

Asheville Multimodal Transportation Commission
2014 Annual Report
January 2015

2014 was a watershed year for multimodal transportation in Asheville. From the announcement that we were selected for a \$14.6 million TIGER grant for the East of the Riverway Project, to the completion of a critical segment of the Reed Creek Greenway, to the implementation of NextBus and Sunday transit service, and far too many others to mention, the city has made great strides forward this past year. 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:

- Federal Vulnerable Road Users Support legislation
- East of the Riverway Connection Plan
- ART High Frequency Route(“Super Service”) Pilot Project
- ART Title VI Policy
- STP-DA/TA and TDA grant applications

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

- Asheville Park and Greenways Foundation
- Bike There 2016
- East of the Riverway Transportation Network Plan
- Asheville on Bikes On-Street Bicycle Parking
- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee: intersection of affordable housing and multimodal transportation
- “Walk Your City” wayfinding project
- City ADA-related work
- 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 year 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 also provided volunteer support at the plan symposium in October.
- The Commission has begun a discussion with the Public Works Department about ways to include multimodal aspects into the prioritization formulas for street repaving. Specifically, streets that carry relatively little vehicular traffic but are used heavily by pedestrians and cyclists may not be properly considered in paving decisions. So far we

haven't been successful in identifying good ways to incorporate these considerations, but we continue to explore possibilities.

- Based on concerns that the existing greenway plan might not be sufficient to allow construction of a multimodal path along the proposed I-26 connector if it became necessary to route along the west side, we suggested amending language to clarify the intent.
- We've also begun conversations aimed at better understanding the city's parking services and specifically whether and how they can be used as policy tools to encourage multimodal transportation.
- The commission has been tasked with assisting staff in defining and developing the City's neighborhood sidewalk program. We have appointed a subcommittee that has been meeting with staff to identify prioritization criteria, and will soon be developing the method to apply those criteria and conducting public meetings to get feedback.
- We heard and made recommendations on 6 proposals for permanent street closures.

This has also been a year of transition for the commission and its committees: Only 2 of 8 current members of the Greenway Committee were on the committee in January 2014, and 4 of 8 Transit Committee members are new. The Commission's appointment process and criteria changed, adding to the feel of transition.

Our Transit and Greenway Committees and Bicycle-Pedestrian Task Force have also prepared reports of their 2014 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 that Council's allocation of more than 1/3 of the upcoming five-year Capital Improvement Program budget to multimodal transportation shows its deep 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
Julie Mayfield
John Ridout

Bruce Emory, Vice-Chair
Don Kostelec
Josh O'Conner (ex-officio)
Bob Roepnack (ex-officio)

Kristy Carter (ex-officio)
Terri March
Steven Obremski
Mary Weber

Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force 2014 Annual Report

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

Many of the listed activities involved groups that contributed to the success of these initiatives. In the examples listed below, the Bike-Ped Task force played a role by providing feedback and support in helping diverse organizations to facilitate these activities.

- “Walk Friendly Community” project (present designation is “Silver-Level”)
 - Evaluated the feedback report and prioritized its suggested improvements.
 - Wrote Op-Editorials to the Asheville Citizen-Times that appeared on May 21, 2014 and October 5, 2014 focusing on pedestrian safety.
- “Bike Friendly Community” project update (present designation is “Bronze-Level”)
 - Started planning process to update our application. Renewal is due in fall of 2015.
- Bike There 2016 campaign
 - Provided input in planning activities for the 2016 National Cyclocross Championship
 - Provided a survey form to evaluate suggested bike routes in the city.
- Asheville Police Department collaborations
 - Provided advice and input to strengthen their efforts to encourage motorists to be more observant of pedestrians.
- Community Outreach
 - Provided feedback and volunteers for Strive Not to Drive week May 16-18.
 - Provided feedback to the French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Complete Street Initiatives
 - Provided feedback for the restriping of Hilliard Avenue.
 - Several members attended the NC Bike Summit on October 10-12 in Greensboro.
 - Member presented plan to bring more bike parking to parts of the city.
 - Provided input to group working on I-26 connector project.
- Education
 - Offered bike safety classes for commuters (Mar 8, May 10, Jul 12 & Sep 13)
 - Offered traffic skills classes (Apr 12, Jun 14, Aug 9 & Oct 11)
- Assessment
 - Coordinated pedestrian/bike counts with UNCA’s Center for Health and Wellness.

Respectfully Submitted by members of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Task Force

Asheville Greenway Committee 2014 Annual Report

The Greenway Committee celebrates the City's progress on implementing greenways, including:

- Received \$14.6 million from the TIGER 6 grants focusing on the East of the Riverway Multimodal Network project, including RADTIP, Clingman Forest and Town Branch Greenways, and French Broad River Greenway.
- Received \$1.8 million from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority for capital improvements along the French Broad River, including greenways.
- Finalized construction drawings for the Clingman Forest and Town Branch Greenways and continued work on Beaucatcher and RADTIP greenways.
- Began design work for French Broad River greenway through the Duke Energy property.
- Completed construction of the UNCA portion of the Reed Creek Greenway, a critical link from Glenn's Creek Greenway to the existing portion of Reed Creek Greenway.
- Began construction of greenway and Craven Street bridge improvements as part of New Belgium development.

2014 Greenway Commission Accomplishments and Actions:

- Continued work on the transition of greenways from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Transportation Department. The Greenways Committee continues to emphasize the importance of incorporating recreation, environmental protection, and aesthetics into greenways, along with the transportation function.
- Held a planning retreat which outlined goals for the upcoming year including: improve communication with City Council and staff; serve as community liaisons and build community networks; update greenways graphics materials; establish criteria and a ranking system to prioritize greenways for feasibility studies; develop a process for preliminary access prior to full greenway development ("goat trails"); and develop partnerships and catalog of elements to be constructed along the greenways in phases.
- Continued community outreach including attending two events at the Highland Brewery and the Healthy Buncombe event at the Sherrill Center.
- Engaged in outreach to other greenways organizations and served as liaisons and/or board members with Friends of Connect Buncombe, the Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation, Asheville Parks and Recreation Board, Friends of Hominy Creek/Friends of Canie Creek, Collaborative Greenways Partners, UNCA, and the Asheville Design Center.
- Toured the proposed Smith Mill Creek, Hominy Creek, and Canie Creek greenways.
- Participated in RFQ review/consultant choice for the new greenway on the Duke property.
- Heard and provided feedback on multiple presentations about greenway-related projects.
- Attended community forums relating to greenways including the Asheville in Motion public forum and the East of the Riverway presentation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Weber, Chair
Jim Grode
Amy Vanden Heuvel

Lucy Crown, Vice Chair
Forrest Merrithew
Kimberly Williams

Richard Lee, Secretary
John Ridout

**Transit Committee
Report of 2014 Accomplishments**

System Improvements

- Added holiday service on 8 routes
- Added Sunday Service on 9 routes starting January 2015
- Eliminated the C route as of January 2015 and added two new routes to serve Fairview (S5) and Emma (W5)
- Added NextBus system that provides real-time bus location information
- Installed 10 shelters
- Improved bus stop signage
- Improvements made to ART Station – roof, PA system, signage, eliminated smoking
- Ridership up slightly over FY 2013 – 1,431,128 passengers in FY 2014

Transit Committee Work

- Expanded the Transit Committee from seven to nine members
- Held information tabling at Transit Station for rollout of NextBus and Sunday service
- Held a rider appreciation day with free fare and free breakfast during Strive Not to Drive
- Worked with staff on dismantling C route and creating two new routes
- Reviewed results of 2013 rider survey to determine future improvements
- Worked with Just Economics to advance elements of its 19 Point Agenda for Transportation Reform, with a particular focus on the development of a set of policies and guidelines for behavior for passengers, drivers, and ART
- Approved exploration of Super Service Pilot Project
- Continued regular meetings with the drivers
- Updated the Wikipedia page
- Adopted and revised Rules of Procedure

Respectfully Submitted,

2014 City of Asheville Transit Committee

Julie Mayfield, Chair
Bruce Emory
Tom Tomlin

Adam Charnack, Vice Chair
Dave Erb
David Allen Wilson

Calvin Allen
Charlton Owen