



2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 900, Arlington, VA 22201
TEL 703-228-3709 Commissions.ArlingtonVa.US/Pedestrian-Advisory-Committee-2

Mr. Mark Schwartz
Arlington County Manager
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, Virginia 22201
Via e-mail: MSchwartz@arlingtonva.us

Committee Members
Pamela Van Hine, Chair
Eric Goldstein, Vice Chair
Ellen Armbruster
Rosemary Ciotti
Jim Feaster
Eric Goodman
Dennis Jaffe
Tom Korn
Christine Ng
John Armstrong
Collin Weber

RE: Opportunity to Submit Scoping Comments to the [Master Plan Update](#) for the National Foreign Affairs Training Center – **Due August 19, 2016**

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) is writing to you to encourage the County to submit scoping comments to the Master Plan Update for the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). In addition to site characteristics, the NFATC environmental assessment will cover the natural and human environment, historic resources, and transportation (traffic, access, and multimodal). The PAC is concerned about both the present transportation conditions around the NFATC site and possible impact of the NFATC Master Plan Update.

The PAC is concerned about the traffic impact of the following aspects of the proposed [NFATC Master Plan Update](#):

- Objectives of the plan (p. 5) include: Accommodate the planned 2020 consolidation of offsite FSI classroom training facilities from other National Capital Region facilities
- Improvements under consideration (p. 8) include:
 - Building B – a new training/classroom facilities of 200,000 +/- GSF
 - Parking structure (new) for 700 +/- vehicles

Particularly if the NFATC moves forward with plans that will increase the utilization of the center, the PAC is also concerned about the following current transportation-related conditions around the NFATC site:

Arlington Boulevard: The sidewalk next to Arlington Boulevard serves as a combined bike-ped trail, but it is not adequate for this purpose. The sidewalk is only 5' wide, except for a few feet in front of a new housing development, and the sidewalk is often overgrown with weeds and severely damaged. It has no landscape zone and runs right next to the road. We recommend that this sidewalk be replaced by a trail that can adequately handle both cyclists and pedestrians traveling in both directions. We also recommend that the tunnel that goes under Route 50 be cleaned up and better lit and made ADA-compatible if possible.

Trails through NFATC land: Although the current trail, from Quincy to 6th St and beyond, is very nice, a continuation of the trail is needed for cyclists and pedestrians to move through the area. A continuation of the trail east from Quincy to connect to Oakland would serve both neighborhood and general users. Adding sidewalk along Oakland would enhance pedestrian safety along this route. Also, the trail running northwest from 6th is currently for pedestrians only and includes a non-ADA compliant tunnel under George Mason Drive. This section should be

made open and accessible for all users. Finally, we recommend adding wayfinding signs throughout the area.

Glebe Road, 6th Street South, and George Mason Drive (GMD): These three streets run along the east, south, and west sides of the NFATC complex.

- George Mason Drive (GMD): Although walking along GMD is relatively pleasant, and the median strip is wide and grass-covered, GMD currently has pedestrian safety risks. The bus stops by the NFATC entrance at 6th Street do not provide shelter or seating, and pedestrian crossing of GMD from the west side to the NFATC entrance on the east side is by unsignalized crosswalk only. Because GMD is hilly and curvy, sightlines for pedestrians and drivers are poor, making crossing without a signal potentially dangerous. Sidewalks on both sides are barely 4' wide, and the sidewalk in front of the National Guard facility has a metal fence right against the sidewalk. Sidewalks throughout are not in great shape.
- Glebe Road: The sidewalk close to Route 50 is wide, but close to several stores, so pedestrians have to watch for turning vehicles in their paths. South of the commercial area, the sidewalk is in poor shape and is overgrown with weeds in many areas.
- 6th Street South: Although 7th Street is the designated bike route, 6th Street is much more pleasant for walking because it is less hilly. Unfortunately, sidewalks are only on the north side starting a few blocks from Glebe, and the street stops when it reaches Quincy. A lovely walk through Alcova Park on unimproved trail is beyond Quincy, if pedestrians can find it.

Recommendations for these streets: Add, widen, and/or repair sidewalks; improve the unimproved trail through Alcova Park; add wayfinding signs throughout the area.

In conclusion, the PAC is concerned about both the current conditions and future plans for the NFATC site. We believe that the future plans will have significant impact upon traffic in the area, and that NFATC and the County need to encourage alternative forms of transportation to the site – transit, cycling, walking, and combinations of all of these – to help mitigate the impact of increased traffic. We encourage the County to submit scoping comments about the NFATC site to ensure that the site and its surroundings will support and welcome alternative forms of transportation that are both safe and enjoyable for all users.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pamela Van Hine
Chair
Pedestrian Advisory Committee

cc: Dennis Leach, Director of Transportation; Chris Slatt, Chair, Transportation Commission; Gillian Burgess, Chair, Bicycle Advisory Committee; John Carten, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee; William Staderman, Chair, Disability Advisory Commission; David Goodman, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager; Pedestrian Advisory Committee Members