



CHARLOTTE
BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 25, 2017
6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 6:04PM with ten members present.

Members Present: Paul Benton Bryan Hall Adam Raskoskie
 Robert Boyer Debra Franklin Elizabeth Swanzy-Parker
 Haley Beaupre Buzz Morley Martin Zimmerman
 Chris Gladora

Members Absent: Katie Lloyd

Staff Present: Ben Miller Keith Sorensen Celia Gray
 Dick Winters

Agenda Item #1 Call to order

Haley Beaupre called the meeting to order at 6:04PM.

Agenda Item #2 Introduction of members and guests

Also present was Anthony Mendez, Tom Sorrentino and Vivian Coleman of the Charlotte Department of Transportation, Kate Cavazza of Sustain Charlotte, Neal Boyd of Start2Finish, and Eric Zaverl.

Agenda Item #3 Call to the public

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item #4 Review of the minutes

Martin Zimmerman made a motion to approve the March minutes, seconded by Buzz Morley. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #5 Old Business

Bike Charlotte!—Neal Boyd

Neal Boyd discussed parking logistics for the Mayor's Ride and requested help from the BAC to hand out t-shirts. Speakers have been lined up, to include Mayor Roberts, Michael Smith of Charlotte Center City Partners, Danny Pleasant of Charlotte DOT, and Dianna Ward. He hopes to see many BAC members in attendance.

All Bike! Charlotte events are on the website and Mr. Boyd encouraged the group to share individual rides via social media. Haley Beaupre mentioned the Learn to Ride event and encouraged BAC members to volunteer. Mr. Boyd said there will also be a bike rodeo which will be lots of fun to help out with. Lastly, he remarked that the Charlotte Observer insert was issued last week, and includes a list of events as well as a series of articles about bicycling in Charlotte.

Agenda Item #6 New Business

Shamrock/Matheson Projects—Tom Sorrentino/Anthony Mendez

Ben Miller gave an overview of all the many different projects taking place north and east of Uptown Charlotte, before turning it over to CDOT designers Tom Sorrentino and Anthony Mendez. Mr. Sorrentino talked about how many of the projects are connecting to each other to create a greater impact overall. Street projects on Kilborne, Eastway, Norland, and North Tryon Business Corridor will provide opportunities for bicycle facilities.

The Matheson bridge will be transformed through a road-diet into a facility that provides bicycle network for both Cross Charlotte Trail users as well as through-bicyclists. The project team are still working on final design, with a public meeting scheduled for May 10.

Matheson Avenue from Jordan Place to The Plaza will be converted to 3 lanes with buffered bike lanes. This project will be accomplished through resurfacing, and must wait until the Blue Line Extension is complete and area detours end.

A study is also underway to consider how the Matheson/The Plaza/Shamrock intersections can be reconfigured. The goal is to make the street network less confusing as well as safer and more convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists. One idea is to use roundabouts to slow down and redirect traffic. Another option would put a signal at Shamrock and The Plaza so cars go left and right but bikes can continue straight. Another option is to realign Shamrock to meet up with Matheson at The Plaza, but this would require acquiring property for new right-of-way.

Robert Boyer asked why this intersection was receiving focus as a study. Mr. Sorrentino replied that the goal is to tie together a series of streets to provide a useful and seamless east-west connection in the area. Elizabeth Swanzy-Parker asked what amenities exist in this area. Mr. Sorrentino replied that it is mostly residential but there is a small retail area on Shamrock and The Plaza, and also a school. The idea is to better connect this neighborhood to the activity occurring in NoDa.

The Shamrock project is considering either buffered or raised bicycle lanes from The Plaza to Eastway. There could be a combination of both depending on existing limitations. Adam Raskoskie said that Shamrock feels dangerous because it is so wide which encourages drivers to speed. He asked are we looking into how to slow down the traffic beyond just narrowing the lanes? Mr. Sorrentino replied yes, we could incorporate some other measures like pedestrian refuge islands, etc. There will be a public meeting for the Shamrock project sometime this summer.

Chris Gladora asked how we make the decisions on where to put these facilities? Mr. Sorrentino replied that we always ask Ben Miller and we also look at what has worked or doesn't work that has been tried in other areas. Mr. Miller said we also consult Police and Fire to find out what is acceptable to them. He said we will need to become more prescriptive in terms of separated bicycle lane treatments during the development of the City's unified development ordinance.

Mr. Boyd asked whether there was a plan to address debris in the bicycle lanes. Mr. Miller replied that the city would be discussing maintenance options and responsibilities, but also suggested that it is impractical to eliminate all debris from the roadways. Bicyclists may have to embrace more durable tires when riding in a city environment.

Uptown Connects—Vivian Coleman

Vivian Coleman gave a presentation on the Uptown Connects study process, with the overall goal of identifying a network of comfortable bicycle facilities into and through Uptown Charlotte. After months of study, public input and traffic analysis, the two most significant recommendations from the study include a shared-use path along the Belk Freeway and a two-way cycletrack along 5th and 6th streets. There is a potential pilot project along 5th Street to create a two-way protected bikeway, but we are still working on how to get across 7th St. bridge. Approximately 100 parking spaces would be removed as part of the project. The project team are looking at different options for barriers, and staff are committed to making sure the bikeway is implemented correctly.

A Belk greenway was also identified and separated into three phases, with some phases entering design while one phase is much longer-term in nature due to the need to travel over I-277 entry and exit ramps. Mrs. Coleman also talked about Janette Sadik-Kahn and her influence on city leadership helping to speed up and gain support for this and similar type projects. Lastly she stated we are either going straight to design or trying a short-term pilot.

Haley Beaupre asked what the timing of the pilot would be. Vivian Coleman replied that Ms. Sadik-Kahn's talk may help speed up the process but we still need to make sure we are doing it right and safe. Robert Boyer asked if Ms. Sadik-Kahn gave any examples of experiments that did not work. Mrs. Coleman said that the Prospect Park cycle track was not well received and had lots of backlash. Martin Zimmerman said the point of the pilot project is that you're not sinking a lot of money into it if it fails. Mr. Boyer countered that we do not want to design it to fail either. Mrs. Coleman agreed that we must find that sweet spot but we don't exactly know where that is right now.

Janette Sadik-Kahn visit—Haley Beaupre

Ms. Beaupre announced that Janette Sadik-Kahn was the first in a series of speakers sponsored by the Knight Foundation, and that a number of BAC members attended the evening talk. Ms. Sadik-Kahn talked about how cities can make radical changes quickly and with very little money, especially when the projects are framed around improving safety. Haley Beaupre also joined a bike tour hosted by city staff to show Ms. Sadik-Kahn some recent and upcoming projects in the Uptown area. Ms. Beaupre encouraged the BAC to read her book, *Street Fight*.

Ben Miller covered the highlights of a meeting between Ms. Sadik-Kahn and various city staff. The meeting was very encouraging in terms of city leadership communicating to staff that they support quick and innovative projects that improve safety and livability. Mr. Miller went on to describe the difference between a strong mayor versus a strong city manager form of government, comparing cities like New York and Chicago to Charlotte. Ms. Sadik Kahn also emphasized that cities should begin piloting projects in pro-active neighborhoods rather than worrying about being equitable city-wide from the start. It's important to get projects on the ground first that will hopefully be replicated throughout the city. One additional piece of advice from Ms. Sadik-Kahn was to develop a five-year action plan framed around Vision Zero.

Neal Boyd brought up the cultural differences and attitudes towards cars between NYC and Charlotte. Elizabeth Swanzy-Parker pointed out that transit is not as efficient and reliable here and parking fees are going up as uptown parking becomes increasingly scarce. Mr. Hall said he hopes this whole push will reach up to Davidson where he lives.

The Plaza pilot project—Ben Miller

Mr. Miller briefed the BAC about an upcoming separated bicycle lane pilot project on The Plaza. The project will temporarily convert the outside travel lanes on The Plaza into one-way, separated bicycle lanes, creating a comfortable connection for bicyclists through the Plaza-Midwood Historic District. Bicyclists will be separated from motor vehicles in the temporary bicycle lanes by orange cones, temporary striping, and buffer space. In addition, temporary staging areas will be set up at the intersection of The Plaza and Central Avenue. This space provides cyclists a dedicated area to stage in front of vehicles to be more visible to drivers making right turns. City staff will monitor the demonstration during the week-long test period, and collect data including bicycle usage, vehicle speeds on The Plaza, and vehicle counts on the surrounding street network.

This project came about due to advocates with the Stroll and Roll Plaza-Midwood neighborhood group initiating a petition urging the City to take proactive measures to make neighborhoods safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Adam Raskoskie said he will be interested to see how it affects pedestrians as well. It should help because will slow cars down making turns. This could be just the beginning of treatment options. Robert Boyer mentioned the parallel route along Thomas Street as an existing, useful bicycle connection. Ben Miller replied that the justification for this project is to reduce travel speeds along The Plaza and improve safety for all users.

Agenda Item #7 CATS report

Celia Gray talked about the rack and ride during Bike Charlotte!, which will allow all transit riders boarding a bus with a bike to ride for free during the first week of Bike! Charlotte. She also mentioned that there will be continued transit service from Northlake mall and that the Tyvola route will be extended to the airport as well.

Agenda Item #8 Greenway report

Dick Winters reminded the group of the grand opening on May 3 for the Cordelia Park greenway extension and ribbon-cutting for the Cross Charlotte Trail. Following the ribbon-cutting, there

will be a gathering at Free Range Brewing to launch the Greenways for Mecklenburg Foundation.

Agenda Item #9 Updates

Charlotte Bikes—Ben Miller

Mr. Miller mentioned the public hearing for Charlotte Bikes that took place on April 24th. A number of speakers spoke in support of the plan, but the highlight of the evening for him was the school children talking to city council about why bicycling is important to them.

Mr. Miller also mentioned that the city's first two-way separated bicycle lane is now opened on 12th Street, connecting the rail trail with Brevard Street.

Agenda Item #10 Other business

Martin Zimmerman brought up for discussion the need to secure funding for the bicycle plan's recommendations. This was his main message to city council during the public hearing. Mr. Zimmerman said he was told by Mr. Autry that the city council can tell the city manager what to fund, what to do, what they want based on what their constituents want, and what they think is best for the city. Unfortunately we are late in the budget cycle to affect changes on next year's budget.

Mr. Zimmerman raised the question of how to get the BAC involved in the process to influence decisions. Mr. Autry said we need to sit down with the City Manager and Mayor and make the case that we need to fund the recommendations of the bicycle plan. But how do we do that with so little time? Haley Beaupre replied that she is not comfortable representing the entire BAC to the city manager. The group then talked about the different methods of funding and how we can show support for the other 5 "Es" besides engineering. Mr. Zimmerman reiterated that we have no money for non-engineering efforts and that we can't wait for bond issues. Mr. Boyer suggested that we talk about this next month and add it to the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Beaupre clarified that committee members are still free in the meantime to advocate as private citizens. Mr. Boyer commented he is in favor of having this discussion. Mr. Gladora asked if it would be in the scope of the next meeting to have a presentation on the budget process so we can be more informed and empowered.

Mr. Boyer announced that he is helping host a Social Sustainability Conference in Charlotte on June 5, 6 and 7. As part of the conference, he is putting together a panel for focused discussion on how can we increase ridership for current non-riders besides able bodied white males. It will be all about Smart Cities and there will be some great speakers. The conference location will be the Center City UNC Charlotte campus.

Mr. Gladora announced there will be a food-themed bicycle ride on May 7 to showcase bicycle benefits businesses.

Agenda Item #11 Confirm next meeting date and adjourn

The next BAC meeting is scheduled for May 23. The meeting adjourned at 8:03PM.

