

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Public Workshop

City of Harrisonburg Public Works

May 19, 2015

At Thomas Harrison Middle School

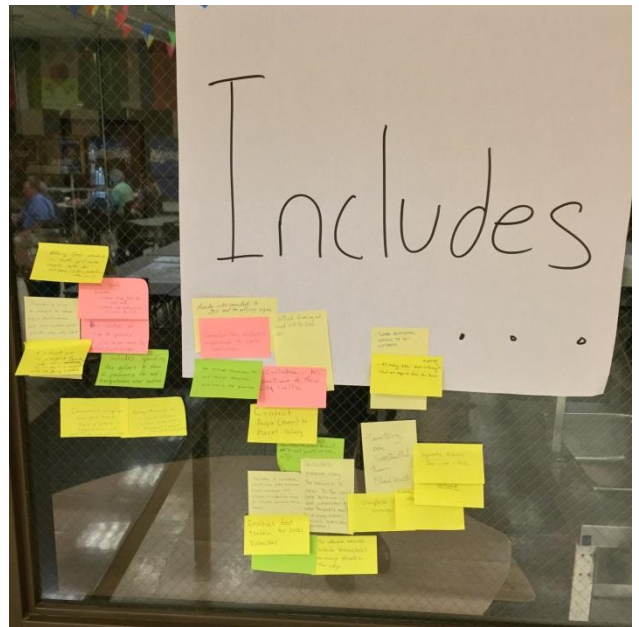
On May 19, 2015, over 30 citizens, 4 Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee members, and 6 city staff participated in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Workshop. The Workshop was facilitated by the JMU Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue.

VISIONING EXERCISE

The Workshop began with a visioning exercise where participants were asked to respond to various prompts.

According to the citizens gathered, a good bike and pedestrian network in the City of Harrisonburg includes:

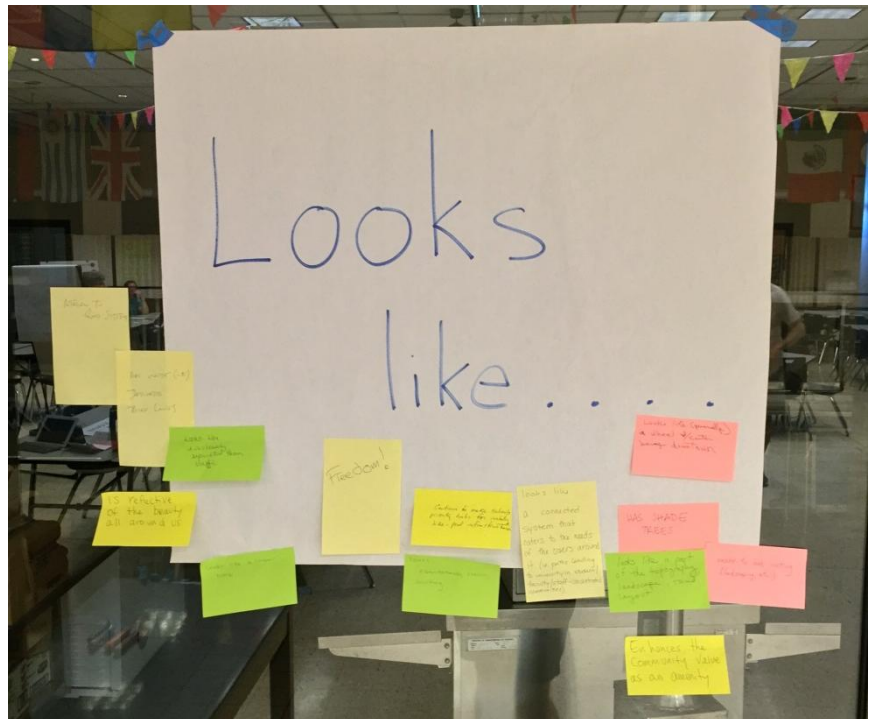
- Safe, multimodal options to all citizens
- As many bike and walkways as possible that are separate from cars and trucks
- Bike Lanes
- Shared use path network
- Sidewalks on every street in the city
- Connections from residential neighborhoods to popular destinations
- Something more substantial than Sharrows
- Complete and accessible paths
- Support along the network to cater to the users (once the network is well-established) – pump stations, showers, lockers, bike maintenance
- Spending tax dollars to show a preference for self-transportation over motors
- Shared and exclusive facilities
- A complete multi-use path network that connects all major residential areas to schools serving those areas
- Bike/ped facilities to allow transit to all points of the city
- The Northend Greenway that connects with the JMU trail
- All sections of the city limits
- Goals: i.e. increase trips taken by bike by x%, increase kids walking/biking to school by x%



- Out of the box ideas: Encourages creative and can-do process like those of Portland, Madison, Missoula, etc.
- Follow through on laws/policies
- Clear sidewalks
- Following rules of the road (all parties)
- Educational campaign everyone knows their rights and expectations, not just those who walk or bike
- Multiple connections to and through downtown, particularly the Greenway
- Interconnectivity to JMU and the outlying region
- A sidewalk plan (i.e. a schedule to add them, independent of or at least in concert with the paving schedule)
- A plan to connect to other major destinations
- Efforts to reduce JMU student car traffic (to make streets safer for everyone)
- Safe connections between people (homes) and places
- Continued focus on making schools priority hubs for installing bike-ped infrastructure

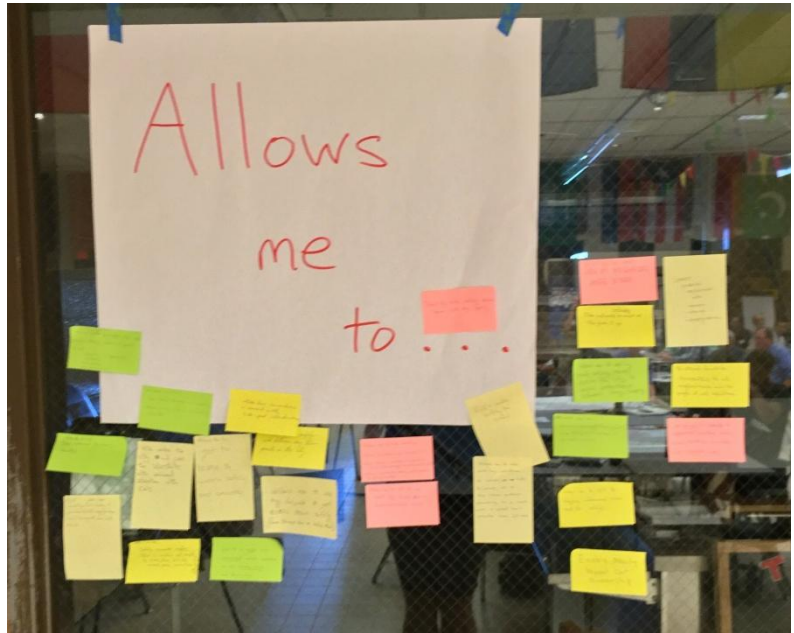
A good bike and pedestrian network in the City of Harrisonburg looks like:

- Freedom!
- Has shade trees
- A part of the topography, landscape, road layout
- Inviting (landscaping)
- A linear park
- A wheel with the center being downtown
- And reflects the beauty all around us
- Comfortable, clean, inviting
- A connected system that caters to the needs of the users around (i.e., paths leading to university in student/faculty/staff concentrated communities)
- Separation of bike/ped clearly from traffic
- An enhancement to community value as an amenity
- Wide (about 8 ft.) dedicated bike lanes
- Connecting trails separate from traffic leading to downtown and other shopping areas



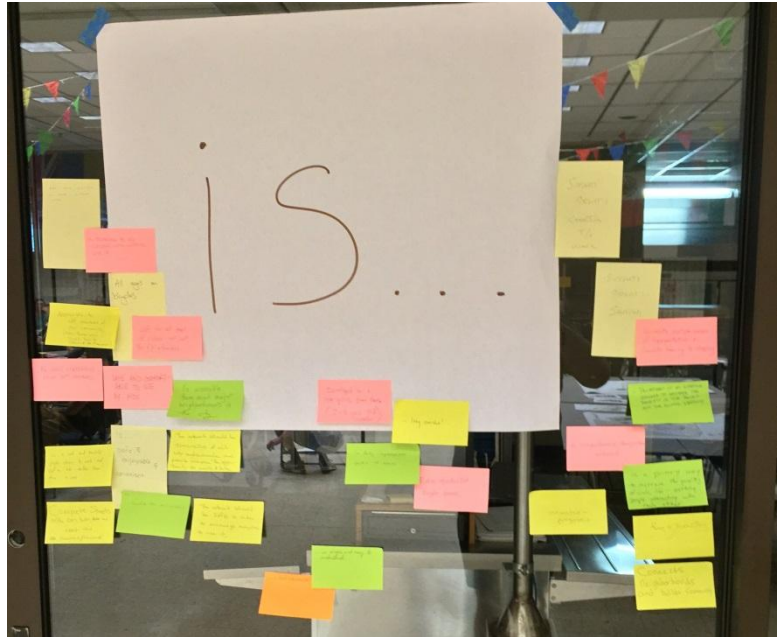
A good bike and pedestrian network in the City of Harrisonburg allows:

- Mobility beyond car ownership
- Safe movement across the city to various destinations (shopping, restaurants, library)
- Foot traffic to local businesses
- Safe movement to schools
- Access to children
- Safe riding
- Sharing by bikers and walkers (wide enough)
- Residents to safely reach parks and playgrounds
- People to get to any park by bike on a safe/comfortable route
- Me to bike and walk comfortably to most of the places I go
- Me to visit with and see my neighbors more often
- Travel by bike safely around town with my family
- Me to ride with my children to school or ride to work or to the store without traveling on a road with a speed limit greater than 25 mph
- Children to ride and walk safely to school
- Everyone to connect to neighborhoods, downtown, parks, schools, businesses in a safe and enjoyable way
- Connections between residential neighborhoods with downtown, restaurants, shopping destinations
- Provides a safe and convenient route regardless of the starting point and destination
- Safely connects nodes (clusters of people and important places)
- Me to use my bike to get across town safely
- City and interstate crossing with minimal interaction with cars
- Me to get to home and work safely and smoothly
- Safety riding between any two points in the city
- Moving across/through the city on mode of people's choice
- Making bus connections in concert with bike-ped infrastructure
- Going from mode to mode seamlessly (bus, car, walk, skate, bike)
- Biking without fearing traffic
- Connects people with places they want to go (parks, schools, employment, groceries, churches)



A good bike and pedestrian network in the City of Harrisonburg is:

- Supportive of cyclists commuting to/from work
- Connections between multiple modes of transportation and connects housing to shopping
- Supportive of cyclists shopping
- Prioritized in an effective manner to maximize the benefit of the project and the funding opportunity
- A primary way to increase the quality of civic-life getting people interacting with each other
- Innovative and progressive
- A comprehensive transportation network
- Fun and healthy
- A way to connect neighborhoods and build community
- Safe in order to encourage everyone to use it
- Complete streets with cars, busses, bikes, feet and wheelchairs and strollers
- Safe, enjoyable and convenient
- Safe for all users
- Safe and separated from busy roadways
- Safe and comfortable to use by kids
- Accessible to all neighborhoods and to people of all abilities
- So safe and beautiful people choose to walk and ride a bike rather than drive a car
- Inclusive of all city neighborhoods and provides everyone the opportunity to walk and bike
- Long overdue
- Makes infrastructure happen sooner
- Fully implemented within 10 years
- Developed in a more quick time frame (2-5 years – 50% installed)
- Accessible to all citizens who wish to use it
- Accessible from most major neighborhoods in the city
- Accessible to all members of the community (even those who aren't able to advocate for themselves)
- Has bikes easily accessible to those without one
- Safe for all levels of riders, not just the fit and fearless
- Has all ages on bicycles



The plan itself is:

- Short and concise
- Is simple and easy to understand

Prioritizing key “visions” of a Bike Ped Plan

After dot voting on the most critical aspects of a plan, the following emerged as vital:

- Timely implementation
- Accessible to all users
- Enables connectivity
- Promotes Safety
- Oriented to kids being able to bike and walk to school safely



QUADRANT DISCUSSIONS

During this session, tables were set up with maps and flip charts for each of the four quadrants in the City – northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast. Participants were asked to break out into different groups and were allowed to move freely between tables. One facilitator was stationed at table, taking notes of the group discussions. Participants were also encouraged to draw their ideas on the maps.

Sample prompts:

- “In order for people in this area of the city to walk and bike more often, safely, and efficiently for leisure and transit, this area needs . . . ” (consider both built/engineering needs as well as awareness/education needs)
- “Where, in the vicinity of this area, do bike/pedestrian/transit bus infrastructures come together or could potentially come together? How do we improve facilities and eliminate gaps at these points? (e.g. – pedestrian crossings, bus stops, shared sidewalk space, etc...)”
- “How might this area connect with areas being reviewed by other groups? How do we improve connectivity and eliminate gaps at these points between other sections of the City?”

Facilitators asked groups recommend priorities for the needs identified: 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level priority (1st priority is the highest priority).

Italicized items were drawn by participants on map, but were not captured on flip charts. Category of need recommendations were not made.

Northeast Quadrant

Recommended Priority	Need Statement	Bike/Ped
An overarching theme of the discussion of needs in this group was access to schools and other destinations from nearby neighborhoods, particularly for those who walk and bike by necessity rather than by choice.		
1	A plan that addresses everyone's needs, focusing on those who may not be bikers/pedestrians by choice.	Both
1	Seeing the connection between these populations and schools, and therefore prioritizing access and safety at these (potential) hubs	Both
2	The provision of continuous paths/lanes that do not force people to jump streets	Both
	<i>Connect Mt. Clinton Pike via Vine St to Smithland Soccer Complex, sidewalks/bike lanes or shared use path?</i>	Both
	<i>Sidewalks on Vine Street from N Main St to E Market St</i>	Ped
	<i>Sidewalks and traffic calming on Blue Ridge Dr; it's a good alternative to Vine St.</i>	Both
	<i>Sidewalks and shared use path on Country Club Rd to connect residents to schools and businesses</i>	Both
	<i>Many gaps along Route 33 between Carlton St to Linda Ln (over interstate)/ High demand area, but lacks bike and ped infrastructure</i>	Both
	<i>Crossing at Reservoir St and Sterling St is unsafe</i>	Both
	<i>Northeast Neighborhood experiences high speeds, drivers not stopping at stop signs</i>	Both
	<i>Main St intersections downtown, drivers turn right without looking</i>	Ped
	<i>Extend Linda Ln shared use path along Smithland Rd from Smithland Soccer Complex to existing sidewalk on Old Furnace Rd near Oriole Ln</i>	Both
	<i>Sidewalks on Old Furnace Rd on either side of Blue Ridge Dr to connect to existing sidewalk</i>	Ped
	<i>Sidewalks on Blue Ridge Dr</i>	Ped
	<i>Sidewalks and crossing(s) on Reservoir St from E Market St to Evelyn Byrd Ave</i>	Ped
	<i>Pedestrian lights on traffic signals downtown</i>	Ped

- Safety
 - Safety was tied to the ideas of accessibility and efficiency throughout different conversations
 - Sidewalks and continuous lanes are seen as ways to ensure safety
 - Schools offer the ability to provide good points to plan around

- Paths provided should be multiuse, have good lighting, and offer a speedy way to travel.
 - Education should be provided for everyone (i.e. bikers *and* pedestrians)
- Current Barriers
 - Lack of connection points (both to other areas, and the need to jump across roads, etc)
 - A lack of continuous paths/lanes
 - A lack of lighting
 - Narrow sidewalks
 - Country Club Rd
 - Vine St
- Opportunities
 - More reliable transit in the NE quadrant
 - Utilizing police who are in communities to identify needs/points of connection
 - The ability to connect neighborhoods with JMU and EMU

Northwest Quadrant

Recommended Priority	Need Statement	Bike/Ped
An overarching theme of the discussion of needs in this group was about connecting schools and neighborhoods and making biking and walking safe and compelling. More sidewalks are a key concern in some of the residential neighborhoods to enable this to happen safely.		
1	Sidewalk and handicapped access from 33 to Thomas Harrison MS	Ped
1	Bike/ped improvements on Waterman Dr between Chicago Avenue and W Market St, <i>bike access to Thomas Harris MS</i>	Both
1	Prioritize Chicago Ave as a key connector	Both
1	Sidewalks west of Waterman ES (Particularly W Gay St west of N Willow St)	Ped
2	Sidewalks on Lee Ave, <i>Stuart St, and residential area to the north</i>	Ped
2	Pedestrian marking from west to Waterman Dr	
2	Bike/ped improvements on Greystone St	Both
2	Traffic calming on streets near EMU for safety	Both
2	N Main St & Gay St intersection – establish crosswalk on final corner (3 of 4 exist)	Ped
2	East-west crosswalk(s) on Virginia Ave north of Third St for Safety (Perhaps at Collicello North development)	Both
2	Bike lanes on N Main St from Washington St to north	Bike
3	Include parking area at future trailhead of Northend Greenway	Both
	<i>Sidewalks and bike lanes or shared use path on Mt. Clinton Pike (connect to Smithland Soccer Complex)</i>	Both
	<i>Connect Woodleigh Ct to Mt. Clinton Pike with official path</i>	Both
	<i>Bike and pedestrian facilities on Mt. Clinton Pike west of Chicago Ave</i>	Both
	<i>Crossings and bike lane or path on Route 42 from Mt. Clinton Pike to north city limits needs</i>	Both
	<i>Northend Greenway between Chicago Ave to Downtown</i>	Both
	<i>Bike Lanes on E/W Gay St to connect east-west</i>	Bike

Observations about linking North West quadrant into the broader city system:

- Talk with various landowners where unofficial paths are in use to make them official paths that offer shorter, more direct routes.
- Mt. Clinton Pike offers connection possibilities to the east quadrant for both bike and ped.
- Virginia Ave becomes an important connection to the north to the county and to the south to downtown and the southeast and southwest quadrants.

Southeast Quadrant

Recommended Priority	Need Statement	Bike/Ped
An overarching theme of the discussion of needs in this group was a desire for connectivity. This included connectivity throughout the city, as well as routes connecting neighborhoods to schools and playgrounds.		
1	Traffic lights and crossing guards to eliminate buses around Spotswood ES, especially at Reservoir St	Both
1	In-street pedestrian signage on Mason St and Water St	Ped
1	Educate Stone Gate and Sun Chase property managers about encouraging residents to use the flashing lights at the crosswalk on Neff Ave	Ped
2	Establish bike lanes on Port Republic Rd on the bridge crossing I-81.	Bike
2	Eliminate parking on one side of Devon Ln	Bike
2	Establish a long, continuous, accessible trail, potentially by extending the Bluestone Trail into the county, following Black's Run and Cook's Creek and on the west side of I-81 south of Erickson Ave following Route 11.	Both
2	Connect A Dream Come True park to surrounding neighborhoods by a separated trail	Both
2	Connect JMU to Downtown to the Northend Greenway via Federal St or Black's Run	Both
3	More routes connecting residential areas to shopping on E Market St	Both
3	Connect the new Hotel and Conference Center to Downtown via a separated path.	Both
3	Shared use path through Ramblewood Park (Connect Bluestone Trail to Greendale Rd).	Both
3	Designated parking for trailheads along Bluestone Trail and future Northend Greenway	Both
	<i>Unsafe and uncomfortable for bikes and peds across Port Republic Rd between Forest Hill Rd and Bluestone Dr</i>	Both
	<i>Sidewalks and crossing points on Reservoir St between MLK Jr. Way and Evelyn Byrd Ave</i>	Ped
	<i>Crossing points on Reservoir St between Myers Ave and Carlton St for safer access to Spotswood ES</i>	Both
	<i>Sidewalks on MLK Jr Way from Mountain View Dr towards Ott St</i>	Ped
	<i>Make Federal St a bike/ped route</i>	Both
	<i>Extend MLK Jr Way to connect to Country Club Rd for east-west connector</i>	Both
	<i>Bike lanes on MLK Way and Reservoir St (between Neff Ave and E Market St)</i>	Bike
	<i>Encourage connectivity between Devon Ln to Hunters Rd/Bradley Dr</i>	Both

	<i>Connect Bluestone Trail to south city limits following Blacks Run, and connect with major industrial employers</i>	Both
	<i>Spur Bluestone Trail along west side of I-81 from Ramblewood Park to Pleasant Valley Rd with connections to roads along S Main St</i>	Both

Southwest Quadrant

Recommended Priority	Need Statement	Bike/Ped
An overarching theme of the discussion of needs in this group was an interest in reframing problem-solving from emphasizing how to adapt existing roads designed for cars into shared systems to emphasizing opportunities to create path systems separate from car roads.		
1	Both bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to Harrisonburg HS and to-be-built elementary school near there from neighborhoods via Hillandale Park and other non-road routes. Emphasis is put on having a pathway that is NOT shared with cars.	Both
1	Create separate facility or bike lanes on 33W to Harrisonburg HS. This will fill in a gap that currently exists regarding bike options to and from the school.	Bike
2	Create non-road access to Thomas Harrison MS from Westover Park <i>and connect to W Market St</i>	Both
2	Safe pedestrian crossing options at the intersections of S High St and S Main St & Erickson Ave, especially S High St & Erickson Ave from SE corner to NE corner	Ped
2	Install sidewalk from SE corner of S High St & Erickson Ave to the nearby Food Lion on S High St	Ped
2	Permanent traffic calming solutions on S Dogwood Dr. (Turn stop sign on Ohio Ave to be stopping traffic on S Dogwood Dr? Small roundabouts in intersections?)	Both
2	Better signage in Hillandale Park regarding what paths are ped-only and what paths are shared bike/ped i.e. gravel path from South Ave into park	Both
2	Addressing natural tendency for bike/ped to cross S High St at Emery St en route to Hillandale Park and shops. Either create safe crossing option or better enforce no crossing at that point	Both
2	Create bike lane on Maryland Ave from S Main St to S High St	Bike
2	Address congestion that forms on Maryland Ave when Keister ES lets out from the school day	Both
2	Complete bike lane on S High St to Garbers Crossing Shopping Center	Bike
2	Create a safer crossing across S High St at W Bruce St and W Water St. Like Emery St, these are places where both bikes and peds cross because it is a natural path/short path between two points. W Market St from S High St to S Liberty St is likely not used as it has more cars, on a steep hill, and is narrow.	Both
3	Clockwise bus route going west on Erickson Ave stops for Wal-Mart on Erickson Ave – this bus stop needs a safer crossing for pedestrians	Ped
	<i>More bike/ped support at intersection for left turns at MLK Jr Way and S Main St</i>	Both

	<i>Create rails-with-trails next to rail line</i>	Both
	<i>Complete SE Connector/ Erickson Ave improvements between S High St and Garbers Church Rd</i>	Both
	<i>Sidewalks along W Mosby Rd from S Main St to west</i>	Ped
	<i>Safe crossings on S Main St at W Kaylor Park, Baxter Dr, and Pointe Dr for residents to connect to opposite sides and to future Bluestone Trail</i>	Both
	<i>Improve sidewalk on W Market St for bike safety between Dogwood Dr and Westover Park entrance</i>	Bike
	<i>Sidewalks on S Dogwood Dr</i>	Ped

Observations about linking South West quadrant into the broader city system:

- While not city-specific, attention needs to be paid to how the city blurs the lines with the county to enable safer transitions for road cyclists, particularly heading west on Erickson Ave and heading south on 42.
- There is a strong interest in linking this quadrant to the Bluestone Trail safely across 11 so that neighborhoods between 11 and 42 have safe access. The most likely prospect for this seems to be at Kaylor Park Dr and as far from the I-81 interchange as possible.
- Participants wanted to ‘see’ this quadrant as an area where the nodes are schools, neighborhoods, and parks and the lines linking them are the bike/ped infrastructure. The infrastructure should be dedicated vs. adapted to existing car systems.
- Because schools are a node in the system, new schools should be designed with entry points for potential dedicated bike/ped paths so that they do not have to be retrofitted after the fact. Case in point is the fact that there is poor bike/ped access to Thomas Harrison MS from W Market St. School design includes adequate, covered bike parking near a logical entrance. Because this involves funding decisions, too, it is recommended that a school system representative at the appropriate decision-making level be involved in Bike/Ped Committee work.

Overall System-Wide Plan Comments

Offer amenities at bus stops (shelter, safety, etc.)

Working with school board to be a part of the conversation about alternative modes of transportation to school

Connecting quadrants – may need to rely more on greenways to make these connections

Have Greenway Master Plan as a sub-plan of the Bicycle & Pedestrian plan

Identify more unofficial paths-in-use

Solidify the “last mile” cross-mode connections

Focus on maps and wayfinding

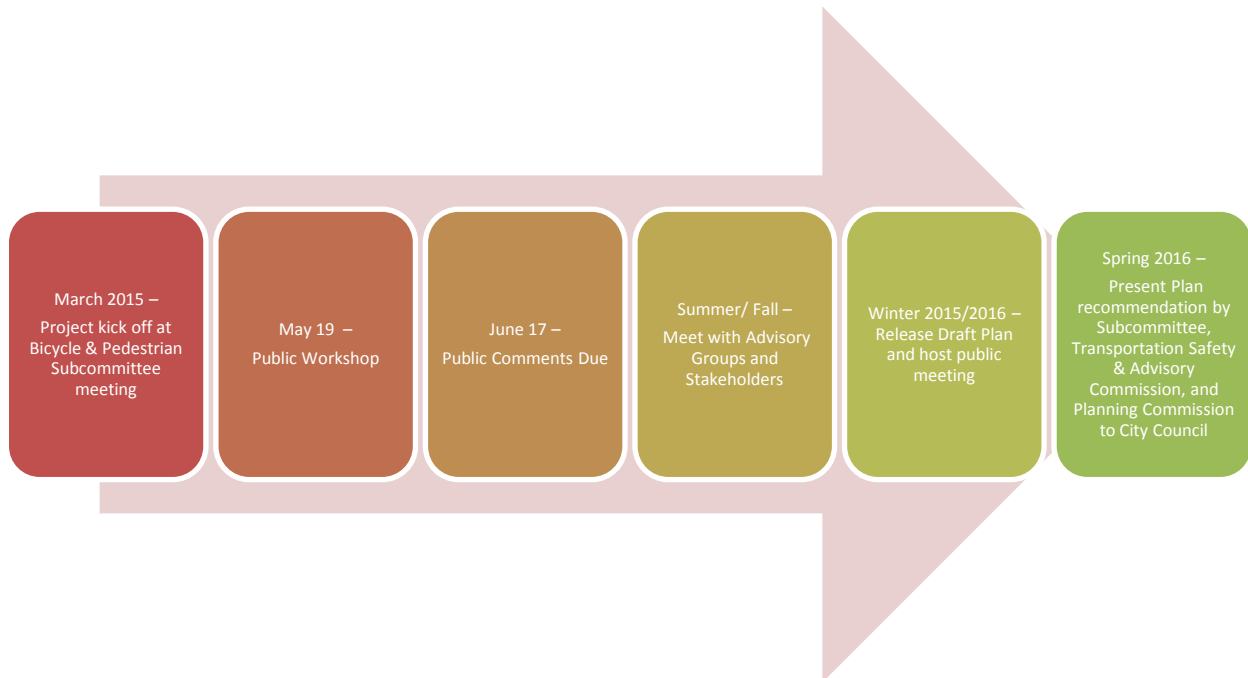
Strengthen confidence that all users are educated on rights, responsibilities, safety

Use amenities/optional fee-for-service in high traffic areas to foster economic sustainability (Bike pumps, repair, vending machines, etc.)

WRAP UP

The recommendations collected at this Workshop will be reviewed by city staff and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee, and will be used to inform meetings with advisory groups and stakeholders.

Below is the schedule for moving forward.



For updates, visit: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/bicycle-pedestrian-plan>