



Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission

City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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

FROM: Thanh Dang, Transportation & Environmental Planning Manager

DATE: Monday, March 28, 2016

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Agenda for Wednesday, March 9, 2016

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on **Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at 8:30AM in Room 011 of City Hall, 409 S Main St.**

Members present included: Bill Blessing, Len Van Wyk, Chance Ebersold, Joshua Humphries, Russell Presnell, and Thanh Dang.

Advisory Members & Guests Present: Jim Baker, Lee Eshelman, Cpl. Wayne Westfall, James Wininger

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

1. Introductions & welcome Chance Ebersold

Mr. Blessing welcomed Chance Ebersold as the newest member of the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission.

2. Procedures

Ms. Dang stated her goal will be to send agendas and supplemental information to Commission members one week prior to Commission meetings. She asked Commission members send her agenda requests one and a half (1.5) weeks prior to the Commission meeting with written request, photos, etc. This would provide Commission members the opportunity to review items, visit sites, etc. prior to the meeting, so that discussion and recommendations can be considered at the meeting and not be rushed.

However, if further information or discussion is required, the Commission can postpone recommendations to the next meeting.

Business

3. Safety/ Sight Distance concerns at Washington Street/ Liberty St

Ms. Dang reviewed the history of the W Washington St & N Liberty Street intersection. A traffic signal was formerly at this location; it was installed when the bridge on Main St was being replaced and traffic was detoured to Washington St and Liberty St. A signal warrant study was conducted by Public Works and found that the traffic signal was not warranted, and it was removed in 2011. N Liberty St's traffic volumes are heavier than W Washington St's.

The intersection of W Washington St & N Liberty St was reviewed by the Commission in May 2015, and at the time, the Commission proposed relocating the center line 3-ft to the west and to add an edge line on the east side to help make vehicles on Liberty St more visible to vehicles pulling up to the intersection on Washington St. These changes have not yet been implemented.

The Commission discussed that parking cannot be taken away on N Liberty St because residents do not have off street parking options. Additionally, on street parking can help with speed control for wide streets. A Commission member asked if collisions have occurred at this location. Cpl. Westfall responded yes, and that he could review collision reports.

The Commission discussed that stop bars are added to indicate the point behind which vehicles are required to stop in compliance with a stop sign. After stopping, drivers can move their vehicle up past the stop bar for better sightlines.

The Commission recommended that Public Works relocate the stop bar on W Washington St, moving it closer to the intersection, and to shift the centerline on N Liberty St.

There was discussion that if the problem continues after changes are made, before considering installation of a traffic signal at W Washington St and N Liberty St that flashing lights on W Washington St in advance of the N Liberty St intersection be considered. It was suggested that the lights should not flash all the time, but should have a sensor to flash only if a car is approaching on N Liberty St.

Additionally, it was suggested that the city should review the alley behind the homes and consider improving the alley to provide off street parking for the residents.

4. Pedestrians crossing on N Liberty St & Kratzer Rd

Mr. Presnell brought up a safety concern regarding pedestrians crossing around the intersection of N Liberty St & Kratzer Road. Poultry plant employees park in the parking lot at the northeast corner and cross at various places to get to work on the other side of N Liberty St. The existing crosswalks are not easy to walk to.

This item will be discussed at the next meeting. Ms. Dang asked Commission members to visit this area prior to the next meeting. It was suggested that a good time to visit the site was during afternoon shift change between 4:30-5:30pm on a weekday.

5. Safety/ Sight Distance concerns at Washington Street/ Vine Street

Ms. Dang provided a brief overview of concerns received. Drivers on W Washington St traveling eastbound have expressed difficulty seeing southbound vehicles approaching from the north on Vine Street. Mr. Baker stated that the required 250-ft of sight distance is there.

There was also discussion regarding stopping at stop bars. Stop bars can be used to indicate the point behind which vehicles are required to stop in compliance with a stop sign. After stopping, drivers can move their vehicle up past the stop bar for better sightlines.

Cpl. Westfall stated that there are speeding issues at this location and that he will review collision data at this location.

Mr. Winger stated that to his knowledge, there have been no complaints received from transit or bus drivers regarding this intersection, but suggested it may not be an issue for transit and school bus drivers because they sit taller in their vehicle.

6. Update on Sunset Heights Neighborhood – Traffic Calming Request

Ms. Dang shared that she, Mr. Tom Hartman, Cpl. Westfall, Dr. Van Wyk, and neighborhood representatives met on February 16, 2016. The meeting summary and traffic study is available at <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/sunset-heights-ntcp>.

Given the traffic speeds and volumes, the neighborhood is eligible to petition to request enrollment into the city's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The neighborhood representatives stated their interest to pursue enrollment and worked with city staff that evening to define the petition area. The neighborhood representatives' goal is to collect the required signatures by early April.

7. University Boulevard & Evelyn Byrd Avenue

Mr. Humphries had reached out to Ms. Dang previously to inquire about the delineators that had been removed from the intersection of University Boulevard & Evelyn Byrd Avenue. Ms. Dang explained to the group that the delineators were hit during snow plowing operations. Public Works staff was taking the opportunity to observe intersection without the delineators. On March 4, Public Works installed signage on the traffic signal mast arms to assist drivers. It appears that there have been fewer complaints received and some positive comments received regarding the removed delineators.

Mr. Humphries said he avoids driving through this intersection during peak times, but when he travels through he is concerned that drivers in the right lane turn only lane will not turn right, but will travel straight and hit a vehicle traveling straight in the adjacent lane. Mr. Ebersold says he drives through this intersection two times per day and sees drivers in the right turn lane going straight through the intersection. The delineators had forced people to turn right, and it was one less worry traveling through the intersection.

Mr. Blessing pointed out that with the original configuration without the turning lanes (prior to 2014), there were left turn safety issues and significant back up at this intersection which has now been improved.

Mr. Ebersold suggested that the ideal situation would be to add pocket right turn lanes. The group discussed that that pocket right turn lanes with assist with driver expectation that the right most lanes are right turn only lanes. However, the Commission acknowledged that this required the city to acquire right of way and it was not an easy fix.

After further discussion, Mr. Baker stated that the delineators for the right turn lanes at this intersection will be reinstalled by Public Works.

8. Reservoir Street Update

Mr. Baker shared that Public Works is moving forward with the Reservoir Street Improvement project. The construction contract has been awarded and will begin this Summer 2016 and will start at University Boulevard and move to city limits. The project is anticipated to be completed by December 2017.

Other Business/ Announcements

9. Vegetation Growth

Mr. Blessing said that with spring coming that Commission members should pay attention to vegetation growth blocking sight distance at intersections. Commission members and citizens can report issues to Public Works by calling 540-434-5928.

Adjourn

Next Meeting April 13, 2016, 8:30am