



Fairlington Citizens Association
P. O. Box 6182
Arlington, Virginia 22206

July 10, 2024

SMART SCALE

Commissioner Stephen Brich
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond VA 23219

RE: SMART SCALE application for Shirlington Circle Improvements

Dear Commissioner Brich:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Fairlington Citizens Association (FCA), which represents over 3600 households (roughly 8000 people) in Arlington and Alexandria, I am writing to express FCA's strong support for the joint application by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria for Smart Scale funding of the Shirlington Circle improvements at the I-395 and S. Glebe Road intersection.

The improvements envisioned by the comprehensive plan for this project effectively address all five goals of the Smart Scale program. For FCA, perhaps the most important are the safety and congestion improvements that underlie the proposal, but the other aspects are compelling as well. This intersection is a major point of access for our residents who are commuting to D.C. for work, entertainment, or shopping or for people who are seeking access to the thriving Village at Shirlington with its restaurants and vibrant retail options, as well as the newly expanded WETA building. It is also adjacent to the Shirlington Transit Station, with a steady stream of Metrobus and DASH buses using the traffic circle.

In short, this circle must safely accommodate a variety of purposes and growing traffic demands at different times of day. It is currently inadequate to that task. Drivers report sometimes experiencing sweaty palms as they navigate the circle and its adjacent intersections, particularly the merger with Quaker Lane, where, unfortunately, the merge sign is often ignored, with frequent reports of near misses. Similarly, the merger with the rotary coming off of Southbound 395 or seeking to exit onto Campbell Avenue can be a test of nerves. It often requires remarkable skill by Metrobus drivers to make that shift without colliding with vehicles entering the circle who fail to yield.

In 2020 the Arlington County Board approved amendments to the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) for the Village at Shirlington. These amendments are designed to accommodate significantly increased density in the Village, and that will no doubt generate additional demands

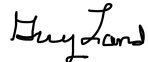
on the Shirlington Circle. In our submission to the County Board, FCA flagged the VDOT study of the Shirlington Circle and the need for those improvements to respond to the expected increased traffic to Shirlington. And that increased traffic is, of course, a key component of the economic development premise on which the increased density is based. So the Smart Scale proposal is an important component of the long-term economic development vitality of the Village at Shirlington.

Our statement to the County Board also stressed the need for improved access to Shirlington by pedestrians and bicyclists, a key element of the plan for helping the Village be a destination for residents who live nearby, not just for those who are coming by car from other neighborhoods. We felt this access was an important part of the larger plan for maintaining the vitality and competitiveness of Shirlington.

As VDOT was conducting the study and developing the recommendations in the 2017-2020 period, FCA worked with other organizations in the area, including the Shirlington Civic Association in Arlington and the Parkfairfax and Parc East condominium associations in Alexandria, to ensure that collectively we had a common vision of the need for these improvements and that we could implement a joint strategy of working with both Arlington and Alexandria to seek funding for these critical improvements.

We are pleased that NVTA is taking the lead in seeking Smart Scale funding and that their application enjoys the support of both the City of Alexandria and Arlington County. Because this project must be carried out in both jurisdictions, rather than in just Arlington or Alexandria alone, it is particularly well-suited for funding through the Smart Scale program. We urge you to view the application favorably.

Sincerely,



Guy Land
President