

Rosslyn Sector Plan Update

Stakeholder interview input (summary record)

As of December 21, 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. Introduction (page 1)
- B. Summary of stakeholder input (page 1)
 - Overall planning study priorities and direction (page 1)
 - Transportation issues (page 4)
 - Parks and public realm issues (page 6)
 - Building form, height and use issues (page 8)
- C. List of stakeholders interviewed (page 9)

A. Introduction

This document contains an aggregate summary of input received from interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders with perspectives important to planning in Rosslyn. A list of stakeholders interviewed appears after the summary. Interviews to date occurred during November and December 2012, primarily during trips to Rosslyn by the planning team on November 8-10 and December 3-5. Additional outreach to these and/or additional stakeholders may occur during the course of the planning process to accommodate further research into specific issues or to discuss and confirm plan concepts and recommendations.

B. Summary of stakeholder input

Overall planning study priorities and direction

- Rosslyn Sector Plan Update intent
 - This is a targeted effort to refine planning policies for Rosslyn to address unmet goals, refine standards for development projects currently under review or anticipated in the near-term, and incorporate fresh ideas that reflect current and future goals and opportunities. A full overhaul of the vision and policies for Rosslyn is not intended. Moreover, the core study area (Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District, RCRD) has been specifically defined to help promote an efficient and focused planning process. Conditions in the larger Rosslyn Station Area will be studied as important background context for the planning effort, but plan recommendations will primarily address the RCRD.

- Principal technical areas of focus include:
 - Transportation, with primary emphasis on pedestrian facilities, additional emphasis on transit and biking, and an intent to reduce negative impacts of vehicular traffic.
 - Public realm and open space, with emphasis on an improved network of sidewalks and crosswalks along streets, as well as opportunities to improve and add parks, plazas and paths.
 - Building form and height, addressing opportunity to translate development value into community benefits, enhance Rosslyn’s architecture from ground level to skyline, and create or preserve significant public view and access corridors. Development density beyond the current floor area ratio (FAR) cap of 10 is not anticipated.
- The planning process needs to include robust public engagement, consistent with Arlington’s planning tradition as well as the County Board’s current year-long community engagement initiative (PLACE).
 - The full diversity of stakeholders should be part of the conversation on Rosslyn’s future, including people who have been previously active in Rosslyn planning as well as people new to the conversation. The plan update will reflect this community input, but the County Board will ultimately be responsible for the plan’s content and implementation.
 - Arlington is taking a new approach in appointing a “Process Panel” of stakeholders to regularly review the planning process approach and progress. Given this new approach, the role or tasks of the Process Panel may evolve over the course of the process to optimize its contributions to the process and its coordination with the planning team, County staff and County elected officials.
- General goals and issues
 - Rosslyn needs to become a more inviting urban place for people to live, work, play throughout the day and week. Although many people live and work in Rosslyn (and travel through it) every day, its streets do not reflect the high quality of place it could achieve with its dynamic concentration of people. Rosslyn should reflect the qualities of true urban pedestrian-oriented places possible given its excellent transit access and rich combination of uses. While Rosslyn’s legacy of buildings and streets designed primarily for auto travel has been evolving toward a more people-oriented environment, much more remains to be done.
 - Rosslyn needs a strong, coherent identity in multiple aspects including sense of place, sense of community, and market position.
 - People appreciate Rosslyn’s assets; this is demonstrated by their choices to live and work in and near Rosslyn. Key assets include excellent accessibility to/from Rosslyn by transit and road; access to jobs and services with little or no need

for a car; unique views, reinforced by topography; adjacent parkland; and attractive adjacent neighborhoods.

- Better wayfinding is a priority, for people on foot and biking as well as driving.
- Public realm enhancements can happen in three related ways: improvements to existing sidewalks, parks and plazas; capturing opportunity to create new public places as part of development projects and/or removing traffic lanes; and improving connections to parkland and recreation corridors adjacent to Rosslyn.
- Any building height incentives provided to development projects should be firmly conditioned on provision of community benefits in return. Critical standards should include (among other potential standards) improved ground floors (including considerations of land use, building design and public realm design), well-proportioned and -composed building volumes, and preservation/creation of significant viewsheds. Building form and height also needs to address transitions to lower adjacent neighborhoods.
- Rosslyn improvements should include easily and rapidly implemented initiatives as well as the larger-scale improvements possible with major redevelopment projects. Although major redevelopment projects can deliver significant physical and financial community benefits, their periodic nature and dependence on market cycles means their timing is by nature unpredictable. This has, for instance, limited implementation of the Corridor of Light public art installation along Lynn Street so far. Therefore a program of smaller-scale incremental improvements should complement more comprehensive projects to ensure consistent progress toward the vision.
- Rosslyn holds important opportunities to apply sustainable development policies, such as:
 - District-based energy systems which can achieve efficiencies not possible at the level of the individual building. District energy systems typically conduct excess heat energy from buildings needing cooling (often commercial buildings) to buildings needing heating (often residential buildings). Rosslyn's mixture of high-density commercial and residential uses near each other makes it particularly well suited to this approach.
 - District-based stormwater and/or graywater systems which can also achieve efficiencies not possible at the level of the individual building. Residential buildings, which typically produce more graywater than they can use, can feed graywater to commercial buildings, reducing fresh water consumption. District stormwater systems can irrigate planting along streets and parks using water collected from building rooftops and streets.
 - Rosslyn's excellent transit access, prospects for better walking and biking access, and mix of high-density workplaces and housing support

- sustainability by reducing need for car travel. Adding electric car recharging stations would further reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation.
- Residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Rosslyn have some concerns about new development even as they generally appreciate Rosslyn’s amenities and accept its scale.
 - More mid-level market rate housing should be included in new development. The high cost of much new housing in Rosslyn creates a gap (economic and ethnic) between new residents and established neighborhood communities.
 - There is concern that neighborhood input into this process will not be taken seriously.
 - There is concern that too little community benefit is coming from the increased building heights recently approved (over 300’, approaching 400’).
 - More retail and dining choices are very much desired. At the same time, people do not expect Rosslyn to rival the more established concentration of retail, dining and nightlife present in Clarendon and Georgetown.
 - Planning process recommendations
 - Technical analysis should include objective study of multiple alternative concepts addressing building form, public realm and transportation issues. Results of this analysis should determine a logical foundation for plan recommendations.

Transportation issues

- The Rosslyn Multimodal Transportation Study (RMTS) developed during 2011-2012 by Arlington County provides detailed analysis of and many specific goals for transportation infrastructure in the study area. This planning process should focus its transportation component on enabling implementation of key plan recommendations. The RMTS derived directly from the 2007 Master Transportation Plan element of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, which reflects significant community input.
- Rosslyn contains major convergences of both transit services and roadways, both providing access benefits and challenges.
 - Rosslyn’s excellent access by transit and car is one of its key assets. The upcoming inauguration of Silver Line service and a new express elevator at the Rosslyn Metro station will enhance transit options.
 - Rosslyn has some of the area’s highest pedestrian counts, but also an unappealing walking environment that is not as safe as it should be.
 - Much of Rosslyn’s traffic is through traffic, such as from Fairfax County and from other portions of Arlington to the District of Columbia. Traffic levels drop significantly outside of rush hour periods. There is shared interest among

residents, commercial property owners and County staff and elected officials in reducing the roles of North Lynn Street and Fort Myer Drive as regional arterials. District of Columbia stakeholders may share interest in limiting/reducing non-transit traffic on the Key Bridge.

- The major roads ringing the study area are controlled by VDOT and NPS, requiring close collaboration with these agencies in implementing plans.
- Realize Rosslyn goal: “Re-balance transportation in Rosslyn.” Priorities:
 - Focus on transportation system balancing and safety with pedestrians (as main focus) and cyclists. Focus on Complete Streets.
 - Focus on improving how buildings meet the street so their design and use support an inviting pedestrian environment.
 - Rosslyn may offer unique opportunities to create streets that are largely or fully devoted to pedestrians. While pedestrian streets have faced real challenges (e.g. retail market viability) in the U.S., Rosslyn’s concentration of pedestrians, transit-oriented uses and multimodal infrastructure, and/or street/block geometry, may make such approaches more feasible. Study international and local precedents to inform potential concepts for Rosslyn.
- Rosslyn contains more parking than necessary given its level of transit service and its potential as a more pedestrian- and bike-friendly place.
 - The County Board has traditionally used parking requirements as an important negotiation tool with developers. This policy limits opportunity to reduce base parking requirements.
 - County staff is prepared to consider implementing reduced parking requirements (and potentially maximum numbers of allowed parking spaces) in an effort to reduce traffic generated by development. Current policy requires at least 1 parking space per 1,000sf office space and 1 space per dwelling unit.
 - Opportunity to share parking among office and residential uses is limited by the tendency of many residents to leave cars in their garages and use alternate means of transportation.
 - Inconvenient evening parking (or perception thereof) is an obstacle to expanding dining and entertainment uses.
 - Ledge below ground level makes below-grade parking costly. For this reason, much parking in Rosslyn is in above-grade structures, posing design and massing challenges.
- Rosslyn has seen a significant increase in bus services in the past decade, but these are also straining infrastructure capacity. Bus travel times have worsened due to peak hour traffic. Stopping locations for buses, private shuttles and vanpools near the Metro station (particularly along North Moore Street) are heavily used. Carpools and taxis encroach on these locations. Thus any increase in bus, shuttle or vanpool services should be combined with traffic flow and stop enhancements. Consider whether dispersing bus stop locations more would help (with consideration for ease of bus-bus

and bus-Metrorail transfers). Reducing the number of bus-rail transfers required in Rosslyn may help.

- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies have helped significantly reduce traffic generation and parking needs in Rosslyn. There is potential for further reductions. TDM application depends on maintaining good working relationships with office tenants.
- Greater numbers of people are biking to and through Rosslyn, in part due to its four Capital Bikeshare stations and access to regional multi-use trails. Building on this trend, priority bicycle improvements should include:
 - Improving safety and convenience at the intersection of the Custis and Mount Vernon Trails with Lynn Street.
 - Improved routes and markings connecting these trails with the Rosslyn core and areas south and west.
- Wayfinding and street character improvements could improve access for all transportation modes.

Parks and public realm issues

- Rosslyn's quantity and quality of public open space are both limited.
 - Opportunities to add space are few, but could arise through major redevelopment projects, and possible acquisition/retention of the Schlafman property and/or former Wilson School site as open space.
 - The significant park areas in the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) should be leveraged better by improving access across highway obstacles. Arlington County and NPS are both interested in working more cooperatively toward this goal.
 - Public sidewalks should serve as places for public gathering and artwork as well as passage. Critical needs for achieving this goal include adding street trees, expanding sidewalk area (ideally through reduction in roadway area) and adding active ground floor uses in adjacent buildings. The planned Corridor of Light installation along North Lynn Street will provide a major benefit.
 - Existing plazas and parks such as Freedom Park are underutilized due to factors including limited programming, access and/or plantings. These shortcomings should be resolved to draw greater public and private value from these spaces. Projects such as the approved Central Place development project demonstrate the opportunity for major redevelopment projects to re-create significant public places.
- The County is committed to moving away from the system of upper-level pedestrian skywalks created in the 1960's and 1970's. Pedestrian traffic should be primarily focused on sidewalks flanking streets where it will help support retail, parks and other

amenities. Skywalks may be retained in limited areas, such as west of the Metro station, where they continue to provide uniquely useful connections.

- Many people see potential for Freedom Park to achieve the success of New York City’s High Line. To do so, the elevated park needs improved access, more compelling destination activities, and stronger design and/or use connections with adjacent buildings. Similar qualities may be possible along a conceptual public “esplanade” between Rosslyn Plaza and the GWMP (and parallel I-66 right of way), potentially extending north to the Mount Vernon Trail and/or south to the River Place residential area.
- Rosslyn’s rooftops offer untapped opportunity for additional usable green space, as well as for green roofs.
- Rosslyn Gateway Park successfully hosts major events but is not appealing as an everyday destination for residents. There is skepticism that planned future improvements associated with the Rosslyn Gateway project will change this. Improvements must be functional, not just symbolic. The role of Gateway Park as a service point for homeless people in the area is recognized and accepted, but does challenge potential for greater use of the park.
- GWMP and river access opportunities and challenges include:
 - The contemplated Arlington County boathouse, potentially including acquisition of the Schlafman property, could serve Rosslyn as a valuable amenity.
 - Improved access to Theodore Roosevelt Island should be a priority.
 - NPS welcomes concepts to improve access to parkland southeast of RosslynRelated challenges include:
 - Designated view corridors along the GWMP, such as from northbound parkway lanes toward Georgetown, limit feasible locations for additional bridges over the parkway.
 - Design and programming need to successfully support natural and urban contexts.
- The Marine Corps War Memorial and Netherlands Carillon deserve better pedestrian and bike access from Rosslyn. In addition, Rosslyn buildings should form a more attractive backdrop to the memorial; prominent commercial signage now mars this backdrop.
- The Rosslyn BID’s “parklet” at the corner of North Moore St. and Wilson Blvd. is a successful interim use of private land as a public space. Similar low-cost, high-impact public spaces have potential to improve other portions of Rosslyn effectively and rapidly.
- Rosslyn has very little tree canopy, adversely affecting its appearance, comfort, and air and water quality. Successfully adding trees along streets and in parks would benefit from:
 - Collaboration with County stormwater management to create successful soil conditions for trees.

- Cueing developers to plan and invest in better tree planting practices.
- Revising building design requirements to prevent cantilevers over desirable places for street trees.

Building form, height and use issues

- Residents and the NPS are sensitive to Rosslyn's appearance from public areas in Washington, DC. There is disappointment that recent attempts to prohibit commercial signs above 30' elevation were unsuccessful.
- Adding more restaurants with evening dining is important to leveraging full benefit from the Artisphere and attracting additional arts-related uses.
- Affordable galleries, live-work spaces and other arts-related uses would be welcomed by the arts community and could potentially serve as active ground level uses.
- Real estate market dynamics have major impact on development program, timing and design.
 - Ongoing relocations of government office space out of Rosslyn due to BRAC restructuring and rents that exceed Federal caps create opportunity and need for more diverse range of professional office tenants. Startups and international business markets may present new tenant opportunities. This shift is also hastening obsolescence of some 30-50 year-old office buildings that do not meet current market expectations.
 - Rosslyn's location makes it competitive with DC for Class A office space. It demands the highest rents in Arlington, but these are \$10/sf less than in DC. Rosslyn buildings can also offer more tenant floor area than many in DC. This competitive edge is shrinking, though, and DC is expected to be competitive regarding price points and available floorplates over the next five years. Public realm and amenity enhancements, plus intentional branding, will be needed for Rosslyn to remain competitive. Opening of Metrorail service to Tyson's Corner in late 2013 will open up additional regional competition.
 - North Lynn St. and Wilson Blvd. appear to offer the strongest prospects as retail streets. Rosslyn won't compete with Clarendon's more established and diverse base of retail, but has untapped market opportunity to add more. Members of the development community highlighted these challenges that should be overcome to attract and retain more retail:
 - Strict retail space and sidewalk design requirements, limit retail feasibility.
 - Complex, lengthy permitting processes should be streamlined.
 - Scarcity of curbside parking, and perceived difficulty of using parking structures, are obstacles.
 - Wayfinding challenges and one-way streets hinder access to retail destinations.

- Housing and office offer similar development value, at roughly \$40-60 per sf of allowable development capacity. Most major development projects in recent years have included significant office *and* residential components to speed absorption of new space.
- Key competitive assets include regional accessibility, views, prominent skyline, cultural amenities (Artisphere), river presence, demographics, proximity to Georgetown.
- The Rosslyn BID is actively working to enhance branding and public realm, among other initiatives.
- National Airport flight paths along the Potomac impact potential maximum heights of Rosslyn buildings, particularly east of North Lynn Street. 470' above sea level is the current maximum in the Rosslyn core (reflected in the approved height of the Central Place project). Areas east of North Lynn Street are limited to 300' above site elevation and could potentially accommodate heights of 470' above sea level if a new generation of flight technology is implemented (a 10+ year process).
 - While the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Metropolitan Washington Airports Administration (MWAA) cannot necessarily reject a building project that exceeds their guidelines, they can make such a project difficult to insure.
 - The County currently requires site plan buildings to receive from the FAA a determination of no hazard to flight navigation before the County will issue building permits for construction.
- Consider transfer of development rights (TDR) as a tool for enabling development in Rosslyn while promoting preservation of historic or culturally significant buildings elsewhere (such as the Columbia Pike corridor or traditional neighborhoods).
- Roslyn buildings over 50 years old can be eligible for historic designation.

C. List of Stakeholders Interviewed

County Elected Officials

- a. Jay Fissette and Libby Garvey
- b. Mary Hynes
- c. Walter Tejada
- d. Chris Zimmerman

Resident Stakeholders

- 2.1 Stan Karson, President, Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Association (RAFOM); Rosslyn BID Board; Past board member, Rosslyn Renaissance; Realize Rosslyn Process Panel

Transportation Stakeholders

- 3.1 Arlington County (AC) Division of Transportation staff (DES)
- 3.2 AC Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 3.3 Julie Hershorn and Fred Simms, WMATA bus operations
- 3.4 John Grant, Chair, AC Transportation Commission
- 3.5 Sam Zimbabwe, District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT)

Parks & Public Realm Stakeholders

- 4.1 AC Department of Parks and Recreation staff
- 4.2 Dean Amel, Chair, AC Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)
- 4.3 Ben Helwig, Thomas Sheffer, David Hayes, National Park Service (NPS)
- 4.4 Paul Holland, Chair, AC Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)
- 4.5 Mark Longo, Chair, AC Arts Commission
- 4.6 Tom Korn, Co-Chair, Pedestrian Advisory Committee

General Stakeholders

- 5.1 AC Economic Development Department staff
- 5.2 Marty Almquist, Chair, AC Economic Development Commission
- 5.3 Tim Helmig and Andrew McGeorge, Monday Properties
- 5.4 Brian Harner, AC Planning Commission; Process Panel
- 5.5 Shannon Cunniff, Deputy Director, Environmental Defense Fund water program; and Chair, AC Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
- 5.6 Mike Hines, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
- 5.7 Betsy Frantz, President/CEO, Leadership Arlington
- 5.8 Joan Lawrence, Chair, Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board
- 5.9 Rosslyn Business Improvement District (BID) Executive Committee and Cecilia Cassidy, Executive Director
- 5.10 Adam Peters and Kingdon Gould III, Vornado Realty Trust and Gould Property Company (respectively)
- 5.11 Andy VanHorn, JBG Properties
- 5.12 Rich Doud, President, Arlington Chamber of Commerce