

**PYPAG Meeting Summary
Tuesday, June 16, 2009**

PYPAG Members in attendance:

Joe Bondi
Michael Caison
Richard Calderon
Allison Cryor DiNardo
Darryl Dugan
Garrett Erdle
Bill Hendrickson
Deborah Johnson
Dan McCaffery
Crystall Merlino
Peter Pocock
John Porter
Mariella Posey
Eric Wagner
Maria Wasowski

Jon Lindgren
Jennifer Mitchell
Frederick Rothmeijer
Sherry Sadai
Noah Teates

City Staff:

Tom Canfield
Bethany Carton
Jeffrey Farner
Claire Gron
Faroll Hamer
Mark Jinks
Sandra Marks
Kristen Mitten
Valerie Peterson

**PYPAG Members not in
attendance:**

The Perspectives Group Staff:
Doug Sarno

Approximately 10 Members of the Public were in attendance.

Welcome

The Potomac Yard Planning Advisory Group (PYPAG) meeting began at 7:05 PM with Eric Wagner, Chair, welcoming the PYPAG. There were 14 PYPAG members in attendance.

Meeting Goals and Agenda

Doug Sarno, the facilitator, reviewed the evening's agenda. He stated that the goal of the meeting is to confirm the framework plan elements and to discuss work to be done over the summer.

Updates and Status of Plan

Jeffrey Farner, P&Z, acknowledged that the planning process is behind, in part due to the Metrorail Station Feasibility Work Group process. He stated that staff intends to have check-in meetings with PYPAG over the summer.

Mr. Sarno stated that staff will hold internal "charrettes" where they will look at options and test alternatives. He asked for volunteers to participate in the summer subcommittee that will be included as part of this process. The following PYPAG members volunteered to be part of the summer subcommittee:

Richard Calderon
Garret Erdle
Bill Hendrickson
Deborah Johnson
Dan McCaffery
Peter Pocock
Maria Wasowski

Mr. Farner stated that staff has received many emails related to neighborhood impacts related to traffic. He stated that staff, along with the Transportation Subcommittee, will take a comprehensive look at mitigating impacts over the summer. Sandra Marks, T&ES, added that staff will be meeting with civic associations and the neighboring communities over the summer.

Mr. Sarno stated that staff is aiming to return to the PYPAG in September (a date is not yet set) with framework options and a draft plan. Mr. Farner added that staff's goal is to produce a conceptual framework plan by September.

Valerie Peterson, P&Z, gave an update on Landbay L. She stated that a subcommittee is being formed and will convene in early Fall, and will look at framework streets and open space in Landbay L. She noted that City Council acted on the P&Z Work Program last week (6/9/29), and directed staff to develop design alternatives for the Route 1 Corridor Braddock Fields/Landbay L and Route 1 West Corridor plans and report back in the fall.

Bill Hendrickson questioned if PYPAG would have the opportunity to see the design alternatives before they go to City Council. Eric Wagner stated he thought not. He stated that he hoped staff will be mindful of comments from the community as there are developing design alternatives, but that City Council is seeking direction from staff.

Faroll Hamer, P&Z, noted that a streetscape study was previously done for the west side of Route 1. Now, staff will also be looking at transportation and land use for this area.

Overview and Work Products

Mr. Farner briefly discussed the work products of the small area planning process, including a Master Plan, CDD Concept Plan, Revised Design Guidelines, and Revised CDD Triggers. He passed examples of these documents around to the group.

Confirm and Discuss Framework Plan Elements

Mr. Farner gave a brief presentation. He stated that the plan for Potomac Yard will have a 20-30 year lifespan, and that our world will change dramatically over this time period. He stated that the challenge is to plan for so much change. He noted examples of great places and themes that have stood the test of time.

Mr. Farner discussed environmental and economic sustainability, mentioning Eco-City Alexandria and discussing how a mix of uses affects sustainability. He stated that the level of sustainability achieved in the plan would be somewhere along a continuum of progressive, cutting-edge technology or transformative.

Mr. Sarno asked PYPAG if they agreed that sustainability is the key umbrella element that should define the Potomac Yard plan.

The group discussed LEED certification requirements. Mr. Farner stated that City Council required commercial buildings to be at least LEED Silver and residential buildings to be LEED Certified or equivalent.

Richard Calderon questioned what LEED requirements have to do with heights and densities.

Mr. Farner asked if PYPAG was comfortable with sustainability requirements as dictated in existing policy (Eco-City Alexandria), or if they wanted to go further. He questioned if sustainability should be the defining element of the Potomac Yard plan.

Deborah Johnson requested additional information concerning if some uses are more economically sustainable than others. Mr. Wagner stated that the group needs to better understand how uses interact.

Dan McCaffery noted that development projects in Chicago are required to be LEED-ND.

Maria Wasowski stated that no one has come up with the perfect balance or the most sustainable neighborhood, but that we need to consider the best research on the topic.

Peter Pocock noted that this is a 30-year plan and that it is possible to revisit it at a later date.

Allison Cryor DiNardo stated that there is tension between economic and environmental sustainability, but that one should not be diminished for the sake of the other.

Doug Sarno introduced the United Nations model of sustainability, which aims at balancing environmental, economic, and social sustainability. He stated that the concept of the model is to find the place where the three are balanced.

Ms. Johnson stated that she would like to know more about how retail and office uses contribute to sustainability.

Mr. Farner asked PYPAG to identify what differentiates the Potomac Yard plan from other plans. He questioned if it should be the fact that it is “green.”

Michael Caison asked: if the City requires LEED Silver (for commercial buildings) how can we require more at Potomac Yard? Mr. Wagner noted that we are creating a new vision for Potomac Yard and new rules can apply.

Mr. McCaffery noted that economics is what drives this plan.

Mr. Farner continued his presentation with a discussion of the framework plan. He presented an illustrative rendering based on discussions with the PYPAG related to framework streets, open space, uses, and heights. He detailed core assumptions derived from PYPAG comments and upon which the illustrative rendering was based including:

- Continuation of Main Street
- Continuation of Potomac Avenue
- The extension Landbay K
- The provision of a centralized open space area
- The provision of an open space area at Four Mile Run
- Preference for the location of the Metrorail station in the body of the yard on the west side of the CSX tracks
- The importance of a gateway location

Ms. Wasowski questioned why the illustrative rendering showed open space near the Metro when density should be concentrated within a ¼ mile radius of the Metro. She stated that we do not want to get married to this picture.

Mr. McCaffery stated that he appreciates experimentation, but that the drawing is illustrative and has not been fully tested.

Darryl Dugan asked whether the PYPAG should re-think the continuation of Landbay K altogether. Mr. Wagner stated that density should be concentrated around Metro and not open space.

Mr. Calderon commented that perhaps a parking deck could be provided on the east side of the Metro station with recreational activities on its roof and connecting views to the Potomac River.

Mr. Wagner clarified that a concentration of density around the Metro station does not mean more density, just shifted from elsewhere.

Mr. McCaffery stated that it is problematic to see “vignettes” as any representation of what could be constructed.

Ms. DiNardo noted that the Mayor’s Economic Sustainability Work Group recommended the concentration of density around the Metro.

Garrett Erdle noted that the plan should have flexibility built in.

Mr. Farner asked whether PYPAG was comfortable at additional building height in strategic locations. Mr. Caison requested that heights be respectful to Lynhaven residents.

The group discussed the PYPAG Metrorail Station Consensus Points handed out at the beginning of the meeting. Ms. Wasowski requested that #2 be clarified to state, “Options that place the Metrorail station on the west side of the CSX tracks with minimal impact to Landbay G are highly preferred.” Mr. Hendrickson noted that alternative D2 will have a major impact on Landbay K.

Mr. Calderon questioned why #3 was scratched. Mr. Sarno stated that the economic feasibility of a Metrorail station is outside of PYPAG’s purview. Mr. Wagner stated that there was not consensus on this point. He stated that Mark Jinks stated that the numbers were very preliminary. Mr. Jinks, Deputy City Manager, stated that his numbers were representative of general concepts, and were not particular numbers.

Public Comment

Mr. Sarno solicited public comment.

David Fromm noted that amending the existing Potomac Yard Design Guidelines might be a challenge considering lower densities approved for the rest of Potomac Yard. He stated that the plan concept examples are illustrative only. Finally, he questioned if #3 of the Metrorail Station Consensus Points was struck, did it disappear? Ms. Wasowski noted that #4 essentially says the same thing as #3.

A member of the public asked if the City had any sense of how close it is to getting a Metro station. Mr. Jinks stated that the further we go without finding a fatal flaw, the closer you get to a green light.

Announcement: Mayors' Institute on City Design

Ms. Peterson informed PYPAG of the upcoming Mayors' Institute on City Design Alumni Technical Assistance Program on June 29-30. This year, the Program will examine Landbay F. Ms. Peterson said that stakeholder input is desired and asked that anyone interested please let Eric Wagner know.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.