



Location and Design Section
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April 8, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kateri Garcia, Cory Giacobbe, and Eric Cassel - 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 dated February 27, 2022 containing requests for the Route 1 Multimodal Study. The responses to those comments are as follows:

Urgent Requests for Phase 2:

- 1. Restart the Phase 2 Task Force Meetings:** We believe that there will be no means of keeping all relevant parties involved and ensuring they have equal opportunity to give feedback unless the project's Task Force resumes in Phase 2.

Response: We believe that public information meetings will provide sufficient opportunity for all stakeholders to express their opinions and provide feedback. The Task Force from Phase 1 was formed to include a large group of stakeholders while a recommendation on the configuration for an urban boulevard on Route 1 was being determined. If a need to have a joint meeting of stakeholders not open to the general public during Phase 2 is identified it will be scheduled.

- 2. Reconsider the Livability 22202's Hybrid Proposal:** During the CCCA meeting, we asked you to reconsider the Livability 22202 hybrid proposal for Route 1 – with Route 1 at grade at 15th and remaining elevated from 18th. We appreciate your brief comments during the meeting, but we still want a more formal and detailed analysis, including showing us the concept plan, profile, and street cross section. The concept plan and profile should be compared to Option 3 and the Crystal City Sector Plan (CCSP) and the impact on all modes of transportation, including PUDO and emergency vehicles, on possible land use, and on comparative costs. We really need a definitive analysis and response from VDOT concerning this hybrid approach before considering other options for Route 1.

Response: As stated during the Phase 1 study and as reiterated in the briefing to Livability 22202 on January 19, 2022, VDOT had agreed to review the Livability 22202 hybrid proposal during the Phase 1 study if creating a uniform at-grade environment was not



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feasible at 15th and 18th Streets. As stated in the Phase 1 report, we believe that it is feasible to create a uniform at-grade environment that brings Route 1 down to the level of 15th and 18th Streets with the implementation of a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management TDM strategy that reduces traffic below the 2019 levels. Phase 2 of the study will develop that TDM strategy in more detail.

- 3. Collaborate with Livability 22202 on Exploring a bike-ped passageway under an at grade Route 1 at 18th Street: Our final comments on Phase 1 from 2021 included a quick sketch of Brian Harner’s proposal for an underground bike-ped passage that would connect to the Crystal City Underground. If the hybrid option is decisively rejected, we encourage VDOT to work with Brian and his team on a possible bike-ped passage quickly. Two other architects have since joined with Brian to study the issue and could provide further insights to VDOT. In September, we asked you to meet with him during Phase 2. We ask again now that you schedule a meeting with them very soon.**

Response: The study team has scheduled a meeting with Brian Harner and his team on April 11, 2022 to discuss possibilities for an underpass or overpass.

Additional Concerns:

- 4. In addition, we have concerns about the limited number of items that will be studied in Phase 2.**

During the meeting, your slides showed only a few items that would be studied in Phase 2:

- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to reduce traffic 20-30% from the 2019 baseline;**
- A feasibility and analysis design (for a potential bike-ped passage under or over 18th Street); and**
- Additional transportation data collection on traffic passing through Route 1 to compare to the 2019 traffic baseline.**

In addition to these projects, you also mentioned, but did not explain:

- a. Improvements to the current 23rd Street-Route 1 intersection; and**
- b. Moving current buses, bus stations, and transit riders using 18th Street to a new bus facility across from the Crystal City Metro Station (although VDOT would not be responsible for designing or building this new transit facility).**

Response:

Slide 14 (Next Steps) of the January 19, 2022 presentation to the Crystal City Civic Association lists eight tasks to be performed during Phase 2:

- Post-COVID traffic counts/update traffic analysis*



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- *Coordination with agencies on potential TDM strategies*
- *Coordination with transit providers*
- *Feasibility of grade-separated overpass/underpass at 18th Street S*
- *Development of 10% plans*
- *Engineering speed study for 25 mph ⇒ Vision Zero*
- *Interim improvements at 23rd St. ⇒ Vision Zero*
- *Identify location for relocated 18th St. bus stops*

Details of the potential 23rd Street interim improvements and relocation of the bus bays at Route 1 and 18th Street were not available at the time of our January meeting. We will work through these as a part of the Phase 2 study.

Additional Requests for the Phase 2 study

- 5. Prioritize the VDOT “fix” for 23rd & Route 1: Creating a safe intersection for all modes crossing Route 1 at 23rd might build community support for other VDOT Route 1 plans – and it’s proven dangerous and needs to be fixed first!**

Response: Twenty-Third Street is identified as a location of concern in Arlington County’s Vision Zero Plan. The study team will review the intersection for interim improvements, with the understanding that the ultimate improvements cannot be achieved without future private redevelopment that includes the relocation of Clark Street.

- 6. Expand the TDM study: We need a real regional TDM as the Blueprint that the Greater Washington Partnership has proposed. Please expand the TDM study to cover the entire DMV region as the Route 1 traffic is not just from Virginia! Ensure that traffic from Glebe Road is specifically included since this is a primary “feeder” road for Route 1.**

Response: We are working with regional partners including the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, regional localities, and transit partners to develop these strategies as necessary. We will be targeting the trips that impact Route 1 at 15th and 18th Streets. These targeted trips may originate in or be destined for jurisdictions outside Arlington and we will propose appropriate management strategies with this understanding.

- 7. Plan the bike-ped passage over/under Route 1: Explicitly acknowledge and state that this facility will be designed for cyclists and micromobility riders as well as pedestrians.**

Response: I can confirm that the underpass/overpass at 18th Street is considering bicycles, pedestrians, and micromobility riders.



- 8. Study the impact of lowering 25mph Maximum Speed: The final Phase 1 report noted that you would study the impact of lowering the speed limit to 25, but it was not in your slide deck.**

Response: A design speed study will be performed. It was included on the schedule and next steps slides of the January 19 presentation.

- 9. Study the impact of the developing Pentagon City projects on VDOT's traffic projections.**

Response: VDOT's traffic projections already includes the Pentagon City project currently in the development pipeline. The intention for the Phase 2 traffic analysis is to input the newly collected traffic data and any newly adopted Pentagon City development information into the new travel demand model developed by Arlington County. This should provide a very good picture of the different travel modes and any impacts that the TDM strategy has on the different modes.

- 10. Include more at-grade safety features for bike-peds, such as creating a Barnes dance signalization at an at-grade 18th; adding protected intersections and pedestrian bumpouts for all Route 1 connections; and adding PBL/LIT lanes to Route 1. Evaluate their impact on bike-ped safety and traffic throughput.**

Response: Features of protected intersections will be included wherever possible. Pedestrian bumpouts will be considered to shadow on-street parking on side streets wherever applicable. Adding PBL/LIT lanes to Route 1 is not considered in the Arlington County Master Transportation plan and would require an amendment to the plan by Arlington County.

A Barnes Dance stops all vehicular traffic to provide a safe space for pedestrians to move in any direction across the intersection. This all-pedestrian phase of the signal directly removes time from the vehicular phases potentially causing traffic congestion. A Barnes Dance will be discussed with Arlington County for applicability in this corridor. Analysis could be performed as part of the Phase 2 study.

- 11. Definitively study whether the number of lanes and lane widths on an at-grade Route 1 can be further reduced to increase bike-ped safety.**

Response: Route 1 is a National Highway System Route, a corridor of state-wide significance, and a primary arterial roadway in Northern Virginia. In accordance with the VDOT Road Design Manual, lane widths will not be reduced below 11' unless trucks and buses are prohibited from using Route 1. The number of travel lanes will be considered again with updated traffic modeling, but are not anticipated to change since the proposed lane configuration already requires a TDM strategy.



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12. Encourage and support the County’s plans for and development of the “pedestrian zones” along Route 1. As proposed, they are insufficient to support all of the activity planned for them.

Response: The sector plan shows sidewalk widths of 18-25 feet, whereas the at-grade option proposed in the Phase 1 study shows 24-29.5 feet. Since the proposed width is generally equal-to or greater than the sector plan width it should be sufficiently wide for activities envisioned in the sector plan.

13. Expand the study area to include all of Route 1 in Arlington, from I-395 to the Alexandria border.

Response: The study area has expanded to consider interim improvements at 23rd Street. The study will not be expanded further; however, nothing in this study or the future project precludes Arlington County from considering future improvements outside the study area.

14. Include the other Phase 2 projects noted in the final Phase 1 report, such as including a NEPA process.

Responses: The final Phase 1 report does not state that NEPA will be included in Phase 2. Preparation of a NEPA document is normally performed on a federal project during its design phase, not with an engineering study using state funds that precedes it.

15. We recognize that VDOT has many very talented traffic engineers on staff and that Kimley Horn is a significant civil engineering firm. However, the study in question includes more than just traffic and decisions about Route 1 will significantly impact the community for years to come. It appears to the community that the transformation of Route 1 should be primarily considered as an urban design/planning challenge of which transportation is a component. Given what is at stake, it would be worth it to take the long view and reflect that investments in this area will reap their full benefits in 50 years. We therefore strongly recommend that VDOT hire a quality landscape architect with urban design background to complement the Kimley Horn team and review/reconsider the design options including an underground solution(s) for Rt. 1

Response: The agreement between the Commonwealth and Amazon specifically calls for a transportation project on Route 1 in a timeframe that coincides with jobs and development in Crystal City related to Amazon. The current team has range and depth to provide an excellent study for Route 1.

16. Finally, we urge VDOT to consider “safety” and “east/west “connectivity,” as well as “cost.” These factors would indicate that directed improvements to beautify and



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slow down traffic speed might be preferred solutions. The clear winner by a long shot is sprucing up and slowing down Route 1 more or less as is. To include, installing a raised, 4' wide medium strip covered with biophilia like the one on Connecticut Avenue in downtown DC. And narrow the lanes as needed to create the necessary space. Finally, in concert with adjacent property owners, raise the roadway's shoulder to its grade, rather than vice versa, and plant trees and attractive lighting, sidewalks and buildings along beside it wherever possible. Meanwhile, improve the underpasses at 15th and 18th Streets to welcome and better facilitate the movement of pedestrians and bikers, as well as light, on/off-people-moving vehicles needed finally to unite all of 22202's urban community.

Response: An elevated urban boulevard with improvements to the underpasses at 15th and 18th Streets was considered in Phase 1, but not recommended. The Phase 2 study only includes supplemental work to support the Phase 1 study recommendation.