



## Alexandria West Community Planning

Meeting 7 Questions and Answers – Online

Monday, December 11, 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](http://alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest)**

**Green Questions were answered live, black questions were answered after the meeting.**

### Urban Design/Land Use

- 1. The streets are not the same in the images. Was that intentional? The first one used N. Beauregard but the second one did not.**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* It was intentional that the streets were not the same. This was really intended to show that there are different connections and different routes. As we think about where streets end up in the Plan, it is incumbent upon all of us to design the character of the new streets as well as potential changes to some of the existing ones. This was intended to show different options.

- 2. When will the construction of the 150-foot buildings begin in the Clyde's parking lot?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* A couple things to point out, the area shows a combination of two things: 1) the existing Blake building at 100-ft and, 2) a combination of 85-ft, and 100-ft farther south as we get away from the lower scale, residential neighborhoods.

This is different than the existing approval. Today, the existing approval goes over 100-ft. We did listen to community comments about the concern of height and importance of scale, and importance of how the existing multifamily building relates to the existing townhouses. We are proposing to lower that height below what is permitted today. In terms of time, given the scale of property, it's probably 10+ years as we think about overall redevelopment. Some community members may know that there was a building discussed just south of The Blake. What we are hoping through this process is to establish a broad framework agreement like open space and parks, height, etc. Based on that, there could be more discussion about the individual buildings.

- 3. Have you heard from any developers with any interest in developing existing Condominium communities?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* The short answer is no. Now, that is not to say there is not a market for condominiums. There is a market for townhouses and given the timeframe in what we are calling the Focus Area, there will be potential for rental and for-sale in the next 10 to 20 years.

- 4. Hi! I joined as you were discussing building heights, can you clarify the comment around the Stonegate community?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* This is a technical piece. The Zoning Ordinance allows building heights up to 150-ft. The community that is constructed today is roughly 45-ft. What we are



proposing to do with this revision is to have it reflect the community that exists today and not the height that was planned in 1992.

**5. For Jeff, there looks to be redevelopment of the Coca-Cola plant. Have they indicated that they would be leaving?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* The short answer is no. We have talked to them at a high level if they have future or immediate plans. They have not indicated to us that there are short-term options. I will say as we think about this area in the next 10-20 years that we create a vision and this is our opportunity to do so. We are also proposing a new public park located in that area which we talked to you about under open space.

**6. Gloria's is a great spot for our neighborhood for lunch, coffees, etc. What new retail or restaurants will we have to walk to?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* We do not have the retail locations shown in this graphic (a link to the map is [here](#)). One of the things we are proposing is Retail Focus Areas. For example, in Southern Towers, around the community college, at King and Beauregard, and around the existing retail in Morgan Properties. Two things we heard from the community are: 1) have more services and 2) keep some of the services and the affordability of services in the future.

Two ways that we are proposing to do so is: 1) requiring retail in certain areas and 2) also having flexibility that if developers come in with retail that it be considered as part of the development review process that would go before the Planning Commission and City Council. We believe having neighborhood serving uses in this community is important for livability, sustainability, transportation, and a lot of other goals we talked to you about.

**7. Does the 150' height on the SE corner of Mark Center Dr and Beauregard ... does that just reflect the buildings that are there today, or is that more of a look-ahead to higher buildings? Could those heights slide further south one block to get a tad further away from the Seminary Heights townhouses?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* No, it is a fair question – let us look at that. This is being evaluated by the City.

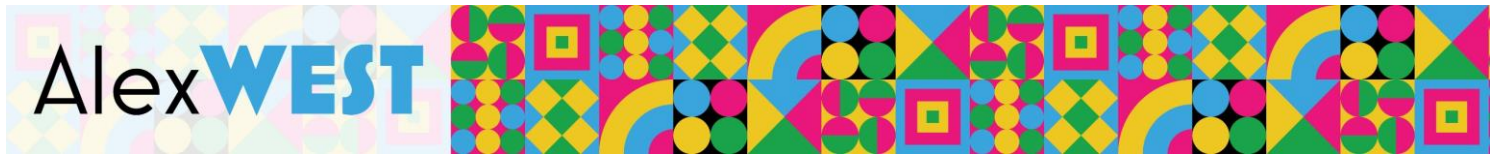
**8. Would the 45 feet listed on the building scale proposed slide within Area 2 be the height for the new SAP?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* Yes, all the heights reflected in this draft are the intent of this Plan.

**9. Given the increased height planning, is there some overall range of the number of new units/homes and thus residents that are also anticipated?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* We are still early in the process. We are still finalizing the total number of units and expected market adsorption of what could be developed with existing zoning and what is being proposed by the plan.

**10. What is holding up the construction of Upland Park development?**



*Live answered by Maya Contreras.* We have been in coordination with the owners at Upland Park and they are still within their development approval window. The market in terms of construction costs and materials has been all over the place. The property owners fully intend on redeveloping and don't have a start date currently. We are continuing to reach out to them and narrow that down and we hope to have more details in early 2024.

**11. I heard someone say 10 years out for building - was that for all construction? And if not, where is the next/first location you expect construction to begin?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* In 10 years, it will be full buildout of multiple buildings on that site. In terms of new buildings, we do not have any specific proposals. Probably the most specific is the parcel south of The Blake. I'm not aware of any additional specific proposals.

**12. Is there anything in the recent passing of Zoning for Housing that would overrule the proposed heights shown for SF and townhouse neighborhoods?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* No, what we are hoping to do is to be consistent with what was recently approved by the City Council. The provisions of Zoning for Housing would apply here as well as throughout the rest of the City.

**13. Where in the planning area would you anticipate the RMF zone being used? Is most of the area considered medium or high residential density, so could the RMF zone be used as outlined in the Zoning for Housing legislation?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* RMF is a zone and tool discussed in Zoning for Housing that requires a significant amount of lower Area Median Income (AMI) affordable housing units and as an incentive to do that, there is additional density. In AlexWest, it is safe to say that RMF can be used in the Focus Area. There are some limitations as discussed during Zoning for Housing. It requires City, State or Federal funding due to the level of affordability.

**14. I heard some encouraging words this evening about heights. What can you say in the design context about setback and preservation of the tree nature of so much of the Beaugard corridor?**

*Written response by Planning & Zoning staff.* The AlexWest plan is contemplating the following: having a generous setback on Beaugard, planting of a double row of trees, encouraging tree retention where feasible and providing a higher tree canopy cover than is required by the city's Landscape Guidelines.

## Infrastructure

**1. Can they make sure that the fire station isn't located on Beaugard Street. We already get enough noise from the daily helicopters.**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* There is a location on Beaugard and it's intended to be one of our urban scale models. It is where the land is required to be dedicated currently. We can look at noise and other things but that is the location required by Morgan Properties.



- 2. In October, Mr. Moritz told us at a public meeting that 7500 new housing units were needed on the Beauregard Corridor. You just said no new additional sewage is needed. This is a real disconnect. Can you explain?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* I can speak to our analysis for the sewer capacity. We work with Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) staff and what we do is look at long-term planning for sewer capacity. T&ES staff has a very robust process and model. As part of this process, we looked at what exists today and what would exist in the future. It's all sorts of things including efficiency of buildings, new development, and we consider future planning citywide. It is something we have looked at carefully, and there is capacity at AlexRenew and Arlington to accommodate new development.

There is a note on Slide 22. New development might be required to make improvements to the conveyance system. If there are new pipes or new recommendations as part of new development, it is typical in our development review process.

- 3. Are there any plans to renovate and expand the existing schools? My wife was a teacher at John Adams and she told me that all of the teachers complained about the overcrowding.**

*Live answered by Carrie Beach.* Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) does have some facility modernizations planned in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in the next ten years. A link with more information is found [here](#).

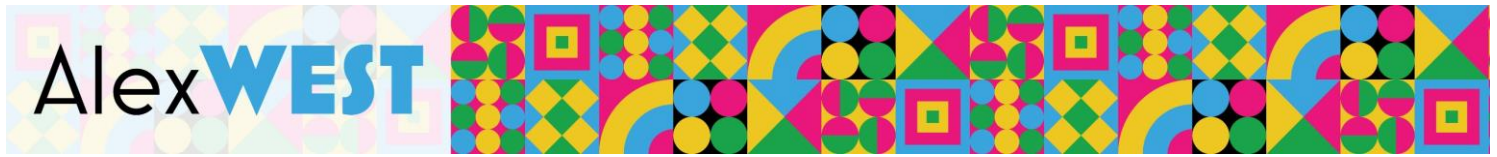
- 4. Isn't AlexRenew currently charging condo associations for sewer upgrades? Is this for upgrades that have already been done or upcoming? I know my condo association started paying extra fees.**

*Live answered by Erin Bevis-Carver.* AlexRenew has been raising wastewater treatment charges, but that is not for future additional capacity. That is because they are constructing the River Renew project. Those increases that you've been seeing on the sewer bill have been to pay specifically for that project.

Regarding treatment plant capacity, we do know that we need additional treatment capacity in both AlexWest and citywide but not until after 2040.

- 5. How is the impact of the educational buildings within the city incorporated into the regulations of the city's design framework and how is this planned to be done?**

*Live answered by Cory Banacka.* The intent is really trying to understand how City regulations affect what sort of planning is done with our educational facilities. It is worth noting that ACPS does coordinate with the City on all our different projects. They are held to the same standards as other development projects. As to the specifics of what sort of criteria they look at, it varies based on direction from ACPS staff and the School Board. We are more than happy to share more information upon request.



## Community Health

- 1. Where do the faith community resources get incorporated into the planning process and how are they invited to participate in the overall quality of community health and planning?**

*Live answered by Christian Brandt.* The faith community has been involved in our community outreach and engagement effort. We had a mini grant program through Virginia Housing. One of the faith communities was Landmark Church. Additionally, we worked with other organizations like the Church of the Resurrection. The faith community has been part of the conversation directly connected to community health resources and also more generally.

## Housing Affordability

- 1. With the options of affordable housing, which I do support, but have questions about the options that pertain to the buildings and the site. Would it be possible to have a session that can describe what those specific options would look like in a building and/or site if implemented. If more than one of these options can be used on a site and/or building, can those options also be described.**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* One of the things we need to do is provide a fact sheet. We are open to meeting with you to talk about this. What we are proposing, with any additional development that is provided in the Focus Area, we are recommending 10% provided as affordable housing. As we are thinking about the overall heights shown, that is being built into this assumption of heights. Also, the piece we started is the design conversation. The final design, height, setback, and all those the things must go through a design review process and that is going to involve the community.

*Additional written response by Office of Housing.* Committed affordable housing can be incorporated in the plan area in different ways. For example, affordable units can be integrated into a market-rate project if the project requests additional density; in addition, affordable units could be constructed and/or preserved through a range of public-private-nonprofit partnerships and co-located with potential future city facilities. Recent examples of affordable housing in the Alexandria West area include Saint James Plaza, The Spire, The Nexus, and Parkstone, as well as affordable set-aside units at the Blake.

- 2. What areas are being considered for “infill” housing?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* We shared a couple months ago as an overall strategy to really focus on non-displacement was to think about existing commercial areas and parking lots. The Focus Area (outlined in pink) is generally areas where there is existing surface parking and where we anticipate most of the redevelopment to happen. We talked about the Coca-Cola facility, and the retail center at King and Beauregard.

There is an area we are calling Area 2 (not outlined) where a property owner could come in and request more density. It's not an area we are actively incentivizing. We are saying that a lot of the existing neighborhoods would comply with existing zoning policies.



## Transportation

- 1. Traffic along Seminary Road from George Mason to I 395 is already very congested. How will streets / traffic be handled when all of the planned buildings are completed and thousands more people with cars live so close to Seminary Rd?**

*Written response by Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) staff.* The City does not anticipate that every new resident in AlexWest will own a personal vehicle. For many people, car ownership is financially unfeasible and thus do not own one. Most people in Alexandria, including in AlexWest, live within a 15-min walk of a frequent bus route – which makes living a car-free/car-lite lifestyle possible. Also, since the re-imagining of the DASH Network, and the fact that the bus itself is free, the City has seen exponential growth in ridership – which confirms that when you make transit convenient and useful, people will use it.

Through this effort, we are conducting a traffic analysis to determine the impacts to the transportation network that land use changes and potential residential growth would have. We have already analyzed existing conditions and future conditions assuming the projections from the current Small Area Plan land use. We are continuing our evaluation to determine various amounts of growth would have and will share that information to the public once it is available.

The City's Transportation Engineering Division has evaluated potential improvements to the Seminary Road and N Beauregard intersection. These improvements would not only help facilitate efficient travel, but also provide a safer environment for all users. The study will be complete in Spring 2024 and we will share the results of the study with the community at that time.

Additionally, the City has continued to work with the community that surround the segment of Seminary Road, between I-395 and George Mason Drive to improve the safety along the street and encourage safe travels and slower speeds. We have committed to analyze this segment further to determine if additional measures are feasible.

- 2. In the building scale map, can you point out route 7 or another identifier?**

*Live answered by Carrie Beach.*

- 3. EMAILED QUESTION: The presentation contemplates the development of buildings of varying heights, but there is no mention of population impacts or levels of service for vehicular traffic. Can the presenters address what those impacts in their proposed ideas? The combination of increased vehicular traffic and lower traffic speeds recently imposed seems like an impending burden on moving efficiently through the Beauregard corridor.**

*Written response by Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) staff.* The City is actively engaged in numerous transportation projects in the AlexWest Plan Area. While traffic volumes are anticipated to increase in the short-term, these projects (the West End Transit Way + the Seminary/Beauregard interchange re-design) will fundamentally transform how people move through AlexWest once fully realized.



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- 4. We have filed requests through the City's communications systems to fix street lighting that is compromising the safety of children and residents in Alexandria in November 2022 that has not been resolved after several times inquiring about it. How can this be resolved?**

*Written response by Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) staff.* The best approach to file this issue is through our 311 service. However, often times, the City is not responsible for the maintenance for street lights, which may fall under Dominion Power. As a quick guidance, any street light that is attached to a wooden pole belongs to Dominion Power and should be reported through their request webpage ([dominionenergy.com/virginia/report-outage-or-emergency/streetlight-and-watchlight-outages](https://dominionenergy.com/virginia/report-outage-or-emergency/streetlight-and-watchlight-outages)). Any street light that is attached to a decorative pole or pedestrian level belongs to the City. For maintenance on those poles, please continue to use the 311 Service ([alexandriava.gov/Alex311](https://alexandriava.gov/Alex311)).

## General-Process

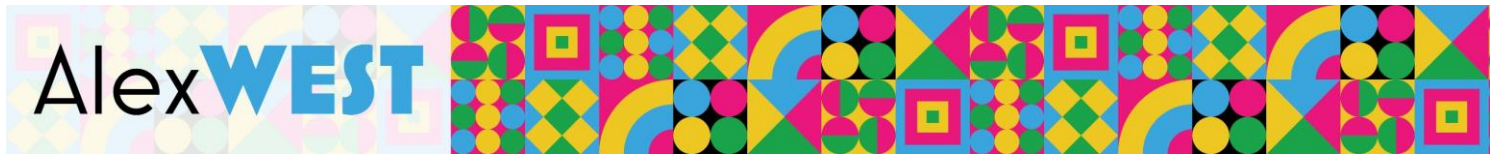
- 1. (EMAILED QUESTION) With the Alexandria West Small Area Plan, what details will be included for the three areas? Will residents see the draft small area plan? If yes, when will residents see the draft small area plan? Will residents have input in the small area plan? If yes, what type of input?**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* We are hoping to build on all the meetings we have had to-date, talking about land use, height, parks, and more. When we see a Plan together, it reflects a lot of the things we've talked about today. In terms of immediate next steps, the idea is that we would release draft recommendations in February and March. The recommendations would be the things that are recommended in the Small Area Plan in addition to the graphics that we've been talking about. Then in the Spring and later, discussing draft Plan and draft graphics. Our goal is to build this Plan together with the community and take the Plan to the Planning Commission and City Council in Fall 2024.

- 2. How is the planning for youth incorporated in the planning?**

*Live answered by Christian Brandt.* Youth have been engaged in a couple different ways in the planning process. Most recently, we worked with NOVA RAFT (Resettling Afghan Families Together) to have some youth come to one of our open houses on November 4 to give some valuable and interesting feedback to us. We've also worked with Alexandria International Academy to engage youth. A colleague and I went to one of the International Academy classes to present the open house materials as well. In addition to that, we partnered with a few organizations that do a lot of work with youth. We are planning to continue doing that as the plan progresses.

*Additional response by Carrie Beach.* To clarify, this is the International Academy at Alexandria City High School.



**3. How is the cultural richness of communities, and the opportunities for expression of this designed into the planning process?**

*Live answered by Christian Brandt.* One of the things we recognized at the beginning of this process is that AlexWest is one of the most diverse parts of Alexandria. It's why, for instance, many of our documents are being translated into 5 languages and it's why we're providing interpretation and translation this evening. We really want to make sure that this process is accessible to folks in our community who don't speak English as their first language.

In addition to that, we've been careful to engage with organizations and individuals who are doing work in all the kinds of communities in AlexWest through the pop-ups that we've done, our community meetings, and other organizational meetings we attended. We've been able to connect with a lot of folks who we ordinarily would not have been able to connect with through large public meetings like this one. The cultural richness of the community is really represented in the way in which we've conducted outreach.

**4. How is the shifting of community demographics incorporated into the planning process?**

*Written response by Planning and Zoning staff.* We are considering the current demographics to plan for things such as schools, park design and programming and transportation as part of the planning process.

Additionally, as the implementation and design of the plan improvements occur in the next 20-25 years, these projects should also take demographics into account.

**5. Regarding safety: since a lot of these plans won't be implemented for ten years, what plan does the city or companies that own the land, have to ensure monitoring and controlling crime to unused spaces.**

*Live answered by Jeff Farner.* Generally, our police department coordinates with property owners on items like lighting and other safety elements. If there are things that you are aware of out here in the community, please let us know and we can follow up with them. In the short term, if there are City improvements like lighting in the public right-of-way, also let us know. There will be some things that need to happen as part of the Plan and with redevelopment. It will be a combination of short-, mid-, and long-term improvements to address some of the safety things that we've heard in this community.

**6. (EMAILED QUESTION) Is there ever the opportunity to have in person meetings?**

*Written response by Planning and Zoning staff.* We typically have hybrid meetings with a virtual and in-person component. Any future meeting information will be posted on the [City calendar](#) and on the [project website](#). All information about future engagement opportunities will be communicated through eNews, WhatsApp, and shared with community groups. In addition, if community members/groups have additional questions or comments we are open to discussing these issues as part of smaller meetings with the community.