**FRAMEWORK FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: CENTRAL WEST FOCUS AREA**

**March 21st and April 4th, 2013**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

For the next two Steering Committee sessions, you are tasked with developing *Guiding Planning Principles* focused on the four topic areas discussed at the March 12th meeting:

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Connectivity
2. Traffic and Transit
3. Future Land Use
4. Community Character
5. During the March 12th session, it was noted that several topics might be considered under more than one of these focus areas. These included, for example: (a) Carolina North and its influence on future planning considerations for the CWFA; (b) the distribution and character of public open spaces and other green areas; and (c) the issue of sustainability – environmental, economic, and community. *Your group does NOT have to cover all of these topics but if you think the topic might be relevant, don’t worry about the fact that another group might be addressing it as well --- just proceed. We can address overlapping principles when we put all of the groups’ work together.*
6. Please consider the responses provided by those attending the March 2nd community workshop as well as the summary of visions provided earlier by the community (see attached), when developing your Guiding Principles so that the views expressed during this session are reflected in our joint work efforts as we proceed.
7. There will be two sessions for discussing and developing these principles – March 21st and April 4th. The first, March 21st, session should be a brainstorming opportunity – a chance to get down as many potential principles related to your topic area as possible. Then, you can spend the time between March 21st and April 4th thinking about the list of potential principles, so that when you come back on April 4th, you can work as a group to refine your list to 3-5 key principles.
8. **WHAT IS A GUIDING PLANNING PRINCIPLE?**

*Planning principles* are basic statements defining the important factors to be considered in developing a plan for a specific area. The principles reflect the core values to be upheld in the ensuing plan. They define the factors that need to be considered when developing and evaluating the various planning scenarios for the area, and they reflect what it is hoped would be achieved through the planning process.

The “art” in creating workable planning principles is that they must be both specific enough to guide the development of concepts that can achieve stated objectives, yet sufficiently general to allow for a variety of ways that these principles can be satisfied. As we move along in the development of alternative planning scenarios, the planning principles will help us evaluate each of the options being considered.

Toward this end, the most effective planning principles are clearly stated and concise. Thus, the reader can quickly understand each of the key principles underlying a plan. (See the Glen Lennox Planning Principles provided at the last meeting, as well as the Lexington East End Small Area Plan, the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan principles, and the Guiding Principles for Transportation Planning, all attached).

In some instances, plans have included a set of more detailed objectives under each principle which define how that principle can be applied to this area in the plan. We have attached the Arlington Pentagon Centre Site Guiding Principles as an excellent example of this model. You might have time during your April 4th meeting to begin drafting objectives for your 3-5 principles; if not, the Steering Committee can develop these as we progress with the planning alternatives.

1. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

Listed below are some “jumping off points” for each of the discussion groups. You will probably think of a number of additional questions as you get into your discussions.

1. **For the Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety and Connectivity Group**
2. What is the area wide vision for accommodating non-motorized accessibility (both pedestrian and bicycle) in the CWFA?
3. Is there a vision for achieving “complete streets” in the CWFA? If so, what are the most appropriate locations for siting pedestrian and bicycle facilities in this area --- on the major arterials only? On local neighborhood streets as well? On existing and new connector streets or paths that tie to the major arterial streets?
4. Does this area currently offer good reasons for people to walk or bike (e.g., convenient destinations, landscaped streets or paths, etc.)?
5. Does the development of Carolina North present any new opportunities for linking the CWFA area to this campus, and to the rest of Town?
6. Are additional measures needed to create safe environments for both walking and biking? If so, generally what are these?
7. Is there a need for the establishment of a Safe Routes to Schools network?
8. **For the Traffic and Transit Group**
9. What would a successful transportation strategy for the CWFA area accomplish? What are the challenges for achieving this vision?
10. What are the kinds of transportation options that might be considered to alleviate traffic congestion fears in the CWFA over time? How might these relate to the projected development potentials for the area over time?
	1. Should this Small Area Plan define additional street connections throughout the CWFA, perhaps only in key locations, to help alleviate some of the pressure on Estes Drive?
11. Are there patterns of development that can reduce transportation demand in this area? If so, what are these?
12. What should be the transit goals for the CWFA area and what types of transit can best satisfy these? How does the phasing of transit in this area relate to the development of the Carolina North campus?
13. What should be the vision for Estes Drive with regard to vehicular access and accommodation in the future?
14. What should be the vision for Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard in the future?
15. **For the Future Land Use Group**
16. What are the characteristics of the CWFA area that the land use planning process will need to respond to?
17. How can density be accommodated in the CWFA, and how can it occur while still protecting the quality of existing, surrounding residential areas?
18. Will the future development of Carolina North provide land use options for the CWFA that are currently not feasible in this area?
19. What are the appropriate land uses for the CWFA and in what types of development patterns (e.g., clustered development; mixed use development; office park development, etc.)
20. What do you anticipate might be the open space needs of the CWFA community given the future development patterns envisioned?
21. What should be the affordable housing goals for this area?
22. **For the Community Character Group**
23. The community has said that it values the area’s environmentally sensitive features as well as its tree canopy. How can you envision future development accommodating these valued features?
24. What are the features of the current community that should be retained and incorporated into the CWFA’s Small Area Plan?
25. How might transit options relate to future development patterns in the CWFA?
26. How can density be accommodated in the CWFA, and how can it occur while still protecting the quality of existing, surrounding residential areas?
27. What role does the development of the Carolina North campus play in thinking about development patterns for the CWFA?
28. How can the image of the CWFA be enhanced through changes in the future?

In conclusion, feel free to explore each of these topics in terms of defining the **general planning principles** that will help guide the development of alternative planning concepts for the CWFA.