

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2009**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank A. de la Fe, Chairman, Hunter Mill District
Jay P. Donahue, Dranesville District
Earl L. Flanagan, Mount Vernon District
James R. Hart, At-Large
Timothy J. Sargeant, At-Large

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District

OTHER COMMISSIONER PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large

STAFF PRESENT:

Richard Stevens, Dulles Rail Project Coordinator, Fairfax County Department of
Transportation
David Jillson, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
Suzanne Lin, Zoning Evaluation Division, DPZ
Christopher B. Remer, Communication Specialist II, Planning Commission Office
Kara A. DeArrastia, Deputy Clerk to the Planning Commission

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In the temporary absence of Chairman Frank A. de la Fe, Commissioner Hart called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m., in the Board Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Commissioner Flanagan MOVED THAT THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2008 BE APPROVED.

Upon his arrival, Chairman de la Fe seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that the Committee would be briefed on the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project Phase 1 Special Exception (SE) and 2232 applications to be heard by the Planning Commission on Wednesday, January 28, 2009. (Note: These applications were moved to Wednesday, February 18, 2009, because the January 28, 2009 meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions.)

Suzanne Lin, Zoning Evaluation Division, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), noted that an overview staff report and five staff reports, addressing each of the proposed Tysons Corner and Wiehle Avenue Metrorail stations, had been distributed this evening. She said DPZ staff had recommended approval of each application and had issued a series of development conditions addressing concerns.

Chairman de la Fe requested that staff address the concern about whether the SE applications would interfere with the Tysons Land Use Task Force Report. David Jillson, Planning Division, DPZ, explained that DPZ staff had evaluated whether the 2232 applications addressed the criteria of character, location, and extent as specified in Section 15.2-2232 of the *Code of Virginia* and conformed to the 2003 Comprehensive Plan recommendations for Tysons Corner. He noted that, although new Comprehensive Plan recommendations based on the Task Force report have not yet been adopted, both the Comprehensive Plan and the Task Force report recognize the rail stations' role in Tysons Corner's future, and that the rail station proposals will support the transformation of Tysons Corner, as recommended by the Tysons Land Use Task Force.

Richard Stevens, Dulles Rail Project Coordinator, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), described some of the proposed developments and their entryways adjacent to the Metrorail stations.

Chairman de la Fe pointed out that none of the Phase 1 stations had parking structures with the exception of the Wiehle Avenue station.

In response to questions from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens discussed the Georgelas Group's proposed development adjacent to the Tysons West Metrorail station and explained that the County was working with the developer to retain and redevelop the Tysons Corner Fire Station property after the station had been relocated. He said an additional SE application would need to be approved to allow a kiss and ride area if it was not incorporated into the Georgelas development.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Flanagan, Mr. Stevens noted that the designs of the stations were 60 percent complete. He explained that the Metro platform canopy length would be 300 feet, which covered half of the Metro platform, and was deemed a cost-saving measure required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to approve spending for the project. He said the platforms were designed in a way that would allow the canopies to be extended the full length.

In response to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Jillson said the Metro stations were compatible with the urban character of Tysons Corner as it was currently planned.

Responding to another question from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens noted that the station design would allow a developer to add another entrance in the future. Ms. Lin pointed out that the applications each had a development condition that stated that if additional pedestrian connections were added in the future, a special exception amendment (SEA) approval would not be required.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hart, Mr. Jillson said the Comprehensive Plan language allowed for either elevated rail or a rail tunnel under Tysons Corner. He explained that an underground tunnel would require approval of another 2232 application.

Mr. Stevens answered a question from Mr. Jillson about the rail alignment.

Commissioner Hart recommended that staff explain at the Planning Commission public hearing why the Commission would not be deciding on the elevated rail versus an underground tunnel. Mr. Stevens agreed with this recommendation.

Responding to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens noted that the County had submitted the Phase 1 project as part of a State package based on the current expenses, which excluded additional funds for a tunnel.

In response to a question from Mr. Jillson, Mr. Stevens explained that the FTA approval and the Full Funding Grant Agreement referred only to elevated rail and not a tunnel.

Responding to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens said the Phase 1 project had been approved by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget and had been sent to Congress for a 60-day review.

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Chairman de la Fe said the next item of discussion was the proposed Wiehle Avenue station, noting that it would be an interim terminal station with a parking structure.

In response to questions from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens described the parking structure for the Wiehle Avenue station. He stated that the County would enter into final negotiation with a developer to construct a transit-oriented development at the Wiehle Avenue Metrorail station site, which would require rezoning, site plan, and SEA approval. Mr. Stevens described the proposed development and parking structure, noting that the County would retain ownership of site. He noted that the residential use was contingent upon an exemption from the Reston Center for Industry and Government Declaration of Protective Covenants and Restrictions, which prohibited residential and hotel uses along the corridor. Mr. Stevens said the County contract bid stipulated that the parking structure must be completed six months prior to the scheduled opening of the rail line. He listed the amenities planned for the properties across the Dulles Toll Road. He explained that FCDOT staff had prioritized the Reston Metrorail Access Group (RMAG) recommendations for the Wiehle Avenue station and requested grants to implement the top priority items. He added that on Monday, February 2, 2009, FCDOT staff would deliver a presentation to the Reston Association's Planning and Zoning Committee.

Mr. Stevens replied to a question from Commissioner Alcorn about airport bus service during rail construction. He said he would provide Commissioner Alcorn with an explanation about how the Wiehle Avenue station design would accommodate bus service.

Responding to questions from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens stated that FCDOT was preparing a Countywide Transit Development Plan to be completed by the end of this summer, which would address the feeder bus network and circulator bus system within Tysons Corner. He said that Fairfax Connector bus fares would need to be quadrupled at a minimum to offset the Fiscal Year 2010 reduction in funding for the bus service. He explained that FCDOT staff would adjust the proposed bus service at the Wiehle Avenue station, as part of the RMAG study. He noted that the Phase 1 project used a planning horizon of 2030 and if additional buses were needed, they would have to be ordered two years in advance.

Chairman de la Fe noted that the staff reports would be available on the DPZ Web site tomorrow.

Mr. Stevens pointed out that the SEA application for proposed improvements to the West Falls Church yard for rail construction would be scheduled for a Planning Commission public hearing in April or May 2009.

In response to questions from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Stevens reported that the Board of Supervisors' hearing on the Dulles Metrorail Project Phase 1 applications was scheduled on February 23, 2009. He explained that the Wiehle Avenue station would be the last stop in Phase 1 and the rail line would end approximately 1,200 feet beyond the station to accommodate interim storage.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.
Frank A. de la Fe, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Kara A. DeArrastia

Approved on: October 22, 2009

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission