East End
A vision to celebrate culture & community
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE EAST END SMALL AREA PLAN AS A GUIDING DOCUMENT IN DECISION MAKING FOR PLANNING, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, CITY REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

MOTION to adopt (TR23-15) PASSED on roll call vote, 6-0 (Res. 2023-19)

RESOLUTION 2023-19

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE EAST END SMALL AREA PLAN AS A GUIDING DOCUMENT IN DECISION MAKING FOR PLANNING, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, CITY REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

WHEREAS, the East End Small Area Plan establishes a vision for the East End to enhance a vibrant destination that serves as a critical gateway into the City of Falls Church, honor cultural ties to the Vietnamese community at Eden Center, and develop equitably and sustainably; and

WHEREAS, the Plan calls for the preservation of nearby housing affordability and the introduction of housing opportunities into the planning opportunity area; and

WHEREAS, the Plan encourages transportation investments that put people first by prioritizing connectivity and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the Plan identifies specific long-term strategies that will help realize the vision for the area; and

WHEREAS, the concepts in the East End Small Area Plan are meant to be a conceptual framework for reinvestments and public improvements; to provide a starting point for public and private investment in general improvements to the area; and do not constitute changes to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Ordinance, or Zoning Map;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Falls Church hereby adopts the East End Small Area Plan as a guiding document in decision making for planning, zoning, and development review; capital improvements; and City regulations and policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a reference to the East End Small Area Plan is added to the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Read: 06-26-23
Public Hearing: 06-26-23
Adoption: 06-26-23
(TR23-15)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the foregoing was adopted by the City Council of the City of Falls Church, Virginia on June 26, 2023 as Resolution 2023-19.

Celeste Hensli
City Clerk

City of Falls Church Department of Community Planning & Economic Development Services
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The City of Falls Church does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its employment practices or in the admission to, access to, or operations of its services, programs, or activities. Cindy Mester, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia 22046 has been designated to coordinate compliance with the ADA non-discrimination requirement. This document will be made available in an alternate format upon request. Call [insert sponsoring division’s telephone number], (TTY 711).
Acknowledgements

A special thanks to City Council, Planning Commission, Boards and Commissions, and the community that shaped this plan into the strong and progressive policy tool that it is. To the community, your passion and activism around preserving the culture of Eden Center has inspired many – the plan aims continue this legacy.
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1. Introduction & Background
Purpose

The City’s Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for future development of the City. The Plan describes demographic trends and existing conditions, and sets policies for future conditions in the City, including land use, transportation, urban design, and the environment.

Within the context of setting policies for development of the City, the Comprehensive Plan identifies several Planning Opportunity Areas (POAs) (see the Opportunity Area map on page I-2). The Comprehensive Plan describes POAs as areas where property is currently underutilized. Reinvestment could help improve quality of life in these areas and further the realization of the Plan’s overall vision.

This Small Area Plan will provide a general concept for the City’s East End (POA 5). This plan is intended to provide an area-specific framework for reinvestment that supports and builds upon the guidelines established in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Authority of the Plan

This plan and the concepts herein create a conceptual framework for reinvestment and public improvements for the City’s East End that, when combined, will create a vibrant, economically viable, walkable, bicycle-friendly, environmentally sustainable and resilient destination along one of the City’s major commercial corridors and its eastern gateway. The recommendations in this Plan are meant to provide a starting point for public and private investment into improvements to the area. This Plan does not constitute a change to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Ordinance, or Zoning Map.

Responsibilities relative to the strategies proposed by this Plan are shared by the City of Falls Church, property owners, business owners, and regional entities. Responsibility is dependant on the nature of the strategy.
Geography and Regional Context

Seven Corners is a tri-jurisdictional site where five roads converge to make seven “corners.” These roads are Route 7 (also known as Leesburg Pike and East Broad Street), Route 50 (Arlington Boulevard), Wilson Boulevard, Sleepy Hollow Road, and Hillwood Avenue. It is at a relative high point topographically, providing views in nearly all directions. The area’s elevation contributed to its locational importance, as will be further discussed.

The East End, the City’s portion of Seven Corners, is a major gateway into the City. The POA is located at the eastern edge of the City where Wilson Boulevard meets Route 7. Roosevelt Boulevard provides direct access to the East Falls Church Metro Station. The area serves multiple functions—as a gateway and transition zone from Fairfax County and Arlington County and as a transportation hub.

The East End shares boundaries with Fairfax County and Arlington County. The Seven Corners Shopping Center in Fairfax County is directly outside the East End boundary. Adjacent land uses in both counties consist of offices, shopping complexes, and apartment buildings. The POA is somewhat isolated from the other commercial areas of the City, buffered by single-family residential neighborhoods.

Within the City’s East End, the largest land uses are the 15.6-acre Eden Center—one of the largest Vietnamese shopping and restaurant complexes in the U.S.—, and the 9.6-acre Koons Ford complex along Wilson Boulevard and Route 7. Along Route 7 and Wilson Boulevard are other retail uses, while Roosevelt Boulevard has a concentration of apartment and condominium buildings. Immediately to the north and west of the POA is the 12.2-acre Oakwood Cemetery and single-family neighborhoods. The City’s Fort Taylor Park is also immediately adjacent to the East End. (See the aerial of the East End on page I-4 and the aerial photos below.)

(Above) Aerial photos of the Seven Corners area showing development over time.
Methodology

This plan is a product of the City of Falls Church, commissioned by the Falls Church City Council. The plan blends information from several sources including adopted City policies; local history; regional context and trends; best practices and input from the Falls Church community, landowners and business owners. Quantitative data was acquired from a number of sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the City of Falls Church Real Estate Assessor. GIS data for map creation and analysis was created by the City of Falls Church. Site pictures are from Google Images, Google Earth, and on-location by City officials.

Qualitative data was acquired from community meetings, developers, planners, the City of Falls Church City Council, and Planning Commission.

A stakeholder workshop was held on September 15, 2021, at Falls Green Apartments. The workshop was attended by various stakeholders from the study area including representatives from the following:

- Regional agencies
- Fairfax County (Department of Planning & Development, and Department of Transportation);
- Arlington County (Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development)
- City staff (Planning Division); and
- Landowners/Adjacent business owners

A community kickoff meeting was held on November 6, 2021, at Columbia Baptist Church. At this meeting, local stakeholders, residents, and City staff came together to review existing planning guidance for the area. Participants discussed land use, transportation, environment, and urban design issues for the future of the East End.

Public input received at the community meeting was incorporated into the draft plan and presented at December 1, 2021; April 20, 2022; August 3, 2022 Planning Commission meetings and March 27, 2022 and September 27, 2022 City Council work sessions.

Following those work sessions, the draft was shared with the City’s advisory boards and commissions. The City advisory boards reviewed the draft plan during October and November 2022. A second community meeting was held at Columbia Baptist Church on November 19, 2022.

A public listening session was hosted by the Planning Commission on January 18, 2023. The listening session resulted in the request for extended community outreach at the Eden Center. Staff hosted on-site pop-up events at Eden Center on March 18, 2023; March 22, 2023; March 29, 2023; and April 22, 2023.

Following the public listening session and pop-ups, additional work sessions were held with the Planning Commission and City Council to finalize the plan.
History

American Indian History

There is evidence of American Indian settlement in Virginia that predated the arrival of the English by more than 12,000 years. In northern Virginia there were several Algonquian- and Siouan-speaking tribes, predominantly the Doegs (or Dogues), who resided at Mason Neck and along the Potomac River. They had been affiliated to some degree with the Powhatan Chiefdom, centered on the James River, but by the 17th century, they had come under the influence of the Iroquois nations of the north.

When Captain John Smith explored the Potomac River in 1608, he found several American Indian settlements along the Occoquan River, Pohick Creek, Accotink Creek, Hunting Creek, and Pimmit Run. The tribes hunted and fished along all of the streams of northern Virginia and grew crops such as corn, squash, and beans.

Historians believe that today’s Route 7 was originally an animal path that became an American Indian travel route, which the English colonists eventually made a major east-west road. There is scant evidence of American Indian culture in northern Virginia, and by 1680 the Dogues had mostly moved to other parts of Virginia. Prehistoric archaeological remains have not been found in the Seven Corners area.

The Colonial Era and Civil War

Route 7, a main arterial of Seven Corners, was originally the Alexandria to Vestal’s Gap Road, built in the late 17th century. Vestal’s Gap Road likely originated as a series of hunting paths used by native tribes. The first English explorers found some of these paths along a natural ridge paralleling the Potomac River. By the late 1720s this route had been traveled enough to become a road. It ran from the port of Alexandria to a gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains where a John Vestal operated a ferry across the Shenandoah River. George Washington, as a young surveyor, used the road to travel west, and it is said that General Braddock’s troops traveled the road during the French and Indian Wars.

(Above) A 1751 map with a red arrow pointing to the Main Road from Alexandria through Vestal’s Gap.
This route became the Alexandria to Leesburg Turnpike in 1832. The area that we now know as "Seven Corners" was a point of relatively high elevation along Vestal's Gap Road and the site of a Methodist meeting hall and tavern. Wilson Boulevard was originally known as the “road to the ferry,” or the Georgetown to Falls Church Road.

Oakwood Cemetery is the site of the first Methodist meeting house in the area, the Fairfax Chapel, built circa 1779. It was rebuilt out of brick in 1819, but that building was destroyed during the Civil War. The remaining burial grounds were incorporated as Oakwood Cemetery in 1927.

Seven Corners had a role in the Civil War. In October 1862, on the south side of the Leesburg Pike at its intersection with Sleepy Hollow Road, the 21st New York Infantry constructed Fort Buffalo, and the area was known as Fort Buffalo until the 1950s. The site had excellent views to the south and east, whence Confederate troops were likely to come.

On the north side of Leesburg Pike, west of Fort Buffalo, stood Taylor’s Tavern, an important outpost for Union troops. The tavern was built circa 1800 near the site of an old American Indian trading post. The site today is the City’s Fort Taylor Park.

The inscription on a historical marker placed by the City at Taylor’s Tavern, reads:

Two-story building with verandahs stood on 56 acres bought in 1856 by Wm. Taylor (part of 1731 271-acre T. Harrison grant). Tavern faced Alexandria-Leesburg Pike west of Junction with Georgetown Road (Wilson Blvd.). Near here on June 24, 1861, balloonist Thaddeus Lowe conducted first aerial reconnaissance in U.S. military history. In August–September CSA Col. J.E.B. Stuart’s troops fortified Upton’s & Munson’s Hills. By October 1861 Union troops had reoccupied hills and added forts Taylor, Buffalo, and Ramsay as a separate group 4–5 miles west of main ring of Washington defenses.
African American History

There were a number of enclaves of free African Americans and former enslaved people in the Seven Corners area during the 19th century. One such African American enclave was created by Frederick Foote Sr. who, in 1864, prior to his emancipation, purchased 28 acres of land from the man who enslaved him, Daniel Minor. In 1866 Foote purchased two more acres; two more acres in 1884; then nine more acres prior to his death. The Foote property is the location of today’s Eden Center, Koons Ford, and the Seven Corners Shopping Center.

Although Foote’s will stipulated that the land should never be sold or leased, over time several heirs died and the remaining property owners could not keep up with taxes. The courts took over the property, and in 1953 the Lynne Investment Company bought most of the land for the Seven Corners Shopping Center.3

Post World-War II

In the early 1950s, Lee Memorial Boulevard (Route 50) was constructed, and its crossing with the Leesburg Pike created a seven-corner intersection mentioned previously. From that time, the area became known as Seven Corners.

Over the next decades the area developed as a shopping mecca for northern Virginia. The first modern shopping center in Fairfax County was Williston Center at the intersection of Route 50 and Wilson Boulevard, built shortly after the end of World War II. It had a post office, business school, liquor store, and medical center. In 1953 a 34-acre tract on the Fairfax County portion of Seven Corners was acquired by the Lynne Investment

(Above) Aerial view of Seven Corners 1985.
(Middle) Ground view of Seven Corners surface lots.
(Below) Promotional poster for Seven Corners.
General Business in order to build the first regional shopping center in northern Virginia, which opened in 1956. Seven Corners Shopping Center had a Woodward & Lothrop, Garfinkels, and Brentano’s book store among its retailers.\(^4\)

On the Falls Church side of Seven Corners, the Plaza Seven Shopping Center opened in 1962 on Wilson Boulevard. It had a Grand Union grocery and Zayre discount store. The Grand Union closed in 1984.

**The Eden Center**

After the Fall of Saigon in April 1975, thousands of South Vietnamese emigrated to the U.S., many settling in Arlington. Clarendon became a hub of Vietnamese merchants, known as “Little Saigon.” In the early 1980s, when Metro construction began and land values in Arlington rose, many Vietnamese left Clarendon, some relocating to the Plaza Center Shopping Center. They redeveloped the space as the Eden Center. The Eden Center was remodeled in 1996.\(^5\)

**Recent Reinvestments in the East End**

A number of property reinvestments have occurred in the East End since 2005. The former Syms store along Route 7 has been converted to a 24-Hour Fitness center. At the Eden Center, some retail space was reconfigured to create the Good Fortune Grocery store. The Oakwood Apartments were substantially renovated and have been renamed Falls Green. Along Roosevelt Boulevard, the Public Storage facility has been renovated and upgraded. Koons Ford demolished a one-story building for surface parking, which was enhanced with a storm inlet, landscaping and street trees, as well as City street lights and a five-foot sidewalk. In addition, recent improvements have been made; a sidewalk was installed along the north side of Roosevelt Street; lanes there were reduced from three to two; ADA curb ramps were installed in the area, and three new bus shelters were added along Roosevelt Boulevard.

In neighboring Fairfax County at Seven Corners, recent investments include the Hampton Inn and Loren Apartments along the west side of Route 50.
## Reinvestments in the Eastern Gateway/7 Corners POA Area Since 2005

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>RPC</th>
<th>Date of Reinvestment</th>
<th>Use Before Reinvestment</th>
<th>Use After Reinvestment</th>
<th>Approximate Value of Reinvestment</th>
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<tr>
<td>BJs Wholesale</td>
<td>6607 Wilson Blvd., Falls Church, VA 22044</td>
<td>53-218-002</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Noland Plumbing</td>
<td>BJs Wholesale</td>
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<td>24-Hour Fitness</td>
<td>1000 E. Broad St., Falls Church, VA 22046</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>Syms Department Store</td>
<td>Fitness Center</td>
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<td>Koons Ford</td>
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<td>Falls Green</td>
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<td>Oakwood Apartments</td>
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**Total Reinvestment:** $93,300,000
Planning Guidance & Past Studies

Comprehensive Plan Guidance
Chapter 4 of the City’s Comprehensive Plan (2005) establishes land use and urban design principles for each of the City’s POAs. These principles for the East End POAs are below.

Land Use & Zoning
- Modify the Future Land Use Map to reflect the areas where reinvestments will occur.
- Ensure compatibility with development on adjacent parcels in Fairfax County.

Urban Design
- Promote a positive image of the City as part of a gateway.
- Use landscaping to indicate focal points.
- Increase pedestrian connections to adjacent areas.
- Transform surface parking for pedestrian mobility and introduce structured parking.
- Ensure adjacent residential areas are screened and buffered.
- Focus on pedestrian mobility through improving sidewalks.

Transportation
- Minimize curb cuts.

Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Amendments
There have been no land use or zoning amendments in the East End POA since 2005.
Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan Update for Seven Corners

In 2015 Fairfax County updated its comprehensive plan based on the work of the Seven Corners Task Force. The revisions call for major transportation infrastructure changes, including a partial “ring road,” a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Route 50, and new access ramps. Other changes envision much of the Seven Corners retail being replaced by mixed use development, with an emphasis on housing. Fairfax County’s Seven Corners will redevelop as three land units, with the densest being Town Center, where the regional shopping center currently exists. This area will feature a large public park and gathering space.

(Above) A rendering of proposed redevelopment in the Seven Corners area of Fairfax County.
Recent Planning Studies

There has been more than a decade’s worth of planning for the City’s East End. These studies are summarized below and available in the City’s Planning Library (www.fallschurcva.gov/planning).

Virginia Tech Student Study (2009)

During the Fall 2009 semester, Virginia Tech’s Urban Affairs & Planning graduate studio conducted an analysis of Falls Church’s Eastern Gateway and created a concept plan for redeveloping the site. Major recommendations from the study included creating a dense, walkable, transit-oriented development with public space, while maintaining the cultural integrity of the Eden Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 4, City’s Comprehensive Plan</td>
<td>City Planning Staff</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2050 Falls Church Eastern Gateway Concept Plan</td>
<td>Virginia Tech Studio</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revitalization Areas, Small Are Plan, &amp; Urban Development Areas</td>
<td>City Planning Staff</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>ULI TAP – Creating an Eastern Gateway in Falls Church</td>
<td>Urban Land Institute</td>
<td>2018</td>
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A TAP coordinated by ULI took place in November 2018. The TAP focused on redevelopment of the East End. Key recommendations of the plan included coordinating development with the proposed Ring Road, constructing mid-rise development over time, and creating a local grid of streets.

(Above) A conceptual map of building footprints and land use as proposed in the 2009 Virginia Tech Student Study.
East End Transportation Study

The East End Transportation Study was completed in June 2022. The study was authored by Nelson Nygaard and funded by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Transportation Land-Use Connections Program (TLC). It was developed as a companion document to the East End Small Area Plan. A primary recommendation of the study is a more connected network of local streets to support Eden Center activity and the potential new residents, businesses, and visitors in the East End. The management and addition of parking, new biking facilities, and encouraging transportation demand management (TDM) support any future new development.
Footnote Citations


2 Gernand, Bradley E., A Virginia Village Goes to War—Falls Church During the Civil War. Brookfield, MO: Donning Publishing Company, 2002; and Seven Corners” (retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Corners,_Virginia (retrieved from Seven%20Corners%20was%20known%20as,intersection%20with%20Sleepy%20Hollow%20Road)).


5 Netherton et al., p. 664.
2. Concepts
Vision & Goals

Vision

This plan uses the following vision statement for developing recommendations and future scenarios for this area:

*The heart of the East End is the Eden Center, a Vietnamese cultural hub that serves as another home to many. The Vietnamese culture is celebrated through place-keeping, preservation of businesses, and the establishment of a cultural district. Transportation investments put people first by prioritizing connectivity and accessibility. Green spaces provide opportunities for community members to gather, recreate, or relax. A green approach to infrastructure, building, and site design supports the environmental sustainability of the area for future generations. Nearby housing affordability is preserved. As complementary new commercial and residential development responsibly occurs within the East End, equitable planning is at the forefront of reinvestments.*

Goals

To achieve that vision, this plan establishes the following goals for investment in the area:

1. Preserve and promote the Vietnamese cultural identity of the Eden Center. Honor Vietnamese heritage through culturally respectful design and place-keeping. Celebrate local Vietnamese history through programming and investments around Eden Center. Uplift the people and culture by prioritizing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. Support economic investments throughout the East End. Prioritize anti-displacement strategies to promote the longevity of small businesses in the Eden Center. Invest in the East End to create and maintain consistent economic activity.

3. Enhance multi-modal mobility and accessibility throughout the East End. Invest in safe connections. Ensure equitable, safe travel opportunities among pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and personal vehicles.

4. Activate public spaces to create community connections. Strengthen the sense of community in the East End by providing spaces for the public to enjoy and gather. Incorporate green spaces to blend nature into the urban environment.

5. Preserve and expand housing opportunities in and around the East End. As the Planning Opportunity Area develops, preserve the quality and affordability of existing nearby housing. Provide design transitions between existing housing and new development. Create housing that is accessible to a variety of household sizes, ages, and a range of incomes. Ensure that affordable housing serves and supports the East End community.

6. Develop the area in an environmentally sustainable way consistent with the principles of stewarding the area for the benefit of future generations.
Key Concepts:
The following subsections provide discussion of key concepts that support chapters of the Plan that provide additional guidance.

1. Preserve the Vietnamese Cultural Identity of the Eden Center

The Eden Center and Vietnamese Culture
With the Fall of Saigon in the concluding days of the Vietnamese War, thousands of South Vietnamese refugees came to the U.S. One of the most notable Vietnamese enclaves was in Clarendon in Arlington, where numerous Vietnamese shops and restaurants flourished. However, with the beginning of Metro construction, increasing land values caused many Vietnamese businesses to leave Clarendon. Following the displacement of the Vietnamese businesses, many moved west to the Plaza Center Shopping Center on Wilson Boulevard in Falls Church. This became the Eden Center. Today the Eden Center is one of the largest Vietnamese shopping meccas in the U.S., and its culture enriches the City and surroundings. The Eden Center is a second home to many and a portal to Vietnamese culture.

Creating a Space for the Celebration of Culture
Eden Center hosts events throughout the year attracting both local and regional crowds. Significant cultural events include Tết (the Vietnamese New Year), Moon Festival, and the Mid-Autumn Festival. Movie nights and smaller events are also hosted. A permanent plaza where event programming can occur would bolster Eden Center’s role as a true International Town Center. A permanent plaza would increase the sense of place. It would allow visitors and business owners alike to have another space to relax and linger. A semi-permanent plaza space should also be considered. This flexible plaza space would allow for parking spaces to remain and would only be utilized on a periodic basis for events.

(Above) Lunar New Year Celebration at Eden Center features elaborate dragon dances. (Below) Child tries on dragon costume during celebration.
Paying Homage to Vietnam through Public Art
The City should explore opportunities for public art at the Eden Center, to tell the story of its Vietnamese influence. The POA is included as a part of the City’s Arts and Cultural District where investment in public art is encouraged. Murals, sculpture, and other forms of art would beautify and add vibrancy to Eden Center. Partnerships with artists who are knowledgeable of and are connected to the Vietnamese American and Asian American cultures should be encouraged when planning public art at or near Eden Center. Public art would visually transport visitors to Vietnam, therefore offering a memorable creative experience.

Creating A Cultural District
The City should explore rebranding the Eden Center area with its own unique branding. The name “Little Saigon East” has received substantial support from the community and should be considered as a potential name for the district. Locals and visitors alike visit the Eden Center to eat, shop, and explore the Vietnamese cultural hub – marketing efforts and place-keeping in the neighborhood should emphasize this. Street flags identifying the area as a cultural district would lend to this sense of place. The district should honor authenticity by lifting up the businesses and people who created this unique area. Small business longevity and cultural celebration should thrive in this cultural district.

Saigon Boulevard
Wilson Boulevard runs from Arlington County into the City of Falls Church with ownership split between both jurisdictions and Fairfax County. To create a gateway to the Eden Center and communicate a sense of identity at the entrance to the City, the portion of Wilson Boulevard located in Falls Church should be honorifically renamed to Saigon Boulevard. This would honor the culture that had such a positive impact on the East End of the City. Coordination with Fairfax County and VDOT will be required for this action.
2. Support Economic Investments Throughout the East End

Maintaining Economic Activity
The East End’s largest commercial attribute is the Eden Center. At over 15 acres, it is the largest parcel within the POA. Its restaurants, shopping, and annual events attract consumers who take charter buses to Eden Center from as far as Philadelphia and New York. It is the largest Vietnamese shopping center on the East Coast.

Since Seven Corners’ opening in 1956, supermarket chains and big-box department stores have been integral to the area’s commercial success. The East End and the Seven Corners area continues to support such businesses in addition to smaller retail and restaurant spaces.

Providing the Eden Center with resources for improved commercial capacity and event planning builds on the economic wealth of the Eden Center and Seven Corners.

Ongoing Investment in Existing Properties
One facet of economic revitalization is to continue to invest in what is working for the area, including its existing properties and businesses. Ongoing private investments from Eden Center property owners to bolster continued economic activity include façade renovations, tenant fit outs, interior renovations, expansion of sidewalk dining, and private murals and art. Larger future private investments at Eden Center may include on-site parking garages, a hotel, plazas, and senior housing, all of which would further engage the community and solidify its position by attracting future business to the area.

(Above) Parcel floor area ratio throughout the POA.
(Below) Visual representation of infill development of surface lots.
Infill & Redevelopment
Distinguishing elements of the POA parcels are large surface parking lots combined with modest size commercial buildings. The site design is reflected in the Floor Area Ratio of the POA, which is approximately 0.43, meaning, on average, more than half of a parcel’s space is dedicated to parking and hardscape.

Future revitalization efforts would benefit from supporting infill development and redevelopment with higher densities. Early infill development could happen on existing surface parking lots. Long term, larger scale redevelopment could replace large commercial buildings, helping to bring activity directly to the street edge.

Additional infill development will also increase the area’s property tax revenue. For comparison, the 301 W. Broad Street building alone produces an annual property tax revenue of $958,000 on a 2.8-acre site. Comparatively, all of the buildings within POA 5 produce $914,000 in tax revenue across approximately 40 acres.

Investments in the Public Realm
The East End is one of four identified gateways into the City. A sense of arrival into the City can be accomplished through a unified streetscape design, signage, and eye-catching monuments, art, or architecture.

Wider sidewalks with improved connectivity, streetscape amenities, street trees, and murals are examples of public investments that the City can use to spur reinvestment.

A cultural center and an associated outdoor park space would be a beneficial addition to the POA. This infill concept is contingent upon ensuring that parking remains adequately available for Eden Center patrons and workers. The cultural center could include a Vietnamese cultural room, spaces for classes such as language and arts, meeting spaces, and outdoor/indoor recreational spaces. The cultural center could also provide space for technical assistance-related opportunities. This particular use is not currently represented in the City’s surrounding area and could help create connections within the East End community.

The East End is geographically separated from other commercial areas in the City and the commercial uses are unique. Localized cultural district branding in addition to Falls Church branding can help build the POA’s sense of place while also linking it to the rest of the city.
3. Enhance Multi-Modal Mobility and Accessibility

Connectivity to Fairfax County, Arlington County, and Alexandria

The East End sits in a multimodal transportation hub with connections to regional destinations. Current transit facilities include the East Falls Church Metro and the Seven Corners Transit Center. A Bus Rapid Transit Center is also planned for the area. The area includes bikeways and pedestrian ways, and the currently under-construction Route 50 Trail. Major roadways include Route 7, Route 50, Wilson Blvd, and nearby I-66. Collectively, these transportation facilities connect the East End to Seven Corners, Baileys Crossroads, Merrifield, Tysons, the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, Washington, D.C., and the City of Alexandria.

Multi-Modal Barriers & Needs

A goal of the POA is to provide improved connections to adjacent sites in order to create a more cohesive East End identity. Lack of an internal street grid, fences, vegetated screening, and parking lots are barriers to this goal.

Pedestrian and Bike Experience

Improved street design supportive of safe and comfortable pedestrian and cyclist movement is a critical component to plan for the area’s future. Wide streets, isolated parcels, intimidating crossings, lack of protection, and uninviting streetscape are all impediments to walking and cycling within the POA. These barriers to walkability and cycling can be overcome by widening sidewalks, planting more street trees, providing safe and frequent crossings, orienting buildings towards the street, and designating protected bike lanes.
Street Grid
The City’s Streetscape Standards call for pedestrian crossings every 250 feet. The current street configurations feature long block lengths that are 2-3 times larger than what is recommended for walkable block dimensions, and marked crossings can be 800 feet or more apart. Long block lengths, limited crossings, and lack of safety and accessibility features such as street trees, benches, and lighting discourage walking and biking.

The East End POA would benefit from a revised street grid which breaks up large blocks and provides frequent, safe pedestrian crossings. Street networks should connect adjacent parcels to increase accessibility to adjacent sites.

Great Streets
Wilson Boulevard connects several major sites, acting as the southern boundary to the POA as well as the City. Wilson Boulevard should be treated and celebrated as a Great Street by widening sidewalks, adding street trees, providing streetscape amenities, facing building facades onto the street, and honorifically renaming to Saigon Boulevard.

Roosevelt Boulevard provides a direct connection between the planning area and the East Falls Church Metro and W&OD Trail. Roosevelt Boulevard should become a truly multimodal facility, with high frequency transit and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities while still accommodating automobile travel.

Fairfax County Ring Road
Continued coordination between Fairfax County and Falls Church is necessary to ensure the County’s proposed Ring Road meets the needs of both jurisdictions.

(Above) Savannah, Georgia has a typical block size from 750’ to 2,300’.
(Below) East End Transportation Study Neighborhood Main Street “Great Street”.
4. Activate Public Spaces for Community Connections

Eden Center Public Gathering Space
Areas for public gathering and event programming serve important functions of everyday life. Plazas, pedestrian malls, food markets, and urban parks are all examples of public structures that can enrich and enliven urban areas.

Through numerous cultural events, parades, and movie screenings, the Eden Center has demonstrated that its site can be used as a flexible event space. The high turnout for such events shows that there is strong demand for such gathering spaces.

Spaces for Children
New public and private parks designed with children and families in mind could benefit visitors to the area, new residential development, and adjacent multifamily residential complexes. Currently the nearest playgrounds are Azalea Park located in Fairfax County and Benjamin Banneker Park located in Arlington County.

(Above) Example of urban park designed for recreation and play. (Middle) Example of engaging multi-use public space. (Below) Old Town Square - Fort Collins, Colorado.
Pocket Parks and Green Space
The majority of the POA is dominated by impervious surface and the only park, Fort Taylor, is neither visible nor easily accessible. Existing green spaces like Fort Taylor Park should be revitalized through additional signage, seating, upkeep, and attention. Thoughtful connections between Oakwood Cemetery and the POA should also be explored.

Future private and public reinvestment provides another opportunity to soften the urban landscape by providing access to pocket parks. Often a combination of hardscape and greenery, pocket parks serve to break up monotonous scenery by providing the public with moments of variety and reprieve. Such spaces double as strategic catch basins for retaining and filtering storm water. Park space along Roosevelt Boulevard and Wilson Boulevard by the Eden Center lot could also provide an opportunity for increased public greenspace with additional placemaking and outdoor seating space.

Night Market
A pop-up night market in the East End would serve as an advantageous marketing and programming opportunity to showcase the area’s variety of dining options and cultural heritage. Night markets also serve as a significant tie to the Vietnamese roots of the area as open-air night markets originated and are still a celebrated economic activity in Asia. Introducing this additional programming could serve to make the area an even larger regional attraction and increase customer traffic at night.
5. Housing

Today the East End consists of entirely commercial uses. To increase the vibrancy of the area and to keep up with local and regional housing demand, housing opportunities should be provided in the POA. New housing opportunities would largely take the form of multifamily housing at a variety of densities. New housing construction should allow for diverse options.

Senior Housing

Senior housing in the East End should be considered. Many of the business owners and patrons of Eden Center are part of an older population. Limited nearby housing means they often travel from neighboring areas. Senior housing would remove the transportation barriers that prohibit ease of access to Eden Center. Senior housing would allow the aging population to age in place and remain in the community where they have played such an integral role.

Family Sized Housing

Family-sized housing should be built as the East End develops to accommodate a range of housing needs. Currently, two-bedroom rental homes and three-bedroom rental homes are underserved in the City (see the Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan). The East End offers the potential to help alleviate this shortage as the POA evolves overtime. Family-sized housing in multifamily buildings often includes the potential for affordable dwelling units, thereby adding to the City’s affordable housing stock.
Condominiums
As the City looks for opportunities to expand homeownership for residents, the East End is attractive. Condominiums should be considered in the POA. Connectivity to transit and proximity to nearby commercial areas make the East End an enticing area for this type of development. Condominium housing attracts a diverse group of residents in age, income, and household size.

Preservation of Housing
As the East End develops, the neighboring existing housing should be preserved. Housing near the East End ranges from multi-family rental units and owned condominium units to single-family homes. The existing housing stock near the East End is accessible to a variety of incomes and family sizes. This fosters inclusivity and diversity. To retain the low-density neighborhood character of the adjacent communities, a design transition should be included between existing residential neighborhoods and the East End.

(Above) Mixed-use development, The Chophouse, in Seattle, WA.
6. Environmental Stewardship

Sustainable Site Design & Building Operations

As the East End develops, new buildings in the area should be encouraged to pursue LEED certifications individually to prioritize the overall efficiency of the building and enhance sustainability in design. LEED ND (Neighborhood Development) should also be explored for projects at a neighborhood scale.

Solar orientation of building sites should be considered to promote energy efficiency as well as maximize shading of sidewalks and public gathering spaces during hotter months. Block orientation in relation ties directly to the LEED rating system and earned credits for LEED ND.

As residential uses enter the POA, all-electric appliances should be encouraged in multifamily buildings.

Climate Resilience

To ensure climate resiliency as the POA develops green infrastructure should be implemented throughout the area. Green roofs to moderate the heat island effect, raingardens to reduce to stormwater runoff, and the installation of permeable pavers to filtrate pollutants often found in runoff – are all green infrastructure measures that can be incorporated into the East End.

Infrastructure reliability should be monitored as the POA develops. Growth and climate stressors could cause a need for higher capacity infrastructure. Additionally, the existing infrastructure within the POA should be maintained and improved consistently.

Renewable energy should be pursued within the East End to promote sustainability and efficiency in development.
Land Use & Zoning
The integration of mixed-use development into the POA creates both better site efficiency and overall energy efficiency and should be encouraged. A broader range of uses within closer proximity to one another encourages walkability from place to place due to thoughtfully designed connections among sites.

Transportation
The use of multiple modes of transportation should be encouraged through a better-connected street grid, enhanced cycling infrastructure, shorter crossings, and overall improved safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. In addition to encouraging alternative modes of transportation within the POA, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations should be installed as the new development occurs. Currently Eden Center contains the City’s only D.C. fast charger – more should be installed as green reinvestments are made in the area.

(Above) Protected bike lane.
3. Land Use & Zoning
The Land Use & Zoning Chapter

The Land Use & Zoning Chapter provides guidance for reinvestment in the East End by suggesting land use and zoning changes that support the overall vision for the area (see Chapter 2, Concepts). The Chapter also documents existing land use and zoning in and around the area. Although closely related, land use planning and zoning are separate activities. Land use planning speaks to future development and what might happen, while zoning speaks to what is allowed to happen.

A glossary of land use and zoning terminology is provided at the end of the chapter.

Note: This Plan is not meant to be used as a tool to force redevelopment of any property within the boundaries of the POA or elsewhere in the City. This policy guidance is also not formal guidance for Fairfax County; rather it is suggested policy guidance for joint planning opportunities between the two jurisdictions.

Existing Land Use

The Eastern Gateway/Seven Corners POA consists largely of three different land uses:

1. Shopping centers and individual retail comprises 27.4 acres (61.71% of total land area)
2. Light industrial/automotive comprises 15.2 acres (34.23% of total land area)
3. Public right-of-way covers 1.8 acres (4.05% of total land area)

The following sections provide general characteristics of the uses present. A map of the existing land use in the POA is on page 3-3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th>Approximately Total Acres</th>
<th>% of Total Land Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Center</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>35.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Retail</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial/Automotive</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>34.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shopping Center
Shopping Centers are the most present land use in the East End accounting for 15.9 acres. Eden Center is notably the largest shopping center in the East End. With over 125 businesses, it includes grocers, bakeries, restaurants, spas, and various shops. Many shops within the Eden Center function as part of a small-scale, indoor mall. The large surface parking lot within Eden Center serves not only as parking for patrons but also as event space.

Another shopping center present in the East End is Wilson Plaza located along Wilson Boulevard. Wilson Plaza contains a variety of small businesses such as restaurants, a nail salon, a hair salon, and a small grocer.

Light Industrial/ Automotive
Light industrial/ automotive account for 15.2 acres. Industrial/automotive use is distributed throughout the POA with a mix of larger and smaller parcels. The Koons Falls Church Ford provides automotive sales and service with a dealership and service center fronting East Broad Street and the Koons Ford Collision Center fronting Roosevelt Boulevard. The Public Storage site along Roosevelt Boulevard is a larger-scale light industrial use in the East End. The BP and Shell gas stations, both at the corner of Wilson and Roosevelt, are smaller-scale light industrial uses in the East End.

Individual Retail
Individual Retail comprises a smaller amount of land in the East End, with 11.5 acres. 24-Hour Fitness, a gym located along Route 7, and BJ’s Wholesale are the two businesses in the East End that fall under this use category.

(Above) Eden Center is a major shopping center within the City. (Below) The 24-Hour Fitness is an example of individual retail within the POA.
Density

In city planning, a common measure of density is Floor Area Ratio (FAR). FAR relates the square footage of a building’s floors to the square footage of the land that it sits on. The average FAR within the East End is approximately 0.2, meaning there is 5 times as much land area as there is interior building square footage. The majority of parcels have a FAR of 0.1 to 0.3.

Comprehensive Plan guidance for the City generally emphasizes the desire for walkable, vibrant commercial areas. The City’s vision for the commercial areas features a grid of streets, low spatial separation between buildings, strong pedestrian orientation, moderate dependence on cars, parking garages, and good choice in transit modes. The FAR needed to provide this kind of design and experience is 2.5 or higher. This aligns with the FAR of 3.0 or above that the City Council’s (2016) called for when identifying the East End as a “Revitalization District.”

(Above) Floor Area Ratio visual.
(Below) Density of all existing properties in the East End.
Zoning

Zoning is a tool for regulating land use in support of the community’s vision. The City’s Zoning Ordinance limits the kind of uses that can exist on a particular property, such as residential, retail, office, or industrial. The Zoning Ordinance includes other development regulations, including maximum building heights, lot coverage, and building setbacks from property lines. The Zoning Map is part of the City Zoning Code and, in combination with the descriptions of the zoning districts, limits the permitted land uses and building sizes. A map of the zoning in the POA is on page 3-5.

Zoning Districts

To regulate land use, the Zoning Ordinance divides the land within the City into various zoning districts or areas. Within each of the zoning districts, a different mix of land uses and sizes can be built. The districts present throughout the East End of the City are described here:

**B-3 General Business**

The B-3, General Business zoning district, allows most commercial uses by-right and mixed-use redevelopment with a Special Exception (SE). Buildings in this zoning district may reach a height of 55 feet by-right and 85 feet with a Special Exception. Koons Ford and 24-Hour Fitness are both part of the B-3 General Business Zone.

**M-1 Light Industrial**

The M-1, Light Industry zoning district, allows most B-3 uses, some light industrial uses, and mixed-use redevelopment in accordance with the Mixed-Use Redevelopment (MUR) regulations. The MUR overlay is intended to promote parcel consolidation and coordinated mixed-use redevelopment and predates the adoption of the City’s SE code, which has been used for the bulk of the recent redevelopments in the City.

The following businesses are all part of the M-1 Industrial Zone: Eden Center, BJ’s Wholesale, and Public Storage.

**T-1 Transitional**

This zoning district permits all residential uses and most commercial uses. The purpose of the T-1, Transitional, Zoning district, is to provide compatible uses in areas located between commercial and residential districts.

Within the East End, T-1 Transitional Zoning covers only a small portion of the 24-Hour Fitness site.
Adjacent Zoning Districts
The zoning districts provided below are those that neighbor the East End. They are included to provide relevant information and inform planning for appropriate transitions.

R-M Multifamily Residential
The R-M, Multifamily Residential zoning district, allows for apartment homes in a variety of sizes, styles, densities, and forms of ownership. This district provides for creativity in residential design in locations of the City that are close to major transportation services, retail, offices, and community facilities.

Falls Green Apartments and the Madison Condominiums are both a part of the adjacent R-M Multifamily Residential Zoning District.

R-1B Medium Density Residential
The R-1B, Medium Density Residential zoning district, allows for single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, houses of worship, public parks, and public facilities such as community centers and libraries. This district was created to maintain the residential character of the City and preserve the integrity of residential neighborhoods. Primarily single-family homes are part of the adjacent R-1B Medium Density Residential Zoning District.

(Above) Falls Green Apartments, which are part of the R-M Multifamily Residential District. (Below) The Madison Condominiums, which are part of the R-M Multifamily Residential District.
Planning Concept
The vision and goals of this Plan (see Chapter 2) call for future development that invests in connective vibrant spaces to include residential communities and new green spaces. The area’s future land use would benefit from a greater diversity of uses, including the addition of housing and active street retail.

Residential / Mixed Use
Introducing residential uses to POA-5 is one of the land use goals of this Plan. The integration of affordable housing into this new residential component should be prioritized. Mixed income housing should be encouraged as reinvestments are made in the POA. The proposed housing should blend in with the existing commercial uses, maintaining a mid-rise height.

Mixed developments decrease reliance on single occupancy vehicles and provide overall greater social connectivity compared to the current drive-and-shop model found in Seven Corners. Additionally, mixed use projects encourage private and public investment, promote tourism, and increase tax revenue.

Green Spaces
Green spaces are an important part of urban environments. They provide environmental and psychological benefits. The mental health benefits of access to nature and trees is well documented. Favorable future design elements will strive to enhance connectivity between new development and nature through direct (living greenery/presence of water) and indirect means (use of natural building materials/mimicking natural forms). These features can be incorporated into buildings, public spaces, streetscapes, and parks.

Attention should also be given to revitalizing existing green space, such as Fort Taylor Park. This public park bordering the POA is the smallest in the City but holds deep historical value, and it is one of the only green spaces in the East End. Increasing maintenance, adding signage, and encouraging planning and investment would benefit the park immensely. Furthering connections between Oakwood Cemetery and different areas of the East End is another way to utilize existing green area.

(Above) Example of an outdoor walkway with greenery on the ground, in pots, and on the roof.
**Active Retail**
Greater concentrations of commercial activity are suggested along Wilson and Roosevelt Boulevards on the current Koons, Public Storage, and BJs’ Wholesale lots. Active neighborhood-serving retail such as restaurants, shops, and personal services is encouraged for ground floor use, including the incorporation of flexible outdoor spaces.

**Office/Commercial**
Additional office and retail uses are recommended throughout the POA, which can serve as destinations and connections between work and living spaces.

**Transitional / Step-down Zones**
Transitions between any future development in the East End and the surrounding residential neighborhoods should minimize the impact of higher density development by stepping down building height and creating softer harmonious commercial/residential edges. The step-down zone is intended to be part of the overall district rather than a stand-alone project.

**Cultural Center & Civic Space**
A cultural center is recommended for the East End. This civic space should be at or near the Eden Center to serve the surrounding community. Vietnamese language classes, art classes, a cultural room or library, and meeting rooms for the community could all exist within this civic space.

**Neighborhood Incubator Space**
A neighborhood incubator space should be considered for the East End. This space would give an opportunity for smaller, start-up businesses to flourish as many have at Eden Center. A wide range of businesses could be supported by this space, such as those owned and operated by artisans or culinary entrepreneurs.

(Above) Example of a shared space with public art, meeting space, and innovative design.
Nodes
In the following sections the POA is divided into four nodes. Each node represents an area where specific planning concepts are recommended. The recommended land uses proposed for these nodes are shown on the Proposed Land Use Map on page 3-10.

Node 0: Green & Open Spaces
Node 0 encompasses all of the POA, with a focus on streets, open space, and green space, as shown in green on the aerial image to the right. Creating greener walkable streets and introducing plazas and parks for quality public spaces are key goals of this Plan. The following are examples of the types of green spaces suggested for the East End.

Streets
Adequate space should be given to street trees along both sides of all current or future streets. Parklets and activated alleyways are additional tools to improve the area’s public and green space.

Plazas & Public Areas
Public spaces have the potential to become landmark destinations, providing flexible areas to host a wide variety of programming. These spaces ideally combine hardscape and landscape by introducing trees, vegetation, lawns, and running water. These could take many forms such as a permeable surface that could flex between parking area or a public plaza, or a more ambitious park space following Wilson and Roosevelt Boulevards around Eden Center, introducing more seating, greenery, and placemaking opportunities to celebrate the cultural significance of the area.
Green Roofs and Gardens
Planting vegetation in otherwise impervious spaces can be beneficial environmentally and for the enjoyment of those occupying the space. Vegetated roofing on developments can repurpose unused spaces for residents, enhance street character and provide ecological benefits. The addition of rain gardens can alleviate stormwater runoff issues. The introduction of garden space in the POA could serve this role as well as possibly creating a connection to Vietnamese heritage, if a garden were planted with traditionally Vietnamese noninvasive plants. This could also serve as a learning space for children and adults to learn about traditional Vietnamese cuisine at its roots.

Places for Playing
Children learn by playing, and spaces which support play are often overlooked. Creative ways to introduce play into public spaces through interactive public art and landscaping are encouraged. Priority should be given to space at or near Eden Center.

Existing Green Spaces
Two green spaces exist adjacent to the POA, Fort Taylor Park and Oakwood Cemetery. As a City Park, Fort Taylor Park should be prioritized for revitalization, as it has the potential to serve as a much-needed green node for the neighboring properties. The 11.25-acre Oakwood Cemetery adjacent to the POA should also be considered as an opportunity for significant green space, that serves for recreational purposes and respectful enjoyment in an area where green space is scarce.

(Above) Green Roof. (Middle) Multigenerational gardening. (Left Below) Children playspace featuring Mandarin Square Capturing (O An Quan), a traditional Vietnamese board game. (Right Below) Fort Taylor Park.
Node 1: 24 - Hour Fitness & Koons Redevelopment

East End Town Center: 24- Hour Fitness and Koons Ford currently occupy Node 1, comprising approximately 10 acres. Redevelopment of the 24-Hour Fitness site in conjunction with either the Koons Ford site or adjacent properties in Fairfax County holds the opportunity to create a town center-style development in the East End. ULI’s “Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers” defines a town center as an integrated, open-air multiuse development where citizens can gather and connect with the community. A town center is anchored by dining, retail, leisure, and residential uses. Town centers often include office or hospitality space.

This town center would act as a welcoming feature into the East End. Attractive, walkable streets within and adjacent to the town center would be made possible by street network redesign accompanying the new Ring Road. Active street-facing retail would entice visitors to shop and linger. A town center development would build on the success of the recent Loren redevelopment in Fairfax County by offering additional street-level retail opportunities. New developments could include either residential or office uses. Any additional residential uses should serve the existing community. Affordable and senior housing should be encouraged. There are several office buildings throughout Seven Corners. Due to their aging nature, tenants may be interested in newer, updated spaces.

(Above) Aerial Map of Node 1 (Middle) Multimodal retail center (Below) Virginia Beach Town Center
**Node 2: Eden Center**

The central zone contains the Eden Center, a cultural anchor for the Vietnamese-American Community. The vision for this area is to uplift the Vietnamese culture at Eden Center, explore place keeping efforts, and improve core existing structures.

**Preservation and Expansion:** The existing buildings in the Eden Center house a thriving Vietnamese-American culture. As part of reinvestment in the area, existing buildings should be properly maintained and improved to continue supporting the community. Any repairs or improvements to existing structures should include a clear plan for supporting and retaining existing tenants. Opportunities for structured parking should be explored to expand capacity for visitors and free open ground-level space for community use.

**Active Edges:** Potential community center and proposed park along Roosevelt and Wilson Boulevards would benefit Eden Center and help to create an active and attractive streetscape. Additional consideration should be given to introducing a mid-rise boutique hotel that caters to out-of-town tourists visiting the Eden Center. The community center space could be incorporated into the ground level of a hotel.
Public Space: The Eden Center currently hosts regular events and celebrates holidays by temporarily repurposing portions of the surface parking lot. On weekends there are approximately 8,000 sq. ft, collectively, used for outdoor seating. Combining these separate spaces to create a flexible public plaza to serve as the East End’s civic space for recreation would be a complementary addition to this node. Future exploration of a permanent public plaza could expand and enhance the Eden Center’s programming to provide patrons with a permanent area for civic engagement, entertainment, outdoor dining, or leisure. Because current businesses rely heavily on vehicular traffic for costumers, there should be a continuing exploration of parking garages. Any public space should incorporate replacement parking.

Cultural District: A cultural district recognizing the area’s significant cultural contribution to the region is recommended. This district would officially recognize the area as a cultural neighborhood, drawing attention to the area in current and future planning efforts without introducing any prohibitive measures.
Node 3: East of Roosevelt

Active Streets and Open Space: A consolidation of properties and limited redevelopment of the BJ’s Wholesale parking lot would allow for a new redevelopment along Wilson Boulevard. This could mirror the recommendations for Zone 2 and include new mixed-use development with ground level retail.

Repurpose of BJs Building: The existing BJ’s Wholesale building offers a large interior space with tall ceilings. If redevelopment of this site is explored, options for repurposing this structure into a food hall, makerspace, or other large format should be considered. Solar panels could be incorporated atop the expansive roof area.

Site Programming: The BJ’s Wholesale, Koons, and Public Storage sites offer a unique opportunity to expand the cultural district if redevelopment occurs. Because of the cultural tourism draw of the Eden Center, a hotel that caters to these tourists could be an advantageous use. Another complementary use is a community center to serve the Seven Corners neighborhoods. Features such as a Vietnamese Cultural Room, community classrooms, recreational space for children, and a library could complement the surrounding uses and fill a niche not represented in the area.
Node 3 could also serve as space for an expansion of the retail environment at Eden Center. Targeted retail should focus on local Asian-oriented businesses, such as a potential indoor/outdoor food hall and market. A food hall would allow existing and future businesses to expand upon the area’s relationship with food and marketplace. If repurposed, consideration should be given to the BJ’s Wholesale building for this food hall. Mixed use could include residential use, which should prioritize affordable housing.

**Public Space:** Due to the size of the site and its underutilized lot, any future redevelopment or repurposing of the BJ’s Wholesale site should include a green public space with flexible programming into its design.
Land Use & Zoning Strategies

Updates to the City’s land use policies and zoning ordinance can enable and encourage investments that advance the community’s goals. The following strategies are intended to encourage reinvestment to advance the goals of this plan.

1. **Strategy:** Work with Fairfax County to adjust the boundary line between Falls Church and Fairfax County to incorporate the small parcel north of the Seven Corners intersection into the City. This would allow for better-coordinated land use planning efforts for this small area post boundary-line adjustment.

2. **Strategy:** Encourage sites that can be planned at 5 or more acres to achieve 15 percent tree canopy coverage.

3. **Strategy:** Amend the Zoning Code to allow for the Special Exception (SE) process to be accessed through the M-1, Light Industry District, allowing for more flexibility in redevelopment efforts. Note: this would replace the Mixed-Use Redevelopment (MUR) overlay zoning process for the area.

4. **Strategy:** Consider rezoning applications for this area on a case-by-case basis. Applications should support the goals stated in this plan.

5. **Strategy:** If an appropriate redevelopment application is submitted for the 24-Hour Fitness site, consider rezoning the small portion of land at the front of the 24-Hour Fitness site fronting Roosevelt Boulevard from T-1, Transitional, to B-1, Business.

6. **Strategy:** Establish a Cultural District in partnership with the Vietnamese community and Eden Center Property Management. Official naming and establishment of this district would follow a separate process that precedes this Plan. A cultural landscape study should occur prior to establishing the district.

7. **Strategy:** Prioritize the integration of affordable and mixed-income housing as residential use is introduced within the POA.
Land Use & Zoning Terminology

Land Use

Land use describes the type activity functioning on a parcel(s) of land. Examples include but are not limited to residential, commercial, or industrial.

A current land use map is an adopted piece of policy guidance that depicts how parcels of land in an area are being used in the present time. The current land use map can be used as a tool of reference for developers and City officials alike.

A future land use map depicts how parcels of land could be used in the future. The intent of a future land use map is to guide future development in an area in coordination with the vision for the area.

Zoning

Zoning is a municipal practice that regulates the use and development of land by way of dividing sections of land into “districts” or “zones” with specific allowances and restrictions applying to each. The purpose of zoning is to connect various areas in a way that support the City’s overall vision.

The Zoning Ordinance is municipal law that regulates zoning practices by way of rules and regulations pertaining to but not limited to the use, placement, size, and spacing of land and buildings. The City of Falls Church’s Zoning Ordinance can be found in Chapter 48 of the City Code.

Zoning districts are specific areas governed by the uniform rules and regulations provided in the City’s Zoning Ordinance.

Rezoning is the process of changing land’s zoning classification to allow for a different use. For land to undergo a rezoning, a formal application process is required and falls under the purview of various City officials and groups.

Density

Density measures the intensity of a given land use. Density is the amount of development per acre.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is a mathematical expression of the intensity of land development. It is determined by dividing the gross floor area of all buildings at or above grade level on a given parcel of land by the gross square footage of that same parcel of land.
4. Economic Development
Overview

The East End’s economic development goals build off the POA’s goals over the next 20 years. The economic development goals include: working to preserve the Vietnamese culture of the Eden Center area by emphasizing culture placekeeping and anti-displacement measures; and supporting economic reinvestment by building upon the area’s economic activity while maintaining the consistent and vibrant local economy.

Economic development can help to achieve these goals by balancing and delivering on these three objectives:

1. Center equity in future economic development activities within POA 5
2. Expand the area’s market share, and
3. Preserve and expand existing economy and culture.

This chapter summarizes the history and current conditions of the area’s economics including ties to past displacement. It then walks through the economic strategies noted in the paragraph above, along with additional ideas on how possibly to achieve these goals over the next 20 years.

Existing Commercial Uses and Employment Profile

The East End consists of unique and wide-ranging commercial uses. The largest uses by land area include Eden Center and BJ’s Wholesale. Eden Center, the largest commercial use in the POA at more than 15 acres, is home to more than 125 retailers. This is the highest concentration of unique commercial uses in the City of Falls Church.

As of 2019, pre-pandemic, the US Census reported that there were approximately 700 jobs in the East End POA. The Eden Center businesses collectively are one of the largest employers in the POA, and are a significant driver of economic activity in the area.

Almost 40 percent of workers in the POA were of primarily Asian descent, and a third of all workers had a high school diploma or less. Employees lived all over Northern Virginia, with high densities in Arlington County, Seven Corners, Annandale, and Tysons. Very few workers lived within walking distance of the East End POA.1
History of Eden Center: Vietnamese Displacement and the Birth of Eden Center

The Eden Center is the most significant economic driver in the POA. It grew out of economic necessity and desire for community among the Vietnamese population. After the Fall of Saigon, Vietnam, in April 1975, thousands of South Vietnamese emigrated to the U.S., many settling in the Clarendon-Ballston corridor of Arlington. Clarendon became a hub of Vietnamese merchants, known as “Little Saigon.” In the early 1980s, when Metro construction began and land values rose, many Vietnamese businesses were displaced from Clarendon, some relocating to what was then referred to as the Plaza Center Shopping Center in Falls Church. They redeveloped the space as the Eden Center, naming it after Saigon’s Eden Arcade – a popular upscale shopping and retail area in Saigon, Vietnam. The Center has since grown into a hub of Vietnamese and Asian culture for the entire East Coast. For many, it is a critical connection between past and present – a reminder of home.

(Above) Clarendon’s Little Saigon before displacement (Below) Interior of Good Fortune
**Recent Property Investments**

A number of property reinvestments have occurred in and adjacent to the East End since 2005. The former Syms store along Route 7 was converted to a 24-Hour Fitness center. At the Eden Center, some retail space was reconfigured to create the Good Fortune Grocery store. The Oakwood Apartments were substantially renovated and have been renamed Falls Green. Along Roosevelt Boulevard, the Public Storage facility has been renovated and upgraded. Koons Ford demolished a one-story building for surface parking, which was enhanced with a storm inlet, landscaping and street trees, as well as City street lights and a five-foot sidewalk.

**Land Values, Property Taxes, and Business Taxes**

Due to the East End’s low density and parking lot coverage, the property tax per acre is significantly lower than recently redeveloped properties throughout the City. The property tax revenue per acre is about 9 times less than that of 455 Tinner and 301 West Broad, and 3.7 times less than that of the Hilton Garden Inn.

The East End is a significant contributor to the City’s Meals, Sales, Business Personal Property, and Business, Professional, and Occupational License tax revenues. In 2020, The Eden Center businesses paid the City more than $1.3 million in these taxes. The Eden Center collectively contributes more tax revenue than any other property in the POA. The other East End properties—24 Hour Fitness, Public Storage, Koons Auto, BP Gas, Shell Gas, Vietnam Supermarket, and BJs Wholesale—provided a combined tax revenue of over $2.5 million.

The table below outlines the total, land, and building values, as well as property tax revenue and acreage for the East End POA and three of the City’s recent redevelopment projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area / Properties</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Total Assessed Value</th>
<th>Building Value to Land Value Ratio</th>
<th>Property Tax Revenue (Buildings and Land)</th>
<th>Property Tax Revenue per Acre</th>
<th>Use Tax Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East End POA</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>$167,793,900</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>$2,273,607</td>
<td>$52,508</td>
<td>$3.9 million</td>
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<td>Hilton Garden Inn</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>$16,191,400</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>$219,393</td>
<td>$192,450</td>
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<td>301 W Broad</td>
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<td>$77,633,200</td>
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<td>12.95</td>
<td>$1,041,861</td>
<td>$493,773</td>
<td>Data Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Based on 2020 Property Assessment

2 Based on the 2020 property tax rate of $1.355 per $100 of assessed value

3 Combined BPOL, Sales, Meals and BPP Taxes
Economic Development Strategies

The following strategies leverage existing City policies and introduce new concepts to help achieve the POA’s economic development goals. These strategies offer ways the City, business owners, land owners, developers, and the community can work together to support equitable economic development and limit displacement in the East End.

The Anti-Displacement Toolkit

Displacement can be particularly concerning for historic cultural centers like Eden Center, as small businesses in the retail and restaurant sectors can be the most vulnerable to market shifts. The strategies explored below apply specifically to the Eden Center area with the intention of preventing displacement of businesses and preserving the Vietnamese culture in the area, which could be disrupted by redevelopment within the POA. Successful implementation of these strategies will require collaboration among the City of Falls Church, community groups, and property and business owners.

(Above) Image from Clarendon’s Little Saigon before displacement
Strategy: Legacy Business Conservation at Eden Center

As a general rule, public dollars cannot be spent to further a particularized private interest. However, some avenues may exist to support legacy businesses indirectly, through investment in the public infrastructure surrounding those properties, or through activities authorized under economic development legislation. While not expressly allowed in Virginia, legacy business conservation programs can help preserve the existing economy and culture by offering incentives, such as grants or other in-kind financial support. Where those programs are authorized, grant money is often used for business or property improvements – including interior remodeling, utility upgrades, or improved point-of-sale systems. Financial support can also aid in activities that ensure businesses’ long-term stability including technical, marketing, and promotional assistance. Many jurisdictions define a ‘legacy business’, based on longevity, history, identity, and/or character in the community. A program such as this - if ever authorized under Virginia law - could help preserve the East End’s long-lasting establishments within the Eden Center and help with preserving the area’s cultural heritage.

The City should explore available methods for providing support to legacy businesses in the POA.
**Strategy: Provide Technical Assistance, Educational, and Counseling Opportunities for Businesses**

Tools like literacy, marketing, and financial training help businesses survive market shocks. Such programs can provide counseling so that tenants can better understand their leases and rights; help to apply for grants, licensing and housing; teach marketing tools; and assist with financial planning like accounting and filing taxes.

The City previously partnered with state or regional organizations to run periodic small-business training events.

**Strategy: Supply Resources for How to Find and Apply for Loans and Grants**

Small businesses, particularly those that are minority owned, can struggle to survive due to difficulties securing funding. Compiling a guide for small businesses that shares different sources and ways to apply for grants and other assistance could ease some of that risk and encourage more entrepreneurship within the City. These resources could lead to new small businesses opening and help existing businesses survive economic shifts or seek improvements. Resource examples could include U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, the Program for Investment in Micro-Entrepreneurs (PRIME), and the Minority Business Development Agency.

**Strategy: Enhance Existing Buildings**

Commercial façade improvements can help increase sales by upgrading and improving existing businesses. These improvements can be pursued independently by property owners and business owners. The City should explore whether it is can establish grant and loan assistance programs to assist with commercial renovations.

(Above) Eden Center façade (Below) Interior of Eden Center
**Strategy: Vietnamese Speaking Outreach Services**
The City of Falls Church has traditionally used contracted services for both interpretation and translation. The Eden Center is home to a large number of Vietnamese-speaking people with whom the City engages across many departments. A Vietnamese-speaking outreach specialist as part of the City team either as a contracted service or as a member of City staff could help promote stronger relationship building and engagement with the Eden Center community. Vietnamese outreach services could help City staff and community members work together to realize the goals and strategies identified in this Small Area Plan.

**Strategy: Establish List of Registered Community Organizations**
Establishing a list of Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) can lead to more productive community engagement and increased connection of the East End with the rest of the City. There are differing requirements for RCOs; however, they commonly constitute a group of residents and stakeholders of a specific area who meet regularly and publicly (ex. Small Business Alliance). The RCO’s can give feedback, advocate for community benefits, and generally ensure the neighborhood is preserved.

**Strategy: Encourage Studies that Explore History, Culture, and Anti-Displacement**
The City of Falls Church has successfully partnered with universities such as Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and George Mason in the past for student-led studies of various areas of the City. Student studies have often led to the creation of valuable policy guidance. The East End is a deserving candidate for a study exploring themes such as equitable planning, legacy business preservation, and cultural placemaking efforts. A cultural landscape report is recommended for the area.

(Above) Clarendon’s “Little Saigon” before Vietnamese business displacement
**Strategy: Eden Center Chamber of Commerce or Small Business Alliance and Peer Advocacy Group**

Businesses within the POA, particularly the small businesses within the Eden Center, should consider joining the Falls Church Chamber of Commerce, or forming organized groups to meet regularly and advocate for the collective interests and needs of the tenants. Such groups having elected leadership representing tenants can provide tenants with increased input in discussions with groups like the City, property management, and neighboring jurisdictions.

(Above) Banh Cuon Saigon established in 1996 an example of a legacy business
Strategy: Leverage Special Exception (SE) Criteria to Enhance Community Benefits and Promote Cultural Preservation

Special exception (SE) criteria promote the City’s desired design, development, and community benefits for projects that exceed ‘by-right’ allowances under the zoning code. So that any redevelopment in the East End supports rather than displaces, existing small businesses, particular attention should be given to following criteria:

- Primary Criteria 1(a) – The resulting development conforms to the City’s adopted comprehensive plan, small area plans, and design guidelines
- Secondary Criteria 2(a) – The resulting development is compatible with surrounding land uses and planned land uses in size, bulk, and scale
- Secondary Criteria 2(g) – The resulting development includes and encourages local or independent businesses

Strategy: Construction Disruption Assistance

Construction as a result of reinvestments and infrastructure projects in the area can cause disruption, changes, and challenges for small businesses. Construction disruption assistance can mitigate the burdens associated with construction through the provision of technical signage, rerouting, and enhanced access to small businesses.

(Above) Construction disruption assistance signage
Place Keeping, Marketing, and Branding

This section explores the opportunity to establish the East End as a cohesive neighborhood focused on the Vietnamese culture. Such strategies include place-keeping, marketing, branding, and heritage tourism.

Strategy: Establish A Cultural District

This area would benefit from a placemaking strategy to organically over time expand the Eden Center to other areas of the POA. The establishment of a formal cultural district would recognize the national prominence of the Eden Center as the largest Vietnamese hub on the East Coast. The name “Little Saigon East” received a substantial amount of community support and should be considered as a potential name for the district.

This designation should be accompanied by enhancements like a cohesive and culturally relevant design, street naming, and programming to help highlight the area’s cultural identity. Placemaking efforts should celebrate the POA’s existing cultural heritage.

Strategy: Honorary Renaming of Wilson Boulevard to “Saigon Boulevard”

To create a gateway to the Eden Center area, the portion of Wilson Boulevard located in Falls Church should receive the honorary designation of Saigon Boulevard. The renaming would honor the Vietnamese culture that has created a positive impact in the region. Coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County will be required to rename and dedicate the street.
Strategy: Cultural District Branding
Branding should be created around the cultural district through banners on streetlights, public art, and wayfinding signage. Such cohesive design elements that incorporate Vietnamese themes recognizing the neighborhood would provide visual cues that this is a culturally significant area. Similarly, any marketing around this neighborhood and programming that occurs should feature the neighborhood’s name and design cues to help reach a wider audience. Design elements throughout the district should be reflective of the area’s Vietnamese influence. Spaces should be activated with art and elements that emphasize the culture. Flags denoting the neighborhood’s name could fly on light poles. Artful planters or bike racks could decorate the area. A history and culture walk could be incorporated into park spaces.

Strategy: Pursue Historic Designations
Applying for Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places designation is another way of honoring the area’s culture and history. The area must meet eligibility criteria including its age, and proven significance to events, activities, themes, or developments in the past. Approval offers new opportunities like federal financial incentives for preservation and rehabilitation. Historic dedications for the Eden Center Clock Tower and Lion’s Gate should be pursued. These design elements were specifically intended to recall building elements from the Ben Thanh Central Market Complex and similar iconic public architecture in old central Saigon.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources administers the two programs cited above. Both programs encourage the continued preservation of historic and cultural places. In coordination with the property owners, Eden Center should be evaluated for eligibility and should be listed in the Registers.

(Top Left) “Little Saigon Stories” community arts program outdoor visual storytelling exhibit in San Diego; (Left Below) Artful mosaic planters in San Diego’s “Little Saigon”; (Right) Street banners in San Diego’s “Little Saigon”
**Strategy: Arts and Culture Focused Placekeeping**

Vietnamese culture should be celebrated through arts-and-culture-focused placekeeping. The practice of place keeping actively involves community members in placemaking measures. Creative placemaking elements such as murals and artful crosswalks that are reflective of Vietnamese culture could be painted by local cultural groups. Partnerships with local and nationally acclaimed Vietnamese artists could also be explored.

**Strategy: Heritage Tourism**

The East End serves as a major attraction for visitors of the City and region. The Eden Center attracts considerable heritage tourism from across several states due to its status as the foremost Vietnamese hub on the East Coast. The City should continue to encourage this tourism through establishing the cultural district, increasing advertising and programming at the Eden Center, and celebrating the history and culture through placekeeping efforts. Consideration of logistics such as parking access and tour bus accommodations should accompany this effort. Virginia Tourism is an appropriate partner in the POA’s heritage tourism efforts together with the property owners. Additionally, the City alongside neighboring jurisdictions should work with the Virginia Tourism to explore creating an AAPI (Asian America and Pacific Islander) cultural trail.
Strategy: Food Programming & Marketing

One of the POA’s strong assets is its diverse food options. Eden Center restaurants are regularly recognized in the “Best Of” awards in many regional publications. The City should work with the Eden Center to promote existing events and schedule additional programming, like a night market, to celebrate this strength. A night market could also increase customer traffic on week nights when there is typically less business.
**Future Reinvestment in the East End**

Reinvestments must occur to support and enhance continued economic vitality throughout the East End. Investments should be made in existing infrastructure to work towards safe, walkable streets, sustainability, an improved streetscape, and upgraded utilities. As reinvestments occur in the East End, complementary uses and spaces, as well as creativity, should be encouraged when repurposing underutilized lots. Community engagement and benefits should be emphasized throughout future reinvestment endeavors.

**Strategy: Invest in Infrastructure**

Infrastructure improvements help preserve and improve walkability and consumer experience. Private and public investments are needed to update and maintain stormwater and sewer infrastructure, widen sidewalks, and plant new trees in the East End. Larger redevelopments are expected to improve streetscape and utilities on their sites. City funds programmed through the CIP can address area-wide needs and missing pieces.

**Strategy: Business Ownership Opportunities**

If future new development occurs in the POA, ownership opportunities such as condominium office and retail space should be considered. This creates more opportunities for small business owners to build equity and wealth.

**Strategy: Repurpose/Infill Underutilized Parking Lots**

Existing surface parking lots in the POA, like those at BJ’s Wholesale and Eden Center, could support additional economic activity without requiring the demolition of existing buildings.

Infill development in the area with uses such as a hotel, cultural center, and housing would support existing commercial uses by allowing more visitors to stay in the POA and expanding the area into an 18-hour-a-day locale with ongoing economic activity.
Strategy: Encourage Complementary Uses and Spaces

New retail should support and build upon existing businesses in the area. Building on existing strengths increases economic activity while also supporting existing businesses. Examples of complementary uses include:

- Additional restaurants, a food-hall, or other incubator space for small food business
- Spaces for civic engagement and business education, such as language classes, exercise classes, or a Vietnamese cultural center and library
- Makerspaces for local and visiting artists, and
- Other uses mentioned throughout this chapter and the land use and zoning chapter such as senior housing and affordable housing options.
Strategy: Community Engagement During Application Reviews

Due to the generally low participation rate of POA business owners and visitors in traditional community engagement forums, such as evening work sessions and public meetings, special attention should be given to how public notice is given for any proposed redevelopment applications. This could include creative and new solutions for expanded public notice, such as yard signs in multiple languages and hosting pop-up meetings onsite to provide information and answer questions. Developers should also be encouraged to distribute multilingual flyers for activities occurring within the East End.

(Above) City Staff at East End Small Area Plan pop-up event
Footnote Citations


2 Legacy Businesses Preservation Programs – Small Business Anti-Displacement Network (SBAN) [antidisplacement.org]


4 Commercial Façade Improvement Programs – Small Business Anti-Displacement Network (SBAN) [antidisplacement.org]
5. Urban Design & Character
Overview

This chapter provides urban design recommendations to create an inviting, pedestrian-scale environment; reconnect residents and visitors with the natural environment; and celebrate the East End as a distinct destination with a unique culture.

A goal of this Plan is making the East End a destination that people will want to explore by any mode of transportation. This means creating pedestrian-scale streets that prioritize ample walking room, engaging streetscapes, and welcoming ground-floor building facades.

Another goal is reconnecting East End residents and visitors to the natural environment; reversing the highly impermeable site through introduction of a street-tree canopy, and creating park spaces.

Finally, the East End should be recognized and celebrated as a distinctive destination within Falls Church with unique culture. Inclusion of flexible event space, wayfinding, and gateway elements will help to shape the area’s identity.

(Above) Friends enjoying lunch in colorful seating under the shade of street trees
Streetscape
An impactful way to reinvest in a place is to begin with improving streetscape. The Plan’s goal is to highlight the East End as an attractive, vibrant, and unique destination. Wider sidewalks can house the outdoor dining, seating, lamps, bike racks, and other amenities that are important to creating a comfortable space that encourages visitors and residents to walk, gather, linger, and explore.

In addition to allocation of space for people and man-made amenities, increasing the amount of natural landscape and tree canopy coverage through ground-level plantings and street trees is a design goal of this plan.

The following are recommendations to create a successful and vibrant East End streetscape:

**Strategy:** In accordance with the City’s adopted Streetscape Design Standards for Commercial Streets, ensure public infrastructure projects, building retrofits, and infill development within the POA include a full set of streetscape amenities including street trees, restaurant seating, walking space, benches, bike racks, and wayfinding. Work with Fairfax County to mimic and provide similar amenities and design along Wilson Boulevard.

**Strategy:** Plant new and existing streets with a dense set of trees to increase canopy coverage and provide shade. Trees should also be incorporated in any parks or plazas. Where there is not sufficient space for a tree, smaller colorful or green vegetation should be planted.

**Strategy:** Incorporate a variety of street furniture such as benches along the sidewalks, moveable seating in plazas and parks, stairs; and consciously design planter edges and public art at sitting height.

**Strategy:** Provide adequate lighting throughout the East End to increase a sense of security and liveliness at night. Lighting can come in various forms; however, it should be designed at the pedestrian scale as opposed to the current automotive scale. Street lamps around Eden Center lamp structures should have a unique color and design with Vietnamese culture in mind.

**Strategy:** During reinvestment and as part of the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, apply the City’s Streetscape Standards for building setbacks of 20 feet along Broad Street, Wilson Boulevard, and Roosevelt Boulevard.

(Above) Shady street with inviting ground floor retail and outdoor dining

Architecture
A building façade, particularly the treatment of the ground floor, has significant influence on area’s character. Some design
factors include vertical design elements, transparent and welcoming ground floors, variation of the façade’s depth or material, residential balconies, and active rooftops. New buildings should incorporate biophilic design elements and strive for sustainable LEED designations.

**Strategy:** Strive to offer a variety of ground floor styles in new developments by favoring design that accommodates more frequent narrow/tall units rather than wide/long units. Considering a pedestrian’s pace, narrower units provide a wide variation of goods and services and a more intriguing streetscape that encourages people to explore.

**Strategy:** Make ground-floor storefronts transparent, well lit, and welcoming. Restaurants are encouraged to provide outdoor seating areas as well as window seating to allow for the fullest degree of street life.

**Strategy:** Introduce street-facing balconies and active rooftops, both residential and commercial, as additional ways to keep eyes on the street to further increase safety as well as street activation.

**Strategy:** Consider top-floor building setbacks for any new development along major roadways and nearing residential areas to reduce the perceived height of the building from the street.

**Strategy:** Utilize biophilic design elements in new construction by weakening the boundary between the inside and outside of a building. This can be accomplished through emphasis on natural light, inclusion of water features, use of natural materials, and addition of trees and greenery in walls, roofs, and landscaping, for example.

**Strategy:** Strive for a designation of LEED Gold or higher in new construction.

**Strategy:** Incorporate respectful contemporary Vietnamese architectural elements in any new facades or building improvements at or around Eden Center.

**Strategy:** Allow for greater sign flexibility from code regulations to encourage more individualistic storefronts.

(Above) Example of a biophilic storefront combining greenery, natural materials, balconies, and open walls to create an intriguing ground floor business.
Vietnamese Character

Any improvements or expansions of Eden Center should support branding and placemaking of the cultural district and promote cultural authenticity.

**Strategy:** Maintain the iconic Eden Center symbols such as the Meridian Gate, replica clocktower, and flag poles that fly the South Vietnamese flag.

**Strategy:** Actively seek out and welcome new Vietnamese and Asian American business opportunities into any future retail spaces in and near Eden Center. Adjacent development could be an opportunity to expand the existing Vietnamese community.

**Strategy:** Ensure the park improvements near Eden Center are influenced by Vietnamese design, including appropriate native vegetation, cultural art, and a history walk.

**Strategy:** Reinforce cultural identity through basic design elements such as decorative sewer lids, bus stops, murals, lamps, and building architecture. Such influences should also incorporate modern Vietnamese influences.

(Above) Denver’s Little Saigon Mid-Autumn Festival (Left Below) Eden Center pocket park tree after New Year’s celebration (Left Right) Filipino-American history walk kiosk in Seattle’s Chinatown
Parks and Plazas
A welcoming square provides a focal point for people to gather, celebrate, and recreate. Form and function will differ; however, common elements include a mixture of hardscape and vegetation, a wide variety of seating options, presence of water, opportunity for food, a sense safety, connection to the street, and a location nearby to other active areas. This Plan suggests such spaces be introduced into the East End. The following are examples of types of public spaces that could be included in the East End.

Eden Center Plaza
There are opportunities for short-term actions to create flexible plaza spaces in Eden Center. The square could host movie showings, live local performances, morning yoga, cultural festivals in collaboration with Eden Center, a night market; or provide additional outdoor-dining seating for businesses.

Strategy: Consolidate the current available space dedicated to outdoor dining (7,938 sq. ft.), into one larger flexible public space that can expand or shrink depending on events or daily parking requirements. The larger event space can be marked with a festive ground mural and barriers can be moved to serve the current need. The space should remain near businesses to provide outdoor-dining seating.

Strategy: Create a permanent cultural square with flexible programming, ample seating, and a mixture of hardscape and landscape. This larger area could be a site for hosting concerts, festival performances, and events.

Strategy: Ensure maintenance and responsibility of park spaces is clear so that such upkeep does not fall upon business owners.

(Above) Example of a flexible gathering space in an underutilized parking lot that can grow or shrink depending on need (Bottom Left) ArtsWalk Park Allentown, PA (Bottom Right) Plaza with moveable furniture
**Fort Taylor Park Reinvestment**

The only public park in or near the East End is Fort Taylor Park. It is a small linear forested trail with deep ties to the City’s history. Currently it is not well known due to overgrowth and limited signage.

**Strategy:** Develop a park plan to restore the park.

**Strategy:** In the short term, clean up Fort Taylor Park through City and community collaboration. Revitalize the existing park design by clearing overgrowth, refreshing signs and historic markers, and installing more seating.

**Strategy:** Commemorate Civil War history and ties to Thaddeus Lowe’s balloon rising through a public art piece in the park.

**Strategy:** Increase connectivity between Fort Taylor Park and the greater East End area, specifically Oakwood Cemetery and any future Koons redevelopment. Consider design to reinforce that the park is a permeable boundary.

**Strategy:** Ensure park entrances are brought up to current ADA standards.

**Strategy:** In the long term, implement a park plan to provide access from Broad Street, address erosion and stormwater issues, and generally make the park more inviting.
Pocket Parks & Parklets
These are opportunistic parks that transform underutilized areas into active green public spaces. Such parks are often found between buildings, in alleyways, along wide sidewalks, and in curb extensions usually occupying on-street parking. Pocket parks and parklets offer spaces for people to recreate, work, or relax.

Strategy: Plan and design for intentional pocket parks during future East End development. A deeper setback along the BJs parcel could allow for a small linear park adjacent to the sidewalk.

Strategy: Work with businesses to identify sites to install parklets along typical sidewalks. Any future street parking should anticipate possible reduction for potential parklets.

Strategy: Consider incorporating parklets into streetscape for outdoor dining usage. Parklets can be incorporated into new or existing developed areas.

Strategy: Incorporate educational components into park spaces, such as history walks or signage noting plant species.

Strategy: Include free public Wi-Fi in proposed park spaces. This would allow people to use their devices for work or leisure in outdoor spaces.

Example of parklets making the best of space regardless of size, from expanded street medians to parking spaces.
**Gateway**

The City’s adopted Streetscape Standards (2017) identify the East End as a gateway into Falls Church. Gateways provide a welcoming transition and a clear identity to the City and neighborhoods within. Gateways commonly include a mix of elements, including signs, lighting, landscaping, public art and monuments, benches or other furniture, signature architecture, and special paving. Gateways help to instill a sense of community by creating a sense of place.

The East End gateway should announce entrance into Falls Church when one is traveling from Arlington and Fairfax into the City. The gateway should help to establish a distinct identity so that one knows they are in Falls Church.

**Strategy:** Incorporate branding, public art, and unique signage within the medians and architectural elements on building facades, rooftops, and building frontages to reinforce the gateway experience.

**Strategy:** Reinforce cultural district branding through street lamp banners, visible murals or art, and Saigon Boulevard signage. Within the cultural district, utilize relevant design elements.

**Strategy:** Enhance landscaping and streetscape along Route 7/Broad Street to create a gateway that complies with the Falls Church Streetscape Standards (2017).

**Strategy:** Design the gateway to be experienced and viewed from various modes of transportation (i.e. pedestrian, bicyclists, and vehicles).
Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage should be incorporated into development to further enhance placemaking. Wayfinding strategies should align with the City’s wayfinding efforts to establish a distinctive identity and sense of place that connects the East End to the rest of the City. Wayfinding can be oriented for motorists such as street signs as well as pedestrians through maps, objects, buildings, and landmarks.

Signage in and around the Eden Center area should be bilingual to include Vietnamese. The integration of bilingual street signage in the area could aid in establishing a distinct sense of cultural identity when around the center. Bilingual street signage would also enhance inclusivity and accessibility for many in the area.

**Strategy:** Incorporate Vietnamese onto street signs in the Eden Center area to enhance the presence of cultural identity.

**Strategy:** Incorporate wayfinding signage as the area redevelops, particularly noting sites such as Fort Taylor Park, Oakwood Cemetery, and Eden Center.

**Strategy:** Display specifically designed or colored City amenities (light poles, trash cans, bike racks, benches, and bus stops) to indicate the Vietnamese neighborhood. Decorative light pole banners should be used to signal the boundaries of the cultural district.

(Above) Wayfinding signage on Route 7 (Left Below) Bilingual signage in Seattle’s Little Saigon (Right Below) Little Saigon neighborhood welcome banner in San Jose, California
Public Art

Public art contributes to an area’s sense of place and identity, sparks imagination, and tells a story. Public art offers the ability to humanize the built environment, blending into streetscape and infrastructure projects. The East End is included in the City’s formally recognized Arts & Cultural District, which identifies areas where public art should be incorporated.

Public art can take the form of murals, sculptures, and temporary art. Mural festivals similar to the NOMA BID’s D.C. Walls should be explored to kick-start the public art efforts in the East End. Creative urban design concepts such as artful Playscapes, bike racks, and crosswalk art offer the opportunity to create functional use with public art as reinvestments are made in the area. Opportunities to enhance the East End through the implementation of public art are limitless.

**Strategy:** Identify areas within the East End that can benefit from temporary or rotating art installations. The following are a few suggestions:

- Host a week-long mural festival to paint and curate murals throughout the East End. The back of Eden Center is a particular location that would benefit from space activation through public art.
- Implement crosswalk art. As part of placemaking efforts for cultural district branding, incorporate art that is reflective of Vietnamese cultural heritage adjacent to the Eden Center.
- Work with Eden Center to install temporary art panels to showcase a rotating gallery of art. These could be

• installed in the adjacent sidewalk or housed within a future community center.
• Work with Fairfax Water to consider a mural design on the side of a replacement water tower facing Eden Center.

Strategy: Partner with artists who are knowledgeable of and are connected to the Vietnamese American and Asian American cultures for public art at or near Eden Center.

Strategy: Introduce art into the design of any future children play areas, for example a sculpture that is also safe to climb and explore.

Strategy: As reinvestments are made in the East End, encourage development teams to invest in public art within project sites.

Strategy: Activate underused public spaces by introducing creative placekeeping aspects such as a combination of public art and curated experiences into the physical landscape.

Strategy: Explore the stories of the rich culture and historic ties of Eden Center.

(Above) Cloud benches designed for San Francisco’s Chinatown (Below Left) Mural Festival in the NOMA Neighborhood of Washington, D.C. (Below Right) Artful crosswalk in Oakton, California’s Chinatown
Honoring History Through Design

Reinvestment of the East End provides an opportunity to incorporate elements that reflect the unique history of the area. The aforementioned elements--gateway features, wayfinding, parks, placekeeping, and architecture--are all tools that can be used to make history visible through urban design in the following ways.

**Strategy:** Utilize wayfinding signage to inform visitors of the area’s history.

**Strategy:** Have relevant Eden Center signage in Vietnamese.

**Strategy:** Commission public art that showcases Asian American cultural themes.

**Strategy:** Integrate placekeeping into the streetscape that showcases Asian culture through interactive public spaces, public art, food stands and markets, choice of vegetation, and amenities and utilities such as lamp poles, bike racks, and decorative manhole covers.

**Strategy:** Install cultural interpretive markers at Eden Center. These markers should be installed at the Lion’s Gate and the Clock Tower.

(Above) Examples of Chinese signage and wayfinding in Chinatowns in San Francisco (Left), and DC (Right). (Below) Example of a fusion of American and Chinese architecture – Paul Tak Center, Chinatown, Chicago
Strategy: Install an interpretive marker, monument, or piece of public art to commemorate Frederick Foote Sr.’s legacy within the East End.

Strategy: Implement a history walk within the East End.

(Above) U Street Heritage Tour signage (Below) Arlington’s Little Saigon Walking Tour (Left) Frederick Foote Sr.
**Block Size**

Typically, a person is willing to walk to a destination within 0.6 miles (10-12-minute walk); however, the quality of the walk can affect enjoyment. A major factor in determining walk quality is block length. Small-to-moderate block sizes of 300-500’ are more favorable to healthy walking environments. Larger blocks can be sustained and enjoyable to walk when they include smaller pedestrian-scaled streets, active alleyways, public spaces, and a lively ground floor.

The East End, an area of approximately 40 acres, is split by the street grid into three super blocks/nodes. If a pedestrian were to walk along the East End from East Broad, they would experience a 2,300 foot-path that is broken up by drive isles and parking lots before finally reaching the intersection of Roosevelt Boulevard. There is no alternative path or street grid, and there are few marked crosswalks.

These mega blocks can be broken up by creating new internal shared streets, parks, and plazas. Additions to the street grid should focus on frequent, safe pedestrian crossings among the three nodes so that a pedestrian could cross from one parcel to the other without having to walk the perimeter of the East End.

**Strategy:** Establish short-term walking routes between existing stores and sites and safe street crossings. Long-term, work with property owners and Fairfax County during any future redevelopment to align new streets with existing layout to create an improved street grid, smaller walkable blocks, and frequent safe crossings.

**Strategy:** Break up buildings in new developments to create alleyways between them. These interior passages help to avoid creating “superblocks.” These pathways should be treated as public spaces rather than utilitarian delivery spaces.

**(Above and Below) Evidence that block size alone does not make an area feel walkable. Downtown Lubbock Texas has 320 ft. block lengths yet distances feel exaggerated by lack of any kind of pedestrian engagement**
Building Height to Street-Width Ratio

The height of a street’s buildings in relation to the width of the street is important for creating a sense of enclosure, while avoiding a sense of being in a canyon. When lined with low height and far setback buildings, a road begins to feel like a highway. Narrower streets create a more intimate space with slower speeds and allow the street to be comfortably shared by all modes of transportation.

Wilson Boulevard has 5 lanes of traffic and varies from 60-70 feet when its long merge lane near the intersection of Route 7 is included. Lined with one-story commercial buildings, street trees, undersized sidewalks, and setbacks ranging from 80-500+ feet, Wilson feels wide and empty. While not as dramatic, the same characteristics are felt along East Broad Street and Roosevelt Boulevard.

There is no precise ratio, and a ratio should not preclude a particular building height, but how the ratio impacts the feel of an area must be considered. Wider roadways lead to faster roads designed to quickly push cars from one point to another.

Strategy: Coordinate with Fairfax County to consider narrowing Wilson Boulevard by removing one lane in each direction, rededicating the space to cycle lanes, sidewalk, future BRT, and trees. Any future narrowing should take into account the future Ring Road planned for the area as well as business access and through travel.
**Strategy:** In any future redevelopment, focus on infill along major roadways to fill the setback gap, bring buildings to the sidewalk, and size them appropriately for the street width. The recommended height for such developments would be midrise.
6. Multimodal Connectivity & Accessibility
Overview

A multimodal transportation network – one that allows people of all ages and abilities to safely travel on foot or by bike, transit, or car – is an important component of livability. The transportation network in the East End / Seven Corners POA is part of the regional east-west corridor of Routes 7 and 50, but it is also the local grid of streets and sidewalks that enables everyday life for area residents, workers, and visitors. Transportation investments should support both the needs of regional and local travel. This chapter catalogs existing transportation conditions and already planned investments. The chapter also recommends future investments that would deliver on the goals of this Plan to reframe the East End as a vibrant multi-modal and accessible area.

(Above) Streetscape with tree-lined separation between the street, bike lane and sidewalk. (Middle) People board a bus from a bus stop by the streets curb. (Below) Street with a separated bike lane.
**Transportation Impacts**
Transportation not only impacts the way people move in a place and access daily necessities, but it also has a significant impact on the shape of communities. The transportation network’s design directly affects how people use it. Streets designed with the sole purpose of moving vehicles – with wide travel lanes and no sidewalks – will only attract more cars and the land uses that serve them. In contrast, when transportation networks are designed to serve people – with bike facilities, wide sidewalks, and other pedestrian accommodations – more pedestrians and bicyclists will be attracted to the area, therefore creating a balanced and active community. A transportation network should inform and respond to the surrounding context and provide safe travel for all users. In order to achieve the vision and goals of this Plan, it is important to focus on enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access throughout the East End.

**Modeshare**
Travel in Falls Church includes walking, bicycling, and transit use, as well as driving. Data from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) shows the split among different modes of travel for commute trips originating in the City and mode splits for all daily trips – trips to work, the gym, the store, to visit friends, etc. A 2014 MWCOG travel study noted that 86 percent of all trips in the City were made by car and Census data for 2015 shows that 65 percent of commute trips are made by car. This data indicates that a significant number of trips are taken by car.

Based upon population projections and forecasted travel increases, MWCOG expects the demand for travel is expected to increase by approximately 9 percent through 2030. In order to meet that demand, the City will need to increase mode share of non-auto trips from 14 percent to at least 21 percent. As reinvestments are made in the East End, investments in transportation should consider pedestrians and cyclists foremost, followed by public transit, and automobiles.
Existing Conditions
The East End currently exists as a primarily auto-dependent area. A lack of crosswalks, long block lengths, and wide streets make the area difficult to traverse as a pedestrian or cyclist. Strategic transportation upgrades are needed to bring the East End from its current condition to one that is multimodal and safely connected. The existing conditions of the East End’s transportation components are listed below.

Block Lengths, Street Widths, and Pedestrian Safety
The availability of safe pedestrian crossings and the distances between them are important considerations for pedestrian safety. Block lengths within the East End measure 800 feet or more. Best practices call for block lengths of 300 to 500 feet. Relatedly, there are only seven marked crosswalks in the entire POA. Pedestrian crossings along Wilson Boulevard are separated by 1,127 feet (more than 3.5 times the recommended distance). The City’s Streetscape Standards call for crosswalks every 250 feet. Intersection and midblock crossings connecting the three nodes of the POA should be prioritized.

Sidewalks are present throughout the East End; however, the condition of the sidewalks varies. Existing sidewalks are narrow, and there are numerous obstructions such as utility poles. All sidewalks and crossings along major commercial streets should be widened and brought up to current ADA standards.

Street width (from curb to curb) varies from approximately 60 to 70 feet wide and includes five automobile lanes, two travel lanes in each direction, and a center turn lane. This means it takes just under half of a minute for a pedestrian to walk across the street. There is a lack of a proper landscaping strip with street trees between the travel lanes and sidewalks.
Bicycle Infrastructure

Roosevelt Boulevard contains the only bike lane within the East End, connecting north to the East Falls Church Metro Station and the W&OD Trail. Hillwood Avenue contains sharrows as a reminder that people biking and people driving must share the street. There is a lack of space in the POA to park bicycles. This can be an obstacle to cyclists and may deter people from viewing the East End as a cycling destination.

A Capital Bikeshare station is located at the corner of Roosevelt Boulevard and North Roosevelt Street. This station has the highest usage throughout the City. It is likely that ridership is highest for this station because it is close to the East Falls Church Metro Station as well as dense apartment and condominium residences and retail nearby.

The incorporation of cycling infrastructure for all ages and abilities in the East End would encourage residents and visitors to cycle in the area, thereby enhancing multimodal access. It would also offer the opportunity to connect cyclists traveling on the W&OD and Route 50 bike trails. Both e-bikes and scooters should be included in plans for such future bicycle infrastructure.

(Above) Street intersection bike infrastructure of a bike lane with a bike box
(Below) Docked Capital Bikeshare bikes
Transit

Existing transit facilities near the East End include the Seven Corners Transit Station and the East Falls Church Metro Station. Bus Routes 26A and 28A run throughout the East End POA. The 26A offers 30-minute service intervals and the 28A offers 12-minute service intervals. Thoughtful design to bolster alternative transit aligns with City goals to address transportation equity and climate change.

Vehicle Volumes

Automobiles dominate the East End as the primary mode of transportation. According to VDOT, both Wilson and Roosevelt Boulevards’ Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume was 18,000 in 2019 and 12,000 in 2020. According to the Federal Highway Administration, a street with an AADT between 15,000-20,000 is a good candidate for road diets, granted that analysis is done to understand peak capacity.

Parking Lots

Large surface parking lots serving businesses exist throughout the East End. Because the area’s primary customer base is outside the convenience range of automobile alternatives, businesses are reliant on ample parking. No parking garages exist in the East End. 78 percent of the East End’s ground cover is impervious surface, which can be largely attributed to the presence of the large surface lots. Consolidation of parking would allow for the reclamation of activities and development space for people while also promoting efficiency in parking and the opportunity for greater green space.
Planned Transportation Projects

Two notable major transportation projects are planned for the East End – the Fairfax County Ring Road and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). These projects are being designed with a regional frame of reference – connecting regional activity centers and major employment centers. As these projects move forward in the planning process, it will be important to design these facilities in a way that improves local conditions as well.

Fairfax County Ring Road

Fairfax County’s Ring Road project will reconfigure the Seven Corners intersection. The latest design shows a four-way intersection of Route 7 to the east and west, Wilson Boulevard to the north, and ramps on and off of Route 50 to the west. Also included are new segments of a “ring road” that begin and end at Route 50 and either Route 7 or Wilson Boulevard. The existing four lanes will be maintained along Route 50. The Ring Road plans call for the addition of new ramps. The addition of side streets will accompany the Ring Road project, therefore creating the opportunity for a grid of streets.

The proposal’s design supports economic development as well as both regional and local travel. The project offers wide sidewalks, street trees, and protected bike lanes. The overall designs offer potential for improved vehicular but also pedestrian and cyclist connections between Route 7/ Broad Street and Wilson Boulevard in the City.

Neighboring the planned Ring Road is Hillwood Avenue. While a residential street, Hillwood Avenue saw AADT volume of 10,000 in 2019 and 4,700 in 2020 (VDOT Annual Traffic Data Publications). As the Ring Road construction occurs, complementary area improvements, such as pedestrian and cycling enhancements along Hillwood Avenue and Wilson Boulevard, should be implemented.

(Above) Fairfax County southern Ring Road connecting Route 50, Sleepy Hollow, and Route 7 and a redesign of Seven Corners into a 4-legged intersection, with the east and west legs on Route 7, Wilson Boulevard, and the entrance and exit ramps to Route 50 to the west

(Above) Ring Road cross section shows two travel lanes, a center turn lane, a two-way cycle track, street trees and sidewalks
**Bus Rapid Transit: “Envision Route 7”**

A Bus Rapid Transit route is planned for the area with a route connecting five population centers or jurisdictions – Tysons, the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria. The planning process is led by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). The BRT would improve reliable transit access for many within the East End by bringing high frequency bus service with intervals of 10 to 15 minutes, providing mobility access to major job centers, and connecting the East End to two Metrorail stations.

The BRT project is titled “Envision Route 7,” signifying the visionary goals for transit in the second busiest bus corridor in the Northern Virginia area. The NVRC estimates that the new BRT would serve more than 7,500 transit-dependent riders each weekday and increase pedestrian access to transit.

(Above) Future BRT Route in Northern Virginia connecting communities along Route 7, including Tysons, Pimmit Hills, Falls Church, Seven Corners, Baileys Crossroads, and Alexandria.
Making Connections – Planning for Increased Travel Demand

A transportation study of the City’s East End was completed in late spring 2022. The study was conducted by Nelson/Nygaard using funding awarded to the City through the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Transportation Land Use Connections (TLC) Program. The study’s scope of work included an analysis of existing conditions, travel demand and mode share goals, recommendations for a future mobility network, projected impacts of future development, and recommendations to support future mode share goals.

The study used a Mixed-Use Trip Generation Model to analyze parcels within a small area to account for transit frequency, level of service, walkability, density of development, and mix of uses.

The three scenarios captured in the model included a base scenario (2019), a no-build scenario (2045), and a future build scenario (2045). The results were as followed:

- The base scenario modeled 38,300 total trips per day. 36,000 (94 percent) of those total trips were vehicle trips generated to/from the East End POA. Walking, transit and internal capture trips each comprising 2 percent of total trips.
- The Future No-Build scenario estimates 38,300 total trips including 35,800 (94 percent) total vehicle trips, and walking, transit, and internal capture each comprising 2 percent of total trips.

(Above) Proposed neighborhood Main Street with two travel lanes, two parking lanes, two bike lanes, street trees, and sidewalks on both sides

(Above) Proposed neighborhood green street with 2 travel lanes, a parking lane, a 2-way cycle track lined with trees, and street trees and sidewalks on both sides
- The Future Build scenario predicts 54,800 total trips including 46,400 vehicle trips. In this scenario, vehicle trips comprise 85 percent of total trips, with walking at 7 percent of trips, transit 3 percent of trips, and internal capture 5 percent of trips.

The results of the study conclude that development in the area would offset 2.5 times more non vehicle trips than the no-build scenario due to public and private investments. The development scenario proposed an area interconnected through an improved grid of streets, greater focus on multimodal design; protected bikeways, and wider sidewalks. The report concluded that denser interconnected development could provide housing and commercial amenities to the area while decreasing the percentage of vehicle trip by 10 percent when compared to the no-build scenario. The study further supports the notion that good land use planning begins with good transportaiton planning.

(Above) Infographic comparing the current breakdown of land uses to the uses laid out in this plan

(Above) Infographic showing the number and type of trips to and from the East End currently, and predictions for the future with and without the proposed development
(Above) Map developed by as part of the Nelson/Nygaard study proposing a new street network if redevelopment occurs.
**East End Transportation: Strategies**

This segment includes recommended strategies that can be incorporated into public and private investments. These strategies will help to transform the East End into a comfortable and safer area for all modes of transportation.

(Above) Protected bike lane (Below) Safe crossing
Grid of Streets and Greener Paths

A fundamental goal of this plan is to provide a common framework that better connects both parcels and people. Currently, the East End’s major streets primarily act as roadways ferrying cars to specific isolated parcels. For a more connected framework to be achieved, a cohesive street grid must be established through increasing multimodal accessibility between nodes. This can be implemented by improving existing streets and adding new connecting streets. As a street grid is developed, steps should be taken to soften the area with street trees and vegetation to improve both aesthetics and ecological health.

**Strategy:** Improve existing streets such as Roosevelt Boulevard, Route 7, and Wilson Boulevard; elevate them to become Great Streets through tree canopy, safer pedestrian crossings, narrower lanes, lower speeds, and raised bike lanes.

**Strategy:** Plant trees along all streets to create a cohesive urban canopy, and use nodes such as plazas, sidewalk amenity space, corners, bump outs, and alleys to create green vegetative pocket parks and parklets.

**Strategy:** Consider vegetative stormwater filtration in all sidewalk design.

**Strategy:** Incorporate curb extensions into intersections with on-street parking to prevent people from parking too close to intersections. This increases pedestrian visibility and shortens the distance pedestrians need to cross.

**Strategy:** Create new internal streets that connect the three East End nodes and adjacent Fairfax County street grid.

People enjoy sidewalk parklet’s seating and vegetation
Pedestrian Connectivity and Safety

Pedestrian infrastructure that safely connects residents and visitors to destinations within and beyond the East End should be implemented in the POA. Pedestrians should feel encouraged to walk from the East End into the rest of the City and vice versa. Thoughtful pedestrian connections would not only enhance mobility but also safety and confidence in the pedestrian experience. To promote walkability attention should be given to pedestrian upgrades such as wider sidewalks, well-lit walkways, safe pedestrian crossings, and connectivity overall.

Strategy: Provide ample space in new and existing sidewalks for people and amenities. The sidewalks along Route 7/ East Broad Street and Wilson Boulevard should be widened to 20 feet.

Strategy: Accompanying the Ring Road project, explore the possibility that Wilson Boulevard becomes a “Great Street,” as it connects several key sites in the area. As a Great Street, Wilson Boulevard would encourage pedestrian activity and enhance street character and design, offering a more pleasing visual experience.

Strategy: Incorporate coordinated, adequately lit walkways in the East End to increase safety and visibility. Particular focus should be given to the sidewalks along Roosevelt Boulevard, Wilson Boulevard, Eden Center, and Oakwood Cemetery. Lighting features should be LED, human-scaled, and generally dark-sky compliant.
**Strategy:** Provide additional high visibility pedestrian crossings and landscaped pedestrian refuge islands, in accordance with the Streetscape Standards in the following locations:

- At the corner of East Broad Street and Wilson Boulevard
- Along Wilson Boulevard by the Eden Center gate

Ensure sites have internal pedestrian connectivity. Pedestrian connections are recommended at the following locations:

- Connect Eden Center to adjacent parcels such as Oakwood Cemetery, the Falls Green complex, and the Koons parcel
- Continue North Tuckahoe Street as a pedestrian street behind Falls Green, connecting to the back of Eden Center
- Connect BJ’s Wholesale to adjacent residential areas, the Cavalier Club, and Madison Manor neighborhood.

**Strategy:** Standardize lane widths on Wilson Boulevard, Route 7, and Roosevelt Boulevard to 11 feet. Rededicate gained space to bicycle lanes and sidewalks.

**Strategy:** Explore respectful connections between Oakwood Cemetery and Falls Green, Roosevelt Street, Fort Taylor Park, and adjacent East End parcels. The cemetery is approximately 12 acres of wooded green space that could be enjoyed by the surrounding population.

(Above) Highly visible crosswalk (Below) Safe bike and pedestrian ways
Bicycle Infrastructure and Parking

Expansion of bicycle infrastructure for all ages and abilities while ensuring user comfort and safety is a goal for the East End. Improvements to the area’s bicycle network will potentially mark the East End as a cyclist destination and become a regional draw for those cyclists looking for respite along the W&OD.

To encourage comfort and promote cycling safety on the streets in the East End, bicycle facilities such as a cycle track level with the sidewalk should be installed. Most bicyclists will choose another mode of transportation, likely an automobile, if the route feels unsafe due to the proximity and speed of passing cars. Bicycle lanes will be built in segments and tied into the greater bicycle network to establish connections for the future. New connections will be reflected in the City’s updated Bike Master plan.

**Strategy:** Install raised, protected cycle tracks and bike facilities along Wilson Boulevard, and Route 7/East Broad Street. The proposed bike lanes on Falls Church’s portion of Wilson Boulevard will need to continue into Fairfax County and connect with Arlington’s existing bicycle lanes.

**Strategy:** Connect the W&OD Trail to the East End/Eden Center by creating a bicycle lane connecting North Sycamore Street to Roosevelt Boulevard. The W&OD Trail exit on North Sycamore is approximately 0.5 miles from the POA. Wayfinding signs should also be placed at the W&OD exit to inform cyclists of the nearby shopping and dining.

The existing bike lane on Roosevelt Boulevard should be widened, painted green for visibility, and protected. Roosevelt Boulevard is the direct connection between the East Falls Church Metro Station, W&OD Trail, and East End.

**Strategy:** Install bicycle parking throughout the area. Private projects should meet the recently added zoning ordinance requirements for bicycle parking. Public projects should adhere to the City’s Streetscape Standards for frequency and location of parking. Scooter parking should be provided where appropriate.

**Strategy:** Coordinate with Capital Bikeshare to move the existing docking station behind the BP gas station to a more visible location along Wilson or Roosevelt Boulevard.
Transit Service

Bus routes from Falls Church, Arlington, and Fairfax converge at the East Falls Church Metrorail Station and Seven Corners Transit Center. Enhancing and expanding existing bus infrastructure and services will help to reduce automobile congestion.

Strategy: Continue to work with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and neighboring jurisdictions to study and plan for a Route 7 BRT.

Strategy: Increase accessibility and visibility of the Seven Corners Transit Center by better connecting the site to the proposed Ring Road and future street grid.

Strategy: Provide pedestrian movement across Route 50 to improve access to the Transit Center.

Bus Stops

To provide better accessibility and reduce the volume of single-occupancy vehicles on site, bus shelters should be installed throughout the East End. As reinvestment occurs in the area, consideration should also be given to the implementation of bus stops at additional nearby sites.

Strategy: Evaluate and assess with WMATA the need for additional bus stops throughout the East End. Such new stops should include bus shelters wherever possible. Replace the existing bus stop on Wilson Boulevard with a CFC bus shelter as shown in the Bus Stop Master Plan (2013).
**Metrorail First-mile Last-mile Connections**

The East Falls Church Metrorail Station, which provides service along both the Silver and Orange lines and additional access to regional bus lines, is approximately 3/4 mile, or a 15-minute walk, from the East End POA, making it outside the range many pedestrians would choose to walk. Connectivity can be enhanced with the following strategies.

**Strategy:** While the walk between the Metro and East End is 15 minutes, it is only a 5-minute bike ride.

Upgrade the Roosevelt Boulevard bike lane to include a protected buffer and be painted for greater visibility. A raised cycle track is another option. The lane should connect fluidly to any new bike lanes on Wilson Boulevard.

**Strategy:** Evaluate the need for a circulator bus between the East End and the East Falls Church Metro Station.
Automobile Parking

Eden Center has dedicated nearly double the space for parked cars as it does for non-parking uses. This is a trend consistent throughout the East End. Due to Eden Center’s strong regional draw and the long distances patrons travel, vehicle parking is needed to sustain businesses in partnership with continued investments in alternative modes of transportation. Rather than expansive surface lots, garages and underground parking are recommended to be integrated into the site.

**Strategy:** Consolidate parking to create space for people, parks, and any future improvements. Viable parking consolidation strategies are:

- Create a parking garage at the back of Eden Center
- Build underground parking in a scenario where a community center, hotel, or multi-family housing is built at Eden Center
- Incorporate a garage, preferably underground, into any future redevelopment projects.

These privately funded parking garages should include public parking spaces.

**Strategy:** Activate existing parking with adequate lighting and increased visibility for safety measures.

**Strategy:** Design any newly constructed roads with on-street parking.

(Above) Structured parking
Thinking Forward

As electric vehicles become increasingly affordable and autonomous technologies advance, the City should consider tactics for addressing these inevitable changes to our automotive landscape.

**Strategy:** Plan to provide multiple EV charging stations throughout the East End, particularly within parking structures. Particularly DC Fast Chargers should be installed.

**Strategy:** Create a long-term plan for accommodating autonomous vehicles (AVs). Designs should highlight key pick-up/drop-off zones on site and have the ability to retrofit parking structures to house and charge numerous AVs.

(Above) DC Fast Charger.
7. Environment & Utilities
Introduction

The East End goals for environment and utilities support the overarching vision and goals for the area. Investments and improvements in the area need to deliver social, environmental, and economic benefits. These include reliability of basic City infrastructure: water, sewer, storm sewer, electricity, and communication mechanisms; adaption to climate change, which will bring hotter summer temperatures and more severe storms; and the integration of green infrastructure.

This chapter summarizes the current condition of the area’s infrastructure and environment. It then proposes strategies to address infrastructure improvement and environmental sustainability, addressing tree canopy, renewable energy, building design, and urban agriculture.
Existing Conditions
The following sections provide existing infrastructure and environment conditions of the East End, including topography, urban forestry, water supply, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and electricity and communication (utilities).

Topography
The terrain within the East End is generally flat; however, the East End itself sits at a higher elevation than areas nearby. According to GIS data, the elevations surpass 384 feet above sea level.

The East End is dominated by impervious surfaces as detailed in the groundcover table on this page. This means that rainwater that falls on the East End rapidly drains into Tripp’s Run and Four Mile Run. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), urban areas where buildings, surface parking, and roads are highly concentrated and green space is limited become “islands” of higher temperatures compared to outlying areas – this is known as the heat island effect. As the East End develops, the addition of vegetation and green space should be prioritized to mitigate the heat island effect. Green infrastructure measures such as green roofs and cool roofs should be considered as well.

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(Above) Graph showing the Heat Island Effect, causing higher temperatures in highly developed urban areas
Urban Forestry
The City of Falls Church was the first jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Virginia to achieve Tree City USA status from the National Arbor Day Foundation. The City has continued to hold its Tree City USA status for over 40 years. According to a 2020 tree assessment conducted by the City Arborist, the City’s urban forestry canopy coverage totals an impressive 49 percent.

The East End POA includes a tree count of 110 trees. This total tree count is significantly lower than the rest of the City’s POAs. Trees beautify an area while also adding environmental benefits such as a reduction in pollution, absorption of stormwater runoff, and cooler air temperatures. Trees enhance the health and wellbeing of an area as well, often encouraging walkability as they provide shelter from the sun. A complete urban forest would include canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennials, and annuals.
Water Supply
Water to the area is supplied by Fairfax Water. Water is supplied by a network of tanks and service lines, including the Seven Corners Tank behind the Koons Auto Dealer. The water system serving the City of Falls Church heavily relies on pumping and storage facilities located outside City limits. Only 33 percent of the total storage capacity is considered “usable storage” by the Virginia Department of Health. The tank is supplied by several feeds from Fairfax Water’s second high pressure zone: a 20”/16” main via pressure-reducing valves at Grove Ave, a 12” main via a pressure-reducing valve at Great Falls Street, and a 16” main from the Prout Hill tanks that are supplied from a 24” second high-pressure supply along Lee Highway in Fairfax County.

The Seven Corners tank is located on a 0.2-acre lot owned by Fairfax Water. The Seven Corners tank is the only water storage tank located in the City of Falls Church. It provides service to approximately 1,200 Fairfax Water retail customer accounts within the City and approximately 1,800 retail customer accounts within Fairfax County. The site has been used for water storage since 1961. The tank is a 70-foot tall ground storage standpipe, with a capacity of 1.5 million gallons (MG).
**Sanitary Sewer**

The sanitary sewer is owned by the City of Falls Church and maintained by the Department of Public Works (DPW). The majority of the sanitary sewer system in the City was installed between 1950 and 1960. DPW manages a comprehensive inspection program that collects pipe conditions and ranks portions of the system for rehabilitation.

Eight-inch diameter sanitary sewer lines located along Wilson and Roosevelt Boulevards as well as throughout the Eden Center site currently serve the East End. The main that serves the East End is the smallest that can be installed while providing adequate capacity. Systems within the East End flow to the Arlington County or Fairfax County sewer sheds, depending on their location. Two issues that remain pertinent for assessment and monitoring are the sanitary sewer main’s connection to the plant and the overall functioning of the plant.
Storm Sewer

DPW manages, maintains, and repairs the City's stormwater system, which includes 140,000 linear feet of storm drain, 1,400 appurtenances, and 8,100 feet of stream channel in the Four Mile Run and Tripp's Run watersheds. The East End is located within the Four Mile Run and Tripp's Run watersheds. There are no Resource Protection Areas or floodplains within the POA.

The East End’s storm pipes vary from 15” to 36” in size and are all reinforced concrete pipe (RCP). The stormwater pipes run primarily along the back portion of Eden Center as well as along Wilson Boulevard. There are two storm sewer easements located within the northeastern portion of the BJ’s site.

Due to the prevalence of impervious surfaces in the area, the East End faces the risk of local environmental degradation attributed to stormwater runoff. Effects could include more frequent flooding events and altered stream flow nearby.

(Above) Storm sewer (Below) Falls Church watershed map
Electricity & Communication
Overhead utilities for electricity, cable, and telecommunication are generally strung between 34-foot high poles and include lines for power, phone, and cable, as well as other uses. In the East End, these poles run along Wilson Boulevard and Route 7.

The City’s adopted Streetscape Standards state that overhead utilities in the commercial areas in the City are to be undergrounded. Recent undergrounding efforts in other parts of the City have been completed as part of private redevelopment or large Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects.

Climate Action & Mitigation
It is widely acknowledged that the earth is experiencing gradually increasing average temperatures, higher temperature extremes, increased precipitation, and more frequent and severe storm events. These effects of climate change are being experienced locally in Falls Church. Strategies to enhance the City’s sustainability and resilience while ensuring that social, environmental, and economic needs are met will be needed. These strategies can take the form of green building measures, increasing the urban tree canopy, and exploring green infrastructure to combat stormwater concerns.

(Above) Overhead utilities in the City of Falls Church along Route 7/ East Broad Street and Roosevelt Street.
**Urban Forestry**

The network of trees and green spaces on public and private property is a critical part of the City’s economic and civic well-being. Green infrastructure provides many benefits, including carbon sequestration, air pollution filtration, oxygen omission, shade and shelter, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, and beauty. Numerous studies have shown that trees and other green infrastructure increase property values and the appeal of business districts. Overall, the City has a tree canopy coverage of 49 percent, based on 2020 data—but, as stated in earlier chapters—most of the East End is sorely lacking in tree canopy.

**Strategy:** Plant Street Trees. As redevelopment opportunities or street improvement projects arise, the City should line the East End’s streets with trees. More trees are particularly needed along Wilson Boulevard and Route 7 between Koons and 24-Hour Fitness. Remove and replace soils mixed with road construction debris in the public right-of-way, mostly along the streets, with a suitable medium to plant additional trees.

**Strategy:** Explore opportunities to expand the East End’s tree canopy as sites redevelop. For sites at 5 or more acres, 15 percent tree canopy coverage should be achieved.

(Above, Middle, Below) Street trees in urban environments
**Strategy:** Create new urban park spaces. There are many ways to introduce small urban parks—parklets or pocket parks—in the East End. Portions of parking lots can be repurposed with trees, plantings, benches, and public art. The addition of activity space and urban forestry through park spaces is needed. Such improvements are outlined in greater detail in Chapter 5, Urban Design and Character.

**Strategy:** Incorporate native plantings into added green spaces. These along with newly added trees will create corridors for pollinating insects. In park and green spaces near Eden Center, explore planting native Vietnamese plantings. Signage could be incorporated providing educational information about the plant species.
Stormwater

The City should work to implement best management practices (BMPs) and integrate green infrastructure with grey as the East End redevelops in order to mitigate stormwater issues. Proper drainage of stormwater into the City’s storm sewer must be maintained as increased development can affect runoff amounts in the area. The heightened presence of strong storms related to climate change will also have an effect on stormwater amounts. The City’s infrastructure must be prepared to handle these increased volumes.

Strategy: Mitigate stormwater runoff by introducing rain gardens and similar vegetated water retention wells. These improvements are low cost upgrade to an area’s stormwater management infrastructure which yield significant improvement. As redevelopment occurs in the East End, developers must be encouraged to manage stormwater through “green” techniques.

Strategy: Utilize best management practices (BMPs) to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff and remove pollutants from stormwater. BMPs can take the form of structural, vegetative, or managerial practices.

Strategy: Incorporate green roofs atop buildings and parking garages in the East End as it redevelops. Green roofs capture rainwater and release it through evaporation and plant usage.

(Above) Examples of vegetated biofiltration infrastructure which capture, slow, and filter runoff and stormwater.
Strategy: Incorporate permeable pavers into new developments. Permeable pavers can be used to provide for visually appealing pedestrian pathways and plazas that function to mitigate stormwater impacts by directing the water into the ground and areas of vegetation.

Strategy: Incorporate engineered green spaces into the East End to act as natural stormwater management systems. Incorporating stormwater collection ponds in future large impervious areas would retain stormwater. Placemaking efforts can occur around stormwater collection ponds— for instance a pavilion for residents and visitors to enjoy.
Building & Site Design

To ensure sustainability and resource efficiency, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards should be pursued for new and renovated individual buildings within the East End. According to the US Green Building Council, LEED provides a framework for implementing measurable green building design, construction, operations, and maintenance strategies as well as solutions. Overall benefits of LEED include: reduced energy usage and carbon emissions, reduction in waste and pollution, conservation of water, the integration of green building materials, and the implementation of sustainable strategies.

The adopted City Council Resolution 2012-24 states that LEED Silver should be a goal for new and renovated public buildings. The Zoning Code's Secondary Criteria for Special Exception Projects includes the provision that the development utilizes LEED criteria and is encouraged to achieve LEED Gold or greater ratings and deliver a minimum 20 percent improvement in energy performance (per Sec. 48-90 d(2)j)). Pursuing LEED standards aids in the City’s effort to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

Additionally, solar orientation should be considered as the East End redevelops. The US Green Building Council defines the practice as one that encourages energy efficiency by creating optimal conditions for the use of passive and active solar strategies. Solar orientation considers the positioning of either a site or a building in relation to the sun’s movement.
**Strategy:** Encourage Special Exception projects in the East End to pursue LEED Gold or greater to deliver optimal resource efficiency while simultaneously ensuring sustainability in development.

**Strategy:** Encourage the pursuit of the LEED ND (Neighborhood Development) certification in development or redevelopment projects in the East End. This certification is attainable for projects at neighborhood scale.

**Strategy:** Encourage the consideration of solar orientation as new development occurs within the East End to ensure energy efficiency and to maximize shading of sidewalks as well as public plazas during hotter months.

**Strategy:** Encourage new buildings to be all electric, therefore enabling lower greenhouse gas emissions as the electric grid converts renewable energy.

**Strategy:** Encourage the addition of energy storage systems into the East End to reduce emissions by capturing energy that is produced at one time and utilizing it later to promote proper balance between production and demand.

**Strategy:** Encourage mixed use designs in the East End. The incorporation of mixed use allows for a more pedestrian-oriented environment, thereby diminishing the need for automobile travel from destination to destination.
Recycling & Composting

Recycling and composting are “day-to-day” sustainable community practices that can have a positive impact on climate action and mitigation. As reinvestments are made in the East End, opportunities to promote recycling and composting in the residential and the business community should be encouraged.

Strategy: Incorporate additional opportunities for recycling into the East End for residents and businesses.

Strategy: Encourage composting food waste for the restaurant community as well as residents. Composted materials could be utilized in community garden spaces.

Strategy: Promote reusable materials among the restaurant community in the East End as part of a sustainable “reduce, reuse, recycle” initiative.

Strategy: Explore technical assistance opportunities providing education around sustainable, green business practices. Grants should be sought that promote sustainability in the small business community.
Urban Agriculture

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, urban agriculture can provide a multitude of benefits to a community – from strengthening neighborhood ties by providing space for community connections, increasing access to healthy foods, and strengthening the economy by providing an income stream for community members who sell their harvest at farmers markets. Spaces for urban agriculture can be implemented on underutilized properties, within old industrial buildings, and on rooftops.

The East End would greatly benefit from the addition of green space and agricultural areas. The addition of urban agricultural green space would aid in the absorption of rainfall in the area, therefore mitigating stormwater overload and runoff into nearby waterways; it would also help to minimize the heat island effect within the POA.

**Strategy:** Incorporate spaces for urban agriculture in the East End within existing green space, acquiring green space, or as part of new development. These spaces can take the form of rooftop gardens, unused green space transformed into community gardens, and vacant industrial spaces.

**Strategy:** Plant a Vietnamese community garden adjacent to Eden Center. Native Vietnamese, non-invasive flowers and plantings should be incorporated.

**Strategy:** Incorporate edible streetscape along the East End’s sidewalks.

**Strategy:** Encourage programming and marketing around these urban agricultural spaces to connect community members through events and classes.
Infrastructure Reliability
As the East End redevelops and increases in commercial activity and residential population over time, it will be important to ensure that the area’s infrastructure is reliable in the long run. This will require efforts to provide an adequate water supply, bolster the sewer and sanitary sewer systems, and incorporate more green infrastructure solutions throughout the East End.

Water
The majority of water in the existing Seven Corners Tank is below the elevation necessary to maintain system pressure above the VDH waterworks minimum requirement of 20 pounds per square inch (psi) of pressure. Due to the deficiency in tank design, Fairfax Water must employ operational measures such as excessive flushing, tank draining, and booster chlorination.

Strategy: Continue the coordination between the City and Fairfax Water to ensure that water infrastructure remains usable and distribution functions adequately as the East End redevelops.
Sanitary Sewer
To maintain the existing sanitary sewer capacity and ensure adequate capacity for future redevelopment within the East End, there must be continued cross coordination among the City of Falls Church, the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, and Arlington County.

**Strategy:** Explore creation of a new sewage pumping station to transport excess sewage to Arlington County’s system. The City’s sewer system is currently over capacity, so any further development in the area will need to ensure adequate capacity and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions.

**Strategy:** Ensure that adequate sanitary sewer capacity is maintained as the East End redevelops. Coordinate between neighboring jurisdictions to assess and monitor capacity.

**Strategy:** Ensure the City’s sewer analysis studies include population and employment projections for the East End.

**Strategy:** Work with developers to offset capacity impacts as a part of redevelopment in the East End.

Overhead Utilities
The City’s adopted Streetscape Standards state that overhead utilities located in commercial areas are to be undergrounded. As part of the special exception process, larger commercial development projects occurring in the East End should include undergrounding of overhead wires, particularly of those located along Wilson Boulevard and Route 7.

**Strategy:** Underground overhead wires as part of the special exception process for development projects within the East End.

**Strategy:** Allocate CIP funding to underground utilities in the East End.

(Above) Undergrounded utilities
Sustainable Energy
Population growth and economic development place increasing demand on natural resources, many of which are non-renewable. Using fossil fuels to generate energy, for example, diminishes supply and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, which causes air pollution.

To the extent possible, the City should strive to shift resource reliance to renewable resources—for example, solar power, water, wind, geothermal energy, and plant life (biomass). Electric vehicle charging stations and conduit should be incorporated, therefore encouraging diversion from a reliance on gasoline-dependent automobiles towards plug-in electric vehicles.

Using renewable resources benefits the environment by reducing our carbon footprint. It reduces dependence on outside energy sources, thus increasing resilience. Further, renewables typically cost less in the long-run.

Strategy: Work towards Net Zero. As part of site redevelopment, work with developers to install solar panels, incorporate geothermal cooling measures, etc. Support and encourage the use of renewable energy sources and the installation of renewable energy generation facilities and energy storage where possible in new development or redevelopment. Encourage reductions in the use of fossil fuels, including natural gas, for all facilities.

Strategy: Reduce GHG emissions in building use. Encourage and/or incentivize all electric appliances in new residential development to minimize use of fossil fuels.

Strategy: Reduce GHG emissions through transportation options. Incorporate publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, including fast charging stations, throughout the East End. Additionally, work with developers to include electric vehicle charging stations and conduit in redevelopment projects within the East End.

(Above) Electric vehicle charging (Below) Solar panels
Appendix: Community Engagement
Community Engagement Timeline

The following is a chronological list of meetings between staff and members of the community, area stakeholders, boards and commissions, and City Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kickoff Meetings</strong></td>
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<td>Stakeholder Meeting</td>
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<td>Community Meeting #1</td>
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<td>City Council Work Session</td>
<td>09-27-2022</td>
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<td>Architectural Advisory Board</td>
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<td>Citizens Advisory Committee on</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Economic Development Authority</td>
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<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>Village Preservation Improvement Society</td>
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<td>Environmental Sustainability Council</td>
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<td>Recreation and Parks Advisory Board</td>
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**Second Round Outreach**

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<td>Planning Commission Listening Session</td>
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<td>City Council Public Hearing</td>
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Planning Commission

Following a public hearing, Mr. Puentes moved, and Mr. Krasner seconded that:

WHEREAS, the East End Small Area Plan establishes a vision for the East End as a vibrant destination that serves as a gateway into the City of Falls Church, honors cultural ties, and promotes equitable and sustainable investments; and

WHEREAS, the Plan calls for the preservation of nearby housing affordability and the introduction of housing opportunities into the planning opportunity area; and

WHEREAS, the Plan encourages transportation investments that put people first by prioritizing connectivity and accessibility

WHEREAS, the Plan identifies long-term strategies to help realize the Plan’s vision; and

WHEREAS, the concepts in the Plan are meant to be a conceptual framework for reinvestments and public improvements; to provide a starting point for public and private investment into general improvements to the area; and do not constitute changes to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Ordinance, or Zoning Map;

NOW, THEREFORE, I MOVE THAT: The City of Falls Church Planning Commission hereby endorses the East End Small Area Plan as a Guiding Document in decision making for the planning, zoning, and development review, capital improvements, City regulations and policies, and that it be referenced in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission further recommends that City Council commit to fully funding the anti-displacement toolkit as identified in the Small Area Plan and direct Staff to develop a strategy to utilize community benefits agreements as a way to guard against displacement in the Area.

The motion passed (6-1) on a roll call vote at the June 7, 2023 meeting.
City Council
Following a public hearing, the City Council approved the following resolution unanimously (6-0) at their June 26, 2023 meeting.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE EAST END SMALL AREA PLAN AS A GUIDING DOCUMENT IN DECISION MAKING FOR PLANNING, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, CITY REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

WHEREAS, the East End Small Area Plan establishes a vision for the East End to enhance a vibrant destination that serves as a critical gateway into the City of Falls Church, honor cultural ties to the Vietnamese community at Eden Center, and develop equitably and sustainably; and

WHEREAS, the Plan calls for the preservation of nearby housing affordability and the introduction of housing opportunities into the planning opportunity area; and

WHEREAS, the Plan encourages transportation investments that put people first by prioritizing connectivity and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the Plan identifies specific long-term strategies that will help realize the vision for the area; and

WHEREAS, the concepts in the East End Small Plan are meant to be a conceptual framework for reinvestments and public improvements; to provide a starting point for public and private investment in general improvements to the area; and do not constitute changes to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Ordinance, or Zoning Map;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Falls Church hereby adopts the East End Small Area Plan, attached herein, as a guiding document in decision making for planning, zoning, and development review; capital improvements; and City regulations and policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a reference to the East End Small Area Plan is added to the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
Boards & Commissions Letters

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF FALLS CHURCH
DECEMBER 8, 2022

DEAR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS,

The City of Falls Church Human Services and Advisory Council (HSAC) is gratified to see the East End Small Area Plan taking shape as a focus on:

- Enhancing our natural environment and incorporating sustainability;
- Embracing our diversity, specifically here, the Vietnamese community around the Eden Center;
- Stimulating economic opportunities;
- Preserving and creating more affordable housing;
- Linking with and adding to multi-modal transportation; and
- Sparking more community spaces.

As a commission focused on human services, our scope includes holistic health.

Upon review of the East End concept designs by members who received it, they are alluring and exciting. In particular:

- Especially appealing are the fountains, water being an important addition to the environment, an important asset as we deal with global warming.
- The park and other features will likely bring people out to sit, stroll, and commune.
- And the open space looks like a fun and attractive place to congregate, if that’s indeed intended to be public.
- Adding colorful, designed benches and lighting along the way would soften the area and, ideally, reduce crime by bringing more people out.
- Bringing in public art is fabulous and a celebration of our personality. The other artistic touches suggested help soften the area and make it more vibrant.
- Including car-charging stations is needed in today’s world.
- Carving out more parking, especially on the street will help.

Please consider:

- It is difficult to clearly glean which areas are subject to these possible changes -- a layperson’s map might help.

THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH
HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Maya Jalal
Chair

Ken Dodson
Director

Alana McNeill
Commissioner

Co-Housing and Human Services • 300 Park Avenue • Falls Church, Virginia 22046 • 703-248-5115 • Virginia Relay VTY 711
www.fallschurchva.gov
Date: December 15th, 2022
TO: Emily Bazemore, Senior Planner
CC: Joseph Schiariti, Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC) Chair
FROM: Andy Young, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator
SUBJECT: Collect ESC Comments on Draft East End Small Area Plan

The ESC received a presentation on November 17th, 2022 by Cameron Galens on the City’s draft East End Small Area Plan. The plan overall was well received by the ESC members who noted the efforts made in the plan to address environmental challenges and opportunities in the East End. As a follow-up to the presentation, members were afforded the opportunity to submit comments and feedback to City staff. Received comments as follows:

1. Bike Lanes: The Draft Plan (Ch. 6) discusses making biking along Roosevelt Blvd safer, to connect the POA to EFC Metro and the W&OD trail. City staff should consider a parallel path that may be safer and more inviting to residents, obtaining access from the north side of Eden Center to the existing paved/ cleared paths along the east edge of the cemetery or the west edge of Falls Green’s parking lot. The north end of those paths is at N. Roosevelt near Tuckahoe, which could be a shorter route to E. Columbia to N. Van Buren, which already intersects the W&OD at two places.

2. District Heating & Cooling: Applicable to Chapter 7 of the draft plan, under Strategies for “Building & Site Design,” The City has detailed operation & maintenance records for a ground-source heat pump (GSHP) system serving about 300k sq. ft. of floor space at Meridian HS. It should lead by example and publicize this info. City staff should pay attention to developments in large-scale Community Heat Pump projects (reference Opportunity New York and BDE). Most of the POA comprises three large parcels, and it seems like the site is covered by less than a dozen medium to small lots. It would be good if at least one or two medium-to-large lots could lay the infrastructure for a network of very efficient GSHPs to share heating/cooling among future tenants before the extensively paved area is redeveloped. This has the potential to noticeably reduce the electric utility loads of the area compared to what would occur with un-integrated development.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on the project.
The CACT liked much of what it saw in an Oct. 12 presentation on the East End Small Area Plan (SAP).

The plan substantially raises the bar for multimodal access, implicitly setting a goal of all ages and abilities access for people on bicycles in the depiction of separated bike lanes on major routes. It prioritizes people over cars with road diets. It is proactive about connecting with nearby projects. Our comments below are presented from the perspective of making a solid plan even better.

Things that are not explicitly in the East End SAP that we recommend including:

- Specifically state that the City’s goal for bicycle routes is to meet an “all ages and abilities” standard per the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). This will help materially shift mode share.

- Specifically state the need for additional use of public transit in this area to reduce the impact of transportation on climate change and for equity considerations.

- Design the bicycle and road facilities with more e-bikes in mind. The global e-bike market was valued $17.6 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach nearly $41 billion by 2030, according to Precedence Research. American e-bikes currently offer pedal assistance with speeds from 20 to 28 mph, much higher than the 12 mph models in Europe. Faster e-bikes will require wider bike lanes, bigger turning radii, and/or better ways for bikes and cars to share the road, namely lower speeds and lower volumes.

- Be specific about our intent to set design standards that we hope will encourage neighboring jurisdictions to follow suit (e.g., the road diet).

- Explicitly set a goal of making a bike/pedestrian connection via or adjacent to Dahlgren Cemetery, just as the plan lays out desired smaller streets to break up blocks. Let’s explore more casements for stairs/ramps and pedestrian/bike paths to reverse the car-centric designs that separate people in local neighborhoods from walking and biking to these attractions that should be mere steps from their homes. These connections will significantly increase all ages and abilities bike/pedestrian access to the East End (from the neighborhood and to Metro and the W&OD Trail), without being reliant on separate projects to fix Broad, Hillwood, and Sycamore streets. Please set a goal to connect the BJ’s Wholesale Club parcel to N. Rochester St. for people walking and biking, perhaps with an easement on the Cavalier Club property. These bike/ped links serve to make active transportation faster and more convenient than driving and will make the area livelier.

- State that the intent is for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that cross the edges of the SAP to be continuous on those streets beyond the planning area, though details would need to be worked out with separate City, Arlington, and Fairfax projects.

- Explicitly state that the City is OK building bike and pedestrian routes “where and when we can” — that we can temporarily have “bike routes to nowhere” because they will eventually be connected through our updated Bike Master Plan and SAP. Cambridge, Massachusetts, demonstrated this very well: If you try to build your bike network all at once, it never happens or takes decades. If you build it block by block, when you can, you get the neighborhood pushing you to finish it, rather than fighting you on building it at all.

- The most direct route from Eden Center to East Falls Church, the closest Metro station, along Sycamore/Roosevelt is not entirely encompassed within Falls Church City. The current path through Arlington does not have contiguous bike lanes, crosswalks, or handicap-accessible sidewalks. As previously stated, that should not preclude the development of those features within Falls Church, but action should be taken to work with Arlington County to ensure continuity of access to the Metro station.

- Show how this links up with the latest Fairfax Ring Road plans, with the large caveat that the CACT has questions about that evolving plan.

- Stormwater retention and sustainable energy can help with placemaking in the East End. The City already has too much impervious area at 42 percent, as of the 2012 Watershed Management Plan. It’s alarming that this Planning Opportunity Area (POAs) has a whopping 78 percent impervious at one of the highest points in the city, giving stormwater a chance to collect volume, speed, and pollutants before crashing downhill toward Four Mile Run or Tripps Run.

Let’s add stormwater collection ponds in large impervious areas to retain/drain stormwater, perhaps with a covered pavilion (example) over the water where Eden Center patrons could gather and eat. Perhaps this could even be stocked with fish and...
native plants for further placemaking and MS4 benefits. Also, with so much flat land at high elevation with southern exposure, let’s explore adding solar canopies above these parking lots to generate power and reduce the urban heat island effect caused by so much paving.

- We suggest more research on Chinatowns (specifically the history of San Francisco’s, which was the first in the U.S.) and other ethnic enclaves around the country to ensure the City is being thoughtful and respectful about how best to celebrate and integrate Vietnamese and Vietnamese American culture in the resulting designs for the East End.

Beyond the scope of this SAP, it raises some interesting implications:

- East Broad St. with 15,000 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) should be suitable for a road diet if Wilson Blvd. is with 12,000 ADT since both fall under VDOT’s guidance of 16,000 ADT. That would enable a bike route from Wilson (where Arlington and Fairfax will build their parts) to the center of the City. Similarly, Annandale Road (ADT 4,800 north of Washington and 11,000 south of Washington) is planned to go into one lane at the future roundabout.

- Falls Church does not have a citywide streetscape design for things other than setbacks and sidewalk design. This SAP calls for the major roads to have separated bicycle lanes, but on the other end of Broad Street, the West Falls project will instead use a shared sidewalk on Broad, which is much less bike-friendly. The City needs a common standard for the full right of way for how we design roads going forward. There is significant difference across the SAPs, some of which were written more than decade ago. Nationwide design approaches, especially on bicycle mode share and on pedestrian safety, have evolved dramatically in that decade.

DATE: December 9, 2022
TO: Falls Church City Council, Planning Staff, and the West Falls Development Team
FROM: City of Falls Church Architectural Advisory Board
THROUGH: Jeff Hollern, Staff AAB Liaison
SUBJECT: Draft East End Small Area Plan – Staff Presentation on October 12, 2022

The Architectural Advisory Board (AAB) met on October 12, 2022 to receive a staff presentation and discuss the following items:

Recommendation and Feedback to City Council requested on the ongoing development of the East End Small Area Plan. East End borders include Wilson Blvd., E. Broad St., and Hillwood Ave. Businesses in the area include BJ’s Wholesale Club, the Eden Center, Rooms Ford, 24 Hour Fitness, and other smaller businesses. There are no residences in this area. Presentation to be made by Planning Staff

The Board has voted 5-0 (1 member absent) to recommend the project to City Council with the below comments:

- Motion to continue development of plan recommend continued and further study and analysis:
  - Variables like land use development, property owner desires, transit options, traffic studies and analysis, connectivity, environmental factors
  - Coordinate and collaborate with Fairfax and Arlington Counties, and transit providers
  - Tremendous opportunity to make this POA a true gateway to CoFC.
  - Safety concerns as well (through layout, design, lighting, crime prevention, etc.)
  - Consider pedestrian and urban design chapter
  - Lack of detail in how to reach goals
Urban Forestry Commission

DATE: 9 January 2023
TO: Emily Bazemore, Planning Department
FROM: Amy Crumpton, Chair, Urban Forestry Commission
SUBJECT: UFC Comments on East End Small Area Plan

The UFC appreciated the presentation by Cameron Gahnes (Planning Dept) at our October 19, 2022, meeting on planning goals for the East End Small Area Plan. We concur with goals to improve environmental sustainability in that unique cultural hub of the city.

Equitably manage redevelopment: The City must assess ways to assure that redevelopment will not destroy the cultural value of the East End, particularly the Eden Center, and displace current tenants and residents.

Increase Tree Canopy: Currently there are only 110 trees in the area and 76% of land is covered in impervious surface. The East End has a canopy coverage of 17% which is drastically lower than other areas/neighborhoods in the City. Overall, the City has a current overall canopy coverage closer to 49%. The City should not wait for redevelopment to arrive to tackle this issue. One immediate approach is to remove and replace soils mixed with road construction debris in the public right-of-way, mostly along the streets, with suitable medium to plant additional trees. This tactic would require funds. As redevelopment arrives, the City should be prepared to hold developers to a minimum tree canopy coverage threshold of between 12-15%.

Update streetscape standard: The UFC concurs that updating the streetscape standard to create deeper setbacks for new construction would be beneficial to allow more room for tree growth as well as public gathering space.

Increase Landscaped Open Space/Greenspace: Incorporating small parks and plazas would create space for trees and native plantings within the private site lines of the redeveloped areas. Connecting such future vegetated spaces could improve the pedestrian and biking experiences as well as create corridors for pollinating insects. The UFC encourages the City to partner with Oakwood Cemetery to envision connected recreational walking space in the East End.

Add bike lanes: Since VDOT identifies Wilson Boulevard as an underutilized road, the City could pursue enhanced streetscaping and adding bike lanes. Could the City work with Fairfax County to make sure that any bike lanes on Wilson Boulevard connect north through Fairfax County to meet up with the bike lanes in Arlington that intersect with the W&OD Trail?

Cc: Charles Prince, City Arborist
Cameron Gahnes, Planning Department

Comments on East End Area Plan, City of Falls Church

Falls Church Historical Commission

January 2023

The Falls Church Historical Commission (Historical Commission) has reviewed the City's draft Area Plan for the East End Planning Opportunity Area (POA). Our review included examination and discussion of a staff Power Point presentation to a joint meeting of the FCCHC and the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) in late November 2022, as well as concentrated review of the full draft plan over the holidays. Based on these reviews, we have several comments to offer as well as some additional specific notes and suggestions to enhance the plan.

Eden Center

The Historical Commission strongly supports efforts to recognize, enhance, and celebrate Eden Center and its associated Vietnamese-American and pan Southeast Asian cultural and historical significance. While correctly highlighting the potential for additional public and private investments in public art, programming, and related public spaces in the future, the plan should explicitly recognize the cultural associations of the Center's key architectural features that currently exist. The Clock Tower at Eden Center, along with the somewhat more recent Lion Gate entrance built off Wilson Blvd., to welcome visitors, were specifically intended to recall building elements from the Ben Thanh central market complex and similar iconic public architecture and sculpture in old central Saigon (renamed Ho Chi Minh City in 1975, although the central part of the old city is still referred to informally as Sai Gon).

The plan could draw further attention to these and other elements of cultural significance by recommending installation of one or more additional interpretive markers to supplement the recent state historical marker along Wilson Blvd. The City of Falls Church should work with the Vietnamese-American community to develop culturally-appropriate ways to highlight and describe the Center's architectural and sculptural elements for the visiting public.

Frederick Foote, Sr.
Former enslaved person Frederick Foote, Sr., "purchased 39 acres following the Civil War with money he had earned working as a blacksmith for Union troops." (Germand and Netherton, Falls Church: A Virginia Village Revisited, 2000, p. 127). This land later became Seven Corners and the Eden Center. His son, businessman Frederick Foote, Jr., served as a Town Constable in the 1870s as well as on the Falls Church Town Council in the 1880s, the first African-American to do so. That family story should be told with an appropriate commemorative marker, monument, and/or public art somewhere in the area that was owned by the Foote family and within the East End.
Fort Taylor Park

In the draft plan the city-owned Fort Taylor Park has been identified as “immediately adjacent to the East End” (p.1-3). The plan goes on to state the “the majority of the POA is dominated by imperious surfaces and the only park, Fort Taylor, is neither visible nor easily accessible” (p. 2-8). We can see no reason why Fort Taylor Park should be excluded from the East End POA, since it is owned and managed by the City of Falls Church. It should be explicitly added to the plan area; it forms a natural boundary for the East End with single-family residences across the street to the west.

Despite its current state, on high ground overlooking East Broad Street and Roosevelt Ave., and overgrown, it has potential to contribute valuable passive recreation green space to an area that is currently mostly pavement. No mention is made in the plan of the two Virginia Civil War Trails signs at the park entrance and on top of the bluff, respectively, detailing the significance of this high ground during the Civil War. However, the park property is only a small remnant of a much larger parcel originally associated with Taylor’s Tavern, June 1861 balloon flights, and the Civil War gun battery that once stood on this high ground and that has largely been disturbed by the adjoining auto dealership and Oakwood Cemetery. A city-wide archaeological assessment done in 1999 found no evidence of Civil War or other archaeological remains in Fort Taylor Park, although some further investigation may be warranted if there is redevelopment. As it looks at ways to provide valuable green space in the East End POA, though, the City should strongly consider redevelopment of the Fort Taylor Park property that could retain the current Civil War interpretive markers but also open up the space on top of the bluff. The City should consider installing picnic tables, benches, or other passive recreational amenities to help serve local residents as well as visitors to the East End interested in its Civil War history.

Oakwood Cemetery

The private Oakwood Cemetery, still open for burials and other interments, has the graves of many significant families from Falls Church and vicinity. The plan correctly points out that the cemetery could offer a place for passive recreation, such as walking. The cemetery also retains the marked site of the important Methodist Fairfax Chapel dating to 1778 (and destroyed during the Civil War). The cemetery is open to visitors from dawn to dusk and could (and doubt does) fulfill such purposes for local residents. The City, or perhaps a private association, might approach the cemetery trustees to more formally allow and encourage such public uses of the drives and footpaths within the cemetery grounds.

Other Specific Comments

- The Introduction chapter includes some background prehistory and history related to Native American occupation in the area prior to English colonization. It goes on to note that “unfortunately, there is scant evidence of American Indian culture in northern Virginia, and by 1680 the Dogue [tribe had] mostly moved to other parts of Virginia” (1-7). That is not exactly true; while quite a few sites are known from the surrounding area, archaeological evidence in greater Falls Church is limited to brief camp or other special use sites along Four Mile Run and Trumbull Run (near Sisler’s Quarry) to the west and north of the East End POA. No prehistoric archaeological remains have been found in the Seven Corners area.

- Reference is made in the Economic Development chapter (p.4) to applying for National Register of Historic Places status for Eden Center. While it seems unlikely that such an approach would be successful, City staff in cooperation with Eden Center management might consider contacting the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) to see what they think of the idea and of Eden Center’s eligibility as a significant historic and cultural resource at either the state or national level of significance.
February 7, 2023

The Honorable Tim Stevens, Chairman
City of Falls Church Planning Commission
300 Park Avenue, Suite 163 East
Falls Church, Virginia 22046

Re: Chamber of Commerce Comments On Draft East End Small Area Plan

Dear Chairman Stevens,

On behalf of the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce, I write to offer suggestions for inclusion within the West End Small Area Plan working draft text. The Chamber supports this ongoing planning effort which, if adopted, will hopefully offer an updated vision to achieve a vibrant urban experience, deliver new retail and highly-demanded housing, and provide a sustainable future for this section of the City of Falls Church.

Generally, the Chamber supports land use and zoning regulations that: (1) provide flexibility to allow landowners, tenants, and other businesses to adapt to changing market and economic conditions; (2) take into account market trends and demands; and (3) support the highest and best business growth, utilizing best practices to drive such growth.

Efforts to support and retain the East End’s unique local businesses are a Chamber priority. Small and local businesses are an essential component of greater Falls Church’s economy and the Chamber’s membership. The Chamber supports all efforts to help existing East End tenants navigate disruptions which occur due to the renovation, redevelopment, or repositioning of existing commercial properties.

The Chamber strongly supports governmental efforts to support small business infrastructure, business preservation and architectural overlay districts, and the continued development of existing programs and initiatives that support small businesses.

The Chamber supports the draft plan’s environmental sustainability efforts to increase tree canopy and energy efficiency, as well as address stormwater challenges. We believe the draft plan should prioritize a holistic environmental strategy that encourages local businesses and developers to use conscientious and responsible environmental practices for land use, water and air quality, and waste management.

Of equal importance, a sustainable Fall Church requires a range of housing options that are affordable to a broad spectrum of citizens. Moreover, the strength and viability of the greater Falls Church economy relies on the availability of a mix of housing options as it directly impacts workforce recruitment and retention.

Diversity in housing types also serves as a key factor in business location decisions. To that end, the Chamber supports the draft plan’s emphasis on providing a wide range of housing types to meet the needs of greater Falls Church’s population and workforce. The Chamber encourages working with developers and the business community to provide clear policy guidance for affordable housing expectations in future East End mixed-use developments.

The Chamber supports the draft plan’s emphasis on developing and maintaining a safe, convenient, and cost-effective multimodal transportation network. An emphasis should be placed upon all modes of transportation including, but not limited to, pedestrian mobility, automobiles, mass transit, bikesharing, taxi services, and ridesharing.

The Chamber supports the introduction of higher land use densities and a mix of uses in targeted areas of the East End as such uses facilitate walkability and enhance the value of transportation investments. We also request the draft plan ensure street, trail, and sidewalk connections are coordinated with transportation plans in Arlington County and Fairfax County.

We further support all efforts in the draft plan to maintain clean, inviting, and safe streets and sidewalks as a way to attract customers to local businesses. The Chamber supports making streets more walkable and standardizing the appearance, safety, and usefulness of the sidewalks, bus shelters, and other aspects of pedestrian-friendly passageways. We also support the undergrounding of utilities along area streets, either through public-sector infrastructure projects or in conjunction with private-sector redevelopment projects.

Lastly, the Chamber acknowledges the efforts staff has made in terms of public outreach, community meetings, online surveys, and discussions with civic leaders in the Vietnamese-American community.

The Chamber appreciates the draft plan’s emphasis to have the East End remain as a Southeast Asian cultural hub focused on the Eden Center. As the draft plan continues to evolve, the Chamber strongly suggests that a renewed effort be made to provide outreach to Vietnamese-American business leaders in a culturally-appropriate and respectful way.

The Chamber recognizes that the comprehensive planning review process is lengthy and complex, and that the Planning Commission and City Council must weigh competing and often conflicting interests in furtherance of public necessity and good planning practice. We acknowledge the challenge of evaluating applications which satisfy the City’s planning, transportation, and fiscal goals.
I appreciate your kind consideration in this matter and would respectfully request that you forward this letter to members of the Planning Commission and staff for consideration. If I may answer any questions, please feel free to contact me at (703) 532-1050.

Sincerely,

Elsie Neil Bengtson

Elsie Neil Bengtson
Executive Director
Falls Church Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Members, Planning Commission
Mr. Paul Stoddard, Planning Director
Board of Directors, Falls Church Chamber of Commerce
Viet Place Letter

Viet Place Collective is a grassroots community organization not affiliated with the City of Falls Church or Capital Commercial Properties (property owner).

These Community Demands were created in collaboration with Eden Center business owners, employees, and community members who graciously trusted us with their experiences and feedback.

Background

These Community Demands were co-created with Eden Center business owners and community members as a direct response to the City of Falls Church’s Draft East End Small Area Plan (SAP).

They reflect the perspectives of the people who would be most affected by the SAP, and must be incorporated into the final version.

Over the past several months, our grassroots organizers have built strong relationships with the business owners and employees of the Eden Center, working tirelessly to provide clear and direct information about the SAP, and actively dispelling rumors that Eden Center might be torn down. We have come to understand the day-to-day challenges that threaten long-term business operations and patronage. Most importantly, we have helped the Vietnamese community better understand the potential consequences and hidden costs of redevelopment — in particular, their displacement from a place they’ve called home for nearly forty years.

Though the City of Falls Church outwardly champions equitable development and diversity, the drafted plan does not adequately support those goals and may actively contribute to commercial displacement. These Vietnamese and immigrant-owned businesses are at highest risk for displacement as a result of redevelopment. As such, it is imperative that their voice, needs, and desires are heard and reflected in the final SAP.
Community Demands

1. Make anti-displacement a primary goal of the SAP
   In order to achieve true equitable development, preventing commercial displacement should be present throughout the SAP, and not relegated to a subsection in the Economic Development chapter.

2. Add a legally-binding agreement to fund anti-displacement strategies using tax revenue
   A percentage of the tax revenue Eden Center generates should be invested into programs to ensure the survival of the small businesses.

3. Implement culturally relevant anti-displacement strategies
   We outline several rigorously researched and culturally relevant strategies such as Community Benefits Agreements, Legacy Business Preservation, and Legal Assistance.

4. Increase the total amount of free parking spaces
   Inadequate parking is the #1 complaint among business owners and customers, and increased parking is necessary to support existing businesses.

5. Formally designate POAs as “Little Saigon East”
   “Little Saigon East” would celebrate Eden Center’s Vietnamese cultural identity and promote it to in-state and out-of-state visitors and customers.

6. Ensure infrastructure improvements & community safety as a requirement of any development plan
   Infrastructure investments, funded both by City and Developer, must occur before any development or vision for multi-modal transit can come to fruition.

7. Commission Vietnamese artists for any public art
   Any public beautification efforts should hire Vietnamese-American artists to celebrate the community’s contributions to the City.

Make anti-displacement of Vietnamese-owned businesses a primary goal of the SAP’s overall Vision & Goals, rather than a subsection of the Economic Development chapter.

Anti-displacement must be front and center in the SAP – not relegated to an afterthought in the Economic Development chapter. Though one of the stated goals is to “preserve the Eden Center,” the plan focuses on building facades and fails to provide specific guidance on how to prevent commercial displacement as a result of potential redevelopment. This is not an unfounded fear: Vietnamese-American businesses making up the “Little Saigon” in Clarendon, Virginia were displaced as a direct result of a lack of anti-displacement protections. After mid-rise developments were approved by Arlington County and the Clarendon metro station opened in 1979, rents skyrocketed from $1/ft² to as high as $25/ft².

Although Arlington County was vocal about their support for the Vietnamese community when planning for additional development, they ultimately failed the community. At the time, the Executive Director of Clarendon Alliance was quoted as saying “We would like for the Vietnamese to stay […] We don’t want just a bunch of tall office buildings.” Now, only one restaurant remains from Little Saigon.

We suggest the following language:
“The primary goal of this Small Area Plan is to provide detailed guidance for future development in the East End that will 1) actively prevent the commercial displacement of Vietnamese-owned businesses that define the cultural identity of the Eden Center and 2) ensure that businesses share in the benefits of any development in the area.”

Add a legally-binding funding agreement that allocates a percentage of the tax revenue generated by Eden Center to fund anti-displacement programs and other community resources.

Eden Center generates more tax revenue than any other property in the East End PDA (over $1.5 million in 2020 alone). Its true economic impact is far greater than taxes – from job creation to cultural cachet. Eden Center’s impact should be re-evaluated by the City and directly reinvested into an anti-displacement fund to ensure the survival of the Vietnamese-owned businesses.

The SAP currently only presents the property taxes generated at the Eden Center relative to other parcels around the city. Examining only property taxes omits the true economic impact (meals & sales tax, jobs), and furthers the false narrative of economic underutilization.
Implement culturally relevant anti-displacement strategies in the SAP

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<th>Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community Benefits</td>
<td>We ask that the Special Exception (SE) criteria be amended to explicitly require the negotiation of a legally binding agreement between community stakeholders and any future developer. This is essential in ensuring the listed anti-displacement strategies (and any other specific amelities) have legal standing as necessary conditions for development. A contractual agreement will ensure that the community will benefit directly from any development that occurs.</td>
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<td>Agreement</td>
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<td>Legacy Business</td>
<td>We acknowledge the inclusion of “Legacy business preservation programs” in the draft SAP. We call on planners to ensure that such programs, created and funded by the City, address the specific challenges business owners are facing. Based on our calculations, rent rates in some Eden Center businesses are upwards of 50% higher than comparable area averages. Tenants have also noted out of order toilets, ceiling leaks, and cracked floors that go unfixed for months. Several Vietnamese-owned businesses have already relocated in favor of places with better conditions and lower rent (e.g. four Sisters, Mark’s Duck House). Without intervention, this pattern is likely to continue until Eden Center loses the businesses that are vital to its character. Grants for long-standing businesses can help mitigate rent increases, fees, and updates neglected infrastructure.</td>
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<td>Preservation Program</td>
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<td>Vietnamese-speaking</td>
<td>Given the misinformation that has surrounded the SAP to date, a Community Outreach Specialist is necessary to effectively promote the City’s resources and help businesses navigate regulatory processes. Currently, few businesses are aware of existing City resources. Regarding the regulatory processes, one owner shared, “it was very difficult working with building and fire code to get doors open….” The ideal Specialist will go beyond translating communications, and will use community-based approaches to gain a full understanding of Eden Center businesses. They, however, must not serve as a punitive enforcement liaison. A Specialist is necessary to strengthen the relationship between Eden Center businesses and the City. One business owner shared: “When we asked [the City] for help in 2008, we got nothing. Why should I trust the City now?”</td>
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<td>Community Outreach</td>
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<td>Specialist</td>
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include culturally relevant anti-displacement strategies in the SAP

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<td>Pro bono or Discounted</td>
<td>Legal assistance will help business owners better understand their tenant rights, leases, and negotiation power. Current lease agreements are at best, disadvantageous, and at worst, exploitative of existing businesses. Several businesses shared that their leases are highly “restrictive and unbalanced.” The standard 8% yearly rent increase is double the commercial average, and is negotiable with legal assistance. Given English only leases, many business owners sign without a full grasp of its content. Providing accessible legal assistance will help level the playing field for businesses to succeed. Negotiating leases is standard practice for businesses to achieve fairer operations. This is not feasible for many Eden Center businesses due to language and cost barriers.</td>
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<td>Legal Assistance</td>
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<td>Construction Mitigation</td>
<td>Redvelopment construction can cause extensive disruption and long-term challenges for small businesses. As one business owner shared, “Any construction, in or around Eden Center, will kill business. People will not come to shop if it’s a mess. Businesses must be compensated for the traffic they lose.” Another business expressed that an interruption of even one or two years is too long to weather. Assistance can mitigate the burdens associated with construction by providing small businesses with marketing, signage, and financial assistance in the form of grants or forgivable loans.</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Business</td>
<td>One business owner predicts that Eden Center will eventually become less Vietnamese since there are often no successors for these family-owned businesses. Establishing a neighborhood Business Incubator will help sustain the community for future generations, and create a hospitable environment for diverse small businesses and entrepreneurs. This could include fast-tracking small business projects that have minimal impacts, or recruiting businesses that address gaps in the current business mix. “Eden is too difficult right now to break into as a new business. We need a space that gives support to young people who are just starting out.”</td>
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<td>Incubator</td>
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Increase the total amount of free parking spaces.

Though we acknowledge the desire of the City to increase community and retail use of space in the East End POA, not all square feet of the area are equal. Parking is the #1 complaint of Eden Center business owners and customers. Increased parking is necessary to support the existing economic activity. We call on the Planning Commission to clarify and separate the Eden Center from their final plan from true "underutilized parking lots," such as the BJ's parking lot. While we long for a less car-dependent future and multi-modal transportation, it does not reflect the real needs of Eden Center business owners and customers today who come from across the East Coast and largely outside of the public transit system. When asked about public transit, one community member stated:

"I buy my groceries for the month; I can't take the bus carrying all my food."

The current parking lot is insufficient for weekend and holiday crowds. This limits the number of customers patronizing businesses. One owner stated:

"Even one day of limited parking hinders my business."

Formally designate Planning Opportunity Area 5 as "Little Saigon East" and rename part of Wilson Blvd Saigon Blvd.

We acknowledge and celebrate the City's intention to rename Wilson Blvd as Saigon Blvd and other "enhancements like a cohesive and culturally relevant design [...] and programming" to better market "the area's cultural identity." We call on the City to go through with this plan of action. Eden Center is the largest Vietnamese commercial hub on the East Coast. Numerous community members recommended this at the January 2023 Listening Session. This is an opportunity for the City to celebrate Eden Center's regional prominence.

One business owner agreed that rebranding the area as "Little Saigon East" would clarify Eden Center's Vietnamese cultural identity and promote it to new in-state and out-of-state customers.

This change would also indicate to potential developers the intangible cultural importance of Eden Center (similar to San Jose's or Seattle's Little Saigon) in addition to its consistent and outsized economic performance as a source of revenue for the City.

Ensure infrastructure improvements and community safety as a requirement for any development plan.

Although the draft SPA mentions that "larger redevelopments are expected to improve streetscapes and utilities on the site," we call on the City to require that potential developers address community safety and accessibility concerns.

There is currently a lack of safe and accessible pedestrian and bike infrastructure on roads surrounding the Eden Center property. Based on our calculations from VDOT crash data, this deficiency has, from 2015 through 2023, contributed to over a hundred vehicle collisions and eleven where a pedestrian or bicyclist was injured by a vehicle. Bus stops within a quarter-mile walking distance of Eden Center do not have benches and shelters, resulting in a greater burden for all riders, particularly elderly riders. The only bus line that connects Eden Center to the East Falls Church Metro/Station (26A), has an average wait time of 30 minutes.

Before the City's vision of multi-modal access to a re-developed East End can come true, infrastructure investments must make that car-independent travel possible.

Commission Vietnamese artists for any public art projects.

We acknowledge and celebrate the City's current plan to commission public art to showcase at Eden Center. Additionally, we call on the City to invite Vietnamese-American artists to design public art. Art is just one way to celebrate the contributions of the Vietnamese community to the City as well as an opportunity to revitalize the appearance of the area, denote its economic significance, and drive art tourism.

References:


Full Crash Data, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Retrieved April 11, 2023, from https://crashdata.virginiadot.gov/CRASHData/AccidentDataSearch?accidentDate=2015-12-31 00:00:00&accidentDate=2023-12-31 23:59:59


Thank you

ViÊt PLACE COLLECTIVE

hello@avietplace.org
AAPI Caucus Letter

March 17, 2023

Dear Mayor Tarter and Councilmembers,

As you consider redevelopment plans affecting Eden Center, we ask that you proactively work to preserve Eden Center as a Vietnamese American cultural center and commercial hub in Northern Virginia.

Specifically, we ask the City of Falls Church to engage in intentional, in-language outreach to Eden Center businesses. As you know, many of the businesses in Eden Center are owned by Vietnamese Americans or other Asian Americans for whom English is a second language. In-language outreach will ensure that these small business owners have a clear understanding of any proposed changes, how they may be impacted, and how they can effectively provide input and advocate for themselves.

We also urge the City of Falls Church to develop an anti-displacement approach for the businesses located at Eden Center. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese American community in Virginia is no stranger to displacement by redevelopment. After the Fall of Saigon, many Vietnamese refugees settled in Arlington and opened businesses, and this part of Clarendon became known as “Little Saigon.” As the area developed, Vietnamese American business owners were driven out. Many settled in Seven Corners and started over, creating Eden Center. We cannot let redevelopment displace the Vietnamese American community again.

In recognition of Eden Center’s significance, we support the renaming of Wilson Boulevard to “Saigon Boulevard.” Eden Center is a significant community anchor for Vietnamese Americans in Virginia and throughout the East Coast. Vietnamese Americans travel from throughout Virginia and surrounding states to eat, shop, and embrace the community at the center. This name change would recognize the contributions of Vietnamese Americans and Eden Center to the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, and the Northern Virginia region.

As you are aware, Eden Center is an economic driver, contributing $1.3 million in tax revenue in 2020 – more tax revenue than any other property in that the City’s Planning Opportunity Area. Eden Center is a

Thank you for your service to the residents of Falls Church and considering these crucial steps to ensure that Eden Center will continue to be the preeminent Vietnamese American community center on the East Coast.

Sincerely,

Kathy Tran
Chair, VAAPIC
Delegate, 42nd District

Ghazali Hashmi
Vice Chair, VAAPIC
Senator, 10th District

Kelly Corvis-Fowler
Treasurer, VAAPIC
Delegate, 21st District

Suhas Subramaniam
Secretary, VAAPIC
Delegate, 87th District

cc:
Mayor David Tarter
Vice Mayor Letty Hardi
Councilmember Marybeth Connelly
Councilmember Phil Duncan
Councilmember Debbie Hiscott
Councilmember Caroline S. Llan
Councilmember David F. Snyder
Capital Commercial Properties Letter

EDEN CENTER, INC.

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Vice President
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Fax (703) 804-4699
E-mail: gfreedy@capcomprop.com

May 16, 2023

Via Email Only

The Honorable Tim Stevens, Chairman
City of Falls Church Planning Commission
300 Park Avenue, Suite 102 East
Falls Church, Virginia 22046

Re: East End Small Area Plan

Dear Mr. Stevens:

On behalf of Eden Center, Inc., the owner of Eden Center, please accept this letter as a response to the above-referenced proposed East End Small Area Plan (the “Draft Plan”).

At approximately 16 acres, Eden Center is the East End’s largest commercial property, and the Owner has developed and operated it as a thriving commercial center focused on the Vietnamese community for more than 40 years.

We appreciate the City’s prioritization of planning efforts in this area of the City. The East End, despite its immense cultural and tax revenue contributions, has been long neglected in terms of public realm improvements and integration into the City of Falls Church (the “City”).

We have monitored the Small Area Plan process over the past several months and have set forth below some general responses to correct some mistaken assertions and unfounded rumors.

At the first kickoff meeting, we stated publicly that we have no immediate or long-term plans to redevelop the center and we did not request initiation of the Small Area Plan process. We intend to continue operating the center for the foreseeable future in much the same way it has evolved over the past four decades: that is, as a nationally- and regionally-recognized cultural home to the local Vietnamese and broader Asian American community.

Eden Center is a trademarked name and is the largest and oldest continuously-named shopping center in the City. Unlike many retail centers, Eden Center is 100 percent occupied and there exists no debt on the property. Many of our leases can be extended beyond 2050. The Owners plan to continue to invest in Eden Center and support the City’s efforts to invest in, revitalize, the public areas of the Draft Plan.

Eden Center has been enlarged over the years. We have added features of cultural significance (e.g., a clock tower, pagodas, and a fountain plaza), and a long-vacant building was converted into the Good Fortune Supermarket. Additionally, we have made a concerted effort to support the Vietnamese community by hosting special cultural events, making substantial donations to Vietnamese non-profit organizations, and providing college scholarships.

We also remain proud of our proven record of attracting and sustaining small businesses within the center. We believe the essential ingredients to sustaining Eden Center’s unique businesses have come only through a concerted focus on attracting, growing, and preserving small family businesses.

Most commercial landlords require would-be tenants to provide, among other things, credit checks, financial records, seed money, a business plan, and prior landlord references. Such prerequisites often act as barriers to entry for smaller underfunded and minority-owned businesses—particularly those who lack access to credit, capital, and banking relationships.

At Eden Center, however, we have traditionally required only two things from prospective small family tenants: a security deposit and a reasonable idea for a business. We have found this approach to be extremely beneficial in unleashing entrepreneurial creativity and making it easy for small businesses to grow.

With respect to tenant relations, I would note that we host two annual Vietnamese festivals, provide meeting space for local Vietnamese organizations, host immunization drives and movie nights in the parking lot, submit to annual code inspections by City officials, and have over 50 surveillance cameras to maintain a safe property. We also have an open-door policy for all tenant concerns. Moreover, we are always seeking to maintain and improve the center. Just recently, for example, we have added indoor and outdoor LED lighting and replaced large sections of the roof, as well as flooring, plumbing, and parking areas.

During the Covid-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, nearly all of Eden Center’s tenants were forced to temporarily close due to the public health exigency. As a result, most were unable to pay rent for several months, resulting in more than 100 tenants in default of their leases. During this time, we worked with our tenants to provide substantial rent abatements as well as extra time to pay rent. As a result, no tenants were evicted and we lost only three tenants.

Today, after multiple expansions and upgrades, we are proud to be home to more than 115 tenants. There is a long waiting list of prospective tenants, and it is no small exaggeration to say that Eden Center ranks among Northern Virginia’s most successful
The Honorable Tim Stevens, Chairman
May 16, 2022
Page 3 of 6

small business incubators. Our focus on small businesses has resulted in a home for the Vietnamese community, which has created a profitable shopping center, a major tourist destination, and generated substantial tax revenue for the City.

Eden Center has been able to survive—and thrive—despite a challenging retail market, higher costs of borrowing and supply chain shortages. That the center has thrived in an expansive area of Northern Virginia which is seeing substantial commercial-to-residential conversions, is nothing short of remarkable. This is due to the owner’s long-term commitment to improve, maintain, revitalize, and promote Eden Center.

We support nearly all elements of the Draft Plan, and respectfully ask the following items be considered:

1) Protecting Existing Businesses: We recognize that, in the event of any redevelopment (which is not being contemplated), protecting existing businesses during construction is critical. However, we are concerned with the Draft Plan’s suggestion that tenant displacement measures be taken even when there is no proposed redevelopment or contemplated displacement. As noted above, our business plan is to protect and grow Eden Center’s approximately 150 small businesses. Frankly, it is the secret to our success.

Such a recommendation, if incorporated into the Draft Plan, would be entirely unique to the City’s other Small Area Plans and would be dissimilar to the treatment of other commercial centers. We render no opinion as to whether the City should adopt an anti-displacement ordinance; however, if one is to be considered, we would suggest it apply to all commercial property owners in the City.

2) Rebranding “Little Saigon East”: The Draft Plan suggests renaming the portion of the East End which includes Eden Center as “Little Saigon East.” While this is a well-intentioned way to honor the Vietnamese community, we believe it is unnecessarily confusing and could dilute the perception, purpose, and idea of Eden Center as a whole.

We have worked for 40 years to build “Eden Center” into a valuable brand and have registered it as a trademark name with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Thousands of visitors and patrons along the eastern seaboard know Eden Center as both a place and destination, and the City’s recently-installed wayfinding signs consistently use the term “Eden Center” to direct visitors to the area. Keeping this brand identity will prove critical as the Seven Corners area redevelops with high-density projects in the future.

The proposed rebranding would also be confusing to a customer looking for a business located in Eden Center’s existing “Saigon East” mall (one of our three indoor malls). Eden Center’s large supermarket—a Chinese-owned; many of Eden Center’s tea businesses are Taiwanese, and we now have Korean- and Thai-owned establishments.

Rather than generating an entirely new name to describe this section of the City, it is important to retain Eden Center as the cross-cultural name already commonly associated with the area.

3) Saigon Boulevard Renaming: The Draft Plan recommends giving the 6700 block of Wilson Boulevard the ceremonial name of “Saigon Boulevard.” Such an honorific effort is not new and is one we have long supported.

For reference, on November 28, 2005, the City adopted a resolution giving Wilson Boulevard this designation between Route 7 to Roosevelt Boulevard (in front of the Eden Center). This was followed by a similar endorsement from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on January 9, 2006. As a consequence, two street signs were placed along Wilson Boulevard, but one is missing. We support all efforts to replace and, where appropriate, emboss such signage.

4) Widening Wilson Boulevard: The Draft Plan references the possibility of narrowing Wilson Boulevard, which currently serves approximately 14,000 vehicles per day, to one lane in each direction in the vicinity of Eden Center. We certainly acknowledge the planning precepts behind narrowing over-engineered roads. However, we oppose reducing the number of through travel lanes along Wilson Boulevard.

Eden Center exists as a cultural destination that is unlike other conventional shopping centers. Some of Eden Center’s patrons reside within walking distance of the center; most do not. This means that improved crosswalks across Wilson Boulevard and ensuring ease of patron access via vehicles is critical to ensuring tenant survivability. Indeed, the center is often frequented by buses and commercial carriers with tourists from large Vietnamese communities along the eastern seaboard, particularly from Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

Maintaining travel lanes does not preclude ways to upgrade Wilson Boulevard. We support enhanced streetscapes, widened and improved crosswalks, undergrounding of overhead wires, installation of street trees, installation of pedestrian refuge medians, high-visibility crosswalks, HAWK signals, bicycle lanes, and wider sidewalks. Such efforts could maintain an adequate level of service, ensure convenient access for those arriving by vehicles, promote pedestrian safety, and accommodate multiple modes of transportation.

Community Engagement
Additionally, given that the majority of the Wilson Boulevard right-of-way is in Fairfax County (which has long planned Wilson Boulevard to be upgraded into a "Major Avenue" under its comprehensive planning documents) we endorse working with Fairfax County on creating a consistent inter-jurisdictional streetscape as one approaches Seven Corners.

5) Renewed Focus on Tourism and Promotion: We suggest the Draft Plan emphasize efforts to work with the Owner and Eden Center’s tenants to schedule and promote cultural and community events and integrate them more into the City’s fabric – similar to the City’s promotional efforts for the Memorial Day Parade, Falls Church Festival, and Farmer’s Market.

Additionally, we suggest renewed outreach efforts by City officials and staff to business organizations to promote the City as a positive place for Asian American businesses. To promote cultural dialogue, we support the establishment of a sister city relationship with one or more southeast Asian cities.

Lastly, given the remarkable growth and success of Northern Virginia’s Asian American Pacific Islander (“AAPI”) population since the late 1960s, we believe the time is ripe for Falls Church to work with the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Visit Fairfax, and Visit Loudoun to create and promote an AAPI cultural trail. The trail would highlight retail, restaurants, sites, and other cultural offerings in the region, most notably in Falls Church, Annandale, Centreville, Springfield, and Loudoun County.

Small, family businesses are critical to Eden Center’s growth and are the key to the center’s continued success. We have steadily and deliberately built Eden Center as a destination and brand over the span of four decades; building-by-building, tenant-by-tenant. The result is clear: Eden Center exists today as both a major tourist destination and one of the City’s largest taxpayers.

The best way to ensure the long-term health and viability of Eden Center as a Vietnamese/Asian American cultural hub is to simply allow the center to continue operating as it has, and to build upon its well-established legacy. Our tenants deserve nothing less.

I would appreciate it if you would provide this information to staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council for consideration in their deliberations. We also request that it be attached as an exhibit to the final version of the Draft Plan.
DATE: May 3, 2023
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Emily Bazeumo, Senior Planner,
Cameron Gahres, Senior Planner,
Zoe Lavine, Planner
SUBJECT: East End Small Area Plan Eden Center Pop Up Report

Background
City staff ran 4 pop-ups at the Eden Center as part of the community engagement process for the East End Small Area Plan. The pop-up’s purpose was to increase public engagement with the Eden Center community, share information about the Draft Plan, receive both feedback and new ideas, and answer other questions and concerns. The pop-ups were on March 18th from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM, March 22nd from 1 PM to 3 PM, March 22nd from 3 PM to 5 PM, and April 22nd from 1 PM to 3 PM.

The pop-ups were very successful in engaging with patrons and business owners within the Eden Center, both in English and in Vietnamese. An interpreter was present at the later 3 pop-ups, following a mix up at the first one. At all pop-ups, community members assisted in communicating in Vietnamese and translating commentary for staff. At the first pop-up Kevin Pham, the president of the Vietnamese Society of DC, Maryland, and Virginia, generously walked around with staff and facilitated conversations with business owners.

Summary of Key Findings
Throughout the 4 pop-ups there were several conversation topics and written responses that were most common. Some of these were: parking, security, desire for no change, concern about displacement of businesses, renaming Wilson Boulevard “Saigon Boulevard”, naming the area “Little Saigon”, and adding community space. The graph below shows how often these different topics were noted on the comment cards. Staff was also frequently asked about various misinformation that has been circulated like if Eden Center is being knocked down or redeveloped. If high rise buildings were going up in front of Eden Center, or if the City owned the land or could implement rent control.

Comments within these categories also went into further specifics both on comment cards and in conversations. One of the more significant categories of anti-displacement had many different ideas floated such as technical assistance for lease and contract negotiation, establish a legacy business program, provide construction assistance and mitigation, and hire a Vietnamese speaking outreach specialist. Safer transportation also contained more specific strategies like improving public transit to Eden Center from the Metro, provide safer walkways and crosswalks, and improving the entrance at the gate with a traffic light or better signage.

Methods of Engagement
Themes and Questions
The pop-ups incorporated multiple methods of engagement. The primary staff presence was at the set-up table, located near the fountain at the center. At the table staff engaged in conversations about the plan. To guide conversations staff prepared materials around a central theme and question for each pop-up. For the first pop-up the questions were “What does the Eden Center mean to you?” and “How do we celebrate Vietnamese culture at Eden Center?”. The second pop-up’s question was “What would you like to see improved at the Eden Center?”. The third pop-up’s question was “What is your hope for the future of the Eden Center?”. Instead of having a question, the final pop-up featured revised materials based on the feedback from the first 3 pop-ups. The purpose of these themes and questions were to guide conversations around the assets of the Eden Center, more immediate improvements, then a larger vision for the area building on the strengths and patching up the weaknesses. The final pop-up’s purpose was to both get feedback on the new materials and to build trust through a show of how the city is listening and is taking the Eden Center communities concerns and ideas into consideration at every step of the plan.
Boards and Comment Cards  
These questions were printed in Vietnamese and English on boards at the table with markers for people to write down their responses. This allowed for anyone who came by to see the responses received, encouraging more people to engage in conversations or write down responses. There were also anonymous comment cards with the printed question “What can the city do for you?” in Vietnamese and English. These were available for anyone who stopped by to write responses to the stated questions or any other feedback they want to share. The comment cards were very successful in allowing people to give feedback on their own time with the comfort of having anonymity. At the table, there were also poster boards with information on the plan and copies of the FAQ in Vietnamese and English available for people to take.

Interactive Activity  
At the second and third pop-ups, staff also brought an interactive activity as an engagement method and a means of receiving visual feedback. The interactive activity was a printed-out board of an aerial photo of the East End and movable blocks with photos of different proposed measures featured in the plans such as trees, a plaza, lights, sidewalks, etc. Community members then were able to move the blocks to where they think the measures could be put. It also helped people visualize the POA as a whole and the scale strategies could take.

Door to Door Engagement  
In addition to the engagement at the table, staff alternated doing door to door engagement with property owners with the assistance of the interpreter and other Vietnamese speaking community members. During this engagement staff both went off a more formalized list of questions and had more organic conversations. This resulted in robust feedback, however, due to the large number of business, staff was not able to engage with all businesses. During this engagement staff passed out anonymous comment cards for businesses owners, managers, and employees to fill out and return if they want.

Feedback from Each Pop-Up and Door to Door Engagement  
Common Feedback from Business Owners in Door to Door Engagement  
The door to door engagement yielded, in some ways, different feedback than the other community engagement methods. Conversations with business owners and managers generally followed the following questions:

1. What’s your name & what business do you operate and/or work at? (options)
2. How long have you been working here/owned your business here?
3. What does Eden Center mean to you?
4. What could be improved about the Eden Center area?
5. How can we (as the City) help existing or new Eden Center businesses?
6. (If familiar with the small area plan) What parts of the draft Small Area Plan do you like and/or support? What parts of the draft Small Area Plan do you dislike and/or want removed?
7. What is your hope for the future of Eden Center?

The first two questions served as background information where the following 5 sought more in-depth feedback. The third question received similar feedback to that of the community. Many emphasized how it is not only the place of work but their community. Some brought up the unique market the Eden Center provides and the difficulties their business would face anywhere else that does not get the same heritage tourism. The fourth question most commonly solicited more immediate issues with the buildings, safety and rent prices, such as flooding, only having cold water in the bathrooms, petty theft and intimidation from bad actors, and high rents and CAM fees. However, some responses fell under the scope of the plan like a need for more parking, more connections to transit to bring in customers and employees, and creating clearer signage and pathways to get to the Eden Center.

The fifth question, asking how the city can assist existing and new businesses at the Eden Center yielded a range of strategies. A common suggestion staff received was increasing marketing around the Center. One business owner explained that the new wayfinding signs created by the City are the most impactful measure the City has taken to promote the Eden Center, and continuing to provide signage and marketing that advertises the existence and location of the Center could help bring in a new customer base. Other business owners brought up increasing the programming at the Eden Center particularly on weekends when there is less business. In addition to these strategies, some being canvassed jokingly brushed it off by saying “free rent”, and others brought up a significant past attempt by the Eden Center community to advocate for some changes which seem resulted in very little action from the City.

One of the most significant differences between the feedback heard while tabling and that of the business owners was to questions six. The majority of the business owners were tangentially aware of a plan but were fairly unconcerned about the effects after confirming that there were no plans to demolish the center or for development. The majority sentiment seemed to be that their businesses were successful and had leases in place. When pressed further on some of the strategies for the Eden Center in the plan there was repeated support for increased parking and concern over anything that could take parking away, but otherwise most generally liked the ideas like a plaza space, renaming the area “Little Saigon”, and creating a legacy business program, amongst others.
For the final question most of the responses previously heard were reiterated, i.e. More parking, continued success of their business, more marketing and signage. There was however a longer-term goal shared by several business owners to have the Eden Center grow into a larger neighborhood and concentrated community like the Little Saigon of the west coast. Several shared the vision that instead of one shopping mall the area would be several blocks with housing, a hotel, a park, and a community center.

Summary of Feedback at Pop Up 1
The first pop-up centered around the questions “What does the Eden Center mean to you?” and “How do we celebrate Vietnamese culture at Eden Center?”. The purpose behind these questions was to map the assets that already exist and how the City can help to celebrate those assets. Below are the responses received on the poster boards to these questions:

What Does Eden Center mean to you?
- Another home to us
- A space where there’s no pressure to “perform” where Vietnamese people can, and connect and have shared experiences. A space where peoples personal history heritage and community can thrive.
- Multi-generational community gatherings
- One of the remaining places that carries the collective memory of southern Vietnam in the world
- I don’t want to lose Eden Center. This is the home of the Vietnamese people. (Translated from Vietnamese)
- A portal to our heritage
- Our Little Saigon
- A place to remember shared heritage and pass along to future generations
- Celebrates the legacy of Vietnamese people in the DMV

How do we celebrate Vietnamese culture at Eden Center?
- Call the “East End” Little Saigon East
- It would be nice to celebrate not in a parking lot
- Name Wilson Blvd., Saigon Boulevard
- Park with bench seating and kids’ playground
- Vietnamese language courses
- Keep the businesses! Add a cultural center!

Overall, people expressed a deep connection to the Eden Center through its history and cultural significance, and through the social and practical uses as a 3rd space to meet with friends and family and to eat and shop at places that cannot be found elsewhere. While many people initially expressed fear at any changes upon more conversation there were several ways to better celebrate the Vietnamese culture in the area that people were excited about. The most commonly mentioned method was renaming Wilson Boulevard and the general area to a version of “Saigon Boulevard” and “Little Saigon”.

Summary of Feedback at Pop Up 2
The second pop-up centered around the question “What would you like to see improved at the Eden Center?”. This encouraged visitors to think of current deficits and how they could be improved. Here is the condensed list of the responses written on the poster board:

What would you like to see improved at the Eden Center?
- More greenery
- Hotel at Eden Center for overnighters
- Cleaner safer public bathrooms
- Traffic light and crosswalk at the gate (2)
- More parking spaces (5)
- More security and cameras (6)
- No change
- Public Wi-Fi
- More events
- Cleanliness and trash
- Community center
- More communal spaces
- Outdoor seating

Much of the feedback from this question was concerns about more immediate problems outside of the scope of the plan. However, other feedback, like adding more parking, more safety measures, and more community space, are important strategies to further address in the plan. Other ideas were new like having public Wi-Fi in the area, or looking into adding a traffic light at the gate.

The interactive board was helpful at this pop-up in showing the borders of the POA, talking through different improvements that could be implemented, and inspiring larger conversations about the future of the area.
Summary of Feedback at Pop Up 3
The third pop-up’s focus was on the long-range future of the East End and Eden Center, asking the question “What is your hope for the future of the Eden Center area?”. Below is a condensed list of responses:

- Safer for pedestrians
- Safer area – more lights in parking lot
- Interior mall maps
- More parking (3)
  - Underground parking
  - Handicap spots
  - Pick up parking for food
- Keep the Vietnamese culture (2)
- Eden 2 to be built at B’s and public storage
- Change from Wilson Boulevard to Saigon Boulevard
- Traffic lights at the main entrance
- Kids playground (2)
- Less cars, less parking
- More greenery
- Green spaces – courtyard
- More sitting area

There was a wide range of feedback for this question, with many reiterating comments from previous pop-ups. Some new feedback included increasing marketing and signage, specifically for the indoor malls, designing for space for children, and an expanding the Center to a larger Vietnamese neighborhood. The interactive board assisted in this visioning exercise, with more people using the blocks to explain their lived experience and hopes for the future.

Summary of Feedback at Pop Up 4
The fourth and final pop-up featured the presentation of new materials including the revised vision statement and goals, a board transcribing the main themes heard at the previous pop-ups, and a collage of images that better represent the revised plan (shown below). For this popup there were not any interactive boards or activities, with the focus being on staff conversations. Most people who stopped by were still initially confused about the project and some were still under the impression that the Eden Center was being redeveloped but after more conversation the majority were supportive of the new goals and ideas. Many were particularly excited about having a night market and the longer-term strategy of bringing a community center to the East End. The overall feedback was that the revised material and “What we heard” sheet is a good reflection of the pop ups.

Feedback Outside of the Plan’s Scope
Below is a condensed list of comments from comment cards or on the board that go beyond a small area plans focus but should still be considered and remedied if possible:

- A shopping cart return
- More police/security for protection
  - Pickpockets in parking lot
  - Back lot especially unsafe
  - More violent crime i.e. stealing necklaces off older women’s necks
  - Female shop owners/employees feel unsafe getting in early or leaving late at night
- Restrooms
  - Dirty
  - Increase baby changing stations in Eden Center (none currently)
  - No hot water
  - Hard to find
  - Feels unsafe
- Smoking violations in the hallways of the malls
- Trash not taken care
- No recycling bins
- More upgrades needed inside (flooding, leaks, grease trap issues)
- Restaurants need more inspections
Community Survey Report

Background
As part of the community outreach for the East End Small Area Plan, City staff conducted a 14-question online survey. The survey’s purpose was to increase public engagement in the process, share information about the Draft Plan, and to receive feedback. The survey launched in late October, 2022. Vietnamese and Spanish language versions were available on November 28th. The survey was open through December 18, 2022.

The survey received 2,005 responses, 31 of which used the Vietnamese survey. Those results were then translated into English. The survey gained attention inside and out of the City borders with 34.2% of the people surveyed marking that that they live in the City of Falls Church, 19% responding that they work in the City, 12% visiting friends and/or family in the City, and 1.5% shopping and/or dining in the City.

Summary of Survey Responses
Overall survey respondents were supportive of the draft vision and goals. Key items that were generally supported include preserving the Eden Center and the Vietnamese cultural identity, the addition of urban design elements such as trees and outdoor dining, and improved multimodal transportation options. Common items that respondents requested be added or changes include strengthened language around the preservation of Eden Center and the Vietnamese culture, anti-displacement strategies to address the affordability concerns in the area, and a decreased emphasis on new development, particularly on the Eden Center lot.

Question Breakdown
The remainder of this report summarized the responses to each survey question. For quantitative questions, the results are represented by a graph. Open response options are summarized with a brief description of common responses.

Question 1: Favorite Feature
Survey Question: Q1. What is your favorite feature, shop, restaurant, etc. about the East End of the City as it exists today?

The overwhelming focus of responses highlighted the Eden Center and the Vietnamese Culture and Heritage that is celebrated in the area. Many respondents mentioned specific stores within the center and emphasize the uniqueness of the Center within the region. Below is just a sampling of the nearly 2000 responses received, highlighting the significance of the East End and specifically the Eden Center:

“The Eden Center is where I grew up. My parents immigrated from Vietnam and it was the only place where we could get food, meet with people who spoke the same language, and feel part of a community and not be isolated. All the restaurants and grocery stores have been staples in my life.”

“Good Fortune supermarket is the most important store in all of NOVA for my family. It is easily bus-accessible from my home (we don’t have a car) and has everything we need to cook healthy Cantonese food for our family. Without Good Fortune, we would be forced to travel an additional 45 minutes each way by bus to Asian supermarkets in Annandale, which would be a burden on our family.”

“The authenticity of this area. The businesses in this area make me feel like I am at home visiting Vietnam. The people truly love their jobs and what they do.”

“All of it. There is no one shop, restaurant, market, etc that can be my favorite as they all hold special memories to my family and I. We’ve shared meals here, celebrated life milestones here, and have the occasional late-night bubble tea. It is a staple and landmark in the falls church area.”

“Eden Center is a cultural cornerstone for my Vietnamese-American children. It is a place where my daughters can hear their language, where restaurant and shop owners continue supporting their community, and it helps non-Vietnamese people (like me! A Caucasian, northern Virginia native) learn more about this beautiful culture - and have amazing food.”

“Eden Center (Kim Phung Bakery, Thanh Son Tofu, Huong Binh, Saigon Restaurant, Falls Church Pharmacy). I also love the new tables in front of the West strip of Eden Center. People sit there and eat, hang out, and it feels more like a community gathering space.”
“Eden center is a place that I grew up around. This is the place that made me feel like I was home. My school was predominantly white and they would always make me feel that I should be ashamed of my skin, my dark hair, my dark colored eyes, my accent, my clothes, my culture. However, the community at Eden helped me find myself and who I truly am, and I learned to embrace and love my culture.”

“All of my favorite shops and restaurants are within Eden Center. To name a few: Thanh Son Tofu, Phuoc Loc Bakery, Good Fortune Supermarket, Nha Tran Restaurant. As a Vietnamese-American and Northern Virginia native, I grew up visiting Eden Center every week with my family. My parents immigrated to the region in the late 70s and Eden Center has been crucial in alleviating their homesickness, maintaining their connection to their home country, and meeting fellow Vietnamese community members.”

“I live outside of the Falls Church area. I am a Vietnamese international currently studying in Washington, DC. Although I do not live in the area of the development plan, I consider the Eden Center to be an important cultural center where I can gather with my Vietnamese peers, both local and international; and to share and promote a taste of home. I’d also like to emphasize that the frequency of my visits to the area correlate with the ease of transportation to and from the East Falls Church station. Without this maintenance of public transit, I would be much less likely to visit the area.”

“All of Eden Center’s restaurants and shops. I’ve lived in Northern Virginia my entire life and going to Eden Center and visiting the restaurants, bakeries and grocery stores is a favorite weekend activity of mine. The food and community is incredible. Unlike anything else in the area.”

“I come from a Hispanic background but we grew up right in front of the McDonald’s. My parents found comfort in coming to the Eden Center for warm meals or affordable groceries. They found community in being around others who experienced similar journeys and struggles as they did coming to America. It reminds me of my parents when I go there. My dad currently works at the used car dealership next to Mango Mango.”

“I enjoyed my time growing up visiting Eden Center. I now have children of my own where we make it a family outing with my parents and my children to not only enjoy the food there but to give my children a little history of our culture and language surrounding them.”

“I love the variety of Vietnamese cuisine I can find in Eden Center. I like that my Vietnamese friends and community members have a place to gather, and to generously share their culture with me in a show of cross-cultural exchange.”

“The fact that it is a hub for the local Vietnamese community, allowing many of us to maintain our culture and embrace our heritage while supporting other Vietnamese business owners.”

“Eden Center - my parents who both non-English speakers heavily rely on Eden Center. They wire money to poor relatives in Vietnam. They depend on Vietnamese people who help sign them up for Medicaid and Medicare.”

“Eden center, it’s a cultural hub attracting a large majority of the commerce in the area. Not to mention a product of generations of Vietnamese work ethic and what it means for a group to actualize the American dream.”

“There’s a store in the northwest corner of Eden center called Kim Phuong. My mother immigrated from Vietnam while she was pregnant with me and worked at that store. Every so often I’ll go with her and of course the people that own the business remember her. She worked there 23 years ago! I grew up going to Eden center and East end in general, it was practically an introduction to my identity. We lived walking distance to East End, and if you know what the Vietnamese community is like, we are quite close knit and tend to know any and everybody.”

“Eden Center has been a huge part of my life. It is a place where I have been re-introduced and immersed by my culture and heritage. It is a safe and meaningful community to many people. It has delicious restaurants that have been open for so long and it has huge supermarkets that provide many community members with their groceries (that are hard to find elsewhere).”

“Eden center is an essential part of east end. Thanh Son Tofu will be catering my wedding because it has been that important to my life and my family. It is a historic cultural hub and major part of the community and my family for my entire life. It is the only place, in any area I have lived in, that provides this kind of community for Vietnamese people, and has welcomed the entire community for decades.”

“Eden center- it’s the cultural hub for Vietnamese. Growing up I lived in Richmond and my parents would drive 2 hours to come here to Eden Center to support small businesses and buy food, and walk around, be immersed in languages, sights, foods, sounds that were familiar to them.”
Questions 2 and 3, Vision Statement

Q2 The following is a statement about the possible future of the East End. How do you agree with it?
“The East End is a cultural hub focused on the Eden Center. Transportation investments put people first by prioritizing connectivity and accessibility. Green spaces provide opportunities for community members to gather, recreate, or relax. Nearby housing affordability is preserved while new commercial and residential development occurs within the Planning Opportunity Area. A green approach to infrastructure, building, and site design support the environmental sustainability of the area for future generations.”

Q3 What would you add to improve the above vision statement?

941 respondents (48.1%) either agreed or strongly agreed. 681 (34.8%) respondents either disagree or strongly disagreed. The remaining 332 (17.1%) respondents neither agree or disagree.

“I put neither agree nor disagree because it doesn’t specify who the community being served is. It’s important that these transportation investments, community spaces, affordable housing, commercial, and residential development include leadership from the existing immigrant and Vietnamese communities. Will the cultural hub focused on Eden Center continue being focused on the community that makes it special? I encourage you to look into community-led partnerships so that any investments and solutions support the actual community of Eden Center—not (just) developers nor gentrifiers who would displace the Vietnamese community.”

“It is important to prioritize and acknowledge the important of diversity, equity, and inclusion in these conversations. You cannot talk about a cultural hub without acknowledging the populations who made it so. This statement should also affirm values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

“Our goal is to make quality of life improvements for our residents while preserving the culture that our community has known for generations.”

“I think the vision statement captures to goals well. I don’t think it’s needed here, but one factor I like about Eden center and that I think the green spaces would also help, is providing a place for the older folks in the area to socialize and walk. A good portion of the affordable housing and the customers to Eden are the older people in the area. Have a place to go to, socialize and be independent. I think is important to mental and overall health.”

Most suggestions for improving the vision statement call for strengthening the language around preserving the Eden Center and expanding to preserving the Vietnamese Community, rather than just the Eden Center. Other suggestions mention having a stronger emphasis on inclusivity and affordability. Many respondents also express concerns about the mention of new development in the area. Below are a few of the suggestions made:

“Preserving the Vietnamese/AAPI cultural hub and existing businesses, and expanding with community centers, and other community-focused resources.”

“Small business support like storefront improvement grants.”

“I want it to be more walkable, and I also want better public transportation options, however the parking is absolutely atrocious. If there could be underground parking or something that would be good.”
Question 4: Goals
Q4: Please rate the importance of each goal of the Small Area Plan.

All of the goals were generally supported. The most important goal was “Preserve the Eden Center and its cultural identity”, with 1663 (50.9%) of respondents selecting very important and another 955 (29.8%) selecting important. The least-supported goal was “Support economic revitalization” with 814 (45.1%) selecting very important or important and 506 (28%) selecting not important of low importance.

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Goal 1: Preserve the Eden Center and its cultural identity. Celebrate Vietnamese-American culture through programming and public art investments in Eden Center.

Goal 2: Enhance multi-modal mobility and accessibility throughout the East End.

Goal 3: Activate public spaces to create community connections. Strengthen the sense of community on the East End by providing spaces for the public to enjoy and gather. Incorporate green space for connection to nature.

Goal 4: Preserve and provide housing opportunities in and around the East End. As the Planning Opportunity Area develops, preserve the quality and affordability of existing nearby housing. Provide design transitions between existing housing and new.

Goal 5: Support economic revitalization throughout the East End. Invest in the East End to create and maintain consistent economic activity and return the area to regional prominence.

Goal 6: Develop the area in an environmentally sustainable way consistent with the principles of stewarding the area for the benefit of future generations.

Question 5: Urban Design Elements
Q5: Which urban design element would you like added to the East End? (Select all that apply.)

- Street Trees
- Outdoor and Sidewalk Dining
- Parklets and Pocket Parks
- Public Art

The most selected option was trees, with 1,103 respondents selecting that option. Outdoor dining and parklets were also commonly selected by respondents.
Many respondents also took the opportunity to write in their own suggestions in through the "Other (please specify)" option. These suggestions primarily centered around a plaza/community space, bike/ped infrastructure, parking, a community garden and addition green spaces. Some of the stand out responses are listed here:

“Name the area Little Saigon.”

“Safety measures for pedestrians (ex. protected walkway through parking lot), more greenery in general (trees plus others) to reduce heat island effect.”

“Interactive planting stations. Botanical gardens have a feature where children can plant.”

“Green spaces made in collaboration with the businesses and communities surrounding Eden Center rather than their expense.”

“Public Art celebrating American-Vietnamese history would be amazing and attract customers.”

“More cultural event space - this area is SO diverse and rich in immigrants and culture. We need to learn it and celebrate it!”

“Reduction of pervious surface and use of storm water detention/retention.”

“Walking trail restoration near the cemetery that connects to Eden Center.”

“History of Vietnam Before 1975. Communist Vietnam erased history before 1975, replacing with untrue stories. So, we should have a food street to show the true of Vietnam history.”

“The combination of outdoor dining & public plazas would give the area a much-needed cosmopolitan feel. Falls Church has so few gathering spaces like this. Old Town Alexandria and its revitalized waterfront are a good example of spaces that draw in the public. They also have a beloved but underused space in the Torpedo Factory, which is similar to Eden Center in the sense that it isn’t very inviting unless you know what’s there to begin with.”

**Question 6: Land Use**

Q6 Which land uses and activities would you like added to the East End? (Select all that apply.)

The most commonly selected option was neighborhood-serving restaurants and retail, with 860 selecting that option. The second most popular use was housing, with 527 respondents selecting that option.

A few respondents chose the "Other (please specify)" option to write in other land uses they wanted to see incorporated into the East End. The most common write in answer advocated for some form of community center, with others writing in parks, parking, and art spaces. Several respondents emphasized the need for any housing that comes in to be affordable. Here are a few standout responses:

“Maybe a Vietnamese community outreach center, to advocate for local issues and provide translation services.”

“Community centers for free activities for any age to learn more about Vietnamese and Asian cultures including dance and language workshops.”

“Local business spaces; library; local artist spaces; community garden.”

“More parking and green space to provide family quality time at Eden Center while preserving originality of history, stores, shops, and culture.”

“Space for year-round food/culture festivals.”
Question 7: Sustainability Element
Q7 Which sustainability element would you like added to the East End? (Select all that apply.)

The most commonly selected elements were Sustainable Energy, Expanded Tree Canopy, and Green Infrastructure.

Questions 8 and 9, Travel Methods
Q8 Currently, how do you travel to the East End? (select all that apply)
Q9 In the future, how would you like to travel to the East End? (select all that apply)

The overwhelming majority of participants responded that they currently travel to the East End in a personal car. While personal car is still the most common choice for respondents when asked about how they would like to travel to the East End in the future, far more participants selected other modes of transportation like transit (buses increased by 369 respondents and metro train increased by 497 respondents, bikes increased by 378, and walking increased by 345). This significant difference between the current availability and desire for multimodal mean of transportation show an increased demand to improve these alternative transportation means in this area.

Many respondents also wrote in other sustainable elements they want included, many centering around bike/ped infrastructure and public transit. Here are a few of those responses:

"Rebates or subsidies for businesses who buy sustainability elements."
"Improve infrastructure to make walking around easier and safer."
"Solar roofing, LED lighting, food gardens, alternatives to toxic chemicals like insulation."
"Expanded bus services and shuttles."
"Pay to refill water stations to mitigate excessive plastic use."
Question 10: Concluding Thoughts

Q10 Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

This question received a myriad of responses ranging from ideas for the future, concerns about the present and future, and overall questions and comments. The concerns most frequently raised focused on the future of the Eden Center, both the businesses and culture that is tied to it. Comments frequently reference fear of gentrification and displacement within the center, with dozens bringing up the history of the displacement of the Vietnamese Community from Clarendon. There is significant concern for affordability expressed. Many comments suggest having stakeholders in the Eden Center work more closely with the City, as well as suggestions for physical improvements to the Center. Below is a sampling of the responses received:

“Please preserve the Eden Center. It is one of the most unique and valuable aspects of the Little City. We have been going there since we moved to Falls Church City 20+ years ago. Now our children go there with their friends. We support investing in better biking, walking, and public transportation access to the Eden Center.”

“It is of utmost importance to highlight and preserve the history and significance of Eden Center on the Vietnamese American community. Provide opportunities for Vietnamese-owned businesses to flourish and not chain restaurants or big box stores. Support the local, small businesses that have been at Eden Center for years!”

“Excited about making the area pedestrian friendly. We live within walking distance but never walk – hoping that changes.”

“The number one priority is to not displace the Vietnamese American/Asian American small business owners. Eden center is amazing now, and its identity as a cultural hub is hugely important.”

“My main concern is displacement and this cannot happen in any shape or form. Please commit to non-gentrification.”

“It is very important that the Vietnamese community has a say in how this space is used. Adding housing and improving the areas environmental impact are great goals, but only if the current community will be sustained.”

“Make Eden center and the area more appealing for future generations of Vietnamese to want to maintain the cultural hub. If not, they will move out elsewhere.”

Question 11 and 12: Relationship to Falls Church

Q11 What is your zip code? (Top 12 Shown)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZIP Code</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Geographic Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>West Falls Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>22046</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Falls Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22044</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Westover</td>
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<tr>
<td>22203</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Pimmit Hills</td>
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<td>22201</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Virginia Square, Court House, and Lyon Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>22041</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Bailey’s Crossroads</td>
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<td>22031</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Remaining 259 Zip Codes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common zip codes given by respondents are within a close proximity of or within the city. However, there are also a large number of respondents in the Greater D.C. region and surrounding states, and even a few as far as California and Puerto Rico. The following maps show the distribution of respondents in the immediate area, neighboring states, and overall country.
Q12 Please check all that apply below:

The most commonly selected options are visiting Falls Church to see friends or family and visiting to shop or dine in Falls Church. Only 542 respondents (a little more than a fourth of respondents) either live or work in the City. This demonstrates the significance of the East End beyond the boundaries of the City to the region and beyond.

![Map of the United States with notable areas highlighted, possibly related to the question's context.](image-url)
Questions 13 and 14 Demographics

The majority of respondents identified as women (63.4%) which is an overrepresentation when compared to the 2022 ACS which estimates women are 50.5% of the population. Men are significantly underrepresented in the survey with 26.6% of respondents identifying as men compared to the ACS’s estimate that men represent 49.5% of the population.

Survey respondents are predominantly between the ages of 18-25 (42.6%) and 25-44 (43.3%). This shows a significant overrepresentation of both groups with the 2022 ACS estimating 18-25 to be 8% of the population and 25-44 to be 26.8% of the population. On the other side several age groups are underrepresented in the survey such as those under 18, 45-64, and 65 and above.

Q13 Which of the following options most closely aligns with your gender?

Q14 What is your age?