



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: Wednesday, January 23, 2013

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from January 9, 2013 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at 8:30 AM in Room 205 at the City Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Citizen Member, Chair), Len Van Wyk (Citizen Member), MPO Greg Deeds (Police Member), Brad Reed (Public Works Member), Lee Eshelman (JMU), Doug Stader (DMV), Deputy Chief Ian Bennett (Fire)

Guests Present: None

Commission meetings are open to the public and citizens are provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the Commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move relevant agenda items to the beginning of the meeting when citizens are in attendance to avoid detaining them for the entire meeting.

Welcome

Old Business

1. Request for convex mirror on W Water Street at Bank of America alley

Mr. Reed updated the Commission on this item, noting that the mirror was purchased by Mr. McHone and picked up by Public Works staff. Installation will be completed in the coming weeks.

2. Request for stop signs on private property exiting onto Evelyn Byrd Avenue

Mr. Reed introduced a citizen request for stop signs to be installed at the exits from each side of the Forbe's Crossing shopping center where they intersect with Evelyn Byrd Avenue. The citizen has had issues with vehicles exiting without stopping and cutting off vehicles traveling on Evelyn Byrd Avenue. Stop signs on private property are not installed or maintained by the city, so new signs could only be installed by requesting them from the property owner. Since these entrances intersect and interact with a public street, it is within the purview of this Commission to make a recommendation to the property owner for stop signs if the entrances are found to be causing a safety problem on the public street. Mr. Reed reviewed the accident history for this location, looking specifically at vehicles exiting Forbe's Crossing, and found that one accident occurred in 2011 and two accidents occurred in 2012. It could not be determined whether these accidents occurred as a result of vehicles failing to stop when exiting.

The Commission noted that stop signs at private entrances are rare and that it is unclear as to whether they would have helped prevent the few accidents that have occurred with exiting vehicles. Mr. Reed added that the Code of Virginia (§ 46.2-826) requires vehicles exiting private entrances to stop even without a stop sign, reading:

“The driver of a vehicle entering a public highway or sidewalk from a private road, driveway, alley, or building shall stop immediately before entering such highway or sidewalk and yield the right-of-way to vehicles approaching on such public highway and to pedestrians or vehicles approaching on such public sidewalk.”

The Commission agreed that these private entrances do not appear to present a clear safety hazard to those on the public street and that no action would be taken. It was also noted that future improvements to the Reservoir Street corridor may reduce vehicle queue lengths on Evelyn Byrd Avenue, thus making it easier to exit from the shopping center.

3. Request for letter to JMU PD to discourage midblock crossing on S Main Street

Ms. Dang presented and requested the Commission's endorsement of a letter to the JMU Police Department, requesting efforts be taken to discourage students from crossing midblock on S Main Street near the Anthony Seeger building. Mr. Williams noted that enforcement and discouragement are being proposed as a measure to mitigate the issue while efforts are underway by the city and JMU on a median concept. This concept will be brought before the Commission in February to request its endorsement.

Mr. Van Wyk noted that officers will need to be clear on how they enforce the section of the Code of Virginia cited in the letter, as there can be some gray area as to the degree of traffic interference. He recommended that signage be considered in addition to enforcement. Mr. Eshelman mentioned that JMU has made efforts to inform students of the dangers of crossing

midblock by asking teachers holding classes in Anthony Seeger to speak with students about the issue. The Commission agreed to endorse the letter. The final letter is attached to this summary.

4. Request for letter to encourage enforcement of bicycle violations

Ms. Dang presented and requested the Commission's endorsement of letters that would be sent to the Harrisonburg Police Department, JMU Police Department, and EMU to encourage enforcement of bicycle-related violations. Bicyclists running red lights, riding on the road against traffic instead of with traffic, and riding at night without lights were noted as particular concerns in the letters, all of which are backed by the Code of Virginia. The Commission agreed to endorse the letters. The final letters are attached to this summary.

Other Business/Announcements

5. Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee member selection

Ms. Dang announced that the applications submitted for the open citizen member position on the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee will be shared at the February Commission meeting.

Adjourn

HARRISONBURG TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

January 9, 2013

Chief Lee Shifflett
James Madison University Public Safety
821 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

SUBJECT: Enforcement of Pedestrians Crossing South Main Street

Dear Chief Shifflett,

As you are aware, hundreds of JMU students cross mid-block on South Main Street daily to travel between Anthony-Seeger Hall and the JMU Quad. This is especially noticeable when classes let out of Anthony-Seeger Hall. The Harrisonburg Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission is concerned with the high potential for collisions between pedestrians and motorists in this area.

The Commission is aware that JMU Public Safety and City of Harrisonburg Public Works have been working on the development of median and fencing concepts for South Main Street to encourage pedestrians to use the tunnel and crosswalks. However, until those concepts are implemented, the Commission requests that JMU Public Safety institute an education and enforcement program to discourage pedestrians from crossing through moving vehicular traffic and to encourage pedestrians to cross through the tunnel or at crosswalks.

Although the act of crossing mid-block is not illegal, Virginia Code Section 46.2-923 reads: "When crossing highways, pedestrians shall not carelessly or maliciously interfere with the orderly passage of vehicles. They shall cross, whenever possible, only at intersections or marked crosswalks." It is the opinion of the Commission that the pedestrians observed crossing South Main Street in the manner described above are carelessly interfering with the orderly passage of vehicles.

The Commission suggests that JMU Public Safety consider placing 3-4 officers in this area of South Main Street at random times throughout various weeks, during the 15 minute class change periods. Officers should interact with pedestrians and encourage them to use the tunnel or crosswalks, and to remind pedestrians that they can be fined for interfering with the orderly passage of vehicles. For example, officers might be present on South Main Street for three separate 15-minute class change periods on a Monday morning, a Tuesday afternoon, and a Thursday morning. Since this would represent a change in enforcement policy, we recommend beginning with warnings to violators during a transition period, after which citations would be issued.

We thank JMU Public Safety for its continued involvement in education and encouragement initiatives to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians in Harrisonburg and on JMU's campus, and its leadership on bicycle and pedestrian planning and programming on campus.

Sincerely,

William E. Blessing, Chairman

CC: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee
Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition Board

HARRISONBURG TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

January 9, 2013

Chief Stephen Monticelli
Harrisonburg Police Department
101 N. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

SUBJECT: Enforcement of Bicyclist Traffic Violations

Dear Chief Monticelli,

The city's investment in bicycle infrastructure over the past decade has had the desirable effect of increasing the number of people using bicycles for transportation. However, one consequence of this increase is the greater number of bicyclist-motorist confrontations.

Efforts by the Public Works Department, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, and RMH Community Health have been underway to educate bicyclists on safe bicycling practices, including offering Bike League certified Traffic Skills 101 classes, 30- to 60-minute presentations at work places and to community organizations, and PSA bus advertisements on the topic of bicycle, pedestrian and motorist safety. However, we have reached the point where increased enforcement is necessary.

To that end, the Harrisonburg Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission requests increased enforcement of bicyclist traffic violations. We are especially concerned with bicyclists running red lights, riding on the road against traffic instead of with traffic, and riding at night without lights. Since this would represent a change in enforcement policy, we recommend beginning with warnings to violators during a transition period, after which citations would be issued.

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) are interested in partnering with HPD on a public education portion of this program and are also available to discuss ideas for the enforcement program. Please contact Thomas Jenkins, Chair for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and SVBC member, at tj@shenandoanbicycle.com and he can assist with setting up a meeting.

We also encourage HPD to work with James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University on the education and enforcement programs, and have sent a similar letter of request to them. We would like to see education and enforcement programs that will continue year after year. Being a college town, we have many new citizens coming to Harrisonburg each year.

We have found the Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center's resources on enforcement useful, <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/enforcement/>.

Although we are requesting additional enforcement for bicyclists, we trust that enforcement will continue for motorist violations such as speeding through neighborhoods and around schools, failing to yield the right of way, and overtaking bicyclists in areas where it cannot be done safely.

We thank the Harrisonburg Police Department's continued involvement in the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission, the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee, education and encouragement programs such as helmet and bike light giveaways, bicycle rodeos, and the work you have done with Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition and Safe Kids of the Central Shenandoah Valley to promote safe driving, bicycling, and walking.

Sincerely,

William E. Blessing, Chairman

CC: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee

Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition Board

HARRISONBURG TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

January 9, 2013

Chief Lee Shifflett
James Madison University Public Safety
821 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

SUBJECT: Enforcement of Bicyclist Traffic Violations

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Efforts by the Public Works Department, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, and RMH Community Health have been underway to educate bicyclists on safe bicycling practices, including offering Bike League certified Traffic Skills 101 classes, 30- to 60-minute presentations at work places and to community organizations, and PSA bus advertisements on the topic of bicycle, pedestrian and motorist safety. However, we have reached the point where increased enforcement is necessary.

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The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) are interested in partnering with JMU Public Safety on a public education portion of this program and are also available to discuss ideas for the enforcement program. Please contact Thomas Jenkins, Chair for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and SVBC member, at tj@shenandoanbicycle.com and he can assist with setting up a meeting.

We also encourage JMU Public Safety to work with Harrisonburg Police Department and Eastern Mennonite University on the education and enforcement programs, and have sent a similar letter of request to them. We would like to see education and enforcement programs that will continue year after year. Being a college town, we have many new citizens coming to Harrisonburg each year.

We have found the Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center's resources on enforcement useful, <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/enforcement/>.

Although we are requesting additional enforcement for bicyclists, we trust that enforcement will continue for motorist violations such as speeding around campus, failing to yield the right of way, and overtaking bicyclists in areas where it cannot be done safely.

We thank the JMU Public Safety's continued involvement in education and encouragement initiatives to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians in Harrisonburg and on JMU's campus, and its leadership on bicycle and pedestrian planning and programming on campus.

Sincerely,

William E. Blessing, Chairman

CC: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee

Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition Board

HARRISONBURG TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

January 9, 2013

Eldon Kurtz, Physical Plant Director
Jonathan Lantz-Trissel, Sustainability Coordinator
Eastern Mennonite University
1200 Park Road
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

SUBJECT: Enforcement of Bicyclist Traffic Violations

Dear Mr. Kurtz & Mr. Lantz-Trissel,

The city's investment in bicycle infrastructure over the past decade has had the desirable effect of increasing the number of people using bicycles for transportation. However, one consequence of this increase is the greater number of bicyclist-motorist confrontations.

Efforts by the Public Works Department, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization, Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, and RMH Community Health have been underway to educate bicyclists on safe bicycling practices, including offering Bike League certified Traffic Skills 101 classes, 30- to 60-minute presentations at work places and to community organizations, and PSA bus advertisements on the topic of bicycle, pedestrian and motorist safety. However, we have reached the point where increased enforcement is necessary.

To that end, the Harrisonburg Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission has requested that Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) and James Madison University Public Safety increase enforcement of bicyclist traffic violations. We are especially concerned with bicyclists running red lights, riding on the road against traffic instead of with traffic, and riding at night without lights. Since this would represent a change in enforcement policy, we recommended beginning with warnings to violators during a transition period, after which citations would be issued.

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) are interested in partnering with HPD and JMU Public Safety on a public education portion of this program and would like to invite EMU to join us in this conversation. We would like to see education and enforcement programs that will continue year after year. Being a college town, we have many new citizens coming to Harrisonburg each year. If you are interested in participating, please contact Thomas Jenkins, Chair for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee and SVBC member, at tj@shenandoanbicycle.com.

We have found the Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center's resources on enforcement useful, <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/enforcement/>.

We thank the EMU's continued involvement in education and encouragement initiatives to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians in Harrisonburg and on EMU's campus, and for its partnership with the City, Northend Greenway, and others to improve the infrastructure around campus.

Sincerely,

William E. Blessing, Chairman

CC: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee
Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition Board

VIRGINIA CODE REGARDING BICYLING

This list is not exhaustive, but highlights bicycle specific laws. A bicycle is a vehicle when operated on the highway. Therefore, laws applying to vehicles regarding yielding to pedestrians, obeying traffic signs, riding on the right side of the highway, etc. apply to bicycles.

Sources: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-laws.asp>,
<http://www.bikeleague.org/action/bikelaws/>, <http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm>

§ 46.2-100 [SELECTED] DEFINITIONS

- A **bicycle** is defined as a device propelled solely by human power, upon which a person may ride either on or astride a regular seat attached thereto, having two or more wheels in tandem, including children's bicycles except a toy vehicle intended for use by young children. A bicycle is a vehicle when operated on the highway.
- A **bike lane** is defined as that portion of a roadway designated by signs and/or pavement markings for the preferential use of bicycles, electric power-assisted bicycles, and mopeds.
- A **shared use path** is defined as a bikeway that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and is located either within the highway right-of-way or within a separate right-of way. Shared use paths may also be used by pedestrians, skaters, users of wheel chair conveyances, joggers, and other nonmotorized users.
- A **sidewalk** is defined as the portion of a street between the curb lines, or the lateral lines of a roadway, and the adjacent property lines, intended for use by pedestrians.
- A **highway** is defined as the entire width between the boundary lines of every place open to public use for purposes of vehicular travel.
- A **roadway** is defined as the portion of the highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the shoulder.
- A **vehicle** is defined as every device used for the transportation of people or property on a highway.

WHERE TO RIDE

- Bicyclists must ride with the flow of traffic on the right side of the highway.
- Bicyclists operating a bicycle on a roadway at less than the normal speed of traffic at the time and place under conditions then existing shall ride as close as safely practicable to the right curb or edge of roadway. Exceptions to this are when bicyclists are overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction, preparing for a left turn, avoiding unsafe conditions, avoiding riding in a lane that turns or diverges to the right, riding on a one way street where bicyclists may ride as near the left-hand curb or edge of roadway, or when the lane width is too narrow to share with a motor vehicle. Additionally, bicycles are not excluded from riding on the highway shoulder.
- Bicyclists must not ride between two lanes of traffic moving in the same direction unless one lane is a separate or mandatory turn lane.

- Bicyclists cannot ride more than two abreast on highways. When riding two abreast, bicyclists cannot impede the movement of traffic and need to move into a single file when being overtaken from the rear. On a laned roadway, bicyclists shall ride in a single lane.
- Bicyclists are not permitted to ride on interstate and certain controlled access highways, unless the operation is limited to bicycle or pedestrian facilities that are barrier separated from the roadway and automobile traffic. The restricted sections of the highways are marked with conspicuous signs.
- Bicycles may be ridden on sidewalks unless prohibited by local ordinance or traffic control devices. While on sidewalks and shared use paths, bicyclists must always yield the right of way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before passing a pedestrian.
- Bicyclists pulling onto a sidewalk or highway from a driveway must yield the right of way to pedestrians or vehicles already on the sidewalk or highway.

Reference: §§46.2-802,46.2-808,46.2-826,46.2-903,46.2-904,46.2-905,46.2-907 ^TOPICS

CHANGING DIRECTIONS

Bicyclists must signal their intentions to stop or turn. The proper signals are made with the left arm as follows:

A right turn may be signaled with the right arm. The signals do not have to be given continuously if both hands are needed to control the bicycle.

Bicyclists may make left turns as either motorists or pedestrians do. To make a pedestrian left turn, the bicyclist should continue straight across the intersecting road, obey the traffic signals, turn left at the corner, and proceed as usual. Bicyclists may also dismount and walk in the crosswalks of the two intersecting roads. If traffic control devices specify the method of crossings, these directions must be followed.

Reference: §§46.2-846,46.2-847,46.2-848,46.2-849

PASSING

Bicyclists may overtake and pass another vehicle only when safe to do so. Bicyclists may pass another vehicle on the right or left, and they may stay in the same lane, change lanes, or ride off the road if necessary for safe passing. Please note that passing motor vehicles on the right side may be extremely dangerous if the motorist does not see the bicyclist and attempts a right turn.

A person riding a bicycle, electric personal assistive mobility device, electric power-assisted bicycle, motorized skateboard or scooter, or moped shall not travel between two lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, except where one lane is a separate turn lane or a mandatory turn lane.

Motorists must approach and pass a bicyclist at a reasonable speed at least two feet to the left of the bicyclist.

Reference: §§46.2-839,46.2-907 ^TOPICS

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Bicyclists must not carry articles which prevent them from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.
- Bicyclists must not carry more people than the bicycle is designed to accommodate, except for adult bicyclists carrying a child, under six years of age, securely attached to the bicycle in a seat or trailer designed to carry children.
- Bicyclists must not attach themselves or their bicycles to any other vehicle on the roadway.
- Bicyclists are not permitted to wear earphones in both ears while riding a bicycle.

Reference: §§46.2-906,46.2-932,46.2-1078 ^TOPICS

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

§ 46.2-833 B. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if a driver of a motorcycle or moped or a bicycle rider approaches an intersection that is controlled by a traffic light, the driver or rider may proceed through the intersection on a steady red light only if the driver or rider (i) comes to a full and complete stop at the intersection for two complete cycles of the traffic light or for two minutes, whichever is shorter, (ii) exercises due care as provided by law, (iii) otherwise treats the traffic control device as a stop sign, (iv) determines that it is safe to proceed, and (v) yields the right of way to the driver of any vehicle approaching on such other highway from either direction.