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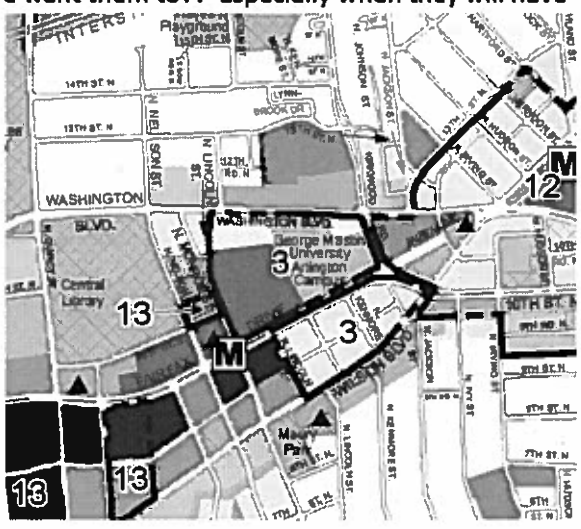
Anthony Fusarelli

From: Albert Lewis [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 11:44 AM
To: Anthony Fusarelli
Cc: Ballston Virginia Square Civic Association; Steffanie J Lewis
Subject: RE: LRPC Meeting July 25th / Follow-up Comments
Attachments: CitiScapes.pdf; CitiScapes2.pdf

Categories: Email Response Needed

At the July 25th meeting, I didn't hear or see any good argument that suggests a need for a change in the GLUP. The community benefits are what?

YMCA: We know the YMCA has said they are not planning to move, but . . . Sure, it would be nice to have a few more amenities – a quiet window air conditioner for \$250 instead of a noisy fan — but are 1,000's of new members going to flock to, and pay more fees to a "state of the art" YMCA? And would we want them to?? Especially when they will have to cut back on tennis courts and try to shrink into underground parking for buses, inimical to any short-term visitors, and compete with a bunch of apartment dwellers? (One current Y user from Dawson Terrace advised her distaste and likely stop for visiting the Y if she had to park underground). We will lose the outdoor pool, adventure areas, open spaces, the well-built tennis court / racquet court buildings, and easy parking. And suddenly the Y will become financially viable??



AMERICAN LEGION PROPERTY: The American Legion proposal is about the same – gone would be the open space where they can park a canon and display the American flag, parking where a visitor can drop in to the Legion for a brief visit, and the trees that surround the property --- maybe some minimal affordable housing for non-vets will provide a windfall to an apparently shrinking organization that seems to claim that it can't fund its Sunday breakfasts as it is and wants \$ to perpetuate its glory regardless of the neighborhood impact. The proposal would ultimately surround the Balls Family Burial Ground with big apartments which are inconsistent with either the R-5 properties adjacent, or Service Commercial area along Washington Blvd.

There are other parts of the community which have already been identified and are MUCH BETTER for affordable housing at the density proposed. We need more affordable housing of the single-family R-5 types for those with families who want to be near school property, and the backside of the Legion property is suited and designated by the GLUP for that. Why, other than "windfall bucks" is there any reason to change the GLUP? Perhaps if there was a creative proposal for disabled vets which could fit in with the R-5 and Service Commercial at much lower density, then a change could be contemplated, the change asked for is too much.

The Loss of SERVICE COMMERCIAL: Defined as "Personal and business services. Generally, one to four stories."

This element, partially identified by Nancy in one of her comments is that a common element in all the scenarios, applications and proposals is the loss of "Service Commercial" along the neighborhood section of Washington Blvd. All the projects salivate over a change to mostly "Medium Office Apartment Hotel" which ups the height limits and allows significant densities. In the VA SQ Sector Plan, the South Edge of Wilson Blvd is designated Service Commercial and requires limited height and setbacks greater than what is proposed for the transition to residential. In addition, the plan

identified with our Washington Blvd block for "REVITALIZATION" which appears to mean Service Commercial transitioning to Residential. The purpose of "Revitalization" is to produce more active commercial activity, increasing jobs and community value. I don't think anyone intended "revitalization" to mean "increased urbanization" which renders the block less vital, more ominous, and street unfriendly.

The VA SQ Site Specific plan states that :

4. Washington Boulevard [on this block] should evoke a commercial character and encourage pedestrian circulation. Pedestrian crosswalks across Washington Boulevard should be installed to permit safe pedestrian circulation between the Core Area and the commercial node along the north edge of this street.

What "Commercial Node" if the whole Washington BLVD (North Side) block is Apartment / Office / Hotel? The Virginia Square shopping will be effectively reduced to Clarendon and Wilson Blvd. The Washington Blvd component but for the Giant will be largely lost.

Another recommendation of the VA SQ Sector plan is: "Maintain the existing "Low" Residential (11-15 du/ac) GLUP designation for properties south of Washington Boulevard, west of North Monroe Street, and east of North Nelson Street." This is NOT consistent with a change north of Washington Blvd, two blocks away, to changing the neighborhood to something different.

The 1983 battle to save the Giant grocery store is illustrative of the problem we face. The following is from the final report:

The argument that a grocery store is "impractical" adjacent to a Metro station is essentially identical to the argument that residential development is impractical in such a location. It says that such areas should be reserved for their "highest and best", i.e., most profitable, use; which is, and is likely always to be office development. This is a negation of the whole concept and purpose of land use planning. If our concerns were only for property values and potential returns from various possible types of development, we would need no elaborate land use plan. We could much more simply rely upon the economic market to determine the types and locations of development. We go through these elaborate public planning processes instead to insure that other values, equally real but perhaps less quantifiable than economic returns, will be taken into account. These values include the need to preserve existing residential areas, provide for future high density residential development near Metro, and insure the services and facilities that are essential if Arlington is to remain a viable place to live. A grocery store may be prosaic; but it is absolutely essential for life in an urban area such as that projected for Virginia Square.

The services provided by the small retail stores, Rocklands Barbeque, the dry cleaners, the departing Casual Adventure, Pham's Auto, and others give the block its useful character, promotes neighborhood services and pedestrian access. Our local neighbor services, as with the local grocery store, the "highest and best" use of land in land use planning is not by rule the most profitable, but that which meets the community needs and character. Washington Boulevard should not be Lee Highway, Ballston or Rosslyn. It should be Service Commercial in this area to serve the needs of the community, and provide the correct transition (height and access) to the R-5 residential corridor.

Washington Blvd as a Through / Service Commercial Street: Between Clarendon and Glebe Road, Washington Boulevard has been a through street, accommodating volumes of traffic (which may increase with the I-66 toll) which are not consistent with urban high-rise office/hotel/residential, which is what is proposed for the bulk of the property. To be consistent, Washington Boulevard would need to be widened, on-street parking would need to be on both sides of the street to accommodate the higher visitor traffic to residences in the higher density. Between Glebe and Quincy, there is no such on-street parking because parking needs are handled by each individual residence, or on the interior streets which are not high density. Most of the segment between Route 50 and Pershing does not have on-street parking for same reason. When the boulevard enters high-rise dense areas, on-street parking is a necessity, and between 10th and Clarendon, a part of the roadscape. Along the lower parts of Clarendon and Wilson, on-street parking is a necessity for the higher densities, but even there, off street above ground parking is a part of the neighborhood character, much like the Washington Blvd Block at risk. Would anybody suggest that losing the 1700 block of Wilson to Office/Residential/Hotel would be a benefit to the community? Or that Westover or Clarendon , Rhodeside Grill or Il Radicchio should all be elevated to 7-story high rises with underground parking?

While Washington is a through commuter street, it is NOT Lee Highway which is four+ lanes in many places and with significant off-street parking. Cramming developments onto Washington Boulevard which might be suitable for Lee Highway or downtown Ballston or Rosslyn is NOT consistent with the GLUP nor the Washington Boulevard corridor, mostly traversing low residential with service commercial blocks.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES NOT FOLLOWED: The Purpose of a GLUP is to set an overview of what is appropriate for the area. By eliminating Service Commercial and the Semi-Public areas from the north side of Washington Blvd, an area which is normally low residential elsewhere along the route, neighborhood services and amenities are largely wiped out in an area where they have traditionally and usefully been. The low residential character of the neighborhood would be irrevocably changed (not "preserved") by large apartment / office complexes on this site, and traffic dramatically worsened both for through commuters and local residents. The transition area would be inappropriately pushed over the Washington Blvd line against the one through low residential street (13th) which until now has been buffered and serves as a bicycle / pedestrian corridor from the low residential area east of Kirkwood though to Washington & Lee High School.

I have prepared to visual aids attached to show the probable visual impact of the proposed changes to the cityscape along Washington Boulevard, as currently exists, and what it may look like. Attachment One shows current cityscapes that will be eliminated if development as proposed and the GLUP changed. Attachment Two shows the dramatic difference between the visual impact of high-rise development and what is Service Commercial which has Arlington village character and vitality.

A short concrete urban canyon eliminating Service Commercial is NOT what the GLUP currently contemplates, and a change to allow such is not in the interests of the community, the Virginia Square Sector plan, or the Guiding Principles that the LPRC has stated.

Thanks for your work and consideration of these comments.

Albert Z Lewis Jr. / Steffanie J. Lewis
3511 North 13th St Arlington VA 22201



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August 11, 2017

Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., AICP
Principal Planner
Department of Community Planning, Housing & Development
Planning Division
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Sale of YMCA National Capital Facility

Dear Mr. Fusarelli,

The YMCA of Metropolitan Washington deeply values its work and relationships with all Arlington County stakeholders toward achieving the development of a new YMCA. We look forward to crowning this over six-decade relationship with a new facility to help individuals, youth and families and the Arlington community.

Over the course of the Washington-Kirkwood GLUP Study, a false narrative has been perpetuated relating to the 2016 sale of the YMCA's National Capital facility located on Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. in the Central Business District ("CBD") of downtown Washington, DC. The false and misleading narrative was repeated again at the last Long Range Planning Committee meeting and we felt it was time to correct and stop this ongoing dissemination of misinformation for the public record. Specifically, it has been stated that "the YMCA intends to re-plan and rezone its Arlington site and then sell it to a developer, just like they did at the National Capital facility." The YMCA strongly disputes this statement and for the record, offers the following facts related to the circumstances and motivations for the sale of its National Capital facility. This statement also provides a revealing comparison of the District of Columbia YMCA circumstances with the Arlington County YMCA facility.

Zoning History

From a zoning perspective, the National Capital facility property was zoned to the SP District when it was first acquired by the YMCA in the mid-1970s. In 1976, the YMCA obtained BZA approval for a special exception and variance to simply allow for health club uses (since the



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zoning regulations at the time did not include site programming similar to YMCA uses) and for parking relief, which has been a common request in the CBD and other dense neighborhoods in Washington. Both requests were permitted through the existing, underlying zoning district. The SP District remained unchanged by the YMCA and continues to be unchanged by the new owner. The District of Columbia had broadly amended its Zoning District several times since the YMCA owned its National Capital facility property, which resulted in a change in zoning of the property from the SP District to the SP-1 District, and most recently, from the SP-1 District to the MU-15 District. None of these zoning changes, instituted solely by the District government, had any material effect on the YMCA's property nor its market value, primarily because of the established historic character of the immediate surrounds of Dupont Circle which includes restrictive height limits, among other restrictions (the National Capital property was also subject to the "Dupont Circle" overlay district now incorporated into the MU-15 District regulations). As such, **the zoning designation of the National Capital facility property has not changed with the change of ownership. There was no up-zoning that instigated a sale of the property.** The narrative that the YMCA up-zoned this property and sold it for some kind of windfall is absolutely untrue and incorrect which can be easily affirmed through the existing public records.

Change in Demographics

As stated above, since the mid-1970's, the YMCA had owned and operated a health and wellness facility branch that included a swimming facility, basketball courts, indoor running track, squash and racquet ball courts, etc. at the National Capital facility location, which again is in the CBD, south of Dupont Circle. Over the years, the facility had experienced a **substantial decline in membership** as the demographics of the District as a whole changed over time. As a result of this change in demographics of the area, demand for a non-profit, modest charitable facility decreased to the point where there was not enough membership demand to continue to support the facility. There was also an increase in competition resulting from the significant growth in higher-end "like service providers" in the downtown CBD. These combined macro-demographic changes essentially put the National Capital facility out of business. In order to effectively compete with similar service providers, the YMCA Board of Directors examined if expansion of the branch was possible. However, the facility footprint was severely restricted because of the lack of any available land area beyond the building's outer walls, as well as the restrictive zoning mentioned above. Other urban YMCA's, in areas also experiencing similar demographic shifts, have seen similar declines in revenues generated from membership fees



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during this time. This detrimental situation was particularly acute at the National Capital facility location.

A Painfully Difficult Decision

Over the course of ten years, the all-volunteer YMCA Board of Directors worked diligently with our Executive Staff and real estate consultants in examining several options to revitalize and/or redevelop the National Capital facility. However, with the aging infrastructure and mounting losses incurred at the facility, the only possible options were cost prohibitive and financially infeasible. Following the redevelopment of our Anthony Bowen YMCA branch facility located at 1325 W Street NW, a little over one (1) mile away from the National Capital facility, the Board of Directors made the difficult decision to sell the National Capital branch. National Capital members were invited to transfer their membership to the Anthony Bowen facility at a reduced rate, and approximately one-third of the remaining National Capital membership did so. The National Capital sale was a fee-simple transaction completed without a rezoning, comprehensive plan change, or subsidy from the District of Columbia. Thus prior to the sale, the value of the property was not in any way increased nor derived through a rezoning or comprehensive plan change request. Although it was a tough decision that the YMCA Board arrived at with much deliberation, **the sale of the National Capital facility was necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington organization.** Ultimately, the timely sale of National Capital is helping to ensure that the YMCA is positioned to continue carrying out our mission to provide critical services to those community members most in need within the Metropolitan area.

Comparison with Arlington YMCA

In stark contrast to the unfortunate fate of the National Capital site, the Arlington YMCA enjoys a very different set of market and operational circumstances. The Arlington site does not have a decline in membership. In fact, a recently-performed growth projection study indicates that demand will increase substantially over the coming decades. Also in contrast to the National Capital facility, the Arlington County YMCA branch has a substantial amount of land onsite to expand the facility with an anticipated increase in demand for services in the broader community. Through the Washington-Kirkwood Special Land Use Study, the YMCA Arlington now has an opportunity to plan just such an expanded new facility along with the community through planning and zoning changes, unlike the National Capital property. Lastly,



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with regard to the National Capital site, the YMCA was able to create a new alternative location on YMCA owned land within a little over a mile of its National Capital location. This strategic redevelopment has allowed us to actually expand and continue serving the community in this neighborhood at the new Anthony Bowen facility. Compared to the existing Arlington branch site, it is highly unlikely the YMCA would ever be able to locate and/or afford as good of a site anywhere near its current Arlington County location.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. The YMCA strongly feels that it is very important to correct the false narrative and inaccurate statements that have been repeated throughout the planning process relating to its National Capital facility. We sincerely hope this letter will reinforce our previously expressed intent and commitment to strategically plan and achieve a new YMCA facility to operate for decades to come in Arlington at its current location.

Regards,

Keith Smith

YMCA Corporate Board Member, Chairman Emeritus

Cc: Elizabeth Gearin, Chair of Wash. Kirkwood LRPC Study
Erik Gutshall, Chair, Planning Commission
Robert J. Duffy, Director of Planning

Anthony Fusarelli

From: Bill Guyton [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2017 9:39 AM
To: Anthony Fusarelli
Cc: Christian Dorsey
Subject: Re: Washington/Kirkwood Special GLUP Study Plus - Project Web page
Categories: Email Response Needed

Anthony,

Thanks for sending his message and for the call today. As I mentioned, I was impressed by your presentation at the development meeting earlier this week. You were very professional and accommodating of differing views.

Here are a few additional comments, as discussed on the phone:

1. Informing neighbors: I had not received any past notices about the development plans. Now I am on your distribution list which is great. In order to inform other neighbors, I suggest possibly posting something on Kirkwood or Washington Blvd to inform those in the community about what is being planned.
2. Kirkwood Road: My main concerns are increased traffic flow from the new development and how to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. The median with mature trees along Kirkwood add great value to the community. We need this green space, especially since there will be buildings along both sides of Kirkwood between 13th and Wash Blvd. I hope that there will not be an expansion of lanes or the elimination of the median.
3. Building Height: I like how the building plans tapers down toward 13th Street. This is good. Of course, I am a strong supporter of shorter buildings that can be architecturally pleasing and consistent with the feel of the neighborhood. I appreciate you pointing out that the new construction will probably not exceed the height of the townhouses on the other side of Kirkwood.

Thanks again Anthony for taking the call and for your openness to hear from those in the neighborhood.

Regards,

Bill

On Wed, Jul 26, 2017 at 2:39 PM, Anthony Fusarelli <Afusarelli@arlingtonva.us> wrote:

Good afternoon:

Following up on several requests made at last night's Long Range Planning Committee meeting, this is simply a courtesy message providing a direct link to the project web page for this Special GLUP Study "Plus". Thank you

for your continued interest in this study, and we will follow up with future updates once a more specific schedule and timeline for the next steps in the process have been determined. Thank you.

<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/plans-studies/general-land-use-plan/special-study-washington-kirkwood/>

Respectfully,

Anthony

Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., AICP

Principal Planner

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