

PROJECT 1:
QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Also posted will be the Urban Center Concept (plan) and Traditional Neighborhood Design (ordinance) which are the basis for your discussion and collaboration.

Questions we would like to you to contemplate:

What solutions/challenges do you see the Urban Center bringing to the County?

-Is there the potential for the creation of a development authority (maybe a public/private entity; or a public entity) to provide the specific oversight, guidance, and maybe financial wherewithal for the urban centers birth, growth, and ultimate development? I am thinking possibly something such as the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation or the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

-How to coordinate and/or gain the cooperation of multiple land owners within an urban center?

-How to attract the key private sector entities that will provide for critical needs, such as employment, commercial retail, entertainment facilities?

-How to guide the design, construction, and development so that the urban centers each have a unique character and appearance and to not appear to “clones” of places elsewhere?

-How to link the urban centers to current and future transportation infrastructure – Crosspointe has the best potential for being a station on a passenger rail service from Washington’s Union Station (via Harpers Ferry, Charles Town, Summit Point, and then Winchester) and possibly a Valley railroad?

How many Urban Centers do you think the County can absorb within a fifty year period?

-There are lots of macro-scale forces at play with such a question – national, regional, and greater metropolitan population growth; the evolving mind-set of future generations as to where and how they want to live and work?

-Population growth would seem to come from native births and retention of that population; working American citizen or naturalized citizens being attracted to northern Shenandoah Valley for economic opportunities and/or quality of life; and retirees attracted to the northern Shenandoah Valley for various reasons with health care, ease of living, cultural/natural amenities, transportation connections to visit outside the immediate area, and cost of living – some of the factors; the big question for all three groups then is whether the

Winchester/Frederick County is up to the task of keeping its unique character while providing for the various needs of these subsets of people?

-As a “gut”, maybe 2 or 3 urban centers, but who knows?

Should the Centers be prioritized/incentivized? If so, how?

-Yes, I think the urban centers should be prioritized and I think Crosspointe has the best potential with I-81, the future beltway of Route 37, and railroad line just to the west of being a multi-modal urban center for urban development and growth.

-On the question of incentives, it is the matter of whether a development corporation/authority as noted above could have some bonding authority so as to have some money to put in the development for public infrastructure? Further is there some way to have a financial entity that could issue loans for projects with suitable risk analysis and no recourse back on the taxpayers of the country? Land and improvement taxes are monies that either are paid or deferred for certain activities and urban center projects and is there possibility of using this power of the country to provide incentives?

How can the land area identified within the centers be used in the interim?

-On the evolution of land uses, I am aware of one particular urban center where I have seen evolution of land use over time (10-15 years), Crocker Park in Westlake, Ohio (a far western suburb of Cleveland). Westlake (aka Dover Township) was an agricultural area; later some farm estates for Cleveland gentry, commercial orchards, then mid-market mid-20th century housing, and now moving into upper-middle class housing. Crocker Park is located at the southwest corner of Crocker and Detroit Roads and about a quarter/half mile of an interchange on I-90 (a main east-west freeway that connects to downtown Cleveland and eastward; and westward to the Ohio Turnpike and Chicago). From my knowledge of visiting this area over a number of years, the particular location of the Crocker Park urban development was originally a strip commercial shopping center with lots of vast gray asphalt parking lots. One such strip commercial shopping center still exists on Detroit, but behind it, the grid of new streets for Crocker Park has been evolving with a dense urban village of 2, 3, and 4 story buildings set right on the sidewalks with offices/residential above; retail shops, restaurants, and entertainment at the sidewalk level. Parking is in structured multi-story garages, or open parking lots at the edges that are just place holders for future redevelopment. Behind the shopping district, one finds market-rate townhouses and apartment buildings. And, I have heard that American Greeting has been planning on moving its headquarters to the far south side of the shopping district, but that may be on hold. What this story is about is evolution from a low level to a higher level of land use, value, and development.

Should each center be phased?

-Yes, I think the urban centers should be phased and which one comes first and then the later pecking order depends on market forces and/or inherent opportunities presented by the particular urban center location.

What more do you think needs to be added to the concept/TND ordinance to make the case for why or why not this type of development is appropriate for Frederick County?

-In the Draft TND:

-Section 165-503.12 Mixture of housing types required:

Zero lot line units, court house (see Los Angeles for this type of housing arrangement), accessory dwelling units, co-housing, and group-housing in large single family (i.e. several retirees single and/or couples pooling resources for a large house with nice large private suites, and living unit(s) for the help/caretakers) - are some of the housing options to keep an open mind for in the future.

-Section 165-503.04 Design Guidelines Manual:

-a new item #9 Cultural and Natural Landscape Features – if a site has cultural and/or natural landscape features that have some scenic, ecological, environmental, and/or other values, these features should be considered in the site design development process and typically preserved/utilized as part of the “amenities” for such a site.

-I would provide some clause that allows for creativity by the developer and their design professionals so that if they come up with a design concept that is not considered within the ordinance, but is publically vetted and viewed as having “special merit”, I would add that clause so that developer and design professional creativity is encouraged. The key thing here is the vetting, review, and approval so that the public and whatever is the final authority – the development corporation/authority and/or the county planning commission and/or the board of supervisors has the opportunity for an open consideration and review.