

Jacksonville BPAC Meeting Notes

August 7, 2025 @ 5:30 PM

Ed Ball Building – 3rd Floor Conference Room
214 N Hogan Street – Jacksonville FL

Attendees:

In-person: Len Burroughs (NFBC), Mary Noonan (AtkinsRealis), Lori Hooper (Citizen Cyclist), Eileen Conley (Boone Park), James Hopkins, Pamela Telis (Boone Park), Tanner Pletzke (BPAC), Stephen King, Thalia Fuste (NFTPO), Barry Cotter, Matt Fall (COJ), Stephen Tocknell (NFBC, Pedaling for Safety), Mike Spino (NFBC, Amelia Island Cycling), Omar Alsahili (HNTB), Shanique Wilson Noack, Andreas Noack, Ernest J Smith IV (CPAC), Peter Borenstein (BPAC), Lauren Rushing (BPAC), Stephanie McCaffrey (BPAC), Lee Durban (COJ)

Virtual: Larry Roberts (JTC Running), Mike Pachoula (NFBC, Amelia Island Cycling), Jackie Morrison (Wolfson's/NICA)

1. Call to Order and Introductions

- Chair Lauren Rushing opened the meeting at 5:30 PM, welcoming attendees and noting the significant turnout for the August 2025 meeting of the Jacksonville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

2. Approval of July 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Peter Borenstein moved to approve the July 2025 meeting minutes, which had been circulated to BPAC officers. Seconded by Tanner Pletzke. Unanimously approved.

3. New Member Induction

- Due to prior record-keeping issues of previous BPAC members, membership status was clarified. New member request forms were distributed to ensure proper documentation.
- Members must submit a formal request form, with induction at the subsequent meeting.
- **New Members Proposed:** Lauren Rushing read out the names of people who submitted BPAC membership forms: James Hopkins, Thalia Fuste, Mary Noonan, Wiatt Bowers, Lori Cooper, Daniel Ashworth, and Colin Moore.
- Peter Borenstein moved to approve the listed individuals as new BPAC members. Seconded by Tanner Pletzke. Unanimously approved.
- **Action Item:** Other interested new members were asked to submit membership forms for induction at the next meeting. Lauren Rushing to provide electronic copies of the form.

4. Announcement: Tanner Pletzke, Tanner Pletzke, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator Jr., City of Jacksonville

- **Announcement:** Tanner Pletzke announced his new role as Jacksonville's first "Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Junior", starting August 11.
- Potential conflicts of interest were raised due to Tanner's new city position and his role as a BPAC officer. The bylaws allow membership for anyone with expertise or

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interest, but concerns about officer status were noted, especially with BPAC's potential transition to a nonprofit.

- Decision on whether Tanner can remain a BPAC officer was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting, pending clarification from the City on ethics and conflict of interest policies.
- **Action Item:** Tanner and Matt Fall to consult with the City's Ethics office prior to the September meeting.

5. Presentation: Talbot Island Bicycling Safety, Mike Spino, NFBC, Friends of Amelia Trail

- **Key Issues:**
 - Safety concerns on A1A near Talbot Islands due to distracted driving, speeding, and poor road shoulder maintenance.
 - A recent incident in April 2025, involved cyclist Joe Pitchco, hit by a vehicle mirror, resulting in serious injuries.
 - FDOT and city engineers recommend moving cyclists to the adjacent Timucuan Trail, but some cyclists prefer the road due to cycling at faster speeds or large group size.
 - The Timucuan Trail is incomplete, however, a \$6.2 million project to connect Huguenot Park to Fort George Bridge, set to bid in November 2025, will complete the trail.
- **Mike Spino presented the following requests for improvements on A1A:**
 - Advisory signage (e.g., W11-1 bicycle warning signs) along A1A to alert drivers of cyclists.
 - Improved trail access signage (six locations identified) to guide cyclists off the road.
 - Maintenance of road shoulders (currently narrowed by grass/overgrowth).
 - Paving short sections (20–300 feet) to improve trail access at parking areas and the Bluffs entrance.
- **Challenges:** Mr. Spino has received limited response from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and COJ Parks department.
- **Discussion:**
 - Lauren Rushing noted the new AASHTO guide advises against substituting shared-use paths for bike lanes, as they may not suit fast or large groups of cyclists.
 - Concerns raised about mixing cyclists and pedestrians on shared paths, especially with fishing activity on bridges.
 - Suggestions included wayfinding signage and collaboration with FDOT and COJ Parks Department.

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- **Action Items:**

- BPAC to work with Mr. Spino to schedule meetings with FDOT (for signage) and COJ Parks Department (for trail access improvements).
- Involve Colin Moore in FDOT discussions due to his expertise and experience.
- Mike Pachoula to provide East Coast Greenway signage for potential use.

6. Coordination: World Day of Remembrance, Lauren Rushing, BPAC Chair

- **Overview:** Lauren Rushing introduced the World Day of Remembrance (November 15, 2025) as BPAC's annual advocacy event to honor road traffic victims and advocate for safer streets.
- **Last Year's Event:** Held at James Weldon Johnson Park, with the mayor, council members, JTA CEO, and victims' families speaking. Approximately 40 attendees, mostly professionals, due to its weekday timing.
- **2025 Planning:**
 - **Venue Options:** Riverside Arts Market (RAM) on Saturday, November 15, or Memorial Park as a backup. RAM's new area near the skate park was favored for its visibility and bike path proximity, but concerns were raised about noise and crowds.
 - **Timing:** Preferred Saturday to avoid conflicts with Jaguar home games on Sunday. Suggested start time: 10–11 AM to allow setup and avoid RAM's peak hours.
 - **Activities:** Ceremony (~35 minutes), potential traffic garden, safety demonstrations, and vendor booths.
 - **Funding:** Last year's event used ~\$800 of a APA grant. Thalia Fuste and Stephanie McCaffrey to check on APA grant availability.
 - **Sponsorship:** Potential hosting organizations include City of Jacksonville, TPO, APA, Angels for Allison, and ITE.
- **Action Items:**
 - Lauren Rushing to confirm RAM availability with RAM representative and explore Memorial Park as a backup.
 - Schedule a separate planning meeting on August 21, 2025, at 5:30 PM (in-person, with virtual option) to continue planning.
 - Mary Noonan to help design promotional materials and a potential new logo for BPAC.

7. Discussion: Bike Walk Jacksonville, Lauren Rushing, BPAC Chair

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- **Proposal:** Transition BPAC to a nonprofit organization named “Bike Walk Jax” to enhance advocacy and fundraising capabilities.
- **Motions:**
 - **Motion 1:** Adopt “Bike Walk Jax” as the official name, effective immediately for promotional materials.
 - **Moved:** Tanner Pletzke
 - **Seconded:** Stephanie McCaffrey
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved
 - **Motion 2:** Pursue nonprofit corporation status and 501(c)(3) designation.
 - **Moved:** Thalia Fuste
 - **Seconded:** Len Burroughs
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved
 - **Motion 3:** Designate current BPAC officers (Lauren Rushing, Stephanie McCaffrey, Peter Bornstein) as the initial Board of Directors for Bike Walk Jax.
 - **Moved:** Lori Hooper
 - **Seconded:** Tanner Pletzke
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Discussion:**
 - Articles of incorporation require a board of at least three members. Current officers were proposed for simplicity, with plans to expand the board later.
 - Bylaws need updating to reflect nonprofit status and address conflicts of interest. Stephen Tocknell to share Pedaling for Safety's bylaws as a reference.
 - Concerns raised about 501(c)(3) restrictions on advocacy (e.g., lobbying, endorsing candidates). Lauren Rushing to consult with Mark Atkins from Pedaling for Safety for guidance.
- **Action Items:**
 - Lauren Rushing to file nonprofit registration with the Florida Department of State and pursue 501(c)(3) status.
 - Review and amend bylaws at the September meeting.

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- Explore website development (e.g., bikewalkjax.org) and funding options for website hosting.

8. Presentation: Oak Street Trail Connectors at Boone Park South, Matt Fall, Sr Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, City of Jacksonville

- **Presenter:** Matthew Fall (Senior Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator).
- **Proposal:** The City may have funds available to pave a ~172-foot natural surface connector from Oak Street to the recreational loop within Boone Park South, likely using permeable pavers, funded by mobility zone fees and constructed by the Parks Department.
- **Context:** The idea was first identified via Venture Out Jax by a resident, as a community need. A temporary user counter was installed on the fence post at the west entrance to the park, at Oak Street, which recorded an average of ~83 daily users (pedestrians, strollers, scooters, and cyclists – modes not differentiated in counts).
- **Concerns:**
 - Pamela Telis from Friends of Boone Park South opposed paving due to heavy pedestrian use and potential conflicts with cyclists. The park's shaded, 8-foot-wide paths are popular for walking, attracting visitors from across Jacksonville.
 - Alternate options may include enhancing Herschel Street with bicycle lanes (per 2017 Bike/Ped Master Plan) to separate fast cyclists from pedestrians. The Bike/Ped Master Plan includes unbuffered bicycle lanes, but due to high vehicle speeds, protected bicycle lanes would be preferred. Attendees agreed a bicycle facility on Herschel Street would be useful.
 - Jackie Morrison supported a crosswalk at Herschel and Van Wert to connect Boone Park South and North, noting heavy pedestrian crossover.
- **Discussion:**
 - Matthew Fall noted Oak Street provides a low-speed, low-traffic bicycling route through Riverside and Avondale. Oak Street is on either side of Boone Park, however there is no paved connection through Boone Park South, creating a network gap. Herschel Street is unsafe for casual cyclists due to speeding cars.
 - A wider path or separate cyclist/pedestrian facilities was proposed, but Friends of Boone Park South emphasized the need for community input. Friends of Boone Park South want to ensure that the path is comfortable and safe to walk.
 - Barry Cotter and Jackie Morrison were in support of paving the path. Lauren Rushing stated that a connection through the park would be useful for cyclists.

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- **Action Items:**

- Organize a community meeting or gather feedback online within the next month to get input from residents and park users.
- Matt Fall to coordinate with Friends of Boone Park South and BPAC leadership to assess support for the connector and Herschel Street improvements.

9. Closing

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:10 PM.
- **Next Meeting:** September 11, 2025