

**Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force**  
Wiehle Avenue Sub-Committee  
Meeting Summary for August 25, 2010

Dick Rogers urged the Sub-committee to require a much higher ratio of residential space to office space. Endorsing Joe Stowers' recommendations, he proposed a ratio of 4:1 SF (Residential:Office). Dick noted that traffic is a concern and that emphasizing residential development will encourage pedestrian and transit activities. He asked the committee to consider how to provide incentives for residential development, suggesting that increased density and reduced parking requirements would be better incentives than reducing workforce housing requirements.

Joe Stowers told the Sub-committee that he had met with transportation experts in John Carter's offices. They indicated that a residential:office ratio of 4:1 would provide the best balance and least adverse impact on traffic. The impact of a 3:1 ratio would be only modestly different. He noted that there will be a big imbalance in Tysons, which the Reston Task Force should avoid.

John Lovaas told the Sub-committee that Reston has lost affordable housing. He objected to a proposal to incentivize development by reducing the requirements for workforce housing. That would be unfair and inconsistent with Reston's founding principles.

Anne Strange commented in support of the recommendations to promote affordable housing and to emphasize residential development near the transit station.

Mark Looney clarified that his suggestion to incentivize early residential development by relaxing the workforce housing requirement was only intended to apply to the initial development (*e.g.*, the first 300-500 units). He noted that the two principle ways to provide incentives are to offer increased density or reduced costs (*e.g.*, lower parking requirements). Mark explained that "wood-frame" construction is less costly and could be very attractive. Such construction is more likely in the near future than high-rise given the economic situation. He also expressed concern about Joe's proposal because most owners in this area are used to building and operating non-residential, so a residential emphasis could delay redevelopment.

Judith Pew noted that we should pay attention to the needs of young residents who need rental units more than high-priced condominiums.

Paul Thomas suggested that more incentives be given for residential development.

Andy VanHorn suggested that density incentives should be offered if more residential units are desired.

Alex SanAndreas of JBG made a presentation to the group concerning "placemaking"—the planning and construction needed to create a location with the attributes needed for successful development. In addition to diverse retail, the space needs wide sidewalks and an atmosphere that people recognize and are drawn to. He presented several slides illustrating elements of placemaking.

Heidi Merkel made a presentation concerning the County Staff's views of TOD and asked for clear direction from the Sub-committee. Drawing from Arlington's experience, she emphasized that successful TOD is more about "form" than density. The GFA is primarily relevant to analyzing impacts from potential levels of development.

Heidi urged the Sub-committee to locate the highest intensities and greatest concentrations of office space closest to the station. Residential should be emphasized as one moves away from the station. Experience in other areas shows that office workers are less likely than residents to walk more than ¼ mile to a subway. The County's TOD policy calls for locating development within ½ mile of the transit station, so the Sub-committee should not promote significant development outside that circle. Under County policies, portions of the Study Area beyond ½ mile should remain office parks. TOD areas along Sunrise Valley Drive should be residential.

Paul Thomas agreed that focusing within the ½ mile makes sense. He noted that even that level of development depends on connectivity. With good connectivity and a good project, he might be willing to go a little beyond the ½ mile radius.

Bill Penniman suggested looking at rings of 1/8<sup>th</sup>, ¼ and ½ mile. He proposed that the ½ mile line be somewhat fuzzy in order to accommodate special cases, such as coordinated development with closer projects or projects with particularly valuable proffers (*e.g.*, an educational institution with a shuttle bus to the station).

Heidi noted that she does not have preconceived notions of the most appropriate mixes for specific land units. She asked that the Sub-committee identify priorities and defer FARs.

Mark Looney indicated that we should figure out what form we want development to take and figure out what infrastructure it takes to get there.

Jorge Kafoury asked if developers would be permitted to trade as long as the overall mix of uses is achieved. Art Murphy and Bill Penniman indicated that seemed reasonable so long as the residential is built in the same time frame, not in the indefinite future.

Rob Whitfield stated that he had spoken to someone at the Airport Authority. It is critical that the County tell the Airport Authority as soon as possible that we want footers for a future Soapstone Extension bridge.

Sub-committee attendees included

Bill Penniman (co-chair)

Andy VanHorn (co-chair)

Paul Thomas

Judith Pew

David Gill

Art Murphy

Dick Kennedy

Mark Looney

Anne Strange