

## **NVAA Jurisdictional Summary – Arlington County**

**New Leadership in Arlington County:** 2015 saw an influx of new leadership in Arlington County. In addition to newly elected County Board members Katie Cristol and Christian Dorsey, the County welcomed a new County Manager (Mark Schwartz); Director of the Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development (Steven Cover); and Acting Zoning Administrator (Arlova Vonhm). The new leadership in Arlington County has committed itself to evaluating County zoning and land use entitlement processes and making improvements to encourage greater community participation and to streamline the review procedure.

**Implementation of New Sector Plans:** 2015 was a busy planning year in Arlington County, as the County Board approved three very significant land use planning documents—the Rosslyn Sector Plan, the West Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS), and the Courthouse Sector Plan. All three of these plans establish a vision for future long-term development within the respective plan boundaries. In 2016, Arlington County Planning Staff has turned its attention to processing the various General Land Use Plan, Master Transportation Plan, and Zoning Ordinance amendments that will be needed to implement the three new land use plans. Implementation efforts for the WRAPS plan are already underway, with Planning Commission and County Board hearings on the proposed General Land Use Plan, Master Transportation Plan, and Zoning Ordinance amendments scheduled for February 2016. On February 24, 2016, the Long Range Planning Committee and Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission will hold a joint meeting to begin discussions on the implementation of the Rosslyn Sector Plan. Implementation efforts for the Courthouse Sector Plan are expected to begin in spring of 2016.

**Pending Zoning Ordinance Amendments:** In April 2011, Arlington County initiated a multi-phased project to update the Zoning Ordinance and make it easier to use, understand, and administer. The newly reformatted version of the Zoning Ordinance contains minor technical and typographical errors that were not addressed during the initial phases of the Ordinance revision process, so Arlington County Staff periodically processes a series of minor technical amendments to correct these errors. The next group of technical corrections is tentatively scheduled to be considered by the County Board in April 2016. Please contact Nan Walsh of Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley & Walsh, P.C. if you know of a technical error that needs to be addressed.

**County Board Approves Universal Design Park:** On January 28, 2016, the Arlington County Board approved a \$1.275 million dollar overhaul to the playground and sand volleyball court at Quincy Park, located south of Washington Boulevard between N. Quincy and N. Nelson Streets in the Virginia Square area. The playground will be the first in Arlington to incorporate state-of-the-art Universal Design elements to make it accessible for people of all ages and physical abilities. The redesigned playground will feature new wheelchair ramps, seating and picnic areas, specially designed swings, softer play surfaces, quiet spaces for those with sensory sensitivities, water fountains, and other elements designed for the enjoyment of people of varying ages and abilities.

**Columbia Pike Developments and Multi-Modal Improvements:** 2015 was an exciting year for the Columbia Pike corridor, and 2016 promises to be no different. In 2015, the Arlington County Board

approved three new Columbia Pike Form Based Code developments—a new residential infill development at the APAH-Columbia Hills property in west Pike, a mixed-use redevelopment of the Arlington Presbyterian Church property in central Pike, and a residential redevelopment of the G.W. Carver Homes cooperative property in east Pike. In 2016, the County Board will also hear applications for new Form Based Code developments at the Food Star/Village Center site, Wellington Apartments/S. Rhodes Street site, and the 2400 Columbia Pike/Rappahannock Coffee site. In addition, the County continues to make progress on its Multi-Modal Improvement Project, which is intended to make Columbia Pike a safer, more accessible route for all users. The Multi-Modal project will feature improvements such as utility undergrounding, street and sidewalk improvements, upgraded bike routes, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and cross-section modifications.

**Lee Highway Visioning:** In the fall of 2015, Arlington County hosted a Community Visioning Charrette and a follow-up community meeting for the re-visioning of the Lee Highway corridor. This meeting brought together residents, business owners, stakeholders, and industry experts to establish a shared vision for Lee Highway. The input received at these meetings provided the basis for a visioning report that will be presented to the County Board in March 2016. The County Board will use the report to inform next steps and any future planning processes.

**Affordable Housing Master Plan:** On September 19, 2015, the Arlington County Board adopted the County's first Affordable Housing Master Plan ("Housing Plan") as an element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Housing Plan represents the culmination of a multi-year effort through which County Staff worked with a consultant team, community representatives and key stakeholders, and members of an appointed Working Group to evaluate existing County policies, assess current County programs and resources, and identify needs and gaps in provisions for affordable housing. The adopted Housing Plan contains significant policy guidance designed to prepare Arlington for the next generation of sustainable, affordable housing. Among many other policy recommendations, the Housing Plan attempts to distribute affordable housing more broadly throughout the County by recommending that the County not award Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) loans to proposed developments located in census tracts that already feature a high concentration of affordable housing.

**Nauck Town Center Revisioning:** Arlington County Planning Staff recently initiated a new planning and design process for the Nauck Town Square. Located in Arlington County's oldest and most historic African-American community, the new Town Square will serve as a community gathering place for events and for learning about the neighborhood's rich cultural heritage as expressed through design enhancements and public art by award-winning landscape architect and artist Walter Hood. The County will be sponsoring a series of community meetings to solicit public input on the design, use, and function of the square. The next community meeting is scheduled for March 22.

**Lower Residential Parking Ratios for Mixed Use Developments and Additional Parking Policy Analysis:** In recent months, the Arlington County Board has approved two new mixed-use developments that feature historically low residential parking ratios. Specifically, the Ballston Quarter mixed-use building was approved for a minimum residential parking ratio of 0.70 spaces per unit, and the Red Top Cab site redevelopment was approved for a ratio of 0.79 spaces per unit. Additionally, the Arlington County

Board approved a parking reduction to 0.932 spaces per unit for the existing apartment buildings located at 1600 & 1610 16th Street N., in consideration of their proximity to a metro station, inclusion of affordable housing units, and commitment to implementation of a transportation management plan. These parking ratios reflect a larger trend in Arlington County and throughout the region of reducing vehicular traffic and promoting public transit options in high-density corridors. Arlington County does have a commercial parking policy which permits a developer to “buy down” required office parking spaces, but it does not have an adopted policy as to reductions in residential parking ratios. The Arlington County Planning Division’s draft 2016 work plan indicates that the County may soon undertake a policy study concerning residential parking standards in Metro Station areas.

**County Board Approves New Condominium Development in Rosslyn:** On January 28, 2016, the Arlington County Board approved an amendment to the General Land Use Plan Map and a new special exception site plan for the Washington Vista condominium development at 1411-1417 Key Boulevard. The new development consists of a 63-unit multifamily condominium building, six three-story townhomes, and 64 underground parking spaces. Four of the two-bedroom units will be committed affordable for households earning 80% of area median income (AMI). The new building will be one of the few developments in the County that features affordable homeownership units.

**Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway Set to Open:** Arlington’s Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway, which will complete the area’s first dedicated transit lanes, is expected to be completed in spring 2016. Arlington County began building the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway, a joint project with the City of Alexandria, in summer 2014. The County’s portion of the project includes 0.75 miles of new transit-only roadway, 1.5 miles of on-street dedicated transit lanes, seven new stations, and traffic signal upgrades along the Transitway route. Alexandria’s portion of the project, running from Potomac Yard to Braddock Road, opened in August, 2014.

**Arlington County Planning Staff Finalizing 2016 Work Plan:** Planning Director Bob Duffy presented the Arlington County Planning Division’s draft 2016 work plan at meetings of the Zoning Committee and Planning Commission in February. The ambitious draft work plan includes items such as ongoing application review, implementation of recently approved land use plans, and initiation of new land use studies and Zoning Ordinance revisions. Please see the Planning Commission website for additional information.