

Long Bridge Drive Multimodal Connection Existing Conditions Community Engagement Summary

Project Background

Why is the County looking at making changes to Long Bridge Drive?

Anticipating current and expected growth in Crystal City and Pentagon City and the intensification of recreational development in these neighborhoods, additional active transportation connections are needed in the Route 1 corridor. The interchange modification currently ongoing at I-395 / Boundary Drive will improve county-side trail connections for Long Bridge Park users; however, a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle-friendly direct link on Long Bridge Drive from 12th Street S. to the Mt. Vernon Trail (MVT) and the planned Long Bridge Pedestrian Bridge would dramatically improve multi-modal connections both for the immediate vicinity and for the regional activity centers of: Crystal City, Pentagon City, Pentagon, Potomac Yard, and the entire regional trail network.

Arlington County's Master Transportation Plan (MTP) has identified Long Bridge as a primary bicycling corridor, and the MTP's Complete Street Policy informs the scope of this project to improve safety for all road users, including people walking, biking, taking transit and driving.

Additionally, the 2021 Vision Zero Action Plan calls on County Transportation staff to take a proactive approach to safety to eliminate severe and fatal crashes from our transportation network by 2030. Separating people walking and biking from motor vehicle traffic is an effective tool for eliminating severe and fatal crashes before they occur by reducing risks for vulnerable roadway users. Providing a multi-use trail that fully separates people walking and biking on a corridor that provides motor vehicle access to a major interstate achieves this safety goal, especially considering the anticipated increases in bicycle and pedestrian traffic along the corridor in the coming years as a result of new trail connections.

What are the goals of this project?

This project calls for the creation of a multi-use facility along Long Bridge Drive connecting the ped/bike terminus of the future Long Bridge Project pedestrian and cycling bridge from its landing behind the Long Bridge Aquatic Center to the Crystal City bike network. This facility will also tie into VDOT's adjacent Boundary Channel Drive ped/bike improvements connecting to the Mount Vernon Trail. As the facility continues into Crystal City, it meets with the future S. Clark-Bell Street multi-use trail at 12th Street S., along with connections to the forthcoming cycle track along Army Navy Drive.

Preliminary planning work has identified a need for a minimum 12'-wide multi-use trail between the new bridge and Crystal City, as this route is expected to become a major multimodal commuter route between Arlington and DC. Without this project, most commuters will likely

attempt to navigate the Long Bridge Park Esplanade and walking trail, which is not intended for use as a commuter cycling route.

Public Engagement Background:

The existing conditions community engagement period lasted from October 3, 2023, through October 22, 2023. The purpose of this engagement period was to present a review of the existing conditions along Long Bridge Drive and gather input from the community on their experiences along the corridor. To do this, the project team launched an interactive online engagement form to collect input on how the public currently uses Long Bridge Drive. Additional information related to outreach methods and the engagement feedback form are detailed below.

Outreach Methods:

The project team used several outreach and communication tools to inform the public about the public meeting and associated public engagement period.

Outreach channels included:

- Posting information on the project webpage, beginning the week of October 2
- Posting engagement information on County social media platforms beginning the week of October 2
- Advertisement in Pentagon City/ Crystal City transportation update email
- Earned media from [ArINOW](#) on October 4, 2023
- Direct coordination with nearby businesses, property owners and tenants
- Email blast to County Boards and Commissions
- Posting flyers promoting the engagement opportunity at the Long Bridge Aquatic Center to alert patrons to the engagement opportunity

Engagement Feedback Form:

An online engagement form was shared with the public beginning on October 2, 2023. Participants were asked to review information about the project's background, goals and existing conditions and then share how they experience the corridor today and provide open-ended feedback. The engagement form also included an interactive map where individuals could add notes to specific locations within the project area, to share more detailed experiences with the project team.

The engagement feedback form closed on October 22, 2023. In total, there were 173 respondents to the online engagement form. The project team received 83 unique, open-ended written comments and 79 notes added to the interactive map.

What We Heard:

Participants in the engagement process were asked to rank their perceived safety utilizing various modes of transportation within the project coordinator. Additionally, respondents were able to provide written comments through an open-ended feedback form or via interactive map.

A summary of the rankings, comment responses and direct communications are provided below.

Survey Responses

159 Participants provided feedback on the ranking on safety for various modes. Highlights of the responses include:

- 43% of respondents feel “very safe” or “safe” walking/rolling along Long Bridge Drive, compared to 18% who feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe”
- 41% of respondents feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe” riding a bike along Long Bridge Drive, compared to 21% who feel “safe” or “very safe”
- 56% of respondents feel “very safe” or “safe” driving a personal vehicle along Long Bridge Drive

A detailed breakdown of the safety rankings can be found below.

Overall, how safe do you feel while travelling through this corridor using the following types of transportation?

	Very Safe	Safe	Neutral	Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Not Applicable	Not Sure
Walking / Rolling	13% Very Safe	30% Safe	28% Neutral	15% Unsafe	3% Very Unsafe	10% Not Applicable	1% Not Sure
Riding a Bike	3% Very Safe	18% Safe	19% Neutral	32% Unsafe	9% Very Unsafe	17% Not Applicable	2% Not Sure
Taking Public Transit	17% Very Safe	25% Safe	9% Neutral	1% Unsafe	1% Very Unsafe	44% Not Applicable	4% Not Sure
Using a Scooter	- Very Safe	5% Safe	8% Neutral	15% Unsafe	5% Very Unsafe	61% Not Applicable	6% Not Sure
Driving a Personal Vehicle	25% Very Safe	31% Safe	19% Neutral	7% Unsafe	1% Very Unsafe	16% Not Applicable	1% Not Sure

Figure 1: Long Bridge Dr. Safety

Written Comments

Through the online engagement form 83 unique, open-ended written comment responses were received. Common themes associated with the written comments are categorized below.

Long Bridge Park Esplanade Usage

Significant comments were received related to the usage of the Long Bridge Park Esplanade. Many individuals commented that the new trail must provide an equal or better biking experience to the Long Bridge Esplanade, or people will likely just bike on the Esplanade. While some have acknowledged the Esplanade was not designed as a main route for bicycle traffic, many users indicated the Esplanade is currently the only safe and comfortable route along Long Bridge Drive.

Desire for Separated Bike Facilities

Comments received from respondents expressed concerns related to the existing bicycle facilities and the need for the project to implement dedicated, separated bicycle facilities. Many individuals also expressed concerns related to the existing, unprotected bike lanes being blocked and not being sufficient for users of all ages and ability levels.

Mount Vernon Trail Connection

Multiple comments acknowledged the importance the project will have in serving as a connection from various places of interest along Long Bridge Drive to the Mount Vernon Trail. There was a strong desire from commenters to have a connection to the Mount Vernon Trail implemented.

Construction Challenges

Comments were received related to the challenges navigating the corridor as a result of the ongoing Boundary Channel Drive improvements. Some feel that the volume of construction vehicles and impacts on infrastructure around the Aquatics Center make it an unwelcoming space for cyclists and pedestrians in its current state.

A complete list of comments received in the online feedback form is available on the [project website](#).

Interactive Map Comments:

Through the online engagement form 79 comments were received on the interactive map of the project area. Common themes associated with the written comments are categorized below.

Safe Crossings along Long Bridge Drive

Multiple comments noted the need for safe crossings at various locations along Long Bridge Drive. This comment was particularly prevalent for areas around the entrance to Long Bridge Park and the Long Bridge Aquatics Center.

On Street Parking

Multiple comments noted to re-evaluate on street parking within the corridor. Comments suggest that larger vehicles, such as tractor-trailers and buses routinely park along the corridor which leads to the bike lanes being blocked. Some felt that if parking was retained grade separated or buffered facilities would need to be installed.

Traffic Calming

Multiple comments referenced the need for traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps, signalized intersections or stop signs at various areas throughout the corridor.

A map and complete listing of comments received in the interactive map is available on the [project website](#).

Comment Letters:

In addition to the feedback received from members of the public, the project team also received a comment letter from the People Before Cars Coalition. A summary of the comment letter received can be found below:

People Before Cars Coalition

People Before Cars Coalition expressed strong support the project, indicating the project would provide an important connection between the future bike and pedestrian span of the Long Bridge, the Mount Vernon Trail and other nearby projects within Crystal City. The Coalition stressed the importance of timely implementation and delivery, the need for safe crossings along Long Bridge Drive and a design which provides a connected, direct, safe, and pleasant experience for users which is greater than or equal to the current Long Bridge Park Esplanade.

The full contents of the letter are provided on the [project website](#).

Next Steps

Staff will work to analyze the responses shared during the existing conditions engagement process. Feedback provided will inform the development of a conceptual design, which is anticipated to conclude in Spring 2024. A subsequent public engagement opportunity on the conceptual design for the corridor will occur in Spring 2024.

More Information

- Review the project page: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/Long-Bridge-Drive-Multimodal-Connection>
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