



**NATIONAL
LANDING**

PENTAGON CITY

CRYSTAL CITY

POTOMAC YARD

January 11, 2021

Mr. Dan Reinhard, P.E.
Virginia Department of Transportation
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Mr. Reinhard,

On behalf of the National Landing Business Improvement District (BID) and the collective business communities of Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard, I am writing to provide feedback following the **Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Study Virtual Public Meeting** held on December 16th by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

The conversion of Route 1 into an urban boulevard has long been the centerpiece of our collective efforts to transform National Landing into a people-centered, walkable downtown that will build on recent economic development successes and continue to attract companies, residents, and visitors for the next several decades. The BID, representing tenants and commercial property owners with a combined assessment value of over \$11 billion in the National Landing area, elevated the transformation of Route 1 as a key priority in its [Strategic Plan](#) and recently published two reports illustrating the importance of Route 1 to the future of National Landing: [Reimagine Route 1](#) and [Mobility Next](#).

Each of these documents shares a common goal of articulating that the future of transportation infrastructure investment in National Landing must embrace a multi-modal future and avoid the auto-centric model that has divided the area and impaired its connectivity. The approximately \$4 billion being invested in National Landing mobility infrastructure will make National Landing the most connected downtown in the Nation. Only this approach will support the anticipated demand for mobility and attract the investment needed to support the vision embodied in Arlington County's redevelopment plans for Crystal City and National Landing as a whole.

The current auto-centric orientation of Route 1 is incompatible with the overarching vision for Virginia's largest walkable downtown. Indeed, the inclusion of this project in the Commonwealth's agreement with Amazon illustrates how critical a role a reimaged Route 1 is to economic development interests motivated by the needs and demands of the area's employment talent pool. According to a recent [Arlington County transportation study](#), upwards of 70 percent of trips already take place within National Landing by means other than private cars, a number that is sure to increase as planned public and private investments are completed.

Planning for the future of Route 1 must reflect this mobility reality while also maintaining the Route 1 corridor as an important north-south vehicular route. As outlined in the Reimagine Route 1 report, the BID holds that a narrow, urban boulevard designed to prioritize pedestrians and other vulnerable roadway users will deliver a multimodal approach while continuing to accommodate auto trip demand.

Any future design that yields an at-grade facility, but a highway-style experience will not deliver the transformation necessary to enhance safety and walkability nor create economic value for the community. Responses from VDOT's survey shared at the December meeting reveal that the community shares this fear of "failed design." Though some suggest that the current condition is safest for vulnerable users because it offers grade separated crossings in some locations, our goal is a truly pedestrian-oriented, at-grade facility that provides safe, convenient access for vulnerable users at all intersections and throughout the neighborhood.

**NATIONAL LANDING
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In order to recognize these community-wide concerns, the BID asks that the **safety of all users** be elevated as the top priority as VDOT continues to explore concepts and configurations for a future Route 1. To achieve this goal, we ask that VDOT consider the following requests:

- Commit to no more than ONE left turn lane at each of the intersections at 15th Street, 18th Street, 20th Street, and 23rd Street to minimize crossing distances;
- Incorporate the needs of bicycles and micromobility vehicles along **and** across route 1 through best-in-class, protected infrastructure;
- Incorporate best practices in operations for downtown districts that elevate the safety needs of pedestrians over the speed of through vehicles (i.e., automated traffic enforcement, speed limits of 25 MPH, leading pedestrian intervals, and restricting “right on red” turns; and
- Embrace roadway flexibility by working with Arlington County to support off-peak, on-street parking along the Route 1 corridor.

As VDOT evaluates feasibility and explores options for a reimagined Route 1, it is a strong priority that the existing barrier created by auto-centric design be converted into a truly people-oriented, complete street that safely accommodates all modes. We appreciate the opportunity to share this feedback and look forward to future opportunities to engage with VDOT on this truly transformational investment in mobility safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Sayegh Gabriel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracy Sayegh Gabriel
President and Executive Director
National Landing Business Improvement District