

What is the most important thing that ought to be done in Falls Church City?

Specific suggestions and criticisms re development (33)

An understanding of the linkage between business development, economic development, and the impact on the ability of the citizens to actually live (afford to live) in the community. Also - the need of the citizens to step up to help in the change process, not just to throw stones or not participate and then wonder what is happening. All data cannot be pushed from the City - sometimes it needs to be pulled by the citizenry.

Get more citizen participation. Most citizens are oblivious to the...way the City Council is encouraging development. We're going to wind up with unlivable "Crystal City," not adorable "Old Town Alexandria." Eight-to-ten story office buildings and hotels in Falls Church make no sense at all. We're too far from main hubs—Tysons and Downtown—to be attractive for major business; and Routes 7 and 29 can't be expanded to improve access and speed to other areas. We're going to develop ourselves into a big traffic jam on the map. City Hall is encouraging too many rental residential units, and this is going to defeat the purpose of providing tax base to serve City Needs—School will be choked with new pupils and Falls Church Police will be hard pressed to deal with all the overcrowding issues—mostly related to citizens turned against each other because of the over-development, over-crowding, traffic gridlock, and unwanted "strangers" parking in our neighborhoods. Broad Street has already developed into "the Road to Hell" regardless of which direction you're going. I'm considering moving the hell out, and I never thought I would.

Create a neighborhood-friendly community that is easily walkable, aesthetically pleasing, not over-developed with a keen eye toward investing in the best in elementary and secondary education. Develop a vision and a strategic plan, modeled not only who we are, but what we already know works. There are many models of communities that we could refer to in developing our city---not just in Virginia! Some other thoughts: The new buildings on Broad Street preclude any family from feeling safe while walking down the street---the sidewalk is right on top of the street! How about more upscale street lights and better designed street signs? How about encouraging development beyond the city center---I live on a street off of West Street. The development on my part of town is awful. One final thought: I am very disappointed in this survey. It's very broad and unfocused, and the spectrum of choices (most important/less important) is weak descriptors.

The City should make every effort to clean-up the appearance of the city. (1) Removing all the advertising signs on the sidewalks, grass, etc. (2) Put all utilities wires underground, not only on Broad Street but the entire community. However I am concerned with what is deemed clean up. Who decided that planting trees in middle of Hill wood Ave. is beautiful? Hillwood Avenue has its own set of beautiful trees. It is ugly and not clearly marked. Paint what needs to be painted. It was never done. There is no up-keep, plus why all the signs in that small of an area? A community swimming pool should be built for the swim team at George Mason, and also for the community to use. This is long overdue.

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The city needs a more explicit understanding of how conflicts will be resolved concerning the goals of commercial development and neighborhood preservation. The process now seems too arbitrary. The staff seems to be too reactive. The commissions seem to be ill-informed on critical details. The community is more likely to get good results if its goals are clearer.

Stop building huge buildings on Broad Street. Where there used to be perhaps 10 vehicles a day entering/leaving a lot, there are now going to be at least 100 vehicles a day entering or leaving the lots of the huge buildings. This is going to create a transportation nightmare in an already miserable situation. And where on earth are all the vehicles going to park? On the side roads, of course. Falls Church is going to have to Zone the City, and then hire people to monitor the parking zones and apprehend/penalize the abusers. Falls Church has already lost its village appearance because of the high density housing and new huge buildings, and will now die as a community. It is sad to see it go.

Advertise meetings better, make them more accessible (weeknights are pretty difficult for most families - weekends might be better or vary the times of meetings); provide guides or "how-to" manuals on how to get more involved. I would love to get more involved, but never even heard of Deliberation Day that met on the 17th until I saw this survey. Also developing the city and providing more community activities that are family friendly. Someone mentioned a single city pool - I think more of a "country club" type center that offers dining, dancing and/or events, pools, tennis, activities for both children AND adults would really bring the city together.

The proposed, nine, ten, and eleven story buildings being proposed for the City Center are simply too big and need to be scaled to more human proportions taking into account the size of existing residential neighborhoods. As emphasized by the City's own community planning and design consultant, Glatting Jackson, if the City Center is going to be developed, it must be done right. If the City proceeds cautiously, we will retain some sense of proportion and harmony, which is the desired goal of zoning in the first place. Falls Church City's quiet charm is the reason many of us choose to live here, and it should be preserved.

Stop unreasonably interfering with property owners' rights to build on their own property and to engage in their legal and constitutional right to own and enjoy their land. The City and its Government, at times, operate like a high school "clique" -- folks feel alienated and at odds with leadership. FC is losing it's small town, "Mayberry" feel. It used to be that one COULD fight City Hall in Falls Church. Neighbors often comment that our City has more red tape and barriers than neighboring Fairfax County. Take input from citizens - listen to what WE want and don't blindly follow the course of action you believe is right (especially if you are basing decisions along on party lines). Remember that the citizens are the City.

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Meetings by City officials or City Council members with community organizations and neighborhood associations are helpful when development issues are likely to be controversial. Citizens frequent form opinions based on misinformation and a lack of understanding of the circumstances surrounding particular design proposals. Likewise, city staff who don't live within the city's confines frequently fail to appreciate the concerns (and occasionally paucity of information) held by citizens.

Be realistic about development. In 20 years there have been several "over the top" plans that never came to fruition. The current Maple St./Annandale Rd./Broad St plan is too ambitious and will make life much worse for the Cherry Hill Townhouse community without adding anything but traffic to the area. We need a renewal and design to maintain and expand affordable housing; we need smaller scale upgrades to the Broad St. Corridor. Enough with the developments that have brought little to the City.

Create a unique identity for our city. People should know when they enter our city: unique sidewalks, signage, flower pots, flags. Need to stick to our master plan. Long range planning is essential. Know where we will be putting commercial buildings and what will remain single family housing. I like the multiple use concept and there are certainly areas (W. Broad St.) that could be changed from old houses that hold a business to a more effective use.

City government should take ownership of creating the City Center "Great Place" (civic square anchored with arts or cultural center) instead of trying to get private developers to do it for them. Only then will citizens have a true sense of ownership and price. The city and its citizens must be willing to invest in such a place just like they do in the great school system.

Address traffic congestion. Redevelop the "lovely" part of Washington Street...from Sizzlers to Jackson. Rethink the grade distribution in the schools...our kids are growing up too fast, so our schools put kids in middle and high school even earlier...that is just crazy. The school decision was based on real estate, not child development, yet the city brags about the schools and wants to protect the school reputation.

Reexamination of how development contracts are awarded. Two development firms have enjoyed a virtual monopoly, despite poor performance, cost & schedule overruns, and numerous change to requirements. To generate a set of desirable AND attainable goals for a future Falls Church City, the opinion of the public can no longer be ignored in what effectively equates to a decision to sole source development.

Stop giving exceptions to developers, stick to the regulations that evolved through many, many hours of consideration by dedicated people and now seem to to be a lower limit rather than an upper limit. Stop taking sidewalks and road lanes from the citizens and letting the developers use them as their own property for months and months. In other words, give us back the full use of our public property.

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Improve communication between City Hall and the citizens so that the process of development is well understood by the neighborhoods. Then the neighborhoods need to form organizations with spokespersons to ensure that people are heard.

BALANCE need for retail and office space development with preserving village feel of the city. I do not want to be another Clarendon. Current proposal from Atlantic for city center is too tall. Buildings should not be at a height more than 3 stories higher than highest current surrounding buildings. This means no more than 5 stories above grade, including parking levels.

The proposed development of the 100 and 200 blocks of West Broad St. I feel this area needs to especially keep a village feel (think Clarendon, Georgetown, Old Town, Adams Morgan - NOT Roslyn or Ballston). I think keeping the post office where it is contributes to that.

Utilize the studies and plans you have to move forward. Decide on the master plan and go for it—stop searching for new plans repeatedly. Be decisive about how to attract development and good businesses. Otherwise, it seems a real possibility that res. taxes will go through the roof.

Distinctive “you are in Falls Church” awareness: Signage (“entering”, “leaving” Falls Church) and distinctive sidewalks both sides of Broad (like uniform red brick). Change name to Falls Church City for zip code 22046.

Stop overbuilding, drastically slow development; discourage unbridled population and traffic growth. The City is rapidly going from a small city, village atmosphere to a downtown Brooklyn feel.

Establish more open space, reduce amount of cars, and make more bike friendly. The point, in my opinion, is to make the city more like a college town (small town but intelligent) than simply a cute little town. A bookstore would also be nice.

The City needs to take the lead and provide parking and infrastructure first, and then development will come. Waiting for the developers to do it will mean more small parking lots so that you can not park one place and walk to various businesses

I think we need a swimming pool in the city. We need to have a performing cultural center where people can come to for an evening out. Places to eat dinner and see an art show or a play.

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Don't polarize the neighborhoods by suggesting that we get involved based on "location". We need to take a "Falls Church" approach not a "neighborhood" approach to solving problems.

Maintain pedestrian friendly environment: safe and generous sidewalks with setbacks from streets, trees for shade, well maintained parks as destinations, traffic calming measures so street crossings are safe, enforcement of speed limits for same reason

It is imperative that the...zoning administrator...works closely with the planning department. Repair the zoning code to protect the city and the environment.

Require all development projects to carry a LEED standard of at least bronze

Get that Harris Teeter built ASAP!

Build downtown parking - good development will flow from that.

Stop the monster houses replacing the small ones

Enforce the zoning code.