

# **Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee**

(Pedestrian Focused Meeting)

April 2, 2015

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

NDS Conference Room, 2nd floor City Hall

## **Meeting Participants**

Jim Self

Peter Ohlms

Carl Schwartz

Katie Bailey

Eberhard Jehle

Rachel Laureillicera

Chris Gist

Will Cockrell

Stephen Bach

Ron Cook

Susan Elliott

Christy Fisher

Lena Seville

Amanda Poncy

Scott Paisley

## **Meeting Agenda**

Snow Removal Discussion - Ron Cook, Public Works

Ron Cook, Program Coordinator for Emergency Operations with Public Works, provided the committee with an overview of snow operation procedures.

Snow storms are rated in 4 categories\*\*:

- Type 1 – dusting, limited staff, no plowing, salt/brine
- Type 2 – light snow (2-3 inches), multiple shifts, plow
- Type 3 – more heavy snow, multiple shifts, plow
- Type 4 – heavy snow, plow and haul

The Public Works Director makes a decision about whether a storm event is a category 3 or 4 and will confer with the City Manager.

\*\* Note: no two storms are alike and many factors will influence the category decision. For example, if the temperature is below 15 degrees, salt won't work and brine would be used instead. If another storm is expected, hauling might not be an option.

The city has 10 designated snow routes and 4 auxiliary routes. Information pertaining to snow routes can be found online:

<http://www.charlottesville.org/Index.aspx?page=2431>

Crews are assigned to different sections of the city. While the snow is falling, crews continuously clear the primary routes. When the snow stops, effort is made to clear 1 lane of secondary roads. Once completed, crews go back to widen and clear the secondary routes. Lastly, the intersections are cleared.

Committee members expressed concern about the lack of bike lane and intersection cleaning, particularly in the days/weeks following a storm. There was particular concern expressed about the large piles that are created by plowing equipment that become difficult to clear and do not melt on their own. The committee inquired about the possibility of cleaning up the bike lanes during the snow, extending the brining operation to include the bike lane and hauling. In areas with a median (such as on JPA between UVA and Fontaine), a committee member suggested pushing the snow to the median rather than to the curb so as not to block the bike lane or sidewalk. Mr. Cook noted that the city provides minimal funding for snow removal and the equipment that is used (essentially rubber squeegees) makes it difficult to get clear paths. Committee members asked about what they can do to help prioritize funding so that intersections and bike lanes are well cleared.

Committee members also expressed concern about parked cars and asked about the threshold to declare a snow emergency so that the cars can be removed from emergency routes before a snow event. The PW Director and

City Manager make decisions about whether a snow event will be a snow emergency. This decision is based on a number of factors.

Mr. Cook mentioned that there is a post-snow evaluation meeting (typically in April/May) to review how the process went for the previous season. There is also a training in the fall to get plow drivers familiar with any new roadway features on their routes. The committee asked if Amanda Poncy could be on the post-evaluation committee. Mr. Cook agreed to make that suggestion. The group agreed that it would be good to meet ahead of time to brainstorm ideas for Amanda to bring up.

Sidewalk closing policy and practice (Christy Fisher, Assistant Traffic Engineer)  
Christy Fisher gave an overview of her role in the sidewalk closure permitting process and presented some considerations for modifying the sidewalk closure process in the future (see attachment 1).

Discussion centered around sidewalk closures going on too long, low cost for closures, and lack of public notice. Members agreed that additional fees for longer closures would serve as an incentive for developers to complete work without undue burden to pedestrians. Advanced notice is also needed. Christy mentioned that there are a few different types of requests that range from large development projects to individual homeowner requests. For big projects there are opportunities to notify the public in advance. It is more difficult to provide advanced notice for individual homeowners and smaller contractors who come in at the last minute to get a permit. Committee members generally agreed that short duration sidewalk closures on residential streets were not problematic and advanced notice was not required in those cases.

One committee member asked if we ever say no to sidewalk closures. Christy responded that we do not allow people to close sidewalks for equipment storage.

A question was raised about whether this topic would be included in the code audit. Amanda mentioned that the code audit is intended to focus on codes, ordinances and standards, but there is likely an opportunity to also discuss policies/procedures.

There was a request to have these considerations fleshed out into a policy recommendation and members of the committee expressed interest in reviewing a first draft. Christy agreed to schedule a meeting with the city attorney to discuss any issues related to a policy/fee structure change and create a draft policy for the committee to review.

#### Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts (Will Cockrell, TJPDC)

Will Cockrell gave a short presentation about the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's role in conducting bicycle and pedestrian counts. The TJPDC began organizing volunteer counts in 2011, which occurred on two days (Wed. 5-7PM/Sat 12-2PM) in 21 locations in the spring and fall of that year. It was the first effort for various regional partners (PDC, UVA, County, City, Bike Charlottesville) to organize a count and demonstrated the ability to coordinate such an effort. Counts occurred again in 2013, but were conducted over 5 day period in 18 locations. It also included additional time periods throughout the week. Given the 2 year interval between the counts, the PDC is looking to organize another count effort this spring/fall 2015. The group discussed potential locations for consideration (South Street, Park Street, Ivy Road), additional partners for soliciting volunteers (neighborhood associations), and ideas for encouraging participation (raffle/prize). This

spring's count is tentatively scheduled for the last week of April/first week of May.

#### West Main Street Pilot Project Follow-Up (Scott Paisley)

Scott provided an update of the recent Council work session where Rhodeside + Harwell presented work to date on the West Main Street project. One of the ideas for moving the process forward was a "pilot" project to test the ideas of the streetscape. West Main Street is eligible for repaving based on public works' rating system, so milling and paving is already programmed. The question was raised if the committee was in favor of using the bike budget for restriping. While there was some disagreement on the use of bike funds for restriping, all present ultimately agreed that it was a good idea to recommend using the bike budget to assist with pilot design and implementation. This provides an opportunity to test the streetscape project within existing budgets.

#### May BPAC Meeting

In the past the BPAC has discussed hosting a bike ride to look at bike infrastructure. As part of Bike Month activities it was suggested that the May meeting be a bike ride that is open to the public to review and discuss some of the recent and upcoming improvements. All present agreed that it's a good idea.

#### Crosswalk policy and practice

Given time constraints, this was not discussed.

#### **Upcoming events**

Apr 15: 3-4PM: APBP Webinar "Legal Rights and Issues for Peds/Bikes"

April 26-May 2: Bike/Ped Counts (volunteers needed, various locations)

**May 6: 4:30-6:30PM: Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan Open House (City Space)**

May 7: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike)

May 20 Law Enforcement Strategies to Improve Safety for Peds and Bikes

June 4: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (ped)

Jun 17 First Mile / Last Mile Connections to Transit

Attachment 1.

### **Considerations for changes to Charlottesville’s policy on pedestrian work zone standards**

- Increased fee for sidewalk closure (currently \$10 per day)
- Fee is more in urban areas. We currently close sidewalks by block.
- Do we need to consider parking meters?
- The following zoning districts/streets shall have a higher sidewalk closure fee: WMN, WMS, CD, D, DN, WSD, SS, and Hinton Avenue from Monticello to Meridian, and arterials and collectors with a sidewalk only on one side of the road.
- For closures in urban districts (\*urban district defined as WMN, WMS, CD, D, DN, WSD, SS, and Hinton Avenue from Monticello to Meridian), a covered walkway or open walkway in the roadway is required if the closure is more than 48 hours.
- For closures longer than 48 hours in non-urban districts where there is a sidewalk only on one side of the road, an open walkway in the roadway is preferred if there is adequate right-of-way
- All sidewalk closures shall post signs at the closure that includes the dates, time, and company/organization (similar to our no parking signs)

Proposed fee structure:

Urban district* sidewalk closure	\$X/foot/day
Downtown Mall partial closure	\$X/foot/day
Arterials/collectors with only one sidewalk?	\$X/foot/day
All other areas sidewalk closure	\$X/foot/day

#### **Case studies:**

District Department of Transportation

Bend, OR

Philadelphia, PA