



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**ZOA-2024-09**

**(Adaptive Reuse of  
Office Buildings)**

Adopted November 16, 2024

Effective November 16, 2024

At the County Board regular meeting on November 16, 2024, on a motion duly made by County Board Member Susan Cunningham and seconded by County Board Vice-Chair Takis P. Karantonis, the Arlington County Board unanimously adopted the following ordinance, effective immediately, to amend, reenact, and recodify Article 15.5 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to:

- A) Establish a new special exception site plan amendment category, *adaptive reuse amendment*, with specific criteria and methods to create an alternative process for the conversion of obsolete and vacant office buildings;
- B) Encourage economic development and enlarge the tax base, in order to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the public for other reasons required by public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice.

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Approved amendments are shown with **bold underline** to denote new text, and ~~strikethrough~~ to denote deleted text.

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# Article 15. Administration and Procedures

## §15.5. Site Plans

### §15.5.3 Scheduling

When a completed site plan or major site plan amendment is filed, the zoning administrator shall notify, as required in Administrative Regulation 4.1, the applicant of the scheduled date of the public hearing for the site plan or major site plan amendment, which date will be up to 180 days after filing. The date of filing of a complete application shall be determined as set forth in Administrative Regulation 4.1, based on whether the requirements of Administrative Regulation 4.1, have been met. Public hearings for site plans, adaptive reuse amendments, and major site plan amendments shall be the first regularly scheduled County Board meeting of each month, except the County Board may establish, on its own motion, another County Board meeting for the hearing. Public hearings for minor site plan amendments shall be as required for use permits under §15.4. Major site plan amendments, adaptive reuse amendments, minor site plan amendments, and administrative changes shall be defined as follows:

#### A. Major amendment

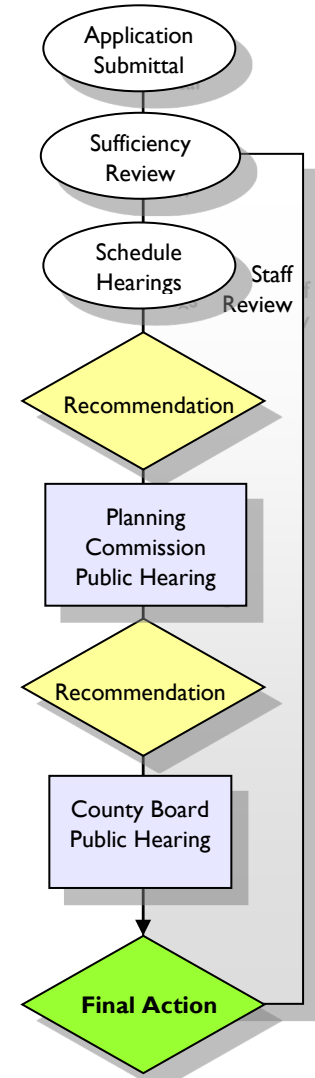
Unless otherwise considered an adaptive reuse amendment as set forth in §15.5.3.D., Any modification of the approved site plan which meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. Principal use of the building would change in more than five percent of the total floor area of the building.
2. Density would change by more than five percent of the total floor area of the building.
3. Building height would change by more than 12 feet.
4. Gross floor area of the first floor would change in more than 20 percent of the area of the first floor.
5. Change in the site area which is used to calculate density.
6. Any change which the zoning administrator determines is similar in significance to the above stated changes.

#### B. Minor amendment

Any modification of the approved plan which is not considered a major amendment or an adaptive reuse amendment and which cannot be approved administratively is a minor amendment. The subdivision of land involved in an approved site plan is a minor amendment, except, that if the following criteria are met, such subdivision may be approved as an administrative change by the zoning administrator:

1. Density allocation is consistent with the zoning and approved site plan;



2. Parking is consistent with the zoning and the approved site plan;
3. Public improvements are consistent with the zoning and approved site plan; and
4. Clear evidence exists that all conditions of the approved site plan have been met or are bonded in a manner acceptable to the county manager.

#### C. Administrative change

Any minor modification of the approved site plan which complies with the spirit of this zoning ordinance, the intent of the County Board in its approval of the site plan, and the general purpose of the Comprehensive Plan for the development of the area.

Administrative changes may be approved by the zoning administrator.

#### D. Adaptive reuse amendment

##### 1. Modification of an approved site plan that meet all the following criteria:

- (a) An adaptive reuse amendment has not been previously approved for the subject site plan;
- (b) Approved principal use of the existing building is at least 50 percent office, as set forth in §12.2.5.C;
- (c) More than 50 percent of the office gross floor area within the building would change to an alternative use allowed in the underlying zoning district;
- (d) Increases in density only in accordance with §15.5.9.D.;
- (e) Clear evidence exists that all conditions of the approved site plan have been met or are bonded in a manner acceptable to the County Manager.

##### 2. Where any of the following modifications to an approved site plan are proposed, the amendment shall not be eligible as an adaptive reuse amendment:

- (a) Vacation of or amendments to existing public easements.
- (b) Change to any affordable housing, community facilities, sustainable design or other public priorities provided for by the approved site plan, where density or height was previously approved by the County Board under 15.5.9.
- (c) A reduction of commitments required by previous County Board approvals.

#### §15.5.8. Affordable dwelling units for increased density within the zoning district regulations

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##### A. Applicability

###### 1. ...

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3. Site plan amendment applications that result in the demolition and rebuilding of a site plan project shall be subject to the requirements hereof at the time of redevelopment. The applicable requirements shall apply only to density that is replaced or rebuilt and any increased density, with the exception of density as set forth in 15.5.9.D. They shall not apply to rehabilitation or renovation or adaptive reuse amendment of development subject to site plan approval pursuant to §15.5.

§15.5.9. Additional building height and density above the zoning district regulations and the General Land Use Plan

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A. ...

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**D. Adaptive Reuse**

In considering the approval of an adaptive reuse amendment as set forth in §15.5.3.D, the County Board may permit additional height and/or additional density above the amounts specified for site plan development in the zoning district regulations, only for the following, provided the County Board finds that the additional height and/or density is consistent with the change of use, overall reinvestment in the building, and enhances the public realm:

**1. Modification of building density**

- (a) Density above the underlying zoning district achieved without modifications to building height other than that provided in 15.5.9.D.2(a) below or form other than that provided in 15.5.9.D.1(e) below;
- (b) Rooftop uses that were not included in the approved site plan or were previously excluded from gross floor area;
- (c) Previously excluded density in the interior of the building;
- (d) Building façade changes that affect exterior wall widths;
- (e) Additions to, or enlargement of the building not to exceed two stories above grade;
- (f) Addition of mezzanine spaces;
- (g) Addition of gross floor area with the enclosure of balconies or terraces;
- (h) The conversion of gross parking area, as determined by the County Board to be unnecessary to the functioning of the building per existing minimum parking requirements in the ordinance or County Board policy, to gross square footage; and
- (i) Other increases in density the County Board finds are in a similar purpose and level of impact as those listed above.

**2. Modification of building height**

- (a) Additional height only for the provision of rooftop amenities.

**D.E. Other Public Priorities**

On sites where the County Board has determined there are other public priorities identified in the Arlington County Comprehensive Plan or other adopted County Board plans and policies, the County Board may permit additional density above the amount specified for site plan development in the zoning district regulations.