

Notes

Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee

October 15, 2020

Electronic meeting

Present

Cecile Newcomb, Roanoke County
Jeremy Holmes, RVARC
Ken McLeod, League of American
Bicyclists
Carol Moneymaker, VDOT
Garrett Brumfield, Overcome Yours
Anita McMillan, Vinton

Tim Pohlad-Thomas, RVARC
Lisa Cooper, Franklin County
Greg Walter, Greenway Commission
Erik Olsen, Montgomery County
Phil Hobrla
Virgil Case
Rachel Ruhlen, RVARC

Cecile Newcomb called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

1. Updates

- Cecile reported that Roanoke County and the Greenway Commission both requested that VDOT include bike/ped crossings in the I-81 projects. Roanoke County projects underway that include bike/ped components are Route 419, Route 419 Phase II, Lila Dr., and Route 220.
- Tim announced that RIDE Solutions was hosting its first post-pandemic social ride tonight with Stormwater.
- Rachel reported that the Bicycle Friendly Community application has been submitted and the League of American Bicyclists surveys locals as part of the review process. [The survey](#) is open until Nov 15.
- Rachel reported that the Pedestrian Safety Campaign was completed in September. Pandemic-related traffic pattern changes resulted in poorer crosswalk compliance for both drivers and pedestrians after the campaign compared to before, but the survey results showed that more people were aware that drivers are supposed to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk after the campaign than before. Tim added that the bus ads reached 2 million views.
- Rachel reported on the Bikeway Plan update and asked for help in reaching bicyclists who bike for transportation because of poverty. This may be the largest cohort of bicyclists but is not represented in bicycle planning, according to *Bicycle Race* (by Adonia Lugo). The goal is 5-10 informal interviews. Some suggestions included:
 - Ask churches for help in reaching these bicyclists
 - Talk to community organizers such as Humble Hustle or Downshift
 - Hand out flyers on the street
 - Focusing on kids' safety gets adults interested
 - Hustle Haven, neighborhood meetings, Melrose Library, Gainsboro YMCA
 - Unorganized, low-key is less intimidating

2. Bike/Ped Counts

Rachel presented data from the past year of pedestrian counts in nine locations and bike counts in five locations from four counters on loan from Virginia Tech, two counters on loan from VDOT, and permanent count equipment installed by VDOT.

Locality staff have requested several locations and committee members are encouraged to suggest locations they think might be of interest.

It may not be obvious what will be done with the data before collecting it but as more data gets collected and shared, more uses are found for it. Over the past year, data has been used to:

- Justify grant application – not just whether anyone is walking on Ogden Rd, but that we cared enough to count.
- Assess the effect of events on pedestrian activity downtown
- Examine compliance with greenway closures (very high)

Data will soon be used to compare before and after crosswalk projects in Vinton (we have the before, when the projects are complete we'll collect after data).

Additional data uses the committee thought of were:

- Bring attention to a street
- Outreach
- Changing how people think about successful streets. For example, Brandon Avenue is considered successful because of how many vehicles move through it quickly, even though it isn't safe or desirable for walking and biking.

Committee members discussed emerging technology which hasn't been available but Strava has changed their pricing scheme recently and it may become more accessible.

3. Wrap up

Erik Olsen reported that New River Valley has hired the Michael Baker firm, which is also doing the Valley to Valley study, to update the bike/ped regional plan. Transit ridership is down to 4000 people per day and bike share is getting used by locals more than students. The Valley to Valley study encompasses Route 460/11 and while the desirability of bike/ped accommodations has been expressed, no one has counted bicyclists on it. Carol Moneymaker added that VDOT tries to find a way to include bike/ped in every project but the policy has so many allowable exceptions that it makes it hard to justify.

Jeremy Holmes reported that he did a TV interview about the Zagster corpses littering the City. RIDE Solutions has been negotiating with the new owner about a donation and has lined up recipients but the new owner has been slow to respond. Zagster bikeshare was very successful in Roanoke and even with the advent of e-scooters was on track to exceed its previous years' performance when Zagster shut down.

Jeremy also reported RIDE Solutions did an ebike video with Downshift explaining the new ebike rules and greenways.

Committee members expressed an interest in reviewing escooter data.