

PENTAGON CENTRE SITE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

The Pentagon Centre site in Pentagon City comprises the block bounded by S. Hayes St., 15th St. S., S. Fern St., and 12th St. S. The site lies in the center of the area designated as the Pentagon City “Coordinated Development District” on February 9, 1974. Intentionally excluded from the subsequent Pentagon City Master Plan in 1976 in order to leave the site with its industrial development potential, the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) designation and zoning have remained unchanged as areas surrounding the site have been developed according to the Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) adopted in 1976.

On October 4, 1997, in response to the development proposal for Pentagon Row, the County Board established the Pentagon City Task Force and charged this group to review the approved PDSP, to develop planning principles for the remaining unbuilt portions of Pentagon City, including the Pentagon Centre site and to identify two to three development scenarios meeting these principles. The Task Force report was presented at a County Board work session on November 12, 1997.

In response to a PDSP and site plan for the Pentagon Centre block, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission met three times, on October 23, November 28 and December 11, 2007 in order to update and refine the planning principles established by the 1997 Pentagon City Task Force and to develop guiding principles specific to the Pentagon Centre block. Planning Commission members were joined by invited community representatives and County staff. All meetings were open to the public. The guiding principles will be used to evaluate the PDSP and Final Site Plan submitted for the site. The guiding principles will be presented as an information item to the full Planning Commission in January, 2008

Pentagon Centre

Pentagon Centre sits on a 16.8 acre site and was established by-right under the existing M-1 zoning and Service Industry GLUP designation in 1994, as an adaptive reuse of the former Western Electric building. The building contains approximately 338,000 square feet of retail space, including Costco, Best Buy, Borders, Marshalls, Linens and Things, California Pizza Kitchen, Chevy’s, and Starbucks. The building also contains three floors of structured parking. The remainder of the site provides a surface parking lot for these uses.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles for the Pentagon Centre site were developed based on LRPC Committee discussions, and build upon relevant planning principles from both the 1976 and 1997 planning documents. While planning principles established in past processes have been updated and modified here to refer specifically to Pentagon Centre, they remain relevant to the Pentagon City area as a whole.

1. Compatibility: Development should be compatible with the surrounding existing uses and with the site's central location to the Pentagon City Coordinated Development District and proximity to Metro.

- Development should create a sense of place both internal and external to the site. As the center of Pentagon City, surrounding existing uses should be unified by development on this site, with development on 15th Street S. sensitive to existing adjacent low-rise residential uses.
- This site should be developed as the heart of the Pentagon City community and should perpetuate the sense of place and community vitality originally envisioned for Pentagon City.
- High quality urban design features and consistent architectural quality should define an identity for the site. Locations where special treatment would further delineate the area as an entry should be identified.
- Proposals for this site should consider concurrent planning efforts in nearby Crystal City.

2. Mix of Uses: A balanced mix of uses should be provided on this block, including office, retail and residential and a community facility or civic space, and should create a convenient live-work-shop relationship to ensure twenty-four hour vitality.

- Hotel use and other uses compatible to future surrounding uses should also be considered.
- Development of the site should not preclude incorporation or continuation of the existing Costco and other existing retailers, although alternative urban forms for such development should be considered.
- The total amount of retail on the site should not drop below the existing square footage, and design for newly created spaces should include those attractive to independently-owned and locally-owned businesses as well as national retailers.
- Streets should be activated with ground floor retail and restaurant uses and should include neighborhood-serving retail and services.
- The following types of uses were identified as desirable by the community: Urgent Care Facility in or near the area, Post Office, Movie Theatre, Hardware Store, Civic or Community Facility, Amphitheatre or Water Park Feature.

3. Distribution of Densities and Heights: The site should provide the highest heights and densities in the Pentagon City area, with heights and densities tapering down toward the southwest portion of the site to meet adjacent existing low-rise residential development.

- Highest densities should be in the northern portion of the site for ease of access to major transportation corridors and existing and future transit nodes and above the Metro station at the intersection of 12th St. S and Hayes Street.
- Step backs should be used along 15th Street to maintain compatibility with low-rise residential development along this corridor.
- The Metro entrance at the intersection of 12th and Hayes Street should develop as the highest point of the site.
- Building heights should be varied to break up the skyline.
- Heights and densities should conform to zoning regulations and meet County policies and plan recommendations. The County Board may consider additional height and/or density with provision of additional community benefits.

4. Open Space: Well-designed publicly accessible open space in discrete urban parks and plazas should be fully integrated throughout the development and should contribute to creation of a sense of place in Pentagon City as a whole.

- Design of public spaces should include links to established pedestrian connections created by surrounding development and access to existing and future transit nodes on and around the site.
- Public spaces should complement the public spaces in the existing and proposed developments to the east and west, and should be designed to encourage congregation and socialization.
- Public spaces should be designed, sited and sized in context with surrounding uses and should be lighted in a manner that promotes safety, while minimizing unwanted impacts on surrounding uses.
- A public plaza or significant public art feature should create an entry to the neighborhood at the Metro entrance at the intersection of 12th and Hayes Streets and contribute to an easily recognizable image and identity for the area.
- Rooftops should be considered as additional opportunities to provide public space through the use of green roofs.
- Public spaces should be incorporated into streetscapes to contribute a pedestrian-oriented environment along the 12th Street corridor, and to provide a transition to the residential area along 15th Street.

5. Circulation and Pedestrian Routes: A street grid should be phased into development to ultimately provide a multi-modal street network improving pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular access through and around the site.

- Design of the site should promote Pentagon City's multimodal transportation infrastructure and connectivity and improve access to transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.
- New internal streets should be designed as secondary streets allowing services (parking and loading) to be removed from the perimeter of the site, and off of Hayes Street, 12th Street, Fern Street and 15th Street. These secondary streets should be designed as narrower streets reflecting a more pedestrian nature.
- Continuous east-west connections should extend 13th and 14th Streets proposed for the Metropolitan Park block, to connect Hayes and Fern.
- A north-south connection should be provided to connect 12th and 15th streets allowing a full range of pedestrian and vehicular movements and should provide visual connection to the existing vista extending north through the MCI and Lincoln properties.
- Twelfth street should be developed to support future planned transit on this corridor as identified in the Master Transportation Plan and should be activated with retail uses to enhance pedestrian experience along the corridor.
- Phasing of the street network should accommodate existing retail uses in the interim.
- The new street network should create pedestrian connectors to strengthen the relationship between the core of Pentagon City and adjacent residential areas.
- Pedestrian passageways should link surrounding developments and routes to and from existing and future transit nodes.

6. Streetscapes: Streetscapes should maximize pedestrian-friendly features, highlight key intersections and gateways, and identify short-term improvements

for blocks where redevelopment is not planned to be implemented until later phases of the project.

- Within the hierarchy of streets of primary, secondary and tertiary, streetscapes should be varied to provide different pedestrian experiences and feels.
- Superblocks should be broken up with pedestrian ways or new streets and create a finer-grained development by using build-to lines along critical street frontages and incorporate step backs along corridors where a pedestrian scale is appropriate.
- Streetscape along 12th Street should be designed to complement proposed County transit improvements for the Pentagon City-Crystal City area.

7. Parking: Parking should be provided below grade unless impossible due to Metro tunnel. Any above grade parking structures should incorporate facades consistent with high quality architecture on the site.

- Parking ratios should be established to enhance the multi-modal nature of the site directing users to alternative modes of travel and lessening the impact of traffic associated with any future increases of density on the site.
- Onsite parking should be established within the context of the entire site rather than for individual buildings, and in the interim, should be sensitive to factors unique to big-box retail uses.
- All parking resources should be maximized through measures such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and shared parking, building on the parking synergies inherent in mixed use developments.
- On street parking should be provided to the extent possible to accommodate short term visitors and retail customers as a means of enhancing the pedestrian experience.
- Parking requirements should minimize spillover into surrounding residential neighborhoods.

8. Sustainable Design: All aspects of urban and architectural design should incorporate sustainable and green building principles.

- Consider environmental sustainability and overall energy efficiency as integral parts of all aspects of building design and development.
- All new buildings on the site should, at a minimum, be LEED certified.
- Green roofs should be incorporated to limit heat island effect.

9. Phasing: Phasing of development should accommodate existing retailers as an interim use and community benefits should be provided concurrent with phasing of the PDSP.

- Development of early phases should provide interim pedestrian connections through the site and be compatible with long term pedestrian connections to and from transit nodes.
- The PDSP for the site should include urban design guidelines to facilitate long term development of this site and define how these guidelines will be met.
- The completion of each phase of redevelopment should be in harmony with the portions of the site slated for redevelopment at a future date