

SUMMARY REPORT

The following summarizes the key activities and findings of the Old Lee Highway “Great Streets” multimodal planning study. The study, undertaken by the City of Fairfax, was a key step to reinvent and to define the City’s vision for Old Lee Highway. Implementation of the vision will transform the road from a commuter arterial to a street that fosters social interaction and transaction, and that is memorable and reflective of the place. The 1.5-mile project links two critical mixed use nodes: Old Town Fairfax and Fairfax Circle and provides facilities and safety improvements for active and public transportation as well as general traffic.

In February 2015, the project team participated in a City Council briefing to explain the purpose and schedule for the project.

Existing Conditions

During the winter of 2014, the project team reviewed existing conditions in the study area including conducting a field review to collect new data for the corridor. The project team reviewed available documentation and records including: right of way widths, ADT volumes from VDOT, functional classifications, accident data, land use and zoning maps, and data from the 2005 Transportation Study. The field screening included adjacent land uses and urban design context, pavement widths, stop-bar and crosswalk locations, posted speeds, intersection configurations, controlled and uncontrolled intersections, condition of sidewalks, and bike and transit facilities. The project team also considered vehicular-pedestrian conflicts, and the location of suitable pedestrian crossings.

A second field review was conducted by tour bus with the City Council members and City staff to further identify issues and understand the perspectives of the adjoining neighborhoods. The findings of the activities above were presented to City staff, City Council members, and the broader community for feedback.

Visioning

Workshop No. 1 was conducted in March 2015 to share findings about existing conditions and to engage the public in creatively thinking about what would comprise a “Great Street.” Boards comprised of photographs were prepared to illustrate the assets and issues of Old Lee Highway as well as the traits of a great street. Using a variety of activity boards, the public were also able to identify the location of issues or propose solutions. They were also invited to create their own street section using *Streetmix*, an interactive software tool that allows individuals to create cross-sections of a street.

The top four priorities identified by the public included:

1. Pedestrian Comfort
2. Bicycle Comfort

3. Landscaping/Buffers and
4. Consistent Design.

Alternatives

Subsequently, the project reviewed the results of Workshop No. 1 to identify the most desired features and attributes. This information was used to create draft multimodal alternatives for seven differing typologies of roadway along Old Lee Highway. The alternatives plans and sections showed the extent of the physical improvements associated with identified multimodal treatments (e.g., medians, protected and general bike lanes, bus stops, shared use paths). Photos were also collected to provide built examples of the potential improvement in the context of Old Lee Highway.

A subsequent workshop with City staff resulted in identification of three roadway segments and two alternatives were prepared for each of these segments. The segments include:

1. North Street to Community Center (commercial)
2. Community Center to Ridge Avenue (residential) and
3. Ridge Avenue to Old Pickett Road (commercial).

The purpose of the alternatives was to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of key potential elements including center medians, bike lanes, shared use paths and low impact development techniques.

The alternatives were photo-simulated in both plan and section view.

The alternatives were presented to the City Council (May 2015) for feedback and to the public at Workshop No. 2 (June 2015). Workshop No. 2 also reviewed the input from the initial workshop, discussed the benefits and constraints of each potential improvement in the alternatives and provided the public an opportunity to identify their preferences or concerns. Additional public comment was also obtained from community members via email to City staff.

Preferred Alternative

The public comments and City Council input were reviewed by the City staff and project team to select a preferred alternative for each of the three roadway segments. The recommended improvements and the number of supportive public comments for each potential element were presented to the City Council in July 2015 (see attached presentation). Alternative 1 was recommended for all three segments. The final recommendations include the following:

1. Landscaped medians were recommended in the two commercial segments. The landscaped median was not included in the residential portion of the roadway due to conflicts with short block faces and left turn lanes.
2. Protected bike lanes on both sides of Old Lee Highway were recommended in all three segments.
3. Shared Use Paths on both sides of Old Lee Highway were recommended in all three segments.



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The desired number of general traffic lanes in Segments 1 and 3 is two in each direction. Segment 2 should be one lane in each direction. It was further recommended to Existing on-street parking would remain.

The City Council endorsed advancing the project to the next phase of design development.