

Docket Item #9A
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT #94-03

Planning Commission
May 2, 1994

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for an amendment to the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan Chapter of the 1992 Master Plan to change the land use designation of the property known as Braddock Center from CRMU-H/Commercial Residential Mixed Use-High to OCH/Office Commercial High.

APPLICANT: Potomac Club Residences Phase II L.P.,
by Harry P. Hart, attorney.

LOCATION: First Street; North Fayette Street
Braddock Center/Potomac Club Residences

ZONING: CRMU-H; I-1/PUD approval.

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, MAY 14, 1994: City Council approved the recommendation of the Planning Commission and approved the master plan amendment.

Speakers: Harry S. Hart spoke representing the applicant.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, MAY 2, 1994: On a motion by Mr. Komoroske, seconded by Mr. Leibach, the Planning Commission voted to adopt the master plan amendment by resolution.

Reasons: The Planning Commission agreed with the analysis in the staff report.

Speakers: Harry S. Hart spoke representing the applicant.

Council Options: Council may approve or disapprove the amendment by majority vote.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Planning staff recommends approval of the master plan amendment.

sketch

DISCUSSION

This master plan amendment, along with its companion rezoning (REZ #94-03), are necessary in order to build the large residential building which is proposed in SUP #2795. The proposed residential development exceeds the density allowed in CRMU-H (up to 2.5 with SUP) and is only achievable under the residential densities allowed in the OCH zone for projects close to a Metro station (up to 3.0 with SUP). The OCH density, however, is less dense than what can be built under a previously approved and still valid plan for commercial development on the site.

History

The subject property is a 2.3 acre site located approximately two blocks from the Braddock Road Metro Station. The site is bounded on the east by North Fayette Street and warehouses; on the north by First Street and a warehouse; on the west by the Braddock Place commercial mixed use office development; and on the south by the Braddock Place condominiums.

On May 14, 1988, the City Council approved a I-1 zone, Planned Unit Development (PUD) mixed use project known as Braddock Center on the subject property. The PUD development plan included two buildings: a residential building with 183 units and a commercial building containing 272,800 net square feet of office space, 6,300 square feet of retail and a 300 seat restaurant. The floor area ratio approved for the entire site was 4.25, with a maximum height of 150 feet.

In 1991, Phase I of the project, the 183 unit Potomac Club apartment building, was constructed at the corner of N. Fayette Street and Braddock Place. The commercial building was never built.

Pursuant to the law then in effect, the 1988 PUD approval for a 4.25 FAR mixed use project runs with the land and remains valid today, despite the subsequent comprehensive rezoning in 1992 by which this site was zoned CRMU-H. In other words, the right to build the previously approved dense commercial office/retail project will remain in perpetuity. However, if the current master plan and zoning proposal are approved, because they involve a proffer to a specific development plan, they will supersede and nullify the 1988 approval.

Application for Master Plan and Zoning Amendment

The applicant is now proposing to develop the second, vacant portion of the site, which contains 67,706 square feet of land (1.554 acres).

Rather than proceed with the original development plan for a commercial office building, the applicant would like to build a second residential building.

The Small Area Plan and the zoning map designate the property for development under the CRMU-H zone, which allows development up to a 2.5 FAR, with a special use permit. However, the residential building proposed by the applicant is larger than that, with a net FAR of 3.0. It is of a design similar to the existing residential building, but taller and larger with 16 floors and 296 units. (See staff report, SUP #2795, for a detailed description of the proposed development.)

Therefore, the applicant is requesting a master plan amendment and rezoning of the site to OCH/Office Commercial High, which permits residential development up to a 3.0 FAR within 1000 feet of a Metro station. A proffer submitted with the application limits development under the requested master plan and zoning amendment to the proposed residential plan. Because the proffer to the specific development under consideration in SUP #2795 is critical to consideration of the rezoning and master plan amendment, all three applications should be reviewed together.

ANALYSIS

The issue presented by this master plan amendment, with its companion applications for a rezoning (REZ #94-03) and for a specific residential building (SUP #2795), is whether increased residential density is justified above the high levels already allowed by the current CRMU-H zone. Staff believes the increase is supportable because of the importance of the location for residential use in this developing neighborhood and because an approval will eliminate the prospect of the previously approved high density office building on the site.

High density residential use is clearly supported by the the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan, which designates this site as well as those around it for CRMU-H zoning. According to the plan, high density residential development is appropriate in this location as a transition between the commercial development to the north and east and the remaining lower density residential neighborhoods to the south. The plan also points out the particular importance of the subject site as a focal point for the immediate area, at p. 36:

The blocks along and south of First Street, west of Henry Street and north of Madison Street have been designated for Commercial Residential Mixed Use to provide for intense redevelopment of the large industrially zoned parcels. Commercial Residential Mixed Use will provide a transition

between the existing low scale residential to the south and the commercial development proposed north of First Street. **Slightly more density and height may be appropriate on the Washington Cold Storage block which is well located to serve as a focal point for the development area and which is not adjacent to existing low scale residential areas.** The residential component of future development should focus on Fayette Street, while the commercial component should focus on the heavily trafficked Henry Street. (Emphasis added.)

CRMU-H was chosen as appropriate for this area because it allows a mix of uses and because the zone favors residential over commercial densities. (See pp. 30, 39.) As explained in the Plan, at p.30:

Medium to high density mixed use development with a substantial residential component is recommended in order to provide the transition in uses and densities, but also to reinforce the residential character of the Braddock area, maximize metro usage, reduce potential traffic impacts and provide round-the-clock activity in the area.

The Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan nowhere defines precisely what it means by "high density residential". However, Council has evidenced a willingness to see residential reach 3.0 FAR, at least in some limited cases near Metro. During the final discussions regarding the regulations for the OCH zone, Council added specific language in order to allow residential development within 1000 feet of a Metro station to achieve the same high density that office buildings are permitted in OCH: 3.0 FAR. The discussion came up in the context of the King Street Metro area, where parcels are zoned OCH. However, the rationale is applicable to Braddock Road Metro area as well, at least under the circumstances surrounding the Braddock Center site.

The OCH zone is not used for land areas near the Braddock Street Metro because the densities allowed are simply too great for an all office development in that area. Nevertheless, the subject property is now approved with an office building denser than the residential building proposed. The Braddock Center apartment site is called out in the small area plan as one where high density is appropriate in order that development there serve as a focal point for the area. Given this background and the fact that the proposed amendments to OCH are limited by proffer to a specific residential development, the Council's statement of policy as

evidenced in the OCH zone applies with equal force to the Braddock Road Metro area as the King Street Metro area.

Staff also believes it is important to the future of this emerging neighborhood that this block be developed as residential and not for office use. Residential development is more likely than commercial to result in high Metro ridership. A residential development will not create the vehicle trips and resulting traffic problems that a commercial development would at this location. Most significantly, additional residential development is necessary to foster and create a residential community in this once quasi-industrial area. Residential development, especially of high density, will bring an increased number of people into the area. By sheer numbers, the area may achieve that critical mass necessary to support successful retail businesses. Additional businesses and people will add to life on the street and activity generally. Staff therefore believes that residential development on this site is highly preferable to commercial development of any type or to no development at all.

Therefore, staff finds that increasing the density on this particular site above the 2.5 FAR allowed by the CRMU-H zone to 3.0 FAR as allowed by the OCH zone is supportable under the particular circumstances of this case.

STAFF: Sheldon Lynn, Director, Planning and Community Development; Barbara Ross, Deputy Director.

Attachments:

1. Resolution #94-03
2. Application for Master Plan and Zoning Amendment.
3. Revised Proffer.

RESOLUTION NO. MP-94-003

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, an application for amendment to the **BRADDOCK ROAD METRO STATION** section of the 1992 Master Plan was filed with the Department of Planning and Community Development in March 1994 for changes to the proposed land use and zoning designations for the property bounded by North Fayette Street, First Street and Braddock Place (Parcels no. 54.01-2-05.02);

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Community Development met with the community on April 11, 1994 to discuss the proposed revision; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Community Development has analyzed the proposed revision and presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearings on the proposed amendment was held on May 2, 1994 with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that:

1. The proposed amendment is necessary and desirable to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the **BRADDOCK ROAD METRO STATION** section of the City; and
2. The proposed amendment is generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the 1992 Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the **BRADDOCK ROAD METRO STATION** section of the 1992 Master Plan; and
3. The proposed amendment shows the Commission's long range recommendations for the general development of the **BRADDOCK ROAD METRO STATION AREA**; and
4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Commission may properly take notice

in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendment to the **BRADDOCK ROAD METRO STATION** section of the 1992 Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The following amendment is hereby adopted in its entirety as an amendment to the **BRADDOCK ROAD METRO STATION** section of the 1992 Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia:

Change the proposed land use and zoning designations from CRMU-H to OCH, with proffer, for the Braddock Center parcels.

2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.

ADOPTED THE 2ND DAY OF MAY, 1994.

William B. Hurd, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Sheldon Lynn, Secretary