

Summary of Public Workshops for the 14th Street Bridge Corridor EIS

The Washington, D.C. Public Workshop was held on February 27, 2007 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at Amidon Elementary School.

The Arlington County Public Workshop was held on February 28, 2007 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at the Aurora Hills Community Center.

The Workshop opened at 6:30 with an Open House. Attendants were asked to look at the boards that surrounded the room and to ask any questions they had to members of the project team.

At 7:00 PM, Gary Willoughby with Justice and Sustainability Associates asked everyone to have a seat as the presentation was about to begin. He also gave a brief summary of the workshop's agenda for the evening.

Jack Van Dop from the Federal Highway Administration- Eastern Federal Lands presented the background of the project for attendees who had not attended previous meetings.

Mark Cheskey from KCI Technologies, Inc. then introduced the Existing Conditions Report to the public. He discussed the general project schedule and ultimately how the Existing Conditions Report would fit into the Environmental Impact Statement.

Mark then introduced Angela Jones, also with KCI Technologies, to discuss existing traffic and transportation conditions in the corridor. She presented general conditions throughout the corridor and then focused the presentation on conditions surrounding the workshop locations. During the presentation in Arlington, it was stated by the attendees that the Metro ridership numbers quoted for the Virginia side of the study area are "way off". Angela stated that she would obtain more updated numbers to use on this project.

Mark then presented the existing cultural, social and environmental conditions to the group.

The presentation was followed by a 15 minute question and answer session facilitated by Gary Willoughby.

Questions asked by attendees:

Washington, D.C.

Speaker 1:

Traffic down Maine Avenue to 4th Street. This bottleneck should be marked on the slide in the area south of the Freeway. There are 50 major projects for a total of more than 40 million square feet of space planned for the SW neighborhood. It may not be possible to reduce congestion.

Speaker 2:

The baseball stadium will have 82 games per year, most starting at 7:05 PM. Metro is expanding the Navy Yard station but it is possible that a ballgame will overload the whole system.

Speaker 3:

There is a goal missing for the project. The region is in nonattainment for air quality requirements. Cars are a big source of air pollution. One goal of this study should be to do something about improving air quality. One option that should be considered is congestion pricing like has been done in London. Some of the money could be used to purchase new cars for Metro.

Speaker 4:

Area between 4th and 7th Streets SW: O Street gets congested when the SW Freeway backs up. He is concerned that the extension of 4th Street will add to the problem. When will there be a focus on the problems in the neighborhood? On March 27th, DDOT will announce improvements in the area to address Stadium issues. We need traffic calming. Will the results of that work and the data collection be integrated into the data used in the 14th Street Bridges study? The neighborhood can not handle any more traffic. The 14th Street Bridges study should consider the traffic going to the new USDOT building.

Speaker 5:

Speaker concerned that the turnpike phenomena will be the fate of this effort- "build it and they will come". Build a road and it will fill up with traffic. SW is already in gridlock. The South Capitol Bridge ending in P Street will add more traffic to 4th Street.

Arlington, VA

Speaker 1:

The count numbers of rail-ridership and bus-ridership are not correct, they need to be updated.

Speaker 2:

Speaker asked if a possible solution would be creating three lanes of the bridge to go straight onto 14th Street, and another three lanes of the bridge to go straight into I-395, for a total of 6 lanes traveling northeast from Arlington to DC. She also suggested using a private company to obtain census numbers, as the US Census numbers are not the most accurate. Lastly, the speaker stated that the signage in the corridor is the worse signage she's ever seen and would like that to be addressed.

Jack Van Dop commented that the reason for this meeting is to get ideas for alternatives, and her ideas will be noted. He further stated that once all alternatives are generated, they will be evaluated and the outcomes will be brought back to the public for another meeting in the fall.

Speaker 3:

Is the impact of the Reagan National Airport being taken into consideration, i.e., potential growth of the airport, increased taxi traffic to/from airport?

Jack commented that we are currently using all available information in our research and will incorporate outside influences as much as possible.

Speaker 4:

Nothing will change in the corridor unless the federal government takes responsibility for allowing limited access to the I-395 corridor during certain hours of the day. During off-peak hours, the corridor functions well, but all the people who use the corridor need to use it at the same time, which the corridor can not handle. It should also be noted that when Congress is in session, the whole roadway configuration is changed, lending to more traffic concerns. There needs to be staggered times limited for certain uses, and the federal government is the key.

Speaker 5:

Is the major BRAC initiative being taken into consideration in the traffic projections for this project?

Jack stated that information gathered from MWCOG reflects the BRAC initiative, so they are included with our projection and such. These will all be included in the traffic models generated in the near future.

Speaker 6:

What are the areas of influence beyond the limits of the study area for considering traffic and land use impacts? Will the study consider converting the existing freeway into a different type of roadway, such as an arterial (with stop controls, signals, and changes in access)?

Jack stated that we are looking at every an all options. He also stated that it will be hard to find a catch all solution that will please everyone, but that all solutions will be reviewed and evaluated. He then stated that the models the project team is currently utilizing take into account other studies outside of our study area that may have an impact on the study area traffic patterns.

Speaker 7:

The Crystal City area has a major task force looking at the BRAC issue. He noted the task force may look at population/housing growth changes sue to BRAC. Traffic maps indicate that the southern limits of the current study area carry traffic volumes in our highest range of values. Perhaps, the contributing factors to congestion in the study area are found much further south. He suggests the limits along I-395 be extended south to the point where volumes drop to the net range or lower. There are concerns over closing any existing ramps or movements that

currently exist along the corridor because he feels they were put in to serve a need.

Jack responded by saying that there are currently no options on the table, but rather, gathering ideas was the reason for the public workshop. The project team will continue to work with other organization studying parts of the study area and will report back to the public with alternatives that will be feasible for the area.

Speaker 8:

Citizen suggests that non-construction improvements (signing, telecommuting/staggered work hours, etc.) be explored before any construction improvements are implemented. There appears to be a lot of pending development along US 1 and in Pentagon City. These will likely generate more traffic in our study area. These need to be accounted for traffic projections and range of improvements.

Speaker 9:

Citizen complained that there were pedestrian and bicycle improvements developed under the previous study of this area, but nothing was done. At a minimum, he wants this study to develop a Master Plan for the area related to bikes and pedestrians.

Speaker 10:

Questions were asked on the long-term view for the corridor, as well as for the SE/SW Freeway. Is there a way to incorporate the changes made since HOV instituted and also include comments from CSX?

Jack stated that a move toward alternative modes of transportation is recognized and that all interested parties have access to the information. He discussed that a citizen's participation panel will convene shortly, and there is an agency group involved in the project as well.

After the Question and Answer Segment, the workshop activity was introduced. The activity was explained by Jackie Seneschal from KCI in Washington, D.C. and Lauren Bowman, also from KCI, in Arlington, VA.

The Public Workshop Activity provided the public a chance to start contributing ideas for alternatives for the project. The participants used maps, tracing paper and markers to identify what they visualized for the corridor by the year 2030. The participants were asked to complete the activity while also returning to the Open House.

Results from the Public Workshop Activity:

Washington D.C.

- Consider the possibilities of a traffic island or roundabout/traffic circle strategy

- Ex. G Street and 6th Street SW
- Congestion charge in the area that encompasses the largest number of destination in a relatively compact area.
 - Reduce pollution
 - Create shorter commutes
 - More telecommuting
 - Funds collected could be used for Metro car improvements
- Gasoline tax
- Cannot build way out of congestion
- Major bottleneck at South Capitol Street and I Street, needs separation for I-395 to South Capitol Street to move.
- Make South Capitol Street from I-395 to South Capitol Bridge a continuous roadway separated from surface streets
- Express Bus lanes
- Add new Metro line from Arlington to DC
- Pedestrian Bridge over Potomac River
- Better signage for lane drops
- More merge area at the GW Parkway interchange
- Close ramp at 14th Street and Maine Avenue
- Better pedestrian connection from the Tidal Basin to SW. Sidewalk width decrease dramatically due to a dedicated lane on the ramp.
- Add acceleration lanes on 395
- Change entrance ramp onto 395 from 9th Street to a left hand merge
- Tear down the SW Freeway.
- Express bus tops
- Pedestrian bridges connecting the SW Waterfront to East Potomac Park.
- Keep Water Street open
- Extend Study Area south to include all of SW
- Open Potomac Avenue to keep traffic out of residential areas
- Add trolleys
- Have ramps to 395 around 2nd Street SW and east of South Capitol Street
- Poor signage all along 395 South (in Arlington)
- Easier bike access on both sides on bridge
- Commute tax
- Dedicated bike/pedestrian bridge
- Poor light timing at 14th Street and Maine Avenue
- Access to East Potomac Park from Westbound Avenue
- Keep Water Street Open
- Maintain 7th and D Streets Metro entrance
- Address merge from 7th Street Ramp to 295

Arlington, VA

- Missing directional signage to Crystal City when exiting off of 395

February 27 and 28, 2007

- Mt. Vernon Trail needs to be shown on the bike map, not clipped to study area
- There needs to be a bicycle/pedestrian connection between North Tract and GW Parkway
- Add a stop sign at I-395 exit on to South Arlington Ridge Road
- Bike crossing to A-NCC on Columbia pike
- Add bike lanes along Joyce Street and have it cross 395
- Bike crossings at Fern Street, Eads Street and Jefferson Davis Highway
- Need bike line on 110
- Upgrade existing bike lane along 27
- Direct crossing to Mt. Vernon Trail, north of 395
- Connection from GW Parkway/Mt Vernon Trail to North Tract Park
- Dedicated bus lanes
- Off ramp from 395 enters directly into a neighborhood at Arlington Ridge Road
- Fix lane drop approaching bridge
- Create an urban street as opposed to a freeway
 - Traffic lights on the freeway at 395 and Jefferson Davis Highway, Boundary Channel and no southbound 395 merge before bridges
- Bike/ped bridge over GW Parkway to North Tract Park
- Increase transit throughout the corridor
- Transitway on Jefferson Davis Highway
- Increase use of improved signage any operation changes
- Walkable communities next to Federal Buildings such as DOT in SE Washington.

At 8:30 PM, Gary Willoughby thanked everyone for coming and then adjourned the workshop.