
March 5, 2013 Meeting Summary | A meeting with the Form Based Code Advisory Working Group (AWG) and Zoning Committee (ZOCO) of the Planning Commission

Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan Implementation Process

Attendees

PC Members: Inta Malis (FBC AWG Chair), Nancy Iacomini (ZOCO Chair), and Steve Cole. **FBC AWG Members:** Mark Cole, Linda Dye, James Smith, Stef Pryor, Betty Siegel, Takis Karantonis, Chris Slatt, Steve Campbell, Peter Hage, Brad Mowbray, Chris Gordon, and Ed Miltenberger. **Others:** Joan Lawrence, Brenda Cox, Kirsten Grigor, Mike Waisylczik, Dave Leibson, Josh Wooldridge, Scott E. Adams, Guy Gotts, Garrett Erdle, Carrie Johnson, Tom Wallinga, Mike Flannigan, Eric Siegel, and Darnell Carpenter. **Staff and Consultants:** Victor Dover, Justin Falango, Geoff Ferrell, Bill Spack, Jennifer Smith, Matt Mattauszek, Deborah Albert, Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Rebecca Ballo, Bethany Heim, Richard Hartman.

Summary

Agenda Item 2 | Presentation of Initial Draft Form Based Code (FBC) and General Land Use Plan (GLUP) & Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Amendments:

A copy of the presentation, with audio, will be posted online soon. You can reach the project website through this link: <http://www.columbiapikeva.us/revitalization-story/neighborhoods-area-plan-implementation-planning-zoning-tools/>

Agenda Item 3 | Q&A / Comments:

Draft Conservation Area Standards

- If the Conservation Area standards are not part of the FBC and instead are guidelines in a supporting document, how are they applied?

Response:

- *The Conservation Area Standards would be policy guidance that the County Board would use to evaluate a FBC proposal during its review and consideration of the use permit. The standards would be referenced in the FBC zoning, in a similar way that sector plans are referenced in other zoning districts. The zoning would indicate that applicants and the proposals shall meet the intent of the guidelines (see Part 2, Section 209.B and 209.C in handout titled Supplemental Zoning Information). The guidelines would not be strict regulations and the County Board would have the discretion and flexibility to approve proposals following them or with some adjustment.*
- *The title "Conservation Area Architectural Standards" used in this Initial Draft is subject to change/refinement in order to provide additional clarity.*

- Will the Conservation Area standards be adopted by the County Board?

Response: Yes

- Why use only guidelines for those areas about which we care the most?

Response:

- *An applicant would be required to comply with all sections of the FBC (i.e. BES, Regulating Plan, streetscape standards) and apply the Conservation Area standards. By structuring the architectural details as guidelines, an applicant would demonstrate consistency with the guidelines to the review bodies (FBC AWG, HALRB, Planning Commission and, ultimately, the County Board) and adjustments could be made to the design in order to achieve proposals that are determined to be compatible with the surrounding context and existing buildings.*
- *The language drafted ranges from more prescriptive (for Renovations/Additions within FBC Conservation Areas) to less prescriptive (for new construction adjacent to FBC Conservation Areas). It was preferred to keep all language associated with the Conservation Area standards together in one document, even though some parts could be included in the Code because they are more specific.*

— *Conservation Area development (renovations, additions, and new construction adjacent to Conservation Areas) would be subject to Use Permit review. The County Board would be the decision-making body and would evaluate whether an application meets the intent of the guidelines. HALRB would make a recommendation to the County Board for its consideration of approval.*

- Legal question is whether they are actually requirements or not.
- Recall from prior meeting's discussion that Conservation Area Standards should apply to just the new construction immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and may not apply ("reach") fully to new construction along Columbia Pike.

Response:

- *The limits of where the Conservation Area Standards would apply was not settled at the prior meeting. There were mixed opinions on which option to apply. The proposal in this Initial Draft is to fully apply the Conservation Area Standards fully to Barcroft such that where any buildings of the existing Barcroft complex are replaced the standards would apply to new construction in order to provide appropriate architecture that is compatible with the remaining, existing buildings. The intent is that even along the Columbia Pike, George Mason, or Four Mile Run Drive edges, the new construction should be reflective of the traditional architecture.*

- A committee member noted that there is flexibility in the draft language

Neighborhood Manners

- How will neighborhood manners apply in Conservation Areas? What were the prior agreements during the planning phase of the Neighborhoods Area Plan regarding this?

General Architectural Standards

- Do the General Architectural Standards apply to all neighborhoods along the Pike? Not all of the neighborhoods have the same style.

Response:

— *Yes, the General Architectural Standards apply in all areas applicable to the proposed Neighborhoods FBC, except for the FBC Conservation Areas and the area Adjacent to FBC Conservation Areas.*

- A committee member noted that the Architectural Standards may be too prescriptive.

Agenda Item 4 | Wrap Up Comments: Attendees were asked to comment on the elements they would focus on most during their review of the draft material.

Columbia Heights

- Good to have additional guidance in this Code which can aid condo associations that are contemplating renovations.

Urban Forestry

- Good details included in the draft streetscape regulations, particularly for street and shade tree planting provisions

Transportation Commission

- Street cross sections, bicycle parking, and in east end neighborhoods

Penrose Civic Association

- Pictures included are helpful, but some indicate buildings that are old and not necessarily compatible with LEED
- Would like to see more emphasis on sunlight, shadows, – not just about angles to step back buildings
- In addition to accessibility, Code should reflect universal design; accommodating aging in place

Planning Commission

- Conservation Area: Guidelines vs. Standards. Understand the intent is to have architectural style cue toward existing style in Conservation Area. Provide case study on how the guideline approach would achieve the goal, and how it may be better option than applying standards.
- Architectural Standards are too prescriptive, discourage some developers/architects because it eliminates creativity

CPRO

- Feasibility issues (code regs; topography issues; constructability); walkability and accessibility; universal design and minimum requirements; and pedestrian zones
- Conservation Area: guidelines are okay

Foxcroft Heights Civic Association

- Guidelines vs Standards: More prescriptive standards make it easier to determine, administer for future groups; the Code should ensure faithful administration by future county boards.

Park & Recreation Commission

- Open spaces: interesting approach on how the spaces are proposed
- Infill construction within FBC Conservation Areas: will evaluate if there is a valid concern about losing open space
- Examine how energy efficiency can be accommodated

Alcova Heights Civic Association

- Transitions between new development and single-family areas; Conservation Areas; streets and transit

Arlington Heights Civic Association

- Livability, accessibility, Neighborhood Manners, and neighborhood values (both green and social sustainability)
- Mandatory stoops limit diversity and go against decisions recently made in existing Code for accessibility

Douglas Park Civic Association

- Barcroft complex including new streets, open spaces, transitions, edges; the area addresses so many of the issues / factors included in the FBC

Property Owner/Developer

- Constructability and cost of construction in context of affordable housing
- Elevation of ground story finished floor is problematic – for accessibility and costs
- Less prescriptive standards is better; balance need for predictability with flexibility

Property Owner/Developer

- Will look at everything
- How draft FBC relates to Neighborhoods Area Plan, and how it ensures viable redevelopment

HALRB

- Providing quality controls with authenticity is good approach; Proposed standards allow for this; possibly some could be loosened
- Intent is NOT to replicate Barcroft or Fillmore but provide a context for the new construction; without creating cookie-cutter buildings

Other Attendees

- Review Code to ensure that right mix of standards are included, but incentives still in place to encourage use of Code over by-right development
- Density is a concern. Does the GLUP guide the FBC density/Building Envelop Standards?