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Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee
Of The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission
City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

TO: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Members

FROM: Thanh Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: June 19, 2013

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Summary for Monday June 3, 2013

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee met on Monday June 3, 2013 at 6:00pm in 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, Charlie Chenault, Carl Droms, John McGehee, and Len Van Wyk.

Advisory members, and guests present included: Thanh Dang (Public Works), Lee Eschelmann (JMU), Scott Drugo (Police), and Becky Johnston (RMH Community Health).

Welcome

Business

1. Recap: Bike Month

Mr. Jenkins gave a recap of Bike Month in May, stating that bike month was a success. There was lots of buzz in the community about all the events that took place. www.svbcoalition.org/bikemonth

2. Next Safe Routes to School Grant

Ms. Dang presented that the next Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant cycle is anticipated to open in late-2013 or early-2014. The details of the grant requirements are not yet known, but will be different from past SRTS grants due to the new Federal transportation law passed last year called, MAP-21. Ms. Johnston added that she understood that SRTS grants will require a 20% local match, whereas in the past SRTS grants funded projects fully (100%). Ms. Dang estimated that if grant applications were due in

January 2014, then grants would not be awarded until July 2014. Depending on the complexity of the project, engineering design and right of way might take 1.5 to 2.5 years, and construction might take 6 to 9 months to complete. That might put the completion of the next SRTS project at a completion date of 2015 or 2016.

Ms. Dang asked that the Subcommittee to recommend which school the next SRTS grant should be applied for. She reminded the subcommittee that in April 2012, the subcommittee had discussed two potential schools and decided it would be best to decide at a later time ([meeting summary here](#)). She explained that although grant application requirements are still unknown, there are some tasks that city staff, school administrators, and community members can work towards finalizing such as project alignments, project cost estimates, preparing for parent and student surveys, etc.

There was discussion about the new middle school being planned for on Garbers Church Road, how it will affect school districts, and how students travel from certain neighborhoods to certain schools. Although future school districts are unknown, the subcommittee felt that any connections planned now to benefit the current students will have benefit for future students.

Thomas Harrison Middle School

Mr. Jenkins provided an update on Thomas Harrison Middle School. Parks & Recreation has cleared the corridor for the Cale Trail on the city property between Westover Park to Thomas Harrison Middle School. However, without funding for further work, the project is at a standstill. Mr. Jenkins has been meeting with THMS officials and parent groups to determine an alignment between the Cale Trail through school property to the school building. Parks & Recreation is working on an alignment between the Cale Trail through Westover Park to connect with the Community Activities Center and to the Sunset Heights neighborhood. An additional connection from the Cale Trail is needed to West Market Street.

Additionally, there is need to connect from Thomas Harrison Middle School to Wyndham Woods. Mr. Jenkins has sent a letter to a property owner who had previously expressed interest in donating land to the city for this connection between the school and Wyndham Woods Drive. Suggestions were made that if a connection through this property was not feasible, then the City should pursue the 10-ft wide right of way the City owns between two homes on Wyndham Woods Drive.

Another option was discussed to create a connection through a vacant parcel that fronts on Wyndham Woods Drive and backs up very close to THMS. The neighbors next door are currently allowing students to cut through their driveway to access the school. If converting a portion of the vacant lot to a path for students were an option, then it may be a good option for connecting the neighborhood to the school. The subcommittee asked Ms. Dang to provide them with property owner names so that they can explore this option further.

There was discussion that path connections proposed around Thomas Harrison Middle School will have a wider effect, in that, they will also help students from surrounding neighborhoods particularly to the north get to connections planned between Hillandale Park to Garbers Church Road where the proposed new middle school and (current) Harrisonburg High School are located.

Spotswood Elementary School

Ms. Dang stated that SRTS project ideas came up while the City was working with the Old Town

Neighborhood through the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. Mr. McGehee added that there is also need to make it safer for students living on Reservoir Street at Holly Hill Court and Dutch Mill Court to get to Spotswood ES. There are presently no sidewalks on the north side of Reservoir Street or any safe way for students to cross Reservoir Street to get to the school. The future roundabout at Carlton Street and Reservoir Street would help improve pedestrian safety crossing at that location, but the project will not add sidewalks towards Holly Hill and Dutch Mill Courts. There is an underprivileged population in this area and it was asked if this area was eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Ms. Dang said she could not say without looking at the Low to Moderate Income (LMI) Areas Map that is part of CDBG eligibility. *(Editor's note: Reservoir Street between Cantrell Avenue to Eastover Drive is eligible for CDBG funding. However, the section of Reservoir Street between Cantrell Avenue to East Market Street is not. [See Map.](#))*

Mr. Chenault also brought up the Northeast Neighborhood and that sidewalks are needed on Sterling Street. Ms. Dang noted that city staff had looked at adding sidewalks on Sterling Street in 2008 through CDBG funding, but that neighbors there were unwilling to donate the property needed for the sidewalk and did not want their landscaping impacted. The subcommittee acknowledged that this would be an important connection between the Northeast Neighborhood and Spotswood ES.

Recommendation

Both schools appeared to have valuable opportunities. However, it appeared that the level of involvement from school officials and parents was greater at Thomas Harrison Middle School. This is especially important when working with past SRTS grants that required that all parts of the 5E's be addressed, not just engineering, but also education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. Parents and school officials play a significant role in programming for education and encouragement.

The subcommittee recommended that the next Safe Routes to School Grant be applied for Thomas Harrison Middle School.

3. Update: HRMPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan & Update: Rockingham County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

- a. HRMPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, <http://www.hrvampo.org/bikepedplan>
- b. Rockingham County Bicycle Advisory Committee, <http://www.rockinghamcountyva.gov/index.aspx?NID=150>

Ms. Dang provided an update on two projects; the HRMPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and Rockingham County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. Over the last month a wiki mapping exercise was available online where community members could draw on an online map where they liked to bike and walk, and where they thought new biking and walking facilities were needed in the HRMPO area and in Rockingham County. A lot of good ideas are being collected and will be analyzed by the consultant team.

A stakeholder meeting will be hosted later this summer, and a public input meeting (open to the public) will be hosted later this Fall.

4. Update: Downtown Streetscape Plan Public Forum June 6, 2013 <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/downtown-streetscape-plan>

Ms. Dang announced that the Downtown Streetscape Plan Public Forum is going to take place on June 6, 2013 in City Council Chambers. This plan is a visioning document and has a lot of recommendations and ideas in it that affect biking and walking downtown.

(Editor's note: On June 5, 2013 the Public Forum was postponed. A future public forum date has not been established.)

5. New Middle School Proposal – Charlie Chenault
a. See also Attachment A

Mr. Chenault stated that City Council officially approved funding for architectural work for the new middle school. The official choice of location has not yet been made yet. The school will open in either Fall 2016 or Fall 2017.

The Subcommittee wanted to know if the School Board was including biking and walking accommodations in the plans for the new school. And asked if accommodations were being made for where the proposed path from Sunset Heights/Hillandale Park empties out onto Garbers Church Road to the school.

The Subcommittee agreed for Mr. Jenkins to reach out to Dr. Kizner, School Superintendent, and Craig Mackail, Director of Maintenance, Operations & Community Outreach, to express need to provide biking and walking accommodations on campus, and also to offer the subcommittee's assistance with developing the request for proposals, reviewing proposals, or any other biking and walking related matters.

6. Update on projects under design/construction (Attachment B)

Ms. Dang reviewed the list of projects in Attachment B.

There was discussion about the Bluestone Trail. Ms. Dang explained that as of now, there is not enough funding to complete what was originally scoped as Phase 1 between Port Republic Road to Wellness Drive. City staff was looking at ways to either reduce the limits of Phase 1 or to find additional funding.

Ms. Johnston announced that Suzi Carter, Program Director for the Northend Greenway, has stepped down to pursue another opportunity with a national nonprofit. The Northend Greenway Steering Committee is committed to continue working with community members and with city staff to complete the project.

There was discussion about the Oak Drive Paper Street. Mr. Jenkins provided an update that the steps to the tree fort belonging to the Gibsons has been relocated by Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) volunteers. Once the deeds are finalized and recorded, SVBC plans to hold a Trail Building Work Day. More information forthcoming.

7. Other Business and Comments

a. Thomas Harrison Middle School/ West Market Street

Mr. McGehee expressed concern in having observed students from the Brickstone Court and Shenstone Drive area dart across West Market Street between moving vehicles to get to and from school. Students are not crossing at the crosswalk at the THMS entrance because it takes them out of the way, down and up a hill. The speed limit on West Market Street is 35 mph. It was asked if the speed limit could be reduced and flashing lights added. Ms. Dang said that Mr. Brad Reed, Transportation Planner, (not present at this meeting) has been working with the school principal on flashing lights due to concerns brought to the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission. Ms. Dang did not have the details, but she will inquire and report back to the subcommittee. *(Editor's note: The City will be installing flashing lights for the school zone, that will include signs to reduce speeds to 25 mph during school arrival and dismissal times. Funding for these lights has been included in the FY2013-2014 budget request, and the lights are anticipated to be installed later this year (2013). The lights cost about \$16,000 for four flashing lights; two in the median and two on the outside of the roadway.)*

b. South Main Street Median

Mr. Jenkins asked if there was any opportunity to make the new median narrow so that bike lanes could be widened on South Main Street between Bluestone Drive to Grace Street. Ms. Dang explained that unfortunately this was not possible due to the left turn lanes approaching Bluestone Drive and Grace Street. Those lanes, and the existing center turn lanes, were already reduced to 10-ft wide with previous restriping, which allowed for the 3-ft bike lanes. The turn lanes cannot be reduced any narrower without creating safety issues on the roadway and making the lanes impassable.

This median project is being done to prohibit walkers from crossing the street mid-block and causing safety hazards to themselves and to vehicular traffic.

Curb and gutters would have to be relocated in order to widen the street to make for wider bike lanes.

c. Wolfe Street between Broad Street and Mason Street

Mr. Jenkins explained that there are many families walking on Wolfe Street between the Northeast Neighborhood and downtown, especially since the Dollar General, Friendly City Food Co-Op, and the Post Office are located at the intersection of Mason Street and Wolfe Street. However, there are no sidewalks on Wolfe Street between Mason Street and Broad Street. Mr. Jenkins felt that a sidewalk project here would make walking a lot safer and easier for this neighborhood. Ms. Dang agreed that there was need here and that she has received numerous requests from citizens over the years.

The Subcommittee discussed that Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority (HRHA) and one residential property owner are the only property owners on the south side of Wolfe Street on these two blocks. Mr. Chenault suggested that he would start with discussing this need with Michael Wong, Director of HRHA.

Ms. Dang reminded the Subcommittee that presently this missing section of sidewalk is not on the City's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan as a priority.

d. Newman Lake

The Subcommittee asked Mr. Eschelman about the status of James Madison University's Newman Lake dam project. Mr. Eschelman stated that the plan is not to drain the lake, but to make the dam longer

and wider. The dam project will include plans for bike lanes and a shared use path that would tie into the Bluestone Trail.

JMU is working on a Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan that will create plans to tie in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on JMU's campus with the city's infrastructure.

Announcements

8. League Certified Instructor (LCI) Seminar in Harrisonburg October 18, 19, 20.

Ms. Dang announced that an LCI Seminar to train people to teach bike skills, traffic safety, etc. will be brought to Harrisonburg October 18, 19, and 20. Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) is offering a scholarship to cover the cost of the seminar (\$300/person for up to 10 people). The scholarship applications are due June 30, 2013. Information about the Seminar and the scholarship is available at <http://svbcoalition.org/become-an-lci/>.

Next Meeting: Monday July 22, 2013 at 6pm in the Community Development Classroom, 409 South Main Street

Adjourn

Attachment A: Excerpt from City Council Agenda for May 28, 2013

AGENDA ITEM ACTION REQUEST

	<p>Meeting Date: May 28, 2013 Meeting Type: Regular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Requestor:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Manager</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> City Attorney</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>School Board</p>	<p>Item:</p> <p>Request for Council support of a new middle school</p>
<p>Reviewed:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Manager</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> City Attorney</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p>Review:</p> <p>At its May 7, 2013 meeting, the School Board unanimously approved a motion requesting "the formal support of City Council to proceed with planning to build a new middle school with a capacity of at least 900 students on city and/or school board property in the vicinity of the existing high school property with the intent to open in the fall of 2016.</p>
<p>Recommend:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Manager</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> City Attorney</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	
	<p>Attachments:</p> <p>1. Letter from the Superintendent</p>

"A place where learning has no limits and together we work for the success of all."

May 8, 2013

Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
City of Harrisonburg
345 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear Kurt:

As requested the school board unanimously approved a motion at their May 7, 2013, school board meeting. The motion read --"I move that we seek the formal support of City Council to proceed with planning to build a new middle school with a capacity of at least 900 students on city and/or school board property in the vicinity of the existing high school property with the intent to open in the fall of 2016; and to seek funding to re-configure the current Thomas Harrison Middle School as a suitable elementary school."

It would be greatly appreciated if the City Council can formally take action at either the May 14 or May 28 City Council meeting so we can proceed with a request for proposal for architectural services. As you can imagine, there is significant planning that needs to occur and the sooner the council acts, the earlier we can proceed with not only the building design plans but also issues pertaining to redistricting, staffing, etc.

On a separate matter, the school system would be very interested in working with the City Council in developing bike and walking trails to the new middle school building site. This morning I attended Bike to School Day at Thomas Harrison Middle School and this appeared to be a very positive and supported event by the community. Planning the bike and walk trails simultaneously as we plan for a new school might promote efficiency.

On behalf of the school board and myself, I want to thank you and the City Council in advance for your support of our school building needs. Our school system is making great strides, and we are receiving national recognition as recently indicated by being listed in both *Newsweek* magazine and the *Washington Post* as one of the top high schools in the country. These recognitions can only support the City's effort to promote economic development and a high quality of life for its citizens.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Kizner, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

SRK/ll

c School Board
City Council

ATTACHMENT B: Update on City Projects under design and construction

For the June 3, Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting. General information is also available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-projects>.

PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, OR SOON TO START CONSTRUCTION

- **Erickson Avenue-Stone Spring Road Phase III** – Road improvement project includes new sidewalks and bike lanes. www.ericksonstonespring.org.
 - UPDATE: Project under construction.
- **Gay Street Sidewalks** – Construct new sidewalks on the north side of Gay Street between Sterling Street to Summit Street. This project is funded by Community Development Block Grants.
 - UPDATE: Sidewalk between Sterling Street and Summit Street has been completed!
- **Safe Routes to School: Waterman Elementary School** – Sidewalks on west side of Chicago Avenue between 2nd Street and Rockingham Drive, bike lanes on Chicago Avenue between Gay Street and Rockingham Drive, sidewalk on south side of 3rd Street between Collicello Street to Stuart Street, sidewalk on east side of Stuart Street, sidewalks on both sides of Virginia Avenue from about 2nd Street to 5th Street. Estimate cost: ~\$610,000. Funded by VDOT SRTS Program and anticipated Community Development Block Grant Funds.
<http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/waterman-safe-routes>
 - UPDATE: Construction of new sidewalks on Virginia Avenue is underway. Project to be completed November 2013.
- **Traffic Signal Upgrades at North High Street/Wolfe Street and Virginia Avenue/Gay Street** – These signal upgrades will include adding new pedestrian signals at High/Wolfe and improving the pedestrian signals at Virginia/Gay.
 - UPDATE: This project is currently under construction.
- **University Boulevard Sidewalk Phase I** - Construct sidewalks along the north side of University Boulevard between East Market Street to Evelyn Byrd Avenue, and a portion of Evelyn Byrd Avenue on the west side between University Boulevard and the existing sidewalk. Pedestrian signals to also be installed at the intersections of University Boulevard & Evelyn Byrd Ave, and University & Valley Mall entrance (at existing traffic signal). Funded by City.
 - UPDATE: Project is completed!

PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN/ PLANNING

- **Bluestone Trail Phase I** – Construct a 10-ft wide shared use path between Port Republic Road at Bluestone Drive to Wellness Drive off Berry Road. Estimated cost: Being developed. Anticipated construction advertisement May 2014. Partially funded by: DCR Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant. More information available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/Bluestone-Trail>
 - UPDATE: Change in project limits? City surveyor has completed survey work. Design engineering underway by McCormick Taylor. Environmental studies nearly completed;

waiting for Jurisdictional Determination letter. Anticipate Council update presentation for June 25, 2013.

- **Bruce Street and Liberty Street Improvements** – The City is working with Matchbox Realty on sidewalk and other road improvements around the Casco Ice building at the corner of Bruce and Liberty Streets. Improvements being reviewed include, but are not limited to, widening sidewalks where possible to achieve ADA clearances, moving utility poles in sidewalks if possible, constructing new sidewalks with the decorative concrete design, adding pedestrian signals and crosswalks at the intersection of Liberty Street and Bruce Street.
 - UPDATE: This project is currently under design and review by the City and Matchbox Realty. Funding sources for this project has not yet been determined.

- **Cale Trail – Westover Park, West Market Street, & Thomas Harrison Middle School** – Shared use path to connect Thomas Harrison Middle School and Westover Park through the former Cale property that was donated to the City by Dr. William Cale and Mrs. Susan Cale.
 - UPDATE: Parks & Recreation has completed clearing the corridor. We are not ready to promote the trail for public use. City staff, Subcommittee members, and Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition volunteers have been meeting with Thomas Harrison Middle School staff and parents to determine alignment between former Cale property to the school entrances. Parks & Recreation working on alignment within Westover Park to neighborhood.

- **Thomas Harrison Middle School to Hillandale Park connectors** – Construct a path from Wyndham Wood Drive to Thomas Harrison Middle School and West Market Street, and a path between Circle Drive to Hillandale Park. This project is in the planning phase and is not yet funded.
 - **Thomas Harrison Middle to Wyndham Drive**
 - UPDATE: Subcommittee re-initiating outreach with property owners.
 - **Wyndham Woods Circle to Hillandale Park**
 - UPDATE: Negotiations for this connector is at a standstill. Property owner and City unable to come to an agreement for alignment.

- **Carlton Street and Reservoir Street Roundabout** – This project is being funded by a combination of VDOT Revenue Sharing Funds and local funds. A roundabout at this location will improve intersection safety for motorists and pedestrians. More information: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-projects>
 - UPDATE: This project is currently under design and is being coordinate with adjacent property owners. Construction is anticipated to begin in Summer 2014.

- **Downtown Streetscape Plan Update** – Update of previous Downtown Streetscape Plan (2004) to provide a comprehensive downtown streetscape plan that will develop a vision for all streets in the study area to develop public and private expectation for project elements. Study areas include the Downtown Core, Downtown Transition Area, and Downtown Gateways. More information available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/downtown-streetscape-plan>
 - UPDATE: Staff presented draft plan to Council on March 26 and will go to forum on June 6, 2013. Public is encouraged to attend public forum.

- **Downtown Streetscape Project Phase 2** – This project includes replacing sidewalk on the west side of Main Street between Bruce Street and South Court Square, replacing sidewalks on the east side of Main Street between Elizabeth Street and Wolfe Street installing decorative stamped crosswalks at intersections, replacing existing street lighting with decorative lights, replace and upgrade traffic signals, and install pedestrian signals. This project is anticipated to begin construction in Summer 2014.
 - UPDATE: This project is currently under design.

- **East Market Street Sidewalk Phase IV** – Construct a 5-ft wide sidewalk with 2-ft grass strip on south side of East Market Street between Carlton Street and 400' north of Hawkins Street. This project will also include pedestrian signals at the intersections of East Market Street with Carlton Street and Hawkins Street/Vine Street. Estimated cost: greater than \$ 400,000. Funded by VDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program.
 - UPDATE: The right-of-way phase for this project is underway and city staff will be meeting with 6 property owners who will be impacted by this project due to needed right of way, temporary construction easements, or impacts to existing signage which the city would relocate. This project is not anticipated to start construction until March 2014.

- **Mt. Clinton Pike/ Chicago Avenue/ Park Road Roundabout** – Following the Chicago Avenue Corridor Study, completed in early 2013, the City initiated work on design of this roundabout to improve the intersections of Mt. Clinton Pike with Chicago Avenue and Park Road. This project is being funded by a combination of VDOT Revenue Sharing Funds and local funds. More information: <http://www.chicagoavenue.org/>.
 - UPDATE: Design is currently underway and project is being coordinated with Eastern Mennonite University and adjacent property owners. A public input meeting is anticipated for Summer 2013.

- **Northend Greenway** – 2.5-mile Shared use path that will run between Park View area (near EMU/EMHS) that will mostly follow Blacks Run into downtown (near Washington St & N Main St), then travel via Federal Street alley to the Farmers Market. This project will be completed in multiple phases which have not been finalized yet. This is a public-private partnership between the City, and New Community Project and Northend Greenway volunteers. Estimated cost: Being developed.
 - UPDATE: Landscape Advisory Committee meetings have been completed. Design Principles document is under final review by the City. Meetings with property owners to request letters of intent for donating easements is underway by Northend Greenway (group). Anticipate Council update presentation for June 25, 2013.

- **Oak Drive Paper Street** – Construct a natural surface trail between Circle Drive and Rocktown Trails.
 - UPDATE: Property owners and city have come to an agreement on land exchange and location of new natural surface trail. City Surveyor is working on plats to include with deeds that City Attorney will write up. Once deeds are signed and recorded, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition volunteers will be working on constructing the new trail.

- **Reservoir Street Project** – Widen Reservoir Street to sections of 5-lane facility and 4-lane facility with median. Project will include sidewalks on both sides and bike lanes.
<http://www.reservoirstreet.org/>
 - UPDATE: Engineering design and right-of-way negotiations with property owners is currently underway. Project anticipated going to construction in 2014.