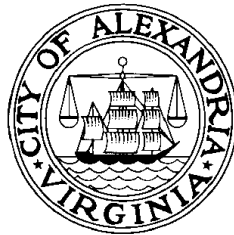


# **City of Alexandria**



## **Monroe Avenue Bridge**

**January 11, 2006**  
Community Workshop

January 11, 2006  
Monroe Ave. Bridge Community Workshop

The following is a summary of the Community Workshop Exercises on the Monroe Avenue Bridge that were held on January 11, 2006, in the George Washington Middle School cafeteria. The summary includes an overview of the community workshop, a description of the workshop exercises and documentation of the written comments collected from the working group tables.

This workshop summary will be distributed to the workshop attendees. It will also be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council in advance of further evaluation of these options.

### **Agenda**

The purpose of this workshop was to collect community input on two issues associated with the straightening on the Monroe Ave Bridge. The data from the workshop is summarized in this document and will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Listed below was the agenda for the January 11 meeting:

- Overview of Monroe Avenue Bridge Project
- Exercise 1: Monroe Avenue Access to/from Route 1
- Exercise 2: Direct Pedestrian Connection from the bridge
- Construction Update

### **Exercise 1: Monroe Avenue Access to/from Route 1**

City staff provided a presentation on the issue of accessing Route 1 to and from Monroe Avenue. Four options were presented for consideration, including the approved design. After the presentation, each table was given large copies of each option as well as a large sheet for recording comments. The attendees received the following instructions:

- Select one person to be the recorder for the table.
- Review the four options for accessing Route 1 to/from Monroe Ave.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option and record the comments on the sheet provided.
- Select an option that is preferred by the group and describe why.

## **Exercise 1: Results**

Eleven tables participated in the exercise. None of the options emerged as a strong favorite. Below is a summary of the preferred option votes recorded from each table:

- § **Option 1:** Approved Monroe Ave. Alignment: **Three tables** recorded a majority in support of Option 1.
- § **Option 2:** Two-Way slip ramp: **Two tables** recorded a majority in support of Option 2.
- § **Option 3:** Realigned Monroe Avenue: **Three tables** recorded a majority in support of Option 3.
- § **Option 4:** Elevated Monroe Embankment: **One table** recorded a majority in support of Option 4.

Two tables did not record a supported option.

Listed below are the advantages and disadvantages recorded from each of the tables by Option:

### **Option 1- Approved Alignment:**

#### **Advantages:**

- § Better option for maximizing open space
- § Best for school site
- § Maximum open space and parking
- § Three options for northbound traffic (Rt. 1, Main Street, Potomac Avenue)
- § Least impact to school site
- Maximum flexibility for future land use

#### **Disadvantages:**

- § Traffic pattern is more difficult
- § It could increase neighborhood cut-through traffic
- § Will cause more traffic on Howell & Bellefonte
- § Problematic for southbound traffic, especially during rush hour
- § Distance to travel to YMCA parking lot
- § Longer route to Route 1 - harder to go east/west traffic - more cut through traffic
- § Too confusing & difficult & major impact on traffic
- § A possible future school should not be a driver in decision
- § Bad for pedestrians, longer route
- § Pedestrian traffic from NorthEast takes too long to get to Monroe Avenue
- Longer for buses and commuter routes

### **Additional Comments:**

- \$ Consider making side streets dead end
- \$ Might be possible to restrict Howell & Bellefonte
- \$ Limit green time
- \$ No thru traffic
- \$ Howell Avenue access differs from original
- \$ Why wasn't it considered to build the railroad tracks over Route 1? Then we could have access to the land underneath.
- Move forward with approved option
- Need to look at pedestrian/bike access to GW Parkway
- Chance to test stop signs, signals and other facilities

### **Option 2 - Two-way Slip Ramp:**

#### **Advantages:**

- \$ Offers 2 way traffic from/onto Rt 1 or Potomac Yard
- \$ Gives best option for bike riding
- \$ Through lane allows easier access to Del Ray from NE
- \$ Ease cut-through traffic on Howell & Bell. & Custis
- \$ Easy access for school/park field
- \$ Provides multiple road options
- \$ Better pedestrian access
- \$ Slower traffic
- \$ NE more access (options) to Del Ray

#### **Disadvantages:**

- \$ More direct access to Monroe, more through traffic
- \$ Bad for pedestrians
- \$ Only adds very little time to get to Route 1 S. by car vs. option 1
- \$ Very inefficient use of land
- No improvement over Option 1
- \$ Potential for more accidents (poor geometrics)
- \$ Tight/windy roads
- \$ Curvy and possibly dangerous
- \$ Do not use: cuts into park space & makes it less useable
- \$ Lose space - Head on accident waiting to happen
- May impair emergency vehicle access

- § Two-way slip ramp has dangerous turn, emergency vehicle access may be impaired by 2-way slip ramp
- § Ramp to Route 1 very narrow
- School option eliminated

**Additional Comments:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> best option if Option 1 does not work.
- Tunnel access to field? (Landbay “L”)
- Additional signal probably necessary
- feel like “NIMBY”

**Option 3 - Re-aligned Monroe Avenue:**

**Advantages:**

- § Pedestrian access between field/school
- § Faster access- appealing design
- § Better pedestrian access
- § May give City more flexibility in land use for Landbay K.
- § Most preferred - leaves access to route 1 w/o traffic impairment
- § Better traffic pattern
- § Should improve pedestrian access to Main Street
- § Allows dev. Access more directly to Monroe(ie: more traffic from Potomac Ave, Main St, Rt. 1)
- § Great connection to Crystal City
- Preserves open space

**Disadvantages:**

- § Marginal- eliminates valuable options outlined in 2
- § Kids crossing busy road to school
- § Bad for peds
- § Bisects park & school
- § Concern for children crossing, sight lines on bends of Monroe Avenue
- § Negatively affects usable space for park and school.
- § Lose space- Road bad for future school - Cuts Simpson Park in half.
- § School option eliminated
- § Pedestrian access drops into no where (need new path to Monroe Avenue)
- § Funnels traffic from development and Crystal City into Del Ray
- § Decrease in school space
- Can't reach Potomac Yard development without going thru Route 1 intersection

### **Additional Comments:**

- \$ Explore option of gaining/trading for Landbay L to get land for school site
- \$ Specific use of Park needs to be determined
- Option if Option 1 does not work

### **Option 4 – Elevated Monroe Embankment:**

#### **Advantages:**

- \$ Shorter access going south
- \$ Best for direct pedestrian/bike access: Del Ray to NE
- \$ Improved East-West pedestrian access
- \$ Improved southbound vehicle access
- \$ School property intact
- \$ Slow down Route 1 traffic (both sides of Route 1 stop for Monroe Ave/Slaters Lane access)

#### **Disadvantages:**

- \$ Waste of additional money and construction time
- \$ Unsightly ramp
- \$ Only right turn does not allow two-way traffic
- \$ Only solves half of the problem (going to route 1 south)
- \$ \$10 million cost to the City
- \$ Inefficient use of land
- \$ Out of place
- \$ No northbound access to Route 1
- \$ Longer construction period
- \$ Untenable
- \$ Strange construction
- \$ Awkward and expensive
- \$ Lose space - no good pedestrian access
- \$ No way
- \$ Makes no sense with regard to land use and traffic
- \$ Possible merge issue as incoming traffic from Monroe may try to cross over to Slaters
- \$ No safe access from the ramp
- \$ Bad for school
- Don't like this option and did not spend any time on it
- Don't like size of bridge
- No, don't support
- Could back up Route 1 so cars bail out earlier in neighborhood
- No votes

### **Additional Comments:**

§ Does City pay for additional cost? If yes, more money and time are a problem

### **Exercise 2: Direct Pedestrian Connection from the bridge**

City staff provided a presentation on the issue of direct pedestrian connection from the bridge to Monroe Avenue. After the presentation, each table was given large copies of each option as well as a large sheet for recording comments. The attendees received the following instructions:

§ Select one person to be the recorder for the table.

§ Discuss the following three questions and record your results.

1. Should there be a direct pedestrian connection from the bridge to Monroe Avenue?

If yes, then:

2. Should the pedestrian connection be ADA accessible?
3. Which of the drawings does your table prefer?

### **Exercise 2: Results**

Eleven tables participated in the exercise.

#### **Question 1:**

**Six tables indicated YES**, they supported a direct pedestrian connection.

**Four tables indicated NO**, they did not support a direct pedestrian connection.

One table was undecided.

#### **Comments favoring the direct pedestrian connection:**

§ Very serious safety problems crossing Route 1 & Potomac Avenues, cars do not yield to pedestrians on right on red

§ Anything (i.e. 2 minutes) that discourages pedestrians is BAD.

§ Needs to be well lit with minimum of 2 footcandles

§ Why not one on each side?

#### **Comments against the direct pedestrian connection:**

§ Vandalism

§ Bikers, Skaters

- Any option only 2 minute gain

- § 2-5 minute savings, not worth it.
- The types of people who would benefit: elderly, handicapped, youth would also probably be reluctant to go under the bridge.
- No, but we would like to see a stronger, safer pedestrian/bike access between Route 1 and Slaters Lane.
- Not good cost/benefit

**Other Comments:**

- § Depends on bridge design
- Why not a pedestrian connection on each side?
- No cost data available
- Will more pedestrians be going on east or west side?

**Question 2:**

**Five tables indicated YES**, the connection should be ADA accessible.

**Four tables indicated NO**, the connection should not be ADA accessible.

Two of the tables that answered “NO” to Question 1 did not respond to Question 2.

**Question 3:**

**Option 1 – Sidewalk on Bridge:**

**Five tables supported Option 1.**

**Comments:**

- Other options could always be added later
- Better than alternates 2-4
- Will bicycles be accommodated?
- Police prefer this option
- After discussion, the other options are not worth saving 2 minutes

**Option 2 – Ramp Under Bridge:**

**One table supported Option 2.**

**Comments:**

- Would be more appealing if this did not jam against bridge- but rather “floated”- perhaps over pond
- Police officer raises crime issues
- Others believe this is ugly and unsafe

- Doesn't save much time
- Safety issue
- Cleanest, visibly intuitive, foot traffic does not cross Route 1
- Easy neighborhood access
- No, not safe
- Will cause pollution in water table/pond
- Skateboarders dream come true
- Possible accidents w/ pedestrians & autos
- Unsafe
- Isolated
- Don't like
- No access to northbound traffic

**Option 3 – Ramp on Monroe Avenue Side of Bridge:**  
**One table supported Option 3.**

**Comments:**

- Should be designed as gateway in appearance
- More pedestrian traffic will make passage safer
- Skateboarders dream come true
- Too difficult to push wheel chair up ramp
- Doesn't save much time
- Even if meets ADA regulation, its not very usable because of distance
- Aesthetic impact
- Huge monstrosity
- Not cost effective
- Possible pedestrian accidents if autos miss turns or peds/bikes/skateboards don't slow down at end of ramp
- Still must cross Route 1
- Most Direct access from Del Ray to METRO
- Best design, open to all pedestrian traffic
- Strongly prefer
- No access to southbound traffic
- Suggest better design - get some consultant to help with European examples
- Ugly!

**Option 4 – Stairway:**  
**One table supported Option 4.**

**Comments:**

- Could be art project
- Another skateboarders dream
- May be ok if a ramp rather than stairs
- Police prefers on east side rather than west side so vehicular traffic can see pedestrians
- Yes, we prefer this idea.
- Most direct access from Del Ray to METRO
- Not ADA - elevator?
- Steps too burdensome even for many regular pedestrians
- Most pleasing, less expensive, the cost of option 3 could be used to put another spiral on the opposite side of the bridge
- Not accessible for ADA or strollers
- Aesthetic impact
- Elevator for ADA – pedestrians

**Three tables did not express support for any of the options.**