

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

**Meeting Minutes**

June 16, 2012

Two Chefs Pizza, 5901 Wilson Boulevard, 8:00 a.m.

**Attending:**

Special Guest: Wayne Wentz, Chief of Transportation Engineering and Operations for Arlington County.

Task Force Participants: Eric Goodman, Ed Fendley, Chris Healey, Dan Laredo, and David Van Wagner

**Discussion with Mr. Wentz**

Mr. Wentz explained that he has lived in Arlington for 4 years. He noted that he came to Arlington to work for the County in the Department of Transportation. Mr. Wentz has been designing and implementing complete streets in Seattle and other municipalities for more than 20 years.

Mr. Wentz commented that four lane streets are the “worst” street design for safety and traffic management. Mr. Wentz indicated that a more effective configuration often includes two traffic lanes with a center turn lane. He stated that this configuration typically provides a better line of sight and safer transitions for cars entering the traffic lanes. This is because the initial traffic lane is set further off from the curb and the center turn lane provides a legal transition zone for cars making a left turn and entering the furthest traffic lane. He noted that four lane roads that are converted to three lane roads typically experience a reduction in crashes, and typically do not experience any significant changes in travel times for motorists. Attention to the design of intersections is important, as are design features that allow for buses, other motor vehicles, and bicycles to successfully share the roadway in ways that minimize conflicts and allow for traffic to flow.

Mr. Wentz stated that in light of Wilson Boulevard’s traffic volumes there is “no question” that Wilson west of George Mason Drive would function successfully as a reconfigured three-lane road.

Mr. Wentz noted that the cost of acquiring “right of way” is often prohibitive for implementing complete streets elements (e.g., bike lanes on Columbia Pike). Mr. Wentz also noted that Arlington includes trees among the necessary elements of a complete street.

According to Mr. Wentz, it is important for civic organizations such as BCA to express their transportation needs and desires to the Arlington County Board. Revenue from Arlington’s County decal fee is used to fund the County’s “Complete Streets” program,

which is used to improve arterial roads that are under the control of the County.. Complete Streets program funding cannot be used to acquire right-of-way.

Mr. Wentz offered that it may be worthwhile to consider a phased approach to enhancing pedestrian safety along Wilson, starting with restriping the roadway to create a two-way center turn lane and two general travel lanes. A later stage would involve moving curbs and moving utility poles so as to create widened sidewalks that are no longer impeded by the poles.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Fendley noted that this is the final formal meeting of the ARSPS Task Force. He stated that the Task Force will be summarizing information gained over the past meetings and the Task Force's findings in order to create a presentation to the BCA Board at its September meeting. Task Force members are asked to join in the development of the presentation. If needed, the Task Force could meet again to review and discuss the final draft presentation.