



February 27, 2022

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:

On behalf of the Livability22202 working group on Route 1, we want to thank you for participating in the Crystal City Civic Association meeting on January 19, 2022, and providing an update on proposed plans Phase 2 of the Route 1 Multimodal Improvements feasibility study. We would like to share some comments and make a few requests as you enter this next phase and before you hold your next Public Information Meeting in late March or early April for the Phase 2 Process.

Our urgent requests for Phase 2 are:

- 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.
- 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.
- Collaborate with Livability22202 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.

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:

- Improvements to the current 23rd Street-Route 1 intersection; and
- 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).

Although we generally support these Phase 2 studies, we again ask you to include these following studies in Phase 2:

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

- Expand the study area to include all of Route 1 in Arlington, from I-395 to the Alexandria border.
- Include the other Phase 2 projects noted in the final Phase 1 report, such as including a NEPA process.

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

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 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.

We look forward to your response to our letter and to working continuing our collaborative and respectful relationship in Phase 2.

Sincerely,



Kateri Garcia, President
Arlington Ridge CA



Cory Jacobbe, President
Aurora Highlands CA



Eric Cassel, President
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