

Rose Hill Coalition

UPDATE

April 11, 2023

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Board of Supervisors defers the Rose Hill Plaza Nomination

On April 11, Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk made the motion to accept the Planning Committee recommendation for Rose Hill Plaza, which was to accept it as part of the 2023 Work Program but *defer* further work on the nomination by Planning Staff until Combined Properties “further engages” with the community.

Based on Supervisor Lusk's announcement last week, we expected this outcome. Nonetheless, we are disappointed the Board of Supervisors voted to designate the Rose Hill Plaza Comprehensive Plan nomination as Tier 3 with a deferral. This is a pause and what happens next is not clear.

The deferral comes with the requirement that Combined Properties "further engage" with the community on their proposed plans, and I have asked Supervisor Lusk to inform the community as soon as possible what that engagement will look like. However, we insist that Supervisor Lusk be an active participant in that engagement as well. He represents Franconia District, but to date Lusk's involvement has been minimal. So we ask that he substantially increase his engagement with the residents who are most affected by the future of Rose Hill Plaza.

(Ironically, although the Board of Supervisors has espoused the dire need for *affordable* housing in the County, at today's meeting the agenda also included an increase in the effective real estate tax rate. Fortunately, the measure was postponed to allow further public debate until May 2, 2023.)

We urge you to stay in this debate!

Our goal remains to save Rose Hill Plaza. Ultimately, we believe the shopping center can be an excellent investment going forward for both the tenants, community, and CP *without razing it*.

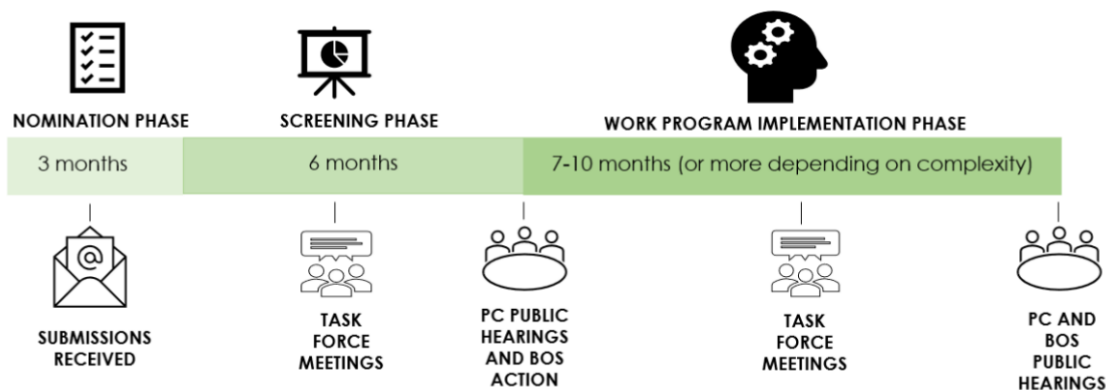
The Rose Hill Plaza nomination remains in the public forum for debate. No doubt the planning and development process in Fairfax County is ripe for confusion, especially when the processes are changed supposedly for the better (for some). The Rose Hill Coalition will continue to provide the information you need to assess the facts. The facts are important, but clarity is even more essential. Everyone is too busy to have to put together this planning puzzle that we are (unfortunately) forced to sort through. We tried to stop this proposal right out of the gate. You helped us succeed in slowing its momentum. Keep up the good work!

Now...the Work Program Stage

The Rose Hill Plaza nomination has been placed in “Tier 3” for deferral. Where it falls on the priority scale when it comes out of deferral is unknown. At this point, it is simply recommended to be deferred. Deferral can last no more than one year. The conditions for the deferral, that Combined Properties further engages with the community, are not defined.

More information on the Work Program Stage will be forthcoming in a future *Coalition Update*. Based on the recommendation to defer the nomination, the timing is unknown at this point.

Figure 1: SSPA Process.



After Deferral

At the point when a nomination is no longer in deferral and resumes as part of the Work Program, the County states the following:

The Plan Amendment (PA) Work Program lays out the review schedule for current Comprehensive Plan amendments and special studies. The work program consists of [activity center](#) and neighborhood planning studies, and **site-specific (Board-authorized)** and countywide policy amendments.

Priority is given to amendments that advance major policy objectives, address emerging community concerns, and provide a platform to better implement the Concept for Future Development.

Completed Plan Amendments

When the Board of Supervisors has acted upon an amendment, the amendment is considered adopted or completed. Adopted amendments are then reflected in the current Comprehensive

Plan. A list of adopted amendments to the current 2017 Edition of the Comprehensive Plan and Policy Plan is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/completed/2017>. A brief description of each Plan amendment can also be found in the Jan 2021- Jan 2023 [Work Program document](#). A new Work Plan document will be created for this new cycle.

Former Rescinded Plan Amendments

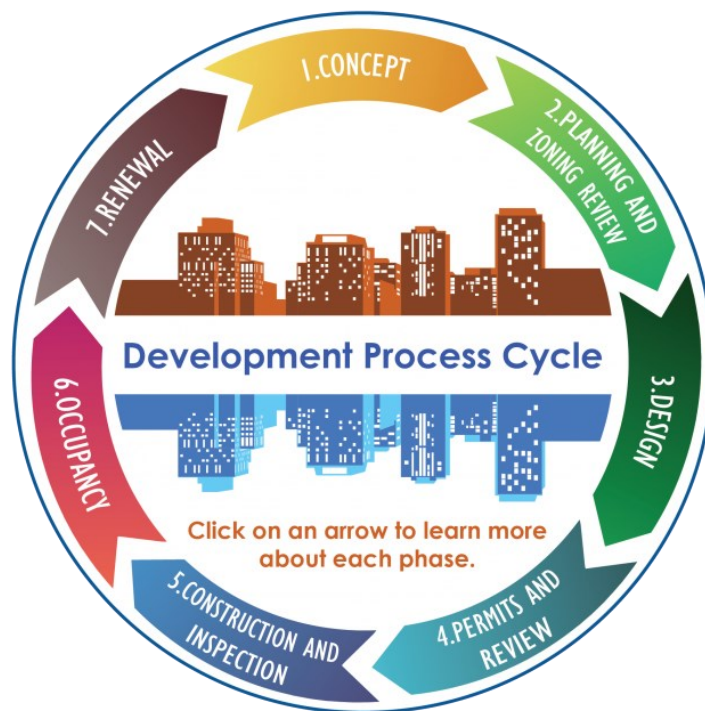
The above noted [2021-2023 Work Plan document](#) also lists all *rescinded* plan amendments. Listed are three mixed-use amendments proposed going back to 2016.

Plan Amendment Name and Number	Authorization Date	General Purpose	Comment
18. McLean CBC, Subareas 5 and 6, Main Street <i>2016-II-M3</i>	December 6, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider redevelopment as a mixed use center that includes office, retail and residential uses for the subject property and incorporates the "Main Street" concept outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. 	Rescinded on July 11, 2017
24. Sully Station Shopping Center <i>(PC17-SU-001)</i> <i>SSPA 2018-III-BR1</i>	July 31, 2018	Consider an option for retail, office, hotel, assisted living, and private recreation mixed-use of up to 0.75 FAR.	Rescinded on January 26, 2021
27. Plaza 500 of the Lincolnia Planning District Study <i>LPD-L3-1</i>	July 16, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a primarily residential use with some retail use that reflects a mixed-use character at an intensity up to 2.0 FAR, or approximately 3.0 million square feet of development. 	Rescinded on January 26, 2021

Fairfax Land Use Planning and Development Process

“The development process in Fairfax County encompasses a broad array of activities, from refinishing a basement, subdividing a parcel, building a high-rise in Tysons -- and much more. The process involves comprehensive reviews by numerous county and non-county agencies and may involve many steps before a project can be approved. Every project is unique and subject to its own set of requirements depending on the location and complexities of the project.

These regulations are in place to provide an invisible web of protection around the structures and neighborhoods in Fairfax County. It's all about the health, safety, and welfare of the community we serve. This overview aims to give you the framework to help guide you through the process.”



1. [Concept](#)
2. [Planning and Zoning Review](#) (see below)
3. [Design](#)
4. [Permits and Review](#)
5. [Construction and Inspection](#)

6. [Occupancy](#)
7. [Renewal](#)

Source: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/plan2build/development-process-overview>

Planning and Zoning Review

Combined Properties nomination is a “Proposed Comprehensive Plan Change” which falls under the Site Specific Plan Amendment Process (SSPA). You will be hard-pressed to find the SSPA designation within the descriptions of the planning review process, but we will try to guide you through the maze.

“The process of seeking a rezoning, special exception, special permit, or variance from Fairfax County consists of a detailed review and analysis of the proposal by staff, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Zoning Evaluation Division of the Department of Planning and Development reviews applications for rezoning, special exception, special permit or a variance.”

The above online description leaves out review and feedback by residents, although this is addressed from the perspective of the developer elsewhere. **Finding SSPA process information for residents and exactly how and when they factor in the process is difficult.**

Better to Not Engage with the Public

The current information structure and communication processes is completely contrary to the policy put forth by the County and Planning Commission to better engage with the public. The result is confusion and frustration for all stakeholders. Without a doubt, there is a clear lack of transparency or concern for ensuring that the public can easily take part in the Fairfax County planning process. Attempts to circumvent this problem, such as directing the public to directly contact planning staff, are insufficient patches to the unmanageable maze of weblinks. The staff are clearly knowledgeable and patient, but already overwhelmed with the workload. Why not provide clear, easily accessible information online?

A [Nominator Guide](#) for the person/company submitting a (SSPA) nomination is provided online and guides them through the process from the perspective of the nominator. An equivalent document to guide the public through the planning process maze and show how they can participate is not available. Such a document used to exist, but according to planning staff it was too long at 40+ pages and therefore was discarded. No replacement has been created.

What we have now is a planning website with no obvious logic; links and sub-links are haphazardly scattered throughout the website. In addition, the language used for links is particular to the “planning” process with which the public is not familiar. For example, see the following web structure:

[Department of Planning and Development](#) > Planning (side menu) > Planning in Fairfax County > where you will eventually find the incomprehensible statement:

“Comprehensive Plan Amendments are scheduled on the Comprehensive Plan Work Program. The Site-Specific Plan Amendment Process is an opportunity to participate in Fairfax County's land use planning process by submitting proposals (called Nominations) to amend the work program.”

How can anybody new to the process be expected to unpack that?! Comprehensive Plan? Amendments? Work Program? Site-Specific Plan Amendment Process? Planning Process? Proposals? Nominations? Amend the Work Program?

And what does “Planning” mean in the first place? How is that different than land use or zoning? Why is “zoning” a bad word when plan amendments ultimately require rezoning? “Planning and Zoning” are

paired in the planning process graphic on the Development Process Overview page (which is located under “Planning, Permitting, and Construction” that is nowhere near “Planning and Development”)

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

Walking the “Walk to Save Rose Hill Plaza”

On Saturday, April 1, the Rose Hill Coalition joined with members of the Rose Hill Civic Association for the “Walk to Save Rose Hill Plaza.” Though the weather was unpredictable (as usual), both the morning and afternoon walkers successfully handed out approximately 150 “Save Rose Hill Plaza” flyers and spoke with many shoppers at the plaza and along Rose Hill Drive. Kristie Ketchum led the morning crew of six and Sharada Gilkey led the afternoon group of about seven. Many shoppers were unaware of the proposal for the plaza and the *vast* majority were against its redevelopment as a mixed-use residential complex.

The “Walk to Save Rose Hill Plaza” remains open to any residents who want to oppose the redevelopment. We only ask that anyone participating agree to the rules of conduct via the RSVP form at <https://forms.gle/riwez7wyc8cWeVKY6>. Organize your group, then download the latest flyer and signs from our website. Pick a safe path and follow all traffic laws. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions to stopzoning@rosehillcoalition.org.

Public Hearings and Staff Reports

We are currently in the “Comprehensive Plan Amendments” process. The Rose Hill Plaza nomination is a nomination to “amend” the language in the Comprehensive Plan to allow Combined Properties the opportunity to apply for rezoning. I know, so confusing. If you want to get in the weeds, read on.

Zoning and Land Use Applications, and other land use matters are scheduled for public hearings before the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals. Schedules, agendas, and information including staff reports on applications that are scheduled for public hearings may be accessed below.

Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission Reports

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/public-hearings-and-staff-reports>

- [Current In-Process Zoning Cases before the Board of Supervisors & Planning Commission](#)
- [Current In-Process in Urban Centers](#)
- [Board Packages for Zoning Applications before Board of Supervisors](#)
- [Minor Variations of Approved Rezoning Applications](#)
- **[Comprehensive Plan Amendments \(Proposed\) Staff Reports](#)**
- [Zoning Ordinance Amendments \(Proposed\) Staff Reports](#)
- [Final Actions of Zoning Cases](#)

Related Resources

- [Board of Supervisors Meeting Schedule and Agendas](#)
- [Planning Commission Meeting Schedule and Agendas](#)

Planning Commission Round Table

The **Planning Commission Round Table** is a 30-minute panel discussion broadcast every Thursday at 6:30 pm and Wednesday at 10:30 pm on Channel 16. Episodes also can be viewed through "Video on Demand" at the Fairfax County website. We haven't had the time yet to watch any of these discussions. But if you are so inclined, here's the link:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/planning-commission-roundtable>

Donation Requested by RHCA

On March 29, the Rose Hill Civic Association (RHCA) ordered a second banner plus 60 yard signs to inform people about the shopping center issue. They are asking for donations to help pay for the additional signs and banner (total cost approximately \$1,100). The yard signs direct people to mysrosehill.com. *The Coalition has no involvement in the creation or purchase of the banner or signs.*

If you wish to donate, go to myrosehill.com, scroll down and click on the **PAY NOW** button, and designate the gift for the "General Fund".

A Letter to the Editor

3/2/23: Letter to *The Washington Post* by Nina Tisara. Unpublished as of 4/11/23.

Dear Editor,

I am not anti-development. I was a member of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce for approximately 25 years and served on its board for six years. I was an early member and president of the King Street Metro Enterprise Team and enjoyed membership in the Mt. Vernon/Lee Chamber of Commerce and the West End Business Association.

This concerns the proposed redevelopment of the Rose Hill Plaza Shopping Center at Rose Hill Drive and Franconia Road in Fairfax County. The proposed redevelopment is simply wrong for the neighborhood.

The shopping center owner, Combined Properties Inc., wants to tear down this walk-to-able neighborhood shopping center and build four-to-six-story residential buildings with 400+ rental units. They did something similar at "South Alexandria" on Richmond Highway. It may work there. It is the wrong development for this neighborhood of mainly one-story ramblers.

Rush hour traffic in the entire area is already extremely difficult and would be significantly worse with an additional 400+ rental units. The 60-year+ water and sewer lines were not built to support the increased density and the local elementary school is already using trailers for some students.

Additionally, other large nearby parcels on Telegraph Road are up for sale/development which will add even more density and traffic....

IN THE NEWS

Deferral of Rose Hill Plaza Project Approved by Fairfax County Board

4/11/23: The proposed Rose Hill Plaza shopping center redevelopment was included as a "Tier 3" project by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.... Fairfax County has yet to say how long the Rose Hill project will be deferred and explain how it defines "further engagement" with the community.

Source: <https://patch.com/virginia/kingstowne/deferral-rose-hill-plaza-project-approved-fairfax-county-board>

Supervisor Lusk Urged To 'Fully Reject' Rose Hill Plaza Redevelopment

4/10/23: A group of Franconia residents sent Fairfax County Supervisor Rodney Lusk a copy of a new "Rose Paper" on Friday that lays out the reasons why they oppose plans to redevelop the Rose Hill Plaza shopping center.

The residents, part of the Rose Hill Coalition, asked Lusk to "fully reject" the site-specific plan amendment nomination to redevelop the shopping center as part of Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program.

Source: <https://patch.com/virginia/kingstowne/supervisor-lusk-urged-fully-reject-rose-hill-plaza-redevelopment>

Supervisor Lusk Seeks Deferral Of Rose Hill Plaza Redevelopment Plan

4/6/23: The owner of Rose Hill Plaza in Franconia should reach out to the community for more feedback about the proposed redevelopment of the shopping center because the current proposal is "unacceptable," Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk said Thursday.

The supervisor urged the shopping center's owner, Combined Properties Inc., to engage with the community again before it submits a revised plan for the site at the corner of Franconia Road and Rose Hill Drive.

Source: <https://patch.com/virginia/kingstowne/supervisor-lusk-seeks-deferral-rose-hill-plaza-redevelopment-plan>

Opponents Of Rose Hill Plaza Redevelopment Urge 'Full Stop' On Plan

4/3/23: The Fairfax County Planning Commission voted unanimously last week to recommend that county leaders adopt the commission's "work program," a plan that includes the proposed redevelopment of the Rose Hill Plaza shopping center.

The inclusion of the Rose Hill Plaza development plan in the work program, approved on March 29 by the planning commission, came with a condition: the proposal will remain a "deferred item" until the owner of the shopping center, Combined Properties Inc., conducts "further community outreach."

Source: <https://patch.com/virginia/kingstowne/opponents-rose-hill-plaza-redevelopment-urge-full-stop-plan>

Fairfax County z-MOD Program Thrown Out by VA Supreme Court

3/23/23: The Virginia Supreme Court has ruled the County's "Continuity Ordinance", which the Board of Supervisors adopted in 2020, did not authorize the Board to consider and adopt a revised zoning ordinance (referred to as "z-MOD") in virtual meeting. Also, although the General Assembly, allowed for virtual meetings in its 2020 budget act under business required to allow the County to essential business, it did not allow the board to adopt non-essential business virtually, including the March 2021 zoning modification.

As a result, the 1978 Zoning Ordinance is presently in effect and available for reference on the County's website at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning-ordinance>.

For zoning questions, residents and developers may contact the Ordinance Administration Branch (Zoning Administration Division) at 703-324-1314, TTY 711, and ask to speak with the “Planner of the Day”.

To determine the Zoning District of your property, please use the [Zoning District Analyzer](#) interactive web map. After determining the Zoning District of the property, the user can determine what specific uses are allowed in this district and other information regarding the district classification and its requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

https://www.insidenova.com/news/fairfax/fairfax-county-zoning-revamp-thrown-out-by-virginia-supreme-court-citing-virtual-meeting/article_e30cb3aa-c99e-11ed-a679-f356c047f6a7.html

Redevelopment of Rose Hill Shopping Center Meets Opposition: There is even a coalition against it.

3/22/23: Supervisor Lusk is quoted in the Connection Newspaper that he supports a deferral of the nomination *but makes no public statement regarding the nomination.*

“In acknowledgement of the number of concerns that my office received from the community, I felt it was necessary for Combined Properties to go back and continue discussions with residents in the communities surrounding the Rose Hill Shopping Center in order to better understand their concerns and make adjustments to the nomination based on that feedback,” Lusk said in a statement.

“We look forward to working with the surrounding communities to reach a similar outcome for the Rose Hill Shopping Center,” Lusk added.

After the Board of Supervisors vote on April 11, there will be a number of public information meetings and a public hearing before the project proposal can move forward.

Source: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/mar/22/redevelopment-rose-hill-shopping-center-meets-oppo/>