



## **Proposed Traffic Safety Measures for Rollins Drive at Fort Hunt Road**

**1/26/23 Public Community Meeting and Input during Comment Period**

**Summary of Comments/ Questions Received and VDOT Responses**

*Study webpage:* <https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northern-virginia/rollins-drive.asp>

On January 26, 2023, the Virginia Department of Transportation held an in-person community meeting at Belle View Elementary School to discuss the proposal for a temporary full closure of Rollins Drive at its intersection with Fort Hunt Road.

VDOT's presentation referenced recent improvements and included background on key concerns (sight distance, currently 32 conflicting vehicular movements plus 6 pedestrian) and brief crash record review. The safety improvements that would be realized by the proposed temporary closure of the Rollins Dr. leg were summarized (eliminate intersection sight distance issue, reduce conflicting movements to 9 vehicular and 4 pedestrian, provide pedestrian refuge area). Also presented were the following aspects of the proposed full closure: detour and impacts, implementation plan and evaluation period, possible outcomes based on evaluation, including exploration of other traffic engineering measures. Details about the proposed closure were followed by a question-and-answer period where meeting attendees could ask questions of the presenters.

Comment sheets were available at the meeting for general feedback and for specific response to the question "Do you support a temporary, full closure of Rollins Drive at Fort Hunt Road?" (Options provided were Yes, No, Unsure). The comment sheet could be placed in the "Comment Box" provided at the meeting or mailed back to VDOT. Questions and comments could also be mailed or emailed to [MeetingComments@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:MeetingComments@vdot.virginia.gov).

Approximately 80 people attended the in-person meeting. During that meeting, approximately 26 questions were asked verbally and answered. Following that meeting, a total of 22 comment sheets were received within the comment period of January 26, 2023, through February 13, 2023. One additional comment sheet was received after the comment period had ended but was still

recorded and considered. During the comment period, 40 emails were received by VDOT. Summary of feedback received and VDOT's responses to the questions are included below.

In response to community opposition to the temporary full closure of Rollins Dr. @ Fort Hunt Rd (see summary below), VDOT is exploring other options instead of a full closure of Rollins Drive at Fort Hunt Road. A follow-up community meeting will be held later this year at Belle View Elementary School to present our recommendations.

### **Summary Of Feedback:**

#### **Support vs. Opposition to the proposed full, temporary closure of Rollins Dr. @ Fort Hunt Rd (Answers to Questions on Comment Form, or expressed in comments)**

*\*75 responses were counted for the following data. Each participant's opinion/preference was only counted once, regardless of how many times an individual may have commented.*

- 55 (72.4%) did **not** support
- 5 (6.6%) were in support
- 15 (21.1%) were unsure or did not disclose an opinion in support or opposition.

Based on the lack of community support VDOT is exploring other options instead of a temporary full closure of Rollins Drive.

#### **Traffic Signal / Traffic Light:**

23 comments suggested adding a traffic light or traffic signal.

- **Traffic Signal / Light Located at Rollins Dr. & Ft. Hunt Rd. Intersection**
  - 20 respondents were in favor of a traffic signal at this location instead of a temporary closure.
- **Traffic Signal/ Light Located at Quander Rd. and Ft. Hunt Rd. Intersection**
  - Two respondents were in favor of placing a traffic signal at the intersection of Quander Rd and Ft. Hunt Rd. This idea was proposed at the in-person meeting on January 26, 2023, and through generally opposed when suggested, VDOT did receive comments in support of this suggestion. A few people considered this alternative an option that may encourage drivers to slow down while traveling along Ft. Hunt Rd while still being able to control the flow of traffic.

- **Actuated Traffic Light**

- One resident suggested an actuated traffic light in the project area, commenting that one has been successful in Alexandria, VA.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** A traffic signal at Rollins Drive is not warranted and therefore could not be installed. Additional information on why traffic signals should not be installed when not warranted can be found here: <http://vtrc.virginiadot.org/rsb/RSB2.pdf>.
- ❖ A traffic signal at Quander Road does meet a signal warrant. However, since the intersection is currently operating at acceptable levels and crash levels are very low, the prioritization for a traffic signal is low.

### **Four-Way Stop/ All-Way Stop:**

11 comments suggested adding a four-way stop, all-way stop, or stop signs at this location to slow northbound and southbound traffic along Ft. Hunt Rd.

- ❖ **VDOT Response:** VDOT conducted an all-way stop analysis at Ft. Hunt Road and does not meet warrants. If a four-way stop was installed, it would take on average 3 minutes for Ft. Hunt traffic to get through the intersection during the AM peak hour and almost 4 minutes in the PM peak hour. Northbound (NB) Ft Hunt queues would be 910 ft in the AM and 1050 ft in the PM (beyond the Paul Spring Retirement Community). Southbound (SB) Ft Hunt queue would be 325 ft in the AM (Quander Road intersection) and 695 ft in the PM (middle of horizontal curve north of Quander).

### **Roundabout:**

6 comments suggested installing a roundabout.

- Responses favored a roundabout at this location with the acknowledgement that this may be a more difficult solution to implement due to the acquisition of residential property. One comment suggested restricting left turns from Rollins Dr and Westgrove Blvd as a short-term solution to further support the implementation of a roundabout.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** A roundabout can be considered as a long-term option but requires extensive analysis for operations and impacts. Our focus is on short term options to improve safety at this intersection.

## **Speed Cameras:**

8 comments suggested installing a speed camera.

- Respondents were in favor of a speed camera at this location with the note that money from speeding violations could help fund the project. Responses also noted that traffic along Ft. Hunt Rd is more responsible for crashes at the project location and should be responsible for financing improvements in the area. Many comments noted speed cameras are an effective way to reduce speeding.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** The [Virginia Code](#) currently does not allow speed cameras at this location. By law, speed cameras are currently allowed only in school zones and work zones. Even if a speed camera were possible, speed is not the main reason for the crashes at this location and would have minimal effect in reducing the crash risk. The crash risk is due to issues with limited sightlines at the intersection.

## **Closure of Westgrove Blvd:**

2 comments received mentioned closing Westgrove Blvd instead of Rollins Drive.

- Respondents were in favor of closing Westgrove Blvd citing that cut-through traffic from the George Washington Pkwy is the reason why the intersection is unsafe as it causes backup for drivers attempting to turn left onto Ft. Hunt Rd. During peak hours.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** The safety issues remaining are due to limited sight distance. We did see issues for the Westgrove approach and recently improved signing, marking, and improved visibility of the stop sign. We are considering additional countermeasures. Closing Westgrove would move traffic to other residential streets. While the Westgrove approach has more traffic volume, the increased traffic volume is not the cause for the safety issues at the intersection.
  - Sightlines for finding acceptable gaps in traffic in Ft Hunt Road traffic are adequate. Traffic stopped from Westgrove can see traffic from the north at the Quander Road intersection. The sight line from Westgrove is about 350 feet to the north. The sight line from Rollins is about 180 feet to the north. The required distance at this distance for sight lines, known as intersection sight distance, is 440 feet. When there is insufficient sight distance, drivers are not able to judge the

necessary gaps in traffic properly to turn that would allow a SB vehicle along Ft. Hunt to stop properly.

### **Road Straightening:**

1 comment received suggested road straightening.

- A response was received suggesting straightening Ft. Hunt Rd between the Westgrove Dog Park and Quander Rd.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** The area described is outside of the limits of the proposed safety improvements at Rollins Dr.

### **Turning Restrictions:**

17 comments mentioned turning restrictions.

- **Left-Turn Restrictions on Rollins Dr and Westgrove Blvd**
  - Respondents were in favor of implementing a no left-turn policy on Rollins Dr and Westgrove Blvd. this was interpreted to imply that through movements along with right turns would still be permissible at this intersection. Responders view this suggestion as a less extreme, yet still effective, alternative to closing Rollins Dr noting that it is an acceptable solution that would reduce conflict points at this location. It was also noted that this could be a better solution for pedestrians in making this intersection easier to navigate. Many comments noted that residents avoid making a left-turn from Rollins Dr onto Ft. Hunt Rd, or just avoid that intersection entirely when possible.
    - One respondent suggested restricting left-turns during peak hours (6:00 am to 9:00 am and 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm) would be acceptable due to this method being effective on Richmond Hwy (Route 1) in several areas.
- **Right In, Right Out Only / Right-Turn Only – Rollins Drive and Westgrove Blvd**
  - Respondents were in favor of implementing a right-turn only policy from Rollins Dr and Westgrove Blvd. This is also referred to as a “Right In, Right Out Only” restriction and implies that any movement apart from right turns would not be permissible at this location, this includes eliminating through movements along

with left-turns. Though many comments have used “no left-turn” and “right-turn only” interchangeably, it has been noted that residents are concerned for pedestrian safety when mentioning either suggestion. Responses acknowledge that enforcement of a right in, right out only policy may be difficult without the use of physical barriers restricting certain movements.

- One responder suggested making only Westgrove Blvd a right-turn only, eliminating all through movements at the intersection, and restricting left-turns onto Ft. Hunt to only be permissible from Rollins Dr.

❖ **VDOT Response:** Turning restrictions from Westgrove would not address the sight distance issues at the intersection. Westgrove Blvd carries significant traffic volume, any turning movement restriction would result in traffic being diverted to the nearby residential streets and could potentially create safety issues at another intersections. Turning restrictions from Rollins Dr, however, would help address sight distance issues at the intersection.

### **Left-Turn onto Quander Rd and from Quander Rd:**

2 comments mentioned turning left at Quander Rd. These comments were concerned with the turn lane on Quander Rd if Rollins Dr were to be closed.

- One comment is concerned with the length of the current turn lane and that if Rollins Dr is closed, will the current turn lane be sufficient for all the traffic that would be diverted to Quander Rd.
- The second comment is concerned with the turning movements from Quander Rd and believes a separate left and right turn lane may help alleviate traffic on Quander Rd if Rollins Dr is closed.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** VDOT analyzed the intersection if traffic volume were displaced from turning left into Rollins and instead turning left into Quander, and it shows plenty of storage for the NB left turning vehicles. The increase of left turning traffic queueing to Quander Road would be negligible based on VDOT’s analysis. If all vehicles needed to turn left to Ft Hunt Road from Quander instead of Rollins, there would approximately be an additional 15 seconds of delay at the stop sign during the heaviest volumes of traffic in the morning and afternoon peak periods. If an option were to be chosen that subsequently

redirected traffic from Rollins Drive to Quander Road, VDOT would explore short-term options to improve the Quander Road intersection if delays were shown to be excessive.

## **Pedestrian Safety:**

24 comments received mentioned pedestrian safety.

- Responses were received in favor of implementing various solutions to prioritize pedestrian safety in the area. These suggestions include, but are not limited to:
  - Adding a **crosswalk** at the intersection of Ft. Hunt Rd and Quander Rd with a sidewalk to Westgrove Blvd
  - Placing pedestrian lights, or **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon** lights (RRFB), or pedestrian stop lights in the project area
  - A crosswalk in the project area
  - Implementing a **pedestrian refuge** as mentioned in the community meeting on Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Installing a **High Intensity Crosswalk (HAWK) signal**
  - Implementing **channelized islands** in the project area.
- Many residents expressed concerns about young children walking in the area and note that the current pedestrian accommodations are not sufficient when it comes to safety. There were comments that mentioned the lack of adequate sidewalks on Quander Rd and throughout the neighborhood in general and state that if Rollins Dr is closed, even temporarily, it would drive additional traffic onto Quander Dr among other roads within the neighborhood, putting these young children at higher risk than before.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** VDOT recommends the installation of RRFBs crossing Ft Hunt Road at Rollins Drive and supports a median refuge to improve pedestrian safety. The installation and maintenance of RRFBs is a county function and will be their decision for funding. A median refuge would only be possible if there was a left turn restriction into Rollins Drive with the refuge replacing the existing left turn lane on Ft Hunt Road. Otherwise, a median refuge would only be possible with a significant widening of Ft. Hunt Road, which could have impacts to adjacent properties. In addition, widening Ft Hunt Road could potentially create additional safety concerns and would significantly impact day-to-day operations along Ft. Hunt Rd.

## **Community Impacts**

20 comments mentioned community impacts of a temporary closure.

- Respondents were concerned with community impacts concerns including, but not limited to, first responder / emergency service access, snow removal access, mail/delivery service access, trash removal service access, increased traffic along Quander Rd and other connecting residential streets, residential access to Ft. Hunt Rd and G.W. Parkway, Rollins Dr turning into a dead-end street on both ends, residential access to Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, property values, turn-around points, and residential access into the neighborhoods surrounding the project area. These comments directly relate to the proposed temporary, full closure of Rollins Dr and many of these comments expressed that the closure would be an extreme inconvenience for the residents living on Rollins Dr along with residents living on connecting streets.
- ❖ **VDOT Response(s):** VDOT acknowledged the various community effects to a temporary closure and did its best to minimize impacts with the proposed temporary closure. This included the following:
  - Emergency access – VDOT was in contact with local emergency responders, and they did not have concerns with a planned temporary closure.
  - Snow removal access – A temporary closure of Rollins Drive would have required some adjustments to the snow removal process, but snow removal would have still been possible with a temporary closure.
  - Mail delivery – Smaller vehicles could easily conduct a U-turn with a 3-point turn within the existing street. Larger vehicles might need to back out of Rollins Drive for a short distance before turning around at Colgate Drive. With the lack of traffic on this block of Rollins Drive, there would almost never be any opposing traffic to a larger vehicle needing to be in reverse for at most about 850 feet.
  - Trash removal services – The trash removal services would need to alter the method of picking up the trash for the final block of Rollins Drive affected by a temporary road closure.
  - Increased traffic on other residential streets – As noted in the meeting, many residents are already avoiding using the Rollins Drive approach to Fort Hunt Road



due to the known safety issues. It was also noted that some drivers are using Rollins Drive as a cut-through street between Beacon Hill Road and Fort Hunt Road. Based on these comments, with the low traffic volume data that was already collected at the Rollins/Fort Hunt intersection, VDOT has determined that additional traffic to streets like Colgate Drive and Vanderbilt Drive would be minimal. Traffic volume along Quander Road would increase slightly more but would only be noticeable at the Fort Hunt Road intersection, where it would take an average of 15 seconds more to turn left from Quander to Fort Hunt Road during morning and afternoon peak periods.

- Rollins Drive turning into a “dead-end street” - U-Turns would be required for drivers that do not live on Rollins Dr. This could necessitate driving in reserve to potentially complete a three-point turn depending on what kind of vehicle is being driven. U-Turning traffic can pose a hazard to busy streets, but it would be expected that the primary users in this case would be residents and guests of residents. To deter unfamiliar drivers from accessing this road and having to make a U-Turn, VDOT would add signage indicating that there are no connecting roads. These efforts will not be necessary because VDOT is not moving forward with a full closure due to lack of community support.
- Property value – In general, there is no evidence that a temporary condition should affect long-term property values. A more permanent solution could potentially have varied positive and/or negative effects on property value and VDOT would take that into consideration in determining a permanent solution.
- Extreme inconvenience – VDOT acknowledges that there will be a minor inconvenience to travel time, but the risk of crashes will be reduced. VDOT would encourage all drivers to avoid this intersection from the Rollins Drive approach until the safety risks can be fully mitigated.

### **Curb Reconfiguration:**

1 comment suggested curb reconfiguration.

- This suggestion was made noting that when turning right from Ft. Hunt onto Rollins Dr, it is a hard turn, implying that the angle of the turn is difficult to maneuver around, and

that reconfiguring the curbs at this location would expedite right turns from Ft. Hunt Rd and would not force drivers on Ft. Hunt Rd to slow down as significantly. It was noted that this hard breaking along Ft. Hunt Rd is largely a distracted driver issue, but that curb reconfiguration may help in preventing additional accidents.

❖ **VDOT Response:** This would be a long-term option that would require funding.

### **Signage:**

5 comments mentioned signage.

- Respondents supported use of additional signage in the project area. One comment noted the 25 mph speed limit signs in the area were covered by overgrowth and should be made larger. In addition, it was suggested that a “Reduced Speed Ahead” sign should also be added to the area.
- A comment suggested installing signs at the top of the hill on Ft. Hunt Rd and changing the speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** Improving the signage is something that VDOT continues to explore. VDOT will investigate overgrowth issues near signs and improving the signs with the advisory speeds. While improving signs are always helpful, sign improvement alone will not address the sightline issues coming out of Rollins Drive that we are most concerned with.

### **Speeding/ Speeding Enforcement:**

10 comments mentioned speeding and/or speeding enforcement.

- Respondents supported increased speeding enforcement in the project area due to the large number of drivers observed driving over the 25-mph speed limit. Many comments noted that reckless driving is a big reason why residents avoid the Rollins Dr. intersection, adding that the sight distance in the area makes a left turn off Rollins Dr. nearly impossible without the fear that a driver will speed over the hill without giving other drivers adequate time to react. It is also noted that speeding drivers affect the behavior of pedestrians as well, many avoiding the area for fear of reckless drivers. Some suggested increasing police presence in the area but noted that, as explained in the Jan.

26<sup>th</sup> meeting, that the police are understaffed, and consistent enforcement may be difficult.

- ❖ **VDOT Response:** The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) oversees speeding enforcement, and it is VDOT's understanding that FCPD has targeted this location many times. Speed limit enforcement is helpful but does not address the sight distance issue that occurs when people are traveling the proper speed limit.

### **Speed Indicator / Speed Awareness Monitor (SAM):**

2 comments suggested installing a permanent speed indicator / speed awareness monitor.

- These comments referred to a speed awareness monitor along Ft Hunt Road that was placed on January 30, 2023, and removed on February 6, 2023. It noted by respondents that this device was seemingly effective in encouraging drivers to be more aware of how fast they were going.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** The Fairfax County Police Department's traffic enforcement division captured information from this device for the 8 days that it was active in the area. The information that was gathered summarized that speeding is not a consistent issue in this area with the average speed being approximately 31 mph throughout the day. The posted speed limit for this area is currently 35 mph with an advisory speed limit sign of 25 mph when approaching the Rollins Dr/ Westgrove Blvd intersection. Drivers traveling at 37 mph were in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, and VDOT requires that drivers in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile would have to be driving 10 mph, or more, over the speed limit for additional traffic calming measures to be considered. The average traffic volume per day was approximately 4,699 vehicles with the total volume for all 8 days being 37,592 vehicles. Of this total, 44.4% of drivers, on average, slowed down upon approaching the speed awareness monitor.

### **Speed Hump:**

4 comments suggested speed humps.

- Respondents were in favor of placing speed humps along Ft. Hunt Rd prior to approaching the Rollins intersection to encourage drivers to slow down before reaching

the intersection. The speed humps along Quander Rd are cited as reasoning in support of this suggestion due to their effectiveness in getting drivers to slow down.

- ❖ **VDOT Response:** Speed humps are not permitted on streets with a speed limit above 25 mph, as they become a hazard to the faster vehicles that do not slow down quickly enough. Traffic calming measures, like speed humps, are typically only considered for residential streets with a speed limit of 25 mph or less. VDOT has noted that the posted speed limit along Ft. Hunt Road is the proper speed limit within this corridor.

### **Rumble Strips:**

1 comment suggested adding rumble strips.

- This comment suggested the placement of rumble strips along southbound Ft. Hunt Rd while approaching both Quander Rd and Rollins Dr.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** Rumble strips are not installed in residential areas within 250 feet of a building as they become a noise concern for those residents hearing vehicles constantly driving over the strips.

### **Mirrors:**

3 comments suggested adding mirrors at the project location.

- Comments offered support of the usage of mirrors at this intersection to promote driver and pedestrian safety.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** Mirrors are not permitted on VDOT property. They create more hazardous conditions than what they might be trying to solve because drivers and pedestrians that utilize mirrors often misjudge what is really happening.

### **Stop Line / Stop Bar:**

1 comment suggested a stop line/ stop bar.

- This comment states that the stop bar on Rollins Dr where it meets Ft. Hunt Rd needs to be moved closer to Ft. Hunt Rd to improve the sight distance.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** The stop bar at Rollins Drive needs to be behind the crosswalk to allow pedestrians to cross safely. The additional “puppy tracks” along the edge of the

southbound Ft Hunt Road travel lane that were recently installed allows drivers to sneak closer to the roadway for a better view of oncoming traffic. While sightlines are improved for the driver at this location, it still does not address the fully needed sight distance at this location.

### **Project/ Crash Data:**

13 comments requested back-up data including project and crash data.

- Respondents requested data to support full temporary closure of Rollins Drive. Specific concerns were crash data, traffic volumes/ traffic statistics, alternative analysis, funding/ cost data, and the accuracy of the data being presented.

❖ **VDOT Response:** VDOT investigated this intersection due to multiple community members asking VDOT to address the continuous safety issues at the Ft. Hunt/Rollins/Westgrove intersection. The community members presented pictures and videos of the safety issues at this location. In reference to other intersections in the vicinity, the crash data for the intersection of Ft. Hunt Rd and Rollins Dr indicates that this intersection has a higher-than-average number of crashes occurring. Evidence from the community and police indicated more crashes have happened that have not been reported due to police not getting called to report the incident, or the crash not meeting the property damage value required for reporting. Traffic counts were also performed at both the Rollins/Westgrove intersection as well as the Quander intersection with Ft. Hunt. Counts were collected after traffic volumes returned to normal from the peak of the pandemic. All data can be shared individually upon request. There is no funding for a project at this location, so the only improvements that can be made is from the limited VDOT Traffic Engineering budget which includes signs, pavement markings, and various traffic control devices, such as barriers. With no funding and only limited internal VDOT resources, a detailed alternative analysis was not conducted. VDOT made as many improvements as possible with improved signing and markings, but those have not been able to address the safety risks due to limited sight lines. VDOT discussed a wide variety of various options internally and with the community members who brought the initial complaint. The only immediate option to address the safety risks with the limited resources and no funding was to restrict movements to and from Rollins Drive.

## **Funding / Project Costs:**

4 comments mentioned funding/ project costs.

- Respondents were concerned about cost and wanted to see what it would cost to fund alternate solutions/ suggestions. One responder wanted to know what VDOT has done to secure funding up to this point/ where the current funding is coming from.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** Short term solutions through signing and pavement marking can come out of VDOT Traffic Engineering's "quick fix" existing budget. Any geometric changes require the County's support and funding and would take many years to accomplish.

## **Other Concerns:**

6 comments mentioned other concerns relating to the January 26, 2023, in-person meeting.

- Comments included questions regarding details of the small meeting the Elected Officials and VDOT had with some community members who had expressed their concern for safety at that intersection.
- ❖ **VDOT Response:** VDOT received a complaint from members of the community regarding repeated crashes and near-misses at the Ft Hunt Road/Rollins Drive/Westgrove Blvd intersection. VDOT met with those community members, along with police and elected officials, to discuss the conditions of the intersection. VDOT investigated and agreed that there were several issues at this intersection that were causing safety concerns. VDOT made a variety of quick improvements with signing, pavement marking, and foliage trimming. Despite these improvements, VDOT could not fix the sightline issues at Rollins Drive. VDOT met again with the same community members and elected officials to discuss various options to address the remaining safety issues. Community members who attended that meeting expressed that something needed to be done quickly to address the continuing safety concerns and that the temporary closure would be an adequate solution.