DATE: June 21, 2005

SUBJECTS: A. Adoption of the Fort Myer Heights North Plan.

B. GP-300-04-2 Adoption of General Land Use Plan amendments to add an Open Space symbol (triangle) to the following locations in order to encourage public open space (see Attachment 1):

- Northeast corner of the block bordered by 16th Street North, North Queen Street, 14th Street North, and North Quinn Street.

- Southwest corner of the block bordered by Clarendon Boulevard, North Quinn Street, North Rhodes Street, and 16th Street North (south of the existing public park).

- Northeast corner of the block bordered by 14th Street North, North Rhodes Street, Fairfax Drive, and North Rolfe Street.

C. Adoption of an Ordinance to Amend Sections 13 and 15 of the Zoning Ordinance which amends, reenacts and recodifies regulations for development permitted under Special Exception Site Plan to include new provisions specific to properties located in the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” (see Ordinance).

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

A. Defer adoption of the Fort Myer Heights North Plan until the December 10, 2005, County Board meeting.

B. Defer adoption of General Land Use Plan amendments to add open space symbols to 3 locations until the December 10, 2005, County Board meeting.

C. Defer until the December 10, 2005, County Board meeting, consideration of Zoning Ordinance amendments to Sections 13 and 15 related to development permitted by Special Exception Site Plan.
ISSUES: A separate collaborative public process is underway to refine the way increases in density are allocated in all site plan districts countywide. This process and the resulting recommendations may necessitate additional changes to the Fort Myer Heights North Plan and the necessary tools and incentives to implement the Plan.

SUMMARY: During 2003 and 2004, staff in conjunction with the Long Range Planning Committee of the Planning Commission and community stakeholders, conducted a planning process to develop goals and objectives for the Fort Myer Heights North neighborhood. The results of the planning process will be presented to the County Board for approval in two phases. The first phase, which was approved by the County Board at its April 16, 2005 meeting, included: 1) adding a note to the General Land Use Plan that designated the boundaries of the Special District; 2) adding a paragraph under Special Planning Areas on the GLUP generally describing the vision for the neighborhood; and 3) amending the Zoning Ordinance to remove townhouses as a by-right use, but to continue permitting them through the site plan process. The second phase to be considered later this year, which is the subject of this report, includes: 1) adoption of the Fort Myer Heights North Plan; 2) General Land Use Plan amendments to depict the desired location for public open space in the neighborhood; and 3) Zoning Ordinance amendments to allow for an increase in density in the Fort Myer Heights North District when a development proposal conforms to the recommendations of the Fort Myer Heights North Plan and provides community benefits to offset the increase in density.

It is possible that the recommendations resulting from the public process to refine the way increases in density are allocated could lead to necessary changes to the implementation tools outlined in the Fort Myer Heights North Plan. Therefore, it is recommended that the County Board defer consideration of the Plan, GLUP amendments and Zoning Ordinance amendments related to implementation tools to be deferred until the December 10, 2005, County Board meeting.

BACKGROUND: The Fort Myer Heights North planning process focuses on reevaluating the land use goals and objectives for the area bordered by Clarendon Boulevard, Arlington Boulevard, North Pierce Street, and North Courthouse Road. County staff, the Long Range Planning Committee of the County’s Planning Commission, and community stakeholders, including the Radnor-Fort Myer Heights Civic Association, the Rosslyn Renaissance, residents of adjacent communities, land owners, and developers, began a study of the Fort Myer Heights North neighborhood in the summer of 2003. The study began with a walking tour of the neighborhood to observe existing conditions. Since then, a thorough inventory has been conducted including land use, historic buildings, affordable housing, open space and tree canopy, infrastructure, and demographics. A series of public workshops were held in 2003 and 2004 to help identify issues, develop a vision statement, and provide feedback on potential concepts and implementation strategies.

DISCUSSION: In order to realize the vision for the Fort Myer Heights North neighborhood, the Fort Myer Heights North Plan includes incentives to redevelop using the County’s Special Exception Site Plan option for development. In light of the County Board resolution on affordable housing priorities adopted on February 15, 2005, staff is working with community...
stakeholders in clarifying how to allocate additional density as it relates to affordable housing contributions through the site plan process County-wide. The results of this process may necessitate changes to the Fort Myer Heights North Plan and the necessary tools and incentives to implement the Plan. It is expected that progress on the affordable housing process will be achieved by the fall. At that time, staff will be able to determine any necessary changes to the Fort Myer Heights North Plan. Therefore, it is recommended that the adoption of the Plan, additional GLUP amendments and Zoning Ordinance amendments related to implementation tools be deferred until the December 10, 2005 County Board meeting.
ZONING ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REENACT, AND RECODIFY ZONING ORDINANCE
SECTION 13. “RA8-18” APARTMENT DWELLING DISTRICTS AND SECTION 15. “RA6-
15” APARTMENT DWELLING DISTRICTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO ADD
NEW ITEMS TO THE LIST OF SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE
CHARACTER OF THE “FORT MYER HEIGHTS NORTH SPECIAL DISTRICT,” WHICH
INCLUDES MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT REMINISCENT OF THE
FIRST MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING IN ARLINGTON COUNTY AND WHICH PROVIDES
A SIGNIFICANT SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING; TO FACILITATE THE
CREATION OF CONVENIENT, ATTRACTIVE AND HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY
WITHIN THE “FORT MYER HEIGHTS NORTH SPECIAL DISTRICT.”

BE IT ORDAINED THAT, Sections 13 and 15 of the Zoning Ordinance are amended,
reenacted and recodified as follows in order to in order to preserve the character of the “Fort
Myer Heights North Special District,” which includes multi-family residential development
reminiscent of the first multi-family housing in Arlington County and which provides a
significant supply of affordable housing; to facilitate the creation of convenient, attractive and
harmonious community within the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District;” and for other
reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare and good zoning
practice.

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Section 13. “RA8-18” Apartment Dwelling Districts

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B. Special Exceptions

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3. When a site with an area of more than twenty thousand
(20,000) square feet, or with ten (10) or more existing dwelling units, is
sought to be used in a manner inconsistent with existing regulations for
height, setback, yard, coverage, or parking, or is sought to be developed
using additional residential density, the county board may allow
exceptions, after application for a site plan approval consistent with
subsection 36.H. of this ordinance, in order to achieve a design which is
appropriate for the site, project, and the surrounding area. Except in the
“Fort Myer Heights North Special District,” the county board may
approve additional height and density based on the provision of low or
moderate income housing as provided in Subsection 36.H.5.b. The county
board, in its discretion, may modify regulations on height, setback, yard,
coverage, or parking requirements and may approve up to a twenty-five
percent (25%) increase above thirty-six (36) units per acre in residential
density for a project that provides low or moderate-income housing as provided in subsection 36.H.5, provided that:

* * *

4. When a site within the area designated as the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” on the General Land Use Plan is sought to be used in a manner consistent with the Fort Myer Heights North Plan, and as generally described herein, then by Special Exception Site Plan approval pursuant to Section 36.H, development may be permitted at up to 72 units per acre. As a development proposal increases in density above what is otherwise allowed by-right, and approaches 72 units per acre, the proposal will be expected to make greater progress toward those goals, including by way of illustration and not limitation affordable housing, historic preservation and the provision of open space. The purpose of the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” is to: 1) promote the compatibility of new and existing development by coordinating building placement, orientation, scale, bulk, streetscape and pedestrian facilities; 2) provide for creative opportunities to encourage and retain affordable housing; and 3) promote opportunities for the preservation of historically significant buildings.

a. When an on- or off-site building that is on the preferred buildings list is preserved and units inside the building are committed as affordable, that number of units shall not count toward the permitted density. In such case the County Board may approve additional density, above 72 units per acre when the height and site design recommendations of the plan are met.

b. Building height shall generally be consistent with the building heights plan for the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” and shall in no event exceed 10 stories or 100 feet, exclusive of penthouse. Penthouses shall be minimized in terms of height, bulk and visual appearance.

c. Externally oriented convenience retail and service uses such as a doctor’s office, neighborhood delicatessen, dry cleaner, neighborhood-scale library branch or small café may be approved, where the County Board finds they will not adversely affect the neighborhood and will otherwise be appropriate at primary intersections and/or locations that experience significant pedestrian traffic.
Section 15. “RA6-15” Apartment Dwelling Districts

3. When a site with an area of more than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet, or with ten (10) or more existing dwelling units, is sought to be used in a manner inconsistent with existing regulations for height, setback, yard, coverage, or parking, or is sought to be developed using additional residential density, the county board may allow exceptions, after application for a site plan approval consistent with subsection 36.H. of this ordinance, in order to achieve a design which is appropriate for the site, project, and the surrounding area. Except in the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District,” the county board may approve additional height and density based on provision of low or moderate income housing as provided in Subsection 36.H.5.b. The county board, in its discretion, may modify regulations on height, setback, yard, coverage, or parking requirements and may approve up to a twenty-five (25) percent increase above forty-eight (48) units per acre in residential density for a project that provides low or moderate-income housing as provided in Subsection 36.H.5.b., provided that:

B. Special Exceptions

5. When a site within the area designated as the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” on the General Land Use Plan is sought to be used in a manner consistent with the Fort Myer Heights North Plan, and as generally described herein, then by Special Exception Site Plan approval pursuant to Section 36.H, development may be permitted at up to 72 units per acre. As a development proposal increases in density above what is otherwise allowed by-right, and approaches 72 units per acre, the proposal will be expected to make greater progress toward those goals, including by way of illustration and not limitation affordable housing, historic preservation and the provision of open space. The purpose of the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” is to: 1) promote the compatibility of new and existing development by coordinating building placement, orientation, scale, bulk, streetscape and pedestrian facilities; 2) provide for creative opportunities to encourage and retain affordable housing; and 3) promote opportunities for the preservation of historically significant buildings.

a. When an on- or off-site building that is on the preferred buildings list is preserved and units inside the building are committed as
affordable, that number of units shall not count toward the permitted density. In such case the County Board may approve additional density, above 72 units per acre when the height and site design recommendations of the plan are met.

b. Building height shall generally be consistent with the building heights plan for the “Fort Myer Heights North Special District” and shall in no event exceed 10 stories or 100 feet, exclusive of penthouse. Penthouses shall be minimized in terms of height, bulk and visual appearance.

c. Externally oriented convenience retail and service uses such as a doctor’s office, neighborhood delicatessen, dry cleaner, neighborhood-scale library branch or small café may be approved, where the County Board finds they will not adversely affect the neighborhood and will otherwise be appropriate at primary intersections and/or locations that experience significant pedestrian traffic.
Attachment 1

Proposed GLUP Amendments