



**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members

FROM: Ian Pike, Transportation Systems Specialist

DATE: Wednesday March 15, 2017

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary for Wednesday, March 8, 2017

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on **March 8, 2017 at 8:30AM in Room 011 of City Hall, 409 S Main St.**

Commission Members present included: Bill Blessing, Chance Ebersold, Josh Humphries, Len VanWyk

Advisory Members and Guests present included: Tom Hartman, Ian Pike, James Wininger, Erin Yancey

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

Business

1. Speed Limit on Peach Grove Ave from southern City Limits to Port Republic Rd

The Public Works Traffic Superintendent has requested the speed limit on Peach Grove Ave be increased from 25 mph to 35 mph, the main complaint being that the design of the road makes it difficult to maintain such a low speed.

Mr. Blessing noted that there is good sight distance along the road and few entrances. Mr. Hartman responded that the sight distance going up the hill at the elementary school is not good.

Mr. VanWyk said that the county would have to also change their speed limit for the short section that connects to Stone Spring Rd.

Ms. Yancey questioned if increasing the speed limit would change the nature of the road. There is an elementary school that is also often used after hours and it functions as a collector for several neighborhoods.

Mr. Hartman suggested performing a speed study to understand if vehicles are driving closer to 35 mph or to 25 mph. Once a study is performed, if the data shows vehicles do drive closer to 35 mph, then sight distances will be checked and the proposed change will be brought to the neighborhoods for comment.

Mr. Blessing agreed that a speed study would be worth performing in order to have the data.

2. Speeding on Virginia Ave near VMRC

Mr. Pike shared the results of the speed study done on Virginia Ave near VMRC. The 85th percentile speed for the northbound lanes was 46 mph. The 85th percentile speed for the southbound lanes was 44 mph. The speed limit in the area of the speed study is 45 mph so these speeds were expected and show that there is not a speeding issue. Mr. Winger from Harrisonburg Public Transportation also noted that there have never been any complaints from the paratransit drivers that regularly service VMRC.

Mr. VanWyk proposed that nothing be done at this time. Mr. Blessing seconded this motion.

3. Stop Bar Request in Northeast Neighborhood

Mr. Blessing asked if there are a large number of crashes at the Hill St/E Gay St intersection because just placing stop bars might not prevent certain types of crashes. Mr. Hartman explained that it would act as a visual cue and help prevent close calls. There were 7 reported crashes at this intersection from 2011-2015.

Mr. VanWyk asked if it would be expensive to add the stop bars. Mr. Hartman said that one intersection wouldn't be, but doing an entire neighborhood would. The best solution would be to first develop criteria for placing stop bars in residential neighborhoods and approach it more systematically.

Mr. Ebersold asked if this intersection would make more sense as a 4-way stop. Mr. Blessing noted that as long as he's been on the commission, the city seems to have had a policy against 4-way stops. Mr. Hartman said that the city isn't explicitly against 4-way stops, but that the MUTCD has a specific set of warrants that would have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Blessing noted that there are a number of intersections in this neighborhood that have been brought up before due to sight distance issues, including Hill St/E Gay St. The commission recommended evaluating this intersection for a 4-way stop and developing criteria for stop bars in residential neighborhoods.

4. Sidewalks Along Port Republic Rd

Mr. Pike explained that Lee Eshelman from JMU has requested sidewalks along the south side of Port Republic Rd from S Main St to Bluestone Dr due to students walking in the gutter late at night. This segment is identified in the upcoming Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Mr. Blessing asked if the city owns the right-of-way to be able to build a sidewalk there. Mr. Hartman said the city only owns to the back of the curb. Mr. Blessing recommended doing nothing for now.

5. Sight Distance Issue at Liberty St Parking Lot across from L&S Diner

Mr. Blessing asked where a mirror could go since the parking lot entrance is located directly across from another building. Mr. Hartman said that is the main difficulty with placing a mirror.

Mr. VanWyk asked if this is truly a problem area. Mr. Ebersold said it is an issue on Sunday mornings when everyone is leaving church at the same time. Mr. Blessing recommended continuing to monitor the issue. If it becomes a greater safety concern, one possibility would be to shift the parking lot entrance further south to provide greater sight distance, though that would involve losing a few parking spaces.

6. Sight Distance Issue at S Main St and Campbell St

Mr. Hartman explained that there have been several complaints about the sight distance on Campbell St turning right onto S Main St when there are cars parked in front of the Joshua Wilton House. The city surveyor drafted a sketch of the intersection showing that approximately 100 ft (4-5 car spaces) from the southeastern corner would need to be restricted from parking in order to provide adequate sight distance from the stop bar on Campbell St.

Mr. Blessing asked if the complaints were about crossing S Main St to access the City Hall parking lot. Mr. Hartman said that was part of the issue, the other big issue was merging into traffic on S Main St. The parked cars would often block oncoming vehicles in the right lane on S Main St. Vehicles on Campbell St that do creep into the intersection to see around the parked vehicles are often perceived as actively merging by oncoming vehicles and creating a safety hazard. Mr. Humphries agreed, saying that he regularly drives through this intersection and has been honked at many times for creeping into the intersection in order to see around parked vehicles.

Mr. Blessing asked if there would be any complaints if the parking was removed. Mr. Hartman believes there would not be any complaints due to its location. It would only extend from the intersection to the bank entrance. Most of the nearby businesses have off-street parking available.

The commission recommends placing the “No Parking Signs”.

Other Business/ Announcements

Adjourn