

IREDELL COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

The Iredell County Planning Board met on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Iredell County Government Center (Old Courthouse) at 200 S. Center Street in Statesville, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eric Fields, Chairman
Harry Tsumas, Jr., Vice-Chairman
Dr. Jackie Grigg
Anita Johnson
Gene Mahaffey
Jeff McNeely
Kristi Pfeufer
Harold Pruitt
Jerry Santoni
Thomas E. Stephens
Alan Williams

STAFF PRESENT

Katrina Hewitt
Ron Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

At this time, Chairman Fields called the meeting to order.

CONSIDERATION/POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE LAKE NORMAN BIKE ROUTE:

Mr. Smith stated that Blair Israel, Centralina Council of Governments, will be making a presentation on a project that has been underway for several months. A regional group that includes Iredell County, towns of Troutman and Mooresville, as well as some private entities has been working on what is being called the Lake Norman Bike Route. This is a NCDOT initiative that would create a designated bicycle route around Lake Norman on existing roads through signage and other physical improvements. Mr. Smith stated this was being submitted as information only at this time.

Mr. Israel presented an executive summary on the Lake Norman Bike Plan:

The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan is the culmination of years of work. The concept it describes was first envisioned nearly seven years ago as a means for bicyclists to travel around Lake Norman through Mecklenburg, Iredell, Catawba and Lincoln Counties. NCDOT contracted with Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) in early 2009 to write a regional bicycle plan for the Lake Norman area. This was to be the first plan of its type in North Carolina. The process used for its development is intended to serve as a model for the creation of similar plans in other portions of the State. Participating communities involved in the Study included:

- Catawba County
- Town of Cornelius
- Town of Davidson
- Town of Huntersville
- Iredell County
- Lincoln County
- Mecklenburg County
- Town of Mooresville
- Town of Troutman

Also deeply involved in the development of the Study were the regional transportation organizations that serve these communities. Those organizations included (1) Unifour Rural Planning Organization (Catawba County); (2) Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization (Iredell and Lincoln Counties, Mooresville and Troutman), NCDOT Division 10 and Division 12 and Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville and Mecklenburg County). Carolina Thread Trail staff also served on the Steering Committee. Thread Trail plans were being developed for Lincoln and Mecklenburg Counties at roughly the same time as this Plan was being written and their input was incorporated into the Plan.

The plan was written in 2009, with adoption by NCDOT in 2010. Centralina staff assembled a Steering Committee of representatives from transportation, land use, recreation, and environmental perspectives. Interested citizens were also given an opportunity to attend and participate in Study discussions. Ultimately, 120+ persons showed interest in the Study's development and asked to be included on the distribution list for Steering Committee meetings. The Steering Committee met monthly throughout 2009. They assisted in the development and review of background information, text for the plan, and route recommendations.

The actual route chosen to circumnavigate Lake Norman was split into *Initial* and *Ultimate* routes. The *Initial Route* includes those segments that are already appropriate for bicyclists, or will be with limited improvements. The NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation intend to install signage along the *Initial Route* in 2010. The *Ultimate Route* includes future segments of the Carolina Thread Trail and improved roads, such as NC 150 and Perth Road that together create the ideal route around the Lake. The two routes are shown on the Recommended Routes map.

The Initial and Ultimate Routes together contain approximately 50 segments that will require many years and millions of dollars to construct. To focus limited resources, the Plan prioritizes these segments and identifies a high priority list that represents moderate cost capital projects for communities to reference when applying for grants. Total cost for implementation of each of the nine high priority projects is currently estimated to be approximately \$15 million. The Plan includes a range of funding strategies to implement the Route. Some of these strategies involve coordination with private development, NCDOT road widening and resurfacings, grant applications, and local funding.

In recognition of the many years likely to be required to implement the Plan, and the number of local governments and organizations necessarily involved, NCDOT asked that an enduring organization be created to sustain interest and coordinate activities among each of the affected parties. The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Route Task Force was created to provide a forum for those parties to meet periodically after the Plan's adoption and to coordinate efforts on the Route, including recommending route amendments and sanctioning bicycling events along the route. The Task Force includes each of the organizations and communities directly affected by the Plan.

The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan could not have been developed without the continued participation by each of the communities and organizations involved. Their comments helped to develop an informed and practical bicycle route plan that reflects the needs of those communities while providing specific guidance to all affected entities on how to implement its recommendations.

They propose to develop the first regional bicycle plan in North Carolina which includes four counties. The vision is for a continuous, multi-jurisdictional bicycle route that will encircle Lake Norman and connect with neighboring communities, destinations, and the various local bicycle facilities, in order to provide a safer, useful, and attractive transportation and recreation resource for a wide range of users within the surrounding four-county region. *(A copy of the Plan and the power point presentation is available for review in the official minute book.)*

Mr. Smith stated that from the County's perspective we don't have to pay for anything and this isn't something where we have to squeeze out of the development community that with NCDOT's help it can be put into place.

At this time, the Board had open discussion. Chairman Fields asked what percentage were "off road" trails and Mr. Israel stated the map shows the initial route is 89 miles long with 3 miles being non-road and the ultimate route has 117 miles with 16 miles non-road. Chairman Fields also asked about dirt bikes and four-wheelers being used on these non-road trails. Mr. Israel stated most of the greenways would not have motorized vehicles but couldn't answer how they would be policed. Mr. Israel stated that this is designed for bicycles. Dr. Grigg stated there was nothing in the plan stating who has jurisdiction. Mr. Mahaffey asked who would be responsible for the maintenance and Mr. Smith stated that NCDOT or if it was a greenway situation it would be NCDOT or one of the local agencies. Mr. McNeely asked if there was any way to project what the cost will be and Mr. Israel stated that NCDOT was covering the majority of the cost but he didn't have a total figure that this would be done over several years. Mr. Tsumas stated that he understands that this is a plan but as a developer we can see where NCDOT requires additional easements and turning lanes which the cost would come back on the developer. Mr. Tsumas stated that you can't say we don't know the cost or that NCDOT will cover the cost and he will not vote without some type of cost.

Chairman Fields agreed with Dr. Grigg's earlier comment and questioned who is liable if NCDOT has no easement and takes the position they are not responsible. He felt that all those jurisdictions involved needed to make this clear in the plan. Mr. Israel stated that the facilities being recommended (bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, and wide outside lanes) are standard NCDOT facilities. Chairman Fields stated that he just felt the liability issues just need to be addressed.

The Board had further discussion and Mr. Israel suggested that they Google *Virginia creeper trail* to get information on an existing trail. This was for information only; no action was taken by the Board.

At this time, Chairman Fields called for a short break.

DISCUSSION OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE: Mr. Smith stated that the staff has been working diligently on the development of the new Land Development Code over the last couple of months. Mr. Smith stated that he proposed to go through the proposed framework of the plan and possibly submit 1-2 chapters for the Board's consideration at the February meeting.

Mr. Smith reviewed the first handout "Proposed New Chapters and their Content" (*see attachment in minute book*). Mr. Smith stated that they are consolidating all the development ordinances and want to make it user friendly as possible. Mr. Smith also presented a list of proposed amendments (*see attachment in minute book*) taken from the 2030 Plan Amendments and also staff generated amendments that will be considered.

Mr. Smith presented a copy of Chapter 1. General Provisions (*see attachment in minute book*) which is the first chapter that will be submitted and would like to Board to review the format and take action at the February meeting.

Mr. Smith stated that the staff proposed to email or send a CD to distribute the chapters for their review and planned to keep the Board involved in the review process chapter by chapter and needed their input.

Chairman Fields asked what the timeframe was for the finished document and Mr. Smith stated he proposes within a year. Mr. Santoni asked if the Board of Commissioners were going to be updated chapter by chapter or at the end with the final proposal and Mr. Smith stated that he would periodically be updating the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Smith also stated that all the proposed changes would be available for review on the County's website.

MINUTES: Mr. McNeely made a motion to approve the 11/4/09 meeting minutes and Dr. Grigg seconded said motion. The motion passed in favor. **VOTES: 11-0.**

MONTHLY COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Chairman Fields declared the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Katrina Hewitt
Administrative Asst. II

Date Read and/or Approved