



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of March 20, 2007**

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT #2
Additional and Revised Information**

DATE: March 20, 2007

SUBJECT: Request to Advertise Public Hearings on Amendments to Section 25B. "C-O Rosslyn" Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, to allow additional height up to a maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for properties within the boundaries of Central Place, defined as the blocks bounded by 19th Street North, North Lynn Street, Wilson Boulevard, and Fort Myer Drive, by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2007, and the County Board on April 21, 2007.

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize advertisement of public hearings on amending, reenacting, and recodifying Section 25B. "C-O Rosslyn" Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, to allow additional height up to a maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for properties within the boundaries of Central Place, by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2007, and the County Board on April 21, 2007.

DISCUSSION: At their meeting on March 17, 2007, the County Board held a public hearing on the subject proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment language. In discussing this item, the County Board raised several questions and concerns regarding the proposed amendment to be advertised, and requested that staff provide responses to the issues raised and provide any necessary revisions at their March 20, 2007, recessed meeting.

Rooftop Signs

A question raised by the County Board was whether a guideline or provision to restrict rooftop signs in Central Place could be included in the proposal. To enable consideration of such a provision, staff proposes additional language in the ordinance that would prohibit all rooftop signs for any project within Central Place (See Attachment 1, E.4.). This broad language would provide flexibility in the final action by the County Board, but does not necessarily reflect staff's final recommendation. If advertised, staff would evaluate the potential impacts and consider

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., DCPHD Planning

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approaches that restrict the location of such signs rather than prohibiting rooftop signs entirely. These different approaches would be within the scope of this advertising.

Goals for Additional Height

The proposed ordinance amendment identifies an “Enhanced Rosslyn Skyline” as the principal County objective to be achieved by permitting additional height in Central Place. As suggested by the County Board, there may be instances where achieving other goals in addition to an enhanced skyline may be a desired outcome of the additional height. To incorporate this concept, staff has revised the proposed amendment language to indicate that an enhanced skyline may be one of several desired goals attained by permitting additional height (see Attachment 1, E.3.).

Urban Design Guidelines

Another matter discussed by the County Board was the proposed resolution’s expectation that developments achieve the “highest feasible urban design standards”. In particular, clarification was needed to identify those standards and indicate that the County has urban design principles in a variety of locations, including sector plans, special area studies, and a variety of other plans and policies. With regard to Rosslyn specifically, the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum provides a set of urban design principles, which is complemented by the efforts of the Rosslyn Working Group’s urban design guidelines. To further clarify the principle’s intent, staff has proposed additional language in the resolution to indicate that County plans and policies would be the primary source of such guidelines (See Attachment 2). These plans and policies get revised over time, and therefore could be expected to reflect the County’s current standards.

Implications of the Resolution

The County Board asked whether, since the resolution establishes specific urban design expectations for Central Place that are referenced by the “C-O Rosslyn” district, would it restrict what the County could require in zoning districts that do not reference specific guidelines? Staff concludes that this approach would not limit the County’s ability to expect that pertinent design guidelines be met by special exception developments in other areas of the County. Through the special exception site plan process, the County could continue to reference relevant adopted plans and policies to identify the desired planning and urban design principles that proposals are expected to satisfy.

Relationship Between Community Benefit and Additional Height

Although not part of the County Board discussion, questions had been raised regarding the relationship between community benefit and additional height. Consistent with the County’s policy on special exception site plan projects, it is anticipated that additional density and height for any project within “C-O Rosslyn” would be permitted only in exchange for important community benefits commensurate with the extent of additional density and height.

ATTACHMENT 1

SECTION 25B. "C-O ROSSLYN" COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING, RETAIL, HOTEL AND MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING DISTRICTS

* * *

E. Provision for Additional Density and Height.

1. In considering the approval of a site plan, the County Board may permit additional density, above 3.8 floor area ratio (FAR) for office, retail and service commercial uses, above 4.8 FAR for hotels and multiple-family dwellings, and above the existing density on a site when it is already greater than 3.8 FAR for office, retail and service commercial uses, or above 4.8 FAR for hotels and multiple-family dwellings, up to maximum of 10.0 FAR and/or height up to a maximum of three hundred (300) feet. Increases in density and height may be approved when the County Board finds that the development proposal offers important community benefits identified in approved plans for the area and meets the other special exception criteria of the Zoning Ordinance. In considering such modification, the County Board may also consider characteristics of the site and the area as described in Section 36.H.5. of this ordinance and the plans and policies adopted for the area. Provisions of Section 36.H.7. for the approval of additional height and density shall not be applicable in the "C-O Rosslyn" district. In no case shall application of the modification of use provisions of Section 36.H.5. be applied to permit a density of more than 10.0 FAR or a height of more than three hundred (300) feet except as described below.

2. To enable the County to provide for adequate streets the County Board may grant additional density (FAR) within the height limit up to an amount that would be permitted if any area dedicated from the site for street purposes were permitted to be counted in calculating density.

3. To enable the County to achieve, among other things, an enhanced Rosslyn skyline the County Board may grant additional height up to maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for projects within Central Place (defined as the area bounded by 19th Street N., North Lynn Street, Wilson Boulevard, and North Fort Myer Drive). Site plan projects within Central Place may be approved when the County Board finds a project is generally consistent with the April 21, 2007 County Board Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Rosslyn Central Place, and additionally meets the standards of Section 36.H.3. of this ordinance.

4. In no case shall rooftop signs be permitted on any building located within Central Place that receives additional density and height by application of either Section 25B.E.1 or Section 25B.E.3. of this ordinance.

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ATTACHMENT 2
DRAFT – 3/16/2007

Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Rosslyn Central Place

Adopted by the County Board April __, 2007

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District (“RCRD”) was adopted by the County Board in 1996 and designated on the County's General Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS sites within the “RCRD” have been rezoned to “C-O Rosslyn” and on such rezoned sites special exception site plans, with building heights up to 300 feet, may be approved by the County Board; and

WHEREAS the policies of the Arlington County General Land Use Plan and the Rosslyn Station Area Plan generally call for the greatest building heights to be focused closest to the Metro Station with building heights tapering down as locations are farther away from the station; and

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Station Area Plan calls for the creation of a Central Place that is the hub of pedestrian and retail activity in Rosslyn with a unique character to its architecture and streetscape design;

WHEREAS the Arlington County Board passed a 2002 Resolution Governing Building Heights in Rosslyn that established general principles for considering height and design of future site plans within the RCRD; and

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Working Group was established by the County Manager to further consider planning principles relating to building height, land use and urban design within Central Place (defined as the two blocks bounded by North Lynn Street, 19th Street N., Fort Myer Drive, and Wilson Boulevard) and to make specific recommendations based on a thorough analysis of these principles;

THEREFORE the Arlington County Board hereby resolves that the following major principles shall be used in considering future site plans within Central Place:

Building, site, and streetscape designs should create clearly recognizable mid-block pedestrian connections that enhance connectivity to the Rosslyn Metro Station;

Project design should maximize, to the extent possible, retail, restaurant, entertainment, and commercial uses within the first two floors of the building;

Despite existing variations in local topographic conditions, building bases across the Central Place blocks should possess heights at approximately equal elevations above sea level;

~~The number of curb cuts should be minimized, especially along North Moore Street, and parking entrances should be consolidated to maximize storefronts and retail continuity;~~

~~Building design should maximize active retail and other pedestrian-oriented uses by maximizing the extent of clear glazing and ground level façade transparency along public street frontages; and~~

Buildings should achieve the highest feasible urban design standards, as reflected in County plans and policies, with regard to such elements as: curb-cuts, parking entrance consolidation, sidewalk clear width, retail activation, pedestrian-oriented units, and ground level façade transparency along public street frontages; and

IN ADDITION, the Arlington County Board further resolves that the following major principles shall be used in considering additional building height above 300 feet for future site plans within Central Place:

Buildings should include distinctive architectural features such as sculpted rooftop designs or significant tapering in its building form and massing;

Any additional building height should be constructed with sensitivity to ~~not adversely impact~~ the panoramic view shed from any public observation deck (approved or built) within Central Place;

Projects should otherwise be consistent with the principles included in the September 2002 County Board Resolution Governing Building Heights in Rosslyn;

Buildings should receive confirmation from the Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.) that the project is not a hazard to air navigation or that the project does not require notice to ~~or approval by~~ the F.A.A.