



**BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION  
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

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**TO:** Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Members, Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members

**FROM:** Thanh Dang, Public Works Planner

**DATE:** October 1, 2010

**RE:** Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Meeting Summary for Tuesday September 28, 2010

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The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee met on Tuesday September 28, 2010, 6:30pm at the Community Development classroom, 409 South Main Street, Harrisonburg. Meetings are always open to the public and citizens are encouraged to attend.

Members present included: Thomas Jenkins, Len Van Wyk, Charles Chenault, Paul Johnston, and Lara Mack.

City staff and guests present included: Thanh Dang (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works), Adam Fletcher (Community Development), Ed Steele (Parks & Recreation), Lee Eschelmann (JMU), and Mack Moore (JMU).

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*Welcome*

**1. Introductions**

Mr. Jenkins, chairman, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and introduced himself and the subcommittee members. Mr. Van Wyk is the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission representative on the Subcommittee. A round of introductions of city staff and guests followed.

**2. Overview of Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission and Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee**

Mr. Jenkins presented that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee was established by the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission (TSAC) after City Council added bicycle and pedestrian matters to the Commission's area of responsibility in response to citizen requests for a formalized body

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to take on bicycle and pedestrian matters. The Subcommittee duties include advising city staff and TSAC. It is important to keep good communication with citizens, with the Subcommittee acting as a liaison between citizens and the city. Public involvement is key; we want citizens and agencies to participate in Subcommittee meetings as key stakeholders. Another duty and goal of the Subcommittee is to help implement the recently adopted Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The Subcommittee will probably present to TSAC quarterly in addition to sharing meeting summaries.

Ms. Dang noted that city bicycle and pedestrian information, as well as meeting summaries will be posted at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped). Anyone interested in receiving e-mails notifying them of upcoming meetings should join the e-mail list by contacting her at [thanhd@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:thanhd@harrisonburgva.gov). Mr. Reed added that Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission information is available at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/tsc](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/tsc).

#### *New Business*

### **3. Introduction to Bicycle & Pedestrian Reference Guides**

Ms. Dang noted that each Subcommittee member has received a binder with the following enclosures: City Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan with maps, excerpts from the City Design & Construction Standards Manual with items related to bicycle and pedestrian matters, Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professional's Bicycle Parking Guidelines, and information from the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) about shared lane markings ("sharrows"). Other reference documents are listed in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and if anyone wants copies of something please let Ms. Dang know.

A discussion was had about sharrows and about the need to inform the general public about what they mean. Ms. Dang reviewed, from the MUTCD, that sharrows assist bicyclists with lateral positioning in a shared lane with on-street parking reduce the chance of a bicyclists being hit by the door of a parallel parked vehicle, sharrows assist bicyclists position in a lane where it is too narrow for a vehicle and bicycle to travel side by side in the same travel lane, sharrows alert road users that bicyclists are likely to be in the travelway, and sharrows reduce the incidence of wrong-way bicycling. Ms. Dang noted that she has already been in discussions with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) about putting out a radio PSA about sharrows and will be working on a press release to the media. Ms. Mack noted that Tom Benevento will also be contacting the media. It was suggested also that the Breeze be contacted and other ideas are welcome.

### **4. Overview of projects currently being implemented**

Ms. Dang provided an overview of projects that the city is currently working on and noted that if the Subcommittee would like to review any of these projects more in depth that time can be set aside at a future meeting.

- Bluestone Trail Phase I
  - Project limits: Port Republic Road at Bluestone Drive to Stone Spring Road across from Wellness Center through JMU property, Purcell Park and 1 private commercial property. Utilizing area mostly within HEC power line easement. (Phase II would extend south towards Pleasant Valley Road.)

- Concept: 10 ft wide shared use path.
  - Estimated Cost: > \$600,000
  - History/Status: In March 2010, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) members approached City Council with a request to move forward with project. City Council directed staff to design project so that it is “shovel ready”. JMU approval of alignment through JMU property has been received. Alignment through Purcell Park is being worked. Once completed, alignment will be presented to conservation easement holders of area within Purcell Park, Valley Conservation Council and The Nature Conservancy. Approval from private property owner on Stone Spring Road has not been received. Staff continuing to work on design and is anticipated to return to Council in April 2011. This project is not yet funded.
- East Market Street Sidewalk Phase II
    - Project Limits: North side of East Market Street between Linda Lane and University Boulevard/Kroger Shopping Center Entrance.
    - Concept: 10 ft wide sidewalk with 5 ft grassed utility strip including new bus shelter.
    - Estimated Cost: <\$184,000
    - History/Status: Construction for this project is funded by VDOT’s Highway Safety Improvement Fund grant applied for by the City. Project has been designed and has gone to bid. City Council reviewing bid recommendation tonight and recommendation will be submitted to VDOT for approval. Project expected to be completed by December 15, 2010.
- East Market Street Sidewalk Phase III
    - Project Limits: South side of East Market Street between University Boulevard and Evelyn Byrd Avenue.
    - Concept: 5 ft wide sidewalk with 3 ft grassed utility strip.
    - Estimated Cost: \$212,595
    - History/Status: Construction for this project is funded by VDOT’s Highway Safety Improvement Fund grant applied for by the City. Project is currently under design by City staff. Construction anticipated to begin July 2011 and to be complete December 2011.
- Safe Routes to School – Keister Elementary
    - Project Limits: South Avenue between Main Street and South High Street (sidewalks most of both sides), South Avenue between South High Street and South Dogwood Drive (sidewalks on north side), Central Avenue between South Avenue and Southhampton Drive (sidewalks on east side), and Maryland Avenue between South High Street and Chestnut Drive (sidewalks on south side).
    - Concept: 5 ft sidewalks, plus 2 ft grassed utility strip where possible. Also includes new pedestrian signals at intersection of South Avenue and South High Street and at South Avenue and South Main Street.
    - Estimated Cost: >\$455,330

- History/Status: This project is funded by VDOT's Safe Routes to School Grant which was applied for by the City in partnership with RMH Community Health, Keister School, etc. City staff designed the project and negotiated and received donations of right-of-way and temporary constriction easements needed from adjacent property owners. Project has been bid and we are awaiting approval from VDOT to begin construction. Project to be completed Spring 2011.
  
- Safe Routes to School – Waterman Elementary
  - Project Limits: Sidewalks on west side of Chicago Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Rockingham Drive, bike lanes on Chicago Avenue between Gay Street and Rockingham Drive, sidewalk on south side of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between Collicello Street to Stuart Street, sidewalk on east side of Stuart Street, sidewalks on both sides of Virginia Avenue from about 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Concept: sidewalks, bike lanes, and new pedestrian signals at intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Virginia Avenue.
  - Estimated Cost: ~ \$500,000
  - History/Status: This project is funded by VDOT's Safe Routes to School Grant which was applied for by the City in partnership with RMH Community Health, Waterman School, etc. City staff has started surveying for project and engineering design currently underway. Have not negotiated right-of-way and easements needed yet with property owners. Project anticipated to be completed Spring 2012.
  
- Bicycle Lanes and Shared Lane Markings (“sharrows”)
  - For this 2010 season, the City has already painted and signed about 2.5-miles of new bicycle lanes on Main Street, Park Road, Central Avenue, and Vine Street. City has also applied new shared lane markings (“sharrows”) on Main Street in downtown.
  - Next projects for this season include new sharrows on South Dogwood Drive and new bike lanes on Main Street between Miller Circle and Pleasant Valley Road when this section of roadway is repaved in the next few weeks. Will identify additional 2 year plan opportunities as time permits this season or will work on next season.

Ms. Dang noted that bike lanes on South Main Street, with future repaving of the street, will eventually be extended to Mosby Road. Extension of bike lanes beyond Mosby Road is not possible without significant roadway reconstruction because the pavement width is too narrow. Mr. Johnston noted that we might be stranding bicyclists and asked if a curb cut could be put in to allow bicyclists to move onto the sidewalk. Ms. Dang noted that although it is permitted, it is not good to encourage riding on the sidewalk because it is often more dangerous than riding on the street. Bicyclists are less visible when riding on the sidewalk and vehicles pulling out of driveways often do not expect to have faster moving bicyclists on the sidewalk.

Mr. Williams presented:

- Chicago Avenue Corridor Study

- Project Limits: Between Gay Street to Mt. Clinton Pike.
- History/Status: This project is a corridor study being conducted by Public Works Department's on-call consultant McCormick Taylor. The goal of the study is to develop a vision of the corridor including widening to a three lane facility in some sections, and adding bicycle lanes and sidewalks. There is no funding for construction.

## 5. Continued implementation of Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Jenkins said there are several projects on which some citizens have begun taking the lead on outreach, and it is the Subcommittee's goal to have the citizens working on their respective projects to report back and coordinate with the Subcommittee. *(Editor's note: None of these projects are yet funded.)* The following overviews were provided:

- Thomas Harrison Middle School shared use path – Mr. Jenkins presented that there is more momentum now than 5 years ago to construct a 10 ft wide shared use path connecting Wyndham Drive to West Market Street by way of the Harrisonburg Electric Commission (HEC) easement behind Thomas Harrison Middle School. Mr. Jenkins has been in discussions with School Principal Betsey Dunnenberger and has been told that School Superintendent Dr. Kizner is also in support of this. It was asked if the schools might be able to assist with project funding. Ms. Dang noted that HEC has also given verbal support of the concept.

Mr. Jenkins said that he will take the lead on doing outreach in the Wyndham Woods neighborhood and also with contacting the private property owner at the end of the Wyndham Drive cul-de-sac to inquire of their support for granting an easement for the shared use path.

- Park Road bike lane extension – Mr. Jenkins presented that Mr. Ben Wyse (not present at this meeting) has been working to get signatures of support from property owners along Park Road between West Dogwood Drive to either Harmony Drive or Beech Drive. Their support is needed because on street parking would be removed and parking in the bike lane prohibited. This would extend the bicycle lanes the City painted earlier this year, with Eastern Mennonite University support, on Park Road between Mt. Clinton Pike and West Dogwood Drive. So far, property owners who have been contacted have all been in support. Ms. Mack added that New Community Project has also been helping with getting support from property owners, but that one of the challenges has been contacting owners of the rental properties. Ms. Dang added that she has received comments from one neighbor on College Avenue who is concerned that removing on street parking from Park Road will have the undesired result of more people parking on College Avenue, particularly spectators of EMU sporting events.
- North Blacks Run Greenway – Ms. Mack presented that Mr. Tom Benevento (not present at this meeting) has been working on this concept which was inspired by the Blacks Run Greenway Master Plan *(Editors note: Greenway Plan was created in 2002)*. Mr. Benevento has specifically

focused on the Greenway in the northern areas of the City, which would provide an extension of bicycle facilities that we have been seeing implemented in the southern sections of the city. This concept would be a shared use path that connects downtown to the EMU area. Mr. Benevento has already begun outreach to some property owners.

- Hillendale Park to Garbers Church Road connection – Ms. Dang explained that this project is in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and that she has received comments from various citizens that this should be a priority connection. However, given limited staff resources and staff focus on other projects, no movement has occurred with this project in some time. Mr. Chenault noted that there was some preliminary alignment determined by city staff some number of years ago and that there was a cost estimate developed at that time. Mr. Chenault volunteered to take a look into this.
- Circle Drive connection to Hillendale Park (near Rocktown bike trails) – Mr. Fletcher provided an update on a property on Circle Drive that could provide a shared use path connection into Hillendale Park. He said that the current property owner had told Mr. Fletcher years ago that when the property develops that the owner would provide an easement for a path connection (verbal only commitment). However, this property is now foreclosed and is up for sale. It is unknown if the future property owner would be willing to accommodate this connection.

Mr. Jenkins asked the James Madison University representatives, Mr. Eschelmann and Mr. Moore, if they could share some information on what JMU is currently working on. They shared the following:

- Future closure of campus to vehicular traffic on Bluestone Drive between South Main Street and Carrier Drive - Road would be open only to transit buses and bicycles. Mr. Eschelmann asked if the Subcommittee had any concerns about bicycles and transit buses operating in the same space. Subcommittee members did not express any concerns. Mr. Johnston asked if JMU might consider doing what UC Davis does. UC Davis does not run buses on campus at the same time as class changes.
- Bike Lanes on Carrier Drive between the I-81 bridge and Bluestone Drive - After Bridgforth Stadium is completed, Carrier Drive will be repaved and the parallel parking spaces on Carrier Drive will be removed. This will provide enough room for bicycle lanes on both sides of Carrier Drive.
- Arboretum Trail - Mr. Eschelmann shared that there is some discussion by JMU staff about paving a shared use path through the Arboretum to connect the trail the city constructed off Neff Avenue to University Boulevard. It was also noted that JMU wants a lighted crosswalk on University Boulevard between the Arboretum entrance and Driver Drive. Ms. Dang noted that the two crosswalks JMU painted this past summer on University Boulevard at Driver Drive and the Arboretum entrance are inappropriate and should be reduced to one single location.

Mr. Eschelman asked if the Subcommittee and the City could partner with JMU and provide support for this paving work and financial support for the lighted crosswalk. The Subcommittee was in support of the concept. However, Ms. Dang noted that a financial commitment from the City would not be likely, and added that the City had already financially contributed by constructing the path from Neff Avenue to the Arboretum. Mr. Chenault explained that originally JMU was going to pave through the Arboretum if the City constructed the path from Neff Avenue leading to the Arboretum.

There was some discussion of where the Virginia Department of Transportation and the City's maintenance responsibility began and ended on University Boulevard.

- Sharrows on Grace Street - Mr. Eschelman shared his desire for sharrows to be applied by the City on West Grace Street. Ms. Dang responded that this has been discussed many times before between City staff and JMU, and that City staff first needs additional information regarding JMU's plans for the area surrounding Grace Street (*editors note: as well as area around South Main Street and Cantrell Avenue*) and that the City and JMU still need to coordinate needed improvements in the vicinity.

## **6. Future Discussion Topics**

Mr. Jenkins asked the group if there were any future topics they wished to discuss. Suggestions he noted were: City Capital Improvement Plan and Budget Process, groups involved in bicycle and pedestrian advocacy and safety, and Bicycle Friendly Community application. No feedback was given.

Ms. Mack asked how future meeting agendas would be established. Ms. Dang responded that items for discussion should be e-mailed to both Mr. Jenkins and Ms. Dang for inclusion in a future agenda.

## **7. Next Meeting**

Mr. Jenkins stated that the Subcommittee will start off with meeting every other month, but may decide to meet once a month if needed. The next meeting date has not yet been established and the Subcommittee will communicate via email to establish a regular meeting time. (*Editor's note: Citizens will be notified via e-mail if they are on the e-mail list and the meeting date will be posted online.*)

*Other Business/ Announcements*

## **8. International Walk to School Week**

Ms. Dang announced that International Walk to School Week is next week and that anyone with children is encouraged to participate. The schedule of events is as follows:

- Monday October 4<sup>th</sup> – Mountain View Elem. School – 8:00 a.m.
- Tuesday October 5<sup>th</sup> – Waterman Elem. – 8:00 a.m.

- Wednesday October 6<sup>th</sup> (Actual International Walk To School Day) Skyline Middle School 7:00 to 7:45
- Wednesday October 6<sup>th</sup> Spotswood Elem. – 8:00 a.m.
- Thursday October 7<sup>h</sup> – South River Elem. – 8:00 a.m.
- Friday October 8<sup>th</sup> – Keister Elem. 8:00 a.m. (Keister now walks every Friday)

#### **9. Share the Road Pocket Guide**

Ms. Dang passed out a pocket guide titled “Share the Road in Virginia: Laws & Safety Tips for Bicyclists and Pedestrians, plus What Motorists Need to Know”. She noted that this was developed by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and other partners and that she has several boxes of these pocket guides funded through a grant. Please contact Ms. Dang with suggestions of where to distribute these pocket guides or if your agency, organization, etc. would like a box. The pocket guides are also available in digital format for reprinting in the future.

*Meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.*