



**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2015 – 9:00 A.M.
HIGH POINT MUSEUM**

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

Council Members Latimer Alexander, Alyce Hill, Jay Wagner, Chris Williams and Jeff Golden

Absent:

Council Members Cynthia Davis, Mayor Bencini, Mayor Pro Tem J. Davis, Jason Ewing, and

Staff Present:

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation; Jeron Hollis, Communications & Public Engagement Director; Wendy Fuscoe, Core City Administrator; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Cari Hopson, Transportation Planner; John Hanes, Transportation Planner; Greg Venable, Transportation Planner; Scott Dingus, Civil Engineer II; Heidi Galanti, Senior Planner; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Judy Stalder, TREBIC, Felicia Jones, Keith Volz, Jamestown; Chuck Smith, Jamestown; Kerry Spencer; Jamestown; Peter Freeman

Guest Speakers:

Lauren Blackburn, Director of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Division for NCDOT
Tom Fiorello, Project Engineer for the City of Raleigh Transportation Operations Division

News Media:

Paul Johnson, High Point Enterprise

Handouts:

- Which NCDOT policy or process is most important to you?
- Complete Streets Planning and Design Guidelines

Note: These handouts will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.

Greetings/Remarks

Council Member Hill welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation, explained this was the result of a request from Council to start looking at development of a Complete Streets Policy for the City of High Point. He noted a committee has been formed and that the committee has met a few times, but are at the point where they believe additional guidance was needed. As a result, he contacted Lauren Blackburn with NCDOT and asked her to come meet with Council and share the State's Complete Street's Policy with Council and address any questions.

He introduced Ms. Blackburn at the Director of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Division for NCDOT, with a degree in landscape architecture and a Master's Degree in Urban Planning.

Overview of NCDOT Complete Streets Policy/Planning and Design Guidelines

Ms. Blackburn distributed some copies of the Complete Streets Planning and Design Guidelines for everyone to view and it would also be available in Dropbox as well. She stated she has been with NCDOT for three years and prior to that she had been with the Town of Davidson, north of Charlotte as a Planning Manager. She explained her role with NCDOT was to work closely with other units in the department to implement the Complete Streets Policy.

Ms. Blackburn then reviewed the NC Bike Summit gathering that took place in Charlotte this year. She asked the audience which NCDOT policy was of most important to them? The outstanding response to this question was about their Complete Streets Policy, which showed there was a lot of interest in it and it has been around for a few years, but they are still in the inception stages of implementing that. She noted this supports the idea that this is a very important issue for folks across the state and a very important factor for the department as well.

Ms. Blackburn reviewed some of the other policies NCDOT has to help support Complete Streets, many of which were developed long before the existing Complete Streets Policy. She reported that in the early 90s, NCDOT started identifying a very strong and growing need for building sidewalks as part of roadway improvement projects. She advised one of the earlier policies adopted was a policy that recognized that there are many plans in local governments for greenways (shared use paths) and when they are replacing NCDOT system bridges, it became very important that if they were not accommodating the future greenway undercrossing as part of the bridge replacement project, they may effectively be creating some barriers to those same greenways being constructed in the future. This was a policy that was enacted to instruct the department to look at the plan when replacing bridges and determine when there is an opportunity to accommodate a greenway that is getting pretty close to being constructed or on a short-term list or is moving quickly to being implemented.

The second one, she reported was probably the backbone of all NCDOT policies, which is called the Pedestrian Policy. This is an attempt to try to respond to all the requests for sidewalks, when sidewalks would be constructed as part of roadway improvements and identifies the when and where and who would pay for what components of it. The third policy that is very related to the Pedestrian Policy, which was also established in the early 90s, is the bridge policy that talks

about when sidewalk and bicycle improvements can be accommodated on bridge improvement projects or bridge replacement projects.

Ms. Blackburn indicated in 1994, the Administrative Action was created, but earlier this year it was updated as a form of guidance after they started to see greenway requests for bridge replacement projects outside of incorporated jurisdictions. She noted the question was when will NCDOT, or should NCDOT accommodate a greenway under a bridge at no cost to the local government. She shared that a frequently asked question is the minimum sidewalk width per AASHTO (American Association of Highway Transportation Officials) design requirement (a 5-foot wide sidewalk) and pointed out anything over a 5-foot sidewalk is referred to as an impediment.

Ms. Blackburn then reviewed the Bridge Policy and the design of the sidewalk leading up to the bridge. She shared that a curb and gutter approach would be needed up to the bridge with sidewalk accommodations. She advised that the railing height and guidelines must be at the standard of 42 inches or may be higher. She then shared the NCDOT Complete Streets Policy adopted in July 2009, as well as the July 2012 Design Guidelines released (www.completestreetsnc.org). Ms. Blackburn encouraged everyone to view the website and learn more about cases and success stories and recognized the following participation in recent training/workshops:

NCDOT Complete Streets Training

4	Regional workshops in fall 2012
27	2-day training events 2013-2014
800	Participants at training events and workshops
	60% --NCDOT employees
	30% --local government or MPO/RPO staff
	10% --private or other sectors
2014	Summit - 200 attendees
1000	Total participants

Ms. Blackburn discussed urban and suburban Main Street and how this is a good cross-section zone and good width for bike lanes. She also mentioned in urban settings, there are 6-foot lanes and how there might be some recommendations for some bike lanes that may need to be narrower. Ms. Blackburn noted that in an urban setting with buildings having been already built, there may not be room to expand for bike lanes. She mentioned the innovative treatments where they have painted the lanes and how they are not prohibited from consideration. Ms. Blackburn shared West Jefferson in the north part of the state, had a series of stop lights that were synchronized through the downtown and traveling through the downtown, people were traveling very fast. As a result, many businesses closed and pedestrians were not coming downtown, and they resurfaced the road. She stated that the town worked with Blue Ridge Electric to remove overhead utilities. She also shared that they were concerned with the speed, so they removed the traffic signals, 4-way stops, added cross-walks, and painted in the outline to where the curb extensions would go. Once the road was redone, the businesses came back. Ms. Blackburn also shared another story on US 421 for the widening project of Boone where they

have a lot of student population and needed bicycle accommodations for restriping and started to work on sidewalks with bike lanes and other features.

Ms. Blackburn highlighted a few sources that are important in the vetting process where NCDOT studied projects using as a variety of data sources:

- 1. GIS data from Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Network (PBIN): planned and existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in NC.*
- 2. State, regional and local bicycle and pedestrian plans and maps*
 - Comprehensive Transportation Plans/Thoroughfare Plans*
 - WalkBikeNC and historic state and regional bicycle route maps*
 - Municipal bicycle and pedestrian plans (some funded by DBPT)*
 - Local websites*

Council Member Alexander called attention to the number of tragedies between bicyclists and motorists, in regards to the shoulder widening at West Lexington at 24-foot wide ribbon paved side ditches streets. He shared that for some reason bicyclists like to go into this entryway to get to the rural areas, but since these streets were built as state streets and the community grew, there was a need to pipe and cover the ditches and put in a pedestrian way. He pointed out there can be between 2-10 bicyclists heading out he felt this is a conflict with young drivers and mothers with children trying to get around the cyclists. He also stated that there have been brushings, knock downs, and even deaths to occur. Ms. Blackburn replied that others have the same problem and a bill was introduced and adopted this past session that required the formation of a committee to study bicycle traffic and safety laws to address the problem.

Council Member Alexander also pointed out that we, as well as other communities seem to place large utility poles right in the middle of the sidewalks and asked if something could be done to not put those poles in the middle of the sidewalks. Ms. Blackburn shared some background for the sidewalks and noted they have to provide sufficient ADA clearance, fire hydrants and utility poles and if it does not provide ADA clearance then the utility poles would need to be relocated. Council Member Alexander added that when developers are working in an area, the City will allow them to put up funds in lieu of and then hold those funds until someone will come along and make that improvement. He asked if there is any way the State can unleash those funds and release those dollars to allow the City to use them in other parts of the town, not necessarily right there. He felt there were other connectivity projects where the funds could be unleashed in some of those places.

Council Member Wagner asked if there has been any discussion at the State level about possibly producing a model of a Complete Streets Policy that could be adopted by towns or cities that could be used as a guideline? Ms. Blackburn shared that there is one town and a couple of others that have actually adopted their guidelines as local ordinances. She also stated that they may have had to add subdivision language that they would take from these guidelines and determine how to make them more restrictive. Ms. Blackburn shared other resources that towns and cities such as Charlotte, Chapel Hill, and Cary have used as examples. She also suggested reaching out to State Planning Associations to look into it for other communities.

Council Member Wagner pointed out there were other issues that involve speeding traffic and asked if that would be something that NCDOT could look into? Ms. Blackburn noted that they have some policies in place regarding traffic calming, speed bumps that they use when requested to evaluate or implement traffic calming issues.

Ms. Blackburn shared some resources where folks could learn more about these.

- 1) North Carolina Complete Streets Planning and Design Guidelines*
- 2) AASHTO, Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, guide for the development for bicycle facilities, adopted in 2012 by American*
- 3) NACTO, National Association City Transportation Officials, developed by larger urban area City's as another resource includes like green bikeway and design guide.*
- 4) Other AASHTO and MUTCD document*
- 5) Research on innovative treatments and alternative intersections*

Ms. Blackburn asked what element of Complete Streets was most urgent. A majority of the answers were: bicycle lanes or road markings. She implied that if that question was asked to a more typical audience, the reply would be directed to more greenways, sidewalks, tunnels, and bridges. She also advised that most people feel safest being separated from traffic and stressed the importance of educating the public about the laws.

Greg Demko, City Manager, asked if NCDOT would be hosting any additional training/educational sessions in the near future. Ms. Blackburn replied they do not have any planned, but she possibly foresees another Complete Streets workshop in the near future.

Mr. McDonald asked how the NC guidelines differ from the other states and if other state guidelines were part of North Carolina? Ms. Blackburn replied that most states do not have a formal document such as this and also stated they are more about the physical environment and where they are situated. She noted that a lot of questions that came up generated around shoulder-width.

Carrie Spencer, Town Planner- Jamestown, noted the Complete Streets Guidelines seem to have been established for the construction for new roads, and asked if NCDOT would also recommend it as a guideline for retro fitting existing roads? Ms. Blackburn replied in the affirmative and noted it talks about big TIP projects, but it is also applicable to resurfacing and routine operations. She explained the thing about resurfacing contracts is that because NCDOT does not typically own the right-of-ways for the secondary road systems, if the ditch is really close to the edge of the pavement, there is really no place to widen the shoulder or make a lot of changes and this is why a wider shoulder is desired and require the ditch being pushed out and basically someone having to look at purchasing additional right-of-way to extend the pavement. She noted that this is why secondary roads and resurfacing contracts are a particular challenge.

Jamestown Mayor Keith Volz spoke about an issue they had with railroad tracks, and asked if there were any recommendations on how to work with the railroad companies because they have not had any success in doing so. He explained they were thinking about putting in sidewalks on the other side of the railroad tracks, but they were coming into an area where high speed rail was supposed to be coming through, but the railroad company has said that the town would be

responsible for paying for any of the improvements. He asked if the Governor's new proposal getting the bond through, if there might be any efforts that NCDOT could assist them in this endeavor as they are trying to deal with the railroad. Ms. Blackburn noted that this very same question came up during a forum last week and the answer was NCDOT was not in any better favor with the railroad companies when they have to work equally hard to try to get railroad projects approved. She did note that North Carolina does have a rail division and their job is to coordinate with the rail companies, so she encouraged them to send specific questions her way. She noted that the rail companies seem to have an interest in separated grade crossings and they want to remove them as much as possible, or upgrade them.

Mr. McDonald explained about twelve years ago, there was a process called Context and New Solutions and asked how this was different from Complete Streets. Ms. Blackburn responded that it was part of the continuum from where they started in the early 1990s. She explained it consisted of the context sensitive solution guidelines and the traditional neighborhood development policies that talked about narrower streets and grids, etc... and the Complete Streets Policy was the next part of that continuum, with the training being a huge part of it.

Lunch Intermission [12:15 p.m.]

Raleigh's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program/Results of a Peer Review Study

Mr. McDonald introduced Tom Fiorello, Project Engineer for the City of Raleigh Transportation & Operations Division. Mr. Fiorello received his degree in Civil Engineering Lowell Technological Institute and also earned his MBA from the University of Lowell.

Mr. Fiorello reported that in 2009, the Raleigh City Council adopted a Neighborhood Traffic Management Program dealing with specifically trying to mitigate speeding on residential streets and doing it through three aspects: 1) traffic calming 2) reducing the speed limit in residential streets 3) putting in multi-way stops at warranted intersections. He noted that traffic calming was the most controversial of the three. Mr. Fiorello stated that in the last six years, Raleigh has done about 32 streets within the city and they currently have two different kinds of traffic calming projects: one on smaller, narrow streets or wider streets without curb and gutter.

He noted their traffic calming projects are strictly regulated to vertical treatments (i.e. speed humps, speed tables, raised crosswalks, etc...). On wider streets with curb/gutter, they have Neighborhood Streetscape projects limited to horizontal treatments (i.e. median islands, chicanes, curb extensions, etc...) and they have done about three of these, two that have recently been completed in the last six weeks. Over the last five years, they have done about 28 traffic calming projects and have reduced the average 85th percentile speed on those streets by about 8.5 mph. Over the course of the last six years, they have proposed changes to the policies such as streamlining and things to make the process a little easier. He noted in November of 2014, he presented a group of proposals to Council and they remanded them to the Public Works Subcommittee where they brought those changes forward.

Due to the range of questions they received on the aspects of the policy, they decided that some research needed to be done as to what other communities were doing. They did this by trying to find population studies with the most recent one done in 2014, based on 2013 estimated

population of the 2010 Census and related growth or declines of the various metropolitan regions throughout the United States. This was used as a baseline for their US Peer Review. Within those 100 cities studied, there were five from North Carolina. For the purposes of this study, they took everything from North Carolina out of the US Peer Group and just left it in the North Carolina Peer Group so there would be no double dipping with the results. He noted there were about 58 of the 100 cities that have some kind of either a traffic calming program, neighborhood traffic management program, data sheets and cut streets that require specs on speed humps or speed tables—something to do with the traffic-calming realm. According to the North Carolina Peer, High Point ranked #9. Of these, they looked at how they administer their program, what they do to reach out to citizens, how citizens connect with the city, how they do evaluations, if they do evaluations—a whole number of aspects.

Mr. Fiorello reviewed the seven basic questions which were put forth to them by their Council Members and Sub-Committee.

1) Who can initiate an evaluation?

Bold text is what Raleigh is doing. Any citizen or group can request or initiate an evaluation a street to see if it qualifies on one of their traffic calming project lists. He stated that it is the most common usage but not the only usage. People that wanted a change in the policy did not think that any citizen should initiate an evaluation; they wanted it to come from people strictly to come from people off the streets.

2) What streets are eligible?

He stated the original policy stated in Raleigh that residential and collector streets. More have residential streets only and they have speed humps.

2b) Allowable Treatment types

They will set up horizontal and vertical residential may only do stripe only instead of horizontal or vertical.

3) Evaluation criteria

Speed
Volume of traffic
Crashes
Schools
General pedestrian's destinations
Land use
Sidewalks
Bike routes
Sight distance
Road grades
Safe routes to school
Time on waiting list
Residential support
But through traffic
Parking

3a) Speed

He used 35 mph for the 85th percent > speed limit
The street should earn due process

3b) Volume (He noted that they are breaking it down to 250 for the average volume)

Did not want to overstate the volume and figured the 250 and needed at least 10,000 vehicles per day and requested Council to lower that to 600 to 500 and to 10,000 to 6,000. Mr. Fiorello shared that the 6,000 seemed to be a good marker to use for their evaluation.

3c) Crash history (some thought that this was the most important)

You need to know what the speed is to reduce the speed. Three years was the time frame for speed related crashes. Mr. Fiorello stated that a frame of reference was needed to go back to start your evaluations from.

4) Who is included?

Get people involved and appoint neighborhood committees. Designate five people to be your Transportation Committee. This has been done by notifying the residence of the project street only and tell them that they are being considered for a calming project, what to expect, these are their options, would you like to go ahead and move on to a design? If the answer is a yes, a petition is handed to them and they have 60 days to gather 75 percent of the property's signatures and return back to the Mr. Fiorello. Once completed, they hold the first design meeting and neighborhood residents are invited.

5) Petition

Who goes on the petition? The project street residents go on this only. This became a sore point with us in Raleigh. This policy has an Equity clause. Council stated that they want every resident within the City to have equal access to this program. When signatures are gathered and the property is a rental and the renter signatures are okay because if it were left to the owners only, the neighborhoods could be left out due to the owners not available. Mr. Fiorello commented that they have been trying to get rid of the petition process entirely and came up with a ballot system. He explained the ballot process and what their options would be and everyone would know everything from day one and what the street is, the emergency response time on vehicles, same process to install treatment will be used to remove a treatment if desired. Council Member Wagner asked if these petitions would be mailed directly to the current resident. Mr. Fiorello responded that it would be either mailed to the current name or current resident.

6) Project funding

If the resident wants funding on the streets the City would come up with the design with the input of the residents and others that use the street, but the residents would be responsible for the cost. Mr. Fiorello also stated that some would have grant money available for the residents to apply for. He noted that Morrisville still does street assessments with the residents being responsible for payment of the improvements. He also stated if after two years the residents do not like the traffic calming and want it removed (that will be considered a street improvement) and it would be re-assessed. Mr. McCaslin inquired if they remove traffic calming measures with CIP funds or bonds? In response to Mr. McCaslin's question, Mr. Fiorello stated it will come out of whatever money has funds available at the time.

7) Removal process

Mr. Fiorello noted that there will be a written policy included for the removal for the length of time in the street, requirements to remove it, any penalties requested for removal and they just cannot go back every single year. Mr. Fiorello stated they use the same policy to remove the traffic calming devices as to install them. Mr. Fiorello alluded to get general consensus from both groups in the neighborhood when it comes to design. He mentioned that Durham had a lower petition percentage at 70 percent to install and 50 percent plus one to remove. He also noted that the treatment must be in place for two years before you can take it out, or it would result in a penalty.

Mr. Fiorello shared that the presentation was given to the Raleigh City Council in October and advised that an on-line questionnaire to residents was not very well received for a City of 430,000 people because they only received 67 responses back in a two-week period.

Council Member Alexander asked how many of the 28 traffic calming devices that were installed, had been removed. Mr. Fiorello responded that only one traffic hump was removed of the 28 that were installed and it was removed due to the intersection qualifying for a Four-way STOP after it was installed. Council Member Alexander inquired about the number of accidents due to the speed humps and Mr. Fiorello replied there have been no accidents.

Paul Johnson, High Point Enterprise, asked about the average cost per hump and Mr. Fiorello responded that the average cost was approximately \$2,500. He also noted that 22 feet of streets is needed to install a hump, versus 12 feet of streets and water/sewer lines and poles became blockages. Mr. McCaslin asked if they allowed any residents on the streets to have any input on the design and Mr. Fiorello explained they do have a design meeting and allow the residents to participate.

Mr. Johnson asked for clarification regarding the number of streets the 148 humps were installed on and Mr. Fiorello confirmed that it was on 28 streets. Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager, inquired on the cost per table and Mr. Fiorello responded at four years ago, the cost was about 8,000 per table. Council Member Alexander asked if there have been any issues with maintaining the streets where these traffic calming devices have been installed especially if the streets had to be scraped for snow removal. Mr. Fiorello commented when they do scrape for snow, they lift up near the hump then come down with the plow and there has not been a problem.

Council Member Hill inquired about the petitions and asked if he could define what the practices are and who they include? Mr. Fiorello explained in the past, they have looked at the neighborhood and determined if they had another way to get out of the neighborhood besides using the subject street. He noted everyone using the subject street was invited to the meeting and asked to share their input. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Fiorello how much of a political issue had this become in the Raleigh elections since he they started this and he replied none that he is aware of, but he does hear unsubstantiated rumors.

Council Member Hill asked about the 8.5 mph reduction in speed and Mr. Fiorello shared when they do their traffic studies; they take their worst case scenarios. He later said they put them out

at two locations for 48 hours with two daily volumes counts at location one and two daily volumes on location two. He then takes the highest on all four, and takes the average volumes for all four readings for both days and to reduces down total volumes from 600 to 10,000 and 500 to 6,000.

Council Member Wagner questioned speed criteria and asked at what point is a “yes or no” decision made. Mr. Fiorello shared the five criteria’s they consider are: speeds, crash history, pedestrian generators, other factors, and physical street conditions. He noted they did away with the 100-point system and they get whatever points it calculates to be and they use a five-year cut-off so if there is no activity or a renewed request, it will result in being removed from the list. Mr. Fiorello stated that there have been projects that have been on the list since 2003.

Mr. McCaslin asked how the City of Raleigh funds these traffic calming improvements and Mr. Fiorello stated that they are still working on the transportation aspect of it and they do the Capital Improvement project funding. Council Member Hill asked if there has been a measureable impact on the emergency response times on the streets with the speed humps. Mr. Fiorello shared that they did start measuring it for the first couple of years and last year they did measure seven streets and timed it and once the humps were put in, they found the average delay to be 7.5 seconds per hump. He noted, for the average street from end to end with five humps, it resulted in about a 35-40 second delay.

Carrie Spencer, Town Planner in Jamestown asked if there had been any kind of criteria for which type of treatment is best. Mr. Fiorello mentioned the one street with three tables is the only one that they are able to refer to and there was not much of a decrease for the humps and was more of a gradual incline to get there. He stated that one street was down at about 2/10 tenths of a mph. He noted they try to mitigate wider streets with streetscapes, medians, chicanes, etc....

Council Member Alexander inquired if there had been any property value changes on the streets as a result of any of these traffic calming improvements. Mr. Fiorello commented that they had not done any research on the property values. Mr. Fiorello’s stated in his opinion he believed that any enhancement to the street would increase quality of life or value.

Mr. Fiorello then shared a map of the Glennwood South Hospitality district that was formed to regulate decibel levels from amplified music out of establishments during certain times. He noted the fine for the first violation was about \$500 and this has reduced the amount of noise complaints/violations. He explained this forced business owners to make improvements to their property in order to abate some of the noise. Mr. McCaslin asked from a traffic stand point if there were lanes used for parking during a certain time? While viewing the slide, Council Member Alexander asked if they tow during peak hours and noted the signage.

Council Member Hill thanked the facilitators for presenting their information and noted it would be up to Council as to how to incorporate this information and it probably should start with the Prosperity & Livability Committee. Council Member Alexander suggested taking a road trip this spring to Raleigh to view some of the residential neighborhoods and the Glennwood South Hospitality District.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria A. Smith
Deputy City Clerk

Jason P. Ewing, Chairman