MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION'S (MVCCA)
TESTIMONY ON EMBARK AND RICHMOND HIGHWAY WIDENING DESIGN
PA 2015-IV-MV1

This written testimony is offered on behalf of the members of the MVCCA, a non-profit organization that has been in existence since the 1970's and has worked to ensure the voices of the citizens living in the Mount Vernon District are heard.

The MVCCA has been involved in the EMBARK process since its beginning and we want to thank the staff and the Advisory Group for their efforts to bring true revitalization to the Richmond Highway Corridor. While we support the majority of this Plan Amendment we offer the following point regarding undergrounding of utilities and request the Board of Supervisors support our request for concurrent undergrounding and road widening:

The Board of Supervisors should direct staff to take appropriate actions to achieve undergrounding of utilities along the Richmond Highway Corridor from Fort Belvoir (Jeff Todd Way) to Costco (Napper Rd) concurrently with the road widening project for that portion of Richmond Highway and utilities should be undergrounded concurrently with all future widening to accommodate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) the length of the highway.

MVCCA appreciates this all costs money. However, there is a cost to remove the utility poles as the highway is widened and a cost to install them in a new location along the highway. These dollars can and should be moved into a fund to pay towards undergrounding. New right of ways to install these new poles in new locations are required and we believe the cost of these right of ways would be the same for poles as for undergrounding.

Prince William County used a variety of funding methods, sources and authorizations to place their utilities underground along a portion of Richmond Highway. We believe Fairfax County can and should do the same.

Major and secondary roads within the County need to be prioritized in order to take advantage of some of these funding opportunities. We request that you do not let this vital revitalization corridor fall below the funding level lines to make the cut for dollars.

We once again request that the Board of Supervisors directs staff to take advantage of the variety of funding opportunities and mechanisms to ensure our revitalization area can realize utility undergrounding concurrently with Richmond Highway widening. Richmond Highway can be the example for undergrounding in all the County's revitalization areas.

(This testimony has been prepared on behalf of the MVCCA by K Ward Co-Chair and is consistent with previous resolutions and testimony to the PC and the BOS)