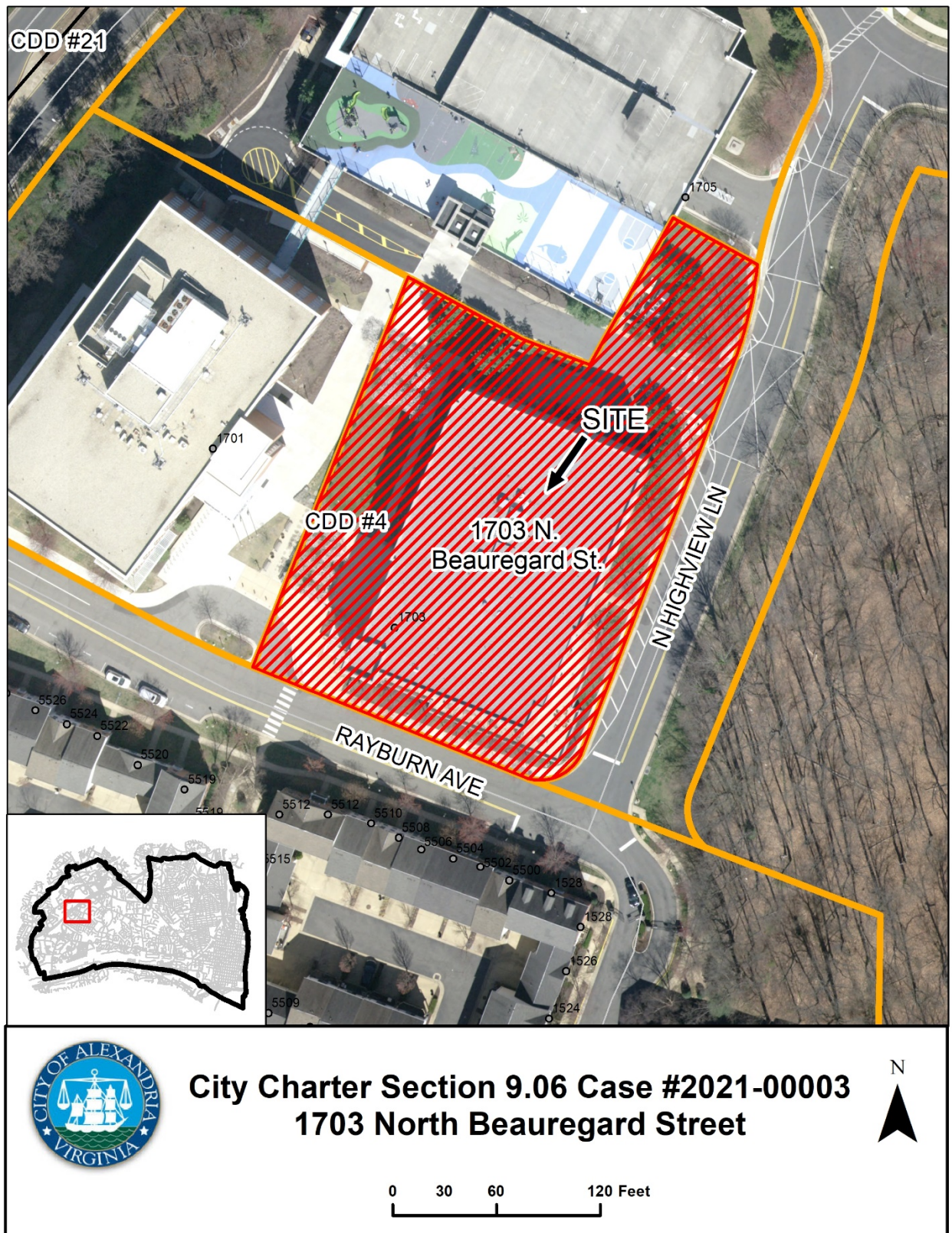




City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2021-00003

Application	General Data	
Request: Review whether the proposed purchase of a property by the City of Alexandria on behalf of Alexandria City Public Schools and the resulting change in use of that property is consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter.	Planning Commission Hearing:	September 9, 2021
	City Council Hearing:	September 18, 2021 (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)
	Zone:	1703 North Beauregard Street – Coordinated Development District #4/CDD #4
Address: 1703 North Beauregard Street	Small Area Plan(s):	Beauregard Small Area Plan
Staff Reviewers: Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning, karl.moritz@alexandriava.gov ; Katherine Carraway, Planner, Planning & Zoning, katherine.carraway@alexandriava.gov		
Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the proposal consistent with the City's Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia.		

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, SEPTEMBER 9, 2021: On a motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to find the proposed purchase of property by the City of Alexandria on behalf of Alexandria City Public Schools and the resulting change in use of that property consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.



PROJECT LOCATION MAP

I. DISCUSSION

The City is proposing to purchase the property at 1703 North Beauregard Street on behalf of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). Section 9.06 of the City's Charter requires that the Planning Commission approve any acquisition or sale of public land. The Planning Commission is charged with ensuring that any such acquisition, sale or change is consistent with the City's Master Plan.

II. BACKGROUND

The property located at 1703 N. Beauregard Street ('1703') is a four-story, approximately 82,000 square foot office building constructed in 1998 as part of the Mark Center properties and is currently owned by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). The building sits adjacent to Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School at 1701 and the 500-space shared parking structure at 1705, both of which were purchased in 2017 for the conversion to an educational use.

ACPS is currently exploring the potential conversion of 1703 to an educational use and is seeking the Planning Commission's finding as to whether the acquisition would be consistent with the City's Master Plan.

As ACPS is still determining the suitability of the property for the intended purpose, City staff does not have a specific proposal to share with the Planning Commission; however, ACPS anticipates the following: in the short-term, space that is currently vacant in 1703 would house ACPS administrative functions; within the next three to ten years, the building would serve as swing space for students during the modernizations of George Mason and Cora Kelly Elementary Schools; and, ultimately, 1703 would be used as a new 600 student school, currently in ACPS's ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and required based on enrollment projections. The ACPS FY 2022-2031 CIP did not include a request for swing space to accommodate George Mason and Cora Kelly Elementary students during those modernization projects. Instead, ACPS' intent was to first conduct feasibility studies on those sites to determine this potential need. Feasibility studies were concluded earlier this year and the Alexandria City School Board directed staff to explore off-site opportunities for swing space. As Ferdinand T. Day is located on the adjacent parcel, the addition of 1703 would allow ACPS to occupy the entire site, potentially improving safety, traffic and bus circulation, and educational programming for schools.

The office building is currently encumbered with two leases that end in 2027 and 2032. Should this property be purchased, ACPS intends to enter into negotiation with the tenants as needed in order to convert these spaces for the proposed uses over time.

III. CONSISTENCY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

Beauregard Small Area Plan (2012) and Alexandria West Small Area Plan (1992)

The subject property is within the Beauregard Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan, which does not specifically address the Mark Center properties since the parcel was already

developed prior to the planning process. Overall, the Plan focuses on office use and commercial development and stresses the importance of a mixture of land uses within each neighborhood. In reviewing the Alexandria West Small Area Plan, staff found that it also supports mixed-use development. While neither Plan specifies a potential need for future school facilities, they do not indicate that this area should be reserved for non-educational uses only.

This property is also within CDD#4. On June 18, 2016, City Council approved Text Amendment #2016-0006 to modify land uses within the CDD to include public schools as a permitted use.

Long Range Educational Facilities Plan (2015)

The project is consistent with the 2015 Long Range Educational Facilities Plan (LREFP), which should be noted is not a chapter of the City's Master Plan. However, the LREFP is the result of a citywide planning process and was approved by the School Board and endorsed by City Council. The LREFP includes criteria for an urban school format, allowing for more flexibility in accommodating the growing student population. One of the case studies is the adaptive reuse of a former office building as an elementary school in Fairfax County.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that the proposal is consistent with the City's Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter, including specifically the Beauregard Small Area Plan. The proposed purchase is in keeping with recommendations made in the Long Range Educational Facilities Plan, endorsed by City Council in June 2015, which include "*Consider retrofitting an existing commercial building*" and "*Consider an urban school model*" for new schools, and is supported by the successful previous conversion of 1701 N. Beauregard Street to an educational use.

STAFF: Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning
Katherine Carraway, Urban Planner, Planning & Zoning