



**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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Transportation Planning Division

**MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 15, 2011 HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR
WORK GROUP MEETING**

To: High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group
From: Jim Maslanka, City of Alexandria, T&ES; Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria, T&ES
Meeting Date: September 15, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Meeting Location: Charles Houston Recreation Center, Multi-Purpose Room
Subject: Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group Meeting 9
Attendees: **Corridor Work Group:** Councilman Paul Smedberg (Co-Chair), Councilman Rob Krupicka (Co-Chair), Donna Fossum, Dak Hardwick, Poul Hertel, John Komoroske, Anna Bentley
City of Alexandria staff: Abi Lerner (Deputy Director, T&ES), Jim Maslanka (T&ES), Steve Sindiong (T&ES), Danielle Parker (T&ES), Susan Gygi (T&ES), Jeff Farner (Deputy Director, P&Z)
Consultants: David Whyte (Kimley-Horn), Erin Murphy (Kimley-Horn)
Members of the Public: 34 citizens signed in

Agenda

Corridor A (Duke Street/Eisenhower) Discussion

1. Introduction (*10 minutes*)
 - a. Opening Remarks –*Councilman Smedberg, CWG Co-Chair*
 - b. Meeting Objectives and Goals – *Abi Lerner, T&ES*
2. August 18 Meeting Minutes – *Abi Lerner, T&ES (5 minutes)*
3. Corridor A Discussion – *Kimley-Horn (90 minutes)*
 - a. Existing Conditions and Land Use
 - b. CWG Input on Existing Conditions / Land Use
 - c. Public Input on Existing Conditions and Land Use
 - d. Review proposed Evaluation Criteria
 - e. Alignments
 - f. CWG Input on Criteria and Alignments
 - g. Public Input on Alignments

4. Logistics and Next Steps – *Abi Lerner, T&ES (10 minutes)*
 - a. Next Meeting Date
 - b. Next Meeting Topics
 - c. Upcoming Meetings Related to Corridor C Implementation

Summary of Discussion

Introduction

- Goal of the meeting:
 - Review existing conditions for Corridor A, review evaluation criteria, and discuss alignment options.

August 18 Minutes

- Due to the meeting duration, the August 18 minutes were not discussed. They will be discussed for approval at the October 20 CWG meeting.

Corridor A (Route 1 / North-South) Discussion on Existing Conditions and Alignment Options

- Presentation by David Whyte
- CWG Comment
 - ***Councilman Paul Smedberg***
 - Need some modified DASH service that is well branded, and unique to the characteristics of Old Town.
 - Need to look south of our border, such as Huntington Metro, and in Fairfax along Route 1 to Fort Belvoir.
 - Need to start looking at east to west, from Old Town toward Braddock.
 - Need to understand if we are building the transitway to get to Metro, or somewhere else. If it is to get to Metro, we don't need to do anything.
 - ***Councilman Rob Krupicka***
 - Would like to know the existing headways for transit routes, and average speeds.
 - Would like to have good service along the REX line, and have a way to connect it to the future Route 9X.
 - Options include: 1) Put as many buses between King Street and Braddock Metro; 2) Provide dedicated lanes; 3) Live with existing conditions; 4) provide marginal improvements at the edges.
 - ***Anna Bentley***
 - Is fine with the population and employment density data – feel it is reliable.
 - ***Donna Fossum***
 - Would be interesting to re-examine existing routes as a circulator
 - Population and employment densities should be refined, by block level.
 - Is there any origin/destination data? It would be good to know where people are coming from and going to.
 - The yellow line should be extended to Fairfax County / Fort Belvoir.
 - One size does not fit all – Each corridor is different. Not sure what we are trying to do. Old Town is a special place.
 - ***Dak Hardwick***
 - Transit in Savannah is good, but loud.

- What is the legal obligation in terms of modifying either Route 1 or GW Parkway?
 - If north-south travel is a regional transit priority, then some of the associated funding should come from outside Alexandria.
 - Transit Signal Priority (TSP) is needed, especially where travel speeds are slow.
 - Branded buses are important.
 - In California, there are barriers that restrict traffic during certain parts of the day.
- ***Poul Hertel***
 - Why is the 2030 population density showing high density in northeast Old Town? The use of census tracts is misleading. *Response – New data can be in the form of Floor to Area ratios (FAR), or by block level. New data will be posted on the project webpage and an e-mail will be sent.*
 - The Transportation Master Plan looked at regional connections – a lot of traffic is coming from outside of the City. We cannot and should not try to accommodate the thru traffic.
 - DASH service is unreliable – it often shows up late.
 - The circulator in D.C. works well.
 - We should not go out of our way to accommodate thru traffic.
 - Need to understand how High Capacity Transit would benefit the City’s residents.
 - The only way people will use transit is if it is faster than a car.
 - Prefer the No Build option, but a circulator concept should be further explored.
 - ***John Komoroske***
 - Need to understand Alexandria traffic vs. thru traffic.
 - Like idea of connecting King Street metro to Braddock metro.
 - Like the idea of circulators.
- ***Public Comment*** on Corridor A Existing Conditions and Alignment Options
 - With REX service, riders aren’t looking to connect to Braddock metro.
 - Very opposed to High Capacity Transit on Route 1 – what are other solutions? If there is a need for connectivity between REX and Braddock metro, give funds to Metro. If riders get off and walk, there would be no charge. Consider a rail spur to the waterfront near the power plant.
 - A purpose of historic districts is to preserve the architecture. Disappointed that the City is not considering preservation of neighborhoods, but instead accommodating outside people.
 - Instead of having dedicated lanes through Old Town, a higher priority should be getting people to use Metro.
 - DASH buses are often empty. They should be smaller.
 - Would like more east-west opportunities.
 - What is the real need for the connection between King Street metro and Braddock metro?
 - Isn’t the purpose of the Crystal City Potomac Yard transitway to get people to metro?
 - The people who will be making sacrifices need to clearly understand the reasons and need for high capacity transit.
 - Having buses on Patrick Street will become a nuisance for the adjacent homes. Alexandria taxes should not be used to accommodate outside users.
 - Is the alignment needed to get people to metro, or is it to serve thru traffic?
 - A conditional goal should be to not widen any right-of-way through Old Town.
 - Does current public transit serve tourists well?
 - How do we know the current automobile users will switch to transit?
 - Why are we doing anything? What are we trying to achieve?
 - What happened to the original impetus of Corridor A, and serving Fort Belvoir?
 - Washington Street is better than Patrick Street
 - Like the idea of a circulator, not a north-south alignment.
 - Need an origin/destination study.
 - Everything in the study has been based on assumptions – we need facts.

- There seems to be a lot of contradictions being stated by the City, especially on why the high capacity transit is needed.
- For the next meeting, please tell us exactly what the problem is we are trying to solve.
- What is Fairfax County planning to do?

Corridor A Discussion on Preliminary Evaluation Criteria

- Due to insufficient time availability, there was no discussion on the preliminary screening criteria.

Logistics and Next Steps

- The next meeting for Corridor B will be on Thursday, October 20, 2011.
- Updates on Corridor C:
 - September 17 – Council Public Hearing / Recommendation