

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 13, 2014

3:00 p.m.

County Government Center, Building A

1.) Roll Call

Present

Mr. Tim O'Connor
Mr. Rich Krapf
Ms. Robin Bledsoe
Mr. John Wright

Staff Present

Mr. Paul Holt
Mr. Jason Purse
Ms. Beth Klapper

Others Present

Wayne Moyer
Howard Price

Absent

Mr. Tim O'Connor called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2.) Minutes

a. July 10, 2014

Mr. Rich Krapf moved to approve the minutes.

In a unanimous voice vote, the minutes were approved as submitted (4-0)

3.) New Business

A. Mooretown Road Extended Corridor Study Project Update

Mr. Paul Holt stated that similar to the process with the Longhill Road Corridor Study, this update is one of the check-in points scheduled in the project methodology.

Mr. O'Connor requested that Mr. Wayne Moyer identify his parcel of property on the location map.

Mr. Jason Purse noted that Mr. Moyer has been providing input to staff and the project consultants regarding the potential road alignment.

Mr. Purse stated that the consultant, VHB, and staff met with property owners and other stakeholders in the area to gather input on the project. From that input, VHB developed three possible alignments.

Mr. Purse stated that Alignment 1 (Central) was the most direct route. This route would traverse the middle of the study area and would require one bridge and three culvert crossings due to the wetlands. Mr. Purse further stated that this alignment would reconfigure the intersection of Croaker Road and Rochambeau Drive.

Mr. Purse stated that Alignment 2 (Western) reduces the impact on the Pine Ridge subdivision and relieves some of the environmental impacts by bringing the road closer to the CSX line

paralleling Richmond Road. Mr. Purse noted that this alignment retains the reconfiguration of the Rochambeau Drive intersection shown in Alignment 1.

Mr. Krapf inquired about how many RPA crossing were required for Alignment 2.

Mr. Purse stated that Alignment 2 required one large crossing and three culvert crossings. Mr. Purse further stated that the crossing would be somewhat smaller than those required by Alignment 1.

Mr. Purse stated that Alignment 3 (Eastern) was developed from citizen input regarding Rochambeau Drive as well as limiting the impact on properties that are not in the Economic Opportunity (EO) district. Mr. Purse noted that this alignment would include widening a substantial portion of Rochambeau Drive.

Ms. Robin Bledsoe inquired about which option the landowners supported.

Mr. Purse noted that that information would be included in a summary that he would provide to the Committee.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about how properties along Peach Street would connect with the proposed road and, further, whether there would be a connection with Richmond Road.

Mr. Purse stated that there needs to be further study to determine exactly how the properties on Peach Street would connect, but it would be preferable to eliminate the need to cross the CSX tracks. Purse further stated that that there had been discussion about creating another leg of the road to connect with Route 60 which would effectively connect Rochambeau Drive with Route 60 as well.

Mr. Purse provided an overview of the market analysis for the study area. Included in consideration were residential development, destination retailers, office complexes, industrial use, warehouse and distribution and hotel and tourism. Mr. Purse noted that the analysis is based on a thirty minute drive time to/from the study area.

Mr. Purse provided an overview of the effect of each alignment alternative on the potential development of the parcels in the study area.

Mr. Purse noted that Alignment 2 would provide the opportunity for more of a relationship with CSX and might include potential for a rail stop. Mr. Purse noted that the Comprehensive Plan does include language encouraging a rail stop in that area if possible.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether the rail stop would be a passenger stop or a commercial freight stop.

Mr. Purse stated that the EO description does not specify the type of rail stop. Mr. Purse noted that during the previous Comprehensive Plan review, there was discussion of having the density available for residential rail capacity; however, if the area is being considered for industrial use, it would be beneficial to have the capacity available as well.

Mr. O'Connor inquired how the RV Park would tie in to the proposed road under Alignment 3.

Mr. Purse stated that the access would need to be through a local street which would cross an adjacent parcel.

Staff and the Committee discussed the ability of property owners to opt in or out of the EO designation. It was noted that at some point, as the EO district develops a master plan, the EO designation would convey when the property is sold.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about the environmental impact of Alignment 3.

Mr. Purse stated that it would require a significant undertaking to widen Rochambeau Drive because of the wetlands.

Mr. O'Connor proposed an alignment that would essentially reverse the curves of alignment 3.

Mr. Purse stated that staff would discuss that possibility with the consultant.

Mr. Wright commented that it appeared the parcel best suited to a destination retailer falls in York County because of its visibility from the main highway.

Mr. Purse provided the Committee with an overview of existing and predicted traffic conditions.

Mr. Krapf inquired whether the predicted traffic conditions accounted for the proposed Croaker Road widening.

Mr. Purse stated that staff was not certain what the modeling included and would need to discuss that with the consultant.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about why the Level of Service (LOS) on Croaker Road fell in the C/D category.

Mr. Purse responded that the LOS applied only to the intersection at Rochambeau Drive; however, the corridor is rated as A/B. Mr. Purse noted that the rating is determined by the wait time at the intersection.

Mr. Purse provided the Committee with an overview of possible typical sections for a four lane divided highway with grass median with several options for shoulders and curb & gutter, bike and pedestrian considerations and options for phasing construction. Mr. Purse stated that these typical sections were developed from citizen input on their preferences for the road. Mr. Purse noted that the road design is important because it affects both the type of development which might occur in the EO area and the character of the area. Mr. Purse noted that citizens were particularly interested in preserving the rural character of the area.

Mr. Purse provided the Committee with an overview of the environmental considerations for the area. Mr. Purse noted that the main area to be crossed had a small stream but because of the large recessed area the crossing would require a substantial bridge. Mr. Purse noted that the other crossings were much smaller and would need only a culvert crossing.

Mr. Purse provided an overview of the questions posed to citizens at the public meeting regarding their preferences for the EO and noted that these questions were the same ones posed during the Comprehensive Plan Community Forums. A summary of the citizen input was provided to the Committee.

Mr. Purse noted that there is no guarantee that the road will be built; however, if it is, the study provides a solid foundation for the design. Mr. Purse further noted that the Comprehensive Plan calls for the road to be privately funded. Mr. Purse stated that the parameters set forth in the study would also apply to any developer.

Mr. Krapf stated that his understanding was that the development of the EO district would/should provide a recession-proof revenue stream for the County.

Mr. Purse stated that the language in the Comprehensive plan was very specific that the area should be reserved for high-paying jobs such as technology, medical or medical research fields. Mr. Purse further stated that any residential development would be secondary and would be very limited.

Mr. Purse stated that one of the next steps is to go back to the consultant with any additional public input along feedback from the Committee and develop a preferred alignment so that other impacts can be studied. Mr. Purse stated that after a final public meeting, the study document will be presented to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Krapf inquired whether thought would be given to the unintentional consequences of the proposed road, particularly if it created a connection with Route 60.

Mr. Purse stated that the Lightfoot Road/ Richmond Road intersection is already a concern and noted that the additional connections could alleviate many of the problems in that area and reduce the amount of improvements needed at that intersection.

Mr. Wright inquired if any of the major landholders are opposed to the corridor extension.

Mr. Purse stated that the owners of properties designated EO are agreeable to the corridor extension; however, some of the properties that are not participating in the EO and residents in the Pine Ridge subdivision are interested in preserving the rural character of the area and ensuring that encroachment on their property is minimal.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired how alignment 3 would impact the Pine Ridge subdivision.

Mr. Purse stated that the impact has not been fully investigated; however, it could potentially affect houses and rights-of-way on the parcels which would be a greater impact on those smaller parcels.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired which alignment the landowners preferred.

Mr. Purse stated that 12 citizens selected Alignment 1, three citizens selected Alignment 2 and five citizens selected Alignment 3. Mr. Purse noted that a greater majority of attendees did not select an alignment and some preferred no road being built.

Ms. Bledsoe noted that the preferred alignment had more environmental impacts which conflicts with the responses indicating that preserving natural resources should be a priority.

Mr. Holt stated that preserving natural resources could be interpreted as preferring that no road is built and the area remain undeveloped.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that there was some concerns in the community about why bike lanes are now always included in the road design. Ms. Bledsoe stated that it would be helpful to educate citizens that it is a VDOT requirement, not just a County preference.

Mr. Krapf noted the inclusion of bike lanes also affects the eligibility of a project to be considered for certain funding allocations.

Mr. Holt stated that in this corridor is shown on the Regional Bikeways Plan for some type of bike facility.

Mr. O'Connor noted that a shared use path, and even sidewalks, would affect the amount of right-of-way required.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether the bike lane was sufficient for the requirements of the Regional Bikeways Plan.

Mr. Purse stated that a bike lane would be sufficient. Mr. Purse noted that it is important to consider the type of development that may occur so that the bike facilities and pedestrian accommodations are consistent with that development rather than having to retrofit the road at a later time.

Mr. O'Connor noted that in the Comprehensive Plan Community Forums, citizens indicated that light industrial use was a preferred option for the EO district.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that it would be a good area to bring in the health care uses that are encouraged in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Krapf noted that those uses would help retain the young professionals who receive their education in the area but cannot find employment in the area.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether the study area had been identified as a receiving area for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).

Mr. Purse stated that Urban Development Areas were no longer a state mandate. Previously, there had been discussion about including this EO area as a way to meet those requirements, and that TDR might be one way to do that.

Mr. Purse noted that the EO district ordinance has very specific language regarding the amount of developable area and phasing of development so that a certain percentage of commercial development must be completed before any residential development can occur.

Mr. O'Connor noted that an early vision for the area incorporated a transportation hub connecting the area to Hampton and Richmond; however, without the residential component, there would be a higher volume of traffic to move commuters into the area.

Mr. Holt noted that the selection of the Southside corridor for high speed rail improvements had reduced the options available to the Peninsula and consequently changed that vision for the EO substantially.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether the vision for the corridor extension could be an incentive to bring in the industries that would provide higher paying jobs.

Mr. Purse stated that it would depend on the source of the funding.

Mr. Krapf inquired about the time frame for selecting a preferred alignment.

Mr. Purse stated that a preferred alignment should be more fully developed by early 2015. Mr. Purse further stated that there would be another public meeting to receive feedback on that alignment. Mr. Purse noted that staff anticipated the study would be completed by May of 2015.

Mr. Wright noted that the technology fields that support the medical community should be encouraged.

Mr. O'Connor noted that the area needed more of the medical and technological industries that would encourage partnerships with the College of William & Mary and Thomas Nelson Community College.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether the road could be developed in phases.

Mr. Holt stated that it would depend on the master plan for the EO; however, it would be a possibility.

Mr. Purse noted that it was logical that construction would start on the Lightfoot Road end which would run through the Pottery's property in York County. Mr. Purse further noted that the road would probably not be built past those properties but would stub out so that it could be extended by another developer.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about the impact on Maxton Lane in relation to access to the RV Park.

Mr. Purse responded that he anticipated that the RV Park would take access from Mooretown Road rather than Maxton Lane.

Mr. O'Connor offered an opportunity for public comment.

Mr. Wayne Moyer stated that the J4C preference was for the road to begin at Lightfoot Road and end at the edge of the Hill Top Farm property. Mr. Moyer stated that the expense of constructing the road should be borne by the developer. Mr. Moyer noted that his personal preference would be for the majority of the roadway to be built as a two lane road. Mr. Moyer noted he had concerns about the accuracy of the traffic predictions for the area. Mr. Moyer further noted that consideration should be given to the cost differential between building two lanes or four lanes. Mr. Moyer also noted expressed concern over the effect of removing the amount of land needed for a four lane right-of-way from the tax base.

Mr. O'Connor asked Mr. Moyer which of the three alignments he would choose.

Mr. Moyer responded that Alignment 3 makes the most sense environmentally. Mr. Moyer further noted that if Alignment 1 is selected, he would prefer to see it be built as a two lane road which would reduce the impact on sensitive environmental areas.

Mr. Purse stated that he would provide Mr. Moyer with the more detailed traffic projections for the EO area.

Mr. Howard Price stated that Alignment 3 was the least attractive because of the impacts on neighborhoods along Rochambeau Drive. Mr. Price further stated that his preferred option is Alignment 1 because it provides better access to properties in the EO area.

Mr. O'Connor suggested an alignment that would create a perimeter road beginning at Lightfoot Road and extending to Rochambeau Drive and then cutting through the Hunt farm to parallel the CSX tracks and the connect with Croaker Road.

Mr. Purse stated that staff would discuss the option with the consultant.

Mr. O'Connor inquired how the Mooretown Road Corridor Study fit in with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Purse stated that the study was included in the Transportation Section of Comprehensive Plan and that the study was also included in the Land Use GSAs. Once the study is completed, it will be used for the next Comprehensive Plan review to update the Mooretown Road and Economic Opportunity discussion areas and the Comprehensive Plan map. Mr. Purse also noted that the study would be used to develop further strategies and actions.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he wanted to ensure that there is a vision in place for the EO area.

Mr. Purse stated that the Comprehensive Plan is very specific about the vision for the EO and Mooretown Road area.

Ms. Bledsoe asked for clarification on the level of specificity expected of the Planning Commission Working Group in reviewing Comprehensive Plan section text and goals, strategies and actions.

Mr. Holt responded that staff is looking to get as much substantive comment as possible so that when the document is presented to the Planning Commission for final review, it will be in nearly final form.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired how the Comprehensive Plan related to the overarching goals of the County's Budget.

Mr. Holt stated that Mr. Hill is working to create that link between the Comprehensive Plan and the Budget through his efforts to develop strategic planning priorities with the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Holt stated that the Comprehensive Plan informs the shorter term strategic priorities which then are funded through the operating budget.

Mr. Purse stated that the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Guide is used as a tool for reporting back to the Planning Commission and the Board.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired about the Strategic Management Plan mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

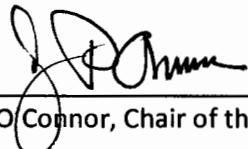
Mr. Holt stated that the document has not been updated since 2010.

Mr. Holt stated that Mr. Hill's goal in developing the strategic planning priorities is to have the type of document noted in the Comprehensive Plan to use as a tool going forward.

5.) Adjournment

Mr. Wright made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:25 p.m.



Tim O'Connor, Chair of the Policy Committee