

Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force
Minutes
June 15, 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: Anna Alsobrook, Anina Aaron, Grace Curry, Scott Dickens, Till Dohse, Bruce Emory (Speaker), Linda Giltz, Billie Lofland, Donner Lohnes, Terri March, Barb Mee, Charles Menefee, Claudia Nix, Ken Putnam (Speaker), Stuart Rohrbaugh, Tom Redinger, Soujo, Michael Sule, Randy Warren, Han Winogrand.

Introductions & Administrative Details

- Minutes: Billie Lofland
- Facilitator: Terri March
- May Meeting minutes: Approved
- Agenda for June Meeting: Approved

Speaker/Presentation: Bruce Emory, Multimodal Transportation C Chair, and Ken Putnam, City Transportation Director, presented NCDOT proposal designs for the I-26 Connector at Amboy Road and Haywood Road.

There was a lengthy discussion about the proposed design for Amboy Road and the five options for Haywood Road. There was agreement that with Amboy Road the round-about design is problematic and that it would be best to have a bicycle and pedestrian facility separate from the road. The Median U-turn Concept was seen as having advantages over the other options. Though one person asked about whether NCDOT had taken into account land acquisition.

After the meeting, a Google Doc was distributed by email to all attendees asking them to submit their comments in writing. That sheet is attached to these minutes. Also attached are the comments Janet Barlow submitted prior to the meeting because she could not attend.

Ken Putnam emphasized that the proposed designs were concept plans, not formal plans, so specific elements were not included. His goal was to get input from the Greenways Committee, the Multimodal Transportation Commission and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force. He is also getting Input from the residents who live in the Virginia Avenue neighborhood. Ken also noted that the City of Asheville will have to pick up the costs of any design elements that go beyond what NCDOT deems as adequate.

The following overarching comments were identified by those providing comments:

- It is not good for NCDOT to say it needs to follow a strategy—such as share roads—because it is in the Asheville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. Instead NCDOT should be following the latest industry recommendations.
- For a design to be effective, it must be clear where a bicycle is supposed to go.
- It is important that crosswalks not be placed in areas where drivers begin to accelerate.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be made as safe as possible to encourage increased use of these forms of transportation.

Open Discussion/Project Work

- Report from the Walk-Friendly Working Group:
 - Grace Curry reported that the group had its final meeting to prepare a list of recommendations for elements to be included in the RFP for the new Pedestrian Master Plan. The Group worked closely with Barb Mee. Barb said the RFP will be issued in July.
 - The application to renew Asheville's Walk-Friendly Communities standing is not due until June 2018.
- Website update:
 - Billie Lofland said she no longer has time to maintain the website and wants to pass the task onto someone else. Several people said they were interested and Charles Menefee said he would coordinate a group to work on the website.
 - Lee Pirtle has redesigned the main web page so that Asheville's status as a Bicycle Friendly and Walk Friendly Community is just under the main banner.

Regular Updates

- Asheville Police/Fire/Rescue: No report
- Multimodal Transportation Commission
 - Mike Sule gave a presentation on Asheville on Bikes' proposed redesign of the bike lanes on the Brevard Road/I-26 Bridge to provide more separation between cyclists and cars.
 - The MMTC retreat was productive, with attendees establishing four topic areas and goals within those areas. The minutes will soon be posted on the City's website.
- French Broad River MPO: No report
- Asheville/Buncombe : Barb Mee
 - The City is again partnering with Watch 4 Me NC. The effort will begin in September.
 - Plans continue moving forward with NCDOT and the City co-funding improvements to Fairview Road.
 - Bus service has expanded

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- *Strive Not to Drive* update: The event was successful. It was good to get support from the Land of Sky Regional Council.
- Buncombe Bike Ed update: The City has implemented a new bicycle driver program. If a cyclist gets a minor citation, they can opt to attend a Cycle Smart class to have the citation waived.
- Open Streets: There is a planning meeting on Tuesday, June 20. The next Open Streets will be held in September.
- How did it go? (Any events to review for the group?)

Announcements/Events: Next Bike/Ped Task Force meeting – Thursday, July 20, at 5:30 p.m.

Comments on I-26 Connector Design Options
Janet Barlow

Note: Janet Barlow could not attend the meeting and did not know all of the details discussed. She submitted her comments by email June 19, 2017, prior to the meeting.

I'm not going to be at the meeting tonight. As many of you know, my daughter, Bekah, is expecting a baby any day, and at the moment, her husband is sick, so I'm in Durham to available to her if labor begins before he's better.

Please consider my comments below on the drawings being presented and share as appropriate.

Let me preface this by saying, for those who don't know much about my work and research, that I've done a lot of work at roundabouts around the country considering the issues of pedestrians, particularly pedestrians with disabilities. I was a major participant in the research of National Cooperative Highway Research Projects 3-78a & 3-78b and am one of the authors of the recently published guidebook, *NCHRP Report 834, Crossing Solutions at Roundabouts and Channelized Turn Lanes for Pedestrians with Vision Disabilities: A Guidebook*. I have evaluated roundabouts from the perspective of pedestrian safety all around the country and have probably walked around over a hundred roundabouts in the past ten years. Roundabouts can be designed to work well for pedestrians and bicyclists but pedestrians and bicyclists must be taken into consideration from the beginning. These concept plans DO NOT show any consideration for the potential pedestrian and bicycle traffic at these locations.

Amboy Road

I am absolutely in favor of small pedestrian and bicycle friendly roundabouts at the ramp terminals at Amboy Road, and I also would like to see roundabouts at the other intersections of Amboy (Virginia, Fairfax), BUT the roundabouts drawn on these concept plans are intended for high speed movements, particularly on the right turning lanes and are not pedestrian and bicycle friendly. All of those turns need to be sized to the smallest possible turning radii (to handle trucks as needed) at the roundabout entries and exits in order to slow traffic at the roundabout and encourage safety for all. High speed movements are not needed at the ramp terminals. And there are too many lanes shown on Amboy still. If there are roundabouts at that location, it could be much smaller and still handle the anticipated volumes. If the consultant can't figure that out, you need a consultant who is more familiar with roundabouts. The drawing shows several locations that are going to be high-speed merges and/or yields and it's not going to encourage safety.

There are several points where pedestrian crossings should be provided that are multilane crossings and those will need treatment with pedestrian hybrid beacons to allow pedestrians to cross.

This concept plan also doesn't address the other intersections of Amboy between the ramp

terminals and Brevard and it should.

I know it's a concept plan, but without showing features like pedestrian and bicycle paths or crossings, it's too limited to comment on further.

Haywood Road

Again, the roundabout (ovalabout) plan is designed for high speed movements and instead needs to be designed to slow the traffic and consider the pedestrian and bicycle and commercial activity in this area. Whoever is designing these needs to be looking at other factors besides high anticipated vehicular volumes. This is a very urban location with lots of activity and the design looks like something designed for a high speed rural setting. As on the Amboy Road drawings, there seem to be several high speed designs used where merging or yielding should be taking place and I don't think that will encourage the safety we want to see at these locations for vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians.

Without seeing the current road alignment under the proposed alignment, I can't quite figure out the location of the bridges in relation to the current bridge (ie are there two new bridges or is the old bridge being used and another added?) and the potential effect on nearby businesses, but it looks like it's much worse than the previous plan. I'm glad it's showing pedestrian crossings (or at least I think that's what's shown) but again, the multi-lane pedestrian crossings will need treatments (PHB, raised crosswalks, etc) to make them accessible to pedestrians, particularly pedestrians who are blind. We know there are several blind individuals who live and work in the area. The anticipated greenway is not shown, as far as I can figure out, and how people get from Haywood Road to the greenway needs to be included in the concept plans or it's likely to be badly designed. Such features need to be included to truly consider these plans. There are bus stops along Haywood and I'm not sure how this large intersection might affect those pedestrians as well. The requirement for out of direction travel by pedestrians also looks quite negative to me. No crossings are shown across Haywood and that's needed also due to the commercial activity near this intersection. In general, I don't see this plan as any kind of improvement over the previous plans.

In my opinion, this area needs wide sidewalks, the shortest possible bridge over the highway, and potential amenities to make it less unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclist. Ideally, I'd like to see the potential commercial activity extended across the bridge as we've seen done in other cities, possibly with a widened (not longer) bridge and commercial facilities over the highway so the highway is not a barrier to pedestrians.

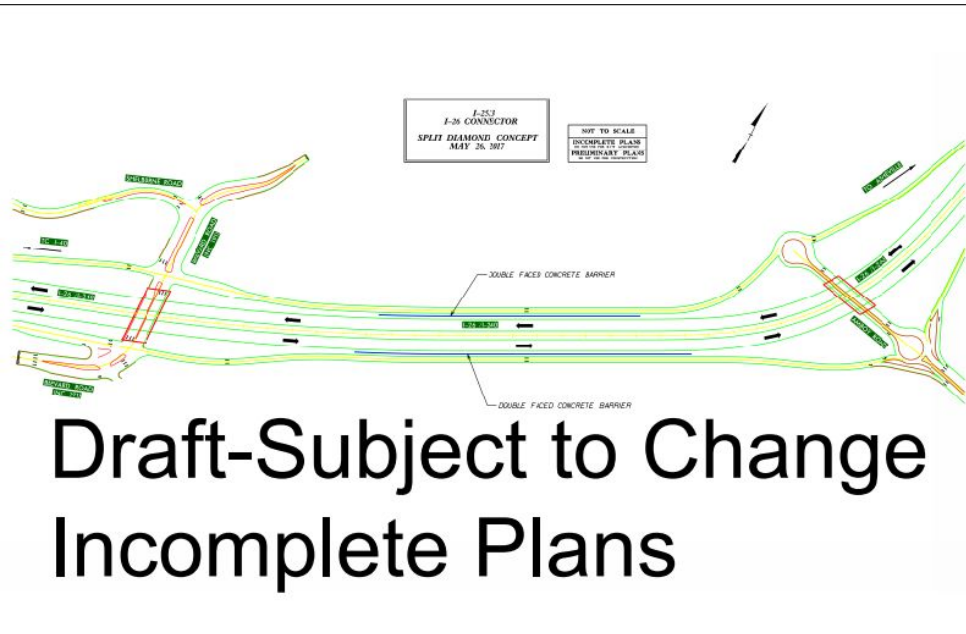
If you have questions on my comments, I'll be glad to try to respond before the meeting (or after the meeting).

Thanks for the opportunity.
Janet Barlow

Amboy Road/Brevard Road Context Map:



Amboy Road/Brevard Road: Split Diamond Concept



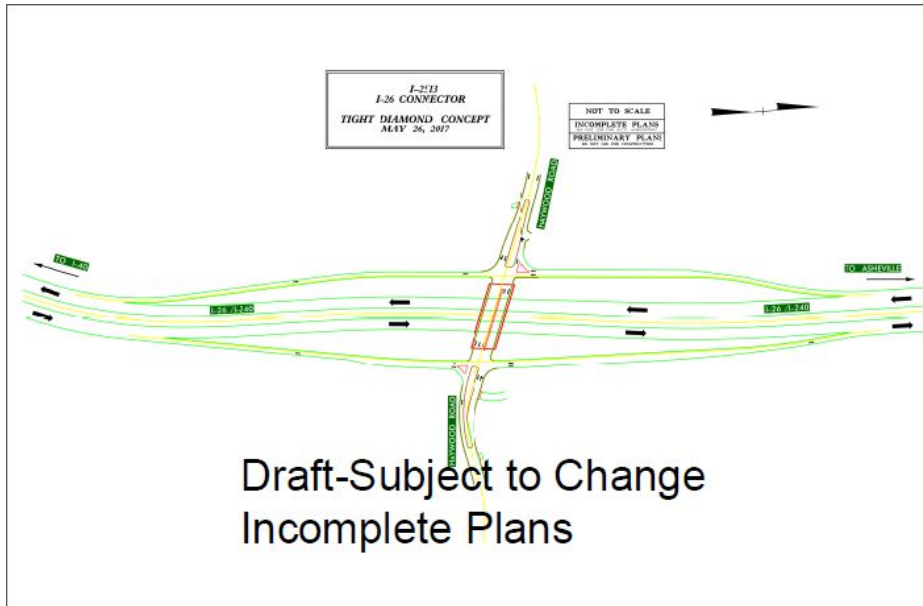
Draft-Subject to Change Incomplete Plans

Name:(Optional)	Comments:
Ken Putnam	Provide separate bike and pedestrian facility to connect Amboy Road and Brevard Road.
Billie Lofland	Separate multi-use facility should have pedestrians separated from cyclists by signage and markings. I experience and have people tell me of sometimes adversarial conflicts on greenways, with peds taking up the whole space, or cyclists not giving way to peds. Concerns on how pedestrians will safely maneuver the roundabout connected to Amboy Road. Roundabout can add distance to walking routes which can cause problems when there is bad weather. If separate bike/ped facility cannot be funded, the roundabouts need to be designed for slow vehicle speed and offer maximum protection for cyclists and pedestrians.
Barb's meeting notes	What is the grade of the proposed roadway route? Very important to many bicyclists.
Barb's meeting notes	Slowing down the traffic is important - adjacent to neighborhoods, entrance to Carrier Park area
Barb's meeting notes	Connect pedestrian and bicycle paths to the neighborhood streets even if no motor vehicle connection
Barb's meeting notes	Must make this as inviting and safe as possible for bicyclists and pedestrians


Barb's meeting notes	Brevard Rd intersection is important - the details will be vital to making it work for peds/bikes
Barb's meeting notes	Is there an option for a separate facility, especially approaching and between the roundabouts? Maybe below?
Barb Mee (personal note)	Though I think the proposal includes a pedestrian path, when there is much of a grade to climb an adjacent pedestrian way, sidewalk, mixed use path, etc., can become important. If I suspect I may not be able to make the full hill on my bike, I want to have an easy-to-access place to go when I move from riding to walking my bike up the hill.
Han Winogrand	Provide a separate, protected bike and pedestrian path on proposed north arterial road of sufficient width to accommodate both users.
Han Winogrand	On south side of new arterial road provide a protected bike/pedestrian path to connect to French Broad Greenway.
Han Winogrand	From Fairfax Ave, East of Brevard Rd, build infrastructure to allow pedestrians and cyclists access to new bike/ped path.
Han Winogrand	At Amboy Rd proposed roundabout include bicycle and pedestrian only access from Virginia Ave, reconnecting the neighborhood to the river.
Han Winogrand	At Amboy and I-26 design roundabout to require safe speeds, possibly including: smaller radius, narrow road width, wide, raised crosswalks. Build roundabouts with a single lane. Chapter 5 of the U.S. DOT FHWA publication, "Roundabouts: An Informational Guide," states that adding an additional lane to a one-lane roundabout is likely to increase overall injury crashes by 25 percent.
Han Winogrand	At Amboy circle install a bike lane or "bicycle use full lane" signage for circle and bridge.
Han Winogrand	Remove the extra cut through lanes outside of the Amboy traffic circle to increase safety for all users.
Han Winogrand	At Brevard Rd and I-26 design for one lane in each direction with wide, raised crosswalks and designated, protected bike lanes. Bridge wide enough to accommodate all users.
Han Winogrand	"No right turn on red" signage at all junctures to keep crosswalks safe and unobstructed and to simplify traffic patterns for all users.

We need to think of this project as a part of the bigger plan to make a network of bicycle/pedestrian facilities that encourage and accommodate active transportation. As such, we need to slow down motor vehicle traffic to levels that encourage safe interaction with bicycles and pedestrians at conflict points. With this in mind, separated facilities at conflict points such as crossing I-26 are most desirable. If separate facilities are not feasible, then we need to slow down traffic and give PRIORITY to non-motorized traffic at conflict points.

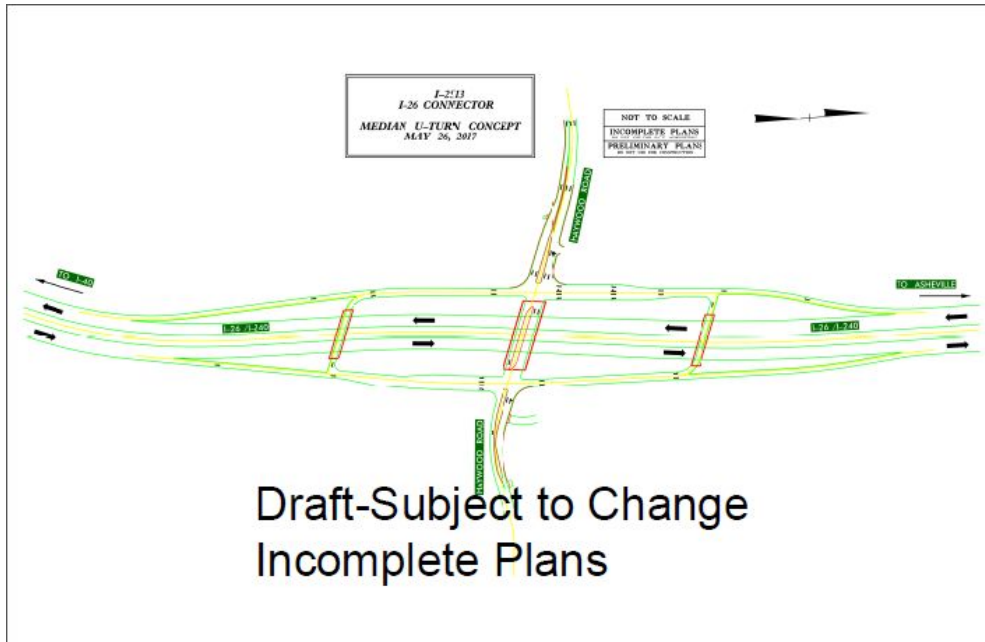
Haywood Road: Tight Diamond Concept



Name:(Optional)	Comments:
Billie Lofland	The group seemed to think that the “Median U-Turn” concept is preferable. As currently drawn, this option provides less conflicts for pedestrians. At each ramp, the pedestrian has to deal with only one or two lanes of cars. This design provides a median between the right-turn and straight/left lanes for pedestrian safety. It seems the “Modified U” would cost quite a bit more money with the construction of two extra bridges. Perhaps the “Tight Diamond” design could be revised to provide separate multi-use lanes on both sides of the bridges.
Barb's meeting notes	Note about plans: Though AIM and bike plan recommend sharrows for much of Haywood Rd, they did not contemplate the changes being made with I-26. Sharrows are not the best/not an adequate treatment across the overpass, and unprotected bike lanes put bike/ped in fear of/at risk of being sent over the side.
Han Winogron	Prefer this “Tight Diamond” or “Median U-Turn” concepts.
Han Winogron	Include design elements to help motorists make the transition from highway to slow, pedestrian and bicycle friendly, community street. Signage, rumble strips on approach ramps, raised crosswalks.
Han Winogron	Include “No right turn on Red” signage to keep crosswalks safe and unobstructed by vehicles coming from highway.
Han Winogron	Painted bike lane through intersection and across bridge.
Han Winogron	Wide sidewalk across bridge.

	<p>Raised, wide crosswalks at all crossings.</p>
<p>Han Winogrand</p>	<p>Vehicle stop lines placed a generous distance behind crosswalks to discourage vehicles from blocking pedestrians.</p>
<p>Han Winogrand</p>	<p>NACTO bicycle boxes at stop lights on each side of bridge. Box for Haywood westbound will allow cyclists to safely integrate with vehicles as the lane becomes too narrow to share.</p> <p>https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/intersection-treatments/</p>  <p>bike-boxes/xcv</p>
<p>Han Winogrand</p>	<p>Eliminate islands and cut through lanes on north east and south west corners. Merging vehicles from highway a safety issue for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles on Haywood Rd.</p>
<p>Linda Giltz</p>	<p>Important to provide bike lanes approaching the bridge and on the bridge. There are currently no bike lanes near the bridge. (this comment applies to all alternatives)</p>
<p>Linda Giltz</p>	<p>Higher railings needed by the sidewalks along the edges of the bridge. (this comment applies to all alternatives)</p>

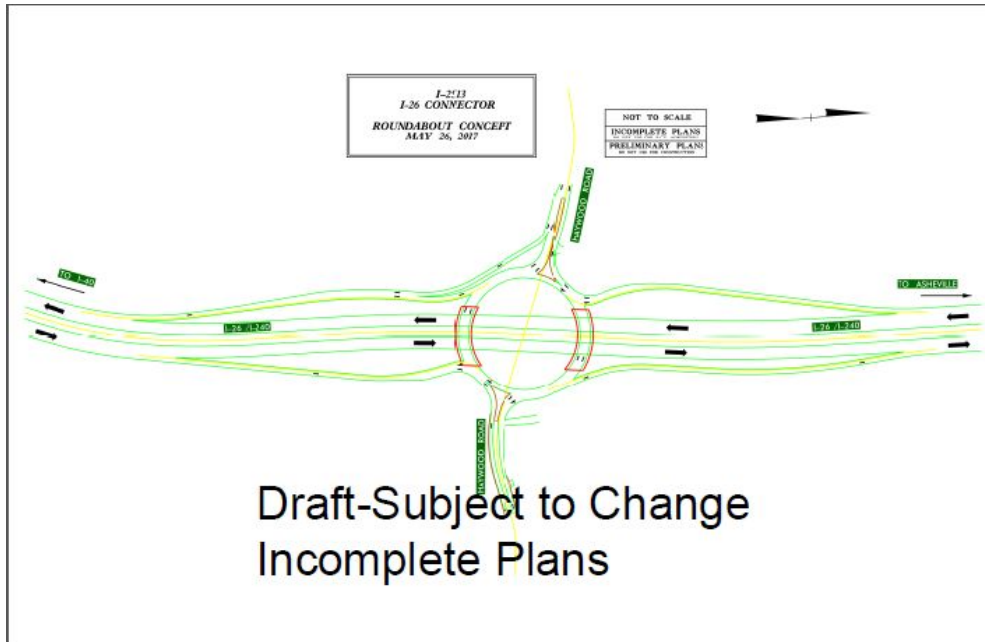
Haywood Road: Median U-Turn Concept



Name:(Optional)	Comments:
Ken Putnam	More bike and pedestrian friendly than other options.
Billie Lofland	As I am interpreting this conceptual plan, drivers from southbound and northbound I-26 exits will be able to go in all directions--right, left and straight. In the meeting it was said there may not be all those lanes, but if there are, it will be very difficult for pedestrians. Two lanes may stop, the driver in the right lane may take a quick look, miss seeing the pedestrian and continue on. In the "Tight Diamond" design There is no island for the pedestrian to separate the right turn lane from the straight/left turn lane. It seems the "Modified U" would cost quite a bit more money with the construction of two extra bridges. Perhaps the "Tight Diamond" design could be revised to provide separate multi-use lanes on both sides of the bridges.
Barb's meeting notes	Option 1 that re-routes left turns via new bridges is most appealing of the choices, but not perfect.
Barb's meeting notes	Option 1 has pedestrians crossing four lanes of traffic at bridge ends, and some of that traffic will have come directly from the interstate. Would be best to have fewer conflict points, but will definitely need ped safety focus in design and operations
Barb's meeting notes	Option 1 appears to have potential for two-way cycle track in center of bridge

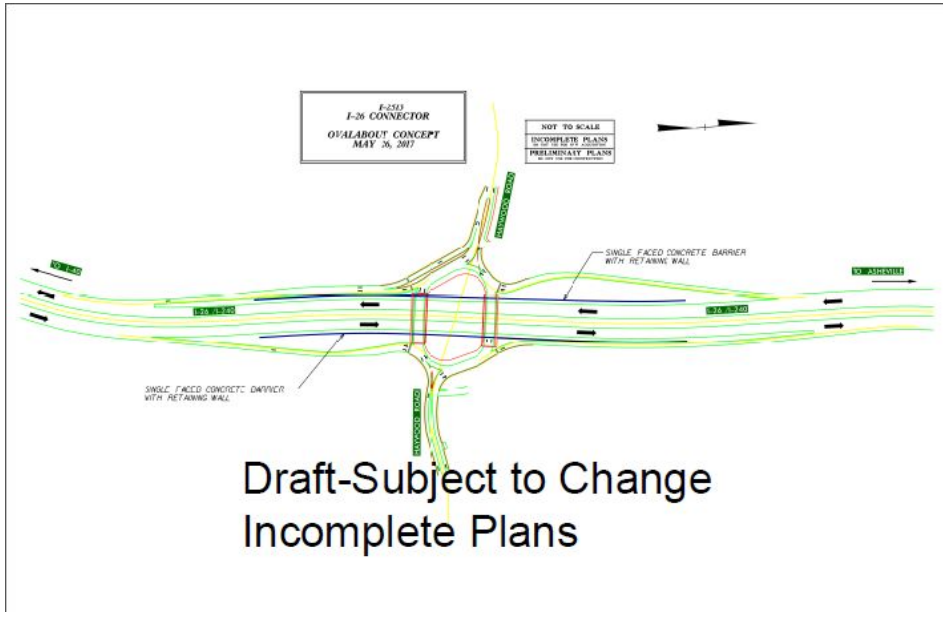
Barb's meeting notes	Remember that this connects to a greenway, and therefore you must assume young/elderly, inexperienced, or unsure riders. Making the connection from E-W Avl as comfortable as possible is important.
Barb's meeting notes	Note about plans: Though AIM and bike plan recommend sharrows for much of Haywood Rd, they did not contemplate the changes being made with I-26. Sharrows are not the best/not an adequate treatment across the overpass, and unprotected bike lanes put bike/ped in fear of/at risk of being sent over the side.
Han Winogron	Median U Turn and Tight Diamond are the safest designs for all users. Or roundabout with single lane and traffic calming (see remarks).
Han Winogron	Wide crosswalks and sidewalks, stop lines set back from crosswalks
Han Winogron	Bike lanes across bridge with bike boxes at traffic lights (see comments under Tight Diamond Concept).
Han Winogron	No right turn on red signage to keep crosswalks clear and safe for pedestrians.
Linda Giltz	Important to provide bike lanes approaching the bridge and on the bridge. There are currently no bike lanes near the bridge. (this comment applies to all alternatives)
Linda Giltz	Higher railings needed by the sidewalks along the edges of the bridge. (this comment applies to all alternatives)

Haywood Road: Roundabout Concept



Name:(Optional)	Comments:
Tom Redinger	We didn't discuss this option in detail but, as noted in the meeting, a two-lane roundabout seems to become very similar to the old style "rotary" requiring vehicles to change lanes within the roundabout to either bypass the next off option, and then again to be in the right exit lane when they do wish to exit the roundabout.. This is doubly problematic for the bicyclist in competition with cars during required lane change when the goal is to continue straight through the intersection.
Barb's meeting notes	Options 2 & 3 are not attractive from the pedestrian or cyclist perspective
Barb's meeting notes	Note about plans: Though AIM and bike plan recommend sharrows for much of Haywood Rd, they did not contemplate the changes being made with I-26. Sharrows are not the best/not an adequate treatment across the overpass, and unprotected bike lanes put bike/ped in fear of/at risk of being sent over the side.
Han Winogrand	Roundabout directly from highway onto Haywood may encourage unsafe speeds and endanger cyclists and pedestrians.
Han Winogrand	"Bicycles use full lane" signage through circle to avoid right hooks by vehicles into bicycles.
Han Winogrand	A single lane roundabout with large raised crosswalks, rumblestrips approaching the intersection from the highway and signage "yield to bicycles and pedestrians" would improve safety for all users.

Haywood Road: Ovalabout Concept



Name:(Optional)	Comments:
Barb's meeting notes	Options 2 & 3 are not attractive from the pedestrian or cyclist perspective
Barb's meeting notes	Note about plans: Though AIM and bike plan recommend sharrows for much of Haywood Rd, they did not contemplate the changes being made with I-26. Sharrows are not the best/not an adequate treatment across the overpass, and unprotected bike lanes put bike/ped in fear of/at risk of being sent over the side.

