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10-17-09

Testimony to City Council

Good Morning Mr. Mayor and Members of Council,

My name is Dean Graves and I am the Treasurer of the Institute for Defense Analyses. As you know, IDA's headquarters are located immediately adjacent to the new Army Washington Headquarters Service site in the Mark Center.

In June, you approved a plan for the phased expansion of our campus in Mark Center. IDA chose to build its headquarters in this location and to buy the adjacent land for our expansion because we valued the Mark Center plan. In particular, we chose these lots because they are next to the Winkler Botanical Preserve.

The Army's development of its property has already done great damage to the Mark Center plan by eliminating open space, cutting down trees and building on top of the planned campus green. We have accepted this reality and tried to work with the Army and Duke over the last year to mitigate these impacts to the extent possible.

We were shocked and dismayed when we learned 2 days ago that VDOT and city staffs are considering construction of a highway ramp from Shirley Highway into the Mark Center including several options going through the Winkler Botanical Preserve and across IDA's property to provide access for DoD employees to commute to and from their new location.

The Winkler Botanical Preserve is an essential part of the overall Mark Center plan. It provides required tree canopy and open space and was a major reason the community supported the large scale development at Mark Center. Any intrusion into the Botanical Preserve is unacceptable.

One of the proposed ramp alignments being considered not only goes through the Botanical Preserve but goes right through the location of the IDA buildings you approved just months ago. To say we are upset is an understatement.

We implore you to direct your staff to oppose any consideration of roads or highway ramps that intrude into the Botanical Preserve or take IDA's property.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

October 17, 2009