

IMPORTANT NOTE

The material in this subcommittee report represents the opinions and recommendation of the subcommittee members. While all such information will be considered by Fairfax County and the consultants contracted to work on this study, Fairfax County does not necessarily endorse nor agree with these opinions and recommendations.



Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway Station Access Management Study

Reston Metrorail Access Group (RMAG) Pedestrian and Bicyclist Issues Subcommittee Report June 26, 2007

Background

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Subcommittee met a total of three times including the initial breakout group discussion at the RMAG meeting on May 22. The group met again at the Reston Town Center Association (RTCA) office on May 31 and finally at the RTCA on June 13. The group consisted of RMAG members Bruce Wright, Fatehmeh Alladoust, Dave Edwards, and Barbara Rovin; two members of the public, Norbert Pink and Joe Stowers; VHB staff member Dan Nabors; Fairfax County staff member Keith Goodman; and Paul LeValley from The Perspectives Group.

The group structured its work around the paper on pedestrian and bicycle issues provided at the May 22 RMAG meeting and also considered a slide show presentation on potential solutions prepared by Dan Neighbors. The following report summarizes the group's discussion and recommendations.

Issue 1: Crossings at Major Routes

- The group felt that there should be more crossings over the W&OD trail. It forms a substantial barrier to movement.
- There should be a shared use crossing, with separation between pedestrian and bike traffic, along Explorer Avenue to Connect Explorer North and Explorer South.
- There should be crossings of Sunset Hills at the Reston Parkway station.
- There should be cross walks at every leg of every intersection.
- Signal timing for pedestrians needs to be improved in order to give people a chance to get across the streets.
- There should be medians in the streets wherever possible. Perhaps additional space on the south side of Sunset Hills is available for road widening to accommodate medians.
- The turning radius at intersections should be reduced where possible in order to slow turning traffic and reduce the amount of ground a pedestrian or bicycle needs to traverse in order to cross the street.
- As a general principle, we should reduce the "box imprint" at major intersections.
- There was general discussion, but no firm conclusion, about the desirability of eliminating "right turn on red" capabilities at major intersections. There was acknowledgement of the desirability from a pedestrian safety point of view but also a concern about the resulting traffic back-ups that would occur.
- There was also discussion, but no conclusion, of the desirability of mid-block crossings.
- There was discussion about the feasibility of a below-grade crossing of Reston Parkway south of the Toll Road.
- The group also discussed the general confusion that exists regarding current pedestrian law and they emphasized the desirability of simplifying it.
- There was general agreement within the group that median refuges could improve pedestrian safety in major crosswalks.
- The group reviewed evidence showing that countdown signals are effective in facilitating pedestrian crossing.

Prioritized major streets and intersections for crossing improvements:

- Sunset Hills (the Wiehle and Sunset Hills intersection is critical)
- Wiehle Avenue

- Sunrise Valley
- Reston Parkway
- W&OD (at Explorer)
- New Dominion Parkway (particularly at the library and County building)

Issue 2: Sidewalk Improvements Along Major Routes

- Pedestrians and bicyclists should be separated on trails/sidewalks.
- A properly designed trail/sidewalk will naturally separate bicyclists and pedestrians.
- There should be a sidewalk along the north side of Sunset Hills from Explorer west toward the Fairfax County Parkway.
- There needs to be a comprehensive plan for putting in sidewalks on the south side of the Reston Parkway station. In particular, there need to be sidewalks along both sides of Sunrise Valley.
- Soapstone and South Lakes Roads are top candidates for sidewalks, multi-use trails and bike lanes.
- The W&OD trail requires a grade-separated crossing over Wiehle Avenue.

Issue 3: Bike Lanes

- A long term goal is for all major roads to have a combination of multi-use trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks.
- As a general principle, most felt that bike lanes on streets were preferable to sharing use with pedestrians.
- An ideal design for major roads would have one side with a sidewalk, one side a multi-use trail, and bicycle lanes on both sides.
- There should be activated signal changes for bike crossings over major roads. The signals should also be audible.

Issue 4: Access to Stations

- A major impediment to bicycle and pedestrian access to the stations is the difficulty of crossing private parcels such as parking lots.
- Rights of way should be purchased when possible to provide direct access to the station from all four quadrants.

Issue 5: Connectivity of Trails

- Trails, sidewalks, and roadways must be well integrated.
- There must be activated signals where trails and sidewalks cross major roads.
- Signage must be present to make the appropriate usage of trails and sidewalks clear.
- Signage must also be used to help pedestrians and bicyclists navigate and access the stations.

Conclusion

The group worked through most of the issues raised by the paper presented at the May 22nd meeting and offered input both general and specific in each of the subject areas. The group sees the work they've done so far and the information presented in this report as a beginning and they intend to continue to meet and discuss these issues throughout the length of the station access management study.

This report and all materials created by the Reston Metrorail Access Group and its subcommittees can be found on-line on the Fairfax County website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/sam_study.htm

The public is invited to post comments about this report or any issue related to the Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway station access management study by sending an email to RMAG@fairfaxcounty.gov