



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Deborah A. Carpenter, AICP, Division Director

Kimberly Gaines, Director

Investing in Workers & Workplaces Advisory Group Meeting 6 July 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes

I. Meeting Details

Meeting date and time: Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 2:00 PM

Meeting location: 585 Himes Avenue, Frederick, Maryland 21703

II. Attendance

Advisory Group members present: Andrew Brown, Chris Smariga, Danielle Adams, Brian Morris, Lisa Graditor, Karen Cannon, Don Pleasants, Matt Holbrook, Tony Checchia, Brian Sweeney, Kai Hagen, Eric Soter

Advisory Group members absent: Louise Kennelly, Taylor Davis

County staff present: DPP: Kimberly Gaines, Denis Superczynski, Karin Flom; DEO: Patty McDonald, Troy Bolyard, Lara Fritts; Office of Agriculture: Katie Stevens, Shannon O'Neil

III. Call to Order

Denis Superczynski brought the meeting to order at 2:03 PM and welcomed the advisory group members and guests.

IV. Small Group Strategic Mapping Exercise – Focus Areas [Continued from 7/9/24]

Denis summarized the process to date, emphasizing that this first phase of the planning process is focused on information gathering. The advisory group has been meeting since May and will be convened again in the fall for a check-in after drafting begins. Public outreach meetings are scheduled to begin in September. These meetings will continue information gathering at this early stage in the process and will include a brief presentation and an exercise similar to the exercise undertaken by the advisory group.

Tony Checchia described analysis he has done of properties in the I-70/Jefferson Pike/Mount Phillip Road area, a total of 680 acres with 12 property owners. He noted two large farm properties outside of the growth area that have been preserved through the County's Installment Purchase Agreement (IPP) program. He described 500 acres in the 340/Mount Zion Road area, noting that the developable acreage in this area is likely closer to 300 acres. He described the New Design/Ballenger Creek/Quantum area, roughly 4,000 acres with 1,800 acres currently slated for development as the Quantum campus which has a 15 year build out. Tony noted that the County's total assessable base is 41 billion, with 8.9 billion (22%) being commercial. To achieve 28%, an additional 2.6 billion in commercial assessable base is needed. At buildout, Quantum could generate 1.9 billion.

Lara Fritts noted that the SAGE report identifies 16 million square feet of data center development on the Quantum campus with a value of \$125/square foot.

Denis noted that the plan can identify short-term, mid-term, and long-term needs and priorities. Denis described how land use designations and zoning can be used as a timing mechanism. As an example, he

described properties in the Urbana growth area that currently have an agricultural land use designation and agricultural zoning.

Denis asked about the small groups' visions for the Quantum/Ballenger Creek area, which was not discussed at the last meeting. One response was an extension of the development on New Design and English Muffin and in Westview – life sciences, manufacturing, and possibly data centers. The proximity of infrastructure was noted, as well as mineral mining operations. Another response was maintaining the Priority Preservation Area in this area and more efficiently using the land in the growth areas.

The history of the Eastalco property was discussed. It was noted that Alcoa purchased a lot of land to buffer their use, essentially being their own neighbor. During the Livable Frederick Master Plan process, different redevelopment concepts for the site were discussed, including an employment campus.

Concerns about the Priority Preservation Areas (PPA) and the Rural Legacy Areas blocking growth were raised. The perpetual nature of agricultural land preservation easements, and the potential for those easements to cause leapfrog development in the future, was described. It was noted that roughly 80,000 acres are currently preserved. The preservation goal is 160,000 acres and the PPA is roughly 96,000 acres. Areas of preserved land that are not in the PPA were described. Re-examining the PPA boundaries to maximize infrastructure use and consider clusters of preserved land not in the PPA was recommended. It was noted that the PPA is not a zoning designation.

The need to protect agricultural land to feed a growing population was described.

Denis described the importance of balancing differing priorities through this planning process.

It was noted that 8,000 acres of new land designated for employment uses would constitute 2% of the County land area.

V. Review of Advisory Group Discussion, Additional Thoughts

Denis asked that the advisory group members offer their thoughts on the issues that have been discussed over the course of the advisory group meetings to date. These are listed below.

- It is challenging to forecast future needs and solve for everything through a planning process. Baltimore County has a comprehensive rezoning process that allows zoning to be considered every four years, which provides more flexibility.
- It is important to consider the needs of workers, particularly housing near workplaces.
- It is a mistake to use agricultural land preservation to constrain and confine future generations.
- There should be more flexibility to allow small businesses and home occupations on agricultural properties.
- 8,000 – 10,000 acres will be needed to increase the non-residential tax base to at least 28%.
- The development review and permitting processes should be improved to shorten timelines and increase predictability for by-right uses in areas that have been designated for development.
- Use of ag transfer tax and recordation tax revenues should be re-examined.
- Development should be targeted to areas where infrastructure is existing or nearby.
- Fixing ORI is a short-term priority, though that's only a few hundred acres.
- The plan should clearly identify industries the County is seeking to attract, the revenues they generate, the workers that are needed, and the community amenities that are needed to retain those workers.
- Contributions to the local economy by the agriculture industry must be considered.

- Keep opportunities for redevelopment in mind. Before we convert farmland, we should look at opportunities to maximize use of sites in growth areas that already have access to infrastructure.
- A new zoning district that incorporates the best in LI, MX, and ORI should be developed to support corridor mixed use. The Village Center (VC) is a good model.
- Hurdles include the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) provisions concerning transportation. LOS E is not necessarily problematic in growth areas. Likewise, impact fees should consider the location of the site and actual impacts.
- MXD with caps on commercial and employment uses is problematic.
- The environment and climate must be addressed. The County has committed to looking at everything through the lens of climate. This includes energy and water usage associated with data centers.
- The economic efficiency of land must be considered, as well as the community benefits – or lack thereof – associated with certain uses and industries.
- It is essential to engage the municipalities and consider their plans.
- Planning is critical. Crestwood Boulevard could have been a very useful east-west connector, but was ultimately blocked by development.
- The County should make it easier for developers to do what we want them to do – developing the things we agree we want in areas that we agree should be developed.
- Data centers have consumed vast amounts of land in Loudon County and they provide few employment opportunities. This is not good for workers.
- Housing is critical. In selecting sites, employers want to know where employees will live, as well as if amenities for employees are present or planned.
- Growth belongs near other growth. The infrastructure is there. Islands of growth are inefficient.
- Moratoriums linger and have impacts beyond just residential development. A jurisdiction's reputation can be damaged for years well beyond the period of the moratorium.
- Existing and planned infrastructure must be considered. All 8,000-10,000 acres are not equal. Flow monitoring is needed.
- Input from workers is required. How can this plan address their needs and priorities?
- A thriving agricultural industry is critical to a reliable local food supply.

VII. Next Steps

Denis described the public outreach meetings that will begin in September. Members of the advisory group are invited to attend those meetings. Denis noted that staff is also available to meet with interested organizations to discuss the plan. Staff expects to reconvene the advisory group at least once in the fall.

Kimberly Gaines stated that staff will consult County Utilities and Public Works staff, among others, as well as the municipal planners as we continue work on this effort. She also noted that Economic Opportunity staff are in touch with representatives of the different target industries.

VIII. Adjournment

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.