

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: MARCH 16, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: CARRIE SANDERS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 4 – PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

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**ISSUE:** Provide an update to the Transportation Commission on the draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the following:

1. That the Commission receive an update on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and proposed amendment to the Transportation Master Plan, and hold a public hearing;
2. That the Transportation Commission, following the public hearing, provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission to approve the proposed amendment to the Pedestrian and Bicycle chapters of the Transportation Master Plan.

**BACKGROUND:** The City's 2008 Transportation Master Plan envisions a transportation system that encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and promotes a balance between travel efficiency and quality of life. The Master Plan includes both a Pedestrian chapter, and a Bicycle chapter.

Given the many pedestrian and bicycle projects and initiatives completed over the past five years, including the approval of a number of Small Area Plans, the Bikeshare Program, as well as the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy (adopted in 2011), the City is conducted an effort to incorporate these additions into an updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The master plan includes:

- Updated Bicycle and Pedestrian chapters of the City's Transportation Master Plan
  - Vision, goals and objectives, bike network, high priority projects and strategies
- Transportation Master Plan appendices

- Supporting documentation, such as progress report, civic engagement summary, case study summaries, and a more detailed list of projects and phasing.

The 2008 Transportation Master Plan will be amended to replace the existing Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter with the new chapters and accompanying appendices. These chapters and appendices will also supersede the 2008 Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan. The Complete Street Design Guidelines is a separate technical guidance document for staff that does not require approval or an amendment to the Transportation Master Plan.

The City began the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan project in April 2014, and the Council approved Resolution 2608 to establish an Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee (Ad Hoc Advisory Committee). The role of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee was to make recommendations to City staff on the update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, including identifying issues and needs, providing input on policy recommendations, input on the bicycle network, input on project prioritization criteria, and input on project recommendations.

In October, 2015, staff provided an update to the Transportation Commission on the civic engagement process, the bicycle network, the pedestrian case study areas, strategies and priority projects. These draft recommendations were based on input received through an extensive civic engagement process, and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. During the fall of 2015, staff presented the draft recommendations to Council and a number of other Commissions and boards, such as the Environmental Policy Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), and the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The input received through these meetings was used toward developing a preliminary draft plan released on January 14, which included some revisions to the strategies, priority projects and bike network. Additional information on the plan, including the draft plan and appendices can be found at [www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan](http://www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan)

**DISCUSSION:** On January 14, 2016, the City released the preliminary draft of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and used the AlexEngage process to receive public input. AlexEngage received 415 individual responses, and the City received a number of other comments on the draft plan through other means.

On February 25, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee reviewed the revisions to the plan, and endorsed the plan, emphasizing the need to implement a Vision Zero program, encouraging transparency on the progress of plan implementation, and prioritizing the need for funding the plan (Attachment 1). The following sections provide more information on the key plan elements, and updates since the last presentation to the Transportation Commission in October 2015.

### **Bicycle Network**

A draft bicycle network was developed to enable safe bicycle travel in and between all City

neighborhoods. The network also improves connectivity between key destinations in Alexandria and destinations in neighboring jurisdictions. The draft network links these destinations and was designed to appeal to bicycle riders of different ages and abilities. The draft bicycle network includes a range of facility types such as enhanced bicycle corridors, shared roadways, and trails.

The draft plan includes a number of changes since the last presentation to the Commission, that includes the addition to the network within the Eisenhower West area (since this plan was approved in late 2015), the addition of E. Reed Avenue as a shared roadway, and changing some roadways from shared to enhanced bicycle corridors, based on additional analysis. There were also corrections to the Potomac Yard area, as well as additional improvements near Slaters Lane and the Monroe Street bridge.

In addition, the plan was revised to include additional language emphasizing the importance of low-stress bicycle facilities, such as protected bike lanes, buffered bike lanes and sidepaths.

### **Pedestrian Case Study Areas**

Five Case Study Areas were initially chosen for an analysis of common pedestrian infrastructure challenges that exist in Alexandria today, such as non-compliance with ADA standards, conflicts between modes, access, difficult intersection crossings, lighting, and other safety issues. These Case Study Areas were selected because they represent certain themes or issues that are found throughout the City. Since October of 2015, an additional case study was added in the vicinity of Commonwealth Avenue at Braddock Road. This case study was added due to a pedestrian fatality that occurred at this intersection in fall 2015, and staff determined there was a need to better look at the issues, needs and potential improvements within this area.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategies**

Draft strategies have been developed for pedestrian and bicycle modes. These strategies identify specific measures that the City should undertake to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives, which also respond to the key issues and needs that were identified early in the planning process. For both the pedestrian and bicycle elements, there are engineering strategies and policy and program strategies. Some of the key updates to the strategies since October 2015 are as follows:

- **Pedestrian Engineering Strategy #8: Reduce conflicts between bikes, pedestrians and other users on the sidewalk.** A new sub-bullet was added to address potential revisions to the City code to address these other types of users, such as skateboarders.
- **Pedestrian Program/policy Strategy #11: Conduct an evaluation of traffic fatalities and develop a Vision Zero program that outlines the framework, budget and staffing needed to work toward eliminating pedestrian and bicycle related deaths in Alexandria.** This strategy was revised to as “...eliminating pedestrian and bicycle related deaths and serious injuries...” In addition, this strategy was moved up as

Pedestrian Program/policy Strategy #1.

- **Pedestrian (and Bicycle) Engineering Strategy #6: Provide ongoing maintenance and repair of the pedestrian (and bicycle) network.** These strategies were revised to note that the maintenance practices within the City and external would be developed, and also include debris other than snow.
- **Bicycle Program/policy Strategy #12: Partner with local bicycle groups to support bicycle education, outreach and promotion amongst underrepresented groups including women and non-English speaking communities.** This strategy was revised as "...including women, senior citizens and non-English speaking communities."

### **Implementation and Priority Projects**

Based on input received through AlexEngage, the plan has been revised to include additional language regarding implementation of the project recommendations. The language focuses on implementation of recommendations within the Case Study areas, the immediate steps to develop a Vision Zero policy and program, pursuing funding from grants and through the City's budget process to begin implementation of priority projects, and leveraging repaving and development opportunities to implement pedestrian focused improvements in areas not covered by the Case Studies.

The implementation section of the Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter includes high priority projects for sidewalks, on-street bicycle facilities, and trails. The priority projects were determined based on the identification of all projects needed to fill existing gaps and barriers, using evaluation criteria that was reviewed by the staff, Advisory Committee and public, and endorsed by the Advisory Committee. The evaluation criteria included factors such as safety, existing or potential demand, connectivity, and geography.

Based on additional input that was received during the fall of 2015, there were some changes made to the priority projects that included revisions to the project segments and additional analysis. The pedestrian priority project list included an additional sidewalk project on Commonwealth Avenue north of Braddock Road. The bicycle priority project list was revised to combine a number of priority projects, including projects on the Van Dorn/Beauregard corridor, and along Duke Street, to be more consistent with the future transitways along those corridors. In addition, two new bicycle priority projects were added to the priority list, including Seminary Road (between Quaker Avenue and I-395), and Mt. Vernon Avenue.

### **Proposed Amendment to the Transportation Master Plan**

The amendment to the Transportation Master Plan will be to replace the existing Pedestrian and Bicycle chapters within the plan, with the new Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter and accompanying appendices. The updated Transportation Master Plan and appendices will also supersede the 2008 Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan.

**Next Steps**

The amendment to the Transportation Master Plan will be presented to the Planning Commission for approval on April 5, 2016. This will be followed by a Council public hearing on April 16, at which time staff will ask for Council approval of the plan and Transportation Master Plan amendment.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Memorandum from Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to T&ES