

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2004**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District
Laurie Frost-Wilson, Commissioner At-Large

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Norma J. Duncan, Associate Clerk, Planning Commission Office
Karl Rohrer, Deputy Project Director, Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project,
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT)
Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Planning Division, Department of Transportation
(FCDOT)
Sterling Wheeler, Branch Chief, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and
Zoning (DPZ)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Rodney Lusk, Lee District Commissioner

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Planning Commission Vice-Chairman John R. Byers constituted the meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's *Bylaws & Procedures*, and indicated that the first order of business was to elect a committee chairman.

Commissioner Lawrence MOVED TO NOMINATE FRANK DE LA FE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 2004 TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Byers and carried unanimously, with Vice Chairman Byers turning the chair over to Commissioner de la Fe to continue the meeting.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that there were three items on the agenda: updates on the Dulles Rail Project, the Transportation Bond Projects, and the Transportation Policy Plan amendments. He asked for introductions around the room.

Chairman de la Fe indicated that the Dulles Rail Project was moving more quickly than anyone had anticipated. He asked Karl Rohrer, Deputy Project Director of the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), for a brief update.

Mr. Rohrer acknowledged an announcement that morning of a grant for preliminary engineering from the Federal Transit Administration, with the Governor in attendance. He presented a quick overview of the project through a slide presentation that is included in the date file. He pointed out that a Metrorail extension was planned to the Dulles Corridor from the Orange Line, which would run through Tysons, Reston, Herndon, Dulles Airport and Eastern Loudoun County. He noted key funding partners as the Federal Transit Administration, the State of Virginia (through the office of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT)), the Metropolitan Washington Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Fairfax County, the Town of Herndon, Loudoun County, and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA).

Mr. Rohrer next explained that after two years of study, including a variety of alternatives, it was agreed that the best answer for the Dulles Corridor was the full metro rail extension and that the concept of bus rapid transit (BRT) was currently working well.

He stated that the project would involve 23 miles of rail and 11 stations, and added that there would be new parking facilities primarily in the western end of the corridor, starting at Wiehle Avenue and that there would be four (4) stations in the Tysons Corner area and approximately 500 additional spaces at Tysons West. He said the other stations at Tysons would only have short-term, kiss-and-ride parking.

Additionally, he said, the Federal Transit Administration wanted to stop at Tysons Corner but VDRPT felt that it would be too hard to get the project beyond that point. Originally, he noted, the proposal had a new rail yard being built on Dulles Airport property. If not going beyond Wiehle Avenue, he said, they could not get the rail yard at Dulles Airport, so they had to improve West Falls Church to get more storage and shop capacity.

Mr. Rohrer advised that in Tysons West they had to change the station's site plan because the previous one was for a 2000 car parking garage, but based on comments from the County, VDOT and others, they scaled back the parking and proposed to move the station entrance east to Springhill Road, closer to the residential areas within Tysons that were already proposed. At Wiehle Avenue, he continued, they made provisions for an interim terminal station which involved adding bus bays and new access roadways to mitigate traffic issues.

Chairman de la Fe advised that Supervisor Hudgins had set up a task force to decide what would be planned at the Wiehle station and held meetings almost every other week, which he hoped would avoid too much controversy.

Mr. Rohrer noted that the Wiehle Avenue site was currently County-owned. Their proposal, he said, was to build a parking garage in the area known as the "million-dollar corner" across from the station entrance and to focus transit-oriented development there.

Another minor change, he noted, was to delete half of the parking at Route 606 and insert it at Route 772, at the request of Loudoun County. He mentioned some other minor design refinements to lessen impacts and improve the esthetics of the project.

In discussing the project status following four years and three different environmental documents, he said the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was nearing completion. He said they had submitted the final EIS draft to FTA, and advised that FTA had approved \$60M funding for preliminary engineering activities.

Regarding the long term funding for construction, he mentioned the project currently had about \$100M in previously appropriated Federal money. He said the County had already provided its funding for Phase 1 for formation of a special tax district in February, and that on July 1, 2004, would begin collecting revenues. The State, he added, was advancing its proposal to adjust the tolls on the Dulles Toll Road, which would pay for most of its share. He noted there was some previously appropriated money to use as well.

Mr. Rohrer advised that the State had recently signed a comprehensive “umbrella” agreement with the Dulles Transit Partners (DTA), a joint venture between Bectel and Washington Group International. Essentially, he explained, the DTA would do the preliminary engineering and afterward, renegotiate the design/build contract, so that if there were irresolvable issues, the contract could be terminated.

Mr. Rohrer mentioned that his staff had increased to six in the past year, including newly-hired project director Sam Carnaggio, formerly the FTA’s head of construction in Washington. He added that Mr. Carnaggio had previously worked with the Maryland Mass Transit Administration and would oversee the staff and guide the project through preliminary engineering and construction.

Mr. Rohrer said parties had signed the contract that day, and preliminary engineering mobilization would begin on July 23, 2004, when they would set up a new project office in Tyson’s Corner, at Springhill Road. He noted that FTA was very clear that preliminary engineering, Phase I, was the only project they would approve at this time. However, he said, they would simultaneously advance the soft sides of the project, such as financial planning, intergovernmental agreements, right-of-way, and utilities so that when preliminary engineering was complete, they could advance into design/build negotiations with Dulles Transit Partners. Since the constituents on the western end of the corridor were concerned about Phase II, he noted that the State decided to risk its own money to advance the engineering design on the second phase rather than starting all over again. He acknowledged their hope that the Federal Government would count it as a local share, but if not, they would move forward and keep it as one project, with the second phase to follow in about six months.

In answer to Commissioner Byers’ question as to whether the right-of-way acquisition was in Tysons Corner, Mr. Rohrer explained that they would need to acquire the aerial easements above Route 123 and the frontage road on Route 7.

Mr. Rohrer addressed the *Air Quality* line item under his slide titled *Challenges* to Commissioner Byers explaining that as the region's air quality continued to degrade, the project would assist as it helped reduce the vehicular traffic in the Corridor.

Commissioner Lawrence noted that since the County was advancing an Area Plans Review cycle, he was curious about how the metro project would fit with the County's planning at Tyson's Corner. Mr. Rohrer explained that he had worked closely with the Planning Division and Sterling Wheeler and had been following the guidelines in the 1994 Tysons Corner Urban Center Plan. He said he hoped that there would be now be a concerted effort to take advantage of the stations and focus development in those locations.

Mr. Rohrer interjected that in some respects the Plan was just catching up with the rail project. He explained that there was still time since they were just beginning the preliminary engineering. He added that previous nominations had been intentionally deferred several years earlier to complete the study and until station sites and alignment were set, the planning would not be productive.

Commissioner Lawrence reiterated that the project was a matter of great interest as there was going to be a separate transportation study done for Tysons and he would need to stay informed. Mr. Rohrer agreed that he would work closely with both Commissioner Lawrence and Supervisor Smyth as the study proceeded.

Chairman de la Fe noted that two of the Tysons stations would be in Hunter Mill and would affect the Providence District so it was important for both of them to be kept informed as well.

Chairman de la Fe noted that projects approved last year for Tysons Corner were going up quickly because proffers were triggered that related to transit in that area. He said it was also an issue for the Dranesville District due to proximity at West Falls Church of the expansion of transit storage.

Mr. Rohrer acknowledged that County staff, based on the 1994 plans, had done well at getting proffers they could use on all the stations except for the fourth one which was not envisioned, and that some of the proffers would help the project immensely.

Chairman de la Fe asked about the timeframe for ground breaking on Wiehle Avenue. Mr. Rohrer said his hope was that construction would begin the later half of 2006 with the caveat that once preliminary engineering was done, the most critical issue would be adequate funding from all partners, with the wild card being Federal funding. Continuing, he said they anticipated to be earmarked for \$600M from the FY'04-FY'09 Transportation Reauthorization and expected to advance the preliminary engineering and do design work.

In answer to Commissioner Byers' question about starting land acquisition without the funding, Mr. Rohrer stated that they could start no later than 2006. In addition to County and State funding, he said they also would have Federal funding available, especially if they had to wade through lengthy condemnation issues in Tysons.

In response to Commissioner Koch's inquiry about the fourth station, Mr. Rohrer replied that the County staff had actually suggested the station at the beginning of the EIS due to the increase in development with SAIC at Greensboro Drive.

Chairman de la Fe referred to an area in downtown D.C., as large as Tysons, which had many more stations. Mr. Rohrer acknowledged that there were 11-13 stations at that location because of multiple lots.

Chairman de la Fe inquired about whether rail cars were included in the Transportation Bond since he knew it included capital contributions to Metro from the County. Mr. Rohrer acknowledged that he did not know currently what was identified in the CIP but that it was a fraction to keep the rail system running and also was not sure how much was indicated for rail cars versus station enhancements.

Chairman de la Fe thanked Mr. Rohrer for his presentation and asked Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Transportation Planning Division, Department of Transportation (FCDOT), for the Transportation Policy Plan Update.

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Mr. Wolfenstein explained that the transportation segment of the Plan had not been updated comprehensively since 1991, but there had been some updates regarding local transportation impacts. He said they were doing an update out to the year 2030, using the Regional Transportation Study and quarterly studies from the last several years.

He skipped the background slides (included in the date file) and moved to slide five to indicate the framework for the current process showing three segments for the second half of 2004. He pointed out that the first frame included background, technical work which was primarily travel-demand forecasting. The middle, he continued, was a series of public outreach meetings which would serve as the basis for carrying updates to the plans and policies, and the second half of 2005 was when they envisioned the formal approval process through the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Slide six, he explained, was a more detailed list and that the process and task list would probably grow as it became more defined.

He indicated that they had contracted with Cambridge Systematics, Incorporated, a national transportation consultant firm, to do the modeling work.

Mr. Wheeler emphasized that the regional model had only 350 zones which would be reduced to about 1500 smaller zones to make a more refined road network, and that it was an extensive refinement to the regional model.

Continuing, Mr. Wolfenstein said they were still developing strategies to involve the public. He indicated that in the fall, they would invite public input through a news release, then wait until early 2005, after completion of the technical work by Cambridge Systematics, to reach out with the first set of public meetings.

Commissioner Wilson inquired as to whether Cambridge would, in terms of modeling, study the differences between the regular commuting traffic in the County area and separate it from the long distance travel. Mr. Wolfenstein said the zones referenced by Mr. Wheeler that were allotted to the County, produced triptail tables, which were trips between each zone. He added that the zones in the County were also larger but with the analysis there would be information about local traffic, through traffic, etc.

Commissioner Wilson asked, in terms of public outreach, if they would generate a list of stakeholders and interested groups or just wait for responses in general. She also suggested that a website would be helpful if similar to what the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services employed with their "letters to industry,".

Mr. Wolfenstein explained that DPZ had a list serve for review of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wheeler interjected that they would use resources that were available and if the DPWES list serve went out to the development community, it could also be used. Commissioner Wilson noted that she had tried to sign up on that website about five times without success. Mr. Wolfenstein said he didn't know when the bugs would be worked out but that their idea was to use that list rather than create a new one. He said the stakeholders for each group had not yet been identified and they would be happy for any input in that regard.

In response to Commissioner Byers' question on whether this Policy Transportation update included an extension of Metro to Fort Belvoir, Mr. Wheeler explained that they would analyze a minimum transportation network similar to the policy review in the early 90s, when they tested transportation. He said they did three transportation networks and six land use scenarios at that time but expected to only do three more sophisticated networks this time. He added that they had not decided what additional transit improvements would be included but the Belvoir rail extension was an example of improvements that could be included in that high transit alternative.

Commissioner Byers commented that during the Area IV update in 2005, Lee and Mount Vernon Districts were probably going to put that into the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wheeler acknowledged that possibility.

Commissioner Wilson asked them to identify the third network besides the regional road system and the transit network. Mr. Wheeler said it would be something in-between the bottom (which was proven to be fundable), and the top which was an extreme intensive transit network in building out the transportation land road.

Chairman de la Fe wanted to know where suggestions for the transportation plan itself surfaced in the process. Mr. Wolfenstein concluded that the information would be publicized in the fall, through various outreach mechanisms. He said he expected comments at the first public meeting stage and were still defining and refining that mechanism.

Chairman de la Fe explained that during the APR process, when citizens made requests to change roads, he wanted a way to ask them to wait until the Transportation Plan was finished.

Mr. Wheeler said they were following the pattern of policy plan updates where they did not take nominations and normally did the technical work first and then went to the public. He said they had decided to get public input beforehand this time, however.

Commissioner Wilson noted that the public submitted updates in the APR process, and asked Mr. Wheeler if that was possible or whether it would be closed. He said the project was not part of the regular review process and that suggestions could be made as part of the public input process. Commissioner Wilson said the Commissioners required a timeframe for when those suggestions would be accepted. She asked if the process would be similar to APR where people could submit amendments rather than on an individual ad hoc basis. Mr. Wheeler said that when the list serve was reconstructed on the webpage, that process would be identified.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.
Frank de la Fe, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Office of the Planning Commission of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Minutes by: Norma Duncan

Approved on: January 12, 2005

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission