

DATE: April 21, 2021

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Environmental Sustainability Council, prepared by Michael Trauberman

SUBJECT: One City Center Special Exception Application

Members of the Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC), the ESC's Energy Transition Subcommittee, and the ESC's Habitat Restoration Task Group have reviewed the One City Center Special Exception application materials received by the City on February 11, 2021. We have also reviewed and endorse the recommendations related to environmental sustainability provided to the Applicant in the March 9, 2021 staff comments letter.

We are encouraged by the initial application and commitment to "green building measures consistent with LEED Gold standards." However, details of precisely what those words mean and how the project will be environmentally sustainable remain to be provided. The ESC looks forward to learning more regarding plans for achieving LEED Gold certification. We also seek additional information on energy use reduction, stormwater infrastructure upgrades, transportation demand management measures, electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle infrastructure, green spaces, solid waste management, and renewable energy use and on-site generation.

In all elements of design, we urge you to ensure the project supports the goals of our community, as stated in Chapter 5 "Environment for Everyone" of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Each section of the chapter outlines strategies that can be followed to support the goals:

- **Climate, Air and Energy:** Enhance livability, sustainability and resilience. Protect the community from air pollution and the effects of climate change, while reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the City.
- **Stormwater, Streams and Natural Springs:** Protect the water resources of the City and the Chesapeake Bay from the effects of pollution and climate change, reduce flooding, and improve water quality.
- **Urban Forest and Biodiversity:** Protect and enhance the network of trees, green spaces and naturalized land on public and private property throughout the City, and the plants and wildlife it supports.
- **Consumption and Waste:** Avoid waste generation and reduce the harmful pollution and financial costs of waste management and disposal.
- **Community:** Inform, educate, and engage the community in environmental action.

In addition, we highlight the recently updated SE ordinance which calls for new developments to utilize LEED criteria (or other rating systems such as the WELL Building Standard) to achieve high standards for environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Certified projects are encouraged to achieve LEED Gold or greater ratings and deliver a minimum 20 percent improvement in energy performance.

We also ask you to consider City Council Resolution 2017-12, which committed the City to reduce greenhouse gases below 2005 levels by 20 percent by 2020, and 80 percent by 2050. The Voluntary Concession process is the primary tool currently available to encourage the private sector to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in new construction so that Falls Church can meet its future carbon emission goals. Going forward, it is imperative that new development in the City be as close to Zero Carbon as possible.

ESC Member Recommendations, Comments and Questions for One City Center

The ESC has not had the opportunity to meet to discuss the project in detail, or agree on specific recommendations. However, members have commented individually, as summarized below:

Green Building Rating Certification

Developer should commit to LEED Gold or higher certification for the project's new building(s), not just "...green building measures consistent with LEED Gold standards" as written in the Statement of Justification.

Climate, Air and Energy

- Aim for net zero carbon utilizing energy efficient design, electrification, on- and off-site renewables, and credits for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy generation at George Mason Square and 150 S. Washington St.
- Minimum 20% energy performance improvement over LEED version 4 baseline (ASHRAE 90.1 – 2010), or 10% improvement if using LEED 4.1 (ASHRAE 90.1 – 2016). The minimum improvement over the LEED baseline used for certification would increase if delivery of building is after 2025.
- Maximum points should be sought in the LEED Energy and Atmosphere category.
- Full electrification of building systems (i.e., HVAC, hot water).
- ENERGY STAR appliances (including clothes dryers), and ENERGY STAR or LED light fixtures.
- On-site solar generation on roofs of all buildings, co-located with vegetated roof, if feasible. Alternatively, procure off-site renewable energy (e.g., Virtual Power Purchase Agreement).
- Grocery stores exhibit very high Energy Use Intensity. Is there any information available about the sustainability practices of the potential grocer's corporate parent?
- Mitigate heat island effects and provide shade for southern facades and outdoor uses.
- At least 5% of residential parking spaces should be equipped with an electric vehicle charge port, as should at least 4% of new and existing office and retail parking spaces. Priority should be given to provision of residential EV charging. A greater percentage will be requested if initial occupancy is after 2025. The Plans should assume extensive EV usage in future and demonstrate how infrastructure would be added with minimal demolition and installation, and legal costs or other obstacles.
- Further reductions in parking requirements should be considered, to encourage the use of alternative transportation such as transit, ride-sharing, bicycling and walking. This could also allow a reduction in the proposed building height.
- The LEED certification submission should also seek maximum points for Bicycle Facilities, Reduced Parking Footprint, and Electric Vehicles.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to the property from Maple Avenue and Annandale Road should be improved. The property should be designed to favor alternative transportation.
- The Woonerf should be designed to encourage and support pedestrian and bicycle use, and minimize vehicular traffic.

Stormwater

- Stormwater management should use green infrastructure where possible, such as rain gardens for bioretention and green roofs. Use of offsite nutrient credits should not be permitted.

Urban Forest and Biodiversity

- Street tree planters should have protective raised edges.
- The proposal includes a park on the corner of Annandale and Maple. Would this be managed by the property owner? What other landscaped open space within the development will be provided for residents and tenants, and what will be publicly accessible?
- Minimize bird strike risk through architectural design and use of bird-friendly materials.
- Minimize light pollution (e.g., dark-sky compliant lighting, minimal up-lighting, motion sensors, timers, integrated solar cells).

Consumption and Waste

- LEED points should be sought in Construction Waste Management.
- Composting, recycling, and glass recycling should be provided.