

# **Design Public Hearing Summary**

Route 29 Lee Highway Widening

Fairfax County

State Project: 0029-029-350, P101, R201, C501, D612

Federal Project: NHPP-5A01(917)

UPC: 110329

June 10, 2019

VDOT Northern Virginia District Office

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

## Public Hearing Description

**VDOT Project:** 0029-029-350, P101, R201, C501, D612  
**Federal Project:** NHPP-5A01(917)  
**Route:** Route 29, Lee Highway  
**County:** Fairfax County  
**UPC:** 110329  
**Project Location:** Lee Highway  
**From:** Union Mill Road (Route 659)  
**To:** Buckleys Gate Drive (Route 1257)  
**Public Hearing Date:** June 10, 2019, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
**Venue:** VDOT Northern Virginia District Office  
4975 Alliance Drive  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the County of Fairfax held a design public hearing at the VDOT Northern Virginia District office in Fairfax, Virginia on Monday, June 10, 2019 from 6:30p.m. to 8:30p.m. for the Route 29 Lee Highway Widening project. The public hearing included a formal presentation followed by a Question & Answer period for the people in attendance. Attendees could view several displays depicting the proposed project design elements before and after the presentation. Public hearing level plan sets were also available. During this time, representatives from VDOT, Fairfax County, and the design consultant were available to speak with attendees and answer questions about the project related to the design, schedule, environmental document, air & noise abatement and right of way acquisition. Attendees provided oral comments to a court reporter and written comments in a comment box. Additionally, citizens also e-mailed comments before and after the public hearing. Subsequent to the public hearing, comments were accepted until June 20, 2019, via email or regular mail.

### **Public Notification:**

Notice of the public hearing was provided to the public by various means. The standard legal notice appeared in several newspapers, including Connection – CentreView edition, Connection – Clifton and Fairfax editions, Washington Post – VA Local Living, and EI Tiempo Latino. Additionally, VDOT mailed, via postal mail, a formal notification package to adjacent property owners. The notification package included a letter, dated May 10, 2019, informing the property owner that the public hearing was scheduled for June 10, 2019, including location and time, a link to the project website, a location map of the project, and a copy of the notice advertised in the newspapers. In addition to this notification package, a post card mailing was circulated to a broader area along the project corridor. Finally, VDOT emailed those people who attended the previous Public Information Meeting, informing them of the Public Hearing.

### **Exhibits and Documents Available at Public Hearing:**

Information available for viewing by attendees included project design exhibits depicting the proposed design overlaid on aerial imagery, typical sections, project plan sets, the environmental document (CE), and other project related materials. Documents available for the public to take included the public hearing brochure, comment sheet, and right of way brochure.

Additionally, the following information was made available for review 30 days prior to the public hearing and at the public hearing:

- Public Hearing Plan Set
- Environmental Documents
- Property Acquisition Guide for Property Owners and Tenants brochure

### **Project Background and Purpose**

The purpose of the Route 29 Lee Highway widening project is to reduce traffic congestion, improve safety, operations, vertical alignment, access management and add/improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connectivity.

Route 29 is functionally classified as an urban principal arterial in Fairfax County. Within the project limits, Route 29 is primarily a four-lane divided facility with short segments of three-lane

sections in the southbound direction. This project will widen Route 29 from four to six lanes, including improvements to vertical alignment, intersections and the construction of shared use paths on both sides of the roadway. The project scope is based on a prior 2005 VDOT study (VDOT Project 0029-029-R27, PE101) which explored the feasibility of providing a continuous 6 lane section from Centreville to the City of Fairfax. Subsequent to the study, the roadway was widened, incrementally, to six lanes by multiple projects between 2014-2018. Specifically, the segment from Pickwick Road (Route 1021) to Union Mill Road (Route 659), accomplished by VDOT, and the segment from Legato Road to Shirley Gate Road (Route 655), accomplished by Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT). Completion of these projects provided a continuous six lane corridor from Centreville to Fairfax except for the limits of the current project between Union Mill Road and Buckleys Gate Drive. The current Route 29 Lee Highway widening project will complete the remaining section.

Major project elements include:

- Improving the vertical alignment to current standards to eliminate the bifurcated areas and improve the poor sight distance.
- Intersection safety for both vehicles and pedestrians will be enhanced with the addition of channelized islands.
- Turn lanes will be improved by adding dual left lanes or lengthening to accommodate heavy turning movements.
- Access management strategies will be applied by consolidating multiple, closely spaced entrances into a single access point using short service roads, while some other entrances will have access restricted to right in/right out movements only.
- Bicycle and pedestrian needs will be accommodated through ten-foot shared use paths (SUPs) on both sides of Route 29.
- An existing lack of trail connectivity to the Fairfax County Parkway will be corrected by extending the SUP on the south side of Route 29 from Buckleys Gate Drive to Gunpowder Road, where the existing trail currently terminates.

Other improvements include:

- Replacement of the bridge over Willow Spring Branch (Built 1938) with a box culvert.

- Addition of noise walls where noise abatement criteria permits.
- Improvements to stormwater management facilities and upgrading of existing drainage pipes.
- Landscaping, where feasible, along the project corridor.

ADT on Route 29 is 33,000 VPD (2017). Projected ADT for the design year (2043) is 44,000.

This project is funded with local and state funding (including Smart Scale) and I-66 concession fee funds.

The current schedule calls for right of way acquisition to begin in early 2020 and construction to follow in late 2022.

### **Summary of Comments**

A court reporter took records of the public hearing meeting, who then transcribed them afterwards and provided them to VDOT. One oral comment was recorded by the court reporter.

VDOT received 22 written comments either at the public hearing meeting, or afterwards during the comment period. The following is a summary of the comments which were received as a result of the public hearing and staff's recommended action for each concern:

- Five written comment sheets were provided with general information or no responses/questions.

**Response:** VDOT appreciates your support on this project.

- Six comments were related to noise barriers and the noise abatement criteria and policy.

**Response:** Since the project is federally eligible and qualifies for a noise study, a preliminary noise analysis has been performed. Following the federal noise regulations, and state noise policy, potential noise barriers have been evaluated in several locations within the project corridor. The final barrier locations will be evaluated in the final design phase of the project. If the proposed noise barriers are shown to meet all the required criteria, affected property owners will be afforded an opportunity to vote on whether the noise barriers are ultimately constructed.

- Three comments were related to the loss of trees, fencing and the path adjacent to Maple Creek Lane in the NW quadrant of the Stringfellow Road intersection.

**Responses:** The trees between Maple Creek Lane and Route 29 will be removed as part of the project. The path will be replaced with a 10' asphalt path that runs adjacent to Route 29. The connection of the path off of Maple Creek Lane will be maintained and tied into the proposed shared use path. The project team has been able to adjust the design since the Public Hearing to avoid impacts to the community's fence.

- Six comments involved specific details of the project that will ultimately be satisfied by the current project design (i.e. reduce congestion, improve safety, improve traffic operations, connectivity between pedestrian facilities and crosswalks, and correct vertical alignment to improve sight distance).

**Responses:** VDOT appreciates your active participation. We encourage you to visit the project website for the latest information and updates regarding the project, including the public hearing presentation. Specific responses have been listed in the summary of all comments.

- One comment requested a median break allowing for left turns from Clifton Road into the 7-11 convenience store, which VDOT will be unable to provide.

**Response:** The Route 29 widening project does not provide left turn access to the 7-11 property from northbound Clifton Road. The 7-11 entrance on Clifton Road is only approximately 300 feet from the Route 29 intersection. VDOT's access management guidelines for Clifton Road require a 470 feet spacing from Route 29 to allow for a northbound left turn into the 7-11 entrance. Currently, the 7-11 property does not have access from northbound Clifton Road. The Route 29 widening project does not change this existing condition.

- One comment requested a barrier between the roadway and proposed bike/pedestrian trails, which VDOT will be unable to provide.

**Response:** The development of the project and typical section follows the required standards and policies established by the American Association of State Highway and transportation Officials (AASHTO) and provides a wide grassed buffer adjacent to the roadway. Verbal response was also provided during the public hearing meeting.

- One comment reflected concern about general tree loss and traffic noise associated with VDOT projects.

**Response:** A preliminary noise analysis has been performed and potential noise barriers have been evaluated in several locations within the project corridor. Noise barrier locations will be refined further in the detailed design phase. The project team makes every reasonable effort to minimize tree impacts and has been able to adjust the design since the Public Hearing to reduce impacts to trees in some locations.

No comments expressed specific opposition to this project.