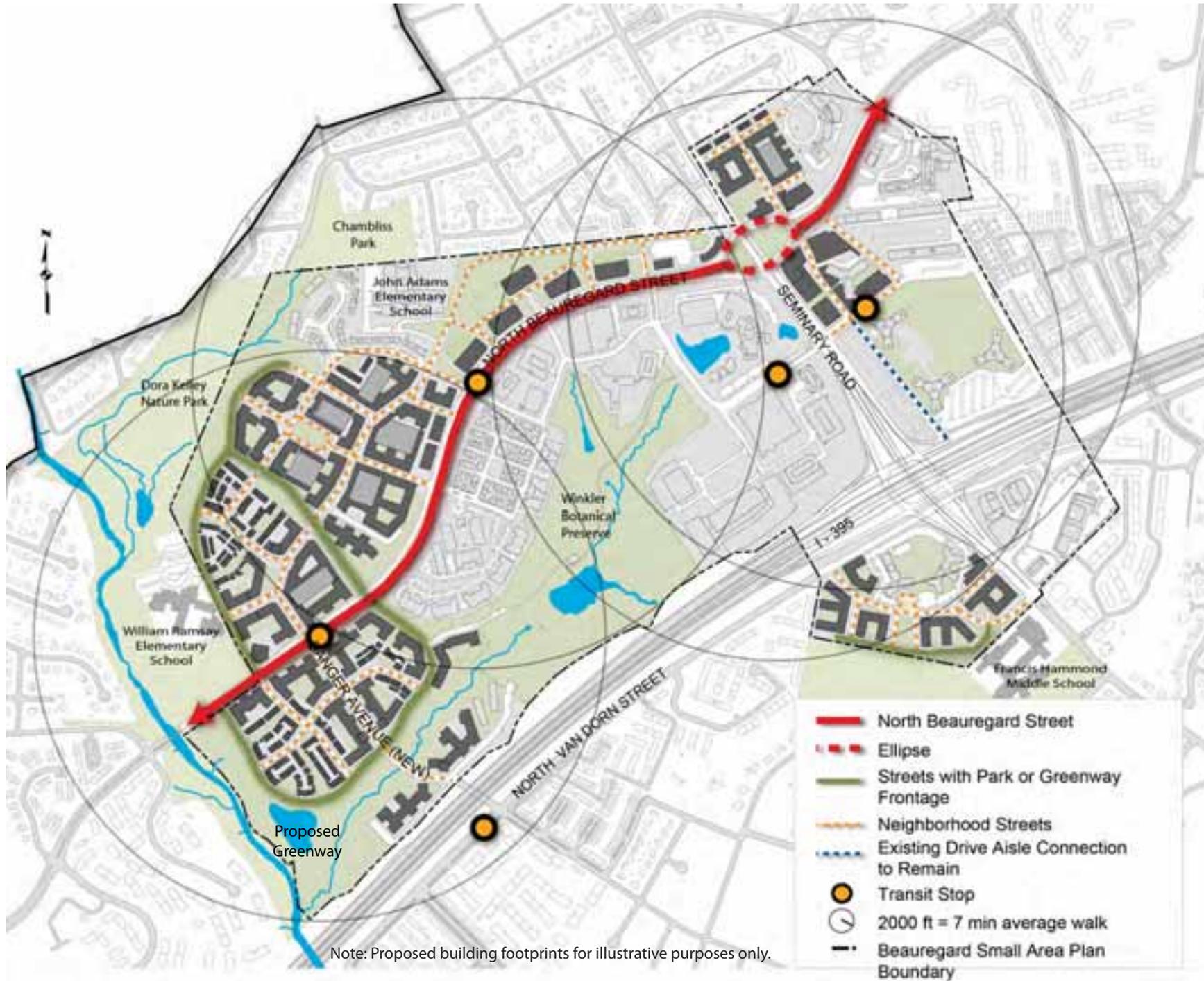


URBAN DESIGN — PLAN FRAMEWORK

3





URBAN DESIGN — PLAN FRAMEWORK

Creating Beauregard as a series of great new neighborhoods will require housing choices, high quality urban transit, streets, architecture, public spaces, parks, and a mix of building types. An exclusive focus on density and land use will not result in quality cohesive neighborhoods or an enduring sustainable place that will bring lasting value to the City. It is essential that as redevelopment occurs, buildings, open spaces, the proposed transitway and the public realm be held to the highest standards. **Quality begets quality.**

A. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:

The urban design framework (Figure 13) provides the structure for a series of interconnected streets, blocks, parks and open space - greenways. The street grid is not a rigid orthogonal grid, but rather more curvilinear streets based on traditional landscaped “garden cities” and neighborhoods such as Myers Park (Charlotte, NC) and Roland Park (Baltimore, MD).

To reinforce the “garden city” nature of the Plan, elements such as courtyards, front yards, a central urban landscaped boulevard (North Beauregard Street) greenways and parks are recommended by the Plan. North Beauregard Street is recommended to be a landscaped street, with a double row of trees, central medians and increased setbacks for the buildings (Figure 16A), which will enable the street to function as a landscaped street that will visually connect the neighborhoods. Other defining streets within the Plan include the streets with park or greenway frontages. These streets will reinforce the public nature of the proposed greenway, the Francis Hammond open space, and Dora Kelley Park (Figure 13 and Figure 16C).

THE GARDEN CITY

The garden city is an urban planning concept that began in the 1880's and has served as the basis for current contemporary planning. The basic concept is a community, with open space and a mix of uses, which enables the benefits of open space and landscaping with the benefit of urban amenities. Many of the garden cities are characterized by urban boulevards, landscaping public parks, urban building form, and a mix of uses.





B. CREATION OF SEVEN DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS:

A defining element of the City is its unique and identifiable neighborhoods. The differences in identity, character and scale of the various neighborhoods complement each other and contribute to the richness of the City. The Plan recommends seven unique and identifiable neighborhoods, which will be accomplished through architecture, scale, uses and open space all of which are located within a 5 - 10 minute walk from the proposed transit stops (Figure 13).

A central open space - park is recommended within each neighborhood. (Figure 14). In addition, there are civic uses (schools and a recreation center) and parks adjacent to several of the neighborhoods, which will serve as civic gathering areas. The Plan is also based on the provision of an open space greenway in the southeastern portion of the Plan area, which will define the character of the adjoining neighborhoods (Figure 33A and 34).

C. FRAMEWORK STREETS:

The Plan recommends a series of streets that will serve as a framework for circulation and a collection of outdoor spaces. The Plan will transform the character of the streets increasing the space given to pedestrians and cyclists. Creative and straightforward street designs will translate into a variety of simple and functional streetscapes (Figure 16B).



A street is a spatial entity and not the residue between buildings.

– Anonymous



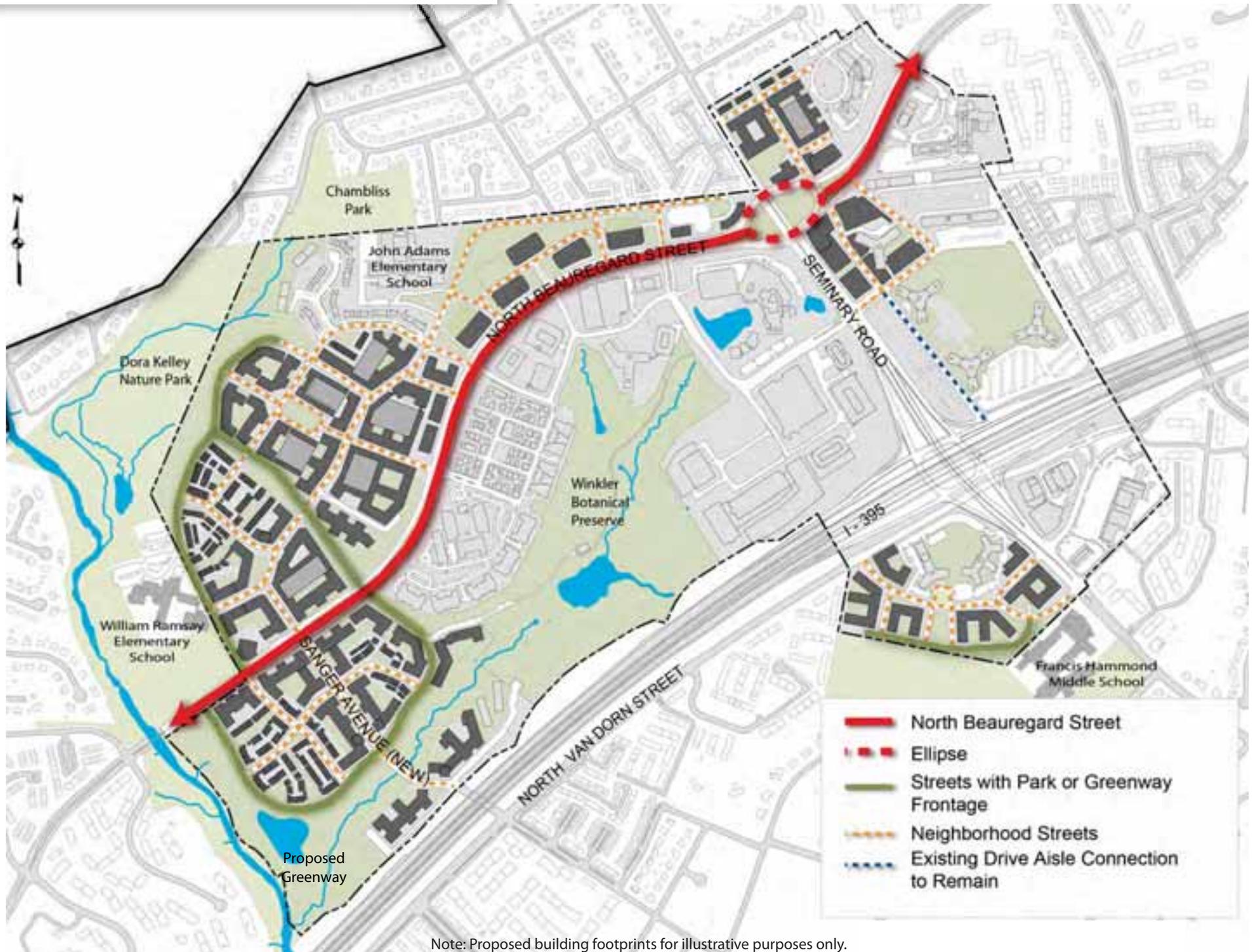
Figure 14: Neighborhood Open Space - Parks



Note: Proposed building footprints for illustrative purposes only. See Figure 39 for open space - park(s) within the Southern Towers Neighborhood. This graphic is intended to depict public open space. The other ground-level open space will be developed as part of the development review process.

*If the .85 acre open space is one option to be considered with the BRAC funds. If the .85 acres is not selected, the Plan will revert to the townhouse layout (19,200 sq. ft.) depicted in Figure 5 in the Staff Report.

Figure 15: Framework Streets



Note: Proposed building footprints for illustrative purposes only.

Figure 16A: Beauguard Streetscape (Partial Cross-Section)



Figure 16B: Neighborhood Street - Typical



Figure 16C: Perspective of Street with Greenway Frontage



The quality of a City or neighborhood's civic life is largely defined by what happens in its public areas, in particular its streets, which are fundamental elements to creating a sense of community. Streets can be made more social by offering places for people to gather, walk and bike in a safe and attractive environment. Ensuring the appropriate street character is a fundamental element in the design and width of the planned streets. The required width of the streets and sidewalks capture the characteristics of great urban streets (Figure 16B). The streets are designed to balance the need for pedestrians, bikes, transit, and cars. In addition, the streets are designed to collect and treat stormwater, be easy to maintain, and provide utility services that make them an integral part of the sustainable infrastructure.

There are five primary types of streets within the Plan area: (Figure 15)

1. North Beauguard Street;
2. Ellipse;
3. Streets with park or greenway frontage;
4. Neighborhood streets; and
5. Alleys.

North Beauguard Street: The street is intended to be an urban landscaped boulevard with double central landscaped medians, and a dedicated transit lane (See Figure 49B). The street will provide a 30 ft streetscape that will include a double row of street trees and landscaping (except at proposed retail) adjacent to the buildings. The existing buildings on the eastern portion of North Beauguard Street that are not proposed to redevelop will also be setback a minimum of 30 feet. The Plan recommends larger caliper street trees at installation to reinforce the landscaped and parkway character of Beauguard (Figure 16A).

Figure 16D: Perspective of Proposed Ellipse



Note: For illustrative purposes only.

Figure 16E: Street with Park Frontage adjacent Dora Kelley



Ellipse: The Ellipse, which functions similar to a traffic circle, accommodates and improves the projected traffic. There is an opportunity to introduce trees and landscaping within the Ellipse for this visually prominent intersection. To facilitate pedestrian and bike circulation, signalization, a 10 ft. sidewalk/trail, and a double row of trees is provided adjacent to the Ellipse (Figure 16D).

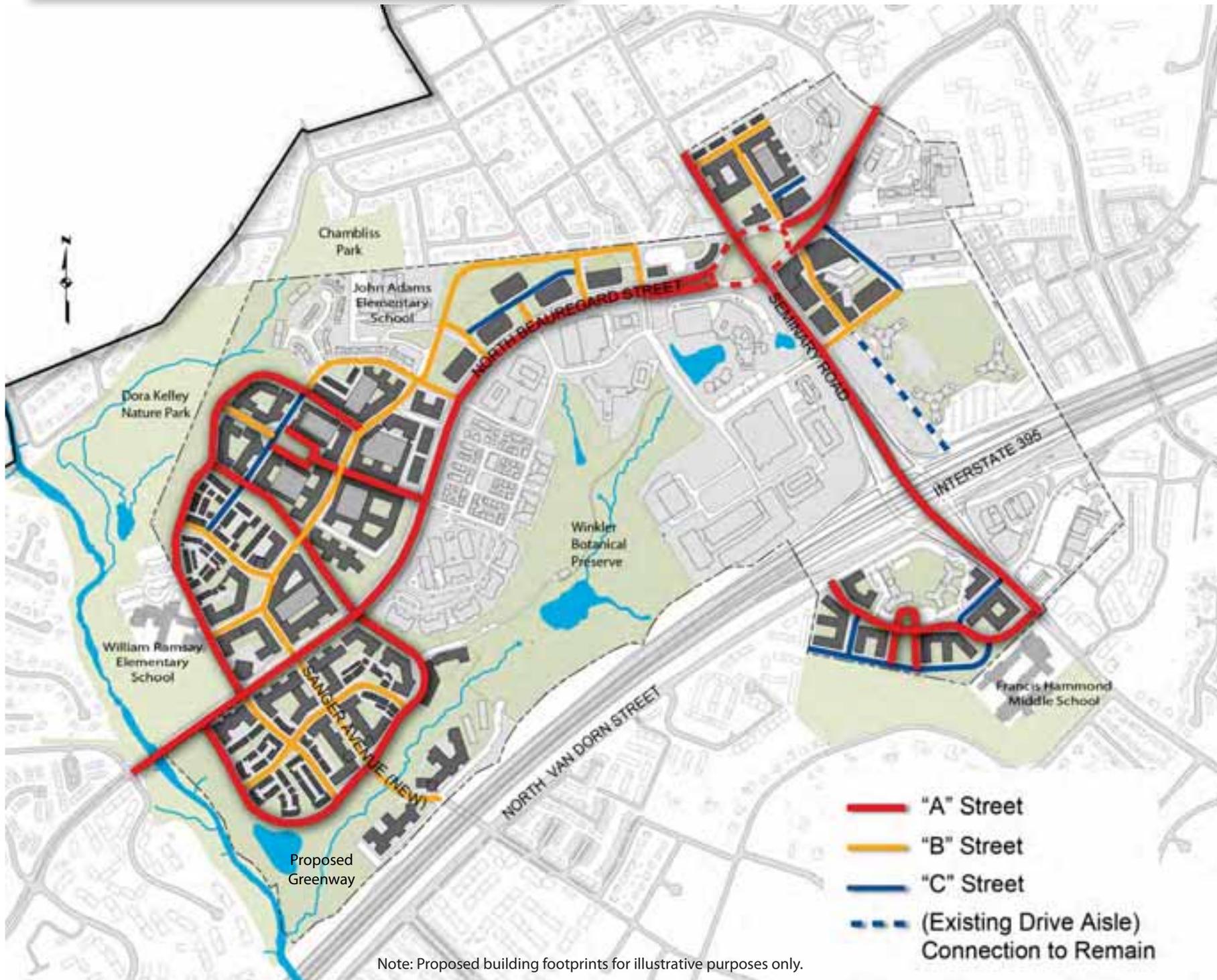
Streets with Park or Greenway Frontage: Curvilinear streets, with buildings on one side, these streets will enable the proposed and adjoining parks or greenways to be visually and physically accessible to the public (Figure 13 and Figure 16C). The street adjacent to Dora Kelley Park has been decreased in width to discourage cut-through traffic. Design elements should include narrow travel lanes, special paving, strategically located parking, a pedestrian path, and additional trees (Figure 16E). Access points to the park are planned to remain at the current locations. The future Urban Design Standards and Guidelines will provide specific design requirements for the design and materials of the street.

Neighborhood Streets: These streets will generally have two travel lanes with parallel parking on each side, and 14 ft. or more for the sidewalk and streetscape (Figure 16B).

Alleys: The Plan recommends alleys for the proposed townhouses to accommodate garage and service access. Alleys are encouraged for provision of service access for multi-family and office, hotel, and retail buildings in a manner consistent with the street hierarchy requirements. The location of the alleys will be determined as part of the development review process.

Decisions such as density, land use, the location of transit, vehicle circulation, the scale of the streets, the amount and location of parks and open space, and building placement and massing are all predicated on creating a public realm that prioritizes the pedestrian experience.

Figure 17: Street Hierarchy



Note: Proposed building footprints for illustrative purposes only.



“...frequent streets and short blocks are valuable because of the fabric of intricate cross-use that they permit among the users of a city neighborhood.”

— Jane Jacobs



Figure 18: Block Comparison



--- Plan Boundary

D. STREET HIERARCHY:

The street hierarchy is based on prominent streets, neighborhood streets and streets for parking and service access (Figure 17). A clear hierarchy of streets will differentiate the role and character of each street.

“A” streets are the most visually prominent streets; “B” streets connect “A” and “C” streets and provide general pedestrian and vehicular circulation for the neighborhoods; and “C” streets provide a means of access and service entries to parking. The Urban Design Standards and Guidelines may permit, as part of the development review process, service entries on “B” streets when buildings do not have alley or “C” street frontage.

E. BLOCKS:

One of the most important measures to ensure that Beauregard will develop as a pedestrian-oriented series of neighborhoods is the requirement of urban, human scaled block sizes. Urban scale blocks with frequent intersections provide increased options for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, while also reducing the perceived building scale. Existing blocks, within the Plan area are approximately 900 x 900 feet or larger (Figure 18).

Through the placement of the streets, the block sizes are recommended to generally be 400 by 400 ft. It is likely that Beauregard will take 20 to 30 years to fully implement the vision of the Plan. Over this period, while it may be more expeditious or less expensive to create larger blocks to accommodate redevelopment, the Plan recommends that redevelopment adhere to the recommended block sizes. While the Plan acknowledges the need for flexibility, the size of the blocks is not an area where flexibility should be permitted.

F. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT – STREETScape:

The blocks, neighborhoods, parks and other public spaces are planned to be connected by a diverse, interconnected pedestrian network along the proposed streets and blocks. The pedestrian environment consists of pedestrian routes connecting the open spaces and neighborhoods. The pedestrian environment is generally located adjacent to the streets, greenways, and parks to encourage pedestrian activity, with active, tree-lined streetscapes with adjoining front yards, courtyards, and landscaping to reinforce the landscaped - “garden city” intent of the Plan.

G. MID- BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS:

The Plan recommends mid-block pedestrian connections as part of the public realm. These connections are envisioned to provide green “landscaped streets” that connect the neighborhoods, parks and greenways (Figure 19). The Plan has also been designed to provide a continual mid-block pedestrian connection to the adjoining William Ramsay Elementary School within the Garden District neighborhood.

Buildings will define the mid-block pedestrian connections. The scale of the buildings adjacent to the connections will reinforce the pedestrian scale and will be limited to a height of 45 to 55 ft. The width and lower building heights are intended to create intimate green landscaped streets for the community. Residential building entries, yards, stoops and terraces will provide a transition between the private realm of the house and the public realm of the mid-block connections.





VIEW OF MID-BLOCK CONNECTION WITHIN THE
GARDEN DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD

Figure 19B: Garden District Neighborhood



Figure 19C: Greenway Neighborhood



Note: Proposed building footprints for illustrative purposes only.

H. BUILDING FORM:

Alexandria is known for its high quality urban form, architecture and unique sense of place where buildings define the adjoining streets and parks.

The existing buildings within many of the neighborhoods are organized in a random pattern, with few internal pedestrian, bike or vehicular connections (Figure 20). In addition, almost all of the existing buildings are oriented toward internal private courtyards and extensive areas of surface parking lots which “turn their backs” on the adjoining streets, depriving the public realm of “eyes on the street.” While there is open space within the Plan area, it is fragmented and not generally useable or accessible by the public.

To establish relationships between the private and public areas, the Plan recommends buildings front the adjoining streets, open spaces and mid-block connections to ensure that the buildings engage the adjoining streets and open spaces. In addition, the building configuration will ensure that a significant portion of the open space will be visually and physically accessible to the public, rather than the predominantly private open space and courtyards that exist today.

I. BUILDING DESIGN – CHARACTER:

The Plan recommends using contemporary building design elements to implement the “Garden City” vision of the Plan. The Plan does not recommend a particular architectural style beyond the goal of using high quality materials that reflect the time and place they are built. The Plan also recommends future Urban Design Standards and Guidelines to ensure high quality buildings.

“We shape our buildings:
Thereafter they shape us”

— Winston Churchill



Figure 20: Existing Buildings, Streets, and Parking



Figure 21: Signature Facades, Vistas, & Open Space Gateway Elements



J. VISTAS, SIGNATURE FACADES AND GATEWAYS:

The Plan recommends that certain streets terminate into the adjoining parks and greenways affording terminating open space vistas (Figure 21). Similar to streets in Old Town that terminate into the water to reinforce the water-maritime heritage of the City, the streets that terminate into the parks and greenways will reinforce the open space - park and “Garden City” character of the Plan area.

There are also opportunities for buildings to visually reinforce prominent locations at the Town Center, the Ellipse and other prominent frontages. (See Figure 21) The Plan identifies signature facades and gateways that, because of their prominent location and/or orientation, are recommended to incorporate distinctive architectural elements and building forms. These elements will draw attention to points of interest and mark the location of “entries” and “places” for each of the neighborhoods. Architecturally significant facades require the highest level of design excellence, materials and the innovative use of materials. Details regarding building materials will be provided within the Urban Design Standards and Guidelines.





K. PUBLIC ART AND HISTORY:

Public art could help define each neighborhood, create a sense of place and express the site's unique history. Public art is also an important part of Alexandria's character and cultural expression. The Plan recommends that public art be integrated into the design of the open spaces through historical references, interpretation and possible educational opportunities. In addition, the public art element of the Plan will need to be consistent with any City-wide public art funding policy and/or as required through the development review process.



URBAN DESIGN REQUIREMENTS:

A. GENERAL:

3.1 Urban Design Standards and Guidelines are required as part of any future rezoning(s) to ensure implementation of the recommendations and intent of the Plan.

B. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:

3.2 Require the streets and blocks depicted in the Framework Plan to be constructed as part of any redevelopment. The final location of the non-framework streets will be determined through the CDD zoning, design standards and development review process.

3.3 The building setback for new buildings will be 30 feet on North_Beauregard Street, excluding the Required Retail areas, to enable a double row of street trees and 10ft. sidewalk-trail (Figure 16A).

3.4 The trees within the median and street trees on North_Beauregard Street will be a minimum of 4" caliper at installation.

3.5 The building setback for new buildings on Seminary Road will be a minimum of 20 feet.

3.6 Development blocks will be sufficiently sized for market acceptable building floor plates.

3.7 The blocks as part of the redevelopment are recommended to generally be 400 ft. x 400 ft. Block sizes of 300 ft. x 300 ft. are encouraged. Ensure permeability of the blocks and streets to encourage walking and appropriate block sizes with mid-block connections and alleys.

3.8 The residential multi-family and townhouse buildings without ground floor retail will have setbacks, front yards and/or courtyards. The final requirements will be approved as part of the Urban Design Standards and Guidelines.

C. CREATION OF SEVEN DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS:

3.9 Create seven unique and identifiable neighborhoods, which will be compatible with the existing neighborhoods. The identity of each neighborhood will be reinforced through the use of scale, height, architecture and open space.

3.10 Encourage the use of history as inspiration for the design of open space, public realm and buildings. Encourage the use of public art to reinforce the distinct neighborhood identities and create unifying themes for the neighborhoods.

3.11 Incorporate the parks –open spaces depicted in the Framework Plan within each neighborhood as a defining element of each neighborhood. (Figure 14).

3.12 Require a mix of building types and innovative building types within each neighborhood.

3.13 The neighborhoods should be connected to one another as much as possible.

3.14 Explore the possibility of providing cultural and civic uses to reinforce the character of each neighborhood.

3.15 While each neighborhood will have unique design and character, consistent and unified elements such as the streets and streetscapes will unify the neighborhoods.

D. FRAMEWORK STREETS:

3.16 Improve and enhance the North Beauregard Street frontage with streetscape improvements, buildings, and landscaping. (Figure 16A)

3.17 Bulb-outs are required for all streets where parallel parking is provided.

3.18 The Urban Design Standards and Guidelines will include streetscape standards for plantings, materials, street trees, sidewalks, street lights, and associated streetscape elements.

3.19 North Beauregard Street will be configured to accommodate the dedicated transit lanes and transit stations.

3.20 North Beauregard Street is central to the visual perception/image of the community and will be an urban, tree-lined boulevard that will provide enhanced tree canopy over time.

3.21 All townhouses are required to be rear-loaded townhouses with garage access from a rear alley. All other building types are encouraged to provide access from a rear and/or internal alley or provide access consistent with the street hierarchy requirements.

3.22 Alleys are required for each block to enable the loading, servicing and other vehicular functions to be located away from the pedestrian realm. Internal alleys are strongly encouraged to be designed and constructed in a manner to ensure that they will provide shared access for adjacent properties and buildings within each block.

E. STREET HIERARCHY:

3.23 The hierarchy of streets (Figure 17) is required to maintain a high-quality street environment and address a variety of needs. Alleys are not considered curb cuts for purposes of street hierarchy requirements. The street designations will be subject to the following:

"A" Streets

Curb cuts, entrances to parking garages and service bays are prohibited. "A" streets are subject to the highest design standards:

- Buildings will front the street;
- Active uses will be located on all street frontages for each level of the building;
- The highest quality of architectural façade and streetscape treatment will be used; and
- Building(s) with frontages on both Seminary Road and new streets internal to the development could have their primary entrances on the street internal to the development.

"B" Streets

- Buildings will front the street;
- Active uses will be located on all street frontages for each level of the building;
- Minimize the number of curbs cuts per block on each side of the street. Curb cuts for each building will be permitted if the curbs cut cannot be located on a "C" street and/or alley.
- Main building and pedestrian entrances will be located along "B" street frontages unless adjacent to an "A" street; and
- A high quality of architectural façade treatment is required.

"C" Streets

- Curb cuts for internal alleys and service will be located on these streets, unless it can be determined that it is infeasible to do so.
- Active uses will be located on street frontages.

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT:

3.24 Require streets to emphasize the pedestrian and bicycles.

3.25 The mid-block pedestrian connections as depicted in Figure 19 will generally be 30 to 60 ft. wide. Require the mid-block pedestrian connections depicted in the Plan. In addition, allow for internal pedestrian connections and alleys within the blocks. The Urban Design Standards and Guidelines will address more specific requirements such as individual entries, stoops and terraces adjacent to the mid-block connections.

3.26 The height of units adjacent to the mid-block connections will be limited to a height of 45ft to 55ft.

3.27 All existing above grade utilities and new utilities within or along the frontage of the redevelopment sites will be located below grade as part of the redevelopment.

URBAN AND BUILDING FORM:

3.28 Create an urban building scale and relationship between buildings, streets and open spaces to encourage walkability and the use of transit.

3.29 Buildings will have a variety of shapes and forms to avoid monolithic and uniform building forms.

3.30 Balance the aesthetic and functional criteria of sustainable design for the site and the buildings.

3.31 Active uses will be required adjacent to all street (excluding I-395) and park frontages. The requirements for the active uses will be part of the Urban Design Standards and Guidelines.

3.32 All buildings are required to be oriented to the adjoining streets, parks or mid-block connections.

3.33 Select appropriate building materials, textures, façades, and treatments that work together to establish a high quality urban environment that is durable and sustainable.

3.34 Buildings will provide architectural scaling and material elements to reduce the appearance of the height and length of building façades through the use of changes in wall plane, height, or materials.

F. BUILDING DESIGN:

3.35 The Plan does not require a particular architectural style beyond the goal of using high quality materials and creating contemporary buildings that reflect the time and place in which they are built and using architectural styles to reinforce the character of each neighborhood.

G. VISTAS, SIGNATURE FACADES, & GATEWAYS:

3.36 Require variety in building massing, design, and/or height to denote the required gateway locations (Figure 21). The gateway elements will be proportionate to the size and scale of the building.

3.37 Require variety in height, building materials, orientation, and dimensions to create distinctive building tops for taller buildings.

3.38 Require distinctive building forms and architecture for the signature facades (Figure 21).

H. PUBLIC ART & HISTORY:

3.39 Integrate public art, which considers the history of the site, as well as thematic, artistic and cultural ideas into new development and the public realm, including the following areas: trails, transit infrastructure, open spaces, buildings, site furnishings (bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, etc.), lighting, gateways, wayfinding, sidewalks and fountains. If artwork is incorporated, consideration should be given to local artists.

3.40 The public art will be determined as part of the development review process. If a City-wide public art policy is approved, new development will be subject to any future City policy requirements for public art.