



City of Harrisonburg

City Hall
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Final Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

8:30 AM

Public Works Building, 320 East Mosby Road

1. Welcome and Introductions

In attendance at the meeting were commission members John Scherpereel, Rob Jezior, Kyle Lawrence, and Marian Lebherz. Also in attendance were City representatives Sgt. Wayne Westfall, Paul Helmuth, Tom Hartman, Timothy Mason, Jakob zumFelde, James Polhamus, and Brittany Clem-Hott, as well as JMU representative Valerie Kramer. The meeting was held in the new Public Works building located at 320 East Mosby Road.

Attachments: [2025-04 TSAC Presentation](#)

2. Public Comment Opportunity

There were no public comments at this time.

3. Review / Summary of North Mason Street Demonstration Project

Jakob zumFelde gave a brief overview of the planned North Mason Street Demonstration Project as well as the accompanying Community Connectors effort with the Northeast Neighborhood. Jakob zumFelde then went over with the commission the proposed demonstration project design which would reduce North Mason Street to one lane in each direction by moving all traffic to the existing northbound lanes and converting the existing southbound lanes into a new community space. Sgt. Westfall asked how this project will impact the existing truck route on North Mason Street. Jakob zumFelde responded that truck movements, in particular left turns from northbound North Mason Street onto westbound Gay Street will be accommodated by the design. Valerie Kramer asked if the project would accommodate bikes. Jakob zumFelde responded that bikes, as well as pedestrians, would use the new community space opened by the demonstration project. Paul Helmuth expressed concern about vehicle queues backing up from the East Market Street signal past Elizabeth Street. Timothy Mason responded that in addition to the demonstration project being implemented during the summer when there is less traffic, changing the cycle length at the intersection of North Mason Street and East Market Street and temporarily turning off the other existing traffic signals along North Mason Street should help to mitigate queues.

Sgt. Westfall then brought up sight-distance concerns for the proposed Elizabeth Street roundabout. Jakob zumFelde replied that there is a possibility of making Elizabeth Street temporarily one way (in the eastbound direction) as part of this demonstration project to help mitigate that concern. Tom Hartman explained to the commission that the demonstration project is only temporary, and that the city will revert North Mason Street to its current configuration when the demonstration is concluded or if there are problems with the configuration that are untenable. Kyle Lawrence asked what the timeframe was for the demonstration project. Jakob zumFelde responded the temporary configuration would be installed this summer and would be in place for roughly a month. Valerie Kramer asked if there are any events planned to be held using the community space area. Tom Hartman responded that there will be, with the city will ensure that the demonstration project does not conflict with other special events scheduled for the summer. Jakob zumFelde reiterated that the demonstration project design is still being developed and that changes will likely occur between now and installation. Marian Lebherz inquired about how the temporary configuration will be lit with concern about how drivers will be able to navigate it at night. Tom Hartman responded that the materials used to implement the demonstration project will be retro-reflective therefore being visible to drivers at night.

Tom Hartman added that the city will be conducting pedestrian and vehicle counts both prior and during the demonstration project to determine its impact and potentially be leveraged for future grants along the corridor. Marian Lebherz expressed concern that vehicles who usually drive North Mason Street may be compelled to use side streets instead. Timothy Mason responded that from a volume perspective, only the intersection of North Mason Street and East Market Street warrants a traffic signal with the roadway being overbuilt to begin with. Jakob zumFelde added that with the existing traffic signals being turned off, vehicles will likely move through the corridor with less delay than they currently do. Jakob zumFelde added that the city hopes to be surveying pedestrians and people experiencing the demonstration project during its duration. Valarie Kramer noted that in JMU's experience, yard signs featuring QR codes have historically garnered high participation.

4. Park Road & Harmony Drive intersection

Timothy Mason next discussed the intersection of Park Road and Harmony Drive where the city recently received concern regarding sight distance for vehicles at the northbound Park Road approach. Timothy Mason explained that according to the city's sight distance formula, the intersection does in fact not meet existing sight distance requirements. Sgt. Westfall commented that nearby overgrown vegetation could be exacerbating the issue. Sgt. Westfall added that in his experience drivers will stop where they can see and suggested that either moving stop bars or restricting on-street parking further from intersections could be plausible solutions when there is ample amount of parking alternatives in the area. Sgt. Westfall remarked that the city switching the stop signs at the Park Road and Harmony Drive intersection seems to

have fixed its former crash problem.

5. Summary of Road Crashes in 2024

Timothy Mason presented a summary of the reported crash data from 2024. He articulated that the number of overall reported crashes in the city last year was consistent with, if not slightly down, from what it's been over the last few years. Timothy Mason stated that when looking at the data by month, a noticeable trend is that crashes usually spike in the fall and then drop off in the spring. Valerie Kramer added that recent promotional efforts at JMU are contributing to an increase in student bus ridership. Sgt. Westfall notified the commission about a recent state general assembly decision that will alter how crashes in the state are reported, adding that it may lead to the appearance of less crashes after July 1st due to raising the cost threshold of property damage warranting a crash report. Timothy Mason stated that about 80% of the crashes reported in the city are property damage only, suggesting that if that number significantly drops in the future, this change will likely explain why. Sgt. Westfall responded that the City Police Department is currently evaluating its guidelines in helping an officer determine whether a crash is classified as reportable versus nonreportable.

John Scherpereel asked if the "distracted driving" descriptor in the crash data were exclusively from self-reports. Sgt. Westfall responded that the data comes from both self-reports and witness reports.

Timothy Mason stated that the number of crashes involving a pedestrian increased. Rob Jezior theorized that right turn on red may be a component of many of these pedestrian crashes and brought up the Grace Street and South High Street intersection as a particular concern. Jakob zumFelde responded that the city plans to investigate more widespread right turn on red restrictions. Currently, no right turn on red signs are only installed at a few intersections in Downtown with minimal site distance. Timothy Mason also stated that there has been an increase in alcohol-related crashes. Valerie Kramer expressed her interest in seeing the age breakdown of alcohol-related crashes given the high number of college-aged individuals living in the city. John Scherpereel asked if the commission would be able to see a mapped version of the alcohol-related crash data. Timothy Mason responded that he would be happy to email the requested map to commission members after the meeting and that the slides he was presenting are publicly available. Timothy Mason concluded that the higher number of pedestrian and alcohol-related crashes will be further investigated by city staff. Jakob zumFelde added that VDOT has some helpful publicly available mapping tools on their website that will aid in that investigation.

6. Summary of Potential Changes to be Made with Repaving in 2025

Timothy Mason presented the proposed changes to be made alongside this year's annual roadway repaving. Relating to the Mt. Clinton Pike repaving and reconfiguration between Liberty Street and North Main Street (US-11), Marian Lebherz asked about the funding status of the planned roundabout at the Mt. Clinton Pike and Acorn Drive intersection. Jakob zumFelde replied that both the roundabout and other Mt. Clinton Pike improvements are currently recommended for Smart Scale funding and will hopefully be officially funded by the summer. Jakob zumFelde clarified that the Mt. Clinton Pike repaving and reconfiguration will not preclude the roundabout and added that even with full funding, construction of the roundabout is still many years away. Paul Helmuth asked what the percentage of truck traffic currently was on Mt. Clinton Pike. Jakob zumFelde responded that it's between about 5% and 10% and that the future roundabout will accommodate trucks.

For the Central Avenue repaving, Sgt. Westfall expressed the concern of cars frequently queueing in the bike lane around Keister Elementary's pick up time. Paul Helmuth stated that the City Fire Department is working with the schools to limit how long before dismissal parents can wait in their vehicle. Jakob zumFelde explained that the city is also considering removing the dedicated left turn lane from Central Avenue onto Maryland Avenue to extend the existing bike lanes on Central Avenue that currently end just short of the intersection. Jakob zumFelde elaborated that the idea for this change stemmed from the Keister Elementary Walkabout.

As part of the Old Furnace Road repaving between Wolfe Street and Vine Street, Jakob zumFelde explained that the city is proposing removing the on-street parking on the north side of the roadway. Jakob zumFelde added that the city plans to send notification letters out within the next week or so to affected property owners. On Old Furnace Road near the vicinity of Blue Ridge Drive, the repaving is planned to extend the westbound bike lane slightly further up the hill. Slightly east near Oriole Drive, Jakob zumFelde said the city would keep the existing eastbound bike lane terminus due to a lack of any clear guidance on how to best end bike lanes. As part of the westbound East Market Street repaving between the city/county line and Linda Lane, Timothy Mason discussed some minor safety changes provided from the city conducted Roadway Safety Assessment (RSA) that will be incorporated. John Scherpereel commented on whether directional arrows might be needed for left turns in the median island. Lastly, for the repaving of Port Republic Road south of Neff Avenue, Timothy Mason explained that the only change would be some new median breaks in the existing continuous two-way left turn lane.

7. Other Business / Announcements

Timothy Mason announced the recent kickoff of the VDOT led Virginia Avenue (VA-42) Project Pipeline Study as well as ongoing efforts related to the HRMPO's Port Republic Road Peach Grove/Neff Avenue Small Area Study, Vine Street STARS Study, and Erickson Avenue Study. James Polhamus announced that the city will be hosting an open house regarding the draft update and proposed process of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) on April 29th from 4 to 6 pm in the City Council chambers. Timothy Mason also announced that Bike, Walk, Roll Day is scheduled for May 7th. Rob Jezior announced that the City of Harrisonburg has advanced into the final round of the 'Strongest Town Contest' and encouraged both members of the commission and the public to vote for Harrisonburg to win. Sgt. Westfall lastly articulated the need to update the city's TSAC webpage with the current TSAC members and titles.

8. Adjournment