

## Meeting Notes

### 8-10-11 West Asheville Library, 6:00 PM

A variety of concerns and suggestions for enhancing transportation along the Haywood Road Corridor were discussed at the 8-10-11 meeting. Transportation safety and connectivity was a main concern for the group, as was the focus on 'scale' and the appropriateness of certain businesses and activities for the area. The group discussed the following items:

- It was suggested that funds be identified to improve the curb cut situation along the corridor, to improve pedestrian safety, and to expand the complete streets model. These funds could come for Federal and State funds, or there could be a West Asheville BID.  
The Family Dollar and the adjoining parking lot were targeted as examples of continuous curb cuts and storefront parking that endangers pedestrians and cars navigating around that intersection. It was also pointed out how congested that area has become. It was suggested that the stretch of sidewalk in front of the store be replaced with an elevated sidewalk and landscaping to eliminate the continuous curb cut, and access to the parking lot be redirected to a side or rear street access point. This would also eliminate the dangerous intersection situation where cars exiting the parking lot currently exit in the middle of the intersection and cannot tell if the lights are red or green.
- The potential to create a special taxing district in the area was also discussed, as was the ability to use a non-profit group to manage any funds acquired for improvements. It was suggested that the City not manage these funds.
- The group determined that a Light Pole Replacement program was needed to remove poles that block pedestrian traffic, especially along narrow sidewalks. Incremental replacement of the poles would increase connectivity. It was also suggested that lines be buried instead of replacing poles in order to improve the attractiveness of the corridor.
- The group was concerned with high-speed cut through streets in residential areas, including Fairfax, Brevard, Swannanoa, Westwood, Burton, and Sand hill. They felt that these roads and others like them should be targeted for traffic calming measures to reduce the risk to pedestrians and property. Traffic calming methods for these streets and for the area as a whole was discussed. The prohibitive cost and questionable effectiveness of speed bumps was mentioned as well as the potential for on street parking and bike lanes as a way to slow traffic by narrowing lanes, the inclusion of "visual friction", or the application of road images painted in the street to slow traffic.
- A new business will be opening in the old Rocket Club location, called 'WALK' (West Asheville Lounge and Kitchen). This business is not required to provide parking because of the existing zoning exemptions and could not anyway because of site constraints.
- To increase the visibility, safety, and attractiveness of bicycling along the corridor, the group discussed using painted bike lanes to distinguish them from the regular car travel lane. This has been done in other cities and is in the testing phase in other areas of

Asheville where the pavement is newer and the painting has a better chance of being durable. Crosswalks were identified as an obstacle for connectivity along the corridor. The group felt that some existing crosswalks lack good visibility due to obstructions or parked cars, and/or cars are not inclined to stop to let pedestrians cross. It was suggested that signs be erected to remind cars to yield and to list the penalties for not yielding, to paint the crosswalks in bright colors, and/or to locate a pedestrian refuge island at the center of crosswalks. A painted bike lane/crosswalk program could be coordinated with similarly colored signs to provide an overall color theme for the corridor.

- Stormwater runoff was mentioned as a concern. The high level of impervious pavement in the area was discussed as an issue, and the group suggested that permeable pavements and vegetation be utilized in the future to reduce the amount of water going into local streams and the storm sewer system.
- The issue of trucks idling outside of the Builders First Source facility on the east end of Haywood Road was mentioned. The trucks park in the middle turning lane for long stretches of time, typically in the early morning hours, and block the lane completely. It was suggested that these large trucks are not appropriate for this stretch of road, and that Builders First may be out of scale in terms of its ability to operate effectively without blocking the roads. The long tenure of the business was mentioned as a positive side to their presence, and the group agreed that discouraging businesses from the area was not their intent; however, a remedy and enforcement for the issue of truck idling is needed. In addition, encouraging deliveries for all corridor businesses to occur at “better times” was also mentioned.
- The existence of the City-adopted Sustainability bonus along the Haywood Road corridor was mentioned. The corridor designation means that density and redevelopment are to be directed along the corridor especially for those residential areas close to the corridor. Additional services and streetscape improvements could be expected with future redevelopment.
- The group discussed the issue of parking along the corridor, and there were some concerns about business parking taking up residential on-street parking spaces and blocking driveways. Some participants pointed out that the urban nature of the neighborhood, and close proximity to the corridor means that residential roads will naturally be used for non-residential purposes, and that this is to be expected as one price of living so close to the urban core. Using church parking lots during the weekdays for customer parking was discussed as one viable option. Making sure that the scale of a site or building was in line with its parking abilities was also mentioned.
- The sale, service, and repair of recreational vehicles along the corridor was discussed. It was determined that scooters are not recreational vehicles, but should be classified similar to yard equipment, as retail items.
- Beechams curve re-design was discussed: Traffic issues on the east end of Haywood where it veers north towards downtown were discussed. This 4 way intersection is dangerous and confusing even for long-term residents. It was mentioned that a

roundabout would not fit the area without requiring the purchase of land. The installation of a traffic light system that could be triggered by the presence of a car or bicycle was discussed as one solution (loop system). It was suggested that the high volume of left turns at the intersection made it impractical to turn it into a 4 way stop.

Some specific land uses were discussed as a part of the meeting using the Table of Uses adopted by City Council in 2011:

- Some business activities will be just too out-of-scale with the corridor including : call centers, recreational vehicle sales service and repair. The questions was asked whether Building First Source was by now out-of scale with the corridor.
- Some other business uses may be ok for the corridor including a business incubator; industrial uses-light with special standards to make it compatible with the character of the corridor; and live-work units in the CBD areas.
- A good amount of time was spent discussing the land use labeled studios, galleries and workshops for artists, artisans and craftspeople high impact and it was decided that with special standards to mitigate noise, dust, fumes etc, it could be compatible with the corridor.
- There was some discussion about categorizing land uses by the relative impact of the use versus by the specific type of use as is currently done. Focusing on the impact is the part of the activity that affects compatibility. Staff mentioned that in cases where a specific land uses is not listed on the use table but is 'close to' or alike another activity there is some consideration of that and the relative impact in this evaluation of an un-listed use.