

Bike/Ped Task Force Meeting

9-24-09

Present: Tom Redinger, Janet Barlow, Doreen DiCarlo, Grace Curry, Barb Mee, Gary Lux, and Claudia Nix

The counting project was a success in that we were able to survey around 50 sites during the week and some were surveyed two times giving us figures for a weekday and weekend day. Don will be taking the figures to Western Carolina University for the students there to tally and do some analysis for us. We will have a report when this is complete.

Last Thursday, Sept 17th the Get There Asheville Forum had a total of 150 participants who can out to listen to the political candidates for city council and mayor. After the Primary Election they will hold a traditional debate at the Asheville Design Center on College St. on October 14th at 7 PM.

Our last bicycle corral for the After 5 Concert series had a small turnout only 20 bikes were parked due to the rainy conditions. This brings the total of bikes parked for the series to 218 bikes parked.

Barb Mee gave us an update on the ARRA stimulus funding for the city of Asheville relating to bicycle and pedestrian improvements. NC DOT Division 13 notified the city that they will be constructing the ARRA funded enhancement projects rather than passing the funding through to individual local governments. Projects in Asheville are completing the Beaverdam Road sidewalk from Merrimon Avenue to Kimberly, installing a bio-retention basin near exit 6 of I-240 to treat the runoff entering Ross Creek, refurbishing plantings at the intersection of I-240 exit 7 and Tunnel Road, constructing sidewalks along Pinchot Drive from Overlook Road to Estes Elementary School, and installing pedestrian signals at Pinchot Drive & Overlook Road. The city requested pedestrian signal and crosswalk to cross Patton Avenue at Louisiana Avenue will be funded with other than ARRA funds, and should be installed as the city's Patton Avenue sidewalk project is complete.

The pedestrian improvements include pedestrian enhancements at Fairview Road by the elementary school which will include a crosswalk and pedestrian signals. Missing links of sidewalks in the near downtown areas include 600 linear feet of side walk on Depot Street from Clingman to Livingston St., 1,200 linear feet on Hilliard Street from Church to Biltmore, 1,350 linear feet on Short Michigan Avenue from Amboy Road to State Street, 1,400 linear feet on Choctaw from South French Broad to Congress, 130 linear feet on Evelyn Place from Edwin to Murdock. Other areas that are farther out of the city are 1,100 linear feet on Linden Street in Royal Pines and 2,600 linear feet on Hendersonville Road to Forest Drive.

The bicycle improvements include the resurfacing of the whole of Kimberly Avenue to make the bike lane safer. Coxe Avenue will be resurfaced and bike lanes will

be drawn in on both sides of the street, and the South Slope bike lane network will be added to Asheland Avenue, Hilliard Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Claudia updated folks on the Buncombe County Greenway Commission projects which include the hiring of Equinox and McGill Engineering to do the Comprehensive Greenway Plan for the Hwy 70 Corridor & Swannanoa River Greenway from Ridgecrest to Azalea Road. They have begun collecting data for the plan and will be holding community meetings this coming January and February.

The Buncombe Co. Parks & Greenways Dept. submitted a request for the Tiger Grant which is another stimulus project for the purchase of lands, the building of bridges and some actual greenway to be put on the ground in the Swannanoa area. The competition is very stiff so we are not sure we will be chosen for this grant.

The French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization has given them a planning grant of \$30,000.00 to develop a plan for a Greenway along Hwy 251 from Broadway through Woodfin to the Buncombe County line. They will begin the process of choosing a consulting firm to do this plan.

The Greenway section to Homeny Creek has been completed although there are some problems right now due to the French Broad River being out of its banks.

Claudia gave an update on the Priority Needs List that the MPO just completed. These projects were rated for the years 2015 to 2020.

Claudia and Terri presented the list of requested improvements to our regional engineer, Mike Calloway after the assessment was performed of Biltmore Avenue and McDowell and all streets between from Biltmore Village to Southside and South Charlotte. Mike asked that we prioritize the requests that the DOT would be responsible for. The rest of the meeting was spent discussing the projects and prioritizing them. Some of our original requests have since been accomplished.

1. At the intersection of South Charlotte, Southside and on both sides of Biltmore Avenue we would like to see a pedestrian refuge and high visibility crosswalks with pedestrian signals. It is very difficult for pedestrians to know when it is safe to cross and it is a large intersection.
2. A high visibility crosswalk on Biltmore Avenue at McCormack Place would make this area safer. This is a difficult place to cross because of the configuration of McCormack Place, the gas station and the ball park. Many individuals who live in the low income housing on Short Coxe walk to the gas station and cross there and during ball games patrons to the ballpark park and cross the street there. Many near misses are occurring.
3. A sidewalk is needed on the south side of Short Coxe and Southside from McDowell to Biltmore Avenue. With the low income housing development access there many of these individuals are trying to walk to a variety of destinations.
4. A mid block high visibility crosswalk on Biltmore Avenue at Mission Hospital from the parking garage to the satellite parking lot across the road would make this area safer. Traffic moves above the speed limit traveling

down hill and it is difficult to see the traffic due to the hill. Individuals are regularly crossing here rather than walking down the hill to the light and back up again. Also, individuals who come from Forest Hill Drive often cross in this area. This could be a good location to try out using orange crossing flags perhaps Mission Hospital would be willing to sponsor the purchase of the flags to make pedestrians more visible.

5. A pedestrian refuge is needed to make it a little more safe for those crossing at Bryson and Biltmore Avenue and an increase in the phase for the light would help pedestrians crossing this roadway due to the size of it. Many people are walking from Kenilworth neighborhood to Biltmore Village.
6. A high visibility crosswalk is needed across McDowell Road at Starbucks to the Grand Bohemian Hotel.
7. A crosswalk is needed across Vanderbilt Road where it intersects McDowell and Hendersonville Road and a sidewalk is needed on the west side of McDowell from Vanderbilt to the Viaduct. There are many visitors who have been caught there lured down the sidewalk in front of TGI Fridays to Vanderbilt.
8. Our final request is for Biltmore Avenue to be changed from 4 lanes to 3 lanes from Bryson and Meadow Roads to Hillard and for bike lanes to be placed along the road. This would help to relieve left turning movements on the roadway which cause accidents and motorists frustrations and develop a buffer for pedestrians who are walking along the roadway. This would also aid bicyclists who are traveling the north/south direction and now are riding up Biltmore Avenue on the sidewalk because there is no room for them on the road. We have seen motorists ride up onto the curb and sidewalk and there have been rear-end collisions on Biltmore Avenue when motorists are stopped waiting to make a left turn. With the state route being moved to McDowell and much being diverted there, it seem proper to make the change in configuration on Biltmore Avenue.

Submitted by Claudia Nix