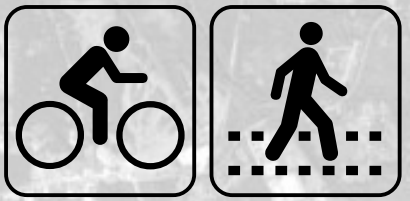
Central Newton County
Plan for Bicycling and Walking

the cities of ***Covington***, ***Oxford***, *and* ***Porterdale***,
Newton County, *and*
Newton Trails



June 2012

GDOT BIKE PED PROGRAM

NEGRC
NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

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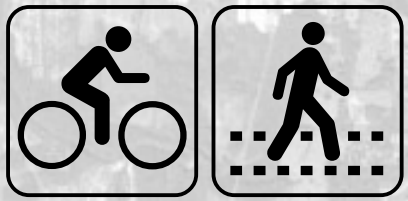


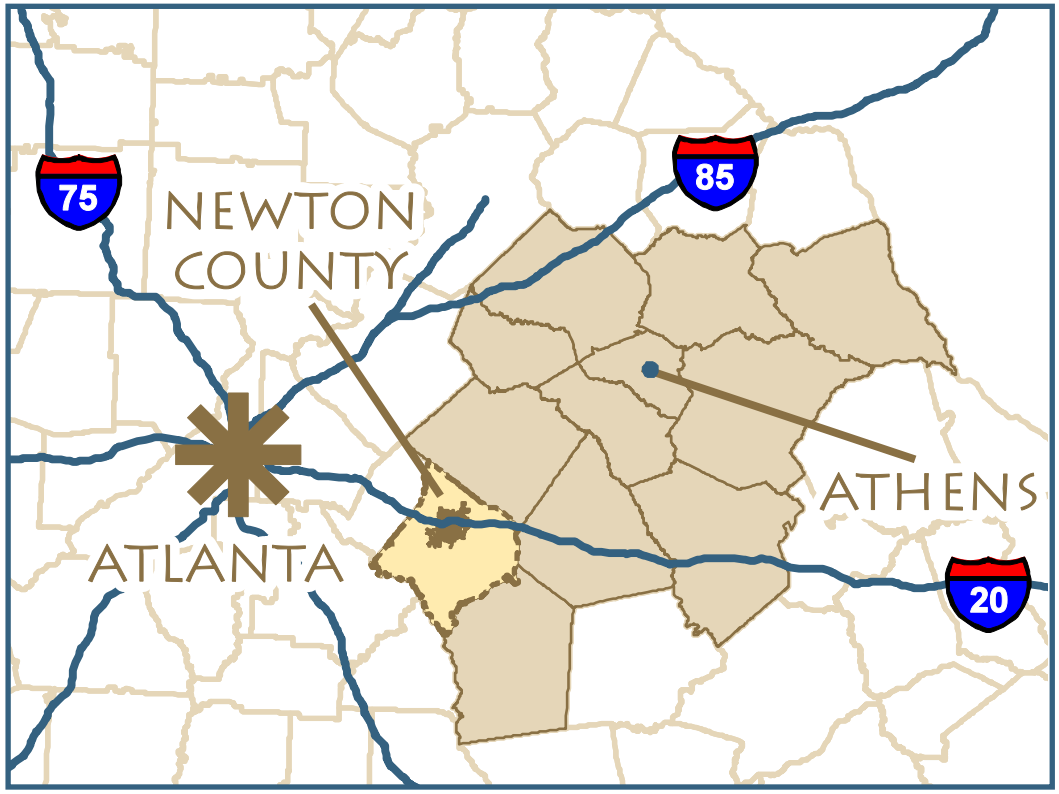
I. Plan Overview

INTRODUCTION

This plan provides a blueprint to local decision-makers and advocates for investing in transportation choices and conservation corridors. It is presented as a combination bicycle/pedestrian and greenway plan because these two areas are closely linked.

Funding for this planning effort is derived from a contract between the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, which prepared the plan and facilitated the process, and the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Newton County is the fastest-growing county in the 12-county region, and it is projected to continue the rapid development that it has undergone in the recent past. Many new residents are relocating from areas in which facilities for bicycling and walking, as well as conservation spaces, are more readily accessed than they are in central Newton County at present. The presence of several major corridors (the Yellow River, an abandoned rail line extending from Porterdale through Covington and beyond, and state and US highways) also presents significant opportunities for conservation, environmental education, and transportation and recreation options.



PURPOSE AND PLANNING PROCESS

This document serves as a guide to facilitate decision-making for investments in conservation and non-automobile transportation. Many greenway plans incorporate bicycling and walking facilities, and conservation goals are common to the development of shared-use paths for bicyclists and pedestrians. However, not all greenway corridors are practical for bicycling and walking; likewise, sidewalks, bike lanes, and side-paths along urban or suburban roads do not typically provide conservation benefits.

Therefore, the planning process that informed this document was designed to include on- and off-road facilities for walking and/or bicycling, as well as to identify potential corridors for habitat and water quality conservation. As a result, the communities of central Newton will have one comprehensive framework to reference when considering these very closely related endeavors.

Steering Committee

A leadership team of municipal, county, and non-profit representatives was established to provide oversight, input, and information to planners. NEGRC staff worked closely with these elected officials, staff, and advocates to obtain the most current data available, seek direction on project priorities, and develop goals and objectives.

Established Need

The following quotes were excerpted from the adopted comprehensive plans of the local governments within the study area and are provided to illustrate the importance placed on bicycle and pedestrian travel in the area:

…pedestrian-oriented mixed use nodes

Ensure that new developments will be designed to be conducive to walking and biking

Encourage the incorporation of sidewalks and bicycle facilities

Create safe, convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhoods and subdivisions...

Public involvement unearthed a deep desire of many residents to transform Oxford into a leader in walkability and bikeability

...a leader in walkability and bikeability

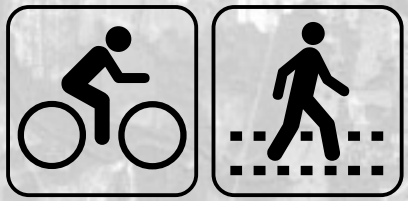
...a pedestrian-friendly transportation network

...require the construction of transportation corridors that support multiple modes...

Amend zoning code to require bicycle racks at new commercial and mixed-use developments

Create pedestrian crossings into all public spaces

All modes of transportation, including bicycling, walking, driving, riding public transit, and others, shall be given equal weight and creditability in decision-making



II. Vision, Goals, and Objectives

VISION

The Cities of Covington, Oxford, and Porterdale, alongside Newton County and Newton Trails, envision a community in which residents and visitors can conveniently and safely walk or bicycle to existing and planned residential, shopping, employment, recreation, and health care centers.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Create spaces that contribute to a walkable, bikeable community in the heart of Newton County by investing in appropriate infrastructure improvements

- Enhance safety and efficiency for existing and new pedestrians and cyclists
- Establish connectivity between and within our communities
- Pursue external funding and dedicate local dollars for associated match and stand-alone initiatives
- Partner with Newton County Schools to develop Safe Routes to Schools programs, including infrastructure, education, and enforcement
- Ensure that all new facilities are accessible to as wide a spectrum of the population as possible

Goal 2: Encourage residents and visitors to increase prevalence and safety of walking and cycling

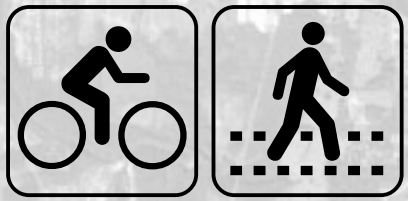
- Partner with advocacy groups, public health experts, Newton County Schools, and others to offer health and safety programs related to bicycling and walking
- Educate the general public about the benefits and potential safety concerns of bicycle and pedestrian travel
- Improve the health of residents and visitors by encouraging active transportation and recreation
- Encourage employers to support bicycling and walking as practical transportation choices to and from work
- Develop internal policies that encourage local government personnel to conduct work-related trips on foot or by bicycle
- Work with local law enforcement officials to increase compliance with state and local law by drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians

Goal 3: Build opportunities for increased coordination and communication among our communities, local organizations, and others

- Work together to envision, plan, and develop new facilities and programs to improve walking and bicycling conditions, including developing consistent design principles and management protocols across jurisdictions
- Coordinate use and management policies and procedures for seamless user experiences
- Participate in activities of the Northeast Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force
- Utilize media, education, and employer contacts to create high-profile, effective outreach and education partnerships

Goal 4: Conserve natural corridors to protect habitat, water quality, potential recreation and transportation areas, scenic vistas, and historic resources

- Apply, enforce, and maintain environmental ordinances to protect natural areas
- Incentivize and promote resource protection as part of new developments
- Provide educational opportunities by interpreting environmental and historic aspects of greenway corridors
- Work with property owners, land trusts, utility providers, and others to make the most effective use possible of natural corridors



III. Existing Conditions

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Population

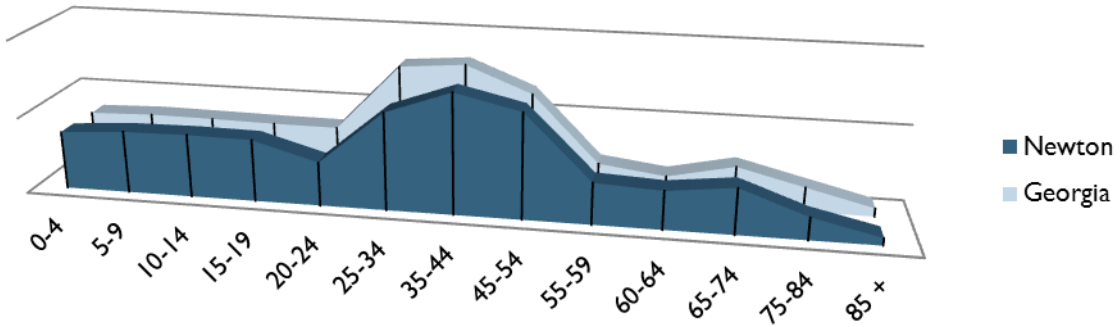
The 2010 US Census lists a population of 99,958 for Newton County, which represents a 61.2% increase over the 2000 population of 62,001. Newton County remains one of the fastest-growing counties in the state, and has the second-largest population in Northeast Georgia. Projections show that the County's eventual "build-out" population could grow to 400,000 under planned development patterns.

Age

The median age in Newton County is approximately 33.7 years, relatively in line with the Georgia average of 35.3. The following table and chart show more specifically that residents of Newton County closely follow the state age distribution across most divisions.

	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Newton	7.6%	8.1%	8.2%	8.1%	5.7%	12.7%	15.7%	13.7%	5.4%	5.0%	6.0%	2.9%	1.0%
Georgia	7.3%	7.5%	7.4%	7.%	7.2%	15.9%	16.5%	13.2%	4.6%	3.5%	5.3%	3.2%	1.1%

Source: *US Census Bureau, 2010 Census.*



Commuting to Work

According to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates, the majority (93.5%) of workers in Newton County use a car, truck, or van to get to work; of these, 81.8% drive alone and 11.7% carpool. Also according to the ACS, approximately 1.1% of workers walk to work, 4% report working from home, and 0.8% rely on other means. Workers reported a mean travel time to work of 31.5 minutes (one-way). These data demonstrate that there are at gains to be had in the percentage of workers commuting by foot or on a bicycle.

Environmental Areas and Sensitive Species

The following endangered or threatened species and critical habitat may be found in the vicinity of the study area:

Species/Habitat	Listing Agency	Type
Pool Sprite	State/Federal	Dicot
Black-spored Quillwort	State/Federal	Fern Ally
Dwarf Hatpins	State	Monocot
Wingpod Purslane	Federal	Flowering Plants
Piedmont Xeric Hardwood/Pine Forest	NA	Natural Community
Brownwater Stream Floodplain Forest	NA	Natural Community

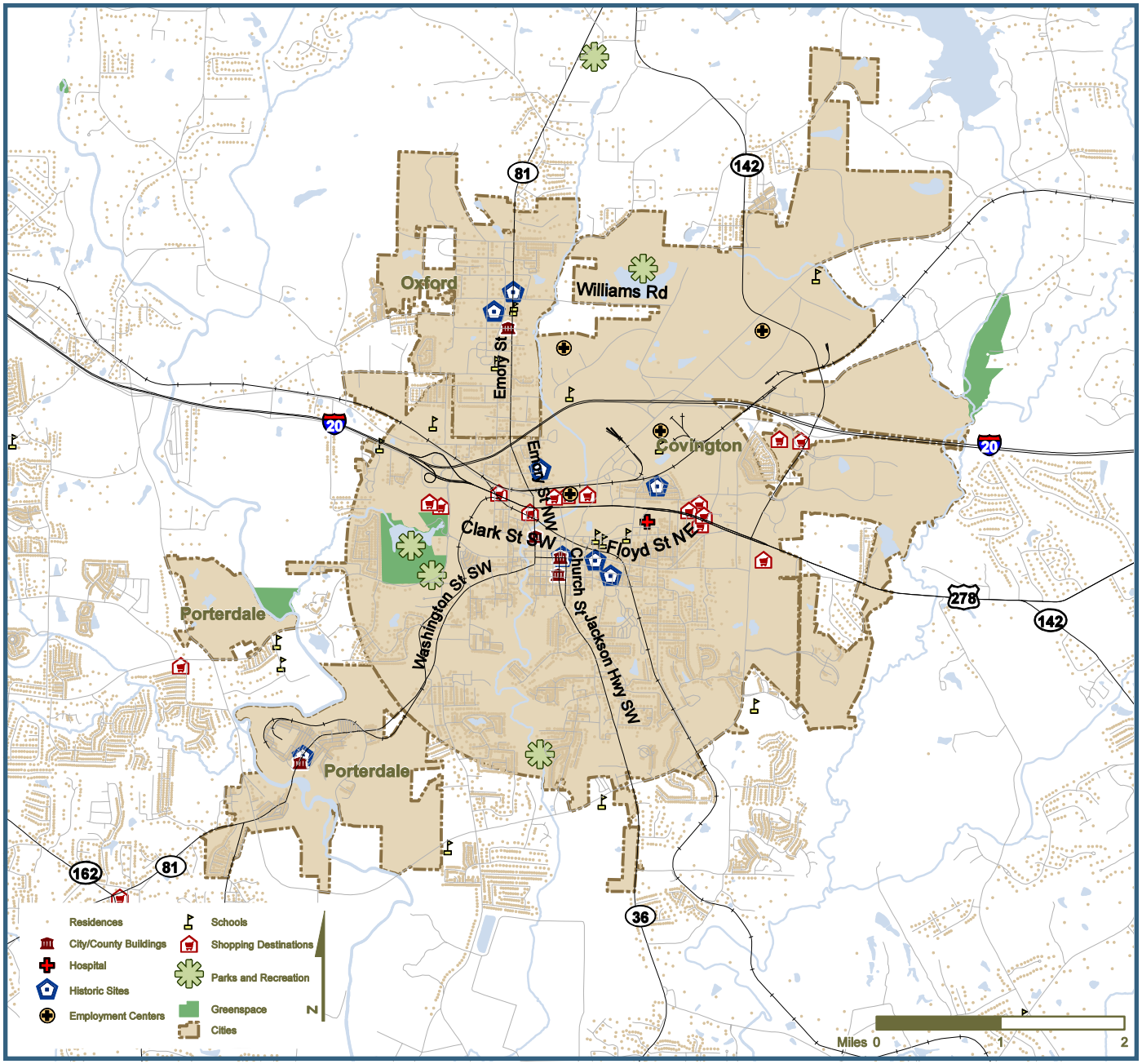
Source: Georgia Ecological Services Field Offices, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

A groundwater recharge area covers parts of the city limits of Porterdale, Covington, and Oxford, as well as neighboring unincorporated Newton County. Regionally Important Resources are also found within the study area: the Yellow River, Oxford College of Emory University, the Alcovy River, and the Alcovy River Greenway are designated for protection (see the NEGRC's Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources at www.negrc.org).

These environmental areas are important because of their sensitivity and for the opportunities they offer to promote conservation, provide educational and interpretive content, and enhance user experiences.

ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS

This map shows the location of residences and key destinations in and around the study area.



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Analysis

Given the relatively high residential density of the study area's three communities and the modest distances from outlying areas to the main commercial hub, downtown Covington, walking and bicycling are viable means of transportation. Within approximately three miles of central Covington (three miles is generally thought of as an easily bikeable distance) are a great deal of businesses of various kinds; elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as several institutions of higher learning; many types venues for shopping, eating, and drinking; parks and other recreation outlets; and civic and institutional facilities such as city halls, a county courthouse, and other government buildings, churches, and libraries. On a more walkable scale, downtown Covington itself features at least twelve restaurants; arts and cultural venues; businesses that cater to everyday needs such as cleaners, technology assistance, florists, banks, hardware stores, barbers and salons, a musical instruments shop, and a produce seller; and the administrative headquarters of the City of Covington and Newton County governments. Porterdale and Oxford each have a number of walkable destinations; additionally, Porterdale's situation on the Yellow River and Oxford College of Emory University both draw interest from within and outside of their respective communities.

However, two major features provide obstacles to what would otherwise be easy access from Oxford and Porterdale into Covington. Oxford's situation to the north of Covington is demarcated by Interstate Highway 20, which represents a major barrier to north/south traffic between the two cities; the only major access point is via the narrow SR81 (*state route*) bridge. Likewise, Porterdale residents wishing to walk or ride a bicycle to and from Covington are currently faced with difficulties related to SR81: high speeds and traffic volumes relative to much of the rest of the area, intense topographic change, land use patterns that do not typically contribute to a walkable environment, and a lack of connective bicycling and walking facilities.

WALKING AND BICYCLING IN CENTRAL NEWTON COUNTY

Patterns and Demand

As stated previously, walking and bicycling within Newton County at large do not represent significant shares of the transportation mode split for work-based commuting (1.1% of workers walk and 0.8% fall into the "other" category, which includes cyclists). However, given that the central portion of the county, which comprises the study area for this plan, features what is likely the county's greatest density and diversity of origins and destinations, one might expect to see a more pronounced interest in bicycle and pedestrian transportation therein.

NEGRC published a questionnaire designed to gauge interest in bicycle and pedestrian travel within central Newton County, to learn where people currently walk and cycle, and to determine where the addition of new facilities might encourage the most people to ride or walk to their preferred destinations. In general, respondents cited safety and the presence of appropriate facilities as two of the biggest contributors to their decisions concerning whether or not to walk or ride a bicycle to preferred destinations. Places that do or would generate bicycling and/or walking trips include parks and trails, shopping locations, workplaces, and libraries. The Floyd St./Clark St. corridor, one of the only locations within the study area currently featuring both sidewalks and on-street bicycle lanes, was by far the most cited place to walk or bicycle, but with the addition of appropriate facilities, respondents indicated that they would ride or walk along SR81, US278, and many other areas. For a synopsis of the questionnaire and responses, please see the appendix of this plan.

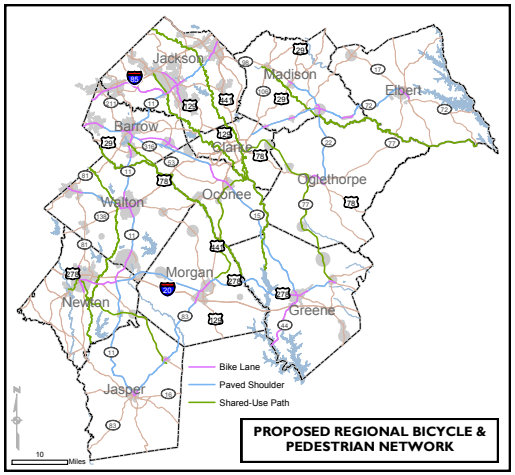
Existing Facilities

Covington, Porterdale, and Oxford currently have facilities dedicated to walking and bicycling. In Covington, sidewalks are nearly ubiquitous throughout the downtown district, but are otherwise less pervasive except in newer residential areas, where they have been required due to code changes, and along state-operated highways. Bicycling facilities in Covington are confined to on-street bike lanes along Floyd St./Clark St and SR142. Oxford's Multi-Use Trail system, developed primarily by Newton Trails and the City of Oxford, provides residents with a connective system of off-road cycling and walking facilities to the west of the SR81 corridor; SR81/Emory St. offers sidewalks in certain areas, but where they exist, they tend to be narrow and need maintenance. Because Porterdale was built as a mill town, its neighborhoods are dense and many road corridors contain sidewalks, making it a fairly walkable city; however, Porterdale currently has no cycling-related facilities.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND REGIONAL EFFORTS

In addition to the quotes from the various community comprehensive plans referenced in the Plan Overview section of this document, a great deal of attention has been paid to planning for bicycling and walking in Covington, Oxford, and Porterdale, as well as in greater Newton County and surrounding areas.

The following plans and projects provide important context and background information for many of the recommendations laid out in this document:



- The **Northeast Georgia Plan for Bicycling and Walking** (2010) guides local decision-makers in developing infrastructure and policy solutions to increase the safety and prevalence of walking and bicycling and to enhance connectivity between residential areas and regionally important destinations throughout Northeast Georgia. It was developed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission with oversight and input from the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, and was adopted in August 2010 by the NEGRC Council. The plan recommends policies, programs, planning tools, and infrastructure investments for communities within the twelve-county region, and central Newton County is one of the plan's "Critical Focus Areas" that require more detailed, community-level planning for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

- Four regional commissions, including NEGRC, have developed a **Multi-Region River Corridor Study** (2012) along the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers. The project's goal is to establish linkage and connectivity along these corridors through the use of trails, greenways, conservation areas, and recreation facilities.

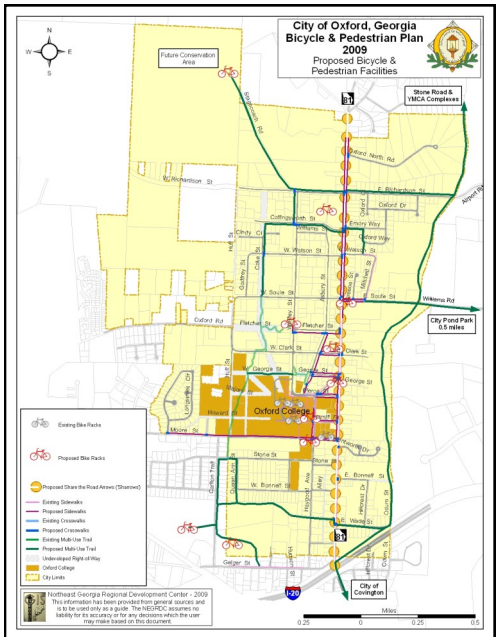
- Covington, Newton County, Conyers, and Rockdale County, in conjunction with several non-profit organizations, developed the **Master Plan for Multi-Use Trails Connecting Conyers and Covington** (2009). The plan includes a Porterdale Branch, 4.33 miles of trail along the Yellow River between

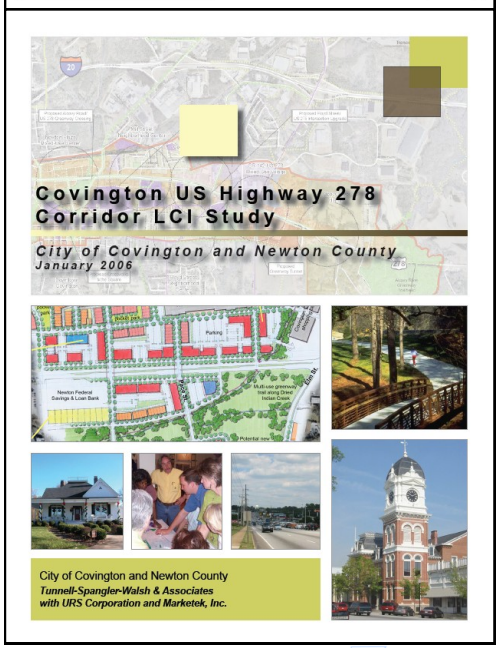
Almon and Porterdale; an Oxford Branch, 3.58 miles connecting Oxford with Almon via a power easement, and connecting to existing trail segments within Oxford; and a Covington Branch, 6.15 miles in two prongs connecting Oxford to Porterdale and Covington, utilizing the dormant rail line that runs from Porterdale to Covington and beyond.

- The NEGRC developed the **Active Transportation Plan for the City of Oxford** (2009) at the City's request, in order to "Make cycling and walking...safer and more attractive for the entire community, regardless of age, fitness level, or income." This plan provides focus points in three key areas: SR81/Emory St., Palmer Stone Elementary School, and Multi-Use Trails.

- The **Covington US Highway 278 Corridor LCI Study** (2006) provides specific, detailed analysis and recommendations for improvements, including an extensive list of pedestrian and bicycle projects. Since the plan presents such a large amount of information, NEGRC was asked to select the most important walking- and bicycling-related aspects in summary form. While not all of the projects listed below are represented in the recommendations included in this plan, the following information synopsizes the key walking and bicycling components of the LCI Study:

  Walking
  - A traffic circle on Turner Lake Rd., a greenway tunnel under the bypass, Floyd St./US278 intersection improvements, and crosswalk installations downtown are completed or in progress
  - Pace St. is slated for comprehensive walkability improvements, including filling gaps in its portion of the sidewalk system, adding shade trees and lighting, and burying utilities; while these changes should be seen as high-priority, investing in similar additions along the Elm St./Alcovy Rd. corridor may be of lesser value, but are still worth funding eventually
  - A "phased pedestrian facilities project on US278" includes very high priority sidewalk construction to fill in the existing network and landscaping adjacent to curbs and within medians
  - To go along with these improvements, high-quality pedestrian crossings along and across US278, including its intersections with Turner Lake Rd., West St., Emory St./SR81, Elm St., Mill St., Industrial Blvd., and SR142, should be pursued
  - These specific suggestions fall within a larger policy recommendation to "create pedestrian crossings into all public spaces" and are coupled with a similar directive to "provide a protected pedestrian walk phase or leading phase at all signalized intersections"
  - Finally, additional sidewalk construction is planned for downtown, Mill Village, Mill St. (south of US278), Adams St. (south of US278), Industrial Blvd (north of US278), Hazelbrand Rd., SR142, and Alcovy Rd./Agnew Way (north of the LCI study area); while these will all improve pedestrian safety and circulation, the highest priority should be given to downtown and Mill St.

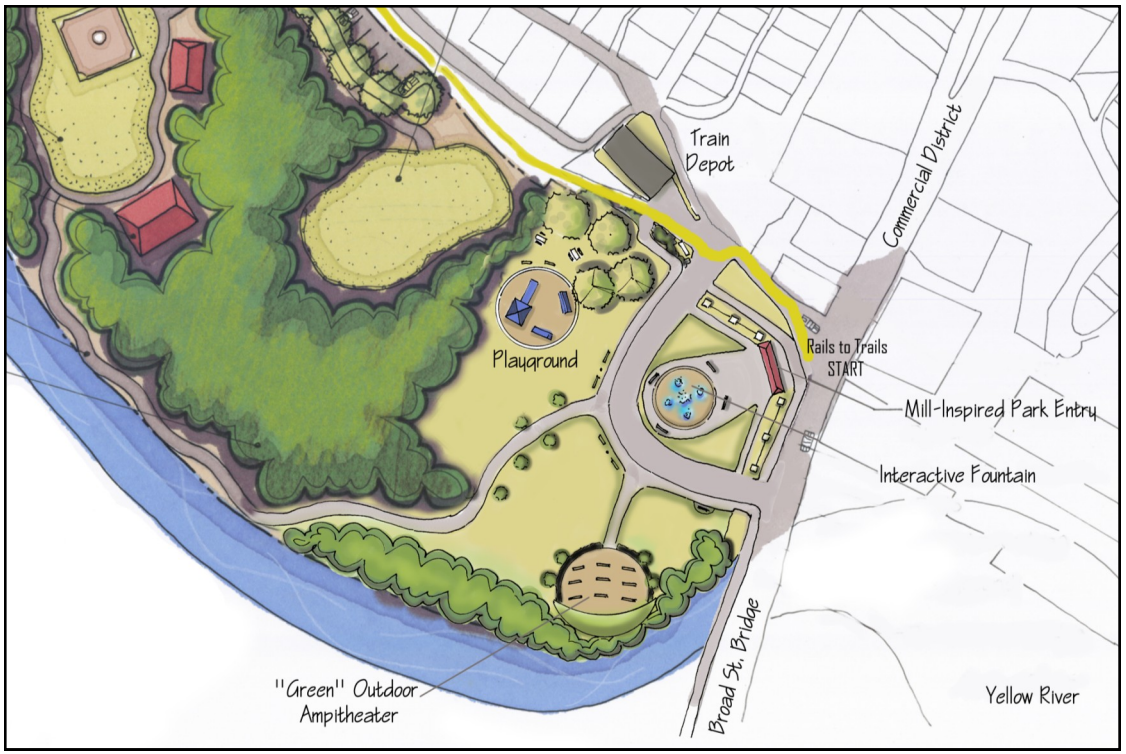


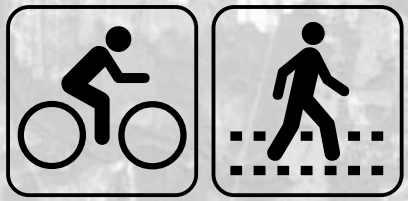


Bicycling

- Many of the LCI's key bicycling components relate to shared-use path installation adjacent to roadways; this should only be encouraged specially in corridors with few curb-cuts and intersections to avoid frequent bicycle/automobile conflicts
  - The most critical of these recommendations is the facility along the Great Walton Railroad
- The LCI study's suggestion to install bicycle racks downtown is important, but equally vital is the recommendation to "amend [the] zoning code to require bicycle racks at new commercial and mixed-use developments; parking should be covered and accessible to front entrances of buildings
- Likewise, a community-wide policy to install bicycle lanes along new roads should be adopted

- Porterdale and Newton Trails have been planning a series of paths as part of the **Yellow River Park**. These projects include connectivity to downtown Porterdale, Newton County High School, and Turner Lake Park in Covington



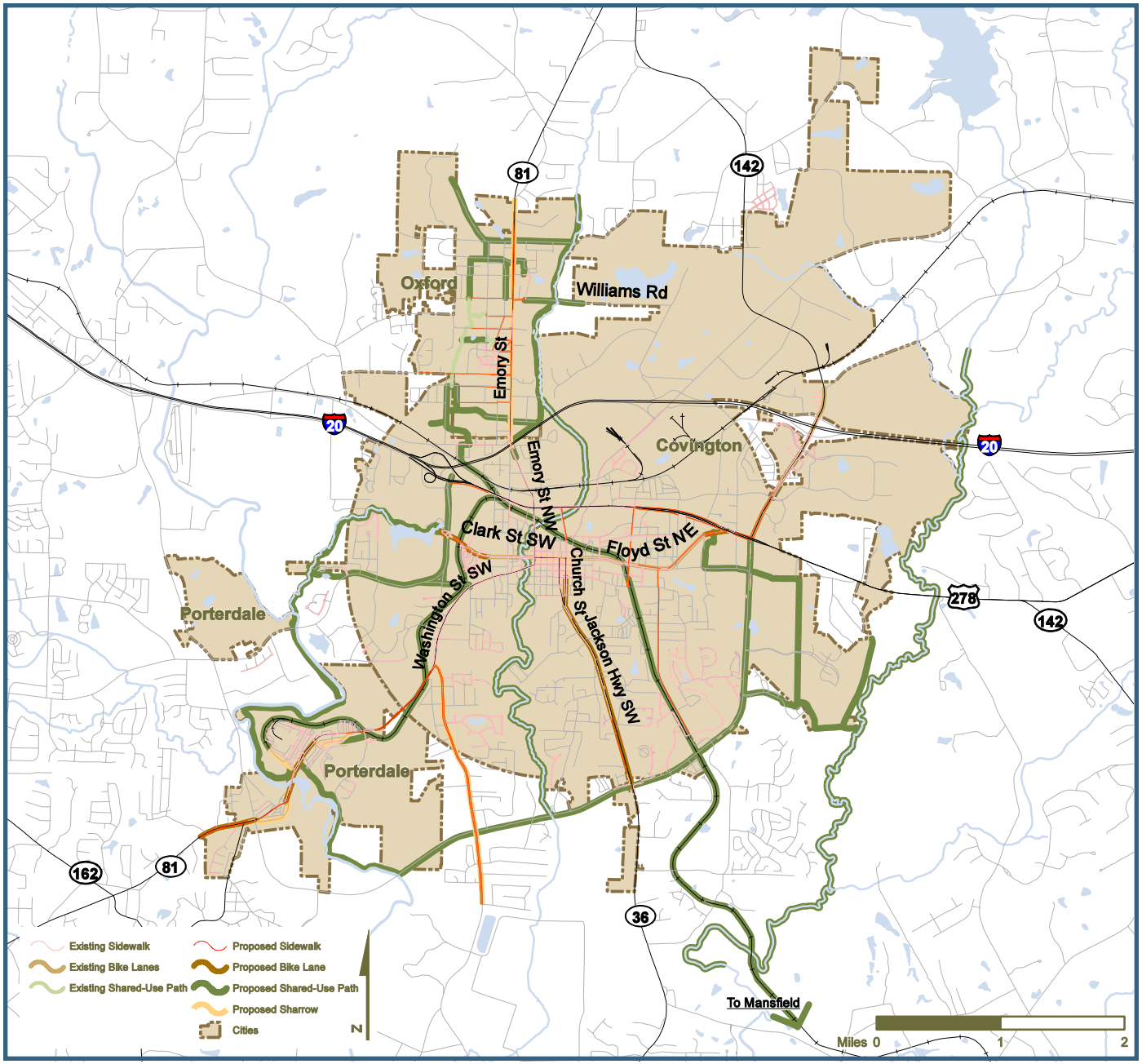


IV. System Development

BICYCLING AND WALKING NETWORK

This chapter presents suggested physical improvements necessary to accomplish the goals set out previously in the plan. It strikes a balance between a establishing a comprehensive, connective network of facilities for bicycling and walking and the economic reality of scarce local government resources.

The Bicycling and Walking Network maps shown at right (overview) and on the following pages (community detail maps) illustrate proposed infrastructural investments that are designed to provide safe and convenient spaces for walking and bicycling. The Greenway Network map at the end of the chapter provides a basic schematic of both sensitive riparian corridors and proposed off-road cycling and walking facilities.

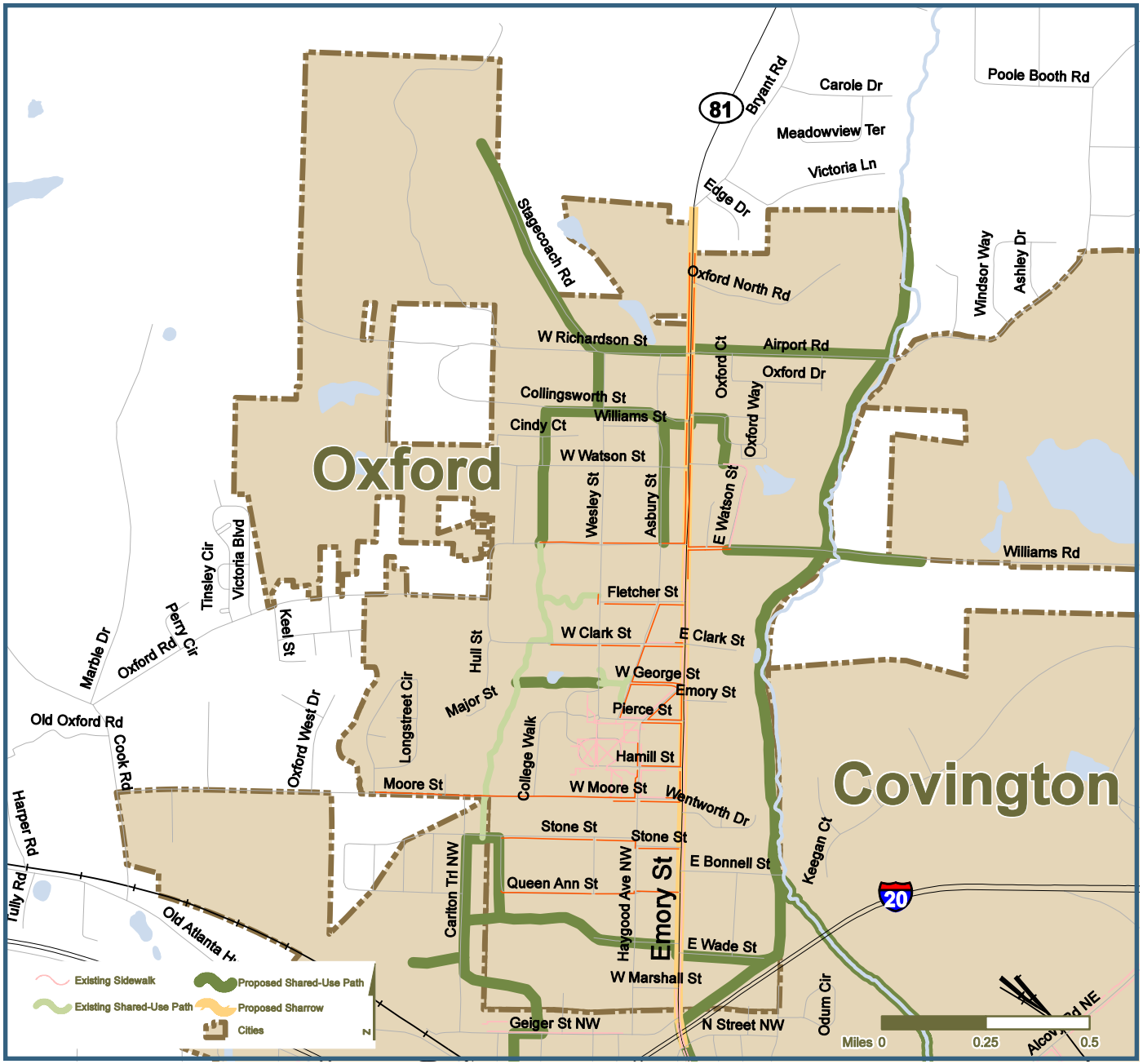


zoom in for greater detail; focus areas are presented on the following pages

BICYCLING AND WALKING NETWORK (COVINGTON)

zoom in for greater detail

BICYCLING AND WALKING NETWORK (OXFORD)



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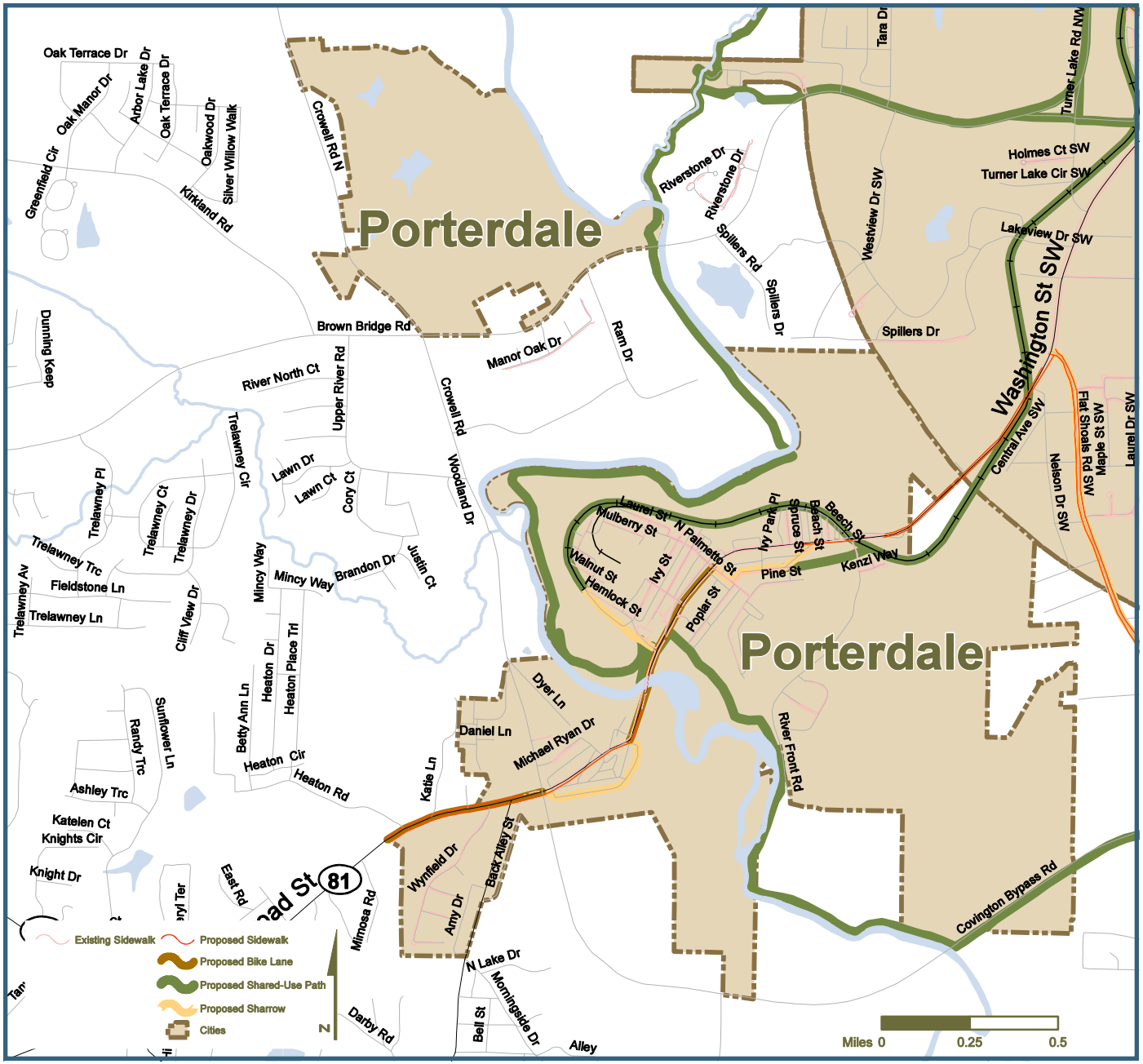
BICYCLING AND WALKING NETWORK (PORTERDALE)



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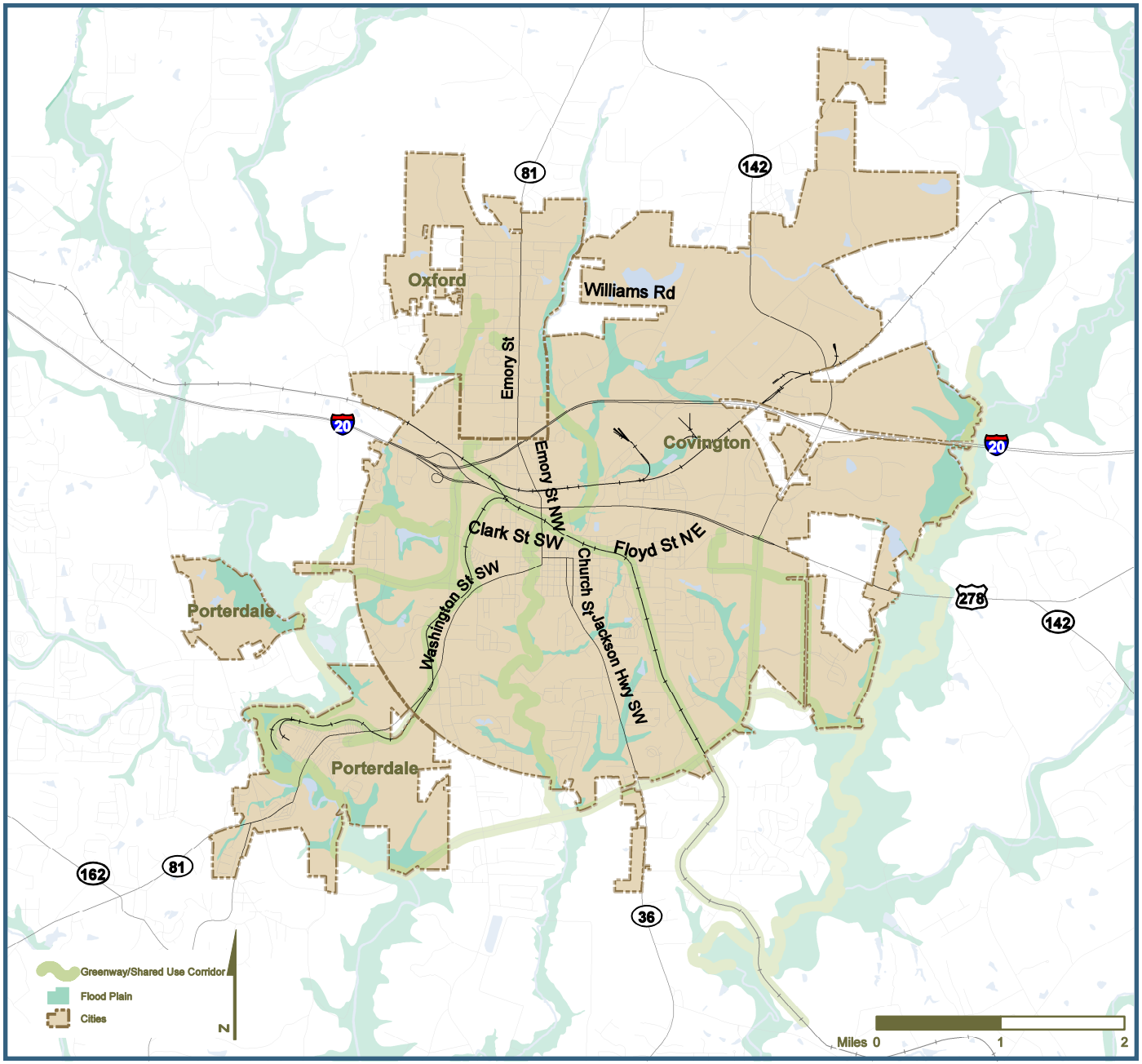
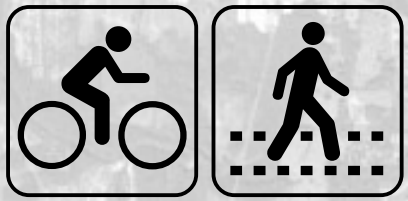
GREENWAY NETWORK

This map is simply a presentation of all shared-use paths recommended on the previous maps, with sensitive flood plain areas in central Newton County.





V. Design, Development, and Management

Through discussions with the steering committee, it became clear that a common purpose and direction must be established within the study area to ensure that facilities, programs, and policies align between communities, especially given their relatively small size and geographic proximity. To that end, this section provides general guidelines for creating a cohesively connective system, such that a user can cross community lines without noticing a marked difference in experience. A summary of selected measures that will help achieve this inter-jurisdictional consistency can be found in this document's Implementation Program.

GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following sections provide general information and specific standards on preferred locations, materials, and applications of certain types of bicycling and walking facilities. In addition to building new facilities, it is paramount that when additions are planned, they include connections to nearby existing facilities. For example, bicycle lanes along intersecting streets must include plain markings that instruct the cyclist how to access one facility from the other properly.

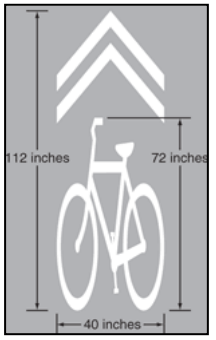
Bike Lanes

Bike lanes should be a minimum of four feet wide on roadways with no curb and gutter, with a recommended width of five feet from the curb or roadway edge to the bike lane stripe. Eleven feet is the recommended width for a shared bike lane and parking area without a curb face present, while twelve feet is recommended for a shared bike lane and parking area with a curb face. Wider bike lanes should be installed in areas of high speed traffic in order to accommodate cyclists' tendency to ride roughly three feet from the curb. In areas in which on-street parking is permitted, the bike lane should be located between the parking area and the motorized travel lane, and be at least five feet in width.

Signage should include standard pavement symbols such as the words "BIKE LANE" and a directional arrow. These symbols should be white with reflective properties, and should, at minimum, be painted on the far side of each intersection.

Sharrows

For the first time, the 2009 edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) provided guidelines for using shared lane marking, or "sharrows." In addition to alerting motorists of the possible presence of cyclists on the road, sharrows guide cyclists to the preferred lateral position within the travel lane. This is especially true for roads with on-street parking and those that are too narrow for a motor vehicle and bicycle to travel side by side. Sharrows are not to be used on roads with speed limits above 35 miles per hour, nor on shoulders or in bike lanes. When used, they should be placed immediately after intersections and at no greater than 250-foot intervals thereafter.



Signed Bicycling Routes

The following are reasons to install "Share the Road" or "Bike Route" signage:

- The roadway connects separate bicycle facilities such as bike lanes and multi-use trails
- The roadway is a popular route for recreational and/or utilitarian bicyclists
- The roadway traverses a rural area with a presumably low demand for separate bicycle facilities
- The route follows neighborhood streets leading to a common public destination such as a park, school, or commercial district

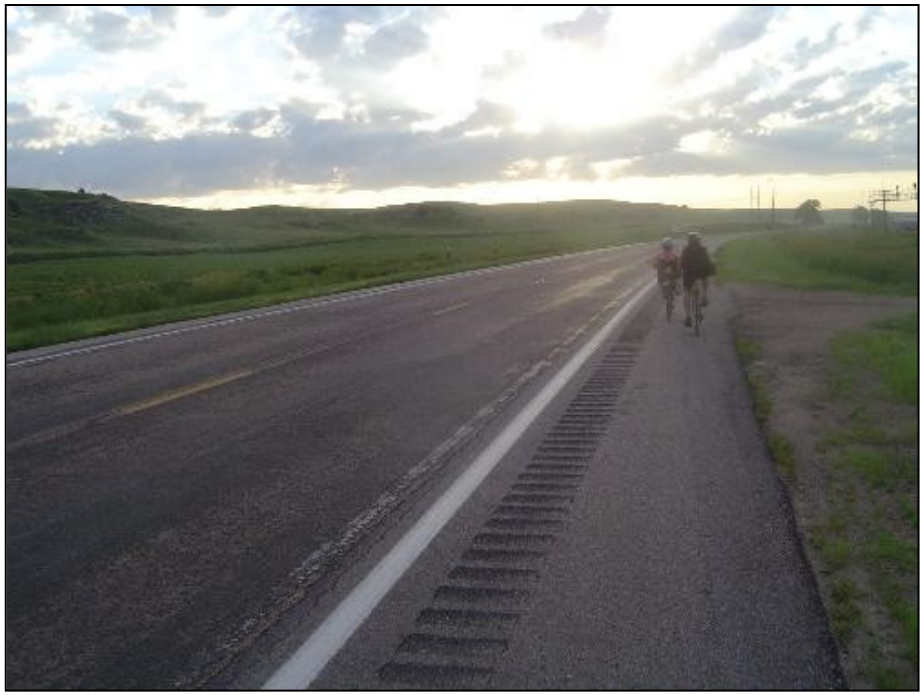
These signs, especially where they connect specific destinations, should include route information such as "To Downtown," and should be located at major intersections and turns.

Paved Shoulders or Wide Curb Lanes*

Paved shoulders also serve to accommodate bicyclists (and pedestrians) in rural areas. Recommended widths are the same as for bike lanes, with a minimum of four feet but an ideal of five feet from the curb or roadway edge. In areas with high motorized vehicle speeds, increased widths may be necessary. On roads with rumble strips, a minimum four-foot width should be provided between the outer edge of the rumble strip and the edge of the paved shoulder.

Roadways without a striped shoulder should be at least twelve feet wide in order to accommodate motor vehicles and bicycles; the recommended width in such areas without a separate bike lane but with "Share the Road" signage is fourteen feet.

**Although no such facilities are included in the specific infrastructure projects recommended in this plan, local governments may wish to pursue them in other locations at some point in the future.*



Sidewalks

Sidewalks are typically made of concrete, though asphalt or crushed stone may be suitable in some rural areas. A minimum width of five feet allows two people to pass by one another comfortably, but sidewalks should be wider near schools, surrounding transit stops, downtown areas, and other destinations with high volumes of pedestrians, such as recreation facilities. New and existing sidewalks should include ramps for access by wheelchairs, strollers, etc.

Local guidelines for the location and installation of sidewalks should comply with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and be based on land use, roadway functional classification, and building density. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides the following list of sidewalk recommendations for both new construction and enhancement of existing streets. For rural roads that are not anticipated to serve development, a minimum four-foot wide shoulder should be provided as a stable walking surface.

Land Use [Functional Classification]	**New Streets**	**Existing Streets**
Commercial and Industrial [All streets]	Both sides	Both sides, completing missing links
Residential [Major Arterials]	Both sides	Both sides
Residential [Collectors]	Both sides	Multifamily – both sides; Single family – at least one side
Residential, > 4 units/acre [Local Streets]	Both sides	At least one side
Residential, 1-4 units/acre [Local Streets]	At least one side	At least a four-foot shoulder on both sides
Residential, < 1 unit/acre [Local Streets]	One side preferred, at least a four-foot shoulder on both sides	One side preferred, at least a four-foot shoulder on both sides

Crosswalks

The Official Code of Georgia defines "crosswalk" in two ways:

- That part of a roadway at an intersection included within the connections of the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway measured from the curbs or in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the traversable roadway; or
- Any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface. (§ 40-1-1. Definitions)

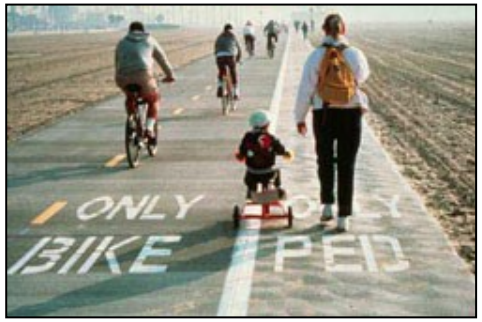
For marked mid-block and intersection crosswalks, ladder, or "zebra," markings painted perpendicular to the pedestrian path are preferred for their visibility. Ideally, these lines should be 12-24 inches wide and spaced 12-24 inches apart to help reduce wear from motor vehicle tires. Raised bump strips should be installed at crosswalk entry points to aide the visually impaired in safely crossing the road, and walk/don't walk signals (with countdown) should be installed where appropriate.

Lighting

Sufficient roadway lighting should be provided along both sides of arterial streets at regular intervals. Pedestrian-scale lighting is most common in high-volume and commercial areas, where visibility is also enhanced by adjacent building lights. Downtown areas and in-town neighborhoods are often identified by specialty lighting in order to unify the district and provide comfort and security for pedestrians.

Shared-Use Paths

Shared-use paths may be located within road right-of-way, on abandoned rail corridors, or within floodplain areas, among other locations. However, paths should only be situated next to roadways when curb-cuts, driveways, intersections, and other motor vehicle crossings are at a minimum. In all situations, these facilities and their amenities should be designed for access by people with disabilities; they should also provide easy and efficient connectivity directly to the entrances of nearby activity centers.



Shared-use paths should be at least ten feet wide, with a minimum of two feet of graded area on either side. For areas with high volumes of users, a width of 12-14 feet may be required. Surfacing materials may vary, depending on the target user group. Shared-use paths are usually paved with either asphalt or concrete, accommodating pedestrians and cyclists alike. Crushed aggregate may be used, though it is generally more difficult to traverse for some cyclists and those in wheelchairs, and more frequent maintenance will be necessary.

Path amenities should be considered, but will vary from community to community. Rest areas containing picnic tables or benches are fairly common, and some communities install restrooms along these facilities. Access points, or "trailheads," with parking lots might be appropriate in suburban and rural locations where the path is not connected to the community's sidewalk network. However, in more densely populated areas high residential concentrations and relatively little space for parking, trailheads are often worked into the fabric of the community and do not include parking lots.

One of the more important elements for shared-use paths is adequate and detailed signage. Depending on the path location, it may be helpful to include way-finding signs to nearby destinations, signs bearing the path name and length, elevation changes, permitted users, and type of surface. In many cases, the agencies, organizations, and companies that contributed to the construction of the facility may also be recognized on signs throughout the extent of the pathway.

Connectivity Between Facilities

In all cases, and across all facility types, connections between walking and bicycling spaces should be designed and constructed to provide obvious direction regarding how to access one from another. For instance, at a regular intersection where both streets have bicycle lanes, signage and on-street markings should clearly show the appropriate path(s) for making a left turn from one street to the other. Without making proper turns and other similar situations explicitly clear and safe, investments in bicycling and walking facilities may not achieve their full safety potential.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

Governments should continue to work together to acquire property and build projects after the design process. While state and local engineers typically handle acquisition and construction management for projects within and adjacent to rights-of-way, such as for sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and some side-paths next to roadways, most shared-use paths are developed by staff (or volunteers) serving in a more specific capacity. Newton County's Special Projects Coordinator and individuals acting on behalf of Newton Trails have had a large part in developing many of the County's existing and planned shared-use paths, and should continue to do so, if available. Not only does involvement from these county-wide institutions ensure cross-jurisdictional coordination, it also presents opportunities for individuals who are knowledgeable of these sometimes-complex proceedings to apply their expertise to the project. Additionally, regulatory tools can help governments require or encourage private developers to contribute to local bicycling and walking facilities construction.

Acquisition Methods

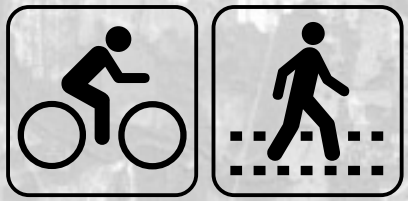
- Donation - A local government or non-profit receives full title to a parcel of land at virtually no cost. In many cases, the owner who donates the land is eligible to receive federal and state tax deductions. This method of acquisition should be a first priority for local governments, as it reduces overall project costs while allowing the project developer (a government or non-profit) complete control over design and construction.
- Easement Acquisition - A full title to the land is not purchased; rather, a community receives those rights granted in an easement agreement, acquired either by donation or purchase. For example, trail construction and access may be granted on an owner's property.
- Fee Simple Purchase - Fee simple ownership results in full title and property rights being turned over to the municipality via outright purchase. Though some governments choose not to use eminent domain or condemnation four trail development, nothing prohibits them from doing so, legally.

Regulatory Tools

- Density Bonus - Allowance of additional density to developers in exchange for the preservation of identified shared-use path or greenway corridors.
- Impact Fees - Developers may be required to provide streets, sewers, streetlights, parks, trails, etc., based on a formula created to calculate the cost that a proposed development would impose on the community; alternatively, fees in lieu could be levied, with funds collected through an impact fees program supporting greenway/shared-use path development in other areas.
- Overlay Zones - Additional development standards and criteria can be developed to supplement underlying zoning and other regulations.
- Compatibility Review - This involves evaluating proposed developments adjacent to or within identified corridors as part of the local plans review process.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Just as governments and organizations should coordinate design and development of facilities, once walking and bicycling environments are created, they should be managed and maintained similarly. Examples of this include consistency in operating hours, maintenance methods and schedules, and rules and regulations. Ordinances, intergovernmental agreements, volunteer labor, and other tools should be considered to accomplish this.



VI. Policies, Planning Tools, and Programs

This section provides guidance on recommended policies, planning tools, and programs for local governments to adopt, utilize, and pursue. While not every measure will necessarily apply to all communities, each represents important potential gains in increasing safety and prevalence of walking and bicycling.

POLICIES

Complete Streets

The National Complete Streets Coalition works with communities across the U.S. to "transform the look, feel, and function of the roads and streets in our community, by changing the way most roads are planned, designed, and constructed." A street can be said to be "complete" when all pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders are able to move safely along and across the corridor.

The Coalition encourages communities to adopt policies to guide the transportation planning process at the state, regional, county, and municipal levels. An ideal complete streets policy:

- Provides a vision
- Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as operators of motorized vehicles
- Encourages street connectivity
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects
- Directs the use of the latest and best design standards
- Recommends solutions to complement the context of the community
- Establishes performance standards
- Identifies implementation steps

Concurrency, or Adequate Public Facilities Controls

A concurrency or adequate public facilities plan or policy acts as a framework linking the timing of new growth to the ability for infrastructure to handle that growth. The terms *public facilities* and *infrastructure* can and should include bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Communities can require developers to pay for infrastructure costs if projects are identified in a capital improvement program, thus distributing the burden of funding across all stakeholders.

New School Siting

Situating new schools in close proximity to neighborhoods and facilities for bicycling and walking can encourage students to bike and walk. At present, the minimum acreage requirements of the Georgia State Board of Education for new school construction are:

- Elementary School: Five acres plus one acre for each 100 children in full-time equivalent (FTE)
- Middle School: 12 acres plus one acre for each 100 children in FTE
- High School: 20 acres plus one acre for each 100 students in FTE

The State Board of Education has determined that deviations may be made from the minimum acreage requirements for new school site selection in developed areas, so long as the reduced acreage is "considered appropriate" by the site approval committee.[1] The Board has also stated that the facility site "should contribute positively to the health, safety, and social aspects of a child's life at school."[2] This enables local governments and school districts to work together in the development of a policy to site new schools in areas where children are able to walk and bike to school.

Regional Coordination

A representative should be designated from the county and municipal governments in Northeast Georgia to continue participating in the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force meetings on a quarterly basis to ensure that the projects and recommendations outlined in this plan are implemented with as much coordination as possible. In addition, regular attendance by community representatives at meetings of other related groups, such as metropolitan planning organizations and the NEGRC's Planning and Government Services Committee, will strengthen intergovernmental relationships and the region as a whole.

Summary of Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Laws

Effective July 1, 2011, state law requires a three-foot passing distance between motorists and bicyclists. Laws pertaining to the operation of bicycles can be found within Title 40 of the Georgia Code, titled Motor Vehicles and Traffic, under Chapter 6, "Uniform Rules of the Road." Bicycles are identified as vehicles in this Article, and it is noted that all traffic laws shall be applicable to bicycles. (§ 40-6-291. Traffic laws applicable to bicycles) Carrying another person on the handlebars is prohibited, and acceptable methods of transporting children are identified. (§ 40-6-292. Manner of riding bicycles; carrying more than one person) Bicycles should be driven as close to the right side of the road as practicable. In addition, local governments have the authority to require cyclists to use a separate path designated solely for bicycles, provided that the path is located adjacent to the roadway, meets AASHTO planning, design, operation, and maintenance guidelines, and provides access to the same destinations as the roadway. (§ 40-6-294. Riding on roadways and bicycle paths) Finally, the Georgia Code identifies personal safety measures that must be taken while riding bicycles. Helmets are required for persons under the age of 16, and a front-mounted light and rear reflector are required for nighttime riding. (§ 40-6-296. Lights and other equipment on bicycles) In June 2009, state law was clarified, prohibiting all persons over the age of 12 from driving a bicycle on sidewalks, and allowing those under the age of 12 to do so only when the local government resolves to permit it. (§ 40-6-144. Emerging from alley, driveway, or building)

Laws pertaining to the operation of pedestrians are found in the same Code. Pedestrians are required to obey instructions of all official traffic-control devices, unless otherwise directed by a police officer. (§ 40-6-90. Obedience to traffic-control devices and traffic regulations) Pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks, and drivers are required to stop to allow them to cross when the pedestrian is within one lane of the half of the roadway on which the vehicle is traveling. Pedestrians are not allowed to walk or run directly into the path of a vehicle that is so close it is impracticable for the driver to yield. When a vehicle is stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross, drivers of any other vehicle are prohibited from passing the stopped vehicle. (§ 40-6-91. Right of way in crosswalks) When crossing at any point other than a marked or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, pedestrians are required to yield the right of way to all vehicles. Pedestrians are prohibited from crossing between intersections unless on a marked "mid-block" crosswalk. (§ 40-6-92. Crossing roadway elsewhere than at crosswalk) Where a sidewalk or shoulder is provided adjacent to the roadway, pedestrians are prohibited from standing or striding along and upon the roadway itself, unless avoiding hazards on the sidewalk. Where neither a sidewalk nor a shoulder is provided, pedestrians shall stand or stride as near as possible to the edge of the roadway. On two-lane roadways, pedestrians shall stand or stride on the left side. (§ 40-6-96. Pedestrians on or along roadway)

[1] Georgia Department of Education Facility Services Unit (January 2008). "A Guide to Facility Site Selection," p. 3.

[2] Georgia Department of Education Facility Services Unit (January 2008). "A Guide to Facility Site Selection," p. 2.

PLANNING TOOLS

Form-Based Zoning
Instead of regulating by land use districts, form- or design-based zoning codes regulate development within a community by the building type, location, or a combination of these. These codes focus on the relationship between buildings and the street, enhancing the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendliness of a community. Graphics are often used to depict building scale, proportion, location within the site, and location of parking.

Pedestrian Overlay Districts
The identification of Pedestrian Overlay Districts within incorporated areas can help to promote a mixture of elements that enhance walkability. Pedestrian-oriented design standards for buildings, streetscapes, and town squares may guide development within such districts. The reuse of existing buildings may be encouraged, contributing to residents' and visitors' interpretation of the community's history.

Incentive Zoning
This regulatory tool is a reward-based system designed to provide tradeoffs for developments in order to address a community's planning goals. This can result in the allowance of increased densities or building heights in exchange for additional pedestrian or bicycle amenities or facilities.

Street Connectivity Regulations
Many communities throughout the U.S. are adopting street connectivity regulations to be incorporated into their zoning and subdivision ordinances. These regulations focus on creating a transportation system in which multiple routes serve the same origins and destinations for maximum efficiency and the enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian travel. (See street connectivity calculation guidance and a model ordinance from Kentucky. *Direct Link*: http://congestion.kytc.ky.gov/AccessManagement/Kentucky%20Connectivity%20Model%20Ordinance%20FINAL.pdf)

Public Sidewalk and Bike Lane Dedication
In order to ensure safe pedestrian and cyclist travel within new residential and commercial developments, many communities are requiring that public sidewalks and bicycle lanes be provided by the developer. Required components may differ among roads, depending on street classification and assigned character of the proposed development on the Future Development Map.

Similarly, when new roads are constructed or when existing roads are resurfaced, communities are increasingly requiring the inclusion of bike lanes, if space allows.

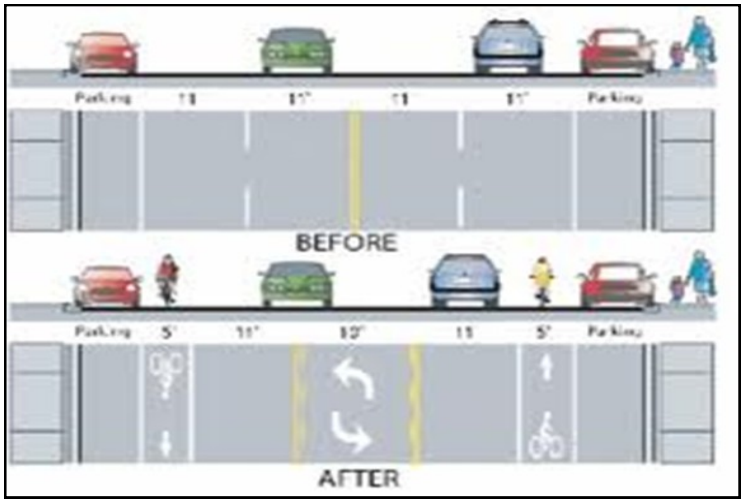
On-site Access, Parking, and Circulation Ordinance
In order for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely access new developments, local governments are integrating bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation (and for cyclists, parking) requirements into the site review process. This type of ordinance emphasizes providing safe access for pedestrians and cyclists from on-road facilities to the new development site.

Health Impact Assessments for New Developments

Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are used to objectively evaluate the potential health effects of a new project or policy before it is built or enacted. According to the Center for Disease Control, the HIA process is similar in some ways to the environmental impact assessment required for federal agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act. HIA focuses on health outcomes such as obesity, physical inactivity, asthma, injuries, and social equity, and is becoming a popular tool for communities interested in enhancing the health of residents.[3]

Road Diets

Road diets are characterized by a reduction in the number of motor-vehicle lanes on a roadway to reduce the severity of crashes and provide a safer environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. They also often include a reduction in motor vehicle lane width, accompanied by the addition of painted bicycle lanes with no added pavement width required.



IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

1999 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
(http://scote.transportation.org)
2005 GDOT Pedestrian & Streetscape Guide,
2006 Georgia Guidebook for Pedestrian Planning
(http://www.dot.state.ga.us/travelingingeorgia/bikepedestrian)
2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
(http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_2009.htm)

[3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). Retrieved on June 22, 2012, from http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm.

PROGRAMS

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

SRTS generally refers to programs that promote walking and bicycling to school to achieve a wide range of benefits for students, families, and communities. These benefits include reduced traffic in the vicinity of schools, improved pedestrian and bicyclist access, and safety and increased physical activity among students, contributing to healthy lifestyles and greater independence. In 2005, the U.S Congress passed federal legislation that established a national Safe Routes to School program, dedicating a total of $612 million toward the initiative from 2005-2009. Congress allocated $17,177,280 to the State of Georgia for 2005-2009 for SRTS, and for 2010 and 2011, funding was continued at the 2009 level of $5,631,065. This funding is administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation in two ways. Infrastructure projects are funded through a competitive process to increase the safety of children walking and bicycling to school. In addition, the Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center was established to aid communities in developing educational and encouragement programs for students, faculty, and parents. NEGRC partners with the Resource Center regularly to assist local communities in the development of SRTS plans.

Bike-to-Work Day/Car Free Day

Every year during the month of May, the League of American Bicyclists promotes Bike Month; the third Friday of every May is designated as Bike to Work Day. This activity is encouraged throughout Northeast Georgia, where practical. In some cases, communities may choose to hold a "Car-Free Day," perhaps on a weekend, and schedule various events in celebration of bicycling and walking as transportation.

Historical/cultural walking/biking tours

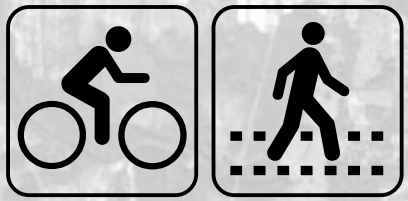
Many of the small towns and cities throughout Northeast Georgia contain valuable historical and cultural assets that should be celebrated. An innovative method of educating residents and visitors about the community is the organization of walking and bicycling tours. Safety should be a priority on these excursions, and cooperation between multiple organizations, agencies, and institutions is encouraged for maximum exposure and participation.

Safety Education and Law Enforcement

Police departments, community agencies and organizations, and bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups are encouraged to develop and execute community safety demonstrations surrounding walking and bicycling. In addition, NEGRC works with local police departments to conduct bicycle- and pedestrian-specific training for law enforcement officers.

IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

League of American Bicyclists' Bike Month Program
(http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/)
Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center
(http://www.saferoutesga.org)
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
(http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)



VII. Implementation Program

This chapter is sectioned into infrastructure projects (per the maps presented previously) and programmatic steps. Infrastructure project distances account for both sides of a roadway, where applicable. Shared-use path costs are presented first in asphalt, then in concrete. For example, sidewalks are proposed on both sides of W George St.: the .1-mi. road segment accounts for .2 mi. of sidewalk. Programmatic steps include the non-infrastructure sections of the plan.

NETWORK (INFRASTRUCTURE)

Sidewalks - Oxford

Street	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Emory St./SR81	NA	NA	1.63	$ 603,543	Various segments of Emory St. to fill existing gaps
W Soule St./Williams Rd.	Coke St.	E Watson St.	0.42	$ 153,642	
Wesley St.	Fletcher St.	Multi-Use Trail	0.02	$ 8,727	
Fletcher St.	Wesley St.	Emory St./SR81	0.18	$ 66,371	
W. Clark St.	Mult-Use Trail	Emory St./SR81	0.31	$ 115,289	
George St	Asbury St.	Whatcoat St.	0.23	$ 84,514	
Pierce St.	Whatcoat St.	Emory St./SR81	0.18	$ 64,993	
Hamill St.	Haygood Ave.	Emory St./SR81	0.09	$ 34,219	
Moore St	Longsreet Cir.	Emory St./SR81	0.79	$ 293,504	
Stone St.	Queen Anne St.	Emory St./SR81	0.43	$ 157,776	
Queen Anne St.	Mult-Use Trail	Emory St./SR81	0.42	$ 155,938	
Whatcoat St.	Pierce St.	Emory St./SR81	0.11	$ 40,650	
Asbury St.	Pierce St.	W. Clark St.	0.18	$ 64,764	

Sidewalks - Covington

Street	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Broad St./N. Broadway/Washington St. SW	NA	Flat Shoals Rd.	1.39	$ 511,909	
Flat Shoals Rd.	Washington St. SW	Hidden Pines Dr.	4.00	$ 1,478,314	
Jackson Hwy. SW	Jackson St..	Carlin St.	0.47	$ 173,392	
Dearing St. SE	Floyd/Martin St.	NA	1.39	$ 515,125	
Clark St. SW	Turner Lake Rd.	Carol St.	0.43	$ 160,072	
SR12	Turner Lake Rd.	Piper St. NW	0.33	$ 121,490	
Pace St.	SR12	Stallings St. NW	0.26	$ 97,375	
Mill St.	SR12	Conyers St. SE	0.66	$ 243,898	
Floyd St. NE	Martin St. SE	SR12/US278	0.71	$ 262,270	
SR12/US278	Mill St. NE	SR142/Covington Bypass	1.68	$ 621,686	
SR142	Wheat St.	Lochridge Blvd.	0.93	$ 341,962	

Sidewalks - Porterdale

Street	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Broad St./SR81	NA	NA	1.26	$ 464,140	
N. Broadway	Magnolia St.	River Front Rd.	0.15	$ 54,199	

Bicycle Lanes/Sharrows - Oxford

Street	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Emory St./SR81	Bryant Rd.	North St. NW	2.03	$ 10,702	Sharrow

Bicycle Lanes/Sharrows - Covington

Street	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Flat Shoals Rd.	Washington St. SW	Hidden Pines Dr.	4.00	$ 21,119	Sharrow
Clark St. SW	Emory St.	Elm St.	0.30	$ 1,601	Sharrow
Church St.	Clark St. SW	Conyers St.	0.15	$ 814	Sharrow
Clark St. SW	Turner Lake Rd.	Carol St.	0.45	$ 22,500	Bike Lane (widening)
SR36/Jackson Hwy. SW	Church St.	Covington Bypass SW	1.54	$ 77,000	Bike Lane (widening)
SR36/Church St.	Jackson Hwy. SW	Conyers St.	0.25	$ 1,250	Bike Lane (widening not required)
Floyd St. NE	Ramsey Dr. SE	US278	0.20	$ 1,000	Bike Lane (widening not likely required)

Bicycle Lanes/Sharrows - Porterdale

Street	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Elm St. Alley/Carmel Church Rd.	Crowell Rd.	Elm St.	0.38	$ 2,031	Sharrow
Railroad St.	Hemlock St.	Elm St.	0.27	$ 1,434	Sharrow
E Palmetto St./Poplar St.	Elm St.	N Broadway	0.35	$ 1,850	Sharrow
SR81	City Limits (SW)	Crowell Rd.	0.46	$ 23,000	Bike Lane (widening)
SR81	Elm St.	E Palmetto St.	0.55	$ 27,500	Bike Lane (widening)

Shared-Use Paths

Identifying Name	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Oxford Multi-Use Trail System	NA	NA	7.40	$ 1,953,904 $ 4,298,589	Total cost and distance for all proposed Multi-Use Trails in Oxford
Porterdale-Covington Rail-Trail	Railroad St. (Porterdale)	Alcovy River Greenway (S of Covington)	9.45	$ 2,495,079 $ 5,489,173	This project is planned to continue past the terminus indicated in this study; the distance and cost represented here only accounts for the extent shown in the maps in this document. Also included is a spur connecting to Poplar St. in Porterdale.
Yellow River Greenway	Porterdale City Limits (N)	Creek Greenway	4.29	$ 1,132,710 $ 2,491,962	
Creek Greenway	Yellow River Greenway	Turner Lake Rd. at Clark St.	2.05	$ 541,667 $ 1,119,667	
Brown Bridge Rd./Turner Lake Rd. Path (incl. Washington St. connector)	Creek Greenway	US278; Washington St.	2.46	$ 650,262 $ 1,430,577	This project has two spurs from Brown Bridge Rd.: one to US278 and another to Washington St.
Covington Bypass Path	Yellow River	US278	4.51	$ 1,191,929 $ 2,622,244	
Dried Indian Creek Greenway	Covington Bypass	Oxford City Limits (S)	4.96	$ 1,309,711 $ 2,881,365	This accounts for the entire length of the segments of the Dried Indian Creek Greenway, with the exception of the portion within Oxford, which is included in the Multi-Use Trail (prev.).

Shared-Use Paths - Cont.

Identifying Name	From	To	Distance (Mi.)	Approx. Cost	Notes
Eastside High School Connector Path (Eagles Pkwy., Martin St., Ramsey Dr.)	Eagles Pkwy./ Covington Bypass	Covington Library and Alcovy River Greenway	2.61	$ 688,484 $ 1,514,665	This project includes connections from the high school to the Library (NW) and to the Alcovy River Greenway (E).
Alcovy River Greenway	Hazelbrand Rd.	SR 36	9.50	$ 2,507,218 $ 5,515,879	
Old Atlanta Highway Path	Rail-Trail (Covington)	W Wade St. (Oxford)	0.67	$ 117,657 $ 390,846	This is a connection between the cities, represented as part of the Master Plan for Multi-Use Trails Connecting Conyers and Covington.

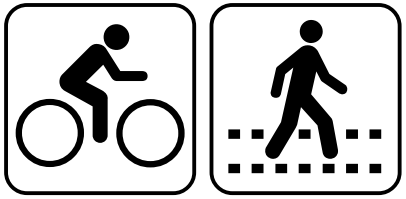
***Shared-use path project amounts do not include the construction of any necessary bridges**

DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, AND MANAGEMENT

Element	Notes
Develop common design standards across communities	This should include facility location and connectivity, materials, signage, lighting, amenities, etc., and could take the form of memoranda of understanding to adhere to internal policies, or be included in adoption of local ordinances that apply to both governments and private developers
Determine infrastructure project priority and phasing	Primary consideration should be given to connective routes that provide transportation benefits
Establish regulatory tools to require or encourage developers to participate in the process of building facilities for walking and bicycling (ex.: impact fees, overlay zones, etc.)	While this should be discussed between communities, each local government will need to decide what is appropriate and feasible in their own areas
Develop common management and maintenance standards and regulations across communities (ex.: operating hours, permitted uses, maintenance schedules, etc.)	Although "rules and regulations" signage and other related directives can educate cyclists and pedestrians how to use facilities appropriately, locally-adopted ordinances are legally enforceable and will ultimately prove to be a more effective method to attain compliance
Create policies and/or strategies regarding the use of volunteer labor to manage and maintain facilities	Volunteers are often critical contributors to walking and bicycling systems, and can assist with oversight and safety, maintenance (clearing brush on shared-use paths, picking up litter on sidewalks or bicycle lanes, etc.), publicity, and other areas
Publicize and promote walking and bicycling within and between communities; educate the public on safety, benefits, etc.	Public health, business, and non-profit (especially those geared toward children and low-income residents) partners can be very committed participants in these activities
Establish an official Bicycling and Walking Coordinating Committee (or other group) to study and recommend procedures and policies for design, development, and management of walking and bicycling facilities	Each community should appoint a number of individuals to serve on this committee, which would be a technical, advisory body that would propose specific measures to be adopted by local governments

POLICIES, PLANNING TOOLS, AND PROGRAMS

Element	Notes
Adopt complete streets policies (all communities)	This is a keystone element of the implementation program
Incorporate bicycling and walking into concurrency/adequate public facilities policies and capital improvement programs	
Work with boards of education and private schools to ensure that new schools are located in areas that support bicycling and walking, and that existing schools in those areas remain in place	Minimum acreage requirements for schools can be waived in appropriate circumstances; the State Board of Education is involved in this process
Designate one or more staff members from each community and/or organization to attend meetings of the NEGRC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force	The "Bike/Ped Task Force" meets quarterly in Athens
Attend other meetings, including the Atlanta Regional Commission's transportation and land use events	
Develop and/or clarify local laws that pertain to bicycling and walking, and provide training and education to law enforcement professionals and the general public	NEGRC and Georgia Bikes held a training session at Oxford City Hall in June 2012 for area police officers
Evaluate and make use of appropriate planning tools found in this document (ex.: form-based zoning, street connectivity, health impact assessments)	These are only examples of some of the planning tools available; the Bicycling and Walking Coordinating Committee referenced previously could be assigned the preliminary steps in completing this task
Incorporate Safe Routes to School into local and school district operations	An area-wide SRTS committee could help administer this; schools are encouraged to join the GA SRTS partnership through the state Resource Center
Host Bike/Walk to Work/School Day, Car-Free Day, and tour events	Communities are encouraged to work together on these, and to partner with appropriate organizations from the health and tourism sectors, as well as others



Appendix

FUNDING SOURCES

Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
http://www.woodruff.org/index.aspx
Conservation of natural resources and environmental education are included in this foundation's listed principal giving interests. Grants for capital projects are limited to tax-exempt public organizations and governmental agencies within the state of Georgia.

Kresge Foundation Project Support Grant
http://www.kresge.org/funding/funding-toolbox
Project support grants include program implementation, growth capital, planning, and facilities/capital grants.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Innovation Grant
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html
This program is intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investments. Non-federal governmental or non-governmental organizations, Tribes, and individuals are eligible to apply.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
http://www.gastateparks.org/core/item/page.aspx?s=18194.0.1.5
The purpose of this grant program is to help state and local governments acquire recreation lands and develop outdoor recreation facilities. In 2010, $1 million was dispersed throughout the state of Georgia in the following proportions: 10% for disadvantaged jurisdictions, 20% for land acquisition, 30% for development projects, and 40% for rehabilitation projects. Criteria used to award grants are based on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Recreational Trails Program (new grant cycle to be announced in Fall 2010)
http://www.gastateparks.org/core/item/page.aspx?s=18195.0.1.5#application
This program provides funding for trail construction, maintenance, and education on an annual basis.

Transportation Enhancements
http://www.dot.state.ga.us/localgovernment/FundingPrograms/TransportationEnhancement/Pages/default.aspx
This program was established to help enrich the travel experience of all users of the transportation system, including bicyclists and pedestrians. Calls for projects are announced by GDOT.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
http://www.dot.state.ga.us/localgovernment/FundingPrograms/cmaq/Pages/default.aspx
This program provides funding to areas designated as non-attainment (fails to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, or NAAQS) by the Environmental Protection Agency. Funds are spent specifically on transportation projects that decrease emissions and improve congestion.

Bikes Belong Grant Program
http://bikesbelong.org/grants
This program has two application categories: Facility and Advocacy. Nonprofit organizations whose missions are bicycle- and/or trail-specific are given priority in the facility category; however, municipal and regional governments are eligible to apply and are encouraged to align with a local bicycle advocacy group to strengthen the application. The key goal of the grants program is to support bicycling in as many places as possible.

American Canoe Association Club-Fostered Stewardship Grants (for paddling trails)
http://www.americancanoe.org/?page=LLBean_CFS_Grant
The ACA partners with L.L. Bean to sponsor this program to provide funding for local and regional paddling clubs that engage in stewardship projects. Eligible projects include cleaning up waterways, clearing in-stream hazards, maintaining access areas, establishing and maintaining paddling trails, etc.

Kodak American Greenways Program (The Conservation Fund)
http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak_awards
The Conservation Fund partners with the National Geographic Society to present this awards program. Seed grant awards are given to organizations working to grow the nation's network of greenways, blueways, trails, and natural areas. Program goals include catalyzing new greenway projects, assisting grassroots organizations, leveraging additional funding, and promoting the use and enjoyment of greenways. *At the time of publication of this document, this program was not accepting applications, but might continue to do so in the future.*

Laura Jane Musser Fund - Environmental Stewardship (may be more appropriate for a land trust to apply for work in Jackson County)
http://www.musserfund.org/index.asp?page_seq=19
Under the Environmental Stewardship Program of the Musser Fund, preference is given to funding programs working to manage resources in a manner that involves a broad range of community members and stakeholders in planning and implementation. Capital projects are not eligible for funding under this program; rather, a collaborative local planning process may be.

MillionMile Greenway
http://www.millionmilegreenway.org/
MillionMIle Greenway, based in Atlanta, provides community grants for a variety of purposes. MMG greenway projects focus on conservation, recreation, and connectivity.

National Parks Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/index.htm
RTCA supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation programs.

QUESTIONNAIRE SYNOPSIS

Executive Summary

From March 20 to April 30, 2012, 187 individuals responded to a questionnaire seeking public input on bicycle and pedestrian planning in the Covington-Oxford-Porterdale area. A vast majority of respondents are Newton County residents, value the presence of appropriate infrastructure for bicycling and walking, and would be interested in reaching recreation, employment, and shopping destinations by foot or bicycle. While only a handful of streets received significant mention as places where walking and bicycling regularly occur at present, answers indicate that, with appropriate investments in safety and connectivity, central Newton County could be a very popular place to walk or ride a bicycle.

Questions:

Which of the following best describes where you live?

48% of respondents live in Covington, 14% in Oxford, and 3% in Porterdale, totaling 65% (123 individuals) within the study area; of the remaining respondents, 22% live elsewhere in Newton County and 12% live outside of it.

If you answered "elsewhere" or "outside Newton County", please specify where you live.

Popular answers include eastern Newton County, the Social Circle area (including the Newton County side), and Rockdale County (particularly Conyers).

How important is the availability of bike lanes, bike paths, or sidewalks when making a decision to bike or walk for recreation or transportation?

Answers show overwhelming support for the presence of facilities: 90% of respondents cited that this is either “very important” (49%) or “the most important factor” (41%). Only 2% noted that this is not important.

How important is the distance to your destination when making a decision to bike or walk for recreation or transportation?

A total of 79% of respondents indicated that distance is either “very important” or “somewhat important” with another 13% claiming this to be “the most important factor.” This indicates that respondents might be willing to add distance to their trips to make use of safe, connective facilities.

How important is safety when making a decision to bike or walk for recreation or transportation?

Safety is supremely important to respondents: it registers as “the most important factor” for 55% and “very important” for 41%.

What other factors are important to you when deciding whether or not to bike or walk?

Weather, traffic, and route characteristics – including topography and "natural, pleasant surroundings" – were common responses that satisfied the "*other factors*" qualifier in the question (many responses referenced factors presented in previous questions, such as facilities and distance/time). The following graphic shows popular words that respondents used in their answers:

How safe do you feel using the following when walking or bicycling for recreation or transportation?

We can look at this question either from the standpoint of "What is the skill/expertise level of our respondents?" or, "What facilities provide the best perception of safety?" Regarding the former, the average respondent seems to have a relatively high skill level in walking and cycling, but is not necessarily an expert or completely at ease. In terms of the latter question, sidewalks, off-street paths, and bicycle lanes separated from automobile traffic by physical barriers are the facilities that make users most comfortable. Paint-only bike lanes were less favored, but still registered far ahead of the least popular facility type, paved shoulders along roads.

How interested are you in accessing the following destinations by bicycling or walking?

Although "very interested" was by far the most popular response in each of the potential answer categories (Recreation: parks, trails, etc.; Shopping, grocery stores, etc.; and Work, church, or school), Recreation was the clear favorite with 124 "very interested" responses out of 177 compared to 85 for Shopping and 84 for Work.

What other places or activities would you be interested in getting to by walking or bicycling?

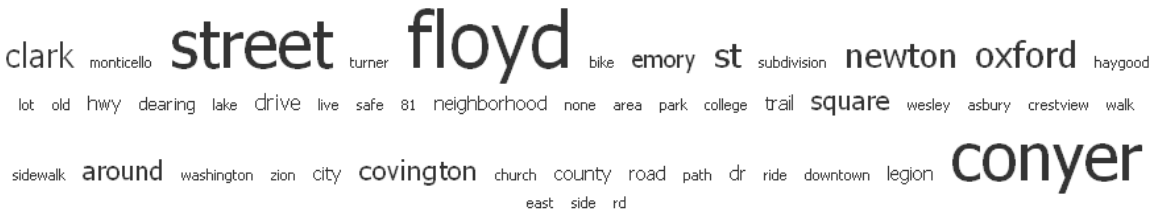
Restaurants, libraries, other towns in Newton County, and friends' homes were the most common responses.

How important are the following factors in motivating you to bicycle or walk?

Of the available choices (Fun/recreation; Weight loss/health; Saving money; Environmental benefits; Stress relief; and Convenience), only "Saving money" did not register at least 50% of responses in "important" or "very important." [*Note: this question might be poorly worded since it does not explicitly reference transportation as a motivation; in other words, the responses could lead one to infer that getting from point A to B is not a priority.*]

On which streets do you regularly walk or bike?

The most common responses to this question show that respondents walk and ride most in Covington and Oxford, but this could easily be explained by the under-representation of Porterdale residents in the respondent pool. Floyd St./Clark St. and Conyers St. in Covington and a variety of streets in Oxford were the most popular.



Which streets would you likely bike or walk on regularly if you felt safer doing so?

Variations on "all streets" were the most common responses to this question. Specific streets to which improvements in safety could generate significant bicycle and pedestrian traffic include the two major at-grade highways in the study area (US278 and SR81), with SR142 and SR36 also receiving some preference.