



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of March 15, 2008**

**DATE:** March 4, 2008

**SUBJECT:** SP #1 SITE PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENT to expand conversion of office space to school use into additional space at 1820 N. Fort Myer Drive. (RPC #16-036-002)

**Applicant:**

The Art Institute of Washington

**By:**

Jack Chester, Director of Facilities  
The Art Institute of Washington  
1820 N. Fort Myer Drive  
Arlington, Virginia 22209-1802

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Renew and approve the proposed amendment, subject to all previously approved conditions, revisions to Conditions #14 and #16, and with a review by the County Board in five (5) years (March 2013).

**ISSUES:** This is a review of an office conversion to a school use and an amendment to convert additional office space to a school use. No issues have been identified.

**SUMMARY:** This is a review of a site plan amendment to convert office space to school use at 1820 N. Fort Myer Drive (Ames Center), an amendment to convert additional office space to school use and to increase the total student enrollment per school quarter. The site plan was to be reviewed in January 2008, but the applicant was not in compliance with Site Plan Condition #16 by exceeding the maximum number of students. The County Board deferred the review for two (2) months and during that period the applicant submitted the subject site plan amendment so as to operate in compliance with all conditions. The use is still appropriate for the site and student activity complements the efforts of local business and civic efforts to stimulate Rosslyn throughout the day and on weekends. Additionally, because the subject site is located across the street from the Rosslyn Metro Station and the applicant has submitted a Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM), staff recommends that the student and faculty parking ratios of Condition #14 of the existing site plan be amended to further encourage Metro ridership. Therefore, staff recommends that this site plan be renewed and that the amendment to convert additional office space to school use be approved, subject to all previous conditions, amended Conditions #14 and #16, and with a review in five (5) years (March 2013).

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

Staff: Robert Ruiz, CPHD, Planning

PLA-4904

**BACKGROUND:** The applicant has been operating at the subject site for eight (8) years. This site plan amendment to convert 65,000 square feet of office space to school use was approved by the County Board on August 14, 1999, and no reviews of this site plan have been conducted since.

The following provides additional information on the site:

Site: The site is located at 1820 N. Fort Myer Drive (Ames Center). The building is adjacent to the Hyatt Hotel to the south, and a combination church and gas station to the north. The site is across North Fort Myer Drive from the entrance to the Rosslyn Metro Station.

Zoning: The site is zoned “C-O” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling districts. School uses are permitted as a special exception pursuant to Section 25 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “High Office-Apartment-Hotel” (Office density 3.8 FAR, Apartment density 4.8 FAR, and Hotel 3.8 FAR allowed).

Neighborhood: The site is located in the North Rosslyn Civic Association and is adjacent to The Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Association boundary. The North Rosslyn Civic Association supports the site plan amendment and the Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Association communicated no concerns, see attached. In addition, the Rosslyn Renaissance submitted a letter of support, dated February 22, 2008.

**DISCUSSION:** The applicant requests a site plan amendment to increase enrollment at the site from 1,200 to 2,301 students and to convert an additional 11,500 sq. ft. of office space to school use. At the time of a January 2008 review of the existing site plan amendment, it was found that the applicant had exceeded the number enrolled students by 449. As a consequence, the site plan review was deferred for two (2) months to allow the applicant time to pursue a site plan amendment. The subject site plan amendment request was submitted by the applicant during the deferral period.

The applicant’s request to raise student enrollment per quarter to 2,301 pupils, represents an increase of the student body by 1,101 pupils from the current ceiling of 1,200 established by Condition #16 of the 1999 site plan amendment. Condition #16 also stipulates that enrollment will not exceed 525 students per session (AM, PM, or evening). AIW operates from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The proposed expansion would raise this figure to approximately 767 students per session. Concurrent with student growth, the faculty and staff is expected to grow to 300 after the requested space conversion. This results in about 275 faculty and staff in the a.m. and p.m. sessions, and 25 in the evening sessions. Site Plan Condition #16 limited staff to 80 per session. In addition, AIW’s application to convert 11,500 square feet of office space to school use would be in addition to 76,500 square feet of office space that is currently dedicated to school use. If approved, the additional office space conversion brings the total school use space at the Ames Center to 88,000 sq. ft. or 54% of the total Gross Floor Area of the building.

The use does not pose a transportation concern. AIW has drafted a Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) with assistance from County staff. Among other things, the TDM stipulates that the applicant will provide:

- One (1) \$10 Metro SmartTrip card to each student
- A commuter benefit of \$20 each month to students living in AIW rental housing in Crystal City
- A sustainable commute benefit program for employees
- A new ten-space bicycle rack

In addition, AIW will provide the County with findings from transportation performance monitoring studies that will be conducted in the first year after receiving a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the space of the subject space conversion, and in five (5) year intervals thereafter.

The TDM complements AIW's existing practices to promote public transportation by encouraging use of the Rosslyn Metro Station across the street from the building entrance. This includes locating student housing in locales that are either metro accessible or within walking distance to the Ames Center. Currently 312 students are housed in Courthouse, Ballston, and Crystal City area apartments provided by AIW. Of these pupils, 225 already receive a \$20 metro card each month to commute to school.

The County Board approval of the 1999 site plan amendment recommended that a TDM be prepared in the event of school growth to compensate for a limited supply of parking at the Ames Center. This building currently has a 329 space parking capacity, of which 175 spaces are set aside for AIW. Staff recommends that Condition #14, which allocates one (1) parking space per ten (10) students enrolled each session and two (2) parking spaces per three (3) faculty members and staff employed each quarter, be amended. If distributing parking spaces according to these ratios, 77 student spaces (assuming the proposed 767 students per session) and 200 staff spaces (assuming the proposed 275 faculty and staff) would be necessary. This results in a difference of 102 parking spaces between what AIW is currently allocated and what Condition #14 demands. In light of AIW's proximity to the Rosslyn Metro station and the submitted TDM plan, staff recommends that Condition #14 be amended to permit the continued use of 102 parking spaces, but restrict the maximum potential number of parking spaces allocated to AIW to a maximum of 201. The latter will permit the remaining 74,000 square feet of office tenants of the Ames Center to have access to one (1) space per 580 square feet or 128 spaces which is typical for this use, as required in Condition #14. This maximum parking figure also represents about one (1) parking space per 437 square feet of proposed school use space. The restriction of on-site parking for this use can be a method to assist in the success of the TDM plan by encouraging non-vehicular forms of transportation for AIW students and staff.

**CONCLUSION:** Staff supports the renewal of the site plan to convert office space to school use and the applicant's request to increase student enrollment and convert additional office space to school use. The use is appropriate for the site and it assists local civic and business efforts to enliven the area with day, evening, and weekend activity. In addition, the applicant has drafted a Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) to mitigate transportation related concerns and compensate for the limited number of parking spaces available at the subject site. The TDM

complements AIW's location across the street from the Rosslyn Metro Station. Therefore, staff recommends that the site plan amendment be renewed and the amendment to the site plan be approved, subject to all previous conditions and amended Conditions #14 and #16, and with a review in five (5) years (March 2013):

14. ~~The applicant agrees to provide parking for the educational use based on a ratio of one (1) space per ten (10) students and two (2) spaces per three (3) faculty members and staff.~~ The applicant further agrees to provide parking for the office use at a rate of no less than one (1) parking space per 580 square feet of office space in the building. The applicant agrees to provide a minimum of 175 parking spaces and a maximum of 201 parking spaces to be use by students, faculty, and staff of The Art Institute of Washington.

~~The parking ratio for the educational use shall be calculated based on the highest number of students enrolled in any session (a.m., p.m., or evening) of a given quarter and all faculty and staff employed during that quarter.~~ Upon request the applicant will provide enrollment and employment information to the Zoning Administrator in sufficient detail to verify that the parking requirement is being met. The amount of office space used to calculate the office parking ratio for the building at the time shall be 162,000 square feet minus the square feet for which a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for the school of higher education's use. ~~In no event shall the total parking spaces for the office/commercial and educational uses, combined, be less than the existing 336 spaces.~~

15. The applicant agrees to submit a detailed transportation demand management plan to be approved by the County Manager or his designee before issuance of Certificate of Occupancy. The transportation demand management plan shall include but not be limited to the following strategies:
  - a. The applicant agrees to designate a member of the administration as a student transportation coordinator. The transportation coordinator shall be responsible for implementing the transportation demand management strategies.
  - b. The applicant agrees to develop a parking management plan identifying the location and number of parking spaces dedicated for faculty, staff and students, identification of additional off-site parking if needed and a projection of parking needs at final buildout and a plan to provide the needed parking.
  - c. The applicant agrees to develop a student transportation plan promoting alternatives for commuting to the site.
16. ~~The applicant agrees to enroll no more than 1,200 students quarterly, and that a maximum of 525 students and 80 faculty will be enrolled or employed for any session (a.m., p.m., or evening).~~ The applicant agrees to enroll no more than 2,301 students and 300 staff and faculty per quarter. In a quarter, each session (AM, PM, or evening) shall not exceed 767 students and 275 faculty and staff, 1,042 total.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- March 24, 1962                      Approved site plan (SP #1) for a 12-story office building and a conceptual plan for a church.
- May 5, 1962                         Approved site plan amendment (SP #1) to change the configuration of the building's plaza level.
- January 11, 1964                    Approved the site plan amendment (SP #1) to reduce the gross floor area and density of the office building.
- March 20, 1965                     Approved site plan (SP #1) for the final design of the church structure.
- February 26, 1966                  Approved site plan (SP #1) for seven (7) radio masts to be located on the roof of the office building.
- November 23, 1968                 Approved site plan amendment (SP #1) for redesign of the church and classroom facilities, and construction of a gas service station at the street level.
- September 13, 1969                Approved site plan amendment (SP #1) for incorporation of additional site area and construction of a new office tower (Ames Building South).
- April 14, 1973                      Approved a site plan amendment (SP #1) to separate the Ames Building South site from the site plan and create a new site plan for a hotel (SP #92).
- June 7, 1997                        Approved site plan amendment (SP #1) to add standard subdivision conditions regarding subdivision of the site into separate parcels.
- August 14, 1999                    Approved site plan amendment (SP #1) to convert 65,000 sq. ft. of existing office space to school use by The Art Institute of Washington.
- October 2, 1999                     Approved site plan amendment (SP #1) for a comprehensive sign plan including two (2) rooftop signs and one (1) building-mounted sign for a school of higher education (The Art Institute of Washington).

January 26, 2008

Deferred site plan amendment (SP #1) review of conversion of office space to school use by The Art Institute of Washington.