

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2006**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

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  
Deborah Albert, Planner, PD  
Daniel Rathbone, Division Chief, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)  
Richard Stevens, Project Manager, Dulles Rail Project, FCDOT

OTHERS PRESENT:

SEE ATTACHMENT A

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Chairman Walter A. Alcorn convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2/3 at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman Alcorn explained that the Board of Supervisors had authorized formation of a committee to develop guidance for transit-oriented development (TOD) in Fairfax County. He said the committee was still in the process of gathering information upon which to base guiding principles, which would become part of the Policy Plan. He said presentations tonight would be made by Jeff B. Speck, Director of Design, National Endowments for the Arts and co-author of *Suburban Nation*; John Carter, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County; Jim Snyder, retired Planning Section Supervisor of Master Planning and

Development Planning, Arlington County; and Patricia Nicoson, President, Dulles Corridor Rail Association.

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Mr. Speck delivered a PowerPoint presentation entitled "A Dawning Awareness." (A copy of his presentation is in the date file. He said walkability, the key to successful transit-oriented development, had four components: a reason to walk (balance of uses); a safe walk (reality and perception); a comfortable walk (space and orientation); and an interesting walk (signs of humanity.) He explained that a new development in planning and zoning, form-based codes, was a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form.

Responding to a question from Bruce Bennett, Hunter Mill Traffic Calming Committee, Mr. Speck said that Dan Burton, with Glatting Jackson in Orlando, Florida, would be a good resource about the relationship of street width to pedestrian-friendly development.

In response to questions from Charlie Hall, Providence District, Mr. Speck said that the ability to walk to a station was more successful than intermodal shift, which required a person to change their mode of transportation to arrive at a transit station. He explained that park and ride lots were only successful in the most congested cities. Responding to another question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Speck said that both passive and active recreational spaces within a community were important to encourage walking.

Keely Lauretti, citizen, commented that in Montgomery County, Maryland, fire officials had indicated a desire for wider streets to accommodate public safety vehicles. Mr. Speck emphasized that the goal was life safety and pointed out that more people died as a result of getting hit by a car than they did by fire. He referred Ms. Lauretti to Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company in Gaithersburg, Maryland, who designed the Kentlands, an example of new urbanism development, to discuss her concerns.

Summarizing Mr. Speck's presentation, Chairman Alcorn said the most important elements for successful TOD were: walkability, grid pattern of streets, narrow streets, parallel parking, street trees, safe and closed spaces, no exposed parking lots, and use of form based codes. Mr. Speck noted that his book contained a checklist with the essential elements for successful TOD. Mr. Speck also said he preferred rules for TOD rather than guiding principles.

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John Carter, Chief of Community-Based Planning, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County, delivered a presentation on TOD initiatives and mixed use activity centers. (A copy of his presentation is in the date file.) He said one-third of the land in Montgomery County was held in agricultural reserve where no significant residential or commercial development was allowed. To balance that, he said zoning allowed dense development in commercial areas. He explained that the principles for TOD included mixed-use development with affordable housing; transit; safe and attractive streets; and public open spaces.

Responding to a question from Sally Ormsby, Fairfax County Citizens Committee on Land Use and Transportation, Mr. Carter said Montgomery County used a method similar to proffers, called incentive zoning, in which density could be doubled if certain standards were met such as compatibility with adjacent development and conformance with the Master Plan. He said the proposal would then be reviewed by staff and negotiated with the community. He added that the County Council deferred decision making on land use matters to the Planning Board.

In response to questions from Edward Batten, Fairfax County Park Authority Board member, Mr. Carter said that in Montgomery County, parks and planning were part of the same agency. and that developers had the responsibility for maintaining parks in perpetuity.

Responding to a question from Becky Cate, Providence District citizen,,Mr. Carter said that one-half mile was generally considered to be a walkable distance to transit stations.

In response to a question from Ms. Ormsby, Mr. Carter said that Montgomery County still used the Wedges and Corridor Plan for guidance. Ms. Ormsby noted that was not the case in Fairfax County.

Responding to a question from Douglas Stewart, Mr. Carter said that although only main roads were state roads, the County was responsible for maintaining all roads; therefore, it was easier to require certain improvements.

Mr. Carter responded to a question from Commissioner Lawrence about working with WMATA on joint development near Metro stations.

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Jim Snyder, retired Planning Section Supervisor of Master Planning and Development Planning, Arlington County, delivered a PowerPoint presentation "30 Years of Smart Growth – Arlington County's Experience with Transit Oriented Development in the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor." (A copy of the presentation is in the date file.) He said Arlington County had lobbied strongly for an underground transit system with stations located along the older commercial corridors. He said a 50-50 tax base mix of residential and commercial development with a variety of housing types located within one-quarter of a mile of a station had been a major policy goal. He said five unique sector plans had been developed for each transit stop in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor with community involvement which included the vision for each station area, desired public improvements, location of retail uses, and urban design standards. He said these plans, along with the General Land Use Plan, served as a guide for development in those areas. He explained that public infrastructure needs had been provided by the developer and were maintained by the property owner. He noted that two rail corridors, Jefferson-Davis Highway and Rosslyn, representing 11 percent of the county, had been replanned to encourage mixed-use, high density development with 89 percent remaining as low density development. He said a site plan was used to approve the development, which allowed only specifically approved uses and design, in compliance with Zoning Ordinances, the General Land Use Plan, and the sector plans.

Responding to a question from Irfan Ali, Georgelas Group, Mr. Snyder said in Fairfax County, special districts should be created with incentives to push density together into nodes which could be served by transit. He said the space in between could be used as buffer to communities or parks; something other than parking lots. Mr. Snyder added that the policy plan should encourage nodal development.

In response to a question from Commissioner de la Fe, Mr. Snyder said that high density development had not occurred in East Falls Church due to community opposition. He said the thinking now was that perhaps parking was not the best use of the land and the community was looking at options with the help of Virginia Tech students and professionals.

Responding to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Snyder said that if transit corridor development were part of the Comprehensive Plan, the General Land Use Plan, and the Transportation Plan, proposals for different types of development would have no legal recourse.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Snyder said significant increases in jobs, office space, housing units, and Metro ridership reflected Arlington's success. He recommended that Fairfax County determine the high density development potential of older commercial corridors such as Routes 7, 236, 1, and 50, using the leftover areas for parks, housing, and buffer zones. He said Fairfax County had a golden opportunity for transit-oriented development, similar to the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor but on a much larger scale, in the Fort Belvoir area due to the Base Realignment and Closure initiative by the federal government.

In response to a question from Ms. Ormsby, Mr. Snyder said Arlington County reviewed zoning, site plan, and implementation at the same time.

Responding to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Snyder said in his opinion, the biggest challenge Fairfax County faced was educating residents so they understood what high density development could mean. He said major corridors would need other types of transit, such as rapid bus or trolley transit, perhaps underground. He said the longer term problem for Fairfax County from a Policy Plan point of view was to give large, old corridors a future vision. He recommended clustering development around individual stations.

In response to a question from Dan Rathbone, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, Mr. Snyder said it was important not to overbuild parking. He said limited, expensive parking discouraged traveling by car to transit stations. He said, however, transitional parking could be provided while a project was being built out.

Responding to a question from Tim Sargeant, Mount Vernon District, Mr. Snyder said people living near transit stations were both seniors and young people. He pointed out however that one of the drawbacks was the high cost of housing in those areas.

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Patricia Nicoson, President, Dulles Corridor Rail Association, said she had been an advocate for transit in the Dulles corridor for many years. She said at the present time a review was taking place to determine the feasibility of underground rail and parking in the Tysons area which would make the development described by the two previous speakers possible. She said the number of residents and jobs would increase significantly in designated activity centers in the Washington region, five of which would be located in the Dulles corridor. She noted that there were more jobs in that area than in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. She explained that job growth was outpacing housing growth in the Dulles corridor and careful TOD planning around Metro stops could address the need for affordable and workforce housing. She said the County owned several important sites in the corridor, the Wiehle Avenue Park and Ride in Reston and the Herndon-Monroe Park and Ride, where TOD could occur. She reviewed TOD strategies and said the Dulles Corridor provided a unique opportunity to implement TOD and create a vibrant downtown at Tysons Corner. Ms. Nicoson noted that TOD could create affordable neighborhoods, provide a convenient and healthy life style, and reduce traffic congestion. She noted that challenges included community education and involvement; meeting the demand for affordable housing; providing infrastructure; and addressing traffic impact, station access, and parking needs with transportation demand management strategies. She said one of the problems in Reston was to amend covenants which restricted development. (A copy of her presentation is in the date file.)

In response to a question from Jody Bennett, Hunter Mill Defense League, Mr. Snyder said in Arlington citizen-based neighborhood conservation programs had been formed to address the impact of TOD on established communities. He added that the wealth created by TOD was used for improvements in those neighborhoods such as traffic calming, streetlights, curbs and gutters, and tot lots.

Mr. Snyder noted that a proposal to create pedestrian priority zones around bus stops and sidewalk had been defeated by the Virginia State legislature. He said walking needed to be recognized as a transportation mode at the State level.

Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth, suggested that a comparison be made of the proffer system in Fairfax to the zoning incentives in Arlington to determine how the proffer system could be used to the best advantage.

In response to a question from Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Snyder said although the parking ratio in Arlington was lower than in other places, it had proven to be effective. He said in some cases a condition had been imposed to make underground parking available in the evenings for retail and other uses.

In response to a question from Ms. Nicoson, Mr. Snyder said that the sector plan process brought people together to develop a plan and partnerships with businesses, government, and citizens had been formed to implement the plan.

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Chairman Alcorn announced upcoming meetings:

- July 26, 2006 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., Government Center, Conference Rooms 4/5 - Nat Bottigheimer, Director, Planning and Project Development, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.
- July 27, 2006 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., Government Center, Conference Rooms 4/5 - Maria Zimmerman, Center for TOD/Reconnecting America.
- August 2, 2006, 7:00 p.m., Government Center, Conference Rooms 4/5 – citizen panel.
- September, 7, 2006, 7:30 p.m., Lee District Government Center – citizen panel.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 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: July 26, 2006

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Attachment:  
List of attendees

TOD COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE, JULY 6, 2006 ATTACHMENT A

Name	Organization
Albert, Deborah	DPZ
Alcorn, Walter	PC
Ali, Irfan	Georgelasgroup.com
Baker, Searcy	Diamond Properties
Batten, Edward	FCPA
Bennett, Bruce	Hunter Mill Traffic Calming Cmte
Bennett, Jody	Hunter Mill Defense League History
Brooks, Roy	Trails and Sidewalk Committee
Broyhill, Linda	Reed Smith LLP
Byers, John	PC
Carter, John	MD Natl Capital Park & Planning
Cate, Becky	Providence District citizen
Cetron, Ari	Connection Newspapers
De la Fe, Frank	PC
Diedrich, Roger	Sierra Club
Duvall, Sara	Cooley Godward
Fairfield, Jeff	Launders Trust
Hall, Charlie	Providence District
Harsel, Suzanne	PC
Hooper, Fran	Homeowner
Horn, Loretta	W&M Properties
Hunter, Richard	WCI Communities
Hush, Leanna	DPZ PD
Jeff Speck	Natl Endowment for the Arts
Kraucunas, Paul	VDOT
Lauretti, Keely	Citizen
Lawrence, Kenneth	PC
Lippa, Barbara	PC staff
Miller, Ryan	CBRE
Moyer, Paul	Edaw
Nicoson, Patricia	Dulles Rail Corridor Assn
Ormsby, Sally	FFC Citizens Cmte Land Use/Trans.
Rathbone, Dan	FCDOT
Rodeffer, Linda	PC Staff
Sargeant, Tim	Mount Vernon citizen
Schwartz, Stewart	Smarter Growth
Selden, Fred	DPZ PD
Smith, Deborah	FairGrowth
Snyder, Jim	Former Arl Co Planning Supervisor
Stagg, Inda	Walsh Colucci
Stevens, Richard	FCDOT
Stewart, Douglas	Sierra Club

