


**Advisory Group Meeting #11 Summary**
**Duke Street in Motion**

Thursday, 5/25/2023; 6:30 pm

In-person: DASH Facility, 3000 Business Center Drive

Virtual: Zoom

**1. Attendees**

The attendees are based on those who signed in. There may be community member attendees who did not sign in, and whose names were not therefore captured in the attendance log.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization / Department</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Aaron Gofreed</b>	Advisory Group	No
<b>Casey Kane</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Devon Tutak</b>	Advisory Group	No
<b>Erin Winograd</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Leslie Catherwood-Chairperson</b>	Advisory Group (Chairperson)	Yes
<b>Mindy Lyle-Vice Chair</b>	Advisory Group (Vice Chair)	Yes
<b>Naima Kearney</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Nawfal Kulam</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Robert Brant</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Meronne Teklu</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Yvette Jiang</b>	Advisory Group	Yes
<b>Hillary Orr</b>	City of Alexandria	Yes
<b>Christopher Ziemann</b>	City of Alexandria	Yes
<b>Jen Monaco</b>	City of Alexandria	Yes
<b>Genevieve Kanellias</b>	Consultant Team (WSP)	Yes
<b>Lee Farmer</b>	Consultant Team (VHB)	Yes
<b>Josh Penn</b>	Consultant Team (RHI)	Yes
<b>Will Tolbert</b>	Consultant Team (WSP)	Yes
<b>James Durham</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Betty Guttmann</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Emilio V. Rouco</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Angie Moran</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Fran Vogel</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>R. Lippmann</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Linda Marshall</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Karen Minatelli</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Carter Flemming</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Lori Cooper</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Jim Moran</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Matt Kuplan</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Amy Stearns</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Athena Baldwin</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Griffin Frank</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Toni Oliveira</b>	In-person attendee	Community member



<b>Michael McCormick</b>	In-person attendee	Community member
<b>Sash Impastato</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Jonathan Davis</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Craige Moore</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Dane Lauritzen</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Julianna Von Zumbusch</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Mary Wiley</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Alex Goyette</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Alex Goyette</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Elizabeth Charles</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Lizzi Alarcon</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Jonathan Falk</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Emily Ross</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Roy Byrd</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Angela Moran</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Griffin Frank</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Alison Maltz</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Robert Schiesel</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Marjorie Leong</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Ann Patterson</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member
<b>Harriett Mccune</b>	Virtual attendee	Community member

### Meeting Summary

**A. Welcome/Introductions**

- Reminder of AG role and responsibility.
- Reminder of guiding principles.
- Refresher of inputs into/process for preferred alternative selection.

**B. Public Feedback Overview**

- Jen Monaco provided an overview of public feedback received.

**C. Group Discussion**

- Yvette Jiang – Acknowledged the majority of bus users prefer Concept A, which aligns with design and project goals broadly.
- Erin Winograd – Asked whether any of the protected left turns in her neighborhood could be implemented without a protected bus lane?
- Erin – Expressed a desire to rethink center running bus lanes. Have studies confirmed that these are safer?
  - Jen – Longer crossings do correlate with higher crash rates; pedestrian refuges have been shown to decrease crashes by about 50%.
  - Hillary Orr – There are places where a refuge island could benefit the roadway, but you have to get that space from somewhere. We can't use this funding to just do part of these improvements on the corridor.
  - Jen – We can note concerns or dissenting opinions in the resolution, but what is before us today is deciding between Concepts A and B.
- Casey Kane – Provided comments on behalf of the Traffic and Parking Board and the Transportation Commission.
  - Traffic and Parking Board (TPB):



- There was concern about providing a recommendation in advance of the AG meeting, but the TPB will be weighing in on the specific roadway changes later.
- The City Attorney didn't think we needed to have a public hearing at TPB about this. There is still some interest from our folks in providing feedback, but we are waiting until after this meeting.
- The input we have had is mixed. Some support, while others don't, and some are concerned about pace of the improvements.
- Transportation Commission (TC):
  - TC is in favor since this is supported by the Transportation Master Plan.
  - TC was not prepared to provide an endorsement until after this group decides on their recommendation to City Council.
  - TC spoke about the equity aspects as well as safety – Concept A resonated for many that walk and ride bikes.
  - Status quo was not viewed as acceptable; delays will only result in higher costs. There was hope that AG would make a resolution on near-term and long-term improvements.
  - There was concern about the tree canopy and a desire to avoid tree impacts and mitigate as much as possible.
  - Without good transit we will have gridlock.
- Overall sense that this was a well thought out process.
- Casey – asked whether the Duke Street Transitway is designed serve more than intracity trips?
  - Jen – There is an existing transfer at Van Dorn Street and the 29 K&N, and the existing buses today. And the 28A bus comes from Tyson's. They're benefiting from the infrastructure on Duke Street.
    - NVTVA is working to advance the Route 7 BRT, which is currently planned to terminate at Mark Center.
    - There will be further discussions about gaps and connectivity to build out a regional BRT system.
- Casey – Asked whether we have current ridership data regarding bus ridership on the Duke Street corridor.
  - Jen – Yes; it's available online. Fall 2022 was around 2,700 riders on DASH and MetroBus, and was 106% of ridership compared to 2018. The stop spacing we looked at came from this ridership analysis.
- Casey – Saw some questioning 200% increase in ridership but I couldn't find the data on it.
  - Jen – We used the STOPS model to project ridership. The inputs are travel times, land use, facility types, and general benefits for those types of services and change in travel times for those types of services. It is a standard, nationally-recognized model.
- Casey – How is the City counting bus stations? Do Landmark and King Street count as stations for this modeling?
  - Jen – Those are access points to the corridor, but in terms of travel times the models only looked at the Duke Street corridor.
- Casey – In terms of cost, I read we got \$87 million. Can the City go after additional grant funds if needed?



- Jen – Yes, if directed by Council to do so.
- Casey – Has there been any clarification regarding school bus stops and where school children will be picked up along Duke Street?
  - Jen – In terms of ACPS, it might require changes to a couple stops on the corridor. We are working through potential options with them.
  - The school typically makes decisions regarding where students are picked up.
- Casey – In terms of Police and the Fire Department, and the section of median that was modified to meet the Fire Department’s ability to access the dedicated lanes, have we discussed that with them?
  - Jen – Fire appreciates the current center-running lanes on Route 1. We heard from Police that it is challenging to enforce curb-running bus lanes.
- Erin – I’m showing that DASH line 30 is at 77% of pre-pandemic ridership, MetroBus 29K and 29N are at 93%, and the additional ridership was the change in route of 28A, which ran down King Street, not down Duke Street. So those riders are what take you to the figure.
  - Jen – Those riders are all still using the corridor. This model intentionally used a conservative number referring to how they traditionally collected the data.
  - Note that updated numbers from Spring 2023 indicate that DASH is at 93% of pre-pandemic ridership and the corridor is at 119%.
- Erin – The grant application seemed to indicate that the second grant request (\$75M) was slated for construction, and the first \$12M grant was for design, engineering- the pre-build piece. I wanted to clarify, what we’re looking at for available construction money at this time is \$75M, not \$87M?
  - Jen – Yes, but the cost estimate did include that funding for design.
  - Will – Our numbers for Concept A are about \$95M, and our numbers for Concept B are at about \$75M. Those included professional services (design).
- Meronne Teklu – Wanted to say thanks to staff and team, coming to this conversation from the business community standpoint. While I’m only one voice from this community, I do run a small business here in town. I’ve heard very mixed feedback on this project, although we did host a roundtable – this project’s impacts on the community, and Jen and Hillary attended. The two types of questions I hear most often from the business community about this project relate to: Ridership, and impacts to service roads – What is this projects’ impacts to service roads (Segment A specifically) on the west side of the corridor?
  - Jen – In Segment 1, you’d have direct curb cuts from those businesses to access Duke Street, and you’d have right in, right out, and you’d have to make a U-turn if you wanted to go the other way on Duke Street.
    - Meronne – And you could still access your home on Duke Street?
      - Jen – Yes
- Meronne – I know we discussed it, but I want to be careful when we talk about it: it does benefit all demographics. In addition to the feedback form that was provided, it was also split. It seemed to be more of a “do it or don’t do it.” I know that our role here is to move things forward and imagine what things could be like in 2030. But I want to caution that a lot of folks who write in and come here to speak do not look like me, and in addition to the business community I’m involved in the economic impacts group.
  - I would argue that this does impact black and brown folks. I’d caution us as a community to be careful what we insinuate, and offer that multi-modal



options can meet the needs of all in the community, not just those from other racial/ethnic groups. This is an intersectional issue, that spans across groups. I believe a Duke Street transitway can support us having a thriving community.

- Another concern was the center/curb conversation. I've heard a preference for mixed traffic and I see that concern. In the west end, we have more real estate to work with, but I recognize that my neighbors to the east have less real estate to work with. I think if we can achieve better safety outcomes, that's a win. I'm optimistic about the outcomes of this project, and I'm interested to see the mixed traffic outcomes with 2A/2B, especially.
- Leslie – I originally came to this board as a rep from the groups east of Quaker Lane so I'll wear that hat first.
  - There needs to be better coordination between this group and the group doing the West Taylor Run improvement project. That said, we still need to make a recommendation here.
  - One of the neighborhoods is Taylor Run. That neighborhood submitted a detailed letter that we all received in our pre-meeting packet. I live in Clover-College Park, and will share feedback from them. We have four buckets of feedback:
    1. Intersection of Cambridge Road and Duke Street. Concerned about more traffic conflicts, changing access road to one-way, increasing existing traffic problems, and more cut-through traffic.
    2. Prefers center running bus for segment 3 – there is space and strong desire to move the bus away from the Telegraph ramps.
    3. Peds and cyclists – prefer separate facilities, with a wide buffer from vehicles. And a speed limit on those facilities.
    4. Questions about cost – concern about high price tag without clarity about how the City will keep the project in budget. Want ongoing transparency about budget.
- Nawfal Kulam – Here on behalf of committee for persons with disabilities.
  - Center running bus lanes will be best for folks with mobility impairments.
  - On a paratransit application, one question they ask is can this individual cross the street safely on their own all the time? So many of our folks feel better about using the bus in this scenario.
  - Pedestrian safety – many members said they don't feel comfortable walking/biking, taking the bus from there. This project will help change that.
- Yvette – This also benefits people who live north and south of the corridor.
- Leslie – Thank you again for everyone on AG for providing their own input as well as input from the communities they represent.

**D. Review Concept Comparison**

- Will Tolbert reviewed the final concepts. See meeting slides for details.
- Casey Kane – If we reduce bus stations, but increase ridership, won't it take as much time?
  - Will – Yes, to an extent. There are other things in the design of the stations themselves that can make the boarding time for buses faster. Fare free environment, off-board fare collection, bus kneeling, etc. can all reduce dwell time at stations.



- Robert Brant – What is the delta between existing and proposed stations?
  - Will – 20 existing stations, 8-9 proposed.
- Naima Kearney – Does that mean the roadway would be wider in those areas in Concept A?
  - Will – In most cases no. The one exception is Alexandria Commons. There are many places where you can only have a center pedestrian refuge if you do construction to create one. We want to leverage money to support bikers, drivers, and pedestrians, and prove that we're trying to benefit other users on the corridor. There was less room for a continuous ped/bike connection on the south side so for now it's on the north side, but we'll continue to look for opportunities to incorporate those improvements on the south side.
- Naima – Since bus riders are also pedestrians, are you considering the ease of crossing at bus stops?
  - Will – Definitely. Have talked about how center stations provide better safety a bit tonight. If we build a center station with refuge and a cross-walk, it's half the crossing distance for those who formerly had to cross the full street.
- Naima – Have there been any analyses of improved signal timing?
  - Will – We will have to look at it on an ongoing basis.
- Erin Winograd – Casey had asked to see the properties by type that would be impacted at the last meeting. There were additional properties that weren't classified. Can staff tell us where those properties are?
  - Will – Half were located at Alexandria Commons. There a few outliers but generally the Segment 2B strip. And that's based on GIS; will be updated when we get the full detailed survey.
- Casey – Regarding the tree canopy: where would we add/remove trees?
  - Will – We looked at trees via GIS and visual survey. The place trees are impacted the most is at Alexandria Commons, on the north side. And the other is where we're doing median work like in Segment 1. I'm not super familiar with the City's tree mitigation approach, but broadly, there are requirements to replant old trees that are removed and I imagine a similar approach would be needed here.
  - Hillary – It would be the city's intent to replant trees when removed as much as possible.
- Meronne Teklu – Technology – the recommendation has language about signalized technology improvements. What about other types of tech. improvements? Do these need to be spelled out or are they inherent? Electric buses and vehicle charging stations. Can staff confirm/clarify the separate funding pool for improvements like that? And how are we measuring the success of this project?
  - Jen – A lot of the region will be looking at this project to see how it goes. We already have a lot of metrics in place to monitor ridership, etc, and we'll continue to track those.
  - Hillary – Before we go to construction, we'll have an evaluation plan with metrics like we do for all of our projects.

#### **E. Recommendation Discussion**

- Leslie Catherwood – We will walk through the recommendation and take an informal vote for each segment, then a format vote for overall recommendation. We will note dissenting opinions.



- Long Term Recommendation
  - Jen Monaco – Walked through the long-term recommendation text.
  - Leslie – Facilitated a vote (out of 9)
    - **In favor of center running: 7**
    - **In favor of dedicated: 1 (Naima Kearney)**
    - **In favor of another plan: 1 (Erin Winograd)**
    - **In favor of the phrase “separate spaces for people walking and separate spaces for people wheeling”: 9**
  - Erin – Want to add a qualifier - “Where physically feasible and financially feasible.” Goes back to potential for Eminent Domain. Segment 2A has the most pinch points and impacts.
  - Leslie – Will note the dissent and request for a qualifier for the long-term recommendation.
- Busway Recommendation
  - Segment 1
    - **In favor of center running: 8**
    - **In favor of curb running: 1 (Erin Winograd)**
  - Segment 2A
    - **In favor of mixed traffic: 9**
  - Segment 2B
    - Yvette Jiang – Request to add additional language - “If the more refined cost estimate indicate that Concept A is over budget, converting Segment 2B to mixed traffic in the near term should be a top priority measure to cut cost.”
      - Jen – Noted that Council has asked for guidance about elements to adjust if cost is an issue.
      - Bob Brandt – Lots of design work to be done. If it’s later determined that something won’t work, staff can make adjustments.
      - Casey Kane – Noted that there is a section in the recommendation document where we can add Yvette’s suggested text.
      - Leslie – Propose to note that space/cost is limited.
        - **In favor: 9**
        - **Opposed: 0**
    - **In favor of single direction, center running eastbound lane: 8**
    - **In favor of mixed traffic: 1 (Erin Winograd)**
  - Segment 3
    - **In favor of center running and mixed: 9**
  - Station spacing
    - **In favor of station spacing, as proposed (approx. ¼-½ mile apart): 9**
  - Curb feature options
    - Jen reiterated the drafted language.
    - Paragraph related to the safety of pedestrians



- Erin – Not a fan of language about tighter turning radii. Request to add language acknowledging first responders in the last sentence of the resolution statement.
    - Leslie – Noted that last sentence in bulleted list acknowledges this issue.
  - Erin – There's a community that is opposed to the woonerf concept; where do we get into that?
    - Jen – Design will be reviewed with the community as we get further in the process.
  - **In favor of recommendation: 9**
  - **Concerns with specific language**
    - Erin Winograd – Opposed to tightening corner radii and removal of slip lanes
    - Naima Kearney – Opposed to reducing the speed limit
  - Paragraph related to micromobility devices
    - **In favor of recommendation: 9**
    - **Opposed: 0**
  - Section related to “understanding that space is limited” with addition of Yvette’s language above (“if funding is constrained, then the City would implement mixed traffic for Segment 2B in order to save costs.”)
    - Erin – Question about 10’ wide paths. What happens if not feasible within existing ROW. Sometimes recommendations get turned into gospel; what if we put in a suggestion that turns out not to be physically feasible within current ROW?
      - Bob – “Aim to be” helps to address that. I think should view these as aspirational, not etched in stone.
    - Naima – Notes dissent on the addition of the language from Yvette. Design team will be able to make those decisions.
    - **In favor: 9**
    - **Opposed: 0**
  - Section related to green space
    - **In favor: 9**
    - **Opposed: 0**
  - **Final Discussion**
    - Erin – Because of language in the long-term recommendation about center bus lanes along the entire corridor, I will oppose the motion that goes against the majority view of Segment 2A. Putting in dedicated center-running bus lanes where there are only four current lanes will be deleterious to our quality of life.
  - **Final Vote on the recommendation to Council, with the addition of the language related to funding constraints and the 2B design**
    - **In favor: 8**
    - **Opposed: 1 (Erin Winograd)**
- F. **Next Step**
- Jen Monaco discussed next steps, including upcoming board and commission meetings.
- G. **Approval of AG #10 meeting minutes**
- Minutes approved with minor corrections.