

September 22, 2022



A Petition to Create Protected Bicycle Facilities on
Cameron Avenue (S. Merritt Mill to S. Columbia)

The members of NEXT, a local advocacy organization that supports affordable housing, transportation alternatives, and economic development, are submitting this petition to the Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board (TACAB) to create uninterrupted protected bicycle facilities on W. Cameron Avenue between S. Merritt Mill and S. Columbia.

Background:

For decades, W. Cameron Avenue has had the highest bicycle traffic of any street in the Town of Chapel Hill. In 2013, the Town adopted a bicycle plan, and recommended that W. Cameron Ave. be placed on the short-term priority list for improvements. In 2017, and again in 2020, the Town adopted a Mobility and Connectivity Plan, which again recommended protected bike lanes for W. Cameron Ave. After OWASA finishes replacing a water line, W. Cameron will be repaved and restriped, with the work most likely taking place in summer 2023.

Proposal:

We call on TACAB to recommend to the Chapel Hill Town Council that before repaving and restriping W. Cameron that the Town assess, design, and construct uninterrupted protected bike lanes for the entirety of W. Cameron, from the eastern terminus of the Libba Cotten Bikeway to S. Columbia.

Rationales:

As part of its Vision Zero initiative (adopted in 2021), the Town has prioritized investing in safe bicycle facilities. Several crashes, including a serious crash at the corner of W. Cameron and Pittsboro Street on Thursday, Sept. 7, show the need to improve facilities on W. Cameron.

The town's bicycle network is currently sporadic and disjointed, which means sometimes cyclists are protected and sometimes they are not. If completed, this project will create a two-mile loop of protected bikeways and bike lanes in downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro, connecting Libba Cotten, bike improvements on W. Main in Carrboro, and the recently completed curb-running bike lanes on W. Franklin.

As electric bikes become more popular, we anticipate an increase in bicycle usage throughout Chapel Hill. Protected bike lanes have been proven to increase ridership, making it possible for us to build a Complete Community, a priority of the Chapel Hill Town Council.

A protected bike lane on W. Cameron will advance Chapel Hill's equity objectives, as the project will connect to the historically Black neighborhood of Pine Knolls and serve low-income communities, including communities of color.

Because W. Cameron's sidewalks are inadequate, and non-ADA compliant, a protected bike lane will also allow people using mobility scooters to safely access food, shelter, and services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Martin Johnson
John Rees

NEXT NC (nextnc.org)