Virtual Public Information Meeting
Transcript Document
Van Buren Road North Extension
Prince William County, Virginia

July 22, 2021
7:00PM – 9:00PM

UPC #118643

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1. Citizen Information Meeting Details

A Virtual Public Information Meeting was held on July 22, 2021 at 7pm to facilitate public education and outreach concerning the Van Buren Road North Extension project. The presentation identified the proposed project alignment, which consists of extending Van Buren Road from Route 234 to the existing connection at Cardinal Drive, and the in-progress environmental study (a proposed Environmental Assessment (EA) level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document) for this improvement. The public was given an opportunity to review project exhibits, review a tentative project schedule, and provide feedback to the County to assist in finalizing the environmental study.

The public was also invited to ask questions prior to the meeting, during the meeting, and a comment sheet was provided to submit questions and comments outside of the meeting by close of business on August 5, 2021. Twenty-six comments were submitted prior to or after the meeting via mail and email. Sixty-four comments were received during the meeting. Both sets of comments have been addressed via mail/email and during the meeting, respectively.

2. Conduct of Meeting

This meeting was held virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions and pursuant to the ordinance re-adopted by the Prince William County Board of Supervisors on March 16, 2021. Representatives from Prince William County's Department of Transportation (PWCDOT) and Dewberry Engineers Inc.'s (Dewberry) design staff were in attendance to present the project and answer questions regarding the project.

The meeting began with opening remarks from the Potomac District Supervisor, Supervisor Andrea Bailey. After a brief introduction for panelists from PWCDOT and Dewberry, a presentation was given by the PWCDOT project manager Sherry Djouharian detailing the proposed alignment, project schedule and on-going environmental study for the project. The remainder of the meeting, moderated by Dagmawie Shikurye, was dedicated to a Question and Answer (Q&A) session during which the public was invited to submit their questions and comments using the presentation platform's Q&A function. These questions were addressed and answered as they were received during the meeting.

Informational brochures for the Van Buren Road North Extension project were made available prior to the meeting via PWCDOT's Current Road Projects webpage and included the following information:

- Details of the meeting
- An overview of the project (including scope, purpose & need, location, budget and traffic information)
- Environmental analyses
- Civil rights requirements
- Land acquisition and utilities
- Directions for providing comments
- The anticipated schedule for the project
- Exhibits of the project design.

A copy of the Brochure is attached in Appendix 1. An exhibit of the project plans that was displayed in the brochure is attached in Appendix 2. The comment sheet provided to the public is attached in Appendix 3.

3. Public Notice Publication

This public Information Meeting was advertised on the Prince William County website on July 6, 2021 (https://www.pwcva.gov/news/prince-william-county-host-van-buren-road-north-extension-environmental-study-project-virtual). A link was provided to the Virtual Meeting website as well as Dial-In information to access the meeting by phone. Links to the Prince William County Department of Transportation website and the Current Road Projects website were also provided. Information on how to submit comments, questions and feedback was provided along with contact information for the PWCDOT.

4. Comments

In total, there are 90 comments/questions with 26 being sent prior to or after the meeting and 64 comments were received during the meeting. The comments/questions addressed the following topics:

- 5 of the comments addressed the projects budget, funding, and approval
- 8 of the comments addressed noise and sound barriers
- 10 of the comments addressed safety during and after construction along with accessibility issues
- 4 of the comments addressed potential impacts to natural resources
- 23 of the comments were concerned with the traffic volume and/or traffic patterns post construction
- 9 of the comments addressed multiple factors which included at least 2 of the above categories
- 31 of the comments addressed miscellaneous topics or did not specifically address a particular aspect of the project.

The following is a compilation of the comments and concerns received regarding the Van Buren Road North Extension project.

A- Comments Received Outside of the Public Information Meeting via Comment Sheets and E-mail

Comment A-1
Commenter: James R. West

Comment:
I live on the east side of Four Seasons Drive and it's only 1/4 mile from my bedroom window to the truck scales.

It would be greatly appreciated if the Van Buren extension included sound walls between the road and Four Seasons.

Response:
A preliminary noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls were warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The results indicate that a noise barrier is warranted for 3 of the receptors, however construction of such noise barriers was determined to not be feasible. They were

determined to not be feasible as the noise wall would block the nature path and to accommodate the nature path a break in the noise wall would be required thus negating the noise reduction qualities of the noise wall. It can be noted that per the preliminary noise analysis the impacted locations were along the nature/recreational trail and not within the residential portion of the Four Seasons development. There were no impacted noise receptors within the Four Seasons residences. The conceptual alignment currently under consideration has maximized the separation between the Four Seasons community and proposed Van Buren Road, in order to minimize noise impacts. A more detailed review and analysis will be conducted during the final design and construction of Van Buren Road to determine if noise walls are necessary.

The analysis does not consider noise from I-95 as there are no roadway improvements proposed on I-95 and therefore barriers along I-95 were not evaluated as part of this project according to the guidelines set by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Comment A-2
Commenter: Myrna Levinstein

Comment:
Please do not proceed with the Van Buren Road project. Extending the road would literally devastate residential communities in its path.

When the citizens who live in those developments bought their homes, they were deliberately *not* warned that they would NOT be living in a residentially zoned area in the future. They were not told that the Prince William government would be putting an industrial zone in the middle of their developments.

It is my understanding that this project could attract trucks that want to bypass the weigh station on the interstate. It would increase traffic to the area and bring dangerous vehicles into residential neighborhoods.

Seniors, who give much in taxes and take little in government services, would have their safety and security destroyed by this road project. Many of them would have no choice but to sell their properties at a greatly devalued amount, and leave the area. This would negatively affect tax revenues.

Families with children will have no choice but to sell to remove their children from an environment that will no longer be safe.

It appears that the Prince William government wants to chase law-abiding, tax-paying, middle class citizens out of the county.

The environment is also a concern. The air pollution due to the proximity of Interstate 95 and Route 234 is very high. The trees that would be killed when the road is built help the air quality now, but would be gone. The noise abatement they provide would also be gone.

Hundreds of thousands of birds and animals live in the targeted area. Many would be displaced, but most will die.

The State of Virginia rejected this project last year. Why are the local politicians pursuing it when it was deemed unnecessary and harmful? Why would they continue to push this ridiculously expensive proposition that will harm thousands of their tax paying citizens while benefiting a few individuals? I would suggest a corruption inquiry is in order.

From comment sheet –
Do you support the alignment as shown?

No.

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project? Yes

Make sure the study is done by an unbiased agency.

In your opinion, does the project meet the needs of the community? No

I do not see how this supports the community in any way.

Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project? Yes

See attached letter

Please provide us with any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.

This statement appears to suggest that the desires of the residents are being ignored and that this damaging project will go ahead regardless of the preference of the citizenry.

Response:
Please do not proceed with the Van Buren Road project. Extending the road would literally devastate residential communities in its path.
The Van Buren Road North Extension Project has taken community safety and environmental wellbeing into consideration during this planning phase of the project. This current phase only addresses the environmental investigations. Final design/location of the roadway has not been determined.

The conceptual alignment as part of this study has been designed to relieve local traffic congestion for this north-south corridor, enhance mobility within the community, include new pedestrian facilities, and improve roadway safety.

When the citizens who live in those developments bought their homes, they were deliberately *not* warned that they would NOT be living in a residentially zoned area in the future. They were not told that the Prince William government would be putting an industrial zone in the middle of their developments.

It is my understanding that this project could attract trucks that want to bypass the weigh station on the interstate. It would increase traffic to the area and bring dangerous vehicles into residential neighborhoods.

Seniors, who give much in taxes and take little in government services, would have their safety and security destroyed by this road project. Many of them would have no choice but to sell their properties at a greatly devalued amount, and leave the area. This would negatively affect tax revenues.

Families with children will have no choice but to sell to remove their children from an environment that will no longer be safe.

It appears that the Prince William government wants to chase law-abiding, tax-paying, middle class citizens out of the county.
Prince William County is currently performing the environmental investigations phase for Van Buren Road, which includes studying the project corridor for environmental constraints and soliciting public commentary on the project. The design and funding for the construction of the roadway is not determined at this time. Van Buren Road has been included in the Thoroughfare Plan of the County's Comprehensive Plan since the 1980's. The process of implementing this project is starting with the NEPA Documentation phase.

The zoning of the properties along the project corridor is public information. This information was available as was the Van Buren Road alignment when residences in the area were bought and sold. However, it is understandable that residents may be frustrated when these zoned properties are developed. That is why the County is taking appropriate actions to study the effects of this project through the NEPA process, and sharing that information when it is available to the citizens impacted by the project. The County also wishes to receive feedback from those citizens through public information meetings, and ultimately the upcoming NEPA Public Hearing. The ultimate goal is to develop a project that provides the most benefit for the citizens of Prince William County.

The environment is also a concern. The air pollution due to the proximity of Interstate 95 and Route 234 is very high. The trees that would be killed when the road is built help the air quality now, but would be gone. The noise abatement they provide would also be gone.
The NEPA study requires office research and field investigations to assess environmental impact and utilizes that information to minimize disturbed areas. Many investigations have been conducted to date, and more are scheduled to occur. A preliminary air and noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls are warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The study looked at the impact to air quality in the corridor. Also, a Jurisdictional Determination has been obtained from the Army Corps of Engineers for wetlands and public waters (streams) within the project corridor.

Hundreds of thousands of birds and animals live in the targeted area. Many would be displaced, but most will die.
Database reviews have been conducted and this information has been included in the Environmental Assessment (EA) level NEPA document, which is currently under review. Upon approval of the draft EA and prior to the future Public Hearing, this information will be available to the public for review and comment. As a result of database reviews, a Habitat Assessment for Threatened and Endangered Plant Species has been performed, and an upcoming field investigation will be performed in the future to confirm any findings. The concept alignment attempts to minimize impacts to these habitats to the greatest extent possible while maintaining a feasible roadway alignment.

The State of Virginia rejected this project last year. Why are the local politicians pursuing it when it was deemed unnecessary and harmful? Why would they continue to push this ridiculously expensive proposition that will harm thousands of their tax paying citizens while benefiting a few individuals? I would suggest a corruption inquiry is in order.

The Van Buren North Extension was evaluated in 2020 by VDOT's Smart Scale program, alongside many other projects in the area. These projects are scored and ranked and those projects with the highest ratings receive funding for design and construction. The Van Buren North Extension was not rejected, nor was it deemed unnecessary and/or harmful, but rather it did not rate as high in comparison to other projects submitted for Smart Scale funding. The Van Buren North Extension provides an important link in this busy north-south corridor, and the goal of the NEPA investigations phase is to study the project and maximize those benefits for the traveling public.

Comment A-3

Commenter: Jeffrey Riddel

Comments:

1. The Dewberry NEPA Study Environment Assessment scope of work scope omits fundamental aspects crucial to Four Seasons: notably:
    a. Why is the road being considered – what is the need/problem being addressed? What are the objectives?
2. Enumerate the objectives and provide a substantiating rationale to support the justification for the road extension.
    a. If the objective is to improve regional transportation, why is this objective not met by the extensive and relatively recent improvements to 1) Route 1 and 2) I-95, specifically the extension of the HOV lanes which has eliminated the southbound backups which caused some traffic to divert to Cardinal Drive and Waterway? Why does the regional argument for Van Buren Road extension still make sense?
        1. If the objective is to improve local transportation, such as perceived congestion or speeding along Waterway, what other more straightforward options have been considered, and if rejected then why?
            a. Add Waterway traffic calming measures rather than building a $100 million new road that might have minimal effect on Waterway.
    b. Specifically, along Waterway, why not do the following, at minimal cost, such as have routinely been done elsewhere to address similar concerns:
        i. Reduce the speed limit from its current 35 MPH to 25 MPH, as exists in Four Seasons.
        ii. Add speed bumps to slow traffic.
        iii. Add stops signs at cross street intersections, as has been done in Four Seasons, Alexandria and elsewhere.

In essence, why build a new road $100 million plus road that cuts through existing subdivisions – Four Seasons and Cardinal Grove in particular – when readily available, cost effective and immediately doable remedies already exist?

3. Recognizing that one objective may be to enable now landlocked parcels west of I-95 to be accessed, why not do a more straightforward solution; that is, build two – non connecting access roads, one from Route 234 and the other from Cardinal Drive – which meets the objective without causing other significant disruptive effects.
4. The tasks shown omit one crucial task of specific relevance to Four Seasons; namely, what are the socio-economic and community impacts of the road?
    a. Typical EA essentials steps/tasks typically address the following:
        i. Will the proposed action be beneficial to the health, heritage, and livability of the communities impacted without destroying the natural environment?
        ii. Evaluate the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the planned project.
            1. An EA should minimize, avoid, or offset the environmental **and socio-economic** impacts of a proposed development project.
5. The Dewberry consultant team should include a firm, not now represented, specialized in and focusing on social, economic and community impacts, such as
    a. Cutting off 12 acres of Four Seasons property
    b. Loss of significant portions of both of our nature trails
    c. Loss of vegetation – trees, etc.
    d. Economic impact on existing home values in Four Seasons and Cardinal Grove

With respect to the NEPA EA tasks themselves:

Task 1: Site Constraint Analysis

1 Are the existing traffic counts and maps to be used current, reflecting now existing development not only at Four Season but also Cardinal Grove, Copper Mill Estates and adjacent hotel development?

Task 3: Traffic Analysis

1 Why will field counts not be included? A traffic counter could be easily installed.
2 If a key issue is traffic along Waterway, why is that road not included in the traffic analysis?

Task 5: Roadway Design

1. How will the one concept to be developed be determined? Is it a VDOT decision? If so, who provides input – the County? Does the County make a recommendation?

Response:

1. The Dewberry NEPA Study Environment Assessment scope of work scope omits fundamental aspects crucial to Four Seasons: notably:
    a. Why is the road being considered – what is the need/problem being addressed? What are the objectives?

The NEPA Environmental Assessment considers the purpose, need, and objectives for the project, and is detailed in one of the first sections of the document. The road is being considered to relieve local traffic congestion for the north-south corridor adjacent to I-95, through Montclair and Route 1, enhance mobility within the community, include new pedestrian facilities, and improve roadway safety. It has been identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan as a transportation improvement

project that will benefit the overall transportation network within the County. Certain sections of the NEPA Environmental Assessment are currently under review by VDOT and will be reviewed by FHWA in the future. After this document is completed to a level determined to be ready for public review and comment, that information will be available, and a Public Hearing will be held for further comments and questions.

2. Enumerate the objectives and provide a substantiating rationale to support the justification for the road extension.
    a. If the objective is to improve regional transportation, why is this objective not met by the extensive and relatively recent improvements to 1) Route 1 and 2) I-95, specifically the extension of the HOV lanes which has eliminated the southbound backups which caused some traffic to divert to Cardinal Drive and Waterway? Why does the regional argument for Van Buren Road extension still make sense?
        1. If the objective is to improve regional transportation, such as perceived congestion or speeding along Waterway, what other more straightforward options have been considered, and if rejected then why?
            a. Add Waterway traffic calming measures rather than building a $100 million new road that might have minimal effect on Waterway.
    b. Specifically, along Waterway, why not do the following, at minimal cost, such as have routinely been done elsewhere to address similar concerns:
        i. Reduce the speed limit from its current 35 MPH to 25 MPH, as exists in Four Seasons.
        ii. Add speed bumps to slow traffic.
        iii. Add stops signs at cross street intersections, as has been done in Four Seasons, Alexandria and elsewhere.

    In essence, why build a new road $100 million plus road that cuts through existing subdivisions – Four Seasons and Cardinal Grove in particular – when readily available, cost effective and immediately doable remedies already exist?
    Van Buren Road will provide a north-south connection which provides local traffic an alternative option other than Route 1, I-95 or through the Montclair community. The construction of Van Buren Road would reduce the through traffic that uses Waterway Drive today. This study does not consider alterations to Waterway Drive. The traffic calming measures described would help to address speeding on Waterway Drive, however it would not remedy the capacity issues for those wishing to traverse between Route 234 and Cardinal Drive. Improvements to I-95 and Route 1 are also vital transportation improvements, however Van Buren as an alternative route provides a missing link and another option. As detailed in the County's Comprehensive Plan, Van Buren Road has been identified as a desirable north-south route such that local traffic can avoid I-95 and Route 1 (and Waterway Drive).

3. Recognizing that one objective may be to enable now landlocked parcels west of I-95 to be accessed, why not do a more straightforward solution; that is, build two – non connecting access roads, one from Route 234 and the other from Cardinal Drive – which meets the objective without causing other significant disruptive effects.

Van Buren Road provides the access to those parcels while also providing a public roadway which will connect Route 234 and Cardinal Drive. Access roads which would not effectively connect Route 234 and Cardinal Drive do not address the objective identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

4. The tasks shown omit one crucial task of specific relevance to Four Seasons; namely, what are the socio-economic and community impacts of the road?
    a. Typical EA essentials steps/tasks typically address the following:
        i. Will the proposed action be beneficial to the health, heritage, and livability of the communities impacted without destroying the natural environment?
        ii. Evaluate the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the planned project.
            1. An EA should minimize, avoid, or offset the environmental **and socio-economic** impacts of a proposed development project.

    This information has been included in the Environmental Assessment (EA) level NEPA document, which is currently under review. Upon approval of the draft EA and prior to the future Public Hearing, this information will be available to the public for review and comment.

5. The Dewberry consultant team should include a firm, not now represented, specialized in and focusing on social, economic and community impacts, such as
    e. Cutting off from Four Seasons of 12 acres of its property
    f. Loss of significant portions of both of our nature trails
    g. Loss of vegetation – trees, etc.
    h. Economic impact on existing home values in Four Seasons and Cardinal Grove

    The elements identified above are considered and documented within the NEPA Environmental Assessment. It's worth noting that the recreational trails within the Four Seasons Community and therefore access to the Four Seasons community property will be maintained by the trail/crosswalk across proposed Van Buren Road. The Four Seasons trail will connect to the project's Shared Use Path and continue through. A crossing has been identified near the Access Road (serving Old Stage Road) connected to Proposed Van Buren Road. All NEPA documents must assess and attempt to minimize impacts to vegetation and overall grading of a roadway project, and the concept shared at this time attempts to minimize those impacts to the greatest extent possible. Finally, it is not determined at this time if home values would be affected by constructing Van Buren Road, which is not designed as a high capacity highway but rather a collector roadway which attempts to increase pedestrian mobility with the implementation of a lower design speed.

With respect to the NEPA EA tasks themselves:

Task 1: Site Constraint Analysis

1 Are the existing traffic counts and maps to be used current, reflecting now existing development not only at Four Season but also Cardinal Grove, Copper Mill Estates and adjacent hotel development?

The traffic data used for the preliminary project design is current and adheres to current VDOT guidance due to reduced traffic as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional traffic counts may be required during the final design of Van Buren Road.

Task 3: Traffic Analysis

1 Why will field counts not be included? A traffic counter could be easily installed.
Field counts were not conducted due to the COVID-19, and the inconsistent traffic volumes experienced during this time frame. Detailed guidance from VDOT was followed during this timeframe to generate traffic volumes, utilizing existing traffic data and appropriate growth rates.

2 If a key issue is traffic along Waterway, why is that road not included in the traffic analysis?
Waterway Drive is approximately 2.70 miles north west of the proposed Van Buren Road extension which is outside of the study area limits of the Van Buren Road Extension – NEPA Traffic Analysis. The Traffic Analysis followed guidance from the *VDOT Traffic Analyses to Support NEPA Studies Consultant Resource Guidance Document* and included traffic forecasting methodology as opening year (2025) and design year (2040) traffic volumes were obtained from Prince William County's (PWC) travel demand model. Even though Waterway Drive was not included in the traffic analysis, PWC's model encompasses traffic from the surrounding area with the proposed Van Buren Road extension in place.

Task 5: Roadway Design

1. How will the one concept to be developed be determined? Is it a VDOT decision? If so, who provides input – the County? Does the County make a recommendation?
The concept currently used for the NEPA study is a coordination effort between the County and VDOT, with input from the public. The concept alignment is still available for comment and modification based on that input.

Comment A-4
Commenter: William O. Cooley

Comment:
Hello,

Just one comment: I am a property owner along this proposed stretch of road. The parcels, one 56 acres and one less than 1 acre, are held in the name Atlantic Funding, Ltd. I am very much in favor or the road and this alignment and would like to see it start as soon as possible. My comment is; knowing that financing is crucial to this project, it would seem that Tax Increment Financing would, in part, be helpful to get this project underway.

Virginia has a tax increment financing statute that allows the County the ability to use tax increment to construct roads. This stretch of road will produce millions of dollars per year in "captured increment" that will diffuse many millions of dollars in bonds in a short period of time.

Creating a tax increment district and selling bonds will move this project along much quicker that waiting for more traditional means of financing.

Response:

My comment is; knowing that financing is crucial to this project, it would seem that Tax Increment Financing would, in part, be helpful to get this project underway.

Virginia has a tax increment financing statute that allows the County the ability to use tax increment to construct roads. This stretch of road will produce millions of dollars per year in "captured increment" that will diffuse many millions of dollars in bonds in a short period of time.

Creating a tax increment district and selling bonds will move this project along much quicker that waiting for more traditional means of financing.

The Van Buren Road Extension Project was initially considered as one of the projects for the 2019 Mobility Bond Referendum but was not ultimately included. This project continues to be a Board priority and the County will continue to identify potential future funding for the project to include, local, state, regional or federal funds.

Comment A-5
Commenter: James V. Cech

Comment:
I wish to offer some background and feedback on the proposed Van Buren Road extension study. I tried to give this information to Supervisor Andrea Bailey, after her town hall with Four Seasons residents last year. However, neither she nor her staff would acknowledge my letters, e-mail or calls.

I'm one of last former Montclair Board members who has insight into the disastrous agreement made with VDOT to temporarily open Water Way Drive, to facilitate emergency vehicle access and snow plowing equipment from Cardinal to route 234. During those negotiations, which included our state Delegate Jack Rollison who was on the VDOT oversight committee, Montclair Board members and representatives repeatedly raised concerns about the use of our road that was NOT designed as a high-volume parkway. We also raised concerns about the fact that school children, for two different elementary schools, walked along Waterway drive. Parents with young children, who purchased homes in Montclair, expected the traffic to be only local. Golf carts daily play a game of dodge ball crossing the road from the 18th hole to the club house. Without exception PWVC and VDOT representatives pointed to the "PWC Long range plan" claiming that the extension from Dale City Blvd to Route 234 would alleviate most of our concerns and funnel the expected traffic directly to route 234 and I-95. Every year additional development has ushed more and more traffic thru Montclair. For two decades Supervisor Caddigan, then a Montclair resident, came to the Montclair Property Owners annual meetings. She brought with her an annual update of the road plans along with VDOT and PWC planners to back her up.

The County finally, after nearly three decades of planning, began to move forward with a bond that included the Van Buren road extension. I testified in **Support** of the building of the road at that open meeting with the entire Board. The majority of Four Seasons residents cited concerns about trees, environment, loss of wildlife habitat, noise pollution and thieves using the planned road to come into Four Seasons to commit crime. They do not care about any other community except their own back yard. I brought to the attention of the County Board that I now also live in Four seasons and the majority of the reasonable and rational objections and concerns could be mitigated with No thru trucks, a sound barrier along the truck stop and a change to the County ordinances that currently allows for

clear cutting of easements. However, the leadership in Four Seasons, which did not even exist when Montclair got stuck with the "Waterway Drive Through way" objected to any road building adjacent to our community and actively opposes ANY access to the Peterson property in violation of the state constitution that guarantees property owners the right of access and use of their land as zoned.

After two decades of unmet promises Supervisor Caddigan reversed her support for Montclair when she removed the Van Buren road from the proposed bond consideration. She argued that she had heard from her New neighbors in Four Seasons, where she moved, and heard nothing from Montclair.

Here is bottom line. If you check the PWC Police record you will see they can cite people speeding on Water Way drive as fast as they can write tickets, and the traffic does NOT slow down, even with the school zone flashers on. That traffic, rushing to and from I-95 THRU Montclair, goes right by the front of Four Seasons. It contributes to the noise pollution, congestion and red-light runners that we, who reside in the front of Four Seasons, have to deal with. The long planed and long needed road should be built **ASAP.**

I feel sorry Four Seasons residents, living in the back of the community, who did not read their disclosure packages to see an easement existed with the proffered property. I think it is shameful some realty agents have asserted their homes will lose value, abutting this road when the realty is homes near 234 have increased in value. It is sad that you are going to receive a plethora of mail from residents who are more worried about the trees in their back yards, on the easement, then they are for the safety of school children IN Montclair.

I have two questions for you as the project planner that I hope you will address on 22 July.

1. The projected construction budget, discussed during the bond meeting, was based upon the County having easements along the planned route. If you shift East, which is fine with me, do you incur any additional expense to purchase the land?

2. If you do not have access are the owners willing and what is the revised construction budget to acquire that access?

3. Mr. Peterson has been strung along for years by PWC in the hopes that he would build the first two lanes of the eventual four lane road. He has rejected that request (and cost). Instead he has finally requested the use of the easement along our community, which was rejected by Four Season's Board of Directors. How is PWC going to avoid an injunction against the realignment plans you are briefing everyone and the legal bill, for all of us, when Peterson heads back to the Virginia Supreme Court citing CB Hylton Vs. PWC?

<u>Response:</u>

1. The projected construction budget, discussed during the bond meeting, was based upon the County having easements along the planned route. If you shift East, which is fine with me, do you incur any additional expense to purchase the land?

   The proffered land as noted in the documented proffer statements describe that the location of the road is subject to change based on design from the County and/or VDOT. Thus, shifting the alignment further east to better accommodate residents and the environment is possible without significant increases to budget related to land acquisition. The same can be stated for

construction costs (only minor increases are anticipated). Thus, by shifting the alignment to the east a substantial increase in project budget is not expected.

2. If you do not have access are the owners willing and what is the revised construction budget to acquire that access?
   The purpose of the project at this time is a NEPA environmental investigation only. Access and associated land acquisition costs are not considered at this time. A project cost estimate will be completed at a later date as part of the NEPA process, but only after public comment has been incorporated and environmental findings are documented, which will inform the preferred alignment to be considered for the project cost estimate.

3. Mr. Peterson has been strung along for years by PWC in the hopes that he would build the first two lanes of the eventual four lane road. He has rejected that request (and cost). Instead he has finally requested the use of the easement along our community, which was rejected by Four Season's Board of Directors. How is PWC going to avoid an injunction against the realignment plans you are briefing everyone and the legal bill, for all of us, when Peterson heads back to the Virginia Supreme Court citing CB Hylton Vs. PWC?
   Coordination with landowners where the roadway concept requires land acquisition is on-going.

Comment A-6
Commenters: Russ and Alena Smith

Comment:
My spouse and I strongly support this study. We were extremely disappointed that the Van Buren extension was not funded in the recent Prince William County road bond. We live in Montclair, and the through traffic from I95 bailout has reached a breaking point.

While we understand this study is needed to apply for federal funding, we regret state or local funding has not been applied to this project to date.

Again, we fully support this study and hope the Van Buren Extension becomes a reality soonest.

Response:
Your comment has been noted and thank you for your support.

Comment A-7
Commenter: Tommy Esquina

Comment:
Do the plans include building Van Buren as close to I95 as possible so the natural sound and security border in Four Seasons is not negatively impacted?

Would the county build a buffer / sound barrier wall for a mile that is closest to Four Seasons?

Response:
The preliminary design of Van Buren Road has the alignment of the road directly adjacent to I-95 to keep noise and vehicles as far away from residential communities as possible.

A preliminary noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls were warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The results indicate that a noise barrier is warranted for 3 of the receptors, however construction of such noise barriers was determined to not be feasible. They were determined to not be feasible as the noise wall would block the nature path and to accommodate the nature path a break in the noise wall would be required thus negating the noise reduction qualities of the noise wall. It can be noted that per the preliminary noise analysis the impacted locations were along the nature/recreational trail and not within the residential portion of the Four Seasons development. There were no impacted noise receptors noted at any residences in Four Seasons. A more detailed review and analysis will be conducted during the final design and construction of Van Buren Road to determine if noise walls are necessary.

Comment A-8
Commenter: Noel Dillard

Comment:
Good afternoon,

I do intend on attending the 8/22 virtual meeting, however, in regard to the Van Buren extension off Rte 234 in Dumfries:

p;(essentially a dead end)? (Already concerns about traffic from current shopping center and the up coming church and other shopping center). And concerns with the traffic overflow running through Forest Park community (cause increased traffic and speeding throughout the community in order to go around traffic).

* is there a plan to put a light at the intersection of Van Buren and where Holiday Inn is on 234?

The increase traffic-especially as marketing it as an alternative to 95 and Rte1 will be intense. Possible that Route 1 will back up, Mine Road will back up and Van Buren will back up due to that traffic flow, which will cause an issue for 234 through traffic.

Additionally, has there been given any thought as to how this project will be affected or affect the casino project and traffic from that? Also my understanding that there will be a traffic circle coming into Triangle/Dumfries to "assist" with the traffic flow from the casino. I am not sure how that works but that traffic circle will also impact traffic on connected projects, such as this one.

Note: every avenue from Cardinal is a through street and therefore the risk of additional backups would probably be minimal. Unlike Van Buren that ends in a dead end with houses and communities at the end of it.

Any information you could provide on these items would be greatly appreciated.

Response:
* what plans will be put in place to minimize traffic that continues on Van Buren down to Mine Road (essentially a dead end)? (Already concerns about traffic from current shopping center and the upcoming church and other shopping center). And concerns with the traffic overflow running through

Forest Park community (cause increased traffic and speeding throughout the community in order to go around traffic).
The traffic pattern that currently exists with Mine Road (the southern portion of Van Buren Road) is not negatively impacted with the extension of Van Buren Road from Cardinal Drive to Route 234. A traffic analysis has been completed with the NEPA investigations and the results do not show undesirable conditions at this location.

* is there a plan to put a light at the intersection of Van Buren and where Holiday Inn is on 234?
This NEPA document does not consider improvements to this intersection. Another study by the County or VDOT, under a future task, could address this intersection if warranted.

The increase traffic-especially as marketing it as an alternative to 95 and Rte1 will be intense. Possible that Route 1 will back up, Mine Road will back up and Van Buren will back up due to that traffic flow, which will cause an issue for 234 through traffic.
The traffic analysis completed with the NEPA document concluded that the implementation of Van Buren Road improves traffic congestion on the surrounding roadway network. This type of traffic study analyzes the roadway network in the 2040 future year, and in general showed improved levels of service at Van Buren Road and the adjacent network. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the adjacent network does not degrade significantly due to the subject project. It's acknowledged this is a heavily traveled corridor, and thus the County has identified this project as an improvement which will benefit the nearby roadway network.

Additionally, has there been given any thought as to how this project will be affected or affect the casino project and traffic from that? Also my understanding that there will be a traffic circle coming into Triangle/Dumfries to "assist" with the traffic flow from the casino. I am not sure how that works but that traffic circle will also impact traffic on connected projects, such as this one.
The traffic roundabout project and the casino project noted was not directly considered as part of this project, as this infrastructure is well outside the project limits. However, the County traffic model was used which does incorporate nearby traffic patterns, volumes, and development, which would indirectly be incorporated with the traffic modeling effort for Van Buren Road.

Note: every avenue from Cardinal is a through street and therefore the risk of additional backups would probably be minimal. Unlike Van Buren that ends in a dead end with houses and communities at the end of it.
This has been acknowledged and considered with the analysis of the improvement.

Comment A-9
Commenter: Daniel Beattie

Comment:
Please add these comments to the public record of comments. If Van Buren is extended between Cardinal Drive and RT 234, stop lights need to be added at several points along Cardinal Dr, notably at the intersection with Bushey Drive. New development are burgeoning off Bushey and the road across the street to the south. It is nearly impossible to turn and cross traffic at this intersection. Several accidents take place. Traffic on Cardinal is incredibly fast and turning at this intersection is dangerous. Adding new traffic on Van Buren will increase the safety hazards to those turning off/on Cardinal Drive. I

also hope folks are planning to increase turning lane capacity to get from Dale onto Benita Fitzgerald, which extends and becomes Van Buren.

Response:
The intersection of Bushey Drive and Cardinal Drive as well as Dale Boulevard are outside the Van Buren Road North Extension Project limits. Currently the NEPA Environmental study for Van Buren Road is the primary focus of this project. The transportation improvements listed above are outside of this project's scope, however it is possible that these other improvements could be investigated under a separate task.

Comment A-10
Commenter: Miles Carlson

Comment:
Dear Ms. Djouharian,

Thank you for your response concerning milestones for the Van Buren Road EA. I have been out of the country, recently returned and now have a question for you.

In a June 23 message from D. Shikurye, we were provided a list of milestones running through Item 13, FONSI Submittal, July 18, 2022.

In your message you reference "number 16 on the milestone" You may imagine my confusion: if 16 items, then what are 13, 14 and 15? Please clarify the schedule.

Additionally, defining a FONSI as the intended result of the EA process seems to presume an outcome that cannot be predicted this far in advance. The EA process should follow the data, letting the chips fall where they may at the end of the study: FONSI or EIS. I would hope that Dewberry has not been contracted only to produce a FONSI. The length of the study--18 months--is well beyond the usual timeframe of 12 months or less, suggesting a much more complicated situation under study, with which we'd agree.

Finally, it would seem that a FONSI can be signed by your department (assuming you are the decision-maker) without any further action, funding or otherwise. Hence my confusion over your concluding statement: "We cannot proceed with the FONSI submittal until the funding is determined." Does this mean that the decision is not within PWC Department of Transportation? Who is the decision-maker? Why wait for funding to conclude the study; this only adds years to the process and risks losing the viability of the study along the way.

Should be an interesting meeting this Thursday.

Thank you for your consideration and response, clarifying these concerns.

Response:
Dear Ms. Djouharian,

Thank you for your response concerning milestones for the Van Buren Road EA. I have been out of the country, recently returned and now have a question for you.

In a June 23 message from D. Shikurye, we were provided a list of milestones running through Item 13, FONSI Submittal, July 18, 2022.

In your message you reference "number 16 on the milestone" You may imagine my confusion: if 16 items, then what are 13, 14 and 15? Please clarify the schedule.
There appears to have been an error and rather there are only 12 milestones, not 16 (please see list below). Milestone 12 is the FONSI submittal on July 18th, 2022. This schedule is current but preliminary at this time and subject to change.

1.	NEPA Concurrence Form Submittal:	January 15, 2021
2.	Complete Critical Field Surveys:	January 29, 2021
3.	Complete Concept Level Design (1 Alternative):	July 1, 2021
4.	Public Information Meeting	July 22, 2021 (7:00-9:00pm)
5.	Draft EA: Purpose and Need Submittal	April 26, 2021
6.	Draft EA: Alternatives Analysis Submittal	May 28, 2021
7.	Draft EA: Environmental Consequences, Comments, and Coordination	August 30, 2021
8.	Complete Preliminary Design (1 Alternative) Part 1:	February 22, 2022
9.	Hold Location and Design Public Hearing:	March 10, 2022
10.	Complete Preliminary Design (1 Alternative) Part 2:	May 31, 2022
11.	Final EA submittal:	June 13, 2022
12.	FONSI Submittal:	July 18, 2022

Additionally, defining a FONSI as the intended result of the EA process seems to presume an outcome that cannot be predicted this far in advance. The EA process should follow the data, letting the chips fall where they may at the end of the study: FONSI or EIS. I would hope that Dewberry has not been contracted only to produce a FONSI. The length of the study--18 months--is well beyond the usual timeframe of 12 months or less, suggesting a much more complicated situation under study, with which we'd agree.

Finally, it would seem that a FONSI can be signed by your department (assuming you are the decision-maker) without any further action, funding or otherwise. Hence my confusion over your concluding statement: "We cannot proceed with the FONSI submittal until the funding is determined." Does this mean that the decision is not within PWC Department of Transportation? Who is the decision-maker? Why wait for funding to conclude the study; this only adds years to the process and risks losing the viability of the study along the way.
In anticipation of obtaining federal funding for the Van Buren Road North Extension project, the County is following the NEPA process for project impact analysis. Federal funding is the trigger to conduct project documentation under NEPA. This process involves public input, addresses the project purpose and need, as well as environmental, social, and economic impacts.

This project appears to qualify for an Environmental Assessment (EA) NEPA document, which involves project scoping and solicitation of comments from federal, state, and local resource agencies from a wide variety of interests. An assessment of alternative alignments, impacts, and public input is included in the earliest stages of project review. The preparation of the future Draft EA also includes numerous field studies and surveys. These on-going studies and agency scoping comments contribute to the impacts analysis into the Draft EA document. While we are conducting studies and compiling the Draft EA we will utilize the upcoming Public Information Meeting to collect comments from the public on the project and alignment options.

Comments from the Public Involvement Meeting incorporated as appropriate into the future Draft EA NEPA document, and transmitted to VDOT and FHWA for comment and typically, but not always, approval and additional Public Involvement.

Only after the Public Involvement and after federal funds are allocated, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) *may* be authorized by the FHWA. As noted, this process is not guaranteed, and is contingent upon input from numerous agencies in addition to the public, and only with federal funding and FHWA approval of the NEPA process will they issue a finding /FONSI.

In regards to the decision making agency on the project, VDOT and FHWA have the final approval after federal funding is allocated to the project, and approvals can proceed under NEPA. Per the guidance of FHWA, in order to issue a FONSI, the funding for the next phase of the project must be included in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the project must be incorporated into the Regional Air Quality Model to assure air quality compliance.

Comment A-11
Commenter: Julius Serrano

Comment:
Dear Ms. Djouharian,

We are residents in the Cardinal Grove subdivision. Our backyard will border the proposed road, since our house is on Fledgling Cir.

We have two small children under the age of 6. We are concerned for their safety if Van Buren Rd. is extended.

Will PWC DOT erect a concrete sound wall barrier along the proposed path? Cars can easily drive off the road and can eventually end up on our property.

Will trees be added & replaced? The few mature trees we have around the area should be protected. What about noise pollution?

What will the speed limit be? Are speed humps being considered?

Thank you!

Response:
Dear Ms. Djouharian,

We are residents in the Cardinal Grove subdivision. Our backyard will border the proposed road, since our house is on Fledgling Cir.

We have two small children under the age of 6. We are concerned for their safety if Van Buren Rd. is extended.

Will PWC DOT erect a concrete sound wall barrier along the proposed path? Cars can easily drive off the road and can eventually end up on our property. Will trees be added & replaced? The few mature trees we have around the area should be protected. What about noise pollution?
A preliminary noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls were warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The results indicate that noise barriers are not warranted or feasible within the Cardinal Grove subdivision and are currently not included with the project. A more detailed review and analysis will be conducted during the final design and construction of Van Buren Road to determine if noise walls are necessary. The NEPA study requires office research and field investigations to assess environmental impact and utilizes that information to minimize disturbed areas. Many investigations have been conducted to date, and more are scheduled to occur. A preliminary air and noise analysis was conducted.

What will the speed limit be? Are speed humps being considered?
The design speed of Van Buren Road is currently set at 40 mph and will be signed at 40 mph or 35 mph (to be determined). Prince William County is currently performing the environmental investigations phase for Van Buren Road, which includes studying the project corridor for environmental constraints and soliciting public commentary on the project. Van Buren Road doesn't qualify for speed humps under the County's Residential Traffic Management Guide which states that the only eligible streets that can have speed humps are local residential 2-lane streets with a posted speed limit of 25 mph or less.

Comment A-12
Commenter: Monique Chouraeshkenazi

Comment:
Good Evening Ms. Djouharian,

My name is Monique Chouraeshkenazi and I am a resident of the Cardinal Grove community at 3304 Soaring Circle.

This is my official statement that I oppose the extension of Van Buren road. I believe the extension will significantly reduce the value of the homes in this community. Additionally, having increased traffic and speed could affect our safety.

If you have any questions/concerns, or if my message is to be directed to another representative, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time.
Take care,

Response:

The Prince William County Department of Transportation does not determine or comment on home values which may be affected by the implementation of a roadway improvement. Van Buren Road is currently being conceptually designed, and ultimately will be final designed, as a collector roadway to connect the community with motorized travel and alternative methods (i.e. biking and walking). Safety will be a main criterion in designing this roadway, especially in the Cardinal Grove community where the roadway is in close proximity to existing homes.

Comment A-13
Commenter: Tracy Eicher

Comment:

From comment sheet –
Do you support the alignment as shown? No

I am very much opposed, I would like to see the funding used to improve existing roads and the safety of PWC citizens. Speeding on 234 and running red lights is dangerous and should be addressed.

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project? Yes

The limited traffic study did not provide evidence that this road is necessary, I would like to know how this project will improve PWC. I am very much interested in reviewing the funding reports and to see how the funds have already been spent.

In your opinion, does the project meet the needs of the community? No

There did not seem to be any evidence that this road extension would help anyone but the people who get money from their property rights. There was no clear objectives to this project presented. It was noted that the intent was not to alleviate traffic from I95 nor to take away from the express land traffic.

Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project? Yes

Noise in my community, security in my community and the nature trail in my community. Also traffic cutting through from I95 is very real probability which would cause more traffic problems.

Please provide us with any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.

I believe the Cardinal Drive Community is opposed to this project as well as the Four Seasons Community. This project will increase noise levels and be a safety hazard. Funding for the study should be used for other road improvements which are much needed in PWC

Response:

From comment sheet –
Do you support the alignment as shown? No

I am very much opposed, I would like to see the funding used to improve existing roads and the safety of PWC citizens. Speeding on 234 and running red lights is dangerous and should be addressed.

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project? Yes

The limited traffic study did not provide evidence that this road is necessary, I would like to know how this project will improve PWC. I am very much interested in reviewing the funding reports and to see how the funds have already been spent.

Please see page 461 in the following Transportation Capital Improvement Program Document: https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-06/aFY22--16--CIP06--Transportation.pdf

In your opinion, does the project meet the needs of the community? No

There did not seem to be any evidence that this road extension would help anyone but the people who get money from their property rights. There was no clear abjectives to this project presented. It was noted that the intent was not to alleviate traffic from I95 nor to take away from the express land traffic.

Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project? Yes

Noise in my community, security in my community and the nature trail in my community. Also traffic cutting through from I95 is very real probability which would cause more traffic problems.

Please provide us with any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.

I believe the Cardinal Drive Community is opposed to this project as well as the Four Seasons Community. This project will increase noise levels and be a safety hazard. Funding for the study should be used for other road improvements which are much needed in PWC
The NEPA Environmental Assessment currently underway considers the purpose, need, and objectives for the project, and is detailed in one of the first sections of the document. The road is being considered to relieve congestion for local traffic for the north-south corridor adjacent to I-95 and Route 1, enhance mobility within the community, include new pedestrian facilities, and improve roadway safety. It has been identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan as a transportation improvement project that will benefit the overall transportation network within the County. The preliminary design of Van Buren Road locates the alignment of the road directly adjacent to I-95 to keep noise and vehicles as far away from residential communities as possible. The safety of the community is of the utmost importance.

Comment A-14
Commenter: Amber Hudson

Comment:
Good morning-

Thank you for the information session that was held yesterday. As a resident of Cardinal Grove I have concerns regarding the non- residents on the two neighborhoods traveling thru. I think the people that pay to live there deserve the accessibility. Traffic from the highway cause great concerns for this who lice closer to Van Buren and we have children who frequent the playgrounds in front of the community, those who walks and walk their dog's. This seems unsafe with so much potential increasing traffic.

I think highway traffic/ genera traffic should use route 1 or the highway itself to travel.

The Van Buren road should be built to connect to Cardinal and route 234 but only for the residents of the two neighborhoods.

This can be managed by making the current neighborhoods gated communities.

Thank you for your time

Response:
The proposed purpose for Van Buren Road, as outlined with the County's Comprehensive Plan, is to provide a public collector roadway which would connect Route 234 and Cardinal Drive. By making these neighborhoods gated communities and thus cutting off general through traffic on future Van Buren Road, the road would no longer serve as a public roadway.

Comment A-15
Commenter: (email) natalia_jorge@yahoo.com

Comment:
Good evening,

I am wondering what are you all considering for us families that have small children. You know how often car accidents happen and on top of that there is not going to be restrictions on trucks. Also some families do not even have fences for their backyards. This is outrageous, the children need to be safe and anything can happen with a road right behind our houses.

You guys did not take into consideration of any of us families who have lived in the community for years now. This has become an inconvenience to some of us who may now have to find a new place to live to feel and be safe.

Response:
Prince William County is currently performing the environmental investigations phase for Van Buren Road, which includes studying the project corridor for environmental constraints and soliciting public commentary on the project. The construction of the roadway is not determined at this time. Van Buren Road has been incorporated in the County's Comprehensive Plan, and thus the process of implementing this project is starting with the NEPA Documentation phase.

The County wishes to receive feedback from those citizens through public information meetings, and ultimately the upcoming NEPA Public Hearing. The ultimate goal is to develop a project that provides the most benefit for the citizens of Prince William County.

Comment A-16
Commenter: Eric Fagerholm

Comment:
I fully support the Van Buren extension.

Thanks,

Response:
Thank you for your support for the project, and this is noted.

Comment A-17
Commenter: Michael Balderman

Comment:
Ms. Djouharian,

I participated in the Van Buren Road Extension briefing last Thursday evening. To be honest I had not heard about this project until a month ago and only then because we have several friends in the Four Seasons development. After listening to the presentation and responses to numerous questions, I find myself very frustrated by the lack of background information concerning this project. I am hoping that you will be able to direct me to the appropriate locations to find this information.

1. It was stated several times during the meeting that the slides would be posted on the Prince William County Transportation Department web site. I spent quite a bit of time looking, but have not been able to locate them. Can you direct me to the appropriate web page?

2. It was also stated that the Q&A would be posted. Where can I find them?

3. It was stated several times in the briefing that this project was proposed sometime before 2015 and contained in the county's Master Plan. I could only find the current Master Plan on the website, but it provided no background on the project. I am looking for information that explains who came up with the idea for this project and the supporting information/traffic study that indicated it would alleviate congestion or meet some type of transportation need.

4. Several times it was alluded to that a partial traffic study had been completed. Is that traffic study available and if so, where can I find it?

5. The presentation also stated that comments could be submitted prior to 5 August. The web site that was provided was the Department of Transportation website, but I could find no place to submit comments. Can you please help.

6. I could find no reference to the projected cost of this project. Where can I find that?

As you can probably gather, I am not a proponent for this project. I have been a resident of Montclair for more than 30 years and see this project as creating far more problems than any it could possibly solve. My primary concern is that this extension will simply be used as an alternate route for I-95 traffic who will exit at Dale City and use this to bypass backups down to Route 234. I am especially concerned about the impact for the intersection of Van Buren and Route 234. Within the last few years this intersection has seen the development of a shopping center which includes a Chick-fil-A restaurant which causes backups into the surrounding roads, as well as the military Dumfries Health Center which adds to traffic. A new housing community is being built adjacent to the intersection. In addition, a new shopping center and church are being constructed which will add to the traffic woes. Finally, this intersection is within a few hundred feet of the exit and entrance ramps between 234 and I-95. To me this is going to lead to grid lock.

I would greatly appreciate your help in obtaining the information I am looking for and look forward to your response.

Thank you.

Response:

1. It was stated several times during the meeting that the slides would be posted on the Prince William County Transportation Department web site. I spent quite a bit of time looking, but have not been able to locate them. Can you direct me to the appropriate web page?

The presentation is available at the following link:

https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-07/Van%20Buren%20Presentation.pdf

The link can be found by clicking "Read More" under the "Current Road Projects" on the Prince William County Department of Transportation home webpage. Once on this page please scroll down to the "Van Buren Road Environmental Study". The last link within this section contains the PowerPoint presentation in PDF format.

2. It was also stated that the Q&A would be posted. Where can I find them?

The Q&A will be posted in August to the Prince William County Department of Transportation webpage.

3. It was stated several times in the briefing that this project was proposed sometime before 2015 and contained in the county's Master Plan. I could only find the current Master Plan on the website, but it provided no background on the project. I am looking for information that explains who came up with the idea for this project and the supporting information/traffic study that indicated it would alleviate congestion or meet some type of transportation need.

The Van Buren Road Project has been in the County's Comprehensive Plan since the early 1980's. Information regarding the background of the project and supporting documentation/traffic study information will be made available to the public as an Appendix to the NEPA Environmental Assessment once the document is finalized.

4. Several times it was alluded to that a partial traffic study had been completed. Is that traffic study available and if so, where can I find it?
A preliminary traffic study has been completed and will be made available to the public as an Appendix to the NEPA Environmental Assessment once the document is finalized.

5. The presentation also stated that comments could be submitted prior to 5 August. The web site that was provided was the Department of Transportation website, but I could find no place to submit comments. Can you please help.
Comments can be submitted to Sherry Djouharian using the following comment sheet at the below link.

https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-07/Comment%20Sheet%20Virtual%20PIM%20on%20Van%20Buren%20Road%20North%20extension%20alignment%20and%20Environmental%20Study.pdf

6. I could find no reference to the projected cost of this project. Where can I find that?
A project cost estimate will be completed at a later date as part of the NEPA investigations, but only after public comment has been incorporated and environmental findings are documented, which will inform the preferred alignment to be considered for the project cost estimate. The cost of the current NEPA project and its funding sources can be found at the below link on page 461.

https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-06/aFY22--16--CIP06--Transportation.pdf

Comment A-18
Commenter: William May

Comment:
I live in Four Seasons at Historic Virginia. I am very much AGAINST the Van Buren Road extension due to the increased traffic congestion it would bring to the Route 234 and Van Buren Road intersection.

Traffic at this intersection going toward I-95 is already backed up 2-3 signals of the traffic light - it is worse at the rush hours. And the new church and shopping center being built near this intersection will make the backup worse. In short, the Van Buren Road extension will create a traffic nightmare.

Response:
Your comment has been noted. During the final design of the roadway a more detailed traffic analysis will be conducted to study and optimize traffic with the project implemented, including traffic along Route 234.

Comment A-19
Commenter: Jo Lynn Arnold

Comment:
Some questions:

1. How will we know how close clearing will come to our property line?
2. And how soon can we find that out?

3. Has the latest route for the road been approved? This is, I think, the 4th or 5th version of the route. We much prefer this latest version because it is furthest from our neighborhood.
4. What will or can you do to address noise issues and how long will it take to address the noise? My understanding is that we have to wait until the road is built and then, if we complain, they will do tests to see how load the noise and then maybe they will do some sort effort to address it. 95 is already too loud in our neighborhood and we would like to see that addressed now.
5. Since they have approved the widening of Route 1 at the intersection of Route 1 and 234, and we are now being told that Van Buren Rd Extension is not intended to relieve traffic from Rt 1 or 95, then why do we need it? I don't think we do. We were originally told that it was to relieve traffic on Rt 1 and 95.

Follow up comment/question (separate email):

I was just reviewing the ppt presentation on the VBR Extension, because I unfortunately wasn't able to view the live presentation, and I have a question. What does this statement from the presentation mean: "Results of the report indicate that warranted noise barriers identified in the study do not meet the feasibility criteria, per FHWA guidelines."

It sounds like the study found that noise barriers are warranted but somehow don't meet some feasibility criteria. So what does that mean? I'm very concerned about the noise and would like to understand what this means for those of us that live near the proposed road.

<u>Response:</u>

1. How will we know how close clearing will come to our property line?
2. And how soon can we find that out?

   The purpose of the project at this time is a NEPA environmental investigation only. Clearing limits will be determined during final design which has not yet been approved or scheduled.
3. Has the latest route for the road been approved? This is, I think, the 4th or 5th version of the route. We much prefer this latest version because it is furthest from our neighborhood.

   This route has not yet been approved. At this time this is an NEPA environmental investigation only and the final roadway alignment will be determined during final design.
4. What will or can you do to address noise issues and how long will it take to address the noise? My understanding is that we have to wait until the road is built and then, if we complain, they will do tests to see how load the noise and then maybe they will do some sort effort to address it. 95 is already too loud in our neighborhood and we would like to see that addressed now.

   A preliminary noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls were warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The results indicate that a noise barrier is warranted for 3 of the receptors, however construction of such noise barriers was determined to not be feasible. They were determined to not be feasible as the noise wall would block the nature path and to accommodate the nature path a break in the noise wall would be required thus negating the noise reduction qualities of the noise wall. It can be noted that per the preliminary noise analysis the impacted locations were along the nature/recreational trail and not within the residential portion of the Four Seasons development. There were no impacted

noise receptors within the Four Seasons residences. The conceptual alignment currently under consideration has maximized the separation between the Four Seasons community and proposed Van Buren Road, in order to minimize noise impacts. A more detailed review and analysis will be conducted during the final design and construction of Van Buren Road to determine if noise walls are necessary.

5. Since they have approved the widening of Route 1 at the intersection of Route 1 and 234, and we are now being told that Van Buren Rd Extension is not intended to relieve traffic from Rt 1 or 95, then why do we need it? I don't think we do. We were originally told that it was to relieve traffic on Rt 1 and 95.
   The road is being considered to relieve local traffic congestion for the north-south corridor adjacent to I-95 and Route 1, enhance mobility within the community, include new pedestrian facilities, and improve roadway safety.

Comment A-20
Commenters: Barbara and Bill Binney

Comment:
Van Buren Road North Extension PIM Comments

Please do not proceed with the Van Buren Road project. Extending the road will impact the quality of life and property values of the residents of Four Seasons Community.

We have been residents of Prince William County for over 16 years. Four Seasons is a lovely 55 plus community offering many amenities and activities to keep us healthy and active.

We are disappointed to learn of various projects proposed around a 4 mile radius of our community. All of these projects increase traffic and impact air quality and the environment. It appears these projects are considered individually without any consideration for other current on-going and proposed commercial construction projects and road projects. For example, there is the on-going Grace Church construction and the adjacent shopping center, the proposed Colonial Downs Gaming facility at the land fill, or Barrie Peterson – Southgate Business Center adjacent to the east side of Four Seasons.

Question – How can these various projects be approved if it's only based on current conditions while not considering proposed projects in the pipeline?

Van Buren Road Project

Van Buren Road (VBR) Project is estimated at $350 million for 2.7 miles of road and bridge work. This is about $118 million per mile. That is an absolutely unbelievable price tag for this project at the expense of the impact on the local neighborhoods.

With over 800 homes in Four Seasons Community, we, seniors, pay much in taxes and take little in government services. This road project would diminish our community's land, safety, security and our home values.

Other local communities are voicing their concerns. Some Montclair residents would find the Van Buren Road extension a welcome change to reduce the through traffic in their community. We understand,

that decades ago Montclair community released their roads from privately maintained to public roads maintained by the county which opened their roads to the public. Even though Montclair loathes the through traffic, they did benefit by not having to maintain the expense of their community roads.

Whether there is Van Buren extension or not, Four Seasons' roads would remain privately maintained.

The County's July 22, 2021 presentation did not address the traffic issues on 234 or Cardinal Drive except to say that it would be studied later, and that one of the purposes of VBR was to relieve traffic congestion.

They did not fully address:

- How residents of Copper Mill Estates could safely enter and exit their community;
- The heavy truck traffic that would go right through the Cardinal Grove community; and
- The traffic on Cardinal Drive, Benita Fitzgerald or Dale Blvd. or near Fannie Fitzgerald school.

In the past we were told that one of the reasons for the road is to relieve traffic on 95 and Rt 1. Recently, it was stated that was not the purpose. Interesting because many of us have pointed out that Route 1 is being widened and I 95 HOT lanes are being extended South.

In addition to the increased traffic, there are environmental concerns. There will be further displacement and destruction of wooded area for wildlife. The air pollution due to the proximity of Interstate 95 and Route 234 is very high. The trees that help with air quality and noise abatement in this area, would be removed when the road is built.

Barrie Peterson – Southgate Business Center

Our backyard in Four Seasons is about ¼ mile from the truck rest stop and adjacent to proposed Southgate Business Center development. We already hear the noise from I-95. Apparently, any type of barrier wall to reduce the traffic noise would not even be considered in our area because of the Southgate Business Center Development.

Question – Where can we submit our concerns about the Southgate Business Development to ensure the developer will consider our suggestions how to best create some security features from their land to Four Seasons?

In closing, Four Seasons would not receive any benefit from the road project. We appreciate your time to review our concerns and answer our questions.

Response:

Question – How can these various projects be approved if it's only based on current conditions while not considering proposed projects in the pipeline?

Prince William County is currently performing the environmental investigations phase for Van Buren Road, which includes studying the project corridor for environmental constraints and soliciting public commentary on the project. The construction of the roadway is not determined or approved at this time. Van Buren Road has been incorporated in the County's Comprehensive Plan as have other

transportation projects, and thus the process of implementing this project is starting with the NEPA Documentation phase.

Question – Where can we submit our concerns about the Southgate Business Development to ensure the developer will consider our suggestions how to best create some security features from their land to Four Seasons?
The Southgate Business Development is not included within the scope of this project. Please contact Supervisor Bailey with your concerns about this development.

Comment A-21
Commenter: Tom Michaelman

Comment:
I was surprised that the safety of Four Seasons residents was not brought up at the virtual meeting. Four Seasons is 18 years old. The last houses were built a decade ago.

Up until the present we have had no residents mugged or raped. We have over 50 vulnerable women living alone.

The reason we have had no incidents to date is that anyone coming into or leaving must pass the cameras at our front gate. In addition, our senior women can call 911 and it is likely that these criminals can be stopped by the police before leaving the front gate.

Many of our older women have been widowed since joining our community.

If either the Peterson Van Buren Road or the planned County Van Buren 4 lane road is built, criminals can use the road to drive close to our community on the access road, park there and enter on foot close to our houses, commit a crime and escape out. This makes our senior women vulnerable.

It very well could happen. Would anyone at the county put their mother in such danger? Abandon your plans immediately!! Senior citizens should not have to worry that this could happen.

Response:
The Van Buren Road North Extension Project has taken community safety and environmental wellbeing into consideration during this planning phase of the project. This current phase only addresses the environmental investigation, which do include social aspects and community access. Final design of the roadway is not currently determined, where safety/access measures can be considered and implemented as needed.

Comment A-22
Commenter: Miles Carlson

Comment:
Dear Ms. Djouharian,

Thank you for this opportunity (as required by the CEQ) to comment on the July 22 PIM. The Comment Sheet provided during the PIM is awkward for my rather extensive comments, so please accept this email when answering each of the comments/concerns.

1. Project purpose #1 includes extending Van Buren Road (VBR) from Route 234 to Cardinal Drive. This implies that VBR has been intended—for some unknown length of time—to run from Mine Road to Benita Fitzgerald. Question: how long has this been intended? Prior to the development of Four Seasons (FSHV) and/or Cardinal Grove residential neighborhoods? Mr. Canizales suggested that it became a 4-lane proposal in the Comprehensive Plan prior to 2010 and he would confirm for us. If known that long ago, the land developers did not reveal this proposal to the original home buyers; not your problem but understandably concerning to the homeowners who may feel misled. I also heard during the Q&A that more analysis for Cardinal Grove would be done during the design after the EA; isn't that too late?

2. At the beginning of the PIM Q&A, we were told that the EA is at the feasibility stage of development, basically addressing only alignment. A Citizens Guide to NEPA (p. 11) states that an EA should include alternative courses of action as well as the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Question: were alternative alignments addressed? If so, their dismissal would be informative.

3. Overall, the lack of traffic information, both current and projected, is troubling. During the Q&A I heard "don't worry, it's coming." Question: If a purpose is to "Provide traffic relief" then what is the traffic to be relieved?

4. Project purpose #2 includes: "Provide traffic congestion relief with the north-south alternative route within the busy I-95 and Route 1 corridor." During the Q&A I heard "this is a secondary road and has nothing to do with I-95" (paraphrase Mr. Canizales) and "this is a PWC project" and would not address I-95 or Route 1. Question: doesn't this fly in the face of the stated project purpose?

5. We were told that VBR would be a public road with no restrictions to trucking to allow in/out traffic to businesses. Observation: there are no businesses in this project area. Question: what businesses are being studied for their traffic impacts? You can't ignore them.

6. As much "traffic congestion…within the busy I-95 and Route 1 corridor" is due to trucks—large and small—it is logical to see them using this new route from Dale Blvd to Mine Rd, not only for to-be-identified new businesses but also for some of them to avoid the truck scales. At the end of the Q&A, we were told that such traffic was not considered but is inevitable. Question: how will you address these consequences?

7. Project purpose #3 includes: "Enhance mobility within community schools, churches, parks, and shopping." There are none of those activities currently within or proposed within the immediate project area and yet the EA is limited to a single alignment within the project area. Question: Which schools, churches, parks, and shopping are to gain enhanced mobility?

8. Project purpose #4 includes: "Include pedestrian facilities as an alternative transportation method." This apparently does not mean exercising but walking and biking for purposes of school, church, recreation and shopping. Question: with no such facilities in the project area, is this really the

intended purpose? Or is the impact area much larger than portrayed in order to include the named activities?

9. Project purpose #5 includes: "Improve roadway safety with current design standards." Question: Because you wouldn't design/build a road to other than current standards and as this road doesn't exist, how will its construction improve safety? Will current standards be applied to the existing roads to improve safety? Otherwise, VBR would be a standalone safety item in an area where no danger exists because there is no road.

10. Question: while the purposes of the proposal may be bit unclear, the need for the project is even less so. Please define the need.

11. Question: did you consider alternative routing and what considerations led to their dismissal for further study?

12. While you have not addressed the nature of business development in the project area, the land is zoned M2, allowing 24/7 industrial activity adjacent to mixed-generational residential areas. This project will clearly open the land for industrial development and its heavy truck traffic. Question: how will you address/mitigate the very real impacts from noise, light, vehicle exhaust and diesel engines idling for hours at a time?

13. Question: when will we see design features to safely move children and adults across VBR within Cardinal Grove?

14. The PIM addressed NEPA studies completed, including "Habitat Assessment for Threatened and Endangered Plant Species. Question: were studies conducted for T&E bird and animal species?

15. The PIM also noted "Wetland and Waters Delineation, and an Approved Jurisdictional Determination for the Army Corps of Engineers." Question: What does this mean? Are there identified wetlands? Are mitigations required? Did the CoE cede its authority to PWC?

16. There are at least three water courses in the project area, including at least one requiring a bridge. Question: how large are the culverts required for the other two crossings?

17. PIM slide states "The bridge would result in a rise in the floodplain water surface elevation. No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated." Question: What does the FIRM show for the project area? How can the water surface rise without impacting the floodplain?

18. Question: Are there known/identified Civil War or Native American sites in the area? Will a search be conducted for such?

19. A Citizens Guide to NEPA dated January 2021 (p. 10) states: "The EA is a concise public document to aid an agency's compliance with NEPA and support its determination whether to prepare an EIS…or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI)…Agencies must complete EAs within one year of the agency decision to prepare an EA…" Question: Have you already determined that the outcome will be a FONSI? And, why is it taking so much longer than a year? Looks more like an EIS is required for a study of this length.

20. 40 CFR 1508.1(g) states "Effects or impacts means changes to the human environment from the proposed action or alternatives that are reasonably foreseeable and have a reasonably close causal relationship to the proposed action or alternatives, including those effects that occur at the same time and place as the proposed action or alternatives and may include effects that are later in time or farther removed in distance from the proposed action or alternatives." I believe there are many to-be-addressed effects not yet identified that are "farther removed in distance from the proposed action or alternatives" from beyond Mine Road and Dale Boulevard. Question: how will you address that?

21. 40 CFR 1508.1(g) states "Effects [of the proposed action] include ecological…aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic…social, or health effects…" Question: when will we see those effects addressed?

22. During the PIM Q&A, it was stated that trees would be planted to mitigate noise impacts and that tree removal would be avoided where possible. Question: how wide should the tree buffer be to satisfactorily mitigate the added noise from new/closer traffic and existing traffic (once trees are removed)? Surely, a 50 foot buffer is not enough, particularly if deciduous trees are used as the buffer.

23. One of the effects that should be studied is economic. Canizales said, during Q&A, that the economic impact on property values is not considered by PWC DoT. Question: who considers this valid impact?

24. Question: What and why is the Access Road from Old Bridge to new VBR?

25. Finally, is that a picture of Mr. Canizales on your website?

Response:

1. Project purpose #1 includes extending Van Buren Road (VBR) from Route 234 to Cardinal Drive. This implies that VBR has been intended—for some unknown length of time—to run from Mine Road to Benita Fitzgerald. Question: how long has this been intended? Prior to the development of Four Seasons (FSHV) and/or Cardinal Grove residential neighborhoods? Mr. Canizales suggested that it became a 4-lane proposal in the Comprehensive Plan prior to 2010 and he would confirm for us. If known that long ago, the land developers did not reveal this proposal to the original home buyers; not your problem but understandably concerning to the homeowners who may feel misled. I also heard during the Q&A that more analysis for Cardinal Grove would be done during the design after the EA; isn't that too late?
Van Buren Road has been I the County Comprehensive Plan since the early 1980s. Further analysis for Cardinal Grove may be completed once the final design for Van Buren Road is approved. This will not be too late as the current project only involves the Environmental Investigation and final design allows for flexibility in the road configuration.

2. At the beginning of the PIM Q&A, we were told that the EA is at the feasibility stage of development, basically addressing only alignment. A Citizens Guide to NEPA (p. 11) states that an EA should include alternative courses of action as well as the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Question: were alternative alignments addressed? If so, their dismissal would be informative.
Three alignments were considered for the project. These alignments were called;

1. "Eastern Alignment" (alignment chosen)
2. "Western Alignment"

3. "Middle Alignment" (very close in nature to the VDOT Smart Scale alignment)

It was determined that the "Eastern Alignment" had the least environmental impact and was favored by the Four Season Development, because it was the farthest away from that community.

3. Overall, the lack of traffic information, both current and projected, is troubling. During the Q&A I heard "don't worry, it's coming." Question: If a purpose is to "Provide traffic relief" then what is the traffic to be relieved?
The traffic analysis completed with the NEPA document concluded that the implementation of Van Buren Road improves the roadway network. This type of traffic study analyzes the roadway network in the 2040 future year, and in general showed improved levels of service at Van Buren Road and the adjacent network. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the adjacent network does not degrade significantly due to the subject project. It's acknowledged this is a heavily traveled corridor, and thus the County has identified this project as an improvement which will benefit the nearby roadway network.

4. Project purpose #2 includes: "Provide traffic congestion relief with the north-south alternative route within the busy I-95 and Route 1 corridor." During the Q&A I heard "this is a secondary road and has nothing to do with I-95" (paraphrase Mr. Canizales) and "this is a PWC project" and would not address I-95 or Route 1. Question: doesn't this fly in the face of the stated project purpose?
Van Buren Road is a local /secondary roadway, intended to provide an alternative north-south corridor to serve local traffic. Van Buren is not intended to supplement traffic utilizing I-95, except to ensure local traffic has the ability to travel north-south without needing to access the interstate.

5. We were told that VBR would be a public road with no restrictions to trucking to allow in/out traffic to businesses. Observation: there are no businesses in this project area. Question: what businesses are being studied for their traffic impacts? You can't ignore them.
The properties along the Van Buren corridor are zoned for commercial development. At this time there are not approved re-development plans for these properties. For the purposes of a NEPA document, re-development is not considered until a site plan is approved. However, to ensure forward thinking and consideration for future growth, certain design aspects have been included with this study.

6. As much "traffic congestion…within the busy I-95 and Route 1 corridor" is due to trucks—large and small—it is logical to see them using this new route from Dale Blvd to Mine Rd, not only for to-be-identified new businesses but also for some of them to avoid the truck scales. At the end of the Q&A, we were told that such traffic was not considered but is inevitable. Question: how will you address these consequences?
Heavily traveled corridors such as I-95 present the possibility of users finding alternate routes for a variety of reasons. The access locations for this new section of Van Buren do not create a direct link to bypass I-95, but it is possible as it is in many other parallel routes to I-95 and other major highways. Van Buren Road is designed as a collector roadway, with lower design speeds and signalization which will deter through traffic seeking alternatives.

7. Project purpose #3 includes: "Enhance mobility within community schools, churches, parks, and shopping." There are none of those activities currently within or proposed within the immediate project area and yet the EA is limited to a single alignment within the project area. Question: Which schools, churches, parks, and shopping are to gain enhanced mobility?
Fannie W. Fitzgerald Elementary and the Shoppes at Quantico Center along Fettler Park Drive, each located at either end of the project will experience greater mobility from the project. Within the project limits are several parcels of land which have preliminary plans to be developed in the future.

8. Project purpose #4 includes: "Include pedestrian facilities as an alternative transportation method." This apparently does not mean exercising but walking and biking for purposes of school, church, recreation and shopping. Question: with no such facilities in the project area, is this really the intended purpose? Or is the impact area much larger than portrayed in order to include the named activities?
The pedestrian facilities along Proposed Van Buren Road will connect to the existing pathways and sidewalks along Cardinal Drive and Dumfries Road thus providing increased mobility to locations in close proximity to Van Buren Road. For example, Fannie W. Fitzgerald Elementary and the Shoppes at Quantico Center along Fettler Park Drive.

9. Project purpose #5 includes: "Improve roadway safety with current design standards." Question: Because you wouldn't design/build a road to other than current standards and as this road doesn't exist, how will its construction improve safety? Will current standards be applied to the existing roads to improve safety? Otherwise, VBR would be a standalone safety item in an area where no danger exists because there is no road.
Van Buren Road will be constructed utilizing the latest design standards, reflecting an evolved focus on safety and efficient mobility. Other routes constructed previously are designed utilizing older standards, and with Van Buren Road as an alternative with improved features will improve overall roadway safety in this community.

10. Question: while the purposes of the proposal may be bit unclear, the need for the project is even less so. Please define the need.
Van Buren Road is an alterative north-south corridor within this part of Prince William County, and thus has been identified as an improvement in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The project currently underway is to study the environmental impacts of this future project, and prepare a NEPA Document investigation.

11. Question: did you consider alternative routing and what considerations led to their dismissal for further study?
Three alignments were considered for the project. These alignments were called;

4. "Eastern Alignment" (alignment chosen)
5. "Western Alignment"
6. "Middle Alignment" (very close in nature to the VDOT Smart Sscale alignment)

It was determined that the "Eastern Alignment" had the least environmental impact and was favored by the Four Season Development, because it was the farthest away from that community.

12. While you have not addressed the nature of business development in the project area, the land is zoned M2, allowing 24/7 industrial activity adjacent to mixed-generational residential areas. This project will clearly open the land for industrial development and its heavy truck traffic. Question: how will you address/mitigate the very real impacts from noise, light, vehicle exhaust and diesel engines idling for hours at a time?
The zoning of the properties surrounding the Van Buren Road corridor is not the focus of this NEPA Study. If there are concerns with the zoning types allowed in this corridor, this is an issue that can be raised to the County.

13. Question: when will we see design features to safely move children and adults across VBR within Cardinal Grove?
Design features such as crosswalks and traffic lights and their exact locations will be examined and determined during the final design of the roadway. The project currently is focused on the Environmental impacts through the NEPA study.

14. The PIM addressed NEPA studies completed, including "Habitat Assessment for Threatened and Endangered Plant Species. Question: were studies conducted for T&E bird and animal species?
The need for T&E species studies is based on both database reviews and regulatory agency comments received during the scoping process. Database reviews and agency comments did not indicate studies for T&E bird or animal species were required.

15. The PIM also noted "Wetland and Waters Delineation, and an Approved Jurisdictional Determination for the Army Corps of Engineers." Question: What does this mean? Are there identified wetlands? Are mitigations required? Did the CoE cede its authority to PWC?
A wetland and waters delineation was performed to confirm the jurisdictional boundaries of Waters of the U.S. (WOUS), including wetlands. This information was summarized in a report that was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). USACE reviewed the report and issued an Approved Jurisdictional Determination (AJD), which confirmed the limits of WOUS within the project limits. Yes, WOUS were identified and mitigation will be required. Mitigation quantities will be calculated during the permitting process, which is a future phase of the Van Buren Road North Extension project. USACE is the regulatory authority that approves Jurisdictional Determinations.

16. There are at least three water courses in the project area, including at least one requiring a bridge. Question: how large are the culverts required for the other two crossings?
The size and exact location of the large culverts will be determined during the final design phase of the project. This phase has not yet been approved and the timing of final design is currently unknown.

17. PIM slide states "The bridge would result in a rise in the floodplain water surface elevation. No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated." Question: What does the FIRM show for the project area? How can the water surface rise without impacting the floodplain?
The proposed bridge crossing is within a FEMA zone AE floodplain. Due to the placement of piers within the floodplain, there will be a slight rise in the floodplain. The revised floodplain limits will be documented by final design which has not yet been approved or scheduled.

18. Question: Are there known/identified Civil War or Native American sites in the area? Will a search be conducted for such?

Preliminary database reviews have been conducted and this information has been included in the Environmental Assessment (EA) level NEPA document, which is currently under review. Upon approval of the draft EA and prior to the future Public Hearing, this information will be available to the public for review and comment. As a result of the preliminary database reviews, a Cultural Resources survey will be performed to confirm any findings. The concept alignment attempts to minimize impacts to these habitats to the greatest extent possible while maintaining a reasonable roadway alignment.

19. A Citizens Guide to NEPA dated January 2021 (p. 10) states: "The EA is a concise public document to aid an agency's compliance with NEPA and support its determination whether to prepare an EIS…or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI)…Agencies must complete EAs within one year of the agency decision to prepare an EA…" Question: Have you already determined that the outcome will be a FONSI? And, why is it taking so much longer than a year? Looks more like an EIS is required for a study of this length.
In anticipation of obtaining federal funding for the Van Buren Road North Extension project, the County is following the NEPA process for project impact analysis. Federal funding is the trigger to conduct project documentation under NEPA. This process involves public input, addresses the project purpose and need, as well as environmental, social, and economic impacts.

This project appears to qualify for an Environmental Assessment (EA) NEPA document, which involves project scoping and solicitation of comments from federal, state, and local resource agencies from a wide variety of interests. An assessment of alternative alignments, impacts, and public input is included in the earliest stages of project review. The preparation of the future Draft EA also includes numerous field studies and surveys. These on-going studies and agency scoping comments contribute to the impacts analysis into the Draft EA document. While we are conducting studies and compiling the Draft EA we will utilize the upcoming Public Information Meeting to collect comments from the public on the project and alignment options.

Comments from the Public Involvement Meeting incorporated as appropriate into the future Draft EA NEPA document, and transmitted to VDOT and FHWA for comment and typically, but not always, approval and additional Public Involvement.

Only after the Public Involvement and after federal funds are allocated, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) *may* be authorized by the FHWA. As noted, this process is not guaranteed, and is contingent upon input from numerous agencies in addition to the public, and only with federal funding and FHWA approval of the NEPA process will they issue a finding /FONSI.

20. 40 CFR 1508.1(g) states "Effects or impacts means changes to the human environment from the proposed action or alternatives that are reasonably foreseeable and have a reasonably close causal relationship to the proposed action or alternatives, including those effects that occur at the same time and place as the proposed action or alternatives and may include effects that are later in time or farther removed in distance from the proposed action or alternatives." I believe there are many to-be-addressed effects not yet identified that are "farther removed in distance from the proposed action or alternatives" from beyond Mine Road and Dale Boulevard. Question: how will you address that?
The NEPA-EA is currently in the process of being prepared for the project and the information presented at the Public Information Meeting was based on preliminary data reviews. The NEPA EA will comply with the Council on the Environmental Quality implementing regulations noted in the 40 CFR 1500 series, and

will be reviewed for compliance and approved by FHWA prior to release to the public. Regional Air quality conformity will be addressed in the NEPA document as well traffic analysis which extends well beyond the project limits.

21. 40 CFR 1508.1(g) states "Effects [of the proposed action] include ecological…aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic…social, or health effects…" Question: when will we see those effects addressed?
Preliminary database reviews have been conducted and this information has been included in the Environmental Assessment (EA) level NEPA document, which is currently under review. Upon approval of the draft EA and prior to the future Public Hearing, this information will be available to the public for review and comment.

22. During the PIM Q&A, it was stated that trees would be planted to mitigate noise impacts and that tree removal would be avoided where possible. Question: how wide should the tree buffer be to satisfactorily mitigate the added noise from new/closer traffic and existing traffic (once trees are removed)? Surely, a 50 foot buffer is not enough, particularly if deciduous trees are used as the buffer.
Landscaping as part of the future Van Buren Road project will be addressed at the next stage of the project, in this case concept and final design. Current County requirements will be followed. Future development of the sites will also dictate how much tree buffer is allocated. During the public involvement process citizens will be able to voice their concerns and if possible more landscaping can be suggested.

23. One of the effects that should be studied is economic. Canizales said, during Q&A, that the economic impact on property values is not considered by PWC DoT. Question: who considers this valid impact?
It is not determined at this time if property values would be affected by constructing Van Buren Road, which is not designed as a high capacity highway but rather a collector roadway which attempts to increase pedestrian mobility with the implementation of a lower design speed.

24. Question: What and why is the Access Road from Old Stage to new VBR?
The access road will be used to provide access to northbound Dumfries Road from Old Stage Road (roadway parallel to Dumfries Road). The access road is necessary as Van Buren Road will cut off access to northbound Dumfries road for vehicles traveling on Old Stage Road. Vehicles on Old Stage Road (south of Proposed Van Buren Road) will travel north on the access road and will then be able to make left onto Van Buren Road which will provide them access to northbound Dumfries Road.

25. Finally, is that a picture of Mr. Canizales on your website?
Yes it is.

Comment A-23
Commenter: Gaston Gianni

Comment:
I do not support the alignment as shown

I would like to provide comments on the community briefing of the environmental study.

1) Even though your study shows that the new road would not be a noise nuisance to the residents of Four Seasons, I find that hard to believe for the following reasons. We have been told that the noise from I-95 currently falls close but below the noise requirements for a sound wall. Now the Van Buren road will be 4 lanes wide plus sidewalks and other features, which will require the removal of the trees that are a buffer to I-95. So the I-95 traffic plus the traffic on the extended Van Buren road (with trucks) does not, in the study's opinion, present a noise issue that needs to be addressed! I cannot accept this conclusion given the facts.

2) Furthermore I question the traffic volume estimates. Does this traffic estimate take into consideration the additional traffic that will result as a result of the casino proposed for the other side of I-95 at 234? I guess that would be hard to do since they haven't thought about the increased traffic or how to handle it as part of that project. I think the county's philosophy is we build it and then afterwards think about problems that may occur as a result of the project.

3) For example we were told that the increase in traffic at the intersection of Van Buren and 234 was not a part of the Van Buren road project!! To my way of thinking if a project is expected to create a problem, the solution of that problem should be a part of the project and not push off to a later date and hope that it will be solved.

4) The NEPA-EA study does not address any negative economic impact that the road will have on land owners. Has the NEPA-EA study attempted to quantify the total impact of the road on the future develop of the area along the roadway? What will that do to the environment, noise, security and safety of the residents of Four Seasons and the other communities which this road will disrupt?

I do not believe the benefits of the roadway extension outweigh the negative impacts that will occur either known or still unknown and not studied! What was envisioned in a study many years ago does not take into account the realities of how the county has evolved and developed since the original transportation plan. I do not believe that the county has fully identified potential problems but instead intent on building the road no matter what the consequences is.

I learned of the meeting from my community HOA and the electronic signs posted on 234.

<u>Response:</u>

I do not support the alignment as shown

I would like to provide comments on the community briefing of the environmental study.

1) Even though your study shows that the new road would not be a noise nuisance to the residents of Four Seasons, I find that hard to believe for the following reasons. We have been told that the noise from I-95 currently falls close but below the noise requirements for a sound wall. Now the Van Buren road will be 4 lanes wide plus sidewalks and other features, which will require the removal of the trees that are a buffer to I-95. So the I-95 traffic plus the traffic on the extended Van Buren road (with trucks) does not, in the study's opinion, present a noise issue that needs to be addressed! I cannot accept this conclusion given the facts.
A preliminary noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls were warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The results indicate that a noise barrier is warranted for 3 of the

receptors, however construction of such noise barriers was determined to not be feasible. They were determined to not be feasible as the noise wall would block the nature path and to accommodate the nature path a break in the noise wall would be required thus negating the noise reduction qualities of the noise wall. It can be noted that per the preliminary noise analysis the impacted locations were along the nature/recreational trail and not within the residential portion of the Four Seasons development. There were no impacted noise receptors within the Four Seasons residences. The conceptual alignment currently under consideration has maximized the separation between the Four Seasons community and proposed Van Buren Road, in order to minimize noise impacts. A more detailed review and analysis will be conducted during the final design and construction of Van Buren Road to determine if noise walls are necessary.

2) Furthermore I question the traffic volume estimates. Does this traffic estimate take into consideration the additional traffic that will result as a result of the casino proposed for the other side of I-95 at 234? I guess that would be hard to do since they haven't thought about the increased traffic or how to handle it as part of that project. I think the county's philosophy is we build it and then afterwards think about problems that may occur as a result of the project.

3) For example we were told that the increase in traffic at the intersection of Van Buren and 234 was not a part of the Van Buren road project!! To my way of thinking if a project is expected to create a problem, the solution of that problem should be a part of the project and not push off to a later date and hope that it will be solved.
The traffic analysis completed with the NEPA document concluded that the implementation of Van Buren Road improves the roadway network. This type of traffic study analyzes the roadway network in the 2040 future year, and in general showed improved levels of service at Van Buren Road and the adjacent network. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the adjacent network does not degrade significantly due to the subject project. It's acknowledged this is a heavily traveled corridor, and thus the County has identified this project as an improvement which will benefit the nearby roadway network.

The traffic roundabout project and the casino project noted was not directly considered as part of this project, as this infrastructure is well outside the project limits. However, the County traffic model was used which does incorporate nearby traffic patterns, volumes, and development, which would indirectly be incorporated with the traffic modeling effort for Van Buren Road.

4) The NEPA-EA study does not address any negative economic impact that the road will have on land owners. Has the NEPA-EA study attempted to quantify the total impact of the road on the future develop of the area along the roadway? What will that do to the environment, noise, security and safety of the residents of Four Seasons and the other communities which this road will disrupt?
The NEPA-EA is currently in the process of being prepared for the project, the information presented at the Public Information Meeting was a preliminary data review. The Council on the Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulation requires the review of economic effect along with the environmental effects and technical requirements in the NEPA document. Future development is subject to other County processes and zoning regulation. The proposed project alignment is not located within the Four Seasons community property and the proposed roadway design has been set back as far as practicable from existing communities.

Comment A-24
Commenter: Jolynn Arnold

Comment:

From comment sheet –
Do you support the alignment as shown?

I like this alignment better than the previous alignments, but I don't want it build at all.

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project? Yes

I'm very concerned about loss of trees and noise. From the PPT presentation what does this mean? "Results of the report indicate that warranted noise barriers identified in the study do not meet the feasibility criteria, per FHWA guidelines"

In your opinion, does the project meet the needs of the community? No

Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project? Yes

Concerns about noise, loss of trees, safety + privacy, don't agree that we need this road.

Please provide us with any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.

Response:

From comment sheet –
Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project? Yes

Concerns about noise, loss of trees, safety + privacy, don't agree that we need this road.

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project? Yes

I'm very concerned about loss of trees and noise. From the PPT presentation what does this mean? "Results of the report indicate that warranted noise barriers identified in the study do not meet the feasibility criteria, per FHWA guidelines"
The above statement can be explained as follows: A preliminary noise analysis was conducted to determine if noise walls were warranted, reasonable, and feasible along the project alignment. The results indicate that a noise barrier is warranted for 3 of the receptors, however construction of such noise barriers was determined to not be feasible. They were determined to not be feasible as the noise wall would block the nature path and to accommodate the nature path a break in the noise wall would be required thus negating the noise reduction qualities of the noise wall. It can be noted that per the preliminary noise analysis the impacted locations were along the nature/recreational trail and not within the residential portion of the Four Seasons development. There were no impacted noise receptors within the Four Seasons residences. The conceptual alignment currently under consideration has maximized the separation between the Four Seasons community and proposed Van Buren Road, in order to

minimize noise impacts and keep the largest number of trees possible as a natural buffer. A more detailed review and analysis will be conducted during the final design and construction of Van Buren Road to determine if noise walls are necessary.

Comment A-25
Commenter: Michael Balderman

Comment:

From comment sheet –
Do you support the alignment as shown?

No.

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project? No

In your opinion, does the project meet the needs of the community? No

I do not see how this supports the community in any way.

Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project? Yes

See attached.

Please provide us with any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.

Would like to see additional information posted on the transportation website concerning this project such as original rational for the project, traffic study that says it will alleviate congestion and any other rationale supporting this project.

I am not a proponent for this project. I've been a resident of Montclair for more than 30 years and see this project as creating far more problems than any it could possibly solve. Rather than providing traffic relief within the local community, I believe, and I feel common logical will support that this project will bring more traffic into the nearby communities. It obviously will serve as an alternate to I-95 North and South when it is congested which is every day during the morning and afternoon rush hours as well as Thursday, Fridays and Sundays with the weekend get-away traffic.

My primary concern is that this extension will simply be used as an alternate route for I-95 traffic which will exit at Dale city and use Van Buren do bypass backups down to route 234. I'm especially concerned about the impact for the intersection of Van Buren and Route 234. Within the last few years this intersection has seen the development of a shopping center which includes a Chick-fil-A restaurant which causes backups into the surrounding roads, as well as the military Dumfries Health Center which adds to traffic. A new housing community is being built adjacent to the intersection. In addition a new shopping center and church are being constructed which will add to the traffic woes. Finally, this intersection is within a few hundred feet of the exit and entrance ramps between 234 and I-95. To me this is going to lead to gridlock.

Response:

I am not a proponent for this project. I've been a resident of Montclair for more than 30 years and see this project as creating far more problems than any it could possibly solve. Rather than providing traffic relief within the local community, I believe, and I feel common logical will support that this project will bring more traffic into the nearby communities. It obviously will serve as an alternate to I-95 North and South when it is congested which is every day during the morning and afternoon rush hours as well as Thursday, Fridays and Sundays with the weekend get-away traffic.

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The traffic analysis completed with the NEPA document concluded that the implementation of Van Buren Road improves the roadway network. This type of traffic study analyzes the roadway network in the 2040 future year, and in general showed improved levels of service at Van Buren Road and the adjacent network. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the adjacent network does not degrade significantly due to the subject project. It's acknowledged this is a heavily traveled corridor, and thus the County has identified this project as an improvement which will benefit the nearby roadway network. Increased traffic that will be present in the future was accounted for and included within this study (including future developments as mentioned above). In addition, modifications to Route 234 leading up to the I-95 ramps have been included with the preliminary design which aim to reduce backups along Route 234.

Comment A-26

Commenter: Michael Balderman (follow up)

Comment:

When is the final review to determine if this project gets approved and which organization within Prince William County (or Virginia) is responsible for that decision.

Response:

The funding for the entire project has not been identified at this time, therefore we cannot determine.

B - Comments Received During the Public Information Meeting Q&A Session

Comment B-1

Comment:

With the expected increase in traffic on Cardinal Drive, will there be added traffic lights to intersections like Wertz Drive and Cardinal Drive where traffic is already congested.

Response:
That intersection is outside of project limits for environmental study. We will be able to look at it in terms of level of service we currently have at that intersection as part of a different project but for this environmental study it is outside the limits. The greater area for the project was studied; don't consider improvements for adjacent intersections, the study looks at the network to ensure Van Buren would not detrimentally affect other intersections. Nothing noted at this intersection as far as worsening conditions. Any upgrades regarding the signalized intersection would have to be considered for another project.

Comment B-2
Comment:
What is the noise impact analysis conclusion? Will sound barriers be built?

Response:
A Preliminary Air and Noise analysis was completed for the NEPA documentation. There are three locations which warranted further study on Four Seasons trail, but none in any residential areas. Next steps involved looking at feasibility of barriers in the identified locations. Feasibility-wise, a barrier cutting off the trail fails feasibility criteria. This is preliminary and a further study will be a part of the final design. Study noted no significant sound impacts to residences will occur from current alignment.

Comment B-3
Comments:
Will the presentation be available after the meeting?

Response:
Yes, a PDF and recording will be available on the County's virtual presentation webpage. This will be viewable later and please provide comments online. Please provide comments by August 5th. We have been collecting comments prior to and during this meeting and will answer all received comments.

Comment B-4
Comment:
I live in one of the 2 communities that are on Van Buren south of Rt. 234. We have ONLY ONE WAY TO EXIT and that is using Van Buren. The Van Buren/Rt.234 intersection is a big congestion/backup mess. Adding Van Buren north to it will make it a parking lot. Why are you not caring about us and only listening to Montclair? They have 3 exits to their community, 2 on Rt. 234. The New Grace Church will be using Van Buren South also adding to the congestion. Already without any of these, there are constant back-ups. Are you considering not extending Van Buren?

Response:
The purpose of the extension is to relieve congestion, and to provide an alternative route from Rt. 234 to Cardinal Drive. Thus, congestion would redistribute along the alternative. Adding the alternate route to the local network should naturally redistribute congestion throughout network, improve traffic conditions. An extensive traffic study and modeling will be done during future design stages for the project, but during the feasibility stage this is what has been projected. During the design phase, this situation can be analyzed further with additional modeling that will be conducted as part of design, but at this point the project is only in the NEPA study phase. Rt. 234 is a very heavily travelled corridor.

Traffic analysis required to complete the NEPA study puts the new Van Buren connection in place and analyzes it from a build and non-build standpoint into future years including 2025 and 2040. It is noted that traffic volumes on Rt. 234 is expected to increase. It was noted in the traffic study that separate improvements to Rt. 234 are likely to be needed (under a separate project), but that is not included in the evaluation of Van Buren Road. Van Buren Road showed slight improvements because it provided alternative routes that distributed traffic out of congested areas.

Comment B-5

Comment:

Noise barriers identified do not meet the feasibility criteria, what exactly does not mean?

Response:

We have completed a preliminary noise study, which indicated that sound barriers were not determined to be needed for approx. 95% of project corridor because the alignment is away from residential developments due of continuous coordination with HOAs (e.g. for the Four Seasons community). The County worked hard to make sure the alignment provided the maximum buffer between the alignment and the nearest residential buildings. Feasibility criteria utilized here looks at whether the barrier can be built to mitigate sound, to effectively attenuate the sound (deflect it from the receptor) and not inhibit the function of the area. A deficiency was noted because the noise threshold was exceeded at receptors located on the Four Seasons nature trail. A sound barrier at these receptors could be built; However, building a barrier would cut off the trail from connecting to the roadway and the opposite side of the trail. More analysis needs to be done as part of final design. This preliminary study fulfilled NEPA requirements to identify potential areas where noise barriers should be looked at.

Comment B-6

Comment:

How are the funds going to be raised for the continued feasibility?

Response:

We are actively seeking funding for the project from local, state and regional, and federal funding sources. The project continues to be a board priority, it has received funding in the past. The County will continue to submit the project to grant programs as they become available. The next round of funding programs becoming available include Northern Virginia Transportation Authority 6-year program this year, and the Smart Scale program next year.

Comment B-7

Comment:

The County is also working on a Powell's Creek Restoration. Are any changes of the creek flow taken into consideration in the planning of the bridge?

Response:

A preliminary hydraulic analysis was completed on Powell’s creek for the current bridge configuration shown on conceptual alignment. Flow changes from any restoration project would be considered during final design. If there were any planned changes to alter flow/hydraulic characteristics, they would be incorporated. Typically stream restorations don’t alter peak flows/flow regimes significantly enough to alter bridge crossing requirements, but it will be considered in design if it did.

Comment B-8

Comment:

The trail is widely used by residents of Four Seasons, will an alternate trail be built?

Response:

As part of feasibility study, we are looking at a typical section, as shown earlier, that includes a sidewalk on one side and a shared-use path on the other side of roadway. Parks & Rec is working on a trail project in the area. Parks and Rec. has assembled a lot of acres on Powell's Creek west of the project area, and also own some land within the project area, and a long-term goal is to have a Powell's Creek greenway from the landfill to Leesylvania State Park. The department will be involved in the design process to ensure trail connections are part of design. Additionally, Potomac heritage trail runs along the River; older trail maps have included the project area but would prefer to have that trail will stay on the east side of 95 closer to the river. However, we are certainly planning to incorporate Powell's Creek trail and other trails into the area.

Comment B-9

Comment:

The extension is only 2.5 miles. How exactly does that improve traffic?

Response:

The extension is 2.5 miles to connect with portion of roadway already built out in Cardinal Grove community for total of 2.7 miles between intersections. Most important part from a traffic standpoint is that this roadway would connect Cardinal Drive and Rt. 234, creating an alternate north-south route between the crossroads. This is on a north-south corridor parallel to I-95 and Rt. 1 and currently some motorists can only get between Cardinal Drive and Rt. 234 is those two routes. Providing an additional north-south corridor is how it improves traffic. This route completes a network that has been included in the County's long-term plan for some time.

Comment B-10

Comment:

Could the typical section be modified to include 4-foot wide on-road bike lanes in addition to the 10-foot shared-use path? This would not necessarily require a wider roadway cross-section, but narrowing the travel lanes to 11-feet each would only require two more feet per direction. The shared-use path poorly serves faster bicyclists because its design, construction, and maintenance is typically inferior to that of the adjacent roadway.

Response:

Considering bike lanes vs. a shared use path is an advanced design question and would be considered during a future design phase to evaluate potential typical sections. When the County is doing transportation projects, it is trying to accomplish what is listed in the County's Comprehensive Plan, are being guided by these documents. This is a valid comment and the County will address these concerns during design phases in the future.

Comment B-11

Comment:

Have you considered the impact that COVID had on the overall analysis? Traffic patterns will not be in full swing until after the pandemic ends.

Response:
The impacts of COVID-19 were considered. Luckily with the project, VDOT provided guidance before project started; traffic data was collected and projected in consideration of COVID-19. Counting traffic when this project was kicked-off would not have been realistic; traffic numbers were down because of the pandemic. Per VDOT guidance, analysis utilized previous (pre-pandemic) counts to predict future traffic growth. The traffic study acknowledges COVID-19 downturn and anticipates when traffic will return to normal and grow beyond that.

Comment B-12
Comment:
Will VBR connect to the planned new Prince William County Service Authority Pump Station?

Response:
During these planning stages, the alignment was designed to try and thread the needle through environmentally sensitive areas and existing/planned/proposed projects. The pump station location is acknowledged; currently their planned access is elsewhere. Access options off Van Buren are likely to be created. The service authority has been contacted, site plans have been provided, and design is attempting to match horizontal and vertical alignments with pump station design, but they are still going through their plan approval process. Since Van Buren is still conceptual, and the pump station is proceeding towards final design, the pump station is not acknowledging potential access in their design, but the County is trying to make that a possibility with the conceptual alignment of Van Buren.

Comment B-13
Comment:
Has the study provided an insight to the impact on wildlife? Cardinal Grove has seen wildlife roaming the community.

Response:
As part of NEPA document studies, wildlife surveys have been done for the project area.
We did database reviews as part of NEPA documentation, which is currently under review with VDOT, to address wildlife species of plan and animal that might be in the project area. Have done habitat assessments for two species of flowers. Moving forward, will be doing species surveys for the two flowers as well. All information gathered regarding wildlife will be part of the NEPA document after FHWA approval, which will be available for public review.

Comment B-14
Comment:
People will tend to continue on Van Buren Road to what is currently known as Mine Road. With homes and neighborhoods on Van Buren, are speed bumps being considered?

Response:
We always consider the safety and well-being of communities in our projects; currently we are only looking at the environmental study investigations, but we will definitely consider safety as part of future design phases. We always take safety into account during projects, want to ensure roadway projects are functional and safe for communities and residents who are going to be using the roads. Any safety measures that might be incorporated will be looked at during final design.

Comment B-15
Comment:
I live in Copper Mill Estates and the intersection is already horrible. People run that red light. 234 and Van Buren. Do you plan on fixing this light as a part of it?

Response:
A number of options for the intersections of Rt. 234 and Van Buren have been considered. With limited traffic analysis that has been conducted for the NEPA document, trying to come up with the correct lane configuration and analyzing all approaches so that Van Buren road can be correctly set up and understand what the impacts would be. During final design, it would be looked at in more detail to decide what the best configuration is. As far as people running red lights, there is only so much you can do from a design standpoint to address this (deterrents, signage, enforcement). This will be considered during the final design.

Comment B-16
Comment:
I didn't see any safety guardrails in the conceptual design. I am in the cardinal grove community and my home will be below the road level. Are safety mechanisms to prevent a car from ending up in someone's backyard being considered as part of your analysis?

Response:
Safety measures will be considered in further design stages. Anything to improve safety for drivers and residents will be considered.

Comment B-17
Comment:
What is the volume of traffic expected?

Response:
We currently have limited traffic analysis. However, the final draft of the EA will include assumptions and final inputs from traffic models. The study will be available to the public once it is reviewed by VDOT, and it will be posted on the County webpage.

Comment B-18
Comment:
Will the funding information be available online, the reply was very quick. I would like to voice my concern in spending these funds on the study since we have so many road improvements needed.

Response: We can include all funding opportunities for the project on the webpage. Acknowledged the comment about concerns in spending the funds.

Comment B-19
Comment:
Will the Cardinal Grove be gated like Stonebridge to prevent the general public traveling through?

Response:

Van Buren Road extension is proposed to be designed and funded as a public roadway.

Comment B-20
Comment:
Who are the decision-makers regarding this project?

Response:
Each section of the NEPA document first goes to VDOT for review and comment in the Northern Virginia and central offices. After receiving the comments, the document will be reviewed and resubmitted; additional comments, questions, concerns are addressed. The final lead agency is FHWA and the compiled Draft EA is sent to FHWA for final signature and approval. Coordination is on-going with all agencies during this process. Biweekly meetings with the County and VDOT have taken place to ensure everyone is on the same page and well-informed on the status of the NEPA document. The FHWA is the end approval agency. Meeting with pubic is part of this process, public has a big part to play and are decision-makers during the NEPA process.

Comment B-21
Comment:
While the van Buren road extension was planned, when was it determined that it would be a four-lane road? I don't recall this information being available in 2015.

Response:
It was called out in the Thoroughfare Plan within the County Comprehensive plan as a 4-lane extension roadway.

Comment B-22
Comment:
Are you looking at the intersection of Waterway Drive and Cardinal Drive and the through traffic at Country Club and Rt. 234 so you know how much traffic currently cuts through Montclair?

Response:
Traffic analysis looks at the greater area when looking at the implementation of the Van Buren Road Extension. However, technically Waterway Drive and Country Club Road are outside of the study area for the preliminary traffic study. However, County's traffic model is utilized for the traffic study; indirectly, that part of network is incorporated in greater model, just not studied/analyzed specifically.

Comment B-23
Comment:
What is the estimate for the number of cars/trucks that will be using this proposed road?

Response:
We have performed limited traffic analysis and scoping as part of the environmental study. Our assumptions and the full traffic analysis will be included in the EA draft document that will be available on the County webpage.

Comment B-24
Comment:

Would construction of this road trigger a compensation event under the I-95 Express Lanes agreement?

Response:
This question refers to the agreement that VDOT has regarding the express lanes. At this time, we do not believe this road has anything to do with that agreement because it does not create additional capacity on I-95; it is a secondary road within Prince William County. This is not a compensation event with VDOT as it does not have to do with I-95.

Comment B-25
Comment:
Good evening. To avoid the same issue experienced on Cardinal with recent accidents, can the design phase consider the addition of guard rails to protect persons on the walking path and property?

Response:
As previously addressed, safety will be considered later in the design phase; detail of safety considerations will be included as design phases advance. We are currently at the feasibility study phase; we do not have answers to design, right-of-way and construction related questions at this time. What we are addressing now is avoiding sensitive environmental resources along the project corridor.

Comment B-26
Comment:
How will the county assess traffic impacts with Van Buren Project and the Colonial Downs Gaming project?

Response:
We currently have limited traffic analysis that is enough to assess the effects of the proposed Van Buren road being in place, only what is needed to address putting in place a new roadway and to address the scope of community and environmental impact. The Colonial Downs Casino is outside of the project area. If growth from the casino is projected in the county's traffic model, then it was incorporated in the modeling for the proposed project. We can look back and confirm this for an answer later.

Comment B-27
Comment:
What is the proposed design speed for this roadway? Considering the spate of speeding-related traffic fatalities on Cardinal Drive, the design speeds of similar collector and arterial roads should be reduced.

Response:
In the presentation, the speed limit is listed as 40 mph. To clarify, 40 mph is the design speed. The posted speed signed on the roadway could be 40 mph or 35 mph and will be determined by elements of the project looked at during the final design as well as input from the County and citizen/stakeholders. This will depend on a speed study as well.

Comment B-28
Comment:
Have improvements to I-95 and Route 1 been considered instead of building a new road?

Response:

There are existing Route 1 project and segments that the County is working on. On I-95, express lanes are being built. Van Buren Road is a Prince William County project and we are doing a feasibility study to determine benefits of the project to our local and regional roadway network performance. The County is concerned with cumulative impacts to improve mobility in the County.

Comment B-29

Comment:

If Four Seasons was willing to move their nature trail would the sound barrier, then be feasible? If so, has this option been presented to this community?

Response:

If the Nature trail is moved, this would warrant further study/noise analyses; the receptors originally looked at on the trail would move and need to be reanalyzed. There were other areas on the trail that did not experience significant noise increases in the noise model. This can be considered and something that would come through in the final design phase and 'final noise analysis'.

Comment B-30

Comment:

Question follows: According to the U.S. Census, the resident population in PW Co in 1970 was approx. 93,000 people. In 2020, the resident population was approx. 476,000 people. This is a 412% INCREASE. The Montclair community was established in 1968; the neighborhood and its main thoroughfare, Waterway Drive, was not constructed to accommodate present day traffic volume. Given the need for more north-south corridors, IF the VB project does not happen, how will the county address our traffic concerns?

Response:

The Montclair community was established back before lots of pop growth; Waterway Drive was not designed for the traffic volumes it is currently experiencing. This is a larger question of whether the County Comprehensive Plan has alternatives to Van Buren Road to address traffic issues in the area. It addresses overall traffic network performance issues, not if one roadway is established or not. We have to defer back to the County Comprehensive plan to see what has been planned to alleviate cut-through traffic in the area.

Comment B-31

Comment:

At what point in the coming months will this project be presented for design approval? Does this require a vote?

Response:

We are in the Environmental Investigation phase and we will continue with drafting the EA and coordinating with state and federal agencies to prepare to submit the final EA. If funding is available in the future, we will move on with a final design, but nothing has been determined at this time.

Comment B-32

Comment:

As the creeks run under the pavement of Van Buren, will the rest of the creek be left open?

Response:
Powell's Creek requires a bridge spanning the waterway with little to no restriction of the waterway and the length required to do that determines length of the bridge. For smaller creeks, other than what's running in culverts under the pavement, the creeks will be left open; disturbances would be limited to where the roadway crosses the creek. Per environmental permitting requirements for project, the amount of countersinking we would have to do for each stream would be determined and the permits would account for the extent of disturbances on state and federal levels.

Comment B-33
Comment:
Relative to the COVID impacts, how can you project traffic patterns utilizing dated guidance? It's highly unreliable because the population continues to increase in this area. Will another analysis be conducted?

Response:
Only option we had in order to complete the study was to follow the VDOT guidance and use the most recent traffic counts pre-pandemic and then grow it (using growth factors) according to growth patterns out to design years 2025 and 2040; population growth is assumed. In the final design, additional traffic counts and estimates would likely need to be collected and additional guidance will likely be needed if we are outside of the pandemic period at that time. The VDOT guidance to use the pre-pandemic numbers and estimated growth rates are accurate and conservative.

Comment B-34
Comment:
What is FHWA?

Response:
An acronym standing for the Federal Highway Administration

Comment B-35
Comment:
Was the noise study performed at the residents of Four Seasons Drive or only the nature trail?

Response:
We did note that the receptors that experienced significant noise increases were on the nature trail, but yes, the main focus of the noise analyses performed was at residential units in Four Seasons along the corridor; noise levels were measured at each of the adjacent residences that border the project corridor. There was an emphasis on moving the alignment as far from residences as much as possible so that the homes observed in the study did not experience a significant increase.

Comment B-36
Comment:
Does NEPA study look at effect of commercial development, as most parcels are zoned for commercial development?

Response:

For transportation project, NEPA calls for a balanced decision-making approach to evaluating transportation needs versus what impacts the projects have on sensitive environmental resources. Every environmental concern is looked at, from zoning to wetlands to threatened and endangered species to cultural resources. The purpose of NEPA document is to provide an all-encompassing look at all the environmental factors and constraints that might impact a project. We are currently working with VDOT on the review of the Environmental Consequences portion of the document, which will contain information on the environmental factors and constraints for the project. Once the NEPA document is reviewed and approved by VDOT, it will be submitted to FHWA and, once approved, it will be made available to the public and available for comments at upcoming public hearings.

Comment B-37

Comment:

How is it possible that there is limited analysis of traffic volume if the purpose of the road is to manage traffic? How do you know the road is needed in the first place?

Response:

Traffic analyses performed so far are sufficient for the NEPA documentation, but we will conduct a more advanced, detailed analysis as the design process continues to evaluate the exact impact of the roadway and performance of the roadway network. The traffic analysis to understand if the roadway is warranted was done in the County's transportation model and included in the County's Comprehensive Plan to a certain extent.

Comment B-38

Comment:

Van Buren is the main artery into the Cardinal Grove community. What design ideas are currently being considered to differentiate pass-through traffic vs. Cardinal Grove residential traffic

Response:

This more detailed traffic analysis will be conducted in a future design stage. As stated before, we have only done traffic analysis to the extent required for the environmental study. We will have more information in the future after additional studies.

Comment B-39

Comment:

Will sidewalks/pedestrian pathways be included in said plans, should they be approved?

Response:

A sidewalk and shared use path are proposed as part of the current design. The sidewalk would be on the east side and the shared use path would be on the west side.

Comment B-40

Comment:

My question was not answered. When exactly was it publicized that Van Buren would be a 4-lane road? Was it before or after 2015?

Response:

We don't have an exact timeframe for when it was publicized but pre-2015, it was listed as a 4-lane major collector roadway in the County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is available on the website, it is a public document that people can access. The Comprehensive Plan is undergoing an update process, but old plan is available to view, along with the interactive map, so people can see the different plans.

Comment B-41

Comment:

Should not the improvements to 234 be addressed before considering extending VB. Again we on Van Buren South have no other option.

Response:

This question is outside of scope of this meeting. We are discussing the proposed alignment of Van Buren and the environmental study. As discussed earlier, that intersections sees a lot of traffic and will be looked at potentially for future projects, but this study is for planning to extend Van Buren Road to Cardinal Drive.

Comment B-42

Comment:

I heard a bit of a contradiction. I heard a limited traffic analysis was conducted and also that a limited traffic analysis is all that is needed? Can you please deconflict?

Response:

A limited traffic analysis is detailed enough to look at build/no-build scenarios for Van Buren Road and understand intersection configurations at connecting roadways, to help understand the impacts of this roadway on properties and the environment and the correct number of lanes. Information on the impacts to the environment and properties is limited but enough to understand effects of the proposed roadway on the transportation network. The study utilizes information from the County and traffic counts (or in this case counts modeled by the VDOT Covid-19 protocol to grow traffic counts from the latest available data). All information is incorporated in the NEPA document draft that will be made available and you can see exactly what has been done when the document is made available.

Comment B-43

Comment:

Will there be a traffic light on Wingspan so that we are able to get out of our street? Also, for the noise will there be more trees placed or other measures?

Response:

As far as the intersection at Wingspan is concerned, this is a design question. We will look at all intersections throughout the project corridor, look at the level of service, and evaluate if they need a traffic signal or not, and follow VDOT guidelines as part of the final design to ensure intersections perform at appropriate levels of service and have traffic signals when required. Signal timing will also be looked at as part of final design. As for the trees, some tree clearing will be needed along the corridor for the project but we will use every opportunity to save trees and plants where possible to mitigate for air quality and noise along the corridor. Trees will be planted where possible and we will avoid cutting trees as much as possible for this roadway project.

Comment B-44
Comment:
Has any discussion involved the fact that the alternative roadway (Waterway Drive in Montclair), which currently shoulders the burden of growing traffic volume has TWO ELEMENTARY schools with crosswalks and hundreds of children walking daily on the narrow sidewalks bordering this main roadway, whereas the proposed Van Buren roadway does not have any schools or a large population of children that would be walking to a school?

Response:
This is more of a comment and this issue will be considered going forward

Comment B-45
Comment:
Is it anticipated this bypass will increase traffic on Waterway Drive by offering cut-through --even more than it is now?

Response:
No, if anything this alternative will improve the overall performance of Waterway Drive and other neighboring roadways.

Comment B-46
Comment:
Will there be permitted commercial development on the west side of VBR exit, and if so how will it be accessed, how near to Four Season residents?

Response:
This is a planning question. We are trying to provide the maximum buffer between Four Seasons community and the roadway. What happens between the roadway and the Four Seasons community will depend on what owners will do on the undeveloped land between, but that is not part of this project. The County understands that there are proffers on this land that are planned to be dedicated for this project.

Comment B-47
Comment:
Explain decision logic for the sidewalk on east side and shared use path on west side of Van Buren roadway.

Response:
We looked to the Comprehensive Plan for some of the information used to make this determination. We also took a look at connecting to the pedestrian network in the Cardinal Grove community that aligns with the proposed roadway and considered what can be adapted to utilize the right-of-way set in the neighborhood as well as the facilities on Rt. 234. We looked at the corridor and, after working with the County, this was the design and typical section suggested and moved forward. This can be a topic of discussion and where we can solicit input for the final design.

Comment B-48
Comment:

15 years ago at the Montclair Property Owners association the presentation by the County VDOT stated the alignment could not be moved due to issues associated with easements and the long range plan? How can you do a study if you do not know you have access to the land?

Response:
This has to do with the right-of-way acquisition and we cannot discuss that at this point in the project. There will come a time later in the future where we can answer questions related to right-of-way and construction. This is a preliminary meeting and is the first of multiple meetings. This is an opportunity to present information to public, get feedback on the location and alignment, get some initial feedback on what everyone thinks to be able to incorporate as we move forward. To reiterate, this is just a preliminary meeting and we are hoping to get comments and additional questions up to the August 5th deadline.

Comment B-49
Comment:
Will funding information be available online?

Response:
Yes, we will provide funding opportunities available to the County for this and other priority projects in the County on the department webpage.

Comment B-50
Comment:
Can you please go back to the slide with an actual picture of the Van Buren road entrance to the cardinal grove neighborhood? The conceptual design contemplates a 4-lane road and that particular section is not wide enough. Will that entrance road be widened?

Response:
As said before, this is the first of many meetings. This is the conceptual alignment we have at this time, nothing is set in stone. The concept alignment could require some marginal widening at this located. The entrance has very wide median, and this entrance will provide additional turn lanes and, utilizing the wider median, we can stay mostly within the existing current footprint. This will be refined and reflected in further meetings. In reference to earlier question: When was the roadway included in comprehensive plan? As stated earlier, this information was included prior to 2015. We will go back and get the exact date it was included; Ricardo Canizales (PWC-DOT Transportation Director) was around during the update of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and this roadway was included in the plan before that. It's been at least 2 Comprehensive Plan updates since that facility has been included, since early 2000's. We will post the information when it is determined when exactly it was proposed.

Comment B-51
Comment:
What are the economic impacts on property values? How do you know what the noise level will be for all the traffic that will using the road?

Response:
Modeling software took the horizontal alignment, along with the vertical alignment, surrounding terrain, homes and additional features, and modeled what the noise level will be for different out-years to see

how noise will increase as more traffic uses the facility. In reference to property value, we can't look at that because the Department of Transportation is looking at the alignment and building a roadway; the department does not have property owner discussions or evaluate how a project affects property owner values in either a positive or negative way.

Comment B-52
Comment:
Will there be truck restrictions as there are on Waterway or will semis be allowed?

Response:
This is a design question. Van Buren will be designed as public roadway with no panned restrictions at this point, but this determination will be made during the final design stage. Regarding truck restrictions: Businesses or commercial properties that have trucks going to them would not be restricted by a truck-through restriction on the roadway. Truck-through restrictions only apply to trucks going between the two adjacent roadways; trucks can come into service businesses within the corridor.

Comment B-53
Comment:
For clarity, this project has not been greenlit and essentially is currently under evaluation. In a nutshell, is that a correct assessment?

Response:
The project is under a feasibility study, so the feasibility study for the project has been cleared or 'greenlit' and had funding allocated for it. The project is under evaluation and the groundwork is being done to make sure the project can receive federal, state or local funding. Though this is only a study, it has been a priority set by the Board to look for funding for this facility. The facility has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan for over a decade. This project has been looked at by the County for years and it almost made a bond program in the last round and is very close in the funding program at NVTA. This project will continue to be analyzed as a priority.

Comment B-54
Comment:
What are the setback requirements? I'm trying to understand the distance between my backyard property line and the shared use path/roadway.

Response:
This is a right-of-way or land-related question; any roadway project will need to acquire right-of-way. That information will be determined when we know what right-of-way impact the project will have. We don't know how much right-of-way will be required until at least the 60% design is complete.

Comment B-55
Comment:
Right now I walk to Cracker Barrel from Mill Station Way. Any plans to put a crosswalk in place?

Response:
Pedestrian connectivity has been studied along the corridor to understand where crossings are; this is a final design question addressed during the next phase of design. In general, at signalized intersections,

pedestrians should have the ability to cross the road. At this location, pedestrians should be able to get from the shared use path to the sidewalk and connected existing facilities.

Comment B-56
Comment:
Who are the panel members and what are their roles in this project?

Response:
Panelists include:
(Moderator) Dagmawie Shikurye – Chief of Design Branch, PWC Department of Transportation
Paolo Belita – Planning Manager, PWC Department of Transportation
Sherry Djouharian – Project Manager, PWC Department of Transportation
Ricardo Canizales – Transportation Director, PWC Department of Transportation

Mark Brewer – Design Lead/Project Manager, Dewberry Engineers Inc.
Beth Moyer – Environmental Services Manager, Dewberry Engineers Inc.

Additional panelists from Prince William County include:
Department of Transportation: Elizabeth Scullin and Meagan Landis.
Parks and Recreation: Seth Hendler-Voss, Patti Pakkala and Brendon Hanafin.
Environmental Services: Clay Morris.

Comment B-57
Comment:
You did not address the economic impacts on property values. How the property value of the residences will be affected?

Response:
The Department of Transportation does not assign or look at property values; they look at roadway extensions and improving the transportation network in Prince William County. Sometimes these projects improve property values, sometimes they do not. We hope to enhance the community with the improvements/projects that the Board and area Supervisors ask the Department to undertake.

Comment B-58
Comment:
Once the road enters Cardinal Grove, does the speed limit decrease or maintain 40 mph? Also, at the intersections of Van Buren and Soaring/Fledgling Circles will there be a stop light or will this be just a four way stop?

Response:
This question, regarding final details of the project within the Cardinal Grove community, is more about a final design detail. This will involve coordination with citizens in the area to determine what are the best ideas and ways to achieve the project goals. Right now, it is designed as 40 mph facility, that's what the geometry of the alignment supports and what is considered when looking at the roadway on a conceptual level and determining the impacts of the roadway to produce the NEPA document. Ideas for the final design would come later.

Comment B-59
Comment:
Why are you using Van Buren to alleviate traffic on I 95?

Response:
The main goal is not to alleviate traffic on I-95; the main objective of the Van Buren Road project is to provide an alternative route between 234 and Cardinal Drive. The network should perform better with an alternative north-south corridor connecting the existing east-west routes, thereby improving network connections and the level of service of nearby intersections.

Comment B-60
Comment:
While your goal is not to alleviate traffic on I-95 the Van Buren extension will inevitably be a thruway for I-95 traffic and congest rather than alleviate traffic. Has that been considered?

Response:
We have only done a limited traffic study so far during this feasibility and environmental study phase of the project; more traffic studies will be forthcoming as part of the future roadway design phases, which will help determine the exact interactions of the proposed roadway with traffic on I-95.

Comment B-61
Comment:
If the value of the residence is negatively affected, will homeowners along the corridor be compensated?

Response:
The Department of Transportation does not make decisions based on potential impacts to property values.

Comment B-62
Comment:
Can you add speed cameras?

Response:
Comprehensive speed cameras on public roads are not legislated right now in the state of Virginia. They are only allowed in school zones and construction areas. It is not an option at this time, but if legislation changes, then we can look at it.

Comment B-63
Comment:
If the main goal is to provide another option between Cardinal and 234, why not put an entrance to I-95 from Cardinal, to achieve that goal with less impact on the community?

Response:
That option is not currently called out in the County's Comprehensive Plan or any long-range plan. Adding access to an interstate falls within VDOT's and FHWA's jurisdiction, is out of the County's control. This was looked at previously, but it is believed that there is no connection in that area because it does

not meet intersection spacing standards for an interstate system. We can look at this option further with VDOT in reference to future improvements.

Comment B-64

Comment:

Was cut through traffic from I95 considered during the study?

Response:

In the event that I-95 backs up and people are looking for different options, this scenario is beyond the scope of the traffic analysis that was done for this phase of the project. Back-ups do happen in that area and there are motorists looking for other routes during these events. The County's traffic models were used in the traffic analysis. If increased loads on local networks due to backups on 95 are reflected in the County's model, then yes, they were included in the existing traffic analysis. These kinds of backups are typically not included in these models because it is considered kind of a niche event. We can look further into how these peak events are reflected in the County's model.

5. Local Government Recommendation

The Prince William County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure concurs with the responses provided in this report. The County intends to address the issues and concerns recorded during the public review period during the engineering design process. The County will incorporate modifications which are reasonable and feasible to accomplish within the designated budget and would not result in additional impacts to adjoining properties or environmental resources. The design will be vetted through the VDOT Value Engineering process to insure an efficient and cost-effective design.

Appendix 1

Van Buren Road Extension Project Brochure

Virtual Public Information Meeting
Van Buren Road North Extension
Prince William County, Virginia

Thursday, July 22, 2021
7:00 PM

About Tonight's Public Information Meeting

This project involves extending Van Buren Road on new alignment from its existing termini at the intersection with Dumfries Road (Route 234) north for approximately 2.5 miles to a portion of existing Van Buren road directly south of Cardinal Drive.

The public involvement meeting will be conducted in a virtual manner due to COVID-19 restrictions and pursuant to the ordinance re-adopted by the Prince William County Board of Supervisors on March 16, 2021.

Prince William County Department of Transportation and Dewberry's design staff will be available to describe the project, report specific details, and answer questions.

All verbal and written comments received will be compiled in a record document and made available for public review at Department of Transportation.

Through August 5, 2021, residents may leave comments on the Prince William County Department of Transportation page: https://www.pwcva.gov/department/transportation

Meeting Link: https://pwc-doit.webex.com/pwc-doit/onstage/g.php?MTID=eaf48366b57ab166df82110857ce3d298
Meeting Number: +1-415-655-0001
Event Number/Access Code: 172 658 5243

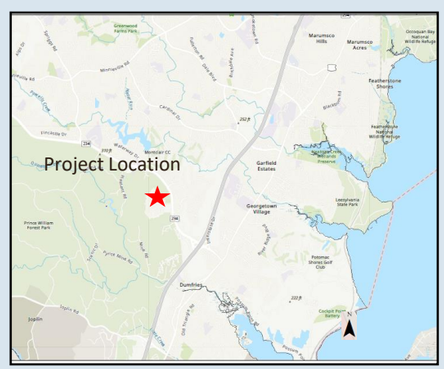
We look forward to working with you as the project moves forward!

Project Overview

From: Existing intersection of Van Buren Road with Dumfries Road (Route 234)
To: Existing intersection of Van Buren Road with Cardinal Drive

Project Budget: The on-going environmental study is budgeted at $1,300,000. The county is actively seeking funding for the final design and construction of the Van Buren Road North Extension.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to complete Van Buren Road North Extension between Route 234 and Cardinal Drive, thus providing relief to existing and projected traffic congestion as an alternate north-south route along the I-95 and Route 1 corridors. In alleviating congestion in this heavily travelled corridor, safety is improved and mobility is enhanced to the nearby community schools and facilities. The environmental studies and documentation performed with the scope of work will fulfill Federal requirements such that Federal funding can be utilized to implement this project in the future.



Civil Rights

Prince William County ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Prince William County the Department of Transportation at (703)792-6825 or TDD 711.

Right of Way

This project will require right-of-way and easements acquisition of property from parcels adjacent to the proposed project. Impacted property owners will be informed of the exact location of these easements during the land acquisition process prior to construction, which will occur after the completion of the NEPA document.

The land acquisition program will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Estate property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended. Information about right of way acquisition is discussed in VDOT's brochure, "Right of Way and Utilities: A Guide for Property Owners and Tenants." Copies of this brochure are available: at https://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/Right_of_way/A_Guide_for_Property_Owners_and_Tenants.pdf.

What's Next?

The public comment period will close on August 5, 2021. Prince William County staff will review and evaluate comments received as a result of the public comment process. Once public input has been reviewed, Prince William County will consider completion of the environmental study and preliminary design (30%).

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONEMTNAL STUDYS CHEDULE

- Additional NEPA EA Document Submissions: **Summer/Fall 2021**
  - Environmental Consequences
  - Re-submission of Purpose and Need
  - Re-submission of Alternatives Analysis
- Field Investigations and Environmental Studies: **August/September 2021**
- Hold Public Hearing Meeting: **Spring 2022**
- Incorporate Public Input into Preliminary (30%) Design: **May/June 2022**
- Final NEPA Environmental Assessment Document: **Summer 2022**
  - Review by VDOT and FHWA

Contact Information (Providing Your Comments)

Sherry Djouharian
Prince William County Department of Transportation
5 County Complex Court, Suite 290
Prince William, VA 22192
703-792-6825
sdjouharian@pwcgov.org

Please reference "Van Buren Road North Extension PIM Comments" in the subject heading of comments submitted via email. The public is also invited to submit comments by mail or to ask questions at the conclusion of the presentation, utilizing the Question and Answer (Q&A) function. Comments may also be submitted via the Prince William County Department of Transportation page: https://www.pwcva.gov/department/transportation

Project Description

Prince William County (PWC) Department of Transportation is proposing to extend Van Buren Road on new alignment from its existing termini at the intersection with Dumfries Road (Route 234) north for approximately 2.5 miles to a portion of existing Van Buren Road directly south of Cardinal Drive, for a total length of 2.7 miles between intersections. The project area is located in the southeastern region of Prince William County, Virginia parallel and west of Interstate 95. The project would construct a four-lane divided urban collector roadway, utilizing criteria for a 40 mile per hour roadway. Construction of a 10-foot wide shared-use path and a 5-foot wide sidewalk would be included to provide non-motorized transportation alternatives. The typical section for these improvements generally varies from 102 feet to 105 feet along the proposed corridor and includes curb and gutter and a raised median. Wider portions of the roadway are provided for turn lanes and entrances to other roadways and private entrances. The project would also include construction of an approximately 235-foot bridge spanning Powell's Creek perpendicular to the waterway, as well as associated stormwater management facilities.

The current scope for this project is to complete environmental studies and documentation for the future construction of Van Buren Road. This includes preliminary concept-level design of the roadway to identify project impacts and estimated right-of-way. Environmental studies are conducted and documented in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Per these guidelines, an Environmental Assessment (EA) level NEPA document is anticipated to be the appropriate level of NEPA documentation to evaluate the Van Buren Road North Extension project. This investigation and documentation is currently locally funded, and the future design and construction of the project anticipates the use of various sources of funding to include Federal funding.

Traffic

Traffic data collection and analysis was preformed for the NEPA document. Traffic along the corridor was analyzed with connections at Route 234 and Cardinal Drive. Multiple configurations at theses intersections were analyzed for operations and safety. Traffic analysis reporting will be provided with the NEPA document to support the conceptual design and benefit of the project.

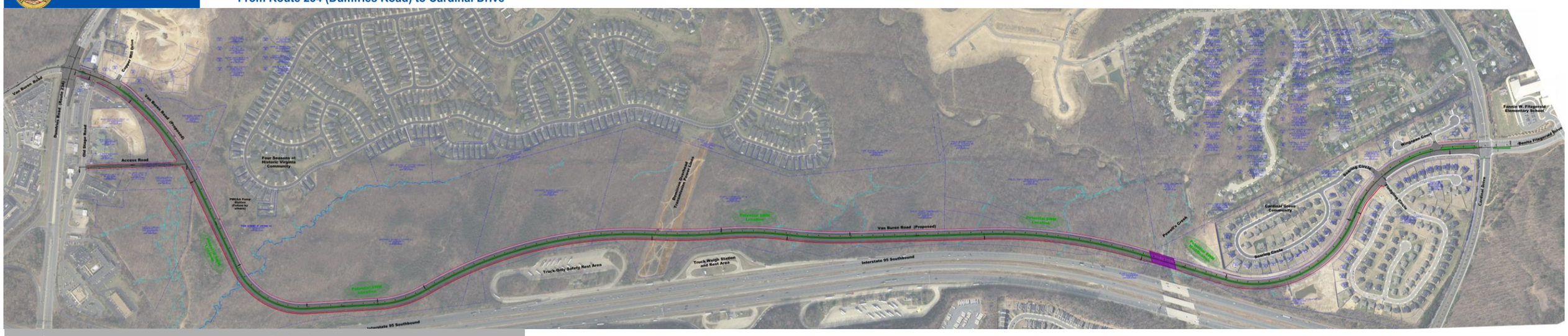
Environmental Analysis

Community Facilities & Recreation	No community facilities or recreational resources are anticipated to be impacted by the proposed roadway. Access to existing schools is anticipated to be improved, and the project would increase connectivity of the pedestrian and bicycle network through the construction of the shared use path.
Cultural Resources	27 previously recorded archaeological resource sites are located within the project area. 2 of the sites have been recommended not eligible for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listing while the remaining sites remain unevaluated. A Phase 1 Cultural Resources Survey will be completed.
Wetlands & Streams	Wetlands and streams, including Powell's Creek, were identified. An Approved Jurisdictional Determination (AJD) (NAO-2021-00347-rdb) was received May 18, 2021. The AJD includes: palustrine forested (PFO) wetlands, palustrine emergent (PEM) wetlands, intermittent streams and perennial streams. Avoidance and minimization efforts were included in the preliminary design and will be refined during the final design and permitting phase of the project.
Floodplains	There are roughly 22 acres of FEMA-mapped floodplain of Powell's Creek within the project area. Two piers of the proposed bridge would be located within the floodplain. The bridge would result in a rise in the floodplain water surface elevation. No impacts to the floodplain are anticipated.
Wildlife & Habitat	According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) and Virginia Department of Conservation Resources (VDCR) databases, there is no critical habitat within the project area. There are no known eagle nests, roosts or concentration areas near the project area. No conservation easements exist within the project area.
Threatened & Endangered Species	According to USFWS, VDWR and VDCR databases, no T&E species have been recorded in the project area. Potential habitat exists in the project area for the federally-listed Northern Long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Harperella (*Ptilimnium nodosum*), and the small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*). Habitat assessments for small whorled pogonia and Harperella were conducted and summarized in a report provided on March 9, 2021. Species surveys will also be conducted to confirm presence or absence of small whorled pogonia and harperella.
Hazardous Materials	A search of federal and state databases did not identify any recognized environmental concern (REC) within the study area. Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) per the American ASTM will be conducted on any properties to be acquired for this project.
Section 4(f)	No impacts to Section 4(f) properties are anticipated and no Section 4(f) properties are located in the project area.

Prince William County

Proposed Van Buren Road Concept Alignment

From Route 234 (Dumfries Road) to Cardinal Drive



Legend

- Existing Wetlands or Streams
- Existing Right of Way & Property Lines
- Conceptual Right of Way Limits
- Potential Stormwater Management Facility
- Proposed Travel Lanes
- Proposed Bridges
- Proposed Shared Use Path
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Grass Median/Buffer

Project Location

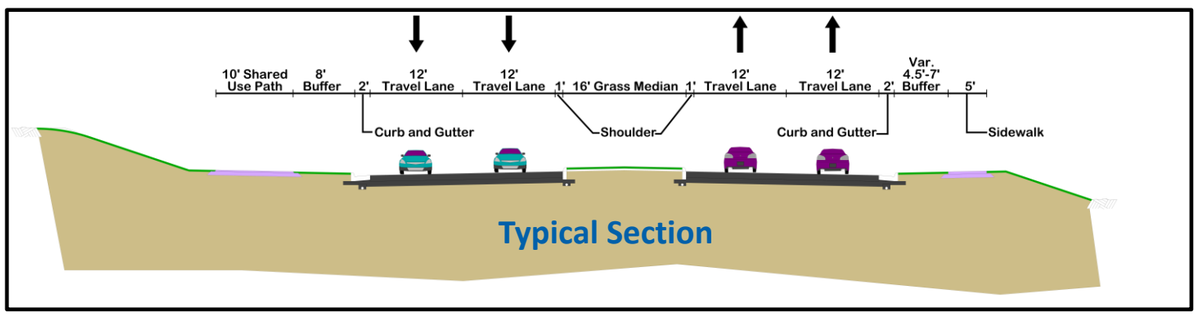
Prince William County, VA

North Arrow & Scale

SCALE
0 50' 100' 150' 200'

Project Team Members:

Dewberry



Appendix 2

Van Buren Road North Extension Proposed Alignment Exhibit

Prince William County

Proposed Van Buren Road Concept Alignment

From Route 234 (Dumfries Road) to Cardinal Drive

July 2021

Project Location

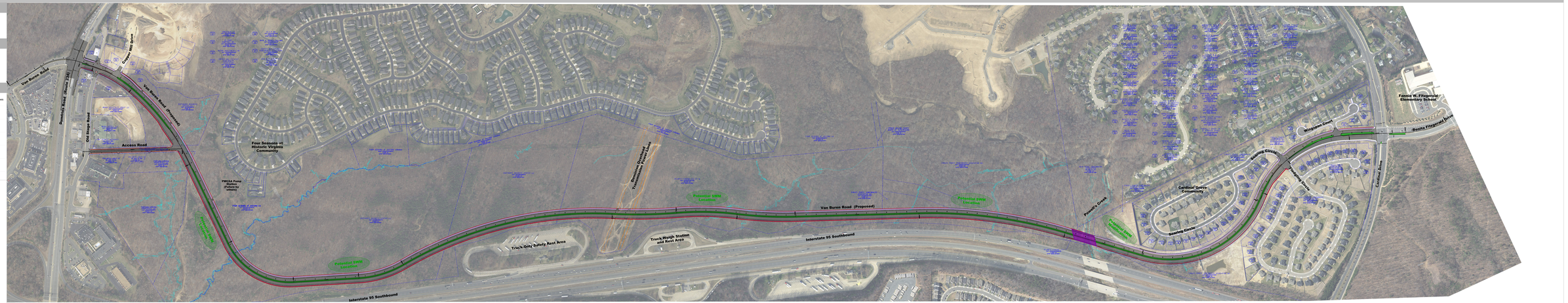
North Arrow & Scale

Legend

- Existing Wetlands or Streams
- Existing Right of Way & Property Lines
- Conceptual Right of Way Limits
- Potential Stormwater Management Facility
- Proposed Travel Lanes
- Proposed Bridges
- Proposed Shared Use Path
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Grass Median/Buffer

Project Team Members:

Dewberry



Appendix 3

Comment Sheet

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Van Buren Road North Extension
Alignment and Environmental Study (NEPA-EA)

COMMENT SHEET

ALL COMMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE – PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Submit comments by close of business on August 5, 2021. Comments can be mailed to the address on the back of this form or emailed to sdjouharian@pwcgov.org.

Name (Optional):_____

Address:_____

Do you support the alignment as shown? Yes_____ No_____

Would you like to provide any input or recommendations regarding the Environmental Study being performed for the project?

YES _____ NO _____

In your opinion, does the project meet the needs of the community?

YES _____ NO _____

Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed project?

YES _____ NO _____

Please provide us with any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.

How did you hear about this meeting?

Newspaper _____ Message Boards _____ Other:_____

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Van Buren Road North Extension Project
Alignment and Environmental Study (NEPA-EA)
Prince William County, Virginia

Place
Stamp
Here

Sherry Djouharian

Project Manager

Prince William County DOT

5 County Complex Court, Suite 290

Prince William, VA 22192