

## **Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee**

August 10, 2017

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

NDS Conference Room, 2nd Floor City Hall

### **Meeting Participants**

Frank Deviney, Jr.

Andrew Eitler

Zach Herrman

Carl Schwarz

Stephen Bach

Ruth Stornetta

Amanda Poncy

Brennen Duncan

### **Meeting Agenda**

5:00PM          Zach Herrman – Regional Bike/Ped Plan (45 minutes)

Zach Herrman, with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, attended the meeting to provide an update on the Regional Bike/Ped Plan and to obtain input from the BPAC with regard to what bike/ped infrastructure is lacking and where future routes should be prioritized. He clarified that this effort is not intended to replace the City's Bike/Ped plan, rather to reflect any development changes that have occurred since the City's plan update. The plan will result in a list of prioritized projects for each of the different jurisdictions within the planning area.

The TJPDC's initial review finds that connections between city/county are lacking.

Frank Deviney asked about the criteria for prioritization? Zach explained that they will be using the Active Transportation Prioritization Tool (Toole Design). It might not use the exact same factors as the City's plan.

The group reviewed a map of existing bike lane, sidewalk and trail data. The following routes were discussed:

- Ivy Road (from city limits to Northridge) should be prioritized Potential UVA commuter route.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street – the bridge is a particular area that needs to be addressed and continued into the county. There are some areas that narrow (driveways, mailboxes, front yards, etc.) and it would be better never to have to get in traffic lane. There are a few pinch points that would make it better.
- Avon St. across 64 – lots of developments south of town and many people who want to commute in. Some stretches of Avon are problematic.
- Monticello Ave – Peter Krebs is working to make some of those connections happen
- Old Lynchburg Road - There are some people that believe that building a trail network from Biscuit Run will eliminate road riding on Old Lynchburg. One member of the committee does not agree. He believes that people who are riding on the road will

continue riding on the road. Those who are currently afraid to ride on the road will use the trails. There is concern about the configuration of OLR not having bike accommodation. OLR needs bike accommodation – paved shoulder from Red Hill to Azalea Park - this is a major recreational route and commuter route for UVA. The thought that Azalea Road to Montevista is an alternative is not viable – it's steep, out of the way.

- Old Garth to Garth Road – Some parts are not too bad for cyclists (“21 curves” – traffic doesn't move too fast). Alternative is to use 250 at Bloomfield Road or Old Ballard, so Garth is heavily used recreational route. There was discussion about the speed limit on Garth. Speed limit should be 45 mph.
- Three Notched Road Trail – there is not a specific alignment, but it basically parallels Ivy Road to Crozet Tunnel. Projects like this could have economic impact for the region.
- Route 29 - Need to look for every opportunity to improve connections. Maps should highlight where the islands are and connecting those islands. For example, you could create a connectivity map showing how far you could get in 20 minutes - It would be great to have a metric like that where you could evaluate how a project would improve overall connectivity. For example, Meadow Creek Trail will get people from west side of 29 to downtown in a short amount of time.
- 250 East – is there an alternative to the roadway to get east?
- Another source of data for recreational riders is Strava. Even though it is biased towards recreational riders, it is a good source of information.
- Gap on Meadowcreek Parkway?
- Amanda pointed out that some of the information on the map needs to be reviewed – some signed bike routes are showing up the same as actual bike lanes. Also need to distinguish between existing and proposed facilities. They are showing up the same on the map.
- GSI on Rio at Route 29 – there are no bike lanes crossing 29. It's disappointing that a brand new project wouldn't have bike accommodation.
- 151 in Nelson County

Amanda asked about the process moving forward. Zach explained that they are gathering information about problematic routes from the public as well as additional quantitative data about those routes (speed limits, road width, etc.) to help inform the prioritization process, which will emphasize connectivity/safety. Zach hopes to come back to the County CAC's and the BPAC with a prioritized list of projects, draft goals/objectives (which will mirror the Long Range Transportation Plan), and a robust cost spreadsheet.

There is a project webpage with a hyperlink to the old plan, as well as a Project page.  
<http://tjpd.org/transportation/jefferson-area-bike-and-pedestrian-plan/>

Comments will be collected via Wikimap through October.

There will be an open house for the Long Range Plan on Sept. 15.

### **Sidewalk Closure Policies**

Amanda provided a summary of the items that have been previously discussed with regard to sidewalk closures. The items generally fall into two categories – fee structure and regulation.

Brennen explained that increasing fees is a separate and larger issue that needs further review in terms of what is allowed under state code, as well as ultimately City Council buy-in. There is a request in the CIP to evaluate all of our fees and this would be included. Fees are a longer term item and will follow a separate track.

Amanda provided a map showing some of the locations where more stringent guidelines would apply (generally following the Downtown, West Main and Corner zoning districts). The group affirmed these locations and also suggested considering JPA, University and Emmet for more stringent guidelines/need pedestrian access maintained.

Frank Deviney expressed concern about a Public Works (PW) paving project on JPA with sign closures blocking both sidewalk and bike lane. Brennen explained that PW does not currently obtain a permit from NDS for sidewalk closures. PW lets NDS know about the closures, but NDS does not review their detailed traffic management plan. Utilities does get a permit from NDS. Both Ruth and Frank suggested that people who are placing the sign should be thinking about where they place the sign so that visibility is not blocked.

Someone asked if the signs need to be as big as they are stating that there is a difference between what is needed on a highway vs. what is needed on a city street. Brennen explained that they are VA Work Zone Standard. Carl asked if it is a new law that the signs are required? Are they necessary? Brennen explained that they are required per code. There was additional discussion about poor placement of signs.

Carl clarified that we close sidewalks based on the distance between crosswalks/closest ramp – not by block.

Ruth suggested that there is a need to change the culture within city government so that employees are more aware of pedestrians and bicyclists. Brennen explained that Public Works supervisors will be attend the ADA Training (Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility). Ruth noted that a video was made for CAT bus driver training many years ago and asked if that could be reinstated. Amanda noted that Chris Gist and Mac Lafferty have provided in person training before, but she was not aware of a video.

Brennen asked for the committee's thoughts on the use of audible signals. He explained that the city has implemented some with construction along W. Main. However, both the city and contractor's equipment has been vandalized/demolished/stolen. Brennen explained that his preference would be to use the audible signals in residential settings, as he feels that the reason they are being vandalized is because they are annoying business owners/nearby residences. He also explained that there were complaints that in an urban environment, it was difficult to understand the message. Frank asked if they could be put in a mesh cage/chains? No decision was made

Regarding reduced speed limits in work zones, Brennen reviewed the code and can't find anything that allows the City to reduce the speed limit below 25mph. It can be reduced in school zones. While looking into speed limits, he clarified the BMUFL/STR are dictated by speed. In Charlottesville, BMUFL is the more appropriate sign, but the sign choice is based on speed limit.

With regard to the size of signs, most contractors don't have their own signs, they rent them and the signs are standard sizes. The biggest problem is the size of the support structure (which is

for wind loading). There was a suggestion that staff consider a post in the ground. Brennen suggested this could be a possibility if the closure is going to be longer than 1 month. Carl suggested that it seems like some of the signs are unnecessary.

Carl supported the idea that 48hrs is a reasonable threshold for increasing regulation. He asked how the regulations would apply to a project like Market Plaza. Brennen explained that because there are sidewalks on both sides, the sidewalk in front of the building will likely be closed. He explained the general approach to maintaining traffic - priority first to cars, then pedestrians, and bikes. In order to accommodate, parking would be removed first, then bike lane, then sidewalk then the travel lane. For Market Plaza, there might be a need to remove the loading zones on Water St. in order to maintain pedestrian access. Carl suggested maybe considering regulations on a street by street basis, rather than district by district. Comparing closures on Water St. vs. West Main, a blockage on West Main is much more disruptive because there are no other options. In the Downtown, there is a better grid and more options for travel.

Ruth commented that the considerations for change is a step in the right direction. Amanda explained that our plan is to get buy in from ADA Advisory Committee and others as needed. We will condense this down and include with sidewalk closure permits, along with a map. Increased fees will come at a later time when we review all of NDS fees.

## **Meeting rules**

### **Being a more effective BPAC**

The group agreed to delay this discussion until there is a larger group. Carl reiterated a need to do some homework before October – specifically to review the group charter and Frank's spreadsheet. Frank has been researching advocacy groups (different than advisory groups), though his research has focused on larger metro areas. Frank feels the area needs a bike advocacy group to organize bike rides, advocate, etc. Ruth commented that BPAC is fortunate to have a paid staff person. She described her experience with Bike Charlottesville and the difficulties of having both an advocacy and advisory group. Most of the people who are part of BPAC were also part of Bike Charlottesville. The size of our community and lack of willing volunteers can be a challenge. Ruth clarified that the structure of the BPAC makes it easier than trying to organize an advocacy group. Frank has been trying to look for examples that are closer in size to Charlottesville to glean lessons learned and how they advocated for staff/budget. Key questions to investigate - What is reasonable budget and staffing level? What authority does the staff person have? Amanda noted that Rex's grant is trying to build a regional coalition of bike/pedestrian advocates.

The group agreed to research examples (focusing on VA examples) of bike advocacy/city associated groups – SVBC, Roanoke, Richmond, Bike Arlington, Tidewater

Amanda also noted that Advocacy Advance has a good summary report of the qualities of bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees.

[http://wabikes.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/bpac\\_best\\_practicesweb.pdf](http://wabikes.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/bpac_best_practicesweb.pdf)

Frank will resend the list of advocacy groups.

### **Bike lane separation statement**

The group agreed to delay this discussion until there is a larger group. However, those present discussed the value of making a separate, specific statement on this topic versus relying on the ideas contained within the Bike/Ped plan and the implementation of the plan. Amanda reminded the group that the bike/ped plan does discuss the need for separation generally and identifies locations where trails and separated facilities are appropriate. She noted that rumble strips are not specifically called out in the plan. Frank expressed concern about making a broad statement about the use of specific treatments. Stephen agreed. They both thought that making a broad statement that is applicable for every situation is difficult.

Frank suggested reviewing the plan for project implementation and to see if there are ideas that need to be re-emphasized. Amanda agreed that maybe there are some things that could be revisited, but also provided examples where separation has been discussed and progress is being made – Belmont Bridge cycle tracks, West Main (cycle tracks discussed, but politically didn't get anywhere). Frank asked what BPAC can do to make sure the things that are in the plan get done (part of being an effective BPAC). He commented that it seems like there is a lot implementing the low hanging fruit. Amanda clarified that what is visible is the low-hanging fruit, but there are a lot of big projects in the works (for example, Emmet Street multi-use trail, Belmont Bridge, Fontaine). Frank suggested that it would be great at the 5 year point to summarize success (for example, the plan lists 100 projects – 80 were completed and 20 are no longer a priority/viable). That would lead to success and updating the plan again. Carl noted that Amanda has been providing project updates to the BPAC on an annual basis. He reiterated the importance of focusing BPAC efforts on project implementation and not wasting time on things that are already contained within the plan unless they need to be rushed. He suggested reviewing the plan to see if bike lane separation is adequately addressed and, if it is, it doesn't make sense to re-emphasize. Frank suggested synthesizing the plan vision to a 1 pager that summarizes what the BPAC is in favor of – for example, BPAC is in favor of separation, connectivity, etc (BPAC policy statement). Carl agreed that it would be useful for BPAC to read the plan again and that a 1 pager would be useful to have at outreach events.