

Minutes for bike ped task force

7/16/2020

Google meeting

Present: Till Dohse, Janet Barlow, Barb Mee, Melissa Anderson, Brendan Merithew, Tristan Winkler, Mike Sule, Terri March, Claudia Nix, Grace Curry, Billie Lofland, Rachelle Jacobsen, Randy Warren, Barb Mee (may have missed some attendees, this was the first meeting on the internet).

Guest Melissa Anderson

Til facilitating, Janet taking minutes

Review January minutes – Contact Till within next week if there are changes; no comments at meeting. Consider approved as written if he doesn't get other changes.

Melissa Anderson report on ADA transition plan

City is developing 3 plans together - looking at gaps in greenways and pedestrian facilities and an ADA transition plan; Melissa is lead on ADA Transition Plan working with TPD; Melissa has taken a job at FHWA and will be leaving team; Janet will continue on team.

The ADA Plan is looking at a priority corridor method rather than gathering data on every sidewalk, curb ramp, and crossing. Team is pulling in various people to participate and looking at barriers. There are certain priorities listed in ADA but we're planning to tweak those priorities with information from our community. Team is coming up with a plan for how the city will accomplish it. It is an evolving process but looking at determining specific projects for first five years, and more flexible location identification in second five years. There will be details and specific performance measures etc. in the plan.

Question – where in process now? Outreach to city departments now; survey for the public to get some info on priority locations; met with NCDOT to discuss collaboration; more discussions tomorrow to determine how city is going to implement the plan. Till noted that setting priorities was a good direction; can get overwhelmed with data at times. Melissa noted that it's important to incorporate work that needs to be done into the daily requirements of city projects.

Randy asked: Any time a structure is touched, is it supposed to be brought into ADA compliance? Melissa answered that it varies a bit depending on the project and what's being done; there is memo from FHWA about what's required with street resurfacing and similar projects.

Question about the Department of Justice and its involvement. Melissa explained that accessibility requirements were in the 1978 Rehabilitation Act, Section 504. The ADA was passed in 1990. DOJ has basic authority to enforce ADA as **civil rights law**; every program has to be accessible. Right of way is what's being dealt with in this plan by Asheville. Every sidewalk needs to be accessible. Enforcement is federal responsibility. Transition plan reduces risk if complaint is filed. Accessibility can be enforced by the city through city policies. ADA should be incorporated into city requirements.

Comments/questions about sidewalk on one side of the road and if sidewalk is required on both sides. ADA does not require sidewalk to be built, but if sidewalk is built it has to be accessible. There are currently no finalized standards for public rights-of-way. There are ADA Standards that can be applied but don't fit well with some aspects of PROW and don't really address street crossings and some other issues. There is a proposed rule for public rights of way, referred to as proposed PROWAG – if finalized, will then be adopted by DOJ and DOT

PROWAG is used nationally as best practice

When's the deadline for the Transition Plan? 1992 Asheville is in same boat as 75% of country

Enforcement is based on complaints; project civic access goes to cities and reviews city policies and may send Project Civic Access to review;

NC DOT has taken no action; how is NCDOT involved? Required to have transition plan; all 50 state DOTs had transition plans reviewed by FHWA; NC DOT has a plan, and there's a difference between safety and access; may be conflict between safety and access;

Randy on Overlook Road project

On hold with COVID and funding issues; have met with NCDOT and they're addressing the problems and looking at options and working together on right turning traffic issues and pedestrians and bicyclists; have to keep involved as money becomes available again; can be looked at again partly due to delays and the issues related to pedestrian funding

Bicycle Friendly Community

Renewed at Bronze level. Thanks from Barb to all involved in making it happen

Hendersonville Road corridor study

Led by Buncombe County and the French Broad River MPO.

No consensus on best way to address issues and trying to work together to address issues related to lack of bike facilities, lack of ped crossings; crash rates are high; 76 people at virtual public meeting earlier this week; will be working forward and hoping to have a 3 day charette later this fall; will be virtual more than likely

Tasked consultants to look at other ideas for connectivity – may be some innovative ideas that will relieve traffic or change the connections in general;

No imminent construction planned on these projects; attempt to get ahead and find out what the community input; Randy complimented the consultants on the meeting; Tristan noted that Brendan is on the steering committee and trying to include DOT in the discussions

Property owners along the corridor have a lot of questions and issues and FBMPO will be following up with them;

Randy asked how the Bike Ped Task Force make our voice heard more as a unified voice, as opposed to just attending the public meetings

There is a survey that is open and we are encouraged to participate; will share location in chat box; important to take survey and encouraged to cover issues related to pedestrians, bicycles and transit

Billie asked about through roadways and options for those kinds of roadway sections

Hendersonville Road is heavily used; will be some short term recommendations and some longer term recommendations

Also a tunnel road study is being done – tunnel and south tunnel road

Watch for Me NC

Some law enforcement training coming up but nothing to report at this time. Rachele asked for other options for distribution of materials

Bus Passes

Do members want bus passes distributed? Is there an interest from members? Fare is free at this time anyway; don't have passes to hand out now because of COVID; there were requirements to last 6 versions of minutes to make the decision about who would get them; could get a list of those who would be eligible and ask if they want and would use one

Randy reported on marathon multimodal meeting

Working with the city to establish some areas special shopping zones that are more pedestrian and bicycle friendly; Randy doesn't feel that Asheville is moving very quickly on these and is hoping it will move more quickly soon; multimodal has make some recommendations but can't really advocate for it

Billie asked a question about accessibility and access to accessible parking, and addressing loading zone issues; Grace asked for example and Randy said Hendersonville had closed off some streets on the weekends. Mike said AOB has developed a plan, etc. and pledge that AOB is asking that the ABPTF support; Talking about slowing streets and setting up a circulator network through a slow street quick build approach. Asks task force members to review plan and asking the task force to possibly support it

Terri asked questions about equity issues, and Mike says it does address those issues and touches various neighborhoods, connecting the entire city; was produced by AOB and is considered a concept, not a final plan; would require input from community stakeholders. Neighborhood and communities could help maintain; Three vote options for task force; send to Till – no, yes or put on August agenda

City project updates – Barb

GAP plan delayed and hope to pick it up again soon

Allowing businesses to develop parklets (Terri suggested a different name is needed for this discussion) for commercial purposes and is for the use of the particular business for restaurant seating, etc. Some shared streets in South Slope, Wall Street, and other locations that have been developed by city and businesses along streets; several other parklets applied for and

businesses are responsible for putting them in; do need to go through city permitting process; ADA compliance is part of what needs to be done;

Sidewalk projects

--Almost finished with Haw Creek Road design from B Rd to Bell Road

--Airport Road connecting to DOT project to connect to Walmart, with sidewalks and pedestrian crossings

--Working on project to extend sidewalk on Overlook Road; will include a pedestrian crossing

--more but Barb doesn't have a list in front of her

--Mike asked about Riverside Drive bike and ped facility plans, Barb will check into it further

--Mike also asked about drainage grates in RADTIP project; running parallel to the road, will be in the median but the median has not yet been built; will not be exposed to bicycle traffic later; Randy asked about retaining wall that's been installed, placement, Barb will ask Ken about it and get back to us about it; wall there may change what could be done?

French Board MPO - Tristan

Hellbender Trail plan

Draft 25 year plan on website

With DOT funding situation, lot of local projects have been suspended; Already discussed Hendersonville plan

Question about whether moving forward with I-26 connector; expecting delays for lots of projects and many being held up at this point; just need to wait and see how it plays out

NCDOT – Brendan

Brendan said I-26, in answer to question, is still on schedule officially at DOT, but expecting many projects will be delayed

NCDOT is interested and pleased to be involved in Hendersonville Road corridor planning; may be considering new ways to design and different options

Mike asked that task force get updated on a regular basis and including looking at details before stuff get finalized

Tristan noted that there's a separate greenway project and a need to coordinate on design with the I-26 plan and space along the river, etc. Issues with utility conflicts and railroad issues;

Next task force meeting is August 20th; will again be virtual

- Agenda item for upcoming meeting – impacts of COVID on community have to do with equity; need representation from black and indigenous individuals on this committee and big issue to work on
Need to think about bike-ped counts

Adjoined 6:38 PM

<https://ashevilleonbikes.com/released-asheville-mmtc-covid-19-streets-proposal>

Mike Sule

6:39 PM

<https://ashevilleonbikes.com/how-oakland-created-74-miles-of-safe-streets-with-support-from-neighbors>

AoB Pledge of Support Slow Streets:

<https://ashevilleonbikes.com/support-for-the-pledge-is-growing-you-should-sign-it-too>

Mike Sule

6:42 PM

<https://ashevilleonbikes.com/sign-the-pledge-of-support-for-changes-to-our-streets>

The City and State should designate a slow streets network to connect people to places; The City and State should cooperate to implement safe commerce zones, a.k.a. pedestrian priority zones, that are connected to the slow streets network; Volunteers and community organizations should be invited to help implement the changes, rather than relying on normal City processes for implementation. Time is of the essence and multiple groups, including AoB, stand ready to assist.

Barb Mee

7:21 PM

I forgot to mention that as a response to COVID, NCDOT went through downtown and Haywood Rd and removed the need to push the call buttons for pedestrian signals. Please consider writing to them if it has made your experience better. mgibbs@ncdot.gov, copy aghenderson@ncdot.gov