



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

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

FROM: Thanh Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: November 24, 2010

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Meeting Summary for Monday November 22, 2010

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee met on Monday November 22, 2010, 6pm 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.

Advisory members and guests present included: Thanh Dang (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works), Phil Alexander (CSPDC), David Ehrenpreis (citizen), Art Fovarg (citizen), Ann ? (citizen).

Welcome

1. Special Presentation: City Budget Process

Mr. Williams gave an overview of the City Budget Process and how projects can be funded. Some highlights of the presentation included:

- Projects may be immediately funded if they are (a) a maintenance and/or safety issue needing to be addressed right away, (b) a City Council priority, or (c) mandated, generally by the state or federal government.
- Each year between August and December the City works on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP looks at projects over the next 5 years that will take more than 1 year to complete and cost \$30,000 or greater. The CIP assists the budget process. Items in the CIP are recommended by each department who assigns justification codes, are forwarded to a small staff committee (City Manager, Director of Planning & Community Development, Director of

Finance, etc.) for consideration who gives each project a priority ranking, and then to Planning Commission before going to City Council for final consideration and approval.

- Further explanation of the CIP and an electronic copy of the most recently adopted CIP is available at <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/index.php?id=533>. (Note: Public Works Department requests and bicycle and pedestrian requests can be found in the section titled “General Fund Projects.”)
- A City Budget is developed for each fiscal year (July 1-June 30). The budget process begins in December and goes to City Council in April through a public hearing process prior to being adopted. Generally, only priority 1s and 2s in the CIP are funded in the budget.
 - The City budget is available for review at <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/index.php?id=173>. (Note: The City Manager’s letter is included in the “Proposed” budget document and has a narrative on the state of revenues coming into the city, and narrative summary of budget matters, etc.)

Mr. Williams also noted that much of the \$1.5 billion that was reported to be “found” in an audit of the Virginia Department of Transportation are, for the most part, funds that had already been dedicated to projects that had not yet begun.

2. North End Greenway

Mr. Benevento and Mr. Zumfelde explained that the North End Greenway picks up on a portion of the old concept of the Blacks Run Greenway that was developed 7 years ago. The North End Greenway is proposed to be a 10-ft wide paved path that would start near the north end of Downtown near Washington Street and North Main Street, and follow Blacks Run to Mount Clinton Pike near Virginia Avenue (Route 42), and then follow Mount Clinton Pike towards Park Road. The proposed path is about 1.5-miles long. See trail concept map in Attachment 1.

The North End Greenway has the potential to serve a diverse population and lower income neighborhoods with an inexpensive form of transportation. It also is an off road facility that is safe for families and children to use. Mr. Benevento noted that although he originally looked at this project as a benefit for transportation, he recognizes that this trail will also provide good recreational opportunities. He also believes that this path will help build communities and neighborhoods.

Mr. Benevento and New Community Project (NCP) started looking at this concept about 1 year ago and the project has been moving faster than they originally anticipated. NCP has had discussions with homeowners that the path would impact, with Eastern Mennonite University, city staff, and others and have received strong support. A meeting with city staff was held recently in which path design requirements were discussed. Base estimates for the project are that it would cost \$500,000 to \$800,000, but would likely cost more. Mr. Benevento said that NCP is prepared to raise money for the project through fundraising.

As of right now, this project is a private idea and is not yet endorsed by City Council. Ms. Dang noted that the project is not on the City Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The Plan can be amended, but she and Mr. Jenkins suggested that it occur not more than once a year so any other amendments desired should also be considered at the same time. Ms. Dang added that before the North End Greenway is presented to City Council or an amendment to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan be requested that these actions would require recommendations from the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission (TSAC) and Planning

Commission. The Subcommittee is being asked to consider recommending this the North End Greenway to TSAC.

City support and/or partnership in the North End Greenway is needed because NCP is asking the that the City hold the easements acquired for the trail and that the City assume long-term maintenance responsibilities after the trail is constructed.

Mr. Benevento also had questions for the Subcommittee: Does the Subcommittee think that the path will be used a lot at night to warrant installing lighting? Lighting increases the cost of the project. There was discussion about the design challenges at the intersection of Mount Clinton Pike and Virginia Avenue. Someone also asked if gravel would be cheaper than paving. Mr. Benevento responded that because the path runs within the floodplain, that gravel would get washed out. Mr. Van Wyk added that this path is also a bypass to Chicago Avenue for some people.

Mr. Jenkins recommended that before sending the Subcommittee recommendation to TSAC, that they review this project and discuss possible solutions to questions that they anticipate might be asked. The Subcommittee concurred with this recommendation. Ms. Dang will send an email to the Subcommittee, Mr. Benevento, and Mr. Zumfelde to continue these discussions after this meeting.

3. Bicycling in City Parks

Due to limited time during this meeting, this item was skipped.

4. Bike Lanes Implementation Procedure

Due to limited time during this meeting, this item was skipped.

5. Brief update, if any, on projects in planning phase

a. Thomas Harrison Middle School shared use path

Mr. Jenkins reported back that an alternative to constructing a path within the easement at 1012 Wyndham Drive (at the end of the culdesac) has been discussed and that he would like to pursue this alternative first. Mr. Adam Fletcher (not present) suggested that instead of asking the owners of 1012 Wyndham Drive (a developed parcel) to allow the path on their property, that the Subcommittee contact Leonard & Sylvia Aamodt who own two parcels of property next to 1012 Wyndham Drive that is not yet developed. (Note: During this discussion the Subcommittee thought that there the second parcel was owned by another party. However, upon checking after the meeting it was determined that the Aamodt's own both parcels being considered.)

Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Johnston said they will contact Mr. & Mrs. Aamodt to inquire if they would be willing to donate an easement to the city for the path. Ms. Dang will contact VEPCO who holds the easement on the school property to inquire if they would be willing to allow a path to be constructed within the easement.

See concept map in Attachment 2.

b. Hillandale Park to Garbers Church Road connection

Mr. Chenault shared that there is a large rezoning that will be coming to Planning Commission shortly. He said he was exploring whether this would be an opportunity for a connection from the neighborhood to Garbers Church Road. (Note: Upon further discussion the day after the meeting, Mr. Chenault found this not be a feasible opportunity.)

c. Arboretum Trail & Neff Avenue Crossing

Mr. Lee Eschelmann was not present to give an update on the Arboretum Trail. Ms. Dang shared that James Madison University will not consider making any paving or lighting improvements through the Arboretum (between the city's path off Neff Avenue to University Drive at Driver Drive) due to safety concerns.

Subcommittee members were disappointed with this news. Mr. Chenault said that when he starts his term on City Council he will request that this item be discussed at the JMU-City Liaison meeting, at which Charlie King and other JMU staff and 2 Council members meet to discuss JMU and City matters.

d. Bluestone Trail Phase 1

Ms. Dang shared that the city engineer's office has been actively working on the design of the trail through Purcell Park and have been stalled at two topographically challenging points, one of which involves a stream crossing. The Parks & Recreation Department has also raised concern about the trail encroaching into the Park. Staff from Public Works and Parks & Recreation will be meeting with the City Manager after Thanksgiving to discuss these matters.

e. Chicago Avenue Corridor Study

Mr. Johnston asked about the safety improvements needed at the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Waterman Drive. Ms. Dang noted that these are being considered as part of the Chicago Avenue Corridor Study, which Mr. Williams is working with an on-call consultant on. Mr. Williams added that this intersection is very challenging and that staff recognizes that a solution for this intersection is needed before the Chicago Avenue corridor improvements are expected to come to fruition. This intersection has already been identified by staff as a breakout project of the Corridor Study. Mr. Williams and staff will review this item and reporting back to the Subcommittee at the next meeting.

f. "Commercial Connector" sidewalks

Mr. Williams shared that staff is reviewing the pedestrian needs in the commercial area bounded approximately by University Boulevard, Reservoir Street, Neff Avenue, and Evelyn Byrd Avenue and may be able to start a project next year.

6. Brief update on projects under design/construction

Ms. Dang asked the Subcommittee to refer to the handout sent out with the agenda that provides an update of the projects under design/construction. See Attachment 3. There were no questions from the Subcommittee.

7. Future Discussion Topics

Mr. Jenkins welcomed anyone with future discussion topics or presentations to contact him or Ms. Dang. Later during the meeting, it was suggested that JMU's Cycle Share program and the DR 100 event be future topics.

8. New "Bike Like Ike" Bike Safety Bus Ads

Ms. Dang shared that new "Bike Like Ike" bus ads have been put up on city transit buses, primarily ones that service James Madison University. There are four ads current up. The ads were designed by City staff, production (printing) of the ads was funded by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO), and ad space was donated in-kind by the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transit. See sample ads in Attachment 4.

9. Parks & Recreation Mountain Bike Class

Mr. Ed Steele was not present, but Ms. Dang relayed that the Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation Department had applied for and was awarded a small grant to purchase mountain bikes to provide to children who did not have a bike or who did not a suitable bike for the mountain bike class at Rocktown Trails. These classes were offered in previous years by Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition in partnership with Parks & Recreation. Now, with two avid mountain bikers on staff, Parks & Recreation was able to lead the class and to also waive the registration fee this Fall. Parks & Recreation plans to host these classes again in the Spring.

10. Bike the Valley and Virginia Tourism Corporation Grant

Mr. Alexander is with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC). The CSPDC represents 5 counties and its office is in Staunton. In 2004, citizens formed a Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee at the CSPDC. The committee has focused mostly on bicycling and has developed a listing and map of 43 scenic bicycling routes in the region, a Bike the Valley website and logo, and has partnered with the City on the Bike Like Ike campaign to offer safety information on the website. The website is www.bikethevalley.org.

Recently, the Committee received a \$3,500 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation in which an equal match was provided in local contributions. With these funds, the Bike the Valley marketing campaign will develop rack cards and distribute them to outside areas to promote the Shenandoah Valley as a destination for bicyclists.

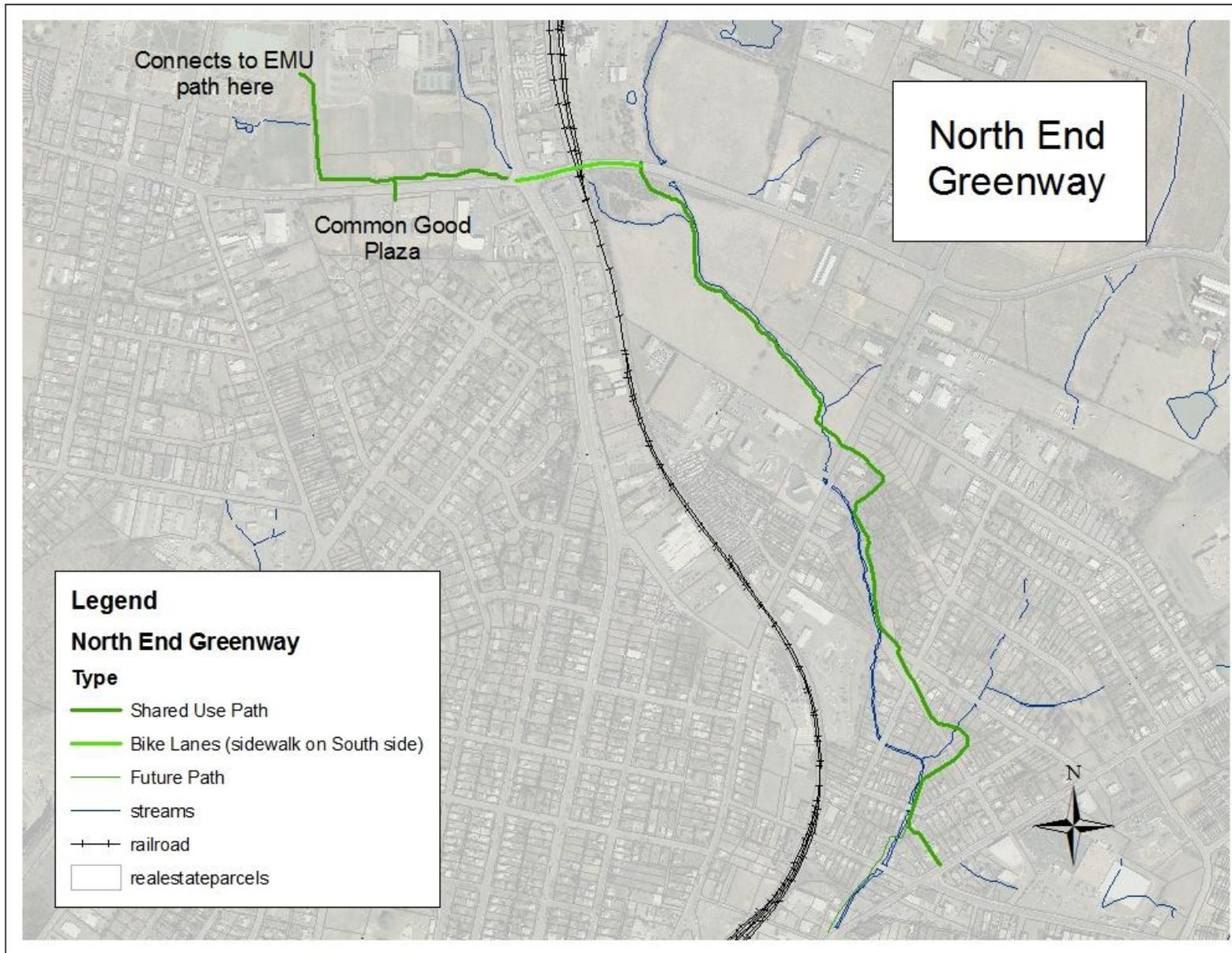
Mr. Alexander stated that the 43 scenic bicycling routes identified on the website are all on roads without bicycle facilities, which are limited in the region. Family friendly bicycling routes are limited also. If anyone knows of routes that can be added to the list, please contact Mr. Alexander at phil@cspdc.org.

Mr. Alexander also handed out copies of the pocket guide "Share the Road in Virginia: Laws & Safety Tips for Bicyclists and Pedestrians, plus what Motorists Need to Know."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Next Meeting: Monday January 24, 2011 at 6pm in the Community Development Classroom, 409 South Main Street.

Attachment 1: North End Greenway Conceptual Map



Attachment 3: Update on City Projects under design and construction

For the November 22, Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting

- Bluestone Trail Phase I – Engineering design continues by city staff. Challenges encountered with two choke points within Purcell Park. This item will be discussed further at the Subcommittee meeting.
- East Market Street Sidewalk Phase II – This project has been awarded and a notice to proceed has been given to the contractor, A&J Excavation & Development. A&J expects to begin the project by December 15, 2010 and to be completed by February 15, 2011.
- East Market Street Sidewalk Phase III – Project is currently under design by city staff. Construction anticipated to begin July 2011 and to be completed December 2011.
- Safe Routes to School – Keister Elementary – Project construction, by Contracting Unlimited, began on South Avenue near Main Street the last week of October 2010. Project is expected to be completed by May 2011.
- Safe Routes to School - Waterman Elementary School – Engineering design continues by city staff; about 50% design completed. Right of way has not yet started and are not anticipated to start until after January 2011.
- Bicycle lanes & shared lane markings (“sharrows”) – New bike lanes have been added on South Main Street from Miller Circle to Pleasant Hill Road with repaving. The city now has a total of 7 miles of bike lanes, 1 mile of sharrows and 2 miles of paved shared use paths.

Background details on each of these projects can be found in the Subcommittee’s October Meeting Summary.

Attachment 4: Bike Like Ike Safety Ads



Bike Like Ike

Get bike safety tips, bike maps and more at
www.BikeTheValley.org

Ike's Tip #12
Look for bicyclists
before opening
your car door.



Bike Like Ike

Ike's Tip #17
Don't get
caught.
Secure your
pants.



Get bike safety tips, bike maps and more at
www.BikeTheValley.org