



Advisory Group Meeting #1 Summary

Duke Street in Motion

Thursday, 4/48/2022; 6:30 – 8:45pm

In-person: Alexandria Police HQ Community Room
3600 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria VA 22304

Virtual: Zoom

1. Attendees

The attendees are based on those who were in attendance during the introductions portion of the meeting and/or those who signed in.

Name	Organization / Department
Chris Ziemann	City of Alexandria
Hillary Orr	City of Alexandria
Mark Schnauffer	City of Alexandria
Genevieve Kanellias	WSP
Jiaxin Tong	WSP
Will Tolbert	WSP (Virtual)
Jody Fisher	NeoNiche Strategies
Deana Rhodeside	Rhodeside Harwell (Virtual)
Aaron Gofreed	Advisory Group Meeting
Bob Brant	Advisory Group Meeting
Erin Winograd	Advisory Group Meeting
Govan Faine	Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)
Leslie Catherwood	Advisory Group Meeting
Mindy Lyle	Advisory Group Meeting
Naima Kearney	Advisory Group Meeting
Nawfal Kalam	Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)
Yvette Jiang	Advisory Group Meeting
Ajashu Thomas	Resident
Christine Hoeffner	Resident
Fran Vogel	Resident
Jerry Frank	Resident
Jim Durham	Resident/DASH Advisory Committee
Sandy Colvin	Resident
Canele	N/A
Alex Goyette	Virtual
Elizabeth Charles	Virtual
Ken Notis	Virtual



2. Meeting Summary

a. Welcome and Introductions

- Mark Schnauer began the meeting shortly after 6:30 pm with welcoming remarks to the attendees. Mark introduced Hillary Orr, Deputy Director of Transportation and Environmental Services for the City of Alexandria.
- Hillary thanked the Advisory Group members for signing up to participate and conveyed the importance of the Advisory Group member's participation to the project. The City is very excited about this project as it is one of the highest transit ridership corridors but also the highest crash corridor. Hillary noted there is funding for the project but this project will determine if the 2012 plan still meets the community's needs and today's context and if not, how should it be adjusted to make this the best corridor.
- Hillary mentioned that this project will focus on creative / innovative ideas, sustainability, equity, and embracing BRT, recognizing high-capacity transit is central to urban area with limited right-of-way.
- Mark reviewed the meeting agenda and goals, noted there are 11 Advisory Group members, and began introductions with attendees.
 - The project team introduced themselves.
 - Mark asked each Advisory Group member to introduce themselves, who they represent, why they wanted to participate in the Advisory Group, and their favorite and least favorite part of Duke Street.
 - Advisory Group members noted they like the access and connections to neighborhoods, businesses, parks, the library, and restaurants, the walkable and urban environment, but the efficiency of buses, congestion, and safety for pedestrians are deterrents. Several of the members are daily commuters of the Duke Street corridor and use multiple means of travel along Duke Street.
 - The attendees introduced themselves.
- Mark reviewed the ground rules for the Advisory Group. Per the guidance, the members have to participate in person at 25% of the meetings. A quorum requires six members.
- Mark noted that when emails are sent to the entire committee, please do not "reply to all". Only reply to the sender.
- Communications outside of the meetings will go through the chairperson.
- Mark encouraged participation from the Advisory Group noting they represent a very large community. When the Advisory Group members communicate about this project, they are representing the City. It is critical to solicit and relay information from organizations /communities that each member represents and seek their input to be shared at these meetings, even if it conflicts with personal opinions. When sharing a personal perspective, please declare as such.
- Mark noted as representatives of the City, the Advisory Group member's communications (emails, etc.) that discuss the project are subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
- Hillary added that any conversation or communication regarding this project between more than 2 members constitutes a meeting.

b. Project History



- Mark provided an overview of the project history noting there is a webinar available on the project website.
 - The 2008 Transportation Master Plan Transit Corridors identified Duke Street as one of three high capacity transit corridors.
 - The Duke Street Transitway corridor alternative recommended from the 2012 Transportation Corridors Feasibility Study and previously adopted by the City Council will be revisited by the Advisory Group to confirm whether it will be included as an alternative or revised as part of the alternatives to be developed in this phase of the project.
- Mark noted the team is going to develop some type of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plan. He noted BRT is a higher level of transit service than the typical bus and reviewed the key features of BRT.
- The City has been awarded \$87 million in two different grants. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) is the grantor. The funding has not been allocated yet; however, there is not an expiration.
- Mark noted the timeline graphic is based on calendar year; however, the graphic likely needs to be adjusted to reflect a more up to date expectation of the timeline.
- The 2012 concept plan (adopted by the City Council) may need some tweaks; however, there are a lot of good elements. Mark reviewed the elements of the plan that were recommended from the 2012 study.
- Mark noted that transit is the primary component and reason for the grant award; however, bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular elements may be addressed in relation to transit.

c. Related City Projects and Initiatives

- Hillary provided an overview of the related City projects/initiatives, noting the City is aware congestion is a big problem.
 - There is grant funding for the West Taylor Run Parkway Intersection Improvement project. It includes changing the ramp onto Telegraph Road to improve safety and move traffic because that interchange ramp creates a lot of traffic access and congestion issues.
 - The City has a Smart Mobility initiative which uses transportation technology to better manage the transportation system.
 - Duke Street is a pilot corridor for adaptive traffic signals.
 - The Duke Street Traffic Mitigation Pilot is in response to congestion concerns. The City changed the signal timing on North Quaker Lane and Duke Street and several other intersections between North Quaker Lane and West Taylor Run Parkway to reduce facilitate traffic flow on Duke Street mainline. The pilot ends this Friday (4/29). The City will analyze the data and see how it worked.
 - The Landmark Mall Redevelopment will include a transit center. There are also a lot of street improvements expected with this redevelopment.
 - The team will coordinate with the Witter Wheeler Feasibility and Campus Master Plan.

d. Project Approach



- Jiaxin Tong provided an overview of the project and scope of work, noting the team will look at ways to serve all users and modes on the corridor. The team is following a three step-process (develop alternatives, develop the preferred alternative concept, and select a preferred alternative) centered around two rounds of public engagement.
 - The public engagement will occur at two key milestones; the first to obtain input on initial schematic alternatives and the second to present the preferred alternative for feedback.
- The corridor has been divided into segments based on its characteristics; however, Jiaxin noted the team will also look at the corridor as a whole to ensure a holistic approach is applied.
- Jiaxin noted the importance of the Advisory Group and that this group will be key in helping to narrow down options to bring to the public and serving as the voice for the communities when it comes to feedback on the alternatives.

e. Community Engagement Summary

- Jody Fisher presented an overview of the community engagement process to date, noting the City is very committed to incorporating community input and began community engagement before the technical work started.
- The focus of Phase 1 Engagement was to develop a vision for the desired outcomes for the Duke Street in Motion project.
- The team implemented a very robust strategy to reach a wide range of target audiences. There were 20 events in seven days with a bilingual team to engage the community.
- Jody noted that many residents were very happy to participate; engaging people at the bus stops was very helpful and engaged those who typically would not participate due to time constraints.
- Jody noted the results from public input analysis; the full summary is available on the website for review. These results fed directly into the Vision and Guiding Principles.

f. Vision and Guiding Principles Discussion

- Mark noted the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles were based on public feedback last summer. He welcomed the Advisory Group members to provide comments.
- Erin Winograd stated the project vision does not include a clear statement that the project will not negatively impact resident's quality of life or the integrity and character of residential neighborhood. She noted impact on quality of life should be determined by the residents.
 - Mark noted one of the responsibilities of this Advisory Group is to have a well-rounded view (and represent the resident's viewpoint); the diverse group includes folks to live, commute, renters, owners, etc. Another goal of the Advisory Group is to narrow down the alternatives to something reasonable to take to the public.
- Yvette Jiang asked why the team created four segments rather than the five from 2012 study?
 - Jiaxin noted it follows the same school of thought but it is based on traffic congestion, cross-section, and land use.



- Erin noted the segment between Quaker Lane to Telegraph Road interchange has the worst traffic congestion and why wasn't this its own segment.
- Will Tolbert noted the traffic congestion will be evaluated across the corridor. The segments are more about the physical geometric change of the corridor.
- Leslie Catherwood likes the safety element and noted it is really important. The guiding principle "Vibrant" is a place to incorporate Erin's comments on integrity and character of the neighborhood.
- Leslie suggested changing the vision; she noted the second sentence (Using the bus to travel along Duke Street will be an efficient and desirable travel option...) is the vision we are looking to achieve, whereas improving the bus riding experience is how to do it.
 - Erin stated concern with the word vibrant (in the vision) because in her experience the City uses it as a synonym for density.
- Yvette asked how does Wi-Fi tie into equitable?
 - The team noted that free access to Wi-Fi can be helpful if you don't have it at home or don't want to use data while on transit. There was a suggestion to change Wi-Fi to modern technology.
- In regard to the safe principle, the Advisory Group mentioned the team should be thinking about safety inside the bus as well. It was noted the original statement includes both inside and outside the bus.
- Aaron asked if there are ways to increase frequency of buses?
 - The team stated more service generally means additional vehicles, drivers, storage space, and funding for the costs. Improved efficiency of the bus also makes service more frequent.
- Aaron noted it would be helpful to have real-time travel information available. He also asked if there is a way to incentivize drivers without sacrificing safety.
- Erin asked if there is a difference in bus stations versus stops and noted she likes that DASH stops every couple of blocks and provides easy access to local riders.
 - Mark noted it is called a station because we are talking about BRT. BRT stations are enhanced stops with longer stop spacing. The team will review how to incorporate local bus service to meet the gaps of BRT service but for BRT to be efficient, there are typically less stops.
 - The Advisory Group suggested the project team develop a list of definitions prior to the next meeting.
- The Advisory Group asked for a glossary of technical terms for this project.
- Erin noted under efficient there is the objective of "limited or no negative travel time impacts to non-transit vehicles". She said limited should be removed. Hillary noted the intent of adding limited is that it is very hard to quantify the extent of travel time impacts to non-transit vehicles that can be tolerated or not. The technical analysis will provide some context on the level of impact for each alternative and trade-offs.
- Bob agreed with Erin's comment that the project vision does not address resident quality of life. He said it is important to not only maintain it but look to improve it. From the developer perspective Bob noted the team needs to consider that Duke Street is an important commercial corridor for the City. Consider the many small, medium, and large businesses on the corridor. Be mindful there are many businesses, and the team should consider the impacts to the businesses in addition to the residences.



- Erin appreciated the City's comments on protecting the service roads for residents. There are also service roads that serve businesses as well. Some are minority owned and it is a fabulous asset.
- Naima said there is a lot of emphasis on bus riding; however, there needs to be access and the sidewalks currently aren't wide enough or have other constraints. Naima noted one of the biggest issues she has experienced is trying to get to places with a stroller, especially taking a bus (stations where you can roll on same goes to wheelchairs).
- Due to time, Mark wrapped up the discussion and asked the Advisory Group members to provide any additional comments to Mark by early next week. The Advisory Group will plan to adopt the vision and guiding principles at the next meeting.

g. Schedule

- Mark reviewed the schedule to show when Advisory Group meetings and civic engagement will occur.
- Mark noted the goals of the Advisory Group and that the project team is flexible and will not host meetings just to meet; similarly, if an additional meeting is needed for discussion, the team will schedule one.
- The group discussed the next meeting and decided Mark will distribute a Doodle Poll prior to each meeting to determine the best date. The Advisory Group agreed this meeting location is good.
- Mark discussed the City Manger confirmed Chairperson role and asked for the committee's recommendations by EOD Wednesday.

h. Public Comments

- Mark welcomed Councilmember Aguirre.
- Mark opened the meeting to public comments.
- Christine Hoeffner provided the following comments:
 - Christine agreed with comments made by Erin and Bob regarding maintaining the existing integrity and character of the residential neighborhood.
 - Christine generally agrees with the overall project vision and said it does a good job addressing the need. She noted she is supportive of increased transit but would like to see a balance of all modes, not just bus.
 - Christine asked how will community input be used and the City response to those be shared with the public?
 - The team noted, public engagement will occur at specific milestones to feed into project decisions. There is a robust public engagement program. Public engagement summaries will be shared with the public.
 - Christine submitted additional typed comments to the project team following the meeting.
- Another resident asked:
 - Under equitable, were there any residents over the age of 65 considered or included for the Advisory Group? It was noted that there are three members over 65.
 - The same resident noted concerns for her community because the focus seems to be on transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. It is important include those who depend on automobiles and that the improvements should not slow down those who drive to work, to shop, to eat out, or go to City meetings.



- The team noted there was a lengthy discussion about efficient component of the guiding principles and that transit improvements will provide improvements for other modes of travel. There is the flexibility in the study to analyze the potential impacts on other travel modes.
- Jim Durham noted he served on the West End Transitway Advisory Group. He also served on Transit Vision Plan committee and is currently on DASH Advisory committee.
 - Jim stated that anything that improves alternatives to driving helps everyone in the corridor. The more alternative modes become preferable, the more everyone benefits.
 - Jim stated the RHI team did a great job on the principles and noted the importance of reliability, frequency, and access. Jim said if those three ideas are first and foremost, then it will be a great product.
- One resident noted service roads serve as an outlet when there is traffic congestion, which there tends to be heading to Telegraph Road. The resident encouraged the team to consider that use of the service roads.

i. Adjourn

- The meeting concluded at 8:45 pm.

3. Action Items

Task	Responsible Party	Due Date
Send Mark nominations for the Advisory Group chair.	Advisory Group Members	5/4/22
Send Mark comments on the Vision and Goals.	Advisory Group Members	
Send a Doodle Poll to schedule the next meeting.	Mark Schnauffer	
Look into bus/walking tour for the Advisory Group.	Mark Schnauffer	
Post presentation online.	Mark Schnauffer	5/2/22
Create a project glossary of terms.	WSP Consultant Team	