FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2006

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large
Frank A. de la Fe, Dranesville District
Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District
Kenneth Lawrence, Providence District
Rodney Lusk, Lee District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:
John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District

STAFF PRESENT:
Fred Selden, Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
Leanna Hush, PD, DPZ
Deborah Albert, PD, DPZ
Daniel Rathbone, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)
Keith Goodman, FCDOT
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission

OTHERS PRESENT:
SEE ATTACHMENT A

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Chairman Walter L. Alcorn convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2/3, Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Commissioner Lusk MOVED THAT THE TOD COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 1, 2006 BE APPROVED. Commissioner Hopkins seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Chairman Alcorn announced that this would be the last Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) committee meeting, noting that the formal process would begin when the Board of Supervisors authorized the advertisement of an amendment to the Policy Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. He said subsequent to advertising, a public workshop would be held followed by public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman Alcorn noted that at the meeting held on November 1, 2006, the proposed introduction and the first three items had been reviewed. He said tonight the review would continue beginning with item 4, Mix of Land Uses.

Number 4 – Mix of Land Uses

Responding to a question from Sally Ormsby, Fred Selden, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, said although a mix of uses was not unique to TOD, he thought it was an appropriate guideline to make it clear that single use was discouraged.

Commissioner de la Fe suggested that the first sentence in the mix of uses be revised to state that TOD should include a mix of uses that would promote increased ridership in "all" directions, rather than "each" direction.

Number 5 – Housing Affordability

Dr. Jody Bennett suggested that this guideline be revised to indicate that affordable, workforce, and senior housing should be encouraged on-site.

Deborah Smith pointed out that in Arlington, money designated for senior housing had not always been used for that purpose.

In response to a question from Dr. Bennett, Chairman Alcorn said that age restricted housing was the same as senior housing.

Inda Stagg noted that in some cases, Arlington County had not used money designated for affordable housing near a transit station because more units could be built outside a transit area. Therefore, she questioned whether affordable, workforce, and senior housing should be required to be on-site.

Dr. Bennett and Charles Hall commented that they thought it was important to provide affordable housing and housing for seniors in TOD areas.

Michael Horwatt, Esquire, noted that sometimes it was difficult to locate high and moderately priced housing together and suggested that innovative architectural design might be able to address this issue.

Commissioner Suzanne Harsel noted that some senior citizens who had moved out of Fairfax County had moved back in because they missed the opportunities of a more familiar urban area. She suggested that senior housing be encouraged, but not required.

Summarizing the comments, Chairman Alcorn said that it was the consensus that senior housing should be generally encouraged on-site.

Number 6 – Design

Timothy Sargeant pointed out that the possible additional language in guideline Number 6, recommending that commuter garages be located at the periphery of TOD boundaries to discourage high volumes of traffic near a station, was in conflict with the first guideline, Transit Proximity and Station Area Boundaries, which said existing neighborhoods should be protected.

Paul Kraucunas, Virginia Department of Transportation, said he had made this suggestion because it was difficult to ensure pedestrian safety when parking garages were located too close to a station. He cited the Vienna Metro Station as an example.

Sally Ormsby said the language should also address stations that would not have commuter parking, such as Tysons Corner.

Commissioner de la Fe suggested that the words "…by locating commuter garages at the periphery of TOD boundaries rather than immediately adjacent to the station." in guideline Number 6, be deleted so it would read: "To facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access to the station, high volumes of traffic should be discouraged near the station."

Mr. Sargeant suggested alternative language indicating that locations within the periphery of the TOD boundaries would be identified and, if feasible, underground parking be provided. Tom Rickert agreed.

Chairman Alcorn said that further consideration would be given to the proposed alternative language for Number 6, Design.

Number 7 – Parking

Mr. Horwatt pointed out that the desire to encourage transit use and deter people from driving to a station were competing goals. He said rigid parking requirements and the assumption that commuters would live near the transit line could have the unintended consequence of under utilization of the station and suggested that language regarding parking be flexible.

In response to a question from Mr. Hall, Chairman Alcorn said that the phrase in Number 7, "encourage the use of maximum parking requirements" would a create cap on the number of parking spaces allowed per unit.

Commissioner Harsel noted that presentations had been made to the committee suggesting that parking structures should be located within a transit area and was therefore surprised to see a recommendation that parking structures be located along streets. Ms. Smith responded that the second sentence in Number 7, to minimize the visual impact of parking structures, addressed this concern. Commissioner de la Fe pointed out that "ground floor uses and activities should be incorporated into structured parking" also addressed this concern.

Mr. Rickert said underground parking should be encouraged. Dr. Bennett said underground parking could be added as an urban design element.

Number 8 – Transportation and Traffic

Daniel Rathbone, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, commented that it was very important to achieve a balance between multi-modal transportation infrastructure and intensity of development to ensure success of transit-oriented development. He said he was specifically concerned about development in Tysons Corner where rail will eventually link to the Orange Line because its capacity could be exceeded.

Ms. Smith noted that Steve Pastorkovich had suggested the first sentence of Number 8: "Cumulative impacts on transit service and capacity as well as on traffic capacity should be evaluated in a transit-oriented development…." to address the concern raised by Mr. Rathbone that phased development be compatible with the available transit capacity. Mr. Hall agreed and said that capacity should be considered during the planning process.

Number 9 – Vision for the Community

Chairman Alcorn stated that the alternative was more explicit in terms of incorporating community input into the planning process. He said there were different opinions about whether to be general or specific.

Mr. Sargeant said he thought it was a good idea to be more specific and suggested that the second paragraph of the alternative language be strengthened to indicate how community input would be solicited, such as through the APR process or the establishment of a special task force. He added that it was very important to obtain community input at the earliest possible time and before a proposal had been made.

Mr. Horwatt said the means used to obtain community input should not be too specific because different stations would require different approaches. He said he agreed to the alternative language for this item. Dave Edwards agreed.

Responding to a question from Mr. Hall, Chairman Alcorn said that "discourage parcel based unilateral development proposals prior to community outreach and involvement" had been deleted because this language would prohibit the use of the APR process for transit-oriented development, noting that nominations were made without community input. Commissioner Lawrence pointed out that APR nominations could be made by citizens, not just developers, and was a way in which citizens could become involved.

Mr. Horwatt suggested that development of an area, rather than a parcel-by-parcel approach, be encouraged.

Mr. Sargeant recommended that this item recognize that a variety of methods could be used to establish a TOD concept and vision for the community before an actual proposal was made.

10. Regional Framework

Mr. Sargeant recommended that "system-wide scale" be clarified in the first sentence of the alternative language. Ms. Smith said this could be done by inserting the word "transit" before system-wide scale.

Mr. Selden said the alternative/additional language would be challenging to implement because it required consideration of what was happening throughout the transit system. He said regional authorities, such as WMATA and VRE, should be responsible for balancing the system capacity and impact. He added that localities could not factor in all system-wide implications and it would be misleading to imply that it could be done.

Commissioner Lawrence pointed out that the federal government had been locating their facilities in proximity to Metro Stations for years and said it was not only important to consider where the riders would embark, but also their destination.

Mr. Hall said although there should be some consideration within the County of obvious impacts, he agreed with Mr. Selden that a system-wide approach was unreasonable.

Mr. Kraucunas said he thought this item referred to station uses, not rail and trains. For example, he said one station area could be known for its restaurants and another for its office buildings.

Mr. Horwatt said while it was desirable to consider the inter-relationships of the stations and their special characteristics, this guideline could make TOD almost unmanageable.

Number 11 – Environmental Benefits

Ms. Ormsby pointed out that this item was unclear because it did not explain what was meant by environmental benefits.

Mr. Sargeant suggested changing the last word in the paragraph from "performance" to "conditions."

Mr. Kraucunas also said this item needed to be clarified because the idea was to encourage dense development in certain areas so land consumption could be reduced in other areas.

Ms. Smith pointed out that there was no evidence TOD would reduce land consumption anywhere else.

Mr. Selden said if the County and the region grew in the next 30 years as predicted, development should be concentrated rather than spread out over the landscape.

In response to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Selden said that thousands of acres of land had been preserved in the County in the last decade by purchases, land swaps, and conservation easements.

Mr. Rickert commented that the last sentence regarding minimizing environmental impacts should remain because intense development should be done creatively considering the environmental features of each station area.

Ms. Ormsby said this guideline needed to be clearer.

Number 12 – Economic Benefits

There were no comments on this item.

Number 13 – Open Space

Commissioner de la Fe recommended adding "such as stream valleys" to the last sentence of this item after …"open space preservation where appropriate."

Mr. Kraucunas said that open space should be user friendly and inviting and not just preserved for the sake of preservation.

Dr. Bennett commented that open space should be usable by residents of all ages.

Sandra Stallman said the Park Authority had suggested this language so that unbuildable areas and stream valleys could be preserved as open space.

Number 14 – Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Mr. Sargeant recommended strengthening this language to ensure that cumulative impacts of development would be addressed before a proposal had been made by stating that "cumulative impacts of development should be identified and implemented."

David Gill, Esquire, asked if the intent of this guideline was to fix existing development or was it only referring to the impact of the TOD development?

Ms. Smith commented that the intent was to take a more integrated approach to development by looking at the cumulative impacts when there were several different development proposals.

Mr. Selden said that this guideline addressed opportunities for transit-oriented development to mitigate problems with existing development in addition to offsetting TOD impacts.

Earl Flanagan said the word "implemented" should be changed to "offset."

Mr. Sargeant said this guideline did not necessarily put the entire burden on a developer to identify and offset TOD impacts and a strategic effort could be made, in partnership with the County, to improve areas beyond TOD.

Number 15 – Phasing of Development

There were no comments on this item.

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Chairman Alcorn asked for comments on any other part of the strawman document.

Ms. Ormsby questioned why the following needed to be included in the introduction: "Development of TOD can leverage major investments in public transit infrastructure, contribute to environmentally sound means to accommodate new growth in the County; improve access to transit stations and enhance transportation choice in the area." Chairman Alcorn said this issue could be discussed at the workshop.

Chairman Alcorn noted that other revisions may need to be made in the introduction and pointed out that budget, process, and implementation issues, not included in the strawman document, could be addressed when the Planning Commission made its recommendation, perhaps through additional motions.

In response to a comment by Mr. Hall, Chairman Alcorn said future planning efforts might expand the implementation of TOD guidelines as part of a family of guidelines for development around different types of mass transit, such as light rail.

Ms. Ormsby reiterated the point she had made at previous meetings about the need for a detailed appendix because much of the information was already in the Policy Plan and suggested that it only include that which was unique to TOD.

Chairman Alcorn said staff would use the guidelines as a starting point to develop specific Plan language recommendations. He noted that the BOS would authorize the advertisement of an amendment; a workshop would be held; and the Planning Commission would hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Board.

Chairman Alcorn thanked everyone who had participated in the process.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 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

Administratively approved on:
August 9, 2007

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Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director
Fairfax County Planning Commission

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Attachment
List of Attendees

Notes:
Final strawman document issued on November 22, 2006
TOD Workshop scheduled for January 17, 2007
Policy Plan Amendment authorized by the BOS on January 8, 2007 (ST07-CW-1CP)
Staff report issued on January 11, 2007
Planning Commission public hearing scheduled for February 8, 2007

TOD COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE **ATTACHMENT A**
NOVEMBER 15, 2006

Albert, Deborah	DPZ
Alcorn, Walter	PC
Audet, Maury	JMCA
Baker, Searcy	Diamond Properties
Batten, Edward	Park Authority bOARD
Bennett, Jody	Hunter Mill Defense League History
Broyhill, Linda	Reed Smith LLP
Cetron, Ari	Connection Newspapers
de la Fe, Frank	PC
Edwards, Dave	
Fairfield, Jeff	Launders Trust
Fields, Zack	BOS
Flanagan, Earl	
Gill, David	McGuire Woods
Goodman, Keith	FCDOT
Hall, Charlie	Providence District
Harsel, Suzanne	PC
Hopkins, Nancy	PC
Horn, Loretta	W&M Properties
Horwatt, Michael	Horwatt Law Offices
Hush, Leanna	DPZ PD
Kraucunas, Paul	VDOT
Lawrence, Kenneth	PC
Lippa, Barbara	PC staff
Lusk, Rodney	PC
McKeeby, Elizabeth	Walsh Colucci
McQuinn, Gina	Fairfax Newsletter
Oliphant, Marc	FCPA
Ormsby, Sally	FFC Citizens Cmte Land Use/Trans.
Panagos, Tom	W&M Properties
Payne, John	Housing Community Dev.
Rathbone, Dan	FCDOT
Rickert, Thomas	Jefferson Manor Land Use
Rodeffer, Linda	PC Staff
Sargeant, Tim	Mount Vernon
Selden, Fred	DPZ PD
Smith, Deborah	FairGrowth
Stagg, Inda	Walsh Colucci
Stallman, Sandy	FCPA
Switkin, Jill	Cooley Godward