

## **Frequently Asked Questions (updated April 2017)**

### **Washington Boulevard Bike, Pedestrian and Roadway Enhancements**

#### **General**

#### **Why are changes to the layout of Washington Boulevard being proposed right now?**

**When are they proposed to take place?** The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is planning to resurface Washington Boulevard, between McKinley Road and Sycamore Street, because of deteriorating pavement conditions. VDOT asked Arlington if there were any changes to the new striping we would recommend to improve mobility and safety along the corridor. The repaving would be done in 2017, typically between May and November. Shortly after the new pavement is in place, the road striping plan will be marked.

#### **What is the timeline for finalizing a design?**

- March 1 – Community Open House & Presentations on draft proposal
- March 17 – Deadline for community comments
- April 19 – Open House & Presentation with community to review revised plan and learn how feedback was incorporated
- End of April – Plan submitted to VDOT for spring installation through re-paving & re-striping

**Will there be changes to sidewalks, pedestrian ramps, landscaped areas, traffic signals, lighting and/or speed limits?** All of the proposed changes are limited to areas within the asphalt paved area of the roadway only. The road will only be repaved and restriped, not physically modified.

**Is there data about pedestrian safety on Washington Boulevard between Westover and the East Falls Church Metro Station? Have there been accidents involving pedestrians?** Over the past five years, there have been 56 reported crashes between Sycamore Street and McKinley Road. Five of these involved pedestrians. More than half of the crashes took place at the intersections of Sycamore Street and McKinley Road on Washington Boulevard - the others took place at different locations between Sycamore Street and McKinley Road. Per our data, crashes tend to happen throughout the day, with no clear trends in terms of time of incident. (Speed data is being compiled and will be provided soon).

#### **Will vehicle travel lanes be narrowed so much that large commercial trucks cannot use Washington Boulevard?**

The proposed travel lanes will be no narrower than 11-feet wide, which is a dimension determined by state and national transportation officials- sufficiently wide for safe use at 30 miles per hour by large trucks and buses.

**What if I have other questions?** Contact David Goodman: [dgoodman@arlingtonva.us](mailto:dgoodman@arlingtonva.us) or 703-228-3709 Project webpage: Visit [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us); keyword search “Washington Boulevard”.

## **Parking**

### **Would there be changes to parking on Washington Boulevard with the initial proposed plan? If so, how much would be lost?**

The initial concept (proposed) plan would remove on-street parking from the street frontage of 21 of the 72 single family homes that directly front/face Washington Boulevard along this corridor. The revised plan has less of an impact on on-street parking. It would impact only 7 homes and approximately 16 of 150 existing parking spaces.

The County understands that removing parking can be difficult for people who have come to rely on it. However, we believe the impacts are manageable and the benefits to the community could be worth the tradeoffs.

### **How will parking on Washington Boulevard in front of Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church be affected?**

Currently, motorists may park parallel to the curb along the entire block in front of the church Monday through Saturday. About ten cars can be parked along the block. The revised plan removes the bus stop and provides 15 marked parking spaces 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Parking will also be preserved on the south side of Washington Blvd. across from the Church.

### **Why is the angled parking back-in only?**

It is safer. Back-in angled parking is safer for drivers and passengers, including children. Instead of pulling into the parking spot, cars back into the spots, allowing drivers to make eye contact with oncoming traffic when exiting the parking space. Back-in angled parking has increased visibility both when backing in and driving out due to seat positioning and car placement in adjacent parking spaces and in the travel lanes.

**How will the loss of parking impact residents living on side streets?** Residents may notice more cars parked on side streets than previously. However, our utilization observations (taken during the day, evenings and on weekends) show there is adequate parking available across Washington Boulevard and on side streets during even the busiest parking periods.

### **How will parking for the businesses at the Westover Shopping Center be affected?**

There will be no changes to parking at or near the Westover businesses and library.

### **If the parking lane is replaced by a bicycle lane, where should homeowners place trash/recycling bins, leaves and large trash items?**

When a utility/planting strip is not available, trash bins, leaf bags and other items for collection should be placed where they will not fully obstruct passage on the sidewalk or in a moving travel lane. Bins, leaves and other materials should be placed at the back or front edges of the sidewalk, or in a gutter immediately adjacent to the curb.

**Parking lanes also serve as by-pass lanes for when motorists are stopped while waiting to turn - wouldn't loss of parking lanes lead to traffic-back-ups?**

For safety reasons it is not legal for motorists to pass other motor vehicles within their lane, or to drive in marked parking lanes. Momentary stopping behind a turning vehicle should not result in great delay for the motorist or lead to significant traffic congestion.

## **Bicycle Lanes**

**The plan shows new bike lanes on Washington Boulevard. Why are bicycle lanes needed there?**

Making Arlington's streets more "multi-modal" has been an overarching goal of the County's Master Transportation Plan (MTP) "Complete Streets" policy since 2008. Specifically, in the MTP and in the 1999 Bicycle Master Plan that preceded it, bicycle improvements along this stretch of Washington Boulevard was identified. The East Falls Church area plan of 2011 also recommended bike lanes on Washington Boulevard. Bike lanes on this stretch will help connect the County's growing Capital Bikeshare system from the East Falls Church Metro Station to the multiple bikeshare stations in Westover.

**Why put bike lanes on Washington Boulevard if the Custis Trail is nearby?**

Just as drivers want to take the most direct route to get to their destination, so do people riding bikes. (For example - driving between the East Falls Church Metro Station and Westover without using Washington Boulevard presents an indirect route with numerous stops and turns. Then consider taking that trip using only the power of your two legs.)

The route along Washington Boulevard provides a brief, direct and fairly- level ride between Westover and the East Falls Church Metro Station. (Also, a new Capital Bikeshare station was recently installed at the East Falls Church Metro, with a new one to be installed at the Westover Library this spring). Connecting these destinations via the Custis Trail requires numerous turns on and off of neighborhood streets - a less direct route with more significant hills. Interstate 66 also forms a barrier between the trail and neighborhood streets that connect to Washington Boulevard.

**The revised plan shows a contiguous bicycle lane westbound (north side) on Washington Blvd. from McKinley to N. Roosevelt, but on the eastbound (south side) there is a gap from Quantico to the 18<sup>th</sup> Street North intersection. What route should eastbound bicyclists follow? How will bicyclists know where to go?**

Green "wayfinding" signs will be installed along the side streets route from N. Quintana to 18<sup>th</sup> Street North to guide eastbound bicyclists through to the Westover area. Eastbound, from Quantico to 18<sup>th</sup> Street N., "Bikes May Use Full Lane" signage will also be installed, however, "sharrows" (shared lane markings) will not be used on that stretch of the roadway.

**Has the County considered options that do not include bicycle lanes?** Yes. All options involve various trade-offs in parking impact and public safety for cyclists, pedestrians and transit users. The concept and revised striping plan address what the County considers to be the best balance of needs along this corridor.

**Is there research that shows bike lanes improve pedestrian safety more than other options? How do bike lanes compare with speed bumps - or a row of parked cars - when it comes to pedestrian safety?**

Bike lanes and on-street parking lanes both provide a buffer between moving vehicles and pedestrians on the sidewalk. However, the narrowing of travel lanes needed to create bike lanes and their buffers, combined with high visibility crosswalk enhancements, help change the character of the street from an automobile dominated environment to one that better accommodates other users. This helps reduce travel speeds, which does have a direct and positive effect on pedestrian safety. Speed humps are not used on arterial streets such as Washington Boulevard.

**How will bicyclists turn left off Washington Boulevard as it is a busy street?**

Bicyclists may execute a left turn in one of two ways. They may merge left then turn from the travel lane, similar to how motorists operate if a sufficient gap in oncoming traffic exists to allow a safe turn. Alternatively, bicyclists may also choose to make a two-stage left turn and wait within the bicycle lane for sufficient gaps in incoming traffic before completing their turn.

**Can bicycle lanes be added to Lee Highway instead of, or in addition to, Washington Blvd.?**

The addition of bicycle lanes to Lee Highway could be considered as part of the expected future planning effort for the Lee Highway corridor and would be difficult to determine prior to undertaking that comprehensive study.

**How wide will the bicycle lanes be?**

The newly striped bicycle lanes on Washington Blvd. will be at least 5' wide, in most places they will be 6' wide, and a painted buffer will be striped where possible on the travel lane side.

**Why are painted buffers, up to three feet wide, being proposed to be marked next to the bicycle lanes on Washington Blvd. instead of the single lines used for bicycle lanes on other roads?**

The painted buffers help to further separate moving motor vehicles and bicyclists, providing additional safety and comfort for both types of roadway users. The buffer areas also allow overly-wide travel lanes to be reduced to a more standard 11-foot width. The reduction of lane widths has the effect of moderating traffic speed and enhancing safety. The proposed design reduces and eliminates buffers in some sections where doing so would allow for the preservation of on-street parking lanes.

## **Intersections**

**Could changes to the timing of the N. Ohio Street's traffic signal, or imposition of a No Right Turn on Red restriction, be included with this project?**

This effort involves restriping Washington Boulevard following the expected repaving. It will not include signal changes or new signage, however modest operational changes such as those mentioned, could be evaluated in conjunction with this effort and if warranted implemented separately. Other more-costly changes to the roadway, such as the addition of street lights, or reconstruction of curbs, are not currently funded and would need to be.