

**DOCKET ITEM #5**

**City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2013-0003**

**Eisenhower Avenue Widening and Roadway Improvement Project**

Application	General Data	
<b>Request:</b> Consideration of a proposal by the City of Alexandria to acquire right-of-way for Eisenhower Avenue Widening and Roadway Improvements Project	<b>Planning Commission Hearing:</b>	June 4, 2013
	<b>City Council Hearing</b>	N/A
<b>Address:</b> Eisenhower Avenue from Mill Road to Holland Lane	<b>Zone:</b>	CDD-1/Coordinated Development District #1
<b>Applicant:</b> Transportation & Environmental Services – Engineering & Design Division	<b>Small Area Plan:</b>	Eisenhower East

**Staff:** Richard J. Baier, P.E. LEED AP, Director, T&ES

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Emily Baker, City Engineer, T&ES

[emily.baker@alexandriava.gov](mailto:emily.baker@alexandriava.gov)

Maurice Daly, Division Chief, T&ES, Engineering & Design Division

[maurice.daly@alexandriava.gov](mailto:maurice.daly@alexandriava.gov)

Lisa Jaatinen, Project Manager, T&ES, Engineering & Design Division

[lisa.jaatinen@alexandriava.gov](mailto:lisa.jaatinen@alexandriava.gov)

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends **approval** of the Section 9.06 action.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 4, 2013:** On a motion by Mr. Macek, seconded by Ms. Lyman, the Planning Commission found the proposed acquisition to be consistent with the Master Plan and voted to approve Section 9.06 Case #2013-0003.

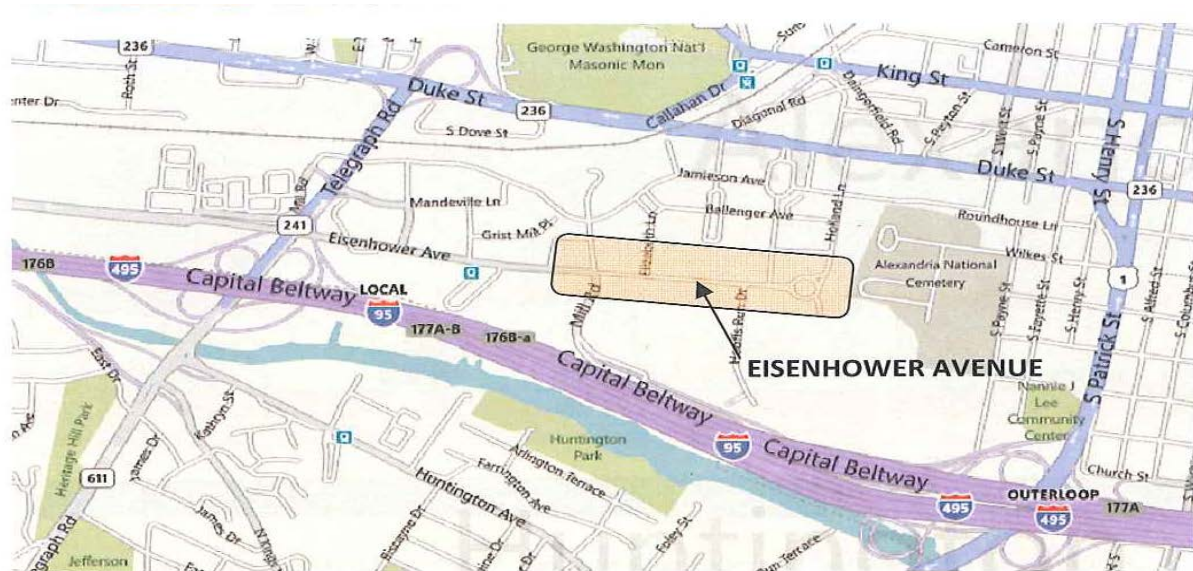
Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

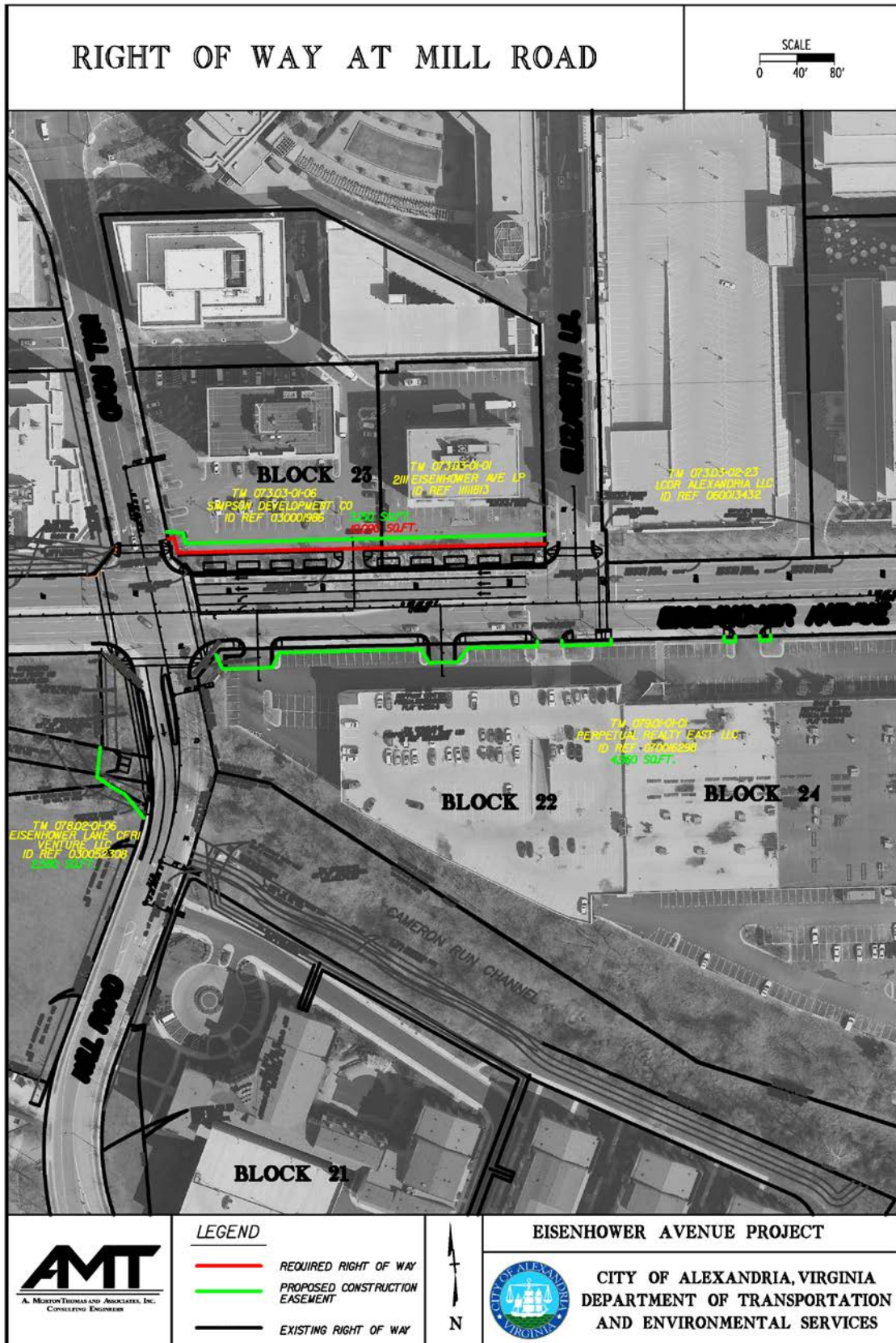
Speakers:

James Durham, requested that the Commission take a broad view of the intersection at Mill Road and Eisenhower Avenue and suggested that the City take specific steps to address the traffic at this intersection for the mid and longer term. He also stated that within seven years of completion of this project, the unsatisfactory conditions could return and that a proactive multijurisdictional approach is needed to promote viable transit solutions.

Duncan Blair, attorney representing DuMor Properties, LLC

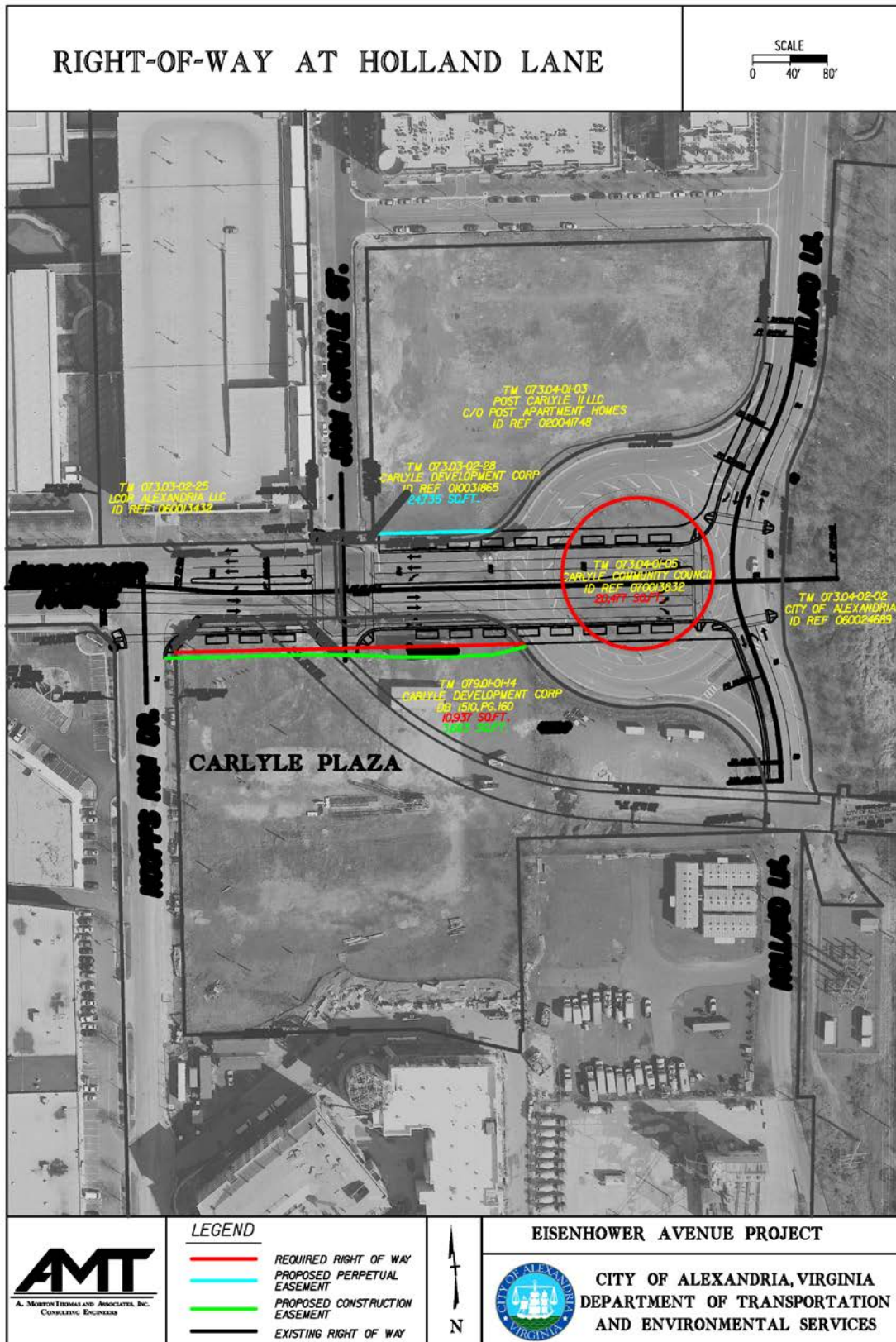
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Eisenhower Avenue Widening and  
Roadway Improvement Project







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**I. DISCUSSION:**

REQUEST

The City is continuing the design process on a capital improvement project for Eisenhower Avenue between Mill Road and Holland Lane. The design is approximately 60% complete and the project is moving into the right of way acquisition phase. The City proposes to purchase right of way and temporary construction easements for public roadway purposes. Funds for the acquisition will come from VDOT Urban funds with a two-percent City match. This acquisition will follow state and federal requirements.

Section 9.06 of the City Charter requires that the Planning Commission approve any acquisition or sale of public land and any change in streets, squares, parks, public buildings or spaces. The Planning Commission is charged with ensuring that any such acquisition, sale or change is consistent with the City's Master Plan. T&ES is requesting that the Planning Commission consider the proposal by the City of Alexandria to acquire right of way for the Eisenhower Avenue Widening and Roadway Improvements Project, pursuant to the provisions of Section 9.06 of the City Charter.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Eisenhower Avenue Widening and Roadway Improvements project is located along Eisenhower Avenue between Mill Road and Holland Lane and is approximately 0.4 miles in length.

BACKGROUND

The proposed widening of Eisenhower Avenue between Holland Lane and Stovall Street is identified in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (EESAP). The EESAP provides detailed information about the City's goals and objectives for the project, with the ultimate goal of creating a multi-modal environment promoting safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

The final build out plan envisioned for Eisenhower Avenue is a six (6) lane roadway, accommodating three (3) travel lanes with bike facilities, in each direction. The roadways will be separated by a tree-lined median with left turn bays and accentuated on both sides by wide sidewalks. The roadway improvements were initiated as a result of the development forecasts for the Eisenhower Valley and the forecasted traffic impacts resulting from the VDOT Woodrow Wilson Bridge project and the construction of two ramps from the Capital Beltway.

As a result of the recession, which slowed the building industry, the development forecasts for the Eisenhower Valley were reduced significantly. Therefore, the City revisited the scope of the project and made a decision to phase the construction of the improvements to the roadway. The proposed project includes the first phase of work. The full build out condition, as described above, would be completed in part by developers as a condition of development.

The project limits for the first phase of construction are from Mill Road to Holland Lane. The improvements include construction of an additional left turn lane on westbound Eisenhower Avenue at Mill Road, widening the receiving lanes on Mill Road, constructing streetscape improvements at Mill Road and Holland Lane, providing bike facilities, and replacing the traffic circle at Holland Lane with a “T” intersection. These improvements are consistent with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan.

The project was identified and funded in the VDOT Six Year plan as an urban project. The project is funded with State Urban Funds which consist of federal (80%) and state (18%) funds with a 2% match from the City. The City’s share for this project was budgeted in prior year funding. The total funding for the project is \$8.1 million.

City staff met with the affected property owners on February 12, 2013, to discuss the process for acquiring the necessary easements and right of way and held a design public hearing on April 4, 2013 with the community and their input has been considered throughout the development of the plan. At the design public meeting, the 60% design plan, showing necessary right of way to be acquired was presented. The approved environmental document (Categorical Exclusion) for the project was also available for review and discussion at that time. The main concerns raised by the public were a lack of continuous bicycle facilities, the use of brick to build the sidewalks, the removal of the traffic circle and widening the roadway to increase traffic capacity.

#### **Bicycle Facilities**

Staff received several comments regarding the lack of continuous dedicated bike lanes throughout the corridor. Right of way constraints prohibit the construction of these lanes. This plan does provide bike sharrows and shared bike lanes.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) staff is working in collaboration with other City departments to ensure that in the future bicycle facilities are part of the redevelopment plans in this area. The City’s Complete Streets Initiative provides for the construction of bike improvements in the Eisenhower corridor. This program includes the implementations of shared and dedicated lanes, markings and off-street facilities.

#### **Brick Sidewalks**

Staff received several comments from citizens concerned that brick sidewalks decrease mobility and are expensive to maintain. At this time staff is recommending to continue with the installation of brick on this project in order to comply with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (EESAP) which calls for brick sidewalks. In addition, several of the adjacent developments already have brick sidewalks, including the Patent Trade Office (PTO) and Post Carlyle II. T&ES staff, together with Planning & Zoning, is currently evaluating the City’s practice of requiring brick sidewalks. Staff is investigating the use of various alternative types of sidewalk paving materials. Staff will bring a summary of this evaluation, including alternative sidewalk materials to Council for future

consideration. If Council makes a decision to change the sidewalk material before construction of this project begins, the sidewalk material can be changed.

#### **Holland Lane Traffic Circle**

Staff received comments from citizens concerned about removing the traffic circle; these concerns raised the issues of reducing the efficiency of the intersection, restricting fire access to the Carlyle Post Building, ability of delivery trucks to access loading docks and removing a unique feature of the community. The proposed project includes the replacement of the existing traffic circle at Holland Lane and Eisenhower Avenue with a signalized “T” intersection. These roadway improvements were approved in the EESAP. The removal of the circle promotes safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Alternate routes for delivery trucks have been identified. T&ES Staff is working with Code Administration to ensure fire access is maintained. The land remaining after the traffic circle is modified will be converted into two parks.

The Planning Commission and City Council have approved adjacent developments based on the “T” intersection including the conversion of part of the existing roadway into parkland. If the traffic circle is retained, significant amendments would be required to the approved Carlyle Plaza development site plan, which has incorporated the circle area in its plaza area.

#### **Traffic Capacity**

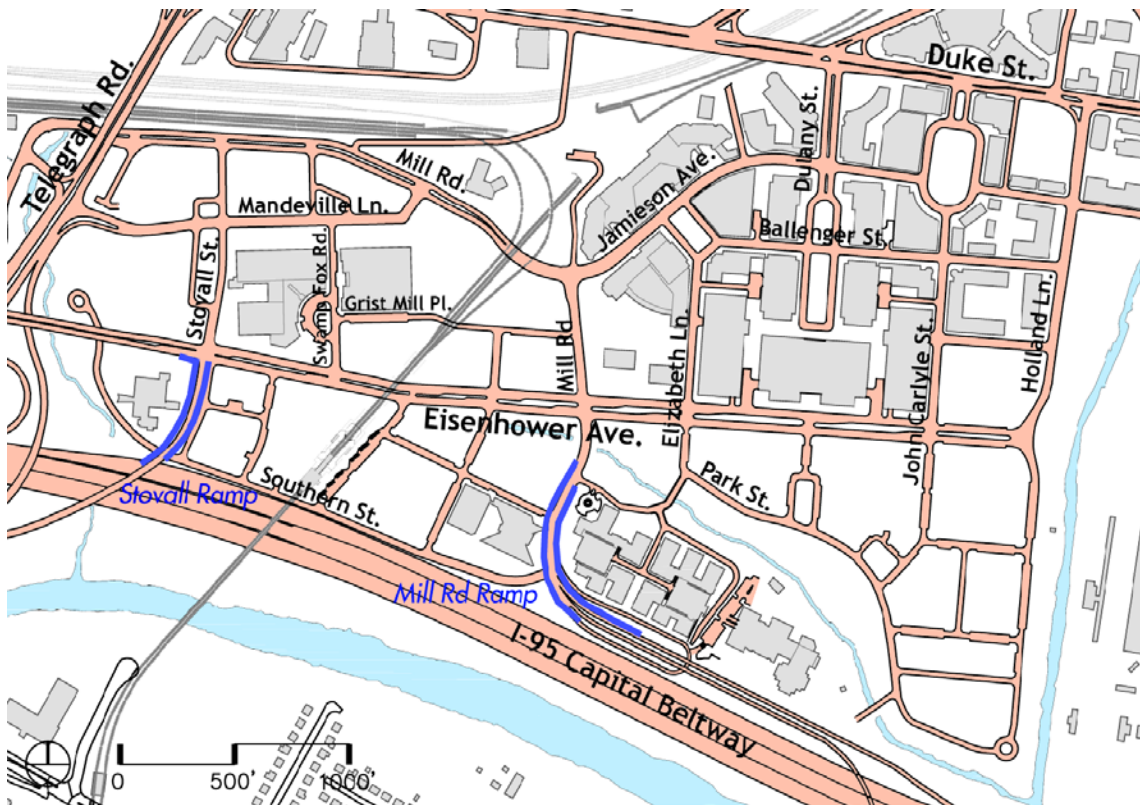
Staff received comments questioning the necessity for additional travel lanes in this location. The need for additional lanes along Eisenhower and an additional turn lane on Mill Road is identified in the EESAP and supporting traffic studies. The Phase I plan will construct the additional left turn lane on Mill Road and this will reduce the delays at the Mill Road intersection for traffic entering the beltway. The traffic within this corridor is projected to increase each year. By 2022, the traffic capacity will double and will meet or exceed the current project’s capacity improvements. The traffic studies have considered a 55% multi-modal split and the future roadway improvements are designed with this in consideration. In order to maintain the vehicular capacity throughout the corridor, the City will continue to encourage and promote the use of alternative means of transportation. By constructing these improvements, the impacts of the future increases in traffic volumes will be lessened and will allow the corridor to operate efficiently during non-peak periods.

This project is funded by prior year VDOT Urban Funds in the amount of \$8.1 million. A resolution supporting the project was approved by City Council in May 2013. The project is currently at the 60% design phase. Upon receipt of this 9.06 approval, staff will bring a separate resolution to City Council in June, requesting authorization to proceed with right-of-way acquisition.

Project construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2014. The construction duration is anticipated to be eighteen months.

### ALEXANDRIA MASTER PLAN

The proposed widening of Eisenhower Avenue between Holland Lane and Mill Road is identified in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (EESAP) chapter of the Alexandria Master Plan. The project is consistent with the guidelines outlined in the EESAP for land use, circulation and urban design. Page 4-27 of the EESAP, “Open Space- The land remaining after the rotary is modified to a T-intersection shall be converted to a crescent shaped open space. The City shall be responsible for the design and construction of the adjoining “T” intersection including curb, gutter, sidewalks, street lights, and associated elements.” On page 7-7 of the EESAP, “Short Term Improvements (2005-2010): Eisenhower Avenue (completion of the improvement to be coordinated with the completion of the new Mill Road ramps to the Capital Beltway) and conversion of the traffic circle to a “T” intersection”.



New Street Pattern – Page 4-3 Eisenhower East Small Area Plan

## **II. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve this request, finding that the proposal is consistent with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia, for the acquisition of public land.



STAFF:

Richard J. Baier, P.E. LEED AP, Director, T&ES

Emily A. Baker, P.E., Deputy Director of Engineering, T&ES

Maurice Daly, P.E., Division Chief – Engineering & Design, T&ES

Lisa Jaatinen, P.E., Civil Engineer IV, Engineering & Design

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 30, 2013  
**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
**FROM:** RICHARD J. BAIER, P.E., LEED AP, DIRECTOR, T&ES  
**SUBJECT:** EISENHOWER AVENUE WIDENING, DOCKET ITEM 1  
SECTION 9.06 CASE #2013-0003



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I am forwarding to you the attached Resolution approving the design features of the Eisenhower Avenue Widening and Roadway Improvements Project. This resolution was approved by City Council on May 28, 2013, after the staff report for this item was finalized. This approval authorizes staff to proceed with the implementation of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 703.746.4025 or Emily Baker, City Engineer at 703-746-4045.

cc: Faroll Hamer, Director, Planning & Zoning  
Emily Baker, City Engineer  
Maurice Daly, Division Chief, Engineering Division  
Lisa Jaatinen, Civil Engineer IV, Engineering Division

Attachment: Resolution

## RESOLUTION NO. 2561

LOCATION AND DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING APPROVAL: EISENHOWER  
AVENUE WIDENING AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**WHEREAS**, after due and proper notice, a public hearing was conducted on April 4, 2013, in the City of Alexandria at the Lee Center, for the purpose of considering the proposed design of roadway improvements on Eisenhower Avenue, VDOT Project Number U000-100-135, PE101, RW201, C501, in the City of Alexandria, at which Public Hearing drawings, NEPA documents and other pertinent information were made available for public inspection in accordance with state and federal requirement; and

**WHEREAS**, all persons and parties in attendance were afforded full opportunity to participate in the Public Hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, representatives of the City of Alexandria were present and participated in said Public Hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council had previously requested the Virginia Department of Transportation to program the Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the area encompassing the Project is experiencing tremendous growth; and

**WHEREAS**, the project will improve multi-modal access throughout the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, the project provides increased capacity to accommodate future growth; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council has considered all such matters;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia hereby approves the major design features of the proposed project as presented at the Public Hearing; and

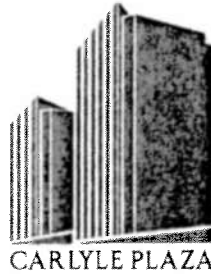
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Alexandria hereby requests the Virginia Department of Transportation to provide all necessary resources to expedite the Project.

Adopted: May 28, 2013

  
WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk



June 3, 2013

John Komoroske, Chairman  
Members of Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria Planning Commission  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Chairman Komoroske and Members of Planning Commission:

We are writing to urge you approve staff's request, finding that the proposed acquisition of right of way for Eisenhower Avenue widening is consistent with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria. The proposed T intersection at Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane is shown in the adopted Eisenhower East Small Area Plan ("EESAP"). Based on this plan, Carlyle Plaza, LLC spent over three years and over a million dollars in design fees in order to achieve Development Special Use Permit approval of Carlyle Plaza. This entire effort was based on conforming with the adopted EESAP. As part of this DSUP, Oculus Landscape Architects has designed a unique urban plaza on the south and north sides of Eisenhower Avenue and created a vertical garden and water feature that specifically address the T intersection. Additionally, Carlyle Plaza's entrances, lobbies and building cores are all designed based on the T intersection. Not moving forward with the widening of Eisenhower Avenue and creation of the T intersection after both the Planning Commission and City Council have spent such time and effort in reviewing and approving plans would not only be unfair, but would imperil the viability of the Carlyle Plaza plan.

Carlyle Plaza designed its plan based on the approved Master Plan. We proceeded based on the City's adopted plan and have complied with all of the rules and regulations. Not proceeding with implementation of the plan would place in jeopardy the public and development community's ability to rely on the City's adopted Master Plan and would be arbitrary and capricious.

We respectfully request that you find the proposed acquisition of right-of-way is consistent with Section 9.06 of the City Charter.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Zell

cc: Jonathan Rak, Esq.  
Kenneth Wire, Esq.



Planning Commission Hearing, 6/4/2013, ***DOCKET ITEM #5 City Charter Section 9.06  
Case #2013-0003 Eisenhower Avenue Widening and Roadway Improvement Project***

**James Durham, 622 Fort Williams Pkwy, Alexandria, VA 22304**

Chairman Komoroske, and Commissioners,

Thanks for the opportunity to speak and thanks for all that you do for the Citizens of Alexandria.

My request is that you take a broad, longer-term view of the traffic situation at Eisenhower Avenue and Mill Road, and suggest specific steps to address the traffic at that intersection for the longer term. Failure to act today will result in recurrence of the current problem within just seven years of the project's expected completion.

While your primary purpose in this docket item is to judge consistency with the Small Area Plan, you are thinking individuals who strive to help the City plan in a manner that makes Alexandria a more livable and sustainable community, for the near, mid and long term.

The City staff has done a good job at identifying a near-term solution to the unsatisfactory motor vehicle Level of Service at the Mill Road and Eisenhower Avenue intersection.

- Unfortunately, the staff projects that by 2022, i.e. within just 7 years of the completion of the project in front of us, level of service is expected to return to unsatisfactory levels at this intersection.
- Furthermore, this unsatisfactory condition is projected to return in spite of the City's efforts to "encourage and promote the use of alternative means of transportation".
- Clearly the plans to "encourage and promote" are not enough!!!

What is needed is a proactive multi-jurisdictional approach that provides viable alternatives to the people who commute to Alexandria via this intersection.

- For example, the city should work with WMATA and Maryland jurisdictions to provide Park and Ride locations and Express bus service routes that would provide viable transit options to the people who commute to Alexandria via this intersection.
- We know that the studies alone to lay the ground work for this approach can take years once the City commits to make to happen, so start now.

Suggest that the City staff start now to develop viable multi-jurisdictional transit solutions. Let the Citizens of Alexandria see that its leadership is committed to making Alexandria a more livable and sustainable community, for the near, mid and long term.

Thank you.