

**Sector Study
(Draft #4, August 31, 2018)
Critique and Key Issues**

Introduction

The Sector Study can be downloaded from the City's website at:

<https://www.annapolis.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10484/Forest-Drive-Eastport-Sector-Study-Draft-Plan-8-31-18>

Draft #4 of the study has evolved from its earlier presentation and addresses some observations raised by the community and the Planning Commissioners. However, many of same issues identified in the first draft remain. The draft continues to rebuff concerns about mobility, to defend the methodology used to assess traffic volumes, and to ignore suggestions that the pipeline calculations are understated.

On October 15, ECA and the Annapolis Neck Peninsula Federation emailed the Planning Commission and copied City Council expressing concerns about the process and lack of attention to needed infrastructure improvements. This briefing paper highlights some of the key issues that need to be addressed before the Council considers approval of the study.

On November 1 at 7pm in City Hall the Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the study. Please attend and make your express your views.

Key Issues

Study did not respond to community feedback. The study ignores or fails to address the results of Community Survey #1. The survey asked, "What do you not like about the study area?". Respondents indicated, "Traffic when there was an accident" and "Traffic on a day-to-day basis." When asked, "What is the most important to focus on?", two of the top three items were transportation and environment. The study indicates that even with improvements there will still be failed intersections (level of service E or F). See tables on pp C-31/32. The study should call for investments in infrastructure before recommending any land use changes.

Projects in the Pipeline. The pipeline of potential new developments does not include several neighborhoods adjacent to the study area, especially in Parole and off Admiral Cochran Drive. These areas should be included because there continues to be significant new development (670 units) in those locations. Residents in these areas will travel into and out of the FD-Eastport corridor during the am and pm rush hours as they commute to/from work or shopping. The study underestimates the volume of new traffic because these Parole area projects are not included in current pipeline calculations. The traffic models should be run again, including these projects.

Longstanding infrastructure improvements have not been addressed. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recognized the need for infrastructure improvements, most of which have not been made. The study (pp 30-31) acknowledges this situation. The study points out that while "... the State and County have made improvements in the corridor since 2009... the current plans and capital budgets do not identify

this area as a priority for future road capacity improvements.” The County “...does not identify Rt. 665 or Forest Drive as one of the County’s key priority areas.” More detailed information should be made available as to what communications the City has had about these issues with the State and County. The study should include a plan for obtaining for the infrastructure improvements.

Reality check: mobility costs money. Section 3 of the study discusses goals and potential solutions by theme. The portion addressing vehicular, bike and pedestrian mobility (pp 42-45) present numerous good solutions. However, some of the solutions cannot be achieved without funding. Thus, they are gratuitous and not grounded in reality because they cannot be implemented. One recommendation calls for “Work with the County and State to further improve the Fairfax Rd/Chinquapin Round/Bywater Rd segment.” Yet the County previously indicated the sector area is not a priority.

Alternatives to driving require investments. The study indicates that between 2000 and 2015 there has been a decline in walking, carpooling and transit use, and an increase in driving to work and working from home (Appendices, p C-46). Additionally, the Study (Appendices, p C-50) indicates that commuter destinations have changed substantially from 2000 to 2015. Over those years there was a 26.6% decline in the percentage of workers who both reside and work in the City. As of 2015 almost 80% of residents work outside the City and many are driving to locations further away from their homes in the City. There is no indication that this trend will not continue.

In sum, more people are driving and more are driving to locations outside the City. Taking public transit is not an option until there is reasonable service. Public transport requires substantial public investment, which will not happen without a realistic plan.

Implementation weaknesses. The implementation action plan (pp E-1 to E-14) has several important actions related to planning and budgeting for road improvements. All these should be undertaken in year one. Also, the City’s Finance Department should be an active participant; they are not currently cited as having any responsibility.

Affordable Housing. A vibrant economy which creates more jobs is a theme of this study, as well as in the City’s Economic Development Plan. Creating more jobs would be greatly facilitated if the City had more affordable housing. Affordable housing would also aid in preserving a “jobs to worker balance”, which is stated as one of the study’s solutions. The study should provide suggestions on how to provide access to or incentivize the development of affordable housing in the corridor.

File: Ross Email_SS Brief_Oct 26