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**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: Local Road Safety Plan

DATE: January 25, 2024–February 27, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed action would ~~adopt~~ accept ACCGov's first Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP). A LRSP provides a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads. The development process and content are tailored to local issues and needs. The process results in a prioritized list of issues, risks, actions, and improvements that can be used to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on local roads.

BUDGET INFORMATION:

REVENUES: N/A

EXPENSES: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: March 5, 2024

PURPOSE:

To request that the Mayor and Commission ~~adopt~~ accept the Local Road Safety Plan aimed to provide a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads, as shown in **Attachment #1**.

HISTORY:

1. In May 2001, Transportation & Public Works (T&PW), cooperatively with SPLOST staff began working on a Bicycle Master Plan that focused on developing a 20-year implementation plan by incorporating a three-mile radius from the downtown area and the University of Georgia.
2. On November 21, 2001, Mayor and Commission (M&C) approved the Athens-Clarke County Bicycle Master Plan and authorized staff to develop an implementation plan for the first year's projects.
3. On December 4, 2012, the M&C adopted ACCGov's first Complete Streets Policy.
4. On December 1, 2015, Mayor Denson assigned the Legislative Review Committee (LRC) to review strategies to expand sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure.

Option # 1 approved

3-5-2024 

5. Between March 2017 and August 2018, T&PW staff, Toole Design Group, and the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Committee developed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, branded Athens in Motion (AiM), which sets as a short-term task to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan in partnership with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Department of Public Safety, Clarke Central School District (CCSD), the University of Georgia (UGA) and all other ACCGov Departments.
6. On October 2, 2018, M&C accepted the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, branded "Athens in Motion Plan" and formed the Athens in Motion Commission (AiMC).
7. On April 12, 2022, the AiMC Chair presented to the M&C in a regularly scheduled Work Session the proposed updated Complete Streets Policy Presentation.
8. On June 7, 2022, M&C voted to adopt the Complete Streets Policy. A Complete Street framework:
 - a. Shifts the status quo of street design from being car-centric to being designed for all users.
 - b. Makes roads better and safer for all users and all modes of transportation.
 - c. Can be applied to both urban and rural environments – context is key.
 - d. Creates more livable, sustainable, and equitable communities.
9. On June 28, 2022, AiMC voted to support the proposed Vision Zero Resolution.
10. On August 2, 2022, M&C adopted a Vision Zero Resolution to help guide the development of ACCGov's Action Plan aligned with USDOT Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Program and funding.
11. On September 6, 2022, M&C voted to approve the submission of a Safe Streets and Roads for All Action Planning Grant.
12. On September 8, 2022, T&PW submitted the Envision a Safe Athens Proposal to fund the development of a Safety Action Plan.
13. Throughout 2022, T&PW staff attended a series of virtual Local Road Safety Plan workshops with GDOT to learn more about the process of developing a Local Road Safety Plan. GDOT hosted this in partnership with FHWA.
14. On September 12, 2022, T&PW staff attended the Georgia Local Road Safety Plan Workshop in Macon, GA hosted by GDOT in partnership with FHWA.
15. On January 31, 2023, the Envision a Safe Athens Proposal for the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) FY22 Safe Streets and Roads for All Action Plan was selected for award (see Facts & Issues No. 14).

16. On July 13, 2023, the SS4A Grant Memorandum of Agreement between ACCGov and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was executed.

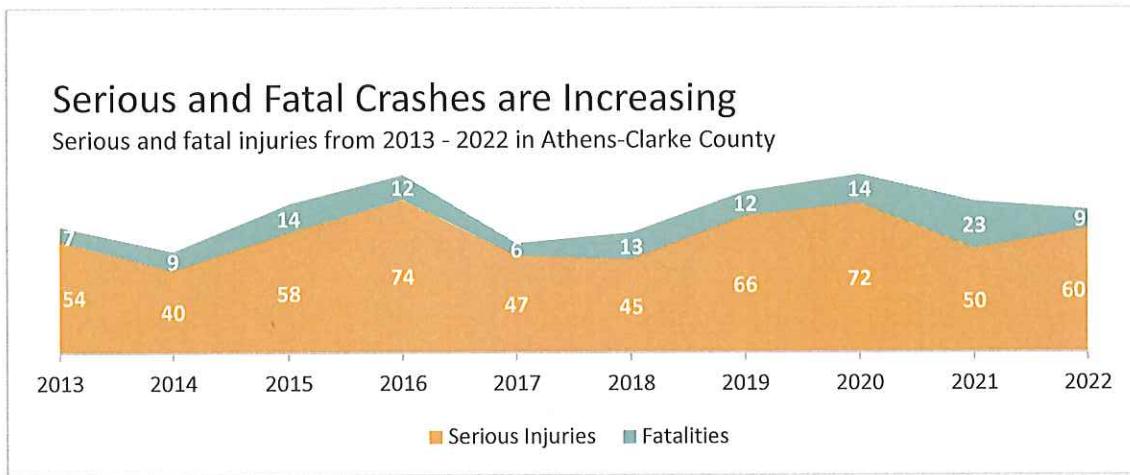
17. On October 2, 2023, M&C voted to accept the SS4A award.

FACTS & ISSUES:

1. A local road safety plan (LRSP) provides a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads. The LRSP development process and content are tailored to local issues and needs.
2. T&PW staff believe the Local Road Safety Plan is aligned with a number of Master Plans, initiatives, policies, and goals of ACCGov, including:
 - a. SS4A Safety Action Plan
 - b. 2018 Athens in Motion Plan
 - c. Complete Streets Policy
 - d. Vision Zero Resolution
 - e. M&C FY23-25 Strategic Plan
3. The Vision Zero Network, a national network of cities committed to eliminating traffic fatalities by a set date, identifies a number of key elements that sets Vision Zero apart from traditional road safety efforts.
 - a. Traffic deaths are preventable. Zero is upheld as the only acceptable number of traffic fatalities and the word “accident” is eliminated from the traffic safety vocabulary. Serious and fatal crashes are preventable; they are not accidents and they are not inevitable.
 - b. In the Vision Zero framework, individuals and their behaviors are not the primary problem. Human behaviors must be accounted for within the transportation system from planning through design, construction and maintenance – to identify and correct roads which have no safe crossings or that set up conflicts between high-speed motor vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - c. Road safety is a public health issue. While traditional approaches to transportation safety have prioritized reducing or preventing collisions, Vision Zero focuses on preventing injuries and fatalities. Engineers are challenged to eliminate the circumstances in which a human body may be exposed to crash forces it cannot survive.
 - d. The Safe System approach is holistic. Roadway design is a part of the issue, but so are land use and development decisions, school siting choices, housing policies, and a host of factors that affect our transportation options and choices.
 - e. Data drives decisions. Vision Zero demands a relentless focus on eliminating fatalities and serious injuries first, utilizing historic and predictive crash data to do so.
 - f. Social equity is a key goal and component of Vision Zero. Traffic crashes disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly among those who do

not have access to a motor vehicle and who are more likely to be dependent on walking, biking, and transit. Communities of concern must be meaningfully engaged in addressing the safety, personal security, accessibility, and larger cultural and societal issues around road safety and community development.

4. The Athens-Clarke County community experiences a preventable loss of life due to traffic crashes, with an average of 13 people killed per year and an average of 56 seriously injured per year over the last 10 years.



5. During 2021, the Athens-Clarke County community ended the year with the highest recorded number of fatalities in a single year with a combined loss of life of 23 people with 5 pedestrian, 1 cyclist, and 17 vehicular fatalities. 2021 also ended with 50 serious injuries including 6 pedestrians, 2 cyclists, and 42 vehicular related crashes.
6. Nationwide, most traffic-related deaths and serious injuries stem from outdated road and intersection designs, poor driver and pedestrian behavior, limited sight lines, and increasing traffic. This is likely the case in Athens-Clarke County.
7. 75% of fatal and serious injuries in Athens-Clarke County occurred at intersections.
8. Crashes on Athens-Clarke County's streets necessitate a comprehensive and systemic approach to street planning, design, policy, enforcement, legal processes, education and communication in order to provide the most powerful solution to solve the problem.
9. Many Vision Zero initiatives, including eliminating fatalities and serious injuries, are geared towards lowering speeds due to the higher rate of fatal crashes at higher speeds. Multiple studies have shown that the chance of pedestrian survival when hit by a car traveling 20 mph is approximately 95% while the chance of survival when struck by a car traveling 40 mph is 95% (see **Attachment #2 – 2018 Athens-in-Motion Plan –Pg. 41**).

10. Athens in Motion, ACCGov's active transportation master plan, emphasizes safety for all roadway users and promotes a focus through its action items on reducing single occupancy vehicle rides and encouraging walking, bicycling, transit, and carsharing or carpooling.
11. When the Vision Zero Resolution passed, Athens-Clarke County committed to a goal of a 50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on public streets by 2032 and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on public streets by 2037.
12. To maintain consistency across planning efforts, the Local Road Safety Plan references the following plans throughout the process:
 - a. Athens in Motion Plan
 - b. Oconee Rivers Greenway Network Plan
 - c. MACORTS Long Range Transportation Plan
13. ACCGov's 2022 adoption of a Vision Zero Resolution necessitates the creation of a safety action plan in order to plan out how the community will reach zero fatalities and serious injuries from crashes.
14. The purpose of SS4A grant is to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through safety action plan development and implementation focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micro-mobility users, and commercial vehicle operators.
15. ACCGov owns and maintains the backbone of transportation infrastructure in Athens-Clarke County including:
 - a. 626 centerline miles (1270 lane-miles) of public roadways, including collectors, arterials, and local streets.
 - b. 234.5 miles of 5-foot sidewalks. While most have good accessibility with ramps, some lack ramps and have substandard geometry.
 - c. 47 miles of bike lanes. Many of these bike lanes are substandard.
 - d. 13.4 miles of recreational trails.
 - e. 41 bridges from the National Bridge Inventory System, including 15 bridge culverts. Most of the bridges in the inventory lack proper shoulder width and/or pedestrian and bicycle facility.
16. If this agenda is approved, T&PW staff will initiate working groups (as shown in **Attachment # 1: 05-Emphasis Areas**) to focus on individual high-priority strategies within the Local Road Safety Plan. These strategies and their working groups include:
 - Intersection Safety
 - Traffic Engineering (Traffic Engineer, Signs & Markings, Signal Systems Engineer, Studies division)

- Transportation & Public Works Administration (Assistant Director, Bike, Ped & Safety Coordinator, Vision Zero Planner)
- GDOT Safety Team
- ACC Police Department (Crime & Intelligence Analyst, GIS Team)
- Reducing Distracted Driving
 - Public Information Office
 - Athens in Motion
 - TPW Admin
 - TPW - Traffic Engineering
 - ACC PD
- Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety
 - Traffic Engineering (Traffic Engineer, Signs & Markings, Signal Systems Engineer, Studies division)
 - Transportation & Public Works Administration (Assistant Director, Bike, Ped & Safety Coordinator, Vision Zero Planner)
 - GDOT Safety Team
 - Landscape Management
 - Transit
 - Athens in Motion
 - Bike Athens
- Reducing Impaired Driving
 - UGA Fontaine Center
 - Transportation & Public Works Administration (Assistant Director, Bike, Ped & Safety Coordinator, Vision Zero Planner)
 - GDOT Safety Team
 - Transit
 - Athens in Motion

Working groups will include ACCGov staff as well as external stakeholders including GDOT staff, UGA staff, transportation and safety-related advocacy group members, and the general public. Staff anticipates each of these four working groups to be operational by Fall of 2024.

17. This recommendation supports the following ACCGov Strategic Plan Goals & Strategies:

- Safely Move Around Athens Goal, Strategy E: *Enhance Safety for all modes of transportation*
- Built and Natural Infrastructure Goal, Strategy C: *Adequate funding for maintenance of existing and newly constructed infrastructure*

OPTIONS:

1. Mayor and Commission ~~adopt~~ accept the Local Road Safety Plan to provide a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads, as shown in **Attachment #1**.

2. Mayor and Commission do not ~~adopt~~ accept the Local Road Safety to provide a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads, as shown in **Attachment #1**.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION: Option #1

DEPARTMENT: Transportation & Public Works

Prepared by: Tim Griffeth, Traffic Engineer

Daniel Sizemore, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Coordinator



Rani Katreeb, P.E.
Interim Director

January 29, 2024

Date:

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: Option #1



Brian M. Weil
Manager

February 14, 2024

Date:

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1: Local Road Safety Plan

Attachment #2: Collision Speed and Survival Percentage – 2018 AIM Plan, Pg. 41



ATHENS-CLARKE
COUNTY

LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN

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Accepted by Mayor & Commission
on March 5, 2024

Jim Smith

Clerk of Commission

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01 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Athens-Clarke County Department of Transportation & Public Works (TPW) employees and partners were instrumental in the development, review, and refinement of this Local Road Safety Plan and would like to express appreciation to the supporting staff and partners for their participation and contributions.

Athens-Clarke County Staff

Stephen Bailey, Director of TPW
Rani Katreeb, Assistant Director of TPW
Daniel Sizemore, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Safety Coordinator
Shirelle Hallum, Vision Zero Planner
Katie Goodrum, Vision Zero Planner
Jimmy Rowan, Transportation Systems Engineer
Tim Griffeth, Traffic Engineer
Jerry Saulters, Chief of Police
Jay Butt, Traffic Homicide/Crash Reconstruction Unit Commander
John Rogeberg, Planning
Cecile Riker, Public Information Office
Joseph D'Angelo, Chief Data Officer

Community Organizations

Athens in Motion Commission
Athens Wellbeing Project
Athens Aging Network
Bike Athens
Georgia Bikes
Envision Athens
Clarke County School District
Athens Housing Authority
University of Georgia
UGA Transit
UGA Fontaine Center
UGA Disability Resource Center
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

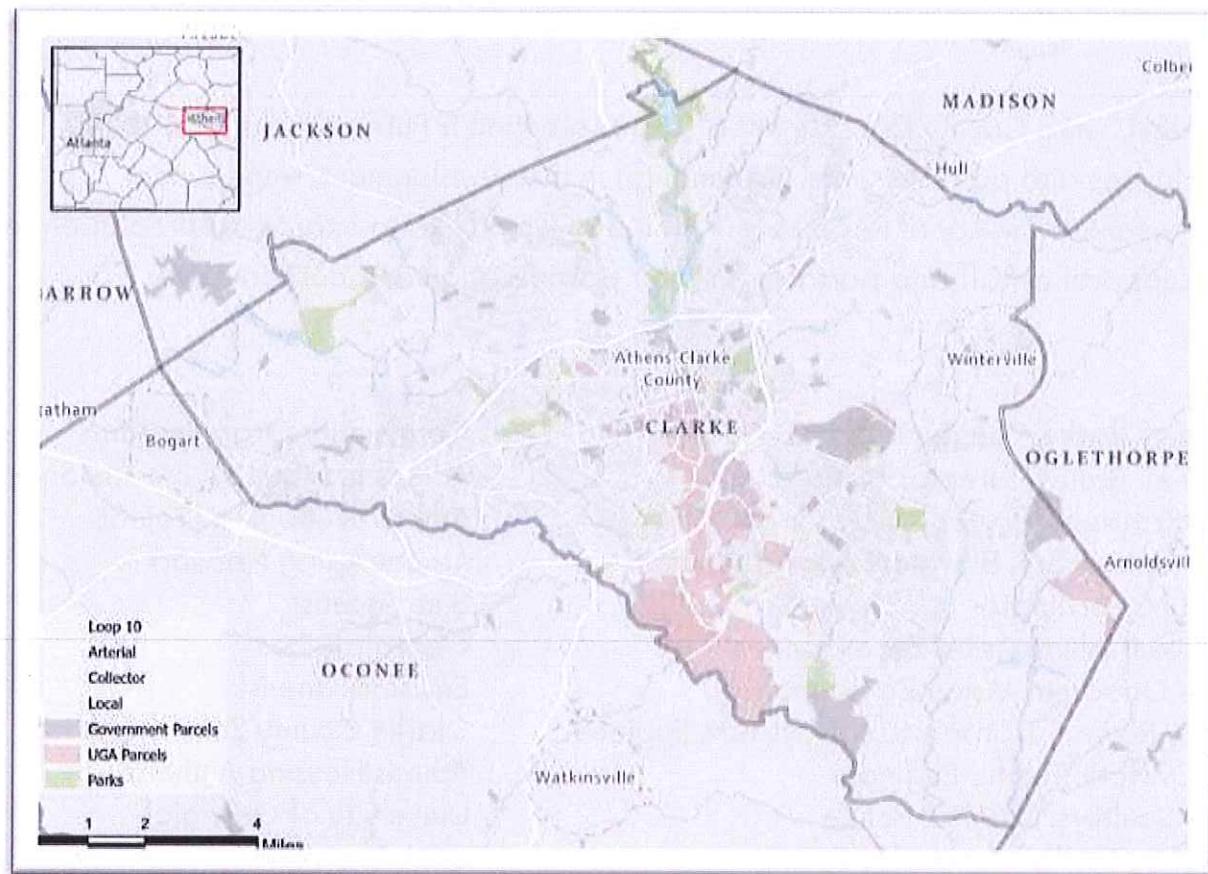
Georgia Department of Transportation

Ron Knezevich
Kelli Roberts

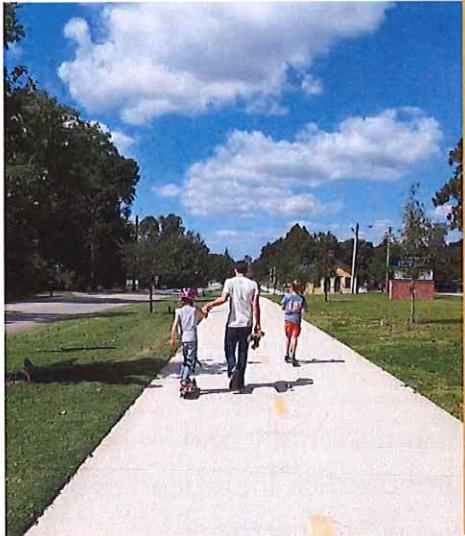
Federal Highway Administration

Hillary Isebrands

02 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



Athens-Clarke County is a thriving 122-square-mile regional area located approximately 65 miles northeast of Atlanta, Georgia. Home to the University of Georgia (UGA), it is a cultural hub teeming with an array of iconic historical destinations, unique art institutions, and picturesque outdoor recreation areas. Although Clarke County is the smallest in land mass of Georgia's 159 counties, it is home to over 128,000 residents, making it the 19th largest in terms of population. Downtown Athens is the walkable commercial core of the community. With the adjacent UGA main campus, it serves as a nexus of active transportation. The Athens-Clarke County Unified Government (ACCGov) continuously invests in active transportation infrastructure.



12 people are killed each year in traffic crashes, with pedestrians and bicyclists comprising about 30%

Athens is a diverse community with significant variation in income, education, housing, and stage of life - including long-time residents, college students, young professionals, and a workforce encompassing a variety of industries. The municipality is committed to ensuring a high quality of life for current and future generations, and that includes providing a transportation system that allows for safe, efficient movement of people to destinations near and far.

Athens is a quintessential medium-sized US community with a predominantly suburban land use pattern, several large campus-style developments (University, medical centers), a reviving downtown, and relatively high rates of poverty. The county also has the unfortunate distinction of having one of the worst records for traffic safety in the state of Georgia. Between 2013-2022, an average of 12 people were killed each year in traffic crashes, with pedestrians and bicyclists comprising about 30% of these crashes. In 2023, 20 people died on our roads.

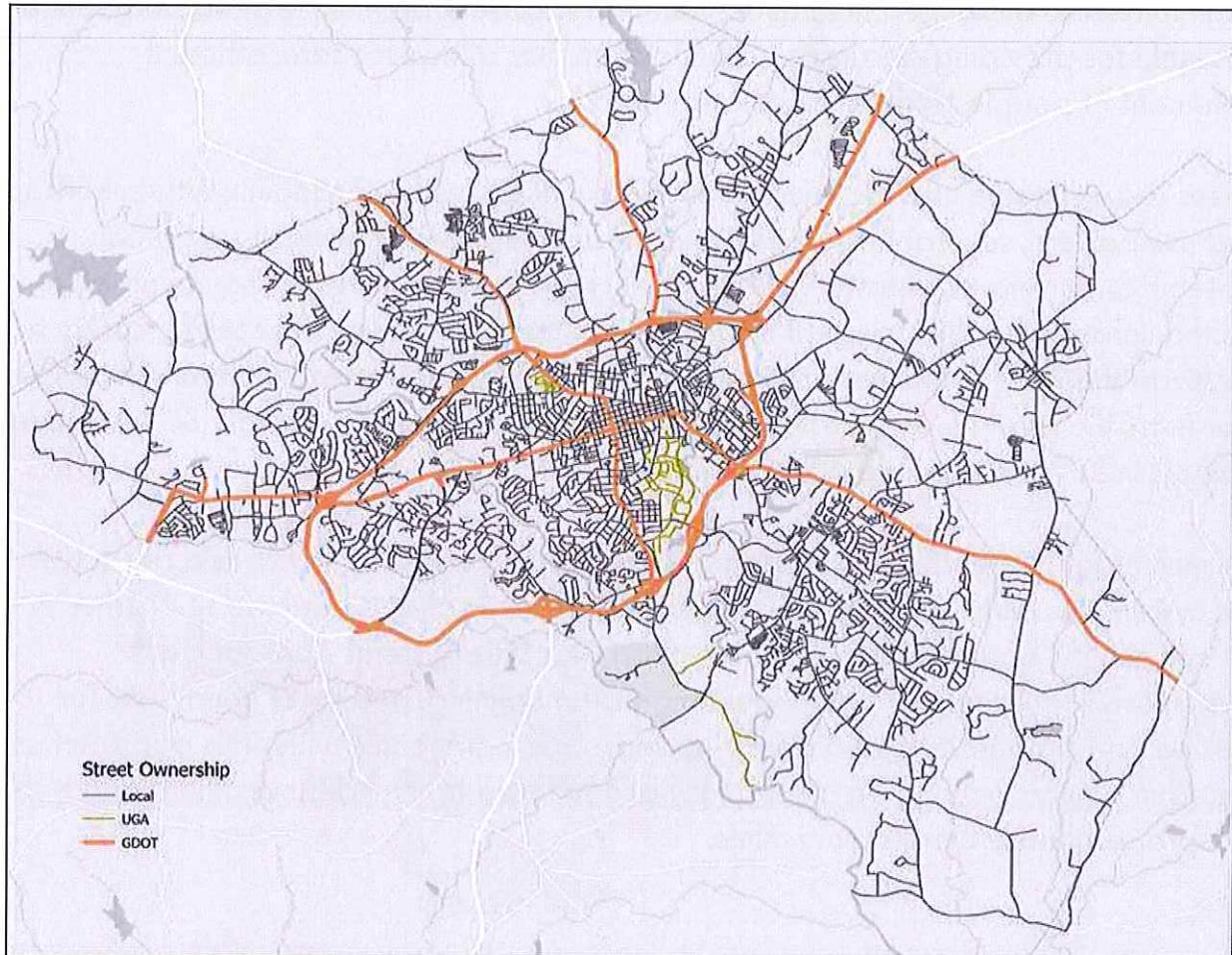
The municipality is shifting its approach to high crash locations towards a proactive and systematic elimination of roadway design features that contribute to crashes in the community, based on the available data. This Safe Systems Approach will particularly focus on speed management, traffic calming, and safer conditions for walking and biking along and across busier roads in the community. This approach is rooted in equity, focusing on areas that have suffered from underinvestment and bear a disproportionate burden of crashes.

03 INTRODUCTION

Athens-Clarke County is committed to creating safe streets for all roadway users. As part of an ongoing effort to make safety improvements, the Local Road Safety Plan was developed with input from several safety partners. Implementation of the plan will improve transportation safety for the county, its people, and its visitors.

Traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries are on the rise nationally and within Athens-Clarke County. In Athens, the number of fatal crashes increased 186% from 2013 to 2023, while the state of Georgia saw a 67% increase in fatal crashes during the same timeframe. This plan tells the story of transportation safety needs and outlines strategies to address those needs in our county.

Athens-Clarke County Streets by Ownership



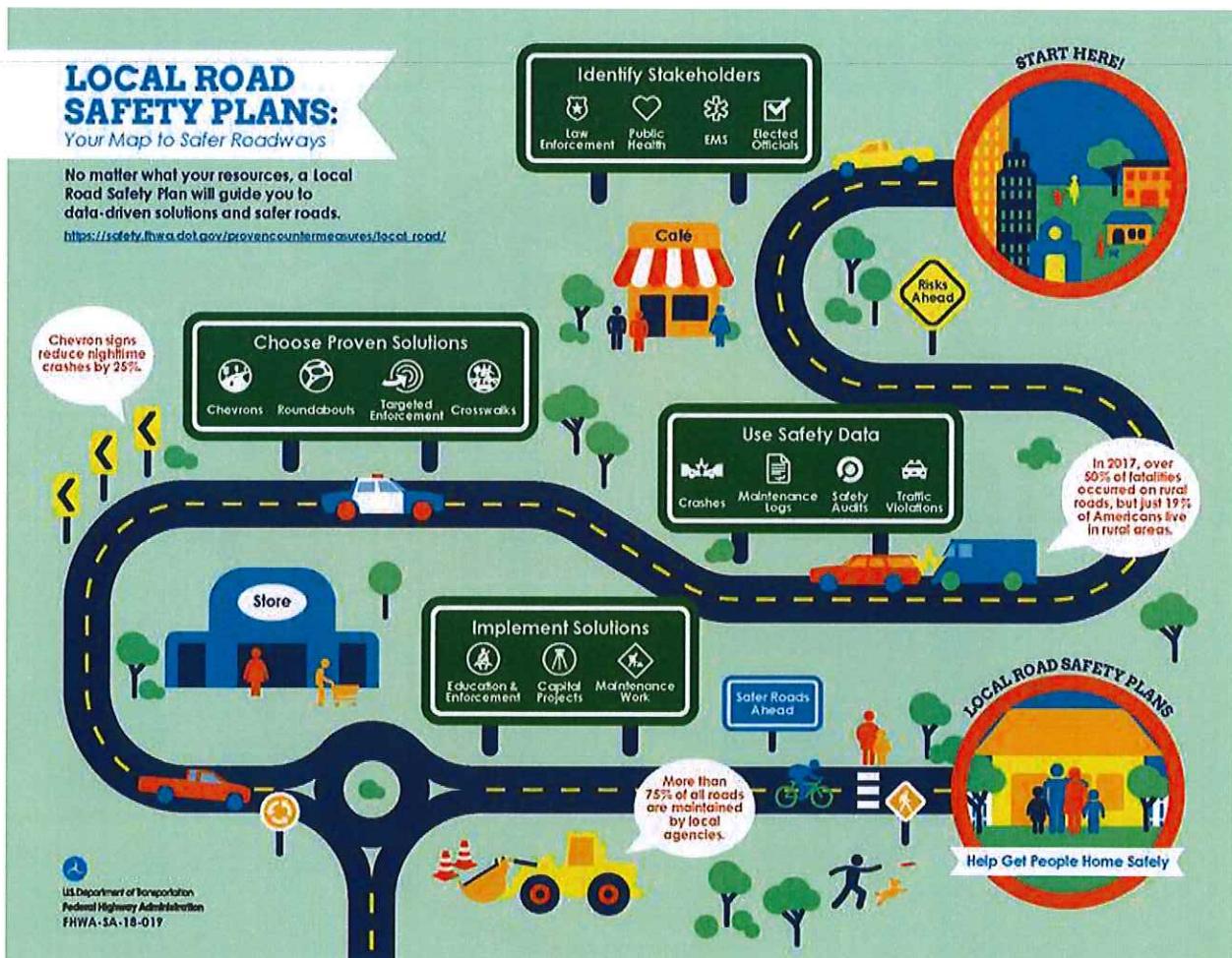
APPROACH

This plan recommends three independent methods for identifying future infrastructure, procedural, and process improvements. Specifically, it recommends balancing systemic, systematic, and "hot spot" improvements.

Systemic improvements are prevention measures implemented to address roadway segments with similar characteristics as those with higher crash rates.

Systematic (or system-wide) improvements are prevention measures that are applied to the entire roadway network within ACC, regardless of the crash data. These include measures to reduce speeds and calm traffic.

Finally, hot spots are specific locations that have a high frequency of crashes or were identified by stakeholders as concerns. The Safe Systems transportation approach recognizes that responsible road user behavior is necessary, but human error is also inevitable. The approach seeks to create a safer transportation system through a combination of safer speeds, safer vehicles, and safer roadways.



INTENT OF THE PLAN

The intent of this plan is not just to implement engineering solutions. It is intended to outline a holistic, Safe Systems Approach to roadway safety that also addresses enforcement, education, encouragement, emergency response, and equity, with the intent to:

- Achieve a reduction in severe crashes
- Increase awareness of road safety and risks through education and enforcement
- Develop lasting partnerships for addressing road safety
- Develop support for grant funding applications to address road safety
- Prioritize needed road safety investments
- Evaluate existing and develop new processes within the county to identify shortcomings and improve the safety of our transportation system.





01 — Enforcement

Encourage safe, responsible driving and behavior by people who use our roads and create conditions that prioritize their ability to reach their destination unharmed.



02 — Education & Encouragement

Teach community members about walking, biking, and traffic safely as well as create interest and excitement surrounding active transportation. These activities teach pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety, as well as the benefits of active transport and why certain engineering design choices are safer.



03 — Engineering

Engineering strategies create safer infrastructure. Examples include slowing down traffic, creating safer crossings or making sure school routes are well-lit. These measures can be major interventions or low-cost easy fixes, like painting curbs and crosswalks or adding signs.



04 — Emergency Response

Enhance the survivability of crashes through expedient access to emergency medical care, while creating a safe working environment for vital first responders and preventing secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices.



05 — Equity

We will work toward equity goals by ensuring that every person, no matter his or her background or situation, has the opportunity to safely walk, bike, or roll to their destinations.

VISION, MISSION, & GOALS

Vision Statement:

Our vision is a transportation system that ensures zero deaths and serious injuries on all ACCGov roadways and recreational paths, because everyone deserves to travel safely.

Mission Statement:

Athens-Clarke County is committed to maintaining a high quality of life for current and future generations of people traveling through the community, providing safe access to opportunity for all. ACCGov strives to utilize a data driven, zero-death strategy to protect its most vulnerable users, regardless of age, race, ability, income, or mode of transportation.

Goals:

- Reduce fatal and serious injuries on local roads by 50% from 74 in 2021 to 37 in 2026, with an eventual goal of eliminating fatal and serious injuries by 2032.
- Provide active transportation links to important destinations.
- Identify common features of dangerous intersections and street segments and implement system-wide countermeasures.

PROCESS

Over the course of 2022, staff members from TPW attended a series of Local Road Safety Plan workshops and compiled crash data. TPW shared this data with community stakeholders in 2023 and developed a series of solutions for each problem area. The remainder of this report is a comprehensive examination of crash data and the specific strategies ACCGov plans to employ to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on local roads.

EXISTING EFFORTS

Athens in Motion

The Athens in Motion Commission (AiMC) is responsible for development, implementation, and modification of the Athens in Motion Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan for a safe and connected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout Athens-Clarke County. The AiMC is advisory in nature and is charged with recommending projects, policies, and initiatives to the Mayor and Commission. Between March 2017 and August 2018, ACCGov staff, on-call consultants, and a resident-led Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Committee developed the master plan, branded Athens in Motion (AiM). The Mayor and Commission (M&C) formally accepted this plan on October 2, 2018. The plan included the overarching goals of Connectivity, Equity, More Users, Education, and Implementation to create a vision for a more bikeable and walkable community.

ACC Police Department

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department is playing a pivotal role in bolstering local road safety efforts through its proactive and community-oriented approach. The Department supports the goal of reducing or eliminating severe traffic crashes through education and awareness, preventive patrol, and active enforcement of traffic laws. By making traffic safety educational material available to the public and taking other preventative approaches to traffic enforcement, they aim to increase voluntary compliance with traffic laws. The Department also seeks to reduce traffic crashes by using highly-visible, uniform, and selective enforcement of traffic laws, compiling and reviewing statistical data on traffic collisions and other traffic enforcement activities, comparing data on crashes/collisions and enforcement activities, implementation of selective enforcement techniques and procedures, and the employment of a specialized Traffic Enforcement Unit. Their commitment to reducing accidents and ensuring the well-being of residents has made them an indispensable force in enhancing road safety within the Athens-Clarke County area.

Fontaine Center

The Fontaine Center at The University of Georgia Health Center is committed to promoting an environment that supports the safety of students on campus and in the community. Through various initiatives and programs, The Fontaine Center provides comprehensive alcohol & other substance misuse prevention, early intervention and recovery support services, as well as relationship & sexual violence prevention & 24 hour advocacy services. Using a multi-faceted approach, The Fontaine Center collaborates with various campus organizations and community partners to create a supportive network to reduce negative consequences related to substance use.

Intersection Improvement Program

In October 2017, the Transportation & Public Works (TPW) team launched a comprehensive Intersection Evaluation Program to identify and prioritize intersection improvement projects. The goals are to improve responsiveness to changing traffic patterns for safety and operational needs, ensure fair prioritization of necessary roadway improvements, and coordinate intersection enhancements with local programs. The evaluation process took into account crucial factors such as crash severity, normalized crash rates per million vehicle miles traveled, and Level of Service. Additionally, it considered the Current and Future Volume to Capacity Ratios to assess capacity against current and projected volumes. Furthermore, the program prioritized intersections listed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, intersections within the primary network of the Bike/Ped Master Plan (Active Transportation), and locations in redevelopment target areas, which received higher scores based on their Economic Impact.

Residential Traffic Management Program

The purpose of the Residential Traffic Management Program is to reduce crashes, traffic volumes, and/or speeds, thereby improving pedestrian safety and creating more pleasant residential areas for the citizens of Athens-Clarke County.

Neighborhood traffic concerns generally relate to excessive speed, pedestrian and bicycle safety, crashes, and general quality of life issues. This program recognizes the uniqueness of neighborhoods and that the critical issues and concerns vary from case to case. Based on this diversity, this program considers a wide range of potential

solutions to address specific concerns of a neighborhood. The recommended neighborhood solutions are based on the existing volumes, speeds, and geometrics for the roadway. The Residential Traffic Management Program strives to utilize all types of traffic calming devices to address neighborhood concerns. Funding is based on a prioritization framework that takes into account vulnerable populations, number of vehicles, and speeding.

Roadway Safety Audits

The Roadway Safety Audit (RSA) Team evaluates designated locations for existing or potential safety concerns. This team includes individuals with expertise in traffic safety, road engineering, project management, city planning, public transit, and public safety. Potential projects are identified by the Vision Zero Planner via a comprehensive safety analysis based on crash data and other safety concerns.

For each safety audit, the RSA team performs a field review of the project site to gain insight into existing road conditions and to identify additional areas of safety concern. Members collect observations and the Vision Zero Planner compiles a comprehensive report for each site.

Safe Routes to Schools Audits

Safe Routes to Schools audits are a subset of Roadway Safety Audits that include enhanced community engagement efforts. These safety audits include meeting with school staff and parents to identify student walking and cycling routes and an extra layer of public involvement.

Sidewalk Gap Program

This Athens in Motion program endeavors to identify, prioritize, and fill sidewalk gaps to ensure that Athens is a pedestrian friendly environment. Sidewalk Gaps are identified as a maximum of 5,000 square feet and fall within areas of existing ROW.

Speed Management

The Speed Management Toolkit will contain guidelines and best practices for the design of streets and roadways that support safe multimodal travel. The anticipated users include planning and design practitioners, elected officials, developers, advocates, and public works departments. This manual is intended to provide the designer with both recommended and required design criteria. Designers are encouraged to select design criteria that provide a balance between the design vehicles, other users of the facility, and the context of the surrounding environment. This toolkit is currently in development.

UGA Ride Smart

UGA Ride Smart, in partnership with Lyft, offers discounted rides to students through a nightly rideshare program. Rides are offered to or from any destination throughout the greater Athens-Clarke County community as long as the transportation originates or ends within the main UGA Athens Campus, Health Sciences Campus, Veterinary Complex, or one block north of the Arch in downtown Athens.

Vision Zero Initiative

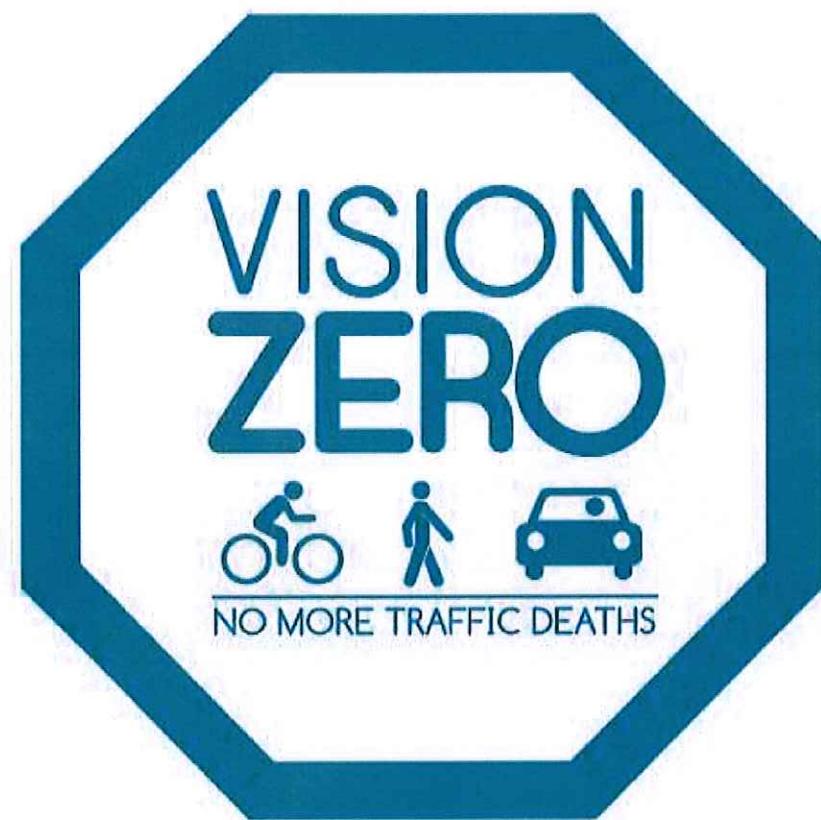
One of the short-term tasks identified in the AiM Master Plan was to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan in partnership with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Department of Public Safety, Clarke Central School District (CCSD), UGA and all other ACCGov Departments.

A Vision Zero Action Plan should identify priorities for roadway safety, as well as provide transparency and accountability for the public. While the end product is important, the process of developing the Plan is also critical, as it should align stakeholders, including agency staff and elected and community leaders, who should be deeply involved in the process and feel ownership over the Plan's development and commitments.

- Plans should center a Safe System approach and evolve beyond the traditional E's of roadway safety (engineering, education, enforcement, etc.), including reducing the need for police-led traffic stops.

Vision Zero Action Plans should lay out actionable, measurable strategies, emphasizing design and policy solutions, including designing Complete Streets and lowering speeds for safety. Each strategy should identify the lead agency responsible, along with supporting/partner agencies, a projected timeline, and budget needs.

Two necessary prerequisites to writing the Vision Zero Action Plan have been completed. In June of 2022, M&C approved allocating funds for a Vision Zero Safety Specialist position, which was officially filled in September 2022. On August 2, 2022, M&C formally adopted Athens-Clarke County's Vision Zero Resolution. This resolution was a commitment by Athens-Clarke County to join other leading cities around the nation and globe in their commitment to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on our streets. Implicit in this was a commitment to provide adequate funding and staffing levels for its implementation and to carefully consider the successes and challenges in other cities implementing Vision Zero policies. Work on the Vision Zero Action Plan began in 2024, funded by the \$1 million FHWA Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program.



04 DATA ANALYSIS & SUMMARY

Between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2022, there were 52,077 crashes in Athens-Clarke County, with 32,043 occurring on locally maintained roads. Of the 52,077 crashes, 1.32% resulted in a fatality (119) or serious injury (566); 390 of these serious and fatal crashes occurred on locally owned roads. During the same time period, there were 3.76 million traffic crashes in the State of Georgia, with 1.72% resulting in serious or fatal injury.

Serious Injuries Remain High while Fatal Crashes are Increasing

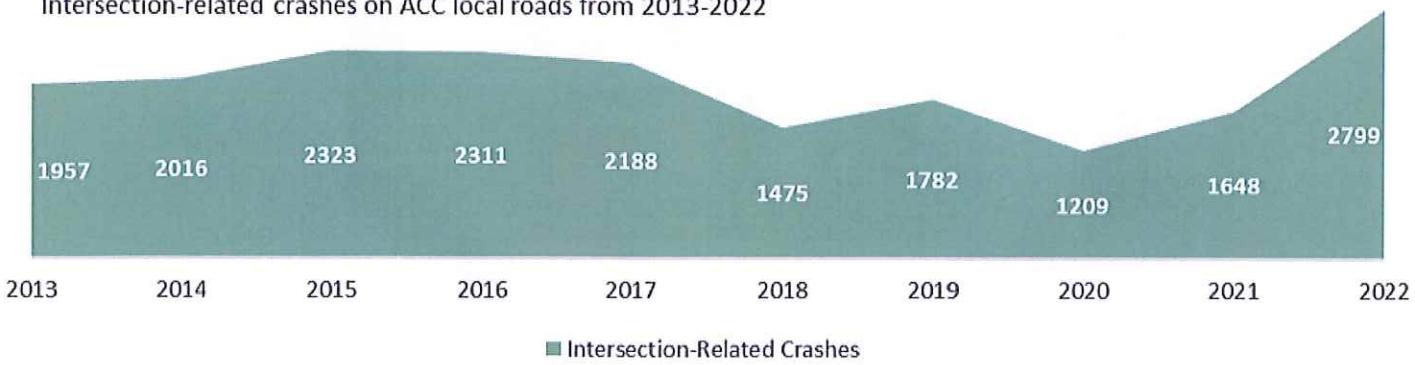
Serious and fatal injuries from 2013 - 2022 in Athens-Clarke County



About 62% (19,708) of the crashes on locally owned roads occurred at or near intersections. Of these, 196 resulted in serious injury and 40 in a fatality.

Intersection-Related Crashes are Increasing

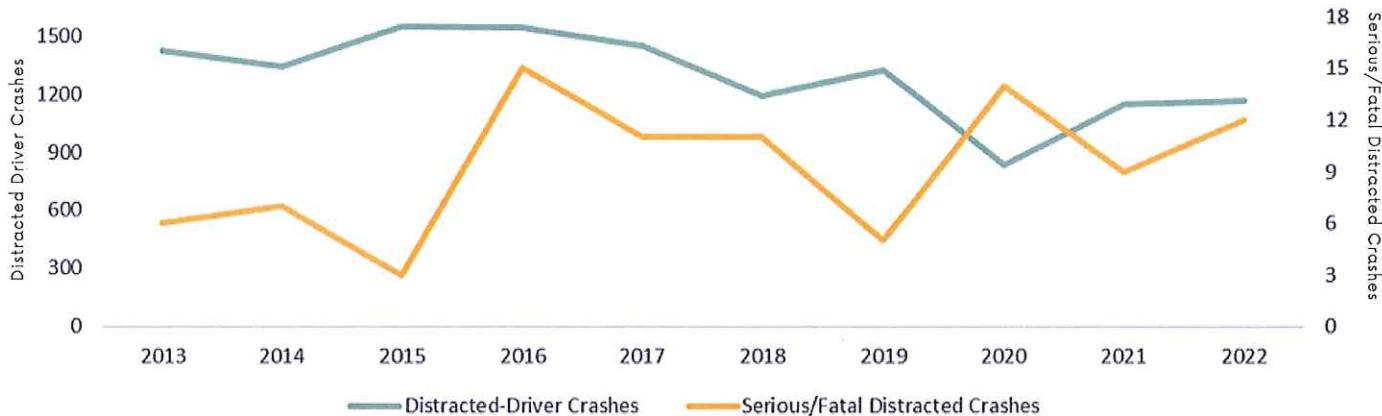
Intersection-related crashes on ACC local roads from 2013-2022



About 40% (12,970) of crashes on local roads involved distracted driving (both suspected and confirmed). Of these, 83 resulted in serious injury and 10 in a fatality. Of the 603,948 drivers involved in a crash on Georgia roadways in 2020, 2% were confirmed to be distracted and another 45% were suspected of distraction.[1]

As Distracted Driving Crashes Decrease, Serious and Fatal Crashes Increase

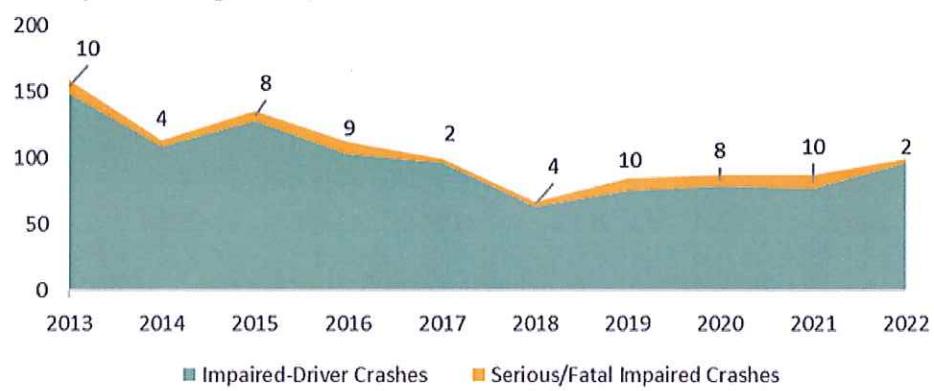
Distracted driving-related crashes on ACC local roads from 2013-2022



Over the ten-year period between 2013 and 2022, there were 977 crashes involving impaired driving. Of these, 41 resulted in serious injury and 26 in a fatality. More information is needed to know if the drop in impaired driving is due to a true change in driving behavior, perhaps impacted by ride-share services such as Uber and Lyft (which came to Athens in 2014 and 2016, respectively). While the total number of impaired crashes have decreased, the number of fatal and serious injuries from crashes involving impaired driving have remained unchanged. The unchanged numbers of Serious/Fatal Impaired crashes could be attributed to the most dangerous drivers having a higher confidence level in their abilities to drive safely.

Reduction in Impaired Driving Crashes, but Little Change in Serious/Fatal Impaired Crashes

Impaired driving-related crashes on ACC local roads from 2013-2022

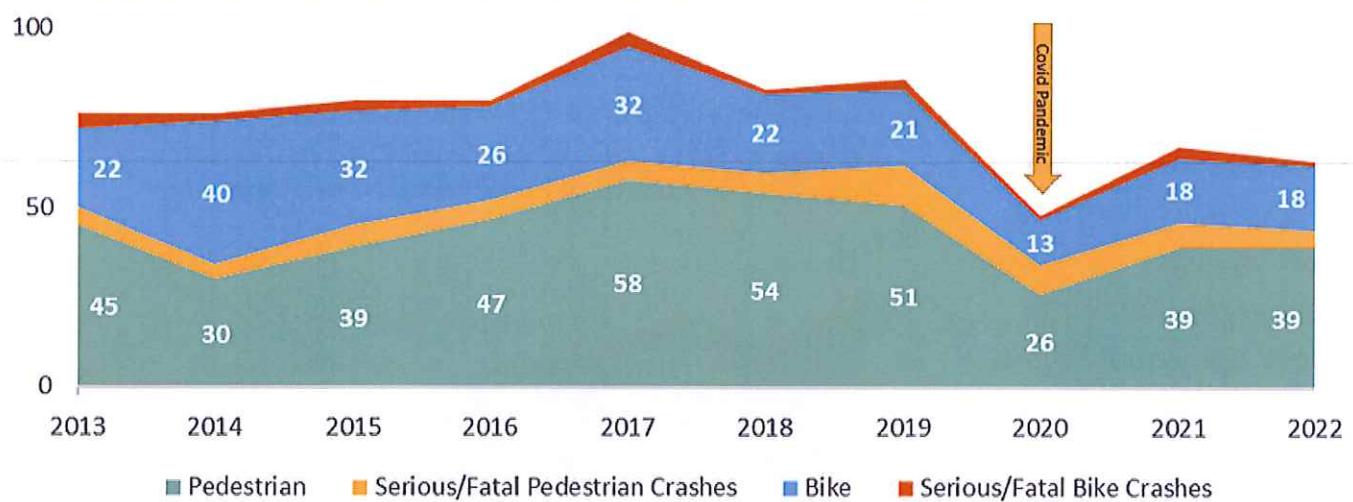


[1] "Georgia Traffic Safety Facts: Traffic Safety During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency."

Pedestrian and cyclist crashes constitute only 2% of total crashes on local roads, yet about 22% of fatal and serious injuries. Between 2013-2022 there were 428 crashes involving a pedestrian and 244 involving a cyclist. These crashes resulted in 14 pedestrians and 4 cyclists being fatally injured and 48 pedestrians and 20 cyclists with serious injuries. Minor crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists are severely underreported, so it is harder to determine the true impact of these crashes. Additionally, there was a noticeable decrease of pedestrian- and bicyclist-related crashes in 2020. This coincides with a reduction of all crashes on local roads, and could be attributed to a decreased volume of cars on the roads.

Pedestrian and Bike Crashes Remain High

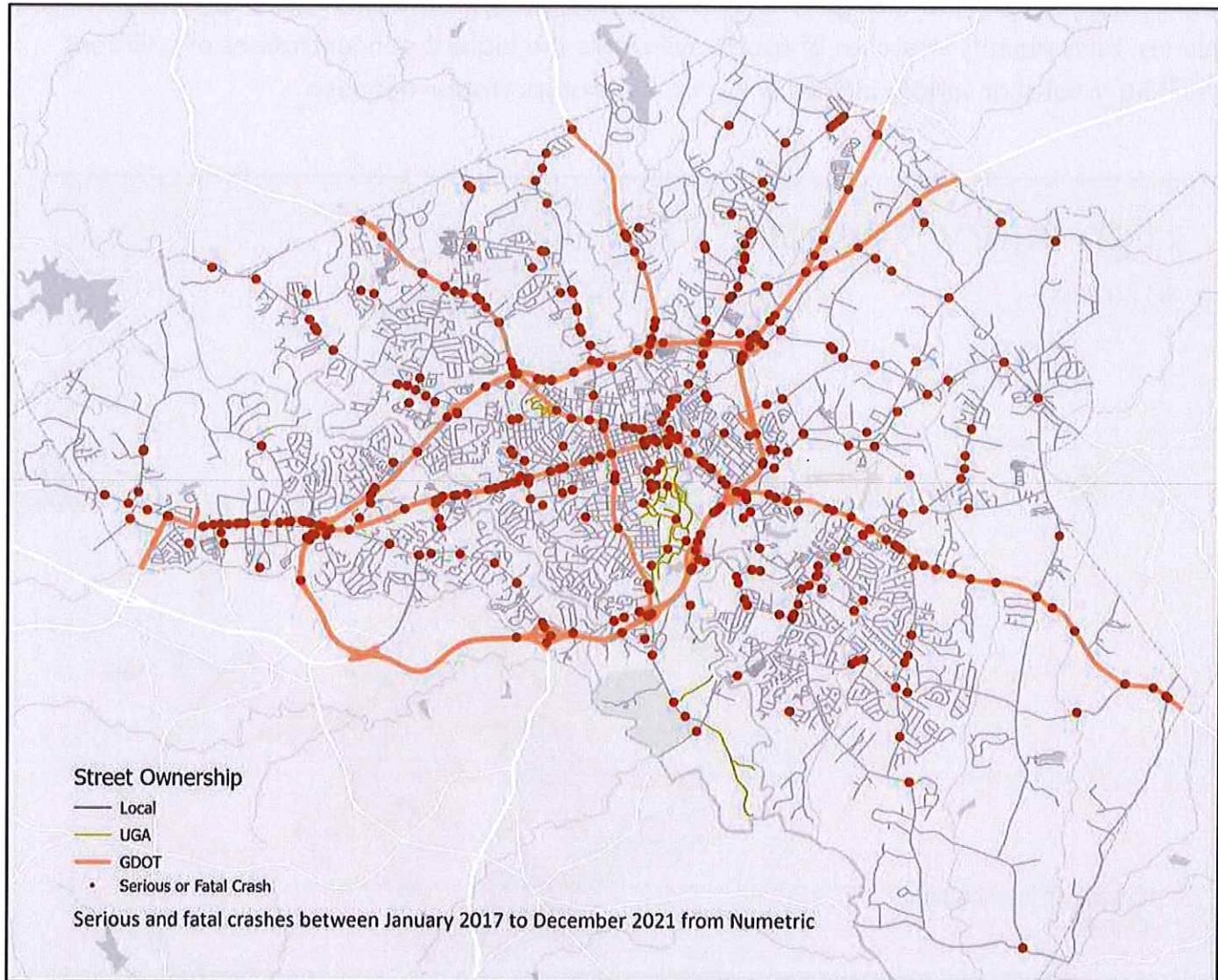
Pedestrian and bike-related crashes on ACC local roads from 2013-2022



SEVERE CRASH LOCATIONS

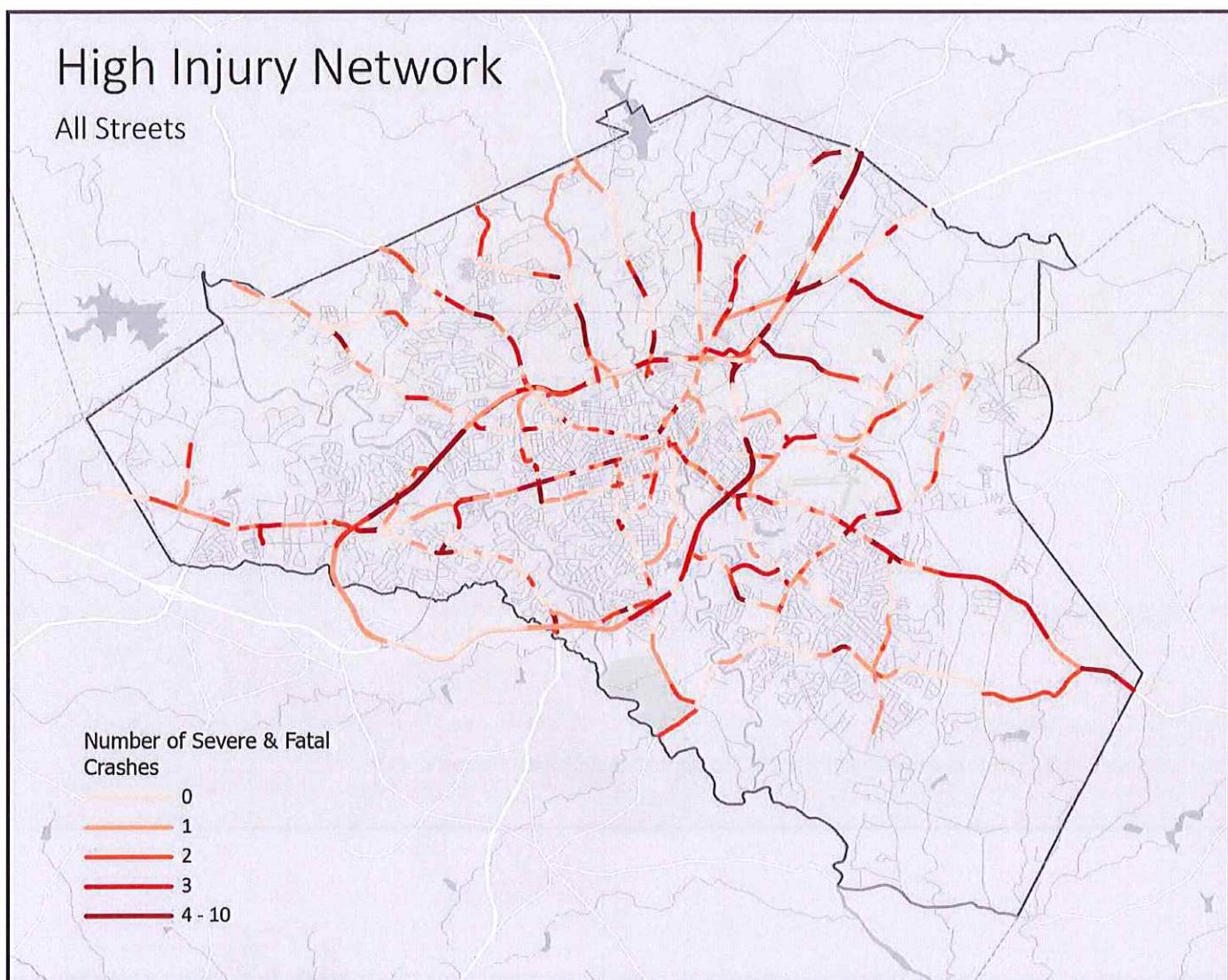
A more recent data timeframe (2017-2021) is used to determine locations of concern. 2022 data was not available at the time of analysis, so 2017-2021 was the five-year period that was used. There were 204 fatal or serious crashes between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2021 on local roads.

Fatal and Serious Crashes 2017- 2021



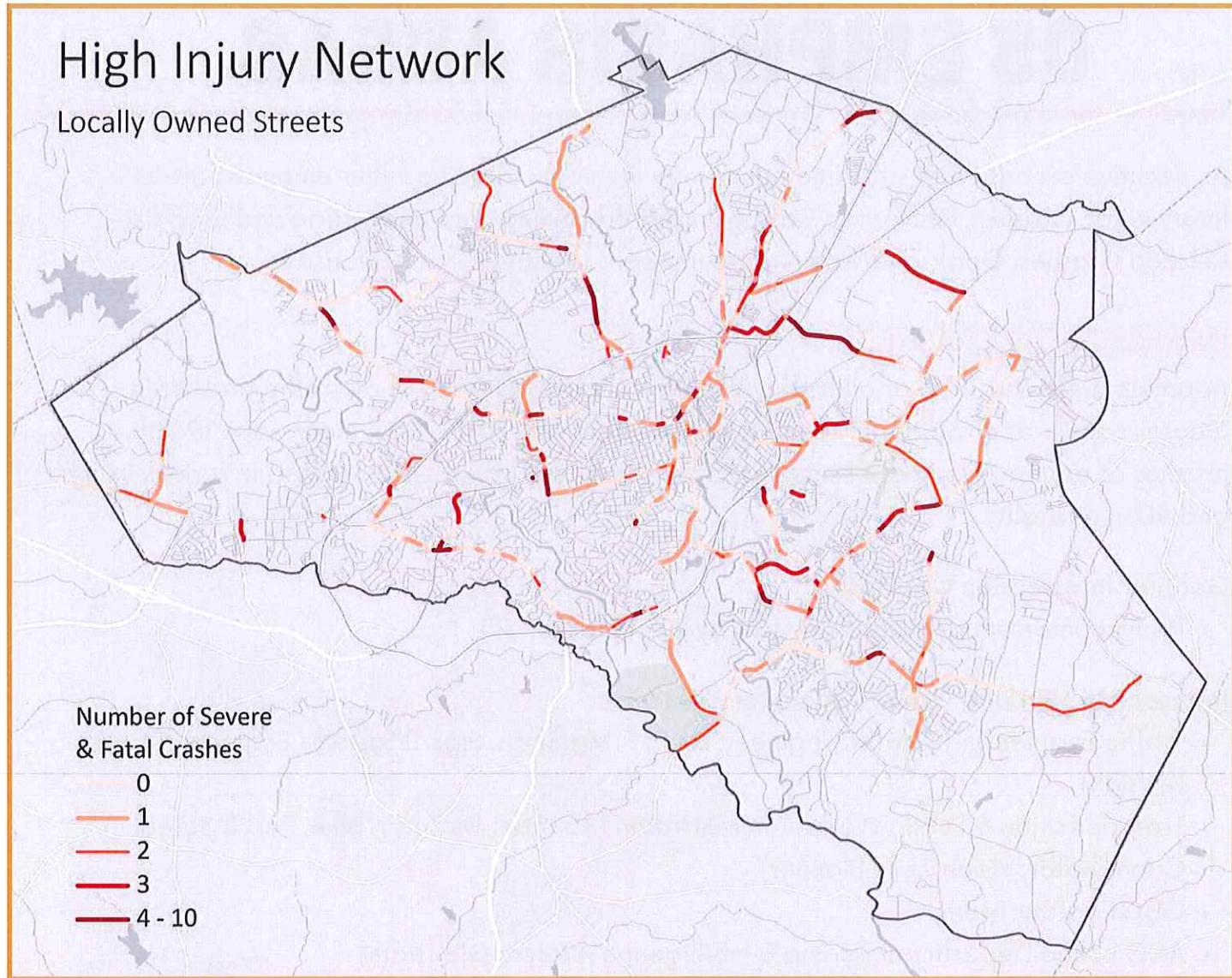
HIGH INJURY NETWORK

While fatal and severe crashes are spread across the County, as demonstrated below, there are several spots with more frequent and severe crashes than the rest of the county. The maps below demonstrates the High Injury Network for Athens. The first shows all streets and the second calls out only those that are locally owned. High Injury Networks (HINs) are one of many tools for local agencies to begin addressing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. HINs identify stretches of roadways where the highest concentrations of collisions resulting in fatal or serious injuries occur on the transportation network.



High Injury Network

Locally Owned Streets



Locally owned roads with the most severe and fatal crashes include:

- Timothy Rd
- Epps Bridge Pkwy
- Barnett Shoals Rd
- Newton Bridge Rd
- Athena Dr
- Macon Hwy
- Gaines School Rd
- Alps Rd
- W Broad St
- Vincent Dr
- Old Lexington Rd
- Tallassee Rd
- Cherokee Rd
- Whit Davis Rd
- Oglethorpe Ave
- Ila Rd
- College Station Rd
- E Dougherty St
- Hull Rd
- Collins Industrial Blvd
- North Ave
- Hawthorne Ave
- Spring Valley Rd
- Barnett Shoals Rd
- College Station Rd
- Prince Ave
- New Jimmie Daniel Rd
- Mitchell Bridge Rd
- S Lumpkin St
- Indian Hills Dr
- Winterville Rd
- W Dougherty St
- E Broad St
- Research Dr
- Voyles Rd
- Nellie B Ave

05 EMPHASIS AREAS

An iterative process with staff and community members identified four emphasis areas – Intersection Crashes, Distracted Driving, Impaired Driving, and Pedestrian and Bicyclist-Related Crashes. Goals and working groups were identified for each area.

INTERSECTION CRASHES

Approximately one-third of all traffic fatalities and roughly 75% of all traffic crashes in Georgia occur at or adjacent to intersections. Between 2013-2022, there were 19,708 crashes at or near intersections on ACC's local roads. Of these, 196 resulted in serious injury and 40 in a fatality.

Goal for Intersection Crashes:

- Reduce intersection crashes by 10% by December 2025.

Intersection Working Group Team Members

- Traffic Engineering (Traffic Engineer, Signs & Markings, Signal Systems Engineer, Studies Division)
- Transportation & Public Works Administration (Assistant Director, Bike, Ped & Safety Coordinator, Vision Zero Planner)
- GDOT Safety Team
- ACC Police Department (Crime & Intelligence Analyst, GIS Team)

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including phone usage, eating and drinking, talking to people in the vehicle, fiddling with the stereo — anything that takes a driver's attention away from the task of safe driving. Texting is an especially dangerous distraction. Sending or reading a text takes eyes off the road for five seconds. At 55 mph, that can be compared to driving the length of a football field with eyes closed. Any non-driving activity is a potential distraction and increases the risk of crashing.

Many drivers consider distractions such as eating or drinking or talking on cell phones to be important and common activities, and they are unlikely to give them up. Moreover, studies indicate that drivers themselves are poor judges of the performance decrements that result from distracting activities.^[2] The 2015 National Survey on Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors found that a large portion of drivers do not believe that their driving performance is affected by cell phone use, and that over half of drivers who talk on the phone while driving believe that their driving is the same while using cell phones.^[3]

Using a cell phone while driving creates enormous potential for deaths and injuries on U.S. roads. In 2020, 3,142 people in the U.S. were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. Additionally, there were 12,970 crashes involving distracted driving (both suspected and confirmed) on local roads. Of these, 83 resulted in serious injury and 10 in a fatality. In the United States, 9% of fatal crashes were reported as distraction-affected crashes,^[4] whereas in Clarke County, 16.13% of fatal crashes were related to distracted driving. In 2022, the Athens Police Department performed 14,802 traffic stops related to distracted driving.^[5] Of these stops, 2,765 resulted in a citation being issued.

Goal for Distracted Driving:

- Increase enforcement of Hands-Free Georgia laws by 10% by December 2025.
- Reduce distracted-driver crashes by 10% by December 2025.

Distracted Driving Working Group Team Members

- Public Information Office
- Athens in Motion Commission
- TPW Admin
- TPW Traffic Engineering
- ACC PD

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs can impair the ability to drive because they slow coordination, judgment, and reaction times. Every day, about 32 people in the United States die in drunk-driving crashes — that's one person every 45 minutes. In 2020, 11,654 people died in alcohol-impaired driving traffic deaths — a 14% increase from 2019.

[2] Horrey, Lesch, and Garabet, "Assessing the Awareness of Performance Decrements in Distracted Drivers."

[3] Schroeder, Wilbur, and Pena, "National Survey on Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors - 2015."

[4] "Traffic Safety Facts Research Note: Distracted Driving 2019."

[5] Athens-Clarke County Police Department

Four basic strategies are used to reduce impaired-driving crashes and driving under the influence.[6]

- Deterrence: enact, publicize, enforce, and adjudicate laws prohibiting impaired driving so people choose not to drive impaired
- Prevention: reduce drinking and drug use and keep impaired drivers from driving, while making it easier to get to and from bars without a car
- Communications and outreach: inform the public of the dangers of impaired driving and establish positive social norms that make driving while impaired unacceptable
- Alcohol and drug treatment: reduce alcohol and drug dependency or addiction

Goal for Impaired Driving:

- Reduce the number of impaired driving crashes by 30% by December 2025.

Impaired Driving Working Group Team Members

- ACC PD
- UGA Fontaine Center
- Transportation & Public Works Administration (Assistant Director, Bike, Ped & Safety Coordinator, Vision Zero Planner)
- GDOT Safety Team
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- ACCGov Transit
- Athens in Motion Commission

Pedestrian & Bicyclist-Related Crashes

Any crash involving a pedestrian or bicyclist is classified as a pedestrian or bicyclist-related crash. Pedestrian and bicyclist crashes constitute a small portion of total crashes on local roads, yet about 22% of fatal and serious injuries. Between 2013-2022 there were 428 crashes involving a pedestrian and 244 involving a cyclist. These crashes resulted in 14 pedestrians and four cyclists being fatally injured and 48 pedestrians and 20 cyclists with serious injuries. Minor crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists are severely underreported, so it is harder to determine the true impact of these crashes.

[6]Countermeasures that Work: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/book/countermeasures/alcohol-and-drug-impaired-driving/countermeasures>

Goal for Pedestrian-Related Crashes:

- Reduce pedestrian-related crashes on local roads by 10% by December 2025.
- Reduce bicyclist-related crashes on local roads by 10% by December 2025.

Pedestrian & Cyclist Working Group Team Members

- Traffic Engineering (Traffic Engineer, Signs & Markings, Signal Systems Engineer, Studies division)
- Transportation & Public Works Administration (Assistant Director, Bike, Ped & Safety Coordinator, Vision Zero Planner)
- GDOT Safety Team
- Landscape Management
- Transit
- Athens in Motion Commission
- Bike Athens

OVERALL GOALS

- Create well-defined guidelines and methodology for future safety projects including a Speed Management Toolkit and Residential Traffic Management Program.
- Compile a comprehensive inventory of existing safety features on local roads by the end of 2024.
- Develop support for grant funding applications to address road safety.
- Prioritize needed road safety investments.
- Evaluate existing and develop new processes within our department to identify shortcomings and improve the safety of our transportation system.
- Perform at least three Road Safety Audits on High-Injury roads per year.

06 EVALUATION & IMPLEMENTATION

The strategies below implement the goals in each of the Emphasis Areas. They are largely drawn from the USDOT Federal Highway Administration's Proven Safety Countermeasures, which includes evidence of efficacy. The working groups identified in the previous section will oversee the implementation of this plan. The ACCGov Department of Transportation and Public Works will be the accountable party for progress on the plan goals. Goals in each Emphasis Area will be evaluated on a yearly basis. The Local Road Safety Plan should be revised every five years.

INTERSECTION CRASHES

Strategy	Evidence
Update the intersection improvement program priority list based on 2018 – 2022 data. Deploy a package of low-cost countermeasures.	Countermeasures such as enhanced signing and pavement markings reduce nighttime crashes, fatal and injury crashes at rural intersections, and fatal and injury crashes at 2-lane by 2-lane intersections.
Implement three quick build intersection treatments with follow-up evaluation.	If traffic circle, mini roundabout, or roundabout are implemented, this should result in similar safety benefits as roundabouts.
Identify non-stop controlled intersections with high crash rates.	Identifying low-cost countermeasures that could be deployed at all high crash intersections could result in a new program and allow ACC to apply for funding.
New process for intersection improvement that includes roundabout feasibility study (ICE) required for intersection capital improvements	Two-Way Stop-Controlled Intersection to a Roundabout: 82% reduction in fatal and injury crashes. Signalized Intersection to a Roundabout: 78% reduction in fatal and injury crashes

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Strategy	Evidence
Identify stretches of road with frequent side swipe or run off the road crashes that might benefit from rumble strips	Shoulder Rumble Strips: 13-51% reduction in single vehicle, run-off-road fatal and injury crashes on two-lane rural roads. Center Line Rumble Strips: 44-64% reduction in head-on fatal and injury crashes on two-lane rural roads.[7]
Coordinate with PD to increase cell-phone ticketing during UGA move-in.	High visibility enforcement demonstrated to be effective by several high-quality evaluations with consistent results.[8]

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST-RELATED CRASHES

Strategy	Evidence
Leading Pedestrian Intervals at all lights in downtown core	58.7% reduction in pedestrian crashes is expected for this countermeasure. [8]
No right on red at all lights in downtown core	3% reduction in ALL crashes, no data for pedestrian only crashes. [8]
Raised pavement markers on all delineated bike lanes	
Develop and implement bike rack subsidy pilot program	
Increase pedestrian lighting	Intersection lighting can reduce pedestrian crashes up to 42%[9]
Install high visibility crosswalks at areas with high pedestrian demand	High-visibility crosswalks can reduce pedestrian injury crashes up to 40%. [9] Adding refuge island results in a further 56% reduction in pedestrian crashes.
Ensure first-mile/last-mile connectivity by installing sidewalks and bike lanes near transit stops	Roads with sidewalks have an 88% reduction in pedestrian crashes. [9]

[7] <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/longitudinal-rumble-strips-and-stripes-two-lane-roads>

[8] <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST-RELATED CRASHES

Strategy	Evidence
Reduce speeding with automated enforcement cameras in school zones.	Increased enforcement leads to a 23% reduction in pedestrian crashes, 54% reduction in all crashes, and 47% reduction in injury crashes.[9]
Reduce illegal parking/stopping in bike lanes with increased or automated enforcement	

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Strategy	Evidence
Expand after hours bus transit services.	Promising, and likely to be effective [10]
Limiting alcohol promotions that can be offered.	Promising, and likely to be effective [10]

[9] Elvik, R. and Vaa, T. *Handbook of Road Safety Measures*. Oxford, United Kingdom, Elsevier, (2004).

[10] Chen, L., C. Chen, and R. Ewing. *The Relative Effectiveness of Pedestrian Safety Countermeasures at Urban Intersections – Lessons from a New York City Experience*. (2012).

APPENDIX: STRATEGIES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Strategy	Efficacy Research	Emphasis Area
Require bars to complete bystander intervention training to obtain their liquor licenses.		Impaired driving
Free vouchers for uber/lyft that bars can provide to inebriated customers.	Promising, and likely to be effective	Impaired driving
Coordinate with Police to document where impaired drivers are coming from and driving to, in order to create an origin destination map that can inform after-hours Transit services.		Impaired driving
Administrative License Revocation or Suspension (ALR/ALS)	Determined to be effective	Impaired driving
Open Container laws	Promising, and likely to be effective	Impaired driving
Publicized Sobriety Checkpoints	Determined to be effective	Impaired driving
High-Visibility Saturation Patrols	Determined to be effective	Impaired driving
DWI Courts	Proven for reducing recidivism	Impaired driving
Alcohol Problem Assessment and Treatment	Determined to be effective	Impaired driving
Alcohol Screening and Brief intervention	Determined to be effective	Impaired driving
Increase documentation regarding when, where, and who is involved in impaired driving tickets and crashes.		Impaired driving
Social Marketing campaign	Limited or no high-quality evaluation evidence	Distracted Driving

Strategy	Efficacy Research	Emphasis Area
Youth education initiative	Limited or no high-quality evaluation evidence	Distracted Driving
Post hands-free Georgia signs	Limited or no high-quality evaluation evidence	Distracted Driving
ADA Compliance Assessment of all sidewalks in ACC		Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes
Create a sidewalk gap program	Roads with sidewalks have an 88% reduction in pedestrian crashes	Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes
Coordinate with Planning to ensure zoning aligns with safety improvements and explore the possibility of impact fees to create bike/ped infrastructure		Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes
Create a comprehensive list of roads that might be suitable for future road diets – five year plan for road diets. During repaving planning, assess which roads would benefit from road diets	4-Lane to 3-Lane, Road Diet Conversions result in 19-47% reduction in total crashes.	Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes
Public website for reporting transportation issues		Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes
Coordinate with school system to build student behavioral capabilities to use the free bus system.		Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes
Increase frequency of mowing in areas without sidewalks, but with high pedestrian volumes	Providing a paved shoulder results in 71% reduction in pedestrian crashes, frequent mowing may have similar effects.	Pedestrian & Cyclist Crashes

Figure 3-1: Speed/Impact Crash on Pedestrians