



## MINUTES OF THE EMBARK RICHMOND HIGHWAY ADVISORY GROUP

On February 18, 2016, the Embark Richmond Highway Advisory Group (AG) held its fourth meeting at Mount Eagle Elementary School, 6116 North Kings Highway, Alexandria, VA 22303.

### **AG members present**

Walter Clarke, co-chair	Rebecca Todd
Richard Knapp, co-chair	Chris Soule
Rodney Lusk	Frank Cohn
Carlos Heard	Vernon Lee
Earl Flanagan	Tim Sargeant
Bruce Leonard	

### **AG member absent**

Dale Johnson  
James Migliaccio

### **County Staff and Guests Present**

See attached sign-in sheet.

### **Call to Order**

Jennifer Garcia, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) called the February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting to order at 7:12 P.M.

### **Administrative Items**

A motion was made **to approve the meeting minutes for the December 9, 2015 Advisory Group meeting.** A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### *Mount Vernon Town Hall*

An announcement was made about the Mount Vernon Town Hall Day on February 27, 2016, at Walt Whitman Middle School. A table with information about Embark will be set up during the open house, including the facts sheet distributed at the meeting, and a brief 5-10 minute presentation on Embark will be made during the virtual bus tour portion of the town hall. Walter Clarke asked AG members who are interested in joining staff at the town hall to email Jennifer Garcia.

#### *New Meeting Procedures*

Ms. Garcia stated flip charts will be used at future AG meetings to write down comments, ideas or questions that may not be related to topics listed on the agenda, and/or items that require additional follow-up.

A standing monthly meeting schedule through the remainder of 2016 was discussed. The AG voted to meet on the fourth Monday of the month with meeting times alternating between mornings and evenings. A start time of 8:30 a.m. was selected for the morning meetings, and a start time of 7:00 p.m. was selected for evening meetings. The next meeting will be March 28, 2016 at 8:30 a.m., location to be

determined. A request was made to send announcements for the AG meetings as MS Outlook invitations.

#### *Fairfax County Activity Density Examples*

Ms. Van Dam (DPZ) provided additional examples of activity density, including ones specific to Fairfax County, as requested at the December 9, 2015 AG meeting. The local examples of Rosslyn, Clarendon, King Street, Eisenhower Avenue, Vienna, and Tysons transit station areas were presented to illustrate activity density, and how development patterns differ depending on the amount of activity density (population + jobs / acreage). A question was raised about activity densities for the Reston and Huntington transit station areas. Staff responded that the Reston AD can be calculated and presented at a future meeting. The Huntington AD was included in the December AG meeting presentation. A link to the Huntington AD slide can be found here:

([http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/embarkrichmondhwy/meetings/12-9-2015\\_erh\\_ag\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/embarkrichmondhwy/meetings/12-9-2015_erh_ag_presentation.pdf), Slides 19-20).

#### *Land Use Inputs for Initial Transportation Analysis*

Tom Burke, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), explained the transportation network will be evaluated based on the mix of land uses and densities/intensities that are forecast for the year 2040. He noted these will be the most up-to-date numbers that will be available.

#### **Presentation**

##### Richmond Highway Corridor Concept for Future Development Planning Objectives and Areawide Recommendations

Ms. Garcia presented an overview of the structure of the Comprehensive Plan guidance, and staff's proposed revisions to the Concept for Future Development, Planning Objectives and Areawide Recommendations for the Richmond Highway Corridor. It was noted these revisions are a first draft, and additional revisions may be needed after AG and community review and input. Ms. Garcia asked for AG feedback on the draft by mid-March.

#### *AG Comment and Discussion:*

A question was asked as to how the proposed revisions compared with the adopted Plan text. Ms. Gardner provided an overview of the history of the development of adopted Comprehensive Plan guidance. A comment was made that the tree canopy should be measured on the corridor as suggested by the Mount Vernon District Tree Commissioner. This comment has been noted and additional information is being sought from the Tree Commissioner. A comment was made that the revised text is more concise than the adopted text, and this seems more helpful and performance oriented. After discussion, March 14<sup>th</sup> was selected as the deadline for the AG to send their feedback to Ms. Garcia on the revised Plan text in preparation for the March 28 AG meeting. A comment was made that the term "workforce housing" be substituted for "Affordable Housing", or that both terms should be used. A comment was made about George Mason University reports that address affordable housing and different income levels that should be presented in future.

A question was asked whether the public would have a chance to review the draft Planning Objectives text. Staff responded that all Comprehensive Plan components will be discussed at public meetings. AG members are encouraged to talk about the draft text to stakeholder groups, including community associations and homeowners associations, and businesses between the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and March 14<sup>th</sup> to get community input.

Discussion followed about the AG subcommittee for public outreach. Ms. Garcia provided the names of the AG members that will serve on the subcommittee (Earl Flanagan, Carlos Heard, Bruce Leonard, James Migliaccio, Chris Soule). The subcommittee will meet on March 1. A comment was made that outreach about Embark has already taken place with Mount Vernon Council of Civic Associations Planning and Zoning and Transportation committees. A comment was made that public meetings should be designed to solicit the public's input and recommendations.

Discussion ensued having a contact list of community associations, and how to compile the list with the help of the Supervisors' office and the AG. A comment was made that the project schedule should be shown on the Embark website. A comment was made that information about the amount of work that has already been done and the ongoing work is not completely visible to the community. Adding this type of information to the website should be considered.

Discussion about distributing the facts sheet to community associations and placed in newsletters, and that in general it should be widely distributed. A comment was made that the bus graphic on the second page should be replaced with an overall timeline. A comment was made about Route 1 roadway widening design funding for other parts of the corridor, not just the Napper Rd to 235 section, and this information should be added to the flyer. Additionally, if the flyer includes the dollar amount secured to date for the widening, the percent of the total amount should be included. Staff replied they will consider the suggestions and will develop a revised document.

#### Existing Conditions Display Boards

Ms. Garcia presented draft existing conditions display boards for Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Heritage Resources. The purpose of the display boards is to provide information to the public about current conditions in a corridor-wide map format by topic area. Existing conditions are also used as the baseline to compare against the impacts of possible changes to land use. Ms. Garcia stated additional display boards are being prepared for Schools, Public Safety, the Environment, and Housing.

*AG Comment:* A request was made that the display boards be emailed to the AG as PDFs, and the boards should also be posted on the website under AG meeting #4. A comment was made that the existing conditions information can serve the purpose of filling in the blanks of knowledge and perhaps alleviate preconceptions about the area. A question was asked whether the land use display shows the different types of commercial uses. Ms. Garcia responded the land use board shows existing gross square feet of different types of nonresidential uses, and the number of existing dwelling units by type for residential uses.

#### **Public Question and Answer**

##### *Project Timeline and Phasing*

Questions asked about the project timeline: why does the Comprehensive Plan amendment process stop at 2018, when does construction start, what is the completion date for the whole project? A comment was made that the most significant discomfort for the public is the timeline, particularly why this will take so long to complete. A comment was made that staff should be cautious about giving an end date and dates for when the first bus or train is expected roll out at this early stage to avoid setting false expectations.

In terms of phasing, how does the Comprehensive Plan amendment process fit into the larger project? What are the project phases, what is the phasing of the implementation? Will the phasing be oriented to completing one station at a time or everything at once? Information on phasing of funding and

construction would be helpful. Comments made about finding ways to shorten the timeline for completing the Plan amendment. A comment was made that we should be quick but not hurry, that the project should be done right.

#### *Land Use and Intensity*

A comment was made about growth pressures from outside the project area, and the need to address these pressures. A comment was made that an evaluation of rezoning properties should be done. A question was asked about whether the Comprehensive Plan amendment will drill down to the parcel level in terms of density and intensity; land use will be considered by station areas. A comment was made that the planning process will examine how planned densities and intensities can support BRT and not preclude Metrorail at Beacon-Groveton and Hybla Valley stations in the long-term.

#### *Transportation*

A comment was made that traffic flow and congestion should be taken into account. A question was asked about the status on station location planning for Hybla Valley. Staff responded that an exact station location has not been chosen yet. A question was asked about whether the route for BRT from the Huntington Metrorail station to Route 1 is going to be North Kings Highway or Huntington Avenue? The study will evaluate the North Kings Highway alignment as recommended in the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Route 1 Alternatives Analysis.

#### *Public Perceptions*

A comment was made that the Tysons Plan amendment process was high energy. This process seems to be low energy from public officials. Discussion ensued about the different circumstances between Embark and Tysons planning efforts, including the timeframe - the Tysons Plan amendment took almost seven years to complete; the Tysons effort required time to get the process going and bringing business and property owners, stakeholders, citizens, and the county come together.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.