

City of Alexandria
Department of Planning and Zoning
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Landmark/Van Dorn Area Plan
Planning and Design Workshop, May 3, 2008
Notes from Breakout Group Reports

These notes were taken by City staff during the reports of each of the three breakout groups to all attendees at the workshop.

MORNING SESSION

GROUP 1 – Mike McGuire

Transit priorities

walk to Metro; improved bike trails to Metro; link Metro to Mall and include nodes in between
purchase of rail lines behind Cameron
traffic from outside Alexandria is a problem; work with Fairfax County to make agreements
about through-traffic
DASH does not serve this area well

Affordable housing

everyone supports it
emphasis on workforce housing 75-100%AMI
most low-rent housing already exists in West End
less emphasis on public housing

Building heights – variety of building heights is appropriate

Small parks within an area but also a larger green space; plant trees; redevelop Backlick Run to improve environmental quality and recreational use

Green building standards – encourage them

Plan goal – improvement of ridership at Van Dorn Metro; it is underutilized

GROUP 2 – Andres Domeyko

Metro location – better connections and access

Connectivity to the Mall with public transportation

Creating nodes along Metro/Mall connection – make safe connections for pedestrian and automobile

Consider other transportation options besides Metro

Automobile access is important – don't exclude because of proximity of 395 and Beltway

Mixed use, enhance quality of streetscape, make Van Dorn more pedestrian friendly

Balance of bike and pedestrian paths (multi-use); dedicated lanes versus off-street paths—group thought it was important to have separate off-street multi-use path as opposed to dedicated bike lanes

Existing retail versus existing industrial (commercial) - what will remain? What will be redeveloped?

Metro area and Mall area are very different; Mall is right for redevelopment while Metro would be less easy; set broad zoning categories for Metro area because we don't know how it will redevelop; multiple owners there.

Parks – create new areas for parks, be opportunistic and also be more intentional about planning for future parks

Parking – some surface parking will be necessary; highest and best zoning; let infrastructure match highest and best use

Preserve natural areas and wetlands; create new ones

Economic sustainability – use city's sustainability task force recommendations- 50% mix of commercial and residential

Create gathering places – recreational/cultural attractions – need to create these because right now they do not exist.

GROUP 2 – Ingrid Sanden

Fewer cars and everything should be walkable

Address isolation of Metro

Make Mall a hub of transportation

Tighten up street grid to make areas more appealing

Make bike paths separate from road so people of all abilities can use them

Pockets of activity along Van Dorn; wide sidewalks

Coordinate engineering and landowners so that all the connections work

Open space – excited about small parks—huge need; dog parks; bike paths; public art

Open space more important as density increases; create opportunities for people to interact

Mix incomes of housing, not types necessary, so that there is mixed income housing, workforce housing, low-income housing – make sure everyone is included and represented

Maintain international flare of West End

Incorporate history into the site because people don't even know there is history

Farmers market, ice rink – amenities that are flexible with the seasons

Evening uses – things you can do after work

Need a recreation center

Uses for children of all ages; small recreation areas

Public art is important and fun

Shirlington is a good model – theater

Need local leaders to help push for these things

Green roofs, green buildings – avoid thermal hot spots, reduce amount of asphalt, encourage builders to embrace those ideas

Stormwater management – work with consultant to help manage stormwater

Consider using tax increment financing (TIF)

Limit car use by having adjacent walkable uses

Incorporating Metro into area is good, but asphalt plant is a problem. What happens to asphalt plant? Shouldn't that also be included in the plan so that the problem can be fixed?

Don't depend so heavily on residential taxes
Marquis tenant at gateway – incorporate Metro into that plan

AFTERNOON SESSION

GROUP 1 – Mike McGuire

Van Dorn is the spine of this small area
Group supports grid system – alternative connections are good, though group did not draw them.
Priority: connection to Metro- either pedestrian, automobile, transit etc.
Pedestrian connection up Pickett Street via bridge
Land uses: transit stops with development occurring at the stops. Mixed use should occur;
further development of existing commercial areas
Tenants should be closer to Landmark Mall because of proximity to 395
Residential on top of retail
Secondary daily amenities to be located on Van Dorn, smaller commercial uses
Stream valley connections of multi-use paths
Include large green space at the Mall
Small areas/pockets of green throughout
Coordinate transit system with Fairfax County

GROUP 2 – Andres Domeyko

Increase access points into Mall site
Create interior collectors/corridors
Extend Whiting to Pickett Street
High rise and mid rise area east of Van Dorn is not likely to redevelop. Preserve as housing.
Create pockets of commercial and mixed use at neighborhood scale
Mixed use corridor along Van Dorn – concentrate density here
Create large park west of Van Dorn
Mixed use at BJ's
Include structured parking deck for shared/public parking for residential/commercial similar to
Arlington County
Neighborhood retail along Pickett Street
Cultural and arts center in several places
Direct trail connection to Eisenhower Avenue at Van Dorn – ramp down to Metro parking lot

GROUP 3 –Ingrid Sanden

Transportation piece is most important
Grid system attempted, more connections
Red dotted lines are proposed road connections
Gateways – know when you are in Alexandria, when you drive, change in localities
Van Dorn and Pickett
North/South connection very important but could have commercial on Pickett Street
Distinct green spaces along Van Dorn and also maybe at Stevenson
High profile hotel, offices, fancy retail at Mall
Van Dorn – bike connection, green corridor, to connect to Holmes Run
Work closely with developers to get more green