

Transportation Subcommittee

Vision:

Integrate environmental stewardship into transportation system design and maintenance.

Issues and Opportunities:

- A. Improve and promote responsible street and road design standards to minimize negative impacts on water quality.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Promote alternative stormwater management systems for roads to address water quality as well as volume issues. See the Center for Watershed Protection's Better Site Design guidelines on Residential Streets and Parking Lots (Habitat for Cars) below:
 1. Design residential streets for the minimum required pavement width needed to support travel lanes; on-street parking; and emergency, maintenance, and service vehicle access. These widths should be based on traffic volume.
 2. Reduce the total length of residential streets by examining alternative street layouts to determine the best option for increasing the number of homes per unit length.
 3. Wherever possible, residential street right-of-way widths should reflect the minimum required to accommodate the travel-way, the sidewalk, and vegetated open channels. Utilities and storm drains should be located within the pavement section of the right-of-way wherever feasible.
 4. Minimize the number of residential street cul-de-sacs and incorporate landscaped areas to reduce their impervious cover. The radius of cul-de-sacs should be the minimum required to accommodate emergency and maintenance vehicles. Alternative turnarounds should be considered.

5. Where density, topography, soils, and slope permit, vegetated open channels should be used in the street right-of-way to convey and treat stormwater runoff.
 6. The required parking ratio governing a particular land use or activity should be enforced as both a maximum and a minimum in order to curb excess parking space construction. Existing parking ratios should be reviewed for conformance taking into account local and national experience to see if lower ratios are warranted and feasible.
 7. Parking codes should be revised to lower parking requirements where mass transit is available or enforceable shared parking arrangements are made.
 8. Reduce the overall imperviousness associated with parking lots by providing compact car spaces, minimizing stall dimensions, incorporating efficient parking lanes, and using pervious materials in spillover parking areas where possible.
 9. Provide meaningful incentives to encourage structured and shared parking to make it more economically viable.
 10. Wherever possible, provide stormwater treatment for parking lot runoff using bioretention areas, filter strips, and/or other practices that can be integrated into required landscaping areas and traffic islands.
- b. Short Term Work Plan: Require rain infiltration/volume planning in parking areas rather than runoff rate and retention planning.
- B. Reduce carbon emissions and protect air quality by encouraging the use of alternative fuels such as natural gas and electricity, and by creating and maintaining an efficient transportation system.
- a. Short Term Work Plan: Support an efficient transportation network by creating internal circulation networks and interconnections within commercial and industrial development to avoid overdependence upon Athens-Clarke County's arterial street network. Encourage retrofit of existing commercial and industrial development.

- b. Short Term Work Plan: Require continued efforts at reducing energy consumption within county vehicles.

Vision

To support transportation policies that encourage viable alternatives to the automobile in order to support public health, promote public safety, protect the environment, encourage efficient land use, maintain a sense of community and sustain our economic vitality.

Issues and Opportunities

- A. Land use Policies shall encourage corridors that support multiple modes of transportation and enhance the aesthetics of our community.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Require the provision of bike racks downtown and at businesses that are accessible by bicycle (i.e. on routes that are identified on the Bicycle Master Plan) and encourage them at all commercial establishments.
 - b. Attend to safety details such as orienting sewer grates perpendicular to traffic flow, repainting bike lane stripes as needed, and regularly sweeping bike lanes free of debris
 - c. Short Term Work Plan: Encourage increasing the cost of time on the downtown parking meters; direct that money towards mass transit.
 - d. Short Term Work Plan: Update and Expand the Bike Master Plan.
 - e. Short Term Work Plan: Create bike lanes from the Milledge/Loop intersection to the Prince/Loop intersection, as needed to promote public safety.
 - f. Short Term Work Plan: Acquire all state routes within Loop 10 (incrementally within 20 years)
 - g. Short Term Work Plan: Promote usage of utilities' corridors into Rights-of-Way and easements, and ultimately into ped/bike pathways, with sensitivity to utility maintenance.
 - h. Short Term Work Plan: Where appropriate, encourage shared trenches to allow for trees as close as possible to the street. Also, where appropriate, allow for boulevarding (central tree corridor).
 - i. Short Term Work Plan: Require the design of parking and circulation routes within commercial centers as distinct streets

with landscaped sidewalks that contain shade trees, small courtyards, street parking, and traditional block sizes with multiple access points to all shopping/parking areas. Encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces and the retrofitting of existing, large, unbroken parking areas by providing incentives.

- j. Short Term Work Plan: Change zoning to encourage shared parking among businesses and institutions.
- B. Support Traffic Calming Options and Pedestrian and Bicycle pathway designs that are safe, environmentally sensitive, aesthetically pleasing, and respond to the unique needs of the area they are proposed to serve (context sensitive).
- a. Short Term Work Plan: Commit to the increased usage of speed humps, bumpouts, traffic circles, and other traffic calming options.
 - b. Short Term Work Plan: Explore alternatives to thermo-plastic striping paint. Commit to repainting crosswalks and other lines with this safer and more solid alternative material, to increase the safety of cyclists and motorists.
 - c. Short Term Work Plan: Promote bike lanes to 5 feet, regardless of an urban or rural cross-section.
 - d. Short Term Work Plan: Commit to building safer pedestrian crossings at busy intersections (using islands, etc.)
 - e. Short Term Work Plan: Allow off peak parking on four lane streets in outer lanes, where applicable.
 - f. Short Term Work Plan: Encourage sharper corners and smaller turning radii for streets with mountable curbs.
 - g. Short Term Work Plan: Perform a study to ascertain what character areas are most appropriate for 1) bike lanes separated by on-street parking, versus 2) bike lanes within the line of traffic. Amend the appropriate areas of the design ordinance to reflect the results of the study.
 - h. Short Term Work Plan: Convert 4-lane roads to 3 lanes (2 travel lanes, median center turn lane, and bike lanes) where feasible.
 - i. Short Term Work Plan: Perform a study to determine the need for a reduction in speed limits.
 - j. Short term Work Plan: Encourage parallel parking on both sides of the street along residential corridors.

- C. Encourage linkages between existing pedestrian systems (i.e. sidewalks), expansion of the sidewalk and pedestrian systems and maintenance of our current pedestrian system.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Commit to connecting new and old sidewalk systems.
 - b. Short Term Work Plan: Commit to connecting dead ends/cul-de-sacs to existing roads/sidewalks where possible.
 - c. Short Term Work Plan: Eliminate cul-de-sacs in new developments that do not conform to the block system.
 - d. Short Term Work Plan: Require schools to be fully accessible to the pedestrian child. Perform a study to determine the feasibility of neighborhood schools to ensure transportation choices for children.
 - e. Short Term Work Plan: Identify existing street segments that would contribute to a connected system of pedestrian corridors, and explore the feasibility of closing such street segments to vehicular non-emergency traffic.

- D. Transportation and alternative transportation corridors (such as greenway corridors and Rails To Trail system) will be supported by and held to the community standards of aesthetics, urban design environmental stewardship, and safety.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Implement the principles laid out in the Appendix titled “Context Sensitive Street Design”, written by the Urban Design Collaborative for the Atlanta Regional Commission.

 - b. Short Term Work Plan: Encourage city council to appoint an advisory group or committee of citizens to develop design standards for alternative transportation corridors.

- E. The greenway corridor and other alternative transportation Corridors such as the Rails-To-Trails system will be expanded and connected.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Identify all railroad rights-of-way within the county that are considered “abandoned”, and determine the suitability and funding capabilities of each for inclusion in a connected system of bicycle/pedestrian trails.

- F. Pursue reductions in maximums of parking based on availability and repetition of mass transit.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Perform a study that investigates what the appropriate parking space cap would be.

- G. Pursue strategies to relieve general congestion.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Encourage roundabouts, signal timing, limits to curb cuts, and increased connectivity of roadways. First, perform a study to ascertain which areas are most appropriate for these congestion relievers.

 - b. Short Term Work Plan: In new neighborhoods provide for vehicular circulation routes that distribute traffic evenly, avoid excessive traffic and speed on any one street, have on-street parking, and have street block lengths that discourage speeding. Encourage retrofitting existing neighborhoods to accomplish the same.

Vision

Athens-Clarke County's Transportation System will accommodate the needs of our diverse population.

Issues and Opportunities

- A. The Transportation System will be inclusionary, and accommodate our diverse population, such as those with disabilities and as the average age of our population increases, the Transportation system should respond to our changing needs.
 - a. Short Term Work Plan: Designs of new and retrofit pedestrian access should consider the needs of our aging population, children, persons with special needs and other pedestrians to include features such as 'islands' in the center of the crossing, crossing guards, longer walk lights, reduced crossing distances, pedestrian bridges, timed lights, and improved street design standards conducive to pedestrian mixed use. Outdoor access routes should meet the most current federal design standards.

 - b. Short Term Work Plan: Street repair and maintenance will be done in a manner as to assure that access for pedestrians, wheelchair,

baby strollers, and the like is maintained by protecting the existing 'curb cuts' access ramps and aprons, particularly during street repaving.

- c. Short Term Work Plan: Study the policy requirements necessary for adequate road design and licensing for light road motorized vehicles (gold carts, etc.)

B. Our Transit System is vital to meeting the transportation needs of our community and it will be supported by our community and our government.

- a. Short Term Work Plan: Increase and support ridership and user friendliness of the Transit System. Initiate and support an active marketing program for the Transit System aimed at the entire community, including UGA students.
- b. Short Term Work Plan: Identify and encourage the broadening of the funding sources (such as SPLOST) and the increase in funding levels for the Transit System
- c. Short Term Work Plan: Commit to providing accurate, current information regarding the Transit system through various media such as through maps, printed material, video or the internet)
- d. Short Term Work Plan: Expand the service area of "The Lift" so that it reaches beyond the current limits of a mile off existing Transit routes.
- e. Short Term Work Plan: Expand existing routes utilizing the Link or other similar shuttle services.
- f. Short Term Work Plan: Foster a Regional (MPO) approach to the Transit system emphasizing access to critical services outside Clarke County such as health care, education, employment, recreation, and retail
- g. Short Term Work Plan: Encourage new ridership among growing segments of our population, such as the aging and Spanish-speaking, through educational campaigns designed to familiarize them with the Transit system and use.
- h. Short Term Work Plan: Consider increasing accessibility on new or existing routes to special destinations within Athens (by reducing the ridership criteria). Those special destinations are culturally significant, promote tourism, or are otherwise important to the general well-being of the Athens community (such as medical facilities, governmental facilities, airports, museums,

arboretums, historical sites, sports arenas, educational facilities, and parks and greenways).

- i. Short Term Work Plan: Perform a study to determine whether the transit system is currently accessing 85% of the county population living and working within 500 feet of a bus stop. If not, re-evaluate what systemic changes (frequency?) would be necessary to maintain this minimum transit accessibility rate.
- j. Short Term Work Plan: Explore the feasibility of providing amenities such as wireless internet access and A/C power outlets on buses, real-time bus location mapping and bus proximity notification to potential customers and extended service subscribers.
- k. Short Term Work Plan: Consider the feasibility of allowing corporate sponsorship to pay for the higher operating costs associated with increased frequency and breath of the ACC transit system.
- l. Short Term Work Plan: Educate banks about location efficient mortgages that require a lower income level for homes near public transit.

C. Athens-Clarke County will take measures to ensure that vehicular traffic will not harm the residential nature of our neighborhoods while encouraging interconnectivity for bike systems, pedestrian systems and road systems.

a. Short Term Work Plan: Identify existing residential streets roughly parallel to major arterials that can be designated as “bicycle arterials” intended primarily for bicycle use, with the exception of local residential automobile access.

Vision

Encourage Regional Coordination in transportation, land use, and character area planning at the respective county borders.

Issues and Opportunities

A. Activate the Northeast Georgia Regional Transportation Authority through MACORTS.

- a. Short Term Work Plan: Coordinate Park and Ride amongst all counties.
- b. Short Term Work Plan: Coordinate density requirements across borders.
- c. Short Term Work Plan: Coordinate land use and character area planning to maintain the integrity of arterials as well as collector roadways.

Notes

Notes to Land Use Subcommittee:

Please consider the following recommendations:

Synchronize zoning requirements and stormwater ordinance (such as the definitions of impervious surface and the infiltration techniques so that the stormwater fee system supports the requirements and standards found in the zoning ordinance.

Make appropriate play areas for children (many small park areas) to ensure their safety away from roads.

Encourage higher densities along transportation corridors.

Notes to Population Subcommittee:

Please consider the following recommendations:

Promote the use of public transit for the elderly population through increased publicity and expansion of services into those population centers.

Notes to Intergovernmental Subcommittee:

Please consider the following recommendations:

Ensure stronger enforcement and reduction (max. 30-35 mph) of speed limits, especially on collector roads. Stronger enforcement against vagrants within Greenway and future pedestrian routes through utility corridors.