



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of April 16, 2011**

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

DATE: April 14, 2011

- SUBJECTS:**
- A. Adoption of the East Falls Church Area Plan;
 - B. GP-321-11-1 Adoption of General Land Use Plan (“GLUP”) Amendments for the East Falls Church Area; and
 - C. Adoption of Amendments to the Master Transportation Plan (“MTP”) Map and the Bicycle Element of the MTP.

DISCUSSION: The following is a summary of comments and input from the Housing Commission and the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the staff responses. This report also includes an “Errata Sheet” listing inaccurate references to pages and/or recommendations that are contained in the staff report dated April 7, 2011. In addition, the report contains a revised “Recommended Bikeway Network Map”, showing the proposed shared use trail through the Verizon parcel. This revised map will replace the map shown on page 43 of the Plan and in Attachment 5 of the April 7, 2011, staff report.

Housing Commission: The draft Area Plan was discussed at the April 7, 2011 Housing Commission meeting. After a brief presentation by staff outlining the provisions of the Area Plan, including the three affordable housing-related recommendations, staff was asked to clarify the total number of affordable housing units that could potentially be generated through the implementation of the affordable housing recommendations in the Plan. In response, staff

County Manager:

BMD/GA

County Attorney:

CEW *GA*

Staff: Richard Tucker, Planning Division, DCPHD
Sarah Pizzo, Housing Division, DCPHD
Richard Hartman, Transportation Planning Division, DES
Bridget Obikoya, Traffic Engineering and Operations Division, DES

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estimated that over the long term build out of the Plan, nearly 100 affordable housing units could potentially be created or replaced within the study area and that up to an additional 150 affordable housing units could be preserved in the greater East Falls Church area; which is defined as a 1-mile radius from the East Falls Church Metrorail station. Housing Commissioners expressed concern that the height and density limits set by the Area Plan also limit the amount of affordable housing that can be generated in this area. However, there was general support for the Area Plan and the Commission recommended that the Area Plan and the associated General Land Use Plan and Master Transportation Plan amendments be adopted by the County Board. As part of that action, the Housing Commission recommended that the Plan also should include:

- An element of flexibility with regard to density so that as development moves forward, the option for additional height and density exists.

Staff Response: As discussed in the staff report dated April 7, 2011, the proposed level of development for the identified sites within the planning area is compatible with and complementary to the development in the surrounding area, which is primarily single-family development. While developing the vision for East Falls Church, staff had to balance two important issues: the amount of development that would be needed to facilitate and incentivize development in accordance with the Plan, and the compatibility of the recommended level of potential development with the surrounding neighborhood. Because of the sensitivity and concerns expressed by citizens regarding proposed building heights, the Plan identifies specific height limits (in stories) for each development site. However, within the height limits that are recommended in the Area Plan for sites other than the Park and Ride parcel (where the Area Plan sets an overall development maximum of 600,000 square feet) there is some potential to achieve additional density above that indicated in the existing or recommended land use designations for the respective sites through the affordable housing density bonus provisions in the Zoning Ordinance.

Although additional development (bonus density above the existing General Land Use Plan) could result in the provision of **additional** affordable housing units through negotiation, the amount of additional potential affordable housing could be offset by the additional construction and site development costs associated with a change in construction type from wood-frame construction (generally 1-5 stories) to steel/concrete construction (above 5 stories). For low- and mid-rise development areas, as proposed in East Falls Church, this increase in construction and site development costs makes the realization of a more robust affordable housing goal more challenging. A developer may choose not to request bonus density under these conditions, as it may not be cost effective for the project.

- A numerical goal for new and preserved affordable housing units in the East Falls Church area and stipulate the targeted Area Median Income (AMI) levels for those units.

Staff Response: Staff estimates that up to approximately 100 newly constructed committed affordable units could be realized through Recommendations 8 and 9 as well as through site plan contributions. Recommendation 10 could yield a maximum of 147 market affordable units (MARKs) preserved in the greater East Falls Church area as committed affordable units.

The committed affordable units would be affordable to households earning up to 60% of AMI. Based on the Housing Commission's recommendation of adding an explicit goal to the Plan, staff recommends the following sentence to be inserted after the first sentence in the Housing Recommendations language in the Plan (page 71):

“Housing

As redevelopment occurs in East Falls Church, there is an opportunity to add committed affordable housing units to an area that currently has only a handful. *This plan has a goal of adding 100-250 new and preserved committed affordable units in the greater East Falls Church area through Recommendations 8-10 below, in addition to site plan contributions.*

The affordable housing requirements for site plan projects outlined in the Zoning Ordinance (commonly referred to as the “Affordable Housing Ordinance”) apply to all site plan projects with a density greater than 1.0 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and apply to the density up to the existing GLUP maximum for the site in question. The Ordinance allows developers to choose whether to provide a cash contribution or to provide units based on a percent of the increased gross floor area (GFA) above 1.0 FAR for the density up to the GLUP maximum.”

- The Housing Commission also recommended that specific housing goals be formulated as part of (future) planning processes, with an emphasis on the preservation of MARKs and the stipulation of specific numerical and AMI targets where the creation of new housing is likely.

Staff Response: Staff agrees, and will work with Housing Commission members who are appointed to, or are otherwise identified to participate in, future planning processes to facilitate substantive discussions regarding the implementation of the County’s affordable housing goals specific to the area(s) being studied.

Bicycle Advisory Committee: In a letter addressed to the Planning Commission dated April 6, 2011, the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) expressed general support for adoption of the Area Plan and the related amendments to the Master Transportation Plan, with the following recommended changes:

1. The Plan’s street implementation/design principles should be revised to reflect the following:
 - a) At least 14 feet of combined space (for curbside parking plus adjacent bike lane) should be specified and provided wherever feasible, as the presently specified 13 feet of combined space in most street cross sections illustrations is less than the desirable 14-foot minimum space. The concern with 13- foot spacing is that it will effectively result in bike lanes much narrower than 6 feet (due to parking encroachment and the need for cyclists to ride clear of the “door zone”, which reaches into the bike lanes). ABAC recognizes that there may be certain situations where space constraints dictate widths narrower than 14 feet, but such constraints should not be presumed from the outset.

Staff Response: Staff does not support bicycle lanes wider than 6 feet, since automobile drivers may attempt to use them as travel lanes. Some parking lanes are shown in the cross sections as 7 feet and some as 8 feet, depending on the available street space.

- b) Planned bike lanes should not be striped on the right side of right-turning traffic all the way to signalized (and un-signalized) intersections. Presently, the conceptual [drawing] does so in direct violation of both the Manual of Uniform Traffic Controls and Devices and AASHTO's Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

Staff Response: A note has been included in the Plan (page 87) that explains that the intersection designs shown in the Plan are conceptual and the detailed design of things such as striping would follow the standards and practices in effect at the time of implementation.

- 2) Recommendation #17 [now identified as Recommendation #18] should spell out more specific requirements for configuration of the West Entrance of EFC Metro. For example, it should require:
 - a) Good connections for cyclists to the W&OD trail in both directions; and
 - b) Connecting facilities from the West Entrance to area on-street bicycling facilities (e.g., the Williamsburg Boulevard bike lanes).

Staff Response: The Plan has been updated to add the following sentence to Recommendation 14:

"Any new station entrance would be designed to have convenient access for pedestrians and good connections for cyclists to the W&OD Trail and the on-street bicycle facilities."

- 3) Recommendation #17 [now identified as Recommendation #18] should "designate" rather than "consider" the EFC Metro Station as a location for a bike station (as supported by ABAC's earlier comments to the Task Force), consistent with the amenity requirements in the existing Recommendation [#31] (secure parking, showers, etc.). Such a bike station (akin to the existing bike station at Union Station in DC) would remove one of the primary barriers for would-be bike commuters. This is an ideal location for such a facility, given the EFC Station's status as the #1 station in the system for bike-to-Metro commuters.

Staff Response: Staff has made the requested language change, from "consider" to "designate" in Recommendation 18.

- 4) Recommendation #28 [now identified as Recommendation #29] should be revised to designate all "Bicycle Routes" as "Bicycle Boulevards".

Staff Response: Staff does not support this change. Bicycle Boulevards can be considered for some of the on-street routes but may not be an appropriate treatment for all of the

recommended routes. Further review and analysis would be necessary before making this determination.

5) Recommendation #31 [now identified as Recommendation #32] should specifically include exploration of:

- a. Realignment of the W&OD Trail along Four Mile Run, providing a separated-grade crossing of Sycamore Street from Brandywine Castle to where the W&OD Trail resumes east of EFC Metro (perhaps cantilevered from the existing I-66 bridge).

Staff Response: This option can be studied under Recommendation 32, but does not need to be specifically described as part of the recommendation.

- b. A potential multi-use trail (MUT) path (for users coming from the southwest) through Isaac Crossman Park. Such an improvement could provide the groundwork for replacing the only segment of the W&OD that directs users onto the street with an off-street realignment.

Staff Response: An off-street trail through Isaac Crossman Park designed to accommodate bicycles was suggested in an early draft of the Task Force Plan but was rejected by a majority of community members from Arlington and the City of Falls Church.

- c. Extension of the Nellie Custis Trail past its existing termination at the corner of Quantico and 18th Street to Sycamore (Street).

Staff Response: This trail extension has been shown on the revised version of the Bikeway Network Map.

Errata Sheet for the April 7, 2011 Staff Report:

Page 13 - The last sentence of the paragraph that starts with “Options for redevelopment...” should end with “Staff reviewed this issue with the Planning Commission at their April 6, 2011 meeting and further discussion on this matter is included on page ~~17~~ 15 of this report.

Page 15 - The first sentence of the paragraph that says “As outlined on page 15 of this report, staff has included optional development guidance ...” should state: “As outlined on page ~~15~~ 13 of this report, staff has included optional development guidance...”

Attachment 4

Page 22 - The third WHEREAS on the page should state: “WHEREAS the proposed amendments to the Bicycle Element of the MTP are shown on Attachment 5, entitled ~~Recommended Bike and Trail Network Map~~ Recommended Bikeway Network Map, to the County Board report dated April 7, 2011”

Attachment 5

Page 23 - Revised Recommended Bikeway Network Map showing the proposed Shared Use Trail through the Verizon parcel (shown on the last page of this report.)

Attachment 6

Page 32 - Staff Response to Comment #16 should state: “The Plan recommends improvements along Washington Boulevard and Fairfax Drive in the vicinity of the I-66 ramps. (See ~~Recommendation 33 on page 75-76 of the Plan~~ Recommendation # 34 on pages 80-81 of the Plan.)”

Attachment 7

Page 59 - The Comment/Question box for Comment #8 from Commissioner Fallon should state: “Vision Statement should come earlier than page ~~31~~ 33”.

Page 59/60 - Staff Response to Comment #12 should state: “The Plan makes reference to bicycling and supportive services related to the W&OD Trail in a number of areas. As part of the vision for redeveloping the Oil Company site (Site A), the Plan calls for consolidation with the Used Car lot (Site B), expanded open space adjacent to the W&OD Trail, with retail or bicycle related services to be offered on the Used Car lot (p. ~~48~~ 51-52). Recommendation #~~29~~ 30 calls for the expansion of the bike sharing program to East Falls Church, if appropriate.”

Page 63 - Staff Response to # 26 should state: “The Plan recommends a study to design pedestrian and bicycle improvements for this facility [Lee Highway Bridge] (Recommendation #~~25~~ 26).”

Page 65 - Staff Response to # 34 should state: “Recommendation #~~17~~ 18 addresses this issue.”

Attachment 8

Page 75 - The first bullet under Transportation recommendations should state: “Deleted one Potential Signalized Pedestrian Crossing location at 19th St and North Tuckahoe Street from the Potential Connecting Paths and Pedestrian Crossings Map (p. ~~74~~ 76) which staff has determined is not necessary at this intersection of two local streets.”

Revised Recommended Bikeway Network Map

