



**MEETING NOTES**

**JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION  
Legacy Hall, 4301 New Town Avenue, James City County  
Monday, April 30, 2012**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**James City County**

Tim O’Connor, Chairman  
Al Woods, Vice Chair  
Christopher Basic  
Robin Bledsoe  
George Drummond  
Richard Krapf  
Mike Maddocks

**Williamsburg**

Sean D. Driscoll, Chairman  
Greg Ballentine, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair  
William O. Kafes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair  
Chris Connolly  
Demetrios Florakis  
Sarah L. Stafford

**York County**

M. Sean Fisher, Chairman  
Richard M. Myer, Jr., Vice-Chair  
Christopher A. Abel  
Mario C. Buffa  
Alexander T. Hamilton  
Mark B. Suiter

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Allen Murphy, Jr., AICP  
Tammy Rosario, AICP

Reed T. Nester, AICP

Timothy C. Cross, AICP

**WELCOME**

**Chair Tim O’Connor** (James City County) called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed the Planning Commission members from James City County, Williamsburg, and York County as well as staff from the three localities. He thanked the three staffs for organizing the four joint community forums that were conducted and for the website that has been set up for the coordinated review process ([www.htplanning.org](http://www.htplanning.org)). He said the purpose of the joint work session was for the Planning Commission members from the three localities to discuss shared planning issues and to review comments received from the citizens that were submitted online and at the community forums. Mr. O’Connor said there would not be a public comment period during the work session but that there would be time for citizens to speak at future public meetings as part of the Comprehensive Plan review process in their respective localities. He said that the Planning Commissioners serve in an advisory capacity to their respective governing bodies, each of which will ultimately adopt the Comprehensive Plan for its jurisdiction.

**STAFF PRESENTATION**

**Reed T. Nester**, Director of Planning, Williamsburg, gave a brief presentation summarizing the review process. He explained that several years ago the three localities decided to coordinate the timing of their next Comprehensive Plan updates. He said the process was initiated by the three governing bodies but that each locality will move on to work on its own individual plan with separate public hearings. Mr. Nester said each locality is aiming to have its individual plan ready for Board of Supervisors/City Council review by December 2012. He reminded the commissions and those in attendance that there would not be a combined regional plan but three (3) individual Comprehensive Plans.

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## HISTORIC TRIANGLE PLANNING TOPICS

**Greg Ballentine** (Williamsburg) asked the other two localities what their thoughts were on what processes they would like to see when there is a proposed development near their borders. He said areas of concern for Williamsburg are the Riverside/Quarterpath area, which is a major development area in the City, and the Northeast Triangle/Second Street area.

**Sarah Stafford** (Williamsburg) said she would like to see redevelopment of the Northeast Triangle area and noted that any changes would significantly affect James City and York Counties. She said the changes she would like to see would continue along Route 143 into York County with possible impacts on the residential development along Penniman Road. Ms. Stafford said she would like to see a group effort with citizen input from all three localities share recommendations with the Commission as to what they would like to see in that area.

**Richard Krapf** (James City County) noted that the Economic Opportunity (EO) designation is a new land use designation in James City County since the adoption of the current Comprehensive Plan in 2009 and that it applies to the Lightfoot/Pottery/Hill Pleasant Farm area of the County. He said those areas are envisioned as primarily commercial with a minimal amount of residential development with the focus being more on a public/private partnership for development. He said an issue is that development of this Economic Opportunity zone has the potential to increase traffic in the other localities. Mr. Krapf also noted that rural lands have been an issue in James City County and that the County has looked into transfer of development rights (TDR) as a possible program to assist with development.

**Tim O'Connor** noted that the three localities are heavily dependent on the tourism and retail sectors, both of which are suffering. He stressed the need to attract businesses that offer year-round, high-paying jobs.

**Richard Krapf**, quoting from the *Statistical Snapshot of the Historic Triangle*, said “At \$2 billion in 2010, total taxable sales in James City County, Williamsburg, and York County fell for the third consecutive year. The large role that tourism plays is reflected in the fact that 9.5% of the three localities’ taxable sales come from accommodations” and said that all three localities have a number of various economic drivers but that, in general, the Historic Triangle is too dependent on tourism. He stated that the local population can not independently drive the sales tax and that one issue discussed during the 2009 Comprehensive Plan review was the idea of creating another revenue stream. He asked if there are opportunities for the Historic Triangle to become a “technology triangle” and noted nearby facilities, including the Jefferson Lab, the NASA-Langley Research Center, and major medical facilities that could potentially serve as partners in such an endeavor.

**Tim O'Connor** agreed and said he would like to see what resources could be used to promote growth through current and new partnerships with facilities such as Canon, Thomas Nelson Community College, NASA, Newport News Shipbuilding, and Jefferson Lab.

**Richard Krapf** asked if the different localities’ future land use designations shown on the land use maps are compatible. He asked how much variation there is among the jurisdictions in the definition of the zoning district terms (e.g. mixed use/density ranges/permitted uses).

**Tammy Rosario**, Principal Planner, James City County, said there are some differences in the Economic Opportunity designations, which for James City County includes retail, office, and light industrial development. She said James City County envisions economic generators for higher income jobs but does allow for some residential use whereas York County’s definition of

Economic Opportunity does not provide for residential development. She added that James City County's mixed use zoning district allows for a broader range of uses with the residential density allowing for up to 18 dwelling units per acre.

**Reed T. Nester**, said the City of Williamsburg's Economic Development zoning applies to High Street and the Riverside area, which are mixed use developments with commercial, office, health care, and have a strong residential component. He said the 2012 Comprehensive Plan review could include a restructuring of the mixed use definition.

**Timothy C. Cross**, Principal Planner, York County, said that York County's Economic Opportunity designation is intended to provide opportunities a mix of retail, tourist-oriented, and limited industrial development. He noted that although the designation is entirely commercial, there are a few Economic Opportunity areas in the upper County that have a mixed use overlay designation that provides opportunities for residential development, one of which is the entire Lightfoot area in York County. He said another area is between Penniman Road and the Colonial Parkway where property is designated Economic Opportunity with a mixed use overlay designation.

**Tim O'Connor** asked what residential density is expected for the Lightfoot area property with the mixed use overlay. **Timothy C. Cross** replied that the current Comprehensive Plan does not go into any detail regarding the balance of commercial and residential uses but that it was something that could possibly be addressed during the upcoming Comprehensive Plan review.

**Richard Krapf** talked about the possibility of extending Mooretown Road to Croaker Road and asked what the impacts would be on York County and if it is in York County's plans. **Timothy C. Cross** responded that the Mooretown Road extension has been in the Comprehensive Plan since 2005 more as a necessity for development of the area than as a means of alleviating congestion. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan states that any extension of Mooretown Road should be built with developer funds rather than the County's secondary road funds.

**Greg Ballentine**, looking at the questions previously submitted for review, asked for discussion regarding local food production and natural resources and asked what the agricultural potential is for Hill Pleasant Farms. **Richard Krapf** replied that agriculture production at Hill Pleasant Farms would most likely decrease since it is predominantly in the Economic Opportunity zone.

**Greg Ballentine** said Williamsburg does not have land for industrial development but would like to generate a tax base from something other than tourism. He said he was curious to know what could be brought in to fall into the light industrial zoning districts besides scientific research facilities that could benefit the locality.

**Mike Maddocks** (James City County) replied that this would be something for the Economic Development Authority to explore.

**Tim O'Connor** said that the common sentiment expressed by agricultural property owners is that if their land does not continue to be used for farming, it will serve essentially as their 401K retirement plan or family inheritance and because of that, they are looking for fewer restrictions on their properties. He said it is hard to determine if the properties would be sold and continue to be farmed or eventually developed.

**Tammy Rosario** clarified that Hill Pleasant Farms is designated Economic Opportunity (EO) where in James City County the primary uses are industrial, light industrial, and office. She said commercial development is more limited.

**Sarah Stafford**, referencing the question of affordable housing, asked if the three localities could put something together that would provide an “apples to apples” comparison showing affordable housing in each jurisdiction.

**Tammy Rosario** responded that comparative housing affordability data for all cities and counties in the state is available from a statewide affordable housing advocacy group called Housing Virginia. Housing Virginia calculates a “Housing Affordability Index” for every city and county in Virginia and publishes it on its SOURCEBOOK website, which is a comprehensive housing affordability resource that includes the most current available information on housing affordability across Virginia. According to Housing Virginia, the Housing Affordability Index (HAI) is the broadest and most comprehensive measure of affordability provided.

**Timothy C. Cross** referred to the data charts that were included in the briefing paper that was distributed to the Commissioners, noting that housing affordability is defined by the ratio of household income to housing costs. He explained that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “low income” households as those with incomes between 50% and 80% of the area median, whereas “very low income” households have incomes between 30% and 50% of the area. He said those with incomes below 30% of the area median are considered “extremely low income” and according to HUD, the 2012 median family income for the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is \$70,900, so the low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income thresholds are \$56,700, \$35,450, and \$21,250 respectively.

**Tim O’Connor** asked if any of the information provided could be translated into dollar amounts for home prices. **Tammy Rosario** replied that the three localities have differing approaches to the definition of affordable housing and were not able to come up with a common price threshold.

**Robin Bledsoe** (James City County) said she was interested in knowing what the other localities are proposing with regard to affordable housing and said it was in direct correlation to the fact that the public comments received were that the community wanted to see higher paying jobs but that the current median income levels were not that high, which affects affordability in the housing market.

**Alexander T. Hamilton** (York County) said York County has had a few affordable housing projects. He mentioned a project that was approved a few years ago as an affordable housing project but was later revised to offer a narrower range of home prices, eliminating the lower-priced units.

**Al Woods** (James City County) asked Mr. Hamilton if the project was approved with the sufficient incentives to ensure that it could be built for the market demand as well as a benefit to the developer. **Alexander T. Hamilton** said attempts have been made within the parameters that they have.

**Timothy C. Cross** said for many years there have been Affordable Housing Incentive Provisions in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage developers to build moderately priced housing. He noted that Sunset Meadows, the development referred to by Mr. Hamilton, was approved and is being developed in accordance with those incentives and added that over the last 15-20 years there have been 450-500 housing units built under the Affordable Housing Incentive Provisions.

**Christopher Basic** (James City County) asked if it was possible through the conditional rezoning process for developers to proffer the inclusion of affordable units as part of a mixed-income or mixed-use development. **Timothy C. Cross** said it is possible but that the County has not had a lot of residential rezoning applications that would present such an opportunity.

**Richard Krapf** noted that there are a large number of failing hotels in the Historic Triangle and asked if there are any plans for or developer interest in adaptive re-uses such as senior housing, affordable housing, or student housing.

**M. Sean Fisher** (York County) responded that York County has had a few proposals to convert older hotels into senior housing, one of which was approved by the Board of Supervisors while the other has not yet been considered by the Board. Both projects, he noted, have encountered problems that either have prevented or will likely prevent such redevelopment from occurring.

**Alexander T. Hamilton** said that developer interest exists but that the weak economy is keeping developers from moving forward.

**William Kafes** (Williamsburg) said there is a proposal coming before the Williamsburg Planning Commission soon for an adaptive re-use of a hotel for student housing. He noted that William and Mary students constitute half of the population in the City of Williamsburg but that only 60% of them live on campus.

**Greg Ballentine** asked if comments could be made regarding the success of Strawberry Plains.

**Reed T. Nester** said that Williamsburg is the only jurisdiction with a Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and they have built most of the affordable housing projects over the years. He said the most recent was a 56-lot project off of Strawberry Plains Road for affordable housing. He said housing has not been discussed yet with the current comprehensive plan review process; however, the City Council has talked about state code provisions that allow density bonuses for affordable housing. He said there is not much land in the city that can be rezoned for residential development that would trigger density bonuses.

## FOCUS AREAS

**Tim O'Connor** asked York County what they see as the growth potential in the Marquis/Water Country area and what the impact could be for traffic. He also asked about bike lanes along Route 60 from Williamsburg to the Busch Corporate area and transportation in general.

**Timothy C. Cross** referring to a map of the Marquis area, said that only a portion of Phase I has been built so far and that there is also a second phase that is approved for up to 200,000 square feet. He said the expansion plans for Water Country USA and Marquis Phase II could affect transportation and that those impacts should be reflected in the congestion modeling performed by the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), which is based on population and employment projections provided by the localities for each transportation analysis zone. He said if the localities supplied the numbers based on what is known about the proposed projects, the traffic modeling should already reflect accurately what the impact is on congestion. He said the HRTPO does not project severe congestion along Route 199 east of the I-64 interchange, where the Marquis and Water Country USA are located. However, he did not recall if Phase II of the Marquis was approved at the time the traffic modeling was performed.

**Alexander T. Hamilton** asked about the development of Kings Creek Plantation timeshare resort in York County. **Timothy C. Cross** said the project is continuing to be built and noted that

the development is approved for up to 1100 total units, which is well above the current number of units.

**Christopher A. Abel** (York County) said that the Marquis has been a disappointment that so far has not lived up to the County's expectations.

**Tammy Rosario** said the HRTPO traffic modeling forecasts severe congestion – Level of Service E or F – on Route 199 west of the I-64 interchange as well as on Routes 60 and 143 in that area.

**Reed T. Nester** said when the traffic study was done for the Riverside/Quarterpath development, there were major improvements to the Quarterpath Road/Route 199 intersection but that the studies that were submitted showed projections of a Level of Service D at that intersection.

**Richard Krapf** asked what processes are in place to handle major land use issues facing the jurisdictions that could affect the other two jurisdictions. **Richard M. Myer, Jr.**, (York County), responded that York County staff coordinates with the neighboring jurisdictions on land use proposals by asking for their input.

**Timothy C. Cross** added that the *Code of Virginia* requires notification of neighboring jurisdictions if they are within a half mile of a site that is the subject of a rezoning or Special Use Permit application. He stated that the three staffs do a good job of keeping each informed of such proposals.

**Reed T. Nester** noted similar notification efforts in the City of Williamsburg.

**Christopher A. Abel** said that although neighboring localities are notified of development proposals, he does not remember ever receiving comments received from other jurisdictions about a York County land use proposal.

**William Kafes** said there seems to be coordination at the staff level but not among the Planning Commissioners. He said it might be a good idea to think about joint work sessions between the Planning Commissions to review large projects that could have implications for neighboring localities. **M. Sean Fisher** agreed.

**Sarah Stafford** commented that the Northeast Triangle Focus Group had York County residents at every meeting who actively participated in the discussions.

**Reed T. Nester** showed a site plan of the Quarterpath development and gave a brief description of what is currently under construction and what is planned in the future, including the Riverside Doctors' Hospital. He added that there is no specified time-frame for construction of the residential component, which is dependent on the economy.

Discussion took place regarding the density proffers and the variety of housing types for the Quarterpath development and the projected traffic Levels of Service in the surrounding area.

**Tim O'Connor** said it needed to be coordinated through the three localities so they do not end up with multiple retail developments with very little residential. He asked for ideas on how to do that.

**Richard Krapf** said that the benefits of multi-jurisdictional planning efforts could address areas where development would affect neighboring localities such as the Pottery, and that effort has not been explored yet.

**Alexander T. Hamilton** noted that York County residents in that general area have been fairly vocal about previous land use proposals in the area and he invited representatives from the other jurisdictions to attend the County's public meetings on the Comprehensive Plan to hear what the citizens have to say.

**Richard Krapf** said he would be interested in attending those meetings to hear what is being said by the residents and noted that he took part in a steering committee through the James City Comprehensive Plan review and noted that there was a lot of discussion that was not universally well received by the residents. **M. Sean Fisher** asked that other localities be notified once York County's public meetings are scheduled.

**Tim O'Connor** asked what the pros and cons are regarding the Mooretown Road extension.

**Timothy C. Cross** said the major benefit is that it would make the property more developable but he added that from a transportation standpoint, York County has many higher priorities for projects that are being paid for by public dollars.

**Tammy Rosario** added that the extension was suggested as an alternative to Route 60 in an emergency situation. She said a transportation analysis done as part of James City County's Comprehensive Plan that showed some benefit to road congestion as a result of the project. She said the benefits should be further evaluated during the corridor study or by HRTPO as part of future modeling efforts.

**Timothy C. Cross** said the region's 2040 Long-Range Transportation plan process will begin shortly, which involves a prioritization tool that allows testing of different candidate projects and that this would be an opportunity for an evaluation of the Mooretown Road extension from a cost-benefit standpoint.

**Alexander T. Hamilton** said it was important to look at the safety aspect for evacuations during natural disasters and specifically mentioned emergency power generation.

Discussion continued regarding emergency power generation, connector roads and funding for secondary road improvements.

**Tim O'Connor** said the Northeast Triangle Focus Group had received many comments regarding the importance of preserving the entrance corridors and providing buffers. Some of the questions were what investments were being made by each locality to preserve and enhance those corridors such as bike lanes, walkways, etc. He said that James City County has a master plan for bikeways and walkways and it was important to see them in the County.

**Reed T. Nester** said the Northeast Triangle Focus Group came up with a list of recommended improvements including a list of initiatives to include underground wiring, sidewalk improvements on Bypass Road, and connecting sidewalks on Parkway Drive with the hope of obtaining VDOT revenue sharing money for all of the project improvements.

**Timothy C. Cross** said York County's only current project in that area is the Capitol Landing Road bikeway which will tie into the existing bikeways on East Rochambeau down and extend

along Route 143 up to the Queens Creek Bridge, thereby eliminating a major gap in the regional bikeway network.

**Tammy Rosario** said that James City County has a Pedestrian Accommodations Master Plan that recommends sidewalks along Penniman Road.

**Sarah Stafford** gave a brief overview of the Northeast Triangle Focus Group study and said there are a lot of opportunities for redevelopment in that area. She said the focus of the group was to see if there are ways to attract businesses by changing some of the regulations that might hinder businesses, such as setback requirements. She said the areas need bridges built for some of the sidewalks but said most of the area is walkable and could be very attractive.

## NEXT STEPS

**Tim O'Connor** asked each locality to describe the next steps in its Comprehensive Plan review process. He said that while these are going to be independent processes, he did not want the localities to become disjointed.

**Timothy C. Cross** said that York County expects to have public meetings in the near future in both the upper and lower County to give citizens an opportunity to review the plans and give input on what they would like to see. He said there would be an intensive schedule of Planning Commission work sessions and meetings this summer with the goal of having the Planning Commission public hearing in November and Board of Supervisors adoption in the first quarter of 2013.

**Tammy Rosario** noted that James City County recently updated its comprehensive plan in 2009 and that the current review would be strategic with a focus on multi-jurisdictional issues or any discussions that grow out of that. She said a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors would be held in May.

**Reed T. Nester** said Williamsburg will have an aggressive work session schedule through the remainder of the year with a few sessions centered on the Northeast Triangle Focus Area. He noted that there will be a public meeting in September on the Downtown and Midtown Planning Areas, with a goal of having recommendation to the City Council by the end of the year, with Council action anticipated in March of 2013.

**Tim O'Connor** asked if the [www.htplaning.org](http://www.htplaning.org) website would be serving as a joint portal to list dates of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan review schedules. **Timothy C. Cross** replied that the purpose of the joint website is to serve as a central portal from which visitors can link to the Comprehensive Plan review process in each locality.

**Tim O'Connor and M. Sean Fisher** thanked the staff for their professionalism and efforts. **Tim O'Connor** asked the citizens in attendance to make sure they attend future public meetings and hearings to speak on any areas of concern they may have.

## ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.