

MINUTES
Urban County Planning Commission Public Hearing

May 20, 2021
1:30PM
Video Teleconference

- I. **Call to Order** – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state of emergency and Governor Beshear’s Executive Orders regarding social distancing, this meeting is being held via video teleconference pursuant to Senate Bill 150 (as signed by the Governor on March 30, 2020) and Attorney General Opinion 20-05, and in accordance with KRS 61.826, because it is not feasible to offer a primary physical location for the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. via video teleconference.

Planning Commission members present: Ivy Barksdale; Headley Bell; Zach Davis; Anthony De Movellan; Larry Forester, Chair; Jan Meyer; Bruce Nicol; Carolyn Plumlee; and William Wilson

Planning staff members present: Jim Duncan, Director; Kenzie Gleason; Chris Woodall; Chris Taylor; Hal Baillie; Traci Wade; Stephanie Cunningham and Libbe Jefferson

- II. **Imagine Nicholasville Road Corridor Plan, Element of *Imagine Lexington* 2018 Comprehensive Plan, Adoption Public Hearing** – The Planning Commission will take public comment on the proposed Imagine Nicholasville Road, an Element of the *Imagine Lexington* 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

- a. **Staff Comments** – Kenzie Gleason began by thanking the Planning Commission for hearing the plan for Imagine Nicholasville Road, explaining how the discussion of Imagine Nicholasville Road came to fruition, and introducing the consultants presenting Imagine Nicholasville Road – Tim Reynolds, Anne Warnick, Andy Knight and Luis Huber-Calvo. She then turned the conversation over to Chris Woodall.

Chris Woodall also thanked the Planning Commission for hearing the Imagine Nicholasville Road Plan. He offered that this plan follows some of the goals, objectives, and policies laid out in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, *Imagine Lexington*, and specifically achieves an action item in Theme D Policy 12 which states we should “perform corridor studies along arterial streets that examine land use and transportation elements”. He added this plan speaks to complete streets, safety for all modes of transportation, providing housing options, accommodating for an exacerbated shift in retail and professional office markets through redevelopment of underutilized space, regional connectivity, context sensitivity, sustainability, transit-oriented development critical to allowing bus rapid transit to succeed, and more. Mr. Woodall stated that all proper public notice was issued, referred the Planning Commission to the Findings for Approval document and encouraged the Planning Commission to approve Imagine Nicholasville Road making this plan an official element of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, *Imagine Lexington*.

Consultant Presentation – Tim Reynolds began the presentation by introducing the Imagine Nicholasville Road project and the background for the concept plan. He noted the Imagine Nicholasville Road project is an outgrowth of *Imagine Lexington* allowing for the opportunity to act on several *Imagine Lexington* policy goals including providing higher density through transit-oriented development (TOD) along higher capacity roadways to facilitate and support Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). This infill development and redevelopment will support transit ridership and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Mr. Reynolds added that the team gathered data and analysis on traffic conditions finding that 4,513 crashes happened from 2016-2018 of which 14.8% occurred during inclement weather, 26.5% occurred at intersections, 23.7% occurred during evening rush hour and 7 were fatal crashes. Based on this data, the worst intersections are Reynolds Road, New Circle Road and Man O’ War Boulevard. Mr. Reynolds also noted that traffic conditions will only get worse if we “do nothing”. They also looked into alternative mobility including buses, bicycles and pedestrians. The team found that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is excellent near University of Kentucky but declines as the road travels south. Lextran’s route 5 is the fixed route along Nicholasville Road, operating daily and featuring an average of 39,251 monthly passenger boarding’s, carrying over 10% of Lextran’s ridership (pre COVID-19).

In describing the corridor, Mr. Reynolds stated that land uses change from the agricultural fringes of the city into the downtown area. Mr. Reynolds added that Nicholasville Road land use comprises of rural commercial, suburban rural, major commercial, suburban retail, residential, university and downtown. Some of the region’s top employers and destinations call Nicholasville Road home including University of Kentucky, Baptist Health and Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government. One of the land use areas that *Imagine Lexington* focuses on is housing, the team looked at conditions of housing and the statistics using the 2017 Housing Study. Those statistics include 20.4% housing unit growth between 2000 and 2015, 22,780 housing units needed by 2025 to keep up with demand, 7,355 multifamily housing units needed by 2025 to keep up with demand and a 6,000 unmet gap of affordable housing units.

Public feedback was also sought regarding the Imagine Nicholasville Road process via public hearings, the project website, e-newsletters, press releases, social media, public surveys and stakeholder engagement. Based on public feedback 14% of respondents work within 1 mile of the corridor, 43% shop, 26% commute and 17% live on the corridor. Transportation public feedback was sorted into two categories: how people use the corridor today and how people want to use the corridor in the future. 68% drive the corridor while 46% want to drive the corridor, 4% use bus transit while 16% want to use bus

transit, 8% bike the corridor while 16% want to bike the corridor, 19% walk the corridor while 22% want to walk the corridor and 0% who utilize ADA modes use the corridor while 1% would like to use the corridor. Some of the words the public used to describe issues along the corridor included congested, busy, traffic, dangerous, slow, confusing, ugly, messy, frustrating, a nightmare, stressful, inefficient and unsafe. Based on public feedback they would the corridor to be free flowing, safe, smooth, easy, efficient, better, uncongested, friendly, fast, quick, beautiful, walkable, accessible, greener and bikeable. Overall positive public feedback included recommending approval of the BRT, support for transit improvements and the overall vision, a desire for the plan to address tree canopy, add more open space and showcase underground parking. Overall negative public feedback included concerns that BRT transit is not feasible in Lexington or along the corridor, concerns about taxpayer funding used to develop private property, a preference for more single family development, and a desire to focus on reducing automobile traffic through additional lanes. Mr. Reynolds went over the goals of Imagine Nicholasville Road including increasing the intensity of land uses to accommodate population growth, improve mass transit viability, improve safety and connectivity, coordinate transportation improvements with future redevelopment opportunities and develop a cohesive sense of place along the corridor.

Mr. Reynolds then went on to explain the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) component of the plan. The BRT would run approximately 8 miles from the transit center to a park & ride at Brannon Crossing with 13 major stations scattered ¼ to 1 mile along the corridor. These 13 stations would be permanent, substantial, integrate design with surroundings and convey a unique identity and image of the BRT line. In addition, these 13 stations would include protection from the elements, will be safe and visible, include passenger amenities (i.e. seating, lighting, and messaging), real time bus arrival display, pedestrian and bicycle access as well as auto access where possible. Buses would run about every 15 minutes using a mix of Business Access Transit (BAT) lanes, reversible bus only lanes and signal prioritization for faster speeds and reliability cutting travel time by 25%. The potential locations for the 13 stations include the transit center, Urban Target, Good Samaritan Hospital, UK Prall Street, UK Kroger Field (special events), Baptist Health, Southland Drive, Pasadena Drive, South Park/Lexington Green, Fayette Mall, Walmart/Summit, Emmert Farm and Brannon Crossing (park & ride). This would supplement Lextran's route 5 which would remain in effect with a potentially modified schedule. Mr. Reynolds went on to discuss center-running bi-directional bus-only lanes. These lanes would run in the center of the street, include a reversible lane, special signals to control bus movements and ensure safety, passing lanes for busses at stations. The use of BAT lanes would also maintain traffic in both directions, keep driveways open, provide refuge for pedestrians crossing the street, use the right-side curb lane, motorists would be discouraged from using the BAT lane through travel though would be open to motorists making right turns into and out of homes, businesses and other activities, improve bus travel times and reduce delays, can be designated only during certain hours of the day or at all times and require minimal infrastructure improvements including signs and paint. Mr. Reynolds then turned the presentation over to Anne Warnick to cover complete streets.

Ms. Warnick began her presentation of complete streets by indicating complete streets cover improved bicycle/pedestrian facilities, vehicular transportation improvements and enhanced transit. Three tools were used to create the Imagine Nicholasville Road plan including bicycle/pedestrian enhancements, access management, and turn and intersections improvements. Bicycle/pedestrian enhancements include shared use paths that accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians while providing a buffer with vehicular traffic, parking protected bike lanes which provide a buffer for bikes in urban areas with on-street parking where a shared use path is not possible and enhanced urban intersection upgrades providing full ADA access. The use of access management tools can reduce crashes by 30%, reduce delay by 24% and balance the competing needs of mobility and accessibility accomplished via removing and consolidating curb cuts and full access points and adding medians to prevent left turns. The final tool incorporated into Imagine Nicholasville Road is turn and intersection improvements. This includes restricted left turns, U-turns and innovative intersections, and allowing for additional green time to be allocated to through movements on Nicholasville Road, all of which increases capacity along the mainline and improves traffic progression and safety.

The corridor is divided into 6 segments:

1. Downtown – Limestone/Upper
2. University of Kentucky
3. The neighborhoods and Baptist Health
4. Southland Drive to New Circle Road
5. New Circle Road to Man O' War Boulevard
6. Man O' War to Brannon Crossing

The first segment (Downtown – Upper/Limestone) would include parking protected bike lanes, enhanced urban intersection and BRT using curb lane in mixed traffic with stations located at the downtown transit center, Target (outbound at Upper) and Good Samaritan Hospital (inbound on Limestone). Segment 2 (University of Kentucky) will consist of a 10 ft. wide shared use path (SUP) along both sides of the road, innovative intersections and center-running bi-directional bus only lane through campus with stops at UK campus and UK Health. Ms. Warnick noted that the stations can be modified and were based on their initial analysis. Segment 3 (Neighborhoods & Baptist Health) consists of access management, bicycle/pedestrian upgrades including a shared use path and BRT in mixed traffic with signal priority which include stops at Kroger Field (events only) and Baptist Health. Segment 4 (Southland Drive to New Circle) will include innovative intersection treatments, bike/pedestrian upgrades including SUP and BRT using BAT lanes with stations at Southland Drive and Pasadena Drive. Ms. Warnick noted that the BAT lanes would assist in traffic moving more efficiently. Segment 5 (New Circle Road to Man O' War) will include innovative intersection treatments, bike/pedestrian upgrades including SUP and BRT using BAT lanes with stations located at South Park/Lexington Green, Fayette Mall and Walmart/The Summit. The final segment (Man O' War to Brannon Crossing) includes bicycle/pedestrian upgrades including SUP, follows US 27 access

management plan and BRT in mixed traffic (shoulder running where possible) with stations located at Emmert Farm and Brannon Crossing that will be a park & ride. Ms. Warnick handed off the presentation to Andy Knight to discuss Transit Oriented Development.

Andy Knight began his presentation by explaining what Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is. TOD is a set of transportation and land use principles in which higher density, mixed-use development is focused around a transit stop in a high frequency transit corridor. TOD orients mixed-use developments and the highest densities around a transit corridor, promotes public plazas, shopping, and dining along pedestrian connections, creates a dense network of pedestrian and bicycle friendly facilities, and promotes walkable types of development based on proximity to transit access. The three example catalytic sites for TOD include South Park & Crossroads Shopping Centers, Fayette Mall and Emmert Farm. Andy noted these are all concepts and would need to go through the development plan process.

South Park and Crossroads Centers concept could include multifamily housing, retail/restaurant, a parking structure, mixed use buildings, plaza/open space, and townhomes. The Fayette Mall and Fayette Mall Plaza concept could include a new plaza with retail and a hotel, phased-in apartment development on Rojay Drive, a new town center with retail and mixed use, and shared parking garages. Mall Road would be shifted south for a potential local transit route, a Shillito Park connection via a bridge would be established, and new open space would be incorporated. The Emmert Farm concept could include a 5-story office building, transit station location with pedestrian crossing treatment, right-in/right-out intersections, 4-story multifamily housing along the Nicholasville Road corridor, restaurant with corridor visibility accessible from the site, hotel & event center or office with single story deck, central community greenspace with playgrounds, fields and gardens, possible local route access, 2 to 3 story attached “flats”, conservation buffer with trail along the rail line, townhomes with community greenspace, a greenway buffer along Waveland property, and potential future connection to Southpoint Drive.

Mr. Knight went on to discuss the regulatory framework of the Imagine Nicholasville Road plan which establishes the mechanism for achieving the 20 year vision, creates station and development typologies that respond to the existing context, provides a sample of how design guidelines can be implemented along the corridor, regulates elements like setbacks, building placement and building heights, provides detailed action items for adoption, and serves as a recommendation on future land use decision and development standards. Mr. Knight noted the regulatory framework does not enact regulation, re-zone parcels or create a new overlay, appropriate funding for projects or approve development proposals, impact existing buildings and uses (residential, commercial, or otherwise) and does not mandate exactly how development will occur. Mr. Knight handed off the presentation to Mr. Reynolds for the next steps.

Mr. Reynolds indicated that there are some short term, long term and funding ideas to assist in implementing the Imagine Nicholasville Road plan. Mr. Reynolds then ended the presentation.

b. Commission Comments – Chair Forester opened the floor for Commission members to comment or ask questions.

Ms. Plumlee asked if lane markers or tape on Nicholasville Road as well as reducing the speed limit could be implemented immediately without waiting for the project to officially move forward.

Kenzie Gleason responded to Ms. Plumlee saying that lane markings could be implemented much sooner than later though she would have to defer to the Traffic Engineering Department and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in regards to speed limit adjustments as they set processes and standards for that.

Ms. Meyer asked about bridges over some of the wider intersections similar to the bridge currently being built in Hamburg.

Anne Warnick responded to Ms. Meyer by offering that they tried to keep recommendations like that fairly general due to the high cost involved with building bridges, though that is something that could be investigated and looked into during the implementation process.

Ms. Meyer followed up with asking who would be responsible for safe pedestrian access.

Ms. Warnick responded to Ms. Meyer that pedestrian and bicycle access can be implemented into certain zone codes but also highlighted areas on Nicholasville Road where connectivity needs to be implemented.

Mr. de Movellan asked how the buses are going to transition from the middle lane to the right lane safely, especially during the more traffic heavy times of the day. He also questioned what the impact would be to areas off Nicholasville Road if you restrict left hand turns.

Mr. Reynolds responded to Mr. de Movellan's question regarding the bus indicating there would be special signals that would hold a green or red light to allow a bus to transition to the curb lane.

Ms. Warnick responded to Mr. de Movellan's question regarding traffic impact due to restricting left hand turns offering that this is still conceptual but you can use coordinated turn around/U-turn signals to allow better flow of traffic or have signals to allow more through movement. A much more detailed traffic study will be needed but this is a concept they know works and has potential on this corridor.

Mr. Bell commented that everyone involved has done a remarkable job in the study and has answered many of their questions; however, Nicholasville Road is already very dense and we are adding more density with these concepts and questioned how we can manage this.

Mr. Knight responded to Mr. Bell's question by adding that development is going to happen over time but the idea with the mixed use is that you could have someone live, work, dine, shop, etc. in the same area and not have to get in the car during the day which decreases the demand on the vehicle. You are also allowing for traffic to move in both directions instead of most lanes for incoming traffic heading into work during the morning rush or most lanes for outgoing traffic heading home during the evening rush.

Mr. Reynolds added on that this concept spreads traffic across in a more efficient way.

Mr. Bell followed up with if there are any other models or cities that were utilized as a source to demonstrate the Imagine Nicholasville Road plan

Mr. Reynolds offered that they did a virtual tour of Indianapolis, Indiana for inspiration as well as Cleveland, Ohio and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Mr. Wilson questioned the future of the reversible lanes that we have now.

Ms. Warnick responded to Mr. Wilson's question indicating the reversible lanes would need to go in order to make the plan work and would not severely adversely affect traffic.

Mr. Wilson followed up by asking about the traffic signals and if they would be synchronized in such a way to keep traffic moving and that Nicholasville Road is a major hospital roadway with emergency vehicles moving in and out of the road and asked how that would play into the plan.

Ms. Warnick indicated traffic signals are one component of the plan that they plan to work with and offered that emergency vehicles would also gain from the more efficient flow of traffic. She also added that some of the medians could be flush to the ground in order to allow emergency vehicles to pass traffic.

Ms. Plumlee asked about who or what funds will be used to fund the plan.

Ms. Warnick offered that much of the road is on a state route, so some coordination with Kentucky Transportation Cabinet would be needed.

Ms. Gleason added that she represents the Metropolitan Transportation Organization who oversees the federal funding that comes into the Lexington area (in coordination with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet) and that there are certain funds they have discretion over and funds the state has discretion over. She added that grants are also an option for major capital projects as well as other transportation pots of money but are very competitive.

Mr. Reynolds added there are a number of grant programs but one of the components the federal government looks at is if your plan is multidisciplinary including land use and potential transit oriented development.

Mr. Forester asked Kenzie if there will be public/private partnership with funding the plan especially around privately owned land on the corridor

Ms. Gleason responded that if we have a property owner dedicate right of way to us we can use that as a local match that is necessary to match the funds which is usually 80% federally funded and 20% locally funded.

Mr. Reynolds offered there are a number of examples of selling of naming rights. In Cleveland, the Cleveland Clinic and the University Hospital contributed \$10 million to the bus line that was named the Health Line due to their contributions.

- c. Public Comment – Mr. Forester opened the floor for public comments, noting that, due to the number of citizens who wished to speak, a two-minute time limit would be imposed for each speaker.

Fred Pope of 975 Edgewater Drive commented that he wrote the educational plan to reverse the traffic lanes back in 1978 and Lexington has gone from 150,000 people to 300,000 people. The issue he sees with this plan is that there is a need for an expressway that runs parallel to Nicholasville Road to take the volume of traffic off enough to where this plan could be implemented completely. He believes it's a good plan but the volume of traffic on Nicholasville Road is like an expressway. On an expressway there are no bike lanes but a free flowing way for people to get across town. Has made a proposal that the freight line, which runs parallel to Nicholasville Road, be relocated because of the hazardous materials traveling down the road where all the hospitals are located. Mr. Pope stated that the consultants only considered roadways but not any consideration to the freight lines and believes if they had then the consultants would have suggested relocating the freight line in the interest of public safety. Mr. Pope suggested using this corridor for transit rail by above ground rapid transit.

Brittany Roethemeir with Fayette Alliance at 603 W. Short Street read aloud a statement from Fayette Alliance.

"As Lexington-Fayette County continues to evolve, we know the question is not if we grow, but how. Investment in transportation and mobility infrastructure plays a critical role in Lexington's success. The means by which we get from A to B is essential to the overall quality of life of our neighbors and the sustained economic prosperity of our City. Innovative updates to guide development on our busiest corridor, Nicholasville Road, are key for future growth and success, and also provide the tools to overcome some of our greatest challenges, including affordability, equity, and access in housing, transportation, and infrastructure. During the creation of Imagine Lexington, over 10,000 community members made their voices heard about what they hoped to see reflected in our City's growth strategy over the next 20 years. One key recommendation was to develop in-depth land use plans and transportation studies for Lexington's major corridors, with Nicholasville Road being the first to undergo this analysis. The community's policies and goals as outlined in the Plan included identifying opportunities for high-density development along corridors to accommodate future growth, supporting transit-oriented development, more efficiently managing traffic, and creating a more transit, pedestrian and bike-friendly environment. With Imagine Nicholasville Road, we see community members' desires, Planning Staff's thoughtful analysis, and hard data combined to support an innovative future vision. The recommendations brought forward in the Imagine Nicholasville Road plan further our goal of efficiently and effectively using our existing land and infrastructure to accommodate growth and to re-focus infill and redevelopment around people instead of around cars. In preparation for the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update, Fayette Alliance commissioned nationally-recognized firm, Lord Aeck Sargent, to analyze properties within the Urban Service Boundary and identify underutilized properties that offered future development and redevelopment opportunities. This landmark study identified over 9,000 non-residentially zoned acres of opportunities, primarily along our major corridors. The Planning Staff, in similar analyses, found that our major corridors are "vastly underutilized". Fayette Alliance also partnered with LBAR, HBAL, Fayette County PVA, and others on the 2017 Housing Demand Study, which showed the need to diversify our housing stock to meet the housing needs of our growing and changing population, including "missing middle" housing like duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and other types of multi-family housing. Pursuant to the collection of population/demographic data, analysis of our existing land to accommodate growth, and the comprehensive public engagement process, the Plan recommended focusing growth on our major corridors, like Nicholasville Road, and implementing walkable, transit-friendly development. Because higher density development is not appropriate in every context, the Plan encouraged more dense development along our corridors to support enhanced transportation opportunities and to emphasize that this type of development wouldn't be appropriate in existing and established neighborhoods. Imagine Nicholasville Road identifies three initial sites along Nicholasville Road that are prime opportunities for re-development to achieve multiple goals discussed above: better use of vacant and underutilized land, encouraging new housing types to diversify our housing stock and work towards greater affordability, promoting higher density near existing transit and other services, and enhancing opportunities for transit, walkability, and connectivity of development. The catalyst sites identified by the plan showcase opportunities to accommodate growth in a way which meets the vision our community members set forth in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. They outline opportunities for us to make our underutilized commercial land work for us as community members, creating more housing options and amenities closer to where we work and play. As we increase density on our corridors and invest in more advanced transportation options to accommodate that growth, strategies to increase diversity of transit options, safety, and reduce congestion are critical. Imagine Nicholasville Road's proposals to implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Complete Streets, focusing on safety and accessibility for any mode of travel, can improve quality of life, accessibility and affordability for all community members and visitors traveling this busy corridor. These strategies can help make modes of transportation other than personal cars feasible in Lexington. Transportation costs are the second largest expense for families after housing; the average US family can spend up to 20% of its income on transit expenses, and the average burden can be up to 30% for low income families. Increased transportation options means greater access and affordability for all. Over 5,000 community members engaged with the Imagine Nicholasville Road public input process, prioritizing reduced congestion, walkable development, improved safety, and corridor beautification. This plan takes those priorities and provides a roadmap for putting into action changes that will directly and significantly impact the quality of life of anyone traveling this major corridor. After decades of car-centric development in Lexington, Imagine Nicholasville Road lays out a framework for making development about people and how we use our land, while considering the realities of vehicle dependency intrinsic to our culture. It will take work to change the culture of transportation, and this is a strong foundation on which to build the changes necessary to better serve our community for present and future generations. The Nicholasville Road corridor serves as the backbone of economic development in Lexington and is where the majority of our jobs are located. In analyzing the corridor's "area of influence", Planning Staff found it to include over 100,000 employees, 30,000 residents, and over 3600 businesses. Research shows that providing innovative solutions to public transit challenges and investment in public transportation infrastructure can significantly contribute to an entire region's competitiveness for good jobs and an educated workforce, even when those solutions aren't required to access those specific jobs. Reducing travel time, travel costs, and transit reliability issues connected with car-dependence can provide significant savings to households and businesses, which correlate to an increase in jobs, income, and businesses sales, potentially contributing millions of dollars to a community's economy. Improving the entire transportation network of our busiest corridor, and the in-depth analysis of each segment and related area of Nicholasville Road to establish the real needs of the same, provides a creative and forward-thinking framework for better serving our community members and businesses, encouraging continued economic growth and success for Lexington. Imagine Nicholasville Road and the recommendations and roadmap included therein are the innovative strategies we must implement to encourage smart, sustainable, and equitable growth in our community. The recommendations and action plan proposed by Planning Staff carefully take into consideration our existing conditions, our objective needs, community members' desires, and offer transformative

opportunities for developing the Nicholasville Road corridor in a way that will be advantageous to all Lexingtonians. Encouraging responsible utilization of existing land for infill and redevelopment, increasing opportunities for diverse housing options, offering safe, multi-modal transportation options, increasing economic opportunities and affordability, access and equity in housing and transit are all achieved by this proposal. As the recommendations are implemented, special consideration will need to be taken to preserve the residential character of existing neighborhoods, and to prevent and mitigate displacement of existing residents and vulnerable communities as new investments are made. Design standards and complete street policies will be critical as we move forward, and engagement with the public as these are pursued will be required for their success. Fayette Alliance stands ready to assist in any way possible as this work continues and looks forward to being an active participant in this transformative vision. Imagine Nicholasville Road, on its face, is consistent with the 20-year vision set forth in Imagine Lexington. Our City's work towards implementation of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan is evident in these types of transformative proposals and we applaud Planning Staff for their hard work in making this vision a reality. Fayette Alliance appreciates the Planning Staff's and Planning Commission's leadership in these efforts and respectfully recommends the approval and adoption of Imagine Nicholasville Road into Imagine Lexington. I know how committed each of you are to Lexington. On behalf of the Fayette Alliance, I sincerely thank you for your consideration".

Blake Hall of 36 Richmond Avenue stated he supports the plan. He went on to state that he currently avoids Nicholasville Road because it does not work well and is not safe. Mr. Hall added what we have is currently unsustainable and cannot continue to push people to surrounding counties because we refuse to allow our neighborhoods to change and people being scared of three story buildings. By encouraging other ways for people to get around, other than a car, we allow more people to have a reasonable livelihood in Lexington. We have a housing shortage in Lexington and Nicholasville Road is severely underbuilt.

Erin Hathaway of 123 Twelfth Street commented that she supports and thanks all the work by the consultant's team and the members of LFUCG. She voiced concern about emergency vehicles. She also stated support for a treatment similar to Richmond Road/Main Street where there is a median and tree canopy, and how the open space on Nicholasville Road and around the city will look like.

Stuart Smith, Senior Vice President of Development for CBL (2030 Hamilton Place Boulevard, Chattanooga, Tennessee), stated he was excited but also concerned as he does not know what the effects will be on the hotel redevelopment they are currently working on. Mr. Smith went on to say he looked at the criteria for picking the sites and while they like mixed use he is concerned that a fixed plan will create a problem for flexibility in the future, though they do want to add residential, office, etc. Mr. Smith feels this site does not meet all the criteria as it's their top performing mall, top performing Macy's, a high performing Dillard's and cannot imagine a major reformat for many years and questioning how Fayette Mall got on the list.

Chair Forester asked Chris Woodall to address Mr. Smith's comments and concerns.

Chris Woodall stated that this is a concept plan and some ways the concept can work on a site. Mr. Woodall added that just because there happens to be one structure that's shown in a particular place on the concept plan doesn't mean that any development plan that comes forward would have to meet that plan exactly, adding there is some flexibility and guiding principles for the catalyst sites as well as allowing development over time.

Amy Clark of 628 Castle Road asked the Planning Commission to consider what land use guidance for corridors would institute if adopted today. She went on to question if this guidance would be used for future zone change applications. Ms. Clark offered that she is concerned about the plan that effects the neighborhood section, specifically the land use frontage and believes it will encompass the entire residential neighborhood. She added BRT has enormous funding challenges including getting the line installed as well as maintenance of the line. Ms. Clark added that the development will increase cramming on Nicholasville Road.

Chair Forester attempted to get Ms. Clark's attention to inform her she was over the time limit

Mr. Davis petitioned to Chair Forester that we have limited comment to two minutes and asked that Ms. Clark respect that request.

Ms. Clark felt she had not taken more time than any other speaker

Chair Forester responded that he is keeping time and would like Chris Woodall to respond to her comment about the guidelines for zoning.

Mr. Woodall offered that the stations are context sensitive based on the character throughout the corridor. Therefore, the consultants have proposed some guidelines for land use decisions or zone change applications that come up to be able to weigh the proposals against some of the recommendations that have been made. Mr. Woodall reminded everyone that these are conceptual guidelines that have been set to make BRT possible through transit oriented development.

Luis Huber-Calvo added that the neighborhood typology was written in to prioritize infill on Nicholasville Road and tried to focus on the transition area and really thinking how density steps down from higher density along the corridor to relate to the scale and context of the residential community that surrounds the corridor. Much of the conceptual plan for the neighborhoods was based on feedback from representatives from the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor.

Barry Saturday of 3416 Laredo Drive commented that he felt the surveys from Planning regarding the plan was disingenuous and cannot be relied on. Mr. Saturday went on to add that the traffic impact will be great due to this plan. Mr. Saturday believes this plan will remove driving lanes from every major artery in town and believes there is no public interest in this plan. Mr. Saturday went on to say he has spoken to Mr. Woodall and other staff about their intent and believes the City will take lanes away from every major corridor in Lexington. Mr. Saturday believes this plan will also increase taxes.

Mr. Forester concluded the public comment portion of the hearing and brought the meeting back to the Planning Commission for additional comments.

Additional Planning Commission Comments

Ms. Plumlee offered that she was appreciative of Fayette Alliance's comment about neighborhood preservation. She also mentioned the mission statement of the 2018 Comprehensive plan to be flexible yet focused in our planning guidance and using our community resources wisely should be something we think about moving forward.

Ms. Meyer believes that Mr. Pope raises a very interesting idea about exploring other ways of transit and would be shortsighted to not take some time to explore that.

Mr. Wilson agreed with Ms. Meyer's statement and asked if the rail option was considered

Ms. Gleason responded that this has been looked at in Lexington over the years and has been determined not feasible in Lexington because the railroad company has no interest in moving due to lack of right of way. Additionally, Lexington is not nearly as dense as the communities that have light rail systems and we are teetering on the edge of not being dense enough for BRT, though this plan is trying to point us the direction for the use of BRT based on the Transit Alternative Analysis conducted by Lextran in 2014.

Mr. Reynolds added that you cannot mix buses and trains as it would not be safe. While they did look at the rail option, it is a major freight line that is highly unlikely to be moved that is controlled by the owners who have the final say.

Mr. Bell offered he feels this was a very thorough examination and study.

d. Planning Commission Vote

Motion – A motion was made by Mr. Bell, seconded by Mr. Wilson, and carried 9-0 (Pohl and Penn absent) to approve Imagine Nicholasville Road Corridor Plan, as an Element of *Imagine Lexington* 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Staff comments: Mr. Duncan thanked the Planning Commission and that their comments will be incorporated throughout the implementation of this plan. Mr. Duncan reminded the Planning Commission that the agenda on Thursday would include the regular subdivision and zoning items with a work session at the end of the meeting to discuss Open Space due to this public hearing taking the place of the regular work session.

III. **Adjourn** – There being no further business, Chairman Forester declared the meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Larry Forester, Chair

Carolyn Plumlee, Secretary