

Minutes September 25, 2014

Asheville Bike /Pedestrian Task Force

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. To promote the benefits of walking and biking for individuals and community health.

Introductions: Michael Biggs, Tom Redinger, Tina Kessinger, Grace Curry, Till Dohse, Barb Mee, Claudia Nix, Tristin Winkler, Liz McLamb.

Business:

- **Multimodal Commission – general updates**
Till Dohse gave a brief update about the MMTC meeting yesterday. First, there are two new members of the MMTC – Steve Obremski and John Ridout. The MMTC discussed a letter from a wheelchair bound citizen, who is greatly concerned about the safety and difficulty of transportation for those who are wheelchair bound. The MMTC is beginning a planning process to update and coordinate the bike, pedestrian, and transit plans in to one plan. An oversight committee has formed, called Asheville in Motion, which Till is part of. They have met one time, and October 24 is their next meeting. The group decided that safety is a top issue. The first public meeting for this plan is on Saturday, October 26th at the US Cellular Center (time – tbd).
- **French Broad River MPO**
Tristin Winkler gave a brief update. Earlier in the day, the MPO Board voted to approve all three City projects – the right-of-way purchase on Riverside, a bike-share study, and a new bus (there is a 25% City match). Also, the Complete Streets work group will be meeting October 8 at 9:30am for the first time in 10 months. The group will discuss starting a regional data collection program. Claudia offered that local Universities and students may make good partners for this, and that the Blue Ridge Bike clubs in surrounding areas may be able to help as well.
Tristin also spoke about the MPO bike/ped counters that have been in use recently. They counted 2400 trail users on Reed Creek greenway in 8 days. User peaks were on Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Barb shared this data with other city departments. It was suggested that greenways have built in counters for continual data collection.
- **Asheville Police/Fire/Rescue**
There were no representatives to give updates.
- **Asheville/Buncombe**
Barb updated the group about three new funding opportunities:
 - **TIGER Funding** – The City recently found out that they will receive \$14.6 million from USDOT for the River Arts District. This will include improvements on several roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, greenways, and more. The city press release is here: <http://coablog.ashevillenc.gov/2014/09/u-s-transportation-secretary-announces-14-6m-grant-for-east-of-riverway-multimodal-project/>
 - **Land of Sky Grant/Funding** – Today MPO board approved right of way purchase on Riverside, a bike share study, and a new bus.
 - **Tourism Development Authority (TDA)** – Winning projects will be announced in mid-October. Funding would go toward Riverside redevelopment projects.

There are several board and committee openings – listed at <http://www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/CityClerk/BoardsCommissions.aspx>

Barb presented the group a document that summarizes sidewalk projects in the City since 2006 – these are sidewalks built by the City, not by a developer. There have been 18.4 miles of new sidewalk built. Sidewalk funding is scored using the pedestrian plan. This formula may change with the new Asheville in Motion plan. Tina K. asked how to get a project on the plan/list? Her concern is with the Merrimon Ave corridor, specifically with the intersection with Coleman Ave, as there are no sidewalks and lots of pedestrian/transit traffic. Barb said that the City does not usually condemn land for sidewalk building – the new sidewalk on Louisiana Ave was built with donated land. Barb also recommended looking at the Pedestrian plan to find priority areas.

Barb gave a brief update on the Hendersonville road sidewalks – designs are almost complete, will go from Long Shoals to the Biltmore Forest shopping center, and will add pedestrian signals to each intersection (where they are not already).

Pedestrian signals are also being added to New Leicester highway.

There was a discussion about Merrimon Avenue and what would be needed to get sidewalk improvements along the road. It is a DOT maintained/managed road. The group discussed DOT criteria for installing a pedestrian crossing, how the MPO board works, and how the speed limit might be changed for Merrimon. Grace asked about the speed limit signs that show your actual speed. Barb encourage interested neighborhood groups to discuss with the City's Traffic Engineer. There was also a discussion about starting a neighborhood pace car program.

- Buncombe Bike Ed – general updates
 - Bulldog Bicycle Bonanza – UNCA – October 9 11:30-2
Blue Ridge bike club will have a booth and will have maps.
Police dept will help with providing a “cone course” for cyclists.
 - Canceling October classes b/c it conflicts with the bike summit in Greensboro.
- Mike had a question/comment about the MPO bike counter in the new Haywood bike lane. Requested that a sign be made to make sure that people do not ride around it, but over it. He observed many people riding around it, as cyclists are accustomed to riding around debris in the bike lane.
- There was a brief discussion about the bike/ped counts that happened last week. Terri March counted 1200 pedestrians by Pritchard park! Suggested that there be a number of counters at this location next year. Claudia noted a huge difference between plainclothes cyclists not wearing helmets and cyclists in their kits wearing them. Also, many pedestrians were observed cutting corners at intersections. Participation increased greatly this year.
- Claudia updated the group about two upcoming events:
 - Friday (tomorrow) afternoon at Kimmel Center – Health Fair promoting physical activity. 4:00-6pm.
 - Saturday Health fair at AB Tech - 10am-5pm. By WNC Health Advocates, Mission, and Carepartners. Furguson Auditorium. Bike Rodeo 12noon-3pm.

Announcements/Events:

- NC Bicycle Summit – Greensboro, NC – October 10-12 <http://www.bikewalknc.org/nc-bicycle-summit/>
- Next ABP Task Force meeting – Thursday, October 23 at 5:30pm