

Old Town North Small Area Plan (OTN SAP) Advisory Group Meeting #2
Monday, November 9, 2015, 7:00 – 9:00 PM
City Hall, City Council Workroom

NOVEMBER 9, 2015 ADVISORY GROUP DRAFT SUMMARY NOTES
(11.13.2015 DRAFT)

CHARRETTE RELATED PRESENTATION

Review of November 9th powerpoint presentation: This presentation further describes the Framework (Visioning) phase of the typical SAP planning process. The presentation also summarizes the recent Eisenhower West SAP framework planning process. Further, it compares the Eisenhower West planning process, and timing, with the OTN SAP planning process, which will utilize the charrette and, thus, will need less time to develop its framework (visioning) plan.

Questions and Comments related to the Charrette Presentation

- **Question:** Will there be a chance for those who were not able to participate during charrette week to have their voices heard. **Response:** Yes. The door is not closed after the charrette. We will continue to solicit input through this and later phases.
- **Question:** What is the difference between open houses and public meetings during charrette week? **Response:** Public meetings will involve group exercises and presentations. Open houses are a chance for people to walk in, interact with staff, and view the progress of work.
- **Question:** Will there be signs in the Canal Center lobby to direct people? **Response:** We will put signs in the garage to direct people to the main level. On the main level there will be a staff member to assist people.
- **Comment:** The view from the charrette space in Canal Center is representative of one of our neighborhood's greatest assets, namely the waterfront.
- **Question:** What will happen in the team meetings during charrette week? **Response:** Team meetings are to give assignments for that given day, after assessing the work and the community participation activities of the day before.
- **Public Question:** Which nights will people be putting dots on boards? **Response:** It could happen during the public meetings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- **Question:** Have you looked at other cities that conducted a week long charrette? **Response:** Yes. In those cases, feedback was extremely positive with high energy.
- **Question:** What is the Advisory Group's role in the charrette? **Response:** First, please attend. Also, please help convey to the public what is expected. You can divide yourselves among the groups during the group exercises. You can help move things along in the group

exercises. Ensure all voices within a group are being heard. Offer your perspectives as residents and professionals. Share ideas that might not have been represented.

DRAFT OTN SAP UPDATE PROJECT ASSESSMENT (VISIONING TOOL) – Comments were solicited from the Advisory Group and the public on the draft principles (goals) and objectives for the various planning categories outlined in the draft Project Assessment (Visioning Tool). The comments are being documented below and incorporated, as necessary, into the draft Project Assessment.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the Planning, Design and land use Category

- **Comment:** Important to look at region-wide connections especially North/ South connections.
- **Public Comment:** Retail Strategy needs its own distinction and especially important to identify key elements of Place-making.
- **Public Comment:** If sustainability drives this plan, that will also drive up land dedicated to open space which will in turn drive up the FAR.
- **Comment:** Important to balance all aspects of the plan, not just land use, but transportation modes and others.
- **Comment:** We need the percentage of existing land use distribution. **Response:** The City is in the process of preparing it.
- **Comment:** If we include Gen-On, we need to have street continuity so that this development is not isolated.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the Transportation Category

- **Comment:** The sooner the railroad (Norfolk Southern) company gets on board, the better. There is a long span of the Mt. Vernon trail that runs along the tracks.
- **Comment:** Important to look at issues and opportunities. For example, we need to think about eliminating problems, such as traffic problems. We also need a balance in transportation modes, not just land use as said earlier.
- **Comment:** Will we also address parking? **Response:** Yes.
- **Question:** Who will be available on the Interdisciplinary team during the charrette?
Response: We will have staff representatives from each department, namely P&Z, Housing, Office of Historic Alexandria, Recreation Parks and Cultural Activities, TES/Planning,

TES/Office of Environmental Quality, TES/Transit, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and City Energy Manager.

- **Question:** I assume there will be re-zonings. **Response:** Re-zonings will not be part of the charrette. Most probably will come after the testing phase where we figure out a regulatory framework to support the vision that comes out of the charrette.
- **Question:** Will the bus barn site be re-zoned? **Response:** Potentially.
- **Comment:** Suggest adding a column for the NOTICe vision statement.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the Housing Category

- **Comment:** Incorporate community space within housing developments for after school activities and, in general, incorporate community space in new housing developments.
- **Question:** ARHA residents emphasize the need for the re-designing aspect as well, not just one-on-one replacement. Will we have input on that? **Response:** The plan will have design principles but not site specific. Architecture quality can get fairly specific such as how buildings relate to their neighbors.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability Category

- **Comment:** Future development sites will be looked at in the context of the full planning area, rather than singling them out.
- **Comment:** In the Environmental Action Plan, there are many strong targets for energy performance. For example, there is a goal for all buildings to be carbon neutral by 2030. Would like to see these strong objectives be on people's minds during the charrette/ while we draft the plan.
- **Comment:** There will be tension between property owners at the table and the rest of the group. We need to make clear that we are not trying to take control of their properties.
- **Comment:** Think about the arts/ Art League, maybe trace the original canal, thus bringing a historic aspect to infrastructure, or, promoting plants and wetlands and bringing the natural world into the environment.
- **Comment:** Is there an existing city ordinance for building green roofs? **Response:** This is largely left to negotiations between staff and developers. Environmental Policy Commission wants to revisit the City's Green Building Policy by utilizing OTN as a model.
- **Comment:** This provides an opportunity to go beyond LEED.

- **Comment:** Include potential issues by neighbors on environmental effects due to construction activities.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Activities Category

- **Comment:** Think about adding an objective that considers interior spaces for the aging population to exercise indoors.
- **Comment:** Principle should be: *Expand, Enhance and connect...*
- **Comment:** Important to identify all categories that need special accommodation such as for the aging community.
- **Comment:** Get in touch with the library system. Rethinking library spaces to not only be about books, but community space to get wireless connection, meeting spaces, coffee shops... etc.
- **Comment:** Use the streetscape as double use such as connections in addition to stormwater management.
- **Comment:** Cultural activities should be a stand-alone item. The cultural facility should be added as an additional line item.
- **Comment:** There is a relationship between transportation and open space such as walkways, bikeways and connections to environmental sustainability in terms of rain gardens.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the History Category

- None made.

Comments regarding principles (goals) and objectives in the Economic Development Category

- **Comment:** Consider economic reality as well. We have four commercial buildings converting to residential and this is what the market reality is saying which might be different than the balanced land use mix we are trying to achieve
- **Comment:** Maybe we should consider doing a small market study.
- **Public Comment:** Economy is dynamic while land use is static. There needs to be flexibility within the plan.
- **Public Comment:** Retail is underrated in land use and usually thrown as flex space in mixed use. We need to think ahead about how and where we want to cluster retail. Big boxes do little to energize the street. If we don't pay attention we could end up with a zoning plan and not a flexible/ dynamic plan.

- **Comment:** Big box works as a good anchor to establish a corridor street and allows the gathering of different uses to create an energized street.
- **Comment:** Both developments (Harris Teeter + Edens) bring the residents who provide purchasing power.
- **Comment:** We cannot make everything mixed use because retail gets dispersed.
- **Comment:** Encourage small antennas for better cell and wireless service. Consider broadband coverage.

CHARRETTE WEEK – ADVISORY GROUP ATTENDANCE

All Advisory Group Members are encouraged to participate during Charrette Week. A handout titled “[Fall 2015 OTN SAP Update Meetings and Events Schedule](#)” was distributed to members and to the public. It outlines each of the Charrette Public Meetings and Open Houses and describes the purpose of each.

The following Advisory Group Members indicated their intended involvement during Charrette Week as members of the Advisory Group Charrette Subcommittee *but* all members are welcome to participate in any activity during any time throughout the [Charrette Schedule](#).

Confirmation of Charrette Advisory Group Subcommittee Week of November 16 - 20

- Chair Maria Wasowski
- Member Engin Artemel
- Member Chip Carlin
- Member Kevin Harris
- Member Tom Soapes
- Member Jeff Strup
- Member Christa Watters

NOVEMBER 12, 2015 OTN SAP UPDATE COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

- Thursday, November 12, 2015
- 7-9:00 PM
- 44 Canal Center Plaza, 4th Floor
- Historical Exhibits
- Displays of Development Proposals
- Summary of Charrette Week
- Refreshments, compliments of MRE Properties

THANKS FOR SPONSORSHIPS OF OCTOBER 10, 2015 OTN SAP UPDATE COMMUNITY EVENT

- Metro Stage
- NOTICe
- Old Town North Community Partnership
- Old Town School for Dogs
- Local Fitness Establishments

Advisory Group – Meeting of November 9, 2015

- Maria Wasowski, Chair (Planning Commission and Transportation Commission)
- Steven Arabia (Property Owner Representative)
- Engin Artemel (Community Representative – At Large)
- Scott Barstow (Environmental Policy Commission)
- Anna Bentley (Community Representative – At Large)
- Chip Carlin (Board of Architectural Review – Old & Historic District)
- Elizabeth Chimento (Community Representative - At Large)
- Herbert J. (Herb) Cooper-Levy (Community Representative - At Large)
- Krista Di Iaconi, Property Owner Representative
- Austin Flajser (Property Owner Representative)
- Stephen Goodman (Community Representative – Homeowner Associations/At-Large)
- Carolyn Griffin (Community Representative – At Large)
- Kevin Harris (Community Representative – Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority Residents)
- Bruce M. Machanic (Business Representative)
- Carlos Mejias (Business Representative)
- Thomas F. Soapes (Community Representative - NOTICe)
- Daniel Straub (Urban Design Advisory Committee)
- Jeff Strup (Property Owner Representative)
- Christa Watters (Community Representative – Homeowner Associations/At-Large)