

Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan Community Meeting Notes April 12, 2007

The following is a summary of the questions and concerns expressed at the April 12, 2007 community meeting on the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan. We have organized the comments into topic area categories.

LAND USE, DENSITY, ZONING

Why so much density? The Plan overuses lingo such as “vibrant” pedestrian scale, etc. when in essence the Plan is proposing another Crystal City; Plan is all about ameliorating the density, when in fact, we’d rather not have the density in the first place. If you want density, put it in new development areas such as Potomac Yard. Can’t study or quantify the impact on our quality of life of too much density; must decrease density if we are going to make it livable; terrible problems will result when you shoehorn density into this neighborhood; will lose the livability of the neighborhood. Need to cut density or work on this Plan a lot longer. Plan ignores this obvious connection [between density and congestion]. Why is there no proposed development/increased density on the west side of the railroad tracks; why no access to Metro Station from west proposed; consider smart growth on west of station as well as east. Need to re-open Potomac West Small Area Plan and examine where density can be located west of the railroad tracks; not fair to put all density on east side. Community should look at the max development allowed by-right; important to go through the Plan and look at the details and understand what that might mean in terms of quality of life – very tall buildings, no open space, no wide sidewalks etc.; the Plan provides the carrot and stick for developers. City should show community what can be built right now, without the Plan; people own these parcels, and developers will do what they want and what will pay off. For example, we want retail amenities, but this would not necessarily be required under existing zoning. Need to look at trade-offs. Either we develop wisely with the Plan, or we let development happen by-right. Density relies on strong economy; what if all this density gets built and then there’s no market for it?

DEVELOPMENT FORM, SCALE

Property at 1261 Madison Street, small scale townhouses completely overwhelmed by new tall scale development, no sunlight. Heights, scale and architecture proposed do not respect low scale homes, despite the fact that the Plan says so. Monarch height is completely out of scale with the neighborhood – and that is what is being proposed for the rest of the area. Monarch’s sidewalks are 14 feet, too narrow for that scale of building; no room for street trees; should require that all new development incorporate 18 feet sidewalk.

The Plan does respect that we don't want Ballston or Crystal City, and proposes height and density at the Metro Station, respecting the small scale elsewhere else. The area can develop wisely with the guidance and input of the Plan or develop by right with no input.

TRANSPORTATION

Thank you for removing BRT references from the Plan

Why no tax district without all the cards on the table?

Was PY taken into account when performing the traffic study for roads?

Frustrated by statement that neighborhood streets can handle traffic; there is currently tremendous cut-through traffic in the area. Want more detail on how they reached the conclusion that traffic can be handled

How will increased density in Braddock area fix congestion?

Neighborhood streets cannot accommodate the increased density; streets are narrow – not like Ballston streets which accommodate four lanes of traffic plus on street parking, bike lanes and a center median.

Cannot take any more cut through traffic.

Did traffic study take into account the Monarch and the Prescott?

Why didn't the City put a Metro Station at Potomac Yard?

Concerned that realignment of Braddock, Wythe, West will facilitate higher speeds on neighborhood streets; new crosswalks should be raised speed humps.

West/Pendleton: Replace light with a three-way stop – or make the light traffic actuated.

Has straightening of the bridge been taken into consideration with traffic congestion?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Why discussing maximizing affordable housing with density bonuses when residents actually want a reduction of affordable housing; Braddock metro neighborhood has more affordable housing already than any other area in the City.

There needs to be a dispersal of affordable housing; historically an over-concentration of affordable housing; need assurance from City that it will be dispersed.

Why is this chapter missing from the Plan?

Contradictory that one of the drivers of the Plan's increased density is to get more affordable housing; this neighborhood already has more than its fair share; needs to be more equitably distributed throughout the City.

Affordable housing is a slogan in search of a policy, and too political – density bonuses to developers to score a political point.

Is there actually an affordable housing gap? If so, what is it?

PUBLIC HOUSING

Please clarify why Andrew Adkins off the table.

Best part of Plan as it stands is the redevelopment of the three public housing sites by EYA to make them more diverse; abandoning redevelopment of Adkins would jeopardize the whole Plan.

ARHA-City institutional communications barriers: ARHA has one view of Adkins, while the City has another; ARHA shouldn't be allowed to do its own thing.

ARHA units should be master planned to ensure that they are evenly distributed throughout the City.

If ARHA can't handle high rises – or won't put public housing in high rises, then why is it being proposed?

METRO STATION, METRO CAPACITY

Is Braddock Road Metro capacity adequate for the future, taking into account additional development both in the Braddock area and at Potomac Yard?

How can we do high density here and still maintain circulation needs?

Density at metro station should be more public in nature – retail, childcare, etc.

Show in more detail the circulation, bus bays, kiss/ride, temp parking, bike racks, taxi stand, etc. in context of the proposed development.

CRIME

Crime at Braddock Place Condos remains high. Crime stats don't reflect reality.

Would like to see a comparison of crime rates today with the 1999 low.

OPEN SPACE

What is happening with the open space at 1260 Madison?

Four acres is NOT sufficient for 3 million sf of development; Monarch doesn't include any open space; Prescott and Lofts built their open space on the roof; Plan should require that open space requirement may not be met with balconies and roof top gardens.

RETAIL

Surprised to be living at a Metro Station with so little pedestrian/retail activity; anything that could be done to encourage retail to remain open in the hours when most commuters are able to shop would be appreciated.

Benefit of new development is new retail; without development, we won't get retail; we need retail to improve the neighborhood. Need to require it in the Plan; suggest the possibility of subsidized retail in the early term.

INFRASTRUCTURE

If sewer infrastructure studies have not been completed, and will not be completed until Dec 2007, how do we know if area can sustain additional development?

NEIGHBORHOOD BENEFIT

Would like to discuss neighborhood amenities such as regulations to require the incorporation of childcare facilities, but until fundamentals of the Plan are addressed, can't.

Don't see public benefits; would like to see more contributions to the area such as playgrounds, day care center, etc

COMMUNITY INPUT

Staff provides the same plan over and over again despite the fact that community keeps saying they don't like it.

Has the community been asked what they want?

OTHER

Seems that we're being offered two choices – either the status quo (warehouses and Crime) or a Plan we don't like (Crystal City); there are more options; this is the threshold issue that must be addressed.

Why isn't the complete Plan posted on the website? Three chapters are missing; how can community comment on something they haven't even seen; urge postponement of public hearing.