

March 11, 2010

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The coalition of representatives from the Charles Village Civic Association, the Greater Remington Improvement Association, and the Old Goucher Neighborhood Association hereby submits our concerns and recommendations regarding the proposed development of 25th Street Station, at the request of the development team on March 9, 2010. The following list contains ideas and suggestions that not only have the support of the committee members, but of a broad group of residents comprising the constituencies of the communities surrounding the site. We strongly feel that our recommendations would greatly improve the accessibility, safety, and overall viability of the proposed development.

Traffic

- ∞ The proposed truck route (using North Avenue and Howard Street from the south) is a good solution to the concern of trucks using routes in higher density residential areas. We suggest that all possible measures be taken to ensure that trucks use this prescribed route in order to limit congestion, safety, and noise issues in the surrounding communities.
- ∞ We ask that tenants (the big box stores, especially) exercise their responsibility for managing the transportation routes of freight from all vendor delivery trucks entering and exiting the site in order to mitigate concerns with truck traffic.
- ∞ Bike safety is a major concern for many residents. Protective measures for bike riders near the site (especially on Maryland Avenue and 25th Street), such as separated bike lanes and traffic calming devices, would greatly improve safe access to the site for nearby residents. The bike route on Maryland Avenue would be most effective if located on the east side of the street, as proposed. This route needs to be clearly delineated from that of truck traffic to increase safety.
- ∞ Exploring traffic calming measures on Sisson Street, such as placing a speed bump on Sisson just north of 24th Street, would greatly reduce the risk of accidents and significantly mitigate the concerns with safety and noise presented by the increased traffic coming from the Jones Falls Expressway via 28th Street.
- ∞ Vehicular traffic in the residential communities north of 25th Street must not be increased. Areas of concern in the current design are Huntingdon Ave. and Howard Street north of 25th Street. Additional measures should be explored to discourage traffic from entering or exiting the development through these areas.

- ∞ The currently proposed location for the Lowe's truck loading zone is ideal. This location should also serve as the loading zone for the Wal-Mart, as previously proposed in early drafts of the site design. Limiting exterior storage of materials within truck loading areas will prevent pedestrian access routes from becoming compromised by both trucks and motorists. As proposed, the location of the Wal-Mart loading area would detract from the viability of the retail on Huntingdon Avenue and act as a barrier to pedestrian access.

Pedestrian Access and Safety

- ∞ Many residents in the surrounding communities will choose to walk to the site; making the location as safe and accessible as possible for pedestrians will encourage more activity in and near the stores and green spaces.
- ∞ Adding bump-outs to the sidewalks on the intersections of 25th Street and all north-south streets near the site will not only make these intersections safer, but provide additional off-street parking for nearby residents.
- ∞ Creating pedestrian scale street lighting on all perimeter streets (similar to those installed in the North Charles Village PUD) would be an effective way to increase safety for pedestrians at night and extend the hours of customer activity at the site.
- ∞ Safe walking paths must connect the east and west portions of the site, activating communication and transportation throughout the location and encouraging travel between stores and residential units.
- ∞ Adding timed electric signals on the traffic lights, improving the visibility of crosswalks, and ensuring that all sidewalks near the site meet the required four feet in width would all be advisable methods to encourage pedestrian activity and promote the safety of visiting patrons.

Major Entrances

- ∞ Utilizing Howard Street and 25th Street as primary identifiers/locators would bring visitors from the surrounding region to the site since those two streets are the most familiar and recognizable of the streets bordering the development.
- ∞ By clarifying and clearly marking major entry points, visitors will be better able to navigate the site, making it more user-friendly and mitigating traffic congestion in the immediate area.

- ∞ A point on Howard Street, between 24th Street and 25th Street, is the ideal location for a clearly identified, signalized main entrance to both the east and west portions of the site. Howard Street is a recognizable thoroughfare and is better suited to increased car and truck traffic than the other streets in the surrounding area.
- ∞ Adding a turning lane with a left arrow signal on Howard Street south of an entrance located between 24th Street and 25th Street would make turning left into the entrance easier for those traveling from the southern part of the city.
- ∞ Visitors traveling to the site from the east would most likely use 25th Street to approach the northern entrance. Since many of these visitors will be walking or biking, and since 25th Street is a recognizable retail corridor, any entrance on the northern face of the development would be best utilized if it were made safe for pedestrians and encouraged exiting cars and trucks to use southbound Howard Street instead of traveling through nearby residential areas.

Design and Identity

- ∞ It is important that the design of the site relate the scale and architectural character of the project with that of the surrounding neighborhoods. Many residents are concerned that the design as proposed is still too suburban in feel; changing design elements to make the site more urban and scaled to pedestrian use would increase the accessibility and viability of both the retail and housing.
- ∞ The landscaping and sidewalk improvements proposed for the south side of 24th Street would be met favorably by residents and would increase pedestrian activity near the site. These improvements could be extended to 26th Street along Sisson Street to further encourage engagement from residents to the west of the development.
- ∞ The circulation tower currently proposed for the southeast corner of the parking deck on the west side of the development is unnecessary. Removing it would make the site more aesthetically pleasing and eliminate a potentially dangerous area.
- ∞ The design elements for the corners of the property would have the most impact if they were kept consistent and used primarily for signage directing visitors to the main entrances and exits. Such signage would make the space more inviting and user-friendly. Special attention should be paid to the eastern corner of the Huntingdon Avenue building, since this corner will appear to be the terminus of 25th Street.
- ∞ Allowing locations on the perimeter walls for design elements that soften the aesthetic of the space, such as murals, windows, greening, and displays would bring the architecture closer to a pedestrian scale, making the space captivating and inviting.

- ∞ The parking ramp along Howard Street on the east side of the development must be removed and relocated internally for safety and aesthetic reasons.
- ∞ The proposed green space/courtyard on 25th Street helps soften the perimeter of the site. Delineating this space from the proposed entrance near it would help avoid confusion and traffic congestion in that area. More green elements could be added to the design of the perimeter to better integrate the site into the immediate surroundings and make it more aesthetically pleasing to visitors and nearby residents.
- ∞ The existing Anderson Honda building should be removed and replaced with a new building hugging the corner of Howard Street and 25th Street. This would help activate and contribute to the consistency of retail along the 25th Street business corridor, make the overall site more urban in nature, and restore the retail presence one held by 25th Street. By occupying this corner, in conjunction with the remaining portion of the partially demolished Anderson Showroom building, a visual termination and boundary are created at the northern edge of the development, reinforcing its identity across two sites and strengthening the site's overall presence.

Greening

- ∞ Adding trees and green spaces is vital to making the architecture of the site gently ease into that of the surrounding communities. Many residents are also concerned with the environmental impacts of this development on surrounding areas, and including more green design elements will help mitigate these concerns.
- ∞ Increasing the number of trees planted near the site (with a recommended spacing of no more than 20 feet) will soften the edges of the perimeter and make the space more inviting.
- ∞ Maximizing the green space around the perimeter of the site, including a continuous green edge on Howard Street, with a knee-high fence enclosing it, would deter jaywalking and could help delineate major entrances to the site.

Sincerely,

Task Force Committee Members:
Charles Village Community Association
Greater Remington Improvement Association
Old Goucher Neighborhood Association