

**Minutes of the Seven Corners Transportation and Land Use Task Force Meeting
December 10, 2013**

Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM
Mason District Government Center

Attendance:

Task Force: John Thillmann, Steve Tillman, Evelyn Haught, Jim Edmondson, Iqbal Khaiy, Jim McIlvaine, Nathan Bath, Martin Faga, Blake Smith, and Patrick Hoar.

Staff: Elizabeth Hagg (OCR), JoAnne Fiebe (OCR), Kimberly Rybold (DPZ), Bernard Suchicital (DPZ), Kris Morley-Nikfar (FCDOT), Michael Garcia (FCDOT), Leonard Wolfenstein (FCDOT), Dan Rathbone (FCDOT), and Aaron Frank from Supervisor Gross's Office.

Public Comment

Paul Bickmore, on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth provided a letter to the Task Force (delivered after the meeting concluded) explaining that Coalition for Smarter Growth is encouraged by the Task Force's recommendations. They offered some recommendations that they believe are essential to the creation of a successful mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented sustainable community. These include: affordable housing, a pedestrian friendly street network, a well-thought out parking policy, and the use of a form-based code.

Minutes and Administrative Items

The Task Force reviewed the Minutes of the November meeting, and a motion to approve them as corrected was made by Evelyn Haught, seconded by Jim Edmonson. Minutes were approved unanimously.

John Thillmann announced the Baileys Business Breakfast coming up at 7:30 am on Wednesday, December 11th at the Public House #7 restaurant on Leesburg Pike.

John Thillmann wrote a letter to Director of FCDOT thanking the organizers of the Transportation Charrette for their excellent work.

Transportation Charrette Results

Mike Garcia explained how County staff along with the transportation consultants utilized the ideas and parameters developed during the November Transportation Charrette to yield six potential network alternatives. From those concepts, staff and consultants developed evaluation criteria based on charrette comments to further narrow down the six concepts to three recommended alternatives. Mr. Garcia introduced Zachery Horowitz from Kittelson and Associates to review the alternatives.

Mr. Horowitz first gave a brief presentation on the principals of geometric design including basic considerations for interchange design such as appropriate queue lengths, intersection spacing guidelines, and bike/ped considerations.

Zachery reviewed the high-level criteria used for selecting preferred alternatives 2, 4, and 6. The next step will be to estimate future volumes to the year 2040 and perform travel-demand modeling on the three selected alternatives. Jim Edmonson asked if the criteria are weighted. Zachery stated that they are not weighted and that the criteria are more qualitative in nature. Dan Rathbone further explained that future volume forecasts could have a significant impact in the evaluation of the alternatives.

Zachery described each of the six alternatives. He first explained that options 1-3 are more focused on vehicle mobility and options 4-6 create more of a balance between local access and vehicle mobility.

Alternative 1: Divergent Diamond Interchange

Provides the highest vehicle mobility between Rt50 and Rt7. This option generally discourages bike/ped use due to the long distances between intersections and many ramp crossings.

Alternative 2: Couplet

Rt7 is split into two one-way roads. Ramps would directly connect Rt 50 to Rt7. Two phase traffic operations would be designed for Rt7 so there would not be a lot of left turns. It requires two new overcrossings over Rt50. This option would be more comfortable for bikes/peds. Wilson Boulevard would not connect to Sleepy Hollow Drive.

Alternative 3: Single-Point Interchange

Needs significantly more space than is available to make the realignment of Rt7 to Rt50 work. This option provides a high degree of vehicle mobility and a reduced amount of local accessibility. Option creates a number of streets with dead-ends but these streets would be connected via a ring road encircling the interchange. This option also requires two signal cycles for bikes/peds to cross and exposes bikes/peds to a lot of traffic.

Alternative 4: Two Half-Diamonds

Splits the interchange and consequently traffic volumes into two separate intersections. This alternative results in less congestion but does not provide for a direct connect between Rt7 and Rt50 and instead relies on local access roads to make the connection. It forms a more regular intersection where the Seven Corners interchange currently is located and provides a much improved experience for bikes/peds. Wilson Boulevard and Sleepy Hollow are reconnected. This plan can more easily integrate the Task Force's land use plan than other options.

Alternative 5: Four Corners

Creates a new intersection at Wilson and Sleepy Hollow. Vehicle connections between Rt50 and Rt7 are formed with sweeping ramps that may interfere with the local grid network and local connectivity. It would be difficult to support the Task Force's plan with this option because it does not permit the spine road to connect across Rt50. Creates a bike/ped friendly intersection on Rt7.

Alternative 6: Jughandles

Four special signals (called half signals) splits traffic moving between Rt50 and Rt7 and reduces congestion. Construction of this network can be more easily phased than other options. This option provides for high volumes of traffic to move between Rt50 and Rt7 while limiting the impact to local neighborhoods and commercial parcels.

Comments on the presented alternatives

Pat Hoar asked if plans showing the various options could be color coded so that existing and proposed roads are better distinguished. Zachery explained that they intend to do this in the second stage of concept development along with road widths and number of lanes. Pat also asked why Option 5 scored as high as option 2 but it was eliminated as a choice. Michael Garcia explained that Alternative 2 allows greater vehicular mobility where Alternative 5 doesn't permit the land use scenarios to be achieved due to ramp configurations. Pat stated that he is not ready to eliminate Alternative 5.

John Thillmann stated that he is concerned that criteria are too heavily weighted towards mobility. He was also concerned about the number of impacts to commercial and residential areas. He would like to see the ring road connecting Rt7 to Roosevelt Avenue occur behind the Seven Corners Shopping Center, not through it. Dan Rathbone explained that there are a number of weaving and geometric issues that may make it not possible to maintain the two overcrossings with the ramps in this location but that they will work with the consultants to review the possibilities. VDOT will still need to review these options and may have different concerns. John Thillmann said he was willing to throw out Alternative 6 in-lieu-of Alternative 5 with the changes he proposed if it can be constructed.

Blake Smith asked the task force to consider an additional option of maintaining the existing interchange but simply eliminating the left turn from Wilson Boulevard onto Rt7. This is the turning movement with the greatest negative impacts to traffic flow through the existing interchange.

John Thillmann asked Task Force members to vote on their preferences. The majority of task force members voted for alternatives 2, 4, and 5 with John's changes. Some members preferred alternatives 2, 4, and 6. John also asked that the consultants consider Blake's option. Evelyn stated that the mission of the Task Force is to look forward and not to be overly concerned with stepping on too many toes. She supports staff keeping its eyes on the future.

Michael Garcia explained that FCDOT will keep a comment period open for one week after the meeting to allow for additional observations by the Task Force on the alternatives. FCDOT will provide an update on the Task Force recommended alternatives at the January Task Force meeting.

The next Task Force meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 7:00 PM** at the Mason District Government Center.

The Task Force adjourned at 8:52 pm.

By

Date