AD HOC PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #5

City of Alexandria | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Thursday, April 16th, 2015 | 6:30-8:30 pm
William Ramsay Center, Multipurpose Room, 5650 Sanger Avenue

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NOTES

6:30 p.m. Welcome, Introductions

Committee members in attendance:
- Jennifer Hovis, Chair
- Scott Anderson, Vice-Chair
- Carol Abrams
- Christine Michaelis
- John Fennell
- Pablo Torres
- Mollie Danforth
- Dave Brown
- Linda Couture
- Timothy Hanson
- Dr. Dan Kulund

Project staff:
- Sandra Marks, City of Alexandria
- Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria
- Carrie Sanders, City of Alexandria
- Hillary Poole, City of Alexandria
- Karen Callahan, City of Alexandria
- Carrie Beach, City of Alexandria
- Robert Patten, Toole Design Group
- Alia Anderson, Toole Design Group

Public:
- Seven (7)persons (in addition to Committee members) signed the sign-in sheet

Meeting Introduction and Agenda Review (Sandra Marks)
- Review project milestones and provide an update
- Present & discuss Project Prioritization process
- Present and discuss the Draft Bicycle Network in western half of Alexandria
- Public comments and Ad Hoc Committee member updates

Project Milestones (Steve Sindiong)
- Project began in Spring 2014
- Public outreach meetings have been conducted
- Goals, objectives and vision has been finalized
- Existing conditions and progress report has been finalized
- Next meeting May 14, 2015 to focus on the Draft Bicycle Network in Eastern Half of Alexandria and case study areas
- Next Public Meeting in June (no date set)

Project Prioritization Process (Carrie Sanders and Alia Anderson)
- Carrie Sanders introduced the topic:
    - Prioritization is important as a way to sort through a long list of potential improvement recommendations and determine which will be the most cost effective investments.
    - Other reasons include:
        - As a way to accurately express the community's values in the implementation of the bicycle network.
        - The need to build public/political support for action.

        - To ensure maximum utility of the network throughout the growth period (i.e. while it is not fully completed).
        - To meet the requirements of certain potential funding sources.
    - Prior to the meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee was surveyed through an on line survey and asked to comment on the relative importance of the potential factors to include in the prioritization process.
- Alia Anderson of Toole Design Group (TDG) provided a more detailed explanation of the proposed prioritization process.
    - Terminology is important
        - **Factors** are the values that will be incorporated into the quantitative prioritization process.
        - **Variables**, are the measures that will be used to provide quantitative data about the value.
        - **Weighting** is a multiplier that will be used to normalize the data variables to ensure that each individual factor influences the total score in a way that appropriately expresses Alexandria's relative value of that factor in the overall scheme.
    - It is important to note that projects that can be implemented because they are an "opportunity" will be factored outside of the prioritization process (for example, an opportunity project may include a road resurfacing project scheduled by the City creating an opportunity to apply a new striping pattern that includes a bicycle facility, or a land development application is filed and the City has an opportunity to have the developer build (or pay for) a portion of a bicycle and/or pedestrian facility due to its proximity to the new development).
    - The results of the online survey of the Ad Hoc Committee follows. This result indicates the Committee's ranked preference for the following factors in the prioritization process:

Factor Ranking	**Score (of all respondents)**
1. Safety (incl. bicycle crashes and fatalities, and traffic speed and volume)	36
2. Demand (incl. land use, density, and schools, metro, etc.)	30
3. Connectivity (incl. proximity to existing bikeway, connection to key destinations)	27
4. Geography (incl. areas that currently lack bike facilities)	17

    - In addition to discussing the factors that can be used for prioritization, Ms. Anderson described the types of variables that can be used as measures for various factors.

- Committee members raised a variety of questions about the prioritization process:
    1) Do we know the types of crashes that occur involving bicyclists and pedestrians, i.e. bike-car; bike-bike; bike-pedestrian, etc.?
    2) Crash data may not be a good measure for safety because crashes are likely to be low in areas where there are few bicyclists.
    3) Geography and demand should be merged as factors, as it may be hard to make them distinct. There could be double counting.
    4) There is a close relationship between connectivity and demand. Maybe connectivity should be thought of as what is needed in between a trip origin and destination, and the origin and destination are the drivers of demand.
    5) Will you use standard demand formulas or a customized approach for Alexandria?

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6) While everyone values safety, it could be a problem if the main measure is crashes. There is a need to factor in the need for safer bicycling conditions, which may be indicated by a low level of bicycling or a low level of crashes.
7) Should we weigh the factors the same way in every part of the city, or should some factors be valued more in some parts of the city (such as the west end) because of the needs present in that area?
8) A number of committee members were concerned that areas of the City that are underserved by bikeway facilities, may not have a factor with enough weight to make sure that it will make proposed facilities in that area rank high enough on the final priority list.
9) A question was raised regarding how to understand the legend of the demand maps shown in the presentation, i.e. what color represents high demand, what color represents low demand.
10) Why does Old Town Alexandria show such a high demand, and some areas in west Alexandria with high levels of employment and high density residential are not shown as a high demand?.
11) The demand map was limited to the boundaries of the City of Alexandria, and concerns were raised about demand for bicycle travel that is created by trip generators located outside of the City.
12) Making bicycle facilities accessible to people that have disabilities and use "special" bicycles may be a factor that should be included in the prioritization.

Presentation of and discussion of the Draft Bicycle Network in the western half of Alexandria (Carrie Sanders and Alia Anderson)

- Ms. Sanders explained the basic concepts of the Bikeway network which identifies major cross-city routes as well as shorter neighborhood links for the City's bikeway network.
    - Primary routes serve and connect the most important set of destinations, including destinations outside of the City. These routes will also serve the longest cross-city movements that need to be accommodated.
    - The secondary routes provide supplemental neighborhood connectivity to the primary system as well as connectivity to some of the destinations of secondary importance.
    - The tiertiary routes provide additional connectivity between smaller neighborhoods and the entire system, as well as important route alternatives that may be attractive for a variety of reasons (directness, stress level, etc.)

- Ms. Anderson presented a slide based upon research conducted in Portland, Oregon, that characterizes bicyclists in four basic categories: The Strong and Fearless, the Enthusiastic and Confident, the Interested but Concerned and the Not Able or Interested.

- Ms. Anderson presented a series of slides that explained what types of bikeway facilities are grouped into each of the three categories shown on the map: Enhanced Bicycle Corridor; Trails; and Shared Roadway. Mr. Patten of TDG, noted that it is important to understand that each and every type of bicycle facility categorized as an Enhanced Bicycle Corridor, will not necessarily be feasible on the road/street with that designation, but at least one of them will be feasible, based on the field evaluation of that road made by the TDG consulting team.

- Ms. Sanders called attention to a handout map that showed the draft bicycle network for west Alexandria. This network included existing facilities, a select set of already planned facilities from small area plans and corridor studies, the 2008 Bicycle Mobility Plan, approved capital improvement projects, as well as new recommendations from the consulting team. The new recommendations that are different from recommendations

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identified in previous planning efforts are highlighted in yellow; Stevenson Avenue and Seminary Road are two examples in West Alexandria.

- The Committee was asked to comment on the map; i.e. what might be missing? What may not be needed? What are the concerns? etc.

General Discussion and Questions Raised (Committee):

1. The choice of facility types is critical. Bicycle lanes or protected bike lanes, not sidepaths, are best for serving the numbers of people Alexandria wants to see using bicycles for transportation and recreation.
2. During the discussion Ms. Marks explained that the goal of the bike and pedestrian planning process is to have a limited number of projects rise to the top; providing the community, elected officials, and the staff a set of projects that can be focused on and completed in a reasonable timeframe. She used the transit planning process that the City conducted in 2008 as part of the Transportation Master Plan, as a model that has helped the City make concrete steps forward in development of three transitways within the City.
3. It was suggested that a link between Quaker Lane between Seminary and Duke Street is missing, and that there is not a good way to get to Ft. Williams Parkway.
4. Questions were raised about how the plan should address the differences between recreational bicycling and utilitarian/transportation-oriented bicycle.
5. A question was asked about the goal for project mapping; is the goal, in the end, to have a map of top priority projects and separate map of medium priority projects?
6. A question was asked: What is the timeframe within which the priorities identified in this plan are expected to be implemented?

Public Comments:

- A number of people raised concerns about the use of crash data as a measure of bicycle safety. Bike crashes can be under reported because property damage is a measure used to determine if a crash is reported by police. Also, bike/pedestrian and bike/bike crashes may not be reported for a variety of reasons. Also, crashes may be low in areas that are underutilized because people believe them to be unsafe for cycling.

- Regional connectivity is also important – ensuring that the network links to out-of-city destinations as well as providing good east-west and north-south connectivity.

- It was noted that the wikimap input was not representative of all city residents and should be used with caution as an input to the prioritization process – it may be biased.

- The demand map in the presentation does not indicate what other data has shown that the Beauregard corridor has a high volume of cyclists using it currently, as well as a high level of future demand due to demographics of the neighborhood and location of jobs at the Mark Center and surrounding area.

- Seminary Road should be a Primary bicycle route in the network.

- It was suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee be asked again to weight the factors that would be used for the prioritization process. They could each be given 100 points and they can spread them across the individual factors as each person sees fit.

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- It would also be helpful to show the committee and the public a trial run of the prioritization process to illustrate how it works.

Next Steps (Steve Sindiong)

- Continued work on the Pedestrian Case Study Areas
- Review the Draft Bicycle Network in the eastern portion of the City
- Public Meeting in summer 2015

UPCOMING MEETING

- Advisory Committee Meeting #6
  Thursday, May 14, 2015, 7:00-9:00 pm
  Cora Kelly Recreation Center, 25 West Reed Ave. Alexandria, VA
  There will be a walking tour held starting at 6pm, in advance of the regular meeting; details TBA.

*To be kept informed of future Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan / Complete Streets Design Guidelines meetings, please sign up for eNews (**Complete Streets** group under Transportation & Environmental Services) at http://www.alexandriava.gov/enews and visit the project website at http://www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan. For additional information, please contact Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria, at 703-746-4047 or email steve.sindiong@alexandriava.gov.*

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended. To request a reasonable accommodation, e-mail Geralyn.Taylor@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.4084, Virginia Relay 711.

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