



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of December 9, 2006**

**DATE:** December 1, 2006

**SUBJECT:** SP #346 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT for comprehensive sign plan; 3600, 3650 South Glebe Road (Land Bay F) (RPC #34-027-030)

**Applicant:**

Comstock Potomac Yard, LC  
2200 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

**By:**

Timothy S. Sampson

**C.M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the site plan amendment for the comprehensive sign plan, as recommended in the staff report, for a period of ten (10) years after County Board approval (December 9, 2016).

**ISSUES:** None.

**SUMMARY:** The applicant has requested revisions to the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* in order to permit additional retail signs along U.S. Route 1 in Land Bay F. Staff recognizes the challenges faced by retail tenants of interior courtyards in new retail areas and therefore recommends approval of the site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign plan, as recommended in the staff report and as agreed to by the applicant, for a period of ten (10) years, in order to allow the new retail area to become established. The *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* are recommended to be amended to allow the proposed signs.

**BACKGROUND:** The subject site is Land Bay F of the Potomac Yards project and is currently being constructed with two, 11-story residential towers with ground floor retail and underground parking. The 80,000 square feet of retail space, including a 50,000 square foot grocery store and other small retail spaces, line the street frontages along U.S. Route 1, South Glebe Road, and the center plaza between the two towers. In September, the applicant requested a site plan

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Lorrie Pearson, DCPHD, Planning Division

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amendment to the comprehensive sign plan which included signs along the U.S. Route 1 façade that did not comply with the sign guidelines. At that meeting, the County Board directed staff to work on revising the sign guidelines. This application is to amend the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* to allow those signs for retail tenants located on the interior courtyard of Land Bay F in Potomac Yard. Staff is also working on revising the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* to allow additional retail signs in new retail areas.

Zoning: The site is zoned "C-O-1.5", Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan as 1/3 "Medium" Residential (37-72 units/acre) and 2/3 "Low" Office-Apartment-Hotel (up to 1.5 FAR for Office, up to 72 unites/acre for Apartments, and up to 110 units/acre for Hotel). The site is located in an area that references Note 18 on the GLUP.

Neighborhood: The site is not within any civic association. Aurora Highlands Civic Association is in close proximity.

**DISCUSSION:** The applicant proposes to amend the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* in order to permit four (4) projecting signs, each 24 square feet in area, along U.S. Route 1. These signs would identify the retail tenants located along the interior courtyard between the two buildings that comprise Land Bay F. The total sign area of all approved signs and the proposed new signs would comply with the total permitted sign area under the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*.

Currently, the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* and the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* permit a retail tenant along an interior courtyard to have one tenant sign at the front door and one within a directory sign near the entrance to the courtyard. The applicant has comprehensive sign plan approval to install signs identifying the interior courtyard tenants at the tenant front door as well as along South Glebe Road. As this request is to add signs along U.S. Route 1, the result would be an increase in the number of permissible tenant signs to three signs and a change in the permissible locations for signs identifying interior courtyard retail tenants.

The applicant requests the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* be amended to permit the proposed signs along U.S. Route 1. In order to accomplish this, the applicant requests that the second and third sentences of the fifth paragraph on page 8 of the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* be amended as follows:

Placement of retail tenant signs will not be permitted higher than the fascia above the first floor level of the building exterior, except for signs as provided below for Land Bay F, or unless the building includes a multi-floor interior retail tenant. In the case of buildings with multi-floor interior retail tenants, In this case, retail tenant signage may be permitted on the exterior of the buildings in locations corresponding to the interior retail floors, providing that the exterior retail tenant signs are not located above 35 feet.

The applicant also requests that a new second sentence be added to the first paragraph on page 9 of the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* as follows:

Also given the unique circumstances of Land Bay F, being the only residential land bay at Potomac Yard to contain interior and park facing retail, signs identifying those retail tenants within the interior courtyard may be located on the western (U.S. Route 1) façade of the westernmost building in Land Bay F; provided such signs may not be located above 25 feet.

In order to further define the permissible additional signs, staff recommends the type of retail tenant be limited to only those along interior courtyards or the South Park specifically, which is the configuration of Land Bay F, that both the individual sign area and the total sign area be limited, and that the additional signs be provided on a temporary basis. The applicant has agreed to the revisions recommended by staff.

Additionally, as directed by the County Board, staff is working to revise the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* to accommodate additional retail signs in new retail areas. An addendum will be added to the guidelines that would enable the proposed revisions to the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* to be consistent with the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*:

In areas that contain multiple site plan buildings and that introduce retail tenant space where retail has not historically been present, additional retail tenant signs may be considered as part of the comprehensive sign plan, particularly when the retail tenants do not front on any street. The permitted number of signs per tenant and the location of those signs may be considered on a case-by-case basis at the time the comprehensive sign plan is considered. The total sign area shall not exceed the maximum permitted within the guidelines. Any additional signs permitted under this provision would be temporary in nature, unless authorized otherwise by the County Board.

**CONCLUSION:** As Land Bay F is the first retail area in Potomac Yard with retail space that that does not have street frontage, additional signs to identify those retail tenants is justified. However, once future Potomac Yard residents and area workers begin to move into the surrounding buildings, the retail area will have a customer base on which to draw from within Potomac Yard and therefore the need for additional signs along U.S. Route 1 will not be justified. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment for a comprehensive sign plan, as revised below and agreed to by the applicant, for a period of ten (10) years after County Board approval.

The second and third sentences of the fifth paragraph on page 8 of the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines* would be amended, as requested by the applicant:

Placement of retail tenant signs will not be permitted higher than the fascia above the first floor level of the building exterior, except for signs as provided below for

Land Bay F, or unless the building includes a multi-floor interior retail tenant. In the case of buildings with multi-floor interior retail tenants, In this case, retail tenant signage may be permitted on the exterior of the buildings in locations corresponding to the interior retail floors, providing that the exterior retail tenant signs are not located above 35 feet.

A new second sentence would be added to the first paragraph on page 9 of the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines*, as requested by the applicant and revised by staff:

Also given the unique circumstances of Land Bay F, being the first constructed land bay at Potomac Yard to contain retail spaces without street frontage along an interior courtyard and the South Park, signs identifying those retail tenants within the interior courtyard and retail tenants along the South Park may be located on the western (U.S. Route 1) façade of the westernmost building in Land Bay F; provided such signs may not be located above 25 feet, may not exceed 25 square feet in area per sign, and may not exceed a total of 100 square feet for all signs of this type. The sign area must also be within the permitted total sign area for the entire Land Bay F and must be removed after a period of ten (10) years following County Board approval.

Revised Condition:

77. The developer agrees to limit signage on the site to the comprehensive sign plan as approved by the County Board on September 16, 2006 and on December 9, 2006. ~~The developer agrees that the projecting signs shown along U.S. Route 1 in the proposed comprehensive sign plan prepared by Mitchell & Company Graphic Design and dated September 7, 2006, have not been approved and will not be built. The developer also agrees that tenants with storefronts within the plaza located between the two buildings are permitted up to two signs, that only one tenant name sign per street on which the store fronts is permitted, and that in order to comply, ~~Two~~ of the tenant name wall signs located above the awnings and shown in the plans dated September 7, 2006, to be located along U.S. Route 1, shall not be erected, or shall be erected as tenant logo signs. The developer agrees that the total area of permitted signage shall not exceed ~~739.9~~ 839.9 square feet until December 9, 2016. This total area includes four (4) directory signs, not to exceed 25 square feet each, which shall be permitted along U.S. Route 1, consistent with the *Potomac Yard Overall Sign Guidelines*, as revised on December 9, 2006, for a period up to ten (10) years after County Board approval. The developer agrees that before December 9, 2016, it will remove the four (4) directory signs and will send a letter to the Zoning Administrator stating that the signs have been removed. The developer also agrees that after December 9, 2016, the total area of permitted signs will not exceed ~~739.9~~ square feet. A revised comprehensive sign plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the County Manager to ensure compliance with this approval within fifteen (15) days after the County Board approves this site plan amendment. Sign permits will be issued and reviewed for compliance with the approved comprehensive sign plan only after County Manager approval. The comprehensive sign plan includes ~~739.9~~ square feet~~

~~of sign area in:~~

Building Name/Project Identification Signs	113.8 s.f.
Directional Signs	26.55 s.f.
Retail Tenant Signs	200 s.f.
Directory Signs	193.3 s.f. ( <u>plus 100 s.f. of temporary signs</u> )
Wayfinding Signs	206.25 s.f.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

October 21, 2000

**South Tract:** Approved a General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Amendment to a striped pattern of 1/3 "Medium" Residential (37-72 units/acre) and 2/3 "Low" Office-Apartment-Hotel, with Note 18.

Approved Amendments to the Master Transportation Plan, including Part I to add public streets and designate several streets as private; Arlington Bicycle Plan to add on-street bike lanes; Arlington County Pedestrian Transportation Plan to add a pedestrian corridor; and establishment of a transitway.

Approved a rezoning from "M-1" to "C-O-1.5".

Approved a Phased Development Site Plan for a mixed use office, retail, hotel and residential development.

Adopted a resolution affirming Arlington County's commitments to developing transit facilities to provide high quality local transit service in the Jefferson Davis Corridor and facilitating traffic movements between U.S. 1 in Arlington and Potomac Avenue.

**North Tract:** Approved a General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Amendment for the area north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street South, from "Service Industry" to "Public".

Approved a General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Amendment for the area south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street from "Service Industry" to "Low" Office-Apartment-Hotel.

February 9, 2002

Deferred a site plan for a Land Bay A, for office and retail development totaling 654,000 square feet, including 6,000 square feet of initial retail, 11,784 square feet of potential retail, and 4,000 square feet of fitness center, to February 25, 2002 Planning Commission and March 23, 2002, County Board meeting.

March 23, 2002	Approved a final site plan for Land Bay A, for office and retail development totaling 654,000 square feet, including 6,000 square feet of initial retail, 11,784 square feet of potential retail, and 4,000 square feet of fitness center.
April 20, 2002	Approved a Preliminary Infrastructure Plan (PIP) for the Potomac Yard PDSP.
December 9, 2003	Approved a final site plan for Land Bay E, for a residential rental building containing 391,714 square feet of residential GFA, 386 units and 4,120 square feet of ground floor retail.
December 9, 2003	Approved a final site plan for Land Bay F, for two residential condominium buildings containing 482,000 square feet of residential GFA, 479 units and 80,000 square feet of ground floor retail, including 50,000 square feet of grocery store use.
July 10, 2004	Deferred a site plan amendment for 2805 Crystal Drive for Potomac Yard PDSP to amend condition #25 to clarify affordable dwelling unit requirement to September 18, 2004.
September 18, 2004	Deferred a site plan amendment for 2805 Crystal Drive for Potomac Yard PDSP to amend condition #25 to clarify affordable dwelling unit requirement to November 16, 2004.
November 16, 2004	Deferred a site plan amendment for 2805 Crystal Drive for Potomac Yard PDSP to amend condition #25 to clarify affordable dwelling unit requirement to January 2005.
February 1, 2005	Deferred a site plan amendment for 2805 Crystal Drive for Potomac Yard PDSP to amend condition #25 to clarify affordable dwelling unit requirement to May 7, 2005.
May 17, 2005	Deferred a site plan amendment for 2805 Crystal Drive for Potomac Yard PDSP to amend condition #25 to clarify affordable dwelling unit requirement to a County Board meeting of a later date to be determined by staff and the applicant.

July 9, 2005	Approved a minor site plan amendment for Land Bay A, to modify the first floor configuration and uses for the north and south office buildings, subject to amended Condition #57.
April 22, 2006	Approved a site plan amendment request to amend Condition #57(b) regarding a reduction in the size of the three (3) flat screen televisions (Land Bay A).
September 16, 2006	Approved a site plan amendment for comprehensive sign plan; 3600, 3650 South Glebe Road (Land Bay F).

## Approved Sign Conditions

46. The developer agrees to develop and submit a comprehensive sign plan and that all exterior signs shall be consistent with the guidelines contained in "Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings and with Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the signs meet the standards of the guidelines and the Ordinance. No sign permits will be issued until a comprehensive sign plan is approved. The comprehensive sign plan shall be approved before the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy. All proposed rooftop signs, defined as all signs that are 35 feet or more above the ground, shall require a site plan approval or amendment.
77. The developer agrees to limit signage on the site to the comprehensive sign plan as approved by the County Board on September 16, 2006. The developer agrees that the projecting signs shown along U.S. Route 1 in the proposed comprehensive sign plan prepared by Mitchell & Company Graphic Design and dated September 7, 2006, have not been approved and will not be built. The developer also agrees that tenants with storefronts within the plaza located between the two buildings are permitted up to two signs, that only one tenant name sign per street on which the store fronts is permitted, and that in order to comply, two of the tenant name wall signs located above the awnings and shown in the plans dated September 7, 2006, to be located along U.S. Route 1, shall not be erected, or shall be erected as tenant logo signs. The developer agrees that the total area of permitted signage shall not exceed 739.9 square feet. A revised comprehensive sign plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the County Manager to ensure compliance with this approval within fifteen (15) days after the County Board approves this site plan amendment. Sign permits will be issued and reviewed for compliance with the approved comprehensive sign plan only after County Manager approval. The comprehensive sign plan includes 739.9 square feet of sign area in:

Building Name/Project Identification Signs	113.8 s.f.
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