

SCDOT /FHWA  
2005 Winter Conferences

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Bicycle and Pedestrian Conference  
SC Partnering Conference



Hilton Head Island  
December 7-9

**NOTE ABOUT CONFERENCE COMBINATION**

Together with our partners, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is working to plan and build sidewalks and bikeways to connect communities across the state. In 2002, we held the first Bicycle and Pedestrian Conference, bringing all interested parties together to discuss pedestrian issues in South Carolina. The conference has been growing bigger each year since, as cycling and walking groups use this opportunity to work with SCDOT to build more pedestrian friendly communities.

The SC Partnering Conference, first held in 2004, brings together SCDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), Councils of Governments (COG) and Environmental Resource and Regulatory Agencies from across the state. The purpose of the conference is to streamline the planning and

environmental process and to identify areas to save state and federal dollars. As a result of the first annual conference, SCDOT worked with the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a standardized general permitting process.

In our continuing efforts to effectively utilize resources, SCDOT reviewed both conferences and identified that the majority of SCDOT employees attending the Partnering Conference also attended the Bike and Pedestrian Conference. We discovered that many external attendees were the same for both conferences as well. To save the agency and our partners money and improve our efficiency, the decision was made to host the two conferences simultaneously. Attendees paid only one registration fee and incurred travel and lodging expenses only once. They were allowed to move between tracks and attend sessions offered at both conferences. Some general speakers and sessions were held jointly, providing further cost savings.

In addition, SCDOT limited agency attendees to only those employees who were directly involved in the planning and environmental stages of highway projects or the planning and construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. As you will see in the financial summary on page 33, these efforts resulted in a very notable savings for the agency.

## **CONFERENCE SUMMARY**

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sponsored the 2005 Winter Conferences in December. It was an excellent opportunity for building new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, as the annual Bicycle and Pedestrian Conference for the first time was merged with the annual SC Partnering Conference.

“In choosing to hold these conferences with our partner, FHWA, we are continuing to move our state into a position of leadership in the provision of facilities for non-motorized transportation. One of the most exciting parts about the Bicycle/Pedestrian Conference has been the sharing of innovative ideas – and seeing those ideas turn into accomplishments to improve the quality of life in South Carolina.”

----- Elizabeth S. Mabry  
Executive Director of the South Carolina Department of Transportation

“The true meaning of partnership is the acknowledgement that we cannot accomplish the goal alone of making South Carolina's transportation system a more safe and accommodating place for all modes of transportation. Conferences like this allow us to form those essential partnerships needed to make it happen.”

----- Bob Lee  
Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

## **SC Partnering Conference**

The SC Partnering Conference brought together partners on the state, federal and local levels to discuss the challenges of effectively maintaining our road systems. The conference provided updates on such issues as the new highway reauthorization, air quality and statewide planning.

A highlight of the of this year's meeting was the interaction among representatives from various state agencies and environmental proponents during the workshop, "Linking Planning and NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act).

There are many agencies at the federal, state, regional, county and municipal levels, as well as other citizen groups who all have a vested interest in the planning of transportation infrastructure and services in South Carolina. A Partnering Workshop has been held by SCDOT and FHWA since 1998 as a way to strengthen bonds that already existed as well as forge new partnerships. The partnering concept is about bringing everyone together to share ideas and concerns and bring to light opportunities for a better planning process.

These meetings are a chance to listen and learn about roles, responsibilities, and concerns from each agency's perspective. They have allowed for the advancement of many important topics including Statewide Intermodal Plans, hurricane evacuation, Mass Transit funding, air quality, the STIP process, DBE Requirements, high-speed rail, safety and Federal legislation.

As a result of this coordination, programs such as 27 in 7 have been successful. That means a more efficient and safe transportation system is available today for the citizens of South Carolina.

Linking Planning and NEPA continues to be about working together, understanding the planning and environmental process, and looking for ways to streamline and share information.

Representatives of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Army Corps of Engineers spoke about maintenance activities and permits.

The Interstate 73 project was used an example of the sharing of information, as an effort to incorporate the Linking Planning and NEPA concepts into the project development process.

As a direct result of last year's conference, the Liaison Interagency Coordination Committee was formed. This group meets on regular basis to discuss interagency cooperation. Because of this, relationships are being built, communication is improved and SCDOT and FHWA are working hand in hand with the Army Corps of Engineers.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Conference**

Embracing the theme "Planning and Building Connected Communities" the 2005 Bicycle and Pedestrian Conference was convened. Together with its partners, SCDOT continues to work to build sidewalks and bikeways to connect communities across South Carolina. Topics included a comprehensive look at the Safe Routes to Schools program;

safety; funding and grant writing; bicycle and pedestrian facility design; the Complete the Streets concept; improving air quality; increasing transportation choices, and improving the health and quality of life for citizens.

Joining Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry as featured speakers at the conferences were State Highway Engineer Tony Chapman; FHWA Administrator Bob Lee; former Congressman John Napier; former Democratic National Committee Chair Don Fowler, Yvette Taylor, Division Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration; Dan Hatley, of the Berkeley- Charleston-Dorchester COG; Bob Thomas of FHWA; and Tina Hadden, on behalf of Col. Edward Fleming of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The FHWA provided information on the new transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU.

Breakout sessions were led by statewide and national experts on topics such as safety; state and federal funding; basic and advanced bicycle and pedestrian design; transit and planning workshops; cycling and walking legislative issues; public health and non-motorized transportation; air quality; and the statewide corridor plan.

The conference also featured tours of bicycle and pedestrian paths on Hilton Head. Also, for the first time, an entire daylong breakout track of sessions was devoted to Safe Routes to School.

Keynote speaker was Mark Fenton, a leading national authority on walking and pedestrian advocacy. Fenton is host of the PBS show, "America's Walking." An enthusiastic advocate for fitness and promoter of neighborhoods designed to accommodate walking and cycling, Fenton also participated in several breakout sessions.

Fenton reported that obesity has a \$40 billion price tag borne by US taxpayers and that our generation is the first in 100 years whose children will lead shorter lives than their parents.

Building bicycle trails cost money, he said, but "you can make an argument that it costs money not to." Just 30 minutes a day of exercise can lead to better health, he said.

Safety was a big issue of the conference, as Executive Director Mabry pointed out that the number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities in South Carolina are higher than fatalities on interstate highways.

### *Safe Routes to School*

This year's conference for the first time devoted a four-session track to Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS), a popular program that is spreading across the United States. Its goal is to get more children traveling safely to school on foot or bike with greater frequency, decrease traffic and pollution and increase the health of children and the community by promoting walking and biking to school.

Engineering strategies include sidewalks, lighting, curb ramps, bike lanes, bike racks, connectors to the school, under and overpasses. School crossing signs, median islands, curb extensions, road diets, marked crosswalks, traffic signals, pedestrian push buttons, countdown signals and no turn on red signs can make walking to school safer. Narrowing lanes can slow traffic.

Education also plays a role. For students, this means skills on crossing streets safely, choosing where to walk and proper bicycle skills. Parents can learn safe driving near the school, proper pick up and drop off procedures.

Strategies to encourage successful programs are events such as Walk to School Day, Walking-Wednesdays and Bike Rodeos. These events engage the school community, show early success, raise awareness, educate and create media opportunities.

Through the new highway funding reauthorization, SAFETEA-LU, every state will receive at least \$1 million for Safe Routes to Schools programs. In SC, there will be a full-time Safe Routes to School Coordinator hired to work under her to initiate SRTS programs statewide. SCDOT will be partnering with the SC Department of Education and is currently setting up the criteria for the grant process.

Fenton suggested that South Carolina could possibly create a core team of SR2S Trainers who could go into the schools to present these workshops. The South Carolina Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (SCCPA) is currently applying for funding from an outside source to make this happen.

Enforcement strategies include involving law enforcement, crossing guards, safety patrol, staff, parents and volunteers to increase the awareness of children walking to school. Speed monitors and complaint hotlines are some of the additional tools for enforcement.

### *Complete the Streets*

The ‘Complete the Streets’ concept is the idea of making a street safe, comfortable and convenient for travel via automobile, foot, bicycle and transit by users of all ages. While there is no design guide or manual for complete streets, and while every street is different there are some common elements. These include sidewalks, medians, bus pullouts, bicycle access and plenty of crosswalks. Every street is different, and a complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area.

Benefits of complete streets include increased pedestrian safety, improving air quality, encouraging the public to walk and bike more and easing traffic congestion. More information can be found at [www.completethestreets.org](http://www.completethestreets.org).

### Benefits of cycling and walking

- Improves health and fitness
- Economic and environmental benefits
- Provides an alternative to travel to work or school
- Makes it easier to get to parks, community centers, libraries and shopping areas
- Lessens traffic congestion
- Connected to other off-road walk and cycle tracks

### *Safety Forum*

Safety issues were another topic highlighted at this year's conference. Safety was a big issue of the conference, as SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry pointed out that the number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities in South Carolina are higher than fatalities on interstate highways. Attendees heard ways to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists on existing roads by adding lighting, shoulders or sidewalks. The European model was used as an example for its use of planning for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and dedication of large space.

The Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System, available at [www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe](http://www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe), is intended to provide practitioners with the latest information available for improving the safety and mobility of those who walk. The online tools provide the user with a list of possible engineering, education, or enforcement treatments to improve pedestrian safety and/or mobility based on user input about a specific location.

### *Pedestrian and Bicycle Design Challenges*

The conference included sessions led by national authorities in the design of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

Two-thirds of pedestrian fatalities occur at night or during dusk and dawn, making it critical that proper lighting is provided. Street lighting also increases personal security. Timing traffic signals in a system should be consistent with the desired safe speed of motorists in the community. Trees along streets not only provide shade and aesthetics but also calm traffic. Elements of a good intersection design offer pedestrians a short wait, adequate crossing time, median islands, limited exposure to motor traffic and a clear crossing.

Bicycle friendly designs should take into consideration the many types of cyclists in addition to the "Lycra-wearing" avid cyclist. These cycling populations include children, adults commuting to work, and recreational riders. One third of the U.S. population does not drive an automobile and 40 percent of adults say that they would ride bicycles if facilities were safer. Nearly half of all trips are shorter than three miles. Design guides for reference include the AASHTO 'Green Book,' the 1999 Bicycle Guide and the new "AASHTO Guide for the Planning Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities." A common issue for bicyclists is lack of space, which is a safety issue for cyclists and motorists. Narrow roads create problems for cyclists especially on heavy volume roads.

Bike lanes provide a separation of cyclists and cars; the white stripe provides comfort for motorists and cyclists. Paved shoulders should be at least 4 feet wide, however any shoulder is better than no shoulder none.

Not every road needs a bike lane or bike facility. It should depend on the road and traffic volumes. Guide signs are very helpful to cyclists in communicating location and destination directions.

Traffic conditions that affect bicyclists include on-street parking, volume of motor vehicles, speed of traffic and the pavement of surface.

Bicycle level of service model (BLOS) allows engineers to determine the level of service and what the conditions are on a roadway. BLOS is a measure of a bicyclist's comfort and safety on a road.

Intersections present challenges for designing bike facilities. The designer should try to guide bicyclists to the best position to move through intersections. Striping correctly can provide safe passage for bicyclists and cars.

### *Funding*

The Federal Highway Administration noted that the new reauthorization would likely bring new money to the state over the next four years in the form of new programs. Bike and Pedestrian funding primarily comes from two sources that require applications: (1) Transportation Enhancement program and (2) Recreational Trails program. SCDOT's Enhancement Program Outreach includes two categories of the enhancement programs, the Metropolitan Planning Organization program and the Rural(non-MPO) Program. Applications are required for all projects seeking funding. South Carolina has two SCDOT enhancement coordinators as well as other staff to assist applicants.

The SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism coordinates the Recreational Trails Program with oversight is by FHWA. Most of their projects are 80 percent federal reimbursement and 20 percent match requirement. The type projects that receive funding are 30 percent motorized (ATV's, motorcycles), 30 percent are non-motorized (hiking, biking), and 40 percent diverse trail (that uses both types). More is information available at [www.sctrails.net](http://www.sctrails.net).

Attendees of the conference received suggestions for successful state, local, and corporate grant writings and learned the chronological steps from researching a grant, defining the need, knowing the grantee, completing an application, and establishing a successful media plan.

### *Public Health and Non-motorized transportation*

The collaboration among transportation engineers, planners and the public health profession has been underway for several years in several South Carolina communities. Attendees heard about initiatives by groups such as Partners for Active Living of Spartanburg; Sumter County Active Lifestyle, which has completed several projects to promote active lifestyles and transportation, including creating trails and using GIS to plot sidewalks; and Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG's Active Living By Design grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to improve walking and biking in the CHATS region.

### *Statewide Corridor Plan*

In partnership with the Statewide Plan Advisory Committee, the Office of Planning at SCDOT has developed methodology that uses criteria to identify contiguous multi-regional corridors to facilitate traffic movement from one side of the state to another side of the state. The criteria include economic development, measure of congestion, type of route (Interstate/US Route/SC Route), truck average daily traffic, and urbanized connectors. A formula, which factors in a scoring system of the 13 criteria as well as corridor length, has been developed to rank the statewide corridors. Public involvement will also play a key role in the development of statewide corridors. The

Office of Planning has coordinated with the major airports in South Carolina and the South Carolina Ports Authority to determine their interests in these statewide corridors. Goals of the plan will include a plan for achieving a seamless transportation system for the state, tying together all modes of public transportation. The plan is anticipated to take approximately 18 months to complete and should be released in mid-2007.