

Response to Steering Committee Questions on Land Use Applications: Part III

LU-0037-2008 7605 Croaker Road

The following information has been provided by the applicant:

“The question came up at last week's Steering Committee meeting about the number of developable acres in this parcel and the potential size of any commercial development. While no detailed engineering has been done, we estimate there is approximately five developable acres that could support no more than 40,000 to 45,000 square feet of development.”

Staff #5 Five Forks Intersection

The Primary Principles for Five Forks have been posted in the Materials section of the website. (The Business Climate Task Force report, which came up under general conversation, has also been posted.)

LU-0021-2008 Hill Pleasant Farm

1. At the Steering Committee's request, the applicant forwarded possible Mixed Use language to staff and the Committee on January 19, 2009. Staff suggests that a more specific idea of the recommended proportions of the different uses suggested in the language (office, retail, entertainment, residential) would help guide development in a more predictable and balanced way, should the Committee be inclined to recommend the designation change. Most Mixed Use language specifies the recommended primary and secondary uses.

In addition, staff would respectfully offer the Committee some thoughts in relation to the idea of a “rail transit node” as mentioned in the submitted language. One possible type of rail transit node is a light rail stop. In order to be cost-feasible, light rail lines generally require a supporting residential density that is much higher than densities that have been built in James City County in the past, from 18 to 20 dwelling units per acre or more as an average over the length of the light rail system. Newport News had recently submitted an application for federal funding for a light rail project. Unfortunately, Newport News did not receive federal funding for this project due to having development densities that were too low to be competitive with applications submitted by other cities and localities. Mixed use is JCC's most intense designation in terms of recommended residential densities and intensities of commercial development. As a comparison, one of the County's most intense mixed use areas, the portion of New Town east of 199, has a maximum approved density of between 3 and 5.3 dwelling units per acre. Below is one picture of a development with a density in the range of what would likely be needed to support light rail: should the Committee wish to look at other possibilities, staff would recommend the website “Visualizing Density” <http://www.lincolnst.edu/subcenters/visualizing-density/gallery/index.aspx>, which has a search feature and images of different density developments from around the U.S. On a related note, in staff's opinion, a switch to this type of development pattern makes sense from a planning standpoint only when it is recognized that the developed areas associated with light rail stops (there would need to be more than one in order for there to be an actual light rail

system) are where growth must truly be focused, and a commitment is made to adjust the development expectations for other portions of the County.



Picture of Dorchester, MA: 18.4 dwelling units per acre

Another type of “rail transit node” might be a commuter rail stop. Commuter rail can be supported by lower residential densities, but is generally based on the idea that commuters are traveling to a central business district with truly substantial amounts of office and other commercial square footage (staff has reviewed documents suggesting square footages in the hundreds of millions are needed).

Staff continues to recommend that the designation not be changed at this time, as outlined in the staff report.

2. The Committee had a question about the impacts or implications JCSA would see in including this area inside the Primary Service Area. As stated previously, this area was not planned for by JCSA in developing water needs projections. The projections for the County’s future water supply needs were based on the existing Comprehensive Plan designations and Primary Service Area line. As long as the County’s rate of growth does not increase overall (which is difficult to ensure), there should be no negative impact on the ability of the Authority to follow their current supply plans. Over the long term, if more land is designated for development, it clearly follows that more water would be needed. However, the effects on specific contracts and permits of the increased need generated by this particular proposed development are not known and would likely be outside JCSA’s reasonable planning horizon. With regard to infrastructure, it should be noted that the amount of infrastructure needed to serve a development of this scale would be significant, and that there would be a cost associated with

JCSA maintenance. The cost of maintaining lines and other facilities is higher if there are fewer customers over a wider area of infrastructure.

3. The Committee had a question about whether this area could become a Technology Zone or an Enterprise Zone. Regarding the idea of a Technology Zone, staff has spoken with Office of Economic Development staff and a representative of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. State code sections 58.1-3245.12 and 58.1-3850 discuss Technology Zones in Virginia. The state code allows localities to establish Technology Zones by ordinance – there is not a state level application process. The state code provides for localities to have tax incentives and regulatory flexibility in these zones, however, there are no state incentives associated with these zones. Regarding the idea of an Enterprise Zone, the County currently has an Enterprise Zone in Grove, and it is very unlikely that another Enterprise Zone would be approved elsewhere in the County, or that there would be the ability to transfer the zone from Grove to the Hill Pleasant Farm area, since existing infrastructure already serves the zone in Grove.

Staff #9 Toano Moderate Density Residential

Information in response to Mr. Krapf's questions has been posted on the blog.

LU#s 17, 26, and 27 Ironbound Commercial

A question from Ms. Leverenz was posted as follows: "Staff noted that this parcel is not included in the Powhatan master plan. Could it/would it be appropriate to add it to the Windsor Meade Mixed Use area, across the street?"

Windsor Meade Marketplace, which is across the street from this parcel, is part of the New Town master planned area. The Windsor Meade Marketplace is Section 11 of New Town, with Sections 12 and 13 behind it along Windsor Meade way. The New Town Mixed Use area has its own specific description in the Comprehensive Plan. The language includes the idea that this area should be "governed by a detailed Master Plan which provides guidelines for street, building, and open space design, and construction which complements the scale, architecture, and urban pattern found in the City of Williamsburg." Given that this language would likely not be a good match for the particular circumstances of the parcels that are the subject of this application, staff would not recommend applying this language to them. If the Steering Committee felt Mixed Use were appropriate, alternative language would likely be needed.

Staff #10: Hazelwood Holdings

During discussion of this Land Use Application, the Steering Committee noted investigating the inclusion of Upper County Park in the Primary Service Area expansion. The park is currently served by a central well and septic system, both of which were recently upgraded and are in good working condition. The nearest water and sewer lines are located on Barhamsville Road at the Michelle Point development, approximately 7,500 feet away from the park. The JCSA does not presently have plans or funding to

extend these lines and noted that the extension would likely fall to a private development project. Upper County Park is master planned for relatively low intensity uses (such as picnic shelters, sand volleyball court, trails, and an outdoor swimming pool) and Parks and Recreation does not currently have plans to extensively expand the amenities offered at the park. As a result, there is not enough public benefit to including Upper County Park in the PSA during this Comprehensive Plan update.