

DRAFT

Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force

Wiehle Avenue Sub-Committee

Meeting Summary – June 30, 2010

Public Comment

Mr. Penniman asked if there was any public comment. The only comment was Ms. Nicoson's suggestion that the subcommittee arrange for a presentation by Kaiser Permanente and consider the Fannie Mae area in its planning.

Linden Development Partners – Mr. Nate Smith

Mr. Smith presented Linden's preliminary concepts for its three parcels in the Wiehle area. Sunset Square, Triangle Park and Skatequest.

Sunset Square is a 2.3 acre parcel at the southwest intersection of Sunset Hills and Wiehle Avenue. Although it is probably impractical to consolidate this with either of its neighbors to the south or west, Linden is discussing the possibility of using one acre of Comstock's land, which would require a rezoning action. They envision replacing the existing office complex with one 14 story office building of 350,000 square feet. The addition of the Comstock property would allow more green space and result in a FAR of about 2.2. The office buildings in all three parcels would include limited space (5%-10%) for support retail.

Triangle Park is a 6 acre parcel adjacent to the east side of Plaza America. Linden envisions redeveloping this with 250,000 square feet of office and 300 residential units comprising. The office building would be adjacent to the DAAR and the residential near Sunset Hills Road. Mr. Smith commented that the current comprehensive plan requires that each parcel meet mixed use percentages. However, since it is desirable to place office buildings near the DAAR and residential further away, the County should consider having the mixed use percentages apply to broader areas to allow more flexibility while still achieving the mix desired.

Skatequest is a 6.2 acre parcel just north of the WO&D trail in land unit G7. Linden's concept is for 190 residential units in two buildings and two 8-story office buildings with 405,000 square feet of office. Linden would like to have the WO&D trail provide convenient pedestrian linkage to the Metro station; later discussion highlighted the need to involve the Park Authority in order to expand the connections to and use of the trail. Also, it was suggested that the exiting VDOT parking adjacent to the trail could be used to make a parallel path; however, this could jeopardize the ability to create dedicated bus lanes on Sunset Hills.

Linden supports the concept of a grid of streets and is willing to split their Triangle Park property to accommodate the grid. Their grid concept reduces the number of curb cuts on Sunset Hills between Wiehle and Plaza America from 8 to 5.

Linden would like to provide at least the minimum parking required under existing code; most parking would be structured. Mr. Smith noted that a requirement to reduce parking below this level would reduce the marketability of the property and delay redevelopment.

Beacon Capital – Mr. Jeff Kovach

Beacon owns a 216,000 square foot office property in G7 at 11111 Sunset Hills Road and envisions adding an 80,000 square foot building northeast of the current building. Since the current building is overparked, no additional parking is necessary. They would need an increase in FAR from 0.5

to 0.7. Although the grid of streets doesn't enhance their property, they might support a grid that ran on the edges of but not through their property.

Vision Discussion

Mr. Penniman invited each subcommittee member to comment on the vision for the Wiehle station area.

Mr. Murphy noted that it was difficult to see an overall vision from the multiple presentations and asked if it would be possible for the County to consolidate the various concepts on a single drawing. He also commented on the need to organize the pedestrian access around the station area in order to avoid the haphazard wanderings he observed at other Metro stations.

Mr. Foster noted that the presentations and discussion seem to indicate broad support for mixed use, the grid of streets and a focus on educational institutions. Issues that need discussion include the density and building height numbers and the vision for Isaac Newton Square.

Mr. Gill emphasized the need to incentivize mixed use, especially to support residential development.

Mr. Corrigan questioned whether the corridor could support heavy development in all three station areas or whether development should be concentrated in the Town Center area.

Mr. Thomas generally agreed with the concepts developed so far, but noted the relative lack of green space. The emphasis needs to be on residential development and on ensuring that the grid is created.

Ms. Allen said that transportation needs to be a major focus.

Mr. Looney made the distinction between what one can aspire to and what one can control. The critical component of the plan is to create a vision of mixed use and incentives to achieve it rather than specific implementations, such as the layout of the grid of streets. Also, the plan should avoid disincentives that work against its objectives. For example, the Tysons plan calls for more residential, but the requirements for low cost housing and LEED make this less likely. Also, Mr. Looney suggested that the group needed to consider where recreational space would go. Finally, he suggested that the subcommittee not restrict its thinking along existing parcel boundaries, but consider what makes sense as developable units.

Mr. Van Horn underlined the need for incentives for residential development.

Mr. Penniman commented that the Wiehle station area should be viewed as having its own character and not be considered as an "adjunct" to Town Center or Tysons Corners. He agreed that mixed use is a critical issue to address and that the plan needed to look at incentives, especially considering that the area was now predominantly office. He believes that the Isaac Newton Square area should become a residential village and that a connection to Lake Fairfax Park should be created.

Next Steps

In response to a discussion on how to proceed, Ms. Merkel suggested that the subcommittee focus on the form of development, how land uses related to each other, and location. She suggested that concepts for mitigation of transportation problems need to be addressed before it would be possible to consider how much additional development was possible.

The subcommittee's report should be completed by the first week of August in order to give the task force members several weeks to review it prior to the August 31st meeting.

The Co-chairmen will send the subcommittee highlights of Mr. Penniman's paper on the Wiehle area to assist in formulating a vision. Members should make revisions to the paper and return it; the results will be used as a basis for discussion.

Members Attending:

Bill Penniman – Co-chairman
Andy Van Horn – Co-Chairman
Judith Pew
Mike Corrigan
Van Foster
David Gill
Mark Looney
Art Murphy
Anne Strange
Paul Thomas