

April 6, 2020

Dear Mr. Rooney and the Winston Downs Community Association:

Thank you for your participation on the E Virginia Ave bike lane and for helping organize the community to help provide feedback on the project. As we discussed on the phone, we look forward to continuing the engagement process with you and others in an upcoming virtual small group meeting. With your help, we hope to gather additional feedback that can implement a neighborhood bikeway that is beneficial to the city's residents, while addressing challenges the local community may see in the design.

There were many great questions and comments at the public meeting, on January 21, 2020, and we regret that we couldn't answer them fully at the time. We have been working hard to ensure we address the concerns brought forth, and we thank you for summarizing them for us in your recent letter.

We understand that, even with many avid cyclists in the community, there is still a feeling that the E Virginia Ave bike lane won't meet the needs or interests of the local community. It's important to remember that though we frequently call streets, "our streets," and refer to parking in front of our homes as "our parking", Denver's roads are a public space, entitled to all users, and they are the travel ways that connect our communities. These roads are not intended to benefit one neighborhood or merely the people who live adjacent to the street, but all people who travel in Denver. As the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, it is our responsibility to assess the use of this public good and ensure that the highest-and-best use is maintained. Plans like DenverRight, Blueprint Denver, and the City of Denver's Modal Plans, including Denver Moves: Bicycles, represent the vision thousands of people, through decades of community engagement, have provided to lay the framework for how Denver's spaces should be used to meet the needs of all.

One of the visions that has transpired from these plans is the communities desire for more comfortable and safe mobility options. Options that will create a healthier, more sustainable city and reduce additional congestion on our roads. To achieve this vision, DOTI is working to expand bicycle infrastructure to benefit existing bicyclists, but also increase the number of people who bike on our roads, especially those who don't bicycle today because they do not feel comfortable doing so. These riders are interested in bicycling, but are concerned about safety, and these riders are the target for the expansion of Denver's bikeways across the city, including E Virginia Ave.

There are several additional points from your letter that we would like to discuss at the small group meeting, (to be scheduled). These points were pulled from the letter sent on behalf of the Winston Downs Community Association, dated February 27th, and are listed below:

1. It is not apparent that the project as currently envisioned will improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and school children.
2. Feeling of being “blindsided”. The Virginia corridor was a recommended bike lane location from a high-level plan that does not include design details. Lack of engagement in the design process prior to the presentation.
3. DOTI developed alternative designs without the community’s input and did not provide any room for changes to the preferred alternative
4. Input of Fairmount Cemetery, as this route would significantly impact bike traffic in their privately-owned cemetery
5. Request for full transparency in relation to the request for copies of attendance sheets and meeting notes from DOT) staff at the meeting.
6. Removing vehicle parking on Virginia Avenue would eliminate the main obstacle that currently slows traffic speeds and manages risks for pedestrians and cyclists.
7. DGS and GWHS have had minimal input in the design process. Concerns with dropoff/pickup areas, parking access, additional side street volumes and increased vehicle turns with limited visibility.
8. Incorporate the well-used, shared-use sidewalk on Alameda that is already maintained by the City and provides a sheltered path for cyclists that does not expose them to motor vehicle traffic along its length.
9. Information on nearby connecting routes was not available. Homeowners asked to sacrifice safety, value and convenience without information on effectiveness of connections. Alternatives to maximize benefits and mitigate risk.
10. E. Virginia Ave empties unsafely onto S. Quebec
 - a. Questions on whether or not the S. Quebec sidewalk is multi-use or shared-use and who is responsible for snow removal and vegetation maintenance
11. Maps presented at the listening session identified S. Quebec St. as a “shared use sidewalk” but this is contrary to Denver bike maps published by Denver as recently as 2019 that identify S. Quebec St. as a “shared lane” bike route.
12. The methods to collect parking use data used to justify the project were flawed because they relied on data collected during evenings (7:00pm — 9:00pm) and weekends, which does not capture the actual traffic and parking issues found along this corridor. (See Safety)
 - a. Calculation methods were not transparent. School traffic parking usage not accounted for
13. Traffic speed data presented is not valid. For the portion of the bike lane extending from S. Quebec St. to S. Oneida Way, vehicle speeds are restricted due to posted 25MPH speed limits and stormwater-related dips in the road.

14. Significant downward impact on home values along the route relative to other comparable homes in the two neighborhoods. The magnitude of the impact on these homeowners must be balanced against the perceived potential benefit associated with a potentially small increase in the number of cyclists using the route.

We can also provide an update on the next steps that were agreed to at the last meeting and that were highlighted in your letter, including parking and speed data; design alternatives; outreach updates with DGS, GWHS and Fairmount Cemetery; and Quebec St status.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
DOTI's Bike and PedestrianTeam