

City of Alexandria
Department of Planning and Zoning
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**Landmark/Van Dorn Advisory Group
Monday, January 28, 2008**

Lecture Pad Notes

The notes below were recorded on lecture pad sheets during the Advisory Group discussion and the public comment period that followed.

Brackets [] indicate additions made by planning staff for clarification.
MB – comments by Matt Bell serving as facilitator.

To initiate the discussion, Matt Bell asked the advisory group members to think about what they would like to see in the future in the planning area. He listed the categories that were discussed as organizing principles in the presentation: open space, transportation, housing, character, environment, and noted that this list was posted on the wall for reference.

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- Transportation – streetscape, walkability all need improvement
- Floating – two owners not part of process – great plan, nothing will move – two owners, Sears, Federated (Macy's)
- Area larger than just mall
- Ped[estrian] and bike access, walkability – those as important in a livable community
- Something change in 5 years – what?
- Mike McGuire has areas to develop ready

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- City – better partner in expediting good projects
 - Transportation study, open space – work together – work with owners
 - Q – 10 units/acre?
30/acre for transit
 - Example – what developer ideas look like on the ground
 - Proximity to Metro for So end
 - What transit options are available to link to Metro?
- MB – {if density at Mall, point-to-point to Metro – dedicated to this area}
MB – don't know if light rail is an option
- King St trolley – look at for here – ambience

- Mall never catches the wave – enclosed too late. Be more forward – thinking.
Don't just use an existing model
- MB – Sustainable plan – malls are buildings, not a network that is easy to change[:] Look at something that can adapt.
- Where is density going to go? Where should it – along Van Dorn?
Can make Van Dorn into that kind of street
Issue – building height needed to get density
Mall – is at the end of the road – harder for residents to get to, Density start where hill gets steep
- MB – Q – What height?
- 60 – 120 feet
10 stories or more

- FAR 2.0 now on BJ's, CompUSA blocks - permits that – no demand until now.
- Bethesda 16-20 stories – step down to one – story residential
- Step – down and grade it away from the street – don't have a canyon.
- Q- Statistics – area, population, densities – compare to here. e.g. Bethesda
- Economic cost to developers – parking is critical – safe, comfortable parking.
Density helps offset the cost.
- Q – Picturing the mall – big open public “Thing” – does it have to be at the mall?
Worried the mall won't go
- Have a couple of other open spaces.
- Big enough for several centers.

- Gathering places – each of the 4 -5 circles along Van Dorn.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Attending since a couple of years ago – Small Area Plans drawn 1992, scope of plan area. Stops at 95 – Public + private investment – focal point
- Suggestion – renter – important that consultant listen to advisory group
look at 5-year plan + 20 – year plan. Set mall aside.
Consultant not listening – presentation too long.
Transportation next time – be specific – define terms – density, FAR
“affordable” housing – by HUD – Public, Section 8, rental \$ 50-60-70 can't buy
1 – BR condo
City change idea about rental

- Policy changing – rentals
- Persistent problem – Small Area Plan in vacuum – ignores people next door
- Transportation point – N side not walkable – grade. All comments Metro • Mall. More reliable bus.
- Comment I like – concentration South of Mall while mall gets their act together
- East – west streets a good idea. Previous all about Van Dorn.

MB – Not likely a retail street – grade, traffic.

- Pentagon Fashion Center vibrant – attracts teens and young adults
- Didn't hear about demographics to attract. Attract people in – e.g. Springfield

- Yoakum Pkwy resident – whatever happens – know what VDOT plans to do
- Sale day at Macy's – difficult at Beauregard
- What happens to S. Walker/Stevenson/Duke/Van Dorn – Bulldoze and facilitate traffic flow
- FF Co – enhance Beauregard lights at Little River Turnpike.
- Light rail – bury utilities in center strip.
- Templeton 25 yr resident – area decline in general – apts great, people great – revitalize the area – have to go to Whole Foods, Harris Teeter, Tysons to shop
- Beltway / 395 / Metro great resources – more multiple – aged group, more variety in stores, people.

- Variety in housing –
- More direct Metro Link.
- Build on Public art talk last week. Public art add to character, work with open space – need presentation on Public Art.
- Connecticut Ave example – connectivity. What is City doing to increase connectivity – a wall around the area stifles traffic.

MB – Connectivity important.