



SEMINARY RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

Dear Seminary Ridge Neighbors:

I want to remind you of the **Duke Street in Motion meeting this evening (Monday, October 17) in the Auditorium of Bishop Ireton High School at 6:30 PM.** I hope you will attend both to hear what the City is proposing, but also to share your views on their plans.

Below is information that was shared with me today by Erin Winograd President of the Wakefield-Tarleton Civic Association, which is located on the south side of Duke just west of Seminary Ridge. The information is Erin's point of view, but it contains a great deal of important information of which you should be aware, no matter what your opinion on these proposed changes. Again, you may agree with Erin's thoughts or not, but I thought it would be helpful for you to have this information.

I hope to see you this evening.

Best regards,

Richie

Richie Weiblinger

President

Seminary Ride Civic Association

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DUKE STREET PROPOSED CHANGES RECEIVED TODAY:

Practical Implications of Design Options. The city's descriptions of design options omit the details of how they would change residents', and others', ability to move around the corridor. Below are the most notable effects I've discovered so far.

Dedicated Curb-Running Bus Lanes

Making Right Turns More Difficult and Less Safe: Vehicles other than buses are barred from traveling in the curb lane for more than one block. Violators are subject to a ticket and fine. The first offense is \$125. Within the five-year period after, the second offense is \$250, the third \$500 and the fourth \$1,000.

To make a right turn and avoid the risk of being fined, cars and trucks will be forced to cut over to the curb lane quickly and likely unsafely. Also, traffic may stack up in the next lane to the left, as vehicles wait to cut over to the curb lane, which could create bottlenecks.

Center-Running Bus Lanes

Left turns would be prohibited at intersections without stoplights. Between N. Jordan and Wheeler Ave., there currently are 10 intersections without a traffic signal. Staff have not explained what the city would do to ensure that residents and their guests can safely and easily access neighborhoods along Duke.

Many of the design options rely on **narrowing lane width**. To my knowledge, staff have not evaluated how this would affect the high volume of large trucks that travel Duke to reach the industrial zone on Wheeler Ave. and businesses along Duke, most notably the three grocery stores. As far as I know, staff also have not yet consulted the Fire Department, the Police Department or the public school bus department (ACPS buses are kept at a depot on Wheeler Ave. and all must therefore travel on Duke).

“Property impacts” largely is code for eminent domain. The city’s consultant does not consider anything other than a physical change to a private property as a property impact. This very narrow definition of “property impact” excludes the most serious quality-of-life and safety ramifications for those whose homes are on Duke St. For example, the city and consultants do not count the conversion of frontage roads to travel lanes as a property impact (because the city owns the road and the medians). The loss of a buffer between homes and vehicular traffic, elimination of street parking, and bringing noise and air pollution 15-20 ft closer to people’s front doors are not factored into the property impact rating. Loss of trees located in the city-owned easement in front of homes or the medians also is not considered in the property impact rating. Decrease in property value is not factored into the property impact rating, either.

The **safety rating** of design options that eliminate frontage roads does **not** take into account exposing driveways to the main flow of traffic. Currently, frontage roads protect

45 driveways (and the people who use them) on the south side of Duke, from just west of Ingram to S. Early; and nine driveways, including those belonging to The Fields and the center with Sherwin-Williams and the ABC, on the north side from Ft. Williams Parkway to N. Jordan.

The city has no “operational plan” for the BRT. Staff have discussed the BRT with DASH and WMATA but neither has committed to operating it. There also is no funding plan. Staff have indicated that the BRT likely will not be free. While the city is allowed to use the “construction” grant money to buy new buses, it may not use those funds for operations or maintenance.

The city has not provided empirical data proving demand for a BRT. Currently, three buses service the entire length of the planned BRT: DASH Line 30 and Metrobus 29K and 29N. A fourth covers about three-quarters of the corridor from Jordan to King St. Metro: Metrobus 28A. To my knowledge, none of these lines is over or at capacity. Currently on weekdays, between Landmark Mall (or the intersection of Walker & Duke right across from Landmark) and King St. Metro: DASH runs 69 Line 30 buses from 5:28 a.m. to 1:13 a.m.; the 29K/N adds another 50 buses from 6:16 a.m. to 11:11 p.m. If I read the schedule correctly, between Jordan and King St. Metro, the 28A runs 92 buses from 6:29 a.m. until 3 a.m. (it offers “late night” service). That’s 211 buses every 24 hours.

Project cost has risen to \$116 million, according to the May 24, 2022, Quarterly Capital Project Status Report. Currently, the city has only \$87 million lined up (\$75 million of which has not yet been received) to cover this 4.5-mile transitway. As a comparison, Metroway runs 6.8 miles and cost \$42 million to build (\$52.5 million in today’s dollars). Staff has not explained the extraordinary difference in cost, nor how the city will fill the \$29 million gap.

The purpose of this project. Mayor Wilson committed to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments that Alexandria will direct 75% of new density to transit corridors. Alexandria has designated three transit corridors: Rt. 1 (Metroway), Beauregard-Van Dorn, and Duke St. According to the previous city manager, Mark Jinks, Alexandria expects to add up to 40,000 more residents; that would translate to 10,000-13,000 more people along the 4.5 miles of the transitway (if Rt. 1, which already is fairly full, can accommodate a third of the planned population increase).

At last week's community meeting on Segment 3 (Roth St. to King St. Metro), city staff acknowledged that the Duke St. transitway won't be sustainable without much greater density. **In a March 8 City Council meeting, senior staff from Planning & Zoning said that their department already was working on a plan to redevelop the Duke Street corridor, "especially in the central part". This the area from Jordan to Roth Streets – our area.**