

1 **Minutes of the Work Session of the Planning Commission of Henrico County held**  
2 **in the County Administration Building in the Government Center at Parham and**  
3 **Hungary Spring Roads, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, September 10, 2020.**  
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6 **Members Present:** Mr. C. W. Archer, C.P.C., Chairman (Fairfield)  
7 Mr. William M. Mackey, Jr., Vice Chairman (Varina)  
8 Mr. Robert H. Witte, Jr. (Brookland)  
9 Mrs. Melissa Thornton (Three Chopt)  
10 Mr. R. Joseph Emerson, Jr., AICP, Director of Planning  
11 Secretary  
12 Mr. Tyrone E. Nelson (Varina)  
13 Board of Supervisors' Representative  
14

15 **Members Absent:** Mr. Gregory R. Baka (Tuckahoe)  
16

17 **Also Present:** Ms. Jean M. Moore, Assistant Director of Planning  
18 Mr. Ben Blankinship, AICP, Senior Principal Planner  
19 Mr. Ben Sehl, County Planner IV  
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22 **Mr. Archer -** ...Session to order. This is a work session that we will be  
23 discussing some updates. And Mr. Blankinship, with his skill, will tell us what we need to  
24 know. So, Mr. Secretary, do you need to introduce him or --  
25

26 **Mr. Emerson -** Mr. Chairman, I don't think I need to say any more. I think you  
27 covered it. But we are going to hold the work session this evening. We will be going over  
28 the Form-Based Overlay District, along with Module 3. Module 3 is your final module of  
29 the zoning code. So, the next work session we have will be to wrap up the zoning code  
30 and discuss scheduling public hearings.  
31

32 **Mr. Archer -** Okay.  
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34 **Mr. Emerson -** So that's exciting and scary in and of itself. The Form-Based  
35 Overlay District, I will ask you, at the end of your agenda this evening, to schedule that  
36 for public hearing next month. As you know, we have several projects that are waiting on  
37 that code change, one of them being Virginia Center of Commons. And of course, we  
38 want to get that moving. And also, the Brookfield Campus of Genworth. They have been  
39 working with us for quite some time and also need to get those entitlements in place. So,  
40 we have told those two entities we would break that out and move it forward separately.  
41

42 **Mr. Archer -** Okay.  
43

44 **Mr. Emerson -** So we'll go over both of those with you this evening, and  
45 Mr. Blankinship will be doing that. And Mr. Sehl is also present to assist on the Form-  
46 Based. He was at all the meetings. And Mr. Blankinship was at the majority of them as

47 well. But they both have been working together on that Form-Based, so he's here to  
48 assist with any questions you have as well.

49  
50 Mr. Archer - All right. Thank you, sir. And welcome to you, Rev. Nelson.

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52 Mr. Archer - All right, Mr. Blankinship. We eagerly await.

53  
54 Mr. Blankinship - Good evening, Mr. Chair, Members of the Commission. I'm  
55 just going to dive right in. We're going to spend just a few minutes to wrap up the  
56 subdivision section of Module 3. I only want to touch on a few of the major changes there  
57 so that we can reserve most of our time for the Form-Based code. One thing that you'll  
58 find as soon as you open that is that we are now going to codify the requirement to have  
59 two access points for residential developments of 50 or more. I put houses on here.  
60 There are different numbers for different kinds of units. It is 50 for single-family houses.  
61 That is currently our policy. But one of the overall objectives of this project is to codify a  
62 lot of our policies so that they're much more clear to the public and to the development  
63 community.

64  
65 Mr. Archer - Mr. Blankinship, before you go on, let me just ask a question?

66  
67 Mr. Blankinship - Yes?

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69 Mr. Archer - This is shown as the current policy; so, it's not law, right?

70  
71 Mr. Blankinship - That is correct.

72  
73 Mr. Archer - That we have to do that? Because I think I can recall a couple  
74 of places where we've had subdivisions of maybe 52 houses, and 53, and we passed  
75 them. Okay.

76  
77 Mr. Blankinship - That is correct.

78  
79 Mr. Archer - Thank you.

80  
81 Mr. Blankinship - And we do not have any policy at this time to add a third  
82 access point for any particular number of units. And that is also proposed in the draft  
83 code, and it's 90 for single-family houses. And as I say, there's a different number for  
84 townhouses and for apartments. There's also a statement, and this is a kind of back-to-  
85 the-future here; to the maximum extent practicable, streets shall be laid out in a grid  
86 pattern. As everybody knows, our older neighborhoods were developed in grid patterns,  
87 generally speaking, during the post-war development boom. And later, it became more  
88 common to end streets in cul-de-sacs. And that is still one of the predominant forms that  
89 we see in subdivision development today.

90  
91 The problem with cul-de-sac development is that it leads directly to sprawl, in the negative  
92 sense, causing longer trips, longer utility connections, more pavement has to be laid. Grid

streets are more efficient in many ways. And it's not an absolute. It is that "maximum extent practicable" language. So where there is a feature of the environment, a steep slope, or a rock outcropping, or something that would prevent grid streets, certainly a developer can work around those through cul-de-sacs or other means. But to the maximum extent practicable, we would like to get back to grid streets.

Traffic calming measures will be required where appropriate. And "where appropriate" is spelled out in some length in the draft. And traffic calming is another one of those issues that a lot of people, when they first see it, find it counterintuitive that we're intentionally slowing down traffic, because since the 1960s, all we've tried to do is make traffic move faster and faster. But we have learned over the years that that's not always a good thing, particularly through our neighborhoods. If you have a long neighborhood street, faster traffic is not necessarily a good thing. So, we will be requiring traffic calming measures. Also, sidewalks will be required where appropriate. That's another area in which the county has made a lot of progress in the last few years.

This is one provision I specifically want to call to your attention, because I think you will hear opposition to it at the time of public hearing. There is a draft requirement that for cul-de-sacs that are within a quarter mile of a school, park, or other feature that generates a lot of pedestrian traffic, a pedestrian access would be required. So, the illustration here; there's a street along the vertical here, and a cul-de-sac here. If this were a grid street, it would connect through, and people who live on this cul-de-sac could walk to whatever attraction may be on this street. Because it's a cul-de-sac, there is no way for pedestrians to access through here. They have to go all the way back and around, one of the things generating the sprawl that I mentioned a minute ago.

The proposal here is to require the installation of some sort of a pedestrian path. It'd probably in most cases be a concrete sidewalk -- or it wouldn't necessarily be that, but some pedestrian access through the cul-de-sac. Now, we have heard from the development community that there is some heartburn associated with that, because it raises issues of maintenance and of privacy. The people living in these homes just don't like the idea that everyone in the cul-de-sac walks through their side yards to get where they're going. But those are the kinds of considerations that have to be weighed in the balance, sometimes, against the common good -- public good of having a better flow of pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Archer - Generally speaking, if there's not a fence or something to prevent it, most of the pedestrians will find a way.

Mr. Blankinship - That's a good point, too. If we don't have a concrete sidewalk, we're likely to have just an opportunity path worn through the grass. A couple other notes; family subdivisions. We have right now a very rigid requirement for paved driveways to serve family subdivisions. We have run into a lot of situations where that requirement is very difficult to meet. And we would like to build some flexibility into the code. That is not actually in the draft that is before you. Again, we've sped this process up to the point

where you're actually reviewing a staff review draft. But the public review draft will provide for some flexibility in that requirement.

Mrs. Thornton - And what -- sorry.

Mr. Blankinship - Yes, ma'am?

Mrs. Thornton - What would be the, I guess, options? Are you letting them do gravel, or concrete, or stamped concrete, you know?

Mr. Blankinship - It would be on a case-by-case basis --

Mrs. Thornton - Okay.

Mr. Blankinship - -- by the Director of Public Works and the Director of Planning working together. I'll tell you about one case we've had recently. It's on Old Hanover Road out in -- I'm not sure if it's Fairfield or Varina, but it's the east end of the county. And there is an old farmhouse that has had a drive, a gravel road, going to it for a hundred years or more. And you know what a gravel road looks like after a hundred years. It's almost a paved road. And they actually went to the effort of having the Division of Fire Safety come out there and inspect it and make sure that they felt comfortable that fire apparatus could get to the house and back. But it still doesn't meet the requirement. The requirement is that it be paved with two inches of asphalt. So, you know, that was a case where we looked at it and thought, if we had the flexibility, we would probably apply it here, but we just don't.

Mrs. Thornton - Okay.

Mr. Blankinship - So it's really going to be a case-by-case determination of what's appropriate in each location.

Mrs. Thornton - Okay.

Mr. Blankinship - Utility and drainage easements required where necessary. Currently, in the code, there is a provision that's rather outdated. It says, and it's in quotes here, alley easements are currently required at the rear or side of every lot. And that's being removed and being substituted with easements required where necessary. So that's the development standards, Subdivision Design Standards, Article 19-3.

19-4, which is also in Module 3, is Required Improvements. And there are no major changes there. For the most part, the requirements remain the same. Monuments, streets, storm water drainage, water and sewer, electricity, telephone, other utilities, street name signs; those are all still required. Financial guarantees, most of that language is taken straight from the state code, so there are some minor updates to that. But most of that is remaining the same.

184 19-5, is going to introduce Cluster Subdivisions. And some of you have been in on these  
185 conversations in the past. There is a requirement in the state code that every county that  
186 has a zoning ordinance must provide for cluster subdivisions. And we have provided for  
187 that, in the past, through controlled-density subdivisions. But our consultant has revised  
188 that and has suggested to us that we adopt something following more closely the  
189 guidance in the state code. Let me put it that way. So, there's a requirement for these  
190 subdivisions. They only would occur in areas where large lots are required, because the  
191 idea is if you cluster onto smaller lots, you free up open space. So, they would require a  
192 conservation of 50 percent of the total land area. And there's a priority list, in the code,  
193 of the areas that we would most like to have preserved. For example, any historical areas,  
194 any culturally significant locations, sensitive environmental features, would be higher up  
195 on the list. So, it wouldn't just be the land that is hard to develop anyway that gets set  
196 aside.

197  
198 And you see here, this would only pertain to the A-1, R-0, R-0A, and R-1 Districts. And  
199 the A-1 and R-0A -- R-0 and R-0A currently have a minimum lot area of one acre. So,  
200 the lots would be able to come down to 20,000 square feet, or a little less than half an  
201 acre. And in exchange, as I said, 50 percent of the land would have to be conserved. R-  
202 1 requires 25,000 today. So those lots could come down to 12,500. But again, you'd be  
203 preserving the other half of the land. So, it nets out to about the same density for the  
204 developer. But they can save some cost, and in some cases, provide a better overall  
205 solution where there is something on the land that's worth preserving. And it is something  
206 that's required by state code, so it really should be in there in some form.

207  
208 And then, finally, as we've mentioned at each one of these work sessions, there are new  
209 definitions because there is new text. But there are only a handful that go with 19-7 with  
210 Module 3, and they're listed there for you. And again, nothing that anybody's going to  
211 have any arguments about. So, good. It didn't take too long to fight through that.

212  
213 We did want to reserve most of our time for the Form-Based Alternative Overlay District.  
214 And one of the illustrations that our consultant provided for us -- or subconsultant, actually,  
215 provided for us is on the screen there. It just kind of gets you in the right frame of mind  
216 for reviewing this code. All these work sessions, I've really tried to focus on the major  
217 changes from the current code. The Form-Based Code, I can't really do that because the  
218 whole thing is a major change. So, the whole Form-Based Code is new to us. So, you  
219 know, this is a great tool. We've talked about it many times. You all have been to those  
220 charrettes. You've heard about it at the Board Retreat. Several different times, we've  
221 mentioned this to you, so I know this is not news to you. But we do finally have the text  
222 to go with all the pretty illustrations, so we do want to go over it with you in some level of  
223 detail.

224  
225 The first section, of course, is the purpose and intent. And I want to actually read this into  
226 the record, because I just -- it sets the tone for the whole thing very well. The purpose of  
227 the FBA-O, Form-Based Alternative Overlay District, is to provide an alternative set of  
228 standards for targeted areas within the county, that may be used as an option by a  
229 landowner in place of the zoning district standards that apply in the base district, in order

230 to achieve a balance between vehicular- and pedestrian- oriented design, facilitate mixed-  
231 use walkable developments of higher densities. The FBA-O District standards allow  
232 landowners and developers to access otherwise untapped potential on a property, by  
233 allowing additional forms of development, by right, in exchange for a better public realm.  
234 So, I want to pull out a few of the key phrases in what I just read, to just to make sure,  
235 again, that everybody's got the right picture. To begin with, it is an alternative set of  
236 standards. The underlying zoning is not going away. So, in an area where there's B-3  
237 zoning, and we put the FBA-O on top of it, they still have the B-3 standards underneath.  
238 If it's residential zoning or industrial or office, whatever the underlying zoning is there, it  
239 is still there. And they can still use that if they want to. This is for targeted areas within  
240 the county. So, I'm going to go over in detail where the four locations are in a few minutes.  
241 And you are, again, already familiar with them.

242  
243 Mr. Mackey - And with you laying it over the top, that would be by-right?

244  
245 Mr. Blankinship - Yes, sir.

246  
247 Mr. Mackey - Okay.

248  
249 Mr. Blankinship - Yes. This would be by right. But it is only in targeted areas.  
250 This is not something that would pop up somewhere without, you know, our having  
251 anticipated it. It's areas where we know there is untapped potential. I like the way they  
252 wrote that. Otherwise untapped potential, where a property has been developed and  
253 there is a potential to redevelop the property in such a way that it can increase its intensity,  
254 increase investment in our older communities. And it is an option available to the  
255 landowner. Nobody is required to do this if they don't want to. As I said, if they have B-  
256 3 zoning, they can just continue to operate under their B-3 zoning with the same standards  
257 they've always had. But if they want to do more with their land, this is a set of options  
258 available to them.

259  
260 So, the middle of what I read, additional forms of development, by right. And that's really  
261 the key to this. There are options available to developers today if they rezone to UMU or  
262 they, you know, go through other machinations. But they're expensive, they are time-  
263 consuming, and those are things that drive away a lot of our development opportunities.  
264 This will be by right. So, you don't have to assemble your whole 20-acre site. You can  
265 take one portion of one of these four areas and develop it, by right. You would have to  
266 go through POD or through Subdivision, if that's necessary. So, it's not, again, completely  
267 unregulated. And there are a lot of standards written into this code that would have to be  
268 met, but they would not have to go through any discretionary reviews, or any public  
269 hearing reviews, or any legislative reviews. So, that's a major element of this for the  
270 development community.

271  
272 Mr. Archer - Mr. Blankinship?

273  
274 Mr. Blankinship - Yes, sir?

276 Mr. Archer - Targeted areas; now, how would we determine the targeted  
277 areas? Would that be --  
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279 Mr. Blankinship - So --  
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281 Mr. Archer - -- prior to?  
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283 Mr. Blankinship - I'm going to show you those at the end --  
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285 Mr. Archer - Oh.  
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287 Mr. Blankinship - -- of the slide show --  
288  
289 Mr. Archer - I'm sorry.  
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291 Mr. Blankinship - -- if that's all right.  
292  
293 Mr. Archer - Go right ahead.  
294  
295 Mr. Blankinship - That'd just be the most organized way, I think, to get there.  
296  
297 Mr. Archer - Okay.  
298  
299 Mr. Blankinship - So we're giving them additional development, by right. What  
300 is the public getting in exchange for that? We are getting a better public realm. Which  
301 this code is defining as a balance between vehicular and pedestrian-oriented  
302 development. Again, trying to get away from the suburban sprawl and produce more  
303 efficient development patterns that work better for the public. And also, mixed-use  
304 walkable development at higher densities, because you have to have those densities in  
305 order for it to be walkable. If somebody's going to walk from their home to a commercial  
306 business, it has to be within a quarter mile or so, or they won't do it. So that's generally  
307 what we're trying to get to here. The applicability, the four areas we're looking at -- I'm  
308 sorry, I keep bumping my mouse -- the Brookfield Office Park is one. The Parham Road  
309 and West Broad Street intersection is one. The Williamsburg Road Corridor, roughly from  
310 Laburnum to Airport Drive, is one. And then the Virginia Center Commons area around  
311 the mall. And I'll show you the maps of each one in just a minute. But there are, you  
312 know, clear boundaries for each one.  
313  
314 Now, within each of those areas -- and here are two of the maps just put up here as an  
315 illustration. Within each of the four development areas, there is a variety of development  
316 areas designated by the code. So, for example, mixed-use corridor exists only right  
317 around the intersection of Broad and Parham. This is Broad this way and Parham this  
318 way. So that area where they intersect is the only area that's designated a mixed-use  
319 corridor. Each of the districts though has a mixed-use core. Broad Street, you see it  
320 there. Brookfield; it's mostly covered by the illustration here, but the most dense area of  
321 Brookfield. And then there are areas in the other two districts as well. Each of them has

an area designated walkable corridor and walkable center. Which, again, you see designated by the slightly different colors here. And then a neighborhood general and the connected edge are areas where there are existing dwellings or it's anticipated that those will remain, probably as some sort of a low-density residential. But they are near the edge of the Form-Based area. And then the highway edge occurs only in the Brookfield Development along the Interstate. The purple color on the map here is the highway edge, and that's the only one.

So, there are four different districts. And within each of those districts, there are the different development areas. And the idea is that the same regulations that apply to the walkable corridor at Broad Street, apply to the walkable corridor at Brookfield, apply to the walkable corridor on Williamsburg Road, apply to the walkable corridor on Virginia Center. So, where those terms are used for each of the different areas, they're going to be the same, or at least very similar. The difference is in the way they're laid out on the maps. And that's one of the things that makes this code a little bit more complex than what we're used to reading in the straight-up zoning.

Then, within each of those areas, there's a definition of a street hierarchy -- which street is going to be considered primary, which are secondary, and which are tertiary. And some of the regulations, in terms of setbacks and build-to lines, depend on those street designations. There is a requirement that the developer build new street connections. So, I'm going to go back a page here. You see along Broad there are some new street connections indicated where there are now parking lots. So again, if the developer just wants to keep that a shopping center parking lot, they can do that. But if they want to redevelop that site to bring up the density and bring in some other uses, they have to give us a new street in exchange for that. Where we expect the new street -- wherever a new street is indicated on this map, the developer, if they want to take advantage of the overlay, they need to build that street segment in more or less that location. And it wouldn't have to be -- you know, engineers will require things to move a few feet here and there as they go through the process. But generally speaking, this road that I'm indicating on the map now, through Brookfield, does not exist today. And in order to make this Form-Based Development work, a street has to be built there. So as long as the owner just wants to keep the office park the way it is, they can do that. But if they want to redevelop it under the Form-Based Overlay, one of the things they're going to have to do is build that street. So, there's a requirement for new street connections. There are general street standards which, again, are not what we're used to, because for the last 50 years streets have just gotten wider and wider. And one of the things we've learned is that wider streets are not always better. And so, in order to make these areas walkable, the streets have to be narrower and the buildings have to be closer to the streets. So that changes the design of the streets somewhat.

There are specific requirements for alleys and for curve radii around the streets, again, in order to make it denser. In order to make the buildings come closer to the street, turns have to be a little bit sharper. Again, this is not what we're used to, but it's a different way of looking at developing these areas. There are specific streetscape requirements, in terms of a frontage zone, clear path and landscape strip, which you see kind of illustrated



before you here. This would be a row of buildings, commercial on the ground floor, and apartments above, or some mix of uses like that. And over on the other side of the drawing, you have the street. And in between, you have the sidewalk, but the sidewalk is only one element of the streetscape. There's also a frontage zone where you might have outdoor dining, or you might have some kind of display area. You might have signs or just street furniture.

And then on the opposite side there's some kind of landscaping strip to protect the sidewalk from the street, so you don't just have a six-inch curb between traffic moving 35 miles an hour and pedestrians on the sidewalk. There are specific requirements for street trees and for street lighting, both pedestrian and vehicular scale of lighting. And again, there are specific requirements for each of the different kinds of street types. There is also a requirement for provision of civic open space. And it's - there's a lot of flexibility built into it, which is why the slide lists different kinds of open space, a green, where you have streets around a green space; very different from a playground or a park where you wouldn't have the streets. A square or a plaza might not actually be green space. They might be paved and with street furniture in a more urban setting. But there are several different kinds of open space that the developer can choose from, depending on the specific location within the site -- what's most appropriate. But they will be required to provide civic open space, because that's one of the elements that brings people to the street, that gets them walking out of their residences and toward those shops. And nobody wants to walk, you know, through an unpleasant area to get from their home to a restaurant. They just -- they'll either drive or they won't go at all. So, it's all a part of making the whole system work with the mixed uses.

The frontage standards go on for several pages in the code. And this is really, in some ways, the heart of the district. The heart of the Form-Based concept is the way buildings meet the street. There are other very important elements to it but regulating the building height and then the building placement. Setbacks and build-to lines; again, we're used to setbacks. We're used to saying you can't come any closer to the street than 35 feet or 50 feet, or whatever it may be. We're a little less familiar with saying you can't be any farther from the street than 12 feet or 18 feet or 20 feet. So that's the concept of a build-to line. We draw a line like a setback line, except you have to pull the building up to that line, not push it back to that line. Again, the idea being, when the building meets the street in a different way, in a more urban way, you get that urban fabric, where people want to get out and walk along the streets, provided that you also have the protection that I talked about a minute ago. So different frontage elements, there's a lot of discussion of the different kinds of frontage elements and exactly how each one has to be designed. And it goes into a lot of detail. And again, I want to emphasize; the developer doesn't have to do any of this. But if he wants to take advantage of the increased density and the mix of uses, then we expect him to build to the form that we're trying to end up with.

So, this has got a little heavy, and I wanted to stop and illustrate it a little bit using some of the illustrations from one of the charrettes. This is Broad Street. Parham is just behind the picture here. This is Fountain Square Shopping Center in the top left. And this is Westland Shopping Center in the lower right. West Broad Street has a right-of-way here

110 feet wide. Westpark is set back about 250 more feet -- I'm sorry, Westland is set back about 250 feet. And Fountain Square is set back almost 350 feet. So, you do have some buildings on outparcels. But for the most part, you have 700 feet, from the front of this shopping center to the front of this shopping center, of just completely automobile-oriented space.

This is what our consultant has suggested doing in that same space. So, you see, back here, this storage use is still here. You see, here, the new Wawa is still here. But this is assuming that the owner of Fountain Square wants to redevelop, and the owner of Westland wants to redevelop. Which they may not want to do today. But they may want to do it in 5 years or 10 years or 20 years. So, you see the concept of the build-to line, where these buildings are brought up very close even to West Broad Street. You see through here, one of those streets that the developer, again, is going to be required to build a new street connection. There's also one here, but it's a little harder to read in this drawing because of the way it's oriented. And you see there is a lot of parking. There is a lot of surface-level parking still on these sites, but it doesn't look like that anymore. It's protected by the buildings now. There's a little bit of parking along the street, just to give a sense of activity. But the buildings are drawn up close to the road, even to Broad Street. New streets are built. There's a lot of green. There's a lot of landscaping. You see the sidewalks, and you can just see the activity. And this is a mix of uses.

And again, exactly how they mix the uses will vary as the market varies. The developer will have a great deal of flexibility in the mix of uses. There are some numbers in there that they will have to meet. There are some targets, but there will be flexibility within those overall standards. So that's what we're trying to get to with all of the frontage elements, and the street design, and all those things. Oh, I should also mention; at some point, structured parking is going to be necessary in some of these locations -- not in all of them, but in some. The parking will just -- as the buildings take up what is now parking, the solution to that will be structured parking. So --

Mrs. Thornton - I have a quick question. I'm sorry.

Mr. Blankinship - Yes, ma'am?

Mrs. Thornton - So if Fountain square, that side, decides to do it and the other side decides not to do it, are you okay with that?

Mr. Blankinship - Yes, ma'am. It is going to be a process. This is not going to happen all at once. This is not West Broad Village, where they took a green field and built a UMU. And you may have, you know, one of these outparcels redevelop, and one of them not. And there probably will be some time where it looks like, you know, a row of teeth with one missing. And I actually took the existing and the phase, either 3 or 4, drawing out of this set of illustrations. The consultants did illustrate some steps along the way getting from here to there.

Mrs. Thornton - Okay. Because I just see, like --

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461 Mr. Blankinship - But I didn't show all of that to you today.

462  
463 Mrs. Thornton - -- not every land, person, you know, wanting to sell and do  
464 this. And then you're having that road put in, but who has to put that road in, if only the  
465 Popeyes decides to put in a building?

466  
467 Mr. Blankinship - Right. Those are the kind of decisions that will have to be  
468 made, case by case, as we see this actually play out on the ground.

469  
470 Mrs. Thornton - Okay.

471  
472 Mr. Blankinship - It will be simpler when the larger parcels redevelop. If those  
473 come in first, then they will build the street and, you know, some of that other  
474 infrastructure, and that will make it easier for the smaller parcels to follow along. But that  
475 may not happen in every case. Mr. Witte?

476  
477 Mr. Witte - How does this affect the balance between our residential and  
478 nonresidential properties? It seems like we're going to change the balance substantially.

479  
480 Mr. Blankinship - That's a very good point. As we allow residential growth to  
481 take place on some of these sites that have not had residential growth before, those  
482 numbers will increase. I think the answer to that is that that residential development is  
83 probably going to go somewhere. So what we're trying to do is steer it to redevelopment  
484 areas where the streets are already there, the utilities are already there, there's already  
485 paving on the ground, rather than having it go out to green field areas, which is more  
486 expensive for the public. The public bears higher costs in the green field areas. Of  
487 course, the developer has lower costs in green field areas, which is why we have to allow  
488 some kind of incentive here to make it worth the developer's time to do any of this.

489  
490 Mr. Witte - Was this going to be residential in this section, too? Correct?

491  
492 Mr. Blankinship - Yes, sir. It would be. Mixed uses would be allowed. If the  
493 developer finds that residential is what the market calls for in one particular location, then  
494 residential mixed use would --

495  
496 Mr. Witte - Can we make sure that it balances?

497  
498 Mr. Blankinship - We will certainly have our eye on that as we go along, as we  
499 always do.

500  
501 Ms. Moore - Comprehensive Plan process.

502  
503 Mr. Blankinship - Ms. Moore just mentioned; the comprehensive plan process  
504 will really drive that discussion, because, you know, this is four relatively small areas  
505 within the county.

506  
507 Mr. Emerson - There is a percentage mix requirement for this.  
508  
509 Mr. Blankinship - Yeah. There is a percentage mix requirement now.  
510  
511 Mr. Witte - Right.  
512  
513 Mr. Blankinship - Yeah. But you cannot just come into an area and do a  
514 hundred percent residential. It would have to be a mixed-use. You would have to  
515 maintain that ratio.  
516  
517 Mrs. Thornton - Yeah. See, that's where I feel like it might be a little  
518 challenging if only one developer wants to do it.  
519  
520 Mr. Blankinship - Right.  
521  
522 Mrs. Thornton - You know? We'll see.  
523  
524 Mr. Blankinship - Yeah. In some of these areas, you know, we expect that large  
525 land owners are going to approach --  
526  
527 Mrs. Thornton - Right.  
528  
529 Mr. Blankinship - -- the county relatively quickly and have major projects in  
530 mind. Other areas, we don't really anticipate that in the next few years. But we want this  
531 tool to be available if somebody does want to do that.  
532  
533 Mr. Archer - You know, Mr. --  
534  
535 Mr. Emerson - One thing, Ben, you want to stress here; you do have a lot of  
536 divided interests, both in this corridor, and in the Williamsburg Road Corridor. This is to  
537 try to incentivize redevelopment of these areas. And we really need to begin to get that  
538 to happen. And the only way you can really get that to happen, without having public  
539 investment, is to give the private sector incentive to do it themselves and realize the  
540 return. And when Ben talks to you about the Williamsburg Corridor, you'll see where there  
541 is a potential of what someone could do with a hotel site that's singularly owned. You  
542 have a lot of divided interests in this area, so it's going to have to kind of be organic and  
543 start in bits and pieces, and so the values will raise and it'll build on itself. So, you would  
544 never see this happen overnight. But it's definitely going to be a slower go where you  
545 have all these separate parcels. And you'll never see anyone come in and assemble all  
546 of this either.  
547  
548 Mr. Archer - Right.  
549  
550 Mr. Emerson - Because, financially, it probably would not be feasible. Two  
551 of these areas are essentially under one ownership, that have been designated. But two

552 of them are true revitalization efforts, redevelopment efforts. And that's this area, and  
553 that's the Williamsburg Road Corridor.

554  
555 Mr. Archer - You know, it's quite amazing; nobody except me and maybe  
556 Mr. Witte is old enough to remember, but when you came west on Broad Street from  
557 down where the Kmart used to be -- I can't think -- Glenside --

558  
559 There was nothing. There was a drive-in theater at the corner of West Broad --

560  
561 Mr. Witte - Hungary Spring and Broad.

562  
563 Mr. Archer - -- and probably Hungary Spring.

564  
565 Mr. Witte - Hungary Spring and Broad.

566  
567 Mr. Archer - And once you passed the drive-in, that was it.

568  
569 Mr. Blankinship - I don't remember the drive-in. I do remember the first few  
570 times I came to Richmond on 64, coming from the west, I had to remember not to get off  
571 at 250 the first couple of opportunities --

572  
573 Mr. Archer - You're right.

574  
575 Mr. Blankinship - -- because there was nothing there.

576  
577 Mr. Archer - Yeah. It's amazing how this has developed and is now at the  
578 point where it sort of needs to be redone again, but --

579  
580 Mr. Blankinship - Exactly.

581  
582 Mr. Archer - As far as West Broad Street is, I mean, you just rolled up West  
583 Broad Street. There were trees, and then a bunch --

584  
585 Mr. Blankinship - And that's exactly the issue. That's also the case with the  
586 suburban office parks. They were exactly what they needed to be at the time they were  
587 developed. But as development has changed, since the office market has changed, what  
588 we expect to see in those office parks has changed as well. And so now, today, you  
589 know, in these shopping centers, we have some vacancies, and we have some uses that  
590 are less intense than what we would like to see. And if putting some apartments there is  
591 what it takes to make the shopping -- the commercial property valuable enough for a more  
592 marketable user to go in there, then that's the kind of synergy that we're hoping to see.  
593 You can't put a restaurant where nobody's going to go. But if you have a row of buildings  
594 there where people are living and working, now you build a restaurant and you've got a  
595 clientele. That's the theory. We'll see exactly how it plays out in each of the four areas,  
596 and each of them will be different.

597

Trying to get through this. The use standards, this is what we've been discussing. It does allow a mixture of residential and nonresidential uses, by right, depending on the development area. So, in the mixed-use core, we're expecting mostly office and commercial users, with some residences. In the connected edge, we're expecting mostly residential, with some commercial uses. So, depending on where you are within each of those four districts, will determine exactly what the mixture of uses is allowed. Auto-oriented uses are focused on the highway edge in the Brookfield area, and the mixed-use corridor developmental area in the West Broad and Parham intersection. So, throughout the rest of those districts, and throughout the other two, Virginia Center and Williamsburg Road, we do not expect a lot of auto-oriented uses going into these new developments. Where they exist already, again, they can continue to exist as long as they are profitable. And then when it comes time for them to redevelop, they can redevelop under this.

Among the other development standards, parking. Again, a lot more shared parking standards. Very specific requirements for the location and access for the parking, so that you don't drive down the street and see that 300-foot sea of parking. You drive down the street and you see the buildings, and the parking is on the other side. And there are specific regulations for how the accesses get into those parking areas. New buildings have very specific requirements for entrance locations. Façade transparency, again, one of the things that makes it pleasant to walk in an urban area, is that you're walking by storefronts that you can see into and people can see out of. And those kinds of requirements are written into this. Some storefront elements will be allowed to encroach very close to, if not into, the right-of-way. There are also requirements for some -- there are specific requirements for what are called specialty buildings. Liner buildings are very shallow buildings along a parking garage so that you don't see the parking garage, you see a building that may only be 20 or 25 feet deep, and then the parking garage is behind it. There are specific guidelines for how to design gas stations if you put one in one of these districts, and how to design restaurants or other uses with drive-thru windows. And again, those are not the preferred uses in these districts, but they will be allowed in some places.

There are specific requirements for signs. For the most part, making them more pedestrian in scale, keeping them lower down and smaller signs that you're expected to read while walking, not while driving. They are exceptions again on Broad and Parham, where the traffic is moving 55 miles an hour, 45 miles an hour. We're not simply trying to do too much, in terms of traffic calming on those major arterials. But on the streets within these districts, we expect the signage to be at a smaller scale. And I mentioned, briefly, lighting. There are requirements for lighting, both for streetlights for cars as well as pedestrian lighting everywhere the pedestrian paths are provided. Okay.

So that brings us to the four subdistricts. So now I'm going to show you the maps that we've been promising you. Each one has an illustrative plan, a regulating and street hierarchy plan, and then illustrations showing how this development could be phased. So, this is the Brookfield area, Broad Street along the left edge of the screen, 64 across the north, Bethlehem Road coming down this way, and then Dickens along the bottom. So again, you see the existing buildings are illustrated here in the darker gray. This, I

644 don't know, rose color, that is potential locations where it would be possible for a  
645 developer to build a building. The street network, again, is required. So, if they want to  
646 build these buildings, they have to build the street network, so the buildings will probably  
647 follow the street. Again, there are requirements for how the buildings have to be related  
648 to the streets. You see the street trees illustrated on here. You see parking areas. These  
649 are parking structures that exist here. And I guess that one -- it's indicated the same on  
650 the map, so I assume that one also exists. I don't remember it. But there may be a need  
651 for additional parking as well.

652  
653 And then here's the illustration that the consultants -- I couldn't think of the word -- the  
654 illustration the consultants provided for Brookfield. And you see a fairly large office  
655 building back against 64, where you're not affecting the neighbors. And Mr. Witte, that's  
656 part of the answer to your question. If you can put up a hundred foot or so, you know,  
657 eight- or ten-story office building, that's going to help a lot with those ratios, if it's  
658 something that the market demands. Right now, there's not a lot of demand for a new  
659 office. But again, this is Brookfield, where we are expecting a proposal that will bring  
660 about some of this in a shorter term. But there is also a substantial amount of new  
661 residential development shown here, and a substantial amount of mixed-use  
662 development. And then, as you get farther back from the highways, it steps down to the  
663 existing residences. So, you know, the intent there is where it's visible from existing  
664 neighborhoods or would have an impact on existing neighborhoods the development  
665 would be significantly less intensive. It would be more similar to the neighborhoods. So  
666 that's Brookfield.

57  
668 Here is Parham and Broad. And again, the same illustration we talked about a minute  
669 ago here. But here is Broad Street running from top left to bottom right, and then Parham  
670 coming across the site this way. So, you see a new street connection through here, new  
671 streets running in the opposite direction. Potential for, again, a lot of mixed-use  
672 development coming up closer to Broad Street, where today we just have the sea of  
673 parking. And again, this is one where it would be more of a long-term commitment by the  
674 county to see more and more of these parcels develop over the years. This is probably  
675 not going to happen this quickly.

676  
677 Williamsburg Road, obviously from left to right here. Laburnum at the left end of the  
678 screen. South Airport at the right end. Mr. Emerson mentioned one particular project,  
679 which is one of the older hotels, along the north side of Williamsburg Road. I did not  
680 include the detailed illustrations of that. But the owner of that hotel came and spent a  
681 significant amount of time with the consultants at the charrette during the week. And they  
682 worked out a design that he was apparently very pleased with, where about half of the  
683 existing hotel would come down and be replaced with mixed-use development. The other  
684 half of the hotel would be improved, with some additional parking and a tower element  
685 being added, and a possible restaurant location being added. And the owner of the hotel  
686 felt that that was a project that would really be feasible and viable. So that's one site  
687 along this corridor that, you know, right now he doesn't have any of those options. Right  
688 now, he can keep the hotel or he can demolish it and build something else that's allowed

in B-3. But he can't do any mixed use because he can't assemble enough land to do a UMU District. So, this would open up opportunities that are not there now.

Mr. Witte - Do you know, is that the Best Western?

Mr. Emerson - Yeah.

Mr. Blankinship - Yes. Mr. Emerson says yes. Also, a neat little illustration here. They had an example where another airport had set up an out-of-service aircraft and turned it into a restaurant. And it's a real thing somewhere else, so there is the potential that it could happen here. And again, the development staff from the airport met with the consultants, during the charrette, for quite some time, and just discussed different options and what they would be interested in doing. The airport owns a lot of the land between Williamsburg and South Airport as South Airport comes around the curve there. Some of that is floodplain, but some of it is developable land. So, you're seeing a lot green around this airplane used as a structure. One idea of what could potentially happen there. Maybe not the most likely idea, but one idea of what could happen. And again, it's -- they had examples from somewhere else where that is in use.

And finally, the Virginia Center Commons area, which everybody is very familiar with. In the illustration back here, the back center, is the proposed convocation center for the county. We do see the existing office and hotel buildings back there. What you do not see is most of the existing mall. The assumption is, that over time, that will come down and be replaced with mixed-use development. So here is a plan view. Brook Road, of course, is on the left edge. The Interstate is along the right edge. Hanover County is just at the top of the page here. So, the convocation center brought out in red. And then again, a lot of this street network exists as parking lot drive aisles. So it would not be building new streets, so much as improving parking lot drive aisles and turning them into streets; building curb and gutter, and putting in the street trees, and everything that needs to be done to meet the standards of this code. And then development being brought, again, right up to those streets. Parking back behind. Opportunities for structured parking where it makes sense and when it makes sense. And the office and hotel development back here would be brought into -- not literally a part of the development necessarily but connected to the development of the overall site. Where there are existing businesses, they could remain for some amount of time. In the future, they may be redeveloped. That would be, you know, again, up to the individual property owners. So that is the end. 6:24, not bad. That is the end of my prepared remarks. And if you have any questions, I will allow Ben Sehl to answer them.

Mr. Archer - This is quite interesting, Mr. Blankinship, to say the least. And not a bit boring. I'm serious, it wasn't. It went very quickly. Anybody have questions?

Mr. Witte - What time's dinner?

Mr. Blankinship - We're got a few more items on the agenda before dinner.



735 Mr. Archer - Mr. Blankinship, in looking at some of the things that you've  
736 introduced as possibilities; the people that you are meeting with, do they bring these  
737 things, these ideas, like the airplane in the middle of anywhere?  
738

739 Mr. Blankinship - I think the consultants actually brought that idea.  
740

741 Mr. Archer - Right.  
742

743 Mr. Blankinship - But again, they met with John --  
744

745 Mr. Emerson - John Rutledge.  
746

747 Mr. Blankinship - -- Ruther? Yeah, John Rutledge.  
748

749 Mr. Archer - Okay.  
750

751 Mr. Blankinship - I wanted to say Rutherford, and I knew that was wrong. John  
752 Rutledge from the airport staff, you know, to discuss what their long-term vision is,  
753 because they have their own master plan. So, we wanted to make sure that the two were  
754 in sync.  
755

756 Mr. Archer - Well, does this -- and again, it's just quite amazing when I look  
757 back at -- I guess I'm a lot older than I like to think I am -- but how West Broad Street used  
758 to be years ago. And I guess I must be talking about close to 50 years ago, because  
759 there was no Willow Lawn. You just came up Broad Street. I believe it was just a two-  
760 lane road. And basically, when you got to where the drive-in used to be, there was nothing  
761 there. You may as well turn around and go back. And once, you know, when the  
762 shopping centers came along, like Fountain Square and the one on the other side, what  
763 is it, Westland?  
764

765 Mr. Blankinship - Yes.  
766

767 Mr. Archer - And they have changed so much since they first opened up,  
768 as to what the occupancy of the buildings are. You know, that was something that was  
769 quite fabulous back then. And now, when you think about it, you know, that's sort of going  
770 in a different path.  
771

772 Mr. Blankinship - Well, all these things have a life cycle.  
773

774 Mr. Archer - Yeah, they do.  
775

776 Mr. Blankinship - And that's really the goal of this, is to take these four areas  
777 where a lot of the buildings have completed their life cycle, and the site, as a whole is  
778 completing its life cycle, and get the new investment in there for the next 50 years.  
779

780 Mr. Archer - Yeah. The big building out at the front, which I guess is a pet  
781 shop now, or is it a sewing place now? One or the other. It used to be a pet store, and  
782 then there was -- was it Hechingers? Or what was the name of that store that used to be  
783 right on the corner?  
784  
785 Mr. Blankinship - Of which site?  
786  
787 Mr. Emerson - Is that Merchant's Square?  
788  
789 Mr. Archer - Yeah, and I meant Merchants Walk.  
790  
791 Mr. Blankinship - Oh, Merchants Walk?  
792  
793 Mr. Archer - Yeah.  
794  
795 Mr. Blankinship - Yes, that's a little farther.  
796  
797 Mr. Archer - Right.  
798  
799 Mr. Blankinship - Back towards town.  
800  
801 Mr. Archer - Those things have turned over so many times, they all have  
802 become new things from what they used to be. And it's quite amazing when you look  
803 back at it and think about when all that happened.  
804  
805 Mr. Blankinship - I think you can just make out, in this illustration right here, is  
806 the cactus. We had a good laugh with the consultants when they saw that. They could  
807 not figure out how that got there. Because today, there's nothing west about that area of  
808 Broad Street. But --  
809  
810 Mr. Emerson - And the cactus is proposed to remain.  
811  
812 Mr. Blankinship - That's right. That's a national historic landmark.  
813  
814 Mr. Emerson - Yeah.  
815  
816 Mr. Blankinship - But at the time, that was the western edge of civilization. So,  
817 I guess that's why they named it Westland and used the cactus as the symbol. Yeah,  
818 they thought we were nuts when we told them that nothing could happen to that cactus.  
819 That had to remain.  
820  
821 Mrs. Thornton - I love that sign.  
822  
823 Mr. Archer - Okay. Anybody with any questions at all? Do we have  
824 anybody on Webex listening that might have a question, or is this a public hearing for --  
825

826 Mr. Blankinship - It's not a public hearing. It's only a work session.  
827  
828 Mr. Archer - Okay.  
829  
830 Mr. Blankinship - And I don't think we are on Webex. We are live -streaming -  
831  
832 Mr. Archer - Right.  
833  
834 Mr. Blankinship - -- but not for participation.  
835  
836 Mr. Archer - Well, Mr. Blankinship, if there are no questions, we want to  
837 thank you so much for your presentation. It's a very interesting one.  
838  
839 Mr. Blankinship - Thank you. And as always, it's been a pleasure. And as  
840 Mr. Emerson said, you have, as a group, made a number of excellent comments, and  
841 asked questions, and made suggestions during these work sessions. So, in October, I'd  
842 like to come back to you with a list of all of those and our answers and responses.  
843  
844 Mr. Archer - Well, we would very much like to have you, sir.  
845  
846 Mr. Blankinship - And with any luck, we can then proceed to public hearing.  
847  
848 Mr. Archer - Okay.  
849  
850 Mr. Blankinship - And this, the Form-Based Code. I probably should've  
851 explained this a little more, but I think you're all familiar with it. The Form-Based Code  
852 has taken on its own time requirements, so that is being broken off from the rest of the  
853 code, and we are proposing that it be adopted sooner, so.  
854  
855 Mr. Archer - Okay. Thank you, sir.  
856  
857 Mr. Blankinship -- Thank you.  
858  
859 Mr. Archer - Mr. Secretary, do you have any remarks to make?  
860  
861 Mr. Emerson - Mr. Chairman, I have nothing further to add other than, of  
862 course, we've got our meeting at 7:00, so.  
863  
864 Mr. Chairman - Right.  
865  
866 Mr. Emerson - The Commission can recess when they feel appropriate.  
867 Mr. Baka was in attendance. He watched it on Simulcast.  
868  
869 Mr. Archer - Oh, okay.  
870  
871 Mr. Emerson - He said it was raining where he is, so. So, he decided to --

872  
873 Mr. Archer - It might be raining where we are.  
874  
875 Mr. Emerson - -- (indiscernible). I threatened him that I would ask the  
876 Commission to wave to him. So, he's out there, so.  
877  
878 Mr. Archer - Okay.  
879  
880 Mr. Emerson. But other than that, Mr. Chairman, I have nothing further to  
881 add to this session --  
882  
883 Mr. Archer - All right.  
884  
885 Mr. Emerson - -- this evening.  
886  
887 Mr. Archer - Thank you so much. Well, with that, then, we'll take a recess  
888 and I'll suspend this meeting until 7:00.  
889  
890  
891  
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893  
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899



Mr. C. W. Archer, Chairman



Mr. B. Joseph Emerson, Jr., Secretary