

November 20, 2013

Dear Chairman Johnson and members of the Traffic and Parking Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to request that you support the city's Traffic Calming project on King Street. This project is needed to meet requirements of the Transportation Master Plan, the Complete Streets Policy, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan all of which have been approved by City Council. Now the city is in the process of implementing these plans and policies. The King Street project is one that will provide a safer environment for our citizens.

The King Street Traffic Calming project is primarily a safety issue. The city staff knows this is a safety issue, our members know this is a safety issue and almost all the residents on King Street would agree that this is a safety issue. Just last week the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) [1] released data which showed pedestrian deaths increased for the third consecutive year, up 6.4% over the previous year and cyclist deaths increased 6.5%. Action is needed now to improve safety for all.

King Street bike lanes will provide much needed safety improvements to nearby residents and Alexandrians at large.

1. Traffic calming. According to City staff, narrowing the main travel lanes will reduce speeding. Local residents have repeatedly told BPAC that they need to reduce vehicle speeds in this area. Studies also indicate that safety improves when more cyclists are on the street [2].

2. Pedestrian safety. Bike lanes provide a buffer between motor vehicles and pedestrians. Local residents have repeatedly told BPAC that they are afraid to walk along this section of King Street because of both the traffic speeds and immediate proximity of the travel lane.

3. Cyclist safety. Bike lanes are a proven safety measure to reduce conflicts between cars and bicycles [3]. Increased bicycling also increases safety for cyclists as well as pedestrians, and will decrease bikes on the sidewalks. "The likelihood that a given person walking or bicycling will be struck by a motorist varies inversely with the amount of walking or bicycling" [2].

Bike lanes on King Street address traffic congestion and demonstrate Alexandria's commitment to its policies and strategic goals.

1. Traffic congestion. These lanes will add capacity to King Street and will increase utilization of high-capacity Metrorail transit. Several King Street residents noted that bike lanes on King Street would increase the number of cyclists. That's the point! Our City's strategic goals recognize that the key to traffic congestion relief is utilization of high-capacity transit and non-motorized access to transit.

2. Citizen health. King Street bike lanes will increase fitness and reduce health issues. Studies show that people who routinely use transit are three times more likely to attain recommended exercise levels [4]. This project improves access to T C Williams High School and is a step forward for our Safe Routes to School program.

3. Public process. This project demonstrates our commitment to implement policies and plans developed through extensive public dialog and debate. We ask that you support the goals of the Transportation Master Plan, the Complete Streets Policy, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan.

In the city's most recent proposed solution, the 5 foot north-side bike lane will replace the current 7 foot "parking lane." Comments at public meetings have clearly indicated that the current, mostly-empty parking lane provides both space and clear sight lines for driveway access. The bike lane on the south side of King Street would be reduced to 4 feet in the latest proposed combination of bike lanes and shared lanes. We support a 5-foot north-side line to improve access to driveways for residents.

BPAC supports the originally-proposed bike lanes extending all the way to Janneys Lane as the optimum solution for both safety and meeting the City's strategic direction, policies and plans. That said, we appreciate the hard work of city staff and recognize the value of their most recent proposed solution, with bike lanes from W. Cedar Street to Highland Place, and then shared lanes east of the traffic light at Highland Place. While not optimum, the combined bike lanes and shared lanes would be a significant improvement over existing conditions.

We believe public safety for all should be paramount and is a sufficiently compelling reason for approval of either version of this project. We request that the Board approve the King Street Project, not only because it implements City-Council approved plans and policies, but also, because it provides much-needed Public Safety for all.

Jerry King
Chair, Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
703-362-7673

Copy to:

Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Silberberg, and Members of the City Council
Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

[1] [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)

[2] Safety in numbers: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling, Peter Lyndon Jacobsen, Injury Prevention 2003, Volume 9 Issue 3, pages 205-209,

<http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/9/3/205.abstract>

[3] Jacobsen and Rutter, "Cycling Safety" in City Cycling, eds. Pucher and Buehler, MIT Press, 2012.

[4] Journal of Public Health Policy, 2009,

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-03/uobc-ptu032609.php