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* Indicates TTY 711 Accessibility



THE WEEK

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Questions or Comments? City of Falls Church, Harry E. Wells Building, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22046 **703-248-5003 (TTY 711)**

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FOR THE WEEK OF

City Center South. A Letter From the Mayor.

Plans for the City's downtown area have been explored for 40 years and have evolved into more specific mixed-use plans over the past seven. For years, the community has asked for a vibrant downtown—one we can walk to, gather around, and prosper from. Right now, our City Center South area has a series of parking lots, a bowling alley, and unkempt land. This is not a destination area for many of us, and it does not generate the long-term sustainable revenue we need to survive as an independent city without taxing residents out of their homes. Citizens spoke in 2002 by defeating (by 63 percent) a voter referendum calling for only commercial development in the City's downtown.

The Atlantic Realty Companies (ARC) proposal that stands before us today will bring a host of community benefits worth more than \$16 million and, once the project is complete, \$2.7 million in annual net revenue.

Most importantly, it will create a more cohesive, vibrant, and walkable downtown, which is vital to achieving the City Center vision. And, there will be parking in the form of 2,100 spaces in three garages, and about 57 on-street spaces.

Since December 2006, we have held public meetings to hear your thoughts on the project and have worked with our design team to address them. We have moved the Harris Teeter, lowered the height of buildings, expanded parking, and secured millions in community benefits. We have done all of this with fewer public funds than any other similar development in the region.

Your voices have been heard.

Wider sidewalks? Done. Not only are the sidewalks on the main corridors 14' or larger to accommodate easy walking and cafes, but the sidewalks on the secondary streets have also been widened.

Lower building heights? Done. The majority of the buildings in the original plan were 115', the tallest our special exception ordinance would allow. Through negotiations, these heights were lowered. The residential building in Phase 2 is now, at its highest point, 95' AND steps down significantly as it goes to Big Chimneys Park.

More parking? Done. Citizens have asked for parking and, through this plan, we will have additional parking in ALL of the buildings in the plan. This parking will accommodate everyone that shops in City Center South AND will provide significant parking to venues outside City Center South during evenings and weekends when it is most needed.

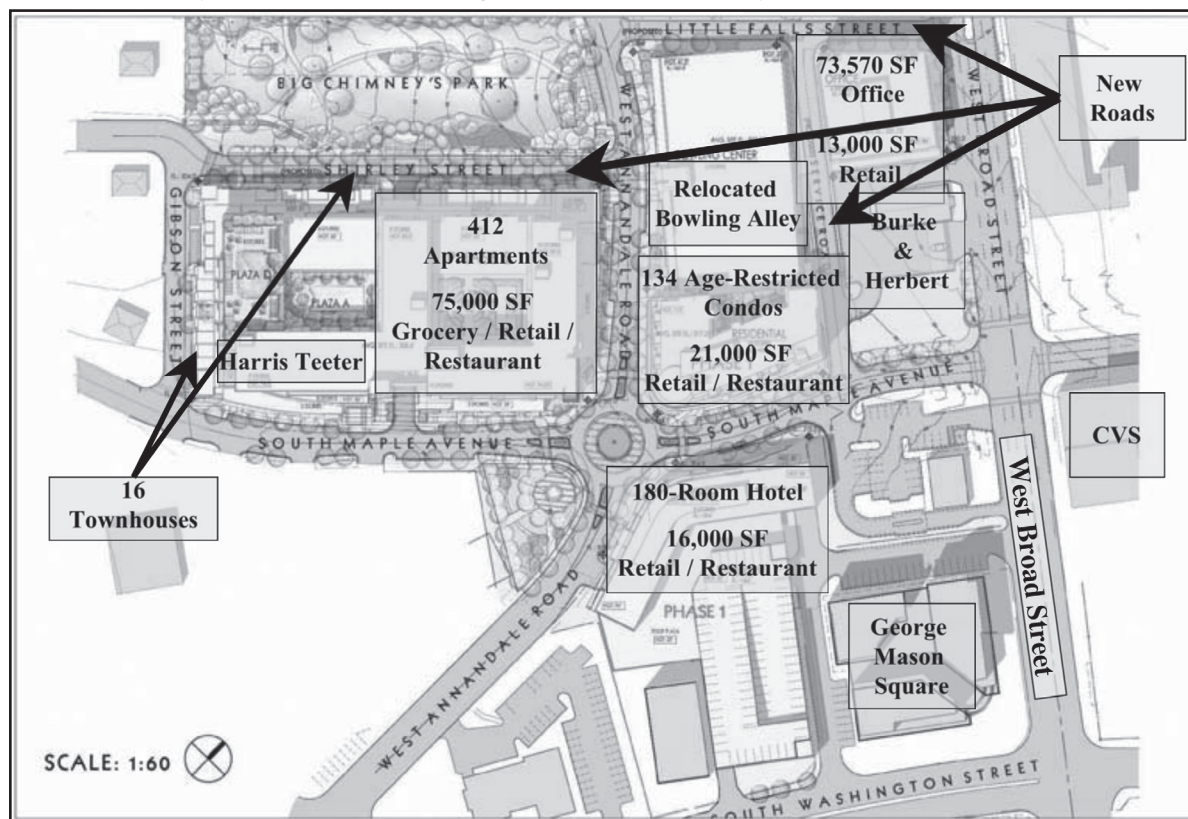
Keep public investment to a minimum? Done. Surrounding jurisdictions have spent up to \$100 million of public funds on projects that are approximately this size. Falls Church City is contributing approximately \$9 million. The anticipated revenue from this project makes this investment well worth it, in addition to the host of community benefits the developer is giving us – including road and utility infrastructure, affordable housing, open space improvements, and so much more.

Environmentally friendly designs? Done. All of the buildings in the project except for one will have green roofs. The developer will also participate in the Neighborhood LEED program, which will bring additional environmentally friendly features to the project.

Green space improvements? Done. Not only will there be funds to do a complete study of improvements to Big Chimneys Park, but the City will also gain a small park with a water feature and green space due to the straightening of Maple Avenue. Big Chimneys will no longer back up to a commercial property that has recently been considered an eyesore—the park will instead be surrounded by attractive buildings on all sides.

Bring a hotel to City Center South? Done. Initially, the planned hotel would have been very small due to space constraints—not what the citizens were looking for. The City convinced the developer to invest in additional land and build a hotel that would

accommodate conferences, events, a full-service restaurant, and stimulate retail on both sides of Maple. Although the proposed hotel is not what was originally asked for, it IS what studies by hotel consultants feel would be most successful in the City AND the hotel chain the developers are working with is willing to accommodate special requests from the City.



City Center South will be built in two phases over five years.

Move the grocery store away from the main corner of the development and put retail on the ground floor of every building? Done. This brilliant plan came out of the City Center Design Team in early 2007. This was a major plus for the City and our desire for vitality on the streets.

There has been a lot of community discussion, through the Planning Commission and public hearings, about why this project isn't the Street-Works project. The Street-Works conceptual plan was completed in 2002 and it called for a significant public investment of approximately \$35 million (in 2002 dollars). The City cannot afford that amount of public investment. In order to bring much of what Street-Works has talked about to the north side, we need an influx of dollars. City Center South allows us that opportunity.

City Center South also realizes the following concepts presented in the Street-Works plan:

- Consolidates control of a significant amount of land
- Supports the community life of Falls Church City
- Attracts a critical mass of private development
- Focuses development on the south side of Broad Street
- Connects the development to surrounding parcels and infrastructure to maximize future development and knit into the future development of the City
- Creates an address in the market to attract offices
- Targets retail to provide for the City and surrounding residents
- Capitalizes on our strengths with housing, location, and history

We are addressing all of those recommendations of the Street-Works plan. In addition, we are creating a great public gathering place with the Triangle Park and improvements to Big Chimneys Park.

Many of the concepts called for in the Street-Works conceptual plan are being implemented in City Center South with the anticipation of developing City Center North. What we are not doing is anchoring it with public facilities because that's where the \$35 million comes in. But, this is an affordable and good alternative for the City.

If Council approves the City Center South proposal on second reading (scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 28), we can move the process along to the next stage. The past two months have been filled with intensive public workshops, and those will continue. If Council approves the proposal, the next step in the process will be the architectural look and feel of the buildings. As it stands now, the proposal speaks to the building placement, height, and use. The design is up to us, and I urge you all to remain engaged in the process and share your feedback.

Warm regards,

Robin S Gardner

Mayor Robin S. Gardner

Timeline

- 1965 "A Plan for the Central Business District" lays groundwork for existing zoning, land use, and transportation circulation patterns.
- 1971 "Proposed Development Plan-Crossroads Area" recommends changes to traffic and land use patterns by elevating a large plaza and dense development above Broad Street with cars traveling through at-grade streets.
- 1988 "Central Business Special Strategy Area Report, Phase I" proposes urban changes to bring buildings closer to the street and closer together.
- 1999 State Theatre completes renovations and brings increased nighttime pedestrian traffic and demand for restaurants and activities.
- 2001 City contracts Street-Works Inc. to develop a strategic plan for City Center through an in-depth study and public review process.
- 2002 Street-Works plan for mixed-use City Center development receives popular public support and the Urban Land Institute's Smart Growth Alliance award.
- 2002 City Council appoints City Center Task Force to conduct independent fact-based analysis of final Street-Works report and make recommendations to Council on how to proceed.
- 2002 City Center Task Force seeks Master Developer to initiate the project, as recommended by the Street-Works report.
- 2004 City staff negotiates with Master Developer, but does not reach agreement on development program. City Council, upon recommendation of the City Center Task Force, terminates the Master Developer negotiations based on market interest, and begins to look to the private market for proposals.
- 2005 Council adopts City Center guiding principles and updates to the Comprehensive Plan, broadly based on Street-Works concepts.
- 2006 Negotiations begin with Centex Homes and Federal Realty for the north side of Broad Street, but after months of unsuccessful land assembly the development of City Center North is postponed indefinitely. Negotiations also begin with Atlantic Realty Companies (ARC) on the south side of Broad Street, where land assembly proves more feasible.
- 2006 (December) ARC submits application for City Center South mixed-use project.
- 2007 Design Team formed to review submission; major changes recommended. Numerous work sessions held by Planning Commission and City Council. Public review of ARC proposal (including public meetings, developer open houses, and community Deliberation Days). ARC submits revisions based on extensive comments.
- 2008 Public review of ARC proposal and first reading by Council on January 14.

Questions on City Center South? We've Got Some Responses.

Visit www.fallschurchva.gov/CityCenter to access a list of questions and answers.

Q: What is the commercial vs. residential breakdown of the proposed ARC project?

A: Roughly 39 percent commercial and 61 percent residential.

Q: Will our schools and other City services be overwhelmed by an influx of new residents?

A: City Center South is projected to generate approximately 75 new public school students. This estimate is based on ratios of students generated by similar residential dwellings and Falls Church City Public School (FCCPS) studies. Newer mixed-use development projects have produced lower ratios of students than expected.

The City's fiscal impact model accounts for all school operating costs associated with new students and subtracts that number and other municipal service costs from the net revenue number associated with new development. The developer has also offered to pay more than \$3 million to mitigate school capital costs.

Q: Is the City trying to put too much development into too small an area?

A: Among other positive outcomes, density increases the tax base. Compatible mixes of uses generate economic vibrancy and sustainability. Residents who can walk to work, shop, or relax at a nearby restaurant or park will enjoy the convenience of not having to drive to those destinations. Town

centers of this nature can produce 18-hour-a-day activity, commerce, and a sense of excitement not achievable in suburban shopping centers or office parks.

Q: Will new development in City Center South bring in stores and restaurants that will displace or kill our existing businesses?

A: Minimal displacement of existing business will occur in this first phase of City Center South development. Every effort will be made to incorporate existing businesses that wish to relocate into the new development.

Customer interest, activity, and excitement created by new retailers and other businesses in the redevelopment area should bring great opportunities for existing businesses that complement the new mix and position themselves to take advantage of the new commercial environment. The purchasing power of new residents and office workers just walking distance from established stores and restaurants should also benefit existing business retention and new recruitment.

Q: Is the Post Office getting pushed out of its space and the City?

A: The Post Office leases its facilities and the land it uses for customer, employee, and fleet parking. They have chosen to relocate this function to the 800 block of West Broad Street, where a new office building will be constructed. Distribution function location pending.



City Center South Public Hearings

Monday, Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, 300 Park Ave.

Thursday, Feb. 28*, 7:30 p.m.

Council Chambers*, 300 Park Ave.

*Council Vote

City Center South Geography

The City Center South proposal is within a 8.77-acre area bounded to the north by West Broad Street (200 block), to the south by Gibson Street, to the west by Big Chimneys Park, and to the east by South Washington Street. This is a portion of the 22-acre City Center area identified in the Comprehensive Plan, which is centered on Maple Avenue, north and south of West Broad Street.

CITY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 21** Original Pancake House
Library Appreciation Day
Story Hour, 10:30 a.m.
"Love Letters and Liniment,"
Cherry Hill Farmhouse, Noon
Board of Zoning Appeals, 7:30 p.m.
Environmental Services Council, 7:30 p.m.
Street Sweeping South of Broad Street
- 22** Armchair Travel Group, 10:30 a.m.
Street Sweeping South of Broad Street
- 23** Farmers Market, 9 a.m.-Noon
- 25** Yard Waste, Bundled Brush,
& Special Collections
Holiday Tree Collection
Story Hour, 10:30 a.m.
City Council, 7:30 p.m.
Volunteer Fire Department Training, 7:30 p.m.
- 26** Juvenile & Domestic Relations
Court in Session
Story Hour, 10:30 a.m.
School Board, 7:30 p.m.
- 27** General District Court in Session
Story Hour, 7 p.m.
- 28** Story Hour, 10:30 a.m.
Historic Architectural Review Board, 7:30 p.m.
- 29** 400 Years of Black Basketball History,
5-6 p.m. Art and Frame of Falls Church
(111 Park Ave.)
3rd Annual Black History Celebration &
Celebrity Basketball Game, 7 p.m.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FEBRUARY

- 21** 6 p.m. 4th Grade Art Show (TJ)
 - 22-23** Model UN (GM)
 - 26** 5:30 p.m. Mt. Daniel Book Fair (MD)
6:30 p.m. School Board Work Session
(City Hall)
7:30 p.m. School Board Meeting
(City Hall)
7:30 p.m. PTA (MEH)
 - 27** 5:30 p.m. Mt. Daniel Book Fair (MD)
 - 28** 7 p.m. Aladdin Jr. Musical (MEH)
7:30 p.m. Family Life Education
Adv. Comm. (GM)
 - 29** 7th Grade Band Festival @
Sandberg MS
7 p.m. Aladdin Jr. Musical (MEH)
- ### MARCH
- 1** 7 p.m. Aladdin Jr. Musical (MEH)
 - 3** 6:30 p.m. Special Ed. Adv. Comm. (TJ)
 - 4-5** 5, 8 & 11th Grade SOL Writing Test
(MEH/GM)
 - 4** 5 p.m. Mason @ Stuart (Baseball)
7:00 p.m. School Board Work Session
(MEH)
7:30 p.m. Langley @ Mason (G Soccer)
- (MD) Mt. Daniel Elementary
(TJ) Thomas Jefferson Elementary
(MEH) Mary Ellen Henderson Middle
(GM) George Mason High