



Memorandum

TO: Ritch Viola, Transportation Planning

CC: Arlington County Board
Arlington County Manager
Peter Owen, Chair – Arlington Transportation Commission
Jerry Auten, Chair – ACCF Transportation Committee
Bill Gearhart and Martha Moore – Co-Chairs, ACCF Planning and Zoning Committee
Members – ACCF Executive Committee

FROM: Larry Mayer, President, Arlington County Civic Federation

DATE: October 9, 2007

SUBJECT: Land use inconsistencies in MTP map

As you know, the Civic Federation has followed closely the process to update the County's Master Transportation Plan. Jerry Auten, chair of the Federation's Transportation Committee and also a member of our Executive Committee, has been an active participant in that process. We have reviewed the documents posted on the County's web site, and these documents were the subject of considerable discussion at our Executive Committee meeting Monday evening, October 8.

We are concerned about a number of factual inconsistencies between the MTP map and the GLUP relating to land use of property along arterial streets. While we understand that staff is reviewing the matter and is considering revising the map, we want to bring to your attention a partial list of inconsistencies that we have identified. We emphasize that this is not a complete list. We believe that it is important that the map advertised be accurate to the best of staff's ability, and urge that staff recommends that the Board delay advertising a map and text until staff is convinced that it has a fully accurate document. At the same time, we are also concerned that a final proposed map for advertising is still not available for public review on the County's web site, making it difficult for members of the public to identify concerns and decide whether they need to speak at the Board meeting.

An accurate map is very important. The accompanying overview text claims that the map is consistent with the current GLUP for properties along those sections of arterial streets. The MTP map, once approved, will become part of the County comprehensive planning documents, and will have a legal status. In view of this status, we are concerned that inconsistencies between the MTP and GLUP documents will, at the very least, create ambiguities regarding the correct land use status of affected properties. They may also encourage property owners and their lawyers to claim that the map, as the document later in time, is the more current statement of the Board's land use policy.

We also note that the map appears to call for a reduction in the number of travel lanes on some key arterial streets such as Lee Highway (from 6 to 4 lanes east of I-66). Unless there is clear

evidence that the lanes are not needed, the reduction in lanes may only serve to shift traffic, at times of heavy use, to minor residential streets or other arterial streets such as Wilson and Clarendon Boulevards that are more pedestrian oriented, which would be contrary to other goals in the plan.

Several of the land use inconsistencies are as follows:

1. **All of Lee Highway**, from Rosslyn to the Falls Church line, is designated as a "commercial arterial." An accompanying picture showing the "complete" street for commercial arterials shows commercial buildings along the street. *However, more than half of the Lee Highway frontage is designated as "low-residential" or "low-medium residential" in the GLUP.*
2. **All of Quaker Lane** next to South Fairlington (between I-395 and King Street) is shown as "commercial"; Quaker Lane here divides Arlington from Alexandria. *However, the entire Arlington side of the street is designated "low-medium residential" on Arlington's land use plan; approximately half the Alexandria side is residential in current use, including two churches, and the other half is service commercial (retail, banks, car sales).*
3. **All of Glebe Road south from Lee Highway** to U.S. 1 (Jeff Davis Highway) is designated "commercial." *However, only limited areas such as at the junction with Lee Highway, in Ballston, at Route 50, Columbia Pike, and a small section along Four Mile Run are commercial; most areas are planned as low-residential or low-medium residential.*
4. **A section of Glebe Road next to Marymount** University and the Washington Golf and Country Club is shown as "commercial." *However, the GLUP shows the area as "semi-public" and shows properties to the north and south as "low residential."*
5. **Kirkwood Road** between Washington Blvd. and N. 15th St. is shown as medium-high residential on the MTP map (almost half the distance between Washington Blvd. and Lee Highway). *However, all of Kirkwood in this section is "low-residential" on the land use plan except for properties also fronting on Washington Blvd.*
6. **N. 10th Street between Route 50 and Washington Blvd.** is shown on the map as "urban center mixed use." *However, the GLUP shows most adjoining properties as "low-residential" and properties at the Route 50 end as "medium residential."*
7. **Washington Blvd.** between Pershing Drive and N. 2nd Street is shown as "commercial." *However, the GLUP shows only the area around the intersection as service commercial, and this use extends only to N. 4th Street. Areas south of N. 4th Street are "low residential" on the GLUP.*
8. **Pershing Drive between Washington Blvd.** and Route 50 is shown on the MTP map as "urban center retail." *However, the GLUP shows most of the frontage as "low-residential" and the remainder as either "service-commercial" (only corner of Washington Boulevard and Pershing and just before Route 50 and Pershing intersection) or "low-medium residential (abutting Pershing and Route 50 intersection) ."*

As always, we appreciate your consideration of our views. Please feel free to contact me via telephone at: 703-525-8921, or via email at: larrymayer@civfed.org.

Sincerely,

Larry Mayer

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Reply – Key Points

From Richard Viola, 10/09/07

“We are currently reviewing and revising the map. I hope to have a revised map placed on our website ASAP.

Some points to remember:

- The GLUP sets the land use policy not the MTP. As the GLUP can have different uses and/or intensities on each block or side of the street, it is hard to exactly match a street type when the GLUP designations vary so frequently. Some generalization is required.
- The cross-sections shown are intended, and labeled, to be samples not exact prescriptions. It is clearly stated that factors such as traffic volume, topography, type of use, community concerns and other considerations will factor into decisions about how wide/number of lanes the street will actually be (i.e. your Lee Highway example).
- There is some latitude in the advertisement of a general plan amendment. It is expected that what is advertised may be revised by the County staff and County Board prior to its adoption.”