

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Ames Center (SP #1)

SPRC Meeting #1

February 24, 2020

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Jane Siegal (Chair), Elizabeth Gearin, Jim Lantelme, James Schroll

MEETING AGENDA

- 1) Introduction
 - a) Overview of Site Plan Proposal and Planning Guidance (Staff)
 - b) Presentation of Site Plan Proposal and Project Evolution (Applicant)

- 2) Land Use & Zoning
 - a) Relationship of site to the GLUP and the Rosslyn Sector Plan
 - b) Relationship of project to existing zoning
 - i) Requested rezoning
 - ii) Requested density exclusions
 - iii) Requested bonus density and modification of use regulations

- 3) Building Architecture
 - a) Design Issues
 - i) Building form (height, massing, tapering, setbacks)
 - ii) Facade treatments, materials, fenestration
 - iii) Roof line/penthouse form and materials/rooftop amenity space
 - iv) Street level activism/entrances & exits
 - v) Accessibility
 - vi) Compliance with the Rosslyn Sector Plan
 - vii) Above grade parking structure
 - b) Retail Spaces
 - i) Location, size, ceiling heights
 - ii) Facade design and transparency
 - c) Service Issues
 - i) Utility equipment
 - ii) Venting location and type
 - iii) Location and visibility of loading and trash service
 - iv) Exterior/rooftop lighting

- 4) Site Design and Characteristics
 - a) Circulation and alley characteristics

- b) Allocation of uses on the site
- c) Relationship and orientation of proposed buildings to public space and other buildings
- d) Streetscape Improvements
- e) View vistas through site
- f) Visibility of site or buildings from significant neighboring perspectives
- g) Compliance with Rosslyn Sector Plan

5) Wrap-Up; Rosslyn BID Introduction, Public Comment

PRESENTATIONS

- Staff provided a presentation covering basic site background, brief project summary, planning guidance, requested modifications, and preliminary issues identified for the proposal
- The applicant provided a presentation with an overview of the project, covering site history, architecture, and site design elements

SPRC DISCUSSION

- During the applicant presentation, the developer team asked what percentage of GFA is residential in Rosslyn (6%), and what percentage is envisioned (30% or more) in the Rosslyn Sector Plan (RSP). The team also noted that no café seating could be located on Fort Myer Drive due to the steep slope of the streetscape.
- Can you explain where the proposed density exclusions are that staff does not support? The applicant confirmed that the proposed area includes rooftop mechanical space. Staff confirmed that any space that adds to the bulk and mass of the building is not appropriate for density exclusions.
- Are gas stations a by-right use in C-O Rosslyn?
- Can you explain how the additional density above 10.0 FAR is achieved? Would this be negotiated to include additional affordable housing contribution? Would you grant a plaza easement?
- We (neighboring residents) will be looking at the roof from above, why is there nothing green? The applicant noted they would like to follow-up at the next SPRC.
- Don't understand the need for additional sidewalk width on Fort Myer Drive given the grade slope, the street width is already too wide.
- Where are there stairs, and how is the plaza jump elevator accessed across the site? Will the elevator be open all the time, and how will it be managed? The applicant responded: yes, it will be open, but have to discuss how access will be managed during repairs.

- Are there multiple elevators between plaza levels? The applicant noted there is one, and if it's down the lobby areas could be a possible alternative.
- What is the justification for the amount of above grade parking? The 4.1 drawings show a large amount of ventilation that makes the parking appear like a garage. Would like to see a more pedestrian scale rendering view from the sidewalk on all sides of the building. Massing of the 5 stories of parking garage is not very pedestrian friendly.
- Describe the balcony planters in detail. The applicant noted they are drip irrigated and can be moved.
- Would like to have more details about plantings on the rooftop(s).
- The provided parking is high, consider alternatives like shared parking, etc. Appreciate the focus on biophilic design; would need to specify plants now, so can that be shared? The applicant noted they would like to follow-up at the next SPRC.
- Is the irrigation managed as part of the rental structure? The applicant noted yes, but this is aspirational.
- Appreciate the façade materials unique to Rosslyn and Arlington in general.
- The parking ratio is very high, the RSP says parking needs to be wrapped by active uses. The applicant responded: based on parking demand studies conducted in the R-B corridor, parking utilization is 0.8 spaces/unit at this time.
- Are you using bird-friendly glass? The architect noted that the building not being a square box is helpful, and the design should mitigate bird collisions. Additional suggestions were welcome.
- Will the retail frontages conform to the retail plan? Yes, there is approximately 66% window transparency on frontages.
- Appreciate the building form and separation. Right now, the church is clearly a church. Will that be clear in the new design?
- Is the gas station the best use at this location? The lease runs to 2034/8 and they are considering converting to retail.
- Neighbors appreciate the having a gas station close by.
- Want to see loading details, dimensions, auto-turns, management program.
- Want to know what the streetscape will be relative to what's there now.
- Want clarity on what is the public vs the private realm in plaza spaces. (This will require further discussion with staff and a proposed easement exhibit.)
- At a prior Rosslyn BID UDC presentation there was a greater sense of greenery and earthiness at the ground level. The architect noted there is more greenery than previously shown, will cover more in detail at the next SPRC.

- The Nash Street cross section does not appear to match the Sector Plan or Core of Rosslyn Study. Staff responded and will provide more information (with information expected from applicant) at the next SPRC.
- Turnberry representative would like to see a perspective view from their building at approximately mid-height.
- Where are the “front doors” for the building that signal where you walk in, and where does the Uber/delivery driver go?
- Want the architects to design once/build entrances once and have one place to enter.

Public Comment and Wrap-Up

- Rosslyn BID: would like to align themselves with all positive comments. Snell presented to the BID on two occasions and was well received. Believe responses to the Sector Plan have been well considered, and loading has been thought out much better than other projects in Rosslyn. Pleased with the project so far. Would like to thank County staff for keeping BID in the loop, and opportunity to participate. This project is a critical connection for pedestrian routes through the neighborhood.
- I’m thinking about stormwater since the sidewalks are so steep. Want to be sure basement doesn’t turn into a pool, and want to think about how pedestrians won’t be washed out.
- Also agree that church and the gas station are important uses for the community. Want to ensure Observation Deck view corridor is preserved. Pleased that 18th Street Corridor is still a priority.
- Does this meet the height limitations of the SP? Want to be sure density exclusions proposed on the 31st floor are not additional height. What is the public art program that is planned (to be discussed at the third SPRC)?
- What is the interim hotel space? A 3-5 year program where unleased units would be converted to short term hotel units in the south tower on levels 8-19.
- What will the construction phasing be? This will be discussed at the third SPRC meeting.
- Would like to hear how the interim hotel units will be accessible and meet ADA requirements, would like to have applicant present to Disability Advisory Commission.
- Representative from Key and Nash: want to reiterate ground floor experience and would like to focus on safety for families with strollers, would like to understand how crosswalks will work to improve safety. Would like to see building view from their building’s perspective, as well as shadow impacts.
- How EV ready is the building and what percentage of spaces would be EV ready? The applicant asked for advice. James responded that 10-20% of total parking to be “EV ready” is a good practice.

- Want to talk about the bike lanes at the next SPRC.
- Would like to know what the LEED certification will be, urge you to go above Silver with energy efficiency priority credits.

NEXT STEPS

- SPRC meeting #2 is scheduled for March 19
- Anticipated agenda includes open space and landscaping, transportation, and design response from the applicant