

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2024

TO: CHAIR NATHAN MACEK AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: BRIAN DOFFLEMYER, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS POSED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DURING THE BRIEFINGS

Here is the answer to the question received related to Item #6 on the docket this evening for the small area plan.

Question 1: Are the new roads proposed in the AlexWest Small Area Plan a net cost to the City or does the maintenance money we receive from VDOT cover the necessary maintenance.

Answer 1: *Maintenance monies received from VDOT helps but do not completely offset City's costs of maintaining the City street networks. The City maintains approximately 500 lane miles of streets that are eligible for VDOT maintenance revenues. There are revenues that City receives from VDOT for maintenance, construction, or reconstruction on eligible streets are of the order of approximately \$10M/year. Therefore, it is important that the streets built as part of new development are built to VDOT standard so that they can be eligible for VDOT revenues. Please note that overall maintenance related needs for the City are diverse and greater than VDOT revenues. These needs are funded as part of the budget process through regular budget process for operating and Capital Improvement budget.*

Here are answers to the questions received related to Item #7 on the docket this evening for the three vacation requests on East Alexandria Avenue.

Question 1: How will the programing be determined for the open space?

Answer 1: *Regarding the parcel you're inquiring about, refer to Appendix 1, page TA-1.14 of the [Open Space Plan](#). This is part of the City's broader effort to preserve open space, as identified in the Open Space Master Plan 2017–2026 Update. The plan recognizes public right-of-way as a candidate for open space preservation, which supports our ongoing mission to enhance and*

expand public open spaces. The table on TA-1.14 lists ROW acreage, including this ROW.

For the potential uses of such open spaces, RPCA collaborates closely with the community to design the most suitable options. This process includes staff presentations to the Park and Recreation Commission for community feedback and a final hearing for approval. Examples of the process are outlined in the Citywide, Neighborhood, and Pocket Park plan documents posted online.

Question 2: What is the City's view of what the structure behind the house is and what is it used for? Are there any concerns about the lawfulness of the use? Why is a vehicle allowed to use a gravel parking pad in the vacant right-of-way land that is the subject of this docket item?

Answer 2: The structure is a remodeled garage and remodeled workshop as shown on Plot Plan PLT2007-00033. The zoning analysis from 2008 is as follows: "Staff has completed a zoning analysis of the subject property located at 408 East Alexandria Avenue. The subject property is zoned R-2-5, residential and contains 9,600 square feet of lot area.

The existing dwelling faces unimproved 4th Street along the west property line. For the purpose of applying applicable yards, staff has determined the west property line is considered a front yard. The existing dwelling faces unimproved 4th Street along the west property line which dead ends. The property as a corner lot has two front yards and two side yards.

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing two-story house and accessory garage/storage structure and construct a new two and two-half story single family dwelling and rebuild the old garage/accessory storage structure in approximately the same locations. The existing garage/accessory structure is classified as a "noncomplying structure" because the north side wall of the existing structure is located on the north side property line instead of 7.00 feet back from the north side property line as required in the R-2-5 zone.

As submitted, the proposed single-family dwelling and rebuilt accessory garage/storage building **complies** with the R-2-5 zone regulations. The following additional comments are provided."

There also were two relevant findings from the PLT2007-00033 review:

1. Proposed new dwelling complies with section 7-1002(A) of the zoning ordinance which states: "Unless a different rule is specified for average setbacks... between one intersecting street and a street dead end have been built with a different minimum setback than prescribed by the zone in which such building(s) are located, no residential building thereafter erected or altered shall project beyond the minimum setback line so established." The existing dwelling facing 4th Street is built 2.00 feet +/- from the front property line facing 4th Street. The new house is located 3.64 feet from the front property line facing 4th Street. The reconstructed garage/accessory structure is located 3.50 feet +/- from the front property line facing 4th Street. Both structures comply with section 7-1002(A) of the zoning ordinance. (P&Z)
2. Section 12-102 (A) of the zoning ordinance permits a noncomplying structure to be physically expanded or enlarged as long as such enlargement and expansion comply with the applicable regulations. The replacement garage/storage structure facing the north side property line is no longer than the existing building. The only change is the

*structure has been flipped to permit the wider portion of the structure to face 4th Street.
(P&Z)*

The garage use with the side load garage was in place prior to the redevelopment of the site associated with PLT2007-00033. In 2012, TES's Chief of Surveys sent a letter to the 408 lot owner in response to conversations regarding the ROW, confirming the City ownership of the space, but additionally 'allowing' the 408 lot owner to "use the driveway/ alley for access to your garage at the rear of your property but we cannot allow you to use this publicly owned property for your exclusive parking space."

Question 3: In responding, please take note of the fact that the 2010 house was initially assessed at \$692,876 in 2011 and then at \$1,048,432 in 2012, more than a 50% increase. What has been going on here?

Answer 3: *In 2010 -2011, the original residence was razed in favor of a new house containing 3,720 square feet of above grade floor area. The new construction was substantially complete and ready for occupancy as of 1-1-2012. This explains the substantial increase in the improvement value between 2011 and 2012.*