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MEETING SUMMARY

To: Howie Mann, NYMTC

From: Janice Yuvan, RBA

Date: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Subject: Hudson River Valley Greenway Link
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting # 2 and Workshop

Location: Yonkers Riverfront Library, Yonkers, NY

Attendees: John Benfatti, Bronx Resident
Alan Fleisig, Yonkers Resident
Betty Klein, Bronx Resident
Sandy Shallack, Riverdale Nature Preservancy
A'gota Fejes, Bronx Resident
Paul Elston, Friends of the Hudson River Valley Greenway in the Bronx
Courtney White, Wave Hill
Stephen Byrns, Riverdale Nature Preservancy
Maggie Clarke, Inwood Livable Streets
Howie Mann, NYMTC
Ryan Walsh, Howard/Stein-Hudson (Consultant Team)
Jackson Wandres, RBA Group (Consultant Team)
Janice Yuvan, RBA Group (Consultant Team)

Introductions

Howie Mann (NYMTC) opened the meeting by welcoming participants and offering a brief description of the planned agenda for the second Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting and workshop. Mr. Mann asked those in attendance to introduce themselves and provide their name and affiliation.

Review of Workshop Summary

Ryan Walsh (HSH) led participants through a brief review of the Workshop Summary Document and asked attendees to offer any corrections or omissions. It was noted that the bulleted lists within the Summary Document are not exhaustive lists of everything heard at the Workshop but rather represent the most common responses. The TAC offered several comments:

- Under Current Destinations, the Target shopping center at 40 W 225th Street in Riverdale should be included as a popular destination.
- Clarification was requested regarding a road description under Previous Efforts. The text reads, “The east side of Riverdale Park along Spaulding Lane...” The text should read, “The east side of Riverdale Park along Palisade Avenue and west up Spaulding Lane...”
- Quantified results from some workshop exercises were requested. Mr. Walsh and Mr. Mann explained that the exercises were not designed to be quantifiably rigorous. Nor was the intent to conduct a vote. The intent of the exercise was to furnish qualitative information about preferences and to identify routes and corridors to be looked at by the project team more closely. A qualitative description of the results was provided in the summary document.
- The TAC requested an explanation of how information gathered would be used. Specifically, it was asked how the comments submitted by Friends of the Hudson River Valley Greenway in the Bronx and included in the Workshop Summary as an appendix, would be incorporated into the study.
 - The project team explained that all comments collected thus far, will inform the Research phase of the project. The deliverable of the Research task will provide a preliminary assessment of route segments as described by the public input and complementary study team research. It will also string those segments together into some number of defined route alternatives, which will be carried forward for detailed exploration in Task 6.

Public Outreach

Mr. Walsh provided a brief description of Public Outreach efforts thus far. This included a description of TAC membership and efforts taken to advertise the Public Workshop and TAC meetings. The TAC offered several suggestions for Public Outreach and advertising of project meetings. These included:

- Posting advertisements on Train Station Bulletin Boards.
- Placing notices in the Manhattan Times.
- Soliciting greater assistance from TAC member organizations and requesting use of mailing lists of cycling and running member groups to encourage greater participation.

Review of Research

Janice Yuvan (RBA Group) led the TAC through a review of research performed under Task 4. The study team provided large maps of the study area that featured potential route segments highlighted with a non-hierarchical color scheme. Each of the segments featured a call-out box that included qualitative information gathered through public input, field visits, and other research.

Ms. Yuvan began the discussion at the south end of the project area and led the group up through to the north end initiating conversation amongst the TAC on the various segments. The following section summarizes comments of the TAC and Study Team. The comments have been organized by broad geographical sections:

Manhattan/Harlem River Crossings

- Access to the Henry Hudson Bridge's upper level pedestrian walkway is blocked. The locked gate is not part of the ongoing lower level construction effort and will likely remain in place when construction on the lower level is complete.
 - The TAC expressed a desire for the lower level walkway to be open to pedestrians upon completion of the ongoing construction. The walkway should be restored to its previous condition at a minimum.
 - The facility parking area on the east side of the bridge is not open to the public. However, the lot is physically connected to trails on both sides of the bridge.
- The TAC requested information regarding the Spuyten Duyvil swing bridge schedule of when it is open/closed.
- The footbridge in Inwood Hill Park over the rail tracks has been targeted for Stimulus Funds. This presents an opportunity for replacing or complementing the stairs with a ramp.
- The community boards on the Manhattan and Bronx sides of the Harlem River Crossings should be actively engaged in the project. The Study Team should arrange meetings with the transportation committees of both community boards (MN-12 and BX-8).
- The MTA Sustainability Committee should be contacted to discuss the Henry Hudson Bridge.
- It is important to speak with Amtrak as soon as possible, as the State Rail Plan contains plans to double-track the Spuyten Duyvil Swing Bridge.
- All physical, jurisdictional, institutional, and political constraints and opportunities of the three bridge crossings will be covered in Task 6.

Bronx

- Independence Avenue is not continuous, as shown on the map. Private yards, houses and the Riverdale Country School are situated in the right-of-way between 247th Street and Spaulding Lane.
- Fieldston Road is private south of 250th Street. The neighborhood was recently landmarked.
- Waldo Avenue was identified as a good parallel alternative to the private portion of Fieldston Road.
- Riverdale Avenue is a tough climb on a bike.
- The Henry Hudson Parkway Service roads should be considered for further study
 - There is heavy traffic around P.S. 81. Some students ride bikes to school via the service roads and the school is part of the Safe Routes to Schools program.
 - The service roads are very narrow in some locations.
- Many buses congregate and layover on Riverdale Avenue in front of the College of Mount St. Vincent. They often make three-point turns here. MTA buses use the area as a depot.

Yonkers/Westchester

- The Beczac Environmental Center must be respected. As one of the few formal locations to access the water, it should be included in route alternatives.

- Warburton Avenue, from Robert Lane north all the way to Hastings is a lovely ride. It overlooks the river and there is good Old Croton Aqueduct Trail access in Hastings. The road is relatively flat, wide, and features low traffic volumes.
- In future project deliverables, the TAC has requested detailed analysis of the Sugar Factory with particular focus on Track 6 and Ludlow Bridge issues.
 - A good waterfront route around the Sugar Factory is to go east from the water on Ludlow Street Bridge, along the east side of the tracks and back over the tracks via an historic worker bridge in the vicinity of Herriot Street.
- Leake & Watts owns and operates a residential children and family support facility on Hawthorne Avenue that encompasses some park space. There is some belief that the facility may be selling off its property.
- The Hudson River Valley Greenway is pursuing a facility on the waterfront around the Tappan Zee Bridge.
- In Westchester, Riverdale Avenue is far preferable to Broadway.
- Neither Hawthorne Avenue nor Buena Vista Avenue is wide enough to support striped bike lanes. They are, however, quiet, low-volume roads that could be designated bike routes.

General Project Comments

- If a waterfront route is pursued on the Bronx portion, it is important to pursue the same strategy on the Yonkers portion.
- The east/west connections will be important, the project should aim to connect a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- A Waterfront Route is one of the potential route alignments that will be examined in the next project task.

Next Steps

The next deliverable will combine all of the research performed through public and TAC input, field visits and other research and will define some number of route alternatives to be carried forward for detailed exploration. That document will be circulated to the TAC for comment.

Mr. Mann thanked all participants for coming and adjourned the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.

These Meeting Minutes represent RBA's summation of the proceedings and is not a transcript. Unless written notice of any corrections, additions or clarifications is received by RBA within ten (10) days of the date of issue, this report shall be considered factually correct and become part of the official project record.