

Subject: CAC Meeting #1 (Notes from breakout sessions)	
Client: Hampton Roads Transit	HRT Doc. Control No. DR-009-49947-PLO11
Project: Virginia Beach Transit Extension Study	Project No: 111287.003
Meeting Date: October 28, 2009	Meeting Location: VB Economic Development boardroom
Notes by: The Miles Agency	

Attendees:

See Meeting summary

Notes from Corridor Discussion for Breakout sessions - Newtown to Town Center

Jayne Whitney of HRT and David Vozzolo of HDR facilitated the discussion which included business and civic leaders on the CAC.

Transportation

Access area:

- Constitution Drive extension will help provide more access for Columbus Station corridor and access to transit line
- Concerns about existing traffic problems on Independences Blvd N/S and Virginia Beach Blvd (major roadways) and the possibility of increased traffic in border neighborhoods, especially along Virginia Beach Blvd.
- Questions about how the transit extension could impede customer access to established businesses along the proposed route.
- Question by one community leader is how useful a transit system would be for her if she only needed to travel a short distance?
- Only one access through and over railroad until extension is built for Thalia Creek
- Chartway Federal CU -business access for customers at 4 different locales
- Currently a number of foot traffic goes from Greenwich Rd crossing over right-of-way for lunch to Princess Anne Rd; Burger King, Zero's etc.
- Cleveland Street is often used as a back door from Town Center
- Access uses of Kellam Rd which has red- switch is used to avoid congestion of Independence Blvd
- Princess Anne High School has large percentage of foot traffic from students

Environmental

Visual

- Use of an elevated transit line/crossing in areas prone to flooding
- Possibility of using existing railroad tracks and integrating transit line with major roads
- Placement of metal fences, concrete barricades to section of commuter area from adjoining neighborhoods

Noise

- How loud will the construction and finished transit line be for bordering neighborhoods?
- Concerns over noise from commuters at stations

Wetlands

- Mitigation of wetland site at Thalia Creek

Open & Recreational Space/Community Facilities:

Community features:

Parklands

- Areas that might be disrupted by transit line include Columbus Condo Walking park, Town Center park area

Recreation

- Questions about impacts to community athletic fields, running tracks, bike paths, and walking tracks. (Point of View neighbor Park)
- Special concerns for residents between Newtown road and Town Center
- Consideration of future new home construction, new neighborhoods/subdivisions
- Safety concerns for students who walk to and from the Princess Anne area schools and heavy foot traffic along the Virginia Beach Blvd corridor around Pembroke Mall and Town Center.

Unique Structures or Characteristics

- Projected plans for new apartments and single family homes along Euclid and Bonney Rd East of Norfolk Southern right-of-way
- Relocation of businesses through Cleveland corridor; ABC Redevelopment potential
Circuit City, FX and HQ areas are underutilized at this time; maybe can be used for future community station or park and ride

Other Comments

Community members asked questions on station placement including:

- Which communities will be directly impacted by the transit line and stations?
- Will station placement be based on neighborhood demand?
- Will stations be placed near heavily used businesses?
- What is the percentage of park and ride versus walk and ride for those who will use either BRT or LRT?
- Can you describe what the potential characteristic of each station would be like?
- Is it possible that Newtown Rd and Witchduck Rd may be future stations but not now during this phase of the planning?

- Will the transit line follow a linear design or something like a spoke and wheel configuration?
- Can we look at options that include residential park and rides outside of original destinations?
- Do we have other options other than the LRT and BRT to consider?

Break-out Sessions Wrap-up

The Norfolk extension stops on the Norfolk side at Newtown Rd

We question where the pedestrian movement for the ridership is coming from; (What neighborhoods)?

The recreational uses of Point O' View Park; ball field

Witchduck Rd potential Park & Ride

Will something else be done with the Aragona access moving through Kellam Rd?

Park & Ride at Town Center

Pedestrian activity at Thalia Creek

Notes for Town Center to Lynnhaven breakout session (Discussion facilitated by Eric Nelson of HDR and Karen Waterman of HRT)

Transportation (parking, traffic, vehicular movement, pedestrian access and safety, deliveries)

- Community Group – Manage Condominiums is on Bonney Road near Pembroke
 - Does not believe the business will be impacted.
 - Does not have any communities in the area that would be affected.
- Thalia Civic League is north of the corridor. Concerns:
 - Where would stations be
 - How would it affect driving
 - What will the wait time be for the train to cross
 - What type of fuel
 - There will be a dredging transfer station with approximately 50 trucks a day about every six years or so; plans in the works
 - Primary concern will be access to Bonney Road, Lynn Shores Drive, and VA Beach Boulevard
 - Limited /no concerns about safety
- Eureka Park neighborhood is on the Lynnhaven Parkway end of the study. Concerns:
 - Residents use Lynnhaven Parkway to get to Virginia Beach Boulevard and are concerned about getting to/out of residences and onto Lynnhaven Parkway if the rail crossing is not elevated
 - Residents have private fences in right-of-way
 - Concerned about property value dropping
 - Not concerned about the noise
- RK Chevrolet is located near Virginia Beach Boulevard and Lynnhaven Parkway. Concerns:
 - Will they lose access to back roads near the corner of Lynnhaven Parkway and Virginia Beach Boulevard
 - Will the overflow parking along the right-of-way be affected
 - Deliveries comes off of the highway
 - Will find out which streets are used for deliveries and report back to the committee
 - Chief concern is about congestion on Virginia Beach Boulevard
 - Concerned about right-of-way where the fleet parking is located
- Southern Boulevard and Lynnhaven Parkway are congested
- 7-11 made the area really busy and congested; No traffic light and the interstate is right there
- Many people make a U-turn at that railroad near 7-11
- Some people walk across Lynnhaven Parkway from their places of business to the 7-11
- Will the new fire station being built in the Witchduck/Cleveland/Aragona area have to cross the rail tracks
- Will there be fencing for protection and safety?

Environment (visual, noise, wetlands)

- Thalia Civic League - Noise might be a concern depending on which mode is selected
- How much space is needed (how wide) for the bus or light rail and stations
- Will it run 24-hours day
- Will there be barriers

Unique Community Features (parklands, recreational, historic resources)

- There are approximately seven homes in Eureka Park neighborhood located on the right-of-way
- There is an actual park in the Eureka Park neighborhood
- How will the park in the Eureka Park neighborhood be affected
- There is a camp behind Lowes and around Wawa

Break-out Sessions Wrap-up

Town Center – Lynnhaven Parkway

- Thalia area concerned about traffic to Virginia Beach
- Concerned about fire station # 7 access to Virginia Beach Boulevard
- Lynnhaven area has congestion at the railroad crossing
- Is concerned about the tracks being near the interstate and having access to back roads (Southern Boulevard)
- There are no lights traffic lights for Eureka Park residents
- Suggested fencing at Eureka Park
- Is there a historic site at back of Mustang Road

Notes from the breakout session Lynnhaven-Birdneck/Birdneck-Oceanfront – Discussion facilitated by Oscar Gonzalez of HDR, Mark Schnauffer (City of Va. Beach).

Transportation:

- Access – Birdneck-Oceanfront

The break out session consisted of a robust discussion regarding plans for the bus and/or train route once it ends at Birdneck. Questions included the following:

1. Which direction is being considered for travel? (17th Street to Birdneck and down 19th Street, or Norfolk Avenue through the trailer park to 19th?).
2. There is already a major bus station at 19th and Pacific. How will it be dealt with? Where will you cross? Norfolk and 17th or Norfolk and 19th? How will you cross?" The group noted that there would be less impact traveling Norfolk Avenue to 19th Street.
3. In reference to "park and ride" facilities for beach employees it was stated that current options are inadequate. The group asked if there would be an opportunity for retailers to contribute to the development of a municipal parking lot. It was also strongly emphasized that there is a need for safe and reliable parking. It was shared that having a facility west of Birdneck Road with the ability to bus people in would be a plus. The group stated that a balance between parking and ridership are key factors that need to be evaluated to push the use of the transit system alternative. All felt that cost to use would play a major role. How much would it cost to ride?
4. The representative from the storage facility was concerned as to whether the service will turn or end at their facility?" They are very interested in the designated route of travel for the train.
5. Will park and rides consist of surface parking only?

Other concerns/suggestions:

- One attendee lives at 86th Street. Buses stop within the vicinity of 86th. If they are ahead of schedule – no one is on the bus. The buses at 19th Street are packed. How do you even out the ridership?
- All agreed that a combination of bus and rail service makes sense. It was also noted that connections between the rail/bus were key.
- It was mentioned that there should be no park and ride facilities in the resort area. Park and rides should be positioned close to Birdneck so that people coming from Croatan would be able to utilize the system since there is not an option to park at the resort
- It was noted that 17th and Birdneck would be a great place to park
- It was suggested that stations should not become homeless shelters
- Parking must be very well thought out to minimize traffic traveling through the neighborhoods
- Enhanced bus is needed to support visitors to the city
- The ability to support special events is key

- Access – Lynnhaven-Birdneck

During the discussion it was noted that Lynnhaven south of the expressway is extremely crowded but north of the expressway it is less of an issue. It was also stated that rail would not negatively impact the Lynnhaven community it would actually be a positive if paid for by ridership. Questions included the following:

1. Will light rail be elevated? Would an elevated/overpass solution work?
2. There is an egress/ingress onto I-264 in conjunction with a stop light. Rail will be a positive solution. As it stands the current traffic situation is a nightmare for those trying to get on and off of the expressway. The owner of the London Bridge Garden Center wants to know what the real solution is.
3. Will there be a transportation alternative to get people to Lynnhaven Mall from the train?

Other concerns/suggestions:

- Mornings and afternoons are problematic with congestion (6-9AM and 4-6PM). Per the group the main issue seems to stem from drivers making a left turn onto Virginia Beach Blvd.
- It was noted that there would be a light located directly in front of the Garden Center. It was suggested that the light for rail and the light for cars be synchronized. The owner also mentioned that his preference is that the light not be located in front of his business. Due to the lack of pedestrian traffic in the area it was felt that this would not pose a problem.
- The Great Neck corridor would be a great place for a station. (potential for a station at the London Bridge area)
- Trains would assist with clearing the intersections very quickly
- Coordination with VDOT critical regarding plans for I-264 at Lynnhaven
- Regarding span of service – want to ensure that service is available to accommodate those in the workforce
- Highlighting Lynnhaven to Birdneck – traffic issues are critical. Great Neck Road and Virginia Beach Blvd need relief prior to any additions.

Unique Community Features

- **Birdneck-Oceanfront**
 1. Seatack Recreation Center
 2. Elementary School at 16th and Arctic
 3. Historic homes, bed and breakfast, etc.

Environmental

- **Birdneck-Oceanfront/Lynnhaven/Birdneck**
 1. Need to buffer established neighborhoods
 2. Desire “green” station roofs

Misc:

- **Birdneck-Oceanfront/Lynnhaven/Birdneck**

During the discussion the following questions arose:

 1. Are there any turning issues for the trains? Experts responded that the trains are double ended (do not need to around).
 2. What happens when the trains stop running? Do they just sit there? Will cars be stacked to control the crowds, especially at large events? Will there be end of the line stations?
 3. Where will the maintenance/storage areas be located in regards to the end of the line? It was mentioned that they did not want this effort to impact any neighborhoods.

Other concerns/suggestions:

- Trains must be reliable – they must run on time
- The marketing initiative should focus on making the trains a “cool” experience for all. Commuters need to be a part of the ridership
- This will be a benefit for tourists. It will eliminate the fear of getting lost.
- It will also serve tourists in regards to secured parking while visiting the Oceanfront.