

## **Rosslyn Process Panel (RPP) Subcommittee on Building Height + Massing Meeting Summary**

**September 30, 2014; 7:00-9:30 pm**

**2100 Clarendon Blvd.,** Lobby Level Conference Room 109/111

**Subcommittee Members** in Attendance: B. Harner (Chair), S. Cole, S. Karson, A. McGeorge, M. Novotny, S. Stein, A. VanHorn, T. Womack, J. Zeien

**Staff** in Attendance: A. Fusarelli, M. Ladd, C. Williamson (B. Carlson)

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### **1. Welcome**

### **2. Building Massing, Three Scenarios**

- Diagram depicting buildable area as percentage of entitlement area may need updating to stay current with those sites with taller building elevations than public observation deck;
- Interest in more information on applying an assumption for residential floor plates up to 100 feet deep, and a better understanding of any key tradeoffs;
- There's one view point that the land basis costs may be higher than what the W-ZHA analysis assumes;
- With respect to the goals for evaluation, not having the analysis and findings tonight would seem to hinder the subcommittee's ability to provide well-informed feedback;
- It would be most helpful to a map key that identifies where each site is for future reference;
- Along neighborhood edge transitions, it would be great to quantify how much of an imaginary plane is filled up by building face/mass across various alternative scenarios;
- Questions pertaining to the approach to TDR, as from earlier discussions it seemed that TDR was not to be applied to get above the 10FAR?
- The Holiday Inn site in Scenario B has shadow impacts on Gateway Park and lack of scale/transition;
- Interest in knowing why the Ames Center buildings shorter than adjacent ones, including those that are even further from Metro; also curious why new building did not go to point of Fort Myer and Nash.
- If achieving a better skyline (from afar) is one of the goals, it should also be listed on the "Goals" slide;
- There are two neighborhoods that buildings in the RCRD need to transition too, which includes RAFOM;
- Overall it seems that Scenario A is more canyon-like along Wilson Blvd than the other scenarios;
- 50' between towers may not be enough separation for buildings that could reach up to and above 300 feet tall; if there's a strong rationale for such a minimum distance, it would be good to know;
- Need to correct use mix shading on birds eye model views for Rosslyn Gateway's NW building;
- Any of the buildings shown as residential could just as easily be hotel;
- Along Wilson Blvd west of Oak, it seems odd in the scenarios with residential along Wilson and office along 18<sup>th</sup> – somewhat contrary to the existing and emerging characters of those streets;
- It would be helpful to add caveats to diagrams to reinforce they are not recommendations for specific uses on specific sites;
- Interest in knowing how the estimated future GFA and full development program would translate into people (workers and residents)

### **3. Open Discussion**

- The discussion of the 3 scenarios presented should be informed by a supporting discussion about use mix; maybe better to discuss use mix before preferred heights and densities;
- Variety in building heights across central Rosslyn is important;
- It would be helpful to show how these scenarios compare with respect to edge transitions;

- It's important to note that the residential building at 1400 Key Blvd. was primarily okay because of its orientation to the edge, which helped mitigate impacts of its 295' of height;
- Interest in rationale and other considerations factoring into choices around tower orientation;
- Established policy seems clear about 300' and 10FAR; would like to see written documentation being referenced as County policy that differs from this;
- It seems a difficult ask to try to select one of these three scenarios as the best option; there may be certain areas where A might be better than C – not sure there's a one size fits all;
- At next meeting would like to know what previous FAA determinations have said about Rosslyn Plaza;
- Due to lack of shared analysis, it's impossible to look at systematically in terms of potential results;
- Prefer to discuss the type of place we want to create, and focusing on looking at how different designs achieve desired goals. Only by objectifying this do we have a better understanding of how to proceed;
- An important part of this is understanding what a minimum residential benchmark might be;
- For some scenarios, reduced density could translate into reduced community benefits and tax revenues;
- But maybe citizens would be okay with less density and less tax and community benefits;
- Thus far, analysis hasn't done great job of testing open space achievements across the scenarios;
- Architecture of individual buildings can make a big difference, and result in something extraordinary;
- Some discouraged by current trajectory of redevelopment in the RCRD, and the loss of all historic fabric;
- There are two major constraints – FAA and FAR. With these at play, can we still create a great skyline and future form for Rosslyn?
- Some sense that views from major and more vantage points in Rosslyn are greatly improved with height variation across the collection of buildings;
- Scenario C seems to offer clear advantages over A and B, especially when consider the improved look of the skyline, view corridors, etc.;
- Scenario C seems to have some advantage over others; would be particularly interested in a comparison of views looking west up Wilson Blvd from Freedom Park bridge;
- Surprised no views along 18<sup>th</sup> Street were shown, given the importance that future connection;
- Scenario C seems punitive in terms of reducing height throughout, and losing opportunities for shaping the skyline and having great architecture; it's possible that permutations of A and B might get at the level of varied height we seem to be moving toward;
- The key is figuring out how to encourage developers to have some variability in the height of their buildings – there may be potential to put systems in place to encourage this result;
- We need to think about building policy assuming each site is owned by an individual owner;
- Interest in a surface analysis that can more clearly show the creation of peaks and valleys;
- What lessons can we take from other great skylines (Chicago cited as example)?
- Disagreement with opinion that A and B are better scenarios, since they provide less varied height;
- It's important that a preferred scenario protect views from the observation deck, and also maximize opportunities for views throughout Rosslyn;
- Preserving views from private buildings are very important; wants Rosslyn buildings to be successful, and have top floor(s) of all buildings should have protected views out;
- We should aim for a desirable goal, even if we may know it's not possible; this should help lead us to developing form standards that relate to how we want Rosslyn to look;
- A key question is could developers accept scheme that achieves height variation even though that may place some restrictions on their properties? Could this be palatable in exchange for establishing a plan with more predictability and specificity? What is the value of this?
- Maybe, but the math has to work. Maybe if the County embraces an approach with less community benefit expectations, recognizing the benefit they are buying is additional light and air in Rosslyn;
- Could there be a policy decision made to forego some/all community benefits typically expected in "C-O Rosslyn" projects;

- Understand interest in peaks and valleys scheme, but since there may be cases where the scheme is beneficial to other buildings with enhanced view sheds, need to consider what offsets could help make it more palatable to probably build project;
- Need to focus on long term value; it's easy to go for the near-term community benefits; but we should seriously consider whether there might be a longer term value proposition if we focus more on creating the best possible Rosslyn, even if that means significantly reducing community benefit expectations;
- This is a good point, and such an approach could help expedite implementation; the problem is that as an added cost, community benefits get passed on to customers, and translates into increased price'
- Scenario B and C get less varied height, they just push everything down; they don't seem to reflect tapering policies;
- Some recognition that we should not be expecting developers to pay for all plan improvements through community benefits;
- Appreciation for a lot of variation shown in Scenarios B and C especially, however still worry about where things end along an edge in a peak.

## **5. Adjourn**

- Brief discussion of next steps noted that staff and the subcommittee chair would work offline to determine next steps and draft agenda for next meeting (10/22)