



## MINUTES OF THE EMBARK RICHMOND HIGHWAY ADVISORY GROUP

On May 23, 2016 the Embark Richmond Highway Advisory Group (AG) held its seventh meeting at the South County Government Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309.

### **AG members present**

Walter Clarke, co-chair	Earl Flanagan
Richard Knapp, co-chair	Rodney Lusk
Frank Cohn	James Migliaccio
Carlos Heard	

### **AG members absent**

Tim Sargeant	Chris Soule
Vernon Lee	Rebecca Todd
Dale Johnson	Bruce Leonard

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

See attached sign-in sheet.

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Knapp called the May 23, 2016 Advisory Group meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

### **Administrative Items**

#### *Update about Revisions to Planning Objectives and Areawide Recommendations*

Ms. Jennifer Garcia, Department of Planning and Zoning, stated that the proposed revisions are under review by staff. A revised document will be distributed to the Advisory Group for discussion in June.

#### *Discussion*

Mr. Flanagan stated that the Department of Rail and Public Transportation Route 1 Alternatives Analysis recommendation shows Metrorail would be in place by 2040.

Mr. Cohn commented that Metro should consider Richmond Highway's traffic congestion versus land use density in considering this project. Mr. Cohn also recommended that fiscal planning be instituted immediately, since money is critical in achieving the needed density and the widening of Richmond Highway.

A motion was made **to approve the meeting minutes for the April 25, 2016 Advisory Group meeting.** A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

### *May 9 Community Open House*

Ms. Garcia reviewed the results of the May 9<sup>th</sup> community meeting including the results of the interactive dot exercise and surveys that was distributed to attendees. She noted that staff estimated approximately 150-200 attendees.

Mr. Clarke asked if Advisory Group had any comments about the community meeting. Mr. Flanagan said he thought the meeting went well overall. Mr. Flanagan added three main issues he heard were that (1) the Virginia Department of Transportation did not plan to allow trees along Richmond Highway and that citizens were shocked about this; (2) property owners want to know about the right-of-way impacts to properties including the extent of total properties taking and frontage loss. Mr. Flanagan referenced an inventory of properties that may be impacted from I-495 to Jeff Todd Way/Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway completed after the VDOT Route 1 Location Study; this list was based on the studied eight-lane widening and was revised in 2003), and (3) elected officials are dissatisfied with the 2010 timeline and the memo said “expeditious” (see comment at the end of this document).

Mr. Biesiadny, FCDOT, stated that FCDOT staff met with VDOT staff overseeing the widening from Jeff Todd Way/Mt Vernon Memorial Highway to Napper Road. Trees are included in the Richmond Highway cross section.

Mr. Cohn said that there should be an explanation about what occurs during each phase shown on the timelines, to better communicate the process. Also, Mr. Cohn suggested the briefing or presentation for the public meeting should be sent to the AG so they may provide suggestions about the types of information to include or points that should be emphasized in anticipation of community comments/questions.

Mr. Heard added that the format of the meeting was successful; the forum in the cafeteria worked well but attendees should not have to wait until the end to ask questions. Mr. Knapp was in agreement. He added that Supervisors Storck and McKay’s attendance showed good support for the project, and the meeting was informative for attendees. He noted there was no mention of when the Metro was coming in the presentation, which should be added in the future. A question was asked whether the next community meeting will be in July. Ms. Garcia replied yes, but a date has not been nailed down yet.

### *Bus Rapid Transit definition, TOD policy, land use alternative development factors*

Ms. Garcia reviewed the changes proposed to the draft definition for bus rapid transit. She noted there have been no changes to the TOD policy or factors for developing the land use alternative, as there have been no additional comments received about these two items. Ms. Garcia gave a deadline of June 10 for additional comments.

A question was asked about public comments related to affordable housing. Ms. Garcia replied that all comments about the draft Plan text are included in the matrix that staff is working on.

### *Conceptual Grids for Lockheed-Hybla Valley Gum Springs and Woodlawn BRT station areas*

A comment was made that the proposed draft Penn Daw grid of streets assumes redeveloping the existing mobile home park. Ms. Hagg, Office of Community Revitalization (OCR), stated the grid is a long term plan and that county policy states that the residents should be relocated when and if the grid was developed. A comment was made that in the past, a developer proposed redeveloping the mobile home park and proposed relocating the residents.

Mr. Flanagan mentioned that the planned separation of North Kings Highway and Richmond Highway should be shown.

Mr. Heard stated that the grids are preliminary at this point and there is a need to hear from developers about the feasibility of the conceptual street grid. Mr. Biesiadny stated that the goal of the grids is to concentrate density to support BRT. Ms. Hagg stated that the grids are meant to show areas that are developable and more walkable.

### Lockheed-Hybla Valley-Gum Springs Conceptual Grid of Streets

Mr. DeLorenzo, OCR, reviewed elements of the proposed grid of streets and the purpose and goals of the proposed network. A question was asked about what the grey colors signify on the street cross section drawings. Ms. Hagg replied that the grey colors are on-street parking. Mr. DeLorenzo explained what the widths of each cross section element for different types of streets. He presented illustrations of different types of streets that comprise the conceptual grid and the concept of the superblock, including local examples at Courthouse Plaza in Arlington and City Center in Washington D.C.

Mr. Heard asked whether the dimensions of Richmond Highway are taken into account in the design for the grid of streets. Do these designs reflect any roadway widening and loss of property frontage? The considerations for additional connectivity and urban design elements are not informed by the future right-of-way requirements for Richmond Highway at this time. However, the conceptual grid illustrates points at which additional connections are proposed to intersect with Richmond Highway.

A question was asked whether there were three stations shown in the Lockheed – Hybla Valley Gum Springs, including one at Lockheed Boulevard and one at Boswell Avenue? Mr. DeLorenzo replied yes.

A question was asked about what the building uses were, residential or commercial. Mr. DeLorenzo replied mixed-use. Mr. Flanagan statement in the Village at Shirlington, outdoor dining space was located between the building and the right-of-way and that Federal Realty, the property owner in Shirlington has had great success with this design. In Hybla Valley, stores turn their back on the street. A statement was made that that could change over time. This is future concept for redevelopment, and it is unknown how the mix of uses is going to play out. There should be flexibility.

A question was asked about which connections in the grid are the pedestrian streets. Mr. DeLorenzo said the yellow streets are the pedestrian streets. Mr. DeLorenzo reviewed the Great Street dimensions. Mr. Lusk asked about whether there was a central plaza that represented a place-making

opportunity similar to Tysons and the Mosaic District in Merrifield. A statement was made that that AG should give some thought to where these spaces should be located. A statement was made that we would have to work with property owners to locate plazas and the Plan should not be too specific. A statement was made that the uses would be important in determining where to locate a plaza, where parking is located, and how properties will develop.

Due to time constraints, the Woodawn grid was not able to be reviewed. The AG agreed to discuss Woodlawn at the June meeting. Additional questions should be directed to Ms. Garcia.

#### *Draft Richmond Highway Cross Section*

Mr. Garcia, FCDOT, presented the Richmond Highway cross section in the adopted Comprehensive Plan and a revised cross section proposed for consideration in the Embark Plan Amendment. Mr. Garcia stated that one constraint that staff is working with is the roadway widening from Jeff Todd Way to Napper Road. Mr. Garcia reviewed illustrations of typical sections through the roadway at a BRT platform and at an area in between platforms.

A question was asked from what cities the pictures of built facilities come from? Mr. Garcia replied the photos of the examples are from London, Vancouver, and Portland. A question was asked whether the cross section design allows outdoor café space in the building zone and who would maintain the trees and landscaping? Ms. Hagg replied that when development is proposed the uses would be worked out through the development review process. A question was asked about green space and whether that would be accommodated. Ms. Hagg replied yes, that is part of the cross section design.

A question was asked whether the bicycle advocates were consulted for these recommendations. A request was made by Mr. Flanagan to contact the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) about the National Bicycle Trail planned from Maine to Florida. Mr. Garcia replied that the county's bicycle coordinator did consult with the bicycle advocacy groups during development of the Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Biesiadny added there are varying opinions about the appropriate type of facility depending on the user group, and that similar issues arose in Tysons. A separated bike lane as shown in the draft cross section would better serve a cyclists of all abilities.

Mr. Heard asked how long it takes for pedestrians to cross the entirety of the roadway as depicted in the draft cross section. Mr. Biesiadny replied staff will have to consult with the county's pedestrian coordinator to an answer to this question. A statement was made that in Tysons, getting people to cross Route 7 has been a challenge (see response at the end of the minutes).

Mr. Flanagan asked whether the bus stop locations have been thought through, whether they should be placed after traffic light. Mr. Biesiadny replied that this has not yet been designed.

Mr. Flanagan made a statement that Fordson Road was named after a historic figure and that moving or renaming this road would not be popular.

#### *Public Comment*

Mr. Terry Jemison, former Planning & Zoning chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Civic Associations (MVCCA), asked whether the future concepts for BRT and Metrorail stations result in removing the existing development planned for BRT. Ms. Van Dam, DPZ, replied there were two stations recommended for an extension of the Metrorail Yellow Line (Beacon Groveton and Hybla Valley) by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transport (VDRPT) that are being evaluated as part of new policy guidance for the corridor but that are conceptual at this time. A statement was made that at this point there has not been a determination about whether the stations would be located above or below ground.

Ms. Eleanor Quigley stated she was distressed to learn from VDOT representatives at the community meeting that trees are hazards. Mr. Biesiadny replied that a meeting was held with VDOT and that trees will be included and the speed limit will not be 55 mph. These issues have been resolved.

Ms. Quigley mentioned that utilities and street furniture should not be located where trees are planted. The appropriate soil volumes should be maintained to keep trees healthy. She encouraged the Embark staff team to also consult and work with the county's urban forestry staff.

Mr. Martin Tillet, member of the Spring Bank Community Association Executive Board, mentioned that at the community meeting, different agencies had different maps showing where parks are located, and the maps should show information consistently.

Ms. Hooper, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), replied that the maps shown at the community meeting showed existing FCPA owned land. In the community businesses centers, the FCPA uses a policy entitled the "Urban Parks Framework" to get land provided by developers during the development review process. A statement was made that land behind the Penn Daw shopping center is county owned land but the FCPA does not want it due to the cost of clean-up and maintenance. Ms. Hooper replied that FCPA will be evaluating all publicly owned land throughout the Richmond Highway Corridor as part of the Embark Study for suitability as future park land.

Ms. Ellen Young, a member of the MVCCA, made a comment that there needs to be neighborhood charrettes held to get input on the proposed grids of streets, community meetings are not enough.

### **Wrap up/additional discussion**

There will be an opportunity to revisit the draft cross section for Richmond Highway at the June Advisory Group meeting.

The next community meeting is proposed for July, date and venue TBD.

Mr. Flanagan suggested that the agendas for the AG meetings should include time for the AG members to present issues heard from their communities.

Mr. Knapp suggested that the project milestones be reviewed at each meeting, so the AG and meeting attendees are informed about the work that has been done and the future steps.

Meeting was adjourned by Mr. Clarke at 10:10 a.m.

Comments and questions recorded on the flip chart

Comment or Question	Response
<p>Cross walk timing - generally how long does it take on average to cross an intersection? What would it be for the proposed Richmond Highway cross section?</p>	<p><b>Cross the full cross section in one signal cycle.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side to side, or curb to curb, distance is 130’.</li> <li>• At 3.5 feet per second, that equates to roughly 37 seconds.</li> <li>• Alternatively, based on a range of speeds, say 3-4 fps (some slower, some faster), that equates to 33 to 43 seconds, roughly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cross in two signal cycles, seeking refuge in the median/transitway.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side to median distance is 36’.</li> <li>• At 3.5 fps, it would take approximately 10 seconds to get to the median from the side curb.</li> <li>• Applying the 3-4 fps range, that equates to 9-12 seconds, roughly, to get to the median from the side of the road.</li> </ul>
<p>An idea to include more prominent open space feature/s within the grid vs. open space along paths; places where citizens could gather in the centralized place</p>	<p>Noted; the inclusion of green space and common open spaces within the grid network are planning considerations, and recommendations related to these types of spaces will be included in the proposed Comprehensive Plan guidance.</p>
<p>To what degree has Metro been considered in the development of the conceptual grids?</p>	<p>The Embark station locations are central to the grid design and discussion. The Metrorail extension would most likely follow the Route 1 alignment, the details will be discussed when appropriate as part of the implementation of the extension.</p>
<p>Work closely with the Urban Forestry Management Division (UFMD) in terms of planning for tree cover and landscaping along the corridor and within the conceptual grids.</p>	<p>Noted; the Embark staff team will coordinate with UMFD.</p>
<p>Encourage consistency across maps – existing vs. proposed plan</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Greater conversation needed among the AG outreach subcommittee about how best to present the conceptual grids to the public.</p>	<p>Noted; staff will reconvene the outreach subcommittee.</p>
<p>With regard to impacts to properties and the extent of total takings of property and loss of frontage, an inventory from the VDOT Route 1 Location Study was referenced that proposed an 8-lane widening of Richmond Highway.</p>	<p>Staff is currently contemplating a 178-foot cross-section to accommodate an 8 foot wide sidewalk and 7 foot wide bicycle lane on both sides of the road. BRT is noted in the center, in a 58’ wide guideway area. At this point in time, It is premature to discern the impact to property. The Richmond Highway right-of-way limits, temporary and ancillary easements would be determined by design, engineering and access management analysis. Regardless of the ROW width of that ultimate typical section, and the extent of temporary and ancillary easements outside of the ROW, the County and VDOT will, to the extent practical, minimize impacts outside the ROW.</p>

