

Comments on Richmond Highway Corridor Improvements from Jeff Todd Way to Napper Road, from Friends of Little Hunting Creek (Betsy Martin, President, Friends of Little Hunting Creek, betsy@folhc.org).

1. We ask that VDOT and Fairfax County take effective steps to prevent trash generated by Route 1 from getting into Little Hunting Creek.

Currently, a tremendous amount of litter and trash is discarded into the creek or carried into it by the county's storm drains. Route 1 is a major source of that litter, which is tossed from cars, or dumped directly into the creek at the Route 1 crossing.

The Friends of Little Hunting Creek and Senator Scott Surovell have conducted annual cleanups of the creek since 2002, as part of the Potomac Watershed Cleanup sponsored by Alice Ferguson Foundation. Since the Friends started keeping records in 2006, volunteers have picked up 3,343 bags of trash and recyclables, 258 tires, 177 shopping carts, and tons of additional bulk trash. On average, this is about 257 bags, 20 tires, and 14 shopping carts per cleanup.

Three of our cleanup sites are directly downstream of the Route 1 bridge crossing Little Hunting Creek. The average number of bags we've collected at each is 33 at Gum Springs, 29 at Little Hunting Creek Drive, and 37 at Brady Street. These cleanup sites are .17, .31, and .47 miles downstream of the Route 1 crossing, respectively. In a separate cleanup, the Boy Scouts annually collect trash immediately downstream of the bridge. In 2017, they collected 60 bags of trash, according to newspaper reports.

This level of trash is unacceptable and degrades our neighborhoods and the environment. Route 1 is far from being the only source of the trash and litter, but it is a major one. The crossing would be a good place to intercept trash before the creek widens into acres of marshland a thousand feet or so downstream of the bridge. At that point the trash spreads over a large area and becomes very difficult to collect and retrieve.

Municipalities, states, and countries around the globe have addressed (and solved) similar problems. We are asking for engineering solutions, not public education, though the latter would be welcome as well.

2. We ask that the bridge carrying Route 1 over Little Hunting Creek be of sufficient span to restore full ecological function to the creek and contribute to its function as a wildlife corridor, rather than interrupt it, as at present.

In order to allow the creek to resume its function as part of the Little Hunting Creek Wildlife Corridor, the bridge must span the stream channel or watercourse, the (100-year) floodplain, and sufficient upland area to offer riparian habitat. The design must anticipate and plan for upstream development which may change the storm water flow and the elevations at which the stream's ecological functions are performed. Similar considerations apply to every other proposed bridge carrying Route 1 over daylighted streams.

3. We support a Superstreet intersection at the Route 1-Buckman Road/Mount Vernon Highway.

(1) It is safer for pedestrians and improves traffic flow compared to a Traditional intersection, and (2) it would result in less impervious surface and would be farther from Little Hunting Creek than the Jughandle intersection, lessening adverse effects on the creek and water quality.

4. We ask that VDOT and Fairfax County revise the section design for the bike path and sidewalk.

The "Typical Section" illustrated in the VDOT handout depicts an unattractive, even hostile, design with separate 6' sidewalk and 6.5' bike path within the 63' wide section. There appears to be no room for trees or landscaping, so pedestrians and cyclists will have neither shade nor vegetation separating them from the fumes and noise of the highway. The design calls for 4.5' between the sidewalk and bike path, but the bike path itself is only 5.5' from the Route 1. For safety reasons, it seems more important to maintain distance from the highway than between the bike path and the sidewalk. Could VDOT and the county consider a wider, combined pedestrian/bike path, with multiple lanes

marked to create needed separation and safety along the entire trail, or the flatter sections of it? That might leave a wider strip within which to plant shade trees and vegetation along the path and create a more inviting pathway for pedestrians and cyclists.

Did VDOT/Fairfax County give any consideration to switchbacks or other accommodations to cyclists at the steep hill immediately south of Buckman Rd.?

5. We ask that VDOT and Fairfax County underground the powerlines.

Undergrounding the powerlines would make it possible to plant trees and accommodate bike and pedestrian paths a greater distance from the roadway. It might eventually save the utilities maintenance and repair costs as it reduces storm damage and outages.

6. We request that VDOT use dark sky (full cutoff) street lights along the roadway, consistent with Fairfax County light ordinances.

Dark sky lights are designed to direct light down, rather than upwards or sideways. Hence they light the road or pathway while reducing light pollution and glare that distracts drivers.