

## 8 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

### 8.1 Existing Facilities

The facilities available to walkers and bikers are diverse in the rural ACOG area. Walking and biking are, by their nature, localized modes of transportation. So, they tend to be focused around nodes of activity. These nodes are typically existing communities and other places with a relatively dense built environment. The parts of these towns that were constructed before the 1940s, before the widespread use of the automobile, tend to be more pedestrian friendly. However, many business centers and places of employment are no longer located in the historic cores. They tend to locate near major highways or in urban areas. As a result, the demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities is low.

Historically, roads were designed for pedestrian and equine travel. It is only within the last century that the automobile has replaced the pedestrian as the primary mode of travel. Facilities accommodating pedestrians and bicycles tend to be separate from automobile traffic. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes are the most common modes for each mode, respectively and are becoming more prolific through the nation. Because of the historical connection with pedestrians, and the universal accessibility to walking, it can be assumed that all roads will be used for pedestrian traffic at some point.

Fatality rates for bicycle/ pedestrian traffic are higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Speed is a contributing factor to this problem. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a pedestrian hit by a car traveling 20 miles per hour has a 95 percent chance of surviving. At 40 miles per hour the chance of survival drops to 15 percent.

Currently, the ACOG does not fund any bicycle/ pedestrian facilities in rural areas. These are funded on the state or county level.

#### 8.1.1 Pedestrian Facilities

The many small towns in the region each have their own pedestrian friendly zones that tend to be focused on the historic core of the each community. These zones typically connect downtown areas to adjacent, historic neighborhoods. In many cases the infrastructure may exist but maintenance of these facilities has largely been ignored or deferred in favor of higher priority projects in recent times. A key issue to consider for pedestrians is safety. This typically comes in the form of crosswalks. Pedestrians tend to not like to cross large, busy highways. They prefer the more compact environment that the urban cores offer. There are some communities that have significant pedestrian facilities and other that have recently taken steps to enhance the quality of their pedestrian facilities:

- **Central** recently completed a sidewalk enhancement on Main Street. The project created additional parking and worked to enhance the appearance of the historic core of the town fronting a railroad. The second phase will complete the Main Street renovation project. It will work to improve the sidewalks in front of the businesses and remove the power lines overhead.
- **Seneca** recently renovated and enhanced its square downtown. The process converted the square from a largely underused parking lot to an attractive and landscaped public square. It

acts as an anchor for downtown redevelopment, complete with a multi-modal tie in with the CAT system routes. Downtown Seneca has an extensive sidewalk network for a city its size that is well integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Gaffney** has one of the larger downtown areas in the rural COG region. Centered on Limestone Street, downtown Gaffney is well connected to its surrounding neighborhoods. It has an extensive sidewalk network and neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes that offer an environment suitable for walking or biking.

Rural areas can present conditions that are threatening to pedestrian travel. In the remainder of the region, the pedestrian and bicycle traffic takes place on rural roads without any specific accommodations made for this type of traffic. Most rural roads are narrow and lack a paved shoulder, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Combined with low visibility and high speeds, these roads can be very dangerous for non-motorized traffic. The volume of this type of traffic is low.

### 8.1.2 Bicycle Facilities

Bicycling is becoming a more popular mode of transportation. Like pedestrians, bicycles have similar range restrictions. Bicycles have a more extended range than pedestrians, but prefer a similar dedication of facilities. Ultimately most non-recreational travel will have origins and destinations within the same community. Dedicated bike lanes paralleling traffic are the most frequent way of accommodating bikers, but share-the-lane demarcations are also common. Bike paths are another facility. They are completely separate from roadways and offer alternate connections to various destinations. Bike paths tend to be for recreational purposes and always include pedestrians. Bikers are more likely to occupy the same traffic lanes as automobiles, and are required by law to follow the same rules as larger motorized forms of transportation.

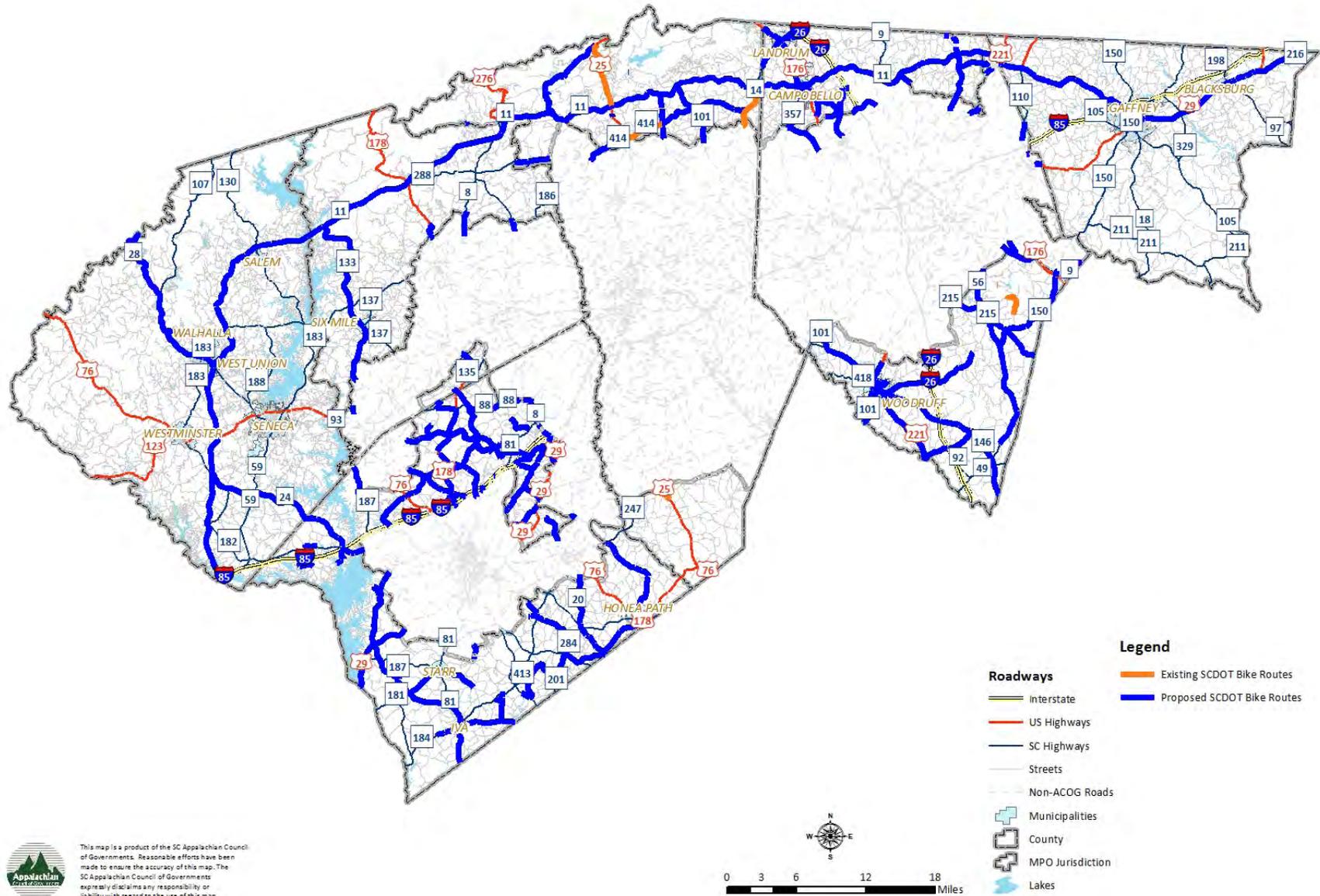
One important aspect of biking is the need for racks. Bicycles need bike-racks just like cars need parking lots. Bike racks can become in many forms, and the objects used for such can even be forms of public art. Transit can also enhance bikers' options by adding bike racks.

**Map 25** depicts the existing and proposed ACOG regional bike network from SCDOT. The only community in the rural COG study area that offers bicycle facilities are those areas near Clemson. Most roads extending from the University have dedicated and well maintained bike lanes that extend as far as Central and Pendleton. Racks are included on each of the Clemson Area Transit buses.

It should be noted that the Greenville, Spartanburg, and Anderson MPOs have made a concerted effort to create more bike lanes and bike racks in their respective communities in recent years.

Map 25. Existing and Proposed SCDOT Regional Bicycle Routes

Appalachian Council of Governments  
Existing and Proposed SCDOT Bicycle Routes



This map is a product of the SC Appalachian Council of Governments. Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map. The SC Appalachian Council of Governments expressly disclaims any responsibility or liability with regard to the use of this map.

## 8.2 Facilities for Recreation

There are many parks and recreational trails in the ACOG region. These facilities are typically designed for leisure activities such as mountain biking or hiking. Users will usually drive to these facilities first, so their presence should be viewed within the context of destinations for vehicles, rather than pedestrian and bicycle traffic alone.

The region has many recreational facilities. Some of the larger facilities include state parks, national forests, and locally designated parks trails:

### 8.2.1 Trails

#### 8.2.1.1 Palmetto Trail

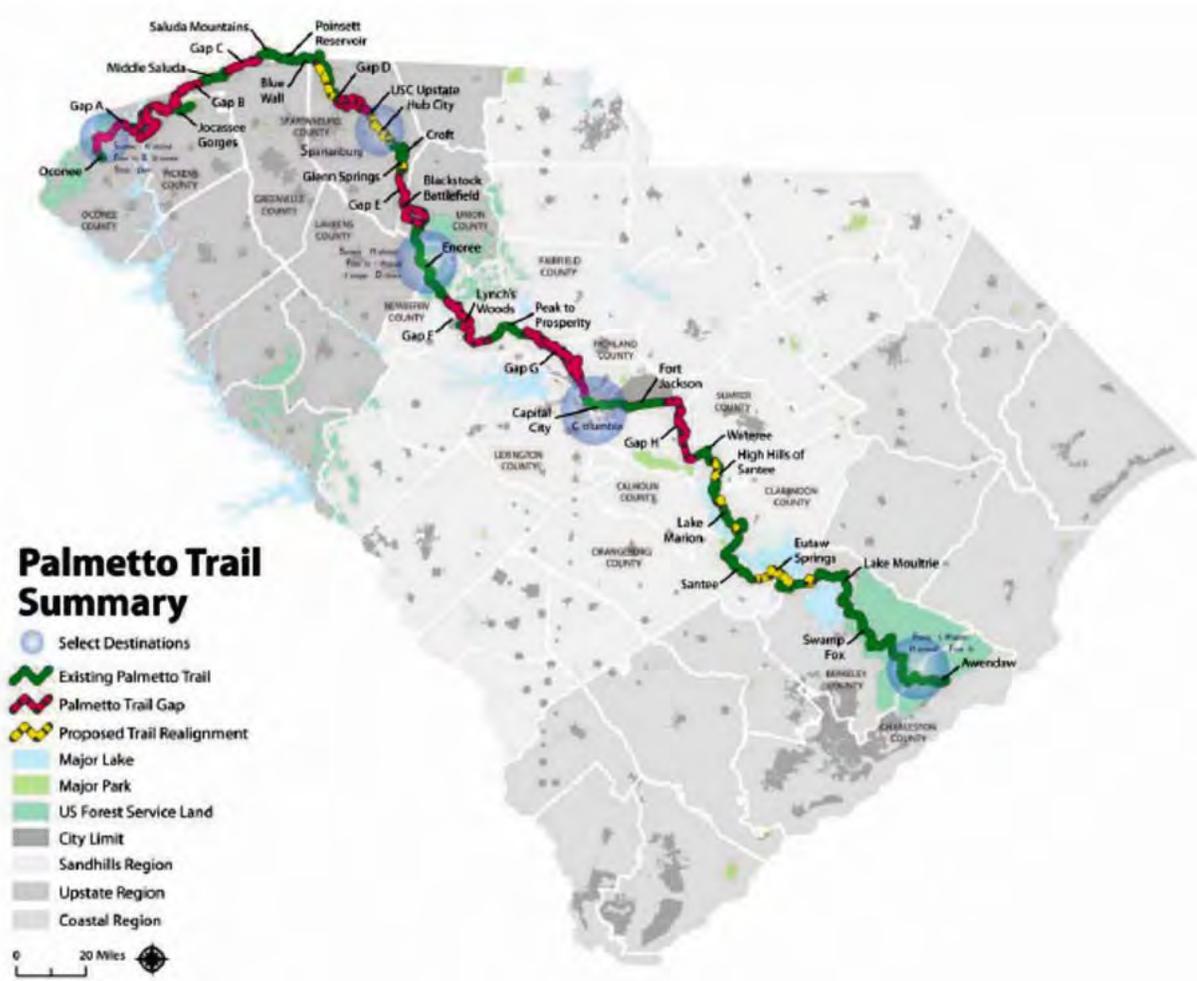
Palmetto Trail was originally conceived in 1994 and will have over 425 miles of bicycling and walking paths through South Carolina once completed. It will go from the mountains to the sea, passing through large cities and small towns, and along lakes and rivers. South Carolina's Palmetto Trail is the state's largest bicycle and pedestrian project. This federally designated Millennium Legacy Trail is a project of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation. It will be one of only 13 cross-state trails in the United States.

Today, the Palmetto Trail is two-thirds complete with nearly 315 miles open to the public. The trail is being built as a series of smaller project sections called "passages." Each of the 15 passages currently open is accessible for single-day or multi-day trips. Together or separate, the passages demonstrate the history, culture and geography of the Palmetto State.

#### Open Sections in the Upstate

- Oconee Connector (Oconee County)
- Jocassee Gorges Passage (Pickens County)
- Blue Wall Passage (Greenville County)
- USC Upstate Passage (Spartanburg County)
- Hub City Connector (Spartanburg County)
- Glenn Springs Passage (Spartanburg County)

Figure 7. Palmetto Trail Map



Source: <http://palmettoconservation.org>

### 8.2.1.2 Rails to Trails

The idea was to convert abandoned or unused rail corridors into public trails. The concept embraces many ideas that community leaders want to promote including: recycling, land conservation, wildlife habitat preservation and non-automobile transportation, historical preservation, physical fitness, and recreation access for wheelchair users. In the rural ACOG area there are two rail-trails: the Mary Black Rail-Trail in Spartanburg and the Blue Ridge Railroad Historical Trail in Oconee.

*The Mary Black Rail Trail* in Spartanburg is the first to be completed in the Upstate. A defunct rail line extending south from downtown Spartanburg was converted to an urban walking/waking trail. It is approximately two miles long and located within the City of Spartanburg. This trail co-exists as part of the Palmetto Trail system.

*The Blue Ridge Railroad Historic Trail* in Oconee County is a 2.5 mile trail that follows the bed of railroad that was never completed—the America Civil War got in the way of South Carolina Statesman John C.

Calhoun's rail dream. They did get as far as starting to build three tunnels into the mountain, which are some of the main features of the trail.

## 8.2.2 Parks

There are a number of parks available to residents of the Upstate. These parks offer numerous recreational hiking and biking opportunities. The Upstate is fortunate to have a variety of parks to choose from, including two Revolutionary War battlefields.

### 8.2.2.1 State Parks

- *Caesar's Head State Park* has long been a must-see in the South Carolina Upstate. A granitic gneiss outcropping atop the dramatic Blue Ridge Escarpment, it offers breathtaking views year-round.
- *Devils Fork State Park* consists of land around the 7,500-acre Lake Jocassee, which remains mostly undeveloped and the only public access point to the lake is through Devils Fork. Four mountain streams and several waterfalls feed into the lake, making it cooler than others and a great South Carolina trout fishing spot. Plus, the unusually clear water of Lake Jocassee is a haven for scuba divers and swimmers.
- *Jones Gap State Park* contains trails and 11,000 acres of pristine mountain woodlands that join with Caesars Head in what is known as the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area.
- *Kings Mountain State Park* has miles of forested trails perfect for hiking, two fishing lakes, and sits adjacent to Kings Mountain National Military Park, one of many national park Revolutionary War sites.
- *Oconee State Park* contains several wooded nature trails that wind through the foothills region and serve as the southern trailhead for the Foothills Trail, South Carolina's 80-mile wilderness hike on the Blue Ridge Escarpment.
- *Oconee Station State Historic Site* was originally a military compound and later a trading post. The site offers both recreational opportunities and a unique look at 18th and 19th century South Carolina. Oconee Station, a stone blockhouse used as an outpost by the S.C. State Militia from about 1792 to 1799, and the William Richards House, are the only two structures that remain today.
- *Table Rock State Park* is a 3,000 acre park with facilities at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In addition to its hiking trails and fishing, Table Rock also has its place in history. Many of the Table Rock State Park cabins and other structures built by the CCC remain standing and are on the National Register of Historic Places.

### 8.2.2.2 National Parks

- *Kings Mountain National Military Park* was called by Thomas Jefferson "The turn of the tide of success." The battle of Kings Mountain, fought October 7th, 1780, was an important American victory during the Revolutionary War. The battle was the first major patriot victory to occur after

the British invasion of Charleston, SC in May 1780. The park preserves the site of this important battle.

- *Cowpens National Battlefield* was a pasturing area at the time of the battle. This Revolutionary War site commemorates the place where Daniel Morgan and his army turned the flanks of Banastre Tarleton's British army. This classic military tactic, known as a double envelopment, was one of only a few in history.

### **8.2.3 Identified Needs**

Both bicycles and pedestrians are localized modes of transportation. Because of their limited range it is important to recognize that travel using each of these modes will tend to be restricted to short distances typically with origins and destinations in the same community for non-recreational travel. It will be important to enhance existing facilities in communities that are already recognized as urban centers while expanding from those areas at the same time. Recreational travel must also be accommodated. Safety is an important concern for bikers and hikers. The shoulders of roads should be assessed and widened appropriately to create a safer environment.