Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force
Wiehle Avenue Sub-Committee

Meeting Summary – November 17, 2010

Public Comment

John Lovaas commented that infrastructure should be the Sub-committee's number one concern. Joe Kelly said that the map location of the Metro station was off by about 100 feet, which leaves part of G5 outside the one quarter mile circle. He recommended that this be corrected.

Discussion of Land Use and Density

Wiehle Concept Map

Mr. Penniman presented a map of the Wiehle area with the grid of streets highlighted. Mr. Gill noted that the group had previously discussed a need for a road link from G4 to a G1 retail area and that this map did not show such a connection.

Several people noted that Station Boulevard dead ends at Plaza America and suggested that redevelopment of Plaza America be changed to incorporate the boulevard.

The idea of creating a road adjacent to the DAAR was discussed. Mr. Walker noted that the existing grid of streets created fairly small blocks and an additional road would further reduce the usable area.

Dave Edwards commented that many drivers will use the Hunter Mill Road interchange to access the DAAR and that something needs to be done with the Sunrise Valley Road intersection.

Land Use and Density Models

Mr. Penniman introduced the discussion of the models noting that the five hypothetical models generally reflected the objectives of approaching a 1:1 office/residential GFA ratio, of locating density near Metro and of using the GMU forecasts as a reference.

Mr. Corrigan expressed concern that models based on the GMU forecasts didn't take the limits of the existing infrastructure plans into account.

Mr. Looney commented that the models described a 20 to 30 year plan, consistent with the County's ability to plan for infrastructure. However, property owners will want to plan for a 40 to 60 year span and 20 year density limits will produce undesirable results. Further, model results assume that 100% of the available density will be built; the reality is that some property won't be redeveloped or won't use all the density available presents. If the Sub-committee's recommendations are based on such models, then the resulting development wouldn't support GMU's projected market needs.

Mr. Walker commented that an overemphasis on numbers was distracting the group from the more important issue of its vision for the area. Mr. Foster added that the group should focus on a general concept of population size and office/residential mix; the issue of how to factor in market absorption of available density should be left to the County. Also, while the recommendations shouldn't constrain the long-term development, it was appropriate to include guidelines that ensure density is created first in the area close to Metro.

Mr. Looney agreed that aside from avoiding limits that produce undesirable development, the important issues include urban form, building heights, design standards, etc.; i.e. form not FAR.

Mr. Penniman commented that numbers were a means of judging the plan's plausibility in relation to forecasts. In general, the models reflect the group's apparent consensus for a "wedding cake" density profile with somewhat more density north of the toll road, greater concentration of retail/hotel north of the toll road, and somewhat more residential than office in the TOD area.

Ms. Merkel agreed with these principles and suggested that the sub-committees should not be overly concerned with recommending FARs. She said that the staff would prepare a modified model for the next meeting.

Mr. Penniman asked the members to look at the models and forward any inspired tinkering to him or Mr. Van Horn. He also asked that the members review the report and provide comments for the next meeting.

Members Attending

Bill Penniman – Co-Chairman
Andy Van Horn – Co-Chairman
Mike Corrigan
Van Foster
David Gill
Richard Kennedy
Mark Looney
Art Murphy
Judith Pew
Rob Walker