

---

**Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**March 3, 2021, 7:00pm**

---

*This meeting was a virtual public meeting held through electronic communications means.*

---

**Planning Commissioners in attendance:**

Denyse "Nia" Bagley  
Stephen Hughes  
James Lantelme  
Elizabeth Morton  
James Schroll (Co-chair, LRPC)  
Sara Steinberger

**Planning Commissioners absent:**

Elizabeth Gearin (Co-chair, LRPC)  
Devanshi P. Patel  
Tenley Peterson  
Leonardo Sarli  
Jane C. Siegel  
Daniel Weir

**Other Invited LRPC members in attendance:**

Matt Anderson, Wells Fargo/Verizon site  
John Armstrong, Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)  
Rashad Badr, St. Charles Catholic Church site  
Collier Cook, Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association  
Susan Cunningham, Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC)  
Steve Finn, Park and Recreation Commission (PRC)  
Bill Gearhart, Lyon Village Citizens' Association  
Benjamin Nichols, Clarendon Courthouse Civic Association  
David Orr, Joyce Motors site and associated properties  
David Phillips, Ashton Heights Civic Association  
Davis Rajtik, Transportation Commission  
Thomas Shooltz, Silver Diner site and associated properties  
Steve Sockwell, Forestry and Natural Resources Commission (FNRC)  
Sharon Valencia, Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC)

**Staff in attendance:**

Lorin Farris, CPHD – Historic Preservation  
Kris Krider, CPHD – Planning  
Matthew Ladd, CPHD – Planning  
Irena Lazic, DPR  
Pablo Penades Lopez, CPHD – Planning  
Timothy Murphy, CPHD – Planning  
Bridget Obikoya, DES  
Jennifer Smith, CPHD – Planning  
Brett Wallace, CPHD – Planning

## Clarendon Sector Plan Update

Commissioner Schroll opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

Commissioner Schroll recognized the presenters of the meeting's agenda item.

Brett Wallace presented on the study process and timeline; follow-up on the December 2020 online engagement session; highlights from the February 2021 online engagement session and the online survey results; and additional considerations regarding building height and form.

Once the staff presentation concluded, Commissioner Schroll solicited comments and feedback from LRPC attendees.

The Commission members offered the following comments and raised several clarifying questions:

### Comments related to tools that are most successful in achieving the Clarendon Sector Plan goals of creating an "urban village" and maintaining a pedestrian scale:

- The Wells Fargo site proposal appears to most-successfully maintain the spirit of the setbacks required by the Clarendon Sector Plan. The St. Charles site faces Washington Boulevard and residences, so there will be additional discussion on that side of the site; less concern about eastern part of site because there are already taller buildings there. We'll need to look at the setbacks on the Joyce Motors site. With the Silver Diner site, not concerned about extra height up by Washington Boulevard and Wilson Boulevard.
- Frontage types are missing from staff's overview; the frontage is what people experience and encouraging more retail frontage along all these streets will enhance the pedestrian experience.
- The step-back is the most effective tool to give space in a corridor. Step-backs will be important on the St. Charles site along Washington Boulevard facing the townhouses. The south side of the St. Charles site along Fairfax Drive will face the open space, so step-backs could help make sure that redevelopment doesn't dominate the open space.
- Comment suggesting that the Fairfax Drive open space should not be turned into a canyon-like space.
- Comment that a canyon-like effect along the Fairfax Drive open space site is unlikely, as the area south of Fairfax Drive is unlikely to redevelop and therefore won't generate shade impacts on the open space.
- Comment suggesting that design guidelines could be a helpful tool that could contribute to achieving Sector Plan goals. Staff responded that there is a lot of design-related guidance in the Sector Plan that could be used during site plan review process; tonight's meeting is focusing on some existing plan guidance and regulations that create challenges regarding building massing.

### Comments related to design considerations along Fairfax Drive:

- Clarifying question about whether staff is considering breaking up the block north of Fairfax Drive. Is staff not in favor of breaking up the buildings north of the Fairfax Drive? Staff presented this concept during an earlier online engagement session; staff will be looking at this concept more during the next LRPC meeting. The Sector Plan did provide

guidance about breaking up the blocks; the plan attempted to create access for service and loading. These access points were not necessarily intended to have a natural alignment across all the blocks. Additionally, the shift of Ivy Street on the Red Top Cab site creates challenges for connectivity due to its proximity to existing intersections.

- Comment suggesting that it will be helpful to show the façade along Fairfax Drive / St. Charles site from a pedestrian's perspective at the next LRPC meeting.
- Clarifying question about whether there are standards regarding the maximum size of a block. The Sector Plan has build-to lines and locations identified for parking and access, as well as distances between entrances to buildings. Ultimately, staff would work with the applicant during the site plan review process to ensure that the façade is not monotonous. The length of the St. Charles block is approximately 550 feet.
- Comment supporting the projects proposed while desiring that the projects support the "urban village" concept, walkability, and streetscapes that are consistent with the Clarendon Sector Plan.
- Comment that the existing topography should be accounted for in the modeling of the St. Charles site along Washington Boulevard.

#### Comments related to design considerations along 10<sup>th</sup> Street:

- Comment expressing concern about the potential effect of a taller building along 10<sup>th</sup> Street might have on buildings and residences across 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Clarifying question about how the taper line is measured. The zoning and Sector Plan require that the measurement point begin at the residential zoning boundary, and then 165 feet from that point the 1:3 taper would begin. While the site with residential zoning currently contains a commercial use, the underlying zoning permits residential development.
- Comment that the taper line methodology seems to be protecting a viewshed for hypothetical future residents, when the site south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street contains a commercial use.
- Clarifying question about the potential landscape buffer envisioned in the Sector Plan south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The landscape buffer shown in the Sector Plan is conceptual in nature.

#### Comments related to design considerations along Wilson Boulevard:

- Comment supporting the use of balconies to help break up the massing, creating step-backs from the street, and activating the streetscape.
- Comment expressing the buildings heights proposed for the area south of Wilson Boulevard appear to loom over the smaller buildings on the north side of Wilson Boulevard.
- Comments supporting the use of step-backs along Wilson Boulevard and expressing interest in hearing more about publicly- and privately-owned public spaces in future meetings.
- Comment that focusing on the streetscape on the south side of Wilson Boulevard could help alleviate the impact of the proposed building heights on the north side of Wilson Boulevard.

#### Comments related to design considerations along North Irving Street:

- Comment that the proposed development doesn't appear to create more of a canyon effect than the concepts in the Sector Plan.
- Comments that a lack of setback on North Irving Street would be noticeable, so the proposed development and loss of a setback would be felt by pedestrians.

### **Public Comment**

- Need to ensure that this study does not supersede previous planning efforts. In the 1990s, previous planning established a view corridor from Virginia Square east toward the Olmsted Building in Clarendon; this effort should strive to maintain this view corridor. The buildings should be designed to support this view corridor, and project applicants should also incorporate biophilic elements in their building designs.
- The study should support the provision of new housing; protecting the views from lower-density, single-family detached residential areas should not prevent the potential development of new housing closer to the core of Clarendon.
- Interest in examining changes to the taper along 10<sup>th</sup> Street and some of the other views. Interest in hearing more about additional height on some of the blocks, as long as it is related to realizing benefits identified in the Clarendon Sector Plan. The pedestrian experience along Irving Street will be important to consider moving forward in the study. Interested in hearing more discussion about step-backs and being a little more specific about the step-backs desired on these streets. Interest in hearing more about open space and the potential for open space, given the impact of County facilities on the 10<sup>th</sup> Street site that was envisioned for open space in the Sector Plan.

--

Commissioner Schroll adjourned the meeting around 9:00pm.