

ALEXANDRIA - WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE

NEIGHBORHOOD TASK FORCE MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2002, 7:30 P.M.

CITY HALL, CITY COUNCIL WORK ROOM

SPECIAL AGENDA

	Time
I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks Kerry J. Donley, Mayor Whittington W. Clement, Secretary of Transportation, Commonwealth of Virginia William D. Euille, Councilman	7:30
II. WWB Noise Abatement Issues	7:40
A. Review of Noise Analysis Findings	
B. Outstanding Noise Issues and Concerns	
C. Response by the Honorable Whittington W. Clement	
D. Status of Research on Noise Minimizing Pavements	
III. Public Discussion	8:20
IV. Agenda Items for Discussion at the Next Meeting	9:15
A. Next Meeting Date and Location	
V. Adjourn	9:30

Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force

Minutes of the December 18, 2001, Meeting

Lee Center Auditorium

7:00 P. M.

Task Force Members Present: Hervey Aitken, Harold Arata, Phillip Bradbury, Councilman William Euille, Lillie Finklea, Gerald Lipson, David Olinger, Teresa Miller, Yvonne Weight
Task Force Members Absent: Vice Mayor William Cleveland (because of his work schedule)
City Attorney: Ignacio Pessoa
City Staff: Richard Baier, William Skrabak, Beverly Steele, Reed Winslow
Project Representative: Tom Heil, Kevin Hughes, Tom Mohler, Ronaldo T. "Nick" Nicholson, Norine Walker, Jim Zito
Virginia Department of Transportation: Frank Gee, Acting Chief Engineer
Guests who signed in: Engin Artemel, Richard Bamford, Dave Beck, Judith Bradbury, Julie Crenshaw, Denise Cunningham, Tom Downey, Brooke English, Ed Ford, Scott S. Gilbride, Lisa Haskins, Michael Horn, Alex Kelly, Jim Kornick, Agnes Palmer, Pat and Wayne Phillips, B. Joyce Puckett, Matt Ries, Jay Siegfried, Jean Varney, D. Willinger

I. Call to Order

The December 18, 2001, meeting of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force was called to order by Councilman Euille at 7:10 p.m.

II. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the October and November 2001 minutes was deferred until the January 2002 Neighborhood Task Force meeting.

III. Special Meeting on Noise Issues (The focus of the meeting was on noise issues that directly involved the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). In January, the Neighborhood Task Force will return to its regular format.)

Rich Baier introduced Frank Gee, Acting Chief Engineer for VDOT, who began his presentation by having Tom Heil, representing the Bridge Project Team, give a brief history of the noise issues, and how VDOT came to its decision. Mr. Heil explained that the criteria for determining noise barriers is based on a noise analysis which focuses on what the future noise levels will be for given conditions on the new Woodrow Wilson bridge (number of lanes, future volume of traffic for the year 2020). This information is the basis for the computer model which provides a predicted noise level for a particular area called a receptor site, and receptor sites are located throughout the surrounding

community to identify projected noise levels. VDOT uses the same criteria as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to determine noise impact. If a future projected noise level at a receptor site approaches 67 decibels (defined as 66 decibels or higher), this is considered an impact. VDOT looks at these "impacted" sites to determine what can be done to mitigate the impact. The future projected noise levels in 2020 for areas east of Washington Street including Yates Gardens ranged from 65 to 66 to 69 decibels, with 39 homes identified as being impacted by noise. VDOT looks at noise barriers that can achieve a reduction of at least 5 decibels for the impacted areas in Yates Gardens, and cost less than \$30,000 per affected residence.

VDOT looked at extending the noise barrier planned for the north side of the bridge by approximately 1,000 feet and found that it is an effective way to mitigate the noise level for the 39 homes and St. Mary's School, if noise is the only factor considered. However, other factors related to extending the wall on the bridge (aesthetics, maintenance, safety, and operations--how traffic flows) posed problems which could not be overcome, and ultimately led to VDOT and various regional bodies not approving an extension of the wall on the bridge. (The details of this decision-making process are contained in the copies of the material handed out at the meeting).

Nick Nicholson gave a brief update on where the bridge project is currently. The concrete pile work in Jones Point Park is complete. Steel piles are still being driven for the V2 pier on the shoreline of Jones Point Park, and for the piers in the Potomac River. The one bid for the superstructure contract came in \$360 million over the estimate and will have to be rebid, causing a four to six month delay in re-advertising the bid package. Work on the ground improvement contract for the Route One Interchange started December 17. The contract for the demolition of the one Hunting Towers building will be advertised in March 2002 with notice to proceed in May 2002, and completion in April 2003. This contract includes the demolition of the Hunting Towers parking garages, and the demolition of the parking area and Seaport Foundation building off of Jones Point Drive. The next major contract, the \$50 to \$60 million tie-in contract (ties in the existing inner and outer loop of the bridge with the newly widened capital beltway), will be advertised in May 2002 with notice to proceed in the fall of 2002. The tie-in contract includes the demolition of the office buildings on Washington Street and the three Hunting Terrace buildings. Mr. Nicholson then answered a number of questions.

Mr. Nicholson explained, in response to Teresa Miller's question if the Hunting Towers building and some of the other buildings will be imploded, that the contractor will tell VDOT what is the best method for demolition based on a number of things, including the City's code regulations, and the requirements for hauling away the debris. Mr. Nicholson also said, in response to a question from the audience, that the Project has already been working with the various environmental agencies and regulatory authorities to make sure the plan meets the environmental requirements. Mr. Artemel asked if there are hazardous materials in the building. Mr. Nicholson said there are hazardous materials

and the contractor will address, in his bid, how he handles their removal. The Project has identified hazardous material disposal sites. Mr. Nicholson said VDOT's resale of the remaining Hunting Towers and Hunting Terrace buildings, once the bridge project is completed, will be to the highest bidder. Starting in the fall of 2002, Washington Street will be reduced from four to three lanes with the middle lane reversible (north in the a.m. and south in the p.m.) to accommodate trucks entering and leaving the site.

Teresa Miller and Phill Bradbury asked for an explanation of why only 39 units east of Washington Street and 58 units in Porto Vecchio are being impacted by noise. Tom Heil said the noise study showed that Green Street is the boundary for the 66 decibel level. Receptors placed at the corner of Green and Fairfax, Green and Royal, and Green and Lee each registered 65 decibels, which is under the 66 decibel threshold. Yvonne Weight asked if Virginia could adopt a lower threshold than the FHWA's 66 decibels. Mr. Heil and Frank Gee confirmed that VDOT can adopt a policy that is more stringent than the FHWA guidelines (it cannot adopt one which is less stringent). Virginia, as is the case with most states, adopted the FHWA guidelines because of cost and consistency that results in a uniform application throughout the state, rather than developing different standards for different areas. Ms. Weight said that since this is a unique project (the only 12 lane bridge being built in Virginia) could the standards be changed to adapt to this project. Mr. Gee said that while this is a unique project, it is also a Federal project involving three jurisdictions (Virginia, Maryland, and D.C.) and each would have to agree to change the standards. VDOT, however, does not believe a change should be made as the FHWA standards are appropriate.

Herv Aitken asked how many households in D.C. and Maryland would be adversely impacted by the noise on the bridge. Mr. Gee and Mr. Heil said none from the bridge abutment on the Virginia side to the bridge abutment on the Maryland side (only Alexandria is impacted). Mr. Heil explained that the noise impact is looked at from a project-wide perspective and how it impacts state policy. Mr. Aitken said that approach is not as relevant to the issue of noise as is the immediate impact of the decibel level.

Phill Bradbury asked if the Federal government would object to Virginia adopting a more stringent guideline. Mr. Heil said, and Mr. Gee confirmed, that the Federal government defers to the states to make their own policy, and monitors the carrying out of that policy.

Gerald Lipson asked if more households were impacted by noise as the project moves west, and is it the concern of the project that if the noise standards are made more stringent that more homes to the west would be added and the cost of mitigation would rise. Mr. Heil answered that the Project has been able, for the most part, to propose mitigation efforts that comply with the policy guidelines. Only in some cases are there properties that cannot be protected by noise barriers, and these are in Yates Gardens and Porto Vecchio. The Project will be meeting with Porto Vecchio property owners on January 7, 2002, to discuss these difficult noise issues. In terms of moving west, not

until the project gets to the Telegraph Road area are there residential households that will be impacted. These households are in Fairfax County, and noise mitigation options will be discussed with these households.

Frank Gee reiterated that at the conclusion of the noise study conducted several years ago from Telegraph Road east, the VDOT Chief Engineer at the time (James Browder) approved noise mitigation measures for the project except at St. Mary's School and the units in Yates Gardens as discussed by Mr. Heil. A 20 foot barrier wall is to be constructed on the south side of the bridge to protect Hunting Towers that will also provide benefits to the first three floors of Porto Vecchio, but not the floors above the third (hence the noise impacts on the 58 Porto Vecchio units above 67 decibels), as it is not feasible to build a wall high enough to protect the upper floors.

Lillie Finklea inquired about the funding for the mitigation and who would pay for the more stringent guidelines. Frank Gee said the total cost of the bridge project is \$2.5 billion of which there are \$1.5 billion in Federal monies leaving the three jurisdictions to cover the remaining \$1 billion. Virginia has committed \$400 million. The unexpected need for the \$400 million has severely hurt Virginia's transportation program, and if more money was needed for mitigation, it would have to come from the state's transportation program, and would create additional hardships.

Mr. Gee then reviewed the history and reasons for his final decision on the noise mitigation issues. At Mayor Donley's request, Mr. Gee agreed to review the noise mitigation decisions made two years earlier by the previous VDOT Chief Engineer, including revisiting the issue of extending the barrier wall on the north side of the bridge. Because Virginia does not have complete control of the design of the bridge, Mr. Gee asked the various groups in the region that have a say in the design process to give him their comments. The aesthetics are governed by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), the Fine Arts Commission (FAC), and a design review committee appointed specifically for this bridge. Each of these groups (in the case NCPC only the staff was consulted, the Commission was never formally approached) opposed extending the barrier wall on the bridge.

Mr. Gee took these results, along with the results of the review of the safety, maintenance and operational issues discussed above, and concluded that it was not appropriate to extend the noise barrier wall. This still left the St. Mary's and Yates Gardens' external noise mitigation issues. Mr. Gee looked at what might be done with St. Mary's (possibly a ground mounted wall). With respect to Yates Gardens, Mr. Gee did not find anything that would probably be acceptable to Yates Gardens citizens. A ground mounted wall is a possibility, but he's not convinced this would be acceptable.

Scott Oswald asked if VDOT did decide to extend the barrier wall, could the various Commissions noted above have veto power over that decision. Mr. Gee said yes because

this a federal bridge and a national memorial to former President Woodrow Wilson. The original agreement for the construction of the bridge gives these Commissions control over how the bridge looks.

Yvonne Weight clarified that the beginning point of bridge is the abutment at Royal Street, and the existing noise wall that is planned to be built will extend west from the Royal Street abutment beginning at a height of 20 feet and tapering down. The proposed extension of the noise wall that Mr. Gee reviewed and disapproved begins at the Royal Street abutment and goes 1000-1300 feet east to a spot approximately half way between Fairfax Street and the Seaport Foundation building. Ms. Weight pointed to the misstatements made by others in the correspondence as to where the extension of the noise wall is located and the length of the proposed extension. Tom Heil said the difference in the lengths is due to the different proposals that were being made at the time.

A member of the audience asked if consideration had been given to other types of walls, like translucent walls. Tom Heil said that while translucent walls have been used elsewhere, the problem is that they don't stand the test of time. Vehicle exhaust puts a coating on the surface which eventually degrades the surface, and the walls have to be taken down.

Herv Aitken asked Mr. Gee if Alexandria ever had a chance to get the extension of the barrier on the bridge given the dynamics of the approval process. Mr. Gee said that he couldn't say Alexandria never had a chance, but it was an uphill battle, not only because of the aesthetics, but also because of the other issues (operations, safety and maintenance). While the two commissions may have placed aesthetics as their top priority, the other issues Mr. Gee considered were, to him, of a higher priority with safety the highest.

Councilman Euille asked Mr. Gee to explain what mitigation will be available to St. Mary's School and Yates Gardens now that he and VDOT have rejected the City's position to extend the barrier wall. Mr. Gee responded that extending the barrier wall is no longer an issue, and we all need to bring this item to closure. As for other mitigation measures, VDOT is having discussions with St. Mary's, and Mr. Gee has formally offered to build the ground mounted wall around St. Mary's. No closure has been reached, but discussions continue with the next meeting scheduled for January 22. For Yates Gardens, VDOT is working with City officials, but the options are limited. Mr. Gee offered a ground mounted wall, but that was not well received. He's continuing discussions with the City and the citizens to look at alternatives that are within VDOT's policies and procedures.

Teresa Miller asked: (1) the benefit of in-structure improvements; (2) the benefit of the ground mounted structure from the standpoint of lowering the decibel level; and (3) what

berms could be put around people's homes that live right at the bridge. Tom Heil said a ground mounted barrier built around Fairfax and Lee Streets could afford a five decibel reduction to two additional residences. Other reductions of noise would occur in that area but less than the five decibels. VDOT only identified external noise impacts, and does not engage in internal improvements to deal with external noise. Ms. Miller asked VDOT to reconsider its position on in-structure improvements given that elderly residents and children in the neighborhood need to be protected from the negative impacts of noise (e.g., high blood pressure and learning disabilities). Mr. Gee said that the noise level inside Yates Gardens units is at an acceptable level, therefore, there is no internal noise issue, only an external noise issue.

Yvonne Weight asked if VDOT, while following FHWA guidelines, could choose to adopt different standards. Mr. Gee said Virginia could adopt different standards, but has chosen not to do so. Tom Heil said if such standards were adopted, Federal dollars would not be available to pay for the in-structure improvements, and all improvements would have to be funded with state dollars. Mr. Gee said these state dollars would have to come from existing state transportation funds, causing additional hardships on the state's transportation program and setting a precedent for other regions of the state for something that is questionable from a noise mitigation standpoint.

Ms. Weight asked what else can VDOT possibly do for Yates Gardens, as it sounds like we're batting zero and VDOT has no other alternative to put on the table? Mr. Gee responded that basically as it stands right now, VDOT has nothing else to offer. Mr. Gee said a wall could be built, or some berms could be constructed (this would affect some park property which would require a 4F environmental review), and VDOT and the City could continue to look at those things, but essentially right now he does not see an effective way to provide noise protection to the Yates Gardens community.

Councilman Euille said that while this is Mr. Gee's position, the City Manager and the Mayor continue to fight for what we believe is best. Hopefully, we will get some form of mitigation that will provide protection for the affected homes and properties.

Jim McAndrews, President of the Home and School Association at St. Mary's, said he is sympathetic with the concerns of the Yates Gardens community and wants to make it clear that St. Mary's is "violently" opposed to VDOT's proposal which is both ill-conceived and ill-advised. There are sections of St. Mary's School that will not be protected by the ground mounted wall, and the wall is an eye-sore for the community and inconsistent with the flavor of Old Town. There are federal guidelines that say the wall should be four times the proposed height to provide the proper protection. The wall does not begin to meet St. Mary's needs and the on-going discussions with VDOT are aimed at getting to the true mitigation that will protect the school. He does not want people to think, based on tonight's presentation, that the VDOT proposal for St. Mary's was thoughtfully conceived and developed. In fact, there are a number of holes in the

proposal that need to be further investigated. Mr. McAndrews recommends that other forums be held to put the ideas and concerns of the St. Mary's community in front of Mr. Gee because he does not believe Mr. Gee is hearing them.

Julie Crenshaw thanked Nick Nicholson for extending the invitation to Mr. Gee to come to the meeting. Ms. Crenshaw said that the concerns of the citizens are not being addressed and they are getting the run-around. When issues come before the NCPC, you have to lobby the people months in advance, because people in favor of things are lobbying much harder for their position, and this was stacked against us. There has to be a way to get what is needed. While VDOT's actions are based on policy that has been in effect for years, the current situation calls for new thinking. There are people in Congress and Senate offices that can be talked to. What is happening is not right; there is an answer and we need to look elsewhere for help.

Tom Downey asked if the acoustic readings were based on actual or theoretical readings. Tom Heil said there are two types of readings: (1) ambient based on what's happening today and (2) predicted as generated by the computer program and based on volume and mix of traffic in the design year (2020). Mr. Downey asked if they are based on the worst atmospheric and weather conditions, because at certain times of the year the bridge noise cannot be heard, and at other times it's a dull roar. Mr. Heil said the ambient conditions are based on a representative sampling (average atmospheric conditions over a period of time). The predicted levels are based on a representation of the ambient levels' atmospheric conditions. Mr. Downey asked how fast the noise levels dissipate over Yates Gardens. Mr. Heil said sound dissipates differently depending upon the terrain and the sound absorbing characteristics of the terrain.

Councilman Euille addressed Ms. Crenshaw's comments by saying that we can approach Congress. Rich Baier summarized who the City has met with at the state level in the past, and believes that a meeting now needs to be set up with the new state Secretary of Transportation.

Lillie Finklea asked Mr. Gee if the state has learned anything from this process. She believes the City and the elected officials to an extent have let the citizens down. This is the largest bridge project in the world, and there should be a better way to protect the affected people. She believes that no one is protecting the City. The state has to do a better job to protect the citizens. Tom Heil said the Project is trying to protect the citizens through the conditions it puts in its contracts for construction such as regulating pile driving in Jones Point Park and the haul routes. Frank Gee said it is impossible for the state to meet every need. He has tried to work with the City as evidenced by his decision to revisit the noise issues. His commitment to City Council is that he will continue to work with the City, but he cannot and will not promise something he cannot keep.

A member of the audience asked what is the state's policy if 10 to 20 years from now the

noise levels exceed today's projected levels and mitigation measures? Mr. Gee said current state policy is not to do a retrofit if the models prove incorrect. If the state does engage in construction, like widening the beltway, then it would re-look at everything and determine what is necessary at that point in time. While this is current policy, it doesn't mean that it couldn't change in the future.

Ellen Pickering suggested that the State's decibel policy be rewritten. Councilman Euille said that while it may be too late to get that into this year's legislative package, it's certainly something we can work on for the next package.

A member of the audience who lives in the area expressed frustration of having observed this process for over a year and seeing it going no where with regard to helping those most directly impacted.

Engin Artemel, speaking as a citizen who lives on the north waterfront, asked that the pile driving noise be stopped on the weekends, by extending the contract for six months. Nick Nicholson said this is a Maryland administered contract, and all he can do is ask Maryland to stop the pile driving on the weekends, especially in the early morning hours, which he has. Because the Foundations Contract has a penalty clause for not completing the work on time and the work is already behind schedule, Maryland wants the contractor to do all that he can to catch up, and will not stop the pile driving. Councilman Euille's asked when the pile driving will be completed. Mr. Nicholson said the initial phase of pile driving will end in the spring. Yvonne Weight noted that penalties can always be waived and with the superstructure contract delay, there's more time to complete the pile driving.

Yvonne Weight asked if the barrier wall on bridge can be lower, not extend so far to the east and still provide any kind of mitigation, even if it is psychological. Mr. Baier said the City 's initial proposal was a 1320 foot wall to provide the most audible difference (4 to 7 decibel loss). The subsequent City proposal was a lower wall, but the bottom line is that none of the reviewing agencies would support any City proposal. While the City was not invited to attend all of the meetings of the reviewing agencies, it did attend two meetings to make its case, but it was clear that minds were already made up.

Frank Gee said that any wall short of the height and length proposed (20 feet by 1300 feet) would not provide the decibel reduction needed. Tom Heil said the human ear cannot detect noise level changes below 3 decibels, so anything built that offers less than a three decibel reduction does not even give the perception of noise reduction. Yvonne Weight asked what height would the wall have to be to provide a three decibel reduction. Mr. Heil did not have the figure and will provide the committee with the answer later.

Herv Aitken suggested that if the State were to lower the decibel level and retroactively apply it to this bridge, the Federal government would "blink." and not force upon the state

of Virginia a higher pro rata share of the resulting costs because commerce on I-95 heading north is too valuable to this government. Also, there are environmental concerns important to the government. If the state would put up an eight foot wall with Plexiglas on top that doesn't have a negative aesthetic value, it may make a difference and the commissions in Washington cannot honorably disagree. This would enable the state to respond affirmatively to the citizens of Alexandria, and to respond to the demand of people attending this meeting that some accommodation be made.

Scott Oswald asked Mr. Gee, in light of the fact that safety was Mr. Gee's highest priority, if a report concluded that for the sake of safety, an extension of the wall is needed, what impact would that have on Mr. Gee's reconsideration of his decision? Mr. Gee said he still has the other issues to consider, that the Commissions would still have veto power, that he would go back before the groups, but all of this would have to be done quickly as the superstructure is about to be built and he's got to bring closure to this issue. Mr. Oswald pointed to the recommendation by one of the bridge project's safety committees that supported having the barrier wall on the bridge. Nick Nicholson said this was the Incident Management Group whose concern is with traffic movement on the bridge. They said the barrier wall should go all across the bridge to block the view so as not to distract the driver, but a barrier wall was not proposed to go all the way across the bridge. The State Police, on the other hand, felt that a barrier wall would not allow them to gain access to people on the pedestrian path, and opposed the barrier wall.

A member of the audience asked what if the path was eliminated? That would remove the concern of the State Police. Tom Heil said that the bridge is set up for multi-modal transportation and bicyclists would be opposed to eliminating the path.

Gerald Lipson asked if any consideration has been given to challenging the authority of the veto. Mr. Lipson asked why there is such fear and trepidation over the potential veto of two organizations that are so far removed from the impact of this particular structure. Mr. Lipson suggests that since Mr. Gee appears to want to do something, but feels his hands are tied by these organizations, why isn't this challenged in court, as we have nothing to lose? Mr. Gee said Virginia has no intention of going to court, itself, and we're not going to have a barrier on the bridge.

David Olinger said the only possible way of turning this around is political, and it has to be done rapidly. The State has been very open and forthcoming with the Task Force, but obviously it's not going to do anything. The only route is political.

Teresa Miller said Yates Gardens would like one last meeting to discuss specific improvements for the Yates Gardens neighborhood which would include Yates Gardens residents only.

Councilman Euille thanked everyone for coming and felt it was a very useful meeting.

The result is that the positions of VDOT and the City have not changed. VDOT says no to the wall and the City says it wants a wall. At the November Task Force meeting, it was suggested that City Council and the Task Force meet to discuss these issues. Due to scheduling matters, that was not possible. As a result of the meeting tonight, Councilman Euille will take the formal request to have a meeting between the Task Force and the City Council to the City Manager and the Mayor. The meeting will need to occur as soon as possible to decide the next steps to continue to advocate for the neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be Monday, January 28 at 7:00 p.m. The third Tuesday of January, the regularly scheduled meeting date of the Task Force, is the same night as the City's Martin Luther King, Jr. program.

Agenda items for the next meeting include the Hunting Towers demolition (Phill Bradbury), temporary City employee parking on Jones Point (Yvonne Weight), safety upgrades at Jones Point for the handicapped (Teresa Miller).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beverly C. Steele



*Mr. Phillip Sunderland
City of Alexandria*

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, 23219-2000

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER

November 8, 2001

C. F. GEE
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
Mayor, City of Alexandria
301 King Street – Room 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Noise Abatement Coordination Issues

Dear Mayor Donley;

As I committed to you in my August 2, 2001 letter, representatives of the Virginia Department of Transportation (Department) have continued their outreach effort with specific Commissions, organizations, and professionals relative to the potential noise wall extension onto the new Wilson Bridge. These outreach efforts focused on reviewing and approving agencies both within and external to the Project. This outreach effort resulted in an October 17, 2001 memorandum from my Project Manager, Mr. Ronaldo T. Nicholson outlining information obtained from these groups. A copy of this memorandum was provided to the City Manager, Mr. Philip Sunderland and is attached herewith for your reference. With this information, I have completed my review and evaluation of this issue and offer the Department's position.

The Department has re-evaluated the technical data, information, and studies, which led to our initial position on this issue in November 2000. Additionally, my representatives have gathered additional information on the Department's specific concerns of safety, aesthetics, operations, and maintenance. Lastly, I have reconsidered all of this information in light of our conversations and additional information gained by my representatives as related to citizen concerns and issues. Based on the plethora of data and information gathered, the Department has weighed the concerns of you and your citizens with those of the inquired groups and professionals versed in these specific areas of concern. With this information, I have forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) a letter (copy attached) that recommends the following;

"The Department reiterates, and is largely supported by the recommendations of the groups queried, that the overall noise abatement benefits (of the noise barrier extension onto the new Wilson Bridge) do not outweigh the overall adverse social, economic, and environmental effects, and the costs of the noise abatement measure.

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
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A wall on the bridge would result in public safety, aesthetic, operations and maintenance issues that, in total, would lead to a detriment in public good to the general public, traveling public, and users of the facility."

This decision of the Department has not been arrived at lightly, and as you are aware, has been scrutinized on several occasions by various levels within the Department. The decision has been arrived at using sound engineering judgment and weighs all factors associated with the safety of the public at large and the significance of the new structure that will be an entryway to our nations capital for years to come.

As we have discussed, extensive noise mitigation efforts for other City of Alexandria residences that are impacted by future noise impacts have progressed over the last six months. Within these other areas, the Department has been successful in providing noise mitigation and abatement measures to the satisfaction of these property owners with the exception of St. Mary's School and Yates Gardens. With regard to St. Mary's School, I have offered to provide a ground-mounted wall that will provide appropriate abatement. I trust my offer will be acceptable. A copy is attached for your information. Unfortunately, I do not have a way to address Yates Gardens in an appropriate matter. A wall can be provided, however, it would result in existing screening being disrupted and would not provide abatement except for a few properties. Therefore, there is not a prudent and feasible way to provide mitigation to these properties. Additionally, I understand that the FHWA and the City may be continuing to work cooperatively on other community enhancements as part of the re-settlement agreement.

Should you have additional questions or concerns associated with this issue I welcome you to contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance for all of your cooperation and input into this difficult decision. We in the Department are looking forward to the continuing close working relationship with you, the entire City Council, and City staff as we jointly advance this critical transportation project.

Sincerely


C. F. Gee

Attachments; As Stated

cc: Mr. Phillip Sunderland – City of Alexandria
The Honorable Vincent F. Callahan, Jr. – Virginia House of Delegates
The Honorable Shirley J. Ybarra – Virginia Secretary of Transportation



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, 23219-2000

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER

C. F. GEE
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER

November 7, 2001

Mr. Thomas Fadoul, Esquire
General Counsel of the Arlington Dioceses
Fadoul and Associates
1650 Tysons Boulevard, Suite 1555
McLean, Virginia 22102

Subject: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Issues Associated with St. Mary's School and Cemetery

Dear Mr. Fadoul:

Thank you for meeting with Project representatives on August 28, 2001 to discuss potential noise issues and other items associated with the St. Mary's School and Cemetery. These facilities are located south of Green Street, east of South Royal Street and west of Washington Street in the City of Alexandria, Virginia and occur in close proximity to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project (Project). I understand that members of the Project staff have met periodically with you and other representatives of these facilities, as well as representatives of the Diocese of Arlington on issues related to St. Mary's. The Department appreciates the time you and others have taken to work with us and we look forward to continuing this working relationship in the future.

During the recent meeting, I understand that you clearly indicated a need for the Department to acknowledge both interior and exterior noise impacts at the referenced facilities and suggested that mitigation is required. As was discussed at the meeting, the Department has completed a thorough traffic noise analysis for the entire Project and these studies include future noise projections at the referenced St. Mary's facilities. The Department applied standard procedures and protocols in accordance with Federal Highway Administration's Guidelines and State Noise Abatement Policy, which have been the guiding documents for numerous other projects statewide. These guidelines and policies are designed to produce objective, substantive data to ensure that decisions with regard to noise impacts and mitigation needs are reproducible, fair to all parties involved, and based on the best available science. The Department used these guidelines, policies, and protocols to compute noise projections at all locations, including the St. Mary's facilities. The projections indicate that the exterior uses associated with St. Mary's School, specifically the schools outdoors recreational areas and playgrounds will be impacted by future traffic noise associated with the Project.

As to your assertions that the interior portions of St. Mary's School will be impacted by noise generated by the Project, the investigations performed by the Department do not support such an assertion. The Department has recognized interior impacts to publicly owned non-profit properties associated with other Commonwealth transportation projects; however, similar conditions do not exist at the St. Mary's School property to support an

Mr. Thomas Fadoul, Esquire
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interior impact designation. Again, the guidelines, policies, and protocols used to formulate this position are consistent with the Department's established protocol for assessing noise impacts and mitigation recommendations. Because of our differences in opinion related to interior noise impacts, the Department normally would request access to the property to further investigate this issue. However, we understand that St. Mary's has already completed improvements intended to lower interior penetration of exterior noise. Thus this action precludes an accurate assessment of the potential interior noise impacts, if any. These improvements were made without any consultation with the Department regarding the perceived interior noise impacts or expectations for the Department to participate in the funding of these improvements. In light of these improvements, the Department understands you may have data that may substantiate your position and respectfully request a copy of your studies so that the Department may better understand your assertions. Without such data, the Department cannot substantiate your assertion of this interior impact.

As noted previously, the Department recognizes that the exterior uses associated with St. Mary's School will be impacted by future traffic noise associated with the Project. Based on this assessment, the Department has investigated the feasibility of constructing a ground mounted noise barrier to protect the schools exterior uses. This noise barrier could be constructed along the southern edge of the school property, north of the existing cemetery, and traverse northerly along South Royal Street and easterly along Green Street. (This barrier would be located on property currently owned by the Dioceses of Arlington.) The Department is, therefore, prepared to provide this ground-mounted noise barrier at Project expense, provided the Dioceses provided the necessary construction easements and recognizes ownership of the barrier upon completion. This barrier location would require the relocation of the existing South Royal Street parking lot entrance to a location along Green Street. Additionally, the Department is offering to provide a noise barrier with aesthetic improvements that will conform to the character of the school property and it's setting. This noise mitigation technique will assist in the reduction of future noise at the exterior uses to thresholds below those designated as impacted by future noise projections. The Department looks forward to working with the appropriate Dioceses representative to coordinate the design and construction of this noise mitigation element.

The Department will make every attempt to construct this noise barrier as early in the construction program as possible to provide St. Mary's with protection from noise through the construction phase of the project. This commitment is made to further benefit St. Mary's and limit the amount of perceived disturbance the Project may have on the current use of the facility. Additionally, the construction of this noise barrier will inherently provide benefit to the interior of the school.

As to other issues you raised during our conversations, specifically those of inverse condemnation and compensation for effects to the St. Mary's cemetery, I offer the following information. The Department finds no grounds to your claims of inverse condemnation; accordingly the Department will take no further action on this issue. As to your request for additional compensation of effect on the St. Mary's Cemetery, the Project has taken every effort to avoid physical impacts to this resource. These efforts include special design and construction of a new retaining wall along the mainline while keeping the existing retaining wall in tact to ensure no physical disturbance. Additionally, the Project will not affect the cemeteries frontage along Washington Street except for areas within current City of Alexandria right of way. The Department welcomes additional coordination with you and/or other representatives to further define specific aesthetic treatments for design elements that are viewed from the cemetery to ensure they fit with the character of this resource. We believe a cooperative dialogue with St. Mary's on these issues can identify aesthetic treatments that will improve markedly upon the existing concrete retaining wall, thereby furthering the contemplative setting of the cemetery.

Mr. Thomas Fadoul, Esquire
Page Three
November 7, 2001

As construction progresses, please know the Project team will continue to identify construction techniques to minimize impact on St. Mary's, such as the existing prohibition of truck traffic during the school's pick-up and drop-off times. Similarly, let me suggest that having the Project as a next-door neighbor holds considerable potential as an educational experience for St. Mary's students. I would welcome opportunities where the Project can partner with the school in having Project staff visit your classrooms as well as provide age-appropriate field trips to the construction site.

In closing, let me assure you that the Department genuinely seeks to be a good neighbor to St. Mary's School and others in the vicinity as we go about building this much-needed Project. I look forward to continuing our working relationship on this and other issues related to the St. Mary's School and Cemetery properties.

Should you have any question or comments concerning this information please feel free to contact my Project Manager, Ronaldo T. Nicholson at (703) 519-9800 or me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention to this matter, as well as your continuing cooperation.

Sincerely,



C. F. Gee

cc: M. Kerley, N. Nicholson, A. Anday, L. Arnold, and J. Cromwell - VDOT
R. Walton and P. Stahl - OAG
G. McCormick, T. Heil, B. Barkley and J. Undeland - GEC
Document Controls (Marvin Harris)



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, 23219-2000

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER

C. F. GEE
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER

November 7, 2001

Mr. Roberto Fonseca
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
PO Box 10249
800 North 8th Street, Room 750
Richmond, Virginia 23240-0249

Subject: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Noise Abatement Coordination Issues

Dear Mr. Fonseca,

The Virginia Department of Transportation (Department) has continued its efforts to resolve noise abatement issues related to a potential noise wall along the north side of the proposed Wilson Bridge. This potential noise wall could provide protection to impacted property owners east of Washington Street and north of the proposed mainline, specifically within the Yates Garden Community within the City of Alexandria. However, the Department has grave concerns over the feasibility of this potential noise wall; as it will adversely affect the general public, traveling public, and users of the facility. This issue has been studied thoroughly for over a year and has been the subject of extensive public outreach by Project staff with the City of Alexandria and the impacted residents. At this time the Department is prepared to provide the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with the result of these studies and outreach efforts and its position on this issue.

Specific to the technical nature of this issue, the Virginia Noise Abatement Committee (NAC) studied this potential noise barrier based solely on technical noise abatement considerations, and recommended in October 2000 inclusion of this noise wall as part of the Project. In accordance with the Departments' Noise Abatement Policy, the Chief Engineer evaluated this recommendation along with other Project noise wall recommendations made by the NAC in November 2000. The Chief Engineer accepted all NAC recommendations; expect he could not support an extension of the noise wall onto the bridge because of four specific concerns that affected both the general public, traveling public, and ultimate users of the facility. These issues related to specific safety, aesthetic, operation, and maintenance concerns. Accordingly, the recommended noise wall accepted by the Department and concurred to by the FHWA would extend along the northern side of

Mr. Roberto Fonseca- Martinez
Page Two
November 7, 2001

the mainline, extending from the eastern terminus of the proposed Urban Deck at Washington Street easterly and terminate at the western Wilson Bridge abutment.

All pertinent study information and justification, which led to this decision by the Department, was shared with the City of Alexandria in December 2000 and coordinated with the City manager, City staff, and its designated noise consultant. Additionally, Project staff performed outreach with the Yates Garden Community to inform them of the recommendations of the NAC and decision of the Department. In June 2001, the City of Alexandria expressed concerns over the decision made by the Chief Engineer and asked that the Department revisit this issue. The City reiterated the need for the potential noise wall on the Wilson Bridge and/or asked for in structure enhancements (i.e. in structure window treatments) to benefit impacted properties within the Yates Garden Community.

As a result of my meeting with the Mayor of the City of Alexandria and representatives, I agreed to revisit this decision. My review and assessment as well as council from Department representatives led to an August 2, 2001 letter (copy attached) to the Mayor that outlined the issues faced, alternate noise mitigation options and potential challenges associated with these options. Additionally, I committed to further investigate the feasibility of this potential noise wall with various review and approval Commissions and professional agencies and organizations as they relate to the four specific concerns associated with the potential noise wall, again; safety, aesthetics, operations, and maintenance. This commitment to ascertain additional input from these groups reinforces the sensitivity of this issue, the extent of outreach and coordination completed by the Department, and the resolve of the Department to fully explore and assess the ramifications of its decision on the general public, affected properties, and ultimate facility users.

The Department completed the additional outreach effort in early October 2001 and assembled the information from these groups. I received this information through an October 17, 2001 memorandum from my Project Manager, Mr. Ronaldo T. Nicholson (copy attached). This data confirmed that concerns over safety and aesthetics are justified and information received from other Departments representatives related to operations and maintenance is valid.


Although the City of Alexandria and the impacted property owners strongly support the potential noise wall on the Wilson Bridge, the Department, using its best engineering judgment and its responsibility to weigh the effects on the overall public good, cannot support such a proposal. The Department reiterates, and is largely supported by the recommendations of the groups queried, that the overall noise abatement benefits do not outweigh the overall adverse social, economic, and environmental effects, and the costs of the noise abatement measures. A wall on the bridge would result in public safety, aesthetic, operations, and maintenance issues that, in total, would lead to a detriment in

Mr. Roberto Fonseca-Martinez
Page Three
November 7, 2001

public good to the general public, traveling public, and users of the facility. Therefore, in accordance with the Departments Noise Abatement Policy the proposed noise wall in this area will extend from the eastern terminus of the Urban Deck easterly and will terminate at the western Wilson Bridge abutment.

The concurrence of FHWA on the Departments decision on this issue is requested. Should you have any questions of concerns please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



C. F. Gee

Attachments

cc: . Mr. John A. Gerner - Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Phillip Sunderland - City of Alexandria
Mr. Robert Healy - Maryland State Highway Administration
The Honorable Shirley J. Ybarra - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. Charles D. Nottingham - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. Jeffrey C. Southard - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. Ronaldo T. Nicholson - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. Gene McCormick - Potomac Crossing Consultants

bcc: Mr. Ahmet Anday - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. Lloyd Arnold - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. James Cromwell - Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. Thomas Heil - Potomac Crossing Consultants
Mr. Thomas Mohler - Potomac Crossing Consultants
Mr. Kevin Hughes - Potomac Crossing Consultants
Mr. James Zito - Potomac Crossing Consultants
Mr. Marvin Harris - Potomac Crossing Consultants



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, 23219-2000

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER

C. F. GEE
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER

August 2, 2001

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
Mayor, City of Alexandria
301 King Street - Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Subject: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Noise Abatement Coordination Issues

Dear Mayor Donley:

Thank you for the time you have offered over the last month, to continue our discussions on noise abatement issues associated with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. I appreciated your involvement and insights during our June 20, 2001 and July 24, 2001 meetings. As you recall, the focus of our discussions have related to the Project's ability to protect impacted properties south of Green Street and east of Washington Street from anticipated 2020 traffic noise projections. Our commitment to continue this coordination effort prior to the Department's outreach to impacted property owners at and near St. Mary's School and within the Yates Garden Community of the City has helped to solidify our concerns and sort out the relevant issues.

As you know, our meetings during June and July 2001 occurred near the final stages of the Department's required noise abatement procedures and protocols. The Department's process began with the studies and investigations associated with the Project's Final and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated September 1997 and April 2000, respectively. Within these documents, assessment of potential 2020 traffic noise projections were conducted and an estimate of those properties impacted by these projections were made. As the design of the Project continued, updates and modifications to these original noise models were conducted. This effort resulted in the preparation of the Highway Noise Evaluation Summary reports that were prepared and presented to the Virginia Noise Abatement Committee (NAC) in September 2000. These reports were completed for the following areas:

- ✓ I-95/I-495 Capital Beltway - Washington Street to the Potomac River
- ✓ I-95/I-495 Capital Beltway US Route 1 Interchange - WMATA Bridge to Washington Street
- ✓ I-95/I-495 Capital Beltway Telegraph Road Interchange - Telegraph Road to the Western Project Limits

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
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The Virginia NAC met in October 2000 to review and discuss the findings and recommendations of these reports and issued a letter on November 28, 2000 to the Department's Chief Engineer for approval of the recommended barrier systems. The Chief Engineer approved NAC recommended barrier systems on November 30, 2001, except Barrier #1 (East of Washington Street to the Potomac River) which was approved with modifications, as follows:

"Barrier #1 extension onto the bridge is not approved. It would detract from the aesthetics of the "signature" bridge structure that has been approved through a public process, would impact on the safety of the pedestrians on the pedestrian bridge, create a tunnel effect to west bound I-95 traffic, and be a detriment to the maintenance of the bridge and safety to traffic during inclement weather.

I understand that the Project provided the stated reports and recommendations from the Chief Engineer to your staff in early December 2000. The City of Alexandria then forwarded to the Project comments on this information based on input from a specialty noise consultant (Bowlby & Associates, Inc.) under contract to the City. The Project and City staff continued to work on technical issues associated with the noise analysis west of the Route 1 Interchange over the following months. This coordination effort resulted in several letters that identified, addressed, and/or resolved technical noise issues that spanned from January through April 2001.

The specific noise issues related to these technical discussions and the potential effects on both the St. Mary's School and the Yates Garden Community were brought to my attention in April 2001. At that time, I became aware that my technical staff and your noise specialists agreed on a noise model for these areas that slightly increased noise levels at five (5) previously non-impacted noise receptor locations by one (1) to four (4) decibels. This increase in predicted noise, although hardly perceptible by the human ear, increased the number of impacted properties from 16 (December 2000) to 39 (April 2001). Again, technical staff from the City and the Project recommended that extension of the Barrier #1 easterly from the proposed bridge abutment to approximately 970 feet out onto the bridge would mitigate these predicted noise impacts. However, as stated in the Department's April 30, 2001 letter,

"...additional analyses do not provide substantive additional data to alter the grounds of the previous decisions of the Chief Engineer. That is, although the number of impacted residences has increased, justification for elimination of the barrier on the proposed bridge structure has not appeared to change."

At the time, I recognized the potential difficulty this issue could raise with the local residents. Accordingly, I engaged my technical staff to continue coordination with City representatives to try to resolve this issue. These discussions resulted in our initial June 2001 meeting during which I explained

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
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the Department's position. After our discussion, I committed to investigate alternative noise abatement and/or good neighbor measures to resolve this issue. These measures included the following:

- ✓ Landscaped berms coupled with vegetation and/or ground mounted barriers at Lee and Fairfax Street to improve aesthetics and view sheds of the properties
- ✓ Ground mounted noise barriers at Lee and Fairfax Streets
- ✓ Ground mounted barriers along the St. Mary's School property and along Royal Street to the current playground entrance along Royal Street
- ✓ A compromise barrier that extends onto the bridge but tapers uniformly or steps down from the full barrier height at the abutment to the parapet wall height on the bridge.

Additionally, two other potential solutions were expressed at this meeting, specifically (1) installation of replacement windows within impacted properties and (2) vertical extension of the bridge parapet from forty-two (42) inches to sixty (60) inches. This meeting was extremely productive and the range of options and alternatives that both Project and City staff brought to our attention were encouraging.

Between our meetings, I met repetitively with my technical staff, again visited the sites, and weighed the benefits and detriments of each alternative. The decision on this issue is neither easy nor clear cut. The benefits to the residents must be weighed against safety of the user, aesthetics of the signature structure, maintenance concerns and tunnel effects during inclement weather to the traveling public. Accordingly, as discussed during our meeting, I offered the following information and recommendations:

- ✓ Staff informed me that the landscape berm option at the end of Lee and Fairfax Street would not provide sufficient noise reduction to the properties nor the physical land area to construct such a facility. Accordingly, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration.
- ✓ Staff advised that a ground-mounted barrier of sufficient height (approximately twenty (20) feet) would provide some benefit to the southern most properties along Lee and Fairfax Street. Additionally, there appeared to be enough physical land area within the City right of way to construct such a barrier. However, upon my field review of the site, I noticed that these properties were significantly screened from the bridge by thick vegetation that extended to the south. I could not, in good conscience, recommend removal of this vegetation to construct a barrier that would benefit only those southern most properties along Lee and Fairfax Streets. However, I feel that this alternative should be examined with the impacted property owners.

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
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August 2, 2001

- ✓ Staff prepared two separate ground mounted barrier systems to provide protection to the St. Mary's School property. Both of these systems were located along the southern edge of the school grounds and was located between the school grounds and the cemetery. My field investigation revealed that, in my opinion, the system was feasible; however, delicate construction practices would have to be employed to ensure that grave shafts were not affected. Staff recommended an extension northerly along South Royal Street that either terminated at the existing playground entrance on South Royal Street or relocation of the current entrance to Green Street and extension of the system to Green Street. Although both systems afforded noise reduction at the exterior school uses, the system that extended along South Royal Street to Green Street is more effective. I support both of these options as an alternative to the placement of a barrier on the bridge.
- ✓ Staff advised me of the benefits a tapered barrier that extended onto the bridge approximately one thousand (1000) feet and transitioned to an elevated sixty (60) inch parapet for approximately one hundred (100) feet would afford. They indicated that this system would benefit those impacted properties; however, the actual construction costs of such a barrier system on a structure would be higher than ground-mounted alternatives. Additionally, inclusion of this tapered barrier would afford similar liabilities of safety, aesthetics, maintenance, and tunnel effects as the originally proposed Barrier #1. Accordingly, in good conscience, I cannot support such a proposal until additional investigation has taken place and I have availed myself of further advice and counsel. My approach will be discussed further in this letter.
- ✓ Staff advised that provisions for replacement windows within impacted properties would not address exterior noise mitigation. Since the impacted properties are considered impacted because of exterior noise, I cannot support installation of replacement windows as a noise mitigation component of the Project.
- ✓ Staff advised that vertical extension of the bridge parapet height to sixty (60) inches would afford less than one (1) decibel insertion loss at one receptor site. Additionally, an increase in the parapet height to eighty-four (84) inches would also effectively, because of significant digits in the model, reduce noise by approximately one (1) decibel. Because this increased parapet height would cause concerns over safety, isolation of the pedestrian path from the traffic, I cannot support this option.

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
Page Five
August 2, 2001

As discussed at the July 24, 2001 coordination meeting, I stand behind the technical justification and other considerations that have led to my decisions. However, the arguments you and the City Manager posed are also quite compelling. As you may concur, it is always helpful to view a challenging situation from several perspectives to ensure the best solution is obtained. Based on our discussions, I believe it is in the best interests of the Department, the traveling public, and the local citizens to consider the tapered bridge barrier alternative further.


To ensure that proper and justifiable input is provided, I will seek the counsel of professionals in the area of public safety and maintenance to investigate the justifications presented to me on these issues. As to aesthetic concerns, I will query the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the Project Ad Hoc Bridge Committee and the Design Review Working Group (DRWG) to evaluate, comment, and recommend a solution to this issue. Lastly, I will advise staff to meet with the local affected property owners to query them on the most appropriate solution to this issue.

Through this multi-faceted approach, a decision that benefits your constituents, the local users, and the traveling public appears achievable. The intent of my reconsideration of this issue is to ensure that a decision is based on the best available technical information and perspectives by those professionals with expertise in the various fields involved.

I look forward to meeting with you further on this issue in the near future. In the meantime, should you have any questions or concerns about this issue please feel free to contact my Project Manager, Ronaldo T. Nicholson at (703) 519-9800 or me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter, as well as your continuing cooperation.

Sincerely,



C. F. Gee

Cc: Mr. Philip Sunderland – City of Alexandria
Mr. Richard Baier – City of Alexandria
Mr. Robert Douglas – Maryland State Highway Association
Mr. Robert Healy – Maryland State Highway Association
The Honorable Shirley J. Ybarra – Virginia Secretary of Transportation
Mr. Charles D. Nottingham – VDOT
Mr. Jeffrey C. Southard - VDOT

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
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August 2, 2001

Bc: Mr. Mal Kerley
Mr. Nick Nicholson
Mr. Ahmet Anday
Mr. Lloyd Arnold
Mr. John Gerner
Mr. Gene McCormick
Mr. Tom Heil
Mr. Tom Mohler
Mr. Jim Zito
Mr. Marvin Harris

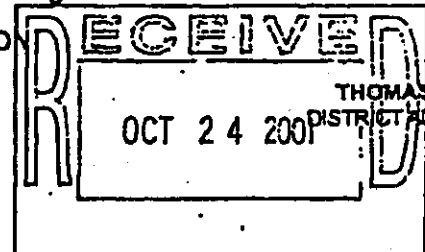


COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

14685 Avion Parkway
Charlottesville, VA 20151
(703) 383-VDOT (8368)

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER



October 17, 2001

To: C. Frank Gee
Acting Chief Engineer

Ref.: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Noise Wall on Woodrow Wilson Bridge

As requested in your letter of August 2, 2001, Project Staff has reached out to various professionals regarding the acceptability of a proposed noise barrier on the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge to mitigate noise impacts north of the Capital Beltway. The following attachments document feedback from:

- The U. S. Commission of Fine Arts
- National Capital Planning Commission
- Design Review Working Group
- Ad Hoc Committee of the Design Competition Selection Panel
- Maryland State Highway Administration

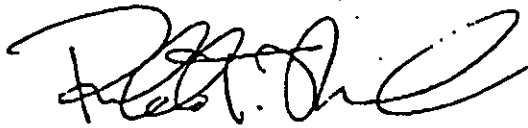
We believe you will find each of these groups opposed to the noise barrier and are very concerned over the aesthetic impacts that the introduction of such an element would cause on this signature bridge structure.

We have also discussed this issue with various safety professionals and have received mixed feedback to date. We have attached the record of a phone conversation with Lieutenant Tom Martin from the Virginia State Police who expressed concern over pedestrian safety in the area hidden behind the noise barrier and recommended against locating the barrier between the vehicular lanes and the path. We also approached the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Incident Management Subcommittee about this same issue. While most of the individuals on the committee were unable to attend the meeting due to the current focus on dealing with terrorist concerns, those in attendance expressed a preference for segregating the pedestrians both physically and visually from vehicles so that drivers would not notice them by extending a tall barrier across the entire bridge to block vehicular views of activity occurring on the path.

Mr. Frank Gee
Woodrow Wilson Bridge Noise Wall
October 17, 2001
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Our meeting with the local affected property owners reflected a preference for replacement windows in the residences and replacement windows and air conditioning for St. Mary's School. Many of these impacted adjacent property owners desired the noise barrier on the bridge. The official position from the City of Alexandria is for the noise barrier on the bridge and replacement windows. None of the property owners appeared to desire the ground mounted noise barrier options presented at the meeting. However, one of the high-rise communities south of the I-95 expressed concern of reflective noise impacts if the barrier were placed as proposed.

Through this memorandum and the attachments we believe that we have provided the additional input that you sought in your letter of August 2, 2001 to the City of Alexandria. We would be happy to facilitate any additional input should you desire it.



Ronaldo T. Nicholson, P.E.
Project Manager
Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

cc: Malcolm T. Kerley, P.E.
Ahmet Anday
Robert Healy, P.E.
Phillip Sunderland
Gene McCormick, P.E.
Jim Zito, P.E.
Tom Mohler, P.E.

Attachments: As Stated

Correspondence from U. S. Commission of Fine Arts dated September 27, 2001
Minutes from October 3, 2001 meeting with National Capital Planning Commission Staff
Minutes from October 1, 2001 Design Review Working Group Meeting
Minutes from September 13, 2001 Ad Hoc Meeting
Correspondence from Maryland State Highway Administration dated September 12, 2001
Record of Phone Conversation with Lieutenant Tom Martin on August 2, 2001

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM
411 F STREET, N.W., SUITE 312
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001-3736

202-394-2200
202-394-2193 FAX

27 September 2001

Dear Mr. Gerner:

At its meeting on 20 September 2001, the Commission reviewed and unanimously approved the final design for the replacement Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The members found the final design and its detailing in keeping with the approved concept. As you know, an item of continuing concern is the height of the guardrail. All travelers must be allowed vistas of the river, Old Town Alexandria and the distant city. We understand that the sightliness have been tested and our approval is contingent on that being the case when it is built.

During the presentation, our staff informed the members that a few residents in Alexandria are requesting a potential modification to the design. They are proposing the addition of a sound barrier to the north side of the bridge from the abutment to the shoreline—approximately 1600 feet in length. This, in the opinion of the Commission, would be a detrimental addition and should not be considered. It would essentially wall off all vistas to the north, present an ugly visual barricade to and from Alexandria, and would have questionable effectiveness in mitigating the noise of passing traffic. Since only a handful residences would be affected, it seems that other strategies for noise mitigation, such as insulating the individual houses would be more effective. Any changes or modifications to the design of the bridge, as submitted, will need to be considered by the Commission.

As always, the staff is available to assist you and the design team should questions arise.

Sincerely,



J. Carter Brown
Chairman

John A. Gerner, PE, Project Manager
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Woodrow Wilson Bridge Center
1800 Duke Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

cc: Robert Healy, Maryland State Highway Administration
Thomas Mohler, URS



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URS Greiner Woodward Clyde
Rummel, Kiepper & Kahl

4 North Park Drive, Suite 300
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21030-1800
410-785-7220
FAX 410-785-3086

Final Minutes

Meeting with NCPC Plans Review Staff to Discuss Potential Noise Barrier on Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge October 3, 2001

Attendees:	Bill Dowd	National Capital Planning Commission
	Gene Keller	National Capital Planning Commission
	Rich Baier	City of Alexandria
	Bill Skrabak	City of Alexandria
	Reed Winslow	City of Alexandria
	Tom Mohler	Potomac Crossing Consultants
	Tom Heil	Potomac Crossing Consultants

This meeting was established to offer the City of Alexandria's perspective about a Noise Barrier on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to NCPC staff. The topics discussed at the meeting included:

NCPC Process

In order for the Commission to take action, a formal proposal requesting approval of a particular design needs to be submitted by a project sponsor. NCPC staff reviews the submittal and develops a report with a recommendation. The staff then presents the project report and recommendation to the Commission for action. On this particular project, the staff would take into account a variety of relevant issues including noise levels, aesthetics and safety. From this respect, they were eager to hear the point of view of representatives from the City of Alexandria.

Noise Barrier Options:

The first concept extends from the Washington Street Deckover to the Virginia abutment. At the Virginia abutment the noise barrier is proposed to be 23'-6" tall (3'-6" traffic barrier plus 20' noise barrier). This concept would provide a benefit, as defined by FHWA criteria of a reduction of at least 5 decibels, to 12 residences.

NOV 08 2001 16:01 FR

TO 18047862940

P.05/18



gene.keller@ncpc.gov

To: Dee_Magnusson@URSCorp.com

10/10/01 09:32 AM

cc:

Subject: RE: Minutes from Meeting

Dee:

Both Bill Dowd and myself reviewed the minutes and take no exception to the issues as recorded.

Gene Keller

—Original Message—

From: Dee_Magnusson@URSCorp.com [mailto:Dee_Magnusson@URSCorp.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2001 3:27 PM

To: gene.keller@ncpc.gov; hcilt@wwbgcc.com

Subject: Minutes from Meeting

Gene, Tom,

Attached are the minutes from the meeting. If you have any questions, please give me a call. THANKS! (410) 785-7220 ext 221.

(See attached file: ncpc minutes - noise barrier.doc)

Dee



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URS Greiner
Rummel, Klepper & Kahl

1800 Duke St. Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-519-9800
Fax: 703-548-4593

DATE: October 12, 2001
TO: Attendees
FROM: Mark R. Edwards
SUBJECT: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Design Review Working Group
October 1, 2001 - Meeting

A meeting of the Design Review Working Group (DRWG) was held on October 1, 2001 at the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project Office in Alexandria, Virginia. The primary purpose of this meeting was to review the 65% design plans for Jones Point Park and the Urban Deck in Alexandria, and to review the possible extension of noise walls onto the Bridge in Virginia. The following individuals were in attendance:

Peter Smith	City of Alexandria
Marilynn Lewis	M-NCPPC
Cicero Salles	Prince George's County DPW&T
John Parsons	NPS
Lilly Richards	VDHR
Dan Johnson	FHWA
Roger Courtney	EDAW
Bridget Belkacemi	EDAW
Peter Bonaccorsi	HNTB
Peter Levasseur	HNTB
Eckart Graeve	HNTB
Tom Mohler	PCC
William Barkley	PCC
Mark Edwards	PCC
Terry Klein	PCC

Jones Point Park, Intermediate Design

Mr. Courtney reviewed the design plans for the park. The discussion included a review of the bike paths, as this was an issue at the last DRWG meeting. Sketches now include three-dimensional views within the park (see enclosure).



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DRWG Minutes - October 1, 2001 Meeting
Page 2

Mr. Smith asked about the interpretation of the boundary line. Mr. Courteny noted that the flush markers are still in the plans, located in the event lawn and in portions of the parking area under the bridge.

Ms. Richards asked about the protection of the corner stone, and the need to preserve the recent wetland in front of the stone versus removing the source of water damage. Mr. Courteny noted that the plans call for improving the ventilation around the stone and improving the vault around the stone. Mr. Edwards noted that based on findings from a June 2001 on-site visit from a NPS conservator, the decision had been made to allow water to continue to enter the vaults so as to not alter the current environment of the vault and stone. The front of the vault will be a stone wall with a grill work above the wall to enclose the front of the vault.

Mr. Levasseur of HNTB presented the design for the comfort station in the park (see enclosure). Heil noted that the comfort station reflects the design of the bridge and historic design associated with the Virginia Shipbuilding Corporation complex.

Mr. Parsons stated that he was troubled by the location of the comfort station location. Mr. Courteny noted that it is oriented to the bike trails in the park and the future fields. The location is related more to the functions within the park as opposed to the bridge as this is a park structure. Mr. Parsons remarked that he would like a better environment for the comfort station, not under the bridge. Mr. Levasseur stressed the need for this location given its association with the trail users and field users.

Mr. Parsons asked why a wall to the ceiling was required, that would "break up" the arched roof (separation of men's and women's room). He suggested that, as an alternative, glazing might be placed at the upper portion to retain the open feeling of the roof. Representatives of HNTB stated that they will look into options concerning this wall and its appearance from inside and outside.

Urban Deck - Washington Street - Intermediate Design

Mr. Courteny reviewed the urban deck plans, and also the plans for memorialization/park for Freedmen's cemetery.

Mr. Parsons asked why the road is restricted in the northern portion of deck. Mr. Bonacorsci said the restrictions were due to the presence of the two cemeteries.

Mr. Smith asked about the graves under Washington Street and how the improvements of the road may impact them. Mr. Klein noted that the Project will be developing an Section 106 effects



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DRWG Minutes - October 1, 2001 Meeting
Page 3

report on the entire Washington Street improvement in terms of Freedmen's cemetery, and what actions will be taken to make sure that there is no impact to the graves. This report will be sent to VDHR and the City for review and comment.

In summary, the DRWG appeared to be happy with the progress of the plans. Mr. Heil noted that the Project will send the DRWG the 65% plans to the DRWG for review and comment.

Virginia Noise Barriers (on the Bridge)

Mr. Mohler reviewed the proposed plans for the noise barriers, including two concepts. The first concept extends from the Washington Street Deckover to the Virginia abutment. At the Virginia abutment, the noise barrier is proposed to be 23' 6" tall (3' 6" traffic barrier plus 20' noise barrier). This concept would provide a benefit, as defined by FHWA criteria, of a reduction of at least 5 decibels, to 12 residences.

The second concept involves extending the noise barrier approximately 1,300 feet out onto the bridge. The height tapers from 23' 6" to 3' 6". This concept provides a benefit to 15 residences in addition to the 12 residences benefitted from the first concept.

Mr. Mohler described a third concept, developed by the City of Alexandria, that would be 18' 6" tall at the abutment, stepping down to 3' 6" at approximately 1,500 feet out onto the bridge. This concept provides a benefit to 13 residences in addition to the 12 residences benefitted from the first concept.

In addition, ground-mounted options were briefly discussed. Mr. Heil related that VDOT is prepared to approve Option 1. He also related that VDOT was hesitant to approve a barrier extending out onto the bridge because of safety, aesthetics, operational, and maintenance issues.

Ms. Lewis emphatically noted that this barrier "has to come off the bridge." She stated that "these noise walls are ugly," and that this development "is awful." Mr. Salles noted that this wall is not in keeping with the sensitivity of the bridge and will detract from the bridge design. He also stated that he was concerned over the safety of the people on the walkway along the noise walls. He wondered how emergency personnel would get to people along the path that now becomes somewhat like a canyon.

Mr. Parsons asked why was this coming out now? Mr. Heil noted that the noise issue has been around for a while, including during the Project's FSEIS. VDOT's Chief Engineer originally made a decision to only place the noise barrier between the deckover and the bridge abutment.



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Page 4

At the urging of the City of Alexandria, the Chief Engineer committed to studying the issue further. The Project is talking to a wide range of groups about the noise walls. The citizens living near the bridge desire the noise barriers. The City's mayor supports the placement of the barriers.

Mr. Parsons asked if noise-proofing homes would be an option. It was explained that VDOT's policy was not to do such noise proofing of private homes. The FHWA policy is to mitigate noise impacts only with exterior solutions for residents. It was estimated that the noise barriers would cost \$1 million dollars, or more.

Ms. Richards noted that the barrier changes the visual setting of Jones Point Park. Ms. Lewis noted that this is then not the bridge that has been "sold" over the years. This completely changes the design of the bridge, she said.

Mr. Heil explained that the Project did examine ground level barriers, but that the use of this type of barrier would result in removal of trees and vegetation and alter the setting at ground level along the bridge. On the ground, the barriers would need to be 20 feet tall and would help only a few residents. The residents in the area were strongly against ground level barriers.

Ms. Richards asked about size of the noise increase, how great will it be? Mr. Mohler noted that today noise level is approximately 62 decibels in certain areas. In 2020, it will be as high as 69 decibels. She felt that the benefit is not worth the safety/visual issues associated with building the barrier. Mr. Salles asked about what the noise levels would be in the future without the project. Mr. Heil did not know what the exact noise level would, but acknowledged it would likely be higher than the current 62, but maybe not as high as 69.

Ms. Lewis asked about construction noise, and what will happen in the area. Mr. Heil noted that construction noise is very different from traffic, and is more periodic. Pile driving in the park is during the week and portions of Saturday. He noted that schedule of pile driving at the Route 1 interchange has yet to be identified.

Mr. Parsons questioned the noise wall shown on the plans (25-foot wall) which is off the bridge, adjacent to St. Mary's Cemetery. Mr. Heil noted that this barrier is associated with the Route 1/Urban Deck design. This wall is being erected to protect the residents near St. Mary's Cemetery. Mr. Heil noted that challenge is to make this wall "palatable" in this portion of the project.



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DRWG Minutes - October 1, 2001 Meeting
Page 5

The DRWG noted that a barrier at any height on the bridge does not meet the design criteria for the bridge as stipulated in the MOA. No opinions were expressed in support of the noise barrier options.

Other Business

Ms. Richards noted that VDHR has concurred with findings for Mason Neck wetland mitigation site (e.g. no further archaeological investigation required). She will be sending out a letter stating this concurrence.

Mr. Edwards noted that the scope of work in Rock Creek Park in terms of archaeology and the proposed fish passage improvements is now being reviewed by the Washington, D.C. SHPO and NPS. Work is anticipated to begin on this project in mid-October.

The Project will notify the DRWG of the next meeting as the design proceeds with the Route 1 interchange as this will most likely be the next meeting topic.

Should anyone have concerns or corrections to these minutes, please contact Mark Edwards at 301.670.3373 or Bill Barkley at 703.836.1414 at your convenience. These minutes represent the general context and content of the items and issues discussed during the October 1, 2001 Design Review Working Group meeting.

TK/MRE:me
enclosures

cc: Steve Calcott - DC SHPO
John Gerner and Bruce Turner - FHWA
New VDOT Representative, Reed, Tony Opperman, and Cooper Wamsley - VDOT
Bob Healy, Don Sparklin, and Rick Ervin - MSHA
Gene McCormick and Bill Barkley - PCC
Document Control (Marvin Harris)



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Potomac River Bridge Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes September 13, 2001

Location: Project Office
Oxon Hill, Maryland

Attendees:	Earle S. Freedman	Ad-Hoc Member
	Harry Robinson	Ad-Hoc Member
	Betty Hager-Francis	Ad-Hoc Member
	Robert Healy	Maryland State Highway Administration
	Richard Cary-Brown	Parsons Transportation Group
	Tom Mohler	Potomac Crossing Consultants

Discussion:

1. Noise Barrier

Mr. Mohler presented 3 concepts under consideration for a noise barrier on the north side of I-95/495 near the Virginia abutment. In this area there are 39 impacted residences according to FHWA criteria.

The first concept extends from the Washington Street Deckover to the Virginia abutment. At the Virginia abutment the noise barrier is proposed to be 23'-6" tall (3'-6" traffic barrier plus 20' noise barrier). This concept would provide a benefit, as defined by FHWA criteria to 12 residences.

The second concept involves extending the noise barrier approximately 1,300 feet out onto the bridge. The height tapers from 23'-6" to 3'-6". This concept provides a benefit to 15 residences in addition to the 12 residences benefited from Concept 1.

The third concept, developed by the City of Alexandria, is 18'-6" tall at the abutment and steps down to 3'-6" at approximately 1500 feet out onto the bridge. This concept provides a benefit to 13 residences in addition to the 12 residences benefited from Concept 1.

Mr. Muhler also briefly discussed two concepts for ground mounted barriers but noted that these were not well received by the community. He then distributed renderings from three perspectives of the two concepts that extend onto the bridge.

The committee members discussed the concepts under consideration and unanimously strongly objected to both concepts that extended onto the bridge. They related that either option would undermine the substantial effort that has been made to date to develop an aesthetically appealing bridge. In addition, concerns were also expressed over safety, operational and maintenance issues.

2. Woodrow Wilson Medallions

Mr. Mohler presented renderings of pylons that would be approximately 25 feet tall at both abutments and located between the inner loop and outer loop bridges. The medallions from the existing bridge would be located near the tops of the pylons with "Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge" underneath in a lettering style similar to that on the existing bridge.

The committee members concurred with the introduction of this aesthetic element and offered a number of suggestions including evaluating:

- Changing the shape of the pylon such as making it thinner
- Reducing the height without diminishing the ability to notice it
- Considering different materials such as the metals used in the operator's house or perhaps granite or marble
- Adding two new medallions on the reverse side of the medallions
- Providing appropriate aesthetic lighting.

A refined concept will be presented at the next Ad Hoc meeting.

3. Woodrow Wilson Bridge Memorial Bridge Sign

Tom Mohler presented an alternative color scheme for the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge sign at the drop down barrier gate. While there was mixed feedback over the appropriateness of this sign, the committee encouraged exploring an alternative sign layout that may eliminate the need for it. They acknowledged that this may require stopping the traffic further away from the operator's house. An update will be presented at the next Ad Hoc meeting.

4. Interpretive Features

Mr. Mohler presented a layout of the overlooks on the bridge along with a draft of the interpretive panels. The concepts for the three interpretive stations on the bridge included:

- A tale of three jurisdictions
- A view towards the District of Columbia
- The Alexandria shoreline.

It was noted that the final panel graphics would not be required in the advertised set of plans and may not be needed for a few years since they are to be installed on the inner loop bridge. Any detailed comments are welcome.

Mr. Mohler also related that the DRWG had recommended adding an interpretation of President Wilson to the overlook being planned at the Maryland abutment. This graphic would be reviewed as part of the Rosalie Island Improvements.

The committee concurred with the layout of the overlooks and offered to provide comments on the interpretive graphics at the next meeting.

5. Traffic Barriers

Mr. Mohler distributed a rendering of the final aesthetic treatments on the traffic barriers. These details included two vertical lines at the same spacing as the railing posts and three horizontal lines near the top of the barriers. The committee concurred with these details.

6. **Next Meeting:** The next Ad Hoc meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2001 at 9:30am in Oxon hill.

cc: Attendees
Mal Kerley - VDOT
Ronaldo Nicholson - VDOT
John Gerner - FHWA
Gene McCormick - PCC

David Wallace - PCC
Bill Barkley - PCC
Tom Heil - PCC
Document Control



Maryland Department of Transportation
State Highway Administration

September 12, 2001

Parris N. Glendonin
Governor

John D. Porcari
Secretary

Parker F. Williams
Administrator

Subject: Contract No. PG3455173
F.A.P. No. DPWW-013 (18) N
Replacement of the Woodrow Wilson
Bridge on I-95/495 over the Potomac
River

Mr. C. F. Gee
Acting Chief Engineer
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond VA 23219-2000

Dear Mr. Gee:

The State Highway Administration wishes to express our strong support of your decision to terminate the noise barrier located on the northern side of I-95/I-495 at the Virginia abutment. We firmly believe that your decision to not continue the noise barrier onto the new Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge was a very prudent decision once all of the relevant issues were considered.

The SHA also wishes to emphasize that public safety is a top priority for the State Highway Administration. Extending a noise barrier 1,300 feet beyond the Virginia Abutment onto the bridge would create a situation that is unacceptable for pedestrians from a public safety standpoint. We also share your concern that the tunnel effect from the noise barrier would compromise the operational characteristics of the new bridge and roadway, a difficult scenario to accept before the new bridge is even open to traffic.

This Department strongly believes that such a barrier would significantly detract from the aesthetics of this "signature" bridge. We also believe that various local agencies that we have been coordinating with would object to this barrier. As you know, we have persevered to gain public and agency acceptance of the new bridge and believe that introducing a new element as unattractive as the noise barrier would be very detrimental to the support we have garnered to date. Its introduction would also cause us to revisit some issues that have long been settled. For instance, the structural requirements for the barrier would require the walkway to be narrowed or the bridge to be widened, not to mention the redesign of various other bridge elements.

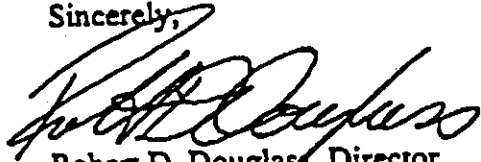
Maryland echoes your concerns over the maintenance costs associated with the noise barrier. We believe that with it being so close to the roadway and adjacent to pedestrians puts it in a very precarious location that would require special attention and enhanced maintenance. For instance, a noise barrier located immediately adjacent to the inner loop local shoulder would be vulnerable to being struck by errant vehicles, especially trucks.

Mr. C. F. Gee
September 12, 2001
Page Two

In addition, we believe that the extension of the noise barrier onto the bridge would be a direct violation of the MOA that allowed this project to move forward. In particular, the first design goal in the MOA stressed high aesthetic values, which would certainly be compromised. The sixth design goal emphasized preserving or enhancing views along the Potomac River toward the National Capital and the Alexandria Historic District, an aspect that would clearly be lost with this barrier. We recognize that all major infrastructure projects are a delicate balancing act between competing public interests. Your decision to not extend this barrier respects the original design goals developed through extensive input from the public and regulatory agencies.

In closing, we wish to underscore that we strongly support your original decision to terminate the noise barrier at the Virginia abutment. We are happy to provide our full support to help you reaffirm this decision.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Douglass, Director
Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

cc: Mr. Robert Healy, Project Manager, State Highway Administration
Mr. Malcolm Kerley, State Structure and Bridge Engineer, Virginia Department
Of Transportation
Mr. Renaldo T. Nicholson, Project Manager, Virginia Department of Transportation
Mr. John Gerner, Project Manager, Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Thomas Mohler, Consultant, URS
Mr. Parker F. Williams, Administrator, State Highway Administration



hell@wwbgec.com on 08/03/2001 06:29:42 AM

To: arch@pbworld.com
cc: gee_cf@vdot.state.va.us, kerley_mf@vdot.state.va.us, anday_ac@vdot.state.va.us,
arnold_lb@vdot.state.va.us, jzito@rkkengineers.com, khughes@rkkengineers.com,
Tom_Mohler@urscorp.com, nicholson_rf@vdot.state.va.us, mccormickg@wwbgec.com,
barkleyb@wwbgec.com, SunleyJ@wwbgec.com, harrism@wwbgec.com
Subject: Virginia Noise Barrier Issues - Safety Concerns

Lieutenant Tom Martin (Virginia State Police),

Thank you for the time you spent with me on August 2, 2001 discussing potential safety concerns associated with the proposed noise barrier on the north side of the proposed Beltway east of Washington Street. Specifically, concerns associated with potential pedestrian/bicycle users in the event an incident may occur on the path. To recall, the ten (10) foot wide pedestrian/bicycle path will be located at grade with the proposed Woodrow Wilson Bridge over the Potomac River; however, shortly west of the bridge abutment at South Royal Street, the path diverges from the mainline grade and climbs to meet with the Urban Deck at Washington Street. This grade transition is such that the path will not be visible from the mainline for approximately 750 feet but emergency vehicular access will be available from Washington Street.

As we discussed, the future traffic will generate noise that will effect the local residents within the Yates Garden Community and around the St. Mary's School north of the mainline. To protect these individuals, a noise barrier is proposed along the mainline from the Urban Deck easterly to the bridge abutment at South Royal Street. The barrier is planned along the southern edge of the path and is envisioned to protect the user from the traffic as well as benefit the adjacent properties from noise impacts. As you indicated, since the path is diverging from the mainline and climbing to the Urban Deck the location of the barrier is appropriate as proposed since, during a response, the path will not be accessible from the mainline. This location is also acceptable because in the case of an incident the users call or scream can be heard by those within the community and be seen by the community. I also appreciated your comments on the need for some sort of emergency call box or safety camera installation to further discourage incidents and provide the user the ability to contact the local authorities. For security, you also indicated that a lighting system should be installed to insure that the area is secure during the night. I look forward to further discussion on these issues in the future, especially with the local jurisdictions.

We also discussed the possible extension of the noise barrier and increase in the bridge parapet wall further east. I noted that because of noise impacts on the local community, the barrier could be extended further east, approximately 1000 feet, and the bridge parapet wall could be changed to a solid 5 foot height and extent another 300 foot to the east. As you indicated, an extension of the noise barrier this additional length caused you concern since this distance would further isolate users from the line of sight of those traveling on the bridge. Although the current 750 foot barrier caused you some concern, the additional length of barrier significantly increased those concerns and from a safety perspective you discouraged this extension. However, should an extension be required, you recommended that the barrier be place on the north side of the path so that the users would be visible by vehicles traveling on the bridge. Additionally you stressed the need for security measure along the path, call boxes, cameras, etc. to discourage incidents.

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P.18/18

As you know this issue is a complex and the Project appreciates your information, albeit based on a limited review of the data. I will pass this information on to assist others in assessing this issue. As I noted, I expect that another meeting with safety personnel from the local jurisdiction will occur to review your suggestions and discuss this issue further.

Please contact me at your convenience to clarify any information I presented herein.

Thanks Again for your time.

Thomas Heil
Environmental Manager

(703) 519-9664



Woodrow
Wilson
Bridge
Project

RECEIVED
FEB 4 12002

Respecting Neighborhoods
Top 10 Good Neighbor Practices
During Bridge Foundation Construction
Spring 2001-Winter 2002/3

1. **Keeping Jones Point Park Open for Recreation** -- In Jones Point Park, existing recreational facilities and public parking will remain open to the public during the duration of construction. Access to the lighthouse and event lawn, both south of the construction area which traverses the park, will remain open at all times. Existing lighting of parking lots, the lighthouse and other areas not required for construction also will be maintained.
2. **Smallest Possible Footprint** -- All bridge foundation construction activities in Jones Point Park will be confined to the approximate locations of the new and existing bridges. To protect residents and block the visual impact of construction, the perimeter of the construction area will feature a covered fence.
3. **Limited Hours of Construction** -- Active construction within Jones Point Park will be restricted to between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday and 9:00 am and 6:00 pm Saturday.
4. **Further Limited Pile Driving Hours** -- Pile Driving hours in Jones Point Park will be restricted to between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday and 10:00 am and 4:00 pm Saturday. Pile driving in the Potomac River is restricted to daylight hours only.
5. **Quieter, More Efficient Pile Driving Hammer** -- In Jones Point Park, hydraulic hammers will be used. Compared with other pile driving hammers, these hammers are somewhat quieter and more efficient, thus compressing the calendar duration of pile driving in the park.
6. **No Sunday or Holiday Work** -- No construction is allowed in Jones Point Park on Sundays and holidays.
7. **Avoiding City Streets** -- Keeping construction traffic off City streets as much as possible is a key priority. Maximum use of the Potomac River for delivery of materials, supplies and equipment will be encouraged. City streets are off limits to contractor parking and storage of equipment, materials or supplies.
8. **Designated Haul Routes** -- City streets other than Royal, Gibbon, Franklin and U.S. Route 1 are off limits for delivery of materials, supplies and equipment.
9. **Street Permit Restrictions** -- City permits are required on any City street when more than five truckloads are anticipated for any construction activity. City permits are also required for oversized and overweight vehicles.
10. **Avoiding St. Mary's and Lyles Crouch Schools** -- To avoid conflicts with student drop-offs and pick-ups at St. Mary's and Lyles Crouch Schools, no equipment or material deliveries will be allowed to pass the school between 7:45 am to 8:30 am and from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm weekdays when school is in session.



NOISE ABATEMENT PROCEDURE SUMMARY

- **Environmental Impact Statement**
 - Noise sensitive areas defined.
 - Future noise levels predicted and impact assessed.
 - Abatement measures analyzed and recommendations for further detailed analysis.

 - **Project Design**
 - Design Plans initiated

 - **Design Public Hearing**
 - Project is presented to the public.
 - Design plans are refined based on comments received.

 - **Detailed Noise Analysis**
 - Design plans incorporated into the FHWA Traffic Noise Model.
 - Noise sensitive areas recommended for further analysis analyzed.
 - Future noise levels predicted and impact assessed based on refined detail design.
 - Abatement measures analyzed.
 - Results presented to the VDOT Noise Abatement Committee.
 - Committee recommendation provided to VDOT Chief Engineer.
 - VDOT Chief Engineer makes final determination on noise abatement.
-
- **Community Meetings**
 - Recommended noise abatement measures are presented to impacted Communities /Property Owners.
 - Impacted Communities/Property Owners comment on noise abatement measure.
 - VDOT evaluates community comments.

 - **Evaluation of Undeveloped Lands**
 - The proposed land use development plan must have been approved by the local jurisdiction prior to the project alignment approval date by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

 - **Final Noise Report**
 - Include community input and undeveloped land evaluation.
 - Issue final noise report.
 - Complete final design of sound walls.



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA STATE NOISE ABATEMENT POLICY SUMMARY

NOISE IMPACT

- A. Noise impacts occur when the projected highway noise levels:
 - 1. Approach (reach one decibel less than) or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) contained in 23 CFR (i.e. noise levels equal or exceed the NAC), or
 - 2. Exceed existing noise levels by a substantial amount (10 decibels or more).
- B. Noise impacts beyond 1000 feet (305 meters) from the roadway will not be considered in determining the need for noise abatement

ABATEMENT CRITERIA

- A. A noise abatement measure will be considered cost effective if the cost of the measure per protected residential property does not exceed \$30,000. Each residential (dwelling) unit will be considered as a single residential property.
- B. The cost-effectiveness determination for non-residential properties will be handled on a case by case basis and will include, in addition to the abatement cost, the type and duration of the activity taking place, the size of the affected area, the severity of the impact, and the amount of noise reduction to be provided.
- C. To be protected, a property must be impacted and receive a minimum of 5 decibels of noise reduction.
- D. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.

THIRD PARTY FUNDING

When the cost of a noise abatement measure exceeds VDOT's cost-effectiveness, VDOT will allow third party funding for completion of the project.

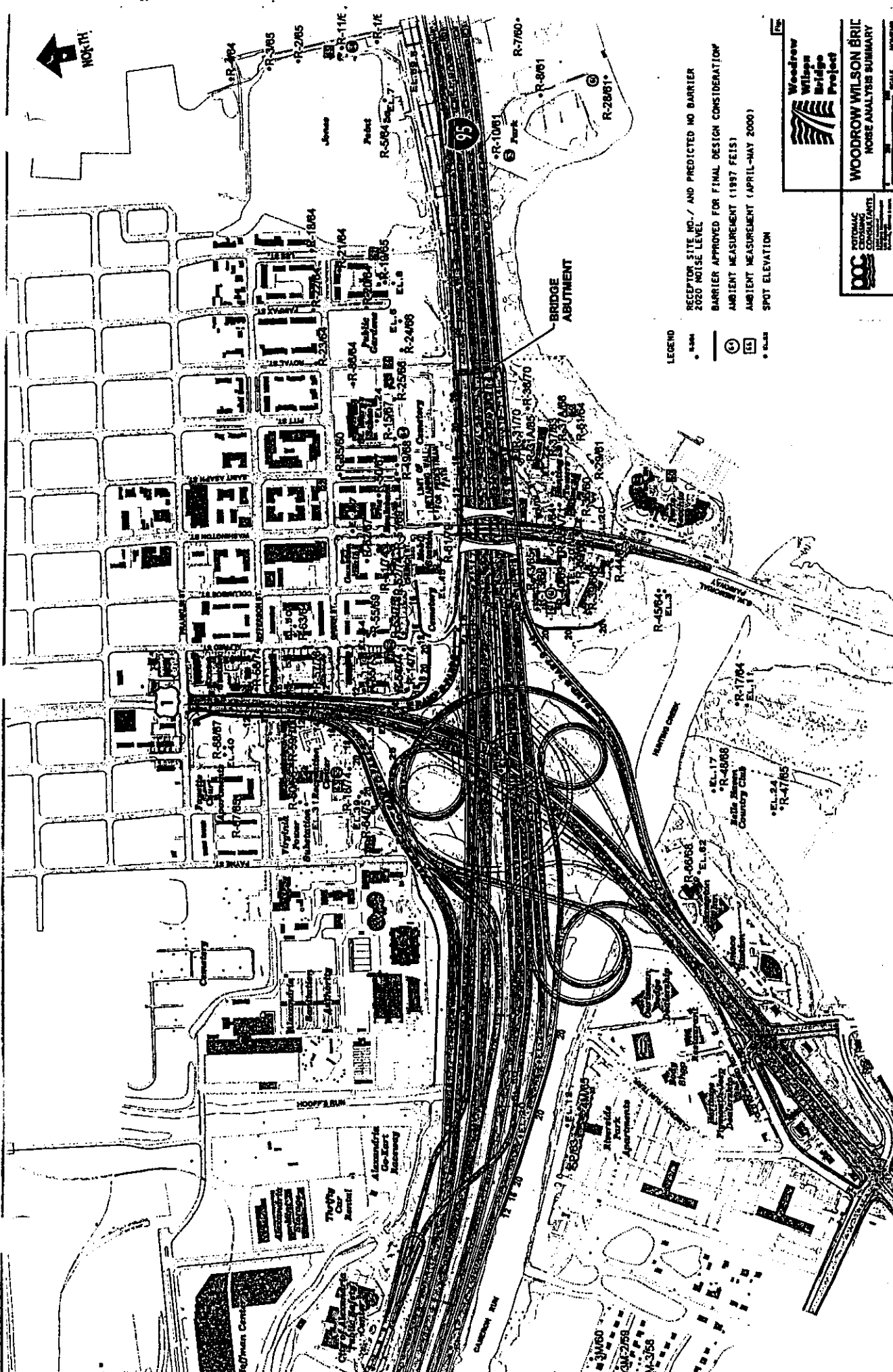
DECISION AUTHORITY

- A. The joint FHWA-VDOT Noise Abatement Committee will have the responsibility for assembling all relevant information and developing noise abatement related recommendations
- B. The Chief Engineer, on behalf of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, will make the final determination on all noise abatement related issues.

COMMON INDOOR AND OUTDOOR NOISE LEVELS

Common Outdoor Noise Levels	Noise Level dBA	Common Indoor Noise Levels
	110	Rock Band
Jet Flyover at 1,000 ft.	100	Inside Subway Train (NY)
Gas Lawn Mower at 3 feet		
Diesel Truck at 50 feet	90	Food Blender at 3 feet
Noisy Urban Daytime	80	Garbage Disposal at 3' Shouting at 3 feet
Gas Lawn Mower at 100'	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 10'
Commercial Area		Normal Speech at 3'
	60	
		Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Small Theater, Large Conference Room (Background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime		Library
	30	
Quiet Rural Nighttime		Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (Background)
	20	
		Broadcast & Recording Studio
	10	Threshold of Hearing
	0	

Adapted from Guide on Evaluation and Attenuation of Traffic Noise, AASHTO-1974.



RECEPTOR SITE NO./ AND PREDICTED NO BARRIER
 2020 NOISE LEVEL
 BARRIER APPROVED FOR FINAL DESIGN CONSIDERATION
 AMBIENT MEASUREMENT (1997 FEIS)
 AMBIENT MEASUREMENT (APRIL-MAY 2000)
 SPOT ELEVATION

WOODROW WILSON BRIC
 NOISE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

WOODROW WILSON BRIC
 WILSON
 BRIDGE
 PROJECT

DDC
 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

*VOID
 Final differs
 n. side from Rte 1 to S. Wash.*

DRAFT

POSITION ON TRAFFIC NOISE ABATEMENT

RELATIVE TO THE WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE PROJECT

I. GENERAL

- A. All impacted dwellings, defined as dwelling units that are predicted to have Year 2020 exterior noise loudness equivalent (LEQ) of 66 dBA or greater, are entitled to noise abatement benefit of 5 dBA insertion loss or greater.
- B. The predicted LEQ noise shall be based on the most severe noise in a typical 24 hour period in the forecast year, taking into account traffic volume, percentage of heavy trucks, and highway operating speed.
- C. If a block of contiguous townhouses or apartments has exterior noise exceeding the threshold value (66 dBA) at any point on the periphery of the block, the entire block shall be considered to be impacted.
- D. Any dwelling where the exterior noise exceeds the 66 dBA threshold and where it is not practical or possible to achieve a 5 dBA insertion loss (e.g., the upper levels of a high rise apartment building), shall be considered to be a candidate for in-structure noise abatement if the interior noise LEQ is predicted to be 51 dBA or greater.

II. NOISE MITIGATION EAST OF SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET

- A. Predicted noise emanating from traffic on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge substantially exceeds the exterior threshold noise value at several critical locations east of South Washington Street. At many of these locations, it is neither feasible nor economical to reduce this noise to acceptable levels by the use of ground-mounted barriers.
- B. A noise wall superimposed on the bridge parapet wall has the potential to effectively mitigate traffic noise in the impacted areas, provided that the geometry, height and length of the barrier is adequate.
- C. A variable height noise barrier on the bridge, whether smoothly tapered or stepped, will decline in height relative to the roadway but, because of the gradient of the roadway, will rise at a lesser rate than the top of the roadway parapet.
- D. The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project, dated April 14, 2000, recognizes the need for

noise abatement and the potential for construction of walls on the bridge (See Figure 4-15 and Table 4-25; attached) extending from the South Royal Street abutment past the river bank on both the north and the south parapets. The City staff supports the implementation of such walls, but does not believe that 12 foot walls extending more than 2000 feet, as cited in Table 4-25, are necessary to accomplish the requisite noise abatement.

III. REASONS THAT HAVE BEEN CITED BY THOSE OPPOSED TO A NOISE BARRIER ON THE BRIDGE

- A. AESTHETICS - A noise wall on the bridge would detract from the signature design of the structure and negatively affect its esthetic appeal.** City staff believes a tapered noise wall would be visually unobtrusive because of screening by tall trees in Jones Point Park. Only from the air would the wall be visible and, in this case, the wall would not stand out visually from the expanse of bridge deck.
- B. SAFETY - A noise wall above the 42 inch parapet between the roadway and the walkway/bikeway would obstruct the view of the walkway and increase the risk of assaults and similar crimes on the walkway.** City staff recognizes that the safety and security of pedestrians and cyclists on the bridge may become a significant issue. However, staff rejects the proposition that security would be substantially enhanced by having the walkway visible from the traffic lanes. Motorists passing at approximately 60 mph would not be particularly aware nor have an unobstructed view of activity occurring on the walkway. Proactive measures, such as call boxes and closed circuit television surveillance will be necessary if security becomes a problem.
- C. TUNNEL EFFECT - Close vertical walls adjacent to traffic lanes cause drivers to decelerate, shift their position within the lane and otherwise interrupt the smooth flow of traffic.** City staff does not believe that the tunnel effect would be significant in this particular case. The vertical wall would be removed from the right-most through traffic lane by the width of the auxiliary lane and shoulder. Moreover, the tapered wall would not result in an abrupt driver reaction, as might occur at the bridge abutment if there is no wall on the bridge.
- D. MAINTENANCE - A noise wall on the bridge would increase maintenance costs and interfere with snow removal.** The shoulders on the new bridges provide greater snow storage than is available on the existing bridge. Maintenance work space will be essentially the same on the bridges as on the approach roadways. On occasion, the walkway might be used to support maintenance operations across the parapet but this would be an exception, rather than a common occurrence.



WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE PROJECT
 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact
 Statement / Section 4(f) Evaluation

Current Design Alternative 4A
Potential Noise Barrier Locations

Date: April, 2000
 Figure: 4-15

Legend

- XM Noise Measurement Sites (1997 FEIS)
- XP Noise Prediction Sites (1997 FEIS)
- ▲ 101M Noise Measurement Sites (1999)
- ▲ 104P Noise Prediction Site (1999)
- Existing Noise Barrier
- Potential Noise Barrier
- o-o-o-o-o Reconstructed Noise Barrier
- Alternative 4A, Alignment

Basemap Source: U.S.G.S. - Alexandria, VA-DC-MD, 1994
 - Anacostia, DC-MD, 1979



Table 4-21: Project Noise Levels

Site * Number	State	Land Use **	Location Description	Loudest-Hour Leq (dBA), and Distance to Nearest Edge I-95/495			
				1997 FEIS Existing		Current Design Alternative 4A	
				Leq	Distance (meters (feet))	Leq	Distance (meters (feet))
1M	Virginia	H	Holiday Inn	71	70.0 (200)	70	54.9 (180)
2M	Virginia	PK	Huntington Park	66	195.1 (640)	68	195.1 (640)
3M	Virginia	MF	Mount Vernon Dr./Arlington Terr.	58	265.2 (870)	66	225.6 (740)
4M	Virginia	MF	Riverside Apartments, Bldg. 3	73	143.3 (470)	69	73.2 (240)
5M	Virginia	H	Howard Johnson's Hotel	65	323.1 (1,060)	69	265.2 (870)
6M	Virginia	PK	Robert E. Lee Rec. Center	69	210.3 (690)	74	204.2 (670)
7M	Virginia	PK	Belle Haven CC, 15 th Green	61	423.7 (1,390)	65	365.8 (1,200)
8M	Virginia	MF	Church Street (Townhouses)	70	106.7 (350)	73	103.6 (340)
9M	Virginia	MF	Hunting Terrace Apts, Bldg. F	66	91.4 (300)	78	24.4 (80)
10M	Virginia	MF	Hunting Terrace Apts, Bldg. D	76	12.2 (40)	Displaced	
10P	Virginia	PP	Deck-Over (West End)	n/a		67	(300)
11P	Virginia	MF	Porto Vecchio South Balcony	54	393.2 (1,290)	65	323.1 (1,060)
12M	Virginia	MF	Porto Vecchio Northeast Lawn	62	280.4 (920)	65	213.4 (700)
13M	Virginia	MF	Hunting Towers Center Bldg.	71	76.2 (250)	80	12.2 (40)
14P	Virginia	MF	Hunting Towers Pool	64	(550)	69	103.6 (340)
15M	Virginia	S	Saint Mary's School, playground	71	106.7 (350)	70	106.7 (350)
16M	Virginia	MF	Hunting Towers Apts, Bldg 1200	78	33.5 (110)	Displaced	
17P	Virginia	MF	Fairfax Street/Lee Street	71	100.6 (330)	68	109.7 (360)
18M	Virginia	PK	Jones Point Park, soccer field	71	79.2 (260)	62	3.1 (10)
19M	Virginia	PK	Jones Point Park, Lighthouse	66	304.8 (1,000)	65	219.5 (720)
20M	Virginia	PK	Jones Point Park, Fishing Wall	70	94.5 (310)	67	143.3 (470)
21M	Maryland	PP	Future Queen Anne's Park (Potomac River Waterfront Community Park)	68	91.4 (300)	75	42.7 (140)
22M	Maryland	PP	Oxon Cove (Heritage Trail)	76	21.3 (70)	70	15.2 (50)
23M	Maryland	SF	Mel Mara Drive (cul-de-sac)	56	579.1 (1,900)	65	542.5 (1,780)
24M	Maryland	PK	Betty Blume Park	56	600.5 (1,970)	55	573.0 (1,880)
25P ¹	Maryland	PR	Proposed National Harbor Condos	71	121.8 (400)	Not Applicable	
26M	Maryland	PK	Oxon Hill Manor, Historic Site	58	478.5 (1,570)	58	481.6 (1,580)
27M	Maryland	PK	Oxon Hill Farm, Wildlife Area	62	112.8 (370)	67	85.3 (280)
28M	Maryland	PK	Oxon Hill Farm, Welby Building	56	378.0 (1,240)	63	344.4 (1,130)
29M	Maryland	S	Flintstone Elementary School, playground	65	109.7 (360)	68	125.0 (410)
30P	Maryland	MF	Comanche Drive/Quade Street	69	64.0 (210)	69	73.2 (240)
31M	Virginia	MF	Huntington Club Tennis Court	63	353.6 (1,160)	68	344.4 (1,130)
34P ²	Virginia	SF	Cambell Road (Houses)	70	64.0 (210)	Not Applicable	
35P	Virginia	SF	Elmwood Drive/Burgundy Road	65	248.4 (815)	69	237.7 (780)
36P	Virginia	MF	Hunting Terrace Apts, Bldg. H	63	118.9 (390)	69	112.8 (370)
100M ³	Virginia	SF	South Quaker Lane (houses)	61	36.6 (120)	65 ⁴	73.2 (240)
101M ³	Virginia	SF/PK	Linnean Street (houses)/Burgundy Park	47	82.3 (270)	65 ⁴	76.2 (250)
102M ³	Virginia	SF	Leisure Court (houses)	59	76.2 (250)	63 ⁴	42.7 (140)
103M ³	Maryland	SF	Galloway Drive (houses)	61	38.1 (125)	63 ⁴	30.5 (100)
104P ³	Maryland	C	Forest Heights Baptist Church	67	76.2 (250)	75	70.0 (200)

Notes: * M ⇒ Measured & Predicted Site P ⇒ Predicted Only

** Land Use: H – Hotel; MF – Apartments, Townhouses or Duplexes; PK – Park; PP – Proposed Park
PR – Proposed Residential; S – School; SF – Single Family Residence; C – Church

1. Noise receptors are no longer required due to National Harbor Development revisions
2. Predicted Site 34P has been replaced with measured site 100M.
3. Existing and predicted noise levels not included in the 1997 FEIS, ambient measurement shown.
4. Predicted noise levels based on 5.5-meter (18-foot) replacement barriers in place.



Kerry J. Donley
Mayor

February 8, 2002

(703) 838-4500
Fax (703) 838-6433

The Honorable Whittington W. Clement
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Virginia
1401 East Broad Street, Room 414
Richmond, Virginia 23219

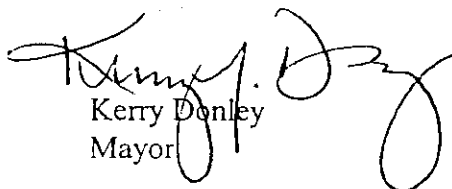
Dear Secretary Clement:

I thank you for meeting with Bill Euille, Phil Sunderland, City staff and myself. As you know, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project has significant impacts on the City of Alexandria. As we discussed, measures to mitigate the post-construction noise impacts, especially those around Yates Gardens and St. Mary's Catholic School, are still unresolved despite the best efforts of City and Project staff.

For the reasons outlined during our meeting, the City respectfully requests your reconsideration of the placement of a noise barrier along a portion of the north side of the proposed bridge as it runs through Jones Point Park (please see enclosed map). In addition, the City requests your consideration of a VDOT-funded community enhancement program for in-home improvements (e.g., multi-pane windows and/or sound insulation) for the affected residences in the Yates Garden community (outlined on the enclosed map). Virginia and Federal Highway Administration noise abatement criteria would guide the determination of eligibility for this program, which could be administered by the City.

Again, I thank you for your time and that of Pierce Homer. I wish you every success in your new endeavor. If you should need additional information, please call me or Richard Baier, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services (703-838-4966).

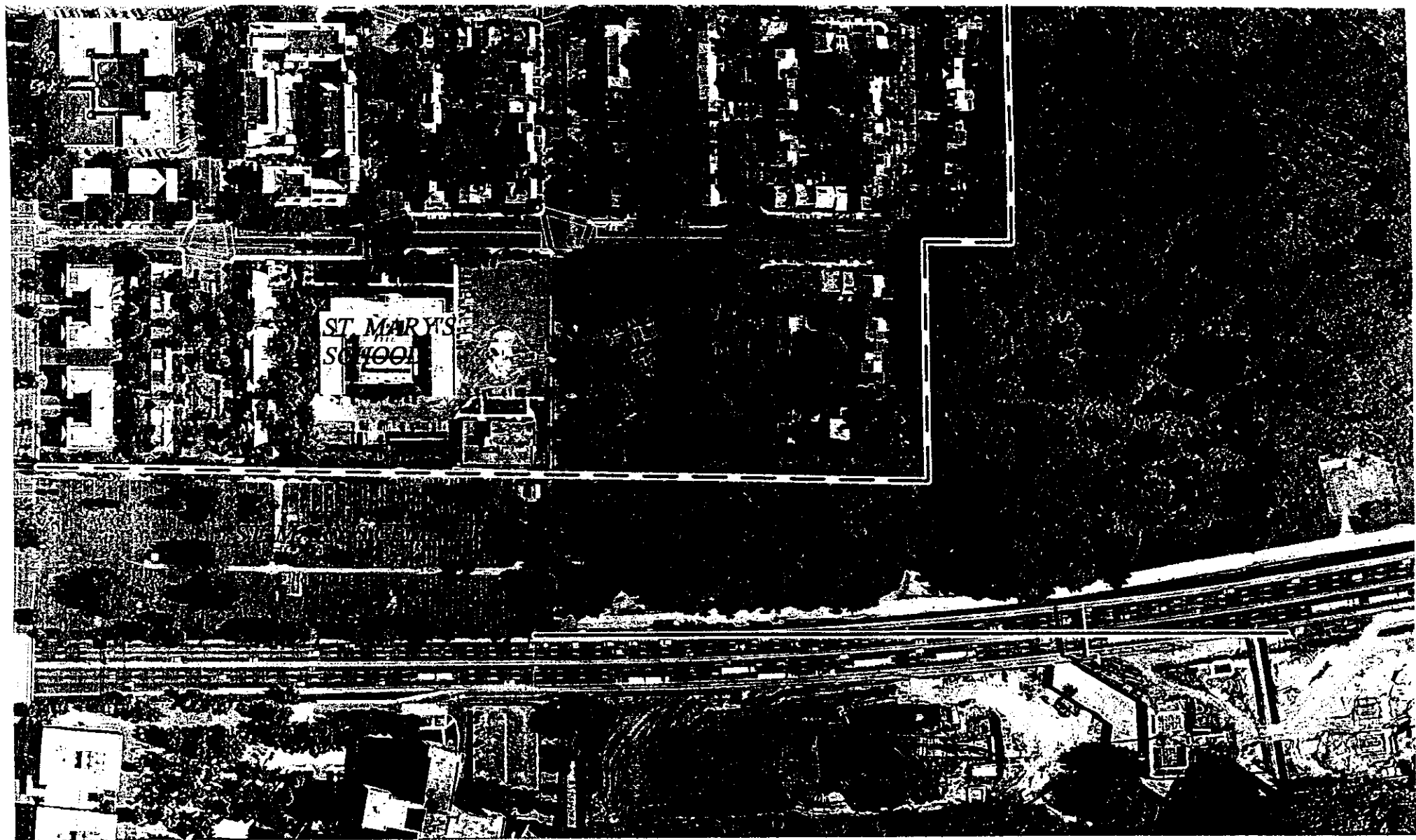
Sincerely,


Kerry Donley
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Pierce R. Homer
The Honorable William D. Euille
Philip Sunderland, City Manager
Richard Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"

Reed - Copy to WWB NTF members before wk session
City of Alexandria, Virginia R.
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
2/13/02



OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

Noise Impacted Area

Proposed Noise Barrier on W.W. Bridge

Yates Gardens Noise Sensitive Zone

