

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

SPRC Meeting #1

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Erik Gutshall (Chair), Steve Cole

MEETING AGENDA

This was the first Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting to review proposed major site plan amendment SP #46, located at 4000 and 4040 Fairfax Drive. The applicant proposes a 22-story residential building on the site of the existing Carpool restaurant at 4000 Fairfax Drive.

The meeting was preceded by a tour of the site and the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development for the current site of the Carpool restaurant.

The staff presentation concentrated on adopted County planning guidance for the site. The applicant made a general introduction to the project.

The following was the agenda for the meeting:

- 1) Informational Presentation
 - a) Overview of Initial Approval and Requested Site Plan Amendments (Staff)
 - b) Presentation of Site Plan Proposal (Applicant)
- 2) Land Use & Zoning
 - a) Relationship of site to GLUP, sector plans, etc.
 - i) ~~Requested changes (if any)~~
 - ii) ~~Justification for requested changes (if any)~~
 - b) Relationship of project to existing zoning
 - i) ~~Special site designations (historic district, etc.)~~
 - ii) Requested bonus density, height, etc.
 - iii) Requested modification of use regulations (if any)
- 3) Site Design and Characteristics
 - a) Allocation of uses on the site
 - b) Relationship and orientation of proposed buildings to public space and other buildings
 - c) Streetscape Improvements
 - d) View vistas through site
 - e) Visibility of site or buildings from significant neighboring perspectives
 - f) ~~Historic status of any existing buildings on site~~
 - g) Compliance with adopted planning documents

SPRC DISCUSSION

Land Use and Zoning:

- Concern that moving the curb to provide the wide streetscape on Fairfax Drive asked for in the Sector Plan affect possible future cycle track on Fairfax Drive, and are 10 foot drive lanes enough?
 - Applicant responded that lanes on other side of Fairfax are 10.5 feet and 10' widths have been approved in some places.
- Will moving the curb affect the consistency of Fairfax Drive lane widths? If reducing the lane widths in order to increase the sidewalk size results in an inconsistent street configuration, it may be okay to sacrifice one or two feet of the otherwise required 24-foot sidewalk, which is the widest sidewalk width in the corridor. Generally, an applicant should design the required public space first, then make the building fit that rather than the way around.
- Does the County still support vent exclusions? What would be the implications for the applicant if they did not get the exclusion?
 - Staff responded that exclusions from density for vents are taken on a case-by-case basis, and only if the vents are channeled to the roof rather than building walls; intent is to encourage commercial and residential venting to roof. If the applicant did not get the exclusion, the applicant would be short around 2,500 square feet of density which would have to be made up through bonus density.
- Requested staff to find other requests for height variances in the "C-O-A" Zoning District.
 - Staff will research and bring results to next meeting.
- Is the extra height justified by Community Benefits applicant is providing?
 - The applicant is proposing a total height of 229 feet to the top of the parapet walls screening the mechanical equipment. The height limit in the C-O-A district is 216 feet (which includes all mechanical penthouses or parapet walls). Applicant is proposing LEED Gold bonus density, and the C-O-A ordinance permits up to 30 feet of additional height in the C-O-A district. The applicant is providing all standard site plan benefits, including public art (or a contribution), underground utilities, streetscape per the sector plan (or improved streetscape around the existing buildings), and a public plaza.

Site Design and Characteristics:

- How is any potential Webb Building redevelopment affected by this proposal? Does the applicant have a concept for redeveloping the Webb Building?
 - Applicant explained that the nature of the "C-O-A" district is that by combining the two lots, more density is permitted than if the lots were developed separately. By combining the lots, up to 6.0 (6.5 if all residential) Applicant had a brief presentation on redevelopment concept for a residential building of the same general size and height. The concept incorporated density allowed by the zoning district as well as typical bonuses (LEED, affordable housing, etc.) The internal driveway/alley that the applicant is proposing with this development would still need to exist as parking and loading for both sites would be in the (already existing) private alley between the two buildings, and the existing curb cut into Fairfax Drive would remain even after redevelopment. Applicant would propose no new curb cuts when redeveloping the Webb Building site. There would be

cross-access easements between the two properties. Applicant realizes that elimination of curb cuts on Fairfax Drive is the goal, but there is no viable alternative to keeping the existing curb cut open.

- Comment that increased vehicular activity resulting from the construction of new buildings at the exit onto Fairfax Drive would negatively impact pedestrians. Design should allow for safe viewing distances for both vehicle and pedestrian to avoid incidents.
- Question if staff is satisfied with the streetscape.
 - Staff worked with the applicant from the time of submittal to revise the streetscape to be compliant with the special standards for Ballston where it abuts the proposed new building. Staff continues to work with the applicant for ways to improve the streetscape abutting the Webb Building, realizing that the placement of the Webb Building's parking garage slightly above grade limits compliance with the recommended sidewalk widths.
- Suggestion that with a larger radius on North Randolph Street some additional sidewalk width could be gained.
- The diagonal architectural effect by varying the balcony/building widths at the corner of North Quincy and Fairfax Drive may be too subtle and may not have the effect anticipated.
 - Applicant pointed out to the SPRC the diagonal effect in the building façade at the corner of Quincy and Fairfax Drive on the façade renderings and stated that it may be difficult to see in a two-dimensional rendering, but would be more noticeable in reality.
- Question if the applicant could study if a wind tunnel effect would be created by the new building (as currently seems to exist between Pollard and Oakland Streets).
 - Applicant stated that they would get back to them.