Fairfax Center Phase II Working Group

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

June 30, 2016

Attendance

Working Group: Chris Grisafe, Jackie Bradley, Sherry Fisher, Jeff Saxe, Robbie Stark, Vince Picciano, Jeff Parnes

Staff: Ken Sorenson, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning (FCDPZ); Meghan Van Dam, FCDPZ; Marianne Gardner, FCDPZ; Kristin Calkins, FCDOT; Marcia Pape, Braddock District office.

Guests: Elizabeth Baker, Walsh Colucci

Administrative Matters

Vince Picciano, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Jim Katcham, the former chairman, has resigned from the group, and Vince Picciano, former vice-chairman, will assume the role of chairman. The working group approved the June 30, 2016 meeting minutes. An updated study schedule was presented to the group. The follow-up on the Pender Professional Center was moved to the July meeting as the representatives will be presenting updated land use scenarios. The timing for the study will not be affected by the working group making a recommendation on the Pender site at the July meeting.

Core Area Discussion

Meghan Van Dam, DPZ, reviewed past decisions made by the working group as well as a chart showing the associated trips for each studied site within the Fairfax Center Area study. She indicated that the group should make a recommendation for land uses to inform the Chapter 870 transportation analysis. Chris Grisafe asked how a Chapter 870 analysis would affect the group's recommendations. Meghan Van Dam replied that the Chapter 870 analysis looks at the transportation impacts based on the land uses and suggests possible mitigation measures. Kristin Calkins, FCDOT, added that the analysis from the Chapter 870 provides information on ridership levels to support Metrorail and the needed infrastructure. Chris Grisafe noted that the group needs to balance the transportation and land use needs. Meghan Van Dam highlighted Merrifield as a balance of appropriate land uses and transportation infrastructure. Staff explained that the funding would be advertise in July in carryover funds, and may be appropriated in September. Jeff Saxe, asked when the analysis would be finished by VDOT, should County funding be available in September. Kristin Calkins replied that it would be beyond the study's existing timeline and that it would take VDOT about three months to review the analysis. Jeff Saxe commented that it makes sense to pull out the non-core sites and the Centerpointe site from the scope of an 870 analysis since the core areas are more closely tied to transit and don't have any pending development projects. Vince Picciano asked if the group needed to take action on breaking apart the study and Meghan Van Dam replied that staff would come back to the group with a proposal.

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The group continued to look at specific sites listed on the vehicular trip generation chart and discussed densities and associated trips. Jeff Saxe noted that the group should find the best land use rather finding a combination that would not trigger an 870 analysis. He noted that he would be uncomfortable with the mall outparcels as currently studied along with the mid-level Fair Lakes scenario. Chris Grisafe agreed, and said that those scenarios wouldn't make sense at that intensity level for Metrorail.

Jeff Saxe made a motion that the group proceed with the current schedule as outlined by staff for parcels that are outlined under Scenario 1 in the handout titled "Fairfax Center Area Trip Generation Scenarios", and all other properties close to the Metrorail station be delayed until a later date until the 870 results are available for review. Meghan Van Dam explained that this is a process change, and essentially is breaking the study into third phase. Meghan continued by explaining that the group can bring all other recommendations to the Board with everything but specific intensities for the core area. The group can talk about conceptually wanting to see TOD mixed use in this area, but couldn't adopt what the intensity recommendations are in the area without having the 870 analysis completed for the core area. Chris Grisafe seconded Jeff Saxe's motion, and the working group unanimously voted affirmatively, 7-0-0.

Vision Statement

Vince Picciano gave an overview of his vision statement for the Fairfax Center Area. He noted the change in demographics and lifestyle/accommodation preferences. He asked the group if the area should be a transfer station, or an urban center and stated that there is already a critical mass of activity in area. He envisions interconnectivity to the mall and area as a whole and noted that future VDOT improvements to bridge over Monument Drive perpetuate the limited pedestrian access. Vince also spoke about BRT and its unknown design and destinations. He listed characteristics of a vibrant community, such as a grid of streets, enhanced town square, and improved pedestrian access and mentioned that we are starting to see some of these elements develop in the Fairfax Center Area.

Jeff Parnes mentioned that there is a second Metrorail stop planned in the Fairfax Center Area and the mentioned elements should be focused on that second Metrorail stop as well, noting that not much thought had been given to this site. Sherry Fisher asked what the overall goal of the "Vision Statement" was and Vince replied that he wanted it to summarize past group discussion and give an overall vision for the community. Jeff Saxe noted that the document called out characteristics of a vibrant community and displayed an aspiration of how the area could develop. These are not in the Plan, but should be, as simply as bullet points. Jeff suggested that the vision consisting of an explanation and elements could be included in the Plan by staff.

Sherry Fisher expressed concern with the statement about building to the street line. The under-construction Residences at the Government Center are incredibly close to the street, which is a safety issue along the high-speed, high-volume Monument Drive. Jeff Saxe suggested a modification to say "Buildings to the street except along high-speed, high-volume roadways." He said these concepts could be integrated into the language in one or two paragraphs, and the discussion about pocket parks could be removed.

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Land Use Scenarios – Core Focus Area

The group continued the discussion from the last meeting on the land use scenarios for the core focus area by looking at areas that hadn't been discussed. Meghan Van Dam reviewed the sites:

- Three grouped mall outparcels are not part of the Fair Oaks Mall recommendation.
- Fairfax Corner parking lot (County-owned) recommended for office use at 3.0 FAR, equating to about 500 KSF. This is an optimal TOD-based site with no mid-level scenario.
- Fairfax Towne Center is a separate Plan Amendment that will be heard by the Board of Supervisors on July 26. The adopted land use will be included in the Chapter 870 analysis.
- Fair Lakes Promenade is a 15.6 acre site and the Plan recommends office use at 0.5 FAR. The proposed mid-level scenario is mixed use at a 1.0 FAR with about a 50% residential component. The high-end scenario is mixed-use 2.0 with about 680 multi-family units and the other half of the mixture office/retail use.

Jeff Saxe commented that he was rethinking the initial intensity recommendations for part of the mall outparcels, Fairfax Corner parking lot, and Fair Lakes Promenade as there is no associated development proposal and no massing. He asked what kind of intensities we have at other Metrorail sites. Meghan Van Dam responded that Huntington is about a 2.0-4.0 FAR, Van Dorn doesn't have a density cap on one of the parcels, and Springfield doesn't exceed 2.0 FAR. Jeff noted that he was uncomfortable making recommendations at higher densities without the usual impacts review and doesn't want to set up situation with very high intensities with unstudied impacts. Jeff thought maybe a 2.0 FAR would be appropriate for the Mantech site, Fair Lakes Promenade and Fairfax Corner Parking Lot with the other two mall outparcels tapering to a 0.8 FAR. Robbie Stark mentioned that there should be a provision if Metro is not built.

Meghan Van Dam also mentioned that in order to get the Fair Oaks Mall redeveloped, a second road connection would need to be made and the Mall most likely could not do it on its own. She recommended looking at the larger area and how potential infrastructure needs could be met with the additional intensities. The needed bridge, or second connection is not specified in the procedural guidelines of the Fairfax Center Area road fund. This may be an opportunity to look at the area to help with the transportation analysis and other infrastructure and how intensity can meet those needs. Jeff Saxe replied that he wouldn't want to do another study in this regard, and that if if the group picks an intensity number on low side, the County hasn't hesitated in the past to authorize an out of turn Plan Amendment or special study to look at higher intensities. He continued that the 2.0 FAR recommendation for the core focus areas sites should hinge upon metro funding.

Jeff Saxe made a motion for up to a 2.0 FAR for the Mantech site and Fairfax Corner Parking Lot at the overlay level dependent upon Metrorail funding, or similar adopted funding language in the adopted Fairfax Center Area text.

Jeff Parnes made a motion for up to 1.5 FAR at the overlay level for Fair Lakes Promenade with Metrorail funding language.

Jeff Saxe made a motion for the northern half of the mall property, or outparcels, up to a 0.8 FAR with Metrorail funding language.

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Seconds provided for all motions and each unanimously approved, 7-0-0.

Areawide Guidance

Meghan Van Dam gave an overview of the structure for the Areawide Guidance and reviewed the following draft revisions:

- Greater emphasis on planned Metrorail stations and guidance about surrounding land uses
- Expanded Core Area around Fair Oaks & Fairfax Corner (1/2 mile radius around
- station)
- Removal of solar design guidance
- Removal of access management guidance
- Strengthened guidance on multi-modal connectivity, including pedestrians and Cyclists
- Updated parks classifications guidance
- Updated public facilities and housing tables
- Editorial updates to reflect contemporary vocabulary

She mentioned the references to the Stringfellow Metrorail Station, and that in the future it may be considered for redevelopment with the caveat of understanding how it relates to the lower, surrounding densities. She continue by outlining the agenda for the next meeting to include review of implementation and the development elements. Meghan said that the utility of the development elements has changed and it has become more difficult to implement. Marianne Gardner mentioned that the environmental areawide remains under review.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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