



**OLD TOWN NORTH
SMALL AREA PLAN
DEFINITION OF TERMS**

May 24, 2017

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Area Median Income:** Income levels, by geographic and/or urban areas, that are annually established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for households of various sizes, where half of the households in the area earn more and half earn less (Source: City of Alexandria, Housing Master Plan, 2014).
- **Art and Cultural District:** Any locality may, by ordinance, establish within its boundaries one or more arts and cultural districts for the purpose of increasing awareness and support for the arts and culture in the locality. The locality may provide incentives for the support and creation of arts and cultural venues in each district. The locality may also grant tax incentives and provide certain regulatory flexibility in each arts and cultural district. The tax incentives for each district may be provided for up to 10 years and may include, but not be limited to: (i) reduction of permit fees; (ii) reduction of user fees; (iii) reduction of any type of gross receipts tax; and (iv) rebate of real estate property taxes. The extent and duration of such incentive proposals shall conform to the requirements of the Constitutions of Virginia and of the United States. Each locality may also provide for regulatory flexibility in each district that may include, but not be limited to: (i) special zoning for the district; (ii) permit process reform; (iii) exemption from ordinances; and (iv) any other incentive adopted by ordinance, which shall be binding upon the locality for a period of up to 10 years. (Source: Commonwealth of Virginia Code § 15.2-1129.1.)
- **Best Management Practice (BMP) for Stormwater:** Best management practices (“BMPs”) means schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the pollution of “waters of the United States.” BMPs also include treatment requirements, operating procedures, and practices to control plant site runoff, spillage or leaks, sludge or waste disposal, or drainage from raw material storage. (Source: Environmental Protection Agency)
- **Bicycle Facility:** A general term denoting infrastructure improvements and provisions that accommodate and/or encourage bicycling. Some examples include bicycle racks, bicycle lanes, trails and shared lane markings (sharrows). (Source: City of Alexandria, Transportation Master Plan, Pedestrian and Bicycle Chapter)
- **Building Envelope:** The volume of space for building as defined by the minimum setbacks and the maximum allowable height. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Building Footprint:** The outline of the total area covered by a building or structure's perimeter at the ground level. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Building Mass:** The three-dimensional bulk of a building: height, width, and depth. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Charrette:** A Charrette is a design-based, accelerated, collaborative project management system. It is a flexible, three-stage process that can be customized for a given project. Stage 1 – Research, Education, and Charrette Preparation; Stage 2 - Charrette; and Stage 3 – Post Charrette Activities. (Source: National Charrette Institute)
- **Combined Sewer Outfall:** There are two types of storm sewer systems in the city, a Separate Sanitary Sewer System (SSSS), and a Combined Sewer System (CSS). A SSSS consists of two pipes: one pipe conveys storm water runoff (rain water) from storm drains to local waterways with little or no treatment to remove pollutants. The other pipe conveys sanitary sewage to the local wastewater treatment plant operated by Alexandria Renew Enterprises. A CSS has only one pipe which conveys both sanitary sewage and storm water to a local wastewater treatment plant. During dry weather, all raw sewage flows to the treatment plant. When it rains, the pipe can become overloaded with polluted storm water. This mixture of storm water (about 90%) and raw sewage may overflow into local streams through the end of the pipe, or the Combined Sewer Outfall (CSO). (Source: City of Alexandria,)
- **Committed Affordable Units (CAUs):** Housing units that are available to income-eligible households through rent and/or occupancy restrictions imposed as a condition of assistance under federal, state or local programs. Targeted income levels vary by program. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Courtyard:** Courtyards relate to an open area enclosed or partially enclosed by walls or significant breaks in the building facade which meet the intent of other elements of the Urban Design Guidelines such as building breaks which mitigate building massing or provide for an active retail area. (City of Alexandria)
- **Density Bonus:** Section 7-700 of the City’s Zoning Ordinance, which requires provision of some on-site affordable units when bonus density or height is granted through the special use permit process. Bonus density under Section 7-700 consists of increases, above what is allowed with a Development Special Use Permit in a given zone, of

up to 20 percent in additional density or up to 25 feet in additional height. (Source: City of Alexandria, Housing Master Plan, 2014)

- **Development Incentive:** A measure that can be taken, usually by a governing agency, to encourage certain types of developments. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Development Site Plan (DSP)** – A DSP is required in all zones for any development that: contains three or more dwelling units; is a building or addition that is 3,000 square feet or larger; provides a parking lot with five or more parking spaces; is a building addition that is 1/3 or more of the existing gross square feet of the building; and falls under other criteria listed in Section 11-400 of the Zoning Ordinance. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan (DSUP):** A DSUP is required in all zones for any development that requires a site plan and is requesting approval of a special use permit for the following: a modification of the parking ratios a modification to the yard, landscape or open space requirements; increased building height; increased Floor Area Ratio; affordable housing bonus density; and other special requirements listed in the applicable zone in the Zoning Ordinance. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **EcoDistrict:** A district (more than a building, less than the town) in urban planning that seeks to integrate the objectives of sustainable development and reduce ecological footprints, improve social equity and create a sustainable economy by designing systems to achieve ambitious targets. (Source: EcoDistricts: Pathway to a Resilient Community, Seminar, March 2, 2016)
- **Floor Area Ratio:** The floor area ratio of the building or buildings on any lot or tract or tract of land is the total aggregate floor area of such building or buildings divided by the area of that lot or tract or tract of land. (Source: City of Alexandria, Zoning Ordinance)
- **Green Building:** Structures that incorporate the principles of sustainable design - design in which the impact of a building on the environment will be minimal over the lifetime of that building. Green buildings incorporate principles of energy and resource efficiency, practical applications of waste reduction and pollution prevention, good indoor air quality and natural light to promote occupant health and productivity, and transportation efficiency in design and construction, during use and reuse. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Green Infrastructure (GI):** GI is “an adaptable term used to describe an array of products, technologies and practices that use natural systems - or engineered systems that mimic natural... processes - to enhance overall environmental quality and provide utility services. As a general principal, GI techniques use soils and vegetation to infiltrate, evapotranspiration, and/or recycle storm water runoff. When used as components of a storm water management system, GI practices such as green roofs, porous pavement, rain gardens, and vegetated swales can produce a variety of environmental benefits. In addition to effectively retaining and infiltrating rainfall, these technologies can simultaneously help filter air pollutants, reduce energy demands, mitigate urban heat islands, and sequester carbon while also providing communities with aesthetic and natural resource benefits.” (Source: Environmental Protection Agency)
- **Green Streets:** Green streets are designed to prioritize the pedestrian through enhanced streetscapes. Design treatments can include sidewalk widening, enhanced landscaping and tree canopy, and green infrastructure. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Gross Floor Area:** Gross floor area is floor area within the perimeter of the outside walls of a building as measured from the inside surface of the exterior walls without reduction for hallways, stairs, closets, and thickness of the walls. (Source: The Free Dictionary)
- **Guideline:** A guideline is an agency statement or a declaration of policy that the agency intends to follow, which does not have the force or effect of law and that binds the agency but does not bind any other person. (Source: American Planning Association)
- **Historic Preservation:** Historic preservation is one important way to transmit an understanding of the past to future generations. It begins as a discussion about what is significant in our past and what can be saved and interpreted. Cultural resource professionals, such as archaeologists, architects, curators, historians, and landscape architects, work with the public to understand what is significant on national, state and local levels—highlighting and celebrating accomplishments in our history as well as recognizing some aspects that are painful to remember. Preservation actions include the designation, recognition and interpretation of historic sites; documentation through written reports, technical reports, and photography; and physical preservation through stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. (Source: NPS)

- **Historic Resource:** Any prehistoric or historic, architectural and archaeological district, site, building, object, structure or landscape. (Source: National Park Service)
- **Housing Affordability:** Housing is considered affordable when the occupying household is paying no more than 30% of its gross income on housing-related expenses (rent or mortgage, plus utilities). (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Impervious Surface:** Any hard-surfaced (e.g. asphalt, concrete, roofing material, brick, paving block, plastic), man-made area that does not readily absorb or retain water, including but not limited to building roofs, parking and driveway areas, graveled areas, sidewalks, and paved recreation areas. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Infrastructure:** Facilities and services needed to sustain industry, residential, commercial, and all other land-use activities, including water, sewer lines, and other utilities, streets and roads, communications, transmission lines, and public facilities such as fire stations, parks, schools, etc. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Innovation District:** Innovation districts represent a radical departure from traditional economic development. Unlike customary urban revitalization efforts that have emphasized the commercial aspects of development (e.g., housing, retail, sports stadiums), innovation districts help their city and metropolis move up the value chain of global competitiveness by growing the firms, networks, and traded sectors that drive broad-based prosperity. Instead of building isolated science parks, innovation districts focus extensively on creating a dynamic physical realm that strengthens proximity and knowledge spill overs. Rather than focus on discrete industries, innovation districts represent an intentional effort to create new products, technologies and market solutions through the convergence of disparate sectors and specializations (e.g., information technology and bioscience, energy, or education). (Source: The Brookings Institution)
- **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED):** A certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Liner Building Uses:** Buildings specifically designed to mask parking lots or garages from street frontage. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Linear Path or Park:** A park or parkway that is a lot longer than it is wide. Linear parks are often created from strips of public land next to rivers, creeks, canals, easements for electrical lines, former rail corridors, scenic highways, and shorelines. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Live/Work Space:** Buildings or spaces within buildings that are used jointly for commercial and residential purposes where the residential use of the space is secondary or accessory to the primary use as a place of work. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC):** The federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) program was established under the Tax Reform Act of 1986 to encourage private investment in affordable housing. LIHTC is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability to the owner of qualified low-income housing development for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction of low-income rental housing units. While the LIHTC is a federal credit, the LIHTC program is administered by state housing finance agencies in each state. In Virginia, the Virginia Housing Development Authority is responsible for administering the LIHTC program. (Source: Virginia Housing Development Authority)
- **Market Affordable Housing:** Rental housing that is affordable to households earning 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) without any restrictions or subsidies. Usually the housing is affordable due to its age, location, amenities, and/or design. The City considers market affordable sales housing as homes that are affordable to households earning up to 100% of AMI. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Market-Rate Housing:** Housing that is produced or provided in response to market demand. It is without federal, state, or local subsidies or income restrictions. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Master Plan:** The City of Alexandria's Master Plan is made up of Small Area Plans (SAPs) covering Alexandria's 18 neighborhoods, plus chapters on key topics, such as Historic Preservation, Transportation, and Open Space. The Master Plan was adopted by the City Council in 1992, and chapters are updated on an ongoing basis through Master Plan Amendments (Source: City of Alexandria).
- **Mixed-Use:** Mixed-use development is development of a tract of land or building or structure with two or more differing uses such as residential, office, retail, service, public, or entertainment, in a compact urban form. These types of developments can result in measurable reductions in traffic impacts. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Neighborhood Bikeway:** Primarily located in residential areas, neighborhood bikeways are designed to encourage slow vehicular

traffic and to be comfortable for people walking and bicycling. These streets may feature design elements such as curb extensions and roundabouts, “calming” traffic and giving priority to local vehicle trips over cut-through traffic. As an important part of the citywide bicycle network, neighborhood bikeways may also feature bicycle facilities such as shared lane markings or bike route signage. (Source: City of Alexandria, Transportation Master Plan, Pedestrian and Bicycle Chapter)

- **Net Area:** The total area of a site for residential or nonresidential development, excluding street rights of way and other publicly dedicated improvements such as parks, open space, and storm water detention and retention facilities. Net area is expressed in either acres or square feet. (Source: American Planning Association)
- **Objective:** Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain a stated vision and goals; they are generally measurable and have a time element. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Parking Standard/Parking Requirement:** The amount of parking that a use is required or recommended to provide. Typically these parking spaces are provided on the same property as the use. This could be a minimum or maximum requirement/standard. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Park Typology:** (Source: City of Alexandria)
 - Park typology categorizes the city's open spaces into groups based on their size and uses, allowing for development plans for parks that share similar characteristics and improvement needs.
 - Citywide Parks: Contains multiple uses within a park boundary; attracts visitors from all over the City.
 - Neighborhood Parks: May include multiple uses within park boundary; attracts nearby residents.
 - Pocket Parks: Small open space; mainly single use attracting nearby residents.
 - Natural Resource Areas: Includes open spaces that are primarily passive-use or preservation areas.
 - Shared Use: Includes parks that share facilities with schools and recreation centers
 - Destination/Historical: Attracts users from beyond the region because of unique features.

- Regional: Includes lands or facilities administered by other regional entities.
- Corridors/Linear Parks/Trailways: Includes trailways, corridors and linear parks that serve primarily as linear bikeway corridors; may include right-of-ways.
- **Placemaking:** Creating squares, plazas, parks, streets, and waterfronts that attract people because they are pleasurable or interesting. Landscape plays an important role in the place making design process. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Policy:** A policy means a general rule for action focused on a specific issue, derived from more general goals. (Source: American Planning Association)
- **Principle:** The stated intent that informs the Standards and Guidelines.
- **Public Access Easement:** Privately owned property that is available for public use, all or some parts of the day (e.g., many recent development projects include public open space in this form – privately owned, but open to the public). (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Public Art:** Public art is an original, site-specific work of art created by an artist, or a design element created by an artist collaborating with a design team, that is visually accessible to the public. Public art can be created in a variety of media, including visual arts, environmental art, literary arts, dance, music and performance, and may possess functional as well as aesthetic qualities. Public art must be located in places where public life occurs, including streets, plazas, parks, and open spaces, as well as facades, lobbies, atria, courtyards and similar spaces that are openly accessible and visible to anybody who is interested. (Source: City of Alexandria, Public Art Implementation Plan and Policy)
- **Publicly-Assisted Housing:** Rental units available to income-eligible households through rent and/or occupancy restrictions imposed as a condition of assistance under federal, state, or local program. Targeted income levels vary by program, and may be as high as 80% of AMI. (Source: City of Alexandria Housing Master Plan, 2014)
- **Public Housing:** Income-restricted housing units that are targeted to extremely low- to low-income families. Residents pay 30% of their adjusted income as rent and HUD provides the local housing authority with subsidies to maintain the units and the developments in which they are located. (Source: City of Alexandria Housing Master Plan, 2014)

- **Public Open Space:** The City’s Zoning Ordinance includes a Public Open Space (POS) zone which is restrictive to recreational and/or natural resource uses. Along with the Zoning Ordinance definition, the term public open space is synonymous any park, plaza, recreation area, etc. that is open to the public – either publicly or privately owned. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Public Plaza:** A public space at the intersection of important streets set aside for civic purposes and commercial activities. A plaza is circumscribed by frontages; its landscape consists of durable pavement for parking and trees requiring little maintenance. All parking lots on frontages should be designed as plazas with the paving not marked or detailed as parking lots. (Source: DPZ New Urbanism Lexicon)
- **Rails to Trail:** Former rail corridors that have been converted to paths designed for pedestrian, bicycle, skating, equestrian, and occasionally light motorized traffic. Most are multi-use trails offering pedestrians and cyclists recreational access (hike and bike trails) and right-of-way to these routes. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Remediation:** Remediation is the action or measure taken, or to be taken, to lessen, clean-up, remove, or mitigate the existence of hazardous materials existing on the property to such standards, specifications, or requirements as may be established or required by federal, state, county, or city statute, rule, or regulation. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Retail Focus Areas:** A Retail Focus Area (RFA) is a location within the 1992 OTN SAP planning area where retail and personal service uses are viewed as vital to the neighborhood. In those locations designated as RFAs (See Map on page 46 of the 1992 OTN SAP), 1/12 of the site area multiplied by the allowable Floor Area Ratio for the site must be devoted to uses specified in the 1992 OTN SAP on page 47. (Source: 1992 OTN SAP)
- **Sense of Place:** The characteristics (constructed and natural landmarks, social and economic surroundings) of a location, place, or community that make it readily recognizable as being unique and different from its surroundings and that provide a feeling of belonging to or being identified with that particular place. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Setback:** The horizontal distance between any part of a building or structure and the nearest property line. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Small Area Plans:** City of Alexandria’s Master Plan consists of 18 Small Area Plans (SAP), each setting a vision and goals for their given community’s future over a designated period of time. With strong citizen participation, a SAP typically addresses the economic, physical (all land uses and infrastructure), social and environmental elements of a community, taking into account anticipated growth in population, employment and overall development over the designated time span of the SAP, generally 15-20 years. The SAP is formatted with text, graphics and maps and includes objectives, strategies and recommendations to accomplish the vision and goals. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Special Use Permit:** A special use permit entails a process for reviewing certain land uses that may have a larger impact on the surrounding area than a by right (permitted) use. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Standard:** A standard is a criterion that defines the meaning of a policy by providing a way to measure its attainment. (Source: American Planning Association)
- **Streetscape:** The treatment of space between buildings and street that define the public realm. Streetscape elements may include building frontage/Facade, public art, outdoor cafes, transit stops or shelters, landscaping (trees, planters, fountains, etc.), sidewalk pavers, special embedded street paving, street furniture (benches, kiosks, etc.), signs, awnings, and street lighting. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Streetwall:** The wall or part of the building nearest to the street or property line. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Street Classifications:** Street Classification (also referred to as Functional Classification) is best defined by connectivity. Roadways that provide the greatest reach of connectivity are the highest level facilities. All streets within a city’s transportation network serve a particular function. These functions can vary from providing access to a person’s home to providing residents the ease of accessibility in traveling outside the city to reach their destination. The functional classification is important for the city to qualify for state and federal transportation funds. There are five categories of functional classification that are generally recognized by the FHWA and the VDOT. The City of Alexandria adopted a classification system that is slightly different, but its characteristics are generally the same. The classifications of the City of Alexandria’s streets include primary arterials, secondary arterials, primary collectors, residential collectors, and local streets. (Source: City of Alexandria)

- **Transit Oriented Development (TODs):** TODs focus redevelopment and new construction around transit nodes, enhancing access to mass transit options and helping curb car usage and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods. (Source: American Planning Association)
- **Transitions and Buffers:** The 1992 OTN SAP includes recommendations for urban design tools that provide architectural solutions and buffers such as landscaping and screening to appropriately transition between larger and lower-medium scale uses and between areas of different uses. (Source: 1992 OTN SAP)
- **Universal Design:** Universal Design, also called barrier-free design, focuses on making houses safe and accessible for everyone, regardless of age, physical ability, or stature. This is accomplished through thoughtful planning and design at all stages. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Urban Design:** The attempt to impose a rational order or to give form, in terms of both beauty and function, to selected urban areas or to whole cities. Urban design is an effort to make an urban area or whole city comprehensive, functional, and aesthetic through the articulation of its parts. (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms)
- **Urban Tree Canopy:** The layer of leaves, branches and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above. (Source: City of Alexandria)
- **Vision:** A general description of the desired result of the planning process (Source: Quizlet Glossary of Urban Planning Terms).
- **Zoning Ordinance (City of Alexandria):** City of Alexandria’s Zoning Ordinance contains regulatory controls for the City covering use (residential, commercial, mixed use), density, height, historic preservation, development approvals, parking, non-complying and non-conforming uses, environmental management, signs, and zoning map amendments. (Source: City of Alexandria, Zoning Ordinance)
- **Zoning Text Amendment:** A zoning text amendment entails a process for changing language in the Zoning Ordinance. (Source: City of Alexandria)

