

Markham, Lory P. - PDR

From: Max Hepp-Buchanan [max@sportsbackers.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 2:34 PM
To: Markham, Lory P. - PDR
Cc: Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR
Subject: Bike Walk RVA comments on Farmers Market Plans
Attachments: Farmers Market_Bike Walk RVA.pptx; image001.png

Dear Lory,

Bike Walk RVA (a program of Sports Backers) would like to submit comments to the City Planning Commission on the proposed 17th Street Farmers Market design up for consideration next week. I've also attached some slides that I would like to show the CPC members in my testimony on Tuesday.

Our comments have to do primarily with safety and connectivity to and through the market for people who walk and bike, and more specifically, the comfort and safety of people who are not experienced cyclists.

It is our understanding after meeting with Jeannie Welliver that the City of Richmond is proposing to use 17th St as a connector from the Virginia Capital Trail to the market and Main Street Station. The current proposal is to direct cyclists northbound from the Capital Trail on 17th (crossing Dock St) and through the market to Franklin Street. At that point, they would turn left and go under the train shed to continue on their way to the Capitol Building.

Ms. Welliver has expressed strong desire to safely get people of all ages and abilities traveling by bike from the Capital Trail to the farmers market and Main Street Station. We agree that this serves as an important link, not just to access those destinations, but to access the broader city-wide cycling network proposed in the Bicycle Master Plan. The Bicycle Master Plan proposes using Franklin as an important east-west connector, which would ultimately tie into the bike-walk street under construction on Floyd Ave. When everything is completed, we would have a contiguous 4-mile route from Thompson St in Carytown to the Virginia Capital Trail – a very impressive accomplishment for our city.

To make this connection work, there are several things that need to be fully considered and understood:

1. People on bikes need to have a dedicated path through the market (from Main St to Franklin St) on the south side of the market. It will not be safe for the entire market to serve as a general "mixing area" of cyclists and pedestrians. While people on bikes should be encouraged/directed to ride slowly and carefully through the market, channeling them through a particular area of the market using bollards, planter boxes, or other physical barrier will help to avoid confusion and potential conflicts. People on foot should be able to cross the bikeway, but there should also be signage warning them that they are stepping into a bikeway and to look both ways.
2. Requiring people on bikes to dismount when entering the market is not recommended, as most people on bikes will end up avoiding the market entirely as a result, both as a destination and as a through-way to Main Street Station or the Capitol Building.
3. Finally, cobblestones are uncomfortable and dangerous for most people to ride on, and are particularly difficult for children to handle. Any bike route to or through the market should not be surfaced with cobbles. We realize there is a historical context to consider, but we recommend surfacing the bike routes through the market and along Franklin Street with bricks instead of cobbles. Even embedding a five-foot wide brick path into the cobble streets in each direction for cyclists to use would be greatly preferred.

Ms. Welliver has been receptive to this feedback, though our recommendations were not acted upon by the Urban Design Committee. We ask the City Planning Commission to consider that if the route or the surface between the Capital Trail and the farmers market/Main Street Station is not safe and comfortable for people traveling by bike, they will avoid

it altogether. This would be counter to what has been envisioned for Main Street Station and the market. However, there are simple improvements outlined above that can be addressed by the Planning Commission at the hearing on February 16.

Thank you for your consideration,

Max Hepp-Buchanan

Director of Bike Walk RVA | [Sports Backers](#)

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