



Memorandum

To: Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission (ZOCO) **Date:** September 07, 2022

From: Matt Mattauszek, Master Development Planner
Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

Subject: Commercial Form Based Code (FBC) Amendment: Town Center Regulating Plan Designation for north end of S. Lincoln Street

Introduction

At their September 13, 2022 meeting, the Planning Commission's Zoning Committee (ZOCO) will review a proposed amendment to the [Town Center Regulating Plan map](#) within the [Columbia Pike Commercial Form Based Code \(FBC\)](#) that would change the Building Envelope Standards (BES) designation along the northern end of S. Lincoln Street. The specific change, as proposed by the property owner, is part of a FBC redevelopment application for the subject property located north of Columbia Pike, between S. Lincoln Street and Glebe Road. The proposed FBC amendment would replace the current "Local" BES designation with a "Main Street" BES designation along S. Lincoln Street near the edge of the FBC Revitalization District boundary. The resulting change would enable the subject property to deliver a more efficient building footprint utilizing a consistent unit layout on most floors and streamlined internal circulation leading to required building egress. The proposed amendment would also provide a more contiguous and desirable building façade along the eastern façade adjacent to the public sidewalk. The proposal would not change the existing, applicable FBC height regulations along the northern edge of the site where an alley would still be located and a 32-foot building height restriction would continue to remain within 40 feet of the property line.

Staff anticipates that the County Board will review a Request to Advertise (RTA) on this amendment in Fall 2022. Should the County Board approve the County Manager's request to authorize the advertisement, the County Board would also consider, at a subsequent hearing, an associated Form Based Code use permit which is currently under staff review and anticipated to be heard by the FBC Advisory Working Group later this fall.

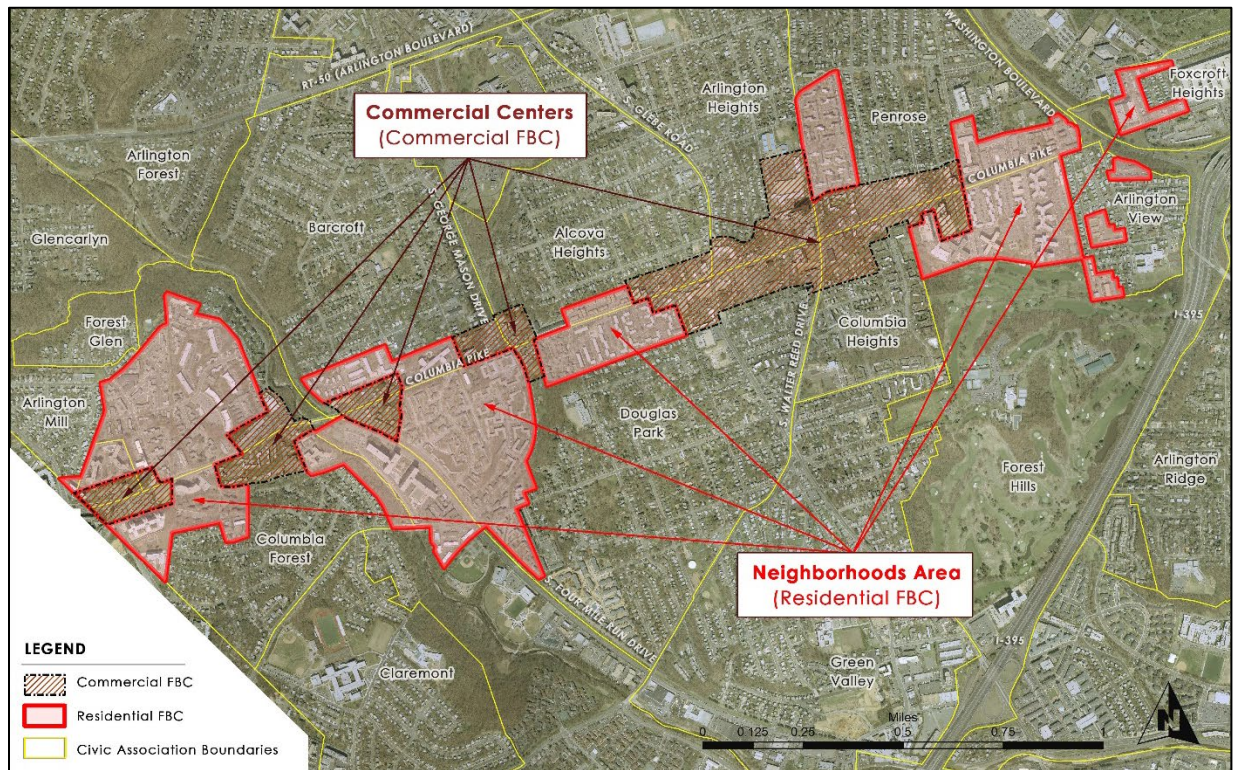
The proposed FBC amendment was reviewed with the FBC Advisory Working Group on July 13, 2022. Staff's recommended changes to the FBC are found in Attachment 1.

Background

Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code (FBC):

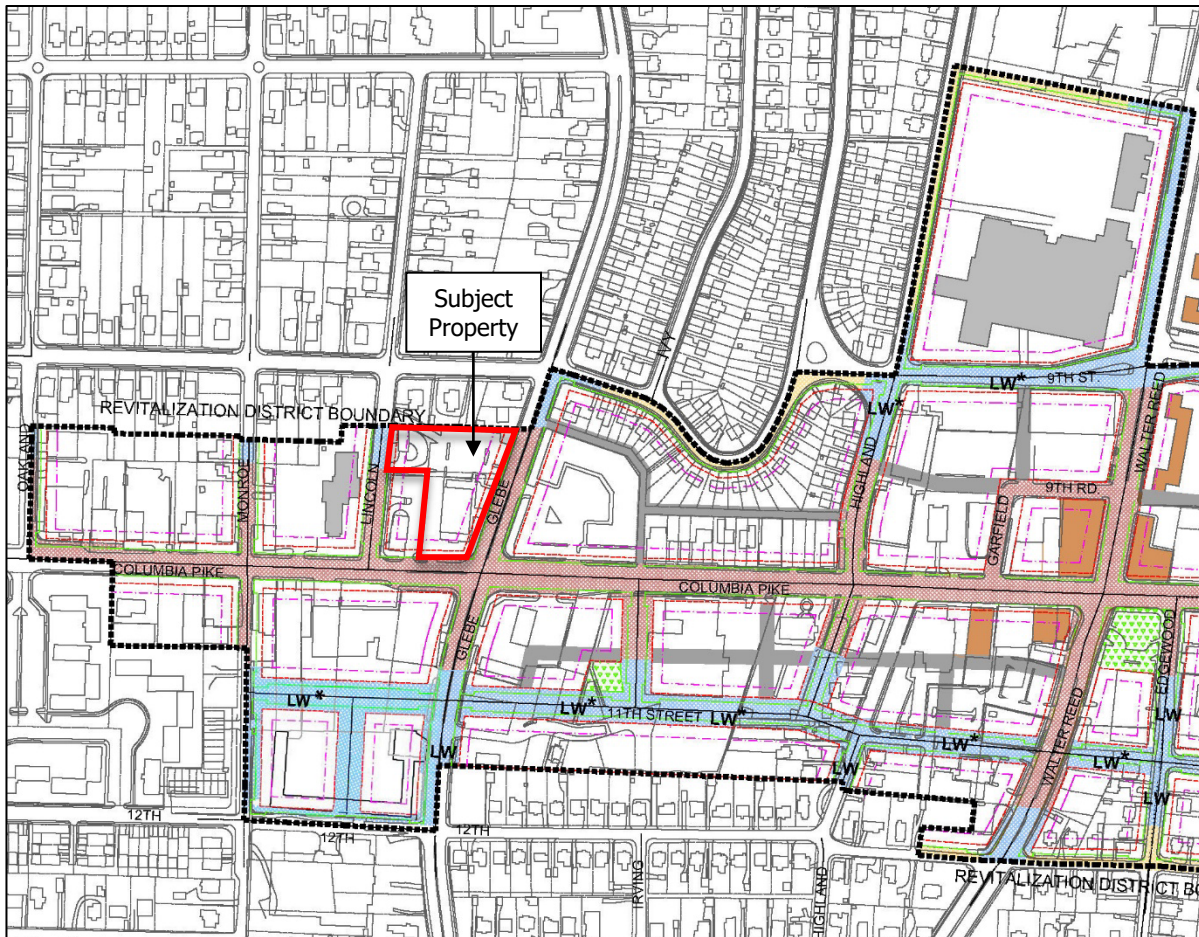
Two Form Based Codes are enabled along Columbia Pike, each representing an optional zoning tool for properties located within one of the Special Revitalization Districts along this corridor (see Figure 1). The Commercial FBC helps implement the [2002/2005 Columbia Pike Initiative – A Revitalization Plan](#), while the Neighborhoods FBC implements the [2012 Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan](#).

Figure 1. Commercial FBC and Neighborhoods FBC Boundaries



The [Commercial FBC's Regulating Plan](#) is the principal tool for administering the FBC. The Regulation Plan constitutes a series of maps that identify the basic physical placement and characteristics of each new building and its surrounding streetscape environment. The maps establish key redevelopment opportunities for each property, and, in some cases, the intended site preservation as identified within adopted plans associated with each Code (see Figure 2 which depicts a portion of the Town Center Regulating Plan and its accompanying legend). The Regulating Plans are supported by a prescriptive set of regulations found elsewhere in each of the Codes with the purpose of providing a clear vision for the built environment through the establishment of the building envelope (height and massing) and the use of appropriate building materials, fenestration, streetscape design, parking provisions, and other elements.

Figure 2. (Excerpt of) Commercial FBC Town Center Regulating Plan



UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATING PLAN

- REQUIRED BUILDING LINE (RBL)
The red dashed line indicates the RBL for your site. The Building shall be BUILT-TO the RBL.
- PARKING SETBACK LINE
Vehicle Parking (except basement level) not allowed forward of this line.
- BUILDING ENVELOPE STANDARD DESIGNATION HATCH (see below)
- PROPERTY LINE
- STREET TREE ALIGNMENT LINE

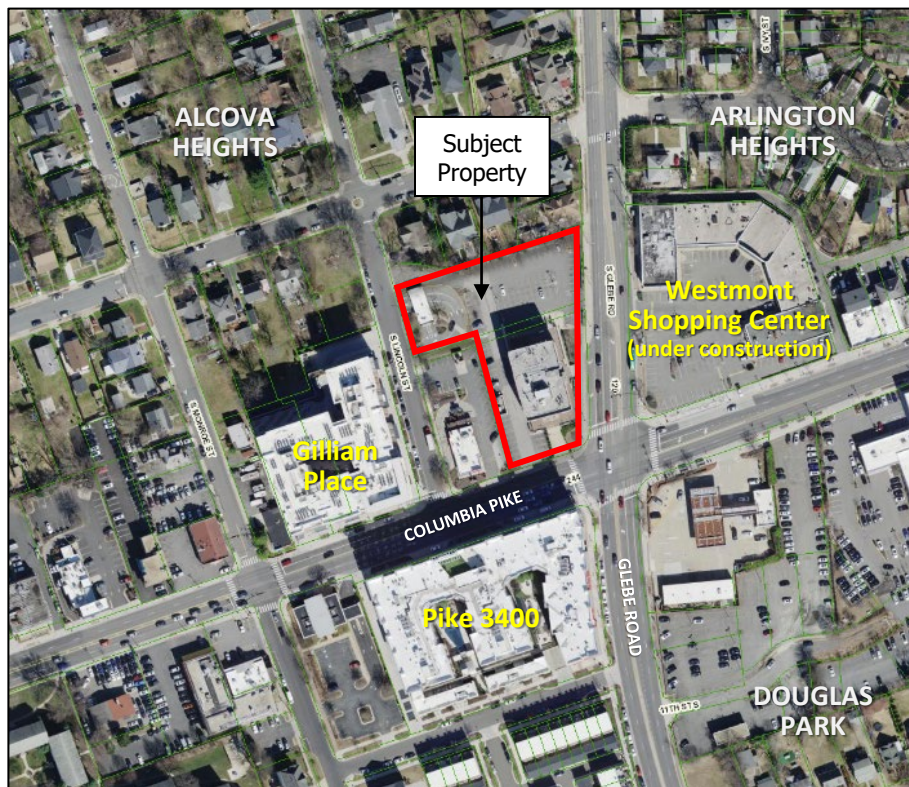
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Street Frontage Avenue Frontage Local Frontage Neighborhood Frontage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Buildings Square Park Civic Buildings Alley (Locations may be adjusted)
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NOTES:
 LW *: 4 stories plus attic story, live-work with retail permitted on ground floor at north side of 11th Street, east side of Highland Street, and south side of 9th Street, where indicated.

Building Envelope Standards (BES): While many of Code’s regulations apply consistently to all sites, some standards are unique to one of four site classifications depicted by the Code’s Building Envelope Standards (BES). Each BES frontage type ranges in scale of potential development, reflecting a specific use mix and any associated design considerations. The “Main Street” frontage is typically identified for sites fronting Columbia Pike where multi-story, mixed-use buildings are envisioned, ranging in building heights of up to six stories. The “Avenue” and “Local” frontage types can generally be found near the edge of the FBC Revitalization District where slightly lower building heights (three to five stories) and residential uses are envisioned. Finally, two small portions of the corridor include the “Neighborhood” frontage type. In those limited instances, the envisioned redevelopment in these areas adjacent to detached dwellings cannot exceed 3 stories and must contain residential uses. BES frontage types, when adjacent to one another, can be extended for a distance of 50 feet, as needed to facilitate FBC redevelopment or ensure appropriate transitions can occur.

The subject property (3401 Columbia Pike) is located on a prominent street intersection, fronting Glebe Road, Columbia Pike, and S. Lincoln Street, adjacent to the existing Wendy’s restaurant. While most of the surrounding public roadways are currently designated by the Main Street frontage type (red hatch on the Regulating Plan), a small portion of the S. Lincoln Street carries the Local designation (blue hatch)(see Figure 2). The site is also adjacent to several previously approved Form Based Code developments including Gilliam Place to the west, Westmont Shopping Center to the east, and Pike 3400 to the south (see Figure 3).

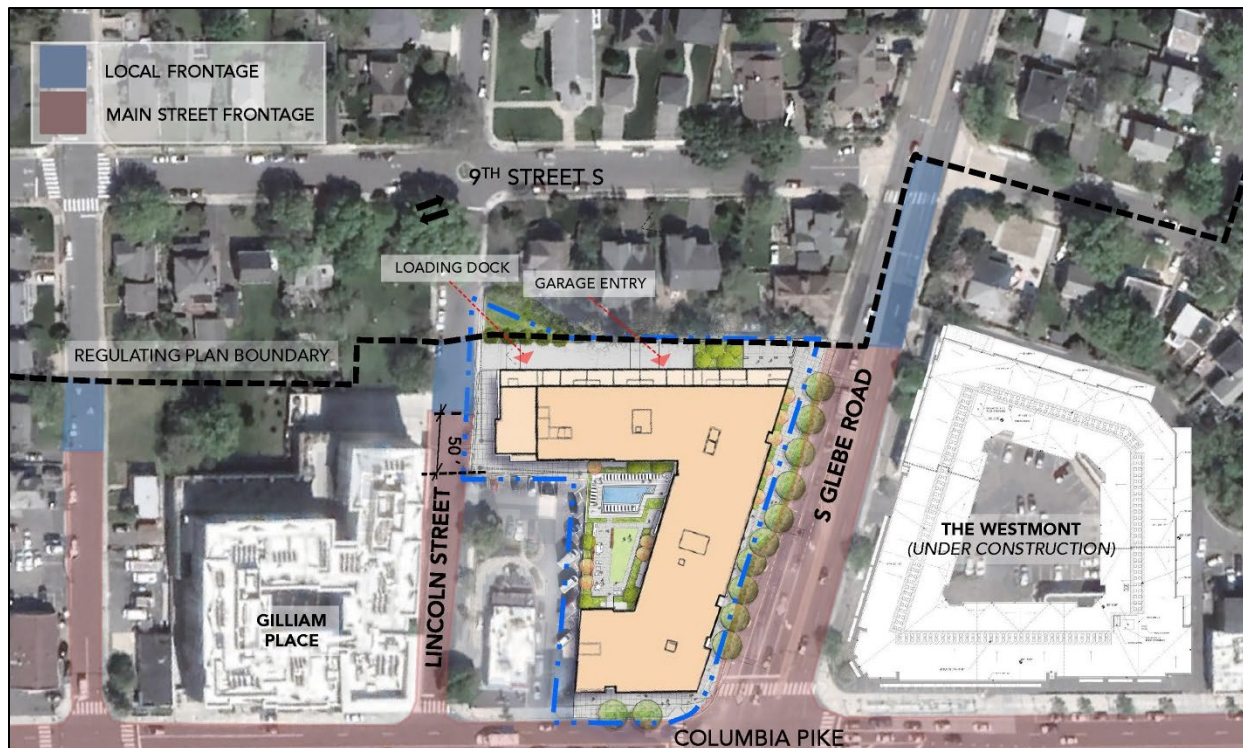
Figure 3. Subject Property (red boundary) and adjacent FBC Developments



Proposed Redevelopment and Associated Zoning Ordinance Amendment

The owner of the 3401 Columbia Pike property is pursuing redevelopment under the Commercial Form Based Code which would replace the existing office building, parking lot, and bank drive-through with a six-story mixed-use building (see Figure 4). The redevelopment would generally frame Glebe Road and Columbia Pike, surrounding the existing Wendy’s restaurant which would remain. A rear (north) alley would provide parking and loading access while an interior courtyard would satisfy the private open space requirements in the Form Based Code.

Figure 4. 3401 Columbia Pike Redevelopment Proposal



To facilitate this redevelopment, the property owner is requesting an amendment to the Commercial Form Based Code which would change the Building Envelope Standards associated with the northwest corner of the property from a Local frontage type to a Main Street frontage. The resulting change would enable the proposed building to achieve the maximum permitted building heights of the Main Street frontage classification for the full depth of the development site, a condition which already exists along the site’s eastern edge fronting Glebe Road. The proposed amendment would not effect the existing FBC height regulations (applicable to both BES frontage types) along the northern edge of the site where an alley is proposed, and a 32-foot building height restriction would continue to remain within 40 feet of the property line.

Staff Analysis

The 3401 Columbia Pike site is located within the Alcova Heights neighborhood, surrounded by several mixed-use buildings and properties with detached dwellings to the north. The property is currently the site of a 4-story office building, anchored by Bank of America which will be relocating to a new space at the intersection of Columbia Pike and S. Monroe Street. Built in 1972, the existing office building is supported by surface parking and a drive-through located near the northwest corner of the site with access to S. Lincoln Street (see Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. 3401 Columbia Pike Context Map (looking north)



Figure 6. 3401 Columbia Pike (looking south)



In reviewing the property owner's request, staff considered several elements in developing the recommendation to support the proposed FBC amendment.

Consistency with Adopted Policy: The FBC Revitalization District boundary for this block is represented by a consistent line located at the northern edge of the subject site, beyond which detached homes are located. Despite that consistency, the site's eastern and western edges do not share a similar Building Envelope Standard (BES) designation. As depicted in Figures 2 and 4, the Main Street frontage designation along Glebe Road already enables the property owner to utilize the full 6-story height potential for much of the property, including northern areas which are adjacent to single family homes. Since both the Local (blue hatch) and Main Street (red hatch) frontages include similar building height restrictions for areas within 40 feet of the adjacent lot line, the massing transition along this northern end of the site would generally remain the same should this amendment be approved.

Figure 7 demonstrates a comparison between a hypothetical redevelopment scenario utilizing existing FBC provisions and a similar scenario which utilizes the proposed changes to the FBC. In order to initially expand its height potential, the hypothetical scenario on the left utilizes a 50-foot expansion of the Main Street designation which is currently permitted in the FBC. While the remaining 32 feet of space beyond that extension still represent a buildable area, the hypothetical scenario instead depicts a street wall as a means to meet the existing Local frontage requirements which are otherwise difficult to satisfy without an independent building, detached from any larger parcels where other BES frontage types may exist. . The scenario depicted on the right of Figure 7 demonstrates how a more efficient building footprint could alternatively complete this northeast corner of the site, still meet the required height transitions to the north, and establish a consistent building edge along S. Lincoln Street once the Local BES frontage is replaced with the Main Street frontage.

In both scenarios, the upper story of the building includes a 30-foot step-back from S. Lincoln Street to address topography changes on this site. The upper-most residential level represents a 6th floor along Glebe Road but if continued fully to the site's eastern edge, would represent a 7th floor along S. Lincoln Street where the site elevation is lower. In such instances, past FBC developments have relied on interior building modifications that reduce the upper floor limits and effectively eliminate an entire corridor of units such that all public street-facing facades can be formatted to mirror the 6-story building height restriction called for in the Main Street BES designation.

Figure 7. 3401 Columbia Pike Massing Comparison (looking south)



Surrounding Development: In reviewing this proposal, staff also considered the surrounding development in this area as several nearby sites have already developed utilizing the Commercial FBC zoning tool. As noted earlier in Figures 3, 5, and 6, the subject property is adjacent to multiple developments which have been approved for six stories, generally utilizing the Main Street BES designation. Westmont Shopping Center (which is under construction) and APAH’s Gilliam Place (completed back in 2019) both involve similar building height transitions as those applicable to the subject development. In each case, rear alleys introduced an initial buffer from adjacent properties which included a combination of privacy fences and landscaping along the common lot line. Beyond the typical alley width of 25 feet, an additional 15 feet was restricted to a height of only three stories before the buildings could reach their ultimate height of six stories. These required building height restrictions, spanning a distance of 40 feet, represent an appropriate transition to surrounding properties for sites with both Local and Main Street designations.

Shade Study: Following the July 13, 2022, FBC Advisory Working Group (FBC AWG) meeting, the applicant prepared several shade study exhibits to further illustrate differences between a development scenario consistent with existing FBC provisions and one which reflects the requested FBC Regulating Plan changes. The focus in this exercise, as suggested by some AWG members, was to verify if the additional building massing sought by the applicant would significantly impact the adjacent properties (as compared to the development potential currently permitted under the FBC). Figures 8a-c capture this analysis and demonstrate that the distinction is either minimal or unnoticeable, based on the various times of year.

Figure 8a. 3401 Columbia Pike Shade Study (Spring/Fall)

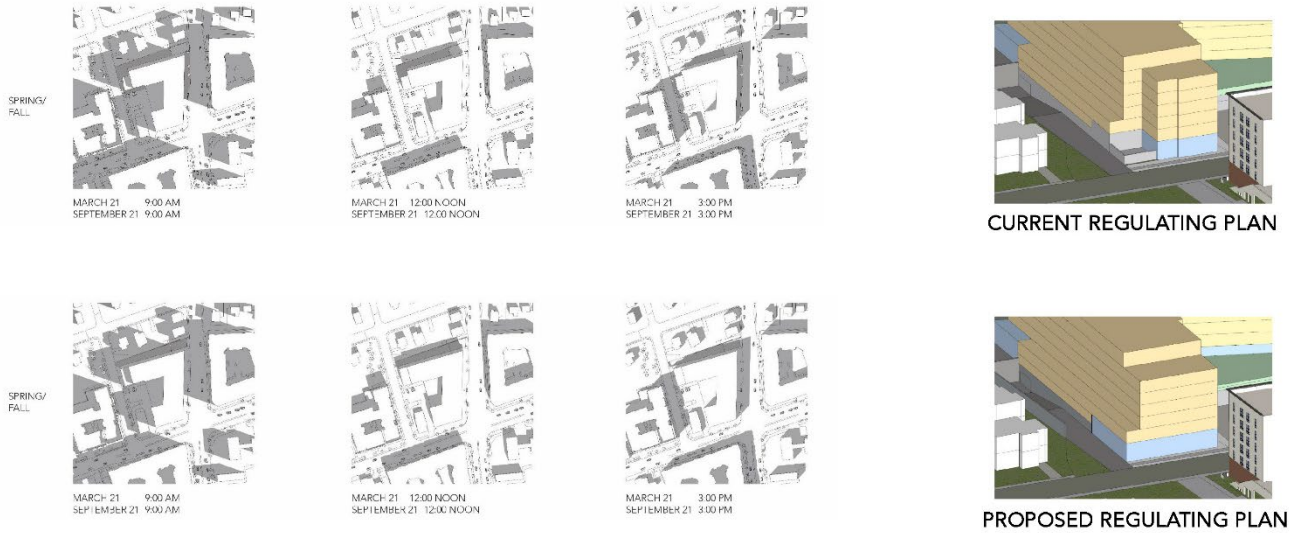


Figure 8b. 3401 Columbia Pike Shade Study (Winter)

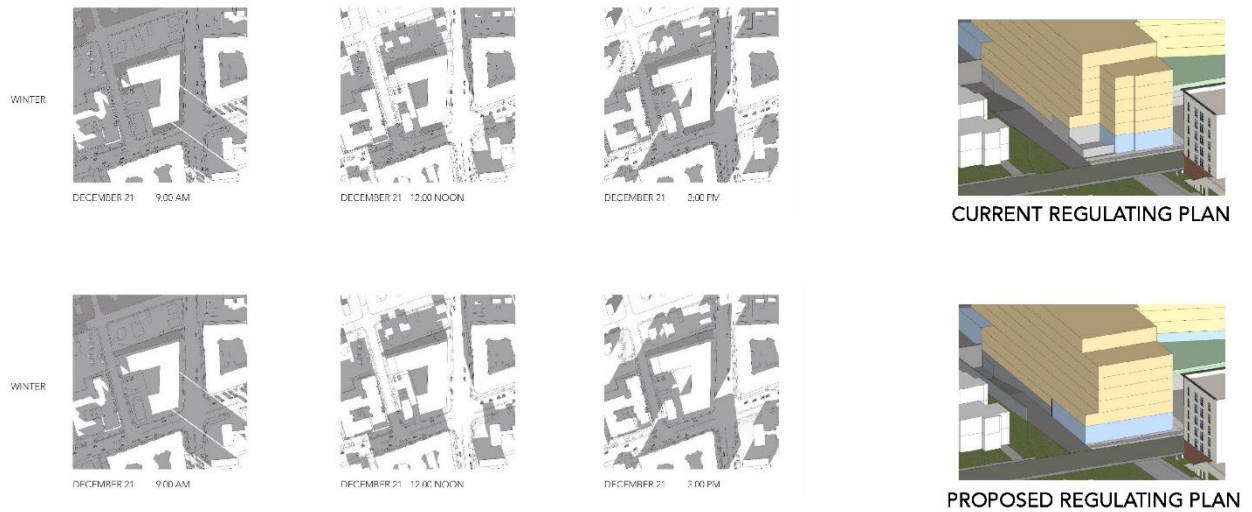
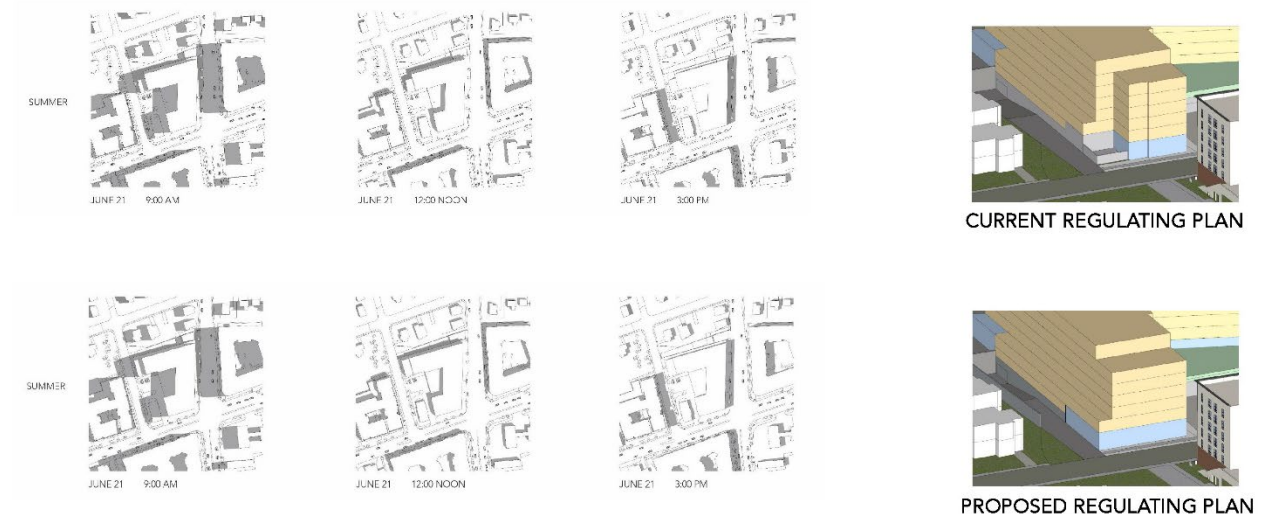


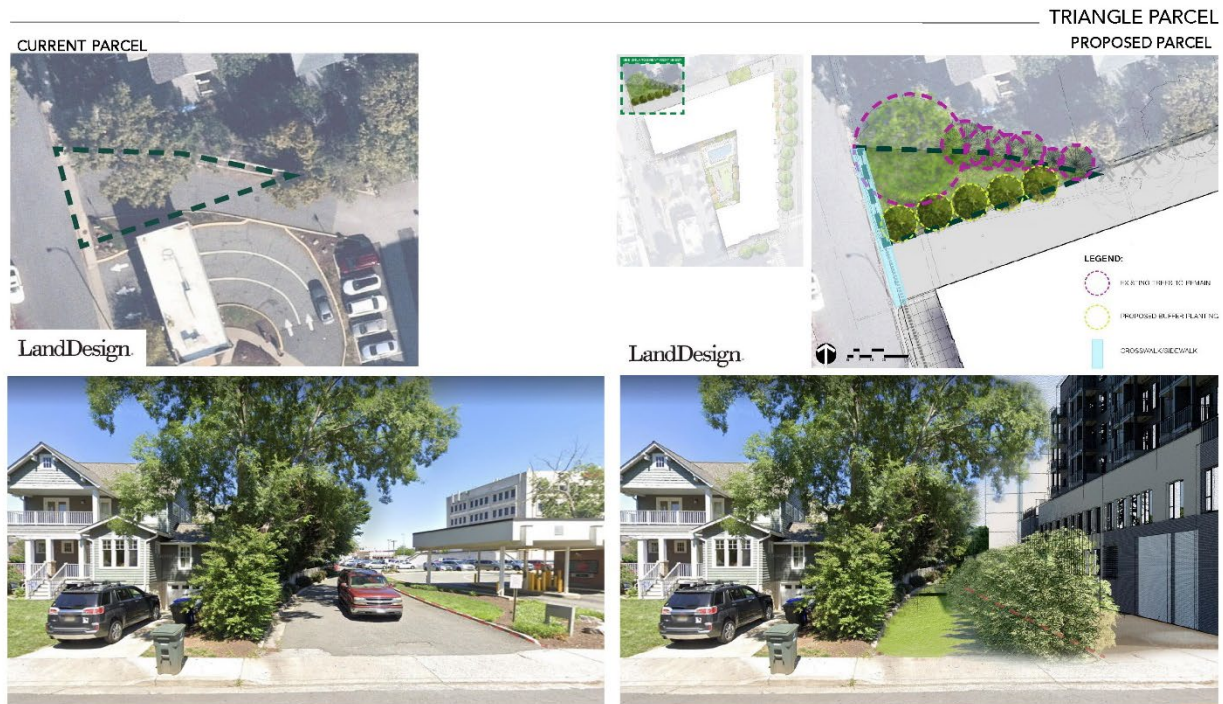
Figure 8c. 3401 Columbia Pike Shade Study (Summer)



Related Site Improvements: Another topic of discussion at the July 13th FBC AWG meeting involved the parcel adjacent to the subject development which is located outside of the FBC Revitalization District but is also owned by Bank of America. For several decades, this triangular piece of land has been utilized as a drive aisle providing access to the bank's parking lot from S. Lincoln Street. It is located in a sensitive transitional area given its immediate proximity to the adjacent detached home which also fronts on S. Lincoln Street. Its future remained uncertain as the drive aisle would no longer be needed should FBC redevelopment occur. However, in considering feedback from FBC AWG members, the applicant has confirmed their plans to augment this parcel with additional landscaping and ensure it can continue to serve as a green buffer between the FBC development and the adjacent residential property.

The envisioned landscaping, as depicted in Figure 9, would also help mirror a similar treatment which was previously applied across S. Lincoln Street with the approval of the Gilliam Place FBC development several years ago. Remaining parcels in that instance which were under the applicant's ownership but could not redevelop under the FBC were instead recreated as park space in response to feedback during the review process of that development. In the case of 3401 Columbia Pike, FBC AWG members similarly suggested additional plantings and landscape improvements would provide a suitable buffer on the triangular parcel located between the proposed development and the adjacent detached property, particularly since the current drive aisle was no longer serving a purpose should redevelopment proceed.

Figure 9. 3401 Columbia Pike Adjacent Triangular Parcel



Recommended Changes to the FBC: The sole change associated with this FBC amendment would involve Part 3’s Town Center Regulating Plan. On this map, the northern section of S. Lincoln Street would change its Building Envelope Standard (BES) frontage from Local (currently depicted by blue hatch) to Main Street (depicted by red hatch). These designations only apply to the public roadways surrounding the private property and therefore no additional changes are needed to effectuate the adjustment.

Figures 10a and 10b demonstrate the existing and proposed changes to the Town Center Regulating Plan, with an emphasis on the northern end of S. Lincoln Street. Since the property to the west has already redeveloped using the Commercial FBC, staff supports revising the designation for the entire street width. Should the subject development proceed, no further redevelopment would be anticipated within the area impacted by this proposal. While many of these exhibits rely on an excerpt of the Regulating Plan for legibility purposes, Attachment 1 captures the recommended changes within the full Town Center Regulating Plan.

Figure 10a. Existing FBC Regulating Plan for 3401 Columbia Pike

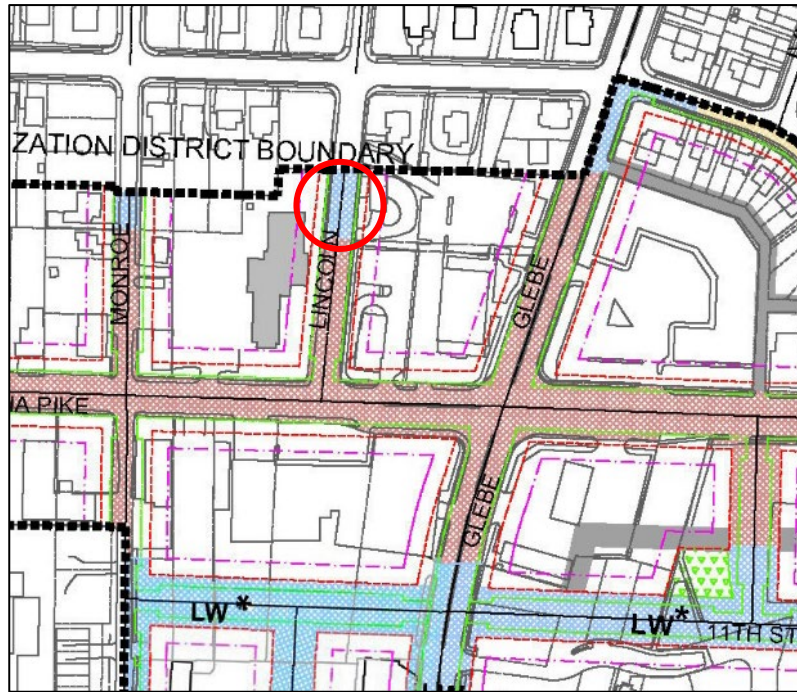
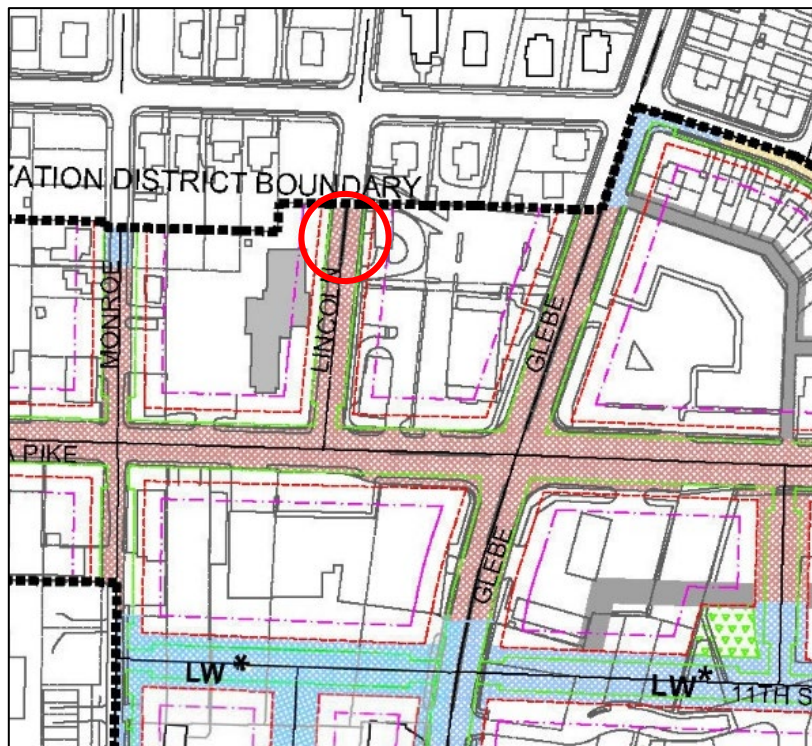


Figure 10b. Proposed FBC Regulating Plan Amendment for 3401 Columbia Pike



Community Engagement Process

Staff used engagement tools primarily from the *Communicate* and *Consult* levels of engagement.

Communicate: Public notice will be given in accordance with Code of Virginia § 15.2-2204, with notices for the Planning Commission and County Board public hearings placed in the Washington Times during the two preceding weeks before each meeting. FBC AWG meeting notifications were also distributed to each of the Presidents of the Civic Associations along Columbia Pike.

Consult: Staff met with the Form Based Code Advisory Working Group (FBC AWG) on July 13, 2022 to discuss this topic and share a presentation by the applicant, representing the property owner of the subject site. Members of the FBC AWG asked clarifying questions about the proposed amendment and to better understand where similar requests may have been proposed with past Form Based Code developments.

In responding to these questions, the applicant provided an overview of their proposed development and highlighted a number of site characteristics which led to the requested amendment. Past FBC developments were noted for similar reliance on the permitted 50-foot expansion of the Main Street designation. The applicant also addressed the adjacent triangular parcel which at the time was still being studied but has since benefited from a clearer landscape proposal that reflects FBC AWG feedback. Some AWG members indicated that a shade study would help inform the analysis and confirm any impacts additional building massing may have on this northwest corner of the site. The applicant has produced several exhibits detailing this study over the summer which has been shared with the FBC AWG in August. Additional questions during the July 13th meeting centered around the overall process for the site's proposed amendment and the potential FBC application. Staff confirmed that preliminary review of the proposed redevelopment was initiated by staff but would not reach the FBC Advisory Working Group's review until later this fall. The County Board would also need to first authorize a Request to Advertise for the FBC amendment before public review of the FBC development application could occur as such an action would help indicate that the proposed FBC amendment could be in the realm of consideration should it be incorporated as part of an appropriate FBC development proposal.

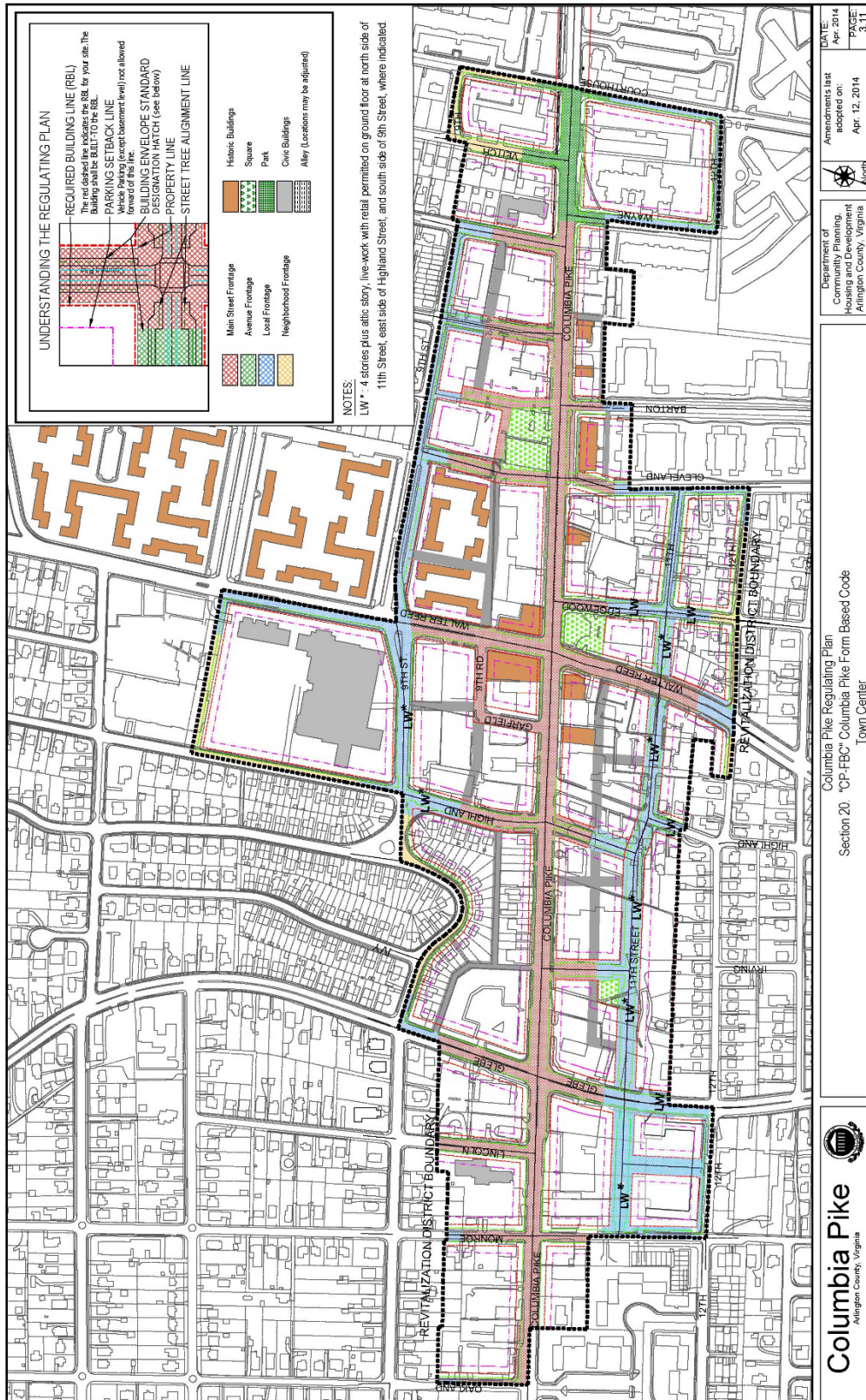
Anticipated Schedule

- September 13, 2022: Zoning Ordinance Committee (ZOCO) Meeting (FBC Amendment)
- Fall 2022: County Board Request to Advertise (FBC Amendment)
- Fall 2022: FBC Advisory Working Group consideration of the proposed FBC redevelopment (FBC Use Permit)
- Late Fall 2022: Planning Commission and County Board final consideration of both requests (FBC Amendment and associated FBC Use Permit)

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Recommended Changes to Sections FBC Town Center Regulating Plan

ATTACHMENT 1: PROPOSED FBC MAP CHANGE – TOWN CENTER REGULATING PLAN



UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATING PLAN

The red dashed line indicates the RBL for your site. The building shall be built to the RBL.

PARKING SETBACK LINE
The setback (minimum level) not allowed forward of this line.

BUILDING ENVELOPE STANDARD DESIGNATION HATCH (see below)

PROPERTY LINE

STREET TREE ALIGNMENT LINE

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Historic Buildings |
| | Square |
| | Park |
| | Civic Buildings |
| | Alley (Locations may be adjusted) |

NOTES:
 LW - 4 stories plus attic story, live-work with retail permitted on ground floor at north side of 11th Street, east side of Highland Street, and south side of 9th Street, where indicated.

Columbia Pike
Arlington County, Virginia

Section 20. "CP-FBC" Columbia Pike Form Based Code
Town Center

Department of
Community Planning,
Housing and Development
Arlington County, Virginia

DATE: Amendments list
Apr. 2014
accepted on:
Apr. 12, 2014

PAGE: 3.11