

## Mount Vernon Civic Association Transportation News for October 2010

Greetings from Bavaria, where your Mount Vernon Civic Association Transportation Chair is currently feverishly working away into the small hours of the night on a mission to improve transatlantic economic ties. I write this from a hotel in the shadow of the historic castle looming over the city of Nuremberg. The hotel itself is situated over a warren of casemates, bunkers, and old water tunnels which brought spring water from the heights on which the castle was built down into the city. All in all, it's some amazing engineering which was well-planned at the time, prudently financed, carefully built, and withstood the test of time. I arrived here in Nuremberg in part via road and rail from further south, and in fact, I could have come from any point on the compass to this city by availing myself of an excellent, well-planned, prudently financed, carefully built, road and rail network that will probably withstand the test of time. Whilst riding the rails, comfortably situated in a spotless carriage and enjoying fine food and drink, I asked myself why we in the States shouldn't have the same services at our disposal. Then, ambling about town on cobblestone-paved streets that seem as much art as infrastructure, I had to ask myself why we put up with potholed arteries with crumbling shoulders and mysterious dips and ridges that would make most roller coasters envious. And it seems that the Mount Vernon Council of Civic Associations (MVCCA) has recently asked the same questions and taken up some of these issues with our elected officials and other miscreants and ne'er-do-wells with responsibility for our roadways and other transportation infrastructure.

During the October 4 meeting of the MVCCA Transportation Committee, the following points were on the agenda. The scheduled guest speaker was legal counsel for Sunoco, who was to speak on Sunoco's planned acquisition of land from the Commonwealth of Virginia to put in a service station at the corner of Huntington Avenue and US 1. That project would replace the former gas station that was condemned and turned into a construction staging area. Also on the agenda was a draft resolution concerning the need for a regional rail transit study. The regional rail transit study would lay the groundwork for the eventual extension of the Yellow Line from Huntington Station, for example, and would be the first in a series of assessments of the feasibility of bringing an extension of the Metro line to life as an above-ground line (theoretically along a "center line" of Route 1, or moving underground in a more ambitious undertaking. Moreover, the agenda covered "brainstorming ideas" which resulted from the September 13, 2010 Visioning Task Force Transportation Committee. One of the ideas that was brought up in that session was a proposal for ferry service between the District of Columbia and points south, which I will elaborate on in a later newsletter. The MVCCA also explored - under the category "new business" the issue of Governor Bob McDonnell's recent announcement of the results of an independent audit of the Virginia Department of Transportation that identifies \$1 billion in unallocated federal and state contingency funds. VDOT will advertise and award \$800-\$900 million of maintenance and construction projects by December 31, 2010. A list of projects will be released within 45 days. Furthermore, the question of whether the MVCCA should draft a resolution to request the repaving of Fort Hunt Road was addressed.

Some of the other lingering issues that I have no answers to are what the status of Mulligan Road is (Mulligan Road being the replacement for Woodlawn Road that should ultimately provide much needed improved access to points generally West of Route 1 from Old Mill Road), when we can expect a definitive statement of status from VDOT on modifications to and/or the expansion of Route 1, and why haphazard repaving - generally of streets that seem to be in reasonably good shape at the expense of neighborhood streets that are falling to pieces - seems to be the order of the day. One last issue I've discussed with Supervisor Hyland's office is how we can better address overflow parking at Grist Mill Park on Saturdays, when traffic related to the Gunston Soccer League leads to "creative" parking situations.

Safe travels and keep an eye on the speedometer and a weather eye open to potholes!

Auf Wiedersehen,

Pete Esser  
MVCA Transportation Chair