

Minutes - Bike / Ped Task Force March 24th

Vision: For Asheville to be a community of connected pathways that is healthy, safe and accessible for people of all ages.

Mission: To educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian transportation. To advocate for the development and maintenance of safe, convenient and inter-connected facilities and to promote the benefits of walking and biking for individuals and community health.

Members present: Barb Mee, Don Kostelec, Kristopher Hinz, Terri Zimmerman March, Tom Redinger, Jim Grade, Drake Fowler, Paul Endry, Linda Giltz, Dwayne Stutzman, Mike Sule, and Claudia Nix.

Introductions: Tell us your dream for biking and walking for Asheville in the next 5 years. What would you like to see?

General response: transform “alternative transportation” into “mainstream transportation” via new infrastructure development, inter-connectivity of existing resources, and community education.

Approved Minutes from last meeting.

Old business:

Survey members for this year’s goals. Let’s get it out and see what folks think.

Thanks to Terri Zimmerman March for her efforts here.

Discuss a possible date to give report to NC DOT on Safety Audit for Haywood Road

Haywood Road Safety Audit: Recommendations for review by Bicycle & Pedestrian Task Force

Recommended Strategies:

- Identify one corridor per year for the Task Force to conduct similar audits, in cooperation with the City, NCDOT, FBRMPO and others.
- Encourage the City, FBRMPO, and NCDOT to use the safety audit as a reference for improvements made along Haywood Road by these agencies, developers, utility companies and others.
- Work with City, FBRMPO, NCDOT and other partners to seek funding for upgrade of pedestrian facilities, in the following order or priority:
 - 1) Focus first on providing countdown signals, crosswalks and curb ramps (curb extensions where on-street parking allows) at existing signalized intersections;
 - 2) Construct curb ramps, curb extensions, and ADA-compliant crosswalks at existing mid-block crossing locations;
 - 3) Fill other gaps and correct deficiencies along the route;
 - 4) Install pedestrian-scale street lighting and other amenities; and
 - 5) Remove / relocated utility poles that restrict the clear width of the pedestrian way.
- Encourage neighborhood-based initiatives to maintain and clear sidewalks and signage obstructed by foliage, debris and other movable obstacles;
- Connect pedestrian facilities to transit stops located along Haywood Road;
- Encourage changes in spot construction practices that disallow placement of temporary traffic controls and signage in the pedestrian way;
- Utilize lessons learned from the Haywood / Clingman / Roberts roundabout to avoid repeating design flaws in future intersection and roundabout construction.
- Re-stripe Haywood Road to reflect recommendations for bike lanes and shared lane markings as identified in the City of Asheville Bicycle Plan.
- Work with City of Asheville to encourage new development or re-development to conform to best practices and ADA compliance when sidewalks and curb ramps are constructed / reconstructed.

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Don Kostelec – reviewed the updated list of recommended strategies, considering feedback both for project-specific concerns and also for region-wide “best practices.” Upgrades to the pedestrian facilities were listed in priority order, with crosswalks & pedestrian signals making the top of the list. Kudos to Don for his outstanding

presentation summary for the safety audit results! Don's list attached at end of the minutes.

Review the DOT plan for Beecham Curve for Haywood Road for a formal comment.

Concerns and suggestions voiced:

- *Pedestrians have a long crossing w/o a clear, established island/refuge. Seems less safe than existing design?*
- *Uphill traffic coming in to W. AVL from Haywood Rd – limited visibility with pedestrians in crosswalk?*
- *No bicycle-specific accommodations at all? What about the (approved) bike plan??*
- *How about Safe Routes to School – recommendations for Hall Fletcher?*
- *Would a roundabout be feasible in the available space? Small like WT Weaver Blvd?*
- *Could we re-align Beverly and Ridgelawn to optimize clearance/flow?*
- *Has feedback been solicited from the community (residents, commercial property owners, Hall-Fletcher school community)?*
- *ABYSA soccer organization has practice at Hall-Fletcher Elementary – heavily-used.*
- *Can we offer DOT our efforts to facilitate gathering feedback from the community?*

New Business:

Don Kostelec – Bicycle Haywood has contracted with his firm to develop a strategic bike plan for Haywood Co. Claudia Nix will provide assistance and consultation.

Jim Grade – Urban Farm Bike Tour (ref. Austin, Texas) – any interest in planning a similar event for the greater AVL area? www.urbanfarmbiketour.org Maybe organize multiple rides for different lengths/durations, different target communities, different themes (coffee, art, restaurants, etc.). Possibly coordinate thru the Chamber of Commerce?

Look at the Roads with 1,000 traffic counts and see if this is a good threshold for putting in sidewalks for Ken Putnam. (We did not get to this item – it got overlooked)

Complete Streets Committees (will be two) We will not be dealing with this here. If interested in working on this join the Healthy Living Committee.

The ABPTaskforce will not be actively working on Complete Streets. However, all volunteer members are welcome and encouraged to participate separately as committee members in the Complete Streets initiative. Terri March and the Healthy Living Index Committee will focus mostly on education & advocacy, whereas the MPO committee will likely stick to policy and planning. Drake Fowler expressed interest.

Claudia – we received a request from Lucy Crown that we assess the pedestrian exchange at I-240 at Woodfin Place/Charlotte St. (exit 5B). Recommend a “spot safety” project for this specific area.

SRTS workshop held in Woodfin yesterday

Claudia – the group that attended was small, but very engaged and enthusiastic. Both parents and teachers participated in the discussion. The Woodfin community is working to utilize RTP grant funding to connect the park at Riverside Dr. to Merrimon Ave. through the landfill property, which could be a significant corridor.

Bike / Ped Safety Summit results

Claudia – the last Safety Summit was in 2000, which brought about a state helmet ordinance for children, Share The Road license plates, and other initiatives. Concerns and Suggestions” will be compiled for each of bike, pedestrian, and automobile areas. Information will be forwarded once available.

Report on National Bike Summit in Washington, DC

Claudia –Dwayne Stutzman and Chris Strout (Cane Creek) also represented NC. Discussions with legislators & staffers focused on maintaining existing funding for bike infrastructure – with supporting arguments based on positive business impact in the local communities. 20 total delegates from NC and 700+ delegates US-wide.

Possible NC Bike Summit

Claudia –Brian Williams (Transportation Demand Manager, Duke University) is working to plan this state-level activity. (Jennifer Baldwin, Raleigh Bike Planner) is also interested in synchronizing her planned conference with a NC-state Bike Summit.

Dwayne Stutzman – The Blue Ridge Parkway Commission is working to partner with the Buncombe Greenway Commission. They have given significant to help with the master planning efforts. We hope to address pedestrian and bike access at established interchanges along the Parkway in Asheville, especially in the Oakley area.

Announcements:

SNTD events week of May 16th

Claudia –The Mayor’s Leadership Ride has not yet been scheduled but will again be part of this event.

Traffic Skills Classes – Sat, March 26 9-3 and Sun, April 10 noon – 6

Claudia –We need volunteers for the Erwin Middle School bike program which begins Monday, March 28 – April 8 sessions are 9-noon . See Claudia if interested.

April 16 – Healthy Kids Rodeo – Public Works Parking lot, 11 AM to 4 PM. **NEED VOLUNTEERS**, please see Terri March if interested.

Bike Lane cleanup – April 2nd. Clingman Café 8:30 AM for breakfast. 9 AM to noon clean-up on Riverside Drive

Dwayne – can we work with Google Earth to get local greenways updated on the satellite maps?

Mike – Bike of the Irish was a big success. 170+ participants?

Barb – draft of the TIP will be previewed at a public hearing in Morganton.

Barb – CoA applied for a pilot program that lays the foundation for a Complete Streets program.

Barb – will be presenting at the MPO about creative use of funding sources for bicycle/pedestrian improvement projects.

Tom – are the planned bike lane improvements in Henderson County (Howard Gap Rd) incorporating feedback from the state-level bike committee? Proposing rumble strips there.