

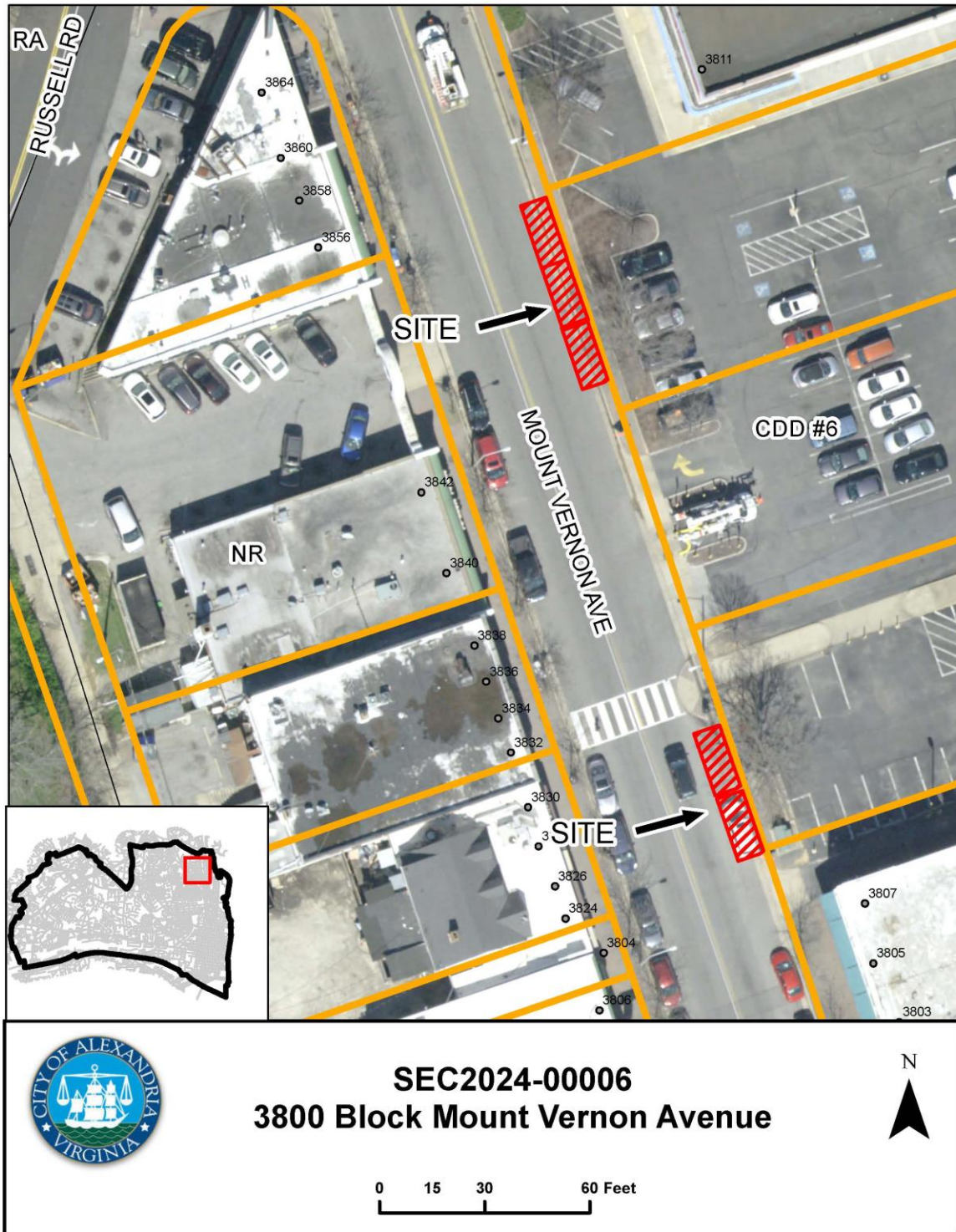


DOCKET ITEM # 4
City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2024-00006
3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue

Application	General Data	
Request: Review whether the change in use of a public street in the 3800 block of Mount Vernon Avenue by the City of Alexandria is consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter.	Planning Commission Hearing:	January 9, 2025
	City Council Hearing:	n/a
	Zone:	NR
Address: East side of the 3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue (generally between 3809 and 3811 Mount Vernon Avenue)	Small Area Plan(s):	Arlandria-Chirilagua

Staff Reviewers: Karl Moritz – Director, Planning & Zoning, karl.moritz@alexandriava.gov Carrie Beach – Division Chief, Planning & Zoning carrie.beach@alexandriava.gov Katherine Carraway, Principal Planner, Planning & Zoning, katherine.carraway@alexandriava.gov Jose Delcid – Urban Planner, Planning & Zoning, jose.delcid@alexandriava.gov
Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve this request, finding that the proposal is consistent with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia, and with the City’s Master Plan.

Project Location Map



I. DISCUSSION

The City proposes to temporarily create five on-street spaces on the east side of the 3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue to implement a one-year pilot program for street vending in the Arlandria-Chirilagua neighborhood. This area of Mt. Vernon Avenue is located within the boundaries of the [Arlandria-Chirilagua Small Area Plan](#).

Section 9.06 of the City's Charter requires that the Planning Commission review any changes to the use of a public street for consistency with the City's Master Plan. For the purposes of this review, the Planning Commission should consider this proposal as both a temporary and potentially permanent change.

II. BACKGROUND

The 3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue is a two-way street running north and south with a mix of commercial uses, on-street parking and private parking lots serving businesses in the Del Ray North shopping center.

For several years, street vendors have been enlivening the sidewalks of Arlandria-Chirilagua, selling a variety of goods to help earn a living while serving the needs of their community. This activity is occurring primarily, but not exclusively, on the 3800 block of Mount Vernon Avenue. The Arlandria-Chirilagua Small Area Plan recognized street vending as important to the community, economically and culturally, but also noted that a program would need to be established to allow it to continue.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City launched the Parklet Program to expand opportunities for retailers and restaurants to use sidewalks and parking spaces for vending. However, the program does not specifically permit vendors without an adjacent brick-and-mortar location to sell in the public right-of-way, though many continue to do so.

Over the last year, an interdepartmental staff group has been exploring a legal pathway for vendors currently operating on the sidewalk along this section of Mt. Vernon Avenue to continue. Following considerable exploration of various options, staff is proposing a one-year pilot program that allows vendors to sell whole, uncut produce and/or limited small non-food items in designated on-street spaces. These spaces are located on the east side of Mt. Vernon Avenue and front existing private parking lots for commercial uses in the Del Ray North shopping center.

Individual vendor spaces will be limited to a 10'x6' area, allowing portable tables and umbrellas. Acceptance into the program will be on a first-come, first-served basis as space allows and successful applicants will agree to comply with all requirements including food safety regulations, annual licensing and liability insurance fees, ensuring that items fit neatly within the allotted space and monitoring the area for cleanliness.

Outreach

Over the summer and fall, staff engaged with the existing vendors and 20 nearby brick-and-mortar businesses and organizations to discuss the parameters of the pilot and gauge vendor interest in the program. Through these discussions, staff learned that vendors strongly prefer to remain as close as possible to their current location on the 3800 block of Mount Vernon Avenue. To date, three vendors have expressed interest in participating in the pilot. Most surrounding businesses support finding a solution that allows vendors to continue operating, provided they relocate from the sidewalk in front of existing storefronts. Three businesses raised concerns about moving vendors to the proposed on-street spaces, particularly regarding the pilot's implementation and vendor compliance with the proposed rules. The property owner of the Del Ray North center shared concerns that vendors and their customers will illegally park in their lots, which they have indicated is an ongoing issue.

The proposed pilot includes a dedicated program manager who will serve as a resource to vendors and the surrounding business community and, along with relevant interdepartmental staff, will ensure compliance with program parameters. While several businesses indicated concern with some of the current unregulated vending activity, they support the coordinated interdepartmental approach that has begun and is planned for the pilot. Staff is continuing to engage with the community to address questions and ensure a smooth rollout and implementation of the pilot program.

On December 9, the Traffic and Parking Board reviewed and made a recommendation to the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services supporting the temporary designation of vending spaces to the on-street spaces necessary to implement this pilot program.

In February, the City Council will consider an ordinance approving the temporary designation of on-street parking spaces in the 3800 Block of Mount Vernon Avenue for vending and will consider the feedback from the Planning Commission.

III. CONSISTENCY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

The proposed change in use of a public street in the 3800 block of Mount Vernon Avenue by the City of Alexandria is consistent with the goals of the Arlandria-Chirilagua Small Area Plan chapter of the City's Master Plan.

Recognizing the benefits that street vendors can bring to the Arlandria-Chirilagua neighborhood including providing access to affordable fresh food and economic opportunity for neighborhood entrepreneurs, the small area plan recommends that a pilot program be considered to allow "small-scale street vendors to sell items such as food, art, crafts, and other items within specified locations in the public right-of-way" as long as the operations do "not block the pedestrian zone" (SAP, page 45).

SAP Recommendations (SAP, page 65):

Entrepreneurship + Street Vendors

- 63. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow small scale street vendors to sell items such as food, arts, crafts, and other items subject to all Health Department and City requirements.
- 64. Work with community stakeholders to develop the parameters of the new street program to be implemented in Arlandria-Chirilagua consistent with the intent of the Plan to provide economic opportunity for neighborhood entrepreneurs, affordable products to residents, and preservation of the culture and diversity of the neighborhood.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that the proposed change in use of the identified on-street spaces in the 3800 block of Mt. Vernon Avenue is **consistent** with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia and with the City’s Master Plan, including specifically the Arlandria-Chirilagua Small Area Plan.

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