



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: October 20, 2014

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Agenda for Thursday September 22, 2014

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee met on Monday September 22, 2014 at 6:00pm in City Council Chambers at 409 South Main Street, Harrisonburg. Meetings are open to the public.

Welcome

Subcommittee members: John McGehee, Elise Barella, Carl Droms, Eric Saner, Len Van Wyk

Guests: Thanh Dang, Jim Baker, Brad Reed, Phillip Read, Brooke Chao, Charlie Chenault, Kim Sandum, David Ehrenpreis, Tom Benevento, Evan Friss, Nathan Musselman, Deb Fitzgerald, and 4 students from JMU.

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

No public comments received.

Business

1. S Mason St & Martin Luther King, Jr. Way Pedestrian Safety Complaint

Mr. Reed introduced himself and Ms. Brooke Chao. Mr. Reed explained that this matter typically would be reviewed by the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission, but because the Commission meets during working hours, she was not able to attend their meeting.

Ms. Chao stated that she and her family walk everywhere. During the summer, her children attended poetry camp at James Madison University and walked through the intersection of South Mason Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way twice per day. She says that when she crosses north-south/ south-north

at the intersection, she would cross when the walk signal was up, and that drivers turning left through the intersection would scream at her because they do not understand that they must yield the right of way to pedestrians when turning. Ms. Chao suggested that the exclusive crosswalk movement be returned to the intersection to stop all vehicular traffic while pedestrians are crossing. She said that she is not concerned about traffic flow, but is more concerned about safety.

Mr. Reed thanked Ms. Chao for informing staff of her concerns and said that this is an iterative process to find solutions. Mr. Reed stated that prior to 2011 this intersection had an exclusive pedestrian phase (exclusive crosswalk movement) and that after review by Public Works staff, Police Department staff, and the Safety Commission decided to remove the exclusive pedestrian phase. He stated that over 95% of pedestrians crossing at this intersection are going in the north-south/ south-north direction. Exclusive pedestrian phases are typically used at intersections with high numbers of diagonal crossing. When the exclusive pedestrian phase was removed, the City employed a new method; the leading pedestrian signal. With the leading pedestrian interval northbound and southbound, the green left turn arrow comes up for north and/or southbound traffic first (if there are vehicles present in the turn lane), then goes red, then the pedestrian Walk signal turns on for 7 seconds (if the button was pressed), then the green ball comes on during which vehicles can proceed straight or turn right or left as a permissive movement that must yield to pedestrians and oncoming vehicles. This operation reduces the wait time for both vehicles and pedestrians and allows the signal to operate much more efficiently than it did with the exclusive pedestrian crossing.

There is a sign mounted on the traffic signal arm that reads “left turn yield on green [ball]”. When turning vehicles have the green ball (as opposed to the green arrow), the law requires drivers to yield to both vehicles and pedestrians crossing the intersection.

Mr. Reed stated that, during the September 10 Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission meeting, there was discussion that there may have been increased issues at this intersection when Grace Street and/or Mason Street were closed due to JMU construction.

A subcommittee member acknowledged that there was a lot of backup at this intersection in the past. We would have terrible gridlock if all signals had exclusive pedestrian phases. Intersections with exclusive pedestrian phases increase wait time for drivers and pedestrians.

Education campaigns such as “Share the Road” have been implemented, but have limited reach and more needs to be done. Enforcement would be a good follow up. In this case, drivers are breaking the law and not yielding.

Ms. Barrella stated that enforcement has to happen, and suggested a period of intense enforcement at this intersection could be very effective and should happen first. She also suggested that there may be a benefit in extending the leading pedestrian walk signal time.

Ms. Barrella uses this intersection often as both a driver and pedestrian and says she sees bad behavior by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Mr. McGehee suggested more effective education could be done on site acknowledging that it would be easier to stop and talk with pedestrians than it would be to stop and talk with drivers.

These recommendations will be presented back to the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission at their October 8 meeting.

2. Northend Greenway Project & Funds

Ms. Dang reviewed the memorandum she sent on September 15 to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee. Ms. Dang reviewed each of the options along with the map provided in the memorandum.

Discussions, comments, and questions from Subcommittee members and guests included:

- Question: Is there a way to get from Suter Street to Washington Street on city streets? Response: Yes. Bicyclists and pedestrians can use neighborhood streets, which have low speeds and low traffic volumes.
- Question: If Option F1 is built, will improvements at the intersection of Mt. Clinton Pike and Virginia Avenue, which include new pedestrian signals and crosswalks, be included as part of the Northend Greenway project or the Mt. Clinton Pike Road Improvement project? Response: Staff responded that the intersection improvements would be relatively small components of either project, and inclusion into either project will be determined as design for both projects got further along.
- Question: What are the City's plans for crossing over the railroad tracks east of Virginia Avenue along Mt. Clinton Pike? Response: Options for crossing the tracks have been discussed, but are only preliminary. Additional engineering design work is needed along with discussions with railroad track owners.
- Comment: Segments 2, 3, and 4 holds true to what the Northend Greenway group and community hoped to begin with.
- Comment: Best to construct the Northend Greenway sooner, rather than later. Before the area develops.
- Comment: Although construction of Segments 3 and 4 is preferred, Segments 4, 5, and 6 is also good and would be a nice linear park.
- Comment: Option C (Segments 2, 7, 8, and 9) don't have much to do with the Northend Greenway.
- Comment: Segment 1 which is the path section that will be included as part of the Mt. Clinton Pike Road Improvement Project has not been fully funded. Public support is still needed for the project, which will include stormwater infrastructure, road improvements, and new trails.

The Subcommittee came to consensus, and ranked their proposed recommendation to City Council in the following order. The preferred option is listed first:

- **Option F1 (Segments 2, 3 and 4)** - This option runs from the intersection of Mt. Clinton Pike and Virginia Avenue to the end of pavement at Suter Street.
- **Option F2 plus Segment 4 (Segments 4 and 5)** - This option runs from Suter Street & Liberty Street to Washington Street.
- **Option E (Segments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)** - This option "combines" the Northend Greenway project with the Mt. Clinton Pike Roundabout and Road Improvement Project.

- **Option D (Segments 2, 7, 8, and 4)** – This option considers an alternative alignment starting at the intersection of Virginia Avenue and Mt. Clinton Pike, and travel east on Mt. Clinton Pike to Liberty Street intersection.
- **Option C (Segments 2, 7, 8 and 9)** – This option starts at the intersection of Virginia Avenue and Mt. Clinton Pike, and travel east on Mt. Clinton Pike to Technology Drive
- **Option B** – This option recommends doing nothing with the Northend Greenway project, and would likely return funds to VDOT for reallocation to another project in Virginia.

Although Option A (Segments 2, 3, 4, and 5) would be the preferred option if funding were available, it was not considered in the ranking because there is a significant deficit in funding needed to construct the entire project.

The Subcommittee encourages input from the public. Reactions to the proposed recommendation, questions, and comments may be sent to Thanh Dang, Public Works Department, at Thanh.Dang@HarrisonburgVA.gov, and will be reviewed by the Subcommittee on October 6, 2014. The Subcommittee will make their final vote on October 6, 2014, after which their recommendations will be presented to City Council.

3. Committee Updates

a. Abandoned Bikes

Cpl. Read stated that he has been looking at the abandoned bikes issue and has been in discussions with the City Attorney. A new ordinance would be needed to allow the city to remove abandoned bikes from bike racks on public right of way. Internally, city departments need to discuss who would be responsible for tracking, removal, and storage of abandoned bicycles.

Cpt. Read stated that he is concerned picking up a bike that isn't really abandoned.

b. Bicycle, Pedestrian, Motorist Education Campaign

No update.

c. Community Bike Map Project

Ms. Dang and Mr. Reed reported that the committee continues working on the bicycle map and plans to have a draft map available for public review by the end of 2014.

4. Updates on projects under design/construction (Attachment B)

5. Open Discussion

Mr. Jenkins said that the Bluestone Trail looks great. However, he wondered about the steep grade between the JMU Parking Lot (at Hillside Avenue) to Butler Street. The grade is about 12%, compared to the preferred 5% or less. He wanted to know what the City's evaluation process was and how this could be prevented from happening in the future. Ms. Dang responded that the City had evaluated several alignment options in the area to connect a path between Hillside Avenue and Butler Street. All options had grades steeper than 5% and the other options considered involved with constructing larger

retaining walls that would have resulted in a project three times more expensive. Ms. Dang stated that it is the City's preference to select alignments that were not steep.

Mr. Saner asked for an update on staff's work on a snow removal plan for sidewalks and shared use paths in the city. Mr. Baker responded that departments are reviewing current city ordinances, reviewing sidewalks throughout the City, and plan to roll out a plan at the end of October.

Mr. Van Wyk stated that he and Mr. Droms' terms expire December 31, 2014 and asked when applications for the Subcommittee positions will be released. Ms. Dang will post the applications in the next week so that new members can be appointed before the January 2015 meeting.

Announcements

6. Harrisonburg & Rockingham Bike-Walk Summit, October 10

<http://svbcoalition.org/bike-walk-summit>

Next Meeting: Monday November 17 at 6pm (Note: This is the third Monday due to Thanksgiving week the following week.)

Adjourn

ATTACHMENT A: Update on City Projects under design and construction

For the September 22, 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: This segment has been completed and is open. 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, as well as from Port Republic Road to Greek Row on the west side of Newman Lake.
- **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.
- **Downtown Streetscape Project Phase 2** – This project includes replacing sidewalk on the west side of Main Street between Bruce Street and South Court Square 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 started in July 2014 and will be completed December 2014.
- **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: Project is complete.
- **New Pedestrian Signals and Crosswalks at Main Street & Mosby Road and Main Street & Pleasant Hill Road.**
 - UPDATE: Project is under construction.
- **Wolfe Street Sidewalk** – Construct a 5-ft wide sidewalk on the south side of East Wolfe Street between Broad Street and Mason Street.
 - UPDATE: Project is complete.

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: The Cales are not yet able to donate the new land. When they are, the City and Cales will work together to further develop this project.

- **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. Due to delays in with right-of-way, the project construction will begin in 2015.

- **Country Club Road Sidewalk** – In early 2014, citizens requested that new sidewalk be constructed on Country Club Road. City Council approved funding for sidewalks to be placed on the south/ west side of Country Club Road between Spotswood Mobile Home Park and Linda Lane.
 - UPDATE: Right-of-way from adjacent property owners is required in order to construct new sidewalks along Country Club Road. City staff has been trying to work with adjacent property owners. No construction schedule available at this time.

- **Thomas Harrison Middle School to Wyndham Drive**
 - UPDATE: In August 2014, community members and city staff worked together to delineate the 10-ft wide right of way between 1022 and 1032 Wyndham Drive, and get support of adjacent property owners. The 10-ft wide area is being used by students to get from the neighborhood and the school. City staff is working on cost estimates and a schedule for paving a path between Wyndham Drive and the school property.

- **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** –
 - UPDATE: See this agenda.

- **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 underway. Utility relocations underway. 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: Engineering design underway through early 2015. Project construction to start Summer 2015.