

Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

(Bicycle+Ped Focused Meeting)

January 22, 2015

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

NDS Conference Room, 2nd floor City Hall

Meeting Participants

Carl Schwartz

Scott Paisley

Chris Gist

Stephen Bach

Ruth Stornetta

Peter Ohlms

Jim Self

Susan Elliott

Eberhard Jehle

Scott Bandy

Boris Starosta

Lt. Stephen Upman

Michele Co

Amanda Poncy

Meeting Notes

- Enforcement discussion with Police (Steve Upman) (1 hr)
Lt. Upman started the discussion with a brief introduction - his background in law enforcement is patrol, forensics and SWAT. He was transferred from Patrol to the Traffic Unit in May of 2014.

Jim Self raised a point of interest - there's a perception that when there's a crash involving a bicyclist or pedestrian there never seems to be a ticket given to the motorists. He asked about the judgments applied by police in those instances.

Lt. Upman responded that bicyclists and motorists have to obey all traffic laws. When officers issue a citation they must take into account all of the facts and make a determination about who is at fault.

Importance is given to all parties. There is no specific data that speaks to the perception that motorists are never ticketed.

Scott further discussed some of the consequences for a bicyclist or pedestrian navigating insurance and property damage without a citation. If a citation is not issued, insurance costs are much more costly. Scott provided an example where he was struck by a vehicle from behind when biking in the county. He was taken to the hospital before his statement was taken. No citation was issued based on the information given by the driver. He asked, "If there is any question about who is at fault, can both parties be cited?" And reiterated that having the citation is useful for processes (insurance claims for property damage, etc.) moving forward.

Lt. Upman clarified that having a ticket does not guarantee that the insurance would agree with the police record. It is rare that a citation would be issued for both parties. In addition, he mentioned that sometimes it's difficult for an officer to determine fault. Hopefully these instances are few and far between, but they do still occur. One challenge is that the state reporting form (FR300) does not allow for much additional information to be reported.

Jake Fox provided another personal example of challenges with the police reporting system. In his case, (need basic description of the accident) witnesses confirmed his account of the accident, but the officer did not file a report because there was not \$1500 worth of damage and no one was hurt.

Lt. Upman stated that incident reports are also used in bike/ped accidents to create a record and provide additional information about the nature of the accident. City police file a report anytime something

happens in with a bicyclist/pedestrian, but policies and procedures are different from department to department.

Jim Self asked if there are any examples in the city where a bicyclist struck a pedestrian? Lt. Upman was not aware of any.

Chris Gist asked about a recent accident at 4th and Main where a police officer hit a bicyclist. Lt. Upman did not have any information.

Chris also asked about recent data requests for infractions and has been told that the only way to get the data is to code for "Bike/Ped." However, that coding doesn't capture all accident types. For example, if an officer classifies the incident as a motor vehicle infraction, it would not be counted. He suggested that having better data would be helpful for making infrastructure improvements and for police to track traffic infractions.

Lt. Upman mentioned that the police department is looking at getting a better records management system to keep track of incident reporting (Lt. Shifflett is the point person).

Scott also talked about his experience in the bike shop working with customers after they have been in an accident. In many cases, people don't report the accident. He asked is people can report an accident after the fact.

Lt. Upman recommended that if in accident, a person should stay on location and call the police so they can get all of the facts of the accident. If the other party leaves the scene, it would be considered a hit and run situation. Lt. Upman explained that there are often times when people exchange info with the other party involved, leave the

scene and then have second thoughts. In this case, not much can be done.

One committee member suggested that the police department is the most central place for data collection. If there is a new data management system, perhaps there is a way to catalogue both incidents and accidents.

Eberhard Jehle suggested that it might be useful for the PD to do some publicity around incident reporting in a way that reminds and encourages people to call when an accident occurs. He described a recent example where a bicyclist was hit on West Main/Roosevelt Brown. In this case, the driver took off, many people came to the aid of the bicyclist to make sure she was not injured, but no one called to report the accident. Lt. Upman noted that, in that case, information about the make and model of the vehicle (as well as license plate number if possible) would have been the most helpful.

Citations to the bicyclist when a driver was pulling into an on-street parking spot.

Lt. Upman noted that one area of the department that can be improved is officer training. Lt. Shifflett is in charge. The Police Academy did not cover bicycle and pedestrian issues in depth. Eberhard suggested that some practical experience on the street might be a useful training model. Jim Self seconded this suggestion and noted that same type of training for pedestrians is also needed.

Lt. Upman provided answers to the questions provided in advance of the meeting:

Parking in the bike lane in front of World of Beer – When the building first opened, they were being lenient, but now they are giving tickets.

Parking too far from curb is enforced – whether vehicle is ticketed or towed depends on how far they are from the curb. Most enforcement is done by complaint. If people see problems, it's important to report them. 977-9041 is best number to contact if there is an immediate situation (i.e. someone parked in bike lane/on sidewalk). If it's an on-going problem that needs routine checking call Sgt. Durette 970-3294.

Eberhard asked about how police are involved in snow removal. Lt. Upman suggested contacting public works for snow removal questions (970-3830). If snow is creating a traffic hazard, then the police might get involved. Eberhard further described locations where snow is chronically problematic – namely the south side of West Main and Preston where sun does not reach. He would like to see more brining during snowy weather.

The committee was appreciative that there are cops on bikes. Jake Fox asked how many officers are on bike on a given day? The number varies. There are 2 officers on bikes on the DT mall. 2 others are bike certified (IPMBA). Bikes are used to patrol parks. There are some officers on foot patrol in smaller parks and problem areas. Foot patrol is used on West Main (near ABC store). Lt. Upman suggested that we may see more bicyclists between the DT mall and UVa as West Main redevelops.

Eberhard suggested that officers on DT mall at night should use lights. Lt. Upman said that all police bikes have lights (headlight and flashing red rear lights) and emergency lights.

Someone asked Lt. Upman for his recommendations for incident reporting and specifically asked if people should use cameras to help with capturing footage of accidents. Lt. Upman responded that cameras provide limited data. For example, if you use a front camera and you are hit from behind, the camera wouldn't capture enough information to help police. The best thing to do if involved in an accident is to make sure you are not hurt, remain on the scene, provide the PD with as much info as possible and help let others in the community know that reporting the incidents is important.

Boris Starosta asked about the law related to blinking crosswalks? What is a driver's responsibility? Lt. Upman responded that a driver (or bicyclist) must stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk (blinking or not). There was discussion about the current state code that states a driver must yield to pedestrians. For motorists, this effectively means that a driver must stop to allow a pedestrian to cross (this is because of the width of the car and the width of the travel lane necessitates it for the pedestrian's safety). It could be interpreted differently for a bicyclist who can more effectively yield to a pedestrian and continue on a travel path safely. Lt. Upman suggested that if an officer saw a bicyclist go past a pedestrian in the crosswalk (not yielding), they would probably get pulled over. His recommendation is to always stop if you see a pedestrian crossing in a crosswalk just like a motor vehicle. As a local League Cycling Instructor, Chris Gist suggested that it's important to make eye contact with the pedestrian and it's ok to travel once the pedestrian has crossed the bicyclist travel path.

There was some additional discussion about bicyclists travel behavior and how there are times when bikes are not the same as motor vehicles.

The group discussed that it would be nice to have stop signs be yield, red lights be stop signs similar to Idaho no stop law.

Jim Self asked if there is anything that can be done to lower speeds on avenues and other major roads? Lt. Upman suggested that the PD is hoping to purchase more speed trailers which would also have the ability to download speed data. This request is in the current CIP.

- **Monticello Ave Bike/Ped Improvements** (Amanda Poncy)

The committee reviewed the proposed draft Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements for the Monticello Avenue corridor. The following summarizes the comments by sheet:

Sheet 10

Consider adding bike box at all signalized intersections. Likes having both 2 stage and bike box.

Sheet 12

What is the rationale for the unmarked parking spaces starting from 6th? Would it be better to have individual spaces delineated to maximize parking?

Sheet 13

Consider bike boxes on all approaches

Difficult to go straight heading WB on Monticello. If unfunded, could the slip lane be widened to accommodate a right turn lane?

Why is the sharrow in the right turn lane?

Can we see the "funded" version?

Sheet 14

Confirm bus stop locations

Sheet 16

Show dashed line to connect bike lane to green bike lane

Sheet 17

Speed limit? Will it be reduced to 25 mph?

Sheet 19-21

Shift buffer to vehicle side on uphill.

Sheet 22

Consider using the extra travel lane for a stormwater management facility instead of the parking area

Eberhard left a few minutes early, but asked if the committee should draft a response to City Council on the West Main comments?

Bent Creek/ 5th Street Station (Scott Paisley)

Scott would like to discuss that construction has started and is interested in the status of the trail on the bridge, but suggested that the group discuss West Main Street instead in light of the recent Council meeting. Those present agreed.

Goal setting for 2015 (Jake Fox and Jim Self)

The group agreed to move this item to next month

Charlottesville Cycling Fest – Sept 24th (Ruth Stornetta)

In light of the World Cycling Championships coming to Richmond in September, Ruth was approached about helping to organize an event that might draw some of the 400,000 spectators that will be in the

region to Charlottesville. She has been working with a sports organization to create a Downtown Criterium that will be a part of the Mens and Women's Finals for the national "Crit" series. The course will be the same as the Apple Classic from many years ago - Market to 5th to E. Jefferson to 2nd and back. The event will take place from 5:30-8 PM on Sept. 24, 2015. This is a great opportunity to raise awareness about cycling. She would like other cycling organizations involved and is looking for sponsorship opportunities and volunteers.

The group suggested looking at the bricks near court square to make sure they are safe.

West Main Street

Scott agreed with Eberhard that a response from cyclists and pedestrians is warranted. Current conditions are not good for either and there is a need to improve conditions for both user groups. Scott is concerned about Mayor Huja's response to the process since it has been held up by many in the community as a good process with many voices being heard.

Ruth expressed concern about Dede Smith's comment about taking bicycles off West Main.

Scott expressed further concern about Bob Fenwick's comment that the citizenry has spoken that they hate the plan and Jeff Speck's arguments that West Main is fine as it is.

Ruth suggested the need to focus on the bike/ped aspect of the plan and emphasize support for safety improvements. Current conditions are dangerous and it is not going to be the same street in 5 years. Scott brought up some of the other infrastructure issues at play - root

masses destroying building foundations, power poles in the sidewalk, etc.

Ruth reiterated that the Bike/ped committee needs to respond to bike/ped issues. The plan is a good "compromise" plan, as it is adequately addressing all needs (merchant parking needs, church parking, dated infrastructure, bike/ped). It's a good idea to make the economic argument about increasing biking and walking on the corridor. Plan does not reduce volume on West Main sending it into neighborhoods. Scott will draft the letter.

Active Project Updates

- Water Street Trail Design Update – City Walk trail (Meade to 10th) is 90% complete, but trail will not open until street is accepted. Chris Gensic is working on extension to Belmont Bridge. Will present next mtg.
- Cherry Avenue Pedestrian Improvements – CDBG Project, Work began Jan. 5, Anticipated Completion June 2015.
- Elliott Avenue Streetscape Design – Staff mtg with consultants in Feb to review comments, will result in 100% design. Project unfunded. Sections will be completed by private development.
- West Main Updates – Council Work Session held on Dec. 18th/Steering Committee on Dec. 19th to discuss final design, parking study results and costs. There will be a future council work session or agenda item to discuss next steps. Date TBD.
- Belmont Bridge – Committee met in Nov/Dec to review the RFP to hire a new design firm. RFP is currently being reviewed by VDOT.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update – looking to schedule a steering committee meeting in February and public meeting in March to review draft plan.

- Code Audit / Streets That Work Update – public meeting on Dec. 13.

Upcoming events

February 5, 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike)

March 5 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (ped)

April 2 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike/ped)

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

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

July 9 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike/ped)

Aug 6 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike)

Sept 10 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (ped)

Oct 1 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike/ped)

Nov 5 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (bike)

Dec 3 5-7PM: Bike/Ped Advisory Committee Meeting (ped)