

Rose Hill Coalition

UPDATE

March 7, 2023

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The Planning Commission’s Public Workshop will be held on

Thursday, March 9, 2023

at 7:30 pm

Nomination Number: CPN22-LE-001

Public Feedback at County “Workshop” on March 9

Testify at the Planning Commission “Workshop”

(Nomination Number: CPN22-LE-001)

The Planning Commission (CP) will hold a public “Workshop” on the Rose Hill Plaza nomination on **Thursday, March 9, at 7:30 pm** in the Fairfax Governmental Center.

The PC Workshop will be open to the public and individuals will be able to provide comments. Public comments or “testimony” may be provided in person OR by written statement (email or mail), telephone, or video.

IMPORTANT!

Please include your *personal opinion* in all communications.

- **Email:** Plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov (see [sample email](#))
- **Speak (in person or by phone):** Call 703-324-2865 or register online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission/speaker> (no later than 1:00 p.m. on March 9, 2023) to be placed on the Speakers List. You also will be required to *email in advance a written copy of your testimony* OR bring 14 copies to the meeting. After signing up, you should receive an email confirmation that you have been placed on the speakers list.

For more information, go to:

Ways to Provide Public Testimony (Fairfax County)

(<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission/ways-to-provide-public-hearing-testimony>)

Combined Properties Proposal

<https://rosehillcoalition.org/rose-hill-shopping-center/the-proposal/>

What else can I do?

Plenty! It’s all up to you and your abilities. Although the local civic and homeowners associations have published information and a number residents have distributed flyers (thank you!), many residents are still unaware of the proposal by Combined Properties.

Here are some options (we’ve tried to make it easy for you):

Distribute Rose Hill Coalition Flyer (File attached)

Share copies with your neighbors. This is a great option for walkers! (*Updated 2/28/23*)

Post a Yard Sign (Files attached)

Attached is our yard sign design (standard 24” x 18”). Feel free to use. We are seeking sponsorship to purchase signs in bulk (40 to 100) as the larger the order, the less expensive per sign.

Help Purchase a Banner

The Rose Hill Civic Association purchased and placed two banners for display along Rose Hill Drive. **If you can contribute to their cost**, please contact us at stopzoning@rosehillcoalition.org for information.



The Coalition also has a banner design (standard 6' x 3') for anyone interested in using that. **We are currently seeking a sponsor.**



Planning Commission Public Resources for the SSPA Process

Email from the Planning Commission on 3/7/23:

“Information regarding how the public can participate is on the SSPA website, which is located [here](#). The [2019 South County guide](#) which you’ve referenced was getting too long (its over 40 pages) and the information on how the public can participate was duplicated on our website, so for this round so we refocused this document on how people can submit nominations (which is also open to the public). The website contains several pages devoted to specific topics, including:

- [2022-2023 Countywide SSPA website](#) provides general information on the process, links to specific topics (including all of those copied below), and how to stay informed.
- [How to Track a Nomination](#), includes links to all of the nominations (by nomination number), the staff recommendations, the Planning Commission outreach schedule, and other resources.
- [An interactive map](#) shows which areas of the County were eligible for nominations.
- [An interactive map](#) shows the locations of the nominations.
- [How to Participate](#) describes the process, including attend the community meetings and Planning Commission Workshops, submitting comments, and requesting translation services.

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) answers common questions about the SSPA process.
- [Community Outreach Schedule for the Screening Phase of SSPA](#) provides current dates and times for opportunities for the public to participate.
- A survey was conducted in 2022 to get feedback from the local communities on the SSPA process. “[T]his information was used during the SSPA retrospective assessment, and the results summarized in the white paper which led to a series of process changes that were endorsed by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors last summer. I’ve included a link to the Board public hearing item, which includes the white paper, is linked [here](#) for your reference. Additionally, a video recording from one of our “Lunch and Learn” meetings on the process changes is included [here](#).” (Source: Email from Graham Owen, Planning Commission Staff, on 3/7/23)

Questions about the SSPA process can be directed to Graham Owen, AICP, Department of Planning and Development, Fairfax County, VA, 703-324-2771, Graham.Owen@fairfaxcounty.gov.



We Need Affordable Housing, Not Just “More Housing”

We are happy to report that Fairfax County is well on its way to providing 10,000 affordable housing units by 2034. But the push for “higher density” housing is a false flag for affordable housing.

The County’s current requirement for new residential construction that requires developers include a minimum 6% affordable housing. This has not been sufficient to meet the overwhelming need to provide alternatives to the skyrocketing rental and home ownership rates.

Combined Properties stated at the January 23 Community Engagement Meeting that they will meet the 6% “minimum requirement” for the redevelopment of Rose Hill Plaza.*

In the last several years, the County has worked diligently to go beyond the 6% handicap by approving the construction (or conversion) of multiple affordable-housing complexes.

- Franconia (Van Dorn): [150 affordable independent senior units](#)
- Seven Corners: [95 units for seniors](#)
- Fairfax Governmental Center: [279 units for families and individuals](#)
- Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force [created in 2020](#)
- Comprehensive Plan change in 2021 also allows single-family homes to add an [accessory dwelling unit \(ADU\) with an administrative permit](#).

“Affordable properties in the County are at risk of losing affordability through redevelopment into more expensive residential and renovations that result in higher rents that outpace the rise in household incomes,” according to the [Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force](#). All redevelopment results in higher rents. In fact, the current goal of real estate developers is create long-term rental income through redevelopment and zoning changes.

Residents just received their 2023 residential property assessments with an [average increase of 7%](#). Although the County is scrambling for ways to reduce this tax burden on homeowners, it is still primarily dependent on these taxes to fund it’s year-over-year growing budget.

*Combined Properties provided more than 10% affordable housing unit at their new South Alexandria development. They also thanked the County for the fast tracking of permits to rebuild after the 2020 fire that devastated the property prior to completion. “[R]ebuilding South Alex after the loss wouldn’t have been possible without Fairfax County’s help, including chairman and former county supervisor Jeffrey McKay.... The county was extremely proactive about making a connection with us and making sure that we understood that they were in our corner to help us in any way they could to get the rebuilding effort started and moving forward as quickly as we could,” Hill said. (Source: <https://alextimes.com/2020/10/south-alex-rebuilds-after-devastating-fire/>)



Current Rental Vacancies in Franconia District

According to the websites of apartment rental websites and local apartment complexes in Franconia District, including Rose Hill Apartments, rents range from \$800 to \$6,200. **The following number of vacancies currently exist:**

- **South Alexandria** (owned by Combined Properties; opened in early 2022): ~300 vacancies (<https://southalex.com/>)
- **Rose Hill Apartments:** 66 vacancies (<https://www.rosehill-apts.com/floorplans>)
- **Franconia District**
 - Aprtments.com: 160 (<https://www.apartments.com/franconia-va/>)
 - Zillow: 16 (<https://www.zillow.com/franconia-alexandria-va/apartments/>)
 - Trulia: 50 (https://www.trulia.com/for_rent/Franconia,VA/)
 - Apartment Finder: 160 (<https://www.apartmentfinder.com/Virginia/Franconia-Apartments>)



Nominator Guide to the 2022-2023 Fairfax County Site-Specific Plan Amendment Process

Fairfax County provides this guide to SSPA nominators, e.g., Combined Properties. The introduction states, “The goal of SSPA is to provide the community with an active role in shaping the long-term vision of Fairfax County.... In addition to the countywide focus, the 2022-2023 SSPA process includes several other process updates, including new submission criteria to help stakeholders understand and prioritize the nominations (such as an illustrative concept plan, property owner’s consent, and development timeline as known), **enhanced forums for community engagement, and a workshop with Planning Commission members during the Screening Phase.**”

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/compplanamend/sspa/countywide/2022_2023_sspa_nominator_guide.pdf



Spot Planning

Higher density should not replace what is currently working in communities. The County specifically states in the *Guide to the 2019–2020 South County Site-Specific Plan Amendment Process* that “The area nominated should be a logical planning area that **avoids spot planning (re-planning an individual property in a way that is inconsistent with the surrounding area).**” <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/compplanamend/sspa/guide2019.pdf>



2022 Survey on the SSPA Process

SSPA Retrospective: All Survey Responses

“This document was originally published April 26, 2022. Following discussion with the Planning Commission’s Land Use Process Review Committee on May 19, 2022, the full Planning Commission on June 8, 2022, and the Board of Supervisor’s (Board) Land Use Policy Committee on June 14, 2022, a number of changes were proposed to the SSPA process.” <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/compplanamend/sspa/retrospective/sspa-retrospective-recommendations-updated.pdf>

Below are responses to two questions on the 2022 survey. Follow the link for the full survey results.

Fairfax County, VA - Planning Dept. - Report Creation

Which of the following changes to the nomination criteria could result in clearer, more understandable, and better-developed nominations? Multiple options may be selected.

74%	Require community engagement before a nomination is submitted so that the community is more familiar with and can participate in the process in a more informed manner.	245 ✓
66%	Require a concept plan drawing that illustrates the proposed land use and site layout.	216 ✓
44%	Require a concurrent rezoning application or the commitment to submit one if an item moves forward to an actual amendment to the Comprehensive Plan so that the community has an additional level of detail and understanding of commitments to the proposed development as the amendment is reviewed.	146 ✓

What are the most effective ways for you to hear about community planning efforts?
Multiple options may be selected.

42%	District Supervisor newsletter	61 ✓
38%	Direct contact by County staff, either through a mailed letter or otherwise	54 ✓
31%	Facebook	44 ✓
30%	Direct contact by the Supervisors' office	43 ✓
28%	News article (Such as Alexandria Living, WTOP, Connection, etc.)	40 ✓
24%	Comprehensive Plan Amendment Listserv email announcement	35 ✓
22%	NextDoor App	32 ✓
16%	Direct contact by a nominator, either through a mailed letter or otherwise	23 ✓
14%	Flyer or poster	20 ✓

Source: SSPA Survey, 2022, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/compplanamend/sspa/retrospective/sspa-survey-full-results.pdf>

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

- General guide for land use (an *advisory* document required by the state)
- Manage growth and the impacts of development
- Ensure a high quality of life for residents
- Promote the public health, safety, and welfare
- Establish and balance diverse community goals and needs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/fairfax-county-comprehensive-plan>

Stay Connected

- Follow the Rose Hill Coalition at <https://rosehillcoalition.org> and sign up for regular *Updates*.
- Get regular updates from the Dept of Planning and Development (DPD) via Comp Plan Listserv at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/maillinglist/
- Follow the DPD's Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/fairfaxlanduse/

IN THE NEWS

Residents Voice Opposition to Development at Public Hearing

“The Combined [Properties] strategy flies in the face of Fairfax County’s own evaluation of the income level for the Planning District, which rates the area as the home of more than adequate financial resources to support medium to high level commercial. Combined’s approach apparently is to leave stores vacant or attract high volume retail that caters to less than appropriate uses in our area. In Combined’s view, that apparently justifies high density residential development.”

(Source: *The Rose Hill Rambler* (Rambler2023Q1), published by the Rose Hill Civic Association, <http://www.myrosehill.com/>)

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Review Sought by Fairfax School Board

2/24/23: Fairfax County School Board members asked for an annual assessment on addressing pedestrian and school traffic safety at schools.

<https://patch.com/virginia/vienna/traffic-pedestrian-safety-review-sought-fairfax-school-board>

Supervisors Approve Affordable Housing Conversion

2/24/23: The Board of Supervisors has approved “a plan to convert an underused parking area into affordable homes. The development will include two mid-rise multifamily buildings with 279 units for families and individuals earning 30 to 70 percent of the area's median income.”

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/affordable-housing-development-approved-unused-government-center-parking-lot>

Supervisors Approve Affordable Housing in Seven Corners, Despite Stormwater Concerns

2/23/23: “Barbara Wolf, president of the Ravenwood Park Citizens Association, said neighbors have consistently pointed out their concerns at dozens of meetings. ‘They have not made real concessions,’ she said. “Our concerns have not been addressed in a meaningful way.”

https://annandaletoday.com/supervisors-approve-affordable-housing-project-in-seven-corners-despite-stormwater-concerns/?fbclid=IwAR36Pm4a49sXPkr6bjHDTwgACMtV0UE_T7ImnSgJsUWEumtUEi9QT-IYL11

Virginia Lawmakers Meet Mixed Success with Housing Reform Bills

“Eviction filings and judgments are below pre-pandemic levels in Virginia, but Alexandria and the city of Richmond surpassed pre-pandemic levels by 7% and 6%, respectively, from October to December 2022.”

“...bill SB 839 passed, which allows the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development director to **conduct a comprehensive statewide housing needs assessment at least every five years**...[and] develop a statewide housing plan with updates.”

“This bill is an important first step in documenting the need for affordable housing in Virginia, said co-patron Del. Kaye Kory, D-Fairfax.”

<https://www.henricocitizen.com/articles/virginia-lawmakers-meet-mixed-success-with-housing-reform-bills/>