

RE Sears Redevelopment Impact on Area Schools

From: Mason BOS Email

Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2014 12:35 PM

To: 'alfred'

Subject: RE: Sears Redevelopment & Impact on Area Schools

Dear Al: Thank you for your email about the Seven Corners Task Force and its work during the past two years. I created the Seven Corners Land Use and Transportation Task Force because the Seven Corners/Willston area had long been in need of a study to determine future land uses as the commercial area ages and demands reinvestment and redevelopment. The study area comprises 500 to 600 acres, mostly north of Route 7, and was carefully crafted to maintain stable single-family neighborhoods nearby, without a proposed increase in density for those properties. Indeed, your "stable, bucolic, heavily treed and pleasant neighborhood" with its mix of older, remodeled, and newer homes is not the focus of any changes by the Task Force. The study area is similar in size to Tysons, and larger than Merrifield, two areas with recent development/redevelopment opportunities. But the study area is more unique than those two, since it has both existing affordable housing and retail/commercial within its borders.

The study area includes the multi-family complexes in Willston and at Seven Corners on both sides of Route 50, and those residents' per capita income indeed is in the lower ranges that Mr. Thillmann referenced. Those multi-family residential areas also were built in the late 1940s through mid-1950s, so the housing is quite old and outdated, certainly by any modern standards. Mr. Thillmann's statements were not incorrect, however, and I regret you found them insulting. A number of property owners there are interested in upgrading the housing, but cannot do so without changes to the Comprehensive Plan, which also must include replacement of the nearly 600 units of existing affordable housing. That's one of the goals of the Seven Corners Study – to make recommendations for changes to the county's Comprehensive Plan that can serve for a planning horizon of up to 40 years. A developer cannot simply "submit a proposal to the Planning Commission for an increase to the density of his/her property" unless the Comprehensive Plan language would permit consideration of additional density for a rezoning. At present, the Comp Plan language for the Seven Corners/ Willston study area permits few options for redevelopment, which has hindered reinvestment during the past couple of decades. Al, you are my appointee to the Economic Advisory Commission, and this same issue of redevelopment/reinvestment countywide has been an element of the overall plan that the EAC sent to the Board of Supervisors, and currently is a focus of the EAC's Implementation Sub-committee.

The Seven Corners Task Force spent the first 8 months learning the basics of everything – from the financial dynamics of new housing, retail, and employment, to traffic fixes that could make a

RE Sears Redevelopment Impact on Area Schools
difference. Then, the Task Force sponsored two highly successful, and well-attended, community charettes, one to look at transportation, and the other to look at potential densities in the study area. You can review the hundreds of pages of documents posted on the OCR website (www.fcrcvit.org/baileys/7corners.htm) for the work of the Task Force. The activities of the Task Force have been very transparent, something that I insisted on when I created it. I'm sure that, if you wish, John Thillmann would be happy to sit down with you for a one-on-one briefing. I think you probably already know John, since he also serves on the EAC.

Transportation recommendations will be part of the task Force's recommendations. What you saw was a draft concept; I understand that Tom Biesiadny, director of Fairfax County's Department of Transportation, also outlined some of the transportation goals and discussions at the community meeting. Transportation staff have been very helpful in identifying challenges, and how to resolve them, and I appreciate the good work being done by Tom and his staff.

The focus of the Seven Corners/Willston study is to develop land use policies that will take a deteriorating area, rejuvenate it, and make it a great place again. The effort has been organized around the principle of 1) fixing the clearly unacceptable traffic situation; 2) create a viable residential area with "market rate" housing; 3) bring in new interesting destination retail for a walkable pedestrian-friendly environment; and 4) protect the existing suburban residential communities but make those areas a walkable part of the larger Seven Corners area.

Al, I will not disband the Task Force. There has been a lot of very good work done, and there is more to do before recommendations are made for Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors consideration. Upon closer examination, I think you will find that what the Task Force is trying to do will provide positive effects for the greater Seven Corners area today, as well as for generations to come. I hope this helps clarify some of the misinformation or misinterpretation you referenced.

Penny

Penelope A. Gross
Mason District Supervisor
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
From: alfred [mailto:dthieme@verizon.net]
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 1:44 PM
To: Gross, Penny
Cc: 'Debbie Smith'; cristinathieme@gmail.com
Subject: FW: Sears Redevelopment & Impact on Area Schools

Dear Penny,

I expect by now you have heard from several of the residents of the area surrounding the Seven Corners area and how distasteful was the draft revitalization ideas presented by the Seven Corners Land Use and Transportation committee appointed by you to draft a

RE Sears Redevelopment Impact on Area Schools

“revitalization”

plan for the Seven corners area at the meeting on Tuesday evening.

In fact, the draft presented was, in the opinion of many of the area residents, not a plan forward, but a recipe for a future disaster of greater congestion and overwhelming density. Furthermore, the moderator, John Thillmann, made several statements that many in the audience found insulting and inaccurate. For example, he cited a per capita income of \$30,000 in the Seven Corners area. Several of the attendees who spoke stated the figure was wrong. Several speakers cited that the correct number was probably closer to \$100,000. Further, he indicated that the housing in the area was old and dated. That is clearly inaccurate as in the last 10 years there have been at least 5 new homes constructed in the Ravenwood area alone, most of which are valued at or above a million dollars. Currently, there is a new home under construction on Juniper Lane which when completed will be valued at more than a million dollars. Perhaps, the most vexing aspect of the draft plan is that it will add more than 5,000 new residents into the existing population, resulting in a greater density than Tyson’s Corner.

For the long time residents in this primarily single family residential area is that we live in this area because of its stable, bucolic, heavily treed and pleasant neighborhood. And we definitely do not need any increase in density to “revitalize” the area. We are quite happy with it as it is.

The best thing the committee could do is too not recommend any increase in density in the area. Thereafter, if a developer wishes to increase the density of his/her property is to submit a proposal to the Planning Commission for such.

Many in the audience were astounded and flabbergasted by the surrealist ring roads and stem road conceptions presented and supported by FC Transport staff. When questioned about how these new roads and highways would be funded it was clear that no serious study and thought has been given to costing such dramatic transport changes and as to where funding would be obtained.

In my opinion, the best thing to do would be to disband the committee and leave the Seven Corners area plan as it currently exists.

Sincerely,

Alfred Thieme Jr. PhD
703 241 9163 tel
703 241 0963 fax

From: Sheila Wayman [mailto:swayman555@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 09:59
To: dthieme@verizon.net

RE Sears Redevelopment Impact on Area Schools
Subject: Fwd: Sears Redevelopment & Impact on Area Schools

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sheila Wayman <swayman555@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Jun 24, 2014 at 9:06 AM

Subject: Re: Sears Redevelopment & Impact on Area Schools

To: LakeLink@yahoogroups.com

Last night at the Mason District Gov.Center a group of well informed local residents

come forth to express their concerns regarding the new development course the area seems to be taking on. I for one felt the concerns were very legit and extremely well

represented. A team of lawyers couldn't have represented this group better.

One of the things I got out the evening was that all the development talk seems to increase the main concerns rather than solving them for the future....What was to be

the answer seemed to me compounding the initial problems....If congestion is the issue how can more people and density housing eliminate that... And as Carl Neuberg brought out if parking at the East Falls Church station is a impossible now what then.....????

Another speaker pointed out that the communities that are enclaves of community closeness are sacrificedwhere is all this going????? I felt the attitude of all on the

listening end was open and appreciative of all the studies .However if we want to better the situation a more understandable plan must come out of this... Back to the

drawing board guys and pull back on some of those numbers.....and please be open about this Real Estate investment regarding Sears.....It has effects that are not

heart fully acceptable to the residents of the local communities

respectfully submitted

sheila wayman