



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

<http://www.mvcca.org>

Planning Commissioner Flanagan
Supervisor Storck

February 16, 2018

Dear Planning Commissioner Flanagan and Supervisor Storck

Ref: Mount Vernon Council of Citizen's Associations (MVCCA) Resolution Undergrounding of Utilities from Jeff Todd Way to Napper Rd (Fort Belvoir to Costco)

The MVCCA feels very strongly that the Comprehensive Plan Amendment (PA 2015-IV-MV1) should contain appropriate language to ensure undergrounding of utilities along Richmond Highway is completed concurrently with the road widening project and not contingent upon execution of individual development projects.

This position is also supported by the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce (letter attached).

The attached resolution is forwarded on behalf of the MVCCA. Support by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors is desired and strongly requested.

Katherine Ward

Katherine Ward
Co-Chair
MVCCA

Enclosed: MVCCA Resolution 2018-03
Chamber letter dated Jan 24, 2018

cc: County Executive Bryan Hill

**MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA)
RESOLUTION (BOARD/TRANS) 2018-03 UNDERGROUNDING OF UTILITIES ON
RICHMOND HIGHWAY FROM JEFF TODD WAY TO NAPPER RD (FORT BELVOIR
TO COSTCO)**

1. **Whereas:** The MVCCA adopted resolution 2017-AC-01 item 3 supporting various funding sources for Undergrounding of Utilities on Richmond Highway and;
2. **Whereas:** The MVCCA has taken the position that the Undergrounding of Utilities should be completed at the same time as the widening and;
3. **Whereas:** Prince William County has funded the Undergrounding of Utilities for the entire 9 mile stretch of Richmond Highway utilizing General Funds, General Obligation Bonds, NVTA regional funds, and Revenue Sharing and local funds which are all considered local funds by the State and the Federal Government and;
4. **Whereas:** Prince William County's justification of Undergrounding of Utilities was a budget neutral investment that will enhance property values, generated by the Undergrounding of Utilities which would pay for itself over 20 years and;
5. **Whereas:** The Richmond Highway community cannot realize the Transit-Oriented Development envisioned with overhead utilities and;
6. **Whereas:** Fairfax County staff states "Undergrounding of Utilities in the Richmond Highway corridor would potentially delay the completion of the roadway widening and BRT project" and;
7. **Whereas:** Properties along this section of Richmond Highway generated over \$4.5 million dollars in tax revenue (2017) and the property owners and both current and future residents deserve to achieve the vision and goals of Embark and;
8. **Whereas:** The amount of Right of Way (ROW) needed will be the same for Underground Utilities as overhead utilities and;
9. **Whereas:** VDOT anticipates Right of Way (ROW) condemnation process from Richmond Highway from Fort Belvoir to Costco to take 4 to 5 years and;
10. **Whereas:** Richmond Highway should be consistently improved from the Beltway in the North to Quantico in the South and;
11. **Whereas:** The Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce also supports Undergrounding of Utilities along Richmond Highway (Reference Chamber letter to BOS January 24, 2018).

Therefore be it Resolved: The MVCCA recommends using the funding processes used by Prince William County for the Undergrounding of Utilities along their section of Richmond Highway and;

Further be it Resolved: The MVCCA recommends Fairfax County utilize similar funding techniques to achieve the Undergrounding of Utilities along the Fairfax County section of

Richmond Highway as Prince William County used to fund their Undergrounding of Utilities and;

Further be it Resolved: The Planning Commission should ensure that appropriate language is included in PA 2015-IV-MV1 that indicates that Richmond Highway requires the Undergrounding of Utilities along its length and especially from Fort Belvoir to Costco and is not dependent upon individual redevelopment/developers and;

Finally be it Resolved: The MVCCA asks Supervisor Storck and the full Board of Supervisors to direct staff to take appropriate actions to achieve Undergrounding of Utilities along the Richmond Highway corridor from Fort Belvoir to Costco concurrently with the road widening project for that portion of Richmond Highway and all future widening to accommodate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Approved by the MVCCA Board Feb 13, 2018 at their Board Meeting

January 24, 2018

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Mount Vernon Voice

Alexandria Times

Mount Vernon Gazette

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 530

Fairfax, VA 22035

RE: Undergrounding of Utilities on Richmond Highway

Dear Chairman Bulova, Supervisor McKay, and Supervisor Storck:

The Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, representing approximately 300 businesses, together with the local business leaders co-signing this letter, urge the Board of Supervisors to ensure that all utility cabling is undergrounded when Richmond Highway is widened between Jeff Todd Way and Napper Road.

We ask that you carefully consider the following:

- In terms of cost efficiency and limiting disruption to residents, business and commuters, the best time to carry out the undergrounding is when all construction activities associated with the widening is underway. We should not miss this opportunity;
- Underground cabling should be viewed as a public good just like the road itself and should therefore be funded through government, not private entities; The cost to do this work piecemeal will be many times higher than what it would cost to do it all at once; this will be a huge disincentive to redevelop along Richmond Highway, in particular for the smaller parcels that cannot absorb the higher development costs.
- The property owners should not have to pay the price to bury utilities that they did not place on the property; in fact they had land taken from them for easements to install utilities that serve the entire area.
- By contrast, requirements on developers to pay for and install undergrounding (as recommended by the Embark process) will act as a significant drag on new economic development for many years;
- Underground cabling will greatly improve aesthetics and help attract new businesses to this neglected area. By contrast, the installation of above ground cables, as currently envisaged, will limit new economic development opportunities;
- Underground cabling will ensure greater reliability in the delivery of utilities to local businesses;
- This part of Route 1 is an essential route for national security and emergency services, linking the nation's capital to Fort Belvoir. Underground utilities are much less susceptible to damage from natural or man-made disasters;
- Undergrounding by private developers would create an unseemly patchwork of cabling and take decades to complete;

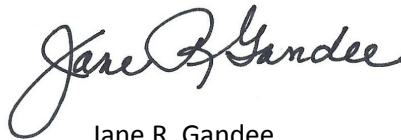
Undergrounding utilities on Richmond Highway now has almost universal support among local businesses and community leaders with 88.5 percent of Chamber members strongly supporting the undergrounding of cabling in a survey conducted in June 2017.

We appreciate the time that Supervisors Bulova, McKay and Storck have taken to discuss this important issue with us and others, and explore various funding options. We understand that the undergrounding of cabling comes with a dollar figure and that the County has a range of competing projects to consider when allocating its budget.

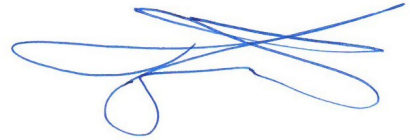
However, we ask you to reflect on the designation of this area as a Commercial Revitalization Zone, which was instituted in 1998 "to encourage economic development activities." For this revitalization designation to carry real meaning, we believe it is essential for undergrounding of utilities to be incorporated into the Route 1 widening project, opening the door for all of the benefits outlined above to flow to the local community.



Scott Stroh III
Chairman



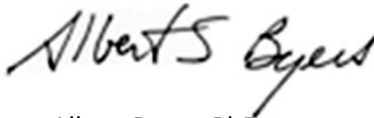
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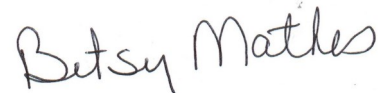
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