



Alexandria Transportation Commission
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Alexandria, VA 22314

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Honorable Mayor William D. Euille and Members of City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

October 22, 2015

Re: Transportation Elements of Eisenhower West Small Area Plan

Dear Mayor Euille, Members of City Council and Members of the Planning Commission:

At its October 21, 2015 meeting, the Alexandria Transportation Commission reviewed the draft Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, including the Plan's transportation recommendations. The Commission moved to affirm that the transportation recommendations in the draft Eisenhower West Small Area Plan are consistent with the goals outlined in the City's Transportation Master Plan, adopted in 2008, as shown in the attachment.

As such, the Transportation Commission recommends that appropriate phasing of transportation planning investments be implemented in anticipation of occupancy of future development. Improvements should include sufficient transit to support car-free and car-light lifestyles for households within the Plan area, and especially areas beyond reach of the planned West End Transitway. In addition, the City should implement near term transportation improvements to support incoming Transportation Security Administration employees at the Victory Center.

The Transportation Commission was created by Council to advocate and promote the development of balanced transportation systems in the City through oversight of the Transportation Master Plan. Our action on October 21st was conducted to fulfill that oversight obligation.

The Commission appreciates your consideration of its input on this project.

Sincerely,

Nathan M. Macek
Chair, Alexandria Transportation Commission

cc: Alexandria Transportation Commission
City Manager Mark Jinks
Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES
Carrie Sanders, Acting Deputy Director, T&ES

Attachment: Eisenhower West Small Area Plan – Comparison to Transportation Master Plan

Attachment: Eisenhower West Small Area Plan - Comparison to Transportation Master Plan

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN GOALS:	WITHOUT THE PLAN (STATUS QUO)	WITH THE PLAN
Transit		
<p>Ensure that people can travel into, within and out of the City of Alexandria by providing a mass transit system that combines different modes of travel into a seamless, comprehensive and coordinated effort.</p>	<p>Without the plan, it is assumed that the West End Transitway, and the Duke Street Transitway (Corridor B) will be constructed. Local transit services would remain as currently operated or planned, including a new Van Dorn circulator. Without the plan, there will be lower land use densities, land uses with less compatibility with transit, and a lack of pedestrian connectivity that result in poor use of existing or planned transit improvements.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan includes a mixture of land uses with higher densities and improvements to facilitate improved connectivity between modes, including a multi-modal bridge that will improve non-motorized and transit access to the Van Dorn Metrorail station. The plan also encourages higher densities within close proximity to the Van Dorn Metrorail station which will encourage greater use of transit. In addition, the plan recommends a realigned Van Dorn circulator to provide better access to areas west of Van Dorn Street, and enhanced transit service on Eisenhower Avenue between the Van Dorn Metrorail station and Eisenhower Metrorail station.</p>
Pedestrian		
<p>Engineering: The City will provide a continuous, connected and accessible network that enables pedestrians - particularly children and those with mobility impairments - to move safely and comfortably between places and destinations.</p>	<p>The City's current Transportation Master Plan identifies specific pedestrian improvements within the plan area, including the Multi-modal bridge, and extension of the Backlick Run trail, and intersection improvements at locations such as Van Dorn Street at Eisenhower Avenue. The current pedestrian facilities are limited, and many streets and uses are not connected by safe pedestrian facilities. There is a lack of north-south connectivity, especially over Backlick Run and the Norfolk-Southern rail line. The street network is disconnected and the narrow and non-ADA compliant pedestrian facilities can discourage people from walking. Without the plan, the limited network would remain.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends an improved street grid that will facilitate better pedestrian connectivity, especially north-south connectivity. Pedestrian connections are also proposed to provide access between Cameron Station and adjacent neighborhoods. In addition to the Multi-modal bridge, non-motorized paths are recommended to connect recreation and open spaces, transit facilities, and adjacent neighborhoods. New pedestrian facilities would be designed in a manner that is ADA accessible, provides separation from autos, and have attractive streetscapes. These facilities will provide better and safer accessibility for all users.</p>
<p>Encouragement: The City will encourage mobility for all pedestrians, regardless of age or ability, by promoting walking as a means of improving health and increasing transit usage.</p>	<p>The current pedestrian facilities are limited. Without the plan, this limited network would remain thereby promoting more vehicular trips, and discouraging healthy activities.</p>	<p>The improved street grid and associated pedestrian facilities will help to encourage walking between uses and to transit. The new facilities will be constructed to be ADA accessible, attractive, and convenient, and therefore encourage users of all ages and abilities to access uses. This in turn will help to promote transit use as well as encourage healthy activities.</p>

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN GOALS:	WITHOUT THE PLAN (STATUS QUO)	WITH THE PLAN
<p>Education: The City will develop a Safe Routes to School Program and awareness initiatives that address pedestrian safety, rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Today, there is a disconnect between many residential areas and schools (Samuel Tucker Elementary School) within the surrounding neighborhoods and many of the pedestrian facilities are not ADA compliant or are in poor condition. These existing conditions can discourage walking to schools. Without the plan, there is no guarantee that pedestrian improvements would be made within the plan area.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan includes improved pedestrian facilities that are ADA accessible, separated from autos and have an improved streetscape. In addition, the Plan includes improved connections to schools and recreation centers from within the plan area, and to surrounding neighborhoods. These recommended improvements are more compatible with a Safe Routes to School program than the existing conditions.</p>
<p>Safety: The City will create a safe pedestrian environment through effective law enforcement and implementation of pedestrian safety countermeasures.</p>	<p>The current pedestrian facilities are limited (see above). Without the plan, this limited network would remain. An auto focused environment results in a higher likelihood of conflicts between pedestrians and autos, and therefore impacts pedestrian safety.</p>	<p>The Plan recommends a compact layout with a mixture of land uses, improved road grid, that will result in direct, visible pedestrian zones with additional crosswalks. It recommends widened sidewalks and trails that are ADA accessible, and buffered from vehicles. The plan also includes improved pedestrian crossings at arterials, additional north-south non-motorized connections across Backlick Run and the Norfolk-Southern rail line. These improvements will encourage pedestrian activity, improve pedestrian visibility, and help to reduce auto speeds, thereby improving overall pedestrian safety.</p>
<p>Bicycle</p>		
<p>Engineering: The City will complete a connected system of primary and secondary bikeways with ample bicycle parking to serve bicyclists needs.</p>	<p>Today, there are limited bicycle facilities within the plan area or surrounding area, including the Backlick Run trail. While there are designated on-street facilities such as on Eisenhower Avenue and S. Pickett Street, they are currently not marked (such as a bikelane or sharrow). The Transportation Master Plan includes an extension of Backlick Run Trail to Fairfax County, the Multi-modal bridge, and a non-motorized trail along the south side of the Norfolk-Southern rail line. It also recommends an on-street facility along S. Van Dorn Street. The West End Transitway project is planning for a sidepath along the east side of Van Dorn Street.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities beyond those identified in the Transportation Master Plan. These include making Eisenhower Avenue a "Great Street" that would include a sidepath for bicyclists, and the implementation of enhanced bicycle facilities along Van Dorn Street, Farrington Avenue, Metro Road, Cameron Station Boulevard, S. Pickett Street, and additional non-motorized trails that would cross Backlick Run and the Norfolk-Southern rail line, connecting Eisenhower Avenue to Cameron Station and Ben Brenman Park. The Plan also recommends bicycle parking at major activity centers, including Bike Share stations located at major activity centers within each neighborhood in the Plan area.</p>

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN GOALS:	WITHOUT THE PLAN (STATUS QUO)	WITH THE PLAN
<p>Encouragement: The City will seek to increase bicycle usage and bicycle-transit connections through targeted outreach and encouragement.</p>	<p>The City's Transportation Master Plan includes objectives such as integration of bicycles with transit, providing bicycle accommodations through development review, Bike to Work Day, promoting health, and partnering with local businesses.</p>	<p>The objectives identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan to meet this goal would continue to be implemented. In addition, the specific bicycle improvements recommended in the Plan, such as the improved connectivity to all uses and transit, and policies related to parking and bikeshare, and Transportation Management Plan strategies will help to increase bicycle usage and connections to transit.</p>
<p>Education: The City will develop and implement targeted Safe Routes to School programs as well as additional programs for adult cyclists, and motorists.</p>	<p>The City's Transportation Master Plan includes objectives such as education, bicycle registration and outreach. However, the general lack of a comprehensive, connected bicycle system within the plan area, and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, discourages students from riding bicycles to school. Without the plan, there are no planned improvements to the bicycle network.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends improved bicycle facilities throughout the Plan area. It includes improved connections to Samuel Tucker Elementary School and other potential future schools. These recommended improvements are compatible with a Safe Routes to School program. Other recommended programs in the City's Transportation Master Plan, such as education, providing bicycle maps, and outreach would continue to be implemented.</p>
<p>Safety: The City will create a safe bicycle environment and reduce user conflict on shared-use paths through effective law enforcement, detailed crash analysis and implementation of bicycle safety countermeasures.</p>	<p>The Transportation Master Plan includes objectives to meet this goal, including educational programs, traffic enforcement of both cars and bicycles, adequately reporting crash incidents, and targeting key intersections and conflict points for adequate improvements.</p>	<p>The objectives identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan to meet this goal would continue to be implemented. However, it is anticipated that the improved street grid and bicycle facilities recommended in the Plan will result in greater awareness of bicycles by motorists, and overall improved safety for bicyclists.</p>
<p><i>Streets and Neighborhood Protection (Traffic Calming)</i></p>		
<p>Provide protection to residential neighborhoods from traffic operating at excessive speeds and excessive volumes of traffic.</p>	<p>The City's current Transportation Master Plan identifies limited improvements within the plan area, such as intersection improvements focused on pedestrian safety (Van Dorn Street at Eisenhower Avenue, Van Dorn Street at S. Pickett Street, etc.). While the Transportation Master Plan includes goals and measures related to traffic calming, there are no specific improvements identified within the Plan area. Without the Plan, most of the street configuration and pedestrian facilities may remain as they are today, but there are opportunities for residents to request additional traffic calming measures.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends a street grid that will include traffic control at intersections. The grid and streets will be designed in a manner to reduce vehicular speeds, especially on residential streets, and will be consistent with the Complete Streets design guidelines. Features include narrowed lanes, wide sidewalks and non-motorized paths, pedestrian crosswalks, bulbouts, on-street parking, and varying pavement materials. These features will provide greater emphasis toward pedestrians, thereby reducing conflicts with autos and improving overall pedestrian safety.</p>

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<p>Keep neighborhood street use, to the greatest extent possible, within the classification defined in the transportation chapter of the Master Plan.</p>	<p>The Transportation Master Plan currently identifies Eisenhower Avenue, Van Dorn Street, Edsall Road, and Duke Street as an arterial; and S. Pickett Street as a primary collector, and all other streets as local streets. Without the Small Area Plan, the only other streets that would be added to the classification system are current planned streets such as the Multi-modal bridge, and Farrington Connector.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends some changes to the roadway classification. The improved grid results in an addition of local streets where traffic would travel at a slower speed, and some new collector roadways. Arterials and collectors would be redesigned in a manner to improve connectivity and safety for all modes, such as a sidepath along both Eisenhower Avenue, and Van Dorn Street.</p>
<p>Increase access, safety, comfort and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists by changing the culture of neighborhood street use from "cars first" to "people first".</p>	<p>The City's current Transportation Master Plan recommends limited improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists within the plan area. These include the Multi-modal bridge, safety improvements at some intersections, and the Backlick Run trail extension. While these improvements will help to encourage use of other modes, there area is still dominated by superblocks and an overall auto oriented character. Therefore ability to change to a "people first" culture is less likely without the Small Area Plan.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends a compact layout with a mixture of land uses, and improved street grid, and safe, accessible, attractive and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities. A key feature of the plan is to provide a more human scaled, memorable place that focuses on people, such as the Great Street concept along Eisenhower Avenue, and neighborhood nodes, such as at the Van Dorn Metrorail Station. These features will encourage more walking and biking between uses, and to transit, improve pedestrian visibility, and help to reduce auto speeds, thereby creating a culture of "people first".</p>
<p>Base the expenditure of public resources on need.</p>	<p>Without the Plan, the current planned major transportation projects include the Multi-modal bridge, the Farrington Avenue Connector, the Backlick Run trail extension, and the West End Transitway. While individual frontage improvements or mitigation improvements could be required for individual developments, the piecemeal development would result in a lack of a coordinated infrastructure plan.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan anticipates the redevelopment of most of the area within the Plan area, with exception of Cameron Station. The expense attributed toward the development of the majority of streets / blocks would be borne by the developer, and developer contributions are also anticipated for some of the major improvements such as enhanced transit along Eisenhower Avenue, the Multi-modal bridge (or Van Dorn Street widening), and bridges built as part of the Farrington Avenue Connector.</p>

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<p>Foster a collaborative working relationship between the City staff and neighborhood residents in the development of traffic calming measures.</p>	<p>The Complete Streets program includes funding for traffic calming projects. As part of the program, staff identifies projects based on citizen requests and if the street warrants traffic calming measures. Staff conducts outreach with area residents for input prior to project implementation. Without the plan, potential projects could still be requested by residents, but would need to be evaluated for implementation based on thresholds such as volume and accident history.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends a road system designed in a manner to reduce vehicular speeds, especially on residential streets. Features include narrowed lanes, pedestrian crosswalks, on-street parking, bulbouts, enhanced bicycle facilities, and varying pavement materials. These initially constructed traffic calming features will reduce the need to implement future traffic calming elements.</p>
<p>Parking</p>		
<p>A comprehensive parking management strategy that is fully integrated with the City's plans for transit, streets, bicycles and pedestrians and functions in coordination with these plans - furthering the City's overall goals and wider transportation vision.</p>	<p>Today, the area is dominated by light industrial and to a lesser extent, residential uses, and the transportation system is focused on the automobile, which results in the need to provide extensive parking. The area includes on-street parking and large surface lots. On-street parking is located in residential areas such as Cameron Station. Without the plan, some issues such as spillover parking on residential streets, and an overall lack of a parking structure could continue, but may be partially or incrementally alleviated as individual properties are redeveloped.</p>	<p>The Small Area Plan recommends a mixture of uses near high capacity transit, such as the West End Transitway, and the Van Dorn Metrorail station. The proposed multi-modal transportation system will result in a greater share of persons who will walk, bike or ride transit. These characteristics thus allow for lower parking requirements (per the City's recently amended residential parking requirements), and opportunities for shared parking. The Plan recommends that parking spaces be efficiently managed to maximize turnover of spaces, and include smart parking technologies and shared parking. A parking management plan will be required for developments as they occur, which could include measures such as unbundled residential / mixed-use parking. On-street spaces may be metered and be part of a performance parking program.</p>