

**Asheville Multimodal Transportation Commission**  
**2015 Annual Report**  
**January 2016**

After the watershed year for multimodal transportation that was 2014—with events such as the announcement of the East of the Riverway TIGER grant and the implementation of NextBus and Sunday transit service—2015 has more quietly continued to build on these successes. Although we did not see new and transformational initiatives on the scale of 2014's, we made progress on a number of fronts, from constructing bike lanes around the city to developing criteria for neighborhood sidewalks and revising transit routes to be more efficient and effective. The Multimodal Transportation Commission has been proud to be a part of this progress. Highlights of our activities in the past year follow:

Policy and Project Endorsements—We provided critiques and endorsements of policy initiatives, projects, and grant applications including:

- E-Cigarettes Policy
- East of the Riverway Report
- Greenway Feasibility Studies
- Fare Free Day
- Bike Friendly Community Application
- Transit Fare changes
- Staff comments and City Council resolution on I-26 Connector Project
- Paratransit policy
- Complete Streets ordinance revisions
- Transit Station improvements
- Transit Management RFP
- Transit priority recommendations

Presentations—We also heard and provided valuable feedback and advice on multiple presentations from city staff, other commissions, and third parties, including:

- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Process
- Pedestrian Traffic Maintenance during Downtown Construction Projects
- Traffic Calming Program
- Future transportation CIP allocations
- Comprehensive parking study
- Transit Fare Free Zone
- Retiming of Downtown Pedestrian Signals

Substantive Projects—The MMTC participated in or led several multimodal transportation initiatives over the past year:

- One of the city's most important projects in the past two years has been Asheville In Motion, the multimodal transportation plan that will guide and ensure that plans for various modes of transportation complement rather than compete with each other. The MMTC has representation on the Project Oversight Committee and has provided input at all critical steps. We look forward to seeing the final product early in 2016.
- Another significant city project has been the development of a Neighborhood Sidewalk Program and policy for allocation of funding for these sidewalks. Members of the MMTC, along with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, worked closely and diligently with Transportation

Department staff to identify, evaluate, and weight criteria for inclusion in the program and project prioritization. Our work led to a policy that was ultimately adopted by Council on October 13.

- We participated in the Neighborhood Festival held on March 15, staffing a multimodal transportation table.
- Several MMTC members participated in the NCDOT pedestrian safety study, including participating in a corridor walkthrough with the consultant.
- At Council's request, we provided a list of policy priorities for the upcoming year.
- We heard and made recommendations on 4 proposals for permanent street closures.

Finally, after two years of existence, we held our first-ever commission retreat, during which we discussed roles and responsibilities, goal setting and plan development. One theme that arose during the retreat was members wanting to know each other and our committees' members better, and to that end, we held a social event for all commission, Transit and Greenway Committee, and Bicycle-Pedestrian Task Force members following our September meeting. The event was well-attended and helped members develop closer relationships.

Our committees and task force have also prepared reports of their 2015 activities, which are attached to this report.

The members of the Multimodal Transportation Commission understand that City Council faces many competing demands for resources, and we recognize Council's continuing commitment to improving transportation options for all Asheville residents and visitors. We appreciate Council's recognition that a comprehensive and functional multimodal transportation network provides economic, health, quality of life, and environmental benefits to the City and thank Council for its commitment to developing such a network. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Commission.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Grode, Chair  
Lothar Dohse  
Philip Lenowitz (ex-officio)  
John Ridout

Bruce Emory, Vice Chair  
Don Kostelec  
Terri March  
Mary Weber

Kristy Carter (ex-officio)  
Richard Lee  
Josh O'Conner (ex-officio)

## **Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force Report on 2015 Activities**

### **Vision**

For Asheville to be a community of connected pathways that is healthy, safe and accessible for people of all ages.

### **Mission**

To educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian transportation. To advocate for the development and maintenance of safe, convenient and inter-connected facilities. To promote the benefits of walking and biking for individuals and community health.

### **Ongoing Activities, Collaborations and Projects**

The Bike-Ped Task Force collaborates with a number of non-profits. In the examples listed below, the task force provided feedback and support in helping diverse organizations to implement these activities.

- “Walk Friendly Community” project (our present designation is at the “Silver Level”)
  - Work group focusing on Pedestrian issues
    - Submitted suggestions to city council including a citywide 25 mph default speed limit.
    - Supported Five Points Neighborhood to get a traffic light at Coleman and Merrimon.
  - Started the renewal application due late 2016 / early 2017.
- “Bike Friendly Community” project update (our present designation is at the “Bronze Level”)
  - Completed the renewal application to be submitted early in 2016.
- Asheville Police Department collaborations (APD Representatives typically attend meetings)
  - Provided advice and support to APD’s “Watch for Me” Campaign.
- Community Outreach
  - Provided feedback and volunteers for Strive Not to Drive Week May 15-21 (261 registered).
  - Started planning process for an “Open Streets” event to occur in Sept 2016.”
  - Provided feedback and coordination to Safe Routes to School initiative.
  - Provided feedback to the French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Complete Street Initiatives
  - Provided feedback for the Livingston Street Project and the I-26 connector project.
  - Several members attended the NC Bike Submit on October 15-17 in Charlotte.
  - Member provided input to AIM (Asheville in Motion) oversight group.
- Education
  - Offered 3 bike rodeos (April 17, May 30, Jun 20). 145 kids participated.
  - Offered one adult traffic skills class (May 9). 3 participants.
  - Bulldog Bicycle Bonanza – UNCA – October 9.
- Assessment
  - Coordinated bike/ped counts with UNCA’s Center for Health and Wellness (Sep 17 & 18).
  - Helped develop metrics for Buncombe County’s Community Health Assessment.
- Communications
  - Redesigned website [www.abptaskforce.org](http://www.abptaskforce.org) to be more user-friendly.

Respectfully Submitted by members of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Task Force

## **Asheville Greenway Committee Report on 2015 Activities**

The implementation of the Greenways Master Plan has accelerated in the past year as the City of Asheville has prioritized greenways and more funding has become available. The increased pace of greenways development was highlighted by a front page article in the Asheville Citizen-Times in December 2015.

The Greenway Committee celebrates the progress the City has made toward implementing greenways this year including:

- Implementing construction of the “Craven Street Greenway” as part of the New Belgium development;
- Finalizing design drawings for the greenway on west side of the French Broad River through the Duke Energy property, connecting to New Belgium Brewery and the French Broad River Park. This will be the first completed greenway corridor on the Greenway Master Plan;
- Continuing progress on construction drawings and land acquisition for the RADTIP which includes a greenway along the route;
- Finalizing construction drawings for the Clingman Forest and Town Branch Greenways and completed land acquisition;
- Continuing work on construction drawings for the Beaucatcher greenway in anticipation of procuring bids for the construction work;
- Receiving a grant for the French Broad River West and Beaucatcher Greenways;
- Hiring a fulltime Greenways Coordinator, Lucy Crown; and
- Updating greenways information on the City of Asheville website.

2015 Greenway Committee Accomplishments and Actions:

- Recommended that feasibility studies for the Reed Creek Connector, East Asheville Greenway, and the FBR/Richmond Hill be included in the CIP;
- Researched case studies and advocated for the implementation of natural surface trails as part of the greenway system;
- Participated in Friends of Connect Buncombe public meetings on a marketing and branding effort for County-wide greenways;
- Participated in community outreach at the Festival of Neighborhoods, at events held at Highland Brewery to raise money for the East Asheville Greenway, and at Grilling for Greenways;
- Engaged in outreach to other greenways organizations and served as liaisons and/or board members with Friends of Connect Buncombe, Asheville Parks and Recreation Board, Friends of Hominy Creek/Friends of Canie Creek, Collaborative Greenways Partners;
- Toured the proposed East Asheville Greenway, French Broad West Greenway, and Rhododendron Creek Greenway;
- Heard presentations from community groups and residents concerning the following proposed greenways: Reed Creek Greenway extended to downtown, Rhododendron Creek Greenway, the Smith Mill Greenway and adjacent Falconhurst property, Beaverdam Greenway, and continued comments from residents regarding the Beaucatcher Greenway;
- Recommended policy recommendations pertaining to greenways to the Multimodal Transportation Commission; and
- Welcomed four new members including Meredith Gregory, Stephanie Gillis, David Nutter, and Sarah Goldman.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Weber, Chair  
Stephanie Gillis  
Jim Grode  
Amy Vanden Heuvel

Rich Lee, Vice Chair  
Sarah Goldman  
Forrest Merithew  
Kim Williams

John Ridout, Secretary  
Meredith Gregory  
David Nutter

**Transit Committee  
Report on 2015 Activities**

**System Improvements / Notable Figures**

- Budget increased by \$260,000 in 2015, almost entirely to cover the addition of partial service on Sunday
- Added Sunday Service on 9 routes in January 2015
- With inclusion of Sunday service, ridership was up slightly over FY 2014 – 1,458,306 rider-trips in FY 2015 (1.9% increase)

**Transit Committee Work**

- Finalized Rules of Procedure (similar to bylaws) for Transit Committee members
- Fees for street closures that affect bus stops were updated
- Hearings were held for proposed fare changes that will be officially recommended to Council. Modifications proposed were in concert with a study performed by a graduating UNC student, who has since become a Transit Committee member, to reduce the change's impact on poverty-sensitive riders
- RFP for Transit Master Plan (TMP) update progressing and getting closer to publication
- An RFP for a transit service management company was decided to be the best move. Work is ongoing to finalize this RFP
- Fare free zone was debated. It was determined this should be dealt with as part of TMP update
- Work is ongoing to develop revisions to and to generally streamline and update the City's advertising policy on buses
- Worked with Just Economics on development of a policy/guidance document that addresses expectations for riders, drivers, and the city/First Transit
- A revised complain process is in the process of being developed
- Four new members were brought onto the transit committee and a new Chair was announced
- Worked on Transit Committee goals – including a funding whitepaper and investigation of a super service pilot project
- Rider appreciation day held in May as part of Strive not to Drive

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Charnack, Chair  
Bruce Emory  
Charlton Owens

Lauren Noto, Secretary  
Ed Johnson  
Gary Ray

Calvin Allen  
Anthony Mitchell  
Tom Tomlin