Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway
Station Access Management Study

Public Meeting #1

7:00 pm, March 27, 2007
Langston Hughes Middle School; Reston, Virginia

Sign-In

A total of 54 members of the public attended the public meeting at Langston Hughes Middle School on March 27, 2007.

Welcoming Remarks

Fairfax County Supervisor Catherine Hudgins opened the meeting with remarks welcoming those in attendance and thanking them for their time and efforts in helping Fairfax County make plans for access to the new Metrorail stations planned for Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway. Ms. Hudgins emphasized that change was coming to Reston as a result of the extension of Metrorail and that the work of the public would be crucial to successfully managing that change.

Meeting Goals and Objectives

Patty Nicoson, Chair of the Reston Metrorail Access Group (RMAG) presented the evening's agenda and outlined the specific goals for the meeting. Ms. Nicoson explained that the first goal for the meeting was to provide information to the public about the plans for extending the Metrorail, the second goal was to provide information about the effort to develop plans to manage access to the new stations, and the final goal was to gather input from the public.

Presentations

Rick Stevens, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, provided an overview of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail extension to Wiehle Avenue. Mr. Stevens' presentation included discussions of the alignment, the station areas and design, and the schedule for construction. He also discussed the status of plans for a joint development project at the Wiehle Avenue site.

Frank Spielberg, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) presented information on the scope of work surrounding the station access management study underway for the new Metrorail stations at Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway. Mr. Spielberg's presentation included information on the team VHB has assembled, the area under study, and the tasks involved. He also presented information on the current traffic conditions in the study area including pedestrian and bicycle traffic and bus service. Finally, Mr. Spielberg outlined a schedule for performing the tasks and completing the station access management project.

Paul LeValley, The Perspectives Group, presented information on the process for public involvement in the development of station access management plans. He reviewed the timeline for the project and noted the points where the public would have opportunities to contribute ideas and review draft proposals. Mr. LeValley pointed out that the evening was the first of four public meetings and that the public was encouraged to attend the monthly RMAG meetings.

Questions and Answers

Following the presentations, Mr. LeValley facilitated a session that provided the public with an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Answers to these questions are provided below.

Q. Is there written material available to explain maps?

A. The graphics for presentation were developed with the goal of being self explanatory, so no accompanying text is available. If a question exists about the information contained in a specific graphic, please email that question to keith.goodman@fairfaxcounty.gov and the County staff or the consultants will try to provide an answer. An Existing Conditions report is being prepared and should be available in draft form for the RMAG meeting of April 24, 2007.

Q. Will the state conduct a new Environmental Impact Study for a tunnel under Tysons Corner?

A. The Tunnel versus aerial alignment through Tysons Corner is not part of this study. If the alternative of building a tunnel through Tysons becomes a possibility, at that time a decision would be made whether an Environmental Assessment or a new Environmental Impact Study is required. This is one of the actions that will be considered in developing the Station Access plans.

Q Will there be a walkers' path on the south side of the Metrorail line?

A. Part of the study is to look at access to both the Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway stations via walking. If the study determines that a pedestrian pathway in a particular location would significantly enhance access, then the study will recommend building such infrastructure.

Q. Does the plan for the stations and roads include Council of Governments estimates for the next 20 years?

A. The study is using the Council of Governments' land use forecasts, in terms of the number of households and employment to be sited in the area, for all future time periods. Moreover, all additional roadways, bikeways, walkways and other infrastructure called for in the Council of Governments' Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as the Fairfax County Comprehensive Transportation Plan will be included in the study.

Q. How likely are changes to the station designs and locations if it is identified as important to access management?

A. Realistically the location of the stations can not be changed at this time. Limited recommendations for station design could be made, but it should be recognized that architectural based suggestions would be under the prevue of Metro. If the concept of design embraces components such as the location and number of bike lockers at a station, and the study identifies the need for additional lockers, then such design changes could be recommendations under this study's mandate.

Q. Are we assuming ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements are included in access planning?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Does the feeder bus system funding come from rail or somewhere else?

A. Fairfax County is expected to fund the feeder bus service.

Q. Are maps and diagrams available on the web?

A. Everything presented at any RMAG or general Public meetings are posted on the Access Study web site at: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/sam_study.htm

Q. What criteria were used to determine access to overpass on left side?

A. It is assumed the question relates to the western side of the Wiehle Avenue Roadway Bridge over the Dulles Airport Toll and Access roads. No specific criteria could be located for citation in the Final Environmental Impact Statement reports. Rather, inclusion of pedestrian facilities are generally based on the engineering judgment of the system designers as a trade off between what could ideally be provided, and what can pragmatically, or cost-effectively, be provided based on implementation at other Metrorail stations.

Q. What is the vision for foot traffic and its impact on local businesses?

A. Two pedestrian bridges are provided, one north and one south of the station. As businesses are generally located north of the station it is hoped that pedestrians using the north bridge will frequent the businesses conveniently located in the area. The vision is that many of those who work in Reston or who are customers of, or visitors to, Reston businesses will find it convenient to use Metrorail and that there will be safe and convenient sidewalks and pathways for them to use.

Q. What does the term "level of service" mean and how is it determined?

A. Please see the definitions at the end of this document. Level of service (LOS) is a measure used by traffic engineers to assess the quality of traffic flow. As used in the materials presented at the meeting, LOS refers to the delay experienced by the average vehicle approaching an intersection. LOS is graded from "A" (best) to "F" delay greater than 80 seconds per vehicle. [Note: At the meeting, in response to this question, it was stated incorrectly that LOS "F" was equivalent to delay greater than 90 second per vehicle.] For purposed of this analysis LOS was computed using traffic volume data provided by VDOT and the methodology set forth in the Highway Capacity Manual.

Q. Given that the level of service is already achieved in both the morning and evening, how do the plans factor in increases to traffic as a result of the new stations?

A. Based on Virginia Department of Transportation data, roadways and intersections in the vicinity of the stations operate at congested, but acceptable, levels-of-service. (See definitions for LOS at end of document). In the future following initiation of Metrorail service initially with Wiehle Avenue station as a terminus, and ultimately with service beyond Dulles Airport, traffic volumes will almost certainly increase. At the heart of this study is the effort to determine what those future traffic volumes will be, and then develop access/egress management strategies to effectively mitigate against the most severe adverse impacts.

Q. Is the project fully funded and are funds coming from Reston businesses?

A. Funding sources have been identified, and expected revenues from these sources are sufficient to fund the Phase I project which will bring Metrorail service from between the East and West Falls Church Stations, through Tysons Corner and out to Wiehle Avenue in Reston. The sources of revenues include the Federal Transit Administration, the Commonwealth of Virginia through toll revenues on the Dulles Airport Toll Road, and commercial and industrial land owners in the Dulles Rail Phase 1 Transportation Improvement District which includes Tysons Corner and to a point in Reston to the west of Isacc Newton Square Road.

Q. Will there be more trains?

A. Phase I of the project includes the purchase of additional rail cars, which Metro will place in service, as part of the capital cost estimates for the extension to Wiehle Avenue. Trains will operate every seven minutes in the Dulles Corridor during the peak periods and every 12 minutes during off-peak periods.

Q. What will the impact be on the Foxmill area? Is it part of the access management planning?

A. The area around the intersection of Foxmill Road and Reston Parkway is included for the access management planning. The study will attempt to determine the impacts on all residential and commercial areas in the greater vicinity of the stations. (See study area maps). Until the study is completed, however, it is not possible to definitively state what the impacts will be.

Q. Does VHB have access to the report resulting from a three-year study of the Hunter Mill Road area and will they consider it in their planning?

A. This report has been made available to VHB. They will use any relevant findings in the report as part of their study.

Q. Is anything being done with landowners from Wiehle to the airport? Is phase II fully funded?

A. A proposed Phase 2 tax district similar to the Phase I tax district is currently in abeyance but the County anticipates that a new petition will be developed by WARD (the Western Alliance for Rail to Dulles) to ensure that adequate County funding is available for the Phase 2 project.

Q. What are the amount of funds received from the tax district and the toll road?

A. The business tax district is expected to generate a total of about $400 million. The business tax rate, currently set at $0.22 per $100 of assessed value generates between $17 and $32 million annually. The tax rate ceiling is $0.29 per $100 of assessed value. The portion of the toll road revenues from the DTR used for Metrorail construction is expected to be about $1.3 billion. The balance of funds, about $900 will come from the Federal Transit Administration.

Small Group Discussions

Members of the public divided into small groups of approximately 8-10 in order to identify the top goals for station access management planning. The following are the top goals for each of the break-out groups.

Group 1

- Usable pathway – walk and bike – connections to bus and residential neighborhoods
- Well lit at night
- Safe
- Wide walkways
- Keep connectivity safe and efficient

Group 2

- Trees, flowers, landscape should look like Reston
- Pedestrian access
- More access across Toll Road

Group 3

- Top concern is congestion
- Pedestrian safety
- Create and aesthetically pleasing experience
- Provide circulator bus service
- On-road bike access

Group 4

- Pedestrian access between stations and Town Center
- Keep Metro parking out of neighborhoods and off main streets
- Frequent shuttle bus service to stations
- Improved traffic along Wiehle Ave

Group 5

- Determine a strategy for getting from station to Town Center
- Provide for access across roads
- Develop strategies for handling parking
- Frequency of bus/connectors
- Traffic on Wiehle

Group 6

- 4-Quad access for peds/bikes
- Shuttle or trolley to loop, connecting
- Can local roads handle cut-through?

Group 7

- Parking garages of privates owners – gates $
- Pedestrian safety
- Feeder buses

Surveys

The participants were asked to fill out a short survey regarding station access issues. Among other questions, the survey asked respondents to note the area where they lived, how they heard about the meeting, how frequently they intended to use the new Metrorail stations, which station they would use, how they would access the new stations, and what their hopes and fears were regarding accessing the stations. The following results are among those that were calculated from a total of 42 completed surveys.

Most respondents heard about the meeting through email notification. Most were homeowners in Reston. 31% responded that they planned to use Metrorail to commute to work at least occasionally, while 21% indicated that they would frequently use the system. 60% said they planned to use the Wiehle Avenue station while 40% planned to use the Reston Parkway station. Most people indicated that they intended to walk to the stations. Driving to the stations was easily the next most popular option, with biking and riding the bus following.

Conclusion

Over the course of two hours, members of the Reston community were able to receive detailed information about the plans for the Metrorail extension and the ongoing planning for station access management. In addition, those who attended were able to give direct input into the access management planning process. The work of the break-out groups and the results of the surveys will be used by the RMAG, Fairfax County, and VHB as planning goes forward.

Three additional public meetings are planned for the coming months to allow for continued community involvement. The RMAG will continue to meet regularly on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the North County Government Center.

Mr. Stevens' and Mr. Spielberg's presentations, the detailed work of the break-out groups, and the full results of the surveys are available on the Fairfax County website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/sam_study.htm.

Level of Service Definitions In Terms of Traffic Conditions Experienced by Drivers

Table 1. Urban Street LOS by Class

Urban Street Class	I	II	III	IV
Range of free-flow speeds (FFS)	55 to 45 mi/h	45 to 35 mi/h	35 to 30 mi/h	35 to 25 mi/h
Typical FFS	50 mi/h	40mi/h	35 mi/h	30 mi/h
LOS	Average Travel Speed (m/h)			
A	> 42	> 35	> 30	> 25
B	> 34-42	> 28-35	> 24-30	> 19-25
C	> 27-34	> 22-28	> 18-24	> 13-19
D	> 21-27	> 17-22	> 14-18	> 9-13
E	> 16-21	> 13-17	> 10-14	> 7-9
F	≤ 16	≤ 13	≤ 10	≤ 7

Table 1. lists urban street LOS criteria based on average travel speed and urban street class. It should be noted that if demand volume exceeds capacity at any point on the facility, the average travel speed might not be a good measure of the LOS.

Table 2. LOS Criteria for Signalized Intersections

LOS	Control Delay per Vechicle (s/veh))
A	≤ 10
B	> 10-20
C	> 20-35
D	> 35-55
E	> 55-80
F	> 80

Table 2. The average control delay per vechile is estimated for each lane group and aggregated for each approach and for the intersection as a whole. LOS is directly related to the control delay value.

These tables are taken from the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 2000) prepared by the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council and issued in 2000.