

Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)

Joint BAC-PAC Virtual Meeting, Wednesday, September 8, 2021 7PM

Minutes, Approved with edits, October 13, 2021

See Appendix for: Meeting recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwE7iARxGUE>;

Speaker slides: Matt Mattauszek et al: Pentagon City Planning Study:

https://projects.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2021/09/PCPS_Update_BAC_PAC_Sept_8_2021.pdf

Pamela Van Hine, VDOT Route 1 Update: <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/wpcontent/uploads/sites/5/2021/10/2021-09-08-BAC-PAC-mtg-pvh-Rte-1-update.pdf>

PAC Attendees: Eric Goldstein, Chair; Eric Goodman, Vice Chair; Pamela Van Hine, Recording Secretary; Jim Feaster; Elizabeth Gallagher; Patrick Kennedy; Tom Kornis; Andrea Walker; Chris Yarie
David Patton, Bike & Pedestrian Planner; Mary Dallao WalkArlington Program Manager

BAC Attendees: Elizabeth Kiker, Chair; Cynthia Palmer, Vice Chair; Gillian Burgess; Eric Goodman; Mike Hanna; Noreen Hannigan; Megan Jones, Steve Offutt, Tim Rosato; Aaron Schuetz
Leah Gerber, Active Transportation Coordinator; David Balick BikeArlington Program Manager

Guests: *Speakers:* Pentagon City Planning Study: Daniel Malouff, Regional Transportation Planner, DOT; Matt Mattauszek, Master Planner, CPHD, Crystal City/Pentagon City Planning Coordinator; Michelle Stafford, Principal Planner, DES; Kathleen Onufer, Goody-Clancy; Pedestrian Signals Update: Hui Wang, TE&O Bureau Chief; VDOT Route 1 Update: Pamela Van Hine, PAC VDOT Route 1 Task Force Representative

Commissioners: Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission (C2E2): Emily Emery, Majdi Shomali; 22202

Community: AHCA: Darren Buck; ARCA: Susan English; CCCCA: Carol Fuller; National Landing BID: Matthew Jones, Planning & Transportation Manager; Other guests: Collier Cook; Christopher Forinash, Gina Gil, Leroy Lambright, Randy Swart, L. Tierstein

The BAC and PAC Chairs called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. and welcomed BAC-PAC members, staff, and guests. There were no public comments or reports from the Chairs. The PAC Chair introduced the speakers.

Daniel Malouff, Regional Transportation Planner, Matt Mattauszek, Master Planner, CPHD, and Michelle Stafford, Principal Planner, DES: The [Pentagon City Planning Study](#)

M. Mattauszek presented the background on the study, purpose of the study, guiding principles, and reviewed proposed guidelines that developers need to follow to obtain added density for their property, and how in return, the community could obtain additional benefits, such as parkland, open space, and improved transportation facilities. The five planning principles are: 1. Coordinating at a District Scale, 2. Equity, 3. Places for People, 4. Transportation, and 5. Green Development. The PCPS development categories are: Land Use and Development, Transportation, Public Realm, and Site + Building Form. The focus of the BAC- PAC presentation was [transportation](#) sections of both principles and development categories. The speakers welcomed additional comments and questions after the meeting and encouraged attendees to participate in followup programs and surveys as the plan is further developed and implemented.

Key topics discussed were:

- *The bicycle network:* Plans for within Pentagon City, how it will connect to the Crystal City Bike Network, why no bicycle facilities are planned for 12th St. (transitway conflicts, not in Bicycle Element, can use Army-Navy Drive, green ribbons through PenPlace, other sidewalks!)
- *Green ribbons:* Cyclists are welcome to ride on these green, primarily pedestrian winding pathways throughout Pentagon City, but they are designed to be green open space, pedestrian wanderings, children playing, and not conducive for speeding through on a bike. They are “slow moving bike routes” and should be thought of as more of a linear plaza than a traditional trail per se. In most cases, an alternative PBL will be parallel to the green ribbon. When there are gaps, the green ribbon will be more trail-like.
- *Lane reductions:* The most likely candidate street is S. Hayes, which staff believe will need its own corridor study because of the complexity of all of the different transportation modes competing for scarce space close to the Metro station and bus stops. S. Joyce may also have some significant redevelopment, including a new realignment – much safer for all modes – and wider sidewalks and PBL.

- *TDM*: Attendees asked for further explanation and justification for the 30% mode share for SOV and how this would be enforced for new developments. M. Mattauszek noted that the specifics of how it would work await the plan approval and actual applications for new development, but would include discussion with the developer on how to limit parking and SOV travel, a toolbox, and the 30% goal. Increasing cycling, walking, and transit riding is critical to successful TDM in Pentagon City to prevent future traffic gridlock.
- *Vision Zero*: The brief section on Vision Zero shows local HIN data for vehicles (at Army-Navy Drive at S. Hayes and at S. Joyce) and cyclists (at S. Fern at 15th), but does not show pedestrian HIN crashes (along 12th Street).

Hui Wang P.E., TE&O Bureau Chief: Pedestrian Signals Reset?

On April 22, 2020, the County [announced](#) that many pedestrian “beg buttons” would be reset to autorecall as part of Covid precautions. And on August 18, 2021, the County [announced](#) that it was returning many of the reset buttons as “beg buttons” because the new school year was starting and “to improve walkway safety, even though many of the buttons being reset are within the walk zone of schools. Dr. Wang was invited to the BAC-PAC meeting to explain these County decisions.

Dr. Wang showed the audience two County maps with pedestrian recall button locations: the first, produced in 2020, shows which buttons were already set to autorecall (green), which ones continue to require activation by a pedestrian (red), and which ones were reset to autorecall during Covid (yellow – these had been red). The second map shows the overlays where the buttons would be reset to pedestrian activation required, especially along Columbia Pike and Langston Boulevard. She noted that some of the signals along Glebe in the Ballston area might not be reset because of the pedestrian traffic patterns in that area. She further explained that when pedestrians are crossing minor streets parallel to major streets, they will have autorecall, but, when buttons are reset, they will need to push a button to get a light to cross the major street when the volume pedestrian traffic does not justify an automatic signal.

Discussion:

- *Impact of Covid*: Saying that the risks from Covid are decreasing with the explosion of delta variants is not correct and should not be a justification for resetting the buttons. County health care professionals should be involved in making the decision as well.
- *Students*: Using the return of students to school is also not a valid justification for resetting the buttons. Rather, resetting the buttons increases the danger for many students in school walk zones and increases parents’ driving their children to school because of the perceived risk. Buttons in the walk zone should be set to autorecall for safety.
- *Decision-making process*: The County decision-making process for resetting the buttons was not transparent, was not public, and did not involve public collaboration with relevant groups. The lack of collaboration and transparency cause many to distrust the validity of the decision. Dr. Wang said that the signal policy is an internal operations activity and has not required outside consultation because they need the ability to make quick decisions about resetting traffic signals in an emergency. However, resetting the buttons now is not an emergency situation.
- *Collaborate with BAC-PAC*: The BAC-PAC has pushed for TE&O to discuss signal policy with them for years, but only a draft internal document was shared. The BAC-PAC strongly encourages TE&O to make the signalization policy and decision-making process public and to collaborate with the BAC-PAC (and other relevant groups) on its development and implementation.
 - **Motion**: The BAC-PAC moved and seconded a motion to send a joint letter to the County Manager asking that the decision to reset the buttons be put on hold and to be consulted on signalization policy going forward.

Pamela Van Hine, PAC Representative on the VDOT Route 1 Task Force: Update on Route 1 Plans:

The speaker said she was presenting during the BAC-PAC meeting because VDOT released its final draft report for Phase 1 last week and the deadline for comments is September 30. She quickly covered four topics:

- Cross-sectional elements and design criteria: Overall, these are still too vague, cause potential conflict between users, and are dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists (travel lane width and design speed).
- Bike-ped safety issues: The goals of the project remain unchanged, and the speaker feels that most of these goals are still being unmet. She focused on bike-ped safety specifically, showing two slides from the report: one predicting that bike-ped safety might actually increase with an at-grade proposal (with major TDM) and one that

showed that all crashes at 18th would increase, as there are no crashes at this location now. She reviewed the safety plans already considered in VDOT planning (grade-separate, providing a bike-ped underpass/overpass, and more urban-friendly street design). Yet she believes these are still not sufficient to keep us truly safe. She quickly reviewed the findings of the massive Schneider [study](#) of risk factors for pedestrian fatalities in the US and noted that the findings show the following street design risks:

- more than 4 lanes (VDOT proposes 6 lanes at 18th and 7 lanes at 15th)
- speed 30mph or higher (Phase 1 recommendation is to study 30mph from the current 35mph)
- volume of vehicles per day greater than 25,000 (even with major TDM, VDOT cites more than 35,000 vpd)
- Phase 2 studies: Ms. Van Hine noted several proposed Phase 2 studies that might improve safety, including interim improvements to 23rd and Route 1. However, she also suggested several more studies that would improve bike-ped safety further.
- BAC-PAC response: The speaker proposed that the BAC-PAC send a joint letter to the County Manager about their concerns about the project and that the BAC-PAC support the BAC-PAC task force representatives sending their comments as official comments. The speaker had distributed the draft BAC-PAC letter to members prior to the meeting. Based upon suggested comments, the PAC Chair and Recording Secretary will edit the letter prior to sending it to the County Manager.
 - **Motion:** The BAC-PAC moved and seconded sending a letter to the County Manager about their concerns with the proposed Phase 1 VDOT Route 1 study.
 - **Motion:** The BAC-PAC moved and seconded supporting the BAC-PAC VDOT Route 1 Task Force members (Pamela Van Hine, Steve Offutt, and Dana Bres) sending their comments to VDOT as official representatives.

The PAC Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:06 P.M. The next PAC meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, October 13 at 7 P.M. Watch the [PAC page](#) for details on speakers and agenda.