

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

June 1, 2017

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

NDS Conference Room, 2nd Floor City Hall

### **Meeting Participants**

Frank Deviney

Scott Paisley

Dave Stackhouse

Eberhard Jehle

Erin Robartes

Peter Ohlms

Carl Schwarz

Zack Lofton

Chris Gist

Samantha Harris

Amanda Poncy

### **Meeting Notes**

#### **Erin Robartes Bicycle Research Update**

Erin Robartes, researcher at UVA, provided an summary of the bicycle survey that was conducted earlier this spring. Over 600 people viewed the survey with 438 responses. The following are some of the highlights:

- Gender: 2/3 male, 1/3 female – expected this because of the gender gap in bicycling commuters.
- Age: Good spread in terms of age diversity.
- Income: Large response from high income (100K-200K)/high education. These two are likely correlated. There were also many responses from those earning less than 10K per year.
- Geographic distribution: Charlottesville and Bburg had the highest concentration of survey responses

The goal of the research was to gather information about crashes that are not reported in the police crash database – 429 crashes were reported on the survey (includes crashes within the last 10 years). This number represents an average of 1 crash per person, but more than half of the respondents did not report any crashes. All types of crashes were considered (vehicle, solo crashes, pedestrians). The survey asked if there was a vehicle in the crash.

Erin showed a graph of injury severity comparing those that were reported and those that were not reported (or unsure). Where police reports were filed, the survey data shows higher percentage of serious and minor injuries. Within the serious injury category, nearly 2/3 did not have crash report. This could be because if you are in a crash that doesn't involve a vehicle, you might simply call a friend instead of the police to pick you up. The data presented did not distinguish between whether or not there was a car involved. Erin expressed interest in looking more specifically at that issue.

Another graph compared the distribution of police reported crashes (2010-2014) and those reported in the survey. There is a higher percentage of no injury crashes in the self-reported crashes.

Four of the survey questions asked about respondents knowledge of laws in Virginia – specifically helmet laws, headlight/reflector laws, driving under the influence, stopping at stop signs/lights. 93% of respondents knew what they were supposed to do at traffic lights/stop signs. However, the positive responses for the other questions were much lower. Erin suggested that the survey likely tapped into an active bicycling population, so they might have expected more people to understand the laws. There is probably less understanding of the laws for those who aren't biking.

These results from this section tied into the open-ended comments section where many people talked about not enough bicyclists' education program for drivers or others on the road.

The open-ended comments were summarized by theme:

- Education – a greater awareness of laws is needed – 3' passing, understanding hand signals and bicyclists right to use the roadway.
- Infrastructure – there is a need for more bike lanes (protected and otherwise), better road maintenance, wider shoulders
- Barriers to Biking – near accidents, safety concerns are main reasons for not biking
- Not enough info about kids, family biking, safe routes on the survey. Many people would have liked to give feedback in those areas.

What's next – researchers will continue analysis of this data. Specifically, they are looking at ways to weight the data to account for the overrepresentation of high education/high income population.

Scott noted that the overrepresentation might be based on how the survey was distributed and . There is evidence (through Bicycling Magazine) that skew towards higher income/education. The research team will be looking at ACS data to get insight into who is commuting.

A couple of members asked about how the survey was distributed. An email was sent to bike clubs/advocacy groups. There was also an outreach event in Charlottesville to capture casual riders.

Dave inquired about the original theory behind the research. The intent was to gather more crash data and understand attitudes toward biking. The analysis is not completed, but the desire is to better understand the crashes that are not reported.

Dave questioned the validity of the data since the most responses were from small, college towns, not major population centers in Virginia – Northern Va, Richmond, Norfolk, etc.

Someone asked if there were plans to do more research or change anything about the research. Erin responded that she would do things differently, but there are no current plans to expand the survey.

Eberhard suggested that future research could separate solo crashes, incidents with vehicles and bike/ped interactions.

There is concern that there are a large number of people who don't know the laws – esp. since the survey respondents were largely bike enthusiasts. Even among those who currently ride, the number of people who understood the laws was low. What is the role that BPAC should have in the educational effort? Is that something that should be a focus? Carl reminded the group that there is an education subcommittee that could help with this. .

There are no federal laws for driving/biking –each state and some localities are different. It's difficult to know the specifics.

In Charlottesville, how do people learn about the helmet law? Scott explained that when helmet law went into place, CPD distributed helmets which provided an opportunity to educate the community about the new laws.

Amanda noted that as part of the Safe Routes to School Programming, the City purchased helmets to be distributed to the schools to students that need them. Peter mentioned that this approach seems to be working, because his son came home talking about being able to get a new helmet.

Amanda introduced the Zack Lofton to the committee. He is both ADA and GIS coordinator, so will be splitting responsibility between those duties. He has a lot of experience and interest in bicycle and pedestrian issues. He's participating today as the ADA representative, but may join the committee as citizen in the future.

### **Mid-Year Project Updates/City Council Annual Report**

Amanda provided an update on the projects identified in the bicycle and pedestrian master plan, as well as upcoming projects.

Many of the near term on-street projects have been completed or are in the works. The exception is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street contraflow/mall crossings and Ridge Street/5<sup>th</sup> St projects. The City is working to put together an RFP for a Ridge/5th Street corridor study that takes vehicle/bike/ped issues into account. It's a high crash corridor for vehicles and the goal is to identify both long and short term improvements that can make the corridor safer.

Clarification was needed for the JPA/Emmet project location – this is where there is a separated bicycle lane and conflict zone markings near Oakhurst..

Eberhard commented that the changes to Park Street make it feel safer. It is now very civil compared to 15 years ago.

Peter asked about status of a pilot project on West Main. Amanda mentioned that there hasn't been much talk of a pilot project recently. However, the project will likely be completed in a phased approach with the eastern blocks first. Scott noted that this same topic came up in PLACE last month where the group discussed the benefits of testing projects first. One of the issues that was discussed for West Main was measuring how/if the pilot is working. Retail sales is one measure, but the city didn't think it was appropriate to publicly publish retail sales information during implementation. NYCs example study has detailed economic data in their report.

Dave asked about the next milestone for West Main. Council approved 30% plans and staff is working on scope/fee for next phase of design. Once finalized it will be brought to Council with a request for funds to continue design. Rhodeside Harwell is the design firm.

Eberhard expressed concern about PW restriping West Main without input from the committee. There is a desire to get additional separation from car doors. He is concerned that BPAC doesn't have input on some of the temporary changes on W. Main.

Chris asked about the status of the meeting that was held as a follow-up to his email about the West Main obstructions. A number of ADA issues were identified and those are being addressed. Chris expressed his displeasure that the "Bike Lane Closed" signs were moved to block the uphill part of the bridge making it even more difficult to travel on West Main. He was hoping that the issues of semi-permanent sign placements with a smaller footprint would have been discussed at that meeting. Committee members suggested that signs could have a smaller footprint, or be placed in the furnishing zones or hung overhead. They also requested that signs should say BMUFL. Approaching 11<sup>th</sup>, there used to be a BMUFL, but those signs don't exist in the westbound direction.

Committee members asked how long the temporary signs are supposed to be there. Amanda explained that the signs are temporary traffic control and will likely be shifting over the next 3-6 months to accommodate construction at its various stages.

Carl commented on the 11<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian walkway. He thought the enclosed walkway is an improvement, but the ramp lands in an awkward location. He asked if there can be space, cone or barricade to designate a waiting area to address his safety concerns. One member suggested adding a no right on red from W. Main to 11<sup>th</sup>. Zack explained some of the constraints that make an ideal solution possible. The city is actively trying to find a good solution. Amanda asked if they could shift the entire enclosure to the west? Zack suggested that this was probably not doable because of the offices attached to the top. Also, the current location protects the area where debris might fall. Zack also explained that the ramp on the east side is already steep so as to land within the curb ramp and not in the middle of the road, which is making a solution tricky.

Amanda provided an update on the 250 Bypass trail. The multi-use path/bridge over the RR and YMCA phases will occur first. Hydraulic to McIntire should be completed within the next 2 years and will occur in phases.

Dave asked about the process for commenting on the 250 Bypass trail plans. He expressed concern that the YMCA entrance to the park has now turned into 3 entrances/3 path crossings within 100' of one another. He suggested the trail design was an afterthought. Amanda noted that concerns for the YMCA would have been addressed at the site plan process, which took place a number of years ago. Dave asked about whether BPAC has reviewed the Meadowbrook to Hydraulic Trail, designs of the McIntire Park trail system and/or the RR Bridge design. Amanda noted that the committee reviewed the RR bridge design and agreed to contact Chris G. about the other 2 designs. Dave suggested that the trails through McIntire should take a straight path with consideration for the grades. The path should not be designed for sightseeing. A number of members reiterated that it was unfortunate that BPAC wasn't included in YMCA design and suggested that bikes should have ROW over the cars at these entrances. There is a

concern that there will be a lack of awareness that the driveway entrances are part of a multi-use commuter path.

Scott noted that there is funding available to improve the asphalt sidewalk along Old Lynchburg Rd. in the County, but no plans to continue under the bridge to connect into Azalea Park and beyond. He suggested that it seems feasible to add a multi-use path, but funding is needed. He asked if there is some way to make that connection?

Eberhard also asked about efforts to coordinate with city departments on vehicle/bike/ped safety. He described a near miss along Preston Ave. by a City Parks and Recreation trailer running 2' off center and in the bike lane.

Amanda noted that there is a Risk Management Division that deals with safety training and suggested that it is better to start with Risk Management than the individual departments. This topic will be added to the next meeting agenda.

Meeting adjourned for participants to attend the Belmont Bridge Presentation/Open House at City Space, 6-8PM.

### **Upcoming Events**

June 1: Belmont Bridge Community Open House (details forthcoming)  
June 10: Books on Bikes Bike Parade  
July 6: BPAC Meeting

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