



July 2, 2021

Senator Adam Ebbin, District 30
Representative Alonzo Lopez., District 49
Representative Mark Levine, District 45
Representative Richard Sullivan, District 48

RE: Livability22202 Rejection of the VDOT Route 1 Study

To our Virginia Legislators:

We are the current presidents of the three 22202 civic associations united in the [Livability 22202](#) coalition are seeking your assistance to represent the concerns of your constituents about the inadequacy of the recent VDOT Study on Route 1. As we wrote to you on February 26, we need your help. On June 16, VDOT announced that it was proposing an option to bring Route 1 down to grade which is opposed by the residential community and Livability22202. We have asked the Arlington County Board to take no action on the [VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Feasibility study](#) recommendations unless and until our concerns about the study have been addressed. We ask that you intervene with the Commonwealth to ensure that a better study formally consider a wider range of alternatives, as a more holistic corridor plan may better balance all of the competing needs and goals of the project.

As we described 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.

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, more 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 ≤ 25 mph 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 (See slides 42 and 43 in [VDOT slide presentation](#)). 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. How will traffic from Glebe Road via Route 1 to I-395 be managed? How will the County manage traffic diverted onto our local streets to prevent gridlock and keep all of us safe?

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 on Route 1 itself currently. 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 (See slide 54 in VDOT presentation). 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.

We ask for you, our legislators, to meet with us and discuss why we believe the VDOT study is incomplete and will worsen, rather than improve any conditions on Route 1 in Arlington County. At a minimum, Arlington County and the Commonwealth should take no action on this proposal until a more holistic study is done that addresses these questions and issues.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Mike Pickford, President
Arlington Ridge CA



Scott Miles, President
Aurora Highlands CA



Carol Fuller, President
Crystal City CA