

The East End Small Area Plan: A Vision to Celebrate Culture & Community

MWCOG Planning Directors Meeting | October 20, 2023

[HTTPS://WWW.FALLSCHURCHVA.GOV/2128/EAST-END-SMALL-AREA-
PLAN](https://www.fallschurchva.gov/2128/east-end-small-area-plan)

PRESENTATION AGENDA

1. Small Area Planning in the City of Falls Church
2. The East End Small Area Plan
 - Context
 - Process
 - Outcomes
3. Key Takeaways

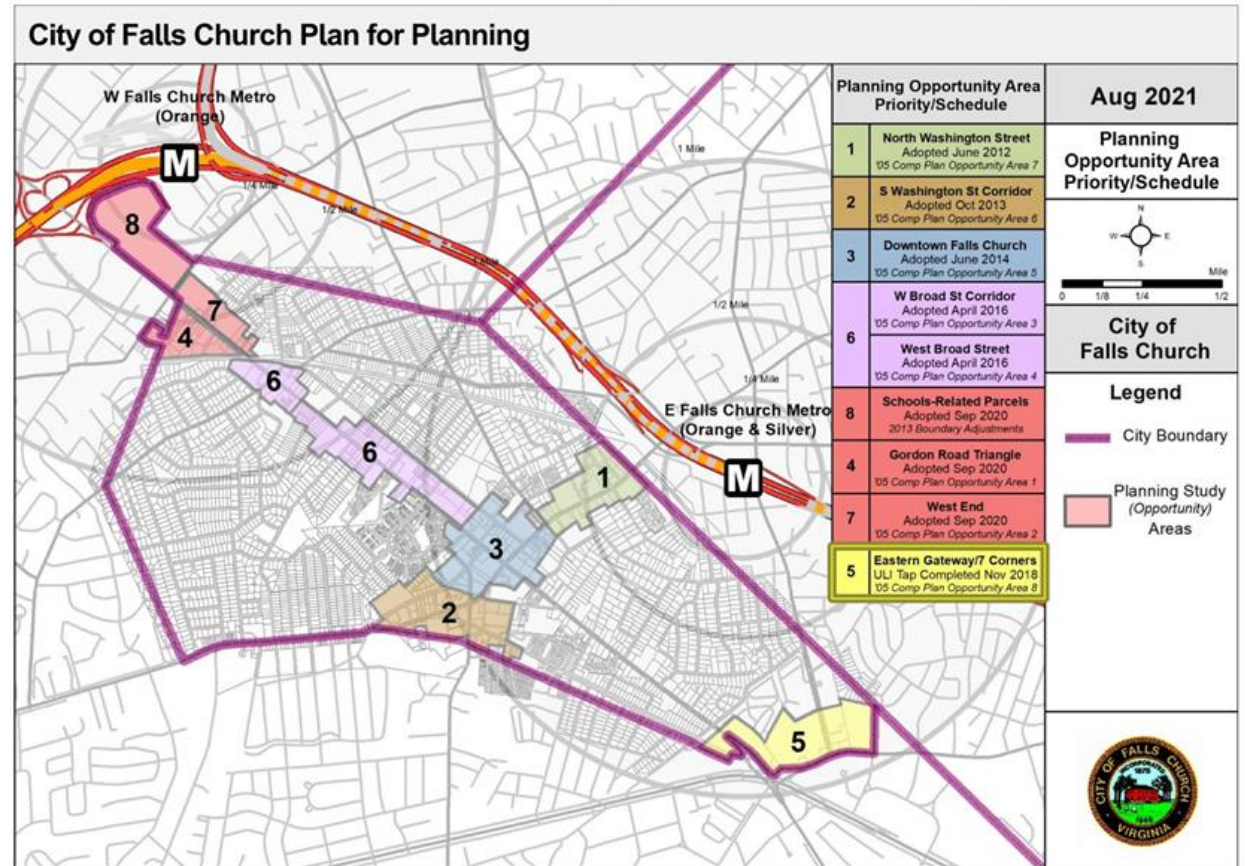
WHAT ARE SMALL AREA PLANS?

- Small area plans establish a shared vision and guide private and public investments.
- The boundaries for each Planning Opportunity Area (POA) are established in the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Small area plans are referenced but not formally included in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Typical size for a Planning Opportunity Area is approximately ten blocks.



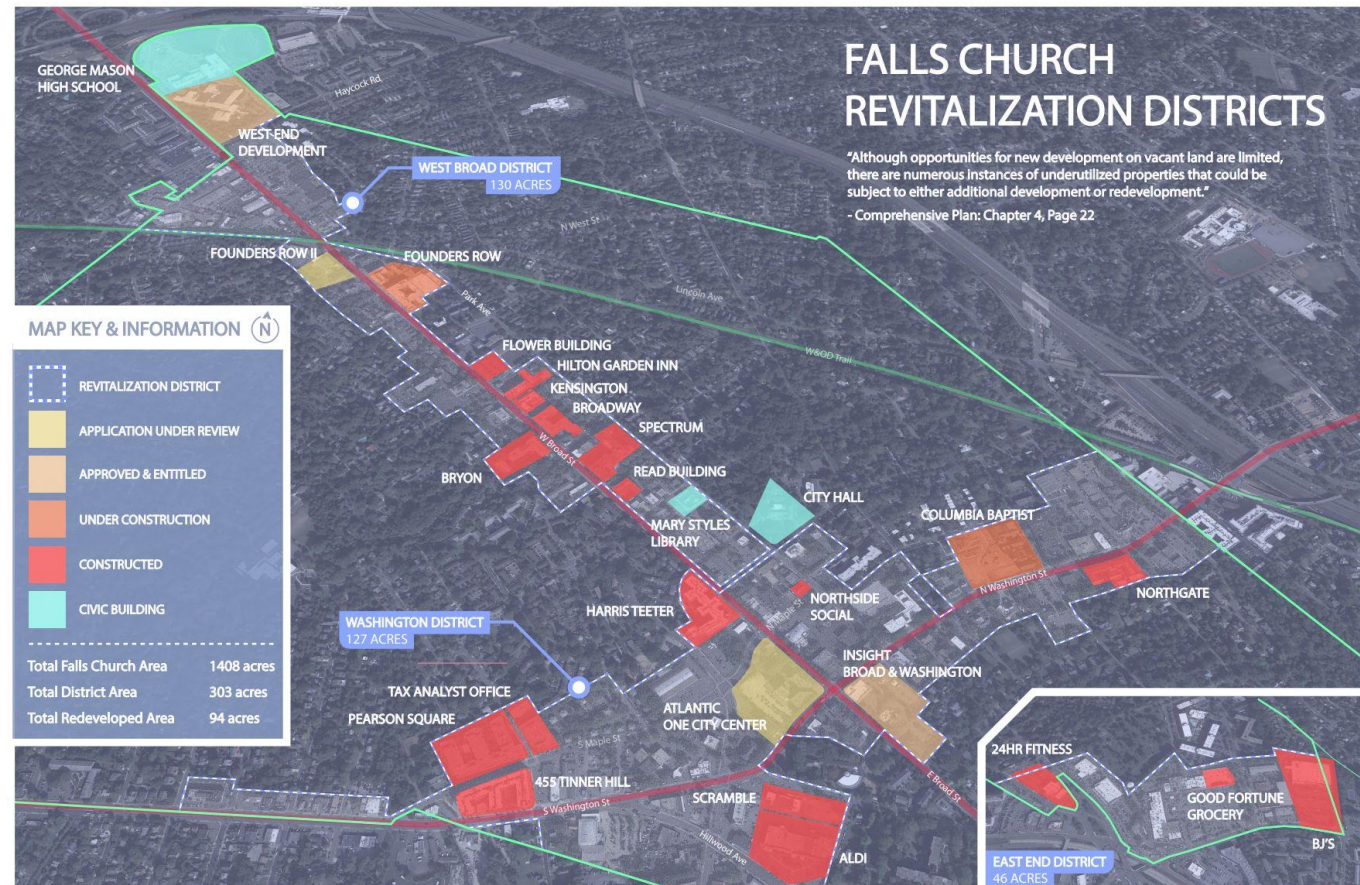
PLAN FOR PLANNING

- The City Council has adopted 6 small area plans for all opportunity areas.
- Timeframe for the small area planning process is 12 to 24 months.
- The Planning Commission is the principal stakeholder group.
- The small area plans are completed in house by a team of 3 to 4 planners with collaboration from other City departments.
- The City has partnered with groups such as Virginia Tech and ULI to conduct studies that inform the plans.



FROM VISION TO INVESTMENT

- This Falls Church Revitalization Districts Map depicts how the City's small area plans have shaped redevelopment and reinvestments.



CONTEXT: PLANNING FOR THE EAST END

- Acreage: 44 acres
- Predominant Zoning:
 - B-3 General Business
 - M-1 Light Industrial
- Adjacent to Arlington County and Fairfax County.
- Located within a 1 mile radius to the East Falls Church Metro Station.



CONTEXT: PLANNING FOR THE EAST END

Community Features:

- Eden Center
- 24-Hour Fitness
- BJ's Wholesale
- Koons Ford



Nearby Housing :

- Falls Green
- The Madison Condominiums
- Roosevelt Towers



Nearby Open Space:

- Oakwood Cemetery
- Fort Taylor Park

PROCESS: BRINGING THE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE

- On-site engagement at Eden Center requested at Public Listening Session.
- Planning team needed to bring the plan to the people it would affect the most.
- We needed to hear from the business owners, workers, and visitors about what their concerns and goals are for the area.
- Successful community plan = reflective of the community which is was written to serve.



PROCESS: BRINGING THE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE

Hosted four pop up events at Eden Center that focused on the following:

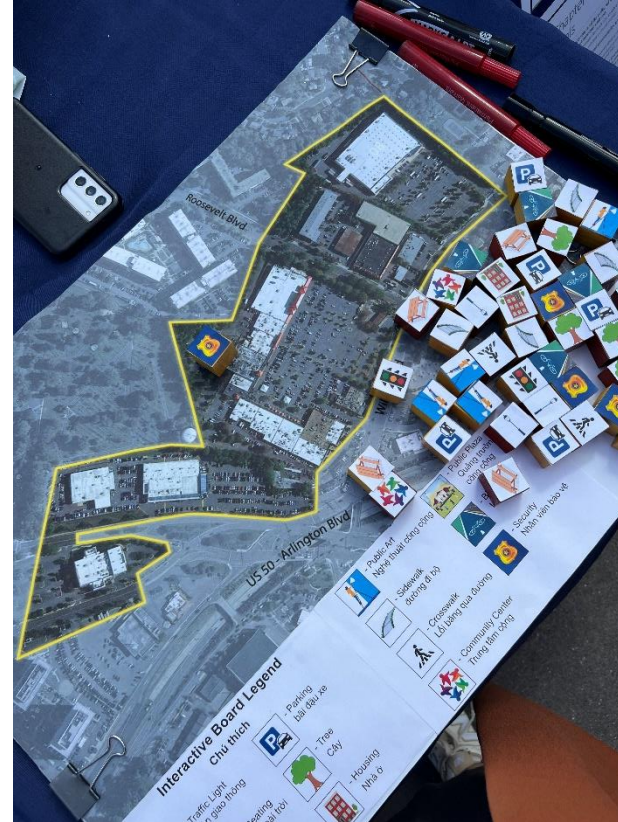
- Pop Up #1 – What does Eden Center mean to you?
- Pop Up #1 – How do we celebrate Vietnamese culture at Eden Center?
- Pop Up #2 – What would you like to see improved around the Eden Center area?
- Pop Up #3 – What is your hope for the future of Eden Center?
- Pop Up #4 – Presentation of revised materials



PROCESS: BRINGING THE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE

Methods of engagement:

- Vision boards with questions
- Interactive activity that visualized improvement measures such as additional trees, lights, a plaza, etc.
- Door to door canvassing of businesses
- Comment cards at each pop up event – “What can the City do for you?”
- Partnered with civic leaders in the community
- Translation of all materials to Vietnamese and interpretation on-site at pop up’s and meetings



OUTCOMES: KEY THEMES OF FEEDBACK

Meaning

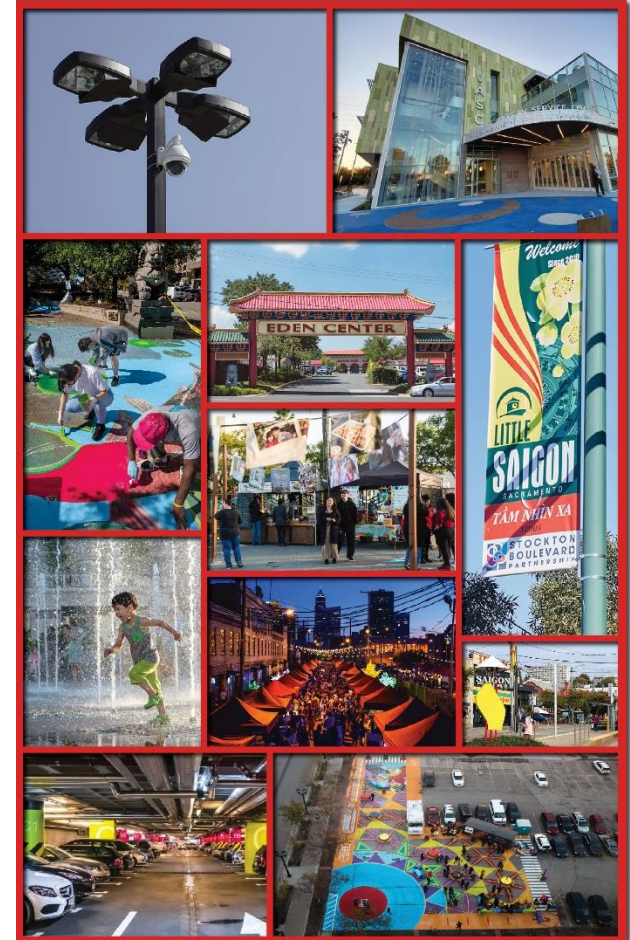
- Eden Center is “home”, celebrates the legacy of Vietnamese culture in the DMV
- Preserve the Vietnamese culture of Eden Center
- The small businesses make Eden Center unique

Amenities

- A cultural center or space for celebration
- Outdoor seating and space for children to play
- More lighting for increased visibility and safety
- Addition of green spaces

Transportation

- Parking is an issue, favored an increase in parking access
- Pedestrian safety and facilities should be prioritized



OUTCOMES: THE VISION

The heart of the East End is the Eden Center, a Vietnamese cultural hub that serves as another home to many. The Vietnamese culture is celebrated through place-keeping, preservation of businesses, and the establishment of a cultural district. Transportation investments put people first by prioritizing connectivity and accessibility. Green spaces provide opportunities for community members to gather, recreate, or relax. A green approach to infrastructure, building, and site design supports the environmental sustainability of the area for future generations. Nearby housing affordability is preserved. As complementary new commercial and residential development responsibly occurs within the East End, equitable planning is at the forefront of reinvestments.

OUTCOMES: THE GOALS

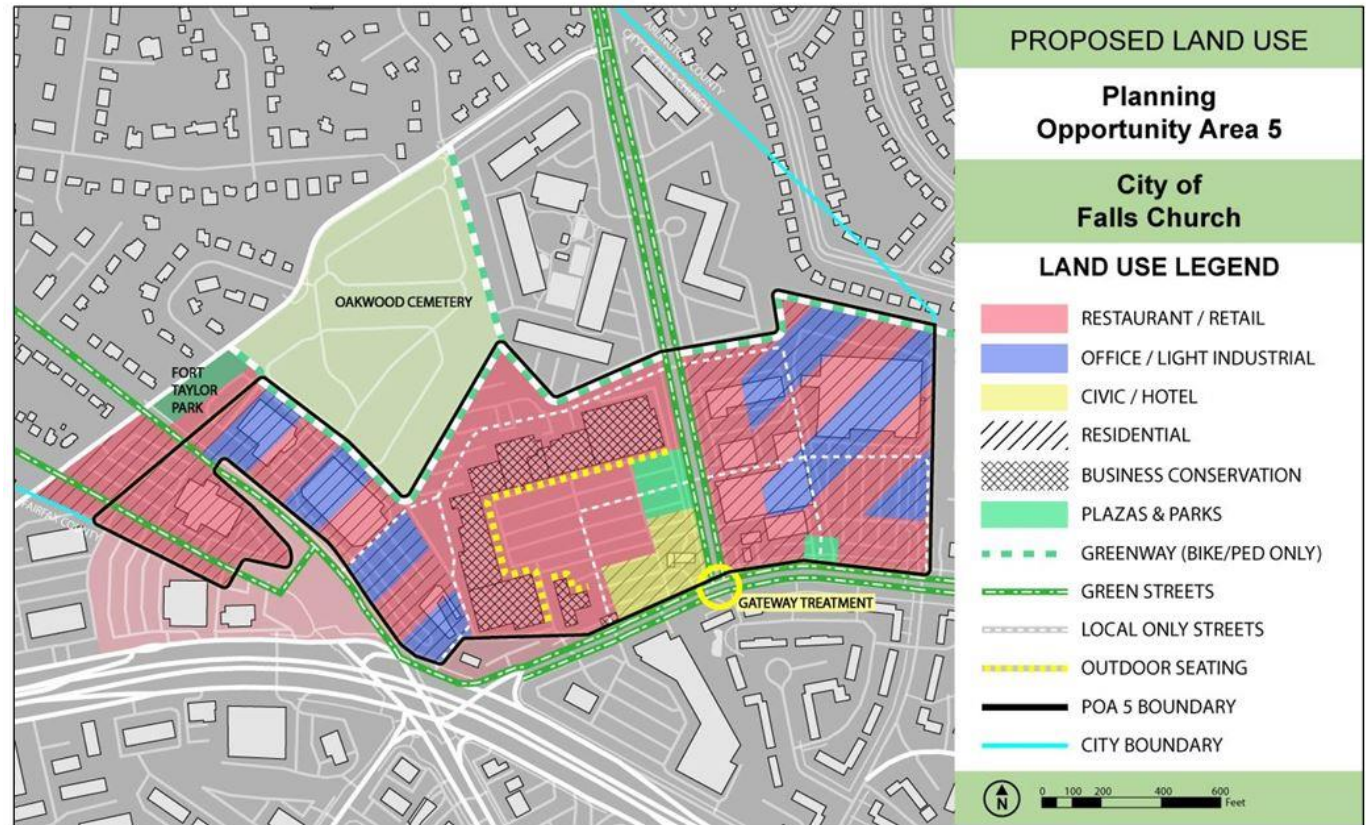
1. Preserve and promote the Vietnamese cultural identity of the Eden Center. Honor Vietnamese heritage through culturally respectful design and place-keeping. Celebrate local Vietnamese history through programming and investments around Eden Center. Uplift the people and culture by prioritizing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. Support economic investments throughout the East End. Prioritize anti-displacement strategies to promote the longevity of small businesses in the Eden Center. Invest in the East End to create and maintain consistent economic activity.
3. Enhance multi-modal mobility and accessibility throughout the East End. Invest in safe connections. Ensure equitable, safe travel opportunities among pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and personal vehicles.

OUTCOMES: THE GOALS

4. Activate public spaces to create community connections. Strengthen the sense of community in the East End by providing spaces for the public to enjoy and gather. Incorporate green spaces to blend nature into the urban environment.
5. Preserve and expand housing opportunities in and around the East End. As the Planning Opportunity Area develops, preserve the quality and affordability of existing nearby housing. Provide design transitions between existing housing and new development. Create housing that is accessible to a variety of household sizes, ages, and a range of incomes. Ensure that affordable housing serves and supports the East End community.
6. Develop the area in an environmentally sustainable way consistent with the principles of stewarding the area for the benefit of future generations.

OUTCOME: THE PROPOSED LANDUSE MAP

- ✓ Preservation of Eden Center
- ✓ Inclusion of a civic center
- ✓ Hotel to support visitors
- ✓ Addition of green space
- ✓ Addition of outdoor seating
- ✓ Bike/ Ped friendly greenways



OUTCOMES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Emphasizes centering equity future economic development activities
- Working to preserve the Vietnamese culture of the Eden Center area through placekeeping
- Implement anti-displacement measures
- Supporting economic reinvestment by building upon the area's economic activity while maintaining the consistent and vibrant local economy



OUTCOMES: THE ANTI-DISPLACEMENT TOOLKIT

INFORMATION & SERVICES

- Encourage Studies that Explore History, Culture, and Anti-Displacement
- Eden Center Chamber of Commerce or Small Business Alliance and Peer Advocacy Group
- Provide Technical Assistance, Educational, and Counseling Opportunities for Businesses
- Supply Resources for How to Find and Apply for Loans and Grants
- Vietnamese Speaking Outreach Services
- Establish List of Registered Community Organizations

EQUITABLE INVESTMENTS

- Enhance Existing Buildings
- Legacy Business Conservation at Eden Center
- Leverage Special Exception (SE) Criteria to Enhance Community Benefits and Promote Cultural Preservation
- Construction Disruption Assistance

OUTCOMES: PLACEKEEPING, MARKETING & BRANDING

Strategies to promote economic vitality through placekeeping, marketing, and branding:

- Establish A Cultural District
- Honorary Renaming of Wilson Boulevard to “Saigon Boulevard”
- Cultural District Branding
- Pursue Historic Designations
- Arts and Culture Focused Placekeeping
- Heritage Tourism
- Food Programming & Marketing



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The East End is home to a unique, vibrant community.
- The East End Small Area Plan honors the community’s legacy and promotes centering the community in future planning efforts.
- This planning effort benefited from in-house staffing and a close partnership with the Planning Commission
- The curiosity and collaboration from the community groups and businesses was tremendously significant in this effort.

