

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY



FOR ARLINGTON COUNTY

September 29, 2025

Hui Wang, Director of Transportation
Ellen M. Bozman Government Center
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Columbia Pike Bike Boulevard Concept Plan

Dear Director Wang:

I write today with lengthy feedback on the Columbia Pike Bicycle Boulevard Concept Plans presented at the September 18th Open House at Walter Reed Community Center. The proposed plan fails to meet the needs of the Columbia Pike Community. It suffers from several high-level issues that pervade the entire plan, including:

1. Little to no connectivity to the Pike, to each other, and to other bike facilities
2. Insufficient traffic calming
3. Lack of modal filters to keep traffic at safe levels for a bicycle boulevard
4. Several Intersections are not safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities
5. Lack of long-term planning to go with this short-term “implementable now” plan

We have added this feedback via the County’s survey & mapping tool to the extent possible, but wanted to also present a more unified letter with more space for reasoning, context, and citations. Furthermore, the county’s survey offers no place to provide overall feedback, outside of answers to very specific questions, or specific locations on the map. We have also included a marked-up overview map with our recommendations as Appendix G, in case it is helpful.

Lack of Connectivity to the Pike, to Each Other, and to other Bike Facilities

The bike boulevards are not just a way for people to travel along the Pike, they need to function as a way for people to travel to and from business and residences on the Pike. The current plan functions more as a highway bypass to avoid the Pike; we want a local connector that can get people to and from the Pike as well, serving our neighborhood businesses. Regular north-south streets should get the boulevard treatment so that people biking and scooting can get over to the Pike safely and comfortably at least somewhat near their desired destination; these north-south connections would also connect the two bike boulevards on each side of the Pike, allowing users to safely transition between them, and connect to the north-side sidepath being built along Columbia Pike east of Courthouse Road as part of the Columbia Pike Multimodal Project. Our suggestions are:

- Greenbrier St (8th Rd to the Pike) - connect to commercial destinations
- Dinwiddie St (8th Rd to the Pike) - connect to commercial destinations

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- Wakefield St (8th St to Four Mile Run Dr) - connect to commercial destinations, residential, and link up with Barcroft Apartment plans
- Taylor St (8th St to the Pike) - connect to Barcroft Elementary and residential destinations
- Quincy St (8th St to 12th St) - connect to Randolph Elementary, commercial, residential, and link the two boulevards together
- Monroe St (9th St to 12th St) - connect to commercial destinations and link the two boulevards together
- Highland St (9th St to 12th St) - connect to Arlington Tech campus, commercial destinations, and link the two boulevards together
- Adams St (9th to the Pike) - connect to commercial destinations, and to the traffic signal at Barton & Columbia Pike (via 9th Rd)
- Courthouse Rd (6th to the Pike - just needs the bike lane gaps filled) - connect to dense residential and the new Columbia Pike sidepath
- Rolfe St (9th to 12th) - connect to residential destinations, connect the two bike boulevards to each other, and link the Washington Boulevard Trail to the planned Arlington View Connector

Several of these connections have been expected & notated in Columbia Pike Planning documents (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, the County should consider a certain level of branching on the bike boulevards to better connect to various other facilities and in other directions. Having only a single blessed alignment for either boulevard often introduces back-tracking and a longer-than necessary routing. Examples:

- To better connect for users approaching from the north on the W&OD Trail, both 7th St S and 9th St S should get the boulevard treatment between the W&OD Trail and Wakefield, joining up into a single alignment on 8th Street at Taylor. As currently envisioned, W&OD trail users approaching from the north would need to go down to 9th St and then backtrack to 8th to continue along the bike boulevard.
- Similarly, the north-side bike boulevard should split at Wayne Street to allow users the option to either go up to 6th St to reach the Washington Boulevard Trail, or to continue on 8th Street instead, connecting down to the Pike along South Courthouse Road to use the new Columbia Pike sidepath.

Insufficient Traffic Calming

While we applaud the curb bump outs and the chicanes included in the concept plan, there are several long stretches where no traffic calming measures are envisioned. We think any stretch of bike boulevard with more than 2 blocks between stop controls needs some kind of traffic calming - chicanes, mini traffic circles, or modal filters. These are critical to keeping vehicle

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speeds below 20 miles per hour, the threshold for an all-ages and abilities bike boulevard, [according to NACTO](#). Examples:

- 8th Rd S between Greenbrier and Dinwiddie
- 8th St S between George Mason Drive and Quincy St

Separated facilities are needed on the bike boulevards anywhere there is serious grade that will slow down those biking and scooting. For example, the proposed buffered facility west of George Mason Drive should also have separation (parking stops, modular curbs, or similar) and westbound 8th Rd S between Dinwiddie and Frederick should have a separated facility for that hill as well.

Lack of Modal Filters to Keep Traffic at Safe Levels

In order for a bicycle boulevard to function as an all-ages and abilities facility, traffic speeds must be kept low and traffic volumes must be kept in check as well; NACTO recommends keeping bicycle boulevards below 500 vehicles per day and 50 vehicles in the peak hour. The new signals envisioned for the 9th Street Bicycle Boulevards are critically important, but they will also make this route more attractive to people driving. The answer here is modal filters on 9th Street on either side of these main arterials, to prevent motor vehicles from traveling long distances along the bicycle boulevards to take advantage of these new signals.

Several Intersections that are insufficiently safe and comfortable for an all-ages and abilities facility

Several important all-way stops have been added to the bicycle boulevards this year, making for a big improvement in several areas, however the concept plans still include several intersections where children are expected to make a left-turn onto or across a street where cars do not have to come to a stop. These intersections need either an all-way stop or a mini-roundabout to provide a safe, comfortable experience through these intersections. For example:

- 8th Rd S & Dinwiddie St
- 9th St S & Dinwiddie St
- 9th St S & Wakefield St
- 9th St S & Irving St
- 9th St S & Wayne St
- 6th St S & Courthouse Rd (also needs centerline hardening due to cars driving into oncoming traffic lanes to go around stopped buses)
- 8th St S & Courthouse Rd (see above recommendations on splitting this portion of the boulevard)
- 11th St S & Highland St
- 11th St S & Cleveland St

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Need for a Long-Term Plan

We recognize that the plan being put forward at this time is constrained to what can be easily implemented right away, and we commend this urgency on the part of the County. However, the Pike neighborhoods need to see a vision for what will eventually be possible, as the proposed plan is a band-aid, at best. It is (understandably, given the constraints) circuitous and disjointed. We need to understand how the County is planning to slowly address these flaws over time using Capital funding. Major issues that will need to be addressed long-term include:

- The Columbia Pike bridge over Four Mile Run does not have a sidewalk wide enough to safely and comfortably be an all-ages and abilities facility. It also requires people biking to take a very circuitous route. A bike-ped bridge over Four Mile Run connecting 9th St S on the west side of the creek to 9th St S on the east side of the creek would be a huge improvement for safety, comfort, and efficient travel.
- The gap in the south-side bike boulevard between Scott Street and Barton Street - will require the cooperation of several landowners including Barkley Condos, Dominion Towers, and possibly Arlington Village.
- The significant deviation from the Pike required in order to travel east beyond Wayne St. This was not supposed to be a problem, the Columbia Pike sidepath was supposed to extend west to Wayne Street according to the Columbia Pike Initiative Update (see Appendix B) and was the intent of Pike Multimodal according to several emails from the project manager (see Appendix C), but that does not appear to be what is being built at this time. Solving this now will either require a follow-on capital project to widen the sidewalk between Wayne & Vietch to trail-width, or purchasing two homes to push a trail through between Wayne & Vietch aligning with 9th St (see Appendix D).
- The significant deviation from the Pike and serious grade along the bike boulevards resulting from detouring all the way up to 8th St to cross George Mason Drive. Solving this will likely require a bike/ped bridge connection over George Mason Drive, between Taylor St and the dead end of 9th St between Quincy and Randolph. This connection is envisioned in the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Plan (see Appendix E)
- The trail through Doctors Branch Park is too narrow, circuitous, and hilly to be a good link in the bicycle network. It also takes users a block too far to the south to properly meet up with the planned bike facilities at the Barcroft Apartments which will be on 12th Rd S, not 13th St S where the trail lets out. This could be solved by relocating the trail to hug the northern property line of Doctors Branch Park as called for in the Pike Neighborhoods Plan (see Appendix E), but staff instead seem committed to waiting for the future redevelopment of both the Quebec Apts and the 7-11 / former Penske site, which will likely take decades.
- The sidepath being built along Columbia Pike east of Courthouse Road by the Columbia Pike Multimodal project is the best that could be achieved now, but will not be winning any awards, nor does it really qualify as an all-ages and abilities facility. The streetscape being built by the federal project that is realigning the far east end of the Pike is what we

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should be striving for (see Appendix F). The build-to-lines of the Columbia Pike Form-based Codes should be updated such that future redevelopment between Wayne Street and Nash Street provides enough right-of-way to the County that the federal streetscape can eventually be extended from where it ends at Nash to where the north-side Bike Boulevard has to deviate far from the Pike at Wayne Street.

Thank you for your time and attention to our concerns about this important plan and project in one of the county's equity-emphasis areas. We want to ensure that Arlington's "Main Street" is accessible to all, despite the lack of facilities directly on the Pike.

Chris Slatt
President, Sustainable Mobility for Arlington County

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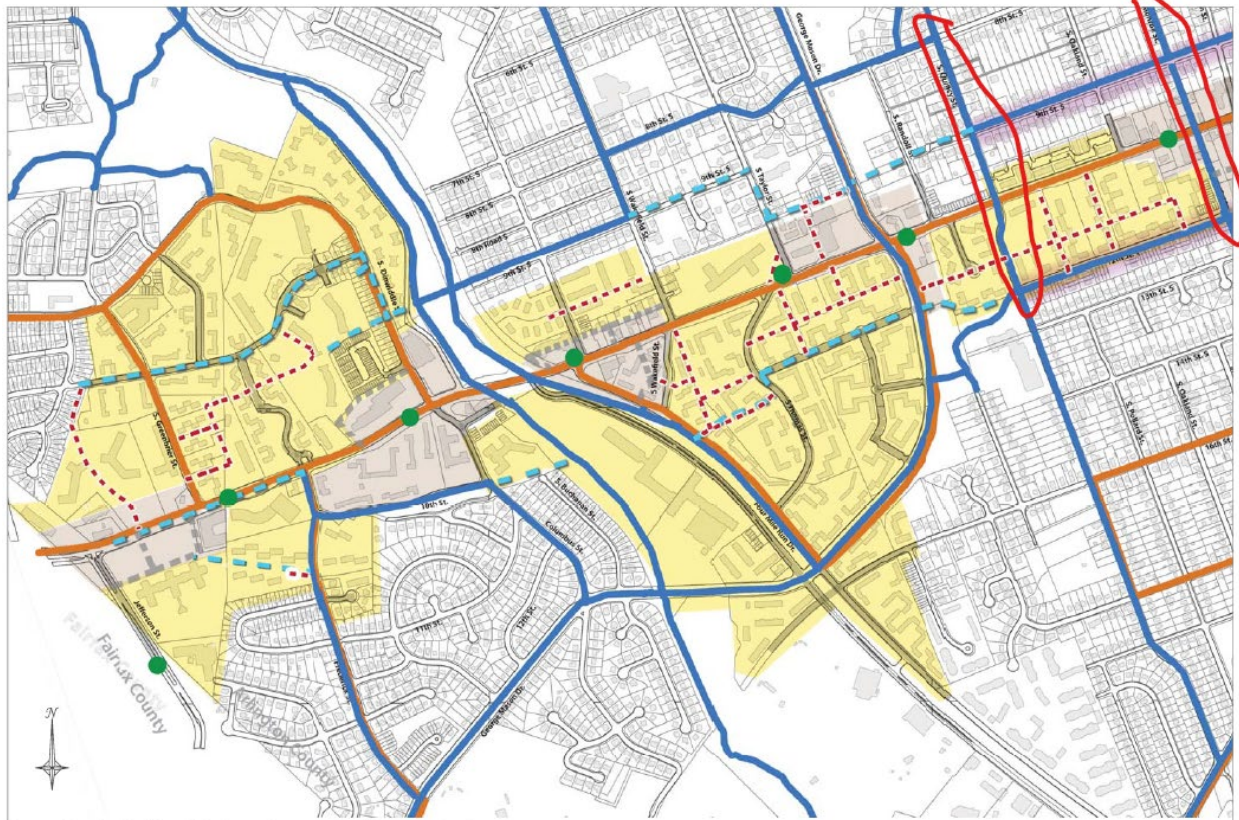


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Appendix A

POLICIES

TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS MAPS

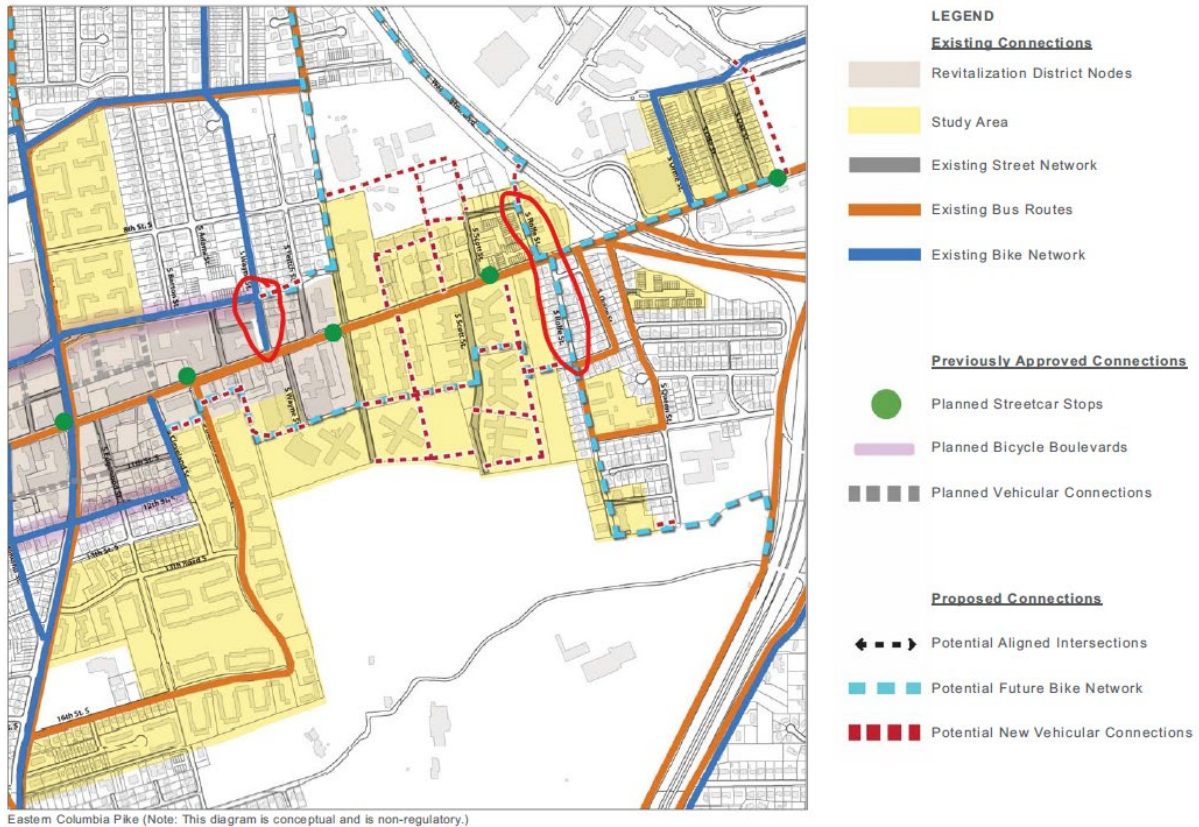


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COLUMBIA PIKE NEIGHBORHOODS AREA PLAN



JULY 2012

4.41

Pike Neighborhoods Plan - SusMo annotations in red

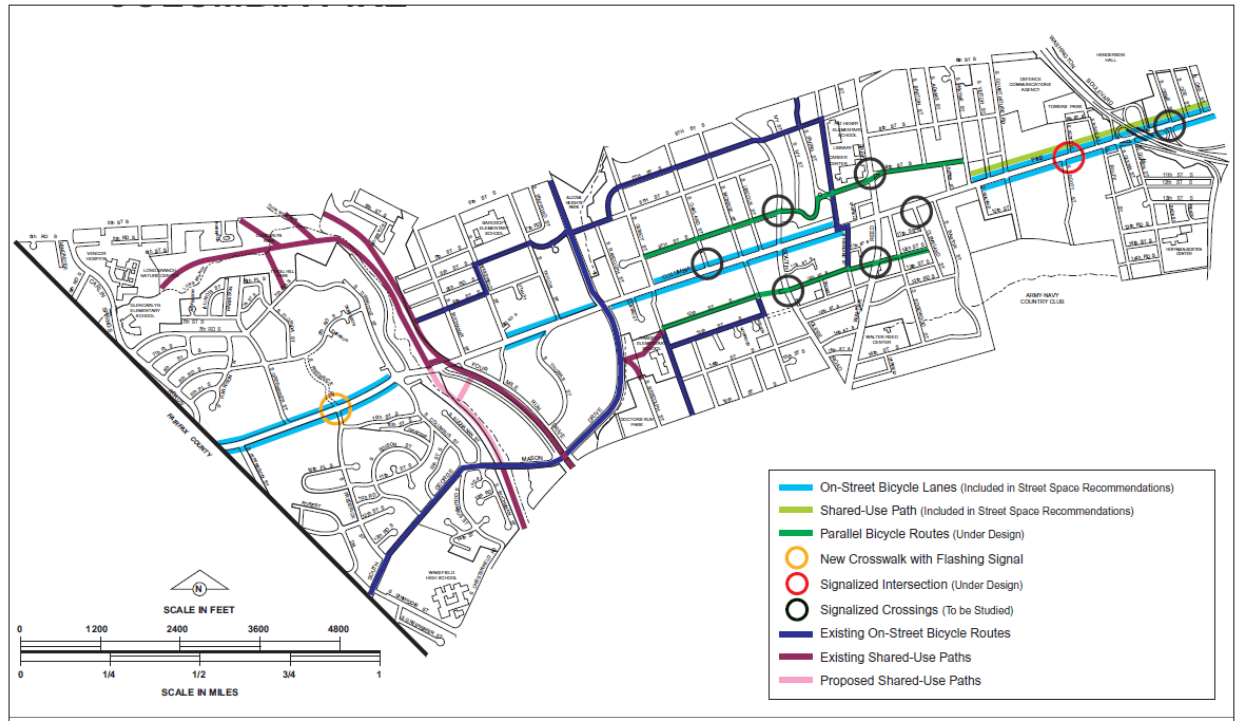
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Appendix B

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



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Appendix C



William Roberts <wroberts@arlingtonva.us>
to Christine, Daniel, me, Bonnie, David, Susan ▾

Thu, Sep 10, 2015, 2:32 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮

Hi Chris,

It is our intention to extend the 10' shared use path all the way to Vietch St. We won't be able to have street trees in that section but we can try to plant trees behind the path where feasible and with property owner permission. There is one driveway in that section (to a residence next to the Church) that will be a little problematic but we think we can make it work.

Bill



Chris Slatt <chris@dodgersden.com>
to William, Bonnie, David, Susan, Christine, Daniel ▾

Thu, Mar 24, 2016, 9:22 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮

Bill,

Is it still the intention to maintain the 10' sidepath on Columbia Pike all the way to Vietch? The plans that Daniel forwarded to the Pike Presidents group appear to have tree boxes between **Wayne** and Veitch (though I may just be misreading the plans).

Chris



Daniel Reinhard <Dreinhard@arlingtonva.us>
to me, William, Bonnie, David, Susan, Christine ▾

Thu, Mar 24, 2016, 11:05 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮

Chris,

The plans haven't been updated with that change yet, but it is the intention to remove the tree pits in that block to maintain the 10' to **Wayne**.

Dan

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Pike Multimodal 10' sidepath External



Chris Slatt <chris@dodgersden.com>
to Susan ▾

Wed, Aug 18, 2021, 1:26 PM



Hey Susan,

With Pike Multimodal segments C&D finally on the horizon, I just wanted to check-in about one design detail. In 2016 I had gotten confirmation from staff that the 10' sidepath on the north side of the Pike would extend west all the way to **WAYNE** street, to meet up with the end of the 9th St Bike Boulevard. (the 50% plans had just a 6' sidewalk between Courthouse Rd and **Wayne St**) Since I haven't seen any updated plans over the years, I wanted to just check-in to see if this is still the intention.

Thanks for all you do,
Chris



Susan Finotti <Sfinotti@arlingtonva.us>
to me ▾

Tue, Aug 31, 2021, 3:18 PM



Hi Chris,

Sorry I'm just getting back to you on this. Still catching up from being off a couple weeks ago. I did confirm today that we will have a 10' wide sidewalk up to **Wayne** Street. I saw on the plans where it did mention 6' and not sure why that was, but measuring this on the CAD drawing, we do show 10'. In the area between **Wayne** and Vietch, we will not disturb the existing retaining wall however still will have the 10' walk.

Hope this helps and hopefully we will have more updated plans soon.

Let me know if you need anything else. Have a great evening and be safe with the rains coming in.
Susan

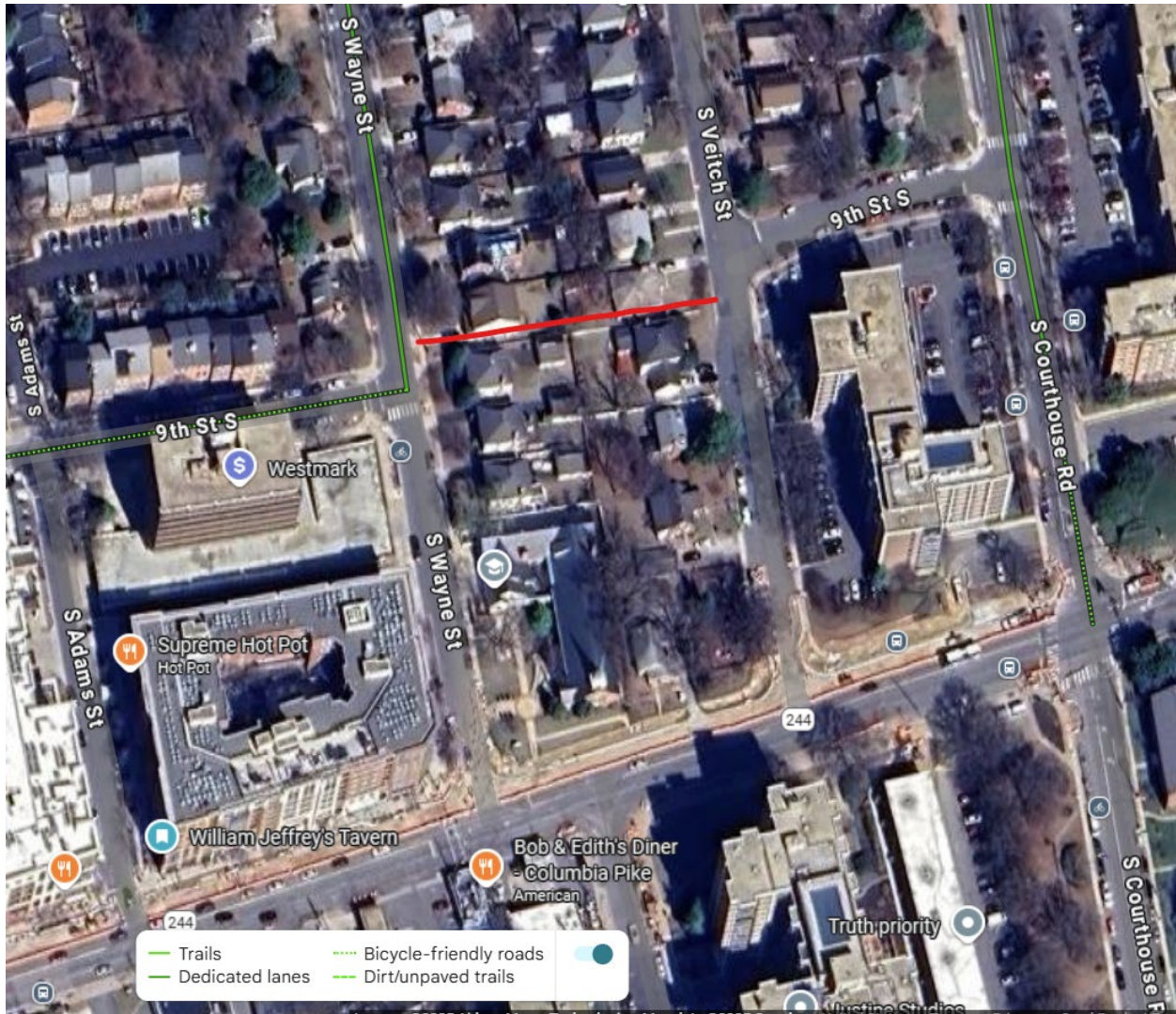
Susan Finotti

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Appendix D



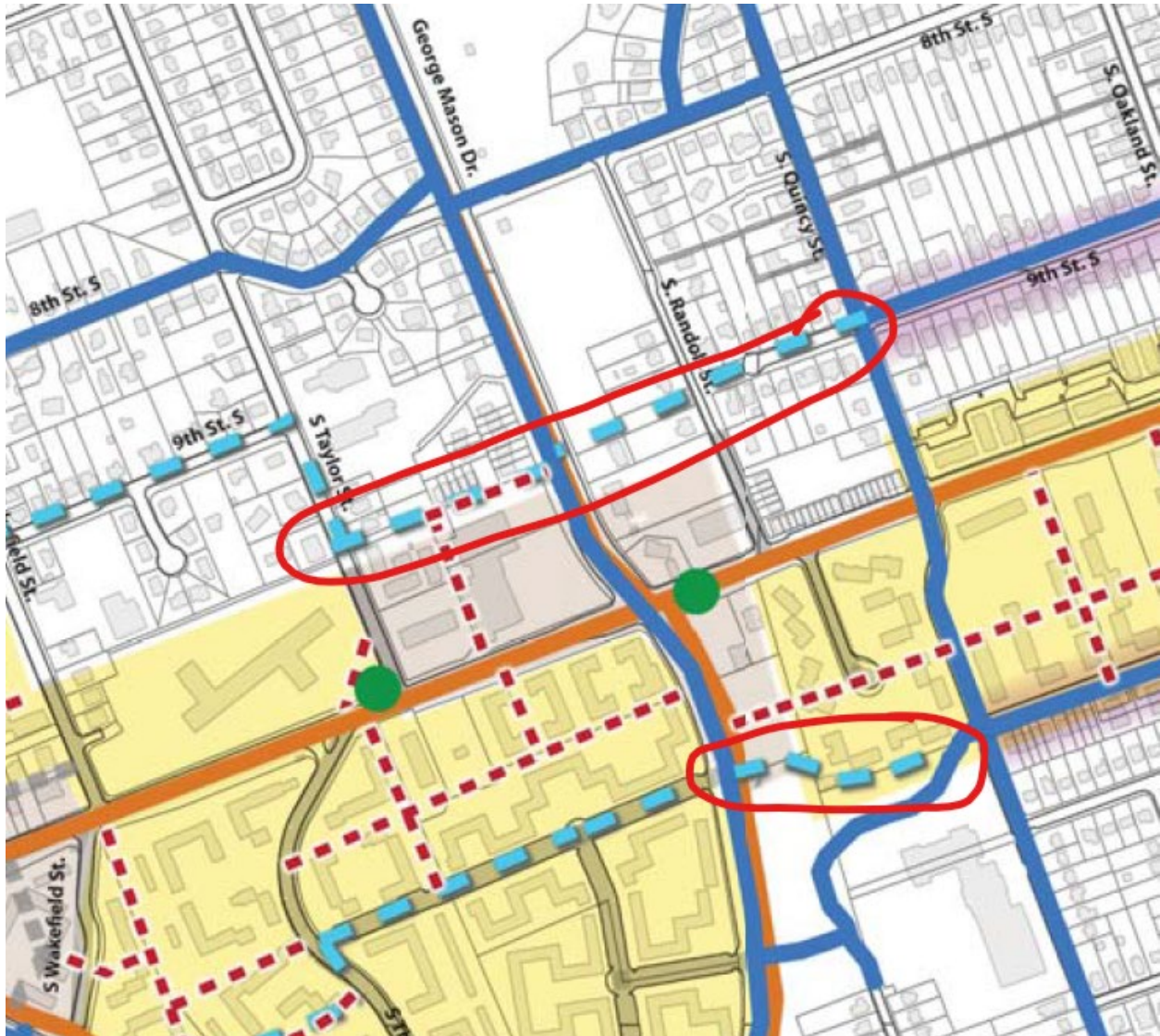
Potential long-term solution to circuitous routing to bridge this gap between Wayne and Vietch along the 9th St Bike Boulevard

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Appendix E



Pike Neighborhoods Plan, showing expected new connections: a bridge over George Mason Drive linking Quincy to Taylor and a new trail along the north edge of Doctors Branch Park. Annotations by SusMo in solid red

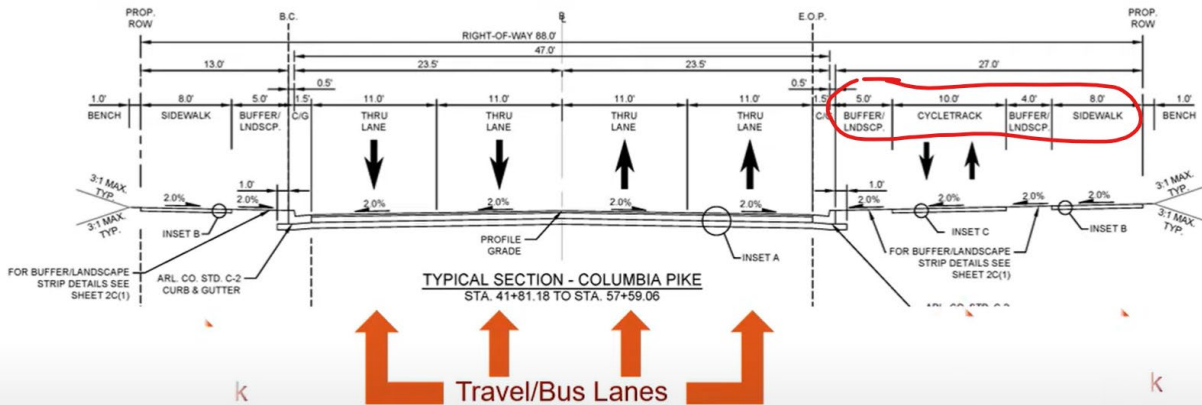
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Appendix F

DEFENSE ACCESS ROAD



Defense Access Road project cross-section, annotations in solid red by SusMo highlighting north-side streetscape

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Appendix G

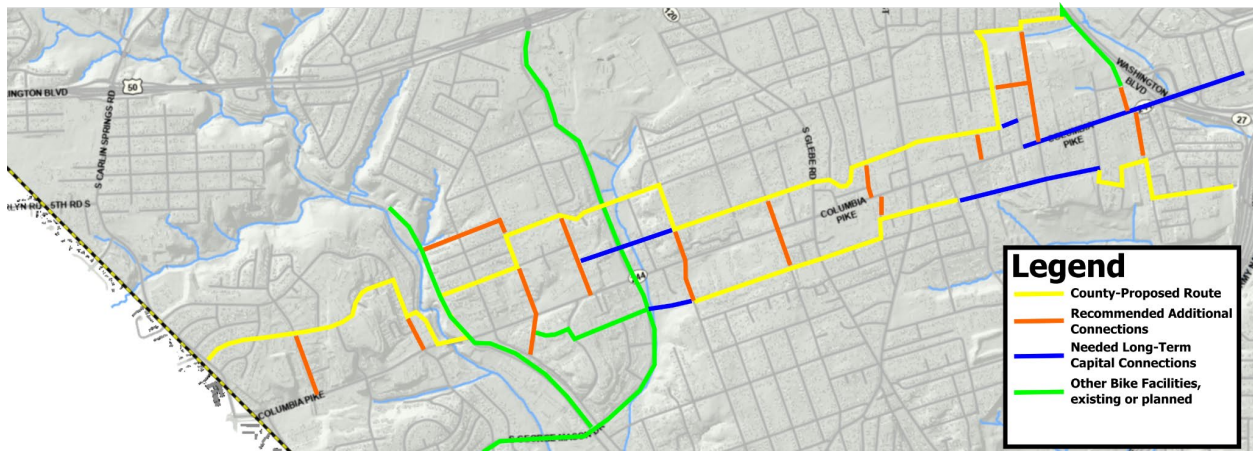


Illustration of proposed improvements to County concept plan, by SusMo