Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force
Meeting Minutes, October 18, 2018

Attending
Hannah Cook       Grace Curry       Scott Dickens       Till Dohse
Bruce Emory, MMTC     Terri March      Barb Mee           Brendan Merithew
Dan Baechtold*     Randy Warren*
*arrived later, see body of minutes

Introductions & Administrative Detail
- Everyone introduced themselves. Till will facilitate and Barb will take the minutes.
- The minutes from the September meeting were reviewed and approved as presented.
- The agenda for the October meeting was reviewed and approved as presented.

Bruce Emory, Multimodal Transportation Commission and I-26 working group, gave an update on the I-26 Connector project.
- Latest schedule has a public meeting in early December, then the release of the environmental impact statement in January, followed by a public comment period. The plan is for NCDOT to get approval of the project in May 2019, and begin right-of-way acquisition in 2020.
- The connector will be a design-build project, and begin in 2020. Under design-build, if the designer can identify changes that will save money, and the designer has an incentive to identify those improvements.
- With the latest traffic projections, Section A (the middle section) can be 6 lanes, but will have auxiliary lanes between Haywood Rd and Amboy Rd. The only place with just 3 lanes in each direction is under Haywood Rd bridge. This is still a reduction in lanes from the 8-lane configuration once proposed.
- Section A (W Avl): The MPO “cascaded” regional funding eligibility to the project last month. Until then, Section B and C had received funding, but section A did not score high enough to get funded. The MPO members voted to move to the regional funding source for section A.
- City reps had hoped to reduce number of lanes on bridge from 6 to 4, but new traffic projections did not support it, so it will remain 6 lanes.
- Some Montford neighbors have hired a firm to explore a tunnel option rather than the bridges.
- Hope to make bridges a bit lower, but not looking likely. All bridges are near height of the existing Jeff Bowen bridges.
- NCDOT website has about 20 photo simulations with the new structure. Brendan, Hannah will get to us.
- City has recently appointed an aesthetics committee to work with NCDOT. Address elements like noise walls (a’la I-40), how existing bridges will be used, and more. Met for first time last year.
- About a year ago city hired Sam Schwartz Engineering firm to help city to identify improvements to reduce footprint and make it better in other ways like redevelopment. (handout)
- Existing plan of Patton interchange, north side is typical diamond, southbound more complicated where I-240 and I-26 come together to allow for weaving distance. Triple
left turn lane from ramp to Patton. Makes redevelopment impossible. Sam Schwartz Engineering (SSE) proposal moves off-ramps further back, narrows up profile, allows potential for redevelopment. Takes additional land in front of Crown Plaza, though no more buildings. Adds ramp structures, and raises bridge, but for many, the pluses outweigh the minuses.

- No plan for reclaimed land at this point.
- Sidewalks along bridge/Patton Ave, potential for Smith Mill Creek GW (not funded yet); W Avl greenway from Haywood Rd along freeway ramps to Patton Ave is something NCDOT has agreed to fund.
- Brendan estimates 3 acres in each interchange area.

(Dan Baechtold arrived.)
- Bowen Bridge cross sections, two with pedestrian cages and travel lanes, third line - city alternative, has two lanes in each direction with large ped space on either side.
- Ped connection from Hillcrest to Patton Ave at signalized intersection on east side of river.
- Page 15/23 orange shows potential redevelopment areas. City’s working group is trying to reduce the space taken by the 240 ramps. Not clear what final design can be.

(Randy Warren joined us.)
- Patton Ave cross-section alternatives (pg 19/23).
- Major areas SSE has been looking at.
- Some changes in Section A near Amboy Rd, but this group looked already. Pushes Amboy frontage Rd south toward freeway, uses less space, but provides fewer options to access highway.
- Preliminary planning for Amboy Rd project is beginning, important to be involved in it.

Comments/Questions for Bruce:
- Q: Detours for large projects need to be cognizant of walking and bicycling as well as motorized traffic. A: Idea is to maintain 4 lanes through WAvl, though there is still some discussion ongoing.
- Q: How did this become design/build? A: Don’t know.

**Report from the Walk-Friendly Working Group.** Silver level walk friendly community award achieved! Lucy Crown receiving on our behalf at NC Walk/Bike Summit tomorrow; make plans for presenting to City Council. **Will someone please set up a planning session?**

**Website.** Scott needs minutes for Dec 2017, all of 2018, please send to him.

**Vision Zero Representative.** Jessica Morriss, Assistant Transportation Department Director, invited the task force to have a representative on the Vision Zero task force. No immediate volunteers, Terri MMTC, Till will think about it. Not urgent that appointment happen this month.

**Pedestrian Master Plan.** It is now part of a larger planning process that includes an update to the Greenway Master Plan as well as the ADA Transition Plan. Schedule: RFQ soon, possibly 2 years to final pln. Is anyone from the group willing to participate on selection committee?
Multimodal Transportation Commission Update

- The MMTC considered an alley closure of Fairfax alley into the church in West Asheville. They recommended against approval, and the church was able to work it out with developer who wanted the closure.
- Bicycle taxis, electric shuttle - low speed vehicles. City has franchise agreements, organization that is billing itself as low speed tour operator. Discussed whether organizations like that should get franchises. Some low speed vehicles have the ability to obstruct ped/bike flow. Franchise doesn’t specify - asked for stronger language regarding parking, loading in bike lanes.
- Vision Zero task force is forming, it received City Council’s blessing.
- Tunnel Road corridor study - city identified three potential corridors for study by the MPO: Patton, Tunnel, Hendersonville. City felt Tunnel Rd had most potential for improvement/lack of degradation. Study will look at land use and transportation.
- Two greenway committee positions open through Oct 4.
- Transit committee member to replace Kim Roney was approved
- Next week - Vaidila will present on urban centers, Haywood Streetscape project design

Bike share feasibility study. There will be a delay in completion of the study, City wants to add e-scooters.

Street Tweaks Coxe Ave Project. Installation Nov 1-3, followed by an small Open Street - style event on Nov 4. Volunteers are needed.

Upcoming events:
- Festival of Neighborhoods, October 27
- NC Thread Trail Forum, early December

Next Task Force meeting: Thursday, November 15, at 5:30 pm

Attachment