



Date: May 20, 2022
Dan Reinhard, PE
Project Manager
VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Feasibility Study Phase 2
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax VA 22030

RE: Livability 22202 Comments on the First PIM Presentation for Phase 2

Dear Dan:

Thank you for participating in the January 19 CCCA meeting, for meeting with the Livability 22202 Working Group on April 11, and for your first Phase 2 public engagement on April 28. We are encouraged that you studied several of our proposals; drafted proposals based on them, and included many of our proposals in the April 28 engagement. The primary purpose of this letter is to send you our formal comments on the VDOT Phase 2 proposals presented on April 28. We are also letting you know that the Crystal City Civic Association will host a community meeting on Wednesday, June 15 focusing on Route 1 Phase 2 plans and the Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group ideas. We will use the June 15th meeting to reach out to community members to gather their feedback on Route 1 plans and preferences. We will share information gathered with VDOT, and you and your staff are more than welcome to attend.

Proposals for 18th Street: We studied the various proposals presented at the April 28 PIM in the context of their actual and perceived safety and convenience, compared to the current grade-separated Route 1 at 18th Street. We developed an informal metrics matrix for the proposals for 18th to help us sort through our concerns. The combination of a Woonerf on 18th and Eads and VDOT Dutch Underpass is our favorite solution. Our comments and recommendations, in order of our preferences, are below:

- *Livability Woonerf between Eads and Clark-Bell (see attached sketch):* Creating a Woonerf on 18th between Eads and Clark-Bell is our first choice for improving safety and convenience for an at-grade intersection. We envision a green, bike-pedestrian park-like open space with limited vehicular access. We propose that emergency vehicles and public buses be allowed to continue to travel along 18th between Eads and Clark-Bell; and that vehicles would still be allowed to make deliveries to the Marriott loading dock. However, through traffic would be excluded, the travel lanes would be removed, and traffic on Route 1 would continue straight through the intersection. The remaining space would be a beautiful, green, park-like environment that would be safe, convenient, and enjoyable for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. The resulting space would be a part of the Green Ribbon network throughout 22202. Ideally, we would add a Dutch underpass through the space as well so that cyclists and others could travel through without stopping for the light, as they do in current conditions. Finally, the Woonerf design only requires a two-phase signalization at 18th & Route 1 for safety: One light phase allows Route 1 traffic to go straight; the second phase allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross safely in all directions.
- *Barnes dance signalization with 18th Street travel lanes:* A Barnes dance signalization includes a third phase in which all-vehicular traffic is stopped to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross safely. We strongly recommend a Barnes dance signalization for any at-grade intersection at 18th if 18th has any travel lanes. VDOT predicts that by 2040, 1273 pedestrians will cross the north side of 18th at Route 1 during PM peak hours. This high volume of crossing pedestrians will be in conflict with right-turning vehicles with a two-phase signalization. Pedestrians will be at risk, drivers will not have sufficient time to turn if they wait for pedestrians to cross, and area traffic will gridlock. However, with a three-phase Barnes dance, pedestrians and cyclists can cross safely while vehicular traffic can move smoothly on its phases. In addition to creating a safe crossing for cyclists and pedestrians, Barnes dance intersections can be an iconic addition to a streetscape, as the [Barnes dance intersection](#) in DC's ChinaTown demonstrates.

- *VDOT Dutch Underpass* (VDOT Slide 23): We appreciate that VDOT took our idea for a Dutch underpass and incorporated it into VDOT's proposal. This underpass is safe, convenient for transit riders using the multimodal transit center, and could connect to The Underground and the corner Plaza above ground. We have some concerns about it: the underpass is relatively narrow for comfort, it shrinks the clear zone sidewalk space, and eastbound cyclists will not find it convenient to use. However, this option can be an effective solution. We also encourage VDOT to study if a second underpass on the south side of 18th is feasible, as that option would support cyclists and pedestrians heading east..
- *Bike-Friendly Bridge* (VDOT Slide 20): This bridge is safe, beautiful and monumental, and would be convenient for cyclists and pedestrians who are traveling from west of Eads. However, many transit riders and others traveling in the immediate area of Route 1 probably could not and would not use it because it is not convenient for this large group.
- *18th Street Tunnel* (VDOT Slide 21): This Livability 22202-proposed tunnel is convenient for cyclists and pedestrians, could connect to The Underground, and prevents conflict with drivers. Bright lighting and other features could mitigate personal safety concerns. This proposal is very different from the old tunnel at 23rd Street!
- *Removing one travel lane in each direction on 18th*: A People before Cars proposal removes one travel lane in each direction on 18th as a compromise. We would only support this proposal if the Woonerf is not approved.
- *Marriott tunnel*: This People before Cars proposal is to modify the existing Marriott tunnel to provide a future safe passage under Route 1. This proposal would connect to The Underground and provide access to the Metro for pedestrians and cyclists. The tunnel could accommodate cyclists traveling through as well. Our concerns about this proposal are that it is not convenient for cyclists and pedestrians who currently use 18th Street and potential conflict between cyclists and pedestrians in the tunnel.
- *VDOT Bridge* (VDOT Slide 18): This bridge is safe, but it is not convenient for pedestrians and may not work at all for many cyclists and pedestrians with impairments. We fear that it would not be used by the majority of people who need to cross Route 1, who might dash across the road instead.
- *At-Grade Route 1 at 18th with minimal safety enhancements* (VDOT Slide 17): This proposal is not safe and does not feel safe for cyclists and pedestrians. It is not acceptable without many additional safety improvements.

ROW for the Future Route 1 Boulevard: We look forward to the PIM #2 discussion on the ROW. Our consulting architects/planners, Brian Harner and Gus Ardura, continue to refine our suggestions for the design and components for a Boulevard ROW that will create a beautiful, green, activated, enjoyable space that will attract people. We believe that the total ROW needed is **165'** from building face to building face:

- This ROW width is needed to create sufficient minimum widths for each zone of the Boulevard, including the 7 travel lanes, an adequate pedestrian median refuge, protected bike lanes/LIT lanes on both sides, landscaping/furnishing zones on both sides, a generous pedestrian clear zone on both sides, and generous cafe zones that are fully and conveniently accessible.
- The Crystal City Sector Plan cites a 160' build-to width for 15th & Route 1 on p. 70.
- The 300' proposed building height along these sections of Route 1 will need this wider ROW to avoid feeling like a canyon to visitors. See attached sketch.

Also, we are recommending a non-symmetric design, with more space allotted to the East side. See attached sketch of our proposed ROW. This additional space can be used by businesses for wider cafe zones and for more green space and green ribbon connections. The addition of more trees and green space in the ROW and on our proposed Woonerf will create a more enjoyable space for everyone, a healthier environment, and help reduce the heat island effect on National Landing.

VDOT 23rd Street Proposals: The current intersection of Route 1 at 23rd Street is very dangerous and widely avoided by cyclists and pedestrians because of the perceived and real danger. The community is eager to see this intersection made safe for all users! We appreciate that VDOT developed these proposals and support the second option, with the bike lanes. However, we have two recommendations: that VDOT study the feasibility of making these proposed bike lanes protected and that VDOT study if the approved 23rd Street improvements can be implemented before other reconstruction of Route 1.

Bus Station and PUDO Relocation from 18th Street: According to the VDOT Route 1 [Multimodal Improvements Phase 2 Scope Narrative](#), VDOT will include a "Planning-level feasibility study for relocating the bus bays currently located on 18th Street S underneath the Route 1 overpass to accommodate a potential at-grade Route 1/18th Street intersection." During the April 28 PIM, staff noted that one of the Phase 2 study tasks is "to Identify location for relocated 18th Street bus

stops.” Please provide details on this feasibility study and plans for relocation of these bus stops. Who is responsible for designing and paying for any new multimodal center; who is determining what the best relocation strategy is, what is your time frame for relocation, if the plan for an at-grade Route 1 moves forward? Please also include where current PUDO and tour buses may be relocated as well, as both of these groups regularly use 18th Street between Eads and Clark-Bell.

TDM (Transportation Demand Management): We remain concerned that VDOT’s TDM strategy and plans are undisclosed and that the TDM results will not be released until the third VDOT Public Information Meeting (PIM) this fall. VDOT shows a 32% reduction to 34,000 vpd by 2025 on p. 129 of the final report for Phase 1. This traffic volume is still significantly higher than those recommended in the Schneider study (1) of 25,000 vpd. Lane widths and number of lanes are also still higher than those recommended in the Schneider study. VDOT has yet to propose how traffic diversion to local streets will be prevented.

Livability 22202 continues to support the existing grade-separated intersection of Route 1 at 18th Street, and we are disappointed that VDOT has recommended that only at-grade proposals will be studied during Phase 2. If VDOT will only support an at-grade intersection, we require that this proposed at-grade intersection be at least as safe as the current grade-separated condition, which has no risk to pedestrians and cyclists from Route 1 traffic, and is achieved with proper implementation of the Livability Woonerf outlined above. Convenience for all modes and minimal traffic diversion to our local streets are also critical for us.

We look forward to a joint meeting with the VDOT team, County staff, and the People before Cars Coalition soon and continuing to work with VDOT on the best possible solution for Route 1. We hope that you can attend the June 15th CCCA meeting too.

Sincerely



Kateri Garcia, President
Arlington Ridge CA



Cory Jacobbe, President
Aurora Highlands CA



Eric Cassel, President
Crystal City CA

Enclosures: ROW Drawing, ROW scale drawing, Woonerf Drawing.

¹ Schneider, R. J., Sanders, R., Proulx, F., & Moayyed, H. (2021). United States fatal pedestrian crash hot spot locations and characteristics. *Journal of Transport and Land Use*, 14(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.5198/jtlu.2021.1825>



