



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: May 5, 2014

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Summary for Monday March 24, 2013

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee met on Monday March 24, 2014 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.

Welcome

Subcommittee members present: Elise Barella, Eric Saner, Len Van Wyk

Guests present: Thanh Dang, Jeremiah Jenkins, Dylan Scofield, Ros O'Brien, Lee Eshelman, Michael Nuepauer, Westley Joseph, Aiden Geagan, Kevin Johnson, Diana Henderson

Public comments, limited to 5 minutes each, for topics not on the agenda.

No comments.

Business

1. Snow Removal from Sidewalks

Ms. Dang reported that city department directors (Police, Public Works, and Community Development) are reviewing snow removal enforcement policies and procedures. City departments will be working on this over the summer and will have a resolution before winter.

Previously, Ms. Dang requested that subcommittee members bring a list of city sidewalks where snow removal has been a problem and either should be prioritized for enforcement or prioritized for city forces to remove snow at those locations. Ms. Dang will share this list with department heads for their consideration. The subcommittee discussed the following locations:

- South High Street (Route 42) between South Avenue and Grace Street, both sides
- Reservoir Street between Carlton Street to over I-81 bridge, both sides
- Port Republic Road between Devon Lane and Forest Hills Drive, both sides
- Mason Street between Wolfe Street to Martin Luther King Jr Way, both sides
- West Market Street (Route 33) on north side near Dogwood Drive
- Chicago Avenue
- Rockingham Drive shared use path

General discussions included K-12 and university students needing a safe place to walk from home to school; elderly residents and individuals with disabilities being able to walk around their neighborhoods, to nearby commercial businesses and grocery stores; residents and employees being able to walk to and from public transit bus stops.

Subcommittee members expressed that arterial streets should be prioritized for snow removal because it is unsafe to walk in the street due to more vehicular traffic and higher speeds. An example was South High Street, which is 4 lanes wide, 35 mph speed limits, and people use the sidewalks to get to the grocery store. One subcommittee member expressed that the city should take responsibility for clearing snow from sidewalks along arterial streets.

There are many streets and sidewalks that do not have a grass/ utility strip between them. When a snow plow pushes snow from the street onto the sidewalk it makes snow removal from sidewalks by businesses and residents very difficult, especially if that snow has iced over. For these instances, it was suggested that residents and businesses could be instructed to remove just 3 feet width of snow furthest from the roadway leaving a 2-ft buffer where snow could accumulate on a portion the sidewalk. Some questioned whether this was enough.

There was discussion about city departments needing to develop a snow removal plan for new shared use paths like the Bluestone Trail and Northend Greenway.

Priority for snow removal should also be given to various connectors to schools.

The police department did a good job with enforcing wrong way parking. They started ticketing people and overnight people started to park the right way. A similar approach should be considered for snow removal by adjacent property owners/ tenants. There was general consensus by the group that they do not think many people in the community know that they have to shovel snow. It was suggested that more education, notifications, and warnings would be best before the city goes out and penalizes people for not shoveling sidewalks.

There was discussion about the elderly and disabled. We should encourage neighbors to help those who are unable to shovel snow. There is also the issue of university students who are renters and are gone for three weeks during the winter. Is the landlord or tenant responsible for ensuring that the snow is removed during this time?

2. Skateboarding as Transportation

This topic was discussed at the last subcommittee meeting and it was suggested that skateboarders be invited to participate in a discussion. Jeremiah Jenkins, Dylan Scofield, Westley Joseph, Aiden Geagan, and Kevin Johnson are skateboarders who were invited to participate in this discussion.

Ms. Dang started by reviewing the Virginia State code summarizing that laws apply to skateboarders much like they apply to bicyclists. Skateboarders on the street shall ride on the right side of the road, with traffic and obey all traffic signs, signals, etc. (§ 46.2-905) Skateboarders are permitted on sidewalks, unless prohibited by local code, and have the same rights and duties as pedestrians to obey traffic signals, cross at crosswalks, etc. (§ 46.2-904).

Mr. Jenkins expressed that skateboarding is stigmatized and skateboarders are often viewed as misguided youth. However, he and many others like him are law abiding members of the community who use skateboarding as a method of transportation and see skateboarding as part of a healthy and active lifestyle.

Mr. Scofield, Mr. Joseph, Mr. Geagan, and Mr. Johnson shared that the JMU Handbook does not specify where skateboarders are suppose to ride. They feel that this leaves it up to the discretion of JMU police officers, and there is often inconsistency between officers. It was suggested that skateboarders reach out to RJ Ohgren at Judicial Affairs because he is working on updating the JMU Handbook.

Mr. Jenkins shared that he was once ticketed by a Harrisonburg Police Officer and was charged for “playing in the street.” He said he was using his skateboard to travel and that he was told that he was charged “to protect him”. Many people believe that skateboarding is inherently unsafe, but the same can be said about any activity including walking.

Mr. Eschelman asked if the group knew of other universities that had reasonable policies and asked if Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Scofield, Mr. Joseph, Mr. Geagan, and Mr. Johnson would like to help JMU develop policies. They said yes and would exchange contact information.

Mr. Scofield also suggested that it would be nice if safe places to skateboarding for recreation could be designated. He suggested designating University Fields as a permissible location for skateboarding recreationally.

It was asked if when coming down a hill, such down Carrier Drive, if skateboarders needed to take the lane and weave/ zig zag in order to control their speed. The answer was yes. However, there are different levels of experience and some skateboarders need more width than others. Mr. Scofield added that responsible skateboarders are also always checking behind and in front of them.

Dr. Van Wyk asked if skateboarding would be incorporated into the city’s forthcoming update to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. Ms. Dang responded that she thought it would be reasonable to include it.

The group shared sentiments that skateboarding seems like it’s a couple of decades behind bikes in terms of general public knowledge of rules of the road for bicyclists/ skateboards and how motorists and others interact with them and how they should interact with motorists. Like bicyclists, stakeboarders could also use help with routing and learning from others who are experienced and familiar with the area what routes are safest to ride. Mr. Joseph gave an example that instead of skating down through

the Village he prefers to cut behind Weaver Hall to the R7 lot. There's also a need to teach new skateboarders tips on how to ride safely and how to ride better.

Ms. Dang added that she has been talking with officers at Harrisonburg Police, and that they are interested in helping with educating their officers, skateboarders, and the general public. Mr. Jenkins cautioned about increased enforcement and encouraged that we should promote and encourage skateboarding because it is a healthy activity and kids and adults.

There was some discussion whether skateboarding required additional infrastructure or whether it's just about managing behavior. Dr. Barella said that there are some infrastructure considerations, such as vertical deflection or surface textures that could help moderate speeds.

It was suggested that the group should review other universities plans and what other communities are doing to address skateboarding. Mr. Jenkins suggested looking to communities and universities in Southern California.

3. Virginia MUTCD Supplement, Revision

http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia_mutcd_supplement.asp

Ms. Dang gave a brief update that the Virginia MUTCD supplement has been updated and that there are some significant changes made for the treatment of shared lane markings ("sharrows") which will affect how shared lane markings are recommended in the next update to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

4. Locations Where ADA Curb Ramps Needed

There are locations throughout the city where there are sidewalks, but there no ADA accessible curb ramps or the ramps need to be reconstructed. Ms. Dang asked the subcommittee and guests to either bring a list of locations where curb ramps are needed to the next meeting or to email them to her. City staff would prioritize curb ramp construction/ reconstruction with the street paving schedule. Subcommittee members and guests may also suggest locations for new crosswalks to be evaluated.

There was discussion that some driveway entrances have lips that can throw bicyclists off. For example, on Liberty Street at the Farmers Market. Ms. Dang asked everyone to share with her where there are problematic entrances also so they can be evaluated by staff.

Dr. Van Wyk brought up that many locations in Charlottesville do not have a gutter pan, which provides for the opportunity or a wider bike lane. Ms. Dang will inquire with Charlottesville what their policy for this is.

5. Committee Updates

a. School Crossing Guards – Nathan Barge, Becky Johnston

No update.

b. Complete Streets – John McGehee, Elise Barella, Eric Saner, Kyle Lawrence

A few emails have been exchanged. It was suggested that a work sessions to review the city's Design & Construction Standards Manual would be a good place to start and then later other documents such as the subdivision and zoning codes, comprehensive plan, and bicycle & pedestrian plan could be reviewed.

Ms. Dang will facilitate setting up a date to review the Design & Construction Standards Manual.

c. Abandoned Bikes – Scott Drugo

No update.

d. Other Enforcement and Education topics, e.g. biking on sidewalks in downtown, running red lights, biking in wrong direction, biking without lights/ reflectors, motorists not yielding to pedestrians, traffic division class, system to track violations ...
- Thanh Dang, Scott Drugo & Thomas Jenkins

Ms. Dang reported that she and Brad Reed, Transportation Planner, met with Harrisonburg Police and City Public Information Officer on March 19. They discussed messaging for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists, and future messaging for skateboarders. The team is now working on selected messages to begin in May and to continue through the year.

Dr. Van Wyk suggested keeping it simple and that the team determines what the most dangerous behaviors are and targets those. He suggested or bicyclists riding at night without lights as an example for bicyclists messaging.

Ms. Henderson asked if there was a program here for sending motorists or bicyclists to traffic school or a diversion class. Ms. Dang responded that there is not a program like that here for bicyclists. There was discussion that this idea was brought up in the past, but it needs someone to champion it. Someone also needs to discuss it with the local judges. Perhaps local LCIs could teach it.

Mr. Nuepauer noted that education is a 20 year process. We are teaching kids through bike rodeos today, and they will pick it up and educate their parents, and these kids will become adults with this knowledge. Dr. Barella added that JMU is working on incorporating bike education in General Education classes. Ms. O'Brien encouraged the use of carrots/ positive incentives, instead of sticks. Perhaps bike shops could offer discounts to people to take classes.

e. Community Bike Map Project – Thanh Dang, Thomas Jenkins, Elise Barella, Carl Droms, Eric Saner, Diana Henderson along with JMU representatives

Ms. Dang reported that there was a small group meeting on March 25 with representatives from city staff, JMU staff, and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. The team is working on identifying methodology for this map and will let other interested parties know if, when, and how they can be recruited to help with this project.

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

Ms. Dang briefly reviewed the project updates in Attachment B.

Announcements

7. Bike Month in May, www.svbcoalition.org/bike-month

Mr. Saner provided an update that the signs and press releases to promote bike month are coming together. There are lots of events lined up for May.

8. Other

Dr. Van Wyk asked about the activity at the end of South Avenue. Ms. Dang reported that Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition and Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation are working on project to extend the berms/ trails following the powerline. Dan Fudala at Parks & Recreation is the contact for this project.

Dr. Van Wyk announced that Virginia has changed the law requiring motorists to give bicyclists 3-ft of space when passing; previously it was only 2-ft. Tony Wilt voted for it. Mark Obenshain voted against it.

Mr. Eschelmann shared that JMU's consultants continue working on the JMU Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and that the draft is being edited now.

Next Meeting: Monday May 19, 2014 at 6pm in the Community Development Classroom, 409 South Main Street

Adjourn

ATTACHMENT A: Update on City Projects under design and construction

For the March 24, 2014 Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting. General information is also available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-projects>.

PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, OR SOON TO START CONSTRUCTION

- **Bluestone Trail Phase IA** – Construct 10-ft wide shared use path between Butler Street to Port Republic Road. Funded by James Madison University. More information available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/Bluestone-Trail>
 - UPDATE: Project construction bids were opened on March 6, 2014 and will be awarded to F. Clayton Plecker & Sons for \$350,687. Construction will begin May 12, 2014 and be completed by August 1, 2014. NOTE: JMU is also working on the Newman Dam Improvement Project which will include extending the Bluestone Trail from Port Republic Road to Sonner Hall.
- **Bluestone Trail Phase IB** – Construct a 10-ft wide shared use path between Stone Spring Road to Butler Street. Funded by DCR Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant, VDOT Revenue Sharing Funds, and City funds. More information available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/Bluestone-Trail>
 - UPDATE: Project construction bids were opened on March 6, 2014 and will be awarded to Hammond-Mitchell, Inc for \$1,072,417. Construction will begin around April 1, 2014 and be completed by December 31, 2014.
- **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/carlton-street>
 - UPDATE: This project is in final phases of design and right-of-way. Bid date anticipated in May 2014 and construction to begin late-June 2014 and to be completed in 2015.
- **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. More information available at: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/downtown-streetscape-next-steps>
 - UPDATE: Construction bids for this project were opened on March 6, 2014. Bids are still under review.
- **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. Funded by VDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program.
 - UPDATE: Bids were opened in January was awarded to Toro Concrete, Inc. for \$334,178. Construction to start shortly and to be completed by August 29, 2014.

PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN/ PLANNING

- **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: City Surveyor has developed plat for new land donation from the Cales to the City. City Attorney is reviewing plats and deeds with the Cale’s attorney. City staff and subcommittee members have been re-evaluating alignment for better alignment with future land donation. This project is currently has no funds for construction.

- **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 School to Wyndham Drive**
 - UPDATE: City Surveyor has marked 25-ft proposed easement and citizen volunteers have delineated a proposed trail alignment. Ms. Dang to contact property owner to follow up for onsite meeting. Weather has caused delay.
 - **Wyndham Woods Circle to Hillandale Park**
 - UPDATE: Property owner of subdivision and the City have been working together on the design of a future residential street and path connection from Wyndham Woods Circle into Hillandale Park. City paid for path design work by owner’s engineer. The plans were approved in March. Property owner’s schedule for construction is unknown.

- **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: This Plan was present to Planning Commission on January 8, 2014. Planning Commission requested that the plan be reviewed again by the Advisory Committee and Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance Landscape Committee.

- **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 TBD.

- **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 is a public-private partnership between the City, and New Community Project and Northend Greenway volunteers. Phase I from Main Street to Liberty Street. Phase II from Park View area to Liberty Street. Phase I & II is total 8,300 lf. To be funded by VDOT Revenue Sharing Funds, City funds, and funds raised

by NEG. Estimated cost: Preliminary Planning, Engineering Design, and Right of Way for Phase I and Phase II totals \$525,000. Construction for Phase I \$675,000, Construction for Phase II \$1,225,000. Total project cost \$2,425,000.

- UPDATE: Project phasing and funding options being explored; a proposal was anticipated early February, but has been delayed through mid-April.

- **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. Utility companies have also begun relocations. Road project anticipated going to construction in 2015.

- **Safe Routes to School Stone Spring ES** –Funded by Virginia Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant, this project will construct new sidewalks on the east side of Peach Grove Avenue between King Edwards Way to Decca Drive, install a new traffic signal at the intersection of Peach Grove Avenue and Stone Spring ES entrance, and include some additional sidewalk work on school property. Grant funds: \$292,000.
 - UPDATE: Surveying is currently underway. Engineering design to take place through Fall 2014. Project construction to start Summer 2015.