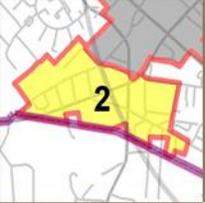


1. Introduction



South Washington Street Corridor Planning Opportunity Area 2

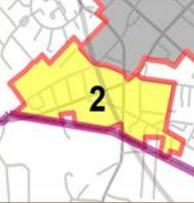
Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the South Washington Street Planning Opportunity Area (POA) Small Area Plan is to provide a framework for higher-density, pedestrian and bicycle oriented mixed-use redevelopment that takes advantage of the new Multimodal Transportation Center and provides a unique southern gateway into Falls Church. Information is provided herein to help citizens, developers, and city officials make decisions in determining the future of the South Washington Street POA. Recommendations, examples, and considerations are presented throughout the plan to help guide the discussion and to provide possible methods and solutions in encouraging compatible redevelopment.

The goals of the South Washington Street POA are:

- To provide a community and City approved guide for City Council, developers, and the Planning Commission when considering future development in the South Washington Street POA.
- To improve the appearance and business climate of this important part of the City.
- To create a local and regional destination that promotes the City's rich historic and cultural heritage.
- To encourage the use of public transportation through the new multimodal transit center by promoting higher density development and retail uses in close proximity.
- To encourage higher density development that supports walkable pedestrian and bicycle friendly areas that are easily accessible from neighboring areas.
- To improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and access.
- To promote integration of new development into the fabric of the surrounding areas by establishing a framework for merging density levels and architectural designs.
- To promote redevelopment of underutilized commercial properties in order to increase the tax base and to improve quality of life.
- To increase the amount of public open space and decrease impervious surface in order to help improve the area socially and environmentally.
- To promote the creation of a unique southern gateway area into Falls Church.



Need

The South Washington Street Corridor POA was briefly examined in the City of Falls Church 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Development since that time has been limited. Recently, developers have begun to show interest in the area and public transportation improvements are underway, including the new Intermodal Transit Plaza. The South Washington Street Corridor POA is part of a major commercially zoned stretch of properties along Route 29 through the heart of the city, has a rich historic heritage, and contains multiple gateways into Falls Church along major thoroughfares from Fairfax County. These are some of the conditions that make it ripe for potential redevelopment.

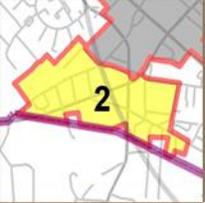
The largest redevelopment project in the City, Pearson Square, was constructed in the South Washington Street Corridor POA in 2007. Once open, the commercial space was slow to be leased due in part to the recession that began in 2008. It is important to maintain momentum to encourage adjacent property owners to engage in the redevelopment process. A proposed redevelopment of the defunct Saab Auto Dealership with a mixed use development, The Reserve at Tinner Hill, is currently in the approval process. This project will significantly add momentum and critical mass of redevelopment of the area.



(Above) Current conditions along the northern side of South Washington Street, facing south.

*(Below) The Pearson Square building from the intersection of Tinner Hill Street and South Maple Avenue.
(Picture from www.wdgarch.com)*





South Washington Street Corridor

Planning Opportunity Area 2

Introduction

The South Washington Street Corridor POA boasts a rich heritage that includes the establishment of the first rural branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as well as several historic structures and monuments. Currently, these historical assets are not adequately incorporated into the fabric of the community. Pedestrian infrastructure is lacking and many of these important structures appear isolated.

A variety of small businesses, many of which support the arts, are located within the South Washington Street Corridor POA. These businesses are an important part of the community and give the area a sense of place. However, some of the structures have fallen into disrepair, and many properties make insufficient use of space by having small buildings on lots surrounded by surface parking. It will be important to incorporate unique businesses into redevelopment efforts. Interim improvements can serve to improve the look and feel of the area before redevelopment occurs.

The Intermodal Transit Plaza presents an opportunity to spur redevelopment in the South Washington Street Corridor POA. The Plaza will be located near the geographic center of the POA, and will incorporate a central transit hub for bus lines as well as streetscape, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements for the area upon completion. This can serve as a catalyst for transit oriented redevelopment in the immediate area and as a gateway to the area.

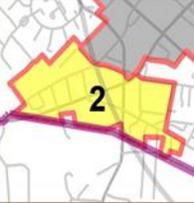
A current, forward looking planning effort can serve to support the vision of the South Washington Street Corridor POA as presented in the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan can serve as a starting point for focusing redevelopment and other improvements so that maximum economic and community benefit are gained with the least negative impact to the area. There is also a need to leverage the unique historic, geographic, and cultural qualities in the POA and throughout the City in order to turn the area into an inviting place for people to live, work, and visit.

Methodology

This plan is a product of the City of Falls Church Department of Development Services, Department of Economic Development, and Department of Public Works. Quantitative data was acquired from a number of sources, including the Virginia Department of Transportation, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the City of Falls Church Real Estate Assessor. GIS data for map creation and analysis was created by the City of Falls Church. Site pictures are from Google Earth, Bing Maps, and some were taken on-location by City officials. Qualitative data was acquired from community meetings, developers, Planners, the City of Falls Church City Council, and the City of Falls Church Planning Commission.

The initial South Washington Street POA Community Meeting was held on June 23, 2012. At

South Washington Street Corridor Planning Opportunity Area 2



this meeting, local stakeholders, residents, and City staff came together to discuss the future of the area. City staff formed teams that discussed several areas of interest with attendees. Areas of interest included: Arts, Culture, and History, Height/Density, Land Use, Open Space, Tripp's Run Stream / Streetscape, and Transportation / Connectivity. Staff members circulated to each of the six tables and listened to attendees' thoughts and concerns on these issues within the South Washington Street Corridor POA. Notes were taken outlining general concepts and specific concerns of the various discussions, which have been incorporated into this Plan.

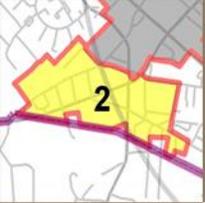
A subsequent meeting was held on October 17, 2012 to have a focused discussion among stakeholders about the future of arts and culture in the South Washington Street Corridor POA. This meeting was held at the Tax Analysts building and included representatives from local businesses, community groups, arts groups, and the City. Participants included: Mary Alexander, Pizzeria Orso; Christopher Bergin, Tax Analysts and Chamber of Commerce; Irene Chambers, Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation and Amaranti and Art Barn; Sally Cole, Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce; Tina Dove, Levine School of Music; Laura Hull, Creative Cauldron; Nikki Graves Henderson and Ed Henderson, Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation; Kevin Landes and Eric Wagner, Foxes Music; Marty Meserve, Creative Cauldron and Artspace; Katie Pavlechko, Land Design; Jeffrey Weaver, Victory Comics; Joe Wetzel, Falls Church



The South Washington Street Corridor POA Kickoff Meeting, June 23, 2012.

(Photo courtesy of Gary Mester, Written in Light Photography)





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Arts. Representatives from the City included: Gary Fuller, Debra Gee, Garrison Kitt, and Jim Snyder from the Department of Development Services; Rick Goff and Becky Witsman from the Department of Economic Development; Cindy Mester, Assistant City Manager; Jenny Paxton, Recreation & Parks.

participants in the community meeting were incorporated into the Plan and presented to the Planning Commission on October 7, 2013. Further comments were received from City Council and the Village Preservation and Improvement Society in mid-October, 2013.

On April 27, 2013 a public meeting was held at Columbia Baptist Church to present the draft South Washington Street Corridor POA Plan. Like the first meeting, a powerpoint presentation was displayed while presenter Jim Snyder described the draft plan. Following the presentation, City staff formed teams to discuss aspects of the plan with attendees that matched the original groups from the June 23, 2012 Kickoff Meeting. Attendees were encouraged to voice questions, opinions, and concerns related to these areas with the respective groups. At the conclusion of the meeting, attendees were asked to take a quick survey regarding perceptions of the event and the draft Plan. Survey responses indicated that the meeting was helpful and that the format and presentation were well received. The survey also indicated that the draft Plan was generally well received, with some criticism of the lack of integration of sustainability into the plan and concern over commercial and residential affordability.

The Plan was referred by City Council to Boards & Commissions for comments and feedback on June 17, 2013. Comments and feedback were due by September 30, 2013. Concepts from the Boards & Commissions feedback as well as those from