



## MEMORANDUM

To: Patty Long  
Office of the President

From: Anthony D. Matos, Chief of Police  
James Madison University Police Department

Re: Public Safety Committee

File: School Year 2022-2023

Date: May 13, 2022

### BACKGROUND

The James Madison University Public Safety Committee meets annually and when needed to discuss public safety concerns and needs of the University community. The JMU Public Safety meeting held its meeting on January 24, 2023

### FINDINGS

The JMU Public Safety Committee addressed several concerns during its annual meeting. A recurring theme from last year revolves around the use of micromobility devices on campus. Private merchants continue to place these devices, mostly electric scooters, around campus for the public to utilize. Last year, we worked with the vendor to reduce the speeds on campus from 18 mph to 10 miles per hour. This helped in reducing incidents involving the micromobility devices around the most congested areas on campus.

We continued to see incidents with the devices, and this year the vendor agreed to lower the speed of the devices across the entirety of campus. The vendor can geo-fence JMU, but once the devices are off-campus they resume normal operations. This will remain an on-going issue at JMU, as the devices do assist those in need of alternate transportation cross JMU, but we must weigh those considerations with the safety of every person on our campus. The best prevention, remains to educate our students of the dangers of the devices and continue a dialogue with the vendor to help ensure safe utilization.

The committee discussed the portion of Carrier Drive between I-81 and Rose Library. The police department conducted a study of the location and discovered the time most concerning for the community coincided with the times of heaviest usage. The 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM weeknight timeframe consistently showed the majority of vehicles on the roadway. On average close to 700 vehicles utilize this portion of the roadway during the hour. The major concern from the community revolved around difficulty turning into traffic from the parking lots and many distractions around which may present a potential unsafe situation.

Members of the JMU PD watched the roadway on several occasions to determine if implementing other traffic calming devices may alleviate some of the stress. They determined the roadway is safe and persons must expect heavy traffic during the evening rush. Adjusting commute times, class times, and activities times around this area may also assist in reducing traffic frustrations, however, this is the middle of prime-time activities on a collegiate campus and all community members must work together to increase the safety for everyone.

JMU's Chief Information Officer, AVP Robin Bryan addressed the Public Safety Committee concerning the safety and security of our infrastructure. We must remain cognizant of the dangers our community faces from malicious actors in the online/cyber environment. AVP Bryan discussed many of the advanced techniques, tools, and safeguards JMU possesses and is working to procure to keep our technological infrastructure safe from ransomware, spam, and a host of other technology crippling threats. The biggest news is the eventual migration of student and employee e-mail boxes, which will create seamless communications across the university. This migration will be completed by the end of May 2023. She further provided a quick update on Reengineering Madison and how this massive infrastructure upgrade will help all Dukes become more efficient and productive in the cyber-world.

A discussion took place about the traffic build-up on Bluestone Drive in front of D-Hall and The Union. This location can reflect the heart of the West Campus section during mid-day hours, as many students, faculty, and staff utilize this area to transition from the Quad to their dorms, Lakeside, or East Campus. This area includes several bus stops, traffic signs, pedestrian crossings, traffic signals, and a railroad crossing. The area can become quite congested and enforcing traffic violations on bicyclists, micromobility users, skateboards, and pedestrians becomes a challenge. The biggest challenge is from the congestion. It provides law enforcement officers very little room to maneuver, if a traffic stop becomes initiated, it presents the problem of causing a more congestion.

The JMU PD conducted a traffic survey of the location and found the majority of the times, bicyclists would come around stopped busses and vehicles in the opposite side of traffic. In an order to stop these individuals, officers must stop

them mid-hill and risk the safety of the cyclist and the officer, or wait at the entrance to the Mr. Chips convenience store on bicycle to stop the individuals. With the nationwide police staffing shortage affecting the ranks of the JMU PD, they cannot afford to have officers at this location looking for the few violators at this location. During the traffic study, JMU PD did note the majority of bicyclists maintained proper roadway awareness to conduct this maneuver, although we must work together to find a better way to address this issue.

Finally, the committee discussed a more systematic and consolidated way to manage and maintain the Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) on campus. Currently, JMU allows each building to purchase the AED which suits the needs of their community. Committee members, A. Matos, M. Young, and G. Shears will be working to find a solution to the oversight.

### **CONCLUSION**

The JMU Public Safety Committee met to discuss a variety of issues concerning public safety in and around the JMU Campus. Many of the items discussed involved the increase in traffic post-pandemic as the campus returns to a new state of normalcy. Members felt JMU remained a very safe campus and we continue to improve, not only the physical safety, but the technological safety as well. The Public Safety Committee possesses members from all areas of campus and we have no need to increase its size at this time.