

MEETING NOTES
York 2040 Committee

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Tabb Library Meeting Room
100 Long Green Boulevard, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Gregory “Skip” Brooks, W. Chad Green, Leigh Houghland, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Vivian McGettigan, Sheila Myers, Jacob Rizzio, Eugene Seiter, Mark Bellamy, Eric Henegar, R. Anderson Moberg and Cowles “Buddy” Spencer

Staff Present: Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services; Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services; Amy Parker, Senior Planner; Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer; Justin Atkins, Assistant County Attorney; and Victoria “Vicki” Diggs, Clerk

Members Absent: Michael S. King and Richard Myer

Call to Order – Vice Chairman Montgoussaint Jons

Vice Chairman Jons, on behalf of Chairman King who was absent, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members and visitors. He explained to those in the audience that public comments would be received at the end of the meeting, prior to adjournment. Lastly he stated that a videographer was present who would be video recording portions of the meeting.

Approval of February 6, 2019 Meeting Notes

The February 6, 2019 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Overview of the Historic Triangle Bicycle Advisory Committee – Amy Parker, Senior Planner

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the history and role of the Historic Triangle Bicycle Advisory Committee (HTBAC), which included the following information:

- The HTBAC, which meets on a quarterly basis, was founded in 1993 by James City County, Williamsburg, and York County.
- The committee members include citizen appointees and staff from each participating locality, as well as representatives from the National Park Service, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and the College of William and Mary.
- The committee developed a long-range Regional Bikeways Plan showing existing and proposed bikeway systems on a regional level for commuters and recreational cyclists.
- The Bikeway Plan map, which depicts shoulder bike lanes, off-road multi-use paths, and shared roadways, is updated when the three participating localities update their respective Comprehensive Plans.
- HTBAC’s bikeway project list, which is updated annually, recommends to the localities needed facilities requiring funding and/or construction.
- Federal and state funds as well as local Capital Improvement Program (CIP) monies are used to fund the construction of additional bike paths in the Regional Plan.

- Although York County was unable to fund the Regional Plan during the recession, funds for active transportation have been included in the County Administrator's preliminary recommended CIP for FY 2020 through FY 2025.
- York County staff, relative to bicycle paths, collaborates on an ongoing basis with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC); and the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) through the HRTPO Active Transportation Subcommittee and the VDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC), which is composed of VDOT, HRTPO, HRPDC, and local jurisdiction representatives.
- A prime example of a successful regional bikeway project is the Capital-to-Capital Trail, which currently ends near Jamestown but is planned to be extended to Fort Monroe as part of the recently adopted Birthplace of America Trail (BOAT) Plan.

Ms. Parker added that HRTPO regional bikeway planning studies currently underway include the Economic Impacts of Bicycle Facilities in Hampton Roads and Linking Hampton Roads—Regional Active Transportation Plan. In conclusion, she stated that HRTPO representatives were in attendance to provide additional information on this topic.

Regional Bike Planning in Hampton Roads – Robert Case, P.E., PhD and Steve Lambert, HRTPO

Mr. Robert Case, HRTPO Chief Transportation Engineer, provided the following information on the economic impact of bicycle facilities in Hampton Roads:

- In the summer of 2017, the HRTPO commenced the development of a regional active bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan for the Hampton Roads region.
- Annual salary income for commuters who bike to work reveal that Virginia Beach bicycle commuters have the highest total annual income in the region.
- Williamsburg has a much higher proportion of bicycle commuters than the rest of the region, which is likely due to the College of William and Mary. However, overall the Historic Triangle holds a high third place position among its competitors in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.
- Virginia Beach is the leader in the Hampton Roads area relative to number of bike shops and bike rental companies.
- StreetLight Data, providers of geospatial data, was hired by HRTPO to obtain data, extracted from smart phone apps, which provides the approximate number of people who attend biking events from outside localities and their origin.
- In the summer of 2019, Streetlight Data will perform a survey to screen persons who are visiting Hampton Roads in order to obtain such information as the amount of money they spend locally and how important the Virginia Capital Trail was in their decision to visit Hampton Roads.

Mr. Steve Lambert, HRTPO Transportation Planner II, provided an update on the project to connect the Virginia Capital Trail to Fort Monroe and the South Hampton Roads Trail via two off-road shared use paths for non-motorized traffic to be known as the Birthplace of America Trail (BOAT Trail). He pointed out that alignment issues on the Peninsula have made this project somewhat difficult. However, subsequent to speaking with all of the affected localities, large

companies, schools, universities, etc. and utilizing existing right-of-way, parks, public property, etc., the HRTPO is seeking to connect the following segments in order to create the BOAT Trail:

- Segment 1: Capital Trail to Williamsburg
- Segment 2: Williamsburg to Yorktown Road (in Newport News)
- Segment 3: Yorktown Road to Richneck Road
- Segment 4: Richneck Road to Route 17 (in York County)
- Segment 5: Route 17 to North Armistead Avenue (in Hampton)
- Segment 6: North Armistead Avenue to Fort Monroe

He stated that as part of a regional study on how to attract people to this trail from all around the world, it was decided that the trail would be built in such a way as to accommodate both cyclists and walkers.

Mr. Lambert briefly described the various types of bicycle facilities as follows:

- Sharrows – where on-road markings designate a roadway as shared by bicycles and vehicles.
- Bike Lanes – striping separates a marked bicycle lane from automobile traffic.
- Buffered Bike Lanes – a painted buffer zone separates the bike lane from vehicular traffic.
- One-Way Protected Cycle Track – a dedicated and protected space for bicyclists.
- Two-Way Cycle Track – a dedicated and protected space for bicyclists.
- Bicycle Boulevards – residential streets with enhanced design treatments.
- Paved Shared-Use Path – two-way paved path is shared by bikes and pedestrians
- Unpaved Shared-Use Path – two-way unpaved path shared by bikes and pedestrians.
- Wide Paved Shoulder – paved shoulder on the edge of a roadway.
- Signed Bike Route – appropriate along more lightly traveled residential, secondary and rural roads.

He stated that Williamsburg has the highest proportion of commuters who walk or bike to work, followed by with local military bases.

Mr. Lambert also provided the following information relative to the population/areas along the designated trail route:

- The population and employment densities are much higher on the Southside than on the Peninsula.
- The degrees of disadvantage were found to be more prevalent in rural areas.
- The active transportation commute mode share was found in pockets on both the Peninsula and Southside areas.
- Active transportation crash numbers were similar for the Southside and the Peninsula.
- Strava Metro Data, a vendor that purchases cycling data, identified Williamsburg and Virginia Beach as having the highest number of active bicyclists.

In response to a Committee query, Mr. Lambert stated that high-crash areas are primarily the result of conflicts between autos and bicycles, facilities that have been improperly constructed to accommodate both modes of travel, mid-block crossings, etc.

In conclusion, Mr. Lambert stated that the HRTPO's next steps to make the BOAT Trail a reality include:

- Collaborating with localities on regional and sub-regional active transportation facilities recommendations.
- Sponsoring a public input campaign to obtain regional recommendations.
- Establishing priorities among regional and sub-regional active transportation projects.

In response to a Committee query, Mr. Lambert stated that the Colonial Parkway was not included in the trail because an off-road facility is needed and the Park Service does not wish to relinquish a portion of the Parkway's existing roadway.

Sidewalk Plans and Planning in York County – Timothy Cross, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services

Mr. Cross stated that the Comprehensive Plan addresses all modes of transportation, including walkways. As such, he presented the following information on walkways in the County:

- Approximately 2.1% of York County citizens walk to work.
- From 2010 through 2018, there have been a total of 50 crashes involving pedestrians, including 49 injuries and 5 fatalities.
- In 1991 when the original Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the lack of sidewalks was identified as an issue that needed to be addressed.
- The County began constructing sidewalks approximately fifteen years ago following the adoption of a County Sidewalk Plan and the establishment of a sidewalk development fund as part of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- Merrimac Trail and Penniman Trail, where sidewalks ended at the County line, were two of the highest sidewalk priorities in the Comprehensive Plan, resulting in the construction of sidewalks in these two areas in 2005-06.
- When determining sidewalk priorities, staff looks at citizens' origins and destinations within a reasonable walking distance.
- County staff works with developers to encourage inclusion of sidewalks in new developments, especially if they will connect to existing sidewalks.
- Two VDOT funding sources for sidewalks are the Revenue Sharing Program, which requires a 50% County funding match, and the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside, which requires at least a 20% County funding match.
- The County used federal economic stimulus funds awarded in 2009 to build sidewalks along Hubbard Lane, Commons Way, and Hampton Highway.
- Whereas VDOT discouraged construction of sidewalks in the past, they now assume that sidewalks will be included in every project.
- During and after the 2008-2009 recession, the County stopped setting aside funds bike path and sidewalk projects because of the lack of funds; however, that is expected to change beginning next year.

Mr. Cross showed aerial photographs of sidewalk projects around the County, including Merrimac Trail and Second Street, Bypass Road and Commons Way, Route 17/Ft. Eustis Boulevard, Hampton Highway, and Yorktown Road, which clearly depicted existing walkways as well as those planned for construction in the future.

In response to Committee member queries, Mr. Cross stated that he would investigate why the existing planned sidewalk on Merrimac Trail was not extended to connect with the walkway on Second Street and he affirmed that the developer of Yorktown Crescent on Ft. Eustis Boulevard would be responsible for repairing damage to the existing sidewalk caused by construction of that development.

In conclusion, Mr. Cross stated that as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the map showing potential future walkways, which was included with the meeting agenda package, will need to be updated. He asked the Committee to review the map and provide staff with feedback as to proposed changes.

Survey Status Report – John Martin, CEO and President, Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR)

Mr. Cross stated that Earl Anderson, Senior Planner, was originally scheduled to provide an update on the scientific survey but that he had to go out of town on family business. He introduced Mr. John Martin of the Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR), the firm that will be conducting the survey, to provide an update. Mr. Martin distributed copies of the latest draft of the survey instrument, which reflects input from SIR, staff, and the Committee members. He stated that his company is under contract with York County to assist with this project and that residents will be contacted via land line and cell phone once the questions are finalized. He pointed out that the survey results would be accurate within a 5% margin of error. Subsequent to the telephone survey, he stated that another unscientific online “Convenience Survey” would be completed and analyzed; however, the two sets of survey results would not be combined. Mr. Martin explained that the current survey instrument before them was drafted after discussions with the Planning staff. He stated that he is cognizant of the Committee’s concerns regarding survey length but that his years of experience have revealed that people are typically eager to discuss improving their community. He assured the Committee that should his employees have any issues relative to obtaining the required number of completed surveys, he would contact the Planning staff immediately.

Following Mr. Martin’s brief comments, various changes to the survey instrument were suggested by Committee members. Mr. Henegar stated that survey abandonment rates was increasing, to which Mr. Martin responded that it depends upon the type of survey that is being conducted. However, he did point out that when implementing a survey in a smaller locality, more call backs are required. In response to Mr. Green’s query, Mr. Martin explained that for a County of 70,000 persons, a minimum of 200 responses would be required to achieve an acceptable margin of error. Following Mr. Spencer’s comments about the need to attract more young adults to the County, Mr. Martin stated that this is one of his company’s primary focus areas with the County and that it is his hope to focus on the specific preferences of the various age groups in the future.

Lastly, he thanked the Committee members and staff for providing his firm with the opportunity to assist with this important survey and he asked the Committee to carefully review the draft to ensure that it covers all important issues.

Vice Chairman Jons urged the Committee members to review the survey in greater detail and provide staff with their input.

Other Business

Gail Whittaker stated that prior to the meeting, she had sent an email seeking Committee volunteers to sign up to host a table at upcoming Yorktown Market Days in order to publicize the Comprehensive Plan update. She explained that a table has been reserved for this purpose at the April 27th Yorktown Market Day and that she would do the same for the scheduled July and August Market Days. She encouraged Committee and staff members alike to sign up to participate at these events in order to publicize the Plan update and engage citizens in the process. In conclusion, she stated that promotional items will be provided in order to entice people to the Committee's table to learn about the Comprehensive Plan update.

Citizen Comment Period

Robert ("Buck) Rodgers stated that he would like to see the Senior Citizen Center added to the survey questions regarding new or expanded public facilities.

Patrick Johnston, HTBAC Chairman and an avid cyclist, encouraged attendees to read the Williamsburg York Daily (WYD) article regarding the economic benefits of bike paths. He stated that cyclists spend a good deal of money, on food, lodging, etc., each year while traveling outside of York County on special bike events. He pointed out that Virginia Beach is currently seeking to replace Yorktown as the ending location for the Trans America Trail event which starts in Oregon. He encouraged the County to provide additional bike signage and to urge VDOT to clean the existing streets and bike paths. Lastly he stated that he supports combining walkways and bike paths to save money and lives.

Bonnie Baffer stated that she is also one of York County's representatives on HTBAC and that she was very encouraged by the comments made this evening but that there is still much to do to provide additional safer bike paths.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.