

May 26, 2017

The Honorable William D. Sessoms, Jr., Mayor
Members of City Council

Subject: Bikeways and Trails Advisory Committee
2016 Annual Report on Bikeways and Trails

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

On behalf of the City Council-appointed members of the Bikeways and Trails Advisory Committee, I am pleased to present this annual report on our work and on progress within our City's bikeways and trails system.

Virginia Beach continued to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in 2016. The use of our City's roadway, bikeways and trails continues to increase, and we soon will have data to quantify the trends. The system continues expanding and making new connections. Shore Drive is becoming more friendly for both pedestrians and bicyclists, and Lesner Bridge will add to it soon. Of our 7 Top Priority Infrastructure Projects, we continue seeing some progress and continued hope for more, even with significant challenges. November's referendum stopped light rail at our border, and the paths alongside that system stopped with it — for now.

If you have questions about this report or the work of the Committee, please contact me at your convenience at 757-377-4130, or Wayne Wilcox in the Department of Parks & Recreation, Division of Planning Design & Development, at 385.1104 or wwilcox@vbgov.com. In addition, the members of the Committee are available at your request to provide a special briefing on this report or on the Committee's future direction.

We are grateful for City Council's support for the initiatives of the Bikeways and Trails Plan and the Advisory Committee, and we look forward to continuing to progress in 2017 and beyond.

With warm regards,



Richard M. Hildreth
Chair, Bikeways and Trails Advisory Committee

VISION

The vision that City Council adopted in April 2011 in the Bikeways and Trails Plan is as valid today as it was then:

Virginia Beach *will be a City where people can walk, run, and ride anywhere safely, efficiently, and enjoyably.*

"a balanced, sustainable, and value-focused system of parks, recreation, and public spaces that creates a sense of community."

The vision of the Department of Parks & Recreation

To that end, the Bikeways and Trails Advisory Committee has worked with team members from Parks & Recreation to advance the goals outlined in the Plan.

MEMBERS OF THE BIKEWAYS AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN 2016

- Richard Hildreth, Chair
- Dan Koach, Vice Chair
- William Hart
- Angie Hathaway
- Ned Kuhns
- Stephen Romine
- Kim Shuler
- Amy Frostick

LIAISONS

- Barbara M. Henley City Council
- Bob Dyer City Council
- Robert Thornton Planning Commission
- Hugh Tierney Parks & Recreation Commission
- Michael Cullipher Agricultural Advisory Commission

ADMINISTRATION

- David L. Hansen City Manager
- Kenneth L. Chandler Deputy City Manager

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT TEAM MEMBERS

- Michael J. Kalvort, CPRE Director
- Chad R. Morris, PLA Planning, Design & Development Administrator
- Wayne T. Wilcox, PLA Senior Planner
- Trina M. Harrell Recording Secretary

- #### TOP PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN THE 2011 BIKEWAYS AND TRAILS PLAN:
- Bike lanes on Shore Drive - Kendall Drive to Atlantic Ave (completed)
 - A shared-use path along the future transit corridor
 - Nimmo Trail from Lago Mar to Sandbridge
 - Thalia Creek Greenway (in process)
 - Bike-pedestrian connection over I-264 from Mt. Trashmore to Thalia Creek Greenway
 - Bike route signs on new "signed shared roadways" (in process)
 - A shared-use path along Buckner Boulevard from Rosemont Road to near Independence Boulevard (in process)

MILESTONES IN 2016



Shore Drive - new shoulder

SHORE DRIVE PAVED SHOULDERS

Two federal grants helped add paved shoulders from Diamond Springs Road to Greenwell Drive (about 3.2 miles) as part of the repaving of that road, to allow cyclists a safe space to ride along this very busy, high-profile corridor.

TIDEWATER BICYCLE ASSOCIATION (TBA) GRANT: INTERN

In September, TBA announced grants available to the five cities in its area, and Virginia Beach was awarded one for an intern to explore how to improve bike safety education. Jonathan Nye came on board and developed a framework for bike ambassadors and a bike safety education program in the schools.

TIDEWATER BICYCLE ASSOCIATION GRANT: STRAVA DATA

Virginia Beach also worked with HRTPO to win a grant to purchase Strava Metro data. STRAVA is a smartphone app that records a user's location at intervals along a trip to interpolate speed and other information. Strava's aggregated data shows where people ride, which will help prioritize improvements throughout the system.



Children enjoying the Bike Rodeo

RIDE WITH THE MAYOR

Mayor Sessoms hosted over 40 people at our second Bike Ride with the Mayor on Friday, May 20th, following Nimmo Parkway's paths from the Princess Anne Community Recreation Center to City Hall.

BIKE RODEO

On Saturday, May 28th, Parks & Recreation hosted its first annual Bike Rodeo at Williams Farm Park. Over 30 children came out with their parents to learn new bike skills and safety lessons. TBA contributed funds to purchase helmets and prizes for kids.

GENERAL BOOTH BOULEVARD PATH REPAVING

Tree roots damaged several sections of this heavily traveled path. Using the repairs and renovations budget, this path was repaired and repaved to become a smooth and enjoyable route to the oceanfront again.



Buckled path along General Booth Boulevard—BEFORE

REPAVING AND RESTRIPING

Parks & Recreation and Public Works team members continue working together to restripe roads differently after repaving, to make them friendlier for bikes and cars to share.

YEAR	13' LANES	14' LANES	PAVED SHOULDERS	BIKE LANES	TOTAL
FY 11-16	100.7 MILES	14.2	27.3	0.9	143.1
FY 16-17	13.3	7.4	7.3	0.8	28.8
TOTAL	114.0	21.6	34.6	1.7	171.9

OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2017

MAY IS BIKE MONTH!

Planners throughout Coastal Virginia are collaborating again this year to develop an exciting month of bike rides, bike rodeos, and other events. In its feedback for the Bike-Friendly Community award in 2015, the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) encouraged Virginia Beach to do more with Bike Month.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RR CORRIDOR

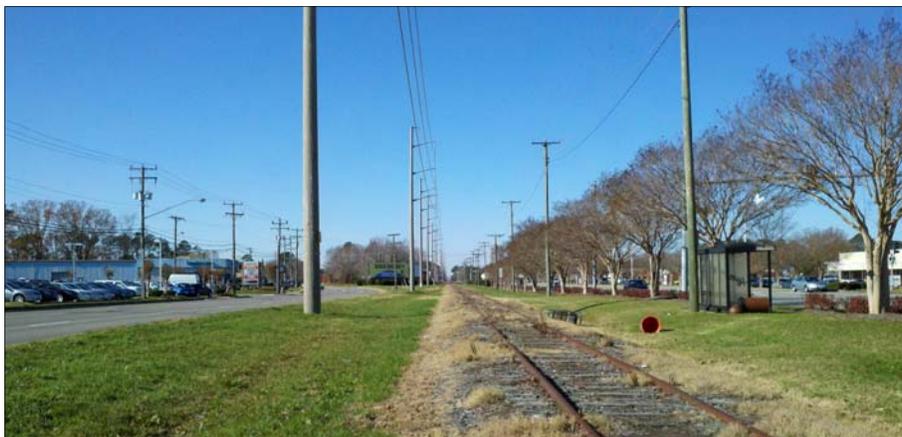
After November's referendum vote not to continue the light rail system across Virginia Beach, the members of this Committee still hear a consensus among our constituents that the planning for this corridor should include a shared use path for its entire 10 miles. A path in this corridor will be the central spine of the City's Bikeways and Trails system, linking different sections of the City together and creating a grand promenade to the oceanfront resort area. This path also will be a dramatic first or last leg of regional, statewide, and national routes.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Commonwealth Transportation Board awarded 3 TAP grants to Virginia Beach, out of the 4 applications submitted last year:

- Independence Blvd., from Bonney Rd. to Baxter Rd. (0.4 mi)
- Providence Rd., from Kempsville Rd. to Indian Lakes Blvd. (0.6 mi)
- W. Great Neck Rd., from Adam Keeling Rd. to the bridge (0.2 mi)

Parks & Recreation continues partnering with Public Works to develop new applications that leverage and expand the funding appropriated by City Council for bikeways and trails.



Norfolk Southern RR corridor along Bonney Road



Norfolk Southern RR corridor over Thalia Creek



Part of the Bike Parade at the Bike Rodeo



Worn path where people follow Independence Blvd under I-264

PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE



An excerpt from the 2011 Plan, which needs an update



Pedestrian on Buckner Boulevard



A bike corral can hold 6 bikes in half of a car parking space

2017 UPDATE TO THE 2011 BIKEWAYS AND TRAIL PLAN

We are updating the Bikeways and Trail Plan, which City Council adopted in April 2011 as a component of the Comprehensive Plan. Much has changed since 2011, including the Complete Streets policy, most of the SGA plans, and several completed projects. Our process begins with robust public involvement partnered with a similarly robust coordination review of City plans and policies.

Everything in the 2011 Plan is under review, but these issues look central to us as we start the update process:

- ◆ Serving the “middle majority” of people who might walk and bike more but are concerned about their safety with traffic
- ◆ Better connections to City facilities, especially recreation centers, parks, libraries, and schools
- ◆ Making connections and eliminating discontinuities in the system to improve travel and wayfinding across the City
- ◆ More bike skills and safety education for school-age children
- ◆ More recreational trails, blueways, and greenways

BUCKNER BOULEVARD

Construction has begun, using a TAP grant. This shared use path will run from Rosemont Road to near Independence Boulevard, in part to serve Tidewater Community College and to make a continuous off-road path from Independence Boulevard to London Bridge Road.

THALIA CREEK GREENWAY PHASES 2 & 3

Phase 2 construction has been delayed but should begin in Summer 2017, using a TAP grant. Phase 2 will connect the existing path behind Midtown Apartments to Bonney Rd near the Days Inn. Phase 3 is in design to connect Phase 2 to Independence Boulevard for a continuous off-road path from Independence Boulevard to Constitution Drive. Future phases could connect to the Norfolk Southern ROW and by bridge to Mt. Trashmore Park.

SIGNED SHARED ROADWAYS (“JUST ADD SIGNS”)

The 2011 Plan outlined 60 miles of low-speed, low-traffic roadways where “BIKE ROUTE” signs could guide people safely across the City to valued destinations like the Oceanfront and Town Center.

BIKE PARKING

Just as a road system is incomplete without places to park cars, so it is true with a bikeway system and bikes. New bike parking facilities are being considered for numerous community facilities.

NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

LONG TERM MAINTENANCE

Beginning in FY 2014-15, City Council provided a CIP fund with \$280,000 per year for repairs and renovations to the bikeways and trails system, including repaving. We need continued funding of this CIP to keep the bikeways and trails system viable.

BIKE SAFETY EDUCATION

The City needs to develop a consistent mechanism to help citizens, especially children, understand the rules of the road and how to abide by them. BTAC vice chair Dan Koach, City team members, and Schools staff have discussed developing a comprehensive bike safety education program for students. Education is a fraction of the costs of construction, and grants are available, but making any progress will require a funding stream in the operating budget.

VISION ZERO

Vision Zero was first developed in Sweden around 1997 to articulate that the real goal for traffic safety is zero deaths and severe injuries. BTAC remains interested in adapting the concept of Vision Zero for Virginia Beach.

BICYCLE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

When the League of American Bicyclists designated Virginia Beach a Bronze-level Bicycle-Friendly City, LAB provided feedback for the City to address to achieve Silver status. Highlights include:

- ◆ Improved connectivity across the network of bike facilities
- ◆ Increased separation of bike facilities from motor vehicles
- ◆ More and better bike parking
- ◆ Bike safety education through a Safe Routes to School program
- ◆ Expanded encouragement efforts during Bike Month (May)

The City needs to increase its financial support for bikeways and trails projects to enhance our efforts to reach Silver status.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNTING

Parks & Recreation team members are working on a master plan for automatic counters for people walking and riding bikes, just as the City does for motor vehicles now. Once the plan is completed, team members hope to purchase and install a strategic system of both permanent and temporary counters to build a baseline and develop data to understand how many people are walking and biking, and where they do it, but as yet there is no operating budget for long-term operation or maintenance of this system.



Buckled path along General Booth Boulevard—AFTER



Dozens of U.S. cities using Vision Zero (VisionZeroNetwork.org)



Automatic bike counter with readout (Arlington, VA)



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