



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: August 17, 2011

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from August 4, 2011 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Thursday August 17, 2011 at 9:00AM in Room 205 at the City Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chair), Russell Presnell (citizen member), Calvin Ferrell (Citizen Member), MPO Greg Deeds (Police member), Doug Stader (DMV), Lee Eshelman (JMU), Brad Reed (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works)

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. Support for TIGER III Grant Application

Mr. Williams requested the Commission's support for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County's grant application to the US Department of Transportation for the TIGER III Discretionary Grant. The application requests grant funding for Phase IV of the Stone Spring-Erickson Southeast Connector project, which runs from Route 42 in the City to Route 33 in Rockingham County.

The Commission agreed to provide its recommendation in the form of a support letter to be sent to Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood.

2. Consider increasing speed limit on Lucy Drive to 35 mph

Mr. Reed requested support from the Commission for an increase of the speed limit on Lucy Drive from 25 mph to 35 mph to improve travel time and meet driver expectancy on the corridor. Now that the road markings have changed to provide separation for left turning vehicles in the center turn lane, bicycles in the bikes lanes, and pedestrians on the sidewalk, staff feels that it would be safe to bring the speed limit closer to what drivers expect on such a street. The results of the speed study are as follows:

85th percentile speeds

@ Fire Station

EB 85th: 39 mph

WB 85th: 36 mph

@ Deyerle Ave

EB 85th: 39 mph

WB 85th: 42 mph

Accident History

Accident records were pulled for a one year period from November 2010. No accidents were found that were directly related to speeding problems.

Sight Distance

Sight distance was observed at all public and private entrances and found to be in compliance with City standards.

The Commission agreed with this recommendation and staff will move forward with requesting final approval from Colonel Harper for the change.

3. Law regarding taxi cabs stopping in roadway for pick up/drop off

Mr. Presnell explained that he runs a taxi company and has drivers that have been ticketed for blocking the roadway when dropping off and picking up customers in the downtown area. Police have informed the drivers that they are supposed to park in a designated parking space. MPO Deeds commented that there are pull-off areas downtown that would be suitable for taxi use on Court Square, W. Water Street, and S. Main Street. Mr. Williams noted that trucks do not get ticketed when they block traffic for deliveries.

Mr. Blessing informed Mr. Presnell that the Commission does not wish to advocate a change to the law on this particular matter, as blocking the roadway can be considered a safety hazard. Mr. Presnell was encouraged to bring this matter before City Council for a recommendation.

Old Business

4. Consider change of directionality on Federal Street between E. Market Street and Elizabeth Street

Mr. Williams informed the Commission that this item has been tabled and, if necessary, will be discussed at a future meeting.

Other Business/ Announcements

5. Selection of a Commission meeting day

Mr. Van Wyk no longer has a scheduling conflict with the current meeting time, so the Commission agreed to continue meeting on Thursdays.

6. Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee July 25 meeting summary

Mr. Williams informed the Commission that the meeting summary from the July 25 meeting of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee are available online at <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped>.

7. Public Works projects

Mr. Williams announced several current projects and upcoming events. The Keister Elementary Safe Routes to School improvements are complete and the Waterman Elementary improvements will begin next spring. Sidewalk improvements on W. Washington Street and W. Bruce Street have been completed. Bike lanes on Lucy Drive have been successfully installed along with a center two-way left turn lane.

On August 27th, Harrisonburg will be hosting the Block Party in the 'Burg event, which is expected to draw around 4-5,000 people and is now a required event for JMU freshman. Mr. Williams explained that there are several bicycling and running events in the City, some of which utilize neighborhood streets for their routes. He suggested that the impact of these routes on our roadways be a topic for conversation at a future Commission meeting.

8. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program – Pleasant Hill Acres August 4th meeting

Mr. Reed announced that the second meeting of the Pleasant Hill Acres neighborhood will take place tonight, August 4th at 6 PM at Keister Elementary School to discuss the traffic calming plan. Speed humps, a raised intersection, and a traffic island will be considered as solutions to calm traffic on Central Avenue. All neighbors present at the meeting must reach consensus on the plan prior to it being brought before this Commission and City Council for approval.

9. JMU Related Announcements

Mr. Eshelman announced that a new bus transfer station is coming to campus around September and will be located in the Godwin Hall lot. The final station design will be realized around next May. JMU is also working with Transit to encourage ridership through the roll out of a bus tracking system this month. For now, only schedule information will be accessible, but

real-time bus arrival information will be available around Thanksgiving and be accessible via the web or smartphone application.

Mr. Williams announced that the removal of the exclusive pedestrian signals at S. Mason Street & Cantrell Avenue and S. Main Street & Bluestone Drive will be completed on August 15th. As discussed at previous Commission meetings, these crossing patterns will be replaced with standard signalized crossings and, for some approaches, leading pedestrian intervals.

August 15th is also the date on which JMU will activate its gate system. Information about traffic pattern changes related to this system can be found at www.jmu.edu/navigatejmu.

10. State safety statistics

Mr. Stader announced that an area-wide DUI crackdown will take place August 15th-September 5th. The Click It or Ticket campaign found a seat belt use rate of 81.8%, which is up from 80% last year, but less than the goal of 83%.

11. Public park idea for Municipal Lot

Mr. Blessing explained that he attended a planning meeting for a project that would install an amphitheater and park in the Municipal Parking Lot behind the City Municipal Building. It was suggested at this meeting that there be consideration of traffic impacts related to the project in regards to access, maneuvering, and safety. Mr. Williams suggested that the Commission members attend these planning meeting to voice their opinions. Mr. Williams noted that the City is not attending these public meetings, as it is not an official City project. The City has requested that the project group provide more information regarding these transportation topics.

Adjourn