



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IN THE ALAMO REGION

MOVING PEOPLE
CONNECTING PLACES

Bicycling and walking are vital components of a transportation system. Riding a bike and walking can improve physical and mental health, curb air and water pollution, reduce traffic congestion, preserve natural resources, promote equity, and create social bonds. These benefits warrant the development of a transportation system that enables people to travel safely and comfortably by bike or foot.

Accomplishments Over the Last Five Years

Ten years ago, it would have been a rare sight to see someone walking to work or riding a bicycle on a weekday in downtown San Antonio. Today, a casual glance at Main Street reveals an entirely different picture, punctuated by buffered bike lanes and wide, shaded sidewalks.

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and its partner agencies continue to educate, encourage, and engineer bicycle and pedestrian facilities to increase the number of people riding bicycles and walking a preferred mode of choice.

Since 2013, the MPO has conducted nine Walkable Community Workshops, assisting residents in identifying the barriers to a more walkable and bikeable community. The

workshops have increased awareness of the importance of pedestrian and cyclist mobility and access, and led to engineering improvements from applicants in San Antonio and New Braunfels. The workshops are supplemented by more frequent and informal walkability audits, conducted by request.

Since 2014, the MPO has reached 820 people through a partnership with the City of San Antonio to provide free Street Skills classes to teach adults and mature teens the rules of the road for cyclists and deliver helpful tips for riding safely.

In the fall of 2014, the City of San Antonio was declared a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists and the MPO was designated a Silver-level Bicycle Friendly Business in 2015.

In 2015, San Antonio became the first city in Texas to launch a Vision Zero initiative. Vision Zero is a traffic safety approach to eliminate traffic-related deaths and severe injuries. The MPO's Transportation Policy Board and the Cities of Kirby and Leon Valley have since approved resolutions in support of Vision Zero initiatives within the Alamo Area. In 2018, the MPO co-hosted the region's first Vision Zero Summit.

In 2016, the MPO made several strides towards a bicycle and pedestrian friendly region by completing its first Regional Bike/Pedestrian Planning Study which included recommendations for enhancing bicycle and pedestrian mobility and access in San Antonio, New Braunfels, Seguin, and Boerne. That same year, the MPO also published a 5th Edition Bicycle Map that categorized the streets in Bexar County according to the Level of Traffic Stress for people on bikes, and a correlating online map that covered the entire study area.

In 2017, the MPO initiated the Regional Bike Share Master Plan to help identify potential future SWell Cycle bike share station locations in Bexar County, as well as explore the possibility of bike share in Comal, Guadalupe, and Kendall Counties. In 2017, the MPO also convened a subcommittee of the Bicycle Mobility Advisory Committee (BMAC) for the purpose of encouraging businesses to participate in the League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Business Program.

As of 2018, the regional bicycle network includes over 230 miles of bike lanes in Bexar County and 68 miles (and counting) of shared use paths along the Leon Creek, Salado Creek, Medina River, and San Antonio River with another 10 miles of shared-use paths providing access through Boerne, New Braunfels and Seguin.

Current MPO Policies

Complete Streets Policy

Since its inception, the Alamo Area MPO's Transportation Policy Board (TPB) has strived to fund projects that included safe and convenient access for all roadway users, including people driving cars, walking, biking, and using transit. In 2009, the TPB formally adopted a Complete Streets Policy, aimed at ensuring that people of all ages and abilities are able to use roadways safely and comfortably.



Figure 1. Bike lane on Main Street, San Antonio.

MPO's Complete Streets policy also encourages the MPO's partner agencies to adopt similar policies. In 2011, the City of San Antonio adopted a Complete Streets policy and in 2017, the City of Seguin adopted a similar policy in its Master Thoroughfare Plan.

Vision Zero

In 2015, the City of San Antonio adopted a Vision Zero Initiative, which calls for eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries. That same year, the TPB passed a similar resolution in support of Vision Zero. Since then, the MPO has worked closely with the City of San Antonio and other partner agencies to enhance roadway safety through education, encouragement, and engineering initiatives. The MPO has also worked to incorporate safety considerations into its activities, most notably in scoring projects for potential MPO funding.

In 2016, the City of San Antonio began its study of Severe Pedestrian Injury Areas (SPIAs), identifying locations where two or more severe pedestrian injuries occurred in close proximity. The study will help the City of San Antonio to identify and prioritize pedestrian improvements for high-need areas. Similar studies are expected for bicycle and vehicular crashes in the future. The MPO is currently conducting a similar

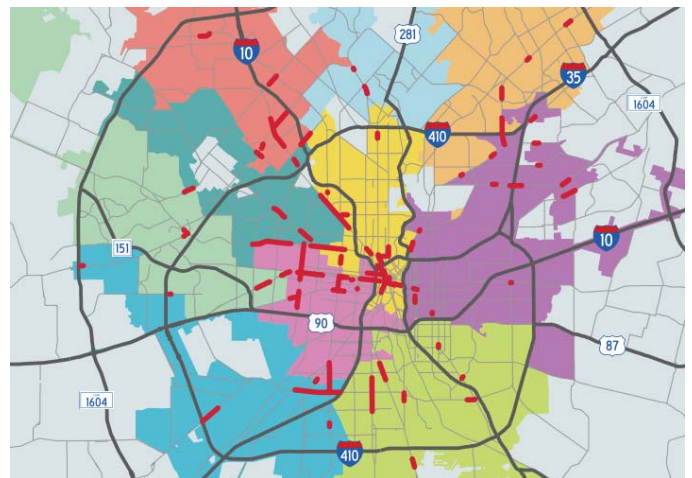


Figure 2. City of San Antonio Severe Pedestrian Injury Areas, 2011-2015.

analysis for Guadalupe, Comal, and Kendall Counties to guide safety projects in those areas as well.

In July 2018, the MPO co-hosted San Antonio's inaugural Vision Zero Summit, alongside our transportation partners in the region. The sold-out event featured regional and national speakers, including Leah Shahum, founder of the Vision Zero Network; Gabe Klein, founder of CityFi; and Lilly O'Brien, with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. Regional leaders, including Councilwoman Shirley Gonzalez and TCI Director, Mike Frisbie, provided local insight.



Figure 3: Vision Zero Summit Leadership Panel

MPO Active Transportation Programs

Walkable Community Workshop Technical Assistance Program

The Walkable Community Workshop is a regional technical assistance program that works with community groups to identify barriers to walkability and bikeability within their district.

Since 2013, the MPO has conducted nine Walkable Community Workshops. The workshops educate participants about the benefits of active transportation, assist communities in identifying infrastructure improvements, and



Figure 4. Residents from the Seele Elementary School area in New Braunfels come together to discuss barriers to walking in their neighborhood.

provide the community with an opportunity for two-way communication with local transportation agency staff. After the workshop, MPO staff compile the findings into a report, which includes recommended strategies for enhancing neighborhood mobility. Projects that stem from these

reports are then given additional consideration if submitted for MPO funding. The workshop reports are available at the MPO's website at www.alamoareamp.org/wcp.

Community Education and Encouragement

Street Skills

The Street Skills program is a partnership between the MPO and the City of San Antonio.

Street Skills classes are classroom-style sessions where adults and mature teens can learn the rules of the road for people on bikes, including bicycle safety tips and best practices for handling potentially dangerous situations. Attendees are given a free helmet and set of bike lights to help them stay safe while riding.



Figure 5. Street Skills participants at a Bexar County Lunch & Learn

SINCE 2016, OVER 700 AREA RESIDENTS HAVE ATTENDED STREET SKILLS CLASSES AND RECEIVED NEW BICYCLE HELMETS AND LIGHTS.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committees

The AAMPO Bicycle Mobility Advisory Committee (BMAC) and the Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee (PMAC) advise the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Transportation Policy Board (TPB) on technical and policy issues related to active transportation. Each committee meets monthly, and is comprised of a variety of agency representatives, bicycle organizations, and citizens who are interested in and knowledgeable about active transportation. The committees provide a centralized forum for discussion, interagency coordination, and citizen input on bicycle- and pedestrian-related matters.

Bicycle Friendly Business Program

The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Business Program is a nationwide recognition program for employers that support traveling by bicycle. In 2017, there were only six bicycle friendly businesses designated in San Antonio, including the Alamo Area MPO. That's why in 2016, the MPO launched an effort to make more businesses aware of the program and encourage them to apply for designation. SWell Cycle was one of the businesses to apply and in 2018 they were declared a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Business.

Defensive Driving

The MPO partners with the City of San Antonio's Risk Management Division to educate city-employed drivers about sharing the road with people biking and walking. This information is shared at approximately 45 classes annually, reaching more than 1,000 people each year.

Community Events

It is the MPO's goal to actively participate in and promote various community events that educate and encourage residents about healthy transportation and environmental sustainability. MPO staff attend events and distribute educational materials related to bicycling, walking, and air quality. In 2016, MPO staff attended over 20 community events, reaching thousands of residents within the MPO study area.

Youth Outreach

Bicycle Rodeos & Safety Talks

The MPO provides support for bicycle rodeos by helping children fit their helmets properly, distributing helmets to children who do not own one, and sharing important safety information with parents, teachers, and students. MPO staff also provide bicycle and pedestrian safety talks to schools and other youth groups.

Safe Routes to School Program

In 2017, the MPO joined its partner agencies in establishing a Walking School Bus program at Sarah King Elementary School. The MPO provided crash data that aided in the selection of the school and conducted a walkability audit. The MPO will increase collaboration with local and regional partners to promote International Walk to School Day each October and foster the development of more Walking School Bus programs around the region.



Figure 8: Walking School Bus at Sarah King (Picture Credit: KSAT12 News)

Walk & Roll Program

The Walk & Roll Program encourages residents to use active, healthy forms of transportation. Walk & Roll efforts typically take place during National Bike Month in May, with the annual Walk & Roll Rally kicking off the festivities.

Averaging 300 attendees annually, the Walk & Roll



Figure 9. The MPO's 21st annual Walk & Roll Rally in 2016.

Rally educates the public on the benefits of active transportation, shares information on active transportation programs and resources, and encourages people to walk, bike, and ride transit more often. In 2018, the MPO also debuted “Energizer Stations”, which celebrate National Bike to Work Day by providing free snacks, giveaways, and educational materials to cyclists on their way to work.

Funding and Implementing Active Transportation Projects

Bicycle networks are funded and developed by a variety of agencies responsible for the transportation system. Leveraging various sources of funding is often necessary to complete bicycle projects.

Table shows some of the common sources of funding for bicycle projects and programs in the Alamo region.

Table 1. Primary Funding Sources for Bicycle Infrastructure in the Alamo Area.

Agency	Funding Program
Alamo Area MPO (AAMPO)	<p>The MPO awards federal funds through a competitive project selection process. The MPO has two federal funding programs that fund bicycle projects.</p> <p>Surface Transportation Program-Metropolitan Mobility (STP-MM):</p> <p>Over \$100 million in federal funding is available approximately every two years. Approximately \$170 million dollars were awarded during the 2017 call for projects. Standalone bicycle and pedestrian facilities are eligible for funding.</p> <p>Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP):</p> <p>Transportation Alternatives is a set-aside program intended specifically for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Approximately \$15 million was available during the 2016 call for projects. Calls for projects are issued about every two years as funding becomes available.</p>
Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)	<p>TxDOT's Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program is intended specifically for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Calls for projects are issued approximately every two years and are open to projects outside urbanized areas.</p>
City of San Antonio	<p>The City of San Antonio has two major programs for funding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects:</p> <p>Infrastructure Management Program (IMP): The Infrastructure Management Program (IMP) is a five-year rolling program which focuses on the maintenance of the City's infrastructure.</p> <p>City of San Antonio Bond Program: Since 2007, the City of San Antonio has initiated five-year bond programs to finance large capital improvements throughout the City. The 2017-2022 bond program allocated over \$445 million towards Street, Bridge, & Sidewalks Improvements.</p>
City of Seguin	<p>City of Seguin Bond Program: The City of Seguin typically puts aside \$50,000 annually to fund sidewalk construction and maintenance. The city also aggressively pursues grants to fund bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.</p>

San Antonio ranks 42nd in the U.S. for bicycle commuting, with 0.3% of San Antonio residents commuting to work by bike.

2016 Benchmarking Report, Alliance for Biking and Walking

The use of Strava Metro data will enable the MPO and its partner agencies to better understand bicycle and pedestrian travel patterns and behavior, from the most-highly used roadways to wait times at intersections.

Active Transportation Trends in the Alamo Area

Bicycle Ridership & Walking Trends

People living in the Alamo region ride bicycles and walk for a variety of reasons.

In 2010, an estimated 93 percent of adult residents in Bexar County who rode a bicycle in the last 30 days did so for recreational purposes. Meanwhile, 17 percent bicycled to run errands, 7 percent bicycled to go to work, and 4 percent bicycled to go to school (San Antonio Regional Bicycling Travel Patterns Survey, 2010).

Commuting by bicycle is also on the rise. Between 2007 and 2013, the percentage of San Antonians who commuted to work by bike increased from 0.1 percent to 0.3 percent. While these are gains to be celebrated, there is much room for improvement. As of 2016, an estimated 1.9 percent of San Antonio commuters walk to work – a 0.4 percent decrease since 2007. Of the fifty most populous cities in the US, San Antonio ranked 40th and 42nd in terms of share of people who commute by foot and bike, respectively (2016 Benchmarking Report, Alliance for Biking and Walking).

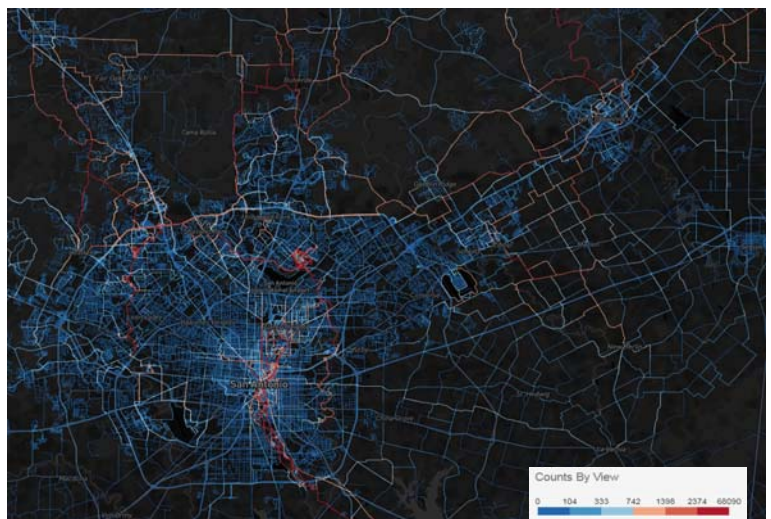
The Alamo Area has the potential to increase overall ridership and foot traffic. In a 2015 survey, over 86 percent of respondents indicated they would like to ride a bicycle more (Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Study, 2015). Similarly, in the MPO's 2018 Regional Transportation Attitudes Survey, 37% were satisfied with the availability of sidewalks and pedestrian facilities.

Strava

In 2017, the Texas Department of Transportation purchased Strava Metro data share with MPOs and other public agencies.

The MPO plans to use this information to better inform its planning process, including in project selection and community outreach.

For example, in 2018, the MPO used Strava data to identify the most popular locations for National Bike to Work Day "Energizer Stations". The MPO's partner agencies can also use this



data to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian projects, build support for more infrastructure, and evaluate usage before and after project implementation.

Safety

According to the Alliance for Biking & Walking 2016 Benchmarking Report, the rate of bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities in San Antonio is higher than the national average.¹ Since 2013, 33 cyclists and 307 pedestrians were killed in the MPO study area, and another 778 were seriously injured (CRIS, 2018). Many more crashes are less severe or do not get reported. Safety concerns remain a major barrier to many people who currently ride a bicycle or are considering riding.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

Existing Conditions

The existing bicycle network in Bexar County contains diverse bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In 2000, there were approximately 34 miles of on-street bicycle facilities in Bexar County. By 2017, the number had increased to over 280, not including wide shoulders.

There are also over 115 miles of off-street multi-use trails, serving people who bike for both transportation as well as recreation. In terms of total number of miles of bicycle facilities, San Antonio outpaces the national average. However, it falls below the national average in terms of bike facilities per square mile.

Currently, there are no on-street bicycle facilities in the City of Boerne in Kendall County. There are, however, 11.5 miles of multi-use trails and side paths. Over 64 percent of survey respondents from Boerne said that the lack of bicycle lanes, trails, or paths prevents them from riding more often than they currently do, and 21 percent of respondents used the word “dangerous” to describe bicycling in Boerne. Boerne’s Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan includes goals to develop more pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the city, and over 85 miles of bicycle facilities were proposed in the MPO’s Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Study for Boerne.

The City of New Braunfels in Comal County has over 10 miles of bicycle lanes and nearly 24 miles of wide shoulders. The City’s off-street bicycle network consists of 5.7 miles of multi-use trails and 6 miles of side paths. Over 80 percent of survey respondents in New Braunfels said that the lack of bicycle facilities prevented them from riding a bicycle more often. The 2017 Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan calls for a network of off-street trails throughout

¹ While the MPO boundary includes Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe, and Kendall Counties, data from this report was only available for the City of San Antonio.

the City as well as on-street facilities. Over 123 miles of bicycle facilities are also proposed in the MPO Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Study for the City of New Braunfels.

The City of Seguin in Guadalupe County has 0.9 miles of bicycle lanes and 31.1 miles of wide shoulders. The City's off-street bicycle network is comprised of 1.4 miles of multi-use trails. Over 78 percent of survey respondents in Seguin said that the lack of bicycle facilities prevents them from riding a bicycle more often. Over 117 miles of bicycle facilities are proposed in the MPO Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Study for the City.

5th Edition Bike Map

The MPO, in partnership with the City of San Antonio Office of Sustainability, created the 5th Edition Bike Map to help the public and other transportation agencies better understand people's experiences when cycling in the region by including the level of traffic stress on different roadways.

The 5th Edition Bike Map shows the Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) for people on bikes on various roadways in the MPO study area. The LTS score was calculated based on several factors:

- Number of travel lanes,
- Posted speed limit
- Traffic volumes
- Type of bicycle facility present

LTS maps help bike riders consider the full roadway context when choosing their route and enables them to select routes that are appropriate for their skill and comfort level. The map is available online at www.alamoareampo.org/bikemap.

Planned Network

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Study

The MPO completed the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Study in 2016. With input from the community, transportation agency partners, and the MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committees, the study included a review of existing conditions and needs as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure recommendations for five areas:

- City of San Antonio (pedestrian recommendations)
- San Antonio Missions National Historic Park
- City of Boerne
- City of New Braunfels
- City of Seguin

The final report documents the growing interest in bicycling in the region and provides guidance for implementing a safe, accessible, and comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network for the MPO study area.

2011 Bike Plan

In 2011, the City of San Antonio adopted the San Antonio Bike Plan & Implementation Strategy. The plan mapped the existing network of on- and off-street bicycle facilities in Bexar County, included recommendations for types and locations of new bicycle facilities, and prioritized network recommendations. The plan also listed opportunities for education and encouragement, as well as potential funding sources for expanding the existing bicycle network.

In total, the plan proposed 1,718 miles of new bicycle facilities. Some of these projects have already been implemented in the six years since the plan was adopted, but continued interagency collaboration, funding, and public engagement will be necessary to further realize the vision network outlined in the plan.

2016 SA Tomorrow Multimodal Transportation Plan

In 2016, the City of San Antonio published the SA Tomorrow Multimodal Transportation Plan. The Transportation Plan outlines goals and guidelines for building a regional transportation system that is “sustainable, safe, convenient, and efficient”. The plan focuses on a balanced distribution of transportation modes by investing in a well-connected network of vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The plan also evaluates different scenarios for growth, concluding that a diverse network of transportation options (including bicycle and pedestrian facilities) most cost-effectively reduces congestion.

Off-Street Trail Network

The City of San Antonio and the San Antonio River Authority collectively have implemented and manage over 100 miles of paved multi-use trails throughout Bexar County. The City of San Antonio is currently planning to expand the Howard Peak Greenways Trail System.

Off-street trails are planned for other parts of the region as well. The City of New Braunfels is developing a Master Plan for the Dry Comal Creek Hike & Bike Trail, which, once complete, will span over five miles and connect parks, neighborhoods, and downtown. Also, the City of Seguin plans to extend the Walnut Springs Hike & Bike Trail within the next few years.

Bike Share

San Antonio became the first city in Texas to initiate a bike share system in 2011.

In 2017, the MPO initiated the Bike Share Master Plan to seek opportunities to expand the existing system within the City of San Antonio and potentially into the Cities of Boerne, New

Braunfels, and Seguin. Since the start of the plan, dockless electric scooters were introduced in downtown San Antonio. This prompted the City of San Antonio to begin work on a regulatory framework to manage dockless vehicles in anticipation of other dockless technologies. The impact on the docked bike share system is still unknown but the MPO will continue to work with all parties to promote safe forms of active transportation in the region.

Integration with Transit

Integrating bicycle infrastructure with public transit is an important step to increase mobility and accessibility for the region's residents. Eighty-five percent of transit riders access VIA bus service by walking or bicycling (VIA Origin and Destination Study, 2015). Therefore, increasing safe access to bus stops has the potential to increase ridership, which helps the region achieve community goals such as improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion.

Interagency coordination is key to making these crucial connections. Today, the majority of bike share stations are located within a ¼ mile of a bus stop. Additionally, all VIA buses are equipped with at least two bike racks. Whether a project makes multimodal connections is also a key part of the process for reviewing projects for potential funding through the MPO.

In 2015, VIA began the MyLink project to improve pedestrian connectivity by identifying high priority areas for sidewalk completion projects. Areas were identified using a variety of criteria including average daily boardings, proximity to bus stops, known accessibility issues, and number of routes at the stop.

Regional Connections

As our region continues to grow, the MPO and its partners will increasingly need to look for regional bicycle connections to improve interregional mobility. In 2017, the MPO sought public input on potential bicycle connections between San Antonio and Austin. These results were shared with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) in Austin and incorporated into the future vision network of their Active Transportation Plan.

The Texas Department of Transportation also initiated a Bicycle Tourism Trails Study in 2017. The goal of the study is to identify a proposed statewide network of bikeways that connects cities in Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. While these routes are only conceptual, they represent a good first step to expanding the reach of regional bicycle infrastructure.

Focus Areas for the Next Five Years

In such a large region, transportation needs undoubtedly exceed available funding. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize key actions and projects that can have a strong positive impact on bicycle mobility, access, safety, comfort, and therefore, ridership.

Prioritize funding for improvements that enhance safety in areas with high concentrations of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

In accordance with MPO's support for Vision Zero, MPO will prioritize bicycle and pedestrian projects that have the greatest potential to improve safety for users.

Increase connectivity within and between activity centers.

MPO will look to fund bicycle projects that create high quality connections within and between high activity areas to enhance access between key destinations.

Enhance regional connectivity.

Local governments throughout the region are seeking to expand the bicycle network within their own jurisdictions. MPO will work with its regional partners to pursue regional bicycle connections between these areas.

Collect more data on bicycle use and bicycle facilities.

The MPO will work with its partners to expand opportunities to collect and use data on bicycle activity, including by measuring the impacts of new bike facilities on ridership and route choice.

Expand educational programs on bicycle safety.

MPO will work with its partners to expand opportunities for people to learn what the rights and responsibilities are for people who bike through in-person engagement, media coverage, and social media outreach.