

Summary of 9-28-17 Meeting of the MTP Bike Element Working Group

Attendees: Chris Slatt (Chair), Gillian Burgess, Eric Goodman, Yvonne Norton, Lindsay Marfurt, Chips Johnson, James Schroll, David Patton (staff), Erin Potter (staff), Henry Dunbar (staff), Ritch Viola (staff)

Item #1 – Public Comment. There were no attendees from the public.

Item #2 – Public Engagement. Erin Potter presented results of the recently concluded public survey. A handout of the presentation was provided and will be included on the webpage. A total of 1206 surveys were completed, either on-line or at in-person intercepts (245 of the 1206). The results included a demographic breakdown of the respondents.

Overall, about two-thirds of the respondents self-identified as being either a “strong and fearless” or “enthusiastic and confident” bicyclist. Those figures indicate an over-representation of higher skilled bicyclists taking the survey than likely exists in the overall Arlington population. Such a result is comparable to the outcomes of on-line surveys conducted by other “peer jurisdictions” such as Alexandria, VA, Fort Collins, CO and Seattle, WA. Arlington’s outreach actually produced a higher participation rate by women (43%) than was reported for the peer jurisdictions.

Some of the key findings of the survey results are:

- Fitness, environmental benefits and transportation are the top reasons as to why Arlingtonians bicycle. There is overwhelming interest (90%+) for wanting to bicycle more often.
- The top 3 things that Arlington could do to enable the respondents to bicycle more are: add more separated bike lanes, add more trails and improve the connectivity of the bicycle network.
- Adding more separated bicycle lanes is the number one interest for the majority of “enthusiastic and confident” and the “interested but concerned” bicyclists.
- The top reason respondents gave as to why they do not bicycle more often is “do not feel safe riding on the street”. The number two reason is weather. Other top concerns relate to personal safety, overcrowded trails and bicycling taking extra time.
- There is great satisfaction for the conditions of Arlington’s trails (83%) and bike lanes (77%). Most respondents are satisfied with then number of trails (65%), however less than half are satisfied with the number of bike lanes (45%). Female respondents expressed a 90% dissatisfaction with the number of bicycle lanes.
- 65% of Female respondents reported that more separated bicycle lanes would encourage them to bicycle more often.
- Most respondents with children under age 18, replied that they are comfortable (53 to 55%) with children that are in their bicycle child seat, bike trailer or riding next a parent. However only 27% of parent feel comfortable with their child riding alone.

Ritch Viola added information that was captured through a visual preference survey using photographs of different potential bicycle facility types. Over 500 persons “Voted” by applying dots when they encountered the boards at different community events or in the CHP building lobby. The results were presented in two handouts. Some of the findings are:

- There is a very strong preference (77%) for green-painted bicycle lanes over other bicycle lane treatment types.
- Physical separation (47%) and painted lines (28%) to separate bicyclists and pedestrians are the preferred treatments for off-street trails.
- Planters (38%) and parked cars (33%) are the preferred means to separate motor vehicles from bicyclists in protected bicycle lanes.
- For neighborhood streets, the top choice (35%) was for traffic calming islands that permit through bicycle traffic while rerouting motor vehicle traffic. The other options, except sharrows (only 9%), were generally liked.

Ritch also reported on the public comments (nine so far) that had been sent to the Bike Element Update e-mail address. The most common concern expressed was about motor vehicles blocking marked bicycle lanes. A compilation of the comments was shared with the Working Group members.

Item #3 – Framework. The group reviewed the September 20, 2017 draft of the Framework document that had been distributed in advance of the meeting. The working group members raised a number of issues with the draft. Many of the issues were in regards to the Introduction, Vision, Goals and Summary sections of the document. There was significant debate as to what information should be included in the document and as to how the sections should be ordered. Gillian, Chips, Chris and David all offered ideas as to how to reorder the sections, with a general agreement to begin the document with the role of bicycles in Arlington transportation.

The five MTP bicycling goals were also discussed and a sixth goals addressing trails was identified. It was agreed that Safety should be the first goal. In addition, there were several few revisions suggested for specific policy and implementation action statements. There was also interest in having the document reformatted so that revisions could more easily be identified and tracked.

Staff tried to capture suggested revisions as they raised, however it was decided to allow the group members through October 10th to submitted marked up versions of the document. Utilizing the working group's comments, a revised version of the Framework would be prepared and submitted to the group prior to the scheduled October 26 meeting.

Item #4 - Outreach to other stakeholders.

It was decided to not reach out to the commissions, county offices and other stakeholders until after the October 26 working group meets and any additional comments are incorporated. The month of November would be the best time for meeting with stakeholders and getting public input through an expected public workshop. The timing of such activities will likely delay the anticipated County Board work-session until early December. Representatives of organizations that serve on the working group should approach their organizations to schedule November briefings.