

From: barb cram
To: [Paul Stoddard](#)
Subject: Fwd: Streetscape Task Force A&H Draft that needs some input
Date: Friday, November 04, 2016 12:31:57 AM

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your patience. The ARTS & HUMANITIES COUNCIL response to the Streetscape Task Force memorandum and questions are below. I may have to present an addendum as I still have not heard back from everyone, but wanted to get this off to you asap, since you needed it this week.

Thank you.

Barbara Cram, Chairman
The Arts & Humanities Council of Falls Church
An Advisory Council to City Council

The Arts and Humanities Council of Falls Church, an Advisory Committee to City Council reviewed the draft Streetscape Taskforce report in the memo dated September 13, 2016. The A&H Council and its Legislative Committee of the Council reviewed and discussed several points in the report and the results are listed below.

First the questions in the cover memorandum are answered below:

1. We did not locate per se a statement regarding the Vision and Goals in the draft of StreetScape Standards. Even though the general scope as specified are acceptable but they do not include some elements that were missed. These topics are listed separately below.
2. Outline of the Cross Sections – flexibility recommended for sign placement, especially where there is street parking.
3. Regarding question about color scheme of furnishings and light poles, opinion was not conclusive on color or the idea of totally matching the furnishings and street lamp poles. The recently gray paint work on existing street lamps is fine. Many did agree and were pleased with the S. Maple Avenue benches (gray with wood seating) and gray light poles that complemented the brick mortar and gray trims on the buildings.
4. Question of property owners maintaining landscaping around their properties except the pruning of trees is acceptable and the Council feels this may well improve the overall appearance of streetscape, and reduce the City budget for current maintenance efforts that will now be performed and paid for by the property owners. Setting expectations and defining a process if maintenance is inadequate is also recommended.
5. Bull nose brick perimeter on brick planters is highly recommended to keep salt damage from tree roots

and killing of tree. The brick perimeter creates a strong classic appearance and the Arts and Humanities Council prefers this option for plant health, clean finish, and neater tree and shrub bed appearance.

6. Missing items. Recommend inclusion of these general and specific items that were not covered in the guidelines/standards as presented in the document sent.

A. Street Decor -
Seasonal lights

Flowers in Pole Planters on Washington (2 blocks) & Broad (3 blocks)

B. Historical Markers and Trails Signage and Wayfinding

Existing - Care and maintenance (straightening- recommend installation of LSI sleeve at base/ painting)-

Falls Church Historic Trail Kiosks (green map) -

Refurbishing or Replacement of the Historic Trail Kiosks used for Historic Trail maps, literature

C. Event Banners

Arts and Humanities Council of Falls Church Event banners are on light pole hardware obtained by grant from EDA to compensate for loss of street banners that spanned the roadway (new VDOT regulation at the time). Established for promotion of arts, theater, culture and history events of approved non-profits.

D. City Map of existing and planned amenities that can be updated is recommended indicating the locations of bus shelters, Information kiosks, Bikeshare, Furnishings, Historic Trail signage, Street Decor areas (pole planters and event banner hardware and Seasonal Decor areas indicated.

E. Recommend the establishment of a permanent Streetscape Committee for updating, review, and making recommendations to City Council for non-conforming situations, and guidance.

DATE: October 16, 2016

TO: Streetscape Taskforce

FROM: Citizens' Advisory Committee for Transportation

SUBJECT: Streetscape Standards Update

Report

The CACT reviewed and commented on The Streetscape Taskforce request for feedback on the latest draft updates to the City's streetscape standards.

1. Vision and goals: The draft vision and goals were developed through conversations with City Council and group exercises with the Streetscape Taskforce. Do the draft vision and goals respond to the interests of your group? Do they represent the overall interests of the City? See pages 3-4.

CACT Comments: The CACT felt that providing a better definition of "Brand" was needed. Although "a family friendly place" was mentioned, there was not enough to describe the desire to make our city feel comfortable and inviting. Although "branding" may be important for our local businesses, creating a comfortable streets that feel safe and welcome should also be a priority.

2. Cross Sections: The draft cross sections were developed by reviewing standards used in other walkable communities and finding a mix of spaces that works for the local context in the City. Do the proposed cross sections provide the right mix of space for amenities, pedestrian traffic, and building uses? See pages 14 – 25

CACT Comments: We are all in support of requiring a flush tree pit to improve the walkability of our streets. We would like to see the following added to plan.

- We support the Twenty Foot option (both option 1 & 2)
- We request that clarification is given 5x12 (page 12) is detailed as recommended tree pit, so why is 5x14 on all images?
- We would like something to be included to address the increase of bike traffic on our sidewalks.
- We would like considerations to be shared on solutions for the existing problem of no required minimum for unobstructed areas on our current sidewalks.

3. Street Furniture: The draft street furniture was selected to unify the look and feel of the different areas of the City and to update the materials described in previous policies. Does the proposed street furniture (style, color, etc.) promote the City's brand? See pages 9-11.

CACT Comments: Supports the selection of all black StreetScape furniture. This includes the metal, Victor Stanley bench and the 'hitch' option for future bike racks. The CACT also would like the Taskforce to consider adding the Little City logo on all new streets signs. We would also like to see signs in Vietnamese around the Eden Center.

4. Maintenance: Maintenance of landscaping in commercial areas and of street trees has historically been the responsibility of the City Arborist. This is consistent with City Code Section 44-24(a) that requires all street tree work to be performed with the consent of the Arborist. To increase the funding available for streetscape maintenance, recent redevelopment projects have agreed to maintain the streetscape in front of their properties. How should maintenance of streetscape, plantings, and trees be divided between the public and private side? See page 30.

CACT Comments: None

5. Trees: The positioning and size of planters impacts many aspects of streetscape, including aesthetics, pedestrian passage, emergency access, and spacing of street furniture. Are the following proposals right for the City – tree spacing, planter sizes, planter edging? See pages 12- 13.

CACT Comments: We support the flush tree planters. Would like to see a minimum 5'x12' size for all tree pits.

From: Sally Cole
To: [Paul Stoddard](#)
Cc: [Joe Wetzel](#); [Alan Frank](#); [Rachelle Barimany](#); [Painter, Andrew](#); [Barb Cram](#); [Tim Stevens](#); [Erik Pelton](#); [Steve Rogers](#); [Gary LaPorta](#)
Subject: Streetscape Task Force
Date: Tuesday, November 01, 2016 3:13:39 PM

Dear Paul:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Streetscape Taskforce per the memo dated September 13, 2016. The Chamber's Legislative Committee reviewed the documents provided. Below are our responses to the questions posed:

- 1) **Vision and Goals** – While we did not note a particular vision statement in the draft standards document, the general overview and specified goals seemed appropriate and adequate.
- 2) **Cross Sections** – The cross section standards designated seem suitable although we would ask for flexibility regarding sidewalk sign placement, particularly in locations with on-street parking. Additionally, more information regarding the sidewalk minimums and rationale for the proposed sidewalk sections would be helpful.
- 3) **Street Furniture** – Given the costs incurred recently repainting the current street lamp and traffic light poles, the recommendation is to incorporate color changes slowly, as repainting is required. There was no consensus regarding the actual color scheme or design concepts or even the need for consistency. The committee does believe that the City's "brand" should be strongly considered in determining the appearance of amenities.
- 4) **Maintenance** – The Chamber is pleased to see that property owners will be afforded the opportunity to maintain landscaping around their properties. This enables them to control the appearance of their property and saves City resources. The Chamber would like this option to be made available, but not mandatory, to existing property owners. The Chamber also recommends that policies be put in place to ensure compliance by the property owners.

The Chamber's legislative committee noted that there were a number of streetscape issues missing from the document and recommends that the following items be addressed:

- Undergrounding of Utilities
- Marking of the City Historic Crossroads (Broad and Washington Intersection)
- Tree Lights (holiday and other times of the year)
- Pole Planters currently installed at Crossroads area 100 and 200 blocks of Broad and 100 blocks N. & South Washington.
- Branding via City markers above the street signs
- Street and Pole Banners for non-profit arts, theater, culture and history events (per EDA grant for pole hardware).
- Gateway Signage that is distinctive and welcoming at the designated gateways and potentially others.
- Sandwich Board Signs for businesses
- Bike and Bus Shelter Locations (while the plans were referenced, these items directly

impact the streetscape and therefore should be addressed in this document as well.)

- Historic trail signage

Thank you again Paul for the opportunity to have representatives serve on the task force and to provide feedback on the draft document. Please let us know if you have any questions. SDC

Sally D. Cole

Executive Director

Falls Church Chamber of Commerce

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November 7, 2016

**TO: Paul Stoddard, Principal Planner
Carly Aubrey, Senior Planner**

FROM: Rick Goff, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: EDA Streetscape Feedback

On October 4, 2016 the EDA Board of Directors received an update from Chairman Mike Novotny on the work of the Streetscape Task Force on which he serves as co-chair. Materials provided by planning staff, including the task force's draft report, were distributed to the board and reviewed by Mr. Novotny. EDA members Bob Young and Rachelle Barimany also serve on the task force and contributed additional background information.

EDA Vice Chairman Erik Pelton commented that the work of the task force ties closely to City visioning efforts, placemaking, branding, and the goal of establishing a uniform theme and appearance for public space in the City. He added that welcome signs at gateway locations are very weak and a good place to begin with implementation of the new streetscape standards. He said the draft report is an excellent document to start and he looks forward to more details that will follow.

Mr. Novotny requested board feedback on some specific issues addressed in the report. On the issue of tree planters, the board consensus is for the 'flush' versus 'raised' treatment option. Board members supported a proposed code change to require 22-foot setbacks for larger buildings. Other suggestions from the board include electrical outlets for tree lights, additional bike racks with more capacity than the decorative racks, and more pedestrian bump outs at downtown street crossings.

I hope this summary is helpful as you gather feedback from boards and commissions on the streetscape draft standards.

cc: EDA Chairman Mike Novotny and Members of the Board



Date: October 28, 2016
To: Paul Stoddard, Principal Planner
From: Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC)
Subject: Comments on Streetscape Design Standards Review

The ESC supports many aspects of the revised draft Streetscape Design Standards. Overall, we support the objectives of the revised standards. We commend the Task Force's efforts in particular to improve walkability in the City of Falls Church, which will enable the City to reduce dependence on automobiles.

Please find the ESC's comments below:

1) **Vision and goals**

The ESC suggests that the environmental goal be revised as follows: "**Promote environmental sustainability** and tree canopy."

The ESC fully supports a robust urban tree canopy. At the same time, there are many other elements of smart streetscape design that contribute to an environmentally sustainable urban landscape. These include reducing greenhouse gas and particulate emissions through enhanced walkability and connections to sustainable transportation, as well as reducing stormwater runoff by integrating green infrastructure elements in the streetscape. We would like to see these benefits articulated in the document.

With respect to walkability, the ESC supports efforts to increase pedestrian safety by increasing the number of crosswalks with enhanced safety features such as hawk signals and Leading Pedestrian Indicator sequencing.

2) **Maintenance**

The ESC supports transferring the bulk of maintenance responsibilities to private landowners, with an important caveat: the City should develop clear, rigorous maintenance standards that landowners must apply and should monitor and enforce these standards with input from the City Arborist as appropriate.

To support private landowners' maintenance of planters, the ESC supports proposals to explore environmentally friendly alternatives to road salt as a de-icing tool. In addition to damaging plant health, rock salt is found in increasing concentrations in urban waters – including drinking water – and has a negative impact on aquatic life. The City should take advantage of MWCOG's cooperative purchasing program for Calcium Manganese Acetate, a low corrosion, plant friendly, effective alternative to rock salt. With volume purchase, the cost of this material

should be competitive with rock salt/brine and, once deployed, would set a standard for the region as well.

3) **Trees and planters**

The ESC recommends that private landowners retain the flexibility to install planters that are designed to capture stormwater runoff.

Stormwater runoff is a leading cause of pollution to local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, and it is the only one that is still on the rise. Jurisdictions around the region are implementing programs to install green infrastructure on both public and private land to achieve compliance with water quality regulations. Many of these programs are ambitious, fully integrating green infrastructure into design guidelines for streetscapes and urban infrastructure. While Falls Church City has not yet attained that level of ambition, the City should at a minimum retain the ability to use streetscapes as one potential location for stormwater infiltration facilities to support MS4 permit compliance.

Safety and appearance of green infrastructure installed on sidewalks have been concerns within the City. The City should avail itself of design guidelines developed by other jurisdictions to mitigate these concerns. For example, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation Green Infrastructure Standards includes safety and access guidelines as well as plant lists and maintenance schedules. The safety guidelines require an 18" raised edge if there is a vertical drop in a bioretention facility adjacent to a high volume pedestrian area and 4" high and 6" wide curb in low volume pedestrian areas. Please see this [link](#) for reference.

We look forward to continued interaction between the Planning staff, Stormwater Management technical staff and members of the Streetscape Taskforce to develop guidelines and graphic standards applicable to stormwater BMPs (Best Management Practices) installed along the City's sidewalks and streets.



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: November 7, 2016
TO: Chairs Novotny and Thurston and Members of the Streetscape Taskforce
FROM: Chair Meeks and Members of the Planning Commission
SUBJECT: Streetscape Taskforce, comments on draft standards

Purpose

On September 13, 2016 the Streetscape Taskforce requested feedback from Boards and Commissions on draft Streetscape Standards. The Planning Commission discussed the draft Streetscape Standards during an October 17, 2016 work session and a November 7, 2016 work session. This memo summarizes Planning Commission comments on the draft Streetscape Standards.

Comments

Example Photos

- To highlight positive elements of the City's existing streetscape, the Planning Commission recommends using photos from the City when possible, as opposed to relying on photos from other communities.
- The Planning Commission acknowledges that some photos were selected to highlight particular elements, as noted in the captions. The Planning Commission recommends that photos be checked to ensure they are consistent with the caption / show the desired effect.

Goals

- The Planning Commission understands that the use of bullets implies that the goals are not listed in a priority order.
- The Planning Commission recommends that safety and accessibility be listed first because the ordering may be interpreted as a priority order.

Building Setback and Building Undulation

- A building setback of 20' is already established in the City's zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission recommends not including additional requirements for building undulation because those decisions should instead be made on a case-by-case basis.

Sidewalk Width

- The Planning Commission recommends a 10' pedestrian space to allow sufficient passage.

Tree Planter Edging

- The Planning Commission does not have a firm recommendation on the issue of raised versus flush planters. The Planning Commission recommends that the following issues be considered:
 - A raised edge can be a tripping hazard
 - A raised edge matches existing streetscape
 - It is not clear from information provided that raised edges promote tree health
 - If trampling of root zones is a concern, can tree grates be used as an alternative?
 - Raised planters can give the appearance of a suburban design, which may not be in keeping with the City's downtown areas

Street Furniture Color

- The Planning Commission recommends the following color combinations:
 - The new black style benches be used along Broad Street
 - The Pearson Square style benches be used along Washington Street. The small area plans speak to each street having its own identity, and this concept should be carried forward.
 - Street can color should be matched to the bench color.
 - Street lights and mast arms along Broad and Washington should stay the existing grey color to avoid being too bold/loud.
 - All bike racks should be green to be more visible.

Trash Can Maintenance

- The Planning Commission noted that some trash cans are overfull and in need of more frequent emptying.

Street Lamp Styles

- The Planning Commission prefers the existing street lamp style along W Broad Street.
- The Planning Commission does not like the lamps along Park Avenue, they are too close together and sun-like in color.

Bike Rack Style

- The Planning Commission supports the green bike racks that look like bikes.
- The Planning Commission is less supportive of the bike rack consisting of a black post and circle with an inscribed bicycle design, as it is smaller and looks less utilitarian.

Street Sign Style

- The Planning Commission recommends that sign toppers be used for specific areas of interest.

Sidewalk Sandwich signs

- The Planning Commission does not have a firm recommendation on sidewalk sign boards. The Planning Commission wants to see regulations that balance flexibility, control, and sufficient pedestrian access. Signs should follow code and guidelines regarding pedestrian access.

Maintenance

The Planning Commission supports allowing/requiring property owners to maintain the streetscape in front of their properties.

- During budget down turns, maintenance is one of the first things to get cut, so relying on the private sector makes sense.
- Some developers have already been required to do this, so the City is learning how to manage these agreements.
- Health of the tree stays with the City Arborist, other maintenance to private side, which provides a good balance.
- Trees- when they die, need to be replaced with the tree species from the site plan, to confirm landscaping is consistent with what was approved.
- A template or guide for maintenance agreements should be developed to make clear what is expected.

De-icing materials

- The Planning Commission supports alternatives to non-sodium chloride but feels that the materials best suited to clear ice should be used.

Outdoor Dining Standards

- The Planning Commission supports outdoor dining, but wants to ensure sufficient space is left open for pedestrians.



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

Date: October 21, 2016

To: Paul Stoddard, Principal Planner

From: Chairman, Tree Commission

Subject: Streetscape Design Standards Review - Summary

This memo and the attached "Full Comments" memo provide the Tree Commission's responses to the five questions you posed to the Task Force and to Boards and Commissions. In order to facilitate a clear understanding of Tree Commission positions, this memo provides a summary list. Each position listed cross-references a fuller explanation in the "Full Comments" memo.

In the current draft of the Streetscape Design Standards, we support:

1. Continued research into the use of alternate sources for deicing materials that are environmentally safe and protect the urban forest. (Full Comments memo Page 1, question 1 and Page 4, question 1)
2. Development of Outdoor Dining Guidelines to provide structure to ongoing use in the "Building Zone" of the public walkway. (Full Comments memo Page 2, question 1)

The following are Task Force recommendations we do not support and are presented in priority order.

1. We are not supportive of the recommendation for flush planter edging and continue to prefer raised-edge planters in the streetscape. Flush edging does not protect trees or pedestrians and will likely increase maintenance costs. (Full Comments memo Pages 3-4, question 3)
2. The 20-foot setback recommendation is a good step but does not go far enough to support tree growth and health. We believe a 30-foot setback, perhaps with a stepped back building height, will promote tree health and afford more space for outdoor dining and safe pedestrian passage. (Full Comments memo Page 2, question 2 and Page 4, question 5)
3. We do not support the single tree planter recommendation. Multiple trees, especially in large planters, create a healthier environment for the trees, a clear barrier between pedestrians and traffic, and a mass of trees and canopy that are especially pleasing to the eye. They are a unique feature of Falls Church, support the Task Force's branding efforts and demonstrate a planned and cohesive appearance. (Full Comments memo Page 3, question 5)

The following are areas of concern that should require additional dialogue:

- the application of these standards to existing streetscape
- process controls for the application of Standards vs use of Guidelines
- incentivizing compliance for ongoing maintenance

Please contact me or Kate Reich should you have any questions.



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

Date: October 21, 2016

To: Paul Stoddard, Principal Planner

From: Chairman, Tree Commission *Dennis Szymanski*

Subject: Tree Commission Streetscape Design Standards Review

This memo responds to the questions you posed to the Task Force and to Boards and Commissions. It also provides full explanations of the Tree Commission's positions, summarized in the attached "Summary" memo.

1. **The vision and goals:** Do the draft vision and goals respond to the interests of your group? Do they represent the overall interests of the City? See pages 3-4.

The Tree Commission supports in particular the goal "**Promote tree canopy** and environmental sustainability."

The Tree Commission also supports continued research into alternative deicing materials for FCC. Sodium chloride, "road salt," is corrosive and environmentally unfriendly to the watershed. Until a cost effective, high performing substitute is found and deployed, FCC should continue the use of raised planters to protect vegetation from road salt run off (see further discussion of edging below). As an example, calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is a granulated, patented chemical formulation from dolomitic lime and acetic acid. CMA is used worldwide to answer environmental concerns and solve problems associated with corrosion and concrete spalling.

2. **Cross Sections:** Do the proposed cross sections provide the right mix of space for amenities, pedestrian traffic, and building uses? See pages 14 – 25.

Passable and Impassable Spaces. There simply must a minimum of five (5) feet of unimpeded space for the planter. Where there is on street parking, unimpeded space is needed between the building and the planter as well as between the planter and curb. This would allow passengers to exit vehicles without trampling on the planter. In locations where the vehicle exit area is structured to allow for this "landing area," the planter must still have five feet of unimpeded space if we are to avoid compromising the health of the vegetation, even if this requires a compromise of either the building or pedestrian zone.

The language reads "As a rule of thumb, half of the amenity area between tree planters should be kept clear to provide pedestrian passing and waiting spaces," while the question above asks for "the right mix." "Rule of thumb" and "half" are generally

accepted terms, but it is unclear what constitutes “the right mix.” This is too subjective. We would support objective standards on spacing of amenities.

The question does not allow the Boards and Commission to weigh in on setbacks and whether a 20-foot setback is adequate for what they visualize for the space. This misses an important component of the streetscape. The Tree Commission believes that while the 20-foot setback is a step forward, it is still inadequate for tall and straight tree growth and for all of the restaurant and pedestrian amenities that the Task Force foresees. Rather than overcrowding the streetscape design with these amenities and potentially compromising tree health, the Task Force should seize the opportunity to create a forward-looking standard for ample tree, pedestrian and dining spaces. The Tree Commission would recommend a 30-foot setback but would also support any setback between 23 and 30 feet. Please see related discussion of planter edging below.

The Tree Commission supports the development of Outdoor Dining Design Guidelines or a City Ordinance for establishments whose intended purpose is the consumption of food or beverage by patrons. The Guidelines will provide acceptable dimensions for dining area access within the public sidewalk, sidewalk dining barriers, and the layout of outdoor service areas. The City of Richmond has created a web page to facilitate opening and maintaining a sidewalk café’.

<http://www.richmondgov.com/PlanningAndDevelopmentReview/SidewalkCafe.aspx>

The City of Falls Church has had a set of draft permitting guidelines since 2013 which should be shared with the Task Force as well as with Boards and Commissions.

3. Street Furniture: Does the proposed street furniture (style, color, etc.) promote the City’s brand? See pages 9-11.

The street furniture is appropriate and acceptable, but we believe we should see street furniture that is consistently applied. If the brand is that FCC is “a unique and special place, then other than the unique bus stops, we don’t see what other street furniture features rise to the level of promoting the City’s brand. Please see further discussion of “branding” problems under “Trees” below.

In short, the draft recommendations do not show sufficient examples of ‘how’ the street furniture supports the City’s branding efforts.

4. Maintenance: How should maintenance of streetscape, plantings, and trees be divided between the public and private side? See page 30.

Planting Rehabilitation: The text reads: “These maintenance agreements would establish expectations for maintenance and provide protections for long term tree health.” While details of the agreements may be discussed at a later time, each agreement should clearly outline how private parties would be incentivized to properly maintain the planters. In current FCC practice, the Lincoln at Tinner Hill agreement

does not address the consequences of poor maintenance/non-compliance. Hoping it will be maintained is not enough.

The Tree Commission believes that the City needs a standard agreement that sets forth real consequences for failure to maintain or especially damage to trees. Consequences should include the City's right to remedy problems and fines that would create a disincentive to non-compliance. Ultimately, the City has the legal authority under Code to determine how City property is maintained and should judiciously apply controls in any delegation of this authority in order to ensure long-term tree health. If private owner maintenance is an opportunity to improve on current public streetscape maintenance, the City should do all it can to ensure success of this new practice.

A consequence of a standard private owner maintenance agreement is that City Code Section 44-24(a), which requires all street tree plantings and maintenance to be under the direction of the City arborist, might need to be amended to reflect the changes in responsibility. Alternatively, the Task Force should confirm with the City Attorney if would be sufficient for each agreement to state that the Arborist delegates authority under this Code provision by directing the private owner to maintain the plantings under certain conditions in the agreement.

5. Trees: Are the following proposals right for the City – tree spacing, planter sizes, planter edging? See pages 12-13.

Planter shape. Since we have options for rectangular or oval beds, we suggest removing "oval ends" from the following sentence: "To balance rain water infiltration and functional space, surface tree planter areas will be 5 feet wide by 14 feet wide, **with oval ends**, and one tree per planter." (See also Question #3, second para.)

Tree spacing. The Tree Commission laments the "one tree per planter" recommendation. The presence of multiple trees in a single planter is both visually appealing (we find value in "massing") and beneficial to tree health. The Task Force suggestion that FCC abandon planters with multiple planted trees in favor of single trees also moves away from another unique "branding" feature of the current streetscape.

Planter Styles. *Flush planters should be the predominant planter type used in all areas. They are especially important when there is limited sidewalk width. They are also important to when providing access for emergency services, such as fire and medical.* "

The Tree Commission continues to support the use of raised planters, referred to as "bullnose planters" in the City. Raised planters provide the best protection for vegetation on any kind and provide a traffic buffer for pedestrians, especially young families. Continuing to utilize these planters also provides an architectural consistency to streetscape planters in FCC and contributes to the City's unique "branding."

It is the Tree Commission's position that by promoting flush planters, the City is making a clear statement that tree health in the streetscape is much lower priority than other streetscape features.

Flush planters are a problematic choice in any area much less in one where there is significant pedestrian traffic. Pedestrians will use the planter space as additional walking space thus increasing stress on any planted material and requiring increased maintenance – unless, of course, it is decided that an unattended, worn out look is what FCC is going for. Other cities are cautious in deploying flush planters. In Northern Virginia, only the City of Falls Church and Town of Herndon currently deploy flush planters to protect vegetation and pedestrians. The City of Milwaukee's Streetscape Guidelines address the use of flush planters: "Flush planters have no curb and are placed at the same elevation as the surrounding sidewalk. Flush planters can be installed without railings, with turf, or with more intense plantings, including groundcover, annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, and shrubs, or simply mulched. When more intense plantings are used, a railing is recommended to protect the plantings. Pedestrian traffic levels must be taken into account when designing flush planters, as they may be used for additional walking space if adequate space is not allocated. In this scenario, railings may be warranted. Low, ornamental railings add interest and identity to a streetscape, as well as protection from pedestrians and animals, when placed in combination with flush or curbed landscape planters."

Good intentions aside, our region has many examples of poorly maintained flush planter beds. See Comments for #4 above. The Tree Commission has provided photo evidence of how flush planters compromise the health of the trees and plants in planters around Northern Virginia, including at Pearson Square in Falls Church. Edging that allows pedestrian foot traffic in planters and erosion of soil will result in the need to replace dying trees.

Flush planters do not protect vegetation from road salt and are an invitation for animals to deposit waste, thus adding an environmentally unsound practice while at the same time adding a hazard to pedestrians. Research into salt alternatives is ongoing but there is as yet insufficient data to support a cost effective, environmentally friendly alternate. Therefore, until such time as the data are secured, we must deal with the impact of deicing salts on plant material.

If developers are adhering to the 20-foot setback, then why would there be a problem with "limited sidewalk width?" Does this mean our specification of setback already is inadequate? As mentioned in Section 2 above, the Tree Commission would recommend a 30-foot setback in part to ensure that pedestrian spaces do not overlap with tree spaces. If greater building height is the market cost of wider sidewalks, stepped-back building heights could be used, and the market could otherwise determine how to meet this requirement and to maintain profitability. The "advantage" of using flush planters for emergency services ignores the actual fact that we already have curbing on our public streets that require navigation. We could remove the curbing, but it is there for, among other things, public safety. All things considered, curbing and any other raised surface are simply a component urban living.

In summary, the flush planter recommendation clearly demonstrates how trees are prioritized in Falls Church. It is not at all an efficacious choice if FCC desires an attractive, well-maintained streetscape that promotes a healthy urban forest, meets its goals and supports branding.



The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

October 28, 2016

Streetscape Task Force
C/O Paul Soddard
City Hall
300 Park Avenue
City of Falls Church, Va. 22046

Subject: Revisions to the City Streetscape Plan

Dear Members of the Streetscape Task Force:

The Board of the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) supports the expansion of the Streetscape plan to cover all commercial areas of the City. The Society has been involved in improving our streets since our original founding in 1885. Following the City Beautiful movement of the 1880s and Mr. Birdseye Northrup's visit here to advance tree plantings, parks, Village Societies and Arbor Day celebrations, we planted the large street trees that appear in many historical photographs of Falls Church. We also initiated the Broad Street Streetscape designs and public discussions of the 1980s that resulted in the current Broad Street Streetscape plan. Our commitment to the appearance of Falls Church is long term and continues strong.

We note that some portions of the distributed draft standards were not the version reviewed by the Taskforce Members.

Our specific comments are:

1. We support the continued use of **bullnose** borders on Broad Street so that (1) when the sidewalks are eventually completed, Broad Street has a planned and cohesive appearance; and (2) the plants and trees are protected from salt and pedestrians' compacting the soil. We are 30 years into this 70-year process. Changing key design elements midstream will result in a fragmented and confusing finished product.
2. We support the design of **tree soil trenches** that allow more growing soil for trees than the surface level pits alone permit.
3. We support the use of flush border tree pits with **mini-fences** at all locations other than Broad Street to protect the trees and plantings from pedestrians and dogs.
4. We support maintaining the **taupe or grey color** of all street lamp poles and street furniture. Black poles will make it very obvious when poles are missing where the streetscape is incomplete.
5. We support the bench type that is of the art **nouveau style** in a taupe or gray.

6. On Broad Street we support **multi-tree pits of 2, 3 or 4 trees** when long pits exist on the opposite side of the street or nearby. Again, this is to maintain the long-term design balance and cohesiveness of the street.
7. We feel the streetscape **appears cluttered** with elements including trash cans and sandwich signs. We support placement of needed trash cans, bike racks and other amenities on the **trailing edge of planters**, so they are not as noticeable for motorists traveling on that side of the street.
8. The vertical parts in the streetscape (lamp post, signs and bus stop shelters) should be **truly vertical**, and should not be tipped to follow the incline of the sidewalk.
9. We support maintaining the interval between **lamp poles at 110 feet** as can be seen in the west end.
10. We support the **wider sidewalks** (20 feet minimum up to 24 feet) on Broad and Washington Streets.
11. We support the requirement for **permits for outdoor dining** to control how much of the clear walk space remains.
12. We support an **irrigation system** requirement for all streetscape tree pit and planters.
13. We support the **continued management**, maintenance and ownership responsibility to **remain with City staff** and that they be funded appropriately to perform the work with a dedicated funding source. Most landowners and business owners do not have landscape crews to perform the function. It will be expensive and risky to the irrigation system and trees to have so many different people digging in the tree pits.
14. We support the requirement for business districts to use **non-sodium chloride** snow and ice melting agents such as Calcium Chloride (and for the City to locally supply them.).
15. The **map** on page 6 should be re-titled “City Entrances.”
16. The **following images** and discussions are not what Falls Church is seeking and its appearance in the standards is confusing and misleading to the reader, and therefore **should be removed**: Page 3, figure 1 of Staunton has no trees or ground planters; Page 3, figure 2 shows an assortment of large sandwich signs, which could be photo-shopped out. Page 4, figure 3 shows dining both curb-side and building-side in the same space. Page 3, figure 4 (Lincoln at Tinner Hill) is a special streetscape that was an approved anomaly and does not represent the standard. Page 5, figure 6 in Philadelphia is parking-lane dining which is not included in the plan here. Page 7, Metro map, bottom center should be re-titled “City of Falls Church,” and remove Fairfax County. The key on that map would be better if it said streetscape Type A, Type B, etc, because there are more specifications than just the sidewalk width that apply. Page 11, Street signs, should be “Street Name Signs,” and we suggest an isolated image that does not have the distractions of newspaper boxes and street elements.

We look forward to reviewing additional versions as this process moves forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ellen Gross

Ellen Gross, Director

Behalf of the Board of Directors



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

300 PARK AVENUE

FALLS CHURCH, VA 22046

Phone: (703) 248-5058 Fax: (703) 248-5158

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September 21, 2016

TO: Streetscape Development Committee

FROM: Capt. Tom Polera, Fire Official

SUBJECT: **Comments - Streetscape**

The following are concerns regarding streetscape as it relates to buildings with fire protection systems and issues that occur during emergency response. Protection systems, access and egress should be part of the consideration package when planning for streetscape. The following points are addressed for new buildings under construction in which streetscape and its components may play a role.

- Location of Fire Department Connection (FDC): FDC shall be within 75 feet of the fire hydrant. Design planning shall accommodate that fire hose, when connected between the hydrant location and the FDC, remains unobstructed. No streetscape, bus shelters, bike racks or outdoor café shall obstruct this area. Fire hose when deployed from the FDC to the hydrant location shall not cross driveways to/from a parking garage, or egress/access points into or away from the structure creating a trip hazard. The same applies if the building is equipped with a fire test connection for their fire pump maintenance tests.
- Building Egress and Access Points: Streetscape, bus shelters, bike racks should not obstruct the means of egress away from the building or access into a building by emergency responders to include main points of entry and fire control rooms.



The above photos portray problems encountered by fire personnel when emergency operations are not considered during streetscape design.



The photos show how streetscape becomes an obstruction for firefighters. There is difficulty to gear up with air packs, difficulty in opening apparatus compartment doors to retrieve equipment and hooking into fire protection systems around trees and brush.

In addition, raised streetscape creates a trip hazard for responders. During the winter months, snow is typically shoveled into these streetscape beds thereby creating an even more difficult challenge.

In conclusion, the growth of the city is bringing larger buildings within a dense foot print. These buildings also include enhanced fire protection systems. The sidewalks surrounding the building are competing for trees, bike racks, trash cans, bus shelters, utility needs, ADA requirements and eatery space. The elements of streetscape provide usefulness and beautification within an urban setting. However, the needs of public safety should also be recognized as a stakeholder in order to perfect a better standard that meets everyone's concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Capt. Tom Polera, CPM, CFI
Fire Official – Emergency Manager





CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

TO: Carly Aubrey and Paul Stoddard, DDS
FROM: Kate Reich, DPW
DATE: October 19, 2016
RE: Comments on Streetscape Design Standards Draft

I have combined the comments received from DPW staff, below. Additional comments are expected from Kathy Allan and Jeremy Edwards.

General Comments

1. We are not sure what the title stands for. Branding the City?
2. Purpose of the document? For use with all development along the streetscape corridors? Only SEs?
3. The document needs background information. For example, "... is a product of the Streetscape Taskforce authorized by City Council..."
4. Include a Table of Contents?
5. There is no reference to the maps on pg. 6 and 7 in the text. They feel out of place because of this.
6. For consistency, the Task Force can list both Stephanie and Jason as "Principal Engineer" in the acknowledgements. If they're including certifications, P.E. can be added to both names as well.
7. It should be clear in the document that it is to be used for future projects and not to retroactively require current development projects to meet the new standards.
8. The map on page 7 should include "neighborhood transitions" at E Broad/Fairfax and N West/Grove.
9. Change "control little" to "control litter" on page 30.
10. Overall, this document is more comprehensive and helpful than we thought it would be, and the inclusion of the various options for cross-sections was a great idea. We hope the final guide clearly states preferences and minimums/maximums as appropriate (i.e., for clear space).
11. Kathy Allan, managing the city's signs program, was inadvertently left out of the review group. Her review will help with locations of traffic signs, and is yet to come. Other signs, such as the adopt-a-spot signs suggested under Maintenance, will also add to the potential sign clutter.

Stormwater

1. There is no mention of stormwater curb inlets and the associated concrete pad and manhole cover. These do take a fair amount of space and are placed based on need - there is no standard spacing requirement. I do think they are worth acknowledging as another feature that must be thought about in the design process.
2. I am not familiar with the proposed manhole cover treatment or the maintenance issue associated with them (pg. 27). I do know covers that have been paved over weigh a ton. I recommend we do not require these and remove the use of "should" in the text.
3. There are graphics showing seating for outdoor eating in the building space (pg. 18, 22). You may recall we currently have an issue where properties with limited outdoor seating have encroached into the ROW. I think this is at least worth mentioning in the report. I've attached a draft policy Matt Hansen worked on some time ago but it lost traction.

Traffic Signs

1. The street sign section (pg. 11) is really vague. Also, I believe it is inaccurate. Kathy Allan is currently working on replacing the vast majority of our signs to comply with federal regulations (MUTCD). If we mention street signs in this document it should track with what she is working on.

Other Utilities

1. Should there be a mentioning of the need to underground the electrical and communications utilities?

Transportation

1. The guidance on street lighting is very vague. Is there a preference for LED lighting? Do we have flexibility on the style of luminaire (no "acorn" lights are Dark Sky-compliant) in the future?
2. There is no clear language regarding clear space at the corners of intersections. These are under the same risk as the space between the tree pits of becoming too cluttered.
3. The Task Force and Paul need to discuss if the new bike rack selection will impact the bus shelter standard design.
4. Not enough information is included about street signs to justify their inclusion in this document. A relevant item for the Task Force is the trend toward mast arm signs along streetscape corridors to improve wayfinding.
5. The manhole treatment included on page 27 may or may not be feasible for the City. Check with Robert Goff and Mike W about this.
6. There are no guidelines or preferences for placement of sculptures or statues. Factors such as pedestrian clear space and sight distance need to be considered.

Urban Forestry

1. Branding: The Streetscapes Taskforce was commissioned to ensure a streetscape “brand” for Falls Church and promote the city’s identity, yet the result looks entirely generic – the proposed streetscape design recommendations could just as well represent Ballston or Cincinnati.
2. Building setbacks: No mention was made of public gathering spaces adjacent to the sidewalk that may be provided by private developers. How these spaces are located and configured makes a difference to the streetscape.
3. Building setbacks: Even the 20-foot setback currently required makes life difficult for street trees next to taller buildings. They will tend to bend away from the building face to get enough light or to avoid reflected heat. Ideally, upper floors of buildings over 2 stories in height would step back 10 feet or more to allow more light and air circulation around the tree tops.
4. On-site facilities for pet relief should be required in new mixed use buildings to reduce the pet waste now damaging the street planters in front of new condo/apartment buildings. I know this is not a streetscape standard, but it is crucial to protecting the streetscape.
5. P. 8: The City Gateways section should be expanded to make intentions/expectations for design in those locations clearer.
6. The design standards should describe how to incorporate Bikeshare stations into the designs.
7. Tree Planters: The existing long, oval-shaped planters with multiple trees in them on West Broad Street are an uncommon design which provides a brand for Falls Church. They also provide a significant visual and practical barrier between pedestrians and the highway. While the desire for “relief space” between planters makes sense, no reason was given for abandoning the entire design.
8. Tree Health and Planter Dimensions: The paragraph on cantilevered pavement should note first that a shared rooting space the length of the block is desired. That is the reason for wanting cantilevered pavement.
9. Tree Health and Planter Dimensions: Planters with larger areas of soil open to the surface are better for tree health, another reason to favor planters with multiple trees in them.
10. Planter Locations: Reference should be made to plant locations in relation to fire department access. Trees and shrubs must not be placed directly in front of access doors to a building, so that emergency responders will be able to fully access their equipment and move from their vehicles to the building unimpeded.
11. Planter Styles/Edging: Planters with no protective edging are much harder to keep nice-looking, and contribute to early decline and death of street trees. A solid raised edge, like the current bullnose on Broad Street, is a very significant deterrent to foot traffic and also reduces the inflow of de-icing salt from sidewalks. Therefore, some kind of solid raised edge is preferred on all planter styles. Flush-style planters will likely need to be retrofitted with fences or other edging to protect the planters if they get trampled.
12. I know that these standards mentioned awnings over the sidewalk as tree protection (from salt use), but I don’t see it. Perhaps awnings could be included in a more general section of the text, with some dimensions.

13. Irrigation: The last sentence should say, "Permanent irrigation systems with spray heads must be used, not drip irrigation or temporary systems."
14. Planter Type: I would like to see oval planters on Broad Street, but other designs perhaps on other streets. The "when to use" section should also describe "where to use".
15. Cross sections: The Pedestrian Zone is listed as appropriate for bicycling. This seems unsafe.
16. Cross Sections: Passable and Impassable Spaces – is the rule of thumb (half the amenity area between tree planters should be kept clear) based on anything? How the "right mix" of planter space, pedestrian space and other utilities/amenities was derived is not evident.
17. Cross sections: The drawings should be more consistent, so that the raised planter does not appear to take a foot or more away from the passable space. I suggest not including the planter edging, whether flush or raised, within the pedestrian space.
18. Cross sections: On side streets where parking is allowed, include the dimension for a paved strip for passenger access between the sidewalk and car doors.
19. Cross sections: The five-foot minimum planter width is truly a minimum. On side streets where there is on-street parking, a paved area for opening car doors and stepping out must be provided by moving the planting beds further from the curb, not making them narrower.
20. Electrical Transformers: Traffic signal cabinets, streetlight power panels and irrigation controllers are also located within the streetscape.
21. Fire Hydrants: Find out whether hydrants can be located next to the curb.
22. Maintenance: I'm not sure that the city can require building owners to maintain the public streetscape. The maintenance agreements we have so far have been voluntary.
23. Maintenance: We need to define who owns the streetscape elements (trees, irrigation system, pavement, benches, trash cans, etc.), and how their maintenance will be enforced.
24. Maintenance: Planting Rehabilitation. I am wary of raising expectations for gardening in the older tree planters; tree roots are filling all available soil space so that the last re-planting of flowering plants (in 2013 I think) failed almost entirely.
25. Maintenance: It wouldn't hurt to reiterate within these standards that adjacent property owners/managers are already responsible for litter and leaf pickup and snow and ice removal on sidewalks in front of their properties.



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

TO: Carly Aubrey and Paul Stoddard, DDS
FROM: Kate Reich, DPW
DATE: October 20, 2016
RE: Additional Comments on Streetscape Design Standards Draft

Below are additional DPW sign-related comments on the draft streetscape standards document:

1. The picture shown of James Thurber Ct “existing” street sign is not current. We have replaced a lot of street signs with the current standard (including that one). We have not made it to the downtown core yet so those are mainly still the old standard. You should show a new sign on a busier street instead of this one that doesn’t exist anymore...it is pretty misleading. If you want good examples, look at W. Broad and Pennsylvania (on mast pole) or N. Washington and W. Columbia (on street sign pole).
2. We can add branding to the end of street signs or add special brackets to the top of the sign for certain areas but we don’t currently have money allocated for this or have a plan for this. Although it is a pretty example, the Oregon City sign does not meet current MUTCD standard. The problem with adding branding to the end of a sign is that you add about 6” in length. We have very little space at some of our intersections to add street names without them hanging out too far. Adding an additional 6” will be challenging in some locations (especially with some of our long street names, like S. Washington St).
3. Note: where the city owns light poles, we try to remove sign poles from the streetscape beds and place them on light poles. This removes clutter and looks visually cleaner. We have done this on W. Broad heading west past West St. but have not done the downtown core yet.
4. Frady Park has a fairly new Adopt-a-Spot sign, if you want a picture of one of those.



CITY OF
**FALLS
CHURCH**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 13, 2016
TO: Carly Aubrey, Senior Planner
Paul Stoddard, Principal Planner
FROM: John C. Boyle, Zoning Administrator
SUBJECT: Streetscape Standards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John C. Boyle".

The following will serve as my comments on the draft Streetscape Standards—

1. Outdoor dining is a very popular feature of city business owners; It would be very beneficial to the city if these standards could facilitate outdoor dining. If there are minimum accessibility requirements, it appears there will be more room available if a sidewalk railing adjacent to outdoor dining is not made an option.
2. I recommend against changing Sec. 48-1101 footnote 11. The proposed amendments will place many existing and newly-developed properties into noncompliance. Rather, I suspect the intent of the proposed amendments can be achieved during the site plan phase.
3. Plantings, especially shrubs, often grow to pose a vision obstruction at intersections, such as where a driveway crosses a sidewalk. I recommend the standards include language that supports Sec. 48-1103 to avoid creating a safety and enforcement problem.