

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2006**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter L. 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  
Rodney Lusk, Lee District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District

STAFF PRESENT:

Fred Selden, Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)  
Leanna Hush, Planner, PD, DPZ  
Deborah Albert, Planner, PD, DPZ  
Andrea Dorlester, Fairfax County Park Authority  
Richard Stevens, Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office  
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission Office

OTHER COMMISSIONER PRESENT:

Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Springfield District

OTHERS PRESENT:

SEE ATTACHMENT A

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Chairman Walter L. Alcorn convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. in Conference Rooms 4/5 of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman Alcorn announced that the Committee was meeting again tonight to continue gathering information upon which to base guiding principles for transit-oriented development (TOD) in Fairfax County.

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Bill Lecos, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, introduced Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks, to discuss results from a telephone survey of 1,820 Fairfax County voters conducted between

May 11-30, 2006 at the request of the Chamber of Commerce. (A copy of the survey results is in the date file.)

Mr. Raabe reviewed the survey results:

- Transportation and traffic issues – identified by a margin of five to one as the major challenge facing the County with 21 percent indicating it was a crisis and 58 percent saying it was a major problem.
- Growth and development – 42 percent felt County was growing too fast; 25 percent said a little too fast. This was linked to traffic concerns.
- Growth – 57 percent felt it was inevitable; 37 percent felt it could be significantly slowed or stopped.
- Growth management – On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent, the County received a 2.78 rating for managing growth.
- Quality of life attributes – 66 percent wanted more access to mass transit; 76 percent believed housing was not affordable for average people.
- Extension of rail past Dulles Airport including four stops in the Tysons Corner Area – 83 percent in favor; 10 percent opposed.
- Transit-oriented developments – 56 percent in favor of transit-oriented developments like Metro West and 18 percent opposed.
- Visitation and appeal of urban centers – 85 percent had visited both downtown DC and Tysons Corner. Results showed that the more urbanized an area, the more appeal it had.

In response to a question from Bruce Bennett, Mr. Raabe said all the respondents had been asked about visitation and appeal of urban centers, but only those who had actually visited were reflected in the percentage.

- Appealing traits:
  - Easy to get around on foot (52 percent)
  - Access to mass transit (49 percent)
  - Cultural attractions and nightlife
  - Mix of uses (office, retail)
  - Interesting things to look at
  - Vibrant and diverse shopping
  - Good places to work.

- Quality of life – 44 percent said quality of life would improve with the above traits; 38 percent said it would only add a little to the quality of life for a total of 82 percent saying that an urbanized area would add to the quality of life in Fairfax County.

Responding to a question from Deborah Smith, Mr. Raabe said that while a distinction had not been made between the desirability of visiting versus living in an urbanized area, extrapolations could be made to indicate that the numbers would not diverge greatly.

Summarizing his presentation, Mr. Raabe made the following points: respondents were clearly upset about traffic and growth; thought growth was inevitable and not being managed well by the County; desired transit options; overwhelmingly supported the proposed Tysons rail project; favored projects like Metro West, with one-third supporting such projects strongly; and thought that more urbanized areas that were walkable and accessible by transit would add to the quality of life.

In response to a question from Mr. Bennett, Mr. Raabe said the demographics of the survey included age, income, gender, and home ownership.

Responding to a question from Joe Stowers about the validity of the survey, Mr. Raabe said that 10 percent of the respondents had been called back to make sure there had been no falsification by the interviewers and that all standard industry quality control measures had been taken.

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Commissioner de la Fe MOVED THAT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JULY 26 AND JULY 27, 2006 BE APPROVED.

Commissioner Lusk seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Chairman Alcorn said the next item on the agenda was discussion of the strawman draft of guiding principles for transit-oriented development. He asked for comments about whether the guidelines should apply only to areas where there was heavy rail or also to areas with different transit types, such as light rail and bus lines.

Mr. Bennett commented that density concentrated in one area was supposed to reduce density elsewhere. He pointed out that if areas with bus transportation were considered transit-oriented development, it could lead to sprawl. He said he thought TOD should be based on rail transportation.

Inda Stagg said she that she thought the purpose of transit-oriented development was to limit car trips; therefore, areas in proximity to bus nodes should be considered TOD.

Michael Horwatt, Esquire, said he thought that it was important to limit TOD to rail stations due to their unique dynamics that were not necessarily applicable to other modes of transportation. He pointed out another reason to limit transit-oriented development to rail was because a different process might be used, such as planning before an application was actually filed.

Mr. Stowers commented that he thought either way would work, emphasizing that it was very important to be clear about the definition of transit-oriented development and whether it included only Metro Stations, VRE, or bus rapid transit. He said at the present time it seemed that the market for TOD was around Metro Stations.

Commissioner Lusk said due to the possibility of light rail coming to the southeastern part of the County as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program, a provision for light rail should be included.

Commissioner Lawrence said he thought heavy rail should be the starting point. Mr. Bennett agreed with Commissioner Lawrence because rail had far more capacity than bus transportation.

Chairman Alcorn asked for input on first developing a set of TOD guidelines for inclusion in the Policy Plan and then formulating an implementation motion or a new section of the Policy Plan that would focus on implementation issues such as encouraging sector station plans, identifying impacts on infrastructure, and protecting existing neighborhoods.

Mr. Horwatt said he thought it was an excellent idea to separate the two because the criteria could be looked at without regard to a particular vantage point. Mr. Stowers commented that he had no problem with separating the guidelines from the implementation process.

Mr. Stowers said that he was impressed with the work the committee had done and the amount of consensus built to date and that the Planning Commission should be commended for organizing the effort, educating citizens, and asking for their input.

Mr. Stowers noted that he had submitted his comments in writing, a copy of which is in the date file. He said the most important issue he raised was the need for public/private funding for public amenities. He also expressed concern about a suburban bias to this process which could become outdated.

Chairman Alcorn pointed out that pages 1, 2, and 3 of the strawman document contained TOD guidelines and page 4 addressed implementation and process related issues. He asked Fred Selden, Director, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, to comment on putting implementation and process related issues into the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Selden said that although in some places the Comprehensive Plan addressed implementation of a recommendation, he thought the Plan should not be too prescriptive.

Commissioner de la Fe agreed with Mr. Selden. He said he thought the guidelines should be developed first followed by implementation strategies, but that the implementation strategies

should be not be put into the Comprehensive Plan step-by-step because then the Plan would read like rezoning proffers.

Commissioner Lawrence commented that the TOD guidelines and implementation could be compared to the Comprehensive Plan and the Area Plans Review process. He said the idea of a two part process made sense as long as the two parts were co-equal; i.e., the process produced a product.

Deborah Smith said that there were two different groups of issues: one related to planning which could include visioning and charettes; and the other related to implementation such as TDM strategies and enforcement.

Dave Edwards commented that he thought the commuter bus system needed to be given the same amount of emphasis as pedestrian and bicycle access.

Douglas Stewart said he welcomed the emphasis on process because it needed to be improved and would impact all parties concerned: the County, developers and citizens.

Responding to a question from Ms. Smith, Chairman Alcorn said the numbering of the issues in the strawman document was random and not listed in order of importance. Mr. Selden said that they did not need to be listed in order of importance.

Sally Ormsby commented that much of what was being discussed was already in the Plan; therefore, perhaps the guidelines should only address those issues that were specific and unique to TOD. She pointed out that if the Plan was amended over and over it became scrambled and needed to be revised in a more orderly fashion. She noted that comments of the Fairfax County Citizens Committee on Land Use and Transportation on the draft strawman guidelines dated August 2, 2006, had been submitted in writing, a copy of which is in the date file.

Responding to a question from Ms. Ormsby, Chairman Alcorn said there had not been a lot of discussion on form-based codes during this process.

In response to a question from Ms. Stagg concerning Number 1 of the draft strawman guidelines, Transit Proximity, Leanna Hush replied that the last section of this statement was an attempt to explain that generally transit development areas within a transit station area should be within a quarter-mile of a station which was in the Plan at the present time. Ms. Hush also noted that suggestions had been received recommending both a quarter-mile and a half-mile as appropriate distances from a transit station.

Mr. Lecos commented that experience around the country with transit-oriented development had shown that a hard boundary, line, or circumference was not the right standard. He said proximity should be determined by time, space, and experience. He also said he thought Number 6, Design and Street Design, and Number 14, Open Space, should be combined because open space was vitally important to creating a sense of space and public use.

Mr. Horwatt said a presumption of a quarter-mile and ten minutes could be made for transit proximity, which was probably the most sensitive issue of all, with flexibility to have different boundaries for specific stations if justified. He said he thought there needed to be a line because without one there would not be confidence in the process.

Roger Diedrich, Sierra Club, that he agreed in general with Mr. Lecos' comment about open space, but thought people were more concerned about the balance of density versus a broader access to open space in the County. He said a possible approach could be setting standards for small amounts of open space within TOD, such as pocket parks, and providing the public with information about the amount of open space in proximity to TOD, such as a mile or two miles.

Mr. Edwards commented that Mr. Diedrich's point was valid but did not belong in the TOD section of the Plan. He said it would be more appropriate to question whether that belonged in this section of the Plan.

Mr. Horwatt commented that Number 14, Open Space, might more appropriately be called "Landscaping and Green Space" because concepts in urban design often meant landscaping and trees and other kinds of design elements that were warm and hospitable.

Referring to Ms. Ormsby's comment about where the TOD guidelines should be put into the Plan, Mr. Selden said he did not see anything wrong with having them in both the Area Plans and the Policy Plan. He said when citizens had a question about TOD, they would not have to look in several places.

Andrea Dorlester, Fairfax County Park Authority, said that the Park Authority was very interested in seeing usable open space in transit-oriented development areas to provide people who lived, worked, and shopped there with a place to recreate without getting into their cars and driving to a park elsewhere in the County.

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Chairman Alcorn thanked everyone for coming and asked for their continuing input. He said the next meeting would be held on October 4, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in Conferences Rooms 4 and 5 of the Government Center.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.  
Walter L. Alcorn, Chairman

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CLOSING

September 27, 2006

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

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Attachment A – Attendance List  
Attachment B – Draft Strawman Guidelines

**TOD DISTRIBUTION LIST  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2006**

**ATTACHMENT A**

Albert, Deborah	PD, DPZ
Alcorn, Walter	PC
Baker, Searcy	Diamond Properties
Bennett, Bruce	Hunter Mill Traffic Calming Cmte
Broyhill, Linda	Reed Smith LLP
Byers, John	PC
Cetron, Ari	Connection Newspapers
De la Fe, Frank	PC
Diedrich, Roger	Sierra Club
Dorlester, Andrea	FCPA
Edwards, Dave	
Gill, David	McGuire Woods
Goodman, Keith	FCDOT
Harrison, Goldie	Hunter Mill District Supervisor's Office
Harsel, Suzanne	PC
Horn, Loretta	W&M Properties
Horwatt, Michael	Horwatt Law Offices
Hush, Leanna	PD, DPZ
Kraucunas, Paul	VDOT
Lecos, Bill	Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce
Lippa, Barbara	PC staff
Lusk, Rodney	PC
McKeeby, Elizabeth	Walsh Colucci
Mills, Joel	
Mullin, Kevin	
Ormsby, Sally	FFC Citizens Cmte Land Use/Trans.
Raabe, Steve	OpinionWorks
Riveros, Albert	Sleepy Hollow
Rodeffer, Linda	PC Staff
Selden, Fred	PD, DPZ
Smith, Deborah	FairGrowth
Stagg, Inda	Walsh Colucci
Stevens, Richard	FCDOT
Stowers, Joe	
Switkin, Jill	Cooley Godward

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