

**Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

April 24, 2023 5:00 p.m.

This meeting of the Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee Meeting was held April 24, 2023, at the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Administrative Office. Chair R. Ross called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

For the June meeting and going forward, citizens will be asked to sign up before the meeting to speak. Citizens must announce themselves by name and address.

**ROLL CALL**

C. Abaka-Williams took the roll. Attendance 6 voting members present, 1 was absent.

<b>Members Present:</b>	Andy Booden, Donald R. Burke (vice chair), Steve Froncillo, Whitney S. Katchmark, Rogard Ross (chair), Timothy L. Stephens
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Dawn M. Kennedy
<b>City Staff Present:</b>	Michael Barber (Parks, Recreation and Tourism), Ana Elezovic (Parks, Recreation and Tourism), Kevin P. Finn (Planning), Tracey Jones-Schoenfeld (Public Works), Carrie Abaka-Williams (Parks, Recreation and Tourism)

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by A. Booden and seconded by T. Stephens to approve the March 27, 2023 minutes as presented with one correction of moving a former committee members from the list of “members present”. The minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

**HEARING OF CITIZENS:**

Paul Atkinson expressed interest in meeting minutes being sent out to citizens. M. Barber shared that minutes will be added to the BTAC website once approved. Mr. Atkinson also wanted to address the issue of looking for new members for the Indian River Park planning subcommittee and requested an update on the progress of cleaning up the streams at Indian River Park south of the powerlines. A. Elezovic stated Public Works Stormwater has been out to the site and evaluated and has put it on their task list, but it is not a high priority at this time. M. Barber asked Mr. Atkinson to email him or A. Elezovic if he sees issues, concerns, or opportunities for enhancement of parks.

**STAFF UPDATES:**

- a. **Parks, Recreation and Tourism**  
BikeFest and Historic Bike Ride

A. Elezovic presented the BikeFest and Historic Bike Ride social media pages. BikeFest is coming up on May 7<sup>th</sup> and will include giveaways such as water bottles, bike lights, and helmets. Two food trucks have committed to coming to the event. The Bike Ride of Historic South Norfolk will be happening on May 20<sup>th</sup>. She encouraged the members and citizens present to share the PRT page on social media. Several committee members volunteered to assist with tabling both events. Members also suggested that PRT place print advertising at some of the park kiosks and at community centers. K. Finn volunteered to speak to the South Norfolk Civic League about the event.

#### Bike /Trail Brochure

- The committee asked that a multi-use picture be use. A. Elezovic requested that any picture suggestions be emailed to her.
- Indian Creek Road on back should be changed to Indian River Road.
- QR link could be added that connects to a bigger map.

#### Heritage Park

- A. Elezovic presented a conceptual map of what the equestrian area of Heritage Park may look like to include multi-use trails and equestrian trails with some paved areas. Another update would be provided later this summer for public input.

#### Blue Heron Landing

- No update, waiting on contractor to complete required documents.

#### Indian River Park Follow Up

- M. Barber shared that he was interested in working with BTAC to form an advisory sub-committee to address potential park changes. This could be at least three representatives from BTAC and an additional three other members (to include non-bicyclists or equestrian individuals). This subcommittee would walk through the park with City employees to help make recommendations and suggestions for City evaluation.
- Mr. Booden, Mr. Stephen and Mr. Ross volunteered to be members from BTAC.

### **b. Public Works**

T. Jones-Schoenfeld shared that Western Branch Trail connection from Jordan Bridge is delayed 4-5 months resulting a projected completion date of late fall. The committee members suggested a name change of the trail project and proposed a recommendation to be voted on at the next meeting to present to the City.

#### TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program)

June is the deadline for pre-applications for the TAP program. Projects identified as good candidates for the TAP grant include:

- Dismal Swamp Trail Extension from Deep Creek Park to Deep Creek Bridge
- Great Bridge Primary pedestrian crossing at Albemarle/Cedar/Bartell
- Greenbrier sidewalk expansion from Volvo Parkway to Pass Summit Pointe
- Veteran's Bridge to Tidewater Community College to Cahoon Parkway

- Battlefield Blvd sidewalk gaps
- Indian River Planning Study (Tracy needs information on this)

c. **Planning**

Chesapeake Open Space and Trails Plan

- K. Finn shared that Alta is being used as the consultant for this project.

Industrial Waterfront Plan

- K. Finn shared that this project would promote connectivity to parks and schools for residents of South Norfolk. Staff and the consultant were also looking into ways to reconfigure Bainbridge Boulevard

**REPORTS:**

- a. **Capital Improvement Program-** Mr. Ross read the letter he proposed to the City Council on key projects. The letter shared that:
- Improving non-motorized connectivity (ex. bike lanes, trails, and transit) across the city was a priority.
  - PeopleForBikes City Rating: Chesapeake ranked 296<sup>th</sup> out of 514 mid-sized Cities, scored fairly high 58/100 for Ridership, and had a low score of 26/100 for having a network that takes people to places they want to go.
  - Key improvements suggested: continue creating a network of multiuse trails and bicycle routes that provide connectivity across the city, building out sidewalks and pathways within communities to connect residents to shopping, business areas, parks, schools, and municipal facilities.
- b. **Projects BTAC Supports in the 2024 CIP Budget**
- South Hampton Roads Trail in Western Branch Chesapeake Bike Trail Phase II
  - Bike Lanes on Indian River Road (Indian River Road Phase I)
  - Bike Lanes as part of Mt. Pleasant Road at Great Bridge Bypass-Interchange Improvement
  - Equestrian and multi-use paths at Heritage Park (Heritage Park Phase II)
- c. **Sidewalk Projects BTAC Supports in the 2024 CIP Budget**
- Citywide Sidewalk Installation II
  - Airline Boulevard Sidewalk Extension
  - Albemarle Sidewalk Connection
  - Myers Road Sidewalk Connection
  - Poindexter Street at I-464 Overpass Pedestrian Sidewalk and Street Lighting
  - South Norfolk Neighborhood Sidewalk Connections
- d. **Related Projects regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety BTAC Supports in the 2024 CIP Budget**

- Chesapeake Signal System-Study and Upgrades including pedestrian enhancements (signing, marking, ramps, and sidewalks)
- South Military Highway Feeder Road Feasibility Study
- Residential Traffic Calming Program
- George Washington Highway Widening

R. Ross asked for a motion to support the proposed projects letter. Ms. Katchmark made a motion to approve the letter and A. Booden seconded the motion. All in attendance voted in support of submittal of the letter.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- None.

**HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:**

- None.

- **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:**

**The next meeting will be on Monday, June 25, 2023, at the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Administrative Office, 1224 Progressive Drive Chesapeake Va. 23320 at 5:00 pm.**

Minutes submitted by Carrie Abaka-Williams

April 26, 2023

The Honorable Mayor Rick West  
and Members of Chesapeake City Council  
306 Cedar Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the City's Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee, I would like to express our support for continued funding of key projects providing bicycle, trail, and improved connectivity in the City of Chesapeake. One of the Desired Outcomes identified by the City Council is to improve non-motorized connectivity (e.g. bikes, trails, transit) across the City. This goal is also reflected in the City's Comprehensive Plan and in many of the various Small Area Plans approved by the City. But there is much work to be done. In the latest PeopleForBikes City Rating, Chesapeake ranked 296th out of 514 mid-sized Cities; although we scored a fairly high 58/100 for Ridership, we got a low score of 26/100 for having a network that takes people to places they want to go.

Key priorities in accomplishing the desired outcome include establishing a backbone network of multiuse trails and bicycle routes that provide connectivity to across different parts of the City, as well as building out sidewalks and pathways within communities to connect residents with shopping and business areas, parks, schools, and municipal facilities. And as part of keeping Chesapeake an exceptional place to live, play and visit, recreational access for paved and off-road bicycling, equestrian pursuits, and increased public access to our waterways for fishing, kayaking, education, and enjoyment are also important.

As such, we wish to express our support for funding in the 2024 CIP budget for several key projects, including:

South Hampton Roads Trail in the Western Branch (27-270 Chesapeake Bike Trail

Phase II, 46-270 Chesapeake Bike Trail Phase III)

- Bike Lanes on Indian River Road (40-270 Indian River Rd. Diet - Phase I)
- Bike Lanes as part of Mt. Pleasant Road at Great Bridge Bypass - Interchange Improvement (61-250)
- Equestrian and multi-use paths at Heritage Park (14-240 Heritage Park - Phase II)

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The Committee also supports the various Sidewalk projects identified in the CIP 2024 budget including:

- Citywide Sidewalk Installation II (16-280)
- Airline Boulevard Sidewalk Extension (41-270)
- Albemarle Sidewalk Connection (20-280)
- Myers Road Sidewalk Connection (18-280)
- Poindexter St. at I-464 Overpass Pedestrian Sidewalk and Street Lighting (44-230)
- South Norfolk Neighborhood Sidewalk Connections (17-280)

We also urge that pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety be emphasized in related projects in the budget such as:

- Chesapeake Signal System - Study and Upgrades including pedestrian enhancements (signing, marking, ramps, and sidewalks). (19-280)
- S. Military Hwy Feeder Road Feasibility Study (27-280)
- Residential Traffic Calming Program (12-260)
- George Washington Hwy Widening (37-230)

Over the next six months, the Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee intends to begin working more closely with City Departments to provide early input on priority recommendations for the FY 2025 budget. We also expect to be a key stakeholder in the development of new Citywide Trails and Open Space Connectivity Plan.

Some key priorities that we are discussing include the route for the East Coast Greenway, the long-distance trail running from Maine to Florida and passing through our City. Completing this route will include completing the South Hampton Roads/Commonwealth Rail Trail sections under I-664 and through the Western Branch and building out the route from downtown Norfolk and Berkley - connecting to the Elizabeth River Trail - through South Norfolk to the Veterans Bridge onward to the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail and ultimately to North Carolina. This would both provide a crucial “backbone” alternative transportation link between South Norfolk and downtown Norfolk and from Grassfield to the future Virginia Commerce Park. It would also bring visitors to the City to enjoy a well-publicized recreation amenity; for comparison, the Virginia Capital Trail running from Richmond to Jamestown had 1.2 million visitors along its length in 2020.

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Other priorities include building out more bicycle network elements including along Indian River Road, along Portsmouth Blvd, along Volvo Parkway from Greenbrier to Oak Grove Park, connections across I-64 from Indian River to Greenbrier, extending the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail north to the Deep Creek Bridge. In local area, work includes building out the connectivity pathways identified in the Indian River Planning Area Study, improving safety at the Great Bridge and Battlefield Boulevards intersection, and creating connects between Oak Grove Park and the Chesapeake Regional Medical Center. Within parks, areas to look at include Indian River Park trail improvements, Heritage Park and Newton Neck development, and examining land-based access to the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

Over the coming months, the Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee will work to prioritize these and other suggestions and continue to gather stakeholder input. We will be looking for both near term opportunities to implement in the next couple of years and work to define a robust plan for the next decade to make Chesapeake a great place to bike and walk every day, as well as enjoy first-class recreational trails.

We thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

/s/ *Rogard Ross*

Rogard Ross, Chair  
Chesapeake Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee