

Transportation Input Session  
Smart's Mill Middle School  
September 12, 2007

Planning Commissioners Present: Nancy Hsu, John Elgin, Gladys Lewis, Kevin Ruedisueli

George Phillips, from the Office of Transportation, welcomed everyone in attendance. He informed the citizens that this is the second in a series of meetings for the Leesburg/Lucketts area of Western Loudoun and is a follow-up to the meeting held in late August.

Lorna Parkins, Consultant from Michael Baker Corporation, provided a presentation that was based on what was asked to be evaluated at the last meeting in Lucketts. She reviewed the main points of discussion from the Lucketts meeting and described the corridor analysis that was done to address those thoughts. She broke those down to in-corridor strategies, countywide strategies and regional strategies.

Mr. Richard Churan, a resident of Lucketts, said the proposed improvements to roads in the east impact the roads in the west. This is coupled with traffic from out of state residential growth. He made the point that these workers are needed in the Northern Virginia region and they contribute to the Northern Virginia economy. He mentioned a federal law allowing trucks coming in from Mexico that will impact Route 15. He recommended a full truck inspection facility on Route 15, full shoulders on Route 15 and other safety measures.

Richard Pedesen of Merritt Farm Lane in Leesburg, said he didn't see anything about the next 20 years in terms of light rail from Maryland that might cut vehicle trips in the proposed CTP. He thinks Congressman Wolf and county leaders must go to the federal government and insist on a bridge crossing at Route 28 or other points. He feels Route 15 problems are being held hostage by a few landowners in Montgomery County.

Barbara Churan, a resident of Lucketts, said there should be a road like the George Washington Parkway that follows the Potomac River. It is up to the Governor and the federal government to make this happen.

Martha Polkey, a resident of Chapel Lane in Lucketts, said she continues to be concerned that mass transit is not being seriously considered in the Plan. She doesn't think there will be a Route 28 river crossing with the easements in place on the Montgomery County side. She doubts the conclusions of the model. The various bypasses proposed all come out on Route 15 and require signals thus reducing capacity. She feels VDOT is very behind in their designs and planning for traffic. She feels the County is backing into the issue because there is a strong rural economy in the area. She stated the support for the unpaved roads. She suggested looking at more modern designs.

Jim Briggs a resident of Limestone School Road, said rather than increasing the capacity on the road the strategy should be to restrict use and he suggests utilizing tolls. His research shows that you could reduce current traffic from Maryland by 8 and 15 percent. He said the tolls would also serve as a revenue source. He suggested a park and ride lot with bus service near Saint Clair Road. He suggested a bike trail that would run parallel to Route 15. He thought they should also accommodate horses. He further suggested networked side streets. His final suggestion was affordable housing and telecommuting be further considered. He feels these strategies can also be used in the Route 9 corridor.

Teresa Ryan, a resident of Gable Square in Sterling, said her community will be surrounded by four lane highways and interchanges. There will be a four lane road three to four feet from her house that goes nowhere. She said Moran Road crossover will go Route 28 and will go right by twenty houses. She feels the roads go nowhere.

George Phillips said the roads have not been engineered. He offered to meet with Ms. Ryan to go over her concerns.

Brian DeCoti, a resident of Gable Square and member of the homeowner's association, said the four lane road proposed in their area is unacceptable. He said it will kill their property values. He said Tippet Hill Road (aka Shaw Road) is a parking lot.

Paul Beckwith, a resident of Lees Crossing, thanked the Planning Commission and staff for listening to the residents concerns about coming up with alternatives for discussion. He asked that the Leesburg Bypass be forever stricken. He sees a lot of congestion and feels that could be dealt with by eliminating left hand turns at certain times and synchronizing signals. He discussed how traffic lights are backing up traffic on Route 7. He likes the idea of a \$3.00 toll for Route 15 southbound traffic. This might make Maryland rethink a river crossing. He feels regional planning for transportation and development needs to take place. He thinks a PPTA approach should be used for Route 15 funding.

Lisa Roden lives in Potomac Station and several years ago heard about the Western Transportation Corridor that was aligned through Potomac Station. She and her neighbors and the Town of Leesburg all opposed this road. She is concerned that this project keeps coming up. She would like to see a river crossing further east in the area of Route 28. She asked for "development calming". The Board of Supervisors needs to think about the consequences of development. She mentioned the Kincora project that would add additional traffic.

Walter Raheb, Limestone School Road, suggested looking at the calendar closer when scheduling meetings because tonight is a Jewish holiday. He said he and his wife are going to be investing additional funds on their property since the six lane bypass is now off the Plan. He is concerned that Loudoun is making plans to accommodate Maryland and New Jersey traffic using Virginia tax dollars for people out of state. He could support a river crossing. Maryland has to be forced into working with Virginia to forge a solution. He said he needs a traffic signal at his lane. He does not support creating a

network of roads because everyone will use it – local and out of state traffic. He said the side roads are unsafe now and he can't ride his horses on the road.

Lori Kimball, a resident of Emerald Dunes Place in Leesburg, said whatever happens to the north of her increases traffic in her area. She fought the Western Transportation Corridor in 2004 – particularly the power line alignment. She said there has never been a complete independent study on the need. She said the lines drawn on the map so far accommodate Maryland traffic. A river crossing further east is what needs to happen. She said a regional solution needs to incorporate Fairfax and Montgomery Counties. She has heard those leaders discussing the river crossing issue. She asked if a bridge at White's Ferry goes into the Maryland Agricultural Preserve.

Gigi Robinson, a resident of Leesburg, said the rural economy needs to be saved in Loudoun. She feels you need to save historic features for tourism. She said Leesburg is the recipient of all the ill thought plots from VDOT. She said the traffic that isn't coming directly to stop in Leesburg they need to not go through Leesburg. She is concerned about through traffic that uses Leesburg as a "big stop light". She raised concerns about the state of the Leesburg Bypass. She thinks a toll might be a good idea. She asked that Leesburg be considered in the planning.

Todd Blakeman, a resident of Spinks Ferry Road, said he commutes on Route 15 everyday and is frequently backed up into Leesburg. There are logging trucks and horse trailers that go 30 mph on Route 15 and that creates a terrible back-up. There needs to be passing lanes or it needs to be a four lane parkway. The Point of Rocks bridge was built in 1850 and Route 15 needs to be upgraded. He believes even if you stop all traffic from Maryland you will still have significant traffic on Route 15.

R. J. Snooks, a resident of Chapel Lane in Lucketts, said he appreciates the Route 15 Bypass but it is very congested. He complained about the bicyclists that use Route 15. He said there needs to be a river crossing on Route 15. He feels the houses in the floodplain need to be bought out.

Nancy Brown a resident of Lucketts Road said she is very concerned about spending a lot of resources in addressing out of state traffic needs. She supports a regional approach. She supports small, incremental improvements on Route 15. She supports the traffic calming strategies on Route 15. She supports the toll road idea for Route 15.

Matt Yoder a resident of Northwest Leesburg, said there needs to be a place for traffic to go when other improvements are made. He commutes daily from Leesburg to Route 28 and traffic over the last several years has gotten worse. He supports the improvements proposed in the plan. He said Route 7 needs to be improved.

Jack Merritt a resident of Lees Crossing, said he represents their HOA and they oppose the bypass. He said he was speaking for himself tonight. He discussed the history of Leesburg By-pass and lamented how the northern portion was taken off the plan. He said we are living with problems today as a result of that decision. Years later he attended

meetings regarding a river crossing when right of way was available. He mentioned that while there was opposition to the river crossing and it was taken off the plans there were some who felt that it would result in huge amounts of traffic on Route 15 and that has happened. He said you still need to build a river crossing where the traffic is and that is to the east. That is where the traffic wants to go.

Andy Pitas, a resident of Lucketts, said the Plan being laid out is very short-sighted. It is a feel good plan that does nothing for Route 15. He said tolls will never happen. He suggested that the safety and capacity on Route 15 needs to be addressed.

Gerald James, a resident of Lucketts, asked if the Bypass is not restored what will happen?

Ms. Parkins said the bypass would not be advanced for five years. The Plan would be revisited in five years.

Mr. Pitas said 11 people have died on Route 15 in the past 5 years. He said \$12 million will be spent on dressing up Route 15 through the traffic calming project. He said this is just fluff. He said the funding would be better spent on a bypass about a mile north of Lucketts and tie back in at Route 657.

Ms. Hsu said the presentation this evening was based on modeling some of the suggestions made at the last meeting. These are not necessarily what will be recommended. The information will add to the Planning Commission's analysis of the Plan. She mentioned the time constraints. She asked the audience if they have had their say.

In response to a question if the by-pass is off the Plan, Ms. Hsu explained that the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Board. At the June meeting the Commission listened to the overwhelming sentiment to remove the bypass and that was a recommendation made. They also decided to hold community meetings and to explore alternatives to the bypass. They will also continue to explore the other options in the CTP draft. The Planning Commission will be making changes and forward those to the Board of Supervisors.

There was sentiment raised that they would like to hear back from the Planning Commission on what will be proposed to the Board.

Ms. Lewis on the Planning Commission said she would be willing to come back to meet with the residents on the decisions of the Planning Commission. She said the traffic issues are a direct result of the land use decisions.

Mrs. Robinson asked for another Planning Commission public hearing prior to any recommendations going to the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.