

Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

July 14th, 2016
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
NDS Conference Room, 2nd floor City Hall

Meeting Participants

Stephen Bach	Peter Ohlms
Brian Carr	Mason Pickett
Frank Deviney	Amanda Poncy
Claudia Elzey	Carl Schwarz
Chris Gist	Lena Seville
Jake Fox	David Stackhouse
Peter Krebs	

Items for Action or Follow-up

- Several members will offer specific feedback/edits on the Bicycle Map
- The committee will explore a sub-committee on safety education/communication
- Several items tabled or undiscussed due to time

Meeting Agenda

5:00 *Introductions*
Welcomed new member David Stackhouse
and observer Frank Deviney
Lena noted that she would like for there to be more members who
are specifically pedestrians.

5:10pm *Ragged Mountain Natural Area – Allowable Uses*

Background:

At last month's meeting it was decided to consider formulating BPAC recommendation about the allowed land use change under consideration for the Ragged Mountain Natural Area. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is having a public hearing on the topic next Wednesday (July 20, 5:30 at the Jefferson School).

David Stackhouse gave a detailed description of the discussions and presented the options that flowed from it. The options all presume completing the loop. “Option B” is Hiking Only; “Options C” and “D” restrict biking to outer loops; “Option E” is a shared use option with some hiker-only trails. An “Option A” that would prohibit even hiking has been eliminated.

RTF, CAMBC and Charlottesville Trail Runners are preparing a statement in support of Option E. CAMBC is supportive of some hiking-only areas as long as there is equal opportunity for cycling experiences.

They’re neutral on the topic of dogs but recognize concerns about keeping dogs on leash.

He [David] recommends endorsing Option E.

There has been a nature survey of the area. There are some sensitive areas, especially plants and unique environments that are said to be in “recovery” like most wild places in Virginia. There is a 170 page environmental survey, which does not take a stand on mixed-use but cautions about the spread of invasive plants.

He cited youth obesity as a major concern and recognizes that there are other trails but they are vulnerable and more variety is desirable. He cited several bicycle-oriented youth development organizations doing great work. He underlined that Ragged Mountain is accessible directly from town and that most other nearby trails are on private or quasi-private land. He cited a potential loss of RTF trail segment [south of Avon Street] that due to a land-owner dispute.

He noted that the County has completely embraced cycling in its parks especially Preddy Creek and Walnut Creek parks. Those are good opportunities but they’re far away—up to an hour by car. He presented that the Mountain Bike club is active in best practice trail building and maintenance, plus encouraging youth exposure to nature. They feel that more people out there is better for the trails and a good way to get kids out into nature.

He cited preponderance of backing for mixed use options while recognizing that hiker-only advocates have legitimate concerns.

More information at <http://www.charlottesville.org/raggedmountain>

Discussion:

Brian asked about wheelchair accessibility. David responded that the plan is for “natural surface” trails and the vast majority of the terrain is steep. He suggested that perhaps with option E, potential for further advocacy exists.

Lena asked about why the option moves the hikers away from the water. Chris responded that it’s because of neighbor (Ednam) concerns about having bikes on the perimeter. [E.N.: The nature survey also states that trails should be situated downhill (if possible) from sensitive areas to prevent the downhill wash of invasive seeds.]

Carl said that as a runner on O-Hill, he rarely if ever has had negative interactions with people on bikes.

There was some discussion about wild birds being startled by bikes. Jake pointed out that BPAC should stick to its purview: bike/ped advocacy; birds have their own advocates. David was adamant that those concerns may be intuitive but the science indicates the opposite—they’re more frightened by creatures (humans, like browsing hikers) than machines.

Motion:

Stephen moved that BPAC endorse Option E, noting also concern for ADA accessibility and widening shared use portion close to parking lot. Chris Gist second. Yes: 5 (Peter O, Jake, Chris, Stephen, Carl); No: 0; Abstain: 3

6:05pm *Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety –
City Traffic Engineer Rashad Hanbali*
[Tabled until next meeting, which he will attend]

6:05pm *Bicycle and Pedestrian Map – Final Comments*

Claudia presented her bike/pedestrian map. Peter O asked Lena if push-button signals being on maps signifies anything to pedestrians looking at map. It was decided to retain them.

There was a request to change the symbology of Route 76 from a colored line to a series of 76 logos.

Jake asked if “shared roadway” is a useful designation, when all roads are legally “shared.”

Chris advised that a map based on facilities is not particularly useful, whereas recommended routes is a better measure. General discussion followed about whether the “low-stress routes” fill that role implicitly.

Peter O asked for consistent symbology in the inset.

Chris requested improved focus on recommended routes. He would like something a novice can take and use to get started without knowing anything about facilities. He talked about some other maps of other places, but noted that its an improvement but very focused on facilities.

Stephen: there are so many possible combinations of origin/destination combos that a recommended route map is not possible, whereas this map simply lays out the information allowing users to make their own decisions. It’s versatile.

Chris: Infrastructure is fragmented on the map because that’s the ground-truth but that information will be difficult to string into useful itineraries.

Brian suggested that a static map is not versatile enough; he suggested an app.

Peter O said to de-emphasize limited access roads such as 250; general consensus.

There will be marked up recommendations from several members.

6:20pm BPAC’s Online Presence, Continued
No discussion

6:30pm Code Audit Topics
Block Length & Non-vehicular Walkways

Carl made the case that the current code calls for excessively long blocks. Shorter blocks are better for pedestrians. He strongly suggested that larger

blocks are not a good idea. If a request to close street arises, ped/bike passage should be maintained through the right-of-way.

He recommended that there be periodic breaks in buildings for walkways/courtyards max every 150 feet.

In Richmond, there is a density bonus if there is an arcade or passage and if you have a cul de sac, you need a walkway connector out of it.

He likes periodic crosswalks.

He found most staff comments to be on point.

Group recommendations:

- Standards of design manual recommendations on block size are much too large.
- Residential: 600' absolute max. Cut-through is desirable at 300'. Crosswalk desirable, even if mid-block.
- Commercial: 300' max.
- Cul-de-sacs should have cut-throughs.
- Connectivities for bikes, pedestrians (into, out-of and through the site) should be established and described in site plans.

6:55pm *Responsibilities of BPAC Representatives to other Bodies*
Tabled for email discussion

6:57pm *Amanda requested volunteers for bike/ped safety communications ideas.*
Potential safety subcommittee
Jake volunteered

Further agenda items not discussed

6:40pm May Bike Month—Chris Gist, Scott Paisley
Recap & Report

6:50pm Updates from Committee Members

- PLACE (Scott Paisley, Representative)
- STWCA (Eberhard Jehle, Representative)

Accommodations by contacting ada@charlottesville.org
434)970-3182

- BAR (Carl Schwarz)
- CAT Advisory Board & Tree Commission (Lena Seville)

Upcoming events

July 20, 3-4PM:	APBP Webinar—“Performance Measures”
July 20, 5:30PM:	Parks & Rec Advisory Committee discusses Ragged Mountain trail allowable uses (Jefferson School)
Aug 4, 5-7PM:	Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting
Aug 17, 3-4PM:	APBP Webinar—“Street Design in Suburban Contexts”