

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

SP #435 2025 Clarendon Boulevard/Wendy's

SPRC Meeting #3

October 27, 2014

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Erik Gutshall (Chair), Nancy Iacomini, Steve Cole, Ginger Brown, Steve Sockwell, Karen Morris

MEETING AGENDA

This was the third Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting to review proposed SP #435, a proposed site plan for a 12-story office building with ground floor retail located at 2026 and 2038 Wilson Boulevard.

The following was the agenda for the meeting:

- 4) Transportation
 - a) Infrastructure
 - i) Mass transit facilities and access
 - ii) Street systems (w/existing and proposed cross sections)
 - iii) Vehicular and pedestrian routes
 - iv) Bicycle routes and parking
 - b) Traffic Demand Management Plan
 - c) Automobile Parking
 - i) Proposed v. required (tenant, visitor, compact, handicapped, etc.)
 - ii) Access (curb cuts, driveway & drive aisle widths)
 - d) Delivery Issues
 - i) Drop offs
 - ii) Loading docks
- 5) Open Space
 - a) Orientation and use of open spaces
 - b) Relationship to scenic vistas, natural features and/or adjacent public spaces
 - c) Compliance with existing planning documents and policies
 - d) Landscape plan (incl. tree preservation)
- 6) Community Benefits
 - a) Public Art
 - b) Affordable Housing
 - c) Underground Utilities
 - d) Historic Preservation

e) Other

7) Signs

a) Rooftop, Storefront, Wayfinding, Parking, etc.

8) Construction Issues

i) Phasing

ii) Vehicle staging, parking, and routing

iii) Community Liaison

The meeting began with an applicant presentation of architectural changes made since the last SPRC. The applicant and staff made presentations on the proposed transportation improvements, especially street-cross-sections, open space, including staff preferences, and community benefits.

SPRC DISCUSSION

Feedback on Architectural Changes:

- How tall is the fin above the roofline? Will it have signs or lighting? The fin seems to emphasize the height of the building.
 - The “fin” will be about 15 feet above the penthouse, and 30 feet above the roofline. It will not have a sign (Zoning Ordinance does not allow signs above the actual roof of the building), it may have “subtle” lighting.
- Renderings make the real-life color of the terra-cotta tough to judge.
 - Applicant passed around samples, the color is intended to be a color that complements adjacent properties, and will blend with the proposed off-white and gray metal accents. The white metal will not be a stark white.
- The revised design for the side facades still seemed to be too horizontal and emphasizes its bulk rather than diminishing it. A more vertical element may help to make the building less bulky-seeming.
 - Applicant believes that the Wilson Boulevard façade (not being adjacent to any tall buildings, and Wilson Boulevard being relatively narrow) will mostly be seen from the street level, and the upper stories will generally not be visible or noticed.
- Traditionally Terra cotta is used for details, can the applicant consider using the terra cotta in that way, perhaps between the retail levels and the upper stories?
- Can the lobby be shrunk, at least the frontage on the street?
- If applicant proposes carts in the plaza, make sure there is at least a convenient electrical hook-up.
- Does the applicant propose to lease the right to operate a food/coffee cart in the plaza?
 - Applicant plans to make this available to a vendor at no cost.
- Where will the ATM be located?
 - There will be a booth in the vestibule to the left of the pillar, and it will be lighted at all times.

Transportation

The applicant made a presentation of the street sections and sidewalks with which they worked out with staff. DES staff explained the rationale for the preferred street-sections and that they conformed to the recommendations of the Rosslyn-to-Courthouse Urban Design Study.

- Where will utilities be?
 - Utilities currently are in the street. The standard 5 feet of underground clearance will be kept in case any utilities locate there in the future.
- Vacations and dedications are confusing, will need clarity by the PC.
- This is a challenging site to accommodate so many uses in a relatively small right-of-way. Sidewalk cafes should not infringe on the proposed Clear sidewalk width of 11 feet.
- Can the applicant use structured soil?
 - There will be a continuous soil panel below grade.
- Can Wilson Boulevard have a tree strip?
 - Staff responded that they did not want to preclude ever having parking on Wilson Boulevard at this location.
- Parking spaces should be wider on the Clarendon Boulevard side, as people will be backing in from the left, not right as people are used to.
 - Staff responded that they may revisit the Clarendon Boulevard street section.
- Will there be on-street short term drop off?
 - There probably will be, but the exact location and nature of the short-term street drop-off are determined after approval.
- Where does the Wilson Boulevard bike lane go once off-site?
 - There will be a continuous bike lane on Wilson Boulevard, unlike the present condition.
- What are the future plans for Wilson Boulevard, especially the north side?
 - Staff is currently studying the possible future cross-section of Wilson Boulevard, which may include wider sidewalks on the north side. But it is a very preliminary study.
- The applicant is proposing 16 foot sidewalks, similar to the adjacent Elm Street project.
- Is there a thought to make the Wilson Blvd. site a protected Cycle track?
 - Staff replied the right of way is too narrow.
- Where would parking for the retail spaces be? Would they be open after office hours?
 - The retail spaces would be on the first level, which would be self-park. Wells Fargo requested six (6) spaces for the bank users. The spaces could be made available after hours. Staff would look into it.
- When laying out the street furniture, make sure that street furniture won't conflict with people exiting cars.

Open Space

The applicant made a presentation of the proposed open space. Later in the discussion, staff made a presentation about staff's preferred arrangement of the open space, in order to keep clear pedestrian paths.

- What are the dimensions of the plaza, outside of sidewalk easements?
 - About 45' x 45'.
- Crosswalk locations seem unusual in the way the ADA ramps open into the center of the intersection.
 - Staff is continuing to look at the alignment of the crosswalks.
- In the future, would the applicant please include both sides of the street in plans in order so the Commissioners can see the context (neighboring properties, the other side of the crosswalk, etc.)?
- Consensus that clear paths must be maintained and that the SPRC preferred staff's suggestions for the plaza to relocate the planter(s) to the perimeter.
- Is the pillar entirely structural? If not, can it be slimmed down to minimize the barrier effect?
 - It is not entirely structural.
- Instead of the planting beds, perhaps green walls should be considered for stormwater management.
- Planters should guide pedestrians, not block them.
- Can any trees be planted in the plaza?

Other Outstanding Issues

- Make sure that alternative street tree species and tree pit details are acceptable to the Urban Forester.
- Lighting at night should not be overwhelming.
- Can the applicant add willow oaks in the bumpout areas where conflict with the overhang will not be an issue?
- Is there a garage air intake in the proposed plaza?
 - Applicant responded that the design has been changed and the air intake eliminated.
- Make sure that the proposed coffee cart or kiosk is integral to the design and utilities are provided for.
- Will there be an apron across the alley?
 - The applicant stated that the plans will change to reflect an apron.
- Will the retail spaces be ready for restaurants? Encouraged applicant to consider for the Wells Fargo retail space that it be adaptable for restaurant use, as the bank may not be there forever.

Community Benefits

The applicant made a presentation on the community benefits, including historic preservation by using the TDR from Wakefield Manor, possible on-site public art (or the standard monetary contribution) affordable housing contribution for GLUP change, perhaps also an affordable housing contribution for bonus density if needed. Staff stated that public art was encouraged in the plaza by the "In Between Study" but elsewhere on site could be supportable as the plaza is rather small and serving many needs.

- Suggestion that affordable housing contribution be earmarked for Courthouse/RAFOM area.
- The perforated metal panel as an artwork is an interesting idea, but make sure that some explanation is very near or on the artwork.

Wrap-Up

- Bill Ross (PRC): Would like to see additional trees on the site.
- Carrie Johnson (SPRC standing member): Excited that the TDR will preserve Courthouse Manor, can there be a design feature that refers to the historic structures? Will the “fin” have a sign or be lighted?
 - Applicant stated that the fin will have some subtle lighting. Staff stated that the Zoning Ordinance prevents signs from being placed above the actual roofline of the building.
- Rosemary Ciotti (PC): Does the building have the technological infrastructure for the tech companies you are hoping to attract?
 - Applicant states that it will.
- Karen Kumm Morris (PC): States that she is supportive of the project in general.
- Bill Gerhardt (TC): Applicant needs to find a way to keep all sidewalks open during construction in this very busy pedestrian area.
- Larry Mayer (Civic Federation): Strongly encourages the in-building wireless system.
- Nancy Iacomini (PC): Still a little concerned about the retail facades. Maybe bring the terra cotta down? Not very thrilled with the amount of glass in the retail facades. Main concern is sensitivity to Colonial Village.