

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 21, 2009

TO: LANDMARK/VAN DORN ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS AND
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

FROM: FAROLL HAMER, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
ZONING

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TRANSPORTATION, HEIGHT,
AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SCHOOL GENERATION

Introduction

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan on January 6, 2009. The Planning Commission endorsed the land use mix and density in the draft Plan but deferred action on the master plan resolution, for a period of no more than 60 days, in order for staff to address issues raised by the Commission.

These issues include:

- explore the feasibility of accelerating the delivery of the dedicated transit lanes within the Plan area to occur no later than the completion of 25 percent of the planned increase in development;
- provide additional information on the proposed building height limits of 250 feet on a portion of the current Landmark Mall site;
- add a statement about expectations for public contributions for on-site improvements for private development; and
- review and strengthen the Plan the Plan language with regard to the preservation of existing affordable housing and for on-going evaluation of the future needs Alexandria City Public Schools.

This memorandum contains staff's findings and responses to these issues. The memorandum also includes some additional information about planned transportation improvements, especially in the vicinity of the Van Dorn Metro Station, as well as a small number of additional changes that staff suggests the Planning Commission consider.

Summary of Responses to Issues

Staff is proposing the following changes to the plan:

- Accelerate delivery of both the Van Dorn dedicated transit lanes and the multimodal bridge to occur at or around 25% of proposed new development
- Strengthen language requiring transportation management
- Add chart summarizing cost of improvements and expected revenues
- Add language strengthening the concept that permission to build a tall building must be earned and that tall buildings must meet stringent performance standards and add graphics illustrating views of tall buildings from around the site
- Add a statement that will limit developer expectations for public contributions for on-site improvements and infrastructure
- Strengthen language emphasizing the importance of preserving existing affordable housing
- Provide additional information concerning the future needs of the Alexandria City Public Schools

1. Phasing of Transportation Improvements

At the January 6, 2009 public hearing, staff presented to the Planning Commission a recommendation to accelerate the phasing the dedicated transit lanes in the Landmark/Van Dorn Plan area. That recommendation was based on the feasibility of the City achieving \$72.5 million in accumulated increased tax revenues and bond capacity by the time that 50 percent of development had been completed. The Planning Commission also heard testimony from residents who strongly supported earlier delivery of the transit lanes, such as one dedicated lane by the time that 25 percent of development and the other by the time that 50 percent had been constructed. The Planning Commission directed staff to explore the feasibility of accelerating the completion of the dedicated transit lanes to occur no later than the completion of 25 percent of the new development permitted by the Plan.

Staff from the City Manager's Office, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, and the Department of Planning and Zoning has developed a proposal to accelerate the phasing in line with the Planning Commission's directive. In other words, staff determined that it is reasonable to expect that the City can achieve the same \$72.5 million (in a combination of accumulated increased tax revenues and bond capacity) in time for 25 percent of development.

However, for several reasons, staff is recommending accelerating the planned multimodal bridge instead of the Duke Street transit lanes because we believe that approach will improve transportation service in the Plan area sooner and possibly more cost-effectively. The Duke Street transit lanes will be required with the redevelopment of Landmark Mall and BJ's.

While staff believes that the acceleration is feasible, the timing is aggressive. In this memo staff will review our assumptions and approach so that there is understanding that there are challenges to having the lanes built by the target deadline.

25 Percent of New Development

The term “25 percent of new development.” Twenty-five percent of new development means 25 percent of the *net* increase in development – that is, over and above current levels. In a number of cases in the planning area, the first phase of development will involve replacement of an existing shopping center with the addition of an increment of office or residential use. This replacement will result in substantially increased value, but a modest net increase in floor area and vehicle trips generated. Later phases of development may involve further intensification, all of which would involve a net increase in floor area and a net increase in trips.

Different types of development generate different numbers of trips depending on the land use (i.e., 100,000 square feet of office generates more traffic in the AM peak than 100,000 square feet of warehouse space) and so it is important that we also track the number of net new trips generated as well as square feet of development. We are using net increase in floor area of development as a proxy for increase in vehicle trips but it should be noted that the increase in vehicle trips rather than the increase in square feet will have the biggest impact on traffic levels.

Attachment 1 to this memorandum shows examples of calculating the net increase in trips for redevelopment. Tracking trips as well as square footage in the Landmark/Van Dorn area's progress toward the 25 percent mark will be straightforward, since each traffic study is required to account for all of the previously approved trips.

Acquiring Land for the Dedicated Transit Lanes

Among the more challenging aspects to accelerating the dedicated transit lanes: acquiring the additional right-of-way needed for the planned transit boulevards. If the construction of the dedicated transit lanes occurs later in the buildout of the Plan, then we can assume that a large proportion of the land will be acquired through dedication during the development review process. Accelerating the construction of the lanes means that it is likely that a greater proportion of the planned right-of-way will be acquired through condemnation and relocation.

Staff analyzed scenarios of the phasing and sequencing of development in the Plan area to develop reasonable assumptions about the amount of land the City could anticipate

acquiring by dedication by the time that 25 percent of new development (or new trips) takes place. Because land dedication agreements occur during rezoning for those parcels that are to be rezoned for new development, and because rezoning can occur well before development is completed, particularly in large, multi-phased projects, we can reasonably anticipate that much of the potential redevelopment area will have land dedication agreements in place by the time that 25 percent of new development is completed. Because there are only four separate ownerships (counting Landmark Mall as a single ownership) fronting Duke Street, and because these properties comprise a large proportion of future development, there is a fairly good possibility that all will have reached dedication agreements with the City by the time that 25 percent of new development has been constructed.

Along Van Dorn Street, there are significant stretches of land that are not planned for redevelopment. The City will need to acquire the required right-of-way from these properties through purchase. Overall, it is reasonable to anticipate that one-third of the required right-of-way could be acquired through dedication.

In developing land acquisition cost estimates, staff reviewed each parcel along the planned right-of-way. This is especially important along Van Dorn Street where there are a few buildings in the planned right-of-way and places where the required right-of-way could take away parking needed by current businesses. Assessments and recent land sales were two source of information used to make the land cost estimate.

Condemnation and relocation is not a simple or inexpensive process. In determining the most opportune timing for construction of the dedicated lanes, some consideration should be given to saving the City important resources by weighing the advantages of waiting for the additional frontage to become available through dedication against the urgency of improving traffic conditions through dedicated lanes. It is possible that this issue may have no significant impact on the timing of construction, but it is something that should be carefully considered if necessary.

Association of the Dedicated Transit Lanes with Landmark/Van Dorn Development

Staff's feasibility analysis looks primarily at the ability of the increased revenue stream from new development in Landmark/Van Dorn to support construction of the dedicated transit lanes. However, the dedicated transit lanes are part of a larger commitment by the City to substantially improve transit service in the City and the region. As such, these projects have citywide benefits and are not needed solely to support Landmark/Van Dorn development. A combination of funding sources will undoubtedly be used to complete the transit network and it may be necessary to tap one or more of these other sources to complete the dedicated transit lanes in Landmark/Van Dorn within the timeframe goal.

Accelerate the Duke Street Dedicated Lane, or the Multimodal Bridge?

On January 6, staff presented to the Planning Commission an approach to complete the dedicated transit lanes by the time 50 percent of development has been constructed. That

approach included both the Duke Street and Van Dorn Street dedicated lanes. Of these two, the Van Dorn Street dedicated lane is much more important to improving the mobility within the Landmark/Van Dorn area since it will serve a larger proportion of the area and will connect to a nearby Metro station. Additionally, the stretch of the Duke Street transit lane within the Landmark/Van Dorn Plan area is short compared with the Van Dorn Street dedicated lane. This means the effectiveness of the Duke Street transit lane depends, to a greater degree than the Van Dorn Street dedicated lane, on the construction of dedicated lanes outside the Plan area.

Staff suggests that the Duke Street dedicated transit lane may not be as high a priority to precede development of the adjacent properties for the Plan area as another transportation improvement: the multimodal bridge from Pickett Street to the Van Dorn Metro. The multimodal bridge will not only provide a new and improved pedestrian and transit link to the Van Dorn Metro station, the traffic analysis conducted for the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan shows that the bridge also provides significant traffic relief (25-30%) for Van Dorn Street, especially at the intersections with Edsall Road and Pickett Street.

The projected construction cost of the multimodal bridge is \$22.9 million and the construction cost of the Duke Street transit boulevard is \$14.8 to \$17.6 million. These figures do not include land costs and, in the case of Duke Street, do not include the cost of the New High Street bridge.

Staff's recommended language for the transportation phasing schedule in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan would show the Van Dorn Street dedicated transit lanes and the multimodal bridge completed by the time that 25 percent of new development, as measured in trips, is constructed.

Possible Early Phase: Converting Existing Lanes to HOV

Because of difficulty in acquiring the necessary right-of-way, and in spite of the City's best efforts, it may not be possible to complete the new dedicated transit lanes on Van Dorn Street by the target deadline. In that case, an interim step could be to convert existing travel lanes on Van Dorn to HOV lanes. Transit as well as high-occupancy automobiles would be able to use the lanes, which would provide a measure of improved travel time for transit until the new dedicated lanes are completed.

Given current and projected congestion levels on Van Dorn Street, staff would suggest that this step only be considered if the multimodal bridge were constructed early. As noted, the multimodal bridge removes some automobile traffic from Van Dorn Street.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the following text changes to the draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan:

- Chapter 3, page 14: *Because reduced parking and increased transit ridership are so important to the success of this plan, the Plan recommends ~~that every effort be~~*

~~made to implement the construction of the Van Dorn Street dedicated transit lanes within the Plan area in at least one of the transit corridors prior to~~ around the time of the construction of 25 percent of the increased development permitted in this Plan. The Plan also recommends the construction of the multimodal bridge linking Pickett Place and the Van Dorn Metro Station around the time of the construction of 25 percent of the increased development permitted in this Plan. As transit service and accessibility are ~~is~~ improved, reduced parking becomes more feasible.

- Chapter 9, very end of page 6: The City's goal would be to set aside a sufficient percentage of the increased net tax increment each year so that by the time that 25 percent of the potential increase in development, has been completed, the City would have a combination of cash reserves and bond capacity of \$72.5 million. Additional funds necessary complete the Van Dorn Street dedicated transit lanes within the Plan area and the multimodal bridge could come from state and federal sources, from developer contributions, by minimizing right-of-way needed for the dedicated transit lanes, or by phasing the dedicated transit lanes on Van Dorn Street south of Pickett Street to occur at a later date.
- Chapter 9, page 7: To meet the Plan's parking and mode share goals, the Plan recommends construction of the both Van Dorn Street dedicated transit lanes and the multimodal bridge must be fully implemented before 90 ~~percent of the increased development permitted in this Plan. Plan's development is built. However, the Plan recommends implementing the dedicated transit lanes as soon as practicable. Because reduced parking is so important to the success of this plan, every effort should be made to implement at least one of the dedicated transit lanes prior to the construction of 50 percent of the development permitted in this Plan.~~
- Revise Table 9-1 (next page):

Table 9-1

Increments of Development and New Infrastructure and Service Elements	
Development along Pickett Street east of Van Dorn and first phase of Landmark Mall redevelopment (<u>or approximately 25% of Plan increased development potential</u>)	<p>Duke Street improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrade Walker Street Intersection ▪ Remove flyover ▪ New intersection between Van Dorn and Walker <p>Van Dorn Street Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transit lanes (<u>Eisenhower Ave to north of Duke Street</u>) <p>Grid Roadway System improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East-west main street ▪ Other grid roadways <p>Transit Service improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanded Bus Transfer facility at west end ▪ Circulator service, with stop at Metro ▪ Express bus service (predecessor to BRT/LRT) <p>Progress toward Multimodal Bridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Realign Pickett at Edsall ▪ <u>New intersection on Pickett Street</u> ▪ <u>Completion of bridge</u>
Development of either BJ site and adjacent sites or sites south of Stevenson, and Phase II of Mall redevelopment (<u>or, with previous increment, approximately 50% of Plan increased development potential</u>)	<p>Duke Street improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transit lanes ▪ New intersection east of Van Dorn ▪ High Street Bridge over Duke Street <p>Van Dorn Street improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transit lanes Edsall to north of Duke Street ▪ Transit lanes south of Pickett Street <p>Grid Roadway System improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other grid roadways <p>Transit Service improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrade express and local service <p>Progress toward Multimodal Bridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New intersection on Pickett
90% of full redevelopment.	<p>Duke Street improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BRT/LRT stations and features <p>Van Dorn Street improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BRT/LRT stations and features <p>Grid Roadway System improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Grid Roadways <p>Transit Service improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Van Dorn LRT / BRT service <u>including outside Plan area.</u> ▪ Full Duke Street LRT / BRT <u>including outside Plan area.</u> <p>Completion of Multimodal Bridge improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Bridge

2. Improvements in Transit Service

Circulator buses may use the grid network of streets, especially New High Street and within the Landmark Mall site and Pickett Place. Circulator buses may make a loop from Pickett Place to the Van Dorn Metro station using the new multimodal bridge and the existing Van Dorn Street bridge. More frequent headways during peak commuting times will help achieve target mode share goals and enhance use of the Metro station by

residents and workers within and near Pickett Place. Dedicated transit lanes in place prior to BRT/LRT is fully operational will serve existing and enhanced circulator and express buses reducing transit travel times in the corridor.

Short term transit improvements will include additional circulator service as new development and associated grid roadway network are introduced. Mid-term transit improvements will include dedicated transit lanes on Van Dorn and the construction of the multimodal bridge. Long-term transit improvements will include dedicated transit lanes on Duke Street and operation of BRT/LRT service in both Van Dorn and Duke Street corridors.

The draft Plan requires that new development achieve a 20 percent non-driver mode share prior to the completion of the Van Dorn Street dedicated transit lane and a 30 percent non-driver mode share after it is completed. For properties along Duke Street, the draft Plan requires the 30 percent non-driver mode share to begin when either dedicated transit lane is completed.

Staff recommends adding some additional text on page 8 in Chapter 9 to clarify that new trips will be tracked and that developers will be required to submit transportation management plans that will identify how they will meet Plan's mode share targets and allow for monitoring and adjusting the TMP as necessary.

- Chapter 9, page 8: *In addition to the traffic studies required with new development applications, the plan recommends that each development project be required to submit supplemental traffic analyses as part of the required traffic impact study to assess the cumulative transportation effect of the development in the planning area. This will help determine if mode share targets are being met, track net new trips and determine what transportation improvements are required to accommodate the proposed development and refine the infrastructure needs and phasing identified in the plan.*
- *As part of the development approval process, applicants must present a transportation management plan identifying strategies to meet transit mode share goals. These plans will be regularly monitored and adjusted to meet goals if the target transit shares identified are not met.*
- *The City is reviewing options for revising the TMP Ordinance and establishing transportation management districts. When these issues are resolved, the Landmark/Van Dorn area is an excellent candidate for a transportation management district, and development approvals should require participation in the district once it is formed.*

3. Illustration of Improved Connections to Van Dorn Metro Station

Planning Commissioners expressed interest in seeing additional illustrative detail of the Plan's recommendations to improve access to the Van Dorn Metro station. Staff agrees that graphics with greater detail can help strengthen Plan recommendations as well as illustrate the issues, challenges and constraints that will be involved in implementing the recommendations. Information concerning this issue will be presented to the Planning Commission on February 3.

4. Infrastructure Financing

The Planning Commission directed staff to prepare language clarifying the limited potential for public financing of on-site improvements that would normally be provided by the developer.

Staff recommends adding this statement to the draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan:

- Chapter 9, at the bottom of page 6: *Any bonds considered for issuance or any cash capital investment made using existing or new tax revenues need to be considered within the context of the City's overall debt policies and debt ratios, as well as within the context of economic and City budget and capital funding environment at the time these capital financing considerations are undertaken. While this Plan recognizes that the redevelopment economics of this area are challenging, especially in the short term, there should be no expectation on the part of private landowners or developers that public funds will be expended for private, on-site improvements.*

Planning staff also recommends some additional language in this section to provide a summary conclusion to the previous discussion of infrastructure cost and revenue potential. The addition consists of (1) a simple table comparing revenue potential (20 percent of net tax revenue and developer contribution potential) with infrastructure costs in the two main categories transportation and open space; and (2) a statement that this relatively conservative revenue estimate is well above these infrastructure costs.

- Add new Table 9-3 (next page):

*Table 9-3
Summary of Revenue Sources and Infrastructure Costs*

<i>Infrastructure and Amenity Costs (excludes fully privately funded)</i>	
<i>Transportation (maximum, including \$10 million land acquisition)</i>	<i>\$ 159,400,000</i>
<i>Open Space</i>	<i>\$ 16,000,000</i>
<i>Total Costs</i>	<i>\$ 175,000,000</i>
<i>Project-related Revenues, 20 years (no bonding assumed)</i>	
<i>20% of new tax revenues (20 years)</i>	<i>Up to \$93,000,000</i>
<i>Developer contribution potential (90% of estimate)</i>	<i>\$ 109,000,000</i>
<i>Total Project-related Revenue for Infrastructure</i>	<i>\$ 202,000,000</i>

5. 250-Foot Height Limits

The draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan provides the option for tall buildings in one section of the West End Town Center to incentivize the development of signature office buildings of outstanding architectural quality that are capable of attracting major employers as tenants. The highest of these proposed height limits: up to 250 feet along most of the I-395 frontage and at the corner where Duke Street and I-395 meet. These are prominent locations due to topography and location adjacent to major freeway, which is a valuable attribute for potential builders and tenants but also a concern for residents in the area that would be able to see buildings of this height and location.

The Planning Commission requested additional information about these height limit proposals, and this memorandum responds with:

- Graphics showing 250-foot buildings at this location as seen from common vantage points in the area. This memorandum contains two such graphics; staff may be able to complete additional graphics for the February 3 presentation to the Planning Commission.
- A review of relevant language already in the draft Plan that describes the intent of the proposed heights and regulates the design of these buildings. It is not the intention of the Plan that any 250-foot building would be acceptable and any building would need to go through the development review process. The goal is to achieve buildings of very high quality that work equally well from a distance as a visual representation of a transformed Landmark area, and at the ground level as a contributor to the urban fabric of the town center. The relevant language is included in Attachment 2 at the end of this report.
- Suggested additional language for the plan that constrains the ability to construct the tallest buildings to those that achieve high architectural quality and clearly support the City’s economic sustainability objectives.

Proposed Additional Language for the Draft Plan

To further articulate the goals of the Plan in relation to taller buildings, staff recommends the following change to the draft Plan language:

- Chapter 6, page 13: *As shown in Figure 6-16, building heights within the West End Town Center neighborhood are proposed for a range of 85 to 250 feet. Height ranges have been proposed within this neighborhood to provide variety in heights and transition into adjacent areas. Heights ranging from 150 to 250 feet are proposed on the frontage of Duke Street. Heights up to a maximum of 250 feet are proposed along I-395 north of Duke Street to allow for a signature building or complex at this prominent gateway location. ~~All building heights within this neighborhood will be subject to approval through the development special use permit (DSUP) process, with varied heights, transitions, and high quality architecture being required. Exceptional architectural design and building quality will be required for the taller signature buildings.~~ The intent of the Plan is to encourage the development of Class A office buildings that vary in height on blocks A1-A3 on the Landmark Mall site. Approval of the maximum allowable height is not automatic and will be evaluated during the CDD and DSUP review processes to determine whether the proposed building heights are in full conformance with the design guidelines and exhibit exemplary design and architecture.*

6. Public Schools

The Planning Commission requested additional discussion of the impact of the proposed residential development on the public schools. This memorandum reviews the potential for student generation, options for meeting the potential need for additional classroom capacity and/or schools, and efforts outside of the small area plan process to address student enrollment and capacity issues.

Student Generation

The draft Plan calls for a minimum of 1.7 million square feet of housing (about 1,700 units) and a maximum of just under 6,800 housing units. These housing units will be multifamily structures.

Every few years since the mid-1970s, Montgomery County MD conducts an in-depth survey of households to, in part, recalibrate the student generation rates that are used to plan schools, set school impact tax rates (which are based on student generation of residential development), and to determine if development moratoriums should be declared because of a lack of school capacity. The survey determines the average number of students in single-family detached housing units, townhouses, and multifamily units (garden apartments, and buildings of 5 stories or more).

Virtually all of the new housing in the Landmark/Van Dorn Plan area will be 5 stories or more. In the 2005 Montgomery County survey of 24,000 households, there were 3.7 students for every 100 households in buildings 5 stories or more.

Looking solely at households that have recently moved (something of a proxy for new housing), Montgomery County found that the elementary student generation rate increases to 4.2 students per 100 units in the buildings of 5 stories or more. For all students – grades K-12 – 11.3 students are generated per 100 multifamily housing units for “mover households.” If the Landmark/Van Dorn Plan were to produce 5,000 housing units, these rates suggest that at least 200 elementary students would live in these units, and 565 students in grades K-12. This is equal to approximately 8-12 elementary school classrooms and 18-20 classrooms at all levels. Currently, capacity concerns are most prominent at the elementary school level.

Because the Cameron Station student generation has been raised in this context, Planning and Zoning staff reviewed Alexandria City Public Schools’ data related to students from Cameron Station who attend public schools. This past fall, there were 112 students attending public schools who live in Cameron Station. The student generation rate from Cameron Station is less than the Montgomery County figures: an average of 2.5 students per 100 multi-family units and an average of 6.2 students per 100 units of any type.

The Landmark/Van Dorn Plan does not rely on these student generation rates but instead recognizes that over time, the number of households in multi-family buildings with children will change. The Plan recommends that ACPS participate in the process of reviewing development projects that are proposed in the Plan area and recommends that, after the catalyst phase, that developer contributions be evaluated in light of school capacity and likely student generation. The Department of Planning and Zoning is working with Alexandria City Public Schools to use currently available data to examine local student generation trends. This analysis could be updated regularly using actual student generation from new development projects in Alexandria and benchmarked to Census data.

Options for Potential Increases in Classroom Capacity

A portion of the potential increase in elementary school students in the Landmark/Van Dorn Plan area could possibly be accommodated by expansions at existing elementary schools. However, ACPS has not yet determined if additions to those schools (Patrick Henry and Kames Polk) are appropriate, and recent increases in enrollment are reducing the available capacity of expansions.

With regard to additional sites for school facilities, the Landmark/Van Dorn planning area has few obvious options that meet the traditional criteria for a new public school. Decades ago, the Commonwealth of Virginia established school site size standards that are still in effect. The Virginia requirement for an elementary school site is a minimum of 4 acres plus 1 acre per 100 pupils. A 600 -student school would require 4 + 6 acres, a total of 10 acres.

Although waivers to the Virginia standards can be requested and are granted, the waiver process adds to the complexity of identifying potential school sites in advance, because it would not be known at the small area plan stage if a waiver will be granted. Options include locating schools near existing parks with athletic fields.

Over the life of this Plan, Alexandria City Public Schools' school site requirements may evolve as the City, and the West End, becomes more urban. If so, one or more sites within the Plan area may become suitable for a school or a school use. As the City reviews development applications for major parcels in the area, this Plan recommends that Alexandria City Public Schools be involved in evaluating the potential for that project to include a school site or contribute to school facilities. This memorandum previously mentioned the Plan's recommendation that, after the catalyst phase when developer contributions for off-site infrastructure become feasible, that contributions toward school facilities based on student generation be considered.

The Plan does not encourage the redevelopment of the EOS21 apartment complex. Over the long term, if redevelopment of this complex moves forward, it could potentially provide land for public uses such as schools.

Long-term school capacity needs will depend on whether the current increase in student enrollment continues, plateaus, or reverses itself. While the small area plan process provides opportunities to designate school site, it is ill-suited for a comprehensive search and evaluation of the best potential school sites in the City.

7. Affordable Housing

The draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan has language related to affordable housing in several locations:

- In *Chapter 3: The Plan for Landmark/Van Dorn*, where all of the Plan's recommendations are summarized;
- In *Chapter 4: Land Use*, there is a review of existing conditions, market trends, and policy directions, along with a recommended approach for preserving existing affordable and workforce housing in the area; and
- In *Chapter 9: Implementation*, more detail about how the affordable housing recommendations will be applied to development proposals and other implementation issues.

This organizational structure (along with a glitch during production which located some of the affordable housing discussion with the public art discussion) may have made it a challenge to get a complete sense of how the Plan addresses affordable housing. In this memo, staff has collected the affordable housing language from the various sections, and placed them together in Attachment 3 at the end of this report. The sentences emphasizing the importance of preserving existing affordable housing are highlighted, and we are proposing new language to further strengthen that emphasis.

Staff recommends additional language for the draft Plan:

- Chapter 4, page 29: *The apartments and condominiums in Landmark/Van Dorn provide a substantial resource of affordable and workforce housing for Alexandria. The majority of the City of Alexandria’s “affordable housing” stock is privately owned and rents at market rates. While this stock has been rapidly dwindling citywide, the West End is home to a large percentage of the City’s privately-owned market-rate affordable and workforce housing. In view of this fact, the Plan does not encourage the redevelopment of the existing affordable housing and proposes no change to the current zoning or land use designation of these sites. These sites are included within the boundaries of the plan only to ensure that the area is comprehensively planned and to indicate that there is a requirement for new framework streets and smaller blocks through these properties in the unlikely case that redevelopment is proposed that conforms with existing densities and zones. The Plan strongly acknowledges these sites as potential opportunity sites for fulfillment of developer affordable housing contributions through preservation of existing units.*

Additional Thoughts on Affordable Housing

The Plan does not specifically mention¹ the current work of the Affordable Housing Initiatives Working Group, which is currently wrapping up its report to the City Council. Consistent with its interim report, it appears that AHIWG will put preservation of existing housing as a top priority. This due, in part, to the fact that preservation of existing units is often more cost effective than building new units. The draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan’s recommendations are entirely consistent with this approach

Staff foresees using the affordable housing contributions from new development to support the City’s efforts to preserve existing affordable and workforce housing, especially within and near the Plan area, using the mechanisms and following the priorities of the AHIWG and the upcoming housing master plan.

While embracing the goal of preservation of existing affordable housing, the draft Plan does not preclude the option of new mixed-income projects where appropriate. The economics of this area and of individual projects may result in a new mixed-income project that supplies affordable or workforce units in a cost-effective manner.

¹ Although the Plan explicitly acknowledges that current and future housing policy and planning initiatives will shape how affordable housing goals are pursued in the Plan area.

Attachment 1

Example Calculations of Net Increases in Trip Generation in Redevelopment

The following tables illustrate the calculation of net new trips using a scenario whereby 100,000 square feet of underperforming retail is replaced with a mixed-use development of 100,000 square feet of retail and 150 housing units. The examples show that using standard ITE² trip generation rates would undercount the net increase in trips (by over-estimating trips generated by the existing retail). The recommended approach would rely on actual driveway counts and would result in a more accurate measure.

Sample PM Peak Trip Generation

Land Use	ITE Land Use Code	SF/Units	Trip Generation Rate	Total Trips
Retail	820	100,000	3.74/1000 sf	374
Residential	223	100 units	.39/unit	39
Office	710	100,000	1.49/1000 sf	149

Example using ITE:

100,000 SF of underperforming retail is replaced with a mixed-use development of 100,000 SF of retail and 150 Dwelling Units.

PM Peak

Proposed	Land Use	SF/Units	Total Trips
	Retail	100,000	374
	Residential	150	59
Subtotal			433
Existing	Retail	100,000	374
<i>Net New Trips</i>			<i>59</i>

Example using driveway counts:

100,000 SF of underperforming retail is replaced with a mixed-use development of 100,000 SF of retail and 150 Dwelling Units.

PM Peak

Proposed	Land Use	SF/Units	Total Trips
	Retail	100,000	374
	Residential	150	59
Subtotal			433
Existing	Retail	100,000	280
<i>Net New Trips</i>			<i>153</i>

² Institute of Transportation Engineers, a source of standard trip generation rates.

Attachment 2

Relevant Language in the Draft Plan Concerning Standards for Tall Buildings

The following language in the draft Plan describes the intent of the proposed height limits and provides guidance for the appropriate design of buildings in the taller height ranges.

- Chapter 3, Page 13: “As shown in Figure 6-16, building heights within the West End Town Center neighborhood are proposed for a range of 85 to 250 feet. Height ranges have been proposed within this neighborhood to provide variety in heights and transition into adjacent areas. Heights ranging from 150 to 250 feet are proposed on the frontage of Duke Street. Heights up to a maximum of 250 feet are proposed along I-395 north of Duke Street to allow for a signature building or complex at this prominent gateway location. All building heights within this neighborhood will be subject to approval through the development special use permit (DSUP) process, with varied heights, transitions, and high quality architecture being required. Exceptional architectural design and building quality will be required for the taller signature buildings.”
- Chapter 6, Page 15: “Leverage high visibility along Duke Street and I-395 by creating distinctive skylines and building tops along both major arterials.”
- Chapter 7, Page 3: “It is important that the development plan not present an uninterrupted wall of office buildings and parking along I-395. The face presented to I-395 should make obvious the presence of a lively, active center full of people and inviting things to see and do, and any above-grade parking must be screened in a manner and with materials consistent with the remainder of the building.”
- Chapter 7, Page 3: “Where Duke Street meets New High Street, this important gateway to the site and regional transit connection demands a special focus, with active uses and unique attractions that are visible to those traveling on New High Street and Duke Street. This intersection should be a site of both daytime and nighttime activity. Special sculpturing of building faces and active frontages are required.”
- Chapter 7, Page 24: “A range of building heights and articulation of heights to create an interesting skyline is expected within each height district. Building shoulders are expected along streets.”
- Chapter 7, Page 26: “While the Heights District Plan recommends maximum heights, the intent of this plan is to ensure that there is a variety in heights within each Height District.”
- Chapter 7, Page 26: “All buildings should have a “shoulder” no less than 25 feet above the street level. The setback for this shoulder should be between 8 feet and 12 feet.”

- Chapter 7, Page 29: “The character, image, and marketability of the Landmark/Van Dorn area will be shaped in large part by the quality of its architecture. Employing the best of contemporary design and the latest environmentally sustainable building technologies; incorporating elements of building design that relate to Alexandria; emphasizing pedestrian experience, detail, and the design will create a distinct identity for each of the neighborhoods. Design decisions made with “neighborhood-building” in mind suggest a kind of architecture that goes beyond incremental block-by-block developments to carry out multi-block concepts, such as high-performance building design, green roofs, and many other concepts laid out in this vision and development strategy.”
- Chapter 7, Page 29: “In Landmark/Van Dorn diverse new architecture can strive for a lively urbanity, with expressive features, sculptural forms, color, and dynamic roofscapes – perhaps achieved by using traditional materials in unconventional ways or unconventional materials in traditional ways. Special focus on design emphasis, and/or architectural detail at the lowest 3 levels of buildings will intensify the pedestrian experience. Excellent ground floor design and materials will contribute to each of the neighborhoods success in attracting sustainable concentrations of retail and neighborhood services and realizing the safe, walkable streets that will attract office and residential tenants.”
- Chapter 7, Page 30: “The unbroken horizontal length of any façade plane shall be minimized. Intervals of set-back or projected façade area may be used to permit longer building lengths. For larger projects and developments, consider composing facades as a series of smaller adjacent facades resembling separate buildings to reduce the perceived horizontal mass and scale.”
- Chapter 7, Page 30: “Buildings shall incorporate elements of intermediate scale between human scale and that of the whole building. At minimum, this shall be accomplished through a “base/middle/top” compositional strategy that defines at least three zones from base to top of the building façade. Additional important intermediate scale elements include bay windows extending through multiple floors, building wings, areas of consistent material, and other larger elements that are still subsidiary to the overall building form. Facades should include horizontal lines of expression (such as string courses, cornices and window alignments) that correspond to the height of adjacent context buildings.”
- Chapter 7, Page 30: “Building tops and other skyline elements that rise above context buildings deserve special attention as prominent elements in the public realm...Building tops should be both designed as attractive landmarks with special forms and materials, and limited in scale so as not to appear bulky compared to context scale nor to block views excessively. Special treatment of upper floors where a building meets the sky creates a sense of drama, helps to make a memorable place, aids in wayfinding, and conveys the message that the building was designed with care, keeping its relationship to its surroundings in

mind. The Design Principles for the City of Alexandria require that new buildings be designed using the principles of base/middle/top; create scale transitions that are sensitive to the surrounding building fabric; and employ articulated tower tops to create an interesting skyline, allow views between buildings, and help sunshine to reach lower building levels and public open spaces.”

- Chapter 7, Page 31:
 - “Utilize high-quality building materials such as brick, stone, precast or metal. Locate heavier materials closest to the ground and highest quality materials and details at the pedestrian level.
 - Utilize stone, metal or similar durable material for trim.
 - Use materials to help express base, middle and top sections of buildings.
 - Balance glass and solid surfaces to create predominantly solid facades with windows placed within the wall. Except on retail frontages, glazing shall not exceed 50% of the overall façade where this proportion is typical of existing context.
 - Use no reflective or darkly tinted glass.”
- Chapter 7, Page 32: “The plan encourages prominent building frontages at strategic street corners, along open spaces, and at locations of high visibility. Within each subarea there are specific areas where higher design standards for façade, massing and materials should be pursued. Facades should be well articulated, and given special design consideration at the following corner locations:
 - West End Town Center
 - Walker Street and Duke Street
 - The intersection of Duke Street and New High Street
 - Duke Street and Van Dorn Street
 - Town Center Main Shopping Street and New High Street
 - New High Street and Stevenson Avenue
 - Stevenson Avenue and Van Dorn Street
- Chapter 6, Page 36-37: “The following guidelines should be observed for buildings fronting Duke Street –
 - A minimum setback of 12 feet from the street right-of-way should be provided. This minimum setback consists of a berm that is sloped gently enough to allow trees to grow.
 - At the four corners of Duke Street and New High Street, a setback at a datum level should be maintained. The datum line should occur no more than 50 feet above Duke Street, measured from the center of the street

between cross streets. The building setbacks at the datum line should be between 15 feet and 20 feet.

- Building massing above the datum level should ensure that the taller mass of the building is perceived as a secondary street edge. Surface articulation and variation in material should be used to break down horizontal length of any building face.
- 80% transparent facades are recommended for the corners that are below bridge level along Duke Street. This treatment of mass and façade should be extended far enough along Duke Street to ensure that pedestrians and transit users perceive an active, well-lit building edge at the corners. Uses such as health clubs may be located at these corners, to achieve the desired results. The corner treatment for mass and façade should be similar in either option – the bridge option or the at-grade option.
- Beyond this zone, where parking garages or other inactive building edges face Duke Street, the buildings should be designed to include the same materials, fenestration and articulation as the remainder of the building for this visually prominent frontage.
- The corner of Walker Street and Duke Street should be given special attention, since this location has high visibility to traffic merging to and from I-395.
- Public art should be located to supplement the generally higher standard for buildings and the public realm along this important arterial.

These guidelines are intended to ensure that the environment along Duke Street does not feel like a canyon, and that is the tree canopies that become the defining characteristic for this street. More in-depth evaluation should be carried out in future design exercises for development plans to ascertain the extent to which buildings need to step back to maintain the desired street character.”

- Chapter 7, Page 47: “Signature Building. The building or buildings located on the north side of Duke Street on Block A1 is expected to be the most prominent building in the West End Town Center because of its visible location along I-395 and at the gateway to the West End as travelers come across I-395 into the Town Center. This prominent location requires a building that is of exemplary design, shows sensitivity in its attention to appearance in the landscape and as a landmark feature, and is appropriate in character and quality of materials and finishes as a gateway to the West End and to the City of Alexandria.”
- Chapter 7 Page 50: “Building design shall meet the objectives of Chapter 6 and the specific guidelines of Chapter 7. Building form, location, access, alignment, façade articulation, building tops, fenestration, materials and finishes and other aspects of buildings are subject to review to meet these requirements.”

Attachment 3

The language in the draft Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan related to affordable housing.

In Chapter 3, Recommendations, the language related to affordable housing is:

Affordable Housing

The Plan does not encourage the redevelopment of the existing affordable housing in the area and proposes no changes to the current zoning or land use designation of these sites. With regard to the provision of new housing as part of mixed-use developments, the Plan recommends a phased approach to developer contributions that could include a cash contribution, preservation of existing affordable housing, and new on- or off-site units (see also Chapter 9: Implementation). The City is about to begin a Housing Master Plan and establish a new taskforce to determine recommendations for developer contributions to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. New City-wide requirements resulting from these efforts will specifically address the treatment of affordable housing provision in the planning area and may or may not result in changes to the strategy set forth in this Plan.

The Plan also recommends that the City seek opportunities to secure public housing units within private development proposals in the Plan area.

In Chapter 4: Land Use, there is extended discussion about the history of residential development in the area, the existing base of residential development and current market trends, as well as the overall market potential for residential development in the Plan area. The language in the Plan specifically related to affordable housing is:

Affordable Housing

The years since 2000 have seen housing costs in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area rise much faster than incomes, causing a substantial reduction in the number of housing units affordable to low- and moderate-income households in Alexandria. From 2000 to 2007, annual incomes have increased 14% from \$82,800 to \$94,500. However, the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Alexandria increased by 47% from \$1,034 to \$1,519. The changes in the housing market also resulted in the conversion of a number of the City's more affordable apartments to condominiums, further restricting affordable housing choices. In 2000, Alexandria had 18,218 housing units that were affordable to households earning at least 60 percent of the median income. In 2007, there were only 8,456 units affordable to households in that income bracket. This shift in housing affordability will challenge the City's ability to sustain the economic and cultural diversity that is important to the vision for Alexandria and important to the character of the West End.

In 2007 and 2008, housing prices in Alexandria stabilized, and in some cases declined. However, price reductions were greater for homes priced above the City median, and housing affordability is only modestly improving for households earning at or below the area median income. For the future, the continued growth of the national capital region, and the City's advantageous location within that region,

is likely to make it increasingly difficult to maintain a significant share of affordable housing without public regulatory or financial intervention. If prices and rents increase faster than incomes, the City stands to lose much of its remaining economic and cultural diversity over the next decade.

The definitions of “affordable” and “workforce” housing can vary. At the recommendation of the City’s Affordable Housing Initiatives Working Group, the City Council adopted these definitions in June, 2008:

Rental housing is affordable when households earning up to 60 percent of the area’s median income can afford the monthly rent, and it is considered workforce housing when households earning up to 80 percent of the area’s median income can afford the monthly rent.

For-sale housing is affordable when households earning up to the mathematical 80 percent of the area’s median income can afford the monthly mortgage payment, and it is considered workforce housing when households earning up to 120 percent of the area’s median income can afford the monthly mortgage payment.

Virginia law prohibits the City from enacting the broad inclusionary housing requirements available to cities in many other states. Inclusionary housing laws can require all developers to include a substantial share of affordable housing in new development projects. Virginia law permits the City to request voluntary affordable housing contributions from developers and to offer increased density as an incentive for developers to provide affordable housing. The City’s affordable housing formula outlines developer contributions for three situations, or “tiers:”

In cases where the developer is not requesting additional density, the formula calls for a voluntary contribution of \$1.50 per square foot of new commercial development and rental housing and \$2.00 per square foot of new for-sale housing.

In cases where the developer is requesting a density allowed with a Special Use Permit or increase through rezoning to densities recommended in an area plan, the formula calls for a voluntary contribution of \$4.00 per square foot of increased density.

In cases where the developer is requesting a density bonus over and above the densities allowed with a Special Use Permit the formula calls for one-third of all bonus units in the project to be affordable units, up to a maximum 20 percent density bonus.

Not all locations in Alexandria are appropriate for the density bonus program (Tier 3), since most of the City’s permitted residential densities were established before the state law was enacted and allowing additional height and density may not be appropriate based on adjacent uses and available infrastructure. When preparing new area plans, there is greater certainty for both residents and developers if the plan recommends that density increases be achieved through rezoning (Tier 2), rather than through the bonus density program.

The apartments and condominiums in Landmark/Van Dorn provide a substantial resource of affordable and workforce housing for Alexandria. Figure 2-22 shows the distribution of household incomes for Landmark/Van Dorn's three census block groups that include existing residential units in 1999, the most recent year for which data is available. Of the 2,355 households living in the planning area at the time of the 2000 census, 1,758, or 75%, had year 1999 household incomes lower than the median household income for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and the City of Alexandria as a whole.

The existing market rate housing in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor planning area consists of multi-family rental housing and townhouses:

- The EOS 21 garden apartment complex was built in 1967 and consists of 1,180 units, of which just over half are one-bedroom, for which rents range from \$1,175 to \$1,430 per month. There are 236 efficiencies (\$1,000 to \$1,115) and 340 two-bedroom units (\$1,505 to \$1,740). Units at the northern edge of the complex were converted to condominiums; in 2007 sales prices ranged from \$158,500 to \$325,763.
- Foxwood Place was built in 1973 and consists of 76 efficiencies renting from \$985 per month, 133 one-bedroom units renting from \$1,230 per month, and 19 two-bedroom units renting from \$1,775 per month.
- The Landmark Terrace apartment complex was built in 1964 and consists of 224 units, of which 96 are efficiencies renting from \$1,050 per month, 113 are one-bedroom units renting from \$1,300 per month, and 15 are two-bedroom units renting from \$1,600 per month.
- The Fields at Landmark garden apartment complex was built in 1965 and consists of 290 units, of which 3 are efficiencies renting for \$825 per month, 99 are one-bedroom units renting for \$950 per month, 134 are two-bedroom units renting for \$1,150 per month, and 54 are three-bedroom units. All of these units are currently assisted under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.
- Brent Place, a mid-rise apartment building built in 1975, consists of 207 units. Of these, 50 are one-bedroom units renting for \$995 per month, 105 are two-bedroom units renting for \$1,195 per month, and 52 are three-bedroom units renting for \$1,474 per month. This property was built as assisted housing under the Section 236 program, and is now assisted under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.
- The Reynolds Street public housing scattered site (a portion of the Braddock/Whiting/Reynolds development) consists of 18 units on South Reynolds Street, constructed in 2005. Residents of this development pay 30 percent of their incomes for rent. The companion Whiting Street scattered site is located immediately to the west of the plan area.

- The Summers Grove townhouse community was built in the mid-1990s near the Van Dorn Metro and consists of 192 homes. In mid-2008, home prices averaged \$450,000.

The majority of the City of Alexandria’s “affordable housing” stock is privately owned and rents at market rates. While this stock has been rapidly dwindling citywide, the West End is home to a large percentage of the City’s privately-owned market-rate affordable and workforce housing. The West End has 53% of the City’s total housing units. The West End has 66% of the City’s market rate rental units (in complexes of 10 units or more), and 63% of the City’s market rate affordable rentals. Affordable means affordable to households earning 60% of the area median income.

According to the Office of Housing, within the planning area there are 965 housing units affordable to households earning up to 80 percent of the area’s median income. Of these, 204 are affordable to households earning 60% or less of the area’s median income.

Surrounding the planning area, there are 4,005 housing units affordable to households earning up to 80 percent of the area’s median income. Of these, 187 are affordable to households earning 60% or less of the area’s median income.

The apartments and condominiums in Landmark/Van Dorn provide a substantial resource of affordable and workforce housing for Alexandria. The majority of the City of Alexandria’s “affordable housing” stock is privately owned and rents at market rates. While this stock has been rapidly dwindling citywide, the West End is home to a large percentage of the City’s privately-owned market-rate affordable and workforce housing. In view of this fact, the Plan does not encourage the redevelopment of the existing affordable housing and proposes no change to the current zoning or land use designation of these sites.

With regard to the provision of new housing as part of mixed use developments, the Plan recommends a phased approach to developer contributions that could include a cash contribution, preservation of existing affordable units, and new on-or off-site units. The City will also seek opportunities to secure public housing units within private development proposals. See Chapter 9.0 Implementation for more details.

The City is about to undertake a Housing Master Plan to comprehensively address housing issues and policies throughout the City. In addition, a new task force is being established to make recommendations on developer contributions to affordable housing. If new Citywide policies or guidelines are adopted, they may supersede those in adopted small area plans, although it is expected that these efforts will take into account the small area plan recommendations for Landmark/Van Dorn and other plan areas.

In *Chapter 9: Implementation*, the language related to affordable housing is:

Affordable Housing Strategy

The preservation or replacement of existing assisted and/or market affordable rental units is the primary emphasis of the Landmark/Van Dorn affordable housing strategy, in an effort to maintain the current level of assisted housing and prevent further losses of market affordable housing. Workforce housing is also a desirable element of mixed-income redevelopment, and is a secondary element of the affordable housing strategy, to be achieved only when financially feasible to do so in addition to meeting affordable rental housing goals.

Rental housing units are affordable housing when households earning up to 60 percent of the area's median income can afford the monthly rent and for-sale housing units are affordable when households earning up to the mathematical 80 percent of the area's median income can afford the monthly mortgage payment.

Rental housing is considered workforce housing when households earning up to 80 percent of the area's median income can afford the monthly rent, and for-sale housing is considered workforce housing when households earning up to 120 percent of the area's median income can afford the monthly mortgage payment.

Phase I – Catalyst

In the catalyst phase, the City would apply, on a mandatory basis, the voluntary affordable housing formula set forth in the Final Report of the Developer Housing Contribution Policy Work Group that was accepted by City Council in June 2005. Specifically:

- Commercial: \$1.50 per square foot of gross floor area (gfa)
- Residential
 - Rental: \$1.50 per square foot of gfa
 - For-sale: \$2.00 per square foot of gfa
- All: \$4.00 per square foot of increased gfa due to rezoning

Phase II - Choice Location

During this phase, the City would capture a portion of the increased ability to contribute to public amenities (based on the expectation of increased sales prices and market rents) by requiring increased housing contributions for additional density provided through rezoning. Such contributions are likely to be requested in the form of units preserved in an existing affordable property, possibly through partnerships with non-profit organizations or other property owners. New, on-site housing would be requested only when such units could be provided in substantial numbers and/or could be deemed replacement units for current affordable units, including public housing units.

Phase III – Dedicated Transit Lanes

Housing contributions during Phase III would be further increased above the levels achieved during Phase II, and would be used in the same manner as in Phase II.
Workforce Housing

While the emphasis of the affordable housing strategy for Landmark/Van Dorn will be on the preservation/ replacement of existing assisted and/or market affordable rental units,

the provision of workforce housing may also be desirable in the context of mixed-income redevelopment. The ability to achieve workforce housing in addition to affordable housing will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Relationship to Other City Housing Policy Efforts

The City is about to begin a City is about to undertake a Housing Master Plan, and a new task force is being established to make recommendations on developer contributions. New Citywide requirements resulting from these efforts will specifically address the treatment of housing provisions in the Landmark/Van Dorn and other plans, and may or may not result in changes in the strategy set forth in this plan.