

Transportation Input Session
August 28, 2007
Mercer Middle School

Planning Commissioners Present: Robert Klancher, Barbara Munsey, Kevin Ruedisueli, Gladys Lewis and Nancy Hsu

George Phillips gave the opening remarks and made introductions of Planning Commissioners and Office of Transportation staff in attendance. He reviewed the process that the draft Countywide Transportation Plan has gone through to date.

Steve Hines, a resident of New Road, asked what will happen with the draft Plan after the community meetings are completed.

Mr. Phillips said the Planning Commission will continue its deliberations and make a recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board will then hold a public hearing on the draft Plan and go through its deliberations then ultimately adopt the plan.

Tim Williams, Summerstown Place in Sterling, asked where the new jobs created will be located?

Mr. Phillips said generally along the Dulles Corridor.

Mrs. Helen Masek, a resident on Lacey's Tavern Court, asked if the Planning Commission is empowered to make changes to the draft plan. Ms. Hsu said yes in the form of recommendations.

Sandra Chaloux, Kudu Court, said the draft plan shows Gum Springs Road in 2005 as LOS A-C but VDOT lists it as LOS F.

Lorna Parkins from Baker said the LOS is based on number of cars on the road where VDOT is doing an operational analysis which focuses on intersection operation.

Ms. Chaloux informed the Planning Commission that Delegate Marshall has requested VDOT to provide current traffic counts on Route 659 and can it be utilized in consideration of the Plan.

Mr. Klancher said the information for one road segment is not really useful to consideration of the Countywide road network.

Ms. Chaloux asked what the County is doing to coordinate four and six lanes of Route 659 south of Route 50 into two lanes into Prince William.

Mr. Phillips said our traffic model shows that we need that capacity for Loudoun County for both traffic generated here and through traffic coming into the County.

Ms. Chaloux said residents along Route 659 do not want the road to be six lanes – they only want four lanes. There needs to be another north/south road.

Helen Masek asked that the Route 860 Extension be taken off the draft Plan from further consideration. The road is to facilitate Prince William County commuters to the Dulles Corridor. It goes through an existing neighborhood. Their neighborhood doesn't exist on Google maps. She felt the road was a deliberate swipe at her. The road also looks to facilitate travel within the area formerly known as the CPAM area. The road impacts the Mount Zion Church and it follows the path of the Old Carolina Road. The Road was abandoned because it was in a floodplain and Route 15 was built in a new alignment to avoid floodplain and accommodate vehicular travel.

Mr. Phillips indicated that the road is a line on the map and has not been engineered. There was a deliberate attempt to avoid the Mount Zion Church.

Ms. Parkins said that a corridor study which is what is recommended would take into account all environmental, community and historic considerations. This draft Plan is predicated on trying to relieve congestion.

Michael Kurkjian of Lacey's Tavern Court, asked why a new road running so close and parallel to Route 15 was necessary.

Ms. Parkins explained the model called for accommodating the traffic trying to go east and north. They did test New Road and it didn't relieve Route 50 whereby the Route 860 Extension did. In response to a question she went on to explain how the model calibrates.

Blasé Berner, Lacey's Tavern Court, asked why Prince William and out of County residents have to be accommodated on Loudoun's roads when it negatively impacts the quality of life for some Loudoun residents. There are too many roads too close together coming from Prince William into Loudoun County.

John Hutchison, a resident of New Road, asked why the draft plan pushes all traffic into the neighborhoods rather than being accommodated onto the bigger roads.

Mr. Hines said he would lose a drainfield and his house will be worth nothing.

Barbara Hill, Grand Ellison Court, is a native Virginian who has driven Route 50 for over 50 years and feels this draft plan will destroy the area. Roads are not the answer – four, six or eight lanes. Take off the Route 860 Extension.

Ms. Chaloux asked for information that are used in the model that support the need for six lanes on Route 659.

Ms. Parkins said that is the household and jobs data.

Becky Williams, Summerstown Place in Loudoun Valley Estates asked for a traffic signal at Freeport and Route 606. The new elementary and high schools are being built and there is no connection to the Loudoun Valley Estates neighborhood. It will be a seven mile bus route with no signal to get onto Route 606.

Mr. Klancher said when LVII rezoning was approved there was a discussion of having a road but there was a tremendous outcry from LV One to not have a connection from Route 606.

Mike Ueltzen, resident on Germania Lane, said he is an engineer with a degree in Information Technology. The model is a mechanical device that is a compilation of what you put in and then it spews out data. He feels you need to consider the people, the thoroughfares and the land you need now. It is ludicrous to deal with a model that gives data for 30 years from now. He asked the Planning Commission, staff and citizens not to be bamboozled by the model output.

Mr. Phillips said the model is a tool that is only as good as the information put in to it. Staff uses the adopted land use plan data.

Ms. Parkins said you are required to do 25-30 year plans. The Plan does address strategies other than just roads.

Rod Dallaire a resident on Oribi Place, said the land use plan could change. He spoke of his former home base in Michigan that was planned in 1930 and they stayed true to the plan. He asked about the analysis of transportation when there is a rezoning.

Mr. Phillips explained that every two years or so the land use forecasts are updated and the most up to date information was used in the model.

Mr. Dallaire asked why there couldn't be an analysis with a revised land use plan.

Ms. Parkins says seldom is "scenario planning" done.

John Kirwan, a resident on Watson Road, asked about Watson Road plans.

Mr. Phillips said a corridor study would have to be done to come up with an alignment for Route 860 Extension. The current adopted plan calls for some changes to existing Watson Road.

Mr. Kirwan asked about the termination of the North Route 50 Collector Road.

Ms. Parkins said there is a difference between what is in the current adopted plan and the proposed draft plan.

Nancy Kurkjian asked how Route 50 traffic calming works into the proposal for the Route 860 Extension.

Ms. Parkins said the alignment would have to be determined under a corridor study.

Helen Masek said the Route 860 Extension would go through land that the Mount Zion Church purchased – 80 acres on the north side of Rt. 50.

Ms. Munsey said it is her understanding that an easement has been placed on the property. She wants to stress that any new road on the map is subject to a corridor study and no engineering has been done.

Blasé Burner raised a concern about the lack of shoulders on roads.

John Hutchison said a road on the map is more than shading on the map. It means it will be built.

Ms. Munsey said it does represent a road but its exact alignment would be determined through a corridor study.

Mr. Hutchison asked how residents get roads off the map.

Mr. Phillips said you work through the Planning Commissioners and Board members.

Lynn Thibodeau, a resident on Grand Ellison Court, asked that the Route 860 Extension be taken off the map.

Mark Fish, a resident on Lacey's Court Tavern, said he concurred with that sentiment.

Ms. Parkins said it is difficult to envision the growth in jobs from 95,000 today to 300,000 in 2030.

Jeff Warren a resident on Mayville Court in South Riding asked about timelines for Route 50/Route 15 roundabouts.

Terrie Laycock indicated it will be built within 24-36 months.

Mr. Warren asked if the Hospital has been taken into account.

Mr. Phillips said if a hospital is included in the land use plan it would be included in the projections.

Ms. Munsey said there are two land sites owned by hospital sites. There is no Certificate of Public Need for either hospital. Inova is seeking a COPN for a hospital.

Mr. Warren said the roundabouts might delay folks to the west getting to the future Route 50 hospital.

Roy Barnett, developer of Stone Ridge, responded to a question that he hopes to begin the Westbound Route 50 3rd lane in the next six months.

Responses were made to the timing and responsibility for widening Route 50 from Poland Road to Fairfax County westbound and eastbound. Ms. Munsey said there was nothing in the Fairfax County Six Year Plan to improve Braddock Road.

Becky Williams said Fairfax will not improve that area.

Blasé Burner said keep the roads where people want them. Let them alone and don't turn Loudoun into Fairfax County.

Helen Masek asked if the New Road and Route 860 Extension roads could be removed from the map and not waste any more time on the issue.

Mr. Phillips said we want to hear from the public on what they do want to address traffic.

Ms. Masek said they want well planned out development and those roads removed.

Mr. Hines said take New Road off the Plan, don't help out Prince William County commuters.

Mr. Klancher explained that the Planning Commission has divided into three subcommittees and will be making recommendations back to the full Commission on the draft plan. The Planning Commission as a whole will be making a recommendation to the Board. They will be analyzing the citizen input further and look at options.

Ms. Chaloux asked the Planning Commission to keep Gum Springs Road south of Route 50 at four lanes and bring another north south road through South Riding to accommodate the traffic.

Mr. Burner asked if the Planning Commission should receive emails.

Ms. Munsey asked that everyone who will be involved in the review be contacted by the residents – the Loudoun County Planning Commission, the staff through the CTP website.

Ms. Munsey said the Planning Commission has seen an initial briefing that showed Route 50 green and she asked that Route 50 be relooked at. She asked the citizens for suggestions for more viable alternatives to address the problems.

Marion Randolph, asked what happened to the Tri-County Parkway.

Mr. Phillips said the Tri-County Parkway is on the current Countywide Transportation Plan as a six lane divided road.

Zareen Shah, a resident of Gum Springs Road, congratulated the staff for making Loudoun County the best place to live.

The meeting concluded at 9 p.m.