

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2006**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter A. Alcorn, At-Large
Frank A. de la Fe, Dranesville District
Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District
Kenneth Lawrence, Providence District

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District
Rodney Lusk, Lee District

STAFF PRESENT:

Fred Selden, Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
Leanna Hush, Planner, PD, DPZ
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission Office

OTHERS PRESENT:

SEE ATTACHMENT A

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Chairman Walter A. Alcorn convened the meeting at 7:33 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman Alcorn stated that the committee had been appointed by the Board of Supervisors to develop a definition and a set of principles for transit-oriented development (TOD) with the goal of making a recommendation to the BOS for authorization to advertise and hold public hearings on an amendment to the Policy Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. He explained that the process would be one of consensus with no formal voting and it was the desire of the committee that all interested organizations and citizens have an opportunity to participate.

Chairman Alcorn said future meetings dates were tentatively scheduled as follows:

May 24, 2006	July 26, 2006
June 8, 2006	September 7, 2006
June 24, 2006	September 27, 2006
July 6, 2006	October 4, 2006

Chairman Alcorn noted that the Policy Plan and the Comprehensive Plan addressed development around transit station areas and the purpose of the committee was not to determine whether or not there should be transit-oriented development, but rather to more clearly define and develop guidance for it. He pointed out that the committee's recommendations would not supersede specific language in Area Plans concerning proposed or planned TOD, but would deal with related issues. Commissioner Alcorn said if a consensus was unable to be reached, he hoped that at least one or two sets of recommendations could be forwarded to the BOS. He said, however, before that was done there was much information to be gathered and discussed.

Fred Selden, Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), explained that the BOS, in response to concerns raised by the citizens, had asked staff to define and develop a set of principles for TOD. He said the process would be similar to that followed in the past to draft Policy Plan language addressing stream protection and defining low impact development. He said the background and the proposed process were fully explained in a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors from James Zook, Director, DPZ, dated March 13, 2006, (Attachment B). Mr. Selden invited anyone who had questions about land use or the process to develop a definition of TOD to call him or Leanna Hush. He also said if anyone knew of resources, including websites, which would assist the committee in its work, to please inform staff.

Mr. Selden recognized Leanna Hush who presented an overview of the current policies existing in the Policy Plan related to mixed-used development and transit station areas, as shown in the following handouts, copies of which are in the date file:

- Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan Summary (Attachment C)
- Sample of relevant Plan text found in the Policy Plan, Glossary, and Concept for Future Development sections of the Comprehensive Plan (Attachment D).

Ms. Hush explained that the Comprehensive Plan was available on the DPZ website and updates, studies, and other initiatives were available by subscribing to the Comprehensive Plan listserv, noting that the instructions about how to do so were included in Attachment C. She reviewed Attachment D which contained examples of existing Policy Plan language related to transit and mixed use development.

Bruce Wright, Trails Committee, commented that the Trails Plan was part of the Comprehensive Plan Map and Transportation Plan Map and should be noted on page 2 of Attachment C.

In response to a question from David Gill, McGuire Woods, Chairman Alcorn said that the Policy Plan was used as a guide in the review of rezoning applications as well as to help the County plan for infrastructure improvements. He said although it was possible the recommendations could lead to Ordinance amendments, that was not the goal of the committee.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Harsel, Mr. Selden said one of the issues that needed to be addressed by the group included the definition of mass transit; i.e., heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail; and what the scope of TOD in Fairfax County should be.

Chairman Alcorn noted that the rationale for the establishment of the Committee could be found in the Clerk's Board Summary – Report of Actions of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Monday, December 5, 2005 (Attachment 1 to the memorandum from the Director of DPZ to the Board of Supervisors dated May 13, 2006). However, he pointed out that it did not provide specific guidance about where TOD should be concentrated. He said perhaps the committee could address that issue in the "strawman" phase of the deliberations which was planned for August 2006 as shown in the "Proposed Process," Attachment E.

Deborah Reyher, co-founder of FairGrowthNetwork.org., expressed concern about the timing of the process, noting that two rezoning cases near transit areas were scheduled before the committee would complete its work. She stated for the record that citizens would like to see a longer more deliberate process.

Chairman Alcorn said until the Comprehensive Plan was changed, rezoning applications would be evaluated in accordance with existing Policy Plan language encouraging development around transit areas. Commissioner de la Fe agreed and said other TOD initiatives were taking place such as the Tysons Area Study and plans for development in proximity to Wiehle Avenue.

In response to a question from Ms. Reyher, Chairman Alcorn pointed out that rezoning applications would not be postponed pending the completion of the study because the Planning Commission was legally obligated, in accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, to hear rezoning applications within a certain period of time.

Stella Koch, EQAC, commented that the committee's schedule could be reevaluated as the work progressed. Chairman Alcorn agreed.

Stephen Pastorkovich asked about the possibility of holding meetings in different locations, such as the northern and southern parts of the County. Chairman Alcorn said this suggestion could be considered.

Ms. Hush noted that another handout, "Transit-Oriented Development Themes Identified in Preliminary Search for TOD Principles," Attachment E, contained a list of definitions and principles related to TOD, information from various planning organizations, and a list of additional resources and websites.

At the request of Chairman Alcorn, the following suggestions for speakers and resources were made:

Senior planner from Arlington County;
Jim Snyder, TOD advocate, retired Arlington County employee;
Jeff Tomlin and Nelson Nygard (impediments to TOD);

WMATA and Airports Authority representatives (reverse commuting)
Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream;
Toll Road and Metro riders;
Bill Vincent (bus rapid transit);
Planners, Montgomery County, Maryland;
PB Placemaking, National Academy of Science research;
Developers and property owners;
General Services Administration and Department of Defense (security issues);
Residents adjacent to mass transit areas;

Mr. Selden pointed out that because Metro stations in the County as well as in neighboring jurisdictions had different needs, what worked at one station might not work for another. Mr. Paul Kraucunas, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), agreed, stating that it was very important that the definition of TOD be flexible enough to meet the needs of individual stations.

Daniel Rathbone, FCDOT, said a people mover, also called a horizontal elevator, could be used at stations not easily accessible by pedestrians.

Mr. Wright said bicycle access to stations should be encouraged.

Commissioner Lawrence said an example of why flexibility was needed in the TOD definition was that while narrow roads and wide sidewalks were desirable for pedestrians, they were not acceptable to VDOT. He noted that it was general County policy to discourage private roads. Mr. Kraucunas said VDOT was now thinking about other modes of transportation besides automobiles, such as walking and bicycling, and how to provide access to transit stations for them. Ms. Koch suggested that the Under Secretary of Transportation be invited to discuss what could be done to change some of the obstacles to other modes of transportation.

Deborah Smith, Fairfax Citizens for Responsible Growth, said VDOT viewed roads from an automobile perspective; for example, she said citizens had been trying to get a traffic light on the north side of the Vienna Metro for years to facilitate pedestrian access, but had been told that there had not been enough fatalities to warrant one.

Paul Moyer, EDAW, said when density had been increased along the rail line in Arlington, traffic had decreased.

Dale Murad, McLean Citizens Association, commented that Arlington County maintained its own roads and perhaps Fairfax County should consider that also.

Mr. Kraucunas pointed out that in some cases mass transit was not an option and the needs of automobile drivers had to be considered along with the needs of mass transit users.

Commissioner de la Fe emphasized the importance of feeder bus systems, noting that the system in Reston had been very successful.

Mr. Murad said that no one method of transportation should be encouraged over another and it was important for people to have a choice and use methods voluntarily.

Commissioner Lawrence suggested that a check list of interrogatives be developed for evaluating guidelines so that no one group, such as seniors and disabled persons, would be excluded. Mr. Selden said that was a good suggestion, pointing out that the need for parking seemed to be insatiable and consideration also had to be given to those who preferred to drive to a station to access mass transit.

Susan Turner, McLean Citizens Association, said the reason there was such a demand for parking was the lack of adequate feeder bus service in the County. Sally Ormsby said better feeder bus service was needed, not larger parking areas and garages. An unidentified speaker pointed out that there would be no parking at the four planned stations at Tysons.

Thomas Rickert stated that regardless of the mode of transportation to a station, pedestrian access was needed upon arrival. He also said amenities along the pedestrian access, such as trails and retail development, would encourage walking.

Mark Tipton commented that more parking might be appropriate at an end-of-the-line station, such as Vienna. He added that the number of people who lived near the Vienna station who drove to the station had been higher than expected and said better access routes might encourage people to walk.

Anders Warga, Tysons Green, noted that the scope of the Comprehensive Plan was 20 years and suggested that the TOD policy address the possibility that areas could be redeveloped at higher densities in the future. Ms. Koch cautioned about making those kinds of assumptions. Chairman Alcorn said there was no specific time frame for the guidelines to be in effect at this time. Mr. Murad said that Arlington County had set boundaries for redevelopment around transit stations.

Fran Hooper noted that the use of a station could change over time and an end-of-the-line station now could be the heart of the system in the future. She added that this was another reason why flexibility was needed in defining TOD. Ms. Smith agreed that flexibility was needed, but at the same said time it was important for property owners to have some guarantee that they would be able to enjoy the use of their property for as long as they desired. Commissioner de la Fe pointed out that it was also important for owners to know what could happen to their property and the area in the future. Ms. Reyher said communities near mass transit stations should be given some protection against density creep.

John Payne, Fairfax County Housing and Community Development, said urban areas needed to be connected by public transportation links and one way to do this was to encourage developers to invest in infrastructure improvements.

Ms. Reyher stated that proffers for TOD development needed to be clear, enforceable, and predictable. She said building scale models and other simulations should be used to determine the impact of the development on such things as watersheds and traffic.

Mr. Hall said TOD research emphasized the importance of working with the community and said there should be discussion and guidelines encouraging outreach.

Reviewing the discussion, Chairman Alcorn noted that an issue that kept recurring involved expectations of property owners about what could happen in their communities and pointed out that the guidelines developed for TOD would not be site specific. He also noted that a suggestion had been made to hold meetings at different locations and concern had been expressed about the timing of the process. He said after a few more meetings had been completed it could better be determined if July 26 was a good date for the initial strawman recommendation to be made. Chairman Alcorn said suggestions for speakers and reference materials could be sent to Mr. Selden or Ms. Hush and that information and future meeting dates would be posted at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/tod.htm.

Chairman Alcorn said the next meeting of the committee would be held at 7:30 p.m., June 8, 2006, in conference rooms 106/107, at the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway.

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.
Walter A. Alcorn, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Office of the Planning Commission of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved: June 8, 2006

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Attachments:

- A List of attendees
- B Memorandum dated March 13, 2006 from James P. Zook, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning to the Board of Supervisors.
- C Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan Summary
- D Sample of relevant Plan text found in the Policy Plan, Glossary, and Concept for Future Development sections of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan
- E TOD Committee Proposed Process

ATTACHMENT A

Attendees at first meeting of Transit-Oriented Committee, May 24, 2006

Name	Organization
Al-Mutawakil, Ahmed	Diamond Properties
Diedrich, Roger	Sierra Club
Duvall, Sara	Cooley Godward
Edwards, Dave	
Fairfield, Jeff	Launders Trust
Foust, John	EQAC
Fx Citizens for Responsible Growth	
Gill, David	McGuire Woods
Grandfield, Irish	FCPA
Gravett, Guy	Farms and Acreage, Inc.
Gunn, Amelia	
Gunn, Roland	NAIOP
Hall, Charlie	
Harrison, Goldie	Hunter Mill District
Hooper, Fran	Homeowner
Hush, Leanna	DPZ PD
Ibrahim, Mike	Diamond
Koch, Stella	EQAC
Kraucunas, Paul	VDOT
Lake, Carrie	Homeowner
Lavoie, Brett	Cooley Godward
Lawrence, Robert	Reed Smith LLP
Licamele, Greg	FFX Office of Public Affairs
Lippa, Barbara	PC
McKeeby, Elizabeth	Walsh Colucci
Moyer, Paul	Edaw
Murad, Dale	McLean Citizens Assn.
Ormsby, Sally	FFC Citizens Cmte Land Use/Trans.
Pastorkovich, Steve	Briarwood
Payne, John	Housing Community Dev.
Rathbone, Dan	FCDOT
Reyher, Deborah	FairGrowthNetwork.org
Rickert, Thomas	Jefferson Manor Land Use
Rweros, Albert	Sleepy Hollow
Sargeant, Tim	
Schor, Justin	Urban Trans Consultants
Schumitz, Kali	Fairfax Times
Selden, Fred	DPZ PD
Smith, Blake	Loiederman Soltesz Assoc.
Stagg, Inda	Walsh Colucci
Teague, Neel	Stout & Teague

Tipton, Mark	Fair Growth
Turner, Keith	West*Group
Turner, Susan	McLean Citizens Assn.
Tyahla, Paul	Fx Co. Chamber of Commerce
Warga, Anders	GTGCA (Tysons Green)
Winterhalter, Brian	Cooley Godward
Wright, Bruce	Trails Committee

Attachments B through E can be found in separate documents at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/tod.htm.