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Board Matter

Motion for Pan Am Shopping Center

Mr. Chairman,

This motion was created in consultation with staff in the Department of Planning and Development, and is to direct the staff to evaluate a potential change to the Comprehensive Plan guidance that governs the Pan Am Shopping Center. The Pam Am Center, built in 1979, is strategically located at the intersection of Lee Highway and Nutley Street, approximately one mile from the Vienna Metro Station, and adjacent to the Thompson Family Cemetery.

As a Board, we have recognized the challenges facing the retail industry and the need to work in partnership with retail owners to help ensure that our retail centers remain viable and continue to contribute positively to the communities they service. In this case, the property owner of the Center, Federal Reality, is interested in working with the community on a concept for redevelopment to achieve these objectives. This motion is intended to allow the planning process to be a platform for the property owner to work with staff and community stakeholders to consider how evolving the center to a more mixed-use environment could enhance the retail experience, ensure the long-term viability of the commercial center, and advance County objectives that include but are not limited to placemaking, economic development, multimodal transportation, and the provision of housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels.

It is my expectation that any potential planning will evaluate how to balance redevelopment with available transportation capacity, look for opportunities to

enhance bike and pedestrian linkages, and create meaningful open spaces and compatible transitions and buffering to the adjacent neighborhoods. Recognizing the presence of existing stable neighborhoods near the center, the appropriate scale of the design, bulk, and mass of any redevelopment should be studied. It is my further expectation that the resultant planning process will have robust community engagement. The center's owners have committed to the same.

Motion:

I therefore move that the Board direct staff to evaluate an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the Pan Am shopping center, Tax Map Parcel 48-4((1))12F. The amendment should consider additional development with a broader mix of uses on the site that would facilitate an improved retail environment; compatibility with any of the existing commercial areas to be retained, as well as with the adjacent development; and ways to support diverse housing, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and expanded open space amenities. Per the current Comprehensive Plan, they should respect the adjacent Thompson Cemetery and floodplain, and integrate it into the design. The process will include robust community engagement, to begin with the property owners communicating with surrounding communities, and then to involve them throughout the process.

The Plan Amendment will be reviewed concurrently with an application to rezone the property once such an application is submitted. This motion should not be construed as a favorable recommendation on these applications by the Board and does not relieve the applicant from compliance with the provisions of any applicable ordinances, regulations, or adopted standards.

This action in no way prejudices the substantive review of the applications.