

STAFF REPORT

To: Mayor and City Council Date: April 22, 2008
From: Cathy Ball Prepared by: Barb Mee
Via: Gary Jackson, City Manager
Subject: Implementation of Comprehensive Bicycle Plan

Summary Statement: The consideration of staff plan to proceed with implementation of the City of Asheville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, adopted February 26, 2008.

Review: After Council adoption of the comprehensive bicycle plan, the attached memorandum, subject: Comprehensive Bicycle Plan Implementation Plan and Steps, describing the staff strategy for implementing the plan was prepared (attachment 1). That process memorandum did not include specific project selections; this report does include those recommendations.

The expressed desire to see plan-recommended bicycle facilities on the streets in the near future suggests that when adding lane or on-road markings, it is best to begin with projects on city-maintained streets. Attachment 2 contains a listing of recommended "on pavement" projects with estimated project costs. These are the projects from the short term plan recommendations that are on city-maintained streets. It includes a listing of share the road signage projects that may be able to be accomplished on NCDOT-maintained rights-of-way (probably at city expense). It does not include other recommended short term projects that are on NCDOT-maintained roads.

Plan implementation is more than the sum of the construction projects. Attachment 3 contains a listing of education and policy recommendations that will be pursued in the next 12-18 months as part of plan implementation.

Regarding the Strategic Operating Plan, implementation of plan recommendations supports the green city strategic operating plan goal of promoting emissions-reducing transportation options.

Pros:

- Improves bicycle transportation system in Asheville
- Begins visible implementation of the adopted plan
- Provides a mixture of strategies for improving bicycling conditions

Cons:

- Involves expenditure of funds
- Delays immediate improvements on NCDOT-maintained streets and roads

Fiscal Impact: Attachment 2, *Construction Costs*, indicates the estimated fiscal impact of implementation of the plan's short term recommendations. Staff would recommend that we implement the installation of twenty bike racks in the Rankin Avenue Parking Garage (or other locations) from the Parking Enterprise Fund. (We will be applying for a grant that may cover this cost.) The cost for this project would be \$25,000 and a fee would be charged to recover some of the costs. Staff also recommends that the climbing lanes on Lexington Avenue be installed at

a cost of \$18,000 and the shared lane markings on South French Broad Avenue for \$10,000. The money from this project would come from the managed savings in the Transportation and Engineering Department.

Recommendation:

a) Staff would recommend that we implement the installation of twenty bike racks in the Rankin Avenue Parking Garage (or other locations) from the Parking Enterprise Fund. (We will be applying for a grant that may cover this cost.) The cost for this project would be \$25,000 and a fee would be charged to recover some of the costs. Staff also recommends that the climbing lanes on Lexington Avenue be installed at a cost of \$18,000 and the shared lane markings on South French Broad Avenue for \$10,000. The money from this project would come from the managed savings in the Transportation and Engineering Department.

b) Implement the projects as current funds allow; and allocate funding in FY09 and subsequent year budget for remaining projects on both city-maintained and NCDOT-maintained roads; or

c) Some hybrid of (a) and (b), allocating additional funding for one or more projects this year, and subsequently granting funding and budget authority for continuing improvements recommended in the plan, pursuing both stand alone projects and opportunities presented by city resurfacing programs.

Attachment:

- (1) Memorandum
- (2) Cost of Construction Projects
- (3) Non-construction Initiatives

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Cathy Ball Prepared by: Barb Mee
Via: Gary Jackson, City Manager
Subject: Comprehensive Bicycle Plan Implementation Plan and Steps

The bicycle plan provided a number of short, medium, and long term recommendations for facilities and policies to improve bicycle transportation in Asheville. Implementation will be a long process, and will include policy review and revision, public education, and hardscape projects. Coordination with other efforts underway in the city, county and region will be vital to the success of plan implementation, as will the ability to mainstream consideration of bicycle planning into the city's processes. Some projects will be relatively easy to implement, some will take multi-year coordination and planning.

Overall Implementation Strategy

- Continue public participation in implementation by using the Asheville Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force as an advisory body for plan implementation, project identification and selection, and evaluation of success.
- Budget for specific projects each year as well as a for placeholder projects that can take advantage of other activities to take place on/near the network identified in the plan.
- Coordinate with traffic engineer, Public Works, and NCDOT to be able to take advantage of synergistic opportunities offered by their projects.
- Seek outside funding in the form of donations, grants and sponsorships, and as a part of the MPO and local NCDOT transportation funding process, but do not rely on such sources of funds for all projects.

Implementation Steps in the Short Term

The plan suggested the following “on the pavement” short term projects, which will form the pool from which projects are selected in the first years of implementation. How quickly these and other plan projects will be accomplished is directly related to funding availability, and may be dependent on successful coordination with NCDOT (in the case of streets marked with *). Priority has been established based on feasibility of implementation under current road conditions, impact on bicycle network, and cost (Appendix B – Tables 1 and 2).

Locations for Bicycle Lanes

- Asheland Avenue
- Broadway (north of I-240)*
- Coxe Avenue
- Haywood Road (from Riverside Drive to Beverly Road West)*
- Hilliard Avenue
- South Charlotte Street*
- Southside Avenue*

Locations for Shared Lane Markings

- Charlotte Street (north of I-240)
- Haywood Road (in downtown West Asheville)*
- Chestnut Street
- Montford Avenue
- South French Broad Avenue

Locations for Climbing Lanes

- Clingman Avenue
- Lexington Avenue

Estimated Sample Project Calendar

1-3 months	1-3 months	3-36 months	1-3 months	1 month	2 months	1-12 months	5-60 months		
Project selection	Expectation of budget authority	Internal coordination	Coordination with NCDOT if necessary	Preliminary design and cost estimation	Budget authority	Project-specific public involvement	Final design	Construction	Completed Project

Activities for remainder of FY 2008:

- Identify most urgently needed routes or connections and develop strategies to address the needs as possible in remainder of FY 2008 and in FY 2009.
- Coordinate with traffic engineer and use his funds to implement a visible project selected from the short term recommendations of the plan. The most likely type of project will be a bicycle lane or climbing on an existing City of Asheville facility.
- If possible, add a second pavement project, probably one of the shared lane marking projects suggested by the plan.
- Research and develop a bicycle locker pilot project in coordination with community organizations (e.g., Asheville on Bikes) for execution in FY 2009, if funded in budget.
- Nurture relationships with staff at NCDOT and in Asheville Public Works Department to enable early involvement with road and street repaving and other rehabilitation or expansion projects.
- Begin to pursue plan-suggested policy changes, including a web-based maintenance request form on the City of Asheville website.
- Ensure that bicycle plan is made available and considered in other planning efforts in the city and region, including the Asheville's downtown master plan, transit master plan, and parks and greenways master plan, and county and regional greenways planning, and ongoing MPO planning.

Activities in FY 2009 and beyond

- Continue to strengthen relationships with staff at NCDOT and in Asheville Public Works Department (PW) to enable early involvement with road and street repaving and other rehabilitation or expansion projects, and continue to identify projects that are affected by the bicycle plan or bicycle needs.
- Designate such incremental funding as is necessary for facilities are identified in the plan or otherwise a good fit with the goals of the plan.
- Coordinate with traffic engineer and public works to identify projects and budget to provide for incremental increases for design and construction in PW projects identified above.
- Coordinate with NCDOT to identify and use funding for incremental increases in their resurfacing and other projects.
- Coordinate with traffic engineer and use his funds to implement a second project in the downtown area independent of expected PW or NCDOT projects, possibly shared lane markings on Lexington Ave.
- Execute bicycle locker pilot project, providing approximately 10 bicycle lockers to test the concept of rental lockers.

Attachment 2, Construction Projects

TABLE 1 - HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

Street	Facility	Project Length (miles)	Estimated cost/mile as part of repaving	Estimated project cost as part of repaving	Estimated cost/mile as stand-alone project	Estimated project cost as stand-alone project
S. French Broad Ave.	Shared lane markings	1.19	\$8,448	\$10,053	\$8,448	\$10,053
Lexington Avenue (N. & S. Lexington from Hilliard to Aston)	Climbing lane	0.4	\$11,141	\$4,456	\$44,933	\$17,973
Bicycle lockers in parking garages, library or Rankin hallway, and other downtown locations*	Twenty rental lockers. Project includes using an estimated \$2,500 community donations		\$1,250	<u>\$25,000</u>	\$1,250	<u>\$25,000</u>
ON-STREET IMPROVEMENTS (City-maintained streets)				\$39,509		\$53,026

*Subject to permit approval.

TABLE 2 - NORMAL PRIORITY PROJECTS

Street	Facility	Project Length (miles)	Estimated cost/mile as part of repaving	Estimated project cost as part of repaving	Estimated cost/mile as stand-alone project	Estimated project cost as stand-alone project
Asheland Avenue	Bicycle lane	0.69	\$13,834	\$9,545	\$47,626	\$32,862
Coxe Avenue	Bicycle lane	0.55	\$13,834	\$7,609	\$47,626	\$26,194
Hilliard Avenue	Bicycle lane	0.6	\$13,834	\$8,300	\$47,626	\$28,576
Charlotte Street	Shared lane markings	0.97	\$8,448	\$8,195	\$8,448	\$8,195
Chestnut Street	Shared lane markings	1.19	\$8,448	\$10,053	\$8,448	\$10,053
Montford Avenue	Shared lane markings	1.07	\$8,448	\$9,039	\$8,448	\$9,039
Clingman Avenue	Climbing lane	0.21	\$11,141	\$2,340	\$44,933	\$9,436
ON-STREET IMPROVEMENTS (City-maintained streets)				\$55,081		\$124,355

TABLE 3 – OTHER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Other Construction Projects –

These projects are low cost improvements that would make an immediate impact on the bike-ability of Asheville

Project	Location	Description	Estimated Unit Cost	Estimated Project Cost
Drainage grates	Throughout city	Identify & replace "wrong way" grates (estimate 25 grates)	\$250	\$6,250
Bicycle connections on dead end streets	Throughout city	Identify and place "No Access - Except Bicycles" signs in places where there is no automobile connection, but there are bicycle connections	\$6	\$600
Share the Road signs	Throughout city	Install "Share the Road" signs on approximately 26 miles of road right-of-way	\$1,500/mile	<u>\$39,000</u>

OTHER CONSTRUCTION TOTAL

\$45,850

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ESTIMATES

**Scheduled
with repaving**

**As stand-
alone projects**

\$140,441

\$223,231

Policy, Education, and Coordination Initiatives

This is a list of plan recommendations that will be pursued in addition to the construction projects in the next 12-18 months as part of plan implementation. They will take staff time, but not capital investment.

Education/Information Initiatives

- Pursue bicycle safety and awareness activities, including through the Asheville Channel
- Update existing bicycle suitability map in coordination with Asheville Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, NCDOT, and other organizations
- Expand/Develop educational and awareness partnerships w/ community organizations

Policy initiatives involving ordinances

- Develop standards for intersections
- Strengthen development requirements regarding bicycle parking and facilities recommended in the plan

Other Policy Initiatives

- Budget dedicated funds for plan implementation activities
- Establish web-based reporting system, including maintenance, grates, and bicycle rack requests
- Increase police awareness of and enforcement of bicyclists and motorist responsibilities
- Repave critical connections that have poor pavement conditions

Coordination initiatives

- Incorporate bicycle plan into other planning
- Incorporate bicycle improvements into City and NCDOT repaving planning
- Encourage bicycle accommodations in NCDOT projects
- Support Safe Routes to School initiatives
- Advertise bicycle accommodations provided by Asheville Transit buses
- Continue to support and expand bikes on buses as well as improved transit services
- Support and pursue greenways initiatives as connections to destinations and on-road facilities and as alternatives
- Develop continuing facility maintenance plan
- Support employer commuter incentive programs

Longer-term projects to begin pursuing

- Improve angle of railroad Crossing at Riverside Drive
- Greenway connection between Onteora Road and Fairview as an alternative to US 74