



Alexandria West Community Planning

Meeting 6 Questions and Answers – Online and In-Person

Monday, November 13, 2023

Please Note: All meeting materials, including the webinar video recording, interpreted recordings, and Q&A, are available on the project website at alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest

Green Questions were asked in person, black questions were asked online.

Housing Affordability

- 1. What is the percent of increased affordable housing in West End relative to rest of Alexandria (i.e. Eisenhower, etc.)?**

Response by Tamara Jovovic. The amount of committed affordable housing that's generated through the Small Area plan is a function of a lot of different factors. One of them will be if redevelopment happens, what type of redevelopment happens? Is it infill development? Does it impact existing housing units? The intent here is to identify a vision, to help guide future housing policy. Roughly one third of the rental housing stock in Alexandria West is affordable at 60% of the area median income (AMI). We want to do is help preserve that and help inform the housing goal for this Small Area Plan. This relates to the Housing Master Plan goal in the sense that this is a supplement. There is an overarching goal for the city, then Small Area Plans take a more in depth look at housing need. The small area plans that are developed in response to that will establish individual goals. In Eisenhower East right now, I can say there's actually very little committed affordable housing. We have some set aside units (fewer than a hundred) currently, in Eisenhower East. We are anticipating a few more in the pipeline as we get new infill development in Eisenhower East. But I'm not sure if that answers your question.

There was a Small Area Plan that was approved in 2019 and there are a set of recommendations and has a 10% requirement in Eisenhower East as well. As new development comes online and pursues additional density, we'll start to see set aside units. We have a new building that's coming online in about a month. We have a large development that was approved in 2022, which will bring another 44 set aside units. Some of the recommendations are similar and some are different because the housing needs are very different. There isn't potential for necessarily redevelopment in Eisenhower East, there's much more potential for infill. Or if there is redevelopment, it'll impact low scale commercial as opposed to existing residential communities. In terms of the developer expectations, there are a lot of similarities.

- 2. How did you determine the recommended % of affordable units for new density?**

Response by Tamara Jovovic. There's a two-tiered approach. One impacts the Coordinated Development Districts and that's consistent with the Zoning for Housing provision. It's also building off some recent approvals that we've had in the City for those of you that are familiar with the Potomac River Generating Station. That's the approach that was used there. That approach is also used with Greenhill. The 10% requirement is building off our housing contribution policy update, which was approved in 2021. That policy ended up looking at the value that was being generated as part of a rezoning associated specifically with density above what the Small Area Plan was permitting. We did an analysis to determine the value that was



being generated for the developer and determined that a percentage requirement would be appropriate for committed affordable housing. Our rental units in those instances, are affordable at 60% of AMI, and are for sale, [and] have a set for sale prices.

- 3. Alexandria offers great help to disabled and senior homeowners through property tax relief. We do, however, lag behind neighboring areas, such as Fairfax County. Has there been any discussion to bring our program in line with our neighboring jurisdiction for helping residents age in place.**

Response by Tamara Jovovic. I might have to pull in our Housing Director at some point. I know that our partners at the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) have some aging-in-place programs. Senior Services of Alexandria also works closely with some of our seniors to make sure that they have access to in-home care. As part of this process and as we look at diversifying the housing typologies, one thing that we think about is what types of housing might be appropriate for households that want to stay in the community, but maybe want to downsize. I think it's a combination of providing housing the right housing typologies, but also providing access to the types of services and programs that individuals need to be able to safely remain in our community. We also have a couple of different smaller programs that involve home rehabilitation for some of our lower-income households. Through our 99-year deferred loan, they can get access to construction services that would make their homes safer as they age-in-place. There might be accessibility improvements, for example, whether it's the installation of grab bars or walk in shower or a ramp. We do have some smaller programs but we're happy to look into the Fairfax County services as well.

Transportation

- 1. What does traffic plan look like in other scenarios (2025, 2028, 2033)? What were the conditions of Seminary fatalities? Has lower speed limit worked?**

Response by Daniel Scolese. In Small Area Plans, we have this as an out year of 20 years. As part of our development review processes, we require interim years. The Small Area Plan will not be looking at individual years, it will go straight to 2045. In our development reviews, we do require additional interim years before they're built out so we can get more information.

Response by Daniel Scolese. The Seminary fatalities were both pedestrians, and the conditions of those was one was that Fairbanks, the other one was north of Dawes. Both of those were pedestrians getting hit by vehicles. The speed limit during the day it's been close to the 25 but after hours it has only been 30. We recognize that there's an issue, and we're working to mitigate that through these future efforts, especially with the Seminary West Plan.

- 2. Does your recommended road network account for change in uses from the Beauregard Plan? Is there flexibility in location?**

Response by Hillary Orr. Yes, the roadway network has the roadway network from the Beauregard plan and expands on it to provide additional connectivity. I'm not sure what we mean by flexibility in location but it's a proposed network. We can take comments if there's any feedback on the proposed network that is out there.

- 3. Why was the North Beauregard Street parallel road behind 1800 and 1900 North Beauregard reinserted into the plan after neighbors and council voted to remove the road. The property owners opposes the road. The community opposes this road. Why is the City betraying the Western residents and homeowners? And how can we trust this process when the City can choose to ignore stakeholders later down the road as a specific example?**

Response by Ryan Knight. So, to my understanding, that road has been approved in the current Small Area Plan. We're showing the road parallel to North Beauregard. As you kind of see from the Plan, it's purple. Therefore, it is approved by the current Small Area Plan and we haven't changed anything. However, I will say that just broadly from a transportation perspective, connectivity is beneficial for those within the transportation network. That's the benefit of having a new connection there. The whereabouts or the location of that connectivity will definitely be adjusted and looked into as we move forward within the DSUP (Development Special Use Permit) level.

- 4. It is commonly known in the safety/risk management community that signs and punishment does not change behavior. What is the City doing toward leading indicators (proactiveness) vs. punishment (lagging)?**

Response by Hillary Orr. We certainly have enforcement out here when we can. Just changing the speed limit and posting signs doesn't always change behavior dramatically. I think when we look at this map right here, we are doing a lot to actually change the roadway design that does lead to safer behavior. We are trying to be proactive and addressing a lot of these concerns. Some of these locations that we noted as key crash intersections, they aren't necessarily coming up on our high crash network, but we know that just by the design of them, there could be severe and fatal crashes. We are trying to address those proactively through roadway design, because we know our police cannot be out enforcing all the time.

- 5. What are the plans for King Street?**

Response by Ryan Knight. We have two projects, but we also have ongoing efforts along every road within Alexandria. We have the King and Beauregard intersection that's still going on and we're hoping to finalize plans this Winter and start construction in late Spring/early Summer of next year. We would have to coordinate with VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) on that and to summarize the King Street and Beauregard intersection improvements widens the road and makes it more pedestrian friendly at that intersection. Then also we have the King Street-Bradlee area project. We are currently working on that the scope of that right now and we will begin community engagement efforts early next year for that and we're hoping to finalize the scope of that project by late Summer of next year as well.

Additional response by Hillary Orr. Also, on King Street we have the high intersection audits that are happening on the 3 intersections west of I-395 here.

- 6. You said some roads are too wide for pedestrians to safely cross. The bus rapid transit on Beauregard will add two more lanes. Beauregard Street has bus pull offs that appear to work well and do not require any technology installation or upkeep. Why does Beauregard need BRT when it works now? Speed limit by the three schools is already just 15 mph during school (coming & going).**

Response by Daniel Scolese. The first phase of the bus rapid transit is the bus stations and part of that is making sure we provide amenities to make sure people know when buses are coming or real time events. These stations and improvements will have a way to improve reliability and time. Right now buses aren't always guaranteed to meet the next stop because of congestion. There could be a queue jump or some type of other minor improvement that would allow a bus to be able to get through. Some of it's mostly signal technology and that's not going to be the traditional bus expansion. Some of these intersections will have improvements for pedestrians like at Beauregard and Braddock. There's the slip lanes and there'll be stations there and we find those slip lanes are underutilized and part of it's being removed through one development. We're moving it and consolidating that intersection more through the West End Transitway project, so we can make it safer for pedestrians to get to it, but also provide those of bus amenities. We want to provide better service and it comes down to the whole intent of bus rapid transit is to provide reliable and consistent service. We have a lot of varying factors within the traffic network, and how buses get to and from where they need to. We want to modernize our system so that we can keep up with the demand that does come.

Response by Daniel Scolese. We update our timetables based off those modes but our varying factors are not so much the speed, it's when you hit a signal, if there's an unnecessary stop, or if there's some other mode in between that's messing it up, that are slowing someone down at that bus. We want to give the bus an opportunity to meet those timetables we say. We don't want to give such a varying time schedule where someone's expecting it to happen 5 minutes ago. We want to give them more opportunity to get through the signals reliably than having to hope that the signal or that a car in front of you is moving forward.

7. Why does Alexandria have signs that say something like speed strictly enforced? Everyone knows it isn't true so why add these signs that distract drivers?

Response by Ryan Knight. Those signs are based off the enforcement efforts for the Alexandria Police Department. It's to supplement any enforcement efforts that they have on those corridors. We've coordinated and collaborated with the Alexandria Police Department to determine what would be appropriate, to put those signs or to put up signs that tells the driver that there's going to be some type of special enforcement at some point whenever there is an Alexandria police presence. Those are the purpose of the signs. To speak on when enforcement happens, it doesn't indicate the frequency of enforcement. However, once enforcement is out there, it does give the drivers that the speed limit that's out there is strictly enforced, and therefore, you have more of a chance of getting pulled over and getting a ticket if you are going over the speed limit.

8. If the community opposes a road, what is more important? Connectivity as viewed by the City or the community's wishes?

Response by Hillary Orr. That's why we're here with you all and we're doing this Plan. The City has put on so many of these forums to make sure that we're hearing the feedback from all sides, and then that'll ultimately be something that will be weighed in the final decision of what moves forward with this Plan and what Council adopts. That's why we're here tonight, to get comments from and feedback from you all.