



THE PEOPLE BEFORE
CARS COALITION
UNITES LOCAL
STAKEHOLDERS
AROUND SHARED
PRIORITIES TO
CREATE A SAFER AND
MORE ACCESSIBLE
TRANSPORTATION
NETWORK ACROSS
NATIONAL LANDING.



February 2, 2023

Nicolas Roper

District Project Development Engineer

Virginia Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia District

4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Re: Feedback on Arlington County Staff Recommendations for Route 1 Boulevard

Dear Mr. Roper,

The Route 1 Boulevard project is about more than moving cars – it is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance East-West connectivity, repair auto-centric urban design, improve safety, and replace pavement with new homes, businesses and public spaces that will enliven our growing neighborhood. While we support nearly all of the county staff recommendations provided to VDOT in their December 5th, 2022 letter, we are concerned that expanding the right of way (ROW) north of 18th to 160' could undermine those goals by making Route 1 harder to cross and reducing the development potential of adjacent parcels. While we continue to support the 140' ROW recommended by VDOT, we believe there are opportunities to provide wider sidewalks and landscaping areas while still achieving the project's broader goals. To that end, we offer the following feedback to VDOT and Arlington County as they work to address county staff's recommendations.

Infill Development

Encouraging redevelopment of land adjacent to Route 1 is a stated goal of both VDOT's Route 1 Boulevard, the Crystal City Sector Plan and the National Landing BID's Reimagine Route 1 report. Such redevelopment would provide housing for new residents, space for new businesses, tax revenue for the county, and help fill in the urban "fabric" between Crystal City and Pentagon City. To quantify the potential impact of the proposed wider ROW on adjacent development, coalition member JBG SMITH (which owns portions of two of the expected parcels) commissioned an analysis of the development capacity of the parcels under two scenarios¹ (Attachment 1). Assuming a 140' ROW consistent with VDOT's Phase 1 recommendation, the analysis found the adjacent parcels could support approximately 3.04m SF of new development. Assuming a 160' ROW north of 18th street per county staff's recommendation, the analysis found that the adjacent parcels could support approximately 2.79m SF of new development, or a reduction of 244,477 sf. Assuming all the new development is residential, the expanded ROW would lead to a net loss of approximately 250 homes.

There are several ways county staff's recommendation for wider sidewalks and landscaping strips could be achieved while mitigating the impact to adjacent development opportunities:

- ➔ **Midblock width:** the expanded ROW recommended by Arlington County north of 18th street includes a dedicated left turn lane, which is only required at intersections. For midblock sections, the overall ROW could be reduced by 11' while maintaining county staff's recommended sidewalk and landscaping widths.
- ➔ **Median width:** County staff's recommended ROW north of 18th street includes a full width median and dedicated left turn lanes at intersections. VDOT's recommended ROW reduces the median width at intersections to accommodate turn lanes. Doing so here could reduce the overall ROW by up to 11' (depending on the size of the remaining median at the intersections) while maintaining county staff's recommended sidewalk and landscaping widths. The median width could be supplemented by reducing the proposed width of the curbside landscaping strips from 13.5' to 9.5' to match the proposed width south of 18th street.

¹The development capacity analysis made assumptions about the likely size, configuration and use of buildings that could be built on the parcels "created" by the Route 1 boulevard project based on existing zoning, property ownership and market conditions.



- ➔ *Eastern streetscape approaching 12th street:* We agree with the county's recommendation to shift the sidewalk/streetscape to the east between 12th and 15th streets to connect with the planned realigned Clark Street. As shown on figure 2, we believe that doing so would allow "Parcel E" to expand further east than would otherwise be possible while improving the bike/ped experience in that location and creating a mid-block corridor to further promote connectivity.

Additional Feedback

- ➔ *Support for county design recommendations:* we strongly support the following county staff recommendations: 25mph speed limit, 10' inside lane widths and 11' outside lane widths inclusive of gutter pan, reducing corner radii to the minimum practical dimension, widening crosswalks to match the width of the sidewalk, 6' cycle tracks on both sides of Route 1, rounded median noses at intersections, minimal lateral offsets, protected intersections at 23rd, 18th and 15th streets, and allowing on-street, off-peak parking in the outermost lanes.
- ➔ *20th street slip lane:* VDOT's current design includes a "slip" or channelized right turn lane where eastbound 20th street meets Route 1. We believe such a design is inappropriate in this context and recommend its removal.
- ➔ *Hardened protection:* Route 1 should include hardened barriers – large caliper trees, crash-rated bollards (not flex posts), etc. – to protect people from vehicles leaving the roadway, especially at intersections and median refuges. Neither VDOT nor county staff address this point in their recommendations.
- ➔ *Public Art/Beautification:* Building on county staff's recommendation #11, we believe the existing overpasses at 12th street and VA 233 present excellent opportunities for public art that will enhance the overall experience for boulevard users and recommend VDOT include "beautification" of these two structures in its project scope.

Thank you for your consideration of our input.

Collectively from the People Before Cars Coalition,

Gillian Burgess

President of the Board, Arlington Families for Safe Streets

Jay Corbalis

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President of Sustainable Mobility for Arlington County



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