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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Albert Frederick

**FROM:** G. Evan Pritchard

**DATE:** December 8, 2022

**RE:** Statement of Support for Zoning Map Amendment, Special Use Permit, and Special Excpetion Applications for N29 WillowWood Plaza Residential Development Phase II

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My client, Capital City Real Estate, proposes an infill residential project (“N29 Residential Phase II”) at the WillowWood Plaza office center located on Eaton Place near Fairfax Drive. As shown on the enclosed plans prepared by IMEG Corp. d/b/a Christopher Consultants, Ltd. dated November 30, 2022 (“Master Development Plan”), the project would consist of fifty (50) “two-over-two” or traditional townhomes that would be constructed on a surface parking lot located between the office building at 10300 Eaton Place and Fairfax Boulevard. Separate from this application, a parking garage would be constructed offsite to replace displaced parking for the office building.

The application property (the “Application Property”) is a 2.18-acre portion of the parcel assigned tax Parcel ID 47 4 02 02 001, which includes the existing office building located at 10300 Eaton Place, and is zoned to the CR Commercial Retail District. The larger parcel will be subdivided to create a new lot for the townhomes on the Application Property. The new off-site parking garage, which is not part of this application, will be constructed on the same lot as the existing office building. The proposed new lot configuration is depicted on Sheet P\_001 of the General Development Plan.

The entire WillowWood Plaza area is identified in the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fairfax (the “Comprehensive Plan”) as part of the Northfax Activity Center, which the Northfax Small Area Plan (the “SAP”) describes as being “marked by suburban commercial development, substantial impervious paving and a lack of sense of place.” The Northfax of the future is envisioned as a “dynamic, mixed-use center” whose existing commercial uses “can be greatly enhanced by additional uses” to include new residential typologies. Recommended building heights of up to seven (7) stories are recommended for the “Neighborhood Core” of Northfax, which includes the Application Property.

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We propose to rezone the Application Property to the PD-R District and construct fifty (50) two-over-two or traditional townhomes that will be four (4) stories/forty-five (45) feet in height. The townhome layout was carefully arranged in a manner that provides continued use of, and access to, an existing stormwater management facility that runs beneath the Application Property. Each townhome will be served by two (2) parking spaces in a garage within the unit. An additional eight (8) spaces will be provided for visitors.

Based on pre-application feedback received from staff, we eliminated the curb cut along Eaton Place near Fairfax Boulevard. Access to the townhomes will instead be provided via the existing curb cut on the western edge of the Application Property. We believe this will help mitigate traffic impacts and prevent conflicts along Eaton Place.

**Rezoning Considerations, § 6.4.9 of the Zoning Ordinance**

The proposed rezoning meets the approval considerations specified in § 6.4.9 of the City of Fairfax Zoning Ordinance (“Zoning Ordinance”):

- A. Substantial conformance with the comprehensive plan.

*The proposed rezoning to the PD-R District is consistent with the SAP’s call for dynamic, mixed-use residential development in Northfax. See Consistency with Comprehensive Plan section below.*

- B. Any greater benefits the proposed rezoning provides to the city than would a development carried out in accordance with the current zoning district (§3.2), and otherwise applicable requirements of this chapter.

*The proposed rezoning will allow for more urban residential development consistent with the SAP that would not be permitted under the existing CR District zoning. The proposed development will provide for greater housing opportunities in the City, generate greater commercial tax revenue, and create a more vibrant community than would otherwise be possible.*

- C. Suitability of the subject property for the development and uses permitted by the current versus the proposed district.

*A rezoning of the property to the PD-R District will allow for the development of townhomes consistent with the SAP recommendations. Furthermore, the introduction of residential uses adjacent to the existing office buildings will help create a more dynamic and active, mixed-use community.*

- D. Adequacy of existing or proposed public facilities such as public transportation facilities, public safety facilities, public school facilities, and public parks.

*The property is well-served by public transportation facilities, including the CUE Bus Green Routes 1 and 2 that provide service to the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metro Station. Existing public safety facilities, public school facilities, and public parks will all be adequate to serve existing community needs and the proposed development. Private recreational amenities and a potential connection the George Snyder Trail will also be provided with the proposed development.*

- E. Adequacy of existing and proposed public utility infrastructure.

*Existing public utility infrastructure has been deemed adequate for the proposed development. Existing stormwater management facilities will be relocated and upgraded with the proposed development.*

F. Compatibility of the proposed development with adjacent and nearby communities.

*The proposed townhouse development will be compatible with adjacent and nearby commercial development. It will also introduce more housing into the area as envisioned in the SAP.*

G. Consistency with the stated purpose of the proposed district.

*The proposed development will be consistent with the stated purpose of the proposed PD-R District zoning, which is “to allow the city, at the request of an applicant, to set aside rigid zoning rules in order to allow applicants to create special and unique developments by mixing and clustering, where appropriate, land uses and/or dwelling types and providing more usable recreation and open space in a master development plan proposed by the applicant and approved by the city council.”*

### **Requested Modifications**

The following modifications and waivers are requested:

1. A modification of the § 3.6.2 requirement of 50% build to line.

*Since this property is located in an urban environment, the intent is to create an urban streetscape along both the frontages of Eaton Place and Fairfax Boulevard, that has the units fronting the streets, with street trees and a prominent pedestrian façade. This modification is necessary to maximum this wall façade for the units along those streets, but at the same time provide visual interest through architecture and street plantings.*

2. A modification of § 4.2.4.B.1 to permit tandem parking.

*As is typical for townhouse development, two (2) tandem spaces will be provided for each unit.*

3. A modification of § 4.2.9.B to permit fewer than the required number of loading spaces.

*A loading space is not required for the townhomes.*

4. A modification of § 4.5.7.D related to the requirement for terminal landscape islands.

*We are not able to provide terminal landscape islands due to the location of existing sanitary sewer easement facilities that will prevent the planting of trees.*

5. A modification of § 4.5.5 requirement for transitional yards.

*With the proposed PD-R zoning district being a planned development district and the location of this property in an urban environment, the intent is to create an urban project, and therefore will require a modification of some of the transitional yards along its perimeter. Along Fairfax Boulevard and Eaton place, the front of the units will help*

*establish the streetscape with street trees and a pedestrian realm defining its urban edge and feel. Along the western portion of the property adjacent to the proposed offsite parking structure, the transitional screening will be provided for buffering purposes. And along the rear/northern side of the property, there will be transitional screening, which will be comprised of plantings and fencing. Since the rear of the property is adjacent to Accotink Creek, we feel that that a modification with a non-uniform transitional screening yard is warranted there since the adjacent use is forested already and it acts as an effective transition for this project.*

6. A modification of § 4.5.6 requirement for 10-year tree canopy.

*Since a significant portion of this property is encumbered with existing easements, proposed trees are not permitted to be planted within the easement areas. In the remainder of the site, we feel we have adequately balanced the proposed buildings, minimized the access roads, provided a good sidewalk network for pedestrian connectivity, and proposed trees within our open spaces and along our streetscapes where we could. We can also at site plan, when the plan progresses, look at adding shrubs and groundcover detailing to enhance the design.*

7. A waiver is also requested of the Public Facilities Manual § 401-01 requirement that a typical curb and gutter street be provided on private accessways that are less than thirty (30) feet from face of curb to face of curb.

*The proposed development is designed to be an urban community that is more compact and integrated with reduced roadway widths. Therefore, support of this waiver is appropriate in consideration of the intended urban design of the proposed development.*

**Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan**

Below is a summary table of the how the proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and SAP:

<b>Comprehensive Plan Reference</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed Plan</b>
Comprehensive Plan, p. 36, Activity Center – Northfax	“New residential uses and amenities such as open spaces and a pedestrian-friendly multimodal transportation network, should also be leveraged to improve the commercial marketability of the Activity Center.”	The new residential uses will provide daytime activity and potential employees to support existing retail and office uses in the area. They will also replace expansive surface parking with more attractive buildings served by garage parking. The project will also improve the walkability of the area for pedestrians with improved sidewalks and streetscape.

<p>SAP, p. 6, A New Identity</p>	<p>A new identity for Northfax includes “housing typologies that are not well represented in Fairfax, such as senior, living, market-rate apartments, condominiums and affordable housing....”</p>	<p>The proposed development will include market-rate and affordable townhomes for sale, which are currently under-represented in the City. In keeping with the City’s affordable housing ordinance, 10% of the proposed units (5) will be provided as affordable units affordable at 70% AMI.</p>
<p>SAP, p. 7, The Linear Park</p>	<p>“The most important design feature in the Northfax vision is a new linear park that spans from Northfax West to Northfax East, and connects north with Accotink Creek.”</p>	<p>The proposed development will help provide a pedestrian connection to Accotink Creek.</p>
<p>SAP, p. 9, A Balanced Activity Center</p>	<p>“Northfax is a huge opportunity to transform into a mixed-use Activity Center that centers and anchors the surrounding communities. Transitioning to a more balanced mix of uses will help create a better sense of place, bring more activity around the clock, potentially reduce single-use peak traffic, and help create more dynamic public spaces. The existing offices and hotels would be greatly enhanced by additional daytime retail, including restaurants, and a larger nearby residential population.”</p>	<p>The introduction of townhomes will help balance the mix of uses in Northfax. New residents will help support existing and future retail in the area as well as hotels and office by generating daytime pedestrian activity.</p>
<p>SAP, p. 14, Surface Parking to Green Space</p>	<p>“...[T]he plan proposes an increase in buildings - replacing mostly surface parking in the plan. These new buildings have the potential to better direct water, have green roofs, and other eco-friendly designs that improve the ecology of the study area.”</p>	<p>The proposed residential building and open space areas will replace an existing surface parking lot. As a result, stormwater will be treated in a much more efficient and ecologically-friendly manner.</p>
<p>SAP, p. 14, Connected Green Spaces</p>	<p>“The proposed green space diagram demonstrates</p>	<p>The proposed redevelopment of the Application Property includes a defined path for</p>

	<p>potential green spaces in a total build out of the plan.</p> <p>The goal of this green space approach is to create 1) interconnected green spaces to facilitate movement of people and wildlife 2) A variety of park sizes and spaces to support different activities and 3) connecting green spaces within the study area to active trail systems and cultural resources.”</p>	<p>pedestrian circulation to connect Eaton Place with a proposed Amenity Area in the center of the parcel and to the Snyder Trail beyond.</p>
<p>SAP, p. 20, Commercial Uses in Northfax</p>	<p>“Northfax is home to a large office complex (WillowWood Plaza) and a cluster of hotels serving a range of guests. What is absent in the overall setting is access to convenient / walkable amenities, such as restaurant and retail.</p> <p>Including providing enhanced neighborhood conveniences for nearby city residents, the redevelopment of the Fairfax Shopping Center into Point 50 will help address this commercial user serving gap. Adding further retailing offerings and other user amenities elsewhere in Northfax (i.e. green space) is key to strengthening these background existing commercial land uses.”</p>	<p>The proposed open space will add to the sense of place for Northfax.</p>
<p>SAP, p. 22, Residential Uses in Northfax</p>	<p>“Residential uses are key to supporting new development in the activity centers, both of which are currently dominated by office space. New residential construction also provides diversification of residential product type since most of the City’s existing residential inventory comprises older single family</p>	<p>The proposed residential development will help diversify the City’s housing stock and bring much needed residential uses to Northfax.</p>

	homes and apartment complexes.”	
SAP, p. 22, Building Height and Setbacks	“Areas not close to adjacent residential structures are recommended to have a (7 story) height limit.”	We are proposing 4 stories (45 feet) for the townhomes.
SAP, p. 43, Zoning and Regulatory Recommendations	“Zoning (Land Use) – Currently, most of Northfax is zoned CR (Commercial Retail), which does not permit residential and hotel uses without special exception. The plan recommends that all properties in the study area be rezoned to also allow for residential, hotel and mixed-use. The Commercial Urban (CU) zone is a potential solution for the study area, as it has more flexibility in allowable land uses.”	As suggested by staff, we are proposing to rezone to the PD-R District.