



FCRP & VDOT FOLLOW UP MEETING

Thursday | June 23rd, 2016 | 12:30-1:30 PM

12000 Government Center Parkway
Conference Rooms 9&10

MEETING NOTES

1. Attending: Jim McGlone, Mark Thomas, Stanley Newman, Kodjo Messan, Ellen Vogel, Philip Latasa, Norbert Pink, Betsy Smith, Brent McKenzie, Nicholas Roper, Tom Tassell, Doug Miller, Andrew Hiegl, Larry Cloyed, Renee Hamilton, Lauren Mollerup, Allison Richter, Amy Gould

2. The meeting began with Larry Cloyed addressing the status of the areas we visited on May 9th. A team has been put together to address the issues including maintenance subcontractors. Transurban will be removing debris but may have to wait until the fall due to the amount of vegetation. Larry went through each picture to describe the steps that are being taken to resolve the issues.

3. For those who were unaware of FCRP's role and involvement in the 495 ExpressLanes project Amy gave a background of how FCRP became involved. Both requests came through different channels but from VDOT. The role was always to mitigate the damage that occurred and to engage with homeowners as a result of the deforestation at the beginning of the project. Outreach meetings were held to facilitate the dialogue between those impacted. The purpose of the replanting was always a reforestation effort where possible with an outcome of low to no maintenance. Because of implementation issues, this is not where we are right now. Everyone recognized that natives take longer to establish. FCRP was involved in developing the criteria for the contract including plant selection and quality, soil preparation seed mix for stabilization were all areas we had input on. This involvement took place over years of meetings and countless hours of interaction with those impacted.

It was also pointed out that Friends of Accotink, a partner whose mission is to document the quality of Accotink Creek, is how we have been able to document the failures that we walked through. For those areas along the corridor that may not have that same level of documentation, who is looking at those areas to see where there are failures? It was noted that the areas between Braddock & 236 were the worst areas and will be the primary focus in the beginning, then they will begin looking at the rest of 495.

Amy asked that VDOT please take a look at the stormwater pond at Northbound 495 & 7, it is a mud pit eroding all around with no screening and no vegetation. Because it was the entry to Tysons Corner, this was to have been an upgraded pond.

4. Jim McGlone explained that once invasives are established it is a challenge. The herbaceous plants are more difficult than the woody plants. The new plantings need space and trees and turf grass do not get along.

5. Nick Roper reviewed the timeline of the new contract which will be advertised by the end of July with planting to occur by October. The total amount of the contract is \$1 Million with \$200,000 going toward the plan and \$800,000 to implement. Consultant Kimley-Horn is involved and recommends removing the invasives. Some of the plantings that are there were inappropriate for the location and were not planted correctly. Soil amendments may have to occur and they may try to emulate the Maryland process of overplanting by 15% to allow for the expected failure rate. This contract will be indefinite delivery and quantity allowing VDOT to accelerate dealing with the priority areas of 236 & Braddock Road.

Jim asked what caliper trees are being considered and Tom responded they are looking at 1" caliper trees. Jim agreed that the smaller the tree the better chance it has to survive. No named invasives should be used and it's probably best not to place the support wires to avoid having to go back or if left alone could kill the tree.

Mark asked what monitoring will be in place to avoid returning to the same issues again? Renee answered that doing proper inspections we hope Mother Nature will do her job. Annual maintenance will deal with problems as they come up. Mark pointed out that much money was spent and asked if Kimley-Horn will be working on I-66? Renee acknowledged that was a good point and stressed soundwalls & landscaping.

Amy pointed out that maintenance, through no fault of their own, misidentified the Virginia Creeper that we had placed on soundwalls to help provide screening of the soundwalls. Kodjo pointed out that all new contracts call for removing greenery from the soundwalls. Renee said they will look into why and see if that can be resolved.

Amy mentioned that we had countless meetings over years and had very qualified people contributing their time and effort. We want to avoid it all falling apart again, it appears the implementation was the point of failure. Jim said we are all very happy at the first phase plantings, they looked good. But after that it all seemed to go wrong which points to the lack of proper implementation .

Amy thanked Senator Marsden for him helping us with the walk-thru, which we had repeatedly requested over a period of years and were happy to be able to finally see the conditions.

There were some other pictures that were taken by a VDOT inspector and had been given to Christian Deschauer and passed again to Andrew Heigl to check on the status these were taken in 2014 and we suspect have been resolved but would like some reassurance from Transurban they have been. Andrew will check back with Christian on these.

Mark Thomas explained that the community came together to cooperate around the ExpressLanes and set a high standard that we like to point to as a model for engagement.

Amy emphasized that in a very developed environment retrofitting is very difficult for existing communities. If you are a homeowner who had a 50 foot buffer between your home and a highway that suddenly disappeared it is easy to understand the concerns for your home value or your ability to resell it.

Renee asked about next steps and we invited them to our summer Quarterly Meeting to report on the status of the new contract so our team can review and have input.

Amy expressed concerns about the contractor and Philip asked why they weren't removed from the contractor list. VDOT says there was no documentation of the poor job they did so nothing would prohibit them from re-bidding. Amy said doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is the definition of insanity and this particular contractor has a long history of poor contract implementation. We hope VDOT will do the right thing and select a company who has the ability to perform to the contract specifications. Mark said historic ability to perform is a factor in awarding contracts.

Philip asked about the spring, this is not something that can be fixed with a backhoe. Larry said this is a sensitive area and that expert advice is being sought. The gulying is problematic.

The newly issued JLARC report was mentioned as Appendix F describes contracting at VDOT and we hope that steps are being taken to resolve these as these exact issues with enforcement and implementation describe our experience with 495. We have a common goal in seeing this new contract be successful in the outcome.

That report may be found at <http://jlarc.virginia.gov//pdfs/reports/Rpt482-2.pdf>

VDOT was thanked for attending.

FCRP Leadership Team Meeting followed.

Mark Thomas discussed the Board of Supervisors is updated the 20 Year Environmental Vision for the county which is in around Year 14. FCRP will be asked for input. Norbert asked why EQAC proposals weren't followed, and Mark explained that policy initiatives need political buy-in and need to be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan and other standards. The BOS has endorsed the EQAC framework. Norbert said the information in the vision seems old. Betsy indicated that EQAC reports on implementation and those could have been distributed as to how they relate to the "Vision". Mark explained that some benchmarks will persist, while some have been achieved like the tree canopy target. Jim said we have better satellites now, original air quality drove the Tree Plan, now focus is stormwater. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/environmentalvision.htm>

Amy asked if FCRP should submit as a group, Mark indicated each agency will be asked for input.

There has been a soft launch on 30 Green Business Partners that have been identified:
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/energy/greenbusiness/>

Betsy wondered if the 495 discussions will influence the 66 discussions, that that the timing is good. Also, Mark said the 495 walk is having broader effects.