



TOWN OF CARRBORO  
NORTH CAROLINA

**TRANSMITTAL**

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**DELIVERED VIA:**  *HAND*  *MAIL*  *FAX*  *EMAIL*

**To:** David Andrews, Town Manager  
Mayor and Board of Aldermen

**From:** Zachary Hallock, Transportation Planner

**Date:** September 26, 2018

**Subject:** Update on Transportation Projects

**Summary**

This document is intended to update the Board of Aldermen on the status of a number of different transportation projects which have been moving forward over the past few months. The Board last received a similar update on October 3, 2017. (A link to the previous report may be found at <https://carrboro.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3167043&GUID=89DA6F06-8717-4BB5-9DA7-77317A443C5B&Options=&Search=> ) Projects are largely organized in the follow manner: NCDOT Projects, Town Projects, and Bicycle Projects and Planning.

**NCDOT Projects**

**Estes Drive/North Greensboro Street intersection project (U-5846)**

The Board received presentations on the conceptual design for roundabout at the intersection of Estes Drive and North Greensboro Street on May 10, 2016 and September 19, 2017. Consideration of a request to accept an offer from NCDOT relating to easements for project construction was provided to the Board on May 15, 2018 (meeting materials may be found here: <https://carrboro.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=571559&GUID=A1B570A7-B73B-4797-AB48-DD36E6952A39&Options=&Search=>) NCDOT advertised the project for construction this summer, but received no bids. They are in the process of reviewing the bid proposal and anticipating rebidding in the near future. The project will be funded and managed by NCDOT.

**Merritt Mill/Franklin/E Main/Brewer intersection project (U-5847)**

The Board received information relating to the updated design for proposed improvements to the Merritt Mill/Franklin/E Main/Brewer intersection at its September 4, 2018 meeting. The new design focuses on enhancements to bike/ped infrastructure rather than capacity improvements for vehicles. NCDOT would manage and fund the project in its entirety (no local match). The

highway project programmed as U-5847 would be removed from the STIP. The Board has approved a resolution supporting NCDOT investment in this location so that construction could move forward in a timely manner.

NCDOT indicated at the September 12<sup>th</sup> DCHC MPO Board Meeting that the design should be finalized in the near future and, that a NCDOT representative could attend a Town Board meeting to provide an update with additional details on the project design, if desired, with a target meeting date in October.

### **Corridor Studies**

#### **NC 54 West – Corridor Study and TIP Projects**

The corridor study is close to completion. A presentation to the Board is scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup>. Information relating to the study including public information meeting materials are available at the project website: <http://www.nc54west.com/>

There are also two TIP projects along this corridor which are in the scoping phase and are anticipated to receive funding as part of Prioritization 5.0.

- R-5821A: NC 54 from Orange Grove Road to Old Fayetteville Road
  - This project largely consists of intersection capacity improvements (turn lanes, signal timing) along the length of the corridor.
- U-6071: NC 54 from Old Fayetteville Road to W Main Street
  - The focus of this project is to provide traffic operations/capacity improvements for the Old Fayetteville/NC 54 intersection, but Town and NCDOT staff have discussed expanding the scope of the project to include the West Main/James Street intersection, and the section of NC 54 in between. The sidepath along NC 54 from Main/James Street to Anderson Park has also been discussed as a possible bike/ped enhancement to the project. Funding for the sidepath, if included, would likely come from the bike-ped project submitted by the Town as part of P5.0; the amount (percentage) of local match for the sidepath, if constructed as an enhancement to a highway project, has not yet been determined.

A scoping meeting to discuss these projects was held in June, 2018. The current schedule information for the projects is as follows:

R-5821A - ROW 2020, Construction 2022, Completion 2024

U-6071 - ROW 2024, Construction 2026, Completion 2027

#### **NC 54 between Old Fayetteville Road and Columbia Street (Chapel Hill)**

In January, the Carrboro Planning and Police departments sent a letter to NCDOT in support of a request from Chapel Hill to conduct a corridor on NC 54, between Old Fayetteville Road and Columbia Street with a focus on bike-ped safety, particularly with regard to access to transit. NCDOT met with police and transportation staff from both towns to discuss a project scope and are in the process of finalizing the scope of services to engage with a consultant.

## **Town Projects**

### **East Main Street Study**

East Main Street is on NCDOT's upcoming schedule for resurfacing, providing an opportunity to revisit the current cross section of the street from Weaver Street to Rosemary Street. The engineering firm Stantec (on the DCHC MPO on-call services list) has been engaged to analyze the feasibility of an alternative cross section that would include bicycle and pedestrian improvements; this is the same firm that is designing the intersection improvements at Merritt Mill/Franklin/E Main/Brewer Lane. Public outreach and final design would only proceed if NCDOT approval for the modification is received. The contract is being finalized and a meeting with Stantec, Town staff and NCDOT is being scheduled to discuss the parameters of the analysis. NCDOT is aware of the Town's interest that the findings from this analysis, if deemed feasible, be considered prior to the resurfacing. Modifications to the scope of the intersection improvements at E Main/Brewer Lane may also affect the timing of the resurfacing for this section of East Main Street.

### **Jones Ferry Road – Protected Bike Lanes (Possible Pilot Program)**

Town staff have been working with NCDOT to identify potential treatments for protected bike lanes on Jones Ferry Road, an interest identified as part of the Spot Safety Improvement Project for the corridor. Staff from NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Division have discussed options, (which may include possible funding) for the effort to be expanded into a pilot project for establishing protected bike lanes treatments that could be replicated throughout the state. To date, discussions with Public Works and NCDOT have focused on concerns over cost, maintenance, snow clearance, and transit operations. Staff have currently identified a set of potential treatments based on the NCDOT approved products list which could be utilized to create a protected bike lane. Public input for the ideas developed during this process could be rolled into the outreach for the Bike Plan Update, or pursued on a separate timeline. Additionally, this project would represent new ground for NCDOT as there are currently no state-maintained facilities with protected bike lanes, thus any results gleaned from this pilot project would be used to inform NCDOT design guidelines for protected bike lanes throughout the state.

### **Bike Loop Detectors (U-4726-DF)**

Staff advertised the bike loop detectors last October but did not receive any bids. After learning of the schedule for resurfacing along Main Street, staff discussed different options to completing the project as part of the repaving process or as part of signal maintenance. After reviewing the project with FHWA and NCDOT as part of a federal audit, the Town was directed to advertise the project for a second time.

### **Homestead Road-Chapel Hill High School Multi-Use Path (U-4726-DE)**

Staff is working with the CEI firm to finalize a punch list and begin the remaining work on the project. The final plantings are scheduled for installation during the fall planting season, typically around November. A future spur linking the multi-use path to Claremont South is also in the works and once completed will provide a direct connection to residents living along the

south side of Homestead Road in Claremont South and neighboring residential subdivisions, such as Wexford, Williams Woods, Cates Farm, and heading toward downtown Carrboro.

#### Morgan Creek Greenway (EL-4828A)

The Town submitted the project proposal (plans, specification manual and engineer's estimate) for Phase 1 of the greenway to NCDOT on September 14<sup>th</sup> for construction authorization, and has received notice from NCDOT that authorization was approved. Staff has also worked with NCDOT and the DCHC MPO staff to move the TAP-DA funds allocated to Phase 2 of the greenway to Phase 1, so that the money can be allocated to construction prior to the scheduled rescission in September 2019.

#### Jones Creek Greenway (C-5181)

Staff advertised for engineering design services late last year and subsequently identified a recommended firm. NCDOT has approved the firm and their estimate for the scope of work for the project. Staff is preparing a draft contract for NCDOT approval. Once executed, design services will be underway, starting with a kick-off meeting for outreach. The project is funded entirely with CMAQ money. The estimate has come in over the amount earmarked for design services, and staff has been working with NCDOT and DCHC MPO staff to shift some the funds programmed for construction to design in order to keep the project moving forward. CMAQ funds are also scheduled for rescission. The DCHC MPO Technical Committee has been reviewing different strategies to ensure that projects underway or shovel ready—receive existing funds and that the remaining projects are positioned to request/receive CMAQ funds with the upcoming call for projects.

#### Estes Drive Corridor Study and Bike/Ped Improvements (EB-5886)

Town staff is working with NCDOT and the Town of Chapel Hill to determine the project scope for bike/ped improvements along this corridor. The project has been split into separate projects (A & B) to allow each Town to execute a municipal agreement with NCDOT directly, provides more flexibility with regard to scheduling. Carrboro Planning staff is working with the Town attorney to prepare a draft agreement with GoTriangle to receive transit plan funds, including funds to proceed with the corridor study. The corridor study is intended to help inform the design of the western portion of the Estes Drive corridor for a seamless connection with the future roundabout at North Greensboro Street and sensitive design within the tight right-of-way between North Greensboro Street and the Wilson Park Greenway. It is anticipated that design and right-of-way acquisition would be managed by the towns and construction managed by NCDOT.

#### South Greensboro Street Sidewalk (C-5650)

The Town has received a municipal agreement from NCDOT and is in the process of preparing a RFLOI for NCDOT approval to beginning advertising for design services.

#### Main Street Sidewalk

As part of the development of the updated Durham and Orange county transit plans, the Town submitted a capital project request to construct a sidewalk along West Main Street between Fidelity Street and Poplar Street. Staff requested delaying the funds for the Main Street project to a later fiscal year in order to receive funds for the South Greensboro Street sidewalk in an

earlier fiscal year. Correspondence between GoTriangle and the Town, to that effect, provided sufficient confirmation that funds would be available for the South Greensboro project—allowing the Town to proceed with the process of initiating a municipal agreement with NCDOT.

#### Barnes Street Sidewalk (EB-5890) & Jones Ferry Road Sidewalk (EB-5880)

The Barnes Street and Jones Ferry Road sidewalk projects were programmed for funding in the 2018-2027 STIP. Staff has requested that the start date of these two projects begin in FY 2022, anticipating a schedule of design in FY 2022, ROW acquisition FY 2023 and construction FY 2024. The proximity of the two projects offers an opportunity to seek one contractor to construct both projects if such an arrangement provides an economy of scale benefit.

#### SPOT 5.0 Local Projects Scoring/Points Allocation

- Old NC 86 Bike Lanes – Current SPOT methodology resulted in very low scoring such that this project (neither the Highway or Bike/Ped versions) is unlikely to receive funding
- Seawell School Road Bike/Ped connection – The version of the project with a multi-use path scored better than bike lanes and may score high enough to receive funding. Staff anticipates that the DCHC MPO Technical Committee will recommend allocating local points to this project.
- NC 54 Sidepath (Main St to Anderson Park) (This project may be incorporated as part of the TIP project U-6071 as noted above).
- NC 54 at Old Fayetteville intersection improvements (U-6071 this project was included in the June 2018 scoping meeting with NCDOT and has received some analysis as part of the NC 54 West Corridor study.

### **Bicycle Projects and Planning**

#### Bicycle Transportation Plan Update

Town staff have worked over the summer to review and execute the grant agreement to NCDOT to receive funding for the Bike Plan update. A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been finalized, planning and finance staff are currently working to set a date to advertise that RFP. The planning process for this update should also provide an opportunity to facilitate a broad public input process aimed at seeking citizen feedback on a number of different transportation projects in addition to the plan update.

#### Bicycle Friendly Communities Application

This summer, town staff worked to complete the latest iteration of the Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) application. Upon nearing the deadline, staff spoke with the BFC program manager regarding the application and other administrative issues which might affect our current status. It was indicated that while our present Silver-level designation technically only runs through 2018, there is a leeway period allowed so long as an application is submitted during the next year. It was staff's understanding, based in part on that conversation, that having a complete (or nearly completed) Bike Plan update would significantly strengthen the application. With that in mind, staff's intention is to submit the formal BFC application in the fall of 2019 to ensure the best opportunity to reach Gold-level status.

## **Other Bicycle Infrastructure Projects**

### **Pathway Drive Bike Boulevard**

Since the Board last received an update on this project (November 21, 2017), staff has been working with the Town Engineer to develop a series of conceptual designs ('typicals') which could be used to seek public input. These 'typicals' represent simple landscaped bump-outs, chokers, and chicanes which will serve to calm traffic along Pathway Drive. In addition, sharrows would be added along the length of the street to better indicate that bicycle traffic should utilize the full travel lane. This option allows for the conversion of the existing cross sections (which includes bike lanes) to include elements of a bike boulevard; overall automobile speeds should be slower but would allow on-street parking to occur in some locations due to the new bump-outs and chokers.

### **Cobblestone Colfax Connector**

The existing 5-foot wide sidewalk between the cul-de-sacs on Colfax Drive and Cobblestone Drive creates a bike/ped connection between the cul-de-sacs on Cobblestone Drive and Colfax Drive. Based on the surrounding network of bike/ped connections (the cut through from Colfax Drive to Claremont Drive, the newly opened Homestead Road-Chapel Hill High School Multi-Use Path (Bolin Creek Greenway Phase 1B) and the other planned improvements (traffic calming along Cobblestone Drive) upgrading the sidewalk to a wider multi-use path could serve to create a Bike Boulevard route from Hillsborough Road to Homestead Road. Town staff reached out to residents for comment on the idea of widening the path in September, and initial survey work is underway to determine how wide a potential path could be made as well as other details.

Other, smaller, bike infrastructure projects have been identified for analysis and may be easier to implement either as part of the update to the Bicycle Plan or as standalone projects include:

- Roberson Street/Libba Cotten – Provide guidance to cyclists as they merge from the bikeway into street traffic
- Shelton Street/Carrboro Elementary – Provide guidance to cyclists who are travelling in the opposite direction of traffic on Shelton Street in order to access the elementary school

### **Bike Share**

Staff continues to work with the Town of Chapel Hill and others to discuss bike share opportunities, to meet with possible vendors and to consider possible collaborations, and to monitor the program in Durham where bike share companies are required to get a permit. The Transportation Advisory Board has also discussed bike share at several points over the past few years.

### **Residential Traffic Calming**

Planning staff have coordinated with Public Works over the summer to perform test runs for collecting traffic count data. While the purpose of this testing period was to ensure that all staff were familiar with the methodology, technical difficulties were encountered with the traffic counter equipment. IT staff is in the process of purchasing replacement counters. Once received and tested, staff will begin the analysis portion of residential traffic calming requests starting with the Cobblestone Drive request.

Over the summer, a graduate student intern worked with Planning Staff to evaluate the adopted Residential Traffic Management Plan and identify possible improvements to make the program work more smoothly.

#### **Citizen & TAB Bike/Ped Safety Requests**

In July, Town staff held a detailed and productive meeting with NCDOT representatives regarding the bike/ped safety requests, with a particular focus on crossings along Homestead Road by Claremont and locations along North Greensboro Street. NCDOT identified possible infrastructure improvements such as signage and lighting for short-term enhancements as longer term items such as lane modifications which would require analysis.

#### **Slow Zone**

Staff met with NCDOT staff to discuss the concept of a slow zone in the downtown area using a combination of signage and infrastructure improvements that would provide cues to drivers to slow down. Staff plans to circle back to NCDOT to discuss more specific design proposals this fall. Informational signage developed as part of the Wayfinding project should dovetail nicely into the Slow Zone program.

#### **Road to Zero**

Staff is evaluating what it take to make a commitment to achieve the designation and to pursue those activities.

#### **Safe Routes to School Implementation Committee**

Staff has reviewed the existing make-up of the implementation committee and has developed a draft description of a revised committee, based on Board comments in June. Discussion with the Active Routes to School Regional Coordinator, and the Town Attorney for input and refinement is still underway.