



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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## Mason Row Proposal

### Neighborhood Transportation Workshop

March 30, 2015

#### Introduction

On March 30, 2015, City of Falls Church staff hosted a public workshop to discuss anticipated transportation impacts of the proposed Mason Row project. Approximately 50 community members participated in the workshop. The document includes the following:

1. A summary of the concerns raised by workshop participants;
2. The information presented by City staff regarding neighborhood parking programs and parking requirements;
3. Other solutions raised residents, but not fully discussed given time limitations;
4. Other topics raised during the meeting, but not fully discussed because they were outside the scope of the meeting;
5. A summary of the survey responses submitted by workshop participants; and
6. All notes from the breakout groups as written on the flip charts.

During the meeting, participants raised a number of transportation concerns. Most of them had to do with parking and traffic in adjacent neighborhoods.

In general, participants reported that they were satisfied with their ability to express their concerns and participate in the workshop. Most participants supported holding similar workshops for future development proposals.

#### 1. Next Steps

Notes from this workshop will be posted on the project website and shared with City Council, the Planning Commission, the Citizen Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT), and City staff. City staff will review the concerns raised and seek to address them as the project continues through the application process.

## 2. Summary of Concerns

During the meeting, participants broke up into neighborhood-level groups to discuss their transportation concerns. Then, each group reported out its list of concerns to all participants. This list summarizes the concerns raised by all groups.

### 2.1 Parking

**Spillover Parking:** Participants were concerned that if insufficient automobile parking is provided onsite or if visitors and/or tenants are required to pay for parking then parking will spill over into adjacent neighborhoods.

**Garage Layout and Parking Space Size:** Participants were concerned that the garage layout would be difficult to navigate or that spaces would be difficult to access.

**Parked Cars Being Hit:** Participants living along Grove Ave and Park Ave reported parallel parked cars being struck by passing vehicles and stated that the narrowness of the road was a factor.

### 2.2 Traffic

**Neighborhood Traffic Impacts:** Participants were concerned that automobile traffic volumes would increase on neighborhood streets. Participants were concerned that this traffic would travel too fast. Participants were also concerned that the increased volume would lead to congestion and slower speeds. Possible sources of new traffic included: new residents, visitors to the site, overflow traffic from West Broad Street, construction traffic, and a Metro shuttle. Participants were concerned about vibration, noise, light, and safety impacts of increased traffic.

**Neighborhood Access:** Participants were concerned that additional vehicles would lead to (or increase the occurrence of) residents being blocked from entering or exiting neighborhood streets and driveways.

**Traffic Impact Analysis:** Participants expressed concerns about the validity of the traffic impact analysis performed by the development team. Participants were particularly concerned with the data collection (time of year and days of week) and whether the results were validated by City staff.

**Traffic Enforcement:** Participants were concerned about insufficient police enforcement of traffic laws.

**Peak Flows:** Participants were concerned about proper management of peak flows from the project, especially when theater traffic exited.

### 2.3 Project Coordination

Participants wanted to know how construction of the proposed project would be coordinated with other projects, such as stormwater projects and how construction impacts could be mitigated.

### 2.4 W&OD Trail

**Trail Parking:** Participants wanted automobile parking provided for people that visit the area to use the W&OD Trail.

**Trail Access/Connectivity:** Participants expressed that the proposed access and connectivity to the W&OD Trail was insufficient.

### 3. Staff Discussion of Parking Programs

Although the agenda called for discussion of multiple solutions to address neighborhood concerns, timing limitations restricted the discussion to two topics: Residential Parking Programs and Project Parking Requirements.

#### 3.1 Residential Parking Programs

Staff presented the following information as an introduction to residential (zoned) parking programs.

**Program Goals:** A successful program needs a set of clearly defined goals. For example, in a residential area, the goal could be to preserve on-street parking for neighborhood residents.

**Permissible Users:** Following the goal, a program needs to establish who can use on-street parking. Is it only residents of a particular street or streets? Is some limited parking for people patronizing commercial uses allowed?

**Program Structure:** Several program elements would need to be established, including:

- Program Hours – all day, overnight, evening, daytime, etc.
- Number of Passes – how many resident and guest passes is a household eligible for?
- Management – how is the program administered?
- Zone Boundaries – how are zone boundaries set? Larger zones provide more access and therefore less protection. Smaller zones provide the reverse.
- Project Cost – who pays to operate the program? Do zone residents have to pay an additional fee?

#### 3.2 Parking Requirements

Staff presented the following information on parking requirements.

The goal of parking requirements for new development is to provide sufficient automobile parking for the proposed uses. For the Mason Row project, the City Code requires 1,200 spaces. The latest proposal includes 900 spaces.

Staff noted that parking requirements were designed for auto-dependent areas and there are numerous opportunities to reduce the amount of parking required, including:

- **Shared-Parking:** different uses (residential, retail, hotel, etc.) will have different parking demands throughout the day. These uses could share a smaller pool of parking spaces and still meet demand.
- **Transportation Demand Management:** providing incentives to use other forms of transportation can dramatically reduce demand for automobile travel and therefore reduce the demand for automobile parking.

- **Trends:** Automobile ownership and vehicle miles traveled are declining in the U.S.

## 4. Other Solutions

Time limitations did not allow for a full discussion of all the solutions proposed by participants. This is a list of the ideas discussed.

- **School Bus:** Providing a school bus stop that does not impede vehicular traffic.
- **Grove & West:** Better defining the intersection of Grove & West to deter queued cars from blocking sight lines and vehicle access or installing a 3-way stop.
- **Ped/Bike Bridge:** Constructing a bridge to carry pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- **Metro Shuttle:** Providing a shuttle to Metro and making it available for everyone at the site.
- **Traffic Signal Synchronization:** Synchronizing traffic lights in the area.
- **Parking Garage Lighting:** Sufficiently lighting the garage to provide safety.

## 5. Other Topics

During the meeting, several topics came up that were outside the meeting's scope. While the timing of the meeting did not allow for discussion of the topics, they are recorded here.

- Construction working hours
- Utility outages
- Difficulty in responding to a design in flux
- Insufficient width of snow plowing
- Design compatibility along Park Ave
- Impacts of parking garage or retail uses along Park Ave
- Crime, personal safety, and disorderly conduct of site visitors
- Ability to continue the Grove Ave Halloween block party

## 6. Summary of Survey Responses

Each participant was asked to complete a short survey as a way of capturing any additional feedback on the proposed project and to assess the meeting format. Of the approximately 50 participants, 23 completed a survey. Responses from those surveys are summarized below.

### **Question 1: Do you have additional transportation concerns regarding the proposed Mason Row project beyond what was discussed tonight?**

Some respondents were satisfied with the coverage of the meeting, with one respondent stating "No, mine were all touched on during the meeting."

The majority of respondents listed additional concerns. The responses touched on the following topics:

- Need for specific information regarding intersection layout and traffic patterns.
- Church parking.

- Trash pickup.
- Ability of or designation of nearby streets to handle additional traffic.
- Implications for existing businesses.
- The appropriateness of the project in general.
- Interactions with other redevelopment projects, ongoing or future.
- Staff was unprepared to discuss solutions or unwilling to discuss specifics.
- Materials should have been available earlier.

**Question 2: Do you agree or disagree that you were given an opportunity to communicate your traffic and parking concerns about the proposed project?**

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	12
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	2

**Question 3: Do you agree or disagree that tonight’s workshop will be effective in informing the planning/approval process for this project?**

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	1
Agree	7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	2

**Question 4: Do you agree or disagree that City staff should coordinate community workshops (either in this format or a different format) for future development proposals?**

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	14
Agree	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

**Question 5: Do you have any suggestions for improving the format of future community workshops?**

Some respondents were satisfied with the meeting format. Others suggested that the time spent recapping the resident input be shortened to leave more time for discussion of solutions.

Several respondents noted that the room was too noisy during the breakout session and suggested breaking out to other rooms.

Some respondents were happy that facilitators tried to keep the meeting on schedule. Others responded that they felt rushed.

Some respondents felt that the facilitators did a fair job of managing conversations and reporting results of the group. Others felt that the facilitators were argumentative and/or biased.

## **7. Street-by-Street Notes**

For completeness, the notes from the individual breakout groups are included here.

### **7.1 Grove Avenue**

#### **Community**

- Want to continue Halloween Block Party (with road closure)

#### **Construction Traffic**

- Worker parking
- Heavy vehicles

#### **Late Night Traffic**

- Crime
- Lights
- Noise
- Pedestrians
- Trash
- Urination

#### **Market Square**

- No bike access from Grove Avenue
- No pedestrian access from Grove Avenue

#### **Parking**

- Lack of adequate (on-street) parking for residents
- Lack of visibility when backing out of driveways
- Loading spaces “disconnect” development from the W&OD Trail (idling noise)
- Security
- Street too narrow for existing traffic volumes

#### **Pedestrians**

- Cut-through private properties
- Late night use of street
- Safety impacts
- Security
- Noise
- Traffic impacts

- West Street crosswalk will create too much conflict

### **Speed**

- Enforcement
- Rushing to movie
- Rushing to restaurants
- Lack of safety

### **Traffic Problems**

- Commercial (Hotel shuttle) utilizing Grove Avenue to/from West Falls Church Metro Station
- Delivery trucks create wear and tear on street, noise, vibration, and volume
- Too difficult to turn right off of Grove to go east on West Broad Street

### **Traffic Volume**

- Difficult to back out of driveways
- Make pedestrian access less accessible
- Will make West/Grove too difficult

## **7.2 North West Street**

### **Blocking driveways**

### **Blocking intersections**

### **Capacity of nonresidential components, as presented in traffic study**

### **Construction**

- Parking
- Utility conflicts/conflicting timelines for projects
- Utility outages

### **Drainage**

### **Flooding**

### **Garage Access (size, number of spaces)**

### **Need for North West Street Traffic Calming**

### **Parking**

- No parking program in residential area
- Charging for site parking may motivate site residents and visitors to park on the street
- Insufficient parking supply in the garage for residents and their visitors

### **Pedestrian facilities/access**

### **Traffic data (margin of error and sensitivity analysis)**

## 7.3 Park Avenue

### On-Street Parking

- A combination of vehicles parked on Park Avenue and increased traffic to/from the development proposed will be the potential cause of more accidents
- Businesses on Park Avenue will increase overflow parking
- Cars parked on Park Avenue are hit by other drivers frequently
- Concerned that everyone from Mason Row will park on Park Avenue
- Development should provide parking per the City code to mitigate overflow parking
- Homes without driveways will be impacted
- Users/Visitors/Residents will find it easier to park on the street

### Other Issues

- Concerned about increased traffic impact on Park Avenue businesses
- Placing a parking garage on Park Avenue is incompatible with the residential character of Park Avenue

### North Spring Street

- Pedestrian cross this street frequently
- Maintain a one-way vehicle flow on Spring Street
- Vehicle volume on Spring Street is an issue

### Traffic

- Cars moving slowly cause other cars in the backup to block driveways
- West bound vehicles on Broad Street will move onto Park Avenue and make vehicular traffic an issue
- West bound on Park, waiting to turn onto North West Street, backs up to North Spring Street

### Traffic Study

- Believe that the traffic study reflects their August counts
- Concerned about the TIS dates and times
- Desire more data for traffic volumes on the weekends
- Did not address Sunday volumes; this is one of heavy traffic days
- How do they update the traffic study?
- How is pedestrian safety being addressed?
- Should include children and other pedestrians crossing the street from St. James
- Uncertainty of composition of residential uses yields the study somewhat inaccurate
- Uncertainty of retail uses yields the study somewhat inaccurate

## 7.4 Other

In addition to the identified neighborhood stakeholder groups along Grove Ave, N West St, and Park Ave, there was a fourth group titled “Other” for people that wanted to participate in the meeting.

### Areas Represented in this Group

- Chestnut Street
- East Columbia Street
- Hillwood Avenue
- Irving Street
- Noland Street
- North Oak Street

### **Bicycles and Pedestrians**

- Improve access and safety
- Need bridges over West/Broad/Grove
- Proposal is not pedestrian friendly
- Separate automobile traffic flow from bikers and pedestrians

### **Concerns**

- Traffic volumes on residential streets
- Cut through traffic
- Grove Avenue
- Park Avenue
- North West Street
- Route 7 Failing

### **Lack of Enforcement**

- Grove Avenue

### **Mobility**

- Failure of current West Broad Street (Unable to make left turn from North West Street to West Broad Street)
- Left in???

### **North West Street**

- Between West Broad Street/Park Avenue to Lincoln Avenue traffic backs up
- Northbound lacks synchronized traffic signals and new traffic signals for left turns from West Street that is eastbound

### **Queueing into Proposed Development**

- Backup on streets
- Traffic Demand Management (tools) proposed
- Weekend traffic (impact of theater, shuttle bus, West Falls Church Metro)

### **Traffic Failures**

- Don't raise failures at intersection of West Broad Street and North West Street
- Improve intersection
- North West Street and West Broad Street
- Need to improve intersection with new development

**Traffic Volumes**

- Compare numbers from previous VDOT counts and developer counts

**West Broad Street**

- Failure on West Broad Street forces traffic to side streets
- Need synchronized traffic lights

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