

South Walter Reed Drive Complete Streets Project – Phase 2 (5th St S to Columbia Pike) – Concept Engagement Summary

Project Background

What are the goals of this project?

This project will connect the recently completed improvements at 5th Street intersection to Columbia Pike. The project will improve multimodal travel along South Walter Reed Drive from Columbia Pike to 6th Street South. The project team has been coordinating with Arlington Public Schools Career Center Project to minimize construction impacts to the community.

What is the current status of the project?

DES staff has incorporated comments received from April 2022 in a revised concept.

Public Engagement:

The project team kicked off an online engagement to solicit comments via an interactive map of the concept design on April 14, 2021. We asked participants to share their thoughts and questions on a draft concept, which was developed from the comments staff received on existing conditions of the street.

On April 27, the project team also held a virtual community meeting. Staff walked through feedback we heard on the existing conditions then shared how we incorporated community's input in the development of a concept design.

The online engagement opportunity closed on May 2, 2021. In total, staff received 104 comments and 238 interactions (agree/disagree "likes")..

What We Heard:

Overall, public feedback indicated support for the concept design. Below is a summary of what we heard by intersection and major themes:

Columbia Pike Intersection

- Better signal operation at Columbia Pike
- Provisions for cyclists in southbound S Walter Reed Drive lanes

9th Street South Intersection

- Traffic signal design and utility of turn lane configurations
- Bike protection at intersection

6th Street South Intersection

- Lack of pedestrian and bicycle connection to and from 6th Street South

Daylighting Protected Bike Lanes

- Better visibility between people biking and people driving

Alternate design to striping for wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and biophilia

- Wider sidewalk and protected bike lanes
- More plantings and green space in large areas of striping in the road

Continued Coordination with the Career Center Project

What Changed and Didn't Change:

As a result of the feedback from the online engagement and public meeting, the project team has developed a revised concept design.

Columbia Pike Intersection

The project team has passed along comments about the traffic signal operation on Columbia Pike to the Columbia Pike Multimodal Project team for their review. A bike box has been added to the southbound through-right lane on Walter Reed Drive to facilitate the transition from bike lane to shared lane or "sharrow" markings south of the Columbia Pike intersection. As there are no dedicated bike facilities on Columbia Pike, the bike box does not extend to the left turn lane.

9th Street South Intersection

A traffic signal is warranted at this intersection. Traffic signal design and lane configurations will be reviewed in greater detail in subsequent design plans.

The revised concept provides components of a protected intersection for the existing bike facilities along South Walter Reed Drive. We are unable to provide a complete protected intersection since there are no dedicated bike facilities on 9th Street South and right-of-way is a concern on 9th Street South.

6th Street South Intersection

The revised concept proposes a crosswalk at this intersection for pedestrians and cyclists and two-way protected bike lane along a short stretch of westbound 6th Street South. The proposed improvement will bridge a gap in existing facilities.

More Visibility for Protected Bike Lanes at Intersections

Where possible, islands have been proposed to help provide better sight lines between the bike lane and the vehicle travel lane. In other places (9th Road South and 7th Street South), buffers have been provided near intersections to provide good sight lines as we balance the need for on-street parking.

Alternate design to striping for wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and biophilic designs

The project scope and funds are limited to tactical improvements (striping, bollards, signage) along South Walter Reed Drive, except at intersections where permanent improvements are proposed to improve safety. The maximum width of bike lanes are 6 feet to prevent motor vehicle drivers confusing bike lane for vehicle travel lane. Opportunities to provide trees and biophilic designs will be reviewed in greater detail in subsequent engineering designs.

Coordination with the Career Center Project

The two project teams are in regular communication to coordinate design, schedule, and construction.

Next Steps & Timeline

The project team is committed to reviewing your comments on the revised concept and, where feasible, incorporate them in subsequent engineering plans. A virtual public meeting is scheduled on March 2, 2022 at 7:00PM. Staff will walk through the revised concept and answer any questions. A public comment period on the revised concept will be open for two weeks, until March 16, 2022.

The project team will be undertaking 30% design plans in Spring 2022 with the goal of completing final design plans in Fall 2022. The anticipated construction start is May 2023.

More Information

Review the project page:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/South-Walter-Reed-Drive-Complete-Street>

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