

Staff Summary: FY2018 Joint BID Memo

As part of the FY 2018 work plan submissions, each BID included a joint memo to the County Board, requesting that the Board address priorities or issues of concern shared by all the BIDs. Below is an update of past, current and/or expected staff work and/policy that relates to each of the five items. The full memo, along with complete staff summaries, where applicable, are attached.

ISSUE 1: Commercial Signage – consider implementing more sign area allowance, or alternate ways of calculating sign area allowance within BID commercial areas, including within building sign plans and specifically for retail tenants. Adequate sign area and varying sign types are needed, particularly in unique situations including retail without street frontage (i.e. retail that faces plazas and access areas to internal mall retail); commercial/retail with more than one frontage; and subdivided space where each tenant requires signage. Additionally, the BIDs request that the County explore non-traditional, non-permanent and/or short-term creative signage which provides for visual interest and adds to the placemaking and unique character in each community.

Staff Update (full memo attached):

- Alternate ways of calculating and/or increasing retail sign area is currently included in the 2017-18 work plan. A staff proposal will be presented to ZOCO on March 18, 2017; BIDs have been notified and will have opportunity for input and comment.

ISSUE 2: Non Commercial Signage (Wayfinding) – workers, residents and visitors who navigate Arlington's urban districts expect adequate signage that directs them to both the commercial amenities (retail, office, hotels) and non-commercial amenities (parks, plazas, pedestrian zones/streets, and public amenities) in a single, uniform set of signs. As such, the County's signage should allow for both temporary and permanent free standing signs, as well as additional signage types such as wall or projecting signs for "bread crumb" uses supporting wayfinding which combine both commercial and non-commercial speech for the purpose of direction, identity and wayfinding around and within a District. Additionally, wayfinding sign programs should be readily updateable and expandable through an administrative approval process to adequately and quickly respond to changes within a District.

Staff Update (full memo attached):

- The ability to create non-commercial "wayfinding" signs is permitted in the Zoning Ordinance via 1) an amendment adopted in June 2016 that allows the County Manager to place non-commercial signs in the public right-of way, subject to County Board approval; and 2) through existing regulations, that allocate sign area on a property-wide basis, allowing it to be distributed between commercial and non-commercial signs (on private property), among allowed sign types, as desired by the property owner.
- Signs allowing a combination of commercial and non-commercial information in the public right-of-way are currently not permissible. These and other requests for commercial sign area revisions are not anticipated to be included in the 2017-18 work plan.

ISSUE 3: Special Events – Although the special events process is straightforward, challenges still exist for certain temporary pop-up events that take place in commercial spaces, mainly due to the time-consuming nature of the permit process. In addition, additional food and beverage pop-ups could activate vacant retail space if a more streamlined and specific path existed that allowed exceptions to permanent tenant requirements for food establishments.

Staff Update:

The Zoning Administrator has received and processed seven (7) short term use CO applications. None were denied. However, the following issues have been identified by applicants during FY2017:

- **Inability to Permit Signage:** temporary sign provisions (Article 13) remain limited to new construction, vacant buildings, and/or new business openings; no special allowances for signs associated with short-term uses (i.e. holiday markets, etc.) currently exist in the County's sign ordinance.
- **Inability to Permit Live Entertainment:** live entertainment, when part of a temporary event, is not currently permitted as part of that short-term use or event. Events that fall within the parameters of the Special Events process (typically those that take place outside and on public property) may include live entertainment. Live entertainment for events which take place on private property AND which are not located in restaurants or other venues which currently hold live entertainment use permits is not permissible.

***ISSUE 4: Streetscape and Lighting** – as BIDs consider streetscape and lighting elements that are reflective of their neighborhood's character and brand, a more streamlined process for implementation of those streetscape elements is necessary. We also suggest the ability to administratively approve individual streetscape elements in various locations once the overall plan has been approved.*

Staff Update:

- Staff has utilized the Rosslyn Streetscape Implementation and Master Plan as a pilot project that can be utilized for future efforts across all BIDs.
- CPHD staff has convened a cross-departmental team that includes AED and DES staff with staff from the Rosslyn BID to develop a process and schedule.
- A Master Plan is expected to be finalized by staff and presented to the County Manager and the County Board by the Rosslyn BID by April 2017 with a request to authorize the County to enter into an MOU to implement a parklet, the first streetscape implementation project requested by the Rosslyn BID.
- The Rosslyn BID will also submit a work plan and budget for the streetscape Master Plan implementation including a plan for fabrication and obtaining all required permits from the County. Implementation would progress on an on-going basis with no requirement to seek County Board approval for each streetscape element or implementation stage.

***ISSUE 5: Alcohol Consumption in Public Parks** – for all BIDs, events are at the core of our individual attraction strategies for our urban neighborhoods. As such, there are certain types of events that are ideally held in public spaces (i.e. certain urban parks and public plazas) which include the sale and/or consumption of alcohol. However, only one public park in all of our Districts (Gateway Park) allows for the consumption of beer and wine. We suggest that Arlington consider amending its Administrative Regulations to allow alcohol sales and/or consumption in certain urban public parks and plazas, located within BID boundaries, under certain conditions wherein the BIDs or Partnerships (i.e. Clarendon Alliance and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization) are involved in the production or sponsorship of the event.*

Staff Update:

- AED held a preliminary discussion with the BIDs regarding this issue, but put the discussion on hold as the County is currently in the process of updating the Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP).
- As part of that update, the County is considering whether to recommend revising the County regulations to allow the County Manager to issue permits for more widespread sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in certain designated public spaces. It is anticipated that a draft plan will be developed by the end of this year.
 - As background, nearly 60% of PSMP survey respondents indicated that they would be supportive of the sale of food and beverages, at least on a temporary basis, in all parks and public spaces. This rises to over 60% when asked about the sale of food and beverages in the County's high density corridors or certain designated parks and plazas. Section 17-2 of the Arlington County Code, which addresses alcoholic beverages currently restricts alcohol consumption to three properties: 1) Gateway Park; 2) Fort C.F. Smith Park; and 3) Clarendon Central Park. Administrative regulation 4.2 also addresses this restriction.
- Any implementation will depend on both the timing of the PSMP approval AND support for a potential recommendation to expand the existing policy. Realistically, implementation of any plan would likely begin in FY2019 at the earliest.
- Should the recommendation to expand the existing policy be included in the plan, AED will work in coordination with DPR to identify potential public spaces where the sale and/or consumption of alcohol could be permitted.