



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of June 17, 2008**

DATE: June 5, 2008

SUBJECT: Amendments to the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance, Section 34. "Nameplates, Signs, and Other Displays or Devices to Direct, Identify, and Inform," Subsection J. Signs Permitted in Specified Areas With Permits to permit certain signs identifying public parking garages. Signs would be permitted in the Rosslyn Metro Station Area only, and would include one building sign or projecting sign per garage entrance to a garage available for parking by members of the general public during certain hours.

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the attached ordinance to amend, reenact, and recodify the provisions in Section 34 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to permit certain signs identifying public parking garages. Signs would be permitted in the Rosslyn Metro Station Area only, and would include one building sign or projecting sign per garage entrance to a garage available for parking by members of the general public during certain hours.

ISSUES: This is a zoning ordinance amendment to permit the placement of signs for public parking within the Rosslyn Metro Station Area. No issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: Arlington encourages mixed-use development in many areas throughout the county, as it provides citizens with opportunities to live, work and play in their own neighborhoods, thereby creating more vibrant communities and reducing vehicle trips. However, there are instances when citizens and visitors travel via vehicle and require parking. Coordinated directional signs help motorists unfamiliar with these areas and with the locations of garage entrances find their way to public parking facilities. An effective parking wayfinding program can reduce congestion by eliminating unnecessary travel by lost motorists, and it can also serve as an economic boost to businesses by providing directions to public parking facilities that are within walking distance of their locations. The proposed amendment to the sign regulations would allow a modest increase in sign area (no more than 20 square feet) for buildings in Rosslyn while providing effective directional signs to public parking.

BACKGROUND: Section 34.E.11 permits small directional signs for parking:

No more than two (2) "entrance" or "exit" signs at each vehicular entrance to and exit from a parking lot, not to exceed three (3) square feet each. Signs specifying parking restrictions, not to exceed three (3) square feet each, may be affixed to a wall and located

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Jill Griffin, Real Estate Development Group, AED

no less than twenty-five (25) feet apart. The signs may be freestanding if no larger than two (2) square feet, located on the perimeter of a parking lot no less than twenty-five (25) feet apart, and at a height no greater than four (4) feet.

However, the type and size of these permitted signs convey the message of garage operations to the motorist who has found the garage location and entrance. The current provisions of Section 34 do not allow for the signing of public parking facilities that are defined as a garage that provides parking for members of the general public after business hours Monday through Friday and either all weekend or for at least a portion of Saturday or Sunday.

The intent of the proposed amendment is to permit, as part of a pilot program, coordinated directional signs to assist motorists in finding public parking facilities within the Rosslyn Metro Station area. The amount of additional sign area would be limited to six and one-half (6.5) square feet per garage entrance. As there are no more than three separate entrances into any garage, the total sign area per building would be limited to less than 20 square feet. It is important to note, however, that this amendment would allow for an optional permit for sign placement directing to public parking facilities – such signs are not compulsory.

DISCUSSION: Arlington encourages mixed-use development in many areas throughout the county, as it provides citizens with opportunities to live, work and play in their own neighborhoods, thereby creating more vibrant communities and reducing vehicle trips. However, there are instances when citizens and visitors travel via vehicle and require parking. Coordinated directional signs which identify the locations of garage entrances help motorists unfamiliar with these areas find their way to public parking facilities. An effective parking wayfinding program can reduce congestion by eliminating unnecessary travel by lost motorists. Additionally, it can serve as an economic boost to businesses by providing directions to public parking facilities that are within walking distance of their locations.

Rosslyn, as it undergoes a dramatic transformation within the next couple years, will require additional visual cues to assist motorists in finding the public parking facilities as on-street parking will be limited. Seven buildings have been identified which have garages meeting the definition of public parking facilities – all but one have been developed under the site plan process:

Building Name	Address	Site Plan
Arland Towers	1000 Wilson Blvd	SP #125
Fifteen-Fifty-Five Wilson	1555 Wilson Blvd	By-Right
Hyatt Hotel	1325 Wilson Blvd	SP #92
Millcourt	1550-1560 Wilson Blvd	SP #219
Rosslyn Center	1700 N Moore Street	SP #94
Rosslyn Gateway	1911 Fort Myer Drive	SP #54
Waterview	1919 N Lynn Street	SP #25

The proposed amendment would permit the placement of the specific parking signs for the public parking facility through an administrative process rather than individual site plan amendments for each building. Such process should facilitate the change of signs from that of

individual garages to a unified system to help visitors find parking.

It is anticipated as construction continues in Rosslyn that additional buildings will have garages that meet the definition of a public parking facility. With the proposed ordinance amendment these new buildings would also be eligible for the uniform parking wayfinding program.

In turn, if the pilot program is successful in Rosslyn and visitors readily find public parking, the program may be expanded to other areas of Arlington – specifically within the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor and the Jefferson Davis Corridor. Levels of success would be measured quantitatively through the participation rate of the seven (7) identified garages and, subjectively through anecdotal evidence from the garages and the visitors parking in the garages as obtained by the Rosslyn BID.

Public Process: The proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment was reviewed by the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission (ZOCO) at meetings on April 23 and May 21, 2008. Discussion at ZOCO was generally favorable toward the amendment. There was discussion about the specifics of the proposed design of the wayfinding sign. However, it was recognized that these elements would not be within the text of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

The Planning Commission heard this item at its June 4, 2008 meeting and voted unanimously to recommend that the County Board adopt the attached ordinance. After the vote, Planning Commissioners proposed some suggestions toward the final design of the proposed signs.

CONCLUSION: Staff recommends that the County Board adopt the attached ordinance to amend, reenact, and recodify the provisions in Section 34 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to permit the placement of certain signs for public parking within the Rosslyn Metro Station Area, subject to limitations on the area and placement of such signs in order to facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; and for other reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare and good zoning practice.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REENACT AND RECODIFY SECTION 34. NAMEPLATES, SIGNS, AND OTHER DISPLAYS OR DEVICES TO DIRECT, IDENTIFY, AND INFORM OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT THE PLACEMENT OF CERTAIN SIGNS FOR PUBLIC PARKING WITHIN THE ROSSLYN METRO STATION AREA.

Be it ordained that Section 34. Nameplates, Signs, And Other Displays Or Devices To Direct, Identify, And Inform, Subsection K. Signs Permitted in Specified Areas with Permits of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended, reenacted and recodified as follows to reduce or prevent congestion in the streets, to facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; and for other reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare and good zoning practice:

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SECTION 34. NAMEPLATES, SIGNS, AND OTHER DISPLAYS OR DEVICES TO DIRECT, IDENTIFY, AND INFORM

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K. Signs Permitted in Specified Areas with Permits.

All public parking facilities in the Rosslyn Metro Station area bounded by North Rhodes Street, Lee Highway, Arlington Boulevard and Arlington Ridge Road may obtain a sign permit from the Zoning Administrator for the signs described below and subject to the following regulations:

1. One (1) building sign or projecting sign per garage entrance to a public parking facility which identifies the location of publicly accessible parking. For purposes of this Section 34.K, a public parking facility is defined as a garage that provides parking for members of the general public, at a minimum, after business from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and either all weekend or for at least eight (8) hours, in total, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The sign shall meet all standards prescribed by the Zoning Administrator including, but not limited to: location; color; size; shape and lettering. The sign shall not exceed six and one-half (6.5) square feet in size nor shall any dimension of the sign exceed four (4) feet.
2. When a sign for a public parking facility is approved and placed pursuant to this Section 34.k, no other parking garage identification signs may be on the exterior of the building.
3. Amendments to approved comprehensive sign plans shall not be required for signs permitted by this Section 34.K.
4. Any sign permitted in Section 34.K. shall not be counted in calculating the permitted number of signs or the sign area for limitations set forth in Sections 34.E., 34.G., or 34.H.

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