



Legislation Text

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TITLE:

Transportation Topics: Bicycle Friendly Community Application, Bike Plan and Related Infrastructure

PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item to provide the Board with an opportunity to discuss progress towards an application for upgrading the Town's Bicycle Friendly Community status, including the bike plan update and possible infrastructure improvements, and associated cost implications.

DEPARTMENT: Planning

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INFORMATION: During the last several months, the Board of Aldermen has received information on transportation issues and projects, including efforts to seek gold status with the Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) program's upcoming application cycle. At the March 17, 2015 regular meeting, the Board of Aldermen adopted a resolution accepting the Town's designation as a silver level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) and pledging its commitment to pursuing gold status at the next application cycle in 2018. Using the Town's report card (Attachment A), staff has been working with an intern to identify areas noted as needing improvement-big-ticket items as well as "low hanging fruit." One of the most substantial undertakings, in terms of time and money, would be an update to the Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan (<http://www.townofcarrboro.org/737/Bike-Plan>). In November, staff submitted an application for the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian and Transportation Planning Branch 2018 planning grant cycle to receive funding for that effort. Award notification is anticipated for March and, if selected, staff would proceed with an RFQ for transportation engineering consulting services to guide the plan update and associated BFC application (Attachment B).

Comprehensive bicycle transportation plans include a combination of educational recommendations and policy and infrastructure recommendations that inform priorities for requests for transportation funding through the 'call for projects' process. The timing of a bicycle plan update and possible townwide comprehensive planning will necessitate clarification and coordination of priorities - one option could be to include a completed bicycle plan update as an element of a comprehensive plan. Another option could be to expand the transportation planning component for bicycling and other modes, clarify trip purposes and gain a greater understanding of the use of existing infrastructure, so that trips could be directed to particular routes in relation to demand and capacity, and to coordinate Town planning interests into county and regional transportation planning. (Example - by better understanding travel behavior on residential streets throughout town, recreation, walk to school, etc., trips could be directed to particular routes in relation to peak traffic and capacity.) Such planning efforts will always seek to incorporate the latest technology and engineering - in Carrboro, maintaining and enhancing pedestrian- and bicycle-scale improvements along corridors and intersections. Whenever possible, implementation would be planned to coordinate with other efforts, such as infrastructure replacements or NCDOT resurfacing schedules.

The 1450-foot segment of East Main Street between Rosemary Street and North Greensboro Street was identified for improvements in the Bike Plan (Priority 11). The project recommendation, described on pages 3-28 to 3-30, calls for bicycle lanes and related improvements, noting that if there are right-of-way limitations sharrows can serve as a comparable bicycle facility. A general recommendation was to consider improvements on NCDOT roads, such redesigning a street cross-section with new pavement markings, in coordination with NCDOT's maintenance schedules. NCDOT's planned resurfacing of East Main Street in 2019 provides such an opportunity.

In its review of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) on February 2, 2017, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) suggested modifying the cross-section of East Main to include protected bike lanes as a recommendation. The new design would consist of a center turn lane, two vehicle travel lanes, and protected bike lanes-if the bike lanes can function on a road with so many driveways. The Board voted to include the TAB's recommendations in its formal comments on the CTP on February 21st, with this particular recommendation listed as number eight, "Change the cross-section of East Main Street from Rosemary Street to Weaver and Roberson Streets to show two vehicle lanes, a center turn lane, and protected bike lanes. The current highway CTP shows that the current cross-section is adequate for the 2040 capacity. The bike and multi-use CTP shows the Campus to Campus Connector along East Main Street from Roberson Street to Lloyd Street as the only improvement." The Board's comments were forwarded to the DCHC-MPO and subsequently included in the adopted CTP (Board minutes from February 21, 2017 included in full as Attachment C).

The Board of Aldermen will recall that the CTP is the fiscally unconstrained 'wish list' of all transportation projects through 2040. In order for the pavement marking changes described to be implemented in conjunction with the 2019 resurfacing, NCDOT has indicated that a study would need to be completed that satisfactorily demonstrated that such changes could be made without causing a detrimental effect to the roadway. A completed study would include the following four elements:

- An operational analysis per the NCDOT Congestion Management Guidelines for existing conditions, proposed conditions at completion and the future design year;
- A functional design to verify the feasibility, constructability and accommodation of multi-modal operations;
- An understanding of the effect of the changed design to other projects such as the intersection at East Main, Brewer Lane, Merritt Mill, and East Franklin; and
- If, the Town and NCDOT mutually agree to the proposed modifications, the Town would have to have the consultant prepare final pavement markings, signing, traffic signal revisions plans for implementation.

Other shorter and longer term potential improvements would likely also need to be considered, including the Campus-Campus connector, the Lloyd-North Greensboro bicycle connection and the possibility of a bike connection from Rosemary to East Main via Sunset Drive, Broad, Cobb, and Lloyd streets, use of the rail corridor and the Libba Cotten bikeway, especially in relation to the inclusion of a Carrboro station in the draft 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as an extension of the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (DOLRT).

Staff is seeking information from DCHC-MPO to determine whether the MPO's on-call consultant services may be used for this type of project and likely cost estimates. Estimates for the West Main Street analysis ranged between \$16,000 and \$24,000 in 2012.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: The anticipated cost to update the bicycle plan is between \$45,000 and

\$70,000. The planning grant requires a 30% local match. Costs relating to the East Main Street cross-section modification would likely cost around \$20,000. In either case, staff would bring a future agenda item and budget back to the Board for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Board discuss these related topics and provide direction relating to obtaining consulting services to analyze potential changes to the East Main Street cross-section.