



Columbia Pike Multimodal Street Improvements
Arlington, Virginia
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 26, 2011
 TIME: 7:00 pm to 9:15 pm
 LOCATION: Walter Reed Center, 2909 South 16th Street Arlington, VA
 SUBJECT: Columbia Pike Implementation Team (CPIT) Meeting

MINUTES PREPARED BY: David Samba/John Martin, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
 DATE PREPARED: May 10, 2010

ATTENDEES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization / Group</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Email</u>
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INTRODUCTION

- This meeting was held on Tuesday evening, April 26, with representatives of the Columbia Pike Implementation Team (CPIT).
- The CPIT is comprised of representatives of civic associations local to Columbia Pike, other interested stakeholders, the Arlington County Planning and Transportation Commissions, Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO), Arlington County staff, the Kimley-Horn consultant team, and consultants for related projects.
- The purpose of this meeting was to provide an update on the multimodal project and gain feedback from CPIT members and civic association/league representatives. Agenda Items included:
 - Introductions, discussion of meeting purpose, and an overview of the meeting agenda
 - Update on Multimodal Street Improvements Projects
 - Recap of streetscape design and response to feedback received since the November 30, 2010 CPIT meeting
 - Discussion of revised multimodal design for streetscape improvements
 - Discussion on traffic and multimodal level of service analyses
 - Update on parallel routes study
 - Update on Pike Transit Initiative
- The discussion generally followed a PowerPoint presentation given to the CPIT, supplemented by handouts. Copies of the presentation and handouts are included on the project's website (www.pikemutimodal.com) on the "Meetings and Presentations" page.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

- Following introductions, Bill Roberts and John Martin discussed the project background, purpose of the meeting, and began the formal presentation.
- Questions and comments were encouraged throughout the presentation.
- Included in the discussion below is a summary of the questions asked and issues raised and the responses provided by Arlington staff and the consultant team.

Recap

- Arlington staff and the consultant team expressed thanks to the attendees for their participation in the last CPIT meeting (November 30, 2010), as well as for feedback provided to the project team from late January through March.
- Based on the request at the November 30 meeting, several groups provided written feedback on the design concepts through emails in late January and early February 2011:
 - Alcovia Heights expressed that they were pleased overall with the design and the study process.
 - They asked that the median at Randolph Street be removed in the design. The design now shows a median opening.
 - They applauded the addition of a left turn lane at Quincy Street, citing that they have observed backups there.
 - They would like to keep the northbound left turn lane on Monroe Street, which the project team said is possible, and add an eastbound left turn lane at that intersection, which the design team is analyzing.
 - Barcroft School and Civic League expressed a desire to work through the design with its citizens and then with staff.



- Columbia Forest Civic Association welcomed the prospect of a traffic signal at Frederick Street.
- Penrose Neighborhood Association suggested a pedestrian zone from Walter Reed to Barton Street.
 - They also expressed a strong opinion that U-turns are difficult on Columbia Pike. The design team agreed.
 - They requested that medians preventing left turns into and out of driveways be removed and they expressed similar concerns about constrained flow, emergency vehicle access, street trees, and the need for protected lefts for all approaches at Walter Reed Drive.
 - The project team responded with a design that removed the median at the north leg of Scott Street and includes mountable curbs for medians. Additional measures were discussed during this meeting (see below).
- Arlington staff and consultants also met with the following groups to discuss the multimodal and transit initiative projects and obtain feedback:
 - Arlington Heights, January 31
 - Alcovia Heights, March 24
- In addition to responding to input from CPIT members, the multimodal design considered “back of curb” improvements and added them to the design. The project team requested feedback at this CPIT meeting on the design modifications and the proposed back of curb improvements.

Multimodal Street Design

- The consultant team briefed the CPIT on the design of the street space, stating that the purpose of this project is to support the near-term implementation of a complete street that builds on the Street Space Planning Task Force report, attempts to achieve an appropriate balance of travel modes, and supports future high-quality, high-frequency transit service.
- Street design considerations were discussed, including the desire to achieve a 56-foot cross section, to include left turn lanes and/or medians where practical, and to eliminate right turn lanes and bus pull-outs. Behind the curb line, design elements could include wider sidewalks, street trees, planting strips, on-street parking, a “furniture zone,” bicycle accommodations (such as shared-use sidewalks or side paths), and considerations for drainage and utilities.
- Additional right-of-way will be necessary in some areas to achieve an appropriate balance of modes in the near term. To achieve all of the complete street elements desired by the Street Space Planning Task Force, redevelopment must occur along many segments of the Pike.
- The typical street plan and cross section were presented and discussed, and then the project team stepped the attendees through the corridor on a block-by-block basis showing concept plans and proposed cross sections.

Design Discussion

- Concerns were voiced about the cross section that the lanes were too narrow from a safety and transit performance perspective.
 - Based on discussions during previous CPIT meetings and with Arlington staff, it is believed that 11-foot outside lanes with Arlington County standard curb and gutter (an additional 18 inches) will be sufficient and will support transit operations.
 - Currently, the outside lane widths vary between 9 and 12 feet along the Pike.



- The 10-foot inside lanes and left turn lanes are separated by a one-foot “shy” distance, adding a measure of safety.
- The widths of the lanes represent trade-offs within a limited amount of existing right-of-way. Narrower lanes provide additional space for sidewalks and other elements.
- As the revised concept plans were discussed, some members of the CPIT asked what happened to the preferred 60-foot cross section with bike lanes that was developed by Street Space Planning Task Force.
 - The viability of bike lanes next to future rail lines (and the gap created by the flange ways) was discussed.
 - The project team mentioned that the intent of the 56-foot section was to develop a standard minimum “cartway” for vehicles that would allow more space behind the curbs for pedestrians, bicycles, transit stops, etc.
 - The County’s proposed parallel bike network from S. Joyce St. to the Fairfax County line is intended to augment bicycle access in the Columbia Pike corridor.
 - After some discussion, a comment was raised that a climbing bike lane would be very helpful when travelling eastbound between George Mason Drive and Quincy Street.
 - The design team will investigate the feasibility of this accommodation.
- A question about the source of project funding was asked.
 - The project is primarily funded with local moneys.
 - Some state and federal dollars may be available in the future.
- CPIT Members asked if the curb near 5500 Columbia Pike was suitable for the County’s proposed cycle track as a part of the streetscape improvements between S. Jefferson St. and S. Frederick St. It was remarked that there is plenty of pavement in this location to bring the curbs in and accommodate the cycle track.
- Comments were made regarding medians, e.g., the left turn out of S. Frederick St. is currently hard to accomplish.
 - The median at S. Frederick St. will be looked at and possibly reconstructed to accommodate left turn movements.
 - For the entire project, the lengths and widths of medians will be evaluated to make sure turning movements can be accommodated.
 - For the interim concepts (prior to redevelopment in some areas), the design may call for striping of median areas with small left turns into mid-block driveways.
 - With redevelopment and the enforcement of the Form Based Code, driveways along the Columbia Pike will be minimized or eliminated and the medians can then be placed along the Pike in appropriate locations.
- In general, the back of curb design will include a 5-foot buffer area and a 6-foot sidewalk. Where space is limited for the near term, the buffer space will be reduced or eliminated in the interim design. Where right-of-way is available in the near term, more and wider accommodations will be made for pedestrians and bicycles.
- The design team reaffirmed that the goal was to recommend as many practical and feasible improvements given the right-of-way constraints.
- One resident reiterated that earlier feedback had suggested that the median at Randolph be removed altogether. The design team will investigate and address the situation with future design revisions.
- The question was asked whether business owners were aware of the proposed improvements or had a say in the design.



- Takis noted that CPRO has been included in the process. He mentioned that business owners are involved and are being challenged to think about how car-oriented their businesses are. There is a huge interest in attracting “bike consumers”—some business owners are finding that if they add bike racks in front of their store, they get more customers.
- The locations of the proposed transit stops were discussed, and a resident asked if the transit and streetcar stops are offset.
 - The stops shown represent near-term bus super stops, which would also serve as longer-term streetcar stops.
 - As requested, the design team will show these transit stops more prominently on the design plans.
 - The transit stops are intended to be paired, but some pairs may not be exactly opposite each other (e.g., for the stops near Walter Reed Drive, the westbound stop will be west of Walter Reed Drive near Garfield Street, and the eastbound stop will be east of Walter Reed Drive near Edgewood Street).
- A resident informed the group that he believes there are issues with the pavement markings on Walter Reed Drive, south of Columbia Pike, and the narrowness of 12th and 13th Streets.
 - He said that the northbound left turn lane approaching Columbia Pike could be longer with new re-striping.
 - 12th and 13th Streets are currently used as cut-through routes for commuters, creating a safety issue. A suggestion was made that there should be no left turns out of Edgewood Street onto Columbia Pike to discourage cut-through traffic.
 - County staff will look into both of these issues.
- A resident commented that the medians near Dorchester Towers should be eliminated due to neighborhood access and the nearby taxi stands.
 - It was reported that the residents living in the neighborhoods between Courthouse Road and Rolfe Street are staunchly against the proposed medians.
 - Residents are concerned with losing left turn access and having to make difficult U-turn maneuvers.
 - The project team will address these concerns in the next iteration of the design.
- A question was raised asking whether the transportation study would include cost estimates. It is the County’s intent to include general cost estimates for providing budgets for capital projects.

Bicycles and Parallel Routes

- A concern was raised about the applicability of the term *complete street*. In one resident’s opinion, the proposed design (with a 56-foot cross section) was “giving up 2 miles of bike lanes” and not addressing the needs of bicyclists. The resident felt that *complete street* was not an applicable term.
 - The project team responded that the proposed improvements are making use of a very narrow right of way. The improvements redistribute the street space to maintain auto and transit progression while also improving pedestrian safety and comfort, as well as providing some bicycle amenities.
 - The design is attempting to balance tradeoffs between the needs of different modes.
 - A major issue the design team is addressing is looking at appropriate and safe places to accommodate bicycles.



- The intent is that by creating a parallel bicycle network north and south of the Pike, augmented by facilities on the Pike, the County is creating a “complete corridor.”
- Another resident echoed concern over losing bike lanes and suggested that bicycles may face equal or more danger with the shared-use path due to pedestrian interactions. The design intent is for the shared-use path to be for lower-speed bicycles, providing a measure of safety for both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The issue was raised that the design team should investigate a raised/separated cycle track that could be a safer alternative than the shared-use path on a block-by-block basis. The project team remarked that the key constraint is limited right of way; such bicycle accommodations may come at the cost of pedestrian accommodations.
- The question was asked whether or not bikes are allowed on the streets.
 - Bikes are allowed to ride anywhere.
 - The network improvements are being created to encourage bicycles to use off-street facilities.
- The question was asked whether the landscaped buffer area could be eliminated to provide a bike lane.
 - The landscaped areas provide safety buffers for pedestrians, separating them from traffic. Additionally, utilities are generally located in the landscaped buffer area.
 - The design team will look at some locations for bike lanes (e.g., the need for a climbing lane).
- General discussion about the parallel routes project included the suitability of bike boulevards versus greenways and the overall accessibility of the proposed routes.
- CPIT members recommended that the findings of the Housing and Land use study should be incorporated into the parallel routes study and into the multimodal street improvements project.
- The CPIT members also commented that the on-sidewalk bicycle facility (shared-use path) locations represent a new idea and should be looked at more globally across the Pike.

Wrap-up

- Kimley-Horn and Arlington County asked members of the CPIT to return to their communities, seek feedback on the concept design and proposed street space elements, and to pass that feedback on to the project team.
- Arlington County and Kimley-Horn will engage civic associations and other community groups to further discuss the design.
- The feedback will be used to influence the proposed detailed design and to prepare for a public meeting next fall.
- Another CPIT meeting is likely to occur sometime before the public meeting.



SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

CPIT Members: Seek additional feedback on proposed design for near-term multimodal street improvements and provide additional input to project team.

Arlington County/Kimley-Horn:

1. Upload presentation and materials to project website. Make link available. *Complete with the issuance of these minutes.*
2. Incorporate CPIT feedback discussed above into next iteration of the design.
3. Prepare for public meeting and next CPIT meeting.

CLOSING

We request that the attendees review the content of these minutes and advise the authors of any necessary revisions within three weeks of the preparation date, after which time these meeting minutes will be considered final.

Respectfully submitted,

KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

R. John Martin, P.E.
Project Manager

cc: Attendees
Project File 2.1

References available on project website (www.pikemultimodal.com):

- Agenda of April 26, 2011 CPIT meeting
- Presentation slides from April 26 CPIT meeting
- Handout from meeting