



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: December 9, 2010

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from December 2, 2010 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Thursday December 2, 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), Brad Reed (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works), Jim Baker (Public Works member), Len Van Wyk (citizen member), Russell Presnell (citizen member), Doug Stader (DMV), Greg Deeds (Police member), Felicia Glick (Rockingham County Sherriff's Office), Lee Eshelman (JMU)

Citizen Guests Present: None

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. New Meeting Day - Wednesday (Begins February)

Mr. Van Wyk will be unable to attend Thursday meetings during the Spring school semester due to a class conflict. The Commission agreed to move the meeting day to the first Wednesday of each month (still at 9AM) beginning in February.

2. Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting update

Please find the summary from the November 22, 2010 meeting at the following web address:

<http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/index.php?id=1088>.

3. University Blvd & Carrier Dr traffic signal

Mr. Reed explained that JMU formally requested the installation of a traffic signal at this location at their cost. Public Works performed a traffic signal warrant study and found that the intersection warrants a traffic signal due to its traffic volume. The study found an 85th percentile speed of about 40 mph on University Blvd, which allowed a lower volume threshold to be used to obtain a warranted condition, though even if speed isn't considered, growth would make the signal warranted by traffic volume within the next couple of years. Public Works recommended that the traffic signal be installed.

Mr. Reed explained that the lighting portion of the lighted crosswalk currently at this intersection will need to be removed, as lighted crosswalks are not allowed for by the MUTCD at signalized intersections. It is recommended that JMU try to repurpose this equipment at the University Blvd & Driver Dr crosswalk. Mr. Reed also recommended that lane markings and signage be added to designate the Westbound right turn lane clearly and that advance warning lights be installed each direction on University Blvd due to the signal being hidden by the bends in the roadway. The Commission agreed with all of these recommendations, including the installation of the traffic signal.

4. University Blvd & Driver Dr crosswalks

Mr. Reed explained that JMU installed two crosswalks at this location and has agreed to remove one of them to simplify the crossing. Mr. Baker recommended that the Westernmost crosswalk be left in place, as it aligns with the pedestrian shoulder along Driver Dr across from the steam plant and is also out of the way of turning truck traffic to the plant, which has been instructed to only enter Driver Dr from the East. The Commission agreed with this recommendation.

5. Warsaw Ave & Harrison St traffic signal study

Mr. Reed explained that Public Works has been studying this traffic signal to look for ways to improve the intersection's efficiency. A signal warrant study was performed and found that a

traffic signal is not warranted currently and will not be warranted within the foreseeable future. There have been no reported crashes at this intersection in the past year. Mr. Reed went on to explain that Public Works is recommending that the signal be placed in flash operation for a 30-day period for evaluation of safety and efficiency. If performed, this study would merely be considered a signal study, as opposed to a signal removal study, though removal would be one of the possible conclusions made as a result. The Commission discussed the intersection and all agreed that the traffic signal is not desired. Ms. Glick asked what could be done to restrict left turns at the Main St & Harrison St intersection and Mr. Williams explained that there are plans to install a median on S Main St between Port Republic Rd and Cantrell Ave when funding becomes available, which would resolve this issue.

Mr. Reed explained that the North-South pedestrian crossing at the Warsaw Ave & Harrison St intersection will need to be watched closely during the study, but Public Works has observed that its use under current conditions is infrequent. The signal would flash yellow for Warsaw Ave and red for Harrison St during the study. The Commission recommended that Public Works perform the signal study and place the intersection on flash just before JMU's spring semester.

6. S Main St & Bluestone Dr exclusive crosswalk study

Mr. Reed reminded the Commission that Public Works is continuing its study of the possibility for removing the exclusive crosswalk at S Main St & Bluestone Dr now that the viaduct is the primary East-West crossing between the JMU quad and parking deck. The advantages of removing the exclusive pedestrian phase are the decrease in delay and improvement of coordinated flow for vehicular traffic at the signal. If the exclusive crossing were to be removed, pedestrians would still have a crosswalk and pedestrian signal for all four legs of the intersection, but would cross concurrent with vehicular movements. A pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle count was in progress on the day of this meeting. Public Works will share its findings with the Commission and JMU in January. Mr. Eshelman reminded the Commission that all parties involved will need to coordinate an information campaign for students if the exclusive phase were to be removed.

7. Bank of America ADA ramp

Mr. Reed shared with the group a request sent to Public Works from Bank of America to install an ADA ramp on the East side of the building on the S Main St sidewalk. The proposed ramp would narrow the sidewalk to three feet to give ADA access to the bank, residences, and other businesses that occupy the building. Mr. Baker had informed the requestors that narrowing the sidewalk to only three feet would pose a pedestrian safety issue on a very heavily utilized sidewalk downtown, but wished to ask for the Commission’s opinion on the matter. The Commission agreed with Mr. Baker’s decision and suggested that the requestors seek an alternative using the building’s front entrance on Court Square where there might be adequate space for such an improvement.

Old Business

8. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program - Old Town update

Mr. Williams shared that there will be a January meeting of the neighborhood representative group to prepare a presentation for City Council and discuss next steps in the process.

9. Traffic signal removal study (Mason Street & Bruce Street)

Mr. Reed explained that the sight distance issue for vehicles traveling Eastbound on Bruce St trying to see traffic heading Southbound on Mason St is in the process of being resolved. Public Works has met with the owner of the parking lot on that corner, Shentel, and the lessee’s, Brown & Edwards tax firm (Newman Ave), and agreed to move the six parking blocks along Mason St on the Bruce St corner to the West by three feet. Brown & Edwards also agreed to ask their employees with large vehicles to park elsewhere in the lot. If this solution is unsuccessful, other options will be considered.

10. Sight distance at Old Furnace Rd & Blue Ridge Dr

Mr. Reed explained that Public Works has trimmed the bush on this corner that Mr. Blessing had noted previously as being a problem for sight distance. Mr. Blessing requested that this be looked at again and suggested removing the bush as a final solution. Mr. Reed agreed to inform Public Works of the issue.

Other Business/ Announcements

11. Parking lot on N Liberty St and in downtown area in general

Mr. Williams explained that the old Curtis Kite car dealership on N Liberty St has redeveloped the site's building and remodeled the parking spaces that back onto N Liberty St. Public Works is concerned that these spaces will create a safety issue for motorists, as cars need to back onto a public street to exit the lot. Mr. Williams would like the Commission to write a letter to Community Development to encourage more review of site plans and/or building permits in the B1 zoning area to avoid parking issues such as this. It is acknowledged that this particular issue cannot be resolved by this action, but that future ones could be. Mr. Williams and MPO Deeds suggested that CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) review by the Police would be a possible solution, as this is performed with success in other localities and HPD has qualified officers for such review. Mr. Blessing and the Commission agreed to create such a letter of recommendation.

Adjourn