

Memorandum

Date: May 6, 2014

To: Marcie Stenmark, *Principal Planner*, The Planning Commission

From: Amy Groves, *Project Director*, Dover, Kohl & Partners

CC: Joseph Kohl, Dover, Kohl & Partners
Bill Spikowski, Spikowski Planning Associates

Subject: **Summary of Input: Plan Policy Focus Group Sessions, April 24, 2014**

On April 24, 2014, the Dover-Kohl team with members of the Planning Commission staff facilitated a series of focus group sessions to gain input that could lead to better comprehensive plan policies for promoting mixed-use development and for discouraging strip commercial development. Each meeting had tables that had a focused discussion of existing policies organized by geographic location (Unincorporated County, City of Tampa, and City of Temple Terrace / Plant City). The groups then considered case studies of policies and approaches in peer communities. Separate sessions were held to gather input from City and County staff, the development community, and community leaders; following is a summary of input and comments recorded:

STAFF MEETING: 9AM – 11AM

Unincorporated Hillsborough County

➤ **SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS / OPPORTUNITIES / OBSTACLES TO CONSIDER:**

1. Urban form is more important than “the numbers” (density, FAR, distances)
2. Create or keep supporting street networks at nodes and along corridors (address access, closed off roads).
3. Need a better way to handle the strip corridors BETWEEN intersections.
4. Need more clarity on exactly what our plans mean by ‘mixed-use’ and ‘strip commercial’
5. Recognize difference between areas and issues; solutions must be context-sensitive
6. OTHERS IDEAS:
 - Don’t ignore conflict between intensifying uses near intersections and limitation on curb cuts (and need to widen ROW for turn lanes, not just for the presumed width of widened ROW that would be needed between intersections)
 - Need plan on where to apply policies geographically

- Observation: can't believe everything we do will be mixed-use; need to decide where those places will be. Will have lots of auto-dominant places left; they need policies too
- Community plans – design regulations are an issue
- **TABLE DISCUSSION NOTES:**
 - Difficulties dealing with undeveloped land
 - Success = West Park Village
 - Issue – restriction of sq. ft. – locational criteria, incentives?
 - Issue – zoning code does not deal well with adaptive reuse
 - Issue – code segregates uses
 - Need to understand definition of mixed use and strip commercial
 - Issue – politics of sprawl
 - Need tool kit for retrofitting areas
 - Investment
 - Issue – access management
 - Issue – allowing roads to go private – no cross connection
 - No requirement for cross access between different uses
 - LRTP does not consider needs of right of way around nodes
 - Need to zone and plan ahead
 - No proactive way to address street pattern
 - Issue – walled off subdivision become barrier to good design, redevelopment
 - Don't have tools to deal with incremental zoning. Need larger plan
 - Proactive zoning as incentive
 - Issue – picking winners and losers
 - Form vs. entitlements – give entitlements, require form
 - Understand direction of change and maintenance of stability
 - Rely less on floor area ratio and density, more on form

City of Tampa

- **SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS / OPPORTUNITIES / OBSTACLES TO CONSIDER:**
 1. Need to deal with very shallow lots that face arterials, a common situation in Tampa
 2. Context is not same across our city – may need a hierarchy of policies based on actual conditions
 3. Need to differentiate between policies for narrow streets with on-street parking, versus wide streets with medians
 4. Zoning: may prevent vertical mixed-use. Need to fix problems with zoning and transportation rules too
 5. Strategy: where could we incentivize more non-residential uses, while disincentivizing in other areas
- **TABLE DISCUSSION NOTES:**
 - Threads
 - Sense of community
 - Older people
 - Get around
 - Reinvent corridors for people to get around
 - Transit
 - People support uses
 - Concentrate commercial/residential at transit stops
 - Depth of lots on corridors
 - Limitations (parking, design of buildings)

- Roundabouts – free flow of cars, slows traffic
- Mixed Use Incentives:
 - o higher density
- Need to address:
 - o Connections to adjoining neighborhood
 - o Relationships of use and transition of design treatments
- Amount of commercial
 - o Businesses needed for the adjoining neighborhood
 - o Walkability
- What does the neighborhood like and dislike of the corridor
- Signals for pedestrian crossings of the corridor
- Demands on the developer for different design than the “typical design”
- Business plan
- Need to encourage better design and walkability during planned development zoning review, education regarding how to achieve better design
- Example – 40th Street, Hillsborough Avenue
- Complete Streets - Change of ownership of road
- Kennedy, Dale Mabry, Howard – through overlays, LDRs
- Scale of road
- Components of speed
 - o Building designs character of road and people safe walking
- Westshore Area – create sense of place
- One policy does not work for all
- How town centers work vs. corridors
- Transit metro rapid
- Corridors front doors to neighborhoods
- What stops quality built mixed use?
 - o Stormwater
 - o LDR Code
 - o Parking requirements
 - o Community input
 - o Have a lot of overzoned strip development
 - o Market saturation
 - o Blighted buildings
 - o Limited lot sizes in locations

City of Temple Terrace / Plant City

- **SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS / OPPORTUNITIES / OBSTACLES TO CONSIDER:**
 1. Need to define mixed-use: vertical? On same site?
 2. How to incentivize mixed-use, need to understand what will make developers want to do it
 3. Need to get parking to the rear (physical form)
- **TABLE DISCUSSION NOTES:**
 - Political barriers – education important
 - Need to bring building to street, parking behind (TT)
 - Making area walkable (PC)
 - Educate developers/business community
 - Banks making money available for Mixed Use developments

- Insurance companies don't want to insure mixed use
- Ability to build more sq. ft.
- Difficult to sell
- Developers not knowledgeable in mixed use
- Market shift – no financing excuse not to do mixed use
- Complicated trying to sell commercial portion of mixed use
- Code may be constraint for existing owners (older)
- Change overlay district in order to move forward need large tracts of land
- Need mechanism to trigger mixed use
- Hard to convince existing business owners of a profit that will happen in the future
- May need minimum density
- LDC and Comprehensive Plan must say what you have to build

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY: 1PM – 3PM

Unincorporated Hillsborough County

➤ SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS / OPPORTUNITIES / OBSTACLES TO CONSIDER:

1. Rethink overly restrictive density caps
2. Create a system where multiple landowners can plan together for access, variety of uses nearby, higher densities. Incentives need to be of greater intensity and should allow for coordination across sites to meet intent of mixed use.
3. Don't hide commercial areas inside developments (or demand excessive cutesy such as squares, plazas, radial streets)
4. Don't let overlays demand urban conditions in suburban situations
5. Overlays prevent new developments, new uses from developing
6. Other Ideas:
 - Current comp plan density bonuses aren't high enough, and only apply on the same property, whereas mixed use can be on different properties
 - Look at point system used in St. Petersburg; could be a valuable tool here
 - Developers want predictability (so they know what they can do) at the same time they want flexibility (so they can change what they want to do, without meaningful hurdles)

➤ TABLE DISCUSSION NOTES:

- Difficult to coordinate with multiple owners for mixed use projects
- Codes do not know how commercial development works
- Shoppers not interested in walking a long distance
- Do not require mixed use – be flexible
- Need residential density to support retail
- Westchase mixed use is small enough to work
- My company passed on residential site zoned TND due to requirements
- Retail tenants in Fishhawk mixed use development have left – vacant and high turnover, failure
- People do not walk outside in August
- Lithia Pinecrest/Bloomingdale area has activists who use regulations to stop growth
- Vocal minority have transportation concerns
- Planning is done in public hearings
- Dale Mabry is a disaster because every rezoning was a battle, with lack of frontage road plans and cross access
- Intensity at nodes is good

- People coming back to urban areas
- Transit works with higher density
- Market demands the use
- On mixed use sites, developers will build residential first and chip away at the rest
- How big of an area for mixed use is planned
- 160 acres is difficult as a stand-alone mixed use project
- Give maximum flexibility, intensify commercial nodes
- Commercial General zoning does not allow residential although it may be the right place
- Incentivize so can solve issues, increase density to encourage coordination across sites
- Rural Area – because of low density, chain restaurants will not locate there
- Define the node for commercial/office uses, with residential in back
- Tampa has neighborhood protection areas
 - o Should define areas of intensification
 - o If we offer incentives in these areas, we need to tell opponents we want intense development in defined areas
- Change rules to allow some approvals administratively
 - o Create flexibility that does not require Board approval if meet code
 - o City of Tampa Economic Committee changed some approvals to administrative
- Certainty is important
- Let market determine use
- If add intensity, may be worth effort for mixed use
- Do not dictate excruciating form - Hyde Park Syndrome – want cute stores but failed
- Perhaps if agree to form, uses can be flexible
- Density/intensity bonus to next classification not enough – need greater bonus so worth the effort

Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City

➤ **SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS / OPPORTUNITIES / OBSTACLES TO CONSIDER:**

1. Public/ private partnerships (assembly of land)
2. Need certainty in process and politics
3. Assemble infrastructure ahead of development to incentivize

➤ **TABLE DISCUSSION NOTES:**

- Commercial Locational Criteria is not business friendly
- Changes in city code too suburban in nature
- Streamline code as an incentive
- Preplan/predevelop infrastructure
- Want more certainty in process and code
- Financing for condos is very difficult - pre sales criteria is a discouragement
- Too much mixed use in city code
- Create open spaces for people/reduce impact on developers
- Community plans can restrict commercial development
- Parking should be a choice not a requirement
- Government could provide parking
- Need transit alternatives
- Comes down to function and design/negotiation
- Certainty in politics
- Design standards/look of project need to be flexible
- Can't achieve floor area ratio due to code requirements and other constraints

- Trust issues in neighborhoods – residents afraid of change and density
- City should assemble properties and make development ready
- Loosen off-site parking requirements

COMMUNITY LEADERS: 4PM – 6PM

➤ **SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS / OPPORTUNITIES / OBSTACLES TO CONSIDER:**

1. PDs no longer seem valuable; are now used for speculation; are being crafted to suggest mixed uses but they allow use substitutions that defeat that purpose; PDs never expire
2. Locational criteria allow more commercial along corridors than is needed, even at T-intersections; too many loopholes; seems to actually encourage the spread of strip commercial
3. Design criteria not allowed in Euclidean zones; not being added to PDs
4. Graduated impact fees would eliminate one subsidy for sprawl; why subsidize the very pattern the county says it wants to discourage?

➤ **TABLE DISCUSSION NOTES:**

- Locational criteria creates strip commercial development
- Older areas, almost every corner qualifies for locational criteria
- No design criteria for commercial
- Locational criteria needs to be fixed to restrict number of intersections
- Size of street and speed limit of street should be considered for locational criteria
- Change Comprehensive Plan policy that exempts legal non-conforming uses from locational criteria
- Mixed use planned development - tradeoff for different uses is too flexible
- Palmetto Beach needs a community plan to designate shared parking and stormwater due to smaller parcels with mixed use and commercial zoning.
- Lack of public transit because of low density
- Incentivize the type of development community wants with smart growth development
- Bubble site plans does not give certainty for citizens
- Need to look at sun setting of planned development mixed use zonings
- Property Appraiser – are taxes based on use or market value
- Used to rely on planned developments to get an idea of what community is getting, but not in current form
- Restrictions on standards zoning have gotten out of hand
- Planned developments need to be site specific
- Citizens should know what their community is turning in to - lack of opportunity to comment on development activities
- The Planning Commission is about constructing policies/rules and the development community is looking for ways around the policy/rules.
- Hillsborough County is not creating the type of communities that will attract economic development
- Economics will change how development community builds
- Type of use instead of zoning should be considered
- Place design criteria on zoning
- Community plans lack implementation
- Bad examples of zonings
 - o US 41 and Sunset Lane – charter school met the intent of the community plan although it actually did not because the site had an easement (not adjacency) to a 4 lane road
 - o Temple Crest – Tampa infill criteria allowed greater density – 40th street widening affected neighborhood lost housing that was built on substandard parcel