



ARLINGTON RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION
2604 SOUTH GRANT STREET
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202
May 27, 2011

Chairman Chris Zimmerman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Chris,

Subject: Request for Hold on Redesign of Arlington Ridge Road/So. 23rd Road/S. Meade Street

ARCA's May 5 & 19, 2011 meetings on the subject intersections' redesign were contentious, as affected neighbors raised many valid issues with the County's "95% design plan," and called for more careful consideration and resolution. The May 19 meeting pitted neighbor against neighbor and residents against County staff. In September 2010 the County briefed ARCA on an elaborate redesign of this intersection and nearby S. Meade St., but failed to redesign the one corner (southwest, Ridge and 23rd) that we had asked be made safer in our July 30, 2009 project priorities letter (attached) – signaling communication issues with County staff. ARCA residents voted that I request you put this project on hold until issues and questions raised about the design can be addressed. These issues likely need to be addressed individually, in more manageable design review pieces. The specific issues are summarized below:

Narrowing the west side of S. 23rd at Ridge to two lanes via recently added bump-outs will create congestion. All other legs of the intersection have three lanes, with a dedicated left turn lane, and most neighbors want the same here. Currently, if an eastbound car is waiting to turn left onto Ridge, there is usually room on the right to go through or turn right. When this right space is blocked, and someone waits to turn left, the net result is that only one car that gets through the light. If nubs are added to constrict the street, and the north side sidewalk is pushed out, it would create a bottleneck. Many asked for left-turn cycles at all legs of the intersection, to enable more than one car to legally turn left during busy times.

Closure of the slip lane to S. Meade from Ridge is viewed as an unneeded and potentially dangerous change for motorists, with little or no gain for pedestrians, on a corner with challenging grades and geometry. Concerns are that the steep grade of what would be the only entry to Meade from Ridge would be hazardous in inclement weather, and that slowing for the proposed narrowed and squared turn could result in collisions, given the patterns of traffic on Ridge. Simpler, low-cost fixes have been suggested. Eliminating this slip lane was not requested as an ARCA priority.

Elimination of the bus pull-in at the NE corner of Ridge Rd. was criticized as unneeded, and could make it difficult for larger vehicles westbound on 23rd St to make right turns onto Ridge. Additionally, a bus stopped in the roadway right after the light could cause blocked traffic if commuters get stuck in the intersection behind it. Some residents also see value in the pull-over for dropping people off or stopping to seek directions. Regardless, ARCA would like to see the no parking requirement immediately posted and enforced for this pullover.

Questions remain about the proposed changes made to the sidewalk in front of 2300 S. Ridge. There is a question as to whether it can be made 2 feet wider than the County's plan –

though this would seem to be a simple question of geometry that could be resolved easily. Also, we had only asked this one corner be addressed as a priority, as prior staff had noted how costly it is to move utilities. We are now told the light signal pole will not be moved due to expense.

Making permanent the experimental rubber curbing changes to the complex southeast corner where both S. 23rd and Oakcrest Rd. both meet at Ridge seemed to be acceptable to most residents, and was anticipated by ARCA when installed. There was concern over placement of the supplementary signal head, and need for signage and pavement markings to better enforce keeping cars at the stop line south of Oakcrest, keeping Oakcrest access clear.

ARCA continues to address traffic control and pedestrian safety issues as a top priority. In our recent NC survey with 445 respondents, traffic issues again were the top complaint, and will be addressed further when we develop our new NC Plan. The surveys reflected considerable localized resident concern over traffic issues caused by Oakridge Elementary School – traffic that would be affected by the proposed redesign.

Apart from the issues and disagreements raised by the above intersection redesign, we have been pleased with the less-ambitious fixes that were the first priority in our attached July 2009 letter. We would like to thank Betty Diggs and Dave Hundeldt and staff for partnering to solve multiple issues beyond what we requested for S. 23rd St. We also want to thank Richard Best for the recent Joyce St. changes, where we again partnered with Aurora Highlands Civic Association.

We look forward to quickly working out constructive solutions to these issues/concerns. I have concluded that ARCA needs to approach the design review process differently, both within ARCA and with County staff. We would be happy to meet with you and Traffic staff in order to move forward on these issues, and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Charles Walter
President, Arlington Ridge Civic Association
703-519-9487

cc: Arlington County Board
Barbara Donnellan, County Manager
Aurora Highlands Civic Association
Dennis Leach, Transportation Division



ARLINGTON RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION/
AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
2604 SOUTH GRANT STREET
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202

July 30, 2009



Mr. Dennis Leach
Director, Transportation Division
Department of Environmental Services
Arlington County Government
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Leach;

This letter is a formal request of the Arlington Ridge and Aurora Highlands Civic Associations that the County use an estimated \$60,500 of the remaining \$175,000 in developer funds from the Potomac Yard development, site plan #346, that were set aside to address traffic problems on So. Arlington Ridge Road and So. 23rd Street.¹ Specific projects requested are:

(1) Ridge Road:

(a) Two additional permanent speed indicators. One should be placed on an electric pole northbound in the vicinity of 19th Street and one southbound in the vicinity of 24th Street. With the southbound display, a sign should also be posted indicating that a school/pedestrian crossing is ahead.

(b) Two new pedestrian bollards (such as those at the 19th and 20th Street intersections) to replace the current ones at S. Lang and 28th Streets.

(2) S. 23rd Street:

(a) Two new permanent speed indicators, one eastbound (downhill) just past 26th St. (opposite Kent) on an extension arm of an existing pole, and the second across the street (uphill) at the Kent intersection (opposite 26th St), also with an extension arm for driver visibility.

(b) Three pedestrian crosswalks with bollards at Grant, Hayes, and Ives Streets. The bollards should have the same pedestrian crossing signs as those in the roadway on Ridge at 19th and 20th Streets.

¹ A separate request will be made for the estimated \$95,000 in developer funds from the Pentagon Row development, site plan #105, for community improvements in the Pentagon city area.

Attachment

In addition, the Associations strongly support two major traffic safety improvements that could be funded with the remaining site plan #346 funds: a traffic signal at Ridge Road and Lang; and proper pedestrian space at Ridge and 23rd, southwest corner.

Traffic signal at Ridge & S. Lang: While the County's traffic count did not include enough children to support the traffic signal at S. Lang, many of our neighbors indicate they do not allow their children to cross at this intersection because it is so dangerous. Instead they drive their children one block to school, creating a "catch-22" situation where the traffic count will remain low because the intersection is too dangerous for children to cross safely.

Pedestrian space at Ridge and 23rd St. Southwest Corner: Use the funds remaining after installing the light at Lang to reconfigure the intersection of Ridge Road/23rd Street. Specifically, at the southwest corner of Ridge and 23rd St, install 4' sidewalks and remove telephone poles and other obstructions from the middle of sidewalks. We understand that the County is already conducting an informal feasibility study of this intersection.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to these further safety improvements to the streets and sidewalks in our area, making them friendlier to pedestrians, public transit users and children walking to school.

Sincerely,

Charles Walter

Charles Walter
President,
Arlington Ridge Civic Association

Bruce Cameron

Bruce Cameron
President,
Aurora Highlands Civic Association

cc:

Wayne Wentz
Patricia Bush
Elizabeth Diggs
www.arcaonline.org
www.aurorahighlands.org

Attachment