



TOWN OF CARRBORO  
NORTH CAROLINA

**TRANSMITTAL**

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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

**To:** David Andrews, Town Manager  
Mayor and Town Council

**From:** Zachary Hallock, Transportation Planner

**Date:** January 8, 2021

**Subject:** Final Changes and Responses to Comments on the Updated Bicycle Plan

A series of comments have been received for the Updated Bicycle Plan, the public hearing for this plan was closed on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. A number of edits have been made based on feedback received and staff responses are shown below in red.

**Comments from Council Member Slade:**

1) staff currently is proposing on P8 – Town Goals under ‘Protect the Environment’ to add ‘by increasing share of people of commute to work by bike’.

I believe the goal should not be limited only to bike commuting. To make this more inclusive of other opportunities when people can bike I am proposing instead adding: ‘by increasing the mode share of bicycling.’ The full sentence would read:

“Reduce the level of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions in Carrboro by increasing the mode share of bicycling.”

Response: Staff have used ‘commute to work by bike’ as it is representative of the type of data collected by the US Census through the American Community Survey. Ideas like ‘mode share of bicycling’ are difficult to capture and would require a wide scale surveying effort done by the Town to assess. It would also be difficult to design a survey to capture this information, as you would need to determine the number of trips people are taking and the mode by which individual trips are taken. It could be subject to significant response bias, as only the people most interested in transportation (such as those who are avid cyclists or public transit advocates) would be more likely to complete a lengthy survey. Staff expect to determine if a question about trip mode choice could be included in the Carrboro Community Survey.

After the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff added a goal of ‘increase bicycle ridership’ as count data is more easily collectable, and can be used to determine impacts of individual projects and measure change over time. This goal has been moved to the top of the list.

2) Last time we reviewed the bike plan draft I requested that the bike plan be linked to our greenhouse reduction goal. To that end I am proposing that on page 74 we add to the phrase ‘Decrease in number of vehicle trips’ the phrase: “to levels aligned with Carrboro’s ghg reduction goal.” The full sentence for that performance target would read:

“Decrease in number of vehicle trips to levels aligned with Carrboro’s ghg reduction goal.”

**Response: Staff have made this change.**

### **Comments from Heidi Perry:**

If the plan is going to be available in separate chapters, I wonder if the individual **PDFs could be renumbered** so that p. 38 in the plan also shows up as p. 38 in the Chapter 4 pdf (rather than showing up as p. 3)

**Response: Staff have made this change.**

The file name tells what is in each Appendix, but it would be useful to add that to the "cover" page of each (EG: Appendix C: Survey results)

**Response: Staff have made this change.**

### **P. 8:**

Shouldn't the first goal should be: **Increase Bicycle Mode Share of Transportation:** Increase the number of trips made by bicycle in town, and the number of people who feel comfortable biking. As is stated in the opening paragraph, increasing the mode share of bicycling across the board increases all of the other benefits listed. Then under "**Protect the Environment**" the wording could be: Reduce the level of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions in Carrboro by "increasing the share of people who commute to work by bike, and by increasing the number of other trips made by bicycle." (the "who" corrects a typo in the existing text. The second phrase is moved up from "Critical Mass," which can then be removed from the list.) Reasoning: For many, a two-mile trip to the grocery store or the library or the school is easier by bike than is commuting to work several miles away Also, "Critical Mass" as a term has a negative connotation for bikes in many places.

**Response: Changes have been made to this section based on comments from Council Member Slade and the typo has been corrected.**

**P. 56** (in Ch. 5): still think that in Phase 1, the wording that "ideally, parking would be eliminated on one side of the street" should be replaced with "parking would—or will—be eliminated on one side of the street ..."

**Response: Staff expect that the final treatment here will be dependent on feedback received from community outreach.**

I didn't have time to look again at each "improvement" It **would be great if there could be a large base map where one could zoom in and see overlays for the improvements**, but I do understand the limitations of the Town staff (another reason to hire someone for that position that was created a few years ago but never filled).

**Response: Staff expect to work to make GIS files available online after the plan is adopted.**

**P. 73** (in Ch. 6) : I feel there are some groups left out here, including the Planning Advisory Board and the Greenways Committee.

**Response:** Town Code section 3-24.2(e) indicates that the TAB may hold a joint meeting with the Greenways Commission on an annual basis.

**P. 74** (in Ch. 6):

Measuring success:

One way to determine whether goals are met is by setting goals for miles of connectivity, miles of protected bike lanes, miles of new bike/ped infrastructure constructed. In fact, this would be the easiest goal to measure, so it seems like a good goal to set. Another would be number of children biking to school. Would require surveys next year and then in years following.

Also, Clarify in the third box "Motor" vehicle trips.

**Response:** Changes have been made to this section based on comments from Council Member Slade.

## Appendix A

**P. 1: Greenway** is a type of improvement, but is not listed here. Should be added.

**Response:** Greenway is included under Shared Use Path.

**P. 1: Neighborways** are usually not only bicycle routes with traffic calming measures but that also prioritize bicycle traffic. In fact, People For Bikes has a [7-pt definition](#), based on NACTO design. The first bullet is: Two-lane streets where it is made clear that bikes and cars share space and **where human-powered movement is prioritized above autos**.

**Response:** Staff have revised this definition to use the same one in the main body of the plan.

**P. 4:** the "owner" subhead lists "Greenway" as an owner, which makes no sense. A greenway is owned by one of the other owners in this list (and is not always a natural area or floodplain). I would suggest removing this confusing item from the list.

**Response:** Staff have removed this item from the list.

**PP 6–10:** I really appreciate seeing the list of projects here!. It would be great to see if the Town could put estimated completion dates here, even if they are just goals at this point.

I would still recommend comparison studies for a roundabout at Hillsborough and Greensboro that would be safer for children. I don't think it would require the sort of super-engineering that Estes Greensboro has had. By the same token, I hope that the Town will work with DOT to look at a SINGLE-LANE roundabout at Old 86 and Homestead, where there is already sufficient pavement to accommodate it without taking any land. This would be better than continuing to have bikes moving to turn left onto Homestead at the top of a hill.

**Response:** Staff expect to provide updates to Town Council once projects move forward and timelines are established.

## Appendix B

**P. 9:** shows a map of existing facilities. It would be nice if there were existing facilities in CH shown along the borders, since Carrboro doesn't exist in a vacuum.

I feel like I have to flip back and forth a lot to see what is being planned. As suggested earlier, would it be possible to put this on an interactive map that shows overlays of what is planned? Are there plans for a wikimap that allows public input? I think Chapel Hill has one. I know DOT utilizes maps that show future projects with overlays or just bullets that expand. There isn't a good map that shows what our town will look like when all of the new infrastructure is there (or is there and I have missed it?).

**Response:** Staff expect to work to make GIS files available online after the plan is adopted..

**P. 39-40** refers to the Carrboro Bike Program Review and the Carrboro Bike Parking Plan. It shows recommendations, but has the Carrboro Bike Parking Ordinance ever been updated? If so, where is it located? I can find nothing on the Town Website about required bike parking spaces. All I know is that developers keep asking for the bike parking to be eliminated which goes against the idea of improved biking in Carrboro. Please provide a link to these two documents.

**Response:** The Town's bike parking requirements are located in Article XVIII of the Land Use Ordinance. Staff expect to bring a LUO amendment to revise the bike parking design standards, based on feedback from the TAB and using the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professions (APBP) bike parking guidance.

## Appendix C

Survey comments are often cut off, please restore full comments.

**Response:** This change has been made.

## Comments from Tamara Sanders:

pg. 68- Does this one paragraph reference to the Bolin Creek Greenway place it in a lesser strategic position than it was in the Bolin Creek Greenway Concept Plan of 2009? Are we setting ourselves back in potential development (whatever level/surface it might be) by not including it in the long term network map on pg. 65? If so, there has not been a community discussion or public hearing to support this at this point. Similarly on pg. 66, is an opportunity being missed by not including this greenway connection in the list of Chapel Hill and UNC connections?

**Response:** Direction on the strategic position of this project has not yet been provided by Council. Staff can bring back an amendment to the bike plan to address this issue, if necessary.

pg. 69- I have heard from members of the Black community that if Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's name is to be shortened, it is more respectful as "Dr. King." Please double check on this.

**Response:** This change has been made.

pg. 73- If this plan is indeed to be a living document, It seems there should be more intentional updates than every ten years. Additionally, as this plan very much includes greenways, the Greenways Commission should also play a major role in guidance. I was surprised to find that this plan was never presented to the Greenways Commission for input over this past summer. Lastly, formal effort should be made to incorporate representation by the Greenways Commission in the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group. At this group's inception, Carrboro did not yet have this advisory board. There has been quite a bit of discussion of regional greenways at these meetings in the past several years.

Response: Staff note that the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group is a public meeting, and members of the Greenways Commission can attend if desired..

With regards to updates, staff can bring back amendments to the plan as needed, if/when circumstances around particular projects, funding mechanisms, design guidelines, or community priorities (as identified through Carrboro Connects), change substantially.

pg. 74- One of the plan's priorities ought to include developing ways to determine and measure these targets. (Perhaps a good project for UNC planning grad student?)

Response: Staff expect to determine what metrics could be a project for UNC Planning Students and reach out to UNC DCRP.

pg. 76- In reference to " Ask police officers to step up enforcement for people driving and bicycling." the League of American Bicyclists, the certifying organization of the Bicycle Friendly Community program, has specifically and intentionally moved away from the term "Enforcement." This was in listening to People of Color and learning the history of police enforcement does not necessarily correspond with ideas of safety. Please see more info on their statement here: <https://bikeleague.org/content/pedaling-toward-more-just-bfa-equity-removing-enforcement-our-framework> . In this light, I might suggest another specific comb-through of this plan for any other places where "Enforcement" appears to assess this idea through a more equitable lens.

Response: Staff expect conversations about this issue to occur outside of the bike plan process, but could bring an amendment to the plan in the future to address these issues.

pg. 77 Key Priorities: In addition, I'd like to see as a priority the plan to find ways to equitably engage with our BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and non-native members of our community. Specifically the first two are groups that have historically been adversely affected by police presence and have defined 'safety' in other means than plans as such traditionally do. This could be called out in #5. -

Response: Staff expect conversations about this issue to occur outside of the bike plan process, in the context of Carrboro Connects. Staff could bring bank an amendment to the bike plan in the future to better address this topic.

Appendix B- Technical Memos: There was reference to the map exercise. I'd like to see the maps of the three groups of the committee as part of this plan. Alternatively, if this info is included in the online map, where community members could pinpoint and comment, then I'd like to see this wikimap included where this info could continue to be referenced by the public. (I believe that there was an additional online map a handful of years ago specifically for bike parking. I'd like to see this included, as well.)

Response: It is unclear as to what is meant by the 'the maps of the three groups of the committee'. An online bike-ped comment map can be found at: <https://tocgis.ci.carrboro.nc.us/Carrboro/BikePedComment/>

Appendix C- Survey Responses: In its current formatting, the responses that are longer than the width of one line are cut off.

Response: This change has been made.

**Comments from Alyson West**

Thank you for all the work on the Carrboro Bike Plan update, and for keeping transportation front and center in the conversation on how to make Carrboro an even more livable community.

However, the draft bike plan could go much further towards meeting the expectations of those of us who live, work, and move around in Carrboro. The ten projects listed in the plan, while relevant and important projects on their own, for the most part, do not add up to a vision appropriate for a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Community, and for a plan which will not be updated again for another five to ten years.

**Response:** Staff expect to bring back amendments to the plan on an as needed basis, if new information develops, funding sources change, or different community priorities are identified through Carrboro Connects.

My comments are as follows:

**VISION and GOALS:** The plan should address how the projects will achieve the vision and goals of the community. It is hard to understand how the projects listed line up with the stated goals of the plan. There are many goals listed in the plan, such as advancing equity and addressing climate change, and a great deal of information has been collected and mapped. However, the end result as laid out in this plan will have only incremental impact on improving safe bicycling, protecting the environment, enhancing health and advancing equity in the Town of Carrboro because important network connections are missing. Much of the preamble for the plan seems lost by the time we get to the actual list of planned projects and strategic priorities, and the selected projects are not clearly tied to the goals.

Some “strategic priorities” that appear on the short list on p. 49 and in the map on p. 50 are not clearly explained. There is not a clear list of what these priorities are, what the rationale for including them is, and how they also tie back to the goals and vision of the plan. For example, why is a “neighborway” on Cobblestone Drive prioritized? Cobblestone Drive is listed on the Level of Traffic Stress map as a LTS 1. What is the justification for investing resources in that low stress street, versus other LTS 1 streets in the community, or versus another location which is not already LTS1? Is the goal to address and improve the higher level of traffic stress locations? Moreover, what group of people does this investment benefit, versus other similar investments that could enhance cycling access and safety for a wider group of people, and more concretely contribute to achieving equity goals.

**Response:** The indication of Cobblestone Drive project was implemented as part of a traffic calming request. Staff can amend the plan if needed, once Council provides direction as to the status of Bolin Creek.

**PRIORITIZATION:** Related to the above, the *process* of arriving at the projects listed is not made clear enough with the graphic on p. 49. As many have pointed out, we need a catalog of all projects, and we need to show where they lie in the sequence of prioritization, and how that selection was made. The list should also include how each project moves the town closer to meeting goals.

**Response:** Staff agree with the assessment that limited prioritization has been done beyond the indicated priority projects. Upon adoption, staff expect to work with the TAB to develop a local priorities list of projects (at the very least a top 10 projects outside of the strategic priorities). This is the process used after the adoption of the 2009 bike plan.

**MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS LEFT OFF:** Many of the most impactful projects have been relegated to page 68 under “Long Term Network – Other projects of interest”, where this statement can be found:

*“In addition to the long-term network shown on page 65, there are other projects of interest, while not shown on that map, warrant additional discussion. These projects are ones that the Town is still interested in finding an appropriate route to*

*implementation, but additional work is needed in clearing administrative hurdles, design review & approval, or identifying community consensus. Showing these as lines on a map fails to acknowledge the underlying complexities and work needed to make these projects a reality.”*

NOT showing these projects on a map, or as high-level goals, fails to acknowledge how central they are to achieving the goals listed in this plan. By listing anything difficult in the ‘Other projects of interest’, we are simply making those projects less likely to move forward. Safe, comfortable connections on main arterial state-owned roads may require facing several implementation challenges, but roads such as these are critical to any sort of true biking network for all in Carrboro. Improvements on these roads are **ESSENTIAL** to an actual connected, safe, livable bicycling network which will enhance public health, increase economic viability, and advance equity. As Damon pointed out in the October 27<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting, the recently updated NCDOT Complete Streets policy requires that projects firstly be *included in a plan* before they can be considered for funding. **Not centering these projects in the plan means Carrboro could be forgoing significant funding opportunities.** More importantly, these larger projects have potential to serve a wider group of people, not just a select few such as the example “neighborway” above.

**Response:** Since the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff have expanded the long term network and added the comprehensive projects table (Appendix A) so that none of the ‘Other Projects of Interest’ are excluded from the plan. Please refer to page 69 of the plan for additional clarification about the applicability of the NCDOT Complete Streets Policy.

**CLIMATE CHANGE:** Carrboro has set forth many overall goals for addressing climate change. This should be more aggressively addressed in the bike plan. We cannot mitigate the harm of automobile dependence without actively striving for reduction of VMT, as well as changes in land use and urban design.

**Response:** Staff have made revisions to the goals (p8) and performance metrics (p74) based on feedback received from Council Member Slade.

**E-BIKES and COVID-19:** The uptake of e-bikes, in addition to the COVID pandemic, has increased the number of people riding bicycles all over the country. Last year around 250,000 e-bikes were imported into the US, and this year that total number is [expected to roughly double](#). Basically, more people are riding, and due to e-bikes a wider variety of people are out on our roads on bicycles, many on e-cargo bikes with children in tow. The number of people riding bikes on the road is *already* outpacing our ability to build safer infrastructure, and that gap is only going to widen without a much more aggressive approach to changing our transportation system.

**Response:** Staff expect to continue to implement projects currently in development including the E Main St Restriping to add bike lanes, the Jones Ferry Road Protected Bike Lane, the Morgan Creek Greenway and the Jones Creek Greenway.

**GREENWAYS:** The unbuilt Bolin Creek Greenway segment, which is from an approved greenway plan that went through a rigorous public input process, has been left off the maps in this draft plan entirely. **Please also note that the Greenways Commission was not asked to provide review or comments on the Draft Bike Plan.**

**Carrboro needs connected, accessible greenways.** As seen on the new Visit Carrboro [website](#), the Town is promoting the Bolin Creek Greenway as a town amenity, and yet the actual segment along the creek in Carrboro is lying fallow and degrading. (The greenway in Chapel Hill is nice, though!) In its current state, the easement along Bolin Creek, while enjoyable for some, is not accessible to all users. The surface is barely traversable, there is no wayfinding, and we are missing out on opportunities to place

interactive educational signage or other interactive elements that would promote the value of the shared green space. Many residents may not even know that there is a walking path there, despite it being public space that all Carrboro citizens should be able to enjoy.

Green space has become even more vital during the pandemic, as more folks want to access outdoor recreation. Many Carrboro residents are likely to end up driving to Chapel Hill to walk/run/roll the completed Bolin Creek Greenway there or to Durham to enjoy even longer distances along the American Tobacco Trail.

Given the limited space available in our dense, urban areas it is important to consider multiple benefits that can be derived from public land. [Green infrastructure](#) can be an important pathway to achieving many overlapping public goals such as climate adaptation and improved public health while providing valuable access to green space as well as transportation and recreation infrastructure. [Sustainable](#) trail approaches along with creek restoration/flood mitigation measures can be taken in this area, which is being damaged by runoff from the surrounding neighborhoods, erosion, existing foot and bicycle traffic, and is perpetually disturbed by the Owasa easement. Carrboro can achieve multiple interconnected objectives by working towards a means of utilizing this space in an environmentally sensitive manner, commensurate with the value we as a community place on this wonderful open space.

**Response: Staff can amend the plan as necessary, once Council has provided direction on Bolin Creek.**

At this time, goals of advancing equity, improving environmental sustainability and climate mitigation, safe walking and biking networks for everyone, and access to green space are all central to the conversations happening around [Connect Carrboro](#), the town's first Comprehensive Plan. The draft Bike Plan Update is falling short of delivering on the promise of this work and the desires of many in the community.

**Response: Staff can amend the plan as necessary, if conversations held in the context of Carrboro Connects provide new insights or information deemed essential to the bike plan.**