OLD TOWN NORTH SMALL AREA PLAN UPDATE

PLANNING COMMISSION Informational Item

Tuesday, December 6, 2016
INFORMATIONAL ITEM

TOPICAL AREAS

- Highlight Key Recommendations in Chapters released to-date (Recommendations are based on Policy Statements which were presented at the October Work Session)
- Note Key Comments on Chapters released to-date
- Discuss Need to Extend the Planning Process
- Review Next Steps
Phase I (Plan Framework) – Vision, Principles, Objectives and Concepts (Fall 2015)

Phases II and III (Study and Testing of Phase I Concepts) – (Significant progress from January to June 2016)

Phase IV – Continuation of Studies and Development of Plan Policy Statements/Recommendations (Summer/Fall 2016)

OTN SAP UPDATE PLANNING CATEGORIES
Five of Nine Draft Chapters Released To-Date

1. Introduction *(11/7 Online)*
2. Open Space, Recreation, and Cultural Activities *(11/7 Online)*
3. Historic Preservation *(11/7 Online)*
4. Housing *(11/15 Online)*
5. Economic Development *(11/15 Online)*
6. Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability
7. Transportation
8. Planning, Land Use and Design
9. Implementation
OTN SAP UPDATE PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

• Participation at OTN SAP Advisory Group Meetings - All Advisory Group Meetings include a Public Comment Period

• Participation at OTN SAP Update Community Meetings

• OTN SAP Update Comment Board at www.alexandriava.gov/86032

• Alex Engage Site
  https://engage.alexandriava.gov/portals/191/Issue_4109

• Email to Nancy.Williams@alexandriava.gov
Content and Public Comments as of late November: Introduction Chapter and General Comments

- **Introduction Chapter**
  - **Background** and Planning History
  - **Planning Process and Schedule**
  - Samples of **Key Recommendations** under each Planning Category

- **Introduction Chapter and General Comments**
  - Comment pertaining to **Goals/Objectives/Recommendations:** For all goals/objectives/recommendations relating to new uses and activities, **ensure appropriateness and compatibility with residential uses.**
  - Comment noting that **some goals and themes are relevant to all the chapters** . . . Therefore, reinforce/restate them throughout the document as appropriate.
DRAFT OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES CHAPTER
Open Space and Recreation Recommendations

I. General Open Space and Recreation

1. Recreational areas with **passive and active spaces** will be promoted for the use and **enjoyment of all ages**.

2. **Programming** will be a priority for public open spaces with themes such as the arts, concerts, fairs, sport and fitness and more.

3. The **Waterfront Plan and the Olin Schematic Design will be leveraged** to achieve recommendations for improvements to the Old Town North Waterfront.

4. Leverage the **City's Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan** and related recommendations to **achieve enhancements to Montgomery Park**, and to continue existing programming such as the farmer's market.

5. Promote a stronger network of open spaces through **more connections between public and publicly accessible spaces** and between public spaces, enhanced streetscapes and art and cultural amenities.

6. **Leverage views to and from the River** and strengthen views to the north and south. Additionally, **rooftop open space should also maximize views**.
II. Linear Trail Park

8. As noted in the Transportation Chapter, the City will work with Norfolk Southern Railway to pursue use of the rail corridor as a linear trail park through the rail banking or abandonment processes. The linear trail park will connect and enhance the existing trail system.

9. Schematic design of all public spaces will be produced including streetscape improvements and the linear trail park under the Implementation process.

III. Power Plant Site

A. Overall

10. Open space percentages will be determined as part of the rezoning and development review process of the power plant site.

11. The publicly accessible open spaces on the power plant site will include areas where the industrial heritage of the site is celebrated through the restoration/preservation of industrial artifacts and interpretive elements.
III. POWER PLANT SITE (Cont.)

12. A central plaza/open space will be located as generally depicted in Figure 7.10. The plaza will be designed for public programming and incorporate industrial elements from the power plant structure as feasible.

13. In addition to the provision of open space areas, the use and other attributes of open space need to be carefully considered. Open space uses will be designed to be suitable for all age groups, especially at larger development sites and those where the representation of certain age groups may be proportionally higher than average, for example residential uses with families.

14. The City and the property owner will coordinate on the design, maintenance and programming responsibility for new public open spaces.
Open Space and Recreation Recommendations (Cont.)

B. Waterfront Public Open Space
15. Under implementation, a new Waterfront public open space will be provided, as generally depicted in Figure 7.09. This public open space area will range from 2 to 4 acres and will include:
- a separated pedestrian/bicycle connection to Daingerfield Island; and
- areas of passive and active recreation.

C. Added Recreational Open Space adjacent to the Linear Trail Park
16. Under implementation a new public open space, ranging 1 to 2 acres, will be provided adjacent to the linear trail park as generally depicted in Figure 7.09 and Figure 7.11. This expansion to the linear trail park will include an area accommodating active recreational activities and other uses such as a public restroom/maintenance facility.

IV. Other Development Sites
17. Minimum ground level open space on development sites will be established as part of the updated Old Town North Urban Design Standards and Guidelines.
Open Space and Recreation Recommendations (Cont.)

V. Tree Canopy

18. At a minimum, 25% of tree canopy will be provided on-site. To the extent that the required tree canopy cannot be provided on-site, through contribution to the Old Town North Open Space and Streetscape Improvement Fund(s), the tree canopy can be provided elsewhere within the planning area, in parks within the planning area and/or other nearby areas as determined by City staff, and supported by the Planning Commission and City Council.

VI. Maintenance, Funding and Implementation

19. Streetscape improvements will be provided along all development site frontages. For larger projects, developers may be required to implement improvements in the vicinity of their frontages, e.g. on the block corner(s) adjacent to their sites.
VI. Maintenance, Funding and Implementation (Cont.)

20. Streetscape improvements will be coordinated with environmental improvements as set out in the Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability Chapter and all applicable City regulations.

21. All open space and streetscape improvements will follow the Old Town North Urban Design Standards and Guidelines and all other applicable City regulations.

22. The City will establish an Old Town North Open Space and Streetscape Improvement Fund(s). The funding will be provided by sites where the required ground level open space, streetscape improvements, and/or tree canopy requirements cannot be provided on-site. Monetary contributions will be provided to the Old Town North Open Space and Streetscape Improvement Fund(s) and the amount of contribution will be established as part of the implementation process.
Art and Cultural Activities Recommendations

I. Community Facilities and Cultural and Arts Uses

1. Community facilities with meeting/event, cultural, after-school and recreational space should be sited on the power plant site and/or within Old Town North. A process for determining operation, management and maintenance of the facilities will be developed under the implementation process.

2. Pursue implementation of an Art Corridor along N. Fairfax Street and/or a designated Art District, as permitted through Code of Virginia Section 152-1129 (Creation of arts and cultural districts), throughout the entire Old Town North community with special emphasis on N. Fairfax Street and potentially other targeted areas.

3. Under implementation, terms for art and cultural uses will be defined.
Art and Cultural Activities Recommendations (Cont.)

4. Maintain current Old Town North based art institutions and anchors, specifically MetroStage and The Art League, and expand cultural uses to promote facilities such as a maritime-related museum and/or other art related venues. Include incentives to accomplish this, such as the exemption of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for art and cultural uses and parking management solutions.

5. Identify through the implementation process potential sites for public art throughout the community and in particular along N. Fairfax Street. Identify and undertake coordinated strategies for securing the art, working through the City’s development process, the Office of the Arts and identify new partnership opportunities.

6. Undertake strategies for the expansion of the Old Town North creative economy and jobs through creative and innovative uses such as think tanks, educational/university uses and/or affiliates and research centers.
Art and Cultural Activities Recommendations (Cont.)

7. Explore through the implementation process initiatives to **promote Old Town North's branding and marketing programs**, expanded art and cultural venues, and programming for the enjoyment of residents, employees and visitors of the area.

8. All recreation and cultural spaces will follow the Old Town North Urban Design Standards and Guidelines and other application regulations.
Public Comments as of Late November
Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Activities

- **Greenways and Traffic Calming Measures** – More clarity is requested regarding traffic calming measures. For example, a specific question about bulb-outs has been raised and whether they will interfere with parking. Also, a request has been made to define greenway in the OTN SAP Update. Information will be added to the OTN SAP Update to address these items.

- **Meeting Space** - A request has been made to further emphasize meeting space as part of public and community facilities.

- **Existing Art Institutions** - Comments requesting retention of the existing art institutions have been plentiful. Recommendation #4 under Cultural Activities in this chapter recommends maintaining The Art League and MetroStage as anchors and expanding opportunities for art institutions such as a maritime–related museum and/or other art venues.
Public Comments as of Late November
Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Activities
(Continued)

- **Recommendation #3** - A request for more specificity on leveraging the Waterfront Plan. Concurrence that it should.
- **Power Plant Site Recommendation #10** – A request to modify language to read - “Significant publicly accessible open spaces will be key elements of a redeveloped site.”
- **Under Objectives** – A request to add an objective that speaks to the intent of “incentivizing retention of existing art uses.”
- **Bikeways** – Several public comments have been received relating to bikeways. To add more clarity to the concept of bikeways, the City has indicated that no stop signs will be removed; no circles will be included; and no bike lanes will be included.
Housing Chapter Recommendations

1. **Mixed income housing development** will be a priority in the planning area to provide opportunities for a range of households and income groups.

2. Pursuant to Section 7-700 of the Zoning Ordinance, an **increase of the density bonus provision from 20% to 30%** is recommended to encourage mixed-income housing and to maximize affordability opportunities throughout the planning area.

3. **A 40 year term of affordability** is the goal for new affordable housing units in the planning area.

4. The goal of **one-for-one, on-site, replacement** of Old Town North Resolution 830 units that are demolished is a priority of the planning area.

5. Exploration of other **regulatory strategies** is recommended to further expand **mixed-income housing** and to foster public-private-nonprofit partnerships.
Housing Chapter Recommendations (Cont.)

6. **Consideration of artist housing**, with regulatory and financial tools as well as partnerships that can help foster it, will be encouraged.

7. Housing developments will **incorporate open space and community space** for the use of residents and, as possible, for use by the public.

8. Housing developments will incorporate universal design to **enable residents to age-in-place and improve the safety and utility of housing** for people with disabilities; visitability features will be incorporated.

9. **Quality standards** are a high priority for the exterior design of units within mixed-income developments to ensure an indistinguishable appearance.

10. Construction, fixtures and operation of residential developments will meet **sustainability standards and guidelines** in keeping with the priorities of the Old Town North Eco-District Study.
Public Comments as of late November

Housing

- **Market Affordable Housing** - Comment emphasizing the importance of “creating” market affordable housing opportunities, as well as “preserving” them.

- **Recommendation #4** - Comment to change “Consideration of artist housing . . .” to “**Encourage artist housing . . .**”

- **Homeownership** - Comment to include **discussion of affordable tools for homeownership** in the chapter.

- **Recommendation #9** - Comment that Recommendation #9 should **apply to all housing**, i.e., state “**quality standards for affordable and market rate housing.**”

- **Recommendation #7** - Comment that “**community space**” does not necessarily have to be incorporated in every residential development. City can revise to say that community space is encouraged to be provided to the extent feasible.

- **Clarifying Comments** - A number of clarifying comments have been received as well that seek more explanatory language relative to affordable housing regulations and tools.
Economic Development Recommendations

1. **Mix of Land uses** – Promote the continued goal of a balanced mix of uses through the goal, objectives, strategies and recommendations herein.

2. **Conversions** – During implementation and in alignment with a balanced land use mix goal, the policy recommendations and guidelines produced by the Competitive Office Study will be evaluated for applicability to Old Town North.

3. **Maintain the existing Old Town North Retail Focus Areas and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Regulatory Incentive** – The zoning text that regulates the RFAs and the associated FAR incentive will be reviewed and any specific changes will be submitted for consideration by policy makers during the initial phase of implementation.

4. **Establish Retail Corridors to connect Retail Focus Areas** (See Figure 9.05 Retail Focus Areas/Retail Corridors Map). As reflected on the map, retail will be required along certain corridors and it would be optional on others.
Economic Development Chapter Recommendations (Cont.)

5. **Develop Strategies to Grow Old Town North’s Creative Economy** – Maintain the two current Old Town North art and cultural institutions, specifically The Art League and MetroStage, as economic anchors, and provide strategies to support and grow existing businesses in the area including but not limited to the promotion of the creative economy sector businesses. In that regard, the City will complete the market study noted in this chapter and pursue its findings/recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by policy makers during the initial phase of implementation.

6. **New Innovative Anchor** – The City will coordinate with the property owner(s) of the power plant site to explore the possibility of attracting innovation uses on that site. This will create an opportunity for an innovative anchor on the power plant site to build and support the community’s creative economy with opportunities for spin off entrepreneurial/incubator businesses, worker space, and jobs.

7. **Explore Incentives to attract and Grow Office Uses/Tenants** – As part of implementation, the City will explore ways to retail existing office uses while attracting new ones to the extent possible.
8. **Enhancing the Old Town North Brand** - The City will explore strategies identified through the above noted market study to further develop, enhance and promote Old Town North as a community with a distinct brand tied to its creative economy and its assets such as the Waterfront, close proximity to Washington, DC via the George Washington Memorial Parkway and other routes, to King Street, to two Metro stops and to other surrounding neighborhoods.

9. **Climate Change** – Priorities, strategies and targets to promote Old Town North as an Eco District will include measures to help promote a low-carbon economy.

10. **Small Business Collaboration** – The City will continue to work with local businesses, the City as a whole, and with business organizations to promote existing and new small business and assist them with the City’s recent related regulatory improvements.
Public Comments as of late November  
Economic Development

- **Recommendation #8 Branding** – A suitable Old Town North brand should be underscored as a high priority in the OTN SAP Update.

- **Definition of Community-Oriented Retail** - Comment indicating that it is important to define what community oriented retail is. The City indicated that AEDP has a definition and it can be included with more specificity.

- **Figure 9.04 related (existing and projected population and employee growth through 2040)** – This comment requests noting the amount of projected population and day time workers that will be attributable to the power plant redevelopment.
Public Comments as of late November
Economic Development

- **Incentives for Commercial Development** - Question pertaining to whether incentives for commercial development will be included. AEDP gave a brief overview of the status of the City-wide Competitive Office Study and how it will address strategies for retaining and attracting office. OTN SAP will draw from that study.

- **Retail Focus Areas** - Question pertaining to Retail Focus Areas and how they will work with Required and Optional Retail Corridors. The City indicated that more information will be forthcoming on this topic in the draft Planning, Land Use and Design and the Implementation Chapters.

- **Larger Old Town North Retail Market** - Comment that the OTN SAP Update should look at how to draw from surrounding communities for new retail. The City responded that such information was generated under Phases II and III of the OTN SAP Update planning process and it can be referenced in the OTN SAP Update text for this chapter and also included as an appendix in its entirety.
Public Comments as of late November
Economic Development

- **Waterfront as Economic Engine** - Comment to highlight the Waterfront as an economic asset in the Economic Development Chapter. The City agrees as it is an asset drawing visitors by boat; providing opportunities for recreation, special events and pleasure; providing opportunities for increased tourism, retail and dining; and it is an attractive draw for new commercial tenants as well as residents.

- **Street Grid for Power Plant Site Comment** – Concern about three-way intersections as shown on power plant site.

- **Comment on Royal Street** – Keep it as it is (See other comments under Open Space Chapter).
Historic Preservation Recommendations

1. The **anticipated OTN Historic Interpretation Guide** will be created as part of this planning process. It will be utilized as a guide among other resources and processes by the public, developers and the City for interpreting the history of private and public sites in Old Town North.

2. Old Town North has a rich history on nearly every block though it may not be readily apparent. **All Development Site Plans (DSPs) or Development Special Use Permits (DSUPs) projects will incorporate an interpretation component as part of the review and approval process.**

3. Consideration will be given to how projects adjacent to Washington Street/the Parkway can contribute to and **enhance the memorial character of the Parkway, pursuant to Washington Street Standards.**
4. Consideration will be given to the development of streetscape design guidelines for Washington Street to continue the City’s commitment to protect the memorial character of the Parkway, pursuant to the Old Town North Design Standards and Guidelines and the 1929 Agreement with the Federal Government.

5. Where significant historical buildings or elements remain, whether or not the site is located within the Old and Historic Alexandria District, consideration will be given for incorporating character-defining elements into the final site design as part of an interpretive strategy.
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<td>November 7, 2016, 7:00 PM</td>
<td>Community Meeting #7</td>
<td>• Release 3 Draft Chapters: 1) Introduction; 2) Open Space, Recreation &amp; Cultural Activities 3) and Historic Preservation</td>
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<td>November 15, 2016, 7:00 PM</td>
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<td>• Final Draft Recommendations</td>
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Need to Extend Process

- Four Remaining Chapters to Release
  - Land Use, Planning and Design
  - Transportation
  - Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability
  - Implementation
- Transportation Study Findings now anticipated in March
- Land Use, Planning and Design Chapter and Transportation Chapter to be released Simultaneously
- April is anticipated Month for Release of those Chapters
- Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability Chapter and the Implementation Chapter are anticipated to follow with time for Public Comment and Compilation of full Document
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