

# Special General Land Use Plan Studies Overview

## Long Range Planning Committee of the Planning Commission

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ARLINGTON  
VIRGINIA

Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

# Comprehensive Plan - GLUP

- Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan is comprised of 11 elements - one of which is the General Land Use Plan (GLUP)
- The GLUP is Arlington's primary policy guide for the future development of the County
- The GLUP is regionally and nationally recognized for fostering sound, sustainable growth
- Potential changes to the GLUP and to the supporting sector and area plans are carefully considered
- GLUP can be amended 2 ways – through a County-led planning process or at the request of a developer/property owner

# Special GLUP Study Policy

- “Policy for Consideration of General Land Use Plan Amendments Unanticipated by Previous Planning Efforts” adopted in 2008
- This policy calls for a community review process in those instances where there is:
  - no adopted plan; or
  - where the GLUP amendment request is inconsistent with the guidance of the relevant adopted plan.
- No changes to this policy are proposed

# Special GLUP Study Purpose

- The purpose of a Special GLUP Study is to allow for high-level review of the land use separate from any site plan/use permit review
- Special GLUP Studies evaluate the appropriateness of the requested GLUP change and what GLUP category or categories may be appropriate

# Typical Process

- The objective is to analyze the site in the context of the surrounding area and obtain feedback from the LRPC on the appropriateness of the requested change – *not to evaluate a specific project*
- A request to advertise report is presented to the Planning Commission as an action item, permitting public comment and a vote with recommendations
- The request to advertise report recommending or not recommending a GLUP amendment is then brought to the County Board for consideration
  - Authorizing the advertisement does *not* imply that the County Board supports the proposed amendment, but that it is in the *realm of consideration*

# Past Processes

- There have been 7 Special GLUP Studies and 1 Special GLUP Study Plus to date
- Building upon these studies, staff has been asked propose revisions to the:
  - Fees
  - Process
  - Procedures.

# Issues to be Addressed

- Currently no dedicated Special GLUP Study fee.
- Currently no mechanism for the County to determine whether the requested Special GLUP Study is the appropriate tool.
- Challenging to integrate Special GLUP Studies into the Work Plan when they can be filed anytime during the year and have historically been dealt with on a first come, first served basis.

# Process Revision Goals

Staff proposes to refine the existing process to achieve greater:

- Efficiency
- Inclusivity
- Predictability
- Cost Recovery.

# Alternatives Explored

Staff analyzed several different ways to respond to the identified issues and goals:

- 1) returning to the pre-2008 process in which site plans are filed and reviewed concurrently with rezoning and GLUP amendment requests;
- 2) staying the course with the current process format;
- 3) revising the current process in a strategic manner by instituting an application window and a two-phase review process; and
- 4) revising the current process in a manner similar to the third option but with rolling applications.

Staff recommends approach #3.

# Proposed Revised Process

- Special GLUP Study requests would only be accepted during a **specified window - June 1<sup>st</sup> - September 1<sup>st</sup>**.
- Potential applicants would submit a **preliminary Special GLUP Study application** prior to filing a Special GLUP Study application and pay an **initial review fee**.
- **Staff will evaluate** whether or not a Special GLUP Study or different **type of process**, such as a small area planning process, a Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) review or a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) exchange, might be more appropriate and/or expeditious.
- Staff would **preliminarily evaluate the applications and obtain input from the Planning Commission through the LRPC**.
- Staff would then prepare a **report to the County Board for its Work Plan Work Session**, which is typically held in each year in February.

# Proposed Revised Process ...

- This report would recommend or not recommend acceptance of the **applications and in which order they would be reviewed**, taking into consideration the other items on the Planning Division Work Plan.
- The **County Board would then provide input on which applications to accept and on the prioritization** of accepted applications.
- In order to **advance to the full Special GLUP Study review, the balance of the study fee would be collected**. Applications not accepted for review through the Special GLUP Study process could be resubmitted the following year for consideration.
- At the County Board's discretion, **out of cycle applications** could be accepted.

Criteria for selection as a study to undertake would include:

1. Would the amendment possibly advance broader County goals?
2. Is there already an existing adopted plan or district designation on the GLUP for the subject area and/or adjacent area? If there is an existing plan or district recommendation for a specific area, a change to the GLUP may be less likely. **What conditions have changed to warrant revisiting the adopted policy?**
3. Is the area currently under study?
4. **Is this a larger site? Would it be more appropriate to address the area through a small area plan?**
5. **Is there a Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP)? Would it be more appropriate to undertake a PDSP review as opposed to a Special GLUP Study?**
6. Is there sufficient staff, leadership and commissioner capacity to begin the study?

# Scoping

**Scoping:** Is the proposed amendment within the realm of consideration? Should other GLUP categories be considered within the realm of consideration? Or should the current GLUP category be maintained? **Is this the right process?**

**Recommended Change – Staff proposes to use the criteria listed above to inform staff's recommendation to accept or not to accept a Special GLUP Study application or when an alternative process may be more appropriate.**

# Submission Requirements

**Current Submission Requirements:** Applicants are currently required to provide the following materials in the form of a letter with accompanying graphics, if necessary:

- Property location and size.
- Current and proposed GLUP designations for site and surrounding sites.
- Current and proposed Zoning designations for site and surrounding sites.
- Transportation information — proximity to transit, potential new streets or connections, existing vehicle counts on all frontages, pedestrian counts.
- Other information necessary for staff analysis, to be determined by staff based on the particular site.

# Submission Requirements ...

## Proposed Additional Submission Requirements:

In order to ensure that Special GLUP Study processes are more efficient and streamlined, staff recommends requiring applicants for the more complex Special GLUP Study Plus projects to provide, in addition to the current submission requirements:

- The **online application form** that is being developed as part of the One-Stop Arlington project;
- **3-D modeling** of the existing conditions of the subject site and contextual area, as well as modeling of various scenarios reflecting the requested GLUP designation or designations and other GLUP designations to be studied at the discretion of staff with input from the LRPC. The models will be submitted to staff to allow for the development of additional modeling scenarios, as well as archival purposes; and
- A **more robust transportation analysis, if necessary**, that could address nearby intersections and alternate modes of travel.

# Applicant Involvement

- Current applicant involvement -
  - Staff shows a 3-D model similar to the applicant's proposal
  - The applicant may participate at the LRPC Chair's discretion
- Recommended change -
  - Applicant can verbally **present their rationale** with up to **3 presentation slides** following staff's presentation
  - The presentation should not be a "marketing" presentation focused on the project

# Supplemental GLUP Requests

Requests to evaluate additional GLUP and Zoning categories while a Special GLUP Study process was already under way:

**Recommended Change** - Staff will evaluate whether requests to analyze additional GLUP and zoning categories once a process has started on a case-by-case basis. In conjunction with the LRPC Chair, staff may determine whether the additional request can be accommodated in the current study. The additional request would be subject to an additional fee.

In some instances, staff, working with the LRPC Chair, may alternatively request that an applicant refile a Special GLUP Study application with the revised request during the next Special GLUP Study application window. The applicant may receive a reduced fee for the new application based on the level of analysis performed by staff on the previous study of the site in question.

# No Changes Proposed

No changes are proposed to the way in which the following are currently addressed:

- Meeting Participation
- Associated Zoning Ordinance Amendments
- Concluding Studies - Planning Commission and County Board Actions

# Associated Actions

- GLUP Booklet description of the Special GLUP Study process
- Zoning Ordinance amendment to allow for reimbursement of fees in instances where a full Special GLUP Study application has been submitted but no staff review work has yet commenced
- Fee schedule changes for new and/or revised fees achieve cost recovery for Special GLUP Studies

# Next Steps

- 1/23 NAIOP meeting
- February RTA for April Planning Commission/County Board action on associated Zoning Ordinance/GLUP booklet amendments
- February RTA for March Planning Commission/April County Board action on associated fee changes

# Conclusion