



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Thursday, November 7, 2019

7:30 PM

Charles A. Robinson, Jr. Town Hall, 127
Center Street, South

Council - Multimodal work session

1. Regular Business

The Vienna Town Council met for work session on Thursday November 7, 2019 in the Council Chambers of the Vienna Town Hall, 127 Center Street South, Vienna, Virginia.

Councilmembers Present:

*Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco
Councilmember Linda J. Colbert
Councilmember Pasha M. Majdi
Councilmember Douglas E. Noble
Councilmember Nisha Patel, M.D.
Councilmember Steve Potter
Councilmember Howard J. Springsteen*

Staff Present:

*Michael Gallagher, Director, Public Works
Mercury Payton, Town Manager*

Others Present:

*Erin Murphy, Transportation Manager, Kimley-Horn
David Samba, Manager, Kimley-Horn*

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Maple Avenue Corridor Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study - Final Council Briefing

Town Manager Mercury Payton opened the November 7, 2019 Town Council Work Session at 7:30pm, noting one item on the agenda; Maple Avenue Corridor Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study - Final Council Briefing.

Mr. Payton introduced Mike Gallagher, Director of Public Works for the Town of Vienna who explained the purpose of the meeting as a continuation of the last work session with representatives from Kimley-Horn.

Director Gallagher introduced Kimley-Horn representatives David Samba, Manager and Erin Murphy, Transportation Planner and noted that tonight's session should provide information on how well aligned the priorities identified by the study are with those identified by the Town. Mr. Samba pointed out that the final deliverable or work product will include a description of how things are now, the means for developing a workable program and what the impacts will be from implementation. Tonight's session is an effort to determine if the listed concepts meet the Town's priorities now or in the near future. He further explained, in response to Councilmember Potters concern, that many items in the scope of work have been presented at prior work sessions and all prior briefing documents have been

published to the Town website for public viewing.

Councilmember Majdi expressed concern that the documents provide no recommendations from Kimley Horn, specifically in relation to total traffic numbers. Referencing earlier presentations, Mr. Samba identified approximately 30,000 vehicles pass along Maple Avenue per day with a theoretical capacity is at 36,000 vehicles per day.

Councilmember Patel, challenged Mr. Samba to identify his top take ways from the study. In response Mr. Samba noted that his most significant finding was that future traffic conditions won't be too dissimilar from today. The issues of today will be virtually the same in the future.

A second take away was that Maple Avenue serves the Town but also processes trips from east to west. With this element in mind a significant challenge to expedited movement is the current number of curb cuts/driveways. Every curb cut represents another point of congestion with crash analysis revealing a significant number of angle crashes midblock. One element considered in the study was to look at appropriateness of developing an access strategy that consolidated, relocated or combined certain driveways in order to keep traffic moving. In response to Councilmember Patel, Mr. Samba suggested that many driveways could be consolidated while with future redevelopment an access street could be created behind the row of businesses that would feed into a side street. Ms. Murphy noted that they also considered a raised median option that would limit left turn movement.

Mayor DiRocco applauded the addition of greenspace to medians. While theoretically an ideal option, she questions how this would impact the flow of traffic and how it would impact intersections. Mr. Samba agreed this would require some type of circulation mobility study to determine if the impacted intersections could absorb the resulting U-turns. He noted that the study included a limited analysis to determine the impact on the next intersection if curb cuts were limited to one direction. For the most part, it was concluded that there was limited impact. The intersections where medians were proposed would provide the town with pedestrian friendly opportunities.

In response to Councilmember Patel, Mr. Samba identified his third takeaway as opportunities to enhance bicycle and pedestrian activity. The study included a complete corridor approach to this issue and it was determined that Maple Avenue is not of adequate width to accommodate bicycle lanes. However, with this approach they were able to determine that bicycles could be accommodated parallel to Maple Avenue.

Councilmember Springsteen expressed appreciation for the theoretical ideas presented thus far, but urged Council to return the discussion back to the reality; what can be accomplished in the near term.

Councilmember Majdi commented that the raised median idea could accomplish three goals simultaneously; pedestrian friendliness, beautification and continued traffic movement. As an additional option he presented the idea of the jughandle turn as a means for controlling traffic. Mr. Samba noted that this is an option for crafting left turns (essentially turning right in order to turn left) however the result is rerouting traffic through streets not geared to handle that level of traffic. When Town citizens were asked about this option most were opposed, so it was dropped from consideration in this study. Another option, the Michigan left, which

eliminates left turns through the intersection then provides a left turn lane further down the street, was also introduced as a means for processing more traffic through town.

Councilmember Noble applauded these innovative ideas for future implementation. He also expressed appreciation for the network approach to bicycle traffic suggesting the need for a Bicycle Master Plan. Further he acknowledged the suggestions regarding pedestrian traffic, specifically early walk signals, or pedestrian head starts, which improve street safety by giving pedestrians a chance to begin crossing the street before cars make turns across the crosswalk. This type of signaling encourages pedestrians to cross to businesses on either side of the street. He also suggested consideration of half clock cycles on signal lights once rush hour is over. These steps would allow for a stronger pedestrian presence in terms of activity. Mr. Samba noted that adaptive timing signals will adjust timing in relation to traffic over the course of the day and allow for better progression. He further noted that they did test signal timing changes and were able to test that adaptive signals will be able to respond to east/west travel and reduce delays, however it may result in a traffic increase on side streets.

Mayor DiRocco posed a policy question asking if the goal is to move traffic as quickly as possible down Maple Avenue, or to encourage pedestrian traffic. The options discussed so far present tradeoffs which will be impacted by the overall goal for the corridor. She further inquired about the pedestrian hold phase where all directional traffic stops and pedestrians move freely across the intersection. Mr. Samba indicated that while this is an option it does add approximately 10 seconds of vehicle delay.

Mayor DiRocco applauded the bicycle network plan presented in the study that connect the Town to Tysons Corner, as well as the addition of buffered bike lanes. Again, recognizing a tradeoff, she acknowledged the loss of street parking with the addition of buffered bike lanes.

Mr. Samba pointed out that the success of most of the presented alternatives rests with driver awareness, i.e. shared bike lane markings that inform drivers of the potential presence of bicycles.

Responding to ideas for low cost, high impact projects, Mr. Samba referenced the lack of uniform signage along the W&OD Trail. Treating each crossing sign the same would provide consistency for motorists and potentially reduce crashes.

Councilmember Patel stated her opposition to projects that would make it easier for drivers to use Vienna as a cut through from Tysons to 66. She also raised the question of pedestrian bridges, pointing out that NVTa has indicated potential funding for projects designed to help move traffic along Maple Avenue.

Councilmember Majdi stressed the need for hard traffic counts at various intersections. Noting discrepancies in reporting from two different companies, he pointed out that Council makes development decisions that are impacted by these numbers. These discrepancies must be addressed. Town Manager Payton indicated that scientifically data driven results may be in conflict with what one intuitively assumes. Consequently, when studies are conducted using data that is scientifically derived, Council has the latitude to state that conflict may exist between the data results and intuition. As such, Council is challenged to make decisions based upon what they believe is best for the Town.

Councilmember Colbert identified several items in the report that would be beneficial. She further noted that NVTa utilizes a formula that rates projects for congestion relief and cost (cost/benefit). Using this formula would allow for matching citizen concerns with those projects that would provide the most “bang for the buck”.

Councilmember Springsteen urged Council to begin assessing what can be accomplished near term that will generate positive results for residents. Councilmember Potter stressed that Council must bear in mind other worthy projects in front of them, and be wise about who benefits the most from the dollars expended. By way of developing an action plan Councilmembers identified numerous projects for near term completion. Among the list was the need to include some measure of service effectiveness criteria into the comprehensive plan and, in order to make it enforceable, into the Town Code. Council debated various ideas for identifying level of service noting that three of the thirty total intersections included in the study were at the unacceptable level of service. It was suggested that new impacts would be required to provide mitigation.

In summation Mayor DiRocco tasked Director Gallagher to prepare a list of priorities with associated costs for a follow-up work session. Council will then rank these and determine funding options.

Councilmember Potter cautioned Council to not lose sight of priorities identified by public feedback. Town Manager Payton concurred and urged that these be shared with the public as soon as possible.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Work session adjourned at 9:57pm.

THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6304, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.