DOCKET ITEM # 9

Master Plan Amendment # 2013 - 0007

Issue: Public hearing and consideration of a request for an amendment to the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to revise the required sidewalk materials.	Planning Commission Hearing:	December 3, 2013
	City Council Hearing:	December 14, 2013
Staff: Jeffrey Farner, Deputy Director Department of Planning & Zoning jeffrey.farner@alexandriava.gov		

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, DECEMBER 3, 2013: On a motion by Vice Chair Dunn, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Planning Commission voted to initiate the proposed Mater Plan amendment.

On a motion by Vice Chair Dunn, seconded by Commissioner Lyman, the Planning Commission voted to **adopt** Resolution MPA #2013-0007, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances, staff recommendations and conditions. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0. Commissioner Hyra was absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis and recommendations.

I. DISCUSSION

Staff is requesting an amendment to the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan to amend the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines, which are a component of the Small Area Plan. The amendment to the Master Plan and Design Guidelines is solely to amend the required sidewalk materials within the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. As discussed below, staff believes the combination of brick and concrete sidewalks provide an appropriate and attractive balance between the benefits of concrete sidewalks and the benefits of brick sidewalks. Staff believes the proposed combination of brick and concrete sidewalks is also consistent with the intent of the Eisenhower East Plan to provide an attractive pedestrian-oriented streetscape. (Figure 1)

The Eisenhower East Design Guidelines pg. 44 state "*All sidewalks on A and B streets shall be 4" x 8" red brick, laid in accordance with City of Alexandria Standards.* Staff is recommending that the required sidewalk material be revised to be a combination of brick and concrete (Figure 1). The two blocks surrounded by brick sidewalks, staff is recommending the continuation of brick sidewalks. (Figure 3)

II. BACKGROUND – EISENHOWER AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS

The City has funding to construct a portion of the sidewalk and roadway improvements for Eisenhower Avenue which are envisioned by the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (Figure 2). The improvements will consist of the following:

- Adding an additional left turn lane at the Eisenhower Avenue/Mill Road intersection on westbound Eisenhower Avenue;
- Upgrading the receiving lanes on Mill Road to accept the dual left turns from Eisenhower Avenue;
- Converting the traffic circle at Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane to a signalized "T" intersection;
- Sidewalk and improvements at Holland Lane and Mill Road and adjacent to the new "T" intersection at Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane; and
- Resurfacing the full width of Eisenhower Avenue between Holland Lane and Mill Road.

During the Eisenhower Avenue improvements update at the City Council hearing on May 28, 2013, the Council questioned whether brick or an alternative material(s) could be used for the sidewalk improvements along Eisenhower Avenue. The issue of brick sidewalks on Eisenhower Avenue was also raised by members of the Alexandria Commissions on Aging, Persons with Disabilities, and the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

The issue of sidewalk materials, design, cost, maintenance and accessibility is an element that is discussed as part of the Small Area Plan process, preparation of Design Guidelines and as part of the development review process. Some of the City's Small Area Plans and/or Design Guidelines require brick sidewalks (Eisenhower East), others require a combination of brick and concrete (Potomac Yard) and others require concrete sidewalks (Beauregard).

A. Existing Sidewalks and Approved Projects

Both Carlyle and Eisenhower East were planned and designed to be an extension of Old Town through elements such as the continuation of the street grid, block sizes, street widths,

streetscape requirements, building materials and brick sidewalks. Carlyle has been constructed with all brick sidewalks. Some of the blocks within Eisenhower East have been constructed with brick sidewalks (Figure 3). As discussed below, Blocks 8, 11, 12 and 19 have been approved with brick sidewalks (Figure 3).

B. Eisenhower Avenue Improvements

The City Council and members of the Commissions on Persons with Disabilities and Aging requested staff to consider a material(s) other than brick for the sidewalks on Eisenhower Avenue. Concerns expressed regarding brick sidewalks include elements such as irregular walking surface, vibration and difficulty navigating with a walker or wheelchair. While staff acknowledges the concerns, some of the concerns are due to the construction standards for brick vs. concrete sidewalks. For example, older brick sidewalk have a sand base which has resulted in a more irregular surface because of settling and shifting of the bricks. However, for new brick sidewalks, the City requires a compacted base, including asphalt below the brick sidewalk to provide a stable base for the new brick sidewalks.

In response to the comments of City Council and the Commissions on Persons with Disabilities and Aging, staff evaluated other materials, surfaces and construction standards, while also attempting to address the aesthetic benefits of brick sidewalks. City-standard concrete sidewalks are the least expensive sidewalk to install and maintain. However, concrete sidewalks can lack the color, texture and more pedestrian scale (bricks vs. panels) that brick sidewalks can provide (Figure 4). Staff is recommending a combination of brick and concrete for the sidewalks within Eisenhower East. The combination of brick and concrete, generally requires a wider sidewalk area and areas where tree well are used, both of which will occur within Eisenhower East.

Revising the sidewalk material at this point is possible because a significant portion of Eisenhower East has not yet been constructed. In addition, Eisenhower Avenue serves as a visual and perceived boundary between Carlyle and Eisenhower East and is a logical location to amend the proposed sidewalk material. Eisenhower Avenue could serve as a transition between the all brick neighborhood of Carlyle and the proposed brick and concrete sidewalks of Eisenhower East. A challenge on Eisenhower Avenue and is that portions of the sidewalks on the northern portion of Eisenhower Avenue are constructed of brick.

However, a significant portion of Eisenhower Avenue will be constructed as part of the City's improvements or part of future redevelopment. In addition, because a significant portion of the proposed sidewalk will be brick, the brick banding will help to visually unify the existing and proposed sidewalks.

C. Timing of the Proposed Change

The resolution of the issue is important at this time because the City needs to finalize the design documents to continue with the anticipated schedule for construction of Eisenhower Avenue. The design will enable the City to prepare the necessary plans and finalize the necessary approvals with VDOT.

D. Existing Approvals

Block 8 and 12
There are two blocks which have received approval for brick sidewalks (Figure 3), adjacent to Eisenhower Avenue. For block 8, a condition requires the construction of brick or a different material if required by the City. For block 12, the Applicant has indicated that they are willing to construct the combination of brick and concrete sidewalk proposed as part of this amendment.

Block 20 and 23
For these blocks because they are surrounded by brick sidewalks, staff is recommending the continuation of brick sidewalks within these blocks. (Figure 3)

IV. SUMMARY

Staff is recommending approval of the brick and concrete sidewalks because this approach balances some of the maintenance and accessibility concerns that have been raised by members of the community and City Council regarding brick sidewalks. The proposed sidewalk materials (Figure 1) provide a balance of the functionality of concrete with the aesthetic, color and texture benefits of brick. In addition, as depicted in Figure 3, the location of brick sidewalks (Carlyle and around the Metrorail station) are distinct zones, while the brick and concrete sidewalks will also be located within distinct zones. This approach will ensure that there is coordination of the sidewalks and streetscape within Eisenhower East.

In addition, while staff is supportive of the combination of brick and concrete sidewalks within Eisenhower East, this is not a combination that staff would support in other areas such as King Street or portions of the Old and Historic District. The combination of brick and concrete sidewalks is a more contemporary streetscape approach, consistent with the more contemporary urban buildings within Eisenhower East.

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of a Master Plan amendment to the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Eisenhower East Design Guidelines, subject to the following:

1. Page 44 of the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines shall be revised as follows: "*All sidewalks on A ~~and~~ B and C streets shall be a combination of brick and concrete sidewalks ~~4" x 8" red brick,~~ laid in accordance with City of Alexandria Standards. The Mill Road sidewalk for Block 23 and the sidewalks for Block 20 shall be City Standard brick sidewalks. "* (P&Z) (T&ES)

2. The Eisenhower East Design Guidelines shall be amended including all applicable graphics, images to implement the brick and concrete sidewalks, required herein. The plan view as generally depicted in Figure 1 shall be incorporated as part of the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines. (P&Z) (T&ES)

Staff: Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning;
Rich Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services;
Jeffrey Farner, Deputy Director, Department of Planning & Zoning; and
Joanna Anderson, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office.

Figures:

Figure 1 – Proposed Brick and Concrete Sidewalk
Figure 2 – Eisenhower Avenue Improvements
Figure 3 – Eisenhower East Blocks and Sidewalk Materials
Figure 4 – Brick Sidewalks Carlyle

FIGURE 1
SIDEWALK MATERIALS - BRICK/CONCRETE

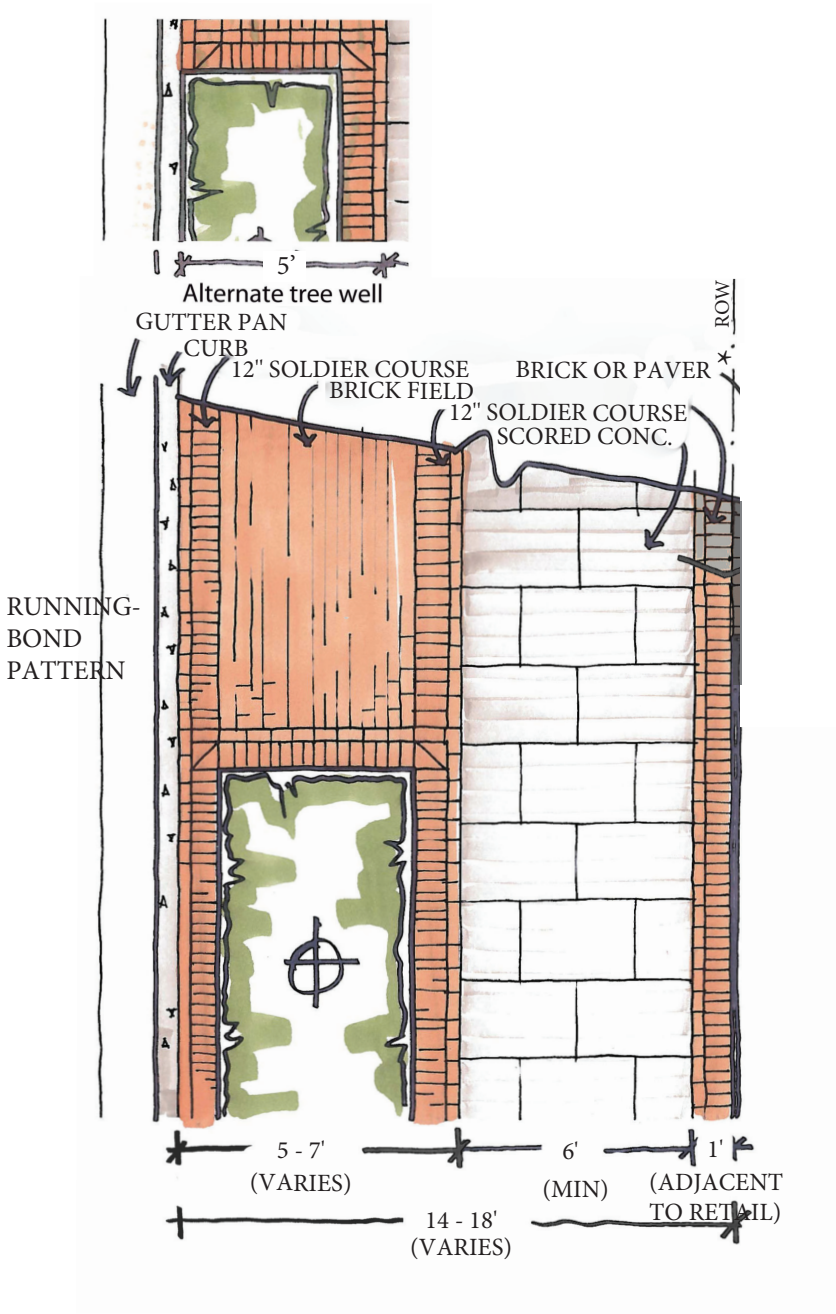
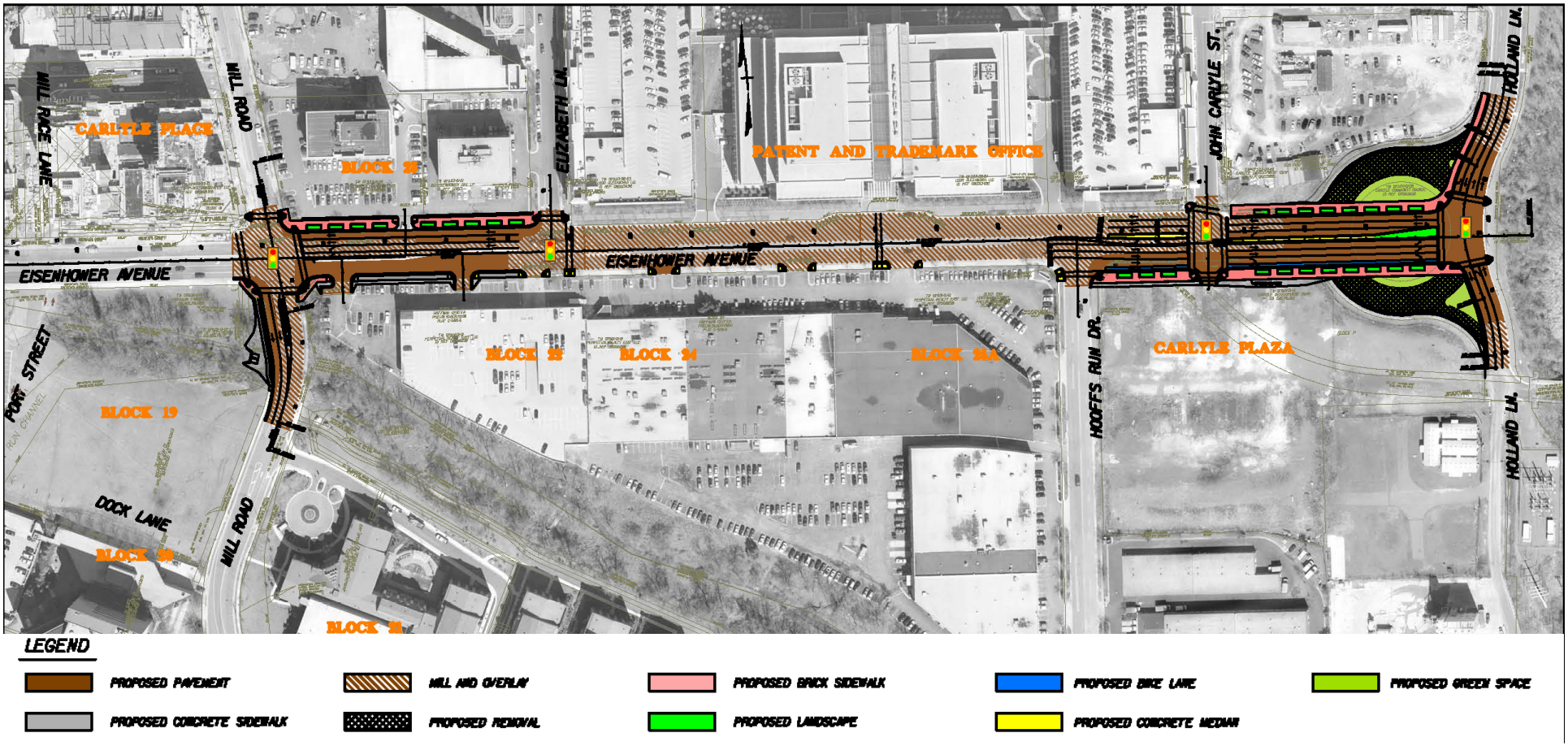


FIGURE 2
EISENHOWER AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS



LEGEND

- PROPOSED PAVEMENT
- MILL AND OVERLAY
- PROPOSED BRICK SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED BIKE LANE
- PROPOSED GREEN SPACE
- PROPOSED CONCRETE SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED REMOVAL
- PROPOSED LANDSCAPE
- PROPOSED CONCRETE MEDIAN

FIGURE 3
EISENHOWER EAST DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS
AND SIDEWALK MATERIALS

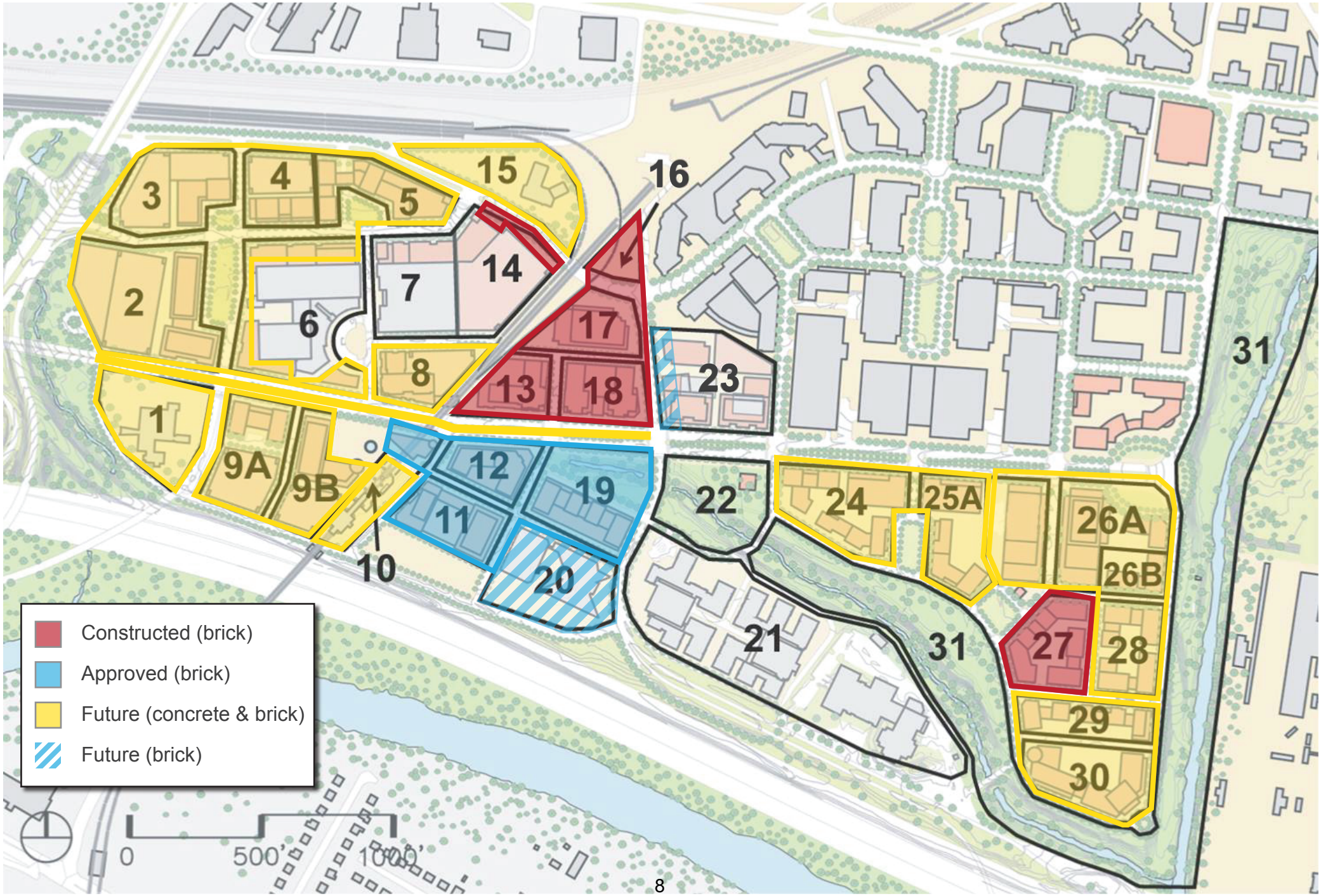
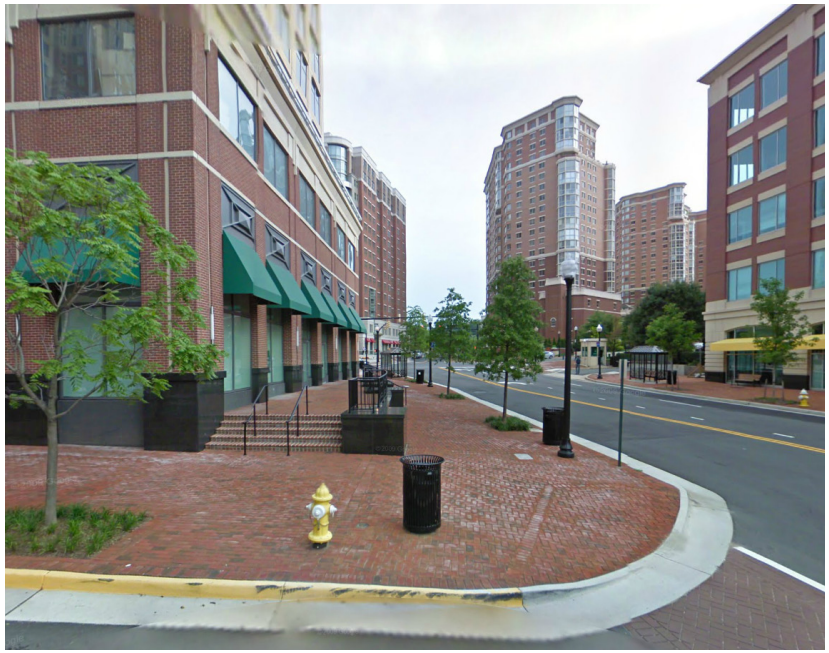


FIGURE 4
EXISTING SIDEWALKS



RESOLUTION NO. **MPA 2013-0007**

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Zoning has brought forth an amendment to the **Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Eisenhower East Design Guidelines** ; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Zoning has analyzed the proposed revision and presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed amendment was held on December 3, 2013 with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The proposed amendment is necessary and desirable to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the **Eisenhower East Small Area Plan** section of the City; and

2. The proposed amendment is generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the **Eisenhower East Small Area Plan** chapter of the Master Plan; and

3. The proposed amendment shows the Planning Commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the **Eisenhower East Small Area Plan**; and

4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Planning Commission may properly take notice in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendment to the **Eisenhower East Small Area Plan** chapter of the Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The following amendment is hereby adopted in its entirety as an amendment to the **Eisenhower East Small Area Plan** chapter of the Master Plan Eisenhower East Design Guidelines of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia:

   All sidewalks on A, B and C streets shall be a combination of brick and concrete sidewalks, laid in accordance with City of Alexandria Standards. The Mill Road sidewalk for Block 23 and the sidewalks for Block 20 shall be City Standard brick sidewalks.

2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Planning Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.
   ADOPTED the **3rd day of December, 2013.**

John H. Komoroske

John Komoroske, Chairman
Alexandria Planning Commission

ATTEST: Faroll Hamer, Secretary /s/

PC Docket Item #: 9
Project: Eisenhower East MPA

PlanComm

From: MichaelandBob <michaelandbob@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2013 9:38 AM
To: PlanComm
Cc: Rich Baier; Jeffrey Farner; kingjane0@gmail.com
Subject: Docket Item #9 for December 3, 2103

ROBERT C. EIFFERT
1418 Juliana Place
Alexandria, Virginia 22304
703-212-7116

TO: Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission
SUBJECT: Amendments to the Eisenhower East Plan Regarding Brick Sidewalks
DATE: November 29, 2013

My name is Bob Eiffert and I am writing on behalf of the Alexandria Commission on Aging in support of the proposed concrete and brick sidewalk surfaces in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (docket item #9 for the December 3, 2013 meeting). The Commission, along with the Commission on Persons with Disabilities, is a strong proponent of Boston's "No Net New Brick" policy for its sidewalks for safety and accessibility reasons. While we recognize the historic nature of the brick sidewalks in Old Town, we see no reason to extend them outside of the Old and Historic District. Brick sidewalks are inherently rougher and more prone to maintenance issues than concrete. Even the newest installation techniques applied in Eisenhower East are failing. Sidewalks in a number of areas are already uneven and unsightly. What we are calling a "hybrid model" of a main walkway that is unobstructed concrete with brick banding and accents seems an excellent compromise of aesthetics with safety, accessibility and lower maintenance costs.

As the staff report notes, the 2 commissions worked with staff from Planning and Zoning and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services on this issue. We wish to commend Jeffrey Farner from Planning and Zoning and Rich Baier from T&ES for their willingness to listen and observe with us, and the creativity that they and their staff demonstrated in approaching this issue. We are grateful for their insights and support.

We urge the Planning Commission to adopt the staff recommendations for Eisenhower East, and we further urge you to extend this policy to other new developments in the city, including Potomac Yard, Landmark and Beauregard, as well as any other small area plans outside the Old and Historic District. The safety and accessibility of sidewalks for all residents – not just older residents or those with disabilities – is enhanced by this design principle.

Thank you for your consideration.

PC Docket Item #: 9
Project: Eisenhower East MPA

PlanComm

From: Jane King <kingjane0@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2013 9:46 AM
To: MichaelandBob
Cc: PlanComm; Rich Baier; Jeffrey Farner
Subject: Re: Docket Item #9 for December 3, 2103

Thanks, Bob. You said it all succinctly and well.

I will forward this to Hillary.

Jane

Jane

On Mon, Dec 2, 2013 at 9:37 AM, MichaelandBob <michaelandbob@comcast.net> wrote:

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