

Ms. Natasha Atkins
President
Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Dear Ms. Atkins:

This is a progress update that responds to the questions and comments we received at the May 9th Aurora Highlands Civic Association meeting and your follow-up email on Thursday, May 11th. Almost all of the issues raised at the civic association meeting and your follow-up e-mail focus on weekday traffic conditions from 23rd Street South and points south between Route One and South Fern Street. Between Arlington DES Transportation and Police, a significant amount of County resources has been applied to developing a detailed understanding of the traffic conditions that are occurring in this geographic area. The Arlington County Police Department has undertaken five speed counts along various segments of South Fern Street and dispatched officers to this area to address specific traffic concerns of residents. Transportation staff has collected detailed intersection counts at 23rd Street South/South Fern Street, 23rd Street South/South Eads Street, and 23rd Street South/Route One (as well other locations in the area to the north and east). We have also utilized four traffic cameras at key intersections to monitor traffic over a three-week period and conducted in-field observations. Much of this information was shared with the community at the May 9th Civic Association meeting.

The principal cause of the traffic congestion in this area and periodic weekday peak period traffic diversion is related to conditions at the signalized intersections of 23rd Street South/South Eads Street and the signalized intersection of 23rd Street South/Route One, which is only 170 feet to the east. In addition, while overall traffic levels have remained stable from 2012 to 2017, there has been a pronounced increase in right-hand turn movements from northbound South Eads Street onto eastbound 23rd Street (over a 50% increase in the five-year period), which appears to be related to airport access, that has worsened the congestion in these two intersections.

As presented at the civic association meeting, we have proposed a phased approach to addressing the issues identified as short term measures (under 60 days), medium term measures (between 60 and 180 days) and longer term measures (beyond 180 days). These are described below:

- The short term measures to be implemented are intended to address the root cause of much of the traffic congestion on northbound South Eads Street. These are focused on modifying the striping and parking management on the northbound approach to 23rd Street on South Eads Street, adding a right-hand turn pocket to eliminate the obstruction of the northbound through lane, coupled with targeted enforcement of illegal parking and loading operations in this location. We will conduct a post implementation evaluation of these changes. We will also evaluate any site distance or congestion issues that may be caused by the current placement of the Capital Bikeshare station on Eads Street north of 23rd Street.

- In the medium term, late summer to fall 2017, we will evaluate and potentially modify the signal timing at 23rd and Eads and 23rd and Route One (as part of the current phase of signal optimization for this part of the County). As part of this effort we will also evaluate the potential of creating a right-turn only lane from eastbound 23rd Street to southbound Route One. We will also evaluate the feasibility of creating more vehicle staging space in this short segment of 23rd Street and assess the feasibility of a left-turn phase onto northbound Route One (which is likely to have a more significant impact on overall intersection performance). These two signal locations along with S. Clark Street at 23rd, are among the most complex in Arlington and we will be looking at the potential trade-offs of these changes on overall intersection and corridor performance.
- In the longer term, beyond 180 days, we will continue to advance a funded capital project that will realign/rebuild the 23rd Street corridor from South Eads Street to a point east of the South Clark Street signalized intersection. This project offers significant potential to improve transportation conditions along 23rd Street and the north-south streets. With regard to the proposed traffic circle illustrated in the Crystal City Sector Plan at the location of Route One and the Airport Viaduct, this is a long term vision for this area of Crystal City which is not currently funded in the County Board-adopted 10-year Capital Improvement Program.

I recognize that this progress update does not address all of the issues that were raised at the civic association meeting and in your follow-up e-mail on May 11th such as temporary signs and permanent signs, and WAZE routing of traffic onto residential yield streets. These are some of the items that we are still evaluating, which will be covered in a subsequent communication to you as civic association president for distribution. We anticipate sending this follow-up communication within the next 30 days. That being said, I hope that this proposed staff work program conveys the very substantial effort that has been committed to this area in the context of limited staff and financial resources that must serve a community that has over 230,000 residents, a similar number of workers and many significant regional and federal facilities. I look forward to continued work with you and the civic association as we progress these changes.

Sincerely,

Dennis

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