

19 October, 2010

Mark Ahrendsen
Director, Durham Transportation Department
101 City Hall Plaza
Durham, NC 27701

Subject: Proposed Pedestrian Improvements on Club Blvd.

Dear Mr. Ahrendsen:

We were pleased to hear a presentation from Phil Loziuk at our September meeting concerning a plan to improve pedestrian accessibility on Club Blvd between Broad Street and Hillandale Avenue. The proposed plan is to build “chokers” at the intersections of Club and Maryland, Carolina, Virginia and Georgia. The chokers would reduce the width of Club at those intersections from about 40 feet (11’ travel lanes with parking lanes on either side of the street) to about 22 feet (11’ travel lanes only). We are pleased to see the city making changes to improve pedestrian safety on Club; however, we are concerned that the proposed chokers will decrease the safety of cyclists. Because motor vehicle speeds and volume on Club are too great for casual cyclists to be comfortable taking the lane, the chokers, parked cars and parking lanes will encourage weaving by cyclists. In order to ride safely, cyclists should be encouraged and enabled to ride in a predictable manner, preferably a straight line.

Mr. Loziuk indicated that current cyclist usage of Club Blvd is low and that there are alternate routes that bypass Club. Our request is that we not implement changes to any road in Durham that benefits one groups of users, in this case pedestrians, at the expense of another group, in this case cyclists. Pages 6-12 and 6-13 of the DurhamWalks! plan state that inappropriately designed traffic calming devices can “impede the safe movement of cyclists” and curb extensions can have a “serious potential impact” on cyclists if “poorly designed and/or located.” While cyclist usage of Club may presently be low, it is likely that usage would significantly increase if Club Blvd. were made to be more bike friendly.

BPAC expects cyclist usage of Club to increase after installation of bicycle lanes on Hillandale Rd., which is currently a funded project. Further, in Durham’s “Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan” Club Blvd was indicated to be among the “Top 20 On-Street Bicycle Roads” (specifically, No. 17 between Hillandale and Washington St, which includes the portion under discussion) and received a Priority Score of 18 for recommended installation of bicycle lanes. In “The 2010 Durham Bike & Hike” map, the section of Club that includes the 4 proposed intersections is shown in yellow (generally considered with routes marked in green to be more bicycle friendly; routes marked in orange and red being considered to be less bicycle friendly).

Club is already a vital link in Durham's bicycling network, and its usage by cyclists is likely to increase in the near future.

We believe changes could be made to benefit both cyclists and pedestrians. We request that the City consider the following options in order to improve both pedestrian and cyclist safety in this corridor:

- Changes in pavement color and/or texture of crosswalks to better define and increase motorist awareness of pedestrian crosswalks.
- Add crosswalk signs in the middle of the street to increase motorist awareness of crosswalks similar to those used on 9th Street.
- Decrease the speed limit on Club from 35 mph to 25 mph.
- Install “Crosswalk Flags” at key intersections. The bright orange flags, similar to those used in portions of Salt Lake City, are an inexpensive solution to increase pedestrian visibility prior to entering the crosswalk and while pedestrians are in the crosswalk.
- Decrease motor vehicle travel lanes to 10'. Place the chokers on one side of the street, along with on-street parking. Alternate the alignment as was done on Anderson Street.
- By having on-street parking and chokers limited to one side of the street, there would be room for bike lanes on both sides of the street. Bike lanes allow pedestrians to move farther into the street before crossing, add visibility and decrease crossing distance

We are also open to other proposals to improve this corridor for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Hence, with appropriate changes, we feel Club can be made to be more accessible to pedestrians while also fulfilling its potential to be an important component in Durham's cycling network.

Sincerely,



Alan Dippy
BPAC Chairman

cc: Dale McKeel, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, City of Durham/DCHC MPO
Phil Loziuk, Traffic Operations, City of Durham
Joshua Allen, President, Watts-Hillandale Neighborhood Association
Durham City Council