



***Docket Item #2
Informational Item
South Carlyle Planning***

DRB Meeting Date:	January 20, 2011
Project Name:	South Carlyle Planning
Purpose of Application:	Update on South Carlyle planning efforts involving Block P East/Block 26A (Zell), Block 28 (Virginia Concrete), and Blocks 26B, 29, and 30 (ASA).

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I. BACKGROUND

With the approval of the building on the western half of Block P in 2007, approximately 95% of the floor area allocated to the entirety of Block P under the Carlyle SUP was approved to be constructed in that one building. Very little floor area remained for a building on the eastern half of the block, which limited development options for this parcel. Around the same time period, the Alexandria Sanitation Authority (ASA) acquired property west of the existing plant (Blocks 29 and 30 of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan). The Plan called for 170,000 sf of residential floor area and 512,000 sf of office floor area on these two blocks. ASA will not be constructing to these densities, thus creating a potential source of floor area to be transferred.

In recognition of the potential for transfer of floor area and as part of the Block P West approval, the Planning Commission and City Council directed Planning staff to work with the owner of Block P, Zell Properties, to undertake a planning study that would evaluate development options for Block P East. This planning process was intended to consider the adjoining parcels that create the South Carlyle area of Eisenhower East. These properties include the following (see attached map):

- Block 26A (aka Block P East) – Zell Properties
- Block 26B – ASA
- Block 27 – Trammel Crow (new building constructed 2009)
- Block 28 – Virginia Concrete
- Blocks 29 and 30 – ASA

Over the last year, Zell hired several consultants to explore a variety of issues including the appropriate amount of retail for the area, traffic impacts, costs of underground parking given contaminated soil, location of the Resource Protection Area, and impacts to sewer capacity. In December 2009, Zell also obtained City Council approval for a Master Plan Amendment and an amendment to the overall Carlyle Special Use Permit that removed Block P East from the Carlyle planning area and added it to the South Carlyle district of the Eisenhower East Plan. Although there were several factors prompting this request, one reason had to do with having Block P East in the same planning area that potential floor area could be transferred from (i.e. ASA Blocks 29 and 30).

Since that approval and completion of the studies, Zell, City staff, and the other property owners have met to discuss the next steps of this planning study. The property owners have agreed to work together and have jointly hired a consultant, FX Fowle, to help them through the next phase of this study, which is exploring potential development scenarios for South Carlyle. Over the last few months, the consultant has met with the property owners and City staff to discuss the issues surrounding the site and start the discussion for potential development scenarios.

The desired outcome from this process is a Master Plan Amendment detailing the transfer of floor area among the South Carlyle blocks. Ultimately, this will also result in DSUPs for the various properties in South Carlyle, including the Zell property and the ASA property. The density transfer public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council is tentatively planned for the spring of this year. Given the DRB's involvement with the Block P West building and development in Eisenhower East, staff wanted to update the DRB on the status of

this planning process, share the ideas that have been generated thus far, and receive some initial feedback on the overall direction.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY

South Carlyle is an interesting planning area given the number of constraints and opportunities that are unique to this site only (see maps included in the packet). No other site in the City has a wastewater treatment plant, jail, and cemetery for neighbors and contaminated soils, high tension power lines, and RPAs to contend with on site. However, the site is a significant gateway to the City with high visibility from Beltway traffic heading west over the Wilson bridge. Development in South Carlyle has the potential to set the stage for future development along Eisenhower Avenue to the west. As there is only one new building in South Carlyle and some cooperation among the three remaining property owners, the possibility exists for a comprehensive development that capitalizes on the positive features of the site while minimizing the constraints, and in some cases turning them into great opportunities.

As hinted at in the scenario descriptions below and in the packet, a key factor in the success of South Carlyle as a development lies with the treatment of the ASA expansion. The use of Blocks 29 and 30 for a wastewater treatment plant was a change from the original Eisenhower East Plan and presents a challenge in creating successful development in the adjoining blocks. Therefore, a starting point for creating potential development scenarios starts with what happens on these blocks.

ASA has explained that they need this property to construct several large tanks that hold the wastewater during the middle of the treatment process. These tanks need to be clustered as close as possible to the existing treatment plant in order improve efficiencies of pumping the wastewater. There is some flexibility in the size and shape of the tanks, with the understanding that there may be cost implications for tanks that are not the typical cylindrical shape. There is also the ability to bury the tanks, partially or wholly, again with the acknowledgement that this could impact the cost.

Initial thoughts for treatment of the site included providing an active use along the northern property line to buffer the treatment use from the adjacent residential and offices uses to the north. While this train of thought has some merit, staff and the adjoining property owners have concerns about successfully buffering and shielding a use of this magnitude. An alternative idea to cover over the tanks and other treatment uses on these blocks has emerged, although the question remains as to whether the tanks are also buried and whether active uses are allowed on top of the cover/deck. Iterations of this alternative are described in more detail below.

A second factor that plays an important role in future development in South Carlyle is the contaminated soil issue and the impact on parking. It will be costly to underground parking in this area given the history of contaminated soil and in the case of Block P East (26A), there is a deed restriction that prohibits this. An idea was generated to expand the concept of covering the ASA site onto Blocks 26A, 26B, and 28 to allow parking underneath. A determination by the Planning Director would be necessary to determine what amount of covering creates the most

benefit to the public and thus provides for some allowances in exempting parking from floor area calculations.

As staff, the applicant and the consultant met, an idea emerged to both mitigate the impacts of the nearby public uses (i.e. the ASA expansion area) on the commercial and residential development planned for South Carlyle and possibly address the issues associated with providing appropriate below-grade parking. These discussions evolved into an interesting concept that considered changing the ground plane for South Carlyle. By doing so, the ASA structures and parking can be hidden from view underneath while open space is blended into the development above. With careful grading, this covering could appear as a gentle slope that meets the existing grade at the northern portion of the site along Eisenhower Avenue. This concept of changing the ground plane and using roof structures as significant public open spaces has been used elsewhere, such as recent work at Lincoln Center in New York City and the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany, both of which have functional space underneath landscaped roof structures.

In studying South Carlyle and creating potential development scenarios, the consultant has presented three general options for discussion, with each scenario building on this concept of changing the ground plane and covering over the treatment plant uses.

1. **Traditional Blocks:** This scenario is fairly consistent with the original Eisenhower East Plan. The floor area from Blocks 29 and 30 is transferred to the three blocks to the north (26A, 26B, and 28) and the street grid is retained. The ASA tanks are submerged and covered with a green deck that is essentially at grade.
2. **Perimeter Green:** This scenario includes above grade tanks, approximately 15-30 feet tall, which are covered by a green deck. The deck is accessed by a green strip along the eastern edge of South Carlyle that starts at grade at Eisenhower Ave and rises to meet the ASA deck in the south. The perimeter green space could look and function similar to the High Line in New York City. The floor area from Blocks 29 and 30 is still transferred to the three blocks to the north, but taller buildings are envisioned based on the assumption that above grade parking would be exempt from the floor area calculations.
3. **Green Carpet:** As with the previous scenarios, this scenario includes a green deck over the ASA tanks, which are approximately 30 feet tall. A large deck also entirely covers the three blocks to the north and slopes toward Eisenhower where it would be accessible at grade. The area underneath the deck on Blocks 26A, 26B, and 28 would house the parking for the buildings above. From the top, the deck could be an expansive green space that hides the parking below. Building entrances could be created at ground level where there is street frontage and on top of the green space.

III. ISSUES

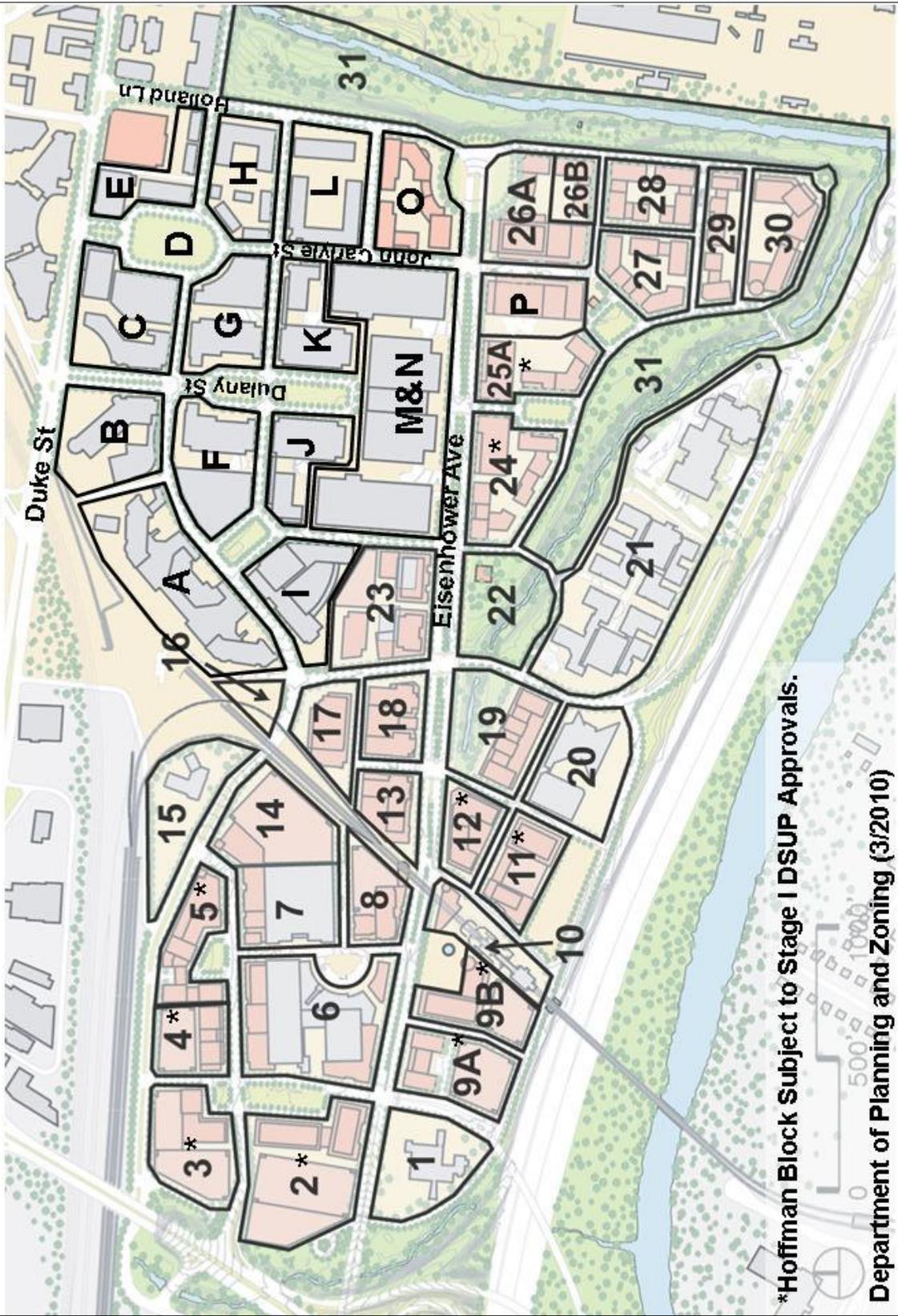
With these three development scenarios come several issues and concerns to consider when moving forward with a preferred option. The following is a brief list of some issues that have come up through the process from City staff and the property owners:

1. Elimination of the grid – Should the grid called for in the Eisenhower East Plan be retained? How does the grid work if the deck option is pursued? What are the traffic and circulation impacts of removing this grid?
2. Relationship to the existing building on Block 27 – How does future development impact this building? If a deck option is pursued, how can development be designed to keep a somewhat normal streetscape for this site?
3. Parking and floor area – Does the idea of covering over parking merit exempting the above grade parking that is under deck from the floor area calculations?
4. Nature of green space, particularly the portion over the ASA site – Should the green space be an active use space? How does it tie in with existing open space surrounding South Carlyle (i.e. future Eisenhower Park, cemetery to the east, open space created by the elimination of the rotary)?
5. Access to the green space – How will people access this space? Only via foot or bike, or should there be a street with full public access constructed on top of the deck, as if on grade?
6. Trail – A trail was envisioned south of Block 30 in Eisenhower Park that would cross Hooff's Run to link with the trail along the southern portion of the existing ASA plant. What is the nature of this trail if one of these scenarios with open space over the ASA site is pursued? Does this trail go through South Carlyle, stay south of Block 30, or are there two trails that provide different routes?

IV. CONCLUSION

This process has created an exciting opportunity for the City to create a unique development at a fairly prominent corner of the City. There are many challenges and opportunities to this site that need to be carefully weighed. Although no official DRB action is required at this time, input about the scenarios presented would be extremely beneficial to the overall success of development in South Carlyle. Future development proposals for the buildings in this area will be brought back to the DRB at such time they are developed for a DRB recommendation.

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks



*Hoffman Block Subject to Stage I DSUP Approvals.

Department of Planning and Zoning (3/2010)