



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of October 18, 2008**

**DATE: September 18, 2008**

**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:** 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. No issues have been identified.

**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.

**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.

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: William Roberts, DES-Transportation Planning

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. The process to select a qualified design-build candidate is underway and a contract award is expected in early 2009. Construction is expected to take approximately 30 months. A definitive schedule will be developed once the design-build firm is selected, and it is anticipated that the project will be completed in late 2013. 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.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact to Arlington County related to the naming of the bridge.



HISTORICAL AFFAIRS AND LANDMARK REVIEW BOARD

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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 20<sup>th</sup> 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; and,**

**WHEREAS, by this Resolution the County Board requests that the Bridge be named as provided herein.**

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

**ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2008.**

**BY \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Attest**