



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of July 11, 2009**

DATE: July 2, 2009

SUBJECT: SP #357, SITE PLAN AMENDMENT, allow certain professional office uses in addition to retail, in approved retail space located at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard (RPC #17-010-037).

Applicant:

WRIT Limited Partnership
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 800
Rockville, Maryland 20852

By:

Nan E. Walsh and Elizabeth A. McKeeby
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich, & Walsh
2200 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the subject site plan amendment to expand the uses permitted in the 1,675 square foot retail space located at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard, to include certain professional office uses, subject to the conditions of the staff report, and a County Board review in ten (10) years (July, 2019).

ISSUES: This is a request for a site plan amendment to expand the uses permitted in the 1,675 square foot retail space located at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard, to include certain professional office uses, and no issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: This is a request for a site plan amendment to allow certain professional office uses defined in the *Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan* as “Consumer and Business Services” at an existing retail space at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard. This request was deferred from the June, 2009 County Board meeting to allow for additional review and analysis of the request. The applicant has revised their site plan amendment request to only include a widening of the uses allowed in the 1,675 square foot space along Clarendon Boulevard. The applicant has been unable to lease the subject space to a retail tenant since approval and is requesting permission to allow certain non-retail tenants. As Clarendon Boulevard adjacent to the site

County Manager: _____

Staff: Matthew Pfeiffer, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-5322

contains approved, but un-built retail uses, and is located some distance from Rosslyn's metro core, professional office uses can be appropriate in the interim, until a critical mass of retail is reached with adjacent planned but un-built development. Staff recommends allowing the conversion of the space along Clarendon Boulevard for a period of ten (10) years from the date of County Board approval and to revisit the build-out of approved retail along Clarendon Boulevard at that time. Therefore, it is recommended that the County Board approve the site plan amendment to allow certain professional office uses in the subject retail space at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard, subject to the conditions of the staff report, with a County Board review in ten (10) years (July, 2019).

BACKGROUND: The applicant is requesting a site plan amendment for approximately 1,675 square feet of retail space on Clarendon Boulevard be allowed to lease to all uses on the "consumer and business service uses" listed in the *Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan*. The site is located at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard, and is described as follows:

Site: The 105,252 square foot site is bound on the east by North Pierce Street, on the south by Clarendon Boulevard, on the north by Wilson Boulevard, and to the west by the 1716 Wilson site (SP #409, Dr. Contis project). The site, known as the WRIT Rosslyn project, consists of two (2) mixed residential and retail buildings, one (1) mixed office and retail building, and one (1) office building. The site contains an underground structured parking garage for 224 vehicles three public plazas, and a public art atrium.

Zoning: The site is zoned "C-O" Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, "C-O-2.5" Commercial Office Building, Hotel, and Apartment Districts, and "RA-H-3.2" Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as "Office-Apartment-Hotel High," Office Density up to 3.8 FAR, Apartment Density up to 4.8 FAR, and Hotel Density up to 3.8 FAR, and "Residential High" Up to 4.8 FAR Residential, Up to 3.8 FAR Hotel

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights Civic Association.

DISCUSSION: Site Plan #357 was approved with approximately 5,500 square feet of ground floor retail, with approximately 1,675 square feet of that space located at the corner of 1601 Clarendon Boulevard at the intersection of Clarendon Boulevard and North Pierce Street. The applicant was required by site plan condition #57 to submit a Retail Attraction and Marketing Plan (RAMP) for the subject space to be approved by Arlington Economic Development (AED). This plan was approved in 2004 and defined the types of uses the applicant would pursue for each of the spaces. Since approval, the space on Clarendon Boulevard has been vacant.

The applicant's RAMP was required to be consistent with the *Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan*, which lists "personal and business service" uses, a retail category including such uses as banks and barbershops, as appropriate in this section of Clarendon Boulevard. *The Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan* also lists a number of uses as "Consumer and Business Services," which is a separate category from "personal and business services" and

which includes many uses such as medical and dental office which are considered professional office uses. Condition #57 requires that the applicant submit a site plan amendment if they would like to pursue uses other than retail in the subject spaces.

Staff supports the applicant's request to allow those uses listed in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan as Consumer and Business Services in the Clarendon Boulevard space. The area around the subject space on Clarendon Boulevard is listed in the plan as "shopping streets principally providing personal and business services." While this category is made up of retail uses, they are similar in nature to those listed as Consumer and Business Services, which contain certain professional office uses. Also, the area immediately adjacent to the site on Clarendon Boulevard is located outside the main Rosslyn metro station core and currently contains mostly residential uses. As there is not currently a critical mass of retail uses in the vicinity, and thus not as high a concentration of pedestrian traffic as can be found in other areas of Rosslyn with a greater retail component, allowing certain professional office uses in the subject space is appropriate in the interim.

However, while there is not currently an abundance of retail on Clarendon Boulevard in the immediate vicinity of the site, the adjacent property, 1716 Wilson Boulevard, has an approved site plan (SP #409, the Dr. Contis project), which when built will contain approximately 27,996 square feet of retail space. Also, the building at 1800 Wilson Boulevard (located on the opposite side of the Dr. Contis site plan from the site) contains a number of live/work retail units that are currently vacant. Staff recommends allowing professional office uses in the 1601 Clarendon Boulevard space for a period of ten (10) years. The applicant has proposed allowing tenants to remain in the space to finish out their lease at the end of the ten (10) year period. Staff recommends scheduling a County Board review in ten (10) years to assess the retail environment on Clarendon Boulevard and, if still appropriate at that time, renew the use or allow existing tenants to finish their lease.

Community review: The applicant has presented this request to the Rosslyn Renaissance Urban Design Committee on two (2) occasions, May 20, 2009 and June 17, 2009. On both occasions, the committee expressed the desire for more retail on Clarendon Boulevard in this location, but found it appropriate to allow professional office uses in the interim given the lack of a critical mass of retail uses in the area currently. The committee also expressed the desire to have any use that may occupy the space activate the streetscape in the manner of retail. Finally, the committee supports the applicant's request to allow tenants to remain in the subject space to finish the remainder of their lease at the end of the ten (10) year limit on use. The Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights Civic Association has expressed that they would like more retail in this section of Clarendon Boulevard, but that they generally support the conclusions of the Rosslyn Renaissance Urban Design Committee.

CONCLUSION: Staff supports the applicant's request to allow those uses listed as Consumer and Business Services in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan at the retail space at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard due to the residential nature of the street in the immediate area and its distance from core retail areas in Rosslyn. The request is appropriate in the interim until approved but un-built retail in the vicinity reaches critical mass, provided that the application be reviewed in ten (10) years so a determination can be made as to whether or not the proposed uses

are still appropriate in the subject location. The Rosslyn Renaissance Urban Design Committee and Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights Civic Association, while they would both like to see more retail in this location, support the applicant's request as appropriate in the interim. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment subject to two (2) new conditions, with a County Board review in ten (10) years (July, 2019).

New Conditions:

77. The applicant agrees that those uses listed in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan as Consumer and Business Services shall be allowed in the 1,675 square foot space located at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard, for a period of ten years (July, 2019). At the end of the ten year period the County Board may determine whether Consumer and Business Service uses are still appropriate in the subject space.

78. The developer agrees that the 1,675 square foot space located at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard will be required to have an overall minimum transparency of 50% as measured from floor to ceiling. In addition, the portion of the storefront that is located between three and eight feet from grade is required to be at least 80% transparent. The purpose of this condition is to allow pedestrians to view the activity within the space and to allow patrons and employees of the establishment to view the activity on the sidewalk and street. "Transparency" shall mean using glass or other transparent exterior material offering a view into an area of the establishment where human activity normally occurs and shall not be satisfied by views into areas blocked by display cases, the rear of shelving, interior walls, blinds, hallways, or the like. Certain medical and dental office uses (for example, examination rooms), shall be allowed flexibility from the above transparency requirements by providing a plan for transparency subject to review and approval by the County Manager or his designee.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS

- July 2002 Approved SP #357 to add two residential buildings of approximately 124,932 square feet plus 87 other residential units, and approximately 5,500 square feet retail, and existing buildings to remain for the parcels of real property known as 1600, 1618 Wilson Boulevard, 1611, 1701 Clarendon Boulevard
- May 2008 Deferred site plan amendment to remove architectural archway until the June, 2008 County Board meeting.
- June 2008 Approved amendment to remove architectural archway and replace it with a program of benches, lighting, and banners.
- June 2009 Deferred site plan amendment for space conversion at 1601 Clarendon Boulevard, until the July, 2009 County Board meeting.