
Joint Zoning (ZOCO) and Long Range (LRPC) Committees of the Planning Commission Meeting

Summary, October 13, 2015. PC Members in Attendance: Erik Gutshall (chair-ZOCO); Steve Cole (Chair-LRPC);

James Schroll; Jane Siegel Staff: Richard Tucker, Deborah Albert.

Western Rosslyn Area Plan (WRAP) Land Use and Zoning Implementation. Staff gave a brief overview of proposed amendments to the GLUP map and booklet, and to the S-3A, RA4.8 and C-O Rosslyn zoning districts. Comments from LRPC/ZOCO and community members present are summarized below.

Proposed General Land Use Plan (GLUP) amendments

ZOCO/LRPC Comments

- “Neighborhood residents” vs. “residents”: All Arlingtonians are equal, and while neighborhood residents may be the most frequent users of the public open spaces within the area, it is open to all Arlingtonians, therefore “residents” is better descriptive term.
- Also include “visitors” as part of description of users of the public spaces in the area
- Does the plan include a concise vision statement that could be used verbatim for the GLUP booklet? Staff indicated that the plan describes the vision, but does not include a vision statement.
- Is there a chicken-egg scenario whereby an applicant could not submit a proposal that is consistent with the Plan for a property that is not proactively re-GLUP’d? Staff responded that an application that requests the envisioned GLUP amendment would be considered consistent in that situation.
- “...continuation of the high-density mixed-use development in central Rosslyn” does not capture the precision that should be captured in the GLUP because the density within the Western Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District (WRCRD) is not the same as that in the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District (RCRD).
- Is “rebuild civic uses” the appropriate term to use in the first paragraph. A more accurate description may be “facilitating the replacement of aging infrastructure with new infrastructure.”
- In the first paragraph, is “secondary school” too specific?

Community comments

- Affordable housing is mentioned in the third paragraph but not the second – it should be in both paragraphs for consistency.
- The allowance for modifying the 100% affordable housing requirement is helpful in the case that funding requirements change such that units may/could be affordable at a different level than that in the defined “low or moderate income” term.

Proposed amendments to S-3A zoning district (*ZOCO/LRPC Comments*)

- It seems inconsistent to simply reference the plan in some of the proposed zoning, while specifically enumerating the plan goals in other places.
- Why use 175 feet as maximum height in the S-3A zoning district when we know that the school being designed is significantly shorter than that. Why not alternatively use the

known height with some additional fudge factor? The Zoning Ordinance could always be amended at a later date if a taller school were to be proposed.

- If the zoning allows up to 175 feet, would the County Board have the discretion to deny a school of a height less than 175 feet if that lesser height seemed more appropriate?

Proposed amendments to RA4.8 zoning district

ZOCO/LRPC Comments

- The proposed text requires that the County Board find that 100% of the housing is affordable, but this may be modified. Under what circumstances could that be modified, and what was the motivation for including the modification clause?
 - “...other goals of the Western Rosslyn Area Plan” is too general for modification of the 100% affordable housing requirement – there are many other goals of the plan.
 - Consider establishing requirement findings in order to modify this requirement. Alternatively, consider making all three proposed findings modifiable, to include the public open space and consistency with the WRAP.
- Is there a way to make it more clear that “low or moderate income” is a defined term?

Community comments

- The height plan in the WRAP envisions height up to 130 feet exclusive of penthouse and parapets, but the 136-ft height limit in the RA4.8 district includes penthouse and parapet walls. It is likely that 150 feet would be needed to accommodate a mechanical penthouse on a 130-ft building. It would be helpful to make clear in the zoning that the zoning district height limit may be modified in order to implement the WRAP vision; or consider incorporating 150 feet into the introductory paragraph (b).

Proposed amendments to C-O Rosslyn zoning district (*ZOCO/LRPC Comments*)

ZOCO/LRPC Comments

- Why amend C-O Rosslyn to implement the WRAP? It seems inappropriate to remove the property from the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District (RCRD) and yet continue to anticipate rezoning to C-O Rosslyn, which was developed specifically to implement the vision for the RCRD. This sets a precedent of using C-O Rosslyn throughout the County, even as far as Crystal City or Ballston, whereby it was intended to be used only in the RCRD.
 - Alternatively, consider amending C-O to implement the WRAP, as this district is already used more generally throughout the County.
 - Consider including the “designated High Office-Apartment-Hotel and located in the area designated WRCRD” in the WRCRD provision rather than only in the district purpose.
- The proposed changes seem significant considering the intent is simply to allow a maximum height of 270 feet within the WRCRD rather than the 300 feet allowed within the RCRD.

- There are many circular references, which make the language confusing – consider ways to simplify
- 10.0 FAR is listed too many times – this makes for confusing zoning. It should be simplified.
- There are proposed changes to the C-O Rosslyn district that are unrelated to implementation of the WRAP. Be transparent about all changes, even if they are simply organizational.
- Consider simply referencing the plan goals rather than enumerating them, as proposed for the S-3A district; particularly since some of the plan goals are not relevant to the properties eligible for this district.
- There are two different properties within the WRCRD proposed to be implemented with this zoning district, but only the 270 foot height appears in the proposed text
 - The expectation coming out of the study is that the heights in the plan would be codified; if not codified, an applicant could proposed a project with greater height and be claim it is compliant with the zoning
- Confirm whether or not the parking ratios in this district are also appropriate for the WRCRD

Community comments

- Line 171 – “...may be considered within up to a maximum height...” is not typical zoning language. Typically the Ordinance uses “...may be approved up to...” which is much stronger. Consider this change here.

General comments (*ZOCO/LRPC Comments*)

- It is challenging to review zoning that references plan goals and recommendations when the final adopted version of the plan is not yet available.
- It is heartening to see the guiding principles references in the proposed zoning text, as the community worked hard on them
- Be consistent with capitalization in proposed zoning