



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen

FROM: Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

DATE: November 8, 2010

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from November 4, 2010 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Thursday November 4, 2010 at 9:00AM in City Council Chambers at the Community Development Building, 409 South Main Street.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chair), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works member designee), Len Van Wyk (citizen member), Russell Presnell (citizen member), Doug Stader (DMV), Grant Holsinger (Transit)

Guests Present: John McGehee (Citizen - Old Town Neighborhood Representative)

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

New Business

1. Welcome to new member, Russell Presnell

The Commission welcomed new member Russell Presnell and had a round of introductions. Mr. Blessing explained the basics of how the Commission operates.

Old Business

2. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program - Old Town update

Ms. Dang shared the results of the October 18 Old Town Neighborhood meeting, wherein the neighborhood reached consensus on the traffic calming measures for which they would like to request funding from Council. Ms. Dang and Mr. McGehee shared a map of the improvements and explained that one item was voted off (street trees on Myers Avenue), two items were de-prioritized (half closure at Ott Street & Bruce Street and speed hump on Mountain View Drive), and one item was added in lieu of the Bruce Street half closure (speed hump on Bruce Street between Mason Street and Ott Street). Mr. Blessing and Mr. Van Wyk expressed concern about the half street closure and agreed with the findings of the neighborhood.

Mr. Van Wyk asked if the improvements had been prioritized by the neighborhood. Ms. Dang explained that this had not been done, but would be brought before the neighborhood small group representatives for consideration before taking the plan to Council.

Mr. Blessing mentioned that he believes the removal of the traffic signal at Mason Street & Bruce Street will help discourage drivers from avoiding Mason Street and cutting through the neighborhood. Mr. Reed explained that the signal was placed in flash operation Monday, November 1st and will remain in flash for a period of 30 days, during which performance and safety will be assessed. If the intersection is found to be safe and efficient without the signal, it would then be removed from operation entirely. He reminded the Commission of the process that was undergone by Public Works in studying the removal of this signal, including review of traffic volumes, speeds, pedestrian crossing, accidents, and sight distance.

Mr. Reed went on to explain that Public Works has received an email complaint regarding sight distance difficulties when waiting at the eastbound Bruce Street approach trying to see traffic traveling southbound on Mason Street. This can be a tough spot to gain sight distance, as you must position yourself in front of the stop bar with the nose of your vehicle within a few feet of the intersection. Public Works is trying to work out a solution to this uncomfortable situation for motorists and will report on its findings at the next meeting. The signal will remain on flash until this study is complete, which may be longer than the original 30-day period. Mr. Holsinger

shared that Transit buses have had no problem navigating the intersection. Mr. Blessing also said he does not have trouble with sight distance at the intersection.

Mr. McGehee said that the replacement of the valley gutter on Reservoir Street at East Market Street is a success.

Mr. Blessing proposed that the Commission recommend for all of the improvements chosen by the Old Town Neighborhood and Commission agreed. The next step is to present the traffic calming plan to City Council. The neighborhood representatives are planning to reconvene in January and will present to City Council shortly thereafter.

3. Sheetz & Chamber of Commerce entrances on Vine St

Mr. Reed shared the background on this issue with the group for Mr. Presnell. Mr. Reed went on to explain that Sheetz agreed to the first step of action, installation of 'No Left Turn' signage on Vine Street and at their exit. The two signs were installed on October 21st and will be assessed for effectiveness over a 60-day period. Recording of the intersection will likely begin within two weeks to give motorists a chance to acclimate to the change. The results of this study will be brought before the Commission.

4. Traffic signal removals (Mason Street & Bruce Street and High Street & Pear St)

Mr. Reed explained that Mason Street & Bruce Street had been covered while discussing Old Town and that the signal at High Street & Pear Street has been taken out of operation successfully. Fewer left turns off of Pear Street have been observed now that the signal has been removed and traffic appears to be flowing smoothly. The Commission agreed that the removal has been successful and beneficial.

Other Business/ Announcements

5. Next Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting - Monday November 22 at 6 PM

Ms. Dang shared the date of the next meeting (Monday November 22 at 6 PM) and a few announcements. New Community Project has created a flier to explain shared lane markings ('sharrows') to the public and is distributing them. A radio ad is also planned for the same topic

by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization. Bike safety ads are planned to run on Harrisonburg buses in the near future.

6. DMV Safety Statistics

Mr. Stader shared that the state will be running a Click-It or Ticket campaign November 14-21 in advance of the holidays. He also shared the following statistics and announcements:

- There have been 34 fewer motorist fatalities statewide to date than there were at the same point in 2009
- 55% of fatalities involve unbuckled individuals, which has not changed from the previous year
- As of September 30th, Harrisonburg has had one motor vehicle related fatality, which was the same at that point last year
- A new safety grant cycle has begun, which will give \$35,000 to Harrisonburg Police for overtime enforcement of motorist laws. The same amount is also being given to Virginia State Police.

Adjourn