



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

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

FROM: Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

DATE: Wednesday, November 20, 2013

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from November 13, 2013 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 8:30 AM in Room 205 at the City Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Citizen Member, Chair), Len Van Wyk (Citizen Member), Calvin Ferrell (Citizen Member), Brad Reed (Public Works Designee), Paul Helmuth (Fire), Reggie Smith (Public Transportation), Nathan Barge (Schools), Lee Eshelman (JMU)

Guests Present: None

Commission meetings are open to the public and citizens are provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the Commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move relevant agenda items to the beginning of the meeting when citizens are in attendance to avoid detaining them for the entire meeting.

Welcome

New Business

1. Request for change to meeting time

Mr. Van Wyk requested that the Commission meeting time be changed due to new conflicts in his work schedule. The Commission agreed to change to the first Thursday of each month at 8:30am.

Note: further discussion after the meeting led to this time being changed to the **first Thursday of each month at 9am**. The meeting location will remain the same.

2. Request for crosswalks on Chestnut Ridge Dr

Mr. Reed shared a request from a citizen for crosswalks on Chestnut Ridge Dr to facilitate pedestrian crossing at bus stops and where the sidewalk ends on one side. The complainant submitted a photo demonstrating how there is confused interaction between vehicles and pedestrians as people get off the bus on the north side of the street and try to cross Chestnut Ridge Dr to the Copper Beech apartment complex on the south side. At present, there are no crosswalks on Chestnut Ridge Dr and the street has a long crossing distance due to the presence of bicycle lanes and bus pull offs.

Public Works staff reviewed this matter and confirmed that there are issues with unsafe pedestrian crossings today, with bus riders trying to cross directly in front of and behind the bus. Those crossing in front of the bus are of particular concern, as two of the three heavily used bus stops in the vicinity of Copper Beech are pull offs, meaning vehicles on Chestnut Ridge Dr can continue to travel unimpeded in the adjacent travel lanes as the bus is stopped. Pedestrians crossing in front of the bus step out and look while standing close to moving traffic, often causing vehicles to suddenly stop for them as soon as they see the unexpected pedestrian trying to cross the street.

Mr. Reed explained that new crosswalk locations need to be carefully chosen and are not appropriate in all locations, but based upon the heavy use of the bus stops and several other factors observed on Chestnut Ridge Dr, the requested crosswalk locations were found to meet VDOT's recommended criteria in their *Guidelines for the Installation of Marked Crosswalks*. For this reason, staff recommended that crosswalks be marked at 6 locations on Chestnut Ridge Dr to make vehicles more aware of the high pedestrian volume and to identify better crossing locations for pedestrians that are within close proximity of where they would naturally choose to cross the street. Warning signage indicating the presence of pedestrians on Chestnut Ridge Dr would be installed with the crosswalks.

Mr. Smith estimated that approximately 600-800 people per day ride the Route 15 bus to and from the Copper Beech complex and agreed that crosswalks should be installed. Mr. Van Wyk inquired as to whether these crosswalks should be raised crosswalks to control the speed of traffic. Mr. Reed explained that it is the city's policy to only install active traffic calming devices, such as raised crosswalks and speed humps, on qualifying residential streets through the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. Since the installation of these devices can be controversial, this process is meant to protect both citizen and city interests by requiring consensus agreement by neighborhood residents to install such devices through the Program. This prevents the problem of expending funding for device installation only to find that residents are not in favor of it and choose to push for its removal. Mr. Van Wyk expressed disagreement with this process and recommended that the city reconsider allowing traffic calming devices to be installed outside the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program to improve traffic safety.

The Commission voted unanimously to proceed with the staff recommendation to install marked crosswalks and associated signage on Chestnut Ridge Dr. A sketch of the crosswalk locations is attached to this summary.

Other Business/Announcements

3. Update on Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program for Old Town

Mr. Reed announced that representatives from the Old Town neighborhood met with Public Works staff on November 5 to discuss next steps for their involvement in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. Staff proposed a process for graduated the neighborhood given the positive results of the traffic study conducted in April 2013 following the installation of 3 more speed humps from the neighborhood's agreed upon Traffic Calming Plan. The representatives requested that another traffic study be conducted that would include previous locations as well as additional count locations on Grattan St, West View St, and Ott St to determine whether the significant decrease in traffic on Paul St after the installation of speed humps has shifted traffic onto other streets without traffic calming devices. This study will be conducted by Public Works prior to the week of Thanksgiving and results shared with the representatives. Based upon the findings of the study, the group will consider entering a "graduation" process from the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. It was requested that subsequent traffic studies be conducted once a year for the next 3 years to ensure that traffic speeds and volume have stayed down.

Adjourn

1 inch = 100 feet

