

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Cunningham and Members of
the Planning Commission

From: Paul Nabti, Planning Division Chief

Subject: Public hearing and final recommendation to
City Council on the *City of Fairfax 2035
Comprehensive Plan*



Meeting

Date: December 10, 2018

BACKGROUND

Per the Code of Virginia, the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to “guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.” In addition, the Comprehensive Plan is used for guidance when considering land use applications and budget requests in the Capital Improvement Plan. The City’s Zoning Ordinance requires considering consistency with the Comprehensive Plan as criteria when evaluating rezoning, special use permit and special exception requests. All budget requests in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan are also required to demonstrate consistency with specific strategies or actions from the Comprehensive Plan.

The Code of the City of Fairfax charges the Planning Commission with the responsibility of planning for the future development of the city so that residential areas may be provided with healthy surroundings, so that the needs of industry and business may be recognized and so that transportation systems, utility, health, educational and recreational facilities and the city itself all may grow in a manner consonant with the efficient and economical use of public funds. The Code of Virginia requires that the Planning Commission prepare and recommend to City Council a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and that it be reviewed at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The current Comprehensive Plan was initially prepared in 2004 with major amendments in 2012. At the time of the 2012 amendments, the Planning Commission recognized the need to begin a process of rewriting the Comprehensive Plan in order to reconsider the underlying vision, goals and strategies that would direct the City’s development pattern over the next 15 to 20 years.

The process for rewriting the Comprehensive Plan began in 2015 with a vision to anticipate growth in the City through the year 2035. Development of the plan was based on a three-phase process beginning with information collection, followed by analysis and recommendations. Information collection included references to previous plans and studies that helped inform the Comprehensive Plan and input provided by members of the community, including residents, business owners, City Council, City boards and commissions, other stakeholders (George Mason University, Fairfax County, etc.), and City staff. Based on analysis of the data collected, and through consultation with the Planning Commission, City Council and City boards and Commissions, a series of goals, outcomes and actions were developed for each of the content areas that encompass the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and provide the foundation for the overall document.

More specific data analysis and additional outreach were conducted to support the development of the Future Land Use Map. The Multimodal Transportation Chapter was initially prepared through a separate planning process and integrated into the Comprehensive Plan. Final revisions to the Comprehensive Plan were based on review by members of the community through public open houses, online forums, and Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY

The *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* is a guide for the future growth in the City, focusing on community needs through the year 2035. Guidance and policy recommendations are provided through a vision, guiding principles, goals, outcomes, and actions. Fourteen Guiding Principles are categorized into five chapters: Land Use, Multimodal Transportation, Environment and Sustainability, Economic Vitality, and Community Services. Each chapter includes an introduction that provides background on the topic and a description of existing conditions, as well as opportunities and challenges facing the City that inform some of the policies suggested through the Comprehensive Plan. Additional background information, Goals, Outcomes, and Actions are then provided for each Guiding Principle. A summary of each of the 14 Guiding Principles, including the principle statement, a description of the principle and key actions, is provided below. Each Guiding Principle statement begins with the phrase *"In 2035, Fairfax is a city with..."*

Land Use...*the small-town appeal and a population that is diverse in its culture, demographics, and lifestyles that capitalizes on its location in the center of the growing region and with easy access to the Nation's Capital.*

A thoughtful mix of development types, as well as high-quality design and development, maintain the City's unique character as it evolves. New development and redevelopment are complementary to surrounding areas and contribute to an attractive, accessible, and economically viable place.

Key Actions:

1. Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development and redevelopment throughout the City.

Neighborhoods...*inviting neighborhoods, each with its own unique character.*

Compatible construction and thoughtful infill development preserves the City's neighborhoods' appeal, all while promoting better amenities and improving pedestrian accessibility.

Key Actions:

1. Ensure infill housing fits in with the surrounding neighborhood;

2. Expand existing pedestrian networks to increase connectivity.

Commercial Corridors & Activity Centers...*flourishing centers of commercial and mixed-use activity that include an assortment of grocery stores, restaurants, cafés, entertainment venues, retail stores, offices, and housing.*

Commercial Corridors are attractive and multimodal points of access, capturing a diverse mix of both tenants and visitors. Activity Centers – five existing commercial centers targeted for redevelopment – are well-designed pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use centers that are desirable places to live, work, shop, and dine.

Key Actions:

1. Develop and adopt Small Area Plans (detailed visions for concentrated geographic areas of the City) for all Activity Centers;
2. Market Old Town Fairfax and Northfax as priorities for new businesses and development.

Housing...*a choice of housing types that meet the needs of our community members at all stages of life.*

New housing developments and infill address the needs and demands of the City, while special care is taken to increase the amount of housing that is affordable and for older adults and persons with disabilities. Renovating existing housing stock is encouraged and supported through City-sponsored residential improvement programs.

Key Actions:

1. Support development of housing types that are not heavily represented;
2. Implement policies and programs to support development of housing that is affordable and expand options for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Community Design & Historic Preservation...*architecture that contributes to a vibrant, creative place and complements our historic character.*

New developments and improved public spaces enhance the City's character and economy through good design and appropriate building materials. Historic elements are protected and preserved, and adjacent redevelopment does not detract from these elements.

Key Actions:

1. Follow the guidance of the recently adopted City of Fairfax Design Guidelines for non-single-family detached development and building modifications throughout the City;
2. Implement measures to preserve and protect buildings of historic or architectural significance where appropriate.

Multimodal Transportation...*options for residents to easily, safely, and efficiently move within and between neighborhoods either by walking, bicycling, taking public transportation, or driving.*

The City is connected to the Greater Washington region across all modes of transportation, especially by expanding non-motorized infrastructure to encourage alternatives to driving where possible. Land use and transportation go hand-in-hand and both provide choices in transportation and mitigate vehicular traffic.

Key Actions:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Transportation Policies and Projects map;
2. Continue to explore measures for improvement of all modes of transportation.

Natural Environment...*a healthy ecosystem of naturally flowing streams, native plants, wildlife, contiguous natural habitat areas, and a healthy tree population.*

Protective measures ensure the City's air, water, vegetation, and wildlife are safeguarded from development impacts and restored over time. The City is less vulnerable to and more prepared for the natural and man-made hazards that threaten homes, businesses, and infrastructure.

Key Actions:

1. Implement policies to protect sensitive areas, natural areas and native vegetation;
2. Complete or implement recommendations of key policy plans, including The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Plan, the Climate and Energy Action Plan, the Urban Forest Management Plan and participation in the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Sustainability Initiatives...*sustainable practices that preserve, conserve, reuse, and recycle resources.*

Residents and business owners are educated about and implement energy-efficient technologies and practices, and citywide use of renewable energy sources is increased while waste is decreased.

Key Actions:

1. Establish a City green building policy;
2. Enact the renewable energy plan to achieve 100% renewable energy usage in government building by 2035 and 100% community-wide renewable energy usage by 2050.

Economic Vitality...*an economy that cultivates and promotes business success and entrepreneurial opportunities for large, small, and independent businesses and capitalizes on national, regional, and intellectual partnerships.*

Diversification of businesses in the City promotes its standing in the regional economy and attracts both new business sectors and new shoppers. Redevelopment, especially in Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers, is mindfully marketed and targeted, includes a mix of uses, and expands the City's commercial tax base.

Key Actions:

1. Promote development and redevelopment of Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers;
2. Attract new businesses and diversify businesses city-wide.

Education...*world-class community schools and a best-in-class education from pre-school to post-high school that prepares students to be productive, responsible members of society, capable of competing in the global economy, and motivated to pursue life-long learning.*

City schools continue to offer first-class instruction and facilities for its students, and educational opportunities for City residents of all ages enhances the City's livability for future generations.

Key Actions:

1. Continue the school services agreement with Fairfax County and ensure that school facilities remain sufficient;

2. Continue to provide educational opportunities beyond standard K-12 education and explore opportunities for new programs.

Parks & Recreation...*inviting, well-maintained parks, trails, open spaces, and multi-generational community centers.*

City residents have equitable access to high-quality park infrastructure that meets their interests and demands. The City offers a variety of programs, services, and facilities that benefit and appeal to City residents, and hosts programs and special events with both local and regional appeal.

Key Actions:

1. Monitor needs and opportunities for new and expanded parks and recreation facilities;
2. Enhance and expand program offerings and strengthen marketing for parks and recreation programs.

Cultural Arts...*a thriving cultural arts program that supports a variety of special events, art spaces, and performance venues.*

A broad variety of arts programs are offered for City residents of all ages and backgrounds through partnerships with local institutions and organizations, where appropriate. New visual and performing arts facilities help the City meet this goal.

Key Actions:

1. Study the need for new and expanded facilities to serve arts program;
2. Continue providing programs in support of the arts and explore opportunities to expand and diversify programming, including strengthening partnerships and integrating programs in to economic development initiatives.

Government & Public Safety...*exceptional governmental, police, and fire safety services.*

The City continues to provide the highest-quality public services in all sectors to its residents and businesses with first-class facilities and equipment.

Key Actions:

1. Continue to provide high quality services and monitor needs for facility modifications and expansions.

Infrastructure & Utilities...*safe, well-maintained infrastructure and the use of advanced technology.*

Providing access to high-quality utilities and infrastructure – water, sewer, energy, telecommunications, waste removal, and transportation – continues to be a key City function. As advanced technologies become available, the City monitors, evaluates, and utilizes them to improve efficiency, connectivity, and quality of life.

Key Actions:

1. Continue to provide high quality infrastructure systems and explore implementation of advanced technologies.

The Comprehensive Plan is supported by two appendices:

- **Appendix A – Chesapeake Bay Preservation Plan** identifies and characterizes the City’s water resources and addresses the effects of land use planning and development on water quality in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- **Appendix B - Transportation Practices and Policy** provides additional information on some of the more innovative practices discussed in the Multimodal Transportation Chapter.

The Comprehensive Plan is further supported by an Implementation Guide, which is a separate document developed as a resource to support implementation of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation Guide identifies every action provided for every Guiding Principle in the Comprehensive Plan along with identification of the lead responsible party in implementing that action, general timeframes for initiation and completion, and a status field. Recommended metrics to measure the impact of specific goals are also provided where appropriate. The status field is expected to be updated regularly as progress is made in accomplishing each action. In addition, occasional updates to the other fields may be necessary as recommended by City Council, the Planning Commission or staff, or based on recommendations of the Capital Improvement Plan.

PLAN REVISIONS

The first draft of the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* was distributed to the Planning Commission on May 9, 2018, followed by subsequent drafts on September 10, 2018, October 17, 2018 and December 5, 2018. Discussions on each draft were held with the Planning Commission. In addition, comments were sought from the general public on each draft through e-mail notifications to the Comprehensive Plan list serve, social media posts and articles in the Cityscene. In total, over two-hundred comments were received on the first three drafts. Each comment was recorded and provided a response. Comments were also identified if they resulted in a change to the subsequent draft.

The last Planning Commission discussion on the Comprehensive Plan occurred during the November 26, 2018 work session. This discussion focused on comments that had been received to date on the third draft (October 17) of the plan from the City Council at a joint work session on October 23, 2018, as well as additional comments from the Planning Commission and the general public. The final draft, released on December 5, 2018, is a result of these changes. Following is a summary of changes that occurred after the November 26, 2018 work session, the majority of which are a direct result of the discussion during that work session.

Comprehensive Plan:

- Acknowledgments page (p. v): Added the following, per discussion on acknowledging community members providing comments on Comprehensive Plan drafts: “Special thanks to City residents, business owners, and stakeholders who have reviewed and provided comments to City Staff on the 2035 Comprehensive Plan drafts.”
- Land Use Strategies chapter, Land Use Strategies section (p. 27): Revised Future Land Use Map to reflect Truro Church parcel containing home as Single-Family Detached Neighborhood Place Type.
- Land Use Strategies chapter, Land Use Strategies section (p. 29 and 30): Revised Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood and Multifamily Neighborhood Physical

Characteristics to clarify that more stringent height and setback recommendations apply adjacent to lower density residential development both within and outside the City limits.

- Land Use Strategies chapter, Land Use Strategies section (p. 34): Removed previous Activity Center residential limitations and added the following statement: “The majority of future residential growth is anticipated to occur within the five Activity Centers identified in the Future Land Use Map, with the recommended numbers of units in each Activity Center to be identified in the respective Activity Center’s Small Area Plan.”
- Land Use Strategies chapter, Housing section (p. 54): Eliminated Outcome H1.2 and renumbered previous Action H1.2.1 as H1.1.3 for inclusion under Outcome H1.1.
- Multimodal Transportation chapter, Introduction (p. 66) added four influential aspirations.
- Multimodal Transportation chapter, Action 2.4.1.5 added pertaining to on-time performance of the CUE system. This was added to replace a target metric.
- Environment and Sustainability chapter, Natural Environment section (p. 106): Incorporated greenhouse gas emission percentages into Action NE1.2.1.

Implementation Guide:

- All pages with matrices: Added “Status” column along right edge to capture updates to Actions.
- Housing, Goal 1 (p. 9): Eliminated Outcome H1.2 “Expansion of housing opportunities that increase supply while maintaining existing neighborhood character” and renumbered previous Action H1.2.1 as H1.1.3 for inclusion under Outcome H1.1.
- Housing, Goal 2 (p. 10): Removed target numbers of housing units from metrics.
- Natural Environment, Goal 1 (p. 33): Removed greenhouse gas emission percentages from metrics and incorporated into Action NE1.2.1.

RECOMMENDATION

The intent of the December 10, 2018 Planning Commission public hearing is for the Planning Commission to hear the final edits to the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan*, hear public testimony on the plan and make a final recommendation to City Council. The Code of Virginia states that the Planning Commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon approval, the commission shall by resolution recommend the plan, or part thereof, to the City Council and a copy shall be certified to the Council. **Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution to approve the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan*, dated December 5, 2018** and certify a copy to City Council for final consideration. This recommendation is based on consideration and incorporation of all comments received by the City Council, the Planning Commission and the general public. The resolution includes acceptance, but not adoption, of the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Guide* as a separate document to be used as a resource in implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

1. *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan*, December 5, 2018
2. *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Guide*, Dated December 5, 2018
3. Resolution
4. Sample Motion
5. Certification



Resolution No. PC-18-02

**City of Fairfax, Virginia Planning Commission
Resolution Approving and Recommending Adoption of the
2035 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fairfax**

WHEREAS, § 2-227 of the Code of the City of Fairfax charges the Planning Commission with the responsibility of planning for the future development of the city so that residential areas may be provided with healthy surroundings, so that the needs of industry and business may be recognized and so that transportation systems; highway, utility, health, educational and recreational facilities and the city itself all may grow in a manner consonant with the efficient and economical use of public funds; and

WHEREAS, the Code of Virginia requires that the Planning Commission prepare and recommend to City Council a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and that it be reviewed at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recognized that a process to develop a new Comprehensive Plan should commence following approval of the last amendments to the existing Comprehensive Plan in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission began the process of preparing the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* in 2015 and has made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of the territory and inhabitants of the City of Fairfax; and

WHEREAS, the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* has been prepared with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the City which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, welfare, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* has been posted on a website maintained by the City where the Planning Commission typically posts information, notice has been given per §15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia on a public hearing on the plan with the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on December 10, 2018 in accordance with §15.2-2225 of the Code of Virginia.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Fairfax hereby approves the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* in the draft dated December 5, 2018 as may be further amended by the Planning Commission, and forward it to City Council with the recommendation to approve and adopt.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Fairfax hereby accepts the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Guide* in the draft dated December 5, 2018 as a resource to support implementation of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, which may be amended by the Planning Commission without additional formal action.

This resolution shall be effective as provided by law.

Adopted this 10th day of December 2018

Chair

ATTEST:

Secretary

The vote to approve was recorded as follows:

- Commissioner/Chair Cunningham _____
- Commissioner/Vice Chair Jaworski _____
- Commissioner Angres _____
- Commissioner Armstrong _____
- Commissioner Burrell _____
- Commissioner Harmon _____
- Commissioner Wheeler-Smith _____

APPROVAL

I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT RESOLUTION NUMBER PC-18-02, APPROVING THE *CITY OF FAIRFAX 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN* RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL AND ADOPTION TO CITY COUNCIL IN THE DRAFT DATED DECEMBER 5, 2018 AND FURTHER RECOMMENDING ACCEPTANCE OF THE *CITY OF FAIRFAX 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE* AS A RESOURCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

APPROVAL WITH REVISIONS

I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT RESOLUTION NUMBER PC-18-02, APPROVING THE *CITY OF FAIRFAX 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN* RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL AND ADOPTION TO CITY COUNCIL IN THE DRAFT DATED DECEMBER 5, 2018 AND FURTHER RECOMMENDING ACCEPTANCE OF THE *CITY OF FAIRFAX 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE* AS A RESOURCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING MODIFICATIONS: [Planning Commission to list modifications (additions, deletions, edits, etc.)]

Deferral

I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION DEFER A DECISION ON RESOLUTION NUMBER PC-18-02 TO A DATE CERTAIN OF [Planning Commission to state date for deferral].

Planning Commission Sample Motion

ATTACHMENT 4D

Denial

I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION NOT ADOPT RESOLUTION NUMBER PC-18-02, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: [Planning Commission state reasons].

CERTIFICATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO CITY COUNCIL

I HEREBY CERTIFY, in accordance with § 15.2-2225 of the Code of Virginia, that the attached is a true copy of the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* approved by the City of Fairfax Planning Commission on December 10, 2018.

Paul Cunningham
Chair, Planning Commission

Date

ATTEST:

Tina Gillian
Secretary, Planning Commission