

Recreational Trails Advisory Committee Of Washington, DC



Commissioners 2017-18

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January 16, 2018

Ms. Anna Chamberlin
Manager, Project Review
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE, Suite 400
Washington DC 20003-3515

Re: Comments on Environmental Impact Statement for the Long Bridge Project

Ms. Chamberlin,

We are writing you in regard to the Long Bridge Project.

The DC Mayor's Recreational Trail Advisory Committee advises the Executive Branch of the City on the use of federal funds for trails within the District of Columbia via the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a program which provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized (and motorized) recreational trail uses.

It is of utmost concern to us that there is coordination between agencies in this project. DDOT needs to consider and include the plans of Arlington County and National Park Service in their assessment of alternatives. Likewise, those agencies need to consider DDOT plans and work with you to find common solutions.

Connectivity in Virginia

The bike and pedestrian alternatives, as currently shown, connect to the Mount Vernon Trail on the east side of the George Washington Parkway. This trail provides indirect connections to Crystal City, the Pentagon and the airport.

The Long Bridge bicycle and pedestrian connection should include access to the Mount Vernon Trail and continue across the George Washington Parkway to connect to the Long Bridge Park and therefore Crystal City, just a few hundred yards away.

It would be an inefficient use of regional resources to build one connection from the Esplanade to the Mount Vernon Trail and another connection from the Long Bridge to the Mount Vernon Trail in such close proximity to each other. DDOT needs to work with Arlington County and National Park Service to develop a solution and funding agreement to incorporate these needs into one project.

Connectivity in DC

The proposed bike & pedestrian connections on the DC side both terminate at Ohio Drive in East Potomac Park. Instead, the trail should include an access to East Potomac Park and continue, as proposed in the MoveDC plan, across the Washington Channel to Maine Avenue. With the recent opening of the Wharf project on Maine Avenue, it is now even more important that off road pedestrians and bicycle users have access to this development, including the employees who work there and the tourists who visit there.

One Project

Due to financial impacts and environmental impacts, the trail should be built concurrently with the main rail project, not separated and treated as a separate project. Packaging related projects in the same area will save time and money, and limit negative environmental impacts from construction.

Therefore, the Rec Trails Advisory Committee strongly suggests that the bicycle and pedestrian crossing be built simultaneously with the rail span, not as a separate project, and we urge the project team to plan in accordance with regional plans so that the terminus of the span will cross the George Washington Memorial Parkway and connect with Long Bridge Park on the Virginia side, and extend to Maine and Maryland Avenues on the DC side.

Finally, perhaps you could join us at the next meeting of the Rec Trails Committee to go over the project and our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Koczela". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jack Koczela
Co-Chair