

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2006**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large
John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Frank A. de la Fe, Dranesville District
Kenneth Lawrence, Providence District
Rodney Lusk, Lee District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District

STAFF PRESENT:

Leanna Hush, Planner, PD, DPZ
Deborah Albert, Planner, PD, DPZ
Andrea Dorlester, Fairfax County Park Authority
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 L. Alcorn convened the meeting at 7:31 p.m. in the Helen Wilson Room, Franconia Governmental Center, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22310.

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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 TOD principles for inclusion in the Policy Plan.

Chairman Alcorn said on the agenda tonight was a second citizen panel discussion on TOD; a presentation by Darren Smith, Jefferson Manor Citizens Association; walking distance research; and a discussion of a strawman of Countywide TOD guiding principles. He said the goal was for a consensus to be reached on the guiding principles which would be given to staff to start the process to formally amend the Comprehensive Plan which included public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The first panelist, John Foust, stated that he was a resident of McLean, past President of the McLean Citizens (MCA) and had been asked by the current MCA President to serve on this

panel. He pointed out that the MCA had not yet taken a position on transit-oriented development (TOD) and said the opinions he expressed would be his own.

Mr. Foust stated that he supported the concept of TOD but had concerns about its implementation. He cited a pending rezoning case in the Tysons area in which an increase in density was being requested because rail transit was expected to come to the area. He said this case was being represented as TOD despite the fact that guiding principles had not yet been adopted. He pointed out that the proposed development was not transit-oriented because it was surrounded by the Beltway, Route 123, and Route 7 with no convenient pedestrian access; parking would increase from 7,000 to 16,000 spaces; there had not been adequate community involvement; and it would not create a sense of place, all of which were components of TOD.

Chairman Alcorn noted that the case to which Mr. Foust referred was scheduled for public hearing before the Planning Commission on October 5, 2006. He noted that although the case illustrated Mr. Foust's points, the committee's goal was to come up with Countywide principles.

Commissioner de la Fe commented that it had been decided yesterday by Governor Timothy Kaine that Tysons rail would be above ground and that construction should begin in early 2007 with the first phase to be operational in 2012.

Responding to a question from Dr. Jody Bennett about community involvement in the Tysons proposal, Mr. Foust said that the developer had made presentations about the proposal but there had been no opportunity for citizens to provide input about the vision for this project.

Chairman Alcorn commented that the applicant's intent was implementation of recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan for this area as a result of work done by a task force in the early 1990s.

Chairman Alcorn introduced the next panelist, Charlie Hall. He noted that this committee had been formed at the request of the Board of Supervisors in response to Mr. Hall's discussions with Lee District Supervisor Dana Kaufmann and Providence District Supervisor Linda Smyth about the need for further guidance in the Comprehensive Plan for transit-oriented development.

Mr. Hall explained that his first exposure to TOD had occurred in Arlington County, one of the great successes of redevelopment around transit stations. He said this success was due to years of community involvement and the creation of TOD boundaries. He explained that his next experience with TOD had occurred in Fairfax County with a proposal to redevelop the area around the Poplar Terrace community and later with the Metro West development. In the Poplar Terrace case, he said developers had wanted to redevelop 70 single family homes with 1,400 homes, a proposal which would never have been considered in Arlington because it was beyond an easy walk to the transit station. He said in the absence of clear rules, developers who stood to gain millions of dollars in profit would always have an incentive to push the boundaries even if there was not a good rationale for transit-oriented development. Mr. Hall stated that one of the most important guiding principles for TOD was proximity to stations which should be measured in distance, not in walking time. He said another crucial component of transit-oriented

development was community involvement and although citizens could participate in the process in Fairfax County, it was a system comprised primarily of insiders. He said development around a station area should be planned before a proposal came forward, which was not the case in Fairfax, and that developers should view themselves as partners with the community rather than owners of the property.

David Gill, Esquire, commented that while it was important to determine appropriate location of development around a transit station area, he did not think it had to be an exact circle. Mr. Hall agreed that a circle was not necessarily appropriate, but said the area needed to be defined and it should not be nibbled away at every two or three years.

Inda Stagg, planner with Walsh Colucci, asked Mr. Hall if he thought development around a bus hub could also be considered TOD. He replied that he thought transit-oriented development should be defined by how many people actually used mass transit because if it was only a small percentage, doubling or tripling density was not warranted. He said there was a legitimate unease in the community about giving a blanket endorsement of transit-oriented densities around anything where there was some transit. He said perhaps TOD should occur first around rail stations and then decided on a case-by-case basis if other types of transit were available.

In response to a question from Michael Horwatt, Esquire, Mr. Hall said that in Arlington the communities had come up with a vision for each rail station before specific proposals had been made which had been beneficial for both the developers and the communities.

Douglas Bolter, a resident of Virginia Hills, pointed out that in Ballston it was easy to walk to the Metro station because the streets were laid out in a block grid which was not the case in Fairfax. He said accessibility was also important and noted that although he lived about 20 minutes in a straight line from the Huntington Metro, it took 45 minutes to walk because communities were not connected. He said it was important to consider what was a reasonable walk without cutting through backyards or building a lot of paths. Mr. Hall agreed.

Commissioner Alcorn noted that he had seconded the motion to deny the Poplar Terrace redevelopment. Mr. Hall said that if clear rules had been established in advance, the proposal would never have come forward.

The third panelist, Andrea Nygren, said she was a Department of Interior employee and a regular transit user who lived in Kingstowne. She said her concept of TOD was high density at transit nodes leveling off to more typical suburban single family development. She explained that her commute time was about one hour from her home to her office and that she drove to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. She said she always got a seat in the morning but in the evening it was more of a challenge. She explained that she would walk if she could and walking should be considered a mode of transportation to stations. She commented that she would like to see a proactive approach to the impact the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) project would have on communities like Kingstowne due to a shift in the job base that was anticipated.

Magda Ortiz, a Riverside Park resident, said her complex provided shuttle service to the Metro Station from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at twenty minute intervals and said developments which provide such service should be considered transit-oriented.

In response to a question from Kimberly Hatsville, Ms. Nygren said that although her community provided shuttle bus service to the Metro, she preferred the convenience and comfort of driving even though she had to pay a parking fee.

Ms. Hatsville said good lighting should be provided to address the safety issue of walking home from a station after dark. She said alternative methods, such as shuttle bus services, should be provided.

Edward Batten, a member of the Park Authority Board of Directors for the Lee District, noted that a cross County trail had been completed and connectors to that trail were in the process of being constructed.

Wade Smith, the fourth panelist, a member of the Tysons Land Use Task Force and the McLean Citizens Association, said he had been asked to serve on the panel as a representative of the Fairfax County Trails and Sidewalk Committee, which advised the Board of Supervisors on pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian issues for trails and sidewalks. He noted that the views he expressed tonight were his own and not on behalf of those organizations. Mr. Smith explained that the size of blocks was important to determine how long it would take to reach a destination; the walk should be direct and safe; pedestrian connections should be provided; and services should be available for people to walk to during their lunch hour. He said bicycling should also be considered a mode of transportation and pointed out that TOD boundaries could be farther away from a station for bicycle riders. Mr. Smith also pointed out that because development in the Tysons area was surrounded by major highways, walking or biking across them was very dangerous if not impossible. He said he had participated in public outreach sessions for development in the Tysons area and that citizens had good ideas and wanted to participate constructively to make the area a nice place.

Sue Jewell, Springfield Civic Association, said she was a bicycle commuter from Springfield to Arlington each day year round. She said it took her less time than using Metro and was cheaper. She said she often got yelled at whether she was on the road or on the sidewalk and felt that bicycle riders were not wanted in either place. She said more people would ride bikes if there were more bicycle trails.

In response to a question from Ms. Stagg, Mr. Smith said bicycle parking varied from station to station and that Metro was aware of the need to provide locked, covered spaces.

Jane Hilder, Burgundy Community Association, said her husband had stopped riding a bicycle to the Huntington Metro after having been run off the road and seeing a pedestrian killed. She said roads were a major obstacle to getting to the Huntington station and she had been told that a pedestrian overpass was too expensive.

Commissioner Lawrence commented that although heavy rail was a tremendous tool to move people, other things, such as transportation demand management strategies and road improvements, were also very important.

The final panelist, Kohann Whitney, said she was a member of the Tysons Land Use Task Force and an appointee to the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce representing a large employer. She explained that she had chaired the Dulles Corridor Land Use Task Force and many of the recommendations of that task force had been adopted by the BOS and were now part of the Comprehensive Plan such as: integrated mixed use development with a high density urban character; a variety of uses; different types of housing; retail, personal service, and public facilities; attractive landscaping and greenspace; high quality design with an architectural review system; and public input about the vision for the future. She added that transit-oriented development should include pedestrian-friendly amenities; a walkable, safe and well lighted environment; benches; and a balance between the land uses and the transportation network. She said traffic problems in Fairfax County would not be eliminated but TOD offered an opportunity to have a positive impact through improvements to the roadway network that served transit areas; transportation demand management strategies; and parking management. Ms. Whitney said objectives of land use changes around transit stations should include accessibility to stations, maximization of ridership of heavy rail; reduced roadway traffic, maximization of pedestrian and bicycle access; appropriate vehicular access, compliance with the American With Disabilities Act, and interparcel access. She also pointed out that it was important to consolidate small parcels of land and give incentives to achieve superior development; height limitation should be addressed; a detailed transportation analysis for every land use choice should be made; developers should be required to provide feeder or shuttle bus services; and employers should support car pooling, and transit use, and provide bicycle and pedestrian connections.

Mr. Bolter commented that the road network around station areas should not be designed in such a way that would preclude those who lived outside the one-quarter or one-half mile zone from using rail transit.

Dave Edwards commented on the public input process, noting that very often few citizens attended public meetings even though they were better advertised now than in the past. He pointed out that involvement required effort on the part of citizens.

Mr. Hall said his first introduction to Fairfax County outreach had been sandwich boards with an obscure number saying that a hearing was scheduled. He said since that time citizen outreach had improved but more effort was needed by County planning staff to actively engage the community. He also noted that homeowner association lists maintained by District supervisors were outdated.

Bruce Bennett said bus transportation could expand a transit area.

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Darren Smith, Vice President, Jefferson Manor Citizens Association, explained that Jefferson Manor was a community of 500 homes close to the Huntington Metro Station. He narrated a PowerPoint presentation which identified existing and planned development in the vicinity and said the Civic Association had developed a vision for the area and established priorities to address concerns that could arise as a result of transit-oriented development around the Huntington Metro Station. (A copy of Mr. Smith's presentation is in the date file.)

Commissioner Byers suggested that Mr. Smith contact Mack Rhoads, President of the Huntington Community Association, to coordinate their efforts to address concerns about transit-oriented development around the Huntington Metro Station.

Mr. Bolter explained that an Area Plans Review nomination submitted for this area had not been supported because it would have eliminated affordable housing.

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Leanna Hush and Deborah Albert, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, reviewed walking distance research requested by the committee which identified transit-oriented development publications and qualitative and quantitative studies. (A copy of the presentation is in the date file.)

Commissioner de la Fe noted that the source of the chart illustrating people's tolerance for walking had been published in 1964 and asked if there was more current information available. Dr. Bennett commented that it would be interesting to compare more recent information with this chart because she believed the statistics would be similar.

Mr. Horwatt said he thought Commissioner de la Fe's observation about the use of old data was important due to changing demographics. He said establishing criteria and methodology were important to protect the integrity of the process and that one approach would not work for all stations.

Commissioner de la Fe suggested consideration be given to asking someone at George Mason University to conduct studies to obtain better data or to update existing data.

Wade Smith commented that data was critical and walking distance was fundamental to this process. He said Metro might have electronic data that could be used as long as it was aggregated and privacy concerns were addressed.

Mr. Boulter said safety was as important as the distance of the walk. He noted that two of the panel members had mentioned lighting but pointed out that a well-lighted path would not promote a feeling of safety if there was only one person walking on it.

Commissioner de la Fe commented the subject of lighted trails had been debated in Reston for a long time. He said all of the original trails were lighted but newer ones were not.

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The next item on the agenda was discussion of the draft strawman document. Ms. Hush reviewed criteria identified for inclusion in the principles of TOD as shown on Attachment B.

Mr. Hall commented that the role of the community in the planning and visioning of TOD projects was not on the strawman list. He said citizens had clearly expressed their desire to have a strong hand in planning TOD projects. He said he would like to see this in the strawman document and viewed as a new dimension in planning.

Wade Smith observed that the strawman was aimed at a project and a place with the assumption that people lived near a station and either walked or drove to it. He noted that some way was needed to accommodate those who arrived at a station from somewhere else.

Mr. Horwatt cautioned against making the criteria too rigid because it could become a trap for mediocrity and unanticipated consequences. He said he believed the framework of the guiding principles was good, noting that Number 10, Vision for the Community, recognized that collaboration and flexibility were necessary to build a place, not a project. He said an interactive process would create trust on the part of the community and developers and the Internet was an invaluable tool to make that possible.

In response to a question from Darren Smith, Chairman Alcorn said it was not known at this point if area plans would be amended to reflect changes to the Policy Plan made as a result of this process. Chairman Alcorn added that Policy Plan language guided rezoning applications, area plan changes, and County infrastructure improvements.

Paul Ouellette said he lived near the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station and he and others had been contacted on a number of occasions by developers interested in buying their property. He said development in this area could be very fragmented because all owners would not sell. He asked how situations like this would be addressed. Chairman Alcorn replied that he did not have an answer to that question and it was something that might be addressed in the TOD guidelines.

John Foster said he lived in the Huntington area and sometimes residents felt a sense of siege by developers who wanted to buy their property and that some of the owners did not maintain their property assuming it would be sold. Commissioner Lawrence commented that in such situations, it was important to have a strong and active community association so that everyone knew what was happening and would be in a position to evaluate proposals made by developers. He noted Arlington's transit-oriented development had been based on a bullseye concept and everyone knew what could happen if they were inside or outside of the bullseye. He said while it was important not to impose rigid rules on developers, residents needed to know that there was a clear demarcation.

John Sperling said BRAC would have a significant impact on south County and a proactive approach should be taken to address concerns about transportation and other infrastructure needs.

Commissioner de la Fe noted that BRAC procedures would be discussed at the September 20, 2006 Policy and Procedures Committee meeting.

Commissioner Lusk commented that BRAC would impact the Lee, Mount Vernon, and Springfield Districts and that discussion had begun concerning the space contractors would need and about the process to amend the Comprehensive Plan, if necessary, for areas adjacent to the Engineering Proving Ground and Fort Belvoir. He noted that infrastructure needs were a difficult issue and that the Federal Government could locate facilities wherever it wanted to without a requirement to ensure that infrastructure was in place to support them.

Mr. Sperling commented that the Secretary of the Army had indicated that a final decision about the relocation of facilities, such as the Davidson Airfield and the Army Museum, would not be made for six months.

Chairman Alcorn pointed out that BRAC, as currently proposed in Fairfax County, would not be considered transit-oriented development.

Mr. Bennett commented that trust had been eroded among the citizens in the Hunter Mill area because developers had argued that a particular site which had been the subject of numerous APR items should be considered TOD even though it was located beyond a mile and a quarter from the proposed rail stop. He said this was an example of why crisp TOD boundaries were needed.

Mr. Foust said he was afraid that the outcome of this process would be approval of higher densities if transit was available and that broader transportation issues would not be addressed.

Chairman Alcorn requested that comments on the strawman be forwarded to staff via the Planning Commission's website. He said at the next meeting of the committee, on September 27, in conference rooms 4/5 of the Government Center, a presentation would be made by the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce followed by further discussion of the strawman.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m.
Walter L. Alcorn, Chairman

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

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer
Approved on: November 1, 2006

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Attachment A – Attendance List
Attachment B – Draft Strawman Guidelines

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attachment A

TOD Committee Attendees, September 7, 2006

Albert, Deborah	DPZ
Alcorn, Walter	PC
Amick, Dave	Springfield Forest
Audet, Muray	JMCA
Balatbat, Karen	Windsor Estates
Batten, Edward	Park Authority
Beal, Garnetta	Windsor Estates
Beal, Wayne	Windsor Estates
Bennett, Bruce	Hunter Mill Traffic Calming Cmte
Bennett, David	EDAW
Bennett, Jody	Hunter Mill Defense League History
Boulter, Doug	VHCA
Bristow, Barbara	Citizen
Brooks, Spencer	Jeferson Manor Citizens Assn.
Broyhill, Linda	Reed Smith LLP
Byers, John	PC
Cavan, John	Wells & Associates
Cetron, Ari	Connection Newspapers
Costabile, K.	MDCCA
De la Fe, Frank	PC
Dorlester, Andrea	FCPA
DuMetz, Lisa	Urban Trans
Edwards, Dave	
Flanagan, Earl	Mount Vernon District citizen
Foster, John	Resident, Huntington community
Foust, John	EQAC
Frazier, Drew	Troop 1150
Fritts, Lara	SFDC
Galligan, Greg	Trails Committee
Gill, David	McGuire Woods
Hall, Charlie	Providence District
Harrison, Goldie	Hunter Mill District
Hertz, Jacqueline	Spring Bank Community
Hilder, Jane	Burgundy Community Assn.
Horwatt, Michael	Horwatt Law Offices
Hush, Leanna	DPZ PD
Jewell, Susan	Springfield CA
Lauretti, Keely	Citizen
Lawrence, Kenneth	PC
Lippa, Barbara	PC staff
Lovelace, Bill	Greenspring
Lusk, Rodney	PC

McKay, Jeff	Lee District Supervisor's Office
McKeeby, Elizabeth	Walsh Colucci
Morris, Roldolfo	Troop 1150
Nygren, Andrea	Kingstowne
Ortiz, Magda	Riverside Park resident
Ouellette, Paul	Windsor Estates
Panagos, Tom	W&M Properties
Riche, Lynn	Windsor Estates
Riveros, Albert	Sleepy Hollow
Robinson, Shean	South County Federation
Rodeffer, Linda	PC Staff
Rutledge, Andrew	Windsor Estates
Sargeant, Tim	Mount Vernon
Schwartz, Stewart	Smarter Growth
Slinker, Barb	Resident
Smith, Darren	Jefferson Manor Citizens Assn
Smith, Deborah	FairGrowth
Smith, Wade	MCA
Sperling, John	Westhampton
Stagg, Inda	Walsh Colucci
Teegarden, Pat	AIMCO
Tillett, Martin	Spring Bank Community Assn.
Tyahla, Paul	Fx Co. Chamber of Commerce
Waas, Gregg	Windsor Estates
Waas, Lori	Windsor Estates
Whitney, Kohann	TLUFT

The following guidelines and established principles should be considered with regard to Transit-Oriented Development.

1. **Transit Proximity.** The highest density/land use intensity should be focused and concentrated close to the transit station. This area may be generally defined as (1/4? 1/2?) mile radius from the station, or may be generally defined as (5-10-20-30?) minute walk from the station, to allow for the consideration of barriers such as roads or existing development that may affect the walking distance to a station within which higher intensity may be appropriate. Density and land use intensity should decrease as distance from the station increases.
2. **Walkability and Bicycle Access.** Techniques to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from that station area should be encouraged. This may include an integrated pedestrian system plan, trails and sidewalks, bicycle storage facilities, a mix of uses that encourage walking and biking, pedestrian-friendly street network, and appropriate sidewalk width.
3. **Station-specific flexibility.** (Narrative about importance of flexibility due to unique character of different stations areas in the County)
4. **Mix of land uses.** (A call for a balanced mix of uses to promote 24-hour ridership; uses that would encourage pedestrian activity)
5. **Housing affordability.** (Creating an expectation to include workforce housing, senior housing, and a mix of housing types, densities and costs)
6. **Design.** (Text covering a range of good design issues/examples, possibly including squares and plazas, integrated pedestrian system, street-oriented building forms, compact development, architecture, place-making, safe spaces)

Street Design. (A related issue -- would call for safe and attractive streets, grids, connectivity, street trees, street design to serve pedestrians, bicycles, buses and cars, perhaps calling for designing streets for lower traffic speeds)
7. **Parking.** (To address maximum parking requirements vs. minimum requirements, shared parking facilities, street parking, metered parking, incentive programs, carpooling, neighborhood parking programs, wrapping retail around parking structures, minimizing surface parking lots)
8. **Transportation and Traffic.** (Issues covered might include transit service, capacity, transportation alternatives, shuttle service, choice in modes, Transportation Demand Management and vehicular issues such as traffic calming measures and cut-through traffic)
9. **Efficient use of transit.** (General language encouraging land uses that are more likely to create transit users)
10. **Vision for the community.** (General language addressing a range of livability issues-oriented to future, stakeholder centered, collaborative, flexible, building a place, not a project)

11. **Regional framework.** (Guidance on regional issues such as: efficient regional land use patterns, coordination with state and federal transportation agencies, surrounding counties, partnerships)

12. **Environmental benefits.** (How TOD should respect, mitigate impacts and/or improve air quality, water quality, preservation of open space and environmental areas)

13. **Economic benefits.** (Covering mix of land uses, local and small business retention, partnerships)

14. **Open space.** (General expectations for urban parks, civic space, public space, passive and active recreation to encourage walking, pocket parks)

Process issues also addressed include:

- Infrastructure improvements/impacts-modeling
- Community outreach, acknowledgment of existing stable communities near transit