



Minutes

PROJECT: Richmond Highway BRT Executive Committee Meeting #11

DATE & TIME: April 16, 2021 1:30 - 3 PM

LOCATION: Conference Call (a recording of the meeting is posted at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SC8-xmZ55WA&ab_channel=FairfaxCountyGovernment)

Attendees:

Committee:

Monica Backmon, NVTA
Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT
Barbara Byron, DPD
Claudia Llana for Helen Cuervo, VDOT
Todd Horsley for Jennifer Mitchell, DRPT
Honorable Rodney Lusk, Supervisor -- Lee
John Lynch, VDOT
Honorable Dan Storck, Supervisor – Mt. Vernon
Marcus Wadsworth for Chairman Jeffrey McKay, BOS

Ron Lilley, FCDOT
Doug Miller, FCDOT
Anna Nissenen, FCDOT
Nick Rinehart, BOS
Eric Teitelman, FCDOT
Michael Guarino, FCDOT
Aaron Campbell, BOS
Noelle Dominguez, FCDOT
Gregg Steverson, FCDOT

FCDOT Program Management Consultant:

Jose Bustamante, PMC
Suresh Karre, PMC
Henry Kay, PMC
Jenny Koch, PMC
Jim Wright, PMC
Laura Jeffords, PMC

Staff:

Vanessa Aguayo, FCDOT
Clinton Edwards, DRPT
Robin Geiger, FCDOT

Tom Biesiadny opened the meeting. Vanessa Aguayo reviewed the agenda which includes updates on NEPA, FTA coordination, right of way acquisition; a 12-month outlook; and recommendations for station design and branding.

With regard to NEPA, Doug Miller reported that project received a conditional No Adverse Effect determination from the Department of Historic Resources as well an objection from the National Trust for Historic Preservation about impacts to its Woodlawn property. Monica Backmon later asked whether the objection from the National Trust would affect the schedule. Vanessa said the objection was based on a misinterpretation of the design and at this point we believe it will not affect the schedule. FTA provided comments on draft Categorical Exclusion, and FTA concurrence is expected this spring.



Vanessa said the County is continuing regulation coordination with FTA, including monthly meetings. Meeting topics include schedule, readiness to enter into Engineering, right of way acquisition, and utility coordination.

Vanessa reported on the right of way acquisition program. Two parcels were approved by FTA acquisition prior to the completion of NEPA, but no offers can be made on any other parcels until NEPA is complete. The County has prepared a Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan for FTA approval and is preparing to bring on a demolition contractor to ensure that acquired buildings are removed quickly. Supervisor Storck later asked whether the County could delay taking possession of occupied businesses and homes. Tom said the County would investigate keeping viable businesses in place pending relocation.

Vanessa said the project continues to look for opportunities to reduce right of way impacts and respond to questions from property owners. Tom noted that VDOT received approval to start land acquisition for the Section 2 widening project on April 9. Full parcel acquisitions are first.

Vanessa reviewed the 12-month outlook which includes completing NEPA; requesting entry into FTA's Engineering phase; continuing right of way acquisition; progressing third party agreements; completing 60% design; and completing a review of bus propulsion technology.

Vanessa said there is a new interactive project map on the website that includes the design details from the public meetings. Users can search for an address and see project features at that location. The VDOT project is shown, but not at the same level of detail. The maps will be updated as design continues.

Nick Rinehart asked who is replacing Ricky Foley as the right of way manager. Vanessa said she is working with Dennis Cate of the Land Acquisition Division of the Department of Public Works to provide support from a group of acquisition specialists. Tom noted that Ricky has moved to another agency in County government but will still be engaged.

Vanessa described the approach for public input into both the station design and BRT branding. In response to pandemic limitations on in-person meetings the County conducted two meetings on each topic, including one in Spanish; sent emails to the project list; emailed 1,000 email contacts, purchased social media ads, placed a display at Hyland Center, posted flyers at bus stops, and distributed flyers at food distribution events.

Vanessa reviewed the survey findings for the station design. Two concepts were presented. Both concepts received equivalent support, and only 7% of survey respondents did not like either concept. The most frequent comment on Concept 1 was "like the modern, sleek, open design." The most frequent comment on Concept 2 was "like the traditional look; reflects history; offers weather protection." With regard to station elements that could be used to showcase "community charm," the windscreen opportunity was selected by a small margin closely followed by plaza art and interpretive panels. Respondents identified the following ideas for community features to reflect history, diversity, nature, community crossroads, gateway, aviation history, African American history, old Mt. Vernon High School, George Washington's Mt. Vernon, and military culture and history.

In light of the survey results, the project staff recommend Concept 1 with community charm elements included in the windscreen, plazas, and art panels.



Monica asked if the intent was to use the same community charm themes for all the stations. Vanessa said the theme would be different, but there would be themes used in multiple locations. Monica appreciated the effort to obtain public input.

Tom made a motion to endorse Concept 1. Supervisor Dan Storck seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Barbara Byron made a motion to approve the recommendation for community charm elements. Supervisor Rodney Lusk seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Jim Wright reviewed the survey responses on branding. He said the survey was not intended to determine the recommended concept, but to provide feedback, insight, and red flags. Survey respondents rated the names alone, the name with explanations, both black and white and color logos, and bus designs. We received a good sample of people who either lived or worked in the corridor. Rhex was the preferred name with The One close behind. With a written description, The One was preferred. Blue was the preferred color.

The brand recommendation is The One due to its connection to Route 1, sense of community and unity, and preference by the Youth focus group. The recommended color combination is blue/cyan.

Supervisor Storck made a motion to approve the recommendation for The One. Supervisor Lusk seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Vanessa said the next step would be to consider how to reflect the brand in the station design. Supervisor Storck said there is a lot of artistic talent among the residents of the corridor, and he requests we gather their input. Vanessa said this would be accomplished as part of the community charm outreach.

Supervisor Lusk said he would like representatives from mobile home parks included in the outreach. He asked when the refined logo would be available. Vanessa said we would have it available prior to the August recess.

Supervisor Storck asked how the station design and logo would be shared with the public. Vanessa said we would use the website, newsletters, and a news release. Supervisor Lusk and Monica said they could publicize it through social media. Robin Geiger said she would provide content. Supervisor Storck asked that the 360 video of the station design be included.

Nick Rinehart asked about the Richmond Highway resource guide. Vanessa noted that it is a Neighborhood and Community Services publication that provides information about business and services in the corridor. Copies would be shared with VDOT's right of way agents.

There being no further discussion, the meeting concluded at approximately 2:45 PM.

Prepared by H. Kay