



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen

FROM: Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

DATE: Wednesday, March 14, 2012

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from March 14, 2012 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 8:30 AM in Room 205 at the City Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chair), Len Van Wyk (Citizen Member), Russell Presnell (Citizen Member), MPO Greg Deeds (Police), Sgt. Roger Knott (Police), Deputy Chief Ian Bennett (Fire), Paul Helmuth (Fire), Reggie Smith (Public Transportation), Lee Eshelman (JMU), Drew Williams (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works)

Guests Present: None

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

New Business

1. Request for endorsement of Stone Spring Elementary Safe Routes to School grant request

Mr. Reed requested support from the Commission for the City's Safe Routes to School grant request for engineering improvements to provide safe paths for walking and biking to Stone Spring Elementary School. The submittal of these applications is contingent upon the availability of funding from VDOT that is allocated from the federal government. The grant request will be for \$318,544.45 and include the following improvements:

- Construction of 950-ft of new sidewalks on the east side of Peach Grove Avenue between King Edwards Way and Decca Drive.
- Construction 400-ft of new sidewalks on the west side of Peach Grove Avenue between the residential driveway to the southwest of the school and the school entrance.
- Construction a 40-ft length of sidewalk on school property to provide better a better crossing location to access the school entrance.
- Installation of a new traffic signal with pedestrian signals and crosswalks on Peach Grove Avenue at the school entrance.

The Commission gave its endorsement to the project and provided a signed letter of support to be included with the grant application. Mr. Van Wyk suggested the City explore the use of a crossing guard as well as the reduction of street width using road marking changes on Peach Grove Ave to further improve crossing safety.

2. Truck traffic in Blue Stone Hills neighborhood

Mr. Reed shared a concern from a citizen in the Blue Stone Hills Neighborhood, Mr. Milton Hale Jr., regarding truck traffic on Blue Stone Hills Dr. The individual has observed large beer trucks traveling through the neighborhood, which he believes to be making deliveries to Gold Crown Billiards on the corner of Chestnut Ridge Dr & Blue Stone Hills Dr, and is worried that the vehicles have a negative impact on pedestrian safety. He specifically mentioned seeing “18 wheeler beer trucks”. He would like the City to consider restricting these trucks from using neighborhood streets. To install such signage, a recommendation from this Commission is needed.

Mr. Williams noted that the Blue Stone Hills Neighborhood is currently enrolled in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, but that this request is being made by the individual, not the neighborhood through the program. Also, trucks making local deliveries are not included in the ‘No Through Trucks’ restriction and it is possible that trucks delivering to Gold Crown Billiards could argue that they are making local deliveries.

City staff performed a traffic study on Bluestone Hills Dr in late February and counted 71 total medium and heavy vehicles in a week long period, which includes both travel directions. 61 of these were 2-axle, 6 tire single unit vehicles, which could include beer trucks, multi-wheel pickup trucks, dump trucks, trash trucks, UPS/FEDEX delivery trucks, town trucks, etc. 7 of the 71 heavy vehicles were 3-axle, single unit vehicles, while only 3 of the 71 were <5-axle, single trailer trucks, which would include the 18-wheeler trucks mentioned by the citizen.

24 of the 61 2-axle, 6 tire vehicles were traveling between 30 and 35 mph and 2 of the 61 were traveling between 35 and 40 mph. All other medium and heavy vehicles were traveling below 30 mph. The overall 85th percentile speed for all vehicles in the week was 33 mph. Based upon the parameters set forth the City’s Neighborhood Traffic Calming Guide, neighborhood streets

with a 25 mph speed limit and 85th percentile speeds over 35 mph are considered to have a speeding problem.

It cannot be determined how many of the 71 larger vehicles counted in the week long study were beer trucks, but the volume can be considered to be very low on a per-day basis, especially given how many other vehicles types are included in the same classification. A comparison was made with Myers Ave between Franklin St and Bruce St in the Old Town neighborhood, on which 73 medium and heavy vehicles were counted in one-week period. Myers Ave is comparable to Blue Stone Hill Dr in that it is a residential street that makes several street connections, but does not have any clear links to businesses.

The Commission determined that the use of a public street by a low volume of trucks traveling at a reasonable speed does not constitute a problem. Since there is no evidence to suggest that the through trucks are posing a safety hazard in the neighborhood, it was recommended that no restriction be imposed.

3. Request for ‘Right Turn Yield to Pedestrian’ signage at High St & W Market St

Mr. Jon Stetson, a blind citizen, requested that the City consider the installation of ‘Right Turn Yield to Pedestrian’ signage at High St & W Market St due to pedestrian safety concerns crossing High St on the south side of the intersection. Staff performed midday and evening traffic counts at this location for comparison with the standard that needs to be met for sign installation.

The westbound direction on W Market St has the heaviest right turn volume at the intersection and is therefore the most representative location to use in considering signage. The midday peak hour (11:45 AM -12:45 PM) for the westbound right turn was 131 vehicles. The pedestrian volume for this leg of the intersection was 2 people in the same hour. During the PM peak hour (4:30 PM – 5:30 PM) on the same approach, 142 right turners and 3 pedestrians were counted. The total number of pedestrians for the entire intersection in either of these peak hours was only 12 people.

The City standard requires that, within the same hour, > 40 pedestrians and > 100 conflicting vehicles or > 0 pedestrians and > 200 vehicles be present. Since the study showed volumes well below the standard, staff and the Commission recommended against the installation of signage. Mr. Van Wyk noted that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee is working on a public outreach program that will address driver, pedestrian, and bicycle safety.

Other Business/Announcements

4. St. Patrick’s Day Police Checkpoints

MPO Deeds announced that the police department will be performing checkpoints and saturation patrols on St. Patrick’s Day. During last year’s checkpoints, 1,200 vehicles were checked and about 120 violations were cited.

Adjourn