

Covered in Section 8...

Consolidates previous recommendations, and identifies the roles and responsibilities of various agencies for implementing the pedestrian plan recommendations. Includes additional information about potential implementation resources.

Section 8. Implementing the *Durham Walks!* Pedestrian Plan

The previous sections of the *Durham Walks!* Pedestrian Plan have discussed the existing conditions and proposed changes that need to take place to achieve the Plan's Goals and Objectives. This section of the Plan discusses how to implement those recommendations, the responsible party (-ies), and a way of charting the progress of Durham and its partners in making the change from Durham as it exists today into the Vision of a fully walkable City described in the first chapter.

8.1 Building Support for Walking

At a glance, it would seem obvious that living in a place where walking is easy and safe is a goal shared by everyone. However, it is important to recognize that implementing the recommendations contained in this Plan will be achieved by relatively few agencies, and funded through a limited number of sources. Because of these limitations, it is critical to expand the circle of implementing partners to include non-traditional agencies and groups. The following partners need to be recognized and linkages created between the City of Durham staff, particularly the Transportation Division, to implement the recommendations contained in the *Durham Walks!* Pedestrian Plan. In addition, stronger communication should be encouraged between citizen advisory committees, such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission, and the Planning Commission.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission. The BPAC is a 15-member group that meets monthly at 7:00 PM on third Tuesdays, and is charged with advising the City Council of Durham concerning matters of bicycle and pedestrian planning and coordination issues. The group, six of whose members are appointed by City Council, is staffed by the City of Durham Transportation Division. The BPAC has created a discussion forum (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/durhambikeandped>) and a website (www.bikewalkdurham.org), and taken on special activities related to its mission, serving as a communication "hub" for bicycle and pedestrian activities. In the past, the BPAC has tended to be more focused on cycling issues, in part due to the fact that pedestrians are a very diverse set of users that do not have strong ties to each other. The importance of the BPAC is that it has a motivated membership that has connections to business interests, college campuses, and other key, non-traditional implementers of pedestrian projects and programs. The BPAC can effectively extend the "reach" of the government staff which serves as the primary support for this group. The BPAC should be made very familiar with the goals/objectives of the *Durham Walks!* Plan and its

recommendations, and serve as an advocacy agency to help keep a long-term focus on achieving these recommendations. Second, the BPAC can help communicate the recommendations from the Plan to other stakeholders that its members come into contact with on a regular or irregular basis.

Public Health Agencies. Increasing attention is being paid to the importance of walking as a means of confronting obesity, improving cardiovascular health, and maintaining a positive mental outlook. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has suggested that everyone can benefit from walking, or increasing the intensity or duration of their walking if they are already doing so.¹ Therefore, it is not surprising to find that health agencies and public health advocacy groups have become more interested in promoting walking in their service areas. The following agencies should receive summaries of the *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan and/or brochures on the benefits of walking:

- Student Health Centers at college and university campuses;
- Public Hospitals, one copy for each waiting area;
- Public School nursing stations; and
- General medical practitioners and other medical facilities for placement in waiting rooms.

Working with Durham County and Inside the Urban Growth Area. The Urban Growth Area is where Durham expects to extend city services over the next 20 to 30 years. The City and County of Durham have had a joint zoning ordinance since 1993, which allows for the smooth transition between suburban and rural uses. The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) has been created in the recent past to replace the 1993 zoning ordinance. The UDO accommodates more *urban* land uses within the Urban Growth Boundary and more variety in land use types, which can be expected to promote more walk trips. Durham requires new sidewalk to be constructed on both sides of major and minor thoroughfare roadways within the Urban Growth Area (including the city limits and a variable distance beyond them). All other roadways are required to have sidewalk only on one side of the roadway, unless the City of Durham Transportation Department requires sidewalk on both sides in areas where there are heavy commercial or retail uses that are expected to generate more walk trips. This is the same protocol used within the City limits; however, the primary difference is that with NCDOT roadway construction, sidewalks are often not a part of the design in unincorporated areas. Problems exist due to the inability of counties to pay the matching funds, and most do not have any resources set aside for maintenance. Since the UGA boundary is typically less than a mile

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Human Health (website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/recommendations/adults.htm#Top>) accessed 2.9.2006.

away from the City limits in many places, the City can expect to inherit sub-standard streets when annexations take place. Often, developers will want to construct in the UGA to have access to public water and sewer services, thereby limiting the amount of new development that takes place in the rural areas of Durham County. Nevertheless, coordination between the City and County policies, as well as NCDOT, should continue to attempt to address the problems inherent in building incidental sidewalk construction outside of the municipal and UGA limits.

Building Better Relationships between Government Agencies. There is perhaps no more critical set of linkages needed to implement pedestrian projects than those that exist between the various operating departments and divisions in the City of Durham, Durham County, North Carolina Department of Transportation (especially Roadway Design, Division and District offices, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Transportation Planning Branch, and Project Development and Environmental Analysis), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. An exhaustive review of how each of these agencies work and relate is not particularly relevant, and the relationships themselves change over time. However, it is critical that regular communication occurs between the City and State transportation staff to carry out their mutual missions of providing transportation services and facilities in the City of Durham. The Pedestrian Awareness Task Force creates an opportunity for Durham's police, transportation, and engineering professionals to collaborate regularly on solutions to emerging safety concerns throughout the City. Collaborating with local, regional, health-based, and campus transit companies can help to ensure future access to transit by walking. The City should consider hosting an annual transportation summit to review progress made in implementing this Plan. The summit should include breakout sessions on walking, cycling, auto travel, and public transportation/rail. Participants should include change agents from all levels of government and in various functional roles, and each should come away with a clear, preferably one-page summary of what each agency needs to do to reach the goals of the *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan.



Many people use the pedestrian system in Durham, but some enjoy it more than others....

Special Mobility Groups. Senior citizens; mobility impaired people; elementary and middle school children; and people who do not have reliable access to their own automobile are particularly reliant upon the pedestrian system to perform everyday tasks such as shopping, going to school, and getting to work. The *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan has focused on selecting projects and programs that particularly affect these groups: maintenance, new construction, encouraging participation by mobility and visually impaired residents in the formation of solutions to pedestrian problems, areas near schools, and special attention to transit access played a strong role in the recommendations of Durham's Pedestrian Plan. Continued networking with senior centers, low income community

organizations, transit companies, the Durham Public School System, and other outlets is strongly encouraged. Transportation and the BPAC members should regularly try to attend meetings and unofficial gatherings to establish a broad, informal network of partners that can help provide direction and resources to support the recommendations of *DurhamWalks!*

General Public Participation. The general public should not be “left out” of the implementation of this Plan. They serve an important role as the eyes of the City staff, informing the City of safety problems, maintenance issues, and identifying potential needs that should be prioritized alongside those described in this Plan. It is this communication that makes regular updates of the Pedestrian Plan so essential to its relevance and maintaining energy to create positive changes in the walking environment. This Plan has recommended that complaints and accidents be recorded, reviewed, and acted upon in a systematic manner by multiple implementing and enforcement agencies. One of the areas that could be improved is gaining access to Durham’s low-income and minority communities: further efforts should be made to establish partnerships with community leaders to establish a broad base of support for implementing the recommendations of *DurhamWalks!* that would help these communities establish better, safer walking routes to places of shopping, employment, and schools. Increasing the level of feedback to communicate the goals and resources available to fund new trails, sidewalks, safety improvements and other pedestrian projects is more important than increasing the frequency of communication.

8.2 Project Implementation

The *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan lists over 200 individual projects for constructing sidewalks, extending trail facilities, and improving the safety features at intersections and around schools.

Local Funding Sources. Local funding sources include general revenue expenditures and the proceeds from bond programs initiated by the City. These funds are relatively flexible, and can be readily obligated to the top priority projects in the Pedestrian Plan pending approval by the Durham City Council based on recommendations from staff. Local funds should not be used to fund projects on major State routes where a State-funded roadway widening (incidental) project is already programmed, unless it is needed to meet the matching fund requirement adopted by NCDOT. Local funding can also include retroactive sidewalk projects discussed in the recommended policies section of this Plan.

State and Federal Funding Sources. Unlike local funds, State funds are not as flexible and harder to forecast in advance. Durham has received some “earmarks” in federal funding for important pedestrian projects, such as the continuation of the American Tobacco Trail. In addition, there are a number of state projects that are listed as “incidental” to roadway widening construction. Again, these projects are not driven by pedestrian priorities *per se*, but instead are dictated by the vehicle capacity and safety needs of individual segments of roadways. However, this does not indicate a lack of need for additional coordination on state and federal-funded projects. Municipalities, including Durham, have often encountered friction when requesting sidewalk, off-road trail, and pedestrian crossing facilities to be included in state construction projects. It is therefore critical to (a) ensure that important pedestrian crossings are indicated in this Plan and/or the Trails and Greenways Master Plan; and (b) to coordinate on pedestrian-related issues related to capital construction within the Urban Growth Area of the City to ensure a coordinated vision of the pedestrian system is implemented.

The following bullets list potential sources and a brief description of State funding which may be used to target specific projects in Durham.

- **Transportation Enhancement Program** - Transportation enhancements are transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of transportation systems. The transportation enhancements program provides for the implementation of non-roadway capacity improvement projects, including bike and pedestrian facilities; landscaping; and similar aesthetic improvements. Sidewalks, greenways, on-road improvements, safety actions, and educational programs are eligible for funding.
- **Powell Funds** – This funding is provided by NCDOT to municipalities for various maintenance projects, including sidewalk maintenance, for state-maintained roads. Funds are allocated based on a municipality’s population and miles of state-maintained roads. Since the mid-1990’s, Powell Funds have been used on sidewalk and have been approved for anything that is not intended to increase roadway capacity.
- **Small Urban Funds** - Each NCDOT Highway Division has \$2 million of small urban funds available annually. Local requests for small bicycle and pedestrian projects can be directed to

the NCDOT Highway Division office for funding through this source. A written request should be submitted to the Division Engineer providing technical information such as location, improvements being requested, timing, etc. for thorough review.

- **Hazard Elimination Program** - Bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible for this program. This program focuses on projects intended for locations that should have a documented history of previous crashes. As of this writing, each NCDOT Division receives \$100,000 annually for hazard elimination and another \$200,000 is allocated to the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation for statewide projects such as training workshops, pedestrian safety and research projects.
- **Spot Improvement Program** - The NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Division budgets \$500,000 per year for “spot” safety improvements throughout the State. These improvements might include installation of a short segment of sidewalk, sidewalk maintenance, crossing treatments, and other small-scale improvements. Proposals should be submitted directly to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation Division.
- **Governor’s Highway Safety Program (GHSP)** – Proposed projects must show the potential for a substantial reduction in crashes, injuries and fatalities as a condition of receiving funding through this program. All funding is considered to be “seed money” to get programs started – the grantee is expected to provide a portion of the project costs and to continue the program after GHSP funding ends. Projects are only approved for one full or partial federal fiscal year at a time; however, projects may be funded for up to three consecutive years. Amounts of GHSP funds vary from year to year, according to the specific amounts requested.
- **Statewide Discretionary Funding** - The Statewide Discretionary Fund consists of \$10 million and is administered by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. This fund can be used on any project at any location within the State. Primary, urban, secondary, industrial access, and spot safety projects are eligible for this funding. To request funding, an agency must submit a written request to the NCDOT Highway Division office (or Board of Transportation representative for Durham), providing a clear description of the project and project justification.

- **State Transportation Improvement Program** - Bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from most of the major federal-aid transportation sources. One of the most cost-effective ways of accommodating bicycle and pedestrian accommodations is to incorporate them as part of larger reconstruction, new construction and some repaving projects. Generally, the same source of funding can be used for the bicycle and pedestrian accommodation as is used for the larger highway improvement, if the bike/ped accommodation is “incidental” in scope and cost to the overall project. Overall, most bicycle and pedestrian accommodations within the state are made as incidental improvements. The other type of specific bicycle project is termed “independent” for the simple reason that it is not connected to a specific roadway improvement funded by NCDOT, which sets aside \$6 million annually through the Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation Division for the construction of bicycle improvements across the State. Eighty percent of these funds are from STP-Enhancement funds, while state funds provide the remaining 20 percent. A local 20 percent match is required for most projects.

- **Safe-Routes-to-School Program** - The Safe-Routes-to-School program just began in 2006 as a result of the passage of the federal SAFETEA-LU Act. Once formalized, it will provide grants and technical assistance for the establishment of Safe-Routes-to-School programs throughout the state. Safe-Routes-to-School programs will establish programs and activities to encourage children to walk or bike to school, and will also include assessments of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities in and around participating schools.

Proposed programs may also draw from several other funding sources, including general matching grants from NCDOT for specific local initiatives and non-transportation related funding sources. For more information about NCDOT funding, please see:

http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/funding/funding_intro.html

Private Sector Participation. The private sector, principally in the form of property development agents and their engineering contractors, play a very important role in the completion of the pedestrian system in Durham. Although required now, there were many subdivisions constructed in the past without any sidewalk internally or along adjacent major arterials. It is these residential areas without sidewalk that now create the extensive area of need in Durham. Requiring new sidewalk or a payment-in-lieu of constructing the sidewalk is therefore seen as a necessary and important part of the overall implementation process. The City of Durham has enjoyed very good success in holding to the policy of constructing sidewalk on at least one side of the roadway for new or expanded

subdivisions. This Plan suggests that connections to existing sidewalk/off-road trail systems; transit accessibility; and connectivity – even off-site in cases where there will be a high potential demand for walking trips – are also critical elements of the pedestrian implementation program.

Grant and Programmatic Funding Sources. The Governor’s Highway Safety Program, Block Development Grants, fitness and health grant sources, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and the federal/state Safe Routes to School program all represent potential sources of funding for pedestrian projects. However, in order to capitalize on these funds, the City must have a staffing component that is well-versed in preparing grants and tracking the grant cycles that occur. These funds are often hotly competitive, and being prepared for an upcoming grant cycle is critical to the applicant’s success. Optimally, the City of Durham would have a Grants Coordinator, perhaps located in the Budget and Management Services Division, who can reach out to the appropriate City staff to gather information needed in the preparation of grant-type applications, not only for pedestrian projects, but for other needs as well. The City’s Police Department does have such a position; but it does not extend to pedestrian planning or other functions within the City.

A large number of public and quasi-public resources exist to help implement landscaping, greenway, trail, and sidewalk construction beyond the major state, federal, and local sources cited in Section 5:

- National Park Service (Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants);
- North Carolina State Government, including Parks and Recreation; Wildlife Resources Commission; Division of Water Resources; Division of Community Assistance (facilitation);
- Volunteer Programs, such as gardening clubs (see text box at right), can be used to infill urban spaces with herb gardens, flower planters, and so forth;
- Conservation trusts, such as the NC Conservation Trust Fund or Triangle Land Conservancy, for off-road trails, should be coordinated with on a six-month cycle to keep informed of funding and other right-of-way acquisition mechanisms and opportunities; and
- Fitness and health-based initiatives are becoming more frequent, such as the Fit Together program and Fit Community grants. In June 2006, Durham was awarded a “Fit Community” designation, making it eligible for up to \$60,000 in grant funding to further community efforts in the healthy lifestyles area. The “Fit Community” honor recognizes North Carolina municipalities that have exhibited a commitment to supporting healthy lifestyles in the areas of physical activity, healthy eating, and youth tobacco use prevention.

North Carolina Gardening Club

For more information about garden clubs, including the Durham Council of Garden Clubs, use the following contact information or go to the NC Garden Club website at: www.gardenclubofnc.org

The Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.
PO Box 33520
Raleigh NC 27636-3520
Tel 919-834-0686, Fax 919-834-4571
Office hours: M-Th 9:00a.m.-4:00p.m
Email: theGCofNC1@aol.com

The principle obstacle to acquiring these grants is not necessarily the competitive nature of the grant environment, but making and maintaining the personal contacts to and with the grant coordinators to keep apprised of upcoming opportunities. A dedicated grants coordinator would be invaluable in this effort, but until then, it is recommended that administrative assistants in the Transportation Division be charged with checking a list of known sources every six months to prepare notices of upcoming opportunities for the rest of the transportation staff.

8.3 Program and Policy Implementation

The *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan has identified several programs and a large number of policies that are recommended to further strengthen, educate, and enforce pedestrian issues in the City. Listed below are those program and policy areas, along with the personnel that will be needed to take action to implement the programs and policies.

Pedestrian Awareness Task Force. This Task Force is a multi-division attempt to get pedestrian-related issues, particularly safety issues, addressed early by the agencies in the best position to do something about them (law enforcement, transportation planning, and engineering). This small group should be led by the Public Works Department Transportation Division and the Bicycle and Planning Coordinator, who will require some assistance from the Durham Police Department to produce accident mapping for three-month and three-year periods.

School Strides. Emulating the Safe Routes to School programs across the country, School Stride is the name attached to the recommended Durham program of educating and encouraging elementary, middle, and high school children to walk to school, and do so safely. This Plan has detailed some of the activities for School Strides, but close coordination between the Transportation Division and Durham Public School System (DPS) will be required. Funding for this effort should come in part from the City, perhaps from the DPS, and in part from anticipated grant opportunities from the federal/state Safe Routes to School program.

Existing Program Modifications. The *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan has suggested minor functional changes, such as applying some additional funding for expanding transit outreach programs, changing the review process for new or expanded development reviews by transit companies, and implementing an Access Award Certification Program. The specific agency or agencies are identified where those suggestions are made (generally, Section 7). However, this full policy listing should be

referenced when preparing the annual benchmarking report discussed in Section 8.4 to ensure that appropriate progress and attention is being paid to these recommendations.

Changing Policies and Plans. Section 3 of this Plan identifies a large number of mostly small policy and planning changes to existing documents. It is assumed that the majority of these will be accommodated during the updates of those plans, but this should be carefully reviewed when those plans are being updated, when the *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan is updated, and during the annual benchmarking exercise described in Section 8.4. Hence, the responsibility of making those changes rests with the individual agency or division re-writing the particular plan, but coordinating those changes is the responsibility of the Transportation Division's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and appropriate planning department staff.

8.4 Tracking Progress

Every planning document and process envisions changes and progress being made as a result of all the efforts of its participants. And, while the process of creating the Plan has been successful already in increasing the awareness of pedestrian needs, it is even more important to its ultimate success to continue tracking and updating it's contents to remain relevant. Two additional suggestions about updating components of this Plan and tracking its progress are therefore provided to help Durham's staff and citizens keep the *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan dynamic and meaningful.

Plan Update Cycles. During the development of the pedestrian plan, concerns were expressed about how to incorporate comments from the public, new information, and revised funding and cost profiles. To accommodate these changes, the following update cycle is recommended:

- The overall Pedestrian Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years. This regular schedule, beginning in 2011, will allow Durham to program ahead to allocate funds and resources for future updates.
- The project listing – especially Section 4.0 – should be reviewed and updated every year to ensure that new comments and project changes are included. This will require maintaining a good list of project changes by the Transportation and Engineering Division staff throughout the calendar year in order to quickly make modifications to the Plan. These modifications should be discussed internally with the implementation staff, NCDOT, and other stakeholders to ensure that priorities and projects are scoped correctly.



A great pedestrian space – with no pedestrians present. *How much better would this space be with...*
...movable furniture?
...planters with herbs and flowers?
...artwork?
...awnings over the shops?

Benchmarking DurhamWalks! Even when the Plan or portions of the Plan are not being reviewed and updated, it is still important to maintain an annual accounting of the progress of the Plan's implementation. Just as important, the successes in the areas of pedestrian planning should be celebrated and communicated at this point – policies adopted, plans completed, projects finished, and miles of trails and sidewalks under construction. This will require some reporting to a central location or data acquisition by the Transportation and Engineering Division staff and particularly the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator to create a simple summary report every January to mark the progress of the Plan.

The term that is chosen for gauging the progress of implementing the pedestrian program is “benchmarking.” Benchmarking is a critical piece of quality control and management, and helps present a clear picture of the status and progress towards meeting important goals. Benchmarks can be almost anything that describes the progress on specific aspects of a program in action: number of herons observed to estimate the health of an estuary; increases in vehicle occupancies to measure travel demand management improvements; and the number of new jobs created to gauge the strength of a local or national economy are all examples of benchmarks. To be a good benchmark, the data that defines the benchmark should be readily available or at least easy to create and the benchmark should have a clear connection to the thing it is measuring.

For the *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan, we are establishing a schedule of actions for the first two, five, and ten years of the Plan's future. In addition, we suggest an annual survey of conditions to assess the progress towards meeting the Plan's goals. Details on the benchmarks are described for each Goal in Section 1.2; this Section provides a sample report that Transportation staff can produce to chart the progress of meeting the recommendations of the Pedestrian Plan (see following page). These benchmarks should change, and obviously be updated when the Plan is updated every five years.

Finally, this benchmark report should be incorporated into the same schedule as the *Comprehensive Annual Report* that Durham produces to chart its progress in many different functional areas each year. Although this report deals primarily with the financial obligations of the City, marrying a summary to this report or at least working the pedestrian benchmarking exercise into the same schedule (each June) may generate a greater audience for the progress summary.

The purpose of this Progress Report is to identify the Goals and Objectives of the Pedestrian Plan and to mark the progress being made towards making Durham a walkable City as outlined in the *DurhamWalks!* Pedestrian Plan. Please contact the Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator at 919.560.4366 for additional information.

Goal 1: Facility Quantity: To increase the number of pedestrian facilities: sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, pedestrian safety improvements at intersections, and other related amenities in the City of Durham.

BENCHMARKS	STATUS
B1.1 Construct 30% of recommended projects from Top “Tier” by 2010.	
B1.2 Reduce sidewalk “gaps” by 10% by 2010.	
B1.3 Establish prioritization scheme by 2006.	
B1.4 Reduce residential streets without sidewalk by 25% by 2015.	

Goal 2: Facility Quality: To improve the quality of both future and existing pedestrian facilities in Durham, especially in those areas that are suffering the worst from poor conditions.

BENCHMARKS	STATUS
B2.1 Adopt pedestrian design standards in all planning documents.	
B2.2 Reduce sidewalks meeting the “moderate” or “severe” rating in the pedestrian facility inventory by 25% by 2015.	
B2.3 Conduct a survey every two years to determine satisfaction with pedestrian accommodations.	
B2.4 Complete an update of the pedestrian facility inventory in 2015.	

Goal 3: Safety and Security: To enhance real and perceived pedestrian safety while increasing pedestrian activity.

BENCHMARKS	STATUS
B3.1 Pedestrian accidents should be reduced by 25% (from year 2000 records) by 2010.	
B3.2 Pedestrian activity should increase by 25% by 2010. Measure using surveys and decennial census.	
B3.3 Conduct a bi-annual survey to ascertain the perception of safety about walking to/from school, home and work.	

Goal 4: Coordination: To guarantee that those people and agencies responsible for providing transportation and land use options assume pedestrian considerations in their everyday policies and practices.

BENCHMARKS	STATUS
B4.1 Update the Landscape and Design Guidelines Manuals to address pedestrian issues.	
B4.2 Adopt policy recommendations on fees, connectivity, and others (refer to Section 7).	
B4.3 Form Pedestrian Awareness Task Force and meet four times/year.	

Additional Progress and Upcoming/Current Work Items: _____