

## **Rosslyn Process Panel (RPP) Subcommittee on Building Height + Massing Meeting Summary**

**October 22 2014; 7:00-9:30 pm**

**2100 Clarendon Blvd.,** Lobby Level Conference Room 109/111

**Subcommittee Members** in Attendance: B. Harner (Chair), S. Cole, S. Karson, A. McGeorge, M. Novotny, S. Stein, D. VanDuzer, A. VanHorn, T. Womack, J. Zeien

**Staff** in Attendance: A. Fusarelli, E. Kays, M. Ladd (B. Carlson)

---

### **1. Welcome**

### **2. Land Use Mix**

- Interested in more affordable housing options for Rosslyn, but not seeing that income diversity addressed (could mean more than 60% AMI, but still less than market);
- For the comparisons, need to consider community amenities role in activating these places -e.g. how much retail/park space is afforded to each sector/comparable area;
- Also need to consider levels of diversity and affordability in other places;
- Do we have a handle on what the use mix might look like at the 2040 horizon?;
- Need to also look at neighborhoods beyond the RCRD (the balance of Rosslyn); how do we tie the areas together into one – could be dangerous to split into the two pieces;
- Important to know what the end game target is – what percentage of new development is needed as residential to end up with 28%;
- Optimistic about positive change with Central Place and 1401 Wilson Blvd mix of uses, should consider whether we can provide incentives for more of this;
- Would like more information on how we should set a benchmark; would like similarly dense areas across the country to be researched to help inform our discussion/decisions (Arlington examples may not be that helpful). Do not want to guess about this, though it could be hard finding comparable districts in other cities;
- Ratio is one aspect that helps define the character, but absolute figures might be an important metric as well (e.g. DC has the example of 3,000 people around Gallery Place);
- Critical mass is indeed important...how many people do you need to support finite amount of retail that can be built out;
- How do we define success? Retail has to be supported day and night, and the question is how do we transform from a not very lively area to a place that is much more active.

### **3. Building Massing, Three Scenarios, Analysis**

- Would like to see the river (legible) in future images;
- Rosslyn Plaza scheme in Scenario C looks good, but what is the FAR yield?
- Need to remember the view from observation deck to the west is also important;
- Haven't bought into the idea that tapering is bad – tapering can help with transitions;
- Need to be mindful of other impacts; if we rotate facades, maybe that worsens sun/wind conditions;
- Seems like we are only planning for one goal, need to remember other goals need to be achieved;
- Interest in why there has been increase in land cost in Rosslyn over past 30 years;
- Some of things proposed in Scenario C reduce density to the point of preventing redevelopment, doesn't like idea of picking losers/winners;
- Would it be possible to look at a few sites and see how much that might delay redevelopment;

- Maybe need to talk about extending period of redevelopment (could allow for more texture, more organic and a different sense of place);
- Ability for County to quantify when and where threshold for starting to pay community benefits is?
- If we build every site to 10 FAR, final result may not be the desirable community that we want;
- Need to seriously consider whether continuing with current trajectory is the path we want to follow, or whether there is merit to looking at an alternative to current path;
- It's very important for community to decide if there is merit in a different approach;
- Need to also keep in mind financial realities, and understand that financial analysis likely went into 10FAR target as well;
- If redevelopment is limited to less than 10, need to understand potential tradeoffs for county/community benefits to make redevelopment financially feasible;
- Could there be a community benefit credit for having a shorter building to help provide better physical form?
- There can be ways to get to a solution without getting 10FAR, but we haven't yet discussed how to possibly implement.
- Original vision of some for C-O Rosslyn was not that 10 FAR was the floor, but always viewed as an absolute maximum that would have to be earned. From that perspective, Scenario A is concerning for how it generally extends current practice into the future;
- County's behavior to date might be that 10FAR is standard, but it's a mistake to think that 10FAR is close to a right or even appropriate in all cases;
- What's driving the plan is a desire to make a better Rosslyn; does not believe that maximum density on all sites will provide a desirable result, nor is it actually needed for redevelopment;
- Building refurbishment may not be a good option for achieving plan goals;
- What are some other models for encouraging transformation; need to recognize redevelopment doesn't always need massive increases in density to happen;
- Need to consider if the County might invest in Rosslyn, to help make it a fabulous public place, which drives individual properties to then refurbish – rather than seeing how far community benefit contributions can go;
- Need to also address what makes good architecture;
- Need to consider what is a benchmark area that we want to be like, we shouldn't settle for just rehabbing properties;
- Encourage County Board on rethinking priorities on how it intends to invest in Rosslyn to enable it to be great, for everyone;
- Concerns with whether we can wait for community benefits to implement plan improvements;
- Need to better understand how FAR yields are arrived at based on heights being discussed;
- FAR limits should not be created that would inhibit redevelopment;
- Certain site consolidation assumptions should also be looked at under alternative scenarios as if sites were to not consolidate and still redevelop;
- Concern about potential impacts of above grade parking on FAR yields;

#### 4. Wrap-Up

- Scenario A is perpetuating current trends and is inappropriate, FAR 10 seems to be driving form, and that is an issue;
- Support for Scenario C;
- Dislike for Scenario C; maybe potential in Scenario B – should also give more thought to how community benefit credits might work;
- Maybe the market drives things, having enough density for feasible redevelopment is key;

- Agrees with staff/consultant findings, but interested in how to remove winner/losers overlay;
- What's best for community? Not interested in promoting a plan that is detrimental; at same time; we need to shy away from accepting at its face that maximum density has to always be achieved;
- Wants to make Rosslyn Plaza the best place it can be; we should not throw away long term benefits for short term gain;
- Analysis shows C is preferred, but not sure if there is enough variety;
- None of the scenarios are wonderful, though Scenario C might be the best - none of them create a great skyline; doesn't see big differences;
- Scenario C doesn't get the skyline effect; agree that 10FAR should be earned. Need more thought on how we get great architecture, there should be incentives; in terms of scenarios, maybe letter designation is B as a base, with earned rights getting closer to A.

## 5. Adjourn