To CBC or not to CBC?

Lincolnia Redevelopment & Preservation Strategies

Alison Anoik, Hilary Goldfarb, Carlton Hart, Rick Liu, Zach Williams

Problem Statement
Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning is interested in evaluating the benefits and challenges of designating an approximately 200-acre portion of the Lincolnia Planning District as a Community Business Center (CBC). We were asked to explore questions relating to Corridor Planning, Regional Context, and Connectivity, Affordable Housing and Social Equity; and Economic Impacts.

What is a Community Business Center (CBC)?
Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan:
These centers typically are planned for over a 3,000,000 square feet of commercial space. Historically, older community-serving commercial areas that emerged along major roadways, CBCs are areas where redevelopment should encourage a mix of uses focused around a core area of higher intensity, such as a town center or main street in a pedestrian-oriented setting. Transitions in intensity and compatible land uses should protect surrounding stable residential neighborhoods.

Why are CBCs Important?
Effective July 1, 2016, Virginia Code limits the ability of local governments to request or accept proffers related to new residential development. However, the proffer restrictions do not apply to an approved small area comprehensive plan that:
1. is designated as a revitalization area,
2. encompasses mass transit (includes buses),
3. includes mixed-use development, AND
4. allows a density of at least 3.0 FAR in a portion thereof.

A designated CBC in Lincolnia that meets these criteria would be exempt from the proffer legislation provisions.

How can Existing International Markets and Small Businesses be Retained?

- Regulatory Solutions: June big box retailers ability to move into areas through rezonings which help protect existing businesses.
- Affordable Commercial Space Requirements: Similar to incineratory zoning requirements.

Connectivity and Regional Context

- RECOMMENDATIONS:
  - Focus new eastwest connections within the CBC area to enhance mobility and value of place.
  - New eastwest multi-modal connections to enhance neighborhood connections.
  - Develop streetscape design standards to improve safety, encourage non-vehicular transportation, and improve aesthetics.
  - Create mobility hubs at Lincolnia Plaza and Linclolniaen.
  - Develop local road project in areas to provide access to CBC.
  - Complete pedestrian network in the vicinity of Chambliss Road and Linclolniaen.
  - Identify key pedestrian connection points to connect sub-areas across heavily traveled roadways, while considering traffic and safety concerns.
  - Prioritize pedestrian crossings at bus stops.
  - Create non-vehicular connection over Little River Turnpike.
  - Improve access and safety along existing bycyle routes (Little River Turnpike, Beauregard Street, and Linclolniaen).

How can Fairfax County Preserve and Expand Affordable and Work-force Housing in Lincolnia while Encouraging Economic Development?

- Housing affordability increases as the overall housing supply increases.
- Fairfax County Development fees risk outspacing average rent.
- Market realities govern - single development cannot achieve every public policy priority.
- Mixed income and affordable housing communities require significant County support (financing strategies, accelerated entitlement processes)
- Flexibility must guide decisions.
- Density should be a carrot, not a stick burdened with costlier regulatory or proffer structure. Consider carefully where 3.0 FAR could be implemented.
- Effective implementation will facilitate, not force, market changes.

Lincolnia CBC SWOT

Strengths/Opportunities
- Articulates vision for area.
- Brings stakeholders to the table.
- Mechanism for obtaining greater public benefits.
- Allows more comprehensive planning analysis.
- Integrates redevelopment concepts to plan area.
- Relatively minor modifications can be mutually beneficial.

Weaknesses/Challenges
- Market may not support CBC density in long-term.
- New infrastructure as market catalyst is questionable.
- Location near major highway interchange is a challenge to pedestrian oriented development.
- Will require coordination with City of Alexandria – added complexity.
- Redevelopment may already advance plan goals.
- Greater "inactions" may hinder redevelopment.