Long Range Planning Committee, Meeting Summary

September 25, 2019; 7-9:00pm
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Room C/D

Subject: Shirlington Special General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Study Plus

Planning Commission members in attendance: Nancy Iacomini (Chair of LRPC and Co-Chair of this Study), Elizabeth Gearin (Co-Chair of this Study), Nia Bagley, James Schroll, Jim Lantelme, Elizabeth Morton, Jane Siegel, Sara Steinberger.

Staff members in attendance: Margaret Rhodes, Kelsey Steffen, Angelina Jones, Laura Shaub, Kris Krider, Gale Koritansky.

Others in attendance: Lisa Delaney, Jason Daisey, Robin Stombler, Robin Kogelnik, Ashwini Halkude, Amanda Esposito, Doug Krietemeyer, Hannah Morrison, Tina Worden, Matt Weinstein, Mike Van Atta, Ginny Farris, Ellie McCann, Dan Corwin, Christine Stanley, Dean Foster, Peter Pizer, Alysia Yi, Michelle Brydges, Hrag Tomassian, Clinton Mazkell, Jay Brinson,

Welcome

- Welcome and opening remarks provided by LRPC Chair/Shirlington Special GLUP Study Plus Co-Chair and the Shirlington Co-Chair.

LRPC Discussion on the Shirlington Special GLUP Study Plus

Staff gave a presentation on the history of Shirlington, as well as potential redevelopment scenarios. Following staff’s presentation, the LRPC discussed the scenarios. Comments and questions were then posed by members of the public. Comments and questions included:

Opening Comments - Recap from Previous Meeting

- Should we be addressing future tidal surge concerns and more extreme concerns with flooding and climate change? Is this a question for Army Corp of Engineers at open house?
- What does the design booklet for Shirlington reference regarding parking considerations? Should we be referencing the current language and direction?
- Are all modeling assumptions based on one level of underground parking across all sites?

Comments on Massing

- What is the overall vision for Shirlington? How can we talk about heights without an overall vision?
• The character of main street is important, and this is not necessarily restricted to the building facades.
• We should not limit the density to the perimeter when good urban design can be artificially created with good direction and process.
• The addition of a large building on B2 blocks views into Shirlington, as well as the view from Shirlington to the water and tree lined bike/pedestrian path.
• One member shared that with more building height there should be more building tapering. They said that they were open to more height throughout Shirlington, including the building massing on Arlington Mill Drive.
• More than one member said that it is important to preserve the connection to the park with views and paths. Sculpting and urban design is the most important element, even more important than heights.
• There should be more design sensitivity along Four Mile Run. The proposed building on B2 feels wall-like.
• Several members agreed that wraparound residential development to hide existing parking structures should be encouraged.
• One member said that they would like a more equal distribution of density around the site. They do not approve of narrow entry points into Shirlington.
• Several reiterated a concern about a loss of connection to the park. Density on the B2 parking lot makes Shirlington’s main street feel like a canyon.
• Building tapers and setbacks should be informed by sun and shade studies to maintain sunlight into Shirlington’s central areas.
• One member suggested looking to Country Club Plaza in Kansas City for design considerations for parking structures.
• Another member noted that he likes the varied building heights at the four corner intersections along Campbell Avenue. Each corner has high and low building heights with varied step backs for diverse architectural massing.
• What is the historical “integrity” of Campbell Avenue outside of the building facades?
• Are we comfortable with the heights over the library (20 levels)?
• What are the economic realities (viabilities) of certain building level heights, i.e. residential/commercial/parking? Can FRIT share more details on this for a rough understanding at the next meeting?
• Buildings should be less long and taller at Arlington Mill Drive. Density should be at the center of block with open viewsheds down existing streets.

Comments on Permeability

• Use connections that area already there as priority passageways and permeability
• Utilize a full midblock connection across block B behind B1.
• More pocket parks for seating are desirable.
• Trash and alley access/considerations for existing retail and commercial are important.
• Can we combine the pedestrian connections and the loading and service in alleys?
• Currently the pedestrian connections on the Shirlington side of Arlington Mill Drive are not good for pedestrians. Show existing pedestrian crossings along Arlington Mill Drive on future graphics.
• Traffic and circulation data will help inform open space and pedestrian connection needs and opportunities.
• Safety should be the main concern along Campbell Avenue where traffic and pedestrian activity are converging.
• Consider a linear park condition along Arlington Mill on the Shirlington side of the street to relate to the park across the street. Existing conditions in Shirlington should be brought up to Universal Design Standards.

Sum Up

• The proposed building along Arlington Mill Drive feels too much like a wall. There is a desire to preserve views and connections to the existing park.
• Preserve the “Village“ feeling.
• Develop a vision for Shirlington.
• There is a willingness to see height near the freeway.
• Retaining historic integrity and character is important to the honesty and feel of the Main Street. There was debate on historic façade preservation.
• Medians could/should be recognized as potential green space on the analysis maps.