Prince George's County Planning Department
Community Planning Division

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December 27, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Quynn Nguyen, Subdivision Section, Development Review Division

VIA: Cynthia Fenton, Acting Planning Supervisor, Community Planning Division

FROM: Chad Williams, LEED AP BD+C, Planner Coordinator, Community Planning Division

SUBJECT: **4-12004 Cafritz Property**

DETERMINATIONS

- This application is consistent with the 2002 General Plan Development Pattern policies for the Developed Tier and does not violate the General Plan's growth goals for the year 2025, based upon review of Prince George's County's current General Plan Growth Policy Update.

- This application does not conform to the land use recommendations of the 1994 *Approved Master Plan and Sectio*n*al Map Amendment for Planning Area 68,* which calls for infill single-family detached residential development and the consideration of rezoning to a residential Comprehensive Design Zone with densities comparable to the R-55 Zone.

- This application conforms to the mixed-use land use recommendations of the 2012 Riverdale Park M-U-TC Development Plan (as amended during the approval of A-10018, Cafritz Property) and the purposes of the M-U-TC (Mixed-Use Town Center) Zone. The mix of uses requested by the application are permitted by the zone.

- Several revisions to the proposed application are recommended to better ensure a more logical and functional site circulation pattern and open space network, including the relocation of the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail to the historic alignment in keeping with the amended development plan and the approved site plan concepts associated with A-10018.

- Key pieces of information have yet to be submitted, including a letter from the American Center for Physics regarding the proposed bridge crossing (per Condition 25 of A-10018) and agreements/settlement on the ownership and maintenance of proposed rights-of-way within the property.

- The northeast portion of this application is located under the traffic pattern for a small general aviation airport (College Park Airport) and is subject to Aviation Policy Area regulations in Sections 27-548.32 through 27-548.48 of the Zoning Ordinance. In particular, the applicant should be made aware of height and purchaser notification requirements contained in these regulations.

BACKGROUND

Location: 1,500 feet north of the intersection of US 1 and East-West Highway on the east side of US 1.

Size: 37.35 Acres

Existing Uses: Vacant, wooded land

Proposal: The applicant proposes a new subdivision incorporating a mix of commercial, residential, hotel, and office uses resulting in between 1,277,000 to 1,915,000 square feet of total development.

GENERAL PLAN, MASTER PLAN AND SMA

2002 General Plan: This subject application is located in the Developed Tier. The vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable transit supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods.

The 2002 General Plan designated the Riverdale MARC station in the southern portion of the M-U-TC development plan area as a possible future community center. The vision for centers is mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development.

The subject property is also located along the Baltimore Avenue Corridor as designated by the 2002 General Plan. The vision for Corridors is "mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development." (See policy 1, 2002 General Plan, p. 50). This development should occur at local centers and other appropriate nodes within one-quarter mile of major intersections or transit stops along the corridor.

Master Plan: 1994 *Approved Master Plan and Sectio*nal *Map Amendment for Planning Area 68*

Planning Area/ Community: Planning Area 68/Riverdale Park

Land Use: The Planning Area 68 Master Plan recommends single-family detached dwellings with consideration for a residential Comprehensive Design Zone for the subject property (see page 16). The Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan (as amended) envisions a mix of uses (commercial/office, hotel, and residential) on the subject property.

Environmental: Refer to the Environmental Planning Section referral for comments on the environmental infrastructure guidance contained in the *Approved Master Plan and Sectio*nal *Map Amendment for Planning Area 68* and the 2005 *Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan*.

Historic Resources: Adjacent to the subject property are the Riverdale Park (#68-004), University Park (#66-029), and Calvert Hills (#66-037) National Register historic districts to the south, west, and north respectively. The Engineering Research Corporation (ERCO) building to the east of the subject property is identified as a Prince George's County Historic Site (68-022). The subject property contains several historic structures of interest. Refer to the Historic Preservation Section referral for additional details.

Transportation: The property fronts onto US 1 which is identified in the 2009 *Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation* as a four-lane collector road (C-209) with an 80-110 foot right-of-way between the Washington, D.C. line and Guilford Drive.

Public Facilities: The Planning Area 68 Master Plan identifies the subject property as a possible location for a proposed park/school. The subject property adjoins a National Guard armory and a USPS postal facility, both identified as "public/quasi-public" uses in the master plan.

Parks & Trails: The Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail extends through the site from north to south. The Planning Area 68 Master Plan identifies the subject property as a possible location for a proposed park/school. US 1 is planned for bike lanes and a sidepath.

SMA/Zoning: The 1994 *Approved Master Plan and Sectio*n*al Map Amendment for Planning Area 68* SMA retained the R-55 zoning but recommended that future consideration should be given to rezoning the Cafritz property to a residential Comprehensive Design Zone.

The District Council approval of A-10018 on July 12, 2012 rezoned the property to the M-U-TC Zone and approved the amended Riverdale Park Town Center M-U-TC Development Plan.

PLANNING ISSUES

On July 12, 2012 the County Council sitting as the District Council of Prince George's County approved zoning ordinance No. 11-2012 to amend the 2004 *Approved Town of Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan* boundary to include the Cafritz Property subject to various conditions. The revised Cafritz Property Design Standards and Guidelines (Summer 2012) per the conditions of approval put forth in zoning ordinance No. 11-2012 have been certified by the Planning Department and have been used to review this application.

The application is a request to subdivide the Cafritz Property to create a Mixed-Use Town Center (M-U-TC) development consistent with the Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center Development Plan (as amended).

Plan Conformance

The application is consistent with the development pattern policies of the 2002 Prince George's County Approved General Plan for corridors in the Developed Tier. The proposed mix of uses will fulfill several goals for the Developed Tier by encouraging more intense, high-quality housing and economic development in corridors, maintaining or renovating existing public infrastructure, and promoting transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.

The application does not conform to the land use recommendations of the 1994 *Approved Master Plan and Sectio*nal *Map Amendment for Planning Area 68.* The master plan provides the following specific recommendations for this property (see page 16):

> "The following comments relate specifically to the Cafritz property: While zoned R-55, the property should be considered for a residential Comprehensive Design Zone, provided that the proposed development is compatible with surrounding residential communities and continues existing design and development patterns. Specifically, design of the development should incorporate a street pattern similar to that of the surrounding community, which has right-angle blocks and alleys. Brick should also be used on all units as the primary construction material. Special attention should be given to the development's frontage along US 1 to preserve the existing wooded image. A tree-save area should be provided and the units directly behind the tree-save area should front US 1."

As a mixed-use development with over 250,000 square feet of non-residential space, 855 multifamily dwelling units, and 126 single-family attached dwelling units proposed, this application does not conform to land use recommendations for single-family detached residential development. However, the District Council's approval of A-10018 on July 12, 2012 rezoned the Cafritz Property to the M-U-TC Zone and made it subject to the Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan (as amended). The proposed application does conform to the development plan and the proposed mix of uses is consistent with the goals, vision, and intent of the M-U-TC Zone and amended development plan.

Cafritz Property Design Standards and Guidelines

The 2012 Cafritz Property Design Standards and Guidelines amend the approved 2004 *Approved Town of Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan.* It should be noted that the certified Cafritz Property Design Standards and Guidelines only apply to the 37-acre Cafritz development and not to the remainder of the Riverdale Park M-U-TC Zone properties. The following comments address the specific proposals of the preliminary plan of subdivision in light of the guidance provided by the amended development plan.

Staff notes many of the specific standards and guidelines of the amended development plan will be reviewed at the time of detailed site plan. The certified site plans and streetscape sections approved with A-10018 and Concept Plan B (Map 1) and appropriate (at the subdivision level of review) site standards identified in the Cafritz Property Design Standards and Guidelines document form the basis of review for the following comments.

Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail

The most significant lot pattern issue pertains to the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail. The amended development plan, specifically the site plan concept drawings certified as part of A-10018, reflects the intent and desire of the county and the applicant to use the historic alignment of Rhode Island Avenue for the location of the trolley trail through the subject property. The submitted preliminary plan of subdivision shifts the trail alignment to the east, placing it on the west side of 48th Street adjacent to a number of proposed townhome lots. This design solution is not appropriate to or respective of the historic context of the site and the former trolley line alignment, and does not conform to the certified site plan concepts.

Staff notes the relocated trail is generally consistent with Map 1: Concept Plan B in the Cafritz Property Standards and Guidelines document. However, users of the trolley trail will be very likely to bypass this unnecessary diversion of the trail in favor of the straight-line approach, which as designed would be along the rear alley of the townhome lots fronting 48th Street.

The applicant should be strongly encouraged to relocate the trolley trail along the historic alignment of Rhode Island Avenue and shift the townhome lots along 48th Street further east to accommodate the trail. Consideration should also be given to incorporation of amenities and natural features to foster a small linear park along the historic trolley alignment.

There are no indications at this time as to who will be responsible for the construction of the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail north of the proposed townhome lots along Woodbury Street crossing the WMATA property into the Calvert Hills neighborhood. The applicant should construct this crucial trail connection and dedicate this portion of the trail to either M-NCPPC or the City of College Park.

Additional Proposed Street and Lot Pattern Comments
The proposed subdivision would establish a large right-of-way (ROW) for the extension of Van Buren Street (intended to be the primary street within the site). The amended development plan identifies two plazas or open space features in the western half of the site within the center of Van Buren Street. These plazas should be individually platted and consideration given to dedication to the Town of Riverdale Park to ensure these public amenities are constructed and under public ownership and maintenance.

The applicant should clarify the proposed transit circulation pattern within the proposed development and provide appropriate assurances that curb radii, lane widths, and other features along the transit route(s) are adequate for modern WMATA and county buses.

The applicant should give consideration to potential realignment and reconfiguration of the southeastern portion of the subject site to more logically accommodate connectivity between relocated Rhode Island Avenue and Maryland Avenue. Staff notes that a number of proposed townhome lots in this portion of the subject property are within unacceptable noise contour areas and suggests that some of these lots may be appropriate to remove in favor of a better roadway circulation pattern.

The applicant should clearly identify and provide for future connectivity to the USPS site and the National Guard Armory in case either or both of these sites redevelop in the future. It appears Parcel K in the south-eastern portion of the subject site is intended to facilitate this connection in the future but multiple connections should be considered, including the possibility for a connection through proposed Lot 3.

Street Design, Ownership, and Maintenance
Staff notes most of the proposed streetscape designs tend to reduce the amount of roadway driving lane paving in favor of slightly wider parallel parking, landscape/tree planting, and sidewalk areas. These proposed changes generally correspond to the concepts and requirements of the amended development plan, which call for "a pedestrian-oriented town center with an infrastructure of wide, continuous sidewalks, alley shortcuts, safe street crossings, and rear access parking. A landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip would buffer pedestrians on the sidewalk from traffic." (See page ii of the Cafritz Property Design Standards Guidelines document).

At present all proposed streets are identified as private roads. This remains a key issue that must be resolved prior to action on the proposed application. The ownership and maintenance of the proposed streets is an issue critical to the future success of the development, and by ensuring public ownership of key streets and open spaces in accordance with the desires of the Town of Riverdale Park

numerous potential issues pertaining to ongoing maintenance and public access will be resolved. The Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Review Committee has discussed the ownership issue with the applicant in detail but resolution of this issue has not occurred at the time of this referral.

The applicant should provide additional details on the design and location of the proposed CSX bridge crossing. At present the location where the slope of the bridge (necessary to achieve the required height to clear the tracks) and the retaining walls begin on the Cafritz Property remains a question, impacting potential access to several townhouse lots in the northeastern corner of the site and proposed Lot 8.

Other Open Space Comments
The applicant should clearly identify the proposed public plazas, squares, civic greens, and open spaces within the subject property along with all public open space and recreation amenities that are proposed to meet the needs of future residents, shoppers, and visitors.

Additional detail should be provided regarding the sidewalk and trail network within and flanking the linear park proposed along US 1. This information is necessary to determine any public use easements or dedications that may be appropriate to ensure public access along this major county roadway.

Tree Conservation Plan Comments

The applicant has made an effort to preserve more specimen trees than originally proposed, along with what have been presented as “small groves” of trees at several locations within the subject property. In response to continued concerns expressed by the Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Review Committee, the applicant continues to explore the feasibility of protecting additional specimen trees, and has worked with staff to increase the amount of tree and woodland preservation from the initial submittal.

The submitted tree conservation plan drawings suggest the phased approach to stormwater management desired by the applicant. This reviewer has not seen any stormwater management concept plans impacting the proposed development but does have concern with the transition of the southern-most surface stormwater management pond into an underground retention and filtration cell as proposed Lot 9 is developed into a multifamily residential building. Additional detail and assurances that the stormwater management of the site will not be negatively impacted by this transition may be appropriate.

Additionally, bioretention, infiltration, green roofs, and other environmental site design techniques should be used extensively throughout the proposed development to better manage stormwater and provide for a more comprehensive approach to sustainability and the natural environment.

Missing Information

At the time this referral was prepared, the applicant had yet to submit several important pieces of information. These include the letters mandated by Condition of Approval 25 for A-10018 Cafritz Property regarding the proposed CSX bridge crossing and information regarding the ownership and maintenance agreements of select streets and open spaces within the proposed development. This information should be submitted as soon as possible for staff evaluation prior to the Planning Board hearing on this application.

Variation and Variance Requests

The applicant has provided a request for both a variation and a variance. The variation pertains to the residential lot depth requirement of Section 24-121(a)(4) of the Subdivision Ordinance for properties adjacent to an existing or planned transit right-of-way, in this case the CSX/MARC rail line on the eastern side of the subject property. The variance request pertains to Section 25-122(b)(1)(G) for the removal of 24 out of 35 existing specimen trees. Staff defers comment on these requests to the Subdivision and Environmental Planning Sections. There are no master plan or general plan issues with either request.

LEED® Certification

This reviewer understands the applicant has provided evidence of an application submitted to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for a Smart Location and Linkage prerequisite review under the provisions and requirements of the LEED-ND (LEED® for Neighborhood Development) rating system. Staff expects to see additional movement toward certification under the Silver or higher level under the LEED-NC (New Construction) and LEED Homes building rating systems at the time of detailed site plan submittal.

Aviation Policy Area

The northeastern portion of this application is located under the traffic pattern for a small general aviation airport (College Park Airport). This area is subject to Aviation Policy Area regulations adopted by CB-51-2002 (DR-2) as Sections 27-548.32 through 27-548.48 of the Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, the subject property is located in Aviation Policy Area (APA) 6. The APA regulations contain additional height requirements in Section 27-548.42 and purchaser notification requirements for property sales in Section 27-548.43 that are relevant to evaluation of this application. No building permit may be approved for a structure higher than 50 feet in APA-6 unless the applicant demonstrates compliance with FAR Part 77.

The application should also be referred to the Maryland Aviation Administration for information and comment:

Ashish J. Solanki, Director
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Maryland Aviation Administration
PO Box 8766
BWI Airport, MD 21240-0766

c: Ivy A. Lewis, AICP, Division Chief, Community Planning Division
Long-Range Agenda Notebook