



Minutes

PROJECT: Richmond Highway BRT Executive Committee Meeting #9

DATE & TIME: September 8, 2020 1 - 3 PM

LOCATION: Conference Call (a recording of the meeting is posted at <https://soundcloud.com/fairfaxcounty/richmond-hwy-brt-executive-committee-2020-09-08>)

Attendees:

Committee:

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

Ricky Foley, FCDOT
Robin Geiger, FCDOT
Michael Guarino, FCDOT
Ray Johnson, FCDOT
Honorable Paul Krizek, House of Delegates
Ron Lilley, FCDOT
Doug Miller, FCDOT
Christine Morin, BOS
Anna Nissenen, FCDOT
Brent Riddle, FCDOT
Nick Rinehart, BOS
Matthew Renninger, BOS
Diego Rodriguez Cabrera, BOS
Philip Scranage, Office of Senator Surovell
Gregg Steverson, FCDOT

Staff:

Vanessa Aguayo, FCDOT
Jim Beall, FCDOT
Aaron Campbell, BOS
Noelle Dominguez, FCDOT
Clinton Edwards, DRPT
Tom Fahrney, FCDOT
Michael Felchow, FCDOT

FCDOT Program Management Consultant:

Lara Hegler, PMC
Suresh Karre, PMC
Henry Kay, PMC

Tom Biesiadny opened the meeting. Vanessa Aguayo reviewed the agenda which includes a project status report and a presentation on the revised project delivery approach.

Vanessa said the County's consultants recently submitted 30% design plans. The design will now progress in response to comments from review agencies.

Vanessa said the branding process is continuing. Focus groups are meeting this week, and results will be available in October. This will be followed by an online public survey in late fall. The County will bring a recommendation back to the Executive Committee in early 2021.



Vanessa said the two station designs selected by the Executive Committee will go out for public review this fall. The County is working with VDOT on design details, and the architect is preparing architectural site plans.

Doug Miller reported on the NEPA process. The County is working on two fronts: completing the NEPA document and working with the Consulting Parties on historic impacts. Because there is some interest in nominating Gum Springs as an historic resource the County treated the community as if it were eligible. The analysis concluded the BRT project creates no adverse effects. The “draft” Categorical Exclusion is completed, and the County is awaiting concurrence from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. We expect the document to be signed by FTA in December.

Doug said that there is also a civil rights complaint that was recently referred to FTA by the Federal Highway Administration. We hope that review will be completed in the next month or two to allow us to stay on schedule.

Vanessa reviewed several aspects of the design in which FCDOT is working with VDOT.

Vanessa said that County is meeting regularly with FTA. FTA is particularly interested in the project delivery approach, schedule, and timeframe for entering the Engineering phase of the grant application process. At the point the project enters Engineering the FTA grant amount is fixed, so the County would like to have a complete cost estimate. The County is also planning to submit the Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan this month.

Vanessa said the County is planning to hold six virtual public information meetings this fall. Topics include the project status, station design, right-of-way needs, and branding, although not all topics will be covered at every meeting. We will utilize a variety of outreach methods.

Vanessa presented the revised project delivery approach. The prior approach included a design-build contract for Section 1 and a design-bid-build contract for Section 2. For Section 1, key benefits included accelerated design, cost-saving innovations, and minimizing right-of-way acquisition for utilities by allowing the contractor to coordinate with utilities. For Section 2, since there is no right-of-way, the major benefit of design-bid-build was to facilitate coordination with VDOT. Since that analysis was completed, several significant changes have occurred, including:

- Schedule for VDOT’s widening project has been refined and lengthened. This has created a long gap in the schedule between the two BRT sections. To obtain the largest federal cost share and reduce the risk of a contractor delay claim, both sections would need to be aligned.
- Long schedule gap would require two separate federal grant agreements. The County would like to avoid the risk of not receiving the second grant. Tom noted this is a lesson learned from the Silver Line.
- Lengthy right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation processes allow time for engineering on both sections to continue.
- Taking design to 100% will allow the County to achieve complete control over the design of stations and ensure the architectural details are consistent.



- Opportunity to transfer right-of-way risk to contractors was re-evaluated, and the County determined that passing this risk to contractors could result in a bid price increase.
- Final design of the stations would accommodate County and community design preferences. To achieve this in a design-build contract would require detailed specifications that would limit a contractor's opportunity to innovate.

Vanessa said the County considered a variety of combinations of design-build and design-bid-build contracts with and without advanced utility relocation contracts as well as different approaches to scheduling work in the VDOT section. The options were prioritized by completion date, lowest cost, and ability to obtain a single FTA grant. Of the most favorable options, FCDOT recommends "Option D" which is a single design-bid-build contract. Benefits of this approach include 1) attracting both national and local contractors, 2) efficient risk management, and 3) the ability to separately deliver utility relocation.

Vanessa reviewed the schedule for Option D. The first visible construction take place in early 2023. She compared this schedule to the VDOT widening project and to the prior schedule discussed at the May Executive Committee meeting.

Vanessa said the County would continue to look for opportunities to further reduce schedule, including starting partial parcel acquisitions earlier and including contract incentives for early completion.

Vanessa said immediate next steps would be to brief FTA; complete NEPA; prepared for right-of-way acquisition; progress design under the current BRT program management contract; accelerate coordination with utilities; and continue community involvement.

Tom asked Vanessa to provide additional detail about the branding focus groups. Vanessa said the groups include 8-15 people who reflect the diverse demographic composition of corridor.

Supervisor Lusk said he wants to support the outreach program by helping to publicize the outreach meetings. Robin Geiger said the County appreciated that. Supervisor Storck said it is important to focus on the Latinx community which is likely to use the service. His office has a dedicated staff person for the Latinx community. Supervisor Lusk said it is important to focus on the youth and to be responsive to what they think is important.

Supervisor Lusk asked if the FTA grant amount that is set at entry to Engineering includes escalation. Henry Kay said the cost estimate presented to FTA is escalated to the mid-point of construction. Tom noted that contract incentives would not be an eligible project cost for federal reimbursement. Supervisor Lusk said he supports the incentive provisions.

Clinton Edwards asked how the focus group were convened, and whether meetings are virtual. Vanessa said it was handled by a consultant, and the meetings are virtual.

There being no further questions, Supervisor Storck moved that recommendation to utilize the Design-Bid-Build project delivery method be accepted. Supervisor Lusk seconded the motion. Tom asked if there were further questions, and there being none all voted in favor and the motion was carried.



Supervisor Storck thanked the FCDOT staff for their work to bringing the project to this point. He sees the biggest challenge is keeping FTA “in our corner.” Tom thanked Supervisor Storck for his comment and said BRT is an important project for FCDOT.

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

Prepared by H. Kay