

**Environment and Energy Conservation Commission**  
Draft

Summary of December 17, 2018 Meeting  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Conference Room 715

Members Present: Claire O’Dea, Mike Hanna, Charles Girard, Carol Rakatansky, Mike Mesmer, Kimberly Fedinatz, John Bloom, Sarah Meservey, Jessica Skerritt, Colleen Orr  
Members Absent: Gabriel Thoumi

Guests: Sharon Malley, David Schwartz, Teresa Leonardo, Destiny Lloyd, Ruth Ellis, Bernie Berne, Jonathan Morgenstein

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss (DES), Ritch Viola (DES)

**1. Public Comment**

Bernie Berne provided public comment on the MTP Bike Element. Mr. Berne noted that bicycling can be helpful but it can also be destructive. Every time a trail is paved to increase width from 8 feet to 10 feet it increases impervious area. He noted that the ASHTO standards are designed for highways, not bike trails.

Mr. Berne also noted that widening trails makes them less safe. Bernie also noted that there isn’t a recommendation for sustainability in this plan. These plan is just to widen. He asked staff and the commission to push back against widening of trails for safety and environmental reasons.

Another issue raised by Mr. Berne was mowing. Bernie expressed that often mowing goes 10 or more feet off the trail. Some of these areas are natural areas that should be preserved. He asked that the policy clearly state that mowing should be limited to 3 feet on each side.

Ritch Viola noted that he has discussed the mowing issue. Absolute targets are hard to hit with mowing since some areas do need more than 3 feet. He Ritch did express that something could be more explicitly done to minimize excess mowing. The plan should be higher level but the contracts with mowing or with the County could be more detailed than they currently are.

Ruth Ellis provided public comment from the Citizens’ Climate Lobby. CCL is a nonpartisan nonprofit that empowers volunteers to advocate for effective national policies to address climate change. Founded in 2007, CCL has grown to over 100,000 volunteers. Last year, their volunteers had over 1,600 lobby meetings with Congressional offices.

She noted that they are asking for the Commission to actively support the Board to adopt a resolution on climate action.

Ms. Ellis detailed Carbon Fee, Carbon Dividend, and Border Carbon Adjustment:

- ▶ Carbon Fee: Places a fee on fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas, as close as possible to the source of extraction. It will drive down carbon pollution because energy companies, industries, and consumers will move toward cleaner, cheaper options.
- ▶ Carbon Dividend: money collected from the carbon fee is allocated in equal shares every month to the American people to spend as they see fit.
- ▶ Border Carbon Adjustment: U.S. manufacturers and jobs will be protected using an assessment based on carbon use.

Why the Board should pass this resolution now? Carbon fee and dividend, places a tax on source of extraction. Doing this as soon as possible is critical. The cost gets passed on to consumers. Carbon intensive products will go up in price, consumers will use less of them. As prices increase funds will be dispersed to those that reduce use.

Why should Arlington take action? The time is now.

- ▶ Is consistent with Arlington county's goals as stated in the Climate Action Resolution and Community Energy Plan
- ▶ Supports a specific policy that is economically efficient, mitigates potential burdens on low- and middle-income households, and has increasing bipartisan support
- ▶ Fairfax and Montgomery counties and municipalities across the country are considering or have already passed similar resolutions
- ▶ Passing a resolution now could help build momentum for the first bipartisan legislation on climate change in ten years

Passing a resolution now could help build momentum to move this along further.

Carol asked if this was a tax on the extraction or use of materials. Ms. Ellis noted that the fee would be applied on the extraction of the material. It is collected at the source.

How did CCL arrive at the GHG reductions? It is a model based on cost per tonnage. It has a base level and increase based on GHG reduction needed to hit IPCC targets.

CCL members asked that E2C2 recommend that the Board take up the resolution for consideration.

This is consistent with many of the Board members' priorities. Michael Mesmer volunteered to draft a letter.

John Bloom also noted that there are several resolutions bubbling up and could be approved at once or combined.

## **2. Chair and Vice Chair update**

Michael Mesmer provided an update on the succession plan for the Chair role and announced the reincarnation of a vice-chair role.

Michael Mesmer will cycle off the Commission at the end of December. Mike Hanna will take up the Chair role. John Bloom will take on the vice-chair role.

Mr. Mesmer expressed thanks to Mr. Hanna and Mr. Bloom for taking on leadership roles within the commission.

### 3. MTP Update

Ritch Viola provided an update on the Master Transportation Plan Bike Element. He noted that there have been many changes since the last plan, including BikeShare, scooters, dockless bikes, protected bike lanes, and more. In addition, many planned bike facilities have since been implemented.

Ritch noted that it is one of eight elements of the Master Transportation Plan that identify policies and projects for development of the transportation system.

The plan is more than 10 years old and needs to be updated to meet current and future realities that are unfolding.

The current schedule for updating the MTP Bicycle Element is:

#### Schedule for Updating the MTP Bicycle Element

- Phase 1 – Develop Goals & Policies Framework (Fall-Winter 2017-18)
- Phase 2 – Develop Bikeways Network Map & Priorities (Spring-Summer 2018)
- Phase 3 – Present Draft Bicycle Element for public comment, incl. commissions/committees, adjacent jurisdictions, open houses; (Fall - Winter)
- Phase 4 – Final Review & Approval of Bicycle Element (Winter 2018-19)

#### Phase 1- Findings from Fall 2017 Public Outreach

- There is a broad public interest in more bicycling
- The primary reason for not bicycling more often is a concern about safety on streets
- The best ways to enhance bicycling are to add more protected bicycle lanes and trails and improve the connectivity of the system

#### Phase 2- Spring 2018 Outreach Activities

- On-Line Comment Form (open May 18 – June 29) collected 630+ responses
- Pop-Up events (Six events across Arlington) about 400 impressions
- Two public workshops (early June) about 50 attendees

#### Sought Community Input On:

- What are the key destinations for bicycling?

- Where are infrastructure improvements needed?
- What bicycling connections are missing, or need to be made better?
- What is most needed? How do we prioritize what/where to make improvements?

Mr. Viola noted that the corridors are the most desired for bicycling upgrades. These corridors include:

- Columbia Pike (entirety, emphasis is east of Walter Reed)
- Lee Highway (greatest interest is Harrison to Spout Run)
- Glebe Road (particularly Lee Hwy to Walter Reed)
- Carlin Springs Road
- Rosslyn to Ballston – upgrade existing bike lanes
- George Mason Drive – (Lee Hwy to Custis Trail, Arlington Blvd to W&OD Trail)
- Arlington Blvd Trail (west of Glebe Road)
- Walter Reed Drive
- Washington Blvd (Clarendon to Arlington Blvd, Westover to Virginia Square)

The most frequently desired improved connections were in:

- Pentagon City to Clarendon/Court House
- Columbia Pike to Pentagon City & Crystal City
- Columbia Pike to 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge
- Ballston to W&OD Trail/Shirlington
- Crystal City/Long Bridge Park to Mt. Vernon Trail & Potomac River crossing



Carol Rakatansky asked about schools and how well served they are bike trails and parking. She noted limited parking around some areas of schools. Ritch noted that schools are an item of focus in the plan and they work to ensure that schools are a focused part of the transportation network. An emphasis is placed on reducing bike and vehicle conflicts around schools as well as parking.

To put the bike map together staff started with existing bikeway facilities and added projects in development. They further reviewed planned projects - 2008 Bike Element plus amendments from other plans (Rosslyn, EFC, Crystal City, others). Staff also considered recommendations from the community and working group. They overlaid all items on a map and looked at coverage, facility deficiencies, and opportunities. Schools were very prominent in this consideration. Many of these trails are maintained and used all year round.

### **Phase 3- Current Activities (October - January)**

- Internal review by County & APS staff
- Review by adjacent jurisdictions, VDOT, NOVA Parks and NPS

- Presentation of draft plan with commissions and other advisory groups
- Additional public engagement to gain community feedback; (on-line survey, open houses) outreach to under-represented groups (youth, businesses)
- County Board briefings

John Seymour noted that the most important item to get people on a bike is simply comfort. For people to feel safe they need more than paint on a road but rather physically separated trails or lanes. John further details that residents don't want to lose parking. He asked where the County is going in terms of expansion to separated bike lanes. Ritch noted that there has been a significant increase this past year. It is difficult to do due to limited space in the right of way. The main areas being focused on are the urban corridors and where conflicts between bikes and vehicles have been problematic.

Kimberly Fedinatz asked for clarification about lighting trails. Ritch noted that staff feel it is important to light many of these trails like a road. For safety, there is a sense that they should be lit in a manner that allows bikers to see ~100 feet ahead. Kimberly expressed concern about lights in the nature trail areas. She noted that that areas such as the Four Mile Run Trail and W&OD are generally wooded.

Claire noted that a section on lighting may be helpful in the letter. Claire noted concern that has previously been expressed in processes such as the streetlight management plan, Williamsburg, POPS, etc. Having some clarity on lights would be helpful and address community concerns.

Mike Hanna noted that there were no consultants involved in this MTP update. The Board and DES did not fund the plan or put a priority on it. Mike expressed that staff did an outstanding job without funding and all while losing staff. It has been an amazing lift by staff to get to this point and they should be commended.

### **Significant Policy Themes**

- Adds a **Vision** – Attention towards providing transportation option for persons of all ages and abilities. Enhance safety and comfort and provide for greater equity.
- More **low-stress routes across Arlington** (safe and comfortable for all skills). Link sections of streets and trails with enhanced crossings. Seeking greater coverage, connectivity and equity.
- Provide for **best possible infrastructure** – not just what easily fits (value decisions about streets). Better facilities = more users
- Embrace **management of trails as transportation** facilities for year-round, and 24 hour use. Also, address conflicts between bikes and pedestrians.
- Address **changing technology** – eBikes & motorized scooters
- Identify new **bike infrastructure projects** and establish **prioritization** methods

### **Greater Connectivity Across the County**

- In addition to the Primary Bicycle Corridors, many additional low-stress bikeways are needed to connect neighborhoods and to access key destinations
- Some on-street facilities need upgrades to achieve greater user safety and comfort

- Plan seeks increased connectivity within the network; bridging of gaps and providing useful linkages
- Also, aiming for greater equity; all communities should have good access & service

#### **Trail Upgrades (Appendix D)**

- Emphasis on Primary Trails (Arlington Blvd, Custis, Four Mile Run, W&OD, Bluemont Junction)
- Repave and widen; 8' to 10' or 10' to 12'. Fix: pinch points, worn bridge decks, drainage issues and other problems
- Consider lighting installation
- Address conflicts between users: markings, signage, other measures
- Enhance wayfinding and entrance points
- Improve street crossings

#### **Phase 4 – Winter Activities**

- Revise document to produce final draft
- Transportation & Planning commission hearings
- Request to Advertise (RTA) at February, 2019 County Board meeting (tentative schedule)
- Adoption of Plan at March, 2019 County Board meeting

The Commission agreed to write a letter in the coming months. Mike Hanna volunteered to draft and circulate it when appropriate.

#### **4. POPS Letter**

The Commission discussed the POPS letter, amended it and decided to continue working on it into 2019. The Commission will bring an amended letter forward at the January 2019 meeting.

#### **5. 2019 Work Plan and 2019 Commission Goals**

The Commission discussed and amended the Work Plan. They will continue to amend in in January once new and current members have had a chance to review and express interest in open slots.

#### **6. Meeting Summary Review – November**

Approved unanimously

#### **7. Old / New Business**

Mike H. noted that the EA working group would be connecting with Rich Dooley to discuss next steps. He expressed a desire to keep this moving forward and create concrete next steps.

John Bloom provided an update on the Energy Committee. He noted that Charles Girard will be serving on the EC. Other residents have expressed interest and will be attending future meetings.

Mike M. noted that Carol is going to take the lead on the Lee Highway Working Group Task Force. Sarah M. is going to be taking the lead on the salt dome site efforts.

John Seymour noted that the Streetlight Master Plan letter is in the final stages. He noted that the Working Group and staff could have worked better together, but that collaborative effort hasn't been as close as hoped. The draft letter will be brought before the Commission in January.

Claire thanked the Commission for input on the POPS process and specifically regarding direction on LOS concern. Clare agreed to raise those issues with staff at the upcoming meeting, amend the letter, and circulate it before the January meeting.