

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

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DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER ^S

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF INTERIM CLOSING OF SOUTH ROYAL AND SOUTH STREETS, FROM JONES POINT DRIVE TO SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a proposal to close South Royal Street from its intersection with Jones Point Drive to its intersection with South Street, and to close South Street (a private street with a public right-of-way easement) to through-traffic from South Royal Street to South Washington Street, until Council consideration of an application for the formal vacation of these rights-of-way.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Receive this report on the proposed closing of South Royal and South Streets, including a map showing the area affected by the proposed closing (Attachment 1), and schedule a public hearing on the proposed closing for Saturday, December 15; and
2. At the conclusion of the public hearing, approve the closing, to be effective on Saturday, December 29, and to continue until Council consideration of an application for the formal vacation of these South Royal Street and South Street rights-of-way, and authorize the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services to take such actions as are necessary for the orderly implementation of the closing.

The Traffic and Parking Board, at its November 26 meeting, voted 6 to 1 to support the proposed closing and recommended the City continue to examine the potential impacts (Attachment 3).

BACKGROUND: Originally, South Street was constructed as a private road providing access to the Hunting Towers apartment complex from both South Washington Street and South Royal Street. In the late 1950s, acquisition of right-of-way for the Capitol Beltway displaced the eastern portion of South Street, requiring that it be rebuilt on an alignment paralleling the Beltway and intersecting with South Royal Street just to the south of the Woodrow Wilson

Bridge. The existing alignment of South Street is limited by (1) a narrow right-of-way with a retaining wall on one side and parking garage on the other, (2) a 90 degree turn where it intersects with the pre-Beltway South Street construction, (3) on-street parking, and (4) severely restricted sight distance at the bridge abutment. In spite of its relatively poor geometrics, South Street has, over the years, attracted "cut through" traffic seeking access between Old Town and the Mount Vernon section of Fairfax County and thereby avoiding the congestion on South Washington Street.

Reconstruction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the associated widening of the Capitol Beltway requires acquisition of an additional 150 feet of land to the south of the existing Beltway. One of the three Hunting Towers apartment buildings and the two nearby office buildings and two parking structures will be demolished. Widening the Beltway will eliminate about sixty percent of the existing South Street, and will require the redesign of the entire area between the enlarged Beltway and remaining Hunting Towers buildings.

During the past year, the Woodrow Wilson Project Team, with input from City staff, has studied the feasibility, at the conclusion of the bridge project, of restoring South Street to a configuration that would allow it safely and efficiently to handle the growing volume of cut-through traffic that utilizes the street. The study led to the conclusion that, because of the widened Beltway, South Street would be too narrow to qualify as a public right-of-way or to safely accommodate a significant volume of through traffic, and thus needed to be closed to through traffic. The closing of South Street was originally planned to occur next Spring, which was based upon the timing of the demolition of the Hunting Towers and other buildings, and the relocation of many underground utilities.

However, as outlined in the attached November 13 memorandum to Council (Attachment 2), in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorists attacks, the Woodrow Wilson Project Team, based upon a security analysis conducted by the Bridge Team and reviewed by Department of Defense personnel, requested that the City approve the immediate closing of South Royal Street under the bridge, along with South Street, on an interim basis, until the Project could obtain the formal vacation of these public rights-of way. (The Project Team intends to initiate the formal vacation process, which will take approximately three months, early in 2002.)

DISCUSSION: To assess the impacts of the proposed closing of South Royal and South Streets, City staff have conducted a traffic study, undertaken an analysis of traffic impacts, met with representatives of St. Mary's School on several occasions, and docketed the proposed closing for the Traffic and Parking Board. Below is a summary of the results of staff's actions, and the reasons for and impacts of the proposed closing.

Current Traffic Conditions

1. Current weekday traffic on average is 3,500 vehicles on South Street and 3,830 vehicles on South Royal Street just south of Green Street.

Twenty-four hour, two-directional traffic counts were taken from 10:00 a.m. Tuesday to 10:00 a.m. Wednesday on November 13 and 14, 2001. These counts were taken at two locations on South Royal Street, one just south of Green Street and the other just south of Jones Point Drive. On these dates, St. Mary's School was in session, the bridge construction site was active and the City's remote parking facility had been moved from under the bridge to the Hunting Towers area. The counts showed a daily volume of approximately 3,500 vehicles using South Street and approximately 3,830 vehicles using South Royal Street south of Green Street.

2. The preponderance of traffic currently using South Royal and South Streets is southbound traffic, which reflects the southbound evening congestion (5-6 p.m.) on South Washington Street.

Southbound traffic peaked between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. with 700 vehicles south of Jones Point Drive. The northbound peak hour, between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m., was approximately 400 vehicles. The morning peak period (approximately three hours) was shorter in duration and included fewer total vehicles than the evening peak (approximately four hours).

3. The effect of St. Mary's School traffic could not be readily distinguished during the morning peak period in either direction, but is clearly evident in the afternoon off peak.

There is a mid-afternoon, two-directional traffic increase associated with the 3:00 p.m. dismissal of St. Mary's students. Cars arrive between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m., form a queue, and then pick-up children and depart between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m. The volume of traffic in the northbound direction along South and South Royal Streets between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. is 50 to 100 percent greater than the hourly average between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.. In the southbound direction, there is a less obvious early buildup to the evening peak period starting at 2:00 p.m. Although not specifically identified, the traffic counts support an estimate of 130 to 150 vehicles in the afternoon on South Washington Street south of South Street, which are destined for St. Mary's School, with about one-third of these using South Street. In the morning peak hours, approximately 70 to 90 vehicles are estimated to utilize South Street to access St. Mary's School.

Traffic Impacts

The closure of South Royal and South Streets to through-traffic will have the following traffic impacts:

1. Removal of through-traffic will improve conditions for residents of Hunting Towers, pedestrians and recreational users.

South Street is a narrow and constrained road on a private right-of-way running through the Hunting Towers apartment complex. There is substantial pedestrian traffic through the area, particularly during peak commuting hours when residents are walking between the apartment buildings and various parking areas. There is also a considerable movement of pedestrians, joggers and cyclists along this link in the Mount Vernon Trail.

2. Turning movements at the South Street intersection with South Washington Street will be reduced by 80 to 90 percent.

This will eliminate this intersection as a cause of traffic delay on South Washington Street. However, delays for both northbound and southbound traffic will continue to occur on South Washington Street at Green Street. In the morning peak hour, the additional right turning volume at Green Street is estimated to be approximately 90 vehicles.

3. In both the morning and evening peak periods, traffic volumes on South Royal Street will be lower.

Traffic volumes, and the associated pedestrian conflicts and traffic noise, will be reduced for several blocks on South Royal Street due to the closure.

4. Traffic will increase on the east-west streets east of South Washington Street between the Beltway and King Street.

An estimated 90 to 95 percent of the traffic that now uses South Street in the morning will likely use one of the east-west streets north of the Beltway to reach the most favorable north-south street for continuing the trip. Distribution of this traffic to the several alternative streets will vary by time of day and direction of travel. For example, Green Street will likely carry almost all of the former South Street traffic that is destined for St. Mary's School, and other traffic will avoid Green Street during the periods of heavy school traffic. Additionally, former South Street traffic will tend to avoid Franklin Street eastbound (in the morning) and Gibbon Street westbound (in the evening) because these streets are already heavily traveled due to their connection to Route 1.

Overall, staff estimates that former South Street traffic will be distributed as follows:

Green Street	25 percent
Jefferson Street	25 percent
Franklin Street	20 percent
Gibbon Street	20 percent
All other streets	10 percent

The redistribution of traffic to these streets is unlikely to adversely affect the Old Town urban grid system. Levels of service and vehicle delays are not likely to be noticeably changed. The effect on the Washington Street corridor will be small as the redistribution of traffic occurs on a corridor that already is constrained. Washington Street currently operates at a level of service "E" during rush hour.

5. Traffic associated with Saint Mary's School, during the morning peak and the afternoon dismissal, will be concentrated on Green Street.

South Street is used by vehicles traveling to and from St. Mary's. Based upon recent roadway counts and school provided data, approximately 90 such vehicles use South Street in the morning and approximately 70 - 90 use the street in the afternoon during the school pickup hour. These vehicles use South Street to travel to and from the school; they do not use it to queue prior to picking up students in the afternoon.

In the morning, the vast majority of the St. Mary's traffic that now uses South Street will travel north on South Washington to Green Street, and then head east on Green to drop off a child at the school entrance. In the afternoon, this former South Street traffic will head eastbound on Green Street to South Royal Street to join the pick-up queue that forms on South Royal Street and along Jones Point Drive. City staff have discussed procedures with St. Mary's School that, we believe, will allow for a more orderly morning drop-off of children, and the afternoon queuing of vehicles on South Royal and other streets. (A presentation of these procedures will be given during the hearing on December 15.) Six field reviews indicate that the morning and evening congestion on Green and South Royal are largely the result of parents stopping vehicles in the travel lanes to drop off children or to merge in the queue mid-stream. The proposed closing of South Royal Street will actually lessen the interference with the afternoon queue formation and associated turning movements on that street. (Further discussion on St. Mary's occurs below.)

6. The volume of traffic that is diverted from South Street will increase the volume of traffic traveling on South Washington Street in both the morning and evening.

The effect of this traffic will be most noticeable in the evening peak period when there is heavy southbound flow of traffic on South Washington Street. Southbound traffic on South Royal Street will seek to distribute itself among the east-west streets that lead to South Washington Street. Typically, this traffic tries to pick the street with the shortest queue at South Washington Street, avoiding Gibbon Street because of the heavy through movement to Route 1. During the morning peak, northbound traffic seeking an alternative to South Washington Street will tend to turn right on Jefferson, Gibbon and Wilkes Streets, avoiding Green Street because of the school traffic and Franklin Street because of relatively heavy traffic coming from Route 1. City traffic engineers are studying traffic signal timing refinements to facilitate the flow of traffic on South Washington Street, so that queues on cross streets will be shorter. By improving the traffic throughput on South Washington Street and reducing the green time allocated to side streets during the evening peak period, the side streets will achieve better utilization of green signal phases and overall delay will be reduced.

Security Impacts

1. The closing of South Royal Street will reduce somewhat the possibility of an attack that is staged from underneath the bridge and that would threaten the surrounding community.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project, in consultation with the Department of Defense, have identified areas of risk where they believe that a truck bomb or similar device could be driven in

a vehicle under the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and detonated, causing major damage to the bridge and to a key East Coast transportation corridor. The closing of the area under the bridge and in Jones Point Park, and the removal of parking under the bridge, has already been undertaken. The closing of South Royal Street under the bridge will complete the goal of securing the area under the bridge in Alexandria.

Impacts on St. Mary's School

St. Mary's School serves a community that includes Alexandria and an extensive area of Fairfax County. The school has experienced continuing growth in enrollment over several decades, with much of the growth coming from areas south of the City. Enrollment today is approximately 750 students, about 65 percent of whom live in the residential communities bounded by the Potomac River, Fort Belvoir, Route 1, and Alexandria. As the school enrollment has grown, problems of student access and traffic congestion have developed. In particular, a slowly moving queue of cars waiting to discharge students develops each morning on Green Street, and in mid-afternoon, cars queue up to wait for students to be dismissed from school. Both of these queues conflict with through-traffic and pose potential hazards that have been a concern to the school staff, the neighborhood and the City.

1. The closing of South Royal and South Streets will increase the number of cars that travel on Green Street each morning.

An estimated 65 percent (or about 90) of the cars from the south that deliver students to St. Mary's now use South Street to reach the school. When South Street is closed, these cars will stay on Washington Street to Green Street, and will increase the traffic traveling eastbound on Green Street toward the school. In their discussions with St. Mary's, City staff have proposed a way of handling the increased Green Street morning traffic resulting from the closure of South Street. Several of the staff's proposals expand the drop-off area and contain a procedure that should increase the rate at which cars can discharge their passengers and leave the queue. As described above, the present drop-off operation is not optimal. Under this strategy, all cars will approach the school with the drop-off area on their right side, minimizing left side drop-off and the number of children who need to walk across Green Street to access the school.

2. In the afternoon, queuing space for St. Mary's cars can be increased.

Approximately six weeks ago, afternoon queuing access for St. Mary's cars to Jones Point Drive became somewhat limited due to bridge-related construction activities. As a result, St. Mary's began to experience some parking and queue management problems. (These problems are not related to the closure of South Royal or South Street.) Staff have proposed to restore the prior queue configuration for St. Mary's and have presented alternate proposals which would have vehicles queue on both sides of South Royal Street, on Green Street, and along Jones Point Drive. These proposals will provide sufficient queuing spaces for the vehicles arriving at St. Mary's in the afternoon to pick up children. Under these proposals, cars leaving the St. Mary's

play area with students will be encouraged to proceed north on South Royal Street to Jefferson Street in order to avoid interference with the car queue. Since there will be no through-traffic on South Royal Street, it is expected that this afternoon queue will be safer and somewhat faster in that it allows parents to stop mid-street in a through lane to drop off the school children. This operation is not only putting students at risk in the middle of the street but also presently causes delays to advancing vehicles.

Traffic and Parking Board Action

On November 26, the Traffic and Parking Board considered the issue of closing South Royal Street under the bridge and South Street from South Washington Street to South Royal. The Board acknowledged the urgency of the closure, but urged staff to provide careful planning and specific measures to minimize the adverse effect of this action. Several speakers representing St. Mary's School were critical of the impacts that would accrue to the school and cited the need for more time to develop mitigating procedures. One representative of the Yates Gardens Civic Association supported the reduction in traffic on residential streets. The Board voted to support the proposed closing by a vote of 6 to 1 (Attachment 3).

Implementation of the Closing

If the proposed closing is approved, South Royal Street will be closed to traffic by erecting barriers beneath the parapet of the existing bridge. Provisions will be made for the passage of pedestrians, bicycles and emergency vehicles. The South Royal Street intersection with Jones Point Drive will remain open to continue to provide access to Jones Point Park. The closing of South Street to through-traffic will not, of course, prevent vehicles from continuing to access the parking lot behind the Hunting Towers complex from South Washington Street.

The requested effective date for the closing of South Royal Street and South Street is Saturday, December 29, 2001. This will allow for a two-week period during which South Street users will be notified, by variable message signs and public announcements, of the impending changes in traffic patterns. Concurrently, staff will work with St. Mary's School to assure the timely notification of parents and car pool drivers about changes in routing and the procedures for delivering and picking up students. One of our objectives is to work with St. Mary's School to distribute the revised instructions to St. Mary's parents before the beginning of the holiday break and to have the instructions in effect before the students return to school in January. In addition, civic associations will be asked to notify their membership so that occasional users and people who might be affected otherwise by the change in traffic patterns will be aware of the street closing.

FISCAL IMPACTS: The proposed elimination of through-traffic on South Street and the closing of South Royal Street south of Jones Point Drive will be treated as a routine activity of the traffic engineering and street maintenance divisions. No unusual or extraordinary costs are associated with this activity. Actual costs for barricades, signing and similar measures will be shared with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project.

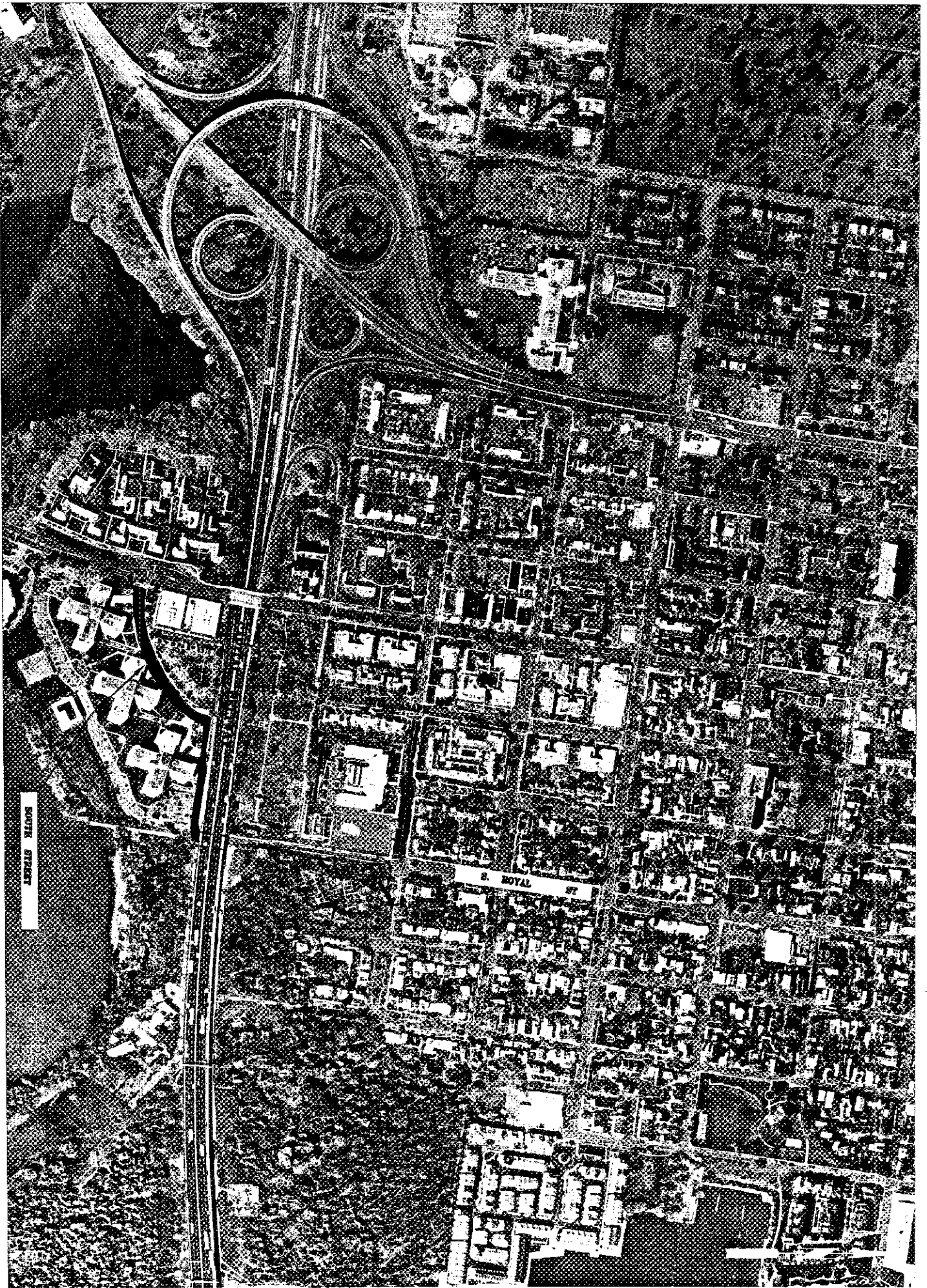
ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Memorandum to Council, November 13, 2001
3. Traffic and Parking Board Minutes, November 26, 2001

STAFF:

Richard J. Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Douglas McCobb, Deputy Director, Transportation and Transit
Emily Baker, City Engineer
Bob Garbacz, Division Chief, Transportation
Reed Winslow, WWB Project Coordinator

LOCATION MAP



City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

FROM: RICHARD J. BAIER, P.E., DIRECTOR
TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES *Baier*

SUBJECT: WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE SECURITY ISSUES

We want to update you on a number of matters affecting Jones Point Park, and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (WWB) Project's plans for the future of the park.

The events of September 11 have caused many changes in our lives and outlook. Over the past eight weeks, we have come to realize that public works structures may be vulnerable and that our country has hundreds of potential terrorist targets. The Woodrow Wilson Bridge has been identified as such a target by the WWB project team. The thinking about the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and its replacement has been transformed as radically as our nation's feelings of complacency and safety. Its destruction would have immediate disastrous effects on the economy of the metropolitan area and the entire eastern seaboard region.

To meet this threat, we are working with the WWB project team and their sponsors, first to increase the security of the existing bridge, and later, to rethink the design of the future bridge. After meetings that included the region's police and incident response representatives, as well as key people on the project staff and in the City's Police, Fire, General Services, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities and Transportation and Environmental Services Departments, and after consulting with Federal authorities, the project team announced a number of security measures to be implemented on an expedited schedule. The project requested that the City relocate the remote parking facility from beneath the bridge and that South Royal Street be closed to traffic where it passes under the bridge. The City agreed to this parking relocation. The remote parking site was moved to the Hunting Towers area and all permit holders were notified about the new location, which was effective Monday morning, November 5.

The City advised the project that, before South Royal Street could be immediately closed at the bridge, we would need to determine the amount of traffic which uses that portion of South Royal, and the impacts that would follow from the closing of the street, and we would need to provide

sufficient notice of the closing to the public. We requested that the project perform turning movement and hourly vehicle counts, but we eventually performed the counts ourselves to expedite the data collection.

I should note that, for several months prior to September 11, there was a discussion initiated by the project (and wholly unrelated to security) regarding the permanent closing of all of South Street and the portion of South Royal Street between the entrance to Jones Point Park and South Street (i.e., the portion of South Royal under the bridge). Working with the project, the City had determined that continuing through-traffic in this area was not consistent with the optimal reconfiguration of the Hunting Towers parking and access. The permanent closing of South Street and the portion of South Royal under the bridge was expected to occur around April 1, 2002, on a schedule that meshed with the plans to demolish buildings and to begin utility relocations along South Street. Also, the closing would follow the project pursuing the vacation process through the Planning Commission and City Council.

The immediate closure of South Royal Street under the bridge obviously will have some traffic impacts. Traffic counts undertaken on November 6 and 7 reveal about 200 vehicles (two-way traffic) per morning peak hour and about 700 vehicles (two-way traffic) in the evening peak hour travel on South Royal Street at the bridge. In reviewing these counts, roadway capacity and circulation patterns, we do not anticipate that the closure of South Royal under the bridge (and the natural re-routing of traffic to other streets) will cause measurable congestion and/or delay on other streets.

The closing will require parents who now travel to St. Mary's school from south of the City to avoid South Street, and to approach and depart from the school along Green Street. This may have cause a slight inconvenience to these parents. The Manager and I met with St. Mary's representatives today and discussed the rerouting of school traffic that has been caused by alternations to Jones Point Park Road (as well as construction and noise impacts). It is not anticipated that the closing of South Royal Street under the bridge will have any significant impacts on St. Mary's.

Staff will present an assessment of the impacts of the closing of South Royal under the bridge to the Traffic and Parking Board on November 26. We will present the matter to you at the public hearing on December 17. Any decision to now close South Royal under the bridge will be preceded by press releases and public notices to residents and businesses. Variable message signs also will be used to alert drivers that South Royal will be closed under the bridge starting on a specific date. The City has insisted to the project that a deliberate, carefully developed closure is needed to avoid unnecessary traffic confusion and hazards.

Meanwhile, the WWB Project, with the assistance of the Department of Defense, is undertaking a threat assessment which will guide future decisions affecting the use of the area beneath both the existing and the proposed Woodrow Wilson Bridges, as well as the future development of Jones Point Park. Construction of the interim soccer fields, to the north of the current bridge, which

was planned for the spring of 2002, has been deferred. An interim parking lot located near the soon to be demolished Seaport Foundation building will be built by May. Remote parking will be shifted to this lot so that demolition can proceed in the Hunting Towers area. The existing soccer fields, south of the bridge, will be retained with minor adjustments to avoid interference with the new bridge construction until a decision is reached regarding the construction of the interim fields.

The design of improvements for Jones Point Park is now at the 65% complete stage. Work on these plans has been suspended until the results of the threat assessment are available, probably in six months to a year. The extent of the changes that will be necessary is unknown at this time. The current plans have major improvements under the bridge, including a relocated Jones Point Drive, new parking, a restroom and park maintenance building, ball courts and a recycling station. It is possible that all or many of these elements of the overall park development plan will need to be relocated, depending on the findings of the threat assessment.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please give me a call ((703) 838-4966).

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Gonzales made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Burns to approve the staff recommendation. The Board voted unanimously to approve the staff recommendation.

8. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Request for a "No Parking" sign at the parking space between the driveways at 3121 Colvin Street and 3127 Colvin Street.

BACKGROUND: There is one parking space between these two driveways and large trucks making deliveries cannot back into the driveways to load or unload.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the request.

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Ty Akbasli spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Laychus made a motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson to approve the request. The Board voted unanimously to approve the request.

9. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Request for installing "No U Turn" signs going east and west on West Braddock Road at the junction to both lower and upper parking lots at Minnie Howard School 3801 West Braddock Road. This is a request from the Principal at Minnie Howard School.

BACKGROUND: Many vehicles are making u-turns at these two sites.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the request.

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Laychus to approve the staff recommendation. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

10. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Request for a traffic signal at the intersection of North Patrick Street and Oronoco Street.

BACKGROUND: The warrants for the installation of a traffic signal are satisfied in accordance to the Manual on Uniform Code Traffic Control Devices. The Inner City Civic Association requested a traffic signal at this intersection.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the request be approved.

BOARD ACTION: Lee Roy Steele, Cammille Leverett, David McCreedy, Jesse Jennings, Paul Loeser and Marcia Feldman spoke in favor of the request. Kevin DeBell spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Laychus to approve the request based on environmental issues, i.e., noise and air quality. The Board voted 5-2 to approve the request. Mr. Ruggiero and Ms. Burns voted no.

11. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Request to close South Royal Street and South Street to through traffic from Jones Point Drive to South Street. South Street will remain open as a private access road for the Hunting Towers Complex.

BACKGROUND: This is necessary due to the construction of the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Access to all of the Hunting Towers parking lots will be maintained.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the request be approved.

BOARD ACTION: Gene McCormick, Renaldo "Nick" Nicholson and Theresa Miller spoke in favor of the request. Christopher Bahret, Jay Siegfried, Dan Haas, James McAndrews, Thomas Fadoul, Jr., Terri Belleher, Jessica LeFerve, David Patalita and Roger Furey spoke opposed to the request. Mr. Ruggiero made a motion, seconded by Laychus to approve the staff recommendation. The Board voted 6-1 to approve the motion to recommend that City Council consider the request. Ms. Burns voted no.

12. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Request to designate Jamieson Avenue instead of Ballenger Avenue as the permit parking zone in the vicinity of the Federal Courthouse that was established for jurors and witnesses.

BACKGROUND: Several months ago the Board approved Ballenger Avenue as the permit parking zone for jurors and witnesses. In November Ballenger Avenue will be closed for the construction of the Patent and Trademark Office Building. Jamieson Avenue will be used for parking during the construction of the PTO.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the request be approved.

BOARD ACTION: Betsy Paret spoke in favor of the request. Alan Rudd, Bill Harvey, Allen Kamerow, Motron Cohen, Joan McAllister, Coy Harris, Sam Biggs, Martin Baskin, Joni Stutman, Sara Harris and Sal Gambone spoke in opposition of the request. Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson to defer this request and for staff to review a change in the location from Jamieson Avenue to Mill Road for juror and witness parking. The Board voted unanimously to defer the request.

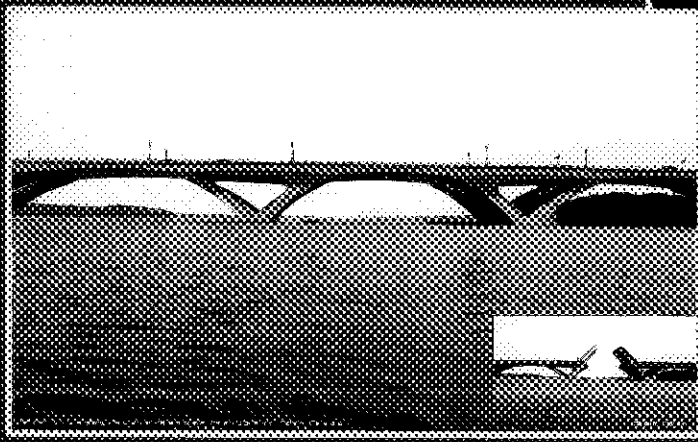
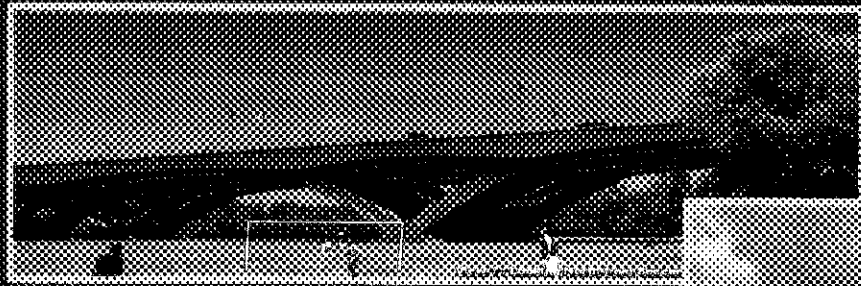
13. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Request to remove five parking spaces on the north side of Braddock Road at Commonwealth Avenue and to remove six parking spaces on the south side of Braddock Road at Commonwealth Avenue.

BACKGROUND: This will create two westbound lanes on Braddock Road as you approach the traffic signal on Commonwealth Avenue. The right lane will be right turn only and the left lane will be through and left. Two approach lanes will improve the capacity and safety at this intersection.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the request be approved.

BOARD ACTION: Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Laychus to approve the staff recommendation. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

South Street/South Royal Street December 15, 2001



Reasons for the Closing

Security

Construction/ Demolition

Location of the New Bridge

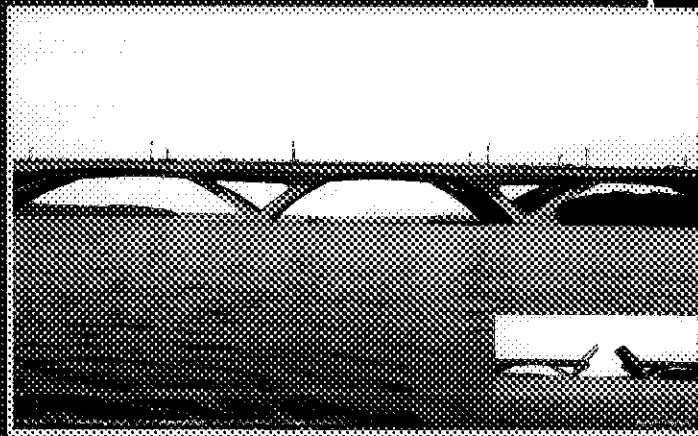


South Street/South Royal Street December 15, 2001



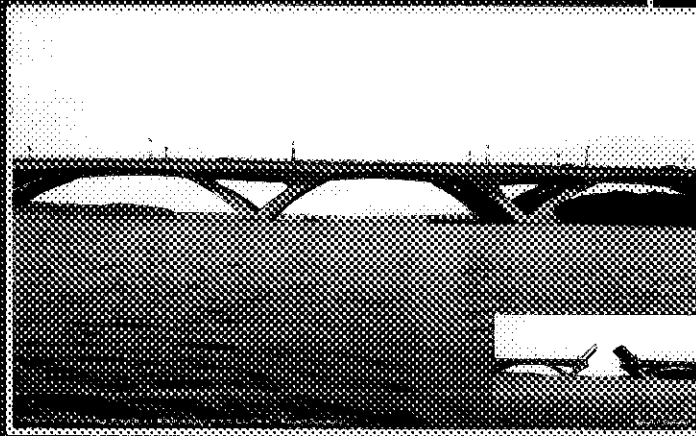
Transportation & Environmental Services

South Street/South Royal Street December 15, 2001



Transportation & Environmental Services

South Street/South Royal Street December 15, 2001



Transportation & Environmental Services



Transportation & Environmental Services

Reasons for the Closing

Security

Construction/ Demolition

Location of the New Bridge



Security

The Federal Highway Administration identified the bridge as a potential terrorist target.

The Department of Defense is performing the threat assessment (due in Spring 2002).

Immediate closing of South Royal Street will secure the area under the bridge.



Construction/Demolition

Demolition of one Hunting Tower building
and other structures

Utility relocation

Construction of new bridge



Demolition Sites



– Demolition Site



Location of New Bridge

60% South Street removed (requiring resolution of parking access to Hunting Towers.)

Eliminates possibility for safe through traffic connection to South Royal Street.



Impacts of the Closing

Neighborhood Traffic

St. Mary's School



Neighborhood Traffic Impacts

Lower traffic volumes on South Royal Street

Current South Street traffic is 3500 vehicles per day.

- 400 vehicles in the AM Peak hour
- 700 vehicles in the PM Peak hour

Projected redistribution of South Street traffic:

	Totals	Current AM Peak	Current PM Peak	Projected AM Peak	Projected PM Peak
Green Street	2600	350	250	400	400
Jefferson Street	2400	170	230	250	380
Franklin Street	4700	450	170	520	370
Gibbon Street	3100	145	390	300	520



St. Mary's School Impacts

65% of St. Mary's students arrive from the South.
Number of vehicles using South Street to get St. Mary's:

- 70 to 90 in the A.M. peak hour
- 130 to 150 in the P.M. peak hour

Closing South Street will divert A.M. vehicles to Green Street (eastbound), and the P.M. queue on South Royal Street at pick-up time remains constant.



Recommended Actions

Re-time the traffic signals on South Washington Street.

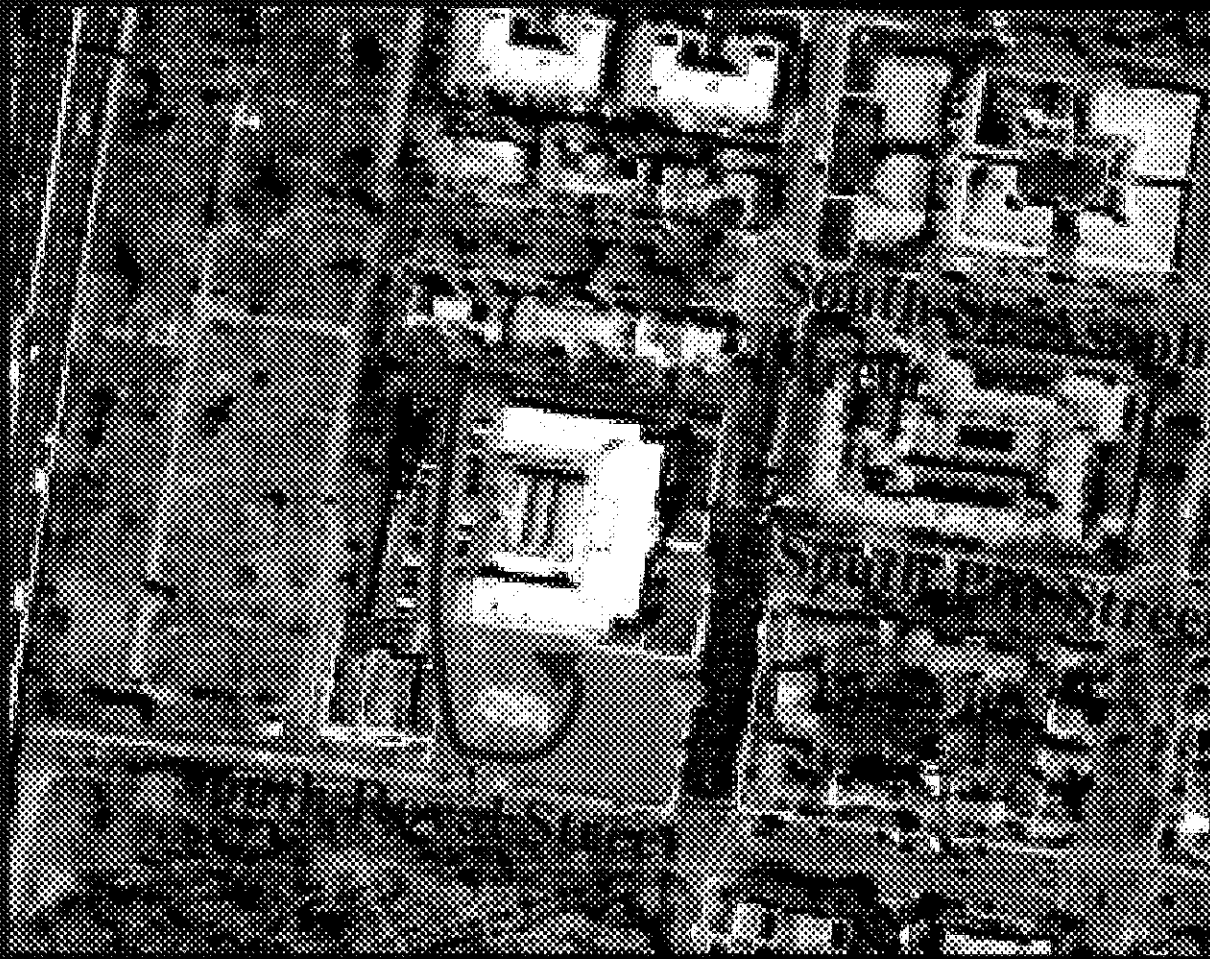
Continue working with St. Mary's School to:

- Expand the A.M. drop-off area at St. Mary's and limit drop-off to the school side of Green Street (eliminate drop-off across Green Street).
- Explore, if needed, additional parking options on Green and Royal Streets.
- Improve Process for drop-off/pick-up.

Monitor traffic conditions to assess the need for any traffic/pedestrian enhancements.



City Proposal for P.M. Drop off at St. Mary's School



Process

Traffic and Parking Board approval – November 26

City Council approval – December 15

Placement of variable message boards on South Royal and South Streets – December 17 – December 29

City Notification to civic associations and affected neighborhoods and press – December 18

St. Mary's notification to parents – December 18

Street closure – December 29

VDOT request to City to administratively relinquish public access easement on South Street – early 2002



Future Project Actions

Primary haul route for demolition and next bridge contract to utilize Washington Street to South Street for direct access to site.

Future plans for Jones Point Park on hold pending Department of Defense threat assessment study.



sent to cc

COPY

LAW OFFICES OF

FADOU & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

12/15/01 PH

SUITE 1555

1650 Tysons Boulevard

McLEAN, VIRGINIA 22102

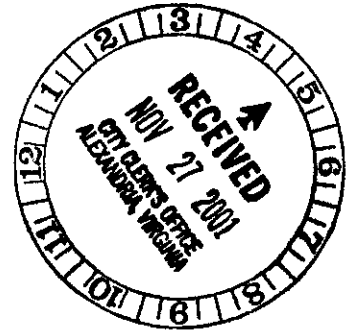
Phone (703) 226-2700

FACSIMILE (703) 226-2701

November 16, 2001

10
12-15-01**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

Mr. Philip Sunderland, City Manager
 City of Alexandria
 301 King Street/3500
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**Re: Effect of Closure of South Royal Street on St. Mary's School**

Dear Mr. Sunderland:

Further to our letter dated November 1, 2001 and our meeting of November 13, 2001 concerning the above referenced matter, this letter is to reiterate that the closure of South Royal (at the juncture of South Street and Jones Point Drive) will exacerbate the damages caused by the construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge by crippling St. Mary's ability to maintain a carpool line for the drop off and pick up of the 700-plus students enrolled at the school. This is contrary to the comments made by Reed Winslow at last night's Task Force Meeting that, "St. Mary's seems to be happy with the closure of South Street". Nothing could be further from the truth.¹

Over one half of St. Mary's students arrive at the school from the south, utilizing the George Washington Memorial Parkway, to South Street and then to Royal Street. Due to the designation of Royal Street as the principal artery for construction vehicles, the impending closure of South Street further creates safety and traffic concerns for the school.

During the meeting called by the City of Alexandria on November 12, 2001 and attended by Reed Winslow, Douglas McCobb, Sergeant Paul Story, Principal Kathleen Dolan, parents of St. Mary's students, and legal counsel, it was made abundantly clear that upon the street closure, no other viable routes will

¹ Also at last night's meeting, with regard to the proposed ground mounted barrier around St. Mary's School, it was suggested by Nick Nicholson of VDOT that a letter was sent to this office addressing our many claims and concerns. No such letter has been received to date, nor will any such proposed barrier be sufficient to eliminate the exterior environmental pollution, to which nationally renowned experts will testify.

accommodate the volume of vehicles in the carpool line (approximately 130 cars each morning and afternoon) without causing severe traffic backups on other city streets and/or significantly inconveniencing parents by more than doubling the time it would take to complete the drop off and pick up of the school's students.² Sergeant Story confirmed this by his recommendation that only buses would solve St. Mary's problem. Additionally, all possible alternative carpool configurations were recently revisited in September of 2001 when Officer Robinson proposed a route which called for the opening of a barrier on Lee Street to allow carpool vehicles to travel along Lee Street and then turn right onto Jones Point Drive to enter the carpool queue. However, the residents of the neighborhood were vociferously against this plan.

Since there are no alternative carpool configurations to accommodate the school's needs, the only solution to the street closure and ensuing traffic problems created by the construction of the Bridge is for the City of Alexandria and/or the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project provide buses to transport the students to and from school. Such a scheme would require approximately six buses to transport students from at least two designated "meeting points." Additionally, a security officer and/or supervisor would be required to ensure the safety of all children as they wait for their parents.

Given the consensus reached at the November 12 meeting and the strong statements by Mayor Kerry Donley in the *Washington Post* that,

"the city would want the project to supply buses to ease the impact of street closure on St. Mary's,"³

² Approximately one-half of the carpool vehicles utilize South Street to drop off and pick up students at the school. By closing South Street, these carpool vehicles would make a right turn from Washington Street onto Green Street and then another right turn onto Royal Street, proceed down Royal Street to make a left onto Jones Point Drive, then make a turn under the bridge to enter the carpool queue. While the City has suggested that the carpool vehicles line up on Royal Street, a total of only fifteen vehicles can be accommodated on each side of Royal Street, which would cause the remaining approximately 100 vehicles in the carpool queue to line up on Green Street, resulting in a back up Washington Street. Additionally, with the lane closure on Washington Street due to construction, there will be further traffic backups.

The suggestion of constructing a traffic circle at the end of Royal Street to alleviate the queuing problem is also unworkable because it would not resolve traffic backups on Washington Street due to the length of the carpool line.

Additionally, by closing South Street, carpool vehicles cannot maneuver to enter the carpool line from Jones Point Drive due to the encroachment upon Jones Point Drive by the Project's erection of a fence that would not allow enough space for cars to make a u-turn to enter the queue. This problem would not be alleviated by simply moving the fence.

Mr. Sunderland
Page 3
November 16, 2001

we were dismayed by your abrupt termination of the meeting you called on November 13th to discuss St. Mary's claims. In fact, it gave us some cause for concern as to why we were invited in the first place, a feeling we have had time and time again during previous meetings with the City and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project over the past year and one-half.

If however, you have an interest in having a **real settlement conference** to resolve all the mitigation, reimbursement, and compensation claims for monies due to St. Mary's School, of which funding for buses is a part, this will notify you that we are, have always been, and will continue to be open for such discussions if you believe a resolution can be reached without judicial or federal intervention within the next thirty days. If that is to happen, it will require an immediate and mandatory meeting where all the aforementioned parties come forward with authority and commitments to satisfy their legal, fiduciary, and ethical duties to the victim, St. Mary's School.

Very truly yours,

Thomas J. Fadoul, Jr.

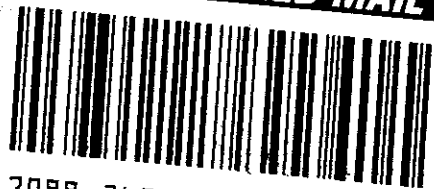
cc: *(via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)*
Rev. Robert E. Avella
Hon. Kerry J. Donley
Hon. James P. Moran
Hon. Tom Davis
Hon. George Allen
Hon. John Warner
Hon. John H. Rust, Jr.
Mr. Thomas M. Heil, Woodrow Wilson Bridge Center
Mr. Rich Baier, City of Alexandria
Mr. Reed Winslow, City of Alexandria
Nick Nicholson, Virginia Department of Transportation

³ Fredrick Kunkle, "Wilson Span Is Placed under Tighter Security", *WASHINGTON POST*, Nov. 3, 2001, at A8. This statement was reiterated by Mayor Donley at the City Council Retreat on November 3, 2001.

LAW OFFICES OF
FADOUL & ASSOCIATES,

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MCLEAN, VIRGINIA 22102

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Kerry J. Donley, Mayor
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, Room 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314



10
12-15-01

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE
REPLACEMENT PROJECT
C/O POTOMAC CROSSING CONSULTANTS
1800 DUKE STREET, SUITE 200
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

RONALDO T. "NICK" NICHOLSON, P.E.
PROJECT MANAGER
PHONE 703.519.9800
FAX 703.548.4593

December 12, 2001

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



**Subject: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
Request for Student Bus Service for St. Mary's School**

Dear Mayor Donley:

In accordance with your request of November 30, 2001, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has evaluated the potential need for a remote bus pickup/drop off lot and student bus services for St. Mary's School. As you indicated, this request is a result of the VDOT's request to permanently close South Street due to the demolition of Hunting Towers, terrorist security concerns for the existing bridge, and the ultimate approved improvements of Jones Point Park. VDOT understands that the need for this remote pickup/drop off lot and student bus service is to ease congestion and operational challenges at the school that have been suggested by St. Mary's due to the closure of South Street.

VDOT and the GEC have continued in our efforts to study the local street network in the Washington Street Corridor, Yates Garden Community, and near St. Mary's School. These efforts have focused on obtaining accurate and reliable traffic data within the local street network, performing projections of traffic distributions once South Street is closed, and investigating a reconfigured drop off/pick up area at St. Mary's School. The results of these investigations have been shared and reviewed with your staff; however, the VDOT continues to refine the recommendations of the study to be compatible with the procedures of the school.

At present, South Street accommodates approximately 3,500 vehicle trips per day. Traffic projections for when South Street is closed have also been completed. For this scenario, the current traffic that uses South Street has been distributed to other local streets within Yates Garden, specifically to Green Street, Jefferson Street, Franklin Street, and Gibbon Street. These projections indicate that the future daily traffic volume on Green Street will increase by approximately 20% or 97 and 75 trips for both the AM and PM peak hours, respectively. It is our opinion that these additional trips will not compromise the capacity of Green Street, nor intolerably inconvenience the students/parents of St. Mary's School as suggested.

Therefore, St. Mary's School student drop off/pick up will only be affected by a change in route such that parents will traverse further north on Washington Street and turn on Green Street, in lieu of using South Street and Royal Street as is currently done. Future traffic projections indicate that this change in route, will only impact the drop off/pick up operation by increasing the travel times to and from the School by seconds. Based on the findings of the Draft Traffic Impact Study, dated December 12, 2001 (Copy Attached), a shuttle bus service to accommodate student drop off/pick up is not warranted.

As to the issues of circulation and safety of the drop off/pick up operation, the closure of South Street will afford an opportunity to enhance both circulation and safety at the School. By eliminating the approximately 3,500 trips per day along South Street, congestion and possible conflict with these vehicles will be eliminated. Thus the length of Royal Street south of Green Street to Jones Point Drive will be able to exclusively, with the exception of access to Jones Point Park, to accommodate both school drop off/pick up. Additionally, Project staff is working with City staff in developing several different drop off/pick up operation proposals that will more effectively use the Schools' frontage on Royal Street. These operational proposals will be the subject of discussions with the School and refined as appropriate to optimize their effectiveness.

The Department is also working with City Staff to minimize, the amount of construction traffic using Royal Street. As you know, VDOT will be advertising the Hunting Towers Demolition Contract (VA-3) and the I-95 Tie-in Contract (VA-4) over the next six months. The primary hauling route is proposed to extend from Washington Street to South Street to enter the construction zones within Hunting Towers. Please note that VDOT now owns and manages the Hunting Towers Complex. This will greatly reduce the construction hauling along Royal Street, as well as potential conflicts between construction vehicles and local street users, especially St. Mary's School operations.

In review of the results of the Draft Traffic Impact Study as well as the information provided during a December 11, 2001 meeting with, St. Mary's School, Mr. Tom Fadoul, and a Traffic Engineering Firm, this Office believes justification for a remote bus pickup/drop off lot and student bus services for St. Mary's School due to the permanent closing of South Street does not exist. The attached report does include the following recommendations to address the level of service issues along the Washington Street corridor due to the closing of South Street:

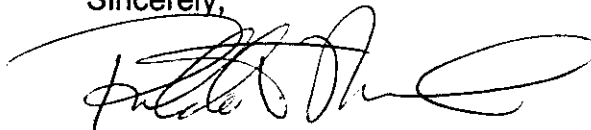
- Optimizing the signal timings along Washington Street, and
- Eliminating the HOV-2 restrictions in the right lane Washington Street through Gibbon Street.

We believe that these measures will help minimize the delays and improve the level of service for the intersection included on the study area. This Office will further commit to working with City Staff and St. Mary's School on the reconfiguration of the drop off/pick up operation at St. Mary's School to take advantage of the operational and safety enhancements that the permanent closing of South Street will provide. Additionally, the Project will move forward in providing for a construction haul route along Washington Street and South Street within the project limits of the above mention construction contracts. Through these efforts, the VDOT strongly believes that operational and safety concerns expressed by the School can be managed and even improved.

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
Page 3 of 3
December 12, 2001

Should you have any questions or concerns with the information presented herein, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience at (703) 519-9800. Thank you for your continued interest and involvement in this Project

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronaldo T. Nicholson', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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

Attachments: As Stated

cc: P. Sunderland, R. Baier, and R. Winslow all (w/ attachments)– City of Alexandria
T. Fadoul - Fadoul & Associates (w/ Attachment)
F. Gee, M. Kerley, (all w/ attachments) – VDOT
G. McCormick, T. Heil, B. Hoage, and B. Barkley (all w/o attachments)– GEC
Document Control (Marvin Harris w/ attachment)

ROYAL STREET CLOSURE TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY

DRAFT

Technical Memorandum
December 12, 2001

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POTOMAC
CROSSING
CONSULTANTS

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

I. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the impacts of the closure of Royal Street under I-95 during construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge improvements. There are two traffic operations issues related to this road closure as follows:

- Diversion of through traffic from Royal Street to Washington Street (currently using Royal Street to travel into Old Town Alexandria).
- Impacts to the pick-up/drop-off operation for school children at St. Mary's School.

II. Background

Washington Street is one of the major north-south arterials providing access into downtown Alexandria (see Site Map, Figure 1). Three lanes are provided in the peak direction by restricting the parking lane, and left turns from Washington Street are restricted at some intersections. Because traffic volumes on Washington Street are fairly heavy during the peaks, some drivers are diverting from Washington Street to South Street and using Royal Street for access into Old Town. About 3,500 to 4,000 vehicles per day per direction are using South Street to Royal Street.

St. Mary's School is located at the Green Street / Royal Street intersection (southwest quadrant). This school does not have a formal busing program, so parents are required to drop off and pick up their children at the school each day. During these operations, vehicles queue along Green Street in front of the school and along Royal Street south of Green Street. With the closure of Royal Street at I-95, school pick-up and drop-off operations may require some modifications.

To assess the impacts related to the closure of Royal Street, 12-hour turning movement count data was collected at the following intersections:

- Washington Street at South Street
- Washington Street at Green Street
- Washington Street at Jefferson Street
- Washington Street at Franklin Street
- Washington Street at Gibbon Street
- Green Street at Royal Street

In addition, the queuing operations at St. Mary's school were observed and recorded to determine the maximum number of vehicles staging, the staging locations, and the length of the queues.

III. Existing Conditions

Today, Washington Street carries a fairly heavy volume of traffic during the peak periods (from 2,000 to 2,700 vph in the peak hour-peak direction). This volume is accommodated in three

lanes by restricting parking along Washington Street and providing a high-occupancy vehicle/bus lane. Vehicles using this lane must have two or more passengers or be making a turning movement. Left turn movements from Washington Street are also restricted during the peaks to maximize the signal green time for through traffic. Refer to Figure 2 for a summary of the existing lane configurations, turn restrictions, and AM and PM peak hour traffic volumes.

The turning movement volumes for the Washington Street intersections were analyzed with the Synchro model and the existing signal timings (provided by the City of Alexandria). The Synchro analysis indicates that the intersections operate at level of service C or better during the AM and PM peak hours at most locations, with the exception of the South Street and Church Street intersections. These intersections operate at level of service E in the PM peak. Table 1 provides the levels of service for each intersection.

Table 1: Existing Operations		
Intersection on Washington Street	Level of Service	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
South Street	A	E
Church Street	A	E
Green Street	C	A
Jefferson Street	B	A
Franklin Street	C	A
Gibbon Street	C	B

The intersection of Green Street and Royal Street is a 4-way stop-controlled intersection. Using Synchro analysis, this intersection currently operates at level of service B(A) in the AM (PM) peak hour periods.

No existing deficiencies were identified in the field at any of the study site intersections listed above. However, it was noted that many single occupancy vehicles were violating the HOV-2 lane restrictions during the peak hours.

IV. Impacts of Royal Street Closure

With the closure of Royal Street under I-95, the cut-through traffic from Washington Street using South Street to Royal Street into Old Town will be required to stay on Washington Street and use either Green Street, Jefferson Street, Franklin Street, or Gibbon Street. The estimated diversions were obtained from a review of current turning volumes from Washington Street. The diversion percentages, and magnitude of traffic volumes added to these intersections due to the closure, are shown in Figure 3. As indicated, the maximum additional (diverted) traffic is added to the Jefferson Street intersection with a total of 174 additional vehicles in the AM peak and 151 in the PM peak. The Synchro analysis results with the additional diverted trips at each intersection are shown in Table 2.

Intersection on Washington Street	Level of Service	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
South Street	C	F
Church Street	A	E
Green Street	E	B
Jefferson Street	D	B
Franklin Street	D	A
Gibbon Street	D	C

The stop-controlled intersection of Green and Royal Streets will improve from level of service B(A) to level of service A(A) with the redirected traffic removed from Royal Street.

V. Possible Mitigation Measures for Washington Street

Two possible mitigation measures were explored for Washington Street. These measures include:

- Revisions to the signal timings along Washington Street
- Elimination of the HOV-2 restrictions in the right lane during peak periods

The existing signal timings were provided by the City of Alexandria and were used in the Synchro analysis for the unimproved conditions. However, with optimized signal timings, it may be possible to improve the operations along Washington Street. The existing cycle length is 80 seconds; with a longer cycle, more vehicles can be served on the mainline. This would result in longer delays for side-street traffic, but the overall intersection operations would be improved. Based on the Synchro model, an AM peak cycle of 110 seconds, and a PM peak cycle of 100 seconds would provide more green time for Washington to handle the additional diverted traffic.

In addition, the HOV lane restrictions do not seem to be enforced due to the need to continue to use the right lane for right turns. Without the HOV restrictions, the lane can serve a greater volume of through traffic to balance the volumes in the three lanes.

The improved levels of service are provided in Table 3 for the signal times alone, and for the timing changes plus removal of the HOV restrictions.

Intersection on Washington Street	AM Levels of Service		PM Levels of Service	
	Timing Changes	Timing Change and no HOV	Timing Changes	Timing Change and no HOV
South Street	B	B	D	D
Church Street	A	A	D	D
Green Street	E	A	B	B
Jefferson Street	C	A	B	A
Franklin Street	C	A	A	B
Gibbon Street	C	A	C	C

VI. St. Mary's School Operations and Impacts

Current Morning Operations:

The majority of morning drop-offs occur on eastbound Green Street in front of the school. Parents jockey for a parking spot in the pull-off area in front of the school, or along the eastbound Green Street curb east of the school entrance. At times, the queue for vehicles looking for a spot can extend to the Washington Street intersection. The maximum number of vehicles that can park along the pull-off area and along Green Street is about 16 vehicles, without double-parking, which does occur during the peak just before school starts. Refer to Figure 4 for a sketch of the observed parking and queuing activity.

A few vehicles were observed on Royal Street dropping off children. The maximum observed on southbound Royal Street was 4 at a time, and the maximum observed on northbound Royal Street was 3 at a time. The total drop-offs observed for both Royal Street and eastbound Green Street are provided in Table 4.

Intersection on Washington Street	Level of Service	
	Total Observed for AM Peak	Maximum Parked at the Same Time
Eastbound Green Street	151	16
Northbound Royal Street	18	3
Southbound Royal	30	4

The deficiencies with the current system include the queuing of traffic on Green Street while waiting for a parking spot in front of the school. A City police officer is assigned to the Green Street / St. Asaph intersection to facilitate traffic movements to the school parking areas from these streets. There was only limited use of Royal Street for parking during the morning operations at the school.

Current Afternoon Operations:

The pick-up procedure is very different than the drop-off procedure at the school, with a much greater use of Royal Street for parking/staging. As parents arrive, many of them queue along Royal Street to await the school dismissal. At dismissal, they drive to Green Street, turn left onto Green and the left into the school driveway, and drive around to the back lot. On the lot, there are three striped "lanes" where cars pull up to load the children, then exit the lot onto Royal Street heading north or south. Refer to Figure 4 for a sketch of the observed pick-up activity.

The maximum queues observed for Royal and Green Streets are provided in Table 5. During the peak period, the queue on northbound Royal Street extended as far south as Jones Point Park Road, just north of the I-95 bridge.

Table 5: St. Mary's School Afternoon Queues	
Location	Maximum Parked at the Same Time
Eastbound Green Street	4
Northbound Royal Street	26
Southbound Royal	0

The existing volumes and distributions for traffic exiting the lot are provided in Table 6. The volumes are fairly evenly split between northbound and southbound Royal Street as shown.

Table 6: St. Mary's School Exiting Traffic		
Time of Observation	Left onto Northbound Royal Street	Right onto Southbound Royal Street
3:00 PM	37	48
3:15 PM	22	21

Impacts of Royal Street Closure on St. Mary's School Operations:

With the closure of Royal Street at I-95, all arrivals to the school from the south will be via Washington Street to Green Street. This may increase the queue on eastbound Green Street in front of the school. However, observations indicated that most of the morning drop-off is occurring on Green Street today. Royal Street south of Green Street would still be available for queuing/staging during both the morning and afternoon periods, but traffic would need to enter Royal Street from Green Street, instead of traveling north on South Street.

The morning drop-offs on Royal Street would be improved with the closure of Royal Street. With the closure, the cut-through traffic would be redirected to Washington Street, eliminating the conflicts between school students and the fairly large volume of through traffic at this location. This would allow school operations to occur unimpeded. To reduce the queue on Green Street, parents could be directed to use Royal Street as the primary school drop-off area. This modification could virtually eliminate the queue on eastbound Green Street.



**Royal Street Closure
Traffic Impact Study
DRAFT REPORT**

December 12, 2001
Page 6 of 6

To facilitate the afternoon staging activities, a turn-around area may need to be designated on Royal Street at Jones Point Park Road to allow vehicles to get at the back of the queue to await dismissal. As with the morning operations, the afternoon operations should be improved with the elimination of the conflicting through traffic.

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**Royal Street Closure
Traffic Impact Study**

December 12, 2001

FIGURE 1

Site Map

Study Area Intersections:



Signalized



4-Way Stop

Figure 2: Existing Traffic Volumes and Lane Configurations

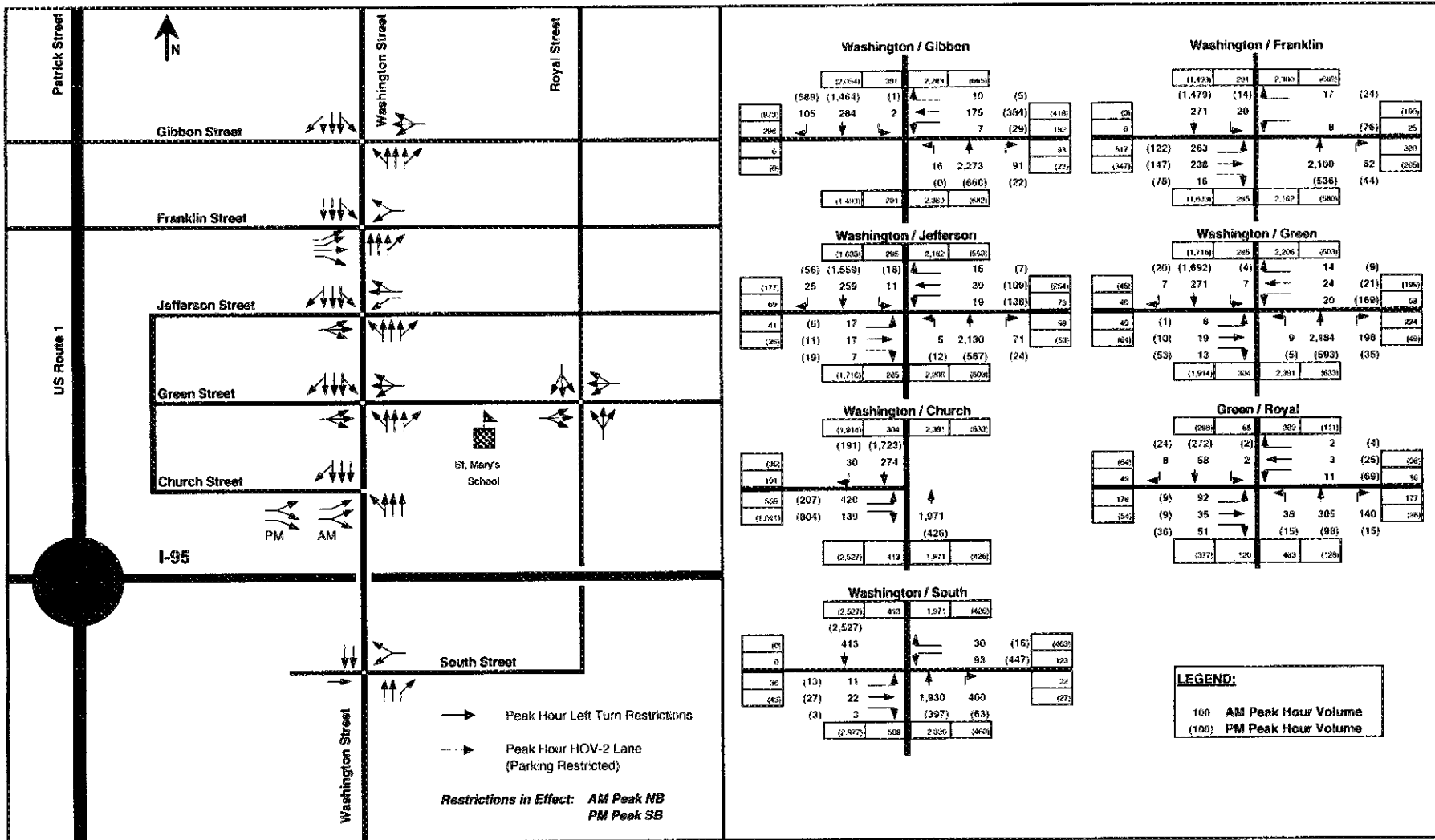


Figure 3: Diversion Routes and Traffic

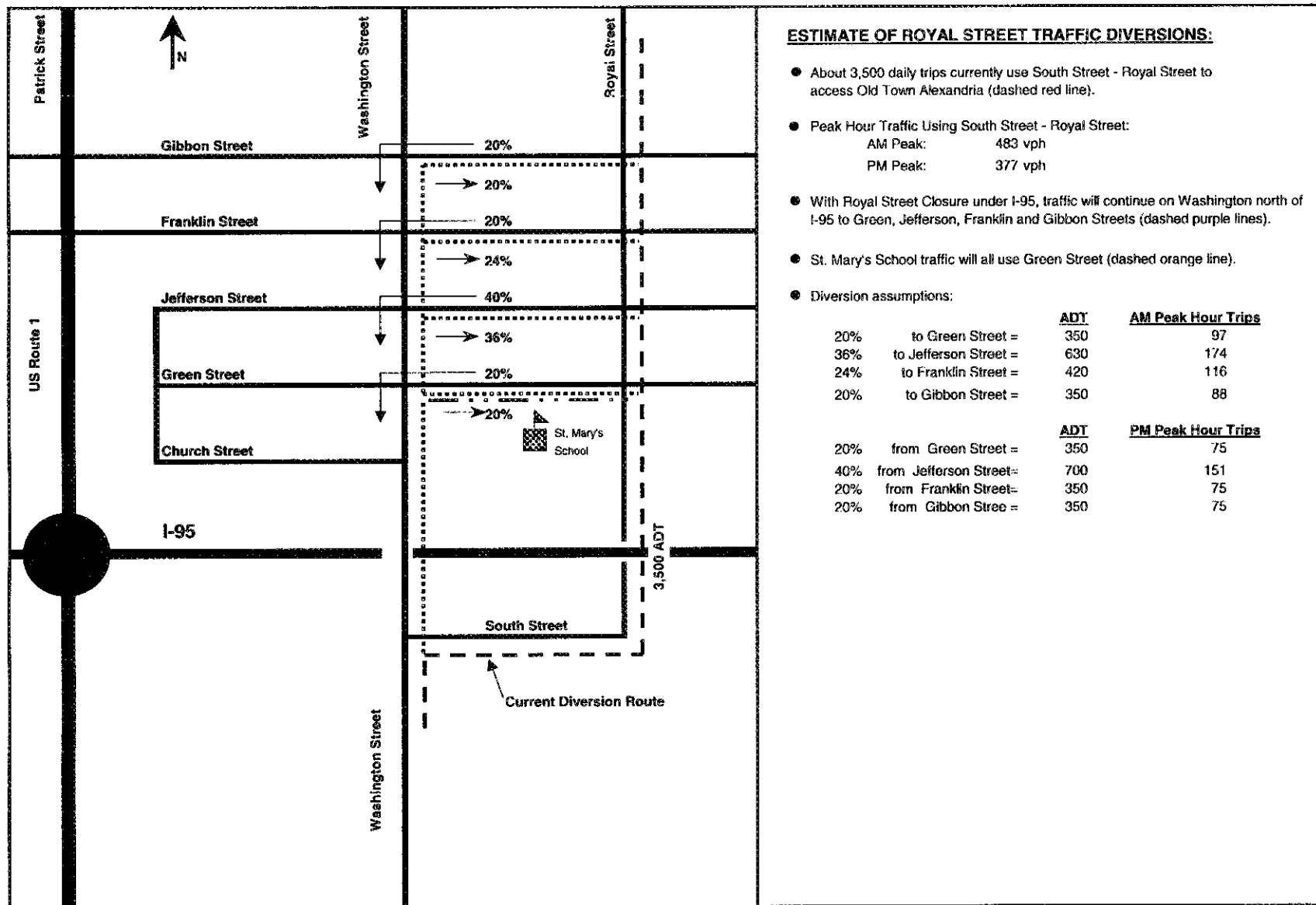
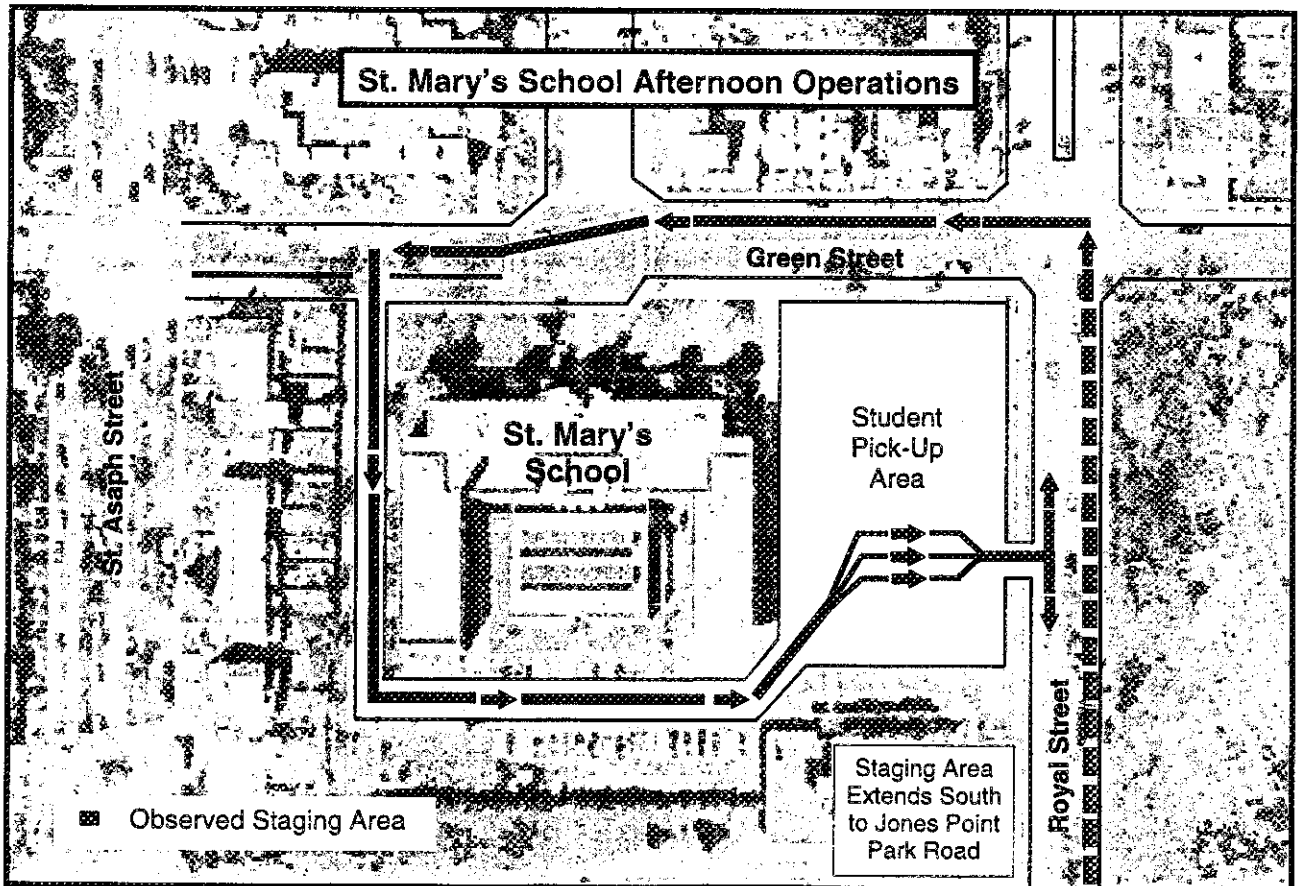
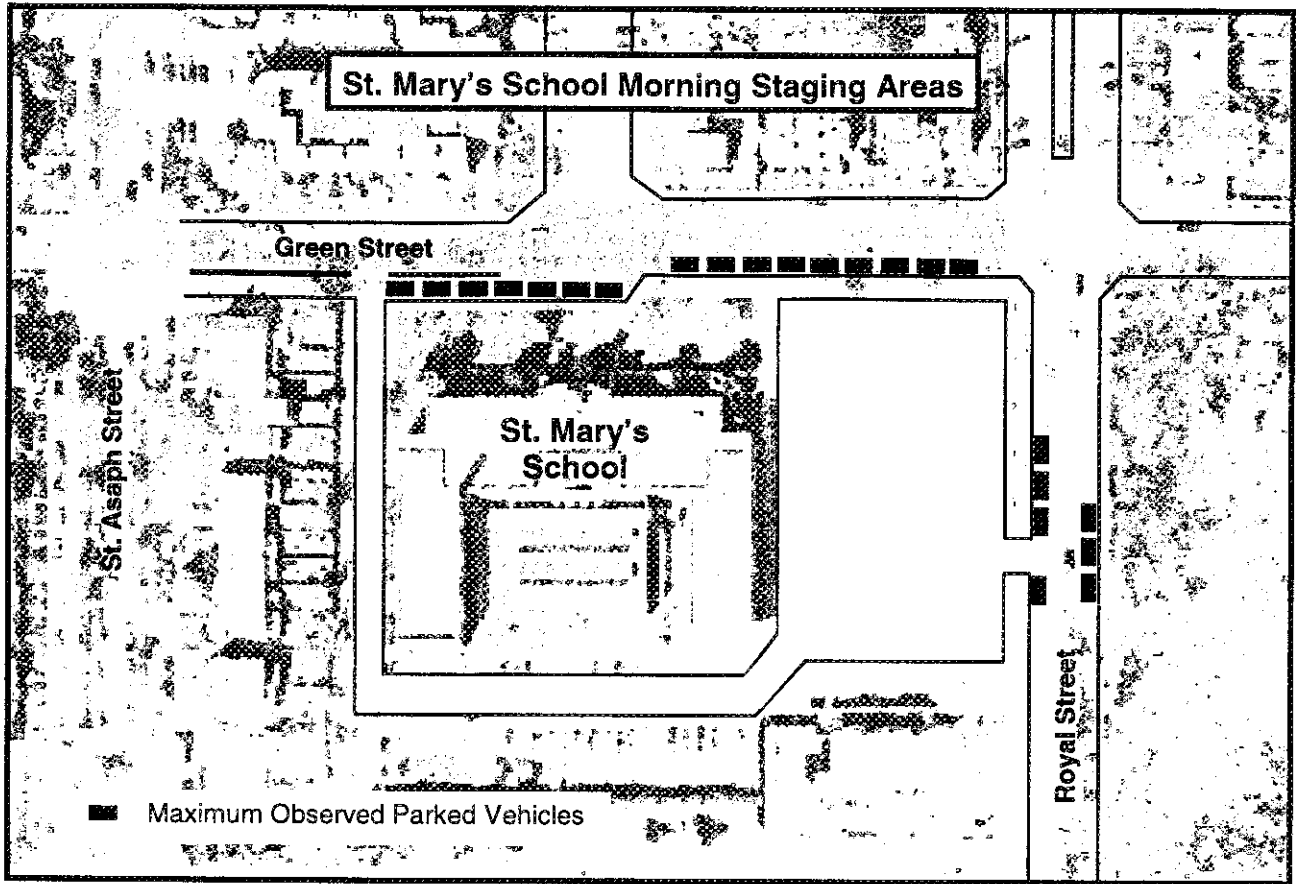


Figure 4: St. Mary's School Operations



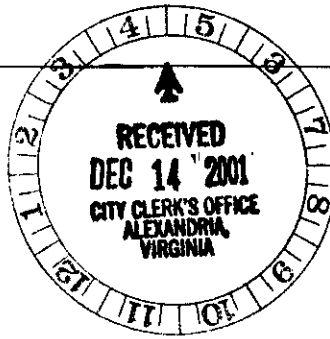
Law Offices of
Fadoul & Associates, P.C.

10
12-15-01

Via Facsimile

December 14, 2001

Hon. Kerry J. Donley
Room 2300, City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



1650 Tysons Boulevard
Suite 1555
McLean, Virginia 22102
703-226-2700
Facsimile: 703-226-2701

Re: St. Mary's School – Closure of South Street

Dear Mayor Donley:

I would first like to extend my sincere appreciation for your taking the time to meet with me personally to discuss St. Mary's position on the closure of South Street, which will come before you as Docket Item 9 at the December 15, 2001 hearing. St. Mary's requests that the Council follow the recommendation of the Traffic and Parking Board and condition the street closing upon the Project providing appropriate mitigation to St. Mary's. We suggest that an appropriate mitigation condition would be for the Project to provide bus service to and from St. Mary's to remote drop off locations at its expense, or such other mitigation that may be agreed by the parties.

As you know from our discussions, St. Mary's will suffer a severe impact from the closure of South Street and has aired these concerns to the City as well as the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project (the "Project"). Enclosed for your review and consideration is a report prepared by St. Mary's traffic engineering consultants in response to the Staff report dated December 7, 2001 (which we did not receive until December 11, 2001). Please note that St. Mary's received the Project's traffic data yesterday afternoon and has not had an opportunity to prepare a comprehensive response to the assertions therein and to analyze the expected measurable delays to St. Mary's parents anticipated by the closure of South Street.

A temporary closure of South Street was scheduled to occur in April of 2002, but for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's assessment that the bridge could be a target of terrorist activity. St. Mary's is cognizant that safety concerns have prompted the request for an early closure, however, St. Mary's believes that the street closure should not be used as a guise to assist VDOT with its construction delay problems and/or aid VDOT now that it is owner of the Hunting Towers Complex.

We urge that that before the Council to take an "extraordinary action" to close a substantially used thoroughfare (3,500 –4,000 vehicles per day), then surely the Council must take into account the serious impact to the educational institution at the epicenter of the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken in Virginia, one which will result in the doubling of the size of the current Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Based upon the foregoing, there is admittedly, an unequivocally serious impact due to the

Mayor Donley
December 14, 2001
Page 2

fact that some 700 students and nearly 80 faculty and staff members report to this educational establishment each day. St. Mary's also admittedly provides a public benefit to the community-at-large. Furthermore, the City of Alexandria reaps a several million-dollar tax savings to its educational budget by virtue of St. Mary's operations. There currently is no other Catholic or public school, inside or outside the city limits that has the capacity to absorb these children.

The conundrum affect of the construction activity together with the closure of South Street affects the safety and tranquility of the children, parents, and the residents who live in the surrounding neighborhoods. A comprehensive mitigation plan is needed, not only to satisfy the logistical interference with the operational aspects of dropping off and picking up children in the morning and afternoon caused by the closing of South Street, but one with takes into account that the school is in a construction site.

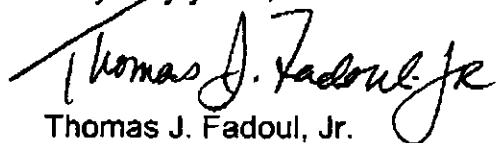
St. Mary's is attempting to negotiate an agreement with the Project the terms of appropriate mitigation plan including, but not limited to consideration of re-configuration of drop-off areas and/or the possible use of South Street on a limited access basis during certain periods by St. Mary's parents for drop-off purposes, and/or shuttle busing to remote drop-off locations.

In the absence of an agreement, we urge the Council to heed the recommendation of the Traffic and Parking Board: that the Council delay consideration on the proposed closure until an appropriate mitigation measure agreed to by the Project and St. Mary's is in place. We note for the record that the Board's recommendation was explicitly left out of Staff's recommendation.

Finally, the effective closing date of December 29, 2001 is unworkable for the St. Mary's, since school will dismiss for Christmas vacation from December 21st until January 2nd, making it impossible to communicate with the parent population new queuing routes and road access reconfigurations.

We appreciate your cooperation with our request.

Very truly yours,


Thomas J. Fadoul, Jr.

Enclosures

VETTRA Co.

Transportation Planning & Engineering Services

11535 Gunner Court

Woodbridge, Virginia 22192

Tel: 703/590-4932

Fax: 703/590-1277

Email: vettra@aol.com

December 13, 2001

Mr. Thomas J. Fadoul, Jr.
Fadoul & Associates, P.C.
1650 Tysons Boulevard, Suite 1555
McLean, Virginia 22102

RE: Saint Mary's Catholic School
City of Alexandria, Virginia

SUBJ: Responses to Staff Report

Dear Ms. Mr. Fadoul:

As requested, we have completed our review of the memo (staff report) from Mr. Philip Sunderland to the City Mayor and Council Members dated December 7, 2001 and offer the following responses:

Current Traffic Conditions

1. Weekday Traffic Counts

- It is stated that the City's traffic study is based on traffic counts taken Tuesday-Wednesday, November 13-14, 2001. It should be noted that it is not standard traffic engineering procedure to perform traffic counts during a week within which a "holiday" occurs. Even for "minor holidays", counts are never conducted the very next day. It is widely known that background counts will be abnormally low during such times. Therefore, it is highly questionable that these counts are valid for the purpose of basing any traffic study.

2. Preponderance of Traffic on So. Royal and South Streets

- It is stated here that the peak traffic flows are northbound in the AM (with approx. 400 vehicles) and southbound in the PM (with approx. 700 vehicles). The non-peak directional traffic volumes are not mentioned, so it is assumed that the non-peak traffic volumes would only add to these stated volumes. The total two-way volumes for each peak hour need to be provided.

Responses to Staff Report
December 13, 2001
Page 2 of 5

3. Effect of St. Mary's School Traffic

- It is stated by staff that *"the volume of traffic in the northbound direction along South and So. Royal Streets between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. is 50 to 100 percent greater than the hourly average between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m."* It is unclear how much of these percentage increases are "background" (non-school) or "site" (school) traffic. This information should be provided.
- The staff report also states that *"the traffic counts support an estimate of 130 to 150 vehicles in the afternoon on So. Washington Street south of South Street, which are destined for St. Mary's School, with about one-third of these using South Street. In the morning peak hours, approximately 70 to 90 vehicles are estimated to utilize South Street to access St. Mary's School."* In other words, the staff report says that of the (up to) 150 vehicles using So. Washington Street (south of South St.), up to 90 vehicles (~60%) use South Street in the AM and about 50 (one-third of 150) use South Street in the PM. These findings seem contradictory and invalid. Although it is believed that in the AM more than the reported (by staff) 40 percent of school-bound vehicles from the south travel northbound on So. Washington Street and turn right to access the school's drop-off zone on Green Street, it is clearly evident that in the PM most school vehicles (more than the reported 1/3 by staff) from the south access school property by taking South Street to form queues and then egress back to the south using South Street after student pickup on the playground. These statistics and discrepancies need to be verified and explained.

Traffic Impacts

1. Removal of through-traffic will improve conditions for Hunting Towers

- No response.

2. Turn movements at the South St./So. Washington St. intersection will be reduced by 80 to 90 percent

- No documentation or technical evidence supports the 80-90% reduction claim. Surely, delay will be reduced at this intersection, but we understand that some side street (South St.) traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) will still exist from the Hunting Towers, as well as construction traffic.
- Prior sections of the staff report have documented that traffic volume increases on So. Washington Street due to the diversion of traffic (from closed So. Royal and South Streets) will be significant (400 to 700 vehicles per hour, or more). Yet the resultant delay increases for So. Washington Street at this intersection have not been provided.

3. Traffic volumes on So. Royal Street will be lower

- No response.

Responses to Staff Report
December 13, 2001
Page 3 of 5

4. Traffic will increase on the east-west streets east of So. Washington Street

- It is agreed that traffic will divert from So. Washington Street onto alternative east-west streets to continue north-south trips interrupted by the closure of South Street. It is also noted in the staff report that 50 percent of the former South St. traffic will use Green and Jefferson Streets as alternatives (25% each). This equates to a minimum of 200 additional vehicles using the two (2) east-west streets that St. Mary's school traffic will also use, thus compounding AM traffic congestion (especially along Green St.) and exacerbating safety hazards. It should be reminded that due to the closure of South Street, St. Mary's traffic would almost exclusively use these two (2) east-west streets to ingress and egress the school.
- The statement about "*Levels Of Service and vehicle delays not likely to be noticeably changed*" must be referring to distant (from the school) streets and intersections in Old Town. Certainly the previously noted increases in traffic along Green and Jefferson Streets will noticeably change congestion levels and safety considerations here. Further, it seems nonchalant, and certainly not supported by any documentation, to infer that significant traffic increases (at least 400-700 vehicles per hour) and any "*effect on the Washington Street corridor will be small as redistribution of traffic occurs on a corridor that already is constrained*".

5. Traffic associated with St. Mary's School will be concentrated on Green Street

- This statement confirms our contention that additional "background" traffic diverted from So. Washington St. onto Green St. will exacerbate the concentration of traffic near the school on Green Street.
- It is stated in this section of the staff report that approximately 70-90 school vehicles use South Street in the afternoon. This is not consistent with the previous staff report statement where 1/3 (or approx. 40-50 vehicles) of the school vehicles use this street. It is unclear which statement by staff is correct.
- City staff believes that procedural changes along with the South Street closure will result in a "more orderly morning drop-off of children". We are not yet convinced of this assertion.

6. Diverted traffic from South Street will increase So. Washington St. traffic

- A claim is made that reduction of green time on cross streets (to So. Washington St.) will improve throughput on So. Washington Street and achieve better utilization of green signal phases and reduction of overall delay. Our experience in many jurisdictions shows that although mainline throughput can be achieved with less delays using this signal scheme, the opposite is true for the cross (side) streets, such as Green, Jefferson, Franklin, etc. Significantly added delays are most likely to result along Green and Jefferson Streets, which will significantly affect school-related traffic in a detrimental way.

Responses to Staff Report
December 13, 2001
Page 4 of 5

Security Impacts

- No response.

Impacts on St. Mary's School

1. Closing of So. Royal and South Streets will increase Green St. traffic

- We concur that this increase will occur. However, we contend that additional "background" traffic will only exacerbate an already hazardous situation, especially in the AM. It should be further noted that after the school-related vehicles discharge the students along Green St. (and/or along So. Royal St. as suggested by City staff), they will then "backtrack" westbound along Green and Jefferson Streets. This further additional traffic load on Green Street will, yet again, elevate congestion levels and safety hazards at this location.

2. PM queuing space for St. Mary's can be increased

- City staff has suggested the availability of additional queuing space along the southbound side of So. Royal Street south of Green Street. Although this additional 600 feet of space will help to a certain degree, it will still fall well below total demand. It is estimated (assuming a 25 foot headway for each vehicle) that the 140 school vehicles will require a total of about 3,500 feet. The staff-suggested available queuing appears to fall well short of what is needed to queue all school vehicles in the afternoon.
- It is stated in this section of the staff report that the "*afternoon queue will be safer and faster as it allows parents to stop mid-street in a through lane to drop off school children.*" We are unclear as to how or why children will be dropped-off here in the afternoon. This needs to be explained further.

Traffic and Parking Board Action

- It is noted in the staff report that a nearby civic association supported the reduction in traffic on residential streets. This is curious since the only reduction that has been purported by staff (and ourselves) is along So. Royal Street, which is a designated construction "haul" road in the vicinity. It has been made clear within the staff report (and these responses) that traffic will undoubtedly increase along such residential (non-haul) streets as Green and Jefferson Streets, among others to a lesser extent.

Implementation of the Closing

- No response.

Responses to Staff Report
December 13, 2001
Page 5 of 5

In summary, unfortunately we find the December 7th memo (staff report) to contain invalid traffic data, incomplete documentation, inconsistent and contrary data and facts, as well as unfounded and technically unsupported conclusions. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these drawbacks and our responses with City staff.

I trust this provides the information requested. Please feel free to call me if you should have any questions or wish to discuss this in greater detail.

Respectfully submitted,
VETTRA Company

Vernon E. Torney

Vernon E. Torney, AICP
Certified Planner (Reg. #8543)
President

cc: Mr. Frank Bigdeli
Mr. Seyed Saadat, P.E.

\\smcs\response1.doc

Summary of St. Mary's Position on the Closure of South Royal Street

I. Traffic Congestion and Safety Concerns

- * The closure of South Street will have a direct impact on St. Mary's ability to maintain a carpool line for the drop-off and pick up students who attend the school.
- * An additional 3,000 cars per day will travel on Washington Street further exacerbating congestion on this and other neighboring city streets. Traffic on Green Street is estimated to increase by 40%.
- * School children will be at greater risk when attempting to cross Green Street due to the greater volume of cars on this street.

II. St. Mary's is Entitled to Busing as the Only Complete Solution

- * Busing is the only solution that will alleviate both the traffic congestion and safety issues by reducing the number of cars and children crossing these streets.
- * St. Mary's is unable to provide its own buses due to the prohibitive cost of liability insurance, unlike public school systems that rely on the protection of sovereign immunity.
- * St. Mary's is unequivocally a public use and is entitled to mitigation under the Settlement Agreement with the City of Alexandria for the "historical preservation and environmental protection" of its inhabitants.
- * The City of Alexandria has benefited from a reduction in the scope of the original Urban Deck, a portion of which must be accorded to St. Mary's as compensation for all construction related impacts.
- * St. Mary's school educates over 700 students each year, at no expense to the City of Alexandria, resulting in a savings to the City of several million dollars per year.
- * Mayor Donley has been quoted in the Washington Post as stating: "the city would want the project to supply buses to ease the impact of street closure on St. Mary's."
- * Funds are available from at least three sources: (1) VDOT has been accorded a budget from the federal government to mitigate Bridge construction related impacts to institutions; (2) VDOT has a separate budget for the condemnation of property; and (3) VDOT has authority to allocate funds in lieu of the original Urban Deck under the above referenced Settlement Agreement.
- * According to VDOT, St. Mary's suffers the "highest impact" from the construction of the bridge, therefore, according mitigation to St. Mary's would not be "opening Pandora's box."

III. Conclusion

- * The City of Alexandria should not be resigned to the fact it has "fought and lost the battle" over the Wilson Bridge.
- * The City must not abdicate its responsibility to protect the welfare of the citizens (in this instance children) who will be adversely impacted by the closure of South Royal Street.
- * The City Council should vote against closure of South Royal Street until mitigation in the form of buses has been provided to St. Mary's for the above described impacts.

The Old Town Civic Association

10
12-15-01

December 15, 2001

POST OFFICE BOX 21333
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22320-2333

Mayor Kerry J. Donley
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Docket Item 10 (12/15/2001) Interim Closure of South Royal and South Streets

Dear Mayor Donley:

Following discussions with the OTCA Board of Directors, membership response to a solicitation of their views, conversations with Staff, review of the City Manager's December 7, 2001 report and the testimony before the Traffic and Parking Board on November 26, 2001, OTCA endorses the recommendation of the City Manager for the interim closing of South Royal and South Streets effective December 29, 2001.

In endorsing this proposal we are not unmindful of the potential adverse impact for some area residents and members of St. Mary's School; we, therefore, urge the City to continue exploration of measures to mitigate any such adverse traffic and safety concerns. Our concurrence in the interim closing is premised upon the immediate security concerns reflected in the City Manager's Report and we find this measure consistent with the recent security measures that resulted in closure of the vehicle access below the bridge at Jones Point.

Inasmuch as the issue of a "more permanent" closure in the form of an application for Vacation of the Public Right-of-Way will be before you in the spring, we can examine the merits in greater detail at that time inasmuch as it now appears that some additional redesign of the project may be required. If any design revisions tend to preserve the alignment of South Street and its availability as a public right-of-way, permanent closure may not be required. For now, and in the context of recent world events, the security concerns are relevant and the interim closure is an appropriate response.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Feldheim

Mark S. Feldheim
President

cc: Members of Council
City Manager Phil Sunderland
Richard Baier, Director, T&ES

Received by CC



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Site Plan
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Engineering
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Street Lights
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December 26, 2001

Mr. Thomas J. Fadoul, Jr.
Fadoul & Associates, P.C.
1650 Tysons Boulevard, Suite 1555
McLean, Virginia 22102

Subject: Effect of Closure of South Royal Street on St. Mary's School



Dear Mr. Fadoul:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposed closure of South Royal Street and the impact that this action would have on St. Mary's School. For the past several weeks, the City has been assessing the impacts that arise whenever there is a significant change imposed on the City infrastructure and operations. Such changes, even when conceived as improvements, invariably result in both real and perceived negative effects on the citizens, institutions and businesses that must adapt to the new order. The timing of the closing is being expedited at the request of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project, which is responding to the Federal imperative to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks on vulnerable targets. The City has agreed to this request, subject to the need for adequate transitional planning, assessment of impacts and development of mitigative programs.

On Saturday, December 15, the City Council approved the temporary closure of South Street and South Royal Street from Jones Point Drive to South Washington Street, to be effective on or about January 14, 2002. Approval was contingent on both VDOT and City Staff working with representatives of St. Mary's School to develop and implement a plan to mitigate unavoidable impacts of the street closing on St. Mary's School during the periods when parents are delivering and picking up students. On Monday, December 17, all parties met at St. Mary's to pool our ideas and further develop preliminary concepts. The concepts for both morning drop off and afternoon pick up have been graphically developed and refined (see the attached exhibits). On Thursday, December 20, the group assembled again at St. Mary's to review and critique the plan and to assign actions necessary for implementation. A copy of the plan was left with Mrs. Dolan after our meeting. The proposed plan takes advantage of the reduction in through traffic on South Royal Street, and minimizes conflict with the traffic that formerly used South Street and will necessarily divert to east-west streets farther north.

The following actions have been agreed on to assure the smooth implementation of the plan:

Preparatory Items

1. VDOT will install a gate across the sidewalk at the northeast corner of the St. Mary's School building to discourage morning drop off along Green Street.
2. VDOT will improve the turn around at the intersection of Lee Street and Jones Point Drive to facilitate cars joining the afternoon pick up queue.
3. VDOT will relocate the bridge security fence opposite the recycling station on Jones Point Drive to facilitate the morning drop off turn around.
4. The City will install signs, including:
 - a. Delineating the drop off zone (2)
 - b. Delineating the pick up play yard entry point (2)
 - c. Making the alley beside the school one-way northbound (2)
 - d. Closing Green Street eastbound from St. Asaph Street to Pitt Street during morning drop off (1).
5. VDOT will provide pavement markings to delineate the drop off zone.
6. The City will prune the trees to above pedestrian eye-level along the east side of South Royal Street.
7. St. Mary's School will provide a letter authorizing work listed above that is on school property.
8. VDOT will assist the School staff in preparing descriptive material to be distributed to parents and in the conduct of a meeting with parents to be held on January 8.

Implementation Items

1. VDOT will provide an additional police officer during AM and PM peak periods for two weeks to assist with the initiation of the plan.
2. The City will provide portable variable message signs to direct parents during the initiation of the plan.
3. The City and VDOT will observe the initial operation and work with the School staff as needed to resolve any problems.

Follow Up Items

1. The City and VDOT will return in approximately four weeks, and later as needed, to observe and critique the plan operation and will work with the School staff to correct deficiencies.

The City will continue to work with St. Mary's School and VDOT to insure that the closing of South Street does not cause undue hardship and to minimize adverse impacts. We believe that the plan and the actions described above will permit St. Mary's School to accommodate the required change in traffic patterns in an acceptable manner.

Thank you for your forbearance. We will continue to keep you informed as the plan implementation proceeds.

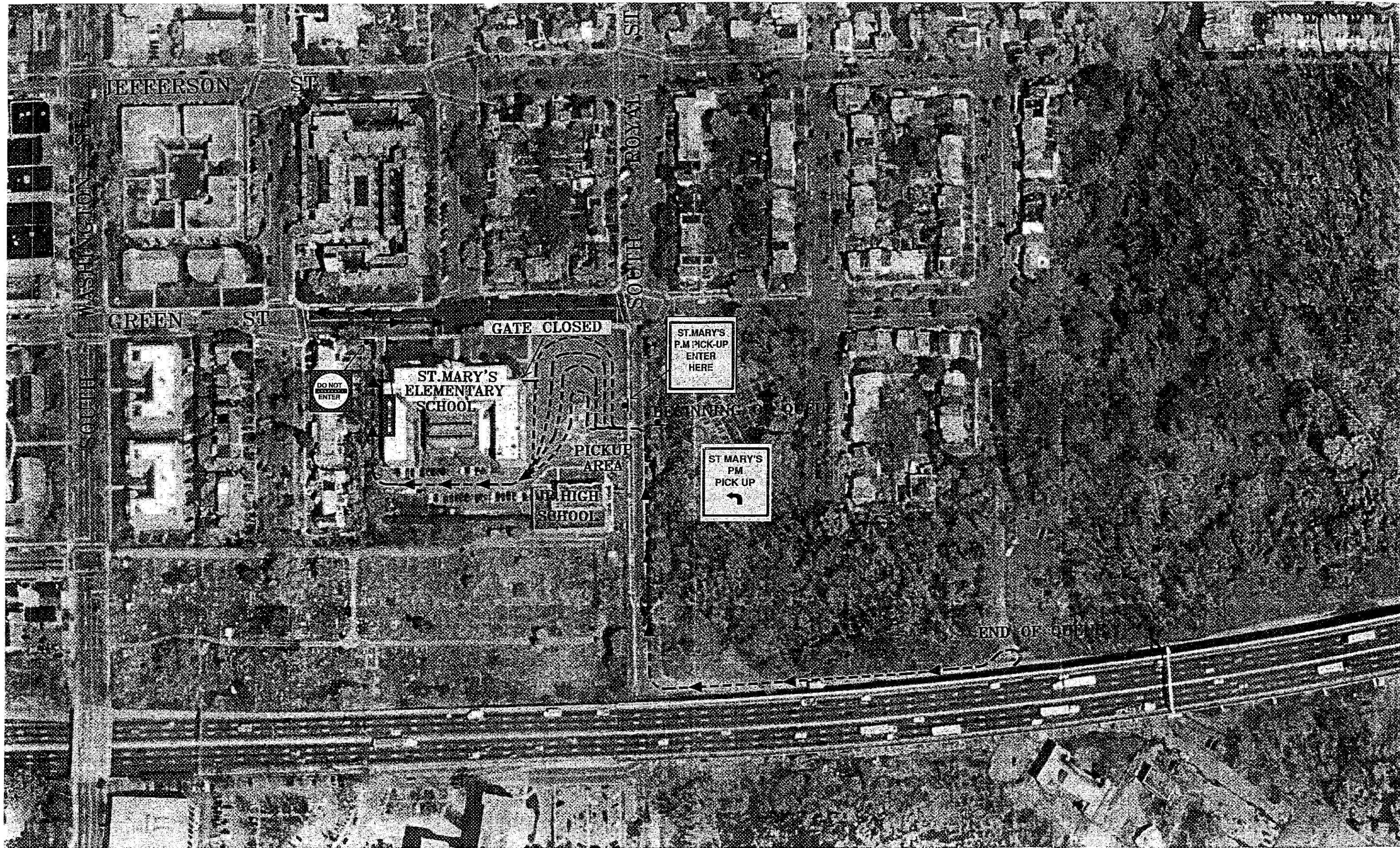
Very truly yours.

Richard J. Baier
Richard J. Baier, P.E. *by RAB*
Director

cc: The Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
Philip Sunderland, City Manager
Ronaldo T. Nicholson, VDOT Project Manager
Kathleen Dolan, Principal, St. Mary's School



ST.MARY'S SCHOOL A.M DROP-OFF DIRECTIONS



ST.MARY'S SCHOOL P.M PICK-UP DIRECTIONS

Sent to CC, CM



10 12/15/01 PF

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

CHARLES D. NOTTINGHAM
COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE
REPLACEMENT PROJECT
C/O POTOMAC CROSSING CONSULTANTS
1800 DUKE STREET, SUITE 200
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

RONALDO T. "NICK" NICHOLSON, P.E.
PROJECT MANAGER
PHONE 703.519.9800
FAX 703.548.4593

January 7, 2002

The Honorable Mayor Kerry Donley
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Ref.: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
South Royal Street Closing

Subject: St. Mary's School Pick-up/Drop-Off Plan



Dear Mayor Donley:

On behalf of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project team, I wish to express our appreciation for your support and efforts in obtaining City Council's approval for the closure of South Royal Street at the Virginia abutment. Your guidance and leadership at the December 15, 2001 City Council meeting was very beneficial in our obtaining final agreement in this closure.

As agreed, VDOT and the Project have been meeting with St. Mary's and City staff in an effort to negotiate a plan to address the changes in school pick-up/drop-off operations. During our December 20, 2001 meeting, an agreement was reached with St. Mary's on the jointly developed plans to address AM Drop-off and PM Pick-up concerns. This agreement was summarized in Mr. Baier's letter to me dated December 26, 2001. On the basis of this plan, and as modified during the meeting, we wish to offer the following final comments/observations:

Morning Drop-Off Procedures:

- The City may want to erect a few R7-2 "NO PARKING" signs along southbound Royal Street designating the curbside for drop-off activity only from 7:00 AM to 7:45 AM to coincide with the School's morning arrival times.
- VDOT will proceed in painting the curb along southbound Royal Street with white paint and "LOADING ZONE" text to further designate the drop-off zone.
- The City may wish to consider installing an R3-1 Modified "NO RIGHT TURN FROM 7:00 AM TO 8:00 AM" sign on eastbound Green Street to further encourage arrivals to use Jefferson Street to South Royal Street for morning drop-off activity.

Mayor K. Donley
St. Mary's School Pick-up/Drop-Off Plan
January 7, 2002
Page 2 of 2

- Further review of the area at the recycling center indicates that relocating the security fence at this location is not practical due to drainage features and other obstructions. However, it was noted during our review that the fence, as located, does not prevent typical pick-up vehicles from negotiating this turn-around.

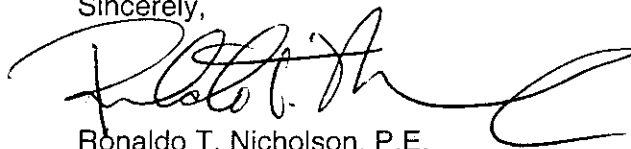
Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures:

- The project will provide for a crossing guard or police officer as required to implement this plan. Further, a crossing guard or school official should be located at the gate entrance on South Royal Street to facilitate left turns into the school lot competing with southbound through traffic joining the back of the queue. No signing or striping is needed, if a crossing guard is used.
- The City may wish to consider installing some additional direction signs for the Pick-Up activity along South Royal Street, directing traffic to use Jones Point Park Drive for turn-around.

As agreed, our team will present this plan to a St. Mary's parent's meeting on January 8, 2002 and provide printed materials as needed to convey this plan to parents. I have attached color copies for your use. We will monitor the implementation and work with City and St. Mary's staff to insure a safe and effective transition into the new plan. We would anticipate minor refinements/fine-tuning of the plan on the basis of operational experience. As further agreed, we will study the traffic impacts of the closure of South Royal Street on the local area and report back to the City by the end of February on our results.

In summary, we greatly appreciate the City's continued assistance and support and look forward to resolving issues associated with the closure of South Royal Street.

Sincerely,

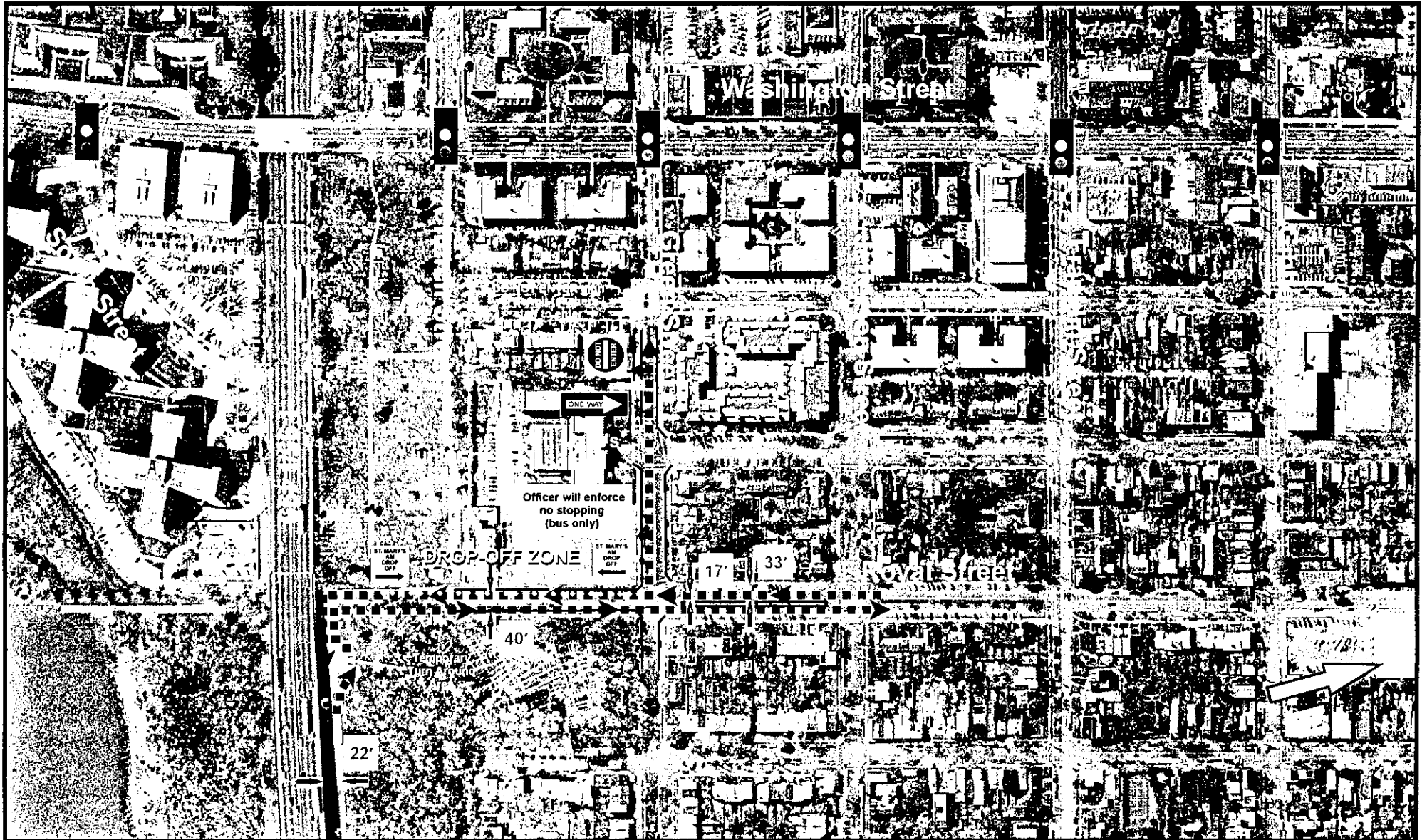


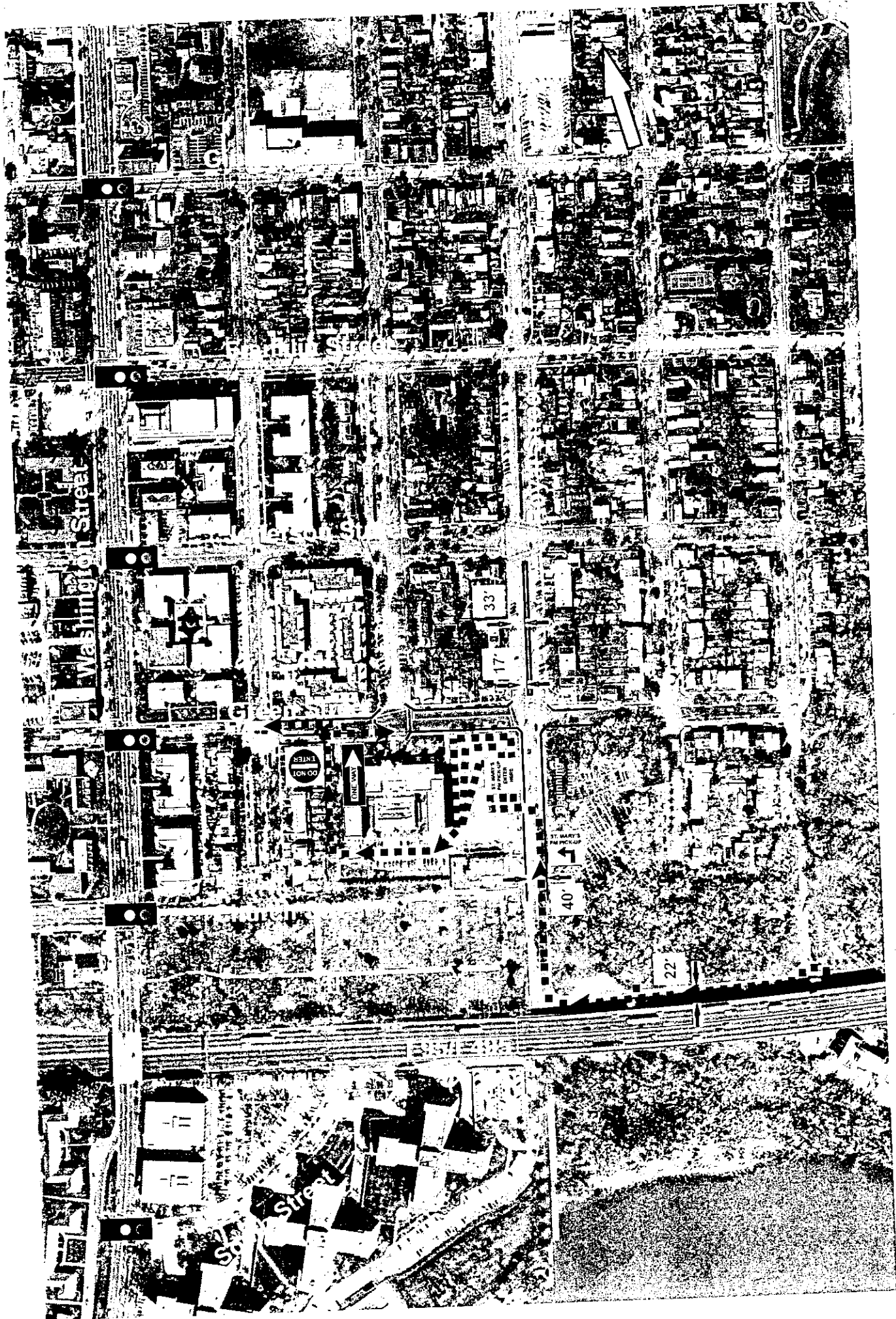
Ronaldo T. Nicholson, P.E.
Project Manager
Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

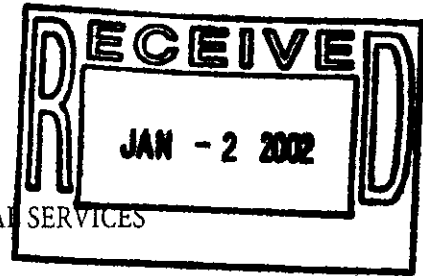
DWW/RTN/an

cc: C. Frank Gee
Richard Baier
Thomas Fadoul
Kathleen Dolan
David Wallace
Barbara Hoage
Gene McCormick
Document Control

St. Mary's School - Proposed Morning Operations







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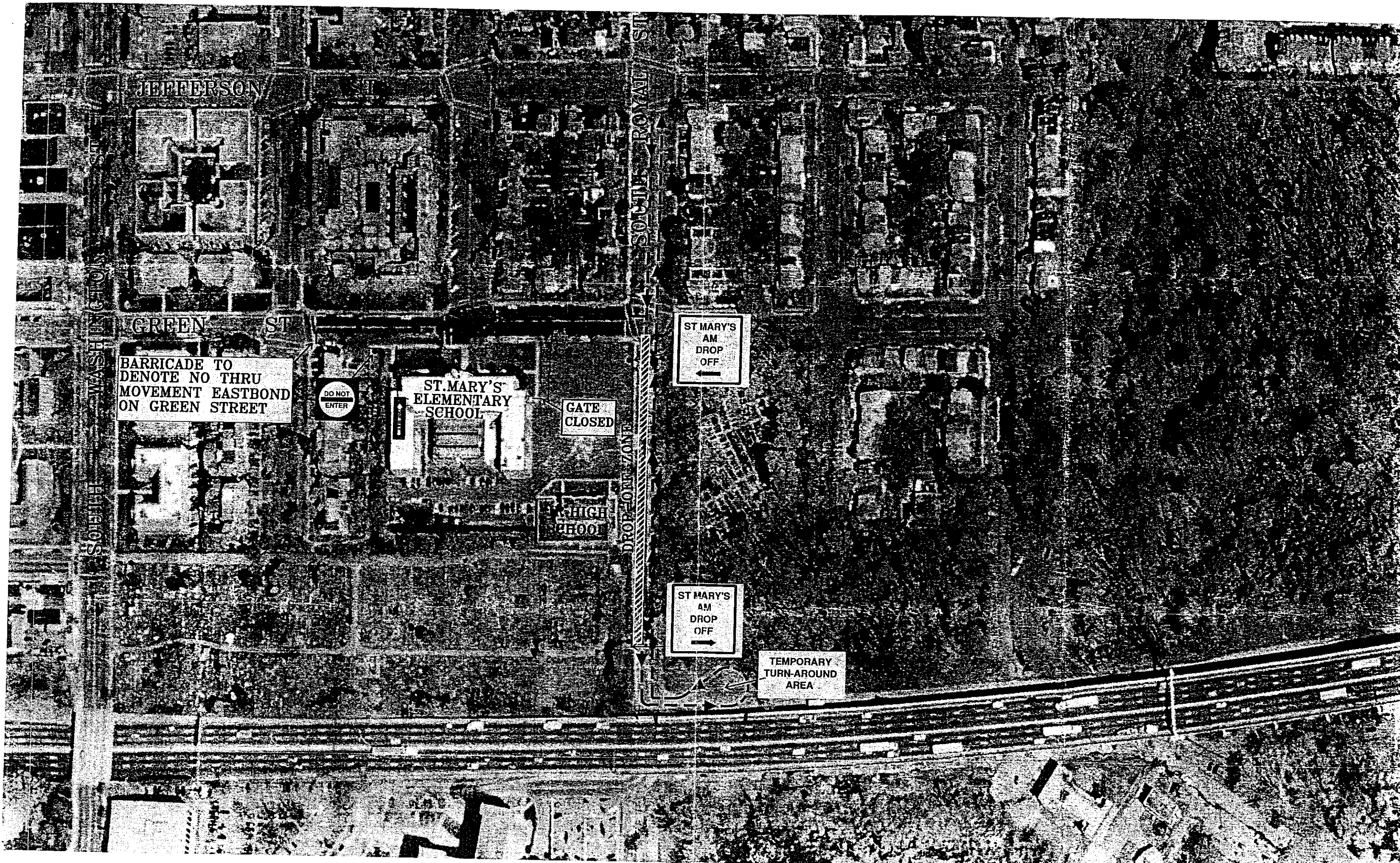
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Very truly yours.

Richard J. Baier
Richard J. Baier, P.E. *by RAB*
Director

cc: The Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
Philip Sunderland, City Manager
✓ Ronaldo T. Nicholson, VDOT Project Manager
Kathleen Dolan, Principal, St. Mary's School



BARRICADE TO DENOTE NO THRU MOVEMENT EASTBOUND ON GREEN STREET

DO NOT ENTER

ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GATE CLOSED

ST MARY'S AM DROP OFF

ST MARY'S AM DROP OFF

TEMPORARY TURN-AROUND AREA

DROP-OFF ZONE

JEFFERSON ST

GREEN ST

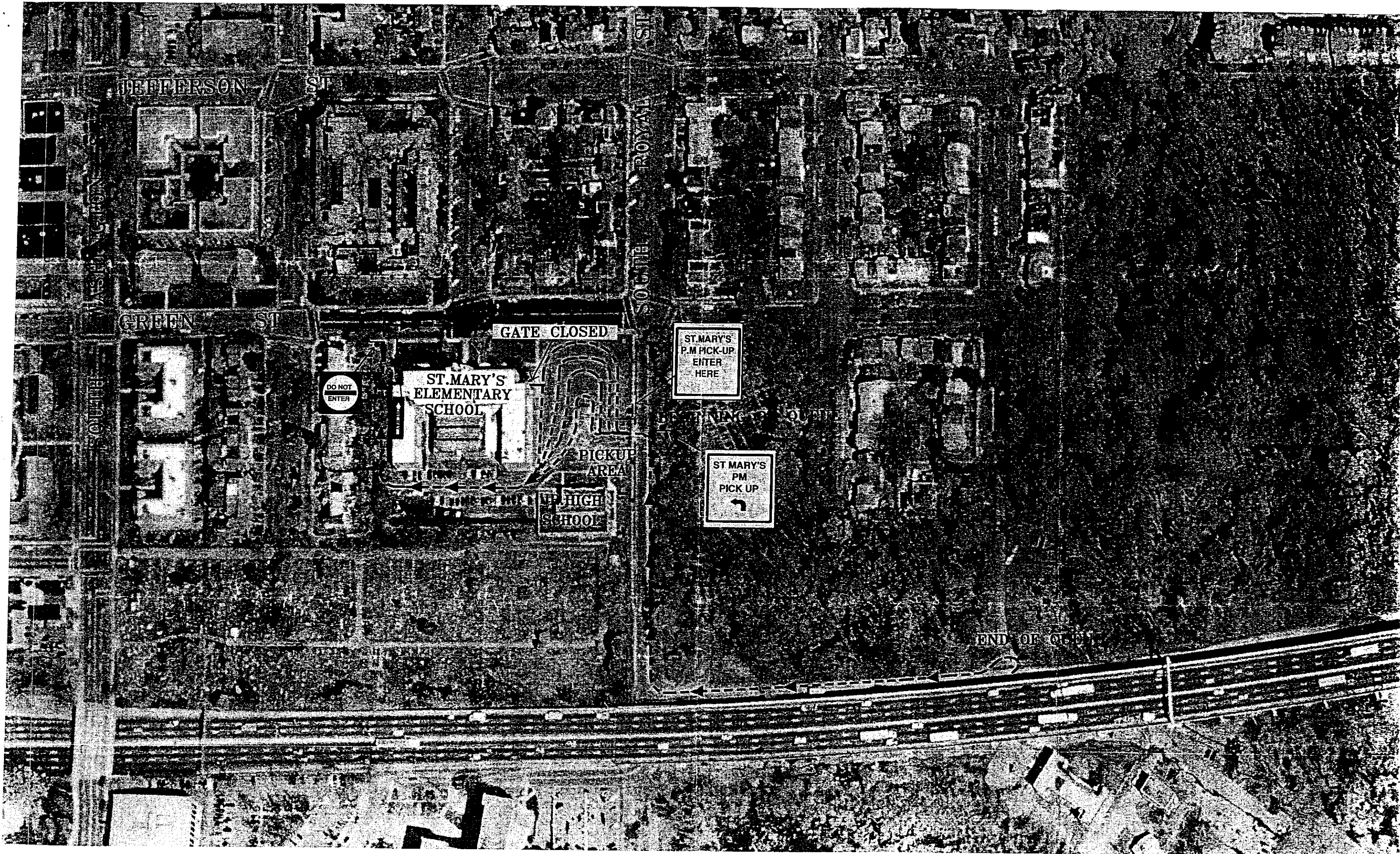
WASHINGTON ST

SOUTH ST

SOUTH ROYAL ST

ST. MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL

ST.MARY'S SCHOOL A.M DROP-OFF DIRECTIONS



ST.MARY'S SCHOOL P.M PICK-UP DIRECTIONS

ROUGH DRAFT

**CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
Public Hearing Meeting — December 15, 2001
Partial Verbatim of Docket Item No. 10**

* * * * *

10. Consideration of Interim Closing of South Royal and South Streets, from Jones Point Drive to South Washington Street.

Mayor: Okay. What I want to suggest that we do is staff has a presentation that, that they would like to, to make which I think might clarify some of the issues. We have a number of folks who have signed up to speak on this matter, and then maybe after we have the presentation, questions will be answered and maybe we can, we can try to short-circuit some of the, the testimony by getting a lot of these issues identified during the presentation. Mr. Baier, why don't you go ahead and kick-off this item with the presentation and then we'll have some discussion.

Baier: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Staff just wanted to give a brief overview of kind of where we are and where we've been in the last two weeks. We've had five meetings on this South Street/South Royal closure with the community and also more so with Saint Mary's. Let's just move through the presentation.

Baier: Basically, you see the areas affected up there. North being, if you will, up to the right. This is South Washington Street. You have the Beltway and then running right along the Beltway, of course, is Jones Point Park Drive. Now this is the area in dashed underneath the Beltway that we're talking about today, South Royal Street and South Street. Really, there's, we tried to summarize over the last couple of years and the last couple of weeks and months what the issues really are, and they come down to really four that we see. The security issue relating to the near-term issue. As we're going to talk about a, a little bit, there are some studies being done to look at this, a very important transportation structure and determine what security measures need to be taken to make sure that it is, of course, you know, very secure given the recent events of September 11. The second is construction

demolition. There is quite a bit of construction. It is going to be focused on that quadrant of Hunting Towers that is just right next to the proposed bridge location. The building closest to the Beltway as you know will be demolished next year and there is a lot of utility work that'll have to be done and we'll talk about that in a little more detail. And then we have the location of the new or proposed bridge. The location of the new bridge is about 150 feet south of the existing bridge structure and that leaves about 18-1/2 feet of width if you will between building #2 that will be, you know, left and remaining and the bridge abutment itself. So that, that we'll talk about a little bit more in detail and then the last is kind have been thread in many of the park plans insofar as the access. And there was some discussion, the members that were on the stakeholders panels can certainly tell you much better than myself, about the character of the park and we talked a little about that last December with regard to the permanent park and park plans. With regard to security the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with VDOT and Maryland are basically reviewing the security of the bridge and have determined that this bridge itself is a potential area of threat for security. Now, now, why would that be? In talking with the project, you know we have a very, very high volume conveyance bridge here, almost 200,000 cars a day. A very visible and direct transportation link. We have a bridge that has an abutment with a road underneath it so the abutment where the bridge connects to land is, is very accessible. And it is in the evenings by the counts very infrequently used. So it's a accessible place that is somewhat dark. We have made recommendations to the project regarding the lighting issues, but also is infrequently used. We have also the areas underneath the bridge with the, the piers and the columns, if you will. They have been cordoned off with fencing and berry wall so those are majority, if you will, secure. The Department of Defense, the second bullet here is performing a threat assessment and according to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project, we expect that back from them in Spring of 2002. The Woodrow Wilson Bridge has as early as mid-October, begin talking with the City about the security threat issues, so the area, the immediate issue under the bridge is a security-driven issue with regard to the time frame. Construction Demolition. The demolition of the Hunting Tower building and structure I've already mentioned is going to make way for the

expansion of the bridge to the south by the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project. That leaves a net, as I mentioned, of 18-1/2 feet for conveyance between the building and the abutment. So about 18-1/2 feet for a roadway. You'll see later on that 60 percent of the existing roadway space that currently exists that could be replaced in a new roadway just isn't there. So it's a pretty narrow conveyance way for two-way traffic. Utility Relocation. Major overhead power services and telephone need to be relocated. It's a lot of utility work in this area as well which do hamper travel through the area during construction. The construction of the new bridge we already mentioned. This is the demo issues we're talking about here. Of course, you have the building closest to the Beltway so this building will be taken down next year and these two commercial buildings here as well as the Terrace buildings over in this area to make room for the, the bridge itself to move about 150 feet south on that alignment. We mentioned about the, the South Street being reduced or shrunken if you will, I'm not going to go too much into that, but it does eliminate the possibility for safe two-way traffic under the consisting configuration, 18-1/2 feet. And remember the point of constriction is not so much where it passes underneath the bridge structure. The proposed bridge structure, but really between building #2 that will remain and the existing abutment planned for the future bridge. The impacts of the closing certainly are two main points. The neighborhood itself, and we're talking about Old Town, specifically Yates Gardens area and also Saint Mary's School. We collected some traffic information which we've shared with the school and their consultants and we see that, you know, that these are basically the volumes on these streets east of Washington Street. Now, these are the a.m. peak and the p.m. peak. So we're talking about here is, right now at Green Street we have about 350 cars between Washington and Royal in that morning a.m. peak which is coincidental with the drop-off period with Saint Mary's. With the closure or the proposed closure of South Street/Royal, we're going to have on that street about 450 cars and these are the blocks between, again, Washington and Royal. Certainly not a high volume. In the afternoon we have less of a, of an issue I believe because we have a much lower background volume and then a much lower volume that will be translated that will have to go up to Green Street and then make a right-hand turn. In the staff report you did see, hopefully, that there is a

redistribution chart there that follows general engineering practice that reassigns the traffic which is now on South Street to Green and Jefferson and the streets to the north as they join Washington. Some information that we gleaned from Saint Mary's was that 65% of the students arrive from the south, and the reason this is important is because it determines the directional flow and the amount of vehicles, students and vehicles, that have to be then reassigned to those streets that we discussed, Green and Jefferson, Franklin and the other streets. Also, we have 70 to 90 in the a.m. hour using those numbers that percentage that will have to be reassigned to those streets. In the afternoon, a little higher volume is provided by the school, 130 to 150 cars in the p.m. peak hour. And, and for this purposes here we've mixed metaphors a little bit. We're calling the peak hour, if you will, it's the peak hour associated with the pick-up time of the school which is the two to three hour, and not the traditional traffic peak hour, of course, the dinner hour, 5 to 6. So the recommended actions that we've discussed with Saint Mary's and the project are retiming the traffic signals on Washington Street to make sure that those intersecting streets with the signals have an adequate amount of time to make a right turn. Now, as we discussed earlier at the Tuesday acceptance of the report, the, there is no doubt that the bridge construction itself, capital T, traffic will be, there'll be some traffic as there always is with construction. What we're talking about here is, is the, the retiming of signals to help move that traffic even though there will be congestion as there is always with construction to allow that right turn and also to factor in any, if you will, exiting traffic coming from Saint Mary's up Green Street or up Jefferson and then making a left out across Washington. Bear in mind that that left out will be done at a time when there is very little background traffic so it's much easier for us to accommodate that left out than if it was coincidental with the background traffic peak hour, 5 to 6. We also want to continue working with Saint Mary's because we see some real opportunities. In the discussions we have, I'm still a little bit perplexed as to their traffic and parking consultants, the planners that they've hired and their concerns with regard to the queuing of parking but we'll continue to work with them. We see that with a few items done, that we'll be able to really enhance their pick-up in the afternoon at least and by enhance what I mean is, right now, and

there has been for many years, utilized Royal Street for pick-up between Green and Jones Point Drive on the east side of Royal Street. That can accommodate about 30 vehicles even though as was pointed out at many of the meetings that there are, there's a fire hydrant and there is a regular turn of course at Green and Royal. We can accommodate 30 cars. What happens then typically is the queue extends back into Jones Point Park along Jones Point Park Drive. The project has agreed to examine with the Saint Mary's School and City staff the need to slightly relocate or adjust the barrier wall and the fencing that exists along the south side of Jones Point Park Drive which has been reported by the school to cause some operational problems because it does make the road a little narrower. Also, the turnaround area at the end of Lee Street has been an issue of concern. It is in pretty poor shape and this turnaround area is used by vehicles that are wanting to join the end of the Saint Mary's pick-up queue and proceed down Green or down South, turn into Jones Point Park on Jones Point Park Drive and then want to turn around to then join the end of the queue that extends from Royal down to the intersection of Royal and Jones Point Park and then wraps the corner into the park itself on the driveway.

Mayor: Question for you. That's right there at the, virtually right there at the intersection just north of the bridge at Royal and Jones Point Park Drive. I mean, it's been there for a number of years. Do you see that as sort of a critical element, improving that turnaround area so that number one you get adequate turning radius, number two, I mean, the grading and the my guess is that you're looking at gravel treatment right now it's virtually bare earth. So improvements there would be critical to the ability of parents who are coming in, turning around, and then reorient themselves back on Royal Street and then to Green. Is that correct?

Baier: That's correct. That's correct. We think it will enhance the operations. Right now what we have is, we have vehicles that come in, it's very difficult. There is very little gravel there. They're turning around, if it's rained it's muddy, and it's difficult to turn when the queue extends back with the existing location of the barrier wall and the fencing along the south side that exists underneath the bridge for security reasons. So we do see that as an important component. We also see as an important component to

explore additional parking needs if in fact, queuing needs if in fact that arises. We haven't seen that to date, but the church, the school I should say, staff that they have hired, consultant staff, have really brought up this issue and so we've looked at other ways that you could actually go ahead and have additional queuing room. One, of course, would be to have queuing allowed on the west side of Royal between Green and Jones Point Park Drive. Currently posed for no parking but because of the ban on the trucks that come through the area and also pass Lyles Crouch during drop-off and pickup, they're not allowed to move through there, very limited traffic so we can look at that. As well we can look at the drop-off bay on Green Street between Saint Asaph and, and Royal. That drop-off bay can be expanded. Right now there is a yellow curb and signs that prohibit use of that area between the drop-off bay east to the corner of Green and Royal.

Mayor: Mr. Baier, the two options that you, the two items that you just brought up are sort of options that we could do. I mean,

Baier: If in fact there is a further need to examine for more queuing room. Understandably the, the consultants, Veteran Associates, that they've brought on who are traffic planners can continue to study that. They, they report that they haven't had, and they probably have not had enough time to amass all the information having been brought on last week. So, future study area. Also the process for drop-off is a particular concern. We have many pictures and we've spoken with the principal, Mrs. Dolan has been very helpful as well as Engin Artemel on some of the drop-off issues. The drop-off in the morning if you've been out there, and know several of you have after contacting me, it is a bit sporadic despite some procedures that are set up, the principal does, you know, state herself that it is difficult for her to control, you know, the place and placement of cars and people, students exiting the cars. Of particular concern is the double-parking and congestion because of, of the existing a.m. to work rush hour. This drop-off occurs and that is created along Green and Royal. Also of concern is the side of the car with which pedestrians exit the vehicles, students. They are allowed to exit either side, go towards the double yellow line in the middle of the street and then run through cars so we do have some issues there. Yeah, this occurs, you know, we do have

police out there and they're trying to keep the intersection free in the morning but just cannot control several blocks worth of parents offing children to school. We also wanted to continue to monitor the traffic conditions, you know. And we've spoken about doing some additional counts, you know, after the temporary closure should Council decide to do that today. One of the issues that we've talked a little bit about is a little difficult to see. This is an aerial picture, a little grainy, of the school. South Royal Street right here. Green Street north is to the right here of the photo. One of the issues, and I feel kind of compelled to bring this up, you know, is to allow some of the queue to come on-site a little earlier. That, of course, you know, has to be worked out with the school and the programming of that area. We have been out there. We haven't seen it used. Mrs. Dolan does report that it is utilized after 2:30 for some recess with pick-up occurring shortly thereafter so other schools in the area do do this. It would be a way to bring a little bit more order to at least the p.m. pick-up after school. The a.m. pick-up is another issue. So really the process we have here is the traffic and parking board approval with the recommendation that we study, that we mitigate the impacts both to the community. The City Council approval, if that's received today, and then we want to do some heavy advertizing whether the approval is, is for December 29 or a later date. We want to do some heavy information education of the community using the variable message boards. They've been very effective. And then also mail outs and certainly going through this issue at the December 18th Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force which has been a valuable addition to dissemination of information to the community. And then also if the community is desirous have some community forum as well. We need to work with all the affected associations, Saint Mary's included to get notification to the parents. As we've learned, you know, Saint Mary's is, is certainly, you know, an affected business, and I say business because that's the term that was used to describe from the representatives from Saint Mary's so it is a business we want to treat them, you know, with enough notice and care. The street closure, December 29 is what has been requested. That could be moved. And then VDOT to come back and study with the City a permanent closure at a later date. These are two important related issues, future project actions. One of the things that's very critical is the haul route both to

the school, and I say schools, I want to say schools because Lyles Crouch is certainly affected with the haul route as well as Saint Mary's even though there is a morning and then after-school ban on truck traffic past these schools there certainly is an impact during school hours other than those two times that I mentioned. South Street is going to enable in the total take by the Project of the property enable a primary transportation delivery haul route along South Street. That doesn't mean that hauling will be entirely eliminated from the Franklin/Gibbon/Royal into Jones Point Park, but the majority of truck traffic coming in, especially with concrete work is being slated for South Street. The future plans for Jones Point Park, just to mention, 65% are on hold right now depending upon the Department of the Defense threat assessment study. So there are some issues with that primarily pedestrian safety and parking issues that need to be worked out leaving the soccer fields in place on the south side of the existing bridge, and they have to be, one has to be slightly reconfigured. The goal line closest to the drainage ditch as you enter that field. And that concludes our staff presentation.

Mayor: Now, Mr. Baier, the item that's before us today is, is an interim closure and one of your points was that the Council at a later time, or the City at a later time would consider a formal request to vacate the, the current easement and the public right-of-way. When do you anticipate that request to come in and be processed by the City?

Baier: We have been informed by the Project that that would be in the kind of March, April, more so April time frame. Nick Nicholson is here and can speak to that issue if it's changed. He is the VDOT project manager.

Mayor: Okay. So, and that would be more of a formal process than what's being requested here. I mean what's being requested here is, is sort of an interim, you know, we've received a request to, to limit vehicular access beneath the bridge because of a threat assessment that's going on. That request came to us, I believe, in, formally came to us in late October. We have sort of identified this process as a process we wanted to go through in order to, in order to afford traffic and parking board consideration and public hearing not only before the traffic and parking board but before the Council. And then later

on we would have another request that would come in which would be the formal vacation of easement. Is that correct?

Baier: That's correct, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: All right. Ms. Eberwein.

Eberwein: Following up on the Mayor's point of being about being a temporary closing prior to a formal vacation, is there anything, and maybe this question should also be addressed to Mr. Pessoa, the City Attorney, is there anything that prevents us from delaying the formal vacation until after the completion of the bridge construction? The reason I ask that is as we all know the bridge may be rebid or even redesigned based on the, on the most recent cost estimate that came in 75% over what they had estimated as the, as the cost, and we won't really know the effects of the bridge until it's actually completed about six years from now. In fact, we may not even know if the effects are what we're planning for right now because it may be redesigned, so is there anything that prevents us from actually delaying that formal vacation until such time as we can see the final effects.

Pessoa: Mr. Mayor, as a legal matter there is not. In terms of the practicalities of the design and construction of the bridge that may be problematic and Rich can speak to that. But as a legal matter, Council has ample discretion to defer or deny the request for a vacation.

Mayor: Mr. Euille.

Euille: Yeah, I was going to ask a similar question, but since we have someone here from VDOT, he can respond to it.

Mayor: Nick:

Nicholson: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Council Members. My name is Renaldo Nicholson. I'm with the Virginia Department of Transportation and project manager for Woodrow Wilson Bridge, and let me speak specifically to the, the articles that have been going about the bid. Currently, the Maryland State Highway Administration are reviewing those bids and the decision they will make will not be to redesign the bridge. The decision they will make is whether, one, to

negotiation with the contractor to try to bring that bid that they have more in line with the engineer's estimate which is in my opinion unlikely. To reject the bid and readvertise the package as originally put out for the outer loop, inner loop and the demolition of the existing bridge, or to repackage, not redesign, repackage the bid for example, just the outer loop, then have separate contracts for the inner loop and the demolition of the bridge. Right now we are anticipating, and this is still open, that that may bring on a five-month delay of the bridge itself. What we're talking about here today is the work that is being done in Virginia. It's the widening of the Capital Beltway as it connects to the bridge, and that work is on schedule and it is important that we close South Street in order that we can proceed with that work, i.e., the demolish of Huntington Towers and the construction of the widening portion of the Capital Beltway that will not only tie into the new bridge, but also the reconstruction of the Route 1 interchange. And that is on schedule. The schedule for that has not changed whatsoever.

Mayor: Okay.

Sunderland: Mr. Mayor, let me just make one addition, just so everybody understands. Remember, Maryland is responsible for building everything up to Royal Street even though it's in Virginia. And then from Royal Street to the west is all, is all VDOT. So what Nick's saying is that VDOT is continuing on all the plans from Royal to the west and waiting for Maryland to decide what they're doing from Royal to the, to the east.

Mayor: Okay. Well, now, I know that there've been a number of meetings and we've got a number of speakers that are here today, but I'm, I'm going to ask sort of a question of you, Mr. Nicholson, and you, Mr. Fadoul, representing Saint Mary's. I think we understand the, the whole notion of security and threat assessment and I don't want to get into a debate about national security here. But one of the things that, that Mr. Baier's presentation pointed out that there are a number things that we, well, we might be able to do, may be able to do to you know either improve the drop-off, pick-up situation. You know, we've, we've got some ideas now and, and we want to work with the school to make this an effective process. What I'm going to suggest, and I want to

know if it's acceptable to you and Mr. Fadoul on behalf of Saint Mary's to see if it's acceptable to you that we go ahead and approve the temporary closure. That the closure become effective January 14, now Mr. Fadoul, I know you were looking for February. When you and I talked yesterday it was January; we're now looking at February. I'm, I'm just throwing the January number out right now and I understand the need to communicate to parents and the holiday season and they're off and that gives us more time to do some community education as well. So, as effective closure date of January 14. Mr. Baier pointed out in his presentation that one of the key elements at least in our assessment thus far is the completion of a, of a sufficient turnaround at Jones Point Park Drive, and, and what I'd like to do, and that gives us more time to do that if we delay that, delay the closure a little bit. And that's something we need to do. I think everybody's in agreement there. That we also after the closure conduct some actual traffic counts, or actual traffic studies that assess through experience rather than projection that assess what the, the affect it is having on Saint Mary's School and as well as the a.m./p.m. commuter traffic and during that time we can also work with the school in terms of the specific of kinds of improvements we can make to the drop-off and pick-up of students. And that also during the next few months prior to the request for the formal vacation, that good-faith negotiations occur between the representatives of Saint Mary's School, Virginia Department of Transportation, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Design Center, and you know, our staff as well. I mean I know we've had five meetings. We've committed to do more, but what I'm asking is, is a good-faith effort to look at how we can, and in good-faith negotiations as well, how we can mitigate some of the traffic impacts keeping in mind that that's going to be a critical consideration when we get to the formal vacation. Now, does that sound like an acceptable course for you, Mr. Nicholson, as representative of the Virginia Department of Transportation?

Nicholson: I just want to make sure I understand. The, the item indicated a closure of the 29th of December but you're proposing is that be delayed until the 14th of January.

Mayor: That's correct.

Nicholson: And at such time it is closed we would then provide studies to look at the actual impacts, whether it's on the Washington Street corridor or in the Yates Garden community, what really happens during that time frame.

Mayor: Exactly.

Nicholson: And at the same time proceed with discussions, negotiations of mitigation for what one is actual as well as what we anticipate as we go through the construction of this project on the Virginia side.

Mayor: That's correct.

Nicholson: And then when we come back and do the vacation, all that will be part of the consideration.

Mayor: Well, all that would be part of the consideration but you know again one of the things, and I've got to say it, but this is a traffic issue.

Nicholson: Yes. That's right.

Mayor: I know that there are other issues. I know that there are other issues that you're discussing with, with Saint Mary's and, and you know in my expectation and I think you would agree that, that the, that VDOT would negotiate those issues as well, and the City will play a role in those. But this is a traffic issue.

Nicholson: And, and that's what I want to differentiate. What we're talking now, is the traffic issue, because quite honestly in my opinion those other issues are a little more complicated.

Mayor: Agreed. And, and, but the traffic issue and the formal vacation need to be constrained within that particular germaneness rule. Okay?

Nicholson: I'm fine.

Mayor: All right. Mr. Fadoul, on behalf of Saint Mary's does this sound like something that would be acceptable to you?

Fadoul: First of all, Mr. Mayor, I just appreciate your taking the initiative here. I believe the answer is yes but.

Mayor: You ought to go into politics. Go ahead.

Fadoul: Let me just say this. What you just outlined, Mayor, is exactly what we've working around the clock literally for the last couple of weeks to negotiate with VDOT. There are many, many witnesses that would testify to that unequivocally, and what we in turn actually initiated as an agreement with VDOT to which as of a few minutes ago, because I wasn't notified otherwise by Mr. Nicholson, VDOT unequivocally refused to agree. I, I really don't understand why all of a sudden they're agreeing, but I'm happy about it and I know the people at Saint Mary's are happy about it because that's nothing more nor less than what we actually attempted to negotiate with them up until literally Thursday afternoon. We are, we have actually transferred proposed draft documents that would identify each and every one of those issues which have been refused to be signed by VDOT. I mean this is documentary proof we have here and we just don't, we don't understand but quite frankly don't really care as long as your fellow colleagues on the Council also agree that these terms would be satisfactory. Because it, it is all we've asked for, for this hearing. We understand the importance to the public that Saint Mary's concerns be satisfied but that, that is all part of a global process to which other people including the residents in and Saint Mary's for the safety of the children and all the adult residents as well for that matter of all those blocks that surround Saint Mary's has to be taken into consideration. That's never been lost, above all on anybody from the Catholic Church. What we've simply been trying to do is explain to each one of you as you've given us the opportunity to do by meeting with us, which we appreciate very, very much, the opportunity to present our defensive posture so that although we're just looking at a transportation issue here, the cumulative affect of the noise, and everything else, where this is sort of the straw that breaks the camel's back, is understood. It's, it's fine to take things in a vacuum. It's the only way things can be properly organized but it is part of a bigger puzzle and we understand that, that part of the admonition here is to get on with that good-faith negotiation too. We made a lot of progress. We had seven engineers at a meeting with your engineers at the City for hours at a time. The dollar -

Mayor: I guess that sort of goes to the, to the fact that you didn't, you didn't take a vow of poverty, is that correct? I mean, seven engineers and a couple lawyers?

Fadoul: A couple of lawyer, but most of whom are actually working at no cost for -

Mayor: Well, that's good.

Fadoul: A large portion of this, including the hours up until midnight last night preparing for this. I must say though that it was good-faith. There's no question about that.

Mayor: And I'm asking the City -

Fadoul: We are a lot closer to -

Mayor: And I'm asking the same of VDOT as well. Granted, they don't work for me, but -

Fadoul: And they don't work for free either, I don't think.

Mayor: I don't think so either.

Fadoul: So. I, I also understand that there is a date included in this, January 14, and it's something we did discuss. In my ignorance of the day-to-day operations of the school, there is no other date I knew that would work for the logistical education and communication to the parents other than some time well after the children arrive back from the Christmas break which is January 3 or so. So, your offer of January 14 was more than, was more than welcome. I, I did indicate, however, that I'd have to check with the principal and she has indicated, I believe Kathy's here, is it February 8? Just three weeks later, February 8 is the better date because -

Dolan: The reason being

Pepper: Forget it.

Mayor: I'll tell you what. Since we're being recorded and all such things, if you could just step to the mike. Thank you.

Dolan: The reason being is that the majority of my problem is parent education, getting them into the new queue

or whatever the City and VDOT decide. I would go for the February 14th if I'm given priority -

Mayor: You mean January 14.

Dolan: I would go for that date, Rich, if you would make me your top priority and work with me consistently until we get something worked out. Christmas vacation is -

Mayor: Yeah. Well, that, that's one of the reasons why I suggested the 14th of January.

Dolan: And I don't have any problems with that as long as I'm priority, but I would also like, what happens if we don't have a, a plan in place and the parents are not educated. Do we go ahead and close it on January 14?

Mayor: Well, that would be, that's the decision we will be making today. The, the answer to your question would be the affirmative. Yeah.

Baier: Mr. Mayor, I, I think we, we've discussed with Mrs. Dolan, not in a formal you know structured way and perhaps it would help if we can reduce more of it to writing several options and so I think we need to now you know bring in more people from the school, whatever people Mrs. Dolan would like, to kind of vet some of those options, whether it be for the a.m. or p.m. pick-up, and then you know come down to what the best option would be.

Dolan: Do you think that's feasible by January 14?

Baier: I, I really do. Most of the options are a matter of signage and very simple striping so it's, it's not going to be very difficult to explain. I believe it is.

Woodson: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Okay. Ms. Woodson, then Mr. Speck.

Woodson: I actually have two questions but I'm going to start with this one because that's what we're talking about now. Mr. Rich, what is the standard operating procedure for notification when we have changes in traffic patterns? Are people normally given months of notification? Are they normally given weeks of notification? Are they normally given letters to a

certain geographic area? What is the standard operating procedure?

Baier: It's a little different thing on the closure, but normally what it involves is the placement of variable message boards because they're the electronic boards that really can capture a lot of the people who don't live in the area but use the street network which serves you know the larger whole. Then also, what we do is door hangers and letters. In this case we're pretty fortunate that we actually have a, a body set up, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force, that have been very, very active and able to get the information out. And I think we're pretty fortunate that Mrs. Dolan, you know, we had discussed disseminating some information earlier this week and she was able to touch the parents via fax or communication, you know, in a pretty ready manner. So, I, I think we've got between the variable message boards, the door hangers, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force, the school system setup, I think we've got a pretty good way to, to reach the public.

Woodson: And how long in advance of the change in the traffic pattern is this normally done?

Baier: Normally we like to give two weeks.

Woodson: Two weeks notice.

Baier: Two weeks notice.

Woodson: Okay.

Mayor: All right. Go ahead.

Woodson: And I presume that we have mailing addresses for all of the parents, for all of the families with children at Saint Mary's should we send them a message. I'm trying to understand. Obviously, you can see where I'm going with this. What is wrong with their ability to connect to this obvious change? Why is it going to take a month and a half for that to happen when that's not standard operating procedure for any other circumstance that might be similar. So, I need to understand that. That's my first question.

Baier: Why, I think, I think that, you know, until recent times the City didn't have the variable message boards, so perhaps their experience was predicated on a time when we were reaching more in a paper way rather than in the electronic way. And the Woodrow Wilson Neighborhood Task Force wasn't, wasn't there. Now, for example with the recent one-waying of the streets on Notabene and North Old Dominion, we spent several months as we have here in discussion with the neighborhoods much like Saint Mary's and then we posted it like we would do and then we put up the variable message boards. We did door hangers in English and Spanish which probably wouldn't be necessary for, for this area, but maybe, and then did a mailing. So we, we'll do all of that so I think it is very possible and plausible to do it, you know, by the 14th.

Woodson: Can I ask my second question or you were going to talk about this one?

Pepper: Well, yeah, I was just going to say one extra way of saturation is simply as the parents are queuing up just hand them through the door or through their window, you know, here's the new plan.

Woodson: Yeah, and that's -

Baier: That's a very good suggestion.

Woodson: Very. But you're not hiding all of these ideas that you have. This has been perfectly evident. You have shared this. They know about the variable message boards and all of these other resources that you have available to disseminate information. I mean this is not a big secret. Right?

Baier: It's not a big secret. Neither are the plans. I think that the school's concern is valid in that they're concerned, and I think one of the big things that we learned as, as a City more about was the concern they have for, for the school and the cemetery, more running like a business rather than as a public institution, which of course, you know, it is as characterized by the -

Woodson: Yeah. I, I mean I understand that. I'm just trying to understand why it is going to take that long and they are asking for even more time to disseminate information. Is it because it's, it's not that people need to know that there is going to be

change, but that they need to know how they are supposed to queue up and is it that kind of education that we're talking about?

Baier: Yes.

Woodson: Because otherwise I'm really having a difficult time connecting to why we need, you know, eight weeks in order to give a little bit of information to what I would presume to be intelligent people.

Dolan: May I address that, please? I think that my main concern as the principal of Saint Mary's is that number one there have been proposed plans but there is no plan in effect right now. They have come out, they being the City and VDOT and have taken pictures and have made suggestions but we have no plan right now. It would, we need to practice the plan, see if it works, and then if it does disseminate it to the parents that that's the one we're going to use. There have been several proposed plans, but it involves making a turnaround on South Street. It involves putting gravel down at the end of the road. It involves requeuing my car pool. That takes time. I have 700 children that I need to retrain and it takes awhile to retrain children and parents. So that's, that's why I'm asking for extra time.

Mayor: Mr. Sunderland. You wanted to weigh in on -

Sunderland: There are two different kinds of notices that need to go out. One is typically to the general public that we're closing South Street and a portion of South Royal and we would do that by a variety of means and we would do that for a two-week period so when people are passing by they see in two weeks or ten days or a week it's going to be closed. The other thing going on here though is that as a result of the closing there are going to be alterations to how kids are picked up and dropped off at Saint Mary's, and two things have to happen before that gets finalized. We have to agree on what's the best option to do that and then they need to get that out to the moms and the dads and the kids and so forth so there's a second round of decision making and then getting the notice out and that's why it's taking more, because we don't have as Ms. Dolan is saying, we don't have that final plan now. So that's going to take more than the normal two-week period.

Woodson: Right. And I understand that.

Mayor: And it's complicated by the fact that we've got a Christmas break too.

Woodson: Sure.

Fadoul: If I could just interject just one quick thing here. The other thing, and the only other thing, and while we appreciate all the comments in addition to that is the actual construction of the turnaround, the physical construction. That takes time to actually do.

Mayor: And that's why my suggestion that, you know, it's predicated on, on that being done. I mean, Mr. Baier, in response to my question, indicated that that is a critical element. I want to make sure that's in before we do the closing.

Woodson: So, that being the case, then are we not premature in even discussing when this is going to be closed?

Fadoul: Yes.

Woodson: You know, I guess that's why I'm confused. I'm having a very difficult time connecting to all of this because I presume that people can follow directions. So clearly there's a disconnect for me and I will take, you know, responsibility for losing that connection, but I'm not getting that. And then my second question is really simple. Why do we have to permanently close South Street?

Fadoul: Excellent question.

Baier: Well, the, there's really a couple reasons. The first is the ability for it to carry traffic when the new bridge is rebuilt south of the existing bridge. It's only going to be about 18-1/2 feet from the corner of Hunting Towers building 2, and so that's going to mean that you've got passage way for 18-1/2-feet worth of street, sidewalk.

Woodson: I see. Okay.

Baier: So it's just a, just a little too narrow for standard two-way travel, and we've discussed some, some things that might be able to be done, but they certainly have some, some implementation logistical problems to say the least, but there is a pretty

severe constriction-18-1/2 feet-for the traffic on South Street which -

Woodson: Would it, would it help if it was one-way travel with no parking? Is that not possible?

Baier: Well, one of the things that we're looking at is that option as well as some other options. The reconfiguration and the width and then the turn, you make a pretty severe right-hand turn underneath the bridge so we're looking at that, the roadway geometrics as to what it can accommodate. But the Project feels very, I would say, I won't speak for Mr. Nicholson, very uncomfortable and I share some of those concerns with regard to the traffic conveyance with the proposed street being 18-1/2 feet even as a one-way street. One, one thing I did want to ask was, the turnaround we're talking about, that's going to be clear, because during the discussions with the Project, there's been a couple turnarounds discussed and I'm not sure that I'm on the exact same wavelength or perhaps I am, so the turnaround we're talking about is the turnaround in Jones Point Park on Jones Point Park Drive because earlier on with the Project, we had discussed with Saint Mary's they had wanted to have the turnaround right there at Royal and Jones Point Park Drive which would take much more construction. If we're talking about the turnaround on Jones Point Park Drive itself where the vehicles now would go in as they do in the p.m. queue and turn around in that kind of unstable gravel area.

Mayor: That's correct. That's correct. Mr. Speck.

Speck: Actually I had several questions/comments. I mean, one, I think that the questions that everyone is asking about sort of the time frame really does have these two dimensions to it. One is how quickly can you tell people South Street is closed. Well, that doesn't take very long and there's a process for that. And then what is it you tell people that the alternatives are, South Street is closed. Well, for the general public, you don't really need to. South Street's closed. Don't go that way. So, what we're really talking about is to the parents who are going to be using that South Street route for Saint Mary's drop-off. That particular route is, if you can't go down South Street or you can't leave from South Street, what are you supposed to do? As far as letting them know South Street's closed, we'll let

them know by Monday. I mean that's why God invited telephone trees is you know for just that reason. You get the word out very, very quickly on that, so we're not concerned about that element of the communication. Now, what I want to focus and Ms. Dolan knows this because she almost, she saw a suspicious man lurking on the school grounds and obviously it was me.

Mayor: I hope she did the responsible thing and called the authorities.

Speck: I was, I was down there, it was close. I was down there actually four times this week, twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon. In fact, if you look right there, that's the top of my head, that tiny little white spot right there.

Mayor: I can see the sheen.

Speck: Yeah. But the first thing I noticed was that in the morning, and there is a police officer stationed every morning. I was talking to him as well. I assume that's at school expense, is that correct?

Dolan: Yes, it's at school expense.

Speck: Was that a significant portion of the drop-off traffic was coming down Green. So, my first question, they would come in Washington and just headed down. They weren't coming that way turning up, dropping off and then leaving. Some were, but not that many. So the first question about what you're trying to communicate to parents about alternatives is, that's not, the issue of closing South Street for what at least empirically to me at least the two mornings I was down there was not all that significant because they weren't using South Street to begin with.

Dolan: Not in the morning but in the afternoon.

Speck: Okay. All right. So, narrowing the issues, if the, and I have to tell you, somebody probably had experience planning D-day watching the way that, that whole thing was choreographed. It was very impressive. If you haven't seen that, it's very impressive the way they have the cars queuing up and the circles and the bells that rang and I don't know what use whoever planned that will be able to apply

in the future but definitely there's some sort of logistics training that -

Dolan: Thank you.

Speck: But, so, they're coming in and I notice that quite a few of a cars that were queuing up in the parking area right there were also coming from Green and they were turning in, you have that little, you have a sign there, it's like what Mary's Drive or?

Dolan: Mary's Way.

Speck: They come in there and they queue up there. Now, then I was watching and some of them do leave that way, you know, they turn right out of the parking garage and go out, but a lot of them were going the other way.

Dolan: About 65% of them take a right and go down South Street in the afternoon.

Speck: Okay. But to the extent that we're trying to give people alternatives, isn't that alternative to turn left? Is it, I mean, it's not all that complicated logistically to tell them what they have to do when they, if they're coming out of the garage and right now they're going right and going south, and you tell them to go left, and I think that chart behind you all that shows that. Well, I'm enjoying this little laser pointer. That they turn left out of there and then they start dissipating traffic. Actually it would result in less queuing I would think if the traffic instead of it all going that way and queuing up right there at that one narrow stop light and turning left, some of it goes this way, some of it goes this way, some of it goes this way, so you actually have fewer backups at the various stop lights.

Dolan: Right. At the corner of Royal and Green there is a stop sign. Between that stop sign and the gate where the parents exit -

Speck: Right there.

Dolan: Right. I can probably fit, and I looked at this very closely, I can probably fit six cars so what's going to happen is that they're going to have to wait for those cars to make a left on Green precede

down and make a left on, what is it, I don't know the next one down.

Speck: Jefferson.

Dolan: Jefferson, or left on Franklin or Gibbon. I don't know that I can control where they make a left and how long they go.

Speck: Well, they're going to, you can control it if they can't make a right, they're going to make a left.

Dolan: Right. But I'm saying that -

Speck: And then the question is which, which street do they go up?

Dolan: Exactly.

Speck: But, given that the traffic, you have the one separate exit out of that parking garage right now so you're not having cars just you know streaming out side by side but it's somewhat controlled that intuitively I would think that if you're coming out that way you're queuing up at the stop sign and this particular intersection is not heavily trafficked in the afternoon, that if I'm behind a bunch of cars that are all turning left, I'll probably go to the next block.

Dolan: Also, on Green Street you have to remember that I have a lot of children who are walkers.

Speck: Right.

Dolan: And they, there is not going to be enough room to queue all the cars on Royal Street even though it's closed. They're going to have to queue on Green also.

Speck: Wait a minute. Let's review that one again.

Dolan: Okay.

Speck: Queuing for, let's, we're talking about afternoon or morning?

Dolan: Morning. Afternoon?

Speck: Afternoon. You're talking about cars that are queuing on Royal to do what?

Dolan: They line up approximately, well some of them start at 2 o'clock. They start lining up to pick up their children. Right now we queue them on Royal Street down Jones Point Drive and then they come into the parking lot at approximately quarter of three. One of the City's proposals is that we queue them on both sides of Royal Street because South Street will be closed and no one needs -

Speck: That's the whole point of the turnaround right there.

Dolan: Right. Exactly. But looking at it for the last couple of days, we can fit approximately 25 cars on each side of the street. What am I going to do with the rest of 133 cars that I have?

Baier: Well, Mr. Speck and Mrs. Dolan, I think what we're, what we're not describing here is, is within that queue between Green and Jones Point Park on Royal, the east side, then wraps around into Jones Point Park and we have many, many photos. We were, we told Mrs. Dolan we were coming so we were out there taking photos and it shows that they queue up past the recycling center. It's been relocated. And down toward what would be the pedestrian extension of Lee Street.

Speck: How many cars are able to stay in that kind of circle that you have there while you're waiting for the kids to, to get into the cars. How many cars are there?

Dolan: When they're in the playground area?

Speck: Yeah.

Dolan: About 77.

Speck: At one time.

Dolan: Yes.

Speck: But there's also cars that are queuing up over here. So if you have 77 cars that can queue up there, why would they even need to queue up on Royal Street?

Dolan: Because of the playground situation.

Speck: You're using the playground?

Dolan: Yes. I've talked to the teachers. We're trying to not use it at the time, but we're -

Baier: And that's one of the things -

Speck: Just abolish recess. That would be -

Dolan: Oh, that's a good one. They'd love that.

Mayor: Real popular with the young people.

Baier: Mr. Speck, that's one of the things I think that is very important is procedurally we talked about in the morning, the afternoon, if in fact there is a concern with the amount of queuing distance and I can tell you that we can fit almost 200 cars just on Royal between Green and Jones Point Park Drive and then Jones Point Park Drive down past Lee Street extension.

Dolan: But you're using a 16-foot car, right?

Baier: Right. What we're using is a 16-foot space which is normally accepted for queuing. Twenty feet is when you have to maneuver in and out of a parallel parking space. So,

Dolan: Most of -

Mayor: Well, I'll tell you.

Dolan: Most of mine are Suburbans if you haven't been there.

Baier: Sixteen feet will do.

Speck: I, I asked if -

Mayor: Well, let me, it seems as though we've got some agreement here on how to proceed, and while I appreciate the attention to detail here, that's why they didn't put City Councils in charge of planning D-day. You know, to use your metaphor.

Speck: What I'm trying to determine is whether the issue of delaying this, whether there is that much that has to be resolved that would result in delaying this further or whether the issues are rather finite and, and can be addressed, particularly since Rich is going to make this his highest priority at Mrs.

Dolan's request. You won't be doing anything else for the next month, I hope.

Baier: It, no sir, and in the last nine days I've spent 12 hours on just this issue.

Speck: Okay, so you'll just bring a cot in here to the office and skip the holidays.

Baier: That's right.

Mayor: All right. Now.

Pepper: The 14th sounds good. Do you need a motion or are you going to have a public hearing?

Mayor: Well, let me, I just want to, I just want to restate things just because we got a little bit off track. Okay. So the suggestion would be right now unless we hear otherwise, right now would be closure effective the 14th and we'll work as hard as we can to help you with communication. Completion of an adequate turnaround on Jones Point Park, critical part of the plan, in Jones Point Park so people can turn around. You know, we would conduct, VDOT would conduct actual traffic studies for Saint Mary's and, and the a.m./p.m. commuter traffic to assess the effect and potentially we might have to, to fine tune some of those other specific queuing options that, that Rich mentioned. And that in the meantime there would also be good-faith negotiations between the representatives of Saint Mary's School, VDOT, Woodrow Wilson Bridge Design Center and us to what degree we need to be involved regarding these traffic issues. Okay. And then it would be hoped that we would, we would learn from our experience and we would have some actual empirical experience so that we could also at that time make a, a decision sometime later in the spring I'm going to assume that that's going to stay on schedule regarding the formal vacation. All right. Now that's agreeable to you, Mr. Fadoul?

Fadoul: It is with two simple clarifications.

Mayor: Very quickly.

Fadoul: That in those mitigation discussions, the good-faith negotiations which to us are critical because the plan -

Mayor: I understand.

Fadoul: Does not exist right now. That the, at least two, that the parameters of those negotiations include the concept that Ms. Woodson brings up of perhaps at least keeping South Street open in the future for this dropping off and picking up in some way, shape or form. That it not be a permanent closure. I think there's been a lot of permanent and temporary -

Mayor: Well, I don't -

Fadoul: going back and forth.

Mayor: Well, I don't know that, I don't know that we can agree to that. Now -

Fadoul: As long as it's contingent on the plan, that's sufficient.

Mayor: I will say that, that that option should be continued to be explored but I can't very well put something that is, I can't very well make a commitment today regarding that particular feature. Should it be, should it continue to be discussed in the negotiations, yes.

Fadoul: That's all I ask is that the scope of the negotiations includes that and that the scope of the negotiations also includes the original -

Speck: No. Not, not from my standpoint it's not. I mean, there's two very good different issues here. I, we never reach closure on anything in Alexandria so in fairness it's hard to say you know you can't. But, but I mean there's, giving, leaving the impression that that's still on the table, I think is unfair to, to the public. I really do. If somebody wants to bring it up and, and no one's ready to say never, no how, I'll sooner die before that happens, you know, I can't, I don't know what someone can communicate to you on that point. But I don't think it's fair to let people think that's still a live issue. I don't think it is.

Fadoul: That what is a live issue.

Speck: That, that the possibility that South Street will not be permanently closed.

Fadoul: If it is not, if it's a fait accompli that it's going to be permanently closed, then we have lost the effect of the transfer of the right-of-way at a later date after the mitigation plan is supposed to have been agreed upon. That is, that goes to the heart and stabs it right in the heart of the entire purpose of this proposal which is to have another time and continued leverage for the negotiations to be indeed bone fide.

Speck: - that we're going to be working on, but well,

Pepper: We can't do that.

Sunderland: Yeah, Mr. Mayor, let me say, give you my own view on this. I think it's perfectly appropriate in the public domain for the issue of South Street to be one-way or whatever to be open and that's going to be discussed down the road. My own view is that's not subject to negotiations between VDOT and a private party. I don't care if it's Saint Mary's or it's the, you know, the Departmental Progressive Club or its whatever. That's a public issue that should be publicly debated and is really not to be negotiated in an agreement between a government agency and a private party. So, I think on our table it perhaps remains an open issue and on whatever other public entity might be involved, but not, and Mr. Fadoul, I mean, candidly just raised the issue. It's leverage, and a public issue should not be the leverage in a private negotiation.

Mayor: Okay. Mr. Nicholson.

Nicholson: And I'll be brief. As, as I've attempted to explain to Mr. Fadoul, VDOT has public safety issues with maintaining South Street open. During the construction there is no way we can entertain the traveling public coming through that area and provide a safe passage through. It's just that simple. In the ultimate configuration, as Rich has explained, there is not safe passage for two-way traffic. I have no problem with discussing with him why we feel what we do, but I agree with the City Manager that to try to say for public to leverage, we want to keep this open, I think we're jeopardizing the public safety and I have some concerns about that, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: All right. But -

Fadoul: Just to clarify for the record, Mr. Sunderland, although I appreciate what you say, we are in three-way negotiation here. This is not a private party with VDOT. This is a private party with the City and VDOT whereby the private party expresses its concerns and hopefully the reasons your representatives from the City are there at these meetings, is so that ultimately the concerns of not only Saint Mary's but anyone else who wants to come and be represented there, and many times our concerns are the same as those of the surrounding public, are heard and incorporated into perhaps even sidebar discussions between the City and VDOT after the meeting which is the ultimate purpose of this. We don't intend to negotiate directly and have an agreement with VDOT and cut anybody out. That's why the City's involved and invited to every single one of these meetings. So that was miscue. That was not something that was ever intended nor put forward.

Mayor: All right. Fair enough. You made your point.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Mrs. Pepper.

Pepper: Unless there is a burning need for those who have signed up to speak, could we close the public hearing and I'd like to make a motion.

Mayor: Well, that's, I want, well, let me just ask. Okay. We, we seem to have some agreement here on a number of issues and we can go through and have this discussion but Mr. Fadoul has, has agreed and Mr. Nicholson from the VDOT has agreed to continue these negotiations. We've got a closure date. There seems to be agreement. We've got the turnaround that there seems to be agreement, and we do agree VDOT will conduct some, some actual traffic studies to assess the impacts and then we can potentially react accordingly. Now, is there a, and one thing I will say is that I would like to involve Yates Garden in, you know, some of the, at least the communication that goes on particularly about the turnaround because that impacts them as well. Now, is there, is there a burning desire since we have this agreement right now to, for people to speak?

Fadoul: Just before, as long as it's clear now -

Mayor: One lone hand goes up.

Fadoul: Since Mr. Speck brought this up that there, there is still, if you want to use the term leverage, there is still a condition here and that is that the reasonable agreement of the parties be brought back before the council before the Council, before, before the right-of-way issue is discussed and agreed upon because that right-of-way is the ultimate safety valve.

Mayor: Well, you're going to have, there's going to be a process that we go through for that vacation to begin with. That opportunity would exist. My hope is that through the negotiations that you have with VDOT and the City as well is that we gain some agreement there prior to, to that particular hearing, and if we don't, my guess is that a lot of the points that you make are the points that are still open will be the subject of testimony at that hearing.

Fadoul: At that time. Yes. That's all I wanted to clarify.

Mayor: But just so you understand, that hearing process exists and is going to be there. That hearing process is not predicated upon anybody reaching any agreements nor is it, nor is it, it's hoped that we have, that we have agreements. It's not going to be predicated on having that agreement.

Fadoul: Correct. But the fact that we don't have agreement if we don't will be taken into consideration I assume by the decision, ultimate decision makers on that issue. That's all we ask.

Mayor: You would have, you would have your opportunity before the Council regarding the permanent vacation.

Fadoul: And that is all that we asked for in writing with VDOT until this morning and never got an agreement on, but all of a sudden they're agreeing, that's fine.

Mayor: Okay. All right. Okay. Well, that's fine. Now, Mr. Speck and then I saw a lone hand go up back there. Okay. Why don't you come on up.

Speck: I've got quick comments after that.

Walter: My name's Lee Walter and I live in Old Town, work in Old Town and my kids attend Saint Mary's. I'm here because I oppose the closure of South Street and just since I was here today I wrote a memorandum prior to reading the exhibit, but in listening to all the discussion it becomes very clear that Councilwoman Woodson, Councilwoman Eberwein bring up the point that the closure of South Street is really hanging in the balance of what we're discussing with the traffic patterns for Saint Mary's School. And others bring this up, of course. ...

Mayor: Well, I, you know first off. Okay. I guess we can have this debate if we want to even though there seems to be some agreement on the principles but I think that you have characterized this not particularly fairly. First off, we're not walling off our Alexandria from, now these are your statements -

Walter: Yeah. Oh, I understood that to be there was going to be a segment of the wall, I mean, was to be on view at Saint Mary's School.

Mayor: Well, first off, this is a traffic issue. Okay. This is a traffic issue regarding South Street. You know, when people are going to have other opportunities to come into Alexandria if they're from Fairfax. The public safety aspect is not necessary, it is being brought to us not necessarily as a traffic accident situation but one of security because the Woodrow Wilson Bridge has been identified as a potential target for a terrorist incident, and -

Walter: I understand that.

Mayor: And this changes the way we think about things these days. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life and it's an argument that, you know, we're not going to win. We're going to have to change the way we do a lot of things in this community, but that's why it's here and that's why it's here now as opposed to in the springtime when we would have normally heard the formal vacation. But at any rate.

Walter: But the construction of South Street, the reconfiguring of South Street when the bridge, as the bridge construction proceeds is not on the table even though we are saying, the City was saying well there's a couple of options we could look at but

we're not looking at those options. We're closing it instead. And Councilman Speck correctly says he doesn't think it's on the table to ever reopen, and I would agree that it is the way it's been characterized and there is no real room for -

Mayor: Okay.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor, could I just follow up on something you were saying? It might be helpful if you knew that one of the things we have in the City are something like the top ten most vulnerable spots in case there were some kind of terrorist attacks, and things like the Masonic Temple obviously because it's big and so prominent. But the Woodrow Wilson Bridge is one of the top ten and has been and that is why they just can't have traffic that goes under it. So that's really kind of what it's all about and I guess if you're getting the feeling that we may never, ever open it again is because at least speaking for myself I'm concerned that the federal government is never going to let us open it again. It's not exactly like we want to. It's, you know, want to close it because -

Walter: That's what you're voting on today, correct?

Pepper: We understand.

Mayor: That what we're voting on -

Pepper: This is temporary.

Mayor: What we're voting on is a temporary closure of the streets and then it'll have to come back for a formal vacation at a later date and that, you know, we've got some negotiations, we've got some specific elements that are built into this, but then, you know, they would continue to negotiate and, you know, the design, some of the aspects of the design are actually relooked at in light of the terrorist incidents. Okay.

Speck: Can we put map, overhead back on?

Mayor: Do we want to continue with, we've taken one comment, do we want to continue with the public hearing or do we want to try to move forward at least on the agreements that we've outlined?

Woodson: Can we hear what they are, the agreements, so that perhaps we don't need to move forward.

Mayor: Well, again, I'll repeat them again. We would agree to the temporary closure of South Street and South Royal. The closure would be effective the 14th of January and will be predicated upon the completion of a, the satisfactory completion of a turnaround in Jones Point Park to accommodate the traffic coming into, on Jones Point Park Drive turning around and then proceeding to the school. That after, during the closure time, the temporary closure time, VDOT will conduct formal or actual traffic counts as it relates to the effects of Saint Mary's and on a.m./p.m. commuter traffic and that good-faith negotiations between Saint Mary's, VDOT, Woodrow Wilson Bridge Design Center and the City would continue regarding traffic issues related to the closure.

Woodson: Okay. Well, I can't speak for what, whether people want to speak but I would be very comfortable with that and would move that recommendation. I'd like however, to see the actual closing to occur say two weeks after the turnaround has been completed because at that point there'd be, the alternative would have been figured out, the turnaround would be in place and then we'd have the two-week notice.

Baier: Mr. Mayor. Just for clarification, that's why we asked about the turnaround earlier. The turnaround is really an improvement of the existing turnaround that's on Jones Point Park Drive. It's basically at the extension, the pedestrian extension of Lee Street where the two bollards are. Right now there's gravel in there but it's kind of -

Mayor: Currently being used, correct?

Baier: That's correct. It's very sparse and it's very, very muddy. It's one of the issues that's come up is the ability to really use that as a turnaround in the condition it's in.

Woodson: so, are we planning to change that condition because that's what I understood? Maybe I was, I misunderstood.

Baier: To improve it, to stabilize it, but I don't think it'll be a major or relocational change or, you know -

Woodson: No, I didn't think it would be a locational change, but that there was going to be some, something done. I mean, I actual, I was thinking in terms of some kind of construction. Something would be done, I don't, paving or whatever, but it seems to me that it makes sense to have that done prior to closing anything. So what you're saying is that's going to happen fairly quickly.

Baier: That's right.

Woodson: Okay. So, can you estimate two weeks, three weeks, four weeks? How long would it take for that to happen?

Baier: The next week.

Woodson: Oh. Very quickly. Oh well then if that's the case I withdraw my concerns.

Pepper: I drove down it myself just the last day or so. It just needs improvement.

Mayor: Okay. All right. So that's the, the suggested path that I think we take is, you know, and so if we want to go there everybody seems to be in agreement, if we want to go down that path, then I think a motion would be in order.

Pepper: I'd like to move that then. That what was just outlined for the fourth time. Agree to the closure effective about January 14 - pardon?

Euille: Insert on or about.

Pepper: On or about the 14th. That there would be the turnaround that would be improved at Jones Point Drive and that VDOT would be doing actual impact studies, traffic counts and that Yates Gardens would be included in some of these, I think, these are the turnaround discussions and that would be my motion.

Mayor: And also the part about the negotiations, continuing negotiations.

Pepper: Oh yes indeed.

Mayor: On, on the traffic issues. Is there a second of that motion? A motion by Mrs. Pepper, seconded by Mr. Euille. Is there any further discussion? Mr. Speck.

Speck: Are there any non-Saint Mary's people that, that wanted to be ?? of this.

Mayor: Well, Teresa has signed up and I think she wanted to make sure that Yates Gardens was included regarding the turnaround.

Speck: All right.

Miller: Yes. I would just like to thank the Council for looking at this. I think you've spent a lot of time. I think that as good neighbors, Yates Gardens wants to give Saint Mary's every opportunity because we feel that the buses will really help take traffic off of our streets. For those that don't think that there has been enough notice that's gone out, I would like you to know that the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Task Force and our civic association has held a number of meetings. One, we sent out 400 flyers, we had many members of our neighbors to come in a joint meeting. A lot of people that lived on Royal Street, Green Street and Lee Street and talked about what the closing would do and it was generally considered that our neighborhood was for the closing of South Street. Those people that need to go to Sutton Place can go around like we do at times. We live there. We see at night at 2:30 and 4:30 in the morning when the ambulances go on the bridge and we have wanted for a long time for more enforcement on that bridge and in this part of town. We're not saying that the police aren't doing their job. We're saying that you've got two bordering neighborhood, Fairfax County and Alexandria, and the police, we need more police enforcement in that area and more coordination and that's what this will do. Thank you.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Ms. Pepper.

Pepper: I think it would be very helpful if Saint Mary's would send representatives to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Task Force. I think a whole lot of the discussion that we had today that went on and on and on could perhaps have been shortened if there had been very active and very meaningful participation on that level. Thank you.

Mayor: Okay. We have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion?

Speck: Yes. I had some points previous, a couple of ?? just very quickly.

Mayor: Okay.

Speck: One of the things that I observed right at the front entrance to Saint Mary's on Green was, I'm not giving this back -

Mayor: You're, you're never getting that, you're never going to, we're never going to let you have that.

Mr. Mayor, this was a serious mistake.

Speck: Wide street, lots of, lots of pedestrian traffic, particularly children, are we able to look at as part of our capital expenses on a lot of the traffic calming issues the raised pedestrian walkways? Whether that's something that we can make sure we've got on our list to try to do. It seems like a pretty logical place to do a little bit more in the way of, of a

Mayor: Kind of a raised crosswalk?

Speck: Yeah. Pedestrian safety. That whole, because you really do have a wide intersection and lots of kids back and forth all the time. So that's one thing.

Baier: Mr. Speck and Mr. Mayor, one of the big things we've discussed with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project team is the need for some traffic calming features and they are looking at that

Speck: Seems like a pretty logical place to do something like that. The second thing I just wanted to mention very briefly because it was mentioned, but it tends to be sort of mentioned and tossed out and really it's a comment directed to the Saint Mary's family, is that there, there are some pretty significant things that, in my judgment, that we have done. One of the most notable is that for essentially 45 minutes, twice a day, every work day, in the morning and in the afternoon, there's no truck traffic that's allowed in or out of the construction site. I mean, here is arguably, maybe not so arguably, one of the most significant transportation construction projects on the east coast for interstate commerce and certainly for the Washington area, for all intents and purposes, construction progress stops twice a day to be sure


there's no truck traffic interfering with Saint Mary's traffic. We negotiated that as part of our contract and I just wanted to tell I think that's pretty significant and it was done on your behalf and I don't think there are a whole lot of projects in the Washington Metropolitan Area that ever had built in that element of negotiation, so I hope that you know that we have not been unmindful of the concerns of the concerns that the Saint Mary's family does have as well as the neighborhood generally, but certainly during those two times a day to try to prevent any further dangers to transportation, particularly for the children. And the final thing which is completely unrelated to this issue but because the map is here and it shows things so clearly, and just in case anyone thinks that I've forgotten or I'm mellowing, look at this particular piece of land right there. That's two acres of land that's owned by the National Park Service, carved out of the Jones Point deal which is being used for basically the private enjoyment of a small group of citizens for four or five months a year. That space right there, and we need to talk about that. Thank you.

Mayor: Okay. All right. Not particularly germane to the, to the issue today, but, but the map's up there, you've got a pointer and that's the last time you get a pointer. Is there any further discussion? All those in favor say aye; those opposed no. It passes unanimously. Okay. Very good. Let's move to item 11.

December 15, 2001

TO: Members of City Council

RE: Hearing on Closure of South Street

FR: Lee Vance Walter 
214 Prince St. Homeowner

cc: Kathleen Dolan, Principal St. Mary's School
Jim McAndrews, Home-School Association President

There are many important aspects to the decision of what to do with Royal St/South St. during the coming months and years. It is key to the success of the final plan that the City, the schools, and the public communities affected work together effectively in these critical phases. The burden placed on our small community to withstand the pressure of the construction of this project is immense.

My husband and I live and work in Old Town. We own residential and commercial property here. Our children attend St. Mary's School. We are impacted greatly by the proposed closure of South Street. I have kept only a fraction of the massive amount of information mailed to my home and posted on my door regarding the bridge construction. Of special interest to me last evening was a beautiful flyer from the **City of Alexandria and the Alexandria Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force**. Some in the room may have been responsible and contributed to the distribution of this material. The mailing included a magnet for my refrigerator with the phone number to call if I have questions about the bridge project. Well, I am calling now.

I have some specific ideas that could form a compromise if the City is forced to close South Street. I will get to them in a moment. But, let me go back to the brochure I referred to. It very clearly states, "no public street will be closed or obstructed." **The very best the City can do for its residents is to work with contractors to find a way to keep open, modify, or build a continuation of S. Royal Street to the GW Parkway at the approximate point the two roads intersect now.** I sincerely hope that can be done. The public has not been informed of potential closure of S. Royal Street. It should not proceed without much greater scrutiny than it has received.

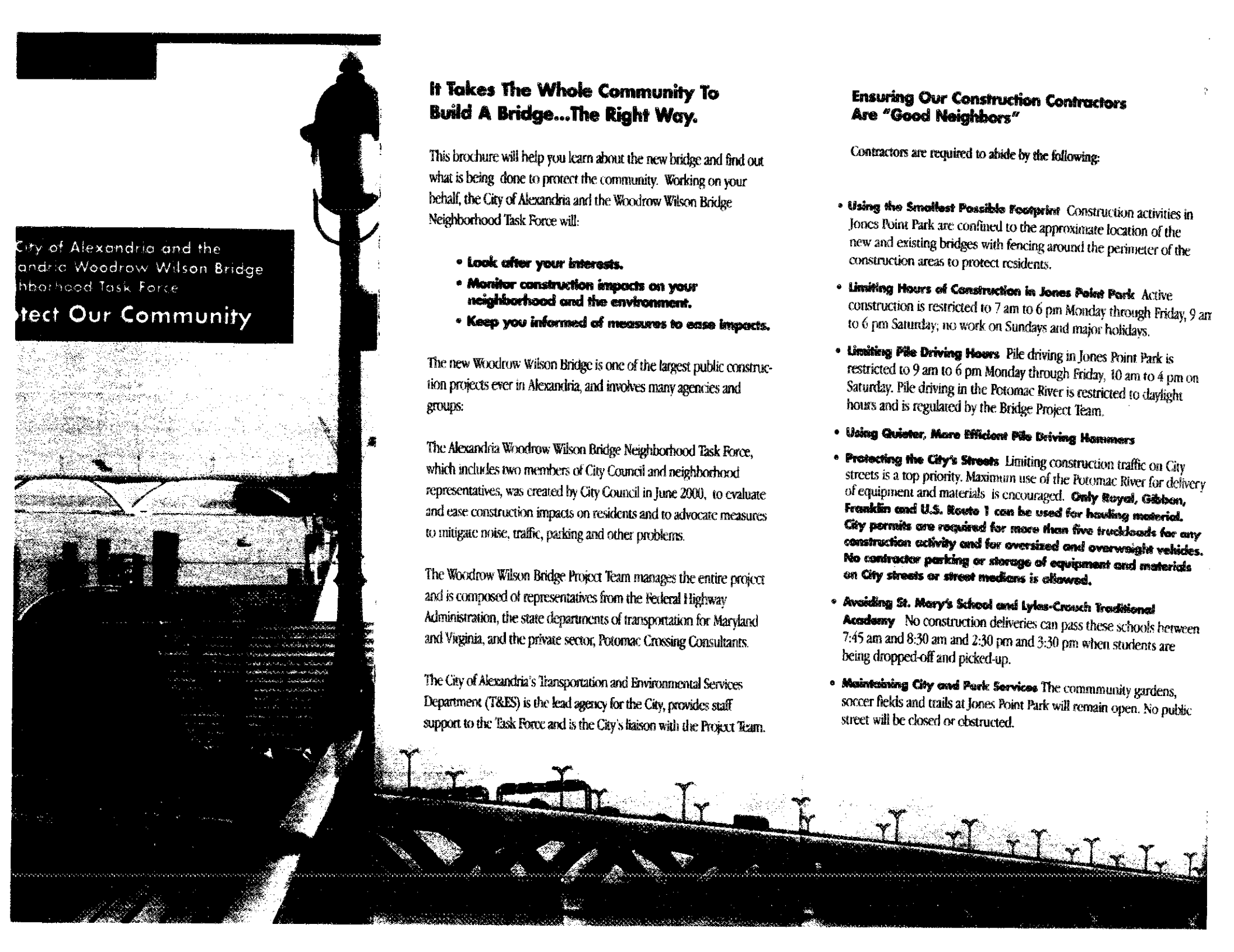
All that said, I want to make two additional points. First, I want to shed some light on the school community most affected by the proposal to cut off South Street. The people who commute to St. Mary's each day from South of the City are truly members of the Old Town community. Their presence in the City each day is... and I don't want to sound hysterical, but... critical. They are the fundraisers for the Campagna Center, they are the patrons of countless Old Town businesses. Many are former and possibly again future residents of Old Town. Economically, this group packs a punch beyond their numbers. Why cut them off at the knees? It is a bad idea.

Second, I have heard much said about how the carpool and morning/afternoon pickup processes will or mostly won't work if South Street is closed. This just isn't so. One needs only look at the success of the "anti-gridlock campaign" waged along the major corridors in the afternoon rush hour to know that a lot can be done through effective control of a situation. The St. Mary's carpool will go on. Will it have to change? Yes.

Reiterating that an effective solution can only be reached through involvement and "buy-in" from all groups, here is what I see as the compromise plan if the city is ultimately forced (word used intentionally – fight to keep South St.!) to close the bypass to S. Washington St.

1. City will post police officers at Green and Pitt Streets and South Washington and Green Streets during critical hours of school carpool activity. (Should recognize here Alex. PD Officer Sydnor as outstanding, exceptional, extraordinarily patient, kind, effective member of the force!)
2. School will allow cars to enter school grounds 15 minutes earlier than it currently does.
3. City will make available from Dash fleet or negotiate with Fairfax Connector the leasing of 2 buses for afternoon and morning "School Run" to the areas south of S. Mary's.
4. Parents will pay for voluntary bus service to points south of the City.
5. These buses will drop off on Royal Street entrance to St. Mary's blacktop. They will exit to GIBBON, left on GIBBON, left on Route 1, left on Fort Hunt Road. Primary point of pickup near Belle Haven could be Mount Vernon Rec. Center. Points south should be somewhat easier to negotiate.
6. All parties will work together to make the best of the situation!

Thank you for your attention to my concerns and ideas. I am cognizant of the immense job faced by the City and commend you all for the service you are providing all who enjoy our City. I can be reached at (703)519-1803 any member or designated staff person needs to contact me.



City of Alexandria and the
Alexandria Woodrow Wilson Bridge
Neighborhood Task Force
Protect Our Community

It Takes The Whole Community To Build A Bridge...The Right Way.

This brochure will help you learn about the new bridge and find out what is being done to protect the community. Working on your behalf, the City of Alexandria and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force will:

- **Look after your interests.**
- **Monitor construction impacts on your neighborhood and the environment.**
- **Keep you informed of measures to ease impacts.**

The new Woodrow Wilson Bridge is one of the largest public construction projects ever in Alexandria, and involves many agencies and groups:

The Alexandria Woodrow Wilson Bridge Neighborhood Task Force, which includes two members of City Council and neighborhood representatives, was created by City Council in June 2000, to evaluate and ease construction impacts on residents and to advocate measures to mitigate noise, traffic, parking and other problems.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project Team manages the entire project and is composed of representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, the state departments of transportation for Maryland and Virginia, and the private sector, Potomac Crossing Consultants.

The City of Alexandria's Transportation and Environmental Services Department (T&ES) is the lead agency for the City, provides staff support to the Task Force and is the City's liaison with the Project Team.

Ensuring Our Construction Contractors Are "Good Neighbors"

Contractors are required to abide by the following:

- **Using the Smallest Possible Footprint** Construction activities in Jones Point Park are confined to the approximate location of the new and existing bridges with fencing around the perimeter of the construction areas to protect residents.
- **Limiting Hours of Construction in Jones Point Park** Active construction is restricted to 7 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday, 9 am to 6 pm Saturday, no work on Sundays and major holidays.
- **Limiting Pile Driving Hours** Pile driving in Jones Point Park is restricted to 9 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday, 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday. Pile driving in the Potomac River is restricted to daylight hours and is regulated by the Bridge Project Team.
- **Using Quieter, More Efficient Pile Driving Hammers**
- **Protecting the City's Streets** Limiting construction traffic on City streets is a top priority. Maximum use of the Potomac River for delivery of equipment and materials is encouraged. **Only Royal, Gibbon, Franklin and U.S. Route 1 can be used for hauling material. City permits are required for more than five truckloads for any construction activity and for oversized and overweight vehicles. No contractor parking or storage of equipment and materials on City streets or street medians is allowed.**
- **Avoiding St. Mary's School and Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy** No construction deliveries can pass these schools between 7:45 am and 8:30 am and 2:30 pm and 3:30 pm when students are being dropped-off and picked-up.
- **Maintaining City and Park Services** The community gardens, soccer fields and trails at Jones Point Park will remain open. No public street will be closed or obstructed.

SPEAKER'S FORM

Request additional time

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM.

DOCKET ITEM NO. 10

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: 10M FADOU

2. ADDRESS: 1650 TYSONS BLVD., SUITE 1335 McLENNAN, TX 76705

TELEPHONE NO. (703) 226-2700 E-MAIL ADDRESS: T.FADOU@FADOU.LAW.COM

3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? SPECIAL COUNSEL, ST. MARY'S PARISH AND GENERAL COUNSEL, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?

FOR: _____ AGAINST: X OTHER: _____

5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.): SPECIAL COUNSEL, ST. MARY'S PARISH ATTORNEY - GENERAL COUNSEL, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL? YES X NO _____

BUT VERY LITTLE!

This form shall be kept as a part of the Permanent Record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of 5 minutes will be allowed for your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the City Clerk.

Additional time, not to exceed 15 minutes, may be obtained with the consent of the majority of the Council present, provided that notice requesting additional time with reasons stated is filed with the City Clerk in writing before 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

The public normally may speak on docket items only at Public Hearing Meetings, and not at Regular Meetings. Public Hearing Meetings are usually held on the Saturday following the second Tuesday in each month; Regular Meetings are regularly held on the Second and Fourth Tuesdays in each month. The rule with respect to when a person may speak to a docket item can be waived by a majority vote of Council members present, but such a waiver is not normal practice. When a speaker is recognized, the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply.

In addition, the public may speak on matters which are not on the docket during the Public Discussion Period at Public Hearing Meetings. The Mayor may grant permission to a person, who is unable to participate in public discussion at a Public Hearing Meeting for medical, religious, family emergency or other similarly substantial reasons, to speak at a regular meeting. When such permission is granted, the rules of procedures for public discussion at public hearing meetings shall apply.

Guidelines for the Public Discussion Period

- All speaker request forms for the public discussion period must be submitted by the time the item is called by the City Clerk.
- No speaker will be allowed more than 5 minutes, and that time may be reduced by the Mayor or presiding member.
- If more than 6 speakers are signed up or if more speakers are signed up than would be allotted for in 30 minutes, the Mayor will organize speaker requests by subject or position, and allocate appropriate times, trying to ensure that speakers on unrelated subjects will also be allowed to speak during the 30-minute public discussion period.
- If speakers seeking to address Council on the same subject cannot agree on a particular order or method that they would like the speakers to be called, the speakers shall be called in the chronological order of their request forms' submission.
- Any speakers not called during the public discussion period will have the option to speak at the conclusion of the meeting, after all docketed items have been heard.

SPEAKER'S FORM

Did not speak

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM.**

DOCKET ITEM NO. 10

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: ENGIN ARTEMEL
2. ADDRESS: 120 MADISON PLACE - ALEX, VA
TELEPHONE NO. 544-5046 E-MAIL ADDRESS: engin@artemel.com
3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? St Marys
4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: OTHER: _____
5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):
Planning Consultant
6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL? YES NO

This form shall be kept as a part of the Permanent Record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

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Did not speak

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DOCKET ITEM NO. 10

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: VERNON (VERN) TURNER

2. ADDRESS: 11535 GUNNER CT.

TELEPHONE NO. 703/590-4932 E-MAIL ADDRESS: VETTRAC.AOL.COM

3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? VERTRA Co. (TRAFFIC CONSULTANT) FOR ST. PAUL'S PARISH

4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: OTHER: _____

5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):
CONSULTANT

6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL? YES NO _____

This form shall be kept as a part of the Permanent Record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

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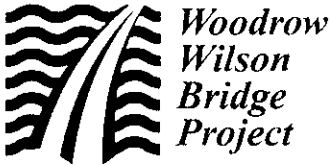
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March 8, 2002

Woodrow Wilson Bridge Center
1800 Duke Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone 703-519-9800
Fax 703-548-4593
www.wilsonbridge.com

Mr. Richard J. Baier, Director
Transportation and Environmental Services
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, Room
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

*10 12/15/01 PF

Subject: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project
South Royal Street Closure – Traffic Impact Study

Dear Mr. Baier:

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project is please to submit two (2) copies of the final report for the South Royal Street Closure – Traffic Impact Study. This report was prepared in accordance with the City Council Approval stipulation noted on the December 15, 2001 Public Hearing Meeting Docket Item Number 10. As you know, the interim closing of South Royal Street and South Street was first considered by the City Council on December 11, 2001 (Docket Item 11) with approval of the interim closure granted on December 15, 2001.


Please note that the implemented pick-up and drop-off operations at St. Mary's are a direct result of the good-faith discussions that took place between City, Project, and St. Mary's staff that occurred prior to the closing of South Royal Street. VDOT has, at no cost to St. Mary's, painted the drop-off area, installed additional fencing and a gate to assist in this school's operation, and provided for traffic enforcement during the transition period. However, given the demonstrated success of the new pick-up and drop off operations at St. Mary's, VDOT cannot assume any additional responsibility in the private operation at the school. We stand ready to assist in any review of concerns resulting from project related activities.

The enclosed traffic impact study includes actual traffic counts that assess the effects that the South Royal Street closure had on traffic operations associated with commuter traffic and St. Mary's pick-up and drop-off and morning operations. Currently, we are reviewing the cadre if issues involved in the vacation of South Street and South Royal Street at the Bridge. Project Staff is in full understanding of the process required for the City to vacate these land rights and look forward to coordinating these issues with you and your staff in the near future.

Should you have any questions or concerns with this information please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Thomas M. Heil, PE
Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

Attachments
C:\SouthStreetClosureTrafficStudytrans030802final.doc

cc: R. Nicholson - VDOT
Honorable K. Donley and P. Sunderland (letters only) - COA
E. Baker and R. Winslow – COA
J. Gerner (letter only)– FHWA
G. McCormick, A. Lee, B. Barkley, and B. Hoage – PCC
Document Controls (M. Harris)



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

I. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the impacts of the closure of South Royal Street under I-95 during construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge improvements. There are two traffic operations issues related to this road closure as follows:

- Diversion of through traffic from South Royal Street to Washington Street (currently using South Royal Street to travel into Old Town Alexandria).
- Impacts to the pick-up/drop-off operation for school children at St. Mary's School.

Data was collected for this study both before and after the closure of South Royal Street, including the proposed changes to the drop-off and pick-up procedures at the school.

II. Background

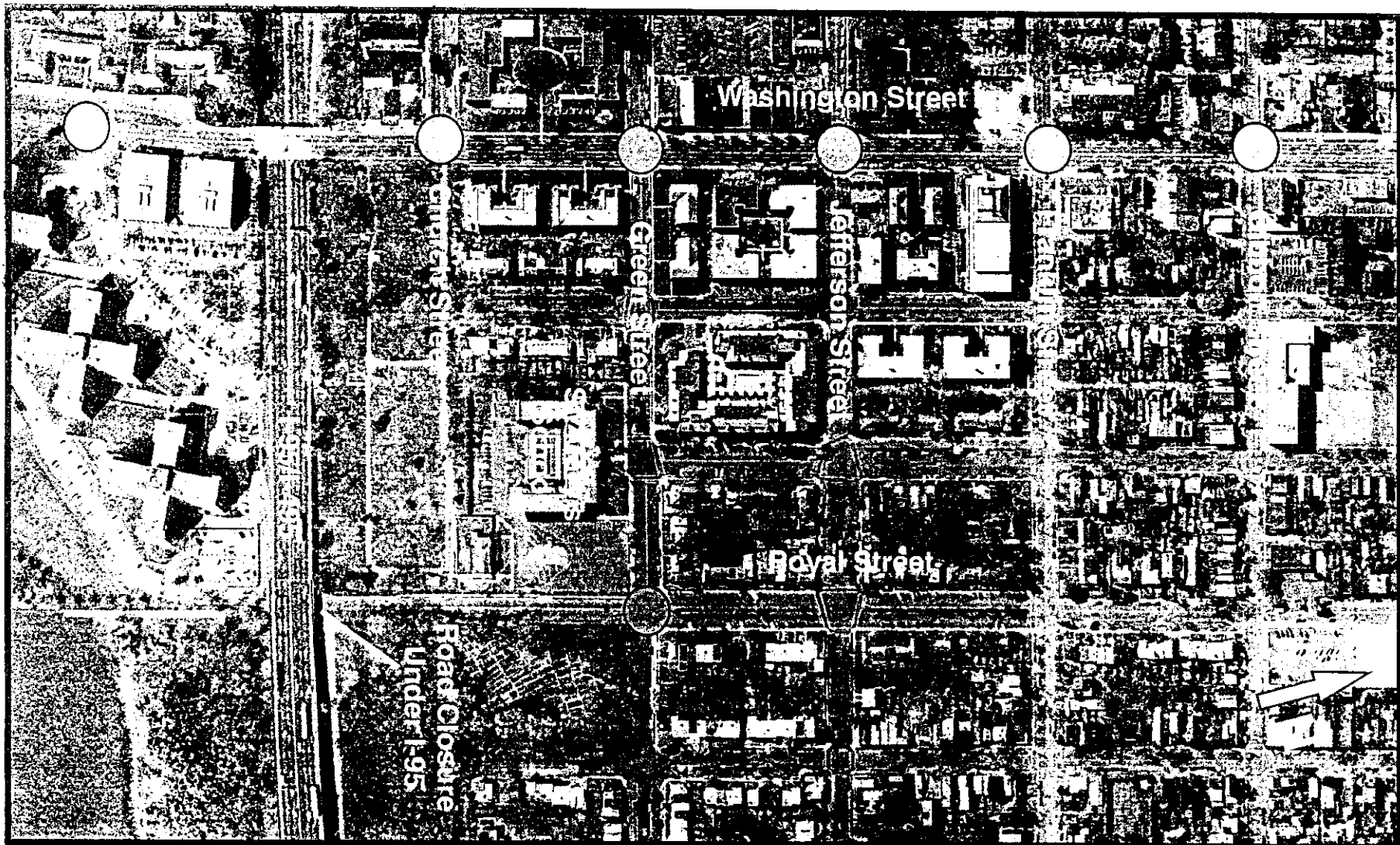
Washington Street is one of the major north-south arterials providing access into downtown Alexandria (see Site Map, Figure 1). Three lanes are provided in the peak direction by restricting the parking lane, and left turns from Washington Street are restricted at some intersections. Because traffic volumes on Washington Street are fairly heavy during the peaks, some drivers are diverting from Washington Street to South Street and using South Royal Street for access into Old Town. About 3,500 vehicles per day are using South Street to South Royal Street.

St. Mary's School is located at the Green Street / South Royal Street intersection (southwest quadrant). This school does not have a formal busing program, so parents are required to drop off and pick up their children at the school each day. Before the closure of South Royal Street, vehicles would queue along Green Street in front of the school and along South Royal Street south of Green Street. With the closure of South Royal Street at I-95, modifications to the school pick-up and drop-off procedures were implemented as suggested by this study.

To assess the impacts related to the closure of South Royal Street, 12-hour turning movement count data were collected at the following intersections both before and after the closure:

- Washington Street at South Street
- Washington Street at Green Street
- Washington Street at Jefferson Street
- Washington Street at Franklin Street
- Washington Street at Gibbon Street
- Green Street at South Royal Street

In addition, the queuing operations at St. Mary's school were observed and recorded to determine the maximum number of vehicles staging, the staging locations, and the length of the queues.



**Royal Street Closure
Traffic Impact Study**

March 3, 2002

FIGURE 1

Site Map

Study Area Intersections:



Signalized



4-Way Stop

III. Existing Conditions

Today, Washington Street carries a fairly heavy volume of traffic during the peak periods (from 2,000 to 2,700 vph in the peak hour-peak direction). This volume is accommodated in three lanes by restricting parking along Washington Street and providing a high-occupancy vehicle/bus lane. Vehicles using this lane must have two or more passengers or be making a turning movement. Left turn movements from Washington Street are also restricted during the peaks to maximize the signal green time for through traffic. Refer to Figure 2 for a summary of the existing lane configurations, turn restrictions, and AM and PM peak hour traffic volumes, before the closure of South Royal Street.

The "Before Closure" turning movement volumes for the Washington Street intersections were analyzed with the Synchro model and signal timings provided by the City of Alexandria. The Synchro analysis indicates that the intersections operated at level of service C or better during the AM and PM peak hours at most locations, with the exception of the South Street and Church Street intersections. These intersections operated at level of service E in the PM peak. Table 1 provides the levels of service for each intersection before the closure.

Table 1		
"Before Closure" Operations Along Washington Street		
Intersection on Washington Street	Level of Service	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
South Street	A	E
Church Street	A	E
Green Street	C	A
Jefferson Street	B	A
Franklin Street	C	A
Gibbon Street	C	B

The intersection of Green Street and South Royal Street is a 4-way stop-controlled intersection. Using Synchro analysis, this intersection operated at level of service B (A) in the AM (PM) peak hour periods before the closure.

No existing deficiencies were identified in the field at any of the study site intersections listed above. However, it was noted that several single occupancy vehicles were violating the HOV-2 lane restrictions during the peak hours.

IV. Impacts of South Royal Street Closure

With the closure of South Royal Street under I-95, the cut-through traffic from Washington Street using South Street to South Royal Street into Old Town is now required to stay on Washington Street and use either Green Street, Jefferson Street, Franklin Street, or Gibbon Street. Traffic counts were conducted after the closure to determine the diversion of traffic from South Royal Street to Washington Street. The diversion percentages, and magnitude of traffic volumes added to these intersections due to the closure, are shown in Figure 3. As indicated, the maximum additional (diverted) traffic is added to the Jefferson Street intersection in the AM peak with about 180 additional vehicles, and the Green Street intersection in the PM peak with about 160 vehicles. The "after closure" volumes are provided in Figure 4 for the AM and PM

Figure 2: "Before Closure" Traffic Volumes and Lane Configurations

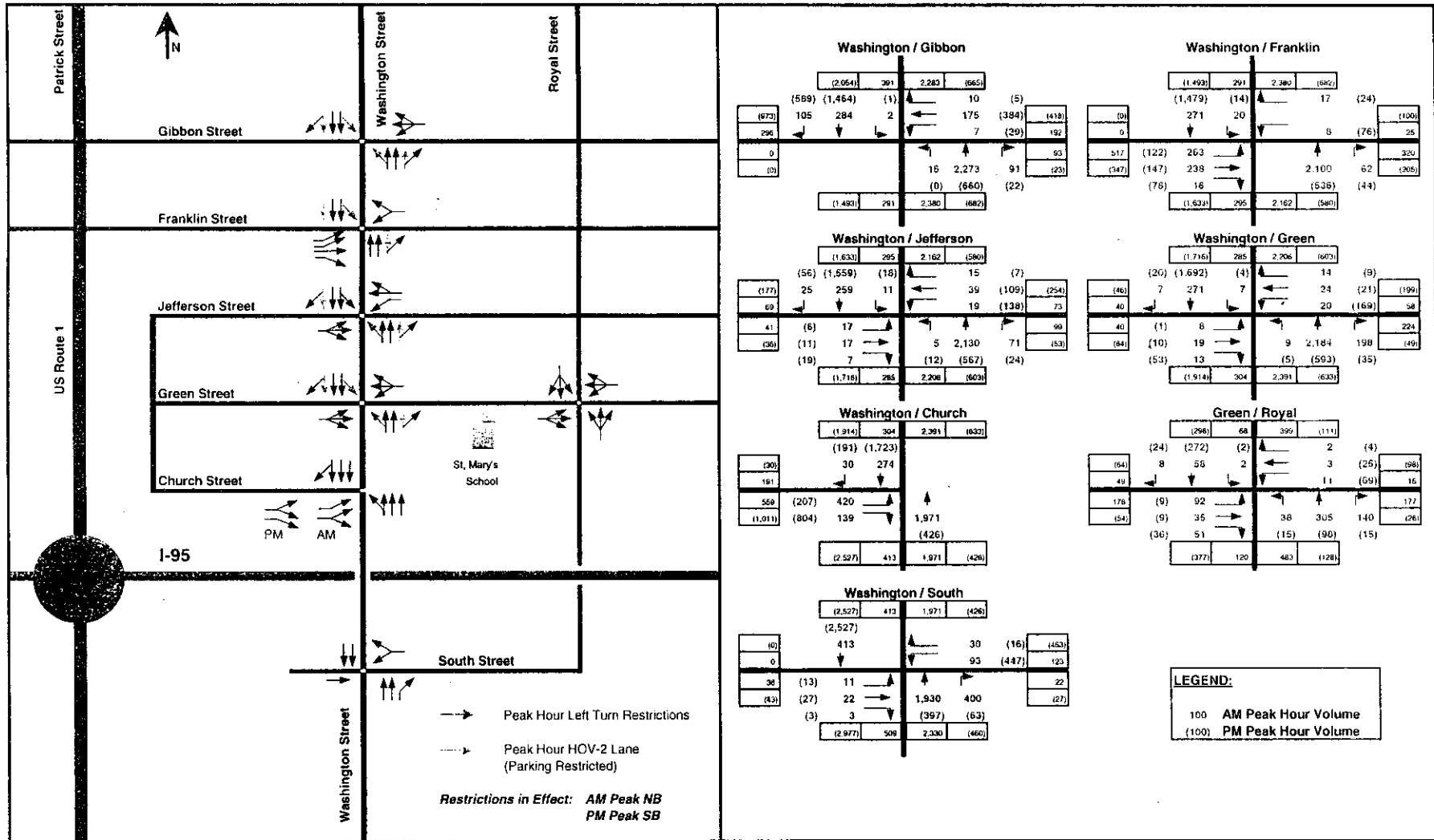


Figure 3: Diversion Routes and Traffic

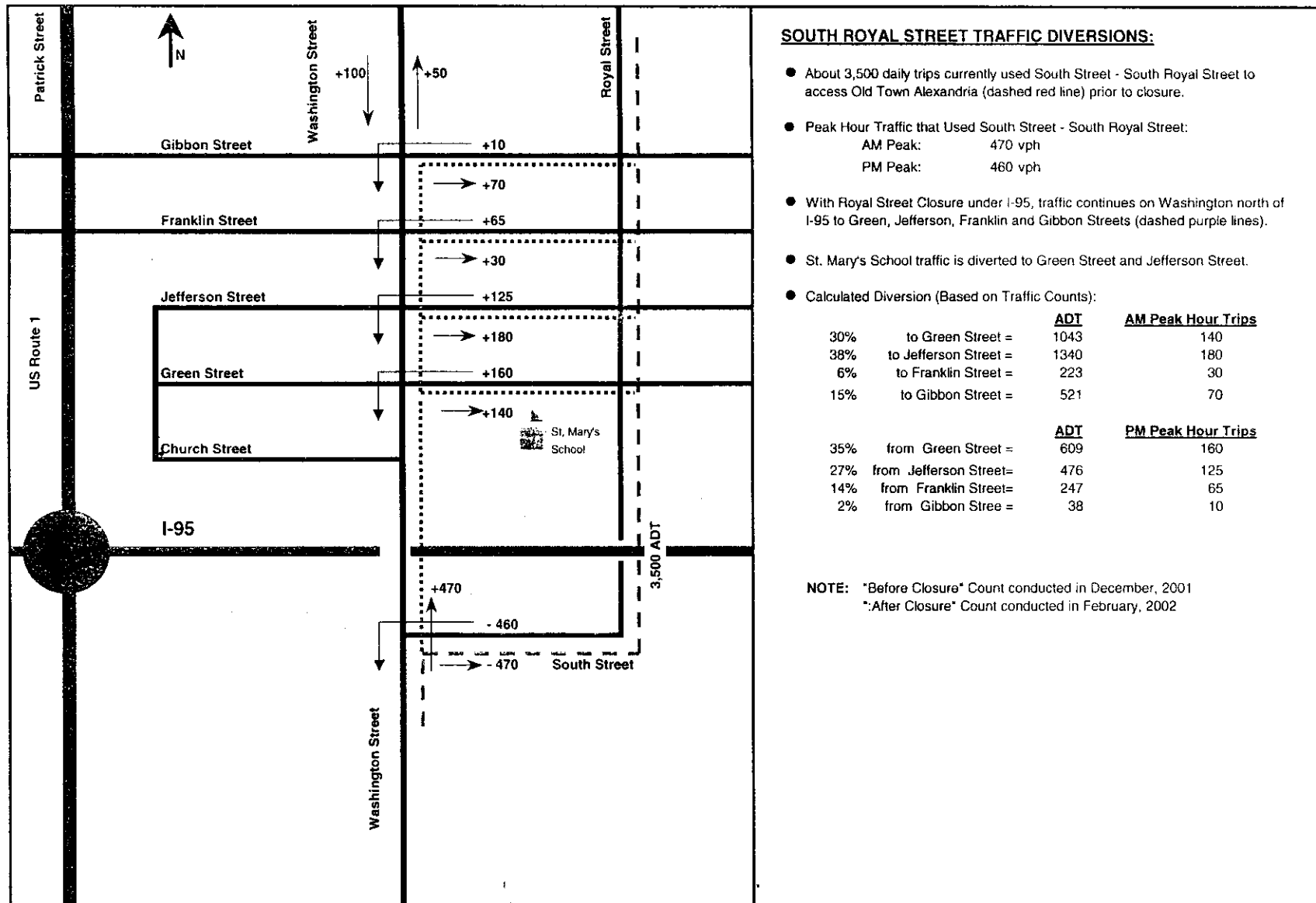
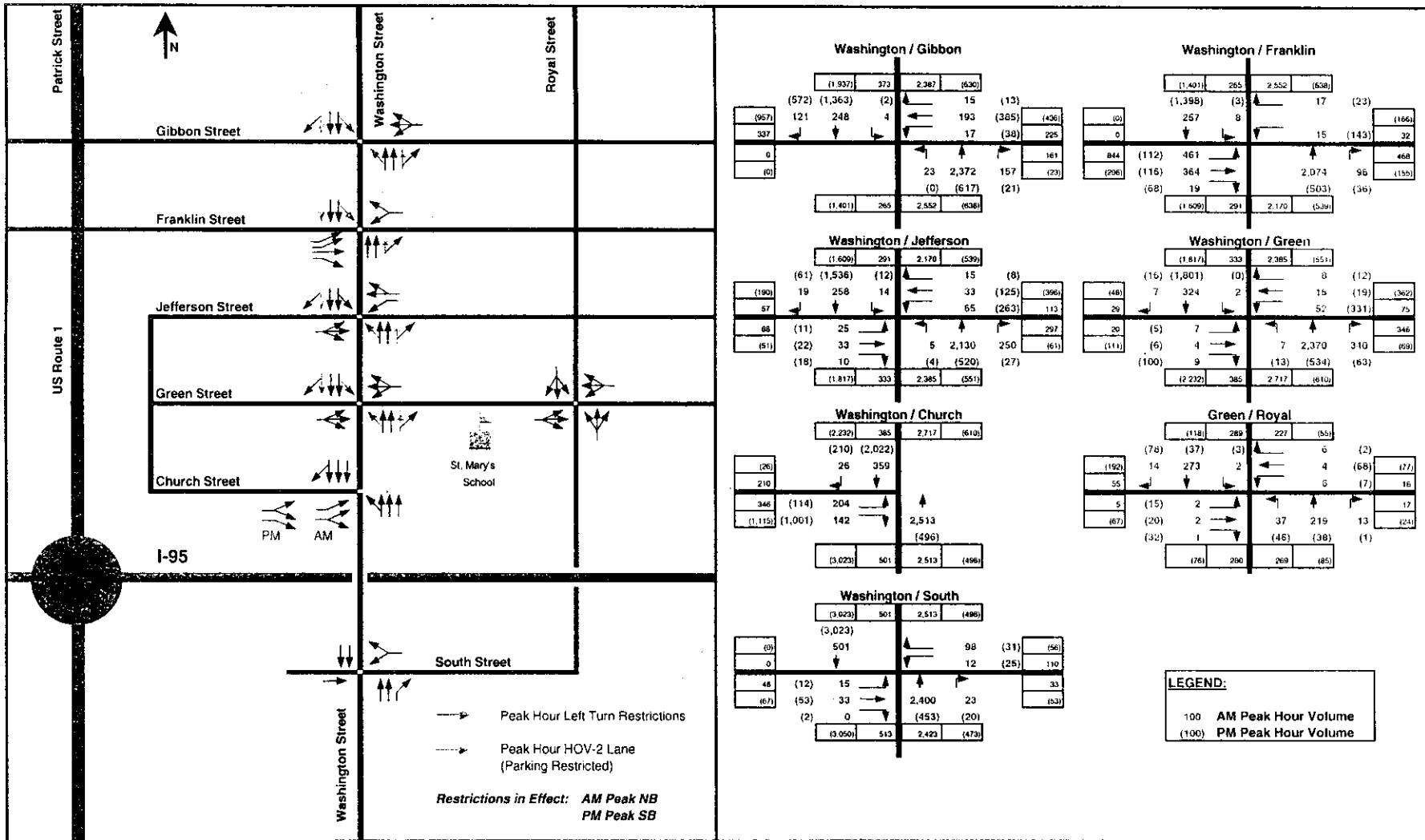
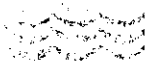


Figure 4: "After Closure" Traffic Volumes and Lane Configurations





peak hours. The Synchro analysis results with the additional diverted trips at each intersection are shown in Table 2.

Intersection on Washington Street	Level of Service	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
South Street	C	A
Church Street	A	F
Green Street	E	C
Jefferson Street	C	B
Franklin Street	D	A
Gibbon Street	E	B

The stop-controlled intersection of Green and South Royal Streets improved from level of service B(A) to level of service A(A) with the through traffic removed from South Royal Street.

As indicated in Table 2, the South Street intersection is improved from level of service E to level of service A in the PM peak, because about 460 left turns are removed from South Street and added to the southbound through movement on Washington Street, for which there is more green time given in the signal to accommodate the traffic. However, with the additional through traffic, the Church Street intersection deteriorates from level of service E to level of service F during the PM peak, with no improvements.

V. Possible Mitigation Measures for Washington Street

Two possible mitigation measures were explored for Washington Street. These measures include:

- Revisions to the signal timings along Washington Street
- Elimination of the HOV-2 restrictions in the right lane during peak periods

The existing signal timings were provided by the City of Alexandria and were used in the Synchro analysis for the unimproved conditions. After the closure of South Royal Street, the City implemented a revised timing scheme to provide additional green time for side street traffic. However, according to the City, the flow of traffic on Washington Street was severely impacted, and the timings were changed back to the original scheme.

However, it may be possible to modify the timings slightly to improve the flow at Church Street in the PM peak, without impacting operations along Washington Street. The existing cycle length is 80 seconds, with a split of 19/61 between Church and Washington. If the split were changed to 31/49, providing additional green time to Church Street, the level of service at the intersection would be improved to E, matching the "before closure" level of service. However, the mainline level of service on Washington Street would decrease, as delay penalties would be distributed more equally at the intersection.



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In addition, the HOV lane restrictions do not seem to be enforced due to the need to continue to use the right lane for right turns. Without the HOV restrictions, the lane can serve a greater volume of through traffic to balance the volumes in the three lanes.

The improved levels of service are provided in Table 3 for the timing changes and the removal of the HOV restrictions.

Table 3				
“After Closure” Operations Along Washington Street (With Improvements)				
Intersection on Washington Street	AM Levels of Service		PM Levels of Service	
	No HOV		Timing Changes*	Timing Changes* and No HOV
South Street	C		A	A
Church Street*	A		E	E
Green Street	A		C	C
Jefferson Street	A		B	B
Franklin Street	A		A	A
Gibbon Street	A		B	B

**Note: Only the timings at the Church Street Intersection have been changed for the PM peak scenario.*

As indicated in Table 3, all intersections will operate at a level of service equal to or better than the “before closure” operations, with the improvements indicated.

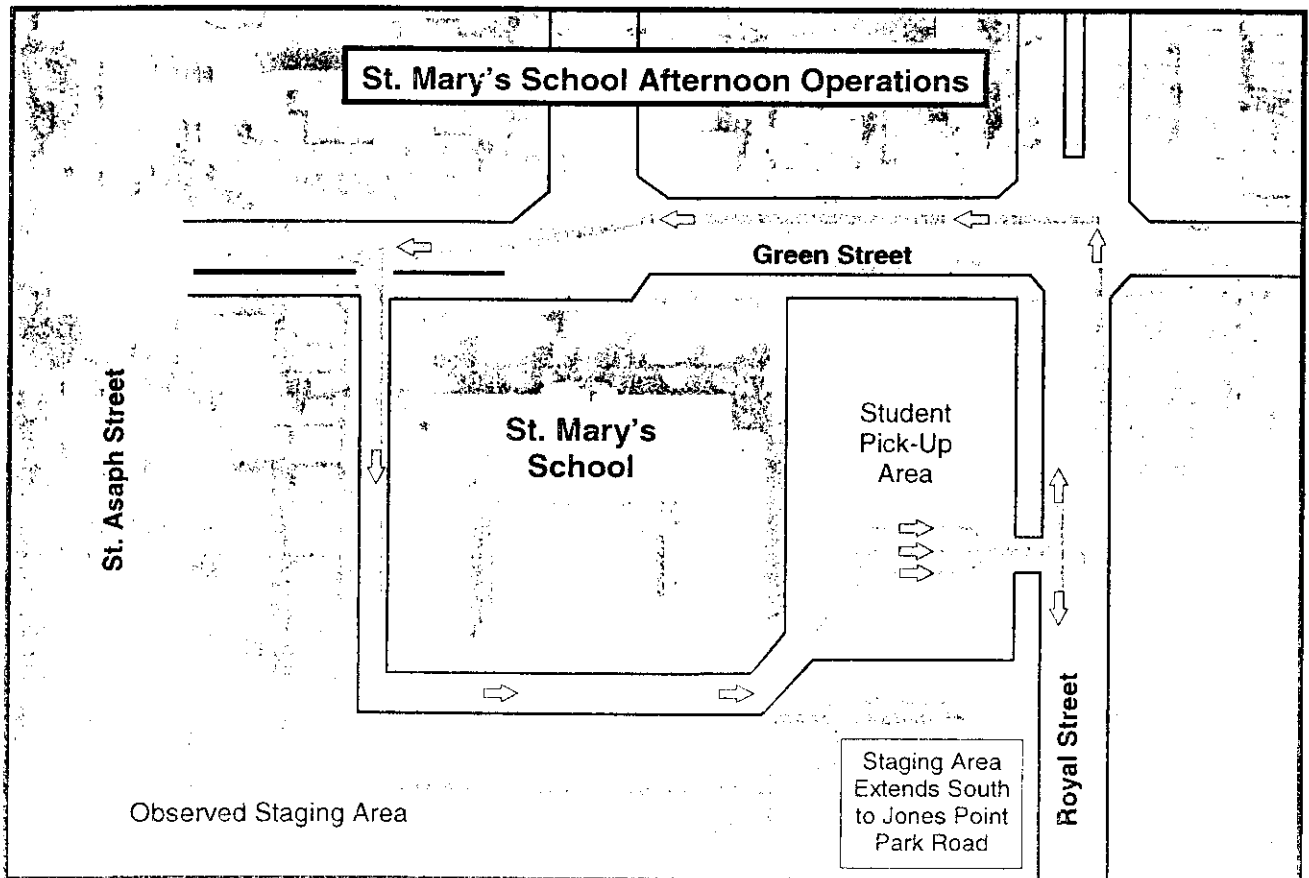
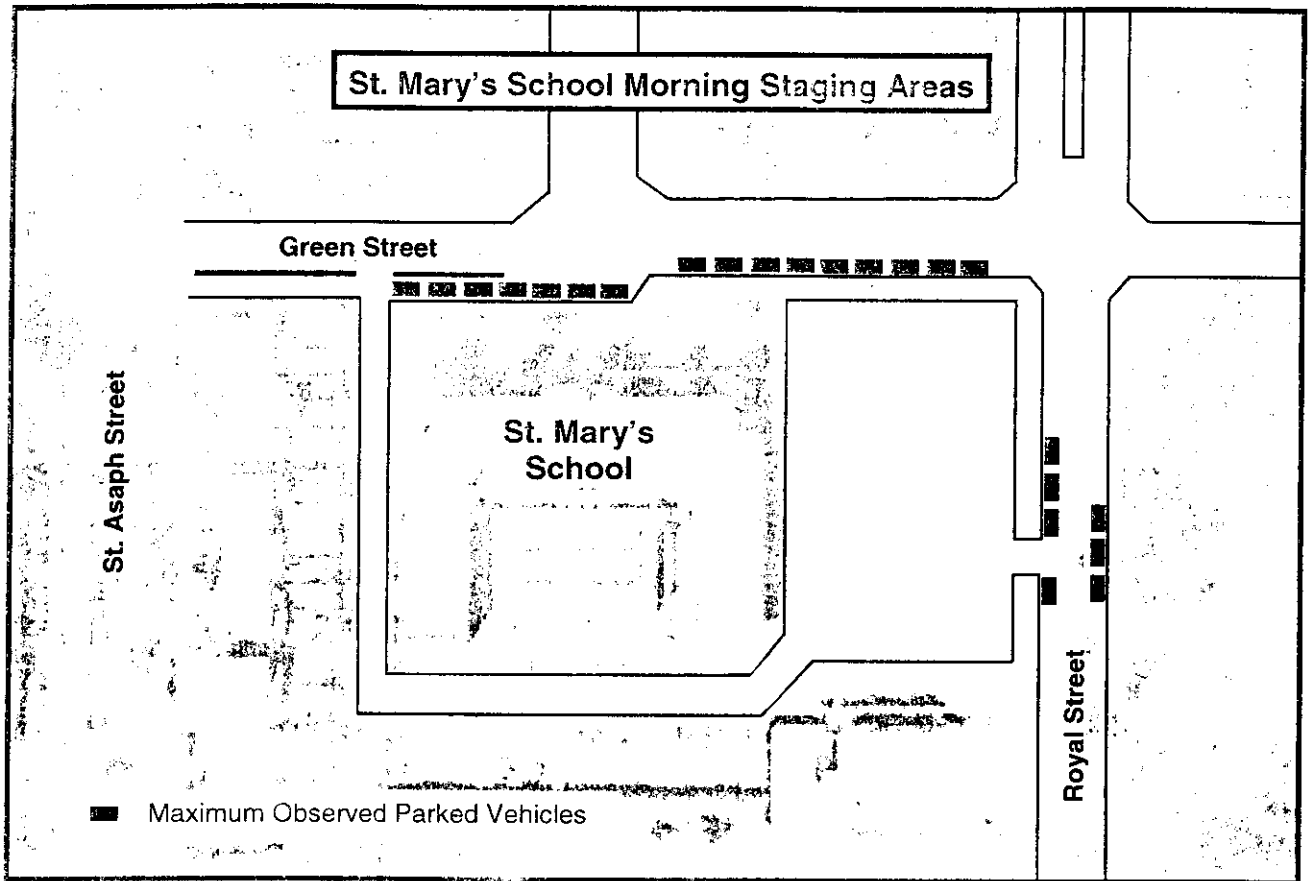
VI. St. Mary’s School Operations and Impacts

“Before Closure” Morning Operations:

Before the closure of South Royal Street, the majority of morning drop-offs occurred on eastbound Green Street in front of the school. Parents had to jockey for a parking spot in the pull-off area in front of the school, or along the eastbound Green Street curb east of the school entrance. At times, the queue for vehicles looking for a spot extended to the Washington Street intersection, and north on St. Asaph Road. The maximum number of vehicles that could park along the pull-off area and along Green Street was about 16 vehicles, without double-parking, which did occur during the peak just before school starts. Refer to Figure 5 for a sketch of the observed parking and queuing activity before the closure of South Royal Street.

A few vehicles were observed on South Royal Street dropping off children. The maximum observed on southbound South Royal Street was 4 at a time, and the maximum observed on northbound South Royal Street was 3 at a time. The total drop-offs observed for both South Royal Street and eastbound Green Street are provided in Table 4.

Figure 5: "Before Closure" Operations at St. Mary's School





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Table 4: "Before Closure" Morning Drop-Offs at St. Mary's School		
Intersection on Washington Street	Level of Service	
	Total Observed for AM Peak	Maximum Parked at the Same Time
Eastbound Green Street	151	16
Northbound South Royal Street	18	3
Southbound Royal	30	4

The deficiencies with the "before closure" system include the queuing of traffic on Green Street while waiting for a parking spot in front of the school. A City police officer was assigned by the school to the Green Street / St. Asaph intersection to facilitate traffic movements to the school parking areas from these streets. There was only limited use of South Royal Street for parking during the morning operations at the school.

"Before Closure" Afternoon Operations:

The "before closure" pick-up procedure was very different than the drop-off procedure at the school, with a much greater use of South Royal Street for parking/staging. As parents arrive, many of them would queue along South Royal Street to await the school dismissal. At dismissal, they would drive to Green Street, turn left onto Green and the left into the school driveway, and drive around to the back lot. On the lot, there are three striped "lanes" where cars pull up to load the children, then exit the lot onto South Royal Street heading north or south. Refer to Figure 5 for a sketch of the observed pick-up activity.

The maximum queues observed for Royal and Green Streets are provided in Table 5. During the peak period, the queue on northbound South Royal Street extended as far south as Jones Point Park Road, just north of the I-95 bridge.

Table 5: "Before Closure" Afternoon Queues at St. Mary's School	
Location	Maximum Parked at the Same Time
Eastbound Green Street	4
Northbound South Royal Street	26
Southbound Royal	0

The "before closure" volumes and distributions for traffic exiting the lot are provided in Table 6. The volumes are fairly evenly split between northbound and southbound South Royal Street as shown.



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Time of Observation	Left onto Northbound South Royal Street	Right onto Southbound South Royal Street
3:00 PM	37	48
3:15 PM	22	21

Impacts of South Royal Street Closure on St. Mary's School Operations:

"After Closure" Morning Operations: A meeting was held with St. Mary's School parents and staff on January 8, 2002, to discuss the proposed pick-up and drop-off procedures after the closure of South Royal Street at I-95/495. With the closure of South Royal Street, all arrivals to the school are encouraged to use Washington Street to Jefferson Street, and continue south on South Royal Street. A barricade is placed along eastbound Green Street to prevent parents from arriving along this route.

Instead of queuing along Green Street to drop off children to the school, the closure of South Royal Street provided the opportunity to use the west curbside area along South Royal Street adjacent to the school as the new drop off area. This staging area accommodates approximately 20 vehicles at a time – 4 more vehicles than Green Street. Parents are directed into a coned-off area of South Royal Street, and are staged in groups. After the drop-off, motorists continue along South Royal Street to Jones Point Park Drive and make a u-turn to continue back north on South Royal Street. (Refer to Figure 6).

With these modifications, the queue of vehicles to the school no longer extends to Washington Street, but does extend from the intersection of South Royal Street/Green Street to Jefferson Street, and along Jefferson Street to about St. Asaph Street. The progression is much more orderly than the "before closure" situation, and safer for the children, since double parking has been eliminated. However, the drop-off time takes an estimated additional 5 minutes to complete, adding delay to the school parents.

At a follow-up meeting with the school on February 6, 2002, both the City and the School indicated that they had received positive feedback from the parents and local community regarding the revised morning operations plan.

"After Closure" Afternoon Operations: The "before closure" flow of vehicles to pick up children has been reversed, taking advantage of the closure of South Royal Street to stage vehicles along the roadway (refer to Figure 7). Parents arrive at the school and form a line along northbound South Royal Street, extending east on Jones Point Park Drive as far back as necessary (usually several hundred feet). Upon dismissal, parents drive into the school lot and form three lines, as with the "before closure" system. After pick-up, parents exit the school via the driveway on Green Street near the front of the school, and either turn left or right, depending on their destination (majority of traffic turns left).

According to the School, the afternoon operations are working very well, with the exception of the signal at Green Street and Washington Street. At times, the queue can extend from the intersection, east on Green Street, to the school driveway. When this happens, the pick-up operations within the school are disrupted, since there is nowhere for vehicles to exit.

Figure 6: "After Closure" Morning Operations at St. Mary's School

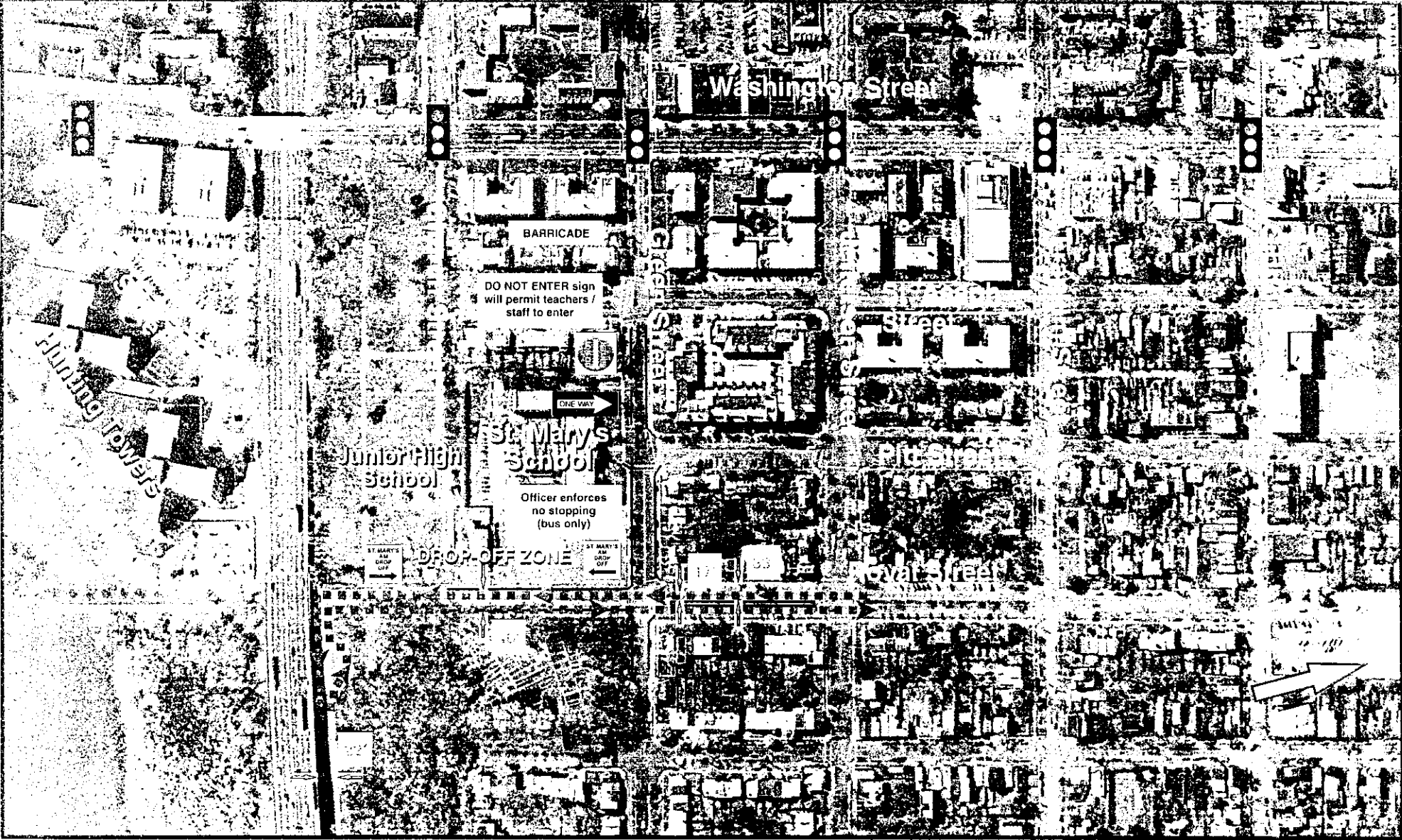


Figure 7: "After Closure" Afternoon Operations at St. Mary's School

