



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

### County Board Agenda Item Meeting July 8, 2006

**DATE:** June 20, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Request to Advertise a General Land Use Plan Amendment (“GLUP”) from “Service Commercial” (Personal and business services. Generally one to four stories. Maximum 1.5 FAR with special provisions within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District.) and “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel (up to 3.8 FAR Office Density, up to 4.8 FAR Apartment Density and up to 3.8 FAR Hotel Density.) or from “Service Commercial” to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel for a property generally located at the northeast corner of South Oakland Street and Columbia Pike within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District on the GLUP.

#### **C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Do not authorize advertisement of public hearings on either option for General Land Use Plan amendments.

**ISSUES:** Would a GLUP amendment from “Service Commercial” and “Low” Residential to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel or from “Service Commercial” to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel for the subject location be contrary to the County’s policies regarding the importance of the protection of and proper transitions to established single-family neighborhoods?

**SUMMARY:** The applicant has requested a GLUP amendment from “Service Commercial” and “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel as part of a rezoning and site plan amendment application to redevelop an existing office site with a multifamily residential development with ground floor retail within the Town Center area of the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District. After analyzing the GLUP amendment request, staff has determined that the site is entirely designated “Service Commercial” on the GLUP. The applicant’s request should therefore only include a change from “Service Commercial” to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel. However, in assessing both scenarios, staff concludes that the “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel designation would represent a significant and inappropriate change in the land use pattern for this area, as well as a departure from the basic tenets of the County’s land use policies. The site in question is located adjacent to established neighborhoods shown as “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) and “Low-Medium” Residential (16-36 u/a) on the GLUP. The County has a stated policy of trying to preserve the integrity of existing single-family

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neighborhoods. The County also has a policy of encouraging appropriate and sensitive transitions in height, scale and density from more densely developed areas of the County to less intensely developed areas. Furthermore, the “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel designation has been heretofore reserved for the County’s high-density Metrorail corridors. Additionally, the scale of development that is characterized by this designation would be inconsistent with the community’s vision for this area as expressed in the *Columbia Pike Initiative – A Revitalization Plan* and the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code (“Code”). Developing under the Code is in fact the County’s preferred development option when sites located within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District develop beyond by-right. If the applicant was to develop this site in accordance with the Code, no General Land Use Plan Amendment would be necessary. For all these reasons, staff recommends that the County Board not authorize the advertisement of this General Land Use Plan Amendment.

**BACKGROUND:** The GLUP is the primary policy guide for the future development of the County. Since its original adoption in 1961, the GLUP has been updated and periodically amended to more clearly reflect the intended future use for a particular area. The GLUP may be amended either as part of a long-term planning process for a designated area or as a result of an individual request for a specific change, as in this instance.

The Request to Advertise is the first step in the GLUP amendment process. Authorizing the advertisement of an amendment would not imply that the County Board supports the proposed change. However, where a GLUP change is clearly out of character with a site and the surrounding area, the County Board may not wish to schedule hearings to consider an amendment. This is such a case.

**DISCUSSION:** The subject site is currently shown as “Service Commercial” on the GLUP and the majority of the property is zoned “C-O,” with the northernmost portion zoned “R-5.” At present, the site contains a 30,900 square foot office building, the Patent Law Building, which was approved by the County Board in 1964 as Site Plan #14 and built in 1966. The applicant has submitted applications for a rezoning for a portion of the site from “R-5” (One Family, Restricted Two-Family Dwelling Districts) to “C-O” (Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts), a site plan amendment to construct a multifamily residential building with ground floor retail, and a street vacation for the premises known as 3717 Columbia Pike. The multifamily building would include 162,121 square feet of residential development, or 123 units, and 18,120 square feet of ground floor retail. According to the submitted plans, a total of 158 parking spaces are proposed for the project, with 19 dedicated to retail/visitor uses and 139 dedicated to residential uses.

In order to pursue the proposed rezoning and site plan applications, the applicant is requesting a GLUP amendment from “Service Commercial” and “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel, one of the County’s most dense and intense GLUP designations. Because GLUP designations apply to general areas, and the existing designation was not applied in relation to a specific property, it is not possible to determine the exact extent of this GLUP designation with complete accuracy. However, after analyzing the GLUP amendment request,

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staff has determined that the subject site is entirely designated “Service Commercial” on the GLUP, so the requested GLUP amendment should only involve a change from “Service Commercial” to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel. Although a portion of the site is zoned “C-O,” which is consistent with the “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel designation, staff concludes that any change to the designation of the site to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel, whether it be from “Service Commercial” and “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) or simply from “Service Commercial,” would represent a significant and inappropriate change in the land use pattern for this area, as well as a departure from the basic tenets of the County’s land use policies.

That is, the site in question is located adjacent to an established single-family neighborhood, shown as “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) on the GLUP and zoned “R-5” (One Family, Restricted Two-Family Dwelling Districts), to the north and northwest of the site. Additionally, the land to the west of the site is designated “Low-Medium” Residential (16-36 u/a) and is zoned “RA-14-26” (Apartment Dwelling Districts). To the east of the site, properties are shown on the GLUP as “Service Commercial” and zoned “C-2” (Service Commercial - Community Business Districts). Although the subject site was rezoned from “R-5” to “C-O” in 1964 in association with Site Plan #14, the zoning on this site is out of character with the zoning pattern for the surrounding area. Given that the adjacent and surrounding land uses and zoning indicate low intensity uses, staff cannot support the applicant’s request to amend the GLUP, which is the County’s primary policy guide for its future development, to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel. The “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel designation is one of the County’s most dense and allows for large-scale, high-density development. It is currently used only along the County’s Metrorail corridors – the Rosslyn-Ballston and Jefferson Davis Corridors. Even in these high-density, heavy-rail corridors, the “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel designation is applied carefully and sparingly. In no location in the County is land designated “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel directly adjacent to “Low” Residential (1-10 u/a) development. In only two very limited areas does it abut “Low” Residential (11-15 u/a) development and in only one area is it located adjacent to “Low-Medium” Residential development.

In addition, amending the GLUP for this site to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel would allow for development that would not be in keeping with the tenets of the County and the community’s adopted vision for Columbia Pike as expressed in the *Columbia Pike Initiative – A Revitalization Plan* and the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code. In February 2003, the County Board adopted the Code as an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance as an alternate set of zoning regulations for properties within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District (“District”). The Code was the result of a comprehensive public planning process from 2000 to 2002. The subject site is located within the Town Center node of the District, which is considered to be the heart of the District. As a key part of the District, this property should develop in accordance with the community’s vision, to the extent it develops beyond what is permitted by-right. To allow the area to be re-designated “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel would allow for larger scale development that would be inconsistent with what is allowed under the Code, the County’s preferred development option for properties within the District. The Code requires specific height transitions and tapering to protect adjacent residential neighborhoods that would not be required under “C-O” zoning. Among the objectives for the District, as expressed

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in the GLUP, are “Providing appropriate transitions between residential and commercial areas that strengthen the image and amenities of both areas.” The Code furthermore establishes a set form for development, through the use of Regulating Plans, Building Envelope Standards, Required Building Lines and the like, that may or may not be achieved if the site was developed under a different zoning category. As a result, in order to help ensure that any development beyond by-right on this property is developed in accordance with the community’s vision for the Pike, the GLUP designation for this area should not be changed to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel. Staff therefore recommends that the County Board not authorize advertisement of public hearing on the subject GLUP amendment options.

**CONCLUSION:** Staff recommends that the County Board not advertise the proposed General Land Use Plan Amendment.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- 1961 This site was shown on the 1961 General Land Use Plan as “Low (Single Family)” Residential (0-8 dwelling units per gross acre). This designation remained unchanged on the 1964 version of the General Land Use Plan.
- 1964 On January 11, 1964, the County Board approved Site Plan #14 (Z-1671-63-1) for this property allowing for a 30,900 square foot office building. Approved with the site plan at this same County Board meeting, was a rezoning for the majority of the site from “R-5” (One Family, Restricted Two-Family Dwelling Districts) to “C-O” (Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts).
- 1966 This site was shown on the 1966 General Land Use Plan as “Office Buildings” Commercial.
- 1975 In 1975, this site was shown as “Service Commercial” (Personal and business services. Generally one to three stories, maximum 1.0 FAR) on the General Land Use Plan. This designation remained unchanged on the 1979 and 1983 versions of the General Land Use Plan.
- 1987 In 1987, the description of “Service Commercial” was shown as “Personal and business services. Generally one to four stories. Maximum 1.5 FAR” on the General Land Use Plan. The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District boundaries were also shown on this version of the General Land Use Plan, with the site in question located within the District. The General Land Use Plan as it relates to this site was unchanged on the 1990 and 1996 versions.
- 2004 The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District, within which this site is located, was shown with expanded boundaries on the 2004 version of the General Land Use Plan. The description of “Service Commercial” was also shown as “Personal and business services. Generally one to four stories. Maximum 1.5 FAR with special provisions within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District” on this General Land Use Plan.