborn, who continue to champion this initiative. Hundreds of citizens, students, leaders from partner organizations, and staff from the City, GDOT, CSU and the MCSD have participated, observed, surveyed, listened, questioned, affirmed, advised and informed the process and resulting recommendations. Thank you, all, for imagining a more connected Core Community.

Findings and Proposed project

Columbus wants to attract and retain more residents. Creating streets and public spaces that support more public life which is reflective of everyone who lives in the city is increasingly seen as a good place to start. From residents to local businesses to city agencies, there is a growing desire to connect people and places, and to create a **Minimum Grid** that demonstrates streets for people - to walk, bike, wait for transit, drive, or spend time.

Creating invitations to attract and retain more residents can start now. With pilot and demonstration projects, city and civic leaders can test how to make context sensitive designs and programs that reflect the local climate and the local desires and behaviors of Columbus residents.

Minimum Grid Project Map



Columbus RiverLink Proposed Project

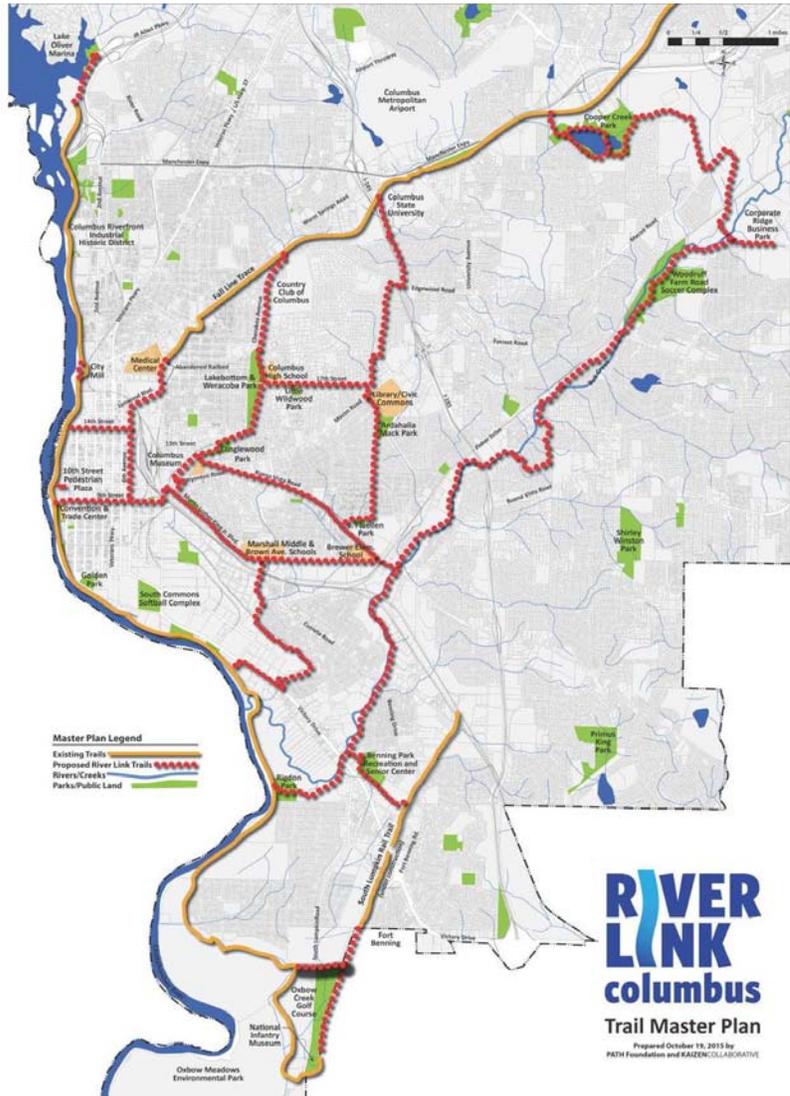
Since its completion, the Chattahoochee RiverWalk and the Fall Line Trace trail users have been left to negotiate their way along the busy city streets with no protection from motorists when travelling from one of these trails to the other. This project proposes a safe, desirable and feasible way to connect these trails and create a seamless twenty-five mile long trail.

The proposed route will utilize remnants of the abandoned rail, right-of-way, and a sliver of cemetery property, along with pedestrian signal phases at busy cross streets and enhanced crosswalks to make the connection. The proposed project separates trail users from vehicular traffic and beautifies the entire route with landscaping and trail amenities.

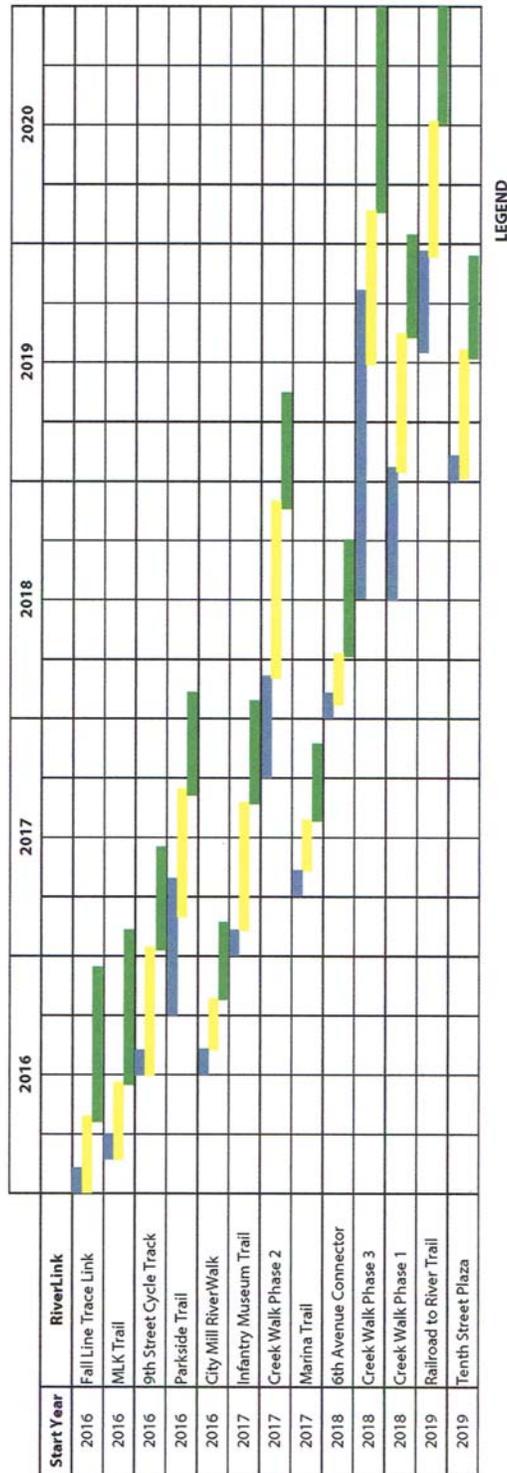
This connection will provide access to the Chattahoochee RiverWalk from all of North Columbus, Columbus State University, Columbus Country Club and the Medical Center. Proposed trails through Cooper Creek Park and Lakebottom and Weracoba Park will give even more citizens access to downtown and the RiverWalk using this connection.

Columbus RiverLink Proposed Project Map

Columbus' Draft Plan:
26.6 Miles
By 2021



RiverLink Proposed Timeline



Section VI – Safe Routes to School



The River Valley Regional Commission, through its contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation, assists its local communities in developing a Safe Routes to School Plan as well as Walk/Bicycle Audits for middle and elementary schools. The RVRC also serves as a regional aid for the Safe Routes to School Resource Center in further developing Safe Routes to School initiatives within our sixteen county region.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program created by the Federal Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU. The Program's goal is to increase the number of children in grades K-8 who bicycle and walk to school. The Program's enabling legislation guides how this will be implemented: 1) by increasing awareness; 2) developing locally-driven and supported programs; 3) by improving bicycling and walking conditions near the qualifying schools; and 4) by evaluating at the project and program levels. The program has many benefits including reduced congestion and increased safety near participating schools reduced air pollution in route to and near participating schools; and increased physical activity of children.

The River Valley Regional Commission has been able to develop a strong partnership within schools in the region and State Safe Routes to School Program. These efforts have resulted in two projects being funded for infrastructure improvements including new and improved sidewalk, road crossings, Refuge Island and adequate signage. Promoting bike-ability and walk-ability is a top priority of the program as well as of the River Valley Regional Commission, we look to achieve this, by continuing to work with schools in urban and rural areas, help plan for International Walk to School Day, provide safety related workshops and bicycle rodeos at no cost to the schools and provide all the tools necessary for school officials, parents, teachers and students to thrive in developing their programs.

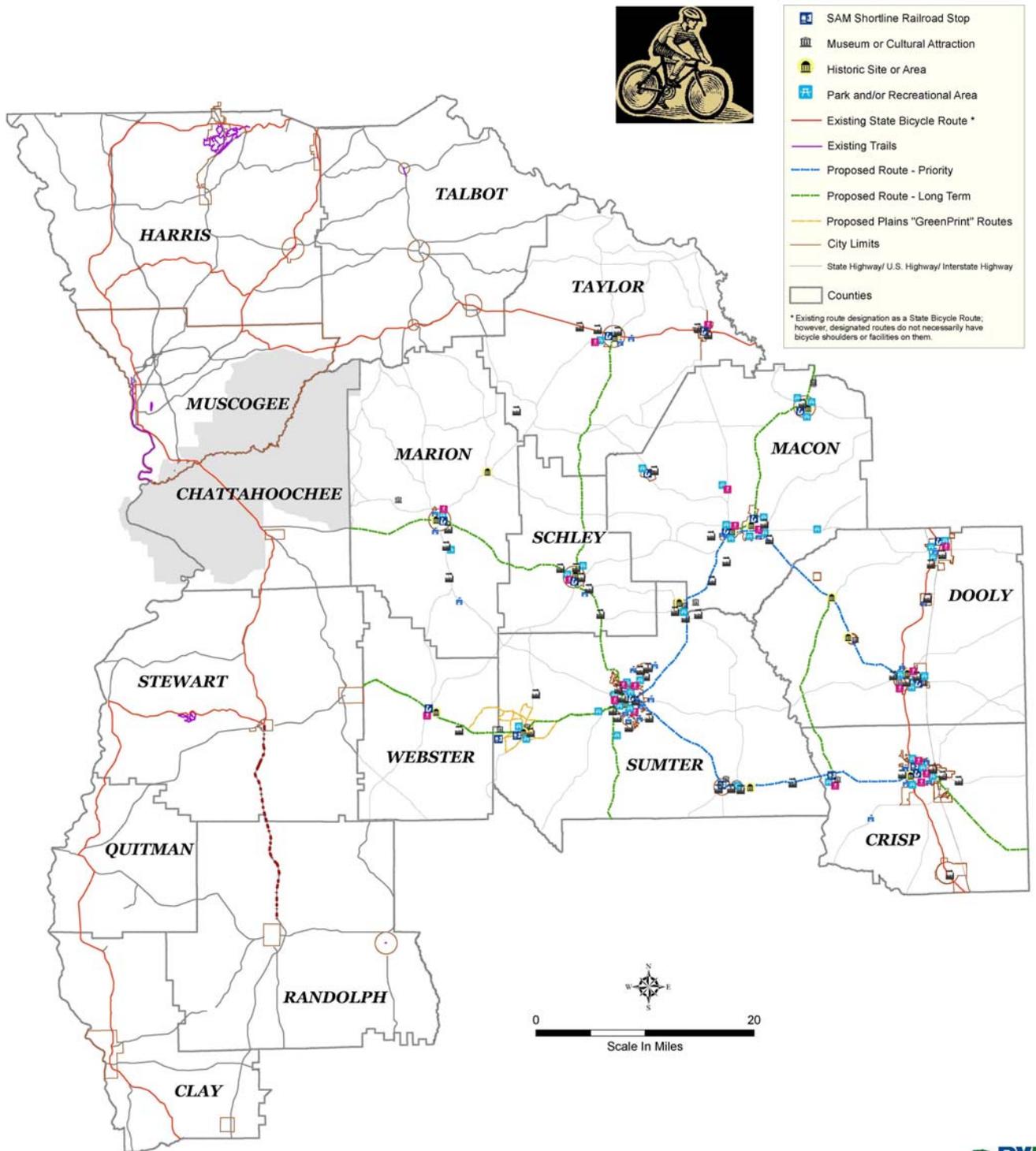
Safe Routes to School is a comprehensive program that includes the **5 Es**:

1. **Evaluation** - Monitoring and researching outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of mode share before and after the program intervention(s)
2. **Encouragement** - Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling
3. **Education** - Teaching the school community about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing schools the importance of life-long safety skills and offering school-bound and school area driver safety campaigns
4. **Engineering** - Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and establishing safer crosswalks, walkways, trails and bikeways
5. **Enforcement** - Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure drivers obey traffic laws, initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs and ensuring that policies are enforced.

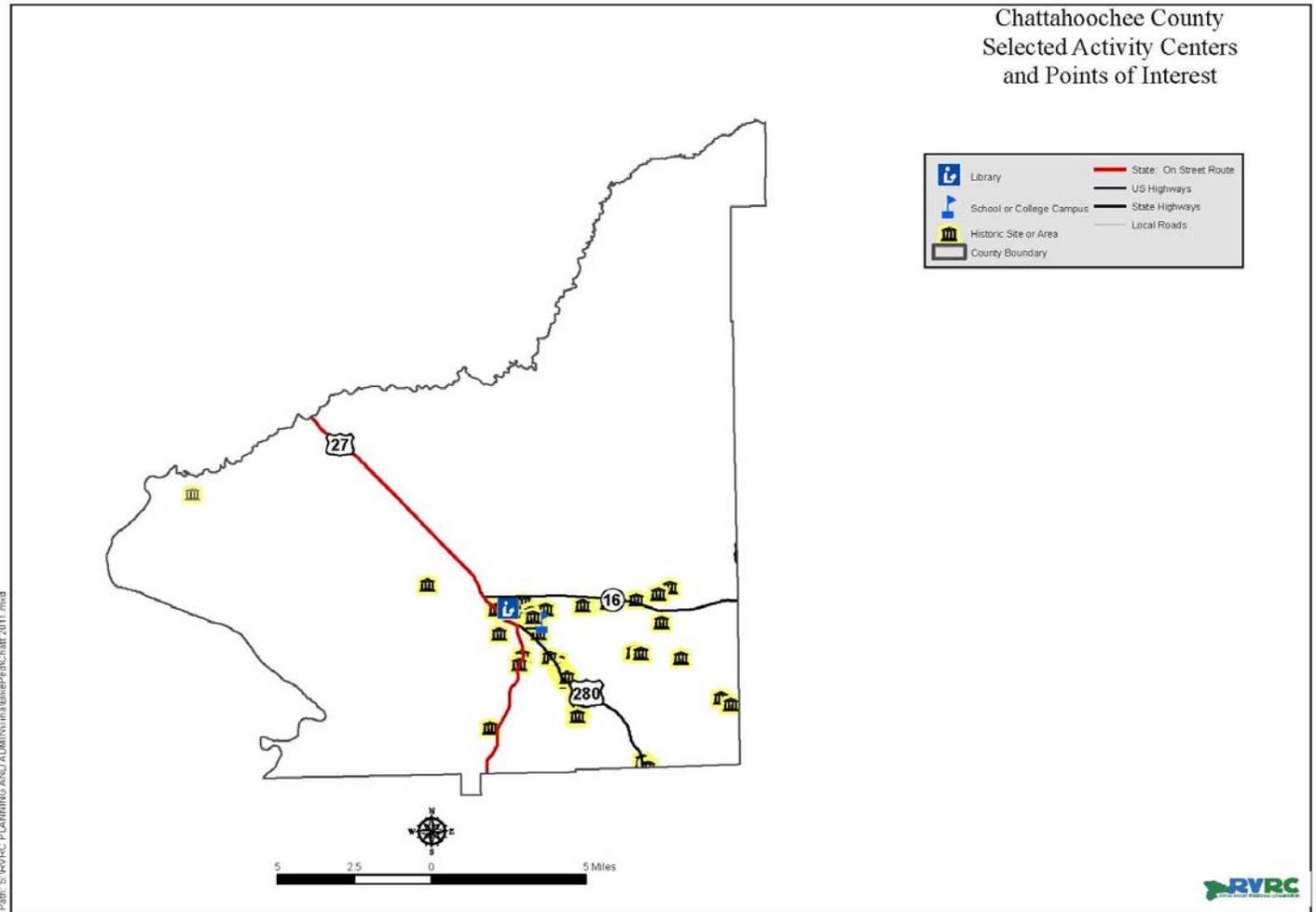
RVRC Safe Routes to School Plans include:

- FY 2007 – Marshall Middle School, Columbus, GA.
- FY 2008 – Chattahoochee Education Center, Cusseta, GA. *Project funded.*
- FY 2009 – Clubview Elementary IB School, Columbus, GA. *Project funded.*
- FY 2010 – Clay County Elementary and Middle School, Fort Gaines, GA.
- FY 2010 – Blackshear Trail Elementary School, Cordele, GA.
- FY 2011 – Taylor County Primary, Elementary and Middle School, Butler, GA.
- FY 2011 – Southwestern Elementary, Fort Gaines, GA.
- FY 2012 – Georgetown Elementary and Middle, Georgetown, GA.
- FY 2012 – Midtown Columbus Safe Routes Project (6 schools), Columbus, GA.
- FY 2013 – Randolph County Elementary School, Cuthbert, GA.
- FY 2014 – Macon County Middle School, Montezuma, GA.
- FY 2015 – Schley County Elementary, Ellaville, GA
- FY 2016 – Furlow Charter School, Americus, GA (Walk Audit only).

Figure 1
Regional and County maps for Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

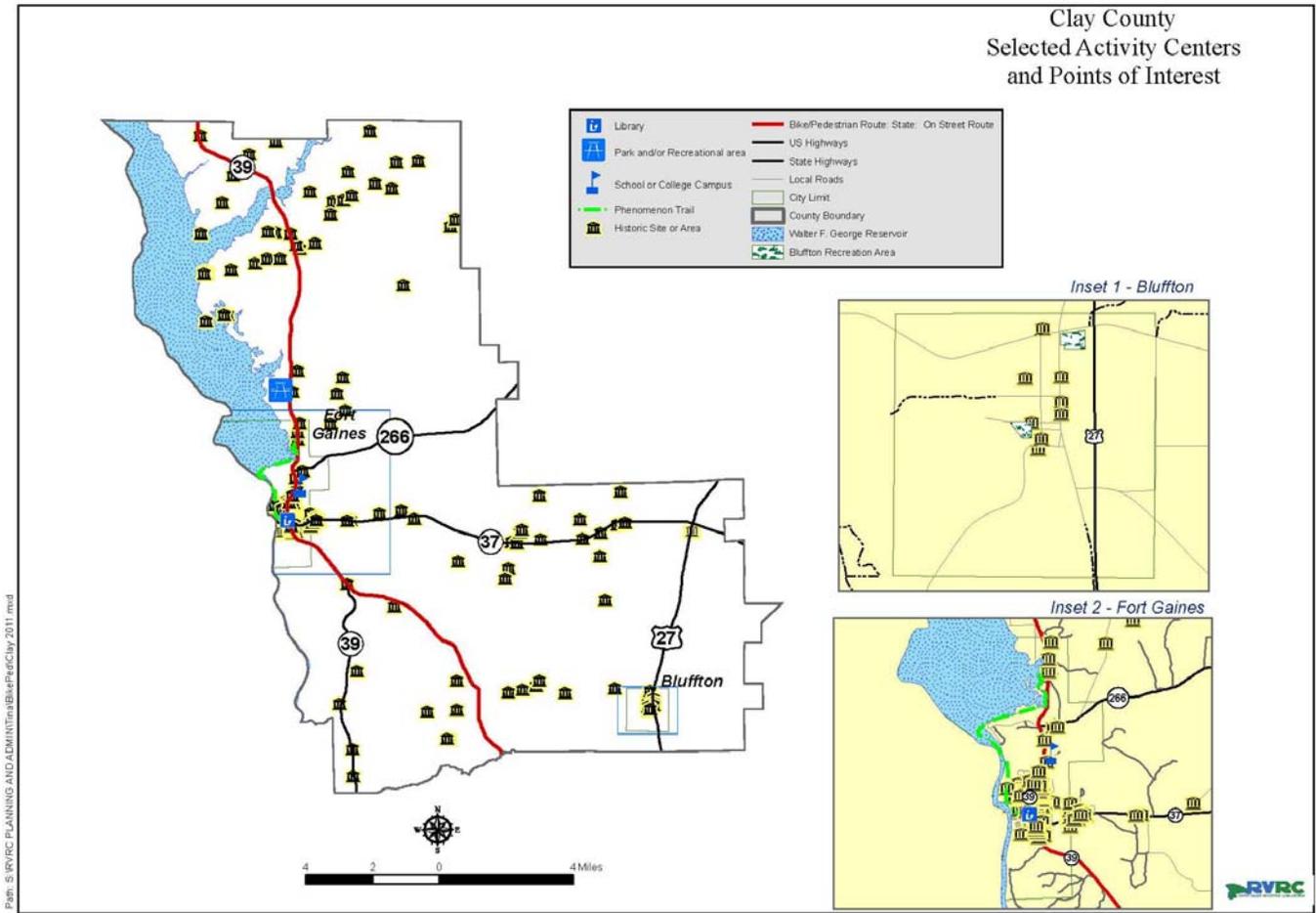


Cuseta-Chattahoochee County Proposed and Existing Facilities



River Bend Park is located in beautiful Cuseta, Georgia. It is a public access facility on the shores of Lake Walter F. George formally ran and maintained by the Army Corp of Engineers until 2002 when Chattahoochee County signed a 25 year lease of the park. The habitat consists of open water intermixed on the north side with small vegetated islands. The uplands are forested with mixed pines and hardwoods. Enjoy boating, canoeing, bird watching and picnicking at this beautiful state park.

Clay County Existing and Proposed Facilities

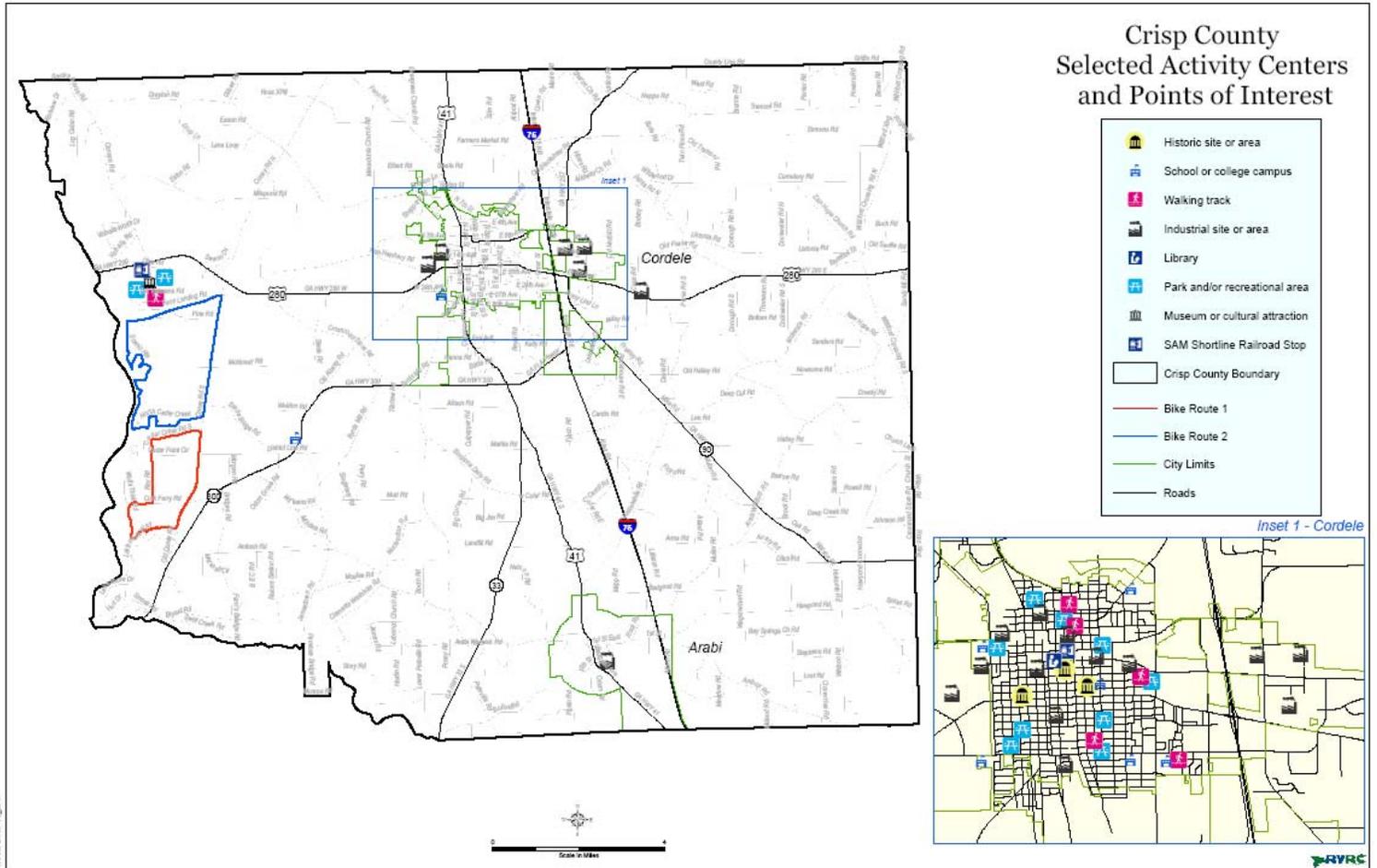


Plan: S:\RVRC PLANNING AND ADMIN\Intra\BluffPedClay 2011.mxd

Cycling: [George T. Bagby State Park](#) and Lodge offers bicycle rentals that can be used for the park's nature trails.

Hiking/Walking: George T. Bagby State Park and Lodge also offers 3 miles of hiking trails that wind through several hardwoods and pines. Hikers should expect to see an abundance of wildlife while hiking this trail.

Crisp County Existing and Proposed Facilities

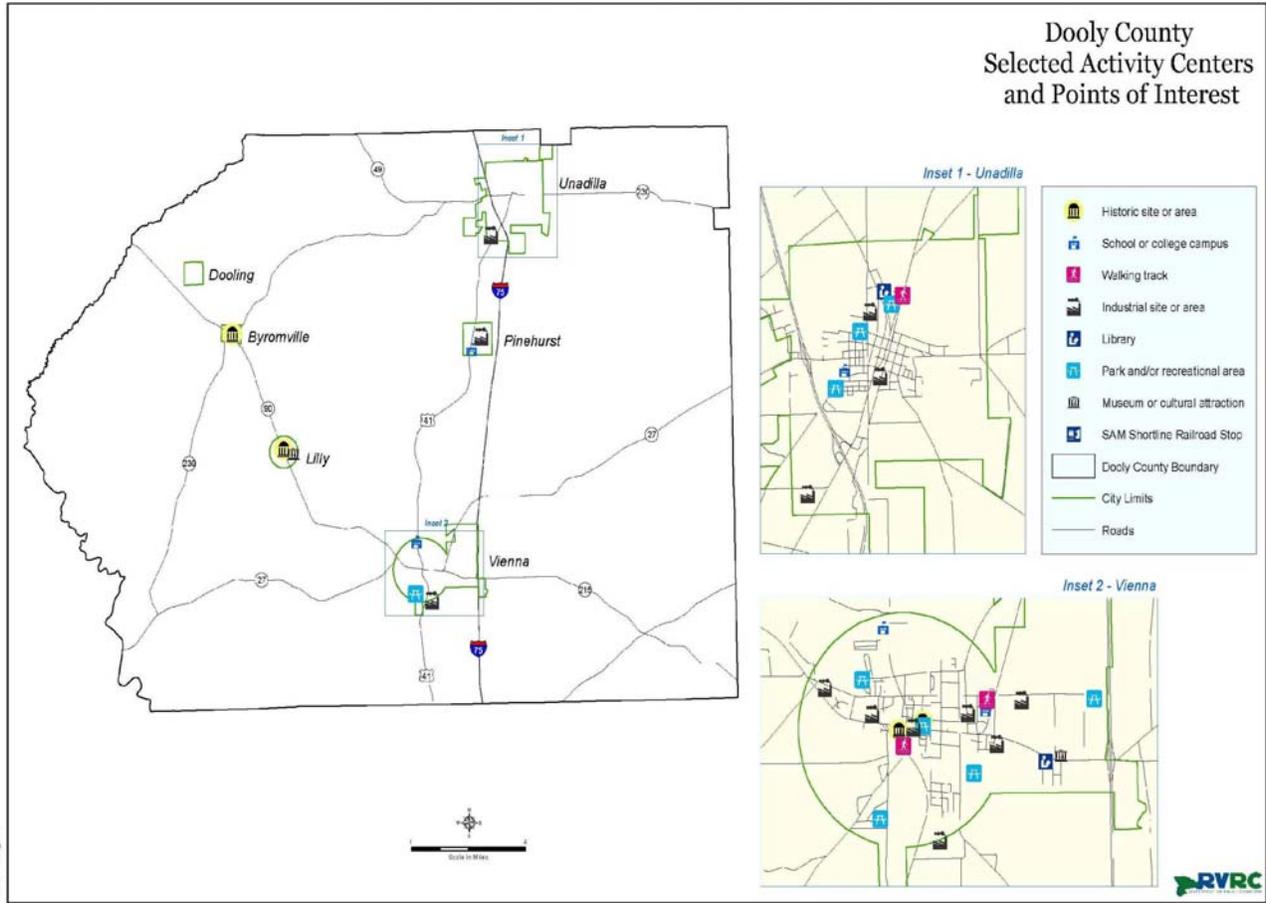


Crisp County was created in 1905 from territory formerly belonging to Dooly County. It was named for Charles Frederick Crisp, a jurist, and Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives between 1891 and 1893.

Cordele, the county seat, was a "child of the railroad" having built up at a junction of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroads. It was named for the daughter of the railroad's president.

Crisp County became the first county in the nation to own and operate its own electrical power plant. It was started in 1930, with Lake Blackshear on the Flint River providing its power source.

Dooly County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Dooly County, the 48th county formed in Georgia, was created in 1821. It was one of the original land lot counties and was later divided to make Crisp and parts of Macon, Pulaski, Turner, Wilcox, and Worth counties.

The county was named for Colonel John Dooly, a revolutionary war hero who helped prosecute Tories in 1779 and was murdered by them the following year. Vienna (pronounced vye-en-na locally), the county seat, was named after the capital of Austria.

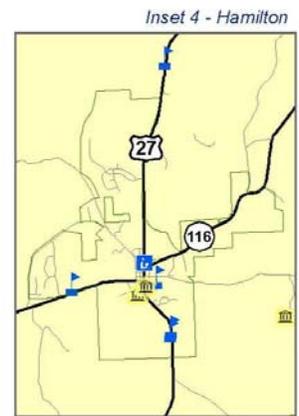
Historic sites in the county include the Dooly County Courthouse. Built in 1891 of granite, slate, and brick, the structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Dooly Campground, which was built in 1875, is an open-air tabernacle constructed with hand-hewn timbers that still hosts many community activities.

Harris County Existing and Proposed Facilities

Harris County Selected Activity Centers and Points of Interest



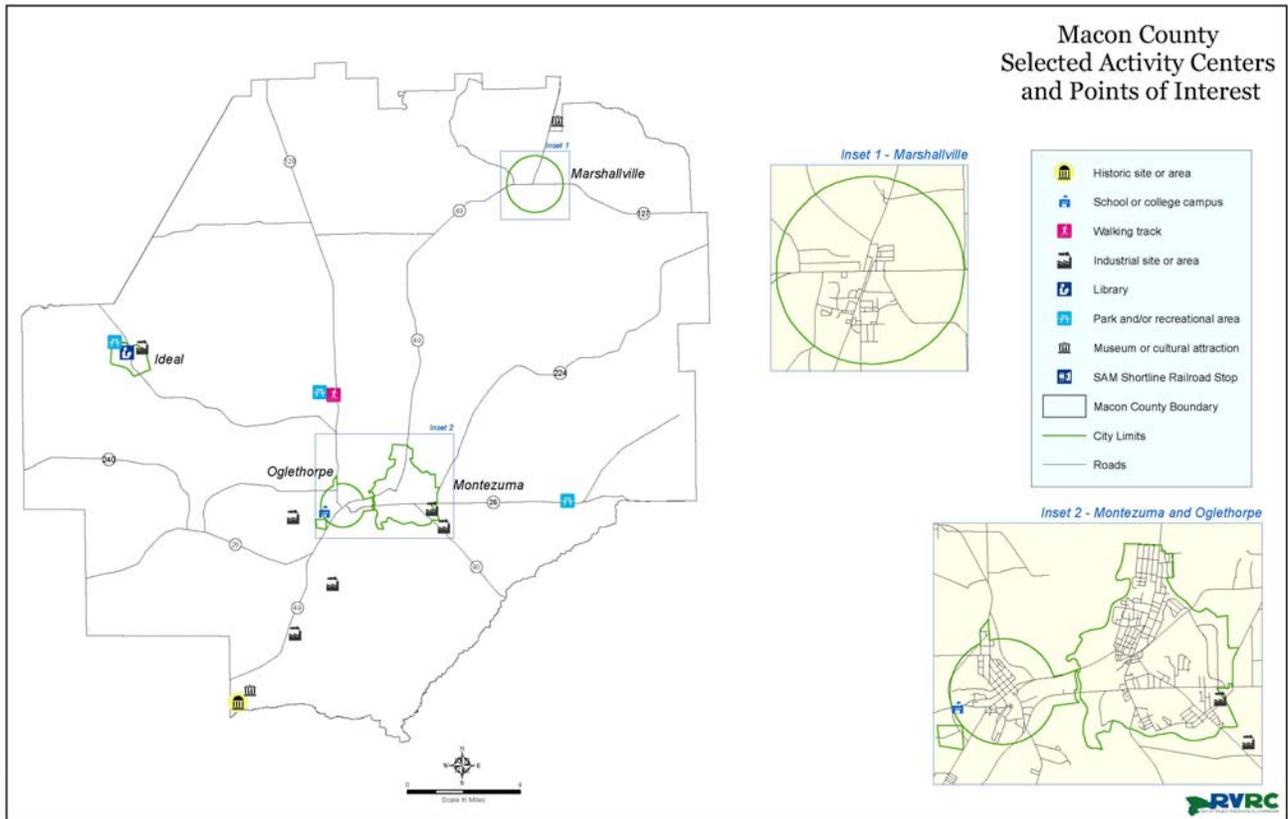
	County Boundary		Interstate Hwy
	Library		US Highways
	Bike/Pedestrian Route: State On Street Route		State Highways
	Park and/or Recreational area		Local Roads
	School or College Campus		Historic Site or Area
	TrailsGreenWays		City Limit



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Macon County Existing and Proposed Facilities

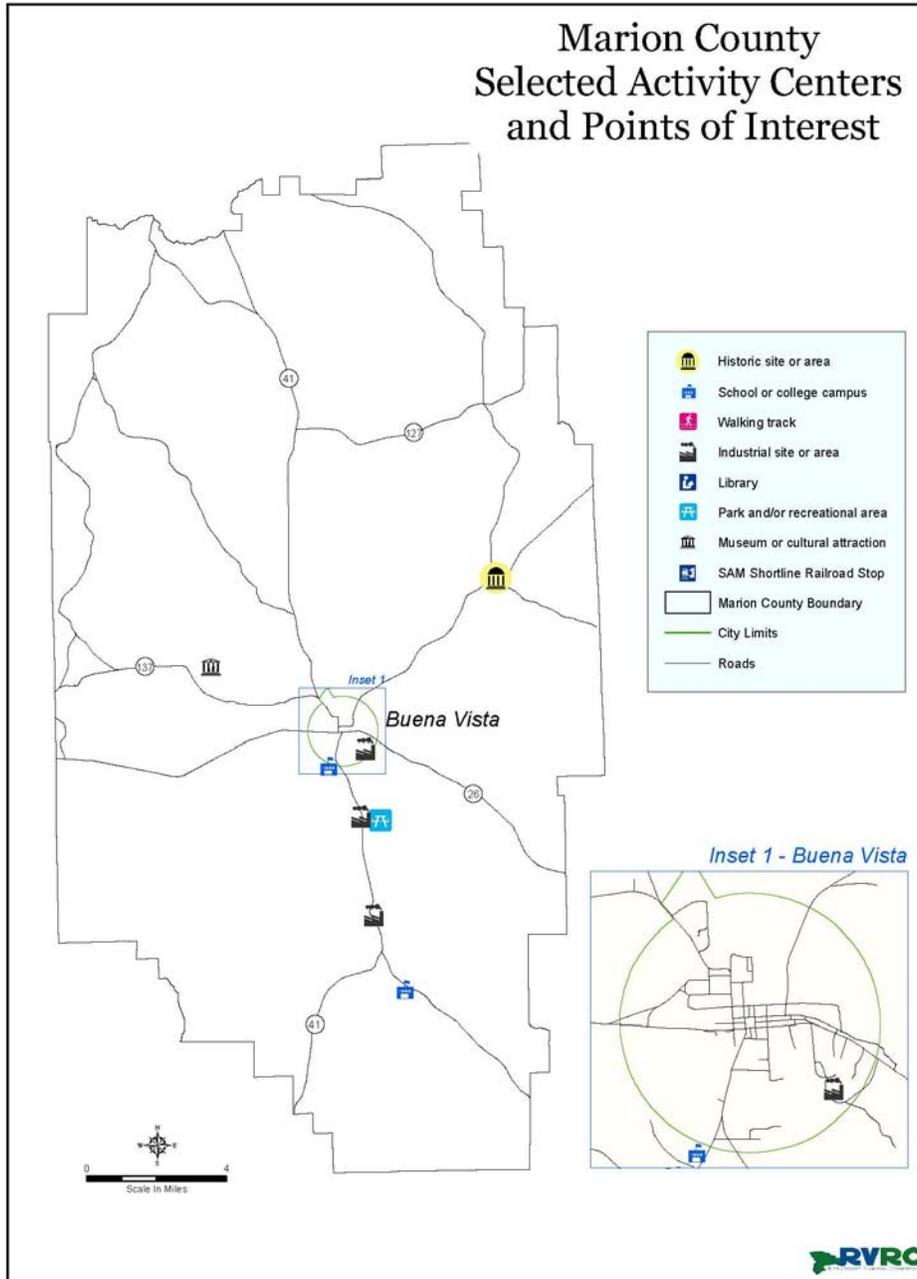


Macon County is named in honor of General Nathaniel Macon, a North Carolina statesman and president pro tempore of the U.S. Senate. Macon County was carved from Houston and Marion counties in 1837.

Andersonville National Cemetery and Park is in the southwest tip of Macon County. Approximately 45,000 Union soldiers were imprisoned here during the Civil War, with 13,000 perishing from hunger and disease.

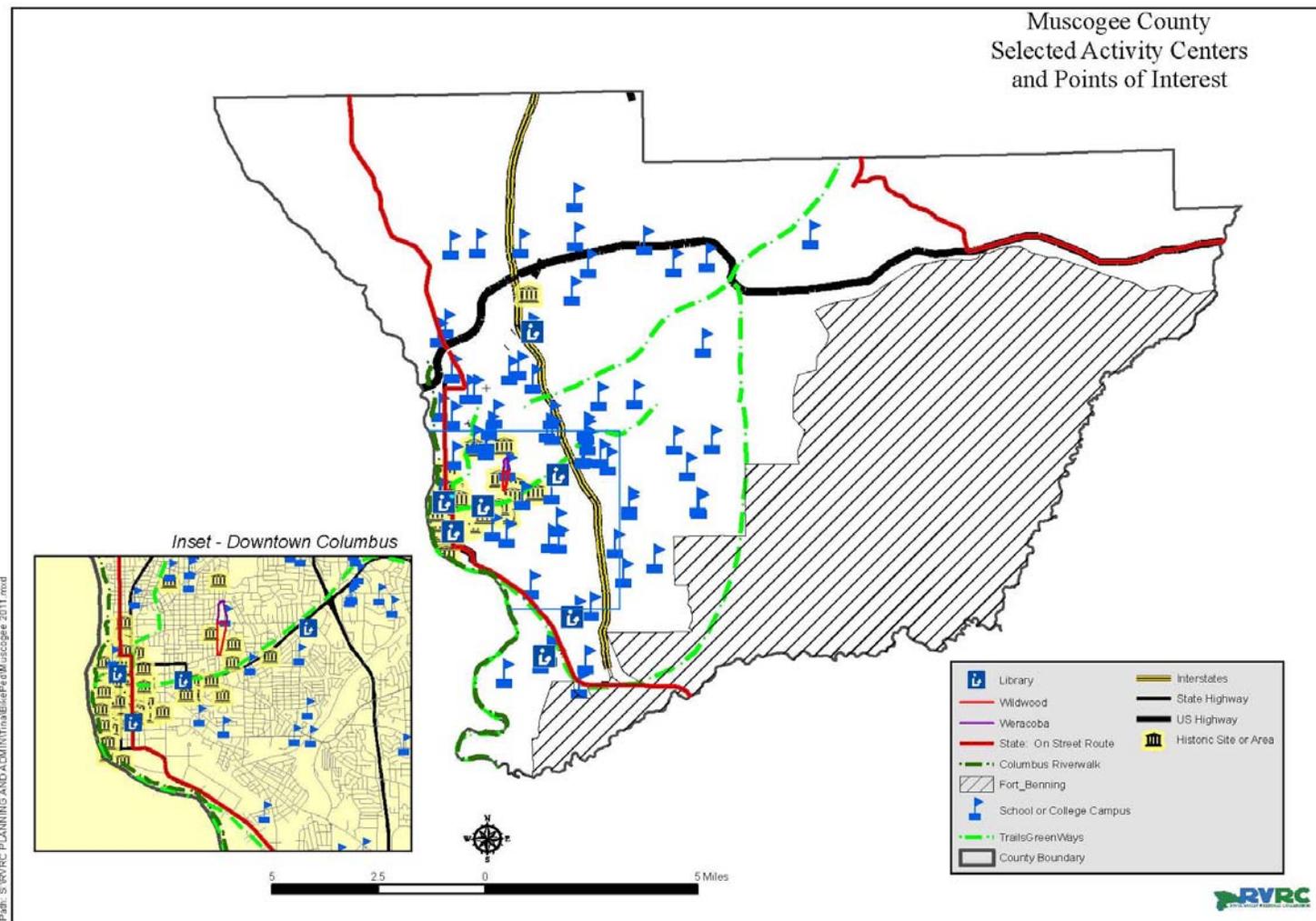
The City of Montezuma was named for the Aztec leader by soldiers returning from the Mexican War.

Marion County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Marion County was created in 1827. Georgia's 72nd county was named for the Revolutionary War hero General Francis Marion. Known as the "Swamp Fox," Marion campaigned successfully against the British in South Carolina. Fort Perry was built in Marion County by General John Floyd, on the old Alabama Road. It was named in honor of the hero of the Lake Erie Battle in 1812.

Columbus-Muscogee County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Cycling

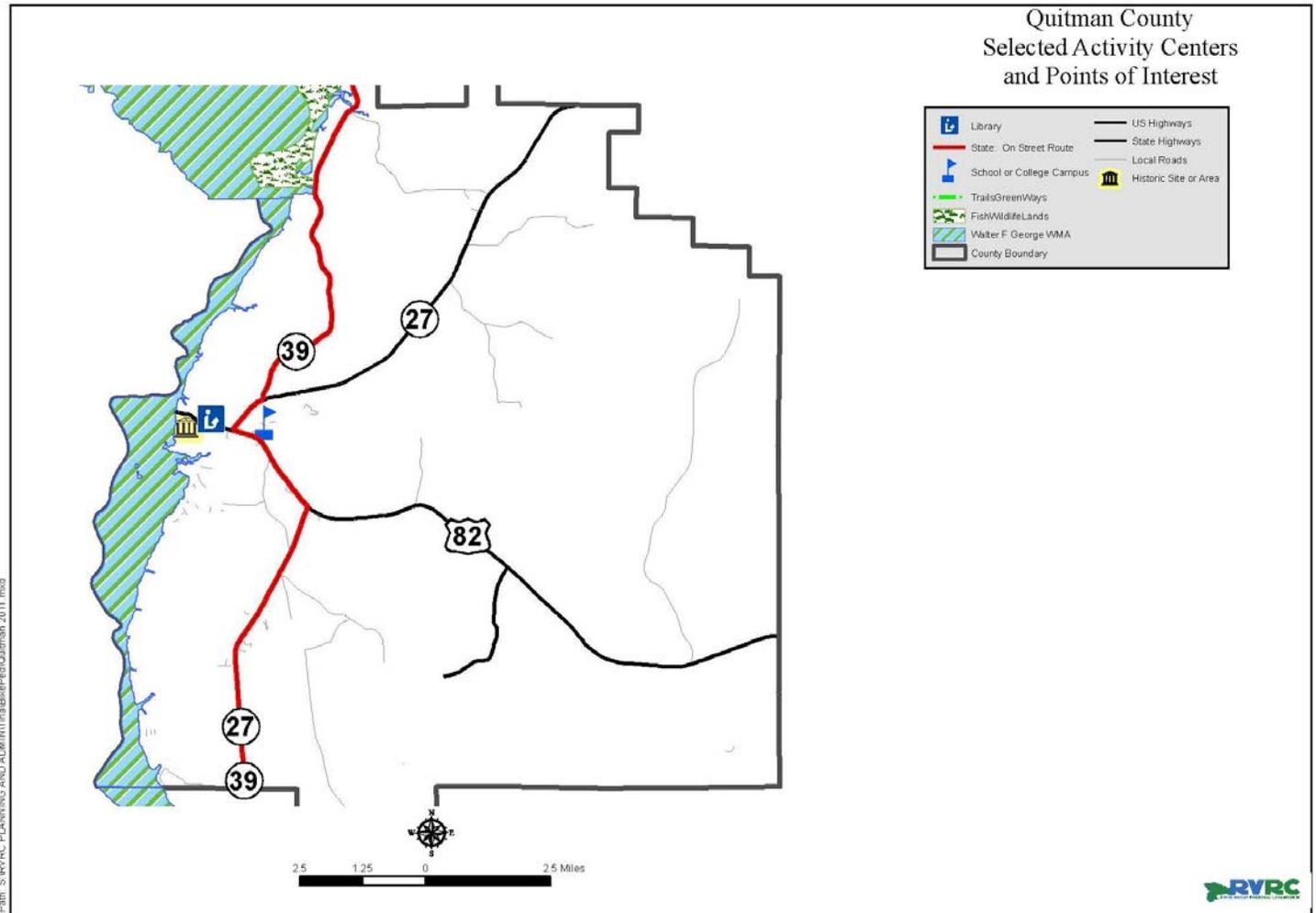
The new **Fall Line Trace** (Rails-to-Trails) system goes from Harris County all the way to the Doctor's Hospital downtown. This trail connects Downtown Columbus with Columbus State University, the Doctor's Hospital, Peachtree Mall, and several city parks and public schools.

The **Columbus Riverwalk** is one of Muscogee County's greatest assets. Spanning 15 miles along the beautiful Chattahoochee River, the Riverwalk is enjoyed by cyclists and runners alike.

Mountain Biking

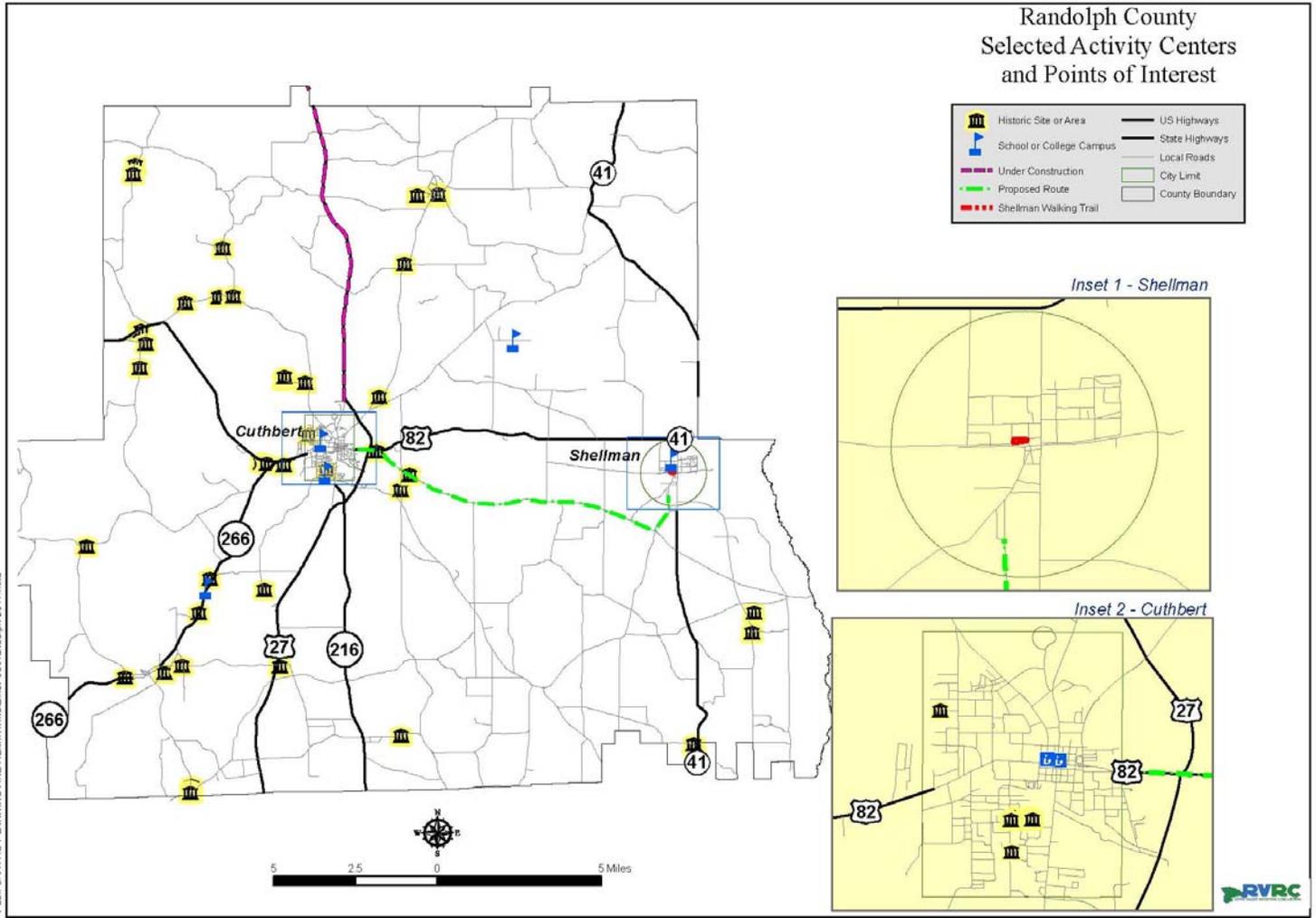
Flat Rock Park Mountain Bike Trail - The Flat Rock Trail consists of one large loop with sub-segments of which can be ridden independently. The segments have been combined to create 4 color-coded routes of varying lengths and difficulty level.

Georgetown-Quitman Existing and Proposed Facilities



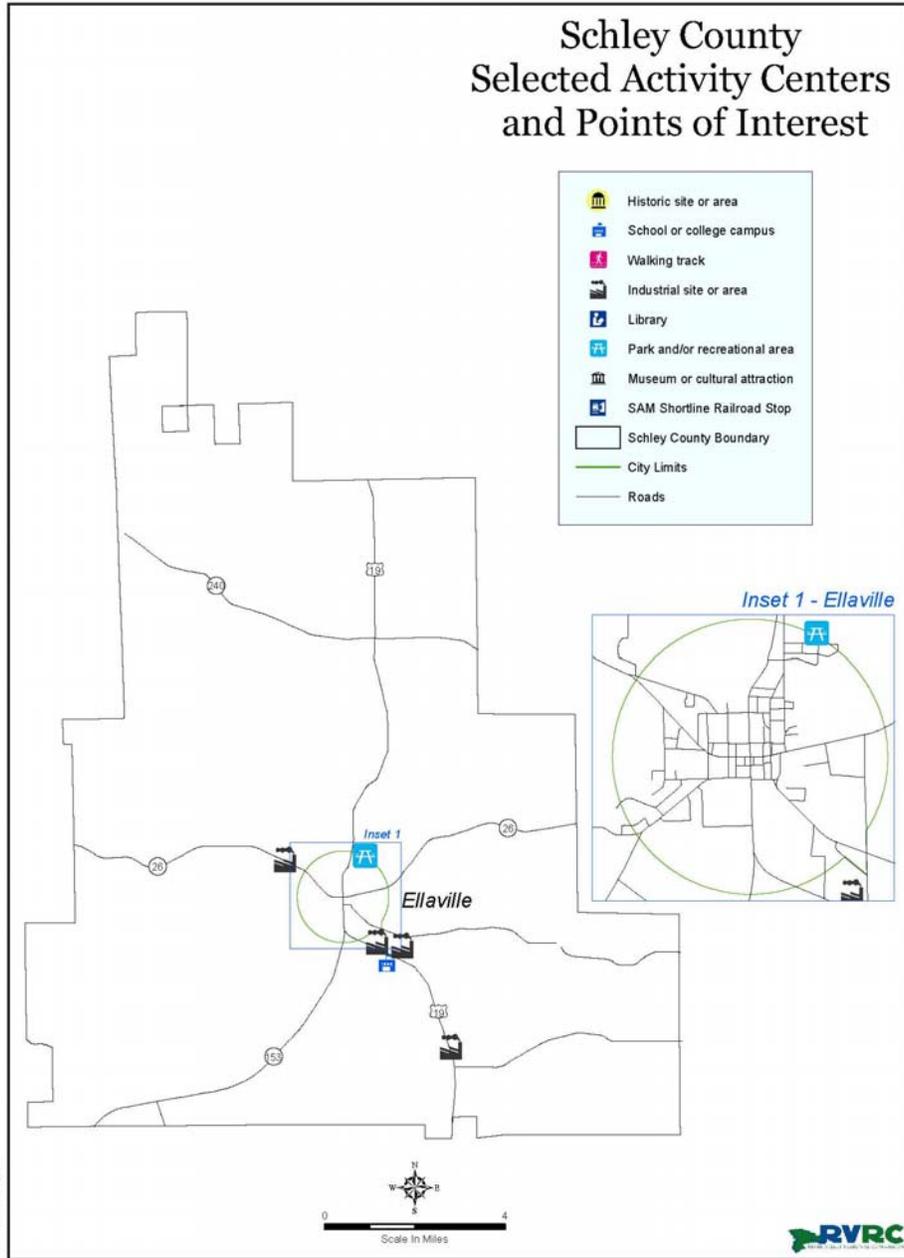
The [Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge](#) is located on the Walter F. George lake, near the Chattahoochee River. They offer several activities, including boating and fishing. They also welcome cyclists and horseback riding, provided you have your own bike and/or horse, respectively.

Randolph County Existing and Proposed Facilities



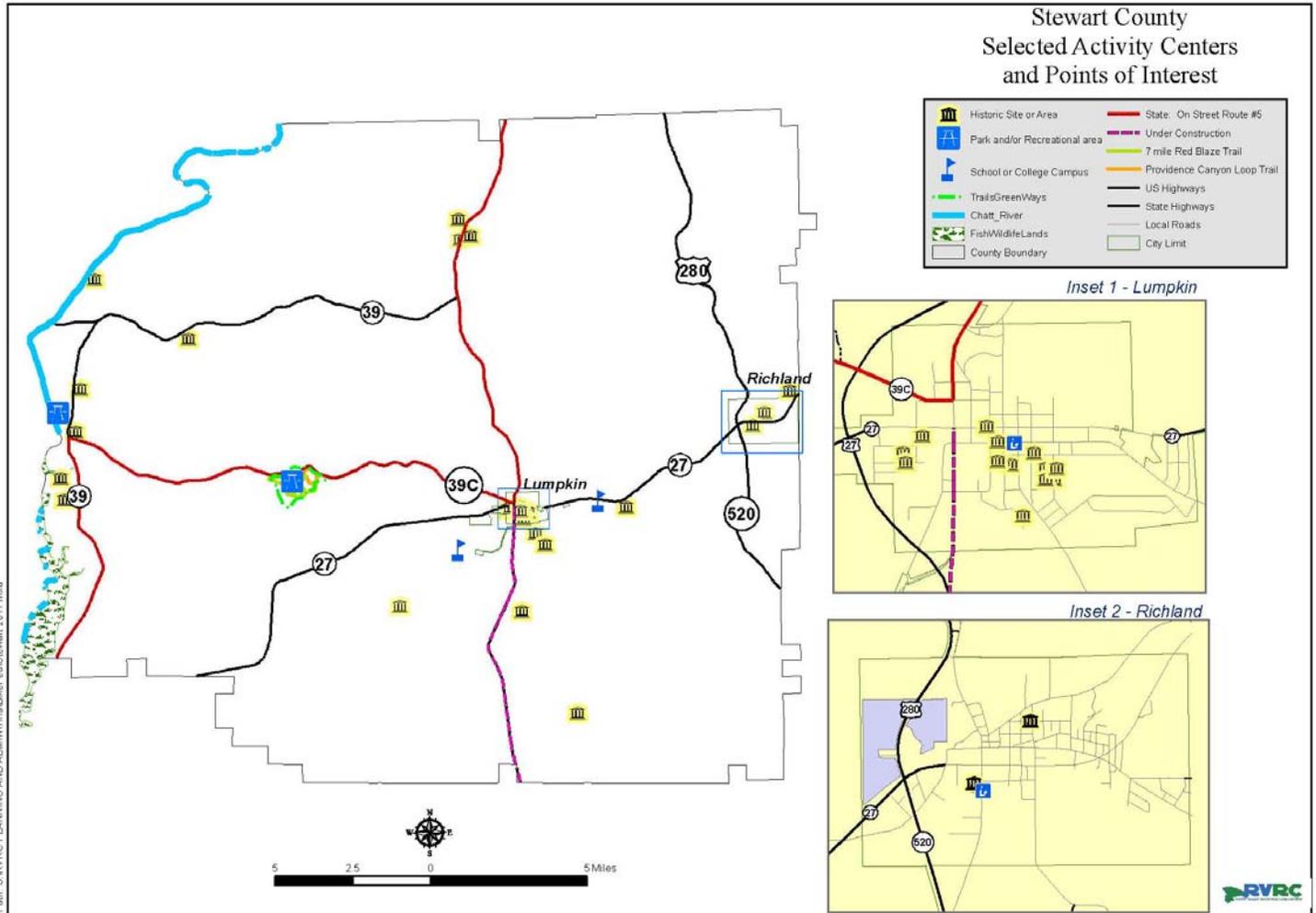
Grier's Cave in Randolph County is a huge underground limestone cavern that was first discovered via an entrance of less than three feet. Cuthbert hosts an annual Historic Tour of Homes and the Fletcher Henderson Jazz Festival. Other festivals include the Pataula Creek Turkey Festival.

Schley County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Schley County was created in 1857 from parts of Marion and Sumter counties. Georgia's 122nd county was named for Georgia Governor William Schley. The name of the county is pronounced "sly." Built in 1899, the county courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places. The clock tower, once known as the "Leaning Tower of Ellaville," was straightened and reinforced in 1991. The City of Ellaville was named for Ella Burton, the daughter of the man who sold the land for the town site.

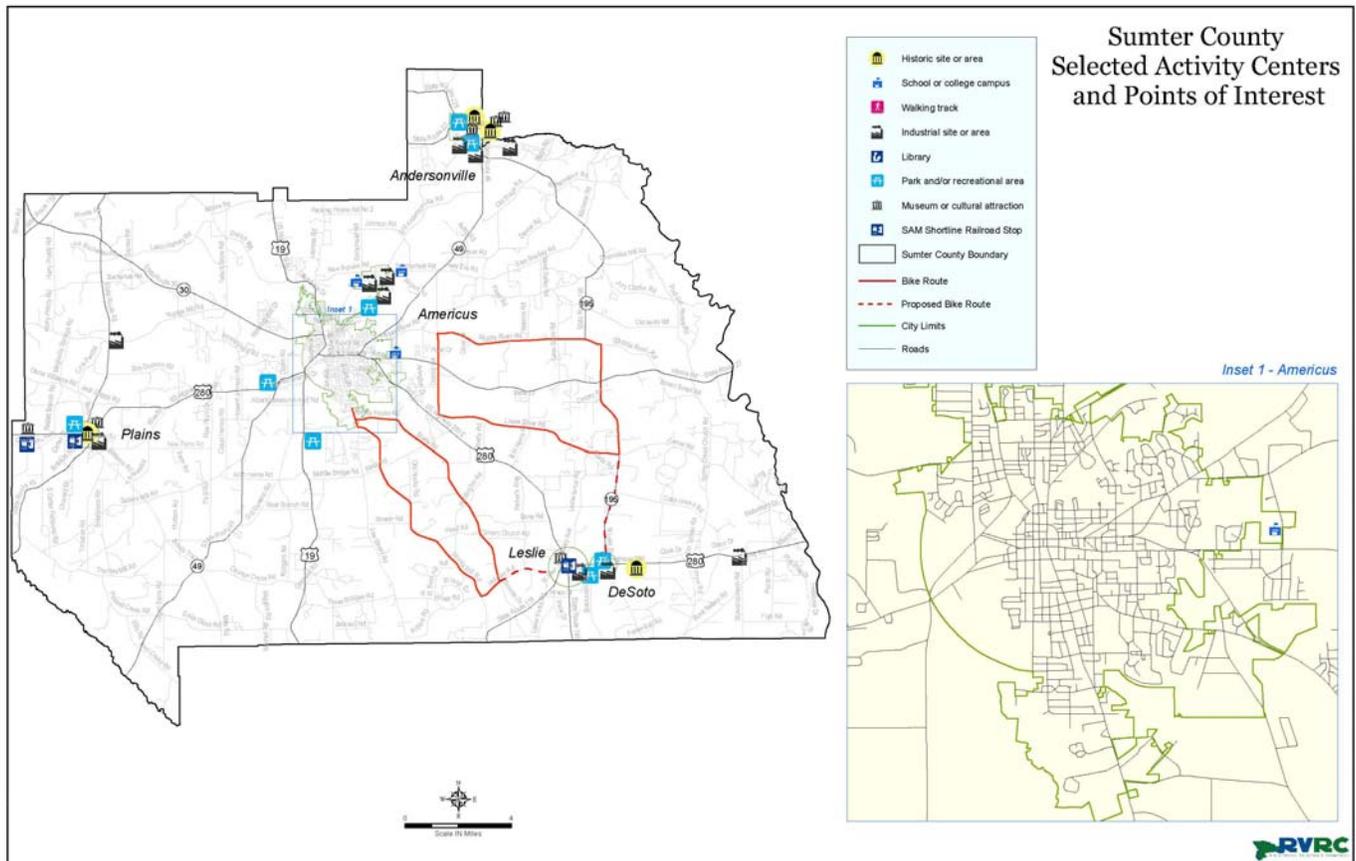
Stewart County Existing and Proposed Facilities



The **Florence Marina State Park** is also located in Stewart County. This park is a great place for all sorts of water sports, as well as bird-watching. Their facilities include 43 Tent/Trailer/RV Sites, 6 Cottages, 2 Playgrounds, Group Shelter, Picnic Shelter, Swimming Pool and Tennis Courts.

Providence Canyon is a 1,003 acre park located in Lumpkin, Georgia. The park has 3-miles of trails, as well as a 9-mile back-country trail. Their facilities include 1,003 Acres, 2 Picnic Shelters, 2 Pioneer Campsites and 6 Backcountry Campsites. They also have several events year round.

Sumter County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Recreation

Public recreation is funded jointly by the City of Americus and Sumter County. A large city-county recreational complex, including a variety of playing fields, is located just south of Americus on US Highway 19/State Route 3. A horse riding arena is located on Southerfield Road in northeast Americus; a baseball field is located on the outskirts of De Soto. Additional facilities are located in Americus (see Americus below).

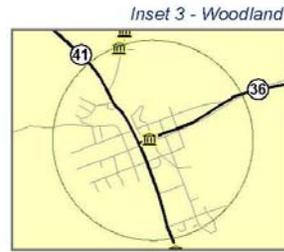
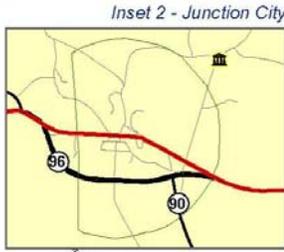
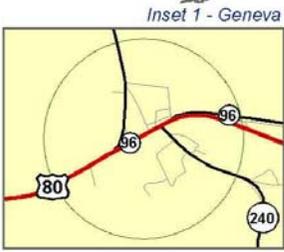
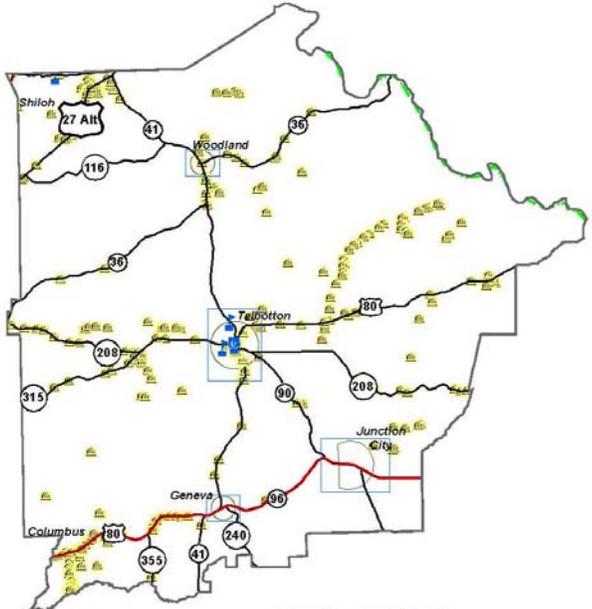
Andersonville owns and maintains three recreation sites. Andersonville City Park, located on East Church Street, consists of a full length, lighted basketball court. This recreation site also contains children’s playground equipment and a picnic table. A lighted tennis court is located at the intersection of Ellaville and Oglethorpe streets. A large, unfenced and unmarked adjoining grass field is available for softball, football, and other activities. The third recreation site consists of a half-court basketball court, playground equipment, and picnic tables on West Johnson Street.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Several walking trails and paths are located at parks and on the campus of Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus.

Talbot County Existing and Proposed Facilities

Talbot County Selected Activity Centers and Points of Interest

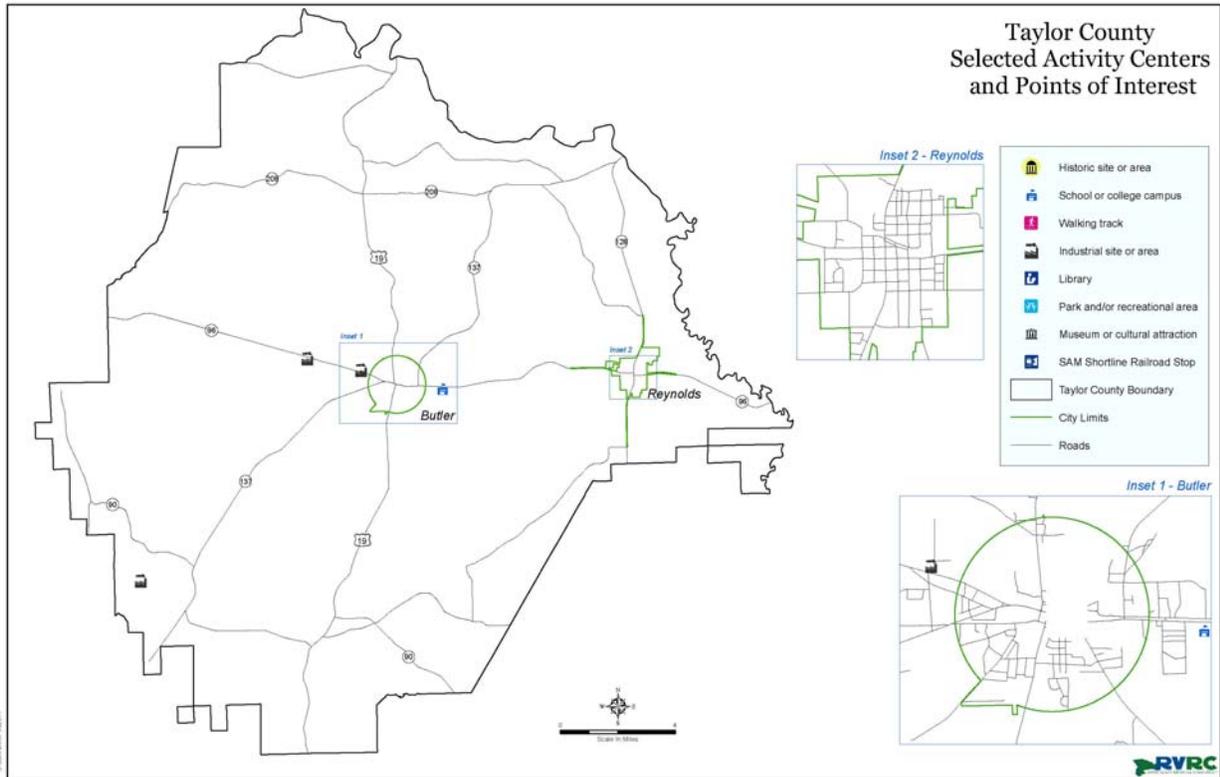


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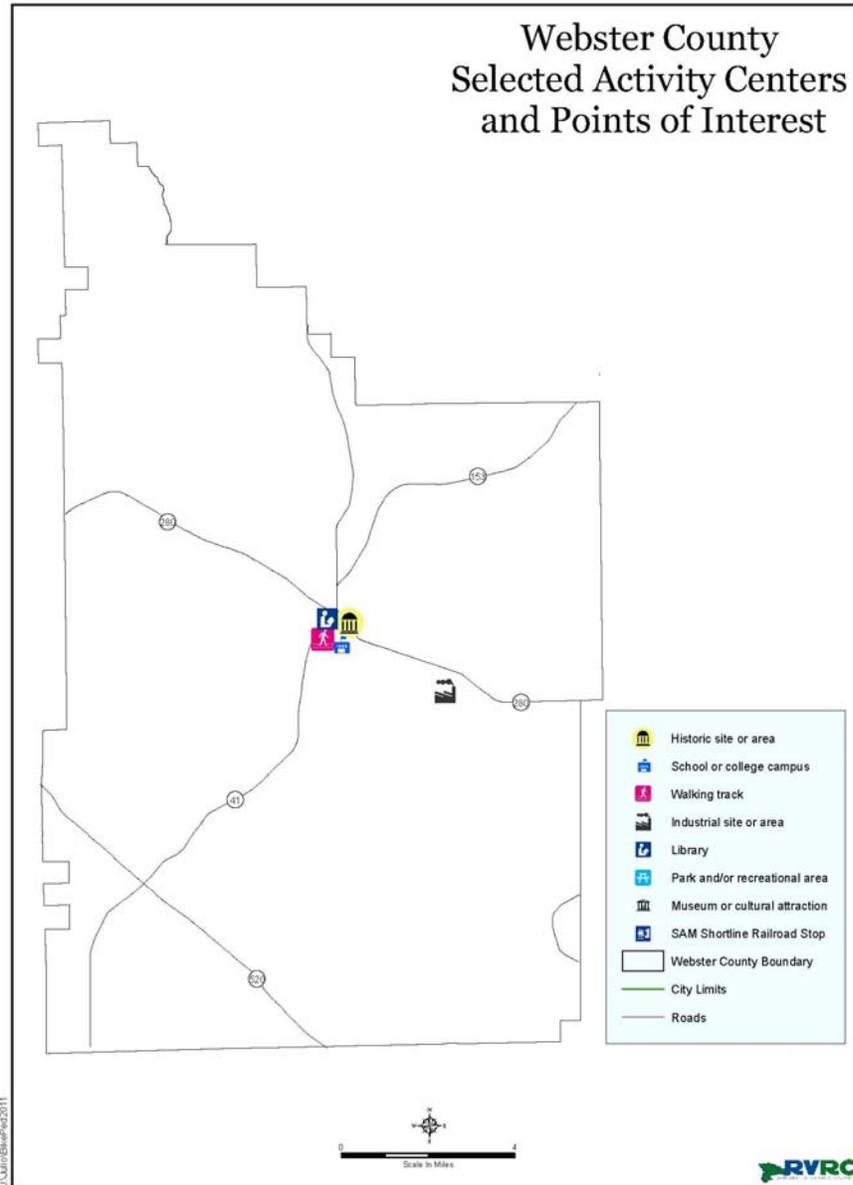
The **Big Lazer Creek Park** is located in Talbot County. Its facilities include concrete two-lane boat ramp, fishing pier, restrooms, picnic tables and primitive camping.

Taylor County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Taylor County was created from Macon, Marion and Talbot counties in 1852, the 98th county organized. The county was named after Zachary Taylor, who won a victory at Buena Vista in the Mexican War and later became the 12th President of the United States. The Tuscaloosa Formation, located in the county, is a sand clay formation that represents the first prominent coastal plains deposits laid. Butler was named for General William Orlando Butler, another hero of the Mexican War.

Webster County Existing and Proposed Facilities



Webster County was created in 1853 from part of Stewart County. Georgia's 103rd county originally had an Indian name, Kinchafoonee, for a principal creek that crosses it. After outsiders mocked the name, the county's citizens petitioned to change it to honor Daniel Webster. The first Confederate flag to fly in Georgia was raised on the Webster County Courthouse lawn in 1861. At the end of the war, Union troops cut down and destroyed the flagpole. For a short period during World War II, the belvedere atop the courthouse was used to watch for any enemy aircraft that might be headed toward nearby Fort Benning.

Section VII: Implementation

One of the main goals of this plan is to educate and encourage the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. To achieve this goal, many different entities will be called upon to implement the programs and actions that are necessary to achieve the plan's vision, goals, and objectives which are described in the context below

In discussing the implementation strategy of this plan, GDOT, RVRC, local municipalities, and advocates of bicycle and pedestrian usage can implement the plan with collaboration and involving the right resources. Successful implementation requires a systematic approach by transportation agencies and affected parties. Additionally, it will take a number of years of implementation and additional investments to create a transportation system that fosters increased safe bicycle and pedestrian use.

The Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides the foundation for a successful network of alternative transportation facilities. The most important purpose is to develop a supportive environment for bicycling and walking throughout the River Valley Region.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section identifies strategies for implementing the bicycle and pedestrian plan in the River Valley Region. The list identifies the most prominent participants called upon to assist with implementing the plan. Following this section are implementation strategies that discuss how these responsibilities can be put into action.

GDOT:

- 🚲 Design the State Highway system with a strong consideration for Complete Streets.
- 🚲 Incorporate proposed improvements from local and regional bicycle and pedestrian plans in the state's long range plans and construction work program.
- 🚲 Provide funding opportunities for local infrastructure and educational programs.
- 🚲 Develop a strategy for funding the safety (education and enforcement)
- 🚲 Provide technical assistance on the planning and design of bikeways to the RCs, local and regional communities.
- 🚲 Provide liaison and coordination with federal agencies, MPOs, RCs, and local governments.
- 🚲 Encourage public transit systems across the state to provide bicycle accommodations on buses and in bus stations (e.g., bicycle racks and storage).
- 🚲 Continue to assist in the development of state, regional and local bicycle maps.
- 🚲 Develop enforcement strategies and programs aimed at decreasing bicycle and pedestrian crashes.
- 🚲 Develop maintenance policies and guidelines for bikeways.

- 🚲 Provide user friendly signage on roadways to increase motorist and bicyclist awareness.
- 🚲 Make additions to driver's education materials that emphasize bicycle and pedestrian as a non-motorized transportation.
- 🚲 Assist with promoting and supporting National Bike and Pedestrian Days (e.g., bike-to-work).
- 🚲 Assist with the partnership and development of Safe Routes to School Programs within the River Valley Region.

River Valley Regional Commission

- 🚲 Introduce Complete Streets to all communities within the region and continue to train and educate communities that have adopted policy.
- 🚲 Establish partnerships with community organizations, local governments, school districts, law enforcement agencies, recreation organizations, and other interested parties on educating the region about bicycle and pedestrian transportation.
- 🚲 Identify funding sources for implementation and continuation of the plan.
- 🚲 Develop, revise and update short and long-range goals and objectives for regional plans.
- 🚲 In collaboration with local agencies, host a minimum of one elementary level Traffic Safety Instructor Course annually to train teachers, law enforcement officers and community volunteers how to teach children bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- 🚲 Continue to host and chair the Columbus and Americus Planning Advisory Committees (PAC) and seek opportunities to develop other PACs within the region.

River Valley Region (Counties, Municipalities, and Educational Establishments)

- 🚲 Adopt Complete Streets Policies to consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in all road projects and building facilities.
- 🚲 Promote land use policies that are bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- 🚲 Educate local law enforcement on share-the-road safety techniques and enforcement strategies for specific high-risk bicyclist and motorist infractions of the law.
- 🚲 Partnership and collaboration with local community organizations, local government, school district, law enforcement, recreation, and private companies.

- 🚲 Promote bicyclist and pedestrian friendly oriented developments through Comprehensive Plans, Zoning and subdivision regulations.
- 🚲 Provide bicycle racks at most public, educational, and commercial areas.
- 🚲 Integrate existing pathways, walkways, trails, local attractions, and parks in the plan.
- 🚲 Develop facilities to encourage bike and pedestrian activities.
- 🚲 Consider adopting a shoulder paving policy in addition to creating user friendly shoulders and sidewalks that are accessible to bicyclist and pedestrians.
- 🚲 Promote and support National Bike and Pedestrian days.
- 🚲 Develop interest and participation from local school districts and board of educations to participate and adopt Safe Routes to School Program practices for local elementary and middle schools.
- 🚲 Develop partnerships with local Visitor's Bureau or local Chambers of Commerce to promote local and regional festivals, local and regional attractions, races, and tours by developing visitors guide and maps linking all activities and attractions.

A. Implementing

The regional bike and pedestrian plan makes many recommendations that will require substantial effort on the part of GDOT and other partners to implement. Clearly, with the resources now at hand, plus those envisioned to be available in the near future, all of the recommended action steps cannot be tackled at once.

Therefore, it is necessary to set priorities regarding which aspects of the plan to implement first. Some of the recommendations will require the integration of bicycle and pedestrian planning into a complex array of ongoing plans, policies, and programs. To become a reality, many of these types of recommendations will need to be part of a larger, overall process of change. Some of this larger overall change is likely to take place in the near future, while some of it may occur at a later date. A number of of these changes are susceptible to concerted action by GDOT and other partners, while some are dependent on other factors.

Other recommendations, however, are easily identified as distinct actions which can be taken to implement the plan, independent of the slow process of institutional and societal change. Many of these actions are already ongoing and should be continued; others should have a high priority for immediate implementation; and some will require a longer period of time to accomplish.

Priorities for Immediate Implementation (A)

There are a number of discrete actions which can be taken within a relatively short time frame toward implementing the bicycle and pedestrian plan. However, it is not realistic to expect that all of these actions will take place immediately and simultaneously. Therefore, they are listed here in recommended order of priority.

Goal A.1: Planning

- Objective A.1.a: Establish Bike and Pedestrian Committee. (COMPLETED)
- Objective A.1.b: Meet with local agencies and organization to discuss the plan (ONGOING).
- Objective A.1.c: Provide opportunities for public involvement by continuing to host public meets to identify needs. (ONGOING)
- Objective A.1.d: Adopt Complete Streets Policies for communities to embrace a complete road use/access approach for all users.

Goal A.2 Education and Enforcement

- Objective A.2.a: Develop a region wide promotion program for bicycling in Georgia.
- Objective A.2.b: Work with regional planning entities to develop a regional and statewide route system and map for bicycling interest.
- Objective A.2.c: Establish and implement pedestrian safety education and training programs for children, teens, adults, seniors, and motorists through partnerships with schools and local law enforcement agencies.
- Objective A.2.d: Educate local law enforcement on "Share-The-Road" safety techniques and enforcement strategies for specific high-risk bicyclists and motorists infractions of the law.
- Objective A.2.e: Publicize the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in the River Valley region's municipalities to raise awareness of its availability.
- Objective A.2.f: Provide "Share-The-Road" education and programs in the region.

Goal A.3: Funding Sources

- Objective A.3.a: River Valley Regional Commission will assist in identifying funding sources and/or researching national programs promoting bicycle and pedestrian awareness and safety.

Goal A.4: Tourism and Marketing

- Objective A.4.a: Promote and support National Bike and Pedestrian Days.
- Objective A.4.b: Promote the River Valley region and its cities as bicycle and pedestrian friendly through attractive bicycle tourism events and programs.
- Objective A.4.c: Promote the River Valley region's municipalities' trails, pathways, and attractions.
- Objective A.4.d: Develop maps of multi-use paths (bicycle/walking trails) identifying tourist attractions.

Objective A.4.e: Partner with regional Visitor Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations to promote local and regional festivals, races, and tours by using visitor's guides for map linking attractions.

Goal A.5: Health Benefits

Objective A.5.a: Encourage participation from local schools to promote bicycle and pedestrian activities and the health benefits associated with these activities.

Objective A.5.b: Encourage partnership and participation from local school districts and boards of education on Safe Routes to School Program practices for elementary and middle schools.

Priorities for Medium-Range Implementation (B)

Once the immediate priorities are in place, efforts should begin on the following tasks. These are considerably more complex than the immediate tasks and will require significant effort. They are also listed in order of priority.

Goal B.1: Planning

Objective B.1.a: Provide bicycle and pedestrian signage and pavement markings for user friendly roads.

Objective B.1.b: Prepare pedestrian facility and infrastructure improvement plans for counties and cities in the region.

Objective B.1.c: Integrate existing pathways, walkways, trails, local attractions, and parks with county and city plans.

Objective B.1.d: Encourage developers to incorporate sidewalks into their developments both residential and commercial.

Objective B.1.e: Encourage local governments to amend local ordinances and codes to require sidewalks in new developments.

Goal B.2: Education and Enforcement

Objective B.2.a: Make additions to driver's education products that emphasize safe motorist driving when encountering bicyclists on the road.

Goal B.3: Funding Sources

Objective B.3.a: Initiate a small grants program along with researching private foundations for municipal bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Objective B.3.b: Incorporate bicycle improvements in conjunction to new construction and reconstruction projects which may use state and/or federal funding (e.g., paved shoulders, bike lanes, sidewalks, or wide curb lanes).

Objective B.3.c: Initiate grants from the state and federal governments for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Goal B.4: Tourism and Marketing

Objective B.4.a: Establish (annual) regional events for cycling and walking incorporating outdoor recreational resources.

Objective B.4.b: Promote and establish bicycle and walking tours, races, festivals, and fundraisers for the municipalities/region.

Goal B.5: Health Benefits

Objective B.5.a: Establish programs that encourage family-oriented activities and active lifestyles.

Objective B.5.b: Establish and implement health and fitness programs utilizing walking as well as stationary and non-stationary bicycles.

Priorities for Long-Range Implementation (C)

Once the immediate and medium-range tasks are implemented, the following should be considered.

- Goal C.1:** **Planning**
- Objective C.1.a: Develop a program for improving road shoulders along extensive stretches of major state highways (example: STIP).
- Objective C.1.b: Develop a program of traffic calming to enhance user-friendliness for pedestrians and bicyclists along major state highways which pass through towns and other neighborhood areas.
- Objective C.1.c: Establish user friendly shoulders and sidewalks for bicycle and pedestrian activity.
- Objective C.1.d: Establish developments to encourage bicycle and pedestrian activity.
- Objective C.1.e: Require all bike and pedestrian facilities to be ADA accessible.

Funding Sources

The regional bicycle and pedestrian system will be improved and in some areas established in conjunction with current roadway construction and roadway improvement projects. Overall, there will not be a cost to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities into road improvement projects and new roadway construction; however, with these facilities there must be posted signage for motorist, cyclist, and pedestrian to make them aware of users of the regional system. In funding signage for the regional bicycle and pedestrian system, there are opportunities provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation, local municipalities, and the private sector. There are several sections within the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21), which specifically incorporates bicycle and pedestrian activities and related programs.

Section 1202-National Highway System Funds (NHS)

The NHS provides flexible funding that may be used by State and local municipalities for projects on any National Highway System. NHS funds may be used to construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System. In the River Valley region, Section 1202 could benefit Interstate I-185 in providing bicycle facilities from Muscogee County to Harris County.

Section 1108-Surface Transportation Program Funds (STP)

Bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible for STP funding. This program can be used to improve and establish sidewalks throughout the River Valley region to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Section 1201-Transportation Enhancement Activities Program Funds (TEA)

These funds may be used for construction activities or non construction activities, such as brochures, route maps, and public service announcements. TEA funds may be used to establish information stations along the network to identify user activities.

Section 1115-Federal Lands Highway Funds

These funds may be used to construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities in conjunction with roads, highways, and pathways.

Section 1219- Scenic Byways Program Funds

These funds may be used to construct facilities along scenic highways for the use of bicyclists and pedestrians. Currently, I-185 has been designated a Scenic Byway by GDOT. With the diverse scenic beauty and history within each unique community, scenic byways could significantly attract new opportunities for economic growth and tourism to the region.

Section 1112- National Recreational Trails Funds

The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users. Currently the Unified Government of Georgetown-Quitman is working towards the development of their Recreational Trail Grant to develop an off-road bicycle and pedestrian path along the banks of Lake Walter F. George.

Section 3003- Transit Enhancement Activity Funding

This funding program clarifies ISTEA's transit funding allowances for pedestrian and bicycle access to transit facilities. This funding source may be used for bicycle and pedestrian access to mass transportation, including facilities to store bicycles and installing equipment for transporting bicycles on public transportation vehicles.

Section 5304- Transportation Planning

The River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) proposes to develop a multi-modal transportation plan (bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and motor vehicle) by examining how and where to connect different modes of transportation in the Americus area. The Bicycle-Pedestrian plan will research and identify how to provide better connectivity for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit with points of interest within the Americus area. It will also provide educational efforts, as well as the link of high tourist areas via bicycle friendly routes. This plan will build upon the 2016 Transit Plan for the City of Americus and the city's existing Comprehensive Plan.

Other Funding Sources

As stated before, there are other possible funding sources for providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in local municipalities. Local municipalities within the region can incorporate funding allocated with city or county transportation budgets, general operating budgets, and the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) initiatives.

The private sector provides another source of revenue for the construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Civic and advocacy groups may be willing to donate momentary contributions, materials, and labor to help construct and maintain facilities. Also civic and advocacy groups could play another role in the overall implementation program (see Appendix II).

Maintenance

During the study for the River Valley Regional Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, there were several concerns about the construction of existing and proposed facilities in the region. Unless these facilities are maintained, they can quickly become unsafe. Before bicycle and pedestrian facilities are constructed, maintenance procedures and

responsibilities must be considered. A maintenance policy should be in place before any portion of the system is marked, signed, or improved.

Monitoring and Evaluation

With any expenditure of public funds, it is desirable to monitor how efficient funding is being used and the actual use of the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region. To identify bicycle and pedestrian activities in the region potential high volume segments in the urban areas should be identified and targeted for counts during peak bicycling season. The rural areas are different from that of urban areas. In rural areas distances between destinations are quite lengthy leaving prolonged periods of time with no activity. With this idea in mind, a data collection technique in rural areas can be self-reports along the traveled route to identify user activities. This could provide insight into general travel patterns, relative volumes and characteristics of the system users.

Another approach in collecting data is to establish information stations along state routes and in local municipalities. This station could be constructed with materials usually found on an all weather bulletin board. The information stations would provide a supply of questionnaire post cards to allow users to record their activities along the route. For strategic positioning of the stations, the RVRC, PAC, and local municipalities can continue to develop partnerships with other civic and advocacy groups in providing input and information to be placed at the stations. The system users could benefit greatly from easy access to brochures and pamphlets on motels, camping, regional and local events, bicycle shops and local points of interest which could be placed at an information station or near the local municipalities along the system.

Section VIII: Future and Continuing Activities

At the present, there has only been little talk about the future activities for the regional system. However, with the growing interest by bicyclists and pedestrians, the RVRC staff recognized the need to continue the steps to transform concepts into a physical reality. Efforts that must be undertaken by RVRC staff include the following:

1. Work closely with local municipalities' planning commissions to encourage the adoption of Complete Streets.
2. Ensure that connectivity with the bicycle and pedestrian systems is reviewed as a routine matter during both the planning and engineering phases of every new development.
3. The Planning Advisory Committee should review current and proposed routes which pass through their jurisdiction and suggest any necessary improvements needed in the system.
4. Work closely with the GDOT to execute the implementation strategy of the River Valley Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
5. Continue to build partnerships with civic and advocacy groups to implement ways in promoting the River Valley region as being bicycle and pedestrian friendly as well as a bicycle tourism destination.
6. Coordination with adjacent regions should be collaborated allowing routes to be integrated with neighboring RC regions.
7. Develop bicycle and pedestrian safety campaigns and information packages to be distributed throughout the region.
8. Continue to update and maintain www.activevalley.org as an interactive way for the community to obtain information regarding bicycle and pedestrian initiatives and activities throughout the region as well as promoting these activities on social media.
9. Continue to work with the Columbus Bicycle Friendly Committee in developing local cycling routes, coordinate cycling and pedestrian events, and promote alternative means of transportation to maintain Bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community designation and move towards Silver.
10. Continue to work the GDOT's Safe Routes to School Program and Safe Routes Resource Center in developing school partnerships and participation in the program.
11. Lastly, promote the system through a public information campaign involving newspapers, television, and public service announcements. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities can provide an economic boost to communities by demonstrating that their communities are safe and family oriented. Ecotourism is growing swiftly in the River Valley region. With the region's diverse scenic beauty, favorable weather, interesting history and unique communities, everyone stands to capitalize significantly if the regional bicycle and pedestrian system can be implemented and promoted in the present and the near future.

River Valley Regional Commission - Service Region 8



Appendix I:

Regional Events Promoting Bicycle Tourism Utilizing Portions of the State of Georgia Bicycle Routes



Sumter Cycling, River Valley Regional Commission, Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, and Andersonville National Historic Site have partnered for 5 years to plan, develop and execute the Prison to Peanuts Bicycle Adventure.

We encourage riders of all levels and skills to join us on this amazing opportunity to visit beautiful sites in Sumter County, Georgia, and visit Americus, Andersonville and Plains by bicycle

The ride begins at Rees Park (409 Elm Avenue) in Americus. The ride is coordinated around the annual Arts in the Park event allowing participants the opportunity to see local artists at work and enjoy live entertainment. Food is available at the event and participants receive a meal voucher as part of their bicycle ride registration along with an event t-shirt, Bicycle Pocket Guide and a helmet fitting guidebook.

Route Information

Four route options are available: 12, 34, 65 and 105 miles. Jimmy Carter National Historic Site will be a rest stop on all the routes except the 12-mile Americus loop. Andersonville National Historic Site will be on the 65- and 105-mile routes.

Ride and Community Information

Participants are asked to sign an event waiver on the morning of the ride. There are SAG stops (Support and Gear) with water, fruit, and snacks. There is also a support vehicle with a limited supply of water and snacks for emergencies and gear for basic mechanical issues and first aid needs.

This is a family-friendly event. Whether fast or slow, everyone is welcome to ride at their own pace. All participants are required to wear a helmet.

Prison to Peanuts Event Photos



September 23-25 | 2016

Register online at
www.findyourparkride.org

FIND YOUR PARK

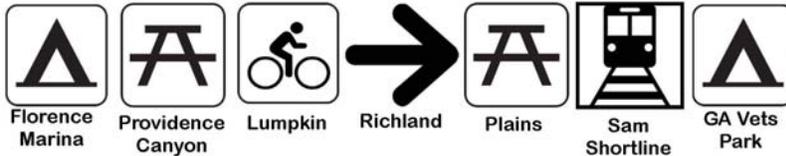
Centennial Bicycle Ride

DAY 1



DAY 2

51 miles



DAY 3

54 miles



Ride Options:

Cyclists

\$75 - Camping, meals, train ticket, T-shirt
 \$60 - Meals, train ticket, T-shirt
 (lodging on your own)

Friend of Cyclists (not cycling)

\$50 - Camping, meals, train ticket, T-shirt
 \$30 - Meals, train ticket (lodging on your own)

Support and Gear Vehicle
 Rest Stops with Drinks and Snacks
 Access to National and State Parks



Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service, this two-day ride will take you to Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, Andersonville National Historic Site, Florence Marina State Park, Providence Canyon State Park, Georgia Veterans State Park, and includes a ride on the SAM Shortline Excursion Train.



For 14 consecutive years, this event provides participants with a unique opportunity to enjoy these idyllic routes replete with historic churches, bountiful farmland, and rolling hills. Three route options will be available:

- 20 miles - From Downtown Lumpkin to Providence Canyon State Park.
- 50 miles - To Providence Canyon, Florence Marina State Park, and back to Downtown Lumpkin.
- 62 miles - Past Florence Marina State Park to Omaha and back to Downtown Lumpkin.

Rest stops are be available every 10-15 miles and SAG (Support and Gear) wagons are provided courtesy of Ride on Bikes and Arnold's Bikes from Columbus, GA.



The proceeds from this event benefit the Stewart County Historic Commission. The Stewart County Historical Commission is raising money to restore the interior of the old Stewart County Jail. The fundraising goal to complete the necessary work is \$400,000.



Appendix II - Safe Routes to School Program



Student walked 2 miles to school during this event



Clay County Schools prepared banners supporting the event



This program increases awareness of physical activity



Students at Hannah Elementary School



Students at Clubview Elementary



Students walking to Richards Middle School



Students mapped their home addresses to determine distance



Chattahoochee County was the first project funded in the RVRC region



Students taking a travel survey

Appendix III – Bicycle Friendly Efforts

Bicycle Friendly Community Designation | Bronze Level – City of Columbus, GA



The River Valley Regional Commission along with its partners, Bicycle Columbus, City of Columbus Planning Department and the Mayor’s Office worked in developing the necessary programs and infrastructure improvements to receive the designation of Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists. River Valley staff and its partners continue to work on efforts to make the city of Columbus a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly city and will continue to work to upgrade the designation to Silver Level.

Bicycle Friendly Business | Silver Level River Valley Regional Commission and Columbus Civic Center



The River Valley Regional Commission was designated as a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Business by the League of American Bicyclist in Washington D.C. This designation comes as the result of an active and ongoing regional bicycle-pedestrian program which is planned, executed, managed and evaluated by the River Valley Regional Commission. Alongside the Columbus Civic Center which in 2015 was designated as a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Business, the RVRC became the 11th business in the State of Georgia to receive this designation joining over 1100 businesses nationwide with such designation



Bicycle Week Celebrations – Columbus, GA



Bicycle week has been celebrated for 9 consecutive years. The week-long celebration includes several events that are planned by the River Valley Regional Commission in partnership with Bicycle Columbus and the City of Columbus. These events include:

- Pedaling for Kids
- Ride with the Mayor
- Ride of Silence
- Bike to Work Day
- Woods to Water Family Bike/walk

Bicycle Week Celebration – Americus, GA



Bicycle Week in Americus has been celebrated for 6 consecutive years. During this week, the River Valley Regional Commission, Sumter Cycling and the City of Americus host the Annual Ride to Lunch with the Mayor event as well as Bike to Work Day.

Midtown Columbus Bike Around Event



Energizing Station for participants and MidTown Inc., Offices



RVRC Staff provided Safety Course and Helmet Fittings



Participants rode a 9.2 mile route along historic Midtown Columbus

National Ride of Silence – Columbus, GA



Columbus Cycling Club President welcoming participants



Over 100 citizens participated in the annual event



A local cyclist performs to honor those we've lost.