



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of March 14, 2009**

DATE: February 25, 2009

SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution Requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board to Name the Bridge at Washington Boulevard over Columbia Pike the “Freedmans Village Bridge”

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the attached Resolution entitled “Resolution of the County Board of Arlington County, Virginia Requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board to Name the Bridge at State Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) and State Route 244 (Columbia Pike) in Arlington County, Virginia the “Freedmans Village Bridge”.

ISSUES: There are no issues related to this Board Report. The State Code authorizes the Commonwealth Transportation Board (“CTB”) to name bridges within the system of state highways if requested by a resolution of the local governing body in which the bridge to be named is located. The County Board adopted a resolution at its October 18, 2008 regular meeting requesting the naming by the CTB of the subject bridge. VDOT has since requested a resolution from the County Board which specifically provides that the County will bear the costs of the architectural treatment of embossing the bridge name into the concrete bridge.

SUMMARY: This is a request for the adoption of a Resolution of the County Board requesting the CTB to name the bridge to be constructed at Washington Boulevard over Columbia Pike the “Freedmans Village Bridge”. The Virginia Department of Transportation (“VDOT”) is undertaking a project to reconfigure the Washington Boulevard/Columbia Pike interchange and replace the existing Washington Boulevard bridge over Columbia Pike. County staff has been working with VDOT and a “Bridge Working Group” on both operational and aesthetic considerations related to the project design. As part of the community involvement process, the possibility of naming the new bridge was discussed. The naming of the new bridge was also discussed at a Design Public Hearing. The Code of Virginia provides that bridges and highways in the Commonwealth of Virginia can be named by the CTB if such naming has been requested by a resolution of the local governing body wherein the facility is located. The resolution must also indicate that the local jurisdiction requesting the naming will pay all costs for signs denoting the name. On October 18, 2008, the County Board adopted a resolution requesting the naming by the CTB. The resolution did not specifically include the County’s agreement to pay for signs. Because the name (Freedmans Village Bridge) will be embossed into the bridge structure pylons, it was originally not considered by VDOT to be “signage”. However, VDOT Central Office has since determined that the resolution must indicate that the County will bear the cost of the

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: William Roberts, DES-Transportation Planning

embossing of the name (“signage”) into the concrete of the bridge in order to be considered for CTB approval. Thus, the attached resolution, acceptable to VDOT, is recommended.

BACKGROUND: VDOT is undertaking a project (VDOT Project # 0027-000-V01, P01, RW 201, C501, B601, B617, D602) to reconfigure the Washington Boulevard/Columbia Pike interchange and replace the existing Washington Boulevard bridge over Columbia Pike. The current bridge, a 1940’s-vintage single-span, rigid-concrete structure, is rated as “poor” in recent structural-inspection reports, meaning that the concrete elements are in poor condition. The bridge is sufficiently capable of carrying traffic without further restriction or risk to the public.

Since February, 2006, County staff has been working with VDOT and a “Bridge Working Group”, comprised of representatives of area civic associations and other entities including the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, the Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Sheraton National Hotel, the Residential Program Center and the Mount Olive Church on both operational and aesthetic considerations related to the project design.

The Bridge Working Group, with Arlington County and VDOT staff, discussed concepts for the architectural and aesthetic treatments for the Washington Boulevard/Columbia Pike bridge. VDOT hired Carlton Abbott and Associates to develop an architectural concept. Mr. Abbott was the architect of the pedestrian bridge across the George Washington Memorial Parkway at Theodore Roosevelt Island. Pylons in each corner of the bridge will establish a greater presence and differentiate this as a gateway to Arlington. A relief pattern will be incorporated into the vertical outer surfaces of the bridge parapet to create shadows and visual interest. A concrete block pattern will be applied to the retaining and abutment walls similar to that of Pentagon architecture. Recessed arched panels will also be included on the abutment walls, larger in scale but similar in shape to the medallions to be attached to the pylons. If all goes as planned, the medallions will display images reflecting the historical significance of the Freedmans Village.

In an effort to expedite design and construction of the project, VDOT has chosen to use a design-build process to complete the project. Construction is expected begin in 2011 and take approximately 30 months to complete. A definitive schedule will be developed once the design-build firm is selected, and it is anticipated that the project will be completed in 2014. The current estimated cost for this project is \$54.8 million.

DISCUSSION: Freedmans Village was a camp of former slaves established in 1863 and operated until 1900 by the federal government on what is today occupied by Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon and the Navy Annex, in the vicinity of the Washington Boulevard/Columbia Pike Interchange.

As part of the community-involvement process for the Washington Boulevard/Columbia Pike Interchange Modifications Project, the possibility of naming the new bridge was discussed. Members of the Bridge Working Group supported the naming of the new bridge the “Freedmans Village Bridge” to reflect the historical significance of the Freedmans Village.

The naming of the bridge was also discussed at the Design Public Hearing that was held by VDOT on June 17, 2008 to present the project design and receive input from the community. There was a consensus among those in attendance that the bridge should be named “Freedmans

Village Bridge”. The Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization and the Arlington Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) also support naming the bridge “Freedmans Village Bridge”. Although different spellings appear in various documents, the HALRB voted “Freedmans Village Bridge” (no apostrophe) as the correct spelling (See attached letter of endorsement.)

The Code of Virginia provides that bridges and highways in the Commonwealth of Virginia can be named by the CTB if such naming has been requested by a resolution of the local governing body in which the facility to be named is located. VDOT requires that the County Board indicate in the resolution that the County will pay for the embossing of the bridge name into the bridge concrete. VDOT estimates the cost to be \$800.

FISCAL IMPACT: As with all betterments to VDOT-administered projects requested by Arlington, the County is required to pay the expenses related to the betterment. VDOT provides the estimated cost of producing the signage as a part of the bridge structure (currently estimated at \$800.00) and the County will reimburse VDOT for the actual cost of the work. Funding for the signage is available in the Department of Environmental Services General Capital Improvement Fund (PAYG) revenue account 313.XXXX.43524.BM17.319.0000.



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD

Courthouse Plaza One 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 700 Arlington, VA 22201
TEL 703.228.3830 FAX 703.228.3834 www.arlingtonva.us

September 19, 2008

Mr. William Roberts
Capital Project Management Supervisor
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Ste. 900
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Roberts:

At its most recent meeting on September 17, 2008, the Arlington County Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) discussed the proposed name for the new bridge at Washington Boulevard and Columbia Pike. The HALRB voted 6-1 in favor of the proposed name "Freedmans Village Bridge." The HALRB deferred this item from their August 20th meeting because they did not want to give an endorsement without first hearing from the Arlington Historical Society and the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. Since that meeting, both groups indicated in writing that they supported the proposed name, and the HALRB is pleased to endorse the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this matter.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Isabel Kaldenbach-Montemayor".

Isabel Kaldenbach-Montemayor
Chairman

cc: Michael Leventhal, Historic Preservation Coordinator, CPHD

**Resolution of the County Board of Arlington County, Virginia
Requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board to Name the Bridge at
State Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) and State Route 244 (Columbia Pike)
in Arlington County, Virginia the “Freedmans Village Bridge”**

State Project # 0027-000-V01, P01, RW 201, C501, B601, B617, D602

WHEREAS, as a part of the State Routes 27/244 Interchange Modifications project, also known as State Project # 0027-000-V01, P01, RW 201, C501, B601, B617, D602 (the “Project”), the Virginia Department of Transportation (“VDOT”) is proceeding with the replacement of the Washington Boulevard (State Route 27) bridge over Columbia Pike (State Route 244) (“Bridge”); and,

WHEREAS, the County Board of Arlington County, Virginia (“County Board”) desires that the Bridge to be constructed pursuant to the Project be given the name “Freedmans Village Bridge”; and,

WHEREAS, State law provides that no name be given to a bridge in the system of state highways unless and until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has received, from the local governing body of the locality within which the bridge is located, a resolution requesting such naming.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Arlington County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Commonwealth Transportation Board name the State Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) Bridge over State Route 244 (Columbia Pike) constructed under State Project # 0027-000-V01, P01, RW 201, C501, B601, B617, D602 in Arlington County, Virginia, the “Freedmans Village Bridge.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the County Board hereby agrees to bear all costs associated with the architectural treatment embossing this name into the concrete of the bridge.

ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2009.

**BY _____
Attest**