

GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING

December 13, 2012

3:30-5:00 pm

First Floor Conference Room-City Hall



GREENWAY COMMISSION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Asheville's Greenway Commission is to advise City Council on implementation of a system of greenways within Asheville by integrating City and County Parks and Transportation plans while educating and engaging the public and advocating for funding.

Members Present: Jim Grode, Chairman, Marcia Bromberg, Vice-Chairman, Glen Locascio, Stephen Jones, Mary Weber, Sue Barlow, Ally Donlan Wilson.

Staff Present: Mariate Echeverry, Transportation Planning Manager, Roderick Simmons, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, Martha McGlohon, Assistant City Attorney, Blake Esselstyn, Planning & Development, Dan Baechtold, Transportation Department, Jessica Bernstein, Planning Department, Janet Georgemurr, Transportation Department.

Community Present: Jim Stokley, David Tuch, Nick Peterson, Nicholas Peterson, Sue Peterson, John Walton, Hudson Owen, Susan Roderick, and Ray Gurriere.

● Chairman Grode called the meeting to order at 3:30.

● **Review and approval of 12-13-12 agenda:** The agenda was approved after adding a public comment period.

● **Review and approval of 11/8/12 minutes:** Sue moved to approve the minutes as written, Stephen seconded and carried unanimously.

New Business:

● **River Arts District Transportation Improvement Program (RADTIP) Update:** Dan Baechtold reported an overview of the process: RADTIP is a part of the Wilma Dykeman Riverway, which includes greenway, roadway improvements, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, street trees - a complete rebuild of the transportation infrastructure a the 2.2 mile section which includes Lyman Street and Riverside Drive. The project limits are Amboy Road at the South end up to Hill Street at the north end. Dan and the consultant team are completing a two year process of reviewing all of the options; completing the extensive environmental study; and gathering public input to produce an environmental document that meets federal requirements. Based on the input received at the second public meeting, all of the different options for improvements including road alignments, sidewalks/greenways were studied in detail to review environmental impacts, impacts on historic buildings, and other factors. The consultant team also held a number of other meetings with property owners and stakeholders. Based on the extensive review, on 12/6/12, Dan and the consultants presented the preferred option at the third and final public meeting and received a lot of input.

- On 12/11/12 a resolution of support for the project was passed unanimously by Council. Dan stated that he is on track to have the environmental document signed in early January in order to move forward with the next steps.
- Marcia asked about the round-a-bout which goes through the outdoor seating area of 12 Bones. Dan stated this will be an extensive process working with the business and property owners to find out what works. This will include addressing concerns about timing of construction and how it affects the businesses in the area. The public comments have been that the public supports the plan and to make sure that the business impacts are addressed.
- Dan stated that there is funding through another grant program to continue to work on the design and take them to the next level closer to the actual construction drawings. The plans will be refined in terms of driveway access and location of parking spaces and the construction details. Dan stated that there is no funding for phases beyond that; and will be working on finding funding to purchase right-of-ways or construct

the project. Marcia asked about the partnerships for funding opportunities. Dan stated that this was discussed at City Council's work session with the River Front Redevelopment Commission and developing those partnerships with other agencies trying to find available federal funding and local options such as tax increment financing.

- Glen asked about the timeline depending on the funding. Dan stated that a year from now the City could begin looking at which properties are needed to approach for right-of-ways and easements. Dan stated that optimistically it would be at least three years before construction could start.
- Jim congratulated Dan in making this fit within a "categorical exclusion." Dan gives the consultant team credit in doing a great job and is pleased with the work they have done.
- Jim asked Dan if he could speak on the greenway-specific aspects of the preferred alternative and has this project been programmed in the Long Range Transportation Plan or in the Transportation Improvement Program. Dan stated that it is in MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and this particular section is in the TIP, due to the environmental study that has been done. There is no construction funding attached to that. The Wilma Dykeman Riverway was once in the LRTP and TIP as one big 17 mile project, but now it is separated out into different sections. Dan stated that the RADTIP will also be programmed in the City's Capital Improvements Program and to be the placeholder for trying to obtain the funding and assign to the project.
- Dan was showing on a map the standard width of the potential greenway to serve pedestrians and bicycles.
- Jim stated that in speaking with Stephanie Pankiewicz, this is the only alternative that Dan's team has studied that would allow a full width greenway for the entire length of the project. Dan stated that another alternative would still work is to improve the road in its existing location. Due to the National Register Historical District the most that could be done is to fit a narrow sidewalk on each side of the road around Curve Studios and down Lyman Street and around the curve. The greenway could be a regular full greenway next to the river, but in terms of the bike lane and sidewalk, that option would not be able to provide those if it follows the existing road.
- Nick Peterson asked how long this has been on the planning board around the 12-Bones Restaurant. Dan stated that in terms of planning the river front plans go back a number of years. The Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan of 2004 showed the alignment through the middle of 12 Bones. There was also a riverside parkway concept in the Sustainability Economic Plan of 1999. Marcia stated that the greenway is not what impedes the property, but the road. Marcia stated that this project has been studied for two years with public meetings that have looked at all kinds of options.
- Jim Stokley, speaking on behalf of this mother, Wilma Dykeman, who passed in Dec, 2006, stated that she would be in support of this plan, because it is a sign of respect for a large natural resource of the river. The economical case that would bring in tourists, nature lovers, fisherman and hunters; but will also bring in industry who want clean water, nice living environment. The last argument Mrs. Dykeman made was a coming crisis of the water for municipalities and for the region. Wilma Dykeman would have been in favor of the proposed plan and also sensitive to the business impacts and would have wanted appropriate compensation or substitution.
- Marcia made a motion to endorse the RADTIP plan; Stephen seconded and carried unanimously, as follows: "Considering how limited the land is that this RADTIP proposal is a good solution from a greenway perspective; is sensitive to certain businesses; and certain problems with the traffic patterns. This plan will accommodate greenways as the Greenway Commission has requested, to separate the greenway from the road and for a continuous greenway throughout the project. This proposal meets the expectation of the Greenway Commission and endorses this plan."
- **New Belgium Update:** Jessica Bernstein reported on her review of the greenway portion of the New Belgium which ties into the RADTIP project. The project is under City review. There are two components:
 1. The brewery site; and
 2. The City's public infrastructure.

Both of the proposals are being reviewed in tandem, which will be presented at the Planning and Zoning on 1/2/13 and scheduled for Council on 1/22/13. Jessica would like to have the support from the GC. Jessica showed a map of the brewery, greenway, private improvements public infrastructure with the roadway improvements, intersection realignment, event space and two parking areas, one at a trailhead. Jessica introduced David Tuch and

Hudson Owen of Equinox who are agents for part of the New Belgium project and will report more intricate details of the greenway and the improvements.

- David Tuch stated that they are early in the process even though they are going to TRC next month; then submitting plans to Planning and Zoning and are now looking at the technical aspects of making the greenway work.
 1. David showed on a map the challenges of the location of the greenway. In addition to the topography, there is a lot of fill material with huge slabs of concrete and debris along the river and up the slope. There are GEO techs, engineers and Mattern and Craig involved. There is a planned workshop with New Belgium for their input.
 2. David has met and will be working with MSD who have significant requirements and restrictions, since it is on top of the sewer easement for this corridor.
 3. Potentially spanning a creek that goes directly into the French Broad River which means concrete footings and working with MSD.
 4. Some of the amenities will be trash receptacles, potential overlooks, if feasible, picnic tables and signage.
 5. There are 2-20ft columns of concrete that are very thick to reuse and integrate with a design feature with the greenway, benches, design elements that could include art reflective of the cultural landscape along the river.
 6. David showed a grading layout plan of the greenway. Along the greenway are invasive exotic plants that have infested the banks. The slope will be gently graded to remediate and restore those areas at the upper end. David stated that McCray Coates was not able to attend this GC meeting, but wanted to inform GC that the greenway goes from Craven Street to Haywood Bridge, but, also looking at a "spur" which will go under the bridge and connect to Haywood Rd - to connect to the West Asheville Community; and will hear from Roderick about the work to the Progress Energy greenway corridor to Carrier Park.
 7. Ally asked how long is the segment and access to the river. David stated that the segment is 2600 linear feet; and New Belgium is not interested at this time in having access to the river, but perhaps in the future.
 8. Stephen asked David if he has been in touch with Nancy Hodges of Riverlink and their developing plans for the "blueways" to access the river. If New Belgium is not to have river access until the future; could there be something that could be done to accommodate the future? David stated that there are a couple of access locations depending on the slope of the bank as it hits the river's edge. Riverlink has received a Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant working from the stormwater management perspective; but not from the greenway perspective. David stated that New Belgium has received legal advice not to have access to the river. Marcia stated that Sierra Nevada is allowing access to their brewery and perhaps New Belgium will follow suit.
 9. Mary asked David if there will be the typical paved cross-section being close to the river, and MSD easements where there are special requirements. David stated that they are looking at asphalt surface at this time. A good base geotech style to protect the surface below and to build the greenway to last.
 10. Greenway Commission is happy with what is happening to New Belgium and Jessica will mention to New Belgium of interest expressed in exploring river access.
- **PRCA Update:** Roderick stated that at the last GC meeting mentioned the River to Ridge Initiative and will use this update time to bring all of the projects that GC has heard about together to show the 30,000 foot level of how all this will play in terms of developing our community. The River to Ridge Initiative is designed to link existing and proposed greenways and tourist destinations. There will be a 14-mile greenway system with separate walking and biking trails linked with common elements offering enhanced north, south, east and west multi-access transportation options. Gateways and improved access to the river front; downtown Asheville; and trying to take river front and downtown developments as identified in the Downtown Master Plan, Park and Rec Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan with the bus routes tying together.
- A Greenway Corridor map and handouts were included in the Greenway Commission packets; Roderick explained and outlined each of the corridors from the River to Ridge Initiative into three different corridors with 14 miles of connections:
 - Red corridor is called the Downtown Corridor consisting of 6.5 miles from Weaver Park to Beaucatcher Greenway. This corridor goes to Reed Creek and ties Town Branch, Clingman Forest and Beaucatcher and Glenn's Creek together.

- Blue corridor is called the Urban River Corridor - East and West, North and South connections - 3.5 miles and connects to New Belgium site at the French Broad River Dog Park and also on the River Road connecting up from Craven Street from 12 Bones.
- Green corridor to the West is called Natural River Corridor, approximately 5 miles connecting to Amboy Road River Park, pass Cragnolin River Park to Carrier Park to the County Hominy Creek Park and the existing tract which was acquired last year, the Waller Tract on the far end.
- Downtown corridor - Weaver Park to UNC-A, the Glenn's Creek Greenway and the section in the of the old Health Adventure site is not currently developed. Part of the greenway is Reed Creek which is not completed but working with UNC-A who will be on the agenda next month to bring the proposal plan for developing that section of greenway for GC's endorsement.
- Town Branch - this was partially completed which is a greenway used for pedestrian access. In the future, the plans are to be next to the river.
- Amboy Road to Carrier Park - greenway is completed which is heavily used that goes pass the Karen Cragnolin Park to the east end of Carrier Park and the currently opened Amboy RV Park.
- Downtown Corridor - 5 miles that are completed - the areas under development is Reed Creek. UNC-A Foundation is working on accelerating that program that will do the design and try to find grant funding for possible cost sharing to get that section completed. The section south of that will also have design at the same time so that when the plan is completed there will be construction drawings for the whole section.
- Clingman Forest and Town Branch Greenways - is currently funded through the TIGER East of the River initiative which is under planning stages. Construction money is available once the design is completed for both greenways.
- Beaucatcher Greenway - Council approved the design contract last week which is moving forward; and Council approved 1 million dollars for the development/construction once the design is completed. It is expected 12 months for the design work to be completed; and construction will start.
- These projects are now currently under development and will happen in the next 36 months.
- An area that ties the north, south, east and west greenways around Lyman Street, at Clingman Cafe area where Town Branch, Clingman Forest and French Broad River Greenways connect together is called the Depot Connection. There is an opportunity to creatively design a plan that ties all greenways together so that a user could go anywhere in the City connecting by bike, sidewalk or greenways accessing other destinations in the City.
- Beaucatcher Greenway - Council approved the design. Beaucatcher Greenway is being the "spur" connecting to 5 park destinations: Beaucatcher Reservoir which is the Festiva site, known historically as the Helen's Bridge area is really Beaucatcher Bridge. It connects the outside park of Memorial Stadium; Overlook Park is the 2 million dollar property purchased three years ago and White Fawn Reservoir Park on the southern end. This will tie 5 park facilities together with one greenway connection and having an overlook to downtown. This project is important because in the 2009 Master Plan talked about creating connections throughout the community. There will also be 7 pedestrian, 3 bike lane and 5 park destination connections. Also, looking at this holistically when Phase I is developed on how to tie-in the 7 pedestrian connections. Roderick showed the Helen's Bridge conceptual drawing of the trail head from College Street to Helen's Bridge. The large water tower will be demolished so that the west side will have a trail head that Helen Bridge as significant historical site for the City; and how to get visitors and tourists to the Overlook to downtown. White Fawn will be on the southern end; and P&R staff is working with Green Works to look at it conceptually if a park is developed. Years ago, this area was to be called Sister City Park, but the Master Plan called it White Fawn Reservoir Park and P&R can design however it will fit with the resources that they have. But the concept is to connect the two areas via the greenway trail.
- Phase II: Town Branch/Depot Street connector to Riverside Drive. This is important because it connects the 2 million dollar Grants Southside Center to two significant park structures and identifying bike lanes from Depot to Livingston Streets to Victoria Road and tie into the Mission Hospital existing bike lane and back into the French Broad bike lane. Due to the elevation change above the Center, an opportunity to have a pedestrian downtown overlook corner at Livingston and Depot Streets, where there is a bus stop. To the north will be a greenway with a "spray-ground" similar to Pack Square Park. A grant is being applied for in January, 2013 for construction.
- Phase III - Clingman Forest, North and South of Reed Creek. Working on transportation and bike lanes as to the best connection and how it ties-in to Weaver Park into Aston Park by Clingman Forest from Merrimon

Avenue. UNC Foundation is looking to do the northern spur of this and piggyback to get the southern portion. The on-road corridors are being designed which are the sidewalk improvements and bike lanes. Not only designing a greenway but looking at all multi-modal connections. If PW is building a sidewalk or a bike lane they will have the plans to fit into the long range of the greenway connectivity to complete all phases of the project.

- New Belgium is under design now from Craven to Haywood Rd. Bridge.
- With the French Broad River Greenway, West and East with RADTIP finishing, Roderick and staff can now move forward with the design because they feel confident in knowing the alignment of the road and how to fit into the design and proceed with the construction documents to "plug" into the CIP funding. P&R with Progress Energy and Duke Power to grant the City an easement to move on the design from the Haywood Rd bridge to French Broad River Park. P&R staff are working on the pedestrian and bike lane plans on how to tie-in; what is the best use; and refining the connections to Jean Webb, French Broad River and Wilma Dykeman Parks.
- Wilma Dykeman River Park - there will be opportunities for greenway space from Dan's plan up and down the corridor which will be connected by the greenway system. How to have river access and where to put in boat ties. If GC would review the documents that Roderick provided on the River-To-Ridge Initiative which outlines "blueways" as one of the area, which has not been identified yet until the overall RADTIP is completed. Will be looking at the whole corridor from Waller Tract to FBR East in how to tie in river access.
- Hominy Creek - start at Carrier Park working toward Waller Tract and will connect Amboy Rd, Karen Park, Carrier Park, Hominy Creek and Waller Tract Parks.
- Over the next few months to have a conversation with the Greenway Commission on the next priority of corridors. All of the projects are now in the design stage and is on the list for funding. To begin land acquisitions in order to make the next priorities come forward. For example, at Azalea Park there is a Lake Craig project that has more linear feet of greenway and how to tie-into Swannanoa; or do we look at something different. We also have the River Bend Greenway that is not connected to anything. To have the dialog with GC on how to plug in the next priorities.
- Marcia stated that she was pleased to hear the update and thanked Roderick and staff in bringing the information forward and that GC is part of the process.
- Roderick's preference is to have a dialog on what the GC has set forth the next priorities to have for the CIP budget process in March and how it ties into the overall scope. Starting to look at land acquisition setting aside money now for five years acquiring the properties to make it a doable project and not in the conceptual stage. One of the other key strategies to this is to have the initiative when applying for grant funding that we are able to leverage it.
- Marcia suggested in the early winter months to have a work session in February. Roderick suggested the sooner the better to have an interactive dialog with GC because the sooner we can plan we can get on the same page.
- Mary Weber commended Roderick and staff and would like to focus on the connectivity and how comprehensive it is. Mary questioned how likely will the City qualify for the TDA grant, timeframe, and possible amounts. Roderick stated that the TDA grant is designed to get more tourists to Asheville. Trying to find projects that will not add to the operational costs of the City but to bring in tourists. The City has not been designed to build projects for tourism, but more infrastructures, what is the quality of life and build a greenway, but not to attract more people. Council wanted P&R to apply for TDA grants which are tracking "heads and beds" to increase room nights by an x-number. Meeting with the TDA comes down to the number of room nights created by the project is enough to justify the amount that we are asking for which is 1 million dollars. If the TDA does not fully fund a project, the City would need funding in place and TDA will supplement some of the funding. We may get less, but we are asking for match in order to get more of the corridor completed. We can use the funds to design White Fawn, Beaucatcher Bridge or some overlook.
- Glenn suggested in helping the TDA case is have events i.e. 5k, 10k races. People coming in for that type of thing will make a much stronger case.
- Stephen stated that he was pleased to see White Fawn Park mentioned and as he is a board member at Asheville Green Works. Stephen would like to work with the City in the development of this project. There is a spur off of the Beaucatcher Greenway leading to the White Fawn Park with incredible views of the area which will bring tourists for heads and beds.

- **Public Comment**

- Ray Gurriere invites GC to walk with him to show another way to the termination point at Helen's Bridge to prevent access to the property of Sky Club. Roderick stated that he will have the consultant look at the other alternative. Roderick stated that part of the process with the consultant that the City has hired will have public outreach to meet with the neighbors and look at alternatives. It is not a final conclusion as to the alignment and that is why the consultant has been hired to do the design. There may be some options that are considered to be less intrusive which will be considered first. Jim stated that GC is purely an advisory board and have no decision making authority. Jim could speak for the rest of GC and recommend and advise to come to a mutually agreeable solution; and that it is in everyone's best interest to build the best project. David Tuch stated that he is on the sub-consultant team for this project and he will walk or make sure that the consultants know that this is an option. Marcia stated that from a GC perspective that all alternatives are examined.

- **2012 GC Annual Report to Council:** Jim reported that an annual report is due by 1/31/13; and to speak with Council on 1/8/13 for 10 minutes as to the events of 2012. Jim will develop a presentation and ask GC's feedback. Jim has a good framework from the planning sessions and to turn that into a meaningful and effective presentation. Marcia urges other GC to be present at the 1/8/12 Council to support Jim.

- **Election of Officers for 2013:** Glen moved to have Jim Grode as Chairman and Marcia Bromberg of Vice Chairman; Stephen and Ally seconded and unanimously approved.

- **STAFF UPDATES:**

- Transportation Update:** Mariate reported:

- Nine new buses have arrived; 2 are on the road now; one more is beginning service today. Due to moving equipment from the old to the new buses it will be approximately ten days for all of the buses to be on the road. Jim asked if the buses will be assigned to any specific route. Mariate stated that under the FTA regulations, cannot assign buses to certain routes due to the equity in assigning buses to the best neighborhoods; and a way to keep the service equal for everyone, the buses are rotated. The hybrids are a challenge due to the large batteries on top of the buses that are unable to go under overhangs, therefore, routes are limited. All of the buses are 30 feet; the only difference with the hybrids other than the height is that the hybrids are designed to perform in a slower speed the electric system clicks in and when it passes 35MPH it shifts to diesel.
- Marcia asked Mariate on following up from the last meeting was to think of a way to review the existing plans and to come back with some ideas on how to do that. Mariate stated that staff is working on it.
- Marcia stated that she hopes after Greenway Commission and staffs from Transportation and PRCA have the comprehensive planning session and discussion in February that everyone will be on the same page.

Planning: Blake reported that Council has set aside money for the Planning Department to look at pilot study of form based code and to the candidates are: the River Arts District and Haywood Road in West Asheville.

- Stephen moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m. carried unanimously.