

# HERNDON-MONROE COMMITTEE

*06/14/10*

## *Meeting Notes*

### **Attendees:**

Nick Bauer, TF  
John Bowman, TF  
John Carter, TF  
Richard Chew  
Fred Costello, TF  
Rick Hamilton  
Kathy Kaplan  
Upen Malani  
Susan Mockenhaupt, TF  
Patricia Nicoson, TF  
Guy Rando  
Greg Riegle, TF  
Joe Stowers, TF

### **Open Forum**

Joe Stowers—The existing bus crossing bridge over Rt. 267 is about 24' wide and could be converted into a 2-lane multi-purpose vehicle road (but with no walkway without widening the road). This could help relieve congestion on Sunrise Valley Drive. A ramp to this crossing could be constructed on the Herndon (north) side of Rt. 267. There is a possible future market for air rights development at H-M and Reston Center stations. The RA board wrote to Supervisor Hudgins asking that the County request that the Airports Authority conduct a preliminary engineering study that would define what would need to be done now (e.g., construction of footings) to allow for future air rights construction. Supervisor Hudgins reportedly is interested in this issue.

Patty Nicoson—The Washington Business Journal recently published an article about the air rights construction over Rt. 395. The Town of Herndon will be holding a public meeting regarding Herndon development near the H-M station. A discussion of lessons learned regarding the Comstock public-private partnership is being planned for a future Task Force meeting, perhaps in August.

Greg Riegle—The lessons learned presentation would be most useful if it were a more general discussion of the County's perspective, not specific to Comstock.

John Bowman—Metro gates will be locked after hours, preventing crossing of Rt. 267—stranding pedestrians and cutting off ready access to downtown Herndon. Air rights development would alleviate that problem.

Guy Rando—The Wiehle Avenue station should not be excluded from the discussion of air rights.

## **Administrative**

- Minutes from the June 8, 2010 meeting were approved.
- Noted that FOIA restrictions prevent the committee from conducting business via e-mail. Individual members may correspond via e-mail; all discussions need to take place in a public forum.
- Review of meeting topics/presentations:
  - 6/14—Reston 2020 (Kathy Kaplan, Guy Rando)
  - 6/22—VDOT (Rick Stevens); Tishman Speyer (Brian Berry et al.); and CB Richard Ellis (Bob Huebner) and Sprint (Keith Thompson)
  - 6/28—Brandywine (Mike Cooper)

## **Reston 2020**

Discussion of analysis conducted and options considered for the station area, including potential air rights (Kathy Kaplan, Guy Rando).

- Papers representing four different views on the development of the H-M station area are available on the 2020 blog.
- The Tishman Speyer property is a long walk from the future station, and therefore is not ideal for TOD. Rather, the TOD should be focused on the Sprint campus and Arboretum West property.
- Air rights would add connectivity and additional TOD potential.
- The natural areas should remain natural.
- Access roads parallel to Rt. 267 are needed.
- Tishman Speyer would prefer traffic directed off of Sunrise Valley Drive, with additional connection to the station from Monroe Street and Rt. 267.
- The area needs to be unified with Herndon and walkable.
- Several examples of approved and completed air rights developments exist (e.g., Boston Chinatown, and I-395 in Arlington)

Committee discussion:

Patty Nicoson—Air rights construction would need approval from Airports Authority, zoning from County

Joe Stowers—Airports Authority generally defers to the County on development.

Greg Riegler—We have consensus that air rights development would be advantageous at the station; however, that is a long-term solution. We need to not lose sight of what needs to happen at Sprint in the shorter term, keeping in mind the potential for air rights in the future.

Upen Malani—The Airports Authority may have restrictions on building heights.

Joe Stowers—Prior economic studies suggest that density would need to be high (e.g., FAR 6.0) to make an air rights project economical.

Greg Riegler—There seems to be general agreement that air rights development would be advantageous and the wetlands park should be preserved.

Susan Mockenhaupt—This is Reston; a cookie cutter solution is not appropriate. High-rise development near the wetland park could be designed to minimize impacts on the natural area.

John Carter—The question is how to accomplish the goals. The H-M station should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a connected corridor that includes Wiehle and Reston Center. A balance should be achieved among the stations.

Susan Mockenhaupt—The woodlands area, while certainly enjoyable, is not a unique ecosystem in Reston (unlike the wetlands). This is a favorable site for residential development. Residents may be willing to walk further than ½ mile if the walk is inviting. Possibly also encourage housing for seniors--aging in place.

John Carter—What makes each station unique? What should differentiate the H-M station: lower density than the others, environmental quality, “back-of-the-house” office tenants, high-tech village? There is an opportunity for development on open areas of the Tishman Speyer property.

Greg Rieggle—There needs to be amenities to make the residences attractive. This area will most likely compete at a different price point than Town Center. Many of the developments in the area now are office buildings that have not been fully depreciated.

Joe Stowers—The Herndon area currently is all office development. The plan for 3,500 parking spaces at H-M is in the Record of Decision, and therefore will be difficult to change. Need to have a transition plan to eliminate subsidized parking for rail and convert the parking to support TOD.

Susan Mockenhaupt—The committee should ask the County to investigate legal aspects of the parking capacity commitment.

Greg Rieggle—The County parcel is a key to overall development of the area. The opportunities for public/private partnerships to develop the area should be explored—opportunities to share parking.

John Bowman—People will walk longer distances if the walking environment is interesting (e.g., NY, Boston)

John Carter—Think of the corridor as a linear city with 3 stations. Sunrise Valley Drive could be made into a grand, green boulevard covering all 3 stations: generous (e.g., 50’) setback, extensive plantings and trees including in the median, walk/bikeway. Sunset Hills could have a similar treatment on the north side of Rt. 267.

Kathy Kaplan—Art should be included along the pathway.

Patty Nicoson—Lake Anne is a good example of height balanced with open space. We don’t necessarily need a wedding cake arrangement of heights, although higher buildings will most likely be located near Rt. 267. Quality design can mitigate potential adverse impacts on the Polo Fields neighborhood.

## **Discussion of Vision for Station Area**

The Committee agreed on the following principles for the H-M station area:

- Consideration of future air rights development should be considered, and measures taken to allow for such future development.
- DOD development on the County parcel via a public/private partnership should be explored.
- The wetlands area should be preserved.
- Additional means of access to the station is needed to relieve traffic pressure on Sunrise Valley Drive.
- Additional north-south connectivity over Rt. 267 is needed.

- The area should be designed so that the walking environment is inviting and easy—walkable/pedestrian-friendly.
- Sunrise Valley Drive should be a grand, green boulevard.
- Encourage quality design balancing building height and open space.
- Lower overall density than other Reston station areas.
- Encourage new residential development (and amenities for residents) to balance the commercial space that now predominates.
- The area should have a local, rather than regional, focus—serve the residents, workers in the station area (as well as the commuters using the station).