

MEETING SUMMARY

Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting #5

Monday, September 8, 2014 | 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Samuel Tucker Elementary School Mini-Auditorium Room

1 Steering Committee Members Present

- Judy Coleman, Steering Committee Vice Chair, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
- Maria Wasowski, Alexandria Transportation Commission
- Tyler Orton, Environmental Planning Commission
- Michael Adams, Community Representative
- Don Buch, Community Representative (in place of Arthur Impastato)
- Charles Sumpter, Community Representative
- Agnés Artemel, Business Representative
- Ken Wire, Landowner Group Representative

2 City and Project Staff Present

- Karl Moritz, 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
- Katherine Carraway, Department of Planning and Zoning
- Sandra Marks, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
- Laura Durham, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Eric Keeler, Office of Housing
- Jennifer Garcia, Department of Planning and Zoning, Fairfax County
- Tom Merce, Department of Planning and Zoning, Fairfax County
- Merrill St. Leger-Demian, SmithGroup JJR
- Valerie Berstene, SmithGroupJJR

3 Welcome and Follow Up

- Judy Coleman, Vice Chair of the Steering Committee, welcomed members and made introductory remarks
- Susan Eddy, Deputy Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, reviewed the meeting agenda, shared prepared remarks from outgoing Chair, Derek Hyra, and introduced Jennifer Garcia and Tom Merce of Fairfax County's Department of Planning and Zoning

Staff Presentation

- *Ms. Garcia and Mr. Merce continued with a presentation updating the group on the status of Fairfax County planning as it pertains to the areas surrounding Eisenhower West*
- *Mr. Moritz gave an overview of the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan*
- *Ms. Eddy led a discussion on the EW SAPs Draft Vision and Principles*
- *Ms. St. Leger-Demian of SmithGroupJJR presented on and discussed the structure for the 3rd Community Meeting to be held on September 29th*

The following is a summary of the discussion on each of these topics.

4 Fairfax County Planning Update

- Ms. Garcia and Mr. Merce provided an overview of the Lincolnia Planning District Study, Smoot Lumber/Plaza 500, Farrington Avenue, Van Dorn Transit Station Area, and Vine Street
- Steering Committee discussion revolved around the potential for a Farrington Avenue connection, existing proposals for new development on Vine Street, the underutilization of the metro station area, and the optimal amount of industrial use for the Eisenhower West area – keeping in mind that adjacent parcels in Fairfax County also include industrial uses
- Mr. Moritz shared with the group that the City is conducting a threshold *Citywide Industrial Land Use Analysis*, which will provide information on the types of businesses currently located in industrially zoned areas, as well as other uses often thought of as ‘industrial’ and where they are located

5 Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan

- Mr. Moritz provided an overview of the plan including its goals and land use strategy, as well as providing specifics on the West End Town Center, Van Dorn Plaza, Pickett Place, Landmark Mall redevelopment, and Landmark Gateway – renamed Modera Tempo
- Discussion centered on residential vs. retail use and whether the City can preclude developers from building residential units. Mr. Moritz explained that the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan provides a fair amount of guidance and clearly indicates goals for increased retail and a balance of a mix of uses
- The Steering Committee expressed interest in a presentation on the West End Transitway at a future meeting and how it will follow the guidelines in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan

6 Draft Vision and Principles

- Ms. Eddy asked the Steering Committee for feedback on draft vision and guiding principles circulated prior to the meeting, emphasizing that they will evolve throughout the process and that this draft is just a start
- Mr. Moritz provided some background on the City’s civic engagement initiative, *What’s Next Alexandria*, which called for steering committees to guide the process, but not act as an advisory group. Mr. Moritz and Ms. Eddy asked if this group would prefer to be more involved in the EW process. They also encouraged committee members to share ideas regarding the visioning process especially if they think it should go in a different direction
- Committee members generally agreed that:
 - The goals/descriptions seemed to be premature – that the committee should bring 10 broad goals to the public and ask for feedback; and
 - The plan should include an interim focus (the next five years) to facilitate change in the area sooner, providing for concrete action/incentives. The group also shared that the goals do not need to include what is already City policy, e.g., calling for green buildings when there is already a City policy on green buildings
 - Members decided to schedule a workshop prior to the 3rd Community Meeting to further discuss the draft vision and goals for the plan

7 Community Meeting #3 Structure

- Ms. St. Leger-Demian initiated the discussion on the structure of the next community meeting and how the group activities can be facilitated. She shared that MindMixer will be launched in an effort to engage more community members in this process
- Some committee members shared a concern that the process and plans had the appearance of moving too fast and shouldn't be presented as is for the 3rd community meeting. Existing conditions should be reviewed to make sure the public understands that certain realities exist, e.g., Covanta will not be moving; the railroad may hinder some building activity etc.
- Regarding interactive feedback exercise options, the committee suggested:
 - Showing concept diagrams and "before and after" photos of other plans to show the public how things can evolve throughout this kind of process
 - Being clear that the public is not being asked to vote on one concept or another; they are simply being asked to come up with a collection of concepts that could be used in this plan
 - Asking the public to answer general questions, such as – "Where do you see the center of the metro station area being? Over top? A few blocks away?" – "What uses can you envision along Pickett Street?" etc.
 - Committee members agreed to review draft questions to ask participants at the next community meeting
 - Committee supported having small group roundtables during the interactive exercise where participants can engage in dialog and also requested to randomize where participants sit
 - Including a large board (as presented by Ms. St. Leger-Demian) that lists the major/board goals with space underneath for participants to make suggestions/edits
- Community members asked:
 - If the City was contacting the business community in the EW area, and were assured that the process had begun as well as the planning of a forum for the business community; and
 - How community feedback in the process is addressed, to which Mr. Moritz explained that it will be seen throughout the process, not just in one place, including the plans goals themselves

8 Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Staff agreed to provide the following information to the Steering Committee:
 - *Citywide Industrial Land Use Analysis* (when available)
 - Circulate within the committee all comments received from fellow members regarding the goals/vision
- Staff will schedule a work session at City Hall in the coming week for Committee members to focus on:
 - Draft vision and goals
 - Guiding questions to ask the public during the next community meeting