WS
6-26-01

Plan for Planning
2001 - 2005

Department of Planning and Zoning

June 8, 2001

Philip Sunderland - City Manager
Eileen Fogarty - Director of Planning and Zoning

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
PLAN FOR PLANNING: 2001 THROUGH 2005

INTRODUCTION

Few cities in the United States possess the attributes of the City of Alexandria: its history and historic resources; its vibrant downtown and waterfront; its healthy residential neighborhoods; its widely diverse citizenry; and its location adjacent to the nation's capital. The City is, indeed, fortunate. However, if these exciting and unique attributes are to be maintained, it is essential that the City play a more active role in defining and shaping its future.

These positive characteristics of Alexandria, along with the City's reputation as an attractive place to live, work and visit, have drawn a significant amount of new development on the remaining vacant land, and this pressure is likely to continue in the years ahead. In addition, there are several developed areas of the City where efforts to redevelop improved properties is increasing, and other developed areas where this redevelopment pressure can be expected to arrive in the near future.

These development and redevelopment pressures provide the City -- City Council, the Planning Commission and City staff -- and our citizenry both a wonderful opportunity and a significant challenge. The opportunity is to change the City's manner of dealing with land use development, moving from an essentially reactive mode to one that is considerably more "proactive" and that works to achieve established community goals and values.

In short, we need to define and implement a model of land use planning which will ensure that future development and redevelopment activities in Alexandria reflect community goals and values, and advance a vision of the City for the future. Importantly, for this model to succeed, it also needs to provide to those who develop or redevelop real property, and who do it particularly well, the degree of clarity and assurance that will encourage these individuals to invest in Alexandria. To do all of this, we will need the participation of all segments of the Alexandria community.

It is clear that today a variety of planning challenges now face the City. How we respond to them will affect, in large measure, whether the City will continue to grow and prosper while maintaining its fundamental and unique character. The City is ideally positioned to respond in a positive manner. We have a committed citizenry in both our residential and commercial communities, and a healthy and expanding local economy. These resources provide us with a solid capability and opportunity to actively shape our own future.

To do so, we must work to develop a set of shared expectations for the future, seeking what is the best for the City. This entails compromise and consensus among all interested parties. Perhaps most importantly, it means recognizing that the health of the City's residential neighborhoods and "quality of life" are directly linked to the health of the City's commercial areas, and that the attractiveness of the City to new commercial operations is directly linked to the quality of our residential neighborhoods. It is crucial that the City's residential and commercial communities

recognize and respect their mutual interdependence, and the critical role of this interdependence to the City's future.

This report outlines that steps that the Department of Planning and Zoning proposes to undertake to achieve this end.

WHERE THE CITY IS TODAY

Alexandria is composed of a mosaic of residential neighborhoods and commercial areas, and interconnecting corridors, all with distinctly different development/redevelopment pressures and land use planning needs. In broad terms, there are four categories of planning issues facing the City today:

- ***new development***: the improvement of vacant land in undeveloped areas of the City, such as Eisenhower Valley;
- ***redevelopment***: the evolution of improved properties in older neighborhoods of the City and along older corridors, such as in Upper Potomac West and the Braddock Road Metro area, along Jefferson Davis Highway and in the west end;
- ***intensification of uses***: the intensification of uses on small parcels of either residential or commercial land which is in excess of or incompatible with the surrounding scale and density of development; and
- ***changing nature of our industrial areas***: the transition to residential or office uses in existing industrial areas that threaten the small amount of remaining industrial land in the city. This change creates potential conflicts between industrial and residential uses.

New Development. Substantial development pressures are being applied to many of the City's undeveloped areas. This is nowhere better seen than in the eastern end of the Eisenhower Valley (the area bounded by Telegraph Road, Duke Street, Holland Lane, and the Beltway) where approximately 14 million square feet of development either are approved, are in the land use approval process or could be developed. While quality development standards are in effect for the "Carlyle" portion of this area, the City unfortunately does not have in place the design, transportation and other standards needed to guide development in the remainder of the area. As a result, the City has recently begun working to establish a set of standards that will provide the direction needed to ensure that development in this part of the eastern Eisenhower area will be appropriate to Alexandria. In other new development areas in the City, such as Potomac Yard, an approved CDD Concept Plan is in place that contains adequate standards to guide the area's new construction and investment.

Redevelopment. In contrast to these new development areas where there is substantial private market interest, some of the City's older neighborhoods and corridors, which are in need of revitalization, may require City action to encourage and direct private market investment. Still

other established communities face significant redevelopment pressures which need to be managed to ensure that the existing neighborhoods are not transformed in undesirable ways.

The challenge for the City in the established neighborhoods is very different than in the new development areas. In redevelopment areas, planning activities must be undertaken in concert with the neighborhood to identify the needs and desires of the existing community, to determine a preferred future for the area and to create implementation strategies and actions (public and private) to spur and/or guide new investment. This planning effort may identify City intervention in the form of incentives, enhanced zoning, or public infrastructure investment to stimulate private investment that is responsive to neighborhood concerns. For example, in the Upper Potomac West area and the Braddock Road Metro area, City assistance may be required to facilitate, among other issues, solutions with regard to parking needs and special zoning initiatives.

Intensification. Recently, the City has received proposals for the intensification of commercial and residential uses -- e.*g*., proposed uses for relatively small parcels that are, in some cases, in excess of the scale and density of the surrounding community. Many of these proposals reflect the natural progression of healthy commercial growth; however, where the proposed new development is adjacent to residential development, there is potential to impact the quality of life in the City's traditional neighborhoods. One example would be residential in-fill development where significant up-zoning is requested. Creative methods must be found to accommodate new residential development and healthy commercial growth in these in-fill areas, while preserving the quality of Alexandria's established neighborhoods.

Industrial Uses. Finally, some of the City's industrial areas are in transition in response to the growing and changing economy and the scarcity of land within the Beltway. In some instances, new residential developments are occurring adjacent to existing industrial uses, which creates potential conflicts with respect to buffers, landscaping, noise and lighting. In other instances, there are market pressures to transform existing industrial buildings into new commercial office uses. Still other industrial areas are redeveloping with marginal interim uses. The City must develop the zoning flexibility that is necessary to address these transitional areas.

It is important to emphasize that areas affected by the above outlined planning issues are, when compared to the City as a whole, relatively few and small, and stand out against a backdrop of the remainder of the City, which is generally built out, stable and not expected to change in the foreseeable future. However, changes in these areas have the potential to dramatically affect the character of the City as a whole. It is critical that land use planning resources and efforts be focused where they are most needed -- on the particular areas of the City which are today, or will be in the near future, "at risk" from either too much private investment and development interest, or too little. Therefore, we are recommending a highly focused and concentrated planning activity during the next five years targeted to these key areas.

Conversely, it is not appropriate at this time to dedicate the City's resources to initiating a comprehensive review of the City's entire Master Plan. There are two principal reasons to undertake a comprehensive effort and both objectives can be better met through the proposed focused approach. First, a Master Plan review considers overall land use issues that impact the locality as a whole, and provides the opportunity to affirm existing, or set new, policies as guidance for later decision-making. The City has already begun this process for a number of citywide issues, including a recreational needs assessment, an open space study, a transportation policy plan and program, and an affordable housing study. In addition, as described below, the Planning Department proposes to study several critical land use and development issues with citywide application during the next few years.

Second, a comprehensive review of a locality's master plan identifies certain geographic areas where land use changes are expected or desired to occur, sets out the community's vision for the future of those areas, and identifies ways to achieve that vision. In Alexandria, the geographic areas where changes are either occurring or are inevitable are the focus of the City's proposed planning efforts. Given the current economic pressures for change, the City is faced with an urgency to channel its energies and resources now toward the neighborhoods and corridors that are most in need.

We want to recognize the strength of the existing Master Plan document and the effort that led to its adoption. Questions about the effectiveness of that document in guiding development in the City stem, we believe, not from the document itself, but from a lack of the necessary tools to implement the goals and objectives it sets out. The proposal outlined below gives priority to establishing much needed development standards and tools for guiding and shaping new development to ensure its quality and compatibility throughout the City. These tools will provide the City with the ability to manage development during the next few years, while providing much needed clarity to applicants.

Under the strategic approach being proposed, the results of staff's planning efforts will be incorporated into the existing Master Plan as amendments and provide the foundation for the forthcoming state required five year review of the City's Master Plan, scheduled to begin in the 2003 time frame.

SETTING PLANNING PRIORITIES: HOW TO FOCUS THE CITY'S RESOURCES

As indicated above, the City has many land use planning needs, and some are more urgent than others. We need, therefore, to focus our limited resources in a way that best addresses the most critical concerns. It is important that we control and direct growth in our new development areas. However, we must also move to address those older, developed areas of the City and related corridors that have redevelopment potential, so as to strengthen the areas themselves and their adjacent neighborhoods. And it certainly is important that we address the developed areas in the

City that, in the near term, are likely to face increasing redevelopment pressures which, if left unchecked, may transform the areas in ways we do not wish.

In our view, the geographical areas described below should be the focus of individual community planning efforts to be carried out over the five years. The areas are set out in order of priority (i.e., in the order we propose to undertake planning efforts). We also believe that, during that same time frame, we need to undertake a number of studies that relate to Citywide land use and zoning issues, and they too are described below.

A. GEOGRAPHIC STUDY AREAS

1. Eisenhower Valley East (Telegraph Road to Holland Lane)

The City is experiencing substantial growth pressures in the eastern portion of the Eisenhower Valley with seven million square feet of development either completed or approved. Another five to seven million square feet of development, much of which is being stimulated by the anticipated arrival in 2004 of the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), is allowed to be built under current zoning. The scale and breadth of the development in this area represents the strong economic attraction of the City, as well as the confluence of the local economy, financial resources and opportunity. As already noted, in the part of this area that lies outside of the Carlyle development, adequate design, streetscape, or other development standards are not currently in place to guide development.

The Planning Department has initiated a planning effort which incorporates several components to ensure that this part of Eisenhower Valley contributes to the logical development pattern established in Old Town and Carlyle. From an urban design perspective, we will establish design, streetscape and massing and scale criteria to guide new development in a way that is complementary to and compatible with Carlyle. The Department is working with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services to assess the potential traffic impacts and requirements for the area, as well as any potential impacts on adjoining areas. The City will also analyze whether future development in this area can and should occur on the very large land parcels or tracts that now exist, or whether a new street grid, with associated circulation patterns and access to the Eisenhower Avenue Metro station, should be designed.

It is important that, before further development in this area proceeds, guidelines and design requirements be established for street patterns, block sizes, open spaces, landscaping requirements, parking structures, and buildings. While development of these guidelines will require significant resources, in light of mounting market pressures, it must take place now. Serving as the basis to guide

new development in that area, these guidelines will clearly define the City's expectations while providing direction to property owners in Eisenhower Valley.

2. **Upper Potomac West (Area Bounded by Glebe Road, Four Mile Run and Route 1)**

The Planning Department has completed the first phase of a successful planning process with the Upper Potomac West Task Force. This joint effort between the City and the task force emphasized redevelopment of the Safeway/Datatel sites and the adjacent Mt. Vernon Avenue and the East Reed Avenue area. The assessment of these areas, coupled with community objectives and approaches for revitalization which reflect a market analysis, will be presented to City Council on June 26, 2001. With City Council concurrence, staff will develop land use documents and strategies identified by the Upper Potomac West Task Force to spark the redevelopment of the Safeway site and guide redevelopment in the area along (and especially on the north side of) East Reed Avenue.

It is anticipated that the entire Upper Potomac West area, particularly to the west of Mt. Vernon Avenue, will be facing increased pressure for redevelopment. The planning effort needs to be expanded to identify a community vision for the entire area, which channels economic development while protecting the existing neighborhoods.

3. **Duke Street East (Telegraph Road to South Quaker Lane)**

Duke Street is one of the principal travel arteries for visitors to Old Town, and handles significant commuter traffic every day. Presently it offers an unappealing entryway to the eastern end of the City, as characterized by small sites, with numerous curb cuts, mixed commercial uses, little or no landscaping and an overabundance of signs. In response to requests from City Council, a corridor study will be undertaken for this area in order to establish an attractive and healthy commercial gateway. The study will examine land uses and appropriate densities, opportunities for parcel consolidation, incentive zoning, consolidated access, coordinated landscaping and building setbacks, and the addition of public and private infrastructure to create a strong streetscape identity along this important corridor.

4. **Mount Vernon Avenue (East Nelson to Hume Avenue)**

As Mt. Vernon Avenue begins to redevelop, it is critical to define the amount, scale and mass of development that can be accommodated while maintaining both the existing neighborhood and commercial character that have made this area an attractive place to live and work. Since the provision of parking will be a

determining factor, a planning effort would first assess alternative development scenarios with a detailed parking analysis, the potential for shared parking and approaches toward providing additional parking for the corridor. The study would also include a design analysis for treatment of building mass and facades, transitional buffers between commercial and residential uses and building heights and setbacks which would maintain the uniquely desirable scale of Mt. Vernon Avenue today.

5. **Eisenhower Avenue West (from Telegraph Road to South Van Dorn Street)**

With its proximity to the Beltway and the Van Dorn Metro Station, this part of the Eisenhower Valley, especially the area west of Claremont, will be subject to redevelopment pressure for high density office and mixed use. Given the existing zoning coupled with the large parcel sizes, many of the issues facing the eastern Eisenhower Valley regarding internal circulation, access, and coordination between developing sites, are potential challenges for this area as well. Moreover, development in this part of the valley will certainly be affected by Council's decision on a Eisenhower-to-Duke connector roadway. To ensure a coordinated development approach in the part of Eisenhower Avenue, the planning effort should identify both long range and interim goals, and incorporate a transportation analysis of the area. Based on the analysis, guidelines that will encourage a functional, coordinated and attractive pattern of new development can be prepared for the western portion of Eisenhower Valley.

6. **Braddock Road Metro Station Area**

Although the Braddock Road Metro Station area is well situated, it has seen relatively little redevelopment activity recently, particularly given the pressures many of the other areas in the City are experiencing. To assist the community in identifying a realistic vision for this area and to identify those incentives that may be appropriate, a market assessment would be one of the first steps in this planning process. The market findings would be coupled with massing and scale scenarios to identify alternative development approaches for this area that are economically viable, transit oriented and compatible with the adjacent community.

7. **Route 1 (Monroe Avenue to East Reed Avenue, West Side)**

With the development of Potomac Yards as the investment stimulus, it is anticipated that the area along Route 1 will see significant redevelopment in the next several years. If the City and the community wish to shape the future direction for this area, it will be necessary to plan for the area now. Such an effort would determine uses that are both complementary and compatible with the

existing and newly developing neighborhoods, as well as address options for parking for future commercial activity along the corridor. An opportunity exists to enhance this entire corridor by consolidating many of the small industrial sites as well as providing a transition to the adjacent residential uses.

8. South Pickett Street

The South Pickett area, especially between Edsall Road and South Van Dorn Street, is expected to redevelop over the next several years. This historically commercial and industrial area is now close to new residential neighborhoods. Given the limited transitional space adjacent to the residential uses, the potential exists for greater conflicts as the commercial area intensifies. To provide for more orderly and compatible redevelopment along South Pickett, an analysis of existing and potential uses, parcelization, transitional buffers, consolidated access and streetscape improvements should be prepared. The study would review the Citywide policy issue regarding the future use of industrial areas, and should identify approaches for minimizing the conflicts between residential uses and industrial/service uses.

B. CITYWIDE PLANNING ISSUES

In addition to these geographic neighborhoods and corridors which require specific planning efforts and individual plans, there are a series of very significant cross-cutting issues affecting new development, redevelopment as well as existing stable areas throughout the City. Many of these land use and development issues must be given priority as they determine the City's ability to attract desired uses and direct and manage its development. These issues are described below.

1. Development Standards and Tools

It is critical that the City possess the ability to both guide and shape development during the next few years to ensure conformance with adopted plans and policies. The most efficient and effective way to achieve this is through the use of new planning "tools." Planning tools (e.g., specific guidelines and standards, performance zones and incentives) play a vital role in the channeling and management of development, and for that reason constitute one of the highest priorities of the Planning Department. These "tools" guide and set the standards for development, while providing clarity to applicants. These tools may include:

- **Development Standards** that establish appropriate uses, open space, siting, heights and setbacks, massing and building articulation;
- **Design Guidelines** that guide the design character and appearance of buildings;

- ***Performance Zones*** that provide specific protection to and ensure compatibility with adjacent properties through both incentives and standards; and,
- ***Incentives*** that motivate or encourage the applicant to develop in a manner that is in the public interest.

2. **Infill Development**

The question of size, scale and mass of new buildings and building additions inserted within an existing physical context is a major issue in almost all of the City's neighborhoods. The Planning Department will be looking to establish standards to ensure compatibility of the new construction with the neighborhood in which it is occurring.

3. **Open Space Standards**

The committee currently assessing the City's open space is reviewing zoning ordinance requirements for open space to determine if we can enhance the City's ability to have new development projects include valuable open space.

4. **Incentives for Target Areas**

The City needs the ability to attract quality investment into designated neighborhoods and corridors. Here, we will be reviewing the applicability of a variety of procedures designed to encourage new investment into areas the City has targeted for such investment. .

5. **Parking Standards**

The Department will be taking a comprehensive look at the current City zoning requirements for parking to address issues of how best to achieve adequate parking for specific uses.

6. **Landscape Guidelines**

The Department will be reviewing existing landscaping requirements to ensure that new projects provide the type of buffering, transition and aesthetic appeal appropriate to enhance the City.

7. **Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Standards**

Many of the City's projects are submitted under Special Use Permit procedures and result in densities above the applicable zone's "permitted" or "my right"

FAR. This issue and the FAR definition will be reviewed in order to devise an approach that results in greater clarity and certainty for both the development community and the residential community.

8. **Encroachment into Residential Areas**

One of the most pressing and difficult issues to address is that of the intensification of existing commercial uses, expanding into or impacting adjacent residential areas. Criteria to guide the expansion of commercial development should be established and applied on a case-by-case basis.

9. **Gateways and Streetscape Guidelines**

Design guidelines need to be established for the City's gateways and major streets to create attractive, coordinated entrances which best reflect their settings. The Department has begun this effort with the Washington Street Streetscape Plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS: HOW WE WILL PLAN

The Department's Mission Statement creates the framework for the planning process:

> *To create a common vision for the future of Alexandria through a proactive community planning effort that incorporates involvement of all stakeholders in a consensus building process and assures that all new development reflects the community's vision.*

The planning process seeks consensus on a clear vision for the future of the planning area among the community, property owners/developers and the City. The planning effort is typically led by an experienced planner, supported by an urban designer/architect, a real estate economist, traffic engineers and a civil engineer. The process is based on conducting a series of facilitated workshops with the community to identify goals and objectives, exchange information, obtain feedback on alternative proposals and reach consensus on a plan, which can then be developed into a formal amendment to the City's Master Plan and presented to the Planning Commission and City Council.

In general, the planning process will have four basic components (Appendix A is a flowchart of the planning process from the Safeway/Datatel planning effort):

- Data Gathering and Analysis
- Alternatives Visions Analysis
- Concept Plan
- Plan Documentation

The Data Gathering and Analysis Phase

The initial planning phase focuses on consolidating available pertinent information on the planning area. The required data typically include: existing entitlements (Master Plan and zoning), existing and anticipated use of the land; environmental, historic and cultural resources; traffic baselines and vehicle access alternatives; economic and market conditions; demographic information; geotechnical information e.g. soils, flood, and drainage issues; and infrastructure availability and public service availability. In Alexandria, the initial analysis needs to place special emphasis on the economic and market analysis, and use it as a "reality test" to determine whether both citizen and property owners' desires for development are grounded in economic feasibility. When all data is compiled, the base information is evaluated and documented in an easily understood format for use at an initial workshop.

During this phase, key stakeholders from both residential and commercial communities are identified, interviewed and asked to describe critical community issues and concerns, along with feasible planning opportunities.

After compiling and preparing a synopsis of the data, the planning team conducts one or more "workshops" in the community. The purpose of the workshop is to confirm the base information and data, to brainstorm on alternative visions for the planning area in question, and generally to identify the "opportunities" for, as well as any major "constraints" on, achieving the visions. The alternative visions identified at the workshop are explored by the planning team and the community during the next phase of the work.

The Alternative Visions Phase

Based upon the input received at the first workshops, the planning team will prepare a series of sketch concepts which focus on the land uses, relative density of development, open space, circulation alternatives and design character. The alternative visions are documented and a general evaluation prepared based upon the community's goals and objectives and on economic realities.

With this information, the team will conduct a second workshop session to review the alternatives and the evaluations and to identify a preferred alternative. An integral part of the alternative visions will be the development of coordinated and phased implementation strategies that may include public investment and action strategies. A crucial part of this strategy will be to establish a public/private partnership between the City and the business community to actively recruit desired businesses which support the community vision for the area.

The Concept Plan Phase

Based upon the second workshop, the team will refine the selected alternative vision and create a Concept Plan which develops the overall preferred community vision for the neighborhood. The

Concept Plan will typically include (1) illustrated sketches of the major concepts, (2) prioritization of public infrastructure improvements, and (3) description of the land use and zoning tasks that need to be accomplished to implement the plan.

The Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy are then reviewed with the community during a third workshop for endorsement and refinement. Additional sessions are held if necessary. The community's comments are documented and become part of the record for presentation to the Planning Commission and City Council for concept approval. Based upon the direction received from the Planning Commission and City Council, the Department prepares a draft plan that documents the vision, the land use, circulation, open space, and specific design elements.

The Plan Documentation Phase

The plan document memorializes the planning process, provides guidance for the future, and identifies the series of steps to be taken, including changes to zoning, to make the plan a reality. The draft plan will proceed through a formal public review by the Planning Commission and City Council prior to adoption.

In Alexandria, the results of the proposed planning efforts will likely be a plan document that is adopted as an amendment or addition to the appropriate small area plan. This approach builds on the City's existing master plan structure, while refining it to reflect the community's current vision.

CHANGING THE PROCESS FOR REVIEWING AND DECIDING DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

A strong tradition of planning leads to a smooth development approval process because, with the City and community's vision for an area memorialized in an adopted plan, landowners, developers and citizens know what future development to expect. Without area plans, permit processing takes place in reaction to individual applications. Lacking a broader context for the proposal, this process frequently leads to acrimony, disappointment and conflict.

The department is today committed to solving neighborhood land use issues by having plans in place in those areas of most urgent need, prior to development applications. It is also committed to improving the delivery of its mandated functions. Currently, the Department is challenged to meet the everyday legal, regulatory and enforcement activities. Each month, the Department staff manages eight to nine Board and Commission meetings, prepares 80 to 100 agenda reports, manages and coordinates a wide range of task forces and committees and, on average, issues 450 permits. The development applications in the Year 2000 nearly doubled during the prior two-year period from 1998.

To improve the delivery of its mandated functions, particularly those relating to development review, the Department is proposing to get involved earlier, in the conceptual design process,

with the applicants, to obtain community and neighborhood input earlier in the process, and, to reduce the time for the "back-end" processing. The development community is entitled to clarity and certainty in the application process. The applicant needs to know, early on, if there are issues that need to be addressed and should receive a coordinated agency response to its applications.

Timely community input is equally important. New and better methods need to be devised to inform the public of pending applications and an organized way for the community to provide comments before applications are sent forward formally to the Planning Commission should be established. This improvement is among the Department's highest priorities because a well informed, involved community is part of the necessary consensus building partnership we hope to achieve.

The Planning Department intends to:

- Work with applicants at the conceptual stage to ensure that required modifications are identified at a point where changes are more feasible and less costly;
- Establish a single point of contact for the applicant;
- Establish a team approach to development review;
- Ensure interdepartmental coordination;
- Obtain community input early in the formal application process;
- Provide enhanced analysis for decision makers; and
- Streamline the post application review process.

To assist the Department in moving forward on improving the development review process, outside expertise has been brought in to evaluate our procedures and recommend how to best structure the process. Consultants are currently interviewing City staff and will be seeking input from representatives of the development community and citizens as they identify approaches to improve this function at the front end and simplify the review period at the back end.

Additionally, the Department recognizes that there is a clear distinction between larger and smaller development applications and the potential impacts and the degree of required review. The approach on smaller applications will be to provide assistance and facilitation through the system. Particularly, for individuals, small business owners and property owners, we intend to ensure that there is a single source for required information. The Department is looking to improve our general customer service culture, particularly the counter functions which serve the general public.

Finally, the Department sees economic development issues as part of its effort to shape development and redevelopment activities in the City. It therefore wants to be part of a proactive partnership among the City, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, and other business groups (e.g., the Eisenhower Partnership, the King Street Metropolitan Enterprise Team and the Potomac West Business Association) in order to identify

the types of investment desired in different parts of the City, and work collaboratively to direct investment there. The planning studies and initiatives discussed above will result in establishing a firm community/land use/market basis for a carefully crafted economic development program geared to individual neighborhood needs, providing a blueprint for future investment in the City.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Planning and Zoning has already begun to change the business of planning in several significant ways.

In terms of the proposed community planning efforts, the Department has begun working with the residents and the development community in Upper Potomac West, confirming agreed upon goals, testing them against market reality, and developing alternative scenarios for investment. With the City Council's concurrence and the assurance of adequate resources, the Department will undertake the proposed series of neighborhood planning efforts described above.

The Department is working on improving the development process for both applicants and the community. We have emphasized working with the development community at a conceptual stage to ensure that projects reflect the quality and characteristics of Alexandria. We are seeking earlier input from citizens and the community in order to bring issues forward prior to public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

And finally, we understand that the Department, during its current period of transition, must exert new and more creative approaches to development projects. It must improve the development process itself. It must empower its staff, provide growth opportunities within, and enhance its customer service. And it must reach out to the community -- residents, workers, business leaders and groups, and elected representatives -- in a public and open way, calling on their talents and energy to help create and implement a shared vision of our future.

The Department has set a large agenda for itself but, with the assistance of Council, it can achieve its goals.

Attachment

EXAMPLE OF PLANNING PROCESS
Safeway/Datatel Development Evaluation Phase

Data Gathering and Analysis

- Compile/Review the work completed to date
  - General Plan/Zoning
  - Surrounding development
  - Physical conditions
  - Access
  - circulation
  - infrastructure
  - concepts
- Examine the contextual, market and economic forces that will affect the site development

Workshop No. 1

- Identify/Confirm goals & objectives for the site
- Confirm understanding of the Base Data
- Review the initial analysis of the contextual, market and economic factors that will impact the development of the site
- Summarize with the TF the apparent "opportunities and constraints"
- Identify the challenges to be addressed in the alternatives analysis
- Identify the alternatives to be developed in the next phase

Alternatives Analysis

Alternative 1
- Land Uses
- Development intensity
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Implementation Strategy
- Development Evaluation

Alternative 2
- Land Uses
- Development intensity
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Implementation Strategy
- Development Evaluation

Alternative 3
- Land Uses
- Development intensity
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Implementation Strategy
- Development Evaluation

Workshop No. 2

- Review the alternatives
- Review the implementation strategies for each alternative
- Review the development analysis of each alternative
- Select the preferred alternative that best meets:
  - Community Goals & Objectives
  - Implementation Strategies
  - Development feasibility
  - Support neighborhood revitalization

Concept Plan

- Refine the preferred alternative
  - Land Uses
  - Development intensity
  - Circulation
  - Open Space
  - Implementation Strategy
    - Public/Private Actions
- Document Concept Plan

Workshop No. 3

- Review the Concept Plan
- Identify next steps for presentation to the Council

Plan Documentation

-Workshop with Council

-Amendment To Plan

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
Department of Planning & Zoning