Rosslyn Process Panel (RPP) Subcommittee on Building Height + Massing Meeting Summary
July 29, 2014; 7:00-9:30 pm
2300 Wilson Blvd., Lobby Level Conference Room
Subcommittee Members in Attendance: B. Harner (Chair), P. Berk, S. Cole, S. Karson, A. McGeorge, M. Novotny, S. Stein, J. Zeien
Staff in Attendance: A. Fusarelli, M. Ladd, C. Williamson (B. Carlson, S. Woodworth)

1. **Welcome**

2. **Comments on Background and Study Assumptions**

- Framework block pattern map on slide 22 should expand in width to fully cover Metro Station plaza, to match facade edge lines shown on map on slide 23;
- Freedom Park is not appearing as a part of the network on map on slide 23; should include bridges over Wilson, Lynn and Ft Myer for consistency (maybe using hatched line);
- Building envelopes depicted in vicinity of 1100 Wilson Blvd and River Place should be revised to match property lines;
- For future reference, would be helpful to have more detailed information on street widths;
- As choices regarding street width affect building height, the subcommittee should consider reviewing proposed street widths;
- Need to further consider and clarify relationship between the work of the subcommittees on transportation and building height and massing, particularly as it relates to street widths and buildable envelopes;
- Should also consider the recommended widths of new streets north of Wilson if they were to be pedestrian-only;
- Would like confirmation on the tallest height for which the Rosslyn Plaza site has received FAA determination of no hazard;
- Sense is that industry is trending towards floor plates less than 20,000 square feet; how to consider this? One committee member commented that 20,000-30,000 is generally the sweet spot for office floor plate sizes;
- May need to consider less deep floor plates, given goals of more natural light into interior spaces;
- Next meeting should include discussion on use-mix goals, given clear relationship to form and massing;
- What should be the target for a use-mix goal? Do we establish a floor for residential? Should we stick with what the current General Land Use Plan (GLUP) would permit, or do we consider changes?
- Also need to consider larger floor plates for residential, e.g. 1400 Key Blvd was approx. 14,000 square feet;
- Floor height assumptions, 20’ first floor makes sense; 12’ approx. is common for office;
- Separation between towers – would like to see examples of 50 feet separation, and examples with more separation, for various uses;
- Should give consideration on how to best discourage above-grade parking, given current County practice and preferences pertaining to structured parking near transit; consider counting above grade parking toward gross floor area or allowing additional density for placing parking underground;
- When present, topography could be used strategically to build most/all parking into hillside;
- Is there information readily available on depth to bedrock in Rosslyn?
- It would be helpful to review examples of various street widths being proposed in the planning;
- Should consider differences of potential impacts if taking an Above Sea Level approach versus an Above Site Elevation approach to measuring building height;
- Will sites that are currently recommended for residential in the GLUP be considered for other uses in the modeling?

- How to deal with the few County-owned parcels within RCRD, for instance along Lee Hwy? For modeling purposes, it seems sensible to include the potential density from those sites into the modeling – BUT be clear it's being done for analysis purposes only and is not meant to imply any decision has been made;

3. Comments on Redevelopment Economics Analysis

- One of the purposes of this analysis is to understand the relationship between development economics and community benefits;
- How will what we learn from this analysis inform our work, are we looking to make recommendations to stay at 10 FAR or recommend other specific densities?
- Why is office value less than residential? If that's a reflection of current conditions, would it be better to pick a blended rate to account for general fluctuations over a 20 year period?
- Would it be more appropriate to run the residential analysis under a condominium ownership scenario? This could complicate the analysis and make it less of an apples to apples comparison. Also, in the long view, results assuming rental and versus condo ownership shouldn't be that much different;
- In the end, it may be best to be most conservative, and consider how we might be able to pull the less feasible residential into actually being economically feasible;
- Need to consider that all else being equal, is one use better than the other? This is difficult to project, since economic yields of different development product will change over time; Also, different types of developers will have different ranges of feasibility; and those ranges may vary over time as well;
- Community benefit expectations and parking ratios for residential development increase development costs for that use as compared to office;
- It seems that perhaps going with the values as they are today makes the most sense, as it would be speculative to project otherwise; those could always be tweaked in the future as needed;
- An important question for the County is whether it would be acceptable to forego potential community benefit value that could be achieved from redevelopment if everything were built at the maximum 10 FAR?
- Consideration should be given to whether soft costs assumed in the analysis should be greater;
- If possible, would it be better to try to apply a dynamic analysis that runs the model over a 20-year period, as opposed to the static 2014 analysis presented here? Difficult to predict future economic cycles;

4. Comments on Approach/Next Steps

- It's unclear why the scenarios aren't more specific about exploring heights both above and below 300', and it seems there is too much focus on FAR;
- Should there be areas where buildings are lower and then they come up to peak? Valleys can also include buildings, and not just include the streets and open spaces;
- It would be good to see much more in terms of height transitions to the communities, tapering down to the neighborhood forms – need to consider what level of variability can we achieve here;
- Would like to see heights modeled from average site elevation in addition to heights as they relate to sea level;
- How should we consider maximum heights at 1555 Wilson Blvd, given that site is also part of the WRAPS study area;?
- If we arrive at a scenario that results in some sites being limited to an 8 FAR, what incentives could be provided to help implement this? Would like to ensure some level of equity and fairness among property owners;
- There should also be sensitivity to not fully designing sites that are privately owned - there different ways to manage sites and owners should be given some freedom to explore options;
- In the end, we need to find a good balance between predictability and some room for creative and custom design solutions;

- Can we find good examples from other cities that have created Peaks and Valleys to better understand how they have achieved it?
- We also need to think about how to implement the new policy and approach; if there is a shift in FAR from current practice, how do we solve for that? Should TDR be an option?
- It will be hard to think about what the vision should be without thinking about how it can actually be implemented;
- We should also consider whether reduced height itself might be a community benefit;
- Should we consider potential incentives to keeping certain sites in Rosslyn as they are? Perhaps promote renovation instead of complete redevelopment?
- Heights diagrams should show more detailed articulation in building heights diagrams to more clearly depict the potential results;
- Need to think carefully about how we evaluate and measure the extent to which goals are being met;
- At this time, it's best to provide a wide range of options, that the subcommittee could help narrow in; rather than a narrow range of 3 alternatives that will continue to prompt looking at other options;
- We haven't discussed the skyline much in tonight's conversation; that's something that also has to be addressed;
- In future meetings, can there be a way for the group to meet and work interactively with the model, to test how changing certain variables will affect the results? What about a physical model?

5. Adjourn