City of Washington
Planning & Inspections

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD

Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, November 25, 2014
7:00 PM

I. Opening of the meeting

II. Invocation

III. Roll call

IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

1. Discussion of proposed text amendment for Solar Farms.
2. Unified Development Ordinance – Zoning articles 1, 2 and 3 review and discussion.
3. NCDOT Bicycle Plan for Washington – Board recommendation needed.

VI. Other Business

None

VII. Approval of minutes – September 23, 2014

VIII. Adjourn

DRAFT

AMENDMENT TO CITY OF WASHINGTON ZONING ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITION OF SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES

Solar Energy Facilities, often referred to as, Solar Farms will be permitted only by Special Use Permit issued by the City of Washington Board of Adjustment within the RA-20, AP, I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.

1. Addition to Article II Definitions, Section 40-25 Words and terms defined as follows:

Solar Energy Facility - A solar collection system that generates electricity from sunlight to a wholesale electricity market through a regional transmission organization and an inter-connection with the local utility power grid and/or for direct distribution to more than one property or consumer as a commercial venture located on a parcel containing a minimum of 30 acres. Solar energy facilities shall consist of a minimum of three individual photovoltaic modules (solar panels), which are an assembly of solar cells to generate electricity. Solar facilities constructed only for the production of electricity dedicated to another facility co-located the same site, or a solar facility which is clearly a subordinate accessory land use, shall not be subject to the special use permit requirements.

1. Addition to Section 40-119. Index to Listed Uses as follows:

(ss) Solar Energy Facility (Solar Farm)

2. Addition to Section 40-120. Listed Uses; Specific Criteria as follows:

(ss) Solar Energy Facility (Solar Farm)

(1) Special Use Permit granted under this section shall be for a period of one (1) year and must be renewed annually. It shall be the responsibility of the owner/operator to make timely application for permit renewal.

(2) Setbacks. Solar energy facilities and their appurtenant components and structures shall be a minimum of 50 feet from all property lines, and 100 feet from any residence. Inverters shall be a minimum of 150 feet from any residence.

(3) Height requirements. Individual modules/panels shall be a maximum of 25 feet in height as measured from the grade at the base of the structure to the apex of the structure.

(4) Site plan. A site plan, drawn and stamped by a North Carolina licensed surveyor or engineer, shall be submitted showing the following:

a. A narrative describing the proposed solar energy facility including an overview of the project;
b. The proposed location and dimensions of all solar panels, inverters, existing and proposed structures, screening, fencing, property lines, turnout locations, ancillary equipment, transmission lines, vegetation and the location of any residence within 100 feet of the perimeter of the facility;
c. Any preexisting structures on the same lot and principal structures on other properties that would affect the placement of solar panels;
d. Parking and access areas;
e. Location of any proposed solar access easements;
f. Location where wiring is brought together for inter-connection to system components and/or the local utility power grid, and location of disconnect switch;
g. Standard drawings of the solar collection system components;
h. Security fencing, a minimum of six feet in height, shall be provided along the entire perimeter of the facility;
i. The entire perimeter of the facility shall be screened from adjoining properties by a ten foot buffer yard. The buffer yard shall consist of nine evergreen trees or shrubs per 100 linear feet or fraction thereof. The vegetation and landscaping requirements shall be in compliance with Article VII of this chapter. This use shall be classified as a III – Utility use;
j. Copies of any lease agreement and solar access easement(s);
k. Evidence that the electrical utility provider has been informed of the customer's intent to install an interconnected, customer-owned generator (off-grid systems shall be exempt from this requirement);
l. Decommissioning plans that describe the anticipated life of the facility, the estimated decommissioning costs in current dollars, and the anticipated manner in which the facility will be decommissioned and the site restored;
m. Signature of the property owner(s) and the owner/operator of the facility (if different than the property owner); and
n. Other relevant studies, reports, certifications, and approvals as may be reasonably requested by the City of Washington to ensure compliance with this article.

(5) Location. Solar energy facilities will be permitted only in the RA-20 (Residential -Agricultural) zoning district on a parcel (or parcels) containing a minimum of 30 acres as a special use as permitted by the City of Washington Board of Adjustment.

(6) Other Requirements:

a. Development of a solar energy facility will be subject to other overlay district regulations including watershed impervious surface limits.
b. Solar energy facilities shall be fully screened from adjoining properties and adjacent roads by an evergreen buffer capable of reaching a height of six feet within three years of planting, with at least 75% opacity at the time of planting.
c. All outdoor lighting shall be shielded to direct light and glare onto the system's premises and may be of sufficient intensity to ensure security.
d. Any electrical wiring used in the system shall be underground (trenched) except where wiring is brought together for inter-connection to system components and/or the local utility power grid.
e. Solar panels shall be mounted onto a pole, rack or suitable foundation, in accordance with manufacturer specifications, in order to ensure the safe operation and stability of the system. The mounting structure (fixed or tracking capable) shall be comprised of materials approved by the manufacturer, which are able to fully support the system components and withstand adverse weather conditions.
f. Multiple mounting structures shall be spaced apart at the distance recommended by the manufacturer to ensure safety and maximum efficiency.
g. No ground-mounted large solar energy systems shall be affixed to a block wall or fence.
h. No signage shall be permitted on the perimeter fence, with the exception of one sign not to exceed 32 square feet that displays the name, address and emergency contact information of the facility as well as appropriate warning signs.
i. All obsolete or unused systems shall be removed. Any structure or equipment associated with the solar farm that is not operated for a continuous period of 365 days shall be considered obsolete or unused system.
j. Any lease agreement, solar access easement, and plan for removal of system/equipment shall be provided to the City of Washington. If the system is to be interconnected to the local utility power grid, a copy of the conditional approval from the local utility must also be provided before a special use permit will be granted.

k. The solar energy facility and components shall meet all requirements of the North Carolina State Building Code.
l. The solar energy facility and components shall comply with the current edition of the National Electrical Code; UL listed, and be designed with an anti-reflective coating.
m. The electrical disconnect switch shall be clearly identified and unobstructed, and shall be noted clearly on the site plan.
n. The owner or future owner of a property onto which a solar farm is installed assumes all risk associated with diminished performance of said system caused by any present or future adjacent structure or landscaping that may interfere with the system's ability to produce power at its rated capacity, regardless of when that adjacent structure or landscaping is constructed or installed.
o. Inverter noise shall not exceed 40 dBA, measured at the property line.
p. Other conditions, including, but not limited to, buffering and noise controls that provide adequate protection for adjacent residential properties as may be deemed reasonable and appropriate for the type of system, may be added by the City of Washington Board of Adjustment.

3. **Addition to Table of Permitted Uses** as follows:

Solar Energy Facility (Solar Farm)

Add – Solar Energy Facility (Solar Farm) and label corresponding RA-20, AP, I-1 and I-2 zoning district as Special Use.

In order to develop a strategic bicycle plan to make Washington a bicycle-friendly community, there are a number of issues that will need to be addressed in the development of the plan.

Developing bicycle facilities for Washington will require considerations for:

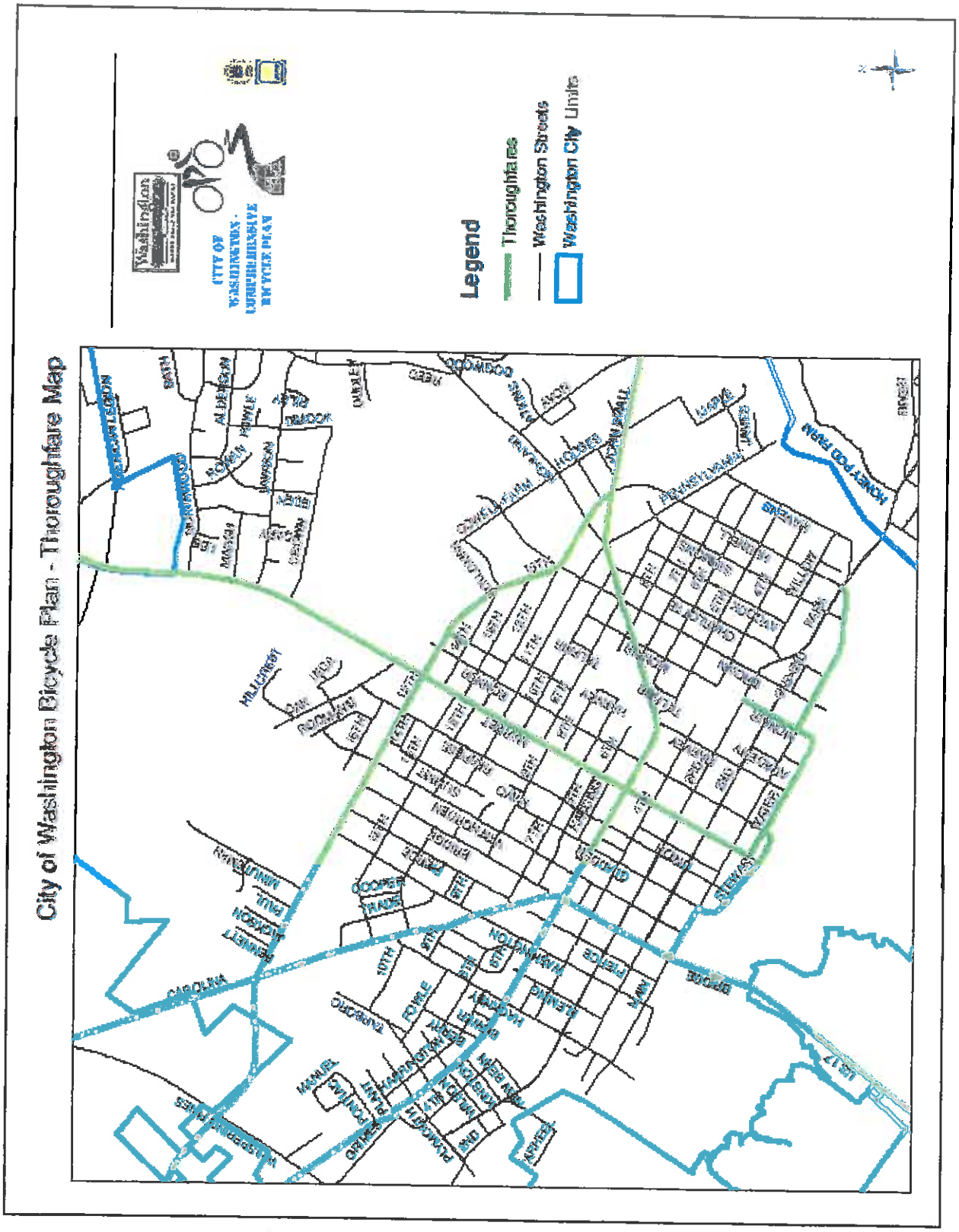
- Safety
- Skill level of users
- Barriers
- Access to and from bicycle facilities
- Direct and convenient alignment to serve origins and destinations
- Continuity - avoiding abrupt facility discontinuity and stops
- Crash Reduction
- Traffic volumes and speed
- Intersection conditions
- Adequate sight lines
- Convenient bicycle parking at destinations
- Adequate maintenance commitment
- Costs
- Policies

This section identifies the overall transportation system, desired corridors of bicycle travel, special focus areas, and potential projects.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

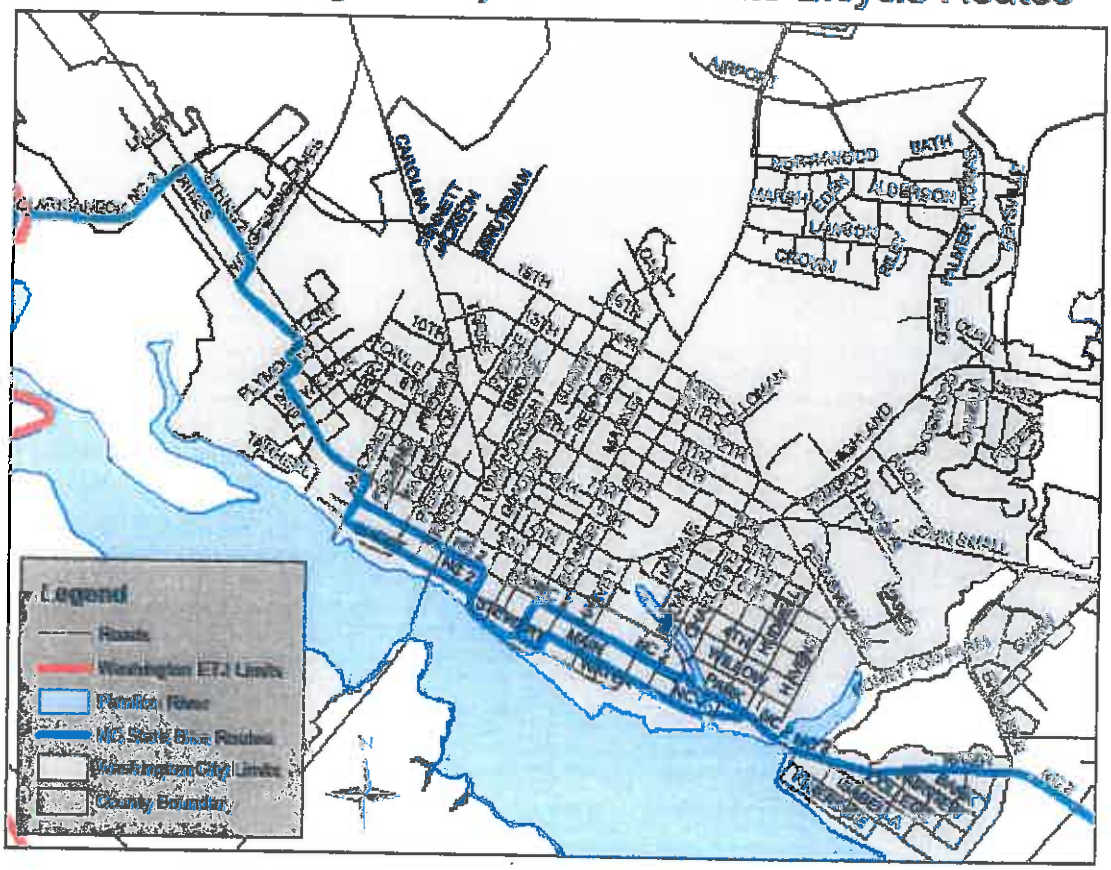
The overall transportation system in Washington is automobile dependent. As a result, intersections and thoroughfares were designed to accommodate automobile travel only. Washington's more recent commercial growth has evolved around the US Highway 17 (Carolina Ave.) and 15th Street corridors

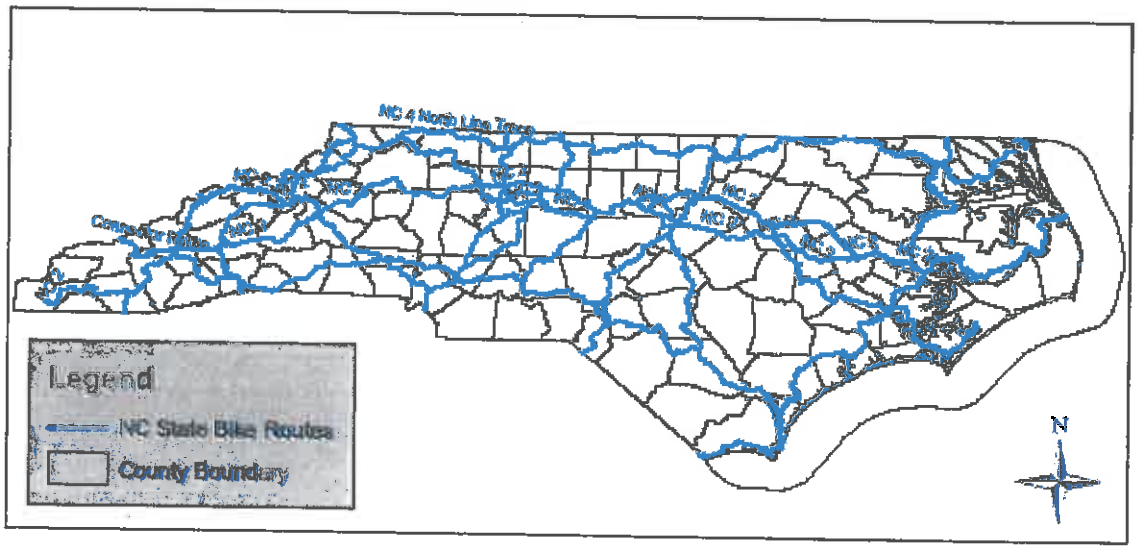
Map 4.1 – Corridor/Thoroughfare Map



Map 4.3 – North Carolina State Bicycle Route Map

City of Washington Bicycle Plan - State Bicycle Routes





ON-ROAD PROJECTS & PREFERRED TREATMENTS

During the early stages of plan development, Mid-East Commission planners conducted numerous site visits to examine the current conditions in Washington. Observations, along with public input that included survey results and comments at public open houses and events, were analyzed together to create an initial list of proposed projects. These projects were then presented to the Steering Committee as well as the public at a second open house. Any necessary adjustments or additional projects based on public comment were then examined for inclusion.

The projects that have been proposed were developed with the idea of making Washington a bikeable community for users of all needs and skill levels. Through the public input survey, it was clear that there are different needs and uses for cyclists in Washington; therefore, the projects that were selected were projects that serve particular purposes, but together create a bicycle system for all users. There are few roadways or facilities that currently exist in Washington that are bicycle friendly; however, it was important to be sure to incorporate these few facilities into the creation of the proposed system. Proposed off-road and ancillary facilities were also incorporated into the decision process.

On-road projects and preferred treatments in this plan include bike lanes, sharrows, paved shoulders, signage, striping, bike signals, and refuge islands, according to specifications and standards outlined by NCDOT.

3rd and Market Intersection Improvement

This intersection, located in the heart of downtown Washington, sits along the proposed Market Street Bike Sharrow Project as well as the currently designated NC Bike Route on 3rd Street. With busy traffic conditions in the intersection and no current crossing signals, this area can be dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians to navigate. It is recommended that standard bicycle lane markings through the intersection be included to safely accommodate cyclists.

5th and Harvey Intersection Improvement at Jack's Creek Greenway

Jack's Creek Greenway, which is currently in place, is divided at its northern end by 5th Street. The gap requires users to navigate across this busy thoroughfare with no signal, designated markings, or warning signs to motorists. This crossing is also located in a curve, further hindering both cyclist and motorist. The greenway, which will serve as the eastern connector leg of the proposed bike loop route system in Washington, needs to see improvements to the crossing at 5th Street, including a designated crossing at 5th and Harvey Streets, bicycle

well as "Share the Road" signage be added to aid bicyclists and pedestrians using the intersection.

Whispering Pines Connector Project

The Whispering Pines Project will allow connection from the northwestern portion of the City, including the neighborhoods behind the Washington Square Mall area, to the downtown area via Whispering Pines. Whispering Pines is a low traffic corridor that can connect riders from 15th Street Extension, across 5th Street, toward the downtown area and proposed Washington-Greenville Greenway rails-to-trails facility, allowing them to avoid the busier 15th and 5th Street thoroughfares. This route will require mid-block crossings at 5th Street, including striping, signaling, and improvements to the current concrete island to accommodate cyclist and pedestrian crossing. Additionally, there is currently no shoulder along this stretch of roadway, making for dangerous biking conditions. Paved shoulders are also recommended as a part of this project.

Market Street Bike Sharrow Project

Running from Water Street to 3rd Street, this segment of Market runs through the Historic Downtown district, intersecting State Bicycle Route as well as arriving at the Washington Waterfront. Along this stretch, it is recommend bicycle sharrow lanes be included. This will allow cyclists to avoid the door zone of cars parked in the downtown area, while alerting motorists that there are cyclists who use the route.

Market Street Bike Lane Project

Running from 3rd Street to 15th Street, this stretch of Market Street runs mostly through residential neighborhood, with a small stretch exiting the downtown area. As travel lanes currently go from two, up to 4, then drop back to 2 lanes through the area, it is recommended that the four lane stretch between 3rd and 5th Street receive a "road diet", decreasing vehicular travel lanes back to 2 while including bike lanes. This stretch features a wide roadway that is suitable for the inclusion of bike lanes. Given the existing pedestrian sidewalk along this stretch, Market Street is ideal for conversion into a Complete Street.

Stewart Parkway Bike Lane Project

The Stewart Parkway Route, running along the Washington Waterfront in downtown Washington, is one of the top locations in which cyclists riding in and through the area come to visit. With its picturesque setting along the Pamlico River and close proximity to the existing NC Bike Route and proposed Rail to Trail

6th and Bonner Bike Lane Project

The Jack's Creek Greenway begins in the northern end of Washington at 6th Street and Bonner Street, which runs parallel to Market Street. It is recommended to include striping for a bicycle lane along Bonner and 6th Streets, connecting to the proposed bike lanes along Market Street. This would allow a safe connection from the Waterfront to northern Washington, with mostly off road usage along the existing greenway.

3rd Street Bicycle Boulevard Project

This east-west stretch would connect cyclists to the proposed Whispering Pines Connector Project as well as the proposed Washington-Greenville Greenway, allowing cyclist to avoid 5th Street/Highway 264. Recommendations along this route include bicycle sharrows, signage designating the corridor as a Bike Boulevard, Pavement Markings, and Stop/Yield signage at intersections along the route (if not currently there), according to NCDOT and FHWA standard. This would connect riders to the proposed loop route systems around Washington.

9th Street Bicycle Boulevard Project

This east-west stretch would connect cyclists from John Small Avenue/Highway 264 to Van Norden, allowing cyclists to avoid 5th Street/Highway 264 and 15th Street. This project would intersect the proposed Market Street Bike Lane Project, providing a safe travel corridor to the designated bike lane facility. Recommendations along this route include bicycle sharrows, signage designating the corridor as a Bike Boulevard, Pavement Markings, and Stop/Yield signage at intersections along the route (if not currently there), according to NCDOT and FHWA standard.

11th Street Bicycle Boulevard Project

This stretch would allow cyclist in northeastern Washington to reach the proposed Market Street route while avoiding dangerous high traffic areas along 15th Street and 5th Street/Hwy 264. Recommendations along this route include bicycle sharrows, signage designating the corridor as a Bike Boulevard, Pavement Markings, and Stop/Yield signage at intersections along the route (if not currently there), according to NCDOT and FHWA standard. This would connect riders to the proposed loop route systems around Washington.

Van Norden Street Bicycle Boulevard Project

This north-south route would connect cyclists from Main Street to 15th Street, providing an alternative riding option parallel to the busy Carolina Avenue/Highway 17 Business stretch. It is recommended that this route include bicycle sharrows, signage designating the corridor as a Bike Boulevard, Pavement Markings, and Stop/Yield signage at intersections along the route (if not currently there), including a flashing crossing at 5th Street/Highway 264, according to NCDOT and FHWA standard.

OFF-ROAD PROJECTS & PREFERRED TREATMENTS

Off-road projects and preferred treatments include rail-to-trail projects. The multi-use trails are typically 10 feet wide and can be located along easements and other open tracts of land. For a complete description of the off-road projects, see Appendix B.

Market Street Extension Side Use Path

Currently, there is a pedestrian sidewalk located along Market Street Extension, which runs from 15th Street out to the northern city limit. Located along this stretch is the McConnell Sports Complex, which is a frequent destination for many in the community, especially children participating in recreation leagues and activities. Given that Market Street Extension is a busy 4 lane roadway with a higher speed limit than most roadways within the city, it is recommended that the current sidewalk be widened and converted to a Side Use Path. Side Use Paths can be used by both bicycles and pedestrians, making the recreation facility and surrounding neighborhoods more safely accessible by bicycle.

Washington-Greenville Rails-to-Trails Greenway Route

Phase 1 of the trail in Washington will run along the abandoned Atlantic Coastline Railroad corridor from West 3rd Street to Plymouth Road. Phase 2 will follow the power line easement west from there until it intersects the railroad corridor again just west of Tranter's Creek Drive. Safety of users is the primary concern associated with this proposed route. To combat this concern, the route will need to be well lit and patrolled by local law enforcement. Additional safety measures, such as emergency call boxes, should also be considered to ensure safety for users in the event or criminal activity or health emergency, especially in more remote areas of the trail.

Share the Road Signage

15th Street

According to Traffic Count Projections in the Beaufort County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the 15th Street Corridor will be above capacity by 2020. Given these projections, steps will need to be taken to increase capacity and improve safety. It is recommended that when corridor improvements are in the planning stages, elements of the Complete Streets initiative be included in the design.

15th Street Extension

According to Traffic Count Projections in the Beaufort County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the 15th Street Corridor will be above capacity by 2020. Given these projections, steps will need to be taken to increase capacity and improve safety. It is recommended that when corridor improvements are in the planning stages, elements of the Complete Streets initiative be included in the design.

Carolina Avenue

This stretch of Carolina Avenue (HWY 17 Business), which is 4 lanes from 5th Street out toward Highway 17, is recommended to include "Share the Road" signage as well as "Bicycle Friendly Community" signage at the city's gateway. This would alert motorists of cyclists in the area. This signage would also be a part of a Complete Street Project along this section of roadway.

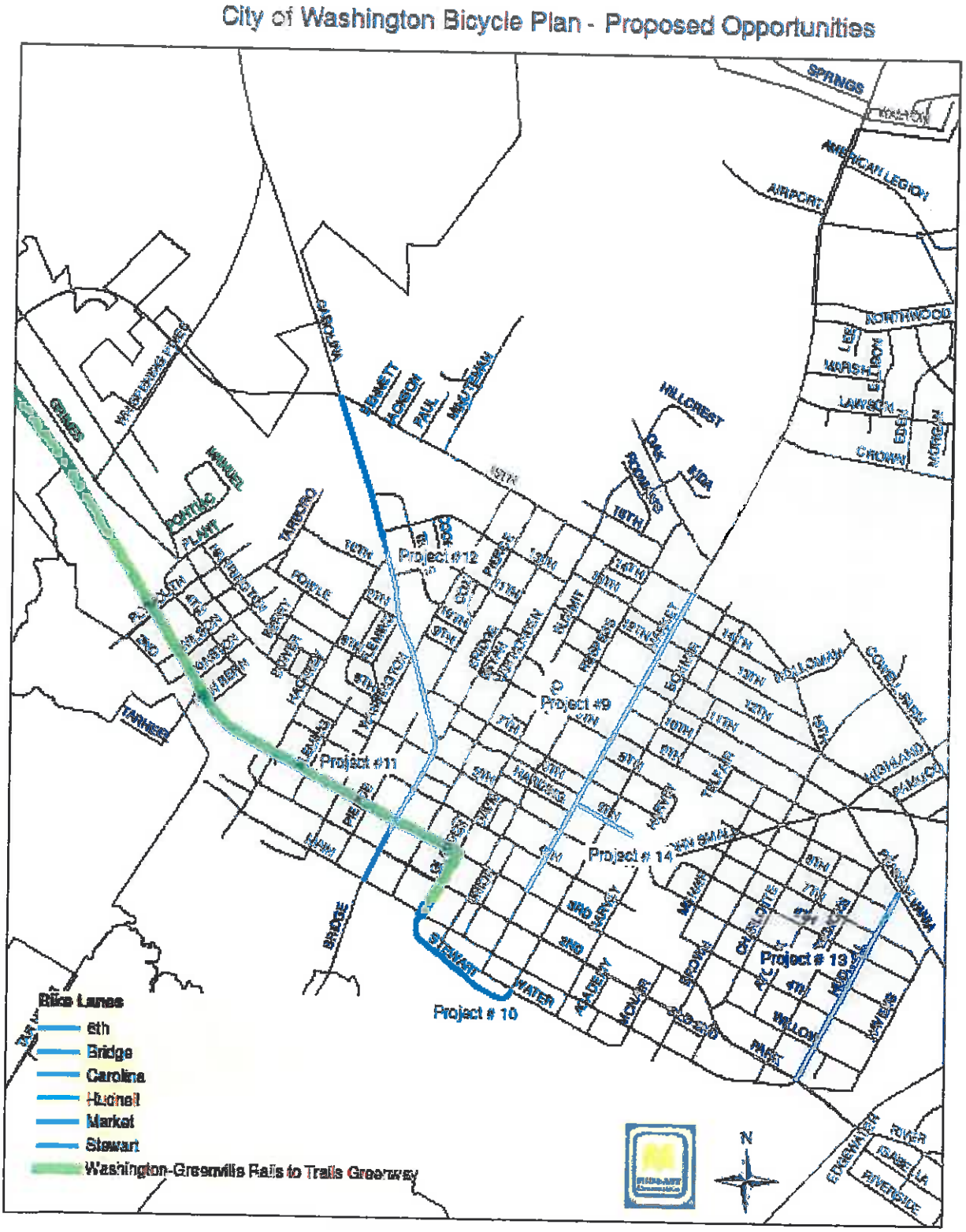
5th Street

As US 264/5th Street/John Small Avenue serves as the major East/West thoroughfare in Washington and are also gateways to the city, it is recommended that "Share the Road" and "Bicycle Friendly City" signage be included along this stretch. This signage will alert motorist that cyclist may be prevalent in the area, and will also acknowledge the efforts the city has made to become a bicycle friendly community.

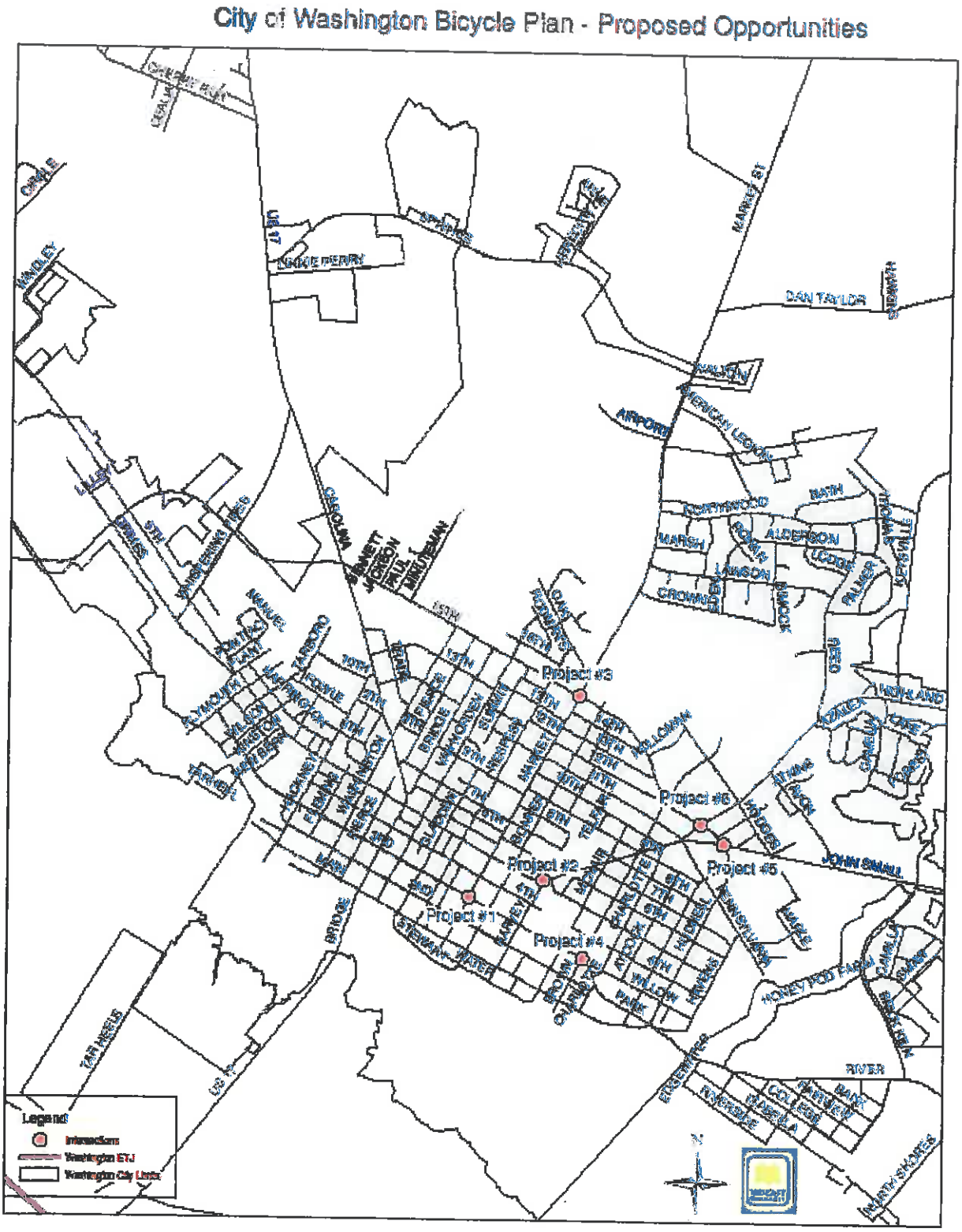
Market Street Extension

This stretch of Market Street, which is 4 lanes from 15th Street out toward the Recreational Complex and Airport Road, is recommended to include "Share the Road" signage as well as "Bicycle Friendly Community" signage at the city's gateway. This could encourage transportation toward the recreation complex from neighborhoods within the city.

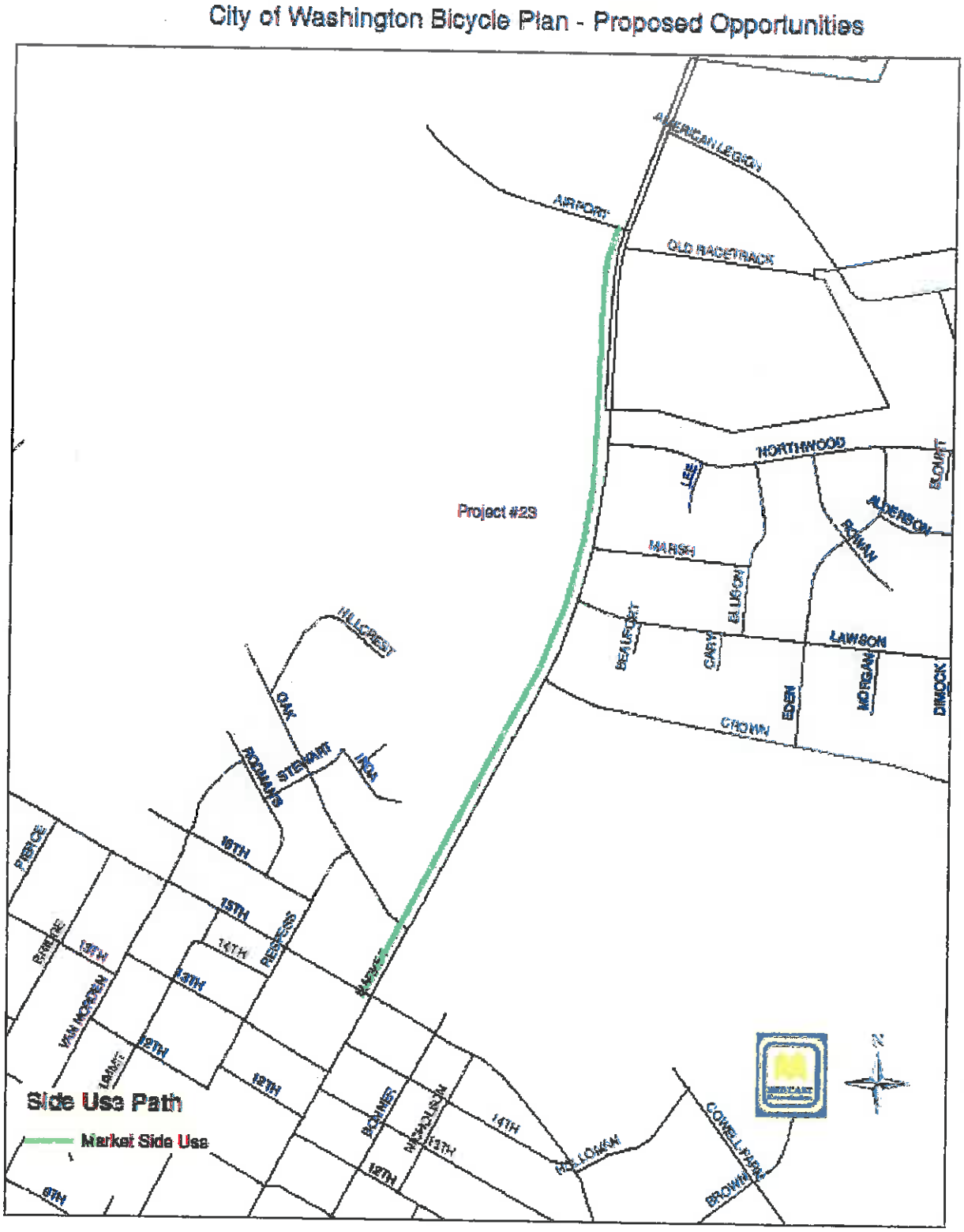
Map 4.5 – Proposed Bike Lane Projects



Map 4.7 – Proposed Intersection Improvement Projects

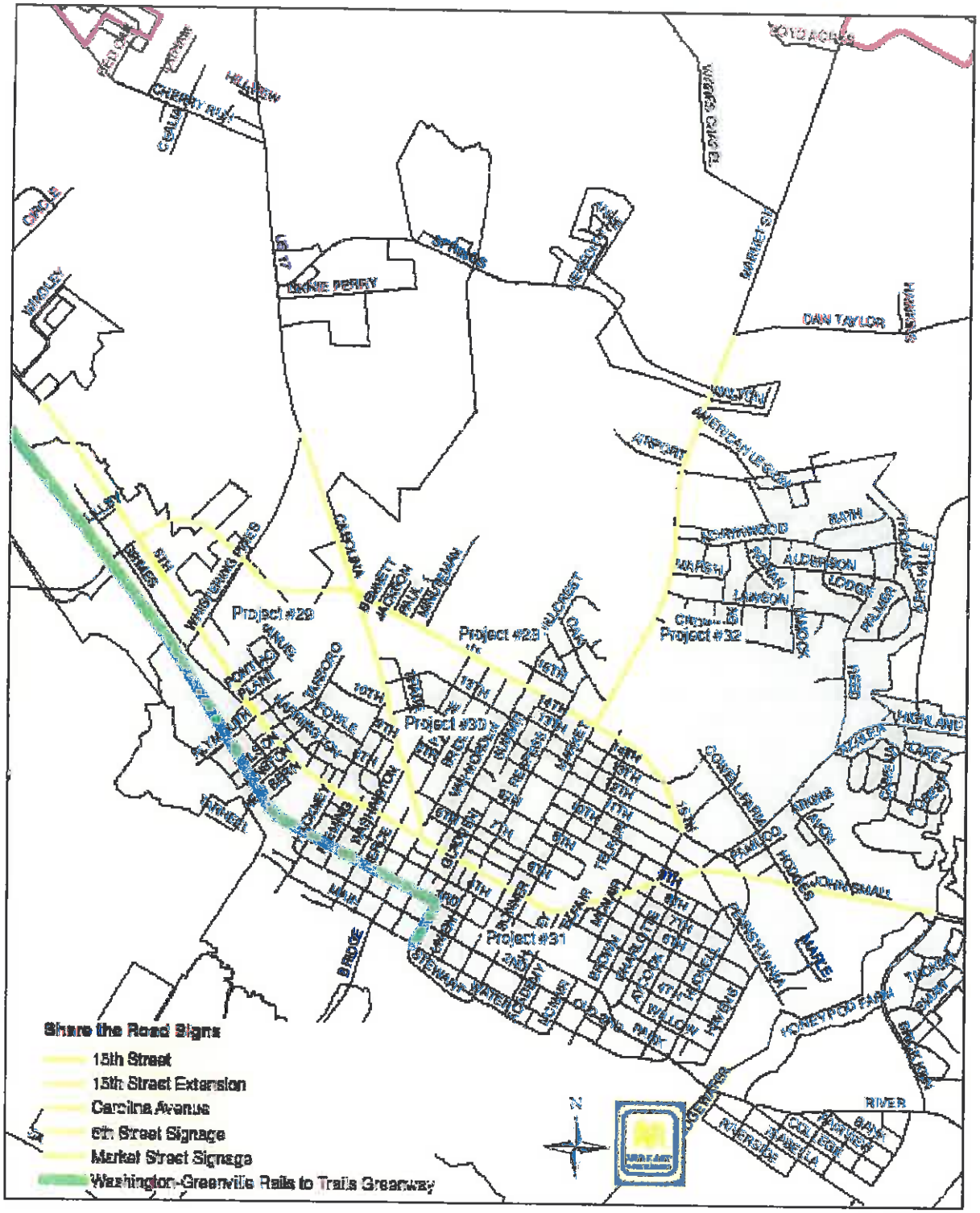


Map 4.9 – Proposed Side Use Path Project



Map 4.11 – Proposed "Share the Road" Signage Projects

City of Washington Bicycle Plan - Proposed Opportunities



With the proposed projects listed, planners were able to propose multiple potential bicycle routes within the City (Map 4.10). These routes can be as large as encompassing the entire City or as small as a couple of blocks in residential areas. Public survey results showed that potential riders would be more likely to bike if designated routes existed with a map of those routes. These proposed projects would create this route system. It is recommended that the City designate and sign these routes using either a color or number coded system and post these routes online as well as print maps to distribute. Information on destinations located along each route (library, shopping, healthcare) would also be included in this information.

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, September 23, 2014
7:00 PM

Members Present
Rawls Howard III Dot Moate
Dan McNeil Howell Miller

Members Absent
John Tate
Jane Alligood
Marie Barber

Others Present
John Rodman, Director
Glen Moore, Planning Administrator
Jessica Green, Administrative Support

I. Opening of the meeting
The acting Chair Dan McNeil called the meeting to order.

II. Invocation
A moment of silent prayer was taken.

III. Roll Call
A silent roll call was taken by staff.

Mr. Rodman added two items to Other Business. Mr. Howard thanked staff for hosting the NCAP Section workshop and encouraged more events like that in the future.

IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

1. Discussion of proposed text amendment for Micro-breweries.

John Rodman came forward. Mr. Rodman stated that he wanted to have a discussion on Micro-breweries. He stated that he believed the first Micro-brewery came about back in the 1970s. Mr. Rodman then explained the difference between allowed uses and special uses as it states in the zone ordinance. He explained that if an item is not listed under one of those uses it is not permitted or allowed. Mr. Rodman stated that one of the reasons why they plan to update the ordinance and complete the UDO is because a lot of new items are coming up and they are not currently listed in the zoning ordinance. He stated that Micro-breweries are a perfect example of that. He explained that as it stands right now if someone wished to open a Micro-brewery it would not be allowed because it is not a listed use. Mr. Rodman stated that they would like to address this issue in hopes that they can attract some of that activity into the Washington area.

Mr. Rodman explained that a Micro-brewery is usually a small independent brewery that produces a limited quantity of beer, usually less than 15, 000 barrels a year with 31 gallons in a barrel. Mr. Rodman then presented a first draft of an amendment to the City of Washington's zoning ordinance for Micro-breweries for the planning board to look at and consider. Mr. Rodman stated that there are currently 100 micro-breweries in the state of North Carolina and about 13 of those are in the eastern part of the state. He stated that they want to get on top of this so that they can plan ahead in case the City gets some activity moving into that direction.

Mr. Rodman stated that first they needed to look at Micro-breweries as a specific use. He stated that they needed to determine if they wanted to look at Micro-breweries as Special Uses that may have some conditions attached or do they want to allow them as a permitted use. He stated that in the draft they have it is listed as a special use which means the Board can attach some conditions to the permit. He then pointed out under the specific criteria that special uses are granted for one year and are renewed annually to make sure that they are still adhering to what the ordinance calls for. Mr. Rodman then went through the other listed Specific Criteria in the draft. He spoke about the space limitations and the distance limitations. He stated that the draft specifies that the business must be a minimum of five hundred feet from any church, public or private school, daycare facility, or any playground. He stated that this is one of the specific criteria that can be attached to the special use permit.

Mr. Rodman stated that first thing the Board needs to determine is which type of use this should fall under. He stated that staff feels that it would be better to allow Micro-breweries in certain zoning districts as a special use permit. He explained that with a special use permit that particular item has to have a public hearing and it allows staff to notify the surrounding property owners. Mr. Rodman asked if the Board was comfortable with listing it as a special use or if they wanted to allow it as a permitted use. Dot Moate and Dan McNeil stated that they like the idea of categorizing it as a special use. Rawls Howard then asked what would happen if someone came who wished to open up something that produced over 15, 000 barrels, which would then be considered a Brewery. He stated that this is not defined in the ordinance and asked if that meant that they are not allowed. Mr. Rodman stated that they want to make sure that they separate those uses, one for Micro-breweries and one for a Brewery. He stated that is one of

the things they wanted to add, the definition of a Brewery. Mr. Howard then asked how the ordinance will address a micro-brewery as an accessory use to a restaurant. Mr. Rodman stated that this is also a definition that they need to add. He stated that they call that a group pub, which means there is a restaurant attached to a micro-brewery. He explained that in this case the principle use is the making of the beer and the accessory use would be the restaurant. He then stated that if the principle use is the restaurant and they wish to add a micro-brewery they want to make sure the restaurant still meets the specific criteria required for the micro-brewery. Mr. Rodman and the board then discussed the permitted use period of one year and if the applicant has to come before the board annually to renew the permit. Mr. Rodman stated that if staff feels like they are meeting all of the requirements and there has been no complaints then staff can automatically extent that permit without it coming before the board every year. Mr. Rodman stated that if there is a problem then the permit would have to go back in front of the Board.

Mr. Rodman then moved on to the specific zoning districts that this use would be allowed in. He explained that staff felt that some of the districts that should be considered for micro-breweries is B1H, B-2 and I-2. He stated that with further thought staff felt if someone wanted to come in with a Micro-brewery then they would much rather channel those folks to the downtown area, so they would rather not have someone located a Micro-brewery in the I-2 district. Dot Moate stated that once Breweries are added to the zoning ordinance maybe they should be allowed in the I-2 district. Rawls Howard agreed. Mr. Rodman stated that staff decided to address Micro-breweries and allow them with a special use permit in the B1H and they also want to make sure that Breweries are allowed in the industrial classification, not only light industrial but also heavy industrial by right/permitted use. Mr. Howard stated that since the City is trying to bring these businesses to the central business district then would it be better to allow them as a permitted use instead of requiring them to get a special use. Mr. Rodman and members of the board discussed this option. Mr. Howell Miller asked about the areas around Wal-Mart. Mr. Rodman explained that the area is zoned B-3. He stated that if the board wanted to expand and allow Micro-breweries in another districts other than B1H, than he would recommend the B-2 zoning district. He then explained the areas in the City that are considered B-2. He discouraged the board from allowing this use in the B-3 or B-4 zoning districts. Mr. Howell and Mr. Miller stated that they felt allowing Micro-breweries in B1H and B-2 zoning would be a good idea. Mr. Rodman stated that it would be no problem allowing Micro-breweries as a special use in the B1H and B-2 zoning districts. Mr. Rodman also stated that staff would add the definition of Breweries and allow them as a permitted use in the I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.

Mr. Rodman and the Board then discussed the parking requirements. Mr. Rodman then asked the Board for their opinions on the loading and distribution restrictions. The Board discussed the issue. Mr. Howard Miller stated that he didn't have a problem with their distribution trucks coming any time just like the current restaurants do. Mr. Rawls Howard agreed that they should be held to the same candle as everyone else in the district. Dot Moate stated that at the special use permit hearing loading restrictions can be added on a case by case basis instead of putting it

in the ordinance. Other members of the board agreed. Mr. Rodman then asked for the Board's opinion on the separation requirements between this use and others in the district. Mr. Rawls Howard stated that if they are just producing the product on sight and the product cannot be consumed on site then they should not have to follow any separation requirements. Mr. Dan McNeil stated that there is not much of a difference between them and the restaurants in the area now that serve alcohol. They discussed the issue further. The board decided to go with a two hundred linear feet separation requirement from church or religious institutions, public or private schools, and daycare facilities, removing playgrounds and parks. Mr. Rodman then recapped all the changes made to the amendment draft. Mr. Rodman stated that he would draft up the changes, but he needed a general consensus vote. The Board members agreed with the changes and gave a consensus vote in favor.

The Chairman decided to go ahead with the 15th Street widening project under other business due to the fact that there were members of the audience who wished to speak on the matter.

2. 15th Street Widening project

Mr. Rodman came forward and explained that DOT is interested in widening 15th Street and the City Council has endorsed the project. He explained that since the City Council has endorsed the project it really doesn't need approval from the Planning Board. Mr. Rodman then stated that once the final plan has been approved then staff and the board needs to look at some of the land uses that may be adjacent to that and address those whether it be for parking. But as far as the approval of the project itself, the Planning Board does not have a say in that since it has been endorsed by the Council. Mr. Rodman stated that he was present at a DOT meeting a couple of months ago where they presented three different scenarios and they weren't even sure which plan they were going with. He explained in the first scenario they planned to take all the right-a-way that they needed to widen 15th Street on the north side of the road. The second scenario was to take right-a-ways equally from both sides of the road. The third scenario was to take a right-a-way equally from the beginning of the project, the intersection of 15th Street and Carolina Avenue by Burger King, up to just before where the Goodwill property starts and then once they got to that point they plan on taking all the right-a-way they need from the north side of the road. Mr. Rodman stated at that time when he was a part of the meeting they had not even chosen which scenario they wanted to go with. He stated that he is sure they have chosen now but he has not been privy to that information. Mr. Rodman stated that DOT has been meeting a lot with some of the other departments in the City, specifically Public Works and the Electric Utilities Department because of the electric and water utilities that will need to be relocated in some of those right-a-ways, but the Planning Department has not been a part of any of those conversations. Mr. Rodman stated that the DOT did request a list of property and business owners along 15th Street so they could development a mailing list and the Planning Department did assist them with that. He stated that DOT does have a meeting scheduled with the property and business owners this week. He explained that they will also have a public meeting, which he encouraged all the Board members to attend, on September 30th from 4pm

to 7pm at the DENR office. He explained that it would be a walk through and DOT representatives will be available for questions and the public will be able to voice their concerns.

The Chairman opened the floor.

Mr. Pat Griffin, property owner, came forward and stated that the DOT has not contacted him about the project. He stated that he and many of the other property owners along 15th Street are very concerned about the affect the project will have on their businesses. Mr. Griffin stated that the current plan is to run a median all the way down 15th Street and the idea is if you want to go to Wendy's you have to go down to Hwy 17 and do a u turn. He explained that the plan would also not allow someone coming down Washington Street to cross the Street and get to the goodwill store or make a left turn onto 15th Street. Mr. Griffin stated that if it is unsafe for people in Washington to make left turns he hates to see what happens when they start making u turns. Mr. Griffin stated that everyone knows that there needs to be something done to 15th Street. He stated that it should be widen to 5 lanes and allow turns just like on Hwy 17. Mr. Griffin stated that if DOT went with the 5 lane plan instead of putting in a median he felt people would give them the right-a-way. Mr. Griffin then stated that if DOT used all of the right-a-way on the North side of the street then his property would lose 5 of their 10 parking spaces. He stated that Arbys is in a position that if they lose any of their parking then they will close.

Dr. Tim Clue from the Washington Eye Care Center came forward. He stated that he did address the City Council about this issue at their meeting. He stated that his property is located beside the Arbys and they have been there for approximately 12 years now. He explained that originally when they bought the property they had their setbacks in accordance with the thinking that they were going to have a turning lane and that was it. Now here they are 12 years later and the proposal is putting a median strip in which would not allow his clients to make a left hand turn into his business. Dr. Clue stated that this plan is not going to do any business along 15th Street from Carolina Ave to Piece Street any good. Dr. Clue stated that not being able to make a left hand turn into his practice is going to be hard for his visually impaired clients. He stated that the plan makes no sense to him. Dr. Clue stated that he spoke to one of the DOT planning employees about the project and he stated that the DOT is not going to put in a turn lane because it would be a death trap. Dr. Clue stated that he does not necessary disagree but what the DOT is looking at doing is not going to work because now they are sending everyone in one direction. Dr. Clue stated that he has not been contacted by the DOT about any meeting or offered by the DOT to sit down and talk about the plan. He explained that their property is also on the North side and they cannot afford to lose any of their space. Dr. Clue then stated that the plan proposes to put green space with trees on the median, which makes no sense what so ever to him. He stated that the trees will cause visual impairment and then you also have to have someone take care of the upkeep of the trees and green space. Dr. Clue stated that he doesn't know what kind of power the Planning Board has and he has already spoken before the City Council but he just wants some of his concerns addressed.

Mr. Howell Miller talked about the turn lane on Hwy 17. He stated that this has not caused any major accidents. Mr. Miller stated that he didn't know why DOT is pushing a treed median in the middle of 15th Street that will hurt businesses. Mr. Miller stated that they are responsible for land use and he feels that they should go to the DOT and let them know that they do not want a treed median or a median period.

Mr. Rodman stated that he understood the reasoning behind this is purely because of safety concerns. Mr. Rodman explained that it was his understanding that when the project was first brought to the attention of the City and the City Council there was a split in cost and they wanted the City to fund some of the cost. He explained that at that time the Council stated that the City could not afford to help fund the project. Mr. Rodman then spoke again about the safety concerns and explained that based on the numbers there are about 20,000 cars that travel 15th Street every day. Mr. Rodman stated that the DOT came back to the City and stated that since it is such a safety concern they would fund the entire project. Rawls Howard asked if that entire corridor is commercial or if there are also some residential neighborhoods. Mr. Rodman stated that there are some residential neighborhoods off of 15th street, but not really any adjacent to that corridor. Mr. Rodman and the Board discussed the projected plan further. Mr. Howell stated that he saw the need for pedestrian islands along that street. Mr. Griffin stated that he felt turning that corridor into 5 lanes would take care of the safety concerns.

Mr. Dan McNeil asked staff where the Planning Board fell into all of this. Mr. Rodman stated that he felt it would be a good idea for members of the Board to attend the public meeting on the 30th and find out what exactly is going on. Brian Alligood, City Manager, then came forward and told the Board what he knew about the project and how the City has been involved up to now.

3. Discussion of proposed text amendment for Solar Farms.

Glen Moore came forward. He stated that the board requested that staff address the issue of solar farms and draft some text so that the City will be ready before they come. Mr. Moore stated that a month or two ago staff presented a template ordinance that was drafted by the Institute of Government along with some of the members of the solar business community. He explained that many of the Cities in the area have adopted that draft. Mr. Moore then presented a draft of the template that he adapted to fit Washington. He stated that this draft refers to a Solar Energy Facility which is also known as a Solar Farm, it does not address the small type solar panels that would be located on a roof. Mr. Moore stated that staff along with many other surrounding Cities decided to place this under a special use that will only be allowed in the RA-20, AP, I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.

Mr. Moore stated that the draft is not set in stone and can be changed to fit the Board's request. He stated that the minimum set back requirements can be changed to make them larger or smaller if the board desires. Mr. Moore stated that staff wants the board to review the

draft and bring it back to staff with any changes they feel should be made. He stated that if any members had concerns and they will not be present at the next meeting they can email their concerns or call staff at any time and he can incorporate those changes in the draft. Mr. Rawls Howard stated that he did not see the need for these solar farms to be classified as a special use. He stated that there should be some developmental standards that staff can review and if they meet all those standards, he personally does not see a need for a special use permit. Mr. Moore stated that the review period would mirror staffs current review period where it would go to the technical review committee and then can come to the board as a site plan for the board's approval or it can be approved on the staff level. Mr. Howard stated that he felt the staff was more than capable of reviewing the site plan. Mr. Moore stated that he will be sure to bring up that concern at the next meeting since Mr. Howard would not be present.

4. Unified Development Ordinance – Zoning articles 1, 2, and 3 review and discussion.

Mr. Rodman gave the Board a copy of the first page of the current table of contents and then a draft with changes to that section that staff feels should be made. He explained that they plan on tackling each article one by one. Mr. Rodman then discussed some items/definitions that need to be added to the text and further explained some of the changes made to the new draft.

VI. Other Business

1. Havens Gardens

Mr. Rodman stated that he wanted to just inform the Board on what has been going on and what the future plans for Havens Gardens are. Mr. Rodman presented the Board with a master plan of Havens Gardens and explained how the plan got to this point. He went through and pointed out some major items/changes to the park on the updated master plan. He explained that once the final plan has been completed it will come back before the Planning Board and if the Board is happy with the plan any recommendation made to the City Council will certainly help.

VII. Approval of minutes – August 26, 2014

Dot Moate made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Her motion was seconded by Howell Miller. All voted in favor.

VIII. Adjourn

There being no other business Rawls Howard made a motion to adjourn. Dot Moate seconded and all voted in favor.