

Town of Nags Head
Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan Steering Committee
January 22, 2014
Draft Minutes: Kick-Off Meeting

Town of Nags Head Municipal Complex
5401 S. Croatan Highway Nags Head, NC 27959

Present: Renee Cahoon, Chris Montgomery, Elizabeth Teague, Michelle Owens, Kelly Wyatt, Gretchen Byrum, Angela Welsh, Phil Wolfe, Debbie Moore, Barbara Gernat, Molly Harrison, Rick Chance, Bob Mosher (NCDOT-DBPT), Jason Reyes & Steve Bzomowski (Alta Planning + Design)

Business: The purpose of this meeting was for the Steering Committee to share ideas with the project consultants about what they would like for this Plan to achieve. After introductions, the project consultants started the meeting by presenting the general work plan and process. The following is an outline of the presentation:

- Project Overview/background
- Guiding Concepts
- Project Approach: Main Tasks
 - Task 1 – Committee Meetings
 - Task 2 – Existing Conditions Inventory and Mapping
 - Task 3 – Public Involvement
 - Task 4 – Draft Plan: Key Inputs
 - Task 5 – Draft Plan Review
 - Task 6 – Final Plans and Presentation

Discussion followed the presentation about whether this plan can dovetail into a future bicycle plan. The NCDOT planning grant requires this particular planning process to produce a pedestrian plan, but there is desire among the committee to eventually have a combined bicycle & pedestrian plan for the Town of Nags Head. An option may include adding bicycle-related recommendations to the pedestrian plan after the planning grant process, to create a single bike/ped plan. Comments were also made that multi-use trails in the ped plan will by nature cover some aspects of bicycling, and that the recent Albemarle Regional Bicycle Plan could serve as a starting point for the Town's bicycle recommendations.

Steering Committee members then discussed target areas for improving walking conditions in Nags Head. The key points are listed below:

- Improving overall connectivity and safety are the main goals
- Location-specific comments, from south to north:
 - The path along S. Old Oregon Inlet Rd has drainage issues
 - Dominion Power has an easement from the National Park Service (NPS) for the utility line in south Nags Head; the clearing along the line also

serves as a firebreak; there is potential to use this corridor to create a trail loop at the south end of Town, but that would require close coordination with the NPS, and a feasible link back to the path along S. Old Oregon Inlet Rd.

- Walking conditions near Jennette's Pier and the Whalebone Junction area should be improved; the Whalebone Junction Information Center does not have pedestrian access (access is designed for cars only). The existing right-of-way at the curve may provide an opportunity for improvement. Closing of S. Oregon Inlet Road was already considered in a previous plan and is *not* an option.
- Safer walking connections to, from, and between businesses in the Tanger Outlet Center
- Improved pedestrian crossings along US 158 are needed throughout Nags Head; US 158 crossings were specifically mentioned for:
 - The Tanger Outlet Center
 - Intersections connecting the west-side neighborhoods (year-round residents) to access the beach
 - Adam's Lane to the grocery store (Food Lion)
 - Satterfield Road intersection - could utilize light here, but other improvements would be needed
- Pathway opportunities/constraints along Jockey Ridge State Park property:
 - At the southern part of Jockey's Ridge, dunes are close to the road. It would be difficult to keep sand off facility – would have to coordinate with the state park
 - Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) finishes here and could be a great opportunity for the state to become involved in helping to complete the trail on park property. The MST is signed on Hollowell Street – currently runs along NC 12 and Hollowell Street in connecting to Jockey's Ridge
- Explore options for making a connection from Hollowell Street going south
- Continue sidewalk along Bonnett Street to beach access
- Arts District:
 - No sidewalk in this area; mostly narrow secondary roads
 - Artwalk: many folks walk during this event, but very tight in limited space
 - Stormwater is key issue here; a sidewalk was pulled up because of stormwater issues in the past
 - Potential to create east-west sidewalk along Driftwood Street if stormwater is managed properly
- A north-south 'park to park' greenway connection was explored in the past for connecting neighborhoods west of the Arts District, but there were safety concerns from nearby residents. One idea for consideration: landscaping along the potential future trail corridor could be planted to create a physical and visual buffer between the corridor and nearby residents.

- Consider options for 8th Street, where a former path is still visible
- Kill Devil Hills is considering a sidewalk along the east side of US 158 to complement sidepath on west side of highway; Nags Head should consider whether a sidewalk along east side of US 158 should connect to it.
- Signage:
 - Directional signage should be considered along NC 12 that tells people which east-west side roads lead to stop lights at US 158 (this would help them cross at signalized intersections)
 - A wayfinding ‘cutsheet’ could be considered for the plan, showing where these signs would go and what they might look like.
 - The town is working on new gateway signage; any new pedestrian wayfinding signage should match this aesthetically.
- Enforcement: Need to encourage people to slow down at crossings
 - Explore options for flashing reflectors in pavement and RRFBs
 - Steering committee members have anecdotally observed that the new signs on NC 12 (“state law to stop for pedestrians in crosswalk”) are effective
- Walking patterns:
 - People walking north/south generally use the NC 12 sidepath; it is very busy with pedestrian traffic, but most bicyclists seem to prefer to use the road, with the exception of families with young children
 - Many people walking along US 158 are going to Food Lion; the path has very few cyclists, but some walkers – would not say it is ‘overused’
- Upcoming/Ongoing Efforts:
 - Safe Routes to School has been ongoing for 2.5 years, including a walk to school day, bike to school day, bike rodeo, and helmet giveaway. Funding may still be available for infrastructure to connect to school
 - Outer Banks Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Coalition achievements:
 - Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/obxbps>
 - Made a Public Service Announcement with Dare County - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVHSgZniHQU>
 - Developed a map to give to foreign workers and visitors
 - Developed SRTS brochure and routes
 - Multi-use path on west side of US 158 – next phase will bring this path south to Windjammer Road – likely to be under construction in spring; ideally, the path would go further south to Hollowell Street, to the entrance of Jockey’s Ridge State Park. Pedestrian routes from Jockey’s Ridge to beach would become more utilized.
 - Sound-side boardwalk planning began in early 2013. The goal is to have value added to businesses and most are in strong support after visiting a similar project in Duck. The boardwalk routing will meander to avoid owners that prefer not to be connected.

Finally, the meeting concluded with Steering Committee members discussing ideas for public involvement. Key points include:

- Invite public to attend future Steering Committee meetings
- First public workshop:
 - Open house format, scheduled for a few hours in late afternoon/early evening
 - Businesses will start opening back up in March
 - Holding the meeting at the elementary school was discussed as the best option to explore, as it may attract more local residents
 - Could get feedback on the boardwalk plan as a part of at first public meeting, as it relates to pedestrian planning
- Include link to survey on water bill - will reach every property owner in Nag's Head

Next Steps/Scheduling:

- Alta to conduct fieldwork in February
- Project website and survey to go live in February; general agreement from the group to use the URL "www.WalkSafeNagsHead.com"
- Elizabeth Teague and Alta to coordinate on scheduling the next steering committee meeting and public meeting, with a target timeframe of late March; ideally these would be scheduled on the same day or consecutive days
- Meeting minutes approval at next meeting