

# SSI BIKE PATH SAFETY CONCERNS

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AS PERCEIVED BY MEMBERS OF BIKE WALK GOLDEN ISLES

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BIKE WALK GOLDEN ISLES IS A 501 (C) 3 ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED IN 2022 TO PROMOTE SAFE AND HEALTHY BIKING, RUNNING, WALKING AND ROLLING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GOLDEN ISLES.

# THE ISSUES

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- Many bicyclists use what are legally defined as sidewalks on St. Simons Island and are potentially subject to prosecution for this action.
- The rights of bicyclists riding their bikes across intersections are not clearly identified or understood.
- The use of e-bikes creates additional hazards for walkers, runners and riders.
- Maintenance along many of the sidewalks and pathways on SSI is poor in places resulting in compromised conditions for bikers, runners and walkers.

# WHERE CAN BICYCLISTS LEGALLY RIDE ON SSI?

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- Under Georgia state law, only riders age 12 and under can ride on a sidewalk. Glynn County ordinances do not address what constitutes a sidewalk, leading to confusion on where one is allowed to ride a bike for both cyclists and law enforcement.
- A sidewalk technically is any paved path that is less than 8' wide.
- A multiuse path, where bikes are legal, should be 8'-10' wide.
- On SSI there is a mixture of what would be defined as sidewalks and multiuse paths.
- Often a bicyclist must use a sidewalk to navigate between multiuse path segments.

# WHAT IS THE SOLUTION SO CYCLISTS LEGALLY RIDE ON SSI?

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- Glynn County could enact legislation designating specific segments of sidewalk as multiuse paths, overriding state law. A list of existing multiuse paths could also be included in the legislation to further clarify where it is legal to bike.
- Strategically placed signage could assist in making it clear what sidewalks have been designated multiuse paths and what existing multiuse paths are already in place.
- BWGI has prepared a list of sidewalks that should be considered for designation as multiuse paths. All are currently being used constantly by cyclists.

# WHAT RIGHTS DO CYCLISTS HAVE WHEN RIDING ACROSS AN INTERSECTION OR TRAFFIC CIRCLE ?

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- There is confusion as to whether or not a cyclist can ride their bike across an intersection or traffic circle.
- BWGI is aware of incidents where bicyclists have been cited because they have ridden their bike across an intersection and been involved in an accident. Likewise, motorists have been cited in other accidents involving bicyclists and intersections.
- Is there a difference between a person walking their bike or riding their bike across an intersection in comparison to a pedestrian or runner? Should there be?

# WHAT CAN BE DONE TO CLARIFY THE RIGHTS OF CYCLISTS WHEN CROSSING INTERSECTIONS ?

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- Create local legislation that mandates motorists stop for both cyclists and pedestrians crossing an intersection or roundabout.
- The same legislation can place the burden of activating any available crossing light or beacon on a cyclist or pedestrian before crossing a signalized intersection or roundabout.
- Be consistent in providing signage that urges cyclists and pedestrians to use caution in crossing an intersection and warns motorists to be aware of cyclists and pedestrians.

# USE OF E-BIKES ON MULTIUSE PATHS AND SIDEWALKS CREATES A HAZARD FOR OTHER USERS

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- BWGI hears concerns from a variety of people about E-bike users traveling at high speeds along paths on SSI.
- Some E-bike users show little concern for other users and proceed a speed to high for conditions.
- There are three classes of E-bikes.



# HOW SHOULD E-BIKES BE REGULATED?

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- For some cyclists the use of an E-bike is critical in allowing them to ride.
- Class 3 E-bikes should be prohibited from all SSI pathways. Class I and Class II E-bikes could be allowed.
- Consider banning all other motorized vehicles except mobility scooters.
- Establish a speed limit for all pathways.
- Post signage reminding wheeled vehicle riders to announce themselves when passing slower parties. Runners should do the same.



# MAINTENANCE ISSUES IMPACT USERS IN MANY PLACES

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- In many places vegetation has overtaken the edges of the paths reducing the useable area and squeezing together users passing in both directions.
- In other areas the paths are covered by grass, pine straw and mulch again reducing the width of the path.



# MAINTENANCE ISSUES IMPACT USERS IN MANY PLACES (CONT.)

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- Broken and displaced pavement creates hazards for both cyclists and pedestrians.
- Signage throughout the pathway system are inconsistent.



# PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

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- Enact legislation designating all pathways that are eligible for use by cyclists.
- Pass an ordinance regarding use of E-bikes, including prohibition of Class 3 E-bikes and other motorized vehicles.
- Develop a maintenance plan that ensures all pathways are cleared of vegetation and debris to the fullest extent of existing pavement.
- Prepare and prioritize a plan to repair/replace broken and displaced pavement and expand pathways to meet the 8' minimum width to be a legitimate pathway.
- Prepare a sign plan that provides consistent information throughout the pathway system.
- Bring law enforcement on board in enforcing new ordinances.

# ADDITIONAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

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- Install a pedestrian beacon in front of St. Simons Elementary School.
- Make sure appropriate crosswalks are installed at street crossings along all pathways.
- The development of a comprehensive master trail plan for all of Glynn County could identify further safety issues as well as guide the development of new and safer bike/pedestrian facilities throughout all of the County.

# THANK YOU COMMISSIONERS FOR LISTENING TO OUR SAFETY CONCERNS!



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# Existing Path Widths

Width	Street	From	To
8'+ -	Kingsway	Sea Island Road	Mallery
	Sea Island Road	Demere	Hamilton
	Ocean	Mallery	Demere
	E. Beach Causeway	Demere	Coast Guard Station
	Demere	South of E. Beach Causeway	Old Demere (north)
	Mallery	Ocean	Blackbeard Cove
	Demere	Cummins	Joe May
	Frederica	4th St.	Sea Island Road
	Frederica	Demere	Kingsway
	Lawrence Road	Frederica	Hampton Point Dr.
7'+ -	Sea Island Road	Kingsway	Demere
	Ocean	Demere	Arnold
	Ocean	E. Beach Causeway	15th Street
	Sea Island Causeway	Frederica	Island entrance
	Mallery	Blackbeard Cove	Demere
	Frederica	Lawrence	Monument Road
	Demere	South of E. Beach Causeway	Cummins
	Demere	Sea Island Road	Frederica
6'+ -	Ocean	Arnold	East Beach Causeway
	Demere	Old Demere (north)	Frederica
	Frederica	S. Harrington	Lawrence
5'+ -	Ocean	15th St.	end of path
	Frederica	Demere	4th St.
	Demere	Cummins	May Joe