

March 7, 2012—Transportation Commission

Good Evening. My name is Dave Cavanaugh, I live at 4008 Fort Worth Avenue, Alexandria, VA. I have lived in Alexandria for nearly 40 years.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak before the Transportation Commission and provide comments on the Beauregard Corridor Plan and the traffic analysis. It is my hope that in providing input to the City Council the Transportation Commission will recommend updating the transportation chapter (Chapter 8) of the Beauregard Corridor Small Area Plan Working Draft. Your oversight helps ensure transportation projects are necessary and have received appropriate review and approval to justify the expenditure of taxpayer funds.

The Working Draft should be revised to include the following:

1. A pedestrian circulation plan within and adjacent to the plan area. The emphasis should be on moving people not cars. May want to consider hiring a pedestrian engineer.
2. An evaluation of the proposed transportation station at Southern Towers and the routing of buses to accommodate local and regional transit to the Pentagon.
3. An evaluation of the proposed ellipse in terms of design, operation, safety and potential impacts on local transit and pedestrian and bicycle circulation through the intersection. The ellipse is a revival of an older transportation concept that today is somewhat experimental.
4. An analysis of a new street paralleling North Beauregard connecting the proposed town center at Rayburn Avenue to Mark Center Drive.
5. An update of the transportation analysis to include other options for managing traffic, transit and pedestrian circulation at Beauregard and Seminary Road

As you are aware, the Planning Staff began holding Community Meetings in November 2011 after receiving individual comments from the community on guidelines to be included in the Beauregard Small Area Plan. At the November 21, 2011 meeting, the agenda included an overview of the potential community amenities and tucked away on the agenda was an overview of the Transportation Analysis. This may be the Chapter 527 Draft Report submitted to VDOT and I assume VDOT has not completed its review.

On January 18, 2012 the Beauregard Corridor Small Area Plan, Transportation Analysis prepared by a consultant for the City was published. Five days later on January 23, 2012 the planning staff released the Beauregard Small Area Plan Working Draft. This draft has been the basis for discussion regarding land use, transportation, transit, open space, affordable housing, and recreation.

During this period, VDOT held public hearings on the proposed HOV ramp at I-395 and Seminary Road. Citizens provided comments and it is likely VDOT will have prepared responses to the comments sometime after March 10. A decision regarding construction of the proposed ramp would be made shortly thereafter.

An "Alternatives Analysis" has also been initiated by the City. The analysis is slated to be completed sometime in 2014.

As you can see, the process is being rushed and citizens (taxpayers and voters) are overwhelmed and becoming irate.

In this process, regardless of citizen concerns and comments, the City, on behalf of the developers has presented one basic option for Corridor C through the Beauregard Plan area. The traffic analysis basically assumes a BRT Transit Corridor in mostly dedicated lanes from Van Dorn Station to a location to be determined. The 4.7 mile corridor would follow Van Dorn to Landmark Mall, continue on to Van Dorn, snaking its way under the I-395 underpass at Sanger Avenue connecting to Beauregard, to Mark Center, Southern Towers. The single option presented by City staff always assumed construction of the HOV ramp and an "ellipse."

A transportation goal for the Beauregard Small Area Plan was to create a transit oriented, mixed use, connected and walkable community.

The Transportation Plan should be reevaluated for the following reasons:

- The VDOT Chapter 527 review has not been completed.
- VDOT has not made a final decision regarding the HOV ramp. If approved, this will create a major regional transportation hub at Mark Center Station, a feature that has not been considered in the current transportation analysis or the plan.
- There is insufficient information available to the public to sufficiently evaluate safety, functionality, size and impacts of the proposed ellipse.

The ellipse should be discussed as one option, along with others, for relieving traffic congestion, but the Beauregard Small Area Plan should not approve or endorse the ellipse until further analysis is completed.

The purpose and need for the ellipse may be reduced as a result of the short and mid-term improvements that have been approved and the early success of DoD's implementation of their Transportation Management Plan.

- The Alternative Analysis initiated in October 2011 for Corridor C has not been completed. It is essential the alternatives analysis be completed to better understand the costs and impacts on land use. Approving or endorsing a design as part of the Beauregard Small Area Plan Working Draft would be irresponsible and like putting cart before the horse.
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- An origin and destination study should be completed on the Beauregard segment of Corridor C. At present there are no heavily used transit routes from Mark Center to Van Dorn Center. This is not a major destination for residents living in the plan corridor.
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- Current planning does not include an integrated network of interconnected streets, sidewalks, public green space connecting the properties within the 400 acre plan area to each other and the transportation hubs at Southern Towers and Mark Center Station.

In closing, reference has been made to Ward Circle in the District of Columbia as an example for considering the ellipse at Seminary and Beauregard. There are major drawbacks to selecting Ward Circle as a good example of a traffic circle similar to the ellipse.

- The center of the circle, at the intersection of Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues NW, is currently inaccessible to pedestrians and features only a statue and some shrubs in the middle.
- Pedestrians and cyclists are able to travel around the circle but not into or through it.
- The major problem is the awkward configuration of Ward Circle and pedestrians crossing illegally at mid-block locations.
- Ward Circle Park is not near a major Interstate Highway.