

# Fight over Village plan

## Some in Short Pump upset with proposed West Broad Village

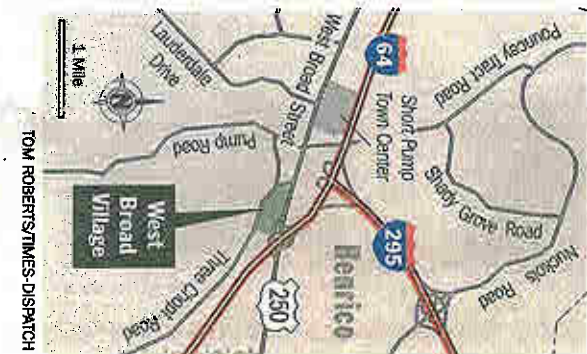
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The urban village planned for Short Pump is a go, but neighbors haven't stopped their fight.

And as the \$1 billion West Broad Village heads for another round of county approval, residents are warning their vocal cords, preparing to make another strong stand if necessary.

Despite sending terse e-mails to Henrico County officials and meeting with the developer's representatives, residents have watched the project morph into a denser, taller clump of urban life in the middle of Short Pump.

"The county certainly understands our concerns. We've expressed them many times. Why the county continues not to respond to those is unknown to me," said Chris Evans, president of the Whyte Trace Homeowners



TOM ROBERTS/TIMES-DISPATCH

### Association.

Residents' main worries are still density, traffic, and the height of two office buildings and a hotel.

Many of them commented in early project meetings with county officials and the developer.

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er's attorney, but they still disagreed on key issues when the Board of Supervisors rezoned the farmland in March.

Planning commissioners must now sign off on detailed plans. The first phase includes interior roads, landscaping along Three Chopt Road, utility work, and specifications for the Whole Foods Market Inc. and Wachovia Bank buildings. The commission is scheduled to address those issues July 26 at 9 a.m.

Plans for West Broad Village evoke a Pan District-type setting where people can stroll tree-lined streets to window-shop, eat at a patio restaurant or walk to work or the grocery store. A maximum of 884 residential units, including town houses, condominiums and apartments, would be available, as would a 10- to 12-story hotel.

### Shorter buildings sought

A major source of contention sits on the top floor of the two office buildings. The towers were originally set for 20 and 22 stories, but after neighbors lobbied for shorter buildings, the developers offered to lower them to about 200 feet, or about 18 stories.

Unicorp National Developments Inc., the village developer, is marketing them as 13 stories, according to Andy Condlin, an attorney representing Unicorp. The company will not otherwise commit to staying at that height, Condlin said, and the ultimate tower heights will depend on the tenant. But, he added, he does not think they will go to 18 stories.

"We think we can fit everything in 13 stories or even less ultimately," he said.

Specifics for the office buildings, hotel and condominiums are scheduled to come before the Planning Commission in September. Ryan Homes, Eagle Construction of Virginia and Prospect Homes have signed on to build the town houses.

### Wish list suggested

Micky Ogburn, of the Windsor Place Homeowners Association and a resident who has been involved in talks since the beginning, penned a wish list that she would like addressed before the meeting July 26. Among the requests are office buildings with no more than 12 stories, a hotel with no more than 10 stories, a 100-residence reduction and traffic-calming devices in two neighborhood.

Traffic surrounding the proposed village, at the junction of West Broad Street and Interstate 64, is already a headache. Road improvements are planned, but residents want to see a game plan including a firm timeline.

"The frustrating part is every meeting we have been to, the developer, the county official, everyone says to us 'We hear you; we understand how you feel,' and the response we get back is 'OK, we're going to make changes you're not going to like,'" she said. "They're trying to placate us. Then when they come back, it just gets worse."

Condlin said Unicorp has worked with residents from the project's early stages and wants to continue the dialogue.

"We're trying to work with [neighbors]; we are making great headway. Ultimately, we're not going to build this building until we have an end user," he said.

### Design, value complemented

Evans complimented the village's proposed architectural design and economic development value. Generally, he said, residents do not oppose the development. He said county officials have taken time to listen to their concerns, but he wants to see some action.

"The expectation is that the county will listen carefully and respond appropriately to the concerns of existing residents," he said. "We're here now. That development is proposed."

Three Chopt District Supervisor David A. Keechle said Unicorp has the authority to do what the supervisor's approved but that the developer has kept the lines open. The county also has listened to residents' concerns, he said, but working out plans for roads or figuring out exactly how many town houses the market will demand takes time.

"Certainly we want to be open and communicate, but it takes the cooperation of the developer as well," he said. "And they've been cooperating in my estimation, in trying to address these concerns, particularly the high-rise building."

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