

CLEARVIEW MANOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
1232 Somerset Drive
McLean, Virginia 22101

February 21, 1984

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[Redacted]
New Building Project Office
Office of Logistics
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Re: Technical Memorandum No. 2
CIA Expansion Study

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Dear [Redacted]

Clearview Manor Citizens Association offers the following comments on Technical Memorandum No. 2 on the CIA Expansion Study prepared by Dewberry & Davis and JHK Associates for the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation. The following comments reflect the unanimous opinion of Association members who attended a meeting on February 20, 1984 at which time the results and projections of Technical Memorandum No. 1 were explained and the alternatives in Technical Memorandum No. 2 were reviewed. The primary recommendations of the Association are as follows:

- Do not widen Rt. 123 to six lanes between Potomac School Road and Merchant Lane;
- Adopt an alternative which relocates Rt. 123 eastbound (toward G.W. Parkway) parallel and adjacent to Rt. 123 westbound (toward McLean);
- Adopt an alternative which incorporates a traffic light at the Rt. 123-Potomac School Road intersection;
- Do not include a grade separation for the intersection of Rt. 193 and Rt. 123; and
- Provide a right turn lane into and out of Merchant Lane from and onto Rt. 123 east bound.

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Our views concentrate on the alternatives proposed for Route 123 between Potomac School Road and the G.W. Parkway because this portion of the study most directly affects us. However, our silence with respect to problems and alternatives relating to the G.W. Parkway and its merge with the Beltway should not be interpreted as agreement with the lack of effective solutions in those areas of the study. We do endorse the proposal to improve the CIA entrance ramp to the G.W. Parkway westbound be adopted. Tech Memo No. 2, p. 42.

Before discussing our recommendations in detail, we wish to point out that Clearview Manor represents an area of approximately 110 homes which use Merchant Lane as their primary entrance and exit road. The Association has a direct interest in this issue and has actively participated in its resolution. We are a member of the Ad Hoc Committee for Traffic To/From the CIA and are represented on the CIA Traffic Advisory Committee. Members of the Association have attended meetings of the McLean Citizens Association and representatives of CIA have met with our Association to explain the project. In summary, our comments are supported by careful review of the data available by our representatives as well as by daily encounters with Route 123 traffic by our entire membership. This includes children using Fairfax County school buses entering Rt. 123 from Merchant Lane.

Six Lanes for Route 123. We are strongly opposed to increasing Route 123 to six lanes at this time. The study (Tech Memo No. 2, p. 29) concludes that a four-lane Rt. 123 will not be adequate to handle traffic in year 2005. While this may be a premature conclusion not supported by the facts, our primary concern is with constructing six lanes between Potomac School Road and Merchant Lane before Rt. 123 is expanded to six lanes beyond those two intersections. The study does not address when or if this would happen. As a result, there would be a six lane bulge for a short distance with traffic compressed back to four lanes beyond those points. This seems very dangerous and ill-advised.

Furthermore, the compression on eastbound Route 123 would occur at the Merchant Lane intersection which is already hazardous (per those who use it every morning). For

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example, Alternative 4 (Tech Memo No. 2, Fig. 9) would merge three lanes from Rt. 123 east with two lanes from Rt. 193 east, i.e., five lanes into three lanes, just west of Merchant Lane; at, or just east of, Merchant Lane these three surviving lanes (and vehicles) would compress into two lanes heading east to the G.W. Parkway. Those who reside in Clearview Manor exiting onto Rt. 123 in the morning would be confronted with three lanes of traffic (which has just been compressed from five lanes), including two lanes from Rt. 193 which we cannot see because of the curve in Rt. 123. This, we respectfully submit, is an imposing task not to be undertaken lightly.

It should also be noted that widening Rt. 123 east bound to six lanes all the way to the Kirby Road, G.W. Parkway complex does not resolve the problem. This is the critical bottleneck with room for only two lanes -- one continuing down Rt. 123 toward Chain Bridge and one entering eastbound G.W. Parkway (toward D.C.). What happens to the third lane? In a comparable situation, the study rejects widening the G.W. Parkway from the CIA to the Beltway because this "would not increase capacity at the most critical points," that is, at the merge with the Beltway. See Tech Memo No. 2, p. 6. This is likewise true for Route 123. The bottleneck at the G.W. Parkway will remain so why enlarge Rt. 123 to six lanes until and unless the capacity at that critical point is increased?

Finally, we strongly object to the addition of another eastbound lane on Rt. 123 closer to the residents of Clearview Manor and Evermay. The roadway at this point is elevated above the homes creating a severe noise problem for the homes closest to Rt. 123. If a third lane is added even closer to those homes a bad situation would be aggravated. We believe that this would pose a substantial environmental impact that may not be resolvable given the less adverse and reasonable alternatives available. At a minimum, a significant additional expense would involve the erection of a noise reduction wall or fence.

Relocate Eastbound Route 123. We strongly recommend an alternative which would relocate Rt. 123 east so it is parallel and adjacent to Rt. 123 west. This has several obvious advantages.

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The basic rationale for a grade separation is explained in the study as follows. VDH&T policy and its regional planning prefer grade separation when an Urban Minor Arterial road (Rt. 193) intersects with an Urban Principal Arterial and Federal Aid Primary Highway (Rt. 123). Tech Memo No. 2, p. 43. While the consultants acknowledge that any six-lane alternative on Rt. 123 will accommodate traffic demand, a grade separation approach will reduce traffic delay and is therefore preferred. Tech Memo No. 2, p. 36. However, the facts accumulated in Technical Memorandum No. 1 do not support the need for a grade separation at the joinder of Rts. 193 and 123.

Technical Memorandum No. 1 studied existing traffic as well as projections for 1986 (when CIA expansion was assumed to be completed) and 2005 in the area of the CIA. These projections were the basis for a level of service analysis at various locations and the identification of several problem areas. Tech Memo No. 1, pp. 8, 12-13, Fig. 5. Of note is the fact that the existing at-grade intersection of Rts. 193 and 123 which is controlled by a traffic light was not identified as a problem area. This condition is confirmed in the study's level of service analysis. The peak AM level of service at the existing at-grade and light-controlled intersection of Rts. 193 and 123 is "A" and will only become level "B" by the year 2005. Tech Memo No. 1, Fig. 3. (Contrast this with the existing level of service on Rt. 123 eastbound during the AM rush hour which is "D" and will deteriorate to "F" in 2005. Id. A highway should operate at no worse than a level of service "D" during the peak period. Id. at p. 7).

The existing at-grade, light-controlled intersection between Rts. 193 and 123 works. There is no reason to think that it would not continue to work at a position slightly west on Rt. 123. Although plans exist to upgrade the safety of Rt. 193, no increased capacity will result since it has been designated a Virginia Historic Byway. Tech Memo No. 2, p. 6.

Thus, the facts do not warrant discarding a traffic light at the intersection of Potomac School Road and Routes 193 and 123. This we submit is essential for traffic safety. As noted in the study: "Under any of the alternatives, problems crossing Route 123 will continue to exist

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at Merchants (sic) Lane and Potomac School Road under unsignalized conditions." Tech Memo No. 2, p. 36. We wholeheartedly agree. We have already pointed out our concerns with traffic safety at Merchant Lane under certain of the alternatives. This concern is heightened when Alternatives 4, 5 and 6 are examined. Id., Figs. 9, 10 and 11. There would be no traffic light on Route 123 from Kirby Road to the heart of McLean. This, we submit, is a frightening and untenable prospect.

Conclusions. The consultants recommend Alternatives 2A and 4 as warranting further study, with Alternative 4 their apparent choice. Tech Memo No. 2, p. 43. We could not disagree more. Keeping in mind the five planning objectives unanimously endorsed by our Association, we find Alternatives 2A and 4 unacceptable for the following reasons:

- worst possible safety impact at Merchant Lane;
- no improvement in environmental concerns since roadways are not effectively relocated parallel and adjacent to westbound Route 123;
- no traffic light at Potomac School Road; and
- no right turn lane into Merchant Lane appears feasible because of merger of Rts. 123 and 193 just west of Merchant Lane.

We also note that Alternative 4 creates perhaps the shortest and least desirable weaving area between the CIA and Route 193. Tech Memo No. 2, p. 35.

Our review indicates that Alternatives 2 and 3 (Id., Figs. 7 and 8) most closely meet the basic planning objectives we have identified.

- drivers entering Rt. 123 from Merchant Lane will have a clear view of eastbound traffic;
- noise and environmental concerns will be minimized;

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- traffic will be controlled by a light at Potomac School Road; and
- a turning lane into Merchant Lane appears compatible.

Therefore, we urge that Alternatives 2 and 3 be given further evaluation.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our comments on the alternatives discussed in Technical Memorandum No. 2. While we understand the CIA's desire to have the Advisory Committee reflect the unanimous opinion of its members, we trust that you will also understand and recognize the time constraints under which the several components of the Advisory Committee must function. We brought the issues before our Association members as promptly as possible and their unanimous views are expressed herein. We have not had an opportunity to review our conclusions with other members of the Advisory Committee; however, we do not anticipate any disagreements. Given the purpose of the February 21 meeting, which we understand is designed to select alternatives for further evaluation, we feel that the submission of this letter and its wide dissemination is appropriate.

Very truly yours,

CLEARVIEW MANOR CITIZENS
ASSOCIATION

By:

[Redacted Signature]

President

[Redacted Address]

McLean, Virginia 22101

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February 15, 1984

Rough notes of Ad Hoc Committee meeting held on 2/14/84.

Present: [REDACTED]

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After reviewing the consultant's analysis of the proposed CIA roadway improvements, the following points are submitted as a consensus report. There should be:

(1) NO SIX LANES actual, installed Route 123 as currently proposed--will accept four lanes improved (grading, etc.).

(2) A complete, regional review of McLean AND surrounding transportation corridors undertaken prior to CIA expansion/occupancy with recommendations for correction submitted to appropriate government officials and legislation submitted by Capitol Hill delegations to enact such recommendations.

(3) Traffic signals installed (regardless of alternative chosen) at Potomac School Road, Merchant Lane, and Turkey Run Farm Road for rush hour use and at other times, a caution light blinking.

(4) Entrance at Turkey Run Farm Road/Route 193 open to traffic at all times.

(5) A statement on where traffic signs will be placed along Routes 123 and 193.

(6) A statement on whether environmental impact statements shown as "significant" for Alternatives 3 and 4 are actually long-term or short-term.

(7) A statement why consultant's report clearly lacked a position on (a) the beltway widening needs addressed verbally by consultants; (b) intersection problems of Route 123/Kirby Road/Parkway, and (c) understanding by everyone that Route 193 is clearly a traffic hazard.

With respect to Alternatives 1-7 for Route 123/CIA entrance, the following comments are made:

(1) Alternative #1. Negatives are:

- o six lanes
- o no light at PSR
- o eight lanes in middle
- o no break at Merchant Lane; sight distance very poor
- o took extra two lanes at Saville Lane

(2) Alternative #2. Negatives are:

- o seven lanes of traffic at PSR
- o CIA traffic must cross west bound lanes by signal;
- o Route 123 left hand lane will back up and Route 193 will back up on left turn
- o three lanes on Merchant Lane bad due to no merging lane and no traffic light.
- o three lanes for Saville Lane area

Advantage: roadway is away from Evermay and Clearview Manor.

(3) Alternative #2a. Negatives are:

- o fly-over merge unacceptable in addition to comments outlined above.

(4) Alternative #3. (Best alternative if limited to four lanes.)

What are requirements for signs/lights on fly-over?
Saville/Merchant Lane area - what does the map mean?

(5) Alternative #4. Negatives are:

- o weaving problem from CIA to Route 193
- o five lanes are merged into three lanes at Merchant Lane (similar to problems of Route 270/Beltway in Maryland)
- o bad design at Route 193/Turkey Run Farm Road
- o bad design re land requirements for Saville/Merchant Lane
- o no lights

Advantage: unrestricted transportation flow

(6) Alternative #5. Negatives are:

- o bad sight distance at Merchant/Saville
- o made extra lane at Evermay
- o weaving at 193/123/CIA entrance very bad
- o Turkey Run Farm Road has sight problem
- o bridge area at CIA is ugly and too much land used

(7) Alternative #6. Negatives are:

- o tri-level fly-overs are bad, especially if not at current ground levels
- o blind corner at Merchant Lane
- o weaving is bad on Route 193 to Route 123 to CIA
- o very bad esthetically
- o Turkey Run Farm Road is unclear

(8) Alternative #7. Negatives are:

- o Turkey Run Road entrance?
- o Turkey Run Road to 123 to 193 (map is unclear)
- o blind corner at Merchant Lane
- o Saville Lane corner cut
- o tri-level fly-overs--NO

One question which kept surfacing concerned the six lanes shown on maps--what happens to all the traffic--does it funnel from six lanes to two lanes--same question applies to either the Dunaway Court or Merchant Lane area\$.

Another question which is very important--will people be added to CIA compound (even in small increments) prior to all transportation improvements (roadway) being accomplished?