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Joint Comments on Lockheed Blvd Restriping

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Dear Active Fairfax Transportation Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the paving and restriping of Lockheed Boulevard in Lee District. While we the undersigned nine organizations appreciate the proposal to add standard bike lanes to this critical connection, we request that the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) install protected bike lanes or a cycle track on Lockheed Blvd., a pedestrian sidewalk along the south side of Lockheed, and additional safe, high visibility crossing options.

At the April 19, 2022 public meeting, FCDOT proposed unprotected bike lanes on Lockheed, with the exception of the last 600 feet of the north side of the street, which would have no bike lane. This proposal would continue to put bicyclists at risk, sandwiched between moving traffic and parked cars whose doors may open without warning. By contrast, protected bike lanes would shift parallel parking away from the curb to create a bike lane that is protected by a row of parked cars with a buffer for swinging car doors, creating a safer design for all. A sidewalk should also be installed on the south side of Lockheed Blvd. to ensure safe pedestrian access to the main entrance of Huntley Meadows Park.

Lockheed Boulevard serves as a critical connection between Richmond Highway and Huntley Meadows Park. By installing protected bike lanes or a cycle track, and a pedestrian sidewalk, the County would ensure equitable and safe access to nature, consistent with its commitment made in 2018 to seek active transportation alternatives that would not encroach upon nor damage Huntley Meadows Park. The current proposed unprotected bike lanes fall short of providing that safe bicycle connection.

Implementation is Critical in Supporting the County's Strong Policies

We note that the County would be fulfilling its core policies by installing protected bike lanes and additional crossings on Lockheed. The Embark Richmond Highway project was intended to enable people to walk, bike, or bus to the places they want to go. Lockheed is a major arterial connecting to Richmond Highway. The promise of Embark is for people to have safe bicycle and pedestrian access from Richmond Highway to

public parks such as Huntley Meadows.

Equitable, Safe Access is Imperative in Support of One Fairfax

Safe bicycle and pedestrian access are also crucial to the County's commitment to One Fairfax. There is an equity issue if the County provides parking lots for private car owners but does not also provide safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the main entrance to Huntley Meadows and other parks.

Safe Active-Transportation Routes are a Keystone to Achieving a Carbon-Free Fairfax

In addition, facilitating transportation by bike is part of the County's commitment to fighting the current climate crisis. As the Joint Environmental Task Force (JET) advised the Board of Supervisors in its final report, supporting a comprehensive, countywide transportation system can prove to be an effective tool to combating climate change. JET further stated that, "[w]ith a little strategic planning, we can integrate travel via roadways with parks, trails, and continuous sidewalks as well as improve connections to transit stations by foot, bike, and bus." Furthermore, the Carbon-Free Fairfax "Anything but Driving" campaign further lifts up this goal. A network of protected bike lanes should be a significant part of such strategic planning.

Health in All Policies Requires Safe Transportation Routes

The County has also adopted a "Health in All Policies" initiative, which it identified as "active living," i.e. increasing opportunities for physical activity to improve health, in its Community Health Improvement Plan: Priorities for Change. The County appointed a Health in All Policies Manager who has recommended safe and accessible biking and walking infrastructure as critical to the active lifestyles needed to improve residents' well-being.

Protected Bike Lanes are the Definition of Safe Routes to Schools

Lastly, but certainly not least, the County has supported Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS), which reduces car congestion at and near schools and improves the surrounding air quality. Hybla Valley Elementary, [3415 Lockheed Blvd](#), is a Title I school that was built 60 years ago, and yet to this day it does not have safe routes for its students to walk or bike to school. And even though the school is located right next to the main entrance to Huntley Meadows, Hybla Valley Elementary School students currently board buses to be driven into the park on field trips, due in part to the lack of a walking alternative.

In Summary

We ask FCDOT and VDOT to ensure that the restriping project goes a step further by redesigning Lockheed Blvd. with protected bike lanes, a sidewalk, and additional safe crossing options. Lockheed Blvd. could thus become the first street with protected bike

lanes in Fairfax County. Let's make history!

Signed,

Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, Bruce Wright, President

Audubon Naturalist Society, Renee Grebe, Northern Virginia Conservation Advocate

South County Task Force, Mary Paden, Chair

Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Jeremiah Lowery, Advocacy Director, and
Garrett Hennigan, Organizing Manager

Coalition for Smarter Growth, Sonya Breehey, Northern Virginia Advocacy Manager

Fairfax Families for Safe Streets, Karen McCluskey, Board Member

Sierra Club Great Falls Group, Susan Bonney, Chair

Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, Andrea McGimsey, Executive Director

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, Cathy Ledec, President