



AD HOC PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #9

City of Alexandria | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Tuesday, January 19th, 2016 | 7:00-9:00 pm
TC Williams High School, Rotunda Room | 3330 King Street

NOTES

Welcome, Introductions

Committee members in attendance:

- Dave Brown, Acting Chair
- Casey Kane
- Christine Michaelis
- Mollie Danforth
- John Fennel
- Alan Dinsmore

Project staff:

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

Public:

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

Meeting Goals and Schedule (Dave Brown, Steve Sindiong)

- Committee Acting-Chair, Dave Brown, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone to the meeting and led introductions of the committee and project staff, and provided an overview of the goal of the meeting, which was to provide input on the draft plan.
- T&ES staff Steve Sindiong provided a project update, and noted that after the comments are received on the draft plan, the plan will be updated and presented to the Ad Hoc Committee for endorsement at their next and final meeting, to be scheduled for February. Following that, the Transportation Commission, and Planning Commission will review the draft plan, and the Planning Commission will be asked to amend the existing Transportation Master Plan. The Council is anticipated to approve the plan and amendment in April 2016.

Plan Updates (Steve Sindiong)

- Mr. Sindiong noted that this is the 9th Committee meeting and there have been two public meetings during the project.
- The last Committee meeting focused on the draft strategies. Several changes to the draft strategies were made based on the input of the Committee and public.
- Also since the last Committee meeting, there was a public meeting on September 24, 2015, and several presentations to Commissions and Boards throughout the City. All of the input received from those Commissions has been incorporated in this draft plan. Similarly, staff took draft plan materials to several public events during the summer, such as Farmers Markets.
- Key themes from the public meeting in September included pedestrian safety, vision zero, the need for improve bicyclist behavior, an interest in slowing vehicle traffic, and a desire for separated bike lanes and a continuous bike network between destinations

Plan Highlights and Recent Changes

- Mr. Sindiong reviewed that the draft plan was developed based on input from staff, the public (via two public meetings, three summer outreach events), six presentations to various Commissions/boards, ten staff Technical Advisory Committee meetings, nine Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meetings, and hundreds of comments through an interactive map and online survey.
- The draft plan includes over 500 facility recommendations in six case study areas, which represent common themes related to pedestrian and bicycle access and safety that occur citywide. It also includes nearly 88 miles of new bicycle recommendations.
- Since the last Committee meeting, the project team added an additional Case Study Area at the intersection of Commonwealth and Braddock Road. Key themes in the area included closing sidewalk gaps and improving ADA access.
- Several strategies were revised since the last meeting based on Ad Hoc Committee input, public input, and input from various commissions/boards. For example, the Vision Zero strategy was revised to include serious injuries (in addition to fatalities) and a strategy was revised to address maintenance needs related to debris and trash, among other changes.
- Mr. Sindiong presented the draft proposed bicycle network. The goal of this proposed network was to connect important destinations citywide, and particularly provide more bicycle facilities in the west half of the City. The map also includes projects and new streets from other adopted city plans including the Oakville Triangle Small Area Plan, Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, and the Beauregard Small Area Plan.
- Mr. Sindiong shared the top 10 priority on-street bike projects, sidewalk and trail projects, all of which were prioritized using a data-driven methodology that the committee reviewed earlier in the project. The numbers on the maps do not necessarily reflect the order that projects will be built – they reflect the potential benefit of the project based on ranked results from the prioritization process.
- Committee Discussion/Questions:
 - o The prioritization exercise and results will be the most interesting element of the plan for the public. Is there any way we can provide greater clarity to the public regarding our aspirations about what will be implemented first? Is there anything we can say about how we expect the city to take these projects into account in moving forward with their work program? Please consider changing the language about the order of project priority to be more clear and aspirational.
 - City response: One of the goals was to have a manageable number of priority projects that would give staff direction on what to pursue for implementation. However, projects will continue to be implemented based on opportunities (i.e. repaving or redevelopment), grant funding, or other conditions. Furthermore, each project must go through design and public engagement, which make it difficult to predict implementation timing. For these reasons, the Top 10 projects are identified but it isn't feasible to present an implementation order or timeline.
 - o We should reduce the use of sharrows and look to other options first. Since all roadways in Alexandria are shared roadways, we may want to think of other names for this category of streets – “enhanced shared roads” or something like that – to reinforce the fact that all roads are actually shareable.
 - o The West End is very needy in terms of infrastructure. We need to emphasize in the Plan that there has been an effort to equitably plan facilities throughout the city.

- Vision Zero needs to have a higher visibility in the plan. The Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) recommends that the Vision Zero strategy be shifted in the document to emphasize its importance to the project.
- Timelines for when projects are actually going to happen would be valuable in the plan. Are these 5, 10 or 25 year priorities? Also, the funding section assumes that there will be 8% funding for bike/pedestrian projects in the City (based on the existing Capital Improvement Program) but it used to be 11 or 12 percent – we need to be transparent about this.
- Objective 1.3 is about reducing conflicts between bikes, pedestrian and vehicles. Separated bike lanes are essential to this, and the strategy should be revised to emphasize this and make sure bicycles are addressed (as well as pedestrians).
- In Strategy 1 on page 60, we have language about monitoring construction projects related to bike routes. Need to add something similar for pedestrian pathways/sidewalks.
- Older individuals may not see themselves as pedestrians or part of a project like this, but they are. One of the key items for educating this group of people is to talk to them about what the process has been, what they can expect from the plan, and how it might influence their lives.
- Given the nature of everything this plan aims to accomplish, it is going to be very helpful for everyone to understand a schedule for completion. Also, if the schedule hasn't been met or if projects are not completed to expectations, what does the public do? The public process can be a labyrinth.
- The plan and approach moving forward needs to consider tourists. Alexandria has tourists on bikeshare who may not have been on a bicycle in 15 or 20 year – we need to figure out a way to communicate to these individuals how to behave on different facilities and in different bicycling conditions.
- This plan is well written and very informative. I think this is a really fantastic job and is comprehensive network that covers areas that have been neglected in the past, including in the center city.
- Prioritization leads to expectations, and we need to communicate more clearly how and when projects will be implemented. If things change over time, we need to communicate why.
- Complements to the staff and consultants on how this process was run. We really appreciate the extent to which staff put the committee's opinions into account and made changes.
- There is a need for more dedicated bike paths and fewer sharrows. The disabled community needs separation between pedestrians and bicyclists. Unless bicyclists feel safe on the street, they are not going to get off the sidewalk.
- The prioritization section needs work, to explain that prioritization reflects the *need* for a particular project, not the order it will implemented.
- How did the case study areas inform the prioritized pedestrian projects? If people don't see their backyard in a case study area, are they left out? You may need to amplify the explanation of this in the draft.
- One of the reasons the City Council wanted a member of the planning commission on the committee is to make sure the Planning Commission is sensitized to the value of having developers fund some of these projects. The Planning Commission will be looking to make sure that staff have taken appropriate steps as part to development review to ensure that private projects contribute to the city – in terms of affordable housing, parks or pedestrian and bike improvements.

Public Comment

1. What is a transitway?
 - City response: The Potomac Yards Transitway on Route 1 is an example. It is a corridor that aims to improve transit speed, frequency and reliability. In addition to Route 1, there are other transitway corridors planned along Duke Street and the Van Dorn corridor, that were recommended in the 2008 Transportation Master Plan. The main goal is to provide dedicated lanes for transit to improve transit travel time, reliability and efficiency.
2. More explanation about Vision Zero is needed. There is a lot of history behind the program and proof that deaths can be eliminated. The plan should explain the timeframe for taking the first step with Vision Zero. This would help people to understand what to expect.
3. Are the developers being asked to pay for these projects? The Beauregard area as an example where private developers could help get these facilities built.
 - City response: Whenever the city does a small area plan or master plan like this, any development proposals that come after that are required to help implement improvements that are identified in plans. This might include adequate pedestrian facilities or bike facilities.
4. The City should do more in terms of safety for bikes and pedestrians. Arlington has corridors where it is easy to ride. They are also using social media to report bad driver behavior. If you take a picture of a delivery truck in front of a business that parked in the bike lane and post it on twitter, tagging the county, they will follow up with the business where the illegal parking is happening.
5. There is something called the vulnerable user law that DC has been exploring – this can help with harassment of bicyclists.
6. There were lots of people in the east end and Old Town who participated in this project. The west end was not very represented.
 - City response: Several of the plan meetings were held in the west end and there was some participation, though not equal to that from Old Town and other areas. It is important for members of the committee and public to help spread the word about Alex Engage, particularly in underrepresented areas and groups.
7. With gentrification happening, the goal should be to try to get some of the amenities built before the development happens so that you set the tone for the future, and so that the existing residents have a chance to benefit from improvements sooner.
8. As the Corridor A Transitway on Route 1 was being planned, there were originally drawings that showed a bike trail along Route 1. Now there are wide sidewalks, which aren't bike facilities. The new transit projects need to be better than this, and shouldn't be misleading from the drawings to the implementation.
9. Are there any detailed design guidelines for public review? In Old Town a new sidewalk on Madison Street which was built but it is only 4' wide – this is not ideal. Is there opportunity for public involvement on Complete Street Design Guidelines?
 - City response: The Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual is under development and is a tool for what treatments should be or could be on different types of streets. The Guide is mostly a working tool for staff so it has not been reviewed by the Committee. They can also be reviewed and modified more readily than a plan; they are meant to be a working document. Staff hope to have the guidelines wrapped up this spring.
10. Complements to the committee and staff for all the work they've done on the plan. There has been a lot of back and forth, and a lot of work to get what the committee felt was the right amount of information. This plan is much better than the 2008 plan.

11. We need to put a priority on Vision Zero. This would tell citizens that safety is a priority, and help make sure that they get these things done to keep our residents and bicyclists safe.
12. This is a very nice looking plan. What is the relationship between this plan and CIP?
 - o City response: Projects identified in this plan can eventually be folded into CIP. There are three implementation paths - Complete Streets projects, the Transportation Long Range Plan (unconstrained), and the CIP. Funding will be needed to implement a number of strategies, such as Vision Zero, as well as priority projects.
13. Consider moving all the case studies to the Appendix. Consider moving the prioritization methodology to the body of the document, and the results to the appendix. Also, need to add information about generators of bike and pedestrian trips, and areas of proposed growth in the plan.
14. I applaud you for the work you've done. This is a solid document.
15. Equity is critical and it is important when you get public input to look at where it comes from. The last meeting was held in Old Town and you heard about bike/pedestrian conflicts. If we asked the same question in the West End, the biggest issue would be missing sidewalks. You could normalize specific comments / priorities in the AlexEngage survey by where respondents live. Potomac Yard is underrepresented. Continue focusing on equity.
16. The real execution of the case studies is through the strategies. We need to describe how a strategy leads to a project.
17. Move Vision Zero up as the number 1 strategy, and add information about how you are going to implement this plan.
18. I don't think the plan for Old Town is aspirational enough. My daughter is 10 years old, and she can't bike in Old Town. Old Town is what draws people to this region, but they need to feel safe cycling there. Shared streets in Old Town are not enough to keep bicyclists off of the sidewalks.
 - o City response: Old Town has unique challenges for installing dedicated and separated bike facilities - it is historic, with limited rights of way and demand for on street parking. The city needs to balance all of the issues and needs. The proposed network provides east/west connections via Prince and Cameron, Madison, as well as north/south neighborhood bikeways on Fayette and Royal Streets.

Committee Member Updates

- No updates were provided by Committee members

Wrap Up and Next Steps / Next Meeting date

- Mr. Sindiong noted that the AlexEngage site will be open through January 31. The public and Committee members should spread the word to have others fill out the survey.
- Following the input, a draft final plan will be prepared, and presented to the Ad Hoc Committee at its last meeting to be held in February (Date TBD), for endorsement.
- The plan will be presented to the Transportation Commission and Planning Commission in spring for endorsement, and for a Transportation Master Plan amendment, followed by Council in April for approval.