The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

January 17, 2018

Mayor Tarter and Members of City Council
Chair Wodiska and Members of the Planning Commission
City of Falls Church
300 Park Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22046

SUBJ: Response to the City's Request for Comments on the Proposed Broad and Washington Streets development from the Board of Directors of the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS)

Dear Mayor Tarter and Members of City Council and the Planning Commission;

The VPIS Board strongly supports commercial development as provided for in the City Comprehensive Plan that protects the quality of adjacent residential neighborhoods. We believe that good development projects can strengthen the City financially as well as provide local employment, an active business environment and social and cultural amenities for residents.

Our comments on the Broad and Washington Streets proposed project are as follows:

1. We support measures to protect the adjoining neighborhood from the impact of the proposed development and to reduce the height of the building all along Lawton Street.

2. The City should expect expanded voluntary concession (VC) benefits in exchange for the City conceding to a rezoning that changes a site now 100% commercial to mainly residential. For example: a traffic island on East Broad Street, with one or two trees, irrigation, and plantings which, with the similar one in front of Harris-Teeter, would provide a clear frame for downtown Falls Church.

3. Streetscape on this part of East Broad and North Washington Streets should match the existing Streetscape on West Broad Street, replacing the concrete poles and the non-matching traffic signal masts.

4. The City should require appropriate occupancy of the commercial portions of the development before significant activities can occur on the residential portion.

5. Given the development's proximity to the City's most historic and architecturally important building, the Falls Church, we are concerned that thus far the external architecture does not display a clear nexus to the character Falls Church hopes to maintain as illustrated in the City's adopted Design Guidelines. The Broad Street façade of this project needs variations to break-up the massing and to provide relief from the long uniformity of the street wall. The rear elevation should be enhanced and improved.

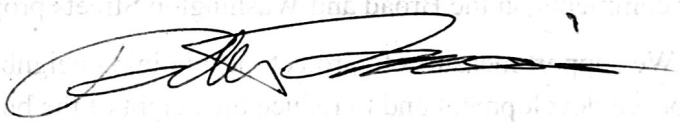
6. The practice in recent years of allowing overgenerous parking requirement reductions should not be considered on this project. A public parking commitment should be required as well as connectivity to current City parking lots to expedite traffic flow.

7. We do not support the plan to remove or cut a turn lane into the traffic island on North Washington to allow left turns into Park Place as it will cause recurrence of the massive traffic problems that the island was installed to prevent.

8. The pedestrian access path from the City parking lot behind the development to the retail on Broad should be made obvious and easy to navigate.

9. This development should be U.S. Green Building Council LEED Gold certified.

Sincerely,



Peter Adriance, Vice President
On Behalf of the Board of Directors
Village Preservation and Improvement Society