

# MEMORANDUM

TO:	Zoning Committee and Long Range Planning Committee of the Planning Commission	
FROM:	Kevin Lam, Associate Planner	DATE: May 5, 2021
SUBJECT:	Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Clarendon Revitalization District Maximum Height Limit Map Revision	

The purpose of the upcoming **Tuesday May 11, 2021**, joint ZOCO/LRPC meeting is to review a proposed revision to the Maximum Height Limit Map in the Clarendon Revitalization District ([ACZO §9.2.5, Map 1](#)) to reflect changes in building height and form requested in a proposed site plan amendment to SP #438 (Clarendon West). Staff will be bringing a Request to Advertise on this amendment for County Board consideration at its May 15, 2021 meeting.

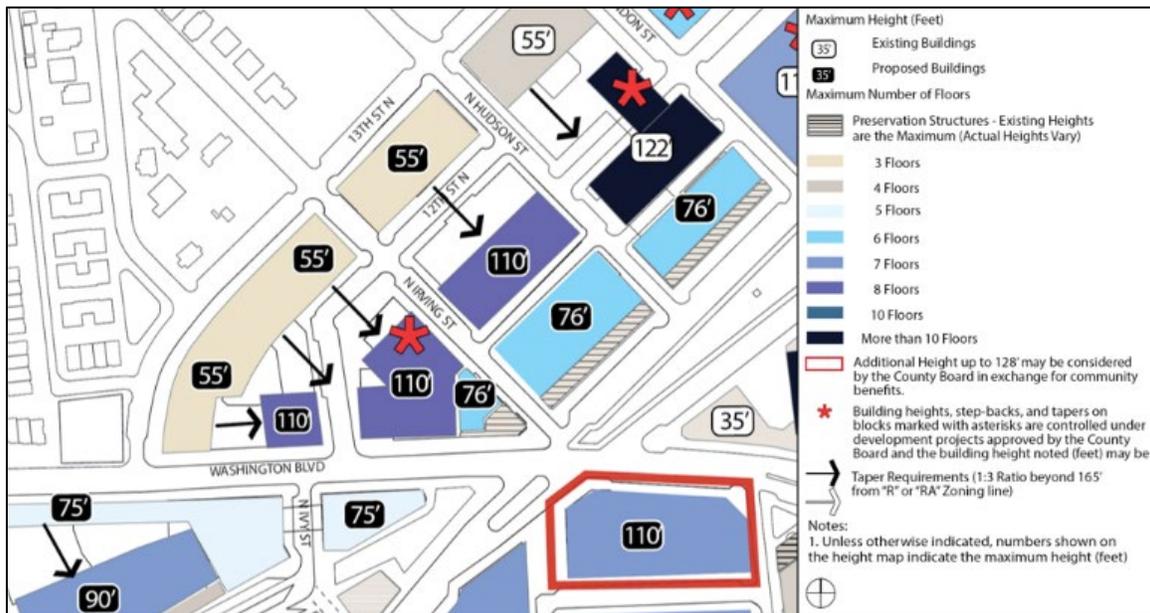
Should the County Board approve staff's request to authorize the advertisement, the Planning Commission and County Board would hear the zoning ordinance amendment at their respective June 2021 meetings. The County Board will also consider at their June meeting the site plan amendment to SP #438, which includes several amendments to Building 1 of the Clarendon West development including lowering the overall building height, reducing the residential parking ratio, and modifying the location of the ground floor unit stoops and main building entrances.

## **Background**

The Clarendon Sector Plan was adopted by the County Board in December 2006 and provides guidance for the redevelopment of Clarendon through a series of form-based recommendations. Subsequent to the adoption of the Clarendon Sector Plan, the County Board in April 2008 amended the C-3 zoning district's regulations for special exceptions within the Clarendon Revitalization District, which codified many of the form-based redevelopment guidelines of the Clarendon Sector Plan. Site plan applications located within the Clarendon Revitalization District must comply with these form-based parameters unless modified, where allowed, by the County Board. Maximum building height is an element of the Clarendon Revitalization District that is not modifiable by the County Board through the special exception process.

The maximum height limit map (§9.2.5, Map 1), shown in Figure 1, outlines the maximum height for each site located in the Clarendon Revitalization District and recommends a maximum height of 55 feet in many areas adjacent to R (“Residential”) or RA (“Multiple-Family”) zoning districts. A building height tapering of one (1) vertical foot for every three (3) horizontal feet beyond a 165-foot distance from an R or RA zoning district boundary is required, unless the maximum height limit map shows heights greater than the tapering requirement. Areas where the taper requirements apply are indicated with arrows. The purpose of the reduced heights closest to these zoning districts is to allow for increased heights in the core of Clarendon while providing a transition up in height from lower density residential areas.

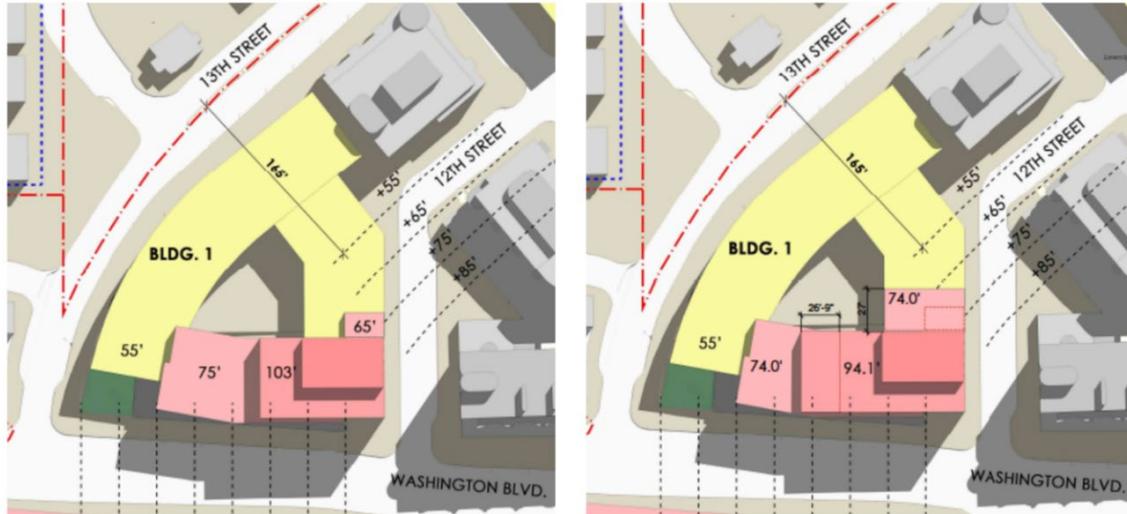
**Figure 1. Clarendon Revitalization District Map 1, Maximum height limit (ACZO §9.2.5)**



**Original Site Plan and Zoning Ordinance Amendment Approval**

On October 17, 2015, the County Board approved SP #438 for the construction of three (3) new residential buildings known as Clarendon West, and a zoning ordinance amendment to revise Maps 1-8 in the Clarendon Revitalization District to reflect changes to the block structure and to revise Map 1 to reflect changes to the proposed building height of Building 1, located at the northeast corner of Washington Boulevard and 13<sup>th</sup> Street North. Staff supported revisions to Map 1 in 2015 because the applicant was providing land to support new public open space and implementing significant transportation improvements that would reconfigure the surrounding road network along with new streetscape elements, thus providing sufficient buffers between Building 1 and the adjacent R/RA-zoned properties. Staff also supported changes to the height map in 2015 because the nearest R/RA-zoned properties to Building 1’s upper floors height are common areas for the Bromptons at Clarendon (a townhouse development), with the nearest home located 80 feet or more from the “spring point” for the taper plane. For those reasons and when coupled with the building transitions in height gradually increasing with more distance from the adjacent residential properties, staff in 2015 concluded that the revisions to Map 1 were appropriate for the site.

**Figure 2. Building Height and Form Changes**



**Approved**

**Proposed**

Source: Applicant

**Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment**

The Shooshan Company is requesting several amendments to the approved site plan for Building 1 of the Clarendon West development, including lowering the overall building height and changes to the building form on Levels 7 to 10. Level 11 is proposed to be eliminated, which reduces the overall height of the building from 103 feet to 94.1 feet at the roofline (Figure 2). In addition, the Level 8 roofline would be slightly reduced from 75 feet to 74 feet. While the total gross floor area (GFA) of Building 1 remains unchanged at 244,389 square feet, a reallocation of GFA throughout the building would add square footage on Levels 7 to 10. The expansion on Levels 7 to 10 would be achieved through increased floor plates and a more gradual tapering of heights compared to the previous approval (Figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 3. Building Elevation, Washington Boulevard Frontage**



**Approved**

**Proposed**

Source: Applicant

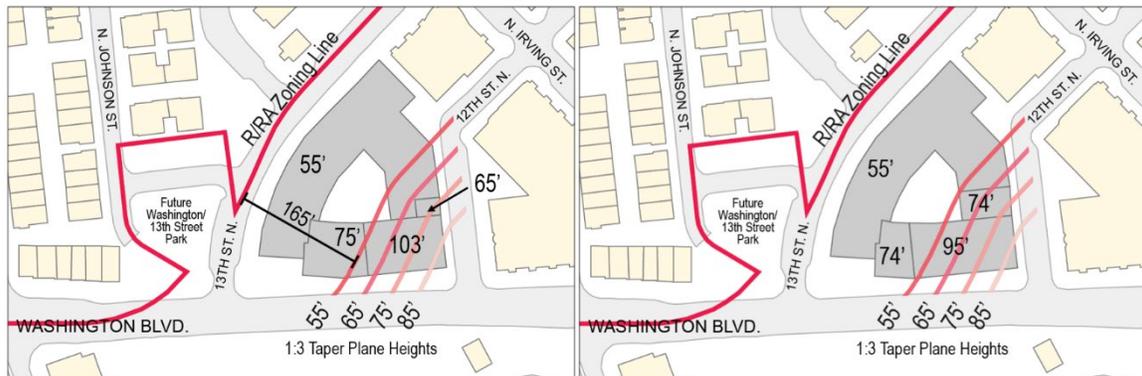
**Figure 4. Building Elevation, 12<sup>th</sup> Street North Frontage**



Source: Applicant

This results in portions of Building 1 exceeding the tapering requirement of the Clarendon Revitalization District, as measured from the R or RA zoning district boundary (Figure 5). On the 12<sup>th</sup> Street North frontage, changes to Levels 7 and 8 will increase the stepped height from 65 feet to 74 feet. The Shooshan Company is requesting these building height changes to create a more efficient building design and facilitate changes to the interior layout of the building, including an increase in the number of housing units within the previously approved GFA. Figures 6 and 7 show the approved and proposed ground level views of Building 1.

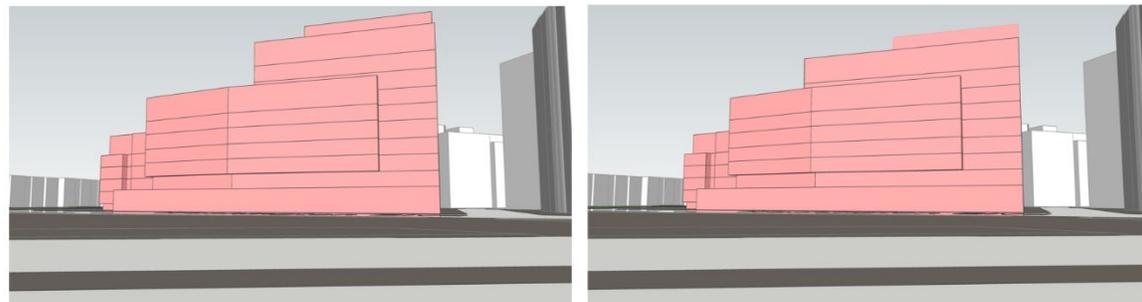
**Figure 5. Taper Plane Diagram of Clarendon West Building 1**



**Approved**  
Source: CPHD

**Proposed**

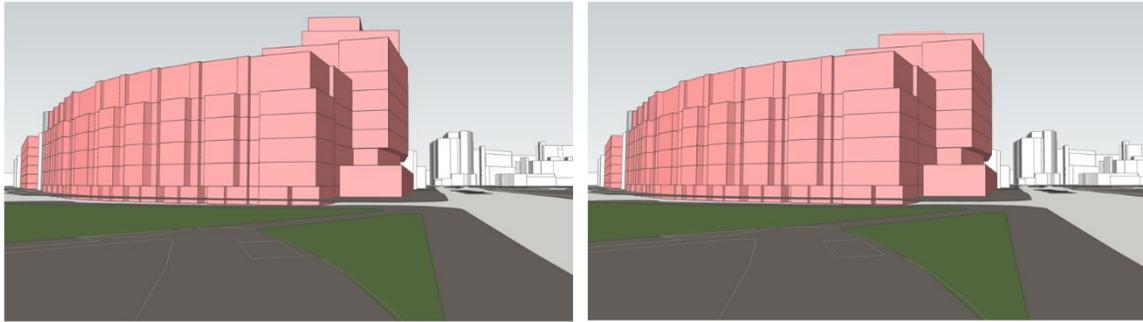
**Figure 6. Ground Level View, Fairfax Drive Looking North**



**Approved**  
Source: CPHD

**Proposed**

**Figure 7. Ground Level View, Future Washington/13<sup>th</sup> Street Park Looking East**



**Approved**

**Proposed**

Source: CPHD

The provisions of [ACZO §9.2.2.D.5](#) govern building heights for sites zoned C-3 with a General Land Use Plan Designation of “Medium Density Mixed Use” in the Clarendon Revitalization District:

**“5. Height regulations**

Under no circumstances shall the County Board approve a site plan that exceeds the following overall height maximums:

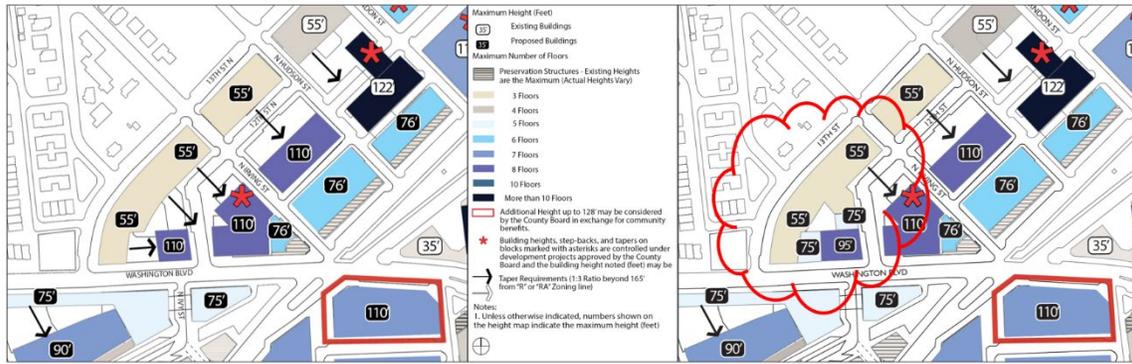
- (a) No building, except for mechanical penthouses, shall be erected to exceed 55 feet in height, except as provided below.
- (b) When a structure is farther than 165 feet from an R or RA district, the height may be increased by one foot for every three feet beyond 165 feet, up to a maximum height of 110 feet.
- (c) Where the Maximum Heights Limit Map (§9.2.5, Map 1) shows heights greater than heights allowed in subsections (a) and (b), above, the County Board may allow additional height up to the maximum height shown on the Maximum Heights Limit Map (§9.2.5, Map 1) and may permit additional height for those sites designated as “Receiving Sites for Additional Height” on the Receiving Sites Map (§9.2.7, Map 3).”

Under these regulations, the County Board can only approve heights that exceed 55 feet in two circumstances:

- 1. The increased height is located 165 feet from the nearest R or RA zone and meets the 1:3 tapering requirement; or
- 2. The increased height is shown on the Maximum Height Limit Map (§9.2.5, Map 1).

Because the proposed change in height for Clarendon West Building 1 exceeds the 1:3 tapering requirement, the County Board may only approve the proposed change to eliminate the 11<sup>th</sup> floor and extend the floor plates of Floors 7-10 through an amendment to the Maximum Height Limit Map (§9.2.5, Map 1). The proposed revision to Map 1 would replace the arrow indicating a 1:3 tapering requirement and the overall maximum height of 110 feet with clearly delineated height maximums of 55, 75, and 95 feet (Figure 8). The proposed reduction in overall building height from 103 feet to 94.1 feet and changes to the building form on Levels 7 to 10 would create more gradual height transitions with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed building massing is not expected to create undue adverse impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and does not increase the total GFA of Building 1.

**Figure 8. Clarendon Revitalization District Map 1, Maximum height limit (ACZO §9.2.5)**



**Current Map**

**Proposed Map**

**Next Steps and Timeline**

Following discussion at the joint ZOCO/LRPC meeting, staff intends to bring the request to authorize the advertisement of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to the County Board at its May meeting. The Planning Commission and County Board would consider the proposed amendment at their June meetings.

*Anticipated Schedule of Actions*

May 2021 County Board Meeting	County Board Request to Advertise for Public Hearings (zoning ordinance amendment)
June 2021 Planning Commission Meeting	Planning Commission Consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning ordinance amendment to revise the Maximum Height Limit Map in the Clarendon Revitalization District</li> </ul>
June 2021 County Board Meeting	County Board Consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning ordinance amendment to revise the Maximum Height Limit Map in the Clarendon Revitalization District</li> <li>• Site plan amendment for Clarendon West (SP #438)</li> </ul>