

## **Planning Commission Meeting**

**November 3, 2008**

**7:00 pm**

**County Board Room**

**PC Members in Attendance: Nancy Hunt, Peter Fallon, Rosemary Ciotti, Steve Cole, Christian Dorsey, Brian Harner, Inta Malis, Charles Monfort, Jim Pebley, Terry Savela, Stephen Sockwell**

### **Topic: Crystal City Plan – Policy Framework and Illustrative Concept Plan**

At the beginning of the meeting, staff presented an overview of the Policy Framework and Illustrative Concept Plan. Terry Savela, Chair of the LRPC and Vice-Chair of the Crystal City Planning Task Force, provided additional remarks on the process as a whole as well as the recent County Board meeting discussion on the Request to Advertise in October.

Questions and comments that arose by Planning Commission members during the meeting included the following:

- ✓ There is a need for an LRPC meeting prior to the Planning Commission hearing; once the date is scheduled it should be announced as far in advance as possible
- ✓ It feels like we're coming into a discussion where a lot of decisions have already been made
- ✓ With regard to maximum heights and bulk-plane angles, are the heights absolute? Could mechanical penthouses be proposed above the heights? If so, we need to recognize the potential of the penthouses to cast shadows.
- ✓ Given the county's practice of concentrating heights around Metro stations in a bulls-eye fashion, why are 300 foot buildings proposed along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in addition to 18<sup>th</sup> Street – this seems counter to that county policy?
- ✓ The presentation/materials lack a clear indication of what is the overall theme or vision for Crystal City – where is it going to go?
- ✓ There had been past discussion about a FAA zone study being done by the county to better understand allowable heights with regard to airport operations – that seems to have been abandoned. The county needs to work with experts who understand the rules and develop a proposed heights strategy for presentation to the FAA for review and feedback.
- ✓ With regards to heights, it appears that if we don't know where the FAA stands on heights then we run the risk of having to go all the way back to the drawing board. If heights need to be reduced, buildings will need to get fatter and eat away at open space to achieve same densities.
- ✓ We need more information or enumeration about community infrastructure required to support this plan, regarding schools, day care facilities, etc.
- ✓ We need an understanding of what benefits (plan improvements) are expected to be met through "base density" (standard site plan expectations), and what benefits would be needed for bonus density.
- ✓ Has there been an analysis done to quantify how much density above the base is available within the building form parameters? This may help indicate what elements of the plan will pay for itself and what elements will need to be funded in other manners
- ✓ It would be helpful to know how much committed affordable housing exists in Crystal City today.

- ✓ Regarding the transitway, studies for Columbia Pike forecasted little operational difference between shared or dedicated ROW for transit operations. Have studies been done for the Crystal City surface transit in this case to support the need for dedicated transitway?
- ✓ The overall goal and vision is not specified in the document. It begs the question as to whether this document is more visionary or more prescriptive, especially if some of the guidelines can change.
- ✓ The vision for Jefferson Davis Highway is not clear and should be captured in the document. What is an urban boulevard? Some critical elements are not sufficiently discussed.
- ✓ The 3D images begin to convey an overall sense of form – more information is needed on what the vision is for open spaces.
- ✓ In terms of LU1, it can be tricky to mix population and square feet numbers, because its based ratios that can sway with wide latitude – preference would be to go with one approach over the other.
- ✓ In terms of LU5, improving the “geographic distribution” of community oriented facilities is a bit concerning. It’s not necessarily a bad thing to cluster civic and cultural amenities to create activity nodes and sense of place.
- ✓ In terms of S1 and S2, we may want to spell out more of what we want without relying too heavily on LEED as a rating mechanism.
- ✓ In terms of the transit alignment as couplet, there seems to be a disconnect between focusing transit along retail streets, by putting much of the alignment and Clark/Bell with loading and service. Transit should be mostly on Crystal Dr, where the retail is and will be.
- ✓ The use of minimums and maximum goals in the Land Use Map can be difficult to discern
- ✓ The Tower Coverage and Building Heights map seem to be in conflict with each other. Tallest buildings should have the least coverage; it doesn’t seem like these guidelines are coordinated with each other.
- ✓ The vision of what we want Crystal City to become needs to be expressed more effectively. Perhaps this can be included within the Vision, Goals and Objectives.
- ✓ More information for the proposed conditions for Route 1 is desired.
- ✓ Would like information/data on existing traffic volume on Route 1 and what is projected with plan build out.
- ✓ The size of many of the public open spaces appear insufficient, causing concern with what if any value these “pocket parks” will have as places that people will use throughout the day.
- ✓ It appears that some of the recommendations conflict with the 60 foot separation guidelines, particularly between Block M2 and M3, and between buildings on Block K.
- ✓ There is a sense that additional density is being planned in Crystal City in order to get community improvements that unfortunately were not included in the first wave of redevelopment – this assumption is a concern.
- ✓ Have we looked at other places that have had to respond to the same type of impact (BRAC relocations) for lessons learned? Vallejo, CA and Sacramento, CA are two examples that should be looked at
- ✓ Has AED looked at how Crystal City may end up competing with other areas in and outside of Arlington to attract and retain employment and residential populations?
- ✓ The affordable housing recommendation and housing more generally get at attracting a more diverse group of populations to Crystal City than exist today – are there specific strategies to how this will be achieved?
- ✓ How will the creation/planning for additional density in Crystal City relate to the ability to import density into Crystal City from other areas in Arlington using TDR?
- ✓ What is the ultimate purpose of the illustrative plan and the maps if it is expected that development proposals will vary from the map to begin with? How should this information be used in the future when reviewing Phased Development Site Plans?
- ✓ The pocket parks proposed in the plan are inappropriate

- ✓ The vision needs to be more clearly articulated – for an area of this size, should there be multiple centers? Is there sufficient demand for both street level and internal retail?
- ✓ Should density be increased to stimulate growth? Can the area handle it or not?
- ✓ A sense is needed as to whether Crystal City will or should become a destination, and an understanding of how that would impact travel patterns, parking needs, retail etc.
- ✓ The clustering of civic components in a focused area is a good idea
- ✓ In areas where there are departures from the guidelines, there could be a greater comfort level if there were rationales behind these departures (e.g. redevelopment not forecasted by 2050, etc)

Terry Savela offered closing comments to note that she will work with staff to figure out how to best address these comments, questions and concerns. There may need to be responses that simply provide links to information posted on-line, as there has been tremendous data gathering, research, analysis and synthesizing completed throughout the Task Force process. We also will identify those areas that may need a more comprehensive level of discussion. Ms. Hunt will work with Ms. Savela and/or staff to convey what level of information is desired. When a date for a LRPC meeting is set, it should be distributed to the Planning Commission ASAP.