

Fairfax Center Area Study – Phase I
Braddock District Working Group
Monday, June 30, 2014, 7:00pm
Conference Room 232, Fairfax County Government Center

Attendance:

Working Group: Vincent Picciano, Joe Martin, Susan Martin, Dan Kennedy, Leigh Kennedy, Terry Wanbaugh, Roni Robins, Debbie Brown, Tracey Barrett, Tom McDonald
Staff: Meghan Van Dam (DPZ), Tom Merce (DPZ), Kim Rybold (DPZ), Rosemary Ryan (Supervisor Cook's Office), and Nell Hurley (Planning Commission)
Additional Attendees: Andrew Teeters

Minutes

7:03 Vincent Picciano called the meeting to order. He asked if there were any comments regarding the minutes from the April 28, 2014 meeting. No suggestions were made. Roni motioned to accept. Susan seconded the motion. Motion passed.

7:05 Agenda Item 1: Kim Rybold introduced the Summary of Impact Analysis for Braddock Land Use Alternatives. The study is not finished yet and should wrap up by September.

- Kim Rybold provided background information to the land use analysis. Two uses were presented to the group: an assisted living facility (90-beds) and mixed-use development consisting of multifamily residential units and townhouses at 20 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).
- Land Units U and V are mostly classified as low density residential. In this area, there are policies that have been in place for some time. In-fill development should be of a compatible use, type and intensity in accordance with Policy Plan guidance. While there are pockets of C-8 zoned commercial uses along the Lee Highway corridor, the Plan encourages the property to be developed in a more compatible fashion with the adjacent residential land uses.
- Rosemary Ryan asked staff to define what uses are considered compatible with the adjacent land uses.
 - Kim Rybold responded that screening, buffering, and architectural creativity can all help with compatibility when taking the functions into context.

- Meghan Van Dam also pointed out that compatible does not mean the same. There should be a synergy between the uses.
- Roni Robins mentioned that the parcels in question are not traditional in-fill in that they are zoned for commercial and front the neighborhoods rather than being buried within them. This land use pattern reinforces the need to keep the parcels compatible.
- Vincent Picciano mentioned that in addition to considering what is next to and behind the parcels, land use patterns across the street should be considered as well.
- Kim Rybold mentioned that the south side of Lee Highway is planned as a transition area between the more dense development on the north side of Lee Highway and the low density residential development south of Lee Highway within the Occoquan Watershed.
- Tom McDonald brought up eight acres zoned R-1 southeast of the Fairfax County Parkway/Lee Highway interchange and asked if language needed to be added to address this area.
- Rosemary Ryan asked if there needed to be language regarding the Merrifield Garden Center site as well.
 - Meghan Van Dam said that the group had addressed the undeveloped parcels rather than the current parcels such as these. If the parcels are not addressed, then they maintain their current recommendation of 1-2 du/ac. Staff will go through and check parcels for accuracies as part of the editorial updates that will be part of Phase One of the study
- Roni Robins disagreed and said that staff brought to the group's attention the commercial parcels rather than the current use of other parcels – such as Merrifield Garden Center. She also assumed that staff was going to bring to group's attention the large parcels that may enter into question of rezoning and redevelopment.
 - Meghan Van Dam felt that this was addressed during the open-house and/or the first working group meeting.
- Tom McDonald said that Merrifield Garden Center could be a site for another school given the land size.

- Kim Rybold mentioned that Fairfax County Public Schools identified the need of an elementary school in the Oakton/Fairfax area or in Western Fairfax. Fairfax County Public Schools prefers not to make specific recommendations on the locations of future facilities on privately-owned property.
- Commissioner Hurley asked staff what the future land use recommendation is for Merrifield Garden Center.
 - Kim Rybold said that the current Plan recommends residential uses at 1-2 du/ac.
 - Susan Martin feels that a school or a RECenter would be appropriate as future land use for the Merrifield Garden Center site.
 - Commissioner Hurley asked if there is a place in the Plan to recommend for the development of a public use on the site.
 - Meghan Van Dam said that caution should be observed when making such a recommendation since it is considered down-planning.
- Commissioner Hurley expressed her concern for redevelopment of Waples Mill Mobile Home Park. She does not want to see current tenants be forced to relocate to western Fairfax County and would prefer that land be found within the Fairfax Center Area to establish a new mobile home park.
- Tom McDonald pointed out that the transit center would be best served closer to Fairfax Corner and I-66.
 - Kim Rybold mentioned that bus routes are being looked at by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).
 - Vincent Picciano said that bus service is dependent on development density.

7:42 Agenda Item 2: Kim Rybold opened up the talk for a discussion of the impact analysis results for Land Units U and V. She reviewed the current zoning and Plan recommendations.

- Kim Rybold first discussed the impacts for Sub-Unit U1. The current zoning for the parcels in question are C-2 and C-8, commercial. The Plan

recommendation calls for residential at 1 du/ac at the baseline level and office use at 0.25 at the overlay level.

- The first alternative land use recommendation for Sub-Unit U1 would retain and expand neighborhood serving retail uses along Lee Highway as well as the inclusion of an assisted living facility. The second alternative would also retain and expand neighborhood serving retail uses; however to a lesser extent than the first alternative. It would also include a recommendation for a childcare use in addition to the assisted living facility.
- The term “daycare” would be clarified to “childcare” to specify the intention of the use to a specific age group. All alternate uses need to have appropriate buffers and open spaces to reduce noise and visual impact.
- After studying the assisted living proposal for parcel 56-2((1)) 66, it was determined that the proposed intensity of approximately 0.60 Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) would be too intense and incompatible with the adjacent residential uses. This intensity translates to a residential density of approximately 12 du/ac. The intensity of this use would be better suited for a larger parcel.
 - Meghan Van Dam said that the intensity in an R-2 zoned district should not exceed 0.25 FAR.
 - Tracey Barrett said that childcare on this parcel will be an issue with noise for homes on Arniel Place. She suggested sticking to quieter facilities.
- Susan Martin said she opposes assisted living due to the traffic burden and safety of the residents. She would be more open if the service road could be opened so that the access is better. The impact of traffic on the existing Lee Plaza Shopping Center is terrible and the assisted living facility would only add to the problem. An additional concern is the scale of the four story building adjacent to two story single family detached homes. She is also concerned about the childcare use and the noise and speed of childcare customers.
- Kim Rybold redirected the discussion to Sub-Units to V1 and V2. The first alternative would redevelop the studied parcels as neighborhood serving retail and a mixed-use development on the existing Waples Mill Mobile Home Park and the smaller scale Fairfax Centre retail center fronting on

Lee Highway. The second alternative would expand the mixed-use concept across all of the parcels in the study area.

- Kim Rybold also mentioned parcel access for the southwest corner of Shirley Gate Road and Lee Highway. A planned grade-separated interchange for the intersection would make it difficult to provide access to the adjacent parcels. A suggestion is to consolidate the parcels to residential and allow for redevelopment. This would not be a down-planning as it is adding an option to existing land use recommendations.
- Kim Rybold said that it is important for the group to see that mobile home parks are a source of affordable housing. The location of this land use may lead to potential compatibility issues with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Kim Rybold mentioned that there is already denser development on the northern side of Lee Highway. This could become part of the activity center; however it could compete with the core of the suburban center. Caution needs to be taken to protect transition areas.
 - Kim Rybold said that if this area were to redevelop, staff recommends consolidating all of the identified Sub-Unit V2 parcels to create a more consistent street frontage (less parking lot) and with better access to Rust and Shirley Gate roads.
 - Leigh Kennedy suggested incorporating the City of Fairfax's Fairfax Boulevard master plan with this plan for cohesiveness.
 - Roni Robins commented that a cohesive streetscape design along the Lee Highway corridor is a good idea.
 - The group noted that a viable option for Sub-Unit V2 should include the current Plan language with no change.
- Meghan Van Dam said that the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) has said that the interchanges along Lee Highway will be looked at as traffic movers rather than pedestrian movers. Part of the analysis in the second phase of the study will look at what has actually happened with development versus what has been recommended in the Plan.

- The group mentioned that a pedestrian enhancement study would be nice for entire corridor.
 - Kim Rybold mentioned that FCDOT is aware that pedestrian safety needs should be considered in any future interchange study for the corridor.
- Kim Rybold discussed trip generation and access. The cumulative analysis of the first and second alternatives for Sub-Units U₁, V₁, and V₂ indicates that the second alternative generates less vehicle trips largely due to its greater mixed-use emphasis in Sub-Units V₁ and V₂. In regards to access, inter-parcel connectivity was an important element in Sub-Unit U₁. Another item is the plan for a series of grade-separated interchanges at several intersections along the Lee Highway corridor. The current plan calls for a collector-distributor (C/D) road system between the interchanges that would feed vehicles to the interchanges through one-way roads that would provide eastbound flow on the south side of Lee Highway and westbound flow on the north. FCDOT understands that the plan needs to be reevaluated, as many of the developed land uses differ from what was originally planned for the Fairfax Center Area.
 - Another topic of discussion concerned connecting cul-de-sacs in the study area. The group did not support connecting the cul-de-sacs to permit vehicular traffic; however they did support constructing pedestrian and bicycle connections.
 - Kim Rybold concluded with a brief discussion on future transit improvements for the study area. She mentioned that a Fairfax Connection bus route that would link Centreville and George Mason University via Lee Highway is included in the 2009 Transit Development Plan. FCDOT is in the process of developing a new Comprehensive Transit Plan. The Plan is updated every five years and is scheduled for completion in 2015.
- Vincent Picciano pointed out the diversification of the community and that it will continue to change as time goes on.
- Kim Rybold then discussed the environmental analysis. She mentioned that road noise should be considered when reviewing new residential development in close proximity to Lee Highway. Another potential concern is naturally occurring asbestos.

- Roni Robins mentioned that while naturally occurring asbestos is an environmental concern, it is one that can be effectively mitigated.
- Kim Rybold then discussed the parks and recreation analysis. According to the analysis, a majority of the entire Fairfax Center Area is served by stream valley parks. The park system for the area as a whole, however, lacks connectivity and lacks accessibility through a connected trail system.
- Lastly, Kim Rybold provided an overview of the schools analysis. According to the analysis, the Fairfax Center Area is served by Fairfax Villa Elementary School, Lanier Middle School, Fairfax High School. The area will soon be serviced by Woodson High School and Frost Middle School once the boundary study adjustment takes effect in the 2014-2015 school year. It should be noted that only part of the land area in Land Unit T is serviced by Woodson High School. Some students west of the Fairfax County Parkway attend Fairfax High School. It should be noted that there are capacity challenges at the middle and high school levels. These issues have been traditionally addressed through new school construction, additions to existing facilities, interior modifications, temporary modular buildings, and changes to attendance areas. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2019 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies the unfunded need for a Fairfax/Oakton elementary school that is in close proximity to the Fairfax Center Area. Capacity enhancements for Oakton High School as well as a potential new high school in the western portion of the county were also identified.

8:50 Agenda Item 3: Following a discussion of the analyses, Kim Rybold provided staff's preliminary recommendations.

- In regards to Sub-Unit U₁, an assisted living or childcare use may be appropriate on subject areas as an option for planned office uses. An option for a residential use would be appropriate for the Shirley Gate Road/Lee Highway intersection given the impact of the planned interchange improvements on the adjacent properties. The current Plan recommendations for Sub-Unit V₂ remain viable options in the future. The properties may be appropriate for future mixed-use development; however if Plan options are added and the Suburban Center is expanded, an analysis should be conducted to determine what benefits would be gained through the expansion. The benefits include the creation of a consistent street frontage along Lee Highway, coordinated site access, and improved internal circulation. Parcels 56-2((1)) 45B, 45, 47A, and 57-1((1)) 11A-B should be consolidated to achieve this vision.

- The floor was then open for recommendations. Vincent Picciano suggested that there should be another meeting since there was a lot of information provided to the group that they needed time to digest. The group agreed and suggested meeting on July 28th at 7pm.
- Rosemary Ryan wanted to confirm that childcare is not an option due to traffic and noise. The group decided they would discuss this further when they make their final recommendation at the next meeting.
- Roni Robins asked if there are any development criteria that will help to assess the impact of whatever building goes into these parcels and help to manage the review process.
- Tom Merce said that the working group has the ability to decide what kinds of conditions for redevelopment they would like to apply to the land use option recommendations. These conditions, in addition to Zoning Ordinance requirements, will guide what can and cannot be developed.
 - Meghan Van Dam said that staff will bring copies of examples of performance criteria to the next meeting.
- Tracey Barrett asked the group if anyone would be the recording secretary for the next meeting since she will be out of town.
- Vincent Picciano adjourns the group.

9:11 Dismissal