City of Fairfax, Virginia
City Council Work Session

Agenda Item # 5c

City Council Meeting 2/5/2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Robert A. Stalzer, City Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion on the draft *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan*.

ISSUE(S): The purpose of this work session is to review comments received from the City Council on the draft *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* before proceeding to a public hearing to consider adoption of the plan, as scheduled for February 12.

SUMMARY: City Council last discussed the *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan* at a work session on January 8, 2019. At that time, the Council provided several comments to staff and recommended proceeding to a public hearing to consider final adoption of the plan on February 12, 2019. The Council also directed staff to provide an initial response to their comments, allowing the Council to review and respond, or provide additional comments before the hearing. On January 16, staff sent the initial comment responses to Council and requested final comments by January 28. The attached table provides a list of the final comments provided to staff from City Council along with responses from staff. Staff will review these comments and responses with Council at the work session on February 5. Staff can also review the initial round of comments with Council as needed.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss comments provided by City Council on the draft *City of Fairfax 2035 Comprehensive Plan*.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION: Defer or do not conduct the work session.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF/ POC: Paul Nabti, Division Chief, Planning
Brooke Hardin, Director, Community Development & Planning

COORDINATION: Planning Commission, various City boards and commissions and City departments.

ATTACHMENTS: Comment Summary

City Council comments submitted to staff

	From	Comment	Response
2-1	Yi	Page 20: Housing Affordability: As the regional economy has grown, **general** increases in housing values have outpaced increases in income. ~~As a result, there are few residential units in the City that are affordable to lower income households~~. About one-third of City households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs, as shown in Figure 5, **which also highlights that almost half of renters reside in units that are potentially cost-burdensome**.	Staff concurs with revising the last sentence in this paragraph as recommended. Staff does not recommend removing the second sentence. While Figure 5 highlights concerns with cost burden for current City residents, a separate concern is that many people who would prefer to live in the City for employment or other reasons are not able to do so due to housing costs.
2-2	Yi	Page 20: Housing Affordability: Note: ~~30% of annual income is considered to be the maximum affordable housing cost for~~ The Department of Housing and Urban Development~~'s Housing Affordability Index~~ **defines cost-burdened families as those who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.**	Staff concurs with revising this sentence to refer to the HUD definition for cost burdened families.
2-3	Yi	Page 37: Social and Civic Network: Comments: I remain uncomfortable with this new designation. I recognize that it may be too late in the game for staff to reconfigure the draft to significantly change this, but as I may have briefly addressed during the work session, I personally prefer these areas being defined as "Institutional" and the definition provided on p. 149 of the current Comprehensive Plan.	Staff does not recommend revisions to the Social and Civic Network Place Type. Staff believes the definition of the Social and Civic Network Place Type in the proposed Comprehensive Plan is similar to the definition of the Institutional Land Use Category in the existing Comprehensive Plan, with the exception of residential uses being considered in support of Housing Goal 2.
2-4	Yi	Page 39: Parcel Specific Considerations - INOVA site: ~~Proximity to George Mason University and Old Town~~ **Its unique location** makes it suitable for **different uses to include, commercial**, multifamily**, and/or townhouses uses**. Commercial uses are appropriate along Chain Bridge Road. Any multifamily development should provide substantial buffering to abutting residential uses to the north. Building heights should be no more than three floors along the north, east, and south property lines. Additionally, townhouse uses may be considered as a transition to adjacent, lower-density residential uses.	Staff concurs with revising this paragraph as recommended.
2-5	Yi	Page 53: Housing: In addition to housing that is affordable, housing that is designed for older adults and people with disabilities **to accommodate the City's relatively high proportion of older adults, and "move-up" housing for growing younger families seeking larger, modern single-family housing without leaving the City** should likewise be prioritized.	Staff does not recommend this revision at this time. This paragraph is intended to focus on housing types that are less likely to be market driven. Accommodation of market driven unit types are discussed in paragraphs one and two. The language of these paragraphs is intended to allow flexibility to accommodate a variety of housing types based on social trends and market fluctuations, rather than specify target residents and unit types.
2-6	Yi	Page 110: Sustainability Initiatives (Action SI1.2.1): Develop a plan for government operations **and the community** to achieve 100% renewable electricity **within the upcoming decades** ~~by 2035 and community-wide 100% renewable electricity by 2050~~. [suggested revision 1] **Conduct feasibility studies and subsequent plans** for government operations to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2035 and community-wide 100% renewable electricity by 2050. [suggested revision 2]	Staff concurs with revising this action per suggested revision 2.

City Council comments submitted to staff

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2-7		I would prefer to somehow, somewhere still incorporate "small town atmosphere" in our 2035 Comprehensive Plan, if at all possible. Even a single mention of it in either the introduction or the guiding principles would resolve this for me. I recognize that the Planning Commission engaged in a lengthy dialogue about this matter, but as you are aware, the current Comprehensive Plan uses the term "small town" frequently and almost throughout the document. In fact, there's an entire subsection in the Guiding Principles dedicated to "Protect the Small Town Atmosphere." I am also aware that an earlier draft of the the 2035 Comprehensive Plan did use the term "small town" in the Guiding Principles, but has since been altered. I don't dislike the term "close-knit community," and encourage its retention in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, but I do strongly believe that our "small town atmosphere" is an incredibly special and unique character that it bears preserving those words in our most important guiding document which addresses the heart of our identity.	This comment is subject to City Council discussion.
2-8	DeMarco	Housing assessment as identified in Action H1.1.1., should be included in the upcoming budget as an immediate initiative.	Staff recommends that this item be considered through the budget process as opposed to the Comprehensive Plan review.
2-9	DeMarco	The Commercial Corridor place type should support a density of **a minimum of** ~~at least~~ 0.4 floor to area ratio.	Staff concurs with revising this sentence as recommended.
2-10	DeMarco	Promoting the use of the PACE Program should be added to the commercial corridor as well.	Staff recommends a reference to the PACE program be added to Action SI1.1.1.4 as follows: "SI1.1.1.4 Implement programs that offer clean energy financing solutions for residential and commercial sectors, such as the Solarize NOVA campaign, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program, and Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation (FRHC) Loans." While not specific to commercial corridors, staff believes this is the most appropriate location to reference the PACE program for commercial properties based on the intent of the program.
2-11	DeMarco	I think we should have metrics for every comp plan section. If there are goals and outcomes, then there should be a way for us to measure success and I think we would do that with the appropriate metrics.	Staff reviewed the Implementation Guide for potential additional metrics. A list of recommended additional metrics was provided in the previous comment responses to Council on January 16. The additional metrics result in at least one metric for all but seven of the 34 goals.
2-12	DeMarco	I think it appropriate to take all metrics from the implementation guide and put them in a separate document that would be the equivalent of a balanced scorecard to assess our success in delivering against the comprehensive plan.	A separate reference document equivelant to a balanced score card may be appropriate to monitor metrics. Staff recommends this be further discussed outside the Comprehensive Plan review process.
2-13	DeMarco	Any metrics that are reflected in another document like the School Board Strategic Plan or PRAB Strategic Plan should also be included in the overall balanced scorecard to get a comprehensive view of success.	A separate reference document equivelant to a balanced score card may be appropriate to monitor metrics. Staff recommends this be further discussed outside the Comprehensive Plan review process.
2-14	DeMarco	Since there are so many outcomes listed, we should indicate those items that are base work versus project work. This would help with staffing needs.	A field has been added to the Implementation Guide matrix to identify whether the action is ongoing base work or is a specific project.

City Council comments submitted to staff

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2-15	Miller	Page v. Listing of Comp Plan participants Under City Staff – would it be appropriate to add former City Manager Robert L. Sisson and new City Manager Rob Stalzer?	The current and former City Managers will be added to the acknowledgements page.
2-16	Miller	Page 2: Third Column, first line: Change "charm" to "close knit community" or "small town atmosphere"	Staff is supportive of revising this language subject to Council discussion.
2-17	Miller	Page 26: Column Two and Page 97: Recommended Transportation Policies/Projects: Both of these pages reference the potential for a future Metro Station in the vicinity of Fairfax City. Time for a discussion about Metro prior to adoption of Comp Plan?	Reference to the Metrorail extension is based on the recommendations of the Multimodal Transportation Plan, which was supported by City Council in 2017 and is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Specific reference to a potential metro station at Chain Bridge Road and I-66 was discussed with City Council in October 2018. This discussion was requested by transportation staff to improve the City's ability to coordinate transportation projects with regional representatives.
2-18	Miller	Page 43: Fairfax County Property Yards: City discussions on right of first refusal. 1. Are these discussions ongoing? 2. Who is authorized to negotiate on behalf of the City? 3. Should this language be included? 4. Suggest that this language be deleted.	A first right of refusal agreement would not commit the City to purchase any of the Fairfax County property yards, but would allow the City to analyze potential benefits of pursuing those properties if they become available. Specifics of negotiations should be determined at that time, as opposed to being designated through the Comprehensive Plan.
2-19	Miller	Page 43: Fairfax County Property Yards: Properties targeted as locations for potential affordable housing partnerships - why is this language included when the council does not have a policy on this subject?	Consideration of affordable housing on Fairfax County property yard sites supports Housing Action H2.1.4 by providing opportunities for partnering with other institutions to accommodate new dedicated affordable housing units.
2-20	Miller	When – if ever – will the Council adopt the recommendations of recommended by the Affordable Housing Committee?	This question is subject to City Council discussion. Note that the Comprehensive Plan has been developed with reference to several plans, studies and other documents that have not been formally adopted by City Council.
2-21	Miller	Page 56: Affordable Housing Goals: 1. Action H2.1.1 – "Provide a regular funding stream to maintain a robust housing affordability programs and housing trust fund" Question: Who/what provides this funding stream? What amount? Annually? If questions cannot be reasonably answered, this should be removed.	As with many actions in the Comprehensive Plan, the purpose of this action is to establish a priority. Specifics on funding sources and amounts should be determined outside the Comprehensive Plan development process.
2-22	Miller	In general, the language on affordable housing comes from the Mayor's advisory group. If City Council wants to have a strong program, the Council needs to take additional steps to make it happen. Housing assessment next and then a strategic plan on housing to include affordable housing as well as senior housing and all other types of housing to bring a balanced and vibrant population to the City.	This comment is subject to City Council discussion.

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2-23	Miller	Page 77: Multimodal Transportation – Goal 1: Action 1.1.5.3 -- Pursue a connection from Jermantown Road to Waples Mill Road north of Fairfax Blvd. Question: Please define location – North of 66 near Phoenix Drive Is this realistic? If not realistic, then remove.	The purpose of this action is to consider options for a new connection between Jermantown Road and Waples Mill as an alternative to the Jermantown Road/Fairfax Boulevard intersection. This connection could work in connection with improvements to Jermantown Road recommended in Action MM1.1.5.1. While no specific location is under consideration, staff recommends maintaining this language should an opportunity arise through redevelopment or other efforts.
2-24	Miller	Page 122: Community Services – Education, Second Column: Change "Shared Service Agreement" to "School Service Agreement" consistent with language on Page 129 when referring to school agreement with Fairfax County.	Staff concurs with revising this language as recommended.
2-25	Miller	Page 135: Parks and Recreation – Goal 2: Action PR2.1.1 Add the following: "Implement community and senior center plan and construct facilities as proposed.	Staff recommends revising Action PR2.1.1 to read "Conduct a study to determine how the City's long term needs for a community center and senior center can be best met and implement the recommendations of this study, including construction of recommended facilities".
2-26	Miller	Pages 137 to 139: Cultural Arts: General comment – The Comp Plans spends more time detailing the needs of a Cultural Arts program than the needs of our schools! I am concerned that we are elevating a wish list over a needs list. (COA Strategic Plan is awesome, but how does the wants of the Commission fit the broader community needs?) Not sure how to proceed on this section, but would like to raise the question prior to adoption.	This comment is subject to Council discussion. Note that the Community Services Chapter does not prioritize any service over another as each represents unique components of the community.