



MINUTES OF THE EMBARK RICHMOND HIGHWAY ADVISORY GROUP

On September 26, 2016 the Embark Richmond Highway Advisory Group (AG) held its tenth meeting at the South County Government Center, Room 221C, Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309.

AG Members Present

Rebecca Todd	Bruce Leonard
Walter Clarke	Frank Cohn
Richard Knapp	Carlos Heard
Vernon Lee	Tim Sargeant
Chris Soule	Dale Johnson
Earl Flanagan	

AG Members Absent

Rodney Lusk
James Migliaccio

Guests and County Staff Present

See attached sign-in sheet.

Call to Order

Mr. Knapp called the September 26, 2016 meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Items

Approval of Minutes from July 18, 2016

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for the July 18, 2016 Advisory Group meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

Review Meeting Dates through December 2016

Jennifer Garcia, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), reviewed the meeting schedule. The next AG meeting is October 24 beginning at 6:30 pm at the South County Center, following that is the November 14 meeting. There are currently no agenda items for December. No objections were raised regarding the meeting dates. A request was made to send out the upcoming meeting dates as an Outlook calendar invitation.

Project Schedule

Ms. Garcia reviewed the project schedule and recent staff activities. The project is still on track for Plan amendment public hearings in the winter of 2017-2018. Ms. Garcia

mentioned that staff has been asked to attend at least five meetings in October outside of the AG and community meeting process. A question asked about why individual groups are requesting these meetings. Some community groups are not as up-to-date on project as others which may account for some special requests. The purpose of staff mentioning these meetings is to make the AG aware these requests are happening, and there is concern they may detract from the agreed upon community and Advisory Group meeting processes.

Recent Staff Activities

A question was asked about the CTB grant deadline for comments. Bob Pikora, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, replied there was plenty of time for comment and the application is in its initial stages.

Recap and follow-on actions from July community meeting

Ms. Garcia reviewed outcomes of the July 25 community meeting as well as follow on actions. A question was raised related to the funding for the BRT, which will be evaluated by the Program Management Consultant who will be hired in December. A discussion ensued about the BRT funding, and whether the consultant will evaluate the acquisition of land. Mr. Pikora said that the PMC will be evaluating this cost.

Land Use Alternative

Ms. Garcia presented an initial corridor-wide comparison between existing development, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the draft land use alternative, as well as any revisions to the land use alternative from the July Advisory Group meeting for Huntington, Penn Daw, and Beacon Groveton Community Business Centers (CBCs). Anthony De Lorenzo, Office of Community Revitalization (OCR), presented the accompanying building massings for land units along the corridor where significant land use changes are proposed.

The following are highlights from the presentation:

Huntington Transit Development Area, Land Unit I (Huntington Club): The draft land use alternative remains the same, and the conceptual massing diagram illustrates a 3.0 floor area ratio (FAR) and a 4.0 FAR, with development concentrated along Huntington Avenue and near Huntington Metro Station. Building height tapers toward North Kings Highway and adjacent low density residential areas. Ms. Garcia noted the proposal being discussed by the community and staff is closer to a 3.0 FAR. The AG discussed location of retail uses, in light of office market. Retail locations are not identified on the massing and would depend on the market conditions. The AG discussed how retail uses most likely would be located along Huntington Ave. Mr. De Lorenzo noted that the conceptual massing is based on a previous proposal by Davis Carter Scott.

Penn Daw CBC, Land Units E and G: The land use alternative was adjusted to account for existing retail uses. The conceptual layout built upon the block concept shown at

previous meeting, with a Great Street concept. Parking structures are wrapped by residential, retail, or office uses.

Beacon Groveton CBC, Land Units A1 and A2: The land use alternative was adjusted to account for existing retail uses with a slight growth; the overall intensity has been increased from 2.5 FAR to 3.0 FAR. The massing exercise builds upon the conceptual road network with a Great Street concept. Building height is concentrated along Richmond Highway. Consideration is given to anchoring station plaza with office, residential, and retail uses; tapering of building heights toward adjacent residential uses. Phasing recommendations are critical to the build out of these land units.

Discussion ensued about the diminishing office market and how this was factored into the assumptions. Office use will not come until the area is amenitized with retail, residential, and public spaces to create a sense of place. There needs to be a recognition about this as a long-term plan. Staff has worked hard on conceptualizing the land use alternative and producing graphics. A statement was made that these presentations should be made to adjacent neighborhoods. The drawings indicate that there is curb-to-curb buildings, but there is a need to also point out open spaces. Suggestion for the presentation to show public spaces like Shirlington with outdoor seating and restaurants to visualize the public realm. Photos of other places also would aid in the visualization. A request was made for the activity density. Staff may be able to provide activity density for CBCs. Activity density for 1/2 mile around the station areas would be diluted by the lower density around the stations. Discussion about the changes in topography and how some of the areas are steep, including North Kings Highway. A comment was made that the group could discuss height limits if desired. How you park the development is different for Metro compared to BRT.

Advisory Group update on community feedback

A comment was made that undergrounding utilities is a major issue and this should be a prominent agenda item at a future meeting. Discussion about whether the AG should take a position on utilities. Staff will have more information at the October meeting and there will be a discussion. A comment was made that the cross-section for BRT in Alexandria is 134 feet and there is talk about a road diet. The proposed Richmond Highway cross-section is 178 feet. This should be discussed at a future meeting. A comment was made that the character of the highway needs further discussion, whether it will be a highway or something else. The importance of the connection between South Kings and Richmond Highway is very important to the Fairhaven community. A request was made for staff bring information on this to a future meeting.

Public comment

Senator Surovell mentioned three items: (1) The article in the Mount Vernon Gazette regarding underground utilities. Prince William County is going to underground utilities based on an increase in property values and tax base to justify the cost. Fairfax County should consider this as well. (2) Richmond Highway will not be Tysons and should not be

compared to Tysons. (3) Criteria for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts application require the preservation of affordable housing and have not heard this being discussed.

A member of the MVCCA Environment and Recreation Committee stated environmental considerations are not evident in the materials that were presented. A comment was made that information is being provided to the MVCCA Environment and Recreation Committee.

A member of the MVCCA Planning & Zoning Committee commented the 3D conceptual massings are very helpful to convey the proposed land use numbers. There are properties outside of the CBCs that will be impacted by the Richmond Highway widening. Consideration should be given to the future of these properties and incentives for an "escape route" and plan for them in the future.

A member of the MVCCA commented that green space should also be shown on the massings not just buildings. The 8-acre Fairchild property was left out of the presentation and should be mentioned.

A resident of the Springbank community asked for clarification about Fairview Drive or Fairhaven. An earlier comment about South Kings Highway and Richmond Highway was referring to Fairview Drive and not the Fairhaven community.

A member of Friends of Historic Huntley commented that a sense of place was mentioned, and for the Mount Vernon area it should be tied to the history. Consideration should be given to whether views from Historic Huntley be impacted by proposed development. Consideration should also be given to how tourists will use the corridor and opportunities for ecotourism.

A member of the Audubon Society stated the need to think proactively about stormwater management and green infrastructure. There should be more park spaces for the increased population. Consider the interest in outdoor classrooms and not just providing park spaces. New development should not outpace the green space needs. Huntley Meadows Park is a draw for bird watchers and eco-tourists.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Items recorded on the flip chart

Comment or Question	Response
The community may not have a full understanding of the impacts of the road widening and the cross section for Richmond Highway.	The AG should reserve time at a future meeting to further discuss the proposed cross section and the future character of Richmond Highway.
Alignment of S. Kings Highway and Fairview Drive	Additional information will be provided about the Comprehensive Plan recommendation to sever the connection at N. Kings and Richmond Highway with a new connection between S. Kings and Richmond Highway.
Include discussion of affordable housing in the corridor.	Affordable and workforce housing is one of the topics to be discussed during the impacts analysis phase of the Plan amendment in early 2017.
How are environmental features being accounted for, how are impacts to the environment, historic viewsheds, and heritage resources being assessed.	County staff met with the MVCCA Environment and Recreation Committee on October 5 explain the work being done and staff continues to coordinate with various committees of the MVCCA.
Consideration should be given to how tourists will use the corridor and opportunities for ecotourism.	This topic can be discussed at a future AG meeting, and staff will assess how the Comprehensive Plan could address ecotourism if this idea is supported.