



December 5th, 2022

Nicolas Roper
District Project Development Engineer
Virginia Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia District
4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Re: Feedback on Route 1 Public Information Meeting (PIM) #3

Dear Mr. Roper,

The People Before Cars Coalition (PBC), writes to you in strong support of the Route 1 Boulevard project for its ability to improve connectivity and safety for all users while enhancing the urban fabric of the neighborhood. The updates described during Public Information Meeting (PIM) #3 will further those goals, and we commend VDOT for incorporating these changes based on stakeholder input. In that spirit, we also offer several additional design and operational suggestions for your consideration.

The PBC is a partnership of area organizations and stakeholders united by shared priorities to create a safer and more accessible transportation network in National Landing by championing the implementation of best practices in people-centric urban design and planning.

We were very pleased to see several of our recommendations included in the latest design update. Those include lowering the design speed to 25 mph, banning right turns on red, incorporating a “Barnes Dance” signal phase at 18th Street and Route 1, and allowing for on-street, off-peak parking. These changes will improve safety compared to existing conditions. An analysis by the National Landing BID found that, at present, 99% of drivers exceed the posted speed limit, and 88% of drivers turning right at 15th Street fail to stop before entering the crosswalk. Both practices are dangerous and will be reduced by the proposed changes. We were also pleased to see the proposal to reconfigure the ramp connecting Route 1 and I-395, which will help slow traffic as it approaches National Landing while offering new opportunities for bicycle/pedestrian connections between Pentagon City and Long Bridge Park.

In addition to the proposed changes, we offer the following suggestions to further improve the design and safety:

1. *Narrower lanes = wider cycletrack and sidewalks.* For the streetscape, we support modifying Option 4 (as presented at VDOT’s November 14th Public Information Meeting) by moving the tree strip closer to Route 1¹ and using the space gained to widen the cycletrack by one foot and sidewalk by two feet. Likewise, we recommend narrowing the innermost lanes (and left turn lanes, where present) from 11’ to 10’ and allocating the extra space to the sidewalk. Narrowing

¹ We understand this recommendation would violate VDOT’s guidelines regarding “lateral offsets”, which are intended to prevent harm to drivers in cases where their vehicle leaves the roadway by removing potential hazards from behind the curb. However, we believe such a policy is fundamentally inappropriate in a dense, urban setting on a street with a 25 mph speed limit and recommend it be waived for the Route 1 project.



the innermost lanes will make the street design more consistent with a 25 mph speed limit, while allowing larger vehicles to travel in the outer lanes. The cycletrack and sidewalk design must provide a safe and comfortable experience for people walking and for people biking – otherwise, people will be drawn to use space not designed for them, negating the value of this mode separation. Specifically, the Coalition supports a NACTO-recommended six footwide cycletrack to allow safe passing and to have breaks to allow people to transition to the sidewalk mid-block if they need to stop. The Coalition also supports wide sidewalks that meet Crystal City Sector Plan minimum clear widths with separate dedicated zones for street furniture and cafe uses.

2. *Corner Radii.* The renderings shared during PIM #3 appear to show curb radii of 30° at the corners of the planned Route 1 intersections. Such radii are designed to allow vehicles to take turns at higher speeds, putting pedestrians at risk. They are unnecessary and inappropriate for the Route 1 Boulevard project and a design speed of 25 mph. We encourage VDOT to adopt Arlington’s standard curb return radius of 15° for this project.
3. *Width of 18th Street.* 18th Street at Route 1 is too wide and should be narrowed to one lane in each direction with wider sidewalks and a protected bike lane. If the existing street parking is to remain, it should be placed away from the curb to allow for a parking-protected bike lane in both directions.
4. *Slip lane at 20th Street.* We do not support the current design for the west side of the intersection of 20th Street and Route 1, which includes a dedicated, channelized right-turn lane onto Route 1. By lengthening the distance pedestrians must cross to achieve a softer angle for vehicles turning right, the design puts driver convenience over pedestrian safety. Instead, the intersection should be narrowed as much as possible to minimize crossing distance and to slow turning vehicles.
5. *Hardened protection.* Crash-rated barriers should be added to the median refuges to maximize pedestrian safety at intersections.

Urbanizing Route 1 to an at-grade, people-centric boulevard will improve safety and multi-modal mobility in National Landing. We appreciate VDOT’s work on this important project and your consideration of our recommendations. We look forward to providing comments on VDOT’s final draft, including details on the streetscape and corridor operations, developed in conjunction with Arlington County.

Sincerely,

People Before Cars Coalition (National Landing BID, JBG SMITH, Arlington Families for Safe Streets, Sustainable Mobility for Arlington, Washington Area Bicyclists Association, Coalition for Smarter Growth)