

Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force

Minutes

May 18, 2017

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.*

Attending: Janet Barlow, Till Dohse, Matt Fusco, Billie Lofland, Donna Lohnes, Terri March, Barb Mee, Claudia Nix, Tom Redinger, Mike Sule (Speaker), Randy Warren, Tristan Winkler.

Introductions & Administrative Details

Facilitator: Till Dohse

Minutes: Billie Lofland

April minutes approved.

Speaker/Presentation: AoB--Mike Sule & Matt Fusco. Mike Sule gave a presentation seeking an endorsement from the BPTF for an Asheville on Bikes (AoB) proposal to restripe the Brevard Road/I-26 Interchange bike lane to include a buffer.

- The Brevard interchange is slated for lots of improvements. The current design is for a 5-foot traditional bike lane. AoB does not think a traditional bike is an adequate design treatment for a 45 mph speed limit road. NACTO guidelines do not support this design either. The AoB Policy Committee looked at proposed plans for Hwy 191 (Brevard Road)/I-26 Interchange and felt it is near impossible to get the 11-foot travel lane reduced. Therefore AoB is recommending that the design be changed to a 2-foot buffer (painted), with the bike lane reduced to three feet. It is felt that having a 2-ft buffer between cars traveling 45 mph cars and the bike lane is a safer option than the standard 5-foot bike lane.
- The proposed design has the gutter pans maintained.
- There was much discussion following the presentation, with the following points being made:

- The 2 foot visual indicator gives some safety distance. Also the AoB proposed design works for child carrier
- Tristan said he thought NCDOT would approve. He also noted that this wouldn't make the 2-foot buffer standard.
- Once the BPTF and MMTC endorse this proposal, the City would then ask for an exemption from NCDOT.
- It was stressed by several people that the BPTF endorsement needs to clarify that the 3-foot bike lane would not be considered in the future.
- Someone noted that there could be a request for a 10-foot travel lane. Mike said AoB is not requesting this because it is too much of a long shot.
- It was noted that lots of people fought for a bike lane and a greenway that would go under Hwy 26.
- It was recommended that the endorsement by BPTF include a statement saying that the current NCDOT standard of a 5-foot bike lane is inadequate for highways with 45 mph speed limits. A suggestion was that BPTF adopt the AoB recommendation, with the statement that the 3-ft bike lane is not ideal, but for safety that 2-ft buffer is needed with the 45 mph speed.
- A check of the ASHTO website showed the recommendation of a 6-ft bike lane for 45 mph.
- A motion was made that we endorse the AoB proposal and the motion was second. All approved. It was decided that the three members of the MMTC draft the statement of endorsement.
- Two related issues were brought up
 - Tristan suggested that later in the game AoB advocate for better cost share policy. Current NCDOT standards are not acceptable.
 - There is no sidewalk stops just before Toyota and then starts on the other side

Members of the Task Force, via email, approved the following statement of support: "Given the present planning constraints, we support AOB's recommendation to improve traffic safety by modifying the design of the I-26 / Brevard road interchange to include a 2 ft. buffer with a 3 ft. bike lane. We encourage future designs of roads with 45+mph speed limits to include a wider lane consistent with recommended standards and the use of buffers where possible.

Open Discussion/Project Work

- Report from the Walk-Friendly Working Group: Billie reported that the focus of this group has been on providing support to Barb Mee in preparing the RFP for the Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Website update
 - Billie said that she would like to pass on the maintenance of the BPTF website to someone else. She will continue making sure the minutes are posted.
 - Billie asked the group to let her know which links—if any—should be removed from the Resources/Link page of the website.
 - Still working on Bike and Walk Friendly links

Regular Updates

- Asheville Police/Fire/Rescue – None
- Multimodal Commission—Terri March
 - Report from last month's meeting
 - Presentation on Fuel Cell technology and the need to have a recharging station in Asheville.
 - Vaidila Satvika talked about proposed sidewalk/parking UDO updates with an effort to make building sidewalk the default rather than fee-in-lieu. The City is pre-empted in part by the State which there can be fee-in-lieu only in subdivision. There was discussion on how that looks to a home owner...how much homeowner is expected to pay.
 - Barb noted that current ordinance does not trigger building a sidewalk and the current cost limit is 15% of total project.
 - Three MMTC members have their terms expire: Rich Lee, John Ridout and Till Dohse. Till is stepping off and the other two want to stay. So far there are two additional applicants
 - Great discussion of transit and replacing the fleet.
 - Still no info on VW settlement—maybe uses for electric bus or low emission vehicles.
 - MMTC had its retreat on May 12. Several areas are to have priority over next year, including implementing a Vision Zero campaign in Asheville. Hoping to put together a proposal and

coalition which will bring a proposal before Council in six months. Several teams were established. One was set up to deal with regulation concerns. Another will focus on project advancement, to have plans in different stages so the City can always seek money. Other goals are prioritizing AIM projects, looking at policies, especially for gaps and to lead public space policy. There are designated group on communication & engagement. There is a desire to emphasize the multimodal concept. It was illuminating that Transit and Greenways don't talk about other modes as much as does the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force.

- Report from NCDOT—On the northern section of Merrimon, six signal times have been reset to maximize pedestrian crossing. There also are plans to do the same between W.T. Weaver and Chestnut.
- French Broad River MPO – Tristan Winkler
In the process of approving block grants and bicycle and pedestrian projects, including two greenways along Riverside Drive. Also approved was a feasibility study of a road diet project in Waynesville. It was determined that the City's application for funds for the Beaucatcher Greenway is not eligible. This project was seen as recreation versus transportation. Members of the BPTF agreed that the City's application made a strong case in conjunction with the River to Ridge plan. Another issue in the greenway not getting funding was that there wasn't enough money.
- Asheville/Buncombe – Barb Mee
 - The City's GIS department is updating the mapping to get ready for the new Pedestrian Master Plan. This will keep consultant costs lower. The Bike Share Plan is going out to bid next week.
 - Members of the Multimodal Transit Commission are helping with developing new policy for pedestrian protection during construction. Barb will meet next week with Mary Smith, the Active School Coordinator to look at the walking route from Pisgah View Apartments to Hall Fletcher Elementary School.
 - Report from NCDOT-City Staff Safety Working Group
Work continues. NCDOT is proposing a sidewalk connection along Fairview Road between Bleachery Blvd (which goes to WalMart) and Swannanoa River Road. This includes going over the freeway. This is the area where two children were killed recently while walking across

Fairview Road. NCDOT has proposed a 50-50 cost split with the city. This will be a big win if DOT and the City each get their share of the funding. It will connect sidewalk recently built by McDonalds and include pedestrian crossing of Fairview Road at the shopping center that includes Babies-R-Us, Gold's Gym, a restaurant, a Subway, to the sidewalk recently built by Soma Pharmacy. There are questions regarding how to handle bus stops. The cost would be almost \$1 Mil. DOT also showing some interest in making a connection from the sidewalk recently installed by Soma Pharmacy to Highland brewing.

- I-26 working group—No update
- Strive Not to Drive
 - The Walk the Talk event looking at the path from the Transit Center south to Hilliard Ave and the AIM plan proposals for Coxe Avenue went well. Bruce talked to Elly about steep ramps and signage for crosswalk at Transit Center. Will add ADA ramp for the transit station upgrades. Christie Carter did the whole route in wheelchair, which was pretty scary because ramps and sidewalks are dangerous.
 - Sixteen people were at the Ride of Silence.
 - Lots of families attended the scavenger hunt.
- Open Streets – Terri

The team will really start getting ramped up soon. They are looking at next meeting dates and soon will be placing orders for signs, safety vests and other supplies.

Announcements/Events

- Next Bike/Ped Task Force meeting – Thursday, June 15, at 5:30 pm