

Vision:

We received comments for a concrete vision statement, in addition the planning principles, and have developed the following statement:

“Pentagon City will be a dynamic downtown for Arlington and the region, and a neighborhood where everyone is welcome and able to live regardless of race, income, age, and immigration status.

The redevelopment of Pentagon City will strengthen the entire 22202 community, diversify housing options, and embrace biophilic design that makes nature a universal part of the everyday experience of the area.”

Biophilia:

In recognition of the importance of this topic, we have created a distinct planning principle, Places for Nature, that addresses biophilia as a shaper of the Pentagon City District. “Create space for nature to thrive so that biophilia is part of the everyday experience of the district.”

Tree Canopy and Vegetation:

A number of comments discussed the need for additional tree canopy and planted surfaces in order to achieve the biophilic goals of the area. In addition to a minimum planted at-grade area of 10% at Riverhouse or 15% within the PDSP area, an additional 10% of the site should be covered by vegetation in the form of one or more of these alternatives: planted area at grade, planters and/or trellises upon a building/structure at or below the fifth floor, and/or a green roof or terrace at or above the fifth floor. This is an increase from the 5% required in the previous draft.

Green Ribbon:

We received a number of comments asking for a stronger sense of what the Green Ribbon might look like earlier within the body of the plan (without having to read all the way to the Appendix for Green Ribbon Design Guidelines). We’ve incorporated a new spread that addresses Green Ribbon design in greater detail within the core body of the document to help make this clearer. The design guidelines still include multiple options that can apply to a variety of contexts.

Flexibility/Certainty and How to Use the Plan:

The Pentagon City Plan provides predictable, consistent performance standards for changes on development parcels and in the public realm, with considerable flexibility as to how property owners, designers, and Arlington County agencies may best respond to the planning principles over time. For

instance, new public street and walking path corridors have recommended endpoints where they connect to the larger mobility network, but their alignment between endpoints is variable to accommodate a range of potential building and site configurations alongside. Likewise, building height and massing can take a variety of forms as long as certain guidelines for street relationship, site coverage, and façade articulation are met. This balance aims to achieve consistently outstanding, inclusive public spaces and mobility choices throughout the study area while inviting the creative response to future opportunities that will best serve community and investor goals.

Implementation:

The appendix includes a proposed future GLUP Map, as well as proposed amendments to the Master Transportation Plan that will help accomplish the policy changes in the Pentagon City Plan.

The County is currently reviewing an implementation matrix that includes immediate, short, medium, and long-term actions, the departments responsible for leading them, and potential sources of funding. While not included in this draft, this will be included in the next draft. Zoning Ordinance amendments are also under review and will be included in the next draft as a key implementation action.

Equity:

Because the Pentagon City Plan is a place-based document, covering a small area and accommodating a range of potential future outcomes, one of the most important strategies for equity is to ensure that it is considered as part of future programs, policies, projects, and processes that will implement the plan guidance. The Plan incorporates equity as one of the core planning principles that guides the future of Pentagon City. Additionally, the plan:

- Requires an equity lens to be part of the SPRC review process for future development, so that projects can identify innovative strategies that advance equity on their specific site and program, including for employment uses and as part of the development process.
- Incorporates the equity lens as part of County projects, policies, and programs in the Pentagon City area.

The plan also seeks to include equity as an element of the physical plan framework throughout. Specific recommendations include:

- All projects would need to deliver a specific percentage of their net new residential density as on-site Committed Affordable Units (CAFs). The target is currently undergoing further feasibility analysis and may vary by site.
- These CAFs would be set at a 60% AMI level. Unit sizes would be negotiated at the time of site plan review (with family-sized units encouraged).
- Revise CAF targets over the long-term to match evolving County needs, based on the Affordable Housing Master Plan.
- Ensure that public spaces are accessible, designed, and programmed to welcome a diverse range of users. Ensuring spaces are safe and inviting to Youth of Color was identified as a key equity concern by stakeholders during this planning process.

- Prioritize transportation investments in modes that disproportionately serve People of Color, including bus service. The Pentagon City Plan identifies that bus service is a priority for future transportation planning, including curbside management. MWCOG studies, including Regional Travel Surveys, have shown that bus ridership has been traditionally associated with minority groups, particularly among Hispanic/Latinx, African American/Black, and low-income households. This is consistent with other empirical studies that have supported this finding in the region and country.

Comments on Specific Sites within the Study Area/from Specific Groups:

Riverhouse (JBG Smith):

The Riverhouse property owners submitted a number of comments highlighting how the topography of their site will be a driver of Green Ribbon routing through the site, as well as overall site design. This is true and has been highlighted in the relevant diagrams throughout the plan.

Building Coverage Ratio: The property owners at Riverhouse submitted comments objecting to the previous draft's lower building coverage ratio for upper floors of buildings in the Southern portion of Riverhouse, given the restrictions already placed on height, specific to this site in the draft plan.

Through discussion with County staff, it was determined that previous requirements to introduce a stepback in the upper floors of buildings under 100 feet to vary massing, whether through upper floor building coverage, an inclined plane, or others, are often found to be modified during the SPRC process. Given that the goal of this requirement was to introduce variation in building massing, a number of different design strategies were instead introduced to help achieve that goal, rather than simply relying on an upper floor building coverage requirement as originally proposed. These ranged from stepbacks, terraces, balconies, prominent vertical compositions, and other varied massing techniques. As a result, this area of Riverhouse now has the same building coverage requirement for upper floors as the rest of the site – less than 40%.

Location of Joyce Street: The property owner at Riverhouse expressed concern about the specific routing of relocated Joyce Street through the site. The Pentagon City Plan establishes some goals for how this should be advanced, including improvements to pedestrian connections (such as through connection at an intersection), space for an expanded Virginia Highlands Park, efficient access to new development, and connections to surrounding areas. The alignment of Joyce Street in the Plan is captured by a diagram of these goals and does not represent civil engineering analysis of any potential constraints. The final alignment may shift during future SPRC review of proposed RiverHouse redevelopment.

TSA Site (Brookfield):

The Brookfield property owners submitted comments concerned about designating a future access way as 11th Street, given that it will require future redevelopment to the north (DEA site) to deliver the full complete street. The Pentagon City Plan allows for this phased approach, but the accessway created as part of the Brookfield redevelopment must provide a sidewalk for safe pedestrian passage.

Fashion Centre (Simon)

Over the long-term, the redevelopment of the Simon Fashion Centre site could change the access patterns throughout the plan, but particularly along Hayes Street. However, an additional disclaimer has been added to the illustrations of public space along Hayes Street that these will require establishing alternative access routes or accommodating access within the design for existing uses. The plan also includes increased flexibility for where additional public space could be located as the site redevelops.

Pentagon Ridge Condominium Owners:

We received a number of similar comments from owners in the Pentagon Ridge Condominiums concerned about how development at the RiverHouse site may affect views from their site, as well as their feeling of privacy. The comments asked for additional height restrictions on the RiverHouse site. Many of these comments cited a desire to preserve existing tree canopy on the slope of RiverHouse, as well as limit Green Ribbon or other connections to Arlington Ridge. We believe the plan addresses these topics at a level of detail appropriate for an area plan – further plans for the distribution of height across the site should be discussed at the site plan level. The plan contains goals for preserving, or, where the construction of structured parking or new accessways may change existing tree canopy, sufficient replanting. The plan also embraces that there should be improved connections, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians, between Arlington Ridge and Pentagon City. While the eventual routing of the Green Ribbon through RiverHouse will be determined through the site plan process, creating stronger connections so it is easier and more pleasant to walk between all areas of 22202, particularly destinations in Pentagon City, is a core planning principle.

Transportation Comments

Because of the detail of comments received on transportation, DES staff and leadership have provided additional response to comments here:

Topic/Theme: RK&K Model and Travel Assumptions

What We Heard: The Travel Model and Transportation Study did not address road diets or other specific reconfigurations of the roads in the study area and beyond.

Response:

The study performed by RK&K was scoped to analyze the impact of additional development density on the existing road network. The modeling exercise factored in planned changes to the existing road network including capital projects for Army Navy Drive, and the Transitway. The density previously approved for the Metropolitan Park and Pen Place sites were also incorporated. The study did not incorporate potential changes to the road network outside of the study area (including on Route 1/Richmond Highway) or options to reconfigure existing streets or add new streets within the study area. Staff and consultants relied on ITE trip generation rates by land use type, as is standard professional practice.

Although not part of the modeling exercise, road diets, reductions in private vehicle travel lanes, changes to management of the curb space, additional reallocation of existing and acquisition of additional right of way for other modes, and other alternatives that could help to reduce single occupant vehicle travel in favor of other modes are still possible. Exploration of potential changes will be pursued through the Site Plan process and via detailed corridor studies.

Topic/Theme: Transit Demand Management (TDM)

What We Heard:

The draft is not specific enough about how the TDM goals will be achieved, and what the enforcement mechanism or consequences of not meeting the performance standards will be.

Response:

The new approach to TDM for the study area allows for more focus on performance standards with less prescriptive, more flexible tools to achieve the identified mode shift goals. This will require development of a new standard site plan condition language, which will need to be developed after the approval of the PCPS. Development of new TDM site plan conditions may take some time, but if successful, could also become a model for other site plan developments in other locations in the County. The metrics used to identify no greater than 30% auto mode share represents the existing travel patterns identified through the decennial Household Travel Survey. In the future, if our analytical tools identify a lower auto mode share is being achieved, we anticipate that mode share performance standards will lower accordingly. New TDM site plan conditions could also include consequences of failing to meet the performance standards, as buildings are monitored over time.

Topic/Theme: Pedestrian Network & Streetscape Standards

What We Heard:

Streetscape standards are not specified in detail which could result in sidewalks that are too narrow, encroachment into or generally insufficient pedestrian clear zone.

Response:

In the quest to balance the need for certainty with the need for flexibility through the redevelopment process, and to anticipate the space demands across some parcels to achieve the envisioned Green Ribbon network, the vision for specific street corridors in the study area was not prescriptive of street cross sections. The revised draft now includes an overarching commitment to achieve a minimum clear pedestrian zone of 8' along each side of any arterial in the study area, though there are locations where the goal will be greater. Encroachment of the cafe zones should be prevented but is a matter of zoning enforcement if modifications from the approved site plan occur after construction.

Topic/Theme: Bike Network

What We Heard:

There are errors and discrepancies between the two maps. 13th St S is not a good/viable low stress bike route.

Response:

The new draft of the study eliminates the Bicycle Comfort Level Map, which was used as an analytical tool for discussion and plan development. Discrepancies and errors on the primary bike network map have been corrected, including removal of facilities on 13th Street South, and revisions to those indicated on 15th Street South. The new map also displays portions of the Crystal City Bike Network, and connections to other regional bike facilities that were not included in the previous draft.

Topic/Theme: Road Network & Road Diets

What We Heard:

The plan does not call for reduction in vehicle/car lanes, or provide cross sections demonstrating road diets - particularly on South Joyce Street and South Hayes Street.

Response:

The plan does not prescribe removal or reallocation of vehicle travel lanes on S Joyce St or S Hayes St. South Joyce Street has a single property owner along the west side of the street and includes a proposed realignment to bring South Joyce Street to an existing signalized intersection, adding 1 acre of land to the existing inventory of park/open space. This proposal will require further study, including allocation of space within the right of way, identification of any needs for additional right of way, and a plan for how separated bike lanes should be designed.

Similarly, South Hayes Street, with the constraints of a median over the existing metrorail tunnel, and extensive competition for curb space, requires a stand-alone corridor study to determine the best use of the right of way and curb space on South Hayes Street, addressing the Vision Zero High Injury Network, to achieve a multimodal street with inviting space for pedestrians, separated bike facilities, efficiency of transit and private bus operations, and connections to the Metrorail station.

Topic/Theme: Additional Metro Station Entrance

What We Heard:

The plan does not prioritize a new Metro entrance

Response:

The plan identifies that buses, both private and public transit, require priority consideration, particularly in light of the trade-offs and tremendous expense of pursuing a second Metro station entrance. The plan does not preclude a second entrance as a longer-term goal but is clear that improvements to surface transit are a more pressing need.

Topic/Theme: 12th Street South Transitway

What We Heard:

12th Street South through the transitway should remove the parking lane and reallocate for separated bike lanes

Response:

Reallocation of a vehicle travel lane for dedicated transitway movements results in two remaining lanes within the right of way. If another lane is removed, the sole remaining travel lane would be impacted by pick up and drop off movements too negatively to provide adequate traffic flow and safe operations. This segment does not include bike facilities in the Master Transportation Plan Bike Element (2019), and an east-west connection will be provided through the Army Navy Drive Complete Streets capital project. The study aims to provide an additional parallel bike route on a new 11th Street South, with redevelopment of the Brookfield/TSA site, connecting to planned separated bike facilities on South Hayes Street, South Fern Street, and connection to South Eads Street across the interior of the Pen Place development. Transit remains the priority for the implementation of the 12th Street Transitway.

Topic/Theme: The Green Ribbon

What We Heard: The Green Ribbon is a positive asset, but as pedestrian infrastructure, should not count towards public space in the study area.

Response:

The Green Ribbon, as described in the study, is a multi-faceted public space element that would provide recreational, biophilic, and transportation benefits to the community. It will therefore become an integral component of Pentagon City's public space system.

The County's Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) designates primary and secondary multi-use trails, as well as public streets, all of which represent parts of the broader public space system. Additionally, it defines parks as "land or outdoor areas used primarily for recreation" and explicitly identifies additional trails as a top priority for the park system. Therefore, considering the Green Ribbon as a community benefit is consistent with the public space goals in Arlington's PSMP.

While this is true of the entire Green Ribbon network, it is especially reflective of the wider sections of the Ribbon where potential park and public space opportunities are identified in the Pentagon City Plan. Examples of this can be found along S. Hayes St., and areas where the Green Ribbon traverses plazas, small park units, or privately-owned public spaces. The design flexibility built into this concept allows the Green Ribbon to fit the full variety of contexts it traverses across the study area while ensuring its functionality as a public space.

Topic/Theme: Virginia Highlands and Grace Murray Hopper

What We Heard: What is the benefit of the proposed land swap to consolidate Virginia Highlands and Grace Murray Hopper Park?

Response:

The benefits realized through this land swap are significant but primarily focus on strategically pursuing more contiguous parkland that is easier to activate, ensuring the expanded areas are subject to the future master planning process, and can be owned outright by the county which would preserve public access into the future. This action is consistent with the PSMP's land acquisition criteria and would help expand contiguous, permanently preserved public space in the study area.

Topic/Theme: Ongoing Engagement on Public Spaces

What We Heard: Please elaborate on which public space needs are currently unmet and how will the new public spaces recommended by the study be designed and programmed to meet those needs. Can we consider looking at public spaces in the study area with regard to what is missing in the County overall and what is missing in this particular community? And how will the County assess community needs and be responsive to future changes as the spaces are ultimately planned and built?

Response:

As new public spaces are planned, the County would look at future master planning efforts, individual site plan reviews, as well as the next update to the PSMP (which would include a level of service analysis and surveys) as opportunities to revisit and refine park priorities in light of changing trends and demographics. To be responsive to community needs in the short term, the County has the ability to pursue temporary uses and pilot projects to add or change amenities outside of longer-term processes like an update to the PSMP or park master plan. To facilitate this, parks and public spaces will be designed to be as flexible as they can be whenever possible.

Topic/Theme: Public Space Acquisition

What We Heard: The plan should identify where publicly-funded acquisitions and improvements may be required in addition to the community benefits associated with private development.

Response:

The PSMP specifies a need for an additional 30 acres of park area over the next 10 years. This is to be realized by the expansion of existing parks as well as the creation of new parks with a focus on densely populated corridors (like Richmond Highway, of which Pentagon City is a part of). The County is always alert for opportunities to expand the public space system and has used the PSMP's land acquisition goals and criteria throughout the Pentagon City Planning Study process to craft the recommendations for public spaces shown in the draft Plan. If these are not realized through public benefit contributions, the County will explore other options. For example, further study of how the Green Ribbon network can be expanded across and beyond the study area was included in the recently adopted 3-year CIP to ensure that this priority is realized. The upcoming 10-year CIP process could provide further clarity in terms of when additional funding could be reserved for purposes of designing and implementing the Green Ribbon's expansion within this area.