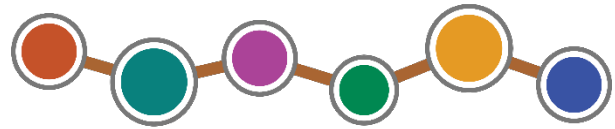


DUKE STREET LAND USE PLAN



Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a Land Use Plan needed?

The Duke Street corridor hasn't had a comprehensive land use update since 1992. Over the past three decades, much has changed in the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. As this corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods evolve, it's critical that our planning keeps pace.

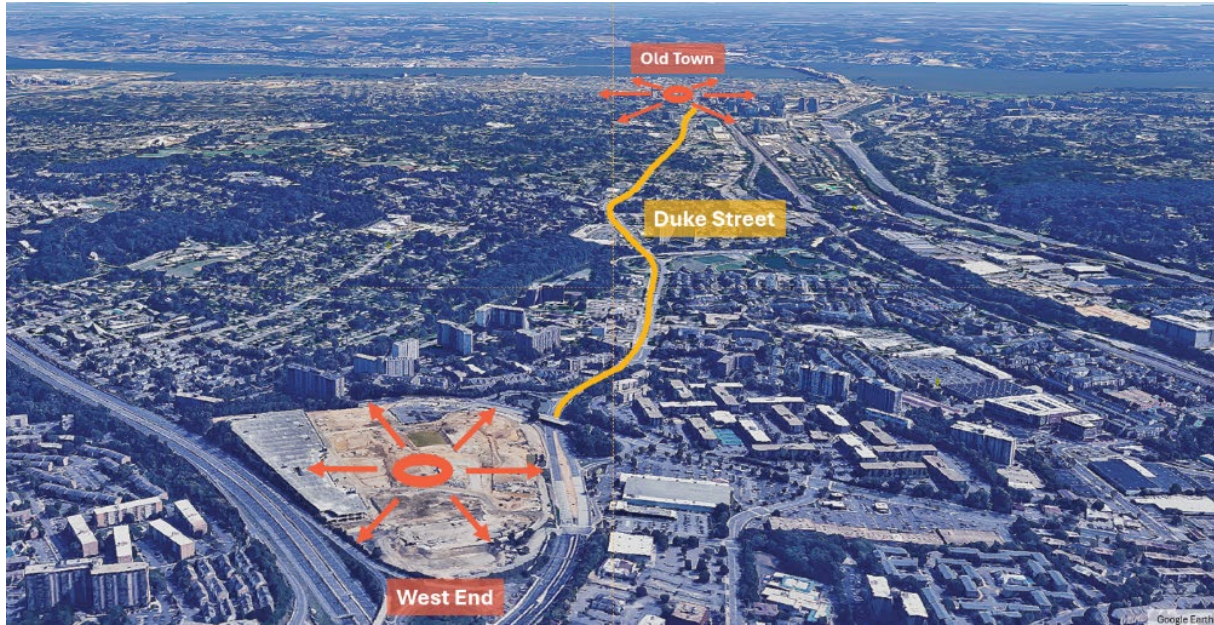
Updating the Land Use Plan now gives us the opportunity to align with current best practices and City policies while also setting a clear, forward-looking vision for the future of the corridor. This process allows us to proactively address key issues like safety, housing affordability, and aging infrastructure that have been raised by the community. It also empowers the City and community to create a shared vision, one that guides future development in a coordinated way, rather than reacting to projects on a case-by-case basis.

Why Plan Now?

The Duke Street corridor will be facing increasing development pressures, from multiple directions:

- **To the east:** Redevelopment momentum from Old Town and Eisenhower East.
- **To the west:** Large-scale redevelopment at the former Landmark Mall site, now the West End development.

Planning now gives the City and community the chance to proactively shape a unified vision for the corridor before individual development proposals come forward.



Small Area Plans have helped deliver meaningful community benefits across Alexandria, including new parks, neighborhood-serving retail, and improved public spaces. This Plan will offer a similar framework along Duke Street while also providing strategies to support the approximately 600 small businesses located along the corridor. Given ongoing and anticipated regional rent escalation, the Plan also will encourage property owners in the Affordability and Growth Areas to maximize the retention of both existing CAUs and market affordable housing. The Plan recognizes that the economics of retaining affordability in these properties will be challenging and will require multiple complementary strategies.

When was the Duke Street Corridor last planned?

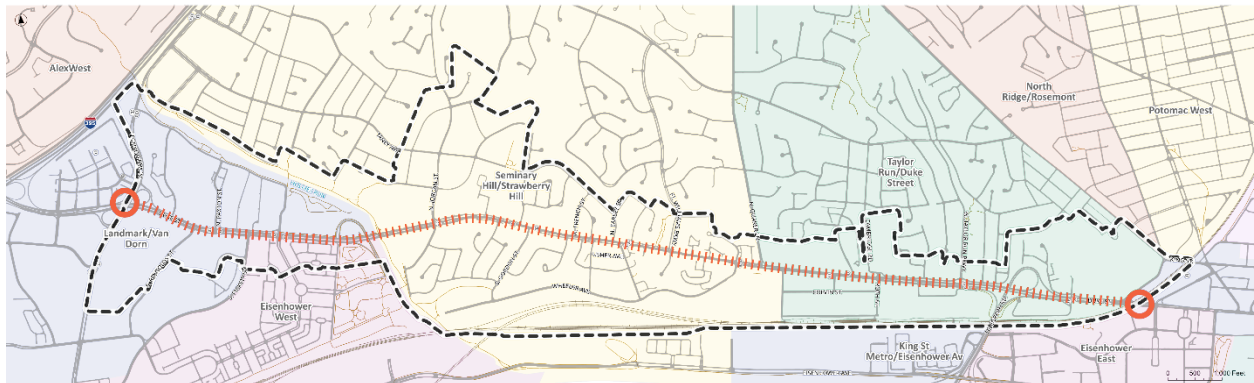
The most recent comprehensive land use guidance for the Duke Street corridor was adopted in 1992 as part of the City's Master Plan. Since then, Alexandria has updated its planning policies citywide to reflect best practices in sustainability, equity, housing, and mobility—making this an important time for an update.

Alexandria's **Master Plan**, which is made up of Small Area Plans for each part of the City, provides long-term guidance on land use, housing, transportation,

parks and open space, environmental sustainability, and other community needs. Small Area Plans typically cover a 15- to 20-year horizon.

What are the boundaries of the Plan?

The boundaries can be found below. They generally cover the length of Duke Street from Alexandria Union Station to Van Dorn Street at the future Landmark/West End development.



Will this Plan amend the existing Small Area Plans or will it be a new Small Area Plan?

The Duke Street Land Use Plan will be an “overlay plan,” which provides guidance for the areas within the boundary but does not change the boundaries of existing small area plans. In locations where the Duke Street overlay provides guidance, it will take precedence over existing Small Area Plans. Where the overlay does not provide guidance, the recommendations of the existing Small Area Plans stand.

How long will this planning process last?

The planning process launched in Summer 2025 and will take approximately **18-24 months** to complete, followed by City Council consideration for adoption, anticipated for late 2026/early 2027.

How is the Plan funded?

The Duke Street Land Use Plan is funded by the City and through a Grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that is being used primarily to support community outreach efforts and transportation analysis.

What will the community engagement process be like? Will there be an Advisory Group?

Due to the size of the planning area and the diversity of stakeholders, we are not planning to form a formal advisory group. Instead, the process will intentionally engage a broad range of voices. City staff will be available to meet with any group or individual who requests a meeting.

The process is designed to be equitable, inclusive, and collaborative. All community members are invited to help shape the vision for Duke Street's future. This includes:

- Residents
- Business owners
- Students, seniors, and youth
- Nonprofits and faith-based organizations
- Property owners and other stakeholders

There will be multiple engagement phases, with both **online and in-person opportunities** offered at a variety of times and locations. Engagement tools will include:

- City-hosted in person community meetings and open houses; City-hosted virtual meetings
- Online and in-person surveys and polls
- Pop-up events
- Meetings hosted by local organizations and stakeholders

All input gathered will inform the Plan and will be summarized on the project website: alexandriava.gov/DukeStreetPlan. Online engagement opportunities will be found via the Engagement Hub website: alexandriava.mysocialpinpoint.com

How do I provide input?

We encourage feedback at any time throughout the process. You can share your thoughts:

- In person at community events
- By phone or email (Christian.brandt@alexandriava.gov, 703.746.3859)
- Through online surveys and digital engagement tools on the project website alexandriava.gov/DukeStreetPlan

We're committed to offering multiple ways for you to participate, based on your schedule and preferences.

Where can I find more information and how will you keep me updated?

The project website will serve as the **primary information hub**, with:

- Project updates and announcements
- Upcoming meeting dates
- Timeline and milestones
- Background materials and meeting summaries

We'll also share updates through email, the City's eNews service, and WhatsApp notifications. Visit: alexandriava.gov/DukeStreetPlan

For specific questions, you can also contact:

Christian Brandt, Urban Planner

Email: christian.brandt@alexandriava.gov

Phone: 703-746-3859

Will this Plan consider changes to the approved Duke Street Transitway Plans?

No. The **Duke Street Transitway concept plans**, adopted by City Council in **Summer 2023** as part of the **Duke Street In Motion (DSIM)** project, will not be revised as part of this planning process.

Duke Street In Motion went through a separate, extensive community engagement process and is already moving into the implementation phase.

For information on the Transitway project, visit:

alexandriava.gov/DukeInMotion.

This Land Use Plan will account for the approved Transitway by incorporating its concept plans into the overall land use framework for the corridor.

What topics or issues are not typically included in a land use plan?

This Plan will not:

- Change citywide policies such as the **Green Building Policy**.
- Change previously approved plans, such as the Duke Street Transitway or the Alexandria Mobility Plan.
- Impose rent control or inclusionary zoning—these are outside the City’s legal authority under Virginia state law.
- Override existing land use entitlements or approvals, nor will it require that property owners redevelop/change their current use or building.
- Dictate what specific types of businesses (i.e. Grocery Store) can be where (or require that specific businesses must remain) – this is outside the City’s legal authority under state and federal law.

What is the relationship between this Plan and other recently adopted or ongoing City policies and plans, like Housing 2040, the Green Building Policy, and Duke Street In Motion?

The Duke Street Land Use Plan will **complement and implement** citywide policies, including:

- **Housing 2040:** Alexandria’s long-range housing plan
- **Green Building Policy:** Citywide sustainability standards

Both of these policy updates are expected to be completed **before** the Duke Street Land Use Plan is finalized, allowing their recommendations to be incorporated.

As noted, the **Duke Street In Motion Transitway plans** will not change, but they will be included in the Land Use Plan as a key infrastructure element that future land use recommendations will support.

How will this Plan impact traffic and congestion?

The City hired Kimley Horn, a transportation planning and engineering firm, to assess the impact the Plan will have on traffic. The findings of their report were discussed at our June 29th Community Meeting and are available on the project webpage: www.alexandriava.gov/DukeStreetPlan. KH examined existing conditions and what the traffic would be like if all of the development proposed in the Plan occurred.

KH concluded that traffic will remain largely unchanged, whether the development proposed in the Plan happens or not. In fact, there would be a slight *decrease* in traffic volumes with the development proposed in the Plan. One reason for this is that the Plan proposes more residential development than commercial development and residential buildings generate fewer overall daily trips than do commercial buildings.

It's important to note that the Plan also provides some additional east-west routes north and south of Duke Street as well as additional access points to Duke Street for neighborhoods on the north. These neighborhood roads will help expand access points along already congested roads like Yale Drive and Cambridge Road.

Is a north-south connector from Eisenhower Avenue to Duke Street a recommendation of the Duke Street Land Use Plan?

Concepts for a potential north-south connection between Duke Street and Eisenhower Avenue have been considered in previous planning efforts, including the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan, and others. These concepts reflect ongoing interest in improving cross-corridor connectivity across the rail line. The current Duke Street Plan does not make a recommendation with regard to a future connection, nor does it preclude it.

Any future connection should be evaluated through a separate study that considers travel demand, neighborhood impacts, multimodal access, engineering feasibility, environmental constraints, costs, property considerations, and community input. Future development and public investment should be designed and constructed not to preclude a future connection.

Why are some properties proposed for additional development while others are not?

The Plan uses a strategic approach to prioritize development along Duke Street, which you can see outlined in the Land Use Themes map on the Engagement Hub and on the Project Webpage. The Plan directs growth along the corridor to strategic locations that can best support it – such as existing commercial areas and shopping centers near transit. The Plan identifies these locations as Opportunity Areas. Growth is intended to add to rather than detract from the corridor based on the Plan’s guidance for the design and scale of new buildings.

Since the Opportunity Areas are generally commercial properties, they can provide additional housing supply and retail without displacing existing residents. The Opportunity Areas are intended to be mixed-use with neighborhood-serving retail and new parks and open spaces to serve residents. Concentrating development in these areas will accommodate new residents and jobs and will provide convenient access to transit as an alternative to relying on single-occupancy vehicles. In addition, the amount of development proposed in the Opportunity Areas generally corresponds to the absorption potential of the Corridor, acknowledging that there is generally not a market for development throughout the whole corridor. By being strategic about where development will happen, the Plan will be able to avoid the haphazard approach to development that has characterized the land use of the Corridor for the last 60 years.

Will redevelopment displace existing renters?

One of the key goals of the Plan is to minimize displacement of existing renters and expand long term affordability where possible. The Plan's Opportunity Areas, where development is generally directed, are commercial sites that won't displace existing residents. In addition, the Plan does not specify new development potential (increased building heights or density) for the areas that have existing market and committed affordable housing (Affordability and Growth Areas). It recognizes however, that in order to retain existing affordable housing, produce new housing, and maximize CAUs, some redevelopment of these sites will occur over time. The Plan directs that any redevelopment that occurs will be required to retain existed committed affordable units (CAUs), add new CAUs, maximize replacement of market affordable housing, and incorporate measures to minimize residential displacement and support affected residents consistent with the City's tenant relocation assistance policies.

Why doesn't the Plan increase all the building heights along Duke Street to enable more housing production?

The Plan prioritizes additional height and density in the Opportunity Areas that do not displace existing residents through development. These strategic areas for development also take into account market realities for potential development absorption along the corridor (i.e., how much new development can the market on Duke Street support?) as well as their access to existing and future transportation resources.

The Plan does not specify changes to the building height or density in the Affordability and Growth Areas, but acknowledges the necessity for additional height and density as a tool for maximizing current and future affordability. To incentivize this and support the production of more housing and new committed affordable units (CAUs) in these areas, the Plan enables additional building height and FAR at a level generally consistent with the applicable development parameters identified, per District, in Chapter 9 of the Draft Plan, to be determined through the development review process.

Areas outside of the Opportunity Areas and Affordability and Growth Areas may benefit from development opportunities enabled through the City's

recent Zoning for Housing initiative, which provided for opportunities for infill development/additional density.

This combined strategy allows for a broad variety of heights and housing types in the Plan area to serve a variety of households while also ensuring that the level of density the corridor can absorb is strategically prioritized in key locations that do not displace current residents.

Why can't all building heights be kept at 35 feet?

Throughout the corridor, there are many buildings that are currently significantly taller than 35 feet and locations where current zoning allows buildings taller than 35 feet. For example, along Holmes Run Parkway and in certain locations along Duke Street, buildings are allowed to be up to 150 feet tall. The Draft Plan identifies key locations along Duke Street where the City is proposing to increase building heights, where new density will be supported by the future Duke Street Transitway. Height and density are the most valuable tools the City has to achieve a range of community benefits and amenities, including affordable housing, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, new parks, etc.

Can changing the light synchronization help traffic on Duke Street?

Traffic Light synchronization is one way in which the City can address traffic on Duke Street. However, it is part of a larger, more comprehensive approach to congestion management that includes intersection improvements, technology upgrades, expanding bike, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure, and regional collaboration. The City is actively pursuing other projects up and down the corridor to help improve the congestion residents are experiencing. More information about those projects is available at the bottom of the [Duke Street Land Use Plan project webpage](#).

Can we change the land use on Wheeler Avenue to allow for residential uses?

Wheeler Avenue, like Colvin Street, is part of the Plan's Small Business Area and is home to a lot of small, locally owned businesses. They locate here because rent is more affordable than other parts of the City, and the zoning and building types allow for a variety of light industrial uses. There are limited other areas in the City where they can locate. Allowing residential uses in these areas could potentially displace these businesses from the City entirely.

What will happen to the stores at Alexandria Commons and the Shoppes at Foxchase?

The Plan does not contemplate changing Alexandria Commons or The Shoppes at Foxchase from a commercial center with amenities like grocery stores, cafes, restaurants, and other retail services. The Plan does enable the property owner to propose a future mixed-use development that would include these types of uses and also provide new housing. Any proposed development will require community engagement, review by the Planning and Zoning's Development Review staff, and compliance with the Plan. The Draft Plan identifies grocery stores and neighborhood-serving retail as priorities for these locations. It's important to note that the City has a recent history of successful redevelopment projects that include Grocery Stores in mixed-use.

It is important to note that, however, the City cannot dictate which specific businesses can go where, in these two shopping centers or in other places, now or in the future. This includes, for example, Grocery Stores, Cafes, Salons, etc. The City is able to control the *general uses* that can exist in certain places, like "retail", "restaurant", "place of worship" or something similar. In the case of these shopping centers, the kinds of businesses that are currently there would be allowed to be there under in the future, both with or without redevelopment.

Lastly, the City is not able to require that certain businesses stay in their locations. For example, landlords may decide not to renew commercial leases when the current lease terminates and businesses may opt to relocate, close, or re-configure.

Will this plan create affordable housing?

Yes, new residential development will provide 10 percent of residential development above existing residential zoning as on-site Committed Affordable Units, determined through the development review process. In addition, Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority owns parcels in the Plan area with the potential to redevelop at higher density to provide new committed affordable units. Finally, the City's Office of Housing regularly works with non-profit partners and other organizations to preserve existing and create new affordable housing. On the Duke Street corridor, an example of this type of partnership is the [Witter Place](#) development, which includes 94 committed affordable units available to households earning between 40% and 60% of the Area Median Income.

How will the 10% committed affordable unit requirement work

The Plan requires that new residential development (floor area) in the Opportunity Areas will provide 10 percent of any residential development above the base residential development (floor area) as on-site committed affordable units. In Chapter 12, the Plan identifies the existing base residential floor area ratio (FAR) and the proposed maximum floor area ratio of parcels in the Opportunity Areas.

Section 7-700, which is the City's Bonus Density/Height provision of the Zoning Ordinance is a separate requirement that is only available to a building if the owner requests to go over the Plan maximum height and/or FAR.

How will existing committed affordable units be protected or replaced?

The Plan identifies specific requirements and expectations for buildings located in the Affordability and Growth areas which have committed affordable units. Specifically, the plan requires that existing CAUs will be retained or replaced so that redevelopment does not result in a net loss of existing CAUs. The way in which that is achieved (replacement vs. preservation, for example) will be determined through the development review process.

What can the City do to preserve market-rate affordable housing?

Market-rate affordable housing includes housing that is not currently in an affordability program, under a deed restriction, or rented at a specific income level. These units are marketed on the rental market at more affordable rates due to the age, location, amenities, or condition of the building. The Plan identifies strategic redevelopment, combined with new affordable housing requirements and preservation, as a strategy for retaining market-rate affordable housing. When key properties on the corridor apply for redevelopment, the City will work with the owners to ensure that the proposals include a combination of redevelopment and preservation to achieve the maximum amount of new committed affordable units and retain as many existing market affordable units as possible.

How will new parks, streets, sidewalks, and tree canopy actually be delivered?

New development is required to mitigate its impacts, and as part of that, is required to provide these kinds of benefits in order to redevelop as is required in the Draft Plan. In these instances, the City will work with property owners and the surrounding community to identify, design, and finalize these requirements. There are some instances where the City will provide these improvements, for example when they are located on City-owned land.

What is the realistic timeframe for change?

The Plan's lifespan is intended to be 20 years. In general, change will be incremental and happen over the course of that amount of time. Though it is difficult to guess the pace of development, it is reasonable to expect that there might be one new building in the Opportunity Areas completed each year on average.

What happens if redevelopment is not financially feasible? Will the City adjust the Plan over time?

The Plan's proposed development is based on an economic analysis of what is realistic to expect over the lifetime of the Plan. However, the world changes

in unexpected ways and what is feasible now may not be in 10 years. The Plan specifically builds in broad flexibility to account for such change and still enables development and implementation of the Plan over time.

That said, part of the ongoing work that Planning and Zoning does is monitor the progress being made on each Small Area Plan's proposed development and goals. In instances where redevelopment is not occurring at the pace or level outlined in the Plan, the City undergoes an effort to analyze why and make adjustments to the requirements accordingly. One recent example of this is the AlexWest Small Area Plan, adopted by City Council in December 2024. In 2012, the City approved an earlier SAP, called Beauregard, that covered a portion of the same area. The Beauregard SAP required extensive office uses in the area. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the market for office development was significantly changed and the level of office proposed in the plan was no longer realistic or feasible. As a result, the City undertook a new planning process that expanded the boundary of the Beauregard SAP and also re-examined its requirements to update them for a economic environment that was drastically changed by COVID-19.

How will the City monitor implementation?

The Department of Planning and Zoning actively monitors and reports out on the implementation of Alexandria Mater Plan (which includes the Small Area Plans, Zoning Overlays, and City-Wide Plans) in close collaboration with other City departments like Transportation and Environmental Services and Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities. More information about the implementation process, including the most recent Status of Implementation Report, is available [here](#).

Can schools, utilities, and other infrastructure accommodate growth?

Throughout the planning process, staff worked closely with other departments to ensure that the existing school, utility, and infrastructure could accommodate the growth proposed in this Plan. Currently, the City is able to accommodate new growth, however when new buildings are proposed the development review process also identifies more specific requirements

regarding the impact the building will have on the City's infrastructure. [Click here](#) for more information about how the Planning & Zoning collaborates with ACPS