AGENDA & MEETING MINUTES
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
City of Charlottesville
Thursday, August 6, 2026; 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
City Hall Basement Conference Room, 610 E Market St
Option to join remotely via Zoom

Meeting Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t93jRSV3ff4

Introductions

Members and attendees present:

- Meredith McCreight
- Ben Chambers
- Zoe Macomber
- James VanVranken
- Brennen Duncan
- Peter Ohlms
- Paul Miller
- YY Ahn
- John Paul Donlon
- Jonathan Berlin
- Sara Forelle
- Alberic Karina-Plun
- Herb Levy
- Natalie Oschrin

Amendments to the Agenda and Meeting Minutes

The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Public Comment

Cycling across the Downtown Mall (Jonathan Berlin)

Jonathan Berlin raised an issue with cycling across the Downtown Mall. Signs instruct cyclists to dismount and walk their bikes across, which matches city code, but he needs to cross the Mall daily to get to work. 4th Street only works on his way home because it is one-way, so he is currently walking his bike across. He asked whether there is room for a "yield" approach rather

than requiring cyclists to dismount, what the reasoning was for installing the signs, whether there had been conflicts, whether there is a real basis for the ordinance, and whether there are plans for the contraflow bike lanes across the Mall that are included in the city master plan.

- **Herb Levy:** wasn't sure why a car can cross at 2nd and 4th Streets but a bike cannot.
- **Ben Chambers:** doesn't think anything is keeping people from crossing on a bike.
- **Brennen Duncan:** noted there is no bicycle crossing at any of the other side streets that dead-end at the Mall.
- **Jonathan Berlin:** the signs went up about a month ago.
- **Ben Chambers:** staff tried to enforce, but people claimed there was no signage even though there was; it just wasn't very clear. The signs were deployed at the request of the Downtown Business Association. This kind of issue will be taken up during mobility planning next year.
- **Peter Ohlms:** this idea is not new. Every crossing, or at least several clearly marked ones, should be a bike crossing. It came up in 2018 and 2019.
- **Ben Chambers:** there is also an ongoing discussion about whether cars should be able to cross the Mall at all.

Traffic calming (YY Ahn)

YY Ahn said he emailed Council about traffic calming and believes the Mall crossing issue can be partially addressed that way. He noted that bikes and e-bikes can travel fast and injure pedestrians, which is a real potential safety issue. He strongly believes that whenever the city repaves or works on a road, traffic calming should be a default add-on, with the city required to justify not installing it. Residents want and need it.

- **Ben Chambers:** part of mobility planning is setting expectations for what we want and need on our streets. A lot of traffic calming has been done, but there is definitely more to do.

Locust Avenue (Paul Miller)

Paul Miller introduced himself and thanked the committee, noting that he is working with the city to improve Locust Avenue with regard to all of the above.

Brennen Duncan and Paul Miller noted that a semi-public meeting on plans for the Locust Avenue neighborhood will be held in the first half of October.

Questions for Staff

Ben Chambers will send an updated staff-updates document with working links. Because Tommy is out, questions this week can be directed to Ben, or better yet to the Google group.

Peter Ohlms asked about the status of intersection daylighting, noting that a mobility plan is not needed to enforce current ordinances. He asked whether there is a prohibition on parking right up to an intersection and said he will keep raising it because it is already in the code.

- **Brennen Duncan:** it is in the code; the requirement is 20 feet.

- **Peter Ohlms:** there are places with no markings indicating you can't park in a spot that looks like a parking space. CPD isn't going to enforce a spot that only Brennen knows about.
- **Ben Chambers:** one thing staff needed was knowing where all the signs are; we now do, and we know where the gaps are, but I doubt we're doing this anytime soon.
- **Peter Ohlms:** I'd like to prioritize it.
- **Ben Chambers:** the mobility RFP is going out in late October.
- **Brennen Duncan:** we're pushing 2,000–3,000 signs across the city, some of which relate to this issue. At about $150 per sign to purchase and install, the cost adds up quickly, which is why it isn't prioritized right now. You're not wrong about officers or judges not enforcing. Ten years ago a no-parking sign was required at every gap in the sidewalk; that's no longer the case, but the signs still have to be maintained for readability and reflectiveness. If there's a specific problem area, let us know.
    - **Peter Ohlms:** I'll forward you the email I sent to Caleb.
- **Ben Chambers:** what you're describing isn't daylighting, it's traffic calming.
    - **James VanVranken:** you can daylight with flex posts.
    - **Ben Chambers:** it's more about visibility from the corner.
    - **YY Ahn:** signage only works if an officer is present and enforces the rule; traffic calming would physically block parking so it isn't possible.
    - **Ben Chambers:** but that's much more expensive than signage, and that's where we have to talk about priorities.
- **James VanVranken:** how long will it take to get to the end of the plan?
    - **Ben Chambers:** we're trying to align it with the end of 2028 so it can directly inform the capital budget for 2030 and beyond.
    - **James VanVranken:** so you can see why it's frustrating that we ask for improvements and have to wait 2+ years.
    - **Ben Chambers:** I'm hoping you'll be impressed with the improvements we're going to make in the next two years, and Brennen will cover some of those shortly. It's going to be construction season on West Main for a while.
    - **James VanVranken:** I think this is a communications issue and not a doing issue. We already have priorities; Peter is asking to move one up the list. Presumably staff already have priorities.
    - **Ben Chambers:** we're working on projects we've already committed to, while simultaneously planning ahead for what comes after that.

Public Works Project Timeline

Brennen Duncan presented a GIS tool staff built for management to give an overview of everything currently underway.

Projects currently underway

- West Main utility project: started on the west end (at the corner). Work won't proceed linearly because of students, so crews will jump up to Ridge McIntire and back, and so on.
- Central water line project (O-Hill area by Fontaine): started with one crew, now has 2–3, currently on Cherry Avenue. It runs out through zero East High Street / Long Street / Route 250, with roughly another 2–3 years of roadway disruption, working 100–200 ft sections at a time.
- Verve project (corner of JPA and Emmet): completion in about 12 months (this time next year); they want it open July/August for incoming students.
- Ivy project (The Blume): student housing, not a UVA-controlled property; also roughly a year out.
- Second phase of Locust Avenue north of Route 250: starting in a month or two.
- Smaller city projects: ADA improvements began this week at 4th/Preston. Next are Grady/10th and Monticello/2nd, where all the crosswalks will be realigned, the slip lane closed, and one signal mast arm replaced. The same contractor is doing all three ADA projects; they are waiting on the mast arm to be produced, expected around September.

Projects coming online next (not all city-managed)

- Fontaine Avenue streetscape: construction starting in the next couple of months, managed by VDOT. Two projects have been combined into one full project from the 29/250 interchange to JPA, with a shared-use path the whole way. Significant traffic impacts expected.
- Emmet Street streetscape: going out to bid in the next couple of months. Bids have come in very high, and some have been denied.
- East High Street: delayed. Scope must be revised to remove underground utilities ($8M); it will reopen to bids after the revision, with construction likely to start late summer next year.
- Roundabout at 53/20 by PVCC: construction starting relatively soon.
- Dairy Road Bridge: the next big traffic-impact project. From a bike/ped standpoint it should remain open, save for a day or two if a closure is needed. A 10-month project with impacts from Grove to Melbourne / 250; rerouting will be via Hydraulic to the new Hillsdale roundabout.
- VDOT project, Belvedere / Park Street / Rio roundabout: likely significant impacts on John Warner Parkway. Currently preliminary work and utility relocation, not yet affecting traffic.
- Cedar Hill / District Avenue / Hillsdale roundabout: starting early next year.
- There is a cap on the change-order amount for the VDOT project bundle (Fontaine, Belvedere, and PVCC), but the exact number is unknown.
- Stribling Avenue: sidewalk extension between Huntley and JPA.

- Around 2028, many of these large projects fall off, with no other large projects in the plan. Some run through 2029, but by early 2030 little remains active, and work will shift into capital funding.

Discussion

- **James VanVranken:** is the tool you're sharing going to be publicly available?
    - **Brennen Duncan:** VDOT is going live with its public portal in the next couple of months.
    - **James VanVranken:** I didn't see 5th Street or Rose Hill on there.
    - **Ben Chambers:** those won't have much traffic impact, so they aren't in this report. There are also a number of sidewalk projects with some traffic impact that aren't in this specific report.
- **Sara Forelle:** traffic management around active projects isn't always the best, with cones out of place and poor signage. Are the traffic management plans for upcoming projects being reviewed?
    - **Brennen Duncan:** our traffic inspector handles that. Some things slipped through the cracks after we lost our inspector a couple months ago, but we have a new inspector getting up to speed now. Bigger projects are usually better; smaller projects with smaller contracts either don't know how to do it or didn't even get a permit. The Verve and The Blume are not compliant and are cutting corners, and the city is aware. Report issues to traffic@charlottesville.gov or via a MyCville report.
- **Sara Forelle:** with school starting next week there will be many more pedestrians and children trying to get to school, so it may help to focus on school areas and how to reduce conflicts.
    - **Ben Chambers:** we have a fairly unique focus on schools compared to other cities in Virginia. Our Safe Routes coordinator looks specifically at those areas and routes to school. For a concern at a specific school or zone, work directly with the school.
    - **Natalie Oschrin:** recommended using the MyCville app, which has a guided interface so reports reach the right staff member.

5th Street Design

Brennen Duncan presented the 5th Street project. Given concerns about what full implementation would do to vehicular traffic flow, staff decided to install a pilot first (with less pavement marking, etc.) before committing to the whole design.

The design keeps the bike lane on the right side, outbound, but that isn't allowed with a right-turn lane; it has to sit between the through lane and the right-turn lane. Another issue is at Harris Road: a concept to continue the shared-use path all the way through and turn it into a bike-only through lane doesn't account for fire engines and larger vehicles that can't make that turn radius (they need a 28-foot turn radius).

Draft maintenance-of-traffic (MOT) plan for the pilot

- Cherry/Elliott: bike lane between the through lanes and the right-turn lane.
- Proposed speed reduction to 30 mph through the construction phase (southbound only).
- Some modular bus stops are needed to bridge from where the current sidewalk is to where the new travel lane would be, allowing bikes to ramp up and over.
- Harris Street: still being worked through, but the path would continue with a bike lane between the through lane and the right-turn lane; two lanes become one through lane with a left turn into Willoughby.

Discussion

- **Herb Levy:** Elliott/5th is the most dangerous place to bike in Charlottesville. Traffic does not respect the calming infrastructure. Somebody is going to die waiting for the sidewalk to get built.
    - **Sara Forelle:** The 5th Street design is dangerous for cyclists. There has to be something more in the design, such as medians.
    - **Natalie Oschrin:** Four people have died on this road, and we shouldn't forget about them while we work on making it safer.
    - **YY Ahn:** It's a little depressing to see the design; there are no physical differences, just a speed reduction. Can we create a bike lane somewhere other than 5th Street?
    - **Brennen Duncan:** Going back to 2021, the plan proposed doing something separate, and it was a multi-million dollar project.
- **YY Ahn:** Why don't we have any protected intersections?
    - **Ben Chambers:** Because we don't have any protected bike lanes right now, except the Belmont Bridge.
    - **Brennen Duncan:** We are kind of doing that on Rose Hill.
        - **Zoe Macomber:** It's a protected facility, but not an island.
- **YY Ahn:** bike lanes and sidewalks can carry 4–6 times more people than a car lane; we could think about “traffic” differently.

Announcements / Other Business

Neighborhood walk: Forest Hills Park, Sunday at 4:00 PM.

Agenda Items for Next BPAC Meeting

No specific agenda items for the next meeting were recorded in these notes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM.