



# AD HOC PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #7

City of Alexandria | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services  
Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 | 7:00-9:00 pm  
City Hall, Room 3008 (OPA AlexStat & REA Conference Room) | 301 King Street

## NOTES

### 7:00 p.m. Welcome, Introductions

#### Committee members in attendance:

- Jennifer Hovis, Chair
- Carol Abrams
- Dave Brown
- Linda Couture
- Mollie Danforth
- Alan Dinsmore
- Christine Michaelis
- William Schuyler

#### Project staff:

- Yon Lambert, City of Alexandria
- Carrie Sanders, City of Alexandria
- Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria
- Hillary Poole, City of Alexandria
- Karen Callaham, City of Alexandria
- Alia Anderson, Toole Design Group
- RJ Eldridge, Toole Design Group
- Mauricio Hernandez, Toole Design Group

#### Public:

- Nine (9) persons signed the sign-in sheet

### 7:05 p.m. Project Schedule Overview (Jennifer Hovis)

- Ms. Hovis reviewed the Project Milestones and provided a project update. Since the last meeting, project prioritization has continued and pedestrian strategies were drafted.
- Tonight's meeting will include a presentation of the draft Pedestrian Case Study Areas

### 7:10 p.m. Recap from Bicycle Network Discussion (Steve Sindiong, Carrie Sanders)

- Existing conditions, fieldwork and Goals/Objectives have been completed
- Bike network – The City has presented the network in two phases: West and then East. The final network was revised based on comments from the Ad Hoc Committee at the last two meetings, as well as input from the public.
- Bike network edits – The City adjusted recommendations to reflect an additional 1.3 miles of enhanced bike corridors (compared to the draft network shared at the prior two meetings). This was done to increase connectivity to different areas, and improve transitions to on/off trails. Some shared facilities were also removed to avoid redundancy (ex. Sharrows in some parts of Old Town, and avoid bicycle and pedestrian conflicts in Old Town. Most of the major changes were to the proposed infrastructure improvements on the West Side of the city because of the low number of facilities on that side.

#### General Discussion and Questions Raised (Committee):

- o Were the new advisory bike lanes in the Potomac Green development part of this Master Plan initiative?

- Ms. Sanders responded that this particular project was started at the same time as the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan however it was funded through transportation management funds.
- South Van Dorn Street will be a challenge for safety of bicyclists. Bike and pedestrian improvements need to be a critical part of the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, and West End Transitway project.

### **Draft Pedestrian Case Studies Discussion (Steve Sindiong, Alia Anderson)**

Case studies were selected to explore key issues and recommendations that can be replicated throughout the City. The Case Study areas were chosen based on input from the public and Ad Hoc Committee early on during the identification of issues and needs. Recommendations for these areas will be used as models for other parts of the city with similar characteristics. Areas include:

- Landmark area
- Duke Street (between Jordan and Wheeler Ave)
- King Street near King Street Metrorail Station
- Arlandria
- Seminary Road (between I-395 and N. Howard Street)

For each case study, extensive fieldwork was conducted and over 50 different issues were identified. Based on the issues and observed pedestrian activity found, a set of recommendations was developed. The end product of this phase of the project will be two maps summarizing the key issues found and recommendations.

The project team presented the Seminary Road case study as an example, though all of the Case Study maps (existing conditions and recommendations) were posted online and distributed to the committee prior to the meeting.

- Existing conditions included: proximity to on/off ramps of I-395 at Seminary Rd; fast vehicular traffic, dense and varied development (retail, housing, school), high number of pedestrians cutting at midblock where there is no crossing available.
- Recommendations included: reducing turn radii on side streets to slow turning vehicles from Seminary Road. Reducing radii will also shorten walking distance for pedestrians; adding buffers and enhancing crosswalks; enhancing pedestrian related signage. Most importantly, for further study, move the bus stop closer to the crosswalk (short term) and evaluate the installation of a midblock signal or other strategies (long term).

### **General Discussion and Questions Raised (Committee):**

- Sight lines for drivers are not easy to see because of the retaining wall at the medical building (east of Kenmore Ave.), making cars go past the advanced stop bar. Recommendations should address minimized sight lines.
- Safety should be the highest priority for this plan. The City needs to improve safety of pedestrians and address conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists.
- How do you balance the prioritization of infrastructure for pedestrians and bicycles? Does widening sidewalks decrease space for bicycles? For many of the recommendations put forth, there are no bicycle facilities currently present.
  - Ms. Anderson responded that this was the core challenge of this Plan Update – that there are right-of-way constraints in most places in the city so expanding space for one mode will mean making choices that impact all road users. The full set of recommendations would be implemented over a longer term, so some concepts that would require new right-of-way would occur incrementally as development comes in.

- The final Master Plan document will not contain full recommendations for each intersection throughout the city, therefore how will the City use these examples as templates to implement improvements in other areas?
  - Ms. Sanders responded that the issues can be replicated throughout the city through the citywide master plan engineering pedestrian strategies. Furthermore, the selected Study Areas are also areas of the city that don't currently have any City projects/studies and these detailed studies will help focus projects in these areas.
- Where do skateboarders fit in this plan? There is no special designation under the current City Code.
  - Ms. Sanders responded that the code does (protection of pedestrians) mention devices that you have one foot on the ground and other (on sidewalks). To date there haven't been significant complaints/issues related to skateboarders but it is something we need to keep an eye on.

### **Draft Pedestrian Strategies (Steve Sindiong, RJ Eldridge)**

The focus of this discussion was on engineering strategies developed through the review of the 2008 plan, AdHoc committee input, City Staff input and input from the community at large. A few things have changed since the 2008 plan: the need to focus on separation of modes on sidewalks and the implementation of the Complete Streets Guidelines being developed as part of this plan, which were recommended in the 2008 plan.

RJ Eldridge presented the draft pedestrian engineering strategies, with a more in depth focus on four that have come up the most in prior discussions with the Committee and from public input:

- **Apply Complete Streets Guidelines** – These guidelines will provide a comprehensive reference that addresses all modes (bike, pedestrian, motorist, transit users). The guidelines also provide recommended sidewalk widths for different street types (seven typologies) based on existing and proposed development character and where the street is located. There is also guidance on vegetation, access management, seating and transit stop spacing/location. All new projects will be required to follow these guidelines.
- **Close sidewalk gaps and improve sidewalks where needed** – Currently the City's sidewalk coverage is good but there are still some challenges that include narrow sidewalks for existing pedestrian volumes, maintenance issues, and obstructions (ex. utility poles). While the 2008 plan recommendations began addressing these issues, these preliminary projects were the easiest to implement. Finally, sidewalk widths will be determined by the Complete Streets guidelines typology and based on the existing and needed frontage area, pedestrian zone area and amenity area.
- **Prioritize and standardize curb ramp upgrades and other ADA improvements** - Recommendations put forth in the plan will include the construction/ upgrade of ramps to ADA Standards, provision of two separate perpendicular curb ramps (where feasible) and adding pedestrian push buttons where they are easy to access.
- **Reduce conflicts between people on bicycles and people walking** – The project team has heard a lot about this topic from the Ad Hoc committee and public, particularly related to Old Town and on arterial roadways with larger commercial districts. Often, these bicyclists are younger and inexperienced. Currently the city does allow bicycling on sidewalks unless specifically stated in the code (King Street and a portion of Union Street in Old Town). Some of the strategies presented include providing increased signage and enforcement by the

police, providing comfortable and low-stress alternatives for people bicycling, and providing alternative routes for bicyclists (alternative options for improving existing nearby facilities and widening existing sidewalks to provide enough space for bicyclists and pedestrians.

#### General Discussion and Questions Raised (Committee):

- A letter was sent by the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) related to concerns about the West End Transit way not having enough right-of-way to provide comfortable facilities for both pedestrians and bicyclists. How will the City address this? Currently, the City has planned for a transit way in the middle of the street which will be implemented first. As adjacent development is approved, and more Right-of-Way is acquired by the City, the improved, wider facilities for both bicyclists and pedestrians will be constructed. In general, due the cost and constraints of acquiring additional right-of-way, the non-motorized improvements will need to be phase in over time.
- What about the connection between S. Pickett Street and the Van Dorn Metrorail station - will the Van Dorn Street bridge be widened? The Long Term vision is to implement a parallel multimodal bridge providing a connection between the Metrorail station and S. Pickett Street, providing facilities for all users. However, there are no short term plans or capital improvements funding for rebuilding the Van Dorn Street bridge.
- Will the Complete Streets Design Guidelines have any recommendations on timing for pedestrian crossing at intersections? The City currently follows the national standard of 3.5 seconds per feet when implementing new timing at intersections with stop lights/pedestrian countdowns.
- Conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians will need to be minimized especially in Old town, which is a very stressful environment to walk/bike in. However, studies have shown that as better bicycle facilities are implemented less conflicts on sidewalks are created. The idea is to make the street so attractive that bicyclists will opt to bike on them rather than on sidewalks.
- Has the City thought about outlawing bicycling on sidewalks on all Streets in Old Town? The process does allow for amendments to the current law to cover more areas, but it would take a lot of time and according to feedback from the police department, it is very difficult to enforce.
- The project needs to identify the root cause of why bicyclists are using the sidewalks, especially in Old Town. Once you know the cause, a solution can be identified.

#### Public Comment

- Please focus on improving crossing conditions in areas with high pedestrian demand including the intersection of Seminary Road and Howard Street where the existing bus stop might need to move. Also think about removing the existing slip lane (at southbound Howard Street) to avoid conflicts between motorists and pedestrians.
- Bicycle and pedestrian conflict resolution should not only focus on Old Town as this is a citywide problem. However if you want bicyclists off of the sidewalk, build good bicycle facilities.
- Please emphasize addressing existing gaps: sidewalks that are dangerous should be improved, and sidewalks that don't need repair should not be repaired. Provide safer

conditions on sidewalks especially the existing sidewalk at Duke Street and Taylor Run Parkway. as there is no railing.

- Some issues were identified for the west end including: existing apartment developments are separated by fences which create barriers for people walking/bicycling. To this end many neighbors recognized that many gaps on the fences have been punched through.
- Consider prohibiting the construction of new slip lanes to prevent conflicts with pedestrians. Some people do like slip lanes , however a compromise would be adding No Right turn on Red signs.
- Other commenters asked that bicyclists not be outlawed from sidewalks (due to the difficulty in enforcement) but that better bicycle focused facilities be implemented.
- Other non-motorized modes (ex. roller skates, segways, push scooters, etc.) should be addressed in the plan to create a legal framework for them.
- King Street bike lanes need some metrics to understand success. Commenter proposed calculating the ratio of vehicles relative to the width of the segment of street that is allocated to those vehicles.

#### **Committee Member Updates**

- No updates from committee members were provided.

#### **Wrap Up and Next Steps / Next Meeting date (Steve Sindiong)**

- Next AdHoc meeting will be held in August to give City and consultants enough time to put together more comprehensive list of recommendations. A Google poll will be sent out to the Ad Hoc committee to determine exact date/time for the meeting.
- Next meeting will focus on policy and program strategies.

#### **UPCOMING MEETING**

- Advisory Committee Meeting #8  
August (Date to be determined), 7:00-9:00 pm

*[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 \[steve.sindiong@alexandriava.gov\]\(mailto:steve.sindiong@alexandriava.gov\).](http://www.alexandriava.gov/enews)*

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