

**County of Fairfax, Virginia  
Planning Commission Meeting  
June 9, 2021  
Verbatim Excerpt**

*PA 2018-II-M1 - MCLEAN COMMUNITY BUSINESS CENTER (CBC) STUDY – This amendment concerns approx. 230 ac. in the Dranesville Supervisors District located south of Dolley Madison Boulevard (Route 123) in portions of Tax Map Grid 30-2 and 30-4 and centered around the intersection of Old Dominion Drive and Chain Bridge Road. The subject area is coterminous with the boundary of the McLean Community Business Center and is planned for approximately 2,175 residential units and 3,365,000 square feet of office, retail, and institutional uses. The amendment will consider adding an option for a mix of uses totaling approximately 3,850 residential units and 3,150,000 square feet of non-residential uses. The amendment will also consider implementation in the central portions of the CBC under a form-based guidance and bike and pedestrian facilities and a new parks concept. Recommendations relating to the transportation network may also be modified. (Dranesville District)*

**During Commission Matters**

Commissioner Ulfelder: Also, we have a decision only, tonight, in an important case involving the McLean Community Business—Center. So, with that, the public hearing for the McLean Community Business Center (CBC) Plan Amendment was held on May 26, 2021. A number of people spoke before the Commission, representing a wide spectrum of views on the proposal and the Commissioners had a number of questions and comments, as well. The decision was deferred until this evening, to allow us to address the community feedback and comments. As a result, my motion this evening includes further Plan Text changes to the staff recommendations found in the April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, staff report and the May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, staff report addendum. I'll explain those changes further in a moment after a few general remarks. Let me first say to the Commissioners, the staff circulated, as of yesterday, a memo to you, discussing so—some various issues in the CBC that was raised at the hearing and I think I would like to ask first, if any of you have any comments or—have any comments or questions concerning that memo before I proceed with my remarks and a motion? Is there anyone who has a question about some of the issues that were discussed in that memorandum? Who? Mary? Ms. Cortina?

Commissioner Cortina: Thank you, Commissioner Ulfelder. Yes, I did have concerns about the bicycle and pedestrian safety. But I did spend time with staff looking through the CBC plans in more detail and the text language, which I believe does address the issues I was concerned about. Additionally, in terms of the stormwater, this proposal here by no means handicaps the redevelopment an—and in fact, it is not as strenuous as some other areas in the County. However, because of the ownership of McLean and so many parcels, and the way it's redeveloped. And the strategy that staff have used in order to reduce the run-off from all redevelopment to prevent flooding. And the green infrastructure that's been proposed for plants. I do believe it is satisfactory and it will be competitive, but not over burdensome. So, I—I believe both of those concerns have been met with the staff letter and additional meetings. Thank you.

Commissioner Ulfelder: Is there anyone else who has any comments? We did discuss some of the issues that you all raised, as well as what some of the speakers raised. Okay, that I will – I will proceed. This amended plan is an important and hopefully a major change for the future revitalization of the aging and somewhat dated downtown McLean business and shopping area. The existing Comprehensive Plan for the area was last updated over 20 years ago, with hopes of

starting a viable revitalization effort to update the community business center and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a mix of the new—of the new balance with the community serving business and other uses that the community values. It did not happen. The current plan based on the floor area ratio approach and highly compartmentalize, has proved to be too inflexible and wieldy for landowners and potential developers. Time for a new approach that supports change and new development while maintaining aspects of the community business center that the residents of McLean love and value. I believe that the staff report more than adequately describes the process that the county and the community went through to develop this proposal. Starting over three years ago, the community and county staff, went through a processes utilizing current market data to envision a business center area that would be more pedestrian friendly and welcoming to local residents and their guests. A place where they could attend local events, get a bite to eat, and hang out. Not just buy their groceries and pick up their prescriptions and go home. The—the resulting vision calls for more residential development in the center of McLean. And I—and a large community park—plaza associated with that residential development in the center and there are number of other proposed changes designed to make downtown McLean greener, and pedestrian and bicycle friendly, while changing the face of its current road network. As well, as addressing other issues that are often associated with an older, aging downtown area, that is ripe for some positive redevelopment. Task force made up of representatives of community organizations, such as the McLean Citizens Association, Mclean Revisitation Corporation, the McLean Planning Committee, and the McLean Chamber of Commerce, as well as adjacent homeowners associations, landowners, and McLean Business Associations, met 28 times over two-and-one-half years with the community at large. In—and—in addition, a number of meetings, many virtual, were had—were held with the community at large to receive input on key steps along the way and all—and—and—and to answer the many questions and concerns about the proposed plan. While the final plan is not quite, all—on all fours with the final vision statement, as documented in Appendix A of the staff report, the changes represent judgments by the members of the task force, bases on the more detailed knowledge and experience with the CBC. Overall, however, the proposed plan is quite consistent with the spirit and intent of the vision statement. Before I make my motion, however, I would like to make—take a moment to briefly explain the additional visions I am proposing to the staff recommendations, based on comments and questions from the public hearing. These proposed changes can be found on the Department of Planning and Development’s website for the McLean CBC study. First, in Appendix A of the staff report, page 74, under street network; strike the bullet concerning the closing of the intersection Center Street and Old Dominion Drive. Center Street will remain open for the time being until a rezoning application is filed and reviewed for that area. Second, in Appendix A of the staff report, page 78; the entire paragraph with bullets, titled “Parking Management”, is stricken. Third, Appendix A of the staff report, page 104, concerning land unit G2 has been revised to make it clear that a maximum height of 40 feet is recommended for the Land Unit G2. And, finally, in the amend—addendum to the staff report, page 9, the discussion, the milestone residential development level has been revised and expanded. It is now based solely on the number of units developed rather than the arbitrary time limit and—and spells out what, and how such a—a review will occur along with opportunity for community input before any decision is made concerning preceding beyond the original goal of 1660 dwelling units. With that I would like to propose a—a motion, Mr. Chairman. They gave it to me here, somewhere. With that Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THE ADOPTION OF A PLANNING COMMISSION ALTERNATIVE TO THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR—FOR PLAN AMENDMENT 2018-II-M1, AS SHOWN ON TONIGHT’S HANDOUT DATED JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>.

Commissioner Lagana: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by...

Commissioner Lagana: Commissioner Lagana.

Chairman Murphy: Commissioner Lagana, yes. Is there a discussion of the motion?

Commissioner Lagana: I, Mr.—Commissioner, I just wanted to add brief comment.

Chairman Murphy: Please.

Commissioner Lagana: I think I—just very, very quickly, both the process and vision of the final product and of course the—the manner in which I—I think that Commissioner Ulfelder handled the CBC study, as a model. We, ourselves, in Springfield have the Springfield CBC, which is very similar. And, I read this great interest. And I would just would like to thank Commissioner Ulfelder, and in the process laid out by staff and the model of engagement for driving this forward. So, thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Thank you. Further discussion of the motion? All those in favor of the motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it approve PA 2018-II-M1, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Ulfelder: Mr. Chairman, I have a follow-on motion this evening. The proposed plan amendment included a section cornering a potential transportation pilot project. One of the issues that came up during the hearing was, you know—how quickly are we really going to be able to try to address some of the transportation issues and the street scape proposal that was included in the plan. And the pilot project would be one way to start that. So, I have a follow-on motion to try and move that along. Therefore, here it is. I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO DIRECT STAFF TO PRIORITIZE THE STUDY AND EVALUATE OPTIONS FOR A TRANSPORTATION PILOT PROJECT TO SUPPORT PLACE-MAKING EFFORTS IN THE MCLEAN CBC BY CREATING A MORE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION STREET NETWORK AND STREET DESIGNS THAT RESULTS IN SLOWER VEHICLE SPEEDS. THE PILOT COULD INCLUDE TECHNIQUES LIKE NARROW VEHICULAR LANES, THE ADDITION OF ON-STREET PARKING, TIME OF DAY PARKING, AND INTERIM CHANGES TO ROAD CONFIGURATION. THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE NECESSARY PUBLIC OUTREACH, WHICH EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDERS. THE PILOT PROJECT STUDY AREA SHOULD GENERALLY ENCOMPASS THE AREA ALONG OLD DOMINION DRIVE, FROM THE BEVERLY ROAD INTERSECTION TO THE CORNER LANE INTERSECTION AND ALONG CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD, FROM THE OLD CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD INTERSECTION TO— TO THE TENSION DRIVE AND INGLESIDE AVENUE INTERSECTIONS. THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE SHOULD INCLUDE \$250,000.00 AS A CONSIDERATION ITEM IN THE NEXT QUARTEY BUDGET REVIEW TO FUND THESE ACTIVITIES. THE STUDY WILL DEFINE IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND COSTS, WHICH WE ASSUME TO BE MINIMAL AS

THERE WILL BE NO MAJOR CONSTRUCTION WORK, SUCH AS CURB RELOCATIONS. I SO MOVE.

Commissioner Carter: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Commissioner Carter. Is there a discussion of the motion? All those in favor of that motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Commissioner Carter: I have a comment.

Chairman Murphy: Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Commissioner Carter: I thought the plan is—is a very good effort on this. This has come up in other areas, both in zoning cases and—and now it's starting to come up in Comp Plans. But, I—I just want to mention that—the street lights and—and the trees proposed in the public right-of-way, is a challenge to us in Fairfax. But, it's—it's all about the health and safety of our pedestrians. If anything that we've learned in the last year, getting outside is—is critical to the health and safety. And, making those features as they're depicted in the plan work is—is critical to our County as—as it matures. So, I applaud this effort and I like the idea of a pilot program. Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Thank you. Anyone else?

Commissioner Ulfelder: Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Is there any other Commission business?

A brief discussion followed that was unrelated to this application.

Commissioner Ulfelder: I would just like to take a minute and thank staff. Leanna O'Donnell, David Fisk, and all the staff that worked so hard on the—this Plan Amendment. I think people don't understand how much of a commitment and sacrifice staff makes on some of these efforts. As I mentioned, there were 28 taskforce meetings and staff had to be there for all of them. And staff was preparing different drafts between meetings. There were other community meetings, some on weekends, some on evenings. Staff made themselves available to talk to any citizen or resident of McLean who called in or had questions or concerns and to try answers them. So, they just spent an enormous amount of time, a lot of it outside the normal business hours, on—working on this plan and I think that this is a tough one because there were some pretty strong splits in the community about what we were trying to do and how we were doing it. I—I happen I think come to a good spot. We'll see the proof of the pudding is in the eating and we'll find out over the next ten years. If we've—if, if the effort has been able to loosen up some further development, revitalization, and redevelopment in the McLean CBC. But I—I, the staff commitment was just terrific and they did a terrific job and I want to thank every one of them.

Chairman Murphy: Thank you.

Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Murphy: Yes.

Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner: I just want to be sure, Do—do we have a recorded vote for that follow-on motion? It got kind of—with John’s second and his comment, I didn’t know if the vote was recorded or not?

Chairman Murphy: Did we record the vote?

Satabdi Samaddar, Deputy Clerk to The Planning Commission: No, you still need to make the motion.

Chairman Murphy: What?

Satabdi Samaddar, Deputy Clerk to The Planning Commission: On the follow-on motion.

Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner: That follow on motion, it—it, the record of the vote itself was kind of lost in the midst of John’s comment.

Chairman Murphy: Oh, okay.

Commissioner Ulfelder: Is—is it an official vote, on the record?

Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner: Can—can we just simply vote?

Chairman Murphy: All those in favor of that motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed?

Commissioner Ulfelder: Unanimous.

Chairman Murphy: Motion carries.

Each of the motions carried by a vote of 10-0. Commissioner Clarke and Commissioner Jimenez were absent from the meeting.

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# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 8, 2021

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Leanna H. O'Donnell, Director, Planning Division

**SUBJECT: McLean Community Business Center (CBC) Comprehensive Plan Amendment (PA 2018-II-M1)**

The Planning Commission held a public hearing for Comprehensive Plan Amendment 2018-II-M1 (McLean CBC Study) on May 26, 2021 and deferred the decision-only to June 9, 2021. Additional information on the following items discussed at the public hearing can be found below.

### 1. The Milestone Residential Development Level

The draft Comprehensive Plan language recommends a Milestone Residential Level, focused on the Center and General Zones which are the areas identified in the draft Plan that are proposed to utilize a form-based planning approach. One of the components of the form-based approach is a maximum development potential, or a ceiling on development. The maximum residential development potential for the CBC is proposed to be 3,850 residential units, which includes existing development, and anticipates no change to the Plan recommendations for the Edge Zone. The staff report addendum published on May 12, 2021, recommends that 1,660 residential units in the Center and General Zones (comprised of the existing development (700 units) and the 10-year market assessment for residential use (960 units) in the Center and General Zones) be combined with the planned development potential for the Edge Zone (700 units) and be identified as this “milestone” as shown in the chart below.

Milestone Residential Development Level

Zone	Residential Units
Center and General Zones	1,660
Edge Zone	700
Total	2,360



The draft Plan recommends that before the milestone is reached, an analysis (the “milestone analysis”) of the impacts of new development in the Center and General Zones be provided to the Dranesville District Supervisor. The details of this tracking and review process are as follows.

Development activity will be monitored by DPD staff, and on an annual basis, an update will be provided to the Dranesville District Supervisor. This annual update will include a summary of development activity in the CBC, including projects in various stages of entitlement or construction, proffer mitigations and public projects.

The timing for the beginning of the milestone analysis will be informed by the regular tracking of development activity, with a goal to complete the milestone analysis before the milestone is reached. The intent is to avoid potential complications for the timing of reviews of any pending entitlement applications while the milestone analysis is underway. The milestone serves as the point at which the analysis should be completed. If there are entitlement applications under review while the analysis is being completed, those applications would continue through the process even if the number of units proposed exceeded the milestone.

The milestone analysis will include:

- an evaluation of school capacity and projections, including an assessment of the capacity projections that were provided at the time of entitlement and actual enrollment information, as well as proposed Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) CIP improvements;
- a transportation analysis that reviews the new development and proposed and/or implemented mitigation measures;
- an evaluation of potential impact on other public facilities (parks, libraries, public safety, etc.) and proposed or implemented mitigation measures; and
- recommendations for each public facility, if needed.

The community will be included in the review of the analysis, and community feedback on the findings of the analysis will be provided to the Dranesville District Supervisor. The Supervisor will work with staff and the community to review the analysis and determine whether the impacts to the existing and planned transportation and public facilities infrastructure have been mitigated, and whether similar planned mitigations are sufficient to support the maximum residential potential identified in the draft Comprehensive Plan (3,850 units). If the analysis confirms the existing and planned infrastructure can support the 3,850 unit maximum, no changes will be required.

If the analysis determines that the existing and planned infrastructure is not adequate to mitigate the impacts of development, additional mitigation measures should be implemented, and/or the maximum development potential adjusted (lowered) to align with the ability of the public facilities to support the planned level of development.

## **2. Parks and Open Space**

One of the main components of the Vision Plan was to incentivize the creation of a central public open space for the McLean CBC. Within an incentivized Bonus Height Area in the Center Zone, additional height is offered for a project that provides a staff recommended minimum 2/3-acre central plaza. This is only one of the new park spaces that would be expected and that can be provided in the McLean CBC. There is language in the draft Plan that gives county staff the tools needed to ensure that every new development in the McLean CBC will provide for new parks, facilities, and amenities. For smaller sites, staff may negotiate for offsite contributions in lieu of fragmented mini parks that do not adequately meet open space needs. This would be an implementation strategy, rather than something described in the Comprehensive Plan. There is also Plan language that would ensure all residential development in the McLean CBC contributes funds for new offsite parks and recreational facilities. How these funds are to be used, and where, is an implementation strategy as well. County staff could pool funds from multiple smaller developments to acquire land for new parks and open space and/or to build new recreational facilities at existing parks (such as Bryn Mawr, which is adjacent to the CBC and has some planned facilities that have not yet been built).

## **3. Schools**

The draft Plan identifies potential solutions, if needed, to address school capacity deficits. The timing of implementation of the draft Plan is unknown, however FCPS staff conduct a Capital Improvement Program review process annually, where an assessment of student membership and capacity utilization at schools for the current and projected five-year timeframe is completed. Potential solutions to alleviate any current and projected school capacity deficits are identified. In addition, with every development application, an assessment of student membership and school capacity utilization is provided. Schools staff will work with DPD for the proposal annual development activity update and for the milestone analysis. If there is a need identified for new facilities based on the most current student yield ratios and current forecasts, efforts can begin to address that need. There is also opportunity to conduct an additional school assessment (after 5 years) ahead of the milestone analysis to evaluate changes in student membership and capacity utilization from the recent boundary changes, and the potential student yield from the most current student yield ratios.

## **4. Stormwater**

The draft stormwater management language addresses both stormwater quality and quantity controls.

### Water Quality

Community feedback at the public hearing recommended that a one-inch retention standard be met.

- The majority of our rainstorms, approximately 90%, include rains of one inch or less.

- The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality found that these storms, while small, can lead to erosion in our streams and other water quality issues.
- In response to these concerns, on-site Best Management Practices (or BMPs) are generally required to address these smaller, but more frequent, storms and to reduce the nutrients flowing into our streams. Many of these BMPs receive credit for both improving water quality and reducing the amount of stormwater runoff leaving the site, which is known as runoff reduction.
- However, in particular circumstances, regulations would allow for the use of off-site nutrient credits in lieu of on-site nutrient reductions.
- The proposed policies would recommend that all water quality requirements be met on-site through the use of runoff reduction BMPs and can be expected to significantly improve the impacts of these smaller more frequent storms.
- The draft policy language lists some Green Stormwater Infrastructure (or GSI) that would be appropriate for relatively small sites, such as those in the McLean CBC, including bioretention planters, green roofs, amended soils, and rainwater harvesting cisterns, although other types of GSI could be used as well.
- This would be a significant improvement over the existing conditions.

#### Water Quantity Controls

Community feedback has recommended that the volume of the 10-year, 24-hour storm in the post-developed condition be reduced by 25% (for sites < 1 acre) and 40% (for sites > 1 acre), as compared to existing runoff volumes.

- While stormwater quantity controls would help manage the smaller storms, they would not fully address the larger storms and the associated flooding issues within McLean.
- State regulations, developed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and local regulations address these larger storms through water quantity controls.
- More specifically, these regulations address the post-development peak flow rates from these larger storms. Managing flow rates is critical, owing to the potential for both flooding and the erosion in the receiving stream channels.
- Flow rates can be reduced through infiltration and/or the temporary storage of rainwater.
- However, infiltration can be challenging in many parts of the county, including the McLean CBC. Soils within the CBC are generally compacted with significant areas identified as having slow permeability and high-water tables, and with a rating of “marginal” for infiltration facilities.
- The proposed policies, therefore, focus on the peak flow rates but do not recommend a particular approach to meeting those flow rates.
- Additionally, state and local stormwater regulations generally compare existing to proposed impervious cover levels to determine detention requirements. For areas like the McLean CBC, which already have high levels of impervious cover, requirements are expected to be minimal. Therefore, the proposed policies recommend that peak runoff rates be reduced from the existing conditions, which is expected to reduce both flooding and the erosion in our stream channels.

## 5. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities were reviewed extensively with the Task Force leading to many recommendations within the draft Plan. The goal of the recommendations is to improve the pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the McLean CBC which is coordinated with and compliments the upcoming Active Fairfax pedestrian and bicycle plan. High quality pedestrian facilities and bicycle networks will provide mobility and connectivity within the McLean CBC and the surrounding community and will complement placemaking and revitalization efforts in McLean.

The draft Plan recommends enhancements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities by:

- Identifying specific pedestrian improvements for existing and new streets that minimize crossing distances at intersections, add pedestrian refuge areas, provide clear markings and wayfinding signage, provide connections between and through developments, and consider mid-block crossings.
- Recommending street cross-sections that were developed for a multimodal network, where a 12-foot-wide separate pedestrian and bicycle pathway on Old Dominion Drive, would separate bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicles. Also, one-way cycle tracks on Chain Bridge Road on both sides of the street would separate bicyclists from pedestrians and vehicles.
- Prioritizing pedestrians and moving bicyclists off the roadways on Beverly Road and Elm Street, by recommending a shared use path on both sides of the streets, narrowed lane widths, and reduced vehicle speeds and crossing distances.
- Accommodating on-road bicycle traffic on local streets with low traffic volumes and low traffic speeds. For pedestrians on local streets, incorporating 6-foot-wide sidewalks is recommended.

Implementing these recommendations would occur over time with redevelopment, in accordance with the Plan's guidelines and County Policy. In addition, developing a transportation pilot project along Old Dominion Drive and Chain Bridge Road to create a pedestrian and bicycle friendly network could be a catalyst for other similar projects in the CBC. A follow-on motion will be offered for County staff to prioritize further studies and to identify funding for the pilot project.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 703-324-1272.