

Meeting Summary
Vanderbilt University Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Nov. 13, 2023, 2-3:30pm
Hybrid Meeting

Attendees:

Student

Levi Schult, Graduate, Graduate Student Council
Jonathan Lifferth, Graduate Student

Faculty

Dr. Amanda Hellman, Director, Fine Arts Gallery
Dr. Julie Gamble, Professor

Staff

Adam McKeever-Burgett, President, University Staff
Advisory Council
Chris Meyers, Dean of Students, Law School

Research / Post Doc

Dr. William Barbour, Research Scientist, Institute for
Software Integrated Systems

Identity Centers

Dr. Rory Dicker, Director, Margaret Cuninggim Women's
Center

Ex Officio

James Moore, University Landscape Architect, Campus
Planning & Construction
Robert Grummon, Team Leader Capital Projects, Campus
Planning & Construction
Lynn Maddox, Neighborhood and County Liaison,
Government & Community Relations
Catherine Buttrey, Assistant Director, Student Access
Michael Briggs, Director, Transportation and Mobility

Others

Lindsey Ganson, Assistant Director, Transportation and
Mobility
Anna Dearman, Walking & Biking Manager, Nashville
Department of Transportation

BPAC Administrator

Matthew Cushing, Bicycle & Pedestrian Planner,
Transportation and Mobility

Minutes

1. Agenda Review and Intros

Matthew Cushing welcomed the committee to the second BPAC Meeting, discussed logistics associated with moving to a hybrid setting, and reviewed the agenda. Michael Briggs, as Director of the Transportation and Mobility team, made welcoming comments to the Committee. The committee asked a clarifying question about the scope of the committee, and expressed a willingness to spend additional time on reports/etc if needed.

2. General Updates

a. *BPAC Website*

Matthew showed the new BPAC website, and explained that he will still be adding a way to contact the BPAC administrator, based on feedback from the first meeting.

b. *Spin Bike Share Ridership*

Matthew provided updates on the Spin bike share program. First, he noted that Spin has been acquired by Bird. He reports that no changes have been announced by Spin, but this will be monitored. Second, Matthew moved onto ridership reporting, explaining that ridership was highest in August, at 33 trips starting on campus. In September, trips dropped 47% (18 trip starts). In October, rides went back up ~15% to 21 trips. Matthew commented that the city did not experience a drop in rides in September.

Committee agreed that numbers seem low, and that they still hadn't seen many of the bikes. Committee asked where bikes can be ridden. Matthew explained that city's pilot area is bigger than Vanderbilt, but doesn't allow trips to downtown or East Nashville.

c. *Preliminary Bike Parking Survey Updates: Bikes and Scooters*

Matthew explained that he recently completed a bi-annual bike parking survey. Data analysis is still in progress, but he shared preliminary data on bike and scooter counts on campus. He explained that there were ~650 vehicles (bikes and scooters) on campus during the survey. About 80% of them were bikes (523), and 20% were scooters.

Matthew pointed out that distributions differed for bikes and scooters. Bikes were more evenly distributed, where scooters congregated at Sarratt/Rand and the Kissam Center. Matthew speculated about two interpretations: 1.) there are more scooters, but they are inside buildings, or 2.) scooters get more use, but bikes sit for longer periods of time.

Committee commented that scooters are parked in academic buildings. Committee asked if Spin bike share program has impacted parking availability otherwise. Matthew replied that there were some capacity issues at the Stevenson Center location, but otherwise most sites have not had capacity problems. Committee asked if any for-profit scooters were on campus. Matthew confirmed that none were on campus.

Committee asked if anyone at City or Vanderbilt is doing spatial analysis for scooter rides. Anna Dearman explained that populus has partnered with the, and suggested that BPAC Administrator follow-up to think about potential data access.

Matthew then presented information on locations where bikes were locked to fences or other non-rack locations. Matthew commented that in most cases, racks did exist nearby, with available capacity, so this suggests a preference for parking at door. Committee commented that the locations were unsurprising, and suggested that people may avoid older style racks or uncovered parking, and may use fences instead. Committee suggested trying to get a "bike rack renewal program" in facilities budget. Committee commented that many faculty and staff are bringing bikes into buildings too.

d. *Upcoming Events*

Matthew showed a list of events and commented that the Open Houses for the Connect Downtown study are happening on 11/14-15.

3. Partner Projects

a. *20th & 21st Two-Way Conversion – Anna Dearman (Walking & Biking Manager, NDOT)*

Anna Dearman presented on NDOT's upcoming plans to convert 20th and 21st Avenues to two-way traffic between Charlotte Ave to Broadway. 21st Ave would have an active transportation focus, whereas 20th would be vehicular and transit-oriented. Traffic analysis found that the conversion is feasible without significant traffic impacts.

Anna showed the specific plans to the committee. She explained that, on 20th, many of

the questions regard accommodating changes to bus routes. She explained that WeGo may consolidate some stops, especially the two stops between Broadway and West End. There is also a goal of getting cyclists across Charlotte Ave from Spruce to 21st/20th. She moved onto 21st Ave, and summarized earlier comments for this area, especially noting that NDOT is thinking about how to make the road “read” as multimodal. She commented that there will 5-foot bike lanes in this area, and a 1 foot buffer, potentially with vertical separation, where possible.

Committee commented that right turns on red are also a challenge for pedestrians in this area, so suggested a “no right turn on red” sign. Similarly, at turn from 21st SB to 21st West, there are often cars queued to turn right. Expressed a need to provide strong separation for bike lane here, or expects that drivers will roll into bike lane. Discussed need for vertical separation near residences, as curbside management, Committee asked about whether bike lane can connect to campus or Walk and Roll Loop. Committee expressed an interest in better signing Walk and Roll loop.

Anna commented that curb line may be changed at West End at 21st to reduce turning speeds, as this is a high pedestrian area. Committee asked if flashing beacon at Terrace Place and 21st could be upgraded. Anna said this intersection is being discussed and may have a possibility for a raised intersection. Matthew suggested using “use ped signal” MUTCD signage at West End and 21st, and commented on flooding at SE corner of West End and 21st.

4. Bicycle Friendly University Goals

a. *The League’s “Key Steps to Silver”*

Matthew reviewed the feedback report from the League of American Bicyclists. Key suggestions include the need to build dedicated infrastructure, improve parking, and update the website. Matthew explained that the full list of suggestions is too detailed, so he simplified the list in two ways, one of which was sorted by “cost and ease”.

b. *Review of “Easy, Low Cost” options*

Matthew reviewed at a high level the list of items in the easy, low-cost category. Matthew reported that one of his goals in next year will be focused on website updates.

c. *Committee Feedback on Categories of Recommendations*

When asked which items the committee would like to see a focus on, the committee commented on the need for bike repair stands. The committee also asked about programmatic goals. Matthew explained that the goal of bringing this list to the committee is to see their interests, but then explained that the Transportation and Mobility Team is a Transportation Demand Management program, with goals of shifting mode share. Committee responded that safety is the number one barrier to walking and biking, so focus should be safety. Committee commented that infrastructure is important, but enforcement is too. Committee suggested that “near miss” reporting would be a good data collection tool, and that driver education may be more important

than bicycle safety education.

5. Construction Closures

a. *Current Closure Map*

Matthew showed the current bicycle and pedestrian detours on the West Side of campus. He described that most pedestrian routes still exist, with tighter spaces, but that bikes have had a harder time, with only one fully bikeable route East/West through Highland Quad.

b. *Review of Successes / Lessons Learned*

Matthew talked through successes and lessons learned in this project. Some successes he reported are the building of temporary sidewalks, the employment of a full time flagger on 25th, and the temporary bike lane on Jess Neely at the beginning of the project timeline. For lessons learned, he described that the size of the projects has created challenges. Signage, especially in relation to the city requirements for detour signage, has been an area for learning as well. New Vanderbilt-specific detour signs are being printed, and monthly walks to check signage are occurring as well.

Committee commented that the mesh on the fences along Jess Neely create a feeling of lack of safety, as pedestrians can't see around corners.

Matthew asked committee about best way to communicate changes. Committee explained that physical signage is most important. Committee described that people don't usually check a website right before they go somewhere.

c. *Committee Feedback*

The committee expressed that their biggest concern with construction is accessibility. Committee commented that detour signage isn't sufficient for anyone who is visually impaired. They suggested that any policy should create a requirement to give notice for closures. Committee suggested that there should be an "opt-in" option for receiving messages..

6. Looking Forward

a. *Scheduling of Next Meeting*

Matthew reminded the committee that there will be 4 BPAC meetings across the academic year, with the next meeting happening in 2024. Matthew will send a doodle poll sometime in January

b. *Agenda Items Requests*

Matthew asked if there were any specific items the committee would like on the next agenda, and added that there will be a discussion about people parking in bike lanes and sidewalks at the next meeting, and potentially a review of a Pedestrian Stress Study a committee member is working on