[EXTERNAL]For June 6 Planning Com mtg: Extend "Woonerf" /Shared Street at PRGS Site

Serge Duss <sergeduss@gmail.com>

Tue 5/30/2023 12:39 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;Jim Parajon <jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov>;Emily Baker <Emily.Baker@alexandriava.gov>;Karl Moritz <Karl.Moritz@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Catherine Miliaras < Catherine. Miliaras@alexandriava.gov>

② 2 attachments (5 MB)

MT Ltr to PlanCom re Extend Woonerf 5.30.23.docx; IMG_0561.jpg;

Letter from Marina Towers Hilco Redevelopment Ad Hoc Committee to: Alexandria Planning Commission City Manager James Parajon Deputy City Manager Emily Baker Director, Planning & Zoning Karl Moritz CC: Catherine Miliaras, P&Z

Please see attached letter and map of the "woonerf"/shared street that we ask to be extended to Slaters Lane.

The Hilco Redevelopment Partners Infrastructure Development Plan for the PRGS should prioritize *pedestrians*' right of way on North Fairfax Street from Slaters Lane by beginning the "woonerf" at its northern entrance.

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system. DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source. DATE: May 30, 2023

TO: Alexandria City Planning Commission

Nathan Macek, Chair; Melissa McMahon, Vice-Chair; David Brown, Melinda Lyle, Stephen Koenig, Vivian Ramirez, Jody Manor.

James Parajon, City Manager

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager

Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning

CC: Catherine Miliaras

RE: The Hilco Redevelopment Partners Infrastructure Development Plan for the PRGS should prioritize *pedestrians*' right of way on North Fairfax Street from Slaters Lane by beginning the "woonerf" at its northern entrance.

Hilco Redevelopment Partners plans to seek approval of its Infrastructure Development Site Plan from the Alexandria Planning Commission on June 6. The undersigned members of the Marina Towers Hilco Ad Hoc Committee of Marina Towers Condominiums urge city officials to expand the shared street, or "woonerf", to the entire route of North Fairfax Street in the PRGS site. In doing so, it will realize the Alexandria vision of pedestrian priority in the public realm and welcome pedestrians to North Fairfax from Slaters Lane – the northern gateway and entrance to the waterfront development. Marina Towers Condominiums are located several hundred feet north of the PRGS.

The Old Town North Small Area Plan adopted by City Council in 2017 envisioned "a pedestrian-focused neighborhood, linked to the rest of the City by a diverse public realm network". The Plan is guided by its key principles including "enhance the design of the public realm* in a way that prioritizes the pedestrian", "offers a lifestyle that is independent of automobiles" and "promotes sustainability". A new public realm is being designed with the development of the largest unconnected site in Old Town North at PRGS. This is the opportunity to make this vision a reality when it connects the Old Town street grid to the site.

Hilco has presented an Infrastructure Development Plan that offers a glimpse of how the vision of *pedestrian priority* can be realized along our waterfront public realm. The portion of N. Fairfax St. proposed along a central plaza as a "woonerf", or shared street, is very desirable. <u>But the N. Fairfax Street grid plan is still very auto centric.</u> We believe that pedestrian priority is essential along the residential site entrance from Slaters Lane. It would be the first residential woonerf in Alexandria and would prioritize pedestrians on the public road along the National Park Service resource protection area, calm traffic entering the site and minimize cut through use by its extension.

This is the first time in the city's 275-year history that this site will be connected to Alexandria's Street grid by N. Fairfax St. It will connect from Slaters Lane in the future. Slaters Lane signals the City's entrance from the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It is the first residential street along the City's Old and Historic District. On the earliest 1877 Hopkins Map of Alexandria, Slaters Lane is one of the last artifacts of rural Alexandria. It remains wooded and curved and operates functionally today as a woonerf or shared street because of its residential density and surrounding National Park Service parks and the Potomac River. It should remain inviting to pedestrians as well as vehicles. The Slaters Lane waterfront access walkshed to PRGS (those who can walk to the waterfront, MV Trail and PRGS entrance within 15 minutes) is estimated to be some 10,000 people.***

Often beneficial pedestrian street features that relate to vehicular traffic, such as crosswalks, traffic lights, lane striping and pedestrian signals have a negative impact on the attractiveness of walkability. They emphasize that the street is prioritized for automobiles. Designing and building a residential shared street or woonerf along its entire passage along the National Park Service land from Slaters Lane offers significant benefits to welcome the thousands of pedestrians, and even vehicles, accessing the site and its waterfront amenities as our City continues to grow from the heavily populated west and north neighborhoods of the site. It is essential to eliminate as many physical and visuals barriers to pedestrian access to public spaces as possible. More walkable streets where pedestrians are prioritized are proven to have significant health, sustainability and equity benefits – and some of the more recent findings are attached in a brief paper with this letter.

We urge the Planning Commission to accept our recommendation to expand the woonerf on North Fairfax Street to realize the vision of pedestrian priority in the public realm and welcome pedestrians to North Fairfax Street from Slaters Lane.

Sincerely,

Serge Duss, Chair,

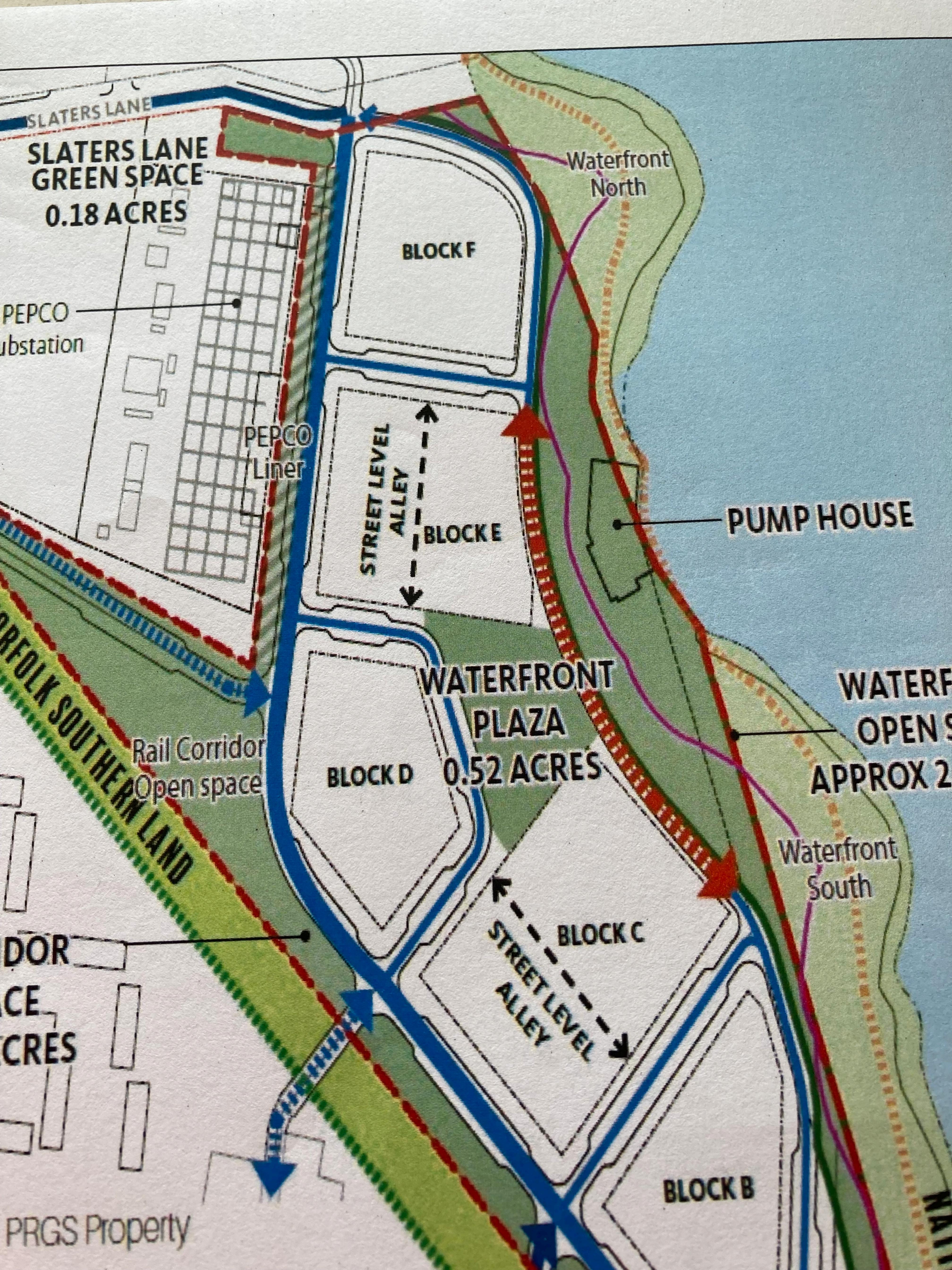
Hilco Redevelopment Ad Hoc Committee

Thom Carroll Mary Harris Tom Hicks Rob Crane Marina Douglas Pat McCall Sumrien Ali Kristin Langlykke Katherine Bingler Joyce Husick **Judy Sears** Lysa Farah Jan Macidull Ann Kaup Ann Mitchell James Lauren

- * The Public Realm is defined as any publicly owned streets, bridges, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building.
- ** Woonerf is Dutch for "living street," and refers to a new way of designing streets to be people-friendly open spaces. It prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists over cars by its design features.
- *** The Slaters Lane PRGS 15 minute "walkshed" includes residential enclaves and walking trails within ¾ mile of Slaters Lane to the west and north including Slaters Lane, Potomac Greens, Potomac Crossing, Northeast, North Fayette, Potomac Yard and Daingerfield Island.

Attachment: Babic, N. (2021), Superblocks – The Future of Walkability in Cities? *Academia* Letters, Article 747.

file:///C:/Users/Serge%20Duss/Downloads/Superblocks_The_Future_of_Walkability_in-1.pdf



Samantha Lockwood

From: Martha Harris harris61325@comcast.net

Sent: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 9:28 AMTo: Michelle Chang; Samantha LockwoodCc: Catherine Miliaras; Ana Vicinanzo; Martha

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: Questions for May 24

You don't often get email from harris61325@comcast.net. Learn why this is important

Michelle:

Thank you for your message. Unfortunately, the key decisions on the Infrastructure Site Plan will be taken before the end of June when you offer to send written answers to the questions that your team did not address last week in the public meeting. I send along questions for Planning Commission meeting as well those not addressed previously. I include Samantha Lockwood on the address line above as she is collecting questions for the June 6 meeting.

I appreciate your clarification that rooftop open space will not count toward the 14 acres of publicly accessible ground level open space.

I have a prior commitment on the evening of June 6 that will preclude my attending the entire meeting of the Planning Commission either in person or virtually. I do hope, however, that my questions will receive consideration.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance,

Martha Harris MUSE resident

Questions for June 6, 2023 Planning Commission meeting to review Infrastructure Site Plan for Hilco development project from Martha Harris, MUSE resident.

Please refer to Open Space concept plan April 2023 and Infrastructure Site Plan for June 6, 2023 review by Planning Commission

These questions were not addressed in the May 24 meeting, although they were sent in advance:

How much open space does the "Retail Patio" take up? See L000. Is a patio necessary in view of the expectation that the buildings will include commercial space? What kind of structure do you anticipate?

Preservation of the central patio is critical to the community gathering aspects of this project. Please preserve this focalpoint and make it a center of relaxed, leisure activities on the waterfront.

L101 and L102: Please explain in greater detail how the bike path connects at N Fairfax. It looks like bikers will need to make 2 dismounted crossings. Is that correct? Are there alternatives that might be considered, such as an overpass for bikers?

In order to make the project a real showcase for open space on the waterfront, why not extend the woonerf both to the north and south, perhaps to the intersection on south with Road A? This would enhance the Arts Walk and the pedestrian-friendly aspects of the the plan.

Is a theater or ampitheater in or near Block A still part of the plan? See L101 from Landscape Plan of April 2023. How might it be constructed to encourage public gathering and access?

Can open space be enhanced by installing telescopes and viewpoints in key spots along the woonerf, etc?

These questions pertain to the discussion on June 6 at the Planning Commission:

The Roads and Open Space Phasing Plan A 900 shows that interim improvements to the open space in OS-6 near the MUSE can be made in advance of coordination with nearby residents regarding permanent improvements. When and how do you anticipate this process occurring?

A 900 calls for construction of N. Fairfax and N. Royal Street extensions as "fully operational" in Phase 1. Again, why not extend the woonerf to what is currently identified as "private" N. Fairfax to the intersection on the south with Road A?

Condition 37 provides the developer with the option of acquisition of Norfolk Southern land in lieu of monetary contributions to the city required prior to receipt of the first certificate of occupancy. What is the state of negotiations with Norfolk Southern regarding the land where the linear park is planned?

Can you provide 3D views of key traffic intersections, such as those at N. Fairfax and Road A? N. Royal and Road A? (See comment above about the bike path and how it will connect.)

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Chang, Michelle" <mchang@hilcoglobal.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: Questions for May 24

Date: May 30, 2023 at 6:53:21 AM EDT

To: Martha Harris < harris61325@comcast.net>

Cc: HRP-Midatlantic <HRPInfoMidatlantic@hilcoglobal.com>

Good morning, Martha.

My apologies, there was a misunderstanding on our end regarding these questions. We will answer all questions in writing, including those you previously wrote in, and publish them on our website before the end of June.

Regarding your question below, private open spaces on rooftops are not publicly accessible and do not count in the approximately 14 acres of publicly accessible ground level open space, new or improved as part of the powerplant redevelopment.

Best.

Michelle

Michelle Beaman Chang **Mobile:** (202) 210-9981

www.hilcoredev.com | mchang@hilcoglobal.com

From: Martha Harris < harris61325@comcast.net >

Sent: Thursday, May 25, 2023 7:28 AM **To:** HRPInfoMidatlantic@hilcoglobal.com

Cc: Martha harris61325@comcast.net; Catherine Miliaras Catherine.Miliaras@alexandriava.gov; Ana Vicinanzo

<ana.vicinanzo@alexandriava.gov>; Jody Manor < jodymanor@gmail.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: Questions for May 24

I send these questions to you in advance of the meeting last evening. I wonder why you did not answer them. Can you tell me when you will do so?

In addition, could you clarify the use of rooftops for "open space." Since such areas are not generally accessible to the public, it is not clear how they can count as publicly accessible open space.

Martha Harris

Begin forwarded message:

From: Martha Harris harris61325@comcast.net

Subject: Questions for May 24

Date: May 23, 2023 at 2:34:50 PM EDT **To:** <u>HRPInfoMidatlantic@hilcoglobal.com</u> **Cc:** Martha <<u>harris61325@comcast.net</u>>

How much open space does the "Retail Patio" take up? See L000. Is a patio really necessary? What kind of structure do you anticipate?

Preservation of the central patio is critical to the community gathering aspects of this project. Please preserve this focalpoint and make it a center of relaxed, leisure activities on the waterfront.

L101 and L102: Please explain in greater detail how the bike path connects at N Fairfax. It looks like bikers will need to make 2 dismounted crossings. Is that correct? What about an overpass?

In order to make the project a real showcase for open space on the waterfront, why not extend the woonerf both to the north and south, perhaps to the intersection on south with Road A? This would enhance the Arts Walk and the pedestrian-friendly aspects of the the plan.

At some point, there was discussion of a theater or ampitheater in Block A. Is it still an option? How might it be constructed to encourage public gathering and access?

Can open space be enhanced by installing telescopes and viewpoints in key spots along the woonerf, etc?

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Samantha Lockwood

From: Melissa McMahon <mmcmahonpc@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 8:57 PM

To: Michael Swidrak

Cc: Catherine Miliaras; Karl Moritz; Robert Kerns; Nancy Williams; Samantha Lockwood

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]PRGS infrastructure DSP, condition questions

Hi Michael,

Thank you for your responses and I look forward to hearing from TES on the interpretation of condition 28.

I would appreciate it if staff could please circulate as soon as possible for commissioner consideration prior to the hearing tomorrow night the following potential edits to condition 25:

- 25. Provide a finalized Common Elements Palette and Woonerf, Road C, and North Fairfax Street designs as a separate document or plan set addendum to be administratively approved by the release of Final Site Plan. The package shall include the following to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES:
- a. <u>Provide gG</u>eneral location and specifications, and details for site furnishings that depict the scale, massing, and character of site furnishings to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES.
- b. Public space and ROW furnishings and streetlights that relate to the site and meet or exceed City standards for materiality and finishes. Site furnishings may include benches, bicycle racks, trash bins, recycling receptacles, and other associated features.
- c. Continued refinement of unit paver and paving details, ramps, crosswalks and any-transition details between general and specialized streetscapes (Road C and the Woonerf).
- d. More detailed information on the incorporation of sustainable, site specific and historic interpretive elements (in coordination with the historic interpretation plan coming with the first DSUP preliminary plan submission).
- e. Enhanced design elements for the length of North Fairfax Street through the site that <u>prioritize pedestrians and their safety and comfort</u>, creatinges a <u>more-coherent and effective</u> transition into the Woonerf (<u>pedestrian-prioritized areas</u>). Designs <u>elements</u> to be shown in final condition in the related Block DSUPs. This could include paving and furnishing/fixture treatments. This could also include design features or approaches that accommodate expansion of <u>Woonerf or pedestrian-priority areas to more of North Fairfax Street at initial build out or over time.</u>
- f. The Common Elements Palette and Woonerf, Road C, and North Fairfax Street designs will be updated with the approval of any building or open space DSUPs if further refinements to improve pedestrian safety, access, and experience are coordinated with the City. (P&Z) (T&ES) (RP&CA) *

Thank you,	
Melissa	

On Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 3:00 PM Michael Swidrak < <u>Michael Swidrak@alexandriava.gov</u>> wrote:

Hi Vice Chair McMahon,

I have forwarded the first question to T&ES for comment.

Regarding Condition 25 and its potential effect in the final streetscape and pedestrian realms of the streets on site and specifically N. Fairfax Street - I have provided responses below.								
Thank you,								
Mike								
Michael Swidrak, AICP								
Urban Planner // City of Alexandria								
Planning & Zoning // Development Division								
703.746.3813 // <u>alexandriava.gov/development</u>								
Original Message From: Melissa McMahon < <u>mmcmahonpc@gmail.com</u> > Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 1:47 PM To: Michael Swidrak < <u>Michael.Swidrak@alexandriava.gov</u> > Subject: [EXTERNAL]PRGS infrastructure DSP, condition questions								
[You don't often get email from mmcmahonpc@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]								
Hi Michael,								
Does this condition mean that the city is foregoing it's right to regulate any non-parking on street spots?								
"28. On-street parking, except for drop-off/pick up zones and rideshare zones identified in the applicable DSUP, on both public and private streets within the site shall be metered and managed by the City. Permanent parking restrictions will be shown on the Final DSUP Plans for adjacent buildings. The Director of T&ES reserves the authority to approve proposed restrictions and to set and adjust meter rates and hours. The applicant for the associated DSUP shall provide a contribution for each multi-space meters required as determined with each block DSUP. (T&ES)"								

And re: the woonerf and treatment of the northern and southern sections of Fairfax in the project area, would you say that the condition 25. Common elements palette is the way that staff are going to approve final treatments and designs that pertain to pedestrian priority space? Can this palette be applied to any extent to the stretches of Fairfax that are not the woonerf? In particular, this clause 25.F. below suggests to me that during DSUPs we can ask for and expect possible to see better transition designs that do more to calm traffic and prioritize pedestrians in these locations?

The common elements palette (with some additional details as part of the upcoming block and park DSUPs) is the means of approving final streetscape treatments that work to prioritize pedestrian spaces. Specifically – 25e. was drafted to ensure that transitional pedestrian-oriented and/or placemaking elements would be placed in the N. Fairfax Street right-of-way. These design elements may not necessarily increase the pedestrian area in the right-of-way but would encourage pedestrian access and safety in the blocks to the north and south of the Woonerf.

- 25. Provide a finalized Common Elements Palette and Woonerf design as a separate document or plan set addendum to be administratively approved by the release of Final Site Plan. The package shall include the following:
 - a. Provide general location and specifications, and details for site furnishings that depict the scale, massing, and character of site furnishings to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES.
 - b. Public space and ROW furnishings and streetlights that relate to the site and meet or exceed City standards for materiality and finishes. Site furnishings may include benches, bicycle racks, trash bins, recycling receptacles, and other associated features.
 - c. Continued refinement of unit paver and paving details, ramps, crosswalks and any transition details between general and specialized streetscapes (Road C and the Woonerf).
 - d. More detailed information on the incorporation of sustainable, site specific and historic interpretive elements (in coordination with the historic interpretation plan coming with the first DSUP preliminary plan submission).
 - e. Enhanced design elements for the length of North Fairfax Street through the site that creates a more coherent transition into the Woonerf, to be shown in final condition in the related Block DSUPs. This could include paving and furnishing/fixture treatments.
 - f. The Common Elements Palette and Woonerf design will be updated with the approval of any building or open space DSUPs if further refinements are coordinated with the City. (P&Z) (T&ES) (RP&CA) *

"The Common Elements Palette and Woonerf design will be updated with the approval of any building or open space DSUPs if further refinements are coordinated with the City. (P&Z) (T&ES) (RP&CA) *"

In response to community requests, have staff considered any modifications to the conditions to increase the likelihood that fair outside the woonerf are more pedestrian focused?

Staff feels that Condition 25 gives the flexibility to seek additional pedestrian-focused improvements. Though staff would like to clarify that we believe the design of N. Fairfax Street (with for instance a requirement of 20 feet between building face and curb on the west side of N. Fairfax and expanded bike and ped access on the river side of N. Fairfax) provides a pedestrian-focused environment.
Thanks,
Melissa
Sent from my iPad
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Statement of Serge Duss of the Marina Towers Condominium Community To the Alexandria Planning Commission on June 6, 2023 Regarding Docket No. 6 Infrastructure Development Site Plan #2023-00001

Chairman Nathan Macek and Honorable Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission.

My name is Serge Duss. I am a 14-year resident of Marina Towers, a condominium community of about 500 residents and 283 units located about 50 feet north of the Potomac River Generating Station. I also serve as chairman of the Marina Towers Hilco Redevelopment Ad Hoc Committee. I am addressing the commission tonight on behalf of more than 250 Marina Towers condominium owners.

The Marina Towers community supports he redevelopment of the Potomac River Generating Station by Hilco Redevelopment Partners. We believe the redevelopment, as it is planned, will add to the growing attraction of North Old Town as a distinct and exciting neighborhood in the city of Alexandria.

Our community continues to be in regular communication with HRP in its plans for offsite improvements to Slaters Lane as well as the redesign of the entry area to Marina Towers and frontage of its southern property. Our third town hall meeting was held on April 18 between Marina Towers residents, HRP and city staff, during which time we discussed our concerns about the demolition of the power plant and community concerns about traffic safety at the Slaters and George Washington Parkway intersection. According to Alexandra Police Department records, 47 accidents have occurred in or about the Slaters Lane-George Washington Parkway intersection between 2021 and March of this year.

My purpose in addressing the Planning Commission tonight is to underscore a few key points in the May 30 letter from the Marina Towers Hilco Ad Hoc Committee emailed to commission members, as well as relevant city officials. The letter was also shared with HRP representatives.

We were delighted to learn almost 2 years ago that HRP had included in its Infrastructure Plan a "shared street", a pedestrian priority street, or Woonerf as is commonly known, in the middle section of North Fairfax Street, between Blocks C and E.

But why limit the shared street to only one-third of North Fairfax? Expand the shared street to all of North Fairfax, thereby realizing the goal of the Old Town North Small Area Plan to (and I quote) "create a pedestrian-focused neighborhood linked to the rest of the city by a diverse public realm network that prioritizes the pedestrian." End quote.

At minimum, we have urged HRP to extend the shared street north around Block F to Slaters Lane, where it will meet up with newly designed bike and pedestrian lanes for citizens traveling eastward toward the Mount Vernon Trail and planned waterfront area.

We can expect large numbers of pedestrians and bikers living in newly-built residences on Route 1 and established communities west of the George Washington Parkway to cross the highway onto Slaters Lane. They will head toward the Mount Vernon Trail, the waterfront, as well as restaurants and retail shops in the new development.

How welcoming it would be for pedestrians and bikers to continue on a pedestrian priority, shared street on North Fairfax in the redeveloped site, rather than be forced to dodge oncoming vehicular traffic traveling northward around the big curve of Block F.

We urge the Planning Commission to accept our recommendation to expand the shared street on North Fairfax to Slaters Lane in order to realize the city's vision of a pedestrian priority road, a shared street, that enhances both livability and safety of its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Planning Commission on this important infrastructure issue.

The Infrastructure DSP also provides refinements to the Road A and North Fairfax Street intersection with Slaters Lane and the entrance to Marina Towers Condominium. The applicant worked with staff and Marina Towers residents to redesign the entry area to Marina Towers and connect North Fairfax Street into Slaters Lane. Additional improvements to the entry and frontage of the Marina Towers property will be approved in a future minor site plan amendment to the Marina Towers site plan

Bicycle lanes will be added to roadway segments in both temporary and final condition. The established bicycle lane route will take riders (from south to north) along North Royal Street into Road B, north along the Woonerf and North Fairfax Street, where riders can take a new path down to the Mount Vernon Trail or continue west on Slaters Lane.

[EXTERNAL]Hilco development

Beth Reister < bethreister@comcast.net>

Tue 6/6/2023 7:00 PM

To:PlanComm < PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

[You don't often get email from bethreister@comcast.net. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Hello,

I am a resident of Marina Towers on Slaters Ln in Alexandria.

I am writing with three comments:

- 1. I generally support redevelopment of the power plant site, as it will have many benefits to the N. Old Town Community.
- 2. However, the traffic solution proposed by Hilco is not acceptable. Slaters Ln cannot sustain the additional traffic load, even with the proposed reconfiguration. I encourage the planning commission to install a vehicular traffic circle there.
- 3. Relatedly, SlatersLn, currently and proposed, is extremely dangerous for pedestrians, pets, and non-motorized traffic (e.g. bikes). I encourage the planning commission to install a pedestrian overpass connecting the two sides of the GW parkway in the vicinity perhaps where the rail line is. Thank you,

Beth

Sent from my iPad

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