



Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines

Civic Engagement Plan

July 2014



Introduction

In 2014 and 2015, the City of Alexandria will update its Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and will concurrently develop Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update will include an assessment of the existing transportation network, the identification of priority pedestrian and bicycle corridors, and recommendations for policies and programs that support increased walking and bicycling in Alexandria. The Complete Streets Design Guidelines will provide guidance for developers, City staff and the public on how to incorporate the needs of all transportation system users into street design and redevelopment projects. The two projects will be undertaken through a coordinated approach managed by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and with support from a consultant team led by Toole Design Group.

On April 8th, 2014, the Alexandria City Council created the Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee, a twelve-member body that will make recommendations to City staff on the update to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The group will work closely with City staff and the project consultants throughout the plan development process, helping to facilitate civic engagement and providing input on pedestrian and bicycle issues and needs, policy and facility recommendations, and criteria for project prioritization.

The purpose of this Civic Engagement Plan is to outline the process that will be used to ensure broad public participation and meaningful engagement in the development of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines. This Plan describes how the City will provide timely and appropriate information about project meetings and milestones, and identifies the strategies that will be used to gather public and stakeholder input.

This process is designed to incorporate the principles of engagement outlined in *What's Next Alexandria: Handbook for Civic Engagement*, including:

- Respect
- Inclusiveness and Equity
- Early Involvement
- Easy Participation
- Meaningful Engagement
- Mutual Accountability
- Transparency
- Sustained Collaboration
- Evaluation

The project timeline and key civic engagement strategies are summarized in the figure on page 5. Details on specific strategies are provided in the *Key Civic Engagement Strategies* section on page 6. For more information about the City's *Handbook for Civic Engagement*, visit:

www.alexandriava.gov/WhatsNext. For current information about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines, visit: www.alexandriava.gov/PedBikePlan.

Civic Engagement Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of civic engagement in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines is to ensure that members of the community are actively, constructively, and meaningfully involved in the public decisions that affect their lives. Specifically, the civic engagement process for this project will seek to:

- Set goals for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update
- Inform the Guiding Principles of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines
- Provide input on existing conditions, opportunities and challenges
- Provide feedback on recommendations and concepts
- Ensure adequate transparency for the project process and decisions
- Increase public knowledge about bicycle and pedestrian transportation concepts

Target Groups and Stakeholders

To ensure that the final products of this project reflect the needs and values of City residents, workers and visitors, a range of strategies will be applied to engage as broad and diverse a group as possible. A variety of engagement mechanisms, including online, in person, formal and informal methods, will provide many ways for people to participate in the process. Stakeholders that this process will seek to reach include:

- The general public (including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists)
- Bicycling, walking and public health advocates
- Regional partners
- Private-sector developers (this applies particularly to the Complete Streets Design Guidelines)
- Civic groups
- City and Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) staff

In addition to these stakeholders, key focus areas for engagement will include:

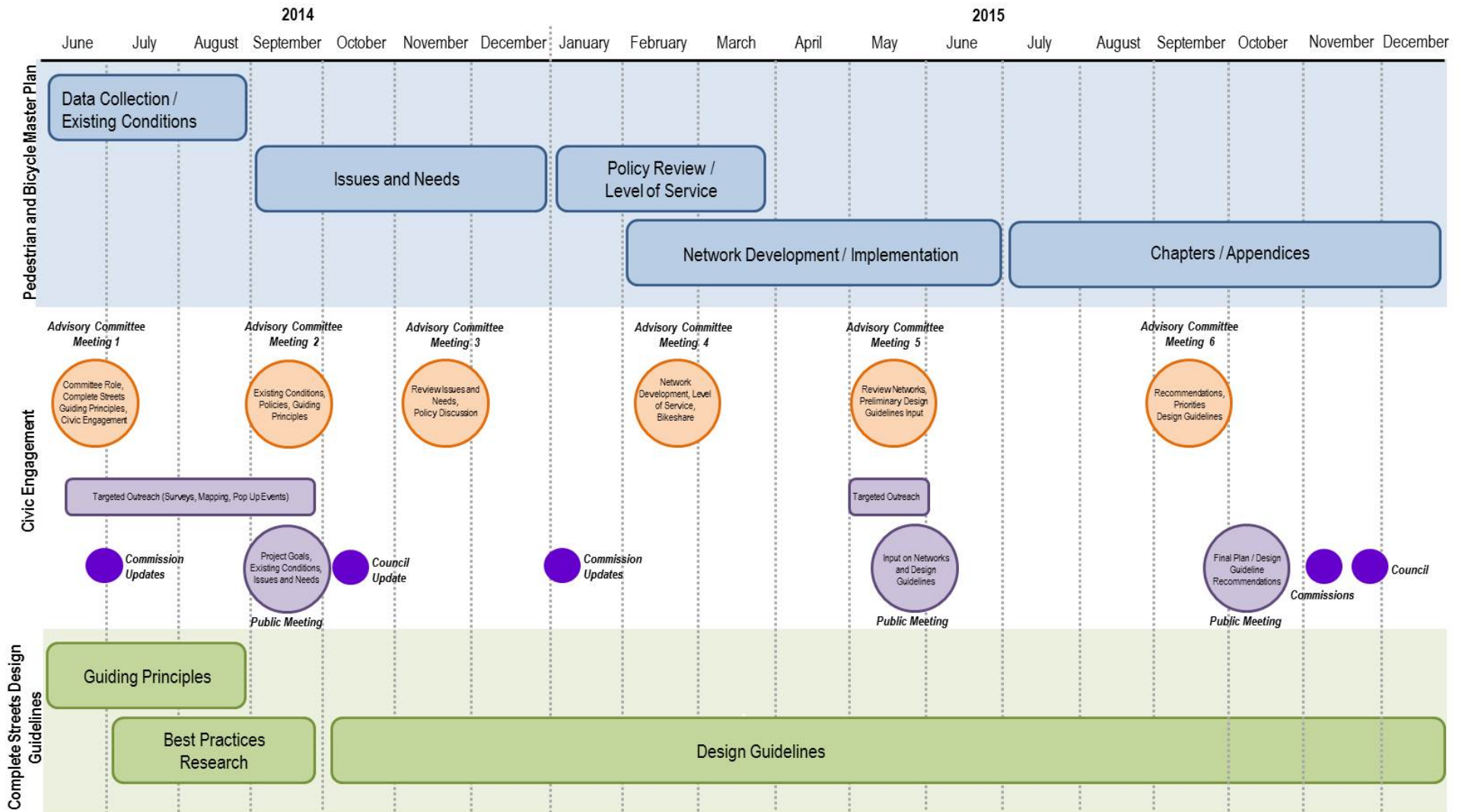
- **Cultural diversity:** To engage people of various cultural backgrounds, the City will hold Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee meetings in different, rotating neighborhoods located throughout the City; advertise meetings and open houses in through local TV channels and newspapers, including Spanish-speaking publications; provide Spanish-language versions of the project's online survey and interactive web map; and provide Spanish-language translation services at the three public open houses.
- **Geographic distribution:** To ensure that this citywide project includes participation from residents who live throughout Alexandria, the City will post fliers about public meetings at community gathering places located throughout the City; provide information at community events such as farmers markets or street fairs; hold Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee meetings (open to the public) in different, rotating neighborhoods located

throughout the City; and collect data from project participants (those completing online surveys/map and those participating in meetings/open houses) on where they live (by neighborhood), so that participant distribution can be monitored and outreach strategies can be modified as needed during the project.

In the same way that the planning process will seek to engage a broad and diverse cross-section of residents, employees and visitors of Alexandria, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Guidelines will be designed to support improved walking and bicycling conditions for people of all skill-levels and ages, including those with physical disabilities, people traveling for recreation and transportation purposes, and people who may not currently bicycle.

**PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN / COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDELINES
PROJECT PROCESS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

June, 2014



Key Civic Engagement Activities

The primary engagement activities for this project are described below. The relevant principles of engagement from Alexandria's *Handbook for Civic Engagement* are highlighted for each activity.

Civic Engagement Activity

Key Principles of Engagement

Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee

- An Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) comprised of citizen representatives and civic leaders will be established. It is anticipated that the Advisory Committee will meet at least six (6) times over the course of the project.
- The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to City staff on the update to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The group will identify pedestrian and bicycle issues and needs; provide input on policy recommendations and proposed pedestrian and bicycle networks; and evaluate criteria for prioritizing project recommendations.
- The focus of the Advisory Committee will be on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update, though updates will be provided on the Complete Streets Design Guidelines.
- Advisory Committee meetings will be announced via the project website and City eNews with at least one week notice.
- Advisory Committee presentations and meeting materials will be posted on the project webpage.
- Meeting comment forms will be provided at each Advisory Committee meeting to allow participants multiple channels to contribute.
- The City will post the Civic Engagement Meeting Ground Rules at each Advisory Committee meeting (see Appendix A).
- Although Advisory Committee meetings are not intended to serve as a primary mechanism for public feedback, agendas will include time for public comment whenever possible.
- The Advisory Committee will play an important role in helping to promote project activities and opportunities for public involvement to their affiliated organizations and networks.

Respect
Inclusiveness and Equity
Meaningful Engagement
Mutual Accountability
Transparency
Sustained Collaboration

Project Website

- The City will maintain an up-to-date project website that features regular project updates, announcements for public meetings (including Advisory Committee meetings), open houses, links to online input tools, and draft plan documents.
- The City will post all meeting materials from public open houses on the project website within two weeks of the meeting date.
- The project website will include staff contact information and a Frequently Asked Questions sheet.

Inclusiveness and Equity
Early Involvement
Easy Participation
Transparency
Evaluation

Social Media

- The City will provide periodic project updates and notice of all public open houses/events via Facebook and Twitter.
- To the extent possible, the City will distribute notices about key project milestones (public meetings, etc) to Community Associations to enable them to post the information on neighborhood blogs and listserves.

Early Involvement
Easy Participation
Transparency

Online Survey and Interactive Web Map

- The City will seek input on pedestrian and bicycle routes, issues and priorities through an online survey and interactive web map. Both online tools will be available for at least two months during the early phases of the project.
- The online survey and interactive web map will be advertised through the City's website, social media, email listservs, and other appropriate venues..
- The online survey and interactive web map will be available in English and Spanish.
- Anonymous survey and web map responses will be assembled and posted on the project website. Data on survey respondents (age, gender and geographic diversity) will also be made public. The City recognizes that responses to online surveys are not typically representative of the community due to self-selection. For this reason, the City will consider survey input alongside public input gathered through other means.

Inclusiveness and Equity
Early Involvement
Easy Participation

Community Events

- The City will provide information for community events during the course of this project, such as farmers markets, street fairs and similar neighborhood activities. At each event, the City will provide information on the project and on the process for public involvement.

Respect
Inclusiveness and Equity
Easy Participation
Transparency
Sustained Collaboration

Public Meetings/Open Houses

- This project will include three (3) public meetings/open houses. Meeting venues will be easily accessible by transit and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- The goal of the first public meeting will be to introduce the project, identify key goals for the project and preliminary needs of the transportation network, and promote the project website, online survey and interactive web map.
- The second meeting will be an open house format, with stations designed to gather input on the existing conditions of the transportation network, programs and policy opportunities, and design treatments.
- The goal of the third public meeting will be to review and provide input on the draft pedestrian and bicycle network and design guidelines.
- Meeting materials (maps, presentations, handouts) will be clear and concise, presenting options and providing relevant background information to the extent feasible.
- It is the City's goal is to provide ample notice for public meetings. Public Meetings will be advertised through the project website, social media, the City eNews, neighborhood listserves, and fliers at libraries, community centers, and at other popular gathering places.
- The Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Group will also provide notice to their respective organizations (for those who are representing or affiliated with community organizations) about upcoming public meetings and open houses.

Respect
Inclusiveness and Equity
Early Involvement
Easy Participation
Meaningful Engagement
Mutual Accountability
Transparency
Sustained Collaboration
Evaluation

-
- Background information (meeting purpose and agenda) will be distributed at least one week in advance of the public meetings via eNews, social media and the City’s webpage. Input from meetings will be summarized and posted on the project website within two weeks of meetings.
 - Meeting evaluation forms will be available at all public meetings.
 - The Civic Engagement Meeting Ground Rules will be posted and applied at each meeting.

Commission/Council Presentations

- The City and consultant team will provide presentations at key stages of the project to City Council and Commissions, to include at a minimum the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Transportation Commission. Presentations will provide updated information on the project status and will seek input from Commission/Council members on priorities, issues, and proposed pedestrian and bicycle networks.

**Respect
Early Involvement
Mutual Accountability
Transparency**

Better Block

- This project will potentially include a unique civic engagement activity called a Better Block. A Better Block is a short-term event that uses quick, inexpensive changes to temporarily transform an existing street into a Complete Street. These events have been used in cities around the country to demonstrate the transformative power of good pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- The City will work with the Advisory Committee and consultant team to select the priority site for the Better Block. The City and consultants will work with the Advisory Committee to identify local stakeholders who will be engaged in planning, developing, promoting and executing the event.
- The Better Block will be advertised through the project website, social media, the City eNews, neighborhood listserves, and fliers at libraries, community centers and other popular gathering places.

**Inclusiveness and Equity
Easy Participation
Transparency
Sustained Collaboration
Evaluation**

Civic Engagement Framework

To ensure consistency in how the City engages the community in different projects, Alexandria's *Civic Engagement Handbook* established the following Framework for Engagement, which will be completed for each City project.

City Department: T&ES	Project: Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines	Goal: Prepare update to the Transportation Master Plan, including future non-motorized network, project recommendations and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual	Overall project timeline: June 2014 – December 2015
Phase 1 – Information (Gathering, Organizing, Understanding)	Phase 2 – Options (Discuss and Evaluate Options)	Phase 3 – Recommendations	Phase 4 – Implementation and maintenance
<p>June 2014 – January 2015 <u>Tasks:</u> Preparation of civic engagement plan, Identify stakeholders, establish Advisory Group (AG) to represent various stakeholder and community groups. Solicit feedback from AG and community members through meetings, social media, targeted outreach and other communication. Help facilitate AG members' communication to the broader community and their respective groups.</p> <p><u>Communication:</u> Post Civic Engagement Framework (including proposed schedule) and AG committee information to City website. Provide 3-week notice of meetings in appropriate forums (City website, flyers, eNews, social media etc.), and post agendas and meeting materials one week in advance.</p>	<p>February - Apr 2015 <u>Tasks:</u> Solicit feedback from AG and community members through meetings and other communication. Help facilitate AG members' communication to the broader community and their respective groups.</p> <p><u>Communication:</u> Provide 3-week notice of meetings in appropriate forums (City website, flyers, eNews, social media etc.), and post agendas and meeting materials one week in advance.</p> <p><u>Engagement Activities:</u> - AG Mtg 4 - Network development and Level of Service, bike share expansion</p> <p><u>Deliverables:</u> - Community Feedback and follow-up on how feedback was utilized for</p>	<p>May - October 2015 <u>Tasks:</u> Solicit feedback from AG and community members through meetings and other communication. Help facilitate AG members' communication to the broader community and their respective groups.</p> <p><u>Communication:</u> Provide 3-week notice of meetings in appropriate forums (City website, flyers, eNews, social media etc.), and post agendas and meeting materials one week in advance.</p> <p><u>Engagement Activities:</u> - AG Mtg 5 - Review network recommendations, level of service, preliminary design guidelines - Public Mtg 2 - Issues and needs, policy development, networks development - Better Block – Input and Education</p>	<p>November - December 2015 and ongoing <u>Tasks:</u> Solicit feedback from public to ensure that established Principles are followed within the project recommendations, Transportation Master Plan update, and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual</p> <p><u>Communication:</u> Provide 3-week notice of meetings in appropriate forums (City website, flyers, eNews, social media etc.), and post agendas and meeting materials one week in advance.</p> <p><u>Engagement Activities:</u> - Ongoing notification of project implementation, as outlined in City policies</p> <p><u>Deliverables:</u> - Final nonmotorized networks - Implementation recommendations</p>

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

<p>City Department: T&ES</p>	<p>Project: Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines</p>	<p>Goal: Prepare update to the Transportation Master Plan, including future non- motorized network, project recommendations and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual</p>	<p>Overall project timeline: June 2014 – December 2015</p>
<p>Phase 1 – Information (Gathering, Organizing, Understanding)</p>	<p>Phase 2 – Options (Discuss and Evaluate Options)</p>	<p>Phase 3 – Recommendations</p>	<p>Phase 4 – Implementation and maintenance</p>
<p><u>Engagement Activities:</u> - AG Mtg 1 - Intro, background, schedule, Civic Engagement Plan, issues - AG Mtg 2 - Existing conditions, stakeholder input, policies and guiding principles - AG Mtg 3 - Existing conditions, needs and issues, policy recommendations - Public Mtg 1 - Purpose, Existing conditions, preliminary needs and issues</p> <p><u>Deliverables:</u> - Civic Engagement Plan - Existing Conditions report - Issues and Needs report - Complete streets guiding principles, best practices - Summaries of Community Feedback (such as surveys, field trips) and follow-up on how feedback was utilized for next steps</p>	<p>next steps - Policy Review and Development - Level of Service recommendations - Preliminary pedestrian and bicycle Networks - Draft Bike Share Operations Analysis</p>	<p>around Complete Streets concepts - AG Mtg 6 - Review project recommendations and priorities, implementation and final design guidelines - Public Mtg 3 - Present network, project recommendations, priorities and Complete Streets Design Guidelines</p> <p><u>Deliverables:</u> - Implementation strategy - Summaries of Community Feedback and follow-up on how feedback was utilized for next steps</p>	<p>- Transportation Master Plan Chapter updates - Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual - Summaries of Community Feedback and follow-up on how feedback was utilized for next steps</p>

Conclusion

Civic Engagement is a central and essential element of the Update to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and will provide valuable insight into the development of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The City is committed to using this Civic Engagement Plan to guide a process that emphasizes respect, transparency and inclusiveness. In addition to the participant evaluations that will be completed after each public meeting/open house, the entire civic engagement process will be evaluated by the Civic Engagement Interdepartmental Working Group at the culmination of the project. City staff will develop a brief summary of the project's civic engagement outcomes and will consider the level of public participation, the geographic distribution of participants and the effectiveness of outreach methods. That evaluation will be publicized via the City website and will be used to inform the civic engagement process and approach for future City projects.

Appendix A: Civic Engagement Meeting Ground Rules

These ground rules were developed for Alexandria's Civic Engagement Handbook and will be posted at all Advisory Committee meetings and Public Open Houses.

- Everyone's opinions are important and valid
- Meetings will begin and end on time
- Follow the agenda, please stay on topic
- Be respectful and courteous - avoid dominating the conversation
- Questions are welcomed
- (For Ad Hoc Committee meetings) Committee members have the floor first. Where possible, time will be allocated at the end of meetings for public comment.
- Please silence cell phones and other mobile devices