

Planning Commission Meeting
September 27, 2012
Verbatim Excerpt

ARCHITECTURAL PLAN FOR TYSONS CORNER CENTER PHASE I RESIDENTIAL,
HOTEL, AND PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Administrative Item During Commission Matters

Commissioner Lawrence: What we're doing tonight is an administrative matter. This is not a recommendation to the Board. It's not a rezoning action. The proffers allow us to have a look at what architecture is proposed and we're looking particularly, as the proffers said, at things like building heights and whether or not the vision of the Plan is being achieved as near as we, not necessarily trained as architects, can tell. Does anybody have any questions having looked at the package? Peachy. All right, we do have somebody here from Macerich tonight. And I do have a couple of questions. And I'd like to be able to get them to reply.

Hillary Zahm, Macerich: Hi, Hillary Zahm with Macerich in Tyson Corner Center Mall.

Commissioner Lawrence: Thank you. My first question has to do with the actions we've been taking. Recently, we did a PCA shifting units from one building to another. Do the drawings that we have here represent all those actions? That is, are the heights what the heights are going to be after all the shuffling is done?

Ms. Zahm: Yes, correct. The drawings you're looking at incorporate all of the changes we've made to date that have been approved by staff, through interpretation or through last week's PCA.

Commissioner Lawrence: Okay. Everybody on that? All right. Second question: in looking at the crossings for Metro, the Metro bridges, it strikes me that it might be interesting to hear a little bit from you about wind, particularly when we have very gusty winds as we might have in the afternoon in summer with a thunderstorm or in the winter time when we get one of those wintery blasts. What can you tell us about what the conditions will be for people on those overpasses if the wind begins to howl?

Ms. Zahm: Sure, well to clarify, we're not building or maintaining the bridge that runs from the Metro station on 123 to our side of the street. That is being built by MWAA and will be controlled and maintained by WMATA. But we are building the bridge that's in the package you're looking at that runs from the south entrance pavilion over to Phase I, which is our residential tower, where it hits. And I'm going to let Harold Thompson with RTKL give you a description of the wind because he's probably more qualified than I am.

Harold Thompson, Senior Vice President, RTKL Associates, Inc.: Hi. Harold Thompson with RTKL in Dallas. And with regard to the wind, Commissioner Lawrence, it's a concern that we share and we've been working with RWDI, a Toronto-based wind consulting firm, to be certain that all of the public spaces within Phase I meet the generally accepted principles for comfort and safety. So, with regard to the bridge in particular, you'll notice in the package that we've

designed a bridge that has a 42-inch guard rail with a mesh plating on it, currently. But we're working with RWDI to be certain that the density of the mesh and the height of the guard rail is appropriate to allow for the required level of comfort and safety for the bridge. And the bridge is about 220 feet long, so we want to be certain that as people walk or stand along the bridge, that those gusts of wind that might happen – particularly in the winter, and the summer – will not be, first of all dangerous and, secondly, will not be uncomfortable to them by standard measures.

Commissioner Lawrence: Thank you and one thought that comes to mind about those bridges, and I understand that one of the bridges is not your worry. But the one that you have there does run pretty squarely in line with what the wind is going to be doing. And one of the things I was thinking of was prams - baby prams. You get a baby pram with the top up and that thing is pretty top-heavy. There's a lot of lateral area.

Mr. Thompson: Right.

Commissioner Lawrence: And as the wind gets to blowing really hard through that mesh, it could have an exciting effect on the pram.

Mr. Thompson: That's right. And RWDI actually built a physical model of all of these elements, all of the buildings – the Plaza, the Mall, and the context. And they study that in a wind tunnel and they determine for certain times of the year and certain times of the day when the wind might be either uncomfortable or unsafe. So what they're telling us, interestingly, is that that particular point of the site does not have extremely negative variables for wind. As you go around the site of Tysons Corner, there are various conditions based on the context and the other buildings across from it. So that particular area is not particularly prone to negative bursts of wind, either in the summer or the winter. But we are continuing to work with them as we continue to document that design to be sure of that. Again, comfort and safety are paramount to you and to Macerich and we'll be certain that that guard rail has the right density and the right height. And, certainly structurally, to your point, you know, we want to be sure that the covering is secure and safe and we'll be certain of that.

Commissioner Lawrence: All right. Thank you very much. And is anybody's mind prompted by... okay. Mr. Migliaccio.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Mr. – Thank you. Just a quick question for Ms. Zahm. With the pedestrian bridge, can you just walk me through how somebody would get from the Metro into the Mall?

Ms. Zahm: Yes. I wonder if this might be easiest if I ... [*inaudible*] So, if you can see from my pen, here, this is Route 123. As you cross over the WMATA bridge you'll be at the same level as the south entrance pavilion. You'll cross over our bridge, cross our "ring road", and then you'll be in Phase I, then you follow through the plaza right into the Mall.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Okay.

Chairman Murphy: Ms. Hurley.

Commissioner Hurley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just going back to the fence along the bridge, is there a reason you wouldn't want to use Plexiglas or something two thirds of the way up to keep out the wind, rain, snow, as well as prevent some of those lovely young grandchildren from throwing things over the side of the bridge?

Mr. Thompson: Right. We certainly have considered that. And you'll note in the drawings that we actually call out either glass or metal railing for that very reason, that we really want to study which is best. Interestingly, the wind consultant has told us that in some cases a completely solid surface is not the best and that sometimes it's better to have a little bit of porosity for the wind to pass through. So we're relying on the experts to be certain that we get exactly the right material. But we certainly are studying that, and that's why we put that in there that some sort of glass might be an option. So we'll get what we need in order to get the right level of comfort and safety.

Commissioner Hurley: Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Mr. Lawrence. It's all yours.

Commissioner Lawrence: No further questions? Okay, two observations: one, as I mentioned to you in the email that I sent today, I continue to believe that what you're doing around that Plaza is very interesting and I think you're going to have quite a product there when everything is done. Second observation: I keep looking at the little pictures of cars and keep not seeing any MGs. I've not seen one MG. Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR THE PHASE I ARCHITECTURE OF THE MALL, AS REFLECTED IN THE DRAWINGS DATED AUGUST 2012, SUBMITTED BY THE MACERICH CORPORATION.

Commissioner Alcorn: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Alcorn. Is there a discussion of the motion? All those in favor of the motion to support the Architectural Plan for Tysons Corner Center Phase I Residential, Hotel, and Pedestrian Bridge, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

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(The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Hart having recused himself from the vote.)

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