

Harrisonburg & Rockingham Bike – Walk Summit 2015 Client Report

**4C Campus Community Civic Collaborative
An initiative of the Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue**

Lori Britt
Leanna Smithberger
Andrew Haveles
Kaitlyn Chun
Kate Ross
Jake Fagenson
Bradley Polen

Executive Summary

This is the third year ICAD has helped facilitate interactive portions of the Harrisonburg & Rockingham Bike-Walk Summit to encourage small groups to think together and develop collaborative ideas for action for the coming year. Partners and sponsors for the event include the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization, Rockingham County, the City of Harrisonburg, and James Madison University.

The 2015 Bike-Walk Summit had two goals. First we wanted to explore how we can benefit from a bike/walk culture. Second, we wanted to determine how we can create a brand for the local community and how such a brand might add impact to ongoing initiatives and activities.

The facilitated portions of the event included an interactive ice breaker; a Values and Logistics of “Branding” Brainstorming session before lunch and after the speaker, Pete Eshelman from Roanoke; as well as an Open Space Breakout Session as the last session of the day to move the group towards action.

Notes from presentation by Pete Eshelman, Director of Outdoor Branding, Roanoke Regional Partnership

A community narrative attracts people and investment.

Develop a collective story and then create environments where you get as many people as possible telling that story.

The Knight Foundation Soul of the Community Study shows the value of community narratives.

It reports on what is referred to as “stickiness,” the characteristics of a community that create attachment. (People visit and then stay.) Several key factors are openness, aesthetics, and social offerings/opportunities.

The community story has to be real if it is going to inspire. It must be authentic and intentional. It has to be real. The community has to believe in it and become the community’s ambassadors.

Once there is the story, the community must consider, “How do we support our assets?”

A key for Roanoke was getting business leaders and the business community involved. Businesses contributed to the formation of Pete’s position, the Director of Outdoor Branding, Roanoke Regional Partnership.

The key steps in the process of this branding were:

Inventory Assets → Inventory Gaps → Build local support → Build a National Image

In terms of building local support, Eshelman pointed to several things the Roanoke Partnership does:

- Weekly newsletter that highlights what is happening outside each weekend
- Event promotion and consultation for area groups
- Education
- Contests and giveaways
- Forums for Discussion and ongoing community dialogue
- An Outdoor Expo (Go Outside Roanoke)
- Film Festival
- Getting area NPs to help volunteer at events (Roanoke has a lot) and raise money by sharing revenues

Eshelman also pointed to the value of gateway resources for the 90% that need a bit more help in finding and accessing the resources to take advantage of the outdoors.

Eshelman noted that the outdoor industry is large and has a large economic impact, employing 1 in 20 people.

He says that outdoor companies do their homework about a community it is considering for relocation online, so he stresses the importance of having a vibrant and complete online presence for economic development. He said that many times a community will never know it was in the running because their online search already eliminated the community.

His tips for an area seeking to brand itself:

- Turn thoughts into action
- Tell your story loud and often.

Collecting Feedback from Participants

Ice Breaker

For the interactive ice breaker which is designed to both introduce participants to one another, get conversation started, and begin to shape the direction for the planning part of the day, participants were asked to answer this question – Regarding Biking and Walking in our community, what has happened, is happening or is on the horizon that you are most excited about?

Participants were then asked to highlight this on the back of a shirt as a tagline related to the “Brand” of “Bike Capital of Virginia”

Here is what participants were excited about and which hung for the day in our “Inspiration Gallery.” We also included a few of the images people offered for their t-shirts.


Explore the opportunities

Get Out ... side

We're connected

Connecting the community through walking and biking

Creating community through walking and biking

Harrisonburg 's walking and biking

Welcome to our region. Park your car.

Walk. Bike. Eat. Repeat.

Connecting our community. To our schools, to our parks, to our neighborhoods, to our recreation.

Bikes in every school.

County Plan

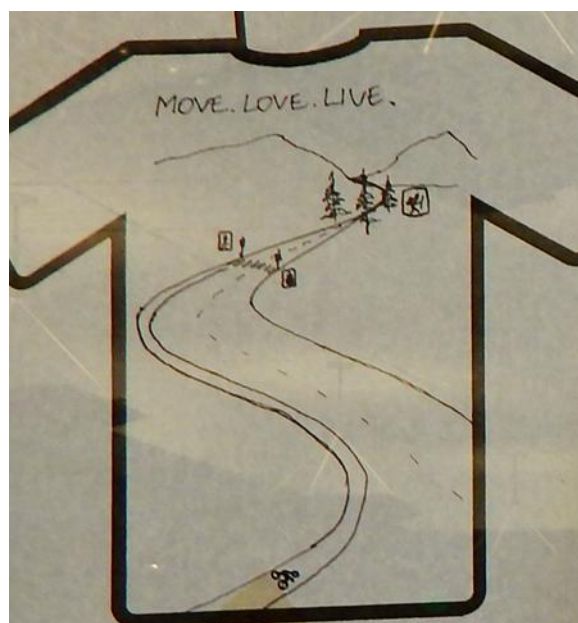
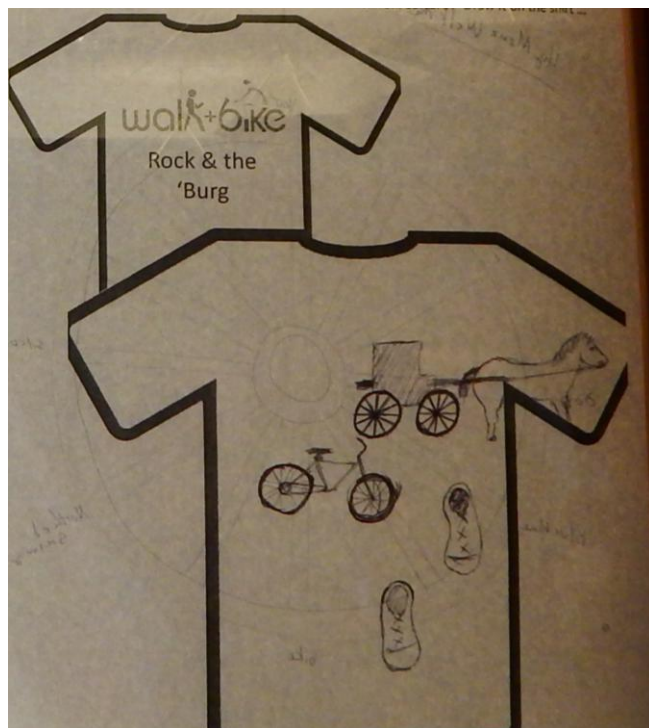
ShenRock Bike Team

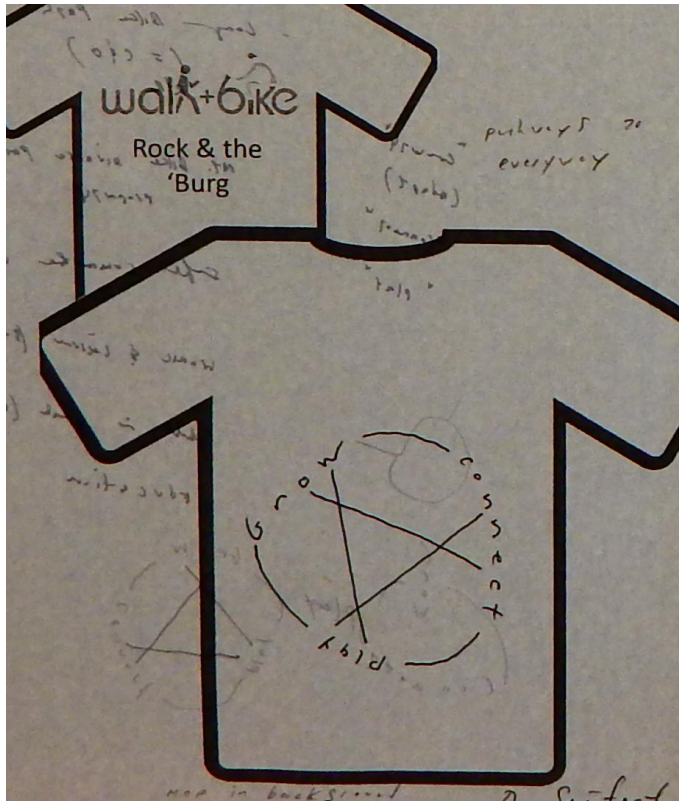
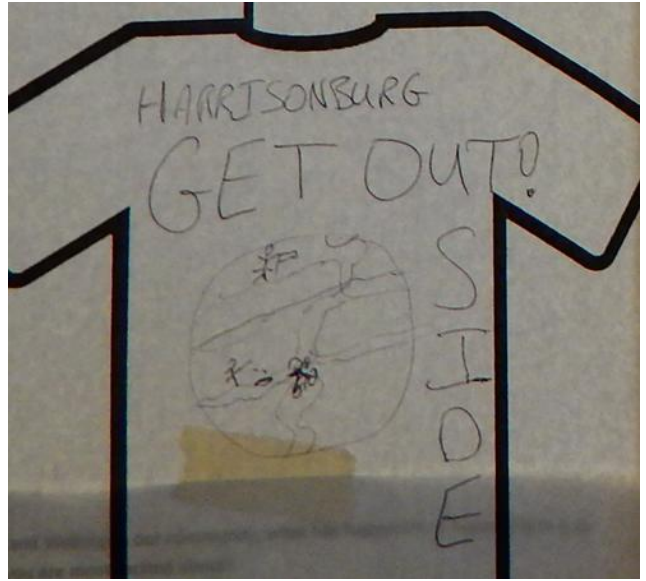
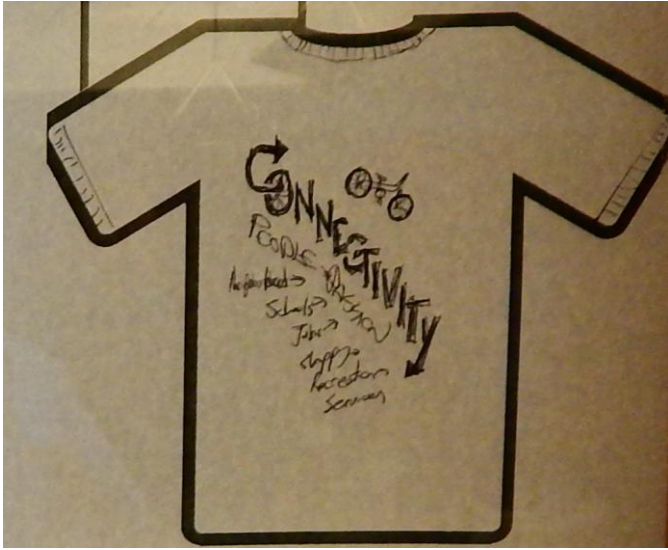
Move. Love. Live.

Bicycling. Making Lives Better.

Momentum. Harrisonburg Gets it!

Run, ride and bike.





Participative Session 1: Large Group

As a precursor to discussions about the potential value of developing a brand for the area's bike and walk culture, infrastructure, and activities, participants discussed a number of questions related to our area identity.

Who Are We

JMU
 Friendly city
 Diverse
 Central → Heart of Shenandoah Valley
 Becomes connector
 Mountains and valleys
 Easy to get "out"
 Agricultural heritage and Agro Tourism
 Safe community
 Outdoor Activities
 Outdoor areas- we are not a big metropolis; let's use that
 Not overcrowded
 Passionate people

Demographics

Diverse
 Young and Active (9 months of the year while college students are in town)
 Cultural Crossroads
 Agricultural

Area Assets

Natural and Recreational Assets

- Bluestone Trail
- Rural Roads
- Kayaking, Boating
- Ski Resorts
- Mennonite Community
- Bike Friendly Roads
- Shenandoah National Park
- Farms/Farm Culture
- Fly Fishing
- Central Shenandoah Valley

Other types of assets

- Schools
- Can bike to work
- Healthy lifestyle
- Confident youth
- Biking isn't exclusive
- Downtown

- Wineries
- Access—interstate
- Social media
- Skyline drive
- Connected community
- Farm
- Town
- Mountain
- River
- Food
- Beer

Geographic Boundaries of our identity

Central Valley – Can we go beyond Rockingham?

Connections into other countries that already exist but maybe far for reaching

Do we have natural barriers to define boundaries?

George Washington Forest and Shenandoah Park

Stream and Rivers “Blueways”

Rivers and mountains etc.

The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) designates “Ride Centers” by including assets within one hour driving radius from a community as “included,” Anything within a 1 hour drive.

Harrisonburg and Rockingham but extended beyond where appropriate

Appalachian Trail – 20 miles from City line, but within Rockingham Co.

Mountain Biking – should include National Forests and National Park

Spans multiple organizations

Nearby towns and Massanutten Resort

Similar to Asheville which identifies itself as “Pisgah” when it comes to outdoor activities, could we identify more broadly as an outdoor region?

Heart of Shenandoah Valley Economically

- Universities
- Businesses
- Families

Values of our community

Bike/Walk instead of driving

Freedom/self sufficient

Feel better with people with the same interests

Quality of life

Connectivity

Breaks barriers

Desire amenities for people of different skill levels

“Stickiness” (qualities that make people “stick” or stay here)

- Diverse Economy
- Not over-crowded
- Affordable cost of living

Resources

Towns: Bridgewater, Dayton

Website, hashtag

Should there be an organization to facilitate this type of identity development?

Shenandoah Valley Regional Partnership already exists as a sister agency to the Roanoke Regional Partnership

Sponsor contests with giveaways to get people involved in area Bike and Walk events, could be prizes such as tickets to ski resort tickets to continue to promote outdoor culture

What employed positions can be created to attract visitors?

Interactive Session 2: Small Groups and SMART GOALS

GOAL: Revise and perfect Bike Friendly Business Packet/ Continued efforts from 2014-2015 (brochure)

People involved in developing this goal: Brian Bauer (brianfbauer@gmail.com)

SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound)

<p>Specific</p> <p><i>What exactly needs to be accomplished?</i></p> <p><i>Who else needs to be involved?</i></p> <p><i>What resources do we need to tap?</i></p>	<p>Make the brochure more reader-friendly-condense and shorten. SMAD majors or just students who are experienced with PR brochures, infographics, and visual content delivery.</p> <p>Resources would include Publisher, possibly photoshop</p>
<p>Measurable/ Monitorable</p> <p><i>How much change needs to occur?</i></p> <p><i>How many actions will it take?</i></p> <p><i>How will we coordinate and communicate our progress and our activities?</i></p>	<p>Not much change has to occur. The content is there but the presentation of the brochure has to be improved.</p> <p>Discussion of hiring interns to do promotion tasks (such as this) had been suggested—this brochure was created with the help of students.</p> <p>Coordinate and communicate through the brochure and eventually social media. Appoint a contact person—Maybe a student who would potentially be an intern or find someone more permanent</p>
<p>Attainable/ Assignable</p> <p><i>Do we have the resources needed to achieve the goal?</i></p> <p><i>Is there someone/a group willing to organize the work needed to accomplish the goal?</i></p>	<p>Yes, it is attainable. Since there are already students helping out with the original brochure, it would be easy to find students to continue the project—just may be time consuming to catch them up.</p>
<p>Relevant</p> <p><i>How can this goal contribute to our community's "brand" of biking and cycling culture? How might a strong "brand" help advance this goal?</i></p>	<p>This is helping develop the brand because it is spreading the word to be more bike-friendly. If there were a stronger "brand" it would entice the shops to put in the extra effort of having more amenities for bikers.</p>
<p>Time-Bound</p> <p><i>What is the deadline for reaching the goal?</i></p> <p><i>What kind of actions can we take today?</i></p>	<p>As soon as possible. Easy to distribute to local shops downtown</p>

Goal: Mapping and Sharing Routes/Continued efforts from 2014-2015

People involved in developing this goal:

Chris Hamilton (hamiltoncp@comcast.net), Ann Cundy, Kyle Lawrence, and Kevin McDermott

SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound)

<p>Specific <i>What exactly needs to be accomplished?</i> <i>Who else needs to be involved?</i> <i>What resources do we need to tap?</i></p>	<p>Give editing rights to specific people who want to give others advice on bike routes Might need a bit of help when it comes to the software Have a quality control measure to make sure routes are updated and only necessary information is available Create a spectrum of distances, areas, and difficulty levels</p>
<p>Measurable/ Monitorable <i>How much change needs to occur?</i> <i>How many actions will it take?</i> <i>How will we coordinate and communicate our progress and our activities?</i></p>	<p>Would need to identify who wants to help that would maintain an amount of professionalism We have a predetermined number of routes, so we can get people around those areas who are willing to test ride and offer feedback We also have a network of bikers and interested helpers that we can communicate with and ask for outside expertise “Bike the Valley” website? has a place to leave comments and reviews where we can measure the effects</p>
<p>Attainable/ Assignable <i>Do we have the resources needed to achieve the goal?</i> <i>Is there someone/a group willing to organize the work needed to accomplish the goal?</i></p>	<p>We have different resources like Strava and some other computer files and programs to use, we just need some time to practice with them and maybe even a teaching session or two Each area of the valley has “ambassador” type people in towns that have services to make the networks of trails we want We can get testers from each of these areas to bike the routes, potentially from many different skill levels, to get the information we are looking for about each trail</p>
<p>Relevant <i>How can this goal contribute to our community’s “brand” of biking and cycling culture? How might a strong “brand” help advance this goal?</i></p>	<p>If we have people committed to helping others, that can portray that we value the brand we have created for ourselves of an outdoors culture, and contribute to the story of who we are This creates a community and also a story that this brand is aimed to represent</p>
<p>Time-Bound <i>What is the deadline for reaching the goal?</i> <i>What kind of actions can we take today?</i></p>	<p>Within One Year: establish standards and work on the five new routes. Immediately we can start working on aims for our standards and looking at geography for where we could begin mapping routes The goal of developing more routes will be an ongoing project with deadlines to be set later</p>

GOAL: Consistent, unifying messaging to tie together infrastructure, events, human use of these

People involved in developing this goal: Thomas Jenkins (tj@shenandoahbicycle.com), Lori Britt, Erin Yancey, Bonnie Riedesel, Denise Martin, Michelle Higdon, Chris Scott, Angela Crow, Elizabeth McCarty

SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound)

<p>Specific <i>What exactly needs to be accomplished?</i> <i>Who else needs to be involved?</i> <i>What resources do we need to tap?</i></p>	<p>Creation of a message might be more helpful than a brand Need a "story" Need a group to meet regularly Need a sort of "speaker's bureau" to talk to the colleges and community Roll out of several "stories" a year that highlight the programs, activities and involvement in biking and walking. Show the human side/human impact.</p>
<p>Measurable/ Monitorable <i>How much change needs to occur?</i> <i>How many actions will it take?</i> <i>How will we coordinate and communicate our progress and our activities?</i></p>	<p>Better infrastructure for bikes and everything else, such as biking and walking, will fall into place with an emphasis on the human impacts. Bikes are easier to brand than running/walking</p>
<p>Attainable/ Assignable <i>Do we have the resources needed to achieve the goal?</i> <i>Is there someone/a group willing to organize the work needed to accomplish the goal?</i></p>	<p>Need for more infrastructure because walking and biking is the gateway to almost all outdoor activities Leads to numerous other activities</p>
<p>Relevant <i>How can this goal contribute to our community's "brand" of biking and cycling culture? How might a strong "brand" help advance this goal?</i></p>	<p>With more infrastructure, biking/running/walking will be branded more easily</p>
<p>Time-Bound <i>What is the deadline for reaching the goal?</i> <i>What kind of actions can we take today?</i></p>	<p>It was decided that a group has to be formed to meet regularly to decide on a brand (or in this case a clear message) Then the group will decide how to best disseminate this messaging to all interested organizations and groups in the area. The hopes are, people will start to see biking and walking as a coordinated, unified, multi-layered, welcoming, cohesive network.</p>

GOAL: To create a Southend and Cooks Creek Greenway/ Continued efforts from 2014-2015

People involved in developing this goal: Robert Bersson (rdbersson@gmail.com) and Travis Layman

SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound)

<p>Specific</p> <p><i>What exactly needs to be accomplished?</i></p> <p><i>Who else needs to be involved?</i></p> <p><i>What resources do we need to tap?</i></p>	<p>Getting community members on board with plan</p> <p>Project Funding</p> <p>Make connections to Industry's</p> <p>Community members speaking for the Greenway</p> <p>Plans adopted by county</p> <p>Getting more officials from Harrisonburg onboard</p>
<p>Measurable/ Monitorable</p> <p><i>How much change needs to occur?</i></p> <p><i>How many actions will it take?</i></p> <p><i>How will we coordinate and communicate our progress and our activities?</i></p>	<p>Get the plan cleared by the Elected Officials and then approved by the public</p>
<p>Attainable/ Assignable</p> <p><i>Do we have the resources needed to achieve the goal?</i></p> <p><i>Is there someone/a group willing to organize the work needed to accomplish the goal?</i></p>	
<p>Relevant</p> <p><i>How can this goal contribute to our community's "brand" of biking and cycling culture?</i></p> <p><i>How might a strong "brand" help advance this goal?</i></p>	<p>This goal will help contribute to the branding of the bike/walk culture by allowing an accessible bike path connecting the community from Dayton to the Harrisonburg city. This greenway also hopes to be accessible to local schools like Turner Ashby HS to allow for Bike education.</p>
<p>Time-Bound</p> <p><i>What is the deadline for reaching the goal?</i></p> <p><i>What kind of actions can we take today?</i></p>	<p>There is technically no deadline, but hope to have the Dayton part of the Southend Greenway under construction within the next year. Right now we are just waiting for the visionary document to go through appropriate channels to be approved by public.</p>

Goal: Getting Bikes to Folks without means, increasing efforts at Diversity

**** We are looking for some people to form an Action Team to begin work in this area, If you are interested, please contact Kyle Lawrence (Lawrence.kyle.D@gmail.com)**

<p>Specific <i>What exactly needs to be accomplished?</i> <i>Who else needs to be involved?</i> <i>What resources do we need to tap?</i></p>	<p>Need bikes for children Community bike collective. Go through training, the bike is yours. Example: Learn A Bike Earn A Bike, New Maine Model The City can do the heavy lifting Functional bikes and storage/ sheds</p>
<p>Measurable/ Monitorable <i>How much change needs to occur?</i> <i>How many actions will it take?</i> <i>How will we coordinate and communicate our progress and our activities?</i></p>	<p>Small programs exist, but we need to consolidate information about where people can turn. Potentially explore municipal funding for bikes, bike share program Maintenance becomes an issue (bikes, tools, broken down bikes)</p>
<p>Attainable/ Assignable <i>Do we have the resources needed to achieve the goal?</i> <i>Is there someone/a group willing to organize the work needed to accomplish the goal?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore affordable bulk buy for bikes • Where do we donate bikes? • Ask for bike locks from JMU for a discount • End of the year bike donation campaign (fraternities and sororities) • Community level bike education (driving around bikes) • Raffle system for giving bikes away (maybe a small fee or a class requirement) • Inquire as to whether Big Brothers/Big Sisters has any bike education programs • Every special interest group could get involved
<p>Relevant <i>How can this goal contribute to our community's "brand" of biking and cycling culture?</i> <i>How might a strong "brand" help advance this goal?</i></p>	<p>Can communicate that we want biking and walking to be accessible to ALL citizens</p>
<p>Time-Bound <i>What is the deadline for reaching the goal?</i> <i>What kind of actions can we take today?</i></p>	<p>Start to assess the resources and options</p>