

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 6, 2017

TO: CHAIRWOMAN LYMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL MORITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: SUP #2016-0106, 5800 EDSALL ROAD (DOCKET ITEM #3
CHANGE TO CONDITION 24– KOONS OF ALEXANDRIA, INC.

Recommendation:

That the Planning Commission strike condition #24 in its entirety. Staff will include in its staff report to the City Council a paragraph stating that “At 10 and 15 years, staff will review the compatibility of the use and site plan with the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor small area plan and provide an update to the Planning Commission and City Council.”

Background and Analysis:

The staff report for docket item #3 notes at the bottom of page 5 that the applicant has requested that staff reconsider the inclusion of condition #24, a condition that is typically included for special use permits on sites that are planned for redevelopment in small area plans. The staff report notes staff offered a longer timeframe for the mandatory review which the applicant found equally problematic, and so the staff report notes that staff and the applicant would continue discussions on the condition language prior to the hearing.

The applicant’s concerns are rooted in the increased uncertainty provided by the condition, especially given the applicant’s substantial investment in the property. The applicant has also noted the positive economic impact of the dealership to the City and the positive impact to the general neighborhood resulting from the location of a luxury auto dealer and the associated physical improvements to the site that will come with it.

Staff’s interest, however, is to ensure that there is a public policy basis for not requiring a condition that has been regularly applied in a number of previous cases in the Landmark/Van Dorn Small Area Plan. The rationale for this condition is to ensure that SUP approval does not create obstacles to planned and desired redevelopment.

Specifically, the SUP condition achieves its goal by influencing lease terms so that over time, clusters of tenants in redevelopable parcels will have the same or similar lease expiration dates. This creates a window of opportunity, when all or most tenant leases are to expire, removing one potential obstacle to redevelopment.

In this case, the property is owned by the applicant, and so there is no ability to influence lease terms. In addition, staff is satisfied that the proposed improvements are not of such magnitude that they will make the site inherently less likely to redevelop, or change the economics of redevelopment so substantially that redevelopment will be delayed.

As always, our review of special use permits in redevelopment areas has to balance our long term interest in encouraging redevelopment with the need to allow property owners to have productive use of that property until redevelopment is feasible.

Staff proposes to include in the staff report that is transmitted to City Council (and thereby memorialized as part of the record for this case) staff's intention to continue to be actively engaged in the redevelopment of the Corridor to achieve Plan objectives. Specifically, in this case, to regularly assess whether redevelopment pressure has reached the point that consolidation and redevelopment could be feasible, and if so, to work with property owners to pursue it.

Planning Commission Action:

Staff recommends approval of SUP #2016-0106 with the deletion of Condition 24 and with the addition of a paragraph in the analysis section of the staff report stating that "At 10 and 15 years, staff will review the compatibility of the use and site plan with the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor small area plan and provide an update to the Planning Commission and City Council."

Proposed site for automobile sales operation at 5800 Edsall Road is outlined in black on the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan. New streets, public open space, and mixed uses are proposed for this parcel.

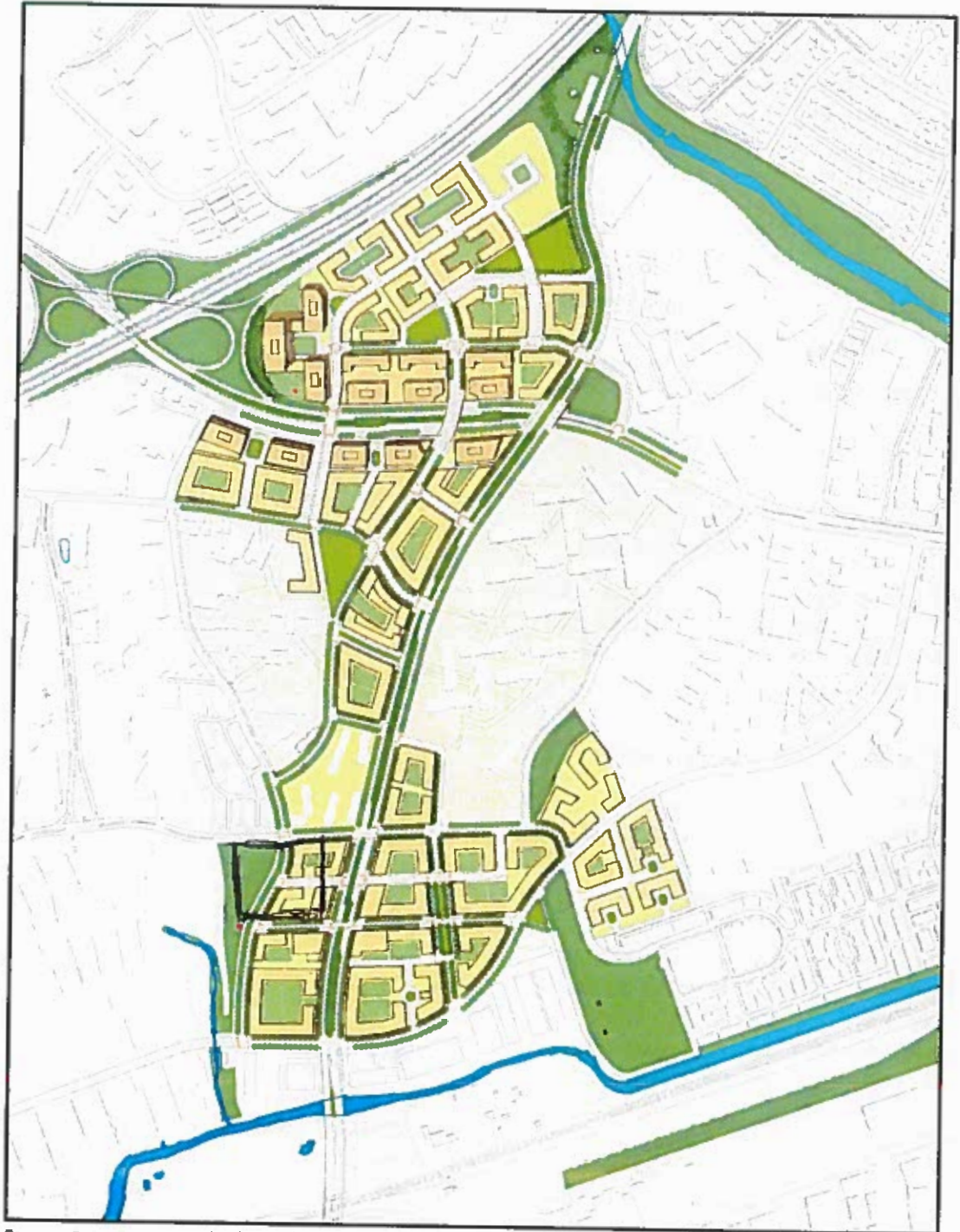


Figure 3-1. Framework Plan. The framework plan shows conceptually how the areas proposed for redevelopment in the plan could be developed to achieve the vision outlined. New streets, parks and new mixed-use developments are shown.