

Revitalization Activity Update

October 2017



Office of Community Revitalization
Fairfax County, VA

CONCEPTS PLANS FOR THE NEW VISION FOR RICHMOND HIGHWAY COME INTO FOCUS

Embark Richmond Highway is a multi-faceted project that includes widening of Route 1, planning for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that will connect the Huntington Metrorail station to the Richmond Highway Corridor, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for areas around the BRT stations, and policy guidance for the eventual extension of Metrorail from Huntington to Hybla Valley.

Areas of study have included proposed land uses, results of an analysis of expected transportation impacts associated with the projected land uses, a proposed grid of streets to augment existing roadways, development of an enhanced parks and open space system, and concepts that depict the layout, size, height and mix of projected land uses in Penn Daw, Beacon/Groveton, Hybla Valley/Gum Springs and Woodlawn.

In May 2017, the county retained the consultant design services to develop an urban design framework vision for the corridor and to refine land use concepts for the areas in four of the CBCs in the corridor. The corridor-wide urban design framework was developed around the themes of ecology and legacy. The ecology theme is derived from the abundant streams and natural areas that bisect the corridor. The legacy theme is derived from the remarkable historical structures, buildings and neighborhoods that permeate the corridor and surrounding environs. The themes of ecology and legacy are reflected in each of the draft concept plans for the four areas in ways that are both distinct and similar.

Over the past year, an Embark Advisory Group has met monthly to provide staff with feedback and guidance on the vision for the future redevelopment of the Richmond Highway corridor. In addition, periodic community-wide meetings have been held to share information and receive community feedback. Public hearings at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment are anticipated to occur in early 2018. For more information about the Embark Richmond Highway project, including details on the draft concept plans, please go to: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/embarkrichmondhwy>

Penn Daw CBC Concept Plan (Proposed)



Beacon/Groveton CBC Concept Plan (Proposed)



Hybla Valley/Gum Springs CBC Concept Plan (Proposed)



Woodlawn CBC Concept Plan (Proposed)



SPRINGFIELD COMMUTER PARKING FACILITY MOVES FORWARD

A new and innovative commuter parking garage is coming to downtown Springfield. In July 2017, the Board approved design plans for the six level, 1,100 space parking garage, to be located at 7033 Old Keene Mill Road. The ground floor is designed to accommodate special events, such as a farmer's market, during off-peak hours. A 5,000 square foot portion of the upper deck will be a plaza that can be used for community events (see drawing). A 200-foot-long pedestrian bridge over Old Keene Mill Road will connect the garage to Springfield Plaza and nearby bus stops, and will function as a gateway to Springfield. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2019, with completion by early 2022.



Commuter parking garage plaza concept

A NEW BRANDING IDENTITY FOR SPRINGFIELD

A unique logo and graphic identity system is being developed to brand the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC). During the summer, OCR solicited input from residents and businesses through a community survey (circulated by the Springfield Civic Association and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce). The results of the survey revealed that the Springfield area is perceived to be a convenient, modern and diverse community that is accessible to the entire region. OCR has contracted with a branding and digital marketing firm to develop an identity campaign for the Springfield CBC that builds upon that perception. The logo/identity system is intended to be used to brand Springfield in a manner that is adaptable to a variety of circumstances, including potential gateway signs, (such as on the new commuter parking garage pedestrian overpass pictured below), banners and fixtures. Community input will be solicited on the alternatives prior to an official launch later in 2017.



Commuter parking garage pedestrian overpass

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE FOR MERRIFIELD

Merrifield has undergone dramatic changes since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001. The Plan's vision calls for transit-oriented development surrounding the Merrifield-Dunn Loring Metro Station and for a new mixed-use town center south of Lee Highway and west of Gallows Road. A significant portion of the Plan's vision has been realized over the past 16 years. Mixed-use residential buildings have infilled around the Metro station, including the redevelopment of the WMATA property at the station. The development of the Mosaic District has achieved the vision of a town center for the area, with its mix of uses and network of new local streets, park spaces, and year-round activities.

An "Implementation Update" of the Merrifield Suburban Center portion of the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2016. The Plan Amendment reflects the changes that have occurred to the built environment, removes plan options in already redeveloped areas, and will encourage development in underperforming areas by providing redevelopment guidance and highlighting where new growth is anticipated to occur.

IMPLEMENTATION OF REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES FROM ANNANDALE STUDY

In October 2016, OCR organized a pop-up park at the Taste of Annandale event, encouraging participants to relax in the temporary park's greenery, enjoy the company of others, and experience first-hand how pop-up uses can contribute to a community.

This pop-up park aligned with the recommendations made in July 2016 by a group of real estate experts from the Urban Land Institute who engaged in a brief, intensive study that was focused on the core area of the Annandale Commercial Revitalization District (CRD). The recommendations included short-to-medium-term revitalization strategies to improve the appearance, economic vitality, awareness and promotion of Annandale.

In keeping with recommended shorter-term strategies, OCR, in partnership with the county's Department of Transportation, has been exploring the potential for an "Open Street" event in Annandale. Open Streets are unique events designed to enliven and enhance a community's sense of place and connection. Open Streets events happen across the U.S., and the world, from big cities to small towns. During such events, streets are temporarily closed to vehicles and opened for people to walk, bike, dance, play, socialize, experience, and envision the street in a different way. Staff has conducted research, pursued partnerships, and performed outreach to the Annandale community in preparation for a potential Open Streets event in 2018, that is envisioned as the prototype for similar events throughout the county.

OCR is also pursuing the creation of a temporary urban plaza or park on the front portion of the County-owned property located at 7200 Columbia Pike that is the site of the ACCA Child Development Center. A recently approved special exception amendment for the site included a development condition that would enable the future establishment of a pop-up plaza. Additional progress is anticipated in 2018.



Pop-up park at the Taste of Annandale



County employees and participants enjoy the pop-up park



Example of an Open Streets community event in Atlanta, GA



Example of a pop-up plaza in Milwaukee, WI

BC7RC ORGANIZATION GROWS

In 2016, OCR and the Bailey's Crossroads Seven Corners Revitalization Corporation (BC7RC) undertook a strategic planning effort to examine BC7RC's role in partnering with Fairfax County on the revitalization of Bailey's Crossroads and Seven Corners. To assist in this effort, OCR hired an organizational consultant to review the group's mission, objectives, structure, processes, and organizational priorities, and to produce a plan for strengthening the capacity of BC7RC in the short and mid-terms. OCR staff aided the effort by conducting a strategic visioning exercise with Board members, providing one-on-one outreach to the local business community, and by offering general restructuring support in the summer and fall of 2016.

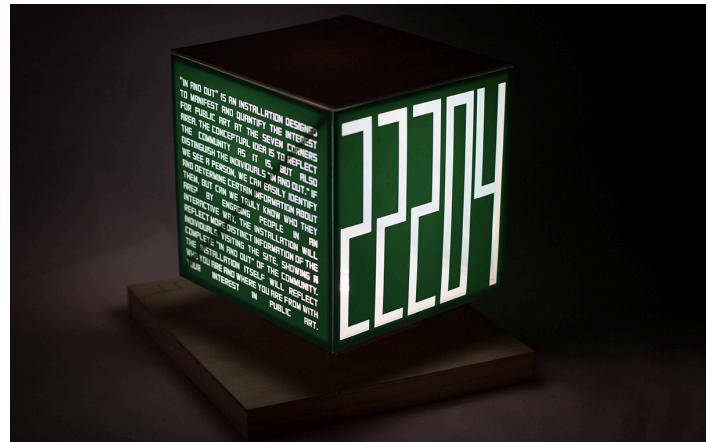
As a result of the assessment and the efforts of BC7RC's leadership, the organization welcomed seven new Board members in November 2016. BC7RC's expanded resources have helped energize and focus the group on its mission. Key objectives are to provide input on development projects in the CRD, encourage beautification efforts across the CRD, and expand membership participation activities – such as direct business outreach, an enhanced online presence, and hosting networking breakfasts. BC7RC's top priority for the next year is to continue to strengthen its connection with residents and businesses in the larger community. The group's website is www.baileyscrossroads.org



OCR is in the process of creating design guidelines for Baileys Crossroads and Seven Corners, following approval of the recently adopted Plan amendment for Seven Corners. The Baileys Crossroads and Seven Corners Urban Design Guidelines contain written and visual ideas about how sidewalks and landscape areas should be detailed, how buildings should be sited, and how innovative sustainable design practices can be used to help create a unique sense of place. Staff sought input and feedback from the public regarding the desired character for the area and developed recommendations to reflect community preferences. Property owners, developers, and planners can use this information to help guide the design of new buildings and public areas during the rezoning process and projects can be evaluated against them during the development process. It is anticipated that these Guidelines will be used as the basis upon which to update the Urban Design Guidelines in the County's other revitalization areas.

IMAGINE ART HERE: SEVEN CORNERS

OCR has been working with the Arts Council of Fairfax County, and other community partners, to bring a temporary public art project to the heart of Seven Corners. The project will be installed in the spring of 2018 in the corner plaza of the Bank of America property at 6307 Arlington Boulevard and will remain in place for approximately six weeks. The installation, which is the first public art project in Seven Corners, will feature a daytime and night-time presence, provide an interactive component to engage the community, and collect participant input that will inform the County's Master Arts Plan. A multi-disciplinary team of artists will refine the design concept and community engagement plan prior to installation.

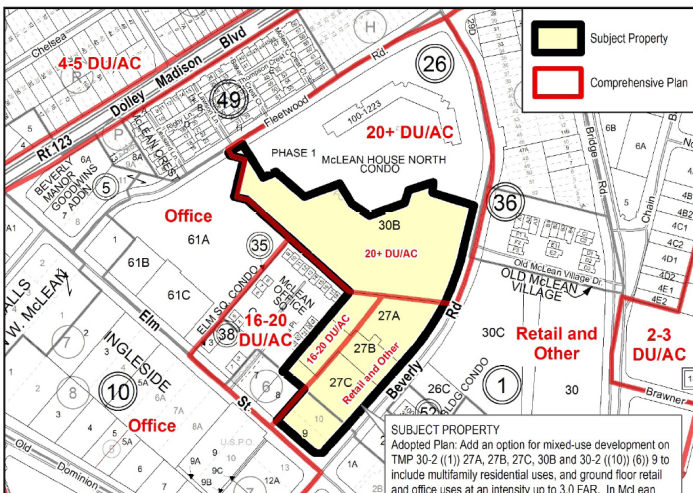


NEW DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR BAILEYS CROSSROADS/SEVEN CORNERS

Urban Design Guidelines are an important tool for creating dynamic, and attractive places. They reinforce the placemaking concepts for an area that are contained in the Comprehensive Plan including streetscapes, public spaces, parks, and architecture. Urban Design Guidelines create expectations with regard to the design of pedestrian-friendly facilities, site development, building placement, quality of materials, and landscaping, lighting, and street furnishings.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE - MORE DENSITY RECOMMENDED FOR MCLEAN

On November 11, 2016, the Board adopted a Plan Amendment that established a new 7.4 acre, high density residential node in the McLean Commercial Revitalization District (CRD). The Plan's new recommendations are intended to further the county's economic success strategy and the continued revitalization of the McLean CRD by increasing the planned intensity of properties along Beverly Road to a 3.0 FAR. As a result, properties in the McLean CRD are no longer subject to recent changes to the Code of Virginia that restrict the offering or acceptance of proffers related to new residential development.



Properties recommended for a 3.0 FAR in McLean

IMPLEMENTING BUILDING REPURPOSING RECOMMENDATIONS

On October 18, 2016, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to implement the recommendations contained in the *Office Building Repositioning and Repurposing: Workgroup Report*. The OCR led study evaluates the impacts of the changing office market on existing office space, how the use of buildings changes over time, and what potential process and policy changes the County should consider to address the challenges and opportunities raised.

Staff has been implementing the report's recommendations related to modifications to the Zoning Ordinance, changes to the land development process, modifications to land use planning policy, and enhanced outreach and information sharing.

A major recent accomplishment is the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, 2016-CW-4CP, Office Building Repurposing, which establishes countywide policy guidance for the conversion of existing office buildings to uses not originally anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan, (i.e., building repurposing). The Plan Amendment provides parameters on what types of conversions may be appropriate, the locations where such conversions may be appropriate, how the impacts of conversions should be addressed, and the degree of flexibility that may accrue to such proposals during the development review process. The proposed Plan Amendment provides flexibility to address issues related to time-to-market and the length of the development process.

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR ENHANCED CRD STREETSCAPE MAINTENANCE ENDORSED

One of the original tenets of the commercial revitalization program was to foster distinctive places in each of the CRDs through the installation of specialized streetscape designs and materials. These specialized streetscapes were installed by the County in the Annandale, Baileys Crossroads, McLean and Springfield Community Business Centers using revitalization bond fund monies, and are maintained by the County through the General Fund based on a Board policy adopted in 1997.

Maintenance of these streetscapes is subject to funding availability. Over time, funding has not kept pace with needs, as a result of an expanded inventory as projects were completed, wear and tear as well as aging of the infrastructure, and rising costs. As a result, maintenance was deferred on a number of items.

To address this need, in October of 2016, the Board endorsed an enhanced maintenance program for the CRDs with the goal of maintaining and improving the streetscapes to community standards. Current program funding is \$750,000 per year. The program is anticipated to ramp up funding and staffing over a 5 to 7 year period. In addition, some monies also are available for capital improvement projects through a Capital Sinking Fund. The greater funding and enhanced service level will improve the appearance and functionality of the CRDS, as well as foster greater economic vitality and reinvestment.

LAKE ANNE VILLAGE CENTER - BETTER THAN EVER

The Lake Anne Condominium Association (LARCA) and local merchants have made significant progress toward Lake Anne Village Center (LAVC) becoming a destination of locally owned small businesses, supported by activities and special events. Many of these actions are based on the OCR commissioned *Lake Anne Village Center Commercial Reinvestment Plan*, which provides short and long-term strategies to improve the vitality of the village center.

New events and festivals aimed at activating the LAVC have successfully introduced attendees to the unique Lake Anne merchants. A craft market was organized as a weekly companion event to the 20-year old Farmers Market. Entertainment events were expanded to include the Jazz & Blues Festival, the Roots Music Festival, a Chalk Festival, a Boos & Brews Halloween event, Jingle on Lake Anne holiday event, Freezin for a Reason, and Weekly Free Yoga on the Bricks.



LAVC Holiday Event

Additionally, LARCA undertook a multi-prong approach to improving the visual environment by introducing “look & feel” improvements, including the incorporation of seasonal landscaping to add color and soften the environment, improving storefront signage by supporting graphic design services to individual businesses, adding brightly colored umbrellas to the dock area, placing casual seating around the plaza to encourage people to sit and stay, and re-creating Gonzola Fonseca’s “The Horse”—a sculpture that was part of the original the LAVC.

These revitalization efforts have been bolstered by new business investment in LAVC. The Lake Anne Brew House, Lake Anne Coffee House & Wine Bar, Kiln & Kustard and Nordic Knot have all opened in the past year. Meanwhile, many existing businesses have been sustained, including the Reston Used Book Shop (30 years), Small Change (35 years), Kalypso’s Sports Tavern (8 years), Café Montmartre (20 years), and Singh Thai restaurants (7 years).

The renewed vitality has contributed to the recognition of LAVC as an interesting destination for Reston and Fairfax County that compliments the fact that LAVC has long been known as an important place of architectural significance. In recognition of its revolutionary design and historic value, the LAVC was added to the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places on June 5, 2017. This latest recognition follows the action by the Commonwealth of Virginia, which listed the LAVC in the Virginia Landmarks Register in March 2017.

zMOD - ZONING ORDINANCE MODERNIZATION INITIATED

Fairfax County has launched an exciting new initiative related to its Zoning Ordinance. The county’s Zoning Ordinance will be 40 years old next year, and while the current Ordinance has guided growth for those decades, it contains redundancies, does not address current and future trends, is not easily adaptable to electronic formats, and is not easily used or understood by those who do not use it on a regular basis. As a result, a multi-departmental staff team, led by OCR, has initiated zMOD - a multi-year, multi-pronged project to modernize the ordinance. zMOD is integrating with, but not replacing, the Zoning Ordinance Amendment Work Program.

The major components of zMod are as follows:

- With the assistance of consultant services, the Ordinance will be reformatted to address current structural issues, including ease of navigation, use of easily understood language, and accessibility on a variety of platforms.
- A series of amendments that have county-wide implications will be prioritized. These include addressing the minor modifications to approved zoning provisions, signs, the PDH Districts, and restaurants.
- Process improvements related the processing of Zoning Ordinance Amendments and other zoning-related activities are being implemented, including providing “plain English” versions of proposed amendments for ease of understanding, and expanding community engagement opportunities.

RESTON TRANSIT STATION AREAS (TSAS) AND TYSONS URBAN CENTER CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT REDEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

A significant number of redevelopment proposals have been submitted in the Reston TSAs since the adoption of the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan related to the extension of the Silverline Metrorail to Dulles and beyond. There are currently 21 zoning cases pending within the Dulles Corridor. These range in size from 1.5 acres to 47 acres. The majority of the requests are for mixed-use developments which, if approved, could result in more than 1,393,000 square feet of non-residential uses and 14,364,000 square feet of residential development.

In the past year in Tysons, Highgate at The Mile, a residential building in the North Central District, was delivered and is currently leasing. Three additional buildings are currently under construction, including the Capital One Headquarters and seven major zoning cases are pending within Tysons, which range in size from 1.29 acres to 38.83 acres. If approved, these applications could result in a 5,363,000 square feet of non-residential uses and 8,663,000 square feet of residential development.

OCR is a key member of the Reston and Tysons Core Teams that evaluate zoning proposals. OCR focuses its efforts on urban design and placemaking, which are key components to successful transit-oriented developments. In 2017, the Board adopted an update to the Tysons Urban Design Guidelines that was undertaken by OCR to reflect changes since they were first adopted in 2012.



Newly constructed Highgate at The Mile in Tysons



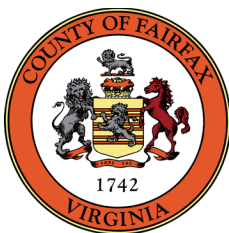
Sunburst proposed concept plan in Tysons



Woodland Park East concept plan in Reston



Midline - Reston Station Boulevard Rendering



Fairfax County Office of Community Revitalization

12055 Government Center Parkway
Suite 1048
Fairfax, VA 22035
703.324.9300
www.fcrevit.org



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