

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION WORKING GROUP OF THE COUNTY OF JAMES CITY, VIRGINIA, WAS HELD ON THE SIXTH DAY OF NOVEMBER, TWO-THOUSAND AND FOURTEEN, AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER BOARD ROOM, 101-F MOUNTS BAY ROAD, JAMES CITY COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

1. **ROLL CALL**

Working Group Members

Present:

Rich Krapf

Tim O'Connor

Chris Basic

Robin Bledsoe

George Drummond

John Wright, III

Heath Richardson

Staff Present:

Paul Holt, Planning Director

Tammy Rosario, Principal Planner

Jason Purse, Zoning Administrator

Leanne Pollock, Senior Planner II

Absent:

Elizabeth Friel

Mr. Rich Krapf called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Krapf opened the public comment.

Mr. Joseph Swanenburg, 3026 The Pointe Drive, spoke regarding the County's future transportation needs.

As no one else wished to speak, Mr. Krapf closed the public comment.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. October 16, 2014

Mr. Krapf stated that Mr. Heath Richardson previously noted a minor typo via email.

Ms. Robin Bledsoe moved to approve the October 16, 2014 Planning Commission Working Group minutes.

On a voice vote, the minutes were approved.

4. **TOPICS FOR REVIEW**

Mr. Krapf stated that the main topic for discussion is Transportation and thanked the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) representatives for their presence.

Ms. Tammy Rosario presented a report on the changes to the Transportation section text and goals, strategies and actions (GSAs). Ms. Rosario introduced Mr. Keith Nichols, Senior Transportation Engineer for HRTPO and the principal author of the Historic Triangle transportation study; Mr. Rossie Carroll, the VDOT Williamsburg Residency Administrator, and Mr. Darryll Lewis, Transportation Planning Engineer for VDOT.

Mr. Nichols gave an overview of role of the HRTPO and the regional study.

Mr. Richardson asked which population figure the HRTPO predictions were based off of.

Mr. Nichols stated that he is not sure of the exact number, but it was provided by the County approximately six years ago. Mr. Nichols noted that predictions from the County regarding where people would be living and working were also used to create their models.

Ms. Rosario stated that that information was compiled prior to adoption of the previous Comprehensive Plan, and changes to Land Use designations were not factored into the 2034 model. Ms. Rosario noted that those changes were incorporated into the URS model.

Mr. Krapf noted that infrastructure across the county is aging and deteriorating. Mr. Krapf inquired, given this and the new demand generated by growth, how competitive a locality like James City County is for available transportation funding.

Mr. Nichols replied that the Hampton Roads Transportation Fund projects come from taxes that were increased in the region to go towards major regional projects greater than \$100 million in value. Mr. Nichols stated that the Interstate 64 widening is currently the only project in James City County. Mr. Nichols noted that these funds could not be used for smaller projects such as turn lanes or road widening. Mr. Nichols also stated that VDOT will now also be devoting funds based on various performance measures, and it is currently unknown how that change will impact the projects in our area.

Mr. Krapf stated that it will be an interesting development.

Mr. Nichols noted that VDOT is still in the process of figuring out how the system will work.

Mr. Carroll stated that the Croaker Road project is already funded and will not go through that process. Mr. Carroll stated that VDOT works with the County to prioritize projects for local roads, and each locality currently receives a certain amount of secondary funds based on revenues. Mr. Carroll further stated that there are many different funding sources.

Mr. Paul Holt stated that although new funding is being generated at a regional level, that funding is dedicated to large scale regional projects and noted that funding for other projects is still very limited and very competitive. Mr. Holt stated that funding that would have been used for new construction and enhancement is currently being used for road maintenance and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. Mr. Holt further stated that many of the County's funded projects are Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects, and noted that because Hampton Roads is now meeting their air quality goals, that available funding may cease.

Mr. Krapf stated that as infrastructure continues to age, the demand for funding will continue to increase and noted that it was helpful to get a better understanding of the funding process.

Mr. Tim O'Connor noted that there is information in the text regarding the future needs of Route 199, but it is not shown on the HRTPO congestion map for 2034. Mr. O'Connor asked how better connections can be made between the Comprehensive Plan and the maps.

Mr. Nichols stated that the HRTPO has the section of Route 199 from John Tyler Highway to I-64 listed as congested in 2034. Mr. Nichols inquired if this is the same section staff has proposed for widening in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Rosario confirmed and noted that this section has been marked as needing clarification.

Mr. John Wright stated that transportation comes up frequently at the Planning Commission meetings, and it is important to have a broader view of how the projects and decisions will impact to each other.

Mr. Krapf stated that as the Planning Commission considers new applications, there are occasional instances where a project would meet a lot of needs within the Comprehensive Plan, but is in an area that is already congested.

Mr. Wright asked how much it costs to widen one mile of highway.

Mr. Carroll replied that it varies, but on average will cost \$1 million per mile.

Mr. Wright inquired how much money is available for James City County's secondary roads.

Mr. Carroll replied that he would have to look in the Six-Year Secondary Plan to find that information.

Mr. Holt stated that the plan only provides several hundred thousand dollars per year.

Mr. Carroll stated that it is over \$1 million in six years.

Mr. Wright asked if funding would have to come from the County's tax payers in order to widen the County's roads.

Mr. Carroll replied that it would have to come from some other funding sources, such as revenue sharing.

Ms. Rosario stated that the County has access to federal funds for which they compete with other localities and noted that the County receives approximately \$200,000 per year in State secondary funds. Ms. Rosario stated that the County can also put money forward to match other State funding.

Mr. Holt confirmed that that is the Revenue Sharing program, where County funds are leveraged dollar for dollar.

Mr. Wright stated that the County must be very selective in the projects it selects because of the high cost and low available funding.

Ms. Rosario added that there are different funding sources for different types of projects.

Mr. Basic stated that this may be reason there are some projects that are not reflected in the HRTPO maps. Mr. Basic stated that, for example, even though Monticello Avenue between News Road and Route 199 is scheduled for improvements next year, it is not reflected in the HRTPO 2034 map because they may only be showing major improvements, which will not have impact in that area.

Mr. Richardson inquired if it is now VDOT policy that bicycle and pedestrian paths be included in the planning of future road projects.

Mr. Carroll stated that it is not guaranteed, but those considerations are a part of the process for all added lanes.

Mr. Richardson noted that there are no shoulders on many of the County's older roads, but they are included in many new projects, whether they are designated as bicycle and/or pedestrian paths or not.

Mr. Carroll confirmed and stated that it is part of VDOT's process to consider whether those paths would be beneficial.

Mr. Richardson stated that it is thus not an absolute, and noted that this is consistent with the language in the Comprehensive Plan that bicycle and pedestrian paths "be considered."

Mr. Carroll stated that they are not applicable in all situations.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that there are criteria within that policy that allows developers to prove that bike and pedestrian paths would not be feasible in certain instances.

Mr. Lewis confirmed that there approximately five exceptions within the policy.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that one of those factors is cost.

Mr. Carroll stated that it is still considered for all projects.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that just because paths are included in a design, does not mean that they will actually be built.

Mr. Carroll confirmed.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that VDOT would at least like to see the community consider what those paths would look like, how much they would cost and if they are viable for the area.

Mr. Carroll and Mr. Lewis confirmed.

Mr. Wright stated that he has heard various complaints from citizens regarding missing stop signs or obstructed intersection views and inquired how VDOT receives those complaints.

Mr. Carroll replied that citizens can call the customer service center at 1-800-FOR-ROAD, and VDOT then schedules repairs or improvements.

Mr. Wright inquired if County staff can provide those comments to VDOT or if citizens will have to call the customer service center.

Mr. Holt stated that the quickest response will come through the customer service center.

Ms. Rosario stated that citizen comments regarding bus facilities have been shared with WATA and congestion comments have been shared with HRTPO.

Mr. George Drummond inquired regarding the process for having cautionary “Children at Play” signs posted.

Mr. Carroll stated that the County ordinances often determine when a “Children at Play” sign is necessary, but VDOT will issue a permit to have the sign placed in the right of way. Mr. Carroll stated that in regards to speeding, VDOT will sometimes perform counts to determine what is going on in that area, and noted that there are various traffic calming measures that could come from the County.

Mr. Drummond asked if there is a scoring system for determining whether a bike path is appropriate for a certain area.

Mr. Lewis stated that there is no scoring system. Mr. Lewis explained that considerations begin with looking at the County’s bike plan, and noted that he will expect paths to be built for all projects in areas that are identified on that plan. Mr. Lewis further stated that projects outside of those areas are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Drummond stated that he believes the inclusion of bike paths is a federal guideline, but there are some areas where they are not practical due to houses being located very close to the street.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that James City County is moving towards more centralized housing and commercial activity and inquired if there is a benefit to that from the perspective of VDOT. Ms. Bledsoe noted that the Comprehensive Plan cites that it encourages better transportation and asked for VDOT’s opinion on that assertion.

Ms. Rosario stated that the centralizing of development would relate to access management.

Mr. Carroll noted that the development portion of that question is not within VDOT’s purview, but mixed use areas and having people live closer to where they work do provide benefits in terms of less travel.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired if it is something VDOT requires or promotes.

Mr. Carroll stated that VDOT does not identify areas that should be developed, as those are Zoning and Land Use decisions.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she understands and is trying to determine why this information would be included in the Transportation section.

Mr. Carroll stated that VDOT's role is to determine that those centralized locations can handle the growth that will be occurring.

Ms. Bledsoe noted that she does see the benefits to mixed use areas, such as New Town.

Mr. O'Connor inquired if there is a benefit to having road shoulders. Mr. O'Connor noted that the first portion of Forge Road has a shoulder, but the rest does not, and inquired if there is a cost benefit to those shoulders.

Mr. Carroll replied that there is a safety benefit, as they provide more space and time for drivers to react to situations on the road. Mr. Carroll also noted that not every shoulder is designated for pedestrian or bicycle use.

Mr. Lewis confirmed that shoulders do provide safety. Mr. Lewis also noted that even in times where there is not enough room for a striped, five-foot wide bike lane, shoulders can still sometimes be widened to allow bikers to use the area.

Mr. Richardson asked if it is true that some states mandate shoulders for safety reasons.

Mr. Carroll stated that he is not sure, but it could be difficult to say that shoulders are required for every roadway. Mr. Carroll stated that there are some roadways that have been taken into the secondary system that were never completely constructed.

Mr. O'Connor inquired regarding the definition of the advanced traffic management technology referenced in the GSAs, and how it could be applied to some of the County's lesser improved roads.

Mr. Carroll stated that some of the strategies include roundabouts and adaptive traffic synchronization in order to keep traffic moving.

Mr. Holt stated that the Historic Triangle Collaborative is also working to put the timing signs along Interstate 295 letting drivers know how long it will take to reach the Historic Triangle and whether it will be faster to take I-64 or Route 60.

Mr. O'Connor asked where the Skiffes Creek Connector project currently stands.

Mr. Holt stated that it is a high priority and is currently in the 2034 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as a study only. Mr. Holt stated that it has received some funding but not enough to push it into the construction phase.

Mr. O'Connor inquired if the HRTPO plays a role in ranking the project for funding.

Mr. Holt confirmed and stated that it is a candidate for the 2040 LRTP process, as is the Route 60 Relocation. Mr. Holt stated that it will most likely be closer to January 2016 before the County knows how the ranking system will play out.

Mr. Krapf thanked the representatives who were present and shared the comments Ms. Elizabeth Friel had submitted via email regarding adding more detail to one of the graphics in the Transportation section and the conservation easement on Mainland Farm. Mr. Krapf stated that he had not noted any takeaway action items for staff regarding the text and GSAs.

The Working Group members confirmed.

5. OTHER ITEMS

Mr. Krapf noted that the Policy Committee will meet on November 13th, and the Working Group will meet to begin discussing the Land Use applications on November 20th, continuing on December 4th if necessary. Mr. Krapf stated that the Land Use wrap up and section review will take place on December 18th.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Krapf opened the public comment.

Ms. Petra Nadal, 106 Indian Circle, spoke regarding bike paths and sidewalks.

Ms. Deborah Linceski, 103 Godspeed Lane, spoke regarding park and ride lots.

Ms. Landra Skelly, 6572 Wiltshire Road, spoke regarding bike paths and funding.

As no one else wished to speak, Mr. Krapf closed the public comment.

Mr. Krapf opened the floor for other discussion by the Working Group members.

Mr. Richardson stated that he hopes there will be further discussion regarding the recurring themes such as bike paths and prioritization of projects.

Mr. Krapf stated that there will be a continuing dialogue as the draft goes through the legislative process.

Ms. Rosario stated that staff is looking to the Working Group for any desired edits at this time in order to ensure that the draft will receive their support when it is presented in its entirety.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired comments from the Working Group regarding edits to the Transportation section will still be considered if they are sent at a later date, even though the discussion on the topic has ended.

Ms. Rosario stated that they will still be considered, but it would be helpful for the comments to be presented at a meeting because it allows for discussion among all of the Working Group members.

Mr. Krapf stated that submitting those questions and comments in advance of the meetings via email is helpful because it allows staff adequate time to perform any necessary research and prepare a response.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the Transportation text describes a desire to limit traffic along the congested corridors such as Jamestown Road and John Tyler Highway, but the GSAs do not list limiting developing as one of the actions to mitigate such congestion. Mr. O'Connor added that, given the recent discussions of the PSA, he was additionally conflicted over limiting growth along roads within the PSA.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that there are also items that she is struggling with, such as the GSA to expand affordable housing in order to reduce in and out commuting. Ms. Bledsoe stated that she does not believe providing more affordable housing will reduce transportation congestion issues.

Mr. Krapf stated that there are no absolutes in this consideration process and stated that there will sometimes be conflicting goals or strategies. Mr. Krapf noted that the Promenade at John Tyler is an example of a case that could worsen transportation issues, but also provide affordable and workforce housing and revitalize a failing shopping center. Mr. Krapf stated that in those instances a recommendation may be made that is not best for one particular sector, but is better for three other sectors.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that the Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for the community, and although it is not possible to have a perfect document, she struggles with what affordable housing and jobs has to do with limiting transportation issues. Ms. Bledsoe noted that if the other side of the argument is considered, more housing and jobs will bring more people to the area.

Mr. Krapf agreed that more development will bring more traffic, but noted that requesting items such as bus shelters with those developments could encourage more people to use public transportation.

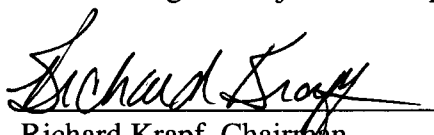
Ms. Bledsoe stated that she is not opposed to development, but she does not agree with the statement that affordable housing and job opportunities should be increased in order to reduce in and out commuting, and she is worried about the creation of a pseudo policy.

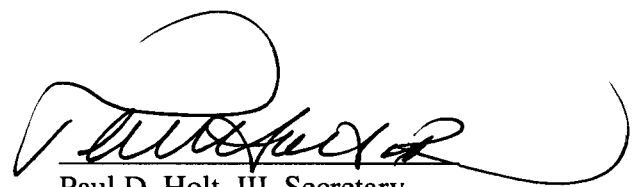
Mr. Krapf stated that he does see how increasing affordable housing could decrease the number of people who are commuting in from other areas for work, but he understands Ms. Bledsoe's comments.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. O'Connor moved to adjourn until to the next Planning Commission Working Group meeting scheduled for Nov. 20, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.


Richard Krapf, Chairman


Paul D. Holt, III, Secretary