

MEETING SUMMARY

Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 19th, 2014 | 6:30- 8:30 pm | Samuel Tucker Elementary School

1 Steering Committee Members Present

- Derek Hyra, Alexandria Planning Commission, Steering Committee Chair
- Judy Coleman, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
- Maria Wasowski, Alexandria Transportation Planning Commission
- Kathryn Mika, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission
- Michael Adams, Community Representative
- Don Buch, Community Representative
- Charles Sumpter, Community Representative
- Jim Durham, Community Representative
- David Heiden, Business Representative
- Agnés Artemel, Business Representative
- Mary Catherine Gibbs, Business Representative
- Ken Wire, Landowner Group Representative

2 City Staff Present

- Faroll Hamer, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Susan Eddy, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Carrie Beach, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Radhika Mohan, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Ryan Price, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Richard Lawrence, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Sandra Marks, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
- Steve Sindiong, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
- Jim Spengler, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Laura Durham, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Mark Jinks, City Manager's Office

3 Introductions, Ground Rules, Orientation

- Steering Committee (SC) Chair, Derek Hyra, welcomed the SC members and the public to the first SC meeting for the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan.
- Faroll Hamer, Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, introduced herself and welcomed attendees. The SC members also introduced themselves.
- Staff introduced Councilwoman Pepper, present City Directors, Fairfax County staff, and City staff.
- Staff then gave a brief presentation on ground rules for the SC, which included a review of the FOIA addendum handout, civic engagement principles, role and mission of SC, and overview of the civic engagement framework and process diagram.

4 Staff Presentation

Staff continued with a presentation on the scopes of the general planning and transportation planning consultants' scopes of work, the plan boundary and possible inclusion of Cameron Run Regional Park, the first online poll, and meeting schedule. The following is a summary of the discussion on each of these presentation topics.

5 General Planning Consultant Scope

- What does the MOU pay for? 100% of the general planning consultants and 30% of the transportation consultants. All consultants will work for the City.
- An SC member offered further background on the MOU and landowner group stating that the goal of the MOU was to get the planning process moving.
- The transportation consultants that will be hired by the City should have demonstrated experience in transit oriented development (TOD).
- The “Landowner/Developer Contribution Analysis” task should be renamed to “Infrastructure Cost and Developer Contribution Analysis.”
- Compliance with the Eco-City Charter and sustainability principles should be incorporated into all of the tasks.
- With Covanta in the study area, “Energy Analysis” should be part of the scope.
- Task 3 on background analysis is important and should include researching adjoining regional jurisdictions.
- The scope should include the time frame and deadlines. Staff confirmed that the RFQ would define dates and consultant skill sets.
- The RFQ should identify “Quick Hits” or elements that are implementable in the short term.
- Staff should articulate to the consultants the difference between a detailed plan, such as the Beaugard Small Area Plan, and this Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, where rezonings will not occur immediately after the plan is adopted.
- The plan should not reinvent the wheel by having the consultants research global best practices.
- Engage Planning Commission and City Council earlier than December 2014, possibly through informational briefs at legislative sessions, which will also provide more public visibility of the project.
- How will we determine what is left over for green space? Green and open space will be part of the visioning exercise for the area. Green space will be identified in tandem with other uses and not as an afterthought.
- How do you tie economic feasibility into the transportation plans for the multi-modal bridge? Many City departments will work together to determine what value certain investments will bring to the area and City Council will make the funding decision on what to spend money on through adoption of the plan.

6 Transportation Consultant Scope

- Ensure that the scope should investigate alternative modes of transportation.
- How do these tasks mesh with the tasks of the general planning study? Include both in the same timeline by combining work programs.
- Investigate whether the multi-modal bridge could extend all the way to Edsall Road beyond Pickett Street.
- Refrain from spending VDOT funding for analysis of the northbound lane on Van Dorn Street turning right onto Pickett Street until this study is complete.
- Investigate curb cuts for buses to improve congestion along Van Dorn Street.
- How many alternative alignments will there be for the multi-modal bridge? 2-3 alignment alternatives will be considered along with their MOEs (cost, range for each, and usership).
- To get a regional perspective in the study, include groups like the Northern Virginia Regional Planning Commission, Fairfax County, WMATA, VDOT, and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

- Has the Clermont Connector already been discarded as a possibility? Not yet, the study will test it.
- The Clermont Connector is necessary because 400 more units are being built nearby and will add congestion to the area.
- What is driving what? Is land use driving transportation or vice versa? They go hand in hand.
- Who is seeking and hiring the consultants? The City.
- The multimodal bridge is very expensive and the City will be looking into grant opportunities to fund its construction.
- The assumption that the multimodal bridge will take care of the need for the Clermont Connector is too big of an assumption.
- The transportation study should look at connectivity issues not just through one corridor but through multiple “fingers.”
- Ask the consultant to be objective about the Clermont Connector, it will open up land for development potential and ease traffic.
- Ben Brenman Park should not be bisected by the potential Clermont Connector.

7 Plan Boundary

- Asking the public to make a decision on the plan boundary when they have no knowledge and background material to do so could be ineffective.
- Staff should use their skills and expertise to suggest a boundary and its corresponding logic and then present it to the SC and public to get feedback.
- Staff clarified that they want public input on the boundary.
- The potential small area plan boundaries should be removed from the online poll because there is not enough information to make this decision.
- In identifying the boundary, there are several options:
 - Use the existing plan area from the 1992 Landmark/Van Dorn Small Area Plan.
 - Use a smaller, compact area and focus only on potential redevelopment areas.
 - Use a focus area, service area, and wider influence area.
- Staff will come back to SC with a recommendation and provide refined options for the SC to consider at the next meeting.
- If the plan boundary moves north and west in the Landmark area, those residents need to be represented on the SC.
- Land east of the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan (that was not included in that plan) should be included in this study area.
- Include Pickett Street in the plan boundary.
- Area around the Van Dorn Metro station in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan needs to be incorporated in the new plan boundary.

8 Cameron Run Regional Park

- Director Spengler gave a brief background on the Cameron Run Regional Park DSUP and whether renewal of its lease should be considered along with this plan. He noted that the City’s population is growing and is currently underserved in local parks, especially on the west end.
- Although it is adjacent to the Eisenhower West area, it is still within a different small area plan boundary.
- Another city-appointed group (the Park and Recreation Commission) already exists and is better suited than the SC to address the future of the existing park.

- Including this in the plan boundary will be a distraction for staff and SC with potential to delay work and detract from quality and thoughtfulness of product delivery. It needs its own focused attention and process.

9 Online Poll

- Start with an introduction of the plan, including thematic issues, major elements, and topic areas so respondents can be thinking of these while answering the questions.
- Define what the “Eisenhower West Area” is and note that the boundary is still under study. Staff should provide a larger, nominal boundary to receive the largest set of ideas for the first poll.
- Question 1: add “I commute through Alexandria.”
- Between questions 2-3: If you don’t live here- why do you or why do you not go to Eisenhower West? If you don’t live in EW, do you visit? And why?
- Question 2a: if you own a business here, in which neighborhood is it located?
- Question 6: How often do you go to Eisenhower West? Is there a place/use/function you would like to preserve?
- Question 7: “Check all that apply” for the commute question.
- Question 8: add a bullet that says “work at home” and “bike to transit.”
- Question 9: Be more specific on which metro station they use
 - How do you get to metro?
 - What metro station do you use?
 - What might encourage you to get better use out of transit?
 - When do you use transit (time of day, day of week)?
- Additional Questions:
 - Do you own a business in the plan area?
 - Include more specific demographic questions (income and household size)
 - Include sustainability related questions
 - Do you think mixed use in the area is good?
- Add a closing paragraph to manage expectations on what the input will be used for in the poll and include that information. Fix the typo “Mayand” in the last paragraph and add the date and time of the first community meeting.