

**Overview of 6th Bridge Working Group Meeting
For the Route 27/244 Interchange Modification Project
(VDOT Project No. 0027-000-V01, UPC 13528)
Held August 16, 2006
At the Carver Center, Arlington**

The sixth meeting of the Washington Boulevard/Columbia Pike Bridge Working Group was held on August 16, 2006 from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. at the Carver Center in Arlington. The following representatives were in attendance:

Arlington View Civic Association

Mr. George Figliozzi
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Mr. Eugene Hubbard
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Mr. Tom Barlow
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Mr. Mike Wasylcevk
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Columbia Heights Civic Association

Mr. Ed Miltenberger
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Foxcroft Heights Civic Association

Mr. John F. Moroz, Jr.
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Mount Olive Baptist Church

Ms. Sabra Jones, Administrator
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Bicycle Advisory Committee

Ms. Karen Riecks
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Penrose Neighborhood Association

Mr. Tom Greenfield
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West Hampton Mews Condominium Association

Ms. Betty Hartman
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Lancaster Condominium Association

Ms. Shirley Hale
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VDOT

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Arlington County

Bill Roberts
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Angela Adams
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Carlton Abbott and Partners

Carlton Abbott
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George Figliozzi began the meeting by requesting that the following comments be included in the minutes of this meeting: First of all, he officially objects to the process. With respect to the operational issues, which were raised at the first Bridge Working Group Meeting in February 2006, George said that the goal of Arlington View was for S. Queen St. to have full access to eastbound and westbound Columbia Pike and Ramp E. It was his understanding that the Working Group would have a chance to review the operational issues before they are implemented, and since then they have been taken off the table. He mentioned that the Citizen Information Meeting (CIM) is scheduled for this fall. He requested that it be delayed until two more Bridge Working Group Meetings were held so there would be enough time to review the latest operational view layout. Tina Briganti-Dunn (VDOT Project Manager) responded that operational issues could be discussed after aesthetics. The traffic consultant needs time to complete the traffic analysis, so it would be premature to discuss operational issues at this time. George asked if the Working Group would be able to see the revised scope of work for the traffic consultant. Tina replied that the scope will be posted on the website once it is finalized. George asked how much time the Working Group would have to review the operations after the analysis has been completed. Tina replied that when the technical memo is prepared based on the revised scope, another meeting can be set up. George asked what the revised operational analysis was, and Tina responded that VDOT does not want to show anything to the Working Group until they are confident that it will work. George said that it was his understanding that it does involve maintaining full access for S. Queen St, and Tina confirmed that this is the goal.

Carlton Abbott (Carlton Abbott and Partners) began the aesthetics discussion by showing a PowerPoint presentation. Slides were shown of some existing bridges, and he commented that the purpose of showing these slides was to demonstrate that VDOT does design/construct decorative bridges. There were slides showing some schematic sketches of proposed finishes and a number of different pylons. Carlton mentioned that proposed pylons would be separate from the bridge structure, set back approximately 1' away, so that there would not be a safety issue as some trucks carrying extra wide loads would not come in contact with the pylon from the top side of the bridge.

A citizen asked if the top of the bridge could be lit similar to the Memorial Bridge, and if that is included in the aesthetics budget. Tina responded that if lighting were to be provided on top of the bridge, then the whole corridor would have to be lit, and that would cost a substantial amount of money. In addition, the lighting shown in some of these examples is decorative, and if it doesn't meet lighting requirements, which would be a problem.

A citizen asked if the proposed bridge would have haunches. Tina responded that only the fascia (outermost) girders would include the haunches to create an arched effect.

Carlton mentioned that another goal is to improve the overhead signing layout, such as making them smaller and more uniform. A citizen asked how small they could be, and Carlton replied that they still have to meet VDOT standards, but that there can definitely be improvements to the existing signing layout. Another citizen commented that the existing S. Quinn Street signal is difficult to see for WB Columbia Pike traffic due to the existing overhead sign. A citizen mentioned that there is not enough advance warning for WB Columbia Pike traffic going onto Ramp B, and creates a dangerous situation. Tina commented that VDOT has a signing expert

who will be asked to review all of the signs on the approaches to the interchange and provide his input into the design of the signage to improve the layout, driver expectancy, and reduce confusion.

Carlton then proceeded to show sketches of seven different pylon designs. Pylon designs #1-#4 were above the bridge and #5-#7 were at the same height as the bridge. Tina mentioned that VDOT will provide the “canvas” regarding public art, and it would be up to the Working Group to come up with a consensus for the medallions or other artwork to be included in the bridge design.

Specific Feedback from the Working Group Members:

Karen Riecks stated that she liked:

- the Pylon to stand higher than the bridge parapet,
- the Pylon to be squared [directly visible] to the Columbia Pike traffic,
- the parapets created with the shadow effect (the repeating patterns that Carlton showed)
- Blocks to be used for shape/pattern the MSE Walls instead of the cruciform shapes

Tom Greenfield agreed and stated that he preferred:

- the Pylons to be wider, more substantial to fit in scale with the longer bridge
- space to be provided where medallions could be attached

Carlton agreed that the pylons could be made larger. Carlton mentioned that once a pylon design is decided upon, he would make refinements and bring it to the next meeting.

Ed Miltenberger stated that:

- the ideal would be to slow traffic down and create a pedestrian friendly environment
- he also likes the idea of medallions or the pylons themselves reflecting the Freedmans' Village theme, which is his priority for the aesthetic treatments and
- he likes the 30's Art Deco Style, but was concerned that it conflicts with the Freedmans' Village theme because the village existed before the 1930's
- Ed cautioned the group that more than one medallion per pylon would appear too busy and may detract from the overall theme and appearance of the memorial bridge

John Moroz stated that:

- he has seen the shape of Pylon #1 before as it relates to the Freedmans' Village
- the shape of the top of the pylon is similar to the blueprint of the houses that existed on South Gate Road in the Freedmans' Village Park
- he offered to get a copy of the shape to present at the next meeting

Tom Greenfield added:

- He would like to see the rhythm of the parapet wall (repeating shadow effect) to be broken up with the use of another shape, maybe the shape of the pylon but scaled down to fit in context with the parapet.

Pete responded that something could be done at the joints (typically 20' intervals) to break up the pattern.

Regarding the haunched fascia girder, Carlton mentioned that it could either be painted or have a plate welded to it. A citizen asked what the keystone was for, and Carlton replied that the bridge name could be put there, either "Freedman's Village" or "Washington Boulevard". A citizen commented that painting life generally lasts around 10 years, and he was concerned that there could be an issue regarding who would be responsible for repainting it in the future. Therefore he would prefer welding a plate instead. Pete Imperiale (VDOT) commented that the problem with a welded plate is that it could take away from the pylons. Another citizen asked what color would be provided for the fascia girder, and Tina replied that there are a number of color options.

Issues were raised regarding the cost of the aesthetic treatments. Tina mentioned that the budget is 3% of the bridge construction cost, and said that by the next meeting they will try to have a cost for the pylons.

Pete mentioned that there could be recessed panels for artwork on the abutment walls, and Carlton responded that there could be a safety issues with the drivers. Carlton mentioned that bronze markers could be placed in the pedestrian facilities, which don't distract drivers and are vandal proof.

Angela Adams mentioned to the Working Group that this is a unique opportunity for the citizens to work with Carlton Abbott in order to architecturally get the bridge they are looking for. The art portion can come at a later date.

Regarding the finish of the MSE walls, Tina mentioned that there are a number of options, from blocks to ashlar stone shape, and that they could check the website to see various options. A citizen asked if real brick could be used, and Pete responded that it would be very expensive. After some discussion, the consensus was to keep the wall finish simple to avoid taking away from the pylons. A citizen asked if landscaping was in the budget, and Tina replied that it is currently not in the budget. However, if there was money remaining from the 3% budget, then it could be included. In another argument for a simple wall design, a citizen said that if plantings were to be done around the MSE walls in the future (by the County or others), over time the vegetation would grow and most likely cover the wall anyway. A citizen mentioned that they liked the ashlar stone but not the cruciform shape. They wanted to know if it would be possible for the stone to be seen but not the shape.

A citizen asked about text in the sidewalk, and Carlton replied that he would bring in some slides of work he had done in Williamsburg. The citizen also asked about art in the abutment walls. Tina responded that it could lead to driver distraction and potential vandalism. VDOT wants to concentrate on the recessed arch, decorative features, and sconce lighting.

The overall consensus of the citizens was as follows:

- Pylon design #1 – larger in scale with at least one recessed area available for adding a medallion at a later date
- No art other than engraving "Freedman's Village" on the bridge itself

- Simple design MSE walls

A citizen asked if it would be possible to reuse the existing stone from the existing bridge, or possibly use it for the pylons. Pete responded that it would be costly (labor intensive), and there probably would not be enough stone. Thus there would be a mismatch.

A citizen raised the question about EB Columbia Pike bikers around S. Queen St. Tina said that there are contractual budget issues that need to be resolved with the traffic consultant regarding specifically addressing the bikers. The intent is to provide the pavement for a bike lane, but due to safety concerns it would not be striped out until the entire corridor is complete.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.