



Location and Design Section
Northern Virginia District Office
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(800) 367-7623; FAX (703) 815-3145

February 23, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike Pickford, Scott Miles, and Carol Fuller - Livability22202

FROM: Dan Reinhard - VDOT

SUBJECT: Route 1 Multimodal Corridor Improvements
VDOT Proj. # 0001-000-894, UPC 115882

This is a response to your letter and appendices dated January 11, 2021 containing comments on the Route 1 Multimodal Study. The comment stem from the public meeting held on December 16, 2020. The responses to those comments are as follows:

Community Goals and Priorities:

- 1. A list of community goals and priorities was provided.**

Response: VDOT agrees with these goals

- 2. "VDOT's language for the Study Scope has evolved: The slide from the first Task Force meeting states: "At-grade urban boulevard focus because it is unusual and extremely complex." However, the slides from the second Task Force meeting and the Public Meeting state: "Seeking to understand potential costs and issues/solutions for constructability and multimodal access." (p. 20, p. 9). The Livability22202 Working Group believes that the study scope is very important and that any changes to the scope during the course of the project should be highlighted and justified. We would like to ask VDOT why this part of the study scope was changed, and why is the study scope not on the VDOT main project webpage?**

Response: The different language does not change the scope. It provides additional detail with respect to the complexities of a conversion from grade separated to at-grade, or from existing to the Sector Plan option.

- 3. Expand the scope to include more of Crystal City and Pentagon City to identify if additional traffic will cut through the neighborhoods and ensure the corridor is coordinated.**

Response: The study area is large enough that a comparison between the future no-build conditions and build conditions will identify traffic leaving Route 1. Feedback on the



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neighborhood's view on the reasons for increased cut-through traffic in the current condition would be helpful. Any future project will review the corridor signals for optimization in coordination with Arlington County who operates the signals.

- 4. The Livability22202 community would support this goal of integrating Route 1 into the urban fabric if it is added to the project website, as it supports our goal of connectivity throughout 22202.**

Response: The project team will add urban fabric to the goals section of the website.

- 5. Study data has been requested by Livability 22202.**

Response: The study team will provide as much of the data as possible. Some of the requested data, such as the crash analysis of an at-grade concept, is part of the current project scope, but has not been completed at this time.

- 6. How does the VDOT traffic data overlap with the County traffic data for the Pentagon City Phased Site Development Plan (PDSP) study?**

Response: The Route 1 Multimodal Study and the PDSP study are using the same traffic data and traffic forecasts.

- 7. The community is concerned about additional vehicle pedestrian crashes due to additional conflict points presented by at-grade intersections, given the pedestrian safety concerns at 20th and 23rd Street S intersections.**

Response: The study team will review the County's Vision Zero crash analysis and the available Department of Motor Vehicles data and discuss the data in the report. The 20th and 23rd Street S intersections are extremely complex due to proximity of S Clark Street and other land uses in these areas. At-grade intersections at 15th and 18th Streets S will be significantly simpler since S Clark Street has been removed. A simpler intersection is easier to understand and safer for pedestrians and motor vehicles.

- 8. Request that a variety of future demands as well as different travel models.**

Response: The study will discuss flexibility that each option provides as part of the feasibility report.

- 9. Alternative concepts should include evaluation of costs and construction schedules, such that improvements which are relatively more expensive or cheaper to implement can be compared to the benefits derived, including open space and revenue that could be achieved from added development opportunities.**



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Response: This feasibility study will estimate costs construction schedules for bringing Route 1 to grade as well as the sector plan option. Transportation benefits from each option will be highlighted. Areas that could be utilized for other land uses will be highlighted. Types of land uses and potential revenue from future development are beyond the scope of this study.

10. The Crystal City Sector Plan Section and the Business Improvement District (BID) sections are being considered.

Response: The focus of this study is Route 1 as at-grade urban boulevard. A Route 1 concept with 6 lanes, appropriately sized turn lanes, and wide sidewalk areas on both sides, will be compared with the Crystal City Sector Plan and the existing conditions. Additional considerations for Route 1 are not critical to a decision on an elevated or at-grade Route 1.

11. An Underpass/tunnel for Route 1/18th Street should be considered.

Response: Clearance above the Metro tunnel is insufficient to lower Route 1 below grade. Route 1 below the Metro tunnel would be more expensive and put the tunnel below sea level. Tunneling Route 1 above or below the Metro tunnel would be extremely costly.

12. Consider bike-ped tunnels across Route 1 and protected bike lanes on Route 1. Also consider protected intersections.

Response: Bicycle and pedestrian tunnels are not critical to a decision on an elevated or at-grade Route 1. These facilities can be considered in a future study or project. Any future tunnel would need to be coordinated with Arlington County and the Sector Plan.

13. Lower speeds to 25 mph

Response: The speed limit is currently 35 mph. The study will evaluate the alternatives with a 30 mph design speed. The feasibility study will comment on potential impacts of a 25 mph speed limit.

14. Many functional and technological suggestions were made including off-peak parking and leading pedestrian intervals.

Response: Many of the suggestions for specific technologies or functional modifications are design details to be considered in a future project and are not critical to a decision on an at-grade or elevated Route 1.

15. Consider multimodal changes to 15th Street S, 18th Street S, and the Metro station if Route 1 remains elevated.



Responses: Specific modifications to 15th Street S, 18th Street S, and the Metro Station could be considered in a future project if Route 1 will remain elevated.

16. If existing elevated condition moves forward, would there be improvements at 20th Street S and 23rd Streets S as envisioned in the sector plan

Response: Arlington County already has projects in process for 23rd Street S improvements. Improvements at 20th Street S have been proposed by the 2001 Clark Street development project that could be implemented with development if Route 1 remains elevated. Additional sector plan improvements may not be practical with any resulting project since they are heavily dependent on development.

17. Provide retail space below the bridges

Response: The Virginia Code states that no commercial establishment or business enterprise shall be constructed or located upon any right-of-way of any limited access highway.

18. Concerned that all the current transit uses along S Bell Street and 18th Street S are accommodated with the new design including transit buses, commuter buses, bike share, micro-mobility, hotel shuttles, etc.

Response: Accommodating all the current travel modes will be necessary with any future project.

19. Consider a linear park in the median. Could increase crossing times, but may be worth the extra wait if access is provided parallel to Route 1.

Response: A linear park on Route 1 in the middle of a 45,000 vpd roadway would not be a welcoming space. Adding a median park runs counter to current trends in 22202. A linear park would only be feasible in the at-grade option.

20. 15th Street S could be lowered 18th Street S could remain elevated. Grades could be adjusted at 18th Street S and with a new bridge improvements could be made below it.

Response: Lowering 15th Street S only is a possible hybrid option that we may examine later in the study process. The feasibility study can address this potential hybrid option.

21. Split Route 1 around development with one-way streets at 15th Street S, similar to Wilson Blvd in Clarendon and Route 1 in Alexandria

Response: The character and traffic volumes of Route 1 are significantly different than the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. Short blocks and close intersections become operational issues



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where vehicle movements are heavy, as already demonstrated in at the 23rd Street S and S Eads Street intersection and the 23rd Street S and S Clark Street intersections.

22. Elevate more of the roadway to provide open-space or retail below the structures

Response: See the response to 18 above regarding retail in the right-of-way. Elevated structures are costly and do not provide a welcoming environment for use as open space. In addition, the structures will require maintenance and inspection. Bridges are considered critical structures and there would also be security concerns. The cost of building and maintaining an elevated roadway would be significant. For these reasons an elevated roadway will not be considered.