

BRAC Advisory Group Meeting

August 19, 2009

7pm – 9pm

Burke Branch Library

Roll Call –

Present:

Jim Turkel, Chief, Belvoir Integration Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Jerry Dawson, Duke Realty

Jayne Blakesley, Alexandria Transportation Commission

Judy Cooper, Brookville-Seminary Valley, *Alternate*

Julie Edelson, Lincolnia Hills/Heywood Glen

Dick Somers, Seminary Park Community Association

Dave Dexter - Chair, Seminary West

Dick Hayes, Seminary Hill

Ronald Sturman, Seminary Heights

Doratheia Peters, West End Business Association, *Alternate*

James Nozar, JBG, *Alternate*

Don Buch, Citizen at Large

Ron Sturman, Seminary Heights

Nancy Jennings, Seminary Hill

Other representatives:

Gwen Sigda, Office of Senator Jim Webb

Mike Chipley, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

Not Present:

John Komoroske, Chairman, Planning Commission

Geoffrey Goodale – Vice Chair, Brookville-Seminary Valley

Colonel Moffatt, Fort Belvoir Deputy Garrison Commander for Transformation and BRAC

Mark Benedict, Parkside of Alexandria – absent due to medical leave

Dave Cavanaugh, Seminary Ridge

Duanne Gautier, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

Kathy Burns, West End Business Association

City Staff:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Bob Garbacz, Division Chief, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Ravi Raut, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Pat Mann, Department of Planning and Zoning

Pat Escher, Department of Planning and Zoning

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VDOT

Ronaldo T. “Nick” Nicholson, VDOT Regional Transportation Director for the Northern Virginia Megaprojects

VHB

Chris Gay

Alexandria Commission for the Arts

Matthew Harwood

Winkler Preserve

Jodi Smolik

Duke Realty

Brian Strohl

Patrick Walsh

1. Roll Call
2. Approved July minutes
3. Matthew Harwood from Alexandria Commission for the Arts gave a brief presentation about the process used for General Service Administration (GSA) buildings public art process. He used the Federal Court House in Alexandria as an example. GSA buildings allocate .5% of their budget for public art. The GSA has a group of local artists that they use on a regular basis. Usually a panel is formed and they review the art work of these preselected artists. Then 3 artists are chosen to provide a preliminary design for the project. The panel then selects the finalist to create the chosen art piece.

The Army indicated that this building is not a public building – it is a secured facility of the Department of Defense (DoD) and does not abide by the GSA regulations. The DoD doesn't have a public art policy and there is no budget for art. The DoD may be able to provide some public art in the general vicinity of the transit center. Jim Turkel will follow up and report back to the group.

The majority of open space will be adjacent to the building and within the secured perimeter, there is a small portion of the open space south of the north parking garage.

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4. Jodi Smolik from the Winkler Preserve discussed that the botanical preserve educates students within the City, primarily grades 1 through 5. They have revegetated the land with numerous native plants. They have had some flooding this spring due to the heavy rains this spring. The additional water was not just from the BRAC site, but from I-395 which serves as the preserve's southern boundary.
5. Brian Strohl with Duke Construction discussed stormwater issues for the Winkler properties. The pond within the preserve serves as stormwater detention for 244 acres in and around the pond. There are 3 streams that flow into the pond and then eventually the water flows to Holmes Run. The ponds water quality meets state requirements and has an additional 6 acre capacity remaining including all of the existing and proposed development. Duke has taken a proactive role by dredging the ponds and installing rock dams prior to the commencement of the BRAC construction. Mark Center Association has a perpetual obligation to maintain and alleviate any problems with this naturalized stormwater system. The middle stream has some erosion due to the composition of the soils and an aggregate base. Duke is looking at ways to mitigate this erosion and improve the stream banks.
6. Open Space Discussion – Pat Escher compared the previous approved plan with the current plan and believes that there is about 2 acres of lost open space. She has asked the Duke Realty to prepare a more precise open space calculation and submit it for staff review. The City will request that the Army make a monetary contribute to the City's open space fund for the purchase of open space in the neighborhood to compensate for the lost of the open space. Mr. Buch stated that based upon the sales price of the land he believed that the sales price for the open space should be approximately 6.5 million dollars per acre and that the open space behind the secure perimeter will be lost to public access. The matter of open space is an on going discussion and the group will be advised periodically.

Another point raised about open space is that there is the potential for additional reduction of open space along Beauregard Street with potential widening to accommodate a bus rapid transit (BRT) lane. Staff has not determined if the BRT will require a dedicated lane or if it will be a shared lane. So to date it is unclear if Beauregard Street will be widened. If it is widened, the lost of open space is a separate issue not linked with the Army's development.

7. Pat Mann of Neighborhood Planning updated the group on the status of the Beauregard Corridor Plan. The City has submitted a draft grant application to the Office of Economic

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Adjustment of the Department of Defense to fund the professional services portion of the Beauregard Corridor Plan. OEA has scheduled the review for Thursday, August 20.

In anticipation of grant funding, the City has issued a request for proposals for professional services to support staff in analysis and plan development. He indicated that the City hopes to have a consultant team on board in October.

He indicated that the City's schedule for the planning program anticipates publication of a draft plan for public review in summer, 2010 and a final plan for public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Council in the fall of 2010. An initial community meeting is expected to be held in October to obtain initial public input on issues, concerns and ideas for the future of the planning area.

In response to a question from the group, Mr. Mann indicated that transportation planning is a major component of the scope of services, and that the RFP could be reviewed on-line at the City's Procurement *eProcure* web site.

8. RIF Discussion – In a letter from Jerry Hansen, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, the honorable members of Congress, Senator Webb, Senator Warner, and Congressman Moran were informed that the Army believes the presence of the remote inspection facility (RIF) will actually makes the development more secure because its existence will act as a deterrent for potential aggressors and its absence makes the development a more readily penetrable. Relocating the RIF would lessen the efficiency of their operations and the building has been designed to lessen any impacts to the surrounding buildings in case of an event. Jim Turkel discussed other security measures that have been incorporated into the development such as a curvilinear road to slow vehicle speed, the provision of security guards and protective fencing. The only facility that has their deliveries inspected at the Pentagon is the Navy Annex and that is due to its close proximity to the Pentagon with a shared property line. The City wants to be assured that the design of the RIF will not preclude a future direct access ramp from I-395 to the entire campus.
9. TMP – Jennifer Rephlo with Benham Companies, LLC is just getting under contract by the Army to prepare the transportation management plan (TMP). The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPCC) requires larger Federal projects – 400 + employees – to develop a TMP. The first thing she will do is survey the employees to find out where they live, if they are interested in using mass transit, etc. The TMP will create opportunities for car pooling, shuttling, etc. TMP will set up monitoring and evaluation procedures to understand what is working and what may need to be changed. She is

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looking at 40% reduction in SOV usage, but will review if a 50% reduction is feasible per the group's request. The DoD has a 60 million dollar budget for transit subsidies. The development will provide parking for 60% of their employees. The Fort Belvoir TMP consultant has been hired and will be attending the BRAC regional meeting and transit/traffic will be reviewed both on a regional basis and individual basis. In the next 2 or 3 months many of these traffic/transportation studies will provide some solutions/conclusions.

10. VHB – Chris Gay gave a presentation about his on going traffic study. He will have it completed by next meeting and be able to give more concrete conclusions. He showed how the intersections are functioning in the area and indicated which ones that were having difficulty with the present volumes; two in particular where the north bound ramp at I-395 and Seminary Road and Seminary Road and George Mason Drive.

The group discussed another intersection and other issues such as:

- The intersection of Echols Avenue and Seminary Road,
- The back up from Route 7 to Beauregard Street,
- The fact that these counts are being taken during the summer months when school is out of session,
- How the already congested area will be further compounded by the BRAC development and
- If the study included origin of destination information.

The study does not include origin destination information, it has looked at pedestrian circulation, and Chris will do some additional counts in the fall to see if his summer numbers needs to be adjusted. The study is reviewing the years of 2011 and 2013 and evaluating what would occur with no road improvements, a ramp into the garage and a ramp into the campus and both ramps. The draft report will be finished by early September. VDOT is also looking at direct access to the site, so these two reports will complement each other. The reports do not align but will give more information with respect to north and south bound access. When reviewing the TMP, bus route commute times should be reviewed with any proposed improvements to see if their route times improve or degrade. WMATA is preparing a study to review their transit routes and route times.

11. VDOT – Nick Nicholson – The interchange justification report (IJR) will be completed by the end of the year – no time frame for any implementation of the study's recommendations. It is important that there be coordination with all of the various

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studies. Nick described the measures that would be used to relieve the additional noise that would be as a result of the HOT lanes. He handed out graphics showing locations for proposed sound walls which would range in height from 8 feet to 20 feet. These walls are a Federally mandated when noise levels are greater than 66 decibels. VDOT is also reviewing other measures such as a quieter pavement material. It would require 100 foot wide, mature treed vegetative buffer to achieve a five decibel noise reduction; VDOT does not have that much right of way. VDOT has a noise abatement committee that reviews each of the walls to see if they are feasible and the committee makes recommendations to the engineer assigned to the area/project. If the walls are accepted, they have to be approved by the effected community. If the community does not want the walls, then they will not be constructed. It appears that VDOT has indicated that they could construct a wall adjacent to the preserve and removing some trees along their right of way, if so, the City would be the contact representative. The group believes the walls are generally ugly and create a physical barrier that divides a community. Care should be taken when selecting the materials and the walls appearance should be softened with vegetation. While there was discussion, there was not a consensus that walls would be good or necessary for the community, even with a vegetative screen. Jayme Blakesley requested that VDOT report on current sound conditions so we can understand whether the condition will worsen with the addition of one traffic lane.

12. Mark Jinks handed out a press release indicating that Arlington County has filed a law suite against the Commonwealth to try to stop the HOT lanes within their jurisdiction.
13. Meeting was adjointed.
14. Next meeting September 16 – Burke Library