Active Mobility Commission Document of Support for E State Street Crosswalks

During the the Active Mobility Commission's October meeting several issues were raised which were referred to the Planning Department. Michelle Kennedy was quick to respond to Commission chair Julie White's request for a meeting to discuss the concerns. At the November meeting of the Commission Randy Tritt and Anna Henderson from NCDOT attended the meeting to discuss our concerns. Michelle Kennedy, Jennifer Tipton, and Russel Cates from the planning department were also at this meeting.

Our first concern was the lack of crosswalks at the entrance and exits ramps from I-40 along the western side of highway 9. There are sidewalks along this stretch of road, curb cuts, and landing platforms for the visually impaired at these intersections. However, there is no indication for motorists using these ramps that they are crossings for pedestrians. It is dangerous and pretty scary to attempt to cross these intersections on foot. We consider this to be an important issue because this is the only way for pedestrians to get to Ingles from the part of town north of I-40.

Randy Tritt, a Division 13 traffic engineer, indicated that these locations may be eligible for some treatment under safety improvements. NCDOT will look at these intersections to determine what could be done to make these crossings safer. A potential timeline is that plans could be submitted to the state NCDOT for consideration for funding during one of the funding cycles in 2026.

Our second concern was the lack of safety for pedestrians and cyclists using the one lane bridge across the Swannannoa River on Blue Ridge Road. We were happy to hear from NCDOT that the bridge was scheduled for replacement in 2026 and should include the bike and pedestrian components in the plan made for the I40 interchange. Following a discussion about how to make the bridge safer in the meantime, Anna Henderson said that NCDOT will look at other places in the division which have similar issues. It is possible that some kind of signage might be appropriate.

A major reason the commission was concerned about these areas is that with the loss of the bridge across the river in Veterans Park there is not safe connectivity for non motorists between the portions of Black Mountain on either side of I 40. We would like for the council to support the planning department's work with NCDOT to address these issues.

Our final concern was one that many in town share. We asked about the possibility of a cross walk somewhere along Broadway between the tracks and the main intersection with State Street. This is a much bigger and more complicated project and would require a formal request from the town. If the council wants to pursue this further the planning department has the information passed along to us by NCDOT about the issues and steps

involved (you probably already know most of these things). The commission is not making a formal request at this time about the potential for a cross walk. We would be more than happy to work with the town on this in the future if needed.

Once again, thanks to the planning department for their quick response to our concerns. Their interest in our work and enthusiasm is appreciated by the commission.