

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

Thursday, October 6, 2016

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Nicopoulos
Linda Haac
Diana McDuffee, Vice-Chair
Bethany Chaney
Kurt Štolka

STAFF PRESENT

Bergen Watterson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Derek Powers
Colleen Barclay, Chair
Rob Dow

GUESTS

Michael Paul

I. Call to order

Diana called the TAB meeting to order at 7:44pm.

II. Approval of Minutes (September 1st, 2016)

Linda asked to add that her reason for bringing up the teardown ordinance at the last minute was its relation to affordable housing and social justice. Kurt moved to approve the minutes; Linda seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

III. Discussion of Bike Plan

Bergen introduced the topic by saying that there has been talk of updating the bike plan since before she started in her position. She would like to go over the status of the recommended projects and programs and see what progress has been made and if it is working. She explained that conditions in Town have changed since the Bike Plan was done in 2009 and many of the technologies have changed since then. For example, sharrows are featured prominently in the Bike Plan and they have been implemented in Town (likely due to being low-hanging fruit), but sharrows are not generally regarded as desirable bike facilities. She wanted the group to look at the recommendations under ‘education and encouragement’ because almost all of them list ‘Town of Carrboro’ as the responsible party. She asked the group to think creatively about some of these recommendations and ways of delegating to the community so that some of the programs and activities can really be implemented, instead of relying on one staff member at the Town who likely does not have much time to do them. Diana suggested that the group not break into smaller groups to discuss the Bike Plan because it is a small group to begin with and some members are not well-spoken in this area. She asked group members that are cyclists to prioritize

projects and programs that should be updated since they know more about the cycling landscape in Carrboro.

Linda noted that education seems to be the weakest area for the Town, even though the CBC does so much on that front. Kurt asked what is the most effective “E”—what is going to get the most people on bikes. He thinks that engineering is going to be the most successful, but that is also the “E” that takes the longest and is the most expensive. Linda suggested matching the recommendations in the bike plan (or what’s not in the bike plan) with the comments that were received at the two Open Streets events that the TAB has held. Diana suggested starting with the list of physical projects in the Plan and determining which of them was also in the comments from the Open Streets.

The group went through the top 10 infrastructure projects and 4.5 of them have been done. Estes Dr. is one of the top priorities in the Plan and also seems to have scored relatively well in the SPOT 4.0 prioritization process. The Town should hear if it gets funded within the next several months. The group noted that the Estes/Greensboro intersection is priority #2 in the Bike Plan, and Bergen told them that NCDOT is going to do intersection improvements there in the next couple of years. She told them that NCDOT staff will be making a presentation to the Board of Aldermen on 10/18 and hold a public meeting on the intersection improvements on 11/14/16. Bergen said that it will be important to make sure that the intersection improvements work with what the Town hopes for the improvements on the rest of Estes.

Bergen noted that the top 10 priority projects do not completely align with the table of top 45 projects, and there are other inconsistencies throughout the plan. Linda asked who did the plan—Greenways, Inc. She suggested that if we redo the plan that we work with a different consultant. Kurt suggested that a member of the TAB be on the selection committee for the next consultant. Bethany asked what the usual life cycle of a plan like this is, and Bergen answered 5-10 years. She noted that it is important to update plans frequently, especially now since the bike technology, facilities and best practices have changed so drastically over the past few years.

Diana said that it is important to know, when thinking of doing a Plan update, what are the technology and suggested solutions that are no longer recommended and what has taken their place. Bergen said that her hope would be to hire a consultant that knows the state of the practice in bike planning. Diana said that when we redo the plan we will need to decide what from the existing plan should be carried forward to the next plan. Bethany asked how long the process took from RFP to plan adoption. Bergen said that the grant was submitted to NCDOT in 2007 and the plan was adopted in March 2009. Bethany asked what happens in the meantime, while the plan is being done.

Linda said that she thought a big problem with the existing bike plan was that there was very little public outreach. She said that it is important that the next consultant be vetted in terms of their public outreach experience and efforts. She added that it is important to include all stakeholders because the community knows what its priorities are.

Bethany pointed the group towards the Public Input section of the Plan and said that it would be interesting to see if we could find out from the public if there has been a shift in outlook/perception on some of these questions. Has the Plan and its strategies actually led to an increase in bicycling and/or perception of safety? Bergen said that this might be something that the TAB could undertake, especially since we probably will not be seeking funding to do a new plan for at least a year. Linda said that it is important to have more than just a Survey Monkey survey because it is important to cast a wider net than those people who would be drawn to fill out a survey like that. Bethany said that the survey should really hone in on people's perceptions, to see if the population is really different or if attitudes have changed.

Diana noted that Carrboro does not own all of its streets and must take opportunities to improve them as they arise. She added that it is nice to have a list of priorities in place, but there is more to consider in terms of timing and ability to complete projects. Bergen explained that there are a couple of other benefits to having an adopted plan in place: it can be used in the development review process to either get developers to build facilities or set aside right-of-way for them, and projects that the Town wants to submit for federal funding must be identified in existing plans.

Bergen noted that many of the recommendations in the bike plan are not considered best practices anymore, and this does not jive with what the League of American Bicyclists is looking for in a gold-level community. Kurt added that the plan says that it should be completely updated in 5-10 years with interim updates as necessary.

Linda said that we must go beyond the cycling community to gather input on the plan. Bergen asked how we can involve members of the public who are not interested in biking in a bike plan meeting or survey. Linda answered that it is not just a bike plan, but a plan for how we envision mobility in town. John noted that bikes and cars are essentially opposites, and that the suggestions from strictly car drivers are going to be difficult to integrate with a plan that is trying to get more people on bikes. Bethany agreed that it will be a hard sell to get people in cars to talk about improving conditions for bikes. It will take a great facilitator to get people to come out and then get the information they're looking for. John cautioned against letting the wide-spread survey get away from the point of the plan, which is to increase the share of bicycling in town.

Linda asked why the point of the plan needs to be to increase the number of bicyclists rather than making it safer for those who choose to bike? Kurt and John said that the numbers of bicyclists will increase if the facilities in town are safer.

Bethany wanted to provide context and stated that Vision 2020 was done before the bike plan. The Board of Aldermen asked the bike plan consultant to craft the Plan to support the vision of bicycling that is in Vision 2020. The plan is operational and tries to achieve the vision that was established in Vision 2020.

Diana asked what we can do between now and next year to prepare ourselves and put us in a good position to apply for funding for a new plan? Linda suggested that the TAB, with the knowledge around the table and the input we got from Open Streets, already knows what the problem areas in town are for cyclists. Diana said that we need to gather the information that we've already collected and put it into a list and decide how to organize it.

Bethany suggested that the group review the Evaluation/Planning section. She thought that it would be a good idea to schedule one of the E's every month to go through the recommendations and decide which of them to keep/emphasize/throw out in preparation for the next bike plan. This will help us tell the consultant what to focus on in the next plan. She let the group know that the Carrboro Youth Advisory Council just got started and they could help us get youth input on our survey.

For the next meeting when we discuss the Bike Plan, Linda will bring the list of bike comments from Open Streets, Bergen will bring the comments from the WikiMap and from the Pedestrian Forum, and John will look back through archived meeting minutes.

IV. Other Business/Staff Report

Kurt asked about the bike parking at Pizzeria Mercato. Bergen said that Marty and James took responsibility for that and they are working on it.

Bergen said that she went to the Board of Aldermen meeting for traffic calming and they recommended Stage 2 for Blueridge Road. The neighborhood meeting will be on 10/23 at the neighborhood potluck and then go forward with making a plan for the street. The neighborhood meeting for Tallyho Trail will be on 10/13 and it will be at the Fire Station #2.

Homestead-CHHS multiuse path is moving along. It's been muddy, but the contractors are out there every day monitoring the silt and other conditions. They have it so they can open the fence in the evenings and for the weekends so the cross country trail is accessible.

John asked about South Green and the status of the project. He wondered how long the bike path is going to be closed. Bethany added that they are doing the culvert, too, then will do the roundabout.

Kurt asked about the Merritt Mill/Cameron/Libba Cotten intersection. Bergen said staff has had some meetings with Chapel Hill planners but the designs have been held up because they will need NCDOT approval. Bergen said that she thinks that Chapel Hill is going to hire a consultant to turn the staff-level concepts into implementable plans that NCDOT can approve.

V. Adjourn

Diana made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm.

VI. Next Meeting: November 3rd, 2016