



**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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Transportation Planning Division

**MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 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: December 15, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Meeting Location: City Hall, Sister Cities Room
Subject: Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group Meeting #11
Attendees: **Corridor Work Group:** Councilman Rob Krupicka (Co-Chair), Councilman Paul Smedberg (Co-Chair), Anna Bentley, Donna Fossum, Dak Hardwick, Poul Hertel, Nancy Jennings
City of Alexandria staff: Abi Lerner (Deputy Director, T&ES), Jim Maslanka (T&ES), Steve Sindiong (T&ES), Karen Callaham (T&ES), Jeff Farnier (P&Z)
Consultants: David Whyte (Kimley-Horn), Erin Murphy (Kimley-Horn)

Members of the Public: 31 citizens signed in

Agenda

1. Introduction
 - a. Opening Remarks – *Councilman Smedberg*
 - b. Meeting Objectives and Goals – *Abi Lerner, T&ES*
 - i. General Updates
 - ii. Corridor A Recommendation
2. General Updates – *Abi Lerner, T&ES*
 - a. Distribution of November 17 meeting minutes
3. Corridor A Recommendation
 - a. Summary of Issues / Challenges
 - b. Summary of Alignment Concepts Previously Presented
 - c. Summary of CWG / Public Input and Highlight of Themes
 - d. Corridor A Recommendations / Conclusions

4. General CWG & Public Comment

5. Logistics and Next Steps

- a. Next meeting date
- b. Next meeting topic

Summary of Discussion

Introduction

- Goal of the meeting:
 - Abi Lerner, T&ES, noted that the goal of the meeting will be to review the previous work prepared, including existing conditions, concepts, issues/constraints, and develop a recommendation for Corridor A.

November 17 Minutes (Corridor B)

- Donna Fossum noted that on page 3, her comments should be corrected to note that there are two fire stations on the west end. Poul Hertel noted that on page 3, his comment should be corrected to say that the City should not sacrifice pedestrians at the expense of planning for bicyclists. Minutes, with changes, were unanimously approved.

Corridor A Recommendation

- Presentation by David Whyte, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
- High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group (CWG) Comments
 - ***Councilman Paul Smedberg***
 - The middle section of the corridor has challenges.
 - Fine with the recommendation, but need to pay attention to providing a connection between Corridor B and King Street metrorail station. We need to include some form of recommendation for that part of Corridor A.
 - Need to continue to have DASH look at a circulator with a unique look and feel.
 - ***Councilman Rob Krupicka***
 - The recommendation is pretty close to what I had suggested earlier this year.
 - Agree that Corridor B needs to be connected to King Street.
 - Circulator doesn't abandon the idea of connectivity – it's just a different way of achieving it.
 - The Council is looking at implementing area-wide Transportation Management Plans (TMP's) rather than individual TMP's, which would benefit the development of a circulator.
 - When staff comes to Council with a recommendation, the recommendation needs to be crafted to show how Corridor B fits in with it.
 - ***Anna Bentley***
 - The recommended strategy for Corridor A makes sense given what we know anecdotally and based on the public input received.
 - The Crystal City-Potomac Yard transitway will help to improve regional connectivity.
 - REX service is successful. There is potential to have a REX hub at the southern end of Old Town, along either the yellow or blue lines.
 - There is potential for an increased east-west circulator.
 - The safety aspect is important, in terms of providing other means of transportation.

- **Donna Fossum**
 - The scale of a circulator needs to be tailored to the neighborhood. Not all buses fit in all neighborhoods.
 - Have a personal knowledge of the conditions in Old Town. Know a friend whose balcony collapsed due to the shift in the foundation.
 - Need to funnel people to metro stations. While a lot of metro stations are underutilized, the Braddock metro station is highly utilized.
 - High Capacity Transit should not be expedited through this part of the City.

- **Dak Hardwick**
 - Kimley-Horn Associates work is exemplary.
 - At Cameron Station, the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) requires a shuttle to the metro station. The shuttle removes about 800 cars from the road. We should think about a circulator in Old Town as a form of a TMP. There is enough density to support it. Consider realignment of DASH to provide the circulator.
 - Regarding neighborhoods, the walking tour of Old Town led to the conclusion that there is a lack of green space. Green space can be enhanced by protecting parking. Bulbouts would help to protect parking while also providing more space for trees and pedestrians.
 - As the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC) representative, still have questions about the costs and funding related to the development of a circulator. However, a circulator needs to be neighborhood focused.

- **Poul Hertel**
 - Comments provided at the last Corridor A meeting are still applicable.

- **Nancy Jennings**
 - No comments, since did not attend the last meeting.

- After public comment (See below), Donna Fossum made a motion to pass a resolution for a Corridor A recommendation. During the discussion of the motion, in response to a question of voting rights, staff noted that the two councilmembers are allowed to vote (*based on a confirmation from the City attorney's office on June 9, 2011*). The following resolution, slightly modified from the original, was unanimously approved:

“Whereas the Alexandria Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan conceptually envisioned the eventual location of high capacity transit in dedicated lanes in the portion of Corridor A south of Braddock METRO Station; and

Whereas the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group was appointed to recommend methods for implementing the Alexandria Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan to City Council;

Be it hereby resolved that the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group recommends that there be no dedicated-lane high capacity transit on the portion of Corridor A south of Braddock METRO Station. Instead, the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group recommends that resources be used to explore the possibility of putting circulator buses/trolleys or other forms of conventional and scale appropriate transit in this portion of the City.”

- **Public Comment** on Corridor A Recommendation
 - The vast majority of people who have attended Corridor A meetings have favored the circulator concept. Feel that the City has listened to the citizens and CWG.

- Like the idea of bulbouts.
- Do all alternatives have the same throughput in terms of people? If there isn't sufficient throughput from Old Town, does that impact the traffic analysis that was conducted for the Crystal City-Potomac Yard (CCPY) transitway analysis? *Answer:* No, the CCPY transitway analysis assumed that the transitway ended at Braddock Road metrorail station. Because the assumptions have not changed, there is no impact to that analysis.
- The circulator concept is a good one. Neighborhoods outside of Old Town would also benefit from a morning and afternoon circulator.
- The circulator needs to connect to the Braddock Road metrorail station. The various TMP's should be coordinated to help fund it.
- Support a connection to Corridor B.
- South of Alexandria, it is not realistic that the yellow line will ever be extended. There is a need for Alexandrians to still get to Fairfax, and vice versa, Fairfax residents to get to Alexandria.
- The circulator must be branded and marketed well.
- You can't operate in a vacuum. The circulator still does not solve the entire problem of reducing traffic.
- The City should still consider streetcars. Streetcars ran in Alexandria a long time ago. The tracks used to go to Falls Church. In the long run, streetcars have lower maintenance costs than buses.
- Outcome of study is delightfully surprising. Commend the CWG for dropping high capacity transit through Old Town.
- Once the CCPY streetcar gets to Braddock Road metrorail station, there may be a future committee that has pressure to extend it south into Old Town.
- Recommend that the City purchase the existing rail spur right of way to the Genon power plant. This would provide a direct connection between the metrorail station and the east end of Old Town, and could continue south into Fairfax County. Urge the CWG to recommend to Council to repurpose the rail spur right-of-way in planning for the Genon site.
- Bus type services such as circulators and BRT, when properly designed and operated can be as attractive as streetcars.
- DASH is able to recover 30 % of its costs through the farebox revenue because they only need to maintain one type of bus.
- The circulator must provide east-west connectivity to the King and Braddock metrorail stations. Consider a Del Ray connection, and also agree the connection to Corridor B is important.
- Consider the inter-jurisdictional connection – the bulk of traffic is pass through. There is a need to develop supplemental rail spurs. How much as a City do we want to participate in solving regional traffic?

Logistics and Next Steps

- This is the last CWG meeting related to Corridor A. Staff will bring a recommendation for Corridors A and B together to the Council in the first quarter of 2012, after receiving input from the Planning and Transportation Commissions.
- The next meeting for Corridor B will be on Thursday, January 19, 2012 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.