

BRADDOCK METRO NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
TOWN MEETING SUMMARY
JUNE 11, 2007

MEETING FORMAT

The Town Meeting held June 11, 2007 at Jefferson Houston Elementary School began with introductory remarks by Faroll Hamer, Director of Planning and Zoning, and Robert Kramer, President of Kramer & Associates. More than 80 participants then split into five breakout groups to discuss their priorities for the Braddock community. Each of the breakout groups designated a reporter who then provided a summary of the group discussion and resulting priorities for the benefit of the entire large group.

BREAKOUT GROUP COMMENTS AND REPORT

During each breakout group session a “running list” of priorities for change was created to reflect the suggestions made by the participants. Each attendee then placed a green, yellow and red dot by the priorities they felt were the most important. For the purpose of these meeting notes, and in order to reflect the cumulative priority level that the community members assigned to the listed priorities for change numeric values were assigned (5, 3, and 1 points) to the green, yellow, and red dots, respectively. This was done simply to give a sense of the value placed by the meeting participants on community priorities – and does not represent a scientific or statistical analysis. Priorities that did not receive a dot are indicated by a non-numeric bullet.

GROUP 1

QUESTION 1: LOOKING OUT 5-10 YEARS, DO YOU PREFER:

Status Quo: 0

Change (with Qualifications): 15

QUESTION 2: (N/A)

QUESTION 3: FAVOR CHANGE – TOP 3 PRIORITIES

<u>Pts</u>	<u>Priority</u>
21	decentralize public housing
21	concentrate on townhomes vs. condos
13	increased density (particularly around/near metro station)
11	parks – pocket parks in any new development
11	public art
11	density that does not dwarf existing SF homes
7	don't combine commercial/office/transportation at the Metro station –spread retail down Madison/Montgomery
6	outward looking community-serving parks, attractive community
6	transition densities
5	strong tax base
5	transportation plan to address poor circulation and consider wider streets
5	mixed use – office and retail
5	walkability
4	safety

GROUP 1, CONTINUED

- 1 include properties on west side of tracks – 7-11 property
- 1 grocery store
- 1 retail cluster, similar to Slaters
- 1 community serving retail (hardware)
- regional throughput improvement
- Andrew Adkins as park
- preserve greenspace at 1261 Madison
- maximum height limit of 3 stories
- maintain heights along block face
- build-up, develop at similar densities to Potomac Yard
- connect pedestrian and bicycle ways
- open space
- more significant setbacks for wider sidewalks and more green

QUESTION 4: GREATEST CHALLENGES TO ACCOMPLISHING YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES

- How to maintain economic activity in 9-5 hours (achieve 16 hour retail)
- Community and developer negotiation – working together
- Political will
- Transportation and density
- How much density can we handle
- How much density to we need to support what we want
- Getting people to change their habits of how they get around
- Accomplishing decentralized public housing especially within timeframe of Plan (address Resolution 830)
- City needs to ensure a transparent process to give the community confidence in the process, and an opportunity to be heard
- Concern that decisions will be made for the area rather than the community being able to shape the decision
- Through traffic – should put more friction – need alternatives to Route 1
- Economics of goals (open space, retail, and relocating public housing)

GROUP 2

QUESTION 1: LOOKING OUT 5-10 YEARS, DO YOU PREFER:

Status Quo: 0

Change: 17

QUESTION 2: N/A

QUESTION 3: FAVOR CHANGE – TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Pts Priority

- | | |
|----|--|
| 20 | do not allow any more density than the street infrastructure will support - TRAFFIC |
| 15 | height limitations |
| 13 | walkable, safe neighborhood |
| 10 | allow greater heights to achieve setbacks, open space |
| 10 | livable community: devt. should be people-scaled with appropriate setbacks:16-18ft |
| 8 | provide affordable housing |
| 7 | mixed use – work, live and play |
| 7 | open space |
| 6 | focus density near Metro |
| 6 | provide a variety of housing choices |
| 6 | redevelopment of industrial properties |
| 6 | recognition (physically) of the history of the area as change occurs |
| 6 | redistribution of benefits from developer back into Parker-Gray |
| 5 | redefine (go back to) the original Old Town Alexandria |
| 5 | character and density consistent with Old Town |
| 4 | preserve vistas and landmarks – view to Masonic temple, Washington monument |
| 4 | manage traffic and parking demand (flexible, creative incentives for transit, carshare, etc) |
| 3 | ensure new development is consistent with the fabric of the existing community |
| 3 | increase the required parking for new devt |
| 3 | ensure adequate parking for small biz customers |
| 2 | streetscape standards (sidewalk width, setbacks, utility poles removed, paving materials) |
| 1 | consistency of streetscape |
| 1 | retail focused street |
| 1 | remove specific reference to currently proposed developments in Plan, or use disclaimer |
| 1 | do not provide residents of new devts with on street parking stickers |
| • | improve access to Metro station for pedestrians |

QUESTION 4: GREATEST CHALLENGES TO ACCOMPLISHING YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES:

- The excessive density and height allowed in the '92 SAP
- Already approved high-density projects
- Gaining support and political will of planning commission and city council
- Using development as a tool to positively shape neighborhood
- Economics: ensuring a big enough tax base to support vision/amenities
- Comprehensive traffic study
- A better balance of uses – not all residential
- High development pressure near Metro station
- Overcoming the notion that high density is necessary to achieve amenities

GROUP 2, CONTINUED

- Impact of new development on existing public housing
- Identifying appropriate amenities to ensure functioning urbanism
- Balancing existing housing with new development
- Economics: Developer profitability

GROUP 3

QUESTION 1: LOOKING OUT 5-10 YEARS, DO YOU PREFER:

Status Quo: 4

Change (with Qualifications): 10

QUESTION 2: FAVOR STATUS QUO – 3 REASONS FOR AS LITTLE CHANGE AS POSSIBLE

- retain character, charm – fit in with existing bldgs, low (4-5 story) diversity of look, residential feel
- historic/residential, retail service (local auto shop)
- maintain traffic at current levels
- keep the broad diversity of people
- value affordable housing

QUESTION 3: FAVOR CHANGE – TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Pts Priority

- | | |
|----|--|
| 13 | respect for Parker-Gray – tax benefits, retain historic elements |
| 13 | balance green space and historic quality with development |
| 13 | need for neighborhood retail – grocery, gym, deli, drugstore, restaurants |
| 9 | green space – meaningful and consolidated - avoid “canyons” |
| 9 | incentivize builders to create community amenities - quality archit., green buildings |
| 9 | maximize Metro economic potential ridership |
| 9 | green space – to balance image of City as transit hub, historic city, commercial devt. |
| 6 | historic preservation |
| 5 | low rise residential and commercial |
| 5 | coordination of transportation and planning |
| 3 | streets with active pedestrian component |
| 3 | remove criminal elements – prostitution, drugs, registered sex offenders |
| | • convert public housing to tax generating housing |
| | • provide amenities, trash cans, cleanup, repairs |

QUESTION 4: GREATEST CHALLENGES TO ACCOMPLISHING YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES

- Greedy developers vs. those for quality of life/good for the City
- Develop a long term plan for Metro/transit hub
- Lack of staff across all departments
- Divided nature of city planning process and neighborhoods (Del Ray, Rosemont, Braddock, Potomac Yard)
- Width of streets - new setback ratio needed
- Clear incentives to developers
- Traffic
- Coordinate P&Z and T&ES
- Tax base vs. Quality of life

GROUP 4

QUESTION 1: LOOKING OUT 5-10 YEARS, DO YOU PREFER:

Status Quo: 1

Change: 14

QUESTION 2: FAVOR STATUS QUO – 3 REASONS FOR AS LITTLE CHANGE AS POSSIBLE

- issues associated with traffic demand
- cost of infrastructure to City and ability of City to meet cost
- historic preservation

QUESTION 3: FAVOR CHANGE – TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Pts	Priority
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- | | |
|----|--|
| 19 | need for intermodal transit system, including BRT |
| 13 | reduce density of public housing |
| 13 | expansion of tax base |
| 12 | complete community – including housing, services, jobs, done with great streets, design |
| 11 | consider area 360 degrees around Metro – comprehensive station area planning |
| 8 | match transit/transportation with density |
| 8 | pedestrian safety (lighting, crime reduction) |
| 7 | historic preservation/transit – transit should be designed to protect historic resources |
| 7 | consider city-wide plan – not just small area plan |
| 7 | good open space (appropriate, safe, and consolidated) |
| 5 | protect long-term families |
| 3 | neighborhood oriented retail – grocery store |
| | • Parker-Gray status on National Historic Register, and the info that comes from it |
| | • good pedestrian linkages (esp. Route 1) |

QUESTION 4: GREATEST CHALLENGES TO ACCOMPLISHING YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES

(Group 4 ran out of time and did not discuss this question)

GROUP 5

QUESTION 1: LOOKING OUT 5-10 YEARS, DO YOU PREFER:

Status Quo: 0

Change: 16

QUESTION 2: N/A

QUESTION 3: FAVOR CHANGE – TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Pts Priority

- | | |
|----|--|
| 16 | good mixed use growth around metro |
| 15 | preserve character of the neighborhood |
| 14 | knit together the community |
| 10 | more density at Metro |
| 10 | decentralize public housing while maintaining diversity |
| 10 | good atmosphere |
| 10 | focal points for the community that pull people together |
| 6 | address crime and safety |
| 6 | age diversity |
| 5 | not too much density |
| 5 | keep neighborhood feel |
| 5 | parks |
| 4 | economics – tax base |
| 3 | preserve diversity in community |
| 3 | families |
| 3 | no Patent and Trade Office (PTO) at Braddock |
| 2 | manage increased traffic |
| 2 | contemporary architecture |
| 1 | need more activity around Metro |
| 1 | coffee shops |
| 1 | maintain character of Parker-Gray |
| 1 | change for betterment of entire City |
| • | preserve small town feel |
| • | keep building heights respectful of area |
| • | if retail oriented development, it has to come first |
| • | intersection improvements to Braddock and West |
| • | Metro stop usage |
| • | manage increased parking pressure |
| • | maintain diversity in people |
| • | preserve integrity of community |
| • | reflect historic character of the neighborhood |
| • | architectural character |
| • | keep post office |

QUESTION 4: GREATEST CHALLENGES TO ACCOMPLISHING YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES

(Group 5 ran out of time and did not discuss this question)

GROUP SUMMARIES

Following is a summary of the reports presented to the large group by the reporter from each of the five small discussion groups.

Group 1:

- Change vs Status Quo: This group wanted to be very clear that while change was supported (there were no votes for status quo), any change had specific conditions and issues that must be addressed.
- Top Priorities for Change: parks – outward looking “community” parks; density, townhomes vs. condos, decentralized public housing, transportation, and considering that increased density vs. dwarfing smaller homes.
- Major Challenges: timeframe for decentralizing the public housing as compared to creating the Plan; making sure that the City listens to the community for plan development (community wants to be heard and concerns considered); thru-traffic on Route 1; economics and how to achieve vital 16 hr retail; ensuring that developers and community work together – currently not enough negotiation, political will regarding transportation and economics of the area.

Group 2:

- Change vs. Status Quo: No group members voted for “status quo”, but any change would have contingencies.
- Top Priorities for Change: no more density than what the current infrastructure (streets) can support, limitations on height, and creating a walkable, safe, livable community. Other issues were: redevelopment of industrial sites, consideration of historic nature/character of area, consistent streetscape, redistribution of development benefits (to the Parker-Gray community), density near Metro, affordable housing, open space – including some achieved through setbacks, meeting traffic and parking demands.
- Major Challenges: allowed density and height from 1992 plan, already approved high-density projects, Council/Commission support, development to positively shape the neighborhood, traffic study, balance of uses, impact on public housing, economics of profit (to developers and City vs. the community), and amenities – existing and proposed.

Group 3:

- Change vs. Status Quo: The group was split between people who wanted change (10) and those who wanted status quo (4). They indicated the question was too general to be useful.
- Top Priorities for Change: retail (neighborhood serving commercial), historic preservation, green space/parks that enhance quality of life. Other issues were: redevelopment of public housing, reduction of crime, and maximizing the use of Metro.
- Major Challenges: coordination of City processes (e.g., planning and transportation), clear incentives for developers to provide community benefits, promote historic preservation, existing width of streets, trade off between the tax base and the quality of life for area residents. Emphasized that P&Z and T&ES needed to coordinate their planning efforts – currently disparate planning processes on parallel tracks.

Group 4:

- Change vs. Status Quo: One member of the group was for “status quo” due to traffic and associated cost of necessary infrastructure, historic preservation.
- Top Priorities for Change: historic preservation in Parker-Gray, inter-modal transit, neighborhood serving commercial, green/open space, pedestrian safety- address lighting/crime, match transit to density, reduce public housing concentration in Parker-Gray. The group emphasized that the plan should be city-wide, not small area focused and should address 360 degrees around Braddock Metro. Other priorities included: high quality design, protection of long term community members, mixed use, integration of planning with transit planning, and tax base expansion.
- Major Challenges: not discussed.

Group 5:

- Change vs. Status Quo: All members of the group were for “change” – but specified “good change” (many contingencies).
- Top Priorities for Change: preservation of diversity of age, race and income in the area; maintain the character of the neighborhood; provide good mixed use around the Metro, improve walkability with a focus on quality open space and retail, and safety.
- Major Challenges: not discussed.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Subsequent to the group summaries, meeting participants posed questions regarding accountability and methodology for the future interviews. How would the interviewees be selected? Who was selecting them? How will the community be represented? Why were other citizens (outside of the plan area) being included? The questions were answered by Ms. Hamer and Mr. Kramer.