



**Project Delivery Advisory Panel
January 8, 2015
Summary Meeting Minutes**

Meeting 13 of the Route 29 Project Delivery Advisory Panel was held at the Virginia Center for Transportation Innovation and Research in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Thursday, January 8, 2015. Meeting information included:

- Meeting agenda
- Presentation addressing agenda items

In attendance: Pete Borches, Chip Boyles, Morgan Butler, Eddie Giles, Mark Graham, Satyendra Huja, Chuck Lebo, Brad Sheffield, Karen Weiner, Henry Weinschenk. Facilitator: Philip Shucet.

Also attending was Alison DeTuncq, Culpeper District's representative on the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and members of VDOT's technical support team.

One comment was submitted via email to Route29Solutions@VDOT.Virginia.gov ; the summary is included in the meeting presentation. Six new comments from four individuals were posted on the Disqus board.

Questions and comments from the panel from the Dec. 18 meeting were reviewed and discussed:

Is there a County requirement for landscaping between sidewalks and roadways?

There is not a County requirement for landscaping in the right-of-way of existing highways. There is a planting strip requirement for new subdivisions that create new streets, but not for existing highways.

Can future funds from the bypass project, recently discussed by the MPO, be directed to local projects?

The \$93 Million is an estimate of anticipated future federal funds and cannot be applied to the Route 29 Solutions projects or any other pending projects.

When will the drive-through video be ready?

Anticipate drive-through video to be ready for Jan 22 PDAP meeting

Has VDOT approached property owners regarding appraisals?

Contact with property owners scheduled to begin mid-January.

Are PDAP email communications captured in meeting minutes?

All substantive PDAP matters are captured in minutes, in public presentations, or both.

What has been the administration's response to comments regarding Rt. 29 and the Rio GSI?

The response is that all projects included in the Rt. 29 Solutions Package will be constructed as scheduled.

What is VDOT's plan for cut-through traffic on private property?

VDOT will not sign or otherwise encourage any cut-through traffic on private property. VDOT has existing counts on local roads. If counts during construction determine cut-through traffic or other issues resulting from construction, strategies will be developed to mitigate those issues. A technical team, including VDOT, county and ACPD staff, is meeting to formulate a response plan.

Will there be maintenance of traffic plan for the Rio GSI that shows a larger area (Park Street, 250 Bypass, East Rio to Hydraulic)?

No. The Rio GSI maintenance of traffic graphic, updated on Dec 12, 2014, is appropriate and is available at route29solutions.org. MOT plans for each Rt. 29 Solutions project will continue to be appropriately developed and updated.

Open discussion

Mr. Sheffield suggested a clear expectation be communicated for public comment and input on the projects even after the contractor has been selected.

Mr. Shucet explained that there will be three benchmarks when the contractor will submit designs to VDOT for review, but they will be quick turnarounds of no more than nine days. He added that once the contractor is selected there will be more information about when and how pertinent information will be made available.

Mr. Sheffield also asked whether there would be dual turn lanes from WB Rio Road to NB Rt. 29. There will not be dual left-turn lanes.

Mr. Graham asked for an update on the status of the Route 29/250 interchange project. Once work begins, can PDAP be provided regular updates and information about project milestones? Mr. Shucet replied that the contract will be awarded by the CTB on Jan. 14 and that updates will be provided once work begins. VDOT will begin providing regular updates, including media advertising, before construction starts.

Mr. Lebo asked if a determination is made after the contract is awarded that some piece of a project is not built, will VDOT be liable for damages claimed by the contractor? Any damages awarded for Bypass contract?

Mr. Shucet replied that VDOT would be expected to pay for all work performed, which is also the case with the Bypass project contract. There is no penalty clause beyond payment for work performed. That will also be true with the 29 Solutions contracts.

Philip also added that that there should be no expectation that any the Rio GSI will be delayed or pulled.

Mr. Borches asked if Skanska has an advantage since they have an open contract for the Bypass project. Mr. Shucet responded that the two are completely separate and the proposals presented by the three D-B offerors will stand and be scored on their merits.

Mr. Weinschenk stated that he feels that there are activities on the other projects (other than Rio GSI) that the panel is not hearing about. He requested regular updates on each project. Mr. Shucet agreed to provide updates on each project at each panel meeting. Once the contractor is selected a representative will attend the PDAP meetings.

Mr. Boyles observed that public awareness and interest will increase when construction begins on the Route 29/250 interchange project. Mr. Shucet stated that VDOT and the contractor will continue to be laser-focused on completion of that project on or before May 21, 2016.

A significant milestone in the design-build project schedule was reached Jan. 6 when the three short-listed firms submitted technical proposals. The proposals will be evaluated and scored by a technical team prior to submission of price proposals on Jan. 20. The price proposals will be opened Jan. 21; notice of intent to award will be made Jan. 26.

Mr. Boyles reviewed the work of the support committees that are being coordinated through the Planning District Commission, including the public engagement activities. On Feb. 4 the Albemarle Board of Supervisors will receive an update on the business assistance initiative and community engagement work to date.

Ms. Weiner asked where the information about the committee activities can be found. Mr. Shucet suggested that the activity reports be placed on the 29 Solutions web site and reported monthly to PDAP.

Mr. Weinschenk noted that while he understands the process must be followed, the bottom line for business owners is whether there is anything coming that will be of help to him.

Mr. Borches expressed concern that neither the business community nor the community at large is represented on these committees and that the process would benefit greatly from their early involvement. Following discussion Mr. Borches agreed to serve on the Oversight Committee to represent the business community.

Signing

Mr. Shucet began the discussion by stating that both aspects of signing; temporary signs placed during construction as well as permanent signs installed following project completion, are critical to helping motorists identify their destination as well as to the visibility of businesses in the area.

Nathan Umberger, VDOT's area traffic engineer who is leading the project signing team, described the Integrated Directional Signing Program, which provides businesses with off-site advertising along roadways. The program is under VDOT's auspices but is managed by a private company. Information is available on VDOT's web site: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/sign-default.asp>

There are several initiatives under that program. The logo sign program, used to advertise businesses near interstate highway exits, cannot be used in this situation since Route 29 is not a limited-access highway. The appropriate program for this use would be the Tourist Oriented

Directional Signing Program (TODS). The program also defines which businesses are eligible: for example, gas stations and food establishments may be listed, while banks do not qualify. There are also limits on the number of businesses that can be listed on the signs. Details about the various programs available under the IDSP can be found at <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/sign-programs.asp>

Mr. Umberger said the signing team is working to identify the affected businesses, the location of their entrances and the effect that construction will have on each. Once that is complete the team will look at what is possible within the work area protection standards and what is possible to be done under the TODS program.

Mr. Weinschenk said that he would like to see the business logos incorporated into the signs to assist motorists in easily distinguishing the business. He also noted that the location of the signs will be critical since motorists will need time to make a decision and move to the appropriate lane.

Mr. Butler suggested that the through and business lanes be separated visually, perhaps by different colors on the pavement of each.

Ms. Weiner added that coordinating the sign color with the pavement color would provide an additional visual cue for motorists. Mr. Weinschenk again asked about incorporating the business logos - could an allowance be made for such signs with logos given the nature of the project. He also asked how it is determined which businesses qualify as well as how many signs/logos are allowed.

Joel DeNunzio described the large directional signs that will be placed in advance of the Rio Road GSI to direct traffic into either the through lanes or the local/business lanes depending on destination. He pointed to the "gantry" sign north of Hydraulic Road that directs traffic approaching the Route 250 Bypass interchange.

Mr. Borches stated his concern about how motorists would navigate the intersection to find a particular quadrant: for example how will a northbound traveler be directed to a business in the northwest quadrant of the intersection? One solution might be a name each quadrant of the intersection, and the businesses within each could build an identity within that location. It was also suggested that perhaps a business could incorporate that quadrant ID into their marketing.

Mr. Borches also emphasized that business assistance plans, including signing, need to be finalized as quickly as possible since businesses need to make their own plans and decisions about how to proceed and how to manage their business operations during and after construction.

Ms. Weiner suggested that a smartphone app that provides the location of businesses as well as current directions with the best route to reach those businesses would be helpful during construction. Similar information in map form was also suggested, as was the continuation of that app and information post-construction.

There was also discussion of how to ensure that the GPS mapping companies are kept informed of detours and shifts in traffic patterns during construction as well as the final, permanent traffic pattern once construction is complete.

Ms. Weiner stressed that it will be critical to involve the businesses to determine their preference for signs. She also offered, by way of an example, on the interstate near a Simon mall property in Charlotte, N.C. the interstate gantry signs include a directional sign pointing motorists to the correct lane to reach the mall.

Mr. Weinschenk suggested “backing in” to the design of signs: to design the permanent, post-construction sign plan and then determine what temporary signs are needed during construction and where they should be placed to best augment and enhance the permanent signs.

Mr. Graham noted that there are parts of the signing program that will have to be managed by Albemarle County due to local regulations on signs and other aspects. Those considerations might include exemptions from restrictions on the time temporary signs are allowed, changes to the permitting and fee structure, as well as expedited review and approval of requests from businesses within the defined project area. He stressed that these suggestions remain under consideration and no decisions have been made.

Future discussion/actions

- The discussion will continue at the Jan. 22 PDAP meeting to refine ideas and provide some guidance to the next signing team meeting on Feb. 24.
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- Mr. Umberger will bring photo examples of signs for those unfamiliar with what is done now.

Mr. Borches stated that the businesses that will be required to make accommodations for stormwater management and other project-related uses will need significant lead time to make those arrangements. In some cases permits may be required, engineering may be needed for the on-site improvements, and it will be critical that they have the information needed as early as possible. Mr. Borches suggested some type of “hotline” that could expedite communications between those businesses and the county and/or VDOT.

Ms. Weiner asked that information re: business assistance be provided as soon as possible so she can share with the businesses that are within the mall.

The next meeting is Jan. 22.

The meeting was open to the public and was streamed live. The podcast and video will be available on www.Route29Solutions.org.