

# Areas 3 and 4 Community Meeting

(5/13/21, 7 PM – 9:30 PM)

## Area 3 Community discussion comments by topic:

### Land Use

Eric M. – Lives 2 blocks north of Lee and Glebe. Thanks for not being afraid to think big. At this stage it is better to cast what the overall limits are to see what people will accept than to start in the middle that you are guessing at. Can you discuss office development and extent that would support retail and higher density and extent that could support appealing retail not just data centers?

County Response: The plan will allow for office as part of the commercial land use. There is already a lot of it on other corridors and we don't anticipate Lee Hwy. becoming a huge office employment center. There is an opportunity for modest size office that is community oriented (medical and professional). Jobs created here may be in people's homes or in co-working centers, as contract work continues to increase. Important to allow office, but need to make sure we are not trying to compete with National Landing or RB corridor for large scale office. The retail that is highlighted in the Scenarios is anticipated to be in addition to the restaurants and coffee shops that we typically see. It's important to think about the activity density (the number of people living there plus number of jobs per acre) in multi-modal corridors. Lee Hwy. has 23 activity density units. The more population we get, the more transit amenities that can be supported. This will drive the future neighborhood serving retail uses.

Chris J. – Is there a difference in the 2 Scenarios on effect of low-income housing and minority communities?

County Response: Slight difference in Scenarios where existing CAFs change or not. Both Scenarios show additional housing supply could be created that could be at an affordable price point. County hasn't done the calculations yet for how the Scenarios help us achieve the affordability goal (2,500 units) for Lee Hwy. Will do that in the next step.

Richard L. – When was the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) last updated for Lee Hwy.? What would process be to update it and would it be before adoption of Lee Hwy.?

County Response: The GLUP has not been updated since 1960, which is when it was established. Only two areas have undergone a study (EFC and Cherrydale) and have adopted their own plans. The GLUP will be updated after Plan for Lee Highway is adopted. In the next few months we will prepare the preferred concept plan. When that is complete, we will take it to the CB and various commissions for review and then the CB will adopt it. Then we will start a separate process to write the policies, based on the recommendations

of the Plan. The GLUP map has to be amended. We will create a District for the area, which CB has to approve. It will take some time to complete the update to the GLUP.

Richard L. – How do the two interact? If we adopt a new plan and then update the GLUP, how do they overlap or do they work together?

County Response: The Lee Hwy. Plan will be a sub-plan of the General Land Use Plan (which is Countywide) that will set parameters, policies and goals to guide development specifically on Lee Highway. The GLUP has policies that guide development today. For example, the commercial properties along Lee Hwy. are designated service commercial. This category does not encourage mixed use nodes. It doesn't allow residential. We need to change the category on the map to encourage mixed use and walkable development.

## Transportation and Connectivity

Ralph J. – If you cut off property with streets it will encourage me to build higher, probably at 10 stories. He agrees with Waverly Hills that 10 is too much. Old Dominion crosses Lee Hwy. and empties out on a slow residential street, 20<sup>th</sup> road. Clearly you have something more in mind for 20<sup>th</sup> Rd. because it won't handle traffic that goes from Old Dominion and dead ends on Woodstock Park. Please explain the idea of 20<sup>th</sup> Rd. because it clearly won't stay the same way.

County Response: Specific location where the road would go, on east or west side of your property, can be worked out with you. It doesn't have to cut through middle of site. There is an advantage of intersection coming to a 90 degree there, but it is not necessary for that road to continue to 20<sup>th</sup> Rd. It is just nice to have good alignment there. If that is not reasonable for those properties and it is not feasible, the plan for Lee Hwy. will not fall apart. No desire to funnel traffic through 20<sup>th</sup> Rd., which ends at Woodstock Park. There is no other plan for 20<sup>th</sup> Rd. in terms of carrying traffic. When possible, it is good to align intersections for the ease of use.

Sara G. – Appreciate what is presented. A lot of it sounds terrific. Walkability and urban environment. Lives near Lee Heights on other side of Old Dominion. Please remember we are not Clarendon, not all millennials, and we don't all hop on a bike and come back with a bag of groceries. If I go to Arrowine to buy a case of wine, I will not walk home with it. I will need my car. Next car will be electric. Need parking for Lee Heights and other shopping centers. A lot of the taxpayers are older. Happy many young people are moving in, but area has to be planned for all ages.

Chris J. – Are there going to be plans for adding additional bus lines, capital bike share locations?

County Response: Working w/ART, WMATA and VDOT on how transit enhancements and more bus service can help, as well as, micro transit, circulators, etc.

Sarah – Live in Old Dominion. Excited about plan generally. Area of concern is around new street connections. Heard Natasha say, "no eminent domain" and others say "don't intend to use eminent domain." Need a firm commitment that eminent domain will not be used to provide

adequate comments/feedback. Love to see more transit and to force more of the traffic onto I-66. Can VDOT make the commuter traffic go on highways, where they belong, if we have main streets here?

County Response: No, County will not use eminent domain to make these connections. It will only happen if property owners choose to sell to developers. Our intent is to create opportunities for improving traffic and connectivity overall, if there is redevelopment. VDOT is an integral partner. One of the things that tend to happen when you create a main street is that people that want to go faster, don't use those roads anymore.

Tony P. – Lives west of Glebe Rd. behind Bill's Hardware. Lee Highway bisects a residential community and a historic neighborhood. I support improvements to Lee Hwy. to make it user friendly and attractive, but we are not Clarendon, C. Pike, or Ballston. Nor want to be. 10 stories start to make this area look like those other neighborhoods and that is not what we want. Concept of moving development into my neighborhood is a great concern. Creating 4-7 story buildings next to homes will change character and impact values of homes. High density increases traffic on Lee Hwy. Pushing traffic into neighborhoods to relieve Lee Hwy. is contrary to efforts in the past. I ask to re-envision west of Glebe such that it enables the small businesses to flourish, w/out negatively impacting the neighborhoods behind it, because plan looks at cutting out a number of houses. I also ask to look at ways to reduce commuter use of Lee Hwy., those avoiding paying the I-66 tolls. I want to preserve residential feel.

County Response: Not trying to push Lee Hwy. traffic into neighborhoods. Trying to make Lee Hwy. less easy to speed on it. Trying to transform it from highway to main street, so it is a less attractive cut-through for traffic that should be on I-66. Any discussion of adding alleys or parallel streets is to better serve existing and future development. None of these roads will send traffic into the neighborhoods. They are to connect the immediately adjacent neighborhoods better, so people don't have to go on Lee Hwy. The new street connections will be refined with community input or removed because of community input. By making Lee Hwy. better for the surrounding neighborhood, and less oriented to commuter traffic going from Falls Church to Rosslyn, that will benefit everyone. All transit and bicycle enhancements will make it possible to have the higher density and not have a frustrating Lee Hwy. We are not reducing capacity on Lee Highway, keeping the same number of lanes. Not making it harder for cars to go on there. Vehicle flow will stay the same. We are not reducing capacity to make these improvements, just want to balance all modes.

Ken R. – I accept the fact that Lee Hwy. is still a thoroughfare to DC. 45 min. to 1 hour for just 9 miles. It's absurd. Adding more density will just increase the traffic and commuting time. Amount of cut-through traffic that was generated during the construction of the turn lane at Glebe Rd. is huge. 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Columbus Street are already cut-throughs. Traffic from I-66 has been added there already. Pleased to hear no eminent domain.

## Public Space and Stormwater

Carmen R. – I represent an affordable housing developer, APAH. Excited to redevelop property in Waverly Hills, Leckey Gardens, and to see there will be more affordable units under any Scenario. Worried about cost of stormwater management. Big need in area. Engaged civil engineers and cost estimators to look at the Scenarios. Depending on capacity it could be millions, 2-3, for an underground detention vault. I think community should think about flexibility in uses and heights. I have worked on C. Pike and know the retail has struggled because not enough density, even after the form-based code. Important to have those honest conversations now, in terms of those trade-offs.

Lauren R. – I am with Walsh C. representing owner of Thirsty Bernie's. While encouraged by prospect of additional density and height, concerned that the two Scenarios propose to solve the County's open space and stormwater mgmt. issue on this site. The amount of property proposed to be dedicated for open space/stormwater will disproportionately affect this property compared to other properties in this area and will negatively impact the developer incentive and ability to redevelop this income producing property. Other properties get the benefit of additional height/density without having to sacrifice as much land area or any of the site area. We are open to solutions but request the burden be shared by other properties. Appreciate the thoughtful plan, but County needs to consider that the property currently functions very well. If the burden is too great, the vision won't be realized and the property may remain as it is well into the future. Don't consider the additional height of 10 stories in Scenario B to be a realistic trade-off (due to the cost of construction) for the amount of land used for stormwater and open space.

## Building Heights

Jim T. – It's tempting for someone to say, "I want the building heights in Scenario A and all the amenities in Scenario B", but that's not realistic. How high do we have to go to get our wish list?

County Response: The challenge is consolidation. Scenario A gives a lot of incentives and B gives more. Goal is to try and incentivize private sector to provide as much of the benefits as possible. We need your help to prioritize wish list so we can try and match up the incentives. Don't have a specific number because there are so many idiosyncrasies and one size doesn't fit all. We heard people like a variety of heights and not one big wall.

Sam C. – Parents are owner of 2040 N. Vermont Street (apartment building behind Wood-Lee Arms Apartments). Excited about plan, love what I see. Not a lot of people renting now due to COVID but thank goodness for not having a mortgage to pay. Is consolidation envisioned between 2060 and 2040 N. Vermont as one building? What is the height being proposed?

County Response: It's up to owner. Consolidation of condo buildings, with a lot of owners, is a lot harder. Scenario B proposes up to 7 stories and Scenario A up to 5 stories.

Tony W. – We cannot think of 7 stories in isolation but rather in context w/neighborhood. More people will bring more kids. Glebe school is already overcrowded. This density will impact schools more. Lee Hwy. is a major commuting route to DC. With this high density what is the impact on commuting? Will it create traffic congestions? Slow moving traffic is bad for environment – CO2 emissions. Both Scenarios are going in the same direction.

County Response: Mosaic is a good example. It is not right at metro and has 5-7 stories. Example of a transformation of a place that was auto dominated to a place that is still auto oriented, but much more walkable, and addresses some of the parking concerns. We have seen over time the number of cars on Lee Hwy. going down, even though the population has gone up. We would like to build on that trend as more people use transit and bicycles on Lee Hwy., which has a higher percentage (on average) than the County as a whole. We are trying to change the corridor to make it easier to move more buses (more often), handle commuting changes, and make bicycle commuting easier and safer. There should still be opportunities for single occupancy vehicles on Lee Hwy. but not the priority. Important to consider that area 3 is not that far from the orange and silver lines in Ballston, however, the bus system that connects area 3 and Ballston is not moving frequently. Improving the connectivity and frequency can make a big difference in how accessible the rail system is. The 10 stories is not for every parcel. Some property owners have said they probably wouldn't need as much, and others have said they do. An example is Connecticut Avenue in DC (near the zoo in areas away from red line stops), which is eclectic and there is a variety of heights (1-10) all within the same block. We imagine that not every single building will be the same height in this area. We are being consistent with what might be allowed, however, each parcel will develop in a way that is tailored to what it needs.

Marna – Lives on N. Buchanan Street near Bill's Hardware. Stormwater mgmt. and affordable housing is an important issue in our neighborhood. Spent decades working w/County on cut-through traffic problems. Remember, we are not Clarendon and not Mosaic. Alarming to see some of the heights suggested when we already have traffic congestion issues.

Richard L. - Height limits on Lee Heights. It's been said that height is not going to impact residential areas, however, a block or 2 away from the Lee Heights shops there is residential and you are showing 10 stories.

County Response: Area 3 has various types of residential units. From single family, low-scale multifamily, garden apartments to 8-10 story buildings. The areas around the Lee Heights shops are currently zoned multi-family and are already allowed to be higher density. Our goal is to not impact the single family areas adjacent to the core (commercial and multi family) areas. There are sites that are built as single family in the core areas that are zoned multi-family. But the GLUP vision today is already for higher density.

Richard L. – If you recall from previous conversations and the visioning study, the community was very vocal about not wanting more height around Lee Heights and now we are showing 10 stories. How did that get built into it? Who did that?

County Response: The County has done a lot more work since the visioning study. We have dug deeper into the issues and have more information about the challenges in each of the areas than when those conversations took place. Certainly understand and appreciate the concern around more height in that area. At the moment we are trying to test what we can achieve by providing more opportunities to the property owners. A number of competing goals and aspirations and want to think creatively of ways to partner with the private sector.

## **Community Improvements and Benefit Priorities**

Elaine F. – It seems some are more needs than wants. Stormwater falls in the needs category. Almost not fair to put them in the same list. There are trade-offs with amenities, things that should be put in CIPs/Bond issues and things that are more suitable for a developer to be incentivized to provide. Public might be better served with having two frameworks, one to consider needs and another for wants. We should have an idea of magnitude of \$ that are being considered. If we don't get stormwater right, we may not be able to enjoy some of the amenities we want. Need to make distinctions before the community prioritizes wish list.

Zach W. – Land use attorney w/Venable. I represent M&T owner in area 3. We support plan and incentivizing development through the exchange of community benefits. Sites such as this, that do not back onto single family homes, should be prioritized for incentivizing the most development potential and likewise getting the most in exchange for community benefits.

## **Area 4 Community discussion comments:**

Jim T. – Can you explain the red and blue dots?

County Response: Red dots depict properties inside Revitalization Area boundary and blue dots only the commercial properties are inside the Revitalization boundary. We are imagining redevelopment in areas that the Cherrydale Plan looked at and expanding it slightly in areas where we can have improvements for street grid and create development opportunities that would help meet those goals.

Tom K. – I have the expectation that we will achieve superior tree canopy for length of Lee Hwy. More concerned with achieving gathering spaces than green spaces. I think they can be accomplished within developments in courtyards. Should think of other ways of achieving gathering spaces than just w/green spaces. I have seen high-rise developments with spaces that are open to the public at different parts of the day.

County Response: the green spaces on the maps are trying to indicate publicly accessible spaces, which could be plazas full of tables and chairs not necessarily planted or parks.

Cynthia H. – Align myself with comments about need for parking because of age. I live around corner from Safeway and need a car to carry groceries. Will have commuters from people outside

of Lee Hwy. Don't we want them to stop and support the businesses we will have? Her experience in Cherrydale is that a lot of businesses have failed because no adequate parking. What is your position for adequacy of parking?

County Response: Each redevelopment will have to provide parking to support its uses. Will look at providing on-street parking in strategic locations. There is not enough r.o.w. on Lee Hwy., but if the developers want to provide it, we will look at it and work with VDOT to make sure it happens. Being walkable doesn't mean you lose parking. You can have both. Just looking for it to not be auto dominated.

Jackie W. – What provisions will be in place for 100 year old homes where we are showing 7 stories? Haven't heard a desire to add character on Lee Hwy, to make it a main street that looks distinct. I look at 5-point intersection and think of a traffic circle or oval w/statues and fountains and a gathering spot in some way to create a character. Buses along Glebe are not enough. Can bike down but not up. We need more n/s connections and different options for transit to get people out on streets walking or biking.

County Response: Important to make character different. Don't want it to become anonymous because it is not that way today. Keep hearing desire for it to be eclectic, like it is today, w/various architectural styles and materials. We did actually look at a traffic circle at 5-points but it came w/some unintended consequences - some of the traffic movements were worse and harder to negotiate. It also put the public space on the inside of the street rather than adjoining the street and next to development. It's better when people don't have to cross the street to get to the open space.