



Minutes

PROJECT: Richmond Highway BRT Executive Committee Meeting #17

DATE & TIME: January 17, 2023 10 AM – 12 PM

LOCATION: Mt. Vernon Governmental Center
2511 Parkers Lane

Attendees:

Committee:

Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT
Monica Backmon, NVTA
Barbara Byron, Chairman's Office
Todd Horsley for Jennifer DeBruhl, DRPT
Honorable Rodney Lusk, Supervisor –
Franconia
Bill Cuttler for John Lynch, VDOT
Honorable Dan Storck, Supervisor – Mt.
Vernon
Tracy Strunk, DPD

Staff:

Vanessa Aguayo T., FCDOT
Gavin Derleth, FCDOT
Rick Foley, FCDOT
Doug Miller, FCDOT
Todd Minnix, FCDOT
Dan Reinhard, VDOT
Eric Teitelman, FCDOT

FCDOT Program Management Consultant:

Henry Kay, PMC
Suresh Karre, PMC

Supervisor Dan Storck opened the meeting. Tom Biesiadny reviewed the agenda.

Vanessa Aguayo reported on design progress. We are currently working towards an 80% design level and are refining easements and right-of-way lines, stormwater management and landscaping, retaining walls, construction phasing, and maintenance of traffic. Coordination with all utilities is underway. With regard to station design, the focus is materials, furnishings, framing, electrical, pedestrian access, and safety. In the future we will come to the Executive Committee with a presentation on these items.

Rick Foley provided an update on right of way acquisition.

Vanessa reported on FTA coordination. We are close to submitting a request to enter the Engineering phase of the grant application process. The FTA contribution is fixed at that point. As part of the process FTA conducts a rigorous scope, schedule, and cost review. Last summer we participated in an FTA-led risk assessment. The top five risks are labor availability, Verizon / Dominion relocation delays, Buy America compliance, VDOT project completion, and stormwater management design approval. FTA's oversight consultant recommended additional cost and schedule contingency which increases the budget to from \$795M to \$937M and extends the completion date from December 2031 to July 2031. The budget increase can be funded with FTA, NVTA, and county funds.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk asked if this discrepancy was typical. Tom said FTA is comparing us to other projects nationally. We understand the local contractor market and believe we will be able to bring down the contingency over time. Regarding funding, we need to be able to describe our potential sources of funding but do not need to have cash in hand. Supervisor Lusk asked if FTA requires that extra funding is returned. Vanessa said no, the FTA contribution is fixed. We will go through this process again prior to the grant agreement. In response to a question from Supervisor Storck, Vanessa said we will lock in the FTA amount this spring. Tom said it was important to note that FTA was comfortable with the County's estimate of the base cost. The difference is the amount of contingency and the cost of six months of inflation. Supervisor Storck asked if FTA has a good track record predicting costs. Henry Kay said they use national averages but there is a lot of variation with individual projects. Eric Teitelman said it is to our advantage to start with a higher cost if we can reduce it later. Vanessa said it important to distinguish between the "budget" and the "cost." Staff will strive to deliver the project for a lower cost than the budget. We are in a period of unusually high inflation, but this is expected to moderate before the project is under construction. If we can resolve large risk, that will allow us to reduce the contingency. Tom said we will continue to look for other grant opportunities.

Supervisor Lusk asked if Verizon's investment in 5G will reduce the underground utility relocation cost. Tom said the underground lines are landlines and FIOS whereas 5G is for cell service.

Gavin Derleth reviewed the results of a survey about station names. Staff conducted the survey during the fall and received 170 responses. Based on the survey results, the staff recommendation is to change "Penn Daw" to "Kings Crossing," "South County Center" to "Hyland Center," and to eliminate "Rd" and "Blvd" from station names.

Supervisor Storck said we have been talking for some time about Hybla Valley and Gum Springs. He is supportive of the community's preference to name the station nearest the historic marker at Fordson Road as "Gum Springs." Supervisor Lusk agreed. He also supported the other recommendations. Barbara Byron said she would provide a letter from the community association supporting this change. Supervisor Lusk made a motion to approve the resolution but to add the provision to swap the "Hybla Valley" and "Gum Springs" names. Supervisor Storck offered a friendly amendment to add this statement to the resolution. Supervisor Lusk accepted the friendly amendment. The resolution passed unanimously. Supervisor Storck noted that once the original Mt. Vernon High School redevelops, he may want to reconsider the adjacent station name.

Gavin provide an update on the "Community Charm" initiative to collaborate with student artists to design the station windscreens. The students began work in October, and we are expecting two or three designs for each station. The final design for each station will be selected by the Executive Committee. Gavin reviewed the schools and community centers that are involved, the stations that are assigned to each, and the schedule. He said the preference is to conclude the effort within the school year because there are graduating seniors involved. Monica Backmon said that should be a priority. Supervisor Lusk asked if the students could come to a meeting to



present their designs. Gavin said the students would appreciate that, and Tom said we could plan for the students to attend the next committee meeting.

Vanessa reviewed the 12-month outlook which includes entry to FTA Engineering and project rating, 80% design milestone, and continuing right-of-way acquisition, third party coordination, and utility coordination.

Supervisor Lusk asked for a flyer that showed the right of way acquisition areas and timeframes. Supervisor Storck asked that the areas be color-coded by timeframe, perhaps in six-month increments. Vanessa said the staff would develop the flyer and it would also include a link to the on-line interactive map.

Barbara asked about the timing of the construction grant agreement. Henry said it would be mid-2025.

Supervisor Storck said he was looking forward to a presentation on utility pole consolidation. Tom said we could provide a presentation in the future.

Supervisor Lusk acknowledged attendees from the public and invited them to speak.

Queenie Cox said she supported the decision to switch the station names. The community should have more involvement given the number of historical sites in the area. The New Gum Springs Civic Association is available to work with the local churches. In response to her question about impacts to the Spring Garden Apartments, Dan Reinhard said the first row of parking spaces will be converted from head-in to parallel. She asked about the number of lanes in the roadway section. Tom said the number of lanes had been reduced and asked Vanessa to send drawings to Ms. Cox. Dan said VDOT would be making a presentation on the final configuration to the NGSCA in February.

Ron Chase said he supported the decision to name the station near the historic marker as “Gum Springs.” He would also prefer that the station at Sherwood Hall Lane also be known as Gum Springs in recognition of the area’s Black history which needs to be recognized. Supervisor Storck reviewed the committee action on the station names, and noted that it could be confusing for riders if two stations have similar names and that communities on both sides of Richmond Highway should be recognized. He invited Mr. Chase’s input on the station designs.

Pastor Charles Hall said he appreciated the effort to distribute color-coded flyers.

Supervisor Storck said the county would publicize the revised station names. He noted that the process started last fall so the decision could be informed by public input.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 11:15 AM.