

## TA-Z-07-01 Mixed Use District Community Meeting Comments

*To gauge citizen input on the proposed mixed-use district ordinance, the Planning Department held four community meetings. Below are comments made at these meetings. These comments are based on notes taken by Planning Department staff:*

Western Branch, Russell Memorial Library- July 16, 2007 (34 citizens in attendance):

- What are the impacts on existing infrastructure? Existing infrastructure is old and already overburdened
- What are the impacts to wetlands?
- How will storm water be addressed?
- What are the possible noise impacts? City Council tabled amendments to the Noise Ordinance on September 3, 2005
- The City needs to enforce all conditions of existing rezonings and use permits
- There is too much development already.
- The City needs to make the developers pay for their impacts
- Will mixed use projects lead to tax increases?
- There is a need for more public transportation.
- Will mixed use projects lead to more school overcrowding?
- There needs to be more green space in developments
- What are the impacts to emergency services?
- Need to define connections between mixed use and existing open space
- Existing ditches/sidewalks/roads need attention prior to more development being approved. The City needs to spend more money in existing areas.
- Traffic Improvements and a stoplight are needed at Taylor and Bruce Road. Bruce Road needs traffic improvements.
- Drum Creek drainage issues are a concern.
- Will mixed use projects tie into the City's Bike/Trail Plan?

- There needs to be adequate setback/buffer between proposed mixed use and existing residential.
- More street trees should be planted
- What is the maximum parking reduction for shared uses?
- What is the difference between mixed use and existing planned unit development standards?

Greenbrier/Indian River/South Norfolk, Indian River Library July 23, 2007(12 citizens in attendance):

- Some commercial uses on 1<sup>st</sup> floor are incompatible with residential on upper floors and this should be considered.
- Parking in alleys for residential will not work; people are not going to get out of their cars.
- Disagree with reduced taxes concept in presentation. More dwelling units equals more people which equals a need for more services which leads to higher taxes.
- It is hoped that mixed use developments will be affordable and accessible to handicapped.
- Chesapeake natives are being out priced by new people coming from the north who bring a lot of equity with them which leads to higher housing prices.
- The City should develop a theme to generate revenues. An example is Nautical Mile in Long Island, NY.

Deep Creek, Major Hillard Library – July 30, 2007 (10 citizens in attendance):

- Mixed-use looks good, but high-rise buildings may result in traffic congestion. What guidelines will be used to keep control?
- The rezoning process is not as complicated as it may seem. The process is not as thorough as it should be.
- Congestion of Dominion Boulevard is a problem; however, the corridor has opportunity to be developed with appealing projects.
- Why should the parking areas always be in the rear of the site?
- Is there a picture of what is in mind for shopping center parking? Is there a picture for residential?

- What is the scope that is in mind? Where are mixed uses going to be located? What is the exact mix of uses? More specifics are needed.
- Is this meeting about the proposed Ethanol plant?
- What are some examples in areas, other than Chesapeake, of a “good” mixed use project?
- The town center is nice.

Great Bridge, Great Bridge Middle School – August 2, 2007 (31 citizens in attendance):

- This looks like Northern Virginia traffic and density.
- Exceptions are always being made where there is development in rural areas
- Mixed use in Great Bridge is condemning our way of life. Projects like Skippers Watch will change the older established neighborhoods. We do not want these neighborhoods to change.
- Wilson Drive should not be part of mixed use or the Great Bridge Village Plan.
- The ordinance will increase density and the developers will not contribute towards paying for the services.
- There should be a referendum on the proposed ordinance.
- If this ordinance passes, the way of life in Great Bridge will change. Projects like Skippers Watch will be “rubber-stamped.”
- While the City is talking about this, they are also talking about developing the Frank Williams property.
- SPSA currently has problems providing services and now the City is talking about increasing densities.
- There needs to be a public safety study on how those services will be provided for new development to make sure the current levels of service are not compromised.
- Mixed use will change the country feel of the whole community.
- Densities proposed are too high in areas that are already congested.
- Six floor buildings are too high in Great Bridge and Dominion Boulevard.

- People are going to continue to drive until there is public transit.
- Great Bridge has a lot of civil servants and military living here. They don't get paid enough money sit and eat at the cafes. There are going to be parking garages, like in Norfolk.
- The 2026 Comprehensive Plan was developed by lawyers and developers; citizens were not involved in the process.
- There are noise issues with mixed-use. What is the City going to do to protect neighborhoods from the restaurants, 24/7 deliveries, and traffic?
- Townhouses need more parking.
- Why is the City re-writing the ordinances to accommodate mixed-use plans?
- The City has planned unit development districts and a conditional use permit process to allow buildings taller than 35 feet; why does it need to have mixed-use districts?
- Seventy-five foot tall and four-story buildings are too high.
- Five years ago, developers told the city to build elderly housing because it would keep taxes low. But now we know it hasn't worked and money will go into a TIF area infrastructure fund that comes from the taxpayers and citizens, and not the developers
- The 2005 Comprehensive Plan did not include mixed use zoning. Why is the City drafting a mixed-use ordinance?
- Who initiated the ordinance; what is its genesis?
- There is concern that the process did not start with the citizens, but promoted by consultants. Citizens have a right to get a question on the ballot, if 25% of the people who voted sign a petition demanding a referendum, then City Council would be required to hold one.
- What changes did City Council make to the Comprehensive Plan before it was adopted in 2005?
- Is there an error in the ordinance where it states that row houses are allowed in the Rural Overlay district?
- Suburban Overlay district may not be appropriate for mixed-use.

- The CH2MHill plan was not adopted by City Council in 2005 since there was no public scrutiny as part of the comprehensive plan update process. Only general language contained in the plan was adopted.
- Allowing 4000 acres of land in the rural area (Frank Williams property) for mixed use will significantly change the character of the city.
- Where did the writer for the newspaper get his information for the Williams property story? Who answers for the citizens? We don't believe the city and we don't believe the staff. Once the Williams farm is developed, you cannot stop it.
- There is a fear that if the ordinance is adopted, Pandora's Box will be opened and this type of development will occur "across the board"
- Mixed use is not appropriate for Great Bridge, but would be appropriate in South Norfolk.
- Mixed use would not be appropriate for the rural area because the taxpayers would have to pay for the infrastructure.
- People move to Chesapeake to raise a family in a country atmosphere. They read the City's plan on-line to make decisions on where they should live.
- Once the ordinance is approved, who enforces it? Fear is in the execution. How can citizens be sure the zoning will take place only in those areas that are designated for mixed use? For example, River walk has an elementary school site that was rezoned for elderly housing which is a big change to the plan. Houses on Great Bridge Boulevard are turning into offices. Apartments are being built at Great Bridge Boulevard and Battlefield Boulevard because there is increasing pressure nationwide to build affordable housing.
- The Planning Commission and staff often rubberstamp development proposals that have a small town, retro feel.
- There is no example in Chesapeake that can be pointed to. We need better pictures to show people what mixed use will look like.
- Virginia Beach was destroyed by this type of development. There needs to be limits on where mixed use can go.
- No mixed use in Great Bridge. If citizens in South Norfolk want mixed use, put it there.
- Mixed use looks very transit oriented. It should go where there is mass transit, like in South Norfolk. Mixed use is too urbanized for Great Bridge.

- What was the consensus of the people attending the other citizen meetings?
- How will hurricane evacuation work with higher densities south of the canal?
- Drainage is a problem in Great Bridge; there is not place for the water to go. If all the water goes into the canal, it will flood into existing neighborhoods next to the canal. A plan is needed now, before we increase densities.
- Great Bridge is a parking lot now. The sidewalks, bike paths and good building design mentioned in the plan are good, but the increased densities scare people. Where is the money coming from to pay for the increased need for services?
- How did Skipper's Watch get so far in the review process before the citizens found out? Most people were unaware of Skipper's Watch until it was too late in the process.
- Great Bridge needs sidewalks and green spaces. Great Bridge needs a facelift, but you don't have to rezone to do it. New buildings and developments should pay their way and not burden existing tax payers.
- Why not put the money generated by the community back into the community? We want to preserve the integrity and improve what we have.
- Why aren't we taking all the assets of Great Bridge and improve with sidewalks, architecture, but not add more people or traffic? Great Bridge is an historic area that needs to be preserved.
- What is the City doing to preserve history? Big buildings do not preserve the history of the area.
- Hanbury Shopping Center is good example and a nice fit for the neighborhood. This needs to happen in Great Bridge.
- It might be okay to construct town homes, but the height needs to be limited. But, why do we need more restaurants and retail when people can go to Greenbrier. A Planning Commissioner was incorrect a couple of years ago when he said that if you allow more business, taxes will not go up; however, taxes keep increasing.
- Why do we need more retail? More business is not needed since we have everything we need now. Businesses lead to more congestion. Congestion in Greenbrier will only get worse if we allow higher densities. Battlefield Boulevard is terrible now, why do we want it to get worse?
- People cut through the neighborhoods to avoid the Battlefield Boulevard/Cedar Road intersection. When the bridge is up, congestion in Great Bridge is gridlock. Traffic taken alone is bad, and will only get worse.

- I work for city and live in city, but can't afford it. Salary raises go towards health insurance, so not really a raise.
- The Master Transportation Plan calls for the widening of some roads, but what capacity is there to widen roads in Great Bridge? How will roads and traffic ever get better in Great Bridge? The City needs to fix the problems we have now before starting something else.
- Existing stores can be upgraded with flowers, flags and landscaping. The City should try to beautify Great Bridge and make it more livable first
- Does it do any good to talk with the Planning Commissioners & City Council?
- Great Bridge has historical neighborhoods with older people who have been here for more than 50 years and they do not want to see any change.
- Where does the Planning Department staff live? In Chesapeake? In Great Bridge? Would they want seven story buildings across from their house?
- People are cutting through neighborhoods and trash is everywhere.
- If the text amendment is to be heard by the Planning Commission on September 12, will there be enough time for staff to revise the ordinance?
- How can public find out what the changes are before Planning Commission meeting?
- What stops a developer from asking for additional height now with use permit? There is a fear factor with citizens to have to fight these applications.
- Skippers Watch would have passed if the citizens didn't come out and oppose.
- There is something wrong with the process when developer can get in to City Hall and the citizens have to pick and probe for information to find out about a development
- Economic Development paid over \$100,000 using tax dollars for the Great Bridge Village plan before public found out about it. How much tax money is going toward this project?
- Citizens feel helpless and are voicing their concerns
- Will the City Hall complex be extended into Great Bridge Acres?
- Wilson Drive needs to stay residential.