

# Do you have an opinion about Lafayette Boulevard? Share it

**I**F YOU WERE king or queen, how would you begin to improve Lafayette Boulevard?

That's one of the questions asked by the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the George Washington Regional Commission.

On June 26, those organizations held a public workshop to kick off the Lafayette Boulevard Corridor Study. It was one of the best experiences I've ever had with government.

The people from the commission, the planning organization and consultant Kimley-Horn Associates were knowledgeable and welcoming. They asked for and received plenty of comments on traffic, pedestrian safety, bicycling, public transportation and the Lafayette Boulevard environment.

If you've walked in the drainage ditches of Lafayette Boulevard, walked around the motor vehicles parked on the sidewalk, bicycled on Lafayette Boulevard or even just driven the speed limit there, chances are you've felt alone and even received a measure of hostility from shouting, cursing drivers.

I left the workshop thinking: "Somebody is listening! Somebody cares!"

Not only are they listening, they are ready to crown me king. At least that was my understanding. If I were king, I would add sidewalks with lighting the length of Lafayette Boulevard, build a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Blue and Gray Parkway, run the Fred



## COMMUTER CROSSROADS >>

STEVE DUNHAM

bus line every half hour all day every day and ticket all aggressive drivers.

What if you had \$100 to spend on improvements to Lafayette Boulevard? That's another question asked at the workshop. Would you widen the street? Repair the infrastructure? Build and repair sidewalks?

I would offer a bounty for the permanent removal of motor vehicles from the sidewalk.

The corridor study will address existing transportation conditions, future travel demand, and accommodation of walking, bicycling and transit in addition to driving, along with the connection between land use and transportation. Its purposes are to strengthen the community, coordinate land use and transportation decision making, accommodate increases in travel, enhance safety, improve aesthetics, coordinate with other plans and studies of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County and come up with recommendations. It will not address the engineering design of Lafayette Boulevard or intersections, site layout of private properties or zoning.

Right now, there's a lot not to like about Lafayette Boulevard. Traffic is out of control, generally merciless toward pedestrians, with speeding and tailgating common. There are almost no sidewalks beyond Sunken Road. There's no safe place to bicycle. Fred bus service is skimpy.

The planning organization and the commission want to hear all your concerns, but they also want to hear what Lafayette Boulevard could be like. It intersects with the planned Hazel Run Trail, touches Lee Drive, passes the Battlefield Visitor Center and almost reaches the Rappahannock River.

Lafayette Boulevard could be a transportation artery that is easy to use without a car and welcomes visitors who arrive by train.

Or maybe you would like the sidewalks striped for parking spaces and want to make Lafayette Boulevard a divided highway.

Whatever your opinion, you have till July 28 to make it known. You can write to the Lafayette Boulevard Corridor Study, care of FAMPO, 406 Princess Anne St., Fredericksburg 22401 or e-mail [lafayettecomments@gwregion.org](mailto:lafayettecomments@gwregion.org).

Be a voice for a better future. Somebody is listening! Somebody cares!

**Steve Dunham** of Spotsylvania County commutes on Virginia Railway Express to Arlington. He chairs the board of directors of the Virginia Association of Railway Patrons. Write him c/o Commuter Crossroads, The Free Lance-Star, 616 Amelia St., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401, or e-mail [literalman@aol.com](mailto:literalman@aol.com).

## Recruits' quality and numbers