

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 18, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: ORAL REPORT ON BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE ACT (BRAC-133) AND BEAUREGARD PLANNING AND CONSIDERATION OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (VDOT) REQUESTED INITIAL DRAFT STAFF RESPONSE TO THE VDOT INTERCHANGE JUSTIFICATION REPORT (PUBLIC HEARING AND COUNCIL ACTION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 17)

ISSUE: What should be the City's initial draft response to the VDOT Interchange Justification Report prior to conducting a public hearing on April 17, 2010?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize sending the attached letter (Attachment I) to VDOT to state the City's initial draft response to the VDOT Interchange Justification Report (Mark Center BRAC-133 Access Study dated February 2010); and
- (2) Authorize requesting VDOT to extend the period for the submittal of comments for the Mark Center BRAC-133 Access Study to April 23, which is after the City of Alexandria's planned April 17 public hearing on the VDOT Interchange Justification Report.

It should be noted that the BRAC-133 Advisory Group considered this docket item at its March 17 meeting and did not propose substantive changes to the attached proposed letter.

BACKGROUND: As a result of a request from the City of Alexandria to assess transportation improvements to mitigate the traffic impacts of the Department of Defense (DoD) BRAC-133 facility, currently under construction, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) conducted an operational analysis, which will be used to assist in the preparation of an interchange justification report, and submitted a draft operational analysis report on February 9, 2010 summarizing the results of the study. VDOT held a

Citizen's Information meeting at Minnie Howard School to discuss the information in the report on March 11, 2010. During the meeting, VDOT representatives indicated that the comment period for the public, jurisdictions and agencies will be kept open until March 25, 2010.

DoD is planning to relocate 6,400 employees to the BRAC-133 Mark Center Facility which is now under construction. The significant increase in the number of employees at Mark Center will have impacts on the existing transportation facilities as forecasted in various transportation studies from 2002 to the present. Improvements are being constructed on Seminary Road and Beauregard Street to partially mitigate the impacts resulting from the increase in traffic associated with the construction of the BRAC-133 facility. These improvements include additional left turn lanes on Seminary Road and Beauregard Street. As presented to Council and the community, these local road improvements are not sufficient to accommodate the increased traffic at a level of service C/D for various movements. The VDOT operational analysis evaluated additional improvements to provide relief to the anticipated congestion on the surrounding roadway network. The results of this analysis were summarized in the VDOT Mark Center BRAC- 133 Access Study submitted on February 9, 2010. The VDOT report recommended two alternatives (A1 and D) to be carried forward in the development of an Interchange Justification Report.

DoD is in the process of preparing a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the BRAC-133 facility in order to achieve a 40% non-single occupancy vehicle goal. The Transportation Management Plan is a critical element in the assessment of transportation needs of the area. The TMP will identify transportation demand management measures to help reduce the number of single occupant vehicles that use the BRAC-133 facility, and it consequently will also mitigate the traffic impacts on surrounding roadways. The TMP has not been completed and is not expected to be completed until the summer of 2010.

The City of Alexandria approved the creation of the BRAC-133 Advisory Group in February 2009 to create a forum to provide input, ideas and recommendations to the City, DoD and Duke Realty. The BRAC-133 Advisory Group developed the following guiding principles for the implementation of transportation enhancements to address the impacts of the BRAC 133 facility:

1. Be transit-oriented and accommodate HOV lanes;
2. Be consistent with the existing and proposed Transportation Management Plans and the City's Transportation Management Plans;
3. Provide for amenities/incentives to encourage alternate transit use;
4. Reduce the traffic impacts to the I-395 and Seminary Road interchange;
5. Serve the entire Mark Center campus;
6. Protect the Winkler Botanical Preserve;
7. Be designed/built for the long-term usage; being the most transit efficient alternative, not necessarily the least expensive or most expedient;

8. These improvements need to consider/accommodate the potential future redevelopment of the surrounding areas (e.g. Mark Center and Beauregard Corridor); and
9. Be funded by the Federal Government through the design and construction phases.

Details on these guiding principles were provided to VDOT in a letter from the Mayor dated January 15, 2010 (Attachment II).

The alternatives recommended in the VDOT Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study for further evaluation do not meet all of the guiding principles of the BRAC-133 Advisory Group. Furthermore, they have not been thoroughly discussed within the context of a City of Alexandria public hearing. Therefore, the attached letter requests that Alternative D, which impacts the Winkler Botanical Preserve, be withdrawn from further consideration. The attached letter also reiterates the Council's December 12, 2009 position that VDOT evaluate alternatives that consider a broader view of transportation issues in the corridor, as well as VDOT begin considering other alternatives such as those involving changes to the Seminary Road interchange as discussed at recent community meetings. It also requests that VDOT extends the comment period beyond April 17 to be able to incorporate the input from the April 17 public hearing into the final comments from the City of Alexandria.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment I. Proposed letter to VDOT from Mayor William D. Euille dated March xx, 2010

Attachment II. Letter to VDOT from Mayor William D. Euille dated January 15, 2010

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

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

Abi Lerner, P.E., Deputy Director, T&ES

March xx, 2010

Ronaldo T. Nicholson
Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
14685 Avion Parkway
Chantilly, Virginia 20151

SUBJECT: City of Alexandria Initial Draft Response on the Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study Report and Request to Extend the Comment Period Beyond the April 17 City of Alexandria Public Hearing

Dear Mr. Nicholson:

The purpose of this letter is to provide initial draft responses from the City of Alexandria to the findings and recommendations included in the Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study report, and to request VDOT to consider additional comments after the April 17 City of Alexandria Public Hearing.

The VDOT Mark Center Access Study reviewed several alternatives to meet the traffic demands of the BRAC-133 facility. The operational study took into consideration the intersection improvements that have been proffered by Duke Realty to help mitigate the traffic impacts. The VDOT report indicates that with these improvements and with the trip reductions resulting from the implementation of a Transportation Management Plan, the conditions on I-395, the Seminary Road interchange and the adjacent arterial network will degrade. Without additional improvements, some of these transportation facilities are forecasted to operate at failing levels of service. The micro-simulation results indicate that there will be gridlock conditions on Beauregard Street and Seminary Road during peak hours in the 2035 design year.

As a result of the identified deficiencies, your study evaluated a number of alternatives to address the transportation needs of the area. The City of Alexandria concurs with your assessment that Alternatives A2, B1, B2, C and E should not be advanced for increased study. We also agree that Alternative A1 could be advanced for increased study provided that measures to increase the vehicle processing rates into the BRAC South Parking Garage are explored as part of the refinements to this concept. We do not agree with your conclusion that Alternative D should be advanced for further study. As you know, Alternative D impacts significantly the Winkler Botanical Preserve. Protection of the Winkler Botanical Preserve is one guiding principles of the City's BRAC-133 Advisory Committee as well as one of the Alexandria City Council recommendations that we adopted on November 21, 2009.

Because your study has not identified improvements that fully address the transportation impacts of BRAC-133 while meeting the guiding principles of the BRAC Advisory Committee and Council recommendations, we request that you continue to work with City staff and staff from adjacent jurisdictions to evaluate additional alternatives to relieve traffic pressures on Seminary Road and to address traffic impacts from BRAC, provided that such alternatives meet the following criteria:

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Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
March xx, 2010
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1. Do not harm the integrity of the Winkler Botanical Preserve.
2. Minimize disruption to local residents from BRAC-133 traffic, as well as from any potential solutions to such traffic.
3. Take into consideration a broader view of transportation issues in the corridor.
4. Take into consideration all the guiding principles of the City's BRAC-133 Advisory Group.

Transportation solutions should include multi-modal enhancements to adequately address the transportation needs of BRAC-133 and the surrounding area. The solutions to serve the transportation needs of the area should include a multitude of actions with transit and transportation demand management (TDM) solutions playing a key role. The City of Alexandria City Council expects that the final VDOT proposal and recommendation will include a combination of transit, TDM and roadway measures to fully address the needs of BRAC-133 site and the surrounding area. City of Alexandria staff members are available to work with VDOT to develop and evaluate multi-modal alternatives that address the transportation needs of BRAC-133 site and the surrounding area. In addition, as stated in the attached letter of December 12, 2009, we request that VDOT consider a broader view of transportation issues in the corridor, and finally that VDOT should seriously consider other alternatives such as those involving changes to the Seminary Road interchange, as discussed at recent community meetings.

Please note that the City of Alexandria will hold a public hearing on April 17 to discuss the Mark Center (BRAC-133) transportation issues. Therefore, we request that VDOT attend this hearing and consider additional comments until April 23 from the City of Alexandria, which will be submitted soon after the April 17 City of Alexandria Public Hearing.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions concerning the City of Alexandria comments with respect to the Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study report. We thank you for your continuous interaction with City of Alexandria representatives and our residents, and look forward to future interaction to study, plan, fund and implement transportation solutions.

Sincerely,

William D. Euille
Mayor

Enclosures: (1) City Council Action of December 12, 2010
(2) Guiding Principles of the BRAC-133 Advisory Group

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Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
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cc: The Honorable Members of City Council
Transportation Commission
James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager
Richard Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Abraham Lerner, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Faroll Hamer, Director, Planning and Zoning



William D. Euille
Mayor

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January 15, 2010

Ronaldo T. Nicholson
Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
14685 Avion Parkway
Chantilly, Virginia 20151

Dear Mr. Nicholson:

The following summarizes the recommendations of the City Council.

As you are aware because you were present, the City of Alexandria conducted a public hearing on December 12, 2009, to address alternative improvement options being considered by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) for the BRAC-133 Project at Mark Center. City Council received significant public testimony on the alternatives being considered by VDOT and adopted the enclosed motion.

The overarching purpose of these Council-adopted recommendations is to help maintain and preserve the quality of life of the residents and businesses in the City of Alexandria. The Council-adopted recommendations listed below are intended to give guidance to VDOT to develop recommendations intended to create a sense of place for the area around the BRAC-133 development and for the adjacent neighborhoods, as well as to address the transportation needs of the larger Alexandria area, rather than limiting just to the needs of the BRAC-133 site.

1. Request VDOT to retain in the IJR study Alternatives A1 and A2 which provide direct access from I-395 to the Department of Defense (DoD) garage.
2. Request VDOT to work with City staff to evaluate additional alternatives to relieve traffic pressures on Seminary Road and to address traffic impacts from BRAC, provided that such alternatives meet the following criteria:
 - a. Do not harm the integrity of the Winkler Botanical Preserve.
 - b. Minimize disruption to local residents from BRAC-133 traffic, as well as from any potential solutions to such traffic.
 - c. Take into consideration a broader view of transportation issues in the corridor.


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Regional Transportation Program Director
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- d. Take into consideration the guiding principles of the City's BRAC-133 Advisory Group when developing alternatives.
3. Request VDOT to eliminate from consideration any access alternatives within their preliminary IJR report which would impact the land area of the Winkler Botanical Preserve.
4. Look at the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) when developing a final proposal and recommendation on the issues.

Transportation solutions should include multi-modal enhancements to adequately address the transportation needs of BRAC-133 and the surrounding area. The solutions to serve the transportation needs of the area should include a multitude of actions with transit and transportation demand management (TDM) solutions playing a key role. VDOT should develop the transit and TDM elements of the transportation alternative enhancements taken into consideration the recommended improvements included in the City of Alexandria Transportation Master Plan, the transportation enhancements being considered in the Beauregard Corridor Plan and the transportation demand management measures being developed for the BRAC-133 Transportation Management Plan. Thus, the Alexandria City Council expects that the final VDOT proposal and recommendation will include a combination of transit, TDM and roadway measures to fully address the needs of BRAC-133 and the surrounding area.

City of Alexandria staff members are available to work with VDOT to develop and evaluate multi-modal alternatives that address the transportation needs of BRAC-133 and the surrounding area. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions concerning the aforementioned recommendations of the City Council. We thank you for your attendance at the December 12 hearing, and look forward to future interaction to study, plan, fund and implement transportation solutions.

Sincerely,



William D. Euille
Mayor

Enclosures: (1) City Council Action of December 12, 2010
(2) Guiding Principles of the BRAC-133 Advisory Group

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Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
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cc: The Honorable Members of City Council
Transportation Commission
BRAC-133 Advisory Group
James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager
Richard Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Abraham Lerner, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER

4. Public Hearing and Consideration of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Proposed Route I-395 Direct Access Ramp Alternatives for the BRAC-133 Project at Mark Center. (#6, 11/21/09)

City Council received the final public testimony on the seven direct access ramp alternatives being considered by VDOT for their preliminary IJR analysis and adopted the following five recommendations from the Alexandria Transportation Commission: 1. direct staff to prepare a letter to Duke Realty encouraging Duke Realty to move with all speed to complete the local roadway improvements as approved by Council; 2. request VDOT to retain alternatives A1 and A2 which provide direct access from I-395 to the Department of Defense (DoD) garage; 3. request VDOT to work with City staff to evaluate additional alternatives to relieve traffic pressures on Seminary Road and to address traffic impacts from BRAC, provided that such alternatives meet the following criteria: A. do not harm the integrity of the Winkler Preserve; B. minimize disruption to all local residents from BRAC-133 traffic as well as from any potential solutions to such traffic; C. take into consideration a broader view of transportation issues in the corridor; and D. take into consideration the guiding principles of the Alexandria's BRAC-133 group when developing alternatives; 4. request VDOT to eliminate from consideration any access alternatives within their preliminary interchange justification report which would impact the land area of the Winkler Botanical Preserve; and 5. look at the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) when developing a final proposal and recommendation on the issues. (City staff was directed to draft a cover letter to accompany the motion, with the understanding that before the cover letter is finalized, that it be shared with Council to make sure the points are covered.)

Council

Action: _____

**BRAC/MARK CENTER ADVISORY GROUP
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

Guiding Principles Relating to VDOT's BRAC Access Interchange Justification Report

The BRAC/Mark Center Advisory Group (the "Advisory Group") supports direct access from Route I-395 to the Mark Center campus with the following guiding principles. The improvements should:

1. Be transit-oriented and accommodate HOV lanes;
2. Be consistent with the existing and proposed Transportation Management Plans and the City's Transportation Master Plan;
3. Provide for amenities/incentives to encourage alternate transit use;
4. Reduce the traffic impacts to the I-395 and Seminary Road Interchange;
5. Serve the entire Mark Center campus;
6. Protect the Winkler Botanical Preserve;
7. Be designed/built for the long term usage, being the most transit efficient alternative, **not** necessarily the least expensive or most expedient;
8. These improvements need to consider/accommodate the potential future redevelopment of the surrounding areas (e.g., Mark Center and Beauregard Corridor); and
9. Be funded by the Federal Government through the design and construction phases.

Furthermore, the Advisory Group recommends that:

10. The City should urgently work to develop and implement solutions to the current and projected traffic problems on Seminary Road from George Mason to Beauregard (as documented in the VHB report) and at least to Kenmore Avenue on the East and also consider the Route 7/King Street corridor from Skyline to I-395 rather than just Seminary Road. The City should likewise review traffic and pending solutions along Beauregard Street to the intersection with Little River Turnpike. This should involve working closely with VDOT, Fairfax County, and Arlington County.

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3-23-10



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William D. Euille
Mayor

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March 24, 2010

Mr. Ronaldo T. Nicholson
Regional Transportation Program Director
Virginia Department of Transportation
14685 Avion Parkway
Chantilly, Virginia 20151

Subject: City of Alexandria Response on the Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study Report

Dear Mr. Nicholson:

This letter represents the City's response on the Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study Report. After a review of the report and consideration by City Council, the City of Alexandria:

- Supports the further study of Alternative A1, provided measures to increase the vehicle processing rate are evaluated.
- Recommends that Alternative D (as well as A2, B1, B2, C and E) be eliminated from further analysis and consideration.
- Requests that VDOT work with the Department of Defense to expedite the completion of the BRAC-133 Transportation Management Plan.
- Requests that VDOT work with City staff and staff from adjacent jurisdictions to develop additional access alternatives.
- Reiterates our position that no alternative should impact the Winkler Botanical Preserve.
- Recommends that all alternatives should take into consideration the Guiding Principles of the City's BRAC-133 Advisory Group.
- Requests that VDOT analyze at least the following two alternatives (as depicted in the enclosed graphics):
 - An alternative which provides a direct access from the HOV Lanes to the west side of Seminary Road tying to the Seminary Road Bridge over I-395.

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"

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Regional Transportation Program Director
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- An alternative which provides a ramp from the HOV lanes to the Seminary Road Bridge with a signalized intersection at the ramp terminus.

In accordance with the City Council's action of December 12, 2010, sent under separate cover, any transportation solution should include multi-modal enhancements to adequately address the transportation needs of BRAC-133 and the surrounding area. The Alexandria City Council believes that the final VDOT proposal and recommendation should include a combination of transit, TDM and roadway improvements which fully address the transportation needs of the BRAC-133 site and the surrounding area.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Abi Lerner of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, if you have any questions concerning the City of Alexandria comments with respect to the Mark Center (BRAC-133) Access Study report. We thank you for your continuous interaction with the City of Alexandria representatives and our residents, and look forward to future collaborative work and further discussions related to the implementation of transportation solutions for BRAC-133.

Sincerely,



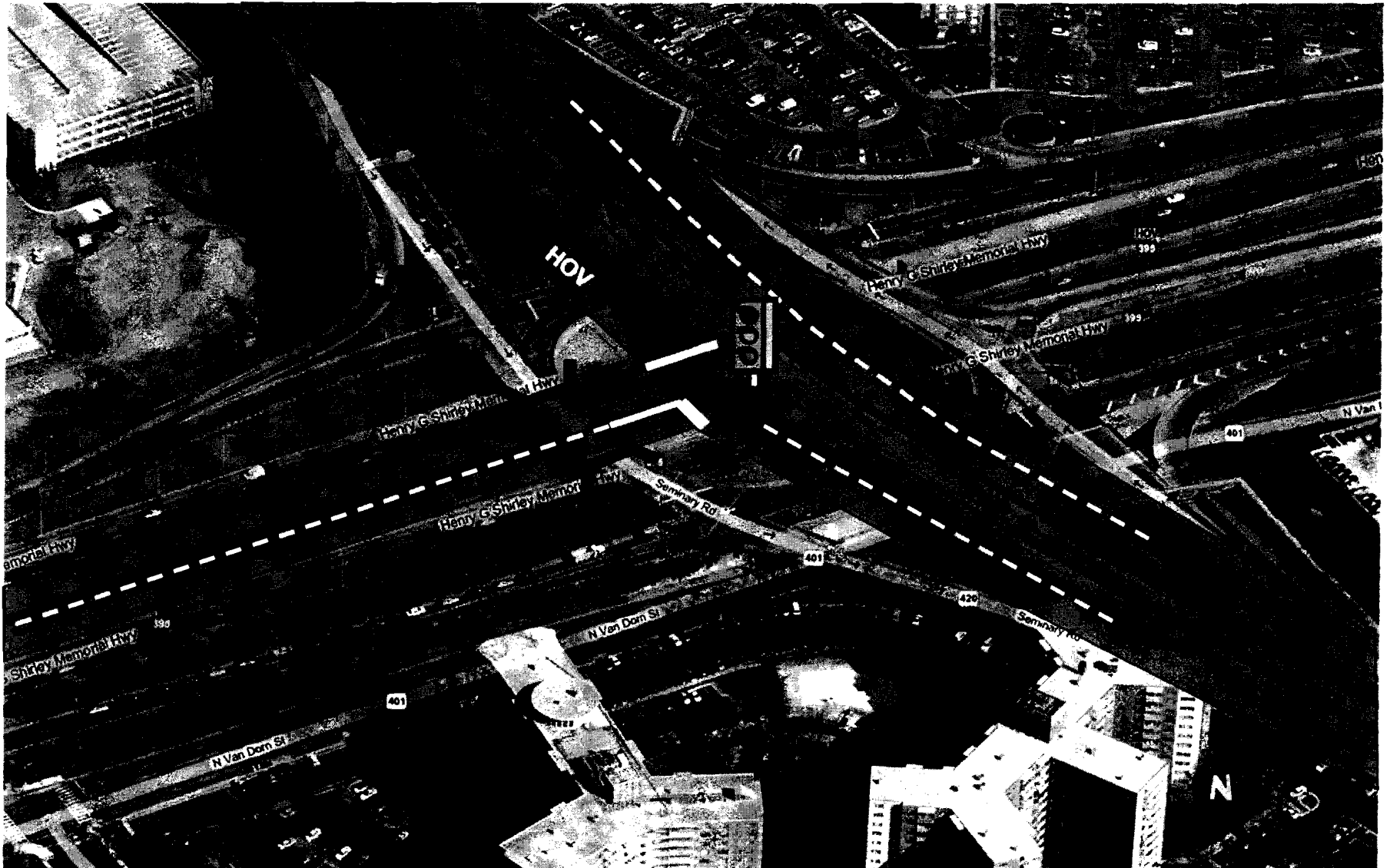
William D. Euille
Mayor

Enclosures: (1) Graphic depicting Seminary Road flyover
(2) Graphic depicting Alternate Seminary Road flyover

cc: The Honorable Sean Connaughton, Secretary of Transportation
The Honorable Members of City Council
The Honorable Sharon Bulova, Chair, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Members, BRAC-133 Advisory Group
Members, Transportation Commission
James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager
Richard Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Farroll Hamer, Director, Planning and Zoning
Abraham Lerner, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

BEAUREGARD CORRIDOR | ACCESS ALTERNATIVE STUDY





Dave -

At last Wednesday's BRAC Advisory Group meeting, members were asked to comment on (the March 17th draft of) the Memorandum which the City Manager proposes to send the Mayor and City Council with respect to VDOT's draft IJR. While I believe it was the desire to have the comments routed to/through you and Abi, I have heard from numerous people who feel strongly that the proposed Memo again raises many long-standing issues which ought to be brought to the Mayor and Council's attention but which will not reach those individuals in time for any Tuesday evening decisions if they have to be routed through, and their validity adjudicated by, City staff.

I appear to continue to be the group scribe so here is my best effort to consolidate and present the views of a varied but concerned constituency. Let me work my way through the Memo, then the proposed letter.

1. **"Initial Draft Response"**: The Memo (as does the proposed letter) speaks of the letter being the City's "initial draft response". I do not understand the implication or inference of the word "draft", should it be of significance.
2. **Lack of Timely Responses**: The draft IJR was submitted on February 9. It is concerning to note that it has taken the City Administration five weeks to draft a response, hopefully getting the Memo and draft letter to Council by Monday (March 22nd), to be considered at a Council meeting on Tuesday (March 23rd), relative to a letter which will, at best, be sent on Wednesday (March 24th), requesting the comment period be extended beyond Thursday (March 25th). (That reminds some people that we have been waiting more than a year to understand the economic costs and benefits of this development that our City was so eager to attract. For more than a year we have been told the City is working on the question of how things such as emergency services will be provided to this development and how they will be paid for. And since early last summer we've heard how the City is working on resolution of the "open space" question. All questions that appear to remain without much of a hint of any imminent answers.)
3. **Reason for Another Public Meeting**: Since February 9th we have had two regular Advisory Committee meetings, one special Advisory Group meeting and the VDOT community meeting. What, specifically, does the City expect to accomplish by holding yet another public meeting on April 17th? If, after 18 months, they now anticipate that the next 30 days will produce appreciably better solutions to the traffic challenges that will certainly be commendable but then they ought to share those expectations with the public and VDOT. If not, simply "kicking the can further down the road" does not bring any progress to the transportation challenges we continue to face.
4. **Exactly What Is the City Expecting from VDOT?**: It is interesting to note the City's reaffirmation of their request to VDOT to "assess transportation improvements to mitigate the traffic impacts of...BRAC-133". Yet the City has still to explain to the community why, in August 2008, they wrote DOD expressly contradicting VDOT's then current assessment that the site was "not viable...it does not have any transit availability". Nor have they explained why, in 2004, they went on record that "a direct

connection into the project from the existing I-395 interchange with Seminary Road...is not feasible or desirable." It would be helpful to have the City clarify exactly where they stand today. Hopefully they have changed their point of view and have no intention of simply again contradicting VDOT's perspective. If not, the public deserves to know that. Presumably letting the developer off the hook for any "direct connection into the project" back in 2004 cannot be rescinded and now places the burden of mitigation on others?

5. **What Specific Progress Has Our City Government Made?:** After noting "...improvements include additional left turn lanes on Seminary Road and Beauregard Street" the Memo goes on to state "...these local road improvements are not sufficient...". That certainly appears to contradict past positions of our City Administration. And it would seem to beg the question, what are they doing about it? To some it would appear they've tried to pass that task to the BRAC Advisory Group, hardly a repository of much formal education or experience in transportation analysis and highway engineering. And now they seem to want VDOT to come up with wide-ranging solutions whereas it is our understanding that VDOT's focus is primarily on the I-395 interchanges. Someone needs to focus on and lead this effort. I believe the Advisory Group's May 27, 2009 letter to the Mayor and Council specifically requested that the City assume that role. I would suggest that many citizens are less than happy with the extent of "progress" to date, as the opening of BRAC draws ever closer. Moreover, we need a holistic approach to traffic in and through the entire area, not just a focus on a couple of blocks.
6. **Where Is the TMP?:** Yes, as the Memo states, it is apparently true that "DOD is in the process of preparing a TMP for the BRAC-133 facility" but where is it? This project was announced 18 months ago. The extent of the construction is, if nothing else, impressive. Yet, in the face of continuing concerns about "traffic", we still don't have even a draft of the TMP. Why not? What effort has the City made to get one? I would note that Duke's June 1, 2009 letter to the Mayor and Council stated not only that "...to the extent that any queuing occurs, it does not reach the public roads, much less I-395" but also that "The Army anticipates that its TMP will be completed within six months." Note the word "completed". Six months would have been up on December 1, 2009. Is the City on top of this critical piece of traffic mitigation planning? One senses not.
7. **Lack of City Contribution to the "Guiding Principles":** Reference to the Advisory Group's "Guiding Principles" is very nice. We would suggest that the City staff ostensibly includes professionals in transportation planning and management (as contrasted with the Advisory Group which I believe does not). Do they have any perspective on the list? Do they have anything to add? To elaborate on? To suggest might need to be reconsidered or rephrased?
8. **Eight Months to Forward Guiding Principles to VDOT:** The Memo notes the "guiding principles" were provided to VDOT under cover of a letter dated January 15, 2010. To the best of my recollection those guiding principles were provided to the City by the Advisory Group in May, 2009 - eight months earlier.

9. **Requesting VDOT Withdraw "Option D"**: Yet again, the letter (as proposed) will "request(s) that Alternative D, which impacts the Winkler Botanical Preserve, be withdrawn from further consideration." It is time City Government stopped pandering to the electorate and address reality. If we are ever to look for Federal funding (and we don't appear to have any viable alternatives) then VDOT does not have the option of withdrawing "D" from further consideration. To quote them directly: "...if the City want(s) to preserve the option for Federal Funding, (then) VDOT would have to provide and document due consideration of all feasible alternatives...".
10. **City Vetoing "Option D"**: The City also needs to stop misleading the public that they/we have some implicit veto power over any option that might impact the Preserve. Let me again quote VDOT: "In order for the project to advance and obtain Federal Funding, a Regional MPO...such as COG...must approve the project. At that point each jurisdiction in the Metropolitan area will have an opportunity to vote on the value of the proposed project." Alexandria gets one vote; that is hardly veto power and hardly supports any implication that "we" can stop it (on our own).

On to the letter and matters not already addressed above:

11. **"With" vs. "Despite"**: Paragraph two says "...with these improvements...conditions...will degrade." I would suggest this ought to say "despite (not with) these improvements..."
12. **"Option A-1" Appears Unrealistic**: Some of us view option A-1 as a non-starter. It exclusively serves 1,854 vehicles, entering the south garage five times a week and exiting five times a week. It is hard to envision any entity funding such an expensive option to serve such a limited number of vehicles. Moreover, it is suggested that the (comparative) ease of access will appeal to personnel coming from the north (SB on I-395). I would suggest that the exit ramp from the garage in question which offers only one option, that being to head south on I-395, will have little appeal to those who came from (and presumably live in) the north and will thus be used by considerably less than 1,854 vehicles, five times a week.
13. **Working with Adjacent Jurisdictions**: The letter requests that VDOT "...continue to work with City staff and staff from adjacent jurisdictions to evaluate additional alternatives..." As noted, this project was announced 18 months ago. How much working together has been done to date by VDOT, City staff and adjacent jurisdictions? What do they/we have to show for it? Where do we stand with respect to the letter Fairfax wrote more than two months ago, in strong support of option "D"?
14. **Lack of Specificity**: Again, our frustration with the City's continuing lack of specificity is only exacerbated by this letter. VDOT is requested to pursue alternatives that meet a variety of criteria including "Do not harm...", "Minimize disruption...", "Take into consideration...". Can someone define "harm"? and "disruption"? How will anyone assess if "harm" has occurred or disruption "minimized"? What defines if something has been "taken into consideration" or not? It sounds like a hard test to fail.

15. **Roles in Addressing Transportation Challenges:** We are unclear as to defined roles. The City is seemingly requesting VDOT to (determine? explore? pursue? lead?) "transportation solutions...includ(ing) multi-modal enhancements to adequately address the transportation needs of BRAC-133 and the surrounding area." Is this not precisely what we've been wrestling with for 18 months - some of us appreciably more than others? Is this not the role of City Government? To what extent is VDOT responsible and/or can we realistically rely on them for detailed answers to Alexandria's traffic challenges? And, if so, when?

In summary, I (and many others) are extremely disappointed with the performance (or lack thereof) of our City Government. They have brought this upon our community while, at least initially, advising DOD they had the traffic issues in hand. As it has become abundantly clear that they did not and do not, one senses that they are (or have been) content to leave resolution in the hands of the community members and VDOT. That is not the leadership that we need or desire - but are paying for.

Don

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft letter.

The overall letter should be shortened and more to the point. It is not necessary to review the alternatives studied or summarize their analysis. There are two points you want to make: 1) we agree that Alternative A-1 be should be studied further provided the processing of cars into the garage do not result in blocking traffic on the southbound ramp, 2) we oppose any option that harms the integrity of the Winkler Botanical Preserve. Therefore, the City recommends Alternative D be removed from further consideration.

The guiding principles of the BRAC Advisory Committee are broad, general statements. They were not developed as ranking criteria to evaluate the various options. Arguably the various alternatives comply with the guidelines to a more or lesser extent.

Table 6.2 Alternative Comparison to BRAC Advisory Guiding Principles shows how VDOT believes the various options comply with those guidelines. You may want to reevaluate using the guidelines as a basis for arguing they did not comply with guidance provided earlier by the City. I suggest the City response be more direct, specific, problem solving and less abstract.

My recollection is VDOT was asked to look at roadway options for direct access to the BRAC complex and Mark Center. Within the scope of that request they have prepared a report and made recommendations. This letter goes beyond the original scope of work.

The paragraph on the second page--"Transportation solutions should include...."-- expands the scope of work to include multi-modal enhancements, transit, and options that address transportation needs of the BRAC site as well as the surrounding area.

I suggest the VDOT IJR study be finalized and that the City of Alexandria's position regarding the options be duly noted for the record. There is little to be gained from arguing whether they complied with City direction or not. I believe the IJR is too narrow in scope to really drive area or regional transportation decisions. It would be best to acknowledge what has been learned and that the community believes it would be better to evaluate options that would help the broader community.

The City and other jurisdictions may want to request VDOT initiate a broader regional study with a focus on different modes of public and private transportation and the development of transit management plans that provide reasonable alternatives for residents and employees in the immediate area.

Finally, I see no benefit in holding another public hearing on the IJR. It is unclear to me what the City hopes to accomplish with an additional meeting. The negative side is that it raises additional concerns as to the position of the City regarding the Winkler Preserve and the HOT Lanes. There seems to be a reluctance to be straightforward and oppose Alternative D-1. There should be nothing wrong with being very emphatic that Alternative D-1 would harm the Winkler

Preserve and therefore the City opposes any further consideration of the option.

Thanks

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