

## Introduction to Active Transportation Programs

### Introduction

Active Transportation (AT) is any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation such as walking, cycling, skating, and cross-country skiing (CDC, n.d.; Rails-to-Trails, n.d., BC Healthy Communities Society, n.d.). AT provides many socio-economic benefits including an increase in the levels of individuals' physical activity and social interaction, improvement in physical fitness among the general population, reduction in traffic congestion and vehicle emissions-related air pollution, decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, and conservation of energy and fuel (Campbell & Wittgens, 2004; American Cancer Society, 2016; TTI, 2016; Voss, 2018). This study explores nationwide and statewide AT programs currently implemented in the U.S.

### Methodology

This review of AT programs was conducted in April-May 2021 and included two parts: (1) a review of current nationwide AT programs to understand the goals and nature of these programs, and (2) a systematic review of statewide transportation documents to understand policies, timeline and goals of statewide AT planning.

### Results

#### I. Nationwide AT Programs

Once the review of nationwide AT programs was completed, all identified nationwide programs were divided into three types: (1) AT infrastructure improvement, (2) AT policy, education, outreach, and advocacy, and (3) AT shared micro-mobility. The AT infrastructure improvement programs work with communities to provide funding and informational resources for AT infrastructure projects to support safe walking and biking. Such projects include the construction and maintenance of recreational trail networks, bike lanes, and bike storage facilities. AT policy, education, outreach, and advocacy programs serve to help state and local governments and transportation agencies understand the advantages and disadvantages of AT efforts and programs across different jurisdictions, identify the areas for improvement, and provide resources for the implementation of AT projects. AT shared micro-mobility programs encompass shared-use fleets of small, fully or partially human-powered vehicles such as bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters (NACTO, 2018). Table 1 presents the information about the objectives of such programs and provides examples for each type of program.

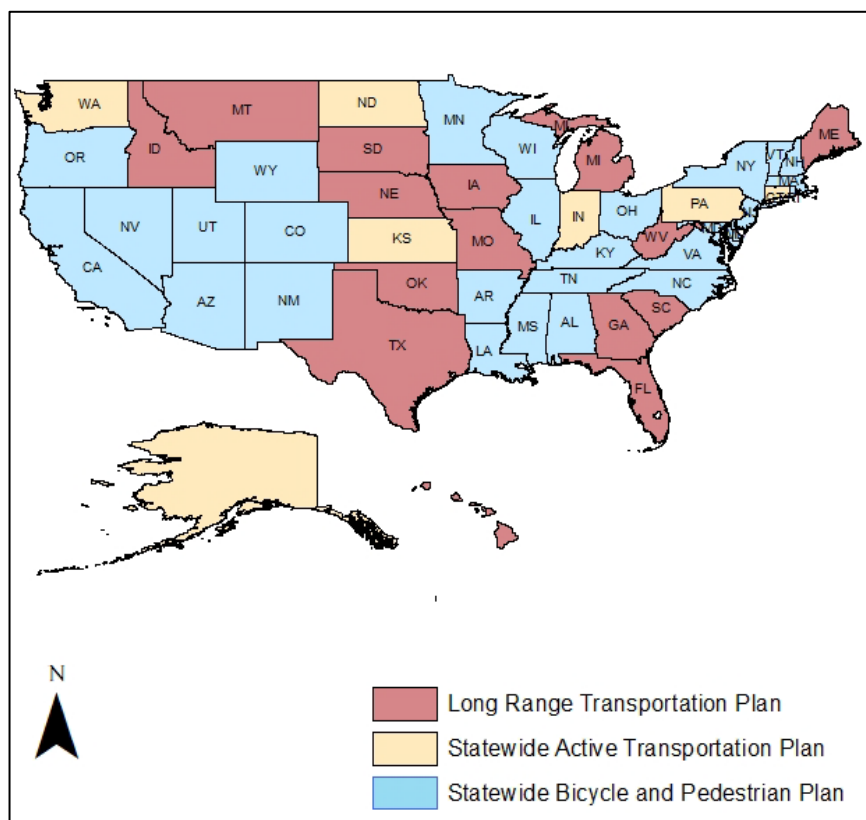
Table 1. Nationwide AT programs

AT Program	Primary Objectives	Program Example
Infrastructure improvement	Provide funding and create AT infrastructure such as trail networks and related facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rails to Trails Conservancy</li> <li>• FHA Recreational Trails Program</li> <li>• Safe Routes to School (SRTS)</li> <li>• Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)</li> </ul>
Policy, education, outreach, and advocacy	Empower governmental agencies to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each state’s AT efforts, identify the areas for improvement, and provide resources for implementation of AT networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People for Bikes</li> <li>• The Bicycle Friendly America Program by the League of American Bicyclists</li> <li>• National Park Service (NPS) AT Guidebook</li> </ul>
Shared micro-mobility	Deploy micro-mobility sharing services (fully or partially human powered vehicles such as manual bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters)	Regional and municipal shared mobility programs (Bay Wheels in Bay Area, Biki Honolulu in Hawaii, Capital Bike Share in Washington D.C., etc.)

## II. Statewide AT Programs

The review of current statewide AT programs showed that state-level AT documents may be divided into three categories based on document type as shown in Figure 1: (1) long-range transportation plans, (2) statewide AT plans, and (3) statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans. A long-range transportation plan is a federally-mandated policy document that outlines strategies and actions for addressing transportation issues within a jurisdiction (Connecticut DOT, 2018). A statewide AT plan serves to

Figure 1: Type of Statewide AT Program

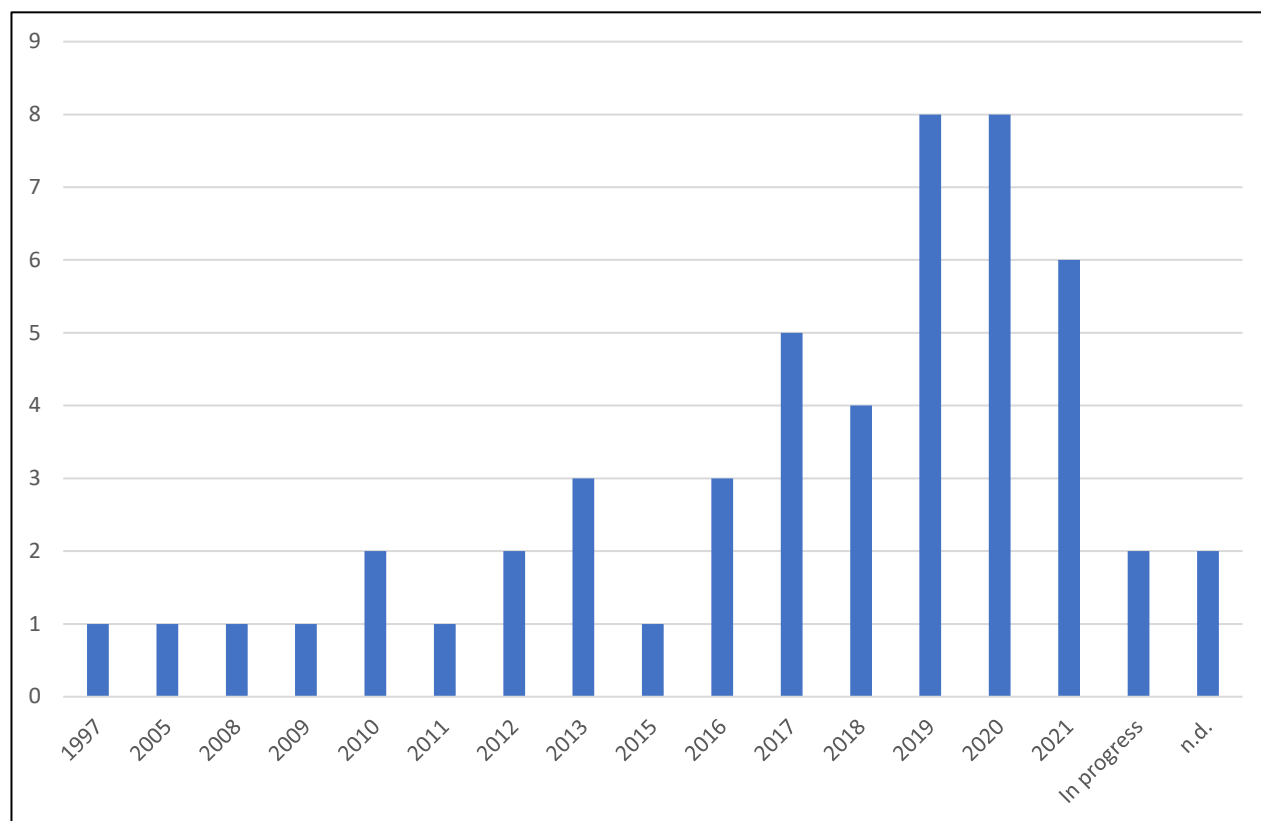


develop and present a comprehensive and cohesive approach for biking and walking across diverse communities.

A statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan is developed to improve the processes and practices for local and regional bicycle and pedestrian planning and design on state-maintained roadways and minimize the impacts of state roadway projects on non-motorized transportation infrastructure (ALDOT, n.d.). Since 2015, there have been six states (Alaska, Connecticut, Indiana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Washington) that have published standalone documents outlining statewide AT plans, while Kansas is currently in the process of developing such a plan. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia do not have any standalone AT or bicycle and pedestrian programs but have discussed AT planning in their long-range transportation plans. The remaining 28 states have statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans in place. Therefore, statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans represent the most common type of statewide AT planning documents.

Overall, most states have AT planning documents in place that have been created or updated in the year 2016 or later (38 states) with the most activity regarding the creation of statewide AT documents seen in 2019 (eight states) and 2020 (eight states) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Statewide active transportation planning documents: year created/updated



### III. AT Infrastructure Needs

The demand for AT infrastructure varies by state (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2015). For all states, walking is a more popular AT mode than biking. Alaska, Hawaii, New England, Midwest and North-West are the regions where the values for walking as a percentage of total trips are higher than in other parts of the country (Figure 3, USDOT, 2015). Western states tend to have larger share values for biking as a commute mode (Figure 3, USDOT, 2015).

Figure 3. Commute mode share: bicycle and walking (as a share of total trips). Source: USDOT, 2015.

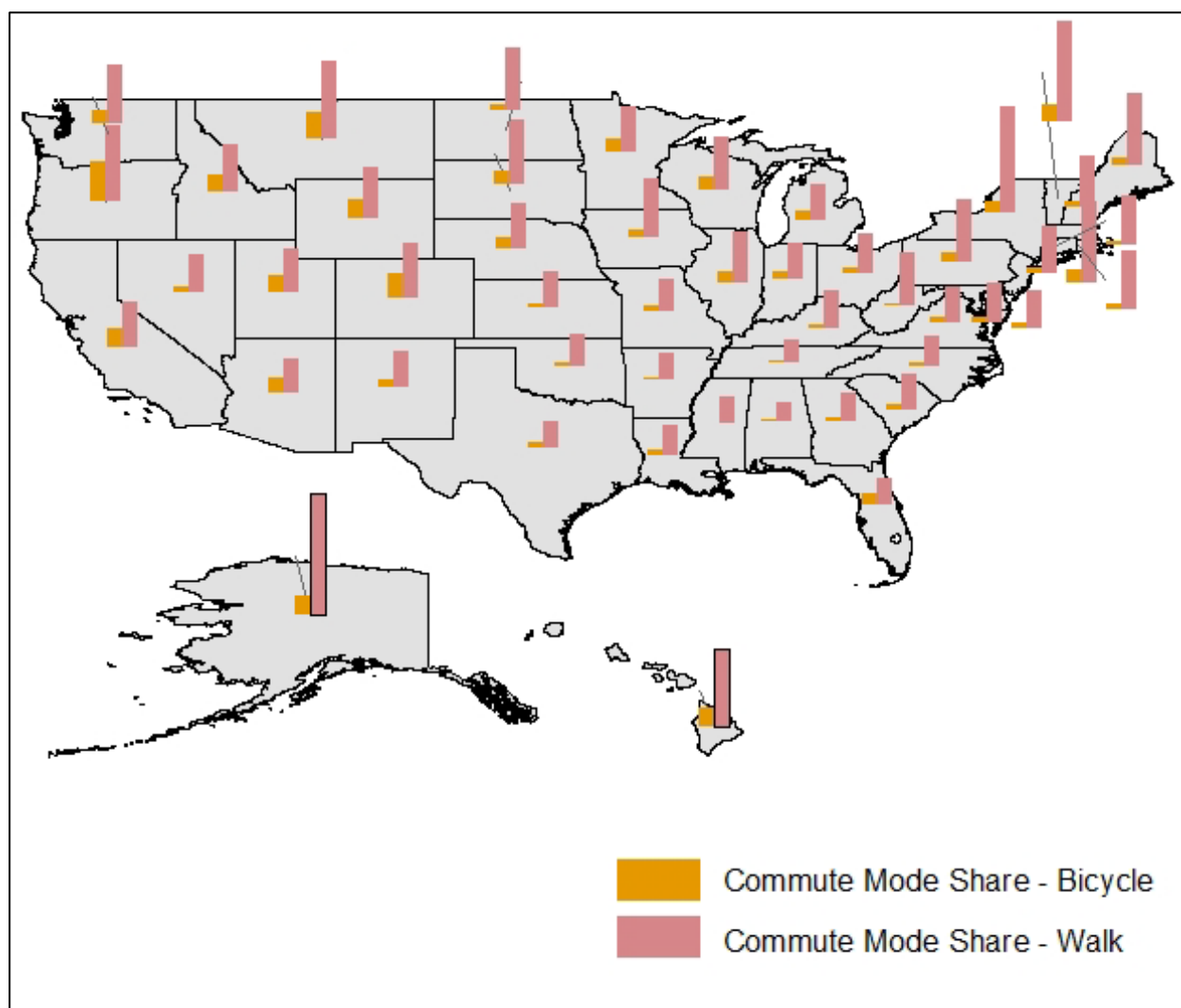
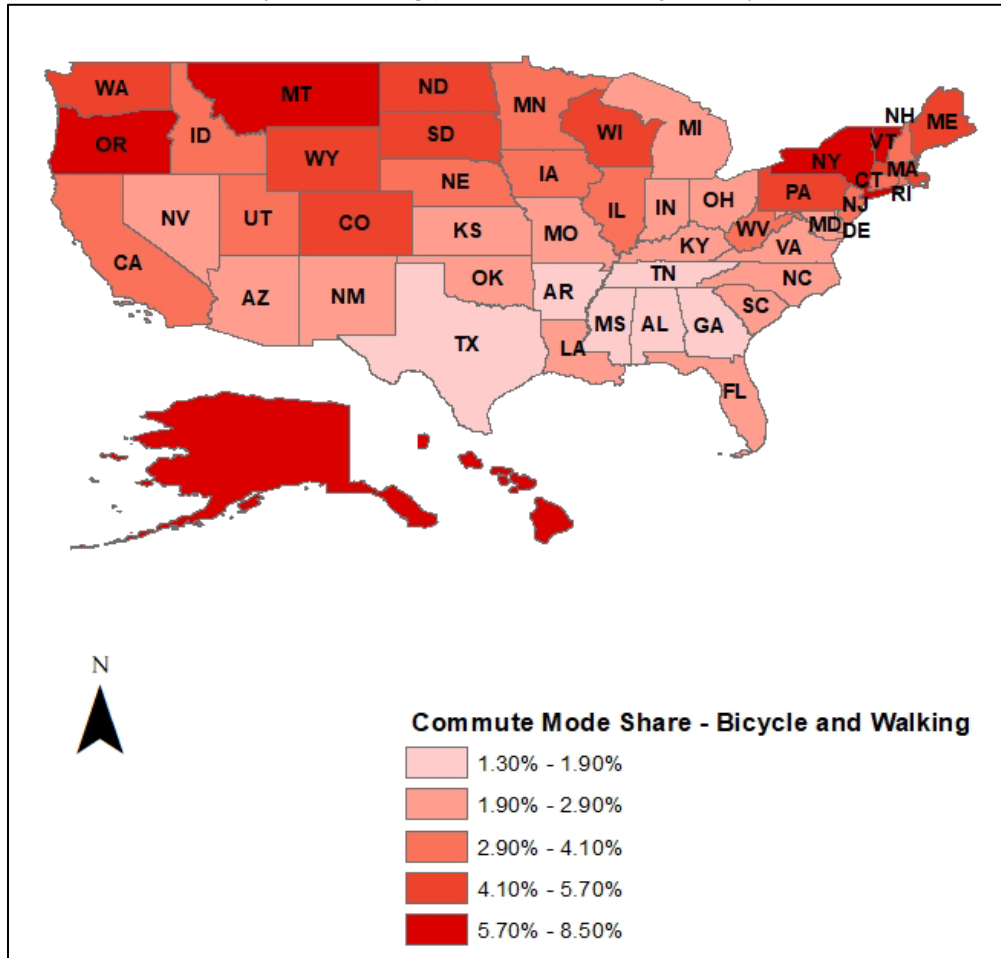


Figure 4 below illustrates the share of walking and biking commutes from all trips completed using all transportation modes in each state and is based on the data available through the Transportation and Health Tool created by the U.S. Department of Transportation (2015).

Figure 4. Commute mode share: bicycle and walking (combined, as a share of total trips). Source: USDOT, 2015.



#### IV. Conclusion

The demand for different types of AT infrastructure varies by state. The northeastern and northwestern regions of the United States are the parts of the country where walking and biking represent a relatively larger share of total trips made within the region, compared to other parts of the country.

#### V. Acknowledgment

This report was prepared by Olga Bredikhina and Sanaa Rafique for the Alabama Transportation Institute at the University of Alabama. Produced by the Transportation Policy Research Center, a unit of the Alabama Transportation Institute.

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