



# Harrisonburg and Rockingham County Bike-Walk Summit 2016

## Final Report



This report is a summary of the data collected during the facilitated portions of the 2016 Bike-Walk Summit. The theme of this Summit was:

## ‘Stronger Together: Building an Inclusive Biking and Walking Community’



Headlined by a welcome from Harrisonburg Mayor Chris Jones and a report of the year in review, dialogue at the Summit anchored within the words of **Veronica Davis**, PE, co-owner of Nspiregreen and co-founder of Black Women Bike.

What follows is a collection of thoughts and ideas organized by the key questions discussed during the facilitated portions of the Summit. The key questions covered include:

- ⇒ What is one reaction to or reflection upon Veronica’s talk?
- ⇒ Drawing from Veronica’s talk, how do you define the terms “bike/walk inclusion” and “equitable bike/walk access”?
- ⇒ What are limitations to fulfilling these values unique to our area?
- ⇒ What are approaches to addressing these limitations?
- ⇒ What assumptions are we making in our talk?
- ⇒ What would an inclusive biking and walking community characterized by equitable access look like for us?
- ⇒ Who is missing in use and planning?
- ⇒ What do we already know how to do regarding inclusion and access?
- ⇒ What are actions steps for the next 12 months?
- ⇒ What should the 2017 Summit look like?

## What is one reaction to or reflection upon Veronica's talk?

### Inspirations

- ⊕ Applaud her efforts at generating public engagement
- ⊕ Excited by her efforts and speech
- ⊕ Praise for the holistic viewpoint of her efforts
- ⊕ Applauds the diversity in her efforts and those of Black Women Bike
- ⊕ Inspired to incorporate and target cyclists who lie outside the "traditional cyclist" image, both in terms of ethnic/cultural groups and purpose of bike usage
- ⊕ Liked the cross-pollination of ideas between different groups in DC
- ⊕ Inspired to build on existing models that have worked elsewhere
- ⊕ Inspired to consider how to overcome blind spots in order to reach more people.
- ⊕ Applaud her efforts at generating public engagement

### Take-Aways

- ⊕ A change in culture is needed
- ⊕ We need to consider the intersection of age and walking infrastructure access
- ⊕ There are different scales of connectivity to consider – the sublocal, the local, and the regional. How might inclusion apply at each of those scales?
- ⊕ Notion of non-traditional communities
- ⊕ Different groups have different needs
- ⊕ Have pilots for the vision-impaired
- ⊕ May be other reasons for under representation of groups
- ⊕ Need to explore class inclusivity, not just race
- ⊕ What it means to serve the 'underserved'
- ⊕ Inclusion is key regarding accessing the financing of projects



## What is one reaction to or reflection upon Veronica's talk?

### Reflecting Upon Local Needs and Actions

- ⊕ How do we reach all stakeholders? How do we improve outreach processes?
- ⊕ My community is at ground zero regarding inclusion in outreach, but we have an opportunity with recent development to start the conversation
- ⊕ Aided in understanding the risks of biking and how Vision Zero could enhance public engagement in Harrisonburg
- ⊕ We need functioning bikes
- ⊕ I am tired of fighting others
- ⊕ Education is needed before enforcement
- ⊕ Engineering component always is present
- ⊕ The importance of public engagement for moving from planning to action
- ⊕ How to enter the community to conduct meetings vs. holding them in our own spaces
- ⊕ How do we include developers in processes?
- ⊕ It is important to link needs between neighborhoods in as smooth a manner as possible
- ⊕ We need to consider "nontraditional meetings" - take the engagement to the streets!
- ⊕ Safety especially for kids biking



## Drawing from Veronica’s talk, how do you define the terms “bike/walk inclusion” and “equitable bike/walk access”?

<p>The attendees defined ‘bike/walk inclusion’ as having three dimensions . . . A <b>cultural dimension</b>, a <b>procedural dimension</b>, and an <b>output/infrastructure dimension</b>. The cultural dimension relates to a set of norms and values for inclusion in bike/walk planning and implementation. The procedural dimension pertains to ways by which the inclusion culture is enacted. The output/infrastructure dimension contains the results of this enactment.</p>
<p>. . . Examples of the cultural dimension</p>
<p>Addressing use norms like the gear one is ‘supposed’ to have</p>
<p>Being mindful of other modes of transportation [than you use]</p>
<p>Challenging car culture</p>
<p>Inclusion is a psychological state of mind, where we feel welcome in the activity/group</p>
<p>Shift of language would be nice</p>
<p>Ensuring that we don’t focus only on biking and neglect those who walk</p>
<p>Don’t “shame” people for using a vehicle</p>
<p>To sum up: Change existing models to create more diverse engagement.</p>
<p>. . . Examples of the procedural dimension</p>
<p>Inclusion in the conversation via outreach practices</p>
<p>Including those who feel excluded</p>
<p>Inclusion is visible with diversity characteristics of the population</p>
<p>Race, age, gender and income levels are represented</p>
<p>Collaborative planning with Input from every group</p>
<p>Inclusion means efforts to reach out to under-represented groups</p>
<p>Individual empowerment and education</p>
<p>Reaching communities that traditionally “can’t” ride, such as the visually impaired</p>
<p>. . . Examples of the output/infrastructure dimension</p>
<p>Balancing influence of ‘voices’ being heard</p>
<p>Ample role models for biking/walking in town</p>
<p>Infrastructure that includes all</p>
<p>Supportive infrastructure</p>
<p>Similar/same Geographic access; walkers/bikers can get where cars go</p>
<p>More signage – signage targeted to alternative modes of transportation</p>
<p>Biking is a viable form of transportation</p>
<p>Access to bikes and equipment</p>
<p>Alternative options including bike shares</p>
<p>Eliminating Barriers</p>

**Drawing from Veronica’s talk, how do you define the terms “bike/walk inclusion” and “equitable bike/walk access”?**

The attendees defined ‘equitable bike/walk access’ as a mindfulness on behalf of planners and decision-makers regarding ways to increase access opportunities for all. . . . Access to planning, access to decision-making, access to infrastructure, access to empowerment. The concept also applies to creating equitable budgetary access for biking and walking needs.



Access to bikes

Geographic proximity to supplies and repair services

Having many options for biking and walking right outside my door

Economic challenges prevent access to using infrastructure

Considering details of infrastructure feasibility such as topography and other barriers

Mindful of access evenly through city; mindful of need vs demand concept

Coordinate bike/walk plan with other transportation plans

Allocation of transportation budget to bike/walk initiatives

We may not be putting resources in the right place

Opportunity to access trails and lanes

Equitable access is about external factors and physical access to bicycles and infrastructure

Equality of access to maintenance of bicycles and bike paths/trails (safe places to bike)

Currently there is a struggle for young individuals with deaf/blind impairments to have access

Infrastructure/ lack thereof is unsafe

Trails around the city are not always the most efficient route

Exploration of non-traditional channels (bike shares)

Access awareness

Make sure essential destinations are accessible

Link bike and bus infrastructure

To sum up: a “Complete Streets” approach.

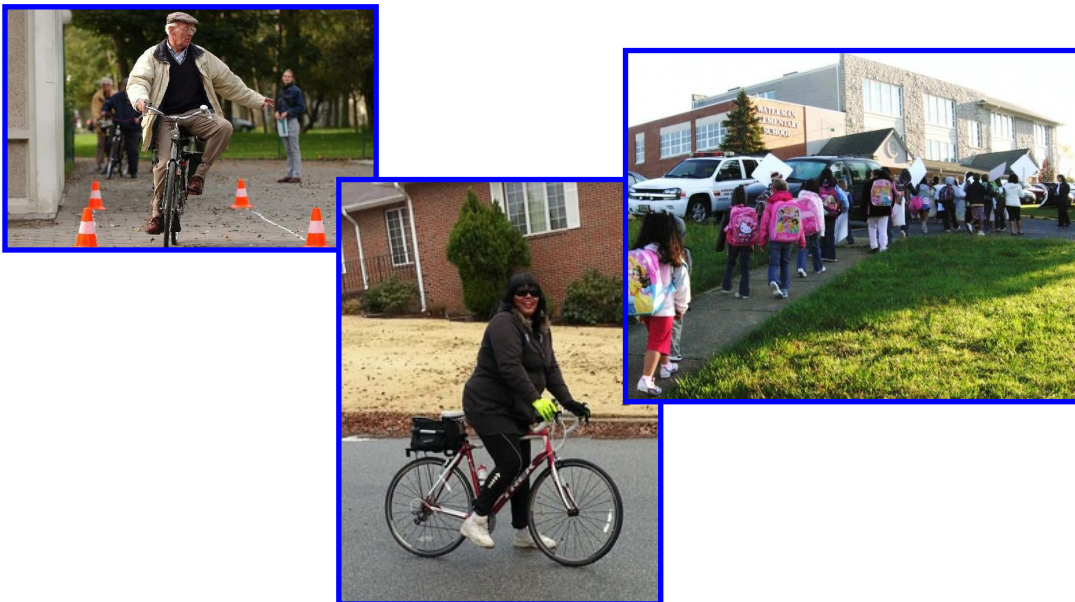
Funding for many things ... Lack of data ... Infrastructure maintenance ... Suburban development norms ... Absence of measurable community-set goals ... Lack of commitment ... Goal communication ... Funding silos ... Existing infrastructure ... Accountability limitations ... Forgetting about kids ... Internal conflicts ... Communication silos ... Cultural inertia ... Lack of participation ... Safety concerns ... Communicating with decision-makers ... Fear of innovating ... Lack of interest ... Language barriers ... Competing priorities ... Convening ourselves ... Right of ways ... Cars over bikes ... Safety perceptions ... Topography ... Access to bikes ... Community health ... Education ... Inaccessible public processes ... City vs. County needs ... Sufficient staff and volunteers ...

**Local Limitations to Achieving Inclusion and Equity Access for Biking and Walking in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County**

Despite the limitations reported on the previous page, attendees identified a range of **approaches for addressing these local limitations** to achieving inclusion equitable bike/walk access. These approaches include:

**New Methods for Public Engagement** that include earlier and more consistent involvement of public stakeholders, empowering residents to lead and share the work. Recognizing that these stakeholders have a responsibility, too, there was much interest in experimenting with the traditional ‘public meeting’ to create new spaces for soliciting input that replace the ones that have traditionally been used. These new spaces should replace existing ones so as to not create new time demands on government workers. Similarly, decision-makers should increase use of coordinated technology such as mobile apps, Be Heard Harrisonburg, and social media for transparency, communication, and education .

**Incrementally Shifting Transportation Culture** through enhanced educational programming and altering language used across government and planning functions so as to open the ‘norm’ of transit to include multimodal forms, especially bicycling and walking. Functional and symbolic shifts towards a cycling culture can occur by saturating the community with bike racks, broadening Bike Share efforts, and making sure our images of cyclists include different body types and ages as well as more traditional demographics of race and gender . . . The more visible bikes are in the community tapestry, the more likely new users will emerge. Everyone has a bike at least in storage—let’s dust them off and get them in use!



<http://comedicavenue.blogspot.com/2009/05/there-is-new-or-old-phonomanon-going-on.html>

<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/blog/entry/black-and-new-to-biking-try-a-ride-on-capital-bikeshare-with-black-women-bi>



**We assume . . .** that we know what is “best,” and that we have identical priorities to those not included in the discussion.

However, what do we **assume** when thinking about challenges of and opportunities for inclusion and equitable access to biking and walking in our communities? Addressing such **assumptions** is key to shifting culture and enhancing outcomes.

**We assume . . .** that cycling is a positive effort we should be promoting and addressing.

**We assume . . .** that transportation is always about “efficiency” rather than, for instance, social connection.

**We assume . . .** that congestion is always a bad problem.

**We assume . . .** that people who drive do not want to be part of the bike/walk culture .

**We assume . . .** that our efforts come up against competing priorities and infrastructure.

**We assume . . .** that everybody is equally mobile.

**We assume . . .** that the issue is lack of resources (bicycles) when it could be the case that many groups have access to bicycles and choose not to use them.

**We assume . . .** that we can change people’s behavior to match our infrastructure rather than changing infrastructure to match human behavior.

**We assume . . .** that we have to start small.

**We assume . . .** that money is hard to get.

Veronica listened to our talk about ‘what is inclusion and equitable access?’, ‘what are limitations we experience achieving these values locally?’ and ‘what assumptions are we making as we talk?’ and had the following to say in response.



- ⊕ Equity needs to be built in from beginning and can't be retrofit.
- ⊕ Get to the root of the issue.
- ⊕ Invite people to walk and ride with you.
- ⊕ Use language that is culturally relevant.
- ⊕ Consider having bike rides/walking events with key elected officials to talk about non-biking/walking issues . . . biking and walking as a space for discussing other community issues.
- ⊕ Take to the streets with your meetings and build a contact database of interested individual with whom you can follow up.
- ⊕ Be conscious of images – who is represented? Age, race, gender are the easy categories. How about size, ability, language?

# Visioning an Inclusive Biking and Walking Community

Visioning an Inclusive Biking and Walking Community

... Communities using bike/walk as tools to address other social problems  
... A public informed about how planning processes unfold ... Public meetings taken 'to the streets' at farmer's markets, Walmart in the morning AND evening, schools, faith spaces, Little League games, high school football ... Ongoing community data collection ... Holistic approaches to development including "complete streets" ... Creating infrastructure where people are already walking and biking ... Infrastructure incorporates community history through signage ... Connected populations ... Biking and walking 'opposers' participated in planning processes ... Public meetings have language interpretation services ... A diverse people walking and biking to stores, work, libraries, parks, etc. that are designed with walking and biking in mind ...

# Who is missing?

**Who is not biking or walking? Who is not part of planning and deciding?**

1. Old Order/Conservative Mennonites
2. Spokespeople and gatekeepers for specific sub-groups
3. Kids/youth
4. Seniors and retired people
5. Disabled and those who need assistance
6. Ethnic groups
7. Income stratified groups
8. Neighborhood associations
9. Poultry plant employees
10. Law enforcement
11. Retirement communities
12. LGBTQ
13. Students
14. Limited mobility or individuals with disabilities
15. Parents with their kids
16. Large parcel land owners
17. People who are primarily pedestrians, rather than cyclists
18. People who dislike cyclists
19. People who travel via horse and buggy in the area.
20. Economic developers
21. Non-English speakers
22. Homeless
23. Motorists/non-bike riders
24. Those isolated by agricultural areas/ farmers in general
25. Other transit workers
26. Unemployed
27. Women in general/ women of varying cultural backgrounds/ minority women

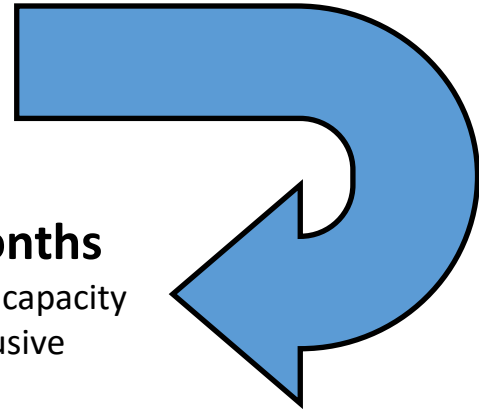
## What programming that increases inclusivity and equitable access already occurs in our communities?

County asking villages to pick meeting places	Everyday Bikes	Our Community Place bike events	Language interpretation services
Audible pedestrian signals	Women on Wheels in Harrisonburg	Family night bike ride on Bluestone Trail	Safe routes for Rockingham county schools and hospital
Walking School Bus	Bike and pedestrian plans for the city AND county	Timberville outreach to civic group meetings	Inexpensive bike rentals at JMU
Learn a Bike	Walk and bike to school and work programs	Bikes for Refugees	Shenandoah Valley Bike Coalition (SVBC) for safe city cycling



Current gaps that need addressing include:

- ⊗ Implementation follow-up to 'good ideas'
- ⊗ Leadership capacity for integrating biking and walking needs into other decisions
- ⊗ Diversifying the public input received but not knowing who to include
- ⊗ Funding and staffing limitations
- ⊗ Lack of a mandate for inclusion and equity in transportation planning



## Action Steps for the Next 12 Months

- ⊗ Continue this discussion through training and capacity building workshops with local experts on inclusive outreach
- ⊗ Implement bike/walk plans
- ⊗ Try out one public meeting in a 'nontraditional' space
- ⊗ Collaborate with one new group to share outreach
- ⊗ Improve and institutionalize data collection instruments that reflect inclusivity values
- ⊗ Coordinate an online community biking and walking calendar
- ⊗ Enhance the MPO's role as a bridging agency
- ⊗ Form an interdisciplinary committee about mobility that integrates city and county functions
- ⊗ Sponsor a bike ride or walk with elected officials where the mode is biking or walking but the business is whatever comes to mind
- ⊗ Establish an Ambassador program with designated walking and riding leaders
- ⊗ Support a Safe Routes coordinator full-time
- ⊗ Hold a public input meeting at a retirement community
- ⊗ Saturate with PSAs in local media
- ⊗ Creating meaningful service learning opportunities for college students that help accomplish our goals
- ⊗ Institutionalize interdepartmental collaboration



## Ideas for a 2017 Summit . . . . .

- Have 'mobile' break-out groups who are walking or biking while they discuss and collaborate.
- Include more representatives from previously identified "missing" groups
- Hold Mini-Summits throughout the year
- Create hyper-local plans: survey specific, underserved areas and come up with action plans for that exact area
- Hold a Community Summit at 'pop-up' sites to experiment with and learn from alternate ways to engage
- Convene the Summit in a larger, community-based space at a time accessible to a different set of actors
- Establish goals and charge participants to meet them
- Focus on data collection about barriers in neighborhood-based surveys during the year—then, frame Summit around findings
- Create an opportunity to practice intentional relationship building with new groups
- Identify new questions we want to ask and answer
- Review and recap all prior Summits
- Have an online platform for broader Summit participation