

# **Crystal City Planning Process Task Force Meeting Summary 07-31-08**

## **Task Force Discussion on Draft Policies**

The following are comments and questions from the members of the Task Force shared at this meeting:

### **Policy LU-1:**

- T. Savela asked whether the revisions to the text actually weaken the residential aspect of the land use policy? Staff noted that the intent was to decouple hotel from residential for purposes of clarity, and to emphasize that the broad use mix goal is to simply have more residential than office, rather than 50-50.
- C. Ahl suggested that for clarity, perhaps the word “development” can be replaced with Gross Floor Area “GFA” to clarify that the measurement is based on gross buildout, not net new.
- M. Bonanno inquired as to whether there has been any change to the vision plan modeling based on the intent for additional residential? Staff noted this did not directly result in a change of the plan, as there is sufficient flexibility in the use mix policies that already allow for achieving more residential than commercial.

### **Policy LU-3:**

- M. Bonanno shared previous comments about too much frontage being shown as required retail, and that consideration should be given to the Retail Policy Document that the County Economic Development Commission has just embarked on. Staff noted that the footnote in the legend specifies that frontages designated as “required retail” are not expected to be 100% retail, providing flexibility for other uses.

### **Policy B-2:**

- C. Ahl questioned whether a new policy is needed that establishes what guidelines on densities and heights should apply if the FAA determines that the planned heights are not acceptable to airport operations, which may then necessitate other means of achieving the densities needed for viability. There should be guidance from the County Board on what direction should be taken to address building heights should this scenario occur.

### **Policy B-1:**

- M. Bonanno suggested that the 98 feet pinch point condition on Crystal Drive should be footnoted if the map is to show 100 feet, to make explicit that the expectation is not to require the existing condition to be modified to conform to the 100 feet ideal. He also reiterated the concerns he has voiced in the past about some of the ROW widths (being greater than necessary, in his opinion), in particular with regards to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.

**Policy B-6:**

- M. Bonanno noted his concerns about the shadow limits policy and has previously stated that perhaps 45% is not the right number and should be reconsidered, as it would not allow for some of the development modeled in the vision plan. There is a need for flexibility since final building geometries will vary from what is shown in concept, which could result in different shadow impacts from what was modeled to arrive at the 45% figure. Staff commented that we can continue to test these numbers.

**Policy D-1:**

- M. Bonanno noted it appears the recent changes to the Base Density Map east of the RR ROW created a new point of confusion in that it appears there is no planned density for that land area, even though there is existing approved density for that area since it includes parcels that are part of the Crystal Park site plan. Perhaps this requires another footnote or treatment to make it clear that the land east of the RR ROW actually does contribute to the allowable density on Crystal Park site plan, even though the plan does not recommend actual development east of the RR ROW.

**Policy P-1:**

- T. Saks asked why some of the open spaces are shown in the policy maps (except the Open Space Map) and some are not. Staff responded that only the spaces defined by RBLs are illustrated in place on all policy diagrams, because there is limited flexibility with the location of those spaces. Whereas, the spaces not defined by RBLs have more flexibility and are not depicted in the other policy maps accordingly, even though they are still required spaces. T. Saks suggested it needs to be made perfectly clear in the plan that this is the distinction. Staff may consider “within RBLs” rather than “defined by RBLs”.
- C. Ahl noted that there continue to be some important losses in existing open space that occur early in the plan whereas the open spaces that are planned to offset the loss are projected to come later. Additionally, the community continues to see the proposed park in the middle of 15<sup>th</sup> Street as a median, and at a more broad level it is not clear as to what discussions have resulted from the feedback provided by the County Board at the work session.
- How does the Clarendon Center Park compare to the proposed 15<sup>th</sup> Street park in terms of width and dimensions?
- C. Ahl commented that the language in P-1 seems to be limiting in that it only calls for achievement of open spaces shown on the map, and does not proactively suggest that others may be achieved even if not planned for. Suggested revision could help establish a minimum threshold rather than boxing in a maximum goal.

**Policy P-2:**

- C. Ahl also noted that in P-2, the primary goal should be for the establishment of new parks or plazas. In addition, efforts should be made to add public access easements or improvements to existing spaces. This needs to be clarified that it's an additive approach, not an offset.
- M. Bonanno noted that he understands the interest in new parks, but when looking at the possible phasing, public access easements should be considered to have value. In CC there are private areas that people use, but they don't need to stay publicly accessible; therefore easements have great value to open space components of the plan. It's hard to get land under county control and the easements should be valued as achieving such.
- C. Ahl commented that in this equation, if the situation were such that private spaces used by the public were disappearing because easements were not forthcoming is not seen as a negative, then open space that is used and remains with an easement should not be counted as an addition.

**Policy P-4:**

- On P-4, M. Bonanno asked if the 15% canopy coverage goal is something that is attainable in the plan, and if not, perhaps applying the County goal in this instance should be reconsidered. What is the current coverage, and what is the projected coverage in the plan? We should ask ourselves if trees are needed in instances in plazas when the plazas may be better suited for something else?
- On P-4, M. Almquist suggested perhaps the statement should more generally note that the goal is to increase tree canopy coverage in Crystal City.
- T. Savela noted that the Urban Forest Master Plan is a component of the County Comprehensive Plan, and as such it would apply in Crystal City whether or not its aspirations are included in the Crystal City Plan recommendations. She doesn't see any problem with keeping the language as is and having some redundancy to emphasize the goal for tree canopy coverage.
- H. Thompson questioned that if it's already in the Comprehensive Plan, then why is it in the suggested policies? This seems unnecessary.

**Policy P-5:**

- On P-5, M. Bonanno acknowledged that the development of buildings with walkways through the blocks is something the County clearly does already in some areas. However, this may not be feasible or warranted in all instances, so perhaps the phrase 'where feasible' should be included within the statement.

**Policy P-6:**

- On P-6, M. Bonanno reiterated their desire/need for a road between the plaza and the planned buildings on the north side of the plaza. Those buildings will not be

redeveloped without the street which is necessary to provide vehicular access and street addresses for new buildings.

- On the open space plan, C. Ahl inquired as to what Open Space #6 is supposed to be, and what it is to be used for; does not believe that anything sensible could be done in Open Space #6.
- On Block G, M. Bonanno noted the relationship between the County proposed building layout and achievement of the 18<sup>th</sup> St Park in the short term. Basically, due to long-term implications for phasing, according to M. Bonanno the County building layout would preclude Open Space #6 from being achieved in the near term, whereas the Vornado proposed building layout would allow for achievement of the 18<sup>th</sup> St Park in the near term, because it would work with future redevelopment activity.

**Policy S-0:**

- M. Bonanno commented that the text “maximizing vegetated areas” is too constraining and should be removed from or replaced in the sentence. N. Sigmon commented that this action is just an example and is used in a “such as” approach, and should be left in because it’s clearly not too constraining in this application. There was ongoing discussion and this was left as an “open issue”.

**Policy T-1:**

- T. Saks commented that there should at least be some footnote with regard to the segment of Fern St that is just south of 18<sup>th</sup> St, and that its classification should be changed to Neighborhood Minor to match the rest of Fern St to the south.

**Policy T-6:**

- T. Saks suggested that the loading indicated on Eads St is problematic, and that loading on Fern opposite the single family residential is counter to County practice in this area. Loading on 22<sup>nd</sup> is more appropriate, and the proposed loading on Fern and Eads should be reconsidered. Also, the extent of alleys should be maximized as a way to get loading and service activity off of the main thoroughfares.
- M. Bonanno noted that the map does not acknowledge the existing conditions along Crystal Dr where garage entrances currently exist to serve Crystal Park. In addition, he suggests that east-west streets will need to allow for loading in some instances, and the plan should reflect that.

**Policy AH-2:**

- M. Bonanno asked whether the bonus is what is above the existing GLUP. The answer is yes.
- T. Savela asked whether the policy statement says that we’d continue to apply the Affordable Housing Ordinance up to the GLUP, and the “up-to 20% would be in

place of where we typically negotiate the contribution above the GLUP as current practice.

**Policy II-1:**

- N. Sigmon asked if the #(2) component is unique to Crystal City, in that there are anticipated to be limitations of developer contribution due to the high cost of demolition-replacement projects.

**Phasing Discussion:**

- M. Bonanno raised concerns about the transitway couplet being located on Clark/Bell in the short term given the potential for running track under existing buildings that are presumed to be demolished or redeveloped at some point in the future (Phase 4). He suggests an earlier/simpler solution is to place the alignment on Crystal Dr in the near term and then relocate into the couplet as redevelopment abutting Clark/Bell occurs and allows. He reiterated that the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza could not happen in Phase 1 with the current county plan for that block.