

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Cunningham and Members of
the Planning Commission

From: Paul Nabti, Division Chief, Planning

Subject: 2035 Comprehensive Plan:
Future Land Use Map Discussion Sites

Meeting

Date: July 14, 2018



The Planning Commission reviewed the first draft of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, including all chapters and appendices, at regularly scheduled meetings between May 14, 2018 and July 9, 2018. Some specific items were not discussed during those regular reviews because they warranted an independent discussion. In addition, the Planning Commission raised questions during earlier discussion on the Future Land Use Map that also warranted independent discussions. The purpose of this special meeting is to hold independent discussions on these specific items.

Staff recommends independent discussion of the following items regarding the 2035 Comprehensive Plan:

1. Residential development in Centers
2. Extents of the "Future Transition Overlay District"
3. Additional actions related to George Mason University
4. Housing Needs Assessment (TBD)

Further information is provided for each of these items in the attachments as listed below:

Attachments:

1. Staff recommendations regarding residential development in Centers.
2. Staff recommended extents of the Future Transition Overlay District.
3. Discussion points regarding additional Actions related to George Mason University.

Residential Development in Centers

Proposed text to be included in the Comprehensive Plan:

Any development within a Center should be limited to a residential density of no more than 20 dwelling units per acre, though a residential density of up to 48 dwelling units per acre may be supported where the proposed development would offer benefits that support the vision of the Comprehensive Plan for the Activity Center. Such benefits should include the following:

- 1. A mix of uses within the development site;*
- 2. Contributions toward a connected street grid;*
- 3. Usable open space, and;*
- 4. High quality design.*

New development in Centers should generally allocate a minimum of 30% of the gross site area toward a portion of a connected street grid, usable open space, or some combination.

In addition to the site development density, the total amount of new residential development in any Center should not exceed the number of units listed below. New residential development includes any residential unit that is initially occupied after the date of adoption of this plan:

<i>Old Town Fairfax Center</i>	<i>850 units</i>
<i>Northfax Center</i>	<i>850 units</i>
<i>Kamp Washington Center</i>	<i>700 units</i>
<i>Fairfax Circle Center</i>	<i>700 units</i>
<i>Pickett & Main Center</i>	<i>300 units</i>

Residential units should generally be located within mixed use buildings and above ground floor retail along Retail Streets and Commercial Mains. Where ground floor residential units are located adjacent to Active streets, direct exterior access should be provided to individual units.

If an adopted Small Area Plan recommends a higher residential development limit for a Center, the recommendations of the Small Area Plan shall supersede the recommendation in this plan. An applicant may request a modification to development limitations for a particular Center through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, provided that analyses of anticipated impacts resulting from modifying the development limit are provided as requested by the City.

Direct fiscal benefits to the City from residential developments are not typically as strong as those from commercial properties. In order to avoid significant displacement of existing commercial uses in Centers, new residential development should first focus on lower value commercial or industrial sites unless a significant commercial component is included. Conversion of existing commercial space into residential uses is not generally supported.

Staff Explanation of Residential Development in Centers:

During a work session at the March 26, 2018 Planning Commission meeting, staff proposed four alternative measures for limiting residential development in the five identified Centers on the Future Land Use Map. There are two primary motivations in limiting residential development in Centers:

1. Communicate to the general public that unrestrained increases in residential development are not anticipated in concentrated areas of the City without potential impacts being better understood. Development limitations can be adjusted by the City in the future if supported through further study, such as Small Area Plans, or once the impacts of new development can be observed.
2. Communicate to developers and potential land use applicants that the City's willingness to absorb significant amounts of residential development is limited. A developer or applicant can request changes to development limitations for a particular Center through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

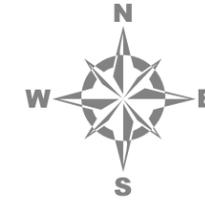
The Planning Commission reviewed the four alternatives presented by staff and ultimately favored the alternative of limiting residential development density by development site. While the site development density limitation achieves the goal of communicating development limitations to developers for individual sites, it does not satisfy the goal of limiting overall development within any particular Center until the impacts of new development a better understood. For this reason, staff recommends the site development density limitation be used in conjunction with the aggregate number of units limitation. The language provided by staff (above) for the aggregate number limitations is intended to address concerns regarding the number of existing units that minimize potential future development in some Centers. This is accomplished by applying the limitation to new units only and by distributing some potential new units from the Pickett & Main Center to other Centers.

Table: Development Capacity Based on Limit (for reference only)

	Kamp Washington	Northfax	Fairfax Circle	Pickett & Main	Old Town	Total
Acres	39.7	74.6	66.2	58.1	84.6	323.2
Existing Commercial	231,468	3,250,618	525,207	756,060	1,531,606	6,294,959
Existing Residential	0	0	312	0	2	312
Approved Residential	403	0	392	0	0	795
Overall Number						
Base unit number	700	850	700	300	850	3,400
Maximum new units	297	850	308	300	850	2,605

2035 Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map



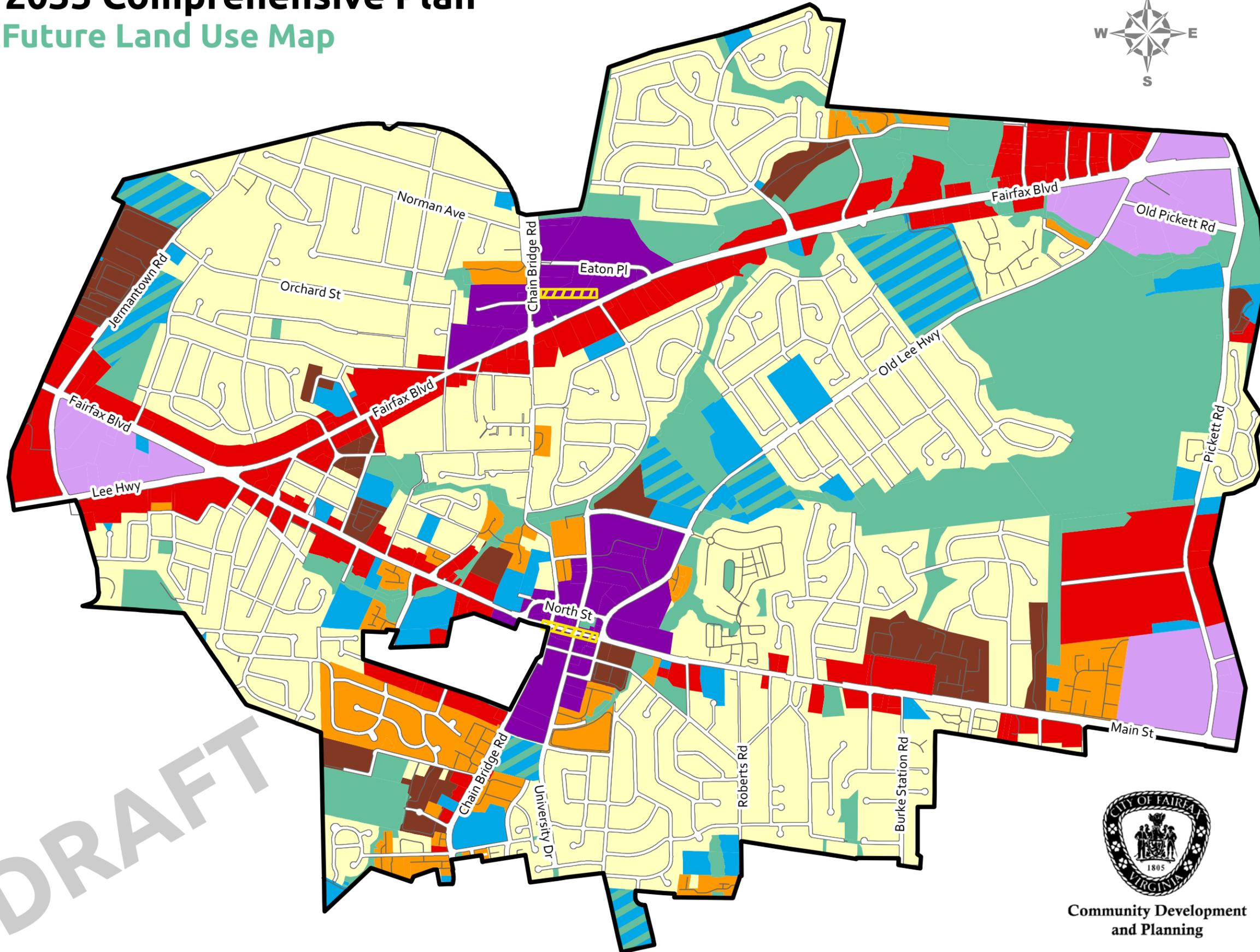
LEGEND

PLACE TYPES

- SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED NEIGHBORHOOD
- TOWNHOUSE/SINGLE FAMILY ATTACHED NEIGHBORHOOD
- MULTIFAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD
- COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
- TOWN CENTER
- LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTER
- GREEN NETWORK
- SOCIAL AND CIVIC NETWORK

ROAD OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY
- PRIVATE ROAD CENTERLINE
- RETAIL STREET



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Community Development
and Planning

1 inch = 1,500 feet



Source: City of Fairfax GIS Parcels and Political Boundary, 2018

DRAFT March 27, 2018

Future Transition Overlay District

The Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District (TOD) is an overlay district within the Zoning Ordinance that provides separate standards for development in a defined area of the City that surrounds the Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District. The purpose of the TOD is to “encourage a compatible mixture of residential, retail and office uses within the designated transition area in a manner which complements the scale, siting and design of the Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District.” This is accomplished with separate use and dimensional standards that supersede those standards for the underlying zoning districts. Such standards can be more restrictive, such as maximum building heights for many commercially zoned properties, or less restrictive, such as narrower building setbacks.

Beginning with the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, expansions to the TOD were proposed to encompass a wider area around the Historic District. Rather impose new zoning restrictions on properties within the expansion area, the expansion area was only identified in the Comprehensive Plan, and not implemented in the Zoning Ordinance. This allowed property owners to rezone into the TOD and impose new standards (both more restrictive and less restrictive) as they redevelop.

With the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, staff recommends some modifications to the extent of the future TOD. The purpose of these recommended changes is to remove properties where redevelopment is unlikely to contribute to or detract from the character of Old Town, and to add properties where redevelopment is more likely to contribute to or detract from the character of Old Town.

The attached map shows the existing Historic Overlay District, the existing TOD, the current TOD future extension (the area in the existing Comprehensive Plan that is in the Future TOD) and the proposed TOD future extension (the area proposed for the 2035 to be included in the future TOD). The proposed changes can be summarized as follows:

- ***Properties that are shaded in white that are inside the dashed line are proposed to be removed from the TOD extension area.***
- ***Properties that are shaded in yellow that are outside the dashed line are proposed to be added to the TOD extension area.***
- ***Properties that are in yellow and are inside the dashed line are within the current TOD extension area and proposed to remain.***
- ***Properties that are in light blue are in the current TOD (staff does not propose removing any properties that are already within the TOD area).***

Note that the dashed line will not be shown in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan because it shows the extent of the TOD extension area from the previous Comprehensive Plan that will be replaced.

Additional Actions Related to George Mason University

During the course of the review of the first draft of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, as well as during earlier discussion regarding the Future Land Use Map, the Planning Commission stated an interest in providing a stronger connection between the City and George Mason University. Such discussions revolved around the Land Use Chapter and the Economic Vitality Chapter. Following are resources that may help support this discussion.

Supporting Plans:

Discussion of the relationship between the City and the University is partially supported by the 2015 Vision Fairfax Mason report and the 2017 GMU West Campus Vision report. A list of key issues from these reports that relate to the Land Use and Economic Vitality Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, along with links to the full reports, are provided below:

George Mason University West Campus Vision Report (2017):

<file:///N:/Planning/Plans,%20Studies%20and%20Presentations/George%20Mason%20West%20Campus/Mason-West-Fairfax-Campus-Vision-June-2017-.pdf>

In 2017, Mason conducted a three-day workshop in which faculty, staff, students, municipal administrators and the general public were asked to participate in envisioning the future of Mason over the course of the next thirty years. The West Campus Vision is a summary of those three days of explorations, discussions, participant questions and commentary as well as consultant recommendations. Five main areas of University interest were identified during initial interviews and discussed at open forums including:

- Campus Life and Student Housing;
- Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation;
- Transportation and Infrastructure;
- Economic Development and Collaborations;
- Academic, Research and Innovation.

The result of the workshops was to proceed with an alternative that concentrates a proposed Innovation District along both sides of Route 123 in the northern part of the Campus. Although discontinuous from the main campus and the proposed Innovation District, the alternative also proposes incorporating the existing GMU Potomac Arts Academy and Townhouse student housing site within the City of Fairfax. The following graphic shows the preliminary locations of the proposed Innovation District from the report, including the main district as well as the area within the City. The next step is for Mason to prepare an impact report on the results of this alternative.



Following the initial workshops, City staff proposed the following list of issues for the City to consider as analysis on the West Campus Vision proceeds:

- The concept needs further refinement; for example, the footprint of the “northern addition” extends beyond the boundaries of the GMU townhouses on Chain Bridge Road near West Drive; this should be vetted with the City’s Comprehensive Plan
- GMU should complete a build-out analysis of the proposed uses for the innovation district with an infrastructure plan and traffic impact study
- Beyond just on-site planning, the build-out analysis should consider off-site impacts, including: interstate access, wayfinding/signage, fire and emergency services, CUE bus service and routing, etc.
- Any additional connections to University Drive will obviously be a concern from the Chancery Park community, as would be height and scale of any buildings proposed on the north side of University Drive (at the current Robinson Square and University One sites)
- Will this concept pause and re-direct ongoing discussions regarding student housing, affordable housing, etc. at the Robinson Square and University One sites?

Vision Fairfax Mason Report (2015):

<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/home/showdocument?id=4679>

The City of Fairfax (City) and George Mason University (Mason) in partnership with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) hosted a three-day event in November 2014 to explore the connectivity, livability and sustainability between Mason and the City's Historic Downtown. The event, called a charrette, was an intensive planning workshop designed to build consensus and explore opportunities focused determining the short-term and long-term direction of the Downtown and surrounding area. Topics addressed included land use, multimodal transportation, urban design, economic development, pedestrian/bicycle access, housing, Town and Gown relations, and the overall prospectus for future connectivity between the City of Fairfax and George Mason University.

A report was presented to City Council in January 2015 that summarized the findings of the charrette and proposed 57 recommendations related to transportation, economic development, housing and land use for the City and the University to pursue. Following are a list of those recommendations staff believes are most pertinent and compatible with the Land Use or Economic Vitality Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation

Applicable transportation recommendations from the Vision Fairfax Mason Report have been considered in the development of the Multimodal Plan.

Economic Development/Cultural Arts

- 23. Consider creating topic based working groups between Fairfax and Mason.
- 25. Look for near term opportunities to add housing in the "Downtown" area.
- 28. Consider creating a more formal Business Improvement District.
- 29. Look for opportunities to incorporate Mason performing arts in Downtown.

Housing

- 32. Work with non-profit developers to identify sites for either new construction or rehabilitation of units affordable to households with incomes below 60% AMI.
- 33. Prepare comprehensive affordable housing strategy focusing on production as well as acquisition and rehabilitation through zoning and other planning "best practices".

Land Use/Historic Preservation

- 46. Establish sites for development at North & Main at West.
- 47. Consider development on north downtown site(s).
- 48. Discuss south downtown plans with property owners.
- 49. Create plan for south downtown with Mason.
- 50. Study Performing Arts venues in Downtown and Mason.
- 51. Work with Mason on OLLI, south downtown, and the performing arts venues.
- 56. Plan and complete development on sites along connection routes to Mason.
- 57. Continue to plan and develop infill sites in the historic Old Town.

Requested Information:Communication:

During the review of the Future Land Use Map at the March 26 regular meeting, the Planning Commission noted that the connection between the University and the City should be more strongly acknowledged through the future land use map. Before providing specific recommendations, the Commission requested staff to provide a list of known existing lines of communication between the City and the University. Following is a summary of applicable primary lines of communication (this list only includes lines of communication staff believes are pertinent to the Comprehensive Plan).

1. Economic Development Office – University/Community Liaison
2. Community Development and Planning – Facilities
3. Transportation (Public Works) – Facilities
4. Parks and Recreation – Facilities
5. Fairfax Campus Advisory Board (representatives from the University, the City and the County)

University City Partnership Example

During the review of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Plan at the June 25, 2018 regular meeting, the Planning Commission suggested more specific recommendations be provided regarding coordination between the University and the City. The Commission cited the College Park City – University Partnership, a non-profit local development corporation as an example. The partnership is guided by the following five commitment areas:

- Housing and Development: Homeownership loans, liaison with developers, landowners and public entities, reviews, sponsors and participates in planning studies, advocates for housing needs, business marketing and support, partners with Terrapin Development Corporation.
- Education: Supports partnerships between the University and local schools, supports school programs.
- Sustainability: Sustainability education and outreach, support awards and recognitions.
- Transportation: Manages bonds for small construction projects, represent the local community on State transportation projects, collaborative planning.
- Public Safety: Review City and University public safety programs and efforts.

One of the primary programs the partnership manages is the Homeownership Program, which provides loans of up to \$15,000 to University faculty homebuyers interested in purchasing a home in the City. The program receives grants from the University, the City and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Partnership Board of Directors includes University staff, current and former elected officials from the City and business owners.