



City Hall, 301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22313
www.alexandriava.gov

March 29, 2011

Mr. James P. Zook, Director
Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning
Herrity Building
12055 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

**RE: City of Alexandria Staff Comments to Fairfax County:
Plaza at Landmark (APR#09-I-1L)
Plaza at 500 (APR#09-I-2L)**

Dear Mr. Zook:

As Northern Virginia jurisdictions face possible redevelopment, it is important that our planning and transportation staffs continue to work together to achieve a balance of planning, design and transportation that will ultimately enhance all aspects of redevelopment within or adjacent to our communities. While the proposed Master Plan amendments are subject to approval by the County, it is important for us to find intergovernmental solutions to help make decisions that are best for our region and jurisdictions. Two proposed Master Plan amendments, Plaza at Landmark and Plaza 500 in Fairfax County, are adjacent to significant on-going planning and transportation planning efforts within the City. We recently met with Fairfax County planning and transportation staff in February 2011 to discuss the County's APR nomination process on the aforementioned projects, how to strengthen jurisdictional coordination regarding these proposed future redevelopment sites, and identified ongoing or future projects that may potentially impact these areas for both jurisdictions. The County staff has been helpful and collaborative in assisting and discussing the referenced applications.

Specifically, we are writing to provide comments from the City of Alexandria Departments of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services staff, in accordance with the request from the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning for review and comments on two sites adjacent to the City's boundary. These two sites are the existing commercial retail center of Plaza at Landmark at the intersection of Little River Turnpike (Route 236) and Beauregard Street and the existing commercial site of Plaza 500, which is located on Edsall Road. This is an excellent opportunity to strengthen land use and transportation planning between our jurisdictions.

As Fairfax County evaluates these two major Master Plan amendments adjacent to the City, we have provided general observations and staff comments related to both proposed projects to better address land uses issues that have considerable impact on our jurisdictions. Attached to this letter, beginning on page 4, are summarized comments of staff review from the City's Department of Planning and Zoning and Department of Transportation and Environmental Services on the APR nomination reports for Plaza at Landmark (APR#09-I-1L) and Plaza 500 (APR#09-I-2L). We respectfully request that these staff comments and letter be reviewed and considered by Fairfax County for the APR nominations proposed for Plaza at Landmark and Plaza 500.

Plaza at Landmark:

The proposed Plaza at Landmark (APR#09-I-1L) is adjacent to the Beauregard Corridor, which is currently being analyzed as part of a Small Area Plan land use process, and transitway corridor planning process and is also in close proximity to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC-133) project in the City, which will have major impacts on land use and transportation in this area. In addition, the operation of the intersection of Beauregard Street and Little River Turnpike (Route 236) has transportation impacts for both the County of Fairfax and City of Fairfax. The current submission does not adequately address transportation or even propose adequate physical improvements given the planned and anticipated development surrounding the intersection. In addition, the proposal does not propose the provision of right-of-way and building setbacks to ensure that future road and transit improvements particularly dedicated transit lanes are not precluded. Due to on-going land use and transportation efforts and the importance of the intersection of Beauregard Street and Little River Turnpike for the City and the County, we recommend that the County consider evaluating all of the properties surrounding this important intersection to enable a more comprehensive land use and transportation solution for the properties adjacent to this important intersection before moving forward.

Plaza 500:

The proposed Plaza 500 (APR#09-I-2L) is adjacent to the area that will be considered as part of an upcoming City land use and transportation planning effort for the Eisenhower West area. The proposed residential uses are adjacent to existing commercial and industrial uses and active rail lines. Ensuring compatibility of land uses, transportation connections and emergency access are important issues of concern for the City. The site is in a location where future street connection(s) are envisioned to be consistent with City plans. Due to the upcoming Eisenhower West planning process, we request that the County consider the proposed Master Plan amendment concurrently with the upcoming planning process. In the event that the proposal does proceed ahead of the Eisenhower West planning process, we request that the proposal be designed and phased in a manner that would ensure it is a mixed-use development and that the parking, streets and open spaces, pedestrian-bike connections be designed in a manner that ensures it will be a more transit-oriented development. In addition, as discussed in the staff comments, we are requesting that open space for this project be connected to planned open space within the City and that the open space function as public open space.

Both properties are adjacent to numerous existing commercial owners and residents within the City. Therefore, we are requesting that you contact the property owners and residents regarding these potential Master Plan amendments and redevelopment opportunities for comments and note upcoming meetings scheduled to receive public input. Due in part to the scale of the proposals and potential impacts, it is essential that the adjoining residents, community members and organizations be made aware of these proposals. We encourage that transportation and land use planning be integrated in the early stages of the development in order that the resulting developments be smart-growth oriented and provide beneficial transportation improvements.

In closing, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on these two proposed projects and request your consideration for further discussion on inter-jurisdictional transportation and land use planning efforts that benefit our two jurisdictions. If there are any questions or comments, please contact Zunilda Rodriguez, A.I.C.P in the City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning by telephone at (703) 746-3855 or by email at zunilda.rodriguez@alexandriava.gov.

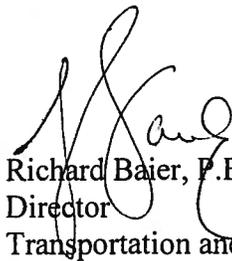
We look forward to continuing to work with Fairfax County and the community on proposed redevelopment adjacent to the City's boundary.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Faroll Hamer
Director
Planning and Zoning Department



Richard Baier, P.E., LEED AP
Director
Transportation and Environmental Services Department

**Attachment #1: City of Alexandria Staff Comments to Fairfax County:
Plaza at Landmark (APR#09-I-1L)
Plaza 500 (APR#09-I-2L)**

cc: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Bernard Suchictal, Planner II, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning
Jeffrey Farnar, Deputy Director – Development, P&Z
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director – Long Range and Strategic Planning, P&Z
Abi Lerner, Deputy Director - Transportation, T&ES
Steve Kaii-Ziegler, Division Chief – Neighborhood Planning, P&Z
Gwen Wright, Division Chief – Development, P&Z
Sandra Marks, Division Chief of Transportation, T&ES
Steve Sindiong, Principal Planner, T&ES
Zunilda Rodriguez, Urban Planner, P&Z
Pat Mann, Urban Planner, P&Z
Ravindra Raut, Civil Engineer IV, T&ES

ATTACHMENT # 1

City of Alexandria Staff Comments to Fairfax County

I. PLAZA AT LANDMARK (APR#09-I-1L):

Open Space:

1. Open space should be reviewed for this proposed project to ensure connectivity within the project area to the City and County. The City recommends that the project review take into consideration that open space proposed for this project not conflict and/or support policies outlined for this area in the City of Alexandria Open Space Master Plan. The City's adopted Open Space Master Plan can be found at <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/parks/OpenSpacePlan.pdf>
2. The Plaza at Landmark project should require landscape and screening walls for the proposed surface parking lot in the northeastern portion of the site.
3. It is recommended that the proposed central park (1.75 acres) be a public park or have a public access easement to enable the park to be fully accessible to the public. In addition, it would be beneficial to explore additional ground or roof-level open space within this project to accommodate the enjoyment by additional residents and establishing a minimum amount of ground level open space in addition to the roof-top open space

Streets:

4. The primary streets that are developed as part of the proposed Plaza at Landmark site should be dedicated as public streets. In doing this, stronger street connectivity could permit better transit connections and enable the streets to function more as a street grid pattern that benefits both jurisdictions.
5. A north-south and east-west street connection that is adjacent to the proposed central park in this project should be provided in order to improve local access and enable local traffic to avoid the Beauregard/Little River Turnpike intersection that experiences congestion.
6. Clearly depict and label how the proposed street North Breckenridge Place will align with the right-of-way near the cemetery location. The plan for this project should depict how the proposed street will connect and align to the existing east right-of-way.
7. Depict and provide a description of the requirements for the Beauregard/Lincolnia Chambliss/Little River Turnpike improvements for this intersection, given the planned development within Fairfax County and City of Alexandria near this area.

Pedestrian – Streetscape - Building:

8. We recommend that improvements be required for the I-395 overpass for pedestrian circulation between Landmark Plaza and Landmark Mall to permit better pedestrian mobility and accessibility to and from the site in this area.
9. In reviewing this APR nomination for the Plaza at Landmark Place, it should take into account the City of Alexandria Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan to ensure there are no conflicts and it strengthens specified goals or policies related to pedestrian and bicycle mobility by the City to the site in the County. A copy of the City of Alexandria Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility plan can be found in the City's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services webpage at (NOTE: large file size): http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/gettingaround/FINAL_FULLPLAN_060108.pdf
10. We recommend that existing signals be upgraded to permit pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Beauregard and Lincolnia Road. It is recommended that a sidewalk be provided on the south side of Lincolnia Road to accommodate pedestrians and circulation. In addition, a new urban scale sidewalk of approximately 20 ft. at the intersection of Beauregard Street and Little River Turnpike and frontages is recommended. The remaining streets should also have urban-scaled sidewalks that are approximately 15 to 20 feet wide to accommodate planned density and uses for the site.
11. The building heights on the perimeter of the site need to be stepped-down where appropriate to be compatible with adjacent residential uses. Require building setbacks on the perimeter of the site and right-of-way dedication to not preclude future need for widening and realignment, connection to future i.e. Transitway in Alexandria, and improved pedestrian circulation.
12. Require that all above grade parking structures be lined with active uses for each street and/or park frontage. Loading and service areas should be on roads within the site and not facing surrounding neighborhoods.

Transportation:

13. Clarify if the study takes into consideration potential developments and mitigation measures mentioned in the Landmark/Van Dorn Small Area plan. Link to the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor plan can be found at the City website at http://alexandriava.gov/Landmark_Van_Dorn. In addition, clarify if the study takes into consideration of the BRAC-133 development. Studies related to BRAC-133 development can be found at <http://alexandriava.gov/BRAC>
14. Duke Street in Alexandria is designated as a Transit Corridor on the City's Transportation Master Plan. It is recommended to consider providing additional right-of-way along Little River Turnpike for connecting to the enhanced transitway on Duke

Street in the future. The City's Transportation Master Plan can be found at <http://alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=3088#overview>

15. The report should include HCM LOS/delay analysis for the intersection of Duke Street and S. Walker Street. Congestion on VA 236 between Beauregard Street and S. Walker Street is a daily event due to its closeness to I-395. The trip distribution table 4-8 also indicates that 20% of the total trips will come from the east onto Little River Turnpike.
16. Even with proposed mitigation measures, intersection of Little River Turnpike and Beauregard Street operates at LOS F during peak hours. At times, the westbound Little River Turnpike traffic queues back to S. Walker Street. The study should include improvements to the Little River Turnpike intersection with Beauregard St and with Oasis Drive to address this issue.
17. Construct a new sidewalk on Beauregard Street along the site frontage. Our Bicycle/Pedestrian Mobility plan recommends this because it is in poor condition and/or is not ADA compliant. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Mobility Plan can be viewed here: http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/gettingaround/FINAL_FULLPLAN_060108.pdf
18. Upgrade existing signals to pedestrian countdown signals, if not already done so, at Beauregard Street and Lincolnia Road as specified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan here: http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/gettingaround/FINAL_FULLPLAN_060108.pdf
19. Specify bicycle parking to be provided long-term and short-term number of bicycle parking spaces. Here is the link to the City's standards: <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/BicycleParkingStandards2006.pdf>

II. PLAZA 500 (APR#09-I-2L):

Open Space:

1. Open space for this project should be publicly accessible or dedicated open space. In addition, open space proposed for the Plaza 500 site should be public and should connect to future open space areas as noted in the Alexandria Open Space Master Plan, including the Pachick Run Trail connection. Identify public or publicly accessible open space on the Backlick Run as part of connections to future open space for the site.
2. Identify public or publicly accessible open space on the Backlick Run as future open space. Open space should be publicly accessible or dedicated open space.
3. Explore continuous public street on west side along the proposed park to provide visual and physical access to the proposed open space - park.

Adjoining Use/ Neighborhoods:

4. The properties that adjoin the site on Picket Street in Alexandria are planned and zoned for industrial uses. Industrial uses that exist today and are anticipated to be maintained and continued as these land uses in the future (i.e. includes railroad, ethanol transfer/loading facility, truck traffic) and these should be noted in the plan nomination application.

Streets:

5. Define how fire access will be provided for the property given the limited access to the site.
6. We recommend that this project provide a sufficient right-of-way to not preclude a future street connection from Eisenhower over to Farrington Avenue, consistent with the City's current 2008 Transportation Plan which can be found here <http://alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=3088>
7. On page 61, the chart indicates the proposed mitigations will reduce the overall intersection delays by approximately 10 percent for 1.54 FAR compared to 1.65 FAR. However, for the intersections on S. Van Dorn Street these reductions are far less than 10 percent.
8. The proposed Plaza 500 site should be designed to not preclude sufficient right-of-way to ultimately connect Edsall Road to Farrington Avenue and Eisenhower Avenue by bridging Backlick Run and Norfolk Southern Railroad.
9. This project site should explore continuous public street access on the west side along the proposed park to provide greater visual and physical access to the proposed park that functions as open space.
10. It recommended that this proposed project ensure that the streets that connect to Edsall and Pickett are dedicated as public street(s) and that the connection to Edsall and Pickett Street as a public street(s) be shown on the plan.

Pedestrian - Streetscape - Building

11. All above grade parking structures should be required to align with active uses for each street and/or park frontage for the site.
12. Loading and service areas should be on roads within the site and not face the proposed parks – parkland.
13. Provide pedestrian –oriented sidewalks of approximately 14-ft. for street frontages.

Transportation:

14. On page 12, Edsall Road and S. Van Dorn Street are classified as Arterials on the City's road classification map. S. Pickett Street is classified as Primary Collector on the City's road classification map. The report should include road classification to match with City's Street System map. The roadway classification map can be found at <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/NTCP%20Guide.pdf>
15. The report should include a HCM LOS/delay analysis for signalized intersections at S. Van Dorn Street and Courtney Avenue, Edsall Road and S. Whiting Street, and Edsall Road and Yoakum Parkway. These intersections are within study limits but not analyzed on the report.
16. Clarify if the 2030 analysis takes into consideration the future developments proposed in the City and the mitigation measures outlined in Landmark/Van Dorn Small Area Plan. The Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor plan can be found on the City's website at: <http://alexandriava.gov/LandmarkVandorn>
17. S. Van Dorn Street is designated as a transit corridor on Alexandria Transportation Master Plan. Clarify if the signal timings and pedestrian intervals take into consideration additional roadway width due to high capacity transit proposed on S. Van Dorn Street for 2030 analysis. The City uses 3.5 ft/sec walking speed to calculate Flashing Don't Walk interval. The future roadway section of Van Dorn Street is shown in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor plan.
18. On page 61, the chart indicates the proposed mitigations will reduce the overall intersection delays by approximately 10 percent for 1.54 FAR compared to 1.65 FAR. However, for the intersections on S. Van Dorn Street these reductions are far less than 10 percent.
19. Overall delays on Van Dorn Street for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan with 1.54 FAR conditions with mitigations are much higher compared to existing conditions, which will adversely affect the operations on Van Dorn Street. The intersections of Edsall Road, S. Pickett Street and Eisenhower Avenue with S. Van Dorn Street operate at LOS F during at least one peak period and v/c ratio over one (1.0) on the section of Van Dorn Street between Edsall Road and Eisenhower Avenue during both peak periods. Mitigation measures are included despite the fact that results of operational analysis clearly show degradation in traffic operations to unacceptable levels at the intersections on Van Dorn Street.
20. The proposed developer shall consider providing a second left turn lane for the southbound Van Dorn Street approach to eastbound Eisenhower Avenue. This left turn

movement is required to facilitate movement to the Van Dorn Metro station from the developer's site. This movement is already very heavy and the duration of the signal indication for this approach cannot be lengthened because doing so will require reducing the amount of green light time given to other movements particularly northbound Van Dorn Street. The queue on Northbound Van Dorn Street created by this intersection already extends into Fairfax County all the way to Franconia Road in the morning.

21. On page 42-43 (5.2.1 – other non-auto improvements), consider replacing "investigate" with "contribute toward the expansion of".
22. On page 43 (5.2.2), consider replacing "review the design" with "install multimodal enhancements on South Pickett Street between the site and South Van Dorn Street in accordance with the City of Alexandria's Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan, which can be found on the City's website at:
http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/gettingaround/FINAL_FULLPLAN_060108.pdf.