
Long Range Planning Committee, Meeting Summary

July 25, 2017; 7:00-10:00 pm

5200 Yorktown Boulevard, Yorktown High School

Subject: Washington Blvd./Kirkwood Road Special GLUP Study “Plus” (Meeting #5)

PC Members in Attendance: E. Gearin (Chair); E. Gutshall; N. Iacomini; J. Lantelme; K. McSweeney; D. Ricks; J. Schroll; J. Siegel.

Others Participating: N. Bagley; G. Erdle; T. Lunger; C. Romero; S. Steinberger.

1. Welcome

- Welcome and opening remarks provided by Elizabeth Gearin, as LRPC Chair for this project. Comments addressed background of process to date, overall process scope, recap of LRPC meeting discussions, and introduction to agenda and objectives for tonight’s meeting.

2. Staff Presentation

- Staff provided a presentation addressing updates since LRPC #4, overview of draft study document, draft concept maps, and preliminary GLUP implementation options.

3. Comments from LRPC Members at the Meeting

TRANSPORTATION / PUBLIC SPACE CONCEPT MAP:

- Staff should consider potential updates to trip generation estimates to reflect addition of Scenario 5;
- Suggest not precluding the potential to bridge over potential street /open space connections;
- Unclear as to purpose of concept maps – is the intent for them to be general or only allow for slight modifications in the future? Less specificity would be better, allowing details to be worked out in designing future projects;
- Maybe this graphic can show fuzzier lines to express the broad desire for north-south permeability;
- Is the design of space still open? Clarity is needed on how much leeway there will be related to recommended ROW sections and widths and designs that can be considered and approved in the future;
- Others commented on liking the concept map, with more flexibility – but also wondered if there was any visual expression of this map that the YMCA would accept?
- For the proposed northwest corner park, it is not solely about buffer and transition to the neighborhood, but also about potential for usable public or semi-public space;
- APAH expressed openness to pedestrian connection extending from street/alley stub into site, continuing as a walkway and open space – however, they are thinking more in 40-foot range (lows), and opines that draft plan’s 48’ recommended ROW with parking on one side may not be needed;
- Eleventh Street Development noted they are assuming 31’ wide north-south alley and 25’ east/west alley, and note the location shown here and what they’ve proposed are not that different;
- Should the plan address desired or likely phasing of streets/alleys, and if so, how?
- Need to consider that potential GLUP change sets a higher bar, and whether this should lead to the three applicants collaborating on creative solutions to meet the principles - how do we have the right process to move forward with that? Is it akin to a block plan or phased development site plan?
- Staff should revisit and reference the Western Rosslyn Area Plan Study (WRAPS) concept map as an example and potential model to follow;
- Need to be more specific in the goals, and clarify what is generally desired in the guiding principles;

- There are many project precedents for different types of alley treatments: pervious pavers, grasscrete, etc., that can be achieved here as a more welcoming place that links to green space;
- Need to reinforce desire to preserve trees, and should really work towards achieving greatly improved pedestrian access to the cemetery; prefers the concept to expand the sense of the cemetery and making it a more usable resource;
- Is the YMCA willing to make a commitment of open space on the Y property? If not an exact location, can we set a percentage of open space, or identify amount of square footage, to be met/determined through future designs?
- Alternatively, planning document can say that we want open space (generally for these purposes) and then provide ideas or suggestions of possible locations; For instance, if it were the preference, it could suggest that some open space should be provided north of mid-line of block; and
- Neighbors want a buffer between neighborhood way of life and world class YMCA - but with some distance between them – northwest park/open space helps achieve that goal.

BUILDING HEIGHT AND FORM CONCEPT MAP:

- APAH contends that Legion site will need 7 stories, which cannot fit in 75-feet. A taller ground floor will be needed to accommodate ballroom type space, latest sketches looking more at approximately 82-foot height; A heights scheme that requires 3 towers adds costs, and the GLUP designations of Low O-A-H don't seem to reconcile with height limits contemplated for the site;
- In terms of transition to low residential, further consider the 35-foot height west of Lincoln Street; maybe it should be taller at 45 feet;
- Also, perhaps 45 feet edging the north side of the YMCA and the west side of YMCA and American Legion is too much of a step back, and perhaps could be up to 65 feet;
- When considering height as a transition, should also consider other ways in which taper and buffer between areas of different development intensity can be achieved;
- Concurrence with prior comments about step down to 45' is too much taper/transition, and would suggest creative way to articulate neat transitions into the plan;
- Overall, it may be better to express building heights in terms of stories and not feet;
- The BVSCA neighborhood is concerned about the nature of transitions, and worried about height along the edges now being considered as more than 45'; The idea of Taper needs to be respected as part of this, and open space at the northwest corner of the study area can serve as a much needed buffer as well as a community-serving open space;
- In the end, this document must be very clear on which pieces would be the governing pieces of the document.

LAND USE CONCEPT MAP:

- In terms of the retail land use category, it needs more narrative to more clearly convey aspirations for street activation, and clarify that retail equivalents or other activating spaces would be adequate;
- Suggest that potential for boutique office space be allowed north of Washington Boulevard?
- Land Use map as drawn does not allow flexibility for YMCA development, and would ask for some flexibility to design a world class YMCA for Virginia Square and Clarendon. Rather, it feels like these are requirements and not guidance;
- Potential for office/commercial should remain north of Washington Blvd; Since GLUP designations in and of themselves are clear enough about uses, it seems unnecessary to include a Land Use Concept Map;
- Support the idea of making the Washington Boulevard ground floor more about active streetscape, and not specifically about retail designation;

- How does this relate to Arlington County Retail Plan (would this be a Blue or Gold street?)– may want to consider reflecting in same way for ease of understanding and cross-referencing across multiple documents;
- Are there WeWork or WeLive – like opportunities here, for co-working space and small office opportunities?

PRELIMINARY GENERAL LAND USE PLAN (GLUP) OPTIONS:

- It’s hard to understand why the Legion site is consistently shown as Low O-A-H;
- Just like sector plans, there is an opportunity here to better define the desired public benefits, and be more clear about goals to achieve with redevelopment;
- Seems to be general support around idea of special district option, perhaps with designations as shown in Option B – “Medium” Residential seems to be preferred along 13th Street, as opposed to Low O-A-H;
- Under a special district approach, at least one prospective developer indicated willingness to work with staff on earning additional density;
- Need to remember a main point of the study is to determine the appropriate levels of density that could fit in desirable buildable envelopes – not necessarily solving for what the developers say they need;
- Support the notion of a special district, and creating the opportunity to achieve more density if a project advances certain County goals as expressed in the plan;
- The neighborhood would prefer a mechanism that ensures greatest amount of taper and transition across the block to maintain existing neighborhood character to the extent possible; focusing density away from neighborhood to degree possible, and like the idea of a special district that adds protection;
- The idea of a special district coupled with community benefits and design issues/buffers is an intriguing idea, especially if combined with GLUP designations as shown in Scenario B.

GENERAL COMMENTS THROUGHOUT MEETING:

- Further clarification sought from staff on potential option of the County Board adopting the study document; would it have same weight as a sector plan or area plan?
- Overall suggestion that concept plans be presented in a way to be not too restrictive, and perhaps fuzzier and flexible;
- Regarding appendices, if data for individual sites are provided there should be extreme clarity on assumptions about consolidations and the limitations of using this data in certain ways in the future (i.e. the numbers do not prescribe an amount of development per assumed consolidated site, and future development potential will be based upon site plan approvals for the exact delimitations of the subject site at that time);
- For modeling purposes, we’ve seen various scenarios parcel by parcel. If consolidations don’t occur as assumed, plan should speak more clearly as to how potential density would play out for each site/project;

4. Adjourn