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City of Fairfax City Council Meeting, Tuesday, February 25, 2025

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Place City Hall, City of Fairfax, Virginia
Length 5h 48m (video)

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[00:00:16] Good evening. I would like to call the regular meeting of February 25th, 2025 to order. It's good to see such a packed chamber here today, such interest in what's going on here in the city. Always makes my heart sing. I would like to ask, we are going to have a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, but I would like to make a statement about our moment of silence today.

[00:00:41] this is the first meeting we have had since the collision of the helicopter and the airplane on January 29th that took the lives of 67 people. Many of them were skaters here in northern Virginia who practiced at the Fairfax Ice Arena, which has been in our city for over 50 years.

[00:01:02] They were students who went to our public schools. Many lost both their parents. Some lost a parent. Families have been devastated. And the other members who lost their lives and the members on the helicopter. So I'd like to ask when we have our moment of silence that we think about these families in their grief, which is really extraordinary and unimaginable, and the impact that these losses have had on the skating world, on our country, on our region, and on our city.

[00:01:31] So if you are able and so choose, please rise for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it

stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:02:07] I'm now going to ask the Fairfax City Restaurant Week committee to come down for the Restaurant Week proclamation.

[00:02:26] Made it short. Very nice. I apologize to anybody tall who has to use this microphone later. All right. Come on. So Winter Restaurant Week, I think, is this our eighth one? Is this our eighth Restaurant Week?

[00:02:46] This is one of the highlights in the city. We do these in the winter and in the summer. And it really is a fun event for our residents, for our visitors, and it certainly is a great way to show off our restaurants, of which we have so many wonderful ones here in the city. Whereas, dining is an important part of our daily lives, an essential part of gatherings, celebrations, family time, and fellowship, creating special places in our community that become part of the fabric of our city, the establishments where memories get made, conversations are shared, and the staff often get to know us by name.

[00:03:21] Whereas restaurants are key destinations for visitors, showcasing the rich diversity of our community through the personal journeys of owners who share dishes from their home countries, family traditions, and homegrown multi-generational local favorites. And whereas Fairfax City, Virginia has solidified its place as a regional dining destination located at the very epicenter of Northern Virginia with a global diversity of food and innovative and exciting approaches to the dining experience.

[00:03:50] And whereas a collaboration between Fairfax City Economic Development, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, and the Old Town Fairfax Business Association has developed a robust program to promote Fairfax City Restaurant Week is a highly anticipated biannual event featuring new restaurants and many established dining destinations.

[00:04:10] Whereas the businesses participating in Fairfax City Restaurant Week play an essential role in supporting the city's financial health by collecting and contributing to the city's meals tax revenue, which provides funding for critical public services and investments that benefit all residents and visitors.

[00:04:29] And whereas the 2025 Winter Fairfax City Restaurant Week features 33 of the finest restaurants throughout the city, all offering set price lunches, dinners, or two for \$10 options, along with programming to entice our residents, visitors, George Mason University, and Northern Virginia Community College students, and the business community to try something new and to bring along friends and family.

[00:04:54] Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, do hereby proclaim February 24th through March 2nd, 2025, is Winter Fairfax City Restaurant Week. And call upon everyone to visit fairfaxcityrestaurantweek.com to learn about this exciting economic development initiative that supports our small and independent restaurant community.

[00:05:17] and to visit our partner restaurants during Restaurant Week and beyond to show that support for our culinary community while finding a new favorite meal in Fairfax City along the way. We've done this 25th day of February.

[00:05:32] Thank you all so much. And who would like to speak to this? Tara Borway, come on down. Oh, well, thank you. You know, some people look forward to the holidays. I look forward to our Restaurant Weeks. They're so exciting.

[00:05:48] And not only do we get to dine out at our favorite places, try something new with friends and family, but we get to show our support for the restaurant community that really helps to make Fairfax City a great place to visit, to dine, to stay a while, and make memories with friends and family.

[00:06:07] I would invite everybody here to dine out this week and maybe next week. There might be an extension. Dine out. Look up our restaurants that are listed along with our menus on FairfaxCityRestaurantWeek.com.

[00:06:25] Plan your trip. Go out multiple times. Post on social media. Use the hashtag [FairfaxCityEats](https://www.instagram.com/fairfaxcityeats). Find our Instagram if you want even more information. We're sharing videos and content all the time. We appreciate the city's support, and we really appreciate the community coming together for these events year after year.

[00:06:46] All right. I think it calls for a picture.

[00:06:55] Right. I'm now looking for Anna Safford, our urban forester, and Sophia Chapin, our stewardship coordinator, Stephanie Kupka, our environmental sustainability coordinator, and the city's environmental sustainability committee.

[00:07:37] Okay, so I really wanted to give this proclamation dressed as a huge, overwhelming pile of ivy, but I couldn't really pull that off and still legitimately run a city council meeting. So I want you to imagine that this green suit is like an epic pile of ivy, which we have all over the city killing our trees.

[00:07:56] So zombie apocalypse there, but let me get on with the proclamation. Whereas the forests, streams, native plants, and wildlife of the city of Fairfax are enjoyed for recreation, cultural heritage, scenic beauty, human well-being, and economic values.

[00:08:13] And whereas when non-native harmful species, known as invasive species, are introduced to public and private lands and watersheds. They alter the balance of healthy ecosystems by disrupting food webs, displacing and preying upon desirable indigenous species, reducing biodiversity, and changing nutrient and water cycles.

[00:08:36] And whereas invasive species are most often spread through the movement of people, vehicles, equipment, and goods, and are becoming increasingly more difficult to prevent and control as a result of global commercialization and human influence. And whereas the spread of invasive species can be prevented by becoming more informed about plant species, including asking more questions at plant nurseries and of landscapers about the plants they recommend, it's having the courage to initiate uncomfortable conversations with your neighbors about what you see in their yards that threaten the health of their trees and other plants.

[00:09:16] It means participating in removal efforts, conserving native plant populations and habitats, and choosing non-invasive plants when gardening and landscaping your own yard or business property. Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, mayor of the city of Fairfax, do hereby proclaim the week of February 24 to 28, 2025 is Invasive Species Awareness Week in the city of Fairfax and encourage all residents and visitors to become well-informed plant detectives and join in our community-wide endeavor to prevent, detect, and manage invasive species in our cities.

[00:09:55] I really want you to take this seriously. All right, who's going to speak? Sophia, come on down. Hi, everyone. My name is Sophia Chapin. I'm the city stewardship coordinator for urban forestry. I'm here

as part of Invasive Species Awareness Week to talk about our forest rescues program, which is a new initiative we started in February.

[00:10:16] It's a collaboration between the city and volunteers and residents to tackle invasive plants in our parks and woodlands. We've already had two work days this month with 23 volunteers contributing 62 hours. We've removed over 200 plants on 0.81 acres of our parklands.

[00:10:33] We have two trainings coming up, one this Thursday on February 27th, 6.30 p.m. at Catherine Johnson Middle School, and one on Monday, March 10th, to address invasive species by training up volunteers to become a higher level of volunteer called a forest rescuer that can work independently in parks, working on a site management plan in collaboration with the city to remove invasives on a park or trail that's close to them or that they'd like to adopt.

[00:11:02] And so all of those events, both the workdays, if you'd like to just come on a weekend or weekday and volunteer, and the trainings can be found at fairfaxva.gov slash trees, and we'll have more dates coming soon in April and May if you'd like to get involved. I'm just going to encourage you to do this.

[00:11:22] If you don't think we have a problem in this city, the next time you're sitting at a traffic light, instead of just, like, looking at the road, look up at the tree canopy. Because there are things that used to be trees that have no branches and are covered with ivy from bottom to top.

[00:11:38] And they're not only ugly, but they are spreading ivy to other trees. And I think we have stopped seeing how pervasive this is. So when you're out and about, when you're walking through your neighborhood, look up.

[00:11:54] And notice what the tree canopy looks like, because a lot of it is absolutely being choked to death by ivy. So with that, we're going to have a happy photo now.

[00:12:29] Right then.

[00:12:48] So we are going to recognize Brian Foster, our city manager. He is going to present a proposed FY26 budget presentation, ably assisted by J.C. Martinez, our CFO. And this is how it works.

[00:13:05] So the manager's presentation generally is without comments or questions tonight because there will be multiple opportunities in many meetings and work sessions from now until May for people to ask questions about the budget. This is just the manager's opportunity to lay it out for us.

[00:13:25] Think of it as like Hamlet's soliloquy if you want to. But basically this is his big moment to tell you what it is and what it looks like and what it does. and we want you to absorb that think about it cogitate upon it and then in future meetings you can come back and you can ask questions and make public comments about it okay so without any further ado i turn this over to mr brian foster thank you mayor good evening uh mayor members of council and to the public here in the audience uh again uh for those of you who haven't met me

[00:13:59] brian foster i'm the city manager here for the city of fairfax and uh i just started on the 27th of January, so I'm not sure it's quite been a month yet, but here we are, time to present the proposed budget for fiscal year 2026, so JC is going to be helping me advance the slides, and we'll just go ahead and jump right into it.

[00:14:23] So first, I wanted to start off with some background, I think, to help put things into context, which I think will help as we get further into the presentation with the specifics, and that is when we're

talking about a budget, what are we talking about? Of course, it's a plan, it's a plan of financial operation, but more importantly, it's what I would tell you, it's a plan of action that illustrates the specific values of the community and how it tends to deploy its limited resources.

[00:14:51] So that's really the context of the budget. It's not an obligation to spend funds, but it does provide the framework of how we intend to spend our funds for the coming year. So with that, our budget is based on a lot of different things, but first off, we look towards our strategic plan.

[00:15:10] This was adopted back in September of 23, so I know it predates some of you that are currently serving on council. But this is our foundational plan that focuses on our short and medium-term priorities. The city is a continual operation, and while we do have an election every two years, planning and executing both day-to-day services and capital projects aren't done in two-year increments.

[00:15:38] We've got to budget on it. While we do budget on an annual basis, planning, projections, all of those things are a multi-year effort that's always ongoing. So as we look at the outcomes, the strategic plan talks about five different things, economic development, environmental sustainability, and stewardship, community, transportation, and governance.

[00:16:02] So those were the things we looked at as we were putting the budget together. Back in November of last year, the city council provided budget guidance to the staff for putting together the budget.

[00:16:17] So I just wanted to highlight a couple of things on the slide here. some obvious things, revenues must equal or exceed expenditures. We should only use significant one-time revenues for one-time expenditures. We want user charges and fees to support the full cost. We want our utility funds that are self-supporting to be self-supporting, not rely on general fund contributions, et cetera. My understanding is that for several years the city has used unassigned fund balance to cover ongoing operational expenses which is not

[00:16:56] a sound budgetary practice since fiscal 17 the amounts have ranged from 600 000 to 5.7 million depending on the year and including in this current year's budget there's a 785 000 in in the current budget that uses unassigned fund balance to in order to balance the budget This budget proposal that you will get this evening does not use any unassigned fund balance in order to balance it.

[00:17:22] The guidance continuing that when we look on the expense side, we want to make sure that we weigh our competing requests for resources on our fiscal constraints. And so one of the things was if we have any new initiatives, they should be financed with either reallocating existing resources or through new revenue sources.

[00:17:46] So that's one of the things we consider when putting this together. I already mentioned the unassigned fund balance. And then we have a policy of general fund cash funding, a portion of the CIP of at least 5% of expenditures in this budget.

[00:18:01] We'll continue to do that. And so you will see that our proposal follows all the guidance that was set forth by council back in November. So moving forward to January when I started, I asked you some questions back in January.

[00:18:20] And these were the three questions. Were there any specific new items or programs you wanted to be considered? Were there any non-negotiable items that would consider you not to support the

budget? And what are the most important values that we should keep in mind? And so we didn't really have a chance to discuss that at that meeting, as you recall.

[00:18:37] We were kind of late on some other issues. But several of you did email me your responses, which I greatly appreciate. And so those are going to be shown up on the next couple of slides. Some of the specific things that you all mentioned that replied to me, of course, public schools education, public safety, investment in staff, sidewalks, and citizen survey was another one that was mentioned.

[00:19:01] I will happy to report that the citizen surveys, actually the RFP is out on the street, and those are due back the 14th of March. So thanks to Patty Inesini, who is our procurement manager, for getting that done. And so we should be able to hopefully actually undertake that exercise before the end of the fiscal year.

[00:19:23] The non-negotiables, some of the same themes, the public schools, public safety, and investment in staff. When we're talking about the values that you all shared with me, you mentioned several things, stewardship, safety, good governance, and the others on the slide.

[00:19:43] So, again, we tried to keep all of that in mind as we were putting everything together. You also gave me some additional things to consider, such as exploring public-private partnerships, Looked to diversify the revenues, to increase reliance on the real estate tax, ensure greater equity between programming expenses and revenues, and some specific projects as well.

[00:20:08] So again, all of those went into how we deliberated and put the budget document together. So just as a reminder, what our primary driver is, again, we talked about this last month, And that is the school's tuition contract increase of \$12.6 million from the adopted FY25 amount, so the current year budget, what was adopted, and what's expected for next fiscal year is \$12.6 million.

[00:20:36] So again, assuming that we have no changes in tax rates or revenue, no increases in non-mandated expenses, You're talking about, if you just use real estate tax rate, 13.5 cents in order to balance that.

[00:20:55] And this budget, there's no, because we haven't actually issued any debt yet for that, there's no funding for school bond debt service in this budget. So again, that was our starting point. And so if you look just historically on the school tuition contract you see on this slide, You've got the ADM, which, of course, average daily membership, and that's the attendance.

[00:21:22] And you saw it was a 10% decline roughly between 2015 and 2023, but that, of course, has picked back up. But even though we've had the decline, during that same time, you see that the cost increase continued to go up during that same time period.

[00:21:41] The next slide I think gives a better illustration, which is that if you see the first set from fiscal 14 to 2023, average increase was less than 3% year over year, more like 2.2%.

[00:22:01] But you see that the trajectory significantly sharpens starting in 23 with an average increase of over 8%. That's certainly a troubling trend, and based upon the preliminary information that has been shared with us, in future years beyond 26, we're looking potentially at another 8% in 27 and 28, at least that's what's been shared with us.

[00:22:28] That is not sustainable, and so that's something that we've got to work with as we work on this budget as well as future budgets. So having said all that and framing this up, the city is still in very good

shape.

[00:22:46] If you look at our economic health, we are a AAA-rated community by both Standard & Poor's and Moody's, and we have been for over 15 years. So the nice thing and the advantage of being AAA, especially with this upcoming school bond issuance, is that that's going to translate into direct savings to the city of potentially anywhere between \$8 and \$11 million of interest expense over the life of those school bonds.

[00:23:17] If we were AA, that would be that much more expensive. So that's a good thing. And so we want to make sure that we're taking the steps necessary, that we're preserving the AAA bond rating that the city has.

[00:23:34] The other good trend in our economic health is our value of our real estate tax base. That's been consistently going up. It's showing a healthy increase, which contributes to higher equity for our property owners. And it's increased almost 50% over the last nine years, as you can see in the information.

[00:23:57] And when you look at the chart, as far as the division of the two, residential is about two-thirds, commercial is a third. And so you do see a slight decrease in the value of new construction, but there are multiple development projects in the pipeline, so hopefully that will reverse that trend as we see more of those come online.

[00:24:20] So the next slide shows, and I want to pause here for just a second, this I think is a good illustration of where our tax dollars go. So this shows how a dollar, a local tax dollar is spent, and when I'm talking about a tax dollar I'm talking about all taxes not just real estate but all the local taxes that we collect here in the city of Fairfax and you'll see that 36 cents goes to public schools another 18 cents goes to public safety which of course is a police and fire so that's over 50 percent 50 or 50 cents

[00:24:55] 54 cents of every dollar goes to those two activities those are also happen to be the two activities that you said were the most important and so they are certainly clearly in alignment which is a good thing when you add the debt service current debt service which is another nine cents now you've got two-thirds of every tax dollar going to those three things so that means that the other third of the tax dollar has to pay for everything else as well as any other revenues that we generate so again just for context that just shows sort of how currently things are being

[00:25:34] that we are spending um here in in the city so going back to um our initiatives again going back to the plans and things that we talked about um we want to uh the city council's adopted vision of being a strong sustainable community that supports a vibrant and equitable 21st century community that's what we're trying to do with the budget that's being proposed this evening we're fully adopting the strategic goals that you've set. We're implementing the capital improvements program

[00:26:07] that was discussed with you by Planning Commission at your previous meeting. And this budget fully funds the school board's tuition request, and it now allocates initial funding for the bond referendum renovations. So that's the background context. So now we're going to get into the specifics. So in the general fund, our total expenditures for proposed for FY26 total \$207 million. And you can see in this pie chart how that breaks down. Again, education, 37% of that

[00:26:44] total. And then you can see the other, how it's divided between the other functional areas. Now, obviously all the details behind this will be in your budget books that we'll be distributing to you when we transition from this meeting over to the work session.

[00:27:02] So you'll have that take home with you this evening. So the major items that are included in the proposed budget are this budget continues all existing services at their current levels.

[00:27:18] There's no reduction in staff. There's no reduction in service levels. This budget funds everything that we are currently doing. Likewise, there are no new initiatives or service increases, so there was a lot of requests and suggestions for whether it be additional staff or additional resources for certain programs.

[00:27:42] Those are not included, but with all of the combination of things that we had to do, that was not something that we could tackle in this year's budget. It does include a 3.5% merit increase for our general pay employees and an annual step increase for our public safety personnel.

[00:28:02] We're also recommending implementation of the remaining pay study market adjustments not yet completed, which are primarily for employees at our property yard in public works. So investments in city staff were listed as a priority when I asked you back in January, and I certainly concur with that desire.

[00:28:27] The city, we have a great team, and we compete with our neighboring jurisdictions for top talent. Fairfax County, Loudoun, Prince William have already presented their budgets, and all of them are including increased compensation for their staffs.

[00:28:44] And so it's important for the city of Fairfax to remain competitive. So you will see those items in the proposed budget. Moving on, the other major items that we have are, there's a half time, or excuse me, the equivalent of a half full-time equivalent position, net increase for the schools.

[00:29:08] Basically, they're moving their assistant to the superintendent position from half-time to full-time. They are absorbing that in their budget, so there's not a dollar, that's a zero dollar impact, as far as it's not an additional impact that was within the budget that they submitted.

[00:29:23] Again, it fully funds the school tuition contract obligation, which is \$71 million, and it allocates \$3 million to begin work on the approved \$220 million school capital program. So that number was working in conjunction with the school superintendent as far as what they identified they needed to get started was \$3 million for this upcoming year.

[00:29:52] And so all of that is included in this budget proposal. So some of the major changes you'll see to our general fund expenses, or you see the additional for the school tuition contract.

[00:30:09] There's also a \$6.8 million scheduled one-time debt service payment, the \$3 million for the multi-year plan for the school bond referendum, and then the compensation adjustments that I mentioned earlier.

[00:30:25] That 6.8 one-time debt payment is attributable. That was a short-term loan that the city took out at the beginning, at the early days of COVID to ensure sufficient funds.

[00:30:42] We would have sufficient funds to operate, not knowing what was going to happen with all the things, all the uncertainty that took place in the early days of COVID. So it was, I believe, a five- or six-year term, and that comes due. And so that is being completely paid off with this new budget.

[00:31:01] The next slide just again talks about our workforce investment. Again, it was expressed as a high priority of staff, and I concur that it's an important thing that we do. One of the other things I want to mention to you as far as one of the tools that we use to manage the budget and manage the revenue requirements is what was the term, we manage vacancy savings.

[00:31:25] So we have vacancies that occur throughout the year. There's a natural occurrence as people come and go, people retire, et cetera. And then there's a gap of time between when that position is filled up after the person leaves. So that's a vacancy savings where we're not paying salary or benefits.

[00:31:46] And so that's a naturally occurring cycle. And so we do an offset in the budget to account for that, which ultimately means it slightly decreases our revenue requirements. So that's one of the tools that we use to help manage the budget and keep any necessary revenue increases more in check.

[00:32:08] And so we're estimating a \$2 million managed vacancy savings, and you'll see that in the budget as part of the non-departmental expense. So the next couple of slides just show some of the expenditure changes and how they shake out from this proposed budget in 26 versus the current budget FY25 that we are currently having right now.

[00:32:37] And then the next slide, our fund expense activity, of course I've been focusing on the general fund to this point, which is our largest fund. We have several other funds, which I'll briefly touch on in just a minute. But you'll see the total budget is actually going to be \$306 million when you add all funds together, including our enterprise funds.

[00:33:03] So, with that being said, these are the funding requirements necessary to have a balanced budget that's being recommended to you this evening. A nine and a half cent increase to the real estate tax rate, which will take us from \$1.03 to \$1.12 and a half cents.

[00:33:27] An increase to the meals tax rate from 4% to 6%. For a person who is a customer who is purchasing a \$50 meal, this would be an additional \$1 in expense on that \$50 meal.

[00:33:43] Where there's a 6% increase to the wastewater rate, which is, again, this enterprise fund that's self-supporting, that results in an average annual bill increase of \$42, a 6% increase to the stormwater utility rate, which equates to an average annual bill increase of \$10.

[00:34:09] dollars. In addition, again, when we're talking about cost recovery, there's a multitude of other fees that the city levies for different things. And so there's increases to a variety of fees to assist with that cost recovery. There'll be a chart, a comprehensive chart in your budget book so you can see all of those fees and what those changes are going to be. I did want to mention just a couple just to give you an example. It's proposed to have an annual membership fee to the

[00:34:41] senior center, \$60 a year. Currently, it's a one-time \$5 fee. And so that, again, even with the \$60 fee, that is not going to get you 100% cost recovery. But again, it's trying to strike the right balance between fees to try to do some cost recovery versus having everything reliant upon the tax rates. Ambulance transport fees, this is typically when Medicare increases their maximum reimbursement we try to capture that and that's going that's recommended as well in this

[00:35:15] budget as well as another example is alignment market alignment of our building and code enforcement fees and so that's a whole schedule of fees for a variety of things and again you will see that in your budget book so i just want to speak a minute so on the meals tax that has not changed in 21 years last changed in 2004 meals tax while i know maybe not be or any tax for that matter it's not necessarily very popular the meals tax is one way in which you can capture revenue

[00:35:50] from non-residents who take advantage of city services whether that's using our parks driving on our roads etc and so that is a way to to lessen the burden on our real estate property owners Cost

recovery was mentioned as being very important, and so, again, that's why we try, again, working with the staff, trying to strike a balance in what we are asking for cost recovery.

[00:36:18] And, again, you'll see the chart with all of those proposed changes in your budget book. And I would also note, and again, just in anticipating the funding requirements, we've also noted that there'll be a temporary decrease in rental revenue from Old Town Hall.

[00:36:39] Well, that's closed for innovation, so we budgeted \$100,000 less to account for that. So again, we're making sure that we're trying to capture everything as part of this budget. Moving on, here's a chart that sort of shows you the breakdown of our revenues for the general fund, and you will see real estate taxes, that's the big blue half, and then the orange on top is all of our other taxes like meals, personal property, et cetera.

[00:37:15] And so those two account for 75% of the revenues in the general fund. All the other small pie pieces come to another 25%. So whether that's fines, license fees, state aid, different, you know, those kinds, you know, those things are only 25% of the budget.

[00:37:36] So unfortunately, as you all know, Virginia is a Dillon rule state, so our ability to raise revenue or do most anything is severely limited by what the General Assembly allows the city to do. So that is, so Fairfax is not unique.

[00:37:53] And seeing a pie chart of this nature where you're seeing a significant reliance on taxes in order to fund essential services. So some of the changes to the general fund revenue for FOI 26, again, you'll see these are the changes.

[00:38:15] So this is the increase, the additional real estate increase, \$6 million of which is due to appreciation of assessments. Not all of that's because of the rate. You'll see the increase in meals tax, estate revenue, and use of money, interest income.

[00:38:34] I do want to explain or point out you'll see \$4.1 million of appropriated prior year assigned fund balance. And so I want to make the distinction for both yourself and the general public that's watching.

[00:38:49] Assigned fund balance is fund balance or reserves that's for a specific purpose. Unassigned fund balance, which can be used for anything, is what the city has been using to balance its budget for a number of years prior to what's being proposed.

[00:39:06] What this assigned fund balance is, this will be revenue that is realized in the current fiscal year, FY25, that ends June 30, from the proposed real estate rate change, because there is a bill that's due in June that will have the new rate, whatever the rate is, assuming that you adopt the recommended budget.

[00:39:30] that money will be designated to a signed fund balance and then carried over and reappropriated for next year. So that's part of how we're getting this budget balanced for FY26 is that we are taking advantage of unrealized revenue in the current fiscal year that we expect to have based on a new rate that we can then use for next fiscal year.

[00:39:59] Hopefully I explain that well. Then, again, you'll see the general fund changes as far as the various revenue sources in the chart on the next slide.

[00:40:15] So with the tax rate changes that you'll see, this slide summarizes the changes that we are recommending as well as the other taxes to which no changes are being suggested.

[00:40:32] One of the reasons there are no changes to several of those tax rates, specifically C&I, plastic bag sales, and hotels, are because they are at the max, and we have no legal basis in which to raise those fees.

[00:40:49] I would note C&I and plastic bag sales are state-mandated. The hotel tax rate is actually a charter provision. I'm not sure why it's in the charter in that fashion, because there are other localities that have...

[00:41:04] the ability to raise their transient occupancy tax or room tax to a higher amount. So if that's something that council wishes to consider in the future, it will require a charter change. So I just wanted to point those out.

[00:41:21] So what is the impact of a proposed \$0.095 tax rate increase? So this slide shows the number. Again, the average residential assessed value for 2025 is just under \$700,000. And so that results in an annual increase of \$1,126 or a monthly \$94.

[00:41:45] Again, as I mentioned, not all of this increase is attributable to the rate. Some of it is attributable to appreciation of the assessment. But \$660 of the proposed increase is attributable to the new proposed tax rate.

[00:42:01] I wanted to make sure, again, to remind everyone of how our rate compares to our neighboring jurisdictions here in Northern Virginia. And so this chart shows the current fiscal year, 2025, with the city's \$1.3 real estate tax rate.

[00:42:18] And you'll see that we are the third lowest of all of the neighboring jurisdictions. The next slide shows us with the new rate proposed and everybody else's rates stay in the same because we don't know what other localities rates are going to be.

[00:42:36] Some have proposed no change, some have proposed an increase, but even if you assume no change, our rate would still be the fourth lowest among all our neighboring localities. So not out of line, but again, I understand that no one wants to see their taxes go up, but we need to have the funding sources available in order to balance the budget.

[00:43:05] So quickly, I'd like to highlight the other funds just very briefly that we have. The first is the Old Town Service District. This is a special taxing district of the Old Town Service area. We're continuing the rate of 8 cents per hundred, and you can see the service, continuing the services and investment that we have done as in prior years.

[00:43:30] The wastewater utility fund, again, it's a 6% rate increase, proposed \$42 approximately average bill increase based on average usage. There's an increase in some capital, you know, one of the larger ones is our share of the upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant in which we are, have our capacity, and a lot of it isn't driven, a lot of the cost increases are driven by regulatory requirements for wastewater treatment in Chesapeake Bay.

[00:44:08] Our transit fund, of course, is our Q bus. As you know, right now, there's a zero fare policy that was implemented. This is due to expire. We had received a grant, so after FY26. So it does not impact the proposed budget of FY26.

[00:44:26] However, looking beyond 26, this could become an issue as far as does council wish to continue in 27 and beyond the zero fare, reinstitute a fair structure as with a lot of our transportation projects and things are funded a lot of it comes from gas tax revenue which of course has been declining and so there is it's it may become necessary in the future not in the proposed 26 budget but in the future

[00:45:01] to have general fund support for some of these issues and in the stormwater utility again regulatory compliance is the driving factor for for as well for stormwater again a six percent increase to the bill which is an average of about ten dollars so those are all of the funds on the operating side i briefly would like to talk about the capital improvements program which you will be adopting as well as part of this budget proposal you'll see on the title slide here

[00:45:38] the five-year total a little over 600 million that does include the bulk about 204 million of the school bond referendum so that's one of the reasons it's so high is because we've included all of that because it is a five-year program although not all of that is in the first year if you recall from the presentation by the planning commission there was a we had the proposed or what this title slide is titled previously proposed that that went forth but

[00:46:12] then in working with the planning commission working with mr martinez we in order to help with budget and and and sort of evening out the expenditures the next slide the newly proposed shows the reductions and the shifting that occurred to help sort of level out the proposed cip So these changes help manage cash flow and debt issuance, but they don't necessarily impact balancing the budget.

[00:46:45] Because moving or canceling projects, they don't impact the current budget. If you want to impact the budget, you have to reduce the cash transfer, the cash outlay to the CIP.

[00:47:01] CIP has a cash component for pay-as-you-go, but a lot of that is debt-funded. And so the cash transfer to the CIP in the proposed budget is \$11.9 million, which represents 5.8% of general fund expenditures.

[00:47:20] Per council-adopted policy, it requires a minimum 5% transfer of cash over to the CIP in order, so it's not all reliant on debt. All of these policies that I keep mentioning tie right back into our ability to have a AAA bond rating.

[00:47:45] These are all the things that are favorably looked upon by the rating agency. So all of this works in concert when we're talking about our ability to borrow and borrow at the most preferred rates. Here's just a brief slide on the adjusted projects and sort of which ones are moving and which year they're moving to.

[00:48:08] Regarding our funding sources for the CIP, you'll note that only half is derived from local taxes. A lot of it's coming from other sources, state and federal, transportation tax, NBTA, et cetera, that's funding this.

[00:48:26] So we're able to do a lot of these projects because we're able to leverage other sources of funding. And again, on the following slide, again, it's just a chart sort of showing the breakdown of our expenditures by functional area to kind of give you an idea of where the money is being spent.

[00:48:48] On the transportation side, at our last work session, Wendy and Chloe and Dave went over several projects, including the transportation roadmap. If you recall, during this time, they've been using this for the last several years.

[00:49:07] We've had \$20 million of local, of the city of Fairfax dollars put into this. But that's leveraged \$250 million in non-local funding, which is a 12 times return on investment, which is a really high number.

[00:49:27] But the way we're able to do that is because of how we plan for our projects, that they're derived from our approved plans, whether it's the comp plan, small area plans, transportation plans, et cetera. That's how they get started. We work through this process, and even though it takes longer, but by doing that, we're able to leverage these outside funding, which is important to be able to do the magnitude of the projects and things that we're doing, whether it's transportation, parks, or otherwise.

[00:50:01] And so, again, I just wanted to point that out, that where this money comes from is not all from the city of Fairfax for these capital projects. And so you see the CIP highlights, again, some of the projects that are going to be in the next fiscal year in FY26.

[00:50:21] So I'm almost done, just a couple more slides. So this next slide shows, again, our total recommended budget for FY26, all funds, \$306 million in round 551-166. I would point out, if you look at this chart and you actually add up all the sections, it will be more than \$306 because there's \$54 million in interfund transfers that we back out for accounting reasons.

[00:50:50] So we don't double count it, but ultimately it's \$306 million is the proposed budget. that we are recommending to you this evening and again summarizing the rate changes the major rate changes in order to fund this budget and balance it without using unassigned fund balance. I want to talk just briefly a couple of unknowns which we've been talking about here for the last several weeks which is the issues with federal funding and the ripple effect that may occur with reductions are potential reductions to our federal workforce,

[00:51:28] the number of federal employees that live in the community and in the region. We don't know what those are going to be. The direct federal funding mostly impacts the city and social services and transportation capital projects, but as far as day-to-day operating, there's only about \$170,000 in federal funds, so it's not a lot of money from that perspective.

[00:51:52] The other one that's not on the slide that I'll mention, for those of you who are following the General Assembly, is the Senate Bill 1307, which is a proposal for the 1% sales tax for school, to fund school construction.

[00:52:09] And that, again, has passed both houses, is on the governor's desk. He has not taken action on it. He has vetoed that legislation every year. I don't know if this year will be any different. And in looking at it, does not, as the votes took place, I'm not sure there's enough votes to override a veto, even though it does have fairly significant bipartisan support.

[00:52:32] However, if that were to come about and council wishes to pursue that as an option, it does have to go to referendum, but that 1% sales tax would have a significant, significant impact because it would take care of funding for the school capital program, which then freeze up budget resources for other things that council may desire. But it's not all bad, even though it may sound like it's bad when you're suggesting tax increase. And I'm very mindful

[00:53:05] in doing so that, you know, it's not a popular option, but it's incumbent upon us to give you the best advice as far as how to fund the budget and meet all your priorities that you've expressed to us. But

this budget is positioning the city for future success. And the way it's doing that is it's creating debt capacity for the future. I mentioned the \$6.8 million one-time debt expense

[00:53:42] from the COVID era. And then there's the \$3 million for the schools to get started on their capital program. So that \$9.8 million, that's a one-time, in essence, a one-time expense that we are using recurring revenue to pay for. And so starting in 27, that recurring revenue will be available to fund, continue to fund debt service, or council could choose to use it for something else. But we're anticipating it continuing for debt service. If you remember from the Davenport

[00:54:21] presentation just the school side was about 20 cents over the next five to six years if you can just focusing on real estate and then another 10 or 11 cents for the city's cip so 30 31 cents total again just focusing on the real estate rate but by doing this by structuring the budget in this fashion you're going to do the heavy lifting this year and by doing that you will not from a debt

[00:54:54] service perspective and i want to stress that from a debt service perspective you will you should not have to have another increase next year to help facilitate the debt that's coming now the other the other good part to that is that buys us time so we can continue to evaluate and refine the budget the future budgets and see and take in all the other considerations that we need to take into to make sure our budget remains structurally balanced so i wanted i just i wanted to pause a

[00:55:32] moment and stress that that that we've we've got it set up to where if council does the heavy lifting this year as we're recommending that's really setting us up very well for the success of years in order to take care especially for the approved school bond capital projects so next steps here I've made my I made the presentation so you have this now before you we will start our budget work sessions next

[00:56:10] week next Tuesday on March the 4th. We've also set up for several of you have scheduled individual meetings with us, which we set time aside for. So once you have an opportunity in the coming week and this weekend to look at the budget and review the book and all the information that's been presented, you'll have opportunities to meet with us and ask questions. We'll have the whole team in place in order to do that and then really hit the ground running on March the 4th at your first

[00:56:43] budget work session. We do need to have, the schedule does call for by the 11th, determining what the maximum tax rate to be advertised. So we'll talk more about that, but that's really the first decision point that we need in order to stay on schedule will be on March 11th, so two weeks from tonight. So just wanted to point that out. And with that, I just want to say thank you. I want to thank all of the employees who work very hard every day for the city of Fairfax, making sure that all the services and things that we're doing are delivered well and in providing great customer

[00:57:22] service. They do an excellent job. I know I've only been here for a month or not even quite a month yet, but that is very apparent. I haven't, as I've been going around and meeting folks, You know, I can see, you know, there's genuine enthusiasm for the work that they do and the job that they do.

[00:57:41] And so that's a great, great credit to them and a great quality to have on your staff. And I do want to thank the budget team, Gwen, who is somewhere here in the audience, JC, and then the budget committee for all the work and helping put this together.

[00:57:59] So, yes, I get to be the one to come and present it. If it's good, I guess I'll get some of the credit, but I also get to take all the arrows as well and the slingshots that are coming, which is fine as well. But

they did so much work in preparation to get us to this point, and so much was done before my arrival, and that's a credit to them and the quality of the staff.

[00:58:23] So with that, Mayor, City Council, this is your recommended City Manager's budget for fiscal year 2026. Thank you very much for the presentation and to the budget committee and staff. We appreciate it. We can move on to the adoption of the agenda. Is there a motion to approve the agenda?

[00:58:47] Councilmember Hardy Chandler the adoption of the agenda

[00:59:06] Do I have a second the motion has been made and seconded a roll call vote councilmember Amos I Councilmember Hall I councilmember Hardy Chandler councilmember Peterson councilmember Bates. I councilmember McQuillan Aye. Motion passed unanimously. We will go to the initial general public comment. Since I have a full room, I'm just going to explain the initial general public comment for everyone. So this period is for individuals who signed up with the city clerk's office at 5 p.m. today. We will have a second general public comment. That's item number nine, and that's after all the public hearing

[00:59:44] items. So anybody who's remaining and did not sign up by five o'clock will speak under that item. I know I have two people who signed up prior to the start of the meeting so they will speak under that item on number nine so I will call the first speaker I have which is Stacy Langton. Hi, my name is Stacy Langton and I live in Farcroft subdivision on Main Street. I'm here to make a formal objection to the proposed plan from Ox Hill development company for the historic five chimneys house

[01:00:24] property located at 10 230 Main Street owned by Ann Farr. This 9.3 acre property is zoned RM for only single family homes. Their request is for rezoning to commercial status and that is to accommodate a 96 room three-story hotel and 20,000 square foot convention center. The Ox Hill Company currently has another hotel further along in the process with the city called the Ox Block A.

[01:00:56] This includes a 170-room, seven-story hotel operated by Hilton Hotels with a 2,400-seat concert venue and a 27,000-square-foot convention center. This complex is only three-fourths of a mile down the street from the proposed hotel on the Five Chimneys property. The presence of the larger Hilton Hotel at the Ox Block A renders the Five Chimneys Hotel proposal unnecessary.

[01:01:22] I'm not sure how the city would see two hotels as feasible since I just recently read the five-year short-term proposal which proposed a single 100-unit hotel. And this is especially something to take into consideration with their music venue since Earp's ordinary music venue is being evicted and filing bankruptcy. It would bring a distinctly negative change to the character of our neighborhood, since we are a quiet residential neighborhood of homeowners who don't really want to live a few yards away from a busy hotel and its associated problems,

[01:01:58] which would include noise, traffic, and crime. This would decrease our quality of life and our home's resale values. Our residents want to preserve the peaceful nature of our beautiful neighborhood. In the promotional video from Ox Hill, they used a man as a quote, local business owner who spoke in support of the project, but we found out on Monday night at the meeting that they held for us at the country club that he is actually the real estate agent representing them in the deal.

[01:02:26] This is distinctly deceptive. Ox Hill also has two lawsuits filed against them last week for non-payment of services by their architect for \$250,000 and another lawsuit for non-payment of services by their video production services company.

[01:02:41] In the event the land is ultimately developed, our residents would prefer it to be kept to its original zoning for single-family homes in a style similar to Farcroft, and this was proposed by our builder, Bashir and Edgemore, in 2018.

[01:02:57] I don't know the exact reason why that deal didn't come to fruition, but that would certainly be acceptable, I think, to the vast majority of my neighbors if the land was ultimately developed and if it came from another residential home builder. Thank you. Our next speaker is Monique LaFleur. Good evening. Monique LaFleur, 9760 Cardinal Road in the city of Fairfax. I would like to address the city council's fiduciary duty to taxpayers regarding citywide projects,

[01:03:35] including the trails projects. Taxpayers have already been hit with a double whammy of property value increases and property tax increases and we are a small city we're not comparable to the much larger jurisdictions nearby taxpayers are ultimately obligated to pay for projects adopted by the City Council once a financial commitment to a project is made that obligation has to be paid including cost increases and overruns during these uncertain times it would be a violation of the city's fiduciary duty to taxpayers to enter into commitments

[01:04:11] for projects that have multi-million dollar price tags without very careful consideration of the necessity for or benefit of these projects. Many individuals and groups have provided detailed information to the City Council regarding how a number of the proposed trails projects have failed of their intended purpose.

[01:04:31] I echo those comments. Many individuals and groups have provided detailed information regarding the environmental harms that will result from the proposed trails projects, harms that cannot be corrected by the implementation of planned plantings, seedlings, and impervious surfaces.

[01:04:49] I concur with those comments. I urge the city council to reconsider multi-million dollar proposals for citywide projects, including trails and other projects. I urge the city council to take seriously its fiduciary duty to city taxpayers who have already experienced these significant property tax increases. Some residents have already been taxed out of their homes. I urge the city council to take the lead in proposing projects that will benefit the majority of city taxpayers, residents, and visitors, instead of following the agenda of special interest groups and political parties. I urge the city to avoid the mistakes made by

[01:05:28] Fairfax County, as has been recently reported. In recent months, Fairfax County went from a \$240 million budget surplus to a \$300 million budget shortfall. It has been reported that a major source of the massive overspending resulted from projects promised to special interest groups and political parties. Ultimately, county taxpayers will pay the cost of their officials' failure to honor their fiduciary duties, as City of Fairfax needs to avoid making those mistakes.

[01:06:00] Thank you for your consideration. David Alcoin. Mayor Reed and members of the City Council, My name is David Alcoyne.

[01:06:16] I've been a resident of Fairfax City for the past 24 years at 3821 Daniels Runcourt. During that time, I witnessed a number of redevelopment projects undertaken by the city. One of those, the downtown revitalization led by former Mayor John Mason, was welcome but highly controversial.

[01:06:34] Initially, it was quite grandiose, including potentially moving historic properties and streets within the historic downtown area. Those aspects of the redevelopment were rejected, and I sense as a

new Fairfax City resident the mandate to preserve and protect our historical properties.

[01:06:51] I don't believe the five chimneys redevelopment proposed by Ox Hill Company is in the best interest of Fairfax City residents. It would desecrate a national historic property and encroach on the resource protection area, removing invaluable trees. It would move the five chimneys residents 60 feet forward.

[01:07:09] We refused to move any historic properties during the downtown redevelopment. Why would we do so now? Also, I'm not convinced of the viability of the business model for the proposed five chimneys redevelopment. The proposed hotel and comfort center, Ox Fairfax Block A, with 170 rooms and a comfort center built by Ox Hill, is less than a mile away, which could provide those services.

[01:07:33] We also have the Sherwood Center, which can be used for conferences. George Mason University's hotel is no longer a hotel, perhaps due to lack of business. The Chantilly Conference Center exists, but with very little conference business in a commercial area. How many conference centers and hotels do we need?

[01:07:50] My family include my wife, Lynn, son, Tyler, a West Point graduate, and son, Daniel, now a GMU student, are original owners in the Farcroft neighborhood and live immediately behind Five Chimneys, abutting the RPA.

[01:08:05] We see the Five Chimneys property and the abundant wildlife in the RPA every day. We don't always agree on everything as a family. However, on the issue, we have unanimity. So that's four no votes. Our family joins other members of the Farcroft HOA thinking this is an abhorrent proposal.

[01:08:22] The Farcroft HOA has been a good steward of the Far House, preserving it as a historic property. Our family is not against all Ox Hill proposals, just this one. The City Center West development is certainly better than a burned-out restaurant. The Ox Fairfax Block A proposal seems appealing as well.

[01:08:39] Note, in the past, the City of Fairfax has had a popular initiative to purchase and preserve open spaces. We don't have to develop every open space in the city. A great option would be for the city to use our property and personal property taxes with any additional tax revenue from new residential developments to purchase the Five Chimneys property and turn it over to Historic Fairfax City Incorporated, which is charged with managing the operation of city-owned historic properties.

[01:09:05] Their website notes, the city of Fairfax's historic buildings and landmarks are tangible reminders of local heritage, and the report rolled the town plate as a major crossroads and judicial center in northern Virginia. This is similar to what was done with Glenham in 1999, what Loudoun County is doing with Oak Hill, the 200-year-old home of President James Monroe on a much smaller scale.

[01:09:30] Thank you very much for your remarks. Our next speaker, Sue Brown.

[01:09:46] Hi, my name is Sue Ellen Brown. I moved to Fairfax 55 years ago when Sideburn Road was just dirt.

[01:10:06] There was only one traffic light on Braddock Road, and yes, there were cows in the pasture at the House of Five Chimneys. I love Fairfax City. It's quaint, it's charming, and it's historic. Unfortunately, I am one of the 11 homes on Bally Nahound Circle being threatened with a 96-room hotel, convention center, pool, and a loading dock almost in our front yard.

[01:10:36] Beep, beep, beep, just a stone's throw from my front door. Sunday, I was changing the sheets, and when I heard what sounded like a spat, I looked out the window and saw a woman in front of the far house.

[01:10:53] I think she was Mrs. Farr's caregiver, and she was shouting at a moving truck driver. My windows were closed, and I'm thinking, if I can hear this, what about a wedding, a convention, music, DJs, alcohol?

[01:11:12] It is impossible that the noise will not be heard all through Farcroft. Even if they switch the loading dock, which is an eyesore, to the west, there is a patio and pool, and the noise will be unbearable. As for the convention center, my family and I vacationed at Virginia Beach.

[01:11:30] The Shriners were having a convention. All night long, inebriated Shriners were having a blast, driving up and down the beach in their little clown cars. Is this what you want for Fairfax City? Is this truly what Mrs. Lewis wants?

[01:11:48] It was very strange that Chris from Ox Hill repeated and repeated and repeated that we must pass this immediately. This is what Mrs. Lewis wants. It's her wish before she dies. Well, she turned 100 in November.

[01:12:05] Well, Mrs. Lewis had six years to put in 19 luxury townhouses and chose not to. I'm suspicious of a lot about this deal. The rush to get it passed, the lawsuits. I can only find one project that Ox Hill completed, a school.

[01:12:22] My gut is telling me, something's fishy in Denmark. Would any of you want to live 30 feet from a loading dock? This whole project will be a nightmare. I'm pleading with you to slow down, think about this and its effect on the community, and keep the House of Five Chimneys residential.

[01:12:47] Our next speaker is Shelly Vance. I'm Shelly Vance, and I live in Cambridge Station. I'm a 20-year resident of Cambridge Station and a 40-year resident of the city of Fairfax.

[01:13:07] Over the past two years, I have spoken on several occasions before the City Council of my opposition to a realigning the George Snyder Trail, GST, into the woods on the south side of Cardinal Road between Fairwoods Parkway and Ranger Road Park.

[01:13:23] Such an alignment will be to the detriment of the city tree canopy and no doubt to what will eventually become a completed stream restoration parallel to the proposed trail realignment. It will jeopardize the ultimate success of the stream restoration and its improvement of Lake Aquatink. This is not a case of NIMBY, not in my backyard. A majority of the residents in Cambridge Station want the George Snyder Trail to be in our front yard, in front of our houses, right down along Cardinal Road. I'm speaking in the hopes that you will express support of a resolution to

[01:14:02] suspend the George Snyder Trail realignment and to direct city staff to explore, to create a safer east-west connection between Chainbridge Road and the Wilcoxon Trail for bicyclists and pedestrians, but to do so using primarily, if not exclusively, existing roadways and paved park pathways. The city must reassert its commitment to environmental and fiscal responsibility in furthering the city's transportation goals. Minimize land and habitat disturbances and the installation of additional impervious

[01:14:38] surfaces. Insist on community-wide engagement, sorely lacking from the 2020 forward when the GST was first envisioned and public engagement was nearly non-existent. I spoke to this exact issue at

a city council meeting in December 2023 and again in January 2024 after attending a city council work session where I was stunned by the staff report revealing the nearly total lack of community engagement on this trail realignment project. Community-wide engagement similar to the kind

[01:15:15] and level for the nearby stream restoration project is the standard that all city projects that impact residents should strive for. There are other reasons to suspend the George Snyder Trail realignment having to do with the city's apparent plan to make Fairfax Boulevard safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

[01:15:34] The city should not spend money to build a trail through city green space that runs parallel to a road that will be upgraded within five years. The city council must lead by providing direction to city staff in developing a George Snyder Trail realignment plan for presentation at the upcoming March 11 meeting.

[01:15:56] Environmental sustainability, that was one of the five outcomes that the budget manager proposed tonight. This is an issue of environmental sustainability. Thank you. Our next speaker is Val Morgan.

[01:16:31] I can almost move. And I'm so glad to hear about my taxes going up. Maybe I'll get a job now. that lady was right. We need to dump all these silly trail things. We don't need to spend any money on trails we don't need. If we've got that money allotted, put it on Fairfax Boulevard.

[01:16:56] That's simple. Now, I think I talked before about this little project going on. I'm sure you saw this, the two of you that were here, right? This is the project out there. BAR, the Board of architectural review approved it, but they didn't look at this, and they all admitted they didn't know anything about plants, so they're going to go out there, and they were

[01:17:30] totally stunned when Judy mentioned that door's locked and all of the plants and the stairway is going to be redone for who? I didn't get an answer when I asked how many people actually park out there and walk up those stairs and walk over here and then walk over there, so maybe we would have thought earlier, we could have done something totally different. But we need to save some money. And when I got this blown up at Staples for free, thank them very much, it took my little measurey thing that I got from Ace for only 40 bucks and measured some of these that I could measure

[01:18:08] against the building, the sidewalk, etc. And I looked at plants that they had, because I got the list too, and there were way too many plants for the spaces that I had measured. And then I contacted Mr. Massoud, he's our contact person, and they took out 866 plants. And then I measured some more by the flagpoles, and there's 42, about 21 on each side too many. This is probably too late because

[01:18:41] they're starting to put up their little orange fence. Why am I the only one who actually went to look at this? There's a landscape architect that yapped and yapped and yapped at the Board of Architectural Review. Landscape architects are decorators, and they're selling you product.

[01:18:59] why didn't anybody check? We're wasting money hand over fist. And this is the same thing that's happened with all the other city horticulture projects. For example, right over on 123 across from Rust Curve, when they put in the bridge, they planted the four corners on either side of the walking bridge. The one closest to 123 has got like a tree because all the plants they put in there, pretty much all of the plants that they planted said shade. There isn't any shade. I mean

[01:19:31] hundreds of plants. I saved the last heuchera and parked it under the weeping willow. We need to look at like all the lights that are on around trees downtown in Sherwood. They're up for like four months of the year. How much does that cost? Not to mention putting them up and taking them down.

[01:19:50] Our next speaker is Nancy Wiegand. Good evening. My name is Nancy Wiegand.

[01:20:11] I live at 3828 Farcroft Drive in the city of Fairfax. I am the president of the board of directors for the Farcroft Homeowners Association. I would like to discuss the proposed development of 10-230 Main Street, also known as the Fine Chimneys House or the Far Estate.

[01:20:30] We know this property will eventually be sold and developed. As it directly borders the Farcroft community, it is important to ensure that any new development does not negatively affect our community. The proposal by Ox Hill for the development of this property has been broadly shared within our community.

[01:20:48] The Board of Directors has received feedback from many of our residents about the Ox Hill proposal and the property development in general. It has become evident to the Board that there are diverse opinions and perspectives among our residents concerning the property's development.

[01:21:06] As a result, the Board of Directors will refrain from endorsing any specific proposal for the development of the Five Chimneys property. However, we strongly encourage our residents to communicate their views directly with you, as some of them have done tonight. In general, the Board of Directors requests that the city conducts a thorough evaluation of the most appropriate use of the property before proceeding with rezoning or development.

[01:21:32] Additionally, measures should be taken to protect Farcroft and the surrounding communities from any potential adverse effects. The proposed use should align with the city's vision and strategy, not just the developer's interests. Please consider these concerns when evaluating the property's use.

[01:21:50] Traffic congestion on Main Street and surrounding roads. Noise from service trucks, events, and activities at the location. The location of dumpsters. the environmental impact of tree removal, water runoff, and the resulting erosion and sedimentation, encroachment on the resource protection area, privacy concerns for residents of Bali Nahan Circle, the use of Farcroft's private roads for overflow parking during events could raise safety considerations for our residents.

[01:22:22] Our preferences for the development of the property include preserving the five chimneys home, maintaining green spaces, trees, and landscaping, creating a significant buffer zone between the development and our community, a development that matches the city's vision, preserves community character, and creates a pleasant area for all.

[01:22:44] We look forward to further collaboration with the city on this matter. Thank you. Our next speaker is Philip LaTassa. I speak tonight representing the Friends of Akatink Creek.

[01:23:02] We strive to be the voice of Akatink Creek and the remnants of woods and wetlands in its wider watershed. Too often that voice is drowned out by louder voices asking to slice away just a little bit more of the forest to intrude just a little further into the wetlands in fulfillment of some purpose deemed to be of such overriding necessity that the sacrifice is fully justified.

[01:23:21] There is no such overriding necessity for the George Snyder Trail, the Pickett Road Connector Trail, or similar projects that propose to pave paths through our few remnant forests for the sole and self-

justifying purpose of having paved pathways through our forests.

[01:23:38] The forests of this city have conceded all but a sliver of their former greatness to our insatiable desire for pavement. Please allow that sliver to continue to exist in peace. Please say enough. Please forego the George Snyder Trail, the Pickett Road Connector Trail, and other projects of their kind.

[01:23:54] Thank you. Our next speaker is Ellen Pence. Good evening.

[01:24:15] My name is Ellen Pence, and I live at 3211 Adams Court. I also own a condo in the Mosby Woods condos. I moved into Fairfax City when I was 29 years old, and I'm now 87 years old. I have two items for you.

[01:24:33] Number one is the problem, which you've already heard about tonight, didn't know that was going to happen, of invasive vines in city parks and along stream beds of the Akatank Creek headwaters. One of those streams runs right behind my house.

[01:24:49] These vines are killing our trees. Cardinal Road Park is terribly afflicted with them. it looks and acts like kudzu. Removing these vines is not a job for volunteers. I mean, it's really bad. So I'm hoping that more than just volunteers will be done in this city.

[01:25:14] My number two item is very familiar to some of you. To those of you who have heard about this many times before, I apologize for the repetition. In 2007, when the Stafford Park Soccer Field was built. We in Cambridge Station and the Mosby Woods condos fought to save the same trees that we are fighting to save now in Stafford Park. Here we are 18 years later. Those trees are again

[01:25:50] endangered by the city council. The George Snyder Trail is currently located along Cardinal Road. It is a dead-end road on both ends. There is very little automobile traffic on Cardinal Road, especially at its east end.

[01:26:08] There is no through traffic and no rush hour traffic on Cardinal Road. Cambridge Station is located on the east end of Cardinal Road. Cardinal Road can accommodate walkers, runners, bicycles, cars, motorcycles, baby buggies, and all kinds of philosophies.

[01:26:29] You can enter Cardinal Road on only two other roads, Fairwoods Parkway or Stafford Drive. You could add connections for bicycles to each end of it if you wanted to.

[01:26:46] The Stream Restoration Project is already stripping hundreds of mature trees from the park. It's really impressive what they're doing. You don't need to put a roadway on top of the Stream Restoration Project.

[01:27:02] destroying a lovely walking path which is what we have and killing 500 more mature trees in the process our next speaker is denise bartlett good evening mayor reed council members um actually my name is denise bartlett i live in farcroft also many of the points that i was going to make

[01:27:39] um really had been brought up by other members in the neighborhood and i realize that we're going late here and other people do want to speak. So I'm just going to emphasize a couple of things that I thought I could just pull out of my statement. First of all, I would like to reiterate that we know that Mrs. Farr-Lewis is 100 years old. So it's very reasonable for us to think that something is going to happen to that property soonish. Hopefully, not for a long time, but

[01:28:18] statistically speaking, that I'm sure if something happens to her, her family is going to, you know, take care of business. The fact that I went to the five chimney presentation by Ox Hill, and I was very taken by the fact that the CEO was, I want to say one thing.

[01:28:47] They were very, very accommodating to all of us that were there as far as listening to what we had to say and taking notes and saying, well, we'll certainly consider this. But they certainly didn't give us the feeling that, or the information that made us think that this was going too far ahead at this time.

[01:29:07] He also said that if this doesn't work out, we will do something else. But subsequently, to those meetings and to conversations, it seems to me that the pushing of having this development built and well underway before Mrs. Lewis dies, because this is what her wish is, is even for, I mean, socially lovely.

[01:29:37] But as a business suggestion, it doesn't make any real sense to us who are going to be affected long after her transfer of property at that time. So I think this is something that we really want to kind of look at our property or our position of being kind of pushed into this situation, especially when we stop and think that there are two other projects by the same company.

[01:30:09] So we now in Fairfax City are going to have three projects by the same company, which is lovely, maybe. However, I don't know any property that we see that we can look at and say, wow, they've done a great job. They really thought this over. It doesn't make any difference if there's somebody that can't evict from the bank.

[01:30:27] One project, so they can't get going. I mean, it just, oh, goodness. I wasn't even going to take my whole time. Anyway, I think that these are really important things. And the other thing is that I would just simply say is that I do hope that you will consider everything that the Far Across represents have brought forward tonight because it's very important to us.

[01:30:48] Thank you. Thank you. All right. Our last speaker who signed up for the initial general public comment is Judy Frazier. Hi.

[01:31:03] Good evening, Mayor and City Council. I'm here tonight to actually thank you all for the work you've been doing so far. Amazing. I know you've, I'm understanding that it's basically a fire hose of information and issues. And tonight is no, I mean, just an example of all the things that are getting thrown at you.

[01:31:22] I do, you know, you have four work sessions still to come tonight. And you've got four at your next meeting, I believe. And so that's a lot of information that you have to take in. I hope that you take some time to pay attention to the George Snyder Trail work session item.

[01:31:40] It's described as a discussion and update. That's a very anodyne description. This is a project, as you probably well know, that is very unpopular with the community at large and has never been justified to the community as having any, there being any need for it whatsoever in the city and a lot of reasons to not go forward with it.

[01:32:05] So I hope you realize you are in the driver's seat now. You are the ones who can make this either go away or change it fundamentally. And I hope that you take a few minutes to put together your questions for staff.

[01:32:21] One thing I've heard from the previous work sessions on this item is that staff only wants your direction. They want your guidance on where you want to go with this. You are in the driver's seat. So

please consider, I think Shelly made a great statement, Monique as well, totally with them.

[01:32:43] I won't repeat what they've said, but I think taking care that you are responsible for the fiscal and environmental health of the city is overarching. And I think you can do a great deal with money that's been allotted for this trail in a much better way by repurposing that money to improve biking and pedestrian travel through the city.

[01:33:07] Or you can cancel it if that is the only way to go. But let staff direct them to make that, put that together for you in that presentation. So when you have that work session, you will actually have the information you need. Thank you.

[01:33:23] Okay, we can move on to the consent agenda. is there a motion to approve the consent agenda councilmember hardy chandler there is i move adoption of a consent agenda for agenda item number 7a consideration of the january 28 2025 regular meeting minutes agenda item number 7b consideration of award of a professional services contract in the estimated amount of 545 300 dollars to alta planning and design inc for

[01:33:59] a city-wide pedestrian master plan a city-wide safety action plan and an old town fairfax multimodal circulation study agenda item 7c consideration of appointments of two fairfax city parks foundation inc initial directors agenda item number 7d consideration of adoption of the two-year transportation program for fy 2526 are we pulling up 7e yes go ahead okay agenda item number seven e consideration of a resolution fixing the date for continuation of a regular

[01:34:34] meeting of the city council upon a finding and declaration by the mayor that weather or conditions are such that it is hazardous for members and the public to attend the regular meeting as advertised agenda item number seven f consideration of appointments to the city's retirement plan administrative committee i move to approve the consent agenda item 7a through f and the motion accompanying the consent agenda item as printed all right a motion's been made by council member hardy chandler is there a second second are there any items council would like pulled for additional

[01:35:14] discussion council member mcquillen yes 7e please all right item 7e will be removed for discussion there will be a roll call vote on the consent agenda minus agenda item 7e council member mcquillan council member bates aye council member peterson aye council member hardy chandler aye council member hall i'm sorry i council member amos okay motion passed for consent agenda items

[01:35:48] a through d and f so we will go on to 7e for discussion which is a consideration of a resolution fixing the date for continuation of a regular meeting of the city council upon a finding and declaration by the mayor that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members and the public to attend the regular meeting as advertised. I'll recognize Brian Lubkerman, our city attorney, to do the staff report. Thank you, Mayor and Council. Very briefly, and I'll just read the summary from the staff report. This is a procedural resolution for your consideration. As you all know, very rarely, ordinarily due to weather, snow, ice, but

[01:36:26] it can also be due to tornadoes, tropical storm remnants, and the like, or other conditions arise that make it hazardous for council members, staff, and the public to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the city council. Ordinarily, without this procedure, the meeting would simply be canceled, rescheduled, and all advertisements would need to happen again, including land use matters.

[01:36:48] The cost of that advertising can be expensive, and it also delays the ability to consider matters that are already scheduled. As you see from tonight's agenda, we have full meetings, and it's difficult to find times for additional meetings. State code has contemplated this and has enabling authority to allow for situations where the chair of the meeting, in this case the mayor, can determine that the meetings, public hearings other matters previously advertised for the meeting date are conducted at the next regular meeting of the City Council it's important to note that while we're

[01:37:25] saying that this is a way to perhaps avoid the cost time and expense of readvertising the default will continue to be to readvertise where possible and where appropriate so the the purpose is not to simply have another meeting and nobody knows about it we advertise our meetings extensively the reason this This item has been pulled in conversations with Councilmember McQuillan.

[01:37:47] She had asked for an amendment to be prepared that would reinforce that the mayor's determination of canceling and continuing the meeting should be with the mayor making best efforts to consult with individual council members first. So the revised motion that's up on the dais in front of each of you would simply make that change.

[01:38:05] There's no legal significance from my perspective, so staff is neutral on that, so we'll give it to you all for consideration. Happy to answer any questions. Are there any questions of the council, city council, our attorney? No? Would you like to speak to this, Councilmember McQuillan?

[01:38:22] I am in agreement that I want this to transfer to the next meeting as easily as possible. As far as the contents of this goes, it was just typically the wording is the nuance that I'm concerned about is clarifying that.

[01:38:40] So that's why I wanted to add it in there. Okay, so if there's no further discussion, would you like to make the motion, Councilmember McQuillan? I move that the City Council adopt the presented resolution as attached to the staff report and considered at this meeting.

[01:38:59] With respect to this agenda item, expect that the first operative provision of the resolution shall be amended to read in its entirety as follows. Be it resolved by the City Council that upon a finding and determination by the mayor or individual authorized to act in the absence or unavailability of the mayor after making best efforts to consult with the individual council members that whether or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend a regular meeting of the City Council, such meetings shall be continued to the next regular meeting of the City Council.

[01:39:29] Is there a second? Who seconded? Okay, so we have a motion by Council Member McQuillan and a second member by Council Member Hall. A roll call vote. Council Member McQuillan? Council Member Bates? No.

[01:39:46] Council Member Peterson? Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Aye. Councilmember Hall? Aye. Councilmember Amos? Aye. Motion passed five to one. We will go on to the public hearing.

[01:40:02] Our first public hearing item is the public hearing and council action on request from Pathway Homes Incorporation, applicant by Molly Navanti, agent, for consideration of a special exception to modify the non-residential district's dimensional standards table to exceed the maximum density at the premises identified as 4010 University Drive in Parens Tax Map 57-4-02-087-B in the CR Commercial Retail Zoning District and Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District.

[01:40:39] I'll recognize Clara Schweiger, city planner, to provide the staff presentation. Good evening, married and council members. This is a special exception request for Pathway Homes located at 4010 University Drive.

[01:40:57] The applicant is requesting a special exception to modify the non-residential district's dimensional standards table to increase the maximum density to allow up to 28 dwelling units per acre in the CR Commercial Retail Zoning District. The subject site is located at the corner of University Drive and Sager Avenue.

[01:41:18] The site is zoned CR Commercial Retail in the Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District. Here are some photos of the site. The site's future land use designation is Activity Center, and the site is located in the Old Town Fairfax Activity Center.

[01:41:34] So I want to give you all some background on this application. On December 10, 2024, the City Council approved with conditions a special use permit to allow upper story residential and mixed uses in the CR Commercial Retail District and Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District. The original application was for 15 upper story residential units and 6,576 square feet of ground floor office space.

[01:41:58] The ground floor office space was proposed to be the headquarters of Pathway Homes, the applicant. In the CR zoning district, density is limited to a maximum of 20 dwelling units per acre, so this site is limited to 10 dwelling units based on the size of the lot.

[01:42:13] One of the conditions of approval for the special use permit was that the maximum total number of dwelling units shall be no more than 10 in accordance with the maximum density allowed by the zoning ordinance unless and until the applicant files a special exception to be reviewed by the city council to increase the total number of units in density and so the applicant has filed a special exception request to increase the total number of units in density from the original special use submission the applicant requested 15 upper story residential units however the applicant did not request a special exception so now the applicant is coming back with this request for the additional five

[01:42:51] units to bring the total number of residential units on the site to 15. These are the zoning tabulations from the plan and circled are the density calculations. The left is showing the approved at the December 10th council meeting, which was 20 dwelling units per acre and would allow 10 units on the site. The right shows the corrected density requesting a density of 28 dwelling units per acre to allow for a total of 15 dwelling units. This request is in line with the goals of the small area plan. The small area plan identifies an increase of 1,250 residential

[01:43:30] units, and this includes affordable housing, and 25,000 square feet of office within the Old Town Fairfax Activity Center. The small area plan also supports partnering with non-profit and other institutions as a means of accommodating new dedicated affordable housing units, and the applicant, Pathway Homes, is a non-profit, and the applicant has indicated that all 15 units would be affordable units. So staff recommends approval of the special exception, and that concludes my presentation, and I believe the applicant is here to present. Okay, I will open the public hearing.

[01:44:05] Ms. Shinneberry, has this public hearing been properly advertised? Yes, it has. Does the applicant have a presentation they would like to share? All right. Good evening. I'm Lauren Herbenak. I'm an urban planner with Curata Partners, and I'm pleased to be here before you all tonight to discuss this

important project for the city and pathway homes. Claire did a great job overviewing the project and the special exception request, so I'm not going to dive back in too deep into the details. I just

[01:44:45] have a few key facts that I wanted to revisit for your consideration tonight. This application is consistent with the Old Town Fairfax small area plan, which calls for an increase of residential density and office space within the downtown area. Our prior special use permit request was just approved in December and permitted the redevelopment of an existing office building with a mix of both residential and office space. This existing building will remain and is being repurposed for this use. As Clara noted, it was always the applicant's intention of having 15 units at this

[01:45:22] site. However, we did learn late in the special use permitting process that we would need to file for a special exception request, which is why we are here tonight to ask for that additional five units. In addition to meeting the small area plan goals, this application is also consistent with the city's housing goals by providing residents who make no more than 30 percent or below the AMI for all 15 units. An elevator will also be installed on the property within the building to service the upper story residences in order to provide full access full accessibility to those who live and want to age in place within this great city. I will now introduce Dr. Lambert

[01:46:01] who is the director of Pathway Homes. She is going to do a quick overview of Pathway Homes and their organization in case not everyone on the council is familiar with it. The organization is an amazing they provide amazing services to the community and our fellow community members with that dr lambert good evening mayor members of the council it's good to be back with you again my name is dr silica lambert woodard i'm president and ceo of pathway homes one of your hometown

[01:46:34] non-profits for 45 years and 20 years your exact neighbor in proximity just about a mile and a half down the road, and now even closer just steps away at 4010 University. We're incredibly excited to be a neighbor so close and to be able to look at this mixed-use building and to be able to scale it in the near future. For those of you who are not aware of Pathway Homes, we're a non-profit organization. We're an organization that is rested on three primary pillars. We provide services to individuals with behavioral health care issues, and we provide integrated medical care as well as behavioral health care. We're a behavioral health care organization built on a foundation

[01:47:13] of housing. The second pillar is that we're an affordable housing developer. We do acquisition and development of housing, deeply affordable housing, 30% and below specifically, over 500 units, 138 owned. And we serve individuals in northern Virginia, Washington, D.C., and in central Florida. So we're a national capital organization in your backyard. The third pillar that I'd like to mention in regards to Pathway Homes is that we are committed to providing education and advocacy, recognizing that housing is a right, not a privilege, and that individuals with disabilities can and do recover.

[01:47:46] And so we're very much so committed in providing those services in the fashion of case management, assisted living facilities, permanent supportive housing, and assertive community treatment teams. So we're very excited to be able to expand, to be able to have our corporate office on the main floor, the mixed use, 15 units above, as mentioned earlier tonight, requesting the additional five units to be added to this particular building. And we are really excited that we continue to provide services to individuals approximately 2,000 a year, and we have some significant outcomes which are pretty impactful in regards to our region, where individuals who we serve, who we have the privilege and pleasure of serving, remain in their housing

[01:48:26] year after year. 92% of those individuals, 96% of those individuals remain out of hospitals and 98% of the individuals that we serve outside of jails and prisons. So we're very excited to become your closer neighbor, and we look forward to your consideration of this special exception request.

[01:48:46] Thank you. Does the council have questions, or we'll bring the speakers forward first who have signed up? So I do have one person who signed up prior to the meeting, Evan Ramey. If you can come forward and just state your name and street address at the podium.

[01:49:03] My name is Evan Ramey. I currently live out of Tidewater Hall on Ravanna River Way on GMU. I cannot support this enough. I mean, the physical character of the building is not changing. There's no character of the neighborhood to be concerned with.

[01:49:20] We can simply allow more housing to be built in this time of a housing crisis. And it's denser housing that's statistically way easier to keep cool with, like HVAC costs. And so high-density housing is sustainable.

[01:49:36] It's this high-density housing near the center of Old Town. Like, if I were to take a permanent supportive housing unit, it would probably be this one, because I can just walk everywhere. And we can sign a piece of paper and give five more people a home in this community. I think we really ought to.

[01:49:53] Thank you. Thank you. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak on the Pathway Homes application? You may come forward. All right. From the dais, do we have Council Member Amos?

[01:50:12] Questions? Well, first, I'd like to say thank you to Evan. I echo a lot of your sentiment, especially the location. You're absolutely right. It's in prime real estate. Love the fit, by the way. So good for you.

[01:50:29] Grateful for the opportunity to be able to explore the facility more recently alongside Mayor Reed. Truly fantastic. I'll need to come by to get another view of Tyson's. That was really cool. And honestly, just keep up the incredible services that you provide and what you plan on providing. So thank you.

[01:50:45] Other questions or comments from the dais? All right. Well, I'm just going to say that I also support the 15 units. We talk a lot about the need for affordable housing of every variety, and this is very specific affordable housing, and this is 15 units, not a 6% set-aside and a market-rate building.

[01:51:06] This is 15 units specifically designed for people with low incomes who are aging and who need some assistance through supportive services. I think we are fortunate to have Pathway Homes not only put their headquarters here in our city, but take part of that building and give homes to 15 people who would otherwise struggle to live a good life in our city.

[01:51:33] And I am appreciative of this project. And since there are no further questions, I will ask for a roll call vote. I need to make a motion. We need a motion. Sorry, you're right. I've skipped a step.

[01:51:49] Is there a motion, Council Member Hardy-Chandler? It happens, right? I moved that the City Council approved the request of Pathway Homes, Inc. Applicant by Molly Novotny, Agent 4, Special Exception Pursuant to City Code Section 110-3.6.2 to modify the non-residential dimensional standards table to allow a maximum density of 28 dwelling units per acre in the CR Commercial Retail Zoning District and Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District on the premises known as 4010 University Drive

[01:52:24] and more particularly described as Tax Map Parcel 57-4-02-087-B. Is there a second? Second. A motion has been made by Council Member Hardy-Chandler and seconded by Council Member Peterson. Is there any discussion on the motion?

[01:52:41] Seeing none, a roll call vote. Council Member Amos? Aye. Council Member Hall? Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Aye. Council Member Peterson? Aye. council member bates aye council member mcquillan aye motion passed unanimously we will go on to the second public hearing item which is a public hearing and council action on a request from living spring church llc applicant by katherine taylor attorney in fact for a special use permit for a religious institution in parents living spring church in the co commercial office district with Proffers and Architectural Control Overlay District imprints ACOD

[01:53:19] on the premises known as 10015 Main Street and more particularly described as Tax Map Parcel 57-4-02-151. I'll recognize Jason Sutton first, but do the introduction here for Savannah.

[01:53:37] Thanks, Ms. Shinnevere, and I'm sorry for always making you have to read such long language there. I'd like to introduce Savannah Newbern with the Berkeley Group. She is assisting us with special use permit review and also the accessory dwelling unit zoning ordinance amendment process.

[01:53:53] You'll see her quite a bit in the future. Thank you. Good evening, Council and Mayor Reed. Thank you for your time in reviewing this special use permit. The applicant is Living Spring Church. I want to draw your attention to one correction from the staff report.

[01:54:10] It is incorrectly labeled that the applicant is Living Spring Church, LLC. They are Living Spring Church Incorporated. The owner of the parcel is Printing United Alliance, and the subject property is at 10015 Main Street.

[01:54:26] And tonight we're hearing about their request for a special use permit to establish a new religious institution at this subject property. Religious institutions are required by the ordinance to obtain a special use permit in every zoning district in which they are allowed.

[01:54:44] They are prohibited in the CL, IL, and IH, mostly industrial districts. And there are no specific use standards for religious institutions. Here is an overview of the subject property on Main Street as well as the zoning district.

[01:55:03] You can see it's zoned commercial office, and it's a spot zoning that was rezoned around the time when the building was constructed in 1980. The subject property is improved with an approximately 20,000 square foot office building, one story, and the applicant proposes to convert the existing building with no exterior modifications to become the facility for a new religious institution.

[01:55:34] In looking at your future land use, you can see that the property was identified as commercial corridor. This future land use designation does not speak specifically to public and civic uses, it does not prohibit them either in keeping with the physical character of this zoning district as the building is currently an office building it does match with your future land use designation here you can see the subject property from a street view and the building as it sits currently the subject

[01:56:13] property is 2.02 acres the proposed use and parking comply with the zoning ordinance and staff recommends approval of this application with four conditions listed in your motion I'm happy to hear any questions after the applicants presentation I will now open the public hearing mission very has this public hearing been properly advertised yes it has does the applicant have a

[01:56:41] presentation they would like to share they do okay evening mayor Reed council members my name is Kathy Taylor from the law firm of Walsh Colucci it's a pleasure to be here this evening to share this proposal with you all as such I will be brief with my remarks.

[01:57:09] I do believe this is a fairly simple and straightforward application, but I did want to highlight a few items about the applicant church themselves, who you all may not be familiar with, as well as some items related to the proposal. So we can go to the first slide. As you saw, the site is located at 10015 Main Street, zone to the CO district.

[01:57:30] As noted by staff, it's improved with an existing one-story office building that was built in 1980. and staff didn't mention but the property is subject to a general development plan and special exception that was approved back in 1993 to allow an office expansion as well as additional parking to date those improvements have not been constructed the main access to the site as you can see is from Main Street as staff noted there are 52 parking spaces on site where all the parking is actually located to the east of the existing building away from the residential community to the west so the next slide

[01:58:07] just shows another image similar to what staff showed of the existing building the office building if you're traveling on Main Street you can see that main parking area to the east and the residential as mentioned is to the west side so moving to the next slide as you heard from staff the applicant is actually the contract purchaser of the site they do propose to convert that existing building into a religious institution within the city limits to do USO does require a special use permit. So by way of brief background, Living Spring Church has been serving the Fairfax community for the past 40 years. They currently lease a space off of Ox

[01:58:44] Road. So the purchase of this location would allow them to have a permanent place of worship for its congregation and does provide sufficient space for reasonable future growth. Currently, they have two main services, a 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Sundays. They also do offer limited weekday evening programs, as well as early Saturday programs that are attended by a much smaller group, a much smaller number of parishioners. Those include things like prayer meetings, Bible studies, youth services. They do not operate, nor do they plan to operate in the future, any type of

[01:59:20] preschool or daycare components. To support the congregation, as you can see here, this very simple layout. They do primarily propose simply to construct a new 200-seat sanctuary, so you can see that area highlighted in red. The rest of the building, which is hatched, they aren't proposing any improvements. They are working with an architect. They will bring the building up to code for a church use. That includes any type of ADA improvements. While there are no major exterior, It is an aging building built back in the 80s, so they will do some minor cosmetic exterior

[01:59:56] repairs, but there are no additional buildings or building additions proposed. There is more than enough parking. As you heard, this use requires 50 parking spaces. We have 52, so that will be met. Finally, I will note that there's presently a significant amount of existing mature vegetation that serve as buffers as well as landscaping around the site.

[02:00:20] Right now, they are proposing to preserve all of that existing vegetation, but I will note that they are also working to clean up any overgrown vegetation. As we just heard about all the invasives, they will also be removing any invasives from the site.

[02:00:36] That will help to ensure clear visibility and really just promote safety on the site. So working with staff when we go through the building plan process, they will integrate appropriate lighting, any type of security systems, signage, pavement markings, things like that in order to, as I mentioned, promote safety and provide just better visibility on this site to support the use.

[02:00:59] So finally, with the next slide, I'll just note that after this application was submitted and early on, we did conduct preliminary outreach to surrounding residential communities. We emailed proximate HOAs and then also mailed out physical mailing letters to adjacent neighbors, including all of the neighbors that are to the west along Colonel Mendez Way.

[02:01:21] So today we didn't receive any responses to those mailings. However, I did hear from the HOA president next door, and he also similarly mentioned the invasives, which is something that we will be addressing. So in the end, the applicant's proposal does present an opportunity, we believe, to redevelop and activate this site with a new, valuable community-serving use that is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, as you heard, and will better serve the needs of not only this existing congregation, but just the larger surrounding Fairfax community.

[02:01:52] As such, you did hear staff recommended approval. We are here to answer any questions, and I do request your favorable consideration in this case. Thank you. I will ask the clerk to call speakers forward. Sorry.

[02:02:08] We did not have anybody sign up prior to the meeting, so is there anybody in the room that would like to speak on this application? Come forward to the podium, and you'll just have to state your name and street address with your comment. Hi.

[02:02:24] Steve Wise, president of Clerk's Corner 8-0-A. Thank you for reaching back out. I couldn't believe walking in, Mayor Reed, and you're talking about invasive species. So what I love is that she's addressed it. I was going to speak about that, but I don't need to take any more of your time.

[02:02:42] You know, as far as we're concerned, it's really a big deal. And yes, it is up to each homeowner and each business, but we've got to put some enforcement in it. And that was the request. She's followed through with it. I'm not going to take any more of your time. Thanks. Appreciate it. Thank you. Any other speakers?

[02:03:00] Does not look like it. Okay, so I will close the public hearing. Counselor, are there any questions of staff or the applicant? Councilmember Hall. You mentioned the location was subject to a previously approved rezoning and special exception related to the office use.

[02:03:18] It might be a staff question, but is this something that conveys to the new owner, or is it something that could be further utilized in the future without restriction, or how does that work? I can let staff speak more to that. My understanding is while those do run with the land, special use permit would only essentially be with the permit holder, so it wouldn't affect what was previously approved on this site specifically. We agree with the applicant that the existing proffers from that dated land use approval do not have any impact on this proposed special use

[02:03:57] permit. And just to clarify, that was specifically for an expanded office use with increased parking, whereas this use meets the parking ordinance. Thank you. And then just one other question. The no preschool or daycare components, is that right now, or there's no expectation at all in the future, and it is not something that is allowed without another special use permit?

[02:04:19] That's correct. It would not be included in this approval. Okay. It could be at a later date with another special use permit if that was something. I should make sure I understand. I can't speak to if it would be permissible in this zoning district with a future special use permit at this time.

[02:04:35] but okay so there are no plans for any future daycare or preschool components however if they should decide down the road 10 years down the road they want to do that we would have to come back to city council and work with staff during you know do this whole development review process it would be an amendment to the special use permit and if there are any additional special exception whatever applications we would essentially work with staff and go through this whole process and bring it before you all the community again thank you that's really all wanted to make sure was that what we're agreeing to now potentially is what it would be for the

[02:05:10] foreseeable future. Correct. Okay. Thank you. Councilmember Amos? Yeah. I mean, to build on that, the main point, as you probably know, is that left turn off of Main Street can be pretty brutal, especially at the wrong time. But happy to see that the, and I appreciate the applicant's willingness to be able to limit the time and days that's available. And I'm not going to lie to y'all, driving by this all the time, I thought it was already a church. So, okay. No, I think it's a, it's a good site for this kind of application and happy to support it any other questions or comments councilmember peterson you mentioned a

[02:05:48] correction from llc to incorporated is the church of 501 c3 corporation great I'm seeing a thumbs up so yes okay good to hear thanks any other questions or comments for the applicant or staff okay seeing none is there a motion councilmember Hardy Chandler I move that the city council approve the request from Living Spring Church Incorporated applicant for the special use permit

[02:06:20] pursuant to City Code section 110-3.3.1b to allow a religious institution in the CEO commercial office district on the premises known as 10015 Main Street and more particularly described as tax map parcel 57-4-02-151 with the following conditions. One, the proposed use shall be consistent with the application and statement of justification received with the application. The city shall have the right to inspect the

[02:06:55] building at any time. Three, the special use permit shall be non-transferable. Four, the applicant shall obtain all necessary local, state, and or federal permits prior to any construction on site. Is there a second? Second. A motion has been made by Council Member Hardy Chandler and seconded by Council Member Peterson. A roll call vote. Council Member McQuillan. Aye.

[02:07:20] Council Member Bates. Aye. Council Member Peterson. Aye. Council Member Hardy Chandler. Council Member Hall. Aye. Council Member Amos. Aye. Motion passed unanimously. We'll go to the last public hearing item, which is a public hearing on the University Drive Bicycle Lanes project. There's no council action for this public hearing. I'm going to recognize Chloe Ritter,

[02:07:44] multimodal transportation planner to provide the staff presentation good evening mayor and council the item this for you this evening is a public hearing

[02:08:23] on the University Drive bicycle facilities project and before I get started I just want to take a moment to let you know introduce our consultants Megan Waring who is here to help me with this and we also have several staff from transportation division and our consultant here in case there are questions at the end of this presentation so the objective this public hearing is to give you some project background give a design presentation answer any questions you may have hear public and hear public comment there

is no city council action required with this public hearing this is a public hearing that is required with all of our federally funded

[02:08:59] projects at the roughly 60% design phase which is where we are with this project and we but we do typically do a public hearing with all of our projects regardless of whether they're federally funded or not so that is the purpose of this of this public hearing tonight so the project location is this line in the middle of the map in red. And this project came out of the small area plans for the Old Town Fairfax small area plan and the Northfax small area plan, which envisioned a multimodal spine connecting the two activity centers with the George Mason University campus, which is to the

[02:09:36] south, which is shown here on the right. So it would connect north-south with all of these dense activity centers. And it's also surrounded by several other projects that have been in the works over the last several years, including a bike lane on Layton Hall Drive, which would connect to the Willard Sherwood Center and the Blenheim Boulevard bicycle facilities. There are bicycle lanes south of Old Town currently that were installed several years ago. The Q bus route now runs on this portion of University Drive, and we've installed bike share stations nearby.

[02:10:10] And then there was the University Drive traffic calming project to the north. So this is another piece in a bigger network of bicycle and multimodal improvements in this area. Just looking at the project from north to south, there's kind of three main sections of this project, and we'll get into the design details in a moment.

[02:10:32] But basically, at the north end, the Layton Hall Drive intersection is recommended for improvement. Then the middle section from Layton Hall Drive to roughly North Street is a road diet, which would re-stripe the road from the four vehicle lanes that are there today.

[02:10:49] two through lanes, a center turn lane, and two bicycle lanes. And then to the south through the middle of Old Town is recommended to have shared lane markings through Old Town because currently there is not enough capacity to do a road diet through that section, but this is a next step into making bicycling more visible and more comfortable and safer through Old Town for the north-south connection. Project status, as I mentioned, we're at about 60% design, so we're at the intermediate design for the public hearing, and that would be step 10 in our project roadmap.

[02:11:28] At this stage, we've already gone through the feasibility, the concept design, and we are now refining some of the details, such as roadway and drainage design details, the striping plans, and the environmental review for the federally funded project. This is a timeline of where the project has been so far as i mentioned this was part of the old town and north fact small area plans it was also included in the bicycle master plan adopted in 2021 from those plans we then brought this to the city council for the two-year transportation program and then we conducted

[02:12:07] a feasibility study and developed the funding funding application and determined that it was feasible and and we were able to fund it with transportation alternatives funding then we started design last year, and we had a work session and an open house last fall, about a year ago. And now we've been working through changes based on that, and we are here at the design public hearing tonight. So just to recap, the project objectives are really to implement the vision for the University Drive multimodal spine as envisioned in those small area plans. And to do

[02:12:42] that, we want to improve pedestrian bicycle safety and comfort while maintaining access for all other types of travelers, maintaining vehicular capacity and transit operations. So now I'm going to hand it over to Ms. Waring to go through the design details. Thank you, Chloe. So a couple of things as we look through these screens, just to orient yourself with how we're viewing this.

[02:13:05] We are looking south as to the left of your screen, so we've flipped kind of the south-north view from left to right as we go through these components. What I'm going to walk through is each of the pieces as the project transitions throughout the corridor that Chloe had previously mentioned. One thing that we want to make sure that is clear as we go through this is that the intent behind this project is a road diet in the sense that we're repurposing the existing asphalt that is out there today. So we are not changing the curb lines. We're not modifying the curb lines.

[02:13:33] We're doing a redistribution of the system as it sits today. So as we look at the first portion of this, we're talking about South Street to North Street. The intent behind this portion of the project is to be sharrows or shared lane markings. There is an image on the upper right hand side where you can see what that looks like. The intent behind this is that the cyclists would share the lane with the cars on the outside lanes in either direction through this segment of the corridor and there would be no reduction to the travel lanes. The next portion that we want to look at here is from North Street to Whitehead Street and this is beginning the transition from those sharrows

[02:14:10] to bicycle lanes. This transition is going to occur as we're passing through the Old Town Plaza and library garages, and we start to introduce that reduction of a single lane in each direction with the two-way left turn lane through the center of the roadway with the bike lanes on either side. Another piece that we just want to note here that transitions from this portion through the end of the project is that we would be resurfacing the pavement through this area, so it would be refreshed with the asphalt and the markings through this area through the end of the project. The next portion that we want to touch on as far as the bicycle facilities

[02:14:49] themselves go. We're continuing that bicycle lane as we pass through to Whitehead Street down to Layton Hall Drive. As you enter kind of that downhill portion, as I'm sure you all are familiar with that, where you get a little bit steeper, instead of the two-way left turn lane, since we don't have any facilities or entrances along that corridor, we have a striped center turn lane. So it does function the same as the remainder, the first part of the corridor that we were just talking about, or the middle portion, I should say. And you'll notice that we also have green striping through major conflict points of this intersection. So anywhere where cyclists would be passing through intersections or entrances would be including striping that points that out a little

[02:15:25] bit more with the green striping itself. And then we transition back into sharrows as we pass through Leighton Hall Drive. So once you complete the transition through Leighton Hall Drive itself, the bike lanes will transition back into a sharrow environment. The next portion that we want to see and just reorienting ourselves again, we have twisted the view back so north is to your top.

[02:15:45] So just so you're understanding that, University Drive is running page bottom to page top, Layton Hall left to right. What we're looking at here is a two-way stop at this intersection that is going to be on the Layton Hall-specific sides of this road. In addition to that, this does include the removal of the northbound right turn lane, as well as the removal of the westbound slip lane from Layton Hall on to University Drive.

[02:16:10] As part of this intersection, we've taken the curb lines that exist there today, and we've brought them in. so we're not taking them out we're not doing any pavement writing here but this is the portion of the project where you do see an adjustment to the existing curb lines it's bringing it in so that we have shorter pedestrian crossings it's bringing the crosswalks closer to the intersection themselves whereas today they're a little bit more space out and it's adding actually the addition of an extra crosswalk on the south leg itself the last piece that we want to highlight as you'll see kind of towards the page bottom of that is the addition of a pedestrian refuge island as you're passing

[02:16:44] through on university drive itself still looking at this image here just a few things related to the design itself since we are moving some of those curve lines the intent behind this design is that it reduces the bicycle and pedestrian vehicle conflicts as you go through this intersection you're removing those extra conflict points with the slip lane and you do have the introduction of the green lanes or the green lines to draw attention to that it does maintain existing vehicle and transit operations today as well in addition one thing that we did want to point out as we brought back to the beginning of this design we are staying within the existing curb

[02:17:23] lines with the exception of that intersection but we are coming in the benefit to this is that we do not have right-of-way or utility impacts on this project so just as you're looking if we're looking at this design i wanted to summarize some of the analysis that we did as we did the feasibility study and then as we refined the design we've done a couple of traffic studies both at the feasibility pre-application stage and then again as we started the design of this project to make sure that we We were selecting the best design, looking at how this is going to impact traffic, but also looking at how it's going to impact pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, and just

[02:18:03] overall operations and safety throughout the corridor. And the traffic study did show, as Ms. Mooring mentioned, that there's not a significant impact to operations, and it does have a benefit for safety. So now we're going to go over some of the engagement that we've done.

[02:18:22] We've done some engagement both in the planning phases through the two-year transportation program, the bicycle plan, and the small area plans all had substantial engagement as part of the overall planning processes. And then we had engagement at the funding application stage as we were developing the concept and conducting the feasibility study.

[02:18:41] And then again, as I mentioned, we did have an open house and engagement last winter. And the engage page has been open throughout the project. And as of January, we had approximately 300 visitors look at the page. We had had five visitors comment on the concept. More recently, we've had a few more comments come in since we posted the public hearing information.

[02:19:01] So we are seeing some more feedback about this project. And we have incorporated some of the feedback that we've gotten as we've refined the design. For example, we did look at a few different options for the intersection. We did determine that the two-way stop, which is out there now, is the best option.

[02:19:18] We looked at trying to improve bicyclist safety in transition areas, as was mentioned, with some green markings and making some of those transition areas more visible. And removing that northbound right-turn lane also reduces a lot of conflicts on that downhill approach to the intersection.

[02:19:35] We've also looked at adding a painted buffer. We looked at but did not recommend a vertical barrier on this roadway between the bike lane and the travel lanes. And then again, as was mentioned, we did add a median pedestrian refuge in the crosswalk at the intersection of Leighton Hall Drive.

[02:19:54] So going forward from this evening, so we'll have the public hearing this evening, and then the public hearing record will be open to receiving formal comments through March 7th. We will then respond to the public hearing comments and finalize the 100% plans before we issue an IFB and award the construction contract later this year to begin construction next year is our anticipated schedule.

[02:20:20] This is our project budget. Our project estimate is for \$2 million and \$19,000. And this includes, as was already mentioned, the resurfacing of the roadway as well as the curb design and curb modifications.

[02:20:37] And we have funding from a couple of different sources. We have transportation alternatives funding, regional surface transportation funding, and the local match for the transportation alternatives funding so the project is fully funded for this evening's public hearing we did put out notice notifications in a number of different ways including signage newspaper ads an advertisement in the city scene and several emails and social media posts as well so that concludes our presentation we'll be happy to take any questions or hear the public hearing okay are there any questions of staff on the

[02:21:15] Dias. Councilmember Peterson. We, well, first of all, thank you very much, all of you, for doing this. We received a public comment, I think all of us, but it's a question that I had also, which is how effective are the Sharrows? So I will say that, I'll give my initial comments, and I know you may have some additional comments as well. The Sharrows, I would see them as an intermediate solution. It does increase visibility, but it does not give bicyclists a separate space.

[02:21:47] We did look at potentially including the road diet all the way through Old Town, but as I said, we don't really have the vehicular capacity the way it's currently done. We do have a separate project coming up in the near future to look at an Old Town circulation study, and I think this is one of the things we're going to be looking at, is how can we improve safety through Old Town as we look at the Old Town circulation.

[02:22:07] And you will have an opportunity to revisit the design where the sheriffs are as you do that? I think that's one of the intentions, is to how do we move traffic through Old Town but also move it through safely for everybody. That will be the intention of the separate Old Town Circulation Study in the future.

[02:22:26] Well, thank you. My second question, my comment is that bike safety is for real, and I've learned that the hard way. With respect to bike safety, other than what we just discussed with the sheriffs, is there anything that you didn't do that you might have done because the tradeoff was too high, whether it's cost or vehicle operation?

[02:22:47] Did we leave something out from a safety standpoint, or do we feel like we really did everything we could here? Well, I know that one of the things that we mentioned was there was some feedback about providing physical separation. Like I said, we had looked at putting in flex posts, and I believe that we decided that that was going to be a difficulty for both maintenance and operations of the roadway.

[02:23:10] You know, if there's snow plows or emergency vehicles, it doesn't give you a lot of flexibility. So that was one of the tradeoffs that we looked at. I would also say that flex posts, those are the flexible wands

that you see on the road, are more of a visual, almost more of a visual improvement.

[02:23:26] I don't know if there's any other safety features that we talked about. I think beyond the capacity issues that Chloe had already mentioned for the first portion of the project that we talked about, that would be one of the components with the share that she just touched on with the future look at that plan.

[02:23:43] In addition to that, where we did have a little bit of additional space and we didn't have the, or we made the choice for the flex posts, we do have a little bit of a wider bike lane on the incline from Leighton Hall up to Whitehead Street because as cyclists go up a hill a little bit more, there's a little bit more of the swaying to give them a little bit more room.

[02:24:02] So that was something that we used as a kind of additional measure. But I believe that covers the items that we were able to look at for this project yet. And can you clarify your comment on the posts? So they don't provide a physical barrier in the same way that a concrete barrier would.

[02:24:18] That's all I really meant. But they presumably are a whole lot better than not having a post. Yeah. Council Member Peterson, can you use your mic, please? They definitely increased visibility. Again, it was a tradeoff of increasing the visibility and reinforcing the separation of the lane.

[02:24:41] But again, as you said, it is a trade-off between the roadway operations versus the safety, and that was one area where we decided the benefit didn't outweigh the conflict. And is this a case where you will monitor and where you have a need and flexibility in the future, you could respond perhaps by adding posts in the future if they're warranted?

[02:25:04] Yes, that would be an easy thing to add in the future if it was warranted. Thank you. Other questions? Councilmember Amos. So for the portion where there's the northbound right turn to Layton Hall Drive, what would be the anticipated timeline for that?

[02:25:23] And have we effectively communicated that with Layton Hall, the apartment complex? When you say timeline, do you mean when it would be constructed? For example, how long will construction take? I don't know if I have that answer. Yeah, that might be. If it's beyond the scope right now, that would just be something to factor in and just getting that information over to Layton Hall.

[02:25:45] That's definitely something that we'll make sure that we communicate as we approach the construction timing and timeline of that. For the project like this, we'll look at the sequencing and understand a little bit more about how that total impact and the maneuverability around this intersection works during construction. The total construction of the intersection itself will take a few months, but it doesn't necessarily mean it blocks the turning access into that property the entire time, but that's something that we can provide more detail about.

[02:26:10] And I say this pretty much every single time Layden Hall comes up, as my colleagues know, Spanish outreach is critical there many individuals who reside at Layton Hall have bikes and they use them frequently I think they'd be very interested in this but we need to make sure that that information is translated Thank you. Any other questions or comments from the dais Councilmember Hall?

[02:26:35] It's one of those roads where you drive it every day and you think you know what it looks like And then you come to a presentation like this and you're trying to remember how many lanes there are or there aren't So can you, I was trying to figure it out from here, but currently when you, my directions are

challenged, currently when you're heading south on University, that's currently two lanes after you kind of cross over Leighton Hall.

[02:26:58] Is that correct? Correct, yes. So we don't have the current conditions, but right now it's two lanes when you're north of Leighton Hall Drive as you're going towards Fairfax Boulevard. When you get to Layton Hall Drive, I don't remember exactly where it transitions out, but it does transition to two lanes in each direction.

[02:27:16] There is the right-turn slip lane that's here today. So as you're coming north, the right-turn lane turns onto Layton Hall Drive. Coming south of the second lane, or the two lanes come in as you come south from Fairfax Boulevard.

[02:27:36] Okay, so would we be losing then the two lanes as you get closer to the Old Town area, or would we still be maintaining the lanes? So this section would have the road diet, where instead of having two vehicle lanes in each direction, you would have one vehicle lane in each direction, and then the center turn lane when you get to Whitehead.

[02:27:58] And then, let me go back the other way, and then as we transition back to Old Town, right around where the old town plaza garage entrance is it would transition back to the two lanes in each direction because there is a lot of traffic turning left and right at north street and main street and traveling through okay very curious to see how that does impact the vehicles and their wait times i don't think it's an extraordinary amount of time people tend to wait in that small stretch um but i i am curious um i do also share um council member peterson's

[02:28:37] questions and concerns about the flex posts. I think if we're trying to encourage people to be on bikes, we want to make sure it's as safe as possible. I recognize that putting a sharo on the street screams, hey, there's a bike here, but so does a bit of a more divided barrier. And even if it doesn't necessarily add a whole lot, it might add a little bit of snowplow challenges, but I think it also makes bikers feel a little bit more address a little bit more seen and it I do think

[02:29:11] it gives an extra safety barrier so I would like to maybe see some additional consideration of that finally I do recognize it's a little bit outside of the scope of here and I never ever thought I would be recommending that we consider a circle roundabout somewhere but if we're going this far down this intersection. I really think that the University Drive-Kenmore situation is a disaster waiting to happen if it has not already happened, and I think that there really just needs to be some additional TLC given to that small stretch where you're turning, and it seems like everyone

[02:29:49] has a left turn on at the same time, but no one knows where to go. There's a new-ish stop sign combined now with a yield, so just something to consider if we could maybe put some attention right there without a whole lot of extra work with this project thank you other questions or comments councilmember bates thank you i just want to say that i'm very supportive of this project and it's certainly a big step in the right direction i do share the desire for eventually

[02:30:22] seeing bike lanes or a shared use path or some kind of separated uh bicyclist or shared use facility along University Drive the entire length. But I do understand that there could be constraints on doing that due to the capacity of the roadway as it is now, but I certainly look forward to seeing what we can do to alleviate some of the safety concerns throughout Old Town for pedestrians, bicyclists, and I'm hoping that as we further evaluate and study the

[02:31:03] circulation throughout Old Town that we can hopefully see some further improvement here on you know very long-term basis and you know we have a lot of other projects in the pipeline such as the South Street extension that could you know for all we know drastically change hopefully improve how traffic is able to circulate through Old Town and that might have ripple effects for what we can do elsewhere in Old Town for example here and elsewhere so I hope that we can

[02:31:39] make Old Town the place where everybody feels comfortable bicyclists pedestrians and motorists alike thank you any other questions comments councilmember Amos just a quick question was this also designed with the potential idea of courthouse plaza going in and would that have any impacts yes Okay. Thank you. Any further questions or comments from about Councilmember Peterson?

[02:32:11] There we go. Build on Councilmember Hall's note about circles. I can't resist the temptation to ask whether this is a case where a Wendy Wiggle might be considered. A Wendy Pickle? A Wendy Wiggle. Wendy Wiggle. The partial circle, the wiggle. Your colleagues in the transportation transportation boards have described this infrastructure design thing that we use in the city as a windy wiggle okay I have not I've not heard that they heard it called that before

[02:32:51] it is the not doing a full circle but when you go down the road there you do a kind of a parcel thing no kidding the ones that are on university drive north of here the chicanes okay there you go okay you're famous but in all seriousness that's an alternative we've used is that something that is not in the cards here for the reasons to address some of the reasons that councilmember all raised so I don't I don't know if that would be something that would address the concerns at Kenmore because

[02:33:29] chicanes are typically a mid-block treatment that you put to slow traffic down as it goes through a corridor so an intersection treatment is going to be different than that but that's something we'll have to look at to see what what options there would be at kenmore other questions or comments it's a good project as far as the flex posts i mean we've seen them in dc you see them in other cities but generally the streets are much wider and multi-lane and so those visual cues really do help to create a sense that the bicycle lanes

[02:34:08] are separated from the traffic but we're talking about very narrow roads and so i i don't object to the flex posts i just think they're very different than when you see them in dc separating bike lanes when there's multiple lanes and the roads are really wide and but again i think anything we can do to improve um the safety is going to be well welcome by the public and so we should move continue to move forward in figuring out ways to make our bicycle lanes and bicycle transit safer here. With that, I am going to open the public hearing. Ms. Shinneberry, has this public hearing

[02:34:48] been advertised? Yes, it has, and I had three people sign up prior to the meeting to speak on this item, so I will call forward first Joseph Petruziak. When you come forward, please state your name and street address at the podium. Good evening, Joseph Petruziak, 4105 Poplar Street. I'd just like to um speak uh in favor of this project you know i'd like to see my um my kids be able to get to uh downtown uh the the cultural events and and teen friendly businesses downtown um you know with uh be able to bike down uh with you know safety provided by infrastructure uh that's um

[02:35:27] you know something that uh you know certainly you know trails do best but bike lanes bike lanes also serve that purpose and and uh corridors where where where we can't have trails um you know i'd also like to um you know put myself forward as a as a as a testament to the fact that once you build uh

bike infrastructure such as lanes um bicycles will use it to to connect to other infrastructure mass transit i mean i myself i i bike to uh both viore and viana metro depending where i'm

[02:36:01] um called to work on any given day um i you know i would it's uh you know bike lanes out on county roads help me get to vre the limited bike bike lanes that we have in the city makes makes it a safe and uh um it it makes it a reasonable um journey for me to to connect to metro um i'm typically going, uh, car free to get to the city. Uh, I really don't think I could do it as well without the support of bike lane. So, so I'd like to just voice, voice my support and, and favor of

[02:36:40] all these bike projects. It's, it's a great improvement on my life. So thank you. Our next speaker is Douglas Stewart. Douglas Stewart, one zero eight, two, two Maple street. And, um, what the previous speaker said, I, I will, I'd just like to add my comments, everything he said spot on.

[02:37:08] really infrastructure, and you build the infrastructure, you do create more demand and opportunities for people to bike safely. I've been biking here ever since we moved here 21 years ago. And actually, when we first moved here, I talked to a former staff member that said he's no longer here, but said, you know, asking why we didn't have bike parking downtown.

[02:37:31] And he said, well, it's too dangerous to bike downtown. And I just thought, gosh, that's so sad. This is actually somebody in the planning department, by the way, who's no longer here, but who was just like, well, you can't bike downtown because we don't want to encourage people to bike there. So obviously the things have changed.

[02:37:47] Your questions and comments, you know, just show how much more bike friendly this city is. And this is a great project. One thing that maybe I just wanted to add to all that's been said already is this isn't only about biking, but it's also sending a signal to people when they're driving into downtown that you're in a different place now.

[02:38:07] you're in a historic town um there are there are buildings around you there are places where people walk and that's what these you know this improvement will really convey that message and create more you know will help encourage more patronage more people to walk and visit city businesses so it's going to be it's going to be good economically for the for the city as well i i also just wanted to just thank the the city staff um for for improving the project i i spoke in support of this when it was first introduced about three years ago.

[02:38:40] And since then, it's only gotten better through the improvements they talked about, especially removing those turn lanes when you're going downhill is going to make it a lot easier and safer to cross at Leighton Hall. And generally, road diets work.

[02:38:56] There's a road diet near Government Center, and now I bike to Government Center to go there, where i didn't before it's changed behavior but it hasn't affected traffic cars are not you know it's just the stop and start is is essentially reduced and you don't have so much possibility you know on that not part of university you have cars speeding and stopping at the red light or you have cars speeding and stopping behind a car that's turning left and road diets really are going to have a pretty i mean the people often are a little unfamiliar with them and don't like them at first and then they they happen and everybody's like this is you know nobody knows

[02:39:33] there's a difference um but it definitely works better for for bicyclists so so thank you um i think it's a great project our next speaker is evan ramey hello i'm evan ramey um tidewater hall um i first

of all i want to thank councilmember peterson for addressing the concerns over the sharrows and the flexi posts i was going to ask the same thing so thank you um i want to say everything happening north of North Street, I'm, like, complete in favor of. It's great work. I love

[02:40:09] the intersection treatments. We need more green paint in the city, and the road diet is a really good idea. It should get done. I have concerns leaving the Sharrows the way that they are. As someone who regularly bikes into Old Town, I do not feel safe on the Sharrows. I have been biking my entire life, and luckily I am confident enough that I can do it, but you wouldn't want, like a five-year-old kid biking into town and then having to take a lane. That shouldn't be the city that we're creating here. I think if the sharrows are to remain for any period of time

[02:40:46] while that section of the road is in review, I think there should be bike lane markings or super sharrows. I think they're called in the VDOT Bicycle Treatments Manual. And I'd like to see green paint on them because that sends the signal to drivers, bikes can be here, they're allowed, you have to slow down or pass. I would also like to say that in terms of adding more protection options for the sections that have a road diet, raising it to curb level as a more long-term plan would keep it easily snow plowable and would also add an element of protection from cars. I would love to see a curb level bike lane. Outside of that, maybe some removable concrete barriers which

[02:41:25] could be removed ahead of a predicted winter storm. That would also add great protection during the summer months. And if the charrows are to remain, I would want to see the speed limit reduced on their roads to preferably 15 miles an hour because my winter bike is a single speed for maintenance reasons. And so if there is a hill, I'm walking. And if I don't feel comfortable accelerating to 25 miles an hour and the cars are already going like 30, 35. So if the charrows are to remain and if they're to be included in the scope of this project, safety treatments must be

[02:42:05] done to make them feel more safe. Thank you. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak on this project? Come forward and you could just state your name and street address and your comment at the podium. I'm Evan Freund. I live at, I'm on campus at Blue Ridge Hall, Ravanna Riverway, GMU. And I would also like to say that I support the idea of a road diet and I share similar concerns over the cycling infrastructure not necessarily being safe enough.

[02:42:39] I don't really feel comfortable taking sharrows. I feel as if if they're there, the majority of people on bicyclists would probably opt to take the sidewalk because it would feel safer. So I would fight tooth and nail for any safety improvement because the life of cyclists is not worth saving 10 seconds for motorists.

[02:43:00] Thank you. Is there anybody else that would like to speak on this item? Hi, City Council.

[02:43:16] I'm Ben Rhodes at 3704 University Drive. I'd like to thank staff. This is a really great plan. and I'd like to thank you all for entertaining this tonight as a public hearing. And I'd like to thank my neighbors for having really great comments, particularly my neighbor in the Beret. Really nice attention to detail with understanding the road treatment manual and understanding the importance of bringing bike lanes up to curb height.

[02:43:41] Something that I feel very strongly about living on University Drive is once you get past traffic calming on University Drive, between the traffic calming at Ford and Kenmore, That's a raceway. It's a straightaway, and it's not helped by the ease by which motorists can take that turn over the bridge.

[02:44:06] This is a great, great plan at that intersection with Leighton Hall to bring attention to motorists that people exist outside of their vehicles. And so I'm really looking forward to this plan being implemented basically in my front yard.

[02:44:28] Yeah. Old Town is a place you should be able to bike to. People talk all the time opposing certain projects, that we have an Old Town and Small Town feel. This would bring a Small Town feel, having kids and, you know, young people, old people, whoever, on different, you know, kinds of vehicles, than vehicles, than cars, than motorized vehicles in the middle of the city.

[02:44:51] So thanks very much. Is there anybody else in the audience that would like to come forward? Okay, there's no council action on this item, So I am now going to close the public hearing.

[02:45:08] Mayor Reed. Council Member Hall. I just have one comment. Please wear your helmets. Just do it. If you're running a bike, bring a helmet. I know it's weird. Carry it with you. Please. Please wear a helmet. I believe that's the law.

[02:45:24] Yes. Yes. So now I will close the public hearing. There's no council action at this time. So second public comment. Yep. We're going to go to the second general public comment. I had two people sign up prior to the start of the meeting, so I'll call them to come up first.

[02:45:41] Bill Fort, if you can come forward and state your name, address, and your comment at the podium. Bill Fort, 3425, Preservation Drive. I'm here representing the Pickett's Reserve Homeowners Association to address our concerns about the proposed highlands of Pantua development.

[02:46:06] We've spoken to the council before last year, and we have been monitoring the progress of the approval. The project, Highlands of Mantua, will border a picture on the north side.

[02:46:23] We have a few concerns that we'd like to continue to put forward. First, it's only a little more than a two-acre plot, and the proposal is 14 townhomes, fairly large townhomes.

[02:46:39] they're too big too tall for that plot of land there won't be enough buffer between our neighborhood our property and the the townhomes that are proposed to be built it's very close to several homes in our neighborhood second four stories is what's been proposed it's really too tall three stories should be

[02:47:11] the limit on this kind of development and the third one is that the developer is planning to remove more than a hundred trees from this two-acre plot to make room for the things that developer wants to put on the property we think this is crazy some of these are old large trees just doesn't make any sense

[02:47:44] to us in a community like the city of Fairfax where we are really after preserving our canopy. A few other concerns that I'm not going to get into. Traffic we're concerned about. We think that there will actually be an increase in traffic associated with this, not only during the construction, but when residents start moving in. So thank you very much.

[02:48:15] Okay, our next speaker is Maggie Lubinsky. Good evening. My name is Maggie Lubinsky, and I live at 3982 Boleynahound Circle.

[02:48:33] I'm a Farcroft resident of six years, a full-time public school teacher, a wife, and a mother. I moved to Fairfax City in 2008 when I first moved to Virginia, and I fell in love with the quaintness, the quietness, and the safety of Fairfax City.

[02:48:54] It is not the same now. Fairfax City has more traffic, congestion, and is noisier. As a Farcroft resident who would be living next to the Five Chimneys House Hotel, the construction site, noise, smells of a hotel conference center proposed, I already hear the garbage trucks, delivery trucks, sounds from the Fauna Grill, former Coyote Grill, Walgreens Plaza.

[02:49:24] We can see the lights at night from there. No less the loud music and the ground movement from the Fairfax City events. And yes, loud music. If there is a hotel conference center next to us, I'm concerned about the following.

[02:49:42] The noise, such as garbage, contractors' deliveries for day and night, traffic in the proposed garage and fire truck turnaround on both sides of the building, the back lights of the hotel at night, the hotel guests and workers who can see into our houses, children and private lives through their hotel windows several stories high, the traffic congestion.

[02:50:09] Do we have to share a stoplight with the hotel traffic? What will be the entrance point? Has there been a needs-based assessment on having a hotel conference center right next to the Farcroft versus a more commercial spot on Route 50 or 29 in Fairfax City or even Braddock Road? I worry about our home value. We already have had people dealing drugs in our neighborhood who don't even live there. I personally have had a stranger at my front door at 1 a.m. trying to open the door. He looked to be under the influence or drunk.

[02:50:47] I live on the side facing what would be the construction site there. I don't want more foot traffic and strangers near my family. Lastly, this proposed hotel conference center has brought back many memories from my childhood neighborhood.

[02:51:06] There was a hotel conference center proposed right next to, behind our neighborhood. The hotel conference center builders had their mandatory community forums, but failed to disclose that the proposal was already a yes. In the end, the bordering trees and brush were cut down, and the Hotel Conference Center was constructed.

[02:51:28] Thank you for your consideration. Is there anybody else that would like to speak under the second general public comment? Katie Johnson, 10132 Spring Lake Terrace.

[02:51:44] I'd like to thank you for recognizing Invasive Species Awareness Week. Invasive species cost Virginia more than \$1 billion per year, nationally more than \$120 billion. After development and habitat conversion, invasive species are considered to be the greatest threat to our natural areas.

[02:52:00] I would like to recognize and applaud our urban forestry program. They are doing an amazing job bringing awareness and putting actual work into addressing the invasives in our park. This past weekend, the urban forestry-led volunteers, including the sustainability on the ESC, we removed 113 bush honeysuckle, multi-flora rose, burning bush, one autumn olive, along with numerous tree-killing vines. It was a great effort, but it was only a dent in this massive problem that we are facing in our parks. I would also like to point out that the invasive species thrive in

[02:52:38] disturbance and edge habitats. These are exactly what are created by trails, especially trails that bisect our forest. This path, I am asking you again tonight on behalf of 2,372 signers of our petition to stop the destruction of woodlands in our city, please amend, reroute, or cancel the George Snyder Trail, the Country Club Commons Trail, the Picket Connector, the trails that

[02:53:08] threatened our forest. Thank you. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak? Thank Thank you, John. Show 3421 Preservation Drive. I'm new to the city of Fairfax for about six months, lived nine months in Fairfax County, and moved 300 yards to this home, and then realized after I moved in, the HOA president said, hey, do you know we're in the middle of this contested space with Highlands of Mantua?

[02:53:42] So mine is the furthest northwest corner home, and the concern we have is that right now, a single level view, when you take a look at something called the bulk plane, dimensional standards, not getting too technical, it's actually right because the size of that single story as it abuts our homeowners' property is just right.

[02:54:06] When you add 47 feet, whether it's 3 feet or 4 feet, you have encroachment. And so that's your 156. So we spent a lot of time taking a look at the regulations and taking a look at the comprehensive plan. For me, in simple lay terms as a heart surgeon, it comes down to is there adequate buffering?

[02:54:27] And so we ask that as you take a look at this, maybe use a common sense approach, as all of you I've heard for the last few hours do. And can we perhaps identify a solution that allows the townhomes to be built, but then allows for adequate buffering?

[02:54:46] There is a case just right across the street, Barrister's Keep, in which that was done, and the city council identified that. But if you take a look at 156, in your zoning regulations, it shows that 45-degree plain for 47 feet or 43 feet or 60 feet.

[02:55:03] Whatever the developer wants, we just ask there be a commiserate distance with our HOA property line. As is, you're a few feet from encroaching on my property, then it makes it a personal tort action. What we're trying to do is have a win-win as you take a look at this, and I just ask that you consider that.

[02:55:24] I appreciate your time. It's been a long evening. Thank you all for your leadership. I look forward to engaging with you on this in the future. Thanks again. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak? Okay.

[02:55:43] All righty then. I will now recess the regular meeting to go into a work session. We will take a five-minute recess to go into the work room.

[03:02:27] All right. We are now in our work session. What is first on the agenda, Ms. Shinneberry? Our first item is a pre-application discussion for 10230 Main Street Redevelopment Concept. Albert Frederick, city planner, will provide the staff presentation.

[03:02:45] Good evening, everyone. This is the pre-application briefing for a concept plan for Far House, also known as Five Chimneys, located at 10230 Main Street. Staff met with a potential applicant to discuss the preliminary plans, and have provided some initial feedback on the concept plan.

[03:03:09] Subject property is located on the north side of Main Street, west of Barcroft Drive, east of Main Street Marketplace, Charming Center, and north of the terminus of Locust Street. The subject property has been identified in the comprehensive plan in the section entitled Parcel-Specific Considerations.

[03:03:34] It should be noted that the subject property has a resource protection area in the rear of the property. Although no historic designation exists, it should be explored for inclusion within a historic

overlay district. An alternative use may include single-family attached neighborhood.

[03:03:52] any developments to retain the existing house, minimize disturbance in the RPA, and consider appropriate relationship with the Farcroft neighborhood to the east. So here's an area of photo of the subject property. Again, surrounded by a single family to the east and north and to the west is also residential along with the marketplace shopping center. So the property has a single family detached neighborhood place type with residential medium zoning and again it has

[03:04:27] RPA and floodplain on subject property. Here is the concept plan showing hotel and hospitality venue with 96 rooms. The hotel is located on the eastern side of the property and proposed three story hotel with 96 rooms, specialty restaurants, lobby and bar, wellness spa and indoor outdoor pool area conference center and event conference center and events as well as an underground

[03:05:01] parking structure so concept rendering for the proposal so on the on the left you'll see the the home that's currently there the applicant is proposing to keep the home and preserve the the home while adding the hotel on the west side and providing you know conference center and spa as well as some restaurants on site so additional renderings shown the rear of the property on the

[03:05:41] on the right side of your screen showing a green roof and some outdoor seating outer dining area to the rear of the home and then you also see again the the home being preserved what you don't see is parking the parking structure is two levels of parking that's beneath the existing home and the proposed conference center and hotel so in terms of preliminary staff comments staff provided comments for the applicant during drt meeting

[03:06:20] and just to highlight some of those comments that this would require a complaint amendment a rezoning request an rpa site specific study as well as a water quality impact assessment application the applicant should evaluate the property for the national register of historic places as well as potentially placing the property within the city's historic overlay district staff also would like for the applicant to provide a structural analysis of the home

[03:06:52] as well as a phase two archaeological assessment one of the larger items that staff brought up is consider switching the hotel location from the east side of the property to the west side you also see that same comment within the planning commission comments in addition to saving as many mature trees on site the applicant should be cognizant of the the tree line and the impacts to the adjacent property owners of farcraw residential on development as well as remaining

[03:07:30] out of the rpa and providing minimal impacts to the rpa that's only what's supported by section 4.1 of the zoning 4.18 of the zoning ordinance the multimodal plan was also mentioned to the applicant would require tempered sidewalks and streetscape along main street transportation staff does not support more than one drive from main street and as well as the applicant should consider realignment of the entrance with locust street staff does not support surface parking

[03:08:10] along main street the original concept plan showed surface parking a traffic study is required and would need to set up a scoping meeting with transportation staff and provide a driveway with the minimum driveway width of 26 feet and providing an area turnaround large enough for the largest emergency upper apparatus for fire and ems and then finally the applicant would need to provide sanitary sewer information as well as storm water management a stormwater management plan

[03:08:47] the planning commission provided a number of comments and the comments were varied in the types of comments as as stated earlier the the applicant should flip the building from the east side to the west side that would be very helpful the elevation changes between the east and west side of the site should be considered as well as the urban forester having a chance to review and making as many opportunities opportunities to preserve the tree canopy

[03:09:24] on-site in addition to those comments comment was made in terms of the hotel and the number of hotels proposed in the city and look for economic development to provide guidance on whether there's a demand to support two hotels in a conference center again being mindful of the adjacent single family neighborhood the applicant should consider the impacts to the adjacent neighborhood as well as remaining out of the RPA and then some larger comments in terms of the comprehensive plan

[03:10:02] the comprehensive plan calls for single family development potentially could see a combination of single family and townhomes and as well as the comprehensive plan was reviewed by the planning commission and did not recommend any changes for the site so it's one of those projects that i received a mixed bag of comments and not sure if this is the right proposal for this uh location as well as does it actually support the overall plan and goals for the for the city finally the

[03:10:35] applicant would need to submit a comprehensive plan a rezoning map amendment or water quality impact assessment study an rpa study and a major certificate of appropriateness for architecture and landscaping and finally the next steps would be a potential land use application submission and development review process and that includes the work sessions and public hearings and i'll stand by for any questions you may have and i don't believe the applicant is here tonight but

[03:11:12] THIS IS INFORMATIONAL AND SO THEY WON'T RECEIVE ANY COMMENTS ANYWAY. RIGHT. SO YOU'RE IT. I AM IT. YOU ARE IT. SO COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS. COUNCILMEMBER HARDY CHANDLER. SO ONE OF THE PIVOTAL PIECES FOR ME IS THE COMMENT BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION ABOUT JUST THE NEED FOR THIS. WHETHER OR NOT FROM GUIDANCE

[03:11:45] from economic development whether or not uh there is a need for a hotel or conference center in our region given the landscape of the city's availability for hotel rooms and other things so there may not be at this very early stage any information about that but to me that's sort of a tipping point for any of the other issues because if the need is not there It makes some of the other questions moot.

[03:12:19] Council Member Amos. Oh, Council Member Amos. To add to Council Member Hardy Chandler's point, also a great point that was brought up during the public comment was the Ox Block A proposal and the hotel conference there.

[03:12:35] So in addition to that, having both hotel options, what does the need look like then? I am also curious, and this would, a lot of my questions I feel like come later, which is a little odd, especially with water quality. I always get iffy about things that even approach the RPA and we don't have We don't have recommendations for a stormwater as of yet. My other point would be I would like to see renderings of what the what the Visual would look like from the adjacent neighborhood just because I that wasn't in this presentation

[03:13:11] Councilmember Hall. Thank you. I had emailed some staff questions and questions to you Brian earlier about this and I think it's important to recognize and I think the mayor has said this before is

that if we don't do this what do we do there and not saying I agree that we move forward with this or that we should but I do think that we need to be mindful of what else could go here

[03:13:44] and some of the questions I had asked in my email was what would be the tax revenues that we could recognize from this and if we didn't go with this and let's say they put single-family homes I had done some rough calculations on number of students, number of houses based upon per acre, you know, to be consistent with Farcroft.

[03:14:05] I think the other proposal that was done previously was 18 single-family homes. Does that sound correct, Mr. Harden? Yeah. So this comment here, about 30 or 40, I don't know if that's feasible or not. But I just think that there's a lot of, sometimes I feel like it's cart before the horse with these projects or bringing them at this stage.

[03:14:27] I just think we need to look and see what could be the potential tax revenue if we went with this. What could it be if we went with single-family homes, some combination of townhomes? You know, I think the community themselves are, they sound like they're open to some sort of development similar to what they already have in Farcroft.

[03:14:47] So if that were the case, if there was a developer willing to do that, you know, what would that look like? I just think there's a whole lot of questions. I also think in addition to many of the community not wanting this plan specifically, I think they also have major concerns about their, I'll call it a retaining pond, I don't know the exact wording there, and what that runoff looks like to them and how much that dredging costs their community every year or every time it has to be done.

[03:15:18] And I think that those are things that we need to be cognizant of as we consider things, as we discuss what could go here and make sure that there are, I guess, contingency plans on what that developer is going to do to make sure that they're mitigating all of those problems and creating their own situation to deal with stormwater management.

[03:15:42] The other thing I didn't totally see in the plan photos was where is the indoor-outdoor pool going to go, unless I missed that in the view itself. Is that it on the left? If you can see my cursor, I believe this is the pool area here.

[03:16:02] Okay, that's the pool. And then the community itself is more towards the right there, the valley. I never had to say that word, the valley-holly drive section. Okay, yeah. So I have to say, I don't hate this plan.

[03:16:18] I think there are a lot of questions, a lot of things that need to be answered, a lot of conversation with economic development. Is this something that we think the city could support? But again, I think the other question is, if not this, what else?

[03:16:34] And how would those things all play out? So, thank you. Council Member Peterson. Well, to build on that, it sounds like there's still a lot of design and assessment that needs to take place here.

[03:16:53] What's the timing and approach around that? Well, it begins with an application. So I don't have a time frame of how long before you'd actually see plans come in.

[03:17:10] That's kind of up to the potential applicant and their plans and trying to move forward and taking the feedback and then coming up with a plan and details. So it could be totally up to them.

[03:17:26] At what stage would the applicant provide a market assessment of this? A market assessment. Will they be doing their own market assessment, and will you be able to do your own?

[03:17:43] Will we be able to do market assessment and compare them to get some sense of feasibility of this? Here we go. We would conduct our own fiscal analysis of the project, and the applicants are asked to also provide that when there is a rezoning.

[03:18:04] Those come in typically with either first submission or sometimes an applicant will wait. If it's a larger project with a lot of multifamily units, for example, to make sure they've got the unit count locked in because there's a lot of work that goes into the programming.

[03:18:20] But in a case like this, we would conduct our work on the front end because there's not a lot to change in terms of programming here. So that would come in with a, it would be expected with a complete rezoning and comp plan amendment application package.

[03:18:38] Great, thanks. Then just to clarify, I think I understood from an earlier comment that the applicant is open about alternate design scenarios here based on at least in part community feedback. Is that right? Well, we discussed the location of the hotel being moved on the east side. I can't really say that they agree to it.

[03:19:07] I mean, we put it out there with Planning Commission and also staff, so it's up to them to consider the comments that they heard from staff and also from Planning Commission. And I'm sure once they continue to have meetings with the neighbors, those are items that they would need to consider.

[03:19:29] So I can't speak for them, but I can tell you that we've brought up the alternative design. And then the last question, I think I saw that the Planning Commission had noted that it would be either a good idea or a must-do to get a stronger evaluation of the forest impacts and RPA impacts, et cetera.

[03:19:52] Again, what would be the timing of that? When would that be done so that we could have a more clear picture of the impact that that has on this? They would need to submit those applications as a package with the rezoning and the complaint amendment.

[03:20:10] So at the time of the rezoning application, we would need to have an RPA study. We would need to have a floodplain study. All of those studies were required at the time of application and submission. And those studies are predicated on comprehensive discussions and scoping with engineering staff and public works for floodplain and RPA delineation, along with meetings with the city's urban forester for not only the tree survey, but understanding where the limits of disturbance may be so that impacts the trees that aren't necessarily flagged but are in danger or critical

[03:20:48] because of where that grading would take place, she would need to know on the plans. So there's a whole litany of meetings and information points needed as they put together their civil engineering set. Well, and just to clarify, between now and then, community feedback seems to be the driver for encouraging redesign of this.

[03:21:19] Is that a fair characterization? I think it would be fair to say that the staff has heard feedback from the community, planning commission, certainly what council may say tonight, along with our collective opinion, all seem to be based on, again, what you may say tonight.

[03:21:41] It seems like the consensus among all those parties are for a redesign of what we see here. That would be my view. Councilmember Bates. Thank you.

[03:21:58] I, frankly, am not a fan of this. I don't think that this is really the right use for this site, especially as it is now having basically a resort backing up to a quiet neighborhood here.

[03:22:17] Moving that over, flipping it, you know, along the east-west orientation might help a bit, but how much really? You know, I want to point out a section of the comprehensive plan relating to this project that states that it should be explored for inclusion within a historic overlay district and alternative use may include single-family attached neighborhood and any development should retain the existing house, et cetera, et cetera.

[03:22:55] And, I mean, this may meet the letter of that part prescribing the retention of the existing house um does it really meet the spirit i would say no um it kind of bastardizes it a bit in a way um it would totally change the the physical context of the house um and uh yeah so i mean i to my mind i could see this becoming a townhouse neighborhood where maybe you have uh you know a handful of townhouses kind of in that front half of the property and then you retain the uh the

[03:23:33] historic house itself in roughly its current condition in the rear half and that way you also preserve most if not all the trees are on the property because that front half is mostly open field and so yeah I'm certainly not really a fan at all this concept thank you. Councilmember McQuillan. I'm in agreement with my fellow council members I too am not super fond of this plan the EDA analysis is really important it's vital to know if we can support this type of business here in the city the stormwater runoff is a huge

[03:24:11] concern to me especially being so close to a floodplain and RPA I'd also like to encourage the developer to consider moving the hotel from the one side to the other you you know that today we heard a lot of feedback on noise and privacy concerns and that's any other any other thoughts yes council member Peterson. More generally, I would like to build on Councilmember Bates' observation here, whether it fits exactly for this property or not, but there is something called a concept called

[03:24:49] conservation design. You protect part of a piece of property and you develop the other part of it, but you don't spread equal development across all of it. This is a site that looks like it would benefit from that kind of thinking because it has the attributes you certainly want to protect, but you can accommodate development at the same time so I think generally speaking if I'm hearing you correctly that would be more akin to the approach we would want to look at here it would be a bit more consistent I think projects like this are very complicated for a lot of reasons we are working within the

[03:25:27] parameters of we have zoning and ordinances and a comprehensive plan of what we'd like to see or what it's zoned for Mrs. Lewis herself had the opportunity to sell her property for development, for housing, and she didn't. And the property belongs to her and not the city. So a developer has come along who has a concept. Once she is no longer in charge of her property, someone else can decide to sell the property to someone else for some other project. But we as a body look at what is brought before us as a project.

[03:26:02] Mrs. Lewis has decided to work with Oxhill on this particular concept. There's a lot of positives to it. In my way of thinking, Fairfax City is at the very heart of Northern Virginia. We are at the epicenter and we are the crossroads for the entire region.

[03:26:19] And yet we have not built venues for people to host things here. What are our major venues? Old Town Hall, Sherwood Center? Where do you host a major conference? Even though we are equal

distance for all the magisterial districts in Fairfax County, which is why they like to do things here, We don't have venues to do things here.

[03:26:37] We didn't build to our geographic advantage it being at the center, the heart of Northern Virginia. And when you look at a venue like this and you wonder who's going to host things there or whether it could be supported, obviously it looks like a wedding venue.

[03:26:53] And we have a lot of historic properties and we're a historic downtown, so you assume that there's a lot of brides-to-be who are going to go, oh, yes, and this place, as well as people who want to host conferences because of its location. You know, I think about Salamander Resort out in Middleburg, and I wasn't around to hear the discussion of whether or not they thought putting a resort in the historic town right on the outside was a good idea or not.

[03:27:18] But hey, there it is. And so projects like this have a lot of potential. One way or another, I don't know if this is the right project or if this is the right developer, but I think we have to think more expansively. Again, what do you use the property in the city?

[03:27:34] We're only 6.2 square miles. We can keep building neighborhoods, but as you know, there are people who have issues with that too. Lots of issues. How tall, how dense, how wide, the trees. So I think we have to think more strategically about properties like this and what is in the best interest of the city's economy.

[03:27:57] And to me, this is an interesting and intriguing project because it does answer the need. What venues do we have in this city to host the events people want to host because we're right in the middle. So I think Ox Hill wants to know what we think as a body because it's very expensive to keep putting time and money into renderings, plans, submitting an application.

[03:28:22] All of this costs money. They're paying people to do all of this. So what they're looking for is they're looking for feedback from the community, but they're also looking for feedback from us. Are we willing to consider it or are we going to shut it down and say, yep, nope, not willing to think about it. I do think out of this work session, that's what they're looking for. Is this something we're going to consider, or is it like no, a hard no for me? And you're not, you may not be prepared to say that right now.

[03:28:51] But again, Mrs. Lewis also has a say in this. She had an opportunity to sell to a developer to build townhouses, and for whatever reason, she has decided that she'd like to work on this project. At least that's what our understanding is. So I think Stocks Hill really is floating a trial balloon for the community and for the council to see where we are.

[03:29:13] Council Member Amos. Yeah, I'll just say when it comes to proposals, I'm open to any proposal. I guess this is just a bit of an odd timing since I'm not used to having to discuss a pre-development proposal this early on in the process.

[03:29:29] So essentially all of our questions don't get addressed until later. And, you know, it's unfortunate that you'd have to go through this and then it's possible that they come back later and we don't like their stormwater management system or we don't like that they didn't preserve tree canopy and then it's expensive to cancel it later as well.

[03:29:46] So I guess it's more so this is a process issue for me just because there's not enough information. I mean, for example, an economic analysis, I would like to see that as well. So I wouldn't say

that I'm opposed to the project. I just don't have enough information. Council Member Hardy-Chandler.

[03:30:07] I agree with that. And this is the pre-application phase. It's very early. I just think that's why some of these factors, they don't have the same weight. And so I think the sort of regional need, not only for now, but as we've talked about many times, trying to plan for the future, what down the line is needed.

[03:30:29] I think additional information about those kinds of projections would be helpful either way. I think, again, it's too early for a hard, for me, a hard yes or no. I think we really just need to think more globally around this information is about this single project, but we have a responsibility to represent the whole city.

[03:30:52] And so where does this meet the needs of the whole city for 2025 and decades beyond is my question. And while no one has a crystal ball to see into the future, we have wonderful people who can do projections about what those expectations are regionally, And that's what would be helpful to me.

[03:31:15] Councilmember Peterson. Well, and to build on that, this is not an uncomplicated project. And as a consequence, will require some degree of capacity by its developer in terms of design and assessment.

[03:31:31] And this particular developer is doing that in other areas and is familiar with the market and familiar with the issues. And I would think it would be fair to, you know, be able to have the benefit of the assessments that they do that would answer some of these questions.

[03:31:49] For instance, in terms of the feasibility of this from a commercial standpoint, this is in a location that has been the subject of evaluation of conference centers, et cetera.

[03:32:04] We have a major university, certainly, that plays into that, and there have been other experiences with that, and there's a record of that experience in the marketplace that no doubt could be considered as the facility is being designed here, and I think we could benefit from that information.

[03:32:23] I just think it's fair to expect that we would get that information at an early stage because it's out there, and this is a project that if you're going to pull this off, you've got to be good enough to do that kind of research, And you've got to make that available at this stage right now council member Hall. I think if we're Looking to give direction my personal opinion on this would be Yes, i'm open to considering this I want to make sure that we're meeting the needs of the community around as far as sound and garbage and

[03:32:58] Viewing and who's not looking into their backyards and their front yards and their windows and all of those things With how things are placed and managed and especially the stormwater situation But again, I will say, I think it's, we don't always want in our backyard, but we do have to consider what else this woman might consider doing with her 9.4 acres.

[03:33:21] That's a lot of square footage when it comes to apartments, single family homes, townhouses. I know I just went through all this again, but I'm not saying this is the best choice, but other things to me, if I lived in the neighborhood, could be a whole lot worse.

[03:33:37] So that's my hopeful, somewhat direction. Thank you. council member bates uh personally you know i'd have to say it's a hard no for me it's to my mind not consistent with the comprehensive plan and uh frankly it you know i just don't see this happening here um it is next to townhouses and so i don't think that it would be unreasonable to uh to see

[03:34:09] townhouses there as long as the original house is preserved in its current condition um but frankly this use i just don't see happening here anything else from anybody else councilmember peterson well i would just like to say that i i appreciate those comments on the other hand i i think my reading is that this developer has tried with this project to do something that is different

[03:34:44] and could potentially work and end up preserving some of the best attributes of this land we've got a historic home, we've got open space, we've got woods, et cetera, find a way for that to come together that is an alternate to a conventional form of development here.

[03:35:02] So I really think the developer should be credited for doing that. And as a consequence, I'm not, you know, against some further exploration of how this could be constructed, but I think that the community's concerns are going to be a very big issue here that need to be clarified and understood in terms of that process.

[03:35:19] what I'm hearing is that the developer is open to that kind of a dialogue and so it may be that there would be an opportunity for another look at what might happen based on some further consideration and I would be open to that but there are some big issues here that would need to be addressed so ultimately it's up to the developer to decide what they want to do next councilmember Hall I'm sorry mr. Harden I'm gonna put you on the spot here the square footage or mileage whatever not mileage sorry the um acreage of what was paul the sixth

[03:35:54] what is that roughly do you know all told about 18 acres okay so this is about half the size of that correct okay thank you it's a very good visual reference for me i agree anything else all right well we will live it leave it up to the developer decide what they are going to do next but we appreciate this very thorough presentation based on what you know right now our next item is discussion on a request by rjl associates incorporation for the redevelopment of 9495

[03:36:27] silver king court albert frederick city plan will provide the staff report good evening again this is a post submission work session for rjl associates david houston with bean kenny and

[03:36:59] corman is representing the applicant so this is a post-submission work session uh on june 26 2023 planning commission held a pre-application briefing uh for the to review concept plan for townhomes followed by a city council briefing in july of 2023 the applicant submitted a formal application in april of 2024 the plans under consideration for tonight those plans are

[03:37:36] submitted on January 7th, 2025. The applicant is seeking to amend the existing general development plan. Also submitted a comprehensive plan amendment from commercial corridor place type to townhouse single-family attached neighborhood place type, a rezoning from PDC to PDR and the architecture of control overlay district, a approval of a master development plan of modifications, And the applicant has submitted a major certificate of appropriateness for architecture and landscaping.

[03:38:13] The subject property is 2.12 acres. The applicant seeks to replace approximately 21,566 square feet of office space with 14 front-loaded townhomes. So here's the location.

[03:38:31] The subject property is located roughly a half mile south of the intersection of Fairfax Boulevard. On the east side of the property is the city-county boundary with single-family home detached in Mantua subdivision.

[03:38:48] On the west side of the site is Pickett Road and the Army-Navy Country Club. This property is south of Pickett's Reserve, a single-family detached neighborhood, and to the north of the site is City Park.

[03:39:03] The applicant is seeking to amend the general development plan, which dates back to 1975. There's been a number of amendments to that general development plan through the years, adding the new school of Northern Virginia in 2006.

[03:39:28] And in 2015, approval was conducted for 80 multifamily units and two four-story buildings, which is now known as the enclave condominiums which was constructed in 2017 and again this amendment seeks to replace office space with 14 front loaded townhomes on 2.12 acres the total area for this general development plan is 9.13 acres with the density of a little more than 10 units per acre the subject

[03:40:07] property is also identified as a part of the parcel specific considerations so what should be noted is that the alternative uses for the subject price so the property could include multifamily residential or townhomes and the portions of the site currently designated as commercial corridor and social civic network in expansion any expansion of the residential uses in the complex should be cognizant of existing neighborhoods to the south and east and and should provide adequate transitions in these areas so the request again is for a comp plan

[03:40:44] amendment to townhome single-family attached neighborhood place type which carries a maximum of three floors and landscape setbacks for the portions of the site that is adjacent to single family neighborhoods within the townhome single-family attached neighborhood place type the maximum density that it could support is up to 14.4 dwelling units per acre. So what you see here is a commercial corridor with a proposed change to townhome single-family attached

[03:41:17] neighborhood. Here's the current zoning. The current zoning is planned development commercial with the proposed zoning to planned development residential. A requirement of minimum of two acres for a master development plan. The applicant meets that requirement.

[03:41:46] This subject property is a little more than two acres and it actually has a requirement of 20% recreation open space and it needs to provide substantial performance with the comprehensive plan. Here's the master development plan. We're looking at 14 units front loaded with a density of 6.6 dwelling units per acre. These units are 24 feet in width and 40 feet in depth with a maximum

[03:42:20] height of 47 feet. The applicant is proposing four parking spaces per unit with an additional 25 surface parking spaces. The street is a one-way street and the applicant is proposing open space with with amenities in terms of the circulation plan the one-way street provides access through the townhome subdivision and also an interpersonal connection with the new school and the Enclave and there's also production

[03:42:56] and connections provided throughout the site so there's a proposed connection to Pickett Road and then connections interior to the site between parking spaces and the open space area both of the the recreation areas are connected with sidewalks as well in terms of trip generation the the traffic memo shows a reduction in a.m. and p.m. total trips as well as daily total trips when you

[03:43:33] compare it to the general office standard versus the proposed townhomes again the open space the applicant is proposing open space that meets the requirement of 20 percent the minimum open space requirement is 50 by 50 the applicant has provided 22 areas that beat that requirement which consists of 20

30 percent of the site the total open space area for this for the project is for roughly 40 percent and it also meets the connectivity requirement that 60 of the open space needs to be connected.

[03:44:11] As you see, the two areas highlighted in yellow on a screen are connected by pedestrian sidewalk connections. In terms of landscaping, the applicant is required to provide a 10-foot buffer yard around the entire site.

[03:44:29] The applicant is seeking to eliminate the required six-foot wall or fence along the northern and southern property line as well as eastern property line. This is largely due to protecting as many trees and trying to minimize the impact on the trees along the edge of the property line.

[03:44:51] The applicant is required to provide a 10 year tree canopy of 20% and the applicant is proposing approximately 28% tree canopy with the plan.

[03:45:11] In terms of the setbacks, the applicant provided a typical lot layout with a minimum front yard of 18 feet, five yard side setback, and a rear yard of 15 feet. When you consider the common area that's surrounding the lots for the townhomes, the applicant is providing a substantial setback for this project, when you compare it to RT and RT6 zoning districts.

[03:45:45] So the applicant's providing greater setbacks the adjacent properties when you add in the the common areas as well as the the private individual spaces the board of architecture review the applicant has met with the board of architecture review and has received feedback the one of the items that the applicant will need to address is the height and the number of stories that's proposed for for this project the comprehensive

[03:46:19] plan requires a maximum of three stories uh what you're looking at is a four-story townhome and the applicant is working with um with their architect to provide a three-story product and um is working with staff in order to uh to to ensure that they're in compliance with the comprehensive plan so here's a rendering of the rear of the units and again like i said the applicant is working

[03:46:52] to make revisions on the for the architectural drawings the staff has provided a number of items for the applicant to address in the next submission in terms of what needs to be updated or improved just to mention a few of these items the applicant will need to again be consistent with the comprehensive plan in terms of number of stories the setbacks no unit no two units should have the same two front offset setbacks so the applicant will

[03:47:29] need to stagger those units a little more to come into compliance with the zoning ordinance the applicant will need to make an improvement to the interior island landscaping no more than 10 spaces will have without a no more than 10 consecutive spaces without a parking lot island is required the applicant has asked for a modification to sidewalks on both sides of the street staff does not support the proposed stamp asphalt that's flushed against the sidewalks in front of the units so if you look

[03:48:08] at the at the rendering provided the units has the driveway with a portion of that driveway is actually stamped as stamp asphalt so staff is not supporting supporting that and it's looking to have the applicant make some revisions to the plan going forward another item that staff is looking for the applicant to to provide

[03:48:42] some some clarity or some improvements going forward is the the number of trees and the in the existing landscape plan the transitional yard should identify the existing trees that's being counted and

identify on the plants that are updated the table so there's some clarity that needs to be provided within the transitional yard and the table that's in your packet a few other items that should be noted is the underground of utilities staff is working with the

[03:49:20] applicant on this request and actually has had a a productive meeting just yesterday with the with the applicant and their engineer discussing the undergrounding of utilities requirement there's a poll that is near the near the right-of-way along Pickett Road that would need to be underground and that has a number of issues that actually makes it fairly complicated and staff is working with the applicant to address it the applicant at this point is seeking a

[03:49:57] modification and we would need additional information in terms of how the poll would be underground or the cost and or any improvements that need to be made for for the undergrounding of the one utility pole that may trigger additional utilities being placed on site or near the site so there's some work that needs to be done there and staff has like I said met with the applicant just yesterday and look forward to reviewing any any additional improvements in the next round of submissions Planning Commission had a

[03:50:37] number of comments related to the utilities as well as the the placement of utilities and its impact on the number of trees along the southern property line so and there was a need for a clarification on the underground of utilities and what the applicant is requesting is just it applies along picket road but the applicant is aware of the southern property line and the impacts on trees in terms of the potential impacts and the location of

[03:51:09] the underground utilities going forward so in terms of the number of the number of the number of issues related to the transitional yard it was explained that there's uh the fencing requirement is basically to eliminate to eliminate the fencing requirement to actually help improve the number of trees that could be saved on site uh there's questions about the loss of uh of commercial space and the the planning commission i wanted to acknowledge that the comprehensive plan

[03:51:48] for the site identified there's a possibility that it could be a multi-family or a townhouse product that would take place in terms of the loss of commercial the applicant has met with the fire marshal just this week to discuss the the maneuvers and the apparatus for this proposal and the fire marshal didn't have any additional comments in terms of fire truck movements and the fire marshal just had a couple of items related to striping and an additional fire hydrant

[03:52:26] so the fire marshal is looking for those improvements going forward and in terms of the width the fire marshal didn't have any issues with the width of the street those issues were brought up during planning commission and finally the the planning commission thought that the accessibility for the elevators for this project would be a good idea and that the project itself is consistent with the comprehensive plan townhomes are underrepresented uh with this within the city of

[03:52:59] fairfax and uh the the zoning district um that the applicant is seeking is appropriate based on um on the issues that have been addressed within the application one of the larger issues is that private streets and townhomes uh cannot i'm excuse me townhomes cannot front a public street and therefore uh the plan development is appropriate because this is a private street that is being proposed the next steps for the applicant is is to resubmit and as well as

[03:53:35] continue working with the development review team and eventually at some point this year there would be public hearings planning commission board of architecture and of course the council would have final approval of this application i'll stand by for any questions you may have the applicants here and has a brief presentation all right do we have questions for the staff before we hear from the applicant okay council member bates and council member hall uh thank you so just a quick question

[03:54:09] i believe in the staff report it had mentioned guidance concerning possibly reducing the the driveway area that that is correct uh staff has um brought that that item to the attention of the applicant uh the reason for that is that there's conversation about the number of trees that are being impacted on the property line and if you move the units closer to the street then there's a potential of saving more trees so it's um it would impact the design

[03:54:49] but there's also an opportunity to save more trees. So I think the applicant is taking all the conversations that we've had about trees, eliminating the driveway spaces, into consideration. Yeah, and the applicant is also looking at reducing this to an actual three-story project?

[03:55:08] That is correct. Okay. Yeah, that's correct. They're currently working on that design now. Yeah. So, without a special exception, is it required that those two green space areas are connected across the street?

[03:55:26] They have to basically be aligned? Well, it basically says that they would need to be contiguous. So, the requirement is that 60% of the open space areas be contiguous. So, they can make adjustments if need be.

[03:55:46] But there's two requirements that one that they have to have 20% open space and then the open space has to be Has to be contiguous. So and this is on right here. They meet the they meet those standards. Okay Thank you. I'll save the rest of my comments for after the applicants presentation councilmember Hall Can you just clarify with regard to the no modification to utility requirements and payment in lieu?

[03:56:14] Discussed on slide 18 potential payment in lieu Yes, so the applicant is looking to provide a payment in lieu of the required underground.

[03:56:37] The one utility pole, if they were to underground it, they would actually have to provide another pole in another location. So you couldn't just have it. The pole actually, let me see if I can explain it by showing it to you.

[03:56:58] It's probably a little easier. Well, and then what is the dollar amount and where does that money go? The dollar amount is an estimated, it is in the commitments.

[03:57:24] Give me one second.

[03:57:45] No commitment yet. So the applicant has stated that there's no commitment yet, but there's a cost estimate. And the applicant probably has that figure that he can speak to it.

[03:58:07] At this point, I don't have that number in front of me, But the applicant could probably speak to that when they do their presentation. Okay, yeah, I'd like to know that and then what the payment would be intended for if it's not going to do that. The payment would be intended for the cost estimate for undergrounding.

[03:58:27] And so that's what the modification is for, is that instead of undergrounding, they potentially could provide a dollar amount. Where would that money go? Who would that go to? How would it benefit the city, the community, et cetera? So maybe that's a question for them. I was just trying to understand it. Thank you other questions for staff Councilmember Peterson. What potentially is the timing of a resubmission? I think I'll leave that for the Apple guy

[03:59:03] Okay, that sounds reasonable anything else for staff. All right. I think we are ready for the applicant good evening long day, right?

[04:00:05] Yeah, a little guys - I I'm David Houston the land use attorney With me is Campbell Lewis, who is the applicant owner, and his family, his father, was the original developer of the Mantua Professional Center.

[04:00:29] Just Fred had given you some background, but the property is nine acres, more than nine acres. It was originally zoned in the 70s. It was planned to have 21 office buildings and an apartment building.

[04:00:48] That changed. Five office buildings for this part of the property were built in 1980. Those office buildings are currently underperforming, and it has recently had a poor leasing history as far as quality A tenants and who would want to sign a long-term lease.

[04:01:20] So the opportunity arose through the existing language in the conference of plan for redevelopment possibilities. The two that were mentioned was a multifamily building, which would be similar to the enclave, which was approved by the city in 2015.

[04:01:42] And when that was approved, there was a plan amendment. And what that was doing was basically taking out all those unbuilt office buildings to put into condominium buildings. Earlier, office buildings had been converted from office to be the new school, which is a school from grades 6 through 12 and has been there since 2006.

[04:02:11] So the Mantua Professional Center has evolved since the 1970s and 80s. It is now really a mixed-use area, and the office is underperforming.

[04:02:27] So rather than explore multifamily because of the height issues with that and the history with the enclave, Mr. Lewis looked towards a townhouse, high-quality townhouse, not necessarily maximizing the density, and that's what's before you today.

[04:02:55] We originally filed and met with the BAR in November, and at that time, it was four stories with a flat roof. The BAR sort of gave us their input and instructed us, and we came back, and what we submitted in January as part of the rezoning application were three stories with a pitched roof, which is what the BAR made known as their desire in their comments.

[04:03:29] So we are talking about a three-story townhouse here. So, again, Cam Lewis, and thank you all, Mayor, Council, and staff.

[04:03:48] So we've actually been longtime property owners here in the city, not only with Mantua, but my father actually negotiated with the city in the 80s to buy 102 on Main Street, the old elementary school. It was on the city agenda to be demolished or to be discussed to be demolished.

[04:04:08] It was used as, like, a fire and police training building. So he repurposed it into what it is today, and hopefully it's, you know, it's a key part of the city and people like it. So I just wanted to touch briefly on

some of our neighborhood outreach.

[04:04:28] We've met several times with the new school, with Mantua. Well, actually, we've just spoke to Mantua. So Dave and I have talked to the new school, the owners, as well as the enclave board. They've had concerns.

[04:04:46] We've addressed a lot of them. I think with new school, they wanted some more intensive landscaping where we boarded them. And then we have a shared parking agreement with the enclave that we are able to maintain as well. And we've also met with Mr. Fort, Dr. Cho, and Mr. Cardinal from Pickett's Reserve.

[04:05:09] He's their HOA president. And I understand their concerns, which they mentioned earlier this evening. We feel this is a sensible plan, given that it's basically the same use as what they have and that it's residential.

[04:05:26] We're not proposing a four-story office building or anything like that. I think it's a good transitional plan for them as far as their neighborhood. As far as too big and too tall, we have reduced the height by going to three stories, incorporated a pitched roof with the BAR feedback and some other architectural elements.

[04:05:54] We would like to do a rooftop terrace that's kind of a trending marketing piece with townhomes these days. Right now, we've got a design that shows it on the rear elevation facing Pickett's Reserve.

[04:06:10] We were kicking around a design change to put it on the front elevation if BAR would be agreeable to it as well. I think that would afford them more privacy, our homeowners more privacy as well. So those are the big issues there.

[04:06:29] The buffer, it seems adequate to us. It's about 87 feet from our proposed townhouse rear wall to the closest home in Pickett's Reserve. Coming back from a Pickett's Reserve house, they have a rear yard, a six-foot-high metal fence, some heavy screening, a buffered area.

[04:06:52] We have a smaller buffered area and a rear yard. If you look at – can you get to the top view, kind of a bird's-eye view? This one. This one's it. So this one kind of gives you a top view of if you're looking to the top is the Highlands in Mantua proposed.

[04:07:15] The outline in red are the townhouse outlines. The white that they're overlaid on top of are the existing buildings. So we tried to keep the existing footprint, the same traffic circulation. And if you see Pickett's Reserves, it's a fairly dense, kind of an urban single-family planned community, not unlike ours.

[04:07:39] So we feel that that's adequate as well. Traffic, I think, was one of their concerns. It's actually shown to be reduced if you're comparing it to general office. We are removing trees, but we're also replacing about the same amount.

[04:07:55] I think we're removing 113, replacing with 107, and we'd be open to putting more in either on our property or maybe even Pickett's Reserve HOA if they were willing to take on more trees if they wanted a stronger buffer.

[04:08:14] Dr. Cho spoke about bulk plane and, like, the looming issue. You don't see it from a top view, but there's a pretty significant terrain change. You can get to the slide that kind of shows the side view, that one right there, one of three.

[04:08:32] Go back one. So what little I know about bulk plane, it's not even a consideration in residential in the city. It's not a requirement. But from what I understand, it's a 45 from the rear property line back up to the building.

[04:08:50] Because Pickett Reserve, the first floor elevation is basically 20 feet, two stories higher than the proposed townhouse first floor elevation. So bulk plan is really not an issue because it deals more with a looming effect on your neighbor's property.

[04:09:11] So I just wanted to clarify that part of it. I can't I don't know what I know um so uh so so if you look um this is our architect good too he can speak to it a little bit more um so if you look on the this is kind of a side view elevation these these lines are gradient at five foot intervals um so Clint you could

[04:09:40] probably speak and as you can see the 45 degree angle doesn't come close to the prop the proposed townhouses and nor does it affect the missing joining house oh beat that okay okay i need to repeat that sorry so the property line is here and the grade at the property line is here and

[04:10:18] and the 45 degree angle of block plane doesn't even come close to the townhouses so it's acceptable you know it can't in the bulk the townhouses can't go into the bulk plane and then the bulk plane in the other direction is not even close so there's a significant amount of tree canopy between the two so we feel that that's acceptable as well and then provides still a good buffer

[04:10:51] between the two properties that's all I wanted to ask well thank you just to clarify there's no bulk plane requirement in residential and this is the plan development district so the standards they basically they set the standards within the master development plan so that was a good explanation but it doesn't apply to to residential we we were trying to address the comment right it's not a requirement in the zoning board and just a quick

[04:11:28] clarification is that for the three-story modeling or the four-story okay yes yeah that's a three-story model so that actually shows like the rooftop terrace is a flatter portion there and then the pitched roof even though it's a block figure there's a pitched roof if you look at the uh the architectural renderings so that that's all i have a few off questions for us all right do we have questions for the applicant uh council member

[04:12:05] mquillen i have a question about the shared parking could you explain that to me please Yes. When the enclave was approved in 2015, they asked for a parking reduction from the parking required at that time.

[04:12:25] And ultimately, the city council approved that parking reduction, but they also asked the enclave to sort of secure some extra spaces during non-peak days and times. And what that turned into was an easement agreement and the development condition on the Enclave for, I think it's 32 parking spaces that are currently on the office property.

[04:12:55] It's the office parking lot. But those spaces may only be used by the Enclave at night or on weekends, so it's not prime time. And in reality, they're not used that much. And we approached them a year or so ago, the enclave, whether they would agree to reduce the number required under the easement, and they were not inclined to do so.

[04:13:27] Thank you. Council Member Peterson? The trees, what's the status of the number of trees and the scope of tree removal that is planned? We heard earlier numbers, 108 or some such.

[04:13:45] So 113 to be removed and 107 to be replaced as a replacement or supplemental trees is what the intent is.

[04:14:01] And the trees being removed, 20% or more are in poor health already. You heard earlier about invasive species management.

[04:14:17] Well, this would probably be an area where it would be useful. This is all for shock and awe, but in January, we lost a tree that actually was tagged to be removed. It fell on our building. You can see roof damage on building three.

[04:14:36] The tree scheduled for removal you see in the upper right picture is from the corner of the town office building closest to Pickett. Those are all the poplars. And then you come back on Pickett Road, and you can see the arrows that are pointy of these poplars.

[04:14:53] They're actually very close to the existing office buildings right now. Those are. So they're in various states of health, but we plan to get to that canopy that exceeds trees. And part of our plans includes a landscape plan that details exactly which trees are going and which trees are being planted.

[04:15:19] I don't think we have. With respect to the trees, the amount of land, the square footage that the trees are located on that is forest, is that shrinking under this proposal?

[04:15:38] The part that is the buffer here, is the buffer actually, are the buildings encroaching upon land that whatever the condition of the trees are is sustaining tree growth right now? There is a tree preservation area.

[04:15:53] Eli, can you guys speak to the trees more? Yes, so we are providing the tree preservation area. I don't think we have any slides for that. Along the southern and eastern property line, it is a significant area behind the townhomes towards the property.

[04:16:16] And as Kim previously said, 113 trees will be removed. We are proposing 109 trees, and we are planning to propose additional six trees or more. So the numbers will equal or exceed what was removed.

[04:16:36] So the tree preservation area, will that ultimately be smaller, the same size, or greater than the current land that is supporting tree growth? It's going to be smaller because we are putting the townhomes, we have to grade the site, but we are adding a significant number of trees to the site.

[04:17:01] And currently the trees, as Ken was showing, they are falling down. They are not in great shape. So we are improving the site conditions. And did I understand earlier that one of the possible options is pulling the townhomes closer to where the current parking lot is now to reduce the shrinkage of the area that's currently in tree growth?

[04:17:26] Did I understand that correctly? We will be discussing that option, but... It is an option. We have a driveway that goes to the garages that, from our perspective, that's not ideal, but it can be done. The difference in height between the original four-story configuration and the pitched roof three-story, what is the difference in height?

[04:17:54] So the four-story was 47 feet, and now, depending on the grade, we're 36 to 40 feet in height. Okay, at the top of the roof. No, that's to the midpoint. It's measured to the midpoint. What is it to the top of the roof?

[04:18:12] Plus 7, so it would be 36 plus 7, 43, 43 feet. Versus 47 originally. Yeah. Okay. And then I guess my earlier question, it sounded like you all were contemplating a resubmission.

[04:18:34] Is that correct? Yeah. So what happens after tonight, I believe Mr. Frederick is going to prepare a letter with the remaining staff issues. He's going to give that to us probably within the next week. No pressure, Fred.

[04:18:53] And then we will turn around a new version of the plans and proffers and other written items and probably resubmit hopefully within a month. Well, my last question, as you do that, will you be continuing to work with the community?

[04:19:17] Yes. In the respect of, like, the architectural design? Well, there are some basic design parameters that seem to have been flagged during the public hearing that are design modification opportunities. And the question is whether that process might continue prior to resubmission to address those.

[04:19:39] And we do have to go back to the Board of Architectural Review. Right, thank you. They haven't seen the three-story version yet. Thank you. And on the undergrounding, typically, if you make a contribution, it's typically earmarked for other undergrounding projects in the city to help defray their costs, things that the city might be moving forward on.

[04:20:14] Other questions, comments? Council Member Bates. Thank you. So a few things that I would like to see explored. First off, I certainly support the staff comment asking for the driveways to be reduced a bit to move the townhouses further forward and allow for some additional buffer and or rear yard.

[04:20:40] And additionally, in order to really be able to consider this a three-story townhouse concept, maybe look at reducing that, you know, the enclosed area of the terrace so that it's basically just the, you know, the stairs and the elevator and so that most of it is the outdoor terrace itself and so that, you know, that really is mostly not like an additional fourth floor, basically, and then maybe reduce the height a bit further after you do that.

[04:21:19] And additionally, if we could maybe move the southern green space area over to the west and then move the townhouses further east by like two or three units or so, that way we can further increase the buffer zone to Pickett's Reserve.

[04:21:44] And I know that that would then mean that that green space wouldn't be connected to the other green space on the other side, but at least we would have the same amount of green space and more buffer zone to Pickett's Reserve, which I think would be a great benefit.

[04:22:03] And also as far as the Passive Recreation area, which would, I guess, be moved or whatever, I frankly would like to see a bit more trees and a bit less open space, which I don't know that there's really as much of a need for with this project because it's so close to Thais Park, which we will hopefully be endeavoring to significantly upgrade in the near future. So thank you. Other questions or comments? Council Member Hardy Chandler. I just want to acknowledge

[04:22:41] that it seems like a lot of the themes from the comments have to do with height and buffering. And in addition to some of the other things, there's receptivity to hearing that and considering other proposals. So I'm excited that that's at least a part of your consideration.

[04:22:57] So it sounds like you're listening. Yep, thank you. Other questions? Council Member Hall. Thank you for coming tonight, and I want to thank the community for all the comments and feedback. I do want to acknowledge that it seems that you are very open and receptive to hearing, maybe not making all of the concessions people are asking for, but I do think that that's important, that you are willing to work and communicate.

[04:23:23] I do have to say I think the three-story option is better. I actually like the terrace part in the front. I think it gives a little bit more privacy to the residents behind. So I think we all recognize that taking out 113 trees and replacing it with 107 or 108 or even 200 is not the same as those original 113 trees.

[04:23:48] Recognizing that some are dead, some are not in good shape, some are literally falling down, We're going through this over where I live, and they're not equal, right? I mean, I would personally rather have some dead trees than have no trees and brand-new trees that are this tall and, you know, take 30 years to grow.

[04:24:08] So I think that there's probably some sort of middle ground. Maybe you could leave some extra trees in a specifically denser area that backs up. It looks like, not to give Dr. Cho preferential treatment here by any means, but if that one corner there is significantly more vulnerable or visible, you know, maybe a couple extra trees could be left there to try to make a concession there. I would be open, I guess, to what Councilmember Bates was saying about maybe moving a townhouse or two over to the other side and shifting

[04:24:43] the area a little bit. That being said, if it is a passive recreation area, I think we need to be careful what we ask for. Dr. Cho and his family might not enjoy a passive recreation area right there instead of a house right you know we don't always know what we're getting there but I do think that it sounds like you're trying to work with it and I think that there there are ways to do it again I think the buffering is a big thing and the height is a big thing so if you can work on those and maybe if it means just one or two townhomes are a little bit shorter than the others maybe that's a feasible option and then the rest of it is not as impactful to the

[04:25:19] outside community so thank you thank you councilmember Bates I was looking at Councilmember Amos and said Councilmember Bates. I meant Councilmember Amos.

[04:25:35] It's just that time of night. I concur with Councilmember Bates' comments about preserving the trees over the park space, and I do want to clarify for Council, and it's kind of somewhat a staff question, but I think I know the answer is that it's because of our ordinance that they have to provide that park space and have it contiguous.

[04:25:55] Is that correct? Yeah. that is correct I mean typically so that's more so on us and the applicant we don't build in that flexibility for them so we can't tell them to do that and then not provide that flexibility they have to pencil it in they would much prefer to keep the trees and then to do the parks as is my understanding so I support increased buffer space and if there is an opportunity to provide that flexibility to accommodate Pickett's Reserve and the adjacent communities that

[04:26:29] falls on us as well council member Bates now I understand that that might be in this might still be for mr. Frederick but I understand that that might be a special exception if we were to want to do that that I'm not aware that you can actually get a modification for for that it's a requirement as part of the plan development I see that mr. Hardin is coming to the mic that is a 20% is a

[04:27:03] baseline requirement of the plan development districts the applicant could there is a an alternative compliance process it's called I think it could propose something different and better that could satisfy that requirement but I also want to be clear the 20% open space can be existing wooded tree there's there's not a requirement that necessarily be plaza space or open space or have hardscape those are options that satisfy the requirement but it depends project to project so so this could be something a

[04:27:42] little different just to be clear on that yeah yeah and then hence my you know distinction between you know tree canopy and then what I'd call open open space which is what we have here which side and that's what I meant earlier by maybe wanting to see a bit less of that and maybe just kind of replace that with trees and move it over to the other side if if there is a way to allow us to do that I think that that would sort of kill two birds with one stone as far as not reducing the amount of green space and actually increasing the tree canopy

[04:28:18] but also increasing the buffer with pickets reserve other comments questions for the applicant I guess that just leaves me so we talk a lot about trees here you may have noticed and you know I've made the observation that I don't think we should design our city around cars and car traffic. And while I agree with preserving tree canopy and increasing tree canopy, designing projects around trees to me seems to be a little bit far to one side. Trees are a renewable resource, and they will be planted, they will

[04:28:58] grow, they will die, they will get diseased, they will fall over. And that is how it works with trees. And we talk a lot about buffers. I'm looking at you, Mr. Houston, because I remember years of talking about the tree buffer between the Glee View Project and Cameron Glenn. Years of talking about that tree buffer. And with every year that passed by, those affordable housing units got way more expensive. We're now in year seven of not having built them for discussing the trees. And I do remember, and I'm going to quote you here because I remember so distinctly,

[04:29:32] a council member saying, is there anything more we can do with this tree buffer? And you said, Short of canceling this project, no. So while I can appreciate doing the most that we can with Tree Buffer, totally redesigning a development so that we can talk about trees does not seem to me practical from a developer standpoint.

[04:29:58] I appreciate you all taking into consideration council comments, community comments, but there is a practicality and feasibility of designing and building a project, and it is what it is. So I'm going to say that as much as I love trees, I'm not designing a city around them.

[04:30:18] I think we have to put the trees where it makes sense to strategically replace, take them down, and replant them. Because to me, that is a logical way you tackle urban design. That's just my comment on all of this. So we look forward to your resubmission or the letter or the things.

[04:30:39] Thank you very much. Thank you. Our next item is a discussion on a request by Combined Courthouse LLC for the redevelopment of 10300 Willard Way. Claire Schweiger, City Planner, will provide the staff presentation.

[04:31:16] Good evening, Mayor Reed and Council.

[04:31:47] This work session is to discuss the redevelopment of the Courthouse Plaza Shopping Center at 10300 Willard Way. We're currently in the post-submission phase of the development review process. Staff has accepted a complete application. The applicant has submitted a third submission and staff has provided comments to the applicant on this third submission.

[04:32:06] This is the second work session that council has held with the applicant. The first work session was held on September 24th, 2024. Six special exceptions are being requested with this proposal and three and read on this slide need to be requested but have not yet been requested.

[04:32:24] The subject property is located in the Old Town Transition Overlay District, so upper story residential mixed uses are permitted by right, otherwise we'd also see a special use requested, a special use request listed here as well.

[04:32:41] The applicant is the owner of an 8.73 acre parcel known as the Courthouse Plaza Shopping Center. The subject property is located in Old Town Fairfax and is bounded by University Drive and Blenheim Boulevard and to the north of the property are the flats on University.

[04:33:00] The proposed zoned, the property is zoned CR Commercial Retail and the Old Town Fairfax Transition Overlay District. The uses surrounding the shopping center are commercial and office uses and one residential use, the Flotson University to the north of the subject property.

[04:33:17] Also to the north are property zoned planned development residential and commercial retail. The south and east are property zoned commercial retail and commercial office. These are the existing conditions on the property. Since the last work session, all trees and vegetation that was existing along Blinnem Boulevard was removed without proper permits.

[04:33:42] The top two photos are what the street frontage along Blinnem Boulevard looked like in September, and the bottom two photos are what the street frontage looks like now. So that's just some basic information about the site. Now I'm going to describe how the proposal fits in with the Old Town Fairfax Small Area Plan.

[04:33:59] The future land use designation of the subject property and all surrounding properties is the activity center place type, and the subject property is located in the Old Town Fairfax Activity Center. Circled on this slide is the general location of the proposal as shown in the small area plan.

[04:34:18] There are a few things that I'd like to point out on this map. This map shows two north to south streets going through the property that do not currently exist, and a large interconnected network of green space is envisioned on this property and would extend north towards Layton Hall. In general, the Old Town Fairfax small area plan supports a mix of uses, a height maximum of six stories, an increase in residential and retail uses, a connected and multimodal street network, connected open space, infrastructure improvements, and on-street and structure parking. These two graphics go into more detail and show the existing surface parking on the left and recommended locations for connected green space on the right.

[04:34:59] This graphic from the small area plan shows recommended retail frontage locations and the red line indicates retail locations. This map from the small area plan indicates recommended building heights. A six-story maximum is recommended on the subject property. The small area plan indicates projections for near-term development of 15 years. For residential development, the small area plan projects an increase of 1,240 residential units. The applicant is proposing to develop 315 residential units with 6% being affordable units. For retail development, the

[04:35:35] small area plan projects an increase of 60,000 gross square feet of new retail space and to fill 20,000 square feet of currently vacant retail space. The applicant is proposing to develop 12,000 square feet

of new retail space, but the applicant is proposing to demolish approximately 25,000 square feet of existing retail space for a net decrease of 13,000 square feet of retail space.

[04:35:59] The applicant is following some of the recommendations of the Old Town Fairfax small area plan. The applicant is proposing a mixed-use building. They're providing a north to south street connection, and they're starting an east to west street connection with proposed street one. They're proposing to add residential units to the activity center. The retail locations generally comport with the locations outlined in the small area plan, and they're proposing to widen sidewalks along University Drive and Blenheim Boulevard.

[04:36:27] The small area plan supports infrastructure improvements by recommending the undergrounding of utilities. The overhead utilities along University Drive are proposed to remain. However, the applicant has offered to provide a financial contribution toward the future undergrounding along University Drive, and that financial contribution would go toward the future undergrounding of utilities along University Drive in that area.

[04:36:55] While the applicant is following some of the recommendations outlined in the small area plan, other recommendations have not been followed with this proposal. Staff advised the applicant and the applicant's representatives prior to application acceptance that the redevelopment of the subject property should include the entire parcel, not just the western portion of the parcel.

[04:37:16] Staff asked the applicant to demonstrate immediate and long-term improvements as well as phasing for those improvements, and these comments have not been addressed. and there are several major deficiencies with the plan as proposed. The applicant has started the connected street network envisioned in the plan, as I mentioned in the last slide.

[04:37:35] However, they're not providing the east-to-west connection. The applicant is not providing the connected network of green space envisioned in the small area plan, and I'll also expand on this more in my next slide. The small area plan does not support new surface parking, and much of the existing surface parking is to remain.

[04:37:54] Historic preservation is important, So staff has recommended to the applicant to do an archaeological assessment. So the plan on the left is the overall development plan, and on the right is an aerial that shows properties to the north. And here is the proposed park, and on the aerial you can see that this proposed green space does not connect to green space to the north.

[04:38:16] And staff has not heard from the applicant that any coordination between property owners to the north or south of the property has taken place. So before I go into detail on the third submission, I just wanted to give some background on this application. The first submission included 315 residential units, a third of an acre park between the Safeway and the proposed building, retail at the corner of University Drive and proposed Street 1, and the application included the vacant site to the south.

[04:38:48] And then Street 1 is the new street south of the proposed building. The second submission included the same number of residential units, retail at the corner of University Drive and proposed Street 1, improvements to the proposed park, and removed the parcel to the south from the application.

[04:39:06] The third submission reduced the size of the proposed park to accommodate a new north to south connection and includes retail along proposed street 2. And street 2 is the new street east of the proposed building between Safeway and the proposed building. So now the rest of my presentation will go

into more detail on the third submission. The applicant is proposing to develop a six-story mixed-use building with 315 residential units and 12,000 square feet of ground floor retail space with 714 parking spaces, including surface street and structure parking. 6% of the

[04:39:44] 315 residential units will be affordable units as required by the ordinance. The applicant is also proposing a 6,700 square foot publicly accessible green space and a new north to south street connection from proposed street one to democracy lane on this slide the labeled building is the existing safeway and so retail to the left of safeway is proposed to be demolished and then the retail to the right of safeway is going to remain the applicant is requesting a special

[04:40:20] exception to modify the transitional overlay district dimensional standards table to exceed the front and street side yard maximum of 10 feet so this slide shows the proposed tenant mix for the ground floor. The applicant is proposing 12,000 square feet of retail at the corner of University Drive and proposed street one and along proposed street two. The upper five stories would be residential units. The applicant is requesting a special exception to modify the residential use standards for upper story residential and mixed uses to allow more than 25 percent of the ground

[04:40:55] floor to be residential uses or residential accessory uses. 12,000 square feet of retail is approximately 15% of the ground floor of the proposed building, leaving roughly 80% of the first floor for residential uses or accessory uses. So due to the grading on the site, there are portions of the building where the first floor is considered the ground floor, and then other portions where the second floor is considered the ground floor. So what is shown on the right in color is the portion of the building where the second floor acts as the ground floor, and per

[04:41:30] the ordinance, the ground floor is what is assessed and analyzing the requirements for the special exception. The applicant is also requesting a special exception to exceed the maximum density permitted in the CR Commercial Retail Zoning District. 24 dwelling units per acre are permitted on the subject property, and the applicant is requesting 36 dwelling units per acre. In the small area plan, density is not prescribed on a parcel-by-parcel basis. While the small area plan envisions higher density in the activity center, the density of 36 dwelling units per acre is achieved by a footprint larger than envisioned in the small area plan.

[04:42:06] Also, the applicant is using the total property acreage to determine density but is proposing minimal upgrades to the rest of the property. The applicant has not requested a special exception for lot coverage but the applicant is proposing a lot coverage of 90.5 percent and the maximum permitted in the CR zoning district is 90 percent. Here's some elevations of the proposed building.

[04:42:32] the applicant is proposing a six-story building. The zoning ordinance allows a maximum of 48 feet in the transition overlay district, and the small area plan recommends a maximum of six stories in this location. So the applicant is requesting a special exception to exceed the maximum height in the CR zoning district, and this is consistent with the recommendations of the small area plan.

[04:42:57] This is the proposed landscape plan. The applicant is proposing plantings throughout the property within the proposed green space, the interior courtyard along University Drive, Blinnem Boulevard, Democracy Lane, proposed Street 1, proposed Street 2, within the interior landscape islands and adjacent to the bank drive-through. The applicant is proposing a 10% tree canopy on the property as required by the ordinance. The proposed street trees along Blinnem Boulevard and University Drive are

proposed to be planted more than 15 feet from back of curb or edge of pavement. The zoning ordinance requires street trees to be located no more than 15 feet from the back of curb or edge

[04:43:33] of pavement, so the applicant has requested a special exception to modify the standard of the ordinance. So this slide is incorrect, but the information in my staff report on page 19 is correct. The applicant is proposing 447 total parking spaces for the multifamily residential use, with 430 spaces proposed in the parking garage and 17 spaces designated as street parking along proposed streets 1 and 2. The applicant is retaining 267 spaces for the existing and proposed

[04:44:09] retail for a total of 714 spaces, and this exceeds the parking minimum of 654 spaces by 60 parking spaces. This is the pedestrian connectivity plan on the left. Pedestrians walking from Layton Hall to the proposed retail and the rest of Old Town, for example, could take the route highlighted in red on the right. So pedestrians visiting the proposed retail or Old Town traveling this path would encounter the Safeway loading docks and the loading area for the proposed development.

[04:44:46] 10-foot sidewalks are required in the Transition Overlay District, and the applicant is proposing 10-foot sidewalks along Bliton Boulevard and University Drive. However, the applicant is not proposing 10-foot sidewalks along Democracy Lane, Propose Street 1, or Propose Street 2. Highlighted in red are the sidewalks not meeting the 10-foot sidewalk requirement, so the applicant is requesting a special exception to reduce the 10-foot sidewalk requirement.

[04:45:08] The applicant has not requested a special exception to waive the sidewalk requirement, However, this special exception needs to be requested or the applicant should provide the sidewalks in the locations highlighted in red. This is the vehicular connectivity plan, and the applicant is proposing a new north to south street connecting proposed street 1 and Democracy Lane.

[04:45:33] The entrance to the parking garage is from Democracy Lane and can also be accessed from proposed street 2 by turning left onto Democracy Lane. A secondary vehicular entrance to the property is from Plaza Drive off of Blinnem Boulevard, and a transportation impact analysis has been submitted by the applicant, and this is still under review by staff. Vehicular cross-access is required to lot 3A, which I've highlighted here in red. If the applicant cannot provide cross-access to this lot, then a special exception

[04:46:08] needs to be requested. The transportation impact assessment indicates a reduction of 193 weekday trips. And like I said, the transportation impact assessment is still under review. So the City Council held a work session with the applicant on September 24th, and the City Council highlighted some issues of concern, such as the lack of open space, reduction in retail space, the scale of the proposed buildings, lack of pedestrian access north to south, concerns that this is only a proposal for a portion of the parcel and not the whole parcel, lack of proposed retail, and concerns that

[04:46:48] this is not a cohesive plan. The council noted some positive aspects of the proposal like the mixed use and the location within the city. So the next steps for this application are for the applicant to resubmit plans and supporting documentation. And then a BAR or the Board of Architectural Review will hold a second work session that's planned for March 5th. And then And then the BAR will hold a hearing with the applicant, and if approved, we'll issue

[04:47:26] a major certificate of appropriateness, and then the application will come back to City Council for the hearing. And that concludes my presentation. I believe the applicant is here to give their presentation. Thank you. Is there questions for staff before we hear from the applicant?

[04:47:46] Any questions? Council Member Hardy-Chandler. Thank you, Mayor. You talked about some deficiencies from the recommendations or from the small area plan that were recommended but not fulfilled.

[04:48:04] Could you just kind of highlight those again? Sure, yeah. The main issues would be the east to west connection. The small area plan, let me go to the...

[04:48:23] And maybe this is a question for the applicant. I'm just curious about the nature of why the deficiencies were not addressed in this third submission so yeah that would be a question for them um but I can show you so this um east to west connection here is not being provided and then like I mentioned the green space that connects up to Layton Hall is not being provided either um they're providing some green space on

[04:48:58] the property but it's not um connecting to other green space um in the area any other questions for staff all right I think we're ready to hear from the applicant good evening my name is Molly Novotny

[04:49:35] I'm an urban planner at Curata Partners and I was lucky enough to be your first item on the agenda now your last item on the agenda so I'm with you for the night guys uh with me at the table I have Aisha Hill with Combined Properties, and Eli with iMeg, our engineer.

[04:49:51] And I just want to say, since I know so many of you are new, I want to introduce Combined Properties just for a moment to you. They have several properties within the city. Turnpike, Pickett, Shopping Centers are both Combined Properties projects, as well as Scout on the Circle. Scout on the Circle was the city's first kind of mixed-use redevelopment project.

[04:50:11] And so, you know, Combined has a long history of redeveloping its properties. The property that we're here to talk to you about is the Courthouse Plaza. And ever since I've been doing work in the city, which has been for more than a dozen years, this shopping center has been a focus of council, of councils before you.

[04:50:33] And they've said, we have this Safeway, and this is in the heart of the city, and we really need to see this Safeway site redeveloped and re-energized. And we are so excited that we are able to start that re-energizing of this site with this application. What you see here is the existing shopping center, which is surface-parked.

[04:50:51] We are adding no new surface parking spaces with our application. All of our parking will be structured, so I just want to be clear about that. The site is about 8.7 acres. It's zoned CR. It will remain zoned CR, and it is in that planned activity center, which allows the introduction of residential here.

[04:51:09] Sorry, I'm going too fast. This is our illustrative site plan that Clara showed you all, and it's helpful to see that the multifamily, the mixed-use building will be on the left of the site fronting along University Drive and Democracy Lane at the top, and then the existing Safeway and the retail to the right or the east of Safeway will remain.

[04:51:34] The small area plan guides this project in incredible detail, and so what you see on the left is the images that were included when the small area plan was adopted and I want to be clear those buildings were not architecturally drawn they were not they were not specifically cited here they were images and

shapes that were put on the small area plan is all the small area plans are done in the city to give some idea of massing and scale and how buildings could lay out

[04:52:11] what we've done is the image on the right and that overlays our building our new mixed-use building on the left and then it retains that Safeway with the white roof and the retail to the right of the Safeway being retained what you can see on the image of the left are those two blue lines those are the retail oriented streets that your small area plan calls for so one of the special exceptions that we have requested is to allow more residential on our ground floor than the ordinance would specifically allow but I want to be clear, your small area plan only identifies retail along those two facades of our building,

[04:52:49] and we are providing retail and lobby and amenity space on those two facades of our building. The small area plan doesn't call for retail along university or democracy. This is the image I was looking for. So what you can see here is everything in red or on the left would be demolished with this project, and everything on the right, the green would remain. And the reason why this is divided this way is because Safeway has a long-term lease. We cannot redevelop the Safeway site today, but we can. So Combined Properties does have control of all of the leases on the left

[04:53:24] side. And so now is the time for us to be able to act on that. We don't want to wait until Safeway's lease expires in another eight years to be here before you. And so I know this is an overarching comment and concern of staff for us to do this entire project at once but we economically cannot do that but we we have been able to control of a significant area of the property to be able to start that redevelopment this is our previous layout so this was submission one and submission two and it showed this park but at the council meeting in September several council

[04:54:03] members said they supported staff staffs feedback and comment that they really wanted that north-south street. And so now with our submission, we have had to reduce the size of the park, but it's enabled us to connect a vehicular connection to the north, to Democracy Lane, all the way up through the flats, and therefore to Layden Hall. There were some trade-offs with adding that street, right? Our park got smaller. We weren't able to do a sidewalk on both sides of the street, but when we reviewed these plans with staff, they said that was okay because people can walk through the new park space. And so we think that this is a good compromise to be able to

[04:54:40] meet that important goal that your predecessors gave us to make that street connection. Along Blenheim Boulevard, that side of the project we're not revising in terms of the development but we are going and widening the sidewalk along Blenheim and replanting all of those trees. This is a good image to talk about the east-west connection that this project is is not adding. To be clear, you can connect from University to Blenheim through this site today you will continue to be able to do that we can't add a new access point to Blenheim

[04:55:16] because of the access points that are there already and the spacing that is there so our proposal is to continue to use the existing access point in its current location so this is just a side-by-side comparison to show the image on the left our previous proposal and the image on the right with that new street to running north to south images of the building we've been to the BAR once they gave us feedback these images here address a lot of their feedback in terms of better breaking up the massing adding more articulation amending where some of our balconies were to create some more activity

[04:55:56] along the building um you will see at the corner of university and our new street one that's all all of that glass area is retail and council member Bates you were you tasked us in September with adding

more retail to this project and I'm so proud of us I'm so proud to be able to say that we have more than doubled the retail so we were at 5,000 square feet and we're now 12,000 square feet incorporated into the building and that does not account for the Safeway and the other retail that will remain at the site so all of this glass here is retail this image moves up along that new Street 1, so I'm heading toward the Safeway. And what you'll see is there's significant grade

[04:56:34] change here at the site. It moves up about 12 feet, and so that's why that entire street can't be lined with retail, because we've got to accommodate the grade change. And now I'm in the center. I'm at that new corner of Street 1 and Street 2, and you see our leasing office and our lobby here. And then along, I'm going to show two images here. This shows the street trees, but then I think it's important to show that same image without the street trees, just so you can see the magnitude of retail and lobby space. This entire street frontage will be lined with retail and lobby space. Neither street one nor street two will have any residential units on the ground

[04:57:12] floor consistent with that small area plan. Now I'm just a little bit farther on street two looking at that new park space. If I would turn to the right where that white car is, I would head toward the Safeway. Democracy Lane and the flats are in the background of this, looking ahead in this picture. Just closer showing the park. This is the existing Safeway wall. This is just an illustrative image of how it could look just with some paint to help improve that site. We do have commitments. We have noted in our Statement of Justification that we will make that commitment

[04:57:48] that we will upgrade the entire facade of that existing retail center. So that entire shopping center will get an uplift and a facelift before these new residential units are occupied. We want it to look like a cohesive center. And then now I've just kind of turned around, looking south now. And so the park space is on the left. This is the loading for the building. As I said, it is a fully structured, fully supported by structured parking. All of the parking is wrapped inside the building. So as you've seen, I've now gone around all four sides of the building.

[04:58:21] You've seen no parking garage, and that's because it's all internal to the building. What you can see here is I'm at university looking south. If I look to the left, that's democracy lane, and that blue car is exiting from our parking garage, just looking back up. So there are several special exception requests, some that are listed here and some that we've learned and we're continuing to work on to make sure that we add them before the public hearing.

[04:58:47] I'll go through them in detail. In terms of the density per acre request, yes, we need a special exception to exceed that 24 units to the acre, but we're doing that to be consistent with the small area plan which calls for an infusion of residential development here. In terms of the ground floor occupancy I think I've already addressed that and to note that we will be having retail and lobby and amenity space on the ground floor but it will there we do need a special exception request because more than 25 percent of that space will be occupied by residential uses

[04:59:23] specifically all of Democracy Lane and University because the small area plan doesn't call for those streets to be retail. In terms of height, we do have a special exception request to exceed the ordinance requirement of 48 feet, but that's to be consistent with the small area plan, which calls for six-story buildings. And so we've done some sections here to be able to show you kind of how that relates to other properties nearby. This section is cut along University Drive, so the office building on the opposite side of University Drive is shown there. And this is the flats

[04:59:58] building directly to our north right across democracy lane a very similar height in terms of the streetscape the small area plan has guidance for what goes into a streetscape and it gives you ranges recognizing that you need within those ranges you need to incorporate sidewalks and street trees and planting areas and so what we've done here is we've got a long university drive about a 30-foot streetscape section from the back of curb to our building face. And so you may recall, Clara mentioned that buildings are supposed to be, or street

[05:00:35] trees are supposed to be 15 feet from the back of curb. Well, we have a special exception because we have utility lines that prevent us from putting the street trees closer to the back of curb. We also have a special exception because our building, because of those utility lines, has to be more than 10 feet from the back of curb. And so we've got that special exception. So this application is a bit complicated because of the strict regulations in your zoning ordinance that we need to account for with all of these existing site conditions that we're working with this is a section from your small area plan that guides streets so this section

[05:01:13] guides streets with residential uses on them and what you'll see is when i said there's a range it says you need between 12 and 16 feet for sidewalk plus landscaping it doesn't specify how that mix should be divided but it says you need 12 to 16 feet for that sidewalk landscaping this would be residential streets along street one or democracy. I've already shown the democracy, but this is that street one street section. And so we are showing, you know, a little more than three feet of landscaping next to the building and then a seven foot sidewalk and then another five feet of landscaping. We're also incorporating on street parking here. So we really work to balance the

[05:01:52] right mix of softscape and hardscape to create that good pedestrian experience through the site. This shows Street 1. We've got a range from 15 to 20 feet of streetscape along Democracy.

[05:02:09] This just shows Democracy Boulevard or Democracy Lane, and then the illustrative image as well. So then the retail street, which is that main street 2 for us, our north-south street, has a different sidewalk landscaping section that's 18 to 24 feet, and that's because you want to leave the ability to put outside dining tables and things like that to support your retail areas.

[05:02:31] And so what we've done is we've provided, through this image you can see, anywhere from 12 ½ to 18 ½ feet in these smaller, tighter areas. And then it expands even bigger than that to allow those outdoor tables and environment to really thrive there.

[05:02:49] This is the proposed park. It is adjacent to the Safeway building, directly across the street from our new retail, ground floor retail space to those residential units above. We think it's a good infusion of kind of active space for the new residents as well as for the retail shoppers to be able to enjoy.

[05:03:12] And this shows the overall illustrative site plan again. I will note, since I've been here tonight and been able to listen to all of your discussions, you talked a little bit about the tax rate and the changes that you're going to have to go through. I do want to note that when we redid Scout on the Circle, that was an entirely retail project.

[05:03:30] And in 2017, the real estate taxes from Scout on the Circle were \$282,000. Last year, the same property, Scout on the Circle, now that it's a mixed-use project, the real estate taxes were \$1.8 million.

[05:03:47] That's converting an all-retail center to a mixed-use center. We're looking to do something very similar here. I already mentioned about our lease limitations, and that's why we can't do the entire center

at once. that's also why we can't create that it's partially why we can't create that new east-west street because Safeway has total approval rights over all the development in the center so all of those parking spaces Safeway has approval rights if we remove any of them so it's one of the reasons or we've been very careful bless you been very careful about what revisions we make to the

[05:04:24] existing parking lot but then I also noted that additional curb cut is limited because of this spacing on Blenheim Drive now. We have had one community meeting already with the old Fairfax Muse. We did that back in September and we had good feedback and we plan to do some additional community outreach. We did just receive staff's comments on our third round so we are working to respond to those and as Claire said we will be to the BAR early next month but we are very excited to hear this council's kind of feedback and questions and given all of the revisions that

[05:05:03] we've made since we were before council last fall thank you thank you for hanging in there into the next day do we have questions for the applicant from the dais questions quick council member amos i walk that area a lot living over at laden hall and i just want to say i want to also come in the I'll ask Council and, for example, Councilmember Bates, Mayor Reed, for your work on this.

[05:05:33] I think, honestly, it's a really good-looking project. I like the trajectory it's going, and keep up the great work. And thank you to staff as well for your hard work on this. Other comments or questions? Councilmember Hall. I personally think this has a lot of potential.

[05:05:51] I will say this as politely as possible, but I've heard of a lot of problems at Scout on the Circle with regard to building quality, drainage issues, rats, other things that go on in that residential apartment complex.

[05:06:08] And I am hopeful that this is not going to be a duplicate of that as far as quality of materials and things like that, I'm sure. I don't know if you manage them directly or not, but I'm sure there have been complaints that could be discussed further to try to come out with better ways to try again.

[05:06:28] Good evening. Thank you, everyone, again. So we definitely have encountered issues along the way. I'll say throughout the whole construction process and development process, you know, starting back in 2018. But we've learned a lot of lessons, and we are long-term holders.

[05:06:46] So we do use high-quality materials, but in new construction, things happen that you have to have something go wrong before you actually know there's an issue. But we stay in contact with our general contractor. They come back to fix things, and we do try to address things as soon as we're aware of them.

[05:07:02] We do have third-party property management. Our company is very small, and so we do third-party that, and we're actually going through a process now to change that management because we did feel like we needed to change there so that that property could live up to what we think it should be.

[05:07:20] Thank you. I'm happy to hear that. And I think that location was one of the places where they were using the software to regulate pricing if I'm speaking correctly? Real page? Real page. Most property management companies use that. I will say Megan and I who are sitting in this room, we did that for the first two years just manually. It wasn't necessarily fun, but during our lease-ups, we tend to do it just on our own. So we would consider not using that. Okay, I think that would, not to speak for all of council, but I think that would be a pretty strong selling point on not using that and, you

[05:07:59] know not subjecting our residents to that um you said something else and i totally just blanked on what it is and when i think of it i will ask you thank you councilmember hardy chandler i think i remember your prior presentation for some reason that's what i was watching but um very quickly i think there was a mention earlier by staff that the retail percentage was calculated based on the whole property density is that accurate or not i think the staff is referring to the residential

[05:08:34] dwelling units per acre. It is being calculated across the entire parcel because it is, that's really the only way we can measure it because it's an entire parcel. We tried to, this application has had a couple different iterations of what's the best way to present the case, but it is being looked at as one whole property. And I think your comments also just highlight this is very complex.

[05:09:00] The elements that require a response also have other implications like the utilities and all of that. So just appreciate the input by the prior council on the iteration of this project.

[05:09:20] Councilmember Holt. Thank you. I did remember, yes. Also, I meant to thank you for your walking us through all of this. I think your presentation was catered towards our knowledge base at this point, so it was very good. How many bedrooms are you looking at, like one, two, three bedrooms, and who are you actually ideally catering to as far as your demographic?

[05:09:43] So I'll start with the demographic question. We don't cater to anyone in particular. If it's targeted towards are we catering to students, not necessarily, but we will have a mix of units from junior one bedrooms to three bedrooms with one dens and two dens in between.

[05:10:02] We do do studies along the way to figure out what that unit mix should be. Right now, we're pretty much in a phase where we're blocking, and we're taking general square footage per unit count that, as the project moves forward, we will develop that into what the actual number of each type of unit will be, but there will be a mix.

[05:10:23] Council Member Peterson, then Council Member McQuillan. Let's see. The occupancy, what's your projection on the timing of being able to reach full occupancy?

[05:10:41] For the residential portion of the building? So if we make some assumptions that this project gets approved, you know, this year, we probably need another year and a half to two to get through full design, site plan approval, and building permits.

[05:11:00] Construction will probably take about another two years, and then lease up should be about 20 units a month. So we're probably looking at, we're in 25, somewhere around 2030 or 2031 by the time it's fully, like 95% occupied.

[05:11:18] And that's the residential. Retail does take longer sometimes because oftentimes it needs to get built, and the tenants need to come in. We need to sign leases, and they actually build out their own spaces. So they're starting from a pretty, you know, raw space.

[05:11:35] So like at Scout, for example, I think we've just opened our last tenant and that building opened in 2020. So it takes some time to get it to that stabilized point. But from that point, it's usually pretty stable from there. Well, thank you. Yeah.

[05:11:50] And part of the reason I ask is that we've been considering many applications for adding housing. And when you look at the cumulative impact on the marketplace, then it affects, because you're increasing supply potentially, what your timing will be around that.

[05:12:06] When you do that assessment, are you taking into consideration the addition of the other units that the city is considering? Yes, we do look at supply and demand as we're moving forward.

[05:12:22] One of the reasons why we've gotten to the unit count that we're at, you know, obviously at Scout, We had three buildings and 400 units here. We're a little less, and we feel comfortable at that level. It's hard to predict, as we say with this project today, that 2028 may be the opening day.

[05:12:41] You know, in 2035, we don't know what that demand will actually be yet. But we do monitor the market and do supply-demand studies and market studies to just make sure that we're in line with what the market conditions are. Usually for us, that might mean a slower lease-up pace if there is a lot of supply hitting the market at one time, or it may mean that we need to do some price adjustments to make sure the units are absorbed.

[05:13:06] Well, and maybe a question for staff. Generally, do you independently do assessments of demand and translation to projections of occupancy for facilities like this, for developments like this? No, we do not.

[05:13:25] Could you? Staff could always bring in resources to do that type of work, but no, we typically look at the fiscal impacts and provide council with the fiscal impacts.

[05:13:50] Now, that will take into account what we would assume a lease-up would be and the construction period would be, and the city's real estate office will look at what values will be of the property over time while it's under construction, And ultimately what that would be at full lease up, but we typically don't get into that detail now Okay, well the reason I ask is we're making individual project decisions here, but there's a cumulative impact scenario or cumulative supply cumulative demand that's going to

[05:14:25] Determine how any individual project will perform and that shows up in an assumption But ideally it's an assessment that has a comprehensive basis for it how's the city doing in terms of changes overall in the stock of housing or retail that's being added and how does that square against demand just seems like that would be helpful when we're making decisions here to know how a particular project might perform in that context and if there's a way for us to get access to that information i think it'd be helpful and part of the reason i ask i don't know how things went with scout on the circle but it

[05:14:59] I've heard things have gone a bit slower than expected with some of these developments that have taken place, and, you know, I think it's helpful for us to know whether we're getting ahead of ourselves, right, in terms of some of these supply issues.

[05:15:18] So I don't know what the... You just throw a curtain if I'm wrong. I believe the recent lease-up was a commercial tenant is what you're referring to being five years from when you started. Yes, that's correct. Or at least the pace went pretty quickly on Scout for the residential.

[05:15:34] It's the retail tenants that take a little longer. Okay. Well, nonetheless, I think having perhaps that is another conversation, but being able to understand cumulatively where we are and where these projects fit into that overall context would kind of be helpful because we're talking about adding a lot of projects here.

[05:15:55] The final thing I would just say to build on Council Member Hall's comments, I'm not so close to the data as others, but I had heard also in Scout on the Circle, there was some safety, public safety, and

crime issues. So I don't know, and perhaps this is a staff question as well as an applicant question, what, if any, implications would be expected for this development on safety and crime on-site or because it's in the Old Town area adjacent, how much of an issue is that and what could or would be done to ensure that there wouldn't be any increases and safety issues?

[05:16:36] So we have explored a lot of different things, not only at Scalp, but at our other properties as well. So we do prefer a secure building where all the access is fobbed, including elevators. So if you live on the sixth floor, you can get to the lobby and you can get to the sixth floor so that we can try to control how people move throughout the building.

[05:16:59] That's not always the easiest thing to do, But when we were involved in the first few years of the projects during lease up, we also were in constant communication with the police, and they offered support as well. Some of it's hard to control, but we did see changes as we tried different measures.

[05:17:22] Thanks. Council Member McQuillan. I thank you for your presentation. I appreciate the inclusion of the additional retail on the first floor. I really like that. As far as the Safeway and that building where he showed some painting, I would love to see some murals supported by some local artists on that space.

[05:17:43] I like the outdoor pedestrian walkway. I think that was really key. So I actually have friends that live at Scout. Parking is an issue. There's a lot of it, but the good stuff that is close to their level, all retail people take.

[05:18:00] So do you have any plans to do something differently with this development to avoid that from happening to these residents that are new residents that might move in there? Yeah. So, so at Scout, it's the first three floors are retail parking. So if you live on three, you have to park, there's like a separate gate arm that only residents can go up above three, but I understand wanting to park on the same floor as, as your unit. For this project in particular, all the parking within the garage is residential only. So people won't have that issue.

[05:18:33] And then to piggyback on what my fellow council member just said about the safety, not just from the perspective of retail and people frequenting, but also to keep a residence there safe, that's going to be a high traffic area.

[05:18:50] You're going to have a lot of people walking by there. So I would like to make sure that you guys are investigating, continuing to do everything you can to create a very safe development. But I am really pleased with what I saw you guys add to it and the changes over time.

[05:19:08] It looks really good. I will say, and this is just my personal preference, that I'm noticing a lot of the architecture that comes across is very blocky, very square. Maybe that's the big thing now, but I just wanted to note that it doesn't come off original. It doesn't come off as special or unique.

[05:19:25] It doesn't seem to add a lot of character. When I'm driving down roads and I see buildings like that, it just takes over. so i just wanted to note that that's something i'm seeing a lot of is this like really square blocky and i they're beautiful buildings but they just they don't have any kind of character i feel like so just a personal note that maybe if there's something that when you guys are speaking with your architects you can maybe do i know you changed some features on the outside and i appreciate that thank you so much for your presentation other questions or comments council member amos just to speak uh briefly i i also do want to say that while scout on the

[05:20:03] circle is comparable because of who's operating it it's not the same location I mean for example scout on the circles potentially being addressed by a small area plan with Fairfax circle to address some of those safety concerns when it comes to lighting with green space this proposal in particular and shout out to Jennifer Rose in the room in the chamber but I mean you consider that it has for example bonds escape room nearby you have 7-eleven right across the And then we also have Old Dominion Pizza, and this would bring a lot of life into Old Town that, frankly, we discussed before about how we want to activate it even more.

[05:20:41] This is a unique opportunity to do that, and I don't see that all the concerns at Scout on the Circle being applicable here. Also, I will note that we have a great police team, and they specifically cited locations such as 7-Elevens on the hot maps to keep an eye out for.

[05:20:57] So I think we can also expect additional, quote-unquote, security. Other comments or questions? Council Member Peterson. Just to say that I would thank you, Council Member McClellan, for raising the architectural design and decor issue because I have noticed the very same thing.

[05:21:16] Things are looking very much the same over and over and over again. And when I pick up my iPad and look at Warrington approving a recent development, it looks precisely the same. And when I go through Falls Church and the new ones, they're precisely the same. They're not feeling as if they are tailored to local condition.

[05:21:36] And I'm not sure what to do about that, but I just want to echo the observation that I think would be worth keeping in mind as we try to decide what sort of style we want to bring to our buildings. Council Member Bates.

[05:21:55] Thank you. First off, I do want to thank the applicant for taking my input and converting that amenity space on the second floor to an additional retail space to kind of try and work around that grade change along the southern new street there.

[05:22:13] I would also like to emphasize, as I said before, I would like to see, if possible, a binding commitment to not use rent-setting software. And also, I ideally would like to see some kind of phasing plan, maybe not, maybe some built-in flexibility there, given the possibility for conditions in the future, desires, demand in the future to be a bit different, but at least some kind of plan to see some additional,

[05:22:52] you know, the rest of the parcel redeveloped eventually. And certainly, you know, the staff presentation report mentioned the trees along Blend Boulevard being taken down without proper permits.

[05:23:09] And given that that is part of this parcel and that's the end of it that, you know, you're saying cannot be redeveloped right now, frankly, not a good look. Thank you. Yeah, if I can just address that, we do have permits in the city's hands to replant those trees that are consistent with our landscaping plans.

[05:23:30] on this proposal but we are happy to replant those trees in advance and my understanding is the permits are with the city staff for review and i just do want to you know for anyone who hasn't heard it before apologize for that it was a grave mistake and our retail asset management team is very sorry about that happening there was a miscommunication with staff they were planning to clean things up and didn't communicate that with our development team or obviously the city and so we did immediately get in touch with with staff and ask what we need to do

[05:24:09] and we were instructed to submit a tree removal permit plan and we did that there were some hiccups with the software because now everything's done online but that's been in the hands of staff since I think December and so we're waiting for the feedback and we will address it as soon as we get approval to replant and and the springtime we probably have to wait that's probably a good idea although it's almost spring felt like spring today any other questions or comments for the applicant councilmember Peterson so maybe this is a staff question and an applicant

[05:24:48] question but when the staff presentation included the notation that there were many, many staff recommendations for improvement or identification of needs for change in the project, and I'd like to just understand to what extent they have been resolved and to what extent they will be resolved if there will be any subsequent submissions.

[05:25:20] Yeah, I appreciate the question, and I'll take a stab, and then I'm sure Clara or someone else from staff will want to jump in. So some of the items that Clara raised is our need to add some additional special exceptions. We will be adding those special exceptions.

[05:25:35] This is an iterative process up until that public hearing. And so it's trying to figure out what special exceptions are needed to modify what regulations. So we will be adding those additional special exceptions. We do have fundamental differences with staff in terms of the phasing plan.

[05:25:54] and in terms of that east-west connection through the property, and for the reasons I've already listed, right? The phasing plan not only are we bound by the Safeway lease, but you and some of your other colleagues made reference of what's going to be the demand in 8, 10 years.

[05:26:11] In the future, what's going to be the demand? We don't know what will be the right use for the rest of the shopping center when those leases come up. And it's our position that we really think it's the right time for that council at that time to be able to review that next application if there is a next application. We are at this point committed to redoing the facade and making facade improvements to the existing retail that will remain very similar to the facade improvements that we did at Turnpike and Pickett Shopping Centers about a dozen years ago. So there will be wholesale changes to that facade. Please. And then just also regarding the retail

[05:26:49] health facade by the hearing we do plan to show you what we're thinking so we are committing to getting that done before we occupy a new building but we also want to start to preview that obviously it'll need to go through bar it'll be a separate application but we are starting we have already engaged an architect same one we're using on this project to start working on those plans so we can be ready the next time we're in front of you to show you what we're thinking can we hear from staff

[05:27:18] Yes. Yeah, this is a prominent site within the city. It's right in the middle of Old Town Fairfax. And so staff has told the applicant from the beginning of this process that we would like to see the whole site redeveloped or plans for the whole site to be redeveloped.

[05:27:42] Because if this is approved as it's proposed, this could possibly exist this way forever. So they're saying that there might be plans in the future for redevelopment of the rest of the site, but we haven't seen anything that would suggest that there would be plans to redevelop the rest of the site.

[05:28:04] And then sort of back to Council Member Hardy Chandler's question, like I said, just more compliance with the small area plan so with those streets with the green space with some of the design features going back to your and council member mcquillan's comment about the design there's also

guidance in the small area plan on the design for active streets in the small area plan and so we would like to see those recommendations provided throughout the site as

[05:28:40] well so comprehend like we would like to see a comprehensive redesign of the entire site and just in my experience it's kind of unusual to see only a portion of a property be proposed to be redeveloped so and if i met mayor just to add to that to to clara's point property owners commit to phasing plans all the time. It provides some insurance for the governing body, for the community

[05:29:18] as to what's going to happen on that piece of property. And if what is proposed and potentially approved doesn't happen, there's an assurance that that property owner is going to come back and will have to amend their plan to make a change if the market is different at whenever that future phase occurs staff is very clear that this entire property may not be developed all at once that's fine what staff has said is we would like to see a phasing plan and we would like to see commitments for what is going to occur it's been mentioned that that there will be

[05:29:57] improvements to the facade of the existing center wonderful we'll look forward to seeing it but the reality is people are going to live around this. People are going to walk around this for any period of years into the future. And because the whole site isn't being redeveloped, it doesn't mean that sidewalks shouldn't be addressed and be accommodating and meeting new standards for what we expect in our old town, that streets are planned for. There are things that are awkward

[05:30:32] about what's being proposed and those are some of the issues that staff has raised and some of it is awkward because there's no assurance of okay this is going to change in phase two this is going to be addressed in phase three there are things like just just to give you an example as to what i'm talking about the existing loading dock for the safeway is just just to the north of that green space. Very awkward to get through that green space, to be on the east side of that street

[05:31:09] at all. Perhaps that would change in the future. Perhaps that's something that the application would address. That would be great to understand that, to be clear about that. It would certainly answer some questions for us, but there's a lot that's left undone here. And we're not asking, everything doesn't have to be done completely.

[05:31:32] We're not asking for lots of money to be spent. There are, you know, tactical urbanism. There are things that you can do on a temporary interim type of basis that would make this a more walkable, a more livable, a more complimentary type of development for our old town.

[05:31:51] That's what staff has asked for. And we've, you know, as was noted, we said that from the beginning, before this application came in. And the development team is very clear on this 'cause they've heard me say it probably a dozen times right now.

[05:32:07] Is this application complicated? It is to a certain extent. And they are asking for exceptions for things that the plan supports. Part of that though is because of the path that the applicant has chosen. It's chosen, doesn't wanna rezone the property. It's chosen to ask for a bunch of different special exceptions where another application type a rezoning or plan development or something else which we talked about at the beginning could have addressed some of those issues so yes this is awkward it's awkward in in many ways and and i just want to be clear staff's guidance is is not trying to

[05:32:45] pass judgment on what's been proposed it's trying to create assurances for us moving forward as to what will occur so i just i just want that to be to be very clear um and and also i don't want to leave um

councilmember peterson on your on your previous question staff doesn't look at demand necessarily on a project by project basis but as ms schwiger noted earlier staff has looked at what demand is for all of our activity centers and that's something in the housing assessment that

[05:33:22] was done in December of 23 kind of confirmed what's the demand for the city in terms of new housing units. And Old Town, Fairfax is 1,250. Citywide, the demand is 4,000-ish units in the next 10 years. So it is something certainly that we look at. I think what we find is project by project depending on on the timing what that absorption is like is gonna reflect

[05:33:59] kind of what regional what's happening regionally so projects might take longer to sell out when interest rates go up not something necessarily we we're predicting or that an adult developer is predicting but those sorts of things are are going to affect what those lease-ups are.

[05:34:22] So it's a level of detail. We certainly need to have more conversation about it. It just may be a level of detail when you think about how far we delve into that. But appreciate those comments. Well, thank you. And let me just say to the prior point, if the full build-out of the site is not just possible but probable, and my reading is that that is the case here ultimately, It is helpful to know whether the initial build-out of the site is consistent with long-term build-out possibilities, if you will,

[05:35:01] so that we know that we're not locking ourselves out of a future design approach that we want to preserve, right? We want to be sure those options are available and that what we do today is consistent with them. So I don't know where this stands right now, but it seems like a logical kind of a request given the situation.

[05:35:25] Okay, so if everybody's kind of done, I have a few things to say. Okay, go ahead, Council Member Bates. Yeah, I just wanted to second Council Member Peterson's comments. Yeah, frankly, this is certainly a big improvement over what's there now, and it's certainly headed in the right direction, seeing a lot of improvement.

[05:35:47] But I would still want to see how this would fit into a redevelopment of the larger shopping center, the entire shopping center. Because, as Councilmember Peterson pointed out, we want to see, are we precluding other options for redeveloping the entire site?

[05:36:08] You know, like, would this, is this what that portion of the shopping center would look like under a full redevelopment? Or would it look like something different that couldn't happen if we were to do this portion now? And as I said, I don't necessarily expect to see a full plan for the entire shopping center to just, you know, do it all in one fell swoop if you were able to.

[05:36:35] but just something that at least shows a rough plan of how that fits into the larger redevelopment more long-term so that we can have some reassurance that we're not locking ourselves out of something that might be a bit better for everybody involved.

[05:36:50] Okay, so the small area plans are a concept, not a blueprint. That's where we start, in my opinion. The city has wanted to change at this plaza for decades.

[05:37:06] I've been here since I was a student in 1981, walking to this plaza from the campus. So I've seen how much it has not changed. So we have a property owner who wants to improve the property. And we are demanding that they give us the whole picture, even though they've made it clear that the long-term lease at Safeway has locked them into parameters that make that difficult.

[05:37:30] That's the first thing. The second thing is the development all around the shopping center could dramatically change how future councils see the possibilities of that space. That includes the building of the Willard Sherwood Center. The flats at University were built.

[05:37:48] Combined has no control over what gets built around this property. But you're talking about an open date or a completion date of 30-31. Some of us will probably be dead by then. But I can tell you the people sitting on this council will not probably, I will not be mayor then, I can assure you.

[05:38:06] In fact, in 675 days, there will be a different council. In 310 days, candidates can file to run for office. Just to give you a perspective on how quickly things change here, but how slowly things like this happen.

[05:38:26] And there are going to be different councils who look at these plans. It's not just us. We are the second council who's looking at this plan. There will be more councils, right? And as far as assurances, I don't know how you can try to lock somebody into a future vision when we are redeveloping things all around this property.

[05:38:46] Future councils are going to decide what they think the second half of this project should be based on things being developed around it. I don't see how we can ask someone to present us something that this council for the next 675 days likes and then know that the next council is going to have their own opinion and the one after that, and the one after that.

[05:39:08] And I will just interject at this point that we are the only independent city in Virginia with two-year terms, the only one. So this is going to be this hamster wheel of different people having different opinions. And I feel like the proposal being made is a tremendous improvement since I've been here in 1981 to what the center of our historic downtown looks like.

[05:39:34] It's an improvement, and it meets many of the aspects of the small area plan which is a concept not a blueprint so I personally like the way this looks they it may not be perfect and I know that there are things that need to be responded to but they have been responsive in doubling the amount of retail space because you councilmember Bates demanded it so things can change on this design but locking them in to trying to predict the future that will meet the needs of multiple future councils I don't see the

[05:40:08] point of that myself any other questions or comments for the applicant councilmember peterson we need to talk further about all that all right then and i guess that will be the final comment thank you so much for hanging in there with us all right we are going to defer the discussion and update regarding the stormwater utility and so i will now reconvene the regular meeting and

[05:40:39] ask our city manager if he has a report out i wouldn't dare okay um i'm just going to go down Councilmember McQuillan thoughts no councilmember Bates thoughts sorry to do this but I do have one thing that Really needs to be said. Well first off. I did have the opportunity short while back to judge a debate at Katherine Johnson and Science Fair Fairfax High School and grateful for the opportunity and very hopeful for the future after seeing the very impressive students over there

[05:41:20] secondly I A friend of mine, an additional friend of mine I've known since elementary school, has passed later last year. His name was Josh Donha. He was a Lance Corporal in the Reserve of the Marine Corps, and he was actually about to go into active duty.

[05:41:47] You know, he grew up a block away from my house and, you know, we're at the same bus stop for quite a while and on the same bus throughout middle school, perhaps. Yeah, I believe at least part of high school and the, you know, our families, you know, certainly miss him fiercely.

[05:42:15] And, you know, I wish his family the best in, you know, trying to get through this. Thank you. Councilmember Peterson well just to acknowledge the city has a high level of exposure to changes that are happening right now in federal policy and budget a lot of people here are not only employed by the federal government directly but indirectly they work as contractors as grant recipients and then even more

[05:42:51] indirectly the city's entire economy is very sensitive to the level of federal activity that takes place, and I think we are just beginning to feel the effects of this. I think a question mark that I have that we obviously would circle back to at a later time is, are we doing everything we can here in the city to help people who are affected in the short and long term?

[05:43:17] Just to give you one quick example, on a transportation board call recently, the Washington Council of governments was saying, goodness gracious, we've seen a surge in back-to-office activity. We need to really get back in gear, no pun intended, in terms of helping people with commute, rideshare, transit, et cetera, because they're really pinched pretty hard right now.

[05:43:44] So I guess I just want to make sure this stays on our radar screen because it's a material effect for a lot of people in a lot of different ways here in the city. Thank you, Councilmember Hardy Chandler. Yeah, I want to echo those sentiments for our federal employees and the rippling effects of that.

[05:44:08] It touches all of us, right? There is no they. The things that affect various groups will ultimately touch us in one way or another. I do want to acknowledge the wrapping up of Black History Month. People need to be seen and acknowledged throughout our community.

[05:44:26] I'm looking forward to Women's History Month in March and thankful to the Commission for Women for inviting me to be moderator of their event, which is going to take place March 23rd from 1 o'clock to 3 o'clock here at City Council.

[05:44:43] So we do need to celebrate women. Their theme will be Empowering Through Education. But also, March is Social Work Month, and as a social worker, I do want to acknowledge the very noble profession of social work and the month that celebrates not only them, but the recipients of those services.

[05:45:06] If you are just a member of any community, you should be celebrating Social Work Month because they, too, have rippling positive effects throughout our community, and I'm grateful that our city actually now has two social workers employed as staff at least that I know of. I want to encourage people to consider serving on boards and commissions. I know we have a need for that, the level of engagement that's possible in very productive ways. I think it's a good avenue for those who want to contribute and see the impacts of their efforts. And then just

[05:45:44] finally participate in restaurant week. I know I am. I have my fork ready. Thank you. Council Member Hall. Do you travel with a fork? I used to travel with stainless steel straws. Fork and hot sauce. Alright. We'll take it. I want to continue to thank everyone in our community that has reached out to us for engagement, questions, concerns, comments. I never know where to look when we're doing this.

[05:46:09] Just thank you. It takes a village to do all of these things and we're not always going to agree. We're not always going to like the final project and, you know, have issues and concerns, but I think it's great that we have such an active and involved community. And finally, and this is a little bit silly, but in light of all the invasive species talks, when you're walking around your neighborhood, consider taking the little clippers with you. And don't go and clip your neighbor's tree without talking to them, but they probably don't realize that the ivy can just be cut at the bottom and stop overtaking their tree so certainly knock on their door before you start clipping but it's not a bad thing to carry with you when you're walking

[05:46:49] your dog or going on a walk in the evenings or whatever so thank you. Councilmember Amos. Just wanted to thank everyone who attended today. We had a lot of speakers, a lot of engagement. Love to see that also when it comes to the budget do not be afraid. There's a lot of conversations that need to happen. Probably some additional conversations that hopefully we can explore. Maybe some community outreach initiatives we can talk about that later and eat out have fun good night all right so yes i need to read yes thank you everyone for being here it's been such a productive evening just really so good

[05:47:29] and um and everybody hung in there with us and we got lots of great information and we're not done yet so i am going to read oh yes sorry right uh councilmember mcquillen i just want to say as we approach this weekend it's the first night of Ramadan coming up I want to extend a heartfelt greeting to all those who will be observing thank you yes excellent we missed any other holidays or anything okay well there you well

[05:48:04] close enough close enough okay so I'm that we are now going to go into a closed meeting I move that the City Council convene a closed meeting under section 2.2-3711.a.7 of the Code of Virginia for consultation with legal counsel regarding non-litigation. All council members in favor of the motion please signify by saying aye. Aye. Those opposed say no. Okay, the vote is unanimous in favor of the motion. City Council retired into the closed meeting

[05:48:37] at 12:49 a.m. 12:49 a.m.



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