



# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & ZONING   
THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAION, CITY MANAGER   
DATE: MAY 5, 2025  
RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF SMALL AREA PLAN DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION POLICIES

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## **I. Summary**

Staff is proposing administrative adjustments to existing small area plan developer contribution policies and a recommended path forward for future small area plan developer contributions summarized as follows:

1. Standardizing monetary contribution calculations across all existing small area plan policies
2. Moving toward a policy of in-kind vs monetary contributions for future small area plans
3. Not moving forward with a contribution policy in Arlandria-Chirilagua
4. Eliminating the catalyst phase ceiling in the EWLVD policy until future analysis

Staff's intention is to implement the proposed approach by July 1. If City Council members have questions or concerns, staff will be happy to follow up with you.

## **II. Background**

The City's small area plans (SAPs) provide a long-term framework to guide future planning and development in Alexandria's neighborhoods and include recommendations for community amenities to mitigate impacts from development. Since 2009, the City Council has adopted developer contribution policies for these plans that support the implementation of the recommended large-scale community amenities that cannot be funded by an individual development project and are in addition to what development projects are responsible for on their respective sites.

The Department of Planning & Zoning regularly monitors the implementation of these policies to ensure that their application is meeting the intended goals, including analyzing impacts for each development project under review.

### **III. Discussion**

As mentioned in previous discussions with the Planning Commission and City Council, over the last year staff have been reviewing all policies for opportunities to provide consistency and facilitate SAP implementation.

Funding of the SAP-recommended community amenities is fulfilled through a variety of sources including in-kind and monetary developer contributions, grants and City capital improvement program (CIP) funds. A key factor in the development of the policies related to developer contributions is that it must offset an impact being created by the proposal.

Recommended community amenities vary in complexity and cost. For recommended large scale infrastructure projects, monetary contributions are collected from each development in anticipation of the project's implementation; however, given the fluctuations in development patterns, collecting those funds can take many years depending on the area of the city. Additionally, over time, changes in community needs, new opportunities or alternative solutions sometimes present themselves.

The methodology for determining developer contributions over the years has remained consistent – for each policy, planning level cost estimates for the recommended improvements are divided by the anticipated square footage of new development allowed through the plan, resulting in a per square foot developer contribution. While the overall methodology has remained consistent, over the years the square footage on which the contribution is calculated has differed slightly between policies in terms of gross vs. net.

Staff have observed that SAP implementation is more effectively facilitated by permitting in-kind contributions where possible. For example, recommended offsite improvements in the Waterfront Plan have been implemented during construction of approved development in the plan area by the developer (such as the waterfront promenade in front of Robinson Landing).

### **IV. Proposed Approach Going Forward**

The goal continues to be the successful implementation of small area plan recommended improvements to mitigate impacts from development.

#### Future Plans

Staff is proposing that going forward, recommended community amenities are implemented through in-kind developer contributions to the extent feasible. Future small area plans, with AlexWest already serving as the first example, would be structured in a way to enable in-kind contributions at the time of development.

## Existing Policies

Existing anticipated policy contribution totals and recommended community amenities will remain as adopted by City Council; however, staff is proposing minor adjustments to the per square foot calculation of monetary contributions per applicable policy to make them consistent citywide.

Staff is proposing that all policies now calculate the contribution on a per gross square foot basis (as has been the practice for Braddock and Eisenhower East), excluding parking square footage and square footage achieved through the application of Sections 7-700 and/or 6-900 of the Zoning Ordinance. Where applicable, the dollar amount per square foot will be adjusted accordingly to reflect the change from net to gross – **the overall anticipated total collected per policy will not change**. This change in calculation would only apply to future development proposals not already in the development review process.

Below is an overview of the proposed adjustments:

Small area plan	Existing (2025\$)	Proposed (2025\$)
AlexWest	In-kind	No change
Arlandria-Chirilagua	No policy	No policy
Beauregard	Superseded by AlexWest	Superseded by AlexWest
Braddock	\$5.85/gsf	No change
Eisenhower East	\$5.91/gsf	No change
EWLVD	Catalyst - \$3.67/nsf Non-catalyst - \$8.56/nsf <i>In-kind permitted</i>	Catalyst - \$3.19/gsf Non-catalyst - \$7.45/gsf <i>In-kind permitted</i>
NPY	\$13.54/nsf (governed by MOU)	No change
OTN (Sites 1-10)	\$11/nsf	\$9.57/gsf
Waterfront	\$12/nsf <i>In-kind preferred</i>	\$10.44/gsf <i>In-kind preferred</i>

In-kind approach where possible; For consistency, remaining monetary contributions calculated on gross sf, excluding parking, Sec 7-700, and Sec 6-900 square footage; \$/gsf adjusted by 15%

## Arlandria-Chirilagua SAP

The Arlandria-Chirilagua SAP was adopted in 2022 with its implementation goals largely focused on the expansion of committed deeply affordable housing. The Plan also recommends enhancements to the open space network to mitigate impacts from development and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Eleven new open spaces of various types and sizes as identified in the Plan will be provided in-kind through redevelopment.

An implementation task recommended in the Plan was to establish a developer contribution policy to fund additional improvements to two existing City parks in the neighborhood and improvements to two new parks on private land.

Given the Plan's priority to support the expansion of affordable housing in the neighborhood, the cost of developing in a flood plain (~50% of the Plan area and ~37% of developable land), and that the majority of redevelopment will be providing in-kind contributions per the Plan, staff is proposing that monetary contributions are not collected.

If development applications are received for sites not providing in-kind open space per the Plan, in-kind contributions supporting planned parks or park improvements can be determined through the development review process.

It is intended that with the future redevelopment of the shopping center on the south side of Glebe, the area for the recommended linear park would be provided and, as a former rail line, would be eligible for grant opportunities to fund design and construction.

#### Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn (EWLVD) SAPs

Last year, Planning Commission and City Council agreed with staff's recommendation to increase the EWLVD developer contribution policy's catalyst threshold from 3 million to 4 million square feet given the economic challenges in this area of the city and suggested that staff consider the continued feasibility of catalyst and non-catalyst phases in the policy (Attachment 1).

As discussed last year, in 2023 Transportation & Environmental Services (TES) provided City Council an update on the analysis of infrastructure improvements recommended in the SAPs and developer contribution policy (Attachment 2). The analysis concluded that implementing the Multimodal Bridge and Farrington Connector would result in negative traffic impacts and offer a poor cost-benefit return. Based on these findings, TES recommended prioritizing alternative projects in the area to improve connectivity, exploring other pedestrian and bicycle connection options across the Norfolk Southern rail tracks, and revisiting the Multimodal Bridge and Farrington Connector at the 3 million square foot development threshold, as outlined in the policy, for further study and analysis.

In the meantime, TES has initiated design plans for pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on the S. Van Dorn Street bridge, which will enhance access to the Van Dorn Metro Station. Additionally, the City is actively seeking funding to implement the Eisenhower Avenue corridor improvements that were recommended in a joint 2023 study with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and approved by City Council last October. These improvements aim to increase mobility, accessibility, and safety along the corridor.

Following the implementation of these projects and TES's evaluation of their effectiveness—along with continued assessment of the Multimodal Bridge and Farrington Connector—staff will

revisit the infrastructure improvements and funding strategy recommended in the developer contribution policy. As a reminder, one of the large-scale infrastructure projects originally identified in the SAPs—the High Street Bridge—has been replaced by an at-grade solution as part of the Landmark Mall redevelopment.

#### Interim EWLVD Proposal

Staff is proposing to remove the catalyst threshold of 4 million sq. ft. for the developer contributions in order to further respond to market conditions in this area of the city and to allow for time to assess the impacts of in-progress transportation improvements which may provide direction on the approach for infrastructure recommended in the plans. The catalyst rate of \$3.19/gsf (as described above) will continue until economic conditions improve and in-progress improvements can be assessed.

Determinants of improved economic conditions include actual construction occurring on multiple properties outside of the former Landmark Mall site and indications that rents have started to increase where the value of development compared to cost of construction is such that the contribution is financially feasible.

#### **V. Discussions with the Development Community**

Staff had several discussions with the development community over the last year regarding the proposed approach, the most recent being during April's NAIOP (Commercial Real Estate Development Association) meeting. Representatives expressed support for the approach for both existing policies and future small area plans, including the proposal to exclude parking square footage from the monetary contribution calculation. They also shared concerns that the existing catalyst ceiling in EWLVD is causing some uncertainty around investment in that area. For example, there is concern that financing for potential projects would be negatively impacted and could not move forward if they are approaching and/or surpassing the existing catalyst rate ceiling. The development community is in support of temporarily removing the catalyst ceiling to address that uncertainty.

#### **VI. Fiscal Impact**

The proposal to have a policy preference for in-kind contributions, rather than cash, is intended to be revenue neutral. In Arlandria-Chirilagua, the recommended policy will provide flexibility to City Council to prioritize the public benefits that are provided by new development. The proposal to make the calculation of developer contributions consistent across plan areas is revenue neutral.

## **VII. Summary of Proposed Approach**

Staff's intention is to move forward by July 1 with the proposed administrative adjustments to existing small area plan developer contribution policies and recommended path forward for future small area plan developer contributions as described above and summarized below:

1. Standardizing monetary contribution calculations across all existing small area plan policies
2. Moving toward a policy of in-kind vs monetary contributions for future small area plans
3. Not moving forward with a contribution policy in Arlandria-Chirilagua
4. Eliminating the catalyst phase ceiling in the EWLVD policy until future analysis

Again, if City Council members have questions or concerns, staff will be happy to follow up with you. We appreciate any thoughts or questions you may have.

### **Staff:**

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager

Katherine Carraway, Principal Planner, Planning & Zoning

### **Attachments:**

1. March 6, 2024, Memo to City Council
2. May 24, 2023, Memo to City Council

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & ZONING  
THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER  
DATE: MARCH 6, 2024  
RE: DISCUSSION ITEM: PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE CATALYST  
CEILING IN THE EISENHOWER WEST/LANDMARK VAN DORN  
CONTRIBUTION POLICY

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### Recommendation

As permitted through the adopted [Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Developer Contribution Policy](#), staff is proposing to the City Council that the policy's catalyst phase ceiling of 3 million square feet be raised to 4 million square feet.

### Summary

The established policy for developer contributions in Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn (EWLVD) sets a ceiling for the "catalyst phase" at 3 million square feet of approved development. After the catalyst phase is over, the developer contribution rate rises from \$3.57 (2024\$) per square foot to \$8.34 (2024\$) per square foot. Approved development has reached 2.5 million square feet and, unless the catalyst ceiling is increased, any new projects will be subject to the post-catalyst rate.

The policy envisions that the catalyst ceiling will be re-evaluated before moving to the post-catalyst phase. Staff's judgement is that the area's market is still in the catalyst phase, because there is not yet sufficient market support for new development to shoulder an increased developer contribution rate. This is in part due to changes in regional and national market realities, including significantly increased costs of construction (materials and interest rates) as well as the scarcity of funding.

Staff is proposing to the City Council that the catalyst "ceiling" be increased from 3 million to 4 million square feet, which will allow pending projects to move forward as catalyst.

The proposal was discussed with the Planning Commission during their regular meeting on March 5 during which members expressed their support for increasing the catalyst ceiling given the reality of the economic situation in this part of the city.

## Background

The EWLVD developer contribution policy was adopted by City Council in 2018 to assist with funding open space and infrastructure improvements recommended in both the [Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan \(2009\)](#) and [Eisenhower West Small Area Plan \(2015\)](#) to mitigate impacts from development. Recommended improvements were grouped into three categories based on their recommended funding sources and timing. Estimated costs for public improvements were \$259M or \$359M (2018\$), depending on selected options identified in the policy:

- Category 1 improvements \$83M or \$183M (2018\$)
  - Multimodal Bridge or Van Dorn Bridge widening \$151M or \$51M
  - Van Dorn Bridge Pedestrian Improvements \$5.3M
  - Backlick Run Park Improvements \$12M
  - Eisenhower Avenue Straightening/Realignment \$13M
  - Spot Improvements at various intersections \$2.5M
- Category 2 improvements \$74M (2018\$)
  - West End Transitway
- Category 3 improvements \$101M (2018\$)
  - High Street Bridge \$50M
  - Farrington Connector \$51M

The policy recommends a phased developer contribution approach with a rate of \$3.57/sf (2024\$) for catalyst projects to help incentivize redevelopment in the short- and mid-term. Catalyst rates are applied to the first 3 million sf of approved development. Longer term non-catalyst projects would pay a higher rate of \$8.34/sf (2024\$). This phased approach allows time for policy considerations and related analysis regarding the Multimodal Bridge or alternative option(s).

Approximately 2.5 million sf of development has been approved to date with approximately 500,000 sf remaining in the catalyst phase.

Two development projects that are currently under review and have been discussed in recent Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group (EWLVD IAG) meetings are proposals for the Vulcan site (~895,000 gross floor area) and the balance of the 5001 Eisenhower Avenue (Victory Center) site (~820,000 gross floor area).

Staff is proposing that the development threshold for the catalyst rate be raised from 3 million sf to 4 million sf of approved development for the following reasons:

- The idea of a catalyst phase recognizes that Eisenhower West and Landmark/Van Dorn is not yet an established market for new development. Once there are several examples of new projects completed and successfully tenanted (or sold), it will signal to the broader market that the balance of planned development in these areas is a good investment.
- Although the catalyst phase is defined in EWLVD as 3 million square feet of approved development, it is clear that the area will not exit the catalyst phase until a significant



fraction of the 3 million square feet is under construction. The Landmark project, including the hospital, is expected to start construction in 2024.

- Closer to the Van Dorn Metro station, however, recent development has been limited to the townhouses on the eastern third of the 5001 Eisenhower site. Staff believes that both the proposal for the balance of the 5001 Eisenhower site and the proposal for the Vulcan materials site have the potential to shift the Van Dorn market from the “catalyst” phase to a market with some momentum. However, current economic conditions are still very challenging for new development, particularly but not limited to a scarcity of capital for investment and a very high cost of materials. Market rents in the Van Dorn area are not sufficient to overcome these financial hurdles and pay the post-catalyst rate for developer contributions. The proposed increase in the catalyst cap to 4 million square feet would be sufficient to encompass both the Vulcan and 5001 Eisenhower proposals and because they are facing similar economic constraints, should be treated equitably.
- Staff does not believe that the change will significantly impact implementation of the two small area plans, except to facilitate forward movement on important development projects. Staff will bring forward, via the Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group, an update of the public improvements needed to implement these plans at a future date.


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 24, 2023

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**THROUGH:** JAMES F. PARAION, CITY MANAGER 

**FROM:** TARRRENCE MOORER, INTERIM DIRECTOR T&ES

**SUBJECT:** INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDED FOR  
LANDMARK/VAN DORN CORRIDOR PLAN AND EISENHOWER WEST  
UPDATE

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This memo aims to provide City Council with an update on the most recent analysis of infrastructure improvements recommended in the 2009 Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan (LVD Plan), the 2015 Eisenhower West Transportation Study (EWTS), and the 2018 Staff Report on the EW/LVD Developer Contribution Policy (Attachment 1). The update is being shared as a part of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) 70% regional funding opportunity for FY 2028 to FY 2029.

The most recent analysis, known as the Eisenhower West Transportation Alternatives Analysis (EWTA) (Attachment 2), is an update to the 2015 EWTS and is occurring mid-way through the development of Phase 1 at 1.5 million square feet of construction. The 2018 staff report stated that City staff would provide the Planning Commission and City Council a policy check-in mid-way through Phase 1 at 1.5 million square feet of constructed new development.

**BACKGROUND:** The 2009 LVD Plan and the 2015 EW Plan recommended infrastructure improvements to serve existing and future residents, workers, and visitors, and transform this area into a more walkable, connected, transit-oriented series of neighborhoods. In the 2018 update to the Planning Commission and City Council, staff provided background information about the various improvements as well as a funding analysis that identified shortfalls for implementation. Because the developer contributions and incremental tax revenue would not fund the full cost of these improvements, City staff recommended two policy check-ins: the first to occur mid-way through Phase 1 at 1.5 million square feet of constructed new development, which based on the approved and under construction development will likely be within the next 5 years. The second with City Council will occur at three million square feet of constructed new development.

Since 2018, some projects have advanced. The first phase of the West End Transitway is currently in design and has been funded for construction. Design funds for a second phase of the Transitway along South Van Dorn Street including the two bridges over Backlick Run and the rail corridor were secured for FY 2026. In anticipation of the AlexWest development, as well as progress toward implementation of West End Transitway infrastructure, staff initiated the first infrastructure review based on future traffic needs and projections from new developments. The analysis included an evaluation of the four potential infrastructure projects to improve connectivity to the Eisenhower Valley (Attachment 1) – Page 4):

1. The Multimodal Bridge
2. The Multimodal Bridge for pedestrian/bicycle only
3. The Farrington Connector
4. The Van Dorn Bridge Widening for pedestrian/bicycle only

**DISCUSSION:** In 2022, the City initiated the Eisenhower West Transportation Alternatives Analysis (EWTAA) Study as an update to the 2015 Eisenhower West Transportation Study (EWTS). The EWTS was conducted as a transportation component of the Eisenhower West Plan encompassing land use and transportation network scenarios explored in EW Plan. The EWTAA (Attachment 2) analyzed the impacts of the Multimodal Bridge and Farrington Connector on the transportation network in the Eisenhower West region, focusing on the South Van Dorn Street and Eisenhower Avenue corridors and corresponding intersections.

The study examined the impacts of future traffic on the connectivity options and assessed the benefit-cost of the various bridge concepts, considering factors such as:

- Vehicular Travel Time
- Pedestrian Comfort/Safety
- Pedestrian Travel Time
- Bicycle Comfort/Safety
- Bicycle Travel Time
- Vehicular Network Performance
- Estimated Cost

The study's conclusions indicate that incorporating both the Multimodal Bridge and Farrington Connector would reduce congestion for some movements. However, due to existing capacity limitations at many intersections in the area, increased delays are anticipated as more vehicles are funneled to bottlenecks. Specifically:

- The Multimodal Bridge (Option 1) allows some traffic to divert east onto Eisenhower;
- The Multimodal Bridge for pedestrian/bicycle only (Option 2) provides good ped/bike access to metro but is very expensive;
- The Farrington Connector (Option 3) in particular is adding traffic and increasing delays;
- Pedestrian/bicycle access on Van Dorn Street (Option 4) would be necessary for new developments; and

- Constructing new bridges (Options 1 and 3) would require very significant investments for minor benefits included further investment including road widening, additional lanes/turn lanes at intersections to accommodate expected volumes to the point to see congestions improvements, which is inconsistent with goals of the Alexandria Mobility Plan.

Based on this study, staff will:

- Continue to seek funding to advance projects in the area to improve connectivity;
- Analyze other pedestrian/bicycle connection options over Norfolk Southern rail tracks; and
- Check in again at the 3 million sq ft trigger as recommended in 2018 for further studies and analysis of Multimodal Bridge and Farrington Connector.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Implementation: 2018 Developer Contributions Policy Staff Report

Attachment: 2: Eisenhower West Transportation Alternatives Analysis (EWTAA)

cc: Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager  
 Tarrence Moorer, Interim Director, T&ES  
 Karl Moritz, Director, P&Z  
 Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, T&ES  
 Jeff Farner, Deputy Director, P&Z