

Rosslyn Plaza
Draft Guiding Principles
September 19, 2012

These draft principles have been developed over the course of three SPRC meetings on June 28, July 17, and September 10, 2012. The items in red below note changes made since the last meeting based on discussion of alternative language for principles A.2, C.2, F.3, and F.6 and an additional principle for Circulation.

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.

Note, the applicant has suggested the following alternative principle for A.2:

~~*"Development should contribute to the rebuilding of Rosslyn in a more urban form with thoughtful vehicular and pedestrian connections, mixed uses, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, easy access to transit, buildings which relate to one another and to the street, and connected open spaces."*~~

3. Development should define a gateway into Arlington and contribute to the distinctive image of Arlington from the waterfront and monumental core.
4. The site design should seek to improve the site's edge condition adjacent to Interstate 66, both visually and physically.
5. Development should include certain placemaking features, such as cultural facilities, public space, entertainment and recreational activities, and destination 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, and contribute to a more balanced use mix in Rosslyn.
2. Development should include a mix of uses, including office, residential, hotel, retail which serves a variety of users, cultural, and a community facility or civic space.
3. Retail should be clustered, have direct street frontage, and have good visibility from primary streets in 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.

Note, the applicant has suggested the following alternative principles for C.2:

“Break up superblocks with pedestrian connections or new streets. Analyze the site's context, topography and phasing in determining if a pedestrian connection or street is appropriate.”

~~“Building placement, open space creation, loading / parking, creation of new streets and overall site design should be considered holistically. Site design should weigh the positive attributes and tradeoffs between different components of the site design.”~~

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 and prevent blank walls should be used.
7. Special treatment should be used to distinguish key intersections or focal points of the site.

~~Note, the applicant has suggested the following additional principle for Circulation:~~

~~“Create a pedestrian (and bicycle) priority street as part of the development 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. 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 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. Public open space should respond to the site's unique opportunities such as its proximity to the waterfront, 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 and other key public view corridors should be protected.
3. Building heights should be notably-noticeably varied and generally taper down from Central Place.

Note, the applicant has suggested the following alternative principle for F.3:

"Building heights should be 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. The development plan should accommodate viable, marketable floor plates for the various uses.~~

~~Note, the applicant has suggested the following alternative principle for F.6:~~

~~"The development must be financially viable and provide efficient and marketable floor plates typical for each type of use."~~

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.
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.