

Meeting Minutes  
Marshall Service District Planning Committee  
Comprehensive Plan Update

Tri-County Feeds, Etc. 7408 John Marshall Highway, Marshall, VA  
April 8, 2008  
7:00 p.m.

I. Summary of the southern gateway (Interstate 66-Exit 28 and Business Route 17) discussion from the March 11, 2008 meeting

Susan Eddy, Fauquier County Chief of Planning, opened the meeting. She noted that all background materials were available online and that all, including newcomers, should sign in, providing their e-mail and contact information to ensure they receive meeting information in the future. Participants could also sign up for the County's e-alert system to receive notification of future meetings.

Mrs. Eddy recapped the major discussion points from the last meeting wherein there was general agreement:

Gateway South:

- Gateway extends from Interstate 66 to the intersection of Old Stockyard Road
- Needs to look and function like the entry to a small town, not a suburb
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street are needed now
- The large trees should be preserved
- Access management (limiting curb cuts) is needed for safety reasons
- Quality landscaping is needed
- Dislike strip commercial
- Dislike drive-throughs
- Dislike big boxes
- Like the existing older homes. Their use is less important than their design, form, materials, placement, etc. The historic pattern is valuable.
- Residential or commercial development is sought along Winchester Road. For commercial development, office is preferred to retail in order not to erode the retail on Main Street.
- Commercial properties could take advantage of the Interstate 66 location and benefit the County financially
- Larger commercial buildings could go behind the frontage properties on Winchester Road.
- Buildings should front Winchester Road
- Either a roundabout or a T intersection is needed at Winchester Road and Old Stockyard Road
- The triangular parcel at the intersection above is key
- No flyover at Route 66
- No extension of water or sewer services south of Interstate 66

## II. The eastern and western gateways on Main Street (Route 55) envisioned in the Current Comprehensive Plan

Mrs. Eddy reviewed what is in the current Comprehensive Plan for these gateways:

- the corridors need to become more attractive and safe for pedestrian movement;
- provide commercial and employment opportunities, which are easily accessible to neighborhood residents;
- encourage entrance features that include large residential lots with generous setbacks along the entrance corridors, in the traditional fashion common to Marshall and other towns and villages of the Piedmont;
- encourage tree preservation, where practical, landscaped features, building and site design, which is sensitive to and compatible with the historic community buildings and the adjoining neighborhoods; and
- encourage an entry character that is carefully linked with existing and planned community park and open spaces;
- provide at least one and potentially two “roundabouts” at key entry points, as shown on the Land Use and Transportation Maps.

## III. Open Discussion of the eastern and western gateways on Main Street (Route 55)

Mrs. Eddy asked the group to openly discuss where they see the eastern gateway beginning. When do you know you are entering the Town of Marshall? Supervisor Peter Schwartz stated five years ago when the Comprehensive Plan was updated, the eastern gateway was considered the stretch of Route 55 coming into town at the Livestock Exchange. Now some consider the gateway to be at the railroad crossing at Hagerstown Block. He stated the group probably needed to talk about both views.

Mrs. Eddy stated that the railroad crossing, Livestock Exchange, or sign that reads “Marshall” could all be considered the gateway. Planning Consultant Milt Herd stated that the gateway is typically the landmark where one feels they are entering town. Mrs. Eddy showed a power point presentation with pictures of the areas discussed above. (This presentation is available online.) Traveling from The Plains, the view begins with recreational vehicle storage and Tri County Feeds. The question was raised again, when do you know you are in Marshall when you are coming in this direction? Is it at the sports fields?

The Form Based Code work shows a gateway east area immediately west of the railroad and a transition east area between the gateway and the Main Street corridor. Is this the appropriate designation?

(Planning Commissioner Ann McCarty asked everyone to go around the room and introduce themselves and state briefly how they are associated with the plan update.)

The discussion continued following the introductions. Supervisor Holder Trumbo stated he thought the sign at Rosstown was the gateway. Mrs. Eddy revisited the idea that the gateway was possibly at the new park. Discussion centered on the importance of the park and that possibly once it was completed it should be the gateway. An idea was raised that even if it wasn't the gateway sidewalks or trails could be extended to the park.

One participant suggested Bill Decker's property is currently the hard edge before entering town, noting the Route 709 is the edge of the Service District. Mr. Schwartz stated that it is very important to remember how one feels when they come into Marshall. Another participant stated that there are two different things being discussed – one is the edge of town and one is the gateway into the Service District.

Mrs. Eddy recapped what had been discussed. She noted that it appeared Rosstown is the gateway into Marshall. Mrs. Eddy said she very much liked the idea of a pathway leading to the park, possibly in the form of a multi-purpose trail. Discussion ensued as to if the Northern Sports Complex is actually Marshall or The Plains. Most felt it was Marshall.

Mr. Schwartz noted that if there was ever passenger rail service on this line of the railroad, the logical place for a passenger rail station would be at the railroad crossing. Mrs. Eddy noted that the area around the train tracks on Route 55 is labeled mixed use in the current Comprehensive Plan. The existing uses are industrial.

One participant brought up the pending application for forty-two townhouses in this vicinity. Discussion ensued about backing up the gateway to east of the town homes. Many were unaware of the by-right townhouse proposal, Groveton Meadow.

The issue of establishing an Architectural Review Board (ARB) was discussed at length. Mr. Herd suggested that the citizens could achieve the same goals they were looking for with an ARB by implementing the Form Based Code. A Form Based Code could prevent buildings taking on undesirable characteristics as with the new medical building in town. The code could be strong enough to accomplish the goals of an ARB without an ARB.

The focus shifted back to the question of where should the urban part of Marshall start? Mr. Schwartz compared it to Upperville – you know you are coming into Upperville when you see the landscaping, shoulders widen, lanes get narrower, some stone walls, and crosswalks. He asked the group the rhetorical questions of what type of message do you want to send when coming into town? Typically when you come into a town you slow down. Possibly this is what needs to be implemented coming by the approved town homes toward the railroad track. Mr. Herd suggested that possibly a series of transitions (road narrowing, fences, stone walls, sidewalks, landscaping etc.) are the answer as Mr. Schwartz has suggested with his depiction of Upperville. This would visually signal a town and slow down traffic.

One participant stated that many years ago there was talk of the railroad track being raised, lowered or by-passed. Mr. Schwartz stated that the grade crossing keeps the

“homey” feel associated with Marshall. Plus, it works if Marshall ever gets a depot. The idea of safety associated with the railroad and residential development in this area was discussed. There was talk about implementing walking bridges over the railroad track as a means to get from the south side to the north side. Walking bridges could be implemented over roads, railroads, etc. keeping a suburban feel.

Mr. Schwartz asked Bill Chipman to talk about plans for his property. He stated it is approximately nine acres zoned C-3, commercial retail. He originally had envisioned approximately seven pad sites with retail; however, now he was open to the mixed-use idea with office/flex space along the railroad and residential up front. He stated there were many options available under current zoning, allowing approximately 155,000 – 200,000 square feet of retail by right. Mr. Schwartz said he envisions a railroad station, shops, apartments, and a pedestrian bridge across the tracks to provide a connection. It was noted that this could be phased, with possibly temporary uses until a rail station was built. This could be accomplished as long as the street network was set in the beginning.

Mr. Schwartz summarized the group discussion thus far. He stated landscaping would help with safety and unity as one traveled down Route 55 toward town, once the railroad tracks were crossed there would be in “in town” feel. The streetscape would be carried all the way to the town home development. This vision would make for a long main street; however, if done properly one would want to walk to surrounding uses. In addition, strategic parking in and around town would help get people where they want to go.

Discussion then shifted to the other direction, the gateway east from Freestate. This area is very different than the gateway from the east. There are older homes, undeveloped property, and older homes converted to businesses. Once again, when do you know you are in town? It is fairly obvious when one gets off of Interstate 66 that you are entering town when you get to the “Marshall” sign; however, what about coming in the other direction.

A high school has been planned for the western end of Marshall, and at an earlier meeting, a Main Street location was considered. Mr. Schwartz stated that there had been talk about extending Salem Avenue to the intersection with the proposed roundabout. The idea is to keep traffic off of Main Street yet keep the school connected to the town. The proposed school site is located on the Cunningham property which is currently zoned Residential. The perfect scenario would be for the western portion of the school site to create a new hard edge for the Service District. The problem with this is approximately 75 acres are needed for a school site and playing fields. Mr. Schwartz then suggested the playing fields could be put on the western portion of the property creating the buffer from town.

This gateway is different in that it is a residential and institutional gateway not retail and industrial gateway as entering Marshall from the east. It was noted that there is great value in having the students close to businesses. Discussion ensued regarding other possible locations for schools and is this really the use wanted as part of the gateway.

Many participants liked the school as part of the town. An example was given of Handley High School in Winchester as an in-town school done “right”.

There was discussion about moving the Service District line when Mr. Herd suggested putting the issue of the Service District line on the back burner until uses were discussed in future meetings. There was a suggestion that when you take Exit 27 into Marshall there are already trees planted which give a rural feel to the area. More arching elms could be planted to continue this feel.

The group was reminded that the next meeting would occur in two weeks, April 22, 2008. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.