



# SHOALS AREA MPO BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN 2017 Update

GMC

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NORTHWEST ALABAMA COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
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## INTRODUCTION

# 1

### NEED FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING

As transportation networks evolve, the prevalence of bicycle and pedestrian facilities have increased across the country. Communities have begun to see support increase for bicycle and pedestrian projects to advance citizens' transportation choices and quality of life. Because of this support communities have started implementing new programs to improve their existing facilities and exploring methods to implement new facilities.

The purpose of the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to guide decisions within the region as to the relationship between bicycle and pedestrian facilities, their demand, and the existing transportation network.



Source: [www.pedbikeimages.org/](http://www.pedbikeimages.org/) / Laura Sandt

This Plan is an update to the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan originally adopted in 2011 by the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) and reflects the changing conditions within the region.

## WHY PLAN FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

As funding for transportation projects continually becomes more constricted, it is important to consider the low cost, high impact projects associated with bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In planning for these facilities, the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan outlines key recommendations and improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network that could have a positive impact on the overall transportation network within the MPO. Existing surface connectivity between and within the MPO municipalities is excellent and these recommendations will facilitate and enhance that connectivity by developing a multi-modal aspect to the MPO region.

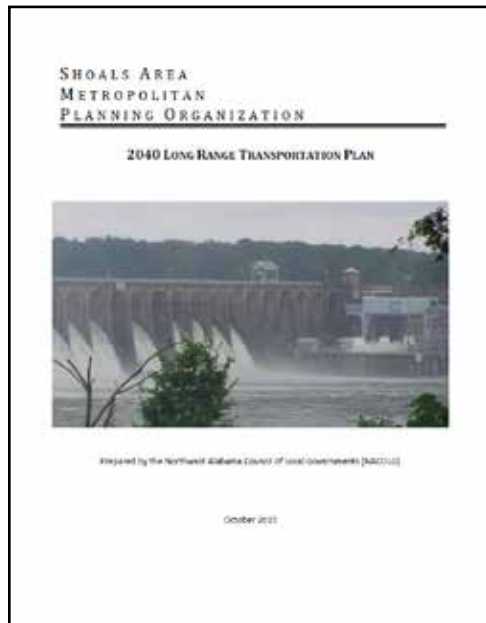
## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is meant to be complementary to other planning efforts underway within the Shoals Area MPO Study Area. During transportation and MPO related projects, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be referenced for applicability to potential improvements in the bicycle and pedestrian network. The recommendations and improvements outlined within the plan should also be considered when updates to other plans are considered.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Each municipality within the Shoals Area MPO has a current Comprehensive Plan, or Master Plan, which the municipality uses as a policy guide for decisions. The purpose of these plans is to serve as long-term policy guides for future decisions related to the physical environment within their respective communities. During the development of this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, each community’s Comprehensive Plan was reviewed to examine transportation-related issues associated with bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Many of the included communities made specific recommendations in the development of appropriate facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. The purpose of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to reinforce within the MPO the consideration

of developing bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the identified locations. Communities within the Shoals Area MPO can also use the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to help locate and develop those facilities as they update their plans.



## SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Each municipality and county within the Shoals Area MPO is required to maintain Subdivision Regulations which govern how property is subdivided and developed. Subdivision Regulations of each jurisdiction within the MPO were reviewed in relation to the requirements for sidewalks and other bicycle and pedestrian related facilities. Those communities which do not require such facilities can use this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to illustrate the need to consider the addition of dedicated facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

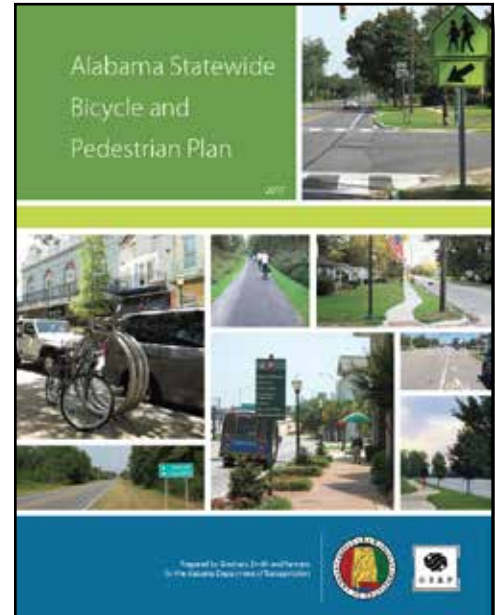
## **LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Shoals Area MPO maintains a Long Range Transportation Plan that outlines all current and future needs along with identifying strategies and projects to meet those needs. Included within the LRTP is brief section regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the MPO. The Shoals Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan expands that initial reference and includes more detailed analysis and recommendations on appropriate facilities. As the LRTP is updated in the future, strategies and projects from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be considered for inclusion.

## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

In 2017, the Alabama Department of Transportation completed the most recent update to the Alabama Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The state plan outlines policies, plans, programs and standards for bicycle and pedestrian planning throughout the state along with existing conditions and trends, recommendations and an implementation plan for ALDOT.

The Alabama Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was used as a reference guide during the update of the Shoals Area Plan to reinforce the recommendations and policies at the MPO level.







## VISION AND GOALS

# 2

The vision of the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to provide choices to residents and visitors to the Shoals Area for alternative transportation modes such as traveling by bicycle or on foot. These transportation choices will be accomplished by making available new and improved facilities that will conveniently and efficiently accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in a suitable environment.

### **GOALS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS**

To facilitate the implementation of the vision of the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the following goals are defined using the criteria outlined in the vision:

- Improve the transportation system to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access along roadways through design and facility standards
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle safety through public education programs
- Provide access for pedestrians and bicycles between neighborhoods, schools, employment centers, retail areas, central business districts, churches, and cultural centers
- Promote the use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to relieve traffic congestion



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

# 3

### COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

The following community assessments were conducted with officials from each of the following municipalities. These assessments were used to define the existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are within each community and identify critical destinations for a bicycle and pedestrian network.

#### FLORENCE

Located on the northern bank of the Tennessee River, Florence is the largest city in the Shoals MPO Area. The City of Florence has an increased interest in bicycle and pedestrian facilities because of the connectivity of the transportation network, the density of development, and the interest of users in the City. There are several recently completed projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities with other future projects under consideration. Currently, the City has a greenway located at the Florence Marina along the River and under the O’Neal Bridge. Plans are to extend this greenway from Florence Marina to River Heritage Park, along with plans for a citywide greenway network.

The Singing River Bridge is an important connection between Florence and Muscle Shoals over the Tennessee River. When it was constructed, there was a public request to include a pedestrian and bicycle path along the bridge to replace the path that was removed from the O’Neal Bridge.

The University of North Alabama, located in Florence, is an important place within the region. The University's Campus Master Plan includes recommendations for various improvements on campus to improve connections for bicyclists and pedestrians. These on-campus improvements could result in the need to provide better connections between the surrounding community and the University. A recent example of this was the addition of bicycle lanes and sharrows along North Wood Avenue from Tuscaloosa Street to Gilbert Court. This facility improvement will provide a safe route for students in the area and also serves to link important community locations and assets.



*Existing greenway in Florence along the Tennessee River.*

### **Policies**

The City Comprehensive Plan includes bicycle and pedestrians elements such as a component related to a city wide greenway system. The City of Florence does require sidewalks along both sides of the road in their Subdivision Regulations. Additional planning, such as West Florence Neighborhood Plan, also stresses multi-modal connections.

### **KILLEN**

The Town of Killen is located to the east of Florence along US Highway-72. A small bedroom community, the Town relies heavily on the surrounding cities. Killen has recently completed a sidewalk improvement project that resulted in a sidewalk within the center of town connecting several destinations, including the municipal center. Recent projects were undertaken to provide pedestrian access between Brooks Elementary School with the surrounding residential areas. The City also maintains Killen Park which is located south of the Town Center on the opposite side of US Highway-72.

### **Policies**

The Killen Master Plan also recommends that the town incorporate pedestrian access into recreational plans and revise development regulations to require pedestrian connections within large sites.

The Town requires sidewalks be installed along both sides of the street in their Subdivision Regulations.

### **LEIGHTON**

Leighton is a small rural town located east of Muscle Shoals and on the eastern edge of the MPO Study Area. Within the Town there is a small downtown area surrounded by several residential neighborhoods and older subdivisions. Several streets within Leighton have existing sidewalks including downtown; however, many of the facilities are in need of repair and maintenance.



## **Policies**

Leighton does not require sidewalks be installed within their existing subdivision regulations.

## **MUSCLE SHOALS**

The City of Muscle Shoals is located on the southern bank of the Tennessee River and was built as a company town in response to the increase in industry from the TVA. The original city was laid out with wide rights-of-way that included sidewalk connections. Over time, many of these sidewalks have fallen into disrepair or have been removed entirely. These sidewalk connections have been constructed as a six-foot wide path that is meant to service both bicyclist and pedestrians. A priority list has been established for north/south routes and east/west routes.



*Multi-use sidewalk along Gusmus Avenue in Muscle Shoals.*

## **Policies**

The Muscle Shoals Subdivision Regulations does include the requirement for sidewalks within a defined boundary for the City which is within the core area of City with good existing sidewalk connectivity. Outside of the boundary, sidewalks are not required. The City does maintain a plan to install and improve sidewalks throughout several locations. Currently, the main concentration of this program is around the city center near the schools.

## **ST. FLORIAN**

St. Florian is a small community located northeast of the City of Florence in Lauderdale County. The area was originally settled to establish a Catholic presence in northwest Alabama. The church that was constructed, Saint Michael's, still stands within the community. The Town is comprised of small family farms, rural neighborhoods and a few newer suburban neighborhoods. As a result of the low density nature, there are no sidewalks or bike facilities within St. Florian.

## **Policies**

Within St. Florian, sidewalks are not required in the Subdivision Regulations; however there are minimum standards and provisions in which the Planning Commission may require sidewalks near schools and commercial areas.

## **SHEFFIELD**

The City of Sheffield is located along the south bluffs of the Tennessee River. There are bike lanes within the city along several streets, including Alabama Avenue and Montgomery Avenue, which connect the residential areas and downtown to Riverfront Park and the Overlook along the Tennessee River. Many of the older

neighborhoods have sidewalks which connect to downtown and other community services, but several segments of those sidewalks are in need of repair or replacement.

There is also another scenic overlook near Sheffield on the Old Rail Bridge, to the east of the O'Neal Bridge. In 1999, the City paved an access road, Ashe Boulevard, on top of the rail bed that leads to the Old Rail Bridge. Along a segment of Ashe Boulevard there is a multi-use path that could be connected to the TVA trail system. Recent improvements to Avalon Avenue have included bicycle lanes between Montgomery Avenue and George Wallace Boulevard. Bicycle lanes are also being considered as improvements along Cox Boulevard.



*Existing bike lanes along North Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield.*

### **Policies**

Within the City of Sheffield, sidewalks are required in commercial subdivisions and are required in residential subdivisions if there are schools or community facilities within the vicinity.

## **TUSCUMBIA**

Tuscumbia, located south of Sheffield and west of Muscle Shoals, has one of the most unique recreational opportunities within the country, The Commons. The Commons is property that the city owns which is only allowed to be used in projects that relate to the good of the community. Over the years, projects along The Commons have included a stadium, library and arts center. The Commons could potentially be used to reinforce bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the city. The neighborhoods within the boundary of the Commons, and older neighborhoods outside the commons have sidewalks which are in need of repair or replacement.

Recent improvements to Avalon Avenue have included bicycle lanes between Montgomery Avenue and George Wallace Boulevard. Bicycle lanes are also being considered as improvements along Cox Boulevard.

### **Policies**

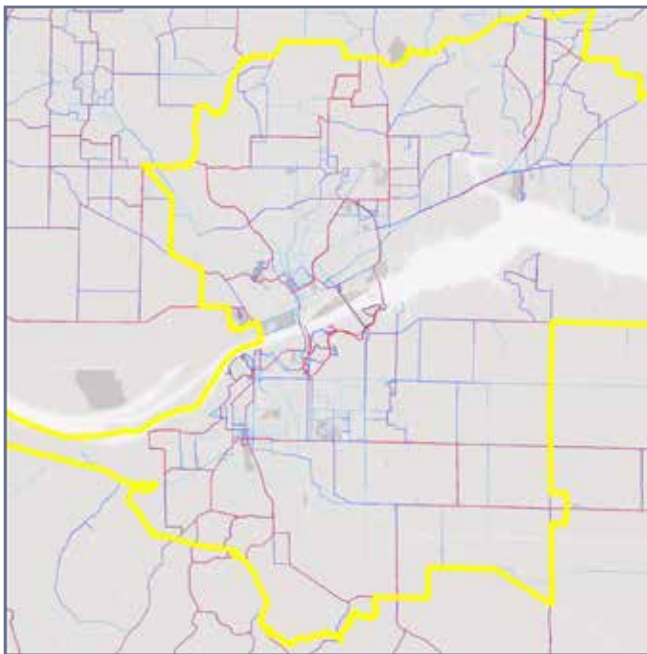
Within the City of Tuscumbia, sidewalks are required in commercial subdivisions and are required in residential subdivisions if there are schools or community facilities within the vicinity.

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATTERNS

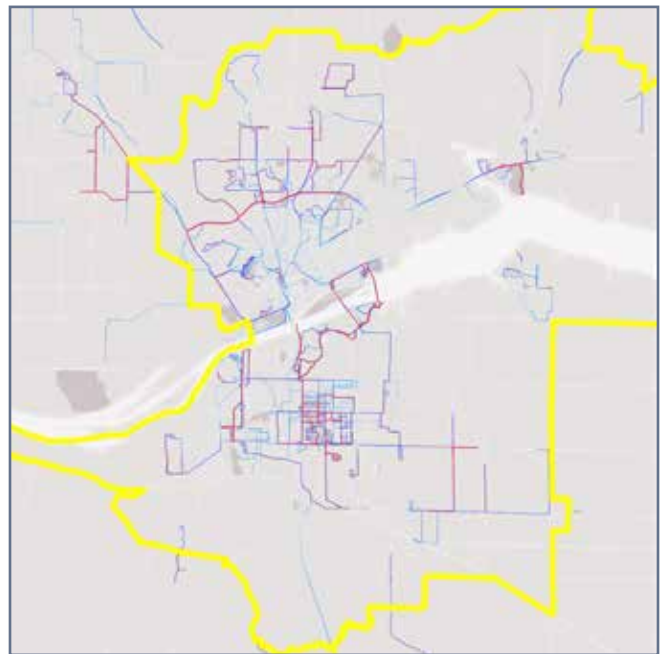
Within the Shoals Area MPO, bicycle and pedestrian activity occurs in several locations and is typically noticed in locations with safe facilities. During this plan update, observations were noted during discussions with individual municipalities and stakeholder interviews. Fitness tracker data was also reviewed as part of the study to better determine the typical location of bicycle and pedestrian activity.

Concerning bicycle ridership, observations and documentation were related to many of the roads within the Shoals Area MPO. The most intense uses did occur in core of the communities, with much of the ancillary activity happening on other roads away from the core. The intensity of ridership in the core can be attributed to connectivity of amenities, such as the University of North Alabama in Florence, and the availability of infrastructure on the TVA Reservation and in Sheffield. It should also be noted that much of the ancillary activity is happening because of the transportation network availability away from the major routes in the MPO Area and the diversity of potential locations.

Regarding pedestrian use, observations and documentation were related to many of the locations within the Shoals Area MPO that have a high concentration of sidewalks. These locations generally have good existing infrastructure related to the connectivity and density of sidewalks and other facilities for pedestrians. Also, many of the older, traditional neighborhoods near the core of the communities have existing sidewalk facilities that connect them to the core of the communities. It should also be noted that many sidewalk requirements become evident in these patterns by the level of activity that is occurring in subdivisions that were constructed following the adoption of those regulations.



*Bicycle activity based on fitness trackers in the Shoals Area MPO.*  
Source: Strava Labs



*Walking and running activity based on fitness trackers in the Shoals Area MPO.*  
Source: Strava Labs



## **LAND USE & DENSITY MEASURES**

The municipalities of Florence, Tuscumbia, and Sheffield have very traditional downtown centers surrounded by higher density residential areas. These residential areas have good connectivity to the downtowns via the street and sidewalk networks. In Sheffield, this connectivity also includes several dedicated bike lanes between the older neighborhoods to downtown. Outside of the downtown and early interior neighborhoods, residential areas exhibit a more suburban pattern. Major road corridors in these cities have typical suburban commercial developments at varying stages of density - the closer to the town center, the more dense the commercial development.

The City of Muscle Shoals has a more suburban town center than the other municipalities in the region. The City has been defining the town center, near the schools and municipal center, through improved sidewalk connections and a concentration of community services. Surrounding the town center in Muscle Shoals are suburban neighborhoods with good street connectivity.

The towns of Killen, Leighton, and St. Florian are all outlying rural communities within the MPO area. Killen and St. Florian are located along major roadways to the east and northeast, respectively, from Florence, and Leighton is located to the east of Muscle Shoals. These towns have rural town centers created around essential community services and rural residential patterns.



## STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

# 4

### STRATEGIES

To facilitate the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the Shoals Area MPO, the following strategies are outlined. For specific design guidelines and standards, the Federal Highway Administration has published a report (FHWA-HEP-17-024) entitled the *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide*.

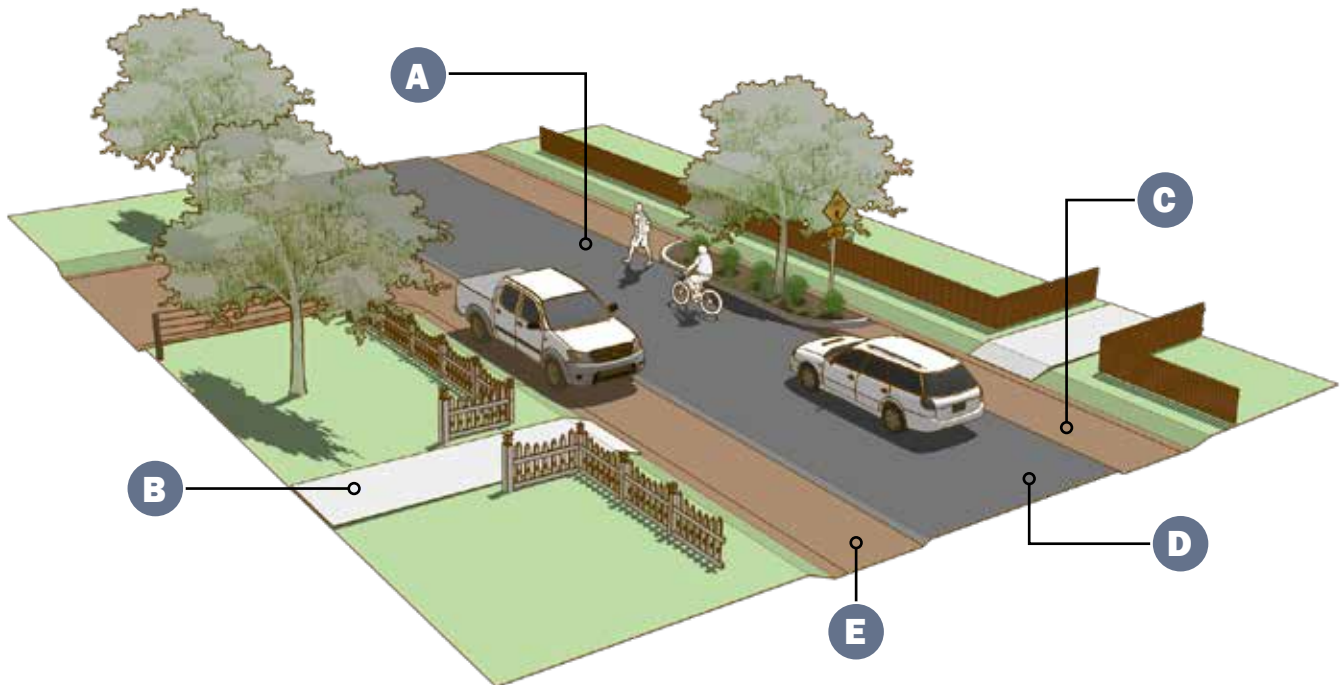
The strategies included as part of this plan update, and the *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide*, is based upon three different facility type designs: mixed traffic, visually separated, and physically separated. The following sections outline each of these three facilities types, including graphic examples, followed by proposed routes within the Shoals area MPO.

## MIXED TRAFFIC FACILITIES

Mixed traffic facilities are most appropriate on roads with low volumes of traffic operating at low speeds. These facilities are shared between motorists, bicyclists and sometimes pedestrians. The low intensity of motor vehicle traffic allows users to negotiate space in comfort without the need for robust separation.

### ***Yield Roadway***

A yield roadway is designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicle traffic in the same slow-speed travel area. Yield roadways serve bidirectional motor vehicle traffic without lane markings in the roadway travel area.



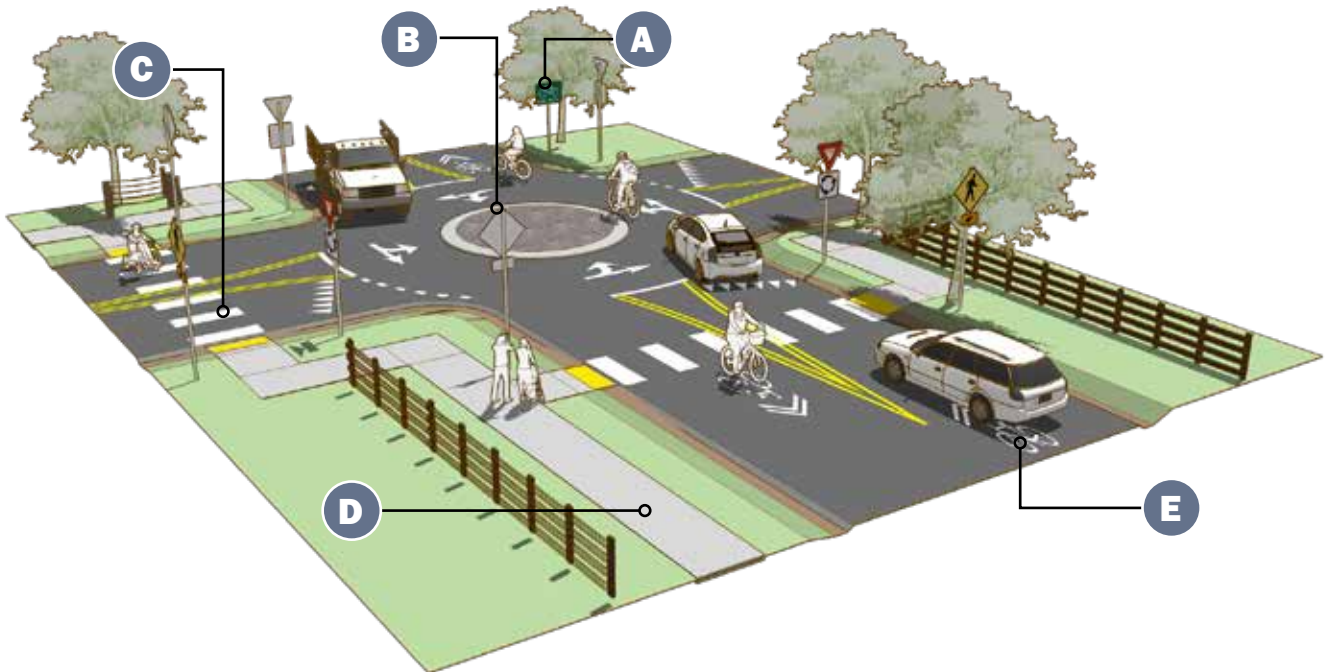
- A. Shared Space: Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists all share a slow-speed, low-volume roadway space.
- B. Local Residential Context: Low volumes and familiar users encourage slow speeds and respectful meeting and passing events within a narrow roadway.
- C. Parking/Pull-Out/Furnishings: Multipurpose roadside visually and physically constrains the roadway.
- D. Narrow Two-Way Street: A limited-width paved roadway surface with no center line markings.
- E. Gravel/Turf/Earth Roadside: Limiting paved surfacing encourages natural stormwater management.

\* Graphics and text are used from the Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide FHWA-HEP-17-024



## **Bicycle Boulevard**

A bicycle boulevard is a low-stress shared roadway bicycle facility, designed to offer priority for bicyclists operating within a roadway shared with motor vehicle traffic.



- A. Route Signs: Signs clearly identify and guide users along the local street bikeway alignment.
- B. Traffic Calming: Horizontal and vertical deflection manages motorist speeds.
- C. Bicyclist and Pedestrian Priority: Traffic control at minor intersections favor through travel by bicyclists.
- D. Sidewalk: Separated pedestrian accommodations may be necessary as roadway speeds and volumes increase.
- E. Route Markings: Markings identify proper positioning within the roadway and alert all users to bicyclist presence.

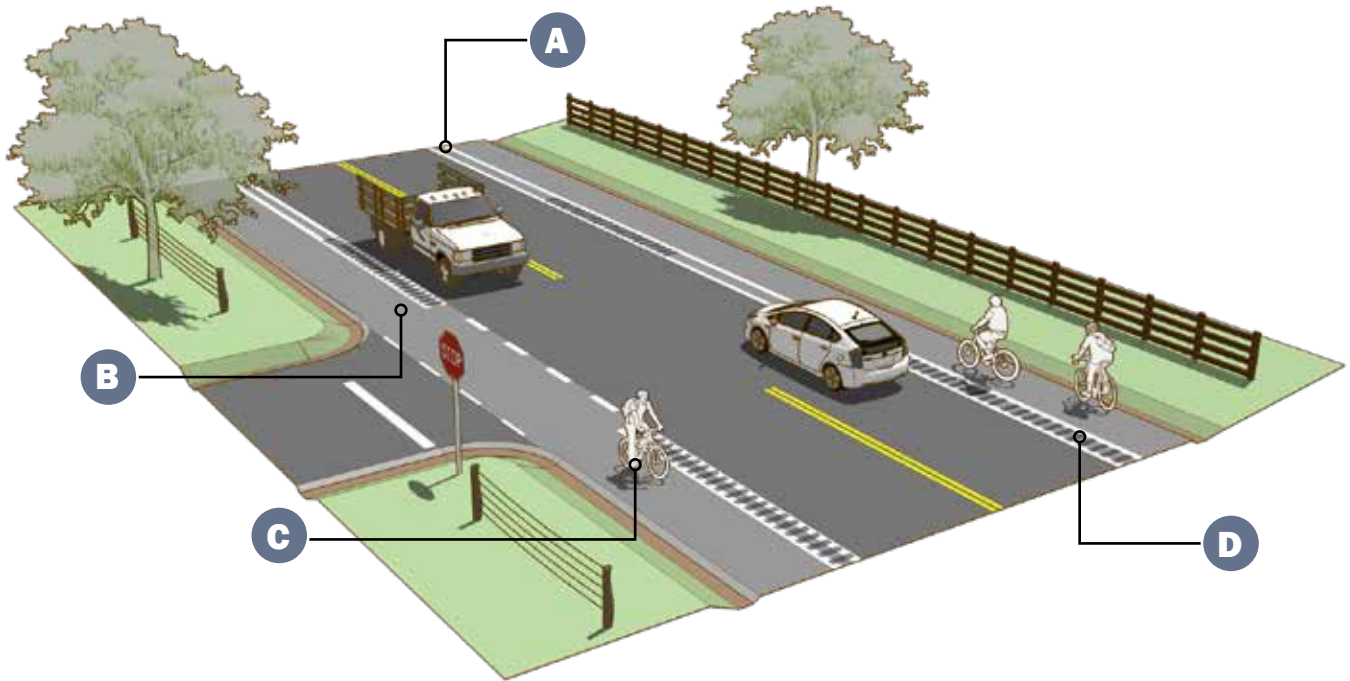
\* Graphics and text are used from the Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide FHWA-HEP-17-024

## VISUALLY SEPARATED FACILITIES

Visually separated facilities are most appropriate on roads with low to moderate volumes of traffic operating at moderate speeds. These facilities use markings and buffer striping to increase the distance between motorists and non motorized users.

### **Paved Shoulders**

Paved shoulders on the edge of roadways can be enhanced to serve as a functional space for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel in the absence of other facilities with more separation.

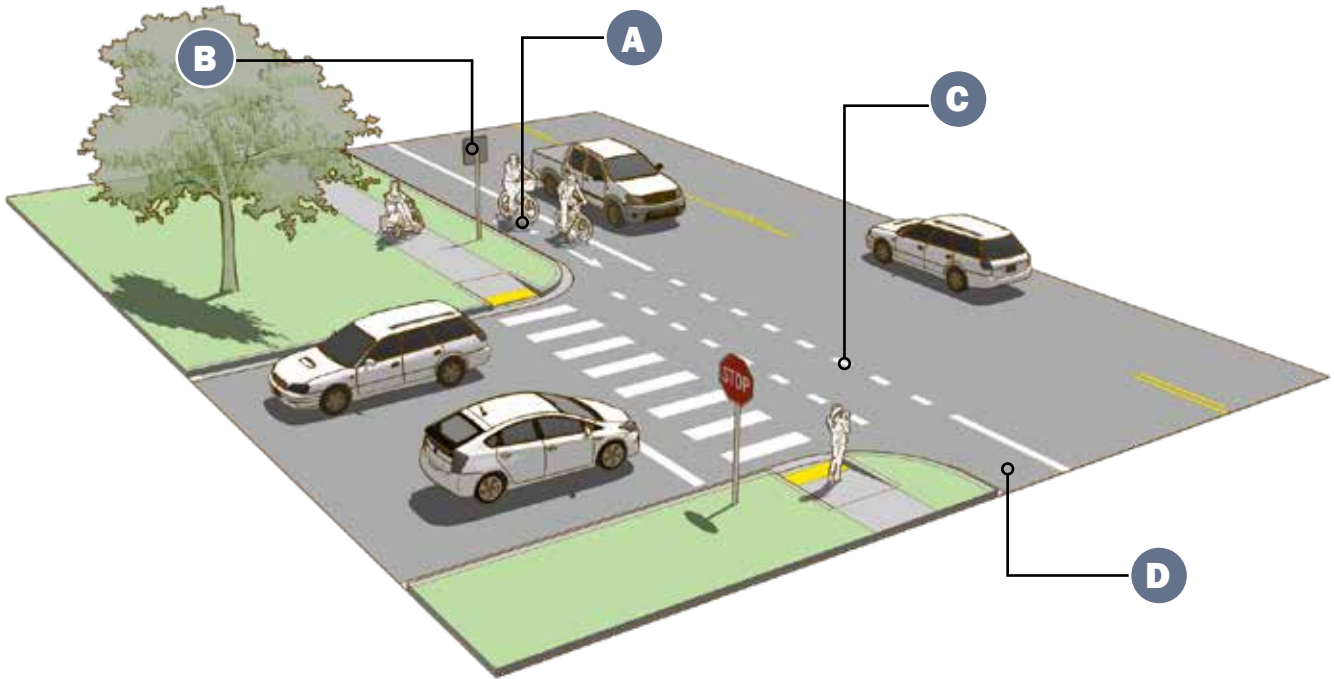


- A. Enhanced Longitudinal Markings: Wide solid white lines or buffer areas enhance the visual separation.
- B. Contrasting Pavement: As an aesthetic treatment, colored or contrasting pavement increases contrast between the shoulder and the roadway.
- C. Bicycle Accommodation: Bicyclists travel in the same direction as the adjacent lane.
- D. Edge Line Rumble Strips: If used, bicycle-tolerable designs can minimize impacts to bicyclists.

\* Graphics and text are used from the *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide FHWA-HEP-17-024*

## Bike Lanes

Bike lanes designate an exclusive space for bicyclists through the use of pavement markings and optional signs. A bike lane is located directly adjacent to motor vehicle travel lanes and follows the same direction as motor vehicle traffic.



- A. Bike Lane Marking: Identifies exclusive use by bicyclists.
- B. Signs: Identify the bike lane and prohibit on street parking.
- C. Bike Lane Line: Wide solid line or buffer area separates the bike lane from the roadway. Dotted lines at crossings maintain a clear path for bicyclists.
- D. Bike Lane: Bicyclists travel in the same direction of the adjacent lane.

\* Graphics and text are used from the Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide FHWA-HEP-17-024

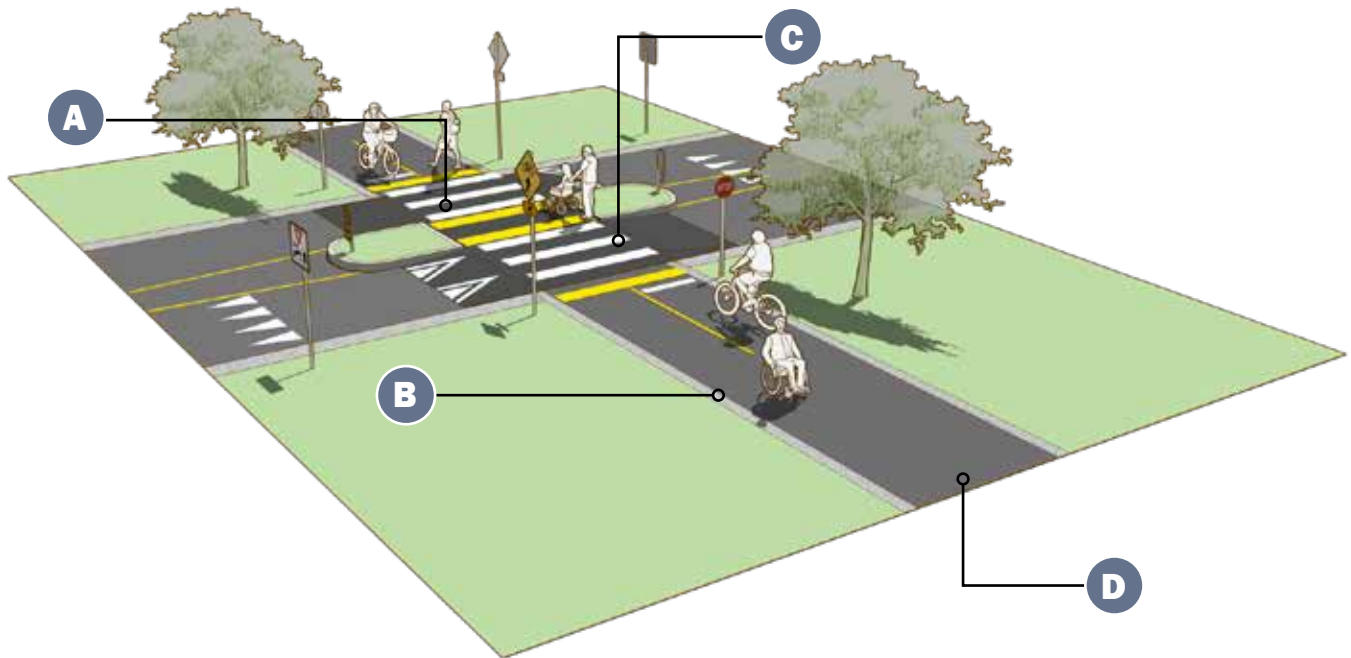


## PHYSICALLY SEPARATED FACILITIES

Physically separated facilities are most appropriate on roads with high volumes of traffic operating at high speeds. These facilities use physical barriers, are raised on curbs, or provide wide unpaved separation areas to increase the comfort and safety of non motorized users.

### Shared Use Path

A shared use path provides a travel area separate from motorized traffic for bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers, and other users. Shared use paths can provide a low-stress experience for a variety of users using the network for transportation or recreation.

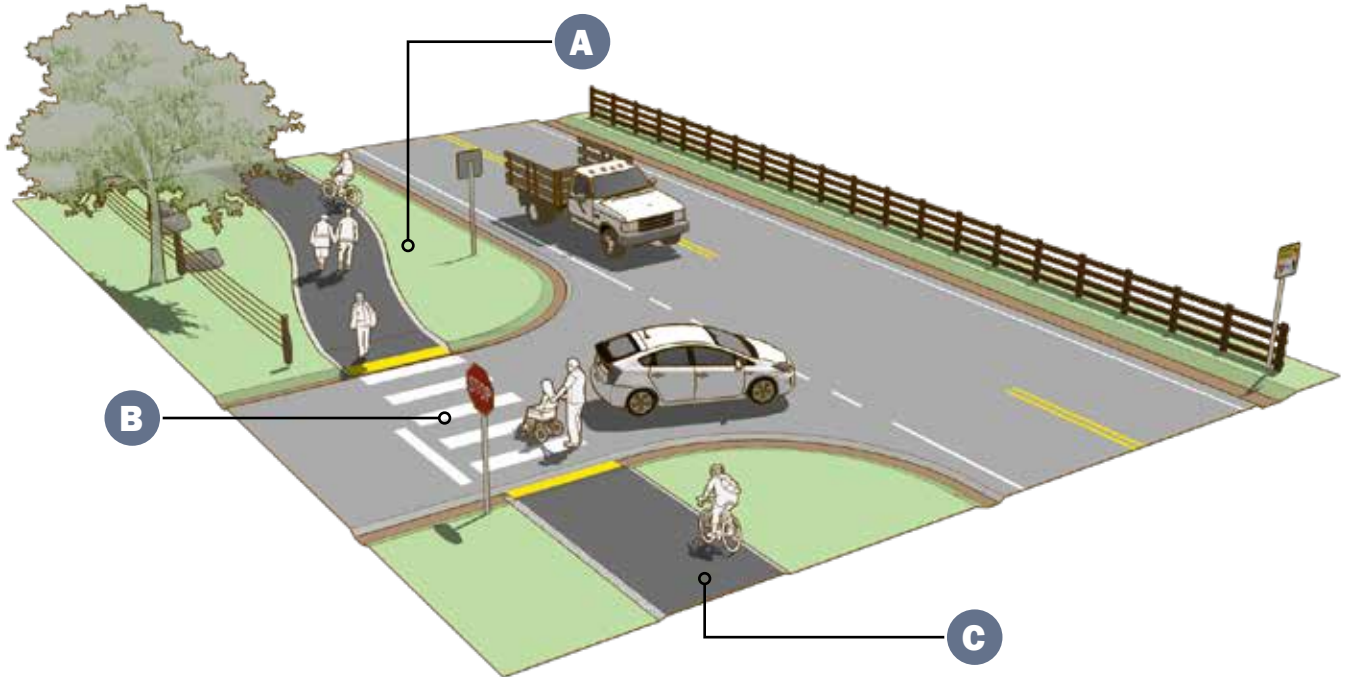


- A. Intersection Crossings: Enhancements such as median crossing islands or raised crossings can increase comfort and safety for path users.
- B. Network Connection Opportunities: When constructed outside of a roadway corridor, a shared use path offers a low-stress experience away from motor vehicles.
- C. Roadway Crossings: Where paths intersect roads, enhancements should improve conditions for path users.
- D. Shared Use Path: The single path combines bicyclists and pedestrians in both directions.

\* Graphics and text are used from the Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide FHWA-HEP-17-024

## Sidepath

A sidepath is a bidirectional shared use path located immediately adjacent and parallel to a roadway. Sidepaths can offer a high-quality experience for users of all ages and abilities as compared to on-roadway facilities in heavy traffic environments, allow for reduced roadway crossing distances, and community character.

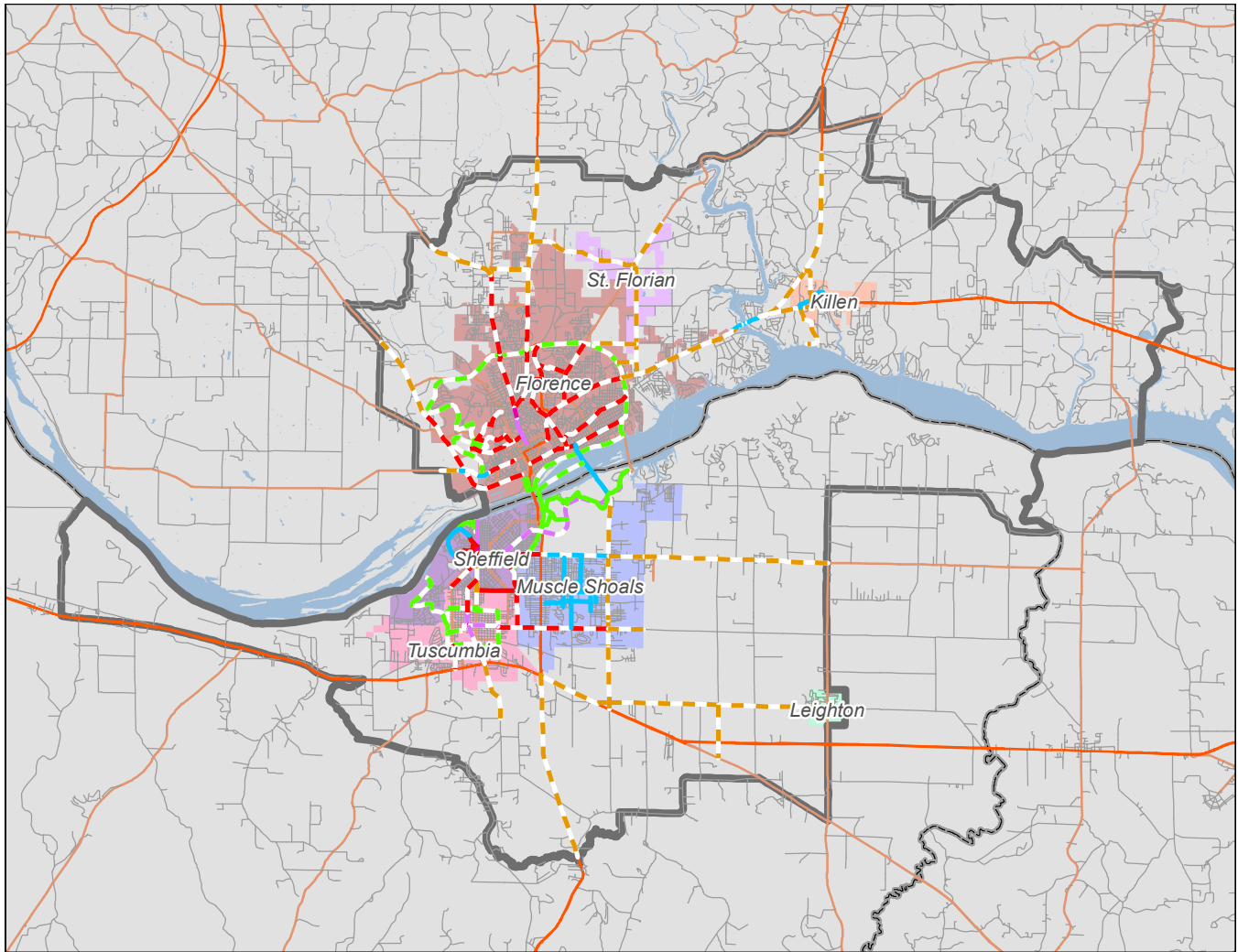


- A. Roadway Separation: An unpaved separated space from the roadway enhances comfort and promotes visibility at crossings.
- B. Intersection Treatments: Geometric design at intersections slows motorists and prioritizes bicyclists and pedestrians.
- C. Sidepath: Sidepaths serve bidirectional pedestrian and bicyclist travel.

\* Graphics and text are used from the Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide FHWA-HEP-17-024

## PROPOSED ROUTES

During the development of the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update, the most important theme continuously discussed was improving connectivity. Consideration during the development of the proposed routes was given to improving connectivity between the seven municipalities and also within each municipality. An assessment was conducted of existing facilities, previously planned facilities and the needs of each municipality. As a result, Figure 1 illustrates the routes that were designated during the planning process as potential bicycle facilities.



**Figure 1**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**



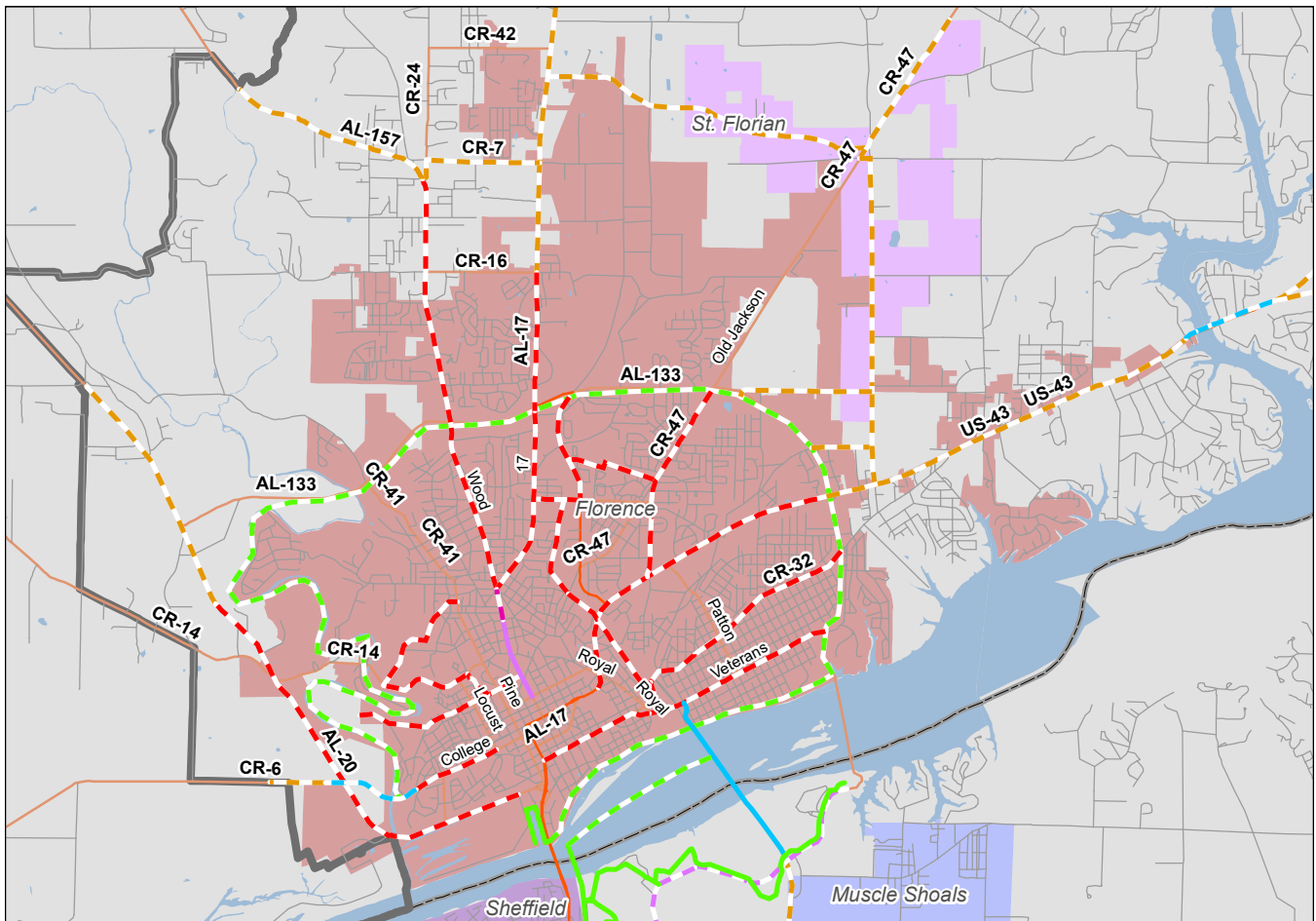
*Legend*

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| — Proposed Bicycle Boulevard | — Existing Bicycle Boulevard |
| — Proposed Shared Use Path   | — Existing Shared Use Path   |
| — Proposed Bike Lanes        | — Existing Bike Lanes        |
| — Proposed Sidepath          | — Existing Sidepath          |
| — Proposed Yield Roadway     | — Shoals Area MPO Boundary   |
| — Proposed Paved Shoulders   | — County Limit               |

## Florence

The proposed routes for Florence within the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are illustrated in Figure 2. Major considerations within Florence were given to the planned facilities included in the Florence Comprehensive Plan and connecting downtown to the surrounding core neighborhoods and subdivisions to the north.

The City has recently completed a bike lane along North Wood Avenue between Tuscaloosa Street and Gilbert Court. This facility improvement is an excellent example in the MPO of improvement connectivity to major desintations.



**Figure 2**  
**Florence Highlight of the**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**



**Legend**

- Proposed Bicycle Boulevard
- Proposed Shared Use Path
- Proposed Bike Lanes
- Proposed Sidepath
- Proposed Yield Roadway
- Proposed Paved Shoulders
- Existing Bicycle Boulevard
- Existing Shared Use Path
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Existing Sidepath
- Shoals Area MPO Boundary
- County Limit



**Key Considerations for Florence:**

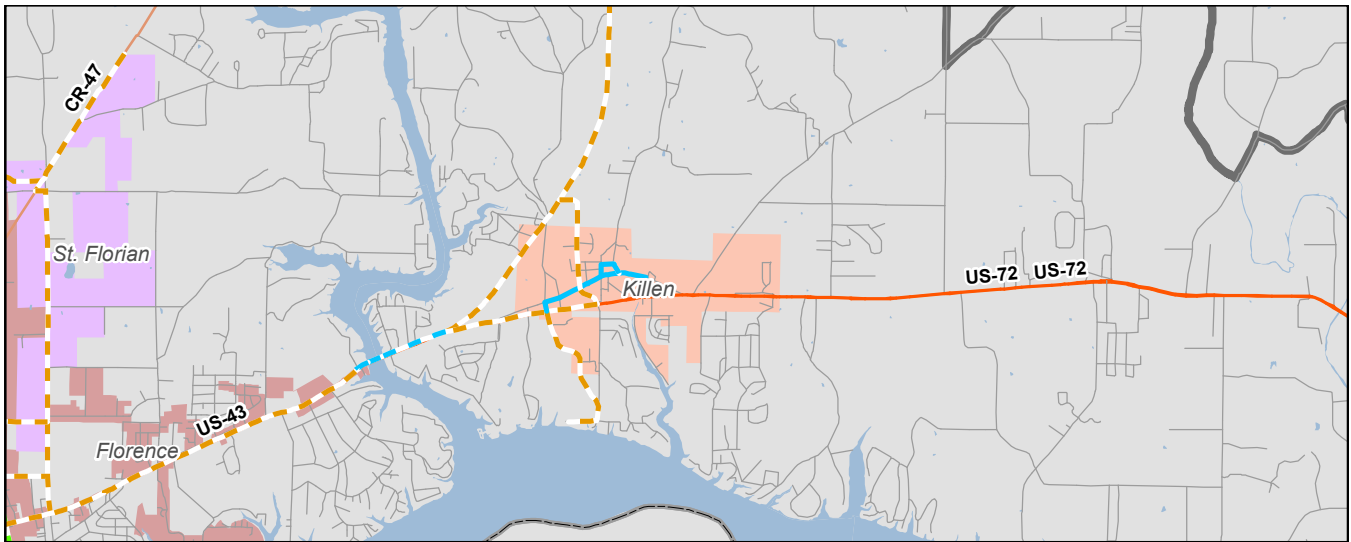
- Greenway along Cypress Creek and Cox Creek Parkway
- Greenway extension along the Tennessee River to connect the existing Singing River Bridge, which is the only bicycle pedestrian crossing along the Tennessee River, with the Florence Marina and River Heritage Park
- On-Street Facilities along College Street extension and proposed bridge over Cypress Creek to connect to AL-20 and the Sportsplex
- Bike lanes and paved shoulders along identified corridors connecting residential subdivisions north of the City with downtown and other destinations
- Opportunities for road diets to convert right-of-way to bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities



The Singing River Bridge between Muscle Shoals and Florence is a critical connector within the regional bicycle and pedestrian network.

**Killen**

Important consideration within the Killen area of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was given to connecting to the proposed route along US-43 to the Shoal Creek Bridge. On-street facilities are proposed to connect with Killen Park and the Lock Six Day Use Area.



**Figure 3**  
**Killen Highlight of the**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

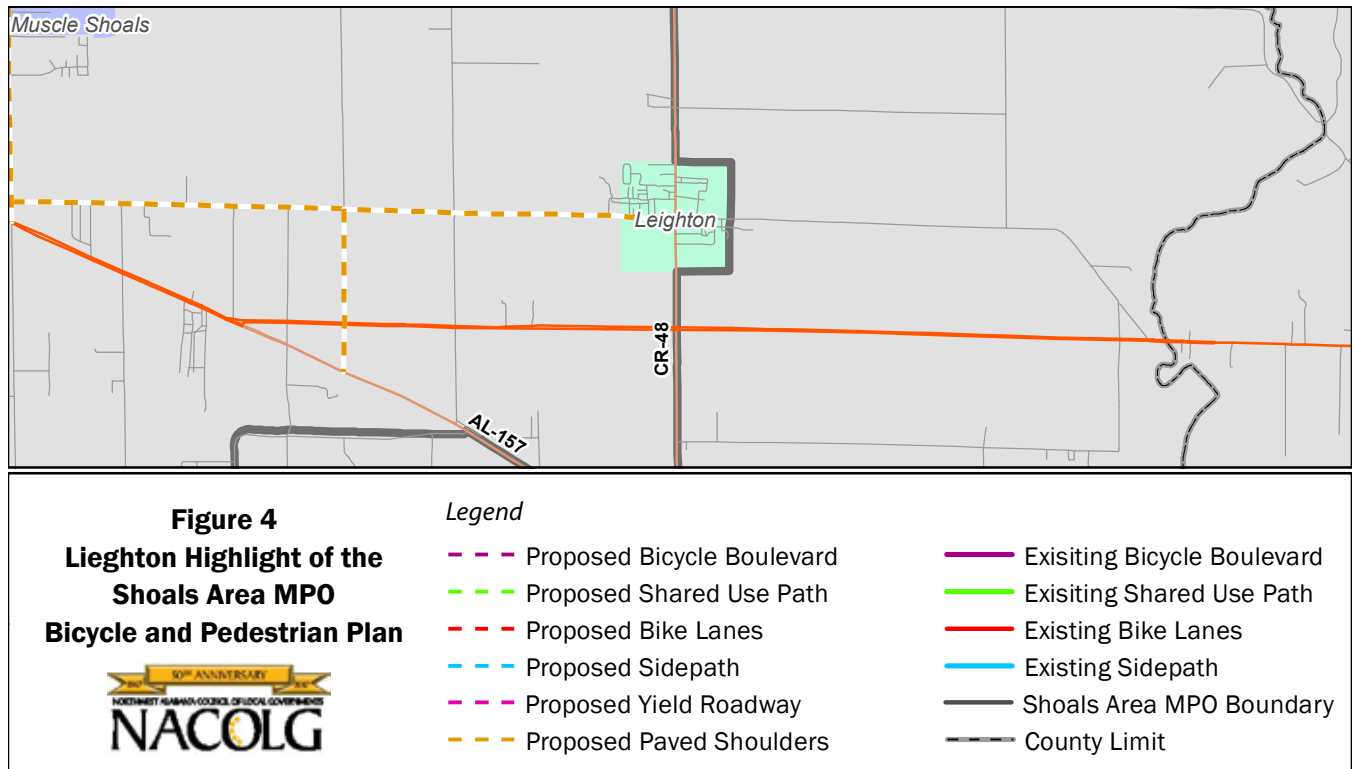


**Legend**

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| - - - Proposed Bicycle Boulevard | — Existing Bicycle Boulevard |
| - - - Proposed Shared Use Path   | — Existing Shared Use Path   |
| - - - Proposed Bike Lanes        | — Existing Bike Lanes        |
| - - - Proposed Sidepath          | — Existing Sidepath          |
| - - - Proposed Yield Roadway     | — Shoals Area MPO Boundary   |
| - - - Proposed Paved Shoulders   | — County Limit               |

### Leighton

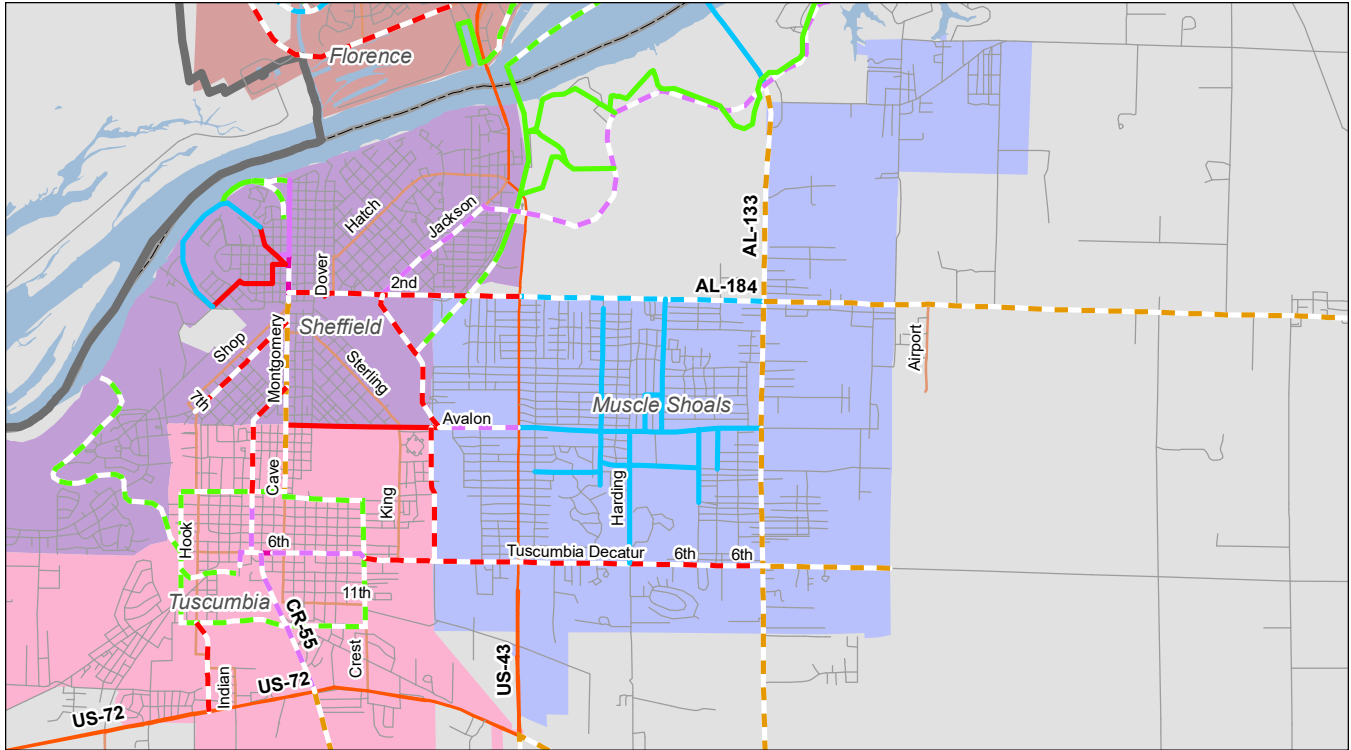
Because of the rural nature of Leighton, a paved shoulder is proposed to connect the community to the remainder of the bicycle and pedestrian network. This route is important to the overall network of the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan because it provides a safe route to access rural areas of Colbert County which are preferred by long distance road bicyclists.



### Muscle Shoals

The proposed routes for Muscle Shoals within the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are illustrated in Figure 5. Because of the wide rights-of-way along the major thoroughfares in Muscle Shoals and close proximity to community facilities, the plan proposes physically separated facilities and visually separated facilities to improve internal connectivity.

An important connection with the Muscle Shoals Area is the proposed on-street facility located along AL-133 and North Wilson Dam Road, which leads to the Singing River Bridge. This bridge is the only crossing over the Tennessee River which has an existing dedicated bicycle and pedestrian path. Several proposed and existing routes within the Muscle Shoals area lead to this important connection over the river.



**Figure 5**  
**Muscle Shoals Highlight of the**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**



*Legend*

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| — Proposed Bicycle Boulevard | — Existing Bicycle Boulevard |
| — Proposed Shared Use Path   | — Existing Shared Use Path   |
| — Proposed Bike Lanes        | — Existing Bike Lanes        |
| — Proposed Sidepath          | — Existing Sidepath          |
| — Proposed Yield Roadway     | — Shoals Area MPO Boundary   |
| — Proposed Paved Shoulders   | — County Limit               |

*Key Considerations for Muscle Shoals:*

- Paved shoulder along AL-133, Wilson Dam Road, to connect to the Singing River Bridge, which is the only bicycle/pedestrian crossing along the Tennessee River
- Physically separated facilities and visually separated facilities on identified major corridors connecting to surround communities
- Connections to the TVA Reservation Network of trails
- Connection between the existing Avalon Avenue bike lanes and the network of sidewalks and other facilities in Muscle Shoals

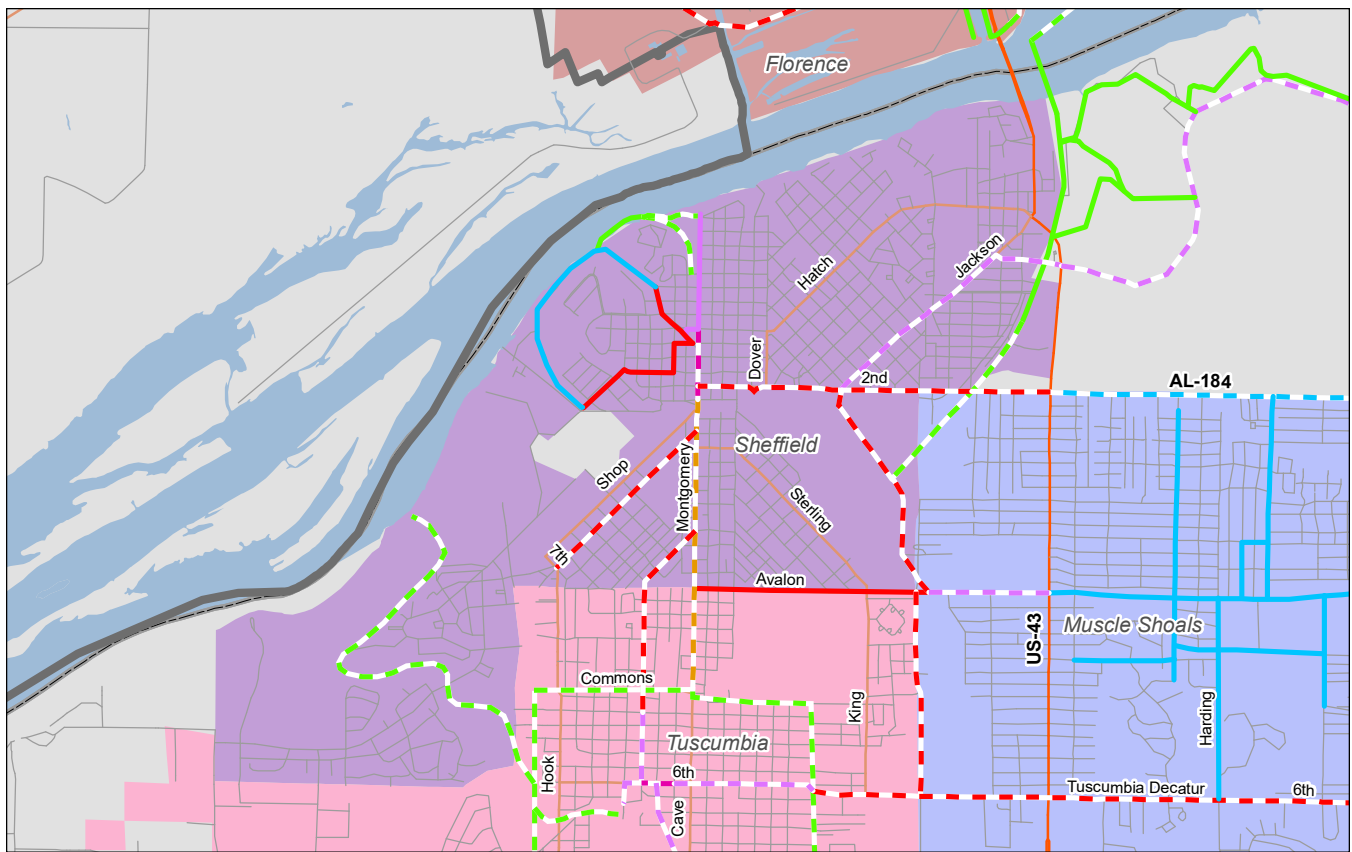
### Sheffield

Sheffield is the community within the Shoals MPO Area that has the most dedicated on-street bicycle facilities along with an existing shared use trail. From those facilities other important connections have been identified to Muscle Shoals, Tuscumbia and the TVA Reservation.



The Old Railroad Bridge Overlook as seen from the Florence riverfront.

An important connection of note for Sheffield is the potential development of a greenway along Patton Island to connect the Old Railroad Bridge to the Signing River Bridge. Currently, the Old Railroad Bridge extends to Patton Island as a river overlook, but with a connection to the island, it could become a second critical connection across the river.



**Figure 6**  
**Sheffield Highlight of the**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**



*Legend*

- Proposed Bicycle Boulevard
- Proposed Shared Use Path
- Proposed Bike Lanes
- Proposed Sidepath
- Proposed Yield Roadway
- Proposed Paved Shoulders
- Existing Bicycle Boulevard
- Existing Shared Use Path
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Existing Sidepath
- Shoals Area MPO Boundary
- County Limit

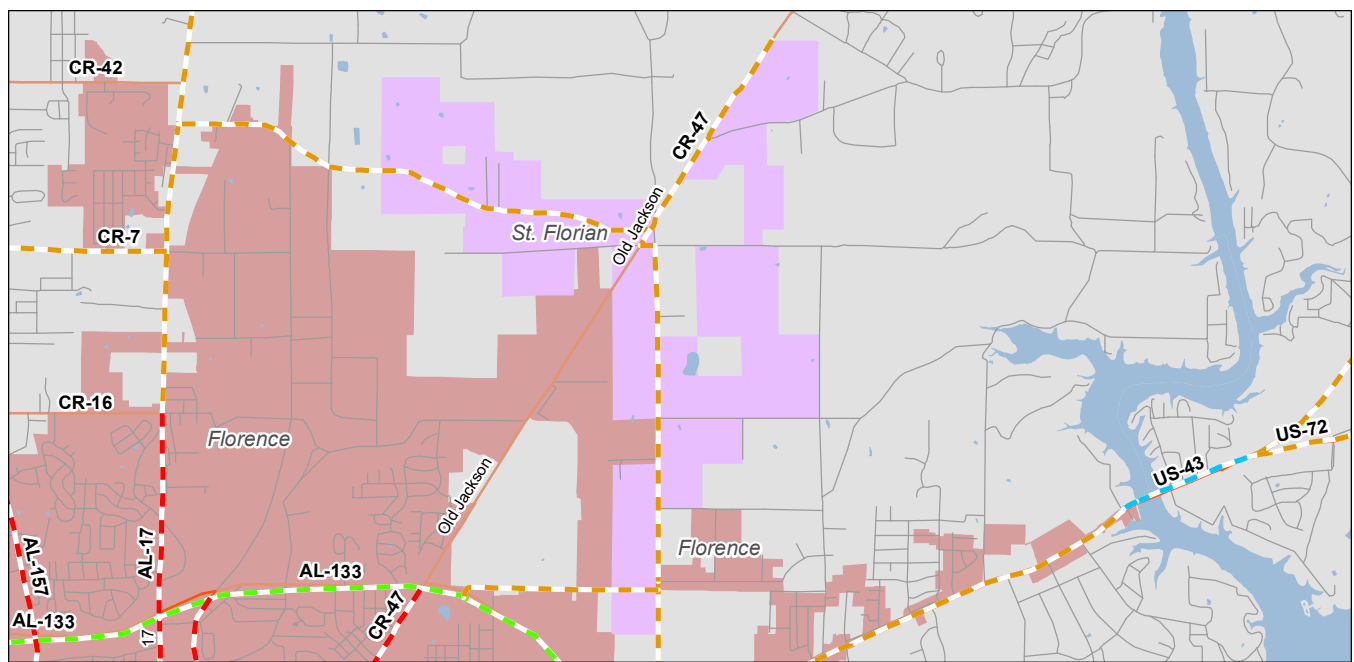


**Key Considerations for Sheffield:**

- Physically separated facilities and visually separated facilities on identified major corridors connecting to surrounding communities
- Greenway along Patton Island connecting the Old Railroad Bridge to the Singing River Bridge, which is the only bicycle/pedestrian crossing along the Tennessee River
- Greenway along Spring Creek connecting to Tuscumbia Landing along the Tennessee River
- Extension of Shared Use Trail from Ashe Boulevard along an abandoned rail line
- Connections between the existing Avalon Avenue bike lanes and other proposed facilities
- Facilities connecting to Inspiration Landing

**St. Florian**

Important considerations for St. Florian in the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan include two important connections to Florence. Along County Road 47, Jackson Highway, are several residential subdivisions and the town center of St. Florian which will be connected back into Florence and the greenway system.



**Figure 7**  
**St. Florian Highlight of the**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**



*Legend*

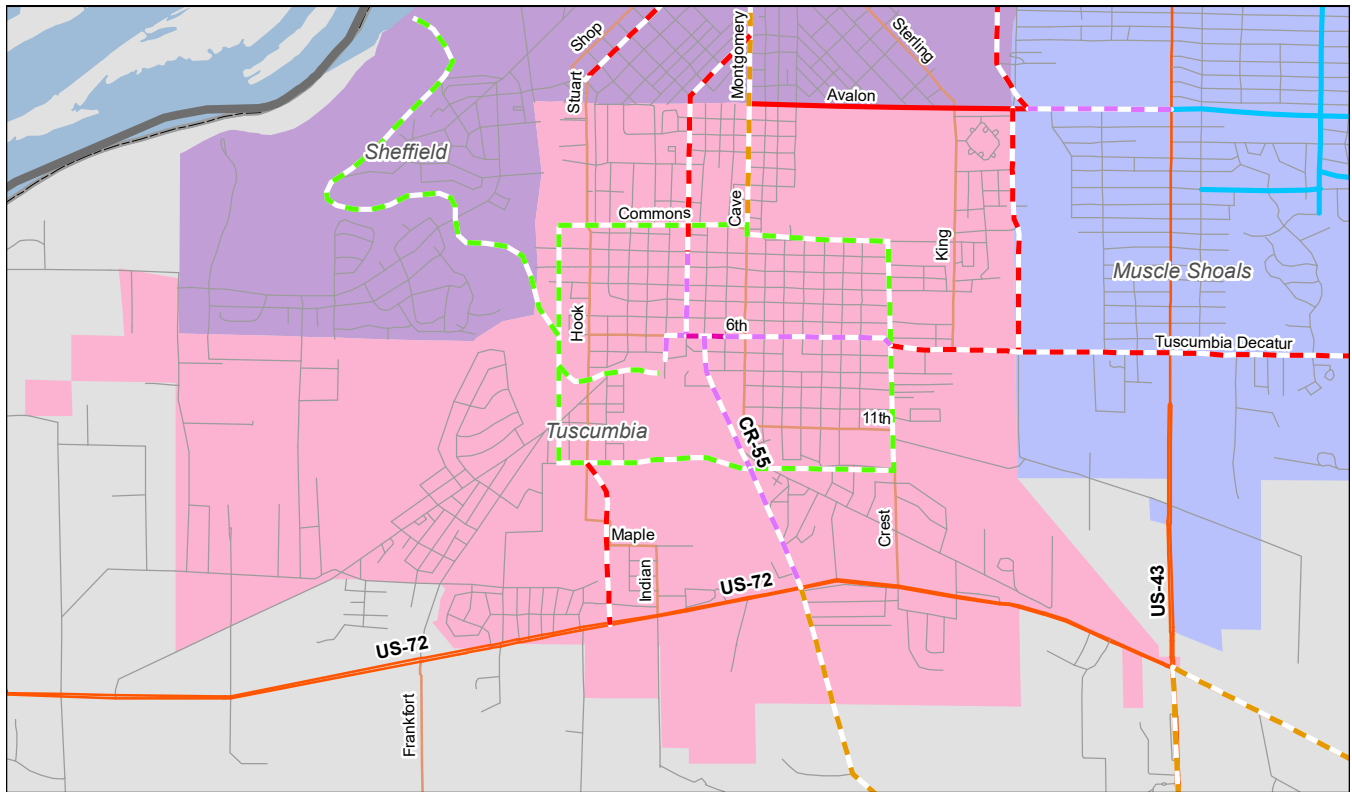
- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| — Proposed Bicycle Boulevard | — Existing Bicycle Boulevard |
| — Proposed Shared Use Path   | — Existing Shared Use Path   |
| — Proposed Bike Lanes        | — Existing Bike Lanes        |
| — Proposed Sidepath          | — Existing Sidepath          |
| — Proposed Yield Roadway     | — Shoals Area MPO Boundary   |
| — Proposed Paved Shoulders   | — County Limit               |

## Tuscumbia

As a City with a Commons, Tuscumbia has a unique opportunity to develop a shared use path that could encircle the community. This path would provide strong connections between many of the neighborhoods in Tuscumbia and provide for connections to other routes back downtown as well as the surrounding communities. Also, another connection that could be established is a shared use path from Spring Park along Spring Creek to Tuscumbia Landing on the Tennessee River.

### Key Considerations for Tuscumbia:

- Shared use path around the Commons which could provide connectivity for existing neighborhoods to surrounding communities and to downtown
- Shared use path along Spring Creek connecting to Tuscumbia Landing along the Tennessee River
- Bike lanes along Veterans Boulevard connecting the Commons with the Alabama Music Hall of Fame
- Physically separated facilities and visually separated facilities on identified major corridors connecting to surrounding communities



**Figure 8**  
**Tuscumbia Highlight of the**  
**Shoals Area MPO**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**



### Legend

- |                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - - - Proposed Bicycle Boulevard | Existing Bicycle Boulevard |
| - - - Proposed Shared Use Path   | Existing Shared Use Path   |
| - - - Proposed Bike Lanes        | Existing Bike Lanes        |
| - - - Proposed Sidepath          | Existing Sidepath          |
| - - - Proposed Yield Roadway     | Shoals Area MPO Boundary   |
| - - - Proposed Paved Shoulders   | County Limit               |

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

One of the most effective tools to improve safety of bicyclists in the Shoals MPO Area would be establishing educational programs. These courses should be taught through a variety of outlets so that they have the ability to reach a larger audience in the area. Courses should be tailored to the needs of the cyclist, providing for children, experienced road cyclists, recreational cyclists, and others. Established local partners, such as the local bike club, UNA and NWSCC, could serve to generate the demand and promotion of such events.

To further the need for education in the area, another important consideration would be to assist in establishing League Cycling Instructor(s) in the area. This is a person trained by the League of American Bicyclists who is able to teach cycling safety and technique to children and adults.

## FUNDING SOURCES

The cost associated with recommendations and strategies in this plan is more than is available through local resources. To help alleviate the local funding deficiency, included are several resources for consideration. Resources are available through federal sources, public/private partnerships, and other private sources. Many communities involved with bicycle and pedestrian improvements are choosing to leverage local money as a match for outside funding sources.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

The adoption of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) has generally continued many of the previous funding mechanisms of the Moving Ahead for Progress for the 21st Century (MAP-21) and other previous programs. For the most current information and relevant facts regarding this federal funding source, please refer to the following links:

- [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/legislation/sec217.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/legislation/sec217.cfm)
- <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/transportationalternativesfs.pdf>
- <http://www.bikeleague.org/content/what-know-about-fast-act>

The following table also provides an overview of the federal funds available as they relate to a wide variety of bicycle and pedestrian projects, provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Funding Opportunities U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds

Revised August 12, 2016

This table indicates potential eligibility for pedestrian and bicycle projects under U.S. Department of Transportation surface transportation funding programs. Additional restrictions may apply. See notes and basic program requirements below, and see program guidance for detailed requirements. Project sponsors should fully integrate nonmotorized accommodation into surface transportation projects. Section 1404 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act modified 23 U.S.C. 109 to require federally-funded projects on the National Highway System to consider access for other modes of transportation, and provides greater design flexibility to do so.

Activity or Project Type	U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds														
	TIGER	TIFIA	FTA	ATU	CMAQ	HSIP	NHPP	STBG	TA	RTP	SRTS	PLAN	NHTSA 402	NHTSA 405	FLTP
Access enhancements to public transportation (includes benches, bus pads)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$						\$
ADA/504 Self Evaluation / Transition Plan										\$					
Bicycle plans										\$					
Bicycle helmets (project or training related)										\$					
Bicycle helmets (safety promotion)										\$			\$*		
Bicycle lanes on road	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Bicycle parking	~\$	~\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Bike racks on transit	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Bicycle share (capital and equipment; not operations)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Bicycle storage or service centers at transit hubs	~\$	~\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Bridges / overcrossings for pedestrians and/or bicyclists	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Bus shelters and benches	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Coordinator positions (State or local)									\$ 1 per State	\$	\$	\$			\$
Crosswalks (new or retrofit)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Curb cuts and ramps	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Counting equipment										\$	\$	\$			\$
Data collection and monitoring for pedestrians and/or bicyclists										\$	\$	\$			\$
Historic preservation (pedestrian and bicycle and transit facilities)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Landscaping, streetscaping (pedestrian and/or bicycle route; transit access); related amenities (benches, water fountains); generally as part of a larger project	~\$	~\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Lighting (pedestrian and bicyclist scale associated with pedestrian/bicyclist project)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Maps (for pedestrians and/or bicyclists)			\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$*
Paved shoulders for pedestrian and/or bicyclist use	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$

**Key:** \$ = Funds may be used for this activity (restrictions may apply). \$\* = See program-specific notes for restrictions. ~\$ = Eligible, but not competitive unless part of a larger project.

\* Table provided by the Federal Highway Administration



Activity or Project Type	U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds														
	TIGER	TIEA	FTA	ATI	CMAQ	HSIP	NHPP	STBG	IA	RTP	SRTS	PLAN	NHTSA 402	NHTSA 405	FLITP
Pedestrian plans															
Recreational trails															
Road Diets (pedestrian and bicycle portions)															
Road Safety Assessment for pedestrians and bicyclists															
Safety education and awareness activities and programs to inform pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on ped/bike safety															
Safety education positions															
Safety enforcement (including police patrols)															
Safety program technical assessment (for peds/bicyclists)															
Separated bicycle lanes															
Shared use paths / transportation trails															
Sidewalks (new or retrofit)															
Signs / signals / signal improvements															
Signed pedestrian or bicycle routes															
Spot improvement programs															
Stormwater impacts related to pedestrian and bicycle projects															
Traffic calming															
Trail bridges															
Trail construction and maintenance equipment															
Trail/highway intersections															
Trailside and trailhead facilities (includes restrooms and water, but not general park amenities; see guidance)															
Training															
Training for law enforcement on ped/bicyclist safety laws															
Tunnels / undercrossings for pedestrians and/or bicyclists															

Key: \$ = Funds may be used for this activity (restrictions may apply). \$\* = See program-specific notes for restrictions. ~\$ = Eligible, but not competitive unless part of a larger project.

**Abbreviations**  
 ADA/504: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 / Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
 TIGER: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grant program  
 TIEA: Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (loans)  
 FTA: Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds  
 ATI: Associated Transit Improvement (1% set-aside of FTA)  
 CMAQ: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program  
 HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program  
 NHPP: National Highway Performance Program  
 STBG: Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

**IA:** Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program)  
**RTP:** Recreational Trails Program  
**SRTS:** Safe Routes to School Program / Activities  
**PLAN:** Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) or Metropolitan Planning funds  
**NHTSA 402:** State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program  
**NHTSA 405:** National Priority Safety Programs (Nonmotorized safety)  
**FLITP:** Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Programs (Federal Lands Access Program, Federal Lands Transportation Program, Tribal Transportation Program, Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects)

**Program-specific notes**  
 Federal-aid funding programs have specific requirements that projects must meet, and eligibility must be determined on a case-by-case basis. For example:

\* Table provided by the Federal Highway Administration

- TIGER: Subject to annual appropriations.
  - TIFIA: Program offers assistance only in the form of secured loans, loan guarantees, or standby lines of credit, but can be combined with other grant sources, subject to total Federal assistance limitations.
  - FTA/ATI: Project funded with FTA transit funds must provide access to transit. See [Bikes and Transit](#) and the FTA Final Policy Statement on the [Eligibility of Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements under Federal Transit Law](#).
    - Bicycle infrastructure plans and projects funded with FTA funds must be within a 3 mile radius of a transit stop or station, or if further than 3 miles, must be within the distance that people could be expected to safely and conveniently bike to use the particular stop or station.
    - Pedestrian infrastructure plans and projects funded with FTA funds must be within a ½ mile radius of a transit stop or station, or if further than ½ mile, must be within the distance that people could be expected to safely and conveniently walk to use the particular stop or station.
    - FTA funds cannot be used to purchase bicycles for bike share systems.
    - FTA encourages grantees to use FHWA funds as a primary source for public right-of-way projects.
  - CMAQ projects must demonstrate emissions reduction and benefit air quality. See the CMAQ guidance at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/) for a list of projects that may be eligible for CMAQ funds. Several activities may be eligible for CMAQ funds as part of a bicycle and pedestrian-related project, but not as a highway project. CMAQ funds may be used for shared use paths, but may not be used for trails that are primarily for recreational use.
  - HSIP projects must be consistent with a State’s [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) and either (1) correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, or (2) address a highway safety problem.
  - NHPP projects must benefit National Highway System (NHS) corridors.
  - STBG and TA Set-Aside: Activities marked “SRTS” means eligible only as an SRTS project benefiting schools for kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Bicycle transportation nonconstruction projects related to safe bicycle use are eligible under STBG, but not under TA (23 U.S.C. 217(a)).
  - RTP must benefit recreational trails, but for any recreational trail use. RTP projects are eligible under TA and STBG, but States may require a transportation purpose.
  - SRTS: FY 2012 was the last year for SRTS funds, but SRTS funds are available until expended.
    - Maps: System maps and GIS;
    - Safety education and awareness: for transportation safety planning;
    - Safety program technical assessment: for transportation safety planning;
    - Training: bicycle and pedestrian system planning training.
  - Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Programs (FLTTP) projects must provide access to or within Federal or tribal lands:
    - Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP): Open to State and local entities for projects that provide access to or within Federal or tribal lands.
    - Federal Lands Transportation Program: For Federal agencies for projects that provide access within Federal lands.
    - Tribal Transportation Program: available for federally-recognized tribal governments for projects within tribal boundaries and public roads that access tribal lands.
  - NHTSA 402 project activity must be included in the State’s Highway Safety Plan. Contact the State Highway Safety Office for details: <http://www.ghsa.org/html/about/shsos.html>
  - NHTSA 405 funds are subject to State eligibility, application, and award. Project activity must be included in the State’s Highway Safety Plan. Contact the State Highway Safety Office for details: <http://www.ghsa.org/html/about/shsos.html>
- Cross-cutting notes**
- FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Guidance: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/)
  - **Applicability of 23 U.S.C. 217(i) for Bicycle Projects:** 23 U.S.C. 217(i) requires that bicycle facilities “be principally for transportation, rather than recreation, purposes”. However, sections 133(b)(6) and 133(h) list “recreational trails projects” as eligible activities under STBG. Therefore, the requirement in 23 U.S.C. 217(i) does not apply to recreational trails projects (including for bicycle use) using STBG funds. Section 217(i) continues to apply to bicycle facilities other than trail-related projects, and section 217(i) continues to apply to bicycle facilities using other Federal-aid Highway Program funds (NHPP, HSIP, CMAQ). The transportation requirement under section 217(i) is applicable only to bicycle projects; it does not apply to any other trail use or transportation mode.
  - There may be occasional DOT or agency incentive grants for specific research or technical assistance purposes.
  - Aspects of many DOT initiatives may be eligible as individual projects. For example, activities above may benefit Ladders of Opportunity, safe, comfortable, interconnected networks; environmental justice; equity; etc.

\* Table provided by the Federal Highway Administration

In addition to the sources identified in the previous table, there are two other sources for federal funds:

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers financial grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and improvements to community facilities and services, especially in low and moderate-income areas. Municipalities and county governments must prepare a grant application for a specific bicycle or pedestrian project and then compete with other governments for funding. Entitlement cities receive a set amount of these funds per year.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – This 50/50 matching grant program is administered by state agencies in cooperation with the National Park Service. Program funds are intended for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas; trails are one priority of this program.

## **LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES**

The following are some sources that may potentially generate funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities:

- Local and Statewide Bicycle Clubs – These clubs can serve as a funding source for bicycle improvements, namely bicycle route signage projects, which tend to be less costly.
- Bond Referendums for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities – Communities across the nation have successfully placed on local ballots propositions to support rails-to-trails projects and other types of bicycle-pedestrian facilities.
- Capital Improvements Program – One measure of local government commitment to bicycle and pedestrian projects is a yearly appropriation for facility development in the capital improvements program.
- Private Sector Donations, Dedications, and Easements – Local industries and private businesses and residents may agree to provide support for trail development through cash donations, donations of services, such as equipment and labor, and reductions in the cost of materials purchased for the facilities. Also, landowners can donate portions of property, such as previously acquired railroad corridors, for the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

APPENDIX

5

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following pages include completed forms received during the public comment period.





**Shoals Area MPO  
Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

**August 29, 2017**

**Comment Form**

• Name: [redacted for privacy] \_\_\_\_\_

• Which place do you live? (Please check one box)

- Florence       Killen       Leighton       Muscle Shoals
- Sheffield       St. Florian       Tuscumbia       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the space below to comment on the draft Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Your comments will be taken into consideration for the final draft of the Plan, which will be adopted by the Shoals Area MPO. If additional space is needed, please attach a separate piece of paper.

Add bike lanes to corridors planned to serve  
Inspiration Landing and Tuscumbia Landing, east and west.

Add ~~more~~ bike and pedestrian lanes from Tuscumbia  
Landing through Park West and on to Downtown Tuscumbia  
and Spring Park as close as possible to the original  
railroad bed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All comments due by September 19, 2017

You may send comments to:

Mr. Jesse Turner  
NACOLG  
PO Box 2603,  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661.  
Phone: (256)389-0513.  
Email: jturner@nacolg.org

Send comments via the online form:

<http://gmcplanning.com/shoalsbikepedcomments>

Shoals Area  
Metropolitan Planning Organization

RESOLUTION 18-01

**Endorsing the Shoals Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update**

**WHEREAS**, the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG) is the organization designated by the Governor of the State of Alabama as recipient of Shoals Urbanized Area planning funds for the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and who is responsible, together with the State of Alabama, for implementing the applicable provisions of 23 USC 134 and 135 (amended by the FAST Act, Sections 1201 and 1202, December 2015); 42 USC 2000d-1, 7401; 23 CFR 450 and 500; 40 CFR 51 and 93; and

**WHEREAS**, various sections in the United States Code (U.S.C.) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in Title 23—Highways, Title 49—Transportation, and Title 42—The Public Health and Welfare describe how bicyclists and pedestrians of all abilities should be involved throughout the planning process, should not be adversely affected by other transportation projects, and should be able to track annual obligations and expenditures on nonmotorized transportation facilities; and,

**WHEREAS**, the scope of the metropolitan planning process "will address the following factors...(2) Increase the safety for motorized and non-motorized users; (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; (4) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life..."; and,

**WHEREAS**, metropolitan transportation plans "...shall, at a minimum, include...existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system..."; and,

**WHEREAS**, the plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs) of all metropolitan areas "shall provide for the development and integrated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities)." 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(2) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(c)(2). 23 CFR 450.324(c) states that the TIP "shall include ...trails projects, pedestrian walkways; and bicycle facilities..."; and,

**WHEREAS**, 23 CFR 450.316(a) states that "The MPOs shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing...representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process."; and,

**WHEREAS**, consistent with the declaration of these provisions, the staff of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG), in cooperation with the Bureau of Transportation Planning and Modal Programs of the Alabama Department of Transportation, has prepared a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Shoals Urban Area; and,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee, that the same body does hereby endorse said Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update.

**ADOPTED THIS 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER 2017**

SIGNED:   
Tim Tubbs, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Jane E. Howard