

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
Task Force on Arterial Road Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety

Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2012

Two Chef's Pizza

5901 Wilson Boulevard

8:00 – 10:00

Welcome

David Van Wagner, Suzanne Sundberg, Sandeep Maripuri, Ed Fendley and Chris Healey attended. Chris and Ed opened the meeting.

Review and Approval of January Minutes

Participants reviewed and approved the minutes from the January 21 Task Force meeting without amendment.

Transparency of Task Force Activities

Task force members reiterated the need for transparency of their work and the consideration of all reasonable ideas for improving the pedestrian safety along Arlington's arterial roads and Wilson Boulevard in particular. To this end, David Van Wagner volunteered to create a Wordpress web page that could be linked to the BCA webpage. The site created by David would be used to publish Task Force meeting minutes, links to relevant documents, and any other information about the work of the task force. It was noted that Googledocs may not be the best tool for managing Task Force information because not everyone can readily access Googledocs.

Post meeting note: The Wordpress site is now up and running and can be accessed through a link on the BCA website.

Stakeholder Outreach

The Task Force confirmed the need to take steps to inform key stakeholders about the work of the Task Force early in the process of evaluating options for improved pedestrian safety on Wilson Boulevard. The following groups were identified as key stakeholders: Ashlawn Elementary, Arlington Traditional School, Dominion Hills Civic Association, Boulevard Manor Civic Association, Waverly Hills Civic Association. Ed noted that he had reached out to all of these organizations with the exception of Waverly Hills, which he could notify in advance of the next ARSPS meeting.

The need to inform and engage local businesses was noted, particularly those located on Wilson Boulevard in the Bluemont neighborhood. Task Force members Ed Fendley and Suzanne Sundburg agreed to send information about the work of the Task Force to those businesses and other stakeholders for which we have email addresses. For others, the Task Force agreed to distribute an informational flyer outlining the goals of

the Task Force and inviting any interested parties to participate at the Task Force monthly meetings. Ed Fendley agreed to develop a flyer for distribution to local stakeholders.

- Task Force members divided up the work of distributing flyers according to the following:
- Fendley/Healey will take businesses and residences along the north side Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason Drive;
- Sandeep will take businesses and residences along Wilson Boulevard east of George Mason Drive on both the north and south sides of Wilson up to Glebe Road;
- Dave takes businesses and residences along the south side Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason Drive.

Consideration of Traffic Volumes

The group considered data on arterial road traffic volume. Looking at VDOT and County data circulated by Suzanne, the group observed that traffic volume on Wilson Boulevard over the past three decades has been steady. The data indicates that while there is some variation year-to-year and decade-to decade, the traffic volumes on Wilson west of George Mason Drive have generally stayed at about the same level since 1980.

The group discussed how these steady traffic volumes on Wilson contrast with the amount of development that has taken place in Northern Virginia over the past 30 years. The group considered how it is that traffic volumes on Wilson have remained steady. It was observed that Arlington Boulevard, I-66, Metrorail, Lee Highway, and Washington Boulevard all parallel Wilson in the Bluemont neighborhood, so people journeying across Arlington have many choices. Sandeep volunteered to look into the disparity between development trends and Wilson Boulevard traffic trends, with the objective of identifying some way of measuring how much development has occurred over the past decades. This could then be charted against Wilson Boulevard traffic volumes.

David Van Wagner provided data on traffic counts of Wilson Boulevard versus Washington Boulevard near Harrison Street. The group observed that the most recent traffic counts for the two roads were within about 2% of one another (about 16,000 and 15,800, respectively). Data showed that at peak times Washington Boulevard traffic counts are higher than Wilson Boulevard. Ed agreed to chart this data for posting on the Task Force website. David agreed to research data on traffic speed for Washington and Wilson Boulevards.

It was observed that Washington Boulevard has one through lane in each direction, while Wilson Boulevard has two through lanes in each direction. It was further observed that Washington Boulevard seems to function as if it had more than two lanes – that is, if a vehicle is turning, other vehicles are able to go around it. The Task Force identified a number of issues for further research including: how does the number of through lanes affect traffic capacity, and how does intersection capacity affect “through-put” capacity.

Task Force members also identified the need to engage county officials and other experts regarding proposals such as undergrounding utilities and County land acquisition for sidewalk expansion.

Next Meeting Topics / Speakers

For the March meeting, Task Force members agreed to review the Arlington Arterial Transportation Management Study (ATM).

The Task Force reiterated the need to hear first hand about accessibility issues along Wilson Boulevard and prioritized this topic for the March meeting, if a speaker is available. It was also agreed that any additional data, information or expertise on traffic capacity and configurations would be welcomed at the next meeting.

Conclusion

The Task Force meeting was adjourned until its March 17th meeting at 8:00am at Two Chefs Restaurant.