

Arlington Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)
Wednesday July 8, 2015
Courthouse Plaza, Dogwood & Cherry Rooms
2100 Clarendon Boulevard

Minutes, approved with additions August 12, 2015 (two abstentions)

Present: Dennis Jaffe, Chair; John Armstrong; Jim Feaster; Eric Goldstein; David Goodman; Eric Goodman; Tom Korn; Pamela Van Hine; Collin Weber

Public and Invited Speakers: None

Minutes of June 10 PAC meeting were approved unanimously, with minor corrections.

South Walter Reed Drive Improvements: Arlington Mill Drive to Four Mile Run Drive (WRD/AMD)

V Mosley presented a preliminary plan for the WRD/AMD project to the PAC at the December 2014 meeting: <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/south-walter-reed-drive-improvements-arlington-mill-drive-four-mile-run-drive/>. She also held meetings with the Bicycle Advisory Committee and relevant civic associations, homeowners associations, and commercial properties. One of the groups, the Fairlington Citizens Association (FCA), wrote to her on February 13, 2015 requesting that the slip lane at AMD/WRD be replaced with a complete T-intersection with a dedicated right turn lane and/or extended green light for this turn. In response to community concerns, Ms. Mosley wrote an interdepartmental memorandum on June 18, 2015 to Mr. Vihstadt, County Board member, about the project and defending the decision to keep a slip lane. Although this memorandum provides great detail on the decision making process and justification of Arlington staff on this project, the community apparently was not convinced, and Ed Hilz, the Fairlington-Shirlington Neighborhood Conservation Area Representative sent an e-mail message on June 25 to the BAC and PAC chairs asking whether the committees agreed with the staff memorandum.

PAC members present held a lively discussion about the project and the benefits and drawbacks of slip lanes versus a complete T intersection. Among the many comments and questions raised, these key points emerged:

- Two PAC members voiced satisfaction with raised slip lanes in their neighborhoods, noting that a well-designed slip lane could be a major improvement for both drivers and pedestrians. E-mailed comments from other PAC members show skepticism, however, and the Chair noted that he thought slip lanes were dangerous for pedestrians to cross.
- PAC members acknowledged both the importance of and difficulties with fairly resolving the conflicting needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers to safely and reasonably navigate the WRD/AMD slip lane, and that the PAC lacked sufficient information to take a strong position to keep or remove the slip lane at this time.
- Part of the challenge for PAC members – and others – is visualizing exactly how the proposed slip lane would work and why the geometry of turns for larger vehicles makes T-intersections so difficult. D Goodman noted that Ms. Mosley is now preparing graphics that should help all groups understand these issues. The PAC should have these graphics available for the August PAC meeting and the next discussion.
- The bottom line for the attending PAC members was that current plans for the slip lane do not remove the timing ambiguity of pedestrians and vehicles moving through the same space. Members expressed

concern that the proposed pedestrian-activated flashing yellow light was too small to be noticed by oncoming vehicles and that it flashes too late for vehicles to slow and stop. To help ensure that pedestrians could cross safely, PAC members suggested moving the flashing sign further back, having a stop sign at the intersection, having a stop light at the intersection, and/or having the flashing sign be large red lights.

- Additional data needed: The memorandum included vehicular traffic volume through the slip lane, but did not provide corresponding pedestrian and cyclist data. The memorandum only presented the total number of vehicles driving through the slip lane, not the number of oversize vehicles using this lane, though only these oversize vehicles might find the T intersection turn difficult. Accident data for this intersection would also be helpful.
- A PAC member noted that the current WRD/AMD intersection is not square and that a proposed right turn lane in the current configuration would be an oblique angle, not a right angle. D Goodman noted that squaring the intersection would be a very expensive, and unbudgeted, project.
- PAC members noted that the two-step process of using the slip lane and the pork chop to cross WMD is especially challenging to cyclists.
- The Chair will summarize the discussion, P Van Hine will edit and distribute to PAC members attending the meeting for any additional edits, then final summary will be distributed to the full PAC, Ms. Mosley, and Mr. Hilz.
- The discussion will continue at the August PAC meeting.

The committee again stated that many aspects of the WRD/AMD proposed project could be a major enhancement to the pedestrian experience of the area. Specifically, T Korn noted that the remodeled bridge could be perceived as a separate destination rather than just a continuation of the road and that the opportunities for large way finding and interpretative signage could be a model for the whole county. His suggestion to enhance the attractiveness of the bridge is to have new lampposts on the bridge that build in height from the ends to the middle of the bridge, as seen in front of Washington and Lee High School.

Online survey of Arlington County Residents on Desirable Qualities for New County Manager

The chair noted that Arlington staff have posted an online survey for County residents on desirable qualities for the new County manager and key issues that the new manager will need to address. The survey, which closes July 15, is found here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Arlington_Co_RESIDENTS

More information on the selection process and timetable is available here:

<http://newsroom.arlingtonva.us/release/share-your-input-on-selecting-a-new-county-manager/>

Meeting with Mark Schwartz, Acting County Manager

The Chair reported that he will coordinate with D Goodman to hold a meeting with Mr. Schwartz as soon as possible. Schedule conflicts prevented holding a meeting prior to the July PAC meeting.

Proposed Amendment to the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) map

D Goodman briefly updated the PAC on staff activity on this project. The consensus of the PAC was that providing R Viola with E Goodman's summary of the PAC discussion at the June PAC meeting was sufficient at this time. The Chair will forward the summary to R Viola.

Time to Discuss Pedestrian Items of Interest

J Armstrong suggested that future meetings set aside brief time at the beginning of the PAC meetings to share items of interest on pedestrian issues, such as upcoming Walkabouts, major pedestrian meetings, and pedestrian news. PAC members thought this was an excellent idea, and the Chair will add this to future agendas to ensure that time is available.

Meeting was adjourned at 9PM. The next PAC meeting will be held on August 12 in the Cherry & Dogwood Room.