



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 21, 2023

TO: Members of the Lorton Visioning Task Force

FROM: Stephen Waller, Senior Planner
Public Facilities and Plan Development Branch, Planning Division
Department of Planning and Development (DPD)

SUBJECT: Draft Community Vision Statement for discussion at
Lorton Visioning Task Force Meeting on April 24, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum transmits the draft Vision Statement (Attachment I - “the statement”) for review by the Lorton Visioning Task Force (“Task Force”). The statement is intended to guide the development of introductory Comprehensive Plan text for the areawide guidance of L2 Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center, which is subject to the ongoing Lorton Visioning Study Plan Amendment.

The April 24, 2023, Task Force meeting will allow the Task Force to discuss and offer feedback on the statement, which contains core community values, principles, and priorities for land use and planning for the Lorton area. The vision statement will provide county staff and consultants with essential direction for developing recommendations for the Lorton Visioning Study Comprehensive Plan Amendment, including updates to land use policy, transportation, and community design recommendations, which will guide the County’s decision-making processes for future growth and development within the Suburban Center.

At the April 24, 2023, task force meeting, staff will provide a brief overview on the development of the draft vision statement, and task force co-chairs will lead a discussion to receive feedback from members and other community stakeholders in attendance. After discussion is completed, the chairs may decide to initiate a straw poll of the Task Force to adopt the vision statement as presented or adopt the vision statement with edits proposed by the Task Force.

The following pages provide a brief overview of the process undertaken to develop the draft statement, and an outline of the proposed next steps for amending the Comprehensive Plan.



BACKGROUND

In March 2019, residents from the Lorton area appointed by Mount Vernon District Supervisor, Dan Storck to the Lorton Visioning 2040 Steering Committee, held their first meeting to oversee the development of a community vision to shape future land use goals for the long-range growth and development in the Lorton area. On February 24, 2020, the Task Force adopted a set of Guiding Principles for community visioning in seven key themes:

1) Placemaking; 2) Housing and Neighborhood Stability; 3) Economic Development; 4) Health and Recreation; 5) Accessibility and Connectivity; 6) Heritage Resources and Environment; and 7) Equity and Access (Attachment II). During this effort, the Task Force offered local perspectives and background information on life in Lorton, defined a geographic area of concentration for the community visioning process (Attachment III), and assembled a package of case studies, precedent images, and renderings that depict site design, building forms, and placemaking elements as appropriate examples to be considered for envisioning the future of planning in Lorton (Attachment IV).

Board Authorization

To advance the Task Force's Guiding Principles, on January 26, 2021, the Board of Supervisors authorized consideration of the Lorton Visioning Study Comprehensive Plan amendment (Attachment V). The amendment focuses on updating goals, recommendations, and guidance for the LP2 Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center in the Lower Potomac Planning District of Planning Area IV. The Study Area's geography encompasses the Lorton Road area, east of Silverbrook Road including the Lorton Town Center, and the Route 1 corridor from Fort Belvoir to the Occoquan River.

Community Engagement

The Task Force has continued the effort of developing the vision for Lorton through the Plan amendment process. Since 2019, the Task Force has participated in 30 meetings with staff from Supervisor Storck's Mount Vernon District office, the Department of Planning and Development, and various other County agencies. The meetings were open to the public, and input from community members has provided valuable feedback at critical points in the visioning process. The following is a summary of these community meetings.

- Summer 2019 - [Community Survey #1](#) - The community dialogue for Lorton Visioning was initiated with the launch of an online survey to gauge community lifestyle choices, goals, and priorities for future development. Results of this survey were instrumental in the formation of the Task Force's guiding principles.
- October 26, 2019 - [Community Open House](#): Information on existing land use and development conditions was presented, and a discussion of key findings from Community Survey #1 was held. Attendees were asked to help identify important community assets of significance within the Lorton area and contributed ideas on future opportunities for improvement.
- November 2019 through February 2020 - The Task Force conducting a series of meetings to discuss information that had been gathered about many of the needs, values, and goals that are shared by many members of the Lorton community. Those meetings culminated in adoption of the guiding principles for Lorton Visioning on February 24, 2020.

- October 2020 through January 2021 - Following an extended break in meetings and community outreach due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the Task Force reconvened the visioning process over a series of virtual meetings to identify next steps. Task Force decisions made during this phase combined with previous work, and community outreach led to the Board of Supervisors authorization for consideration of the Lorton Visioning Study Plan Amendment.
- April 2021 through September 2021 - The Task Force held another series of virtual meetings, and staff from various County agencies provided briefings related to land use and planning in Lorton Visioning Study Area. Topics covered in the agency briefings including Areawide Demographics and the County's One Fairfax Policy, Transportation, Environmental Resources of Pohick Creek, Planning for Healthy Communities, and Development History.
- October 2021 through May 2022 - A team of planning and market consultants was hired to perform research and analysis for the visioning study by mapping existing land use and development conditions, updating Task force framework maps, studying commercial and residential market conditions, and hosting two additional opportunities for public engagement in the form of a work shop and survey.
- January 27, 2022 - [Community Workshop #1](#): Members of the Lorton community were invited to join a virtual community meeting to learn about the Plan Amendment study and offered an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on task force efforts to further define the study's core area of focus. Input received during the workshop aligned with the [frameworks maps](#) that had been developed by the Task Force.
- Winter and Spring 2022 - [Community Survey #2](#) - An online community survey was conducted to request feedback on the Study Area and individual commercial sites with future potential for redevelopment within the study area. The survey results confirmed the community's support of sites the Task Force's identified possible changes in the future.
- Spring/Summer 2023 - The Task Force has reconvened for a series of in-person meetings that will mark the conclusion of a multi-layered and extensive process of information gathering and brainstorming with adoption of the Vision Statement. The Task Force will then work with staff and design consultants to develop planning concepts that will inform the recommendations of the Plan amendment.

Adoption of the Vision Statement

After initial Task Force review and adoption of the Vision Statement, the statement will be shared with the community for public input. The team of consultants who are currently working on the study will also present updated visioning framework maps, planning concepts, and supporting visual exhibits after endorsement by the Task Force. Staff and consultants for the study will be reporting on feedback received from the public to the Task Force.

The Vision Statement is an essential component for guiding County staff in drafting the Comprehensive Plan Amendment. However, the Task Force will continue to serve as stewards of the community's vision by collaborating with staff from Supervisor Storck's Mount Vernon District office, the Department of Planning and Development, consultants, and staff from other County agencies throughout the remaining phases of the planning process.

VISION STATEMENT SUMMARY

The draft Vision Statement summarizes the Task Force's efforts of reflecting community goals for guiding long-range land use changes in the Lorton-South Route 1 Suburban Center. The statement is intended to identify ways of accommodating future growth and shaping the form and character of future development that will occur in the Lorton area. The community's vision will serve as the inspiration for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment that inspires bold and innovative strategies that can be realized through implementable land use policies that encourage vibrant, livable, and enjoyable experiences for all of the Lorton community through sustainable land use and development practices.

Attachments

Attachment I: Draft Vision Statement

Attachment II: [Lorton Visioning Guiding Principles](#)

Attachment III: [Lorton Visioning Study Area Map](#)

Attachment IV: November 23, 2020, Task Force Meeting Presentation (Task Force curated Task Force curated Case Studies for Development Density and Intensity in Fairfax County, photos for Character Study on Building Scale and Mass, Opportunity Sites)

Attachment V: [Motion presented by Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck for Board authorization of the Lorton Visioning Study](#)