

BRAC Advisory Group Meeting

May 19, 2010

7pm – 9pm

Burke Library

4701 Seminary Road

Roll Call –

Present:

Donna Fossum, Planning Commission
Jerry Dawson, Duke Realty
Paul Mc Mahon, Washington Headquarter Services
Judy Cooper, Brookville-Seminary Valley
Dick Somers, Seminary Park Community Association
Dave Dexter - Chair, Seminary West
Kathy Burns, West End Business Association
Don Buch, Citizen at Large
Nancy Jennings, Seminary Hill
Dave Cavanaugh, Seminary Ridge
Julie Edelson, Lincolnia Hills/Heywood Glen
Tom Burkert, JBG
Mark Benedict, Parkside of Alexandria
Gerry Chiaruttini, Beauregard Heights Civic Association

Not Present:

Jayne Blakesley, Alexandria Transportation Commission
Stephanie Landrum, AEDP
Ronald Sturman, Seminary Heights

City of Alexandria Elected Officials:

Kerry Donely, Vice Mayor
Redella S. “Del” Pepper, Councilwoman

City Staff:

Adam Thiel, Fire Chief
Rich Baier, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services
Abi Lerner, Deputy Director of Transportation and Environmental Services
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Planning, Department of Planning and Zoning
Bob Garbacz, Chief, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
Ravi Raut, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
Pat Escher, Principal Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning

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Note: All presentations can be found on the City's web page: <http://alexandriava.gov/planning>

1. **Roll Call, Meeting Minutes** – Dave Dexter called the meeting to order and asked if there were any changes to April minutes, hearing none, the April minutes were approved.
2. **Housekeeping** – Dave Dexter - Due to the City's budget constraints, Burke Library will be closed on Wednesday evenings, so the meetings will be held at the Beatley Library. During the summer months, most commissions, groups, do not meet during the month of August. Dave wanted to know if the group wanted to adjourn for the month of August. Having said that, the draft Transportation Management Plan will be submitted to the City and the group in early June and the group's comments are due back to the consultant by June 16th so they can be compiled and submitted to the National Capital Planning Commission at the end of July to be heard in September. The group decided that they would wait until June or July to decide whether or not to meet in August.
3. **Matrix** – Abi Lerner presented the draft matrix and went over the various topics.

Matrix topics #1 & #2 will be discussed later in the meeting.

Matrix topic #4 is the responsibility of the Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Fire Chief Thiel discussed his concern with the need for better communication between the City and the Army with respect to the potential impacts that this development will have on the neighborhood. This is the busiest EMS areas in northern Virginia. The EMS units are already at capacity and additional development will strain an already taxed system. Paul McMahan indicated that the new facility will be part of Ft. Belvoir and serviced by them. Chief Thiel indicated while it may be part of Ft. Belvoir, the City and other local jurisdictions will be the first responders. Pending what type of incident occurs, the response may take up to half to the City's total resources. Funding for these resources remains an outstanding issue. The City is capable to handle any incident at the site, including at the remote inspection facility.

Dick Somers stated that the matrix should have milestone dates and completion dates. Don Buch agreed that there needs to be more specific information in the matrix.

Matrix topic #3 is public art. Pat Escher stated that there have been some very preliminary meetings with the Army; the process will establish a reviewing panel and the

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process will be open to the public. The actual construction of the art can not begin until the building is occupied, so it is too early to have specific dates and times.

Matrix topic #5 will be presented later in the meeting.

Matrix topic #6 – Abi gave an update about the approved road improvements. Some of the initial improvements are under way. VDOT has authority from Mark Center Drive to the I-395 interchange and has requested some technical corrections to the proposed improvements. These plans have been submitted for VDOT to review and TES will meet with VDOT next week to discuss the plans.

Matrix topic #7 will be presented later in the meeting.

Dave Cavanaugh expressed concern that the office building will be occupied and the City will not be prepared to meet the new transit demands for the development and for the citizens of the Alexandria. He understands that the TMP will be dealing with moving the employees to and from the site, but has concerns with the area residents needs as it relates to their transit needs. There needs to be coordination with Southern Towers and the BRAC transit center to avoid conflict. It was discussed by the group and the topic of transit will be added to the matrix.

Don Buch stated the matrix needs more detail so the group will be able to ensure that topics are not lost and there is accountability. Jerry Dawson stated that the matrix is to help the group advise staff, not perform project management. Dave Dexter stated that this was the first preview of the matrix and it can be revised and updated as necessary. Rich Baier discussed that key employees and elected officials will be meeting monthly to ensure that concerns relating to BRAC will be addressed. He is making a request for additional funds to provide added resources, potentially a dedicated staff person, similar to what the City did on the Woodrow Wilson bridge project, to help with the BRAC development. Nancy Jennings stated that there needs to be accountability and that her civic association, Seminary Hill, opposes new ramps to the Seminary interchange. It was raised that this area should be allowed to have parking permits to restrict potential BRAC employees from parking in the neighborhoods. Rich stated that there are pros and cons to parking permits, while it does control unwanted parking; it requires the residents to get permits for visitors. Currently those permits are issued at City Hall. The group said that there needs to be a better way to distribute the permits as it would be very inconvenient for residents from the West End to have to travel to City Hall. Rich agreed. Julie Edelson stated that it is not just parking, but cut through traffic. Rich said that the City

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can implement a number of traffic calming measures that would ease traffic in the neighborhood.

4. **Interchange Modification Report (IMR)** – Abi presented a power point discussing the IMR. The city met with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to discuss any proposed improvements to the interchange. FHWA did not support Alternative A1 which provided direct access to the parking garage. There are two potential interchange improvements that will be studied. The first Alternative F would provide High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) access to the existing bridge at a signalized intersection. The second Alternative G would have an HOV flyover to and from Seminary Road. This alternative would eliminate a portion of the existing bridge and require any vehicle coming from the east to use the signalized intersection on the lower level.

In conjunction with the interchange improvements, staff and VDOT will be reviewing other improvements that were recommended by the group, staff and VDOT as an interim solution to the BRAC traffic. The Office of Economic Adjustment, a branch of the Department of Defense, will fund half of the money needed to study the interim improvements and the City will need to find the additional funding.

There are numerous studies that will have to be performed for the interchange improvements, then it will have to be designed, funding secured and construction completed. This will all take up to 10 - 15 years before the interchange improvements are in place. It was discussed that the City needs to look at the Duke and King streets interchanges. The VDOT model is a regional model and will look at other interchanges and additional information can be added to the model.

5. **Transportation Management Plan** – Jennifer Rephlo with SAIC updated the group. The draft TMP has been submitted to the Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) for review. It will be made available on June 2nd to the City and the group. Comments should be submitted by June 16th and then at the Advisory Group's June meeting she can do a Q & A. The TMP is proposing shuttles from King Street, Pentagon, West Falls Church and East Falls Church metro stations with 10 minute headways. Only 55% of the WHS will be getting the parking permits, there will be a dedicated TMP coordinator and they will have lunches in the towns where the employees live so they can coordinate car pools. Numerous agencies will be located at the WHS site, so people who live in the same neighborhoods may ride share even though they don't work in the same agency. The National Capital Planning Commission meeting is September 3rd.

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Group discussion: If the Moran bill passes how will that affect the TMP? WHS would have to revise the TMP. Donna Fossum invited the consultant to present the TMP to the Transportation Commission on June 2nd. There will be issues with shuttles on Duke, King and Seminary Roads as they are already at capacity. Paul McMahon stated that they have been working with the City about shuttle routes. Rich Baier stated that additional metro stations need to be included in the shuttle service. Abi Lerner stated that the City has recommended the assessment of transit improvements that the Army consultant has not included in the TMP. Abi also stated that even though City staff has participated in coordination meetings with the Army, the City staff has not support for the proposed shuttle service. Jerry Dawson stated that each shuttle would be taking 40 cars off the road and that 1 bus every 10 minutes is only 6 busses in an hour. Nancy Jennings stated that people may leave their jobs and get other jobs which would affect the results of the current TMP. Can Braddock Station be considered for the shuttle? The Army is concentrating on King Street Station because of the high ridership of the VRE from Manassas and Fredericksburg.

6. **Beauregard Corridor Update** - Karl Moritz gave an update stating that the May 24th meeting has been canceled as staff is still working through some issues and the next community meeting will be June 28th.

Vice Mayor Kerry Donely spoke stating that the group needs to concentrate on the traffic, transit and public safety issues. There may be a potential new tax, similar to that at the Potomac Yard, which could help raise money for improvements. The group needs to take a broader view of the issues, not just Mark Center. The City will have a new review team that will be addressing these transit/traffic issues.

Councilwoman Del Pepper spoke stating that she was disappointed with the WHS, VDOT and FHWA response to this situation. She noted that she has attended most of the BRAC meetings.

Community discussion – Commuting on King and Seminary will not work. Seminary has several schools and a hospital; using those routes will be a safety hazard. The proposed metro stations anticipated for the shuttles service are not within one mile of the Mark Center site.

7. **Meeting was adjourned.**
8. **Next Meeting Beatley Library**