

City of Alexandria, Virginia Planning Commission Annual Report Fiscal Year 2020

INSIDE THIS REPORT

Long Range Planning	3
Development Cases	9
Zoning Text Amendments	13
Land Use Services	15
Membership & Attendance	17
Other	19

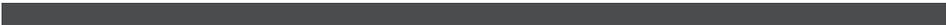
The Planning Commission is appointed by City Council and performs its duties under Sections 15.2-2223 and 2225 and Chapter 9 of the City Charter and the Zoning Ordinance. It is charged with adopting, reviewing and amending the City's Master Plan, making final decisions on Subdivision and Site Plan regulatory cases, and making recommendations to City Council on other regulatory cases such as Zoning Text Amendments, Special Use Permits, Development Special Use Permits, Encroachments and Vacation proposals.

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Planning Commission held eight public hearings out of its eleven regularly scheduled public hearings. There were three cancelations, including one cancelation (January 7) due to inclement weather and two cancelations (April 7 & May 7) due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the last two public hearings in FY 2020 (June 2 & June 25) were held electronically with Planning Commission members and staff participating from remote locations through Zoom Webinar. The virtual public hearings were held pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A) (3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council

on June 20, 2020, or Sections 4-0.00(g) in HB29 and HB30 to undertake essential business. The meetings were accessed by the public through the Zoom teleconferencing platform, broadcasted live on AlexTV (Comcast Channel 70), and streamed on the City's website. Additionally, public comments were received at the meeting via Zoom and telephone. The video and audio recording were posted the day after the hearing. Also, at its June 2, 2020, Planning Commission Public Hearing, the Planning Commission voted to approve the Electronic Participation Policy for Planning Commission Hearings. The Electronic Participation Policy allows virtual participation by members when a quorum has physically assembled in one location.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES



Regulatory Cases	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Special Use Permits (SUP)	37	44	28
Encroachments, Subdivisions and Vacations	21	13	8
Development Projects (DSP/DSUP)	17	23	17
Master Plan Amendments and Re-zonings	13	18	6
Text Amendments	12	12	7
CDD Conceptual Design Plans	5	4	3
City Charter Section 9.06	1	1	3
Transportation Management Plans	7	10	5
Total	113	125	77
Administrative Approvals			
Administrative Special Use Permits (SUP)	50	48	47

Seventy-seven regulatory cases were considered by the Planning Commission in FY 2020. Cumulatively, total cases went down from 125 (FY 2019) to 77 (FY 2020). This 38% decrease is in contrast to the overall increase of the year before. All regulatory cases as noted were either recommended to City Council for approval or approved by the Planning Commission. Subdivisions and Site Plans are cases which are approved by the Planning Commission and do not require approval by the City Council.

In addition to the Special Use Permits (SUPs) that required review by the Planning Commission in FY 2020,

staff approved an additional 47 Administrative SUPs. From FY 2018 to FY 2020 the number of Administrative SUPs remain comparable from year to year. SUPs only went down by one (from FY 2019 to FY 2020), a 2% decrease. Many of the Administrative SUPs were requests for both a change of ownership and for minor amendments to an existing SUP.

The following pages provide examples of several regulatory case types from the Planning Commission’s FY 2020 Dockets as reflected in the chart above.



LONG RANGE PLANNING

Arlandria-Chirilagua Planning



City Staff and Arlandria Community Members Discuss the Resident Survey

The update to the 2003 Arlandria Action Plan began in fall 2019 when staff launched a community engagement process that involved a variety of stakeholders, residents, and neighborhood organizations. The outreach has been conducted in two languages using a Spanish-first approach with English translation.

Moreover, the project webpage, video presentations, eNews notifications, flyers, questionnaires, meetings, pop-ups, media, and mobile engagement all featured both languages. Over the course of engagement so far, staff accomplished over 35 one-on-one meetings or presentations, nine mobile pop-ups, two large community

conversations with open-house follow-ups, over 800 responses to an online questionnaire in Spanish and English, and coverage in El Tiempo Latino Newspaper and Univision Television. A video summarizing community engagement efforts can be watched [here](#).

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Arlandria-Chirilagua Planning cont.



Fall 2020 Community Engagement Meeting



Tenants and Workers United Meeting to Discuss Arlandria Planning

Initially, the City intended to combine this effort with an update to Del Ray's 2005 Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan. However, due to COVID-19 Pandemic, City Council approved separating the two planning processes, focusing first on the Arlandria-Chirilagua neighborhood. The first phase of this planning process prioritizes the time-sensitive topic of housing affordability, so the proposed recommendations guide future development. The second phase will develop recommendations for other planning topics such as open space, pedestrian safety, environmental sustainability, and community and economic health, to mention a few. Community engagement will continue, through a combination of in person and virtual strategies, to involve as many stakeholders as possible. Staff anticipates bringing housing affordability recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for their consideration in winter 2021. The second phase of the planning process will conclude in fall 2021, after which the Del Ray Plan update will begin.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Eisenhower East Small Area Plan Update

In February 2020, City Council approved the Planning Commission recommendation to adopt the updated Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. The planning process began in January 2019, engaging the broadest possible cross-section of residents and stakeholders in the Plan area through a variety of means – informal pop-ups, open houses, online engagement, and multiple briefings to City Commissions including Planning Commission work sessions. The Plan provides a blueprint for inclusive growth and a people-first orientation to build a complete community through recommendations that encourage expansion of housing opportunity, flexibility of land uses, transit-oriented development, social connections, an enhanced open space network including a new park under the Metrorail Station, safety and accessibility for all, and the necessary social infrastructure, including a public school, to make a complete community. The Plan seeks to enhance the quality of life for existing and future residents, workers and visitors and seeks to make the neighborhood a local and regional destination.



Rendering of New Recommended Park Under the Metrorail Station Tracks



Rendering of New Recommended Multi-Use Trail

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Eisenhower East Small Area Plan Update cont.



Eisenhower East Plan Principles

Central to the Plan’s goal for creating an inclusive and equitable community is the provision of a more balanced range of multifamily housing options in proximity to transit, employment and neighborhood-serving amenities that

will contribute to the vitality of the area and enable more workers to live closer to their jobs. To that end, this is the first Small Area Plan in the City to require a minimum percentage of additional residential rental development enabled



Cover of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan

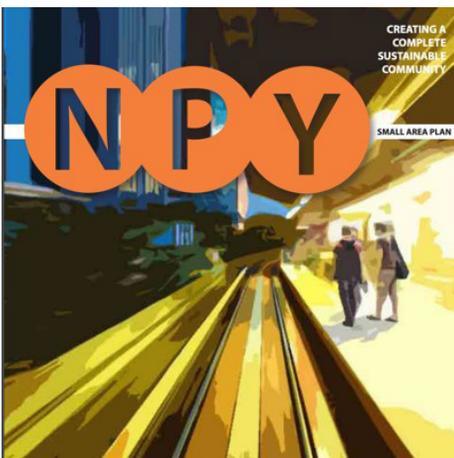
by the Plan update be provided as committed affordable rental housing, supporting the City’s Housing for All Policy and objective to develop or preserve 2,000 affordable housing units through 2025.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

North Potomac Yard Master Plan Amendment



North Potomac Yard Block Diagram, including New Potomac Yard Metrorail Station



Cover of the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan

In March of 2020, the Planning Commission approved Master Plan Amendment (MPA) #2019-00008 to the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan, taking a major step towards achieving the community’s vision for redevelopment of the approximately 70-acre site as a complete sustainable community-oriented around the construction of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, and now incorporating Virginia Tech and the Innovation District. The MPA includes a new section describing the intent and objectives of the Innovation District,

new text and map amendments, amended square footages and location of uses, amendments to retail locations, framework streets, pedestrian connections, and building heights. These amendments enable enhanced pedestrian circulation and a mid-block pedestrian connection within the Virginia Tech portion of the neighborhood, retention of the City school site (in a new location), a new 150,000 square foot affordable housing project, and increased building heights in proximity to the new Metrorail Station.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

NPY MPA cont.



Precedent Image of Innovation District Collaborative Spaces

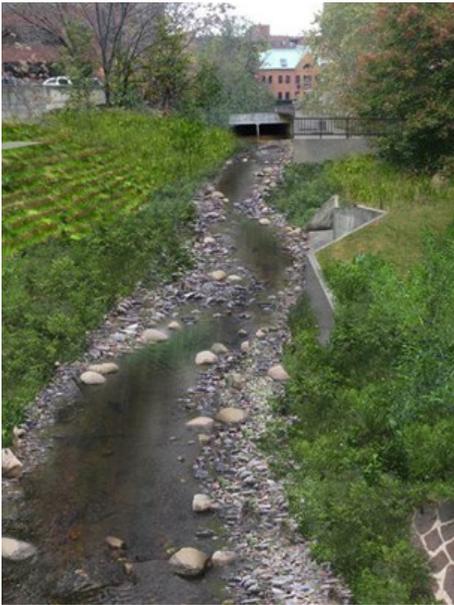
In addition, the North Potomac Yard Urban Design Guidelines were amended to include new Innovation District Design Excellence Prerequisites and Criteria (Prerequisites and Criteria). Design Excellence is the convergence of best practices and technologies in the design of sites and structures. The Prerequisites and Criteria are intended to ensure implementation of the block sizes and street framework of the Plan, informing building volume, form, materials and heights to create an active street wall and screen utilitarian

uses that distract from visual quality and the pedestrian environment, while implementing and integrating high quality materials and high performing technologies. The Prerequisites and Criteria also call for high performing technologies to meet or exceed the City's standards for environmental sustainability. Design Excellence is necessary to nurture a thriving community and create an innovative place that is desirable for people to live, work and visit.

DEVELOPMENT

RiverRenew – Tunnel Dewatering Pumping Station

Development Special Use Permit #2019-00013



Exterior View of the Tunnel Dewatering and Wet Weather Pumping Station Building-View Looking South-East

The City of Alexandria has a combined sewer system, primarily in Old Town, dating back to the 1800's. About 540 acres of Alexandria is served by the combined sewer system, which was designed to carry both sewage and rainwater runoff in a single pipe—a combined sewer. On rainy days, the capacity of the combined sewer pipes is often exceeded. Instead of being transported and treated at AlexRenew's Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF), sewage mixed with the rainwater overflows to the Potomac River, Hooffs Run, and Hunting Creek,

via four discharge points, or outfalls. In April of 2017, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a law requiring the remediation of these outfalls by July 1, 2025.

AlexRenew will implement RiverRenew over the next five years to address the overflow issue through the following four main projects:

- **Tunnel System Project:** a storage and conveyance tunnel system, pumping stations, and wet weather treatment

- **WRRF Site Security and Access Project:** upgrades to AlexRenew's existing access points (gates) and site security system
- **108 to 116 Million Gallons Per Day Expansion Project:** upgrades to AlexRenew's primary pumping capacity at the WRRF
- **Building J Facilities Relocation and Decommissioning Project:** relocation of facilities and decommissioning of AlexRenew's former administrative building

DEVELOPMENT

RiverRenew cont.



Exterior View of the Tunnel Dewatering and Wet Weather Pumping Station Building- View from Western Entrance Gate

Outside of AlexRenew's main treatment facility the RiverRenew remediation project is essentially underground with three areas that will touch the surface where site improvements will be made. These include improvements at the Robinson Terminal North site, Jones Point Park and Duke Street at Daingerfield Road. With RiverRenew in place, it is estimated that the frequency of combined sewer discharges will be reduced from 60 to less than four times per year, on average. Additionally, the volume of combined sewer discharges is anticipated to be reduced from 140 million gallons to less than 17 million gallons per year, on average. This reduction in the frequency and volume of discharges of sewage mixed

with rainwater will limit the number of bacteria, trash, and other pollutants flowing into Alexandria's waterways.

This large-scale, water remediation project was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission this past year in two parts: the tunnel system construction and a new treatment facility shown in the adjacent pictures. It is a major infrastructure accomplishment to protect the environmental resources of Alexandria and the larger region.

DEVELOPMENT

1300 & 1310 King Street

Development Special Use Permit #2019-00001



Exterior View of the Building

The development at 1300 King Street was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission in September 2019. The proposal was to construct a four-story, 31-unit multifamily building with ground-floor commercial spaces on the site of an existing surface parking lot and two historic townhouses. The two historic buildings will be adaptively reused and incorporated into the design of the new development as ground-floor commercial space. The historic buildings, located in the eastern half of the site with frontage on King and S. Payne Streets, will be rehabilitated with

the 19th-century brick façade exposed and painted after the removal of the synthetic stone veneer.

The new L-shaped building will wrap around the existing historic buildings to the west and south and is predominantly four stories with a height of 50 feet. The upper floors (residential) are set back 9 feet from the front wall of the ground-floor commercial spaces. The S. Payne Street building façade steps back at the third and fourth floors and is clad in gray brick with metal accents. The mixed-use building contains three

commercial spaces and the residential lobby on the King Street frontage, each surrounded by a decorative metal screen at the first floor, and an entrance to the underground parking garage and loading corridor along S. Payne Street. The proposal has received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review, and will be under construction as early as fall 2020. It will contribute significantly to the vitality and diversity of commercial and residential options on King Street.

DEVELOPMENT

1112 First Street - Aspire Alexandria

Development Special Use Permit #2019-00007



Perspective View – Northwest Corner



Perspective View – West Elevation

The development at 1112 First Street was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission in February 2020. The proposal was to construct a six-story, 133-unit (including 9 affordable units) age-restricted building, including a ground-floor restaurant, in the Braddock Road Metro neighborhood. The project, the Aspire, represents a new housing typology in the City by providing an age-restricted apartment option that includes amenities and services tailored to aging residents who may not need the full offerings provided by continuum-of-care facilities. The site is immediately to the west of the new Carpenter’s Shelter project and north of the Belle Pre development. The building features a contemporary design with setback “shoulders” above the fourth story and has high-quality materials including brick and metal panels. The project contains a number of streetscape improvements on Fayette and First Streets as well as a publicly-accessible pedestrian walk along the adjacent alley that separates this site from the Belle Pre. Monetary contributions to the Braddock Neighborhood Community Amenities Fund, the Braddock Open Space Fund, Capital Bike Share, public art, and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (in addition to the 9 on-site units) are additional public benefits of the project.

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

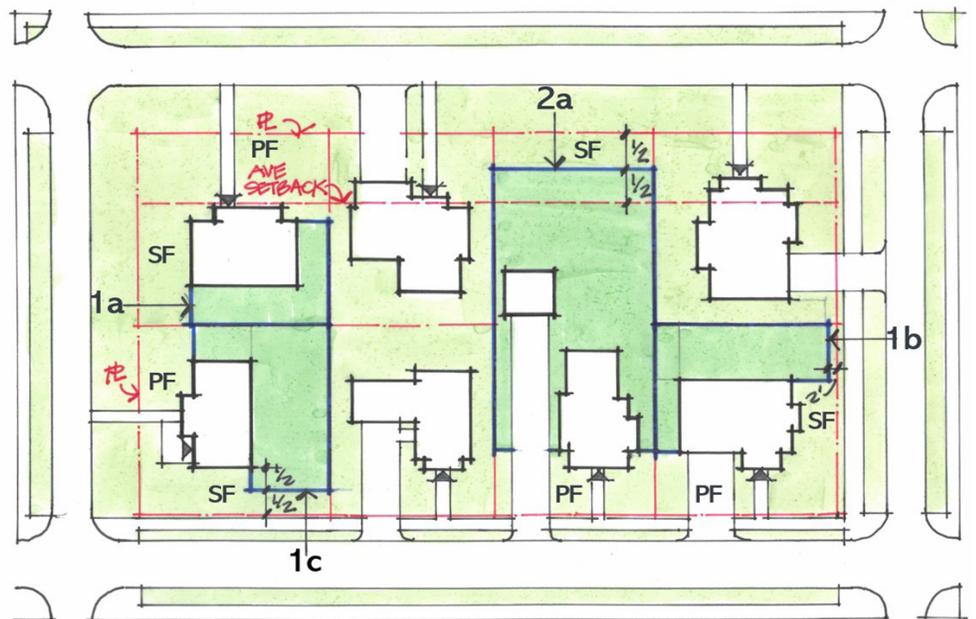
Fences & Accessory Structures

Zoning Text Amendment #2019-00006

In October 2019, a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment was approved that made changes to how the City regulates fences, certain accessory structures and vision clearance. Among the most significant of the changes is an increase of the maximum height of open fences allowed in front yards from three and a half feet to four feet. The new maximum height reflects the industry standard thus making the installation or replacement of fences in front yards easier and much less costly for the property owner. Part of the amendment also included a visual guide

so that property owners can more easily understand fence regulations. Changes related to accessory structures included new definitions for arbors and pergolas as well as limiting the height of those structures to 10 feet. One significant change was aimed at eliminating the setback requirement for accessory structures in the two historic districts. With small and narrow lots, the suburban oriented Zoning Ordinance placed a burden on historic properties that were hard for homeowners to meet when placing accessory structures. Finally, a change to the required vision

clearance triangle for corner lots was adopted thus reducing the required clearance from 100 feet to 30 feet. The change updated a section of the Zoning Ordinance that has been in existence since 1951 when very few of Alexandria's streets had traffic signals and stop signs. Given the expansion of traffic signalization and signs since the 1950's, the 100-foot vision clearance was no longer necessary.



Fences in Secondary Yard on Corner and Through Lots

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

Wireless Facilities

Zoning Text Amendment #2019-00008



Wireless Facilities

In February 2020, the City adopted a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment in order to implement Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines for installation of wireless facilities in local jurisdictions. The Text Amendment established federally mandated rules which set deadlines for staff review of applications, provide limits on what design features can be reviewed, and set maximum application fees. The rules provide small cell providers installing 4G and 5G technology uniform rules across all jurisdictions nationwide.

LAND USE SERVICES

Special Use Permits



1721 King Street- Two Birds Co-working and Child Care Center

1721 King St - Two Birds Co-working and Child Care Center Special Use Permit #2020-00016

In June 2020, Hatch Workspace, LLC, was approved to operate a combined co-working office use with day care center accommodations on two floors at 1721 King Street. The proposed day care space will be located on the first and second floors and the co-

working office use would be located on the second floor. The applicant requested and was granted approval for a change in non-complying use for a day care center as it is not allowed on the ground floor in the KR zone. The day care center is proposed to include

up to 100 children up to the age of four. Both the day care center and co-working space would be available on an a-la carte basis for users. Up to 28 employees would work at the business.

LAND USE SERVICES

Special Use Permits

919 Prince St - Social Service Use Special Use Permit #2020-00004

In June 2020, the Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund, Inc., received approval to operate a not-for-profit social service use in the building located at 919 Prince Street. The use includes a “Community Integration Center” focused on providing adults with disabilities the training, resources, and enrichment opportunities that they need to advance their personal and employment goals. The facility will provide hands-on training for approximately 15-25 program participants with the goal of integrating these individuals into Alexandria’s workforce. After training, program participants will be matched with paid employment opportunities around Alexandria. The facility will also include a small retail component, staffed by program participants, and open to the general public to offer handmade items such as soaps, candles, greeting cards and other items. The retail items will be created on-site by program participants as well as local organizations dedicated to serving those with disabilities.

805 King St – Aparthotel Special Use Permit #2019-00067

In October 2019, a fifteen-room, 6,584 square foot apartment hotel at 805 King Street was approved. Unlike traditional hotels, there would be no front desk staff or 24/7 on-site staff service or restaurant within the facility. The hotel guests would access the guest rooms by a keypad or through an app on their phone. Assistance for guests would be available through an “on call” 24-hour system. This is the second automated aparthotel to be permitted in Old Town. Following the October hearing, staff worked with the applicant to help gain approval from the Virginia Department of Health which previously had no regulations related to automated aparthotels without 24 hours staff on site.



805 King Street – Apartment Hotel



919 Prince Street- The Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund BEST Center

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

There were no changes in the membership of the Planning Commission for FY 2020. At its March 3, 2020, Planning Commission Public Hearing, the Planning Commission unanimously re-elected Nathan Macek as Chair and Maria Wasowski as Vice Chair for a one-year term. All members attended at least 75 percent of the scheduled meetings in FY 2020.

Planning Commission appointments to other Commissions and Work Groups for FY 2020 are noted below.

Vice Chair Maria Wasowski resigned from the Planning Commission effective July 8, 2020. At its September 1, 2020, Planning Commission Public Hearing, the Planning Commission unanimously elected Melissa McMahan as Vice Chair for a term ending in March 2021. In FY 2021, Commissioner David Brown is anticipated to serve on the Open Space Steering Committee.

Planning Commission Appointments to Other Commissions and Work Groups

Group	Planning Commission Member
Transportation Commission*	Melissa McMahan (Chair) & John Goebel
Waterfront Commission*	Nathan Macek (Vice Chair)
Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Group*	Stephen Koenig
ARHA Redevelopment Work Group	Stephen Koenig
Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group	Mindy Lyle (Chair)
Green Building Policy Task Force	Stephen Koenig
Affordable Housing Contributions Work Group	Stephen Koenig
Four Mile Run Joint Task Force	Maria Wasowski
Eisenhower East Small Area Plan	Nathan Macek
Open Space Steering Committee	Maria Wasowski
MacArthur Elementary Advisory Group	Mindy Lyle

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
MEETINGS ATTENDANCE REPORT
JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020

COMMISSION: Planning Commission

CHAIR: Chair Nathan Macek and Vice Chair Maria Wasowski

Board Member	2019				2020								
	Sept 3	Oct 3	Nov 7	Dec 3	Jan 7	Feb 4	Mar 3	Apr 7	May 7	June 2	June 25		
Nathan Macek, Chair	X	X	X	X	canceled	X	X	canceled	canceled	X	X		
Maria Wasowski, Vice Chair	X	X	X	X		E	X			X	X	X	
Mindy Lyle	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	
David Brown	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	
Stephen Koenig	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	
Melissa McMahon	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	
John Goebel	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	E	X

Notes:

1. The Planning Commission is in recess during the month of August.
2. Cancellations: January 7, 2020, hearing was canceled due inclement weather; April 7 and May 7, 2020 hearings were canceled due to Covid-19 Pandemic.
3. June 2 and June 25, 2020 hearings were Virtual Hearings.

INDICATE: (X) PRESENT; (E) EXCUSED, (U) UNEXUSED
LIST OF THOSE WHO DID NOT ATTEND 75% OF MEETINGS: None.

APPROVED:



Nathan Macek, Chair

OTHER

Planning Commission Information

The Planning Commission's process for elections to fill leadership positions, namely, Chair and Vice Chair, is covered in its By-laws and involves the election of officers on an annual basis in March. Elections this year are described in the summary of membership and attendance. As called for in the By-laws, it is the vote of the Planning Commission that determines changes in leadership. Term limits can also affect changes in the Planning Commission's leadership.

Questions? Please contact Planning & Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the Planning Commission at PlanComm@alexandriava.gov.

City of Alexandria
Department of Planning & Zoning
Room 2100
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
