City of Harrisonburg

Meeting Minutes - Final
Bicycle and Pedestrian Sub-Committee

Monday, May 22, 2023 **6:00 PM** **Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center**

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1. Welcome and Introductions

In attendance for the meeting were Subcommittee members Dudley Bonsal, David Ehrenpreis, Sumeet Gudi, and Jessica Pyle. Also in attendance were Public Works representatives Tom Hartman, Erin Yancey, Jakob zumFelde, Tim Mason and Brittany Clem-Hott, JMU representative Valerie Kramer, and TSAC member Kyle Lawrence.

2. Crash Data Review

Jakob zumFelde introduced the primary topic for the meeting - a review of bicycle and pedestrian crashes within the city since 2015. For the information and crash data presented, see the meeting agenda. He said that the April 2023 TSAC meeting included a summary of all crashes within the city. He also noted that e-scooters are new enough that there is not an exclusive category on state crash reports, so the data is considered as either bike or pedestrian depending on the characteristics of each crash.

Sumeet Gudi asked where crashes that did not result in injury or the minimum amount of property damage value were recorded. Jakob zumFelde responded that it would only be in the dataset of the local law enforcement agency that reported the crash, mainly the City, state, or JMU police departments.

Jessica Pyle asked whether the City would be able to identify crashes that were not deemed reportable. Jakob zumFelde noted that the City would be able to view them, but they are not in a digestible format and it would be incomplete data as the state/campus police would have their own systems as well. Jessica Pyle noted that it would be valuable to have data on all bike/ped related crashes regardless of monetary value of the crash and suggested for staff to evaluate all available data.

Dudley Bonsal asked whether the crashes reported to the state were also reported to the federal level. Jakob zumFelde responded that the crashes in the state are reported to/by the state Department of Motor Vehicles, but he

did not know whether DMV directly reported to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

David Ehrenpreis noted that the crash data included interstate I-81. Jakob zumFelde noted that there were two fatalities on I-81 that were labeled as pedestrian related. He said that he can't read the crash reports for these crashes, as his understanding is that if a Virginia State Trooper filed the report, then Public Works is not able to access details of the crashes.

David Ehrenpreis asked for clarification of what the City would consider the "Downtown" area, as that was an area noted as a higher concentration of crashes. Jakob zumFelde responded that there is no classified area within the webtool that would denote it being Downtown, but staff wanted to offer a qualitative summary of crashes to bring attention to the clusters of bike and pedestrian crashes in the area surrounding the Court Square area. Tom Hartman added that the label was meant to call attention to the cluster of bike/ped crashes specifically south of Washington Street and north of Grattan Street, between US 42 and Mason Street.

Dudley Bonsal asked how the VDOT crash map tool could identify whether a pedestrian or driver, or both, was intoxicated for crashes labeled as "Alcohol Related." Jakob zumFelde answered "Alcohol Related" refers to whether either party was identified as intoxicated. Further details can only be found in the police crash reports.

Sumeet Gudi asked whether data could be separated between college aged individuals and younger teenagers. Jakob zumFelde noted that the field denoting young driver is for ages 15-20, which means that this crash map tool wouldn't be capable of differentiating, but further analysis of the crash reports could give exact ages.

Jessica Pyle asked if there were specific changes that the City had made due to crash history. Jakob zumFelde responded that the City mainly considers crash history and trends through VDOT's Potential and Safety Improvement (PSI) classification for intersections and road segments, which compares total vehicle volume with number of crashes and shows locations with an outsized crash rate. Bicycle and pedestrian crashes are considered in these factors, however statewide collection of bicycle and pedestrian volume is not available, so it is not a factor for PSI consideration. Various studies and projects have been funded to address safety at these PSI intersections. Outside of funding opportunities, the City sometimes completes spot

improvements for locations where bicycle and pedestrian safety concerns have been raised. Examples of these improvements include the pedestrian island at the Waterman Drive and Chicago Avenue intersection and the raised intersection installed at the Wolfe Street and Sterling Street intersection. While these changes are not exclusively evaluated for bicycle and pedestrian crashes, they are considered.

Dudley Bonsal asked whether the data is available to the public to be viewed through GIS software. Jakob zumFelde confirmed that the crash data is available to the public via VDOT's GIS database.

Kyle Lawrence noted that much of the bicycle infrastructure in the City tends to end at intersections. He also noted that the number of crashes at intersections could prompt more innovative approaches for intersections.

David Ehrenpreis asked whether the City is considering roundabouts, both traditional and mini roundabouts. Jakob zumFelde noted that some locations have been identified as good candidates for roundabouts, but also noted that they tend to be more expensive than alternatives, as they require extensive right-of-way. Tom Hartman also noted that mini roundabouts in a neighborhood context can be difficult for various reasons including that there often aren't sidewalks to accommodate people walking around the roundabout.

Jessica Pyle asked whether a speed reduction would be appropriate/considered for the downtown area. Jakob zumFelde said that he read recently about a few downtown areas in the US that have done this with some success. He also noted that the speed limit can't be reduced without an official speed study. Tom Hartman noted that the parking along South Main Street has impacted the speed of drivers, so when JMU is out for summer, speeds tend to increase.

Sumeet Gudi asked what the process would be to implement speed radar display signs downtown, or elsewhere in the city. Tom Hartman noted that the City has installed those signs before, although they are fairly expensive and the City is careful where they are installed to prevent them from becoming "background noise" for drivers. Erin Yancey noted that HPD has a mobile speed radar trailer that is moved to locations throughout the city where speeding concerns are reported.

David Ehrenpreis asked whether the City would implement bike lanes on downtown Main Street between City Hall and the war memorial statue.

Jakob zumFelde noted that there is at least one portion of S Main Street on this segment where the road isn't wide enough for a bike lane and the existing parking on both sides. Erin Yancey said that the Downtown master plan calls for Main Street to be one lane in the downtown area to increase sidewalk and pedestrian space while Liberty Street would be improved as a bicycle route. Tom Hartman added that the City is pursuing the Liberty Street cycle track, which was submitted for both a SMART SCALE and RAISE grant. Jessica Pyle asked about the City's process to inform citizens of opportunities to provide input for projects and plans. Brittney Clem-Hott and Erin Yancey noted that the Public Works Department has Projects and Plans webpages that are regularly updated. She also noted that agendas for City Council meetings, as well TSAC and Bike/Ped Subcommittee meetings, are posted beforehand to allow people to review and potentially attend. Jakob zumFelde noted that the City's Bike/Ped email newsletter has information and updates regarding many different efforts, so signing up for these newsletters is a good source for people to know what is going on and when there are opportunities to provide input.

3. Potential 2023 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant applications

Jakob zumFelde provided a summary of the City's potential Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) applications.

Kyle Lawrence asked how many TAP applications the City usually submits. Tom Hartman responded that the City typically submits one or two projects each round.

4. Potential 2023 Revenue Sharing grant application

Jakob zumFelde provided a summary of the City's potential VDOT Revenue Sharing application.

Kyle Lawrence asked how a project would be selected for each funding opportunity. Jakob zumFelde responded that the projected cost would be a factor, as Revenue Sharing, TAP and SMART SCALE all require different levels of local fund dedication. Also, each funding source has different criteria for benefit scoring purposes.

Kyle Lawrence noted that TAP and Revenue Sharing had been used to build the Northend Greenway. He also noted that he believes the return on investment has been high for the City.

5. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation of Public Right of Way

Jakob zumFelde provided a summary of the efforts currently being completed by Public Works staff regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including completing a self-evaluation of the City's existing pedestrian infrastructure in the public right of way.

6. Project Updates - see attachment

Jakob zumFelde made a few comments on the provided project update document.

Kyle Lawrence asked what projects Public Works had applied for in the Community Development Block Grant. Tom Hartman answered that they had focused on sidewalks around city schools, but noted that they weren't selected for funding.

7. Other Business/Announcements

Public Works staff announced an upcoming public meeting for the Sterling Street sidewalk project.

Kyle Lawrence asked about the pedestrian path between Court Square and Liberty Park, noting that the path is not aligned to appear continuous. Tom Hartman responded that Public Works plans to rebuild the ramp on Elizabeth Street to better align the path.

Adjournment