

## MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Feather and Members of the Planning Commission

From: Albert Frederick, Senior Planner

Through: Jason Sutphin, Community Development Division Chief  
Brooke Hardin, Director of Community Development and Planning

Subject: Pre-Application Briefing – Northfax Chain Bridge

Meeting  
Date: September 25, 2023



The attached documents are inclusive of materials for the Planning Commission pre-application briefing on the above-referenced items, including a narrative and conceptual plan. The site is bounded by Chain Bridge Road to the west, Fairfax Boulevard to the south, Jim McKay Chevrolet Car Lot to the east, and Residence Inn by Marriott Fairfax City to the north. The intent of this pre-application briefing is to receive initial feedback on a design concept from the Planning Commission before proceeding with an official application.

The concept plan proposes an 8-story mixed-use building with approximately 271 apartments and 2,253 square feet of retail uses, a parking garage with 316 spaces, twelve parallel parking spaces on a future east-west road (Northfax Street) from Chain Bridge Road, and a proposed north-south road from Fairfax Boulevard on 2.3 +/- acres. The proposal may result in a Map Amendment (Rezoning) from CR Commercial Retail to CU Commercial Urban in the Architectural Control Overlay District (ACOD), Special Use Permit for upper-story residential/mixed use building, Special Exception for density, height, 75% of ground floor non-residential, reduction in parking, inter-parcel connection, and a Major Certificate of Appropriateness for architecture and landscaping. Additional applications may be required based on final design if an application is submitted. Further detail is provided within the attached briefing. A fiscal impact analysis has not been conducted at this time.

# Pre-Application Briefing – Planning Commission

## Site Details

**Address:** 3575 Chain Bridge Road, 10464-10480  
Fairfax Boulevard

**Current Zoning:** CR Commercial Retail in Architectural Control Overlay District (ACOD)

**Current Use:** Gas station, retail, and former restaurant with parking lot

**Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Designation:**  
Activity Center

**Site Area:** 2.3 +/- acres

**Number of lots:** 5

**Property Owners:** One

**Potential Applicant:** G. Evan Pritchard for Chain Bridge, LLC



## Development Concept:

The concept shows the following elements:

- Proposed 8-story mixed-use building with approximately 271 apartments and 2,253 square feet of retail uses
- 8 floors of residential units fronting on Fairfax Boulevard (with ground floor walkups) and a portion of Chain Bridge Road, and 6 floors of residential units fronting on a portion of Chain Bridge Road, the new east-west street (Northfax Street) and the new north-south street
- Ground floor retail, lobby, and amenities area
- Five levels of structured parking with 316 spaces
- The garage and portions of the residential building spans over existing box culvert and a stormwater easement
- New proposed east-west road (Northfax Street) and streetscape from Chain Bridge Road
- Proposed vehicular access point to garage from Chain Bridge Road
- New proposed north-south road from Fairfax Boulevard with garage access
- Approximately 1,662 square feet of open space on Chain Bridge Road

**Potential Applications:** If an application is submitted, this concept would require land use approvals that could potentially include, but are not limited to:

- Map Amendment (Rezoning) from CR Commercial Retail to CU Commercial Urban in the Architectural Control Overlay District (ACOD)
- Special Use Permit for upper-story residential /mixed use with the submission of a General Development Plan
- Special Exception for density, height, 75% of ground floor non-residential, reduction in parking, and inter-parcel connection
- Major Certificate of Appropriateness for architecture and landscaping

Specific applications will be assessed at a future date when a complete application package is submitted by the potential applicant.

**Preliminary Feedback:** City review agencies provides the following feedback to the potential applicant:

- Community Development and Planning
  - Consistency with Northfax Small Area Plan and Comprehensive Plan
  - Map Amendment (Rezoning) from CR Commercial Retail to CU Commercial Urban while retaining the Architectural Control Overlay District (ACOD)
  - Special Use Permit for upper-story residential /mixed use
    - Parking Requirement
      - Studio (1.25 spaces per efficiency unit)
      - 1-bedroom (1.5 spaces per 1 bedroom unit)
      - 2-bedroom (2 spaces per 2 or more bedroom units)
      - Retail, general (1 space per 200 sq. ft. of floor area)
      - Within the CU, Commercial Urban District, where structured parking is provided: 10 percent reduction
  - Special Exceptions
    - Maximum height in CU is 5-stories/60 feet
    - Maximum density in CU is 24 dwelling units per acre
    - Proposed retail square footage is 2,253, which is below the required 75% (23,918 sf) of the ground floor
    - Parking reduction, requires a parking analysis
    - Section 4.3.3 (Vehicular cross-access) is required between two or more contiguous sites
  - Subject to Section 4.11 (Underground Utilities) of the Zoning Ordinance
  - Subject to Section 3.9 (Affordable Dwelling Unit) of the Zoning Ordinance, minimum of 6% or 17 units is required
  - Subject to Board of Architectural Review for a major certificate of appropriateness for architecture and landscaping
- Public Works/Transportation
  - Continue coordination on the new Northfax Street (proposed city project pending funding approval)
  - Ensure clear sightlines to/from all intersections and entrances (e.g., when planning landscaping)
  - Evaluate/show functionality of New N/S street (one-way, 20' wide). Consider turning movements, overall site circulation (note that most access points are RIRO); note whether this entrance/road is shared with the auto-dealership to the east.
  - Include streetscape improvements on all frontages (10' path or sidewalk, landscaping, etc.)
  - Expect to include Transportation Impact Study & Transportation Demand Management
- Public Works/Stormwater Management
  - Ensure that access to the culvert is provided
  - Confirm requirements for stormwater easement (e.g., vertical & horizontal clearances)
- Code Administration
  - Met with potential applicant and will provide additional comments if application submitted.

**Attachments:** Includes submission materials received from the potential applicant:

1. Request for Pre-Application Briefing
2. Pre-Application Briefing Concept Plan
3. Façade examples

Chain Bridge, LLC  
6820-B Commercial Drive  
Springfield, VA 22151

September 11, 2023

Brooke Hardin, AICP  
City of Fairfax  
Director of Community Development and Planning  
10455 Armstrong St.  
Fairfax, VA 22030-3630

Dear Brooke,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our vision for the site.

**Site Overview:**

The 2.30-acre site lies at the northeast corner of Chain Bridge Rd and Fairfax Blvd intersection. It will be flanked by the future Northfax St to the north and New Street to the east. A 40' wide and 14' tall stormwater easement divides the site. To proceed, we will need to demolish the current gas station, retail outlet, and vacant restaurant.

**Development Proposal:**

We envision a mixed-use development, featuring approximately 271 residential units with 2,253 SF of limited retail space. We intend to dedicate 6% of these units to affordable housing. The proposed unit distribution is 65% studio or one-bedroom units, with the remaining being two-bedroom apartments. With an average unit size of 775 SF, we've intentionally designed the unit depths between 30' – 32' to optimize natural light penetration.

Our design showcases a three-level concrete podium base with five additional stick-frame constructed levels above. This podium setup allows for enhanced ceiling heights suitable for retail and amenities, but also ensures that the building's overall height remains within an 85-foot limit.

For parking, we're integrating an internal pre-cast garage, strategically enveloped by residential units or ground-level functional spaces, rendering it invisible from the outside. This garage will accommodate 316 parking spaces, with 305 for residents and 11 dedicated to retail. Additionally, there will be 12 off-site parallel parking spaces located along Northfax St.

In line with our commitment to sustainable development, we aim to meet standards equivalent to LEED Silver. To provide a clearer understanding of our design intent, especially the facade's quality and aesthetics, we've enclosed images from a similar project we are currently developing, offering a glimpse into our vision for this pivotal corner location.

**Project Significance:**

This mixed-use development aims to transform the current car-centric commercial area into a vibrant urban block. The mid-rise structure will place retail, residential lobby, and amenity areas along Northfax Street's extension. This aligns with the vision of creating a bustling pedestrian-focused pathway along Northfax Street. Strategic placement of retail at the corner of Chain Bridge Road and Northfax Street will ensure high visibility. Additionally, walkout residential units will revitalize the southwest and southern edge of the block along Chain Bridge Road and Fairfax Boulevard.

**Stormwater Easement:**

The garage and residential building will span the existing storm easement running from east to west. Ample ceiling height above the easement will facilitate access to the culvert below ground and let service vehicles operate within as needed. Based on feedback from the City, parking at grade over the easement is anticipated. No columns will be within the easement. Foundations and load designs will be prepared so as not to disrupt or damage the culvert.

**Entitlement Incentives:**

In May of this year ownership was at lease with a tenant for the old Fuddruckers building when the City's Economic Development team called to relay the City's eagerness to see the Fuddruckers demolished and the road network extended as soon as possible. We were asked what entitlement relief / incentives would be needed to justify moving forward with a redevelopment to accelerate demolition of the Fuddruckers.

For supporting redevelopment and the demolition of Fuddruckers, we are seeking:

- An increase in density up to 125 units per acre
- A 33% residential parking requirement reduction to 1.125 spaces per unit (see chart below)
- A North-South New Street without a parallel parking mandate
- A moderate amount of Northfax retail frontage positioned adjacent to Chain Bridge

**Parking Reduction Chart:**

Parking Per Unit	% Unit Mix	Requirement	10% Reduction	Recommended
One Bedroom or Less	65%	1.50 / unit	1.35 / unit	1.00 / unit
Two Bedroom or More	35%	2.00 / unit	1.80 / unit	1.356 / unit
Weighted Requirement		1.68 / unit	1.51 / unit	1.125 / unit

Previously, a transportation memo to support a 33% parking reduction was provided to the City that highlights the following:

- TDM strategies have proven effective in the area to reduce parking demand amongst residents. A plan will be developed unique to the needs of the building and implemented by a designated staff person. The amenity design of the development will encourage residents to complete normal activities and errands within or nearby the development.

- Nearby jurisdictions have adopted reduced parking requirements for residential uses, specifically Fairfax County is pursuing an updated Ordinance to require less parking for new residential.
- Ridesharing and autonomous vehicles are revolutionizing the transportation system and significantly reducing the need of vehicle ownership for residents. Ridesharing allows flexibility for residents to either eliminate vehicle ownership or consolidate to shared ownership.
- Parking supply is a significant cost for new development. The cost impacts of additional parking would require higher rents, increasing costs to future City residents.
- Parking would be unbundled from standard unit rental. The risk of providing less parking is solely on the developer. If spaces were to become limited, the price per space would increase, managing the supply and demand.
- Parking, much like interstates and traffic, operates on the principle of induced demand. Essentially, "if you build it, they will come." When developers are compelled to construct excess parking, they adjust the pricing to ensure its use, aiming to recover their investment. This strategy inadvertently encourages individuals to maintain and depend on cars, subsequently intensifying local traffic.

#### **North-South New Street:**

By eliminating the parallel parking requirement, we can design the garage to be enveloped by units on all four sides, creating a cohesive and integrated architectural appearance. This change not only enhances the aesthetic value but also allows for the desired density that ensures the project's feasibility. In terms of traffic flow, we're conceptualizing a one-way system. Traffic from both Northfax Street and Fairfax Boulevard would converge and funnel smoothly into the parking garage, streamlining access and minimizing congestion.

#### **Northfax Street Activation:**

Small area plan recommends majority of Northfax roadway provide retail frontage. To be successful retail needs access, visibility, other retailers, and adequate parking. The existing hotel opposite our site is without retail. We show 2,253 SF of retail in the provided concepts and have explored increasing the retail to as much as 3,000 SF. Doing so unfortunately eats away at the needed residential lobby and amenity space. Near Chain Bridge we envision retail for visibility. As we move east, a lobby would be mid-block. To the east of that would be highly aesthetic amenity space visible from the street. We've provided the exact streetscape suggested in the Northfax Small Area Plan and see these sidewalk depths of 20' to be a great way to activate the fronting amenity space with Northfax Street. We need the retail to be adequately parked to be successful. As we increase retail, the overall density is constrained by the number of parking spaces achievable, since retail requires more than four-times that of residential.

**Shared Goals:**

The City and ownership are united in their vision for the site. Both parties are keen to achieve increased density coupled with an integrated roadway extension, aiming to alleviate traffic and enhance accessibility. Impressively, the project aligns seamlessly with the City Council's objectives for the 2023-2024 term, encompassing Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability/ Stewardship, Community Engagement, Transportation, and Effective Governance.

This endeavor promises to boost tax revenue and catalyze the implementation of the recently ratified Northfax Small Area Plan. Notably, it will transition a gas station site into a contemporary housing development complemented by community serving retail. Additionally, a commendable 6% of the residential units will be earmarked for affordability, supporting the broader community's needs. Furthermore, the project fills a critical gap in the Northfax roadway extension, effectively mitigating traffic congestion stretching from Old Town to I-66. By replacing an aging structure situated at a key intersection, the project introduces additional residents and rejuvenates the area. Given these compelling features, the project holds a high likelihood of realizing its envisioned success.

**Next Steps:**

If the planning commission and council align with the objectives outlined in this memo, we intend to promptly engage the remaining team members and submit our application. In our previous meeting, we acknowledged feedback regarding landscaping, dry utilities, culvert foundations, and stormwater management. Our application will comprehensively address these items in accordance with City regulations.

In closing, please note all our proposed concepts incorporate the Northfax roadway extension. Without the approval for the entitlement incentives described within, the site runs the risk of becoming merely a standalone retail location, albeit at such a prominent intersection. Our primary aim is to obtain entitlement approval prior to the demolition of the old Fuddruckers. Optimally, we hope to wrap up the entitlement proceedings within a year to facilitate the old Fuddruckers demolition, rather than the prolonged timeline of 1-2 years post the availability of NVTA funding in 2028.

Thank you for considering our proposal. We look forward to taking the next steps together.

Warm Regards,



Justin Johnson

VP Real Estate Development



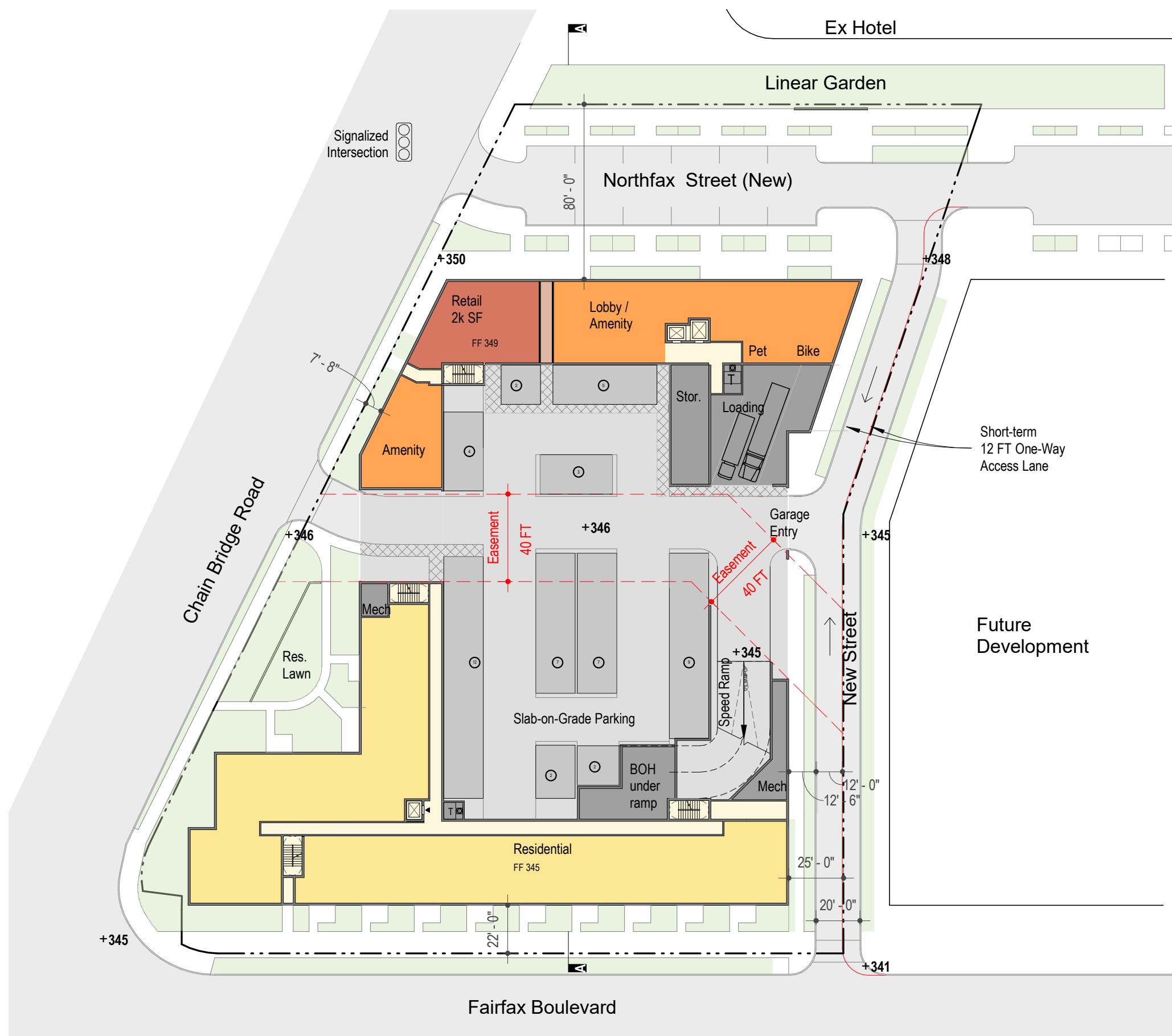
RESIDENTIAL

# NORTHFAX STUDY

08/11/2023

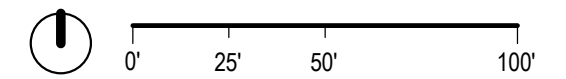
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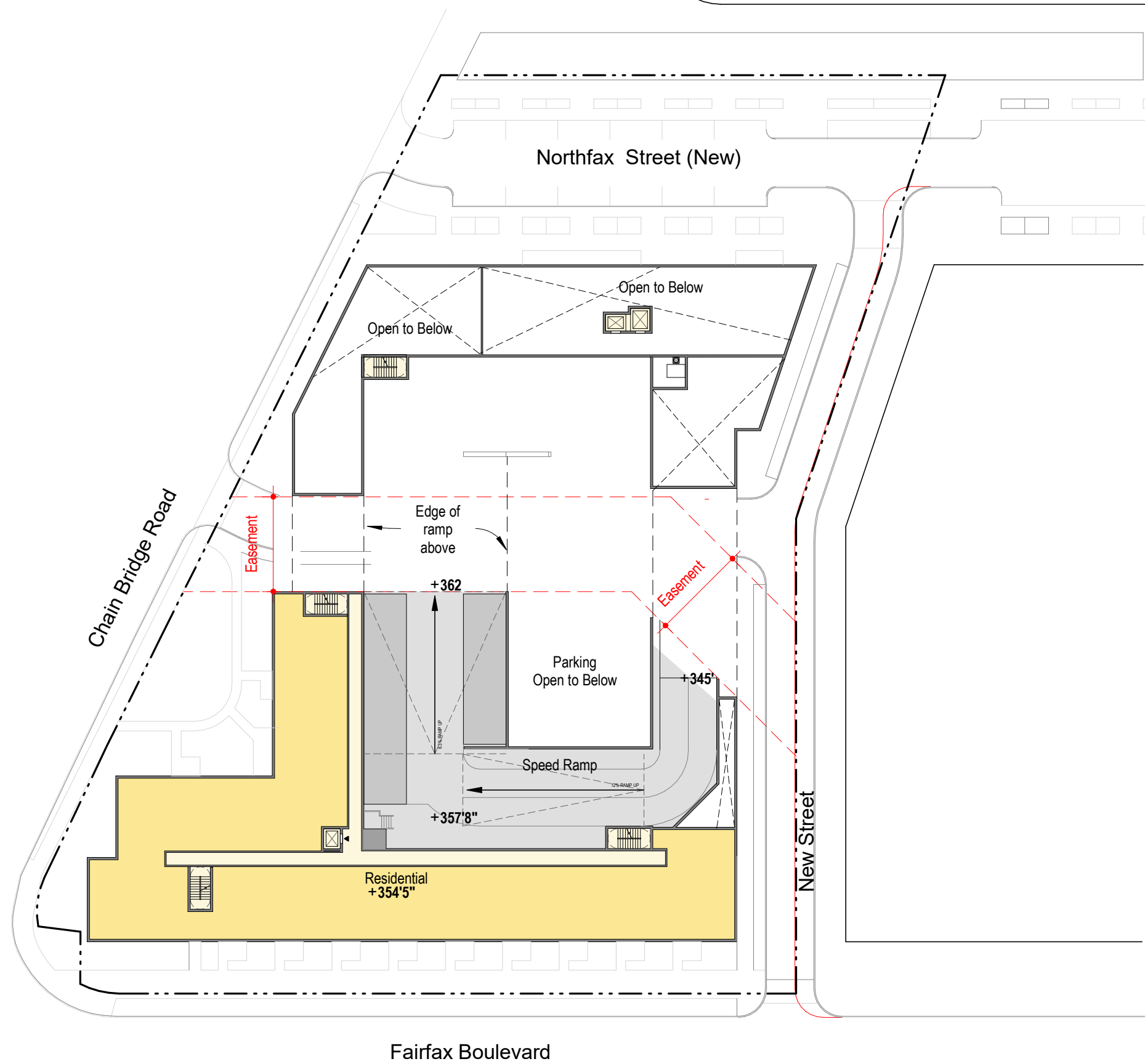


# Ground Floor

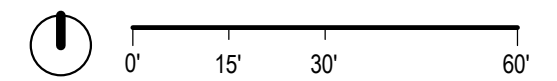
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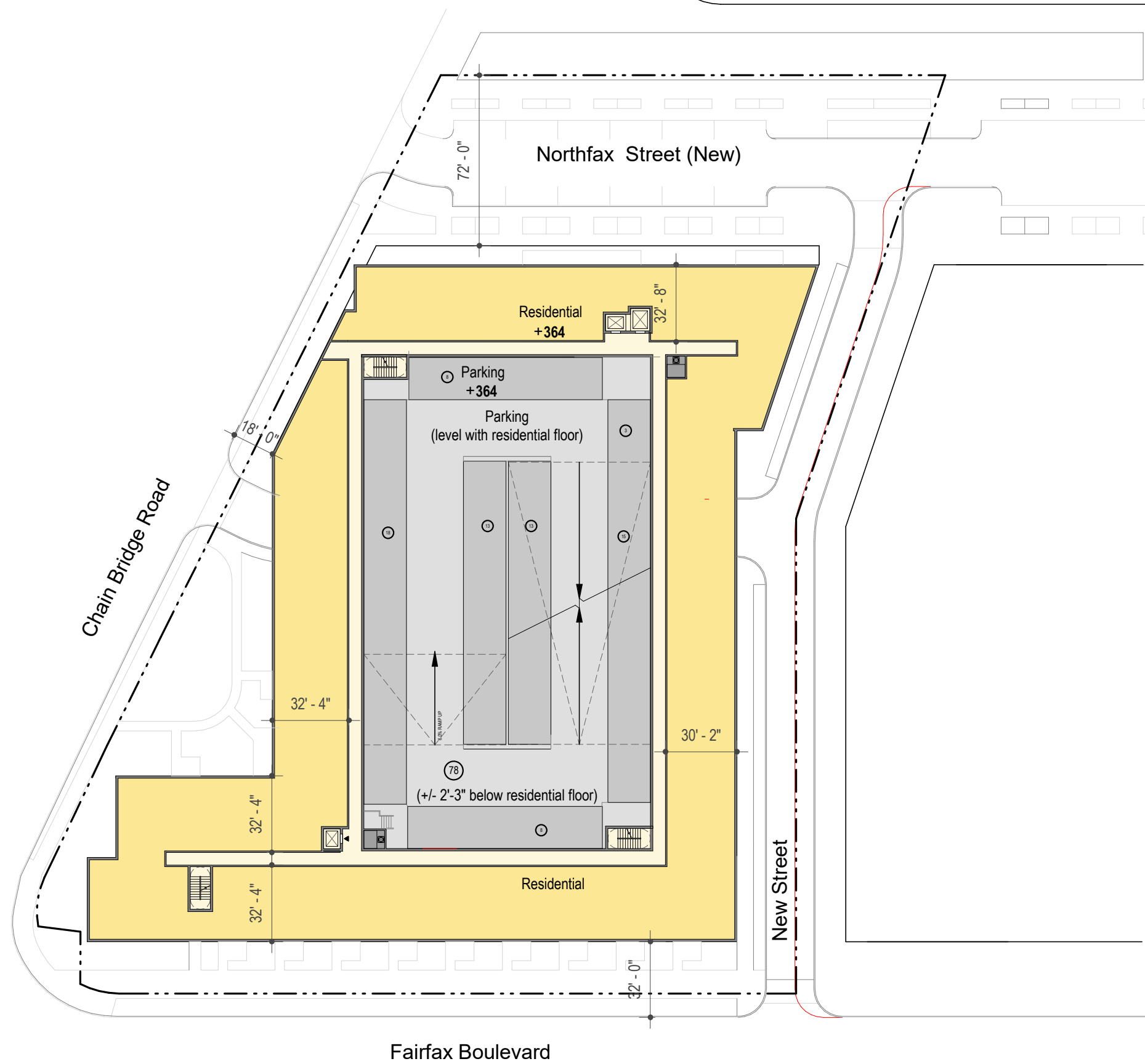


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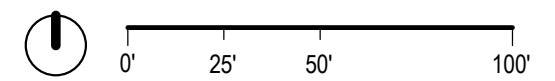
# Second Floor



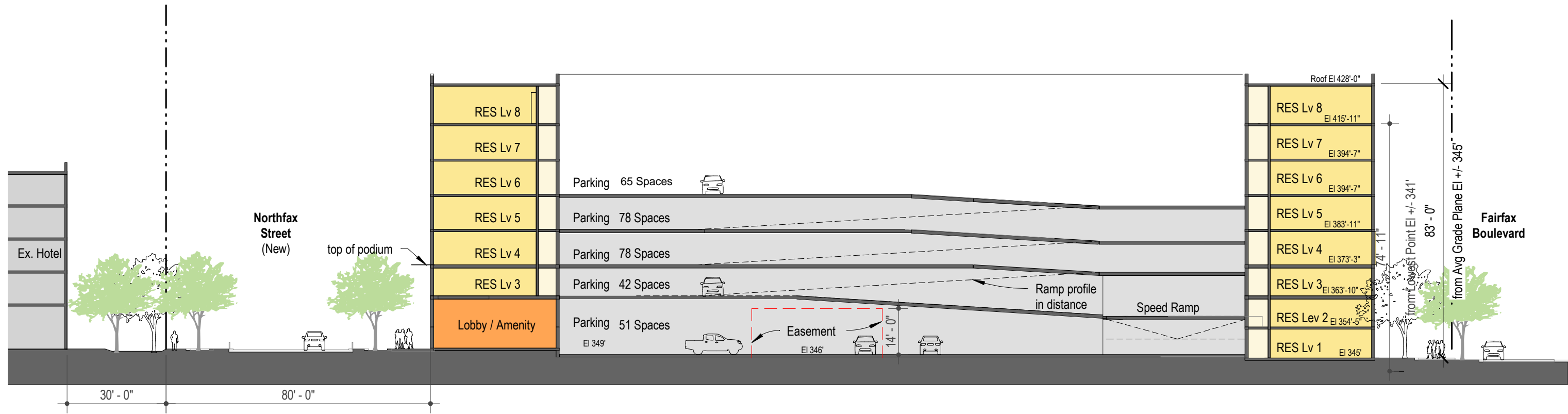


# Typical Floors (3rd-8th Floors)

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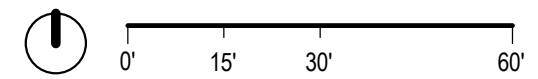


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# Site Section (AA)

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Northfax Chain Bridge Road								
LEVEL	Res. NRSF**	Res. Circ.	Res. Amenity	Retail	Service / BOH	Total (GSF)	Parking (GSF)	Parking Prov'd (SP)
LEVEL 08	30,233	5,330	0		258	35,821		
LEVEL 07	30,233	5,330	0		258	35,821		
LEVEL 06	30,233	5,330	0		258	35,821	24,646	65
LEVEL 05	30,223	5,330	0		258	35,811	24,646	78
LEVEL 04	30,223	5,330	0		258	35,811	24,646	78
LEVEL 03	30,223	5,330	0		258	35,811	13,882	42
LEVEL 02	14,006	3,289	0		76	17,371	5,032	0
LEVEL 01	14,149	3,919	6,203	2,273	5,347	31,891	27,657	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>209,523</b>	<b>39,188</b>	<b>6,203</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>6,971</b>	<b>264,158</b>	<b>120,509</b>	<b>316</b>
		<b>254,914</b>						

Unit Count per NRSF		
	775	Avg NSF/DU
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>DU</b>
Amenity Ratio / Unit	22.9	SF/DU

Required Parking	Parking Spaces
Retail Parking (4.5 SP/1000 SF)	11
Res Parking (1.125 SP/DU)	305
<b>Total Spaces Required</b>	<b>316</b>

# ELEVATION - COLUMBIA PIKE



# VIEW - NORTHWEST CORNER AT GLEBE ROAD AND COLUMBIA PIKE





# VIEW - CLOSE UP OF RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE





ELEVATION - GLEBE ROAD



# VIEW - SOUTHEAST CORNER AT 11TH STREET AND GLEBE ROAD



ELEVATION - NORTH 11TH STREET



ELEVATION - SOUTH 11TH STREET



VIEW - LOOKING DOWN 11TH STREET



# VIEW FROM AUDI DEALERSHIP OF SOUTHEAST CORNER







# VIEW - NORTHEAST CORNER ALONG COLUMBIA PIKE



i Service Drive