

Seven Corners Connectivity Working Group – Meeting #3 Summary  
November 15, 2012

**Attendees:**

Members:

Mary Cheston (on behalf of Rick)  
Ben Cooper  
Doug Smith  
Jan Reitman

County Staff:

Mike Garcia (Fairfax Department of Transportation)  
Kris Morley-Nikfar (Fairfax Department of Transportation)  
Charlie Strunk (Fairfax Department of Transportation)  
Bernie Suchicital (Department of Planning and Zoning)  
Aaron Frank (Supervisor Penny Gross' Office)

- The meeting began at 6:30 pm. Two minor changes were made to the meeting minutes from the meeting held on October 16, 2012. The group voted 4-0 to approve the meeting minutes with the changes noted.
- Introductions were made. Mary Cheston introduced herself and stated she was sitting in for her husband, Rick Cheston.
- Charlie Strunk, Bicycle Coordinator from the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, was introduced.
- The focus topic for the meeting was bicycle connectivity/facilities. The meeting began with a discussion of bicycle improvement goals in the Seven Corners area. At the same time, concerns were also raised.
  - Goal: Implement bicycle lanes in the Seven Corners area in a safe and efficient manner
  - Goal: Connectivity – not just within Fairfax County but to the neighboring jurisdictions.
  - Goal: Crossing Route 7 in a safe manner.
  - Goal: Awareness of bikers. There is an awareness of walkers and drivers but not necessarily bikers and this should be addressed.
  - Goal: Link to Wilson Boulevard
  - Concern: Bike lanes on Route 50 (clarification was made that most likely the bike lanes we be on the service drive but acknowledged that some people bike on Route 50.)
  - Concern: Seven Corners area is not bike friendly.
- Discussion of Sleepy Hollow Road Bicycle Plan recommendations.
  - Charlie Strunk stated that extensive measurements were taken on Sleepy Hollow to see if on-road bike lanes and the existing on-street parking could be accommodated on the road. On-road bike lanes could not be accommodated within the existing pavement for Sleepy Hollow Road as the road is 1-1.5 feet shy of being able to accommodate the travel lanes, on-street parking, and on-road bike lanes.
  - While discussing the recommendations for Sleepy Hollow Road, Charlie explained the minimum standards for an on-road bike lane on one side of the road, which is five feet. If the bike lane is next to the curb, then one foot of the gutter may be used, and the bike lane can be reduced to four feet. In the case of Sleepy Hollow Road, which has on-street parking on both sides of the road, the feet minimum standard was used. Charlie did note that in places such as Arlington

County and the City of Alexandria, wider bike lanes are being used because of the issue of car doors being opened into the bike lanes. The wider bike lane gives the biker more room to maneuver around the open door.

- There is a recommendation for a bicycle climbing lane, on Sleepy Hollow Road, in the draft Master Bicycle Plan as there was not enough room for bike lanes on both sides of the road. This means that a bicycle lane is striped out in the uphill direction for bikers to use as they are likely going slower than cars but in the downhill direction it is expected that bicyclists will be able to keep up with traffic or not slow it down considerably. The climbing lane will alternate from side to side on Sleepy Hollow as the road is not constantly going uphill or downhill in one direction.
- Because Sleepy Hollow Road was just repaved, it is not likely that the climbing lanes can be installed until the road is repaved. However, shared lane markings could be looked at as near term solution until climbing lanes could be included when the road is repaved.
- Charlie noted that the way the County gets roughly 90% of its bike lanes is through the VDOT repaving program.
- Charlie discussed the new tools that are available to the County and then described what the keys on the map meant. (*note: I will be attaching a description in the email that will accompany this meeting summary*)
  - New Tools: Sharrows, signs that read “Bikes May Use Full Lane” (this one is controversial)
  - Technique that is used during repaving is to implement wide curbside lanes. This creates a wide lane on the outside of a road that may be easier for bicyclists to use.
  - There is opposition to taking of private land for right-of-way to create bike lanes in road. This is where sharrows or wide curbside lanes may be a helpful tool.
  - The red dashed circles on the map denote areas where bike access can be done by laying down some asphalt. An example is generally where two cul-de-sacs meet.
  - Policy Roads are big roads with lots of traffic and other issues. Requires a separate study for the road.
- Discussion about opportunities in the Seven Corners area
  - Working Group member stated that there is almost a continuous service drive on the south side of Route 7 from Seven Corners to Culmore.
    - a. An opportunity exists for a pedestrian/bike corridor from Seven Corners to Culmore.
  - There is a service road on Route 50 from the McDonalds (just east of Patrick Henry Drive) to DC.
  - Safer crossings of Route 7.
    - a. There are only two places that are marginally safe to cross Route 7: 1) Castel Road and 2) Patrick Henry Drive
    - b. Was stated in the group that because of safety, there is a preference to bike south towards Glen Carlyn to cross Route 7 and then cutover to Manchester to cross Route 50.

- It was stated that the County has reach out to neighboring jurisdictions, especially the City of Falls Church and Arlington County. The County has tried to match the draft bicycle master plan with what other neighboring jurisdictions are doing.
- Other comments/follow up items:
  - There was a transportation bond passed in 2007. What sidewalk improvements are associated with that bond for Route 7? (*Note: This comment has been passed on and Chris Wells will address this question at the next Connectivity Group meeting*).
  - Need to explore a work around for the interchange area for bicyclists.
  - It is permitted to have bike lanes that go contrary to the flow of traffic assuming the road is a one-way road there are signs telling bicyclists they can do so.
  - How do we get the concept of using the service drive on the south side of Route 7 from Culmore to Severn Corners added to the bicycle master plan or on a list of improvements for the area? (*Note: Response is this will be evaluated hopefully in the Spring of 2013.*)
  - We will look into why bicycle lanes were not continued on Annandale road across Route 50.
- It was suggested that each member of the group come up with 3-5 top projects in the Seven Corners area. From this list we can start to generate ideas and help prioritize improvements in the area.