

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Honors Theses

Honors College (Sally McDonnell Barksdale
Honors College)

2010

Sidewalks Matter: A Transportation Policy Study and Plan for Sidewalks in Clinton, MS

Elizabeth Jayne Joseph

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis

Recommended Citation

Joseph, Elizabeth Jayne, "Sidewalks Matter: A Transportation Policy Study and Plan for Sidewalks in Clinton, MS" (2010). *Honors Theses*. 2228.

https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis/2228

This Undergraduate Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College (Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College) at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

SIDEWALKS MATTER: A TRANSPORTATION POLICY STUDY AND PLAN FOR
SIDEWALKS IN CLINTON, MISSISSIPPI

By
Elizabeth J. Joseph

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2010

Approved By



Advisor: Professor Melissa Bass



Reader: Professor Robert Haws



Reader: Professor John Winkle

ABSTRACT

ELIZABETH J. JOSEPH: Sidewalks Matter: A Transportation Policy Study and Plan
for Sidewalks in Clinton, Mississippi
(Under the direction of Melissa Bass)

The primary goal for this thesis is to provide the necessary research and analysis about the importance of sidewalks for Clinton, Mississippi, so that the city will have a plan and a study to support the implementation of a comprehensive sidewalks construction project. This thesis is grounded in theory and recent research on sidewalks. After establishing the theoretical and empirical arguments in favor of sidewalks as a significant transportation policy concern, I outline a three-phase plan for constructing sidewalks in Clinton. The plan delineates the three phases based on specific roads' varying degrees of importance to community life. Following the explanation of the project's estimated cost and its financing option, I discuss ways to organize the Clinton community in support of the construction project. The conclusion offers suggestions for future research based on the findings of this thesis.

I will present this plan to the Clinton City Council to advocate for sidewalks throughout the community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....1

CHAPTER 1: SIDEWALKS: A PUBLIC GOOD.....5

CHAPTER 2: SIDEWALKS: A SAFE AND HEALTHY CHOICE.....12

CHAPTER 3: SIDEWALKS: A MODEL AND A PLAN FOR CLINTON, MS.....18

CONCLUSION.....44

APPENDICES.....46

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....57

Introduction

I love sidewalks. To me, they represent community and connectedness. Perhaps, this obsession with sidewalks goes back to my quaint childhood desire to be able to walk places—to school, to church. I have always thought that the most wonderful quality of a city is the ability to walk or bike from one location to another. Growing up, my family would go on summer vacations to St. Simons Island, Georgia. During our time vacationing in this community, located in Georgia's Golden Isles, we would always reserve a special afternoon for riding bikes. We could ride all over the island, and we were not the only people who were taking advantage of the pedestrian and bike lane that connected the island. Adults, children, and families, alike, filled the sidewalk, moving from the downtown area to the outskirts of the island—and from the outskirts to the downtown. It was picturesque. My hometown's sidewalk situation is not.

My interest in sidewalks became a passion when I noticed my community's need for sidewalks during the summer of 2008. I came home to Clinton, Mississippi, to spend the summer with my family. Clinton is a suburb of Jackson—Mississippi's capital and largest city—and the City of Clinton has a population of approximately 23,000. Clinton is also the home of Mississippi College, a private Christian university with 4,900 students. My father is the head football coach at Mississippi College, and my house is only two miles from the campus. With the rising gas prices in the summer of 2008, my family began discussing the possibility of my dad riding a bike to work. However, when

we examined the route that he would take, we realized that he would have to ride his bike on the two-lane road with busy automobile traffic because there are no sidewalks or bike paths from my neighborhood to the college. The lack of safety for the pedestrian or biker should have been addressed many years ago or, if not then, especially within the last two years when Lina Song, an international student at Mississippi College, was killed as she walked across town. With each visit to Clinton, I notice more pedestrians and bikers who have to contend with immense automobile traffic on the streets in order to travel from one point in town to another. Therefore, the question of why I am interested in sidewalks is easily answered: there is a desperate need for sidewalks in my hometown, Clinton, Mississippi.

During the Spring 2009 academic semester, I took a public policy course on civic and political engagement. In the first class, my professor asked if we had ever advocated for or organized in support of anything in our communities. I raised my hand and said that I recognized a need for sidewalks and wanted to have them constructed in my hometown but had not taken action yet. This specific topic and my desire to make effective change in my community sparked an interest for my professor. She took a special interest in my project, and, together, we began researching for this senior honors thesis about the importance of sidewalks for my hometown. I recently submitted a proposal to Mississippi's Governor Haley Barbour, calling for a statewide sidewalks construction initiative that would be funded by the state's allotment of stimulus funds (see Appendix A). I also established a nonprofit organization, Hinds County Community Enhancement Initiative (HCCEI), through which I can apply for grant monies for sidewalks and other types of community development projects.

Spending the summer of 2009 in Washington, D.C., was also significant in reinforcing my passion for sidewalks because I walked and took mass transit everywhere. I loved the ease with which I could walk around town, despite the often long distances between point A and point B. However, in Mississippi and in the surrounding states, we are bound to our vehicles for all of our transportation demands. We need research and policy plans so that sustainable modes of transportation can be developed in Mississippi.

For this reason, I applied for a Fulbright Scholarship to study transportation planning and policy at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands (see Appendix B). Although I was not awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, I believe that it is an issue that has immediate relevance to my region, my state, and most specifically for the purpose of the thesis, my community.

The primary goal for my thesis is to provide the necessary research and analysis about the importance of sidewalks for Clinton so that the city will have a plan and a study to support its implementation. After defending the thesis, I will present my proposal to the City of Clinton at a city council meeting and work to organize support within the community. I believe that Clinton, Mississippi, can be a statewide model for other communities—whether urban, suburban, or rural—to follow when organizing their own sidewalks plan.

Throughout the research process, I have encountered numerous people who question why I am so committed to Mississippi constructing sidewalks. When visiting with these people—whether transportation committee personnel at the capitol in Jackson, officials at the Mississippi Department of Transportation, or friends—the dialogue usually consists of an impassioned speech about the many benefits that sidewalks bring to

a community. I go through the list of health, safety, and community connectedness virtues of sidewalks. I talk about how there is a strong correlation between these concerns in our state and the potential for sidewalks to improve all of these issues in Mississippi. When I am asked these questions, I am always puzzled as to why anyone would need to have a detailed justification for constructing what seems to me a critical missing piece of life in our state. Of course the nation's current recession is forcing state leaders to make cutbacks. However, my policy proposal offers a way to stimulate the state and local economies during the current crisis while improving infrastructure and providing a pure public good—sidewalks. To the question of why sidewalks, I say, "sidewalks matter."

Chapter 1

Sidewalks: A Public Good

Sidewalks matter. They are a feature of a community that everyone can enjoy and use; and, therefore, sidewalks are public. Through the ideas of the sidewalk as representative of the public character of a community and as a public space, it can be said that sidewalks are a public good.

Mitchell Duneier's book *Sidewalks* (1999) attests to their significance in displaying the public character of a community. He references Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) in which Jacobs asserts that a public character is someone who is in "frequent contact with a wide circle of people and who is sufficiently interested to make himself a public character... His main qualification is that he *is* public, that he talks to a lot of different people" (Jacobs qtd. in Duneier, 6). Here, Jacobs is referring to an individual who is a well-known figure in the life of a particular area. According to Jacobs, these public characters who are a significant part of community life make the sidewalk a safer place for its users (Duneier, 8). However, "public character" can also be symbolic of the community interaction that takes place on the sidewalk, allowing for the connection of peoples whom have never had previous contact. According to Duneier, "sidewalk life is crucial because the sidewalk is *the* site where a sense of mutual support must be felt *among strangers* if they are to go about their lives there together" (8). Duneier maintains: "there is no substitute for the power of

the informal social relations that constitute a wholesome sidewalk...society” (42).

Duneier cites Jacob’s study in which she shows how sidewalks fulfill the purpose of “assimilating strangers” by making everyone traveling on the sidewalks feel comfortable and safe with one another:

She argues that cities are most habitable when they feature a diversity of uses, thereby ensuring that many people will be coming and going on the streets at any time. When enough people are out and about, respectable eyes dominate the street and are fixed on the strangers, who will not get out of hand. (115)

Most significantly to Duneier, sidewalks bring together people from all backgrounds as they pass each other and engage in conversation. The availability and use of sidewalks creates a sense of “social cohesion” as people interact and share common experiences (Duneier, 123).

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Renia Ehrenfeucht (2009) continue this theme of the importance of the sidewalk as a place where bonds are made among the people of a society—a space “where people display individual and group identities and observe others” (13). Their analysis of the history and evolution of the sidewalk in America looks at events that have taken place in the past and continue to occur on sidewalks throughout the country. They examine the capacity of the sidewalk to “strengthen intragroup cohesion and intergroup differences” through such activities as promenading and parading (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 13). Interaction among people in a community that takes place in a public space is important. According to Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, sociologist Lyn Lofland contends that “public relationships are more meaningful than urban observers and sociologists initially realized” (Lofland qtd. in

Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 37). Lofland has outlined four categories of the types of relationships that take place in the public realm: fleeting, routinized, quasi-primary, and intimate-secondary relationships (37). Fleeting relationships are just that—they last only for an instant. Routinized relationships involve “standardized interactions, such as those between customers and fast-food restaurant workers” (37). Quasi-primary relationships are shared emotions between two people about a specific topic, and intimate-secondary relationships are formed from consistent interaction over time. All four of these subgroups of relationships are viable possibilities when people in a community have the opportunity to connect with others in the public realm. The sidewalk is the ideal place for such interaction because people are able to be in the safety of the public watch while communicating—however so informally—with others in their community. According to Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, “sidewalks can be spaces that facilitate ‘unassimilated otherness’ and where people of varying affiliations and identities coexist” (125). Whether this contact occurs between two people walking to the grocery store, pairs of jogging partners, or groups of children walking to school, there is a good chance that these people passing each other on the sidewalk are of differing race and socioeconomic backgrounds; thus, providing the opportunity for “social cohesion” or “coexisting” to take place.

Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht discuss whether sidewalks are truly a public space. Because they are adjacent to private property while simultaneously being built by government funding or initiatives, the question is raised about whose responsibility is the sidewalk. These authors believe that because the maintenance duty generally falls on the owner of the property where the sidewalk connects, it becomes more of a privately cared-

for asset (246). However, these authors emphasize throughout their research that the primary purpose of sidewalks is for pedestrian activity. From the beginning of the presence of sidewalks in America, “municipalities articulated the pedestrian as the user for whom the sidewalks were being created” (29). The same holds true today—the pedestrian is the primary reason to have a sidewalk: “The pedestrian’s unobstructed mobility became the justification...and the pedestrian became the public for whom the sidewalks were being provided” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 17). These authors assert, “On sidewalks, the pedestrian has become equated with the public” (33). Although sidewalks border private property and are usually maintained by the property owner, their purpose is to provide a lane in which the pedestrian can safely move from one location in town to another. Because the pedestrian is the public for whom the sidewalk is meant and pedestrians can be anyone in the public, the sidewalk is open to everyone and is, thus, public.

Despite the potential conflict over public versus private ownership and responsibility of sidewalks, they provide immense benefits for those property owners who have sidewalks connecting to their property. Whether this property belongs to a home or business owner, “sidewalks are...useful to abutting spaces” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 125). They provide accessibility to businesses as well as residences while keeping the pedestrian safe via this protective lane.

Sidewalks are public goods from which all users can benefit; therefore, sidewalks do matter—they are important. States throughout the country receive enormous amounts of money to construct or enhance their sidewalk systems. States have taken advantage of the funds available through transportation appropriations and, recently, through the 2009

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or the Stimulus Bill. The 2010 Federal appropriations for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development provided over \$8 million to states for sidewalk and pedestrian projects.¹ Mississippi, however, did not receive any of these congressionally appropriated dollars for such enhancements. The “Mississippi Unified Long-Range Transportation Infrastructure Plan” by the Mississippi Department of Transportation references that although the state does have a Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, “there has not been sufficient use or demand in Mississippi to justify the consistent development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities” (21). The summary continues:

However, as nonmotorized transportation modes such as cycling and walking gain momentum and make the transition from recreation to a viable modal choice, new issues and concerns will require attention, such as: safety, connectivity, funding opportunities... and “mainstreaming” bike/ped considerations into MDOT business (21, 22).

For much of the rest of the country, sidewalks are a mundane feature of cities. Citizens of all ages use sidewalks—they walk to school, to the store, to church—because these special lanes designated for walking connect the residential areas to all parts of the town, regardless of the layout of the community. I was recently in Dover, Delaware, and what was the first thing I noticed about the state’s capital city? They had sidewalks. What a novelty! Upon first arriving, we drove down the main road of the business district, which housed grocery stores, restaurants, a mall, and hotels. Sidewalks were paved along the street. As we made our way to a different part of the town, away from

¹ United States. Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies. Congressional Directives. *Appropriations Act, 2010*. Washington, D.C., 2009. Print.

the hustle of the business district and into the residential, I noticed that the sidewalk system continued to this part of the community, as well, even though several miles separated this part of town from the buzz of the main street. Even more fascinating was the fact that a path was on both sides of the roadway: one side of the street had a sidewalk and the other side had a bike path. For cities like Dover throughout the nation, sidewalks are an important part of their city infrastructure. In explaining the history of the American sidewalk, Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht tell of cities, beginning in the mid-1800s, that made sidewalks a special emphasis in their initial construction work: “In Salem, Oregon, for example, sidewalks were ordered along all streets from 1851 onward” (18). During this time, cities throughout the country recognized the importance of sidewalks and made them an automatic and permanent part of the city infrastructure (18).

Walkinginfo.org, a website powered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, addresses several questions and concerns that people sometimes have about sidewalks. One of the concerns mentioned on the site is about the potential invasion of privacy when people walk near one’s home on a sidewalk. Duneier’s thoughts on the protection, instead of harm, that results from having sidewalk users resonates in the website’s answer: “Walkers are the eyes and ears of a neighborhood. This can be a good thing if your house is on fire or you need help.” When the question is raised about a change in property value that can result from the existence of sidewalks in a community, the answer explains that only sidewalks in poor condition will negatively affect property value, and, rather, that “the property value for homes in walkable neighborhoods may actually increase.” Most importantly to research on sidewalks being public goods, this site says that: “Roadways are part of urban, suburban, and rural settings. Few people would argue

against streets being built in suburban or rural environments. A sidewalk is part of a complete street.” So, there it is. Straight from a government-sponsored website about why walking and, thus, sidewalks, are important to communities. A street is incomplete without the accompanying sidewalk. Sidewalks matter.

Chapter 2

Sidewalks: A Safe and Healthy Choice

Sidewalks matter. As Mississippians, we are often subject to much criticism about the need to improve various aspects of the state's image. Sidewalks are an excellent place to begin to bring about this change. Mississippi can become a leader in pedestrian activity and sustainable transportation while ameliorating the state's health concerns by encouraging walking through the construction of sidewalks.

In the previous chapter, I examined the idea that sidewalks exhibit the public character of a community, making the sidewalk a safe space because it is constantly watched by those who travel on or reside adjacent to it (Duneier, 115). According to Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, "fear makes people...avoid public spaces or use them less" (230). In order to reduce these fears, Duneier emphasizes that the sidewalk is a public space where many people travel; thus, making it safer. Crime is the main focus in this sense of the term "safety." However, I want to turn now to the idea of safety in terms of protecting the pedestrian from automobile traffic.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Mississippi sustained fifty-eight pedestrian fatalities from motor vehicles in 2007. This number is up from the fifty-six that occurred in 2006. As the data indicate, the pedestrian fatality rate per 100,000 people in Mississippi is two percent. This statistic is higher than the national average of 1.5 percent per 100,000 people in the population. The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ranks states in

order of highest pedestrian fatality rate per 100,000 people in the state's population. For 2007, Mississippi was ranked number ten in the country among all states for pedestrian fatalities. Although Mississippi suffered only fifty pedestrian fatalities in 2008, the state still ranked eleventh in the country.

These statistics indicate that some Mississippians are choosing to walk as their mode of transportation. The numbers also show that those citizens who choose to walk are putting themselves in serious danger of becoming a pedestrian fatality. Mississippi has more pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 than some of the country's major walking hubs, such as District of Columbia (ranked number 17) and New York (ranked number 19). Washington, D.C., and New York have extensive sidewalk systems, while Mississippi does not have many sidewalks for its citizens. The high levels of pedestrian fatalities might be directly related to the dearth of sidewalks in Mississippi.

These statistics could also be indicative of the economic/class bias in the state. Mississippi's economics should cause policymakers to see that sidewalks are an important transportation policy issue that must be addressed for the improvement of the citizens' welfare. The U.S. Census Bureau report titled "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008," details the decline of the median household income in the southern region from 2007 through 2008. As stated in the report, "median household income declined in the South by 4.9 percent"—more than any other region in the country. The "Distribution of People in Census Tracts by Poverty Levels: 2009" from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that Mississippi has the fourth highest (behind the District of Columbia, Louisiana, and New York) percentage of the population who fall into Category IV—the highest percentage level—for people who live

church—and not have to drive to find a destination for walking. According to Jennifer Evans-Cowley, “People cite lack of pedestrian connectivity...” as a reason they do not walk (71). Evans-Cowley calls for communities to have a comprehensive pedestrian plan: “To begin, a pedestrian plan should be developed that clearly establish[es] its goals, such as creating a pedestrian network that...improves the quality of the pedestrian environment, increases pedestrian safety, and encourages walking” (73). Sidewalks should connect important places—they should be functional for citizens to use to walk to key places in the community (Evans-Cowley, 74). Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht assert that having sidewalks is an important part of livable communities as a quality of life concern (269). Communities must be walkable, connecting key locations in the community so that citizens can walk to accomplish mundane tasks while meeting physical fitness and health goals.

Sidewalks could be a missing link to Mississippi’s future health success. The ability to safely and conveniently walk from one point in a town to another location within that same community could prove to be invaluable to improving the state’s health. Current obesity rankings show that certain Southern states—including Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee—are all among the top ten most obese states in the nation, with Mississippi coming in at number one. A recent *Time* magazine article by Claire Suddath titled “Why are Southerners So Fat?” directly addresses this concern. Suddath quotes David Bassett, co-director of the University of Tennessee’s Obesity Research Center, who asserts that the lack of physical activity is a main contributor to Southern obesity rates. Bassett particularly emphasizes that because the South does not

have developed systems of public transportation, Southerners do not even have the opportunity to exercise by walking to a bus stop or subway station. Suddath writes:

States like Mississippi and Tennessee also have a surprising lack of sidewalks, discouraging even the most eager pedestrians. Many roads are narrower than those in the North—where streets have wider shoulders to accommodate winter snow—and people who want to bike or jog find themselves uncomfortably close to traffic.

Other Mississippians find themselves in similar situations to Lina Song in Clinton, who was forced to walk along the white fog line, while contending with heavy automobile traffic of the city's main roadway. The safety and health issues directly correlate: if Mississippians have a safer place to walk, they will be more likely to engage in this mode of transportation, thus, improving the overall health of our citizens. Sidewalks matter.

Chapter 3

Sidewalks: A Model and a Plan for Clinton, Mississippi



Clintonian riding down the turn lane of U.S. Highway 80 in his motorized wheelchair

The city of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, has several similarities to Clinton—it has a population of approximately 25,000, it has sidewalks in the older sections of the community, and it is a college town. Mt. Pleasant has conducted extensive research about sidewalks construction for their town. Because they have made a commitment to improving their status as a “walkable community,” the city of Mt. Pleasant created a Sidewalk Committee to examine the city’s need for more and better sidewalks throughout the community. According to the Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission Sidewalk Construction Prioritization Policy, sidewalks are crucial to the establishment of unity within a community: “Sidewalks are a necessary component of a walkable community. Walkable communities tend to have stronger, healthier and cohesive neighborhoods with less traffic congestion and a stronger sense of civic identity” (2).² The City of Mt. Pleasant recognizes these important effects of sidewalks and the potential improvement in the connection within the community that could be a result of sidewalks. The Sidewalk Committee for the City of Mt. Pleasant also wanted to engage its citizens in their sidewalk efforts by recommending that the city’s planning commission “sponsor a...workshop for the community. The topic of the workshop would be people friendly walkable communities” (3). The committee also promoted their walkable community campaign by proposing a citywide “Walk To School” and “Walk To Work Day” so that their message could be even more visible (3). The planning commission acknowledged that the sidewalks construction project would also be in the best interest of the community if they maintained environmental awareness. When placing sidewalks on one

² *Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission Sidewalk Construction Prioritization Policy*. Rep. 8 Jan. 2004. 28 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.mt-pleasant.org/depts/commdev/sidewalk.pdf>>.

side of the street, one factor for the way the side would be chosen was “environmental tree impact” (3).

Mt. Pleasant began their planning policy by recognizing that 146 miles of sidewalks were needed throughout the city (1). Beginning in 1995, the Mt. Pleasant City Commission provided \$100,000 annually for the construction of new sidewalks (2). The report points out that “older neighborhoods seem to have more sidewalks than areas developed in the 1950’s through 1980’s” (1). Just like Mt. Pleasant, Clinton’s historic district has sidewalks. The earliest area of the city connects its homes to churches to the college with sidewalks. However, as the city grew during the 1960s and through the present, the necessity of sidewalks has not translated to a current priority. Mt. Pleasant is also a college town. Although this university is significantly larger than Mississippi College, the city of Mt. Pleasant recognizes the need not only to connect their residents to schools, businesses, churches, and homes with sidewalks, but they also recognize the importance of linking the university to the community. As stated in the sidewalk prioritization policy, one of the locations of highest priority for new sidewalks is “one side of all streets within a ¼ mile of designated generators of pedestrian traffic including the...CMU campus” (3). Mt. Pleasant recognized the importance of sidewalks stemming from CMU. Clinton must begin its sidewalks project with Mississippi College.

As a “complete street” has been defined as one that has a sidewalk, Clinton, Mississippi, has many incomplete streets. In the effort to create the most reasonable plan for implementing a sidewalk system in Clinton, I have determined three phases of construction based on varying degrees of importance to community life. The plan is delineated in terms of roads most used by pedestrians, then moving to roads with schools

and then roads with high residential concentrations. Phase I is a 2.2 mile stretch of U.S. Highway 80 running from the base of the Mississippi College campus to the edge of town where the Wal-Mart Supercenter store is located. This section of roadway in the city is most important for the safety of Clintonians and for the community's economic development. Highway 80 is the location of most of Clinton's businesses. Mississippi College students are seen everyday walking—in the grass on the side of the road—from the grocery store to the campus with their grocery bags in hand. This lack of safety for the pedestrian on the busiest road in the city must be immediately addressed. Phase II of the project will be to construct sidewalks from U.S. Highway 80 extending to most of Clinton's schools. This addition is also crucial to the safety of the primary and secondary students in the community and has government backing through the Safe Routes to School program. As reported in a Mississippi Department of Transportation news release from November 13, 2009, Meridian, Mississippi, was awarded a Safe Routes to School grant for sidewalk construction and other infrastructure enhancements around an elementary and a middle school. Clinton, Mississippi, should encourage students to walk to school and provide a safe path on which to travel, obtaining funding from a government program, such as Safe Routes to School. Phase III of sidewalks construction will extend sidewalks from Highway 80 along Clinton-Raymond Road, as well as down Springridge Road—locations for businesses, neighborhoods, churches, and community parks. As Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht put it: "Sidewalks support public activities and public relationships, but they also allow people to fulfill personal needs through economic exchanges, social encounters, and at times basic survival" (126). Many Clintonians need sidewalks to survive—to be able to safety travel from one location in

town to another. As it is the duty of the government to protect its citizens from potential harm, the city of Clinton should implement this three-phase plan for sidewalk construction throughout the community.

Through my discussions with business owners and residents of Clinton, I believe there is a great consensus among community members that the city would benefit from sidewalks and that the community would support and use sidewalks as a viable mode of transportation. In order to obtain official documentation of the business and citizens' endorsement, I have created the following statement of support form, based on a similar document used to obtain sidewalks on Ash Avenue in Pewee Valley, Kentucky.

I (We), _____, owner(s) of
_____ (property name and address) in
Clinton, Mississippi, do endorse the construction of sidewalks in Clinton because of the
safety, economic, health, and community benefits that result from the presence of
sidewalks.

Signed this ____ day of _____, 20__.

Owner

Owner

Witness

Sidewalks are a public good from which all citizens in a community can benefit. They are a crucial feature in completing a street. Now, it is time for Clinton, Mississippi, to complete her streets and to get sidewalks, protecting citizens and enhancing community life.

The three-phase plan for sidewalks follows. While some sections of town can get away with only having sidewalks on one side of the road, other parts of town require the sidewalk to be on both sides of the road to ensure the safety of the pedestrian. Cost estimates are based on the State of Florida's report from October of 2009 that breaks down costs into dollars per mile³. For a five feet wide sidewalk constructed on one side of the street, the cost is \$143,411. A sidewalk of the same dimensions constructed on two sides of the street costs \$284,855. Florida's figures were chosen for Clinton's approximate costing because of Florida's southern location and because these estimates are recent (2009).

Phase I

Texaco Gas Station, 549 Highway 80 West, to Chick-Fil-A, 952 Highway 80 East

Distance: 2.2 miles

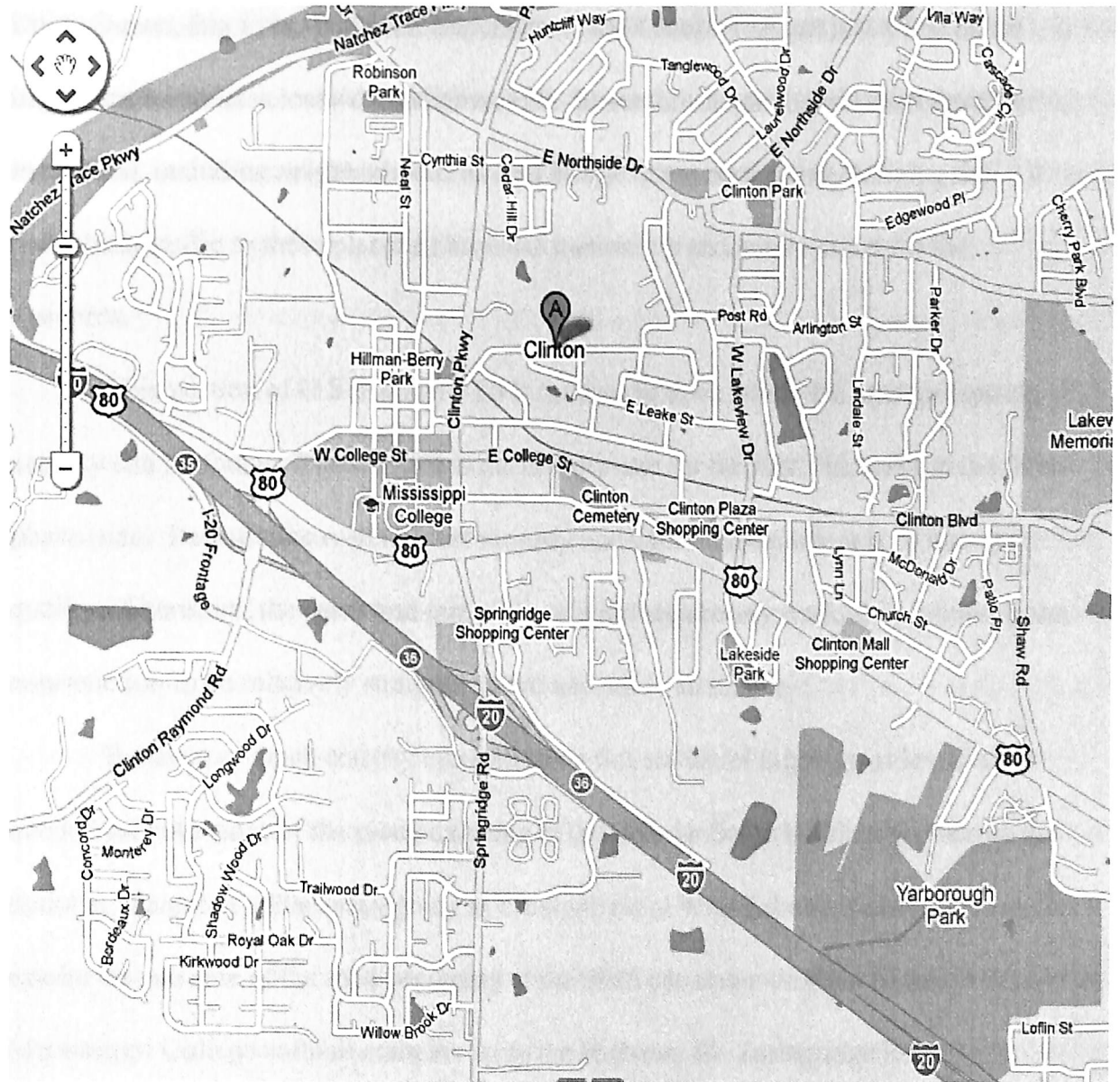
Cost Breakdown: \$86,046.60 (549 Highway 80 to Highway 80-Springridge Road intersection, 0.6 mile, one side of the road) + \$256,369.50 (Highway 80-Springridge Road intersection to West Lakeview Drive, 0.9 mile, two sides of the road) + \$100,387.70 (West Lakeview Drive to Wal-Mart, 0.7 mile, one side of the road)

Total Cost: \$442,803.80

³ "District 3 Preliminary Estimates Section Transportation Costs: Quarterly Roadway Construction Cost." Oct. 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.

<www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/costs/costs-D3.pdf>

Phase I Map (Google Maps)



As the main road through Clinton, U.S. Highway 80 connects Mississippi College to many of the community's restaurants, grocery stores, banks, and other businesses. Kroger, Walgreen's Pharmacy, Cellular South, Zaxby's, Wendy's, Newk's, McAlister's, Dairy Queen, Big Lots, Wal-Mart Supercenter, and Chick-Fil-A are just a few of the important businesses located on Highway 80. Several residential areas stem from the main road, including neighborhoods as well as apartment complexes, bringing the pedestrian traffic to these places of business transaction and employment for the residents.

This portion of U.S. Highway 80 is the area in town where the most pedestrian activity can be found. Therefore, it is the obvious site for the first sidewalks in the three-phase plan. Because the road has just recently undergone expansion, it is of like-new quality. Therefore, the curbs and gutters should not require any work, thus, allowing the construction to be relatively straightforward and easily attainable.

Because so much activity takes place on this stretch of highway, sidewalks are needed on both sides of the road beginning at the Cellular South building and across the street at Walgreen's Pharmacy going to the stoplight at West Lakeview Drive. Sidewalks can be on one side of the road beginning at the Shell gas station in front of the Mississippi College softball complex up to the Highway 80- Springridge Road intersection (where the Cellular South and Walgreen's buildings are located). Sidewalks can then be on the Big Lots side of the street beginning at the West Lakeview Drive intersection up to the stoplight at Sonic and Chick-Fil-A. Here, a crosswalk will be painted so that pedestrians can cross the street to the stores and restaurants. A crosswalk

should also be painted at the first entrance to Wal-Mart so that pedestrians can more quickly access the grocery department.

Phase II

Sumner Hill Junior High School to Cherry Park Neighborhood,

Intersection of Clinton Parkway with Northside Drive and Pinehaven Road to Clinton

High School and Clinton Park Elementary School,

Northside Shopping Center to Traceway Park (Cynthia Road)

Distance: 5.8 miles

Cost Breakdown: \$358,527.50 (Sumner Hill Junior High School, 400 West Northside

Drive, to Cherry Park Neighborhood, Old Vicksburg Road, 2.5 miles, one side of the

road) + \$329,845.30 (Texaco gas station at intersection of Clinton Parkway with

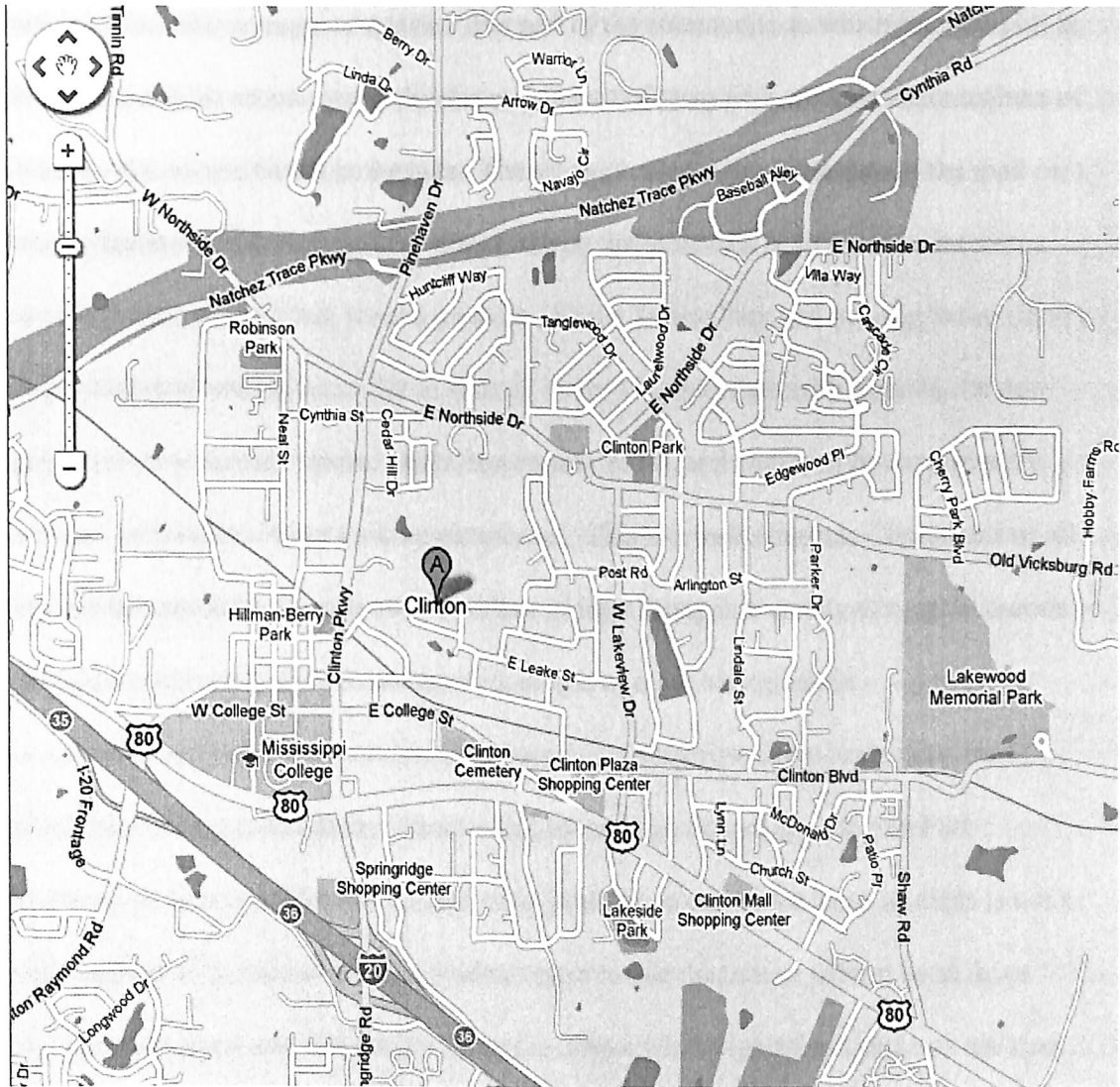
Northside Drive and Pinehaven Road to schools on Arrow Drive, 2.3 miles, one side of

the road) + \$143,411.00 (Northside Shopping Center to Traceway Park, East Northside

Drive, 1.0 mile, one side of the road)

Total Cost: \$831,783.80

Phase II Map (Google Maps)



Phase II is crucial, primarily, for linking the residential with the schools. These sidewalks connect to five of the city's schools. Sumner Hill Junior High School is the school for ninth grade students that is housed in one of the former African American schools from the segregated system. The part of the community in which Sumner Hill is located is still an economically disadvantaged part of town with concentrated numbers of African Americans living in the area. The sidewalk would be on the side of the road on which Sumner Hill is located and would stay on the same side of the road as it crosses onto Old Vicksburg Road, passing in front of Kids Towne Park and moving to the Cherry Park neighborhood. It would be in front of many of Clinton's neighborhoods, the new public library, grocery stores, banks, restaurants, parks, and ending with the primarily African American Cherry Park neighborhood. This sidewalk connects Clintonians of all socioeconomic backgrounds and provides residents living in a variety of neighborhoods the opportunity to walk and interact with people of other backgrounds.

The path on Pinehaven Road to the schools on Arrow Drive is also important because it connects hundreds of homes to Clinton High School and Clinton Park Elementary School. With the current setup, walking to school for these students is not a safe and feasible option. Instead, students have to ride the bus, or parents must drive their kindergarten and first grade students to school while high school students are also forced to drive.

The Northside Shopping Center to Traceway Park segment of sidewalk would complete phase II of the plan, including more apartment complexes and neighborhoods and the city recreational baseball, softball, and soccer fields into the walkable part of the community.

Phase III

Highway 80-Clinton/Raymond Road Intersection to Providence Presbyterian Church,

Highway 80-Springridge Road Intersection to 509 Springridge Road

Distance: 2.5 miles

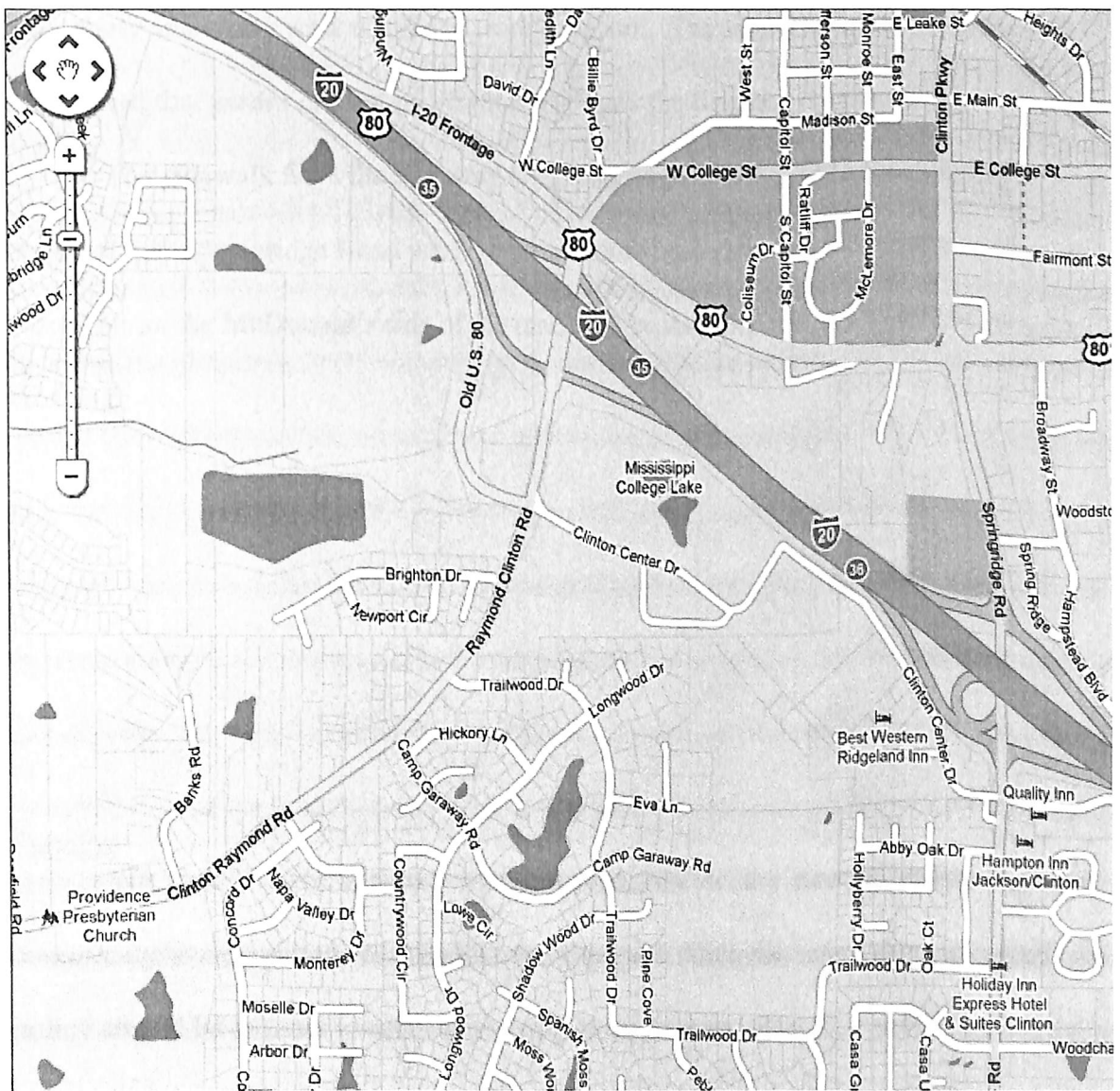
Cost Breakdown: \$186,434.30 (Highway 80-Clinton/Raymond Road Intersection to

Providence Presbyterian Church, 1.3 miles, one side of the road) + \$172,093.20

(Highway 80-Springridge Road Intersection to 509 Springridge Road, 1.2 miles, one side
of the road)

Total Cost: \$358,527.50

Phase III Map (Google Maps)



Phase III completes the sidewalks plan, connecting more residential areas on Clinton/Raymond road with the sidewalks at the core of the city. Brighton Park, which is located just steps away from Clinton/Raymond Road, has a playground, walking track, and tennis courts. The sidewalk would be in front of four churches, ending at Providence Presbyterian Church. Because this path would intersect the sidewalk on Highway 80 in front of Mississippi College, residents of the neighborhoods would be able to access the University and easily walk or bike to work or school. The sidewalk would be on the side of the road that passes in front of Brighton Park and the Brighton neighborhood.

The sidewalk from the Highway 80-Springridge intersection to the shopping center at 509 Springridge Road would connect more businesses via the pedestrian lane. It would be on the McDonald's side of the road with crosswalks at every stop light for safe crossing.

Funding

We should have a public referendum to vote on the issue to ensure that the community is committed to sidewalks for Clinton. After the referendum is passed, a policy should be in place to enact a municipal bond payment plan.

Municipal bonds are those “issued by state and local governments...” through which the government obtains funds for such projects as “schools, bridges, hospitals, power plants, and many forms of public infrastructure...” Investors are attracted to municipal bonds because the interest payments received from the government to the investor are federal and state tax-free. The majority of municipal bonds are owned by households, followed by “bond funds, money market funds, and closed-end funds,” then by “banks, insurance companies...” etc. (Adapted from municipalbonds.com).

Even though the total estimated cost of the construction project is \$1,633,115.10, the City Council should approve a municipal bond issue for slightly more than this estimated amount to accommodate for any additional costs in the project that might come along the way. Bonds will be sold to individual investors, churches, businesses, and bond funds in multiples of \$5,000. Entities that buy bonds will be exempt from tax increases. All others will have a 2% property tax increase (2% so that the bond can be paid quickly) for a maximum of five years when the bond and its interest has been paid in full.

Although it will require a commitment from the poor to take on the tax’s economic impact, the benefits from sidewalks will be advantageous to this group of citizens. Their property value will increase because of the sidewalk connectivity, and they will be able to more easily walk places throughout the Clinton community.

There are many programs through which funds can be obtained to relieve a portion of the costs in paying back the bond. As previously mentioned, federal transportation appropriations provide monies for pedestrian and bike projects yearly. Furthermore, as stated on the North Carolina Department of Transportation website, the legislation, “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (SAFETEA-LU) “which is the most recent funding authorization for Federal-aid programs, requires each state DOT to set aside federal funds from eligible categories for the construction of bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities.” Other grant providers, such as the Delta Regional Authority, award funds to projects in “transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development.” Clinton is under the jurisdiction of the Delta Regional Authority and would be an ideal location to use such funds. The “Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2009” which was passed in the House of Representatives on September 23, 2009, and is awaiting approval by the Senate calls for SAFETEA-LU to reauthorize appropriations for “the delta region transportation development program” and for “roadway safety improvements for...pedestrians.”

I hope to present this project to the Clinton City Council at one of their two June meetings. Before that time, however, I must initiate support from key stakeholders throughout the community. In order for the City Council to know that the community is behind the project, organizations representing a variety of interest groups are needed in the campaign process. I will begin by forming a committee of representatives from Mississippi College, including the president of the university, a vice-president, a faculty member, and two students to help organize support for the program on campus. Then, I

will incorporate fifteen to twenty other community members across varying age, race, and economic demographics to show that sidewalks are desired by Clintonians of all backgrounds. Using the statement of support form, these representatives will help gather signatures from supportive residents, churches, and businesses, alike, to show the City Council that the community wants a referendum to be placed on the ballot. The committee will also be charged with helping rally the backing of various community organizations, such as the Clinton Chamber of Commerce, the district-wide PTA and school board, the Junior (Civic) League of Clinton, and the Clinton Lion's Club. Through the combined interest expressed by these groups in the statement of support as well as through their direct communication with elected officials, the City Council will be able to feel confident that the community is willing to take on the costs of the sidewalks project.

My goal for this project is to make effective, visible change in my community by enhancing infrastructure with pedestrian accessibility throughout the city. I want to see actual results.

**Community Sidewalks Construction
(CSC)**

June 2010

Clinton, Mississippi

*Submitted by:
Elizabeth Joseph
402 Concord Drive
Clinton, MS 39056
601-212-6061
ejjoseph@olemiss.edu*

Proposing Individual – Elizabeth Joseph, 402 Concord Drive, Clinton, MS

Title – Community Sidewalks Construction (CSC), Clinton, MS

Concept – The primary focus of Community Sidewalks Construction (CSC) is to provide safe and functional pedestrian walkways, connecting community learning/training centers (i.e. K-12 Clinton Public Schools, Mississippi College, churches, etc.) to local businesses and neighborhoods. Sidewalk systems would be designed to allow safe access to learning and training centers without the need for motor transportation, especially near major roadways lacking pedestrian access. A three-phase plan of construction outlines various parts of the community that have been labeled as high priority for sidewalks. City and community leaders, as well as business representatives, should approve the identified priority roadways within the community that currently do not provide safe pedestrian access. This proposal provides a way for Clintonians at every economic level to access learning/training centers and potential places of employment. CSC improves the community's infrastructure, while ensuring safety, promoting healthy and environmentally friendly transportation, and connecting the Clinton community.

Job Creation – The local economy would benefit from the immediate job-creating nature of CSC. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for February 2010, 11.4 percent of Mississippians are unemployed.⁴ The BLS magazine publication, *Monthly Labor Review*, from March 2010 reports that the construction industry experienced 942,000 job losses in 2009.⁵ CSC would directly address this concern, placing construction/contract workers in jobs in Clinton. Louisville, Kentucky, recently received \$14.7 million in federal stimulus funds to build sidewalks throughout the city. Two of the six projects planned for the city of Louisville alone were supposed to create 660 jobs.⁶ By instituting such a project in Clinton, able employees in contracting and construction will be placed in jobs that will not only benefit this sector of employment but other important industries as well. As stated in the Bureau of Labor Statistics April 2009 report, manufacturing employment notably decreased with significant losses in “three durable goods industries – transportation equipment (-34,000), fabricated metal products (-29,000), and machinery (-22,000).”² Constructing sidewalks will require using this machinery and equipment, providing a needed boost to those industries as well. Furthermore, community businesses benefit as pedestrians gain access via sidewalks. In the current economic crisis, the increased number of Clintonian walkers shows that the citizens of the community are turning to pedestrian and bicycle travel. CSC would accommodate these demands and allow pedestrians and bikers to have easy and safe access to community businesses—locations of business transaction and employment.

⁴“Table 3. Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment by State and Selected Area, Seasonally Adjusted.” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Web. 05 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.t03.htm>>.

⁵ Hipple, Steven. “The Labor Market in 2009: Recession Drags on Steven Hipple.” *Monthly Labor Review*. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Web. 5 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/>>.

⁶ The City of Louisville, Kentucky. Bike Louisville Newsroom. “Mayor Announces New Stimulus Projects Including Bike and Walking Paths.” Press release. LouisvilleKy.gov. 16 Mar. 2009. 15 May 2009 <<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/BikeLouisville/News/2009/03-16-09-stimulus.htm>>.

Safety – Safety is also a major reason to implement the CSC. In 2007, Mississippi sustained fifty-eight pedestrian fatalities from motor vehicles.⁷ As stated in the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials’ (AASHTO) 2007 vision statement, “pedestrians and bicycles comprise 11 percent of fatalities per year. As we encourage people to walk and ride bikes, their safety must improve as well” (35).⁸ The AASHTO vision statement also emphasizes that to ensure safety for the pedestrian, biker, or even those citizens who use “mobility assistant devices such as wheelchairs,” state and community officials must consider street design in terms of what is best not only for automobiles, but also more vulnerable travelers.⁵ For example, in the past few years, three accidents have occurred involving Mississippi College students who were walking across town to business establishments where there was no sidewalk system, one resulting in the tragic death of a student. Because no sidewalks connect the college to the business district on U.S. Highway 80, pedestrians and bikers must contend with heavy automobile traffic on the streets in order to travel from a learning center to the business district.

Health and the Environment – Sidewalks also have other sustainable benefits.

Governor Haley Barbour’s campaign, “Let’s Go Walkin, Mississippi,” encourages all citizens to enjoy the outdoors and to be active. Walking is a great start to a healthy lifestyle, but walking on the roadside without sidewalks is dangerous. The State of Mississippi has a wonderful opportunity to link the Governor’s initiative for health with safety through the construction of public sidewalk systems. Promoting healthy lifestyles

⁷United States of America. Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Bureau of Transportation Statistics. BTS. 2007. 13 May 2009 <http://www.bts.gov/publications/state_transportation_statistics/state_transportation_statistics_2007/html/table_02_07.html>.

⁸Horsley, John. Transportation Vision and Strategy for the 21st Century Summit. Rep. 2007. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. 15 May 2009 <http://www.transportationvision.org/docs/Draft%20Vision%20Statements_web.pdf>.

through sidewalks as a mode of transportation also reduces the negative environmental impact resulting from reliance on automobile use. This relatively inexpensive program would contribute to the development and reputation of our community as a safe and environmentally sustainable place to live and work.

Community Development – Sidewalks are a key element to community development.⁹

Sidewalks connect locations in a community – residential to businesses to churches. It is crucial that sidewalks serve as a functional asset to a community, connecting places that are key features and locations within a town. Equally as important to connecting places is the fact that sidewalks also connect people. The availability and use of sidewalks creates a sense of “social cohesion” within a community as people interact and share common experiences.

⁹ Duncier, Mitchell. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.

Three Phases and Funding – Phase I runs along Highway 80 for 2.2 miles from the Texaco Gas Station to Chick-Fil-A. Because much pedestrian activity takes place in this bustling part of town, it is the priority to receive sidewalks. Phase I will cost \$442,803.80. Phase II is 5.8 miles. It begins at Sumner Hill Junior High School moving to the Cherry Park Neighborhood on Old Vicksburg Road. It then extends from the Clinton Parkway- Northside Drive- Pinehaven Road intersection past Clinton High School to Clinton Park Elementary School. The last segment of Phase II connects the Northside Shopping Center to Traceway Park. The total cost of Phase II is \$831,783.80. Finally, Phase III is 2.5 miles long going from the Highway 80- Clinton/Raymond Road intersection to Providence Presbyterian Church (on Clinton/Raymond Road) and the Highway 80-Springridge Road intersection to the shopping center at 509 Springridge Road. It will cost \$358,527.50. These locations have been designated as priority because they are important roads in the connection of schools, churches, and businesses to the residential areas of town.

Even though the total estimated cost of the construction project is \$1,633,115.10, the City Council should approve a municipal bond issue for \$3 million dollars to make sure any additional costs for the project that might come along the way are covered by these funds. Bonds will be sold to individual investors, churches, businesses, and corporations in multiples of \$5,000. Clinton residents, churches, and businesses that buy bonds will be exempt from tax increases. All others will have a 2% property tax increase for a maximum of five years when the bond and its interest has been paid in full. There are many programs through which funds can be obtained to relieve a portion of the costs in paying back the bond (i.e. federal and state appropriations, grants, etc).

Measurable Outcomes – Results can be measured by the jobs created and miles of transportation infrastructure established, connecting education initiatives to business objectives.

Long Term Viability – Once sidewalks are constructed, the community will be responsible for relatively low-cost maintenance. If necessary, the city government can seek financing through normal means (taxes, bonds, or state transportation funds). Clinton will benefit from the community enhancement, livability and desirability that result from constructing sidewalks. The City of Clinton’s Director of Community Development and City Engineer would ideally be designated as the Co-Directors of Community Sidewalks Construction (CSC).

Contact – Elizabeth Joseph, 601-212-6061, ejjoseph@olemiss.edu

Conclusion

Clinton has many qualities of the typical suburb. William Shutkin discusses much of the general history of suburbs in his case study on New Jersey suburbs. Llewellyn Park was developed in 1858 as one of the nation’s first suburbs. One scholar, James Kunstler, asserts: “Llewellyn Park, like so many other modern suburbs, was not really a community at all...” (211). Following World War II, suburbs became increasingly popular as city dwellers began moving to the newly developed suburbs. According to

Shutkin, this movement to the suburbs caused a decrease in pedestrian traffic and an increase in automobile traffic: the “pedestrian scale of the suburb disappeared, and with it, most of its individuality and charm. The suburb ceased to be a neighborhood unit...” (211).

This research on sidewalks for Clinton could lead to more studies post-sidewalks construction. As Clinton is a suburb that largely fits into Shutkin’s description of the suburb, changes could be evaluated in interaction between the community and the university, levels of civic and political engagement and connectedness, pedestrian fatality rates, and citizen health statuses. These findings would be relevant for sidewalk enthusiasts and community developers throughout the country.

Furthermore, most sidewalks research to date concerns sidewalks in urban areas. More studies are needed about the importance of sidewalks in suburban areas and the feasibility of constructing sidewalks in rural communities. The understanding of these other settings is also crucial for sound and comprehensive sustainable transportation policies.

There is a need for more research on civic infrastructure and public goods of all kinds—not sidewalks alone. Just as sidewalks offer safety, health, and social interaction dimensions for study and analysis, other public goods such as public parks, playgrounds, and the like can be examined through the same lens. What a great day it will be when we are able to walk on sidewalks to the playground, too!

The important thing for now is for Clinton to begin to make a change in its transportation planning and policy through this pedestrian plan. Sidewalks matter.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Governor's Discretionary Funds Request for Ideas and Concepts

Mississippi Department of Employment Services Workforce Investment Act 2009

May 29, 2009

| Workforce Investment and Recovery through Community Sidewalks Construction

Submitted by:
Elizabeth Joseph
402 Concord Drive
Clinton, MS 39056
601-212-6061
ejjoseph@olemiss.edu

1. **Proposing Individual** – Elizabeth Joseph, 402 Concord Drive, Clinton, MS

Title – Workforce Investment and
Recovery through Community Sidewalks Construction (CSC)

2. **Workforce Investment and Development** – Community Sidewalks Construction

(CSC) would establish sidewalk systems where most needed through a partnership among key community stakeholders including businesses, residential neighborhoods, and learning/training centers. This program would connect “learning/training centers” (i.e. K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, community centers, churches, etc.) through pedestrian accessible walkways. CSC meets immediate workforce needs employing Mississippians laid off as a result of current economic conditions. It will also provide a direct connection between the work force, learning/training centers, and potential places of employment.

3. **Concept** – Community Sidewalks Construction (CSC) is a program designed to bolster Mississippi’s economy by constructing sidewalks throughout Mississippi communities. The primary focus of CSC is to provide safe and functional pedestrian walkways, connecting community learning/training centers to local businesses and neighborhoods. Sidewalk systems would be designed to allow safe access to learning and training centers without the need for motor transportation, especially near major roadways lacking pedestrian access. City and community leaders, as well as business representatives, would collaborate to identify priority roadways within the community that currently do not provide safe pedestrian access. This proposal is unique in that it not only addresses the current employment problems throughout Mississippi, but it also provides a way for all Mississippians at every economic level to access learning/training centers and potential places of employment. CSC strengthens the state’s infrastructure, while ensuring safety, promoting healthy and environmentally friendly transportation, and connecting communities.

Job Creation - Mississippi’s economy would benefit from the immediate job-creating nature of CSC. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for March 2009, 9.4 percent of Mississippians are unemployed.¹⁰ The construction sector has been hit hard with jobs declining by 110,000 in April. “Over the past 6 months, job losses have averaged 120,000 per month, compared with 46,000 per month from December 2007 through October 2008.”¹¹ CSC would directly address this concern, placing hundreds of construction/contract workers in jobs across the state. Louisville, Kentucky, recently

¹⁰United States of America. United States Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Table 3. Civilian labor force and unemployment by state and selected area, seasonally adjusted. 17 Apr. 2009. 13 May 2009 <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.t03.htm>>.

¹¹ United States of America. United States Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employment Situation Summary. 08 May 2009. 20 May 2009 <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.nr0.html>>.

received \$14.7 million in federal stimulus funds to build sidewalks throughout the city. Two of the six projects planned for the city of Louisville alone will create 660 jobs.¹² By instituting such a project throughout the state of Mississippi, able employees in contracting and construction will be placed in jobs that will not only benefit this sector of employment but other important industries as well. As stated in the Bureau of Labor Statistics April 2009 report, manufacturing employment notably decreased with significant losses in “three durable goods industries – transportation equipment (-34,000), fabricated metal products (-29,000), and machinery (-22,000).”¹³ Constructing sidewalks will require using this machinery and equipment, providing a needed boost to those industries as well. Furthermore, community businesses benefit as pedestrians gain access via sidewalks. In the current economic crisis, more people are turning to pedestrian and bicycle travel. CSC would accommodate these demands and allow pedestrians and bikers to have easy and safe access to community businesses—locations of business transaction and employment.

Safety – Safety is also a major reason to implement the CSC. In 2006, Mississippi sustained fifty-six pedestrian fatalities from motor vehicles.¹³ As stated in the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials’ (AASHTO) 2007 vision statement, “pedestrians and bicycles comprise 11 percent of fatalities per year. As we encourage people to walk and ride bikes, their safety must improve as well” (35).¹⁴ The AASHTO vision statement also emphasizes that to ensure safety for the pedestrian, biker,

¹² The City of Louisville, Kentucky. Bike Louisville Newsroom. “Mayor Announces New Stimulus Projects Including Bike and Walking Paths.” Press release. LouisvilleKy.gov. 16 Mar. 2009. 15 May 2009 <<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/BikeLouisville/News/2009/03-16-09-stimulus.htm>>.

¹³ United States of America. Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Bureau of Transportation Statistics. BTS. 2007. 13 May 2009 <http://www.bts.gov/publications/state_transportation_statistics/state_transportation_statistics_2007/html/table_02_07.htm>.

¹⁴ Horsley, John. Transportation Vision and Strategy for the 21st Century Summit. Rep. 2007. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. 15 May 2009 <http://www.transportationvision.org/docs/Draft%20Vision%20Statements_web.pdf>.

or even those citizens who use “mobility assistant devices such as wheelchairs,” state and community officials must consider street design in terms of what is best not only for automobiles, but also more vulnerable travelers.⁵ For example, in the past few years, three accidents have occurred involving Mississippi College students who were walking across town to business establishments where there was no sidewalk system, one resulting in the tragic death of a student. Because no sidewalks connect the college to the business district on U.S. Highway 80, pedestrians and bikers must contend with heavy automobile traffic on the streets in order to travel from a learning center to the business district.

Health and the Environment – Sidewalks also have other sustainable benefits.

Governor Haley Barbour’s campaign, “Let’s Go Walking, Mississippi,” encourages all citizens to enjoy the outdoors and to be active. Walking is a great start to a healthy lifestyle, but walking on the roadside without sidewalks is dangerous. The State of Mississippi has a wonderful opportunity to link the Governor’s initiative for health with safety through the construction of public sidewalk systems. Promoting healthy lifestyles through sidewalks as a mode of transportation also reduces the negative environmental impact resulting from reliance on automobile use. This relatively inexpensive program would contribute to the development and reputation of our state as a safe and environmentally sustainable place to live and work.

Community Development – Sidewalks are a key element to community development.¹⁵

Sidewalks connect locations in a community – residential to businesses to churches. It is

¹⁵ Duneier, Mitchell. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.

crucial that sidewalks serve as a functional asset to a community, connecting places that are key features and locations within a town. Equally as important to connecting places is the fact that sidewalks also connect people. The availability and use of sidewalks creates a sense of “social cohesion” within a community as people interact and share common experiences.

Funding – It may be possible to obtain the funding for this project through the Department of Transportation grant proposals for state and local government infrastructure projects, however, if the State of Mississippi declines federal stimulus dollars, it would be more economically viable to proceed with CSC through the Governor’s Discretionary Funds.

4, 6, and 10. **Benefits to Mississippi** – The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was designed to meet the needs of both workers and employers, because addressing their needs are “important in developing thriving communities where all citizens succeed and businesses prosper.” This is also the goal of the CSC—to develop partnerships between community leaders, residents, businesses and other local stakeholders to provide everyone access to community businesses and training centers. All parties would be responsible for crafting the sidewalk system. The State of Mississippi would contract the work out to local companies who could certify that all employees were fully documented, including all prime and subcontractors (i.e. concrete companies, machinery firms, and other construction-related businesses).

5. **Allowable Activities** – By connecting community training and learning centers to businesses, CSC is not simply disseminating lists of eligible providers of youth activities,

it is creating a safe and direct link for everyone in the community to access businesses, learning and training centers, as well as his or her place of employment.

7. **Resource Requirements** – Sidewalks typically cost anywhere from \$20.00 to \$50.00 per square foot to construct. Community leaders should immediately organize meetings with state and local government officials, local businesses and residents, and other stakeholders to design the local sidewalk system. The city could then submit a cost estimate (including certified bids from local contracting companies) to the State who would decide how to allocate funds.

8. **Measurable Outcomes** – Results can be measured by the jobs created and miles of transportation infrastructure established, connecting education initiatives to business objectives.

9. **Long Term Viability** – The project will become self-sustaining. Once sidewalks are constructed, the community will be responsible for relatively low-cost maintenance. If necessary, the local government could seek financing through normal means (taxes, bonds, or state transportation funds. Mississippi cities and municipalities will benefit through community enhancement, livability and desirability that results from constructing sidewalks. The Mississippi Department of Transportation's Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator would ideally be designated as the Director of Community Sidewalks Construction (CSC).

11. **Contact** – Elizabeth Joseph, 601-212-6061, ejjoseph@olemiss.edu

Appendix B

The Fulbright Scholarship “Statement of Grant Purpose”

During my Fulbright year I will study and research transportation planning and policy at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, focusing on the sustainable transportation modes of pedestrianism and biking. I will bring the research back to the southern United States so that a plan can be developed and implemented for creating sustainable mobility in my home region.

I am currently writing my senior honors thesis on the importance of sidewalks to a community and have even submitted a proposal to Mississippi’s Governor Haley Barbour, advocating for sidewalks to be constructed across the state. Through my research, I have recognized the necessity of sound urban planning that would allow for sidewalks, bike paths, and other environmentally sustainable forms of transportation.

The southern United States, especially, needs research providing academic legitimacy to the idea of sustainable mobility in order to launch this essential addition to the region. Like the Netherlands, much of the area in which I live—particularly the states in the Mississippi Delta region—is flat, making walking and cycling feasible modes of transportation. Although an overall transformation will not come quickly or easily, it is crucial to study how the American South can use policies and research in the Netherlands as a blueprint for change.

The Netherlands's cities, specifically Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Delft, are famous for their system of sidewalks and bike paths. Therefore, the country is the premiere location to study this topic. The Netherlands has a culture of pedestrian and bike activity. Cities were built for walking, and bike paths connect city to city throughout the country. It is common to see people biking on the trails to travel from one city to another instead of driving on the roads. The Dutch walk and bike everywhere. Their culture values this way of life and, thus, supports these sustainable modes of transportation.

The Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands is a world leader in transportation studies, and I have established an affiliation with the University to study sustainable mobility planning and policy. Students at the university engage in research projects about current transportation issues while learning—from distinguished professors on the topic—the most effective way to address potential concerns. My research in the Netherlands will draw on the disciplines of urban planning, the sociology of transportation, sustainable transportation planning and construction, and sustainable

transportation policy analysis. A few of the graduate level courses offered at the University that would be greatly beneficial to my research objectives include Transport Policy, Sociology and Psychology of Transport, Policy Analysis of Multi- Actor Systems, Policy and Decision Models, Legal Aspects of Project Design, and Safety of Transportation. Delft University also offers a class on Urban Design: People, Pedestrians, and Public Spaces—the crux of my current thesis and of my goals for the Fulbright Scholarship. Dr. Dominic Stead is a researcher at the OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies at Delft University. Dr. Stead specializes in sustainable mobility and has published much on the topic; he has agreed to supervise my research while in the Netherlands.

The classes are taught in English, but I would work with Dr. Stead and professors at the University to learn Dutch. I have purchased a book to begin learning the Dutch language. Knowledge of the language will be particularly beneficial, as I want to travel to the sites of some of these extensive sidewalk networks and conduct interviews on the sidewalks/bike paths. I will ask questions about what makes the Dutch people dedicated to using sustainable methods of transportation. Why do they choose to walk or bike? Have they always walked or biked? Do they own personal automobiles? Are the environmental and public health concerns reasons for using these sustainable modes of transportation? By comparing their society to southern society, I hope to learn how their ideas can be put into effect in the southern region of the United States.

During other vacation time, I want to travel to events hosted by TRAIL, the national transportation research school comprising five Dutch universities' faculties of researchers. Delft University of Technology is one of the universities that is involved in the initiative. TRAIL specializes in transport, infrastructure, and logistics, and it offers courses, workshops, and conferences on the latest transportation findings. I also want to use vacations to bike across the country on these trails, examining the specific features of the bike paths that allow them to accommodate and be attractive to so many users.

As a musician—a pianist and a singer—I want to immerse myself in the Dutch music society in order to interact with the community. I plan to attend the renowned Delft Chamber Music Festival, which is a series of classical concerts where the world's most celebrated musicians perform. I want to participate in community opera productions, sing in a local choir, and, even take voice lessons from a Dutch voice coach. I will take advantage of the Netherlands's rich history of art, visiting Rembrandt's and van Gogh's museums and viewing their masterpieces in their home country. I will also volunteer for a small nonprofit organization in Delft with whom I would continue serving throughout the year. Most importantly, however, I will interact with the Dutch people while walking on the sidewalks and biking on the trails.

Sustainable transportation is a particularly important topic as the United States focuses on ways to improve the environment and public health, among other current policy concerns. Through the development and execution of sustainable transportation planning and policy

as studied in the Netherlands, the southern states can make the crucial and necessary changes that allow for sidewalks and bike paths throughout the region.

Bibliography

"Distribution of People in Census Tracts by Poverty Levels: 2009." *U.S. Census Bureau*.

Web. 27 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/censr-16.pdf>>.

"District 3 Preliminary Estimates Section Transportation Costs: Quarterly Roadway

Construction Cost." Oct. 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.

<www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/costs/costs-D3.pdf>.

Duneier, Mitchell. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.

Evans-Cowley, Jennifer. "Sidewalk Planning and Policies in Small Cities." *Journal of*

Urban Planning and Development (2006): 71-75. Print.

"FAQ - Frequently Answered Questions about Municipal Bonds." -

MunicipalBonds.com. Web. 11 Apr. 2010.

<<http://content.municipalbonds.com/2010/02/06/faq-frequently-answered-questions-about-municipal-bonds/>>.

Horsley, John. Transportation Vision and Strategy for the 21st Century Summit. Rep. 2007. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. 15 May 2009.

<http://www.transportationvision.org/docs/Draft%20Vision%20Statements_web.pdf>.

"H.R. 3617 - Summary: Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2009 (GovTrack.us)."

GovTrack.us: Tracking the U.S. Congress. Web. 01 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-3617&tab=summary>>.

"Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008." *U.S.*

Census Bureau. Web. 27 Mar. 2010.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p60-236.pdf>>.

Let's Go Walkin' Mississippi | Home. Web. 19 Feb. 2010.

<<http://www.letsgowalkinms.com/welcome.html>>.

Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia, and Renia Ehrenfeucht. *Sidewalks: Conflict and*

Negotiation over Public Space. Cambridge: MIT, 2009. Print.

"Mississippi Unified Long-Range Transportation Infrastructure Plan Executive

Summary." *GoMDOT.com.* Mississippi Department of Transportation. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.

<<http://www.gomdot.com/Home/AboutMDOT/TheGoogler.aspx?sstr=bike%20and%20pedestrian%20coordinator>>.

"NCDOT: Funding." *NCDOT: Home.* Web. 31 Mar. 2010.

<<http://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/funding/default.html>>.

Owens, Leslie. "Two Meridian Schools Awarded the Safe Routes to School Funds to Improve Infrastructure." Web. 12 Dec. 2009.

<<http://www.gomdot.com/Home/MediaRoom/newsreleases/pressReleases.aspx>>.

Shutkin, William A. "Smart Growth and Community Planning in Suburban New Jersey." *The Land That Could Be Environmentalism and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century (Urban and Industrial Environments)*. New York: The MIT P, 2001.

"State Grant Funding." *Delta Regional Authority*. Web. 01 Apr. 2010.

<<http://www.dra.gov/state-grant-funding/>>.

State of Mississippi. Mississippi Department of Employment Security. *Workforce Investment Act- Governor Discretionary Funds: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*. Web. <<http://www.stimulus.ms.gov>>.

The Associated Press. "State-by-State List of Obesity Rates, Rankings." *SFGate*. San Francisco Chronicle, 1 July 2009. Web. 8 Oct. 2009. <<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2009/07/01/national/w043830D55.DTL>>.

United States of America. Fatality Analysis Reporting System. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *2008 Ranking of STATE Pedestrian Fatality Rates*. FARS, 2009. Web. 19 Feb. 2010. <<http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesPedestrians.aspx>>.

United States of America. Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Bureau

of Transportation Statistics. *Pedestrian Fatalities Involving Motor Vehicles, 2007*.
BTS, 2008. Web. 16 Feb. 2010.

<http://www.bts.gov/publications/state_transportation_statistics/state_transportation_statistics_2008/html/table_02_07.html>.

United States of America. Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Bureau
of Transportation Statistics. BTS. 2007. 13 May 2009.

<http://www.bts.gov/publications/state_transportation_statistics/state_transportation_statistics_2007/html/table_02_07.html>.

United States. Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.
Congressional Directives. *Appropriations Act, 2010*. Washington, D.C., 2009.
Print.

"What objections might homeowners make to installing sidewalks in their neighborhoods
and how can I address these concerns?" *Walkinginfo.org*. Web. 12 Dec. 2009.
<<http://www.walkinginfo.org/faqs/answer.cfm?id=3456>>.