

#12 - Resolution

13-0636

Public Hearing and Consideration of a Request for Council to Approve a Resolution Denoting the City of Alexandria Position on the Operation of the Seminary Road HOV/Transit Ramp [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

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1. I find the Resolution concerning the Hove Ramp at Seminary Road weak in its stance against the AM right turn onto Seminary Road and the PM left turn onto the ramp going south.
2. It now appears since we accepted the \$80M from VDOT we are at their whim and under their thumb.
3. The ramp, when first proposed, was to 'mitigate' traffic to the BRAC building. It was to be used primarily for transit options, buses, vanpools and carpools. From the beginning I posed my concerns about these additional turns. I was assured the chance of this happening was slim. It now appears it is a sure bet or the resolution with measures/tasks would not need to be requested.
4. My concern is now even greater. This ramp will be used 24hours a day 360 days a year from now until forever. VDOT is inviting, inviting traffic to cut through our city. Seminary Road between I-395 and Quaker Lane will take the brunt of the onslaught.
5. It is apparent the City feels there is a great possibility for an impact to traffic and safety from the right and left turns from and onto the new HOV ramp.
6. I am proposing that in tandem with asking VDOT for measures/tasks the City establish and implement my suggested measures BEFORE

the ramp opens so those using the HOV ramp as a commuter cut through will understand the rules,

- Post the speed limit between the HOV ramp and Quaker Lane at 25 mph and 15 mph in the school zone at Hammond Middle School and **enforce** the speed limit.
 - Post police or a crossing guard at Library Lane at the start and end of each school day.
 - Make sure each corner at the intersections of Seminary Rd at N. Pickett St., N. Jordan St., and N. Howard St. have pedestrian buttons and that they work.
7. The safety and concern for the numerous children going to the schools in the area as well as all citizens in our city should be the first and quite possibly the only concern of our City Council and City Staff.
 8. Every time our City spends money on road changes to accommodate those driving through our city streets to cut their commuting time the quality of life is diminished for the tax paying citizens. To spin it as a help is offensive, maddening and a slap in the face.
 9. Some how, some way the City of Falls Church has maintained a 25mph speed limit on Route 7 for 40 years. Now posed with what will be an ever increasing traffic impact from the allowed turns off of and onto the HOV ramp the City will need to do the same on Seminary Rd. east from the ramp.
 10. I am asking the City to be pro-active with concrete measures to 'mitigate' the impact of the turns from and onto the HOV ramp impacting Seminary Rd. for the safety and well being of our citizens.
 11. I hope it will not take a death or injury of a school child for our City to recognize the severe impact the right and left turns at the HOV ramp will have on our community.

Just and aside. I am now avoiding a left turn into my street, N. Ivanhoe St., from Seminary Rd. for fear of being slammed from the rear and because many times the entrance to my street is blocked with traffic. I now plan my route home so I can make a right turn into my street. Already my quality of life has been altered do to increased traffic.

Alexandria City Council Public Hearing
Saturday, September 15, 2012

12
9-15-12

Docket Item #12 – Request for Council to Approve a Resolution
Relating to the Operation of the Seminary Road/I-395 HOV Transit Ramp
Comments of Donald N. Buch (dnbuch@hotmail.com)

The proposed Resolution uses the term “transit ramp”. It would be helpful to understand the intent of the term; will this ramp not be available for use by all HOVs?

At the risk of alienating some friends who live on or near Seminary Road East, I must say I do not understand or agree with the Resolution calling for no right turn from northbound I-395 onto eastbound Seminary Road or, in the afternoon, from westbound Seminary Road onto southbound I-395.

- This \$80 million ramp is being funded by all taxpayers; why should they not all be able to benefit from it in equal measure?
- By definition, an HOV has to have at least three people in it. An HOV vehicle wanting to go east has presumably taken at least three SOVs off the road, thereby reducing traffic on Seminary Road east. Is that not a desired objective?
- If carpools choose to avail themselves of the new HOV exit on their journey to a destination east of I-395, but are precluded from making the right turn, what will they logically do? I would imagine they will proceed westerly, further contributing to congestion on Seminary Road west and then make a U-turn at Mark Center Drive and travel east on Seminary Road just as they would have done were they allowed to turn right off the ramp in the first place.

We have a fire/EMS station on Seminary Road just east of I-395. Are we proposing that fire and EMS vehicles not be permitted to make the right turn? Is an ambulance headed for the hospital precluded from turning right?

Can our City get the community an answer as to why DOD is not paying for this ramp? On February 1, 2011, Dr. Dorothy Robyn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, wrote Secretary Connaughton asserting that “this project is the highest priority road project in the Commonwealth of Virginia for the DOD.” DOD has paid for other mission-critical roadworks – why not this one?

Finally, I would ask what plans our City has to address the major increase in traffic that the ramp will inevitably precipitate on westbound Seminary Road beyond Beauregard – an area which is already heavily congested.