|  |
| --- |
| November 15, 2017 |

|  |
| --- |
| Broadview Avenue Business Group  **Meeting Notes** |

# **Attending**

Business and Property Owners

Woody Baek, Fuel Baek LLC

Mike Ewing, Oak View Bank

Brian Montgomery, Warrenton Foreign Car

Dale Edwards, Chicki Services

Sam Parker, Oak View Bank

Erica Fusco, McMahon’s

Mike Cerny, Foster Grille

Carl Nerskoo, Carousel

Brian Murphy, Murphy’s Motorsports

Randy Minter, Moser Funeral Home

Tom Noland, Warrenton Tire

Jim Walther, Burger King

Nitin Avaiya, Warrenton PlazaTown of Warrenton

Sunny Reynolds, Town Council

Robert Kravetz, Town Council

Brannon Godfrey, City Manager

Edward Tucker, Public Works Director

Paul Bernard, Asst. Public Works Director

Brandie Schaeffer, Planning Director

Tom Wisemiller, Economic Dev. Manager

# **Discussion**

**Mike Cerny:** believes that the design, media breaks, layouts have changed compared to the plans he saw prior to investing in the property and his business and that the current design will have serious negative impacts on his business. Mr. Cerny asked if the Town or VDOT planned to do an economic impact study of the proposed project (Town staff replied that such studies are rare for projects of this magnitude and type; staff found no comparable examples on VDOTs website; moreover, a study that examines impacts on individual businesses on the corridor – as opposed to an overall economic impact study that attempts to project the economic impacts from public investment in construction, etc. – would be very complex, essentially requiring such a study to look at the impacts from the perspective of dozens of differently situated properties on the corridor).

**Randy Minter:** said that the community needs to think about how changes to the corridor will impact future economic opportunities on the corridor, not just current businesses; e.g. a property on Broadview Avenue, which might currently have a “destination” restaurant could change in the future (in theory, a “destination” business is not as reliant on convenient access as a an “impulse” business is). Mr. Minter acknowledged that VDOT has to work with existing conditions and constraints. Mr. Minter believes that other transportation improvement projects and/or Broadview Avenue-specific access and safety improvement strategies, beside medians – including projects previously recommended by transportation planning consultants – have better potential to alleviate traffic flow and improve safety, while also supporting business development on the corridor, compared to this project by itself; however, the community lacked political will and/or consensus to pursue these other options. Mr. Minter believes that proposed project as is, and/or by itself, will not effectively alleviate the community’s most critical transportation problems, which are partly caused by over-reliance on Broadview as a commuter thru-route. He asked for greater clarity on the question: What are Broadview Avenue businesses in particular and the Warrenton public in general really gaining from this project?

**Sunny Reynolds:** along with **Brannon Godfrey**, Ms. Reynolds pointed out that Broadview Avenue has had a relatively high number of vehicular accidents; however, Town staff asked whether these accidents primarily vehicles attempting to do a “full crossover,” i.e. crossing perpendicular to Broadview Avenue, or from vehicles turning left onto Broadview that can use the center shared lanes (i.e. left turn lanes) as a haven before merging into traffic.

**Robert Kravetz:** Mentioned that VDOT’s current design was modified in response to previous input from business owners and TOW Public Works; however, Randy Minter believes that some of the input was incorporated, while other elements were not.

**Edward Tucker and Paul Bernard:** there a lot of demands from local communities across the state for VDOT transportation funds and that congestion and safety have been concerns on Broadview Avenue. If Town Council does not approve the project, VDOT will not force the issue and will simply reallocate the transportation funds to a project in another jurisdiction. VDOT previously completed 30 percent design for this project; now that the project is funded, they will proceed to 60 percent design and will seek stakeholder input during that process (four stakeholder meetings are planned for 2018), with the design expected to be completed later in 2018. Mr. Cerny questioned, however, to what extent VDOT would be able to make significant, substantive changes at this stage of the process.

Mr. Tucker also noted that, when Gold Cup residential development occurred, a 110’ right of way was dedicated for Timber Fence Parkway. The total Timber Fence concept (Rte 17 to Rte 211) did not get past the political process. The Town is pressing VDOT for a signal at the Gold Cup Broadview intersection, but may have to pay for a signal at this intersection since it does not meet VDOT warrants or criteria for funding. The Town must coordinate with VDOT to ensure that any projects are compatible with Smart Scale funding goals and programs. Mr. Tucker stated that he felt that VDOT would be receptive to business and public comments, but that they will not be flexible to any issues on Safety and with federal money involved they must adhere to Federal Highway standards.

The project is part of Virginia’s Smart Scale funding, a state priority to promote multi-modal transportation, making key corridors open to bicycles and other non-auto modes of transportation.

**Dale Edwards:** believes that this project, as currently designed, will add five minutes to his mechanics’ road tests and will hinder deliveries (he gets 7-30 deliveries per day); if his mechanics use the 15 m.p.h. rear residential road for tests, instead, residents will be unhappy; a lot of cars turn left into his business; Mr. Edwards wants to be sure that we’ll have u-turn locations on Broadview Avenue that are reasonably convenient and that delivery trucks will be able to turn around.

**Sam Parker:** Asked if Town has studied the possibility of creating inter-parcel connections? Edward Tucker said yes and Paul Bernard said “the more inter-parcel connectors, the better,” but it’s not clear what options we have to create these connections at this point.

**Mike Ewing:** what is Town Council’s position on creating more, and/or better utilizing, rear access roads, given that these are residential neighborhoods? Robert Kravetz said it hasn’t been discussed; Paul Bernard said they’ve looked at Timber Fence Parkway a number of times, but the County opposed this idea.

Sam Parker asked about other options for creating service connections beside Timber Fence Parkway, which involve less opposition and/or fewer hurdles? Sam Parker wondered whether these other options would involve moving a lot of dirt and property owner cooperation.

**Brandie Schaeffer:** agreed that the larger goal is to better link land use and transportation. Where feasible, good planning means that long-term investments in transportation will go hand-in-hand with land use, which will also spur private investment. Ms. Schaeffer highlighted planning regulations that impact development options, such as setback requirements, minimum parking requirements, redevelopment overlay districts, and building/zoning codes.

**Jim Walther:** it will be a shame if we miss this opportunity to make meaningful improvements to Broadview Avenue besides just limiting access, by creating 1-2 signalized intersections at key locations on Broadview Avenue and by implementing traffic calming measures on Broadview Avenue via engineering design modifications (e.g., narrowing travel lanes), an idea also supported by Mr. Minter and many other members of the Broadview Avenue Business Group present at the meeting; Town staff and Town Council members expressed a willingness to consider various options, but Ms. Schaeffer urged the group to create a list of 3-5 things that are the highest priorities, which can then be evaluated on a cost/benefit basis; Ms. Reynolds recommended that suggestions for Timber Fence Parkway be included on the list, but noted that Fauquier County would be involved and the ideas we’re discussing are not in their current plans.

Mr. Walther, however – given his past experiences on Broadview Avenue transportation committees – is skeptical that the Town and/or VDOT will incorporate and/or act on ideas for improving connectivity and access on Broadview Avenue beside the “bread and butter” median proposal currently in the project design.

Robert Kravetz noted that the 15 m.p.h. speed limit on Norfolk Drive does not effectively deter drivers from using it as a cut-through; he suspects that residents will worry that a traffic light at Gold Cup will encourage even more cut-through traffic and thus would push back against such a proposal; Mr. Kravetz is open to exploring this idea nonetheless.

**Brian Murphy:** Asked how the planning and design process of this project will work; Mr. Murphy believes that the overriding problem is the sheer volume of commuters that travel on Broadview Avenue, many of whom he believes do minimal shopping on the corridor; Mr. Murphy asked if other businesses felt that less “pass through” commuter traffic would hurt their businesses and no one volunteered such a concern; Ms. Reynolds noted, however, that long-term transportation tends to be very difficult and contentious; if some of the commuter traffic were rerouted, it would impact other parts of Fauquier County and thus figure to be controversial.

Murphy also asked if some of the existing turn lanes are exacerbating traffic problems.

# **Next Steps**

The group is requesting a meeting with VDOT project managers on the Broadview Avenue Improvement Project to be held, if possible, December 12th. Staff is coordinating with VDOT on scheduling.