



Interim Report Task 05 **Pedestrian and Bicyclist**

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HNTB



Mississippi Department of Transportation **MULTIPLAN 2050**

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Agency Involvement	2
2.1 Role of MDOT.....	2
2.2 Metropolitan Planning Organizations	2
2.3 Funding	3
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	3
Transportation Alternatives Program	3
Bridge Formula Program.....	3
Highway Safety Improvement Program	4
2.4 Planning Highlights	4
Complete Streets Initiatives	4
Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment.....	5
Safe System Approach	9
Key Highlights	10
3.0 Statewide Significance	10
4.0 Inventory	11
4.1 Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs	11
4.2 Bicycle Infrastructure	12
4.3 Multi-Use Trails	16
4.4 Recreation Trails	16
4.5 On-Street Routes.....	17
4.6 Scenic Byways	18
4.7 Bridges.....	19
Pedestrian Infrastructure	20
MDOT Projects	21
4.8 Network Usage and Performance.....	21
Activity/Demand	22
4.9 Safety	24
Pedestrian Fatal and Serious Injuries	25
Bicyclist Fatal and Serious Injuries	26

Bicycle and Pedestrian Fatalities 26

5.0 References 28

List of Tables

Table 1. Mississippi Municipalities with Complete Streets Policies 5

Table 2. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Intersection/Non-Intersection and Urban/Rural 7

Table 3. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Functional Class 8

Table 4. The Safe System Approach 10

Table 5: Mississippi Bicycle Infrastructure 14

Table 6. Scenic Byways in Mississippi..... 19

Table 7. Mississippi River Bridge Bicycle Conditions 20

Table 8. Commuting Patterns in Largest Mississippi Cities, 2022..... 23

List of Figures

Figure 1. Age Distribution of VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries 6

Figure 2. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Time of Day and Day of Week 9

Figure 3: Vehicles Available to Workers 16 years and over in households 11

Figure 4: Mississippi Bicycle Map 13

Figure 5. Number of Trips by Distance 24

Figure 6. Pedestrian Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries Trend, 2019 to 2023... 25

Figure 7. Bicyclists Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries Trend, 2019 to 2023 26

Figure 8. Percent of Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes that Involved Pedestrians and Bicyclists in Mississippi, 2019 to 2023 27

1.0 Introduction

The bicycle and pedestrian networks are vital elements of Mississippi's transportation system. A connected multi-modal network helps facilitate active transportation and provides options to residents who do not drive or have access to a car as a means of transport. The US DOT defines active transportation as human-powered mobility, such as walking, biking, or using a mobility device.¹ Some benefits of using active transportation apply to individual users, but many things influence the well-being of the overall community. These benefits range from decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and traffic congestion to cost savings on gas and improved health. One example of this approach to integrating active transportation into multi-modal systems is known as Complete Streets. By implementing Complete Streets, which accommodates all modes of transportation and pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users, safe and convenient access for everyone can be achieved. This policy can be executed at various levels by transportation agencies, councils, and planning groups². Overall, facilities that make active transportation a feasible means of mobility provide benefits that can improve Mississippi residents' quality of life.

This interim report documents the existing conditions of Mississippi's pedestrian and bicycle programs, policies, infrastructure, and safety outcomes. This assessment of Mississippi's existing bicycle and pedestrian network gathers information from the 2045 MULTIPLAN³, Mississippi Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment (2024)⁴, Mississippi Carbon Reduction Strategy (2023)⁵, various Metropolitan Planning

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation. (n.d.). Active Transportation. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/office-secretary/office-policy/active-transportation/active-transportation#:~:text=Climate%20Change%20Mitigation:%20Active%20transportation,climate%20action%20at%20DOT%20here>

² Safe Routes to School. (2010). Mississippi SRTS State Network Complete Streets Fact Sheet. Retrieved November 2024, from https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/MS_SRTS_Ntwk_CS_FactSheet.pdf

³ Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2020). MULTIPLAN 2045 Final Report. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Intermodal%20Planning/Reports/Multimodal/MBI%20Multimodal%20Final%20Report.pdf>

⁴ Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). Mississippi Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Retrieved September 2024, from <https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Highway%20Safety/Plan/2024%20Mississippi%20VRU%20Safety%20Assessment.pdf>

⁵ Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2023). Mississippi Carbon Reduction Strategy. Retrieved September 2024, from <https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Planning/Plan/2023%20MS%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Plan.pdf>

Organization (MPO) plans⁶, League of American Bicyclists Reports⁷, and other plans described herein.

2.0 Agency Involvement

2.1 Role of MDOT

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) is responsible for developing, designing, operating, and maintaining the state's facilities and transportation system in collaboration with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), of which bicycle and pedestrian facilities are a crucial component.

2.2 Metropolitan Planning Organizations

The Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) MPO has a walking and bicycling program that aims to encourage, support, and fund bicycle and pedestrian planning and implementation. The MPO receives \$600,000 annually in Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds from MDOT as provided by funding from BIL⁸. GRPC maintains a pedestrian and bicycle plan component of the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), sustains inventories of bicycle and pedestrian networks, and partners with various agencies and non-profits to encourage the implementation of Complete Streets (CS) and other priority projects.

The Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar (HPFL) MPO developed the "Pathways Master Plan" in April 2015 to facilitate and oversee the development of trails, sidewalks, and bicycle paths to improve connectivity and safety.

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) MPO has also incorporated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure into its long-range transportation planning process. They are developing a 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan alongside MULTIPLAN 2050⁹. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities subcommittee provides input on the transportation planning process regarding pedestrian and bicycle planning, reviews proposed and existing pedestrian and bicycle documentation, and makes recommendations to the Intermodal Technical Committee on matters related to bicycle and pedestrian planning activities. An

⁶ Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2019). Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Hernando, Mississippi. Retrieved September 2024, from <https://www.cityofhernando.org/home/showpublisheddocument/2544/638084333845370000>

⁷ The League of American Bicyclists. (n.d.). Reports and Resources. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://bikeleague.org/reports/>

⁸ Gulf Regional Planning Commission. (n.d.). Walking and Bicycling. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://grpc.com/mpo-programs/walking-and-bicycling/>

⁹ Central Mississippi Planning and Development Project. (n.d.). Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://cmpdd.org/transportation/plans-and-programs/long-range-transportation-plan-lrtp/>

interactive map of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including existing and proposed shared-use paths, bike lanes, bike routes, and sidewalks in the Central Mississippi District, is live on CMPDD's website.

2.3 Funding

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) of 2022, officially known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), made significant strides in addressing the needs of vulnerable road users (VRUs), such as cyclists and pedestrians, by increasing dedicated funding and introducing new initiatives. This includes a doubled baseline for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants, waived local match for State Planning and Research (SP&R), and Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds for CS planning, and a 2.5 percent allocation by the state for CS planning from overall SP&R and PL funds. The BIL also included a requirement that states complete VRU Safety Assessments in tandem with Statewide Highway Safety Plans (SHSP).¹⁰ The VRU Safety Assessment is described in more detail below.

Transportation Alternatives Program

The TAP funds projects like bicycle and pedestrian facilities, recreational trails, Safe Routes to School Projects, and VRU safety assessments. Moving forward, TAP funding will increase in proportion to other surface transportation spending with an allocation of \$1.38 billion to \$1.49 billion, reflecting a 60 to 70 percent increase, so a larger portion of this funding will be made more accessible to local governments and sub-allocated by population. Under this law, small MPOs, nonprofits, and the state are also eligible for funding. Additionally, the new policy addresses equitable access by requiring states to identify and prioritize "high need" communities for TAP funding.¹¹ The definition of the term "high need" can vary from state to state. Some indicators typically included by states in their definition are income level, race, age, disability, and other specific criteria. Mississippi does not explicitly list points or ranking criteria for high-need communities. However, it remains part of the review process where prior funding is considered, and in-person project site reviews are conducted before developing a priority ranking.¹¹

Bridge Formula Program

Under the Bridge Formula Program, projects that replace or rehabilitate a highway bridge deck are required to provide safe accommodations for pedestrians and

¹⁰ Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Fact Sheets. Retrieved from https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/metro_planning.cfm

¹¹ Safe Routes Partnership. (n.d.). Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Background and Resources. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/healthy-communities/policy-change/federal/BIL-background-resources>

bicyclists, provided that the bridge is situated on a highway where they are permitted to travel and that the accommodation can be provided at a reasonable cost¹².

Highway Safety Improvement Program

The BIL also requires pedestrian and bicycle programs and projects to be considered in conjunction with all rehabilitation and new construction of transportation facilities. Part of this legislation includes the allowance of up to 10 percent of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding to be allocated for non-infrastructure spending, such as staffing for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Vision Zero initiatives related to the SHSP. In addition, the VRU Special Rule enacted as part of BIL mandates that states allocate at least 15 percent of HSIP funding for the applicable federal fiscal year towards VRU safety when 15 percent or more of the state's crash fatalities are VRUs in a given time period.

2.4 Planning Highlights

Complete Streets Initiatives

The CS initiative is an approach to planning, designing, and maintaining streets with the aim of making streets safer and accessible to all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists regardless of age or ability. MDOT, several cities, and one MPO have adopted CS in various degrees—from policies to resolutions and ordinances—as shown in Table 1.

¹² Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). Bridges and Structures. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bfp/20220114.cfm>

Table 1. Mississippi Municipalities with Complete Streets Policies

Agency/Municipality	Policy	Level	Year	Population
Columbus, MS	Resolution	City	2010	24,084
Greenwood, MS	Resolution	City	2012	14,490
Hattiesburg, MS	Ordinance 3068	City	2011	48,730
Hernando, MS	Resolution	City	2010	17,138
Jackson, MS	Resolution	City	2015	153,701
Jackson, MS	Executive Order 2017-15	City	2017	153,701
MDOT	Developing a Complete Streets Policy	State	2025	2,961,279
Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO, MS	Complete Streets Policy	Region	2015	
Oxford, MS	Resolution	City	2011	25,416
Pascagoula, MS	Resolution	City	2010	22,010
Ridgeland, MS	Complete Streets Policy	City	2017	24,340
Senatobia, MS	Resolution	City	2012	8,354
Starkville, MS	A Resolution to Adopt a "Complete Streets"	City	2017	24,360
Tupelo, MS	Resolution	City	2010	37,923

Source: Smart Growth America, 2023, retrieved from: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/web-excel-06162023-PDF.pdf>

Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment

Part of the BIL requires all SHSPs to include an evaluation of the safety of VRUs. This mandate highlights the BIL's commitment to promoting safe transportation for all individuals, regardless of their mode of transportation. By incorporating VRU safety assessments into the long-range planning process, the BIL aims to build upon the strategies and information provided in SHSPs, ultimately addressing the unique challenges faced by alternative transportation users or non-motorists. This proactive approach demonstrates not only a dedication to improving road safety for all, but also a recognition of the importance of considering the needs and safety concerns of all members of a community, regardless of their chosen means of transportation.

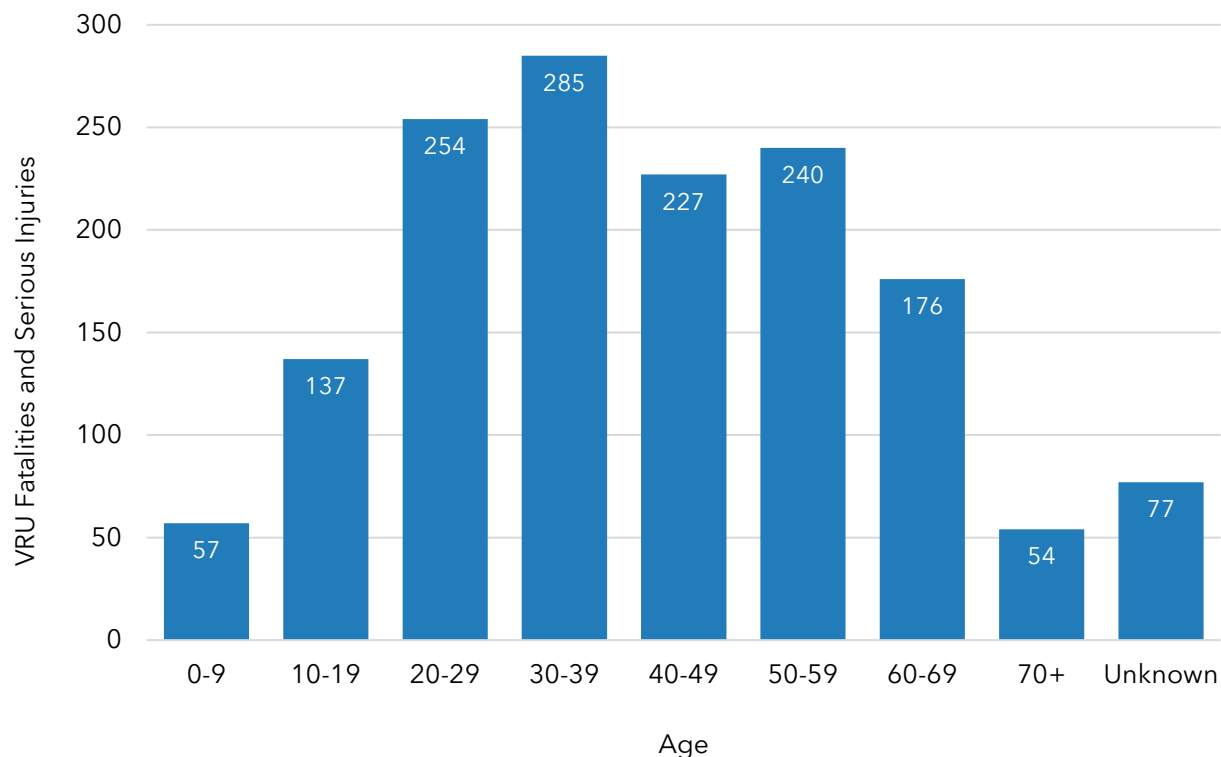
VRU Crash Statistics

The 2024 Mississippi’s VRU Safety Assessment catalogs factors related to VRU crashes in the state. The assessment results illustrate the types of investment that may be needed to mitigate safety concerns by helping to identify patterns in high-risk populations, who may benefit from education and outreach initiatives or patterns in infrastructure design. Crash characteristics described in the report include demographic characteristics, intersection crashes, a breakdown by road functional classification, and the day of the week and time of the crashes. These insights provide a foundation for understanding the current safety conditions of the bicycle and pedestrian network and its users.

Demographic

According to the assessment, most vulnerable road users killed or seriously injured while cycling or walking are male (72%) and fall within the age of 30 to 39. Figure 1 illustrates the age distribution of VRU fatalities and serious injuries. A comparison of the VRUs involved in severe crashes and population data from Mississippi’s 2020 census reveals that Black individuals are overrepresented in severe VRU injuries. Understanding the race of affected road users can inform culturally sensitive safety campaigns that may better resonate with these communities by addressing the unique challenges they face (such as socioeconomic factors that affect transportation choices).

Figure 1. Age Distribution of VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries



Source: Mississippi Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, 2024

Intersections vs. Mid-Block Crashes

Understanding high-risk locations helps prioritize design solutions such as improved traffic signal timing, clearer signage, enhanced crosswalk visibility, and installation of pedestrian refuge islands or bike lanes at these critical points. Data showing higher crash rates at specific intersections can also inspire redesign efforts, such as converting intersections into roundabouts, adding dedicated turn lanes, or even implementing traffic calming measures to slow down vehicular traffic.

As shown in Table 2. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Intersection/Non-Intersection and Urban/Rural, 85 percent of fatal or serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian or bicyclist occurred away from an intersection, either alongside roadways or at a mid-block crossing. Most crashes, approximately 60 percent, occurred in urban areas.

Table 2. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Intersection/Non-Intersection and Urban/Rural

Type	Urban	Rural	Unknown	Total	%
Intersection	193	34	2	229	15%
Non-Intersection	745	493	40	1,278	85%
Total	938	527	42	1,507	100%
%	62%	35%	3%	100%	

Source: Mississippi Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, 2024

Road Functional Classification

Table 3 provides a more detailed breakdown of the locations of these crashes according to roadway classification. Data on crash frequencies by road functional class can help prioritize safety investments helping to narrow down the types of programs that may be most beneficial in addressing safety needs. Different road types require design solutions that can effectively address the specific challenges and circumstances of each roadway. For urban arterials, solutions might emphasize separating pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic, while rural collectors might be designed to ensure safe access points and higher visibility.

The VRU crash analysis showed that urban arterials and collectors accounted for 44 percent of severe crashes despite comprising only 5 percent of total road miles in Mississippi (Table 3). By identifying high-risk road classes, MDOT can ensure that funding is directed toward the most critical areas.

Table 3. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Functional Class

Road Functional Class	Total	%	Miles	%
Urban Local Road	162	11%	9,125	11.8%
Urban Collector	123	8%	1,592	2.1%
Urban Minor Arterial	173	11%	1,094	1.4%
Urban Other Principal Arterial	378	25%	953	1.2%
Urban Freeway or Expressway	8	1%	64	0.1%
Urban Interstate	94	6%	253	0.3%
Rural Local Road	91	6%	44,075	56.9%
Rural Minor Collector	8	1%	2,303	3.0%
Rural Major Collector	124	8%	11,939	15.4%
Rural Minor Arterial	94	6%	3,754	4.8%
Rural Other Principal Arterial	153	10%	1,784	2.3%
Rural Interstate	56	4%	578	0.7%
Unknown	43	3%		
Total	1,507	100%	77,514	100%

Source: Mississippi Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, 2024

Day and Time of Crash

VRU crashes were also broken down by the day of the week and time of day to help reveal patterns in pedestrian and cyclist behavior that contribute to increased risk. If crashes are increasing during nighttime hours, this may indicate a need for lighting; if crashes increase at a particular time of day, this might indicate higher activity levels signaling a need for traffic management.

The VRU assessment showed that weekend hours, especially Friday and Saturday, account for higher numbers of fatal and severe crashes (Figure 2). Evenings, and evenings after 6 PM specifically, present the highest frequency of severe crash incidents. VRU crashes at night may occur more frequently due to poor lighting conditions, which may make it more difficult for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists on the road. Infrastructure and other countermeasures that separate VRUs from vehicular traffic and increase visibility may aid in preventing severe crashes from occurring.

Figure 2. VRU Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Time of Day and Day of Week

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	Total	Percent
12:00 - 2:59 AM	34	12	15	11	16	17	53	158	10%
3:00 - 5:59 AM	21	18	17	13	19	22	17	127	8%
6:00 - 8:59 AM	9	18	15	10	19	19	10	100	7%
9:00 - 11:59 AM	10	9	9	8	12	20	10	78	5%
12:00 - 2:59 PM	12	30	14	27	13	18	19	133	9%
3:00 - 5:59 PM	13	24	38	22	33	33	30	193	13%
6:00 - 8:59 PM	41	41	52	68	77	61	71	411	27%
9:00 - 11:59 PM	45	33	45	35	39	56	54	307	20%
Total	185	185	205	194	228	246	264	1,507	
Percent	12%	12%	14%	13%	15%	16%	18%		

Source: Mississippi Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, 2024

Safe System Approach

The state's plans to address VRU safety take a Safe System Approach¹³, as outlined in Federal guidance, comprised of six principles and five safe system objectives, as shown in Table 4 and explained in the following section of this report.

¹³ U.S. Department of Transportation. (2022). What Is a Safe System Approach? Retrieved 10 1, 2024, from <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem#:~:text=1,transportation%20industry%2C%20and%20emergency%20response.>

Table 4. The Safe System Approach

Safe System Principles	Safe System Objectives
Deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable	Safer Roads
Humans make mistakes	Safer People
Humans are vulnerable	Safer Speeds
Responsibility is shared	Safer Vehicles
Safety is proactive	Post-Crash Care
Redundancy is crucial	N/A

Source: US DOT, 2022

Strategies to address these Safe System areas are based on USDOT Proven Safety Countermeasures¹⁴, a toolkit with specific recommended countermeasures and strategies for reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries. The countermeasures in the toolkit include strategies for:

- Speed management
- Pedestrians and bicyclists
- Roadway departures
- Intersections
- Crosscutting

Key Highlights

MDOT has made significant strides toward improving pedestrian and bicycle safety through its proactive responses to federal legislation and increased funding. As part of this effort, MDOT has integrated VRU assessments into its planning processes to facilitate targeted infrastructure investments. This commitment to safety is further evidenced by their promotion of CS initiatives, which prioritize accessibility for all users. In addition, MDOT engages with communities and launches educational campaigns to raise awareness about active transportation options, including emerging solutions such as e-scooters and bike-sharing programs. Looking ahead, MDOT has set its sights on continuous monitoring and evaluation of safety measures.

3.0 Statewide Significance

The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) ranked Mississippi as the 40th Bicycle-Friendly State in 2017.¹⁵ In 2022, Mississippi ranks 50th in ridership levels, 50th in

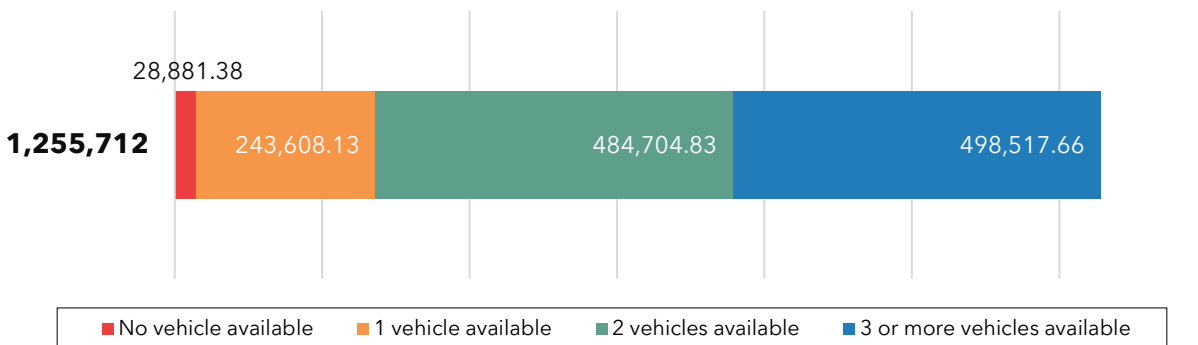
¹⁴ Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). Proven Safety Countermeasures. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

¹⁵ League of American Bicyclists (2017). Bicycle Friendly State Past Performance. Retrieved from https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFS2017_PastPerformance_Chart.pdf.

safety, and 23rd in FHWA spending on biking and walking, with an overall national ranking of 48th.

As shown in Figure 3, there are 28,881 or around 2.2% of workers 16 years and over who live in households with no vehicles available. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates, 35 percent of workers who walk to work are considered people with lower income, ranking Mississippi as the fourth highest nationwide. This highlights the importance of active transportation in increasing the accessibility to jobs for lower-income workers.

Figure 3: Vehicles Available to Workers 16 years and over in households



Source: United States Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022

4.0 Inventory

4.1 Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs

In Mississippi, various programs and organizations promote walking and bicycling while advocating for safer and more accessible infrastructure¹⁶, all listed below:

- The **“Change Lanes to Pass”** campaign is a dedicated and unified statewide effort to increase bicycle safety across the state. The campaign emphasizes the importance of increased education, training, and advocating for improving VRU safety in Mississippi.
- The **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** program¹⁷ is a federally funded program to make bicycling and walking to school a safe and viable option for children, helping to foster a healthy and active lifestyle, and is a program supported by MDOT and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH). Specific SRTS projects are supported through funding made available by the TAP which

¹⁶ Bike Walk Mississippi. (n.d.). Statewide Campaigns and Projects. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://www.bikewalkmississippi.org/current-projects>

¹⁷ Bike Walk Mississippi. (2017). Mississippi Safe Routes to Schools Toolkit. Toolkit. Retrieved September 2024, from https://issuu.com/bikewalkms/docs/srts_toolkit_2017_e767c9de45c6a8

allows for contributions up to 95 percent of the total eligible project cost¹⁸. The BIL expanded the eligibility of the SRTS program to schools through the 12th grade and added eligibility for safe school route projects through the HSIP, including for use in training and education¹⁹.

- The **Students Taking Active Routes Safely (STARS)** program provides pedestrian and bicycle safety instruction focused on second and fifth-grade students, parents, schools, and community members.
- **Bicycle Rodeos** are community-organized events focused on bicycling safety, including instructions on inspecting bikes, helmet fitting, and other activities to promote the proper use of bicycle equipment. The SRTS program has several events and outreach to promote its overall goal.
- **Walk-a-thons** are one-time events aimed to promote active lifestyles for children.
- **Walk-to-School Day** is a one-day event where children, parents, teachers, and community leaders walk to school together to promote being active and making streets friendlier for walking and bicycling.
- **Walking School Buses** are part of the Safe Routes To School (SRTS) program. It consists of organized groups of students walking to and from school on a pre-planned route accompanied by an adult.
- **Rails to Trails Conservancy** transforms abandoned railway lines into walking and/or bicycle trails. The Bicycle Infrastructure section later in this chapter outlines Rails to Trails conversion projects of regional and statewide significance in Mississippi.
- **Bike Walk Mississippi** is a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization to increase bicycle and pedestrian-related access, education, safety, equity, and support by advocating for local and statewide programs, policies, safety, and infrastructure.

4.2 Bicycle Infrastructure

Figure 4 shows a map of the bicycle infrastructure located within Mississippi, including statewide on-street signed routes, on-street non-signed routes, and multi-use trails. Local multi-use trails and on-street bike routes are noted by location. [Table 5](#) provides information on the bicycle trails, trail types, locations, and total route mileage in Mississippi.

¹⁸ Safe Routes Partnership. (2022). Mississippi TAP Competition Info Sheet. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/Mississippi%20TAP%20Competition%20Info%20Sheet.pdf>

¹⁹ Safe Routes Partnership. (n.d.). State Implementation. Retrieved October 2024, from <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/healthy-communities/policy-change/state-implementation>

Figure 4: Mississippi Bicycle Map

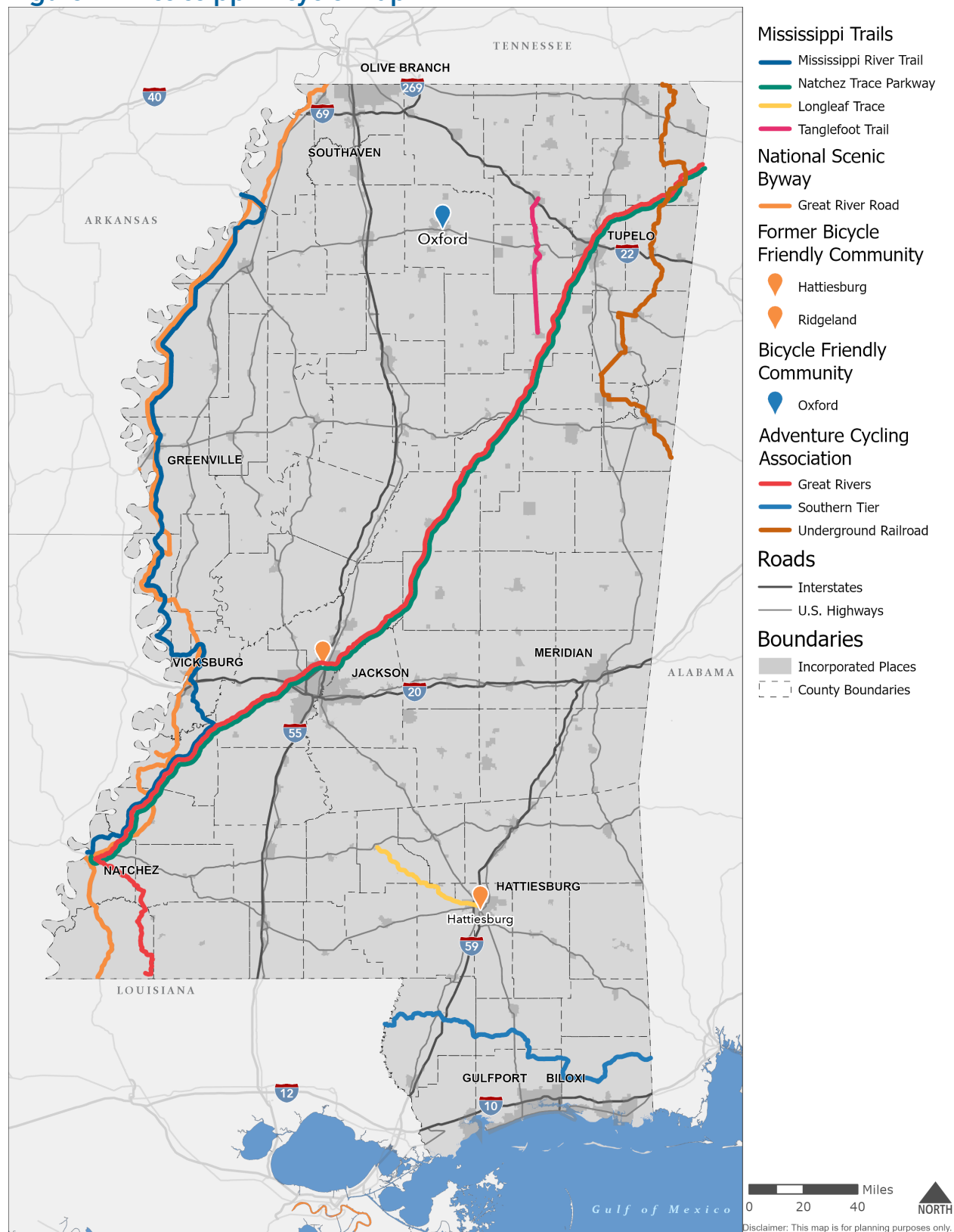


Table 5: Mississippi Bicycle Infrastructure

Name	Type	Location	Owner	Mileage
Natchez Trace Parkway	On-Street Signed Route	Statewide	National Park Service	310
Mississippi River Trail	On-Street Signed Route	Statewide	N/A	249
Great Rivers	On-Street Non-signed Route	Statewide	Adventure Cycling Association	58
Southern Tier	On-Street Non-signed Route	Statewide	Adventure Cycling Association	119
Underground Railroad	On-Street Non-signed Route	Statewide	Adventure Cycling Association	158
Tanglefoot Trail	Multi-Use Trail	Statewide	GM&O Rails-to-Trails Recreational District of North Mississippi	44
Longleaf Trace	Multi-Use Trail	Statewide	Pearl & Leaf Rivers Rails-to-Trails Recreational District	44
Catherine "Kitty" Bryan Dill Memorial Parkway	Multi-Use Trail	West Point	National Recreational Trail	3.75
Biloxi Bay Bridge/Front Beach Drive	Multi-Use Trail	Biloxi - Ocean Springs	Mississippi Department of Transportation	2.9
South Campus Rail Trail	Multi-Use Trail	Oxford	University of Mississippi	2.79
Bay St. Louis Bridge	Multi-Use Trail	Bay St. Louis - Pass Christian	Mississippi Department of Transportation	2.2
Columbus Riverwalk	Multi-Use Trail	Columbus	City of Columbus	1.2
Crosstie Walk	Multi-Use Trail	Cleveland	Columbus and Greenville Railway	0.6

Existing Conditions

Name	Type	Location	Owner	Mileage
City of Pascagoula Historic Bike Route	On-Street Signed Route	Pascagoula	City of Pascagoula	10.4
Live Oaks Bicycle Route	On-Street Signed Route	Ocean Springs	Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	15.5
Biloxi Bike Route	On-Street Signed Route	Biloxi	N/A	6.5
Bay St. Louis Historic Route	On-Street Signed Route	Bay St. Louis	Mississippi Department of Transportation	4
Chisha Foka Multi-Use Trail	Multi-Use Trail	Ridgeland	National Park Service	10
Spillway Road Multi-Use Trail	Multi-Use Trail	Rankin	Rankin County Highway Agency	2.9
North Shore Parkway	Multi-Use Trail	Rankin	Pearl River Valley Water Supply District	4
Ridgeland Mountain Bike Trail	Mountain Biking Trail	Ridgeland	Tri-County Mountain Bike Association	10
Ross Barnett Reservoir Botanical Garden Trail	Recreational Trail	Ridgeland	Pearl River Valley Water Supply District	0.6
Hugh Jack Stubbs Recreational Trail	Recreational Trail	Coahoma	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	5
Tuxchanie National Recreation Trail	Recreational Trail	DeSoto	National Recreational Trail	12.1
Total Mileage				1,076.44

Source: MDOT MULTIPLAN 2045, Longleaf Trace Org, GM&O Rails-to-Trails Recreational District, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, Visit Clarksdale, Visit Starkville, Visit Jackson, AllTrails,

4.3 Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails are designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and other users. They are off-street facilities with an independent right of way and are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or dense vegetation providing more safety and less stress than on-street routes. The two statewide multi-use trails in Mississippi, the Tanglefoot Trail and Longleaf Trace are rails-to-trails projects that transformed former railroad corridors into multi-use paths.

- The **Tanglefoot Trail** is a 44-mile rails-to-trails conversion project along the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area. The trail begins in New Albany and traverses Ecu, Pontotoc, Algoma, and New Houlka, ending in Houston, MS.
- The **Longleaf Trace** is a 44-mile long rails-to-trails conversion project that links Hattiesburg, Sumrall, Bassfield, Carson, and Prentiss within the Pine Belt region of Mississippi.
- The **Chisha Foka Multi-Use Trail** is a 10-mile paved path that runs through historic Choctaw homelands in Ridgeland. The southern terminus of the trail is at milepost 95.8 with the nearest parking at Choctaw Agency (milepost 100.7), and the northern terminus is at milepost 105.6 at the Barnett Reservoir Overlook.

4.4 Recreation Trails

In Mississippi, a recreational trail is a designated path or route used for various outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, and ATV riding. These trails can be found in state parks, forests, and other natural areas, offering scenic views of the state's landscapes, including woods and lakes²⁰.

- The **Ridgeland Mountain Bike Trail** is a 10-mile long fast singletrack with features for all skill levels. It is a privately owned club that was built and is being maintained by the Tri-County Mountain Bike Association. A waiver is required to ride and non-members can ride the trails with a two-day visitor pass.
- The **Ross Barnett Reservoir Botanical Garden Trail** is a 0.6-mile loop trail near Brandon, Mississippi. The trail is accessible at any time and open to the public year-round.
- The **Tuxachanie National Recreation Trail** is a 12.1-mile stretch of dirt surface rail-trail conversion starting from Highway 49 north of Saucier, goes through the heart of the DeSoto National Forest and terminates at the P.O.W. Campground on Bethel Road. The trail is free and open to the public year-round.

²⁰ Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. (n.d.). Recreational Trails. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://www.mdwfp.com/parks-destinations/recreational-trails>

- The **South Campus Rail Trail** is a 5.9-mile out-and-back trail, formerly called Thacker Mountain Trail, near Oxford, Mississippi. The trail has an access point at Front Street and another at Thacker Mountain Road is great for mountain biking and running and is open year-round.
- The **Hugh Jack Stubbs Recreational Trail** is a five-mile, wheelchair-accessible, asphalt-paved trail that begins at Senator Delma Furniss Hospitality Station and ends at Moon Lake Boat Launch. The trail is open to the public year-round.
- The **Catherine 'Kitty' Bryan Dill Memorial Parkway** is a two-mile narrow concrete trail extending through West Point in eastern Mississippi. It forms a loop of approximately four miles by incorporating city streets and connects five local parks along the historic routes of the Columbus & Greenville and Mobile & Ohio railroads. This trail is one of the 1,600 trails supported by the Rails to Trails Conservancy and was designated a National Recreational Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2005.

4.5 On-Street Routes

An on-street route refers to a designated path for travel that utilizes existing streets and roads. These routes are typically marked for specific uses, such as biking, walking, or driving, and are integrated into the public road network. They can include bike lanes, shared lanes, or designated pedestrian paths that run alongside vehicular traffic. On-street routes in Mississippi total the largest share of bicycle facility mileage in the state.

- The **Natchez Trace Parkway** is a 444-mile two-lane roadway that spans three states connecting Natchez, Mississippi to Nashville, Tennessee. The parkway drives through 312 miles of Mississippi scenic views and 10,000 years of North American history. It is part of the Mississippi Scenic Byways Program offering bicycling and other recreational opportunities like hiking and camping. It is owned, operated, and designated as a bicycle route by the National Park Service (NPS). The entire parkway has a 50-mile-per-hour speed limit and restricts commercial vehicles such as trucks.
- The **Mississippi River Trail** is a 3000-mile national route that travels along the entire Mississippi River with designated trail signs starting at Itasca, Minnesota, and continuing down to the Gulf of Mexico. The route in Mississippi snakes along low-volume roadways from the U.S. 49 Bridge at Helena, Arkansas to the U.S. 84 Bridge at Natchez, Mississippi.
- The **Spillway Road Multi-Use Trail** is a 2.9-mile trail that starts from State Route 471, connecting neighborhoods along Spillway Road, and creates a loop to the North Shore Parkway Multi-Use Trail.
- The **North Shore Parkway** is a four-mile asphalt-paved multi-use trail that starts from Spillway Road and ends at Mississippi State Route 471.
- The **Adventure Cycle Association** provides information and maps for a network of cross-country bicycling routes, including three that pass through Mississippi. These routes are the Great Rivers, Southern Tier, and Underground

Railroad. These routes also travel on bicycle-friendly, low-volume roads but do not have signage.

- The **Great Rivers South** is over 1,387 miles, 368 of which run along the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi and connect Muscatine, Iowa to Girardeau, Missouri
- The **Southern Tier** is a 3,055-mile route connecting San Diego, California to St. Augustine, Florida. Within Mississippi, it runs for 119 miles from the Louisiana-Mississippi border near White Sand to the Alabama-Mississippi border near Hurley.
- The **Underground Railroad** is a 2,010-mile route stretching from Mobile, Alabama to Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada. It spans 168 miles in Mississippi, with 10 miles running along the Natchez Trace Parkway. The route starts from Columbus near the Alabama-Mississippi border and ends near Burnsville at the Tennessee-Mississippi border.

4.6 Scenic Byways

The Mississippi Scenic Byways Program is a grassroots effort focused on identifying and designating highways, roads, and street corridors as scenic byways to preserve, enhance, and protect the intrinsic resources of the state for residents and visitors alike. The goal is to find a balance between conservation and land use to improve the community's quality of life, heighten the traveling experience, and provide economic opportunities for the communities along the byway.

The National Scenic Byways Program was established by Congress in 1991 to recognize historic, scenic, and culturally important roads that promote the economic development of communities in the U.S. There are more than 1,200 byways in 50 states, 13 of which can be found in Mississippi. These include one All-American Road, one national scenic byway, and 11 state-designated scenic byways in the state, shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Scenic Byways in Mississippi

Name	Designation	Location	Mileage
Beach Boulevard Scenic Byway	State	Hancock County	13
Brice's Crossroads Battlefield-Chief Tishomingo Scenic Byway	State	Lee, Prentiss County	12.4
Byways to Space	State	Hancock County	30
Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway	State	DeSoto County	31.7
Grand Gulf-Raymond Scenic Byway	State	Claiborne, Hinds County	50
Great River Road National Scenic Byway	State	Mississippi River	275
Gulf Coast Scenic Byway	State	Harrison County	18
Gateway to History Scenic Byway	State	Madison County	32.8
Highway 67 Scenic Byway and Highway 605 Scenic Byway	State	Harrison County	20.68, 15
Lower Mississippi Historic Scenic Byway	State	U.S. Highway 61	101.1
Mississippi Delta Great River Road Scenic Byway	National Scenic Byway	Mississippi River	175
Natchez Trace Parkway	American All- Road	Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee	312
Noxubee Hills Route Scenic Byway	State	Choctaw County, Noxubee County	43
William Faulkner Scenic Byway	State	Mississippi Highway 30, Holly Springs National Forest	15
Total			1,144.68

Source: MDOT Mississippi Scenic Byways

4.7 Bridges

Bicyclists are often forced to go over bridges alongside high volumes of vehicles to cross over major water bodies. The ability of bicyclists to cross bridges easily or with difficulty depends on the availability of adequate facilities, such as wide shoulders or physically separated bike lanes. The U.S. 82 Bridge in Greenville has wide shoulders which makes it easier for cyclists to cross.

The Biloxi Bay Bridge and the Bay St. Louis Bridge on the Gulf of Mexico are good examples of how to incorporate cycling and pedestrian facilities into bridge design. These bridges were reconstructed after Hurricane Katrina with multi-use pathways with walls separating users from vehicular traffic. Table 7 below describes the cycling conditions of the bridges on the Mississippi River Trail based on how bicycle-friendly each one is.

Table 7. Mississippi River Bridge Bicycle Conditions

Name	Lanes	Bicycling Conditions
U.S. 49 Bridge - Helena, Arkansas	2 lanes, no shoulders	Very Difficult
U.S. 82 Bridge - Greenville, Mississippi	4 lanes, wide shoulders	Bicycle-Friendly
Old U.S. 80 Bridge - Vicksburg, Mississippi	Deck beside RR tracks	Bicycles allowed only for special events
U.S. 84 Bridge - Natchez, Mississippi	4 lanes, no shoulders	Difficult

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The pedestrian network within Mississippi is comprised of city sidewalks, multi-use paths, and trails. The local sidewalks are the facilities most used by pedestrians. The standards for pedestrian infrastructure are laid out by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Standards for pedestrian facilities primarily concern designing equitable and accessible facilities for all users, regardless of age and ability. All public entities are required under the ADA to provide an ADA Transition Plan to ensure compliance with federal regulations. Included in this plan is an evaluation of current facilities and a schedule for implementing the construction/modification of facilities to ensure ADA compliance.

Mississippi's ADA Transition Plan was last updated in 2014 by MDOT. The plan references the 2001 MDOT Roadway Design Manual (RDM), which regulates the design standards for other elements of pedestrian infrastructure aside from sidewalks and paths such as crosswalks, signage, lighting, ramps, approaches, and entrances to buildings, and other traffic-calming measures. The RDM was recently updated by MDOT in 2020. Local policies and programs in the state dictate the evaluation of pedestrian infrastructure needs.

Pedestrian infrastructure also links pedestrians to other modes of transportation like transit facilities which must meet the standards addressing the facility as well as the access to and from the stop. The ADA standards define these connective elements as "a continuous, unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements and spaces in a building, facility, or site." There are different standards for sidewalks in a public right-of-way that do not meet these criteria.

A total of twelve cities in Mississippi, in addition to the state DOT and the MS Gulf Coast MPO, have adopted some level of CS policy. A full list of these cities and a description of the Complete Streets Initiative are provided at the beginning of this section. As of 2025, MDOT is in the process of developing the agency's own CS policy. This initiative helps promote a safer and more reliable transportation network and encourages more residents and visitors to walk and ride bicycles as their primary mode of commuting. Cities, MPOs, and MDOT have also adopted additional design standards for pedestrian facilities which are described in CS ordinances and resolutions. The design of the operation of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities must accommodate motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders regardless of age and ability.

MDOT Projects

Several MDOT projects in southeast Mississippi are making progress. Some projects include improvements to pedestrian infrastructure and safety²¹, which are described below:

- I-10 Widening in Harrison and Hancock Counties – the project's scope includes the construction of a multi-use path and is expected to wrap up in 2027.
- U.S. 11 bridge replacement in Pearl River County – a bridge replacement over Hobolochitto Creek is underway and will include a sidewalk with a concrete barrier to protect pedestrians. This project is expected to be completed in late 2025.
- U.S. 49 – a project to construct a pedestrian walkway from Turkey Creek to just north of Creosote Rd. has begun and is expected to be completed in 2026.

Other areas of Mississippi are also breaking ground on major infrastructure projects with improvements including shoulder widening, updating traffic signal systems, and signage enhancements which all aid pedestrians and bicyclists in navigating the roads and traffic safely.

4.8 Network Usage and Performance

An analysis of Mississippi's pedestrian and bicycle network aims to assess the usage patterns, capacity, and performance of the infrastructure. This includes:

- **Commuting Patterns:** Utilizing American Community Survey estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau to understand how many workers in Mississippi bicycle and walk to work.
- **Trip Distances:** Analyzing the number of trips by distance using estimates from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS).

²¹ Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2024). MDOT projects make headway in southeast Mississippi. Retrieved from https://mdot.ms.gov/portal/news_release_view/1885

- **Safety Issues:** Examining crash data related to bicyclists and pedestrians to identify safety concerns on the network.

Manual counts are often time-consuming and expensive which makes tracking the number of bicyclists and pedestrians more challenging than counting users of other transportation modes. The estimates of the number of residents who bicycle or walk to work or other destinations provided by the Census Bureau and Bureau of Transportation Statistics can be used for planning purposes to capture regular, daily bicycling and walking habits.

The following section includes a review of commuting patterns of cyclists and pedestrians across the state. The data shows that most trips taken are less than a mile, which demonstrates the possibility of increasing use of active transportation.

Activity/Demand

Estimates for workers who bicycle or walk to work were collected for the 10 largest cities in Mississippi, as shown in Table 8. The commuting patterns in the largest cities of Mississippi reveal that there are more workers aged 16 and over bicycling than walking to work. Jackson, the largest city, has a relatively low percentage of workers walking (0.11%) and bicycling (0.80%). In contrast, Biloxi stands out with the highest percentage of bicycle commuters at 8.47 percent, while Hattiesburg has the highest percentage of workers walking at 0.38 percent. Other cities such as Gulfport and Greenville also show notable bicycle commuting rates at 2.11 percent and 2.60 percent, respectively.

Overall, the state of Mississippi has lower percentages of walking (0.07%) and bicycling (1.49%) compared to the national averages of 0.46% and 2.40%. These patterns highlight the varying reliance on non-motorized transportation across different urban areas within the state.

Table 8. Commuting Patterns in Largest Mississippi Cities, 2022

City	Workers 16 years and over	Walked	Bicycle
Jackson	64,354	0.11%	0.80%
Gulfport	30,018	0.21%	2.11%
Southaven	26,979	0.00%	0.37%
Biloxi	23,486	0.12%	8.47%
Hattiesburg	22,820	0.38%	2.28%
Olive Branch	23,921	0.00%	0.17%
Tupelo	17,743	0.12%	0.24%
Meridian	13,370	0.13%	1.51%
Horn Lake	12,755	0.00%	0.13%
Greenville	10,238	0.00%	2.60%
Mississippi	1,250,771	0.07%	1.49%
The U.S.	160,577,736	0.46%	2.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2022

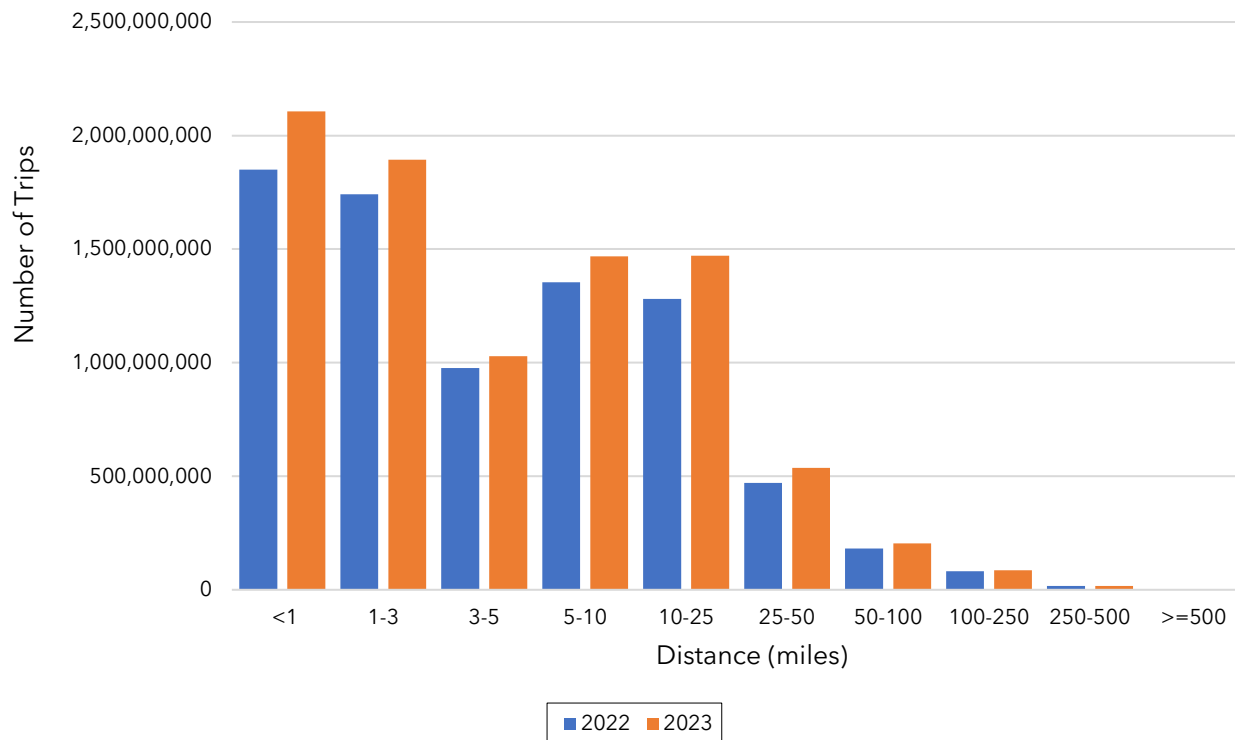
Active transportation offers numerous benefits—improved personal health, reduced environmental impact, and decreases in traffic congestion to name a few—making walking and cycling more attractive options for Mississippians. The use of active modes of transportation helps to improve the health and fitness of residents and enhances the livability of a city by decreasing traffic congestion on the roads, increasing a sense of community, and creating more affordable options of transportation that cater to all residents.

According to estimates by the BTS, many of the daily trips taken by Mississippi residents, on all modes of transportation, are less than a mile (Figure 5). Given these estimates, there is a potential for Mississippians to decrease their dependence on vehicular transportation by accomplishing most of their daily trips through walking and biking²². If provided with proper infrastructure, shifting to heavier use of active

²² Mississippi Department of Transportation. (n.d.). Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://mdot.ms.gov/portal/bikeped>

transportation could support Mississippi's environmental goals²³ by mitigating carbon emissions and pollution.

Figure 5. Number of Trips by Distance



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Trips by Distance Estimates, 2022-2023

4.9 Safety

During the five-year analysis period from 2019 to 2023, 2,482 pedestrian crashes and 734 bicyclist crashes were reported, totaling up to 3,216 VRU crashes. The crash data analysis focuses on fatal and suspected serious injury crashes²⁴ in alignment with the state's goals of zero deaths on its roadways.

In this section, pedestrian crashes involving cyclist injuries and fatalities are examined. The data indicates a decreasing trend in pedestrian fatalities, while serious injuries

²³ Mississippi Department of Transportation. (2023). Mississippi Carbon Reduction Strategy. Retrieved September 2024, from <https://mdot.ms.gov/documents/Planning/Plan/2023%20MS%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Plan.pdf>

²⁴ In 2022, "Life-Threatening Injury" was changed to "Suspected Serious Injury" to align with Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC). MMUCC is "a voluntary guideline that represents a minimum, standardized set of data variables to describe motor vehicle traffic crashes, which could be used to identify traffic safety problems and design countermeasures to improve traffic safety nationally and in each state."

and fatalities among bicyclists fluctuated, peaking in 2022. Additionally, the VRU special rule from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) was only met in 2019 and 2022, reaching the 15 percent threshold irregularly.

Pedestrian Fatal and Serious Injuries

Figure 6 shows pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries from 2019 to 2023. The number of pedestrian fatalities shows a significant increase from 69 to 105 in 2020 but has been on a decreasing trend with 2023 reporting 82 deaths. Likewise, serious pedestrian injuries increased from 85 to 156 in 2020 and have since decreased to 145 in 2023.

Figure 6. Pedestrian Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries Trend, 2019 to 2023

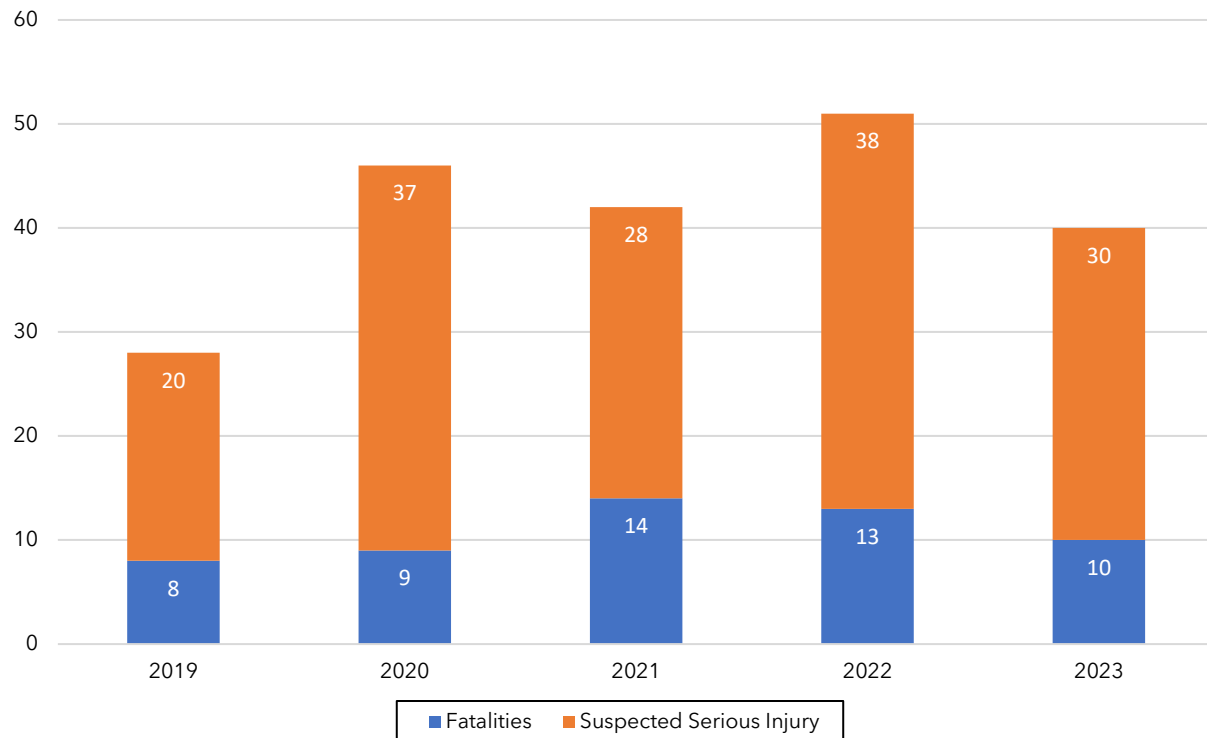


Source: MDOT, 2024

Bicyclist Fatal and Serious Injuries

As shown in Figure 7, the number of bicyclists involved in a crash resulting in a fatality in 2019 was eight, which is five crashes lower than in 2022. At that time there were 13 bicyclist fatalities reported. Similarly, bicyclists involved in crashes that resulted in serious injuries have been increasing with 2022 reporting the highest number of 38.

Figure 7. Bicyclists Fatalities and Suspected Serious Injuries Trend, 2019 to 2023



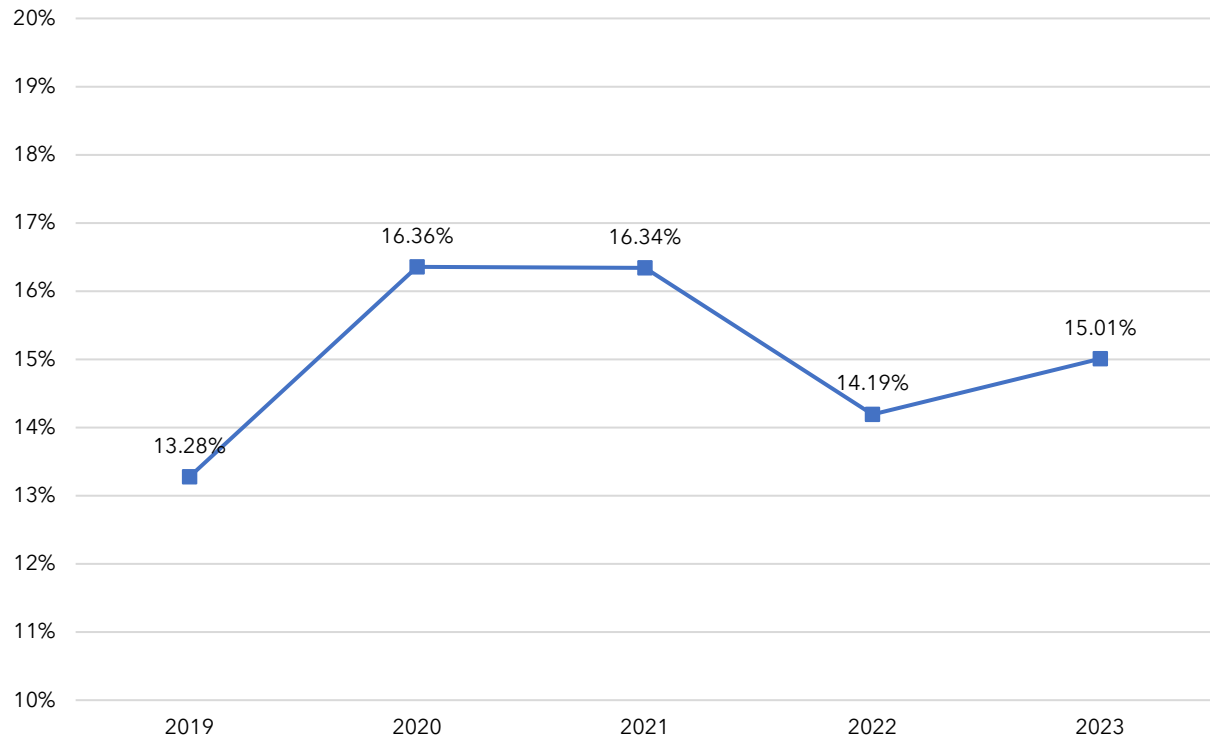
Source: MDOT, 2024

Bicycle and Pedestrian Fatalities

Figure 8 compares Mississippi's number of bicycle and pedestrian deaths to total traffic deaths from roadway crashes. A special rule was set by the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to support VRUs. Per this guidance, States are obligated to spend 15% of their HSIP funding on highway safety improvement projects to address the safety of VRUs, if VRUs represent over 15% of the total annual crash fatalities. This threshold was not exceeded for the analysis period.

When the special rule was established as part of the BIL in 2021, there was an initial drop in crashes; this placed Mississippi below the 15% threshold once in 2022 when the percentage of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities represented 14% of that year's total crash fatalities. Since then, the number of fatalities has continued to rise, once again exceeding the threshold and triggering the special HSIP VRU spending rule.

Figure 8. Percent of Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes that Involved Pedestrians and Bicyclists in Mississippi, 2019 to 2023



Source: MDOT, 2024

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