

**Long Range Planning Committee, Summary**

**May 20-21, 2015; 7:00-10:00 pm**

**2100 Clarendon Blvd., County Board Room**

**PC Members in Attendance:** Steve Cole (LRPC Chair), Rosemary Ciotti, Brian Harner, Ginger Brown, Chris Forinash, Erik Gutshall, Stephen Hughes, Nancy Iacomini, James Schroll, Jane Siegel, Stephen Sockwell

**Staff in Attendance:** Anthony Fusarelli, Steve Cover, Bob Duffy, Elizabeth Weigle

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**May 20, 2015**

**A. Welcome/Introductions/Transformational Elements – Steve Cole**

**B. Rosslyn Process Panel Update – Brian Harner**

**C. Introductory Remarks – Bob Duffy**

**D. Overview of Draft Sector Plan & Urban Design, Building Height and Form section – Anthony Fusarelli**

**E. Urban Design, Building Heights, and Form**

- What does special context zones (Policy B1.a) refer to? (R: Refers to transitional edges of the district adjacent to lower density residential, parks, and the river);
- Please explain how heights map incorporates transitions and why the transitions map from the framework is not included (R: Heights, stepbacks and transition notes in heights map address neighborhood transitions; tower orientation map addresses park and river edge);
- Some neighbors have suggested this plan will allow taller buildings than would have been allowed under the current taper policy; how will bulk plane angles (notes on heights map) be implemented? How far does height plane extend into the site? (R: height plane extends infinitely into site);
- Where does height plane measurement begin (what elevation)? Notes should make clear;
- Clarendon Sector Plan uses zoning district edge, which can cause issues depending on how it's drawn; the method suggested here may work better, but should be clearly explained so that it can be implemented and understood by the general public (R: perhaps a diagram would be helpful in explaining the concept);
- It would be helpful to provide some contextual information for the WRAPS site; will the same height parameters and transitions apply in the proposed new district?
- Page 163 – caption needs to be clarified; there is also a typo – “were” should be “where”
- 3D model of Observation Deck views – will Air Force memorial be visible? If so, considering showing this, Arlington House, and cemetery topo in model;
- Recognizing that River Place is not part of the RCRD or study area, what study, if any, has been given to the potential future heights on this site? (R: River Place is outside the study area, so the heights were not analyzed; this would have to be part of a future study);
- With regard to the proposed height flexibility, why not increase heights proactively if staff feels that additional height is acceptable? Suggest that we should make a decision in the plan about whether we give the additional height or not, so that this battle does not need to be fought during site plan review;
- Height is always discretionary, so none of the heights in the plan are guaranteed; though, precedent shows that the County Board usually grants the maximum potential height;
- Supportive of criteria that states that additional height only be granted for residential or hotel; this will help incentivize residential uses.

- Criteria for height flexibility (p. 162) needs to be stronger and extremely careful: good views shouldn't be just from the tops of buildings; shouldn't grant additional height if proposals include above-grade parking; don't encourage random, unplanned open spaces that erode the street wall and build-to lines map;
- Has the County Attorney's Office reviewed the criteria for height flexibility and determined that the County Board would be able to use it to deny a request for height modification?
- In earlier discussions, the idea of an 18<sup>th</sup> step back came up; was this determined to be infeasible? (R: step back is not recommended along all of 18<sup>th</sup> as it limits feasible footprints, but lower 65' height zone is recommended along certain portions between Moore and Kent);
- Why aren't step backs recommended along Wilson and 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the Rosslyn Plaza site? (R: 70' recommended zone at Wilson and Arlington Ridge intersection achieves the view corridor from Freedom Park, while additional step backs on Wilson would limit feasible footprint; an open space is recommended along 18<sup>th</sup> Street and additional step back requirements here would further limit feasible footprints);
- Strengthen language in the plan regarding the benefits of the peaks and valleys approach; not only does it preserve the Observation Deck view corridors, it also provides advantageous views for multiple private properties;
- Observation Deck has the potential to make Rosslyn a major tourist destination, so potential to compromise views should be a major concern; views must be framed and provide a complete and clear view of the western bank of the Potomac River; strong guidelines for rooftop design should also be incorporated;
- Plan should define the priority view corridors further and state what exactly should be visible (e.g., specific landmarks, river, etc.);
- In 3D model, confirm that Rosslyn Metro Center is modeled at correct height? If it is, perhaps we should consider lowering it to open up the view from the Observation Deck further;
- Not fair to sow seeds of discontent at this point; if height should be limited to achieve goals of the plan, then the plan should be very explicit about that; the reality is that every developer is not going to get 10FAR, which is not guaranteed under current C-O-Rosslyn either; we should make this decision now, rather than have the fight during SPRC over height modification proposals;
- Why is the Observation Deck located in the middle of Rosslyn with buildings around it? Can it be relocated? (R: Location of Observation Deck was determined with the approval of the Central Place site plan in 2007; it is currently under construction);
- Peaks and Valleys approach is a much better policy than current taper/tent-pole policy;
- Some Process Panel and BID members have suggested that the design guidelines are too prescriptive; however, the sector plan is the opportunity to define a vision of Rosslyn as a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts; SPRC will not be able to evaluate the whole while focusing on one site plan, so guidelines are incredibly important; guidelines as proposed are reasonable, and we ought to be careful about major revisions to these;
- Should not let economic conditions of 2014 dictate a plan for 2040; due to the lack of residents in the core, the developers' voices are louder than the community's; sector plans are compacts with the community, and flexibility should not be the enemy of creating a good place; this plan should not be squishier than other sector plans;
- Add language to guidelines to provide clarity and make them more concrete; this will provide clear guidance for future proposals and should ensure the vision is achieved;
- Page 148 – This plan seems to provide more flexibility than other sector plans;
- Build-to lines relate to cross sections and the proposed open space system; the plan should reinforce the integrity of the build-to lines and not encourage random, on-site open spaces that erode the street wall;
- Proposed ground level design standards are robust; streetscape standards should include more examples of the streetscape elements (benches, lighting, paving, etc.) (R: Staff will aim to provide latest BID

streetscape elements document to PC (when ready) and will consider whether elements should be added to the Sector Plan);

- This is the first time that we have recommended streetscape elements that are distinct from the Arlington County standard; what is the community’s opportunity to weigh in on the BID’s plan?
- Strengthen language that discourages above grade parking; above grade parking should count towards FAR; previous studies have shown limited need for large increases in parking spaces in Rosslyn;
- Bedrock often makes below grade parking unfeasible and/or very costly; below grade parking will remain an aspirational goal; perhaps additional density should be provided to incentivize below grade parking;
- Page 159 – replace the photo on left with a more comparable precedent; this photo is too suburban and is low-density residential;
- Page 159 – language like “preferably” is not strong enough;
- How feasible is it to wrap parking with active uses? Many sites in Rosslyn are small and/or narrow (R: It will not be feasible on every site, but larger or consolidated sites could achieve wrapping);
- Commercial parking policy recently approved by the County Board provides mechanisms to reduce parking; these tools should be used to achieve less parking in Rosslyn and avoid above grade parking;
- Would be helpful to see hard numbers on parking (how much exists today and how much will be needed based on new development);
- Don’t feel that T4 (architectural composition of towers and tops) gets us to B2 Policy; all of this is predicated on squares and rectangles and doesn’t encourage creativity in building features; these guidelines would not achieve a distinctive building like the Architect’s Building; that said, not sure how to write guidelines that guarantee distinctive architecture and demand creativity/innovation;
- Since mechanical penthouses will be seen from above (from Observation Deck), we need a different type of screening than what we typically get in site plans; we especially want to avoid the fabric used on Turnberry Tower that has torn several times; the plan should incorporate more guidance on this issue;
- The plan’s renderings show boxy buildings that are all very similar to each other; consider including more distinct building type;
- Further emphasize language on creative use of shape, material, color, etc.;
- Crystal City Sector Plan calls out specific sites where interesting rooftop treatments are encouraged; consider using a similar approach in this plan;
- Recommend including some language on materials; this is an objective guideline that would help future SPRC discussions; do not agree with determining which buildings should be distinct or not distinct at the sector plan level;
- May be advantageous to encourage various materials to help vary the skyline and emphasize the foreground/background; however, the renderings are not meant to imply specific building design, so consider adding language to emphasize this point; for example, the plan could recommend that proposals consider techniques to differentiate new buildings from adjacent buildings;
- Buildings should still complement adjacent buildings, even if they are differentiated; and
- Page 166 – the guideline for 45’ tower separation needs clarity (R: We can look to add a diagram to better explain the guideline).

#### **F. Air Rights**

- Appreciate that air rights is included in the document; air rights can provide great benefit to community;
- Page 83 – no need for language in the plan to express negativity; suggest removing first sentence in 2nd paragraph;
- Page 83 – FAA issue would be more appropriate in Chapter 2; and
- The plan should be stronger with regard to facilitating air rights development; suggest a recommendation to amend the GLUP and rezone the air rights development sites so that they are primed for future redevelopment proposals.

## G. Land Use

- There is quite a bit of open space identified in the plan, and we should not feel as if there isn't enough. The ratio of street space to block space is good, and we'll need to focus on resources to implement.
- On the Illustrative Concept Plan spread, a note should be added to identify the public observation deck as a key highlight.
- Where should the plan identify priority projects that should be undertaken the soonest? The Process Panel identified filling in the Fort Myer Drive tunnel and addressing Gateway Park as a high priority.
- The Plan should include language that states changes to future CIPs should be made to incorporate priority projects identified in this plan;
- If this plan doesn't speak specifically to pop-up parks (tactical urbanism), related language should be added to address this.
- It's misleading to try to acknowledge account for housing/residents in the balance of the Rosslyn Metro Station when talking about use mix in the core because to date people living outside of RCRD have not shown interest in activating core. On the other hand, this might be due to Rosslyn not currently offering enough amenities and not being a very pleasant place to be in.
- Trends show more and more cities are moving towards mixed use urban cores, for Planning Commission, it would be great to see a summary of planning literature about the kinds of use mix balances that you strive for to make a great place;
- Penn Quarter in the district is a good example of setting a goal for a set number of new housing units (3,000) and then achieving it – would be good to know the tools that DC used in doing so; seemed like there was an incremental provisions of office and residential to maintain balance over time;
- In the land use projections, the retail share of 4% seems low? How does that compare with retail numbers for Crystal City, for example? Please share at Planning Commission;
- While this is a sector plan for 2040, these use mix goals appear to be based on full build out; it would be good to know whether 30% or some other percentage would be the actual goal/target for 2040;
- The plan seems to have a bias towards incentivizing residential, and we may potentially find an imbalance in the future due to these incentives;
- Perhaps number of units is not the right way to measure the goal, maybe it's better to monitor the relative use mix share in percentage terms;
- The good thing about targeting a number of units is the notion of a critical mass of people who will be living there to activate and sustain a place;
- Should give thought to whether the existing GLUP designations of High Residential in certain locations provides a good start to ensure some residential/hotel;
- Deeply concerned that the tools are inadequate; the two tower tool does not seem sufficient or equitable. Suggest a tool whereby every developer is responsible for X number of residential units, that could be achieved in a number of ways;
- Map p. 79 on ground floor uses, it would be good to know how the estimated retail build out would translate to percentage of ground floor space modeled in the proposed scenario;
- Street changes: maybe Wilson Blvd. between Pierce and Nash Streets should be red, maybe there should be more red on Moore Street, as well as on 18th Street; Wilson should not be blue on both sides of street between Lynn and Oak. Doesn't make sense for grocery store in 140 Key to be Blue;
- Not clear why different build out requirements for different streets in the RCRD – they should all have minimum of 15' first floor should be rule; Overall, the map and classifications used are extremely prescriptive, and are problematic;

- Regarding design standards for retail, maybe in the land use column just refer back to Retail Plan, alternatively, if included, make sure it reflects most current/what will be adopted as part of Retail Plan.

#### H. Transportation

- Along western edge of redrawn RCRD boundary, very concerned about relationship between pedestrian connection next to fire station and relationship to fire alley; others mentioned would not agree with taking out pedestrian connection (e.g. maps 93 and 151);
- Does the plan specifically address that International Place will need to be addressed in the future? If not, should embed some additional text for the more challenging blocks and speak to some of the challenges and opportunities;
- Sidewalk location shown for Holiday Inn site should be consistent with intended location across all maps;
- Wants to see 18<sup>th</sup> Street as a ped/bike priority street; it could be managed in certain ways, to convey a preference towards ped and bicycles, and convey this is not principally a vehicular street;
- Plan should recommend amending the County MTP to add a typology for a 'pedestrian street'
- Does not agree with recommended timing of two-way conversion as medium term – this should be done sooner;
- With Fort Myer Drive, the road is wider than it needs to be, and if narrowed, the excess land could be sold and County can capture value from selling excess land;
- If it's really important to define public space in sector plan, it seems like some of these spaces are being squeezed too tight? With 18<sup>th</sup> Street east of Lynn, is 60' adequate – think we would like to see wider sidewalks and parking bay on each side;
- Concern with lack of cycle tracks on Wilson Boulevard between Nash and Lynn Streets;
- There should be inclusion/reference to 'protected intersection designs' where appropriate; can refer to newly released federal guidelines for documentation;
- Does the plan speak to a notion of how much parking we'd like to see in future; maybe this is an area where the soon to be undertaken residential parking study can assist in;
- Image on p 103 is a great rendering; could benefit from a small 2D plan views that show how it all lays out in plan view;
- Need to push transit access/service here. How do we ensure we can accommodate a second Metro Station that is planned in the future? For Planning Commission, would like to have a better understanding of transit capacity, and whether we'd need a second station at some point to add more capacity to a system that's been maxed out to adequately serve Rosslyn;
- P. 104, clarify what's intended for 'bus platform' reference in second bullet;
- Suggest that bus staging layover lot should be located outside of Rosslyn;
- Why are a few segments of sidewalk in the system excessively wide; unless justifiable as a unique condition, should normalize and have all sidewalks in general tranches;
- Should seek overall uniformity in sidewalk widths to extent feasible.

#### I. Parks and Open Space

- Two alternatives for Rosslyn Plaza: problem w/ internal open space is that it will be much like one at Central Place, duplicating that type of space doesn't make sense;
- Wonder whether what's been left out of analyses is economics of new buildings; doesn't see this as a retail destination, more for open space uses;
- Share link with AED presentation on Rosslyn Plaza SPRC retail;
- From Kent and 18<sup>th</sup>, one can see top of Washington Monument; the views north and south along the esplanade will also be great;

- Much agreement that most attractive location for park space is along River and would prefer to carry forward one park location;
- An esplanade can work well with noise, need not worry about that as a limiting factor here;
- The esplanade is ambitious but warranted to include in the plan, at this level of detail;
- The Boathouse in Rosslyn would be transformative; consider beefing up language to talk about importance of boathouse as part of riverfront system, consider noting that potential air rights development could provide parking for boathouse or potentially other benefits if needed;
- Regarding proposed on-site public open space be allowed, one should have to tell us why small space should be ok; maybe there should be a threshold of how small we are talking about
- Many properties already have some type of frontage on open space; it is important that we already have open space network foundation, now we need strong street edges
- Does not want to see fracturing of open spaces.

#### J. Sustainability

- Should consider whether sustainability is something that should be specifically addressed in the sector plan;
- With respect to something like district energy, if you're not going to do it in Rosslyn, where would you do it?
- It may be that the plan should have standards for newer buildings that are higher because of the lost embodied energy from redeveloping the site;
- From a policy perspective, is it possible to raise the bar here, independent of other station areas; would reinforce that green infrastructure, including streetscapes and streets themselves are important; would advocate for Rosslyn to have flagship green streets given proximity to Potomac.

#### K. Community Benefits

- This plan is incredibly intense with public improvements; this creates concern with aspirational goal of up to 30% of affordable housing contributions towards affordable housing;
- Does not seem appropriate to treat affordable housing differently here from how it's treated in other sector plans;
- Should recognize that there is a significant areas just a couple of blocks away that can achieve affordable housing; could male point that affordable housing contributions should stay in Rosslyn (Metro Station Area); suggest taking all of the affordable housing contribution and leave it here;
- Should be careful about the potential for public benefits that are treated as "community benefits contributions" go to improve privately owned property – this is an issue;
- Suggest strengthening language in 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph to focus affordable housing as close to RCRD as possible, when being proposed;
- Seems outside of sector plan; something that affordable housing study should address; has worry with putting 30% goal in a long-term plan, much rather see implementation action to be "implement affordable housing study", which would interface with Rosslyn...prefer to rely on afford housing plan;
- For Planning Commission, need to further explain affordable housing recommendation and how that was derived.

#### I. Rebuttable Presumption

- Only in areas where we are totally indifferent, should we provide going a level of flexibility;
- If developers can't follow plan, they simply have to justify why they are doing something different, the pointy is to make clear they can do something different, with good reason;
- In some cases, language needs to be addressed; for instance, "at a minimum, on average" is problematic;

- Concerns with being overly specified about this; already plan is guidance.....they are not law....why not express plan as a clear vision of community;
- One question to ask is whether the plan defines minimum necessary components to achieve success in achieving vision of plan; staff trying to hit balancing point -if plan defines the right vision, there ought not be a lot of flexibility on those components;
- If there are things that are seen as so onerous from the development community perspective, then we should address those;
- Staff has tried to strike the right balance; need to be aware and cautious that we do not lock in a lot of biases and tools that may make sense now, but may not be sensible in the future under changed conditions;
- In terms of flexibility, should remove lawful words, and wiggle room words; let's be specific about places where we are agnostic;
- Where we are sure, be clear; Where we are indifferent, be clear.