



Bluemont Civic Association

Representing Neighborhoods in and around Arlington Traditional School, Lacey Woods Park, Bon Air, Fields Park, Balls Crossing, West Ballston, and all along the former Bluemont Division of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad

P.O. Box 5134 Arlington, Virginia 22205
www.bluemontcivic.org

June 12, 2013

The Honorable J. Walter Tejada
Chair, Arlington County Board
CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Board:

Thank you for meeting with representatives of the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA), a neighborhood business owner, and partner organizations to discuss the BCA request to improve sidewalks along Wilson Boulevard in the Bluemont neighborhood. We are encouraged by the interest and enthusiasm of Board Members for reconfiguring Wilson between George Mason Drive and Four Mile Run so as to improve safety and access for all users. In confirmation of our discussions, we would like to emphasize our request that County staff take advantage of the planned repaving and restriping of Wilson Boulevard to initiate this reconfiguration.

Arlington's policies and plans unequivocally embrace accessibility of arterial roadways for all users. Regrettably, Wilson Boulevard in our neighborhood is starkly at odds with these policies and plans. The reconfiguration and sidewalk improvements proposed by the BCA and supported by partner organizations would address this serious problem.

These safety improvements were first requested by the BCA in 2001, following the recommendation of representatives of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and other transportation planners, and were subsequently recommended in 2004 by Kimley-Horn and Associates and the Arterial Transportation Management Task Force pursuant to the County's 2004 Arterial Transportation program. More recently, BCA's sidewalk safety effort has included substantial research on the feasibility of reconfiguring Wilson Boulevard and outreach to community members and stakeholders.

BCA's renewed sidewalk safety initiative has been underway for almost two years, and has aspired to be a model of community engagement. Residents and businesses along Wilson Boulevard, neighborhood residents throughout Bluemont, neighboring civic associations, nearby schools and a range of County advisory groups have been engaged in this effort. The Dominion Hills Civic Association, the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee have endorsed the BCA's proposal. In addition, the Transportation Commission, drawing on the recommendations of Toole Design Group in connection with the planned expansion of Ashlawn Elementary School, has recommended design and implementation of a reconfigured Wilson Boulevard from Glebe Road to Ashlawn as a means to reduce risks to children walking to school.

In this context, we ask that you direct county staff to prioritize the repaving and restriping of Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason Drive in a manner consistent with the BCA recommendation, as detailed on our letter of November 9, 2012. In addition, we ask you to ensure staff and other resources for the planning, funding, and implementation of measures needed to achieve our ultimate objective for the roadway. Further, we would like to renew the request from our November 9th letter to the Board, to provide baseline data to determine existing levels of service at signalized intersections, public transit travel time, emergency vehicle response time, crash statistics, and other relevant metrics. As part of its ongoing work, the BCA would then be able to compare baseline data to updated data and document the changes, if any, resulting from a particular modification. We believe this to be an important element to the reconfiguration process.

Thank you once again for discussing this important matter with us. We appreciate your consideration, and your support for efforts to turn into reality Arlington's vision for safely accessible roads in our community.

Sincerely,

/s/

George Rovder

President, Bluemont Civic Association

copy to: Mr. Dennis Leach and Mr. Wayne Wentz, Arlington County Transportation Department