



July 2, 2021

Dan Reinhard
VDOT P.E., Project Manager
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

RE: Livability22202 Comments on VDOT's Feasibility Study of Route 1

Dear Dan:

At the June 16 VDOT Public Information meeting, you recommended building the at-grade hybrid option for 15th & 18th rather than following the Crystal City Sector Plan. You acknowledged that implementing the at-grade plan will require these additional, currently unfunded, actions:

- the predicted excess traffic diverted onto our local streets will need major mitigation through a comprehensive and effective TDM program,
- a new transit center will need to be built to accommodate the relocation of buses and bus routes, and
- a bike-ped underpass will need to be studied to increase the safety for cyclists and pedestrians crossing Route 1 at grade.

This letter provides the comments on the VDOT proposal from the Livability 22202 Route 1 working group representing the 3 civic associations in 22202: Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City. As we describe in our [June 27 press release](#), we find that the VDOT study is incomplete, recommends a traffic pattern that VDOT admits reduces safety, does not follow standard process, and fails to address many community concerns. If the County and VDOT proceed with this project without addressing our concerns, our community will be further divided by a dangerous and wide road that prioritizes vehicular travel along Route 1 over pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers crossing Route 1. The Associations have urged the Arlington County Board not to approve the study when submitted unless these larger questions and concerns are addressed.

Our concerns about the VDOT project fall into these broad categories: Safety, study process, traffic, urban design, and impact on our community.

1. **Safety:** Safety for all travelers along and across Route 1 is the number one VDOT project goal and the number one goal for our community. Yet VDOT's recommendation for a 7-lane and 6-lane at-grade hybrid is more dangerous than current routes that pass under Route 1, especially for our most vulnerable road users, including children attending a future school, as well as pedestrians who are older, frail, or have disabilities or impairments. The VDOT study does not meet Arlington's [Vision Zero](#) or [Master Transportation Plan](#) guidelines nor meet research study recommendations for speeds

≤25mph and ≤5 lanes. VDOT did no safety analysis, such as following the Highway Safety Manual..

2. **Process:** The VDOT proposal recommends an at-grade alternative to the [Crystal City Sector Plan \(CCSP\)](#). Without community buy-in, a wholesale change in the Sector Plan is not acceptable. We do not accept this change to the Plan. In addition, this study failed to follow a number of project development procedures that would normally be followed for a project of this scale. Typically, we would see alternatives generated, reduced to a number of feasible alternatives, and analysis conducted to create a chosen alternative that best meets the purpose and need for the project. Here, a CCSP alternative, the development community's preferred alternative, and a no-build were the only options evaluated. The Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) are not defined, data-driven, or evidence-based, and the values assigned to each MoE in the comparison of proposals appear to be somewhat arbitrary and incomplete. For instance, the \$180 million estimated cost for the at-grade proposal does not include costs for building the new transit center, relocating bus routes, the TDM study and implementation, planning and building a bike-ped underpass, or the probable costs of lives lost and property harmed by the dangerous at-grade intersections.

3. **Traffic:** VDOT predicts significant traffic diversion onto our side streets with the at-grade proposal To reduce Route 1 traffic by 20-30% and mitigate traffic diversion, VDOT proposes a future Phase 2 “strategy development” for a “comprehensive and effective” TDM (Transportation Demand Management) program. We need this comprehensive analysis of regional travel through the corridor as well as transit capacity now, before the Route 1 plan is finalized.

4. **Urban Design:** The scope of the VDOT study is overly restrictive, both in considering urban road designs and in addressing only a small section of Route 1 in isolation rather than taking a holistic approach to the entire corridor to the City of Alexandria line. The study thus ignores significant stretches of Route 1, Glebe Rd., and the proposal for the airport access road in the CCSP. Likewise, the at-grade design makes no effort to ratchet down traffic entering the community, instead including 7 lanes on 15th St—the same number currently on Route 1. The final study recommendation does not support the proposed urban boulevard in the approved CCSP for 15th Street and for 18th Street.

5. **Impact on community:** The VDOT at-grade proposal creates tremendous value for developers, by opening up frontages along Route 1. However, besides future real estate tax revenue, this project delivers no benefits or improvements to the community. Rather, removing the 18th and 15th Street underpasses without providing adequate safety measures reduces community safety and access across Route 1. Increasing traffic diversion on neighborhood streets affects quality of life and safety as well.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to get this right. Limiting the project to the current VDOT recommendation is an epic fail. A project of this scale and impact requires a full consideration of options as well as input from the community from the earliest stages of the project through its completion to ensure community priorities are incorporated.

The Livability22202 Civic Associations urged Arlington County to take no action on this proposal until a more holistic study is done that addresses these questions and issues. We do not support the current VDOT recommendation for a pair of dangerous at-grade intersections and their accompanying major traffic diversions to our local streets. We still support our prior position as stated in our [March 14 letter](#): **“From our perspective, there’s no apparent full at-grade configuration that will provide both adequate safety for east-west walking and biking and prevent excessive traffic from diverting onto parallel streets....We recognize that the CCSP alternative in this study may not address other concerns about aesthetics and development potential, and we reiterate our hope that a future study formally considers a wider range of alternatives for a longer portion of this corridor, as a more holistic corridor plan may better balance all of the competing needs. It is obvious however that should a decision be made to move forward with the CCSP or at-grade options, we would want to engage in a fuller consideration of the details.”**

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Mike Pickford, President
Arlington Ridge CA



Scott Miles, President
Aurora Highlands CA



Carol Fuller, President
Crystal City CA