

**PYPAG Meeting Summary
Thursday, May 21, 2009**

PYPAG Members in attendance:

Joe Bondi
Michael Caison
Richard Calderon
Darryl Dugan
Garrett Erdle
Bill Hendrickson
Deborah Johnson
Jon Lindgren
Dan McCaffery
Peter Pocock
John Porter
Mariella Posey
Frederick Rothmeijer
Noah Teates
Eric Wagner
Maria Wasowski

**PYPAG Members not in
attendance:**

Allison Cryor DiNardo
Jennifer Mitchell

Crystall Merlino
Sherry Sadai

City Staff:

Bethany Carton
Jeffrey Farner
Claire Gron
Faroll Hamer
Mark Jinks
Sandra Marks
Valerie Peterson

The Perspectives Group Staff:

Doug Sarno

Kimley-Horn Staff:

David Whyte

WMATA Staff:

John Thomas
John Magarelli

Approximately 15 Members of the Public were in attendance.

Introduction

The Potomac Yard Planning Advisory Group (PYPAG) meeting began at 7:05 PM with Eric Wagner, Chair, welcoming the PYPAG. There were 16 PYPAG members in attendance.

Meeting Goals and Agenda/PYPAG Accomplishments and Goals

Doug Sarno, the facilitator, stated that tonight's meeting and the June PYPAG meeting are important because PYPAG needs to establish where it is, what it has achieved so far, and where it's going. So far, the PYPAG has developed Plan Principles which establish the long-term vision for Potomac Yard. Two conclusions need to be reached at tonight's meeting, including: how Metro is factored into the long-term vision for Potomac Yard, and how PYPAG intends to treat Landbay L in the planning process.

Mr. Sarno indicated that, at the June PYPAG meeting, PYPAG will provide clear and final direction to staff (heights, mix of uses, etc.) so that they can develop alternatives. A summer subcommittee will be assembled to work with staff as the alternatives are developed. Mr. Sarno then reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Review and Discuss Transportation Study

Jeffrey Farner, P&Z, Sandra Marks, T&ES, and David Whyte, Kimley-Horn, gave a presentation on the preliminary results of the working draft summary of the Potomac Yard Multimodal Transportation Study ("the Study"). Mr. Farner provided background information concerning the character of Route 1 and the planned transit corridor through Potomac Yard. Mr. Farner stated that one conclusion of the Study is that if the City does nothing in Landbay F, traffic will get dramatically worse. The challenge for PYPAG is to figure out how the capacity of Route 1 is best used by the City and not adjacent jurisdictions, and balancing the need for transportation amenities with other urban amenities.

Ms. Marks discussed the Transportation Master Plan's vision for the City, and the necessity of looking at Potomac Yard in context, including thinking of Route 1 as a regional arterial road, transit corridors, and regional transportation networks. She discussed capacity, and indicated that while most of the Study focuses on traffic, there is additional capacity in other modes.

Mr. Whyte presented the preliminary results of the Study. He detailed assumptions, including densities, the future transportation network, and mode split, then, he discussed the initial findings. The Study examined PM Peak travel speeds (as a measure of congestion) on Route 1 adjacent to Potomac Yard and comparable corridors in the City, specifically Washington Street, Route 1 in Old Town, and Duke Street. The Study modeled travel speeds under four scenarios: 1) Existing; 2) Future No Build; 3) Future Build (with Metro station); and 4) Future Building (without Metro station). As densities increase, travel times along the corridor increase. Mr. Whyte noted that under the Future Build (with Metro

station) scenario, travel times are still better than existing conditions in the comparable corridors. He noted that the capacity on Route 1 will be taken up, whether or not development occurs at Potomac Yard.

Mr. Wagner noted that the Future Build (without Metro) scenario doubles the travel times for existing conditions.

Mr. Whyte stated the Study showed pressure points at certain intersections, including Reed, Glebe, and Potomac Ave. However, the corridor was still functioning. He further noted that the Study examined conditions at PM Peak, which is the worst 15 minutes of the day.

Fred Rothmeijer asked how much density could be added to Landbays F and L that would equalize the Future Build (with and without Metro) scenarios. Mr. Farner stated that the travel speeds were about the same for a 1.5 FAR without Metro and a 2.5 FAR with Metro.

Mr. Whyte summarized observations. He stated that Route 1 will reach capacity regardless of whether or not Potomac Yard is redeveloped. If redeveloped, local and not regional trips will consume the capacity of Route 1. He stated that, with a multi-modal approach, Route 1 can accommodate the densities proposed. Finally, he stated that there are strategies that can be employed to protect neighborhoods.

Garrett Erdle stated that he was interested in knowing where the regional trips were going.

Richard Calderon stated that he was hoping for additional retail density than was considered in the Study. Mr. Sarno and Mr. Farner noted that the densities used in the Study were simple assumptions, and could be increased or decreased. Mr. Farner stated that there will be a second run of the traffic model.

Mr. Farner mentioned that a dedicated transit corridor will link Potomac Yard with Arlington County to the north, and that dedicated transit lanes will widen planned streets. He stated that the use of couplets (pairs of one-way streets) might be explored to reduce the width of planned streets and make the area more pedestrian-friendly.

Darryl Dugan questioned if the Study was a presentation of facts, or if it would include recommendations. Mr. Sarno indicated that the Study is a presentation of facts to inform PYPAG decisions.

Mr. Erdle questioned the source of the mode-split assumptions. Ms. Marks explained that the mode split was derived from census data, Crystal City, Pentagon City, and King Street Metro station data, and a WMATA commuter survey.

Mr. Rothmeijer questioned if Kimley-Horn was going to look at different densities and mixes of uses in the second run of the traffic model. Mr. Farner stated that the first run of the traffic model assumed a 2.5 FAR. A refined ratio and mix of uses must be formulated for the second run of the traffic model, and will be further discussed at the June PYPAG meeting.

Maria Wasowski questioned if the first run of the traffic model assumed redevelopment on the west side of Route 1. Mr. Farner indicated that it was considered in the background. Ms. Marks stated that no specific numbers were used but redevelopment was considered in the model.

Mr. Wagner asked if the study examined the impact on adjacent neighborhoods, specifically Del Ray and Inner City. Mr. Whyte stated that they have some information on cut-through traffic, but that the study intentionally did not assign a lot of traffic to neighborhood streets because it was assumed that the recommendations would address this issue. Mr. Wagner noted that there has been a noticeable increase in traffic in Del Ray when Route 1 is congested. He stated that it is important that the community be made aware of potential impacts on neighborhoods due to the redevelopment of Landbay F.

Mr. Sarno summarized feedback concerning the Study received from the PYPAG Transportation Subcommittee, and asked for confirmation that his summary accurately reflected consensus point. Mr. Erdle confirmed that the summary was accurate and reiterated that he would like to see concrete numbers which explain where regional trips are going.

Mr. Dugan stated that not widening Route 1 will not work. He suggested that Route 1 be elevated. Peter Pocock stated that elevated roads destroy neighborhoods. Ms. Marks clarified that Route 1 is being widened for dedicated transit lanes.

Mr. Calderon suggested that couplets be explored to feed into Potomac Yard, or some other method of getting traffic onto Potomac Avenue. Mr. Whyte stated that Potomac Avenue is a continuation of Crystal Drive in Crystal City.

Michael Caison asked if the consensus points be amended to recognize impacts on adjacent communities. Deborah Johnson questioned the impacts on adjacent communities under the "No Build" scenario.

Public Comment

David Fromm questioned which traffic counts were used, in terms of neighborhood traffic, for Monroe Avenue. Ms. Marks stated that the numbers were from 2007.

Mr. Fromm questioned where the assumed density for Landbay L (1000 dwelling units) came from. Mr. Farner stated that a 2.0 FAR worst-case scenario was assumed for Landbay L.

Review Metrorail Station Feasibility Work Group Findings

John Thomas, WMATA, presented the technical analysis of the station location alternatives. WMATA presented seven station location alternatives to PYPAG at the April 21, 2009 PYPAG meeting. He briefly detailed revisions to the alternatives, and noted the addition of an eighth alternative (D2).

Mr. Farner discussed densities which could be captured within the ¼ and ½ mile walksheds, the added economic value for different uses in proximity to a Metro station, access issues, and open space impacts as they related to different station location alternatives.

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager, discussed financing a Metro station at Potomac Yard. He stated that the estimated cost of the different Metro station alternatives ranges from \$140-300 million. For comparison, the debt that the City currently holds for everything ever built totals approximately \$300 million.

He presented a graph illustrating a hypothetical comparison of project revenue and cost for a long-term build-out. He stated that at build-out, the net tax revenue generated by a Metro station would exceed the debt service paid for its construction. Mr. Jinks stated that the dilemma is that the cost of constructing a Metro station are up front and that debt service obligations are immediate. The challenge comes in the first 7-12 years when the net tax revenue does not yet cover the debt service. He stated that the assumed level of debt service per year would be approximately \$10-16 million, which would require a tax increase of between \$0.03-0.05, or cutting some other program. Mr. Jinks stated that there is a possibility that the City could receive some federal assistance, but most of the region's Metro expansion money will go towards the Dulles Metrorail project. He stated that another possibility is to use the proffer model (as was used for the construction of the Monroe Avenue Bridge) where the developer paid for infrastructure up front.

Mr. Wagner detailed the Metro Feasibility Work Group's findings. The Work Group found that alternatives A1, B2, B3, and D2 from a physical perspective appear feasible and should continue to be examined, but that a Metro station will only be financially feasible with significant contributions from outside the City (developer/federal government/state government). Mr. Wagner stated that Mayor Euille stated that Alexandria will not devote significant resources for the construction of a Metro station, and that there is a big back log of City projects that are not yet funded. He stated that a \$0.03 tax increase for at least 7 years is a burden on tax payers.

Mr. Jinks and Mr. Thomas clarified that the estimated \$0.03 tax increase was based on a debt service on \$230 million (the cost of alternative D2).

Mr. Sarno stated that assuming the construction of a Metro will require up-front costs and have long-term pay-off, the question for the PYPAG is: Is the long-vision with the long-term pay-off compelling? This will affect the PYPAG's recommendations.

Dan McCaffery stated that he understood Mayor Euille's statement but didn't think anyone, including the developer, got a free ride. He stated that if any party was going to say they were "out", they should have said it months ago.

Mr. Sarno stated that PYPAG's role is to decide what it wants to see here in the future, and timing and phasing.

Ms. Wasowski noted that we had this same conversation 10 years ago, when it was significantly cheaper to build. She questioned if we would spend the next 10 or 20 years asking why we didn't plan for a Metro. She stated that many citizens see the value to a Metro station.

Mr. Pocock noted that the mayor made a political statement. He stated that we are going to have to make political statements about the general direction that we want to the City to be going. He stated that the scope of PYPAG is limited and that there must be a permanent body that pays attention to the development of Potomac Yard.

Mr. Calderon stated that the graph says we should be building a Metro. He stated that we're not charged with figuring out how to pay for the Metro station, but how to place uses on the ground. He stated that PYPAG should be looking at the ideal location (especially alternative D2), assuming it will be financed.

Mr. Teates stated that PYPAG should be very careful not to kill the idea of the Metro station. He noted that the illustrative image of the D2 alternative is the first image that starts to pull the Potomac River into Potomac Yard and create an image for the City.

Deborah Johnson questioned how the City might pursue federal funding for the Metro station. Mr. Jinks stated that the City has already but in a request for funding, and that the City's receipt of \$10-25 million is a possibility.

Mr. Wagner clarified that the Work Group did not say kill the idea of the Metro station, just that City does not have the resources. He stated that physical feasibility and financial feasibility and two different issues.

Mr. Rothmeijer stated that he didn't know of any jurisdiction that would permit a developer to upzone without significant contributions to infrastructure upfront. He stated it's important to understand and quantify long-term benefits to the City.

Mr. McCaffery stated that timing is the issue. He stated that we [the developer] understand that we will contribute to this Metro station.

Mr. Pocock asked that a \$0.03 tax increase be quantified. Mr. Jinks stated that it was about \$160 per year.

Public Comment

Mr. Fromm stated that this is the first time we have come close to designing a Metro. He stated that we should develop a long-term vision, and that the D2 alternative should be further explored.

Mr. Teates questioned if there is a way to construct alternative D2 behind the existing retail center. Mr. McCaffery stated that a decision needs to be made soon because the leases at the retail center are coming up for renewal. If nothing happens, the leases will need to be renewed.

A member of the public questioned the distance from the Eclipse development (in Arlington County) to the Metro station location. She stated that if the City is providing a Metro station to Arlington County, they should be contributing. She noted that more people are biking to Metro than ever before and questioned how much the City would be willing to pay to get cars off the road. She stated that she liked alternative D2.

Develop PYPAG Message to Policy Makers Regarding Metro Station

Mr. Sarno summarized the PYPAG conclusions:

- 1) Metro must be a part of the long-term vision for Potomac Yard;
- 2) The Metro station should be located in the main body of Potomac Yard;

Mr. Rothmeijer added that a center platform is preferable and the distance from development to the station should be minimized. Mr. Dugan added that the density within the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walkshed should be maximized.

- 3) Metro should be thought of as a long-term investment, and that the resources will be found to make it happen;
- 4) Implementation strategy is important; and
- 5) Phasing and timing is critical

Mr. Wagner requested that a 1-page document detailing the conclusions be produced and circulated for comment.

There was additional discussion concerning permissible levels of development without a Metro, and 'triggers' for the construction of the Metro station. Mr. Wagener indicated that phasing issues would be worked out in detail as a group.

Discuss Options for Landbay L

Valerie Peterson, P&Z, stated that P&Z staff presented a work program for next year to City Council a few weeks ago. In the work program, staff included a placeholder for a planning effort for Landbay L following Landbay F. She stated that City Council will decide if Landbay L will be handled as part of a separate planning process at their June 9 meeting. She asked if PYPAG would like to communicate anything to City Council to inform their decision.

Ms. Peterson stated that, at the direction of PYPAG, staff conducted a Threshold Analysis to determine if there was anything that would preclude looking at planning for Landbay L. She stated that the Threshold Analysis uncovered a number of challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Dugan stated that he felt Landbay L should be included as part of the current planning effort and questioned if there was anything that would preclude the land swap. Jon Lindgren stated that the owner would not agree to the land swap.

Ms. Hamer indicated that there are three possibilities of how to proceed with a planning process for Landbay L:

- 1) Landbay F and Landbay L continue to be in the planning scope of the PYPAG;
- 2) Separate Landbay L from the current PYPAG process; or
- 3) Provide general concepts or principles for Landbay L through the PYPAG process, and provide more detailed planning for Landbay L as part of a later planning process.

Mr. Lindgren stated that the developer is not interested in increased density on Landbay L.

Ms. Hamer clarified that following the density transfer, there is no approved plan for Landbay L, just a number of units. PYPAG needs to develop a framework so that Landbay L works with the rest of Potomac Yard.

Mr. Teates stated that it seemed PYPAG would like to maintain Landbay L as part of the current process.

Mr. Pocock expressed confusion that he thought there was a lot of support for the land swap and now it appears as if it is not a possibility. Ms. Hamer stated that the land swap is a possibility; it has not yet been studied. Members of PYPAG questioned how the land swap is a possibility if the developer is not interested.

Mr. Farner discussed different possibilities for dealing with Landbay L.

Mr. Lindgren stated that the developer is not interested in the land swap and that he did not think the schools were interested in the land swap. John Porter stated that the schools are open to discussing it.

Mr. Wagner stated that PYPAG needs to decide if Landbay L should remain part of the current process.

A member of PYPAG expressed frustration that Landbay L has received only limited attention, at the end of meetings. He further noted that members of PYPAG are not representative of parties affected by Landbay L. He stated that a subcommittee should be formed for Landbay L, including additional stakeholders.

Mr. Erdle stated that he is more concerned about getting 70+ acres (Landbay F) right, than he is concerned about 10 acres (Landbay L). Mr. Pocock stated that PYPAG has to get Landbay L right, too.

Ms. Johnson questioned why a decision is needed tonight. Ms. Hamer explained that City Council is making a decision on the work program on June 9.

Mr. Sarno stated that perhaps the best way to deal with Landbay L is through a subcommittee, with better representation. PYPAG vocalized support for this approach.

Public Comment

A member of the public stated that Landbay L is another gateway to Potomac Yard and it is important to get it right.

Mr. Fromm stated that Landbay L should be included in the current planning process. He stated that some ideas were generated at the public meeting in January.

Mr. Wagner requested that any PYPAG members interested in serving on a subcommittee for Landbay L contact Jeffrey Farner.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 pm.