



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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## WEST BROAD STREET SMALL AREA PLAN

### Themes of Public Comments from Meeting #1

#### Introduction

During the meeting, attendees participated in breakout discussion groups. The discussion topics were (1) community and culture, (2) open space, (3) land use, height, and density, and (4) transportation. This write-up captures the major themes expressed by participants during those discussions.

#### Community and Culture

##### **Build on Existing Unique Establishments**

Retain and build on the places that define the character of W. Broad Street, including St. James Church, the City Library, Mad Fox, CD Cellar, Hole in the Wall Books, and small retailers.

##### **Make Park Avenue a “Great Street”**

Reinforce Park Avenue as a special place, a “Great Street,” different in character from W. Broad Street, perhaps with decorative street lamps, murals, and special pavers.

##### **Create Gathering Places**

Expand existing gathering places and create new ones. Improve access to and visibility of these areas through wayfinding, better lighting, and clear sightlines.

##### **Preserve Historic Resources**

Protect historic resources, such as 920 West Broad Street and St. James Church and School. Consider recreating the historic West Falls Church Train Station as a rest stop and visitor center along the W&OD Trail. Honor the City’s history by naming new buildings and places for former City residents.

##### **Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility**

Increase connections for pedestrians and bicyclists. Establish bicycle sharrows on Park Avenue, widen sidewalks along W. Broad Street and Park Avenue, and improve sidewalk infrastructure on side roads.

##### **West End Park**

Make West End Park a focal point of the community, perhaps by adding a skateboard area or children’s festivals.

## **Land Use, Height, and Density**

### **Seek True Mixed Use Redevelopment**

Seek a mix of uses in redevelopment projects, with street level retail services with office and limited residential above. Enforce quality architectural design and sustainable building practices. Provide shared parking for mixed use redevelopment.

### **Increase Ground-Floor Retail**

Retain existing retail to the extent feasible and incorporate small-scale retail at the street level of mixed-use buildings.

### **Balance Building Height**

Seek a balance of building heights in scale with existing buildings. Avoid creating a “canyon effect” along W. Broad Street.

### **Promote Walkability**

Widen sidewalks and set new buildings back 20 feet from the street to enhance walkability.

## **Parks and Open Space**

Overall, meeting participants spoke to the need to better integrate the parks with the community. They had several specific suggestions including creating more visible entrances, clearly identifying public space, adding wayfinding to direct people among parks, adding more activities, and installing lighting to make the parks available after dark.

### **Create a Connected Park System**

Make improvements that link existing City parks to each other and to the commercial corridor. Use Great Streets concepts, such as landscaping, to connect parks when connections must use City streets.

Advertise City parks through the use of wayfinding signs, trail signage, and more visible park entrances.

### **Define Park Boundaries**

Use landscaping and other features to clearly mark the boundaries between public and private space. This will help people enjoy the parks who today are unsure whether they are in a park or trespassing in backyards.

### **Provide a Dog Park and Protect Placid Uses**

Provide a dog park within the park system. At the same time, protect placid uses, such as strolling and picnicking.

### **Add Lighting to Increase Safety and Make Parks Available After Dark**

Add lighting to the parks to make them accessible and safe after dark.

### **Provide Pocket Parks & Plazas**

Partner with developers to provide small pocket parks and plazas within the commercial area as redevelopment occurs. These parks and plazas should provide gathering spaces along West Broad Street that will help to activate the area. Automobile access in plazas should be limited and access streets should be geared toward pedestrian usage.

### **Leverage the W&OD Trail**

The W&OD Trail serves as a regional gateway into the City. Future public and private projects should strengthen connections among the W&OD Trail, existing parks, and the West Broad Street area.

Make use of the entire W&OD Trail easement for storm water projects, gardening, and other uses.

Expand the W&OD Trail to provide more space for the different types of users on the trail – walkers, runners, and bicyclists.

## **Transportation**

### **Provide More Public Parking**

Build consolidated parking facilities for residents and visitors. Ensure that parking is architecturally compatible with existing architecture and encourage green roofs and associated gardens.

### **Enhance Pedestrian Mobility**

Widen sidewalks and eliminate such pedestrian obstructions as utility poles, planters, and curb cuts. Enhance walking areas with benches and street trees. Install more crosswalks and curb extensions. Explore undergrounding utilities throughout the commercial area.

### **Enhance Bicycle Mobility**

Provide bicycle racks throughout the commercial area. Provide bicycle lanes along Park Avenue while retaining on-street parking.

### **Slow Automobile Traffic on W. Broad Street**

Calm traffic along W. Broad Street. Time stop lights to allow better traffic flow and longer pedestrian crossing times.

### **Install Wayfinding**

Direct pedestrian and bicycle pathways to and from Metro and the commercial areas of the City through wayfinding signage.