



County of Fairfax, Virginia

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# Soapstone Connector Public Information Meeting

July 18, 2022

Presented by:  
Negin Askarzadeh, AICP  
Fairfax County Department of Transportation



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The Soapstone Connector project is funded in part by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority





# Overview

- Project Description / Background
- Environmental Assessment (EA) / Public Hearing
- Association Drive Historic District
- Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation
- Draft Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
- Revised Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Next Steps
- Questions and Answers



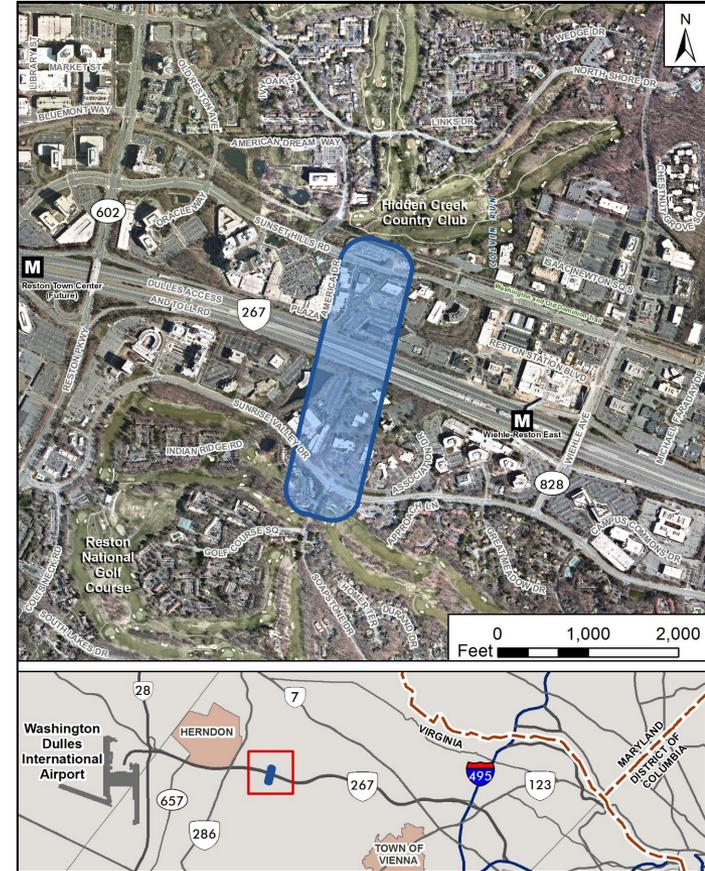
# About Tonight's Meeting

- Presentation followed by Q&A
- To ask a question, please use the WebEx “Q&A” feature:
  - Open the “Q&A” window
  - Type in your question
- Phone participants: please hold questions until the end
- This meeting is being recorded



# Project Area

- Major roadways in project area include Wiehle Avenue, Sunset Hills Road, and Sunrise Valley Drive
- Two crossings of Dulles Corridor on either side of Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station (Reston Parkway and Wiehle Avenue)
- Vehicles traveling to and from Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station and entering and leaving the Dulles Corridor compete for same road space on Wiehle Avenue





# Purpose and Need

- The purpose of the project is to provide additional multimodal capacity on a new north-south alternative to mitigate congestion on Wiehle Avenue.
- The project addresses:
  - Inability of Wiehle Avenue to accommodate current and forecasted traffic demand
  - Delays on Wiehle Avenue at the intersections with Sunset Hills Road and Sunrise Valley Drive
  - Lack of direct access for buses to the Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station without requiring travel on Wiehle Avenue
  - Lack of connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists to the Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station, from Soapstone Drive and Sunrise Valley Drive on the south and Sunset Hills Road on the north

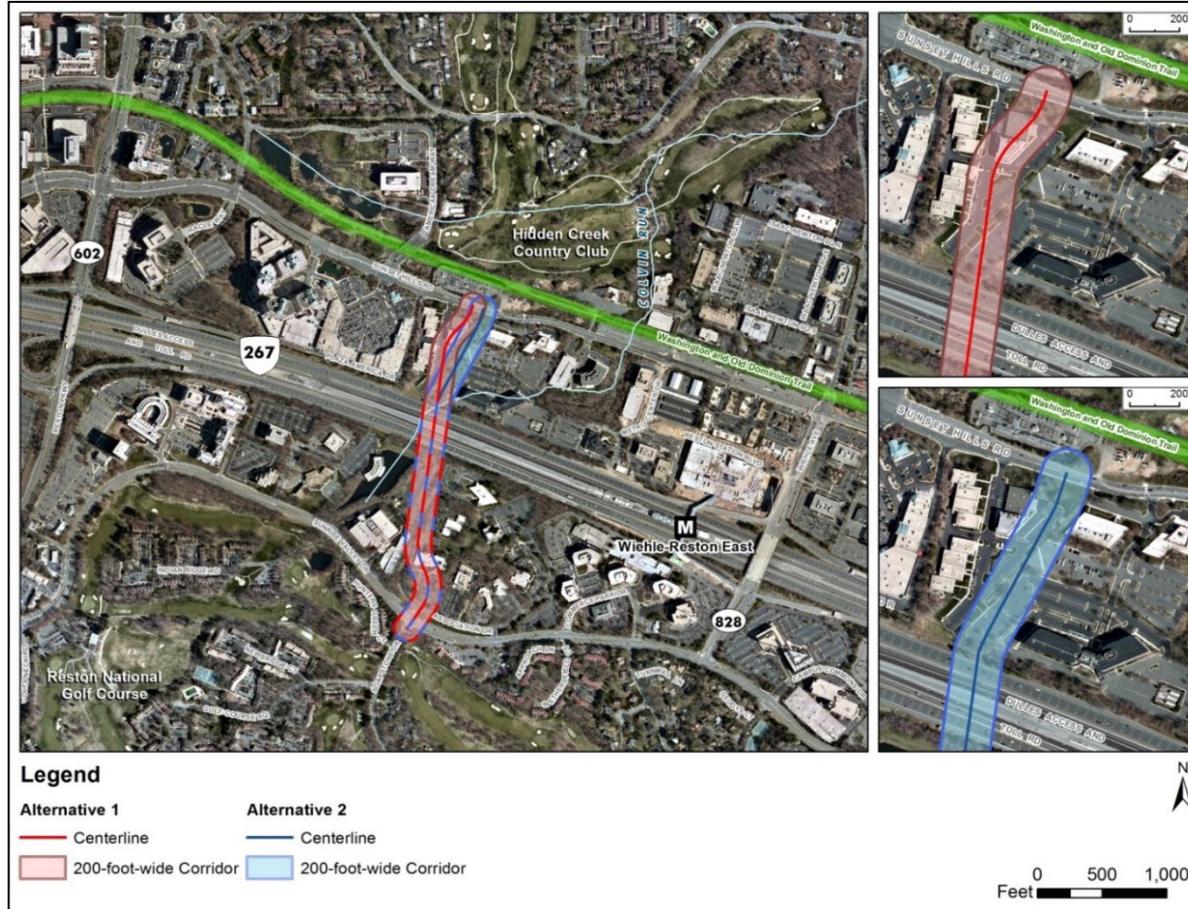


# Project History

- **Wiehle Avenue/Reston Parkway Station Access Management Plans Final Report, April 2008**
  - Initiated to consider needs in the vicinity of the two proposed Metrorail stations in the area
  - Soapstone Connector was included in list of recommended roadway projects
- **Soapstone Connector Feasibility Study, November 2013**
  - Assessed engineering feasibility of a multimodal roadway that would provide connection between Sunset Hills Road and Sunrise Valley Drive
  - Screened 30 alternative alignments
  - Conducted community information meetings to ensure public input
  - Identified most promising alignment
- **Board of Supervisors endorsed advancing Preferred Alignment to Preliminary Design Phase on May 13, 2014**



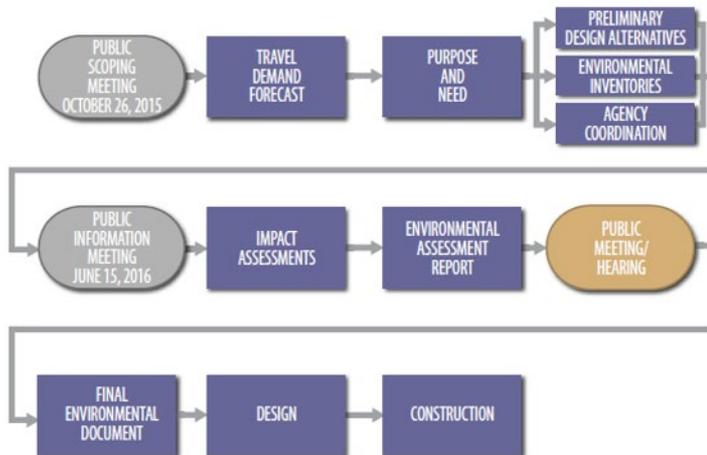
# Improvement Options





# Environmental Assessment

- Environmental Assessment (EA) approved for public availability by FHWA in August 2017
- Public Hearing for EA held in November 2017



SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR

Fairfax County Project No. 2G40-078  
From: Sunrise Valley Drive  
To: Sunset Hills Road  
Reston, VA

August 16, 2017

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

 In Cooperation With  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
and  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

*[EA and associated technical reports available on project website]*



# Public Hearing Summary

- 45 people attended the hearing
- Comments received from:
  - 19 individuals or property owners
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  - Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

## SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### Summary of Public Hearing and Comments

November 8, 2017

Fairfax County Project No. 2G40-078

#### DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was held at Dogwood Elementary School in Reston, Virginia on Wednesday, November 8, 2017 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The purpose of the hearing was to receive citizen comments on the alternatives and the Environmental Assessment (EA), and to share information on the study process and its current status. The hearing consisted of four parts. First, an informal information session was held during which displays and documents were available for review and Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and consultant personnel were available for discussion (see Attachment 1 for display boards and brochure). Second, a presentation was given by Audra Bandy, FCDOT Project Manager, to provide information on the project (presentation also in Attachment 1). Following this presentation, a formal hearing was conducted during which citizens were given the opportunity to make oral statements (three minutes was allotted to each). After the formal hearing, there was an informal question and answer session.



Photos from Public Hearing  
(Left: Open House, Discussions at Display Boards; Right: Presentation)

The following topics relevant to the project were discussed during the informal question and answer session (and the general response is provided in italics):

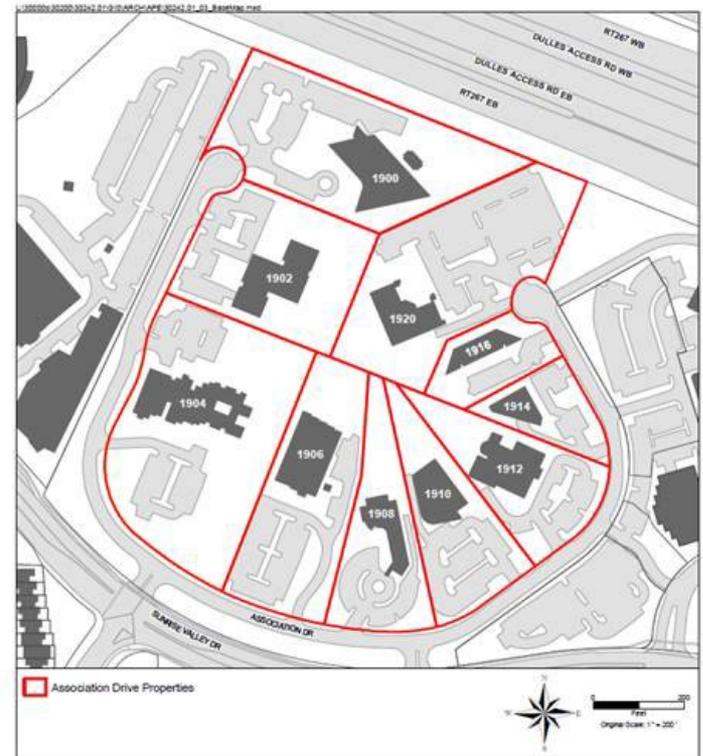
- Location of the Soapstone Connector (*the alignment does not pass through a golf course*) and width of the roadway (*the approximately 90-foot-wide roadway would lie within one of the 200-foot-wide corridors identified in the mapping; a wider footprint was studied in the EA to allow flexibility during the design process*).
- Stormwater management (*details to be determined during the design stage*).
- A direct connection from the Soapstone Connector to the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) trail at the northern terminus (*to be completed as a separate project by FCDOT*).
- Relationship to Reston Network Analysis and how this project fits into overall planning within the Reston area (*this project is one of many improvements identified within the*

*[Summary of November 2017 Public Hearing and Comments is Appendix D of Revised EA]*



# Reston Center for Associations and Educational Institutions (RCAEI)

- A Phase IA Cultural Resources Survey and Phase IB Architectural Survey were completed as part of the EA
- These studies indicated that the buildings within the Reston Center for Associations and Educational Institutions (RCAEI) on Association Drive were not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) because they are all less than 50 years old





# Supplemental Phase I Architectural Survey

- Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) requested the preparation of an architectural survey for the RCAEI in January 2018
- Supplemental Phase I Architectural Survey completed in July 2018, followed by a public meeting

*[Supplemental Phase I Architectural Survey available on project website and July 2018 Public Meeting Summary is Appendix E of Revised EA]*

**Soapstone Connector**  
Fairfax County, Virginia  
WSSI #30242.01

Supplemental Phase I Architectural Survey  
July 2018

Prepared for:  
Kevin M. Mentz, PE  
HNTB CORPORATION  
2900 South Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22206

On behalf of:  
Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
4050 Legato Road  
Fairfax, VA 22033

Prepared by:  
Anna Maas, MUEP, and Penne Sandbeck, M.A.,

  
Thunderbird  
Archeology  
A Division of Wetlands and Wetlands, Inc. a BUREAU VERITAS company

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[www.wetlands.com](http://www.wetlands.com)



# Association Drive Historic District

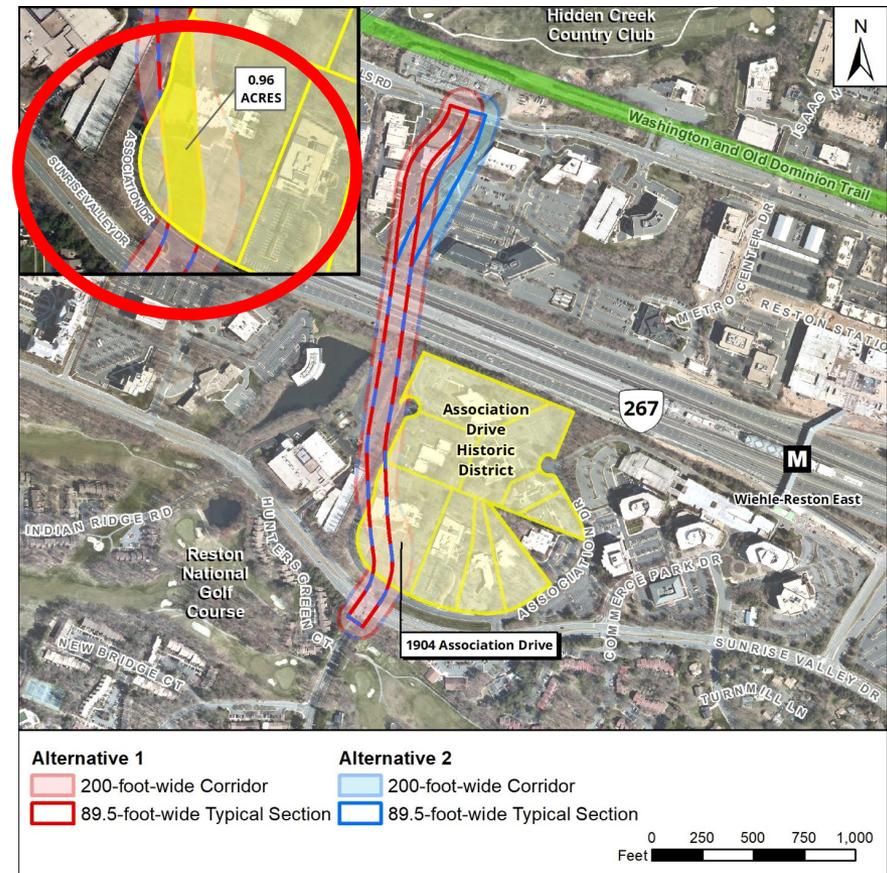
- In November 2018, DHR concurred that 9 of the 10 buildings are potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A and C and in Criteria Consideration G (properties less than 50 years old)
- In October 2019, Keeper of the National Register determined that the historic district is eligible under Criterion A - Community Planning and Development as an exceptionally important component of the overall Reston development





# Section 4(f) of the U.S. DOT Act

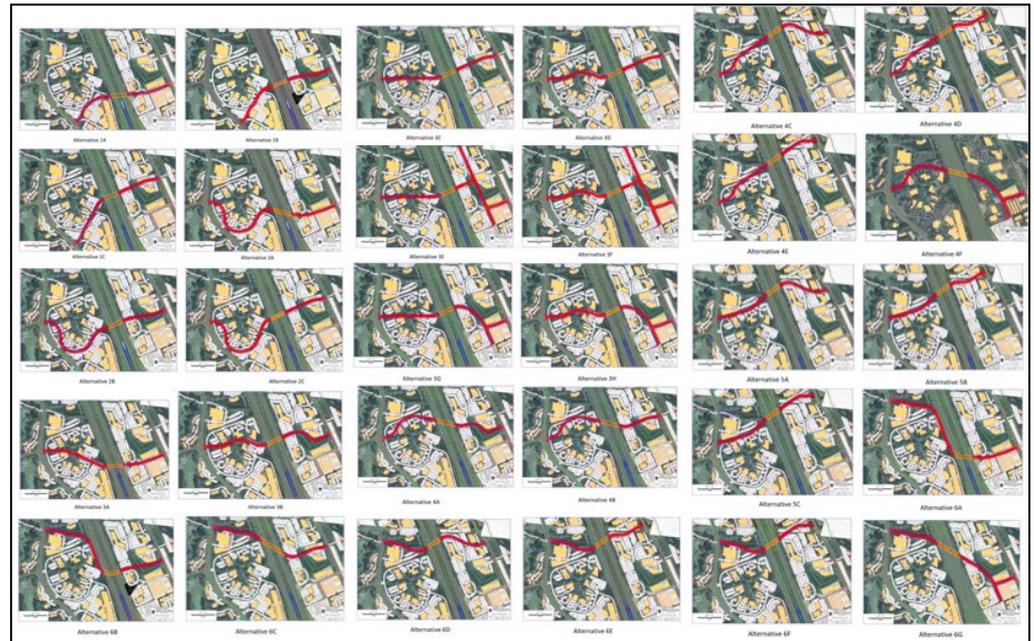
- Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 stipulates that FHWA cannot approve the use of land from any significant historic site unless it is demonstrated that there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative to the use of land from the property
- FHWA may approve only the alternative that causes the least overall harm in light of Section 4(f)'s preservation purpose





# Alternatives Analysis

- Avoidance alternatives for the Association Drive Historic District
  - No-Build Alternative
  - Alternative 5C Modified
  - Alternative 6E Modified



*30 alignments were screened in the 2013 Feasibility Study, and Alternatives 5C and 6E were revisited in the Section 4(f) analysis.*



# Section 4(f) Evaluation

- Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation completed in October 2020
- After careful review, FHWA determined that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to the use of the Association Drive Historic District

*[Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation is Appendix B of Revised EA]*

FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

In coordination with  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
and  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION –  
ASSOCIATION DRIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR**

Fairfax County Project No. 2G40-078; VDOT UPC No. 112479  
From: Sunrise Valley Drive  
To: Sunset Hills Road  
Reston, VA

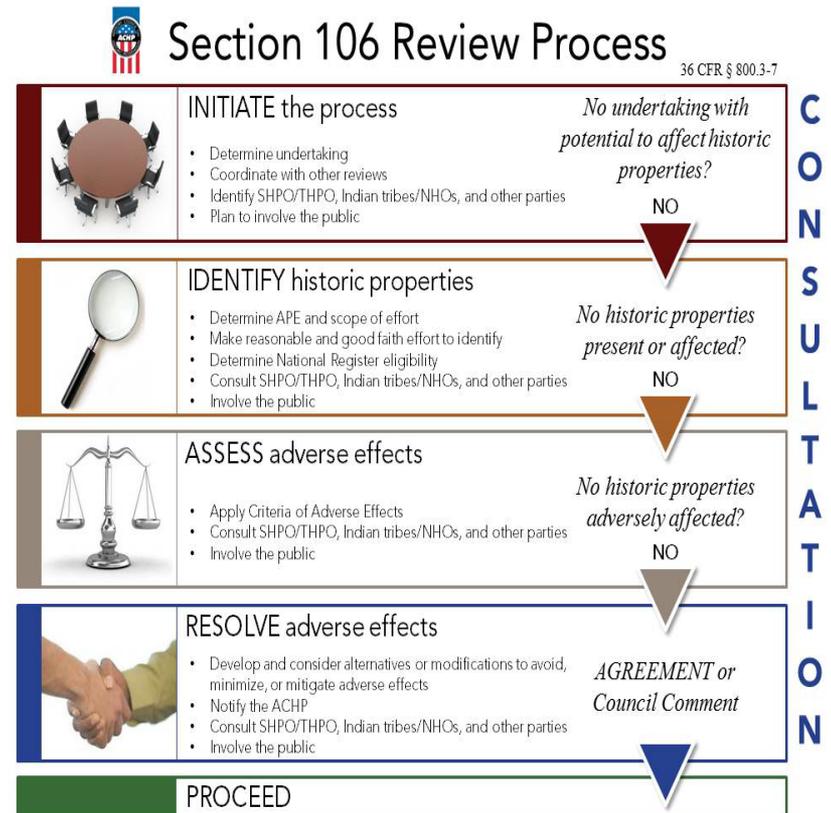
Approved for Public Availability  
10/28/2020  
Date

*John Simkins*  
Federal Highway Administration



# Section 106 of the NHPA

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires identification and assessment of the effects federal actions may have on historic properties
  - DHR concurred with the Determination of Adverse Effect on February 24, 2021
- Consultation with DHR and the Section 106 Consulting Parties
  - Four Consulting Party Meetings between July 2018 and March 2021
- Development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to resolve adverse effects





# Draft Section 106 MOA

- Mitigation measures presented as discrete stipulations in the MOA
- MOA is a legally binding document and signatories have sole authority to execute, amend, or terminate the MOA
- Signatories to the MOA
  - FHWA
  - VDOT
  - DHR
  - Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT  
AMONG  
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,  
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,  
THE FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,  
AND THE VIRGINIA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER  
REGARDING  
THE SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR PROJECT  
FROM SUNRISE VALLEY DRIVE TO SUNSET HILLS ROAD,  
RESTON, VIRGINIA

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers the Federal Aid Highway Program in Virginia through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); and

WHEREAS, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (Fairfax County) proposes to use Federal aid funds through VDOT for construction of the Soapstone Connector Project in Fairfax County (Reston), Virginia ("the Undertaking"; Department of Historic Resources [DHR] Project Review No. 2015-1168), which includes a new roadway approximately one-half mile long between Sunrise Valley Drive and Sunset Hills Road with a three-lane cross-section (one travel lane in each direction and a two-way, left-turn-only lane), on-road bicycle lanes on each side, a sidewalk on the west side, and a shared use path on the east side; and a new four-lane bridge over the Dulles Corridor, comprising VA Route 267 (Dulles Toll Road [DTR]), the Dulles International Airport Access Highway (DIAAH), and the Silver Line of the Metrorail system; and

WHEREAS, FHWA and DHR, which in Virginia is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), are signatories to this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.6(c)(1), and FHWA has requested VDOT and Fairfax County to be invited signatories in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.6(c)(2)(iii); and

WHEREAS, FHWA, with assistance from VDOT and Fairfax County, has defined the purpose of the Undertaking as: to reduce congestion and travel delay at intersections along Wiehle Avenue and within the traffic analysis area; to improve multimodal connectivity to the Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station; and to improve accessibility and mobility to and within the area surrounding the Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station (Attachment A – Project Location Map); and

WHEREAS, FHWA has determined that providing funding to Fairfax County through VDOT for the Undertaking is an undertaking as defined in 36 C.F.R. § 800.16(c); and

WHEREAS, the Undertaking does not include outside actions undertaken by other entities, such as a demolition permit associated with private land development, unrelated to the Soapstone Connector Project; and

*[Draft Section 106 MOA is Appendix C of Revised EA]*



# Draft Section 106 MOA Stipulations

- Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Recordation of Association Drive Historic District
- Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) Documentation of Association Drive Historic District
- In summary:
  - HABS focuses on the buildings and HALS focuses on the landscape and setting of the historic district
  - Both HABS and HALS include written history and description, photographs, and drawings
  - Documentation to be filed at the Library of Congress and DHR, with copies available at several locations in the local area

Contributing Elements of the Association Drive Historic District

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES (DHR) RESOURCE NO.	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS
029-6253	American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation	1900 Association Drive
029-6254	American Medical Student Association	1902 Association Drive
029-6255	National Association of Secondary School Principals	1904 Association Drive
029-6256	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics	1906 Association Drive
029-6257	Distributive Education Clubs of America	1908 Association Drive
029-6258	Future Homemakers of America	1910 Association Drive
029-6260	National Business Education Association	1914 Association Drive
029-6261	National Art Education Association	1916 Association Drive
029-6262	The Council for Exceptional Children	1920 Association Drive





# Draft Section 106 MOA Stipulations

- Three Wayside Markers for Association Drive Historic District
- Public History / Popular Report



*[Draft Section 106 MOA is Appendix C of Revised EA]*

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# Additional Content in Revised EA

- Summaries of November 2017 Public Hearing and July 2018 Public Information Meeting
- Updates to environmental analysis and discussion of changes in the area since EA was released in August 2017
- Recent cultural resources information and effects analysis
- Alternatives analysis and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation
- Documentation of Section 106 coordination and Draft Section 106 MOA

The screenshot shows the Fairfax County website's 'Soapstone Connector' project page. The navigation menu includes RESIDENTS, BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, FAIRFAX COUNTY, SERVICES, and CONNECT. Contact information for the office is provided, including phone number 703-477-5600 and email DCOTInfo@fairfaxcounty.gov. The page features a 'DEPARTMENT RESOURCES' sidebar with links to various services and a main content area titled 'Soapstone Connector' with a 'Project News and Updates' section. The news section includes a 'Virtual Public Meeting Set for Monday, July 18; Comments Due Aug. 1, 2022' and a list of meeting instructions.

The cover of the 'SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR' Revised Environmental Assessment report. It features the title 'SOAPSTONE CONNECTOR' in large white letters on a dark blue background. Below the title, it specifies 'Fairfax County Project No. 2G40-078' and the route 'From: Sunrise Valley Drive To: Sunset Hills Road Reston, VA'. The date 'May 4, 2022' is printed in the bottom right corner. The main title 'REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT' is displayed in white over a photograph of a multi-lane highway with a bridge in the background. At the bottom, there are two smaller photographs: one of a traffic light intersection and another of a parking lot. The Fairfax County logo and logos for the U.S. Department of Transportation and Virginia Department of Transportation are at the bottom right.



# Next Steps

- Board of Supervisors decision on Preferred Alternative
- Signatories sign the Section 106 MOA
- FHWA signs Final Section 4(f) Evaluation
- FHWA issues NEPA decision
- If Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is issued, will coordinate with VDOT to start design
- Implement MOA stipulations prior to construction
- The project is funded in part by NVTA
  - \$88.8M for Design, ROW, and Construction



# Questions and Comments

## To ask a question now:

### Please use the WebEx “Q&A” feature:

- Open the “Q&A” window.
- Type in your question.

### If calling in via telephone:

- Press \*3 to “raise your hand” and to be added to the queue.

- To submit comments online, please visit the project webpage and use the red “Feedback” form:

FEEDBACK?

Contact the project team.

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/soapstone-connector](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/soapstone-connector)

- **By Phone:** Please call us at 703-877-5600
- **By Mail:** Fairfax County Department of Transportation, Soapstone Connector Project, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA 22033

**Comments will be accepted through August 1.**



Thank you!