

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
March 5th 2020
5pm to 7pm
NDS Conference Room

Members in attendance:

Carl Schwarz
Navarre Bartz
Peter Krebs
Nelson O.
Stephen Bach
Frank Deviney
Cort Hammond
Kyle Rodland

Peter Ohlms
Amanda Poncy
Will Lee

• **Matters from the Public**

Julie Convisser, a member of the Huntley Neighborhood, came to the meeting to raise concerns about the lack of infrastructure and potential increases in traffic on Stribling Ave. off of JPA as a result of a proposed development at 240 Stribling Ave.

- Southern Development Group is planning to build 170 unit complex
- A formal proposal has not been submitted to planning commission yet
- The units would generate additional 2000 car trips on Stribling Ave. plus walkers and bikers
- The street is too narrow for cars to travel in opposite directions and has no sidewalks or bicycle infrastructure
- Southern Development said that they would be willing to provide money for improvements but would need to be matched by the city
 - There is also a push for affordable housing which may take away funds
- Neighborhood supports improvements on Stribling Ave.

• **Discussion with Charlottesville Police Department (Capt. Victor Mitchell)**

Capt. Victor Mitchell of the Charlottesville Police Dept. joined BPAC to answer questions regarding the relationship of the police to people walking and riding bikes in the area, how certain laws are being enforced, and how BPAC and CPD can foster a better relationship. Below is a detailed summary of the questions asked and the answers that were given

- Questions about crash on JPA involving a cyclist was impetus for inviting CPD to the meeting
- How is staffing?
 - About 30 officers down from an operational standpoint

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- 10 new officers in training
- 13 in the Academy but they won't counted in operational numbers until September or October
- There are still some that are leaving
- ~4-6 people short on each shift
- Dept. expects to run 5 –10% down from full staff, however, they are much further down right now
- What are some of the greatest challenges that are being faced?
 - Staffing as previously mentioned
 - The rate of turn over adds to the challenge
 - Capt. Mitchell does not believe it affects the quality of policing though
 - Dealing with perceptions on what people think the police do and what the police actually do
 - Police have been “beat up” a lot in recent years
- Are officers aware of BPAC?
 - Depends on where individual interests lie
 - Generally officers are aware but not very familiar
- Would officers ever consider enforcing 3-foot passing law?
 - Can just be enforced by observation which means that it is at the discretion of the officer
 - Officers can enforce any law that is on the books, however it can be impossible to get 3ft of space to pass on some streets
 - Officers have charged for it, but it is not a daily focus
 - Could prosecute/ investigate based on video submitted to law enforcement
 - Could also call car owner to follow up or warn about passing dangerously
- Do you have any programs to promote walking and cycling?
 - They have done helmet giveaways
 - DMV grant that is offered yearly
 - Applied to two portions of the grant for this year, but too late to add bike portions on to it
- Is there any chance of partnering twice yearly with Parking and transportation for a marketing campaign?
 - Definitely, could also include it in grant for next year
 - Best way to push ideas to the CPD is to send something to all the divisional captains who are Mooney, Hatter, and Durrett

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- Mooney is traffic enforcement
- Do you have any policy for safety education and scooter enforcement?
 - Mall officers enforce not using bikes, scooters on the mall
- What is the schedule for officers on the mall
 - An officer on the mall for daylight and evening shifts
 - ~8am to 1 or 3am
- Are there plans for a CSO on the Rivanna River?
 - There is an officer has been there for years
 - He rides the trail during the summer months and is stationed at the alternative school during the school year
- Is there an appetite for enforcing cars parked too far from the curb?
 - Some tickets have been written but not many
- Is there interest in automated speed enforcement cameras?
 - CPD advocated to the state legislation for it several years ago
 - Due to engineering it was not possible in most of the city
 - Only two locations in the city would have been eligible
 - CPD interested in looking at it
 - The new law may be a reason to bring it up again
- Is there a way to access stats on crashes involving bicycles?
 - Can do it on VDOT website
 - However, it only goes back to 2011
 - Can check individual streets by year
- Are you familiar with the bicycle crash that occurred on JPA?
 - Only from looking it up, University Case
 - In a joint enforcement area
 - Cyclist upset because no charges were pressed when the driver seemed to be at fault for the accident
- Is there a policy around charging decisions?
 - Up to officer discretion
 - When total damage under \$1500 most officers don't
 - If there is personal injury officer has to do an accident report
 - Charges don't actually help anyone civilly
 - Can't be brought up in court
 - Present evidence in court and judge decides whether or not to charge
- They have a lot of cases where police are contacted after the fact but there is not much that police can do then

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- In most cases of a serious injury in the joint jurisdiction area with UVA, City Police will be the ones that investigate it
- What types of actions lead to citations of cyclists?
 - A bicycle is considered a vehicle, so hard to separate out how many are for bicycle
 - Typically cyclists are stopped for running red lights and stop signs
- What is the law for stopping at a crosswalk
 - Pedestrians always have ROW
 - Vehicles not required to stop until pedestrians step into the crosswalk, anywhere in crosswalk
 - Pedestrians also have responsibility to be aware when crossing
- Have you been tracking the stopping for pedestrian law in state senate?
 - Not familiar with it
 - In VA, currently, law says drivers must yield to pedestrians
 - The new law changes the language to say that drivers must stop for pedestrians
- What is the overall approach to enforcing texting and driving
 - Pulling people over for it
 - Even if texting at red lights
 - Discretionary by officer whether to cite
 - Unsure if it is an infraction to talk on a phone while driving
- Any ways that BPAC can be of assistance?
 - Officer Lynn Childers out for 7 months due to injury from a bike accident, broke wrist, may also be retiring soon
 - She is the officer in the CPD who often spearheads bicycle initiatives
 - From April to October Capt. Mitchell has an overtime assignment that puts officers on bikes
 - This year, from City Walk on the Mall up to Rugby Ave
 - Since Chief Brackney started, everyone that comes out of the Academy is mandated to go to bike school as well
- What percent of calls are traffic related?
 - ~40,000 calls/year
 - About 7000 calls for traffic per year, but there are incidents that aren't reported or reportable even if an exchange of information form was filled out

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- Mental health calls have increased 7-8 times what they were 6 years ago, this takes away from things that might benefit the community more

- **Safe Routes to School Program Activities and Programs Plan Review -Kyle Rodland**

Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Kyle Rodland, gave a review of what SRTS had accomplished over the past year and talked briefly about what he hopes to be able to do in the future and asked for BPAC's advice on what they thought would be useful moving forward.

- It is time to reapply for the grant for the Non-Infrastructure grant that funds program
- Looking to the future to see if BPAC has any insights into the program
- Where the Program is:
 - Currently, bike/ped education is being taught in every school mostly through PE
 - Fleets of bikes at 6 schools
 - Move fleets around so other schools can use the fleets
 - Any child/student can request a helmet for free, with no requirements
 - Punchcards are an incentive program for Walking and Biking
 - A MTB trail was built at Greenbrier Elem with help from United Way's Day of Caring and CAMBC
 - A few schools do a "Walking Wednesday" program
 - SRTS is advocating to get this to be district wide
 - Students from Buford will ride over to Johnson and ride with younger kids
 - This creates a Pseudo-mentorship relationship
 - Try to do a bike with the principal for Bike to School Day at Jackson-Via
 - There has been an observed increase in biking and walking to/from school by 7% to a total 14% citywide
 - Family bike day in the fall
- Ongoing efforts
 - Burnley-Moran Elem. was awarded a Walkabout Mini-Grant
 - Toole Design doing an analysis of infrastructure
 - SRTS applied for funding to install a Traffic Garden at the McInitire Skate Park
 - Create more walk and bike groups
- Coordinator position is 80-20 match by the city

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- Mostly grant funded
- Unclear if there is an intent for program to eventually not need the grant \$
- How to get more scientific data
 - BPAC to help out with a data collection day
- Coordinator is interested in collecting more data and who uses roads around schools, and how and why
- Is it possible for SRTS to advocate for automatic speed enforcement cameras in school zones?
 - It seems like it

- **CIP Discussion**

BPAC discussed the state of the CIP budget, what actions should be taken, and what the next few years might look like if the budget remains the same

- There is some reorganization and retooling that is happening and staff is trying to wrap heads around it
- Pause in funding may be to give a chance to get caught up on projects and to understand new system which may help rebalance the budget
- Is there a chance that the reduced budget will become a norm?
 - Not a clear answer
 - If the community wants the money then it will be reinstated, which highlights the need for advocacy
- Council could order the budget changed but won't because they need to maintain a good relationship with the City Manager
- Is it worth doing more advocacy?
 - Yes, send letters to council and showing up to public hearings
 - Keep the pressure even though the budget seems unlikely to change
- If a pause is unavoidable, then can the money be reallocated for a year or two later after parking garage and West Main projects are completed?
 - This seems possible, but there are concerns that the reduced budget might become the norm because the projected budget does not do this

- **Project Updates**

Amanda Poncy gave a brief update on the status of projects that are in the works. Due to time constraints a discussion and more in depth update was not possible. Updates on projects will be given at the April meeting.

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- Emmet streetscape
 - Based off the comments from the 60% design a decision was made to have the street laid out as such travel lane, tree buffer, raised bike lane, walking path
 - This is flips the bike lane and the tree buffer so improve safety and follow European models more closely
- March 17th Parking Advisory Panel meeting (Tuesday)
 - About how to improve alternatives related to parking

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- March 5: Council Worksession Budget, City Space, 5PM
- March 5: Regular BPAC Meeting NDS Conference Room, 5-7PM
- March 12: Council Worksession Budget (CIP), City Space, 6PM
- March 16: City Council Meeting (Budget Public Hearing), Council Chambers, 6:30PM
- March 25: Community Budget Forum, City Space, 6PM
- March 26: Council Worksession Budget, City Space, 6PM
- April 2: Regular BPAC Meeting NDS Conference Room, 5-7PM
- April 6: City Council Meeting (Budget Public Hearing), Council Chambers, 6:30PM
- April 9: Council Worksession Budget, City Space, 6PM
- April 14: City Council Meeting (Budget-2nd Reading), Council Chambers, 6:30PM

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