

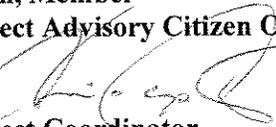


County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 16 December 2009

TO: Mr. Tim Sargeant, Chairman
Mr. Robert Cosgriff, Member
Mr. Doug Wrenn, Member
Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizen Oversight Committee

FROM: Chris Caperton 
Laurel Hill Project Coordinator

SUBJECT: Master Plan for the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area

Attached for the Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizen Oversight Committee's (PAC) consideration is the Master Plan for the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Site. The Master Planning process began in May 2008 and concluded this past week with additional stakeholder input from the South County Federation.

The signatories to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) were each invited to participate in the planning process and many of these provided written comments. Additional stakeholder feedback came from citizens, special interest groups, and neighborhood organizations. County staff participated in 35 public outreach meetings and presented the Plan to over a dozen County departments and agencies. Staff also discussed the Plan with Board of Supervisor's Chairman Bulova and Supervisors Hyland, Herrity, and Cook.

The Master Plan represents a collaborative effort between The Alexander Company, County staff, and Laurel Hill stakeholders. The Plan recognizes the key historical elements of the site and proposes the aggressive preservation and reuse of the National Register Reformatory and Penitentiary structures. The Reformatory buildings are planned for market-rate and affordable apartment units. The proposed new construction of single-family homes will compliment the historic elements of the site while providing much-needed capital to restore and reuse the existing buildings. Planned retail and commercial space will utilize both historic buildings and new construction. Site features such as the open courtyards, the guard towers, and elements of the Penitentiary wall are planned for retention as signature reminders of the site's history dating back to the Progressive era of the early 1900s. Most importantly, the Master Plan provides an opportunity to transform the former Lorton prison into a showcase of adaptive reuse that can function successfully within, and add value to, the National Register District, the larger Laurel Hill and South County communities, and the entirety of Fairfax County.

A third-party review of the Master Plan economics concluded that the Plan contains reasonable financial assumptions related to development and construction costs, the lease and rental markets, home and pad site pricing, and tax credit availability. A financial gap, however, still exists for the project which will require creative solutions. The third-party review assessed the potential use of such County tools as Tax Increment Financing and the creation of a Community Development Authority to close the gap. Further analysis is required as more detailed project finances are developed.

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I appreciate the PAC's leadership in this planning process. Community agreement on all issues is rare – if not impossible – for a project of this size and complexity, and we don't claim it here. However, we collectively strove for a consensus dialogue to shape decisions in a manner that considered the interests of all groups and citizens. We achieved this through an open and fair process. The PAC deserves credit for ensuring a forum for thoughtful input and dialogue. The development process moving forward will be marked by continued community coordination, MOA stakeholder review, financial scrutiny, and County oversight. County staff is committed to an open and transparent process.

In addition to further developing the financial structure of the project our near-term activities include identifying a baseball field in South County, considering the steps necessary for a Rezoning and Comprehensive Plan amendment, and assessing preservation impacts per the guidelines of the MOA. We will continue to use the Laurel Hill website to post information, meeting summaries, work products, and schedules related to the development of the Adaptive Reuse Site.

County staff is prepared to answer any questions about the Master Planning process and next steps.

cc: Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Gerald W. Hyland, Supervisor, Mt. Vernon District
Patrick Herrity, Supervisor, Springfield District
John C. Cook, Supervisor, Braddock District
Anthony Griffin, County Executive
Jim Zook, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
John Dargle, Director, Fairfax County Park Authority
Alan Weiss, Office of the County Attorney
Len Wales, County Debt Manager
Barbara Byron, Director, Office of Community Revitalization and Reinvestment
John Burns, Chairman, Architectural Review Board
Linda Blank, Historic Preservation Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning
Leanna O'Donnell, Laurel Hill Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning

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