

# Walking conditions set to improve

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The Carrboro Commons

Between the various coffee shops, restaurants and thrift stores in Carrboro, on any given day the streets of downtown are bustling with people.

“Carrboro is an extremely walkable town,” said Linda Haac, chair of the Transportation Advisory Board. “People are always walking or biking.”

At a Board of Aldermen meeting in 2014, the issue of pedestrian safety in Carrboro was brought up by an Orange County resident named Terri Buckner.

Buckner requested that the Board create a taskforce to collect information on pedestrian safety in Carrboro.

“We are always talking about pedestrian safety in Carrboro,” said Haac. “It’s an ongoing topic for us.”

The Transportation Advisory Board consists of eight members, who are responsible for conducting studies and advising the Board of Aldermen on transportation related issues throughout the Carrboro area.

“We came up with this idea to let people write in on a map all the places they felt were dangerous for pedestrians,” said Haac.

“Carrboro has this ‘Open Streets’ event, where people were already going to come to gather.”

Haac said receiving over 65 responses would have been considered a success, but the Board was able to collect over 80 comments from residents.

The Transportation Advisory Board then appointed subcommittees to review the data that was collected from residents and interpret where the major pedestrian safety hotspots were located.

The Board created a map of Carrboro that illustrates the locations of each pedestrian safety hotspot and



**The Transportation Advisory Board determined the locations that residents felt were unsafe. Speed limit reductions and the addition of crosswalks are ways in which the Board hopes to increase pedestrian safety.**

lists the complaints for each location, as well as resolution options.

“A major problem is the speed of cars,” said Haac. “Carrboro has these twisty streets with bad visibility and cars go too fast.”

Colleen Barclay, vice chair of the Transportation Advisory Board, said the majority of complaints came from residents that did not feel safe crossing the street. Other complaints listed were lack of sidewalks or accessibility to sidewalks.

“The policies that have been put in place in the past have been for making infrastructure suitable for driving, not for pedestrians,” said Barclay. “The focus has been on automobile for so long.”

Ashley Simpson, a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill, has been living in Carrboro for the past two years.

“People go pretty fast on roads because they’re generally less busy

than roads in Chapel Hill,” said Simpson. “So people are driving a lot faster than they would on Franklin.”

The Transportation Advisory Board plans to combat the risk of pedestrian safety in several ways, including speed limit reductions, better signage and changes in the timing of walk signals. However, incorporating more crosswalks is the Board’s main priority.

“I think with more crosswalks it would be a lot safer because people wouldn’t just cross the road, trying to dodge traffic,” said Simpson. “Which is what people are doing now.”

Barclay said that the majority of complaints were on state controlled roads, which the town cannot alter without the state’s approval. However, there are currently plans in place for crosswalk construction on several main streets in town, such as N Greensboro and W Main streets.

“We want to make Carrboro the best place it can be for everyone,” said Haac. “Whether you’re walking, biking or driving.”

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**- Linda Haac, chair of the Transportation Advisory Board**