



Indian Trail Pedestrian Plan Update

Focus Group Listening Sessions Summary

July 2023

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Safety improvements benefit both people and places in Indian Trail.

- Safe sidewalks with connecting crosswalks improve park accessibility.
- Indian Trail demographics are shifting to a slightly older population, and seniors need safety improvements – including lighting – to feel comfortable walking.

2. Greenways are both a recreational amenity and a transportation improvement.

- Residents and users value shade and prefer greenways to sidewalks during hotter summer months.
- Separation from traffic encourages families to make greater use of the network.

3. Strengthening regional relationships can help speed up implementation.

- As one of the largest communities in the region, Indian Trail's tax base is better equipped to support implementation.
- CRTPO, Union County, and NCDOT Division 10 staff can support implementation efforts through grant assistance and training on locally-administered projects program.

Session #1 – Thursday 7/20 @ 10 am – Parks & Recreation / Neighborhood

Attendees: 5

- Hayden Kramer
- Brian Cross
- Andrew Friend
- Steve Dotson

Discussion Topics:

PRIORITY CONNECTIONS WITHIN Indian Trail

1. **Town Parks** are the tremendous assets for this community – I.T. parks are better than other towns in Union County – **Parks & Rec value is promoting the events (“activating”) and driving interest for citizens to join**
 - Connect parks to schools, especially ones that are less than a mile away
 - Need more access points to trails/parks
2. Connections with **schools** is imperative –
 - “lots of children walking in the wet grass” each morning
 - Union County walk/bike to school event – windhenderson@hembybridgevfd.com Union County Safe Kids Coordinator - leslie.brett@unioncountync.gov - Union County Safe Kids/Union County Sheriff Office
 - See list of Union County schools below
 - Poplin Elementary is a big one
 - 3 large neighborhoods feed this school
 - Many kids walk across the street to get to school from their neighborhood
3. **Neighborhood connections** (sidewalks) are third – crossing major roads

NEED TO IMPROVE...

- Park access, safety, and capacity for walking to/from and within
 - Need sidewalks to “draw” people to the park
- Improved lighting opportunities
 - Example: crossing at Crooked Creek
- Street trees / shade is needed
 - More stream/greenway corridors desired, especially for families
 - Walking along streets is HOT in the summer
- Grocery store connections (e.g.,: Sun Valley shopping area, next to major schools and neighborhoods, still can’t walk)

OBSERVATIONS

- Town is **segmented** by US 74 and Old Monroe Roads (southern vs northern half)
 - State-maintained roads (NCDOT) serve as larger barriers
- Interconnected neighborhoods (sidewalks) for more than driving!
 - Promoting a park once and wander philosophy
- Coordination with HOA and development community to promote larger connectivity needs

- “Very dense housing near Carolina Courts” planned to add density in the Town Center vicinity
- Walking along a busy road is a “different feeling”
 - “I wish I had other places to walk”
 - “Sun Valley is where I do a lot of my shopping”
 - Need more tree cover
- Park Assets: public parking is largest challenge – wayfinding signage would be needed to promote awareness
 - Crooked Creek Park
 - Chestnut Square Park / Town Hall
 - Crossing Paths Park
- Existing coordination meetings between Towns, but can always be improved over time
- Loss of bus route along 74, people still need to get around!
 - May be biking dangerous roads, eg: Westly Chapel Stout Rd

LOOKING AHEAD

- Demographics of Indian Trail is quickly shifting toward seniors/aging!
 - Seniors need improved safety, and lighting
 - Parking is always necessary
 - It’s more than just providing handicapped spaces!
 - Want last mile connection between park and parking
 - “Prime Time Players” who are very active, and use the Parks & Rec facilities daily
 - Aging in Place often means downsizing homes and adding walkability
- IT Future Lane Use Map - <https://data-indiantrail.hub.arcgis.com/apps/3579e0240897414d9fce4ba43ae2e30c/explore> with neighborhoods / districts and future growth areas
- NCRPA – North Carolina Recreation & Parks Association grants – improving access to facilities
- Connect the future downtown area (near Town Hall)

Union County Schools within or near Indian Trail

- Indian Trail Elementary School – 200 Education Drive, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/bYjKmdWjhdibiM5F9>
- Hemby Bridge Elementary School – 6701 Indian Trail Fairview Rd, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/FspzYfjMFTp9oRYb8>
- Shiloh Valley Primary – 5200 Rogers Road, Monroe, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/kLH4BUX9rKS9CctU6>
- Shiloh Valley Elementary School – 7362 Rogers Road, Monroe, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/jo2b3mC3Vwuqb8aJ9>
- Antioch Elementary School – 3101 Antioch Church Rd, **Matthews**, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/rKmvKoHGoeVj5LiBA>
- Stallings Elementary School – 3501 Stallings Rd, Stallings, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/2wENQRWHYtkMMveFA>
- Sun Valley High School – 5211 Old Charlotte Hwy, Monroe, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/dE7fYBMYbgXLTC DK9>

- Sun Valley Middle School – 1409 Wesley Chapel Rd, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/za4PMcKr1T9neNzh6>
- Porter Ridge Elementary School – 2843 Ridge Rd, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/TnrNnGnKCWuk4ZDYA>
- Porter Ridge High School – 2839 Ridge Rd, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/eFj3ZAZ4rwyPL3hP8>
- Porter Ridge Middle School – 2827 Ridge Rd, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/4WaEKc4MA1mJRrMP8>
- Metrolina (Private) Christian Academy – 732 Indian Trail-Fairview, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/FC4d54cuUFmDAow3A>
- Union Preparatory Academy – 2324 Younts Rd, Indian Trail, NC
<https://goo.gl/maps/KV24L5g7DdDKVqeH8>

Session #2 – Thursday 7/20 @ 3 pm – Regional Stakeholders

Attendees: 4

- Curtis Bridges
- Bjorn Hansen
- Mark Kincaid
- Theo Ghitea
- Jessica Rielly

Discussion Topics:

OBSERVATIONS

- Indian Trail is now the largest population in Union County (~40k) – very fast residential growth
 - IT has a lot of positive momentum – still awaiting additional walkable activity to establish a critical mass to build upon
 - Chamber of Commerce is anticipating small retail, food services, bakery type businesses
 - “Traffic” is their #1 issue for driving business
- “Our challenge is retrofitting conditions, and making best use of local dollars”
 - Crossing some of the major roadways is most important
 - Barriers to crossing these highways
 - Retrofitting may be inequitable, considering it may leave out other municipalities with less money
 - Indian Trail has more access to local match dollars
- 14 municipalities in Union County, and they have not grown continuously (strange patterns)
 - IT has positive local tax base to support the 20% local match
 - What “counts” as Indian trail can be dramatically different
- To fill sidewalk gaps, it may be most valuable to quantify small connections and ### homes within a 0.25 mile distance – then pursue a grant opportunity to design/connect
- NCDOT is planning to widen US 74 and will provide sidepaths with that construction
- Union County survey on critical intersections for improvement (Spring 2023) – 2,900 responses
 - Dashboard to view the results
<https://www.unioncountync.gov/government/departments-f-p/planning-development/union-county-critical-intersection-program-774>
 - Filter and download from AGOL
- Ways to cross major roads and highways (eg: bypass, 485, 74) are needed (suggestion of greenways under or over)
- Business challenges
 - Traffic issues make it tricky for customers to navigate
 - 95% of chamber of commerce is local small business
- Cyclists on road feel unsafe for everyone

REGIONAL HELP

- **CRTPO** – best to use current CTP list of project
 - CTP map [CRTPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan \(arcgis.com\)](#) – all modes

- MTP map [ArcGIS - CRTPO Regional Map](#)
- **Carolina Thread Trail** is the regionally significant plan for off-road connections
- CRTPO has previously received a small package of *many* sidewalk gap projects at once – this may be the preferred method for gaps
 - Don't ask for Federal dollars unless the project is >\$1M; too cumbersome to administer
- NCDOT Div offered a training seminar on applying for locally administering projects
- NCDOT Vulnerable Road User dashboard
- NCDOT TDI
- Wish they had a map of short segments (low hanging fruit) with an analysis such as “this connection would connect X number of households”
- Need training on locally administered projects
- Need for better regional coordination: “if you're dealing with something that's more than 100 feet long” who do you have to talk to?

LOOKING AHEAD

- Educational campaigns have HUGE return on investment
 - Roadway maintenance
 - Improvement process – what's needed
 - Managing expectations to trim long corridor projects down to the necessary sections that would have the largest benefit
- Dedicated local dollars that are earmarked for regional projects – gives them an advantage
 - This investment will bring future dollars
- Future light rail extension into Indian Trail downtown / near Town Hall
- Greenways are critical, because users prefer the shade over roadside
- Important to connect to municipalities outside of Indian Trail
- **Two critical intersections to be included in Union County**
 - Hayes Rd / Faircroff Way @ Old Monroe Rd
 - Hemby Bridge vicinity: Idlewild / IT Fairview / Secret Shortcut
- Old Monroe Project is a valuable multipurpose connection on its way
- Critical momentum needed
 - On the way, but not yet at critical mass