

Burke Centre Parkway

Pedestrian and Motorists Safety Task Force

August 5, 2011

In February 2011 Braddock District Supervisor John Cook established a community task force to review the pedestrian and traffic safety issues along Burke Centre Parkway (BCP) and provide recommendations that would enhance the safe operation and crossing of the Parkway. The members of the task force included resident community members, appointments from the Burke Centre Conservancy, Terra Centre Elementary School Parent Teacher Association, Burke Walks Safe and Green, Transportation Advisory Commission representative from the Braddock District, Trails and Sidewalks Committee member, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), and staff from Supervisor Cook's office.

The task force adopted the following mission statement:

- 1) To outline a proposed community visioning process for longer term readjustments to mobility in greater Burke Centre, to include vehicle, transit, pedestrian and bicycle users.
 - a. The greater Burke Centre is defined as BCP between the intersections of Route 123 and Burke Lake Road.
- 2) To develop and recommend a series of measurements in the short term (within a year), to provide enhanced crossing of the BCP, in the central vicinity of Terra Centre Elementary School and the Burke Town Centre.
 - a. The vicinity of Terra Elementary School and the Burke Town Centre is defined as the section of BCP between and including the intersections of Roberts Road to Coffer Woods Road.

The Task Force recommends adopting "Complete Streets" principles in current and future development of Burke Centre's core (in the vicinity of Terra Centre Elementary School and the Burke Towne Centre) in order to promote a balanced transportation system for all modes of travel.

These principles include:

- Accommodating all modes of transportation in roadway and redevelopment projects to allow pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users to move safely along and across BCP;
- Implementing infrastructure specific improvements that improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and access;
- Increasing education and enforcement measures that create safer streets for all users and encourage the development of Burke Centre's core into an active community, in which residents walk and bike to work, school and shop.

The Task Force also recommends that these principles be replicated throughout the rest of the community as appropriate. Other target areas in Burke Centre include:

- The Ponds Community – increase safe access from the north side of BCP to the Ponds Community pool;
- Lake Barton – link the path system on both sides of BCP;
- Fairview Elementary School area and the commercial center on BCP between Oak Leather Drive and route 123.

The Task Force recommendations aim to transform BCP from a traffic barrier facility, which divides the Burke Centre community in half, into a unifying, multi-modal artery that links neighborhoods and services that is safe for all users.

Planned Construction Projects:

- Construct sidewalk from Pond Spice to the entrance to Terra Centre Elementary School (Fairfax County; expected completion date: 09/2011)
- Construct sidewalk along Coffey Woods to signaled crossing at BCP (Knollwood Community Church; 03/2012)
- Replace sidewalk on north side of BCP from Coffey Woods to the end of the Knollwood Community Church property line (Knollwood Community Church; 03/2012)

The Task Force recommends a tiered, multi-stakeholder approach to implement “Complete Street” principles over the next five years (2011-2016). The Task Force realizes that we cannot transform Burke Centre’s core overnight and that funding will have to be identified for both the planning and construction efforts for this transformation. Several initiatives that will help improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along and across BCP already are in the pipeline. The Task Force’s recommended approach is an attempt to link these initiatives and guide future development under a comprehensive plan and vision for Burke Centre.

Tier 1: Enhance existing infrastructure (time frame: 2011-2013)

- Widen sidewalk on north side of BCP from Knollwood to signaled crossing at Burke Commons/Pond Spice, including: marking crosswalks and expanding islands at the entrance and exits to the Giant parking lot; replacing the soft right turn on Burke Commons Road with a hard right turn (this enhancement was included in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) proposal and is dependent on VDOT approval, anticipated construction completion 2013).
- Expand the median and narrow traffic lanes on BCP at the existing crosswalk on Marshall Pond/School House Woods (this enhancement was included in the SRTS proposal and is dependent on VDOT approval, anticipated construction completion 2013).
- Deploy special message signs in median strip to promote slower traffic speeds and road sharing on the parkway (Burke Centre Conservancy; ongoing)

- Increase enforcement of existing speed limits on BCP through implementation of enforcement campaigns similar to past efforts on the Fairfax County Parkway (FCPD; ongoing)
- Speed Limit Evaluation on BCP between Roberts Road and Coffey Woods Road (VDOT, completion date TBD)
- Traffic Signal Study at the intersection of BCP and Terra Elementary School (VDOT, completion date TBD)
- Conduct a feasibility study for installation of pedestrian activated crossing signal (i.e. HAWK or other system) on BCP at the entrance to Lake Barton (funding for planning study TBD).
- Request that the Fairfax County School Board review their existing policy regarding the application of Wink-O-Matic lights.
- Review the existing static school signs along BCP to make sure the existing signage is in conformance with standard signing practices. (VDOT completion date TBD)
- Install "Yield to Pedestrian" fine signs on BCP at Schoolhouse Road.(FCDOT 2011)

Tier 2: Planning and Visioning: Identify additional measures necessary to develop Complete Street (2012-2013)

- Conduct comprehensive audit of Burke Centre's core to identify next round of improvements (outside consulting firm; funding sources TBD)
- Conduct comprehensive audit of Burke Centre's trail system to identify all areas that need improvement and upgrading (outside consulting firm; funding sources TBD).

Tier 3: Add new infrastructure along BCP (2013-2016)

- Add bike lanes on BCP (funding for planning and construction TBD)
- Plant trees in the median strip along the length of BCP from Burke Lake to Rte. 123 (Responsible party and funding source TBD)
- Reduce the number of traffic lanes on BCP between the Giant Towne Centre entrance and Burke Commons Road. (VDOT; TBD)
- Provide enhanced pedestrian barrier along the north side of BCP between Schoolhouse Road and existing guardrail. (Funding Source TBD)

Below is a summary of the task force's requests for considerations for enhancements and a brief summary / status of each.

Considerations for Enhancements for Burke Centre Parkway

- Reducing the speed limit on BCP
VDOT has completed their study of the speed limit on BCP. While conditions are not present to support an overall reduction of the speed limit, VDOT is reviewing the speed limit near the Terra Centre Elementary School, to determine if an adjustment is needed on this section of BCP. (Study completion date TBD)
- Adding bicycle lanes on the entire length of the BCP
Adding bicycle lanes along BCP would require engineering and construction of the shoulder areas to accommodate the bicycle lane width requirements. Restriping BCP will not produce a sufficient bicycle lane width.
- Reduce travel lane widths of BCP
VDOT has advised that the lane widths on BCP can be reduced to a minimum of eleven foot lanes. This can be accomplished as BCP is repaved. It should be noted that BCP is not scheduled for repaving for the foreseeable future.
- Create a wider median at intersections to enhance pedestrian safety
One of the SRTS strategies included the widening of the median at the intersection of the BCP and Marshall Ponds Road / Schoolhouse Woods Way. We are waiting approval of this application prior to initiating the design phase of this project. This strategy could be implemented at other pedestrian crossings along BCP, however funding for design and construction needs to be identified.
- Reduce the corner radius at intersections
An engineering evaluation needs to be completed to identify which intersections along BCP would be candidates for this enhancements. Funding needs to be identified for this evaluation.
- Create right angle turns at signalized intersections
One of the SRTS strategies included the elimination of the free flow right turn at the intersection of BCP and Burke Commons Road. . We are waiting approval of this application prior to initiating the design phase of this project. This strategy could be implemented at other pedestrian crossings along BCP, however funding for design and construction needs to be identified.
- Review the lane usage for traffic exiting the Burke Town Centre
Recommendations on lane usage will be determined when VDOT's traffic signal study at the intersection of BCP and the Terra Centre Elementary School is completed.
- Install flashing school "wink-o-matic" signs for the Terra Centre school zone on BCP.
The current FCPS policy allows for the installation of flashing school "wink-o-matic" signs at crossings where there is student pedestrian traffic, a Fairfax County Police Department crossing guard, and the posted speed limit greater than 25 mph.

additionally, the policy allows for placement where there is a sight distance issue at a school driveway. These conditions do not exist at the Terra Centre Elementary School. Task force should request that the FCPS Board review their existing policy to consider including the application of flashing “wink-o-matic” under circumstances which are found on BCP at the Terra Centre Elementary School. This request is being sent without the unanimous support of the Task Force.

- Provide additional sidewalks
Additional sidewalks are recommended for all bus stops at the Burke Centre trail continuation at Lake Barton and the Terra Centre Elementary School. An engineering assessment needs to be performed, project costs and funding source needs to be identified. (FCDOT)
- Provide pedestrian activated crosswalk signals at pedestrian crossings
VDOT has advised that they will do a study at the intersection of BCP and the Lake Barton Trail crossing. Prior to commencing the study VDOT has asked for the task force’s perspective and their observations when the highest amount of pedestrian activity takes place so they can focus on those particular hours. Information from the task force members has not been received at this time.
- Reduce the number of travel lanes between the Giant Town Centre entrance and Burke Commons Road.
This area of focus is between the Giant Towne Centre entrance and the intersection of Burke Commons Road. This request calls for eliminating the right most thru/right turn lane. VDOT needs to complete an engineering/capacity review of this area.
- Review the intersection of BCP and Terra Elementary School for a traffic signal
VDOT is currently reviewing this location for a fully operational traffic signal and the impacts to the intersection with the propose Terra Centre Elementary School Construction

Information was also identified by the task force and is listed below

- Support the community’s SRTS application
On April 29, 2011 the Task Force sent a letter to VDOT in support of the community’s SRTS Application.
- Identify crash locations along Burke Centre Parkway
On March 21, 2011, VDOT provided crash history for BCP. Below is a summary of the crash information provided:

Most collisions occur at intersections. Of these, the most involve angle collisions. A few locations involve a insignificant amount of crashes. In general, the accidents are spread out along BCP. Rear-end collisions constitute the second most frequent category of crashes, especially accidents approaching intersections, which are called “congestion

crashes.” BCP measures favorably compared to other roadways in terms of crashes. VDOT measures crash frequency in terms of 100 million vehicle miles traveled. On BCP, there are 165 crashes per 100 million miles traveled. The crash rate on similar secondary roads is 235 crashes per 100 million miles traveled. Furthermore, the injury rate for crashes reported to FCPD is approximately 20% lower than average for BCP crashes.

- Provide VDOT’s paving schedule
At this time BCP is not on VDOT’s paving schedule
- Provide Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) bus ridership numbers for BCP
Ridership numbers were provided to the task force.

Task Force Members

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