



Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Minutes from Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, 14 September 2016

MINUTES

Attendees: 20 members (see attached sign-in sheet pages).

Proceedings:

- Meeting called to order at 7:02 by Vice President Debbie Eliezer.
- *Community Updates*
 - *Elections.* Reminder that anyone interested in an AHCA officer position are welcome. Nominations will take place at the October meeting and elections will take place at the November meeting.
- *Aurora Hills Community Center Renovation Update*
 - Peter Lusk, Facilities Operations Manager, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Robin Leonard of DPR provided a recap of the community center renovations and schedule. Renovations are scheduled to kick off November 1, 2016 and be complete April 2017. The library will remain open. Any people or groups that use the community center that still have with questions or need help relocating should contact Peter.
- *395 Express Lanes*
 - Susan Shaw and Matilda Baxter from Virginia Department of Transportation, and Mike McGurk from 395 Express Lanes (TransUrban) provided a presentation on the 395 Express Lanes project.
 - The presentation materials provided are available at http://aurorahighlands.org/wp-content/uploads/395_Northern_Extension_Fairlington_Presentation.pdf and all documentation and project info is available at the project web site at http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/395_express.asp.
 - Goals of the project are to reduce congestion, provide additional transportation choices, improve predictability, and improve roadway safety
 - The project would add capacity by adding one additional lane to the current two, adding signage and toll gantries, making improvements at Pentagon/Eads street interchange, and adding sound walls. Toll gantries



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would be added at all entrances to allow paid access using Speedpass transponders in addition to free HOV traffic.

- The current access points would remain the same, but would have HOT toll gates added. The only difference is at Seminary, which will only be HOV3 and buses. The additional access points at Shirlington proposed in 2010 have been dropped.
- Most changes will happen at Pentagon & Eads St. by making current southbound ramp closer to Pentagon reversible, adding lights, and combining with improvements at Pentagon adding a bus loop and dedicated slugging drop-off/pickup area. This is expected to take all bus movement off Eads St and save 11 minutes for people going to Pentagon.
- **The draft environmental assessment covering topics such as traffic, noise, air quality was just published. The public can provide comments on the environmental assessment at public hearings in October, or by email or postal mail. See the 395 Express Lanes web site. Final decision on the environment assessment is expected in December.**
- Sound walls for noise mitigation are 25% of the project budget. 8.1 miles of noise walls are proposed based on the ability to provide beneficial noise reduction in the 500 feet noise monitoring zone. Noise walls are divided into segments, and residents within the benefit zone for each segment vote whether they want a wall or not. Ballots are sent by mail to owners & renters, with owners weighted more. If majority of those responding want a wall, it is built.
- Based on traffic study, HOT conversion should provide 40-50% increase in use in AM, and 35% increase in PM. No reduction in the number of HOV vehicles is expected. The interstate improvements are expected to take some traffic off side streets.
- Express Lanes would be built & operated by private company “395 Express Lanes” (TransUrban). A portion would be paid to the state for transit funding, which should be \$15m annually, escalating each year for the life



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of the term – 70 years. This funding would be used for things like enhancing service to existing bus routes, capital expenditures for busses, rail, parking lots, encouraging carpooling, etc.

- The conversion to HOT and partnering with concessionaire allows project to be completed that VDOT cannot wholly fund themselves, puts risk on concessionaire to leverage their money to improve infrastructure, helps initial investment to get system operational, allows free-flowing traffic (attempting to meet goal of minimum 45mph), and allows new unused capacity to be used to fund other transportation options.
- VDOT currently has an agreement with 395 Express Lanes (TransUrban) for the current 95 express lanes. There is a framework agreement for the 395 extension, with a final financial agreement expected in January with construction starting next summer. Pentagon improvements are scheduled for 2018.
- The project is continuing to work with key stakeholders and civic associations. Anyone can sign up for updates on the project web site.
- *Traffic issues on Fern Street*
 - Residents raised concerns about a large increase in traffic on Fern Street south of 23rd with motorists running stop signs, passing school bus stops, and driving over sidewalks causing unsafe conditions.
 - Many possible causes suggested such as people coming from 23rd trying to get on route 1, but diverting because of long lines, construction, narrowing of Eads to one lane, and avoiding traffic lights.
 - Katie Cristol of the Arlington County Board was present at meeting and agreed to discuss problem with appropriate people in county and provide an update by next meeting. She warned that with multiple issues - traffic, congestion, and speed – fixing one could cause problems with others, so it's important to fully understand problem to provide appropriate fix.



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- *Water Treatment Plant Update*
 - Paul Guttridge, our community member on the Solids Project Task force provided an update after the 3rd quarterly meeting. See <http://aurorahighlands.org/news/arlington-water-pollution-control-plant-solids-master-plan/> for recap of project from March.
 - Since the last meeting, the task force has added their input to the economic, operational, social, environmental criteria, resulting in odor control and acceptability aspects improving from 7th and 9th to 4th and 6th respectively. Top three are permit, operability & safety, and reliability.
 - They are currently in the option choosing phase. Already ruled out are incinerators and composting (no space). Options under consideration include putting in trucks and taking away or digesting to convert to methane/power.
 - The final choice based on task force and independent input from local universities is expected by spring 2017.
- *FAA Aircraft Noise*
 - A resident informed members that the previous evening FAA Aircraft Noise meeting will essentially cause aircraft to return to paths over Arlington. A next gen navigation system using GPS has been in place allowing plans to fly more accurately over the river. Maryland and DC did not like this, so voted against VA to fly planes back over Arlington.
 - Katie Cristol mentioned that the county board is expressing their dissatisfaction with the outcome and looking at options. John Vihstadt is the board point person to contact for this topic.
- Meeting unofficially adjourned at 9:03 PM.



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I certify that these minutes are a true and accurate representation of the business conducted at the meeting and were adopted as the official meeting minutes by the membership of AHCA.

Robert Sidman

Recording Secretary

Date: _____