

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) NOVEMBER 12, 2002

VELLORE VILLAGE DISTRICT CENTRE STUDY
FILE 15.80.2

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT the presentation from Warren Sorensen and Paul Lowes, of Sorensen Gravely Lowes Planning Associates Inc. BE RECEIVED;

THAT the "Summary of Issues" (Attachment 1) and key recommendations presented today BE CIRCULATED to participating members of the Stakeholders Consultation Group for their input and comments to be received prior to the end of November; and,

THAT based on the input received from the Committee of the Whole and the circulation to the Stakeholders Consultation Group participants, the final results of the Stakeholder Consultation Group meetings are presented to a Public Open House at Vellore Hall on Thursday, December 12th.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide the Committee of the Whole with a summary of the issues discussed at the four Vellore Village Centre Stakeholders Consultation Group meetings.
- Summarize the consultant's resulting recommendations.
- Identify the next steps in the work plan to solicit further input from the Stakeholders Consultation Group and the community, and to complete the Vellore Village District Centre Plan.

Background

On June 24th, 2002 Council approved the Phase II Work Plan and operating budget for the completion of the Vellore Village District Centre Study. In accordance with the Work Plan, the consultants held four meetings with the Stakeholders Consultation Group (SCG)

Each meeting was well attended and the discussions were extremely valuable for both the Consultants and Staff in gaining insight into the desires of both ratepayers and landowners. On many issues a consensus amongst the group was reached, however, in other areas there are conflicting views that will need to be resolved. Staff thank all of the participants for their efforts in attending and actively participating in the meetings.

Summary of Issues Discussed

The following four issues were discussed at the Stakeholder Consultation Group meetings:

- 1- Vision
- 2- Transportation
- 3- Retail
- 4- Residential

The Consultants presentation will provide an overview of the areas where consensus was, and was not, achieved.

Summary of Consultant's Key Recommendations

The key recommendations resulting from the Stakeholder Consultation Group meetings are as follows:

Retail

Weston Road should be the retail 'main street' with other more typical retail plaza formats located east and west of the Weston Road 'spine'.

Transportation

A modified 'ring road' around the core commercial area will serve the higher volume commercial traffic and separate the core area uses from the adjacent lower density residential uses.

Building Height

Up to 3½ stories will be permitted within the 'ring road' in the core commercial/mixed use area. Stringent criteria are to be applied to any applications for greater height or density within that area. The surrounding area is to be restricted to a maximum of 2 ½ stories.

Streetscape

An enhanced streetscape is to be provided utilizing the 6 metre easement in the boulevard on the east side of Weston Road with a gateway feature, tree plantings, street furniture, on-street parking, and a landscaped median.

Urban Design/Implementation

A strong emphasis on building design will be included in urban design guidelines emphasizing a village house scale and design. The guidelines should be implemented through a Streetscape Committee established by Council and including members of local community groups to review and comment on all site plan applications in the Village Centre.

Next Steps

The next step will be to circulate the material presented to this Working Session to the participants in the Stakeholder Consultation Group sessions for their comments. Their comments can then be taken into consideration in the presentation to a community-wide Open House that is tentatively scheduled for the evening of December 12th at Vellore Hall. On this basis, an Official Plan Amendment could then be prepared for a Public Hearing in January.

Conclusion

If the Committee of the Whole concurs, the materials presented at this Working Session will be circulated to the participants in the Stakeholder Consultation Group for their comments and then form the basis for a presentation at a community-wide Open House.

Attachment

1. "Summary of Issues discussed and raised during the four SCG Meetings"

Report prepared by:

Rob Gibson, Senior Planner – Policy
Wayne McEachern, Manager of Policy

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL DEANGELIS
Commissioner of Planning

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Vellore Village Centre Study – Summary of SCG Meetings

Preliminary Draft for Discussion Purposes Only

Summary of Issues discussed and raised during the Four SCG Meetings

Vision:

- *Centre to be something different – a community gather spot, a people place*

There seemed to be consensus that the stakeholders wanted to see something different for the Centre. They don't want to see the typical strip plazas or big box development. They want a destination that they can walk to. They want it to be a community gathering place. They want an area that has a strong sense of identity. It should be designed to be a people place, an area with cafes, restaurants, mix of retail stores and cultural facilities. They want it to be safe for pedestrians.

- *Key difference among participants was the perception of the need for density to support a pedestrian main street*

A key difference among the participants was that the community groups were leery of densities. The community group representatives believed that could achieve a main street without high density. On the other hand, some of the landowner representatives felt that a main street couldn't be achieved without densities or without a 'critical mass'.

- *Treatment at main intersection should be unique*

One landowner indicated that they would like permission for a gas station at north-west corner of Major MacKenzie Drive and Weston Road, but others indicated a desire to anchor the 4 corners with something unique and special.

- *Architectural treatment very important*

Another key issue that emerged was that architectural treatment for the retail main street and the 4-corners of Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road is very important.

Transportation:

- *Road capacity has not kept up with growth*

Concerned was raised by many that growth in area has been too fast and infrastructure has not keep up particularly road capacity.

- *Dichotomy between maintaining traffic flow and speed and concern for pedestrian safety*

A Significant concern was raised with respect to maintaining the flow of traffic along the arterial roads. A number of the community representatives want the arterial roads to remain as high speed thoroughfares. But others were concerned with pedestrian safety along the arterial roads. Participants indicated a desire for a place to walk to and a place to stroll and shop but were concerned for pedestrian safety.

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- ***Community representatives opposed to parking on the arterial roads***

The community group members were opposed to any parking on the arterial roads due to perceptions that on-street parking would slow down the traffic and thereby reduce the capacity of the arterial roads.

Retail:

- ***Objection to retail stores located up to the street with fake windows and doors***

There was a significant concern amongst residents, from past experience, that when buildings are brought up to the street, builders place fake windows and doors in the street frontage and the building actually faces the parking lot with the back to the street. The community would rather have plazas than this form of development.

- ***Don't try to bring big boxes up to the street***

Participants were quite skeptical of the ability to make big boxes pedestrian friendly. They were concerned that bringing big boxes up to the street only leads to extensive blank walls. They would prefer small stores along the street frontage and the big boxes to be located behind and set back from the street.

- ***Car oriented retail okay in the appropriate location***

Participants did not feel that all forms of car oriented retail such as gas stations and fast food restaurants should be banned from the Village Centre. If there is a demand for a certain type of store in the community, then it should be accommodated, but it must be placed in the appropriate location, i.e. not on the retail main street and not at the main intersection. The important issue was that these car oriented retail uses not be allowed to 'characterize the area'.

- ***General support for retail Main Street located along Weston Road.***

There was broad support for a retail main street with pedestrian oriented retail within the Village Centre and general support for it to be located along Weston Road. The participants also supported that Major Mackenzie frontages to be reserved for larger box style retail developments.

Residential:

- ***No consensus on residential height***

There was no consensus amongst the SCG members as to the maximum height of mixed use and higher density residential blocks. The landowners want to maintain the 6 storey height limit. One community group objects to any apartments or mixed use development. They may be willing to discuss low rise apartments on an application basis. They do not however object to any height what so ever for office buildings. Another community group wants a maximum 3 storey height limit for all apartments, mixed use buildings and office buildings.