



PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE and COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDELINES PUBLIC MEETING #1

City of Alexandria | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Thursday, September 30th, 2014 | 7:00-9:00 pm
Minnie Howard Campus (TC Williams HS), Cafeteria | 3801 W. Braddock Road

Public Workshop Notes

On September 30th, 2014, representatives from the City of Alexandria and the consultant team were joined by approximately 50 people from Alexandria and surrounding communities at the first public meeting for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Project in the Minnie Howard Campus cafeteria.

Through this meeting residents were provided with an overview of the project, preliminary findings from an existing conditions assessment, and were asked to provide feedback on issues and needs for walking and bicycling in Alexandria.

An Open House at the beginning of the meeting allowed participants to learn more about the project, existing conditions, and provide input on pedestrian and bicycle issues and needs. The open house included display boards, a station where participants could participate in the online survey and crowdsourcing map, a station where participants could identify their favorite and least favorite street in Alexandria and issues/needs, and a station where participants could state why walking and bicycling are important to them.

During the meeting presentation, Acting Director of Transportation Yon Lambert introduced the project and City of Alexandria staff and representatives from the consultant team also provided an overview of the project. Finally consultant team representatives provided select highlights from the existing conditions analysis, mode share trends and a timeline to the study. In the last portion of the presentation section of meeting, participants asked questions to City and the consultant team about the project.

Following the presentation, workshop participants divided into four separate groups for more detailed discussions on programmatic issues and opportunities for expanding Education, Enforcement as well as Engineering and Infrastructure programs. Finally, participants within each group were asked to share their opinion on what the most important change that could be made to encourage people to walk and bicycle more. Some key overarching themes emerged from each of the group discussions. Following are highlights of the discussion for each of the issue areas:

Education and Enforcement:

In this portion, meeting attendees were asked to discuss any issues dealing with existing education and enforcement initiatives related to walking and bicycling. Additionally, participants were asked to provide ideas on how to address these issues:

- Issues:
 - Residents voiced concern about bicyclists, motorists and pedestrians not knowing the “rules of the road.” For example, some expressed concern that bicyclists may not stop at traffic lights and stop signs; or use required lights at night. Participants expressed concern about cyclists riding on sidewalks, creating conflicts with pedestrians. Similar concerns were raised about drivers failing to provide adequate passing distance to bicyclists or failing to yield to cyclists (e.g. turning right in front of bicyclists). Participants expressed concern about the level of enforcement by Alexandria police for all modes with regard to interactions between bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Participants noted that there is confusion about actual traffic laws – sometimes even amongst police officers, and the need to make the State code on bicycle and pedestrian laws more available to the public.
 - There was concern that a significant number of tourists come to Alexandria every day, and many may be unfamiliar with the City’s rules, laws and customs related to walking and bicycling.
- Solutions
 - Participants expressed support for institutionalizing bicycle safety classes in public schools. In addition, participants suggested that the City provide more information on printed materials, websites and other media on the existing rules of the road. There was also a suggestion that users of Capital Bikeshare be required to take a bicycle training course prior to purchasing a membership.
 - Participants suggested regular training to City police on rules and regulations for increased related to walking and bicycling.

Engineering:

In this section of the meeting, participants discussed infrastructure challenges to walking and bicycling in Alexandria. Four primary themes emerged:

- Issues
 - Participants expressed concern about the existing sidewalk network and its connectivity. Some stated that the existing sidewalk network is not complete and in some instances it is uneven. This makes it difficult for children, seniors and persons with disabilities to access different parts of Alexandria.
 - Participants commented on the lack of clearly marked pedestrian crossings at various intersections - in particular those located on major roadways and arterials. Participants also want the City to ensure that curb ramps and sidewalks are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Attendees voiced their concern about the existing lack of connection to and from trails. There was also concern that existing wayfinding is inadequate and better signage is needed to help residents and visitors to navigate the City’s trail system.
 - Meeting participants voiced their concern about the lack of existing separated facilities in comparison to other neighboring jurisdictions. Residents felt that while the City has installed some facilities (ex. bike lanes), better and more comfortable connections are needed to and from activity centers in the East and West parts of the City.

- Solutions
 - With regard to uneven sidewalks in parts of the City, participants proposed that the City implement a program to fill in the gaps in brick sidewalks in addition to promoting a system for reporting maintenance issues for various pedestrian and bicycle focused facilities
 - Attendees proposed that the City implement a city-wide policy to have crosswalks on all 4 legs of all intersections in addition to implementing a pedestrian only phase for crossing the street without the use of actuated buttons/signals. Participants also proposed installing pedestrian signals and signalized crossings in various parts of the City with particular emphasis on streets that connect to and from transit as well as important destinations.
 - Participants proposed adding more bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities along corridors connecting eastern and western parts of the City. Participants' comments focused on improving conditions along King Street, Duke Street and Braddock Road.

Most important changes

At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to identify one change that would make it easier for them to walk or bike in Alexandria. Ideas included:

- Increase the number of separated bicycling facilities in addition to bike lanes on major connector roadways.
- Expand Capital Bikeshare to western parts of the City.
- Increase connectivity to trails and to transit
- Embrace Complete Streets
- Reduce speed limits
- Provide dedicated, separate facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists