

WAYFINDING STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP MEETING JUNE 19, 2008 6:30PM CITY HALL

MEETING SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Participants were divided into three groups and asked to each discuss three separate topics. Discussion was facilitated within each team by a member of the Sasaki consultant team, and recorded by a City staff person. Participants then reassembled and a member of each team presented a summary of their findings to the group as a whole. A summary of findings for each topic is included below, and copies of the worksession agenda (including specific questions relating to each topic) and easel pad notes from each group are available on the city web site at www.alexandriava.gov/wayfinding.

The meeting summary communicates the overarching themes that emerged from the exercise as interpreted by the Sasaki team. The consultant team will take these themes as directives to guide further development of the wayfinding plan.

SUMMARY

Topic 1A & 1B: District definition and boundaries

The full group generally identified the following districts for wayfinding in Alexandria:

- Arlandria
- Carlyle
- Del Ray
- Eisenhower Valley
- Old Town
- Parker-Gray (teams unanimously agreed on the importance of inclusion)
- Potomac Yard
- West End

The West End emerged as the hardest district to define – it clearly exists in the community mindset, but with vague boundaries, and is comprised of many smaller neighborhoods/subdistricts. Some noted that these subdistricts might emerge over time to be identified in their own right. Others noted that the West End is an established name with marketing recognition, better kept than further subdivided. It was suggested that Landmark, rather than being a distinct district, may emerge as the heart of the West End through current planning efforts.

Groups considered additional named areas of the City, but declined to include them as districts for wayfinding purposes (in many cases deciding they are more appropriately considered neighborhoods). These included Seminary Hill, Rosemont, Taylor Run, Holmes Run, Cameron Station, Hunting Creek, Van Dorn, Duke, Foxchase.

The groups discussed district boundaries and attempted to demarcate some district boundaries on the maps provided given limited time. These maps can be viewed as part of the breakout groups' easel pad notes available on the City's Wayfinding website at www.alexandriava.gov/wayfinding.

Topic 1C: District identity/iconography

Collectively, the groups identified the following "free-associated" thoughts regarding image & iconography for individual districts:

Arlandria

Birchmere
Ethnic Diversity
Mount Vernon Ave.
Four Mile Run Park
Chirilagua
Art Deco
Restaurants (Waffle Shop)
MOM's / My Organic Market

Carlyle

PTO & its atrium
Federal Courthouse
Carlyle Club
Lions
Fun art
Whole Foods

Del Ray

Mount Vernon Ave/commercial
Town of Potomac Historic District
Eclectic
Walkable/ Main Street
Trolley/Electric Railway
Where Main Street Still Exists
Purple
Funky
Arts
Simpson Fields
GW School
Cora Kelly
Del Ray Artisans
Independent Stores
Old racetrack

Eisenhower Valley

Cameron Run Regional Park / Waterpark
Cinema/Hoffman Center
Art Deco
DMV
Animal Shelter
Eisenhower Greenway / biking
Statue of Dwight D. Eisenhower

Old Town

Waterfront
History
City Hall/Market Square
Carlyle House
Lyceum
Ramsey House
Restaurants/Retail
Townhouses
Brick
Cobblestones
Ships
Pet-friendly

Parker-Gray

African American History
Charles Houston Rec. Center
Post Office
Braddock crossroads/hub

Potomac Yard

Railroad
Fire Station

West End

Landmark Mall
Hospital
Fort Ward
Diversity/Immigrants
Ben Brenman Park
Tempo Restaurant
Library
Masonic Memorial (as the gateway to West End?)

Topic 2: Destination hierarchy

Additions, subtractions, and reprioritizing of destinations proposed by each of the three teams are as follows:

Courthouses & Municipal Buildings

Tier C:

- Recycling Center
- DMV
- Human Services
- Lee Center (also rec center)

Colleges & Universities

Tier C:

- Strayer University
- GW Graduate School

Regional Commercial Centers

(no change)

Hospitals

(no change)

Transit Stations

Tier B:

- Water Taxi
- Amtrak / VRE

Parks, Public Squares, Rec. Facilities

Tier B:

- ~~Jones Point Park~~ Jones Point National Park
- Market Square
- City Marina
- Fort Ward (in addition to a museum)
- Waterfront
- All parks defined as "active" by the city

Tier C:

- Chinquapin
- Daingerfield Island National Park (tier B?) (& Marina)
- Charles Houston Rec. Center
- King St Garden Park
- Lee Center (also municipal bldg)
- All parks defined as "passive" by the city

Also, public art sites, a new category?:

- King/Fayette
- Canal Square
- others? (comprehensive list needed)

Theatre, Arts & Performing Arts Centers

Tier B:

- Del Ray Artisans
- Little Theatre (was C)
- MetroStage (was C)

Regional Destinations

Tier B:

- Washington DC
- ~~Mount Vernon~~ Mount Vernon Estate

Museums/Historic Attractions

Tier B:

- ~~St. Paul's Episcopal Church~~
- ~~Ramsay House~~ Alexandria Visitor Center

Tier C:

- ~~J.Q. Adams Otolaryngology Museum~~ (closing)

Major Trails & Access Points

Tier B:

- W & OD Trail

Other Attractions

Tier C:

- ~~Seaport Center~~ Seaport Foundation

Shopping Centers

(deleted category)

Schools

Tier B:

- T.C Williams

Tier C:

- Episcopal High School
- Bishop Ireton (Washington Symphony performs here)
- St. Agnes/St. Stephens
- Commonwealth Academy
- Hammond Middle School
- George Washington Middle School

Topic 3: Design character

Design qualities which the full group generally favored:

- A versatile design palette which can be applied throughout the city
- Interchangeable elements to relate to specific districts (color/pattern/icon/etc)
- Clear & legible text and arrows
- Sophisticated, flexible color palette, yet not too "muddy", with potential for selective pops of brighter color & contrast

- Relief and patterning, using architectural inspiration which lends authenticity
- An authentic, timeless look: "Rich history with contemporary flair"

Scheme A summary

- Generally felt to be a little dark & monochromatic
- "Iron" look fits Old Town but not elsewhere
- Doesn't appear to allow enough variety/flexibility
- Charming (too charming?)

Scheme B summary

- Versatile & looks like it would represent the whole city
- Colors are a little muted; Low-key/mundane; needs punch
- Image reference provides nice inspiration: authentic
- Textures, "friezes" hold appeal

Scheme C summary

- Color coding of destination types appeals to some
- Too bright to be predominant colors but nice for accent or in certain neighborhoods
- Variety of palette implies flexibility
- Would like a district-related icon

Scheme D summary

- Very legible
- Modern look wouldn't fit Old Town
- Colors include bright accent but not too garish
- Comfortable but familiar/generic: "It's been done"
- Timeless look would age well

The information above will stand as recorded unless Sasaki receives written comments within five days of the distribution date from a recipient requesting an amendment.