

Reston Master Plan Special Study

Process Committee Meeting Notes PN 4/20/10

April 16, 2010

SUGGESTED EDITS BY JOE STOWERS HIGHLIGHTED

North County Government Center

Summary. The Process Committee decided that at the next meeting on April 27, we should break up into four small groups, each composed of a balanced cross-section of task force members and alternates, to work on the Reston Parkway Station area issues. Staff will prepare a package of materials that includes existing information: the language from the Comprehensive Plan, existing land use and zoning maps, aerials, and the Reston Metrorail Access Group recommendations. Each team will report back its findings. Staff will provide a list of specific issue areas and products that are expected.

A group, composed of task force members including representatives of the small groups, will be formed to synthesize the recommendations (or staff will) to be presented to the Task Force at a subsequent meeting. Future task force meetings will involve a similar process for each of the other station areas, and a final report on this process will be developed for presentation to the public.

Attendees:

Task Force: **Fred** Costello, Van Foster, Arthur Hill, Dick Kennedy, Mark Looney, Patty Nicoson, Bill Penniman, Greg Riegler, Joe Stowers

Staff: Heidi Merkel, Goldie Harrison Other: Rick Hamilton, Polo Fields

Patty Nicoson opened the meeting by asking committee members to introduce themselves

She then asked Heidi to review the Charter of the Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force. Heidi said it was to evaluate the current Comprehensive Plan for Reston to look at the PRC and non-PRC areas and the three Metrorail station areas. She emphasized it was not necessary to redo the plan. We need to familiarize ourselves with what is in the Comprehensive Plan and identify the areas where we need to amend the plan. What is appropriate to add? We need to add a vision for Reston, the station areas, and the other ~~the~~ PRC-zoned areas. Parts of the plan are outdated.

What is the meaning of vision? One sentence? There are differences in the station areas. Before we determine densities for the areas, we need to identify the differences. Take a look at the big picture For example; what do we want Wiehle Avenue station area to be. Joe said that we needed to change the name of the area from Reston-Herndon Suburban Center. Reston is urbanizing.

Heidi noted that there was nothing in the plan that reflected a vision for Reston. Creating one would be helpful to residents. Dick noted there was no longer one developer we need to acknowledge the challenges in the development process. Mark asked how much could we change the system? One way the stations are differentiated is that the stations at Wiehle Avenue and Herndon-Monroe are considered to be commuter stations, while the Reston Parkway station is an urban origin/destination station. Others thought that the Wiehle and Herndon Monroe stations should not necessarily be considered only commuter stations.

Rick asked if the task force was trying to affect change. Heidi responded there are two aspects: a vision element, which would take 20, 30, or 40 years to achieve. The opportunity is in the vision part. We could say Wiehle Avenue is not just a commuter station. As a practical matter, the planning and development can't be changed quickly in the short term. It is a commuter station. It could be possible to convert parking to other parking uses in the future. However a funding decision has already been made to support a 2,300 kin garage for transit commuters as part of the Dulles rail project.

Art Hill said he had a process concern. We do need to know the current zoning, current information. Do the means justify the ends? Heidi said we will receive modeling of traffic impacts from the current Comprehensive Plan. Once we have that we will know once the traffic implications in the current plan. This will help guide recommendations.

Arthur. The decision should be based on knowledge. We should know parcel by parcel what is allowed on the properties. We need to know the current zoning parcel by parcel. If we make changes, we need to know if they would be difficult to accommodate in the current plan.

Mark. The traffic study will assess the biggest impact. We do need to look at the applicable zoning regulations, maps and categories. Now there is a **PRDC** zone. The underlying zoning is irrelevant. We need to look at how it should be changed. He expressed concern about backing into a development scenario. One example is a Reston Metrorail Access Group recommendation concerning adding a new crossing of the Dulles Toll Road. We might need to encourage Kaiser Permanente to provide for this new road on its property.

Joe said there's an opportunity for transitional parking. We have heard the community's input on the number of the parking spaces at Wiehle Avenue. The decision to have no parking at the Reston Town Center came from **community recommendations regional policies that limited parking at the town center because it was intended to be an urban center**. Providing too much parking would limit transit use. **The County can use gradual increases in parking fees We plan ways** to transition down from the current 2300 spaces to a lower number. It would be possible in the future to use the spaces for other uses.

Bill. The vision thing is important. We are looking at details. Heidi noted the vision is for a longer-term time frame. We need to also consider the near to mid-term. Are the recommendations adequate to reach the first step of the vision? She expressed concern about putting in levels of density now. We

need to achieve the longer-term vision. Bill suggested we could have recommendations for the subunits. We could address usage. We need to know the basic levels of development.

Dick. We need to get to a discussion of three stations and the specifics. They are commuter stations but more than that. We need to provide the opportunity for transit-oriented development. We need to get beyond the planning principles to the bigger issue of transportation infrastructure to support extra density.

Greg. We don't have a good way to facilitate the discussion. How do we organize ourselves? Suggest we break into four groups. Bill. We need several days to reflect on the discussion. We should have a set of committees, perhaps one on each station. They could meet several times.

Van. How do we organize? We should determine what the final report should look like, for example what are the chapters? Is the first chapter on the vision? Would we have a chapter for each station area? Will we discuss issue areas in the report? What is needed to provide this information? We will need to write those sections. Van later volunteered to work on an outline of the report, as did Bill Penniman.

Greg. Is there a value to the Town Center committee model? Mark. The Town Center is different. The north Reston Town Center does not have a starting point. When we are dealing with the stations, we are not starting from scratch. He expressed concern about breaking up into three distinct groups. People will sort out by interest group. They will self-select.

Dick. We need a strong agenda. Try to find common grounds. He had an agenda of vision for what needs to be done from staff.

Joe. Concerned that in the larger group, we just deal with things on the surface. **By breaking into small groups people can get into specifics and new ideas will surface for task force consideration.**

Dick. Be specific, be comparative. Heidi. Vote on concepts. Get on the agenda a vision for the three stops then establish committees. We could provide time to allow us to break into smaller groups at the next meeting. ~~Joe. Things surface.~~

Bill. We need to breakdown into small groups. Concern that the groups not be so large that the discussion is superficial

Gerry. We have a vision of the importance of the wetlands at the Herndon Monroe Station.

Heidi. At the last meeting dealing with the Herndon Monroe Station, John Carter articulated key points to start the discussion.

Mark suggested that we start with an area that was less complicated. He noted the Herndon-Monroe has the least definition in the Comprehensive Plan.

Dick suggested looking at all three station areas together.

Rick. You need to consider taxonomy of issues.

Bill. Unless we sit down and start integrating these issues. We can't do it at the table.

Mark suggested that staff would be compiling the comments at the public meetings, the community's vision. Then we should get a package that includes the existing plan recommendations, updated information, land use information, zoning, the Reston Metrorail Access Group recommendations and overlay these pieces of information. Does the grid make sense? For example at the Kaiser Permanente site, is there room for the proposed new crossing. We should have background information. What should be added? We are rethinking the boundaries. The recommendations we make will include urban design. Now the recommendations build in a wedding cake scenario with the highest densities in the center tapering down to the edges.

Patty expressed concern about where you start measuring the quarter and a half mile distances from the stations since in the Dulles corridor there is a significant distance between the station platform and the drop-down areas north and south of the Dulles Toll Road. The right-of-way is more than 300 feet wide.

We could ask people to put down recommendations in writing, to develop a written statement. We need to make sure there is balance in the groups. Staff should get something in front of us to react to, a Strawman. We need to develop a vision.

Bill. We could ask for written products from the task force small groups. A smaller group could bring together the recommendations and create a Strawman. Interested community group members present.

Patty suggested that the sense of the group was that everyone wanted to work together on the same station areas. Van said the larger group would have the opportunity to look at the thoughts that were developed and then make a decision. Someone could put together a synopsis of the recommendations.

Mark. Maybe we should create a group to synthesize the recommendations of all the groups at the end and come back with a synopsis.

Heidi. Start with small groups. How do you articulate the vision, how do the stations compare?

Patty said that Alexander Garvin had talked about a framework for the redevelopment of Reston of a public realm that would include streets with special treatments, green sinews, paths, public buildings, schools and spaces in the village centers, parks, open spaces, squares, and plazas. . (This would make everyone more comfortable and make it easier to live in Reston.) We could design this overlay of the public realm in the near term. In the longer-term, we have the opportunity to develop an enhanced network of streets. This would be helpful to residents.

Gerry. "Proposed way forward"

Patty mentioned having found a contact at Robert Charles Lesser & Co. to help present information about the market based on significant market research.

Bill. Don't know what development will want to come here. We need to come up with a good plan.

Patty noted the need to consider the role of the public in the development of the concepts for the station areas.

Dick. We can't respond point by point. The meetings are open. We provide the opportunity for people to comment. Different people come with different perspectives. We have to acknowledge that. We don't need to have more public meetings.

Joe. We can present our concepts to the community and show that what we have done is based on the community workshops.

Mark. We could bring forward a Strawman to the community. We have heard from others, heard from the property owners.

Gerry. Is information going to be there? If the community sees that the infrastructure is going to be provided that will address their major concerns. He thought that the community would be in agreement with what we are going to propose.

Joe. Addressing parking, we need to tie in the reductions of parking. We could price parking and use the revenues to fund improvements. **Then use the freed parking spaces to support TOD, both by making desired uses, such as affordable housing, less costly, and by marketing space at reduced prices.**

Bill. From participating in community meetings, he did not think, the task force was far apart from the citizens. We need to keep finding ways to get input. The groups could present their own straw men in the 10-minute presentations at the beginning of the meetings.

Patty said that she thought it had been helpful to have representatives of Polo Fields and several property owners at the previous meeting to provide input on the Herndon-Monroe Station ~~area~~ area.

Greg. This is one part of the process. We are producing a data point.

Dick asked what Patty meant when she said she didn't think Herndon-Monroe parking levels have been decided. Patty thought there was a difference between the Wiehle Avenue and Herndon Monroe stations and the treatment of parking. Wiehle is at the end of Phase 1 and decisions have been made about that station. Herndon-Monroe is being studied in the Phase 2 preliminary engineering phase now underway.

Mark. Ten years ago, we needed to include a parking facility at Herndon-Monroe to demonstrate sufficient ridership for the rail system. Once it is built, you can repurpose the parking. At Herndon-Monroe, if you build either extension of the garage in the early years you would operate it as a

commuter facility, but when it comes online, you could lease it to a private developer. We cannot make that decision now. It is the county responsible for the parking? Yes.

Dick. We need to get this information about the parking out so people realized what the situation is. We should not provide the parking garage to Metro.

Joe. We can develop policies in the plan that state the expectation to reduce commuter parking over time.