

## Minutes of the Seven Corners Transportation and Land Use Task Force Meeting September 9, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM  
Mason District Government Center

### Attendance:

**Task Force:** John Thillmann, Mary Ellen Ward, Patrick Hoar, Evelyn Haught, Vince Burke, Steve Tillman, Karl Moritz, Dick Knapp, Martin Faga, Blake Smith, Jim Edmondson, Mark Silverwood and Iqbal Khaiy

**Staff:** Elizabeth Hagg (OCR), JoAnne Fiebe (OCR), Hyojung Garland (OCR), Bernard Suchicital (DPZ), Kim Rybold (DPZ), Kris Morley-Nikfar (DOT), Marianne Gardner (DPZ) and Aaron Frank from the Office of Supervisor Gross

### Administrative Items

Minutes from the August 26, 2014, meeting were reviewed. Evelyn Haught made a motion to approve the Minutes, and Martin Faga seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved unanimously. John Thillmann announced that the Task Force had two meetings remaining: September 23<sup>rd</sup>, when the Task Force would approve the Plan; and October 1<sup>st</sup>, when the Task Force would review implementation ideas and decide if they agree or disagree with them. He also announced the upcoming presentation on the draft Seven Corners Plan to the Falls Church City Council on September 15, 2014 at 8 pm. He and some county staff will be making the presentation.

### Discuss Proposed Transportation and Schools Implementation Plan Language

Kris Morley-Nikfar, with FCDOT, gave a presentation to clarify the transportation study and ring road concept. Kris reviewed some of the underlying assumptions of the transportation study, including that roads in neighboring jurisdictions were modeled at capacity levels desired by their implementing authority and that the final network recommendation will not include roadways in neighboring jurisdictions. In keeping with those assumptions, Kris reported that a new connection to Route 7 and also behind the Eden Center, which were taken from the Falls Church City's Eastern Gateway Concept Plan, were modeled with these roads as low capacity, neighborhood streets, one-lane per direction.

Kris showed illustrations of the overall street network as well as a zoomed in view of the ring road from Concept B – the recommended road network. These illustrations showed the indirect nature of the new road connection behind the Eden Center, and that the new road and N. Roosevelt Street were modeled as low capacity, neighborhood streets. Consequentially, N. Roosevelt Street was never intended to function as part of the ring road.

Kris then reviewed how trips assignments were done in the transportation study. He stated that trip assignments were driven by land use origins and destinations and a series of roadway desirability factors such as number of lanes, roadway speed and green time at signalized intersections. The model assigned larger volumes of trips onto the most desirable routes. He noted that in a comparison of weekday PM peak hour trips in 2040 between the existing Comprehensive Plan for Seven Corners and the Concept B network, the concept B scenario resulted in fewer trips to and from N. Roosevelt Street. In conclusion, Kris said that excluding N. Roosevelt Street and other potential future roads within Falls Church City has little to no impact on how the recommended roadway network will function.

## Discuss Land Unit C “Sears Site” Development Mix Options

JoAnne Fiebe, OCR, presented four options for Opportunity Area C- the “Sears site”; all of which have a maximum development capacity of 719,000 square feet (SF). Option 1, from the design charrette, has 165,000 SF of multifamily residential development, 110 townhouses for a total of 220,000 SF, 200,000 SF of office and 134,000 SF of retail. Option 2, a configuration that allows for a large format retail use, has 485,000 square feet (SF) of multifamily housing, 100 townhomes for a total of 200,000 SF, and 134,000 SF of retail. Option 3, provides for more residential development of the options, has 485,000 square feet (SF) of multifamily housing, 200 townhomes for a total of 400,000 SF, and 34,000 SF of retail. Finally, Option 4, which is a modified version of the original charrette proposal, has a range of 315,000 – 415,000 SF of multifamily development, 110 townhomes totaling 220,000 SF, 50,000 SF of office, and a range of 34,000 – 134,000 SF of retail. In Option 4, the land owner would have flexibility in the amount of retail and multi-family housing within the proscribed range, but in no case could the land owners exceed 719,000 SF.

### Public Comment Period

#### Association Representatives

##### Debbie Ratliff – Sleepy Hollow Manor Citizens Association

She stated that with the Plan draft changing so frequently it was hard to coordinate community comments on it. She identified her community’s top three issues: the residential density at the Sears site, transportation implementation, and schools. She said many unanswered questions remain.

##### John Iekel – Ravenwood Park Citizens Association

He stated he could support the original recommendation for the Sears site, but wanted to see access to the site limited to Route 7. He would also like to be able to review the side letter that is proposed to address implementation that would accompany the recommended Plan.

##### Catriona McCormack – Ravenwood Citizens Association

She stated that she supports the overall vision, but did not see the details to support the vision. She wants to see true community-serving amenities as part of the Plan. She said there are nearby examples of redevelopment that have succeeded at lower intensities. She said she supports Option 1 for the Sears site. However, she said the opening or closing of Juniper Lane was a make or break item for her community. She stressed that implementation details also are critical to her community.

##### Jim Kilbourne – Lake Barcroft Association

Mr. Kilbourne stated that he was in support of the charrette numbers for the Sears site and the individual categories of land use. He expressed concern about impacts of development on schools and roads. He stressed that it is important to have public comment on the implementation plan and, therefore, the community would like another public comment session.

##### Kay Kory – Delegate from the 38<sup>th</sup> District and Lake Barcroft resident

Ms. Kory was not aware of this process until email traffic pick-up later this summer and would like to see the timeline extended for more input and to refine the Plan. She wants to see a clear timetable and identified funding sources for implementing the transportation components of the Plan. As someone who instigated the codification of a school impact formula she expressed concern about the additional students that will further exacerbate school overcrowding.

#### Individuals

Suzie Wells – Sleepy Hollow Manor

Ms. Wells said that her community does not want the Shadeland Drive cul-de-sac opened to the new development at the Sear's site.

Mark Hayes – Juniper Lane

Mr. Hayes questioned the plans for the Willston School site and does not buy the contention that N. Roosevelt Street is not important. He noted that Sleepy Hollow Road is also only two lanes but it is very important. He said the new development proposed on Cherry Street was not taken into account in the transportation study. He also expressed concern that the proposed Plan does not have Juniper Lane cul-de-saced before the Sears and wanted to know what measures would be taken to ensure that Shadeland Drive is protected from the Sears site development. He declared that it was not acceptable for the implementation plan to be in a side document. Finally, he wanted to know what information had been shared with VDOT regarding the transportation network.

Kay Cooper – Lake Barcroft

Ms. Cooper stated that she did not want to see Seven Corners area continue to deteriorate and that development must be profitable or it won't happen. She would like to see the Route 7 corridor improved with light rail, medians and additional landscaping prior to redevelopment. She would also support an extension of the timeline for the Plan.

Debbie Ratliff – Sleepy Hollow Manor

This time Ms. Ratliff spoke as an individual rather than as a representative of her community. She does not see meaningful input from surrounding residents in the Plan. She felt the community will gain nothing from the new plan but new neighbors. She does not support the draft Plan.

Sam Rothman – Lake Barcroft

Mr. Rothman felt the process has moved too fast and that it seems that the community's recommendations are being ignored. He thinks the process needs to be extended to allow for further consideration of the Plan.

Marcial Peredo - Sleepy Hollow Manor

Mr. Peredo would like to see language added to the Plan that would stop vehicular traffic on Juniper Lane and Shadeland Drive. He is concerned that their residential streets will be used as a parking lot.

Liz Rawlings – Lake Barcroft

Ms. Rawlings said she recognized the current short-comings of the Seven Corners area. However, she feels the proposed reality falls short of the vision. She thinks too much residential development is being proposed, and asked who would pay for the additional services for this new population. She asked for an extension of time of this planning process.

Marc Freedman – Ravenwood

Mr. Freedman felt that what is being proposed in the Plan is counter-intuitive. He said Seven Corners should not become a Ballston-west. He does not think the Sears site proposal is in keeping with the vision to prevent retail encroachment into the residential neighborhoods. He said the Task Force was not being responsive to the community and they would like written responses to the questions from the community.

Betsy Washington – Lake Barcroft

Ms. Washington stated that she thought Option 4 for the Sears site seems to be more of a single-use and she found this disappointing. She mentioned her field trip to New York City and the wonderful linear parks and sustainable development she found there. She wants to see more of a mixed-use development for the Sears site, and that the Plan was a little short on green space.

Don Smith

Mr. Smith stated that he did not believe they were likely to see any benefits from the proposed revitalization of Seven Corners. He thought the transportation plan is highly speculative, relying on routes that traverse private property. He said Seven Corners will more likely look like eleven corners. He wanted to know where the 5,800 new residential units came from. He was told it was needed to make the redevelopment profitable. He wants to see a lower overall intensity and a second transportation study to refine the Plan.

Marty Machowsky – Ravenwood Park

He wanted to know if the Task Force was going to vote on one of the four options for the Sears site that evening. He thought the Charrette option was the best. He stated that traffic from the Sears site should not empty out onto Patrick Henry Drive. Also, he said they need assurances that the transportation infrastructure will be in place or else the county should say “no” to rezonings.

Anne Simon – Lake Barcroft

Ms. Simon wondered how the area could become more Metrorail accessible. She wanted to see more and better transit and perhaps public parking garages so can better access the metro.

Clyde Miller

Mr. Miller said he thinks the Seven Corners area is a thriving retail center now, including a newly renovated Gold’s Gym. The vision of the Task Force is to tear it all down. He said the Planning Commission will be told this Plan is the community’s plan but he did not agree with that and will communicate to the Planning Commission that the Task Force Plan is not the community’s plan.

Task Force Action

At the request of the Task Force, Joanne Fiebe repeated the four options for the Sears site. There was general discussion and a straw poll of Task Force members on the options. Option 1 and Option 4 received the most support, so the Task Force agreed to eliminate Options 2 and 3. However, due to no clear consensus on the remaining options, John Thillmann said that they would defer a vote on the Sear’s option until the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Then the Task force discussed restricting access to the Sears site from Juniper Lane and Shadeland Drive and to only have the site accessed from Route 7. Evelyn Haught made a motion to include in the Plan to close Juniper Lane and for there to be no pedestrian access to Shadeland Drive. Discussion ensued and some concerned comments from the public were made. Again, with no clear consensus on the motion, it was agreed to table the motion until the next meeting.

Mary Ellen Ward made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Karl Moritz. The Task Force adjourned at 9:40 pm.

The next Task Force Meeting will be **Tuesday, September 23, 2014.**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

9/23/14  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_