

## Summary of Scoping Comments for the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges Corridor EIS

Through the meetings with the general public, as well as affected government agencies the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Project was able to collect vital information to better define the purpose and need for improvements to the bridge. Two public meetings were held, one in Arlington, VA and one in Washington, DC. The agency scoping meeting was held in Washington, DC.

At each Scoping meeting the project team invited response and comments to a list of ten major concerns within the corridor. Those attending the meeting were invited to present oral or written testimony about these or any other areas of concern they had. Attendees were also asked to participate in a ranking exercise. Each participant was provided with six dots to distribute among the various areas of concern within the corridors. Dots would be placed beside the initial list of potential project objectives or on additional objectives listed by the public. The results of the ranking exercise are shown below from most to least popular.

<b>What needs to be noted...</b>	<b>Total Tally</b>
1. Improving transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities serving commuters, visitors and recreation	35
2. Providing access to waterfront and to hiker/ biker paths	21
3. Improving transportation system efficiency/ enhance mobility	16
4. Protecting/ Maintaining parklands, wetlands, and the Potomac River	16
5. Improving Safety and Reducing motorist confusion	13
6. Providing clear and consistent signage to motorist	10
7. Enhancing gateway corridor features, aesthetics, and appearance	7
8. Enhancing role as an evacuation route	5
9. Optimizing public investment	2
10. Addressing security issues of national concern	1

## **Issues Identified**

Some of the items proposed by the public discussed specific potential solutions but the suggestions could be grouped by topic area for consider in refining the project scope:

### *Reducing vehicle trips across the Potomac*

- Restore and enhance HOV priority in corridor
- Parking on the VA side with free bikes and electric bikes to downtown DC
- More creative alternatives to get people out of cars
- Set goal to reduce traffic over bridge at rush hour 10-15% rather than more lanes
- Implement all ideas that reduce car trips over the bridge that cost \$75,000 or less
- Set up visitor centers outside DC in VA/MD to facilitate use of Metro Rail and bus into the city
- Develop bus Center for visitors at locations outside study area to keep buses from clogging arteries
- How do we get current drivers that use the bridge daily, to leave their cars and find another way to get to work?
- Enhance, promote public transit and fewer cars
- Plan for a water taxi that could take drivers off the bridge
- Free bikes to commuters who leave their cars
- Reduced Metro fares
- Free buses on the 395 corridor
- Build a parking garage on the VA side of the bridge for commuters and provide electric bikes that would be used to commute over the bridge to downtown locations. Bikes would then be returned at night to the garage facility.
- There should be higher priority for buses and bus-only lanes.
- Extending HOV/HOT lanes over the bridge into DC
- Reducing foreign oil dependence

### *Reducing vehicle traffic within the District*

- More creative alternatives to get people out of cars
- Raise parking tax in DC in conjunction with reduced metro fares
- Consider streetcars in the district side
- Consider multiple ways of encouraging non-car transportation, including London example of inner-city motor-vehicle permit
- Enhance, promote public transit and fewer cars
- Free bikes to commuters who leave their cars
- Reduced Metro fares
- Free buses on the 395 corridor
- Increase the DC parking taxes to provide a negative incentive for people who now commute to DC in cars
- Build a parking garage on the VA side of the bridge for commuters and provide electric bikes that would be used to commute over the bridge to downtown locations. Bikes would then be returned at night to the garage facility.

### *Addressing location specific traffic issues*

- 14th Street traffic lights cause backups

- Double parking at Holocaust Museum evenings rush blocks outbound traffic
- Queue for HOV lanes subject to “interlopers”
- Need to possibly widen bridge to pre-sort weaving
- Connection to Anacostia Freeway
- Close one lane of northbound GW parkway in the morning and afternoon rush hour to ensure an “entry lane” to from the southbound ramp onto the GW parkway.
- Coordination is needed to connect 295 on either side of Anacostia River at PA Ave.
- Don’t even think about closing GW Pkwy entrance to 14<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge So. Fix mess of entrances/exits.
- Consider DoD employees getting in/out of Pentagon or not obstructing thousands of cars every day parking and SLUGing.

*Addressing location specific pedestrian and bike issues*

- Ensure direct bicycle/ walking access from North Tract to Mt. Vernon trail
- Look at Crystal City metro stop: connection to study area
- Consider improving pedestrian access to Mall, monuments and museums (including new African American museum form Metro): Along Independence Ave., 14th Street connection to waterfront, facilitate crossing 14th Street
- Improve and encourage bicycle access by increasing safety of feeder roads.
- I-395, Route 27 and GWMP are major barriers to bicycling and walking and all existing shared-use paths in the project area are highly substandard.
- Conditions on Maine Ave approaching E. Basin Drive from 12<sup>th</sup> St. SW are very dangerous. High curb on E. Basin Drive leaves us out.
- Provide on-street bike lanes from the 14<sup>th</sup> bridge to downtown and Capitol Hill.
- Improve bike/pedestrian crossings of GWMP on both sides of I0395.
- Existing path on George Mason Bridge is too narrow and connections on both sides.
- Build a bike path on Arland Williams Bridge to connect directly to the path on the Case Bridge.
- Build a direct bike/pedestrian bridge over GWMP to connect North Tract to Mt. Vernon Trail.
- Create bike route through Pentagon South parking to link Columbia Pike to Mt. Vernon Train and 14<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge.
- Attached map shows my route to L’Enfant Plaza from S. Arlington. The route is long and squiggly from the DC end of George Mason Bridge to the Case Bridge sidewalk. I believe a better connection and signage would provide many cyclists with a safer connection to the Mall, Capitol Hill and beyond. A sidewalk/bicycle path on the downstream side of Arland Williams Bridge is needed too.

*Improving the visua/and aesthetic quality of the area*

- Facilitate VA-Ave restoration and SE- SW Freeway deconstruction, in DC No parking built on parkland
- Paint Railroad bridge
- Retain and improve “Banneker Overlook” and “L’Enfant Promenade”
- Improve aesthetics; eliminate weaving.

*Protect and improve natural environment*

- Protect and enhance the natural resources of the Potomac River in this area

- Terrestrial habitat; wetlands & aquatic habitat; need more trees to absorb CO2 put out by cars
- Enhance Daingerfield Island and 14th Street Bridge area with trees (Native)
- The VA and MD Departments of Natural Resources should be involved in the study (MD owns the river). The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Commission should also.

### **Summary of Meetings**

The meeting in Arlington VA pointed out that a key aspect was within the biking and walking communities. A major concern of these people was to ensure direct bike/walking access for park lands. Another major concern was to look at Crystal City metro stop and how that interacts with out study area. If the project is able to look at the interconnection between Crystal City and the study area, then it can fix any traffic issues at head. Since a majority of the people living within Crystal City work within DC, this is a good way to ensure less confusion on the roads.

The meeting *Washington DC* gave the insight of the issues at head for the residents of Washington. The key issues with the residents in Washington was eliminating traffic in DC, and minimizing the amount of cars in the city. Their idea to achieve such a goal is to set up visitor centers outside DC in VA/MD to facilitate use of Metro Rail and access into the city. This visitor center would lower the amount of traffic into the city, thus lessen the confusion, and amount of cars in the city. The resident's goal is to reduce traffic over the bridge to 10-15% rather than to add more lanes. The attendees of the Washington DC also tried to emphasis the necessity that their sense of community was kept intact. For instance "Banneker Overlook" and "L'Enfant Promenade" were not to be destroyed, however the areas around such could have improvements added to such. These residents also did not like the idea of parking facilities, or the construction of the bus and tourist parking garage because these facilities would add to traffic in the community.

A major concern in both of the community meetings was driver confusion. The signage and roadways are full of confusion. In the *Arlington* community the traffic patterns are so confusing that even the residents get confused or not able to comprehend the signals. Participants are consistent in requesting a change to traffic signage to improve clarity throughout the study area.

The *agency meeting* gave another perspective to the comments and concerns in the area. Again a major concern was with the confusing signals, signs, and general road patterns. To reduce the amount of cars on the road, participants at the agency meeting recommended use of an HOV lane across the bridges, as well as a lane reversal to increase traffic flow when necessary. Another suggestion was to give bus priority at traffic signals and to have more bus routes available.

The comments from all three scoping meetings will be considered for inclusion in the project statement of purpose and need. In some cases the specific actions proposed for consideration will be carried forward into future phases of the project.

## **Issues for Study Area**

Some of the issues raised by the public can be considered in the definition of the project scope:

### *Working with DC Sports Commission to gauge the impact of the new ball park off of North Capital Street*

- Develop a plan to get fans that drive over the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge off on the North Capitol Street exit and into the Stadium.

### *Coordination with other plans*

- Over the last 5-6 years I've participated in community scoping, planning and development of plans for 1) The South Capitol Street Bridge corridor, both before and since the stadium 2) the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge corridor 3) Barney Circle and the PA Ave bridge region impact AND development, roads, traffic, etc. all along the Anacostia and Potomac rivers. Nothing major (signage and marking is OK) should be done until all these site developments are integrated and the impact is measured together.