

**Route 1 South Housing Affordability Strategy
Community Meeting, Thursday, June 28, 2018
Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson Street**

Meeting Summary

Community Questions/Comments following staff presentation

1. Why can't the Old and Historic District Boundary (OHAD) be adjusted to include all the potential redevelopment sites?
 - The Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) boundary was established in 1946, amended in 1951, and the boundary has remained unchanged since 1965. The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) reviews all buildings located wholly or partially within the OHAD boundary. The Strategy does have recommendations (refer to pages 33 and 34) to ensure high quality design, materials and compatibility for new development which matches the intent of the OHAD.
2. Can a "No Enter" sign be placed at Wilkes Street between S. Alfred Street and S. Columbus Street? Can a yellow post, similar to the ones found on bike trails, be placed at those intersections?
 - Staff will consult with the Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) department and follow-up on that question.
3. The Glossary added to the Strategy is a good idea, can the acronyms in the document be clarified?
 - The City will continue to provide more clarity on the technical terms used in the document or eliminate technical terms where feasible.
4. Who is responsible for distributing the flyer to the residents? Some residents did not receive them.
 - The City creates the flyers and delivers them to the management offices of Olde Towne West and the Heritage at Old Town. The management office delivers the flyers to each door. The City will continue to work with the management offices to ensure that flyers are delivered to each unit.
5. We know that not everyone's concerns can be addressed, but we still don't think that questions about traffic, parking, and schools have been answered. What is the best way to convey those questions to the City? The process seems rushed. What is driving the September deadline?
 - The City's response to the community comments, questions and feedback is compiled in a spreadsheet that has been posted online. Please reference the "Comments on June 4 Working Draft" PDF document which can be found on the [project webpage](#). The process, which was originally from January to June, has been extended to September in response to the concern about the timeframe of the process. In addition, the City added (3) Community Meetings, Pop-Ups, and Round Table discussions within that extended timeframe.

- There are numerous ways to provide feedback on the draft Strategy which include:
 - i. AlexEngage on the project webpage.
 - ii. Email Ashley.labadie@alexandriava.gov or tamara.jovovic@alexandriava.gov
 - iii. Call Ashley at 703.746.3801 or Tamara at 703.746.3097
 - iv. In person at upcoming Round Tables (7/24 & 8/9)
 - v. In person using paper copies:
 - Lee Center
 - Abyssinia Mart
 - Heritage management office
 - Olde Towne West management office
 - The timeline for this process is tied to the expiring subsidy contracts for The Heritage at Old Town and the Olde Town West properties.
6. Some families who want to discuss housing relocation concerns need flexibility with meeting times. How flexible can City staff be in meeting with those residents.
- City staff are extremely flexible. A resident can request a meeting time and location that is convenient for them and City staff will try to meet them where they are to make sure that their questions are clearly answered.
7. Would like to echo appreciation to City Staff in being forthright and transparent. Would like to know the extent of owner/developer feedback and whether it has been identified in the spreadsheet of comments. Also, can you elaborate more on the resident survey?
- The resident survey will be conducted by the Office of Housing. The survey will be done by going door to door and through mail surveys. Similar to what was done in Beauregard, the survey is aimed to understand the temporary relocation needs of residents such as household size, general income, place of work, and where children go to school. This will help the Office of Housing to begin the planning process for temporary relocation if and when redevelopment occurs and provide residents with the support they need. The Office of Housing anticipates it would start the survey in Fiscal Year 2019, after the City Council Hearing.
 - The City has had great collaboration with property owners, including during the charrette. Jon Frederick Executive Director of the Affordable Housing Development Corporation (AHDC) explained that AHDC has been working with the Alfred Street Baptist Church, property owner of Olde Towne West, as well as with ARES, the owner of The Heritage, throughout this planning process. Representatives of both property owners attended and participated in the charrette, in other community meetings, and attended the City Hall work session in late June. The City has also been having a dialogue with HUD throughout the process to make sure that the draft Strategy aligns with their preferences in terms of extending the subsidy contracts.
8. What is the Dillon Rule?

- Local governments follow one of two types of governing authority: Home Rule or the Dillon Rule. Home Rule gives local governments authority to make a wide range of legislative decisions that have not been addressed by the state. By contrast, the Dillon Rule creates a framework where local governments can only legislate what the state government has decreed and must ask permission to make decisions and/or legislate outside of this framework. Virginia is a Dillon Rule State. From a land use perspective, there are two types of development applications in the City of Alexandria, a Development Site Plan (DSP) and a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP). A DSP is approved by the Planning Commission and the City has less discretion to add requirements of approval as part of a DSP. A DSUP is approved by City Council and enables the city more discretion to add requirements of approval to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development.

9. What is the urgency behind this planning process?

- The urgency stems from the expiring subsidy contracts for The Heritage at Old Town and Olde Towne West. The Heritage at Old Town is subject to annual renewals of the contracts which are provided through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This means that every year, the property owner of Heritage decides whether to renew the contracts or whether to make a market driven decision to potentially redevelop the property without the inclusion of affordable housing. The Olde Towne West property has had a long-term contract which provides rental assistance to low-income households, however, that contract is expiring in late 2019/early 2020. In order to ensure the preservation of the affordable housing contracts, the City will need to coordinate with the community, the property owners, and HUD to make sure that there is a strategy in which the affordable housing is preserved over the long term and meets HUD's requirements for mixed-income development. This type of coordination takes time and the City needs a strategy in place with time enough in advance.

10. What happens if the properties do not renew the affordable housing contracts?

- Over time, the rents could potentially go up to what the market would support. That would generally be a lot more than what the current residents can afford. Property owners could choose to renovate the properties which would lead to increase in rents by approximately \$600 to \$1,000/month which would force residents to move elsewhere. The City looked at scenarios where the City would invest in replacing the units off-site or renovating the current units, however these scenarios are cost prohibitive to the City. The main purpose of this Strategy is to preserve the affordable housing on-site and provide temporary relocation support.

11. What leverage does the City have to ensure that the units remain affordable and that the existing residents have the right-to-return?

- One tool that the City has is to allow density and height bonuses in exchange for providing affordable housing.

12. How much notice will the residents get before they have to relocate?

- The minimum notice would be four months. However, residents will receive notice if and when a redevelopment application is submitted. Development applications typically take 12 to 18 months to go through the approval process.

13. Why does the City need a plan to incentivize developers to provide affordable housing when it seems like the Alfred Street Baptist Church is already committed to affordable housing? Shouldn't we focus on building partnerships instead of giving incentives?

- The Alfred Street Baptist Church does have a partner, AHDC, however the cost to develop and sustain deeply affordable units is significant. The Strategy aims to provide enough density to make it financially feasible to provide these deeply affordable units. A representative from the Alfred Street Baptist Church explained that with the current zoning, it is not economically feasible for the Church to simply renovate the existing units on-site; instead the additional density is needed to financially support and maintain the affordable housing units through redevelopment.

14. Developers work for profit. The residents need the City to help.

15. What about preservation of the existing properties?

- HUD will want to make sure that these old properties are renovated appropriately before they renew the contracts to make sure that they would last for many years. Renovations include the roofs, HVAC systems, kitchens, etc. and is very expensive. The factors that are important to HUD, are to retain the levels of affordability, the existing number of units, and to create a mixed-income development by creating market-rate units within the developments themselves.

16. Why are the terms of affordability only for 30 years? Can there be a ratio between 30% AMI, 60% AMI, and market rate units?

- It is likely that a range of incomes will be served if the property redevelops, including market rate units that will help subsidize the units that are affordable at 30-60% AMI.
- The City typically requires 40-year term of affordability and sometimes 60 years. HUD however offers 20 year contracts with the possibility to renew.

17. Can the City give advance notice prior to meetings?

- Yes, the City will distribute the flyers in advance of meetings. The dates and times of meetings are also posted on the project webpage.

18. Will the monthly rental fee during relocation be the same as what the residents currently pay?

- The City will work with the property owners to apply to HUD for Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) for the period that residents are relocated. TPVs can be used anywhere, however the City will work with impacted residents to

find a place that suits their needs. TPVs allow residents to continue to pay whatever portion of rent they currently pay, and the vouchers make up the balance.

19. Are there special programs for the military families?

- Generally housing is based on a family's income and not necessarily their profession. There are programs called VASH vouchers for veterans who are homeless.

20. The Environmental Action Plan should also be considered in this Strategy.

- Acknowledged.

21. The pedestrian connection recommendations in the Strategy are good. Would like to expand the Wolfe Street connection across S. Patrick Street.

- There is a recommendation in the Strategy addressing that intersection. It is recommendation #8 on page 39 of the Strategy.