

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**April 9, 2018**

The Athens-Clarke County Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Committee met at a public meeting on Monday, April 9, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at 780 Barber Street, Athens, Georgia.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mary Cook, Tyler Dewey, Tony Eubanks, Robert Holden, Daisy Mathis, Ken Sherman

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dodd Ferrelle, Carol Myers, Eric Nesmith, David Oygunsanya, Mark Ralston, Julius Thomas

**STAFF PRESENT:** Sandy Beasley, Tim Griffeth, Drew Raessler

**Quorum:** The absence of six members represented the lack of a quorum to approve the minutes, any motions presented, or adjournment.

**Approval of Minutes:** Not approved due to lack of quorum.

**Karen Tinsley**

Ms. Tinsley, an avid local bicyclist, was killed in a bicycle vs motor vehicle accident on April 3, 2018. This accident is an impetus for this committee to continue in its efforts to provide safer routes for bicyclists and pedestrians. Mr. Sherman noted that a ghost bike event and ride will be held on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Firefly Ticket to Ride:**

This event was held on March 24<sup>th</sup>. In the biggest event yet, there were over 300 riders, bolstered in part by having three starting points. Over \$13,000 was raised during the event.

**Greenway Dedication:**

The dedication of the expansion of the Greenway Trail, held on Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, was well attended. There are still issues such as gaps and street crossings that must be addressed. Ms. Cook expressed concern that several projects have been under construction for a long time. She also noted that it is very difficult to find Trail information on the ACC website. Mr. Raessler requested that she send information to him for his department's new GIS Analyst to help in developing level of comfort interactive maps. Ms. Mathis noted that Leisure Services is in the process of developing maps of the Greenway and Firefly Trail.

Mr. Raessler said that Jared Draper, members of the Greenway Commission, and his staff will meet to understand each other's plans. With the Plan's adoption, there will be an opportunity to discuss coordination and the next steps. This will be the time for the BPMP Committee to approach the Mayor and Commission, should they feel necessary,

to expand the Charter to continue the BPMP Committee and provide additional duties. Conversations about data are already being discussed should the charter be expanded.

Mr. Draper extended kudos to Mr. Raessler and his department's efforts to help future implementation of this plan as well as other initiatives.

Toole Design Group – Education campaign and prioritization:

Mr. Draper has talked with Joseph D'Angelo of ACC's new GIO division. The map work he is working on is interactive and extensive.

Mr. Draper noted that Toole's efforts include working thru prioritization and pedestrian specific infrastructure plans. The draft network map presented at a Mayor and Commission meeting is available on ACC's website; however, it is in a continuous state of updating. The next release will be a series of maps that will show the overall network and pedestrian specific projects.

Andy Clarke, Toole's Director of Strategy, will be leading the effort for the Education, Safety, and Encouragement portions of the plan. His goal is to point the Committee on a path to use education, safety and encouragement for constructive and positive plans and get the Athens In Motion Plan implemented effectively.

Mr. Clarke advised that ACC is under-achieving and under-performing when it comes to the walking / biking community as compared to other college towns. The most important thing that can be done for safety is to have more people walking and biking so they are more visible, which makes people used to dealing with cyclists and pedestrians. Familiarity and safety in numbers phenomenon is real and the government needs to get the numbers up as job one – with both a safety initiative and an encouragement initiative. Government agencies in the community need to own this plan and the implementation of it, becoming visible champions of the elements of the plan. Challenging employees to be a part of the program is a critical piece of the plan. What sets a successful community apart is a sense of leadership and ownership from the elected officials and the community as a whole. Gaps noted at this time include ridership, safety, infrastructure, mileage, lack of connectiveness of the network and major roads, and culture / behavior. ACC has a poor traffic safety record within the state which should be a priority to remedy. Mr. Clarke suggested that the education, safety, and encouragement message should be focused on getting the T-SPLOST investment moving forward as efficiently and effectively as possible. Ground work would include advertising new infrastructure installations or changes with Committee members and elected officials attending the opening event; ensuring community involvement and ownership; understanding traffic flows by touring the neighborhoods with the residents pointing out issues; instituting a series of official community events such as bike/walk to school/work days, car-free days, etc. Another suggestion is for staff to undergo internal training to be on the same page and have the same level of understanding when it comes to Complete Streets. Also, the website should be intuitive for citizens. There should be an active tourist component with the CVB and the University on board.

For the past several years, ACC has a record of one of the worst counties in Georgia for crashes – motor vehicles, bicycle and pedestrian vs motor vehicle, which seems to be a systemic issue. Vision Zero is a fairly new approach in the states to traffic safety. It

represents a fundamental shift in the way we think about traffic safety and it starts with the premise that fatal and serious injury crashes are unacceptable. The physical environment, rather than human error, dictates the vast majority of crashes. Speed and distracted driving are major issues. This approach is data driven and relentless in identifying how, why and where accidents are occurring. Since 2015, accidents with pedestrians and bicyclists are trending up at an alarming rate. Georgia DOT has, as an official performance measure for traffic safety, an increase in the number of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities. Speed is a huge factor in accidents in Athens. Mr. Clarke suggested that new University students be required to take a driver safety course to have a car on campus. Mr. Holden noted that this is one side of a much larger problem. UGA deals with issues such as pedestrians on campus not paying attention to their surroundings and walking into moving transit buses or vehicles passing transit buses striking pedestrians. As a matter of routine, bicycle safety should be taught in schools. Mr. Sherman noted that new technology in vehicles also tend to be a distraction. A non-controversial, powerful pedestrian respect focused campaign also benefits bicyclists and motorists. There should also be a "respect the pedestrian" campaign. Governor Deal is expected to sign a distracted driving bill that passed recently. There will be some money coming down from the Governor's Office for Highway Safety for educational campaigns. This would be a good opportunity to jump start conversations regarding distracted drivers and pedestrians.

He also noted that after many bicycle fatalities in one year, Portland obtained the Platinum level in the Bicycle Friendly Community Designation because of the way they responded. Measures such as bike boxes to help make biking safer were instituted.

Without a quorum, the meeting ended at 7:48 p.m.

The next meeting of this Committee will be Monday, May 14th at 6:00 p.m. at 780 Barber Street.