



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

HIGHWAY SAFETY RESEARCH CENTER

SAFETY • MOBILITY • INFORMATION

ATTACHMENT 3

14

February 17, 2005

Re: Mr. Wayne Pein's "Critique of NC 86 / Airport Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Mobility Study: Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative"

Dear Mayor Foy:

The Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) project staff for the "NC 86/Airport Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Mobility Study: Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative" stands by our report prepared for the Town of Chapel Hill. We performed the work outlined in our Statement of Work (dated December 12, 2003) and Contract, and did what the Town asked us to do - which was to conduct an informal assessment in order to describe current bicycling and walking conditions and patterns, identify safety and access problems, and identify potential countermeasures that might be used in the corridor (after further evaluation) to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety, accessibility, AND encourage more walking and bicycling. This study was not intended to be an engineering study, nor were we expected or contracted to collect any additional data than that provided by the Town.

We believe that the comments of Mr. Pein about this report are unsupported by transportation research and the experiences of other communities, and are largely the writings of someone who has been unable to accept the decision of the Town to move toward implementing bicycle lanes as a preferred facility for arterial streets (and optionally required for collector and local streets). Additionally, this is not the first occasion on which Mr. Pein has undertaken to criticize the work of the Center. He was once an employee of HSRC and according to HSRC administrators, his lack of objectivity in research played a part in his departure. There have been disagreements with researchers at HSRC both before and since his leaving employment here. HSRC research that he criticizes has been reviewed and accepted by federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration. The results of these studies have also been published in peer-reviewed journals and have been applied in other cities and states in the development of project recommendations and broader policies related to pedestrian and bicycle planning. Mr. Pein has a right to express his opinion, but presented no research findings to substantiate his opinions in his critique of the NC 86 / Airport Road study. (The one research-based citation he references in his critique of this study does not in fact support his supposition.) His opinions are also completely counter to those of other bicyclists that we obtained through the project public input forum (that are reflected in and documented in our report) as well as the outcome of Chapel Hill's previously completed public process to develop current bicycle facilities policy.

(15)

HSRC is committed to doing quality research and will defend itself against unsubstantiated statements such as those made by Mr. Pein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Libby Thomas". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Libby Thomas
Principal Investigator

cc: Cal Horton
cc: David Bonk
cc: Charles Zegeer
cc: William Hunter
cc: Doug Robertson

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A POLICY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF BICYCLE FACILITIES WITHIN THE TOWN (2003-11-10/R-10)

WHEREAS, it is the goal of the Town of Chapel Hill to accommodate the needs of existing bicyclists; and

WHEREAS, it is the goal of the Town of Chapel Hill to encourage greater use of bicycles as an alternative mode of transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Chapel Hill 2000 Comprehensive Plan includes the objective “develop and maintain a system of safe and efficient bikeways (on-street bike lanes and off-street paths within greenways) designed to contribute to Town-wide mobility, connecting neighborhoods with activity centers, schools, parks, and other neighborhoods”; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town “adopt revised roadway standards incorporating on-street bike lanes, including a commitment to install bike lanes in roadway resurfacing projects where feasible; and

WHEREAS, variable circumstances exist in the Town of Chapel Hill such as topography, vehicle speed and volume, impediments such as parked vehicles, drainage grates or raised reflectors, access to public facilities and activity centers and available right of way.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill, that:

- Within the Planning Jurisdiction of the Town of Chapel Hill, the appropriate design, type and width of bicycle facilities will be assessed on an individual and site-specific basis depending on the circumstances that exist.
- Striped bicycle lanes will normally be provided on newly constructed or reconstructed Arterial Streets; however, when existing Arterial Streets that do not currently have bicycle lanes are resurfaced they will normally be re-striped with bicycle lanes to the extent practicable.
- Either striped bicycle lanes or wide outside lanes may be appropriate on Collector Streets depending on site specific circumstances.
- Local Streets will not normally include extra width for bicycle facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the Manager to utilize this policy in reviewing development plans and in the design of roadway improvements within the Chapel Hill Planning Jurisdiction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan include discussion of the type, design and width of bicycle facilities that may be appropriate for different streets within the Planning Jurisdiction of the Town of Chapel Hill. Until such time that the Action Plan is completed and adopted by the Town Council, Town staff shall recommend bicycle accommodations on a case by case basis and in accordance with this policy, subject to approval by the Town Council.

This the 10th day of November, 2003.