

**HUNTER MILL ROAD
TRAFFIC CALMING STUDY
Fairfax County, Virginia**

Prepared for:
Northern Virginia Regional Commission

Prepared by:
Draper Aden Associates
Alternate Street Design
December 2006

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Chapter I

Introduction

A brief review of the background, purpose, goal, and this study's public involvement will give a context for understanding potential futures of the Hunter Mill Road corridor. Subsequent chapters in this report examine in detail existing conditions, current plans, projected traffic volumes, transportation concept alternatives, community participation, and recommended traffic calming conceptual plan.

Study Purpose

Several decades ago, there began a grass-roots effort to protect Hunter Mill Road, a 7.2 mile natural and historic roadway that serves as the main street for over five thousand residents. Residents from many of the low-density cul-de-sac neighborhoods bordering the roadway have volunteered many hours developing and thus promoting their vision of how land use, transportation, and cultural and historic resources of the corridor should be continued, protected, and preserved. There have been public meetings and workshops that have always drawn hundreds of participants. These workshops were to specifically discuss safety issues, transportation and land use proposals, historic resource preservations, and traffic calming measures for Hunter Mill Road.

Building upon this grassroots effort and interest, the primary objective of this study was to engage residents, public officials, and representatives from public and private agencies in a process for developing a traffic calming conceptual plan for Hunter Mill Road. The purpose of this study is to improve safety for all users of Hunter Mill Road while enforcing the existing culture and character of the corridor as defined by the community. Some of the options under consideration for this study included the following:

- A do-nothing option or retain the status quo.
- A traditional engineering highway plan that includes such options as widening and straightening the vertical and horizontal curves of the roadway.
- A traffic calming alternative plan that includes landscaping, signage, splitters, roundabouts, providing for trails for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians, and crosswalks at street intersections and trail crossings.

Since an all-inclusive involvement is a crucial element for successful traffic calming plan development, input for this report was from the community, the Hunter Mill Road Traffic Calming Committee (The Committee), Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County planning, transportation and park agencies, Hunter Mill Defense League History Committee, Northern Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC). The study was managed by NVRC and conducted by Draper Aden Associates, with support from Alternate Street Design.

Background and Public Involvement

The majority of Hunter Mill Road is a 7.2 mile roadway operating as two lanes. The corridor is characterized by undulating alignment traversing scenic rolling terrain and is bordered by low density residential neighborhoods. The road serves as the principal access for residents living in cul-de-sac neighborhoods bordering the road. The Hunter Mill Road corridor has been deemed eligible for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. It is designated a Virginia Byway.

For several decades, citizens have been concerned about pedestrian and traffic issues that impact the quality of life and safety of residents living throughout the Hunter Mill Road corridor. For almost ten years, residents funded several well attended community workshops on traffic calming and context sensitive design. Citizens from throughout the corridor also engaged in a six month visioning exercise which culminated with a Vision Statement that received widespread community endorsement.

“The Community’s vision is to maintain Hunter Mill Road as a tranquil, residential byway with unique natural, historic, and picturesque character, thus preserving one of the last remaining scenic, rolling terrains in Fairfax County.”

2001 Vision Statement

Citizens also examined the Georgetown Pike Traffic Calming Study and the Route 50 Traffic Calming Study. They concluded that traffic calming alternatives would be appropriate for Hunter Mill Road. They asked State Delegate Vincent F. Callahan, Jr. to introduce legislation in the 2002 General Assembly session that would provide for a study similar to the Georgetown Pike Traffic Calming Study. Delegate Callahan worked with officials from VDOT to ensure that a traffic calming study would be completed for Hunter Mill Road. These efforts were supported by State Senator Janet Howell, then State Delegate Jeannemarie Devolites-Davis, and State Delegate Kenneth Plum. Efforts of citizens to traffic calm Hunter Mill Road continue to receive the support of Delegate Callahan, Delegate Plum, Delegate Steve Shannon, Senator Devolites-Davis, and Senator Howell whose districts include the Hunter Mill Road corridor.

Elected officials, Fairfax County staff and VDOT, determined the traffic calming study should be completed. Therefore, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed residents living in the corridor to serve on a Hunter Mill Road Traffic Calming Committee (The Committee). Committee membership includes representatives from each of the four (4) magisterial districts that border the corridor (Hunter Mill, Dranesville, Sully, and Providence). Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FX DOT) staff and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) staff. Staff from these agencies often served as advisors and provided valuable information and direction to the Committee

The Committee held monthly meetings where they reviewed and heard from transportation officials and engineers involved with both Route 50 and Georgetown Pike Traffic Calming Studies and citizen leaders. The Committee adopted the above Vision Statement and

developed a Mission Statement (**Appendix A**). They examined crash and traffic volume data, conducted a field study of the road, and planned two (2) public workshops. The first workshop was held on February 24, 2004. Over 250 citizens and representatives from local and state offices along with staff from Fairfax DOT and VDOT attended. In breakout sessions, citizens were asked to identify traffic, safety, and pedestrian issues and concerns as each related to Hunter Mill Road. Citizens also discussed where they would like to see the corridor in ten, twenty, and thirty years. At this meeting, the participants were informed that \$75,000 of state funds had been allocated to continue the efforts to select appropriate traffic calming measures for Hunter Mill Road.



May 24, 2006 Public Meeting

The second public workshop was held on May 24, 2006. NVRC and The Committee co-sponsored the workshop which attracted over 200 participants including residents and representatives from public and private agencies. The traffic calming consultant presented findings from the study, including recommendations for traffic calming alternatives such as signage, roundabouts, textured crosswalks and description of trail location for cyclists, pedestrian and equestrians. While there were comments and questions about location, cost, and timing of implementing the traffic calming alternatives there was overwhelming consensus that supported the study's direction and general traffic calming recommendations. The power point presentation can be viewed at NVRC website: <http://novaregion.org/huntermill.htm>



May 24, 2006 Public Meeting

On July 31, 2006, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Supervisor Linda Smyth's (Providence District) motion to amend the Transportation Map. The section of Hunter Mill Road from Vale Road to Mystic Meadows Way was changed from then current 4-lane designation to 2-lane designation. There was community support for this lane designation change.

For the past decade, volunteers have made significant efforts in identifying and documenting historical sites in the Hunter Mill Road corridor. In 2001, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources determined the Hunter Mill Road corridor was eligible for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. In 2005, Cartersville Baptist Church located at 1727 Hunter Mill Road was admitted to Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites and a historic marker was subsequently installed on the Church site. On July 10, 2006, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Comprehensive Plan language that supports identifying and preserving historic resources found in the corridor (**Appendix B**).

Community Concept

The community's vision is to maintain Hunter Mill Road as a tranquil residential byway with unique and historic and picturesque character, thus preserving one of the last remaining scenic rolling terrains in Fairfax County. It is believed that traffic calming recommendations as presented in this report will meet the following goals and objectives:

Goals

- Increase the quality of life of residents living in the corridor;
- Create a safe and attractive corridor for residents and for drivers passing through;
- Improve conditions for cyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians; and
- Reinforce the historical and natural settings found in the corridor.

Objectives

- Slow traffic to within posted speed limits;
- Reduce crash frequency and intensity;
- Increase safer access to the roadway from neighborhoods;
- Enhance trails and crosswalks for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians;
- Enhance the historic resources and natural settings in the corridor; and
- Create a roadway that can accommodate existing volumes and some future growth.

The remainder of the report presents existing and projected conditions, relevant County plans, alternative corridor transportation options, and a recommended traffic calming conceptual plan.