



Wiehle Avenue and Reston Parkway Station Access Management Study

Meeting Summary

December 4, 2007

Sign-in:

RMAG Members:

Fatemeh Allahdoust
Dave Edwards
Baba Freeman
Joe Leighton
Kathryn Martin
Colin Mills
Patty Nicoson, Chair
Kate Rudicille
David Vanell
Bruce Wright

County Staff:

Keith Goodman
Rick Stevens

VHB Staff:

Chris Gay
Dalia Levin
Dan Nabors
Frank Spielberg

The Perspectives Group Staff:

Kristie Bergeron-Hale
Jim Lawson
Crystal Sarno

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Bruce Bennett
Mary Ellen Craig
James Ferguson
Feliza Kepler
Rich McPhillips
Ed Metz
Norbert Pink
Joe Stowers
Justin True

Action Items:

- Draft public meeting agenda for review at the January 8th RMAG meeting.

Patty Nicoson called the meeting to order and asked members and staff to introduce themselves. She then opened the floor to public comments.

Joe Stowers proposed that the RMAG take on the task of developing recommendations for how to implement the work that is coming out of this project. He said that he recognized that this was probably beyond the scope of the consultant's work, but that this way is probably the best way to get the community's recommendations for how improvements can best be implemented. He expressed the view that the best way to get funding for many projects is to ask a planning group that has already been formed to take on issues and develop recommendations for implementation.

Joe also said that he thought that Fairfax County should retain ownership, management, and control of the parking at the two primary Reston Metrorail stations. He believes that this would be the best way to produce needed revenue to augment existing sources, and also be the best way to periodically adjust parking fees in order to manage motor vehicle access to the stations. He volunteered to write a proposal for consideration by the RMAG committee.

Frank Spielberg of VHB responded that part of the final product is a proposed capital improvement plan. They will be trying to match the proposal with the funds that they believe will be available. Most of the projects in Reston are funded by general funds; there is no dedicated revenue source for implementing plans in Reston.

Bruce Wright responded that some of these projects could be proffered by developers. If the RMAG recommendations go into the Comprehensive Plan, then the developers will have to comply. He suggested that the trails plan be modified to include what the group has come up with.

Mary Ellen Craig urged the RMAG to consider pedestrian access from Reston feeding into the stations first. Good pedestrian access is key to making the whole plan work, and more vehicles trying to drop off passengers would cause even more congestion. She said that because Reston was originally planned with pathways through a bucolic setting, sidewalks and trails should be planned so that people can do their daily business by foot. She expressed that this access should not be an afterthought, but considered first in the plan in order to get people using Metro.

Fatemah Allahdoust stated that VDOT projects will include pedestrian and bicycle access, but that it is very important that the Comprehensive Plan reflect the community's desires. Many roadways are secondary, and the County must decide which projects get the funds each year. The rail project itself will not include those improvements, yet VDOT will complement the project. She stressed the importance of coordination between agencies, developers, and the community to ensure that there are no broken links in communication.

Jim Lawson of The Perspectives Group presented the Hunter Mill Focus Group Meeting Summary to the RMAG. He reviewed some of the major points for the RMAG to consider, and asked the group to read the summary on their own. Bruce Wright asked for clarification on the boundaries of the Hunter Mill Corridor, as referenced in the summary. Feliza Kepler explained that it was the buffer zone at Baron Cameron to Route 123, right at the edge of the Reston Master Plan to the edge of the transit-oriented area.

Fatemah asked for clarification on a point made in the summary regarding improving existing trails. She asked if the group meant trails, lanes, paths, etc. Jim said that the word "trails" was used specifically in the summary, which had been reviewed by the Hunter Mill meeting participants.

Frank reminded the group that the Hunter Mill bus route had already been modified based on their comments, and that this modified route would be presented at the public meeting on January 22nd.

Dan Nabors of VHB updated the group on the November 15th RMAG Pedestrian/ Bicycle subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee met to discuss the major issues regarding pedestrian and bicycle access, and to give VHB recommendations before meeting again with the entire RMAG. The subcommittee decided that basic fundamental improvements were needed in the following areas: providing access to the stations for pedestrians and bicyclists, how to improve safety based on the pedestrian safety index, train plans, multimodal interface, planning concepts that will make the streets pedestrian and bicycle user friendly and cost considerations that apply with each of these issues.

Joe Stowers asked the group how priorities were established. He commented that the priorities should be ranked and that the cost benefit should be considered. Bruce Wright discussed a possible direct entrance from the south at the Wiehle Avenue station. Rick Stevens said the developer is considering that option.

The group discussed the trade-offs between urban design standards and suburban design standards, and agreed that striking a balance between pedestrian and vehicular traffic is very important.

Chris Gay of VHB showed the Roadway Facilities presentation to the group. He gave the group an overview of the study and influence areas, and reviewed the technical approach with the 2030 target year in mind. He presented several possible roadways and improvements, and projected population and employment growth in the study area. The group also discussed comparisons of the morning and evening peak periods in the study area. Chris and Frank explained that these figures came from the Fairfax County model, and that a 30% growth through 2030 is consistent with the projected population and employment growth. The group discussed the effects of the improvements on roadways and pedestrians.

The group discussed the importance of longer signal times for pedestrians in the area. This improvement is outside of VHB's scope of work, but the RMAG could recommend that it be done. Fetemeh said that VDOT is aiming for all signals to be countdowns, and that all recommendations should be sent to VDOT for consideration.

A member of the public commented that the group should consider the balance between group issues and individual issues, or between vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic. The group discussed the possibilities of having walkways through private properties, and Rick commented that some discussions with property owners had already begun.

The group discussed the improvements proposed at Sunset Hills Road and Town Center Parkway. These improvements would have to meet VDOT standards for pedestrians and bicyclists. The group discussed the possibility of an underground roadway for vehicular traffic, and a pedestrian and bicycle bridge going over the roadway.

The group discussed the possibility of adding bus only lanes to major roadways, and reducing the road to one lane during off-peak periods. VHB is looking into that option. Rick said that inter-parcel access could also create relief.

The group agreed that now is the time to overlap the pedestrian/bicycle, transit, and roadways plans to get a better view of the big picture prior to the public meeting.

Jim Lawson explained the proposed agenda for the next public meeting. The public would view brief presentations of each of the modal issues, and have a questions and answer period for clarification questions only. The public would break into small groups and discuss the modal issues, then report out to the large group. Frank explained that what they are really looking for at this point is the identification of conflicts in priorities when the plans are overlapped. This would be achieved by focusing the group on possible conflict areas.

The group also discussed the need to reach out and engage grassroots groups to bolster attendance at this upcoming public meeting.

Patty adjourned the meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next regular meeting of the RMAG is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 8, 2008**, from 7-9:00PM at the **Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods**. The address is 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston, VA, 20191.

The next public meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 22, 2008**, from 7-9:00PM at the **Langston Hughes Middle School** cafeteria. The address is 11401 Ridge Heights Road, Reston, VA, 20191.