



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

June 1, 2022

The Honorable Rodney L. Lusk,
Fairfax County Supervisor, Lee District
6121 Franconia Road,
Alexandria, VA 22310

Re: Telegraph Road at Hayfield Road Improvements Project

Dear Supervisor Lusk,

Thank you for your letter, dated May 4th, 2022, referencing recent comments you received from the Hayfield Citizens Association about the Telegraph Road at Hayfield Road Spot improvements project. As you know, the project was originated with the purpose of reducing congestion and improving safety by adding a short auxiliary lane segment for northbound Telegraph Road traffic through the intersection with Hayfield Road, which would taper and merge back into a single northbound Telegraph Road through lane prior to the next intersection with Helmsdale Lane. For southbound Telegraph Road, the initial concept also added capacity through the intersection by converting the existing on-road parking just downstream of Hayfield Road to a second through lane. Subsequently, additional concepts were added to the Base alternative and presented at the January 26, 2022 Virtual Public Information Meeting.

One of the benefits sought by such auxiliary lane extensions is to reduce queuing and delays of vehicles trying to cross the intersection while the traffic signal allows for the through traffic movement (green, yellow phases). Accommodating the auxiliary lanes would require targeted widening of Telegraph Road approaches to the Hayfield Road intersection. From the project's inception, the VDOT and Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) project teams have carefully considered the safety and mobility of pedestrians in each of the concepts developed. In the next few weeks, the team will be conducting additional reviews to develop the additional option(s) and analyses you requested.

MetroQuest Survey

To complement the January 2022 Virtual Public Meeting, VDOT is planning to conduct a MetroQuest Survey intended to expand the reach of public awareness and participation to additional members of the public, whether they live close to the site or use the subject intersection, or may not have yet become familiar with the project and its goals. The team will be looking to select addresses in zip codes both in the immediate vicinity as well as others farther out from the project site, and will make residents and businesses aware of the survey via the project website, and print/social media

announcements as appropriate. We will provide you details of the proposed outreach (such as zip codes, number of addresses, publication methods) and general survey content for your and Chairman McKay's review and input prior to launching the survey. We understand your hope that the survey will be completed by late October 2022 and are working with that timeline in mind.

Pedestrian Accommodations and Safety (for Students, Families All Users)

Three Telegraph Road design alternatives were presented during the January 2022 Public Meeting. The Presentation can be found at the project website <https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northern-virginia/telegraph-at-hayfield.asp>. References to Presentation slides on **Pedestrian Safety** and on **Coordination with Fairfax County Public Schools/ FCPS** are noted below.

- (A) Baseline Concept: Existing sidewalks and crosswalk lengths to remain, new ADA curb ramps on east side at the intersection. (Pedestrian safety summary: slide 13, FCPS coordination: slide 14).
- (B) Widening to the East: Upgraded/new 8-ft sidewalk on East side. (Pedestrian safety summary in slide 21; FCPS coordination noted in slide 22)
- (C) Widening to the West: Sidewalk replacement on both sides (Pedestrian safety summary in slide 30, FCPS coordination in slide 31).

The length of the crosswalks would either remain unchanged or be reduced for all current options (options B and C would extend the auxiliary lane beginning at the existing wide throat just north of the intersection; the crosswalk would not need to be lengthened). During the design process, VDOT and FCPS staff collaborated frequently on the decisions for pedestrian safety accommodations, including the proposed width and cross-section of the sidewalks and buffers.

As you requested, the team will be developing additional concept(s) that do not widen the roadway footprint to provide auxiliary lane operational improvements, and instead focus exclusively on improving current conditions to support pedestrian safety: 1) at the intersection (including "No Turn On Red" signs, crosswalks, ADA ramps), and 2) improved pedestrian accommodations (sidewalks). I would note that since there are no existing bike lane facilities to connect to at either end of the project at this time we do not recommend developing a pedestrian-focused concept(s) with bike lanes; please let us know if you have a different preference.

Lastly, the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) could review implementation of School Zone Speed Limit (SZSL) signs. These are typically implemented by FCPS following established criteria, under VDOT Permit, and operated and maintained by FCPS.

Traffic Study

In your letter, you mentioned concern that the initial traffic conditions used to justify the potential operational improvements of this project may now be outdated. VDOT Signal Operations staff reviewed detector counts for the Telegraph/Hayfield traffic signal for a 10-day period in March 2020 (generally prior to Covid traffic drops) and March 2022 (current); the resulting graphs indicated that, per VDOT Operations staff, "traffic volume on all approaches is getting close to pre-COVID level."

For a more detailed evaluation, the project's design consultant is now initiating the process to collect traffic data for the subject intersection before the schools close in June. The data collection will include counts of traffic and pedestrian volumes, and observations/documentation of conditions (such as queuing). We will share the results of the review when it is available.

Environmental Review (SERP), Stormwater Quality/ Quantity Analysis, Tree impacts

VDOT works hard to balance environmental issues with transportation needs and considers environmental issues in various project phases. The type of project funding partially determines the environmental review process to be followed. Although the Project has no federal funding and is therefore not subject to the federal environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in accordance with Virginia Code § 10.1-1188, the Telegraph Rd at Hayfield Rd Improvements Project is subject to administration of the **State Environmental Review Process (SERP)**. Although this Project is in a category that exempts it from SERP coordination with state natural and historic resources agencies, VDOT is still required to perform the necessary due diligence and coordinate with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies as part of its environmental review process throughout design development. All required environmental clearances, regulatory approvals and permits will be obtained prior to commencement of construction. Strict compliance with all environmental conditions and commitments resulting from any regulatory approvals, and implementation of VDOT's specifications and standard best management practices will protect the environment during construction.

The project team will also study potential impacts to **both water quality and quantity**. To address pollutant loading associated with the project, it is anticipated that water quality mitigation will be handled through offsite compliance with the purchase of nutrient credits, based on disturbed and impervious areas. Once a final alternative is selected, channel protection and stormwater capacity (flood protection) analyses will be conducted. It is anticipated that the analyses will determine that the project will not have a negative impact in the pipe system and that the channel and flood protection criteria are met.

Regarding trees, the project team is estimating the number of **trees impacted** by each alternative and will provide a comparative summary of our findings.

Next Steps

Thank you again for sharing the residents' questions and concerns with us. We hope that this interim information will prove useful as you continue to engage with your constituents. In the coming weeks, we will develop the pedestrian-focused concept(s) and the MetroQuest survey for your review. We look forward to receiving your input, and are optimistic that this continued VDOT-Fairfax County partnership will serve to benefit the community.

Sincerely,



Claudia Llana, P.E.
Director, Transportation & Land Use, Fairfax and Arlington Counties
VDOT NOVA District

- cc. Tom Biesiadny, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
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