Town of Riverdale Park

5008 Queensbury Road
Riverdale Park, Maryland 20737

November 7, 2011

Richard K. Reed, Esquire
Rifkin, Livingston, Levitan,& Silver, LLC
6305 Ivy Lane, Suite 500
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Dear Mr. Reed:

The Town of Riverdale Park appreciates the spirit of cooperation that the Cafritz team has displayed when working with the municipalities of Riverdale Park, University Park, and College Park. Additionally, we recognize that the Cafritz team has made adjustments to the project at our request and the request of others, and have generally supported several of our goals and desires for the site, including:

- Changing the request for zoning from MUI to MUTC. We fully support your intention of creating a vibrant Mixed-Use Town Center community on the Cafritz site and encourage you to both increase the variety of residential unit types in order to promote a more diverse community, and provide a greater mix of uses throughout the site which would include more residential in the western half of the site, and possibly live/work or smaller retail pushing further east into the site. We would also like to see a more balanced mix of uses in each phase of the development.
- In creating a vibrant community, we support the creation of multiple connections to and through the Cafritz site to existing streets, pathways, bike routes and transit, especially at Maryland Avenue and over the CSX tracks. We also encourage you to design the site plan in a way that supports these connections now, and allows future connections to be realized in the advent of possible future developments on the WMATA site, the Post Office Site, and between Rhode Island Avenue (hiker/biker trail) and Maryland Avenue towards the Riverdale Park Town Center Plaza.
- We also believe that additional vehicular access and adjacent traffic management should be thoroughly studied and planned, including Maryland Avenue and a bridge across the CSX tracks to connect to River Road, presumably south of the AIP complex, and preferably to the north of the historic ERCO building so as to avoid the loss of that historic facade. Direct access to Tuckerman, Somerset, and Sheridan should not be considered.
- We also support your desire to create structured parking throughout the site and also support University Park's request for 80% of all parking to be located in

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structures. We also understand that some blocks may be required to be modified and to be designed slightly larger in order to fit viable above grade parking structures within the blocks, framed by residential or office use liners. In support of this effort we suggest moving the Whole Foods building forward toward Route 1 with only "teaser parking" (maximum of 50 surface spaces) with the remainder being in structured facilities. We would like a 2 story façade facing Rt. 1 with significant architectural detailing and would be amenable with M-U-TC compliant above-grade parking design at this site.

- We applaud your stated desire to use state of the art green, sustainable and low impact stormwater systems and methods throughout the Cafritz development and encourage you to preserve the goal of containing the quantity of stormwater on site that is realized today, yet dramatically improving the quality of that water before it enters the Anacostia waterway system.
- The project should aim to offset a minimum of 2,426,970 kWh annually, which equals the average annual electricity consumption of 190 single-family homes. Acceptable examples of renewable energy resources include solar, geothermal, wind, etc.
- Additionally, in your desire to create a sustainable, active extension of the Riverdale Park town center on the site, we encourage you to pursue the highest level possible within the LEED Certification Standards for New Construction, Homes, and Neighborhood Design.
- We envision the buildings in the development to be a mix of LEED gold and LEED silver buildings.

In addition, we request:

- The traffic plan, study, and planning must include definition and evaluation of the impacts to Queensbury/Maryland/Rhode Island/Lafayette/Natoli Place intersections as well as River Road.
- A commitment to construction of the Rhode Island Avenue hiker/biker trail to be completed by the end of Phase I of the project. All efforts should be made to keep the trail open to the public during construction.
- Space for the Riverdale Park Farmers' Market for a minimum of 10 years
- Reimbursement to the Town for professional services directly related to the zoning of the project
- A commitment to plan for and include additional green open space in the project
- Additional space for Town offices
- A commitment to construction of a residential component during Phase I. We strongly feel that focusing on a commercial build-out alone during the first phase is antithetical to smart-growth principles and expect to see a residential component in the Phase I. The senior-living building fits with this vision by providing a residential

sector that is currently not in the area while not causing undue strain upon existing public services such as schools.

- We would like the Cafritz team to consider renaming the main boulevard to be called something other than Van Buren. Our neighboring municipality is rightfully concerned with cut-through traffic. Providing the street the same name will encourage such west-to-east cut through traffic with motorists unfamiliar with the area. If this is acceptable to both the Cafritz team as well as our surrounding municipalities we would suggest changing it to McMillan Avenue paying homage to the town's first mayor or another figure that has historical relevance to Riverdale Park.

The issues that we believe have not been addressed and remain of utmost concern to us are the front parking lots along US 1 and Van Buren Street and the orientation/location of the Whole Foods Market. Our concerns for this portion of the site are:

- The current design locates a significantly sized parking lot at the front door to our community and promotes the image of a suburban, auto dominated, non-pedestrian friendly environment from US 1 and Van Buren Street.
- Although the developer states that a buffer to US 1 will be the primary gateway to this community, we believe that although this green space might be a nice amenity to US 1, a buffer does not constitute a gateway, and likewise the depth of the buffer will not hide or diminish the view and impact of the parking lot.
- As the primary entry street into the new development, Van Buren Street must present a character and design that frames an active and meaningful public realm. Pedestrians entering off of US 1 should have shops and activities along their path framing the street. The current design of parking lots framing Van Buren is antithetical to this goal.
- In order to promote greater public safety (and the perception of greater safety) along all the streets and park spaces in this plan, it is of the utmost importance that activities and "eyes on the street" situations are created in all cases. With traffic moving at higher speeds along US 1, and a parking lot with parked cars framing and impeding direct views into the sculpture park, rather than having active uses and/or direct views out of buildings with uses in them facing the park, it is likely the sculpture park will not have the urban design characteristics that promote safety through urban design.
- Finally, we understand that all great retail must have great exposure and "teaser" parking that is within view of the entrance to the retail and draws in users. We want the Whole Foods to be immensely successful and embrace these design ideas. However, we think that these ideas can be incorporated in a way that also promotes a gateway to the community along Van Buren and US 1, frames these important streets and spaces with active uses, allows some teaser surface parking along Van Buren, and then accommodates a substantial amount of the Whole Foods

parking in structured parking either behind, above, or below the Whole Foods Market as seen in numerous examples of Whole Foods buildings across our region.

Again, the ongoing cooperation of the Cafritz team to our goals and desires for this site has been greatly appreciated. Although certain issues remain, notably the US 1 facing parking lots, we look forward to discussing these concerns with you in order to move forward.

Sincerely,

Vernon Archer

Vernon Archer
Mayor