

Arlington Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)
Wednesday, November 4, 2015
Courthouse Plaza, Azalea Room
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Minutes (approved December 9, 2015)

Present: Dennis Jaffe, Chair; Pamela Van Hine, Vice Chair; Ellen Armbruster; John Armstrong; Jim Feaster; Dan Foster; Eric Goldstein; David Goodman; Eric Goodman; Christine Ng; David Patton; Collin Weber

Guests: Valerie Mosley, WMD-AMD Project Director; Sergio Viricochea, TE&O; Tom Norton, Safe Routes to School; Jacqueline King, Arlington citizen

Approval of October minutes: Copies of the draft October minutes were distributed. There was a motion to approve which was seconded. In the discussion, E. Goldstein recommended a slight edit of his comments, which were approved. The Vice Chair will make the change and ask staff to post the approved minutes on the PAC website.

Update on South Walter Reed Drive Improvement Project (see December 2014 and July, August, September, and October 2015 PAC minutes)

V. Mosley, the DES WRD project manager, and S. Viricochea, DES TE&O staff, updated the PAC on the latest plans for this project. V. Mosley first provided an overview of the history and evolution of the project plans and an overview of the current plans for the bridge over Four Mile Run. The focus of their presentation was on current plans for the slip lane between Arlington Mill Drive and Walter Reed Drive and how this plan re-balances the competing needs of pedestrians/cyclists and the large County vehicles that use the slip lane.

V. Mosley described the following improvements over the current slip lane that would enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety while crossing this intersection: a) the slip lane crosswalk will be raised (6") and the safety island will also be raised to the same height, with ramps to the other 2 crosswalks, b) the location of the slip lane crosswalk is moved further down AMD and placed at a more perpendicular angle to the slip lane to enhance visibility of cyclists/pedestrians to drivers and vice versa. Specifically, cyclists and pedestrians will be looking to their left if they are coming on the trail from the East rather than having their backs to the traffic as they attempt to cross. c) moving the location of the slip lane also creates a new space (large enough for a bus) between the slip lane and the actual completed turn that will allow drivers to focus on one decision at a time – crossing slip lane only when cyclists/pedestrians are not present and watching for oncoming vehicular traffic heading northbound as the driver actually turns onto WRD, d) the proposed safety island is significantly larger than the existing one – which should make it easier to navigate by cyclists and pedestrians in wheelchairs or with strollers, luggage, and other items. The increased size will also “hold” more pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross.

Staff also proposed using motion-activated flashing lights that would alert drivers to the presence of cyclists and pedestrians approaching the slip lane crosswalk, and they presented five choices and asked the PAC to choose one or more options: a basic unlit yield sign with additional text and graphics (1), same sign with flashing yellow LED borders (2), LED blank-out sign (3), solar flashers (4), and traffic signal, which would be (set for flashing yellow when activated, but could be changed if there is a demonstrated need (5)). Cost and reliability varied by type of lighting. More than one option could be selected and used, and options could be used in different locations.

PAC members raised several suggestions for enhancing the project: a) The Chair suggested removing text "turning vehicles" from options 1 and 2 because it's both too much to read and redundant, b) C. Ng reminded the committee that the rose bushes by AMD need to be moved because they interfere with everyone's sight lines, c) she also noted that in the proposed redesign, the bus stop on AMD would be moved further East to accommodate the new slip lane location and possible increase in traffic waiting to turn onto WRD. This change might increase the number of pedestrians that cross AMD mid-block to go to the bus stop. She also has concerns about increased pedestrian exposure to vehicle fumes if traffic flow is significantly delayed, d) more than one PAC member mentioned a need for better street lighting of ALL of the crosswalks and the safety island at the WRD/AMD intersection.

PAC Follow-up: V. Mosley requested that the PAC respond to the latest design, including choices for signage and lighting, in the next two weeks. The Vice Chair will prepare and distribute detailed notes from the meeting to the PAC GoogleGroup and request feedback on the plan and choices for signage and lighting. The Chair will prepare draft comments based upon PAC feedback. The final PAC response will be sent to V. Mosley no later than Wednesday, November 18.

Please visit the project website for more information:

<http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/south-walter-reed-drive-improvements-arlington-mill-drive-four-mile-run-drive/>

The Role of PAC in SPRCs:

At the request of the Chair, P. Van Hine and E. Goldstein drafted a document, Continuing PAC Involvement with SPRCs, that was distributed to the PAC online and as copies at the meeting. The authors stressed that it was an internal document for PAC use only and that its purpose was to outline how the PAC might determine which SPRCs need PAC participation, how to decide which PAC member would represent the PAC for a specific SPRC, and what types of background and training are desirable for PAC members who participate in specific SPRCs. The PAC held a lively discussion of the document, with some PAC members with significant prior experience with SPRCs finding the document too detailed and some points unnecessary. E. Armbruster noted that she thought that the most important action prior to a new SPRC meeting was a site visit that specifically checked current pedestrian flow and issues and possible changes implied by the new plans. The general consensus of the PAC was that the document would be useful to PAC members new to SPRC involvement, after some additions, rearrangements, and

language changes. The Vice Chair will add links and make edits, then redistribute to the PAC after approval from the Chair and E. Goldstein. The Vice Chair also mentioned that S. Byrd, the SPRC Coordinator, might be willing to attend a future PAC meeting to provide some training, and the PAC thought that would be useful.

Other Topics Discussed before and after Main Topics:

P. Van Hine and E. Goldstein gave brief feedback from their attendance at the recent National Walking Summit in Washington DC. Key issues were equity and the evolution of Safe Routes to Schools to Safe Routes for Everyone, Everywhere, Every Time – and what it would take for that to happen. In one of the specific sessions, E. Goldstein learned that research shows that pedestrians will only walk up to half a mile to a local park. Both PAC members will share more comments at another time.

Need for More Funds for Crossing Guards for Schools: Tom Norton, who coordinates Arlington's Safe Routes to Schools program, spoke briefly at the end of the PAC meeting. He reiterated and updated his explanation of his position, including funding and responsibilities, that he presented at the January 2015 PAC meeting. He indicated an increasing need for crossing guards and that additional funding may be needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM. The next PAC meeting will be held Wednesday, December 9, 2015, at 7 PM in the Dogwood & Cherry Rooms.