



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE EMBARK RICHMOND HIGHWAY ADVISORY GROUP

On April 25, 2016 the Embark Richmond Highway Advisory Group (AG) held its sixth meeting at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310.

AG members present

Walter Clarke, co-chair	Earl Flanagan
Richard Knapp, co-chair	Chris Soule
Bruce Leonard	James Migliaccio
Dale Johnson	Frank Cohn
Carlos Heard	Vernon Lee
Rebecca Todd	

AG members absent

Rodney Lusk
Tim Sargeant

County Staff and Guests Present

See attached sign-in sheet.

Call to Order

Mr. Clarke called the April 25, 2016 meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Items

A motion was made **to approve the meeting minutes for the March 28, 2016 Advisory Group meeting.** A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

Outreach Materials

Ms. Garcia, Department of Planning and Zoning, stated the packet of materials includes a copy of the press release for the May 9 community open house and the updated facts sheet dated April 2016.

Revisions to Planning Objectives and Areawide Recommendations

Ms. Garcia described a comment matrix that will document all AG and public suggestions for draft revisions to the Planning Objectives and Areawide Recommendations. The matrix will include staff's preliminary recommendations.

Existing Conditions

Ms. Garcia summarized the changes made to the Existing Conditions for Public Safety and Libraries, Selected Environmental Features, Housing and Community Development, and Public Schools based on suggestions received from the AG at its last meeting.

Other Follow-Ups to March 28 AG Meeting

Activity Density

Mr. Burke, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, summarized staff's response to questions regarding comparisons of activity densities across the region. A comment was made that a 17,000 population/jobs increase between existing development to 2040 is required to meet the 35 activity density threshold for bus rapid transit from Huntington to Accotink Village. Mr. Burke responded that not every station needs to meet that threshold, the activity density will be examined on a corridor-wide level. A question was asked whether activity density was calculated for a 1-mile or ½ mile radius. Mr. Burke replied that it is calculated for the ½ mile radius around the station.

Mr. Burke discussed staff's response to a question regarding through traffic and tourist traffic and how those traffic volumes will be accounted for during the study. This question originated from a statement from Mr. Cohn with regard to traffic congestion caused by factors specific to the Route 1 Corridor: 1) traffic infusion from Prince George's County to Fort Belvoir; 2) through traffic from PG County, MD and D.C.; 3) visitor traffic to Mount Vernon and the forthcoming National Museum of the United States Army. Burke replied that the transportation model accounts for trips coming to Richmond Highway and generated from Richmond Highway to destinations outside of the corridor. Mr. Burke also mentioned that the transportation model uses special generators to account for traffic to and from destinations such as the Ft. Belvoir Hospital and the Army Museum.

Draft TOD Comprehensive Plan Guidance, 2040 Land Use Data Observations & Draft Factors for Developing a Land Use Alternative

Ms. Gardner, Department of Planning and Zoning, presented a new draft definition for bus rapid transit to be included in the Glossary, and revised Transit Oriented Development guidance contained in the Policy Plan. Ms. Gardner also discussed observations of the initial analysis of 2040 land use data and finally, factors that could be considered in formulating a land use alternative. Ms. Gardner invited the Advisory Group to provide staff with additional qualitative factors to be considered, once they have an opportunity to consider the factors presented this evening.

A question was asked about whether the right-of-way dimensions of Richmond Highway south of the Fairfax County Parkway will accommodate bus rapid transit. Mr. Burke replied that the bus rapid transit may run in mixed traffic on some segments of Richmond Highway in the Lorton area and within the median on other segments.

Questions were asked about whether bus rapid transit will run during the evening, and how ticketing will be handled. Ms. Gardner and Mr. Wolfenstein, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, responded that scheduling of bus rapid transit service and ticketing will be addressed at a later phase when bus rapid transit operations are considered.

A question was raised about how left turns will be addressed. Mr. Wolfenstein stated this will be considered during the transportation analysis for the Plan amendment and subsequent analyses when bus rapid transit is being implemented.

A question was asked about the 503 acres for the South County Center and Woodlawn areas on the data summary slide, and whether the density is being spread out over the entire 503 acres. Ms. Van Dam replied the increased density will be primarily focused within the community business centers. These two areas were considered together for comparative purposes.

A question was asked how retail is considered in terms of jobs. A question was asked about the kind of draws to the corridor that can be created during different times of day, and a comment was made that intensities for bus rapid transit are different than for Metro. A comment was made that what we are seeing today is not what we are planning for long term; a lot of thought has to be given to adding amenities but not over-serving the market.

A question was asked about the numerous Conservation Area Plans that do not lend themselves to higher density redevelopment. A comment was made that the conservation areas near station areas leave a smaller amount of land area that can support higher density around transit stations. The community needs to be made aware that those areas will not be touched, that intensity will be focused around Metro and bus rapid transit stations. A question was asked about whether the intent is to leave them as they are. Ms. Gardner mentioned some Conservation Area Plans have sunset dates. Those that do not remain active.

A comment was made that there should be fiscal support for new people and jobs, and a question was asked about whether the cost of development is too high. A comment was made that financial viability should be matched to product type for land uses. A comment was made that the infrastructure that is necessary to support new development should be addressed. A comment was made that density needs to be high enough so that income after development justifies land cost.

Street Design and Conceptual Grids for Penn Daw and Beacon/Groveton

Ms. Hagg, Office of Community Revitalization, introduced the concept of complete streets, one of the guiding principles in creating a conceptual street grid. Mr. DeLorenzo, Office of Community Revitalization, presented the draft conceptual grids of streets for the Penn Daw and Beacon/Groveton bus rapid transit station areas. A question was asked about whether connectors will be discussed. Questions were raised about the Walmart site, and they will not want their property to be divided by a great street. A comment was made that right-sized blocks should be created for right-sized density. A comment was made that the community rejected a plan in the past for additional connectivity to Richmond Highway.

Mr. DeLorenzo stated that the grids being shown tonight are draft, and that some kind of grid will be needed in the future. A statement was made that this will be a hard sell to the community. A comment was made that a long term perspective is needed. A question was asked about how bicycle routes shown on the map were determined? Ms. Hagg responded that there is an adopted countywide bicycle master plan. A comment was made that the bicycle impact may be as great as any others on the planning. A question was asked about how block sizes were determined. Mr. DeLorenzo responded that research was done on standard block sizes around the world, what is shown is a little larger than normal. A comment was made that just north of Memorial Street an intersection is shown,

that should be a right in right out not an intersection. Mr. DeLorenzo responded that a right-in right-out is what is shown.

May 9th Community Meeting

Ms. Garcia summarized the draft agenda for the May 9 community meeting.

Public Comment

A statement was made that one of the things that has to be worked on is the magnetism for the corridor. Reference was made to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy rating system for bus rapid transit systems: <https://www.itdp.org/> In this country, we have mostly bronze level systems that are planned to be transformed into rail systems in the future. All of the gold level systems are in other countries. This bus rapid transit system has to a good system that people want to ride. It should have raised platforms and the buses need to be of high quality.

A question was asked about the timeline for Metro. Mr. Wolfenstein responded that at this point there is no timeline, Metro is a long term plan, but there is no timeline associated with it. Mr. Flanagan pointed out the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DPRT) Route 1 Multimodal Alternatives Analysis, which the Mount Vernon District citizens are using as the basis for the Embark amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, proposes timelines for Metrorail to be operational during 2040. A question was asked about whether we want to be fixing yesterday's problem or do we want to plan for tomorrow. A statement was made that the street grids should not be designed to dump commercial travel into residential neighborhoods.

A statement was made that the tree commissioners for Lee and Mt. Vernon Districts sent a memo about greening the corridor to the Advisory Group. A question was asked whether documents like this could be sent to staff to distribute instead of emailed to the Advisory Group members. A comment was made that a lot more parkland is needed and there is an existing deficiency.

A comment was made that many of the schools are overcrowded and the current Embark work should address how density being planned for will affect the schools.

A comment was made that Beacon Mall area is one of the most valuable site for redevelopment in the corridor.

A comment was made that the Embark planning effort should consider what can be done with what's there now and in 10 year increments. A suggestion was made for the county to think about how the Richmond Highway Corridor be activated with the grids of streets within 10 years.

A comment was made about all of the news about the current state of Metro should be kept in mind during the Embark study.

A request was made about whether a regular location for the AG meetings could be chosen. Staff responded that South County Center is not always available but that staff would do their best to find a permanent location.

A suggestion was made for the Advisory Group and the county to consider using Google Hangouts for a future meeting to make the meeting live online.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chris Soule, and seconded by Walter Clarke at 9:00 p.m.