HUNTSVILLE ALTERNATIVE MODES REVIEW 2021
Table of Contents

Alternative Modes 101 ...................................... 1
Greenway Projects........................................... 5
Sidewalk Projects........................................... 14
Bicycle Projects............................................. 20
Complete Streets.......................................... 31
Special Initiatives......................................... 34
Alternative Modes Planning............................... 39

About

The Huntsville Alternative Modes Review is an annual summary of the city’s alternative transportation infrastructure projects built for safety, quality-of-life, and recreation. This review is a compilation of public data covering project status, grant funding, preliminary engineering, right of way acquisition, construction costs, and timelines of infrastructure projects in the City of Huntsville for transportation and recreation by alternative modes.

Questions or comments about the Review?
Email the editor at ken.newberry@huntsvilleal.gov

Cover Photos

Clockwise, from top left: Meridian Street Bike Lanes, North Huntsville Transit Center, Elgie’s Walk Greenway, Gateway Greenway

Disclaimer

The editor and contributing staff members of the Long-Range Planning, Planning Services, Engineering, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) divisions have worked hard to ensure the accuracy of the data within this document. However, no guarantee of accuracy can be made with regard to such data. The City of Huntsville and any employee, individual, organization, or agency which has contributed toward the substance or format of this document shall not be held liable for any damage or loss resulting from the use of or reliance on any information contained within this document.
What is an Alternative Mode?

There are many modes of transportation. For transportation planners, an “Alternative Mode” is a mode of transportation other than a motor vehicle. This includes walking, cycling, running, jogging, and using mobility aids such as wheelchairs and walkers. Some motorized alternative modes, such as scooters, electric bicycles, and motorized mobility aids also require alternative mode infrastructure.

The City of Huntsville invests in alternative modes of transportation primarily for traffic safety, quality of life, and recreation. To improve the safety of our streets for all users, the City of Huntsville builds sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks, and bike lanes. These infrastructure improvements reduce casualties and fatalities for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities.

Alternative modes are often a form of recreation. Investment in greenways, trails, and cycle tracks is a quality-of-life improvement for Huntsville.

This annual report details the City's efforts, challenges, and progress toward creating an ideal alternative modes network. This report focuses on sidewalks, bicycle projects, greenways, and complete streets. Other types of alternative modes projects such as crosswalks and ADA compliance ramps will also be discussed throughout.
Alternative Modes 101

Life of an Alternative Mode Request

Requests for greenways, sidewalks, complete streets or bike lanes come from a variety of sources. “SeeClickFix” is the city’s online citizen request portal at seeclickfix.com/Huntsville. Requests are also sent directly to elected officials and city department staff. Nearly all alternative modes requests, received by all departments, are sent to the Planning Department. City Planners add these requests to ongoing projects, or prioritize the requests for future funding based on safety, equity, connectivity, and feasibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Processes My Request?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once a request is prioritized by the Planning Department, several departments become involved. The type of alternative mode request determines which departments are involved in implementation.

**Engineering** is involved in every type of alternative mode project because funding, design, bidding, oversight, and inspection of these projects is done by Engineering.

**Legal** is involved in ADA Compliance considerations for alternative modes projects.

**Public Works** is responsible for maintenance of sidewalks and roadways, as well as installation of ADA accessible ramps and in-house alternative modes construction.

**Traffic Engineering** is responsible for crosswalks, signage, and signalization of alternative modes projects, and design work for complete streets improvements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Implements My Request?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternative Modes 101

The Current Process

Every alternative mode request requires a high degree of cross-departmental coordination and time. An alternative modes request may receive a response from any or all of the above departments. The resulting construction will likely involve all departments.

Funding is also complicated. Greenways, sidewalks, and large complete streets projects, such as Holmes Ave, have specific line-items in the city budget. Funding for greenways and sidewalks also includes resources external to the city, such as grants and construction by private developers. Other alternative modes do not have as many funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Sources by Alt Mode Project Type</th>
<th>Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): multiple projects and departments</th>
<th>Planning: various grant applications for projects</th>
<th>Engineering: Federal Projects, Greenways and Sidewalks budgets</th>
<th>Public Works: Maintenance and ADA Compliance budgets</th>
<th>External to the City: partner organizations or developers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenways</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Streets</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Greenways** have the most funding sources. Greenways also have the most established implementation process, through the city's partnership with The Land Trust of North Alabama. There are delineated roles and responsibilities and a detailed Greenway Master Plan with achievable goals set on a timeline. As such, the greenway section of this report lists the most projects in progress or completed.

**Sidewalks** have several funding sources. However, as detailed in the Sidewalks section of this report, the supply of funds is not sufficient to meet demand for sidewalks. Most sidewalks in the city are funded by private developers in new residential subdivisions or commercial projects. The building of sidewalks also necessitates building associated crosswalks and ADA compliant accommodations. Sometimes curb and gutter issues arise. Construction costs can vary greatly, depending on the existing context of the proposed sidewalk.

**Bike projects** do not have a dedicated funding source. Bike projects are often attached to federally-funded projects in the Engineering department as part of mandated bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for federally funded roads. There are many logistical issues in constructing bicycle infrastructure detailed in the Bicycle
Alternative Modes 101

section of this report. Fortunately, the city has a strong partnership with the bicycle community in Huntsville. Avid cyclists are engaged in discussing citywide bicycle projects and have been helpful in identifying needs.

**Complete Streets** are the newest alternative modes projects, with the Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2018. While priority complete streets corridors have budget line-items, other prioritized complete streets projects do not have dedicated funds and the tab for their construction is often split among several departments. The city is still in the process of establishing roles and responsibilities for complete streets implementation.

**Special Initiatives** are unique projects or opportunities presented to the city. These projects are usually initiated by the Planning Department through grants or by external partners such as business associations, non-profits, or neighborhood associations. This section discusses ongoing transit improvements and initiatives as well as the progress being made on developing the Singing River Trail.
A Tale of Two Greenways

Every greenway is different and the process involved to build each greenway is unique. The time required to build a greenway depends on: whether design and engineering work is required; whether right of way has been donated or must be purchased; and the origin of funds used for construction.

The city’s partnership with the Land Trust of North Alabama has streamlined the process, with clear roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in the implementation of the Greenway Master Plan.

However, many factors are outside the control of the city or the Land Trust. Two recent greenway projects are a good example of the variables inherent in greenway planning, design, and construction.

**Elgie’s Walk (Grissom) Greenway Phase I:** The steps involved in this South Huntsville greenway’s construction process in 2019 and 2020 were:

**Defining the Greenway layout:**
City administration, Hays Farm, and Grissom High School representatives worked together to determine the best route for this greenway. There were few surveying, engineering, or design obstacles on this flat piece of property donated to the city.

**Funding and Construction:** The funding for this greenway was obligated internally from existing budgets of the city departments involved in its construction.

This greenway was built entirely in-house, making a fast, six-month timeline easy to achieve.
**Spring Branch Greenway** The steps involved, so far, over the last 3 years:

**Grant Application** - A federal grant application and supporting documentation took 2 months to compile, and 2 months for the grantor to review and notify winners of funding availability.

**Engineering and Design**: This greenway’s engineering and design phase encountered few obstacles.

**Right of Way Acquisition** - Several land owners were involved in this project. While land of less than one acre was required to be donated or purchased, there were disputes between land owners which extended the timeline.

**Certification Requirements** - Federal or state funding requires 2 to 10 months of paperwork, review, and approval. Mandatory certifications such as Type 1 Environmental Categorical Exclusion and Historical Significance involve several state and federal agencies. These certifications are important for preserving natural habitats and historic features. However, they do require additional time. Requests or requirements to resubmit materials or make unexpected changes further extends the timeframe.

When federal or state grants are involved, the city pays only twenty percent of the cost of the greenway. Most of the city's greenways have been funded in this manner. Therefore, going through all these additional steps is worthwhile for the opportunity to grow our greenway network.
It’s All in the Details

Unless conditions are perfect to build a greenway entirely in-house, the timelines of most greenways built by the city fall closer to that of Spring Branch Greenway: 18 months to 2 years.

The following pages detail the costs and timelines of preliminary engineering, right of way, utility relocation, and construction for the greenway network projects ongoing or completed in 2020. As described in “A Tale of Two Greenways,” each of these projects is unique in cost, complexity, and timeline.

Greenways that have been recently constructed, are currently under construction, or are upcoming in 2021-22, are detailed in the following section.

Definitions for the Following Pages:

**PE**- Preliminary Engineering- the work of design, surveying, and producing engineering documents for an alternative modes project, often includes environmental and historical surveys.

**RW**- Right of Way- the land on which an alternative modes project is built must be acquired unless owned by the city. Acquisitions occur through purchases or donations.

**CN**- Construction- the building of an alternative modes project.

**Land Trust of North Alabama Trails**- Part of the Greenway Master Plan network because trails provide connectivity between greenways in areas where building a paved, flat surface is not feasible.
**Spacewalk Land Trust Trail**

**2.06 Miles**

This trail was planned and designed by the Land Trust with the largest expense being RW and CN.

PE: Was not necessary for the trail

RW: Purchased by Land Trust and City of Huntsville

CN: Phase I (2.06 miles south of Green Mtn Rd, Land Trust 2021-22)

---

**Tennessee River Phase II**

**1.91 mile**

The continuation of this greenway was planned, designed, and will be constructed entirely in-house. Right of Way acquisition is ongoing.

RW: 1 acre of land needs to be purchased, price TBD

CN: City labor, in-house, 2021

---

**Elgie’s Walk Greenway**

**(Grissom to Ditto Phase I)**

**1 mile**

The owners donated the land to the city. Design was contracted to Smith Engineering.

PE: $31,158, 2015-2017

RW: no land needed to be purchased

CN: $527,224 completed 2020
Chapman Mountain Trail

1.14 miles

The Land Trust of North Alabama is developing this new trail in north east Huntsville.


RW: $283,800 split between City of Huntsville and Land Trust.

CN: In kind donation of labor from the Land Trust in 2020-21.

Spring Branch Greenway

0.62 Mile

FHWA Transportation Alternatives grant money for construction, less than one acre of ROW was donated to the city, and PE paid for by the city to 4Site.

PE: $33,450, 2018 to 2019

CN: $547,786 2020 to 2021
Tennessee River Greenway 2.52 miles

This greenway had several funding sources and a long PE phase due to environmental and historical certifications.

PE: In-kind by Land Trust of North Alabama

RW: Donated by TN Valley Authority (TVA) or Ditto Landing Marina.

CN: $115,000 in 2020 to 2021

Meek Greenway 1.69 miles

PE: Project is designed (CDG Engineering) and in acquisition stage.

CN: Scheduled for construction in FY 22; Estimated cost $1.75 million
Redstone Gateway
1.17 miles

PE: Project is designed (ALTA Engineering) and in acquisition stage.

CN: Scheduled for construction FY 21; Estimated cost is $1.5 million.

Edinburgh Connector
.46 miles

PE: Design to be done in connection with roadway

CN: In late 2021; estimated cost is $500,000
Elgie's Walk 2
5 miles
PE: $56,000
CN: In late 2021

Zierdt Greenway
3.10 miles
PE: $161,000
RW: $1,000,000
CN: Anticipate completion in September 2021; estimated cost is $2.3 million
Sidewalks

The Many Faces of Sidewalks

There are six city departments involved in sidewalk construction in Huntsville. Most sidewalks built by the City are bid and contracted to private construction firms for installation.

Which departments are involved in a sidewalk project depends on several factors:

1. Is the project in an existing neighborhood or new development?
2. Is the project maintenance/repair or new construction?
3. Does the project require ADA compliant accessible ramps?
4. Does the project involve new crosswalks, signage and signalization?

### City Departments and Private Sector Involved in Different Aspects of Sidewalk Installation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Communities that want new sidewalks</th>
<th>Repair sidewalk or complete small missing links</th>
<th>New crosswalks, signage and signalization</th>
<th>ADA Compliance: additions of accessible ramps</th>
<th>New Development: Subdivisions and Large Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Developer or Contractor</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sidewalks**

Who Builds Sidewalks?

Sidewalk construction falls into two categories in the City of Huntsville: public and private. Public sidewalk construction is built by the city. Private sidewalk construction is built by developers, most often due to city requirements for sidewalks in new subdivisions and along new commercial properties.

Sidewalks Built by City of Huntsville

The city has a $600,000 annual budget for sidewalks which includes both new construction and maintenance of existing. New sidewalk projects vary in cost due to complexities such as grade of the roadway, drainage along properties adjacent to sidewalks, and utility relocation. Sidewalks that were built or scheduled in 2020 and estimated cost per linear foot:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sidewalk Location</th>
<th>From/ To</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Estimated Length</th>
<th>Estimated cost per linear foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Lowe to midblock Bluefield Dr.</td>
<td>$15,970.15</td>
<td>994 ft</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marschuetz Drive</td>
<td>Gallatin to Whitesburg Dr</td>
<td>$68,518.18</td>
<td>1073 ft</td>
<td>$63.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulaski Pike</td>
<td>Sparkman Dr</td>
<td>$73,869.03</td>
<td>828 ft</td>
<td>$89.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Drive</td>
<td>Holmes Avenue to Stanley Dr</td>
<td>$63,428.00</td>
<td>865 ft</td>
<td>$73.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$221,785.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.71 mi</strong></td>
<td><strong>$59.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sidewalks

2020 Sidewalks built by Private Developers

In 2020, there were 1336 single family subdivision lots and 71 commercial lots approved by the Planning Commission. In addition, 2,340 multi-family housing units were approved. Connecting these new lots and living units with the city’s roadway network resulted in over 40 miles of street added to the city.

City regulations require sidewalks along streets in all new developments, unless there are circumstances allowing for a variance. In 2020 private developers built 80 miles of sidewalk in the City of Huntsville, significantly more than was built by the city. Subdivision details can be found in the annual Huntsville Development Review on the city’s website.
Note: The subdivisions shown were approved for Final Subdivision status by the Planning Commission from Jan. 2020 - Dec. 2020.
Which Sidewalks to Build First?

The city receives about five sidewalk requests per month from residents contacting their Councilmembers, city departments, using SeeClickFix, or calling the Mayor's office.

There are two sidewalk lists from which annual city sidewalk projects are selected: a list of sidewalk requests, and a list of sidewalk gaps within 1/4 mile of an elementary or middle school.

Projects are ranked by city staff and constructed as funding is available.

Factors to Consider

Ranking sidewalk requests involves judgement calls, often by looking at issues that can’t be easily measured with numbers. Staff engineers, lawyers, planners, and public works professionals conduct project-by-project review to determine priorities.

A determination of high priority in any of the below categories may initiate a project faster than another.

Safety & Equity

**ADA Compliance** – Does this project impact ADA compliance? Was the project initiated or requested by a person or people with disabilities? What is the ADA compliance status of the project area? How does the project fit into the current ADA compliance projects schedule?

**Safety** – To what extent does the project increase safety for pedestrians at the site? Safety considerations may include: ADT, Crash Data, HPD monitoring of site, federal design guidelines, and/or resident reports of dangerous conditions, but will not be limited to these considerations.
**Sidewalks**

**Vulnerable Demographics** – Are populations within a 1-mile radius of the project dependent upon walking/biking/transit as primary modes of transportation? Percent of financially vulnerable populations within 1/2 mile of project site: households living in poverty and zero-vehicle households. Percent of culturally vulnerable populations within 1/2 mile of project site: elderly, people with disabilities, or racial minorities.
Bicycles

Bike Sharing Re-Launched

In 2020, communities across the US were impacted by COVID and as a result, Zagster was forced to close their doors, abruptly ending the bikeshare programs they maintained in those communities, including Huntsville. For small to medium-sized communities, bringing bikeshare to fruition is no easy feat, as it often requires public and private partnerships and true collaboration between cities, local stakeholders, and sponsors. Getting programs back up and running would potentially prove to be a long and arduous process.

The Huntsville program, which had been operating since 2017, was shut down for nearly 6 months. In partnership with Blue-Cross Blue Shield and with the help of Tandem Mobility and Movatic, the Huntsville Bikeshare program reopened in September 2020 and has seen a welcomed revival, launching 30 bikes across 11 stations in the downtown area.
Bicycles

Stations

Trip Start/End Point By Station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End Station Name</th>
<th>Big Spring East</th>
<th>Big Spring West</th>
<th>Butler Green</th>
<th>Five Points</th>
<th>Jefferson Squares</th>
<th>Lumberyard</th>
<th>Roundhouse</th>
<th>Twickenham Square</th>
<th>Visitor's Center</th>
<th>Warehouse, Washing Square</th>
<th>Westside Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Null</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Spring East</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Spring West</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler Green</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Points</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumberyard</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundhouse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twickenham Square</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor's Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside Square</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trip Start Point By Station

Trip End Point By Station

Rides Over Time

Ride Duration

Duration in Minutes...
- 1 - 15 Min
- 16 - 30 Min
- 31 - 60 Min
- 61 - 90 Min
- 91 - 120 Min
- > 120 Min

Ride Day

- Sunday: 117
- Monday: 108
- Tuesday: 122
- Wednesday: 123
- Thursday: 93
- Friday: 142
- Saturday: 238

Ride Time of Day

Source: Tandem Mobility
Bicycles

2020 See & Be Seen Form

Bikes have become a popular method of transportation on Huntsville streets. As more bicycles enter the roadways, the City recognizes there is still more work to be done to make streets comfortable for riders of all ages and abilities.

To help achieve this goal, Huntsville’s Bicycle Advisory and Safety Committee (BASC) worked with the City to implement an online reporting tool, where cyclists could share road hazards or incidents with motorists where they felt unsafe. The reporting tool, which launched in January 2020 on BikeHuntsville.com, can also be used by pedestrians and motorists to report similar “near miss” incidents.
Bicycles

The City uses data from these submissions to inform municipal decision-making on road improvements and to determine areas that need additional traffic enforcement.

The City anticipates using the data for grant applications, infrastructure planning and policy decisions. Officials will also use the data to identify areas to add police patrols for traffic and speeding and to gather information about “repeat offender” drivers who may continually endanger cyclists.

The See and Be Seen reporting form will continue to be reviewed to help ensure that it provides an effective resource for the City and BASC.

The form is not a criminal report and should not be used by cyclists for this purpose. Cyclists should report criminal behavior to the Huntsville Police Department directly.
2020 MPO Area Bike Plan

The updated MPO Bike Plan envisions an expanded and ADA-accessible network of transit, sidewalks, greenways, trails, and on-street bicycle connections linking people to jobs, schools, destinations, adjacent communities, and one another. The network serves residents, commuters, students, and visitors alike. Walking, biking and transit are an integral part of City projects, policies, and programs and are perceived as routine, efficient, safe, and comfortable options for both transportation and recreation. People of all ages and abilities enjoy walking and biking and benefit from enhanced quality of life, public health, and economic opportunity.

The plan was completed in February 2021 and marked the first time that it included the entire MPO area. The plan sets forth ways to implement, over a 20-year time period, new biking and pedestrian concepts to improve alternative modes of transportation for the Huntsville metro area. Listed below are the Goals and Objectives of the Plan:

- **Goal 1: Choice - Provide a range of transportation options to advance the Huntsville MPO’s multimodal linkages and transportation culture.**
  - Objective 1-1: Expand the range of ways to move throughout the metro area.
  - Objective 1-2: Implement a phased bike share system that complements and expands the transit and pedestrian networks.
  - Objective 1-3: Connect bicycling and walking infrastructure improvements with transit stops for last mile linkages.
  - Objective 1-4: Increase the number of bike-on-bus trips by 50% by 2030, and 100% by 2045.

- **Goal 2: Accessibility - Institutionalize universal design principals to meet the needs of all modes and all users, including children, families, the aging, and those with disabilities.**
  - Objective 2-1: Update design guidelines to meet current best practices of ADA-accessibility, transit access, and safe and innovative pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
  - Objective 2-2: Upgrade streets of all typologies, including transit corridors,
Bicycles

based on improved accessibility guidelines to meet the needs of all users.

➢ Objective 2-3: Expand development standards to require bicycle parking at retail, commercial, civic, and employment uses and multi-family housing.

➢ Objective 2-4: Establish short-term and long-term bicycle parking at all major transit stops.

➢ Objective 2-5: Establish form-based codes or similar development standards to ensure setbacks, parking lots, and other street-level design elements prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access.

➢ Goal 3: Connectivity and Convenience – Biking, walking, and using transit for transportation will be easy, efficient, and routine activities.

➢ Objective 3-1: Connect residents and visitors with on-and off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities to destinations and activity centers throughout the city.

➢ Objective 3-2: Integrate transportation and land use policies to encourage sustainable growth that encourages walking, bicycling and transit.

➢ Objective 3-3: Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle routes between the Greenways, UAH, A&M campus, and each of the major commercial areas into downtown.

➢ Objective 3-4: Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle routes from neighborhoods to transit stops, and from neighborhood to neighborhood.

➢ Goal 4: Safety and Comfort - Improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety while designing attractive, welcoming, and comfortable streets, trails, and greenways for all users.

➢ Objective 4-1: Reduce the number of bicyclist injuries and fatalities by 20% by 2025 and by 40% by 2030.

➢ Objective 4-2: Reduce the number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities by 20% by 2025, and by 40% by 2030.
Objective 4-3: Continue the process of incorporating low-stress facilities such as wider sidewalks and innovative bike treatments.

Objective 4-4: Incorporate intersection safety and accessibility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists within corridor improvement projects.

Objective 4-5: Develop off-street facilities to meet national best practices in design, providing a safe and inviting environment for all ages and ability levels.

Goal 5: Awareness - Education, encouragement, and enforcement related to biking and walking will ensure all residents and visitors feel confident biking and walking throughout Huntsville metro area.

Objective 5-1: Generate awareness among motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians of their rights related to safe and courteous use of roadways by using Social media as well other forms of communication for the MPO.

Objective 5-2: Provide educational opportunities and encouragement programs specifically targeted to the “interested but concerned” group of existing and potential bicyclists, including families and children.

Objective 5-3: Ensure that education and encouragement programs for transit, walking, and biking reach all socioeconomic groups, geographic locations, genders, races, and walks of life.

Objective 5-4: Utilize targeted enforcement to discourage unsafe behaviors of motorists, Licensed Commercial Drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

Objective 5-5: Develop and promote an easy-to-read User Map & Guide, supported by wayfinding signage, for the combined transit, bicycle, and pedestrian network.

Goal 6: Usage – The transit-, walking-, and biking-environment will inspire movement in everyday life.

Objective 6-1: Improve walking mode share to meet national avg of 2.8
Bicycles

percent by 2030.

➢ Objective 6-2: Double transit mode share by 2030, establishing a level of usage comparable to the national average.
➢ Objective 6-3: Double bicycle mode share by 2030, establishing a level of usage comparable to peer Bicycle Friendly Community-designated cities.
➢ Objective 6-4: Establish and maintain an annual counts program, documenting trends in pedestrian and bicycle activity.
➢ Objective 6-5: Document an annual increase in physical activity levels among MPO residents, ultimately reducing rates of obesity and related chronic diseases.

➢ **Goal 7: Implementation** – Local leadership, coordination, and funding will allow the continued growth of the pedestrian and bicycle network as well as opportunities for bike sharing.

➢ Objective 7-1: Work across jurisdictions, departments, and organizations to achieve coordination on short-, medium-, and long-term transportation-related goals and plans.
➢ Objective 7-2: Establish dedicated funding amounts and fundraising goals for implementation of the Plan.
➢ Objective 7-3: Implement at least six recommendations of the Plan within six months of adoption with a goal of implementing at least one recommendation in each of the 5 E categories (Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation) within 1 year of adoption.
➢ Objective 7-4: Establish an annual work plan of programmatic, policy, and infrastructure recommendations ready for implementation, for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.
➢ Objective 7-5: Build 50 miles of on-street bike facilities by 2030.
➢ Objective 7-6: Identify non-profit and private sector partners to lead community-based education and encouragement programs.
➢ Objective 7-7: Designate a staff member and/or establish a new staff position dedicating at least 50% of time to implementation of the MPO Bikeway Plan.

➢ **Goal 8: Evaluation** – The City will measure progress towards advancing the vision and goals of the MPO Long Range Plan
➢ Objective 8-1: Develop and publish a bi-annual report summarizing progress
Bicycles

in implementing the transit, walking, and bicycling recommendations of the Plan.

➢ Objective 8-2: Coordinate annual pedestrian and bicycle counts with planned infrastructure investments to measure impacts.
➢ Objective 8-3: Conduct bi-annual analysis of pedestrian and bicycle collision data to measure progress towards safety goals and objectives.
➢ Objective 8-4: Maintain up-to-date GIS inventory of pedestrian, bicycling, and transit facilities including ADA improvements.
➢ Objective 8-5: Achieve Bronze-level BFC by 2025 and Gold-level BFC by 2030.

Performance Measures for the MPO Area Bike Plan

▪ Number of bicycles observed as counts
▪ Number of bike racks installed around area
▪ Number of page views on bicycle website: www.bikehuntsville.com
▪ Number of fans on Facebook
▪ Percentage of roads with bike lanes or shoulders
▪ Number of linear greenway miles
▪ Number of bicycle trips made in the City of Huntsville as a percentage of total trips by 2030
▪ Minimum of 80 percent good level of confidence and comfort for cyclists that ride in the City of Huntsville by 2030
Is Your Business a Bicycle Friendly Business?

Members of the local cyclist community can help your business become a certified Bicycle Friendly Business (BFB) through the national League of American Bicyclists. There are four BFBs in the state of Alabama, two of which are in Huntsville: Bicycle Cove bike shop and Straight to Ale Brands, Inc. brewery. Learn more at bikeleague.org/business

From the League of American Cyclists:

“The Bicycle Friendly Business Program” is based on our belief that bikes are good for businesses, employees, and the community. BFBs are recognized for their efforts through an award system based on four essential elements to being bicycle friendly: **Engineering, Education, Encouragement, and Evaluation & Planning.** All BFB applicants receive feedback to help them become more bike-friendly, and BFB awardees must renew every 4 years to maintain a current designation.

Deserving businesses are recognized at the Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum levels and all applicants receive valuable feedback and assistance in becoming more welcoming to bicycling.

Awarded businesses are recognized in a national press release, through the League’s social media and on our [interactive awards map](#).

**BENEFITS OF BEING A BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESS** Becoming a BFB benefits your bottom line while also enhancing quality of life in your community. What can you gain by becoming bicycle friendly?

- Recruitment: attract and retain the best and brightest
- Foster a sense of community and camaraderie in workplace
- Enhance health and wellness benefits, and reduce costs on healthcare
- Catalyze a more alert, active, productive workforce
- Showcase commitment to sustainability & reducing environmental footprint
- Support long-term health benefits, both physical and mental.”
Bicycles

Cyclist Community in Huntsville

Huntsville’s cyclists are engaged in the community, advocates for safety, and promoters of increased cycle ridership citywide. To get involved in cycling in Huntsville, there are many groups to join:

**Spring City Cycle Club (SCCC)**- Huntsville’s own 120+ year old cycle club was founded in 1892 for the promotion and development of cycling for sport, fitness, recreation, transportation, and safety education. SCCC hosts regular rides for all levels and education and training events. [www.springcity.org](http://www.springcity.org) to join.

**Bicycle Advisory and Safety Committee (BASC)**- This committee was formed in 1992 to assist the City of Huntsville in planning and developing non-motorized transportation facilities and programs. Members represent local bicycle organizations, bike shops, and citizens at large. The committee meets with city staff from Traffic Engineering, Planning, and other departments once a month. Contact [james.moore@huntsvilleal.gov](mailto:james.moore@huntsvilleal.gov) about attending.

**Bikes and Brews**- A popular addition to the Huntsville bicycle community is the monthly Bikes and Brews event. A group of 15 to 50 cyclists take unique brewery and eatery bike tours of Huntsville. Learn more at [facebook.com/groups/bikesbrewshsv/](http://facebook.com/groups/bikesbrewshsv/)

There are many more opportunities to be involved in Huntsville cycling besides the above. Any of the local bike shops: Bicycle Cove, Bicycles Etc., Blevins Bicycle Co., or Trailhead Inc. can discuss local resources, rides, and events.
Complete Streets

What is a Complete Street?
Complete streets are streets for everyone. Complete street improvements make roadways safer for all users. Transit riders, daily commuters, freight delivery, and alternative mode users of all ages and abilities are considered when designing complete streets.
Complete streets are about more than sidewalks and bike lanes. Access management to businesses, transit accessibility, nearby land use, and safe intersections are all incorporated into city complete streets projects.

City of Huntsville’s Complete Streets Policy

The city adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2018.

In 2019, the city’s Complete Streets Policy was recognized by Smart Growth America as one of the 2018 Top Ten best policies in the country. This was a particularly impressive honor, given that the Smart Growth America scoring criteria for Complete Streets Policies changed in 2019 to include a new category for measuring equity in planning.

In addition to this honor, the cover of the report, at left, was an image of a cyclist taken in Huntsville. She is riding one of Huntsville’s Pace bike share bikes on the city’s first Complete Street project, Spragins Street in downtown Huntsville.
Featured Complete Streets Project: Meridian St. NE

This was a four-lane road with a center turn lane and parallel parking spaces on the East side. The segment of Meridian St. north of Pratt Ave. has an existing bike lane, while the Gateway Greenway terminates near the intersection with Howe Ave. The segment of Meridian St. between these two bikeways, scheduled for resurfacing, was identified as a critical “missing link” for bicycle connectivity between Downtown and points north. Local business owners were engaged with the redesign process. The complete street project that commenced in 2020 removed two vehicle lanes and added one-way, separated bicycle lanes in both directions, along with more parking spaces and intersection improvements at Pratt Ave.

Future of Complete Streets

An informal process for implementation of the City's Complete Streets Policy has developed among City departments working on the Clinton Avenue and Holmes Avenue projects. See more information about Holmes Avenue on page 45.
This newly developing process of partnership between city departments led to the Meridian St. project. Further discussions of future projects include those complete streets recommendations in the Downtown Master Plan:

- Monroe in front of the VBC to promote multi-modal access with the new hotel developments
- Elements of complete streets such as crossing and streetscaping for Church / Gallatin

Other ongoing master planning efforts that include complete streets recommendations are:
- Lowe Mill redevelopment master plan – public outreach coming in 2021
- Cummings Research Park master plan
- Mid-City development master plan
- Hays Farm development master plan
- City Centre development master plan
- Five Points/NE Huntsville Small Area Plan
- Cove Area Plan

For the 2020 and 2021 fiscal years, the funding mechanism for alternative modes will be discussed by all departments involved. Roles and responsibilities for complete street design and construction will be reviewed as well.
Special Initiatives

Singing River Trail

Unveiled in 2019, the Singing River Trail (SRT) originally consisted of 70 miles of walking, biking, and hiking trails and greenways. It was envisioned as not only a way to connect many north Alabama communities to each other, but as a way to connect the region to its rich history and natural environmental beauty.

The original 70-mile, three-county project, has now grown into a 150-mile, eight-county project, connecting North Alabama from Bridgeport/Scottsboro to Sheffield, bringing it within 16 miles of the Natchez Trace.

The completion in 2020 of the first phase of the Elgie’s Walk Greenway in the new Hays Farm development in South Huntsville, is a part of the overall SRT and several other greenways in Huntsville will also become a part of this important regional trail system.
5-Phase Transit Improvement Plan and Commuter Study Continues During 2020 Pandemic

The #1 priority for the City of Huntsville Public Transit Division is and always will be the safety of the riding public and its employees. The 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic required a quick and thorough response with a lot of changes to the daily operation of Transit services starting around the 3rd week of February. Temporary workers were hired to assist Operators in disinfecting fixed route buses hourly as routes pulsed into the downtown station each day. Clorox wipes and disinfectant spray quickly became expensive and hard to get. Substitute cleaners and disinfectants were identified in the first quarter and used throughout the remainder of the year.

A $7,000 Clorox machine was also purchased to fog and disinfect all fixed route buses and paratransit vehicles each morning before going out on route.

Other measures were implemented to respond to the crisis such as:

- Bagging off every other seat in fixed route buses to create physical distancing
- 5 Paratransit vehicles were re-assigned during May 2020 to provide additional seating and separation on the heaviest fixed routes.
- Nursing homes being served with paratransit service were required to sign a “certification of health” for all clients being picked up by drivers.
- All passengers were required to wear masks.
- Testing, Contact Tracing, and 14-Day absences became the standard operating procedure.

In July 2019, the City of Huntsville Public Transit Re-brands as Huntsville Transit
Special Initiatives

All Fixed Route Services become known as Orbit

Paratransit Services changed to Access

380 new bus stop signs and 10 solar lighted shelters installed

New Service Models Explored for Less Densely Populated areas of the City

Changes in traffic, work culture, and transit ridership brought about the need to explore alternate modes of transit for less densely populated areas of the City. Micro-Transit (On Demand real time transit service) with smaller vehicles utilizing a smart phone application are being tested and piloted in cities across the country.

During the summer of 2020, Huntsville Transit staff solicited demonstrations from leading providers to further explore these alternatives to traditional fixed route bus service. Staff has also engaged transit managers in Birmingham and Baldwin County Alabama where such pilot micro-transit programs were underway.

At the same time, Route Match (Huntsville Transit’s Automated Vehicle Location – AVL - System provider) was acquired by Uber, creating Uber Transit, and basically doubling down on future micro-transit solutions.
MPO Contracts Metro Analytics for Regional Commuter Study and recommends future regional park-n-ride locations
Regional Park and Ride locations provide the future infrastructure needed for carpooling, vanpooling, commuter bus service, and eventually regional commuter rail. Planning for these future alternatives to the single occupant vehicle (SOV) continue,
Alternative Modes Planning

It’s all about the Network

The goal of transportation infrastructure is to provide connectivity from point A to point B by the most efficient and safest route possible. Users of alternative modes require this same connectivity to travel safely from home to work, school, medical appointments, and shopping.

Planners use phrases like “the sidewalk network” or “the greenway network” to describe a safe, connected network for alternative modes throughout the city.

Ideally, where every bike lane ends, a greenway or multi-use path would begin; every street would have sidewalks on both sides; and every sidewalk would have ADA compliant ramps at all crossings. Linking these investments to create a network of alternative mode transportation options is an ongoing goal for the city.
Why does this cost so much and take so long?

The most common questions the city receives from the public about alternative mode projects regard the perception of high cost and lengthy construction timelines.

Before concrete is poured or paint is purchased:

- Funding must be acquired
  - In the case of greenways, this is often a grant application process, which can take several weeks to prepare
  - In the case of sidewalks, this is a process of prioritizing sidewalk requests against the limited funds available each year to determine where tax dollars will do the most good.
  - In the case of complete streets, this is a process of negotiating cost sharing across several city departments.
  - In the case of bicycle projects, this is often a matter of adding funds to existing projects, such as roadway resurfacing.

- Preliminary Engineering and design must be completed
- Right of way must be purchased
- Utilities often need to be relocated
- Environmental considerations must be documented (if federal money is involved)

The entire process can take from 6 to 18 months with several steps overlapping.
Bicycle Projects: More than Just Paint

A common misconception is that bicycle projects should be easy to achieve, as bike lanes are “just some paint.” That is not necessarily the case. Bicycle projects must address a variety of considerations:

➢ **Different types of riders**
  o From seasoned commuter cyclists to kids on training wheels

Roger Geller in Portland, OR is credited with creating the four cyclist typologies:

- **Strong and Fearless**: Current riders who ride with little or no bicycle-specific infrastructure in place
- **Enthused and Confident**: Current riders who ride where some bicycle-specific infrastructure exists
- **Interested but Concerned**: People willing to bicycle if high-quality bicycle infrastructure were added
- **No Way, No How**: People unwilling to bicycle even if high-quality bicycle infrastructure was in place

The City of Huntsville’s goal for improving and increasing bicycle infrastructure is to appeal to the **Interested but Concerned** segment of the population, to encourage more people to ride if they are interested. Additionally, the city endeavors to create a safe environment for the **Strong and Fearless**, as well as the **Enthused and Confident** cyclists already riding on city streets.
Different contexts and solutions

Every street is unique and the appropriate bicycle infrastructure for one street is not always best for another.

There is an entire field of transportation engineering that focuses on safely moving bicycles through cities. Some context to consider:

- Conflicts between bicycle lanes and traffic lanes at:
  - “T” intersections
  - 4-way intersections
  - Driveways
  - Traffic signals
  - Bridges

- Conflicts when the bike lanes end
  - Where do bikes go next? How to get there safely?

- Does the road need to be resurfaced?
  - Paint cannot simply be applied to the top of the existing roadway surface. It will come off and must be reapplied constantly.
  - The road needs to be milled and repaved for the application to be permanent.

The City of Huntsville does not currently have a specialist in engineering safe bicycle infrastructure. However, city staff from multiple departments regularly attend bicycle safety webinars and other educational opportunities offered by FHWA, Smart Growth America, and the DOT.

Every bicycle infrastructure project presents new challenges for which the city must often consult professional texts, other cities, or expert consultants.
At the 2016 Complete Streets Workshop, the city designated Holmes Avenue and Clinton Avenue as the city’s Complete Streets pilot projects. Both roads were wider than their capacity demand and are alternatives to major thoroughfares I-565 and US-72. Funds were committed in the city’s capital plan for both projects.
Clinton Avenue

Complete Streets are about more than sidewalks and bike lanes. Access management to businesses, transit accessibility, and safe intersections were all incorporated into the Clinton Avenue complete street design. The construction of Clinton Avenue improvements began in Spring 2019. The improvements are now complete and included:

- Bike lanes from Heart of Huntsville Way to Governors Drive
- Sidewalk improvements throughout the corridor
- ADA compliance ramps throughout the corridor
- Additional crosswalks throughout the corridor
- Intersection improvements for safer bicycle and pedestrian crossings throughout the corridor

Access management is a complete streets tool for improved roadway safety for all users. Below are two aerial images of Bandito Burrito (located at the corners of Clinton Avenue, 6th Street, and Governors Drive) before and after the complete streets project, with access management problem areas circled. These three areas created conflict when drivers made turning movements, slowing drivers behind them and causing dangerous conditions for bikes and pedestrians. These entrances were closed, adding parking for the business as well as creating a safe pedestrian crossing.
Holmes Avenue

The design for Holmes Avenue Phase 1 (between Monroe St. and UAH) is complete. There are several major redevelopment projects along the corridor that may require changes to the design. Construction on the corridor is being scheduled to occur in conjunction with these projects.

The Complete Streets project was designed in seven sections. These seven sections were determined due to the changing widths and inclines of Holmes Avenue at each of these locations.

Section A: From John Wright/Ben Graves Drive on UAH campus to Brickell Rd, just east of UAH
Section B: From Brickell Rd to Greenacres Dr., just west of Jordan Lane
Section C: From Greenacres Dr. to the beginning of the hill’s incline between Jack Coleman Dr. and Hillmont Dr.
Section D: Up over the hill, passing Wexler, Russell Hill, and ending just west of 14th Street
Section E: West of 14th Street to Triana Blvd
Section E2: Triana Blvd. to Broglan Branch Creek
Section F: Broglan Branch Creek to Pollard St
The outcomes of the Clinton Avenue project will inform the Holmes Avenue improvements. Because Clinton Avenue was a much smaller project in scope and scale, it was a good test case for Complete Streets improvements.