

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, August 22, 2016, for the purpose of receiving an update on the State Highway Administration I-495/Greenbelt Metro Interchange Project.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Jessica Bellah, Community Planner; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Erin Markel, John Webster, and Sean Johnson, State Highway Administration; Garth Beall, Renard Development; Kathleen Gallagher, Greenbelt News Review; Bernard Brown, and Bill Orleans.

Mr. John Webster presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing the State Highway Administration's (SHA) project plans to facilitate planned Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and the potential FBI headquarters in Greenbelt by providing improved access to the Greenbelt Metro Station and I-95/495.

Mr. Webster explained that the project will be split into three phases. Phase 1 (projected to begin in May of 2017) is the section of I-495 between the current Greenbelt Station off-ramp and MD 201. Work will entail reconstruction/new construction of the off/on ramps to create a full interchange as well as sound barriers and some widening of I-495 in this section. Phase 2 (projected to begin in 2025) consists of sound barrier installation and some widening/reconfiguration of I-495 between Route 1 and the Greenbelt Station interchange. Phase 3 (projected to begin in 2030) will consist of sound barrier installation and widening/reconfiguration of I-495 between MD 201 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Council questioned why noise barriers are proposed on the inner loop of I-95/495 between MD 193 and the Baltimore Washington Parkway for Greenbelt Park but not for the outer loop in the same area which has residential housing units. Sean Johnson explained that noise level studies deemed Greenbelt Park as a "noise sensitive" area but not the residential area. He said he would forward a copy of the report to the City.

Mayor Jordan requested that during both the design and construction phases of the project, consideration be given so vehicles exiting the ramp and entering the Greenbelt Station north main access road do not impede pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Mr. Herling and Mr. Roberts questioned the negative impact the increased number of vehicles (associated with FBI) will have on air quality. Mr. Webster and Ms. Mach both responded that air quality will not be affected. They said that with the widening of the roadways, vehicles will be moving instead of sitting idly in congested traffic.

Erin Markel reviewed the environmental impacts of the project on wetlands, streams, floodplains and forested area. She explained the proposed mitigation, including: 1) Fish passage improvements to 2,470 feet of stream for Paint Branch at I-495; and 2) 5.31 acres of wetland creation and 2,500 feet of stream restoration at Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. Ms. Markel said any excess mitigation will be used for future projects.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Mr. Johnson advised that SHA will hold a public information meeting this fall to obtain input from the public. Ms. Bellah said staff and SHA have met monthly for the past two years regarding the project. She said when the project is underway, it will be important for SHA to keep in contact with City staff regarding daily traffic impacts (road/ramp access closures).

Mr. Webster said that the proposed project will only proceed (be funded) if Greenbelt is selected as the site for the new FBI headquarters. He said if Greenbelt is not selected, then funding for the project would be up to the Governor.

Mr. Beall provided an update on the FBI Headquarters relocation project as well as development plans should the Greenbelt site be selected for the relocation.

Bill Orleans, Greenbelt, asked and was provided answers to several questions.

Informational Items

Mayor Jordan discussed the transportation for Council in the Labor Day Parade.

Ms. Davis, Mayor Jordan and Mr. Putens discussed the Chesapeake Education, Arts & Research Society (CHEARS) Three Sisters Garden at Springhill Lake Recreation Center. Mr. Putens advised that CHEARS was asking for volunteers for an upcoming Clean-up/Green-up Day in October.

Ms. Pope advised a twelve month old had fallen out of a third floor window in Franklin Park Council suggested window guards be discussed with Franklin Park at the work session on Wednesday.

Several other informational items were discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant*