



CITY OF NEWPORT
Office of the
CITY MANAGER

Laura L. Sitrin
Interim City Manager

To: Mayor Xay R. Khamsyvoravong and Members of the City Council

From: Laura L. Sitrin, Interim City Manager

Date: June 18, 2024

RE: Docket of June 26, 2024 - Communication from the Chief of Police
Temporary Traffic Pattern During Newport Folk Festival

Attached is a communication from the Chief of Police in regard to a temporary traffic pattern during the 2024 Newport Folk Festival.

/paf
Attachment



NEWPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Police and Community - Partners in Excellence"

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE



June 18th, 2023

Newport City Council
43 Broadway
Newport, RI 02840

Re: Temporary Traffic Pattern During Newport Folk Festival

City Council Members,

Over the past few years, the use of bicycles to transit to and from the Newport Folk Festival has significantly increased. Last year's count of bicycles entering the Folk Festival was in excess of 1,600 bicycles each day. The Police Department has been working hand in hand with our community partner Bike Newport to address the needs of this popular mode of attending the festival. With each year of increased popularity, we have been adjusting our traffic control tactics to account for the safe entering and egress of bicycles at the same time the vehicular traffic moves to and from the festival.

There are still a number of identified concerns that we have yet to mitigate. Throughout the morning and early afternoon on Folk Festival days, both cars and bicycles are entering Fort Adams. Inevitably there are backups of vehicles from the Fort Adams entrance east on Harrison Avenue and can reach to the area of New York Yacht Club. When bicycles transit this area next to the vehicles that are in line to enter Fort Adams, it becomes natural for bicyclists to travel to the left of the cars that are lined up. The reason for this is because there is extremely limited space between the vehicles that are lined up and the right-side curbing. Much of the curbing is a drop off on to grass where there are land scape rocks that pose a significant hazard to the bicyclists should they be forced off the pavement. There are also hazards to the left of the vehicles where the bicyclists are traveling. These hazards include blind curves to the bicyclists that are now traveling on the edge of the oncoming traffic lane. Additionally, and at the same time as these other hazards, there is a significant downhill on the approach to Fort Adams that is also on a curve with a restricted view to oncoming traffic in the next lane.

As the festival let's out, there are large numbers of bicyclists that egress at the same time. Every year we try to space out and separate bicyclists and vehicle as they leave. Inevitably, these bicyclists become mixed with the vehicular traffic on dark windy roads after a long day in the sun and enjoying the festival. This mix of bicycles and vehicles in these circumstances is an identified risk elevated from standard bicycling situations.

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It is the goal of the Police Department is to reduce these risks by implementing reasonable traffic control tactics throughout the festival days.

In February of 2024, Bike Newport applied for the RI Streets Transformation Project Mini Grant from the Rhode Island Department of Health. They were subsequently awarded grant funding to support the engineering assessment regarding the Folk Festival traffic control and logistics surrounding an implementation of any risk reducing strategies recommended by the engineering assessment. Several weeks ago, representatives from Bike Newport presented representatives of the Newport Police Department with recommendations for temporary traffic patterns during the Newport Folk Festival. In short, the proposed temporary traffic pattern is founded upon a complete separation of bike and vehicle traffic from the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Beacon Hill Rd., ½ mile to the entrance of Fort Adams. In order to accomplish this, Harrison Avenue will be one way westbound for vehicle traffic in the westbound lane. In that same stretch of Harrison Avenue, it will be designated two-way bicycle traffic only in the eastbound lane. Any vehicle traffic leaving Fort Adams or other locations south of Fort Adams heading back to the downtown area would be directed by signage and police officers to use alternate routing around the temporary one-way safety zone. See attached diagrams of traffic pattern and detours.

The Police Department reviewed the proposal, consulted with the Fire Department and assessed the balance of safety vs. local impact to non-event goers. It is our assessment that this temporary traffic pattern is a good idea and the benefits provided by the separation of vehicle traffic and bicyclists in that portion of Harrison Avenue is well worth the extra work setting up the logistics and any minor inconveniences to non-event goers. It is the intention of the Police Department to institute the temporary traffic pattern at 8:00 am each morning of the Folk Festival on July 26th, 27th and 28th. The temporary traffic pattern will remain throughout the day and will be discontinued at the end of each day when the Folk Festival has emptied out. This traffic pattern may be discontinued if inclement weather results in a significant reduction of bicyclists.

In addition to the temporary traffic pattern, and in accordance with the approved City's Transportation Master Plan, the ITC accelerated its strategy to install a trial period of a designated bike lane and shared lane indicators on Spring Street to assist with the management of bicyclists for the Folk Festival. Shared lane indicators and designated bike lanes will coincide with the different widths of Spring Street. Please see attached diagrams of the Spring Street bike lane indicators. The addition of the designated bike lane and shared lane indicators will be a trial period through the end of the summer at which time the ITC will determine its permanent status. This enhancement will further improve traffic safety with no negative impact to the local motoring public.

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There will be an active public information campaign leading up to Folk Fest regarding this temporary traffic pattern. Bike Newport will be mailing letters to residents, property managers, Newport Country Club, Castle Hill, Ocean Cliff, Sail Newport, Fort Adams Trust and RIDEM. The Police Department along with the City's Communication Department and Bike Newport will convey this information through our different social media platforms and associated websites. Bike Newport will also place adds in local papers informing the public of the upcoming temporary traffic pattern. Lastly, there will be electric and temporary signs, including the Police Department's variable message system (VMS) trailers, to inform and guide the public traveling in close proximity to the temporary traffic pattern.

The Police Department is confident that these measures will provide the best and safest traffic control while at the same time ensuring local traveling non-event goers have clear direction with as little inconvenience as possible.

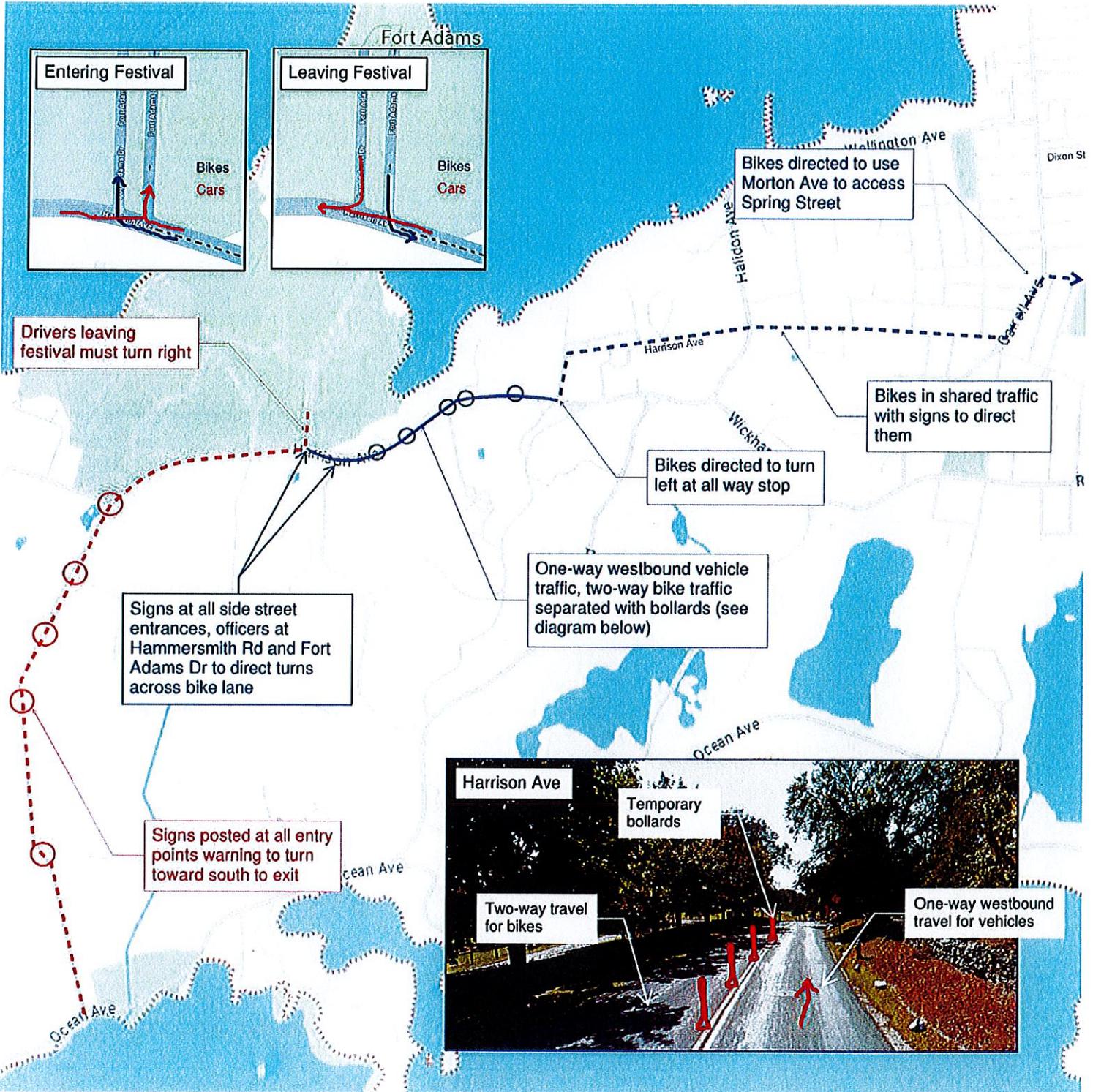
Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan G. Duffy
Chief of Police

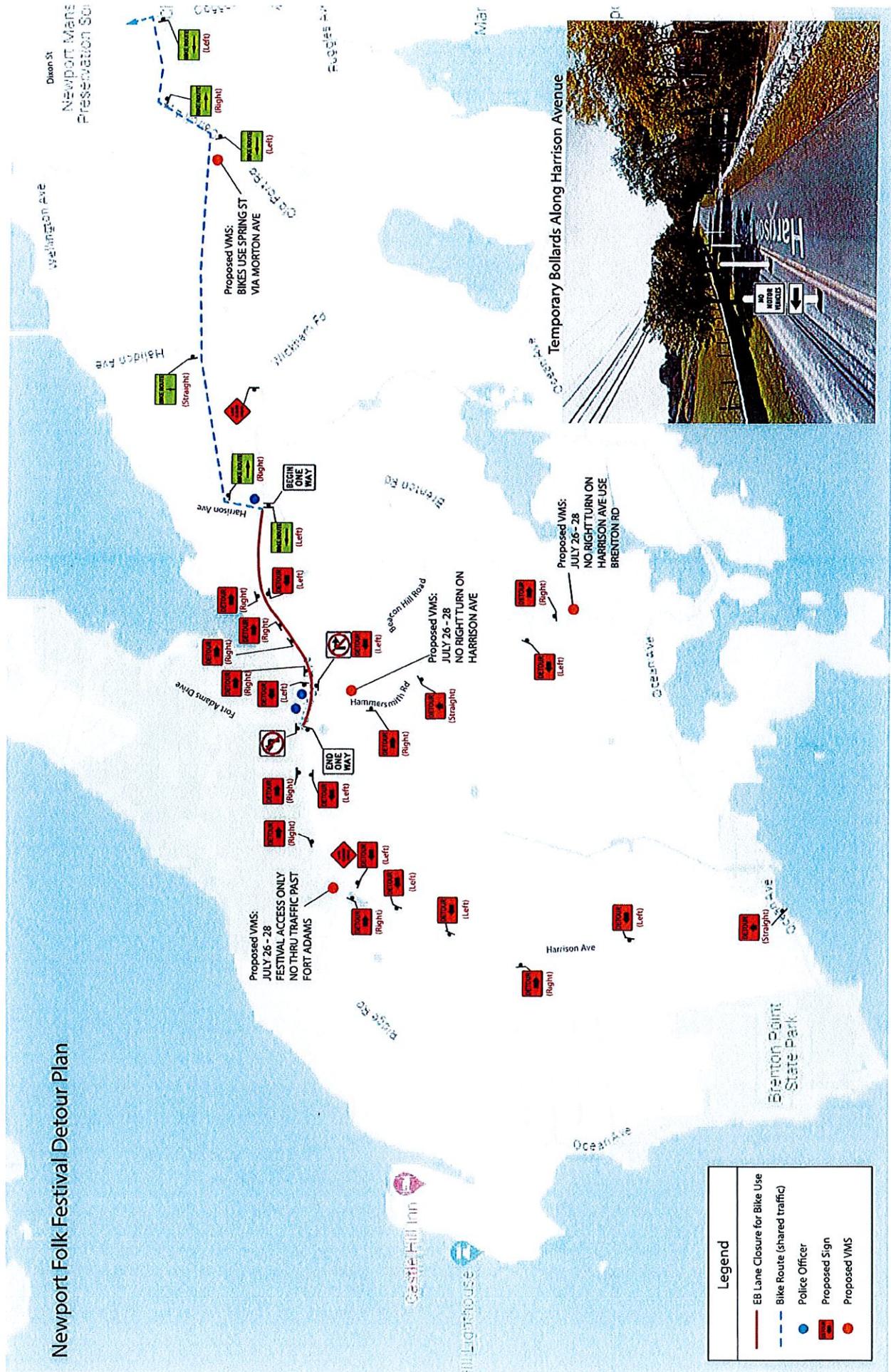
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Harrison Avenue Temporary Traffic Management Plan

Newport Folk and Jazz Festivals



Newport Folk Festival Detour Plan



Legend	
	EB Lane Closure for Bike Use
	Bike Route (shared traffic)
	Police Officer
	Proposed Sign
	Proposed VMS

Temporary Bollards Along Harrison Avenue



SPRING STREET - S. of Narragansett
Spring Street width varies ~30-ft

Provide green-backed
sharrow markings 11-ft off
of curb on side with parking

Remove centerline markings
to encourage slower speeds
and safe passing of cyclists

Maintain parking
on one side

Provide green-backed
sharrow markings in
center of lane on side
without parking



SPRING STREET
Intersection Treatment (with bike lane)

Green markings across intersections to warn drivers of potential conflicts with bikes

