

Ilene Muhlberg

From: Angela Brackett on behalf of CountyBoard
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2011 3:31 PM
To: Ilene Muhlberg
Subject: FW: Dec. 10, 2011, County Board Meeting, Agenda item No. 32.A., Five Year Review of Comprehensive Plan: Proposed GLUP amendment for West Ballston area

FA-saturday's meeting

Angela Brackett
Administrative Asst.
County Board Office
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201
703-228-3121

From: Bernard H. Berne [mailto:bhberne@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 4:53 PM
To: CountyBoard; Jay Fisette; Christopher Zimmerman; Walter Tejada; Mary Hynes; Barbara Favola
Cc: CountyManager
Subject: Dec. 10, 2011, County Board Meeting, Agenda item No. 32.A., Five Year Review of Comprehensive Plan: Proposed GLUP amendment for West Ballston area

Re: Arlington County Board Meeting of December 10, 2011: Agenda Item No. 32.A:
Five-Year Review of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan, including the General Land Use Plan, the Master Transportation Plan, the Storm Water Master Plan, the Water Distribution System Master Plan, the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan, the Recycling Program Implementation Plan and Map, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and Plan, the Public Spaces Master Plan and the Historic Preservation Master Plan.

Proposed amendment to General Land Use Plan (GLUP) re. West Ballston area

Board Members:

I would like to request that, as part of your five-year review of the County's Comprehensive Plan that you consider amending a portion of the GLUP in the West Ballston area to make the GLUP designation for that area consistent with recommendations in Concept Plan of the 1980 Ballston Sector Plan, with recommendations in the 2006 Buckingham Neighborhood Conservation Plan and with your recent designation of this portion of the GLUP as the Ballston Business Improvement Service District (Ballston BID), effective January 1, 2011. The present GLUP designation for this portion is inconsistent with provisions and concepts in each of these plans.

The amendment would cover a portion of the area that is bounded on the northeast by N. Glebe Road, on the southeast by N. Henderson Road, on the southwest by N. Thomas Street, N. Carlin Springs Road and N. Tazewell Street, and on the north by Wilson Boulevard. The portion encompasses parts of three blocks that are on the southwest side of N. Glebe Road. The portion presently contains (from southeast to northwest) a Harris-Teeter supermarket, the American Service Center, a Goodyear store, several small businesses and a Nissan automobile dealership. All present uses in the portion are commercial, except for a narrow strip of town houses along the northeast side of N. Tazewell Street. No part of the portion is within one quarter of a mile of a Metro station entrance.

The present GLUP designation for the portion is High-Medium Residential Mixed Use. Most of the portion is further from a Metro station entrance than is any other area in the County with the same GLUP designation.

The portion is bordered by low-rise residential development (townhouses and three story apartment buildings) in the Buckingham and Bluemont neighborhoods. Although R-C zoning is consistent with the present GLUP, such zoning is not legally permissible in the portion. The zoning ordinance states that an R-C zoning district must be within one-quarter of a mile of a Metro Station entrance. As stated above, no part of the portion is within one-quarter of a mile of any Metro station.

Development of the portion at heights and densities consistent with a High-Medium Residential Mixed Use designation would greatly impact the adjacent low-rise residential neighborhood. Further, the GLUP needs to designate a strip of land adjacent to Glebe Road for commercial uses, rather than for primarily residential uses to be consistent with recommendations in the Ballston Sector Plan and the County's recent placement of the area within the Ballston BID, (which is a special tax district).

Page 8, Figure 1 in the Ballston Sector Plan

(http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/planning/docs/CPHDPlanningDocsMain.aspx#bs_plan) contains a map of a "Concept Plan" that includes the portion currently designated as High-Medium Residential Mixed Use. The Concept Plan shows that most of the portion is within a "Neighborhood Preservation" area. The Concept Plan also shows that a strip along the southwest side of Glebe Road that is outside of the Neighborhood Preservation Area should be developed as "commercial." A map on page 12 of the Sector Plan shows this commercial strip, accompanied by the statement that: *"Existing commercial development is recognized as a key asset in the Ballston community. Parkington (now Ballston Common) provides a focus for commercial expansion. The major thoroughfares in Ballston also provide fine opportunities for commercial growth."*

N. Glebe Road is one of these thoroughfares. This exclusively commercial development that has occurred along Glebe Road in Ballston since 1980 and the recent placement of the strip along Glebe Road within the Ballston BID is consistent with the Ballston Sector Plan, but is inconsistent with the present GLUP designation of High-Medium Residential Mixed Use GLUP designation for the strip.

The High-Medium Residential Mixed Use GLUP designation is also inconsistent with the Sector Plan's Neighborhood Preservation Area. Page 1, Figure 2, in the Ballston Sector Plan contains an "Illustrative Plan" that shows that the part of the Neighborhood Preservation Area within the block bounded by N. Glebe Road, N. Henderson Road, N. Thomas Street and N. Carlin Springs Road should contain a large open space with many trees and shrubs. The High-Medium Residential Mixed Use designation essentially precludes the presence of any such large open space.

Ballston has few large open spaces. It is therefore important that County Board change the GLUP to encourage the development of the open space that the Sector Plan illustrates within the Neighborhood Preservation area on this block.

The Buckingham Neighborhood Conservation Plan (

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/Documents/9309Buckingham.pdf>) states in Recommendation #4 on page 44: *"To adequately protect the Buckingham neighborhood, Arlington County planners should ensure there are no further exceptions to the neighborhood preservation plan that the Ballston Sector Plan's Concept Plan describes. Any new high-density construction along North Glebe Road should taper downwards toward the adjacent existing residential neighborhood and should contain a wide landscaped buffer between the neighborhood and all new buildings. No part of the neighborhood preservation area should be rezoned to permit increased heights or densities."*

The Neighborhood Conservation Plan therefore supports the development of the open space that the Ballston Sector Plan illustrates for the portion of the Neighborhood Preservation area within the Buckingham neighborhood that the GLUP presently designates as High-Medium Residential Mixed Use.

The County's Long Range Planning Committee is currently considering a potential GLUP amendment for the American Service Center site. An applicant has filed a site plan amendment for the Goodyear store site that would permit the construction of a residential building at the corner of N. Glebe Road and N. Carlin Springs Road. This building would be inconsistent with the Sector Plan's recommendation for commercial development on the site, the existing site plan's provision of a commercial building on the site, and the inclusion of the site within the Ballston BID.

The GLUP change that I am requesting involves an area in West Ballston that is larger than both the American Service Center and Goodyear store site. Because the current GLUP designation for the area is inconsistent with the Ballston Sector Plan, the Buckingham Neighborhood Conservation Plan and the Ballston BID, I am requesting that the County Board amend the GLUP for the larger High-Medium Residential Mixed Use area during the present five-year review of the Comprehensive Plan before it considers amending the GLUP and site plan for any individual components of the area. Comprehensive planning principles require such prioritizations.

The amended GLUP should reflect the Ballston Sector Plan's Concept Plan for West Ballston. The amended GLUP should designate the strip along Glebe Road between Wilson Boulevard and N. Henderson Road for commercial development. The amended GLUP should provide for an open space (perhaps with a "public" designation to permit the development of a County-owned park) between the commercial strip along Glebe Road and the low-rise residential development along N. Thomas Street in the block bounded by N. Glebe Road, N. Henderson Road, N. Thomas Street and N. Carlin Springs Road.

Thank you.

Bernard H. Berne
President
Buckingham Community Civic Association

4316 N. Carlin Springs Road, Apt. 26
Arlington, VA 22203-2035

Phone: 703-243-0179