

Transportation Input Session
Lucketts Community Center
August 29, 2007

Planning Commissioners present: Nancy Hsu, Gladys Lewis, John Elgin, Robert Klancher, and Kevin Ruedisueli

George Phillips, Office of Transportation Services, gave a presentation on the draft plan.

Lorna Parkins, consultant on the draft plan, said in discussions with Commissioner Hsu it was decided that more information on the problems in the Route 15 Corridor would be presented and the September 12th meeting will be for residents to make suggestions on alternatives they can support to address the problems.

Ms. Parkins went on to explain the travel demand model and how it works. The data in the model includes the information in the adopted land use plan for Loudoun County as well as the Council of Governments regional data. The households and jobs produce the number of trips and the travel pattern is determined by travel times on origins and destinations on the roadways in the regions. Alternative testing doesn't change the land use but it changes the transportation network options – widening roads, changing speeds on roads such as by adding interchanges, introducing new roads, etc.

She presented a powerpoint presentation on the analysis done to date with respect to Route 15.

Jim Briggs, resident on Limestone School Road, thanked the Planning Commission, consultant and staff for being here. He said he is a telecommunications engineer by profession and they use a lot of the same methods to determine “traffic”. He said if the road is built larger you attract more traffic – transit traffic. This is a key issue for those who live on the Route 15 corridor. Much of the traffic in peak times is for out of state traffic and should that have to be handled by the residents of the area. He suggests utilizing restrictive controls rather than expansive controls. He suggested a strategy of putting a toll booth at the border – the Maryland State line. He doesn't support adding additional capacity.

Martha Polkey, a resident on Chapel Lane, thanked everyone for coming. The main frustration with the whole process is that it was backed into. If you want a bridge in Maryland, get a contract signed and notarized from the State of Maryland. This is a new road plan and not a transit plan – very little multi-modal strategies. She said there is no attention to environmental considerations. The Plan ignores limestone overlay and water quality issues in the area. Loudoun County hasn't endorsed the Journey Through Hallowed Ground initiative which promotes tourism and doesn't add children to the school system. We need to start over.

Richard Churan from Lucketts asked why we should pay for roadwork used by out of state folks. Many out of state folks will be utilizing Route 15. The morning commuters are going to and from work in Northern Virginia and use Route 15 and Route 9 to get to their jobs. These folks help with growing the economic engine. Route 15 has no shoulders and we need to plan to put in shoulders to help a motorist that is broken down. They should support the Lovettsville Road intersection improvements. Loudoun County should have a long range road program. A Lucketts by-pass should be put into the plan for a long-range strategy.

Chuck Billand a resident on Lovettsville Road and owner of a rural business. He is a professional planner by vocation. This Plan can't be dealt with by applying traditional traffic modeling because there will never be another bridge. He suggests putting a stop sign at every crossroad. He supports slowing down the traffic and living with it.

Peter Gustafson, a resident on Black Walnut Lane, said he can see Rt. 15 from his home. He used to work in Leesburg and there were times when he couldn't easily get home. Route 15 is a US highway – Maryland owns the River and there is a mountain on one side. There is interstate traffic but most commuters come from Maryland to go to work. You can't really network roads in the area which are mostly gravel roads. This needs to be looked at regionally to solve the problem. Unless Maryland agrees to a bridge this is the road folks will take. A four lane road won't work either. He feels the solution is a bridge across the Potomac near Dulles Airport. After watching the road for 26 years the back-ups have been caused by traffic signals.

Dorothy Brandt, a resident on Chapel Lane, asked if a bridge over the Potomac connecting into Route 28 was looked into. That is the area she supports since the traffic is down there.

Mr. Elgin said the Planning Commission resurrected the consideration of the Western Transportation Corridor and it was killed by the public.

George Phillips said the Western Transportation Corridor was removed from the Countywide Transportation Plan in 2001.

Ms. Brandt suggested relooking at a Western Transportation Corridor.

Hugh Ghiringhelli a resident on Potomac Overlook asked why the Commonwealth doesn't give tax credits for teleworking. This is a local solution to a regional problem. Virginia needs to get together with Maryland.

Betsey Brown a resident on Rockland Lane said we live in the most historic farmland in the United States. She lives on one of those historic farms. The draft Plan would have the proposed bypass go through Temple Hall and their farm. How can those issues be ignored.

Matt Thompson, a resident on Dove Lane, said he moved here because he likes the area and doesn't want to see a four lane highway. The road is going through Hallowed Ground. Maryland doesn't intend to widen Route 15. Maryland has said it will not allow a bridge between Point of Rocks and Cabin John Bridge. Maryland is looking to put in roundabouts.

Jan Fearing a resident on Wilt's Store Road asked if the conceptual corridor has been removed from consideration.

Commissioner Hsu said the Planning Commission has supported removing the Rt. 15 Bypass and the Route 9 Bypass from the draft Plan. That will be in the form of a recommendation to the Board.

Ms. Fearing said the term corridor scares her. She is concerned that the only mass transit consideration is a bus. Transit should be further considered.

Mara Walsh-Copeland a resident of Hillsboro said the primary recommendation is for a Corridor study. That is currently in the Countywide Transportation Plan. She asked if there has to be a line on a map.

Rebecca Kite, a resident on Lost Corner Road, said she is from Minnesota, and she feels there needs to be lots of bridge crossings. She worked on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the County. She would like to see a bike path from Lucketts to Leesburg. There needs to be a safe way to do that.

Jack Merritt, a resident on Spinks Ferry Road, farmed 3,000 acres in Loudoun. The Lees Crossing Homeowners Association is very concerned about a proposal for a by-pass. It hacks through the heart of a historic area. He doesn't feel it will make things better in the area. He attended many meetings regarding the Western Transportation Corridor. There hasn't been the fortitude to do the right thing. There are as many votes out in this area as there are in the east where the road should go. He believes the road should go into the population center. He doesn't support the stop signs and toll approaches. This is a regional issue and we need a leader who can bring this to the forefront with Maryland.

Betty Cross, a resident on Stumptown Road, said the networking of streets was recommended to VDOT and they refused. She doesn't support having a park and ride lot and bus service for Maryland.

Mike Miller, a resident on Limestone School Road, said he thought the bypass proposal was removed from the draft Plan. He said the public notice needs to be improved. He said two wealthy counties – Loudoun and Montgomery – are involved and Montgomery is forcing Loudoun's hand. He reversed his commute and goes from Lucketts to Harper's Ferry to work. A bypass destroys historic farmland. He said there is room for improvements. The turnlanes have complicated his ability to get onto Route 15. You need roundabouts.

Susan Glass, a resident on Limestone School Road, said parallel roads work but in the eastern end that occurred through development. There is no development in this area. She suggested a bypass east where the folks are. We need more affordable housing in Loudoun and Fairfax County.

Mike Miller asked about doing a small bubble around the Village of Lucketts.

Ms. Parkins said this would come out in a corridor study.

Ms. Hsu said the meeting two weeks from now is to be a follow up. The consultant will come back with alternatives based on what was stated tonight.

Jack Merritt said the residents said there needs to be a regional approach. He asked Ms. Hsu if that means all issues are still on the table?

Ms. Hsu said the consultant will analyze the suggestions and come back to say what they will do to address the problems for further consideration by the public and the Planning Commission.

Mr. Briggs said it will take the Board of Supervisors to begin discussions with their counterparts in Maryland and discussions at the State level with Virginia and Maryland to begin discussions regarding a bridge.

Mr. Merritt asked if the new suggestions will be considered and studied.

Mr. Miller asked if multiple consultants can be hired to look at the same issue and come back with various alternatives.

Ms. Hsu said this consultant has been chosen and charged with conducting the analysis.

Ms. Lewis asked if the consultant can model fewer jobs.

Terrie Laycock responded that would involve changing land use and that would require direction from the Board to have the consultant go in that direction.

The meeting ended at 9:40 p.m.