

General Remarks of the EDA on the BCTF and its Manifestation through the Comp Plan Presented to the 2008 James City County Comp Plan Steering Committee January 20, 2009

The EDA's primary focus since the acceptance of the BCTF recommendations by the BOS has been to steward the advancement and implementation of the various recommendations through a wide variety of means and measures. The Comp Plan is one of the most appropriate vehicles to advance many of the BCTF recommendations and we were particularly encouraged by the decision at a previous SC meeting to incorporate the full BCTF report into the Comp Plan, though how precisely that will be done appears to remain under consideration.

We submit that merely attaching the report as an appendix or attachment to the Comp Plan is not the most effective method of incorporating such important principals in a dynamic and wide-ranging document that is the Comp Plan. Rather, we believe that where distinct opportunities to advance specific recommendations present themselves, explicit language in the Comp Plan should be included to reference the recommendation and to signal the many businesses, citizens and County staff that this policy, that land use designation, or this transportation improvement is intended to advance the County's sincere efforts to enhance the business climate of JCC. In so doing, the variety of efforts that will ultimately diversify the County's tax base, expand employment opportunities in the County and sustain the fiscal and economic foundation of the County will be explained in that context.

Those BCTF recommendations which have land use implications and which are therefore particularly suited to specific inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- 1. Reduce the number of uses that require Special Use Permits.**
 - a. This is clearly a land use matter and needs to be addressed here.
 - b. Modest progress was made in adopting selected staff recommendations to switch certain SUP uses to by-right uses, but subsequent PC inaction on other Staff recommendations for SUP changes specifically referenced the need for the Comp Plan to address these issues. Specifically, the context within which larger changes to the overall SUP ordinance and its trigger mechanisms are considered was understood to be part of the Comp Plan update process.
 - c. How is that being addressed directly through the Comp Plan process?
 - d. Who are the stakeholders that are being invited to contribute to the discussion?
 - e. What detailed discussions are taking place to address specific uses, the types of performance standards that will be needed to ensure community compatibility and acceptance and the process and timing for ordinance changes needed to complete the satisfaction of the BCTF recommendation?

- 2. Identify areas in the County suitable for economic development potential, and install infrastructure to target preferred businesses; master plan a business/industrial park to include regional stormwater management basin.**
 - a. Earlier this summer, the EDA advanced to Staff a list of properties and areas that we believed held the greatest promise for viable economic development in the mid- and long-term.
 - b. In many instances, current zoning and or land use designation is not supportive of the types of economic development the County has expressed an interest in having within

its borders. Reference BCTF matrix of Level 1, 2 and 3 businesses and desirable attributes.

- c. The BCTF recognized a fundamental concept in this recommendation, and that is that jurisdictions who want to be successful in an increasingly competitive economic development arena must invest in targeted infrastructure to jump start their prospective economic engines by making their site more attractive financially and functionally and temporally than the competition.

3. Establish one or more Research & Technology Zones with appropriate incentives as allowed by State legislation.

- a. We are prepared to share our thoughts on viable locations and to share some research on the range of incentives that have been deployed in Virginia's R&T zones to date.
- b. The Comp Plan should define the boundaries of the zone or zones and establish the broad framework for determining business eligibility. More refined effort for specific language, incentives, review of return on investment considerations and specific ordinance language will follow the Comp Plan and be informed by it.

4. "Landbank" (comprehensive plan area designations, site acquisitions, options to purchase, and public/private partnerships) additional land for James City County's economic development future. Identify and preserve, through a variety of methods, key sites for future economic development opportunities.

- a. To grow or not to grow or how to grow, these seem to be the overarching questions that characterize the entire Comp Plan process.
- b. To not grow is not an option. Growth pressures in our area will not diminish long term, for reasons we can all appreciate and understand. And given this recent economic downturn and fiscal malaise, it has become apparent again to all who have forgotten how vital quality growth is to the economic sustainability of a community. To maintain a healthy fiscal balance and affordable property tax rates for residents, continued economic development is essential.
- c. Recognizing that the decisions made over the next few years beginning with this Comp Plan update will in large part determine the type of community we will be 10, 20 or 30 years from now and taking aggressive steps now to plan for our economic future by designating lands for economic development and supporting uses, such as workforce housing and tourism/entertainment venues, is critical to ensuring that opportunities are not lost to continued residential sprawl.

5. Encourage development of Class A & B space for office-based employers in mixed-use areas and other commercial areas.

- a. This recommendation really speaks for itself, but the harder questions are:
- b. What existing vacant land exists for this use and how much office will that yield?
- c. What lands can and should be added to the inventory, and what additional yield will that produce?
- d. What encouragement can the Comp Plan provide to bring about future Class A office development and the tax base and quality jobs that it facilitates?

6. Increase and expand workforce housing options, including ownership opportunities through favorable zoning, incentives, and clear public policies by supporting Comprehensive Plan.

- a. We recognize that the housing component will address many of the issues involved in this recommendation.
- b. But there are land use considerations to be sure, and this section of the Comp Plan is a good place to start the analysis.
- c. What should be the benchmark objective for workforce housing quantity?
- d. What proportion should be in mixed cost communities and what proportion should be included in mixed use areas?
- e. How do we increase and expand workforce housing options, where should favorable zoning be placed, when and how should it be effected (consistency zoning?) and what clear public policies will be needed to bring this about?

7. Enhance transportation through the Peninsula to the Ports to promote commerce and economy.

- a. What options for enhanced transportation to the Ports exist?
- b. What opportunities exist for new or expanded rail sidings for industrial enterprises?
- c. What planning needs to take place now to ensure that there will be future opportunities for passenger rail options like commuter rail, light rail and high speed rail?
- d. Are there areas of the County suitable and potentially available for barge traffic dockage and land-based container management facilities?
- e. What opportunities exist to expand I-64 and yet maintain the current forestal character of the medians? Is this a worthwhile objective? What impacts to existing state roads can be expected by a future widening of I-64 or the placement of tolls on the mainline of I-64 through the County, as some have suggested is being considered in Richmond?

Ladies and gentlemen of the Steering Committee, these are no easy tasks. The future of this great County depends significantly on how you manage the tremendous volume of information, material and viewpoints that are this Comp Plan process. The EDA encourages you to embrace the challenge before you, take the time you need to do the job right, accept the responsibility which is yours to address the tough issues as part of this process, not a future as of yet undetermined process, advance recommendations that will have long-term benefits for the County and please accept the help of organizations who offer the experience, expertise and understanding to assist in working through the more vexing issues before you.