

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
FINAL Minutes October 20, 2020**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were Julian Bivins, Chair; Karen Firehock, Vice-Chair; Tim Keller; Rick Randolph; Daniel Bailey; Jennie More; and Corey Clayborne.

Members absent: Luis Carrazana, UVA representative.

Other officials present were Charles Rapp, Director of Planning; Kevin McDermott, Chief of Planning; Daniel Butch; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Mr. Bivins said the meeting was being held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A(14), "An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Disaster." He said opportunities for the public to access and participate in the electronic meeting will be posted on the Community County Calendar at www.albemarle.org when available.

Mr. Rapp called the roll. All Commissioners noted their presence except for Mr. Carrazana, who was absent.

Mr. Bivins established a quorum.

Consent Agenda

There was no consent agenda.

Work Session

Transportation Projects Updates

Mr. Kevin McDermott, Chief of Planning, said he was joined by Mr. Dan Butch, Senior Transportation Planner.

Mr. McDermott said he would be giving an informal presentation by request of the Planning Commission to provide an update on transportation projects that are ongoing or in some level of planning throughout the County. He said this was similar to a presentation he gave to the CACs, yet expanded as there were many projects going on throughout the entire County.

Mr. McDermott said the informal presentation should take about half an hour and that after the meeting, he would provide a list to the Commission to refer to, as well as mapping. He said the Commissioners could get in touch with him with additional questions. He said he would take the Commission through each slide that evening and look for any hands raised on those particular projects before moving onto the next slide so that questions can be asked.

Mr. McDermott began his presentation, noting that he would be running through the major larger projects organized by project status ("Under Construction," "In Design," etc.). He clarified that

these projects do not include maintenance activities, paving programs, bridge replacement or maintenance projects, or transportation projects that are solely intended to serve an upcoming development.

Mr. McDermott said he would begin with those projects currently under construction, with the first being the Lewis and Clark Drive Extension to Airport Road, which includes a shared use path. He said this project is located in the UVA Research Park in the northern part of the County and was constructed by the UVA Foundation. He said the road is actually complete, although it has not yet been turned over to the public, as there were a few minor punch list items to deal with first. He said once those items are complete, the road will be turned over to VDOT.

Mr. McDermott said the next project under construction is the Berkmar Drive to Rio Mills Road Connector, which includes a shared use path. He said this is a connector between Rio Mills and the new segment of Berkmar, and is just north of the quarry. He said this road is being turned around so that Rio Mills will now turn and go directly into Berkmar. He said at a T-intersection, the existing unpaved road that goes down to the river will remain. He said this project would start any day now, and that its completion was expected in Spring 2021.

Mr. McDermott said the next project under construction is the Greenbrier Drive/Rio Road Pedestrian Crosswalk, which was a Neighborhood Improvement Funding Initiative project from a few years earlier that provides a new pedestrian crossing of Rio Road at Greenbrier and connects a couple of bus stops. He said the project is in the final stages of completion.

Mr. McDermott presented a map on the screen, noting that at the bottom of the map was the location of the I-64 Exit 118 Improvements. He said the project is currently underway, and that the proposal is that one of the cloverleaf ramps that takes one from Southbound US-29 onto Eastbound I-64 will be removed, where there is currently a weave issue and where there are many safety problems where this comes back onto I-64. He said this will be closed in favor of putting in dual left turn lanes that are signalized so that the southbound traffic on US-29 can then make a left and get directly onto Eastbound I-64. He said this project is expected to be complete in winter and that it is very close to completion.

Mr. McDermott said just north of Exit 118 at the Northbound US-29/Fontaine Avenue exit, there is another project that is currently under construction. He said this is a Smart Scale project from a few years earlier that was funded, and that it will add an additional exit ramp off of Northbound US-29 onto Fontaine Avenue in order to improve some of the weave movements from people getting off of I-64 onto US-29, as well as those movements by those who are coming north on US-29, all trying to get off at Fontaine. He said this project is also coming close to completion and that it should be complete by winter.

Mr. Bailey said he wanted to make sure that he understood correctly that the Exit 118 project will alleviate the issue where there are cars coming onto I-64 where people coming down from Waynesboro are trying to get off, and where people are trying to accelerate and decelerate.

Mr. McDermott said this is exactly the problem. He said he used to come from Augusta County for work every day and that this was a nightmare. He said he was happy to see that they would now be taking care of the issue.

Mr. Bivins asked if the project referring to Greenbrier Drive was not the Greenbrier Drive off of US-29, but was the other one.

Mr. Bailey said it was the Greenbrier Drive down the road from Belvedere, which goes to the filling stations on Rio Road. He said this project will help people to get across to those filling stations without getting hit by the four-lane traffic on Rio Road.

Mr. McDermott said these completed the projects under construction and that he would move onto those projects in design. He said nearly every project in this category is fully funded and is currently being designed either internally or by VDOT.

Mr. McDermott said the first project in design is the Route 250/151 roundabout, which is another Smart Scale project from a few years earlier. He said one may have noticed that a signal was placed there a few years ago, which was considered a temporary solution there. He said this is the location where one is coming out of Nelson County and there is a brewery trail that hits Route 250. He said the temporary signal was put in there, but the long-term proposal was to convert this into a roundabout. He said this is currently in design and that it is expected to possibly go to construction in Fall 2021.

Mr. McDermott said the next project in design is located at Route 250 and Route 240 at Three Notched Road, just to the east side of Crozet. He said this is another roundabout proposed and was funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program funding. He said it should be under construction sometime in the winter or in the spring of 2020. He said there have been many crashes there in the past, and so he is looking forward to the safety improvements there.

Mr. McDermott said the next project in design is the US-250 West Crozet Sidewalk, located by a builders supply and grocery store across from Corey Farms. He said a sidewalk is being put in on the north side of US-250, as well as a pedestrian crossing that will get people to that shopping center from those neighborhoods on the north side. He said this project is proposed for construction in spring to summer of 2021.

Mr. McDermott said the next project is the Crozet Square Reconstruction, which is in front of Fardowners coming off of Crozet Avenue. He said this is another Neighborhood Improvement Funding Initiative project from a few years earlier. He said there is also additional grant funding from the state as well as some other capital funding. He said the parking area in front of Fardowners Hardware Store and the coffee shop is being refurbished. He said slightly wider sidewalks are being put in, as well as additional parking to clean up the area. He said the current pavement is in poor condition, and so this is being fixed to be much more aesthetically pleasing and serve more as a center for the downtown area. He said this is expected to go under construction in the winter and into spring of 2021.

Mr. Bivins asked if with the anticipated development of that area, this would predate what is going on there.

Mr. McDermott replied no. He said they are actually timing the two projects to go together. He said this was the next project on his list: the Barnes Lumber Redevelopment/Library Avenue Extension. He said these projects butt up against each other, with Oak Street and Crozet Square being one project, and with the extension of Crozet Square to High Street and Library Avenue being the other project. He said these are being timed to be concurrent and that the consultants are working together on the design. He said concerns about parking were raised and that they did not want to have everything under construction at once, so the construction of those two projects will be sequenced to allow access to the businesses there.

Mr. McDermott said there is a private developer for the Barnes Lumber project with whom the County worked in a public-private partnership. He said there is also additional grant funding through the state to help build an entire new network for Downtown Crozet.

Mr. McDermott said the next project in design is the Eastern Avenue South Extension, which is located where West Hall meets the existing segment of Eastern Avenue. He said this will extend Eastern Avenue down across Lickinghole Creek and connect to Corey Farms Drive, then put drivers out onto US-250. He said this is the current proposal and that staff is still looking at potential slight shifts in alignment, but that it would likely go by Corey Farms Drive.

Mr. McDermott said although this project is marked as “in design,” he wanted to be clear that this is not a fully funded project. He said the County has put part of its capital money towards getting a design and a location study that they hope will support a future grant for the rest of the construction funding in 2021. He said there is not yet a timetable as they continue working towards the grant. He said this is an important and expensive project in Crozet.

Ms. More said she had a question about the Route 250/151 Roundabout. She mentioned the restriping that is taking the place of a “suicide lane” that exists between the commercial centers, adding that this was much appreciated. She asked if there will be a lighted signal crossing, or how the pedestrian aspects of this project will work.

Mr. McDermott replied that it is a midblock crossing and so it is not directly at the turn. He said this allows for putting in a pedestrian refuge island in the center turn lane. He said there will be a curved pedestrian refuge island in the center, which will be lit with the rapid flashing beacons that can be seen at many pedestrian crosswalks. He said it will be push-button activated, and a strobe yellow light will flash and catch drivers’ attention.

Ms. More said she also wanted to ask about the Crozet Square Reconstruction. She said she believed there had been some design in terms of how the light functions and what will happen when the reconstruction project happens. She said currently, the light does not operate correctly, and so she wanted to mention she has heard that the right-in/right-out might be a reconfiguration of how the traffic flows. She asked if this were still the case.

Mr. McDermott replied yes. He said a right-in/right-out is proposed there. He said the signal will remain, but it will only stop northbound traffic on Crozet Avenue, for two reasons. He said it stops the northbound traffic because they cannot get sight distance for people who want to turn right out of Crozet Square because the buildings come right up to the road there. He said they have to keep the light and if someone needs to make a right out of Crozet Square, this light will be triggered, and it will stop the northbound traffic. He said additionally, there will be stops for southbound traffic because there is a pedestrian crossing there as well. He said if a pedestrian actuates the signal, it will stop traffic going in both directions on Crozet Avenue.

Mr. McDermott said the light will remain, but one will not be able to make left turns onto Crozet Square from Crozet Avenue anymore. He said this way, they will not have the problem where traffic backs up to the Three Notched intersection. He said one will not be able to make lefts out of there, either.

Ms. More said Mr. McDermott mentioned the NIFI funding, and her understanding is that there have been some delays of that. She said as Mr. McDermott explained to Mr. Bivins, they want to

coordinate that project with the Barnes Lumber project, adding that there are some technical considerations with how the sidewalks plane into the businesses. She said some businesses along that strip experience flooding and that this will help address that as well. She said this is a more complicated project because it is not just about needing new sidewalks, but is about addressing these matters with more time and money.

Mr. McDermott said Ms. More was correct. He said the project team has worked heavily with those businesses there and is trying to provide them with good access. He said the drainage issues were another one of the major reasons why they wanted to move forward on the project. He said it is a complicated project and that it has taken more time than some of the other NIFI projects that are shorter. He said they are moving forward with the project and are looking at winter or spring for a construction start.

Mr. McDermott said continuing onto the projects in design, this time in the northern parts of the County, the next project on the list is in the Rural Area and is another Smart Scale project that was approved a number of years earlier. He said the location of the project is Route 250 and Route 649, which is where Proffit Road hits Route 20 heading north from Pantops. He said this is the site of a number of accidents and that many people use this as a back way to go from Pantops to Route 29 North, resulting in a significant amount of traffic. He said this will be converted into a roundabout, with construction expected to begin in Fall 2021.

Mr. McDermott said a large upcoming project that will begin fairly soon is the Diverging Diamond at I-64 and Route 250 in Pantops. He said this interchange will be converted to a diverging diamond, which will allow those movements to operate with just two signals by switching the directions of traffic so that they cross over each other. He said then, one will never have to make lefts across traffic. He said this is both a safety and an operations improvement for this heavily congested area and that construction is expected to begin this winter. He said this is a Smart Scale project from a number of years ago and that it was an \$18 million project, which was the project with the most Smart Scale funding that has ever been awarded in Albemarle County.

Mr. McDermott said the US-250/Route 20 Intersection Improvements were the most recent Smart Scale approvals, which include adding some turn lanes and reconstructing the signals there. He said currently, there are limitations on how many vehicles a green signal can be given because the number of lanes and the mast arms there cannot handle additional signal heads. He said this project will rebuild the intersection with some additional lanes. He said they are also closing some sidewalk gaps around the intersection and adding some turn lanes to this. He said because the project was just awarded funding about a year and a half ago, construction will likely start in 2024 or 2025.

Mr. McDermott said the Rio Road Sidewalk project is an extension of the sidewalks from the John Warner Parkway/Rio Road intersection, heading south on Rio Road as if one is going towards the City. He said there are many segments of sidewalk that were constructed with various developments, and this project looks to connect all those sidewalk segments on both sides of Rio Road, going all the way down to Towne Lane. He said the project also includes a pedestrian crossing of Rio Road at Pen Park Road by Charlottesville Catholic School. He said these improvements should be under construction likely in Spring to Summer 2021.

Mr. McDermott presented a map on the screen, noting that the top of the map was the location of the Lewis and Clark/US-29 Intersection R-Cut. He said this project is being led by a private developer for the North Pointe development, which is on the east side of Route 29. He said they

are converting the three-way intersection into a four-way intersection and in doing so, VDOT required them to remove the existing signal and convert it into an R-cut. He said this is a major safety problem in the County, and that it was number 6 or 7 for the frequency of accidents. He said because it is being led by a private developer, staff does not have a timetable.

Mr. McDermott said in the Rio Corridor, there is the John Warner Parkway Shared Use Path Extension project. He said this shared use path goes up John Warner Parkway and continues where one crosses the Rio Road intersection for some way, then dies out. He said there is the 999 Rio Road development that will take the shared use path from where it currently ends, continue it onto the Belvedere intersection, then up Belvedere to connect to the existing shared use path that goes in front of The Center. He said a private developer is working on this project.

Mr. McDermott said the next project on the list in design is the Berkmar Drive Shared Use Path Extension, which goes from the Rio/Berkmar intersection all the way up to Hilton Heights Drive on the east side of Berkmar, which will connect to the existing shared use path that was built with the bridge and an extension of Berkmar up to Hollymead. He said the project will bring the shared use path all the way down to Rio Road, which is funded by a combination of revenue-sharing funds and the County's CIP funds. He said this project is in the early stages of design and therefore, there is not yet a schedule for construction, but it is fully funded.

Mr. Clayborne asked what the duration of the Exit 124 Diverging Diamond project would be once construction starts.

Mr. McDermott replied that this is a fairly long project and that he believed the timeframe was just under a year. He said he would get back to Mr. Clayborne with that information. He said traffic will be allowed to go through there for the entire period, and it will be broken up into segments, possibly going down to fewer lanes a few weeks at a time. He said he could provide more exact dates.

Mr. Clayborne replied that this information was sufficient for him.

Mr. Bivins said when Mr. McDermott was talking about the extension from Airport Road to the UVA Research Park, he said that this was complete but had not yet been made public.

Mr. McDermott said the part that is completed that is not public is the extension of Lewis and Clark all the way down to Airport Road. He said this is entirely on the UVA Research Park. He said the project he was referring to is on the southern end of Berkmar and goes from Hilton Heights (where Walmart is, at the roundabout) down to Rio.

Mr. Bivins said this is where there are not any sidewalks at the moment.

Mr. McDermott said there are some.

Mr. Bivins agreed.

Mr. McDermott said there are sidewalks on one side, and the shared use path is being built on the other side.

Mr. Bivins said at one point, the Commission had had discussions about extending Berkmar to Airport, but he couldn't recall what happened with that.

Mr. McDermott said this will come up on another slide in the presentation.

Mr. Bivins said he could wait for that information later. He said if he understood correctly, Rio Mills will connect to Berkmar.

Mr. McDermott said yes. He said this is in the middle of the newest portion of Berkmar, just north of the bridge over Rivanna that is south of the Hollymead Town Center development.

Mr. Bivins asked if this is close to the proffered land that came from the Brookhill development.

Mr. McDermott replied that there will be a way to get from that proffered land to Berkmar. He said if Berkmar does not connect to Route 29, except up to Town Center and all the way down at Hilton Heights. He said the new connector will be on the northern end of that proffered land, so if the County were to move forward with any development of the school (which is what was proffered), they would use the new connector road for the access.

Mr. Bivins noted that the proffered land was not just for a school, but for anything the County wants to use.

Mr. McDermott moved onto more projects in the design phase. He said one project is the Avon Street Sidewalk, which is on Avon Street south of the interstate bridge. He said it starts at Lakeside Apartments and heads south from there. He said this project will make connections between existing small segments of sidewalk, all the way down to Mountainview Elementary School. He said it also includes some segments on the opposite side of the road, on the west side of Avon north of there, connecting the Avon Park development to Mill Creek South. He said these are far along in design, with construction expected in Spring to Summer 2021.

Mr. McDermott said Mountainview Elementary Pedestrian Crosswalk is a Transportation Alternatives Project that was awarded, as well as a NIFI project, to provide a pedestrian crossing across Avon Street in front of Mountainview. He said this is similar to what he described is happening in Crozet, where there will be a median refuge and a rapid flashing beacon to make drivers aware of people crossing.

Mr. Randolph asked if this project (as well as Avon Street Sidewalk) would both take place in 2021.

Mr. McDermott replied yes. He said the pedestrian crosswalk is already going out to bid, and staff expects it to go under construction in winter, perhaps even before 2021 but definitely right after the new year. He said the sidewalks are actually a few months behind that, in Spring or Summer 2021.

Mr. McDermott said the next project in design is the Ivy Road Bicycle Pedestrian Improvements. He said this was a long time coming, and was a revenue-sharing grant from 2015 that ran into many right-of-way issues. He said this will construct sidewalk on the south side of Route 250 from the City line out to the new UVA property where the muscular-skeletal institute is currently under construction. He said there will either be bike lanes or a shared use path there and that he would have to confirm which one, adding that there will be bike facilities on Route 250 in both directions. He said construction is expected in Spring to Summer 2021.

Mr. McDermott said the Commonwealth Drive/Dominion Drive Bike-Ped Improvements project is currently in design and will construct a new sidewalk on Commonwealth from Hydraulic Road (by Stonefield), heading north and connecting existing segments of sidewalk, going all the way to Dominion, then turning onto Dominion and going out to Route 29. He said this is a very long stretch of sidewalk in that area, along the Route 5 bus line, which is the most popular bus line in the County, and so this project will provide some additional access to that.

Mr. Randolph asked if this was going in on the east side or the west side.

Mr. McDermott replied that it is going in on the east side. He said there is existing sidewalk on most of the west side.

Mr. McDermott said the Albemarle High School to Greer and Jouett School Campus Shared Use Path is another Transportation Alternatives grant and NIFI grant from a few years earlier. He said the project will connect from Hydraulic all the way to Greer with a new sidewalk and shared use path. He said there is a lot of traffic going back and forth between those schools, and this will allow more people to also be able to walk from the elementary and middle schools there.

Mr. Bivins said he would be remiss if he did not ask whether or not Mr. McDermott has had any dialogue with the Boys and Girls Club. He said he understands there has also been recent conversation about looking at the traffic flow there, in the general sense, between the elementary and middle schools. He said he wanted to be sure Mr. McDermott is aware of other moving parts happening there.

Mr. McDermott thanked Mr. Bivins for pointing this out. He said the project team has been keeping in touch with the Boys and Girls Club development to make sure there is coordination as necessary. He said he did hear some discussions about a transportation study but did not know if anything had happened with that other than it being suggested.

Mr. Bivins said if they put the sidewalk in from Hydraulic Road, it will also facilitate people getting across the street from Loaves and Fishes. He said he is sure Supervisor McKeel will want to have a conversation about that, since people who walk there and at this point in the year, it is becoming difficult to see pedestrians, and the sidewalks will help.

Mr. McDermott agreed. He said he has been in contact with Loaves and Fishes over the years about transit and pedestrian access. He said this project will provide improved access. He said although it does not go directly or all the way to Loaves and Fishes, it does improve the access significantly.

Mr. McDermott said he would move on to the projects for which funding applications have been submitted. He said these could include revenue-sharing grants or TA grants from last year which have not yet been awarded due to the state delaying announcements on this because of COVID-19. He said all the projects submitted in 2019 are still in this category, as well as the Smart Scale grants submitted in 2020.

Mr. McDermott said the first project in this category is the Berkmar Drive Extension to Airport Road. He said where it stubs out heading north on Berkmar, they want to push this through to Airport Road so that it can connect where Lewis and Clark now comes in. He said the proposal was also to put a roundabout there at that intersection to facilitate traffic. He said this will include bike-ped facilities as well.

Mr. McDermott said the US-29 Shared Use Path project goes on the east side of Route 29 from Carrsbrook up to the shopping center at Seminole Trail that parallels Route 29 by the river. He said they initially looked at this as being a project that would actually get bike-ped facilities all the way across the river, either by putting them on the existing bridge or on another bridge, but the cost became too high and the project was broken up. He said they are going from Carrsbrook to the Seminole Lane section currently, with the bridge possibly being a future piece.

Mr. McDermott said the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission submitted a study in 2019 for transit planning funding through the Department of Rail and Public Transit to look at the potential expansion of transit all along Route 29, all the way from the research park down to UVA. He said they are looking into what would likely be a higher-frequency type of service there. He said he has not heard if this has been funded yet, but that the County would be working through the Regional Transit Partnership and the TJPDC if that were to move forward.

Mr. McDermott presented a map on the screen, noting that at the bottom of the map was the location of the Rio Road/John Warner Parkway Intersection Improvements project that was just submitted for Smart Scale. He said this proposes a roundabout where John Warner Parkway and Rio Road meet, across from CATEC.

Mr. Bivins said at one point, the Commission discussed having a traffic study done for the Rio Road Corridor. He asked if this was coming up in the presentation.

Mr. McDermott replied yes.

Mr. Bivins said he would wait to ask his question about it.

Mr. McDermott continued his presentation. He said in the Samuel Miller District, a grant was submitted for sidewalks along Old Lynchburg Road, just north of 5th Street, that would connect to Azalea Park. He said there would also be a greenway trail or shared use path that would run from Old Lynchburg Road over to Sunset Avenue. He said this property is owned by the City through a donation from Dave Matthews, who donated the land to turn it into a greenway. He said the County is partnering with the City to make this a new trail, and there is a funding application submitted that they are waiting to hear back about.

Mr. McDermott said the Fontaine Avenue/29 Bypass Interchange Improvements project is one the County just submitted for Smart Scale, and will reconfigure the interchange into what is referred to as a displaced left turn. He said he did not bring a picture of what that looks like, and so he would have to send the Commission a link to the video, as he would not be able to explain it. He said it is a fairly confusing type of interchange that is similar to a diverging diamond, where some traffic switches over and goes in the opposite direction of what one would expect.

Mr. McDermott said the project is supposed to improve the operations there and would also allow for the removal of the current Northbound 29 to Westbound I-64 turn lane. He said this is a spot where there have been many safety issues and trucks waiting in the too-small turn lane to make the left turn. He said some serious accidents have occurred there. He said the idea is to close this turn lane off and route vehicles up into the interchange to make a U-turn. He said with the displaced left turn, one does not need to stop for any signals as it is basically free flow. He said one goes under the bypass and then gets back on without having to stop.

Mr. McDermott noted that with the Smart Scale projects, the County would find out in January 2021 whether or not they get funded.

Mr. McDermott said in Crozet, the County submitted a grant in 2019 for some sidewalk improvements along Tabor and High Street. He said there is an existing segment of sidewalk on Tabor, and the County wants to extend this all the way to High Street and put in some pedestrian crossings there, connecting them to the existing sidewalk on Hill Top Street that goes down to Crozet Park. He said they are still waiting to find out if this will move forward.

Mr. McDermott said the next project that was submitted for Smart Scale in 2020 is a Park-and-Ride lot at I-64 Exit 107. He said the idea is that it is on the south side of the interchange there, and that the lot would be put in the southeastern quadrant. He said this can also be served by the pilot project for the Afton Mountain Express, which is a regional transit service that the County received funding for with the Central Shenandoah PDC and Bright Transit to carry people back and forth across the mountain for their commutes. He said perhaps even the JAUNT Crozet Connector could serve this if they wanted to reroute it and pick people up at the lot.

Mr. McDermott said also on the list for applications submitted for funding is that the TJPDC submitted a grant for the Hydraulic/29 Interchange, which is a package of improvements that was recommended by the Hydraulic/29 panel. He said Supervisor McKeel sat on this panel and so the Commission has likely heard updates about it. He said the idea with the application is that it would remove left turns from Hydraulic onto Route 29 going in both directions. He said it would put a roundabout in at Hillsdale and Hydraulic, and add a pedestrian overpass and bus stops just on the north side of that interchange as well. He added that it will allow movements at Angus so that drivers can make left turns off of Angus to Northbound 29 easier without stopping traffic.

Mr. McDermott said this is a whole system of improvements and that there was \$18 million of state money to put towards it, with the total cost being about \$28 million for all the improvements. He said the County is waiting to hear back on scores for that Smart Scale round.

Mr. McDermott said the next project on the list is in the City, but because it is considered as part of the Hillsdale projects, he thought he would mention it. He said this is an extension of Hillsdale from the proposed roundabout he mentioned at Whole Foods to extend Hillsdale South and connect it to the bypass. He said they would then remove the current ramp that takes drivers off the bypass to get to Northbound 29 and make some other changes there. He said this is a very expensive project and so he is not sure what chance it has for funding, but it would improve many of the movements in that area. He said they will wait to see how this works out.

Mr. McDermott said another project is located at Route 250 and Pantops and is an access management project, with the intent to remove the continuous left turn lane that goes down the middle and put in a median to direct left turns or U-turns to very specific locations where staff believes they can do it more safely. He said this is a high-accident corridor, and staff believes the project will improve operations and safety along there, as well as aesthetics. He said this project was submitted in 2020 for Smart Scale.

Mr. McDermott presented a map and indicated to the Frays Mill/Burnley Station Road/US-29 intersection. He said this is the last major intersection before arriving in Greene County on Route 29, and the idea is to convert this to an R-cut intersection, which is a movement that does not allow people to make direct lefts out of side streets. He said drivers have to make a right, go up, and make a U-turn to come back. He said this is a Smart Scale project.

Mr. McDermott said at the County Office Building on 5th Street, the County submitted a grant for a proposed roundabout there where 5th Street, Old Lynchburg Road, and the County Office Building all come together. He said there are many congestion problems there, and as the Commission may recall, the Albemarle Business Campus was recently approved at that location, which offered to contribute some land and funding for that improvement. He said this is an important intersection that experiences safety and congestion issues.

Mr. Randolph asked what the cost was on the application for this roundabout.

Mr. McDermott replied that it has not yet been finalized. He said another caveat is that they have to accelerate the cost out to 2026, so it comes in slightly higher than one would expect. He said the cost is about \$8-9 million, initially. He said staff believes they will be able to get VDOT to come down on the price, even though the application is in, because the County is trying to include the donation of right-of-way from both the County property and Albemarle Business Campus. He said they may even be able to get it done faster. He said the last time he talked with VDOT, they told him it may come down to as low as \$6 million, and so the price would be somewhere in the \$6-8 million range.

Mr. McDermott said on Route 20 where Route 53/Thomas Jefferson Parkway comes in, the County submitted a Smart Scale grant for a roundabout at that location as well. He said this was submitted in 2019, and it was just outside of the funding limits in the last Smart Scale round. He said staff thought they would take another shot at it and see if they might have success this time.

Mr. McDermott moved onto the projects that are currently in planning. He said these are projects for which essentially, there is some sort of planning process that is ongoing. He said the projects he would call out are projects that staff have looked at previously and that are prioritized on the Albemarle County list. He said there were some things he wanted the Commission to keep in mind as they look at these projects.

Mr. McDermott said the first of these projects is the Rio-29 Small Area Plan project that includes the recommendations that came out of the approved small area plan. He said one of the primary improvements included is the Hillside Realignment, which takes Hillside from where it currently turns off to the east to connect to Rio, sends it directly up through the backside of the mall parking lot to connect near Putt Putt Lane, and constructs a roundabout there. He said this was one of the highest recommendations from the small area plan.

Mr. McDermott said the next improvement included in this was an extension of that. He said initially on the existing road, they were going to make the connection, and the second phase would actually bridge the drainage ditch there. He said because this would be fairly expensive, it was broken up into two projects.

Mr. McDermott said Phase 3 of this is an improvement that heads north from Rio Road and would go through some of the proposed new developments or greenfield there for possible development, as well as if there are any future changes to some of the shopping centers there. He said this would make a connection through that property for redevelopment.

Mr. McDermott said another recommendation from the small area plan was the Rio Road/Berkmar Intersection Improvements project. He said this was highly prioritized in the small area plan as

well as in the County plans, and so they will move forward to see if they can find some funding for this.

Mr. McDermott said another project from the small area plan is the Route 29 Pedestrian Crossing. He said there is a shared use path that goes up and down Berkmar, and that this is also proposed to go behind some of those businesses on the north side of Rio Road along the drainage ditch. He said they felt this would be a great place to make an off-grade pedestrian crossing to tie the area together.

Mr. Randolph asked if in crossing that intersection, the County is offering pedestrians gold medals because they will need to be at Olympic speed to get across Route 29 safely. He said he would assume that an overpass would be a pedestrian means of access from one side to the other.

Mr. McDermott said the County was considering this and that it would not be an at-grade crossing of Route 29. He said they are looking at either bridges or underpasses.

Mr. McDermott moved onto the Rio Road Corridor Study projects. He said he called out a couple projects on the slide, but wanted to be clear that this process is just starting. He said even though he named a few projects that he thinks may be key areas, it is not known what recommendations will come out of the corridor plan. He asked the Commission to keep in mind that there are likely more projects than what he listed on the slide.

Mr. McDermott said staff has been evaluating the Rio Road/Belvedere Drive intersection, and they hope there will be some good recommendations that come out of the corridor plan for this intersection.

Mr. McDermott said at the Rio Road/Pen Park Road intersection, a pedestrian crossing is currently being put in. He said they have discussed improvements there, as the signal has not worked as well as they would have liked. He said there was actually a fatality at this intersection at one point, and so staff is looking into potentially reconfiguring this intersection.

Mr. McDermott said there is a series of bike-ped improvements all along the corridor. He said there is sidewalk and unprotected bike lanes that are not very effective there. He said the hope is that the corridor study will come up with some recommendations for that.

Mr. Bailey said he had a question, noting that he was new to this and to understanding the phasing. He said Mr. McDermott mentioned that many of these were suggested in planning and were highly uncertain. He said as the Commissioners attend community meetings and are asked about these things all the time, the question comes up of what this means. He said he understands the projects are uncertain and that the studies are being conducted, but assuming some of these get approved, he wanted to know what the timeline is from planning to implementation.

Mr. McDermott replied that this is an entirely separate conversation to be had. He said for example, the Rio Road Corridor Study is expected to be completed over the next year. He said one of the things staff is looking to the consultant to do on this is come out with a couple priority projects they have taken to a level where the County could possibly make some applications for funding.

Mr. McDermott said assuming that when the project is completed in Fall 2021 and the consultant makes a couple recommendations, staff could take one of those recommendations and in Spring

2022, a Smart Scale round would open up where an application could be submitted if there is an appropriate project at that time. He said the way that Smart Scale works is that the longest period of time the County can take to construct a project they submit for it would be 6 years. He said it has to be fully funded over those next 6 years. He said it depends on the scale of the project and whether or not they can accelerate it faster than the 6 years or how much money they put on it.

Mr. McDermott said generally, if they submit the project in Spring 2022, they could have a project that is essentially completed by 2028 if they go the Smart Scale route.

Mr. McDermott said because the state alternates years for different grant programs, in 2023, there is a revenue sharing grant application period. He said those get funded immediately and so if the County were to submit a grant in 2023 for one of the projects for revenue sharing, they may start seeing money come in 2024 and that they could be going into construction in 2026. He said everything depends on the complexity of the project and the funding source they are looking for.

Mr. Bailey said he appreciated this explanation. He said setting expectations with the CACs is always helpful.

Mr. McDermott added that this discussion has taken place in the past at CIP meetings, and that he could provide something that shows different funding options and ranges as to how long it takes to complete those projects under different funding sources. He said the complexity of the project is what it really comes down to.

Mr. Randolph suggested to Mr. Bailey that when talking with CAC members, he informs them that the projects will hopefully be constructed by the end of the decade. He said this is realistic because Mr. McDermott was giving him an extremely optimistic outlook if all other things work in sequence and everything falls in order, the funding is there, etc. He said if people are told things will be happening in 2025, they will be contacting him in 2025 to ask him where the project is. He said whereas if Mr. Bailey were to tell them it would take the decade for the project to be achieved, if it comes in earlier than 2030, it will be all the credit to him to be involved in bringing it in earlier.

Mr. Bailey agreed and thanked Mr. Randolph for the tips. He said with the terminology of the projects being in "planning," when most people think of that word, they think about things happening more immediately and not in the context of transportation planning. He said some of the terminology could potentially be misleading and that people may be thinking that "planning" means they could see something happen in a year. He said it is a matter of setting expectations, as Mr. Randolph suggested, that this is a 10-year horizon for any of these projects (if approved) to actually happen.

Mr. Randolph said Mr. McDermott mentioned NIFI projects. He said once funding was received from the 2016 budget, the community expected that those projects were going to be done immediately. He said the community did not understand vetting and the other participants that needed to be involved, including the state, in some cases, and the School Board with regards to the Avon Street crosswalk. He said there were many issues there, and that those projects are going to be completed in 2021, which is five years later.

Mr. Randolph said there is still planning taking place with the Rio Road Corridor Study project. He said the plan is not yet finalized, as the Board of Supervisors has to digest it and the Planning Commission has to discuss it. He said it may perhaps be complete in 2021, and so the earliest

one can realistically look for the projects is 2022, meaning there are two years gone out of the decade. He said 2030 completion was safe to say.

Mr. Rapp said this speaks to why this is called “long-range planning.” He said it is a long vision, noting that Mr. McDermott was currently speaking about the forty-sixth project on the list. He said there are many projects to balance in terms of management, budget, and funding. He added that the County is competing with every locality in the state for funding.

Mr. Randolph said to keep in mind that every year, the Board of Supervisors reshuffle the deck.

Mr. McDermott said this happens every other year now.

Mr. Randolph said what looks good one year may not be nearly as salient of a project two years later and therefore moves down the list.

Mr. McDermott said to this point, these were the planning projects being discussed and he was not even attempting to put timelines to them yet. He said perhaps these may even fall off the list at some point and may not be priorities at all, whereas the projects in design are the ones that will likely happen in the next 2-3 years.

Mr. McDermott said that to Mr. Randolph’s point about the NIFI projects, there were two projects that were completed within months of approval. He said it is all about complexity. He said the project off Commonwealth Drive to clear the vegetation off the sidewalk, for example, took months and was done with a local crew. He said the project at the Rivanna River where Free Bridge crosses to build a new trailhead at the gas station took about nine months. He said there are projects the County can move quickly on, although this was not necessarily the case for the projects in the presentation.

Mr. McDermott said the last project on the slide was the South Fork Rivanna Greenway. He said he works heavily with Parks and Recreation on greenways because they are not just a recreation resource, but a transportation resource. He said there is a lot of donated right-of-way property that the County owns all along the Rivanna River, and Parks and Recreation has been working with consultants to look at how they might be able to develop that area and a greenway. He said the Belvedere development did proffer portions of that greenway as well, and so this is something to look forward to coming out there at some point in time.

Mr. McDermott said other in-planning projects include the Avon Corridor Study project, which was completed about a year and a half ago. He said a number of recommendations were made, including an Avon Street shared use path. He said the idea was to construct a shared use path from the Mill Creek Drive intersection up to Peregory Lane, which is near the jail, as well as a pedestrian crosswalk there. He said this project received some Quality of Life money and that a grant is expected in the next round of revenue sharing coming up in the spring.

Mr. McDermott said the next priority from the Avon Corridor Study is a shared use path and bridge over I-64, which would take pedestrians from the northern end of the previous project he mentioned (Peregory Lane) and build a bike-ped bridge over I-64 to connect to the 5th Street Station Parkway intersection. He said the next priority from there was reconfiguring the Mill Creek Drive/Avon Street intersection into a roundabout.

Mr. McDermott said the 5th Street Corridor Study is underway but getting ready to wrap up. He said some of the recommendations from that study were listed on the screen, with one of them being to reconfigure the I-64 Exit 120/5th Street interchange likely into a diverging diamond. He said the next project anticipated to come out of that is a shared use path along 5th Street and Old Lynchburg Road. He said the Albemarle Business Campus development has proffered a shared use path in front of their property and that the County would like to extend this on both sides, north and south of the Albemarle Business Campus development.

Mr. McDermott said the Rivanna Corridor Plan is a partnership between TJPDC and the City. He said a couple of projects coming out of this plan include a bike-ped bridge over the Rivanna River, likely connecting the Martha Jefferson area of South Pantops and State Farm, down across the river and connecting to the Woolen Mills neighborhood. He said this would only be a bike-ped bridge and that recommendations for a specific location have been made. He said he believes there is a public meeting scheduled for November 12, where this recommendation and others will be discussed.

Mr. McDermott said lumped in with this is a recommendation from the Pantops Master Plan (which is located in that corridor) to convert Free Bridge Lane into what is called a "green street." He said this would be turned into a one-way southbound street and use the extra room they get to improve the bike-ped facilities and make it more aesthetically pleasing, much like a parkway. He said this runs along the river and gets a lot of bike-ped use, and the idea is to tie it into the natural features there.

Mr. McDermott said the last project in planning is that as part of the Crozet Master Plan Update currently underway, there is a consultant conducting a transportation study for the entire Crozet area. He said they are looking at some key intersections where there are known problems. He said primarily, these are along Crozet Avenue from Three Notched Road down to Tabor Street (including Jarman's Gap), Crozet Square, Library Avenue, all the way down to Crozet Avenue and Route 250. He said they are also looking at the Old Trail/250 intersection. He said the consultant will be running some analyses on those intersections, looking 20 years into the future and how those might operate to help staff come up with some good ideas as far as things they can look at long-term for improvements in that corridor.

Mr. McDermott concluded his presentation and offered to take additional questions, acknowledging that this was a lot of information. He said he could make the presentation available in a paper version along with the maps for the Commissioners to be able to review. He said staff is also working internally to make this information more available not just to the Commission, but to the public on the County website so that the public can stay updated on the transportation projects.

Mr. Bivins said many Commissioners likely saw in the newspaper the project that is being proposed and is due to come to the Commission next month. He said there used to be a Knights Inn on Premier Circle, and there is a proposal to create a space for people without housing to be able to go.

Mr. Rapp said this would come to the Commission in mid-December.

Mr. Bivins said there was a great deal of conversation not just about that project, but about what will happen with the Fashion Square property. He asked if there is a way to get safely across Route 29. He said a number of people mentioned that they saw pedestrian crossing buttons going

in along Route 29, but they did not know if they were simply to go north or south or if they are also opportunities to go east or west.

Mr. McDermott replied that those pedestrian upgrades being made are only to go parallel with Route 29. He said there are no proposals to get pedestrians across Route 29 in that area, except for the Rio Road overpass and the recommendation for another overpass north of there. He added that the Hydraulic project has the proposed pedestrian overpass that would be on the north side of Stonefield, so slightly north of Hydraulic.

Mr. Bivins said there was a lot of energy in terms of how to get this population of people across to go to Food Lion, JABA, and other places if, in fact, the project goes forward.

Mr. McDermott said this is a concern staff will definitely be looking at.

Mr. Bivins said the other thing that was interesting about the list of 54 projects presented that evening is that he saw nothing about Scottsville.

Mr. McDermott replied that there were projects in the Scottsville District, though not in the Town of Scottsville. He asked if Mr. Bivins was referring to the Town of Scottsville.

Mr. Bivins said this was correct.

Mr. McDermott said the Town of Scottsville is its own entity and have its own projects it manages. He said he knows there are some proposals for pedestrian improvements along the main street there, and that the town has been talking to VDOT about some grant opportunities. He said staff would love to work with them, but they are their own entity that takes care of their own projects.

Mr. Bivins said he wanted to bring this up in case people were to ask about this.

Mr. Randolph said the Commission is representing the Town of Scottsville and that he is deeply indebted for Mr. Bivins' mentioning of the welfare of the town and looking to go into the coffers of the County to assist the Town of Scottsville. He said as Mr. McDermott so excellently explained it, however, once Scottsville decided to form a town and apply to the General Assembly for a town status, they became responsible for road projects within the town.

Mr. Keller thanked Mr. McDermott for the presentation. He said it was helpful, and that he wondered whether it would be useful on the two-year cycle for the Planning Commission to have this presentation so that there would be the continuity as new people come onto the Commission and others rotate off. He said he certainly saw why there was not a need to do it every year, but in a two-year cycle, he thinks it could be quite useful. He said the presentation was very well done.

Mr. McDermott said that he, Mr. Rapp, and Mr. Butch are working on how they can start to bring many of these projects into the early stages (i.e. those that may go for grants) to the Planning Commission to receive their input, at least on a biannual basis.

Mr. Keller said because there were so many projects that have come to fruition, it may be something for Mr. Rapp to consider in the annual report. He said this might be something where the citizenry can be informed that although the projects can take many years (as Mr. Randolph pointed out), things do happen. He said the amount of time can be daunting to think about but

when looking at the list, there are things on the list that have been worked on for many years that are starting to go through.

Mr. Rapp said he has been talking to Mr. David Benish about how to revisit the annual report. He said Mr. Benish had been in the process of that when the pandemic hit, which changed some things. He said with the recent loss of one of the County's great planners, Mr. Andrew Knuppel, who moved to Texas and who had been creating many of the statistical figures in the annual report for years, staff have to figure out how to fill that void as well. He said the report is definitely worthy of a revisit.

Mr. Randolph asked Mr. McDermott if he could tell the Commission which body will be discussing the Rivanna bridge that will go into Woolen Mills. He said he looked on his calendar and the date for the meeting was on a Thursday, so it was not the Board of Supervisors. He asked if the Pantops CAC would be discussing it, or the joint Rivanna Committee with the City.

Mr. McDermott replied that it will be the TJPDC that leads the meeting as part of their management of the stakeholder team that includes the City, TJPDC, and County.

Mr. Bivins said he understood from Ms. Schaffer that no one from the public was there to speak about the work session. He thanked Mr. McDermott and Mr. Butch for the presentation. He said they equipped the Commission to be able to share information with those they encounter who may not have any idea as to the magnitude of work the Transportation Planners are doing. He said it is good for the Commission to be the planners' advocates, and it is also helpful for the community to know that while it may take some time for projects to complete, as Mr. Keller said, there are a number of projects that are coming to fruition and should be able to be walked and biked on soon.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Old/New Business

There was no old/new business.

Items for Follow-Up

Mr. Rapp said as he mentioned at the last Commission's meeting, the Board of Supervisors did request that staff coordinate a joint work session with the Commission to talk about the housing policy. He said in looking at dates, he would suggest that there be some adjustments to the December dates. He said one opportunity for the joint work session was December 8, on which there is a public hearing set for the Premier Circle project that Mr. Bivins mentioned earlier. He said the applicant for the project is willing to push the hearing back a week so that the Commission can have an open date for a work session with the Board, which he believed would remain the only item on that agenda.

Mr. Rapp said in doing this, the Commission would need to establish December 15 as a meeting date, which had been a vacant date in December. He said the next work session they were going to have was on December 22, however, which he did not feel would work very well with schedules and being so close to the holidays. He said it seemed to make sense to schedule the work session

with the Board on the housing policy for December 8 and schedule a public hearing for the development review on December 15, if that worked with the Commission.

Mr. Rapp said the other meeting date available for the work session would be December 9 (a Wednesday), but that there was a much shorter window to have everyone to be available 3:00-6:00 p.m., and so this may be more challenging for everyone.

Mr. Bivins asked if the meeting on December 8 would be 3:00-6:00 p.m. or if it would be in the evening.

Mr. Rapp replied that he believed it would be at the normal Commission meeting time, 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Bivins asked the Commissioners if they could see any problems with this, or if they could move forward with it. He said they would have the joint housing meeting with the Board on December 8 and then have the next meeting on December 15. He said he noticed some thumbs up and heads nodding.

Mr. Clayborne said he was not sure if he could attend because his baby's due date is December 7.

Mr. Bivins told Mr. Rapp the Commission was fine with having the joint work session on December 8 and the following meeting on December 15.

Mr. Rapp said they could remove December 22 from the Commission's schedule.

Mr. Bailey asked if there was a meeting scheduled for December 29.

Mr. Rapp said there was nothing scheduled for that date. He added that as he was preparing the schedule for 2021, he was trying to avoid weeks around the holidays. He said he would let the Board know that the Planning Commission will be available on December 8 and would confirm this date with the Board.

Adjournment

At 7:31 p.m., the Commission adjourned to November 10, 2020, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.



Charles Rapp, Director of Planning

(Recorded by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards and transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 11/10/2020
Initials: CSS