

Rosslyn Plaza
Working Draft of Guiding Principles
October 29, 2012

These draft principles were developed over the course of four SPRC meetings on June 28, July 17, September 10, and September 24, 2012. The Guiding Principles will be an element of the PDSP brought before the County Board for consideration.

Guiding Principles

In response to a Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP) submitted for the Rosslyn Plaza site, County staff, the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC), and the Planning Commission drafted these principles to guide the long-term development of the site and to evaluate future site plan applications. They are based on existing Arlington County policy documents, including:

- Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum (1992);
- General Land Use Plan (2011);
- Arlington Master Transportation Plan (2009-2011);
- Rosslyn Multi-Modal Transportation Study Draft (2011);
- Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Streetscape Standards (2007);
- Retail Action Plan (2001);
- Public Spaces Master Plan (2005); and
- County Board Resolutions on Building Heights (1982, 2002, 2007).

Should new County policy be adopted in the future, PDSP amendments and final site plans should be evaluated in the context of these principles and the latest County policy. The order of the principles is not intended to suggest relative priorities.

A. Compatibility and Placemaking

1. Development should complement surrounding existing and envisioned uses and create a distinct sense of place.
2. Development should contribute to the rebuilding of Rosslyn in a more urban form with a functional street grid, mixed uses, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, easy access to transit, buildings that relate well to one another and to the street, and connected open spaces.
3. Development should help define a gateway into Rosslyn.
4. Development should contribute to the distinctive image of Arlington from the waterfront and monumental core.
5. The site design should seek to improve the site's edge condition adjacent to Interstate 66, both visually and physically.

6. Development should include certain placemaking features, such as cultural facilities, public spaces for park uses and flexible programming, and retail to enhance the site's sense of place.

B. Uses

1. Development should create a live-work-shop environment, encourage vitality throughout the day and evening, provide diverse housing and retail opportunities, and contribute to a more balanced use mix in Rosslyn.
2. Development should include a mix of uses, such as office, residential, hotel, cultural, retail and service businesses, community facilities, and civic spaces.
3. Retail should be clustered, have direct street frontage, and have strong visible connections to central Rosslyn to encourage its success.
4. Ground floor uses should complement adjoining public open spaces and activate streetscapes.
5. Ground floor spaces should be attractive and flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of tenants, including small retail and service businesses.

C. Circulation

1. Development should enhance Rosslyn's street network and provide multimodal, complete streets which improve pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular access to, through, and around the site.
2. A street grid that organizes open space, defines building placement, and distributes loading, parking, and emergency access points throughout the site should be phased into the development to break up the existing superblock.
3. Development should include pedestrian connections through the site which link to surrounding developments, public open spaces, and routes to and from transit nodes.
4. Improved pedestrian and bicycle access from Rosslyn to the Mount Vernon Trail and Potomac Riverfront should be considered as part of the development plan, subject to collaboration with Virginia Department of Transportation and the National Park Service.
5. Streetscapes should maximize pedestrian-friendly features, including widened sidewalks, shortened crossing distances, accessibility improvements, and street trees.
6. Creative and functional design solutions to topography challenges which improve site access should be used.
7. Special treatment should be used to distinguish key intersections or focal points of the site.

D. Parking and Loading

1. Parking should be provided below grade as much as possible. Visibility of above grade parking structures should be minimized by wrapping parking with other uses and incorporating facades consistent with high-quality architecture on the site.
2. Flexibility for below grade parking under new streets should be considered if it improves garage functionality without adversely impacting streetscapes or utilities.
3. Loading and parking areas should be located so as to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and to distribute access points.
4. On-site and on-street public parking should be provided to accommodate short-term visitors and retail customers.

E. Open Space

1. Public open space should expand and diversify Rosslyn's open space resources by providing new types of spaces which attract a broad range of residents, workers, and visitors and encourage evening and weekend use.
2. Well-designed public open space should be highly visible, have direct street frontage, and be at grade with major pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation around and through the site.
3. A significantly sized public open space should be provided on a prominent street and should be designed to accommodate multiple park uses and provide flexibility for multipurpose programming.
4. Public open space should respond to the site's unique opportunities such as its proximity to the waterfront, Theodore Roosevelt Island, and nearby recreational trails.
5. Public open space should be designed and located so as to minimize the negative impacts from the site's adjacency to Interstate 66.
6. Streetscapes should be designed as useable public space with enhanced pedestrian elements such as widened sidewalks, seating, and multipurpose green spaces.
7. Public art should be incorporated into the site's open spaces in order to activate them, improve wayfinding, complement cultural uses, and contribute to a sense of place for the site.

F. Building Form and Heights

1. Design techniques such as tapering, step backs, orientation of building footprints (base and tower), and distinctive top elements should be used to enhance Rosslyn's skyline, maximize key view corridors to, from, and through the site, and improve the pedestrian environment.

2. Views from the Central Place observation deck should be protected and other public view corridors should be provided.
3. Building heights should be noticeably varied and generally taper down from Central Place.
4. Buildings should be located and designed to create a consistent, pedestrian-scaled streetwall with visual interest, variety, and transparency.
5. Building placement and form should be sensitive to shade impacts and the seasonal needs for both sunlit and shaded public space.
6. Creative and functional design solutions to topography challenges which prevent blank walls should be used.

G. Sustainability

1. Development should incorporate best practices and County policies for green buildings and stormwater management.
2. Development should seek to achieve applicable County energy goals to ensure efficient building design, operation, and energy infrastructure.
3. Development should increase the tree canopy of the site and include green, landscaped elements throughout outdoor areas where feasible, including the use of roof gardens.

H. Phasing

1. Key public infrastructure and community benefits should be achieved at each phase and detailed with approval of the PDSP.
2. Phasing should ensure short-term functionality of the site and accommodate existing uses and their garage and street access in the interim.
3. Development of early phases should preserve connectivity through the site and to transit access points.
4. Retail uses should be located so that a critical mass is maintained throughout phasing. Interim uses, such as temporary retail vendors or structures, should be considered to achieve this principle.
5. The phasing plan should allow for the replacement of the existing theater on site during the same phase in which it is demolished.
6. The PDSP should include urban design guidelines to facilitate the long-term development of the site and ensure consistent, high-quality urban design and architecture in future site plans.

The following are the Guiding Principles with tracked changes from the September 24, 2012 SPRC meeting shown.

Guiding Principles

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8. Development should contribute to the rebuilding of Rosslyn in a more urban form with a functional street grid, mixed uses, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, easy access to transit, buildings that relate well to one another and to the street, and connected open spaces.

9. Development should help define a gateway into Arlington Rosslyn.

~~9-10.~~ Development should ~~and~~ contribute to the distinctive image of Arlington from the waterfront and monumental core.

~~10-11.~~ The site design should seek to improve the site's edge condition adjacent to Interstate 66, both visually and physically.

~~11-12.~~ Development should include certain placemaking features, such as cultural facilities, public spaces for park uses and flexible ,programming, -entertainment and recreational activities, and destination-retail to enhance the site's sense of place.

B. Uses

6. Development should create a live-work-shop environment, encourage vitality throughout the day and evening, provide diverse housing and retail opportunities, and contribute to a more balanced use mix in Rosslyn.
7. Development should include a mix of uses, including such as office, residential, hotel, cultural, retail and service businesses which serves a variety of users, -community facility facilities, and-or civic spaces.
8. Retail should be clustered, have direct street frontage, and have good visibility from primary streets in strong visible connections to central Rosslyn to encourage its success.
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- 4.2. Well-designed public open space should be highly visible, have direct street frontage, and be at grade with major pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation around and through the site.
2. A significantly sized public open space should be provided on a prominent street and should be designed to accommodate multiple park uses ~~active and passive recreation~~ and provide flexibility for multipurpose programming.
3. ~~Public open space should expand and diversify Rosslyn's open space resources by providing new types of spaces which attract a broad range of residents, workers, and visitors and encourage evening and weekend use.~~
- 4.3. _____
- 5.4. Public open space should respond to the site's unique opportunities such as its proximity to the waterfront, Theodore Roosevelt Island, and nearby recreational trails.
- 6.5. Public open space should be designed and located so as to minimize the negative impacts from the site's adjacency to Interstate 66.
- 7.6. Streetscapes should be designed as useable public space with enhanced pedestrian elements such as widened sidewalks, seating, and multipurpose green spaces.
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The discussion at the SPRC Meeting on September 24, 2012 included a number of comments that staff recommends would be better discussed and incorporated into the PDSP plan and the Design Guidelines. Such elements of the PDSP will provide further guidance and detail as to how the principles should be applied as part of future final site plans. The comments are included below for future reference and discussion.

Principle	Comments
Placemaking and Compatibility	Clarify “sense of place” – what type of place will Rosslyn Plaza be? Specify placemaking elements needed to achieve the sense of place.
Circulation	Pedestrian paths and public open spaces should be barrier free and incorporate universal design elements.
Circulation	Incorporate festival street elements into some streets so that they can be utilized for pedestrian-only events.
Uses	Provide more guidance on the appropriate location for certain types of uses, such as retail and services uses, on the site. While retail may be desirable on the ground floor of buildings on primary streets, other uses may be more appropriate on side streets or above the ground floor.
Uses	Ensure that spaces are designed appropriately to accommodate designated retail uses.
Open Space	Provide more specificity on the types of park uses desired in the public open spaces on site.
Open Space	Provide more specificity on the size required for the “significantly sized” open space, so that it meets the needs of the desired park uses.
Building Form and Height	Encourage building form and arrangement which orients slender edges toward the river.
Sustainability	Incorporate green elements into building design, such as green terraces and walls.
Sustainability	New streets, plaza, and open spaces provided above garages should be designed with enough depth to ensure that canopy trees can be accommodated.
Phasing	Provide more detail on the public infrastructure to be provided at each phase of the PDSP.