

## MEMORANDUM

May 6, 2023

**TO:** Jeff Farner, Richard Lawrence, Planning & Zoning

**CC:** SWCA Board

**FROM:** Owen P. Curtis, President, SWCA

**RE:** Inputs to Community Meeting on the Alexandria West SAP Objectives

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First off, thank you both for reaching out this past week or so to solicit ideas and input regarding the Alexandria West Small Area Plan (AWSAP). Our Association is aware of the Community Meeting to be held on Monday, May 8, at Day Elementary. I fully expect some of our members to attend and participate, but I cannot tell you who or how many, as I do not know. Unfortunately, I am out of town and unable to join the effort, even virtually, due to a family conflict. Thus, this memo will serve to provide the inputs I would have brought to you on Monday from our Association.

### **Background**

To think about this SAP's objectives, it is helpful to review the 1992 Plan's Goals and Objectives.<sup>1</sup> They were:

#### **"GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals of this plan are to preserve and protect the existing residential neighborhoods and to provide for coordinated development of the large vacant parcels within the area.

The plan objectives are to:

- prevent redevelopment of existing uses at higher intensities
- maintain the balance between residential and commercial uses
- ensure preservation of substantial open space
- consolidate intense commercial activity on those sites with the best access to major transportation corridors

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<sup>1</sup> I do not reference the Beauregard SAP because it did not cover the full extent of the Alexandria West area, and it was overwhelmingly oriented towards satisfying the demands of the large-scale developers to gain more value from their latest acquisitions than the 1992 Plan permitted. For our Association, the BSAP was a disaster, and we have not liked its adverse impacts on our quality of life.

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- to develop guidelines and appropriate zoning controls for the Winkler Tract and the Stone Tract.”

In large part, with the exception of the last one (which history has overtaken), these objectives are valid today. They reflect some of our key perspectives:

- We like our neighborhood, and how it fits into the rest of Alexandria West.
- We value our trees, the open space, its walkability, the excellent transit service, and the diversity of the residents in Alexandria West.
- We are concerned about increasing density, pedestrian safety, loss of tree canopy, and the City’s failure, going on six years, to fix the Holmes Run Bike Trail which is our only safe bicycle connection to the rest of the City.

Thus, a good plan will preserve and enhance what we like about our area, and fix what concerns us.

### **AWSAP Goal**

Stated otherwise, it seems to us that the Goal of the AWSAP should be to “preserve and protect the quality of life in the existing residential areas while accommodating modest evolutionary growth in parcels where such capacity is currently permitted.”

### **AWSAP Objectives**

In support of that Goal, we see the Objectives of the AWSAP to reflect the principles which we provided for you at the last Association meeting that you attended. I restate them here as objectives, rather than guiding principles.

- Preserve the tree canopy and open space
- Maintain the current density in residential neighborhoods
- Preserve the balance of residential, commercial, and retail development in Alexandria West, with building heights stepped down from the highest adjacent to I-395, to the lowest adjacent to single-family neighborhoods
- Maintain/enhance setbacks on all land uses as a means to maintain the tree canopy and the aesthetics of the area
- Preserve the workforce & affordable rental properties in Alexandria West rather than seeking to increase density in SF neighborhoods, which will NOT create affordable housing
- Eliminate the plan for the Transitway on N Beauregard Street, as detrimental to the tree canopy and as unnecessary for a high quality transit service, which we already have
- Resolve the congestion on and improve the safety of Seminary Rd from I-395 – City line
- Preserve/protect/maintain/enhance Dora Kelley Park & the bike trail
- Construct sidewalks on some blocks where there are none, in close coordination with the residents.

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I hope this is helpful input to the AWSAP effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to further explore some of the ideas herein.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Owen P. Curtis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'O' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Owen P. Curtis  
President  
Seminary West Civic Association