

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update, and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual

**Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Meeting #3
December 3, 2014, 7:00 – 9:00pm
Samuel Tucker Elementary School, Mini Auditorium
435 Ferdinand Day Drive**

MEETING NOTES



Committee Members in Attendance:

- **Scott Anderson**, Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Representative (Acting Chair)
- **Carol Abrams**, Community Representative
- **Steve Beggs**, Parks and Recreation Commission Representative
- **Dave Brown**, Planning Commission Representative
- **Mollie Danforth**, Commission on Persons with Disabilities
- **John Fennell**, Design Professional Representative
- **Dr. Ayne Furman**, Community Representative
- **Dr. Dan Kulund**, Commission on Aging
- **Skip Maginniss**, Business Representative
- **Kevin Posey**, Transportation Commission designee
- **William Schuyler**, Traffic and Parking Board
- **Pablo Torres**, Community Representative

City of Alexandria Staff in Attendance

- Yon Lambert, Acting Director, T&ES
- Steve Sindiong, T&ES
- Hillary Poole, T&ES
- Karen Callahan, T&ES

Consultant Team

- RJ Eldridge, Toole Design Group

- Alia Anderson, Toole Design Group
- Iain Banks, Nelson Nygaard

Public Attendance:

- Approximately 20 persons from the public attended the meeting

Welcome and Introductions

- Yon Lambert welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of the agenda for the night.
- Scott Anderson, Vice Chair, served as the acting chair for the meeting and reviewed the Ground Rules. He let the audience know that there would be opportunities for public comment.

Review of Online Input

- RJ Eldridge, project consultant from Toole Design Group, gave a review of key responses from the online survey.
 - A committee member commented that older adults had trouble using the survey and that it was important to remember that it wasn't reflective of the entire Alexandria community. Another committee member countered that they felt older adults were capable of completing the survey. There was general acknowledgement that the survey should not be overemphasized in the planning process since only a subset of the City used it.
- RJ Eldridge also provided an overview of the feedback on the online interactive map.

Complete Streets Briefing

- Hillary Poole, Complete Streets Coordinator with the City of Alexandria, gave an introduction and overview.
 - Complete Streets are about building streets that work for everyone. The City adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2011 that indicates that the City will take advantage of opportunities as they come up to implement Complete Streets.
 - There have been questions about bicycle and pedestrian projects that are scheduled to occur during the Ped/Bike Master Planning project. The City has several projects that are already adopted in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) (this was distributed to the committee for review) and also takes advantage of opportunities to implement bicycle improvements during street repaving, in keeping with the City's Complete Streets policy.

- RJ Eldridge described the importance of taking advantage of repaving opportunities to implement on-street facilities when possible, as a way to ensure the efficient use of City resources. He then gave an overview of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines.
 - This project is similar to guidelines in many other cities and builds upon some national guidelines.
 - The Guidelines will serve as a technical tool for city staff to use as transportation and development projects come up over time.
 - The Guidelines will include a new street typology, which will give guidelines for the types of design characteristics that are appropriate on various street types. The Guide will be graphically oriented, with images depicting typical street cross sections.
 - The City has developed a set of eight new Complete Street types. Eldridge gave an overview of the street types. Some City streets change type as they cross the City.
 - Committee members asked when they would be able to comment on all of the street type definitions and requested a copy the draft street types, which the City will circulate when the staff review is complete.
 - The committee also requested that when the consultants say “for all users” that they specifically include people with disabilities. Otherwise, there was concern that people with disabilities will be forgotten in the future.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Vision, Goals / Objectives

- RJ Eldridge presented the draft Vision, Goals and Objectives that have been developed for this project. Scott Anderson mentioned that the goal for the meeting is to endorse the vision, goals and objectives; however, if the committee feels that significant work still needs to be done, we may need to follow up after the meeting.
 - RJ Eldridge and Scott Anderson noted that the Vision, Goals and Objectives are meant to be general and set the high-level intention for the plan. Objectives are not the most specific level of content in the plan. They will be followed later in the planning process by specific tasks and strategy recommendations.
 - Committee members gave input on the Pedestrian Vision:
 - The tone should explain the vision for the “end state”, e.g. “the City will...”
 - There was confusion about the word “facilities” and the committee suggested the word “infrastructure” instead, or the use of a parenthetical statement like “facilities (e.g. sidewalks, curb ramps, etc.)”

- There was a question about whether saying the word “safe” in the Vision meant that the City was committed to eliminating unsafe conditions, for example diagonal curb ramps that direct pedestrians (particularly those with limited visibility) into the middle of intersections. The group discussed the possibility of stating “zero” fatalities as a goal.
 - There was a suggestion to add the phrase “all abilities” to the Pedestrian Vision statement to ensure that the vision includes people with disabilities.
- The committee discussed the Pedestrian Vision, Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures.
 - There was a suggestion not to say “getting people out of their cars” but instead to say “get less cars on the road.”
 - There was a question about reducing the speed limit, to help support improved safety, and also an interest to support more protected bike lane. There was more discussion about whether speed limits “fit” within the scope of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.
 - Traffic calming is more effective at slowing people down than lowering the speed limit. Things like speed tables on Commonwealth Avenue are an example, although a committee member mentioned the need to always accommodate EMS access.
 - Committee members asked why there weren’t numeric targets – performance targets – for each performance measures. RJ Eldridge stated that there will be numbers and measurable goals developed for some of the performance measures over the course of the project, but others will just be tracked over time. It would be too time-consuming and expensive to try to do a detailed tracking of everything over time.
 - Committee members voiced concerns about the process for review and comment on the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures, suggesting that they should have been sent out earlier, comments collected prior to the meeting, or more time being given to the process. Some members suggested that the process should go slower, others suggested it was moving too slowly. Steve Sindiong noted that the Goals and Objectives went out before Thanksgiving about one week prior to the meeting.
 - There was a question about whether the City has a way to survey the public to gather some of this input. Hillary Poole mentioned that there

are occasional surveys but there is interest in the City to survey more often and improve the information that we have access to.

- There was a discussion of Bicycle Vision, Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures.
 - There was input that there was more need to measure some of the goals.
- Public Input
 - There is a need for connectivity between destinations, particularly between apartment buildings, and a request to mention the West End specifically.
 - There is a lack of engagement in the West End that is reflected in the comments we received online.
 - The online interactive map is not reflective of where people walk, but where a subset of people who took the survey walk.
 - The City presented at the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan committee. There was a comment that there is not enough time being given to Committee Discussion.
 - There is a need for high-level objectives that are measurable with targets and timelines.
 - We need to consider people walking during nighttime hours, and the need for streetlights.
 - There are narrow sidewalks in Old Town and there are multiple uses there. In these locations it is impossible for bicyclists and pedestrians to both use the sidewalks safely.
 - There have been requests to fix uneven sidewalks but the City is unable to accomplish this because the approval of the arborist is needed.
 - Need better east/west connections, particularly in the South. There used to be a connection from Old Town around the waste treatment plant.
 - It is important for the Committee and public to attend the Eisenhower West sessions and Beauregard implementation questions. It is important that this plan is coordinated with those discussions and that the recommendations are coordinated. There is a need to vet bicycle facility proposals with the broader community, not just bicyclists or certain groups.

- There is a need for bike share stations in the West End in the nearer term, and the City should maximize developer proffers for bike share stations. Developers want to attract young residents/tenants.
- There are protected bike lanes in Arlington that could serve as a model.
- Some of the pedestrian countdown signals have signs that say “don’t enter the crosswalk once the red hand appears.”
- There is interest in having another meeting soon so that more input can be provided.

Break Out Groups

- RJ Eldridge gave an overview of the break out group process.
 - Three groups comprised of committee members and the public identified a finite set of pedestrian focus areas where the consultant field work on pedestrian issues should be targeted.
 - The groups then gave feedback on the “tier one bicycle network,” which will serve as the spine of the future citywide bike network.
 - RJ Eldridge closed the break out by saying that the input would be consolidated by the project team and that a proposed study network would be developed.

Committee Member Updates

- Dr. Ayne Furman noted that there is concern in Old Town about persons riding bikes on sidewalks.

Scott Anderson made closing comments:

- Mr. Anderson suggested a committee meeting just focused on the Vision, Goals and Objectives. There was also a suggestion to have the next meeting in February, and to give four weeks advance notice.
- Mr. Anderson thanked everyone for participating.
- Steve Sindiong gave an update on where we are in the project schedule and that the focus of the next meeting would be the Better Block event and the Program/Policy elements of the plan.