

ACST NEWS

Newsletter of the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation

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www.acstnet.org

December 2004

I-66 Town Hall Meeting: Wiser or Wider?

ON January 10th, 2005, at 7:30 p.m., the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation (ACST) will host a town hall meeting on the future of I-66.

Come hear speakers Theresa DeFore, VDOT Idea-66 Study Project Manager; Jason Rylander, ACST President; and Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board member speak on current I-66 issues and potential regional impacts of the ongoing VDOT Idea-66 study <http://www.idea66.com>.

Theresa DeFore will report on the specific concepts and evaluation criteria being used for the Idea-66 study and the opportunities that remain for public involvement.

Jason Rylander will review how ACST has successfully redirected I-66-widening initiatives over the past five years toward creating a much-needed comprehensive plan to effectively manage the existing I-66 highway and Metrorail links as an integrated and truly multimodal regional corridor. He will also outline I-66 alternatives that would be better, smarter, and cleaner than widening and ACST's current work to influence and improve the Idea-66 study.

Chris Zimmerman will frame the debate over I-66's future in the context of regional, state, and federal politics and discuss how Arlingtonians can prevail to ensure that all viable alternatives to widening I-66 are fully and fairly evaluated.

After the speaker presentations, interested participants will engage in brainstorming, strategy, and activity sessions to help ACST

build a vibrant citizens' movement for a "wiser, not wider" I-66 through Arlington. The event will conclude by celebrating ACST's fifth anniversary with cake, other refreshments, and socializing.

The meeting will be at NRECA, 4301 Wilson Blvd (corner of Taylor St.) across from Ballston Common Mall, two blocks from Metro. Enter the free parking garage on N Taylor Street.

Public Involvement Suffers in Idea-66 Study

ACST members as well as many public officials and Arlington citizens were particularly disappointed this fall with VDOT's failure to provide a proactive, meaningful, and robust public involvement process for the duration of the Idea-66 study. In an attempt to reverse VDOT's secretive study approach, Jason Rylander sent a letter to Virginia Transportation Secretary Clement on December 15th outlining ACST's concerns and requesting an improved public involvement process. Among the issues cited was the fact that with barely two months until study completion, all meaningful public involvement and feedback has ceased. Specific requests in the letter included releasing immediately for public comment:

1. The study team's current draft "problem statement" for the I-66 multimodal corridor;
2. The full list of I-66 "alternatives" (or "improvement concepts") under consideration for evaluation in the study matrix;
3. The full list of I-66 "evaluation criteria" under consideration for the study matrix and a

meaningful description of how each criterion is defined, measured, and rated for the study report;

4. A draft study matrix showing each studied "alternative" and "impact" determined to date;

5. A community outreach plan for the study that includes additional public and outside agency involvement and feedback from the community; and

6. A summary of all technical tasks being conducted for this study, including lists of the existing technical and policy studies being reviewed.

ACST also requested that the draft study report and matrix for the study be posted on the project website for a 30-day public comment period prior to VDOT issuing a final report. The final report should include a summary of all comments received on the draft and VDOT's responses to those comments.

As of December 23rd, none of ACST's concerns have been addressed on the Idea-66 website.

Fact Sheet on Widening

ACST published a fact sheet describing

why widening is not the best solution to congestion in the I-66 corridor. The fact sheet was handed out at the Idea-66 public workshops and is available at www.acstnet.org. Causes of I-66 congestion, potential solutions, alternatives to widening, and criteria VDOT should use to evaluate options for I-66 are covered.

Limerick Contest

An anonymous ACST donor will provide a \$20 Metro Fastpass to the person submitting the best I-66 or regional transportation-related limerick. Entries will be judged by ACST board members with the winner announced at the January 10th town hall meeting.

Here is an example limerick to get your creative juices flowing:

"There once was a road too congested,
Solutions to which were contested,
Sprawllville wanted wider,
Smart Growth wanted wiser,
While transit stayed under-invested."

Send your entry by Jan. 8th to acst@postmark.net

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO ACST

ACST is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, so your year-end Contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Help ensure a strong citizen voice for sensible transportation solutions in 2005! Please complete and mail the form below with your donation to:

Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation, P.O. Box 5574, Arlington VA 22205-5574

NAME: _____ PREFERRED PHONE NUMBER: (____) _____

ADDRESS: _____

PREFERRED EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Enclosed is my donation of:

\$100___, \$75___, \$50___, \$25___, \$10___, \$_____ (Other Amount)

My volunteer interests are: (check all that apply) Outreach/Events___ Leafletting___

Advocacy___ Research___ Fundraising___ Website___ Newsletter___ Other_____