

Meeting Summary
Vanderbilt University Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
April 24, 2024, 8:30am-10:00am
Hybrid Meeting

Attendees:

Student

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

Faculty

Dr. Amanda Hellman, Director, Fine Arts Gallery

Staff

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

Research / Post Doc

Dr. Ishita Dash, Post-Doc, Department of Civil and
Environmental Engineering

Identity Centers

Sarah Brennan, Program Coordinator, Margaret Cuninggim
Women's Center

Ex Officio

James Moore, University Landscape Architect, Campus
Planning & Construction
Lynn Maddox, Neighborhood and County Liaison,
Government & Community Relations
Bob Grummon, Team Leader Capital Projects, Campus
Planning & Construction

Others

Lindsey Ganson, Assistant Director, Transportation and
Mobility
Miriam Leibowitz, Commute Concierge Manager,
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

Matthew Cushing welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that it was the fourth and final meeting of the academic year, and then reviewed the agenda.

2. Edgehill Bikeway with Anna Dearman, NDOT Walking & Biking Manager

Anna Dearman introduced herself and explained that the plans shown during the meeting are posted on the NDOT website. She explained that the plans included the Edgehill and Chestnut corridors, from 21st Ave at Vanderbilt, to where Chestnut becomes Wharf, to where it becomes Charles E Davis, and then routes over the interstate via a Pedestrian Bridge. She explained that this corridor is a key bikeway corridor for the city, and has been included in many generations of bikeway planning. There are some existing bike facilities on Edgehill, but the current planning will upgrade the entire corridor from 21st to Lafayette. Due to the size of the project area, it will likely be implemented in phases. The city is currently wrapping up planning and conceptual design phases, before moving into the construction phase, and the project will likely be constructed over several phases. Plans have been reviewed by WeGo and Vanderbilt's Transportation & Mobility team, and now the City is starting to reach out to other community groups as well.

Anna showed the designs on the screen, and explained she would review from West to East. She explained that Edgehill at 21st is one of more constrained areas, and commented that the City doesn't want to expand pavement width, acquire right of way, or reconstruct sidewalk for a

variety of reasons, but that one of those is that streets don't tend to get safer as they get wider, even when the widening is for multimodal infrastructure. Keeping current widths has traffic calming and safety benefits. In this segment, the plan is to add a 4-foot bike lane with a 1-foot buffer. The plan does include some amount of vertical separation. Anna commented that the plans aim to keep 11-foot lanes, as this is the preferred minimum dimension for roadways which have transit routes. In the westbound direction, where Edgehill approaches 21st Ave, a bike box will be installed, and could be paired with signal priority or other signal changes. At minimum, this would require the addition of no right turn on red signage. Throughout the corridor, the city is proposing several shared bike lane/transit stops, where the bike lane raises to the level of an extended curb, which serves as a boarding area for transit riders. An example of this is on 12th Ave S at Archer. As Anna moved east, towards 19th Moving east, she commented on the green bicycle conflict markings through the intersections, and explained that due to new MUTCD guidance, final installed markings may look different, with dashed green markings, rather than continuous green markings through the intersection. Anna then showed the continued bike lanes through 16th Ave.

A committee member clarified a comment from Anna, asking if the shared bike lane / transit stop infrastructure was likely to move forward. Anna confirmed that the stops are proposed as designed, and there is no indication that they won't be included in final plans.

Another committee member asked a similar question, confirming if the shown vertical separation was likely, or just potential. Anna confirmed that the separation is both possible and feasible, and the project will go to design assuming protection is included. The caveat is that there would only be 1 foot to work with, rather than a more typical 2–3 foot buffer.

The same committee member commented that there is sometime vehicle loading on Edgehill, both from campus users, and University School of Nashville buses, so that vertical separation should be included to delineate the space.

Matthew clarified the comment – he explained that, when biking towards a bike box, he personally prefers some amount of gap in between the posts to allow claiming the lane. He asked if the committee member had the same preference. The committee member agreed.

A committee member asked if Anna has reached out to the University School, and offered to help put them in touch, especially as they currently use this area for loading. Anna confirmed she would appreciate this.

Matthew asked Anna about how only having 1 foot of space, versus 2-3, impacts selection methodology towards infrastructure for vertical separation. Anna explained that the city has used armadillos, cyclelane products, and rubber curbs in these kinds of spaces in the past. She further elaborated that the final vertical separation would likely be interspersed with 3-foot bollards for visibility, and that some bollards may be attached to tuff-curb base, similar to those seen at 12th Ave S. at Deford Bailey. She explained that the 1-foot space wouldn't allow pre-cast concrete wheel stops, as it likely wouldn't be as resilient in this location. Matthew asked a clarifying question about whether all the other options fit into in 1 foot. Anna explained that they do, but some construction crews may prefer not to put these items where they overlap paint. She explained that there is some room for placement, as the striping itself is normally 4-6 inches wide, where the lane striping is normally 6 inches, and the striping for the bike lane

buffer is normally four. When crews are willing to overlap striping, this allows overlap within the 10 inches.

Anna then moved back to reviewing the plans. She explained that the segment near Edgehill Village is one of the more challenges sections, as there is currently parking on both sides, and it isn't possible to accommodate protected bike lanes on both sides without removing parking on at least one side. She explained that the existing parking is heavily utilized, and also effectively serves as traffic calming. The shown plans preserve parking on the north side near Villa Place. Anna also commented that recent meetings with community members emphasized a parking need near the Edgehill Apartments, closer to 12th Ave South, more than expected. As such, finalized plans may consider removing the left turn lane approaching 12th Ave S. to allow more parking in that segment.

A committee member asked if the parking near Villa place is metered. Anna replied that she did not think so, but that it may be managed, and may be a candidate for metering. Another committee member commented that they had seen a large RV parked there for over a year.

A committee member commented that, from a Vanderbilt perspective, the project has a benefit not only for east/west commuters from Wedgewood-Houston, but also that it provides better connectivity to Vanderbilt facilities and parking at Chestnut.

Anna asked if this committee member expected that people will drive and then bike from Chestnut.

Lindsey Ganson commented that this may occur, there are reports of people parking in the neighborhoods and then biking in, but it may not be all the way from Chestnut, as this is farther and up a hill, but that there is both Vanderbilt University and Medical Center parking at this facility. She also communicated an interest in developing more bike share along this corridor

Matthew clarified the location of the Chestnut facility – near the old baseball stadium – for those who aren't familiar with the facility. He elaborated that there is printing and storage at this facility, along with parking. He explained that the parking is potentially more utilized by VUMC currently, as they run shuttles to this location. He also commented that there is a major east/west bike commuter need that would be partially addressed by this project, as right now one of the bigger challenges for bike commuters from the east is crossing the interstates.

Anna responded to Lindsey's comments, and provided an update that a docked bike share RFP is being finalized soon, likely this week. Lindsey asked how long it would take to advertise and procure. Anna didn't have a firm answer, but guessed that it would take a while. In her experience, procurements are often taking 6-9 months, so it could be a year or more before a new vendor is operating.

Lindsey made a comment to the committee, explaining that the Transportation and Mobility Office has a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant coming from TDOT and the Federal Highway Administration, which has a line item for a bike share program, but spending on this line has been held while waiting for clarity on the city's bike share program.

A committee member asked about the phasing of the project. Anna commented that the construction will likely align with the paving schedule. Chestnut is at the top of the paving list, due to condition, so this will likely happen first.

Miriam Leibowitz asked about whether there are any plans to complete the sidewalk connection from Chestnut to Adventure Science Center, as the Acorn school considered using buses to visit, but decided not to due to lack of sidewalks. Anna commented that there are a few processes that may lead to this. For instance, Fort Negley will be working on a master plan soon, and she knows the Science Center is interested. NDOT has looked at the feasibility of this, but the project hasn't risen to the top priority, due to scoring factors like presence of vulnerable road users and others, but there may eventually be options like expanding the bikeway to an on street multi-use path.

3. Committee Design Brainstorm: Vanderbilt Place Cycle Track

Matthew introduced the next section of the agenda and reminded that the agenda item was moved from last month's discussions which went over time. However, this discussion is a continuation of the theme of the current challenges around vehicles parking where they shouldn't on campus, especially on sidewalks, pathways, and the cycle track. Matthew summarized some takeaways from this earlier meeting: 1. the parking team is small, and would need to expand significantly to effectively monitor outside of parking lots, 2. There are ongoing efforts to improve bollard performance, with ongoing operational questions being discussed, and 3. There is also some fire lane master planning happening for the historic core, which may provide some long term options to better to delineate vehicle movement in this space.

After this recap, Matthew moved to discussing the cycle track on Vanderbilt Place but started with a caveat: he clarified that this discussion is intended as a brainstorm, as there is no identified funding for changes. As such, the goal is to collect feedback to lobby for changes.

Matthew provided context on the cycle track, showing on the map that the segment of Vanderbilt place being discussed is between Saratt and Memorial Gym. He also clarified that a cycle track is the bike lane design which places two directions of bike travel on the same side of the road. As additional context, Matthew explained that the multiuse paths in the West End Neighborhood are relatively recent in Vanderbilt history, and that they used to be roads with lots of parking. He commented that this has led to some underserved parking needs in this area. One specific need worth noting is that the cycle track is formally used in move-in/move-out as loading space, so any solutions proposed need to accommodate parking need in this area a few times a year, which is one of the challenges to putting permanent infrastructure solutions here.

Matthew then described that he sees two problem with cycle tracks. He commented that, broadly, he likes the idea of cycle tracks, but that they require thoughtful intersection design. He then showed some examples of awkward turning movements that exist in the current configuration. He acknowledged that the other problem is vehicles parking in the cycle track.

Matthew then reviewed some current features in the area that are intended to help with the challenges in the area. He showed that there are "no parking" signs in various locations, both permanent and temporary. Additionally, there are a few dedicated loading spaces in the area, although some could be better signed. He then showed a map which highlighted a number of

areas in the vicinity which likely could be delineated as loading space.

Then, Matthew showed on the screen the current configuration of Vanderbilt Place, as well as current engineering guidance on lane widths, bike lanes, etc. He noted that the measurements on screen were approximate, gathered from overhead measurements in ArcGIS, which isn't usually viewed as being accurate to the inch. He described that the existing cycle track is 2 four-foot bike lanes, an eleven-foot travel lane, and a twelve-foot travel lane. He commented that, applying the design guidelines, some major takeaways are that the existing cycle track is at absolute minimum design width, where normally up to 12 feet is preferred, with the option of a three-foot buffer. Regarding the travel lanes, historic guidance was that lanes should be eleven to thirteen feet in width. The thinking was that more room to maneuver meant safer operations. However, it has been seen that wider roads just means higher travel speeds. Current guidance for travel lanes is 10 to 11 feet, but areas with heavy vehicle traffic, like buses and trucks, should still prefer 11 feet. Matthew commented that, due to loading needs and VandyRide operations on Vanderbilt Place, he didn't think the lanes should go below 11 feet. Given that analysis, without changing curb lines, which is significantly more expensive, any design change would need to fit into about a foot of space, or the changes would start to inhibit operations.

A committee member asked whether the awkward turning movements discussed prior could be solved by adding a bike box. Matthew commented that bike boxes are not typically installed on cycle tracks, as they would mean blocking one of the lanes of travel. Additionally, he has some concern about bike boxes at stop signs. There are examples of bike boxes at stop signs in Nashville, such as the one near Belmont, but NACTO guidance is that they should be installed only at signalized intersections. He commented that there is room for debate, but he personally agrees with this analysis, as a bike box at a stop light allows time to get in front of traffic during a red phase of the traffic signal, but at a stop sign drivers typically only pause for a second or two, making it harder to safely move over in time.

A committee member asked whether it would be feasible to reduce the travel lanes and then install traditional bike lanes on both sides of the road, with a one foot buffer. Matthew commented that having 2 one-foot buffers would require taking one lane down to 10 feet, or two lanes down to ten and a half feet, but that it is something that could be explored. He then moved to the next slide, which showed several potential options on the screen.

First, Matthew showed the option of adding a one-foot buffer with delineators to the existing cycle track. He commented that NACTO recommends a minimum 1.5 foot buffer, but that the city seems comfortable with 1 foot, so this could be worth considering. He noted that this is the cheapest option shown, but there would still be costs for restriping and adding delineators. The biggest challenge of this approach, he described, is move-in/move-out logistics. He suggested that there are some delineators which have an option to be removed by a hex key, but this would create an operational need, and it's not clear who would manage this.

Second, Matthew showed the option of traditional bike lanes. Matthew noted that he did not show a buffer or delineators due to the spatial limitations discussed prior. He commented that this design would help with improving intersection operations but noted that many prefer the perceived comfort of cycle tracks to bike lanes.

Finally, Matthew discussed his own perception, as a vehicular cyclist, that he doesn't think

Vanderbilt place is an unsafe place to ride, as it is a low-speed road with relatively low traffic. Given this consideration, one option could be to mimic the design on nearby Fairfax avenue, without the bike lanes due to space. Specifically, this road has chicanes, where the road striping meanders back and forth around parking, to encourage slower travel speeds. Matthew explained that a positive of this approach is that it would delineate preferred parking space. Additionally, as we traditionally charge for parking, it may be easier to fund these modifications. However, Matthew clarified that this design would have no dedicated bicycle space, other than perhaps painted on-street sharrows. Matthew then asked for committee feedback.

A committee member commented that, as a cyclist, they are in favor of getting rid of cycle track and riding in the road, as this leads to better predictability.

Another committee member commented that the biggest problem in this area is the lack of delineators, management, or protection. They commented that they are personally fine biking in the road in this segment, but questioned whether they would do so with kids.

Lindsey commented that if any parking were to be installed in this area, it would likely be hourly parking.

A committee member commented that generally they feel that on campus roads should have bike lanes. Further, they feel that moving to parking may move back from intent of district.

A committee member commented that the adjacent roadways mean that all riders on this segment should be comfortable riding in traffic, as the other roadways doesn't have bike lanes.

A committee member commented that there are long term plans for bike lanes on 25th, and that the CUI project will likely lead to a continuous protected bike way in this area.

Matthew clarified that these bike lanes are being discussed currently, but that, practically speaking, he wouldn't expect any short-term improvements to go past the current construction limits, which is mostly south of the Student Life Center. As such, there are likely to be bike lanes on 25th in the adjacent area in the long term, but in nearer term, this is unlikely.

A committee member commented that, even with kids on a cargo bike, they would rather ride in the road than in an area with occasional parked cars. Further, they expect that some people will still try to park in the bike lanes even if bollards are installed. They expressed it isn't useful to build bike lanes just to say we have bike lanes.

A committee member commented that they ride this segment daily, and are in constant communication with the parking team about the offenders, many of which they report are campus vehicles. This committee member agrees that this road isn't unsafe without the bike lane, but in the long term, having it connected with a larger system would be ideal, and thinks it important to not just give up. They think the shown loading zones could work, and would be willing to help with operations around removable bollards, should this move forward.

A committee member commented that one of the shown potential loading zones near the powerhouse, likely wouldn't work, as this is the site for a recurring food vendor.

Lindsey Ganson proposed that we may be able to move forward with improved signage around the loading zones before bike lane changes, as this may be able to happen faster.

4. **Dockless Bike Share Pilot Year in Review**

Matthew provided background on the on-campus bike share pilot, noting that Spin deployed on campus in August with 9 designated parking locations. The target parking locations took advantage of existing signage at locations from an earlier bike share / scooter share program and added white paint on ground to better delineate parking areas. The agreement with Spin currently allows up to 25 e-bikes, mirroring the required number of bikes per operating in the city program. The city is currently in the process of renewing their agreement with the operators, and current thinking is that all will be required to have 50 or more. So far, in preliminary discussions, it seems likely that Spin would be willing to put almost all 50 of the bikes on campus if we want them to do so. Of course, bikes would move around upon use, so the number on campus would fluctuate, even if the target number was raised.

Matthew then moved to the national context and explained that Spin acquired by Bird in the last year, after which Bird immediately for bankruptcy. Matthew commented that the bankruptcy doesn't seem to be a "closing shop" bankruptcy, but that some restructuring is happening. Matthew isn't involved in background discussions, but public stances from the local teams say that Bird and Spin will continue to operate separately in Nashville, due the robust market, but some places may seem to companies collapse into one.

Regarding the city program, Matthew described speculations that the city is likely to allow the bikes to extend to East Nashville soon, but likely won't be allowed into downtown until parking spaces/corrals are better delineated. This would likely mean some roads would be designated to allow passing through downtown.

Matthew explained that the program was launched as a pilot, and things seem to be going well, but it's a good time to check with the committee to hear feedback before planning for the next year. As a reminder of past discussions, Matthew showed ridership data. He summarized that ridership was highest at launch, dropped noticeably the following month, before stabilizing, and then dropping in the winter. He reminded that the drop parallels a similar drop across the city, so this is likely more related to the cold weather than anything programmatic, but we don't yet have sufficient Spring data to confirm. There are somewhere between 10-20 rides a month on an average month, which Matthew commented is not a huge amount of activity.

Matthew then explained that he would share some of the current thinking regarding the program within the Transportation and Mobility team, clarifying that this thinking hasn't yet gone to any higher leadership. Matthew explained that one option to increase the number of bikes on campus would be allowing more operators, but that the current thinking is keep one operator is preferred for ease of communication and administration. Matthew reported that there are not any known operational challenges currently. Following this, Matthew explained that he would suggest increasing the on-campus bike allowance to match the increased city minimum, while potentially adding some additional parking locations. Further, as discussed earlier in the meeting, the program's CMAQ grant does have a line item for bike share, so the team has been wrestling with whether it makes more sense to hold funding in favor of docked bike share following the city's procurement, or whether it makes sense to subsidize dockless

bike share to potentially allow discounts/ more bikes. Matthew opened the floor for feedback.

A committee member commented that they have used a Spin bike, but that they are too expensive. They also commented that the beauty of dockless bike share is flexibility, which is limited by having designated parking locations. This committee members prefers docked bike share because it is cheaper, offers a monthly pass, and gives more certainty about where to find a bike. They commented that having more bikes on campus might help, but that they lean towards the docked system, and then having programming for student discounts.

Another committee member expressed that they also have concerns about cost, and wondered what the threshold is where people consider bikeshare over other modes. However, they also expressed some concern with the docked model, as this ties the university to a specific vendor in a more permanent way. If a company closes or goes bankrupt, they have some concern about this leaving abandoned stations/pad on campus. For dockless, a main concern for this committee member is that the bikes take up existing bike racks, so any program expansion should be paired with installation of additional bike racks as well. Lindsey commented that the CMAQ budget also has a line item for transit stop improvements and bike racks. This committee member asked if BCycle, the current docked bike share vendor, is starting to use smaller stations. Matthew confirmed that this is true, but that there is only one location he knows of in town – in Midtown, near new apartments – where these have been deployed. This committee member asked how servicing of the dockless bikes has been going. Matthew commented that he hasn't heard any operational concerns, and everything seems to be going smoothly. He clarified that, in the current model, unless there is a bigger maintenance needs, much of the operation is swapping batteries, which can manually be removed from the bikes. This reduces operational challenges and on-campus vehicular needs.

Matthew then moved on to discuss potential installation of new parking locations. He showed heatmaps of the city's micromobility data, which he commented is mostly scooters, and explained that this is more granular data than shown previously. He commented that the data does appear to match earlier comments from the committee, in that most of the popular locations on the map are around hotels or other tourist destinations. However, he confirmed that the area near Scarritt Place and 21st shows significant ridership, and does not have an obvious tourist demand, so he speculated that it makes sense to add a new parking area near Owen. Otherwise, West end and 21st is another popular area, but the fact that there are hotels nearby makes it hard to assess whether this is a tourist or Vanderbilt demand. Similarly, near the West End Neighborhood is another popular area, but it is hard to tell whether this is more related to campus, or Centennial Park.

A committee member commented that the heatmap shows that the campus geofence for scooters is working.

Matthew then showed a map with all current on-campus parking locations, and a proposed sites for new locations. Locations highlighted were near Scarritt Place, the West End Neighborhood, the Peabody campus, an additional location near Alumni lawn, and near ESB/Olin.

A committee member commented that it may be better to have a policy that dockless bikes could be parked at any bike rack. Matthew agreed that he also thinks this is the ideal long-term solution, but expressed concerns about this in the short run. He explained that if this was

achieved by adding a geofencing at the site of all existing bike racks, this would essentially include all of campus, due to the high number of bike racks. This would improve the reliance on users to have good parking behavior. Additionally, due to the low number of bikes in the program currently, this would make it much harder to know where to find a bike. This committee member commented that they toured a different campus recently, and that campus has welcome officers that help with things like communicating about dismount zones and tidying micromobility devices. They commented this would be ideal on campus, but realized it would require staffing.

Another committee member commented that they like the idea of allowing parking at all racks, but fear that it may create blow back around the program. They speculated it would be easier to grow the program by increasing locations as described. Otherwise, they were in favor of subsidizing the program. They also commented that the driveway near Scarritt has a very high lip and is a hazard for scooter users.

5. Looking Forward

Matthew Cushing provided an update on Mobility and Transportation team initiatives. He explained that he will be taking over the up abandoned bike collection process from Facilities/Grounds, but that many specifics are still a lot being determined. Otherwise, the team is hiring a few interns – one for bicycle and pedestrian-related functions over the summer, including abandoned bicycle collection, one website intern for the summer, and one data analyst intern for the academic year. Postings are on hireadore.

Matthew then talked about upcoming events, commenting that May is Bike Month. As such, there will be a large number of events in the city, and he recommend committee members check the Walk Bike Nashville page for information on events like the Tour de Nash. Otherwise, Vanderbilt will be hosting a lunch webinar series on Wednesdays, a group bike ride on 5/13 to start bike to work week, and Bike to Work Day on 5/17.

Then, Matthew reminded that this meeting is the last of the year. He thanked the committee for their support and discussion throughout the year. He commented that he will reach out in the coming weeks to confirm whether committee members would be interested in serving on the committee for another year. Then, he asked the committee if there was anything that could have gone better across the year. A committee member commented that it would be useful to have a file repository to reference materials discussed at earlier meetings. Otherwise, a committee member commented that finding a more central location for the on-campus meeting option would be helpful.