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9-9-08


*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT 4600 KING STREET, THE ENTRANCE TO THE FORMER JEFFERSON HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING SITE

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of a recommendation to remove the existing traffic signal at 4600 King Street, the entrance to the former Jefferson Hospital and Medical Office Building site.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorize staff to remove the traffic signal at the King Street entrance to the former Jefferson Hospital and Medical Office Building site. The Traffic and Parking Board held a hearing on the proposal on May 19, 2008 and voted unanimously to recommend that the signal be removed.

**BACKGROUND:** As part of the intersection improvements at King Street and Beauregard Street, King Street will be widened between Chesterfield Road and North Hampton Drive. These improvements include partial widening to add a raised median and left-turn lanes on eastbound and westbound King Street, elimination of median openings (including the one currently providing access to the Jefferson Medical Office Building), removal of the signal at the King Street entrance to the Jefferson Medical Office Building, upgrades to traffic signals, and upgrades to street lights to meet current standards. During community meetings and hearings on the project, many comments were received from motorists relating to the lack of justification for this signal. The signal is generally in the flashing mode, and is not needed. The King and Beauregard project is currently being designed and construction is scheduled to begin in fall 2010.

As part of the intersection improvements, the traffic signal control system will be modified and upgraded on this section of King Street. The existing signal on King Street at the former Jefferson Hospital and Medical Office Building entrance is approximately 225 feet from North Beauregard Street and is more than 35 years old. The hospital has been demolished, and the medical office building is in the process of being demolished. The median opening providing access to this property from northbound King Street will be closed as part of the King and Beauregard intersection improvements project, thus, this signal is no longer needed.

The proposed removal of this signal was considered by the Traffic and Parking Board (TPB) on May 19, 2008, and the Board voted unanimously to remove the signal. A copy of the TBP docket item is attached.

**DISCUSSION:** Transportation and Environmental Services staff conducted an engineering study of this intersection prior to consideration by the Traffic and Parking Board. The staff found that the existing traffic volumes at the intersection do not meet any of the warrants justifying traffic signal control as contained in the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The City is required to be in compliance with the MUTCD for removing a traffic control signal, and it clearly states, if the engineering study indicates that the traffic control signal is no longer justified, removal is to be accomplished using following steps:

- A. Determine appropriate traffic control to be used after removal of the signal.  
*A stop sign will be added to the driveway after removal of traffic signal.*
- B. Remove any sight-distance restriction as necessary.  
*No sight distance restrictions exist.*
- C. Inform the public of the removal study, for example by installing an informational sign (or signs) with the legend TRAFFIC SIGNAL UNDER STUDY FOR REMOVAL at the signalized location in a position where it is visible to all road users.  
*The public was notified by signs prominently posted at the intersection and a public hearing was subsequently conducted by the Traffic and Parking Board.*
- D. Flash or cover the signal heads for a minimum of 90 days, and install the appropriate stop control or other traffic control devices.  
*The signal has been in flashing operation for more than 90 days.*
- E. Remove the signal if the engineering data collected during the removal study period confirms that the signal is no longer needed. Instead of total removal of the traffic signal, the poles and cables may remain in place after removal of the signal heads for continued analysis.  
*The signal will be removed before construction of the intersection improvements at King Street and Beauregard Street commences.*

The City is working to acquire this site for future use for City facilities but we expect site access to be configured so that the signal is not needed.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There will be a one-time cost to remove the signal; however, there will be annual cost savings for the signal operation and maintenance. The cost of removing this signal is estimated to be \$2,000. The annual energy and maintenance cost for this signal is approximately \$2,500.

**ATTACHMENT:** Traffic and Parking Board Public Hearing docket item, dated May 19, 2008

**STAFF:**

Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES

Tom Culpepper, PhD, P.E., Deputy Director, T&ES

Bob Garbacz, P.E., Transportation Division Chief

**TRAFFIC AND PARKING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING  
MAY 19, 2008**

**DOCKET ITEM:** 5

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request to remove the traffic signal at 4600 King Street at the Medical Office Building Entrance.

**APPLICANT:** The Transportation and Environmental Services

**LOCATION:** Intersection of at 4600 King Street at the Medical Office Building Entrance.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board recommend to the City Council that the traffic signal at the intersection of King Street and the Jefferson Medical Office Building Entrance be removed.

**DISCUSSION:** As part of the intersection improvements at King Street and Beauregard Street, King Street will be widened between Chesterfield Road and North Hampton Drive. Street improvements include partial widening to add a raised median and left-turn lanes on eastbound and westbound King street, elimination of median openings, upgrades to traffic signals, and upgrades to street lights to meet current standards. The project is currently being designed and is planned to begin construction in fall 2010.

As part of the intersection improvements, most of the traffic signal poles will be relocated and modified on this section of King Street. The traffic signal on King Street at the Jefferson Hospital entrance is over 35 years old. The signal at Medical Office Building is approximately 225 feet from North Beauregard Street. The Medical Office Building is no longer occupied and so this signal is no longer needed.

Transportation and Environmental Services staff studied the intersection. The staff found that the existing traffic volumes at the intersection do not meet the warrants as outlined in the 2003 Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The City is required to be in compliance with the MUTCD for removing a traffic control signals. The MUTCD clearly states the following steps:

- A. Determine appropriate traffic control to be used after removal of the signal.  
*There will be a stop sign added to the driveway after removal of traffic signal.*
- B. Remove any sight-distance restriction as necessary.  
*No sight distance issues exist.*
- C. Inform the public of the removal study, for example by installing an informational sign (or signs) with the legend TRAFFIC SIGNAL UNDER STUDY FOR REMOVAL at the signalized location in a position where it is visible to all road users.  
*The signs were installed on the mast arm.*
- D. Flash or cover the signal heads for a minimum of 90 days, and install the appropriate stop control or other traffic control devices.  
*The signal has been under flashing operation for more than 90 days.*

- E. Remove the signal if the engineering data collected during the removal study period confirms that the signal is no longer needed. Instead of total removal the traffic signal, the poles and cables may remain in place after removal of the signal heads for continued analysis.  
*The signal will be removed before construction on King Street.*

There will be a one time cost to remove the signal, however, there will be annual cost savings for the signal operation and maintenance. The energy and maintenance for this signal is approximately \$2500 per year.



**Tom Burke**  
<tombu@verizon.net>

09/10/2008 06:45 PM

Please respond to  
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Subject COA Contact Us: Item 12 CC Docket for 9/9/08

12  
9-9-08

**Time:** [Wed Sep 10, 2008 18:45:18] **IP Address:** [71.178.107.63]

**Issue Type:** Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

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**Subject:** Item 12 CC Docket for 9/9/08

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

It is good to see that you finally voted

to remove the traffic light at the old hospital. Thank you.

Of course, I

and many of the residents near the King/Beauregard intersection have been advocating this removal for many years. It hasn't met the warrants for years, but Dr. Tauber's minions managed to keep it there and functioning for their own purposes, not for traffic flow.

A certain tone has crept into

the discussion sections of staff, City Manager, and T&ES reports. This tone indicates some type of certitude regarding the larger question of the King/Beauregard intersection. There have been a couple of information meetings held regarding City proposed plans, but public discussion was not allowed. And each time the City had one of these info meetings, the City's proposal had changed.

There has yet to be a public hearing, either

**Comments:** before TPB, Planning Commission or Council regarding any proposal for the King/Beauregard intersection. And a separate planning effort arose earlier this year with the Transportation Master Plan, which conceptualizes a Beauregard transit corridor through this intersection. When will there be public hearings on either of these efforts? I would expect the same level of staff effort and public involvement as occurred for the intersection "improvements" at Seminary/Beauregard a couple of years ago.

Many residents have serious concerns about both these transportation plans, as well as City plans for the old hospital site. We are being vigilant. There will come a time when you will have to put some cards on the table.

Tom Burke  
Fairlington