

ACST NEWS

Newsletter of the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation

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June 2004

From the ACST President....

This is a critically important time for ACST. After months of relative quiet on the issue of I-66 widening in Arlington, things are heating up. The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved a new study of I-66 westbound with Federal money given to VDOT at the behest of Congressmen Wolf and Davis (see following article). In addition, Congressman Wolf has earmarked another \$5 million for widening I-66 in Arlington for the next six-year federal transportation authorization bill. We have our work cut out for us.

But ACST has been gearing up for this and we are ready to promote and fight for our vision of transportation alternatives. In the past year, ACST has received prominent mention several times in various media, including the *Washington Post*. We have spoken at public meetings before numerous planning and Government bodies including the TPB, CTB, Metro Board, Arlington County Board and Civic Federation. We've assembled a knowledgeable and vigorous board of directors, and we've reached out to environmental and smart growth groups across the region and Virginia.

To win the I-66 battle, we need your help—your time, your expertise, and your financial assistance. Our opponents in the highway expansion and developer communities are well-connected and well-financed. We will need to work hard to make our voices heard. Please make a tax-deductible contribution today to ACST, PO Box 5574, Arlington, 22205, or contact us at ACST@postmark.net about how you can be more involved. Together we CAN preserve our quality of life in Arlington and make a positive difference for transportation in the region.

Jason Rylander

I-66 Study to Start This Summer

Widening still a possibility

Last summer, Congressmen Wolf and Davis designated \$1M in the FY 04 US Dept. of Transportation appropriation to study the feasibility of widening I-66 westbound from Rosslyn to the Dulles Connector at West Falls Church. On May 19th, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) voted to add the study to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FY 04, enabling VDOT to conduct this study.

ACST has steadfastly insisted that the study evaluate all alternative solutions for improving mobility on the I-66 corridor inside the beltway. Thanks largely to the efforts of the Arlington County Board and Governor Warner, the study's description now focuses on I-66 mobility rather than just adding a westbound lane. In addition, the description now states that any recommended changes to the highway be contained within the existing right-of-way and that all solutions proposed be context-sensitive, per Governor Warner's 4 September 2003 letter to Congressmen Wolf and Davis.

ACST members came out in force to speak at the TPB meeting. Jason Rylander, President of ACST, and four other ACST members spoke in support of a fair and objective study that evaluates all alternatives for reducing congestion in the I-66 corridor, including HOV changes, HOT lanes, better transit options and spot improvements to the highway. Jason and Allen Muchnick (an ACST Vice President), were quoted in a Washington Post article on May 20th.

Go to <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A41221-2004May19?language=printer>

to read the article.

The study, expected to take about eight months, is the first step in finding ways to reduce chronic congestion and multi-modal transit mismanagement in the I-66 corridor, hopefully without adding any lanes. Results of the study will shape how I-66 through Arlington functions long into the future.

Tom Farley, VDOT District Administrator, has stated on several occasions (including the TPB meeting) that extensive community input will be solicited during the study. To ensure your voice is heard, watch for notifications of public hearings on the website (www.acstnet.org) and in ACST group emails (join by sending an email to: ACST_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

Although many Arlingtonians oppose widening I-66, developer proponents of widening remain very active and were also present at the TPB meeting, where several speakers urged that the road be widened. Widening proponents also submitted more than 30 written comments to the TPB in May and will certainly be vocal during the upcoming VDOT study. We will need your help to ensure that Arlingtonians and others who oppose widening are vocal activists as the study progresses.

Support ACST!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Tax-deductible donation \$ _____

ACST at the Arlington Fair

On August 19-22, ACST will staff a booth at the Arlington County Fair for the fourth consecutive year. ACST's fun and engaging booth will be a prime opportunity to inform Arlingtonians of VDOT's upcoming I-66 feasibility study, and dozens of volunteers are needed to staff the booth for short (2 to 4 hour) shifts.

To volunteer for a staffing assignment or to contribute your creative talents to the booth, email Peter Fallon at pfallon591@aol.com

ACST Seeks Board Members and Volunteers

During the four and a half years since ACST was founded, several key ACST leaders have moved from the area and several others have become less active. With the launch of VDOT's I-66 feasibility study, ACST needs new volunteers to lead or assist with our organizational development, communication and community outreach activities. If you'd like to volunteer with ACST, send an email to ACST@postmark.net or attend our next monthly meeting Sunday, June 6th, in the cafeteria of the Capital Area Hospice. Directions can be found at www.acstnet.org.