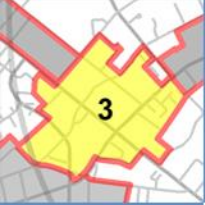


8. Implementation



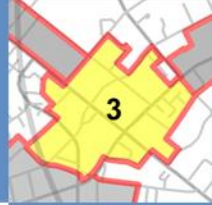
Downtown Falls Church

The Heart of the City

Overview

This Plan outlines a long range concept for development in the Downtown Falls Church Planning Opportunity Area (POA). Some of the projects and improvements analyzed can be implemented immediately to begin the process of realizing the concept. Market conditions and other factors will play a strong role in determining the type and extent of development, and when it would occur. The ratios examined in the Concept chapter are meant to show what is envisioned for specific areas within the POA, and are not meant to be definitive policy guidelines. The City should not seek to “force the market” with specific preconceived percentage goals for redevelopment, but rather should encourage desired redevelopment and revitalization and provide policy guidance as it occurs. The City can begin by setting policies in place and making infrastructure improvements to help attract new investment and expand on the structure of existing businesses in the area.

Coordination of infrastructure improvements can also help to reduce overall costs and accelerate implementation. For example, construction of streetscape improvements along Maple Avenue and West Fairfax Street can be coordinated with construction of new stormwater sewers. Also, the construction of pedestrian improvements such as wider sidewalks and undergrounding utilities can occur concurrent with development as part of a Special Exception. As redevelopment helps fund these improvements, the City can also coordinate publicly funded improvements at the same time.



Zoning

Zoning mechanisms need to be available in order to allow expansion of existing businesses, infill development, reduced parking requirements. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan states that new development should take advantage of existing height and lot coverage provisions and **possible density bonuses offered through other zoning provisions.**

In 2004, City staff created a draft City Center Unified Development Ordinance. In addition, amendments to the Zoning Ordinance were proposed that would allow more dense mixed-use development within the Downtown Falls Church POA by revising the Special Exception process for properties within the POA to allow height increases new buildings under certain conditions. These draft zoning tools could reexamined to provide a basis for regulations and incentives within the POA. The draft City Center Unified Development Ordinance includes bonuses for specific incentive items and specific regulations for specific parcels within the POA.

An option for the Core Commercial Area is for a Planning Overlay District that would specify that desire for office uses with ground floor retail. A Planning Overlay District could also specify particular uses, allowances, and building expansion requirements in the Core Entertainment Area. It could also provide for specific use requirements and ratios for redevelopment projects.

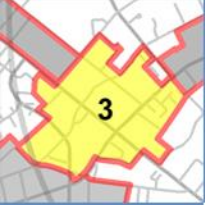
Another option would be to modify the B-2, Central business district zoning district to include special provisions for properties within the Core Areas or the POA in general. Examples of special provisions for these areas would be flexibility for parking, building height, outdoor dining, and signage.

Parking

Parking management should include both long term and short term solutions. Long term, the City should seek to establish consolidated public parking structures that could serve area businesses. In the short term, parking mitigation techniques should be used to reduce the burden on existing business and property owners to provide an abundance of parking.

Various financing mechanisms should be continuously explored to provide funding for public parking structures in the area. Some possible mechanisms are explored in the “Tools to Encourage Redevelopment” section of this chapter and include: Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Business Improvement District (BID), Industrial Revenue Bonds, or the creation of a Community Development Authority (CDA) for the area.

Immediate actions can be taken in the short term to reduce the parking burden on existing businesses and encourage structural expansion in the proposed Core Entertainment Area (CEA). This can include the creation of a “special parking district” within the proposed CEA that would allow collective parking on the existing surface parking lots. The existing City policy states that there needs to be a 30-year contract for collective parking agreements, which makes the signing of such an agreement unlikely. It is recommended that this be reduced to five years or less in order to facilitate cooperation between property owners in the area. Credit can also be given to private property owners for adjacent public parking in order to allow development on existing private parking lots. Also, the Department of Economic Development has also undertaken an important step in procuring the use of the two available private parking structures in the area for public use on evenings and weekends.



Downtown Falls Church

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Tools to Encourage Redevelopment

The City can bring powerful tools and incentives to encourage and to shape commercial redevelopment in the Downtown Falls Church POA. Assistance in sharing the costs of new and upgraded public infrastructure such as public space and consolidated parking are examples of improvements that the City can facilitate through tax increment financing, business improvement districts, and other programming.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a way to set aside, for a limited period of time, all or part of the so-called increment of new taxes generated by new development, to invest in public improvements. New and improved roads, expanded sewer and water systems, undergrounding of utilities, streetscapes, as well as public parking structures and park space, are some of the potential uses of TIF revenue. Projects can be accomplished on a pay-as-you-go basis or through the issuance of general obligation bonds. Another approach is to create a 'virtual TIF' where the City would participate on a case-by-case basis through diversion or abatement of incremental taxes via a development agreement with private sector partners.

Business Improvement Districts

The City can establish by ordinance a business improvement district (BID) in a defined area within which property owners pay an additional tax on real estate in order to fund improvements or services within the district's boundaries. Taxes generated by BIDs can be used for district maintenance, security, capital improvements, marketing and promotion, facilities operation and staffing, and more. The services provided by a BID would be supplemental to those already provided by the City.

Industrial Revenue Bonds

The City's Economic Development Authority, with City Council approval, may issue tax-exempt or taxable industrial revenue

bonds (IRBs) on behalf of qualified companies to finance the construction of buildings and related infrastructure (including parking). Examples of qualifying projects are construction of corporate headquarters and facilities for nonprofit corporations, such as trade associations. The Tax Analysts Building was financed by a \$25 million IRB.

Commercial Property Rehabilitation Tax Abatement Program

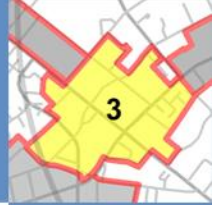
Owners of buildings at least twenty years old may qualify for up to five years abatement of real estate taxes on the value of improvements that increase a building's assessed property value by at least fifty percent.

Arts & Culture District

The Downtown Falls Church POA is included in the City's Arts & Culture District. Economic development incentives have been approved by the Commonwealth for implementation within such districts. These include tax incentives for up to ten years, such as reduced permit and user fees and reduction of gross receipts tax. Regulatory flexibility may also be applied to the area, which may include a special zoning district or exemption from ordinances for up to ten years. These incentives can provide the opportunity to display public art, provide community facilities, and hold community oriented cultural activities and events.

Community Development Authority

A Community Development Authority (CDA) can be created for a specific geographic area by City Council upon petition by a majority of property owners within the area. A CDA may have the power to finance the construction, acquisition, and maintenance of infrastructure improvements such as roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, traffic signals, and storm water management systems. A CDA bond can be repaid through special assessments levied on property owners within the CDA district or by the City through Tax Increment Financing (TIF), or a combination of both. Any incurred debt or obligation of the CDA is not the debt or obligation of the City.

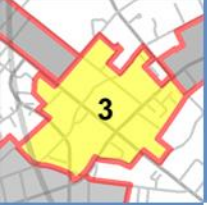


Capital Improvement Program

In support of the Public Action plan, a schedule of Capital Improvements should be created based on the actions and other suggestions within the Plan. This schedule should provide information related to specific projects that will help to move toward achieving the goals of this plan, provide a timeline for implementation, and outline costs. This supplemental document could then be used to guide future Capital Improvement Program funding toward projects that support the Downtown Falls Church POA. This schedule can be updated regularly and reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Public Actions		
Action	Lead Dept.	Description
Future Land Use Map Changes	Development Services	Changes to the City's official Future Land Use map may be necessary in order to reflect the desire for specific uses within the Core Entertainment Area and the Core Commercial Area. A change from "Mixed-Use" to "Business," or the creation of a new land use category should be explored.
Zoning Tools & Planning Overlay District	Development Services	The City should reexamine the draft City Center Unified Development Ordinance and possibly use it as a framework for a zoning tool that could be used to guide development in the POA. The City should explore the creation of Planning Overlay Districts in the Core Commercial Area and the Core Entertainment Area that would set guidelines to encourage and incentivize development of the desired scale and composition within these areas.
Streetscape Improvements	Public Works	General streetscape improvements for the area include widening sidewalks,
Financing Incentives	Economic Development	Utilize available financing incentives to promote building expansion and redevelopment in the POA.
Public Parking Garages	Development Services	The City should explore the possibilities for construction and funding of consolidated parking structures at strategic locations throughout the POA.
Intersection Improvements	Public Works	Preliminary designs should be explored for intersection improvements at intersections along Park Avenue, at the intersection of Annandale Road and South Maple Avenue, Broad and Washington Street, South Washington Street and East Fairfax Street.
Core Areas	Development Services	Further design charrettes and discussion of the Core Entertainment Area and Core Commercial Area should be undertaken among the City and stakeholders.
Public Spaces	Development Services	The allocation of public spaces within redevelopment projects, or the acquisition of public space upon redevelopment should be pursued in order to create a Great Place.
Stormwater Management	Public Works	Set an overall target of 20% to 30% reduction in stormwater peak flows in this watershed. Require new development to provide a minimum of 1,000 gallons of stormwater storage space on-site.

Implementation



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