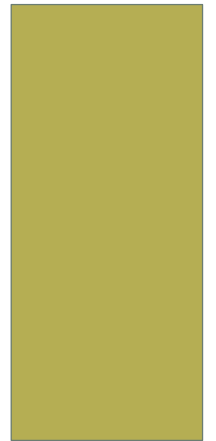


**REPORT FROM THE TASK FORCE ON ARTERIAL
ROAD SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

SEPTEMBER 27, 2012



BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

- In December, BCA reaffirmed previous decisions that our arterial road sidewalks are not adequate.
- BCA established a Task Force to identify and investigate options to improve Bluemont's arterial roads in a way that would:
 - make them safer and more accessible for pedestrians
 - meet ADA laws and County design standards
 - allow for the safe, orderly flow of pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicles, and other transit.
- The Task Force would be open to all members, and it would report back no later than September 2012.

TASK FORCE PROCESS

- 20-person/organization email distribution list for notification of meetings and dissemination of relevant information
- Website established for posting of meeting minutes and reference information
 - bluemontroads.wordpress.com
- Meetings on the 3rd Saturday of each month; minutes taken and posted for each meeting
- Substantial bibliography of pertinent information developed, disseminated and reviewed:
 - More than 20 information and reference sources discussed or posted to website

TASK FORCE PROCESS

- Regularly contributing members included:
 - Eric Goodman, Dan Laredo, Sandeep Maripuri, Suzanne Sundburg, David Van Wagner, Ed Fendley, Chris Healey
- Personal outreach to all businesses in the Bluemont commercial area, Arlington Traditional School, Ashlawn Elementary School, Dominion Hills Civic Association, Boulevard Manor Civic Association
- Consultation with experts and reference to County guidelines:
 - Richard Best, Arlington County Transportation Department planner
 - Tim Ohora, Arlington County Real Estate Acquisition
 - Elizabeth Prialx, Senior Legal Specialist, National Disability Rights Network
 - Christopher Forinash, Engineer and Program Director, Institute for Sustainable Communities
 - Wayne Wentz, Arlington Transportation Engineering and Operations Chief
 - Dennis Leach, Arlington County Director of Transportation
 - County design guidelines for emergency vehicle access

TASK FORCE FOCUS

- BCA arterial roads include Wilson Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, Carlin Springs Road and George Mason Drive
- The Task Force focused on Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason
 - This follows the Arlington Arterial Transportation Management (ATM) plan of 2004 and past BCA recommendations
- The Task Force recommends additional efforts to address the area of Wilson Boulevard east of George Mason

APPROACH

- Discuss current conditions (as-is).
- Understand County requirements, options, and constraints.
- Discuss what is at stake if we don't make a change.
- Establish a "To-Be" vision.
- Identify strategic options and reach consensus on recommendations.
- Ask County to provide baseline data to determine existing levels of service at traffic-light intersections, public transit time, emergency vehicle response time along the corridor, crash statistics and other relevant metrics.
- Compare baseline data to updated data to measure outcomes.

CURRENT CONDITIONS



Sidewalks
are narrow
and
obstructed



CURRENT CONDITIONS (CON'T)



Large vehicles
drive close to
the sidewalk



CURRENT CONDITIONS (CON'T)



There is limited room to expand into private property

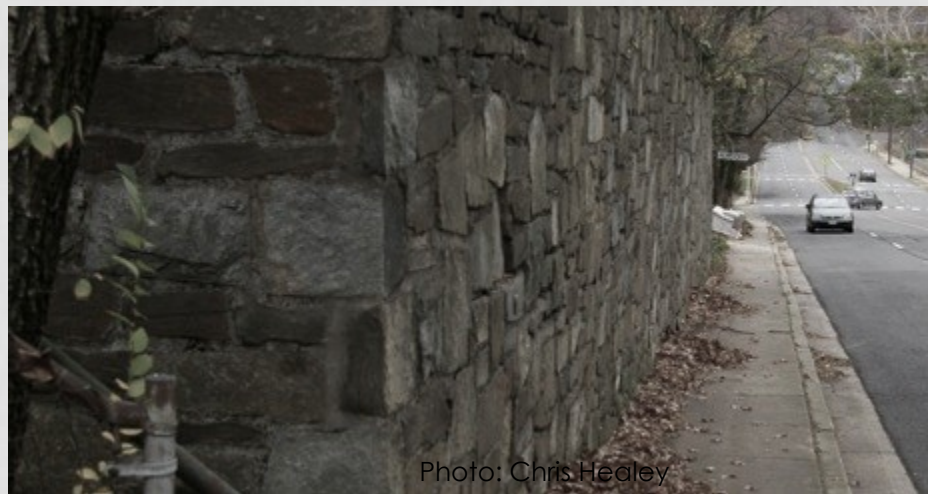
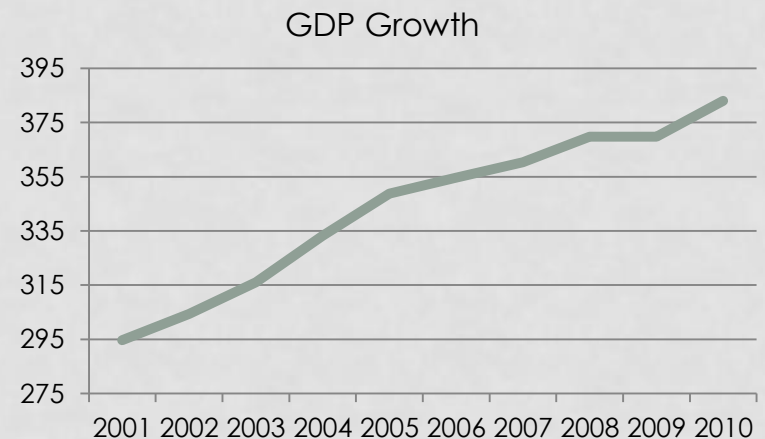
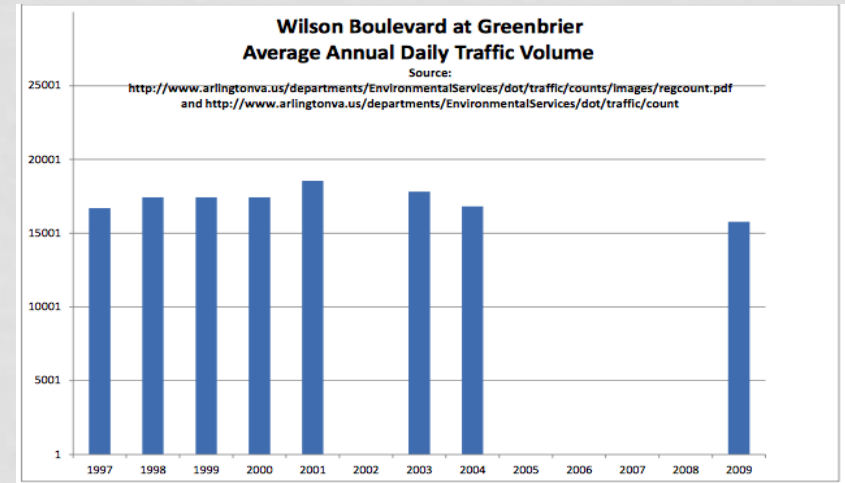


Photo: Chris Hedley

CURRENT CONDITIONS

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

- Traffic volumes on Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason Drive have been steady for more than 30 years, despite significant increase in population and economic activity
- Wilson Boulevard has about the same amount of daily traffic as Washington Boulevard
- Washington Boulevard has higher traffic volume during morning and evening peak hours of travel than Wilson Boulevard.



WHAT IS AT STAKE?

- Health, safety, quality of life, and viability of businesses
- Lack of adequate pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure limits safe transportation options, adding more cars on the road.
- Wilson is particularly inaccessible to many people with disabilities and presents hazardous conditions for children and older people :
 - forces pedestrians/residents with disabilities into the street
 - unsafe for school children to walk or wait for a bus
- We do not want to leave this problem to our children.

TO-BE VISION

- Streets that are safe and accessible to all pedestrians
- Streets that allow for the safe, orderly flow of pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency vehicles, motor vehicles, and transit
- Arterial sidewalks that meet ADA laws and Arlington design guidelines
- Ease of access from/onto Wilson Blvd. from side streets
- Acceptable flow of traffic along Wilson Blvd.

WASHINGTON BOULEVARD IS A NEARBY EXAMPLE



- Unobstructed and level sidewalks
- Planting and utility strips
- Street trees
- Bike lanes
- On-street parking
- Vehicular travel lanes



FOUR POTENTIAL OPTIONS

- Underground utility poles.
- Acquire additional right-of-way.
- Reconfigure the existing right-of-way.
- Do nothing.

OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Utility undergrounding
 - County policy allows for utility undergrounding
 - Would require significant funding (costs of up to \$1 million/block on average)
 - Bluemont is not among the County's "high priority areas"

OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Acquisition of additional right-of-way
 - Has been done successfully at other Arlington locations
 - Property acquisition or easements are sometimes difficult to secure, especially in cases of commercial properties and properties that are not owner-occupied.
 - Sometimes, one or more property owners will not agree to grant an easement or sell property. Increased sidewalk width is counted toward the “covered” percentage of a property under lot coverage rules, potentially affecting property changes/improvements.
 - Projects requiring right-of-way acquisition are currently not eligible for funding under the “Complete Streets” program.

OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Reconfiguration of existing right-of-way
 - Converts four existing lanes into two through lanes, one two-way center turn lane (with dedicated turn lanes at intersections), and two bike lanes
 - Could be a phased project: Phase 1—pavement striping; Phase 2—sidewalk widening and utility pole relocation
 - Funding available through “Complete Streets” program
 - According to Wayne Wentz:
 - Two through lanes with a center turn lane typically provides a better line of sight and safer transitions for cars entering the traffic lanes.
 - No expected changes to flow of vehicular traffic; speeding may be reduced while maintaining the same overall travel time.
 - Reduced crash risks for all users are expected.

STRATEGY AND RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION

- The Task Force recommends reconfiguring Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason Drive to make it safer and more accessible for all modes of transportation.
- This strategy can be implemented in two phases:
 - Convert existing four lanes to two through-lanes and a two-way center turn lane (with dedicated turn lanes at intersections), and two bicycle lanes by restriping the pavement.
 - Widen sidewalks to meet ADA requirements.

STRATEGY AND RECOMMENDATION BEFORE AND AFTER EXAMPLE

Four Lanes w/o center turn lanes



**center turn lanes, bike lanes,
ped refuge island at bus stop**



QUESTIONS?