



Ancillary programs and practices are an important part of establishing a pedestrian-friendly community without necessarily being incorporated with any on-the-ground projects. Facility design, maintenance, traffic calming, education programs, law enforcement, promotion, and offering transportation choices are all necessary to create a community that is walkable. Some of these recommendations could be implemented immediately, while others may need the basic land-use and infrastructure to be incorporated into the defined Pedestrian Oriented Development Districts to be effective.

6.1. SPOT IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

Sidewalks / Walkways

Just as potholes, uneven pavement, and visual obstructions irritate automobile drivers, these do the same to pedestrians. Current sidewalks should be free of cracks, dead-ends, or uneven alignment. All sidewalk/roadway intersections should include curb cuts, ramps, detectable warnings and landing areas that comply with ADA. Funding should be set aside for maintenance of worn sidewalks and consideration should be given as to which material to use to maximize the sidewalks' lives. An annual budget of \$100,000 should be set aside for small spot improvement projects. The City should apply for any available state or federal funding to correct any gaps in its existing sidewalk network and to retrofit ADA specific accommodations.



Maintenance issues such as worn sidewalks and retrofitting opportunities such as curb cuts and ramps are very important.

Currently, a limited sidewalk inventory exists for the City of Albemarle. It is recommended that the City conduct a comprehensive inventory, including notes on where these sidewalks need maintenance or ADA upgrades. A means should also be established by which the City can annually determine where new maintenance issues occur, and continually receive alerts from the public on sidewalk maintenance concerns. Once an initial list of necessary repairs and upgrades is compiled, each particular maintenance project can be ranked according to the criteria set in Section 7.2 (Table 2 on page 7-4). These maintenance projects should be ranked separately from the projects outlined in Appendix G, and be continuously updated as additional maintenance needs arise.

Additionally, small gaps in the sidewalk may occur when separate public or private projects do not completely connect. A serious effort must be made to connect these pieces of walkways, and future policy must be created and enforced that ensures that these connections are always created in future projects (see Section 8).



6.2. EDUCATION PROGRAMS

School Safety Patrol Programs



School Safety Patrol Programs across the United States have been responsible for decreased pedestrian/vehicle collisions. The American Automobile Association (AAA), municipalities, and schools have sponsored these important safety programs in the past, and should be continued by Albemarle's schools. AAA Carolinas' contact phone number is 704-569-7883. They can provide pertinent information in reference to ordering supplies and starting up the program at Albemarle's schools.

North Carolina School Crossing Guard Training Program

As traffic continues to increase on North Carolina's streets and highways, concern has grown over the safety of our children as they walk to and from school. At the same time, health agencies, alarmed at the increase in obesity and inactivity among children, are encouraging parents and communities to get their children walking and biking to school. In response, the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation decided to establish a consistent training program for law enforcement officers responsible for school crossing guards. According to the office of the North Carolina Attorney General, school crossing guards may be considered traffic control officers when proper training is provided as specified in GS 20-114.1.

Law enforcement agencies interested in participating in the School Crossing Guard Training Program should contact the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation by phone at (919) 807-0777 or visit http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/crossing.html

Safety Signs on Pedestrian Routes

Pedestrian walkways should have certain amenities to make them comfortable such as benches, water fountains, shelters, waste and recycle cans, restrooms, landscaping, interpretation signs, lockers, boardwalks, bridges, etc. Use these structures to your advantage. Safety messages could be placed on any of the aforementioned amenities in a location where users could clearly read it, and quite possibly abide by its message. Using riddles, rhymes, or stories to make the point increases the public's interest. A local business or family could sponsor each structure and its corresponding safety sign.

Public Perception Marketing

Although an increase in pedestrian facilities is far more popular than many transportation projects, it is highly recommended that a positive marketing campaign start as soon as possible. Shared-use paths, sidewalks, bikeways, and intersection improvements cost tax dollars, require



Greenways corridors are showing to be popular neighbors



right-of-way, and sometimes create friction between the impatient driver and the pedestrian. In addition, recent political events concerning the acquisition of right-of-way have created some public uneasiness with sidewalk and other projects that might require land easements.

In reality, shared-use paths such as greenways have shown through studies to occasionally increase property re-sale values, have no increase or actually might decrease neighborhood crime, and result in more positive ecological effects than negative. Once greenways are successfully on the ground in communities, the residents know first hand of their benefits and welcome more. However, communities are sometimes wary as to how these trails might negatively affect them, and false information and negative perceptions may allow for a public relations issue before the walkways are in place.

Plus, designing a community where transportation choices exist has been shown to place communities at an economic advantage over communities that rely solely on the automobile. Tax dollars spent to improve or create pedestrian facilities are tax dollars that place a return on the investment for the community.

The City should first act to create a positive image for future greenways, sidewalks, zoning changes, intersection improvements, traffic calming and other pedestrian expenditures before any opposition occurs. Circulate the facts concerning these facilities and show the positive benefits.

Driver Education



Targeting the young generation with this plan is very important. Children aged 5-15 are not yet old enough to drive, are young enough to have the energy and ability to learn new skills and habits, and sometimes have no choice but to walk. Once these children turn sixteen, it should be expected that the majority of these youth are drawn to the automobile. The car is a status symbol, a mode of independence, and a sign that they are becoming an adult.

At the same time young drivers are very impressionable and this provides excellent opportunities to educate the driving population. Pedestrian safety, as well as how to safely maneuver an automobile while in the presence of pedestrians and bicycles can be an instrumental part of any driver's education program in Albemarle. This training will allow this new generation to be more aware of the simple fact that motorized vehicles do not have sole right to the transportation network, and it is everyone's responsibility to be careful when in the roadways.



Pedestrian Education

Many pedestrian crashes occur because the pedestrian disobeyed traffic laws. Crossing signalized intersections on the red phase, walking on the roadway in the same direction as traffic, and darting across traffic lanes are not only dangerous, they are illegal.

Indeed, much of the reasoning why a pedestrian breaks the law is because of conditions unknown to the motorist such as the scarcity of proper crossing locations or the absence of walkways out of the roadway. But unfortunately, many pedestrians do take unnecessary risks often. Much of the time, they may not know that any traffic laws apply to them, but it would be fair to say that many pedestrians choose not to follow the law. In addition to creating safe walking areas for pedestrians, walkers must be taught to respect the laws for their own safety. Pedestrian Education courses should be offered at schools, libraries, or on informational web sites.



Resources



- The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation has a wealth of information on their web site: http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/safety_programs.html This web site includes information on programs such as the *Basics of Bicycling Curriculum*, *Bicycle Helmet Initiatives*, *Bike Repair*, the *North Carolina School Crossing Guard Training Program*, the *Share the Road Initiative*, the *Safe Routes to School Program* and the *Walk a Child to School Initiative*. The web site is also a good source of resources and materials.

- <http://www.walkinginfo.org> also has a great amount of information and program ideas, including design and engineering guidelines, programs, facts, news, outreach and solutions to problems.



- <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/> offers ideas for a variety of pedestrian-safety focused curricula.



6.3. ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

Safe Routes to Schools



The Safe Routes to School Program was established in August 2005 as part of the most recent federal transportation re-authorization legislation, SAFETEA-LU. This law provides multi-year funding for the surface transportation programs that guide spending of federal gas tax revenue. Section 1404 of this legislation provides funding (for the first time) for State Departments of Transportation to create and administer these programs which allow communities to compete for funding for local projects. Visit the Federal Highway Administration’s web address for Safe Routes to School at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>

The steps below provide a framework for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program based on what has worked in other communities according to the website <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>.

- Identify and contact the people who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing for children.
- Hold a kick off meeting and set a vision: A goal of the first meeting is to create a vision and generate next steps for the group members.
- Gather information and identify issues: Collecting information can help to identify needed program elements and provide a means to measure the impact of the program later.
- Identify solutions: Solutions to identified issues will include a combination of education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement strategies. Safety is the first consideration.
- Make a plan: It does not need to be lengthy. Include encouragement, enforcement, education and engineering strategies. Create a time schedule for the plan.
- Get the plan and people moving: Hold a kick off event starting with a fun activity. Participate in International Walk to School Day or celebrate a Walking Wednesday.
- Evaluate, adjust and keep moving: To sustain the program, consider building additional program champions and letting people know about your successes.

Visit the North Carolina Safe Routes to School Program at:

http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/Safe_Routes.html

Walk to Work, Shop, School and Play Days

Designate a day, or preferably even a week or month where people walk to their destinations. This can coincide with *International Walk to School Week*, or with Bike to Work Week, or with another common “Hike, Bike, and Bus” week that some municipalities sponsor. Advertise these events, have some fun events along common pedestrian routes, and offer prizes and recognition for shining participants. *International Walk to School Week* typically falls on the first week of October, and their web site with good information can be found at <http://www.walktoschool.org/>. Walk to School events can be as simple as a few kids and parents meeting to walk to school or can be very elaborate celebrations. Event logistics range





from a central walking location to people walking from their homes. Successful events have the support and participation of the principal, police and parents, and programs such as this give public agencies and representatives the opportunity to publicly support health, environment and safety initiatives.

Walking School Bus

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school to as structured as a route with meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of trained volunteers. More information can be found at <http://www.walkingschoolbus.org/>.

Walk a Child to School in North Carolina

Thanks to the national initiative and support from the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program, Walk a Child to School Programs have gained a foothold in North Carolina and are growing each year. To date more than 5,000 students in 12 communities in the state have participated.

Four Stanly County schools (Badin Elementary, Norwood Elementary, Stanfield Elementary, and Central Elementary) first participated in Walk to School in 2000 and 2001. The schools had over 600 participants and did all of the organizing while the Healthy Carolinians committee helped promote the walk. With grant money, the health department placed ads in the paper, made copies of flyers and checklists, and purchased zipper pulls from the *Partnership for a Walkable America* for the schools to give to the students. For 2007, Badin Elementary School organized a Police escort for students/ adults walking from North of town; Fire Truck escort for student/adults walking from South of town; and the mayor and city council members will be invited to walk as well.

Access International Walk to School's website at www.walktoschool.org to let them know about what the City of Albemarle is doing today to encourage children to walk (or bike) to school.

Walking Challenge



Have a web page set up where residents can enroll to receive a pedometer (at no cost or at a cost determined by the City) and a map of Albemarle's pedestrian routes. Participants record on the web site how much they walk each month, and have the opportunity to win recognition or awards. It is amazing how recording the results from a pedometer can addict users to walking. As one such regional example, the Cleveland County Health Department, the Alliance for Health and the Cleveland Regional Medical Center teamed together to sponsor a walking event of this nature for Cleveland County. The event is entitled "Take the Step One Challenge," and is a community-wide approach to increasing physical activity and supporting obesity prevention strategies among Cleveland County residents. Partners in the health organizations of Stanly County are exploring this type of program.



Urban Walker Program

The State of Florida's Division of Forestry realized that Floridians knew of their many State Parks, but were mostly unfamiliar with their State Forests. They began a "Trail Walker" Program that gave users a map of the forests and their trails, and allowed them to earn stickers and patches according to the number of trails that they have done. The State Forests became more widely recognized, and many trail hikers scrambled to earn trail stickers and patches.

There are 33 proposed pedestrian projects in the Albemarle Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, and dozens of opportunities to integrate these into pedestrian routes. These routes could be named, mapped, and signed (marking the pavement is a less expensive and less intrusive method) for easy identification, and used in a similar program as Florida's Trail Walker program.

Residents could obtain a pedestrian route map, record log, and sticker sheet from the Park and Recreation Department and commence their walking. Each time a user walks a portion of a route, they would record this walk in their log book and place a sticker in it.



Once they walk five different routes, they earn a "Pathfinder" patch. Five more routes, and they earn an "Urban Pioneer" patch. If they complete all of the routes, they earn a "Trekker" patch.

This way, residents become familiar with local pedestrian routes, and maybe determine that they can also use these routes to get to shopping, work, school, or to leisure activities.

Three more patches can be created for those who use the same paths routinely for these purposes. If the user records five walks on any path within one month, they earn a "Weekend Warrior" patch. If they record ten total walks in a month, they earn the "Rambler" title. With 20 walks in the same month, they earn the very prestigious designation of a "Pedestrian." This program is an inexpensive way to familiarize residents (especially the elderly and children) with the local pedestrian network, and naming the highest level as a "Pedestrian" will associate the act of being a walker as a great honor.

Walkers' Discounts

Americans end 90-99 percent of their car trips in deceptively "free" parking spaces. With the average parking space costing \$1,000, fifty percent of this cost is paid by employers, the businesses drivers patronize, and by taxpayers. Another 40 percent is paid through rent and mortgages for off-street parking at home. This means that only about 1-10 percent of the nation's parking costs are at pay-per-use at meters, lots, or garages. Pay parking is rare because outdated provisions in zoning and tax codes - along with expansive street designs - produce an abundance of available parking. Businesses where "free" parking exists in designated Pedestrian Oriented Development District centers could join with the City to offer discounts to patrons who walk to these businesses (using the honor system). Perhaps the market may then favor some businesses to develop parking lot land for denser infill development that supports pedestrian travel. This program can be tried during walk, bike, and transit encouragement weeks.



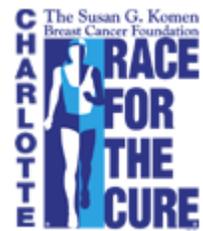
Spot Trot



A safe pedestrian route can be created near the shelter (or the volunteers could take the dogs to other existing pedestrian paths), and a volunteer dog walking joint program between the City and the Humane Society could be established. The Stanly County Animal Control is located on Coble Street near a proposed shared-use path recommended in this plan. These animals would always benefit from a walk and nearby residents would also benefit from walking the dogs.

“Walk for Prevention”

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Race for the Cure is a highly successful organized event whose proceeds go toward finding a cure for breast cancer. Some studies suggest that non-active lifestyles, poor diets, environmental cigarette smoke, and other lifestyle choices contribute to breast cancer risks and other health issues. The City’s Park and Recreation Department or the Stanly County Health Department could sponsor a 5K and/or 1 mile run/walk whose proceeds might go to Albemarle’s pedestrian facilities, healthy school lunch foods, and tobacco education programs. The event would also educate the community about healthy lifestyle choices (especially walking) and the effects of unhealthy living. The route could include downtown or the YMCA area, and the right advertising might attract a large audience.



Greenway Events and Street Closings



A event street closure in Shelby, NC

Once many of the recommended projects are constructed, it would create a perfect opportunity for regular special events. A festival could be set up downtown, at a park, or on a greenway, closing roadways off to vehicular traffic for seasonal festivals, or even on currently low traffic days like Saturdays, spurring a new and desired shopping experience that may draw more business than a typical Saturday.

An international trend is to turn major city roads into “Sunday Parkways.” This concept takes long strips of roadways (linear or in a looping pattern) and converts one or both directions of traffic to pedestrian malls during a portion of every Sunday and holiday. This encourages people to get out and walk, increases the amount of public space, and motivates people to walk more often throughout the rest of the week.

Twilight Walks

This library or senior center volunteer program would be for both elderly residents and younger residents. The two will get together on a predetermined regular schedule and walk to a destination (such as the grocery store, movies, or restaurant). This walk will give the senior



time to talk to a young person about anything that they want to talk about. It will also give the younger participant an opportunity to hear stories of the past and understand their city's history. The two will benefit from walking and from learning to become less dependent on their automobiles, and the senior who already depends on walking will have some security against possible (or usually just perceived dangers of) crime attacks.

6.4. ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

Enforce the Laws

Continued police enforcement of traffic laws is always necessary to protect pedestrians. Albemarle's Police Department should be particularly encouraged to ticket violators in residential, high density commercial, and other popular pedestrian areas. Pedestrians must also be encouraged to follow the law for their own safety, with pedestrian violators also being educated as to the correct behaviors.

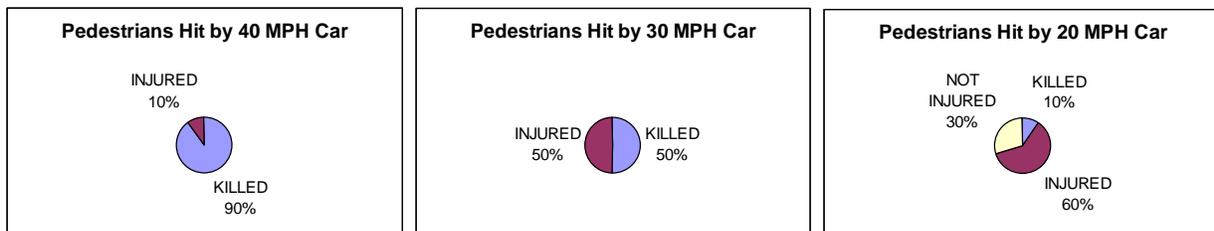
Sting Operations

This tactic, along with others, is a method from www.walkinginfo.org for making an impact upon motorists who fail to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

1. Identify high risk locations for pedestrians.
2. Observe to see the types of violations that are occurring and choose a location for the sting.
3. Calculate a reasonable amount of time for a driver to see and react to the pedestrian, mark that distance back from the crossing with a cone or sign.
4. A police officer in high visibility civilian clothes acts as a pedestrian, stepping into the street before the car has passed the "cone".
5. Other officers observe the crossing attempts from concealment and pursue and apprehend violators. The media is invited to view and report on this sting operation.

Twenty's Plenty

There is always a need to reduce automobile speeds to accommodate for increased pedestrian traffic. Creating an awareness program that encourages drivers to drive no more than 20 MPH in certain areas of town will make it more comfortable for the pedestrian to venture out on foot. As illustrated with national data in the graphs below, the severity of pedestrian / automobile incidents drastically decreases with lower automobile speeds. The name, "Twenty's Plenty" has been used with success in other communities.





Foot Patrol

The Albemarle Police Department should assign pedestrian officers to be visible and personal presence, particularly in downtown and other Pedestrian Districts. These officers will therefore get to know business owners, residents, and frequent visitors well, as they would be more reachable to the people of these communities.

6.5. ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS THAT COMPLIMENT WALKING



Transit gives pedestrians options

Future Local Bus Transit

Currently, Albemarle has no local bus transit, but it would be important in a pedestrian plan to mention planning similarities between the two. Mass transit works well with compact or mixed-use developments. Land use plans that encourage this type of development will maximize the efficiency of future transit routes, stops, and costs, ensuring a viable system with which pedestrians can be comfortable. Furthermore, encouraging pedestrian amenities now will make future transit routes more simple and affordable.

Bicycle Accommodations and Loaner Programs

Providing bicycle parking throughout Albemarle will give pedestrians an option of using a bicycle for slightly further or quicker trips. In addition, bicycle loaner programs may be an option in areas where pedestrian and bicycle trips might be more common. Although this program is more typical of larger municipalities, Albemarle may be able to customize a version of this program to suit it needs and realities. Some operational difficulties with this program could be mitigated by issuing any interested person a “Bicycle Loan Card” from the public library for a small fee or no fee.



Bicycle programs give options to pedestrians

Car Sharing Programs

Densely developed pedestrian-friendly communities are good candidates for car-sharing opportunities to take root. Car-share programs primarily allow families to own fewer cars while still giving them the convenience of “renting” a car by the hour for local tasks. Downtown public agencies or businesses may also designate these shared cars for pedestrian commuters who might need to borrow a car for mid-day tasks. Some areas of Albemarle might be good candidates for publicly supported car share programs. Retirement communities and low-income neighborhoods might benefit from such a program or public agencies may keep some cars for employee use. While this concept is not a realistic option for the public at this time, it may be



feasible in the future when Albemarle’s downtown and other Pedestrian Districts grow, or for public employees downtown.

6.6. ANTI-LITTER PROGRAMS

Provide Trash Receptacles and Enforce Litter Laws



Pedestrians are sensitive to trash – its existence may determine whether people walk there or not

Automobile traffic, by nature of its speed and relative isolation from the outside world, is less sensitive to litter than pedestrian traffic. Litter indicates a lack of social order, which is a deterrent to pedestrians. Automobile-generated litter tends to accumulate in places where drivers generally wait such as traffic lights. Pedestrians may tend to litter if there are limited waste receptacles at transit stops or benches. Ample bins should be provided in these areas for the pedestrians, and there should be a known venture to enforce litter laws for both motorists and pedestrians.

NCDOT offers a statewide litter reporting hotline exists named the “Swat-A-Litterbug Program.” This program gives the user an opportunity to call, mail, or submit violation information online. The phone number of the Customer Service Office is 1-877-DOT-4YOU (1-877-368-4968).

The web address is:

http://www.ncdot.org/doh/operations/dp_chief_eng/roadside/Beautification/litterbug/

Swat-A-Litterbug



Adopt a Road / Adopt a Sidewalk Programs

Adopt a Road programs are common, enabling members of the community to sponsor and help to clean a road of litter. The City of Albemarle can begin a similar program for its sidewalks and (future) greenways. This program could also be used as a means for the community to alert the city when there is a maintenance issue with a sidewalk, or as a means for a sidewalk to get special attention, funding, and improvements because of the dedication of its community sponsor. In the end, if the number of pedestrians in the City increases, the awareness and sense of pride and ownership should eventually create a cleaner streetscape.



Adopt a road – or even adopt a walkway programs can be made possible by public involvement



6.7. MAPPING AND SIGNING PROJECTS

Neighborhood and Comprehensive Route Systems

An ideal city transportation system might have neighborhood roads that take residents from their homes to densely developed satellite shopping, employment, and interior schools. Albemarle’s roads get less grid-like and more complicated to navigate the further out you get from downtown. Newer residential roads commonly end in cul-de-sacs and some housing developments have only a few exits out of the development. Commercial strip development away from residential areas is far more common than nearby dense commercial development. A national trend is to have new schools built on cheaper land on main highways away from neighborhoods. Realistically, changing the future development patterns is a far more effective planning strategy than most infrastructure additions, but sometimes simple and affordable solutions need to be implemented to enhance existing conditions. Pedestrian mapping or signing projects are one such tool.



Signage programs on shared-use paths and neighborhood routes can reassure pedestrians about their whereabouts.



Several pedestrian routes have been identified in this plan, and missing gaps in the connections should be built immediately to ensure that the proposed routes are functional. Once a route is physically connected with pedestrian walkways, it should be named, mapped, and marked. Maps should be printed and distributed, with occasional updates added. The pedestrian structures, waste cans, or sidewalks themselves should have the route name posted on it without the need for additional signage. These marked routes would eventually serve to make the walker less unsure of connection problems. Once a policy-driven street connection system is developed, there will be no need for additional mapped local routes.



Way-finding signs help pedestrians find their way easily