

# Falls Church Times

Friday, December 05, 2008

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## City Center Design Changes Revealed

December 5, 2008 by [bromleyg](#)

The Falls Church City Council met in closed and public work sessions on Thursday night to view and discuss Atlantic Realty's proposed design changes for the City Center.

Facing increased construction costs Atlantic is planning to reduce the height of two of the buildings and significantly change the design of the complex's primary structure, generally referred to as the Harris-Teeter Building (HTB), which will occupy the current Bowl America site at the corner of Maple Avenue and Annandale Road.

This building, whose name derives from its primary prospective tenant, will be reduced to 68 feet (6.5

floors) on the Annandale side and to 84 feet (8 floors) on the Gibson Street side. The building's interior courts will be increased from 2 to 3, however the new courts will be considerably smaller than those shown in the original plan.

Although the building will have fewer floors, the number of residences will remain the same under the new design - 413 apartments and 16 townhomes. This will be achieved primarily by changing setbacks, most significantly on the Gibson Street side where the setback will be reduced to less than 5 feet in some areas, compared to the 30 feet as originally designed.

The facade facing Shirley Street will maintain its original setbacks of 30 feet above the proposed townhomes, however there will no longer be openings into the courtyards. Instead, these breaks in the facade will, in effect, be filled in with units to a height of 7 stories, creating a continuous frontage.

Atlantic now is planning to use wood construction on the upper, residential floors. The lower, mostly commercial base floors will be primarily concrete. Ceiling heights will remain unchanged throughout.

The overall effect is a design which is denser and more uniform throughout. For example, there will be no variations in the roof line, the differences in height being due to the slope of Maple Avenue.

Atlantic plans to lower the active adult building from 11 floors to 7. No design details were available concerning this structure other than that the number of residences would be reduced from 134 to 90.

City Attorney John Foster stated that the prospective design changes would not require an amendment to the current special exception ordinance due to the revisions being in "general accordance" with the final legislation approved by the Council. Given that decision and the Council's concurrence, the changes will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review in January.

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