

## Steering Committee for Rex Endowment SRTS Project

March 31, 2015

1:30 – 3 pm

### Attendees:

Kenneth Withrow  
Amy Sackaroff  
Nancy Pullen-Seufert  
Sara Merz  
Reed Huegerich  
Ben Howell  
Danny Johnson  
Jennifer Delcourt  
Elizabeth Sharpe  
Jason Brown  
Ed Johnson  
Laura Sandt (phone)  
Karen Rindge (phone)

### **School selection**

After introductions and review of SRTS Steering Committee Goals and Objectives by Kenneth Withrow, Elizabeth Sharpe proposed that we offer the school district additional refined suggestions on school site selection. She was concerned that they may be considering the wrong factors (such as just looking at traffic volume) or would not have time to examine all of the information sent to them.

The group agreed to set aside other agenda items to work on school selection. The group discussed the variety of criteria to consider (crash ranking, potential walkers, sufficient conditions for walking, low-resource community inclusion, scheduled renovations). The group proposed five schools to remove from consideration. They reviewed each municipality's list with comments about each school and endeavored to remove a school from each municipality's recommendations. The following were deemed less-good fits based on the candidate schools available:

- Apex Middle School (other two Apex schools considered better fit)
- Kingswood Elementary (smallest enrollment, walking eligibility and free and reduced price meal program percentage may change with the school's transition to Montessori)
- Vandora Springs Elementary (preparing for major renovation)
- Fuquay Varina Middle School
- Balentine Elementary School (already has many parents walking kids to school; only walkable to students in subdivision so probably not a large opportunity for increasing walking rates)

ACTION ITEM: Nancy and Laura will create a reference for the school district that will list each of the remaining schools with a few bullets as to rationale for inclusion. The message to WCPSS will also include what we're hoping they'll contribute in terms of considerations, such as what they may know about existing interest in walking/biking to school.

### **Municipal policies and process discussion**

Nancy revisited with the group that in addition to establishing the SRTS demonstration sites, another purpose of the project is to explore existing county and municipal policies and practices that may affect walking conditions and pedestrian safety, and identify opportunities and needs to focus grant-related resources (such as training and technical assistance). HSRC sought input on most impactful policies/processes, barriers encountered that could be helped with resources and how to best gather information from municipalities over the project period.

### **Group discussion questions:**

*Which municipal and MPO policies and practices do you feel are most important to help improve conditions for walking, especially child pedestrians?*

Danny Johnson (Fuquay-Varina) listed:

1. Required ped improvements with new developments and then town fills the gaps.
2. Signalization for peds
3. Addressing railroad crossings
4. Land development ordinance – including walkability, form based code.

Reed Huegerich (Apex):

1. Filling gaps in undeveloped land
2. Challenges with DOT
  - a. Ex: Building bridge and DOT requiring specific lane width and specific ped walkway allowance even with Complete St policy. NCDOT says town would have to pay for addl widening even if lane width was reduced.

Amy Sackaroff (Laurel Pk Elem/Stantec) suggested:

Design criteria limits what can be done when in reality something else is needed.

Jennifer Delcourt mentioned school site requirements for stacking length that don't account for school walking numbers (just require same stacking based on student enrollment) but after group discussion it was felt that this was impenetrable right now.

Jason Brown (Knightdale):

Increasing mixed use specified in comprehensive plan

Ben Howell (Morrisville)

Working with schools on their walking policies. He gave example of a location that, with one safety improvement, could be able to lift their ban on walking.

*What aspects of these policies and practices might need to change to make conditions safer for pedestrians?*

Danny noted the major barrier being funding. He noted several assets including: progressive board, existing sidewalk inventory, public input.

*What resources or data are you looking for in order to improve processes and policies where you work, or to assist with decision-making?*

Reed suggested best practices/models from other DOTs on how they're being more ped-supportive in construction projects and how implementing Complete Streets in a more authentic way. Something that shows DOTs making tough decisions to balance the needs of pedestrians.

*Do you have thoughts on how key policies and practices can be tracked/monitored by HSRC as part of the grant? What do you feel would be an efficient method for collecting policy-related documents from each municipality?*

The group agreed that phone conversation was best. Jason noted that all ordinance changes were available online.

**Next meeting:**

Doodle poll will be sent to develop standing meeting time for monthly meetings.