

Appendix D

1997 TOWN PLAN: *inventory of elements supporting task force recommendations*

I. LAND USE ELEMENT.

Community Design (6-11):

Old and Historic District: “a grid street pattern lined with one and two story buildings predominates” in the district with “no or minimal setbacks along the street frontage with predominantly on-street parking.” “Brick sidewalks, nineteenth century lighting fixtures and park benches line the streets.”

First tier residential and commercial area: “Residential subdivisions and commercial development built between the 1940s through the 1970s ... located east and south of the Old and Historic DistrictThese residential subdivisions are of a more curvilinear than a grid design. Commercial developments are automobile oriented with offstreet parking, larger setbacks, and numerous curb cuts.”

Newly developing residential and commercial area: “[B]uilt on larger tracts of land and have an entirely curvilinear street pattern. Fewer curb cuts and larger setbacks, planned sign systems and increased landscaping....opportunity for providing appropriate, quality gateways to the town.”

Infill (6-21):

“Infill provides opportunities to strengthen the fabric of the community through the development of vacant or under used sites.”

Infill policies:

“Infill development should complement existing development.”

“Site design and architectural treatment ... should complement adjacent uses while reflecting the overall character of the community.”

“The Town should encourage the completion of dead end streets to complete the grid street system.”

“Present infrastructure or lack of it (i.e., narrow roads, lack of sidewalks, existing trees and vegetation, interesting curvature of roads, etc.) helps define Leesburg by creating its character. The eclectic character of our past should be modified only when necessary and with great care.”

Residential land use policies (6-27):

“Pedestrian access should be provided between residential areas, parks, schools, libraries, commercial centers and the town’s open space network.”

“The town should ensure adequate, safe pedestrian circulation within and between residential subdivisions.”

General commercial land use policies (6-31):

“The historic downtown should remain a focal point for business, cultural and social activity.”

“Safe pedestrian access should be provided between commercial centers and surrounding residential neighborhoods.”

“New commercial centers should provide for adequate and appropriate parking, loading facilities, traffic movement, and pedestrian safety.”

Arterial commercial policies (6-32):

“The town should encourage improved landscaping, signs and shared access for individual businesses in arterial commercial areas.”

“Redevelopment in these areas should be compatible with adjacent residential and commercial uses and provide an appropriate transition to the Old and Historic District.”

Business land use policies (6-36):

“Commercial traffic should not have to pass through residential areas to access business uses.”

“Residential areas will be separated and buffered from non-residential uses by natural features, landscaping, and/or civic uses such as schools, places of worship, or community facilities. At the same time, the site circulation scheme should provide adequate internal road connections and pedestrian/bikeway links so that residents can have safe and convenient access to on-site commercial activities and workplaces without having to travel the arterial road system.”

Action program (6-42):

“The town should develop zoning ordinance provisions that will allow flexibility in dealing with infill development proposals.”

“Evaluate the impact of the new County Government Center [and judicial center] on the Old and Historic District and develop measures to address these impacts, if any.”

“Refine the Town’s objectives with regard to: Design of Town Gateways, Scale of New Development, Use of Traditional Town Planning Concepts in new growth areas, and Implementation of Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail Networks into the overall transportation system, based on the ‘Vision for the Future’ discussed earlier in this Element. Prepare approaches to implement these objectives, if appropriate.”

II. HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT.

Purpose. Conservation districts (7-1): “To protect the unique attributes of these older developments, this plan proposed the creation of conservation districts. Such districts would serve the interests of neighborhood conversation by ensuring that regulations and standards devised in the context of conventional late 20th century residential development do not erode the established character of existing older neighborhoods.”

Alternatives to Historic District Designation (7-3): “The purpose of establishing conservation districts would be to retain certain identifiable attributes of these neighborhoods which might be lost through alterations due to inappropriate or incompatible public improvements.”

Conservation Districts (7-5): “Being identified as an area for ‘conservation’ differs from identification as an ‘historic district.’ A conservation district indicates that the fabric of development is important, not necessarily the buildings themselves.

“Development in a conservation neighborhood would entail evaluating potential negative impacts and then avoiding inappropriate changes to the area’s character, which in most cases is defined by earlier engineering standards. Those earlier standards reflected a pedestrian identity and scale, rather than vehicular transportation needs, and thereby created a more human setting.

“‘Improvements’ to reflect present-day engineering standards are as inappropriate in these areas as they are in historic districts. Modification of the infrastructure could well change the unique character of the area to resemble that of contemporary suburban development. The loss of character and identity affect both the neighborhood and the community. However, care must be taken to assure that standards which uphold the public health and safety are maintained. For example, pedestrian access should be provided for even if the original development did not contain this feature. Street lighting should not be eliminated, but should be designed to facilitate both public safety and the neighborhood character.”

Urban design (7-6): “To encourage quality urban design, it is recommended that flexible regulations be created to encourage development to maintain variety and scale consistent with existing neighborhoods.

Urban design trends: “Over the past several decades of rapid urban development, Leesburg has not escaped many of its less fortunate results:

“Streets scaled to the automobile with little regard for the pedestrian or human scale.

“Streets designed to meet state-imposed standards inconsistent with Leesburg’s scale adjacent to historic neighborhoods.

“Regulations that require development patterns inconsistent with the existing character of the town.

“An abundance of freestanding commercial signs and public road signs along transportation corridors.

“Visual complexity created by overhead utility wires, particularly in the Old and Historic District.”

Urban design policies (7-8): “The encouragement of creative urban design will be necessary to ensure that Leesburg continues to develop with the architectural variety and compatible mixture of uses that produces the town’s unique identity. New residential development that perpetuates the diversity of Leesburg’s traditional building pattern composed of distinct neighborhoods would be desirable. A collection of neighborhoods rather than a series of large-scale developments would avoid the dull homogeneity of mid-20th century suburban development, which often has no links with local identity and either dilutes or destroys the sense of place that is characteristic of older communities.”

“2. The town will encourage quality urban design through modification of zoning and subdivision regulations, including flexible design standards, incentives and bonuses.”

“5. A continuous town open space/trail network will serve as a unifying urban design feature for the community. The town shall support the development of a trail system incorporating stream valleys, natural drainage ways and adjacent steep slopes. Connections to community facilities should be sought.”

“10. The town will provide ordinance options that produce development consistent with the present character of Leesburg.

“11. The town and VDOT will cooperate to assure that engineering standards allow consistency between the existing town scale and the scale of future development.”

7-9 Action program: “6. Incorporate waiver provisions into regulations written in the late 20th century to avoid alterations to the setting or scale of historic streetscapes or conservation neighborhoods.”

III. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT.

Importance of Transportation Planning (8-1): “An efficient and effective transportation system is critical to the economic vitality of an area. The town’s transportation system, including roads, mass transit, and non-motorized system (sidewalks, bikepaths, and trails) not only influence the location and intensity of land uses but enhance the town’s attractiveness to expanding and new businesses and quality of life.”

“[The transportation] element also recognizes that, as Leesburg grows and population density increases, building and improving roads cannot alone satisfy the transportation needs of the people who live and work in Leesburg. While improvements to the roadways are essential, providing greater opportunities for public transportation and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access will be important elements of the town’s transportation policy.”

The Street System (8-3): “In the downtown area, the grid street pattern (straight streets forming blocks of land) has a human scale that encourages pedestrian use and contributes to the ambience of the Historic District. The grid street pattern has become a hallmark of the neo-traditional town planning concept that is undergoing a renaissance in the nation. This pattern disperses traffic evenly throughout the grid compared to non-grid patterns which concentrate traffic on limited numbers of roads. The grid pattern has been recently acknowledged by traffic planners and community designers as desirable due to this efficiency as well as attractiveness from a neighborhood design perspective.”

Functional Classification (8-4): “Through truck traffic should be discouraged on certain functional classifications, namely, Local Street, Local Collector, and Through Collector.”

The Non-Motorized System (8-13): “Sidewalks provide a place for pedestrians to walk along roadways. Pedestrian/bicycle trails are less-road oriented; although they may occasionally parallel a roadway, they are generally located along rear lot lines, beside streams, and through reserved open space. A well-planned system of continuous and interconnected sidewalks and trails can reduce vehicular traffic in town by providing safe and convenient routes for alternative travel (walking or biking) between and within urban activity centers. The town must carefully consider the maintenance and liability responsibilities inherent in such a system.”

8-14: “Leesburg’s only dedicated trail is the W & OD regional hiking/biking and horse trail ...The trail’s function as a transportation link within town is limited because it lacks connections to the town’s residential areas. A system of bike routes connecting to the trail and providing access from existing and future residential areas to commercial and employment centers would promote cycling as a safe and efficient means of transportation. Such a system would have other potential regional links affording transportation and recreation possibilities. For example, the proposed Potomac Heritage

Trail along the Potomac River, accessed from Ball's Bluff Park in Leesburg, would provide a connection via White's Ferry north of town to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal trail paths along the Maryland side of the river."

Transportation Management Plan: "The transportation management plan is intended to integrate and optimize the functioning of the three foregoing transportation system components, namely, the road system, the public transportation system, and the non-motorized system."

Ride sharing and Commuter Parking (8-15): "Strategically located commuter parking lots can increase the potential for ride sharing as well as the use of mass transit facilities."

Provisions for Bicycle Riders and Pedestrians (8-16): "Walking and cycling are alternative travel modes that can reduce dependence on the automobile for short trips. Mixed use development is especially suited for walking or biking between home, work, shopping and other activities. Development planning should provide for convenient and safe non-automotive travel routes and site planning should accommodate associated needs such as bicycle parking."

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

General Road Policies (8-18):

"1. A balance must be achieved between transportation interests and other interests of the community such as aesthetics and neighborhood integrity without compromising safety or the proper functioning of the road network.

"2. Design and location of road improvements (i.e., sidewalks, road width, curvature, etc.) will be sensitive to the existing fabric of town.

"3. The town will continue to separate local residential traffic from through traffic by implementing appropriate design and construction standards based on road function.

"4. Through truck traffic will be discouraged in the Old and Historic District, including Morven Park Road, as well as Edwards Ferry Road and other roads deemed appropriate by the town."

"6. Discourage individual driveway access to major and minor arterials and through collectors in residential development."

"11. The town will seek legislation reducing the current minimum of 50' right-of-way and 30' pavement within and adjacent to the Old and Historic District."

"14. Off-street parking will be encouraged in lieu of on-street parking in residential areas."

“16. The town will encourage a grid street pattern throughout its jurisdiction.”

Transportation Corridor Policies

North King Street (8-21):

“1. The appearance and historic character of North King Street will be preserved.

“2. Provide northbound left turn lane at Ida Lee Park.

“3. Provide pedestrian [sic] trail from downtown to Exeter.”

Streets of the Old and Historic District (8-24):

“On-street parking will be retained on downtown streets unless public safety issues call for an alternative. Elimination of off-street parking may be considered only after appropriate traffic studies are completed and review and comment made by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR).

Public Transportation Policies:

“4. The town will encourage developers to provide commuter parking facilities.”

Pedestrian and Bikeway Policies (8-25):

“1. Encourage pedestrian/bicycle trails in selected areas subject to approval of Town Council to encourage pedestrian circulation more removed from potential conflicts with vehicular traffic.

“2. Encourage the provision of safe pedestrian and bicycle networks in all developments to link residential areas to community facilities, jobs, and shopping areas. Such networks could include off-street pedestrian and bike paths, as well as traditional sidewalks, where designed with adequate security considerations.

“3. New pedestrian and bikeway routes will connect with existing pedestrian and bike routes, including the W & OD regional trail and other major trails.

“4. Continue to require pedestrian access to and between community facilities such as schools, parks, libraries and community centers.

“5. Grade-separated pedestrian crossings will be studied for coordination with the town’s transportation plan.

“6. Safe bicycle parking facilities will be provided at employment, commercial and recreational areas.

“7. Bikeways and pedestrian paths will generally be constructed by developers and maintained either by a homeowners’ association, if privately owned, or by an appropriate public agency, if accepted for public use.

“8. The town will consider construction of major pedestrian paths and bikeway connections to public parks, schools, or other public trails, such as W&OD regional trail and the C&O Canal Towpath.

“9. The town will develop criteria for acceptance of pedestrian paths and bikeways into the publicly maintained system. Criteria may include such items as:

“ - part of a continuous trail system

“ - designed and constructed to town specifications

“ - links residences with public facilities and public facilities with public facilities”

Action Program (8-26):

“5. Develop criteria for acceptance of sidewalks, bikepaths and trails by the town to minimize the town’s responsibility for maintenance costs and liability.

“6. In cooperation with the Virginia Municipal League, the Town will seek legislation reducing the current minimum of 50’ of right-of-way and 30’ pavement in instances where it furthers the interests of the Town. Such town interests include infill development within the Old and Historic District, the facilitation of bonafide [sic] low and moderate cost housing in accordance with a Town-adopted affordable housing program, and where a new development incorporates neo-traditional community design principles in a manner where ample off-street parking and adequate service access is provided.

“7. Work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to provide a trail connection between the W&OD Trail and the C&O Canal via White’s Ferry.