



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

TO: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Members

FROM: Jakob zumFelde, Public Works Planner

DATE: August 8, 2019

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Meeting Summary for Monday, August 5, 2019

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee met on Monday, August 5, 2019 at 6:00pm in City Hall, Room 011 (lower level); 409 South Main Street.

Attendees:

Subcommittee members: Matt Hassman, Jenny Toth, Dudley Bonsal, Marci Frederick

Other residents: Tom Benevento, Kyle Lawrence

Staff: Erin Yancey (Public Works), Tom Hartman (Public Works), Jakob zumFelde (Public Works), Tyler Flick (Harrisonburg Police Department)

Welcome and Introductions

During introductions, Mr. Hartman announced that the Northend Greenway (Phase I) ribbon cutting will be Wednesday, September 4 at 11 AM.

Business

1. Follow up items

- Bicycle Friendly Community renewal

Mr. zumFelde said that the application to renew the Bicycle Friendly Community certification is nearly complete. He asked the committee members if they had any questions or comments regarding the application. Mr. Bonsal asked what the difference is between a "bicycle boulevard" and "shared lane markings". Ms. Yancey noted that defining and identifying bicycle boulevards is generally up to each City, with Harrisonburg not currently having defined or created any bicycle boulevards. Mr. Hartman mentioned that an analysis of the City's transportation budget was completed as part of this application. The analysis showed that the City has spent an average of approximately \$800,000 on bicycle infrastructure each year over the past 5 years.

- Update on grant awards & new applications

Ms. Yancey stated that due to a change in statewide funding priorities, the Federal Street path project that was expected to receive HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funds was not funded at this time. Mr. Hartman indicated that the state is expecting to fund more systematic improvements, such as median rumble strips and crosswalks, instead of improvements such as new paths or other projects that are considered spot improvements. There was some discussion about what types of improvements the City may be able to apply for in the future. Mr. Hartman indicated that the City has received funding for systematic improvements including flashing yellow arrow upgrades, audible pedestrian signal installation, and corridor timing updates. When new guidelines are released, staff will assess what projects may be a good fit, with Mr. Hartman noting that it only makes sense to apply for relatively large projects due to the additional requirements associated with federal funding.

Ms. Yancey said that an additional project is being considered as a revenue sharing application, due in October. This project would extend the Bluestone Trail from Stone Spring Road to the new High School site. There was discussion about the proposed route, which would primarily be on City property (Public Works site) and would include a long bridge that would cross Blacks Run and the railroad tracks. The group noted that the path would increase bicycle and pedestrian connectivity for the south part of the City, given that S. Main Street is not a particularly desirable route for bicycling and walking.

2. Chicago Ave and Waterman Dr potential pedestrian improvements

Ms. Yancey explained that the intersection of Chicago Ave and Waterman Drive was identified by the subcommittee as needing analysis to determine if bicycle and pedestrian improvements could be made. A recent count by high school students, reported at the last meeting, indicated that the intersection does warrant a crosswalk across Chicago Ave. Staff will put out video cameras to do counts of both pedestrians and vehicles to inform identification of a potential crosswalk location.

3. JMU Capstone project/plans

Mr. Hartman showed posters and documents that were created by a JMU capstone class that had worked for 2 years on planning bicycle and pedestrian path connections from Skyline Middle School/Smithland Elementary to multiple nearby neighborhoods. A path along Country Club Road was evaluated, with connections to the Spotswood Homes trailer park and Country Club Court. Mr. Hartman noted that the I-81 bridges over County Club Road will need to be replaced to accommodate the additional lanes planned on I-81. This will provide the opportunity to have more space for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along Country Club Road when passing under I-81. Creation of a path along Smithland Road and Old Furnace Road was also analyzed by the students, to connect to the North 38 apartments and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Mr. Hartman said that VDOT is continuing to work on plans for replacing the Old Furnace Road bridge over I-81, with a meeting expected this fall.

4. Roadway connections for Garbers Church Road shared use path route

Mr. zumFelde showed a basic diagram of the Garbers Church Road shared use path route, which includes segments where users will be on existing roadways. The roadways that will be used are Hillandale Ave in Hillandale Park and Wyndham Dr and Wyndham Woods Circle. Mr. zumFelde noted that signs and other improvements will need to be completed to provide safety and wayfinding for path users on the roads. He indicated that wayfinding can be done in a similar fashion to the signs

currently on the Bluestone Trail (shown below), which indicate direction and distance to major landmarks.



There was significant discussion about installing sharrows on the roads. It was suggested that this could help with wayfinding, by having the arrows (part of the sharrows) angle to indicate when the route turns or the path exits the roadway. As many kids are expected to use the path to get to school, sharrows or other pavement markings may be more helpful than signs, which kids may be less likely to look at.

There was a brief discussion about similar signs for the Northend Greenway. Ms. Frederick noted that there is no sign at Liberty Street to let Northend Greenway users know that it is Liberty Street. Mr. Benevento indicated that there is also a need for wayfinding information when the path ends at Suter St. Mr. Hartman and Ms. Yancey said that staff would continue working on this and create a plan for additional Northend Greenway sign installation.

Regarding wayfinding signs, Mr. Lawrence asked if it would be better to put travel times to major landmarks instead of distances to the landmarks. Mr. Benevento indicated that this could make people feel that a trip is more feasible, as many people understand travel times more easily than travel distances. There was discussion about what speed of travel to use if travel times were calculated, 3 mph was noted as the average walking speed and 10 mph was suggested as the average bicycling speed. Additional discussion on whether to include travel times in addition to or in place of distances can occur when more details about the signs have been determined.

Appropriate design of crosswalks was mentioned as an important component for ensuring safe entry and exit of the path from the road. Specifically, it was suggested that parking not be allowed close to the crosswalks to ensure that drivers can see path users entering the road.

Mr. Lawrence asked about the status of the Garbers Church Road Shared Use path project. Mr. Hartman indicated that there have not been any major obstacles and the plan is to have construction on the project in 2020, and have it completed at the same time as the Cale Trail which will connect the path from Thomas Harrison Middle School to Westover Park.

5. Shared use path etiquette signs

Ms. Yancey said that the committee has had discussions regarding shared use path etiquette signs over the past few years, with the discussions having been on hold pending new City branding and associated Parks Department branding. While it is still unclear when these branding processes will be complete, staff are looking to finalize the information to include on shared use path etiquette signs in the next few months. She mentioned that a main theme of past discussions has been to keep the sign simple so that users read and understand the important messages.

Mr. zumFelde showed the group the draft language (copied below) that staff has identified for inclusion on the signs, with some items being potential things to include that may not be necessary.

To include:

- “Keep right, pass left”
- “Announce when passing”
- “Travel at a safe speed”
- “Pedestrians have the right of way” or “Yield to pedestrians” or other yield instructions

Other possible:

- Keep pets on leash. Clean up after pets.
- Use lights and reflectors when dark.
- Please keep the trail trash free.

At beginning, end, or intersections:

- “Non-motorized vehicles only” (sign already in place for existing paths)
- Stay in public access areas, respect private property. (when relevant)
- Stop or yield signs as necessary at intersections, other info about crossings when relevant
- Potential for signs for transition from shared use path to shared roadway

Ms. Toth said that she agrees that the first 4 are important items and top priority to include on the sign. Ms. Frederick noted that “travel at a safe speed” is very vague, and Mr. Hassman indicated that “travel at a safe speed for everyone” might better communicate that users need to be respectful of others. Mr. Hassman asked whether pet leash length (maybe 5 feet maximum length) could be indicated on the sign, as that is an important part of safety when bicycles pass people with pets.

6. Project Updates – see attachment to agenda

Ms. Yancey asked if there were any questions on the project updates provided, and there were no questions.

Announcements / Other Business

Ms. Yancey said that a public survey will be distributed in the near future for the downtown parking study, and a second survey will be conducted for the study being completed on South Main Street between Pleasant Hill Road and Mosby Road.

Mr. Lawrence said that the Harrisonburg Rockingham Bike Ped Summit will be held on November 1 this year, with additional information about topic and speakers being announced soon.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: September 23 @ 6pm – City Hall, Room 011 (lower level), 409 South Main St