

**Minutes of the Seven Corners Transportation and Land Use Task Force Meeting  
August 12, 2014**

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM  
Mason District Government Center

Attendance:

**Task Force:** John Thillmann, Evelyn Haught, Mary Ellen Ward, Patrick Hoar, Mark Silverwood, Vince Burke, Steve Tillman, Karl Moritz, and Dick Knapp

**Staff:** Elizabeth Hagg (OCR), JoAnne Fiebe (OCR), Hyojung Garland (OCR), Bernard Suchicital (DPZ), Kim Rybold (DPZ), Kris Morley-Nikfar (DOT), Marianne Gardner (DPZ) and Aaron Frank from the office of Supervisor Gross

Administrative Items

Minutes from the July 8, 2014, meeting were reviewed that included a few edits from Karl Moritz. Mark Silverwood made a motion to approve the Minutes with Karl's edits, and Evelyn Haught seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

John Thillmann reviewed the upcoming Task Force meeting schedule. Task Force members are to review the latest Plan text (8/12/14 edition) and provide their written comments to staff before the August 26<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting. Staff will also summarize the public comments received tonight for the Task Force. The September 9<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting will have a public comment period, and then at the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Task Force will make a recommendation regarding the final Plan language. He noted that there may be an October Task Force meeting. The Planning Commission public hearing is scheduled for October 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Board of Supervisors public hearing is scheduled for November 18<sup>th</sup>.

John announced that the order of the agenda would be switched to have the public comment period first.

Public Comment Period

Jeff Platenberg, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)

Jeff Platenberg gave the Task Force copies of the written comments of Sandy Evans, Mason District representative to the Fairfax County School Board. He stated that there is good coordination between the county's planning and zoning staff and the FCPS regarding school impacts of new development. Based on their analysis of the proposed Seven Corners Plan, there will be need for a new elementary school as well as future capacity enhancements to the middle and high schools serving the area to address capacity deficits. Capacity enhancements can entail new school construction, additions to existing facilities, interior modifications, temporary/modular buildings, and changes to programs and/or attendance areas. He identified the pages in the draft Plan that should be revised to reflect these concerns, and recommended updating the list of public facilities in the current Plan by adding the new Bailey's Upper Elementary school, which is scheduled to open in September 2014. He said developers should mitigate development impacts to schools, and that there may be ways to provide innovative

urban solutions to address capacity issues. He noted that Supervisor Gross has been an ardent proponent of schools and believes in a cooperative environment between the county and public schools. His only wish was that the FCPS would have been at the table during the initial visioning process. He thanked the Task Force and offered to answer any questions they might have.

Duane Morse, Sleepy Hollow Manor Citizens Association

Mr. Morse noted the letter submitted to the Task Force on behalf of his association. He said transportation and its implementation is the biggest concern of his association. He thought the plan is innovative and he likes the concept of the ring road and a connection between Castle Place and Roosevelt Boulevard to the East Falls Church Metro. However, he is concerned that the ring road can actually get built. He said they are asking for three main things: a workable design for transportation improvements and having them in-place with development; the provision of full funding for a detailed study of transportation improvements; and for the Board of Supervisors to give priority for Seven Corners transportation funding.

Debbie Smith, Ravenswood, with joint letter from multiple civic associations

Ms. Smith highlighted the main points in the letter, including that transportation improvements must come before redevelopment; ingress and egress to the Sears site should be limited to Route 7 only; Juniper Lane should be closed to through traffic; there should be a balance between residential, commercial and retail development; and the Plan should take into account environmental considerations.

Jim Kilbourne, President, Lake Barcroft Association

Mr. Kilbourne said his association is concerned about the amount of planned development. He said it has to work for three groups: businesses, developers and occupants of the surrounding neighborhoods. The letter from his association identified four transportation improvements that need to be funded before redevelopment should occur. He raised the issue of Falls Church City's level of cooperation for improvements. They also want to see access to the Sears site limited. Finally, he raised their concern about environmental impacts of development on the area's watersheds.

John Iekle, Ravenwood Park

Mr. Iekel stated his main concern is that road improvements won't keep pace with development. He said it imperative that transportation improvements be funded or implemented first. He said they do not want to see access to the Sears site from local roads. He noted that there are existing transportation problems now on Patrick Henry Drive and that redevelopment could make that worse.

Betsy Washington, Lake Barcroft Association

Ms. Washington said her concern was for the Tripps Run watershed and the surrounding urban forest. She said the water quality is outstanding when it leaves Lake Barcroft, which contributes to the water quality in downstream watersheds. She noted the Sears site drains directly into Tripps Run and that storm drains feed into Lake Barcroft. She said density matters and stressed that any new development should focus on providing stormwater management strategies that protect the natural hydrology, including encouraging infiltration and retention and detention of stormwater. She asked the Task Force to join them in planting more trees and to include specifications regarding best planning practices for urban root volumes for trees.

Richard Dreiman, Lake Barcroft

Mr. Dreiman asked that a cost/benefit analysis of the Plan be shared with the community. He said there is a cost of new development to the community in terms of the quality of life, pollution, density, traffic and schools. He said there should be a transparent discussion of costs and benefits.

Ivan Cheung, Juniper Lane resident

Mr. Cheung stated that he lives near the Sears site. He talked about the Urban Land Institute's strategies for sustainable suburban redevelopment. He felt there needs to be a comprehensive look at infrastructure. He said there is not a sustainable transportation plan and there is no timeline for implementation. He said there is too much residential development proposed for the Sears site and he has safety concerns about Juniper Lane.

Ben Cooper, Lake Barcroft

Mr. Cooper read Sandy Evan's letter to the Task Force.

Kay Cooper, Lake Barcroft

Ms. Cooper re-read the principles from the Seven Corners visioning process and urged the Task Force to be sure all principles are accounted for in the Plan. She wants an innovative sustainable design for the community; one that has a unique identity that is not a Shirlington or a Tysons or a Mosaic. From the beginning, she was delighted to hear of the revitalization effort and has participated or attended every visioning session and Task Force meeting, and has served on two work groups. She referenced Portland, Oregon as a successful example of an urban network of complete streets with high quality design.

Marc Freedman

Mr. Freedman remarked that the public comment to-date has been articulate and measured and he hoped that the comments are taken into account by the Task Force. He wondered what kind of impression their comments have made on the Task Force. He asked the Task Force to think of

this as their neighborhood and put themselves in their shoes. He asked the Task Force to be brave.

Debbie Ratliff, Sleepy Hollow Manor

Ms. Ratliff stated that the existing roads and schools are inadequate. She stressed the importance of having a transportation implementation plan, and to make transportation improvement first, before adding new development.

### Discussion of and Response to Prior Public Comments

Kris Morley-Nikfar, FCDOT, gave a response to the concerns raised about implementation of the transportation plan. Kris explained that the transportation improvements cannot precede all redevelopment. Reconstruction of the interchange is partially dependent on the grid of streets being constructed to stage the improvements and mitigate the effects of the construction. Developers are expected to provide for the grid of streets on their site as they redevelop. However, the county has already committed \$3 million in funding for further analysis of the interchange improvements.

Pat Hoar asked about whether the ramps and the ring road could be built. Kris replied that there are components of the interchange that could be done before the grid; however, the reconstruction of the interchange is a long-term project. Kris reported that today the average intersection delay is 40 seconds and, that even with no additional development within Seven Corners and no changes to the transportation network, this will increase to 100 seconds by 2040. However, he noted that with the new interchange and redevelopment this average delay is projected to drop to 30 seconds of delay. Regarding the ring road, he stated that the links previously shown to be in the City of Falls Church are not necessary for the county's road network to work. Currently there is a blurred line depicting the ring road on a map, but more detailed engineering is required to determine the ultimate alignment of this road.

Steve Thillman asked if there was a priority list for those transportation improvements we do now. Kris replied that there are some shorter-term, smaller improvements that were identified in the transportation study. Generally, the process is that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) updates the Six-Year Transportation Funding Program every year, Kris said. He added that prior to HB2232 passage by the General Assembly this year, the BOS adopted a Four-Year Transportation Funding Program every year.

Pat Hoar said that the Lake Barcroft Association would like to prioritize the 4-way intersection and asked Kris if this could happen first. Kris replied that based on the transportation study, the 4-way intersection could only happen after other improvements occurred first.

Karl Moritz reported on his presentation to the Mason District Land Use Committee (MDLUC) on July 22, 2014. He stated that he outlined the planning process and Task Force education process. He said he told the MDLUC that by the time the Task Force got to the charette, members were informed about the issues, the study area, best planning practices and current

trends and issues impacting development, such that they were not just a bunch of kids with crayons. He stated that the three groups at the charette independently came up with similar recommendations. He added that he had summarized the public comments heard up to that point to the MDLUC.

### Discussion of and Response to Prior Public Comments

JoAnne Fiebe, OCR, presented three concepts or options for the Sears site, per previous direction from the Task Force. Option 1 has 165,000 square feet (SF) of multifamily housing, 110 townhomes, 134,000 SF of retail and 200,000 SF of office development, totaling 719,000 SF. This is the original concept for the site developed at the charette. Option 2 has 485,000 SF of multifamily development and 50 townhomes, for a total of 719,000 SF. Finally, Option 3 has 385,000 SF of multifamily housing, 100 townhomes and 34,000 SF of retail, for a total of 619,000 SF of development.

Dick Knapp expressed concern about the viability of providing vertical retail as well as office use, and stated that he needed sufficient density for the project to be feasible, i.e. the 719,000 SF. He also stated he would like flexibility between the multifamily units and the townhouse units, but to keep the total amount of SF the same

Karl Moritz did not disagree that it might make sense to convert the office SF into multifamily SF, and that it could be a challenge to get 134,000 SF of retail. He suggested keeping the retail SF flexible in case more retail proves feasible.

Mark Silverwood pointed out that the numbers for Option 3 are not correct. He said all options should have the full 719,000 SF. He liked Karl's idea of having a flexible range of retail from 34,000 to 134,000 SF. Staff said they would correct the mistake and bring back a revised concept to the Task Force at their next meeting.

Bernie Suchicital, DPZ, provided responses to other public comment that had been raised. One comment concerned the boundaries of the Seven Corners study area. Bernie explained that the Seven Corners Community Business Center boundaries were established in the 1990's in the county's Comprehensive Plan and the plan amendment would not transcend that area. Thus, all of the existing characteristics of the study area reflect the community within that boundary.

Marianne Gardner, DPZ, responded to the concern that housing in Seven Corners meet the needs of families across the economic spectrum. She said the Plan calls for retaining all 585 of the existing affordable housing units that are proposed for future redevelopment and that, in addition, provision of new residential development (where no housing now exists) would include 15 percent affordable housing units. She did state that the range of affordability could go as high as 120 percent of the average median income (AMI), but that units would have to be evenly spread between the range of 60 percent and 120 percent of AMI.

John Thillmann asked her what the rule of thumb is to induce redevelopment of existing affordable housing units, and she replied that it was about three new units of housing for every one unit of affordable housing being replaced.

Mark Silverwood mentioned that some of the affordable housing under discussion in Seven Corners have deed restrictions for another about 15 more years due to rules pertaining to Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) used to finance these projects.

Jim Edmonson expressed concern that many of the residents living on his property had incomes below 60% of AMI and that it would take subsidies from the government for the redevelopment and replacement of those units to be feasible. He said his property currently does not have any LIHTC tied to the site. He urged the Task Force to push the Board of Supervisors to link financing to the Plan amendment in order for the plan to be realized.

Marianne replied that usually such things do not go into the Comprehensive Plan itself, but that the Task Force could include a cover letter that accompanies the recommended Plan text that made those points.

John Thillmann responded to the environmental issues raised previously by the public and noted that new state stormwater regulations have gone into effect as of July 1, 2014 that are much stricter than the regulations previously in effect. He said that new development would have to comply with these regulations and that should be a benefit to surrounding watersheds.

Evelyn Haught made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mark Silverwood. The Task Force adjourned at 9:05 pm.

The next Task Force Meeting will be **Tuesday, August 26, 2014.**

  
By Evelyn L. Haught  
Secretary

8/26/2014  
Date