

Comments on Chapel Hill Sidewalk Request Master List and the Chapel Hill and Regional
Transportation Priority Lists
Regina Blalock, Chair, Go! Chapel Hill Active Living by Design

I cannot attend the September 11th ALBD meeting, but I would like to offer the following comments and recommendations on the Chapel Hill Sidewalk Request Master List, Chapel Hill Transportation Priority List and the Chapel Hill and Regional Transportation Priority Lists.

- 1) **Crosswalk Improvement Plan Recommended (Complete Streets Approach):** Crosswalks that allow pedestrians to crossover roadways are a vital part of the transportation system, and the lack of crosswalks linking thousands of pedestrians to transit stops all over Chapel Hill is of particular concern (due to the high traffic counts, this a major concern along MLK blvd). Unfortunately, the road, transit, bike/ped plans are stand alone plans that do not take into consideration the infrastructure that links them.
- 2) **Recommended Changes to the Town's Sidewalk Ranking System:** The Town's Sidewalk Ranking System that establishes a sidewalk's priority does not appear to indentify improvements that would necessarily maximize pedestrian use, pedestrian safety, or address environmental impact. **Adoption of the TAC criteria for bike/ped ranking appears to be more comprehensive ranking system and may be preferred.** Other recommended changes to the ranking system include:
 - a) Improve procedures for citizen requests, and establish criteria for including citizen requested projects on the priority sidewalk list (e.g., 30% of residents have signed a petition). Once a criteria is established, citizen requests should carry a much higher weight than the current one point allocated on the Sidewalk Ranking System (i.e., current ranking does not distinguish between one request and one thousand, and a sidewalk proposal with signatures of 30% of a neighborhood should weigh much heavier on a project than a request from one citizen).
 - b) Include topography in the Ranking System (e.g., ranked the same on the priority list, Lake Ellen Drive, with very little contour is probably much safer to walk than Shady lawn Road, which is hilly and curvy and includes blind curves).
- 3) **Cost Sharing for Sidewalks on State Roads:** While not a current priority for the town, cost sharing for sidewalk construction on state roads should be a high priority when it is an issue of pedestrian safety or if pedestrian use can be increased substantially with installation of a sidewalk.
- 4) The Adopted 2009-2015 Chapel Hill Priority List identifies what I would consider most of the very highest priority bike/ped facilities needed in the town; however, Rosemary Street and Weaver Dairy Road improvements should be included.
- 5) **Focus on Comprehensive Neighborhood Complete Streets Improvement Plans:** ALBD has had success directly involving community groups to create comprehensive neighborhood multi-modal improvement plans. This approach has not only created comprehensive neighborhood improvement plans that includes bike lanes, sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, etc., but has also had enormous citizen involvement that is seen as crucial for identifying the needs of our citizens (e.g., Northside Mutli-Modal Transportation Plan, Timberlyne Improvement Requests, and Ephesus Elementary Walkability/Bikability Plan).

-----Original Message-----

From: andrea_richardson@med.unc.edu [mailto:andrea_richardson@med.unc.edu]

Sent: Thu 9/25/2008 11:57 AM

To: Public Works

Subject: Sidewalk Request

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Alta Springs apartment community, located on Spring Meadow Dr. in Chapel Hill. The community is located off Barbee Chapel Rd. across from Finley Forest.

Many residents of Alta Springs are connected with UNC as students or employees and thus utilize one of the Chapel Hill Transit bus stops located at the Friday Center Park & Ride, NC 54 Park & Ride, Hedrick Building parking and Friday Center Drive stops. These residents must walk down a stretch of Barbee Chapel Rd. to cross over to Finley Forest and get to one of the bus stops listed above. In addition, residents must also take this route if they wish to utilize the NC 54/Meadowmont bike path.

This portion of Barbee Chapel Rd. has neither a sidewalk nor significant shoulder for residents to walk along safely. Cars often travel down Barbee Chapel Rd. at upward speeds of 60 mph (although the speed limit is 35 mph), just feet (and sometimes inches) from the pedestrians. This situation frightens me a great deal, and I would like to see something done to ameliorate its many dangers.

I feel a sidewalk and pedestrian crosswalk are necessary for this area of Barbee Chapel Rd., if not a stoplight to help the pedestrians cross more safely and calm the traffic in the area. If this is not possible, I would like to see more regulation of the speed limit at the very least. I fear for the safety and lives of everyone taking this dangerous path every day.

Please let me know if this is not the appropriate avenue for this request, or if there is anyone I can speak to in addition to your office to get something accomplished.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Andrea R. Richardson