



D U R H A M

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Durham Transportation Division ▪ 101 City Hall Plaza ▪ Durham, NC 27701

July 21, 2009

TO: Ed Venable, Engineering Manager, City of Durham

FROM: Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)

RE: Re-design of the Downtown Loop

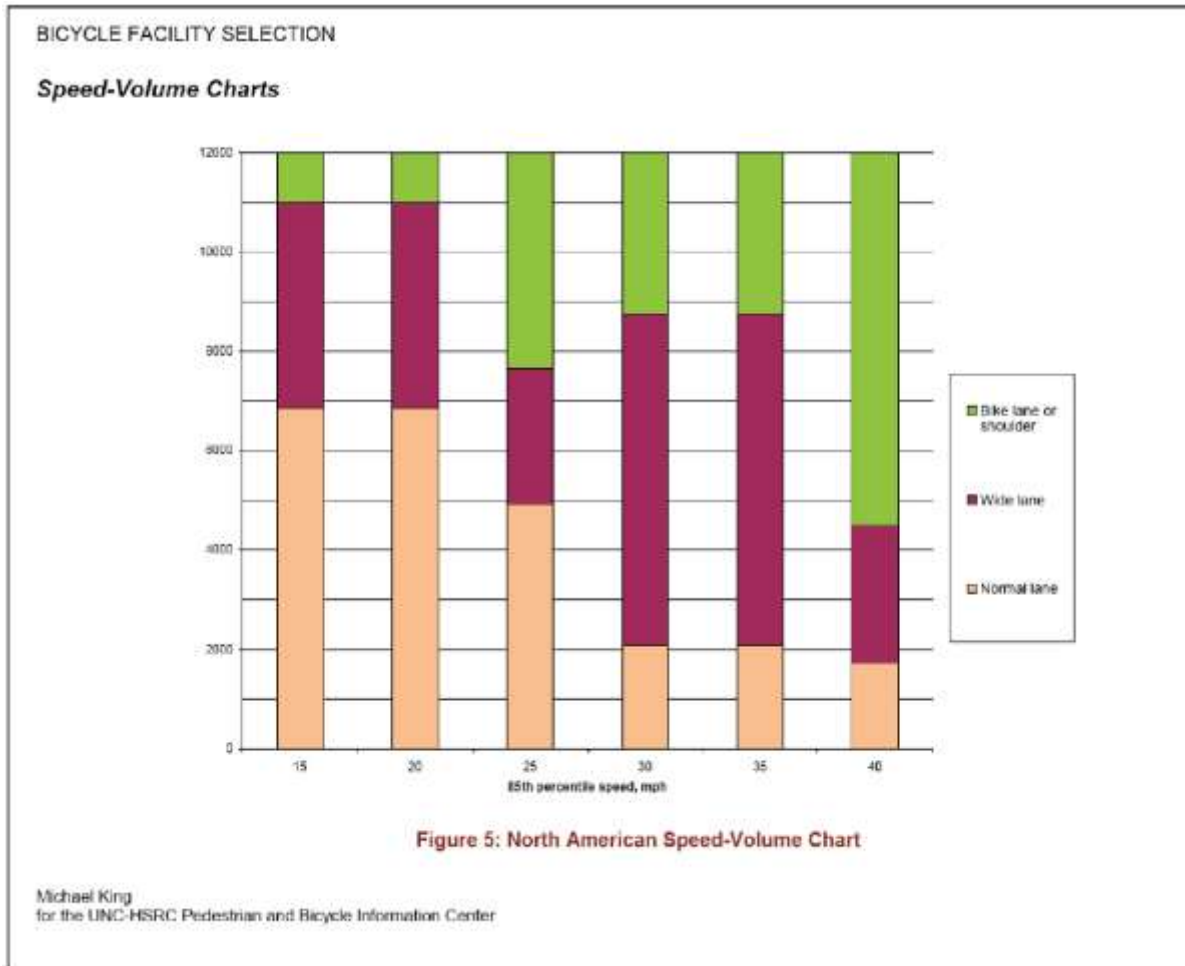
Dear Mr. Venable,

The Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) understands that the City of Durham is beginning the process of redesigning the Downtown Loop and making it a two-way facility. This presents a wonderful opportunity to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience on a major downtown corridor.

As the re-design takes shape, we urge the City to refer to the guidelines within the DurhamWalks Pedestrian Plan (“Pedestrian Plan”) and the Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan (“Bicycle Plan”), both adopted in 2006. Below are selected sections of these plans that we feel are especially pertinent for this project.

- **Sidewalk Width-** Section 6.1 of the Pedestrian Plan recommends that sidewalks should be at least 8 feet wide (with a variable width buffer) within the Central Business District to accommodate larger volumes of pedestrian traffic. Obstructions such as fire hydrants, mailboxes and bus shelters should be placed outside the walkway.
- **Pedestrian Crossings-** The intersection of Great Jones Street and W. Main Street is one of the intersections identified in the Pedestrian Plan for an upgrade and safety improvement. Please refer to section 6 of the Pedestrian Plan when designing crossings at intersections as well as curb cuts for driveways.
- **Pedestrians and Transit-** Table 7.1 in Section 7.2 of the Pedestrian Plan offers suggestions on improving connection between pedestrians and transit use. Appropriate local transit waiting areas and shelters should be added or planned for public transit enhancements such as the downtown shuttle between the universities as well as additional service to be added by DATA and TTA. Improved pedestrian connectivity to the new bus terminal via Chapel Hill Street should be considered.

- Bicycle Facility Selection- The appropriate bicycle facility should be dictated by motor vehicle volume and speed. The chart below, found in section 5.4 of the Bicycle Plan, demonstrates ideal situations for bicycle lanes, wide outside lanes, and normal lanes.



- On-Street Parking and the Use of Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows) - Use of on-street parking on the Downtown Loop is another consideration when selecting bicycle facilities. Section 7.7 of the Bicycle Plan provides some guidance here. If the combined width of the outside lane and parking lane is over 17 feet, 10 foot wide travel lines can be striped with an edgeline. If the combined width is less than 17 feet, sharrow markings can be provided every 100 to 200 meters on the right side of the motor vehicle travel lane. It should also be noted that if the on-street parking is expected to be high-turnover, sharrows may be more appropriate.
- Converting the Old Bus Station into a Bike Station- The recently evacuated bus station on Great Jones Street provides an excellent opportunity to implement one of the concepts within the Bicycle Plan- a downtown bike station (section 5.12). One purpose of a bike

station is to provide secure bicycle parking in the vicinity of transit centers. Bike stations around the country also provide services such as simple bicycle repair and rentals. The space could be rented out to vendors or non-profit groups like the Durham Bike Co-op.

In addition to these items from the adopted plans, BPAC also recommends the following:

- Avoid use of treatments like the decorative pavers at the Five Points intersection, where there have been reports of slipping in inclement weather.
- The railroad tracks along the southern side of the Loop are often identified as an impediment to pedestrian access between the downtown area and the facilities in and around the American Tobacco campus. Where possible, we would ask the City to consider how pedestrian access can be improved at Chapel Hill, Corcoran and Mangum Streets.
- We would also ask the City to consider improvements to pedestrian access to the Downtown Library. Currently pedestrians coming from downtown have to negotiate the five lanes of Roxboro Road as well as Liberty and Morgan Streets.

It is requested that the City provide BPAC an opportunity to review design concepts and to discuss these with staff.

Sincerely,



Alan Dippy
BPAC Chairman

cc: Mark Ahrendsen, Transportation Manager, City of Durham
Dale McKeel, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, City of Durham/DCHC MPO