

# Rosslyn Sector Plan Implementation – Zoning Ordinance Amendments

ZOCO Meeting  
April 12, 2016



# Agenda

- Staff Presentation
  - Background
  - What We Heard
  - Preliminary amendments to C-O Rosslyn
    - Building Height & Step-backs
    - Density
    - Other
      - Landscaped Open Space
      - Purpose
      - Retail uses, streetscapes
- Next Steps

# Background

## Sector Plan Recommendations

- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to update the provisions of the “C-O Rosslyn” district to facilitate the vision of the Rosslyn Sector Plan
- Plan specifically recommends that height (including provisions for flexibility), stepbacks and density be addressed in the Zoning Ordinance

**County Board Resolution adopted with the Plan also provides guidance**

## Staff presented

- GLUP and MTP draft amendments
- **Building Height and StepBack Zoning Approach**
  - Draft considerations for evaluating the appropriate zoning approach to height and stepbacks
  - Conceptual framework that focused on the level of flexibility, ranging from allowing modification of heights for single-tower sites below 300 feet to codifying only a maximum height for the district

## Two questions:

*Have we captured the appropriate considerations for evaluating the zoning approaches?*

*What is the appropriate amount of flexibility to provide in the Zoning Ordinance?*

# What We Heard: February 24 LRPC/ZOCO

- Majority preferred **less flexibility**, codifying the **Building Height Map**, and **allowing modifications** based on strong findings
- Ensure **Plan goals are upheld**, including **neighborhood transitions** and other goals of the **peaks and valleys** approach
- Burden to **justify a variation** from the Plan should be **on the applicant rather than the SPRC**
- A minority preferred **more flexibility** to allow the County Board to **consider site- and project-specific circumstances** and **allow creative solutions** that meet the intent of the Plan.
- Comments were also received on the GLUP and MTP amendments; will be addressed prior to bringing all the amendments forward later this year

# What We Heard: Other Comments

- Encouraged only codifying those elements recommended by the Plan, allowing for height flexibility, and broad input throughout the public review of the draft amendments
- Comment matrix will be updated throughout the process

Rosslyn Sector Plan Implementation: GLUP, MTP and Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Comments/responses on proposed amendments (updated 4/6/16)

#	Source/Date	Comment	Staff Response
<b>GENERAL LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENTS</b>			
<b>GLUP Map Text</b>			
1.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Description of Rosslyn as having the "greatest concentration" of activities is not accurate; consider different language such as "varied activities"	This language is intended as a vision statement, not as a reflection of current conditions. The statement is consistent with the vision statement in the Rosslyn Sector Plan (page 49), so staff proposes utilizing the same text in the GLUP.
2.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Existing bullet regarding preservation areas should be updated to better reflect all the residential areas surrounding the RCRD, including River Place; consider also whether the description reflects the current intent for these areas.	This bullet is intended to reflect planning guidance, not current conditions. The Rosslyn Sector Plan recommends that future planning will need to be done for the River Place site (page 89). Staff is evaluating the language to ensure it adequately describes current policy guidance outside the RCRD.
3.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Somewhat confusing to describe "Plan features" when, in fact, there are multiple plans for each station area.	This is standard language on the GLUP map and is meant to reference multiple plans.
4.	Resident, 2/16	Existing bullet regarding preservation areas should refer to Radnor-Fort Myer Heights, not Fort Myer Heights.	Staff agrees. Staff is evaluating language to ensure it adequately describes current policy guidance outside the RCRD.
<b>GLUP Map Booklet</b>			
5.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	It's not appropriate to strike "over the next 25 years" from the description of the RCRD; the timeframe acts as a reminder that plans need to be refreshed over time.	The sentence in the GLUP is describing the purpose of the RCRD, which is not limited to a 25-year timeframe. Staff does not agree with keeping this text.
6.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	When describing "C-O Rosslyn" zoning district, clarify that additional height and density is earned above base site plan heights/density.	The language in the GLUP states that the "C-O Rosslyn" zoning district allows the County Board to approve additional height and density.
7.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Are bullets just examples or meant to be complete description of the plan's vision and goals?	Yes, the list is a summary of highlights and not inclusive of all the vision, goals, policies and recommendations in the Plan.
<b>MASTER TRANSPORTATION PLAN AMENDMENTS</b>			
<b>MTP Street Typologies</b>			
8.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Addition of new street typology should be part of a broader County-wide process and discussion, rather than grouped together with Rosslyn implementation.	The new typology will be proposed as a County-wide update and go through a separate process prior to the Rosslyn amendments.
9.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	What is the significance of changing streets from Type A to Type B? Staff responded that the types reflect the intended mixed-use character and anticipated level of activity.	The types reflect the intended mixed-use character and anticipated level of activity.
<b>MTP Bike and Trail Network Map</b>			

#	Source/Date	Comment	Staff Response
18.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Are there any districts that have no height caps?	Yes, several of the "C-O" districts do not have an ultimate height limit and can be modified through bonus provisions.
19.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Is there a way to incorporate review process in the ZO (e.g., a project with no modifications has a faster process than one with modifications)?	The review process and timing is governed by §15.5 and Administrative Regulation 4.1. Staff does not recommend codifying a Rosslyn-specific site plan process.
20.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Recommend codifying the map and limiting the flexibility – either by only allowing the height of single-tower sites below 300' to be modified or by providing strong criteria and a maximum height limit/maximum amount of modification. The zoning should ensure that modifications only are granted in unique circumstances.	In the resolution adopted with the Plan, the County Board gave clear direction that the property owners should be able to offer alternative creative solutions or proposals consistent with the stated goals of the Plan to be considered as part of the site plan review process. Therefore, the Zoning Ordinance should allow for some flexibility in building height. Rather than codify a map and allow for multiple ways to modify it, staff believes that referencing the map and codifying goals of the Plan more strongly enforces the Plan recommendations related to height.
21.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Include strong findings for height modifications; consider criteria on page 168 as a starting point for developing criteria.	The preliminary approach includes strong findings, based on the goals of the plan, the peaks and valleys approach to building height, and the criteria for height flexibility. With this approach, the County Board would have to find a site plan consistent with the findings in order to grant the height in the Plan or allow for height above that in the Plan.
22.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	The zoning text should place the burden to justify a variation from the Plan on the applicant rather than on the SPRC. Leaving the map out of the Zoning Ordinance would place the burden on SPRC to raise concerns about the deviations from the Plan.	While the preliminary approach does not codify the map, staff believes it does place the burden on the applicant to justify a variation from the Plan. First, the base special exception heights are a starting point and the County Board may approve "up to" heights in the Plan based on findings. The applicant will need to prove that the site plan meets each of the findings included in the ordinance. Further, in order to allow a site plan to exceed height on the map, the County Board must make an additional finding.
23.	LRPC/ZOCO, 2/24/16	Plan provides a strong vision, but it does not need to be codified. Flexibility should be provided and ultimately evaluated through the site plan process.	The preliminary approach strikes a balance between providing flexibility and ensuring that the vision and goals of the Plan will be upheld. The map is referenced but not codified, and the findings provide strong guidance for evaluating the height of site plan proposals.
24.	Property owner, Letter, 3/11/16	The Building Height Map establishes maximum heights for each building site in Rosslyn, and is best interpreted as	

# Crafting the Preliminary Zoning Text

Rosslyn Sector Plan  
Visions, Policies,  
Goals, and  
Recommendations

County Board  
Resolution

LRPC/ZOCO and  
other comments

## Considerations

- ✓ Upholds the vision, goals and recommendations of the Plan
- ✓ Provide predictability and clarity for developers and community members
- ✓ Ability to address site-specific conditions

Preliminary C-O  
Rosslyn  
Amendments

# **Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks**

# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

Current C-O Rosslyn Height Regulations	Preliminary Zoning Text
<p><b>By-Right</b>            Single-family home: 30' max             All other uses: 35' max</p>	<p><i>No change</i></p>
<p><b>Special Exception – Base Heights</b>            Office, Retail, Service Commercial: 153' max             Multiple-Family Dwellings and Hotel: 180' max</p>	<p><i>No change</i></p>
<p><b>Special Exception – Provisions for additional height</b>            County Board may approve up to 300' (with provisions for additional height within Central Place)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The County Board, through site plan approval, may approve height <u>up to</u> heights recommended in the Plan, and consistent with step-backs and neighborhood transitions in the Plan, based on a set of findings</i></li> <li>• <i>Further, the County Board, through site plan approval, may approve height <u>above</u> heights recommended in the Plan when a project equally or better meets the findings, up to a maximum height of 470' above sea level.</i></li> </ul>

# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

## Proposed Findings (lines 88-107 of proposed text):

- a) The development project is consistent with the vision and policy guidance of the Rosslyn Sector Plan;
- b) Priority public view corridors are preserved;
- c) The development project contributes to a distinctive skyline with varied heights;
- d) The development project provides a transition in scale and height to surrounding lower density neighborhoods;
- e) The increase in height does not have a substantial adverse impact on daylight for public parks and open spaces envisioned in the Rosslyn Sector Plan; and
- f) The development project provides a pedestrian-scaled street environment and view opportunities.

# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

The preliminary zoning text is intended to ensure that development projects must demonstrate that they meet the vision, goals and recommendations of the Plan through a variety elements:

- **Referencing the Building Height Map**
  - Specifically references the building height map and its elements (height, step backs and neighborhood transitions)
  - Heights on the map are not guaranteed
- **Use of findings**
  - County Board must consider **each finding** in approving a site plan, whether the height is above or below that on the Building Height Map
- **An additional, separate finding for heights above those on the Building Height Map**
  - Emphasizes this is a request beyond what was anticipated in the Plan and should be reviewed with additional level of scrutiny

# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

## Considerations

- **Alternatives considered that meet the criteria and allow for flexibility:**
  1. Codifying the Building Height Map and allow for modifications based on findings
  2. Referencing the Building Height Map and permitting heights up to and above the heights on the map based on findings
- Both options would permit the County Board to permit heights up to and above those in the Plan
- Both options would require the applicant to justify the height based on the findings proposed
- Option 1 codifies map, then effectively weakens it through modifications; may set expectation that mapped heights are a given
- Option 2 starts with a strong reference to the map and then strengthens it by requiring the applicant to prove that the findings are met for any proposed height

# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

## Example

- Block with split heights between 340' and 260' on the Building Height Map
- Applicant proposes 350' and 250.'
- The County Board would utilize the Plan and the findings to evaluate the proposal.
- In this case, the Board could find that the proposal better meets the finding of height variation and does not have a negative impact on any of the other findings.



# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

## Considerations

- **Maximum height for the district**
  - At February 24 LRPC/ZOCO, staff suggested a maximum height of 390 feet for the district could be considered
  - The text proposes 470 feet above sea level for the district
  - Utilizing 470 feet above sea level is
    - Consistent with the assumptions explored during the sector plan process; and
    - Better reflects the change in topography from the eastern to the western portions of Rosslyn

# Preliminary Text: Building Height and Stepbacks

## Considerations

- **Separate criteria for single-tower sites below 300 feet**
  - Rather than have separate criteria, the proposed approach reinforce that all projects must meet the core goals of the peaks and valleys approach.
- The County Board must find that projects are consistent with the Plan, which would include the Plan's recommendations for single-tower sites.



# Preliminary Text: Density

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## Sector Plan: Density above 10.0 FAR

- The Plan recommends that the County Board should have the ability to consider, in specific instances necessary to accomplish **transformational infrastructure** elements identified in the plan, additional density above 10.0 FAR, where it could be **consistent with the overall vision** of the sector plan, **major plan goals are advanced**, and additional density is **consistent with building height and form guidelines**.
- For single-tower sites below 300', density should not exceed 10.0 FAR **unless involving transfer of development rights**

# Preliminary Text: Density

Current C-O Rosslyn Density Regulations	Preliminary Zoning Text
<p><b>By-Right</b>            Site area up to 9,999: 0.40 FAR            Site area 10,000 – 19,999: 0.50 FAR            Site area 20,000 and above: 0.60 FAR</p>	<p><i>No change</i></p>
<p><b>Special Exception</b>            Office, Retail, Service Commercial: 3.8 FAR             Multiple-family Dwellings/Hotel: 4.8 FAR</p>	<p><i>No change</i></p>
<p><b>Special Exception – Provisions for additional density</b>            County Board may approve up to 10.0 FAR. No modifications.</p>	<p>County Board may approve up to 10.0 FAR.             The County Board may approve density above 10.0 FAR in two instances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving segments of 18<sup>th</sup> Street N.</li> <li>• Transfer of Development Rights</li> </ul>

# Preliminary Text: Density

## Density above 10.0 FAR for transformational infrastructure

- Not defined in Plan, though discussion during planning process focused on achieving 18<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor
- Preliminary text:
  - Permit density above 10.0 if County Board finds that the density is necessary to achieve segments of 18<sup>th</sup> Street N.
  - Precludes modifications of height to achieve this density



# Preliminary Text: Density

## Density above 10.0 FAR for transfer of development rights

- Referenced in the Plan with regard to height flexibility
- Preliminary text:
  - Would permit use of County's TDR policy and provisions of 15.5.7.B
  - Receiving sites could exceed 10.0 FAR for density achieved through TDRs
  - Would not be precluded from height flexibility

# Preliminary Text: Other Changes

# Preliminary Text: Landscaped Open Space

- Current C-O Rosslyn requires that 20% of a site be landscaped open space (can be modified by site plan)
- The Plan discourages small on-site open spaces when they distract from the overall urban design vision for Rosslyn
- Propose removing this requirement so as to not inadvertently encourage spaces that may not contribute to Rosslyn's open space network
- On-site open space needs and tree canopy should be evaluated during site plan review

# Preliminary Text: Other Changes

- Remove retail uses and streetscapes
  - Recommendations in the Plan are intended as policy guidance
  - Including some policies from the Plan and not others may imply that other policies do not need to be followed
- Other
  - Updated references
  - Remove outdated text that is no longer need
  - Improve formatting for clarity

# Next Steps

- Further revise draft text based on input
- **Anticipated Schedule**
  - NAIOP April 13
  - Chamber of Commerce April 20
  - ZOCO May 25
  - Additional outreach April-July 2016
  - RTA & Final Consideration Fall 2016