



**VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS**

---

Midday Storage Facility

# **PUBLIC MEETING #2 SUMMARY**

JUNE 2017

## Table of Contents

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1 PURPOSE OF THE MEETING .....	3
1.2 EVENT INFORMATION.....	3
1.3 FORMAT .....	3
1.4 BOARDS AND INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS.....	3
<b>2 OUTREACH EFFORTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 NOTIFICATIONS .....	4
2.2 DOOR HANGER AND POSTERS.....	4
2.3 TITLE VI OUTREACH .....	4
<b>3 ATTENDANCE</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS .....	6
<b>4 COMMENTS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>5 THE PATH FORWARD</b> .....	<b>7</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Midday Storage Facility (MSF) project's purpose is to replace the current storage space leased from Amtrak at the Ivy City Coach Yard in the District of Columbia. The project includes planning, designing, and constructing a permanent midday storage facility for VRE trains that travel to the District. The proposed facility will accommodate current VRE trains, and will be used to store those trains on weekdays between the inbound morning commute and the outbound afternoon commute. VRE will work with members of the community, stakeholders, and property owners to assess potential impacts and determine ways VRE can be a good neighbor.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

This was the second public meeting in the neighborhood for the VRE MSF project. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update to the community, present ideas for visually screening the rail facility site, and get feedback from the community.

## 1.2 EVENT INFORMATION

The public meeting was held on Tuesday, June 27, 2017, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Washington National Arboretum (1917 Bladensburg Road NE, Washington, DC 20002). The meeting location was accessible by the B2 Metrobus. There was parking available, which was important since many attendees came to the meeting by car.

## 1.3 FORMAT

The meeting format was “open house” style. Attendees were able to view boards set up around the room and ask questions to the project team.

## 1.4 BOARDS AND INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

Boards were designed to give attendees an overview of the project, help them better understand the benefits and purpose of the project, and provide them with updates since the last public meeting. The following boards and graphics were presented:

**Process Diagram:** This board provided the updated project timeline for the VRE MSF.

**Project Area Map:** This board showed the existing railroad facilities and surrounding transportation network with the project area highlighted.

**Site Layout:** This board showed a diagram of existing tracks and proposed facility layout, identifying track ownership. The board included bullet points that summarized the project and why it is needed.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** This board described NEPA, its requirements, the process, and how the VRE MSF qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion.

**Environmental Evaluation:** This board presented the different metrics on which the project's potential environmental impact was evaluated, as well as a map with the locations where VRE measured noise and vibration.

**Facility Cross-Sections:** Two boards each showed a different cross-section for the storage facility—east of Fairview Avenue NE and west of Fairview Avenue NE. They showed the MSF right-of-way as well as DDOT's proposed New York Avenue Streetscape and Trail Project right-of-way.

**Screening:** Four boards displayed concepts to visually screen the railroad from the active urban development. The first showed existing conditions alongside a drawing with the estimated screening dimensions. The next three each showed a different screening concept: decorative artwork, green wall, and historic graphic panels.

**Handouts:** The handouts included a Title VI demographic survey, a project fact sheet, and a copy of VRE's monthly magazine.

## 2 OUTREACH EFFORTS

Outreach for the second public meeting aimed to let the adjacent community know about the project and invite them to the meeting to discuss the proposed midday storage facility with the project team. Organizations, institutions, media contacts, and residents were notified.

### 2.1 NOTIFICATIONS

The project team contacted organizations, elected officials, ANC and neighborhood representatives, residents, and organizations through e-mail blasts, news releases through VRE's channels, and posting information about the project on the project website.

### 2.2 DOOR HANGER AND POSTERS

900 door hangers and 100 posters were distributed throughout the project area during the week of June 19, 2017. On-the-ground outreach was focused on the areas closest to the proposed facility. These areas included Gallaudet University, public libraries, grocery stores, churches, government buildings, and other businesses that agreed to display the posters. The project team also went door-to-door to distribute door hangers with meeting information to the residents of the Ivy City neighborhood and surrounding areas. This type of distribution has been effective in reaching Title VI populations in previous community outreach efforts.

### 2.3 TITLE VI OUTREACH

Key locations in the project area were identified (e.g., locations where residents include low-income persons, non-English speaking populations, seniors, etc.). Information was sent electronically or through hardcopy to the following locations:

#### **ANC Commissioners**

- ANC 5C, 5D, 5E, 6C

#### **Religious Institutions**

- Bethesda Baptist Church
- Trinity Baptist Church
- About My Father
- Mt. Olive Baptist Church
- New Samaritan Baptist Church
- First Jericho Baptist Church
- The Summit at St. Martin's

#### **Community Center/Libraries**

- Gallaudet University

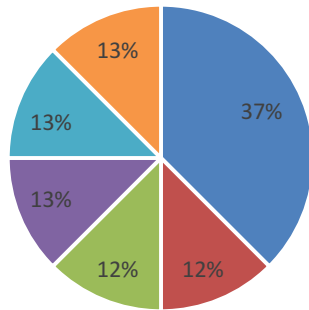
- Youth Services Center

**Other Community Organizations**

- District of Columbia Animal Care and Control

The chart below shows how attendees found out about the meeting, according to the Title VI forms that were completed and submitted to the project team.

Method of Outreach



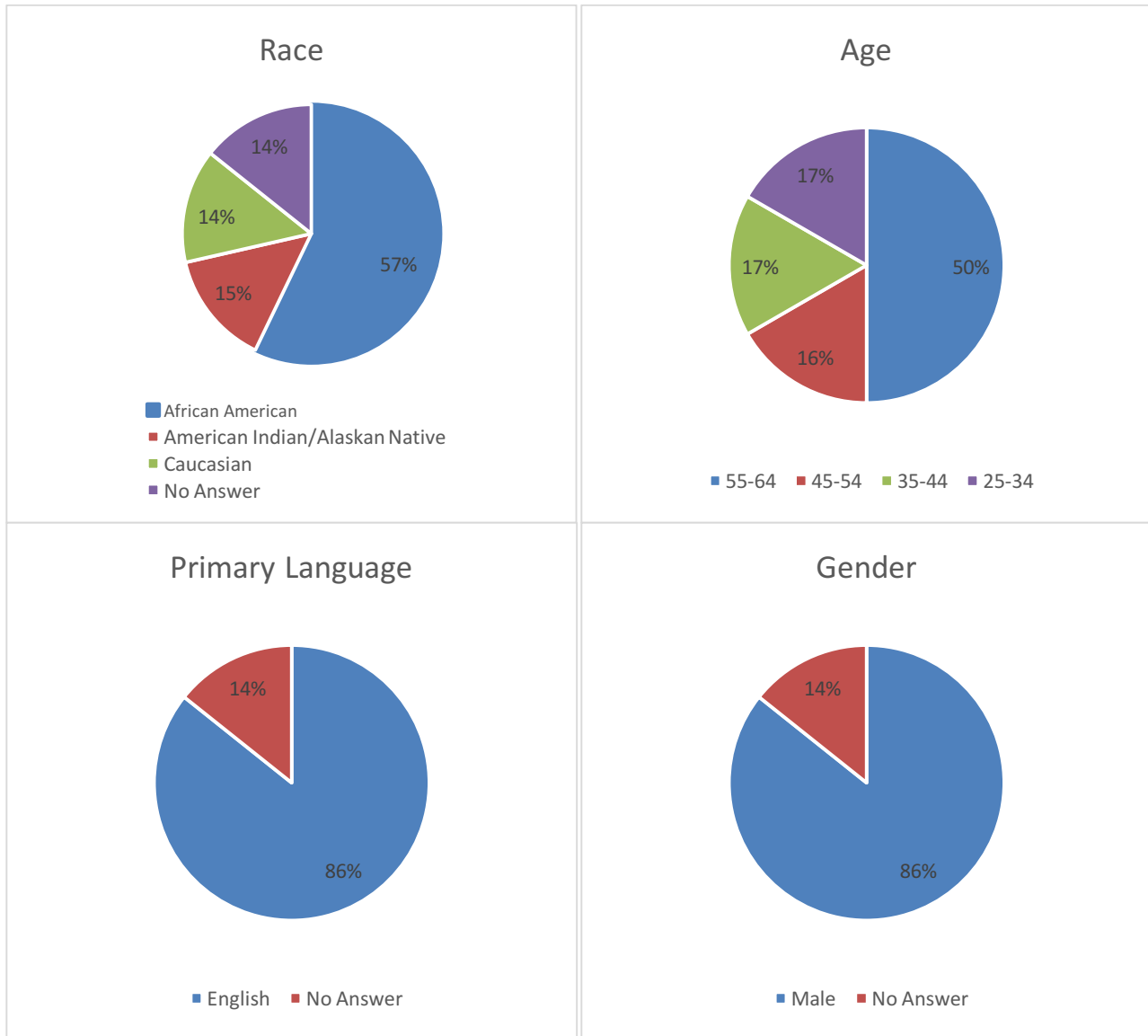
■ VRE (Website) ■ VRE (Mail) ■ Neighbor ■ VRE (Email) ■ Doorhanger ■ No Answer

### 3 ATTENDANCE

Approximately nineteen members of the public attended the second public meeting. These attendees included ANC Commissioners, local leaders, and community residents.

#### 3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The charts below represent the demographic makeup of meeting attendees based on the seven Title VI forms that were completed and submitted to the project team.



## 4 COMMENTS

The most common questions staff received were about what everything was going to look like when both the VRE MSF and the NY Avenue Streetscape & Trail projects were both completed.

The Title VI forms allowed participants to write comments about the project for the project team to take back and consider. The section below summarizes the input received from meeting attendees from these forms. They have been edited for grammar and clarity without changing the spirit of the comment.

1. The exterior wall should be raised to 20-ft. No viewing portal or viewing location should be built into the wall.
2. Major issues with the proposed turntable at Montana Avenue NE. Need more info on terminal track ending at Bladensburg Road NE. Safety concerns. Consider a deck over tracks between 4<sup>th</sup> Street/New York Ave NE and 16<sup>th</sup> Street /New York Avenue NE. Need better solution to the green walls.
3. Need a wall with sufficient height that will prevent autos from going onto the tracks. In the past, drivers of vehicles have ended up on the track and traveled for some distance.
4. I appreciate the inclusion of space for bikes.
5. A presentation regarding changes to the project and the reasons for them would've been more helpful

## 5 THE PATH FORWARD

VRE will continue to work with the community and the District to select a screening design that fits the community's goals for New York Avenue NE. Some next steps include:

1. Post all materials on the website and provide a follow up email to alert participants they are available for download.
2. Present at the next ANC 5D meeting
3. Present at the ANC 5C meeting in September 2017.