

Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force
Wiehle Avenue Sub-Committee
Meeting Summary for July 28, 2010

The Committee meeting was hosted by Mark Looney at the offices of Cooley, LLP.

Kate Rudacille made presentation on behalf of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, which operates and maintains the W& OD Trail. The W&OD is 45 miles long and 100 feet wide for almost its entire length. There is a paved trail for the entire length. In addition, there is an unpaved trail that parallels the paved trail for a lengthy section. NVRPA owns the W&OD in fee. Easements exist for Dominion Power along much of the length and for a number of crossings by roads, sidewalks and a variety of utilities.

Proposed road crossings require NVRPA and federal approval. Interconnections with other bike and pedestrian trails can be implemented with staff approvals. The policy is that new road crossings must be grade-separated, and close crossings that could interfere with the flow of bicycles are disfavored. The NVRPA is open to widening the trail and to locating adjacent parks but a 50 foot buffer is desired. The W&OD's crossing of Wiehle has been identified as a problem area that would benefit from a grade-separated crossing. The road between Isaac Newton Square and Sunset Hills also poses a hazard. Urban redevelopment in the vicinity of the W&OD can pose difficulties for the W&OD, as it has in Vienna and Herndon. The NVRPA is not favorably inclined to more crossings or re-routing.

Members of the committee were asked to provide suggestions for new park areas on top of the map of existing parkland prepared by the staff. Mark Looney noted Fairfax Park Authority's standard for urban parks, including expectations for minimum ratios of park acreage to residents and workers. This is reviewed in normal project review processes. G-3, G-1 and G-7 were suggested as candidates for a large park areas, with smaller parks distributed through the Study Area. Dick Kennedy raised the issue of where athletic fields might be located? The idea of combining a recreation center with athletic fields was raised in the discussion. Suggestions were also made for active green areas and plazas ringed with restaurants, perhaps in G-3, G-4; for a trail connecting the W&OD and Sunset Hills to Lake Fairfax Park; and for continuous bicycle trails along each side of the Toll Road. The co-chairs asked for submission of additional ideas, which they will try to put together for later discussion and the draft report.

Co-Chair Andy VanHorn handed out 6-page document with 5 color-coded maps to provide a framework for discussion. The document in bullet items says in its introduction: Location: Build up density in an urban TOD between Sunrise Valley and Sunset Hills, prioritizing the parcels within the quarter-mile from Wiehle Ave, while respecting established residential communities south of Sunrise Valley and north of Isaac Newton Square. High density closer to the station, tapering down as you move away. Identity: urban mixed use TOD emphasizing residential, education, retail and non-retail attractions.

The document, which Andy presented as a power point, offered a "strawman" by 'landbay sub-units; showing current zoning (ranging from 0.35 to 0.5 F.A. R.s); current Comp Plan TOD allowed (ranging from 0.7 to 1.5 F.A.R.); Proposal A (ranging from 1.0 to 2.5 within ½ mile of the station)

and Proposal B-, co-chair (ranging from 1.5 to 5.0 and extending throughout the Wiehle Study Area). Andy introduced the F.A.R. map as the basis for a discussion of what he said were "aspirational F.A.R.s" in exchange for street grids, library, high quality design, first movers in support of infrastructure, open space, educational and cultural venues. A number of questions were asked. Bill Penniman expressed different opinions on a number of points in the strawman, including with respect to maximum densities, distances from the station at which FARs could be sensibly raised, impacts on traffic and neighborhoods. Time expired before a full discussion could be had.

Right around here, discussion and time ran out. To be continued.

Members Attending:

Andy VanHorn co-chair
Bill Penniman co-chair
David Gill
Richard Kennedy
Mark Looney
Arthur Murphy
Judith Pew
Paul Thomas