

Summary of the Marymount University Task Force meeting notes and progress:

In December 2005, the County Board appointed a Task Force to analyze a proposal presented by Marymount University; a proposal to address current needs of the university while solving a previously identified and on-going problem – parking. In its charge, the County Board asked for the Task Force to provide guidance on project-related issues impacting the neighborhood.

Recognizing that this is a Special Exception Use Permit and not a Site Plan application, the goal of the Task Force was to reach general consensus on the concept of the project and issues related to use, appropriateness, and character. The Task Force met five times with meaningful progress and adjustments to the original proposal. The proposed design has achieved general consensus of the majority of appointed Task Force members, understanding that there are specific and important outstanding concerns that can be addressed in the final details of the design.

Task Force Charge:

This Task Force is established to review and evaluate Marymount University's December 2005 proposal to redevelop the parking lot located on the corner of North 26th Street and Old Dominion Drive. The Task Force should provide guidance on project related issues impacting the neighborhood, including but not limited to transportation flow and pedestrian safety. The goal of the Task Force should be to reach general consensus on the concept of the project and other issues related to use, appropriateness, and neighborhood character.

Task Force Members:

Michael Foster Task Force Chairman	Peter Fallon Transportation Commission
Maxine Nagel Donaldson Run Civic Association	Anne Wilson Donaldson Run Civic Association
Pam Gillen Old Dominion Citizens Association	Christine Smith Old Dominion Citizens Association
Paul Michl Rock Spring Civic Association	David Wahl Rock Spring Civic Association
David Haring Yorktown Civic Association	Ted Weihe Yorktown Civic Association
David Parker St. Mary's Episcopal Church	Peter Judge Washington Golf

Meetings:

- First Meeting, February 16, 2006 at Marymount University
- Second Meeting, March 27, 2006 at Marymount University
- Third Meeting, June 8, 2006 at Marymount University
- Fourth Meeting, July 6, 2006 at Marymount University
- Fifth Meeting, July 19, 2006 at St. Marys Church

The first meeting began with an overview of the program and brief history of past and current master planning studies that explored various options to address current facilities needs on the campus. The program requirements are to sustain the needs of the current student population

capacities and bring onto campus student housing now provided in local hotels. The university president provided an overview of the internal planning process including a long term master plan that addressed various initial studies as well as the direction and concerns of the Marymount University Board. In addition to the program requirements, the university wanted to mitigate the image of a large isolated surface parking lot and to create a more dignified presence to the campus with increased landscaping that fit into the neighborhood.

Through the review process it was determined that, to address community concerns and zoning requirements, the initial plans needed revisions. After clarifying that the project must work within existing zoning limitations without exceptions, and hearing from the community significant concerns about the density of the project, the process experienced a brief hiatus to allow for a re-design to reduce scope, area, and density, while increasing landscape setbacks to be more compatible within the neighboring community.

At the third meeting of the Task Force, members agreed that the revised plans positively addressed some of the concerns about the scale and the setbacks of the project. It was at this meeting that the Task Force chair conducted a straw poll looking for general consensus points. The following points were specifically identified as important and achieved general consensus of the majority of Task Force members, but not unanimous endorsement from each person on all points.

Findings and General Consensus Points:

1. **Parking:** Parking is an issue facing Marymount University and large scale management is required. This proposed project does not meet 100 percent of the current demand for parking, including the off-site locations, and therefore the university will be required to continue and increase its management and restrictions of parking.
2. **Zoning:** The project is required to be developed in strict compliance with the General Land Use Plan and the Zoning Ordinance requirements. The project shall not have any variations from these requirements.
3. **Setback Compatibility:** The setbacks and the streetscape should measure between 32 – 40 feet. This will allow for street trees, wide sidewalks and under story plantings and lawn areas reflecting similar setbacks and green space of the single-family homes within the neighborhood.
4. **Use:** Use, while not unanimous, general consensus and support for student residences and academic space over a surface parking lot or a visible parking garage was more desired for compatibility issues. Noise and lighting concerns will need to be addressed, through conditions of the special exception use permit, mitigating the impacts.
5. **Access and Loading:** The parking and loading access is located on Yorktown Boulevard – working with the topography of the site. The drop-off point, located on the main campus, will allow vehicles to circulate within the campus and not through the neighborhoods.
6. **Pedestrian Bridge:** The construction and alignment of the uncovered pedestrian bridge is crucial to the development of this project and was strongly encouraged to align with the center of campus.

7. Auditorium: The auditorium should be large enough to accommodate community use but not so large as to create excessive evening and weekend demands or public disruption.
8. Architecture: The architecture was generally appreciated. The scale was broken down to proportions similar to the university, St. Mary's Church and Washington Golf. The architects should continue to refine the elevations on Old Dominion Drive and 26th Street North to appear less institutional.

The fourth and fifth meetings focused primarily on architectural refinements and detailed transportation issues that have informed and been the subject of refinements in the proposal. Community concerns over the project program intensity were addressed by the Task Force and understood to be important issues that would require larger policy direction and commitments from the university to address long term administrative and management plans for the campus. Primary use concerns were related to confirming the longer range plans of Marymount University to seek assurance that the campus would not experience a rapid growth pattern of full time student enrollment, but could confirm that this project was to meet existing student academic needs while reducing vehicular trips of specific students who could live on campus instead of traveling to campus by car.

The current proposal is the result of Marymount University's commitment to resolve the larger parking concerns, and work productively with the Task Force and responsively address many of the expressed concerns. It provides a mixed-use development on an existing surface parking lot that adds green space to the neighborhood. The proposal provides a design and architectural solution that is more compatible than an above-grade parking garage and an improved scale from the original design. To achieve the below-grade parking, the Task Force has recognized that certain densities are economically required.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the project proceed through the special exception use permit process with required refinements and appropriate conditions to protect the concerns of the neighbors during the construction, administration, and operation of the facility.