Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum
Courthouse Square

Planning Commission Presentation
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Community Planning, Housing and Development
September 10, 2015
Courthouse Square Study Area
Courthouse Square Charge

1. Sustainability

2. Circulation

3. Open Space

4. Buildings

5. Cultural Resources
Presentation Outline

• Changes to the Plan Design Elements
• Additions to the Appendices
• County Board Guidance at July RTA relative to Planning Commission Motion
• Additional County Board Issue Raised at July RTA
  – Funding/Sequencing/Implementation
• Additional Items
Courthouse Square Concept Plan

Final Draft Plan

RTA Plan
Courthouse Square - Sustainability

Sustainability Changes
- Reconfigured Sustainability map to make it look like the building is not in the middle of a Stormwater feature
Courthouse Square - Circulation

Circulation Changes
- Shows crosswalks in correct locations
- Indicated shared streets without curbs

RTA Plan
Parking Garage Access Changes
- Added additional alternate parking entry off N. Courthouse Rd. and Verizon Plaza
Courthouse Square- Open Space

Open Space Changes

General
• Shows more consistent size, color and location of trees

The Square
• Modified Memorial Grove orientation

Promenade
• Added allee of trees

RTA Plan
Courthouse Square - Buildings

Building Use, Height and Location Changes

General

• Described principal methodologies for building arrangement and relationship to open space.
• Required major entrances, massing and prominent architectural elements to respond to north/south and east/west axis.
• Described tools used to determine maximum building height.
• Clarified role of sector plan as guidance with site plan application being the ultimate determinate of building use, height and massing.
• Introduced special exceptions for greater height may be made in consideration of exceptional architectural features.
• Removed “absolute” height and referenced “maximum” height as defined by the zoning ordinance.
Courthouse Square - Buildings

Building Sites Changes

South Square
- Modified building footprint to describe more flexibility for location within a building envelope and building footprint.

Landmark Block
- Specify elements within maximum height

RTA Plan
Courthouse Square - Buildings

Building Sites Changes Continued

**Strayer Block**
- Specify elements with maximum height
- Defined build-to lines rather than building footprint

**Verizon Plaza**
- Specify elements with maximum height

**Court Square West and theater site**
- Specify elements with maximum height
- Show Option B layout integrating CSW and theater site.
Courthouse Square – Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources Changes

*Landmark Block*

- Removed Simmonds Building from façade preservation

RTA Plan
Courthouse Square – Urban Design Guidelines

Circulation Changes
- Modified Roadway Element Dimensions
- Added location for bike parking

**Figure 3.3: Transit & Bike Lanes Diagram**

**Figure 3.4: Streetscape & Roadway Element Dimensions**
Building Frontages and Streetscape Changes

General
- Revised titles of frontage types from Primary Retail, Flex, Promenade and Service to Frontage Type 1,2,3,4
- Showed transition at corners rather than wrapping around.
- Not intended to reflect Retail Plan colors. It reflects non-retail uses as recommended in the Addendum.
- 3 of the frontage types: Flex, Service and Promenade, are not included in Retail Plan
- More concerned with physical form than use.
- More specific, for example, elements such as tree pit depth are not included in Retail Plan.
Courthouse Square – Urban Design Guidelines

Building Stepback Changes

**Landmark Block**
- Reduced minimum stepback width from 15 ft. to 10 ft
- Removed stepback requirement for N. Courthouse Rd. elevation

**Verizon Plaza**
- Reduced minimum stepback width from 30 ft. to 10 ft
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Site Plan History of the Courthouse Study Area

- Landmark Block (no existing site plan approval)
- Strayer Block (SP#345)
- Bell Atlantic Plaza / Verizon Plaza site (SP #153)
- Courthouse Plaza (SP #231)
Proposed GLUP Changes

Create Courthouse Square Special District – amend zoning ordinance for C-O sites in the district to achieve heights and TDR options.

Change from “Government and Community Facilities” to “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel and extend public ownership cross-hatch.

Change from “Government and Community Facilities” to “Public”

Courthouse Square – Appendix D
Proposed Retail Plan Changes
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Proposed Retail Plan Changes
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The Planning Commission supports the proposed heights as included in the June 12, 2015 draft Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum, with the exception of the civic building, where significant architectural features unique to the expression of civic buildings may exceed fifty feet. The proposed location of the “Civic Building” at the southern end of Courthouse Square (north of 14th Street North) and the resulting amount of open space on Courthouse Square.

County Board Guidance: Concurrence with Planning Commission Motion

Staff Response: Language included in two areas: 1) General Courthouse Square Building Guidance. “Specific exceptions may be made for additional height in consideration of exceptional architectural features and/or community benefits. As defined in the Zoning Ordinance, maximum height is measured from average site elevation to the main roof. As permitted by zoning, penthouse structures may rise an additional 23 feet.” 2) 4.1.2 South Square Height. “Special exceptions may be made for civic architectural features that may exceed this height.”

The Planning Commission recommend the County Manager’s draft plan be amended to;

A .Restrict 15th Street North generally to pedestrians, bicycles and transit

County Board Guidance: No changes identified

Transportation Commission: Supports staff recommendation

Staff Response: Staff does not support this position and feels that automobile traffic should continue to be permitted on 15th Street North to maintain connectivity, visibility and access to the Square.
Courthouse Square – Planning Commission Motion

B. Include a central bike parking facility in the new underground garage

*County Board Guidance:* Concurrence with Planning Commission Motion except no specific requirement for underground location.

*Transportation Commission:* Supports staff recommendation

*Staff Response:* A central bike parking facility is shown near kiosk to increase access. Alternative locations will be studied with the open space master plan and parking study following the adoption of the Addendum.

C. Locate the “Memorial Grove” along N. Courthouse Road from south to north, forming a green edge on the east side of Courthouse Square and organize the garage layout to optimize growing conditions for trees in this area

*County Board Guidance:* Concurrence with Planning Commission Motion

*Staff Response:* Staff agreed with this recommendation and will address this item in the follow up studies and concept master plan for park by considering its impact on the open space and garage design.

D. Ensure the use of the same design “language” and design guidelines for street-level building frontages and interiors used in the draft Arlington County Retail Plan

*County Board Guidance:* Concurrence with Planning Commission Motion

*Staff Response:* Staff modified Urban Design Guidelines to show “Frontage Types” rather than matching Retail Plan and added Appendix D: Proposed Retail Plan Changes map. Staff proposes the implementation of this change to the Retail Plan to be part of item 2 of the Implementation Matrix for follow up actions along with GLUP and MTP changes.
Courthouse Square – Planning Commission Motion

E. a. Limit potential historic preservation on the Landmark block to portions of the two buildings identified in the Historic Resources Inventory.

*County Board Guidance:* Distinguish buildings on HRI from other existing buildings on the Landmark block.

*Staff Response:* Plan recommends preserving the facades of two buildings currently on the HRI and other existing buildings on the Landmark block. Plan furthermore recommends that the Simmonds building (Jerry’s Subs) be considered for relocation and adaptive reuse within or outside the project area.

b. Require consideration of preservation of façade and notable interior features during SPRC and HALRB reviews balancing historic preservation goals with other site plan goals, including functional program and urban design.

*Staff Response:* Chapter 2, Section 5.4 of the Addendum the plan suggests “a balance of historic preservation with other valuable County initiatives, economic feasibility analyses and redevelopment goals. The plan recommends that the five buildings be considered for preservation at the time of a final site plan application…”

F. Use the streetscape standards as illustrated in the 2007 R-B Corridor Streetscape Standards report as updated.

*Staff Response:* Street Sections for Wilson and Clarendon Boulevard have added a note: “Refer to Arlington County Streetscape Standards.” The R-B streetscape standards where considered in the draft addendum for the streetscape design on the north side of the Landmark block and the Strayer site. Staff recommends greater flexibility elsewhere in the study area to allow for an integrated streetscape design solution determined by the open space master plan as it relates to Courthouse Square, the park, promenade and shared streets in the immediate vicinity.
G. The design of the civic building in the south square should allow the first floor to be of an open design to facilitate community and other public uses.

*County Board Guidance:* Include design criteria for an interesting civic building. Allow for flexibility for design and exact location.

*Staff Response:* Language added in Chapter 2, Section 4.1.5 South Square Special Considerations: “The building should maintain transparency on the north and south facades adjacent to the Square and adjacent to 14th St. North respectively. The north façade should allow for connectivity to the Square and link activities in the open space to activities in the building. The north side of the building should also serve as the main entrance with a location directly on the Square. The west façade of the building should consider a direct connection to the Court Square West site. More precise building placement within the area south of the Judicial Plaza entrance should be determined during building concept design.”
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Courthouse Square – additional issues raised by County Board
Funding/Sequencing/Implementation

**County Board Guidance:**

The main open space and underground parking should be prioritized in the implementation plan. The County Board further recommended preliminary design, cost and feasibility studies for the parking and open space portion of the Square be prioritized in the implementation section of the Addendum.

**Staff Response:**

As the 2016 work plan is developed over the coming months, staff will work with the directors of CPHD, DPR and DES to accelerate implementation of these two priorities. In CPHD, staff will consider land use tools to facilitate implementation. Staff proposes to work with DES on a scope of work to undertake a parking analysis to determine future public and private parking demand and DPR to develop a conceptual open space design process. In developing the scope of work for the studies, staff will include an option for a joint public-private agreement of the underground garage with adjacent developers. In addition, staff is preparing recommendations for the County Manager’s consideration regarding near term funding and longer term commitments in the Capital Improvement Plan.
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Courthouse Square – Additional Items

Prioritization

The Courthouse Square Working Group expressed interest in better articulation of the goals of the Addendum as well as establishing a better nexus to the specific community benefits and how they will be realized.

*Staff Response:* On page 10 of the revised Draft Plan, staff has included language in the Purpose statement that the plan provides prioritized recommendations and will guide future public investment and private contributions in this area related to streets, open space, buildings, cultural resources and sustainability. Further the top goals, aka “big ideas” have been inserted on pages 16 and 17 as the *Priority Concept Recommendations.*

Landmark Block/JBG

JBG controls the development rights to the Landmark Block with the exception of the county owned parcel at the former homeless shelter. In their letter, they have urged the County Board to remove the recommendation for historic preservation of the five buildings listed in the Addendum.

*Staff Response:* In Section 5.4 staff recommends the facades of four of the buildings and relocation of the Simmonds building be considered for preservation at the time of a final site plan application.

JBG also recommends the County Board consider a partnership to provide funds for the construction of the underground garage in exchange for unreserved parking spaces.

*Staff Response:* While not directly referenced, staff has added language to the County Board report recommending consideration of public private partnership for the garage be included in the scope of services of a parking demand and feasibility study as recommended in the Implementation Matrix.