

Form Based Code Advisory Working Group Meeting Summary – 09/12/12

The following summarizes FBC AWG discussion and includes staff clarifications where they were provided during the meeting.

Agenda Item 1: FBC Amendments related to bike sharing and transit stops. Staff informed the AWG that this item will not be part of the overall package of amendments that will move forward this year since additional analysis is required before potential changes to the FBC can be considered. However, the AWG provided feedback on this item as guidance to staff for future analysis.

With regards to bikeshare stations:

- AWG members requested detailed maps of planned locations and dimensions of stations that would inform how much on-street or streetscape space may need to be occupied.
- Some AWG members questioned whether the stations would actually be located off the Pike and closer towards the 9th and 12th Street parallel bike boulevards. Staff indicated that both areas are being evaluated by staff and the Capital Bikeshare Program.

With regards to transit stops:

- AWG members noted that the Street Space Task Force previously evaluated changes to the streetscape to account for 80-foot long platforms.
- Additional analysis and graphics should clearly indicate anticipated widths and planned locations for bus and streetcar stations if they have changed.
- AWG members asked whether or not future transit stations would fit within the streetscapes as currently planned.

For both topics, AWG members asked whether the amendments would provide guidance in the FBC for how the Zoning Administrator could adjust regulations in certain circumstances or amendments would result in detailed regulations that address the locations where these stations occur. AWG members expressed their preference for regulations that would apply to sites with bike share or transit stations instead of granting authority to the Zoning Administrator to administratively modify requirements.

Agenda Item 2: FBC Amendments to Street lighting standards. Staff presented a summary of its analysis conveying the purpose to make lighting standards more consistent with standards required by the State and used elsewhere in the County and answered a number of technical questions on existing street lighting issues along the Pike. Overall, AWG members were supportive of adjusting the lighting spacing to create a safer level of lighting.

One of the main issues raised by the AWG was whether this amendment addresses lighting levels for drivers or pedestrians, and if targeted for drivers, questioned how the County ensures proper levels for pedestrians. Staff confirmed that lighting conditions impact both groups; however, the lighting analysis is primarily completed to set the proper lighting level for the street and driver. The primary function of street lighting is for the roadway. Sidewalks are considered as part of the roadway grid. However, the lighting levels for the road vary from 0.5 – 2.2 foot-candles. These levels are determined by the street classification, street width, land use, availability of sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. Lighting levels for sidewalks are usually higher than the roadway lighting due to the proximity of the light placement to the sidewalk, i.e. the lights are usually closer to the sidewalk than the roadway. Uniformity and distribution are based on the maximum to minimum and average to minimum ratios and they determine the overall spacing of the lighting for the road.

Staff acknowledged that new guidelines have been written to compensate for existing obstructions such as tree canopies. With regards to the existing street lights recently installed on the Pike by the County, their average spacing of 60 feet may be acceptable, and where adjustment may be needed, the County could adjust the lighting level manually at the specific fixture rather than relocating the street light pole. However, moving forward with future proposals, staff would need to assess the specific situation on each block through the photometric analysis and the current FBC regulation of a maximum distance of 60' may or may not be suitable distance.

Some AWG members commented that the amendment attempts to provide a consistent level of lighting along the Pike corridor, depending on street type. As a pedestrian, some commented that consistent lighting levels are important, and may be more important than a consistent spacing of poles.

AWG members requested that staff reevaluate the proposed ranges and reconsider whether a narrower range could be codified since we know the specific street cross sections for each street on Columbia Pike (specific curb-to-curb dimensions), rather than applying a range that could be applied throughout the County for a variety of street types.

Agenda Item 3: FBC Amendments related to street tree caliper sizes. Overall, AWG members were supportive of the proposed amendment. AWG members questioned who is responsible for the maintenance and replacement of trees since in some instances (throughout the County) some trees have declined over time and may not provide adequate tree coverage. An AWG member questioned whether a list of approved nursery suppliers could be used and enforced for developers to purchase street trees. Staff noted that the County's Landscape Standards contain tree standards, County inspectors assess tree health and installation details at installation and over time, and also, developers are typically required by Conditions to maintain trees over the life of their projects.

The AWG also asked if this amendment will impact trees being planted at the Penrose Square plaza. Staff will inquire with the Project manager to confirm the installation sizes for the trees.

The AWG members also commented on the plain poured concrete required by the FBC for the main pedestrian zone and noted that the design had been discussed at length earlier in the process to develop the Code and was the preferred material. The County also has shifted to this standard for the primary pedestrian zone, where a level surface, without bumps, would be provided. However, the FBC does not preclude use of color or different scoring patterns to be used; and, the Code also encourages use of special paving materials in the tree/furniture and shy zones of the streetscape.