



The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

November 15, 2021

Mayor Tarter and Members of City Council
City of Falls Church
300 Park Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22046

Subject: VPIS Comments on the One City Center Project

Dear Mayor Tarter and Members of Council:

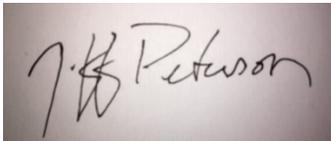
The Board of the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) would like to take this opportunity to provide our considered comments on the One City Center Project. We believe this project needs substantial changes and improvements and suggest the following:

- (1) The developer should offer a more wholesale redevelopment of this acreage, including substantial modification of the architectural appearance of George Mason Square, in order to justify use of the Special Exception for its new component, which is heavily residential. Current tenants should be protected during the transition.
- (2) An attractive “reskinning” of the warehouse appearance of George Mason Square should include stepbacks and larger office windows. This update to the exterior is also an opportunity to improve energy use (e.g., improvements in insulation and energy efficient equipment).
- (3) A more welcoming and public-oriented green “lawn” at the corner of Broad and Washington should complement the new public plaza to be built across the intersection. The green oasis should continue into the central courtyard as shaded natural space for the office tenants and public alike.
- (4) The new mixed use building should be LEED platinum and move strongly toward all-electric or geothermal to the extent feasible, with enhanced stormwater bioretention and a substantial increase in electric vehicle charging stations.

- (5) Key to support for the final project will be a strong commercial linchpin to diversify the City's revenue generation – rather than just another grocery store. An increased share of affordable dwelling units without reducing voluntary contributions for the schools, library, and parks will also be crucial.
- (6) The height of the essentially residential building should be reduced to seven stories to better complement the 301 W. Broad and new Broad & Washington structures, with a commensurate reduction in the height of a more carefully screened garage. The proposed Maple Avenue corner isn't a highly commercial one and doesn't justify this height.
- (7) The proposed small City Center park is isolated by traffic and not impressive as a public space. Harkening back to the Streetscape Plan of 2002, we propose that the City close off and re-imagine S. Maple between Broad and Annandale Road into a true City commons public space with extensive gardens, trees, walkways, and bicycle paths – with financial support from Atlantic Realty.
- (8) The roundabout on Westmoreland near the East Falls Church Metro was removed due to too many accidents. We are concerned about the potential risk to pedestrians and bicycles at the roundabout proposed for the intersection of Maple and Annandale. By creating a new commons on S. Maple, such a structure would be unnecessary.
- (9) The proposed crosswalk and "Hawk" light to stop traffic mid-block on Broad is unnecessary and too disruptive to traffic.
- (10) The City should exact a significant monetary contribution for waiving the warranty deed on the Matt's Tailor lot, which was sold to Atlantic Realty for a pittance. The economic value of a "developed" lot should be the consideration here, not current usage.

Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Jeff Peterson" in a cursive, slightly stylized font. The first name "Jeff" is written with a large, looped "J" and a small "P" for "Peterson".

Jeff Peterson
VPIS President
on behalf of the VPIS Board

cc: Planning Commission
Environmental Sustainability Council
Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation
City Manager