



Asheville on Bikes
RIDE YOUR CITY

Mike Sule
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Nov. 17, 2021`

Asheville City Council
70 Court Plaza
Asheville, NC 28806

Dear City Council,

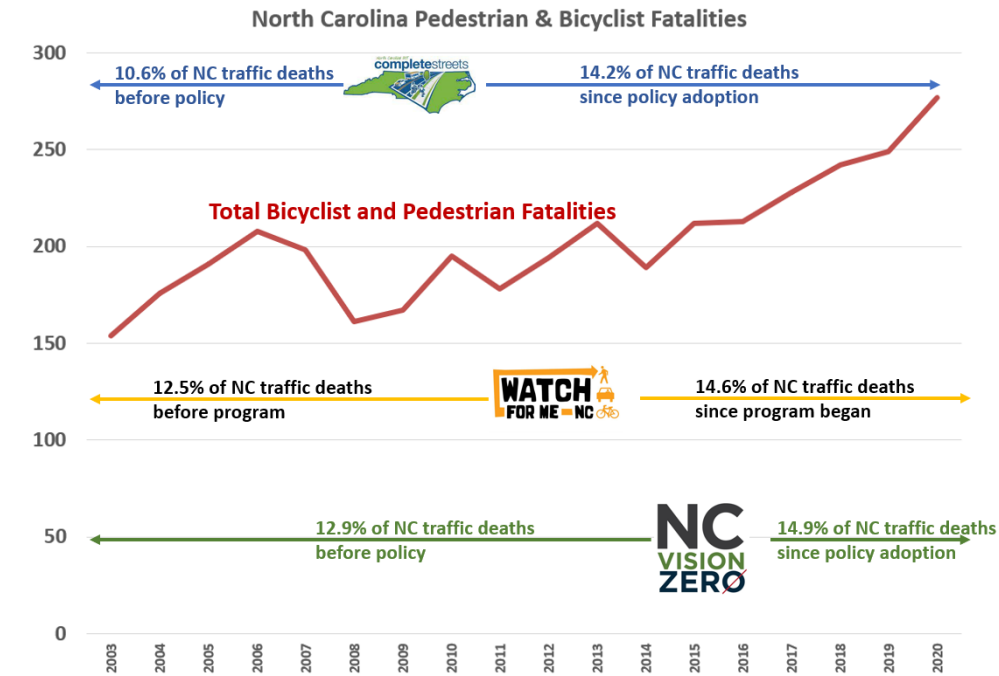
It's concerning that the vote to approve three transportation corridor studies has been delayed until Dec. 14th from its intended agenda date of Nov. 9. Approving the [Hendersonville Road](#), [Tunnel Road](#) and the [Biltmore Avenue/McDowell Street](#) studies is the next clear and present opportunity for you to respond to the inhumane and deadly existing conditions on our streets. While each plan is imperfect, they all point the way towards enhancing mobility options and restoring dignity to active transportation.

To delay adopting these multi-modal transportation plans, demonstrates an indifference to the current deplorable conditions of our streets. Consider these alarming facts from North Carolina's crash data:

- [Asheville continues to rank #1 in NC for pedestrian crashes](#)
- According to NCDOT's crash data African-Americans are the victims in 40% of NC pedestrian crashes and represent 32% of pedestrians killed in NC despite them comprising only 20% of NC's population
- NCDOT's Complete Street & Vision Zero policies have failed to produce safer streets - pedestrian deaths rose 7% from 2019 to 2020 while bicyclist deaths rose 55%.

The only way to improve upon our shameful failure to provide safe and dependable mobility options, is to redesign our streets to accommodate and prioritize the needs of people.

The challenge ahead will remain politically charged as detractors of change will always rally to maintain the status quo. To avoid adopting new policies, designs, and infrastructure is to accept the increasing carnage on our streets. There will always be organized vocal opposition to elevating dignity in active transportation. Our community relies on you to lead us forward. Don't delay support for safer streets any longer. Vote to support the studies.



This chart shows the ineffectiveness of words and policies when not backed by road redesigns.

Consider that the recent Charlotte St road diet was debated for twenty years and several neighbors vehemently opposed the road diet leading up to its installation, but following the build there is little opposition and the conditions on the corridor have greatly improved. [A post installation study of Charlotte St, conducted by Traffic, Planning & Design reports:](#)

- 75% increase in bicycle use along portions of Charlotte St
- Vehicular travel times decreased between 1.5 and 6 seconds
- Traffic volumes on Washington St and Madison St, identified as Charlotte St cut through streets, experienced no increase in traffic volumes or speed.

The only thing the Charlotte St opposition achieved was delaying a safer, more vibrant street. Let's not continue the delay. The call is for you to build upon the Charlotte St success and deliver the next steps toward safer streets.

The [Coxe Ave tactical urbanism project](#), spearheaded by Asheville on Bikes, was also an initially controversial project but has since been absorbed into the corridor. The project was only supposed to be installed for a year, but, as a result of its effectiveness, the City of Asheville opted to keep the treatment in place because it expanded pedestrian and bicycle facilities and calmed traffic. The Coxe Ave report states:

“Coxe Avenue’s average auto speeds were reduced by 28.3% with no impact on the automobile carrying capacity of the street, while also adding significant safety features that protect pedestrians, bicycle riders, and low speed vehicle users (wheelchairs, scooters, etc). Speed monitoring occurred over a 3 day time period before and after the project. Before the project, 65.9% of drivers using the road were speeding. The highest recorded speeds each day were: 75.5 mph, 85.5mph, and 89.2

mph. After the project, only 21.3% of drivers were speeding and the highest recorded speeds were 40, 41, and 40.2 mph. Car volume counts were nearly identical in both the before and after time periods.”

And finally, consider how the Asheville community rallied in opposition to North Carolina Department of Transportation’s (NCDOT) plan to widen Merrimon Ave in 2019. [80% of the 418 comments received from NCDOT’s public comment opposed road widening and favored investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities.](#) You can still [read many of those comments on our website.](#)

On behalf of Asheville on Bikes, I encourage you to push beyond the static calls to maintain the status quo, synthesize the results of recent corridor treatments, and respond to the clear and present need to prioritize public safety on our rights of way. At the next opportunity, vote to approve the [Hendersonville Road](#), [Tunnel Road](#) and the [Biltmore Avenue/McDowell Street](#) corridor studies.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Sule". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mike Sule
Executive Director
Asheville on Bikes