

May 19, 2022

Mr. Mark Schwartz  
Arlington County Manager  
Via e-mail: [mschwartz@arlingtonva.us](mailto:mschwartz@arlingtonva.us)

RE: Comments on the first VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Feasibility Study PIM,  
April 28, 2022

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

**Committee Members**

Elizabeth Gallagher, Chair  
Eric Goodman, Vice Chair  
Pamela Van Hine, Recording  
Secretary  
John Armstrong  
Ian Blackwell  
Jim Feaster  
Eric Goldstein  
Patrick Kenney  
Tom Kornis  
Andrea Walker

Thank you for your thoughtful response to our [September 23, 2021 joint BAC-PAC letter](#) and for including County staff comments on the Phase 1 study. You note in your letter that you look forward to our additional input during Phase 2, and these are our first Phase 2 comments to you.

Through this letter, the Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) reiterates that we continue to support our comments and recommendations in our September 23, 2021 letter, but wish to add the following caveats and clarifying comments:

- **Route 1 at-grade at 18<sup>th</sup> Street South:** We believe that any design for an at-grade Route 1 at 18<sup>th</sup> Street must provide crossings for cyclists and pedestrians that are at least as safe as current conditions. Currently, cyclists and pedestrians have no conflict with Route 1 traffic, and creating an at-grade intersection that is more dangerous would be against Vision Zero principles. VDOT has stated that overall Route 1 will be safer with projected decrease in speeds and traffic volume through an effective fully implemented Traffic Demand Management (TDM) program. Regardless of the effectiveness of such a TDM program, the 18<sup>th</sup> Street intersection will become more dangerous without significant safety improvements that are convenient, easy, and desirable for cyclists and pedestrians to use. We appreciate that VDOT included several bike-ped passages over and under Route 1 during the PIM #1 presentation. These proposals do increase safety, but are often not convenient, easy, or desirable to use – and some potential users are concerned about the personal safety risk of using tunnels.
- We do, however, strongly support the following two proposed safety improvements to an at-grade intersection of Route 1 and 18<sup>th</sup> Street:
  - **A Woonerf - a green, bike-pedestrian priority open space:** The Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group coalition proposed several of the options presented by VDOT, but their preferred option is to remove the travel lanes on 18<sup>th</sup> between Eads and Clark-Bell to create a Woonerf plaza for cyclists and pedestrians, perhaps with a Dutch underpass in the middle. Emergency vehicles, buses, and loading dock deliveries would still be allowed. Without the travel lanes on 18<sup>th</sup>, the signalization at 18<sup>th</sup> & Route 1 could be two cycles (versus three - see Barnes dance below) – one for vehicles on Route 1 and one for bike-peds along 18<sup>th</sup>: Easy, safe, convenient, and desirable. We support this option as our first choice.
  - **Barnes dance signalization - a traffic signal phase exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Route 1 safely:** VDOT projects that in 2040 the predicted PM peak volume of pedestrians crossing Route 1 at 18<sup>th</sup> will be: 1273 on the north side of 18<sup>th</sup>, and 397 on the south side (p. 66 final phase 1 report). If VDOT traffic analyses show that some travel lanes need to remain on 18<sup>th</sup>, we recommend that the signalization be a Barnes dance because the high volume of right turning vehicles would conflict with the high volume of pedestrians and cyclists crossing Route 1.
- **25 MPH speed limit:** We are glad that VDOT will study the feasibility of a 25 MPH speed limit along Route 1, as this lower speed limit is essential to protect cyclists and pedestrians. We encourage a quick implementation of a lower speed limit on the current Route 1 and automated enforcement.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> Street Proposals:** We are pleased to see the two VDOT proposals for improving bike and pedestrian safety at the intersection of Route 1 and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Our preference is Option 2, with new bike lanes, preferably protected. The current intersection is dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians, and we hope that improvements can be built early in the overall Route 1 reconstruction schedule.

- **TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Strategy:** We remain concerned that VDOT’s TDM strategy and plans are undisclosed and that their 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 (vehicles per day) 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.
- **Boulevard Design:** We want to expand upon our comments on the cross-sectional elements in our September 23, 2021 letter because the second VDOT PIM will focus on the design of the curb-to-building space, and we want to ensure that the space is sufficient for both pedestrians and cyclists. Both the Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group and the People before Cars Coalition have been working on designs for the general streetscape for an at-grade Route 1 Boulevard. By determining minimum widths for various components of street infrastructure, they came to the same conclusion – that more space is needed to create the desired, activated, comfortable, enjoyable, and safe Boulevard envisioned. Everything needed will not fit in the 25’ VDOT has proposed for the “pedestrian zone.” The minimum widths for the pedestrian clear zone (10’) and landscaping zone (8’) already take up most of the allotted space, without providing space for bike lanes or cafe zones. The resulting streetscape would feel more like a major highway than an urban boulevard.
  - **Protected Bike Lanes/LIT Lanes:** Both the Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group and the People before Cars Coalition are advocating to include protected bike lanes/LIT lanes in the Boulevard design, even though bike lanes along Route 1 are not in either the Crystal City Sector Plan or the Bicycle Element of the Master Transportation Plan. That’s because no one envisioned an at-grade Route 1 when these plans were developed. If we truly want to increase cycling to reduce driving, and if we want cyclists to be able to visit places along an at-grade Route 1 comfortably, safely, and conveniently, then we need to provide safe facilities for cyclists along Route 1. These facilities need to be separate from both the clear zone sidewalk and the travel lanes for everyone’s safety. The PAC supports including LIT Lanes to prevent conflict between cyclists and pedestrians by having separate, safe spaces.
  - **Cafe zone:** Providing space for cafe zones along Route 1, separate from the pedestrian clear zone, will be essential for successful activation of Route 1 and a healthy retail environment. Yet VDOT does not show a specific cafe zone in their proposals and have indicated that the cafe zone should not be included in the 25’ of ROW. However, the VDOT meeting audience poll for preferences for curb-to-building ROW included “public art, cafe zone, benches etc.” (see [slide 36](#)) We need an additional 10’ wide minimum space for cafe zones on both sides.

We continue to recommend that Arlington make clear to VDOT that the County will only support moving forward with a plan for Route 1 that improves the safety for all road users, including pedestrians, transit riders, and cyclists, of all ages and abilities, including the very young, the frail, and the elderly. As recognized by VDOT, safety, walkability, and bikeability are core community design criteria. Any at-grade plans for Route 1 must show that safety, comfort, and efficiency for transit riders, pedestrians, and cyclists will not be decreased, including specifically at the intersection of Route 1 and 18<sup>th</sup> street.

The PAC looks forward to continuing our participation, and we regret that VDOT has decided to discontinue the VDOT Task Force, which gave us an official “seat at the table.”

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Gallagher, Chair, Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
Eric Goodman, Vice Chair/Acting Chair, Pedestrian Advisory Committee




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<sup>1</sup> 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>